GENESEE COUNTY PLANNING BOARD REFERRALS
NOTICE OF FINAL ACTION

GCDP Referral ID	**T-05-ALA-9-18**
Review Date	**9/13/2018**

Municipality	**ALABAMA, T.**
Board Name	**TOWN BOARD**
Applicant's Name	**Alabama Town Board**
Referral Type	**Comprehensive Plan Adoption**
Variance(s)	
Description:	**Adoption of an updated Comprehensive Plan.**
Location	**Entire Town of Alabama**
Zoning District	**Entire Town**

PLANNING BOARD DECISION

APPROVAL

EXPLANATION:

The proposed Comprehensive Plan should pose no significant county-wide or inter-community impact.

Felice A. Stamm

Director

September 13, 2018

Date

If the County Planning Board disapproved the proposal, or recommends modifications, the referring agency shall NOT act contrary to the recommendations except by a vote of a majority plus one of all the members and after the adoption of a resolution setting forth the reasons for such contrary action. Within 30 days after the final action the referring agency shall file a report of final action with the County Planning Board. An action taken form is provided for this purpose and may be obtained from the Genesee County Planning Department.

SEND OR DELIVER TO:
GENESEE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
3837 West Main Street Road
Batavia, NY 14020-9404
Phone: (585) 815-7901

DEPARTMENT USE ONLY:
GCDP Referral # T-05-ALA-9-18

* GENESEE COUNTY * PLANNING BOARD REFERRAL

RECEIVED
AUG 07 2018
Genesee County Department of Planning

Required According to:
GENERAL MUNICIPAL LAW ARTICLE 12B, SECTION 239 L, M, N
(Please answer ALL questions as fully as possible)

1. REFERRING BOARD(S) INFORMATION

Board(s) Alabama Town Board
Address 2218 Judge Road
City, State, Zip Oakfield, NY 14125
Phone (585) 948-9341 Ext.

2. APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name Janet Sage, Supervisor
Address 2218 Judge Road
City, State, Zip Oakfield, NY 14125
Phone (585) 948-9341 Ext. Email jsage@alabamany.com

MUNICIPALITY: ☐ City ☒ Town ☐ Village of Alabama

3. TYPE OF REFERRAL: (Check all applicable items)

- ☐ Area Variance
- ☐ Use Variance
- ☐ Special Use Permit
- ☐ Site Plan Review
- ☐ Zoning Map Change
- ☐ Zoning Text Amendments
- ☒ Comprehensive Plan/Update
- ☐ Other:

Subdivision Proposal
- ☐ Preliminary
- ☐ Final

4. LOCATION OF THE REAL PROPERTY PERTAINING TO THIS REFERRAL:

A. Full Address Town of Alabama Municipal Limits
B. Nearest intersecting road
C. Tax Map Parcel Number
D. Total area of the property ____ Area of property to be disturbed ____
E. Present zoning district(s)

5. REFERRAL CASE INFORMATION:

A. Has this referral been previously reviewed by the Genesee County Planning Board?

☒ NO ☐ YES If yes, give date and action taken

B. Special Use Permit and/or Variances refer to the following section(s) of the present zoning ordinance and/or law

N/A

C. Please describe the nature of this request Adoption of the Town of Alabama Comprehensive Plan Update

6. ENCLOSURES – Please enclose copy(s) of all appropriate items in regard to this referral

- ☐ Local application
- ☐ Site plan
- ☐ Subdivision plot plans
- ☐ SEQR forms
- ☐ Zoning text/map amendments
- ☐ Location map or tax maps
- ☐ Elevation drawings
- ☐ Agricultural data statement
- ☐ New or updated comprehensive plan
- ☐ Photos
- ☒ Other: Please see the following link:

http://alabamany.com/index.php/comprehensive-ag-plans

7. CONTACT INFORMATION of the person representing the community in filling out this form (required information)

Name Andrew Reilly, AICP, PE Title ____ Phone (716) 688-0766 Ext. 2633
Address, City, State, Zip 375 Essjay Road, Williamsville, NY 14221 Email areilly@wendelcompanies.com

Town of Alabama
2218 Judge Road
Oakfield, New York 14125

NOTICE
SEQR: LEAD AGENCY DESIGNATION

TOWN OF ALABMA

TOWN BOARD

May 16, 2018

This notice is filed pursuant to the State Environmental Quality Review Act ("SEQRA"), codified as amended at Article 8 of the Environmental Conservation Law, and its implementing regulations, codified at Part 617 of the Compilation of Codes, Rules, and Regulations of the State of New York.

The Alabama Town Board is seeking to adopt the *Town of Alabama Comprehensive Plan Update*.

Name: Town of Alabama
2218 Judge Road
Oakfield, New York 14215

Contact Person: Rebecca L. Borkholder, Town Clerk

Phone: 585.948.9341

Regarding: *Town of Alabama Comprehensive Plan Update*

Description & Location of Action:

As the most local agency with permitting authority, the Town Board wishes to declare Lead Agency and conduct a coordinated review of the proposal.

A link to the full text of the document and appendices can be found here:

http://alabamany.com/index.php/comprehensive-ag-plans/

Other potential permitting (involved) agencies identified are:

(Check Each)

___ Town Board
___ Planning Board
___ Zoning Board of Appeals
___ Highway Department, Superintendent
___ Building Department, Building Inspector
___ Water District
___ Sewer District
___ County Highway Department, Commissioner of Public Works
___ County Health Department
___ State Department of Environmental Conservation
___ State Department of Transportation
___ State Department of Health
___ Army Corps of Engineers
___ Others: _____

Other interested agencies may be:

X County Planning Board
___ School District
___ Fire Company
X Others (Federal, State, County, and Local):

STATE: NYSDEC

LOCAL: Town of Batavia
Town of Oakfield
Town of Pembroke

A preliminary review of the proposed action indicates that it is a SEQR Type:

___ Unlisted Action
X Type I Action

The attached long form Environmental Assessment has been filed by the applicant.

Please notify us within **thirty (30) days**, by **June 23, 2018**, if your agency objects to our acting as lead agency, otherwise we will proceed with our review and determination of significance. Any information or concerns should be mailed to the below address. If no response is received by this date, we will assume your agency has no specific concerns about the action.

The Alabama Town Board will be holding a public hearing on this application at a regular meeting on **Thursday, June 7, 2018 at 7:00 P.M. at the South Alabama Fire Hall.**

For further information please contact:

Rebecca L. Borkholder, Town Clerk
2218 Judge Road
Oakfield, New York 14215

585.948.9341

Copies: Genesee County Planning Board
NYSDEC
Town of Batavia
Town of Oakfield
Town of Pembroke

Instructions for Completing Part 1

Part 1 is to be completed by the applicant or project sponsor. Responses become part of the application for approval or funding, are subject to public review, and may be subject to further verification.

Complete Part 1 based on information currently available. If additional research or investigation would be needed to fully respond to any item, please answer as thoroughly as possible based on current information; indicate whether missing information does not exist, or is not reasonably available to the sponsor; and, when possible, generally describe work or studies which would be necessary to update or fully develop that information.

Applicants/sponsors must complete all items in Sections A & B. In Sections C, D & E, most items contain an initial question that must be answered either "Yes" or "No". If the answer to the initial question is "Yes", complete the sub-questions that follow. If the answer to the initial question is "No", proceed to the next question. Section F allows the project sponsor to identify and attach any additional information. Section G requires the name and signature of the project sponsor to verify that the information contained in Part 1is accurate and complete.

A. Project and Sponsor Information.

Name of Action or Project: Town of Alabama Comprehensive Plan Update		
Project Location (describe, and attach a general location map): Town of Alabama, Genesee County, New York		
Brief Description of Proposed Action (include purpose or need): The proposed action involves the adoption of the Town of Alabama Comprehensive Plan Update. The Town of Alabama has identified specific goals and objectives that are unique to its locale and this comprehensive plan update will help the Town accomplish them. New York State law dictates that Town planning, zoning, capital budgeting, and other decisions should be based on a comprehensive plan that represents the community's vision for its future. The plan is designed to be consistent with other regional planning documents including the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan. In addition, the plan seeks to build upon the previous comprehensive plan for three communities (The Alabama, Town and Village of Oakfield Plan). The plan is intended to serve as a framework within which the community will be able to evaluate future land use and development issues.		
Name of Applicant/Sponsor: Town Board of Alabama, Rebecca L. Borkholder (Town Clerk)	Telephone: 585.948.9341 E-Mail: rborkholder@alabamany.com	
Address: 2218 Judge Road		
City/PO: Oakfield	State: New York	Zip Code: 14125
Project Contact (if not same as sponsor; give name and title/role):	Telephone: E-Mail:	
Address:		
City/PO:	State:	Zip Code:
Property Owner (if not same as sponsor):	Telephone: E-Mail:	
Address:		
City/PO:	State:	Zip Code:

B. Government Approvals

B. Government Approvals, Funding, or Sponsorship. ("Funding" includes grants, loans, tax relief, and any other forms of financial assistance.)		
Government Entity	**If Yes: Identify Agency and Approval(s) Required**	**Application Date (Actual or projected)**
a. City Council, Town Board, or Village Board of Trustees ☑Yes ☐No	Town Board of Alabama	May 2018
b. City, Town or Village Planning Board or Commission ☐Yes ☑No		
c. City Council, Town or Village Zoning Board of Appeals ☐Yes ☑No		
d. Other local agencies ☐Yes ☑No		
e. County agencies ☑Yes ☐No	Genesee County Planning Board	May 2018 (Actual)
f. Regional agencies ☐Yes ☑No		
g. State agencies ☐Yes ☑No		
h. Federal agencies ☐Yes ☑No		

i. Coastal Resources.
i. Is the project site within a Coastal Area, or the waterfront area of a Designated Inland Waterway? ☐Yes ☑No

ii. Is the project site located in a community with an approved Local Waterfront Revitalization Program? ☐Yes ☑No

iii. Is the project site within a Coastal Erosion Hazard Area? ☐Yes ☑No

C. Planning and Zoning

C.1. Planning and zoning actions.

Will administrative or legislative adoption, or amendment of a plan, local law, ordinance, rule or regulation be the only approval(s) which must be granted to enable the proposed action to proceed? ☑Yes ☐No

- **If Yes,** complete sections C, F and G.
- **If No,** proceed to question C.2 and complete all remaining sections and questions in Part 1

C.2. Adopted land use plans.

a. Do any municipally- adopted (city, town, village or county) comprehensive land use plan(s) include the site where the proposed action would be located? ☑Yes ☐No

If Yes, does the comprehensive plan include specific recommendations for the site where the proposed action would be located? ☑Yes ☐No

b. Is the site of the proposed action within any local or regional special planning district (for example: Greenway Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA); designated State or Federal heritage area; watershed management plan; or other?) ☑Yes ☐No

If Yes, identify the plan(s):

Please see Comprehensive Plan Update for further information on special planning districts located within the municipality.

c. Is the proposed action located wholly or partially within an area listed in an adopted municipal open space plan, or an adopted municipal farmland protection plan? ☐Yes ☐No

If Yes, identify the plan(s):

Note: Agricultural Protection Plan is in progress

C.3. Zoning

a. Is the site of the proposed action located in a municipality with an adopted zoning law or ordinance. ☑ Yes ☐ No
If Yes, what is the zoning classification(s) including any applicable overlay district?
Please see Comprehensive Plan Update for description of the adopted zoning law.

b. Is the use permitted or allowed by a special or conditional use permit? ☐ Yes ☑ No

c. Is a zoning change requested as part of the proposed action? ☐ Yes ☑ No
If Yes,
i. What is the proposed new zoning for the site? _____

C.4. Existing community services.

a. In what school district is the project site located? Please see Comprehensive Plan Update for complete description of school districts.

b. What police or other public protection forces serve the project site?
Please see Comprehensive Plan Update for complete description of police stations that serve the municipality.

c. Which fire protection and emergency medical services serve the project site?
Please see Comprehensive Plan Update for complete description of fire stations and emergency medical services that serve the municipality.

d. What parks serve the project site?
Please the Comprehensive Plan Update for complete listing of parks that serve the municipality.

D. Project Details

D.1. Proposed and Potential Development

a. What is the general nature of the proposed action (e.g., residential, industrial, commercial, recreational; if mixed, include all components)?

b. a. Total acreage of the site of the proposed action? _____ acres
b. Total acreage to be physically disturbed? _____ acres
c. Total acreage (project site and any contiguous properties) owned or controlled by the applicant or project sponsor? _____ acres

c. Is the proposed action an expansion of an existing project or use? ☐ Yes ☐ No
i. If Yes, what is the approximate percentage of the proposed expansion and identify the units (e.g., acres, miles, housing units, square feet)? % _____ Units: _____

d. Is the proposed action a subdivision, or does it include a subdivision? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If Yes,
i. Purpose or type of subdivision? (e.g., residential, industrial, commercial; if mixed, specify types)

ii. Is a cluster/conservation layout proposed? ☐ Yes ☐ No
iii. Number of lots proposed? _____
iv. Minimum and maximum proposed lot sizes? Minimum _____ Maximum _____

e. Will proposed action be constructed in multiple phases? ☐ Yes ☐ No
i. If No, anticipated period of construction: _____ months
ii. If Yes:
- Total number of phases anticipated _____
- Anticipated commencement date of phase 1 (including demolition) _____ month _____ year
- Anticipated completion date of final phase _____ month _____ year
- Generally describe connections or relationships among phases, including any contingencies where progress of one phase may determine timing or duration of future phases: _____

f. Does the project include new residential uses? ☐Yes ☐No

If Yes, show numbers of units proposed.

	One Family	Two Family	Three Family	Multiple Family (four or more)
Initial Phase				
At completion of all phases				

g. Does the proposed action include new non-residential construction (including expansions)? ☐Yes ☐No

If Yes,

i. Total number of structures _____

ii. Dimensions (in feet) of largest proposed structure: _____height; _____width; and _____ length

iii. Approximate extent of building space to be heated or cooled: _____ square feet

h. Does the proposed action include construction or other activities that will result in the impoundment of any liquids, such as creation of a water supply, reservoir, pond, lake, waste lagoon or other storage? ☐Yes ☐No

If Yes,

i. Purpose of the impoundment: _____

ii. If a water impoundment, the principal source of the water: ☐ Ground water ☐ Surface water streams ☐Other specify:

_____

iii. If other than water, identify the type of impounded/contained liquids and their source.

_____

iv. Approximate size of the proposed impoundment. Volume: _____ million gallons; surface area: _____ acres

v. Dimensions of the proposed dam or impounding structure: _____ height; _____ length

vi. Construction method/materials for the proposed dam or impounding structure (e.g., earth fill, rock, wood, concrete):

_____

D.2. Project Operations

a. Does the proposed action include any excavation, mining, or dredging, during construction, operations, or both? ☐Yes ☐No
(Not including general site preparation, grading or installation of utilities or foundations where all excavated materials will remain onsite)

If Yes:

i .What is the purpose of the excavation or dredging? _____

ii. How much material (including rock, earth, sediments, etc.) is proposed to be removed from the site?

- Volume (specify tons or cubic yards): _____
- Over what duration of time? _____

iii. Describe nature and characteristics of materials to be excavated or dredged, and plans to use, manage or dispose of them.

_____

_____

iv. Will there be onsite dewatering or processing of excavated materials? ☐Yes ☐No
If yes, describe. _____

_____

v. What is the total area to be dredged or excavated? _____acres

vi. What is the maximum area to be worked at any one time? _____ acres

vii. What would be the maximum depth of excavation or dredging? _____ feet

viii. Will the excavation require blasting? ☐Yes ☐No

ix. Summarize site reclamation goals and plan: _____

_____

_____

b. Would the proposed action cause or result in alteration of, increase or decrease in size of, or encroachment into any existing wetland, waterbody, shoreline, beach or adjacent area? ☐Yes ☐No

If Yes:

i. Identify the wetland or waterbody which would be affected (by name, water index number, wetland map number or geographic description): _____

_____

ii. Describe how the proposed action would affect that waterbody or wetland, e.g. excavation, fill, placement of structures, or alteration of channels, banks and shorelines. Indicate extent of activities, alterations and additions in square feet or acres:

_____

_____

_____

_____

iii. Will proposed action cause or result in disturbance to bottom sediments? ☐Yes☐No

If Yes, describe: _____

iv. Will proposed action cause or result in the destruction or removal of aquatic vegetation? ☐Yes☐No

If Yes:

- acres of aquatic vegetation proposed to be removed: _____
- expected acreage of aquatic vegetation remaining after project completion: _____
- purpose of proposed removal (e.g. beach clearing, invasive species control, boat access): _____

_____

- proposed method of plant removal: _____
- if chemical/herbicide treatment will be used, specify product(s): _____

v. Describe any proposed reclamation/mitigation following disturbance: _____

_____

c. Will the proposed action use, or create a new demand for water? ☐Yes☐No

If Yes:

i. Total anticipated water usage/demand per day: _____ gallons/day

ii. Will the proposed action obtain water from an existing public water supply? ☐Yes☐No

If Yes:

- Name of district or service area: _____
- Does the existing public water supply have capacity to serve the proposal? ☐Yes☐No
- Is the project site in the existing district? ☐Yes☐No
- Is expansion of the district needed? ☐Yes☐No
- Do existing lines serve the project site? ☐Yes☐No

iii. Will line extension within an existing district be necessary to supply the project? ☐Yes☐No

If Yes:

- Describe extensions or capacity expansions proposed to serve this project: _____

_____

- Source(s) of supply for the district: _____

iv. Is a new water supply district or service area proposed to be formed to serve the project site? ☐Yes☐No

If, Yes:

- Applicant/sponsor for new district: _____
- Date application submitted or anticipated: _____
- Proposed source(s) of supply for new district: _____

v. If a public water supply will not be used, describe plans to provide water supply for the project: _____

_____

vi. If water supply will be from wells (public or private), maximum pumping capacity: _____ gallons/minute.

d. Will the proposed action generate liquid wastes? ☐Yes☐No

If Yes:

i. Total anticipated liquid waste generation per day: _____ gallons/day

ii. Nature of liquid wastes to be generated (e.g., sanitary wastewater, industrial; if combination, describe all components and approximate volumes or proportions of each): _____

_____

_____

iii. Will the proposed action use any existing public wastewater treatment facilities? ☐Yes☐No

If Yes:

- Name of wastewater treatment plant to be used: _____
- Name of district: _____
- Does the existing wastewater treatment plant have capacity to serve the project? ☐Yes☐No
- Is the project site in the existing district? ☐Yes☐No
- Is expansion of the district needed? ☐Yes☐No

- Do existing sewer lines serve the project? ☐Yes ☐No
- Will line extension within an existing district be necessary to serve the project? ☐Yes ☐No

If Yes:

- Describe extensions or capacity expansions proposed to serve this project: _____

iv. Will a new wastewater (sewage) treatment district be formed to serve the project site? ☐Yes ☐No

If Yes:

- Applicant/sponsor for new district: _____
- Date application submitted or anticipated: _____
- What is the receiving water for the wastewater discharge? _____

v. If public facilities will not be used, describe plans to provide wastewater treatment for the project, including specifying proposed receiving water (name and classification if surface discharge, or describe subsurface disposal plans):

_____

vi. Describe any plans or designs to capture, recycle or reuse liquid waste: _____

e. Will the proposed action disturb more than one acre and create stormwater runoff, either from new point sources (i.e. ditches, pipes, swales, curbs, gutters or other concentrated flows of stormwater) or non-point source (i.e. sheet flow) during construction or post construction? ☐Yes ☐No

If Yes:

i. How much impervious surface will the project create in relation to total size of project parcel?

_____ Square feet or _____ acres (impervious surface)

_____ Square feet or _____ acres (parcel size)

ii. Describe types of new point sources. _____

iii. Where will the stormwater runoff be directed (i.e. on-site stormwater management facility/structures, adjacent properties, groundwater, on-site surface water or off-site surface waters)?

_____

- If to surface waters, identify receiving water bodies or wetlands: _____
- Will stormwater runoff flow to adjacent properties? ☐Yes ☐No

iv. Does proposed plan minimize impervious surfaces, use pervious materials or collect and re-use stormwater? ☐Yes ☐No

f. Does the proposed action include, or will it use on-site, one or more sources of air emissions, including fuel combustion, waste incineration, or other processes or operations? ☐Yes ☐No

If Yes, identify:

i. Mobile sources during project operations (e.g., heavy equipment, fleet or delivery vehicles)

_____

ii. Stationary sources during construction (e.g., power generation, structural heating, batch plant, crushers)

_____

iii. Stationary sources during operations (e.g., process emissions, large boilers, electric generation)

_____

g. Will any air emission sources named in D.2.f (above), require a NY State Air Registration, Air Facility Permit, or Federal Clean Air Act Title IV or Title V Permit? ☐Yes ☐No

If Yes:

i. Is the project site located in an Air quality non-attainment area? (Area routinely or periodically fails to meet ambient air quality standards for all or some parts of the year) ☐Yes ☐No

ii. In addition to emissions as calculated in the application, the project will generate:

- _____Tons/year (short tons) of Carbon Dioxide (CO_2)
- _____Tons/year (short tons) of Nitrous Oxide (N_2O)
- _____Tons/year (short tons) of Perfluorocarbons (PFCs)
- _____Tons/year (short tons) of Sulfur Hexafluoride (SF_6)
- _____Tons/year (short tons) of Carbon Dioxide equivalent of Hydroflourocarbons (HFCs)
- _____Tons/year (short tons) of Hazardous Air Pollutants (HAPs)

h. Will the proposed action generate or emit methane (including, but not limited to, sewage treatment plants, landfills, composting facilities)? ☐Yes ☐No

If Yes:

i. Estimate methane generation in tons/year (metric): _____

ii. Describe any methane capture, control or elimination measures included in project design (e.g., combustion to generate heat or electricity, flaring): _____

_____

i. Will the proposed action result in the release of air pollutants from open-air operations or processes, such as quarry or landfill operations? ☐Yes ☐No

If Yes: Describe operations and nature of emissions (e.g., diesel exhaust, rock particulates/dust):

_____

_____

j. Will the proposed action result in a substantial increase in traffic above present levels or generate substantial new demand for transportation facilities or services? ☐Yes ☐No

If Yes:

i. When is the peak traffic expected (Check all that apply): ☐ Morning ☐ Evening ☐Weekend
☐ Randomly between hours of _____ to _____.

ii. For commercial activities only, projected number of semi-trailer truck trips/day: _____

iii. Parking spaces: Existing _____ Proposed _____ Net increase/decrease _____

iv. Does the proposed action include any shared use parking? ☐Yes ☐No

v. If the proposed action includes any modification of existing roads, creation of new roads or change in existing access, describe:

_____

_____

_____

vi. Are public/private transportation service(s) or facilities available within ½ mile of the proposed site? ☐Yes ☐No

vii Will the proposed action include access to public transportation or accommodations for use of hybrid, electric or other alternative fueled vehicles? ☐Yes ☐No

viii. Will the proposed action include plans for pedestrian or bicycle accommodations for connections to existing pedestrian or bicycle routes? ☐Yes ☐No

k. Will the proposed action (for commercial or industrial projects only) generate new or additional demand for energy? ☐Yes ☐No

If Yes:

i. Estimate annual electricity demand during operation of the proposed action: _____

_____

ii. Anticipated sources/suppliers of electricity for the project (e.g., on-site combustion, on-site renewable, via grid/local utility, or other):

_____

iii. Will the proposed action require a new, or an upgrade to, an existing substation? ☐Yes ☐No

l. Hours of operation. Answer all items which apply.

i. During Construction:

- Monday - Friday: _____
- Saturday: _____
- Sunday: _____
- Holidays: _____

ii. During Operations:

- Monday - Friday: _____
- Saturday: _____
- Sunday: _____
- Holidays: _____

m. Will the proposed action produce noise that will exceed existing ambient noise levels during construction, operation, or both? ☐Yes ☐No

If yes:

i. Provide details including sources, time of day and duration:

_____

_____

ii. Will proposed action remove existing natural barriers that could act as a noise barrier or screen? ☐Yes ☐No

Describe: _____

_____

n.. Will the proposed action have outdoor lighting? ☐Yes ☐No

If yes:

i. Describe source(s), location(s), height of fixture(s), direction/aim, and proximity to nearest occupied structures:

_____

_____

ii. Will proposed action remove existing natural barriers that could act as a light barrier or screen? ☐Yes ☐No

Describe: _____

_____

o. Does the proposed action have the potential to produce odors for more than one hour per day? ☐Yes ☐No

If Yes, describe possible sources, potential frequency and duration of odor emissions, and proximity to nearest occupied structures: _____

_____

_____

p. Will the proposed action include any bulk storage of petroleum (combined capacity of over 1,100 gallons) or chemical products 185 gallons in above ground storage or any amount in underground storage? ☐Yes ☐No

If Yes:

i. Product(s) to be stored _____

ii. Volume(s) _____ per unit time _____ (e.g., month, year)

iii. Generally describe proposed storage facilities: _____

_____

q. Will the proposed action (commercial, industrial and recreational projects only) use pesticides (i.e., herbicides, insecticides) during construction or operation? ☐ Yes ☐No

If Yes:

i. Describe proposed treatment(s):

_____

_____

_____

_____

ii. Will the proposed action use Integrated Pest Management Practices? ☐ Yes ☐No

r. Will the proposed action (commercial or industrial projects only) involve or require the management or disposal of solid waste (excluding hazardous materials)? ☐ Yes ☐No

If Yes:

i. Describe any solid waste(s) to be generated during construction or operation of the facility:

- Construction: _____ tons per _____ (unit of time)
- Operation : _____ tons per _____ (unit of time)

ii. Describe any proposals for on-site minimization, recycling or reuse of materials to avoid disposal as solid waste:

- Construction: _____

_____

- Operation: _____

_____

iii. Proposed disposal methods/facilities for solid waste generated on-site:

- Construction: _____

_____

- Operation: _____

_____

s. Does the proposed action include construction or modification of a solid waste management facility? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If Yes:

i. Type of management or handling of waste proposed for the site (e.g., recycling or transfer station, composting, landfill, or other disposal activities): _____

ii. Anticipated rate of disposal/processing:

- _____ Tons/month, if transfer or other non-combustion/thermal treatment, or
- _____ Tons/hour, if combustion or thermal treatment

iii. If landfill, anticipated site life: _____ years

t. Will proposed action at the site involve the commercial generation, treatment, storage, or disposal of hazardous waste? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If Yes:

i. Name(s) of all hazardous wastes or constituents to be generated, handled or managed at facility: _____

ii. Generally describe processes or activities involving hazardous wastes or constituents: _____

iii. Specify amount to be handled or generated _____ tons/month

iv. Describe any proposals for on-site minimization, recycling or reuse of hazardous constituents: _____

v. Will any hazardous wastes be disposed at an existing offsite hazardous waste facility? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If Yes: provide name and location of facility: _____

If No: describe proposed management of any hazardous wastes which will not be sent to a hazardous waste facility:

E. Site and Setting of Proposed Action

E.1. Land uses on and surrounding the project site

a. Existing land uses.

i. Check all uses that occur on, adjoining and near the project site.

☐ Urban ☐ Industrial ☐ Commercial ☐ Residential (suburban) ☐ Rural (non-farm)
☐ Forest ☐ Agriculture ☐ Aquatic ☐ Other (specify): _____

ii. If mix of uses, generally describe:

b. Land uses and covertypes on the project site.

Land use or Covertype	Current Acreage	Acreage After Project Completion	Change (Acres +/-)
• Roads, buildings, and other paved or impervious surfaces			
• Forested			
• Meadows, grasslands or brushlands (non-agricultural, including abandoned agricultural)			
• Agricultural (includes active orchards, field, greenhouse etc.)			
• Surface water features (lakes, ponds, streams, rivers, etc.)			
• Wetlands (freshwater or tidal)			
• Non-vegetated (bare rock, earth or fill)			
• Other Describe: _____			

c. Is the project site presently used by members of the community for public recreation? ☐Yes☐No

i. If Yes: explain: _____

d. Are there any facilities serving children, the elderly, people with disabilities (e.g., schools, hospitals, licensed day care centers, or group homes) within 1500 feet of the project site? ☐Yes☐No

If Yes,

i. Identify Facilities:

_____

_____

e. Does the project site contain an existing dam? ☐Yes☐No

If Yes:

i. Dimensions of the dam and impoundment:

- Dam height: _____ feet
- Dam length: _____ feet
- Surface area: _____ acres
- Volume impounded: _____ gallons OR acre-feet

ii. Dam's existing hazard classification: _____

iii. Provide date and summarize results of last inspection:

_____

_____

f. Has the project site ever been used as a municipal, commercial or industrial solid waste management facility, or does the project site adjoin property which is now, or was at one time, used as a solid waste management facility? ☐Yes☐No

If Yes:

i. Has the facility been formally closed? ☐Yes☐ No

- If yes, cite sources/documentation: _____

ii. Describe the location of the project site relative to the boundaries of the solid waste management facility:

_____

_____

iii. Describe any development constraints due to the prior solid waste activities: _____

_____

g. Have hazardous wastes been generated, treated and/or disposed of at the site, or does the project site adjoin property which is now or was at one time used to commercially treat, store and/or dispose of hazardous waste? ☐Yes☐No

If Yes:

i. Describe waste(s) handled and waste management activities, including approximate time when activities occurred:

_____

_____

h. Potential contamination history. Has there been a reported spill at the proposed project site, or have any remedial actions been conducted at or adjacent to the proposed site? ☐Yes☐ No

If Yes:

i. Is any portion of the site listed on the NYSDEC Spills Incidents database or Environmental Site Remediation database? Check all that apply: ☐Yes☐No

☐ Yes – Spills Incidents database Provide DEC ID number(s): _____

☐ Yes – Environmental Site Remediation database Provide DEC ID number(s): _____

☐ Neither database

ii. If site has been subject of RCRA corrective activities, describe control measures: _____

_____

_____

iii. Is the project within 2000 feet of any site in the NYSDEC Environmental Site Remediation database? ☐Yes☐No

If yes, provide DEC ID number(s): _____

iv. If yes to (i), (ii) or (iii) above, describe current status of site(s):

_____

_____

v. Is the project site subject to an institutional control limiting property uses? ☐Yes ☐No

- If yes, DEC site ID number: _____
- Describe the type of institutional control (e.g., deed restriction or easement): _____
- Describe any use limitations: _____
- Describe any engineering controls: _____
- Will the project affect the institutional or engineering controls in place? ☐Yes ☐No
- Explain: _____

E.2. Natural Resources On or Near Project Site

a. What is the average depth to bedrock on the project site? _____ feet

b. Are there bedrock outcroppings on the project site? ☐Yes ☐No
If Yes, what proportion of the site is comprised of bedrock outcroppings? _____%

c. Predominant soil type(s) present on project site: _____ _____%
_____ _____%
_____ _____%

d. What is the average depth to the water table on the project site? Average: _____ feet

e. Drainage status of project site soils: ☐ Well Drained: _____% of site
☐ Moderately Well Drained: _____% of site
☐ Poorly Drained _____% of site

f. Approximate proportion of proposed action site with slopes: ☐ 0-10%: _____% of site
☐ 10-15%: _____% of site
☐ 15% or greater: _____% of site

g. Are there any unique geologic features on the project site? ☐Yes ☐No
If Yes, describe: _____

h. Surface water features.

i. Does any portion of the project site contain wetlands or other waterbodies (including streams, rivers, ponds or lakes)? ☐Yes ☐No

ii. Do any wetlands or other waterbodies adjoin the project site? ☐Yes ☐No

If Yes to either *i* or *ii*, continue. If No, skip to E.2.i.

iii. Are any of the wetlands or waterbodies within or adjoining the project site regulated by any federal, state or local agency? ☐Yes ☐No

iv. For each identified regulated wetland and waterbody on the project site, provide the following information:

- Streams: Name _____ Classification _____
- Lakes or Ponds: Name _____ Classification _____
- Wetlands: Name _____ Approximate Size _____
- Wetland No. (if regulated by DEC) _____

v. Are any of the above water bodies listed in the most recent compilation of NYS water quality-impaired waterbodies? ☐Yes ☐No

If yes, name of impaired water body/bodies and basis for listing as impaired: _____

i. Is the project site in a designated Floodway? ☐Yes ☐No

j. Is the project site in the 100 year Floodplain? ☐Yes ☐No

k. Is the project site in the 500 year Floodplain? ☐Yes ☐No

l. Is the project site located over, or immediately adjoining, a primary, principal or sole source aquifer? ☐Yes ☐No
If Yes:

i. Name of aquifer: _____

m. Identify the predominant wildlife species that occupy or use the project site: _____

n. Does the project site contain a designated significant natural community? ☐Yes ☐No

If Yes:

i. Describe the habitat/community (composition, function, and basis for designation): _____

ii. Source(s) of description or evaluation: _____

iii. Extent of community/habitat:

- Currently: _____ acres
- Following completion of project as proposed: _____ acres
- Gain or loss (indicate + or -): _____ acres

o. Does project site contain any species of plant or animal that is listed by the federal government or NYS as endangered or threatened, or does it contain any areas identified as habitat for an endangered or threatened species? ☐Yes ☐No

p. Does the project site contain any species of plant or animal that is listed by NYS as rare, or as a species of special concern? ☐Yes ☐No

q. Is the project site or adjoining area currently used for hunting, trapping, fishing or shell fishing? ☐Yes ☐No

If yes, give a brief description of how the proposed action may affect that use: _____

E.3. Designated Public Resources On or Near Project Site

a. Is the project site, or any portion of it, located in a designated agricultural district certified pursuant to Agriculture and Markets Law, Article 25-AA, Section 303 and 304? ☐Yes ☐No

If Yes, provide county plus district name/number: _____

b. Are agricultural lands consisting of highly productive soils present? ☐Yes ☐No

i. If Yes: acreage(s) on project site? _____

ii. Source(s) of soil rating(s): _____

c. Does the project site contain all or part of, or is it substantially contiguous to, a registered National Natural Landmark? ☐Yes ☐No

If Yes:

i. Nature of the natural landmark: ☐ Biological Community ☐ Geological Feature

ii. Provide brief description of landmark, including values behind designation and approximate size/extent: _____

d. Is the project site located in or does it adjoin a state listed Critical Environmental Area? ☐Yes ☐No

If Yes:

i. CEA name: _____

ii. Basis for designation: _____

iii. Designating agency and date: _____

e. Does the project site contain, or is it substantially contiguous to, a building, archaeological site, or district which is listed on, or has been nominated by the NYS Board of Historic Preservation for inclusion on, the State or National Register of Historic Places? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If Yes:

i. Nature of historic/archaeological resource: ☐ Archaeological Site ☐ Historic Building or District

ii. Name: _____

iii. Brief description of attributes on which listing is based:

_____

f. Is the project site, or any portion of it, located in or adjacent to an area designated as sensitive for archaeological sites on the NY State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) archaeological site inventory? ☐ Yes ☐ No

g. Have additional archaeological or historic site(s) or resources been identified on the project site? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If Yes:

i. Describe possible resource(s): _____

ii. Basis for identification: _____

h. Is the project site within fives miles of any officially designated and publicly accessible federal, state, or local scenic or aesthetic resource? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If Yes:

i. Identify resource: _____

ii. Nature of, or basis for, designation (e.g., established highway overlook, state or local park, state historic trail or scenic byway, etc.): _____

iii. Distance between project and resource: _____ miles.

i. Is the project site located within a designated river corridor under the Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers Program 6 NYCRR 666? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If Yes:

i. Identify the name of the river and its designation: _____

ii. Is the activity consistent with development restrictions contained in 6NYCRR Part 666? ☐ Yes ☐ No

F. Additional Information

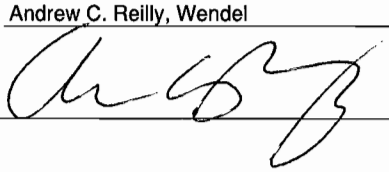
Attach any additional information which may be needed to clarify your project.

If you have identified any adverse impacts which could be associated with your proposal, please describe those impacts plus any measures which you propose to avoid or minimize them.

G. Verification

I certify that the information provided is true to the best of my knowledge.

Applicant/Sponsor Name Andrew C. Reilly, Wendel Date 5/17/18

Signature  Title Consultant for the Project

PRINT FORM

TOWN OF ALABAMA
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

FINAL - AUGUST 2018

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Mapping for the *Town of Alabama Comprehensive Plan Update* was derived from maps utilized as part of the 2004 *Oakfield/Alabama Comprehensive Plan*, the 2015 *Green Genesee / Smart Genesee Plan,* and the 2017 *Town of Alabama Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan*. All of the mapping can be found in Appendix #1.

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SECTION 1.0
INTRODUCTION

The Town of Alabama prepared a joint Comprehensive Plan with the Town and Village of Oakfield that was adopted by the communities in 2005. Since that existing Comprehensive Plan was developed, a number of circumstances in the Town have changed. These changes include the extension and planned extension of water lines, new proposed economic development activities (including STAMP), a proposed wind farm, the completion of the "Green Genesee-Smart Genesee" planning initiative, changes to the County's *Smart Growth Plan* and other regional planning work such as the Regional Economic Development Council and the *Regional Sustainability Plan*. This Comprehensive Plan Update is being prepared to examine what has changed in the Town, reassert the Town's preferred vision and goals for its future, and outline strategies to help achieve the Town's goals. The regional studies are an integral part of this Update.

The project with the greatest potential impact on the Town is the Science and Technology Advanced Manufacturing Project (STAMP). STAMP is a +-1,250 acre site that was partially agricultural at the time of the 2005 Plan and was then identified by the Genesee County Economic Development Center (GCEDC) as the preferred location for a mega-industrial site. After an extensive process, including completion of a Generic Environmental Impact Statement, the site was re-zoned for manufacturing, office, retail and other business uses (TD1, TD2, and TD3), and is being marketed by the Genesee County Economic Development Center. Redevelopment of the site is bringing new infrastructure support, such as water, sewer, broadband and power, to the Town of Alabama. Potential growth pressures arising from the development of up to 6,000,000 square feet of manufacturing, office, retail, and other business development have prompted the Town to reexamine its vision for its future. This update to the Town's Comprehensive Plan was offered as a mitigation in the Generic Environmental Impact Statement prepared for the STAMP project.

In May of 2001, Genesee County adopted a *Smart Growth Plan* as a strategy for mitigating the environmental impacts of extending water services throughout the

County. The Smart Growth Plan has been updated on a regular basis, with the most current available version adopted in 2017. The County is currently in the process of reviewing the Plan in 2019. As a way of minimizing potential impacts arising from extension of new waterlines in the County, the *Smart Growth Plan* generally outlines what areas in the County would qualify to receive public water and the reasoning behind these decisions. Those areas that were designated to receive water are known as "Development Areas", and were determined to meet a certain set of criteria. Examples of criteria that may make an area suitable as a Development Area include:

- Existing patterns of dense development,
- Zoning that permits higher density development,
- Access to transportation networks,
- Feasibility of extending water service, and
- Minimal conflict with agricultural districts and State designated wetlands.

As set forth in the *Smart Growth Plan*, three key reasons for limiting potential connections to public water supply include:

- Promoting the efficient use of land resources and infrastructure,
- Encouraging revitalization of existing developed areas, and
- Protecting prime agricultural soils and natural resources.

The *Smart Growth Plan* gives reasons for properly planning future hookups and establishes guidelines for implementing an approval process. This process calls for the creation of an administrative review committee by the County Legislature, to include representatives from various County agencies. This committee will then review requests for service connections on a case by case basis, using the criteria outlined in the *Smart Growth Plan*. The County Legislature may choose to delegate the authority of administering requests for service connections to the individual municipalities by entering into inter-municipal agreements. To be eligible to review requests for service connections a municipality must have a legally adopted comprehensive plan that is consistent with the principles of the *Smart Growth Plan*. Without such a plan, the community would not be able to review requests within their own municipal jurisdiction. In addition, by having an adopted comprehensive plan a municipality would also have a stronger position and founded reasoning for

requesting revisions to Development Areas when the *Smart Growth Plan* is amended every three years.

For the above reasons, the Towns of Alabama, Oakfield, and the Village of Oakfield collaborated to draft a Comprehensive Plan in 2004. None of these communities had undertaken any previous comprehensive planning efforts. Although the *Smart Growth Plan* and the ability to receive public water was the driving force behind the effort to create this document, there were other issues that warranted the preparation of the plan. That comprehensive plan set forth a strategy for addressing the important issues in each partnering community and for guiding future growth and development, protecting rural character and improving the quality of life. The three communities designed that plan to acknowledge existing conditions in each community, to establish their vision for the future, and to outline how they intend to achieve their goals and objectives for managing growth.

In approximately the year 2007, Genesee County Economic Development Corporation introduced the concept of developing the STAMP project in the Town of Alabama. This "mega-project" envisioned the development of up to several million square feet of light industrial and commercial businesses in the Town. The GEIS process (completed in 2012) acknowledged the impact this project would have on the Town and the region and identified the fact that the Town's Comprehensive Plan (the three community plan completed in 2005) would need updating.

In the time period since the original Comprehensive Plan was adopted, there have been many other changes in the area, a large Wind Turbine project was proposed, and numerous regional planning initiatives have taken place (Updates to the *Genesee County Plan*, a *Sustainability Plan*, a *Regional Economic Development Plan*, a new Plan entitled "Green Genesee Smart Genesee", and current planning such as the Alabama and Oakfield agricultural protection plans and the update to the County's *Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan*).

- This Town of Alabama update to the three community plan, will consider all of the above noted issues and plans, and community input, to provide needed updates to the Town's vision and provide the tools necessary to reach that vision. This planning initiative will acknowledge the original three community plan, but will be a standalone update to that Plan. This Plan will also reference and utilize

the other regional planning initiatives and studies. See attached document

The Town and Village of Oakfield are encouraged to update their own sections of the Plan; considering the Town of Alabama's update.

1.1 Regional and Local Setting

The Town of Alabama is situated directly north of the New York State Thruway (Interstate 90, Exit 48A) in northwestern Genesee County. Located west of New York's Finger Lakes, the Town is uniquely situated at the crossroads of four counties, Erie, Niagara, Orleans, and Genesee. The Town is approximately 25 miles east of Buffalo, 35 miles west of Rochester, 20 miles south of Lake Ontario, and 10 miles north of the City of Batavia. The surrounding communities include the Towns of Shelby and Barre to the north, the Towns of Elba and Oakfield and the Village of Oakfield to the east, the Towns of Batavia and Pembroke to the south and the Tonawanda Seneca Nation and the Towns of Newstead and Royalton to the west. See Maps 1 and 2 in Section 2.1.

The population of the Town was reported at 1,881 persons in the 2000 Census and 1,869 in the 2010 Census, which represents a very slight decrease (0.6 percent) over a ten-year period. The number of households also decreased slightly, from 723 households in 2000, to 712 in 2010, a 1.5 percent decrease.

The Town is predominantly a rural/agricultural area, with small pockets of slightly denser residential and commercial development located in the hamlets. The landscape is very typical of rural Western New York communities with the area being dominated by gently rolling hills, farm fields, pockets of woodlands, and rural homes. The rural landscape is interrupted only by the hamlets where small stores, churches, and slightly denser residential development can be found.

1.2 Reasons for Preparing a Comprehensive Plan

It is important for each community to have an effective comprehensive plan to guide future growth and development. New York State Law indicates that Town and Village planning, zoning, capital budgeting and other decisions should be based on a current comprehensive plan that represents the community's vision for

its future. New York State Smart Growth legislation also acknowledges that Smart Growth, by its very essence, is growth that is in accordance with a Comprehensive Plan that reflects Smart growth principles. The goal of the comprehensive plan is to develop recommendations for future development in the Town, while recognizing the community's unique assets and considering impacts upon surrounding Towns. This Plan is intended to serve as a framework within which the Town will be able to evaluate future land use and development issues. It examines the environmental, demographic, physical and development aspects of the community, and the regulatory setting that guides these factors. It addresses the issues and concerns specific to the community, based on citizen input from local residents through a variety of forums. The goals and objectives, recommendations and implementation actions included in this plan are designed to address the Town of Alabama's concerns, and reflect its unique and distinctive vision for its future. The original three community plan was adopted by each of the three communities and became a blueprint for the region's growth into the 21st Century. The adoption of this update will help to ensure that the Town's blueprint, which now includes the STAMP project, still meets the community's needs and reflects the vision of the Town of Alabama, its neighbors, and the region.

1.3 How the Plan Will be Utilized

In accordance with Section 272-a of Town Law, Towns have the authority to undertake comprehensive planning and to adopt a plan to help promote the health, safety and general welfare, with due consideration given to the needs of the people of the region. The comprehensive plan is defined by these laws as such: A comprehensive plan consists of the materials, written and/or graphic, including but not limited to maps, charts, studies, resolutions, reports and other descriptive material that identify the goals, objectives, principles, guidelines, policies, standards, devices and instruments for the immediate and long range protection, enhancement, growth and development of a municipality.

By law, (pursuant to Sections 272-a) the adoption of a comprehensive plan has the following effect:

- All Town land use regulations must be in accordance with a comprehensive plan adopted pursuant to §272-a.1.(a).

- All plans for capital projects of another government agency on land included in the Town comprehensive plan, adopted pursuant to Section 272-a, shall take such plan into consideration.

Once adopted, the Town should begin to implement the plan by amending its land use regulations to conform to the comprehensive plan, and consider the plan in all of its land use decisions (site plans, subdivisions, and zoning actions). Yearly, the municipality should utilize the plan in formulating its capital project plan and in helping to determine what projects and other implementation actions should be undertaken in the following year.

Copies of the adopted comprehensive plan must be filed with County and State agencies, and should be utilized by those agencies in planning projects and actions that could affect the planning community.

SECTION 2.0
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

This section presents the goals and objectives that were updated for the Town of Alabama with the assistance of the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee. The goals and objectives have been formulated for the Town by utilizing the 2005 *Oakfield Alabama Plan*, the Town's rational for preparing this comprehensive plan update, the *Green Genesee/Smart Genesee Plan* (GGSG) and other regional planning documents, data from the inventory and analysis, and input gathered from residents at public meetings, and from written comments.

The goals and objectives focus on the major issues and concerns of the Town's residents and are aimed at helping to guide future growth and development in the Town of Alabama. The recommendations that follow in Section 5 include more specific actions that the Town can implement to achieve the intent of these goals and objectives.

2.1 Public Input

The *Town of Alabama Comprehensive Plan Update* was committed to the idea that a critical element of the planning process is effective public participation. From its inception, the Comprehensive Plan was prepared with public input and reviewing the input received during other local and regional initiatives. A variety of avenues were utilized to solicit input, including a public information meeting held on 10/25/16 and another held on 04/13/17, comment forms for the submittal of written comments, the public input received during the GGSG plan work, input received during the creation of the Town and County's agricultural protection plans, public meetings related to STAMP, individual meetings with government officials, an internet website, and press releases. In addition, the entire process was closely overseen by the Advisory Committee, which was comprised of representatives from the community. This committee met multiple times to provide guidance and insight into the planning process and to ensure that the concerns of the community were being effectively addressed.

Public Information Meetings

Once updated information was gathered and a first meeting was held with the committee, a public information meeting was held in the Town of Alabama on October 25, 2016 to introduce the public to the project consultants, the Advisory Committee and the project. A brief overview of the project (update to the previous Plan), the reasoning behind it (growth pressures and as a requirement of the SEQR Findings for the STAMP project) and an understanding of how the plan would be developed and utilized was provided. This was followed by an open discussion of important issues and opportunities designed to generate public comments. Issues included the impacts of the STAMP project, wind turbines, and other things impacting the future of the community, and the results of the GGSG project. An important goal of this meeting was to gather as much public input as possible regarding the goals and objectives of the Town, where they had concerns, and what they saw as key opportunities for improving their quality of life. Brainstorming encouraged attendees to articulate their "vision" for their communities. Based on this input, a preliminary list of issues was prepared for use in updating the goals and objectives.

A second public meeting was held on 4/13/17, which provided the public an update on the Plan and allowed for further input. Concurrence ("did we hear you correctly") with the results of the first meeting was received. These results were:

- Residents value the rural character of the Town of Alabama
- There is strong support for agriculture
- There is strong support for the extension of water lines to existing residents
- Residents support smart growth in the hamlet areas, and limiting growth outside the hamlets
- Residents prefer the hamlets remain primarily residential in character, particularly for South Alabama and Basom. Some limited commercial development could occur in the Alabama hamlet.
- Property maintenance is a concern
- Failing septic systems are a concern (although there is not support for public sewers)
- There is concern about traffic, particularly along Route 77/63.

At this meeting, the following additional comments were received:

- Town should be proactively planning for alternative energy, particularly wind turbines. There have been proposals for very large turbines to the north of Alabama in Somerset.
- There were questions about zoning, and how incentive zoning works in the Town.
- There was concern about the future end use for the quarry site.
- Traffic along the State highways is a concern.
- The intersection of Lewiston and Alleghany Roads was identified as a problem intersection, with a recent major accident. It was questions as to whether a street light should be installed. Drew Reilly noted that both roads were under the jurisdiction of the State, limiting the Town's influence.
- The Alleghany and Ledge Road intersection was also cited as an issue. It was noted that the State is planning for that intersection. Attendees would like signage on Ledge Road to warn motorists of the upcoming stop sign.
- There was a question on the designation of Route 77, and what impact that may have.

Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee was a very important source of input and guidance for the plan. These community volunteers set the tone early on in the project and then reviewed the first draft report, providing their input. They also helped to advertise and facilitate the public meetings. They served as important liaisons between their Town and the project consultants, and provided useful comments, feedback and revisions to the plan.

More information on these meetings and the results of surveys from the GGSG planning initiative can be found in the Appendix to this Plan update.

2.2 Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives listed in this section are large-scale visionary ideas that can be utilized to evaluate actions in the Town. The following goals and objectives were developed utilizing those established in the 2005 Plan and updated through the process described previously.

2.2.1 Town of Alabama Updated Goals and Objectives

1. Protect, promote and preserve Agriculture

   Agriculture is an important aspect of the Town of Alabama; it helps define the character of the area, provides jobs, preserves open space and is an integral part of the community.

   - Promote the protection and preservation of farms and farming-related activities that are economically viable.
   - Protect and promote farming activity as a priority to preserve open space and scenic vistas that help shape and maintain the rural character of the Town.
   - Maintain farming and agriculture activities to provide jobs and economic activity for a large portion of residents in the Town.
   - Encourage and allow farm-related business as a secondary interest and support service to farming.
   - Utilize the Town's and County's Agricultural Protection Plans in achieving the Town's Agricultural goals.
   - Look for synergies with the STAMP project and other development projects in the Town.

2. Maintain and enhance community character in the Town of Alabama

   - Maintain and enhance a strong sense of community in the Town.
   - Maintain the unique rural character and small-town atmosphere in the Town of Alabama through proper planning and development.
   - Manage growth in the Town to ensure that development occurs at an appropriate scale and pace, and in locations suitable for the type of development that is proposed.
   - Promote the positive image of the Town as a desirable community in which to live and work.
   - Preserve viewsheds, mature vegetation, open space and other natural resources that contribute to the rural character of the Town.
   - Promote the distinct heritage and historic identity of the Town.

- Encourage architectural development styles that are consistent with the historic and rural character of existing development in and around the Town.
- Blend the STAMP development area (what is referred to as theTD-3 District) into the Town's rural character and ensure that surrounding growth fits into this rural vernacular (especially in the Alabama Hamlet). The other areas of STAMP (TD-1 and TD-2) should primarily be screened from the surrounding areas and highways.
- Restrict residential subdivision growth in most areas of the Town (see Vision Map) and target appropriate areas for small scale residential growth.

3. Provide potable water to all areas of need in the Town

Public water is a quality of life issue and water services should be extended to all areas of the Town to address needs.

- Continue to work with Genesee County to extend public water in the Town.
- Provide public water in areas of dense development (hamlets) where groundwater sources are inadequate, of poor quality or polluted, to address such problems and encourage growth.
- Provide public water to areas where the quality or quantity of potable water resources threatens public health.
- Provide public water to areas targeted for industrial and commercial growth.
- Provide public water to farmers in need of public water.
- Develop creative techniques to provide water to agricultural operations that need public water.
- Build upon the water system established in providing water to the STAMP project.
- Protect groundwater and surface water resources from contamination from failing septic systems and other sources of pollution.
- Promote the provision of assistance for improving farming practices to protect the quality of groundwater and the environment.

4. Protect the environmental features and resources of the Town of Alabama

   The Town contains a variety of environmental features and is home to over 1,000 acres of wildlife conservation areas.

   - Protect and preserve the abundant natural resources of the Town.
   - Protect groundwater sources as a high priority to maintain the viability of private wells that are susceptible to pollution.
   - Promote public education with regard to septic system maintenance to protect groundwater quality.
   - Promote sound farming techniques that limit non-point source pollution.
   - Promote the protection of natural stream corridors and watersheds.
   - Utilize some of the proceeds from the STAMP project development to continue to protect the Town's important areas.
   - Implement the STAMP Long Term Management Plan (LTMP).
   - Implement targeted ideas developed in the GGSG Plan.

5. Provide for economic development in the Town of Alabama

   The expansion of industrial and commercial growth, and other economic development activities, helps provide jobs and a stronger tax base for the community.

   - Target areas for new smaller scale commercial and industrial growth outside of the STAMP project site and support the extension of necessary infrastructure to these areas.
   - Protect and support the existing economic base of the Town and the expansion of existing businesses in an appropriate manner.
   - Promote the establishment and growth of new business enterprises in the Town, particularly in and around the hamlet areas and in other areas designated for economic growth.
   - Identify areas in need of redevelopment and encourage the re-use of existing structures and utilization of vacant properties in these areas.

- Promote new growth and the expansion of existing businesses to provide job opportunities for youth to help them remain in the area.
- Continue to work with GCEDC on the proper development of the STAMP site and the identification of support businesses. Cooperatively work with GCEDC on the type of development to be considered in TD-3.
- Implement the actions developed in the Town's and County's Agricultural Protection Plans to help support Agricultural and Agricultural support businesses of the Town.
- Encourage the development of tourism-related businesses and services that support activities associated with the wildlife conservation areas.
- Ensure the development of compatible land uses to avoid use conflicts.

6. Maintain and promote efficiency of government

   The Town of Alabama should strive to offer the highest quality and most cost-effective services possible.

   - Promote the sharing of services, equipment, and personnel, to the highest level possible, with the Town and Village of Oakfield (or other neighboring municipalities) to cut costs and maintain a high degree of service.
   - Maintain and enhance the strong collaboration between the community and the Oakfield-Alabama School District.
   - Advocate effective zoning, land use, and development regulations and enforcement.
   - Manage long-term growth and development in the Town through a comprehensive planning process and implementation.
   - Plan for and foster a balance and diversity of uses in the Town to control the cost of, and the need for, public services and future service upgrades.
   - Utilize the proceeds (IZA monies) to implement the objectives of this Plan.

7. Encourage a diversity of housing types

   As the population of the Town changes over time, and the economic conditions vary, the housing stock should be made diverse to accommodate the changing needs of the community.

- Maintain the quality of the existing housing stock.
- Encourage the provision of a greater variety of housing styles and types to accommodate a wider range of housing preferences, income levels and household types *(in appropriate areas)*
- Maintain and protect residential property values.
- Encourage the development of housing in a manner that discourages sprawl and enables residents to use existing services and infrastructure efficiently.

SECTION 3.0
EXISTING CONDITIONS OF THE COMMUNITIES

3.1 Existing Land Use

Land uses in the Town of Alabama did not change significantly since the 2005 Comprehensive Plan. The Town remains predominately agricultural and rural in nature. Agricultural uses make up the largest proportion of land in the Town of Alabama, followed by wildlife conservation areas. The Tonawanda Seneca Nation, although independent from the Town, is also largely rural in nature and contributes to the rural character of the Town. Map 3 of the previous Comprehensive Plan depicts land use patterns in the Town in 2003 and the map from the GGSG Plan shows land use in 2015. In general, these two maps demonstrate that land use patterns in the Town of Alabama have not significantly changed over the course of the last 11-years.

A typical rural landscape in the Town of Alabama

Agriculture is by far the most prominent land use in the Town making up over half of the land area of the Town. Farming in the Town of Alabama includes a mix of large farming operations, as well as small family farms throughout the countryside. The next most prominent land use in Alabama is wildlife conservation areas. These areas include the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge and Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management Area (in the northern portion of the Town), the Tonawanda State Wildlife Management Area in the western portion, and the New York State White Memorial Game Farm in the center of the Town. These areas are protected lands that contribute to the rural character of the Town.

Residential development is the next most common land use in the Town of Alabama. Residential development is scattered throughout the Town, largely along road frontage lots or in one of the historic hamlets in the Town. There is very little other development within the Town. Existing commercial, industrial, public and utility uses each comprise less than 1 percent of the Town's acreage. These other land uses are found scattered throughout the Town, with concentrations within the hamlets. The Town's hamlets, Basom, Alabama, Wheatville, and South Alabama, are historic 'cross-roads' developments. They consist of pockets of denser development, with a mix of homes, small stores, churches, gas stations and similar uses. In general, these hamlets are found along major roads or at major intersections. This type of development pattern is very typical of rural/agricultural communities.

Example of denser, mixed use in the hamlets of Alabama.

The most important impact to land use within the Town will be the introduction of the Science, Technology and Advanced Manufacturing Project (STAMP), which consists of approximately 1000 acres west of Allegany Road (Route 77/63) and north of Judge Road. Although these lands are currently a mix of agricultural, rural residential and vacant lands, they are in the process of being converted to an advanced manufacturing business park. The first tenant may begin development in 2018 for occupancy in 2019. The STAMP development has the potential to generate significant changes in the pattern of land uses within Alabama.

Tax parcel data from Genesee County were used to develop estimates of the distribution of land uses in the Town, using property class codes assigned by the Assessor's office as a proxy for land use, supplemented with aerial photographs and local input. To provide a general sense of land use trends in the Town of Alabama, data from the 2005 Comprehensive Plan were compared with more recent data from the Green Genesee Smart Genesee planning effort. The two data sets are not strictly comparable, due to differences in how parcels were categorized. However, they show a relatively consistent pattern, with agriculture and protected open space dominating land uses within the Town. These figures are shown below:

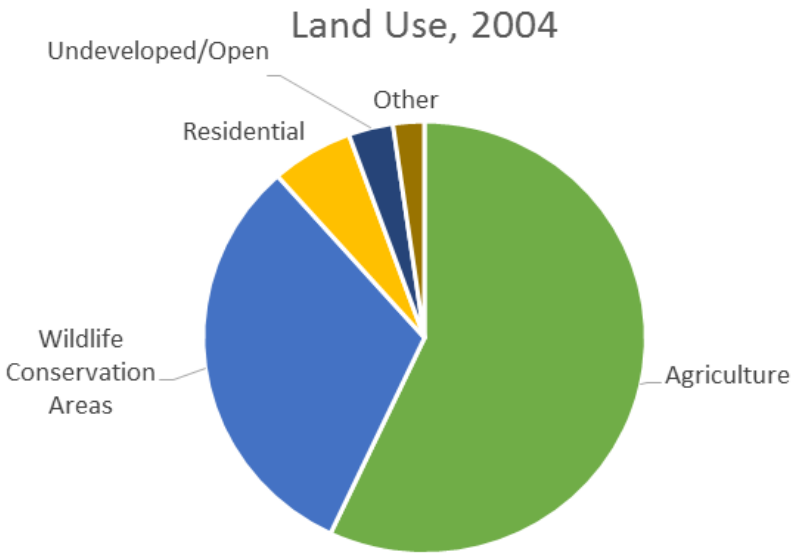


Figure 1

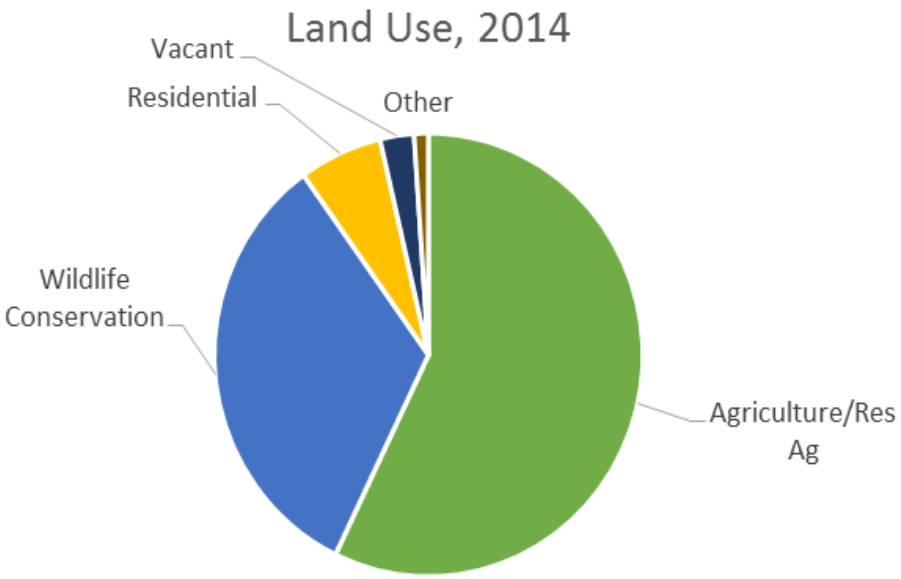


Figure 2

Sources: 2004: *Town of Alabama Comprehensive Plan* (joint with Town and Village of Oakfield); 2014: *Green Genesee Smart Genesee Alabama Oakfield Community Inventory and Analysis Report*

3.1.1 Farmland and Agriculture

The Town of Alabama is preparing an *Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan* parallel with this Comprehensive Plan update. *Map 5: Agricultural District and Protected Lands* depicts lands within County Agricultural Districts, and also shows parcels that are farmed (as shown on the *Agricultural District and Protected Lands* map). The Agricultural District program was established by State Law. Landowners voluntarily agree to have their lands placed into Agricultural Districts in exchange for a variety of protections and incentives designed to promote the continued agricultural use of the land. The County administers the program on behalf of the State, officially reviewing the districts, and adopting them following state certification. Agricultural districts allow landowners the opportunity to receive real property assessments based on the value of their land for agricultural production rather than on its development value. In addition, these landowners gain protection from local regulations that would unreasonably restrict farming operations, protection from nuisance suits, and they receive greater protection from

development under the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) process. Properties located in Agricultural Districts in Genesee County are enrolled for 8-year periods. At the end of each 8-year time frame, the County conducts a review, and landowners can opt to either remain in the district or be removed. The purpose of the Agriculture District is to encourage the land to remain in agricultural production and contribute to the agricultural economy of the area. As Map 5 illustrates, because it is a voluntary program, not all land being farmed falls within the protection of an Agricultural District. At the same time, not every parcel within an Agricultural District is currently in active agricultural use.

Most of the Town of Alabama is covered by Genesee County Agricultural District #2, which encompasses much of the northwest portion of Genesee County (see Map 5). In the Town of Alabama, District #2 includes nearly all of the land south of Casey and Roberts Road and east of the Tonawanda Seneca Nation. The district also encompasses a small portion of land in the southwest corner of the Town. The key omissions from the district include the Alabama hamlet, the New York State White Memorial Game Farm, the Buffalo Crushed Stone industrial property on Ledge Road, and the lands owned by Genesee County for the STAMP project. Although the Tonawanda Seneca Nation does not participate in the New York State Agricultural District program, many of the lands on the reservation are in agricultural use.

The Towns of Alabama and Oakfield are currently in the process of preparing agricultural and farmland protection plans, which outline specific strategies for supporting agriculture in each community. For the Town of Alabama, see the Agricultural Protection Plan that is to be adopted by the Town.

For the near term, a combination of factors including protection of farming by the agricultural districts, proper soils for good agricultural production, and a critical mass of farms within the Town helps to maintain the stability of agriculture in the area.

Another indicator of important agricultural lands is soils. Map 6 illustrates soils best suited to agricultural operations in the Town, based on ratings categorized by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and mapped by the Genesee County Planning Department. Agricultural soils are categorized as Prime, Prime when drained, soils of statewide importance and muck.

Prime soils are those most suitable for agricultural operations. The USDA defines prime farmland soils as:

> *Land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and is also available for these uses. It has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce economically sustained high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods, including water management. In general, prime farmlands have an adequate and dependable water supply from precipitation or irrigation, a favorable temperature and growing season, acceptable acidity or alkalinity, acceptable salt and sodium content, and few or no rocks. They are permeable to water and air. Prime farmlands are not excessively erodible or saturated with water for a long period of time, and they either do not flood frequently or are protected from flooding.*

Soils that are prime when drained are areas that may be subject to flooding or standing water, but with drainage improvements are well suited to farming. In addition to the soil types categorized by USDA as prime for farming, New York State has identified additional agricultural soils. These soils are classified as Soils of Statewide Importance. The Town of Alabama also has unique soils, categorized as Muck. Muck consists of dark, nutrient rich soils with a high organic matter content that are well suited for growing onions and other vegetables. Derived from drained swampland, muck soils are relatively rare. The remainder of lands in Alabama are not categorized as specifically suited to farming, and tend to be less fertile; however, they are often in agricultural use. Map 6 indicates that the vast majority of land within the Town is comprised of good soils.

It is also important to note that agriculture not only has an effect on the local economy, but on its character, as well. Rural landscapes such as farm fields, woodlands, and picturesque farmhouses create an identity for the communities in addition to supporting the local economy. By preserving farming not only are jobs being preserved, but so is the rural quality of life.

3.2 Land Use Regulation

The Town of Alabama regulates land use through the application of zoning regulations. Land use is also impacted by the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and the requirements of the New York State Agriculture and Markets Law for those properties located within an agricultural district. Zoning classifications for the Town is shown on Map 7. The following paragraphs provide a brief synopsis of the Town's zoning laws, including updates adopted since 2005. Please refer to the Town's zoning law for specific regulations and requirements.

4.2.1 Zoning

The zoning law of the Town of Alabama establishes zoning districts to regulate development within the Town. These districts include Agricultural-Residential; Residential; Commercial; Industrial; Land Conservation; and three Technology Districts. In addition, the code provides for planned unit developments. The code also regulates off-street parking, loading, fences, signs, commercial excavations, home occupations, wind energy systems and includes additional standards for a variety of specific uses. The Town also has an incentive zoning law, which is what has allowed the STAMP project and could allow future development of wind turbines in the Town.

The majority of the Town falls within either the Agricultural-Residential or the Land Conservation district. Residential and commercial zoning districts are concentrated largely in or near the three hamlet areas of the Town. Industrially zoned land is found on Ledge Road (at the Buffalo Crushed Stone property) and on Wright Road in the southwest corner of the Town. The Town's Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning category is a floating zone. No areas of the Town are currently zoned PUD. The PUD zoning district is available for use if a development proposal for a particular piece of property arises. It is intended to allow flexibility for a proposed development while still affording the Town control over what occurs. Use of the PUD always requires a rezoning, because the specific development proposal governs uses and layout for the development on the site. The zoning map of the Town also illustrates a "flood plain overlay zone" that depicts potential areas of flood hazard, as established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Flood Insurance

Rate Maps. This overlay is informational only; no additional local standards are established.

In anticipation of the STAMP development, the Town adopted three new zoning districts in 2012. These districts are geared specifically to accommodate the types of uses anticipated to be developed on the STAMP site. These districts are Technology District 1 (TD1), Technology District 2 (TD2) and Technology District 3 (TD3), and they are applied on the portion of the Town designated for the STAMP facility. The lower (western) areas of the property, which are less visible from major highways, are zoned TD1. TD1 is intended to encourage advanced manufacturing enterprises. Uses allowed in TD1 include technology manufacturing, light industry, warehousing, and a series of support uses, such as offices, banks, hotel, and parks. TD2 is a transitional zone, which allows light industrial, warehousing and distribution, along with small retail, office, community facilities and "technology demonstration facilities". The TD3 district is located in the northeastern portion of the STAMP site, closest to the Alabama hamlet. Allowed uses, such as retail and services, are intended to complement and support uses within the hamlet. Drive-through businesses are allowed with a special use permit.

The table below highlights the types of permitted uses allowed within each zoning class; for specific uses please refer to the Town of Alabama Zoning Law.

Figure 3: Town of Alabama Zoning Districts and Permitted Uses

District	Permitted Uses
A-R: Agricultural-Residential	*Allowed:* Farms and usual agricultural operations; one &and two family dwellings; churches; schools; public uses and buildings; private stables; Contractors' Yards. In addition: mobile homes; some home occupations; roadside stands; non-commercial wind energy systems are allowed with additional restrictions. *With Special Use Permit:* 31 uses are allowed with a special use permit, including multi-family dwellings; recreational facility; kennel; community center; professional offices; public stables; public utility; commercial greenhouses; mobile home parks; junk yards; cluster residential; bio-remediation; and commercial wind energy systems, among others.
R: Residential	*Allowed:* Single family dwellings; churches; schools, parks, municipal buildings; farms and usual agricultural operations excluding stabling of farm animals. In addition: roadside stands; non-commercial wind energy systems with restrictions.

	With Special Use Permit: 15 uses, including multi-family dwellings; outdoor recreation; professional offices; nursing home; neighborhood business.
C: Commercial	*Allowed:* General commercial uses (i.e. restaurants, motels, professional offices, banks, etc.); wholesale trade; adult uses; non-commercial wind energy systems. *Allowed with Special Use Permit:* drive-in business; a variety of automobile-related uses (e.g. gasoline stations, vehicle sales); light industry (assembly/warehousing); recyclables facility; contractor's yard; day care.
I: Industrial	*Allowed:* General industrial uses (i.e. manufacturing, warehousing, trucking terminals, etc.) *With Special Use Permit:* commercial excavation; contractor's yard; recycling facility; self-storage; communication tower; junkyard; bio-remediation; mass vehicle storage; commercial wind energy system.
LC: Land Conservation	*Allowed:* Wildlife refuge areas, farms and related farming activities, outdoor recreation.
PUD: Planned Unit Development	Permitted uses will vary. Each PUD is looked at on an individual basis.
TD1	*Allowed:* Technology Manufacturing, as defined; office buildings; light industry; warehousing; demonstration facilities; on-site services for employees; hotel; day care; banks; parks and trails; public utilities. *With Special Use Permit:* communications towers; non-commercial grade wind energy systems.
TD2	*Allowed:* Offices; light industry; warehousing; community and cultural facilities; demonstration facilities; on-site services for employees; hotel; personal or medical services; parks and trails; public utilities. *With Special Use Permit:* communications towers; non-commercial grade wind energy systems.
TD3	*Allowed:* Offices; museum; community and cultural facility; hotel; retail; restaurant; services; shopping center; parks and recreational trails. *With Special Use Permit:* day care; drive-through businesses; automotive uses; public utility.

Source: Town of Alabama Zoning Law

As shown in the previous table, the zoning law establishes which uses are permitted by right, as well as those uses that are allowed by Special Use Permit. Special Use Permits are required for certain uses that may require additional regulations and/or restrictions. In addition, several uses, such as junkyards, are subject to additional criteria set forth in supplementary regulations in the zoning law. Other examples of uses governed by supplementary regulations within the Town of Alabama are home

occupations, adult uses, cellular communication towers and commercial wind energy systems. These supplementary regulations provide the Town additional protections to address issues specific to these uses, and some contain standards for setbacks, minimum lot size or other bulk standards. The Town has also adopted design standards that control the appearance and layout of proposed development within the TD districts. Generally, the TD design standards focus on screening uses, and/or ensuring that the development visible to the general public is in character with the surrounding community.

The Town's zoning law establishes bulk regulations that govern required lot size, street frontage, yard setbacks, height, and lot coverage. For residential structures, the code lists minimum lot sizes, lot widths, and yard setbacks for front, side and rear yards. These standards vary depending on the zoning district and the creation date of the lot.[1] Setbacks and lot size for non-residential uses are governed by the supplementary regulations by use, rather than by standards associated with the zoning district. For example, supplementary regulations for bio-remediation, allowed with a special use permit in the A-R, B and I districts, require a minimum setback of 1,000 feet from any neighboring residential use or any place of assembly. Roadside stands, allowed by right in A-R and R districts, must provide a front yard setback of 20 feet, and side yard setbacks of 25 feet on each side.

The code also establishes regulations for accessory buildings, off-street parking, signage, fencing, access to highways and similar site planning issues. Minimum habitable floor area (square footage) is established for residential structures. Cluster residential development is permitted on lots of 10 acres or more.

Article XI of the Town of Alabama Zoning Code establishes Incentive Zoning in the Town. The intent of the Incentive Zoning provision is to provide incentives to applicants in return for certain amenities, in order to help the Town implement "physical, cultural and social policies" expressed as priorities by the Town. Eligible amenities include affordable housing, parks, road improvements, or certain facilities, such as health, cultural or historical facilities, beneficial to the Town. In return for the provision of amenities, the applicants may be granted decreases in required minimum lot sizes; changes of use or zoning classifications; changes in setbacks or

[1] Section 306

height requirements; reductions to open space; or other changes to the provisions of the Town's zoning law. The STAMP project used the Incentive Zoning provisions, and if it proceeds, any Wind Turbine project would require Incentive zoning.

The Town of Alabama has locally adopted subdivision regulations (the County notes that their records indicate Subdivision regulations being adopted in 2005), for Minor and Major Subdivisions.

3.3 Natural Environment

3.3.1 Topography and Steep Slopes

The majority of the Town is extremely flat with very gently sloping land. There are a few areas of steep slopes although they are small and limited. Areas of slopes can be found in the Town of Alabama along Ledge Road.

3.3.2 Hydric Soils

Map 8 shows the location of hydric soils within the Town. Hydric Soils are defined by the USDA as, "….a soil that formed under conditions of saturation, flooding, or ponding long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions in the upper part." Essentially, hydric soils are those soils that may be wet during parts of the year. They are likely to contain wetlands. The majority of these soils are concentrated in the northern portion of the Town, in the vicinity of the wildlife conservation areas. There is another concentration of these soils along the south side of Ledge Road.

3.3.3 Stream Corridors and Watersheds

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines watersheds as the area of land that catches rain and snow melt, which drains or seeps into a marsh, stream, river, lake or groundwater.

There are three watersheds located within the Town of Alabama: Murder Creek, Middle Tonawanda Creek, and Oak Orchard Creek (see Map 9). These main watersheds are subdivided into a number of sub-watersheds.

The watersheds occupying the smallest area within the Town is Murder Creek, which drains a small area in the southwest corner of the Town of Alabama. This watershed extends from Genesee County west into Erie County and south into Wyoming County. It eventually flows west into the Niagara River.

The Middle Tonawanda Creek watershed occupies the western and southern portions of the Town. It is divided into the Whitney Creek-Mud Creek, the Black Creek-Tonawanda Creek and the Galloway Swamp-Tonawanda Creek subwatersheds. They drain the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge and the Tonawanda State Wildlife Management Area, the Tonawanda Seneca Nation and the hamlet of Basom. Tonawanda Creek runs through the watershed parallel to Meadville/Sand Hill Road, flowing eventually into the Niagara River.

The remainder of the Town is drained by the Oak Orchard Creek Watershed. This watershed covers almost the entire central and eastern portions of the Town of Alabama along with the entire land area of the Town and Village of Oakfield. Oak Orchard Creek runs along the northern portions of the Towns of Alabama and Oakfield through the Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management Area and the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge. Because of the size of this watershed, it encompasses a myriad of land uses from agricultural, residential, forested lands, commercial and industrial, among others. This watershed drains north into the Western Lake Ontario Basin.

Oak Orchard Creek

3.3.4 Floodplains and Wetlands

The region contains flood zones that have been designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as areas subject to flooding. These areas are depicted on FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps. The flood zones are established based upon the degree to which an area is susceptible to flood damage. There is one flood zone that exists within the Town:

- 100 – Year flood zone, base elevations unknown – (also called the "A" Zone and the area of special flood hazard) is that area of land that would primarily experience still water flooding, without significant wave activity, during the 100-year storm event.

These natural flood zones or plains are flat areas surrounding streams that are periodically inundated with water due to overbank flow. As shown on *Map 10: Environmental Features*, floodplains are located in the northern portions of the Town, within the wildlife conservation areas and along Tonawanda Creek within the Tonawanda Seneca Nation.

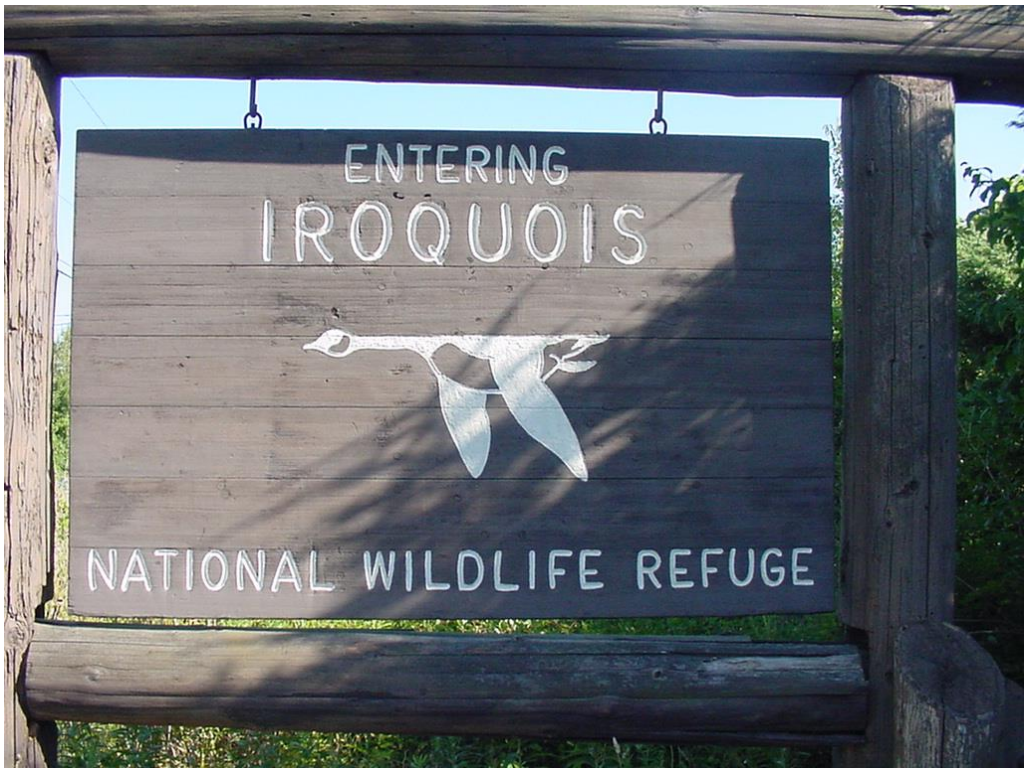
Wetlands are defined by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) as transition areas between uplands and aquatic habitats. They are identified by a variety of factors including the presence of standing water, vegetation type, and soil type. The NYSDEC regulates any wetland area that meets their definition and is 12.4 acres or larger. Federal wetlands are under the jurisdiction of the Army Corps of Engineers, who regulates development within federal wetlands if they are over 0.1 acre and are associated with a navigable waterway.

Wetlands are an extremely important environmental resource that perform numerous functions. The NYSDEC has listed some of these functions as flood and storm water control, surface and groundwater protection, erosion control, pollution treatment and nutrient cycling, and fish and wildlife habitat, as well as public enjoyment. Map 10 shows that both state and federal wetlands are located throughout the Town, with significant concentrations in the northern portion of the Town.

3.3.5 Wildlife Conservation Areas and Significant Wildlife Habitats

Map 11 shows the location of the wildlife conservation areas within the Town of Alabama. These include the Tonawanda State Wildlife Management Area, the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge, and Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management Area, which together are known as the Alabama Swamp Complex. The Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management Area extends east from the Town of Alabama into the Town of Oakfield. The fourth habitat area is the New York State John White Memorial Game Farm, located north of Judge Road on either side of Route 77/63. In total, the wildlife conservation areas cover approximately 19,000 acres of land area within the two Towns. These areas serve as important wildlife habitat and provide permanent protection for important environmental features. They are also

important recreation areas for the residents of, and visitors to, the communities, as well as a regional resource.



Rustic sign for Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge

3.3.6 Scenic Resources

In general, there are many scenic resources in the Town of Alabama. The wildlife conservation areas, farms, and rural residences throughout the area are all important resources. Particular views of interest include Fisher Road overlooking the Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management Area and Kenyon Road looking north. The scenic landscape contributes significantly to the rural character of the community.

View of the Oak Orchard SWMA, Kenyon Road looking north, and a sweet corn field

3.3.7 Historic and Archaeological Features

The Oak Orchard Creek Marsh was designated as a National Natural Landmark in May of 1973. The marsh is located within the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge and the Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management Area. The marsh is one of only 28 areas in New York State designated by the National Park Service (NPS) as a National Natural Landmark. The National Wildlife Refuge extends into the Town of Shelby in Niagara County to the north. The marsh is described by the NPS as an area that is relatively undisturbed, which is rare for this part of New York State. The marsh and the surrounding wildlife areas are a major stopover for migratory birds, and it is a popular location for fishing, hiking, hunting, birdwatching and other outdoor activities.

Oak Orchard Creek Marsh: photo from the National Park Service

3.4 Demographics and Socioeconomic Conditions

3.4.1 Existing Population Characteristics and Projections

The population in the Town of Alabama was 1,869 persons in 2010. More recent estimates provided by the Census' American Community Survey (ACS) set the

population at 1,713.[2] In 1990, the population of the Town was 1,998 persons. Based on these figures, the Town has been losing population over the past 25 years. Genesee County, in comparison, has remained essentially stable over that same time period.

Figure 4: Population: Town of Alabama and Genesee County 1990-2014*

Community	1990	2000	2010	2014*	Change 1990-2010	Change 2010-2014
Town of Alabama	1,998	1,881	1,869	1,713	-129 (-6.4%)	-156 (-8.3%)
Genesee County	60,060	60,370	60,079	59,702	-19 (-0.03%)	-377 (-0.6%)

Source: U.S. Census Data and American Community Survey.

** 2014 data: 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-year estimate, which has a margin of error of +/- 236 persons for the Town. Genesee County total population figure is controlled (no margin of error available).*

While population in the Town has been declining since 1990, over the long term the population has been relatively stable, ranging between 1,600 and 2,000 persons for the past 100 years. Past population trends are illustrated in the following graph:

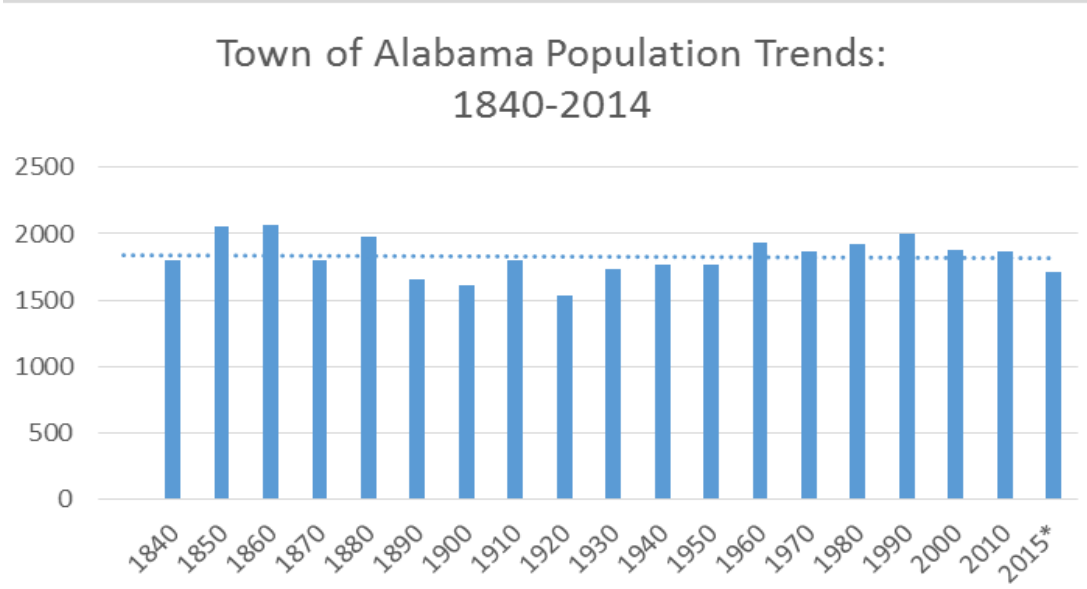


Figure 5

[2] *Figure for 2014 taken from the 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-year estimate, which has a margin of error of +/- 236 persons for the Town of Alabama.*

The population in the Town of Alabama has been aging. In 2010, the median age was 42.2 years. In 2014, it is estimated to be 47.0 years. Approximately 19 percent of the population is under the age of 18, compared to 22.8 percent in 2010. The proportion of seniors in the Town has risen. In 2010, 14.9 percent of the population was age 65 or older; that figure is now estimated at 16.9 percent.

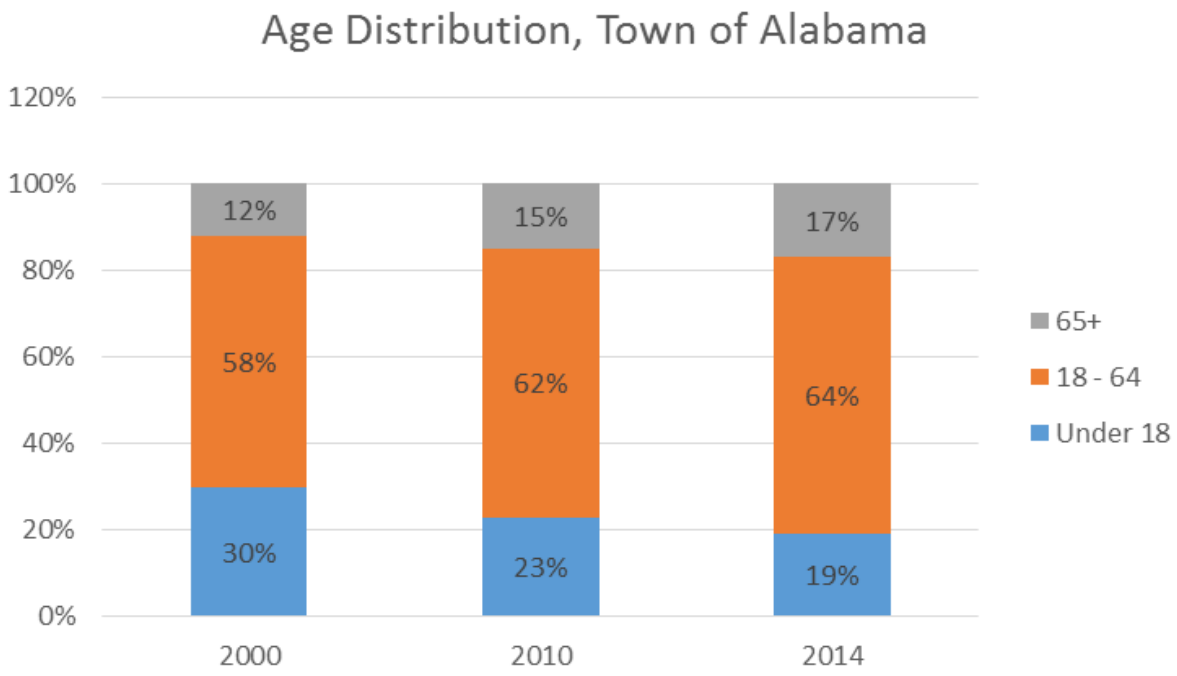


Figure 6

3.4.2 Household Characteristics

Between 2000 and 2014, the number of households in the Town of Alabama grew slightly, from 663 to 682 (+2.9 percent). Over the same time period, the number of households in Genesee County grew by 5.3 percent (1,975 households). Following national trends, the average household size in Genesee County declined between 1990 and 2000, from 2.59 to 2.45 persons per household, but remained unchanged between 2000 and 2010. There were an average of 2.50 persons per household in Alabama, as reported in 2013, which is down from 2.84 in 2000.

Household Growth: Town of Alabama and Genesee County 1990-2014*

Community	2000	2010	2014*	% change 2000-2014
Town of Alabama	663	712	682	19 (2.9%)
Genesee County	22,770	23,728	23,967	+1,197 (5.3%)

Source: U.S. Census Data and American Community Survey.

** 2014 data: 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-year estimate, which has a margin of error of +/- 86 households for the Town, and +/- 311 households for Genesee County.*

Figure 7

Statistics on types of households were prepared as part of the *Green Genesee/Smart Genesee Plan*. According to that data, the majority of households in the Town are families (74 percent), largely consisting of married couples (62 percent). These rates are higher than the nation, where 66 percent of all households are categorized as families, and 48 percent are married couples. The majority of families in the Town of Alabama do not have young children living at home: 40 percent of all households in Alabama are married couples with no children living at home, while 22 percent are married couples with children at home. Most non-family households in the Town are one-person households (19.5 percent). Roughly 5.6 percent of all households are "non-traditional" households, consisting of non-related persons living together.

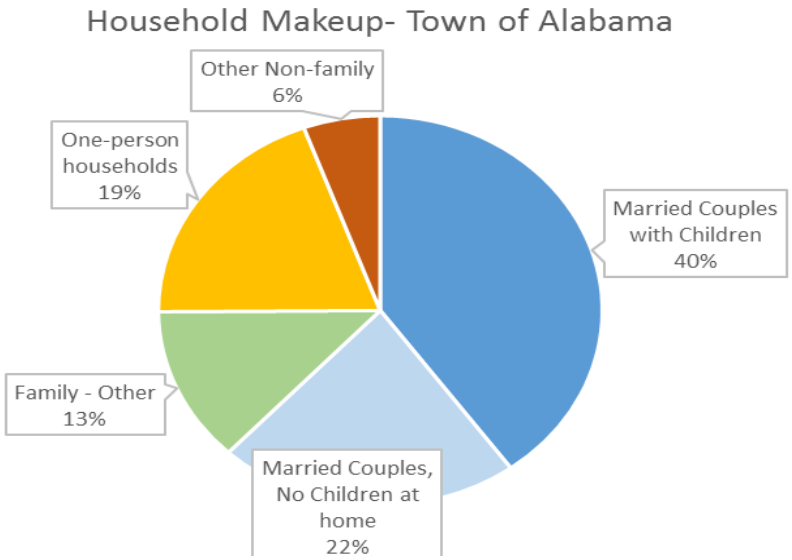


Figure 8

3.4.3 Housing Characteristics

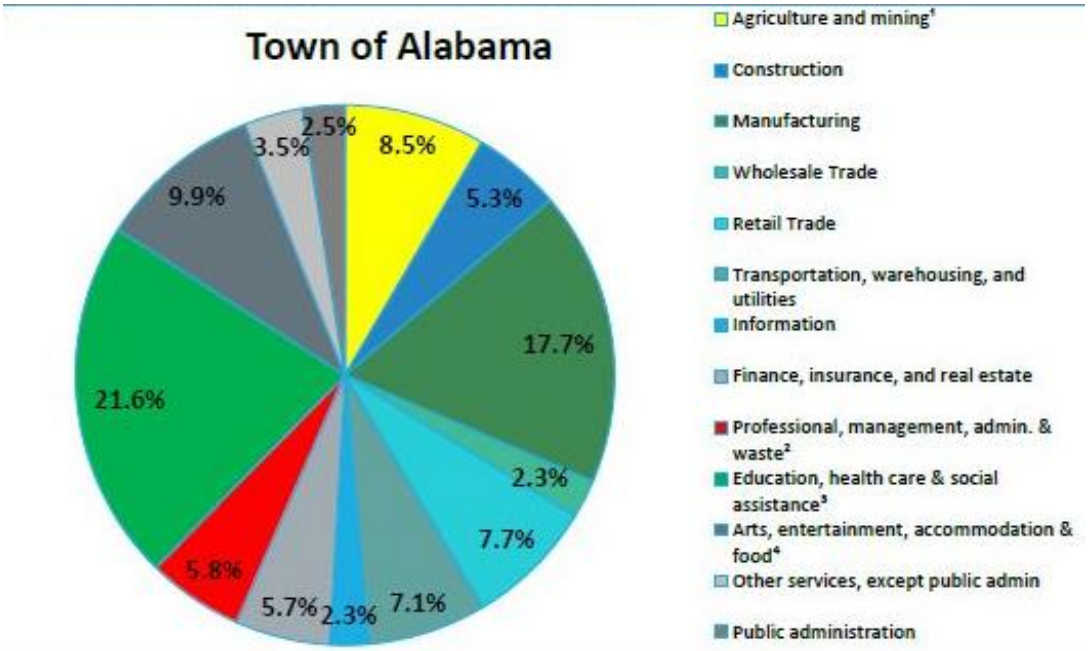
There were 765 housing units in the Town of Alabama in 2010. Current estimates suggest the number of units has remained essentially the same (estimated 755 units).[3] Approximately 10 percent of housing units in the Town are vacant, while 90 percent are occupied. This vacancy rate exceeds that of Genesee County, where approximately 6.5 percent of units are vacant.

The housing stock in the Town of Alabama consists mostly of single-family dwellings (83 percent) and manufactured homes (8.3 percent). The remaining units are in two-family and multi-family dwellings. The Town has a strong homeownership rate: 80 percent of all occupied units are owner-occupied and only 20% of the housing stock is rental units.

3.4.4 Employment Statistics

Approximately 68 percent of the population 16 years and over in the Town of Alabama is participating in the labor force, which means they are either working or looking for employment (2016 ACS). Persons not in the civilian work force include retirees, many students, and persons, such as parents of young children, who choose not to work outside the home. Approximately 66 percent of the population 16 years and over in the Town of Alabama is employed (2016 ACS). The unemployment rate for the population 16 years and over is 3.1 percent in the Town (2016 ACS). In comparison, unemployment of the population 16 years and over in Genesee County is 5.4 percent (2016 ACS), and a smaller proportion of the population 16 years and over is in the labor force (65 percent based on 2016 ACS). Based on Census estimates, the unemployment rate in Alabama has been dropping. In 2012, it was estimated at over 12 percent, and in 2013, it was estimated at approximately 10 percent.

In Alabama, the largest share of employment is in the manufacturing industry, which employs 17.7 percent of the Town's workers. More than 20 percent of the workers in the Town of Alabama work in education, health care or social services. Nearly 10 percent are employed in arts, entertainment, accommodations or food services, while agriculture and mining employ 8.5 percent of the Town's workforce.



Source: Green Genesee/Smart Genesee

Figure 9

3.4.5 Income

Median household income in the Town of Alabama is $50,848, which is slightly higher than the Genesee County median of $47,167. The proportion of households with incomes below poverty level, based on national thresholds established by the Census Bureau, was 8.3 percent in the Town of Alabama, and 12.6 percent in Genesee County. Statewide, 15.6 percent of the population is under the poverty level.

3.5 Transportation

3.5.1 Roadways and Highway Access

Two major New York State roads make up the backbone of the roadway system within the Town (see Map 12). State Route 77 runs generally north to south, from the northwest corner of Alabama to its southern boundary with the Town of Pembroke.

[3] Margin of error is +/- 86 units

Exit 48A of the New York State Thruway is located off Route 77 south of Alabama in the Town of Pembroke.

State Route 63 runs from the north central portion of Alabama. Route 63 is coterminous with Route 77 between the Alabama hamlet and Judge Road, when it turns east, running through the Town and Village of Oakfield toward Batavia. In the Town of Batavia, it provides a second point of access to the Thruway (Exit 48). The following table provides traffic counts for certain points along these major thoroughfares within the Town.

Figure 10: NYS Route Traffic Counts

Route #	Where to Where	AADT*: 2000	AADT*: 2012	Change	
77	Niagara County Line to Route 63	2,750	3,898	1,148	41.7 %
77	Judge Road to Bloomingdale Road	8,300	6,170	-2,130	-25.7 %
77	Bloomingdale Road to southerly Town line	5,900	7,729	1,829	31.0 %
63	Northerly Town line to Route 77	3,900	4,120	220	5.6%
63/77	Lewiston Road to Judge Road	4,950	5,386	436	8.8%
63	Routes 63/77 intersection to Macomber Road	4,750	5,120	370	7.8%
63	Route 262 to southerly Town line	7,300	7,657	357	4.9%

Source: Genesee Transportation Council (2000) and NYS Traffic Data Viewer via Green Genesee/Smart Genesee (2012)
**AADT – Average Annual Daily Traffic.*

The largest change between 2000 and 2012 was the decrease in the number of vehicles counted on Route 77 between Judge Road and Bloomingdale Road, which decreased by over 2,000 cars per day, on average. Despite the decrease, this segment of road remains one of the most heavily traveled roads in the Town, with an average annual daily traffic count of over 6,000 vehicles. Generally, traffic has been increasing on State Routes in the Town, although in most road segments, the growth has been modest (less than 500 vehicles per day, on average).

The roadway segment experiencing the strongest increase in traffic was Route 77 from the southern Town line to Bloomingdale Road, which saw an increase of 1,829 vehicles per day, on average, a 31 percent increase between 2000 and 2012. This segment of road is the most heavily trafficked roadway in Alabama, with an estimated 7,728 vehicles per day, on average. It provides access to both the New York State Thruway south of the Town, and to the Tonawanda Seneca Nation. The segment of Route 77 from the Niagara County line to the intersection with Route 63 in the hamlet of Alabama also saw a significant increase in traffic counts, with an average of 1,148 additional vehicles per day.

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) prepared by the Genesee Transportation Council (GTC) identifies proposed roadway improvement projects. In the Town of Alabama, there is one project on the current TIP (2014-2017), and one project in the newly adopted TIP (2017-2020). The current project is improvements to the intersection of Route 77 and Ledge Road, which as noted above, falls within one of the more heavily traveled segments of road in the Town. The new TIP identifies the bridge on Judge Road over Whitney Creek for improvements in 2019-2020. There are no projects in the Town of Alabama identified in the list of transportation projects prepared by the NYS DOT (STIP).

3.5.2 Railroad Service

As shown on Map 12, there are no active railroad lines in the Town of Alabama. There is an abandoned rail corridor that runs east-west through the Town.

3.5.3 Public Transportation Services

There is limited public transportation service in the area. Rural transportation services are available in the Town of Alabama on Tuesdays, providing service to destinations in Alabama, Basom, Oakfield, Corfu, Pembroke and Batavia.

Other transportation services are available to targeted populations. RTS Genesee provides transportation to medical appointments for seniors (age 60 or older). This service operates on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday by appointment no sooner than 30 days in advance on a first call-first serve basis. Special transportation for seniors, veterans, persons with disabilities, and persons with mental health needs is

available on a limited basis through various governmental and non-profit groups, largely using volunteer drivers. The County's Office for the Aging has a Transportation Coordination Program to try to help individuals find transportation to medical appointments, grocery and pharmacy trips, banking, errands and social events.

3.5.4 Pedestrian and Bicycle Routes

Formal facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians are limited. There are no sidewalks or multi-use trails in the Town. Pedestrians walk along the roadway shoulders and bicyclists share the roads with vehicles. For recreational use, there are several marked nature trails in the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge, and abandoned Penn-Central railroad corridor is used informally by walkers, hikers and bicyclists. For snowmobiles, the Genesee County Sno-Packers snowmobile club maintains a network of snowmobile trails in Alabama and linking to adjoining communities.

3.6 Utilities

3.6.1 Water Supply

Water is presently available in the western portion of the Town of Alabama, adjacent to the Town of Newstead (see Map 13 Water Infrastructure). All other areas of the Town are served by private wells. The Town is finalizing plans to extend water lines along many of the major roadways in the Town (primarily financed through the Incentive Zoning Agreement for the STAMP project). Upon the new system's completion, public water service will be provided to most of the existing homes in the Town. Design is being completed, and construction is anticipated to start in 2017/2018. Lateral restrictions will be enforced to control future development, which means that new homes built after the completion of the water line project will not be able to tie into public water service. The Town of Alabama is committed to providing public water to existing residents because areas in the Town are experiencing well contamination problems. The lateral restrictions have been instituted to allow improved service to existing residents without encouraging excessive growth.

3.6.2 Wastewater Disposal

All existing residences and businesses in the Town of Alabama utilize on-site septic systems. There are plans to extend sewer service to the STAMP project, due to the scale of the project. Wastewater will be pumped to the Village of Medina for treatment. No residential sanitary sewer service is proposed (although there have been some very preliminary discussions about the Town potentially utilizing this system in the future).

3.6.3 Solid Waste Management

Solid waste in the Town of Alabama is currently picked up by the company PSI. The Town re-bids this work at certain intervals of time. The Town operates a recycling center and garbage composting and yard waste facility.

3.7 Community Facilities

3.7.1 Parks and Recreation

The Towns of Alabama is home to large tracts of publicly owned wildlife and conservation areas, which are available for both active and passive recreation such as hiking, bird watching, hunting, fishing, boating (non-motor), nature programs, limited camping, and cross-country skiing (see Map 15 Community Facilities). Due to their size (over 19,000 acres, including areas in neighboring towns), these open space features dominate the landscape in the northern sector of the town. They include the two NYSDEC Wildlife Management Areas (Oak Orchard and Tonawanda) and the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge. As previously noted, these features are characterized by state and federal wetlands and are located in a floodplain. A fourth conservation area is the John White Memorial Game Farm on Route 77, north of Route 63, which is closed to the general public. However, the game farm is leased to environmental and hunting organizations for training and educational programs. The wildlife and conservation areas together provide important open space, wildlife habitat and recreation areas, as well as limiting future development in the northern portion of the Town.

In adjoining communities, the Village of Oakfield has three recreation areas, each offering different amenities. The Oakfield Fire Department, located on Church Street, has a ball diamond. In the center of the Village is the Village Park, which is the site of the annual Labor Daze Festival. This park is passive in nature with benches and walkways, and provides a pleasant venue for taking a stroll or just sitting and enjoying the Village scenery. The Town of Oakfield also owns and maintains a park on Drake Street in the Village.

3.7.2 Schools

The majority of residences in the Town of Alabama fall within the Oakfield-Alabama School District (see Map 16 School Districts). Residents of the western portion of the Town and the Tonawanda Seneca Nation fall within the Akron School District. A small portion of the northwest corner of the Town within the Royalton-Hartland School District, while the northeast corner of the Town is in the Medina Central School District. There are no schools located within the Town of Alabama.

3.7.3 Emergency Services

Police services are provided by the Genesee County Sheriff's Office and the State Police. The Town does not have a municipal police department. Fire services are provided by volunteer fire departments. The Town of Alabama is served by the Alabama Volunteer Fire Department Inc., which is located on Judge Road, adjacent to the Town Hall. In adjoining areas, the Town and Village of Oakfield are served by the Oakfield Volunteer Fire Department, located on Church Street in the Village. Ambulance service is provided by Mercy EMS. In 2012, CGR completed a report titled *Potential Impact on Emergency Services in Alabama, NY: An Evaluation of the Proposed STAMP Project*. The report examined the STAMP project's potential impact "of existing public safety network for police, fire, EMS and emergency communications, projected the impacts of the potential development to public safety services, and described potential solutions involving funding, equipment, and staffing changes."[4]

[4] **CGR, *Potential Impact on Emergency Services in Alabama, NY: An Evaluation of the Proposed STAMP Project*, http://reports.cgr.org/details/1690.**

3.7.4 Government Facilities

The Town of Alabama's local government offices are located on Judge Road, east of Knowlesville Road, in South Alabama hamlet. The town hall is home to the Town Clerk's office, Town Court, and services a variety of other municipal needs. The Town of Alabama also has a facility located on the corner of State Route 63 and Ham Road, which houses the Town's Highway Department.

3.7.5 Smart Growth Areas

Genesee County adopted a Smart Growth Plan in 2001, with the goal of protecting valuable farmland, and encouraging economic development and revitalization of the County's villages and hamlets. The Plan, which is reviewed and updated on a regular basis, identifies designated "Smart Growth Development Areas." Development is encouraged within the priority development areas, and new and existing structures within these areas are allowed access to public water 'by right'. Development outside the priority area boundaries is discouraged, and access to the County-funded water system is subject to review and approval by the County Water Hookup Administrative Review Committee. In the Town of Alabama, the Smart Growth Development areas correspond to the hamlets of South Alabama, an area that encompasses the hamlet of Alabama and the STAMP development site, and the hamlet of Basom (which includes a small "reserved Development Area") as shown on Map 14.

SECTION 4.0
FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This section provides the Findings/Observations for the Town of Alabama Comprehensive Plan, as they relate to the Existing conditions of the Town, with an eye towards the Town's goals and objectives. Opportunities and constraints associated with each existing condition section were developed, based on issues identified through the GGSG plan and other regional plans and public input. Based on these opportunities and constraints, general findings for the community were established, which then allow the Town to formulate recommendations for achieving the opportunities or addressing constraints. These ideas and recommendations were refined and evaluated, with input from the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee, and finalized as outlined in Section 6.

4.2 Findings/Opportunities/Constraints

Following the format of the Existing Conditions section of this Plan, the generalized findings (observations, opportunities and constraints) for the Town are outlined as follows.

Existing Land Use

- Agriculture is the most significant land use by area in the Town.
- Agricultural uses are spread fairly uniformly throughout the Town, with the exception of the northern tier, which is dominated by wildlife conservation areas.
- Three land use categories (Agricultural, Indian Reservation and Wildlife Conservation Areas) account for 90 percent of total land area of the Town. The Town has no jurisdiction over lands designated as Indian Reservation or wildlife conservation areas.
- While there is sentiment to not develop agricultural lands, future development pressures could change that situation.

- The Tonawanda Seneca Nation dominates the western sector of Town. A small area of the Town is separated from the remainder of the Town by the reservation.
- There are four hamlets in Town (Alabama, Wheatville, Basom, and South Alabama) comprised of slightly higher density mixed-use development.
- Outside of the hamlets, residential development consists of low-density single-family housing, situated along Town highways. There are no "subdivisions" in the Town.
- Land use is regulated in the Town solely through the zoning ordinance.
- A small amount of commercial development exists in and around the hamlets.
- A rock quarry is located in the south-central portion of the Town. This area of the Town is underlain by former gypsum mines.
- The *Genesee County Smart Growth Plan* discourages development outside of the Priority Development Areas by not allowing new development to connect to public water without review and approval by the County. This will become more problematic as the Town builds waterlines throughout the Town. Any new development (outside Smart Growth areas and areas limited by lateral restrictions) would need to be serviced with wells. All development in the Town is serviced by septic systems.
- There has been little change in land use since the last Comprehensive Plan.
- The STAMP project could have a significant effect on the future land use patterns in the Town. The STAMP footprint represents approximately 4.5 percent of the total acreage of the Town.
- There has been a large scale wind turbine project proposed in the Town that currently is on hold.

Agriculture and Farmland

- Agriculture is the predominant active land use, accounting for 83 percent of the land area outside of the wildlife and conservation areas and Indian Reservation.
- Genesee County Agricultural District No. 2 encompasses most of the Town. Most of the farmed land within the Town falls within the Agriculture District.

- A large portion of the Town contains soils classified as prime farmland soil. Over 76% of the Town's soils are prime, prime when drained, or soils of statewide importance.
- The *Genesee County Smart Growth Plan* restricts new water connections to new, non-agricultural land uses in agricultural districts, unless they are located in a designated development area or receive approval to hook in by the County.
- In 2005, agricultural preservation was viewed as important by approximately 80 percent of the Alabama residents that responded to a public opinion survey. More current public outreach indicates continued support for farming. There is clear support for protecting farms as viable businesses, preserving open space and open space, and continuing the rural character of the Town.
- Other planning documents affecting the region are also strongly supportive of agriculture. The Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council's Strategic Plan recognizes agriculture as an integral sector in the region's economy, representing employment of nearly 19,000 and a payroll of $700 million across the region. The Finger Lakes region leads the State in many agricultural crops, including milk, fruit and organics.
- The Finger Lakes Regional Sustainability Plan also strongly supports agriculture and the protection of agricultural lands.
- The Town of Alabama is in the process of completing an *Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan* and is cooperating with an update to Genesee County's *Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan*. These plans support continued protection of agricultural operations and the preservation of agricultural lands. Some observations from the Town's *Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan* are as follows:
    - Alabama has a large number of strengths in regard to agriculture, including good soils, strong farm traditions, public and governmental support for farming, and availability of support services.
    - Threats include market trends, increasing land costs, and potential impacts from the STAMP development.
    - There is increased interest in organic farming.

- There is not a great deal of land available for the expansion of farming in Alabama, which could affect the ability of young farmers and start-ups.
- Access to public water is beneficial to farmers, and can boost their productivity and profitability.
- A major concern is the condition and character of area roadways, which farmers depend upon to get to their fields, and get products to markets.
- Drainage is a major issue, and increase regulations complicate farming on wet soils.
- The STAMP project could have impacts on viability of farming in the Town, by potentially increasing development pressures and traffic conflicts.

Natural Environment and Constraints

- The topography of the Town is generally flat, with the exception of the escarpment that extends through the southern portion of Town. In general, steep slopes do not present a development constraint.
- There are large extents of hydric soils in the northern portion of the Town within the wildlife and conservation areas, and scattered areas of hydric soils elsewhere in the Town.
- There are floodplains along Oak Orchard and Tonawanda Creeks.
- The wildlife and conservation areas are important for open space and wildlife habitat. They are also valuable recreational resources, with opportunities for hiking, boating, fishing, nature walks, and similar pursuits.
- Agricultural lands and the wildlife and conservation areas provide valuable scenic vistas, adding to the unique character of the area.
- The northeastern portion of the Town of Alabama lies within the Oak Orchard watershed. The remainder of the Town falls within the Middle Tonawanda Creek watershed, except for a small portion of the southwest corner of the Town that is in the Murder Creek watershed.
- Small creeks and streams generally flow northward combining with the major streams, which flow out of the study area.
- The abandoned U.S. gypsum mines could potentially cause ground subsidence, which could result in damage to aboveground structures

or personal injury. The location of the former mines should be noted in future land use decisions in affected areas.

- The STAMP project proposes the preservation and conservation of a network of greenspace throughout the site. According to the Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement prepared for the project, less than 49 percent of the project site will be developed, and substantial landscape buffers will surround the site. It is the "plan" of the STAMP project and the Town that development in the TD-1 area of STAMP not be seen from other areas of the Town (screened/buffered). A natural area corridor is proposed to run east-west across the site that will be protected and maintained to improve ecological functions provided by existing streams and wetlands.
- Included in the undeveloped lands are approximately 112 acres of wetlands.
- A long term management plan for the STAMP site has been drafted (needs to be finalized with Town input) for those areas of the property that will be permanently protected.
- Oak Orchard Creek Marsh is a National Natural Landmark, signifying its importance as an ecological resource.
- The *Green Genesee/Smart Genesee Plan* (GGSG) promotes the establishment of a 'green belt' through the County, where high quality environmental lands and connecting corridors are protected to enhance environmental sustainability. Elements of the GGSG plan relevant to the Town of Alabama include:
    - A *Green Action Plan* that identifies significant natural asset cores, or areas with high ecological value resources, such as wetlands, flood plains and significant habitats. Five such areas were identified in the Town of Alabama. The *Green Action Plan* proposes green corridors to protect and connect these natural asset cores.
    - An *Energy Conservation Strategy* for the Town, consisting of an energy audit for Town-owned facilities (buildings and fleet) and an estimate of energy usage by fuel type for the residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural sectors in the Town.

- Zoning audit and recommendations were made, with a focus on protecting the recommended green corridors and improving energy efficiency. These proposed changes included:
  - A stream corridor overlay district;
  - Revisions to the Town's site plan review language;
  - A new solar energy law;
  - Provision to facilitate electric vehicle charging stations; and
  - Sample Form-based code for the hamlet areas.

Demographics and Social-Economic Characteristics

- The Town has experienced modest but steady decreases in population since 1990, although over the long term, population has been stable.
- Population projections in 2005 indicated that the Town's population will likely decline over the next 25 years. More current town-level estimates are not available. However, the development of the STAMP project could affect these figures.
- The population of the Town has aged, with the share of the population aged 65 and older increasing from 12 percent in 2000 to an estimated 17 percent in 2014.
- Household size decreased from 2.84 persons per household in 2000 to 2.5 persons per household in 2014. Households in the Town of Alabama are slightly larger than the average in Genesee County, where household size has remained at 2.45 since 2000.
- The number of households has been slightly increasing, from 663 in 2000 to 682 in 2014.
- Household makeup in Alabama is traditional. Two-fifths of households are married couples with children, and another fifth is married couples with no children at home. One person households comprise another 19 percent.
- The number of housing units in the Town has grown from 700 to 755 since 2000, an increase of about 3 units per year.
- Unemployment is higher in the study area (6.0 percent) than in the County as a whole (4.3 percent).
- A majority of respondents believed in 2005, that commercial and industrial growth is needed in Alabama.

- The STAMP project, if successful, will add a large Industrial base to the Town, and most probably create the demand for support businesses in the surrounding areas. It could also potentially result in increased residential development.
- A critical goal of this Plan and the Town will be to target the growth that could occur due to STAMP in the appropriate areas of the Town. This growth should be sustainable, smart and occur in a manner that protects the assets and character of the Town.

Transportation

- State Routes 63 and 77 are the major transportation routes through the Town.
- Bloomingdale Road and Ledge Road provide access from the Tonawanda Seneca Nation to State Route 77, in the western portion of the Town.
- No major capacity or operational deficiencies were identified on state or local highways.
- Highest traffic levels in the Town are on Route 77 between the southern town line and Bloomingdale Road. This traffic is likely due to people traveling to the Tonawanda Seneca Nation for gas and cigarettes.
- An abandoned railroad corridor runs west to east through the Town. It is currently being utilized by snowmobilers and ATV riders.
- Some problematic intersections were noted along State Route 77, at Ledge and Bloomingdale Roads.
- As part of the agreement for the STAMP project, the County took responsibility for Crosby Road and a portion of Judge Road. In exchange, the Town assumed responsibility for portions of Salt Road.
- Traffic is expected to increase as STAMP is developed.
- Additional roadway improvements were proposed as part of the STAMP development. These include potential intersection improvements along Route 77, if warranted, including possible traffic signals at Judge Road and Ledge Road. A by-pass to divert traffic on Route 77/63 away from the Alabama hamlet is also proposed, to be built when the project has reached 70 percent buildout.

- The New York State Department of Transportation has been studying the Route 77 and Ledge Road intersection, initially proposing a roundabout.
- Access to public transportation is very limited.
- Bike routes are limited to existing roadways and/or their shoulders. There are no sidewalks in the Town.

Utilities

- In 2005, there was very limited public water service in the Town. The Town currently is pursuing plans to provide public water to most existing homes in the Town.
- The *Genesee County Smart Growth Plan* identifies Alabama, South Alabama and Basom hamlet areas as "future development areas," where public water could be extended to new development.
- Currently, the proposals for waterline extensions in the Town have water being supplied by the Monroe County Water Authority through the Town of Oakfield. Public water supply is also be made available through Darien, Pembroke, or Newstead from the west. Water could also be brought from Niagara County to the north. The STAMP project is evaluating bringing water in from Niagara County in later phases.
- Most residents in 2005 responding to the public opinion survey indicated that public water should be provided Town-wide. This appears to still be the sentiment in 2016 and is now being implemented in 2017.
- There currently is no public sewer service in the Town. The closest sewer system is located in the Village of Oakfield. The STAMP project proposes to construct a pump station that will pump wastewater to Medina. This pump station could accommodate some wastewaters from the Town.
- During the development of the agricultural protection plans, the issue of the need of public water for farmers was also raised.

Community and Government Facilities

- Alabama has large tracts of wildlife and conservation areas
- There are no other public parks in the Town.
- Town facilities include the Town Hall, Fire Halls, and Town Highway Garage.

- The majority of students in the Town of Alabama are part of the Alabama-Oakfield Central School District. Smaller areas of the Town are served by Akron Central, Royalton-Hartland, or Medina Central School Districts.
- In 2005, residents believed additional recreational facilities were needed, such as playgrounds, sports facilities, and picnic areas.
- Residents indicate that shared services and inter-governmental cooperation should be expanded for highway, recreation, garbage/solid waste disposal, youth services, and senior's services.
- The Town has discussed the possibility of building a new town hall on the lands around the Highway Garage. This could be a complement to the growth of the Alabama Hamlet adjacent to the STAMP project site.
- The STAMP project also includes the potential of improvements to snow mobile trails and potentially other open space features.

Zoning

- The most significant zoning change since the prior plan is the creation of three Technology Districts (TD) for the STAMP site. The three TDs are designed to scale from higher intensity industrial uses on the western end of the site, to lower intensity, smaller scale development adjacent to the Alabama hamlet.
- The Town is developing design standards to further regulate development within the STAMP site. These design standards would apply only to the Technology Districts.
- The Town has also adopted incentive zoning, which was applied to the STAMP project and is being considered for a proposed large-scale wind turbine project.
- The Town is considering zoning revisions recommended in the *Green Genesee/Smart Genesee* project for site plan review, electric vehicles, and solar regulations.
- The R Residential zoning classification, in particular the dimensional standards, is very similar in nature to the A-R classification and does not promote or limit particular uses in the hamlets.
- The LC district provides protection for rural character in the northern tier of the Town.
- Too many uses are allowed by special use permit in the AR district, which essentially allows a wide number of uses in areas that should be prioritized

for agricultural uses. A number of the uses allowed by special use permit in the AR district are not inherently compatible with adjacent agricultural operations. These include uses such as professional offices, nursing home and child care center.

- A large number of uses are also allowed by special use permit in the R district.
- The Planning Board issues special use permits in the A-R, R, and C districts. The Town Board has jurisdiction over special use permits in the "I" district. No uses are allowed by special use permit in the LC district.
- The R district applies mainly to the hamlet areas.
- There are currently no hamlet design standards or other mechanisms to help define the hamlets. A sample mixed-use, form-based hamlet district has been developed through the *Green Genesee/Smart Genesee Plan*.
- Within Alabama there is not a lot of commercially zoned land, but commercial and industrial uses can be achieved throughout much of the Town with a special use permit.
- The Town's zoning in regard to home occupations and home businesses is overly complex.
- The Town has standard off-street parking regulations that may require excess parking.
- The Town has provisions for cluster residential development, but it lacks a clear process for instituting this type of development.
- There are performance standards for many, but not all, of the uses that require a special use permit.
- Agricultural protection (provision of conservation easements) is not an amenity eligible for consideration under the Town's incentive zoning.
- Minimum area requirements for residential lots are tiered, depending upon when the lot was created. It is not clear if this distinction still serves a purpose.
- For lots created after the effective date of the current zoning Law (1987), there is little distinction between lots in the A-R and R districts. The only difference is the required side and rear yard setbacks, which are slightly lower in the R district.
- The Town's subdivision regulations could use better guidance.

SECTION 5.0
RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Recommendations

Many of the recommendations of the previous joint Comprehensive Plan are still relevant. This Plan Update provides additional recommendations and revises others mainly due to the STAMP project and the Town's plans to provide public water to almost the entire Town (largely funded by the STAMP project). Like the previous joint Comprehensive Plan, the recommendations are arranged under each Goal of the Town.

Goal: Protect, promote, and preserve agriculture

The Town of Alabama is characterized by rural open space, wildlife conservation and wetland areas, open farmlands, and older residential structures mixed with some newer homes. Residential development is denser in the vicinity of the hamlets, but is very low density throughout the remainder of the Town. There has been little to no major subdivision activity in Alabama since the previous Comprehensive Plan adoption. There are a large number of active farms (and the amount of farmland may have actually increased since the last Comprehensive Plan) in the Town and a great amount of open land, much of which is situated within the wildlife and conservation areas. There is strong public sentiment in Alabama to protect farmland and preserve open space. The Town is actively developing an agricultural protection plan.

Devising and implementing measures for preserving farmland and prime farm soils is the most effective way to acknowledge the public's concern for protecting agricultural resources in the Town. Issues such as reassessing residential lot sizes to better manage future growth and using non-traditional development techniques implemented to preserve open space should be explored. Rural development guidelines could be instituted to avoid the appearances of sprawl and mitigate potential impacts to farming practices (e.g., better guidelines or standards for road frontage development and encouraging more creative development techniques).

In formulating these recommendations, it must be understood that the extent of, and limited pressure for growth is presently not impacting agriculture and agricultural operations in the community, but could change dramatically with the development of STAMP.

Recommendations:

- Implement the recommendations of the *Agricultural Protection Plan* (Many of which are re-enforced below). The Town should be a Right to Farm Community with the accompanying rules associated with that designation.
- Consider the adoption of an agricultural zoning classification that would limit non-agricultural development (preventing/restricting subdivisions and limiting uses to those that are agricultural related). This type of district would also typically allow some other non-residential uses that could benefit the landowner/farmer. This district would incorporate large farms and areas of prime farm soils and focus on development density as a means of protecting agricultural uses. This zoning category could be used in combination with conservation easements or a purchase of agricultural conservation easement (PACE) program to ensure that potential rezoning actions would not result in the development of prime farmland. The potential would exist for the landowner/farmer to have the ability to break off one lot (or limit it to 5 acres) every 10 years for resale.
- Review and expand the Town zoning to include innovative non-traditional development standards, such as open development areas, overlay districts, and rural cluster development regulations (allows small subdivisions of land that would preserve important features and rural character). The model form based code for agricultural areas (not included in the new Ag zoning district referenced previously) created for the *Genesee County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan* can also be utilized to help direct growth (see the County Plan or the Appendix of this Plan for the Model Form Based Agricultural Zoning District). The use of any of these tools should acknowledge the fact that the Town is not encouraging growth outside of the targeted development areas and any small growth outside these areas would respect important features as identified in the Green Genesee Smart Genesee Plan and the Town's rural agrarian character.

- Adopt and enforce rural development guidelines, to control growth, manage sprawl and preserve farmland (which do not take away the right to develop, but enable development to occur in a more managed fashion to achieve particular goals). Unlike some other communities, the limited level of development pressure and low growth rate in Alabama reduces the need for utilizing these guidelines. Therefore, the tools should be used as follows:
  - Establish subdivision regulations, with a particular emphasis on minor subdivision.
  - Utilizing (permitting) open development areas could be helpful along State Routes 77 and 63, and in areas that have important views or environmental resources that should be preserved. The use of open development areas provides a more creative approach for allow minor subdivisions, helping to avoid the standard creation of roadway frontage lots which result in long "bacon strip" parcels.
  - Overlay zoning could be used in areas that require more creativity in residential design and along major roadway corridors to establish more appropriate setback standards (see Vision map for locations). They can also be used for the incorporation of aesthetic standards, such as landscaping, architectural design or signage, in certain areas (such as the hamlets).
  - Rural development guidelines may be the most important tool to guide potential developers with site designs that are in concert with the surrounding community. These guidelines could be inserted into the zoning code or subdivision regulations for easy reference and utilization. The Town could begin the preparation of rural development guidelines by researching what they like and dislike in terms of subdivision design.

  (It should be noted that none of these tools and land use measures completely eliminate the right to develop land. Rather, they provide flexibility and guidance to enables land to be developed in a manner that achieves the goals and objectives of this Plan).
- Institute programs to preserve important areas of farmland and prime farm soils, such as a purchase of development rights (PDR) *or* transfer of development rights *(TDR)* program, conservation easements and other similar mechanisms. The Town should work with the County to ensure that such efforts are consistent with the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan and the Smart Growth Plan. Agricultural conservation easements may be the first step, to be followed at a later date with a PDR *or TDR* program (TDR's require development pressures to be

effective) as required. The Town should also evaluate the economic impacts of a purchase of agricultural conservation easement (PACE) program. It is suggested that this type of planning be done in conjunction with the Town of Oakfield (a joint agricultural protection plan). Because of the low level of development pressure, programs such as PACE or PDR are considered long-term actions and should be considered as feasible actions when the time is right.

- Consider the adoption of a right to farm law that would be complementary to the State and County programs, and would offer additional protection against unwarranted complaints aimed at farming operations, such as noise, odor, etc.
- Special use permits could be written to support home occupations and secondary businesses that help residents and farmers generate additional sources of income, such as tourism activities or day camps for children.
- Public water extensions are being planned throughout the Town, and to eliminate/reduce the potential for extensive growth and to protect these agricultural uses, the Town will need to act on several of these recommendations. The County's *Smart Growth Plan* should be considered in implementing these recommendations/restrictions. Such restrictions may be necessary to minimize development pressure on farmlands and discourage non-agricultural uses in those areas.

- It should be understood though that due to regulation changes, public water could be necessary for certain farming operations. The Town should investigate special pricing (water costs) to help support these farmers.
- Consider the establishment of an agricultural advisory committee to assist in clarifying and mediating, and alleviating, conflicts that may arise, and to promote the concerns and desires of farmers. This committee could be utilized to provide a better understanding of the needs of farmers and farming operations in the local community. Through this committee, this information could be for easily transferred to County and State governments to help keep farming viable in the region.
- Adopt and enforce new guidelines for siting, construction, site restoration and monitoring of individual wind turbines and wind farms based on the Town's experiences to date and new technology. It should be understood that WECS units used for Agricultural purposes are protected by State Agriculture law.
- The County and Town should investigate road standards that support agricultural equipment and operations.

- See the Appendix for the recommendations contained in the *Agricultural Protection Plan*.

Goal: Maintain and enhance community character

The Town of Alabama is a rural farming community, with vast tracts of open space and farmland. Over 25 percent of the community encompasses wildlife and conservation areas. The Town has experienced no significant subdivision activity and the densest residential development exists in and around the four hamlets of Basom, Alabama, Wheatville and South Alabama. Every planning effort undertaken in the Town should take the preservation of rural character into consideration. The recommendations for Protecting, Promoting and Preserving Agriculture, listed previously, will greatly help in achieving this goal, but the following additional recommendations will be needed. The STAMP project will create development pressures in the Town and any development should be directed to the appropriate places in the appropriate forms. It should be clearly understood that the below recommendations will not encourage development outside of the targeted growth areas but provide tools to control the development inside these targeted areas and if any small development occurs outside of these areas ensures that it is done correctly.

Recommendations:

- Necessary road improvements to address drainage or safety concerns, which are undertaken outside the hamlets, should limit the installation of sidewalks, curbing, street lighting or other suburban features.
- Require the use of non-traditional development techniques, such as open development areas (create local law which allows open development areas and how they can be utilized), rural cluster development and planned unit development to control future growth, manage sprawl and preserve farmland. If an Agricultural zoning district is created (for much of the Town outside the "growth areas") or a form based Agricultural zoning is created, most of these tools would not be needed.
- Focus attention on addressing traffic problems along State Route 77 at Ledge and Bloomingdale Roads, which are impacting the character of the community.

- Create, adopt and enforce rural development guidelines, or utilize the model form based code for agricultural areas created for the *Genesee County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan* can be referenced Appendix H Model Agricultural Zoning District.

- Develop hamlet overlay zoning that incorporates traditional neighborhood design standards, architectural and historic preservation standards, and allows for denser development in and around the hamlets (in the Smart Growth areas), which is consistent with the policies of the County's Smart Growth Plan. This denser development will require assessing the zoning in these areas to support increased development densities in these areas (Note that ½ to ¾-acre lots are the smallest that can be approved in non-sewered areas).
- Zoning overlays could also be used to control develop along the two major road corridors, limiting commercial development to the hamlets (particularly Basom), and preventing commercial strip development.
- Adopt zoning classifications, or strengthen existing zoning, to protect existing agricultural uses and prevent residential sprawl. The model form based code for agricultural areas created for the *Genesee County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan* can be referenced Appendix H Model Agricultural Zoning District.
- Review and update permitted uses, and uses allowed by Special Use Permit in the AR Zone. Any revisions to the schedule of land uses should specify those existing land uses conforming to today's zoning would be able to continue as pre-existing uses.
- Identify and protect important scenic vistas that add to the character of the Town and include their consideration in new/amended subdivision regulations.
- Protection of agricultural lands and keeping farms in business will do a great deal in maintaining the Town's character. The Town should implement those recommendations found in this Plan and the Agricultural Protection Plan to protect those uses.
- Consider using the incentive zoning law (revised) to accomplish agricultural protection.

Goal: Provide potable water to all areas of need in the Town

Potable water in the Town of Alabama is procured from private wells. The Genesee County Smart Growth Plan outlines policies for extending public water primarily to developed hamlets to prevent urban sprawl. It should be noted though, that the provision of water services is essential to address certain health and safety factors associated with contaminated wells and failing septic systems, as acknowledged by the Genesee County Department of Health. *The last (2013) update to the County's Smart Growth Plan included the expansion of Priority Development Areas and Reserved Development Areas in the Town and supports the expansion of water to service these areas. Many other areas of the Town have health and safety problems with their water and are in need of public water. With the changes in the Agricultural industry (better quality of water needed) and draught conditions, farmers are also in need of quality and more reliable water. The STAMP project and the Town's Incentive Zoning Law have allowed the Town the opportunity to provide public water to most of the Town. These extensions of water throughout the Town, outside of the Smart Growth areas, will still have limitations on future development connections (lateral restrictions).*

Recommendations:

- Support and continue to look for ways of financing the extension of water throughout the Town. As of April, 2017, the Town has established a Plan and the water districts necessary to accomplish this. Continue to develop this long term plan for the water system and its operations and maintenance costs.
- The required utilization of lateral restrictions outside of the Smart Growth areas (and in Agricultural Districts) will continue to supply a good technique for not increasing development pressures throughout the Town. Sponsor educational opportunities in groundwater protection for households and farms.
- Continue to work with GCEDC on the water supply needed for the STAMP project. This cooperation should help to ensure that resident's public water systems are not adversely affected by the expansion of STAMP water demands and required system improvements. As part of this analysis, the Town and County need to consider the needs of the agricultural community.
- New homes that may be built within the Town, outside the Smart Growth areas, will not be allowed to tie into the public water system without review and

approval by the County. It is therefore recommended that strong review standards be put in place to ensure that these new homes have adequate wells (quantity and quality) and well-designed septic systems. Work with Health Department officials to help update these regulations.

Goal: Protect the environmental features and resources of the Town

The wildlife and conservation areas of the Town comprise approximately 26 percent of the land area in the Town of Alabama. The Town contains a variety of other important environmental features including wetlands, large expanses of mature woodlands, tributary stream corridors and floodplains. Groundwater is also an important environmental resource since a large portion of the population of the Town currently relies on this resource for potable water (this is in the process of changing). The former U.S. gypsum mines shafts extend through the southeastern and south central portions of Alabama (Map 10). Any proposals for future development activity in this area of the Town must take this into consideration.

Recommendations:

- Groundwater quality must be protected. Efforts should be undertaken to ensure that on-site sanitary waste disposal systems are properly maintained, and that failing systems are detected and properly mitigated. The communities should work with the appropriate County and State agencies to address this problem through public education programs and the provision of technical assistance to help residents understand and address this important issue. Monies may be made available through rural development programs supported by the federal government.
- In identified groundwater problem areas, the Town should require larger lot sizes.
- In order to mitigate the impacts from aging and deteriorating on-site septic systems, communal septic systems or "package" wastewater treatment systems should be investigated for the hamlet (Smart Growth hamlets) areas. In this evaluation, the Town should also consider the use of the STAMP sewer system for those areas surrounding STAMP.
- Until public water is acquired (and for areas outside the Smart Growth areas), consideration should be given to subdivision regulations that require soil testing as part of the application procedure. If poor or problematic soils are identified,

stricter standards could be imposed, such as larger minimum lot size requirements, or limitations on the number of divisions of lots.

- To protect important environmental features, proposed development actions should avoid identified wetlands, floodplains and prime farm soils. (Depending upon the structure of the wetland, avoiding wetlands has the additional benefit of protecting the groundwater resource.) Mandate usage of cluster development or open development areas to help avoid these environmentally sensitive features.
- Wetlands protection should include both State and Federal wetland areas including the required 100-foot setback areas required by the State. A local law could be utilized to help protect these important areas.
- Look to the *Green Genesee Smart Genesee Plan* for tools that can help in the identification and protection of the Town's important environmental features. One such tool is a stream corridor overlay district, which would include more restrictive requirements for developing or disturbing lands within 150 feet of these important waterways.
- Support farming practices that recognize environmental resources and the importance of avoiding or minimizing point and non-point source contaminant threats to groundwater, surface water and the environment as a whole. This can be accomplished by working with organizations such as Cooperative Extension and County Soil and Water District.
- Assess the zoning in the vicinity of the wildlife and conservation areas to reduce potential impacts from development.
- Develop a more formalized trail system along the abandoned railroad corridor and encourage the State to establish official bike routes along State Routes 63 and 77.
- With respect to the former underground gypsum mines, the Town should investigate the need to institute zoning revisions or additional regulations to address the risk to future property owners in underground mining areas. Assistance from the State should be sought for this effort. In addition, consideration should be given to adopting minor subdivision regulations to allow the Town to further evaluate the risks of subdividing and developing properties in these areas.

Goal: Provide for economic development in the Town

The expansion of commercial and industrial growth, and other economic development activities, helps provide jobs and a build a stronger tax base for the community. Agriculture will continue to dominate as *one of* the primary industries in the Town of Alabama. *The STAMP project and associated support development will also grow to become an important economic factor in the Town and region. Smaller scale business will be focused on the Alabama hamlet and to a lesser extent the Basom hamlet.* An economically sound Town helps support the school district and surrounding communities.

Recommendations:

- New commercial uses should be limited to the hamlets, in particular, primarily Alabama and to a lesser extent Basom and minimally (recommend none) South Alabama. Focus should be placed on how State Route 77 should be developed, particularly in the vicinity of the Basom and Alabama hamlets. As the STAMP project develops, there will be more and more pressure for support and ancillary businesses to develop in these areas. The Alabama hamlet development should support and compliment the development in the TD-3 district of STAMP. Avoid zoning or zoning changes that would allow areas of commercial strip development to build up in the Town (outside the hamlet long-term growth areas identified on the Vision Maps) which would adversely impact the character of the community. This is especially important with retail uses that should only be allowed in certain hamlets or the Village of Oakfield. Farm related businesses and other smaller type businesses should continue to be allowed in the rural areas by special use permit.
- The Basom Hamlet (Smart Growth area) could allow small auto dependent uses in response to the traffic to the Tonawanda Seneca Nation and the STAMP project. It must be done in such a way not to destroy the rural atmosphere or important environmental features of this area.
- The South Alabama Hamlet is the community center but should not have a focus on business or retail development, but as a residential hamlet. The Town Hall may or may not continue at this location.
- Efforts should be centered on revitalizing the hamlets through redevelopment and in-fill activities.

- Long-term potential for sewer service or on-site (package) wastewater treatment systems should continue to be investigated as an option for the hamlet areas.
- Support farming as the primary industry in the Town and consider a separate zoning classification, or strengthening existing zoning, to protect and enhance this industry. Non-agricultural uses should be highly restricted on prime farm soils. However, secondary commercial or home occupations related to agriculture should be encouraged.
- Target locations for future commercial development along State Route 77 and Ledge Road. The Ledge Road area (near the existing quarry) should be restricted from residential development and only allow agriculture or other uses not impacted by any potential quarry operations. The Town should be an active partner in the closure plans for the quarry.
- Recreation-oriented economic activity should be supported, such as campgrounds, riding stables, etc. Support services for the recreational sector should also be encouraged. Again, these uses could be allowed in the more rural areas outside the hamlets. The Alabama Hamlet could have a focus on tourism support uses.
- Promote visitation to the wildlife and conservation areas and find ways to capitalize on this environmental tourism. Include specific regulations in the zoning codes for bed and breakfast establishments in the hamlets and surrounding areas.
- Coordinate activities with the State, and cross market these recreational – tourism related activities. Help in marketing the attributes of the region.

Goal: Maintain and promote efficiency of government

The Town of Alabama previously completed a joint Comprehensive Plan with the Town and Village of Oakfield, and recently worked together with the Town of Oakfield on their agricultural protection plans. This Comprehensive Plan Update took this into consideration and supports the continued cooperation with the adjoining Town and Village of Oakfield, to strive to offer the highest quality and most cost-effective services to the three communities.

Recommendations:

- Continued cooperation between the communities will be essential for infrastructure expansion.
- Utilize this Comprehensive Plan to promote continued cooperative approaches and plans with the Town of Oakfield, and where feasible, the Village of Oakfield. A three-community committee should be re-established and should meet yearly.
- Continue to work with the Town of Oakfield to develop ways to share essential services, equipment and personnel.
- Implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan to establish appropriate and alternative development standards and regulations to manage growth.
- Utilize and enforce land use regulations to properly manage growth and encourage the development of a mix of uses to balance the tax base and control the costs of public services.
- Keep working with the surrounding communities to develop ways to share recreational opportunities.
- Continue and strengthen the relationship with the Oakfield-Alabama School District to sharing services and improving relations between the Towns and Village.
- When completed, work together with the Town of Oakfield to implement the agricultural protection plans.
- As part of the STAMP IZA, the Town will be acquiring monies that can be used to help fund a new town hall. The new town hall would be located on lands owned by the Town adjacent to the Highway garage. This will offer an efficiency that does not exist today.

<u>Goal:</u> Encourage diversity of housing types in the Town

As the population of the Town changes over time, and the economic conditions vary, a variety of housing options should be available to accommodate the changing lifestyles, incomes and needs of the community. Presently, the Town's zoning regulations allows for diversity in housing stock. However, single-family detached homes are the primary form of residential development in Alabama. The lack of sewers severely limits the types of construction that can take place in the

Town, and the Town's goal of maintaining its rural character also limits the types of construction.

Recommendations:

- Denser development could occur in and around the hamlets in the Town. The zoning of these areas should be assessed to ensure that a variety of housing types are permitted. A possibility is to allow mixed use type zoning in the Alabama hamlet area.
- Promote alternative housing types to satisfy the needs of single individuals, seniors and other non-traditional households that are affordable in nature, such as in-law (accessory) apartments, and attached single-family dwellings. These will not be large multi-family buildings, but rather creative alternative single, two unit and potentially mixed use structures located not in the rural/agricultural portions of the Town, but specifically within the new TD-3 zoning district.

5.2 Vision Plan

5.2.1 Introduction

The Vision Plan for the Town is represented as Map 17. The Vision Plan is based on the findings and recommendations outlined in the previous sub-section and was developed to more specifically illustrate the vision concepts for the Town. This Vision plan does not directly correlate to zoning or land use (not a future land use or zoning map). This map is an overall guidance tool that represents the overall vision for the community and can only be utilized in association with the recommendations outlined in the Plan.

The remoteness of the Town helps to create the setting for the vision. Being located approximately 30 miles from both the City of Buffalo and Rochester, and

approximately 10 miles from the population center of the City of Batavia, makes this region quite remote. The Tonawanda Seneca Nation and the wildlife refuge and management areas also provide isolation from the surrounding communities.

These factors have led to very little development pressure and have allowed agriculture to remain as a viable land use.

The Town of Alabama has four hamlet areas. South Alabama currently acts as the community center with the Town Hall and Fire Department located in its boundaries. The other hamlets serve different purposes within the community and region and are discussed under the vision map section.

The potential development of the STAMP project, the waterline expansions taking place at this time, and other needs of the community have forced the Town to look closely at its future.

In the Town of Alabama, the key issue for the Town is having controlled/minimal growth. This growth would primarily occur in the areas surrounding the hamlets of Alabama and Basom, and very little occurring in South Alabama and Wheatville. As shown on the Vision Map, the majority of the Town outside these hamlet areas is devoted to agricultural and conservation uses. The Town would like to see future commercial and residential development located in and around the two hamlet areas rather than having such uses sprawl throughout the Town in the form of residential frontage lots or commercial development that requires a special use permit. The two hamlets of Basom and Alabama and the STAMP site are where future, long-term growth should occur. The Vision map illustrates a large area called the STAMP- Hamlet Planning Area. This plan does not call for growth throughout this area, but it is noted that this area will be directly impacted by the STAMP site and will come under development pressures as STAMP is developed.

The Town of Alabama's largest land use features include the Tonawanda Seneca Nation and major wildlife areas. The Tonawanda Seneca Nation isolates a small area in the southwestern corner of the Town, which is a mixed-use area.

The major transportation corridors in the Town of Alabama are State Route 77 and State Route 63, which bisect the Town. Three of the Town's hamlets lie along these

corridors, each serving a different purpose. The Plan (and the Vision map) notes that these corridors are very important transportation corridors that are also very important to Town's vision and character. These major corridors are noted as areas needing a rural protection overlay that will help ensure the protection of the Town's rural character.

The hamlet of Basom is located on State Route 77 as you enter the Town from points south, including the NYS Thruway. It is located near the major entry points to the Tonawanda Seneca Nation (Bloomingdale and Ledge Roads). The area presently has a few small businesses and a limited amount of residential development. The plan supports that the area encompassing the lands along State Route 77 between Bloomingdale and Marble Roads be considered as the area where growth could occur over the long term (it is within a Smart Growth area) . Automobile-related uses, agrarian support businesses and limited residential development should be the focus of long-term growth in this area. This would allow the Town to take advantage of the traffic coming from the NYS Thruway and the traffic heading towards the Tonawanda Seneca Nation and in the future, the STAMP site. Due to the existing pattern of vehicles moving in and out of the Tonawanda Seneca Nation, and problems associated with this traffic, the intersections of State Route 77 with Bloomingdale and Ledge Roads should be considered for future traffic mitigation to address these concerns. The traffic study for the STAMP project should be referred to when implementing transportation improvements.

The hamlet of Alabama, located at the intersection of Lewiston/Lockport Roads (State Route 77 to the west and State Route 63), carries traffic coming from the NYS Thruway heading to the north and traffic coming south into the Town. It presently includes some auto-related businesses and a grocery type store. The area includes the Town's highway garage, a fire hall, an American Legion Post and a cemetery. The long-term growth envisioned for this hamlet has been changed by the STAMP project. The 2005 Plan stated that this area "could include recreational and tourism-support businesses and residential development". This Plan update envisions that not only recreation and tourism related development could occur, but also small scale retail and support businesses could be developed (but in a way that does not adversely impact the character of the hamlet and its residential components). This development should occur at a scale and style that fits the rural, small Town character of the Town and this area. The long term plan for the STAMP project site is

the construction of a bypass road that would take major traffic out of this hamlet area. It should also be understood that the TD-3 zoning district of the STAMP site abuts this hamlet. The Town will need to closely monitor the growth in the TD-3 area of STAMP and when the bypass is added. The TD-3 area and the hamlet of Alabama must be planned together and should be connected and complement each other.

The Hamlet of South Alabama is located along State Route 63, towards the Village of Oakfield, and acts as the Town center. This area includes the Town Hall/historical building, a church and fire hall. There is little commercial development, but it has some of the largest concentrations of residential development in the Town. This hamlet is the closest dense residential hamlet area to the Village of Oakfield. If the Town decides to relocate Town Hall to the Alabama hamlet, this hamlet will primarily be a residential hamlet.

The final hamlet in the Town is Wheatville, which is located north of South Alabama. This is a small residential hamlet with a church. Future residential development would be incompatible with the County's Smart Growth Plan. Hence, this area is not considered an area that will see substantial long-term growth. The Vision Plan notes that Lewiston and Knowlesville roads connect this hamlet to two other hamlets and the rural agrarian character needs to be protected and regulations to such must be implemented.

Throughout the goals and recommendations sections of the plan, there is strong support for increased development controls in the agricultural areas outside the hamlet areas. With the exception of the hamlet of Wheatville, the hamlet areas identified on the Vision Map are generally in keeping with the proposed "development areas" as mapped in the *Genesee County Smart Growth Plan*. The major difference between the Town's plan and the County's is that this plan update acknowledges that a larger long-term planning area will occur in and around the STAMP project site, while providing controls to manage future growth.

The abandoned railroad line running east/west through the Town would provide an excellent connection feature from Basom to South Alabama to the Village of Oakfield. This feature could be utilized for biking, walking and other non-automotive forms of transportation.

On-road bicycle lanes should be considered for State Route 77 from Pembroke into Niagara County. It also would run northward on State Route 63 into the wildlife areas and into Orleans County. It should also run east on State Route 63 to the Village of Oakfield. This would provide ties to three of the hamlets, the wildlife areas, the STAMP project area and surrounding communities including the Village.

A quarry area in the south-central part of the town should be protected from non-compatible development (restrict residential in this area). Furthermore, former underground mine locations must be considered when proposals for residential development are received. These areas are not considered suitable for future residential use.

The areas along State Routes 77 and 63 that are not within hamlet areas should have a rural development zoning overlay put in place that would protect rural-agrarian enhancement of these areas, and protect this important travel way in Alabama from poor development patterns (hurting the town image).

The remainder of the Town should remain rural/agrarian and allow small development within rural development guidelines (suggest rural development guidelines law) and the recommendations of the *Agricultural Protection Plan*.

The Vision Plan also illustrates areas for Gateway features that will help welcome people to the Town and provide the essence of the Town's rural agrarian character. During the STAMP project development, the Town recommended signage features at these gateway areas that included the acknowledgement of the Town as a Farming community.

5.2.2 Overall Regional Impacts

The Town has been put into the position of being a community with a large regional asset, the STAMP project, that could have long term impacts to the Town, County and overall region. The Town's vision is to continue to be a Rural-Agrarian community that includes this large Industrial site. Any growth within the Town, outside of the STAMP site, will be directed to targeted areas and be of a rural scale and character. The people entering and leaving the Town on a daily basis to work at the

STAMP site will have a potential to impact the Town's character and actions will be necessary to minimize these impacts.

As the STAMP project is developed, the Regional Plans, including the County's Smart Growth Plan, may need to be updated, to reflect the issues associated with the growth pressures from STAMP. These Plans should include recommendations (and needed implementation monies) to help the Town and Region to achieve their vision and the County to realize returns on their investments. The Region and New York State will need to continue their support of the Town, Region and State's goals of not promoting sprawl and protecting the important agricultural lands and agrarian nature of the Town of Alabama.

SECTION 6.0
ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

6.1 Introduction

In some cases, the potential environmental impacts of a Comprehensive Plan are evaluated through a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS). To meet this requirement, the Comprehensive Plan itself can be set up to represent the GEIS (see §272-a.8 of NYS Town Law and §7-722.8 of NYS Village Law). This format enables the reviewers, the Lead Agency, Involved Agencies, Interested parties, and the public to review one comprehensive document that outlines plans for the future and the evaluation of the potential environmental implications of these plans. This section of the Comprehensive Plan has been provided to assist with the environmental review of this document.

6.2 Environmental Setting

A GEIS, like any Environmental Impact Statement, includes a section on Environmental Setting. Section 4 (Existing Conditions) of this Comprehensive Plan provides a review and analysis of the environmental setting of the Town of Alabama, as it exist now. Section 4 includes information on the following:

- Existing Land Use (4.1)
- Farmland and Agriculture (4.1.2)
- Land Use Regulations (4.2)
- Topography and Steep Slopes (4.3.1)
- Hydric Soils (4.3.2)
- Stream Corridors and Watersheds (4.3.3)
- Flooding and Wetlands (4.3.4)
- Wildlife Conservation Areas and Significant Wildlife Habitats (4.3.5)
- Scenic Resources (4.3.6)
- Demographics and Socioeconomic Conditions (4.4)
- Transportation (4.5)

- Utilities (4.6)
- Parks and Recreation (4.7.1)
- Schools (4.7.2)
- Emergency Facilities (4.7.3)
- Government Facilities (4.7.4)
- Historic and Archeological Features (4.7.5)

6.3 Potential Significant Adverse Environmental Impacts

The underlying purpose and a major goal of the Comprehensive Plan is to promote appropriate land use *in appropriate areas* and avoid significant adverse environment impacts. The proposed Plan supports this goal. However, it is important to acknowledge and discuss potential adverse impacts. For this Comprehensive Plan Update, the impacts specific to each SEQR environmental area are outlined individually. Although this leads to some redundancy, it facilitates review of the document by all Involved and Interested Agencies and parties.

Short Term/Long Term and Cumulative Impacts

Based on the environmental setting of the Town of Alabama, the following potentially significant adverse environmental impacts could occur if the Town does not plan appropriately and provide the proper tools for the management of growth and development. The reader can also refer to Section 5 (Findings) and Section 6 (Recommendations) for an understanding of potential impacts. The *Alabama Comprehensive Plan Update* is designed to properly guide growth in the Town, avoiding significant adverse impacts on land use and development decisions, which are made outside the framework of the plan.

a. ***Impacts on Land*** *(See 2015 Land Use Map, Agricultural Soils Map, Hydric Soils Map, and Environmental Features Map)*

- The Town of Alabama is very rural in nature, a characteristic that is valued by area residents. Inappropriate planning and development actions could negatively impact the character of the Town.

- The Town of Alabama has significant areas of hydric soils, wetlands and floodplains, primarily in the northern quarter of the Town and following drainage corridors. Improper development of these areas could result in drainage, flooding and/or erosion problems within the Town and in downstream areas.
- A large portion of Alabama has soils that are categorized as "prime farmland", or "prime farmland when drained". Over-development in areas having these soils could result in a significant cumulative loss of irreplaceable resources (prime farmland soils).
- Outside the Tonawanda Seneca Nation and State and Federal wildlife conservation areas, there are only a few significant areas of mature woodland in Alabama. Inappropriate development of these areas could have a negative impact on the rural character of the Town, wildlife habitat and important open space.

b. ***Impacts on Water*** *(See Hydric Soils Map, Watershed Boundaries Map and Environmental Features Map)*

- Tonawanda Creek, Witney Creek, Ledge Creek, Brinningstool Creek, and numerous tributaries of these waterways run through the Town of Alabama. These creeks are important for environmental protection, open space preservation, drainage, wildlife habitat and aesthetics, particularly in the case of those that run through the two major wetland areas in the Town: Tonawanda Wildlife Management Area and the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge.
- Floodplains surround portions of some of these waterways, primarily Tonawanda Creek. Inappropriate development could lead to flooding or drainage problems, and hazards to public safety.
- Most of the Town of Alabama is within the portions of four watersheds. Ledge- Tonawanda Creek covers the west to southeast portion of Alabama. Mud Creek covers a small area in the northwest corner of Alabama. Murder Creek is located on very small area in southwest corner. The Oak Orchard Creek watershed covers the entire north central to east half of the Town. Inappropriate development in these watersheds could potentially have adverse impacts on water quality, groundwater resources and habitats in the Town and downstream of the Town.

- The Town of Alabama is decreasing its dependency upon groundwater resources for their potable water supply. Improper or inappropriate development could affect these groundwater resources.
- Nearly all residences also use on-site septic systems to treat sanitary waste. The effluent of which is ultimately discharged to groundwater.
- At times the groundwater resource can be under stress due to drought conditions, accidental spills or contamination.
- The Town is extending public water to most residents of the Town. This will improve water quality and quantity for residents, but could cause additional problems with septic system failures and induced growth. Uncontrolled development could create potential groundwater resource supply problems, have adverse impacts on community character, and cause conflicts with agriculture uses.
- Town residents use on-site septic systems to treat sanitary waste. The effluent is ultimately discharged to surface and groundwaters. Lack of maintenance and failing systems can pose threats to groundwater wells.
- There are areas of wetlands and hydric soils. Inappropriate development in these areas could lead to flooding and drainage problems, and adversely impact groundwater resources and wildlife habitat.

c. *Impacts on Plants and Animals* *(See Environmental Features Map)*

- The NYS Tonawanda Wildlife Management Area and Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge and John White Memorial State Game Farm are significant resources for wildlife habitat, which together cover approximately 25 percent of the northern portion of the Town. The Tonawanda Wildlife Management Area and Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge (part of the larger Alabama Swamp complex) provide excellent bird and fish habitat, including state-listed endangered, threatened and special concern bird species. Because these areas are under the ownership and management of State and Federal conservation agencies it is not anticipated that any changes resulting from the implementation of this Comprehensive plan will result in significant adverse impacts. Areas just outside of these resources could have some effect on them.

- Outside the wildlife conservation areas, the Town's expansive areas of agricultural fields, open meadows, and old fields, as well as the wetlands and creek corridors, provide a variety of habitats for many non-threatened and non-endangered plant, avian and animal species. These areas also provide an important element of the rural character of the Town. Inappropriate development and poor site planning could adversely impact these resources.

d. ***Impacts on Agricultural Land Resources*** *(See the Agricultural District and Protected Lands Map, 2015 Land Use Map, and Agricultural Soils Map)*

- Agricultural land resources are an important part of the rural character of the Town and the region. Agricultural land use is still an important part of the local land use pattern and local economy. Large areas of "prime farmland soils" and "prime farmland soils when drained" are important to the continuation of agriculture as an industry and as a way of life. Agricultural land resources are a critical element that helps define the Town's rural character. Inappropriate or uncontrolled development could have a negative impact on these resources.
- Agricultural lands comprise a significant proportion of the Town of Alabama land use. Nearly all lands in the Town, excluding lands in the wildlife management areas and Tonawanda Seneca Nation, are within the State-designated Agricultural District No. 2. Location within an Agricultural District provides benefits (agricultural value assessment) and generally encourages landowners to continue to leave farmland in production. Although increased development pressures could have a major negative impact on these resources, the Agricultural District designation helps to somewhat reduce the potential for development that would significantly affect these agricultural resources.
- A major change since the last Plan is the need of public water for Agricultural operations. In previous planning efforts, it was determined that extending public water to areas with Agricultural operations could adversely impact them by promoting growth.

e. ***Impacts on Aesthetic Resources***

- The aesthetic resources of the Town of Alabama include significant views, rural landscapes of farm fields and wood lots, open space (characterized by the Tonawanda Wildlife Management Areas and Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge), and creek corridors. The hamlets also provide an aesthetic resource contributing to the character of the Town. These resources contribute to the quality of life and community character of the Town, and could be negatively affected by inappropriate development.

f. ***Impacts on Historic. Cultural and Archeological Resources***

- The historic resources of each municipality are described in Section 4.7.5. Oak Orchard Creek Marsh (located within the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge and the Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management Area) was designated as a National Natural Landmark in May of 1973. This relatively undisturbed marsh is rare for this part of New York State. Although inappropriate development or management could negatively impact this resource, it's location within the publicly owned and managed wildlife areas makes it unlikely that changes resulting from the implementation of this Comprehensive Plan will result in negative impacts.

g. ***Impact on Open Space, Parks and Recreation*** *(See Community Facilities Map)*

- Parks and recreation resources in the Town of Alabama are identified in Section 4.7.1.
- A significant area (approximately the north quarter of the Town) is within the NYS Tonawanda Wildlife Management Area, Iroquois National Refuge conservation areas and the John White Memorial Game Farm. These areas provide significant open space and recreation opportunities for the Town, as well as the region. Because these areas are under the ownership and management of State and Federal conservation agencies it is not anticipated that any changes resulting form the implementation of this Comprehensive plan will result in significant adverse impacts to recreation or open space resources.

h. ***Impact on Critical Environmental Areas***

- There are no designated Critical Environmental Areas in the *Town of Alabama*.

i. ***Impact on Transportation*** *(See Transportation Map)*

- The transportation system in the Town of Alabama is heavily dependent upon roadways and automobiles. Public transportation is very limited, and there are no active rail lines.
- The major roadway corridors in the Town are described in Section 4.5.1. They include Routes 77, 63 and 262.
- Travel for pedestrians and bicyclists can be difficult in the Town. There are no designated bicycle routes or paths. The abandoned Penn-Central railroad corridor is informally used for hiking, bicycling and snowmobiling, although no formal designation exists.
- Additional development in the Town has the potential to increase demands on the transportation network. More intensive development may also increase potential conflicts between automotive and non-automotive modes of transportation.
- The Alabama Comprehensive Plan Update does not recommend development patterns that will significantly alter the transportation patterns of the community, but acknowledges the future development of the STAMP site.

j. ***Impact on Growth and Character of Community or Neighborhood*** *(See Vision Map)*

- The population of the Town of Alabama slightly decreased (5.9%) between 1990 and 2000 and only 0.6% from 2000 to 2010. Some population projections suggest that there will be growth (12.5%) over the next three decades. However, current trends suggest the population will remain relatively stable.
- The rate of residential construction in Alabama, since 1990, has been modest. The Comprehensive Plan does not encourage or facilitate uncontrolled development, but rather directs reasonable growth within use and design parameters in limited areas.

- The Town's Goals and Objectives (Section 3.2.1) clearly support controlling growth to protect community character.
- The hamlets of Alabama, Wheatville, Basom and South Alabama serve as activity centers (residential/business/public facilities) for the Town. The Town recognizes the importance of these hamlets and wishes to provide support for local businesses.
- The Town's goals and objectives clearly indicate the preference for directing growth toward the hamlet areas, and to control the rate of growth in areas without services or along rural road frontages, in order to protect community character.
- The Comprehensive Plan Update supports public water service extensions to most residents in the Town of Alabama. Although it is possible that public water may induce higher growth rates (along with development at the STAMP site), other recommendations of the Plan will need to be implemented to control this possible future growth.

6.4 Adverse Environmental Impacts that Cannot be Avoided

With or without the adoption and implementation of the Alabama Comprehensive Plan Update, Alabama and the surrounding communities will see some new development pressures from the development of the STAMP project, some reuse, and pressures to sell-off building lots in the agricultural areas. There will continue to be concerns regarding water quality and quantity and, therefore, an increasing demand for public water. The adoption of this plan will allow the Town to better manage growth and development, and reduce potential environmental impacts. All development actions taking place after the adoption of this plan will still be subject to the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) process on a site/project specific basis. This comprehensive plan will assist with the review of development actions. In the instance of a rezoning request, this plan will have a much greater impact on that decision and the SEQR process. Zoning must be in accordance with the community's comprehensive plan.

6.5 Growth Inducing Aspects of the Plan

Most of the implementation actions outlined in this plan will help to control and moderate growth within the Town. Certain actions (addition of public water and

STAMP) will act to encourage development. Specifically, development in and around the STAMP site is encouraged and public water is being constructed throughout the Town.

These hamlet areas and the STAMP site have been deemed to be the most appropriate areas for development. While the Comprehensive Plan indicates some areas for growth (see *Vision Map*), it equally provides rational for restricting growth in a majority of the Town.

6.6 Mitigation Measures

It is the objective of this Comprehensive Plan to help reduce the potential impacts that could be caused by future development in the Community. This can be accomplished by providing techniques for guiding development that may occur, such as amending zoning, adopting other development regulations, or providing tools to help mitigate the possible impacts of development (limiting future infrastructure connections, increased/improved design standards for development, etc.). This Comprehensive Plan Update provides techniques for guiding the direction of growth in the Town of Alabama, and the tools for minimizing impacts to a level that does not create significant adverse environmental impacts. The following section discusses the recommendations of the Alabama Comprehensive Plan Update, analyzing why and how they help mitigate the potential impacts of future growth.

a. *Impacts on Land*

- To protect the rural character and environmental resources of the Town of Alabama, this plan recommends zoning revisions, aesthetic regulations, infrastructure connection limitations, new development regulations and guidelines, and protection and preservation of important features.
- Agricultural lands in the Town will be protected. Depending upon the situation, the land will be preserved through various techniques (see the Agricultural Protection Plan):
  - Amendment of the Agricultural-Residential (A-R) zoning district, recommending the use of rural development guidelines, adopting a Right to Farm Law, and the use and adoption of more flexible

zoning techniques (open development areas, zoning overlay districts and cluster provisions for residential subdivisions).
- Lateral Restrictions on some proposed public water extensions. (See *Vision Map*).
- Use of Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE) for farmland preservation.
- Utilizing prime farmland soils information when making land use decisions.
- Participation in the NYS Agricultural Districting program.
- Adopting minor subdivision Regulations.

- In general, the Town of Alabama is presently not experiencing high rates of growth and is under minimal pressure for development. This could change as the STAMP project is developed and public water is provided. The *Comprehensive Plan Update* supports the development of STAMP and development in the targeted areas identified in the Plan, but also provides techniques to protect the community's land resources, and also ways of directing growth to appropriate areas. This is a pro-active approach rather than being re-active to development pressure and demands for growth.
- Where practicable, residential subdivision should be limited and only encouraged, on a limited basis, in and around the designated hamlet areas (see *Vision Map*).

b. *Impacts on Water*

Smart Growth Plan

- The *Comprehensive Plan Update* mitigates potential impacts from growth through its general support of the *Genesee County Smart Growth Plan*. The *Comprehensive Plan Update* builds upon the concepts in the Smart Growth Plan by targeting limited growth in the hamlet areas (see *Vision Map*). Since public water is proposed to be extended throughout much of the Town, the plan supports lateral restrictions or other protective techniques to control growth outside of the designated areas. The *Comprehensive Plan Update* does anticipate increases in residential growth pressures, but it does provide the Town's enhanced land use controls to best guide that growth and minimize potential adverse impacts.

Surface Water

- An objective of the *Comprehensive Plan Update* is the protection of the important stream corridors and floodplains within the study area.
- Increased drainage standards, and avoidance of poor soil areas, will also reduce potential impacts from development on surface waters.

Groundwater

- The addition of public water in much of the Town will help in the protection of groundwater resources in the Town.
- In Alabama, the extension of public water will relieve the problems associated with strained private wells and failing or faulty septic systems, alleviating health and safety concerns due to water quality and quantity.
- The plan suggests employing education and awareness programs for local residents as they relate to the maintenance and repair of septic systems.

c. *Impacts on Plants and Animals*

- As discussed previously in this section, the Town will be undertaking efforts to protect and preserve the stream corridors and open space areas. By targeting these important habitats for protection, the Town is minimizing potential impacts to the flora and fauna of the region.
- The plan also identifies important features like floodplains, wetlands and unique environmental features, so that they can be properly incorporated into site designs and preserved. The plan also enhances the ability of the community to plan and save more contiguous features in the region.

d. *Impacts on Agricultural Land Resources*

- The mitigation actions recommended previously for minimizing potential impacts to the land also apply to potential impacts to

agricultural land resources in the Town. In some cases agricultural land resources will be preserved through one or more of the following techniques (see Ag Protection Plan):

- Amendment of the Agricultural-Residential (A-R) zoning district, requiring the use of rural development guidelines, adopting a Right to Farm Law, and utilizing more flexible land use techniques (open development areas, zoning overlay districts and cluster provisions for residential subdivisions).
- Lateral Restrictions on proposed public water extensions (see *Vision Map*).
- Use of Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE) for farming.
- Use of prime farmland soils information in making land use decisions.
- Participation in the NYS Agricultural Districting program.

- The Town will seek to manage growth and development and focus on the common goal of agricultural preservation. This involves balancing the need to maintain viable farming operations and contiguous farmland with the need to provide opportunities for residential growth.
- The *Comprehensive Plan Update* recommends adopting minor and major subdivision regulations and cluster provisions in an effort to protect environmentally sensitive or resource-constrained areas.

e. *Impacts on Aesthetic Resources*

The preservation of community character is one of the major goals of the Alabama Comprehensive Plan Update.

- Community character includes the aesthetic resources in the Town, such as scenic views, open space, farmland, locally significant and historic structures, and the communities' overall rural quality of life. The Town has identified community character as a significant resource, and has outlined actions to proactively protect and preserve those features that establish community character in their area.

f. *Impacts on Historic and Archaeological Resources*

- In considering future development proposals that require discretionary approvals (site plans and subdivisions) the Town must consider impacts to cultural resources. These reviews are coordinated with the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and will result in the identification of cultural resources and appropriate methods for minimizing potential impacts to these resources.

g. ***Impacts on Open Space, Parks and Recreation***

- The plan identifies the key open space and recreation features.
- The wildlife management areas have a total of approximately 19,000 acres. All of these are under the control of New York State and the federal Department of the Interior and, therefore, are outside the direct jurisdiction of the Town of Alabama.
- The *Comprehensive Plan Update* avoids recommending development of infrastructure extensions in the vicinity of the wildlife management areas. The exception is the John White Memorial Game Farm, which is a more active educational and training facility (presently underutilized), located between the hamlets of Alabama and Basom.
- The *Comprehensive Plan Update* also provides methodologies to protect and preserve open space resources from potential adverse development impacts.
- The communities can cooperatively plan to ensure that open space features are protected to the maximum extent possible, recreational needs are efficiently provided, and parks are connected and considered in development scenarios in each community.

h. ***Impacts on Critical Environmental Areas***

- There are no Critical Environmental Areas, in the Town of Alabama.

i. ***Impacts on Transportation***

- Transportation in the Town of Alabama study area is heavily reliant on roadways and automobiles. There are no significant transportation issues/deficiencies that will be exacerbated by the plan components. The STAMP project includes mitigations that must be implemented during its development

- In accordance with the *Genesee County Smart Growth Plan*, to avoid sprawl, growth is being targeted around the existing hamlets in the Town. This helps to preserve community character and protect environmental features by reducing the potential for potential transportation-related impacts.
- The 2005 *Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan* also identified a potential multi-use trail along the abandoned Penn-Central railroad grade to provide for non-vehicular related travel and recreation.

j. *Impact on Growth and Character of Community or Neighborhood*

- *The 2005 Oakfield Alabama Plan predicted that* growth rates and pressure for development in the Town is low, and for planning purposes, this is not projected to dramatically change. *The addition of the STAMP project has a potential to change this.* This Plan Update acknowledges this potential impact and provides techniques to accommodate growth within appropriate areas, without minimizing the impacts to environmental resources or the character of the community.
- It is clear from the goals and objectives of the Town, that community character and quality of life should not be adversely impacted by growth. Many of the recommendations of the plan provide ways to achieve this through the direction of growth to the hamlet areas, emphasis on the protection of agricultural land uses, and the preservation of significant natural resources.
- The public water extensions are for public health and safety issues, providing residents who are currently experiencing water quality and quantity problems with the opportunity to obtain public water, and not for growth. This plan focuses future development in and around the hamlet areas.

6.7 Evaluation of Alternatives

Throughout the planning process, alternatives for helping the Town achieve its goals and objectives were evaluated. These recommendations and implementation alternatives were evaluated for not only their desired results, but also to assess their potential impact on the environment, the needs of local

residents, private property rights, quality of life, and the vitality of each community.

It should be noted that long term recommendations have not been thoroughly evaluated in this section. These actions have only been outlined for consideration under circumstances where the Town experiences greater levels of growth pressure as the result of the implementing short term recommendations, or where short term recommendations are not achieving the desired results.

No Action Alternative

- The No Action Alternative (not adopting the *Comprehensive Plan Update*) was considered for the Town of Alabama. However, this alternative does not adequately enable the Town to direct and manage growth trends to achieve the Town's vision.
- The No Action Alternative does not meet the requirements of the SEQR Findings made by the GCEDC and Town on the STAMP project (It is a required mitigation).
- The No Action Alternative does not allow the Town to properly plan for its chosen future, or to better direct and manage growth and development.
- The No Action Alternative does not support the concentration of development and revitalization activities in the hamlet areas.
- The proposed plan would more effectively allow the Town to realize it future goals, and provide greater protection to the environment than the continuance of present trends under the No Action Alternative.

SECTION 7.0
ANNUAL REVIEW

The Town of Alabama should conduct an annual review of the *Alabama Comprehensive Plan Update* to ensure that the Plan remains a dynamic and useful document, and to gauge the accomplishments of their community. The Town should also take the opportunity at that time to meet with the Town and Village of Oakfield to look at a partnership in implementing and achieving the goals and objectives of the Plan. This review should be conducted by the Planning Board or a review committee, as designated and authorized by the Town Board. This annual review should include some or all of the following.

- A review of all site plan and subdivision approvals issued during the previous year in conjunction with the recommendations of the *Comprehensive Plan Update* to determine where this activity has occurred, and if it has occurred consistent with the recommendations of the Plan. These planning approvals should be assessed with regard to their overall impact on the general land use trends in the community and their potential impacts on adjoining communities.

- A review of any rezoning decisions issued during the previous year in conjunction with the recommendations of the *Alabama Comprehensive Plan Update* to determine if these actions were consistent with the recommendations of the Plan. These actions should also be assessed with regard to their overall impact on the general land use trends in the community and their potential impacts on adjoining communities.

- A review of the priority listing of zoning amendments specified in this plan to determine which items were accomplished and which ones should be undertaken in the coming year. The overall impact of these zoning decisions should be evaluated with respect to general land use trends as well. It should also be determined if there are any new zoning actions that should be added to this list in each community.

- A review of the list of other priority items, as contained in Section 6.0 of the Plan (Implementation), to determine which items were accomplished during the

previous year. It should also be determined if there is a need to update or amend the individual community lists.

- A review of any comments received from the Town Board, departments and committees, and any public input gathered during the previous year, in conjunction with the information ascertained from the reviews outlined above. This information should be utilized to assist in the development of an implementation action plan for each community for the coming year.

The Planning Board or designated review committee should prepare a statement outlining the accomplishments of the past year, including a listing of all major site plan, subdivision and rezoning approvals, and other accomplishments, as specified in the *Comprehensive Plan Update* (including joint efforts by the partnering communities). This information, along with the action plan for the continuing implementation of the *Alabama Comprehensive Plan Update*, should be presented to the Town Board for their review and approval.

By undertaking this review on a yearly basis, the community can evaluate its achievements for implementing the Alabama Comprehensive Plan Update, so as to keep the implementation process moving forward and make adjustments to the implementation strategy, as required. The information generated from this review process should be incorporated into each community's Comprehensive Planning files through the formal acceptance of the respective Legislative Board.

Approximately every five years (or sooner if deemed necessary), the *Alabama Comprehensive Plan Update* should be more extensively reviewed (using these annual reports) and updated, as necessary, through a formal adoption process (including draft changes, public hearings and SEQR review).

TOWN OF ALABAMA
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

APPENDICES:

1. Mapping

2. Public Meetings Information

3. Appendix H: Model Agricultural Zoning District from *Genesee County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan*

4. *2005 Oakfield / Alabama Comprehensive Plan*

FINAL - AUGUST 2018

1. Mapping

Town of Alabama Comprehensive Plan Update
Map 1: General Location Map

Lake Ontario

United States

Canada

Town of Alabama

Rochester

Niagara Falls

Batavia

Buffalo

Lake Erie

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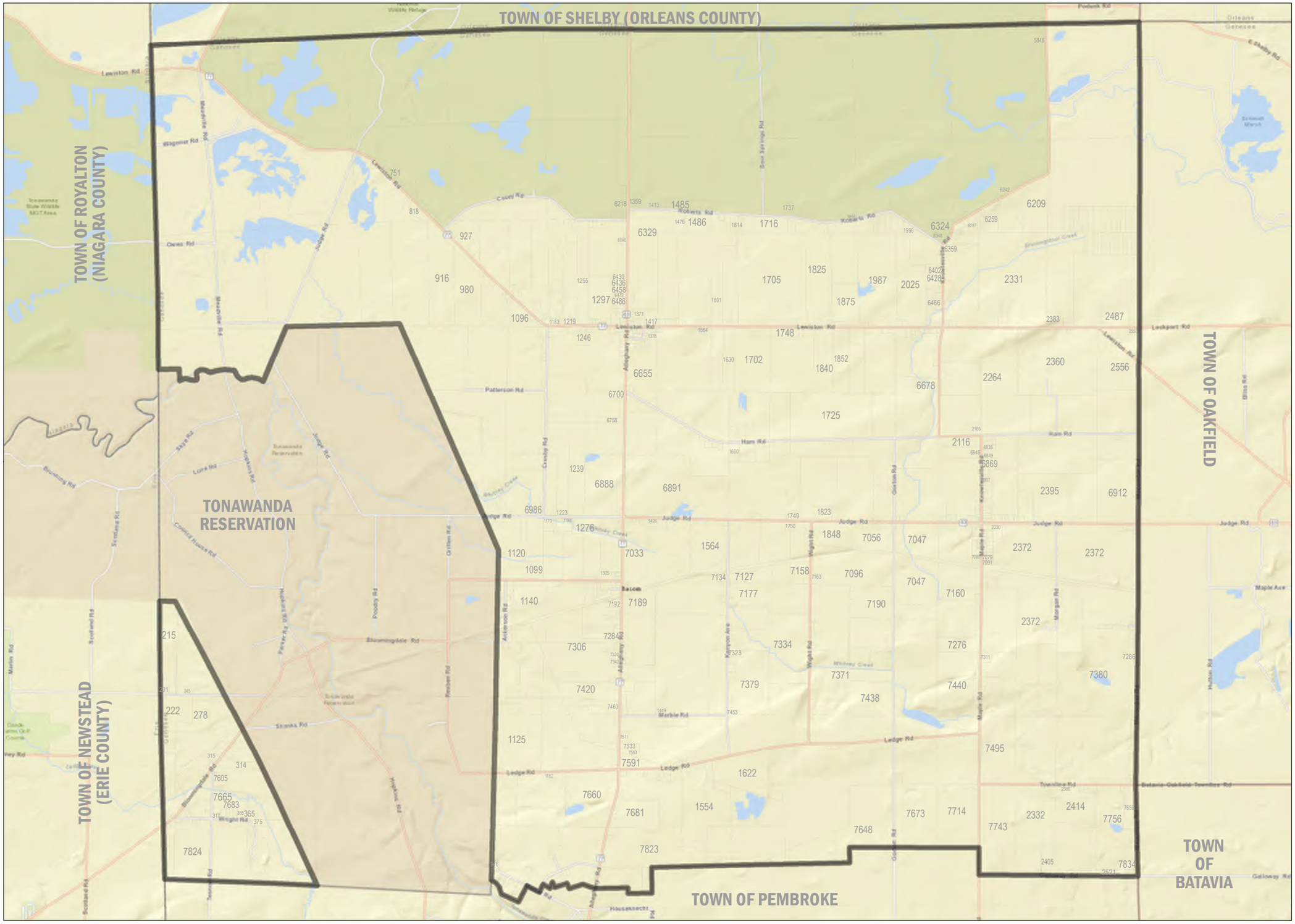
DATA SOURCES: NYSDOT; ESRI ARCGIS ONLINE AND DATA PARTNERS, INCLUDING IMAGERY FROM AGENCIES SUPPLIED VIA THE CONTENT SHARING PROGRAM.

Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye,

wendel

WD Project #436003CP
October 2, 2017



Town of Alabama

GENESEE COUNTY, NEW YORK

Comprehensive Plan Update

Map 2: Town of Alabama

N
W E
S

LEGEND

- Town of Alabama
- Parcel (Address # Labeled)

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

wendel

WD Project # 436003CP
Map Created: October, 2016

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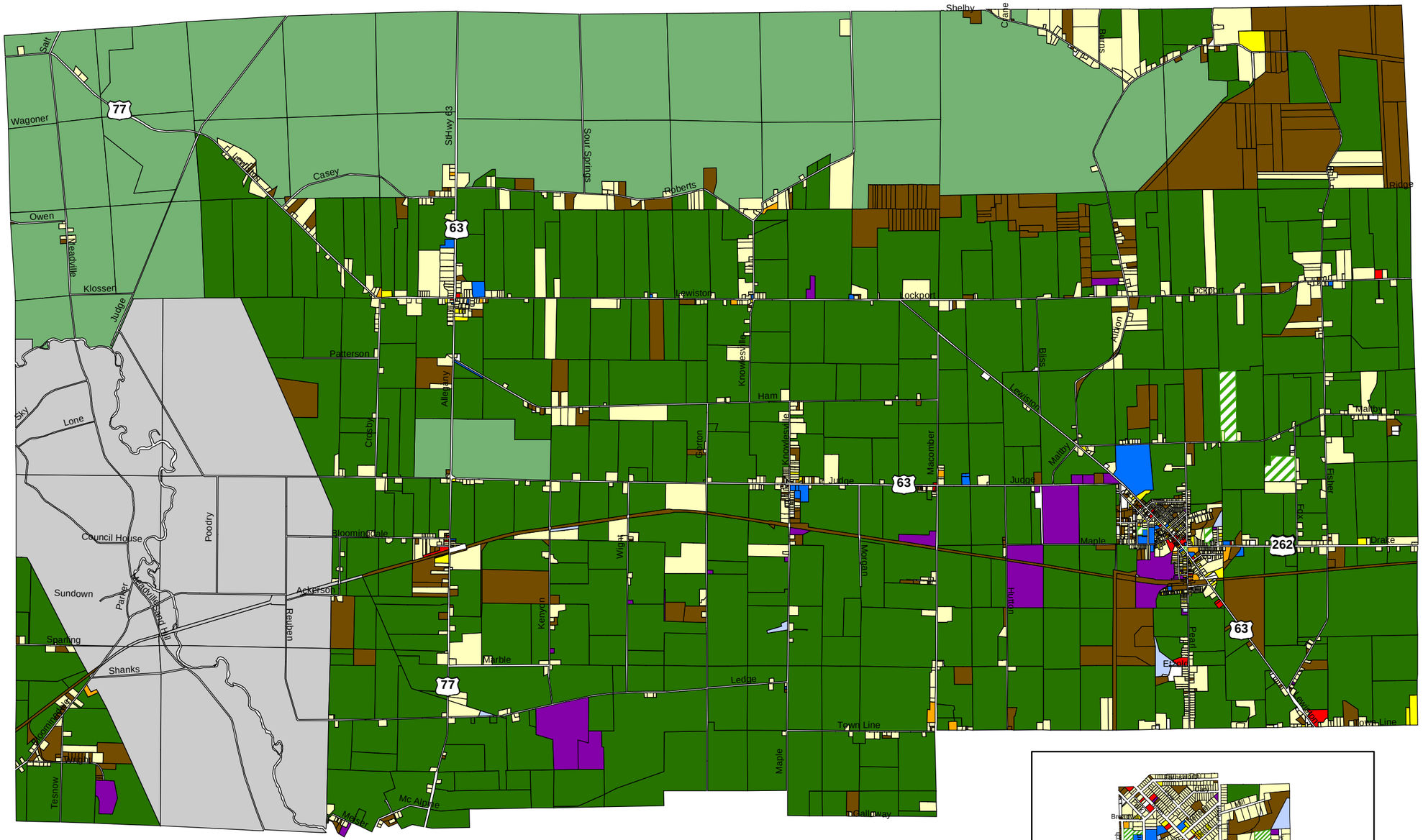
Oakfield/Alabama Comprehensive Plan
Existing Land Use

Map 3: 2003 Land Use



Key to Features

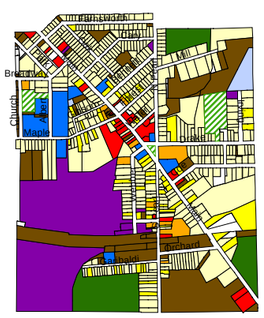
Land Use Classifications

- Agricultural
- Single Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Multiple Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Government/Public
- Parks & Recreation
- Utilities/Infrastructure
- Vacant/Undeveloped/Open Space
- Wildlife Conservation Area
- Tonawanda Indian Reservation
- Unknown

**Existing landuse classification categories are based upon real property survey (RPS) information

N W E S

3,000 0 3,000 Feet



Village of Oakfield

WENDEL DUCHSCHERER ARCHITECTS & ENGINEERS

WD Project #408601
April 17, 2003

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Data sources: Genesee County Department of Planning

Land Use by Tax Parcel

- Residential
- Residential - Agriculture
- Agriculture
- Commercial
- Industrial, Storage, Mining
- Public and Community
- Utilities and Transportation
- Vacant
- Private Hunting, Fishing, Wildlife
- Wildlife Conservation Area

Tonawanda Seneca Nation

N

0 0.75 1.5 3 Miles

0 1,000 2,000 4,000 Feet

Data Sources: 2014 tax parcel records obtained from Genesee County, Aerial imagery obtained from Google Maps and Google Street View.
2014 land use based on the Assessor's Property Classification.
Land use verified or updated based on analysis of aerial imagery

Land Use by Tax Parcel

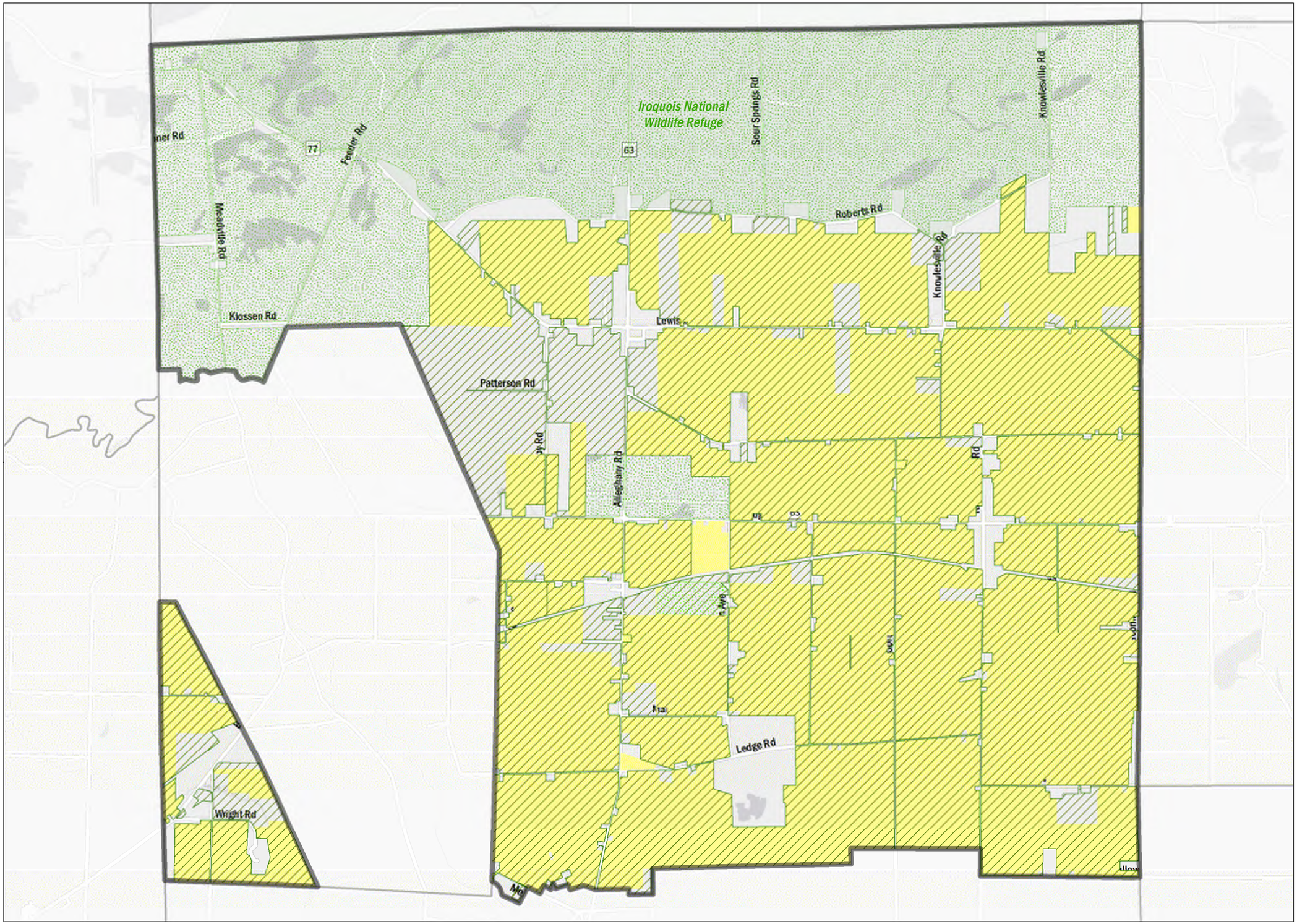
Oakfield and Alabama, Genesee County, NY]

CC Environment & Planning
23 Jackson St.
Batavia, NY 14020
(585)219-4030

LABELLA

Map 4: 2015 Land Use

Prepared by: LaBella Associates, 06/25/2015



Town of Alabama

GENESEE COUNTY, NEW YORK

Comprehensive Plan Update

Map 5: Agricultural Districts & Protected Lands

N
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LEGEND

- Town of Alabama
- NYS Agricultural District
- Ag Exempt Parcel
- Park / Refuge / Protected Land

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

wendel

WD Project # 436003CP
Map Created: August, 2017

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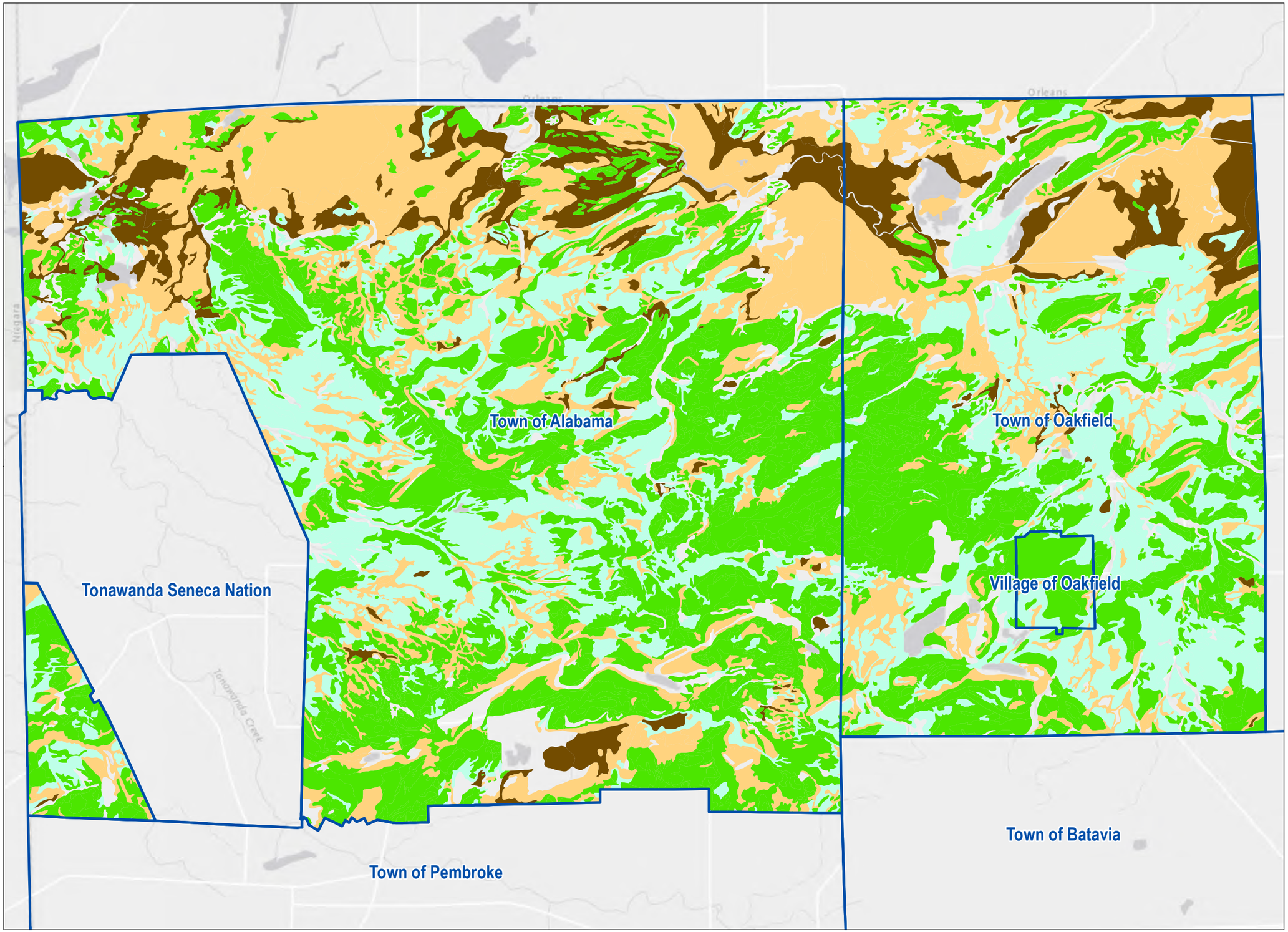
Data Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, MapmyIndia, OpenStreetMap contributors, Clark Patterson Lee, NYS GIS Program Office

Oakfield & Alabama Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan

Map 6: Agricultural Soils



LEGEND

- Municipal Boundary
- Strategic Farmland Soils

Farmland Soil Classification

- Prime Farmland
- Prime farmland if Drained
- Farmland of Statewide Importance
- Muck

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

wendel

WD Project # 448103
Map Created: March, 2016

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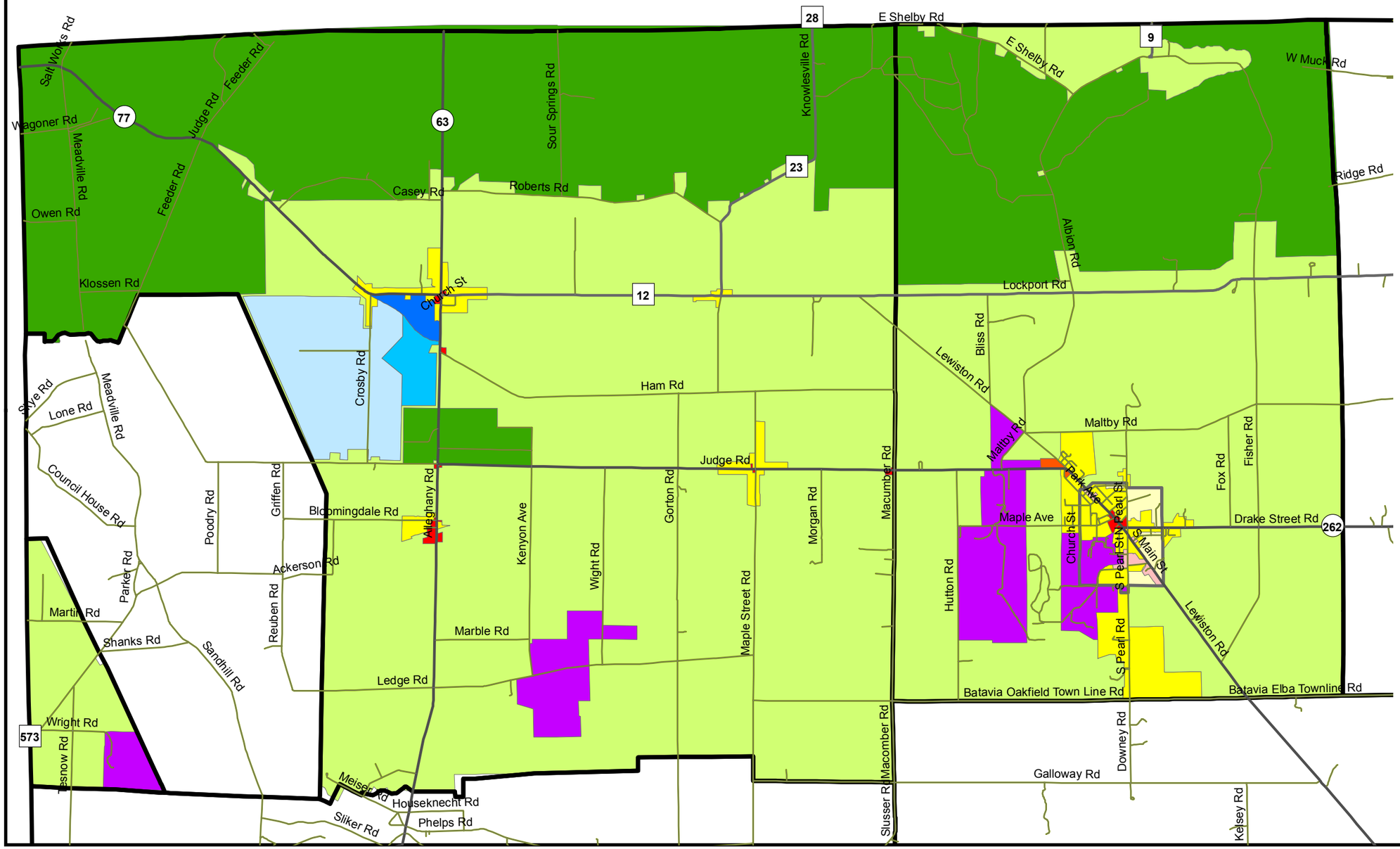
Data Sources: Genesee County Department of Planning, Esri, HERE, DeLorme, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS user community, USDA NRCS

Map Prepared by: Genesee County Planning Department



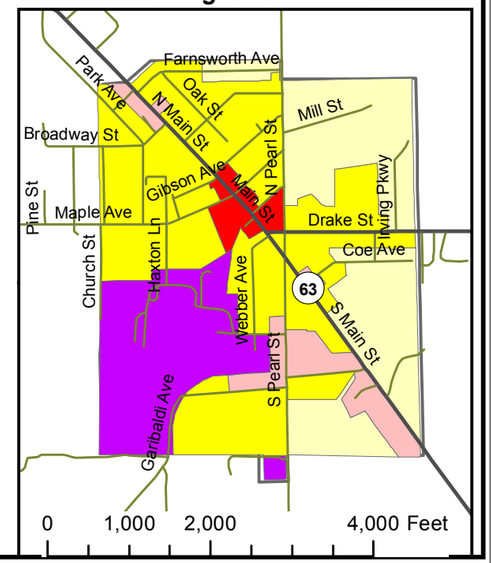
Zoning Districts

V. Oakfield Zoning
- R-1 Residential 1
- R-2 Residential 2
- C-1 Neighborhood Commercial
- C-2 Central Commercial
- I Industrial

Town of Oakfield Zoning
- R Residential
- R+A Residential Agriculture
- C Commercial
- I Industrial
- LC Land Conservation

Alabama_Zoning
- R Residential
- A-R Agricultural Residential
- C Commercial
- I Industrial
- LC Land Conservation
- TD-1 Technology District 1
- TD-2 Technology District 2
- TD-3 Technology District 3

Village of Oakfield



N

0 0.75 1.5 3 Miles

Data Sources: 2014 tax parcel records obtained from Genesee County, Aerial imagery obtained from Google Maps and Google Street View.
2014 land use based on the Assessor's Property Classification.
Land use verified or updated based on analysis of aerial imagery.

Zoning Districts

Town of Alabama, Town of Oakfield and Village of Oakfield
Genesee County, New York

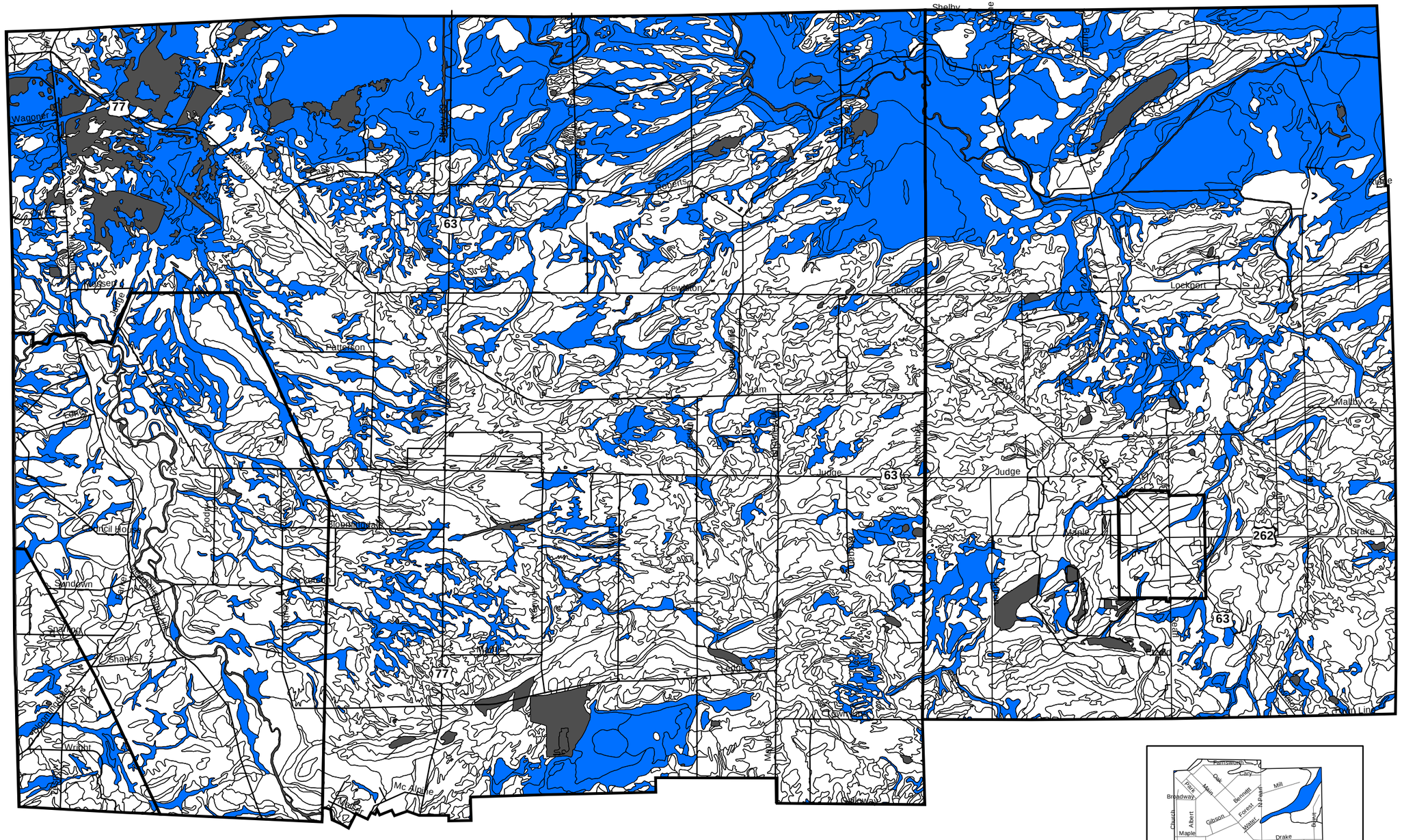
CC Environment & Planning
23 Jackson St.
Batavia, NY 14020
(585)219-4030

LABELLA

Map 7: Zoning

Prepared by: LaBella Associates, 06/25/2015

Oakfield/Alabama Comprehensive Plan
Hydric Soils



Key to Features

- Study Area Boundary
- Roads

Soils

- Hydric
- Not Hydric
- Unknown

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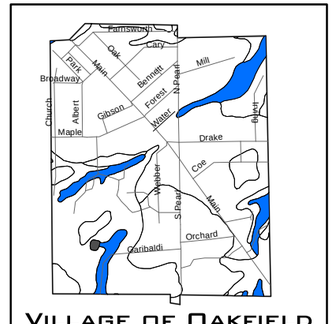
DATA SOURCES: GENESEE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, GENESEE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT, USDA, NRCS

WENDEL DUCHSCHERER ARCHITECTS & ENGINEERS

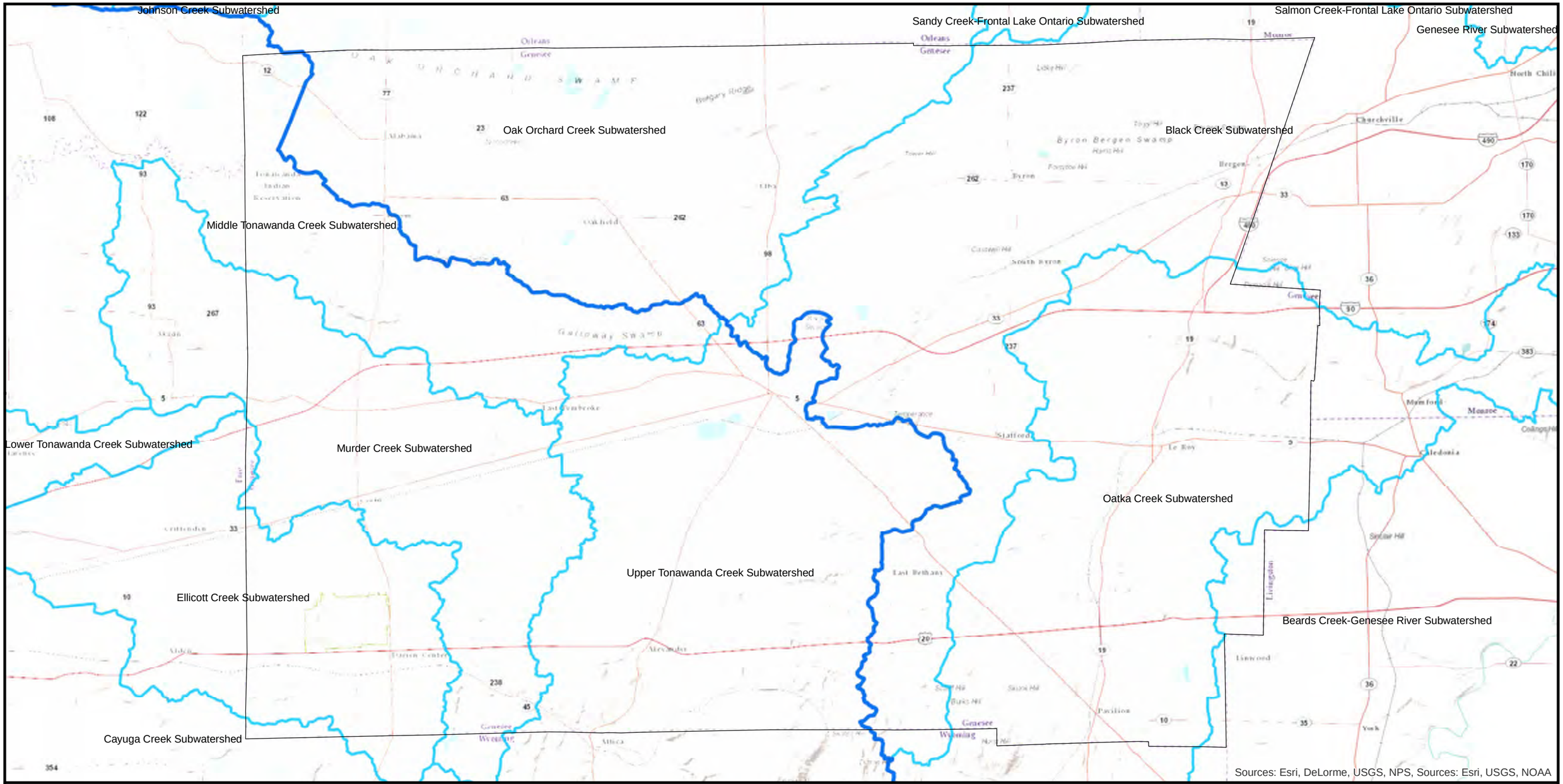
0 3,000 6,000 Feet



Village of Oakfield

WD Project #408601
July 22, 2002

Map 8: Hydric Soils



N

0 2.25 4.5 9 Miles

Data Sources: USGS, Genesee County Planning.

Green Genesee Smart Genesee
Watersheds and Subwatersheds
Current Context Report
Genesee County, NY

CC Environment & Planning

LABELLA

Watersheds
Subwatersheds
Genesee County

Map 9: Watershed Boundaries

Prepared by: CC Environment & Planning, 05/19/2015

N

0 3 6 12 Miles

Data Sources: USGS, NYSDEC, NYNHP, Genesee County Planning, National Audubon Society, National Conservation Easement Database.

Green Genesee Smart Genesee
Diversity Features Inventory
Current Context Report
Genesee County, NY

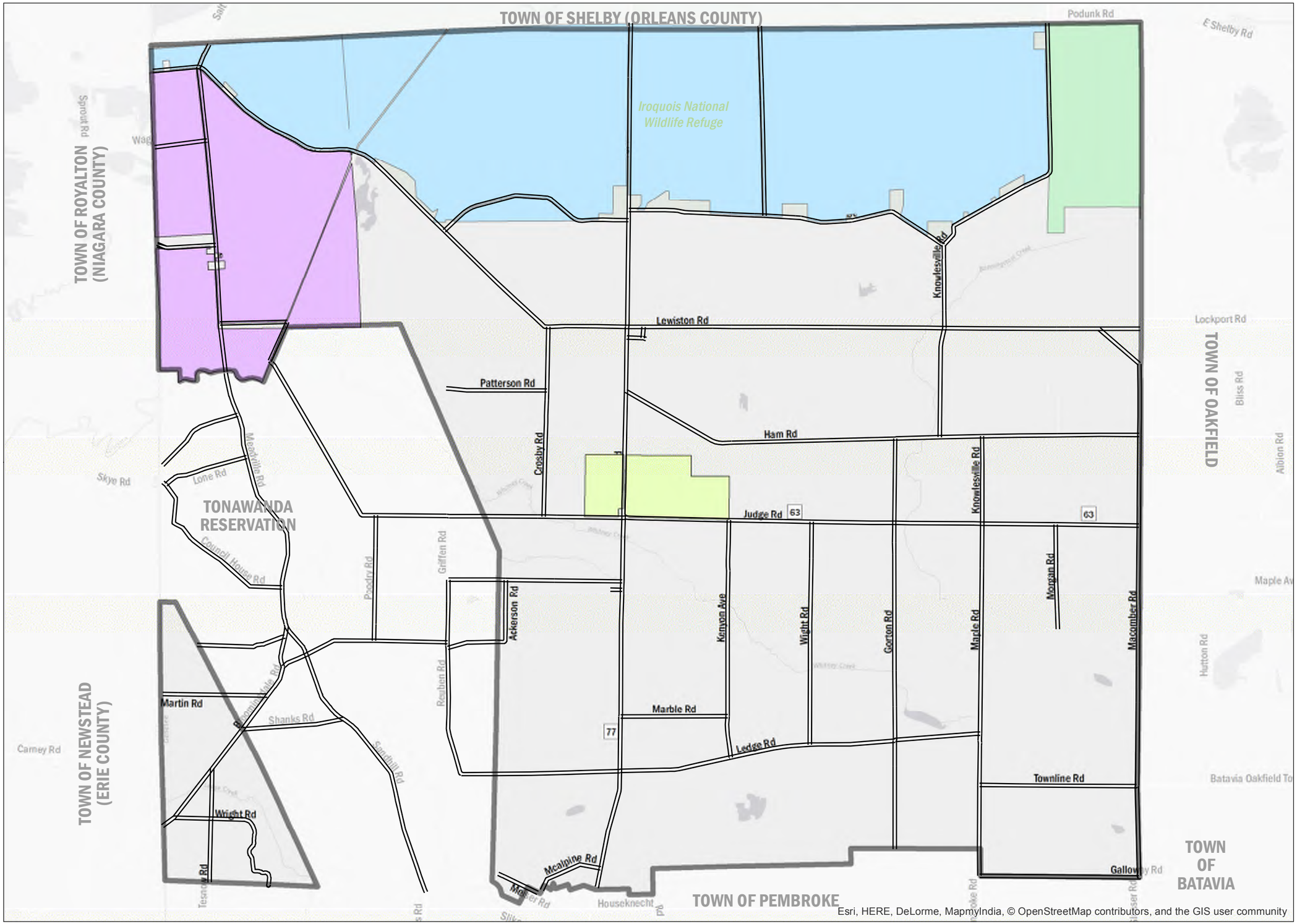
CC Environment & Planning

LABELLA

- Audubon Important Bird Areas
- Streams and Rivers
- GeneseeCounty
- Significant Natural Communities
- DEC Wetlands
- DEC Wetland Check Zones
- Protected Areas

Map 10: Environmental Features

Prepared by: CC Environment & Planning, 05/19/2015



Town of Alabama

GENESEE COUNTY, NEW YORK

Comprehensive Plan Update

Map 11: Wildlife Conservation Areas

N
W E
S

LEGEND

- roads_public
- Town of Alabama
- John White Memorial Game Farm
- Tonawanda Wildlife Managment Area
- Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge
- Oak Orchard Wildlife Management Area

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

wendel

WD Project # 436003CP
Map Created: August, 2017

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Data Sources:
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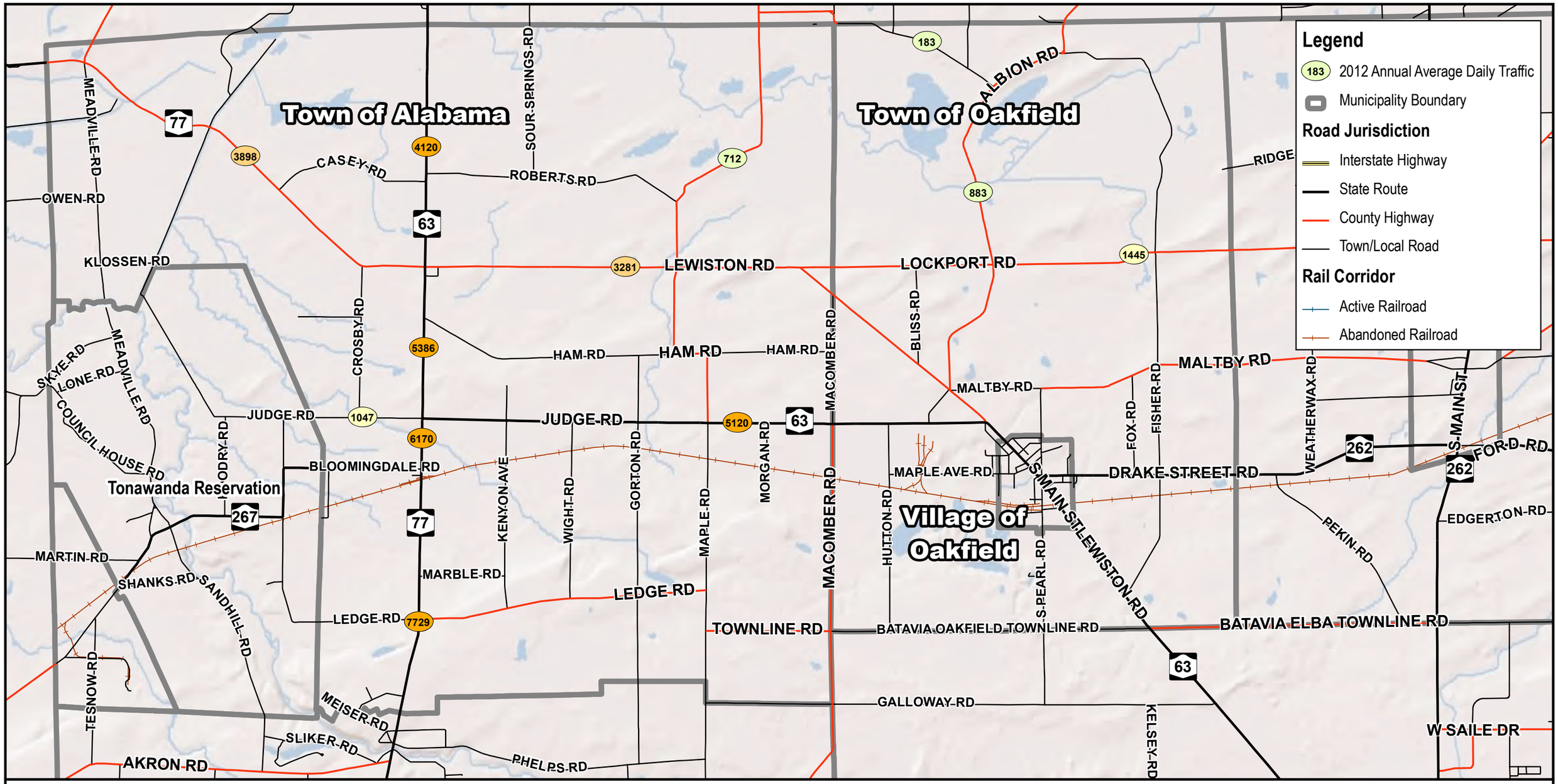


Data Sources: 2012 Traffic Count data from NYS Department of Transportation

Green Genesee Smart Genesee
Transportation and Traffic Counts

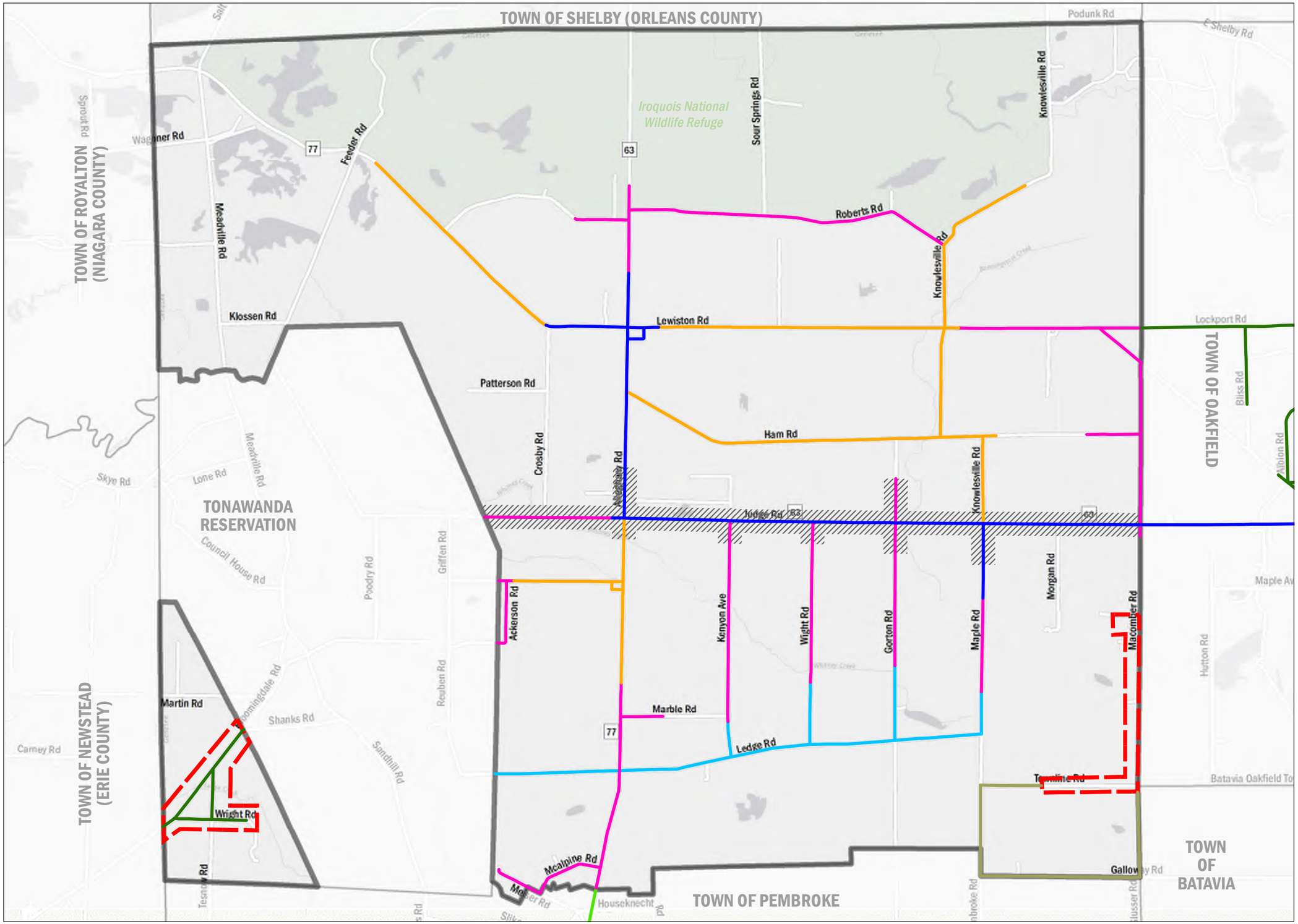
Community Inventory and Analysis Report
Town of Oakfield - Village of Oakfield
Town of Alabama, New York

CC Environment & Planning

LABELLA

Map 12: Transportation

Prepared by: Genesee County Department of Planning, 06/25/2015



Town of Alabama

GENESEE COUNTY, NEW YORK

Comprehensive Plan Update

Map 13: Water Infrastructure

N W E S

LEGEND

- Town of Alabama
- Water Districts

Phased Water Location

- Existing Water
- Phase 1 Water
- Phase 2 Water
- Phase 3 Water
- Phase 4 Water
- Phase 5 Water
- Pembroke Line
- DR-14 Pipe Upgrade

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

wendel

WD Project # 436003CP
Map Created: August, 2017

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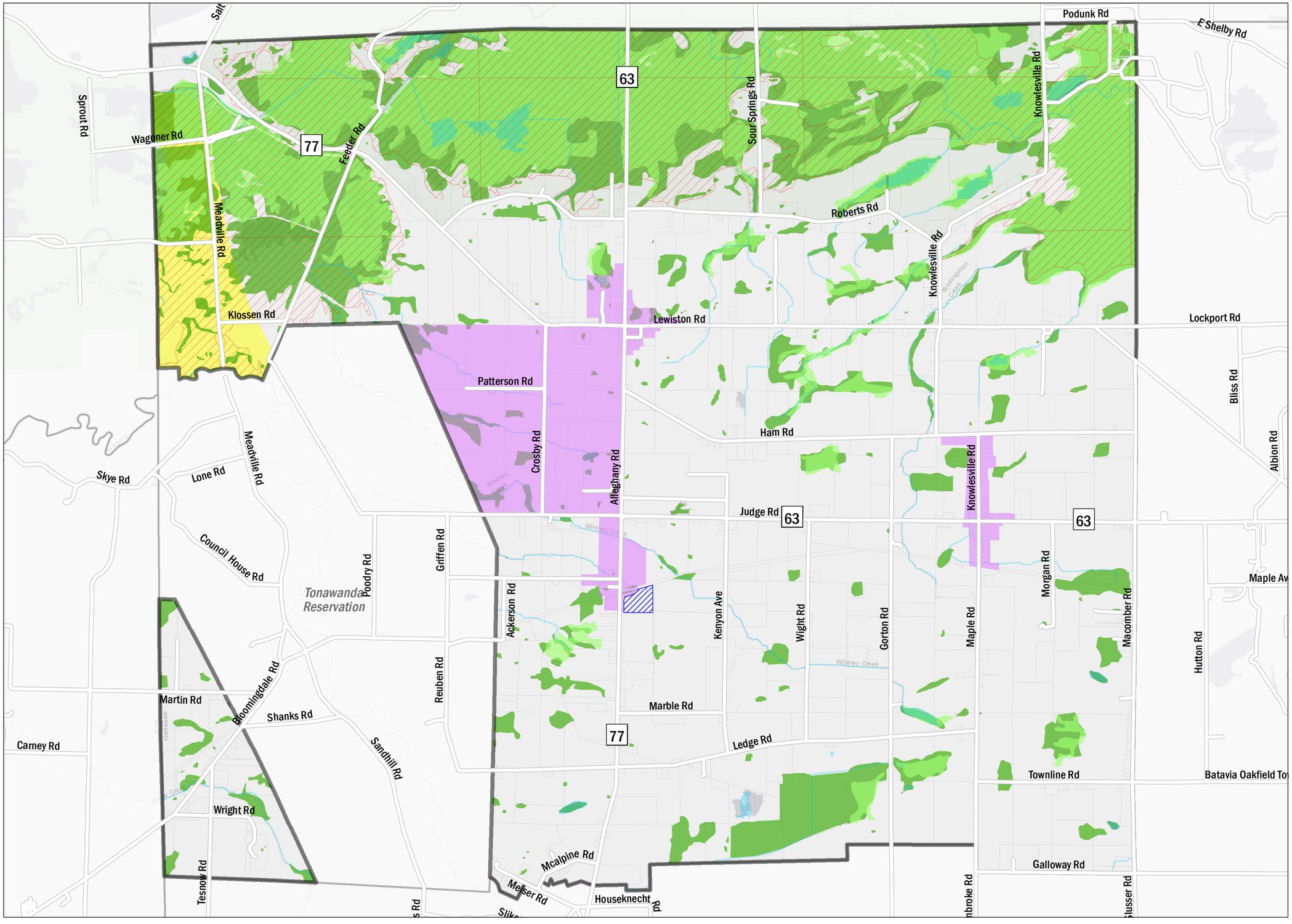

Town of Alabama

GENESEE COUNTY, NEW YORK

Comprehensive Plan Update

Map 14
Smart Growth Areas

LEGEND

- Parcel Boundary (2016)
- Stream
- Waterbody
- Smart Growth Development Area
- Reserved Development Area
- FEMA Flood Hazard
- Aquifer
- State Wetland
- Federal Wetland

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

wendel

WD Project # 436004
Map Created: August, 2018

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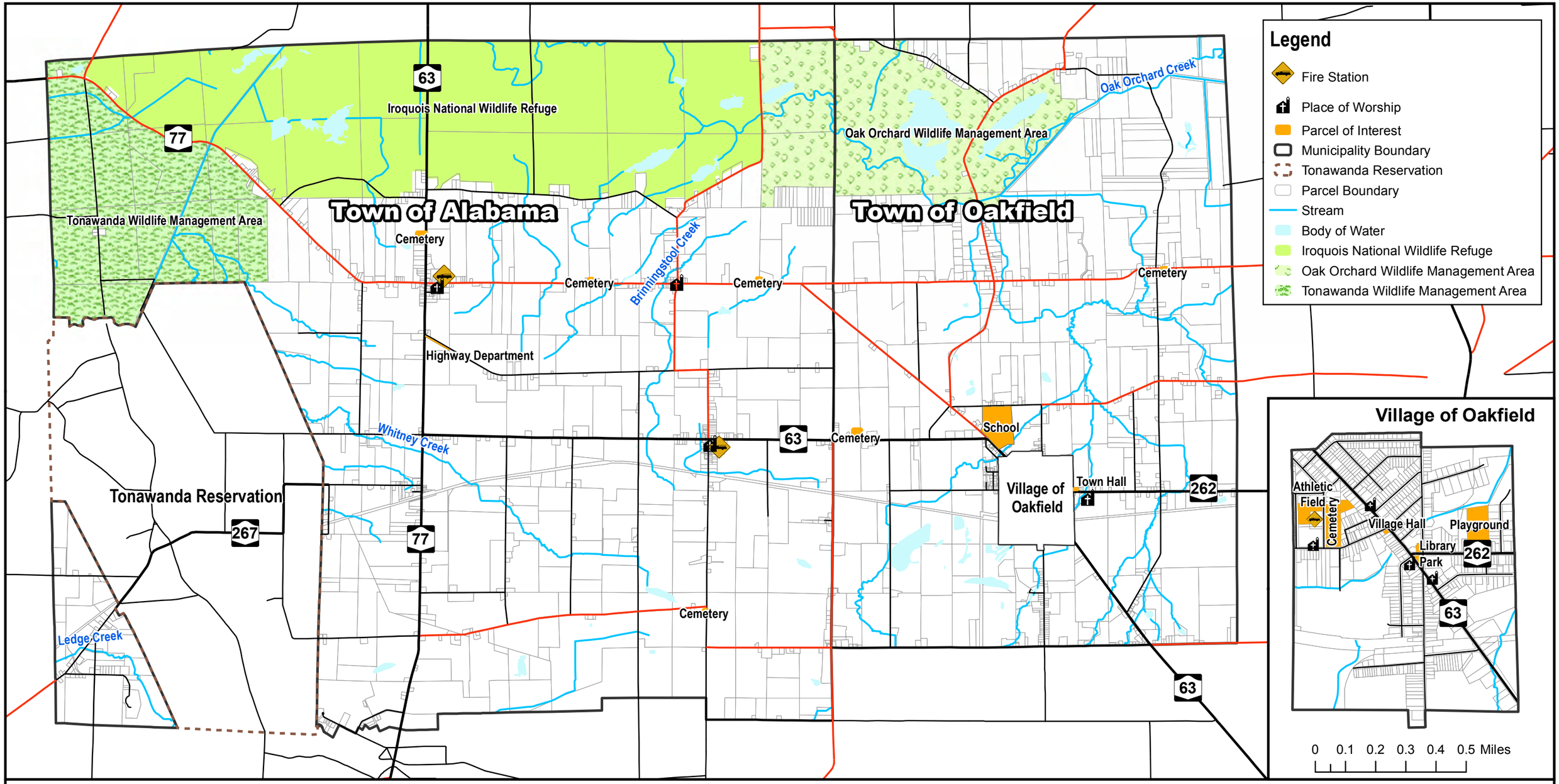
Data Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, MapmyIndia, OpenStreetMap contributors, Clark Patterson Lee, NYS GIS Program Office, Genesee County



Data Sources: Genesee County Department of Planning

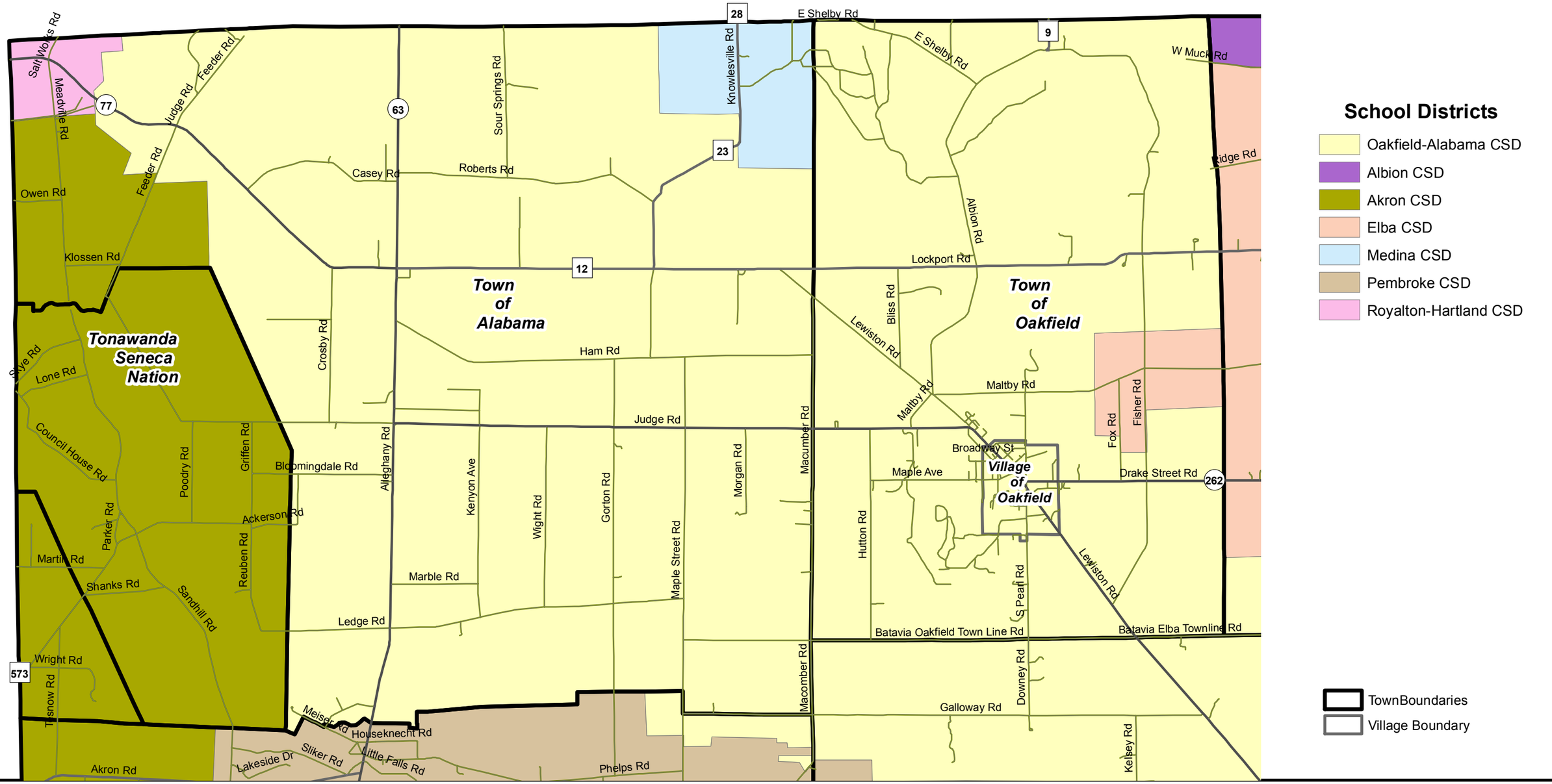
Green Genesee Smart Genesee
Community and Cultural Facilities
Community Inventory and Analysis Report
Town of Oakfield - Village of Oakfield
Town of Alabama, New York

CC Environment & Planning

LABELLA

Map 15: Community Facilities

Prepared by: Genesee County Department of Planning, 06/25/2015



Data Sources: Base map and data provided by the Genesee County Planning Department

School Districts

Town of Alabama, Town of Oakfield and Village of Oakfield
Genesee County, New York

CC Environment & Planning
23 Jackson St.
Batavia, NY 14020
(585)219-4030

LABELLA

Map 16: School Districts

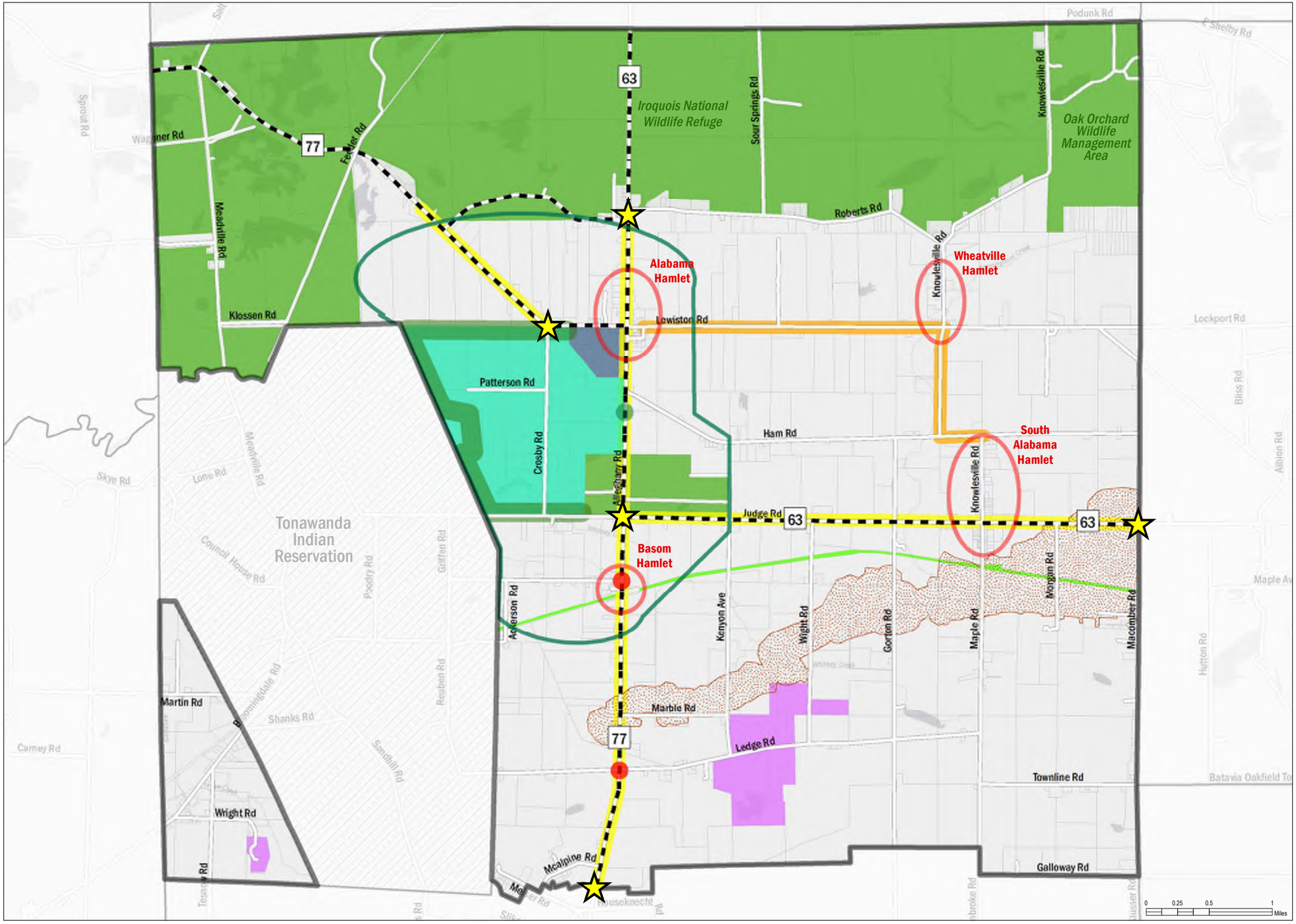
Prepared by: LaBella Associates, 06/25/2015

Town of Alabama

GENESEE COUNTY, NEW YOR

Comprehensive Plan Update

Map 17
Vision Map



LEGEND

- Gateway
- Hamlet Planning
- Stamp Hamlet Planning
- Stamp Entrance Features
- Problem Intersections
- Bike Paths
- Generalized Location of U.S. Gypsum Underground Mines
- Stamp Greenspace Viewshed Protection Area
- Industrial
- Stamp Site
- Rural Agrarian Character Protection
- Rural Character Zoning Overlay
- TD3/Alabama Hamlet
- Multi Use Trail
- Conservation

wendel

WD Project # 436003CP
Map Created: October, 2017

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2. Public Meetings Information

Public Information Meeting #1

TOWN OF ALABAMA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE
Public Information Meeting: April 13, 2017

The Town of Alabama hosted a Public Information Meeting on April 13, 2017 to obtain public input on the Town's Comprehensive Plan update. The meeting provided attendees with an overview of the draft Plan document, and an opportunity to provide comments.

The presentation started at 7pm, with a welcome from Supervisor Janet Sage and Planning Board Chair Ron Gilbert, who sit on the Comprehensive Plan Committee. Drew Reilly provided an overview of Comprehensive Plans, and where the Town is in the process. To date, the Town's consultants have updated information about the Town, and based on the research and public input, updated the Goals and developed draft recommendations. Mr. Reilly also described public input, which included a public meeting in October 2016, an informal survey, and meetings with the Comprehensive Plan Committee. In addition, the consultants reviewed other planning efforts affecting the Town of Alabama, including the Green Genesee, Smart Genesee; the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan and various regional planning documents.

Ellen Parker provided a summary of the public input and asked attendees whether it was accurate. The primary findings were:

- Residents value the rural character of the Town of Alabama
- There is strong support for agriculture
- There is strong support for the extension of water lines to existing residents
- Residents support smart growth in the hamlet areas, and limiting growth outside the hamlets
- Residents prefer the hamlets remain primarily residential in character, particularly for South Alabama and Basom. Some limited commercial development could occur in the Alabama hamlet.
- Property maintenance is a concern
- Failing septic systems are a concern (although there is not support for public sewers)
- There is concern about traffic, particularly along Route 77/63.

Attendees generally agreed with those observations.

Drew Reilly and Ellen Parker provided a summary of the major findings, and draft recommendations, which were also summarized in handouts (see attached). Attendees were encouraged to take extra copies of the handouts to their neighbors, friends and family members. Completed comment sheets can be dropped off at Town Hall.

The floor was then opened to questions and comments. Issues that were raised included the following:

- Town should be proactively planning for alternative energy, particularly wind turbines. There have been proposals for very large turbines to the north of Alabama in Somerset.
- There were questions about zoning, and how incentive zoning works in the Town.

- There was concern about the future end use for the quarry site.
- Traffic along the State highways is a concern.
- The intersection of Lewiston and Alleghany Roads was identified as a problem intersection, with a recent major accident. It was questions as to whether a street light should be installed. Drew Reilly noted that both roads were under the jurisdiction of the State, limited the Town's influence.
- The Alleghany and Ledge Road intersection was also cited as an issue. It was noted that the State is planning for that intersection. Attendees would like signage on Ledge Road to warn motorists of the upcoming stop sign.
- There was a question on the designation of Route 77, and what impact that may have.

3. Appendix H: Model Agricultural District Zoning from *Genesee County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan*

APPENDIX H

MODEL AGRICULTURE ZONING DISTRICT

§ XXX-XX. Rural Agriculture District (RA)

A. Purpose and Intent

Consistent with the Town of _____ Comprehensive Plan, the purpose of the Rural Agriculture District (RA) is to create a zoning category supportive of agriculture, encouraging maintenance of large parcels conducive to growing crops and keeping farm animals for the production of agricultural products. These areas consist of rural, sparsely settled lands primarily in agricultural use such as cultivated fields, grasslands, wetlands, hedgerows and woodlots. Design guidelines are intended to minimize conflicts between agricultural and non-agricultural uses, and maintain rural character. Residential uses are allowed as a secondary use, and residential uses shall be aware that if conflicts arise with agricultural uses, agricultural practices shall be given preference.

B. Design Principles

The primary objective of the RA district is to preserve the rural character of the agricultural landscape. For agricultural uses, design is subordinate to the needs of a working farm. Non-agricultural uses should be designed to harmonize with the surrounding landscape. The following design principles apply to non-agricultural uses:

(1) Recognize that agriculture is considered the primary and preferred use.
(2) Protect important natural and historic features.
(3) Encourage a natural and agricultural landscape along road frontages.
(4) Encourage buildings to have varied setbacks from the roadway.
(5) Establish buffers between agricultural and non-agricultural uses through use of distance, hedgerows, trees or other natural screening on the non-agricultural property.
(6) Discourage creation of undeveloped parcels that cannot support agricultural operations.

C. Standards vs. Guidelines

This code includes both standards that are required to be met as well as guidelines that are encouraged, but not mandated. As such, provisions designated as “shall” or “will” are required, while provisions designated as “should” are encouraged.

D. Location of Districts

The location of the RA district is as shown on the Zoning Map of the Town of _____.

E. Review of Projects in the RA District

(1) Administrative Review. The Code Enforcement Officer under Administrative Review as set forth herein is hereby authorized to undertake the review and approval of applications and

shall coordinate such review with any other code review requirements with emergency responders, highway or other agency officials as/if deemed necessary by the Code Enforcement Officer.

(2) Applications reviewed for compliance with this district may be either approved through Administrative Review, or shall be approved through Site Plan Review. The purpose of Administrative Review is to streamline the approval process where possible.

(3) The Code Enforcement Officer is authorized to administratively review and approve all applications which clearly conform to all the applicable principles and standards of this district, or to deny approval if it does not conform. Applications that are denied may re-apply after appropriate modification and/or the applicant may request a full Site Plan Review instead.

(4) If the Code Enforcement Officer determines that an application requires interpretation or discretionary judgement with respect to compliance with the standards and guidelines of this district, the application shall be referred to a Planning Board.

(5) Prior to submitting a formal application under this section, it is strongly encouraged that the applicant request a pre-application meeting with the Code Enforcement Officer, at which point there should be a discussion of the design principles of the District, along with identification of the engineering considerations of the site and the integration of the site into the agricultural landscape.

(6) No site preparation or construction shall commence until site plan approval has been granted and permits have been issued by all governmental agencies involved.

(7) The purpose, principles and standards of this section are intended to guide the Code Enforcement Officer and the Planning Board in its review of projects within the RA District.

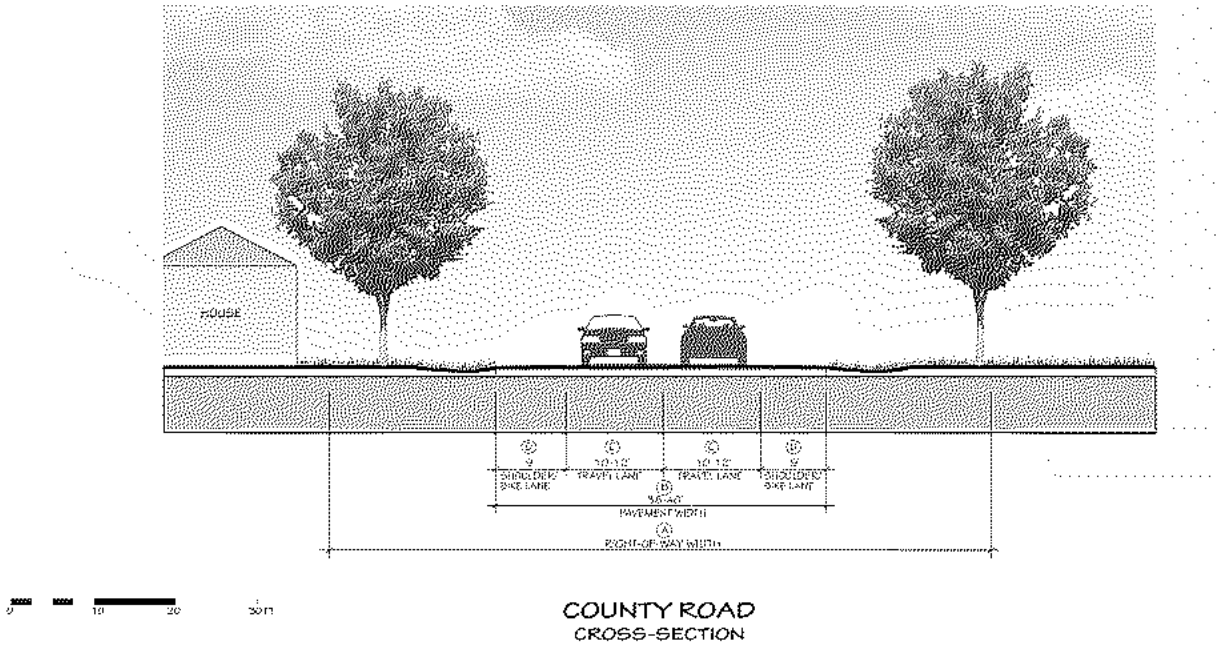
(8) In reviewing any proposed modification of a guideline, the Code Enforcement Officer and/or the Planning Board shall consider whether granting the modification will be consistent with the purpose of this section and the Comprehensive Plan.

F. Building Placement

Building placement shall be guided by best practices to integrate the proposed use into the agricultural landscape with a minimum of disruption to agricultural uses. No minimum setbacks are established, except as may be determined by other code review requirements, such as emergency responders, highway or other agency officials. Placement to minimize disturbance of prime soils or important environmental features is prioritized.

Table 1: Building Placement	
Setback (Distance from Property Line)	
Front	NA
Side (primary/accessory)	NA
Rear (primary/accessory)	NA
Lot Size and Coverage	
Width	200 foot minimum
Depth	NA
Lot Coverage	NA

G. Street Standards



COUNTY ROAD
CROSS-SECTION

Street Standards – Rural Agricultural Road		
Application		
Movement type	Varies	
Target Design Speed	45 to 55 MPH	
Overall Widths		
Typical Right-of-Way Width: County Road	66’	**A**
Typical Right-of-Way Width: Local Road	49.5’	**A**
Pavement width	36-40’	**B**
Lanes		
Travel Lanes	10-12’	**C**
Shoulder/ Bike Lanes	9’	**D**
Parking Lanes	None	
Edges		
Curb Type	Open Swales	
Tree Lawn	None	
Tree Spacing	Multiple species in clusters	
Sidewalks	None (optional)	
Lighting	Per agency with jurisdiction	

The following are the specific standards for RA Districts:

(1) Where new streets are provided, the street network should connect to county and state roads in a manner that takes access management into consideration.
(2) Streets should be designed to:
    a. Respect and follow existing terrain as much as possible, to minimize earth moving and disruption to the existing topography.
    b. Be parallel to and preserve existing tree lines, hedgerows, stone walls and watercourses, with an attempt to minimize disruption to these features.
    c. Minimize alteration of natural, cultural or historic features.
    d. Be aligned, where possible, so that the 'terminal vista' is of natural vistas.
    e. Intersect at right angles whenever possible, with preservation of adequate sight lines (triangles) at the intersection.
(3) Where feasible, wide shoulders are encouraged to accommodate wide farm equipment using the roadways.

Site Development Standards

(1) Agricultural uses shall be preferred.
(2) Where non-agricultural uses are proposed, they should be sited to minimize impact on adjacent agricultural uses.
(3) Non-agricultural uses, including residential uses, shall avoid development on prime soils, properties enrolled in a NYS-certified Agricultural District, or lands that have been actively farmed in the past three years as determined by reported crop history.
(4) Non-agricultural uses, including residential uses, that do not avoid these features are subject to stricter review, as outlined in Table 2:

Table 2: Development Standards: Disturbed Lands	
Affected features* comprise less than 25% of disturbed area on parcel	Eligible for Administrative Review
Affected features are 25% to 50% of parcel	Requires Site Plan Review
Affected features are more than 50% of parcel	Requires Area Variance

* Affected features include prime soils, Agricultural District enrollment status or lands actively farmed in the past three years.

(5) Where construction on prime soils is unavoidable, development should be located as far from active farmlands as is feasible, with a preference for locating near the roadway, near other existing development or in wooded areas of the lot.
(6) In order to minimize land disturbance and wherever possible, existing access drives or lanes should be used for location of driveways.
(7) If buffer lands are provided between the non-agricultural development and actively farmed lands, such buffers shall be designed to avoid potential impacts to adjoining agricultural lands (e.g. not host pests or create shade that impedes crops).
(8) The emphasis shall be on natural plantings, with a variety of species set in naturalistic clusters rather than formal landscaping. Pollinator-friendly plantings are encouraged.

(9) Any exterior lighting shall be minimized and focused downward to the maximum extent practicable to avoid excessive night time lighting glow (dark sky compliant).

H. Architectural Standards/ Guidelines

(1) Agricultural buildings are not subject to architectural standards or guidelines.
(2) Non-agricultural buildings should emphasize local identity, and reflect the residential vernacular of Genesee County.

[Note: Local community may have/ may develop local design guidelines]

I. Uses and Restrictions

(1) The schedule of permitted uses and specially permitted uses for the RA district is found in Table 3.

Table 3: Permitted Uses	
USE GROUP Use Category	**Rural Agriculture District**
P = Permitted by right. SP = Special use permit required	
AGRICULTURAL	
Farms and related agricultural operations	P
Commercial greenhouses and nurseries	P
One- and Two-family farm homesteads	P
Farm worker housing	P
Farm water supply and ponds located a minimum of 150 feet from a street, property line or stream	P
Private stables	P
Agri-tourism activities operated as part of a farm	P
RESIDENTIAL	
One-family dwellings not associated with a farm	P
OTHER	
Home Occupations [as allowed per Town regulations]	*
Churches or other assembly buildings	P
Parks	P
Outdoor recreation facility	SP
Agri-tourism activities not operated as part of a farm	SP
Kennels/ Dog boarding	SP
Public stable	SP
Public utility	SP
Landscaping and topsoil businesses	SP
Commercial Solar Farms	SP
ACCESSORY USES ASSOCIATED WITH AN ALLOWED USE	
Barns and other outbuildings, such as silos, storage bins	P
Garages	P
Sheds	P
Roadside stands, not exceeding 400 square feet	P
Non-commercial alternative energy (wind, solar)	P

4. *2005 Alabama / Oakfield Comprehensive Plan*

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SECTION 1.0
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Introduction and Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

The Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan represents the culmination of a joint planning effort undertaken by the Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield. These three rural communities recognized the importance of such cooperation and joined together to formulate a common vision for managing future growth and development. This Plan was prepared in conformance with NYS Town Law Section 272-a and NYS Village Law Section 7-722 and is designed to be consistent with the principles of the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan.

The Genesee County Smart Growth Plan outlines a strategy for managing and controlling the extension of water service throughout Genesee County. As a way of minimizing the potential impacts of additional growth and development, which would otherwise occur as a result of the extension of water service, this plan sets forth objectives aimed at ensuring that water extensions do not result in additional development that is inconsistent with the principles of "smart growth". The Plan designates "development areas" within which development and redevelopment would be encouraged and access to the County-funded portions of the County's water system would not be restricted. The "development areas" were delineated based on a certain set of criteria, and include areas with significant potential for economic development, as well as areas that are already relatively densely developed with residential, commercial or industrial uses.

The Smart Growth Plan establishes guidelines for implementing an approval process for water hook-ups, which calls for the creation of a County-level administrative review committee. However, the County Legislature may choose to delegate the authority to approve water hook-ups to individual municipalities that have adopted a comprehensive plan consistent with the principles of the Smart Growth Plan.

Although the Smart Growth Plan and the potential ability to receive public water was the driving force behind the effort to create this document, there were other issues that warranted the preparation of this Plan by the three partnering communities. The Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan sets forth a strategy for addressing important issues and for guiding future growth and development, protecting agricultural uses and rural community character, and improving the quality of life in each community. The three communities have designed this plan to acknowledge existing conditions in each community, to establish their vision for the future, and to outline how they intend to achieve their goals and objectives for managing growth. This Plan is intended to serve as a framework wherein each community can evaluate future land use and development issues and decisions. The goals and objectives, recommendations, and implementation strategy outlined in this Plan are designed to address the individual concerns of each community, and reflect their unique and distinctive vision for the future.

Each municipality will individually adopt the Plan, and will be responsible for implementing the action items that pertain to their respective communities. It is hoped that in implementing this Comprehensive Plan, the communities will continue to work together, especially on those issues and actions that center around their common goals, have regional significance, and/or relate to the County's Smart Growth Plan. Once adopted, the Towns and Village should begin to implement this Plan by amending their land use regulations to better

follow the recommendations contained herein, and to consider the plan in all of their future land use decisions (site plans, subdivisions, and zoning actions).

1.2 Regional and Local Setting

The study area includes the Towns of Alabama and Oakfield and the Village of Oakfield, and is located in northwestern Genesee County. The communities are approximately 25 miles east of Buffalo, 35 miles west of Rochester and 10 miles north of the City of Batavia. The three-community study area is predominantly a rural, agricultural region with small pockets of denser residential and commercial development located in hamlets and the Village Oakfield. The rural landscape is dominated by gently rolling hills, farm fields, pockets of woodland and rural homes, interrupted only by the hamlets and Village where small stores, churches, and denser residential development exists.

1.3 Public Input

The three communities recognized public input as a critical element in the planning process. Therefore, a variety of methods were utilized to gather input from local residents, including two public information meetings, written comment forms, a public opinion survey, individual meetings with government officials, an internet website, and press releases. In addition, the entire process was closely overseen by the Advisory Committee, which was comprised of representatives from each community. This Committee met on a regular basis to provide guidance and insight on the development of the plan, ensuring that the concerns of each community were being effectively addressed.

1.4 Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives represent the broad, general values and vision for the communities. With the assistance of the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee, the goals and objectives were devised by utilizing the communities' original rational for preparing the comprehensive plan, data from the inventory and analysis, and input gathered from residents at public meetings, from written comments, and through a public opinion survey.

The goals focus on the major issues and concerns of the residents in the three communities. They are aimed at helping to guide future growth and development in the Towns and Village. They represent a consensus of the community's values and vision for guiding future land use decisions that could impact overall quality of life. The major goals for the three communities are listed below.

<u>Town of Alabama</u>

- Protect, promote and preserve agriculture
- Maintain and enhance community character
- Provide potable water to appropriate areas of the Town
- Protect the environmental features and resources
- Provide for economic development
- Maintain and promote efficiency of government
- Encourage a diversity of housing types

<u>Town of Oakfield</u>

- Promote the expansion public water to appropriate areas in the Town
- Provide for economic development
- Protect and preserve agriculture
- Maintain and enhance community character
- Protect the environmental features and resources of the community
- Encourage a diversity of housing types in the Town
- Maintain and promote efficiency of government

Village of Oakfield

- Promote and encourage investment and economic development in the Village
- Preserve the traditional neighborhood character of the Village
- Maintain and Promote efficiency of government

1.5 Existing Conditions

Section 4.0 of the Comprehensive Plan summarizes information on the existing conditions and trends in each of the three communities. It contains information land use and land use regulations, the natural environment, demographics and socioeconomic conditions, transportation, public infrastructure and utilities and community facilities. This information provides a useful assessment of where the communities have been and where they are now in terms of growth and development. Furthermore, it is useful for identifying important issues and opportunities in each of the communities, as well as commonalties, and establishes the framework for planning recommendations. The general content of each subsection in Section 4.0 is described below.

- Existing Land Use

This section outlines land use patterns throughout the region. Because farming has traditionally been an important component of land use in Genesee County, a subsection is provided that discusses agricultural activity in each community.

- Land Use Regulations

This section summarizes the land use controls that govern how land may be used and developed in each municipality. It describes the various zoning districts and the types of uses allowed in each district. It summarizes supplemental zoning regulations that control particular uses such as home occupations, adult uses, and communications towers.

- Natural Environment

This section provides information about the environmental setting of the three communities. It provides information about the topography, hydric soils, stream corridors by watershed, areas of flooding and wetlands, natural habitat and scenic resources. The final subsection describes the State and Federal wildlife conservation areas, which play a significant role in defining the character of the area.

- Demographics and Socioeconomic Factors

This section provides information about population trends, the age characteristics of area residents, and statistics on employment and income. It also provides an overview of the housing stock of the region.

- Transportation

This section describes the transportation network serving the communities, including roadways, traffic volumes, public transportation and pedestrian and bicycle routes.

- Utilities

This section provides information about the local infrastructure, including water (public water supply and wells), wastewater disposal (sewers and septic) and solid waste management.

- Community Facilities

This section identifies the community facilities available for the use of the residents of the Towns and Village. These include area parks and recreational facilities, schools, emergency services (police and fire), governmental facilities and cultural resources (historic buildings and important archaeological sites).

1.6 Findings and Recommendations

The Findings and Recommendations are provided for each community as they relate to the major Goals and Objectives in Section 3.0. Findings, opportunities and constraints for each goal were identified using the existing conditions information found in Section 4.0, as well as public input received throughout the process. Based on the determined opportunities and constraints, general findings for each community were established. Findings are listed for each community under the following categories.

- Existing Land Use
- Agriculture and Farmland
- Natural Environment and Constraints
- Demographics and Social-Economic Characteristics
- Transportation
- Utilities
- Community and Government Facilities
- Zoning

Recommendations for achieving the opportunities or addressing constraints were formulated for each community utilizing the goals and objectives outlined in Section 3.0. For each community, each goal is discussed and then followed by a series of recommendations. The recommendations are further developed in Section 6.0 (Implementation).

1.7 Implementation

The Implementation section of the Comprehensive Plan outlines strategies for achieving the goals objectives outlined in Section 3.0, and for accomplishing many of the recommendations set forth in Section 5.0. The implementation strategy includes a step by step approach with established priorities. This Plan is an active document and over time, as local situations change, so may the priorities of each community. Therefore, upon adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, one of the first priority actions is for each community to designate an Implementation Advisory Committee to be responsible for the active implementation of this document.

Section 6.0 is broken into subsections for each participating community. Each implementation strategy for each community sets forth a prioritized, step-by-step approach. Priority 1 and 2 actions have been organized under four categories: Agriculture; Public Water/Smart Growth Plan; Zoning and other Land Use Regulations; and Other Actions. Priority 1 actions are those tasks that should be completed in the immediate term (one to two years). Priority 2 actions are those actions that should be undertaken over the short term (three to five years out). Priority 3 Actions are also included, which are either longer-term activities or alternative actions that may or may not be necessary depending on the outcome of Priority 1 and 2 actions. Key implementation strategies for each municipality are as follows.

Town of Alabama

- Revise the Agricultural–Residential zoning district to build upon the intent that agricultural uses are primary uses in the district.
- Work with Genesee County to more specifically expand the designated "development areas" in the 2005 Update of the Geneses County Smart Growth Plan.
- Outside of the identified growth areas, review and update the list of non-agricultural land uses allowed by Special Use Permit.
- Establish zoning overlay districts for hamlet areas (within long-term growth boundaries on the Vision Map).
- Adopt regulations for the review and approval of the major and minor subdivision of land, separate from the Zoning Ordinance, as per Section 276 of the NYS Town Law.
- Draft a set of rural development guidelines that provide written standards and graphic examples to ensure that the vision for growth and development set forth in this document is achieved.
- During future reviews of the County's Agricultural District, recommend to Genesee County that non-agricultural lands be removed from the district. This is primarily the case in Basom and South Alabama.
- Investigate residents' requests/needs for public water due to public health and safety concerns.
- Relocate Town Hall, along with other Town facilities, to the Alabama hamlet.
- Work with Genesee County and the Town of Oakfield to investigate the feasibility and potential funding for a rails-to-trials project on the abandoned Penn Central rail corridor.

Town of Oakfield

- Revise the schedule of permitted uses for the Residential Agricultural zoning district (R&A) to build upon the intent that agricultural uses are primary uses in this district.
- Work with Genesee County to expand the designated "development areas" in the 2005 Update of the Geneses County Smart Growth Plan.
- Identify a new growth area in the East Oakfield crossroads area of Lockport Road and Fisher Road for both public water and as a residential development area.
- Expand water from the Village of Oakfield to the growth area surrounding the Village. Lateral restrictions should be implemented along Fisher Road north to East Oakfield.
- Adopt regulations for the review and approval of the major and minor subdivision of land, separate from the Zoning Ordinance, as per Section 276 of the NYS Town Law.
- Revise zoning to include provisions for cluster residential subdivisions as per Section 278 of the NYS Town Law, with proper reference made in the Town's Subdivisions regulations.
- Establish a zoning overlay district for East Oakfield hamlet (within long-term growth boundaries on the Vision Map).

- During future reviews of the County's Agricultural District recommend to the Genesee County that non-agricultural lands be removed from the district.
- Investigate residents' requests/needs for public water due to health and safety concerns.
- Adopt Site Plan Review regulations.
- Adopt a new zoning district (separate from R&A) that would focus on protecting important agricultural lands and prime soils from intrusive or incompatible uses or ill-designed subdivision layouts.
- Develop a strategy for the U.S. Gypsum facilities in the event they become available for redevelopment.
- Work with the Village of Oakfield to create a long-range plan for expanding sewer service into the Town within the identified growth areas.
- Work with Genesee County and the Town of Alabama to investigate the feasibility and potential funding for a rails-to-trials project on the abandoned Penn Central rail corridor.

Village of Oakfield

- Support the Towns of Oakfield and Alabama in their efforts to modify the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan to reflect the long-term growth boundaries shown on the Vision Map.
- Develop a long-range water plan depicting where water may be expanded outside the Village.
- Establish a zoning overlay district for the Central Business District, with architectural design guidelines, landscaping standards, signage requirements and parking standards.
- Amend zoning to allow multi-family housing in the commercial districts with a special use permit.
- As an incentive for reinvestment, adopt a local law allowing the Village to participate in the Real Property Tax Law Section 485-b program.
- Establish a Business Improvement District.
- Establish landscape standards in the zoning code as part of site plan review.
- Work with the New York State Department of Transportation as the Village implements streetscape improvements along Main Street.

1.8 Environmental Review

Section 7 provides a mechanism for the environmental review of the Comprehensive Plan. The Plan has been developed to serve as a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS), as allowed by §272-a.8 of NYS Town Law and §7-722.8 of NYS Village Law. This format enables the Lead Agency, Involved Agencies and the public to review one comprehensive document that contains a plan for managing future growth, and evaluates the potential environmental implications of adopting the plan.

A GEIS must include a section on Environmental Setting. Section 4 (Existing Conditions) of this Comprehensive Plan provides a review and analysis of the environmental setting of the Towns and Village, as they exist now. The underlying purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to guide future growth and development by promoting appropriate land use in suitable areas, thereby avoiding potential significant adverse impacts. For this multi-jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan, the impacts specific to each community are outlined individually, facilitating review of the document by all involved and interested parties. Section 5 (Findings and Recommendations) provides the necessary evaluation of existing conditions in order to establish the importance and nature of potential impacts.

Adverse environmental impacts that cannot be avoided are put into perspective by the fact that with or without the adoption and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, there will continue to be limited new development, some reuse, and pressures to sell-off building lots in agricultural areas. Adoption of this Plan will allow the Towns and Village to better manage growth and development, reducing potential environmental impacts. The Plan provides techniques for controlling growth, along with mitigation measures, such as lateral restrictions on water hook-ups and overlay districts that minimize impacts to a level that do not create significant adverse environmental impacts. The Environmental Review section of the Plan also assesses the No-Action alternative (not adopting the Plan).

1.9 Annual Review

In an effort to keep the Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan relevant as conditions change and to reflect the results of the implementation actions, a process for the regular review of the Plan should be established. Section 8 (Annual Review) recommends that each community conduct an annual review of the Comprehensive Plan to ensure that it remains a dynamic and useful document. This review will also measure the accomplishments of each community, individually and in partnership, for implementing and achieving the goals and objectives of the Plan. The Planning Board or a designated review committee, as authorized by the municipality's legislative board, would conduct this review.

By undertaking this review on a yearly basis, the communities can evaluate their achievements for implementing the Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan. This is important in order to keep the implementation process moving forward and to make adjustments to the implementation strategy, as required.

SECTION 2.0
INTRODUCTION

In October of 2000, Genesee County drafted a Smart Growth Plan as a strategy for managing and controlling the extension of water services throughout the County. As a way of minimizing potential impacts this plan generally outlines what areas in the County would qualify to receive public water and the reasoning behind these decisions. Those areas that were designated to receive water are known as "Development Areas", and were determined to meet a certain set of criteria. Examples of criteria that may make an area suitable as a Development Area include:

- Existing patterns of dense development,
- Zoning that permits higher density development,
- access to transportation networks,
- feasibility of extending water service, and
- minimal conflict with agricultural districts and State designated wetlands.

As set forth in the Smart Growth Plan, three key reasons for limiting potential connections to public water supply include:

- promoting the efficient use of land resources and infrastructure,
- encouraging revitalization of existing developed areas, and
- protecting prime agricultural soils and natural resources.

The Smart Growth Plan gives reasons for properly planning future hookups and establishes guidelines for implementing an approval process. This process calls for the creation of an administrative review committee by the County Legislature, to include representatives from various County agencies. This committee will then review requests for service connections on a case by case basis, using the criteria outlined in the Smart Growth Plan. The County Legislature may choose to delegate the authority of administering requests for service connections to the individual municipalities by entering into inter-municipal agreements. To be eligible to review requests for service connections a municipality must have a legally adopted comprehensive plan that is consistent with the principles of the Smart Growth Plan. Without such a plan, the community would not be able to review requests within their own municipal jurisdiction. In addition, by having an adopted comprehensive plan a municipality would also have a stronger position and founded reasoning for requesting revisions to Development Areas when the Smart Growth Plan is amended every two years.

For the above reasons, the Towns of Alabama, Oakfield, and the Village of Oakfield have collaborated to draft a Comprehensive Plan. None of these communities have undertaken any previous comprehensive planning efforts. Although the Smart Growth Plan and the ability to receive public water was the driving force behind the effort to create this document, there were other issues that warranted the preparation of the plan. This comprehensive plan is intended to set forth a strategy for addressing the important issues in each partnering community and for guiding future growth and development, protecting rural character and improving the quality of life. The three communities have designed this plan to acknowledge existing conditions in each community, to establish their vision for the future, and to outline how they intend to achieve their goals and objectives for managing growth.

2.1 Regional and Local Setting

The study area, which includes the Town of Alabama, the Town of Oakfield, and the Village of Oakfield, is situated directly north of the New York State Thruway (Interstate 90) in northwestern Genesee County. Located west of New York's Finger Lakes, the study area is uniquely situated at the crossroads of four counties, Erie, Niagara, Orleans, and Genesee (see Map 1). The three communities are approximately 25 miles east of Buffalo, 35 miles west of Rochester, 20 miles south of Lake Ontario, and 10 miles north of the City of Batavia. The surrounding communities include the Towns of Shelby and Barre to the north, the Town of Elba to the east, the Towns of Batavia and Pembroke to the south and the Towns of Newstead and Royalton to the west.

The population of the study area was reported at 5,084 persons in the 2000 Census, with the populations for the Town of Alabama, Town of Oakfield (excluding the Village), and Village of Oakfield being 1,881 persons, 1,398 persons, and 1,805 persons, respectively. These numbers actually show a 4.3 percent decrease in population for the study area over a ten-year period, with the largest decline evidenced in the Town of Alabama. The number of households in the three-community study area generally remained stable.

The study area is predominantly a rural/agricultural area, with small pockets of denser residential and commercial development located in hamlets and the Village Oakfield. The landscape is very typical of rural Western New York communities with the area being dominated by gently rolling hills, farm fields, pockets of woodlands, and rural homes. The rural landscape is interrupted only by the hamlets and Village where small stores, churches, and denser residential development can be found.

2.2 Reasons for Preparing a Comprehensive Plan

It is important for each community to have an effective comprehensive plan to guide future growth and development. New York State Law indicates that Town and Village planning, zoning, capital budgeting and other decisions should be based on a current comprehensive plan that represents the community's vision for its future. The goal of the comprehensive plan is to develop recommendations for future development in the Towns and Village, while recognizing each community's unique assets and considering impacts upon surrounding Towns. This Plan is intended to serve as a framework within which each community will be able to evaluate future land use and development issues. It examines the environmental, demographic, physical and development aspects of each community, and the regulatory setting that guides these factors. It addresses the issues and concerns specific to each community, based on citizen input from local residents through a variety of forums, including a community survey. The goals and objectives, recommendations and implementation actions included in this plan are designed to address each community's individual concerns, and reflect its unique and distinctive vision for its future. It is the intended that this plan be adopted by each of the three communities and become a blueprint for the region's growth into the 21st Century.

2.3 How the Plan Will be Utilized

In accordance with Section 272-a of Town and Section 7-722 of Village Law, Towns and Villages have the authority to undertake comprehensive planning and to adopt a plan to help promote the health, safety and general welfare, with due consideration given to the needs of the people of the region. The comprehensive plan is defined by these laws as such: A comprehensive plan consists of the materials, written and/or graphic,

including but not limited to maps, charts, studies, resolutions, reports and other descriptive material that identify the goals, objectives, principles, guidelines, policies, standards, devices and instruments for the immediate and long range protection, enhancement, growth and development of a municipality.

By law, (pursuant to Sections 272-a and 7-722) the adoption of a comprehensive plan has the following effect:

a. All Town or Village land use regulations must be in accordance with a comprehensive plan adopted pursuant to §272-a.11.(a) or 7-722.11.(a).
b. All plans for capital projects of another government agency on land included in the Town or Village comprehensive plan, adopted pursuant to Section 272-a or 7-722, shall take such plan into consideration.

Once adopted, the Town or Village should begin to implement the plan by amending its land use regulations to conform to the comprehensive plan, and consider the plan in all of its land use decisions (site plans, subdivisions, and zoning actions). Yearly, the municipality should utilize the plan in formulating its capital project plan and in helping to determine what projects and other implementation actions should be undertaken in the following year.

Copies of the adopted comprehensive plan must be filed with County and State agencies, and should be utilized by those agencies in planning projects and actions that could affect the planning community.

SECTION 3.0
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

This section presents the goals and objectives that were developed for the three-community study area with the assistance of the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee. The goals and objectives have been designed for each community utilizing the communities' original rational for preparing the comprehensive plan, data from the inventory and analysis, and input gathered from residents at public meetings, from written comments, and through a public opinion survey.

The goals and objectives focus on the major issues and concerns of the residents in the three communities. They are aimed at helping to guide future growth and development in the Towns and Village. The recommendations that follow in Section 5 include more specific actions that each community can implement to achieve the intent of these goals and objectives.

3.1 Public Input

The three communities involved in the Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan were committed to the idea that a critical element of the planning process is effective public participation. From its inception, the Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan was prepared with extensive public input. A variety of avenues were utilized to solicit input, including two public information meetings, comment forms for the submittal of written comments, a public opinion survey, individual meetings with government officials, an internet website, and press releases. In addition, the entire process was closely overseen by the Advisory Committee, which was comprised of representatives from each of the participating communities. This committee met on a regular basis to provide guidance and insight into the planning process and to ensure that the concerns of each community were being effectively addressed.

- Public Information Meetings

  At the outset of the project, public information meetings were held in the Town of Alabama and the Town of Oakfield. These meetings were held on July 22nd and August 6th of 2002 to introduce the public to the project consultants, the Advisory Committee and the project. A brief overview of the project, the reasoning behind it and an understanding of how the plan would be developed was provided. This was followed by an open discussion of important issues and opportunities designed to generate public comments. An important goal of these meetings was to gather as much public input as possible regarding what features residents liked about their communities, where they had concerns, and what they saw as key opportunities for improving their quality of life. Brainstorming encouraged attendees to articulate their "vision" for their communities. Based on this input, a preliminary list of issues was prepared for use in developing the goals and objectives.

- Public Opinion Survey

  This project included a public opinion survey. The survey was sent out in the fall of 2002. The survey was tailored slightly for each municipality, with the Town of Oakfield survey including questions relating to the Village of Oakfield and visa versa. The surveys provided additional input, insight and clarification

into the issues facing each community. The results of these surveys, which are provided in the Appendix, were utilized to further define the goals and objectives.

- Additional Sources of Input

  As noted above, a internet website was established for this plan. The website was used as a forum for providing the public with information about the progress of the plan. For example, data summaries, maps and survey results were posted, as were the goals and objectives and preliminary recommendations. The schedule of public meetings was also posted, as a supplement to the press releases and other methods used to advertise the meetings.

  Following the drafting of the recommendations and implementation strategy, meetings were held with public officials (Town Boards and Planning Boards) in each of the three communities to go over the report, and ensure that it was consistent with their vision for their communities. These public representatives will be responsible to adopt and implement the plan, and this step of public input is very important to help ensure the success of the project. Their comments were incorporated into the final draft of the report.

- Advisory Committee

  Finally, the Advisory Committee was a very important source of input and guidance for the plan. These community volunteers reviewed the report and directed its progress at each stage of the process. They also helped to advertise and facilitate the public meetings, and were instrumental in developing and distributing the public opinion survey. They served as important liaisons between their respective communities and the project consultants, and provided useful comments, feedback and revisions to the plan.

The Appendix to this report, referred to above, provides examples of materials used to solicit public input, public opinion survey results, and additional information on the public input process for the Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan.

3.2 Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives listed in this section are large-scale visionary ideas that can be utilized to evaluate actions in each community. To help facilitate the development of recommendations and implementation steps and set forth the "vision" for each area, the following goals and objectives are presented separately for each community.

3.2.1 Town of Alabama

1. Protect, promote and preserve Agriculture

Agriculture is an important aspect of the Town of Alabama; it helps define the character of the area, provides jobs, preserves open space and is an integral part of the community.

- Promote the protection and preservation of farms and farming-related activities that are economically viable.
- Protect and promote farming activity as a priority to preserve open space and scenic vistas that help shape and maintain the rural character of the Town.
- Maintain farming and agriculture activities to provide jobs and economic activity for a large portion of residents in the Town.
- Encourage and allow farm-related business as a secondary interest and support service to farming.

2. Maintain and enhance community character in the Town of Alabama

- Maintain and enhance a strong sense of community in the Town.
- Maintain the unique rural character and small-town atmosphere in the Town of Alabama through proper planning and development.
- Manage growth in the Town to ensure that development occurs at an appropriate scale and pace, and in locations suitable for the type of development that is proposed.
- Promote the positive image of the Town as a desirable community in which to live and work.
- Preserve viewsheds, mature vegetation, open space and other natural resources that contribute to the rural character of the Town.
- Promote the distinct heritage and historic identity of the Town.
- Encourage architectural development styles that are consistent with the historic and rural character of existing development in and around the Town.

3. Provide potable water to appropriate areas of the Town

Public water is a quality of life issue and water services should be extended to appropriate areas of the Town to address needs.

- Work with Genesee County to further outline and identify what areas of the Town should receive public water.
- Provide public water in areas of dense development (hamlets) where groundwater sources are inadequate, of poor quality or polluted, to address such problems and encourage growth.
- Provide public water to areas where the quality or quantity of potable water resources threatens public health.
- Provide public water to areas targeted for industrial and commercial growth.
- Protect groundwater and surface water resources from contamination from failing septic systems and other sources of pollution.
- Promote the provision of assistance for improving farming practices to protect the quality of groundwater and the environment.

4. Protect the environmental features and resources of the Town of Alabama

The Town contains a variety of environmental features and is home to over 1,000 acres of wildlife conservation areas.

- Protect and preserve the abundant natural resources of the Town.
- Protect groundwater sources as a high priority to maintain the viability of private wells that are susceptible to pollution.
- Promote public education with regard to septic system maintenance to protect groundwater quality.
- Promote sound farming techniques that limit non-point source pollution.
- Promote the protection of natural stream corridors and watersheds.

5. Provide for economic development in the Town of Alabama

The expansion of industrial and commercial growth, and other economic development activities, helps provide jobs and a stronger tax base for the community.

- Target areas for new commercial and industrial growth and support the extension of necessary infrastructure to these areas.
- Protect and support the existing economic base of the Town and the expansion of existing businesses in an appropriate manner.
- Promote the establishment and growth of new business enterprises in the Town, particularly in and around the hamlet areas and in other areas designated for economic growth.
- Identify areas in need of redevelopment and encourage the re-use of existing structures and utilization of vacant properties in these areas.
- Promote new growth and the expansion of existing businesses to provide job opportunities for youth to help them remain in the area.

- Encourage the development of tourism-related businesses and services that support activities associated with the wildlife conservation areas.
- Ensure the development of compatible land uses to avoid use conflicts.

6. Maintain and promote efficiency of government

The Town of Alabama should strive to offer the highest quality and most cost-effective services possible.

- Promote the sharing of services, equipment, and personnel, to the highest level possible, with the Town and Village of Oakfield (or other neighboring municipalities) to cut costs and maintain a high degree of service.
- Maintain and enhance the strong collaboration between the community and the Oakfield-Alabama School District.
- Advocate effective zoning, land use, and development regulations and enforcement.
- Manage long-term growth and development in the Town through a comprehensive planning process.
- Plan for and foster a balance and diversity of uses in the Town to control the cost of, and the need for, public services and future service upgrades.

7. Encourage a diversity of housing types

As the population of the Town changes over time, and the economic conditions vary, the housing stock should be made diverse to accommodate the changing needs of the community.

- Maintain the quality of the existing housing stock.
- Encourage the provision of a greater variety of housing styles and types to accommodate a wider range of housing preferences, income levels and household types
- Maintain and protect residential property values.
- Encourage the development of housing in a manner that discourages sprawl and enables residents to use existing services and infrastructure efficiently.

3.2.2 Town of Oakfield

1. Promote the expansion public water to appropriate areas in the Town of Oakfield

Public water is a quality of life issue and water services should be extended to appropriate areas of the Town.

- Work with Genesee County to further outline and identify what areas of the Town should receive public water.
- Provide public water in areas of relatively dense development (hamlets) where groundwater sources are inadequate, of poor quality or polluted, to address such problems and encourage growth.
- Provide public water to areas where the quality or quantity of potable water resources threatens public health.
- Provide public water to areas targeted for industrial and commercial growth.
- Protect groundwater and surface water resources from contamination from failing septic systems and other sources of pollution.
- Promote the provision of assistance for improving farming practices to protect the quality of groundwater and the environment.

2. Provide for economic development in the Town of Oakfield

The expansion of industrial and commercial growth, and other economic development activities, helps provide jobs and a stronger tax base for the community.

- Target areas for new commercial and industrial growth and support the extension of necessary infrastructure to these areas.
- Promote the establishment and growth of new business enterprises in the Town, particularly in the area situated northwest of the Village of Oakfield, which has emerged as an industrial growth area.
- Encourage new commercial growth, particularly in the hamlet and around the Village of Oakfield.
- Identify areas in need of redevelopment and encourage the re-use of existing structures and utilization of vacant properties in these areas.
- Protect and support the existing economic base of the Town and the expansion of existing businesses.
- Promote new growth and expansion of existing businesses to provide job opportunities for youth to help them remain the area.
- Encourage the development of tourism-related businesses and services that support activities associated with the wildlife conservation areas.
- Ensure the development of compatible land uses to avoid use conflicts.

3. Protect and preserve agriculture in the Town of Oakfield

Agriculture is an important aspect of the Town of Oakfield; it helps define the character of the area, provides jobs, preserves open space and is an integral part of the community.

- Promote the protection and preservation of economically and ecologically sound farming practices so as to maintain farming without affecting the quality of life for citizens within the community.
- Protect and promote farming activity as a priority to preserve open space and scenic vistas that help shape and maintain the rural character of the Town.
- Maintain farming and agriculture practices to provide jobs and economic activity for a large portion of residents in the Town.
- Encourage and allow farm-related business as a secondary interest and support service to farming.

4. Maintain and enhance community character in the Town of Oakfield

- Maintain and enhance a strong sense of community in the Town.
- Maintain the unique rural character and small-town atmosphere in the Town of Oakfield through proper planning and development.
- Manage growth in the Town to ensure that development occurs at an appropriate scale and pace, and in locations suitable for the type of development that is proposed.
- Promote the positive image of the Town as a desirable community in which to live and work.
- Provide opportunities for passive recreation, such as picnicking.
- Preserve viewsheds, mature vegetation, open space and other natural resources that contribute to the rural character of the Town.
- Promote the distinct heritage and historic identity of the Town.
- Encourage architectural development styles that are consistent with the historic and rural character of existing development in and around the Town.

5. Protect the environmental features and resources of the community

The study area contains numerous environmental features and is home to a large wildlife conservation area.

- Protect and preserve the abundant natural resources of the community.
- Protect groundwater resources as a high priority to maintain the viability of private wells that are easily susceptible to pollution.
- Promote public education with regard to septic tank maintenance to protect groundwater quality.
- Promote sound farming techniques that limit non-point source pollution.
- Promote the protection of natural stream corridors and watersheds.

6. Encourage a diversity of housing types in the Town

As the population of the Town changes over time, and the economic conditions vary, the housing stock should be made diverse to accommodate the changing needs of the community.

- Maintain the quality of the existing housing stock.
- Encourage the provision of a greater variety of housing styles and types to accommodate a wider range of housing preferences, income levels and household types.
- Maintain and protect residential property values.
- Encourage the development of housing in a manner that discourages sprawl and enables residents to use existing services and infrastructure efficiently.

7. Maintain and promote efficiency of government

The three communities within the study area should work together to offer the highest quality and most cost effective services possible.

- Promote the sharing of services, equipment, and personnel, to the highest level possible, with the Village of Oakfield and the Town of Alabama (or other neighboring municipalities) to cut costs and maintain a high degree of service.
- Maintain and enhance the strong collaboration between the community and the Oakfield-Alabama School District.
- Advocate effective zoning, land use, and development regulations and enforcement.
- Manage long-term growth and development in the Town through a comprehensive planning process.
- Plan for and foster a balance and diversity of uses in the Town to control the cost of, and the need for, public services and future service upgrades.

3.2.3 Village of Oakfield

1. Promote and encourage investment and economic development in the Village

The Village of Oakfield serves as the commercial center for the Towns and outlying areas. Efforts should be made to protect, enhance, and promote the Village.

- Provide opportunities for existing enterprises to expand within the Village.
- Encourage a diversity of retail and commercial uses in the Village business district.
- Promote and market the Village business district to enhance its vitality.
- Promote the re-use of existing structures and vacant facilities for new and expanding retail, commercial and light manufacturing establishments.
- Enhance the visual quality of older structures of local significance in the downtown area of the Village.
- Encourage multi-use of existing structures to enhance activity in the business district.
- Provide adequate, safe parking in and around the business district.
- Encourage the development of tourism-related businesses and services that support activities associated with the wildlife conservation areas.

2. Preserve the traditional neighborhood character of the Village

- Recognize the unique character of the Village as an important asset to the area, which should be supported and preserved.
- Maintain and enhance the high quality of life within the Village.
- Promote streetscape and roadway improvements to further enhance the aesthetics and pedestrian-oriented character of the Village.
- Maintain and preserve the architectural integrity of buildings within the downtown area.
- Ensure that development and redevelopment in the Village is compatible with the existing character in terms of architectural design, style and scale, and is integrated into the surrounding area to promote community interaction.
- Encourage the development of multi-family housing and other such housing alternatives to accommodate a range of incomes and age groups.
- Improve linkages between the business district and the outlying Town.
- Provide opportunities for passive recreation, such as picnicking.
- Encourage the provision of a greater variety of housing styles and types to accommodate a wider range of housing preferences, income levels and household types.

3. Maintain and Promote efficiency of government

The three communities within the study area should work together to offer the highest quality and most cost effective services possible.

- Promote the sharing of services, equipment, and personnel, to the highest level possible, with the Towns of Oakfield and Alabama, to cut costs and maintain a high degree of service.
- Maintain and enhance the strong collaboration between the community and the Oakfield-Alabama School District.
- Advocate effective zoning, land use, and development regulations and enforcement.
- Manage long-term growth and development in the Village through a comprehensive planning process.
- Plan for and foster a balance and diversity of uses in the Village to control the cost of and need for public services and future service upgrades.

SECTION 4.0
EXISTING CONDITIONS OF THE COMMUNITIES

4.1 Existing Land Use

For the purpose of studying existing land use patterns within the study area a land use classification map was created. The map was created by first obtaining digitized tax parcel data from the Genesee County Department of Planning. These data were placed into a geographic information system (GIS) and sorted by the property classification attribute fields within the database. By doing this, it is possible to see how the respective Town and Village assessors classify the parcels for taxation purposes. Each property class number within the database represents a different land use type (i.e. - 201 = single family residential). For the purposes of taxation, land use categories are broken down into very specific uses. For example, agricultural uses are broken down into such categories as poultry and poultry products; dairy products; cattle, calves, hogs; sheep and wool; honey and bees wax; and so on, until all possible uses are covered. For the purposes of this study, this represents too much detailed information. Therefore, we grouped all those individual uses into the category of agricultural. This same technique was used for all categories found on Map 3: Existing Land Use. We can now easily sort, reproduce, and edit land uses within the study area. Past experiences have shown that these type of land use maps are 90 percent± accurate and can be easily modified by field visits, public input, etc., to increase the level of accuracy. At such a small scale, this level of accuracy performs very well in portraying existing land use patterns.

Another aid in studying land use and development patterns is digital orthoimagery (see Map 2). Digital Orthoimagery is simply vertical aerial imagery that has had all distortions caused by ground elevation changes and camera distortions removed through computer processing and placed in a digital format that can be used with computer applications. By looking at an area from above, it is possible to gain unique perspectives on land use and development patterns, especially if there are older orthoimages available for comparing different time frames. Utilizing digital orthoimagery allows you to see things that might otherwise go unnoticed.

4.1.1 Community Land Use

Town of Alabama

The Town of Alabama is very rural in nature. There are three predominant land uses within the Town of Alabama that help to keep the rural nature of the community intact: agriculture, wildlife conservation, and the Tonawanda Indian Reservation.

A typical rural landscape in the Town of Alabama

Agriculture is by far the most prominent land use in the Town making up almost 50 percent of the Town. Unlike some areas of Western New York, where farming is no longer a viable economic option, it remains very much intact in the Town of Alabama. A drive through the Town will yield many views of large farming operations, as well as small family farms throughout the countryside. The wildlife conservation areas include the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge and Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management Area (in the northern portion of the Town), the Tonawanda State Wildlife Management Area in the western portion, and the New York State White Memorial Game Farm in the center of the Town. Other land uses are found scattered throughout the Town in less abundance. In a much denser land use pattern, single family and multi-family residences, commercial uses, and public uses are found in the hamlets of Basom, Alabama, Wheatville, and South Alabama.

Examples of denser, mixed use developments in the hamlets of Alabama.

This type of development pattern is very typical of rural/agricultural communities. The majority of the land is used for the production of agricultural products, while these small pockets of development serve the surrounding area. These hamlets most often contain small stores, churches, gas stations, and similar uses. In general, these hamlets are found along major roads or at major intersections. The following is a table containing the break down of land uses within the Town of Alabama by total percent.

Figure 1A Town of Alabama Land Use Percentages

Land Use	Percentage
Agriculture	47.01 %
Commercial	0.02 %
Government/Public	0.09 %
Indian Reservation	17.52 %
Industrial	0.68 %
Multi-Family Residential	0.05 %
Multiple Residential	0.71 %
Single Family Residential	4.19 %
Unknown	0.84 %
Utilities/Infrastructure	0.26 %
Vacant/Undeveloped/Open Space	2.69 %
Wildlife Conservation Areas	25.94 %

Source: Map 3 Existing Land Use

Town of Oakfield

The Town of Oakfield is much like the Town of Alabama in that it is rural and agricultural in nature. The Town of Oakfield also has three land uses that cover the majority of the Town. Over 80 percent of the land is either agriculture, vacant/undeveloped/open space, or a wildlife conservation area. Agricultural land uses however are the most predominant, covering 58 percent of the Towns. Large lots and vast tracks of land in agricultural production typify the landscape outside of the Village. There are, however, areas of road frontage residential development along South Pearl Street Road, Town Line Road, and Drake Street Road in the southeastern portion of the Town. The majority of denser residential and mixed-use development within the Town of Oakfield takes place in and around the Village. Industrial development can be seen along Judge Road, just west of the Village with the largest tracts of land belonging to the U.S. Gypsum Company. Starting in the early 1900's, U.S. Gypsum conducted subsurface mining operations in the vicinity of their facility in Oakfield, with mines extending to the west, into Alabama, and further east (see Map 10).

The Oakfield – Alabama Central Schools are located in the Town, just northwest of the Village on Lewiston Road. The following table offers a breakdown of land uses by percentage of the total area for the Town of Oakfield.

Figure 1B Town of Oakfield Land Use Percentages

Land Use	Percentage
Agriculture	58.02 %
Commercial	0.20 %
Government/Public	0.62 %
Industrial	1.47 %
Multi-Family Residential	0.41 %
Multiple Residential	0.11 %
Parks	0.27 %
Single Family Residential	8.23 %
Unknown	7.77 %
Utilities/Infrastructure	0.21 %
Vacant/Undeveloped/Open Space	11.56 %
Wildlife Conservation Areas	11.13 %

Source: Map 3 Existing Land Use

Village of Oakfield

The Village of Oakfield is the central hub for the three-community study area. It is a destination for residents from the surrounding area. People come to shop, do business, go to school, and more. The Village is the most densely populated and developed area in the three municipalities. The Village is developed mostly with residential uses, along with a mix of other community-oriented uses. Commercial uses are located primarily along North Main Street and South Pearl Street, although other commercial properties and some industrial uses can be found in other areas in the Village. The following table provides a break down of land uses by percentage of the total area for the Village.

Figure 1C Village of Oakfield Land Use Percentages

Land Use	Percentage
Agriculture	7.01 %
Commercial	2.96 %
Government/Public	3.77 %
Industrial	0.81 %
Multi-Family Residential	5.12 %
Multiple Residential	2.16 %
Parks	2.16 %
Single Family Residential	38.81 %
Unknown	25.07 %
Utilities/Infrastructure	3.77 %
Vacant/Undeveloped/Open Space	8.36 %

Source: Map 3 Existing Land Use

As is illustrated by Map 3 and the table above, the Village is developed with a mixture of land uses. Residential uses make up the largest portion composing just under 50 percent of the area. The Village also contains the largest mixture of residential housing types. The Towns of Alabama and Oakfield each have less than one percent of their land uses comprised of multi-family (two and three -family homes) and multiple (apartments, group living facilities, etc.) residential units. The Village has approximately 15 percent of its housing stock as multi-family and multiple residential. Large unclassified tracts of land at the south and west end of the Village account for nearly 25 percent of the land area. The rest of the Village is divided rather evenly between a mix of other uses that include churches, parks, government offices, businesses, and cemeteries, among others.

4.1.2 Farmland and Agriculture

Because so much of the land within the study area is in agricultural production it is useful to take a closer look at these properties. Two maps are provided to aid in the study of these areas - - Map 4 Agricultural Data and Map 5 Prime Farmland Soils. Map 4 was generated by taking the existing land use file and displaying parcels that were known to be in agricultural use and then overlaying New York State Agricultural Districts. Agricultural Districts are areas that are voluntarily formed by landowners and adopted by county legislative bodies, following state certification. Agricultural districts allow landowners the opportunity to receive real property assessments based on the value of their land for agricultural production rather than on its development value. In addition, these landowners gain protection from local regulations that would unreasonably restrict farming operations, and receive greater protection from development under the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) process. Properties located in Agricultural Districts in Genesee County are enrolled for 8-year periods, at the end of which time they are reviewed and can either remain in the district or be removed. The purpose of the Agriculture District is to encourage the land to remain in agricultural production and contribute to the agricultural economy of the area. The second map provided to help analyze existing farmland and agricultural use (see Map 5). This map examines digital soils information obtained from the Genesee County Planning Department (which was produced and distributed by the USDA, NRCS, and GCSWCD). One of the features shown on this map is the prime farmland soils classification. The data displayed on Map 5 falls into one of three categories: not prime, prime when drained, and prime. The USDA defines prime farmland soils as,

"*Land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and is also available for these uses. It has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce economically sustained high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods, including water management. In general, prime farmlands have an adequate and dependable water supply from precipitation or irrigation, a favorable temperature and growing season, acceptable acidity or alkalinity, acceptable salt and sodium content, and few or no rocks. They are permeable to water and air. Prime farmlands are not excessively erodible or saturated with water for a long period of time, and they either do not flood frequently or are protected from flooding.*"

It is also important to note that agriculture not only has an affect on the economy of the study area, but on their character, as well. Rural landscapes such as farm fields, woodlands, and picturesque farmhouses create an identity for the communities in addition to supporting the local economy. By preserving farming not only are jobs being preserved, but so is the rural quality of life.

Town of Alabama

In the Town of Alabama just over 47 percent of the land is classified as agricultural, as defined by the real property survey. The majority of this land falls within Genesee County Agricultural District #2. This district in the Town encompasses nearly all of the land south of Casey and Roberts Road, west of Macomber Road, and east of the Tonawanda Indian Reservation. The district also encompasses a small portion of land in the southwest corner of the Town. The key omissions from the district include the Alabama hamlet, the New York State White Memorial Game Farm, and the Buffalo Crushed Stone industrial property on Ledge Road. Map 5 indicates that a large portion of the land within the Town has prime farmland soils. As noted above, these soils have the best properties for agriculture uses. The combination of factors including protection of farming by the agricultural districts, proper soils for good agricultural production, and the critical mass of farms in one location helps to maintain the stability of agriculture in the area. Genesee County has also implemented a Smart Growth Plan that guides the expansion of water services to currently non-serviced areas of the County. This plan calls for minimizing the number of hookups in areas of agricultural districts. It is the intent of this plan to discourage hookups to the County portion of the water system in these areas that will, in theory, help to keep development pressure down, which in turn helps to preserve agriculture. Other issues affecting agriculture are the economics of farming and the desires of future generations to farm.

Town of Oakfield

The Town of Oakfield is similar to the Town of Alabama regarding the area dedicated to agriculture. It too, has the majority (58 percent) of its land involved in agriculture and is also mostly located within one agricultural district. Genesee County Agricultural District #2 takes in nearly 75 percent of the Town, covering much of the land area south of the Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management Area. A few of the obvious omissions from the District are the Village of Oakfield, the US Gypsum property on Judge Road, and some vacant undeveloped lands just southwest of the Village. Oakfield also contains nearly 50 percent prime farmland soils with the largest concentration located in the vicinity of Lewiston Road northwest of the Village. In the Town of Oakfield, much of the land is either owned or operated by Lamb Farms, or the land is owned by the U.S. Gypsum Company and leased to farmers. Lamb Farms is the largest dairy farm in the County and one of the largest in Western New York.

Lamb Farms, one of the largest dairy farms in Western New York, is located on Albion Road

Another critical aspect to maintaining farming is the concept of critical mass. This concept relates to having enough agricultural related operations in one location to support the necessary businesses needed to maintain farming. By looking at Map 4 for at the Towns of Alabama and Oakfield it is obvious that this critical mass is obtained in these two communities. The presence of agriculturally related businesses is also an indicator of critical mass.

Village of Oakfield

The Village of Oakfield only contains three parcels of land that are listed as agricultural by the real property survey. There are no agricultural districts located within the Village boundaries, however, Genesee County Agricultural District #2 surrounds the entire Village. The Village may not have agricultural land use to the extent that the surrounding Towns do, but it still plays an important role

An agricultural related business in the Town of Oakfield (Goodridge Farm Supply)

in the agricultural economy of the area. It acts as the hub of the communities where farmers can go to purchase necessary supplies and goods to maintain their farming operations. It should be noted that the property in the southwest corner of the Village, which is listed as unknown on the existing land use map, is comprised almost entirely of prime and prime when drained farmland soils.

4.2 Land Use Regulation

The Town of Alabama, Town of Oakfield and Village of Oakfield all regulate land use through the application of zoning regulations. Land use is also regulated through the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and the requirements of the New York State Agriculture and Markets Law for those properties located within an agricultural district. Zoning classifications for each of the municipalities are shown on Map 6. The following paragraphs provide a brief synopsis of each communities zoning laws. Please refer to each individual zoning law for specific regulations and requirements.

4.2.1 Zoning

Town of Alabama

The Town of Alabama has six zoning classifications identified within its zoning law. The majority of the Town falls within two zoning classifications, Agricultural-Residential and Land Conservation. The Residential and Commercial zoning classes are found mostly (although not entirely) within the three hamlet areas of the Town. Industrially zoned land is found on Ledge Road (at the Buffalo Crushed Stone property) and on Wright Road in the southwest corner of the Town. The final zoning class, Planned Unit Development (PUD), is not identified anywhere on the zoning map (sometimes referred to as a floating zone). It is a zoning district that is available for use if a development proposal for a particular piece of property is determined to meet the intent of the regulations. The site would then be rezoned to PUD. The table below highlights the permitted uses allowed within each zoning class; for specific uses please refer to the Town of Alabama Zoning Law.

Figure 2A: Town of Alabama Zoning Districts and Permitted Uses

District	Permitted Uses
A-R: Agricultural-Residential	Farms and all related agricultural operations, single and double family dwellings, single mobile homes, churches, schools, and other public uses and buildings.
R: Residential	Single family dwellings, farms and all related agricultural operations excluding stabling of farm animals, churches, schools, and other public uses and buildings.
C: Commercial	General commercial uses (i.e. restaurants, motels, professional offices, banks, etc.)
I: Industrial	General industrial uses (i.e. manufacturing, warehousing, trucking terminals, etc.)
LC: Land Conservation	Wildlife refuge areas, farms and related farming activities.
PUD: Planned Unit Development	Permitted uses will vary. Each PUD is looked at on an individual basis.

Source: Town of Alabama Zoning Law June 8, 1987

Within the zoning law, each zoning class is listed with all actual permitted uses by right, as well as those uses that are allowed by Special Use Permit. Special Use Permits are required for certain uses because they may not generally be appropriate and may require additional regulations and/or restrictions. Bulk regulations regarding lot size, street frontage, yard setbacks, height, and lot coverage for each individual zoning classes and certain specified uses within those zoning classes are outlined in the Town of Alabama Zoning Law.

Many times a community is faced with an application for development that is difficult to regulate through standard zoning laws. The Town of Alabama has addressed needs and requirements of some of these uses through Article VI of its zoning law, supplementary regulations. Some examples of uses that require supplementary regulations within the Town of Alabama are home occupations, adult uses, and cellular communication towers. By having these supplementary regulations in place the Town is able to address issues specific to these uses without placing undo hardship on other allowable uses within a zoning class.

It should be noted that the Town of Alabama does not have any separate subdivision regulations in effect although the subdivision of land is regulated through Section 401C. of the Zoning Ordinance.

Town of Oakfield

The Town of Oakfield has five zoning classifications (see Map 6), which are very similar in nature to those of the Town of Alabama. The following table contains a list of the zoning classifications and general permitted uses. The table is just an overview and generalization of the zoning class, specific inquiries should refer to the Town of Oakfield Zoning Law.

Figure 2B: Town of Oakfield Zoning Districts and Permitted Uses

District	Permitted Uses
R & A: Residential Agricultural	Single family dwellings, mobile homes, farms and related agricultural operations, churches, schools, and other public uses and buildings
R: General Residential	Single and double family dwellings, farms and related agricultural operations, churches, schools, and other public uses and buildings
C: Commercial	Motor vehicle sales and service, retail shops, offices and banks
I: Industrial	General industrial uses (i.e. manufacturing, warehousing, research and development facilities, distribution facilities, etc.)
LC: Land Conservation	Farms and related agricultural operations

Source: Town of Oakfield Zoning Law August 11, 1981

The Town of Oakfield's zoning law also lays out each zoning class and lists all actual uses permitted by right, as well as those uses that are allowed by Special Use Permit. Bulk regulations for each zoning class and certain specified uses within those zoning classes are outlined in the Town of Oakfield Zoning Law. The Town of Oakfield adopted a Land Separation Local Law and Land Subdivision Regulations in June of 1992. Although the Land Separation Law, which regulation minor splits of four lots or less, was repealed in 1997, the major subdivision regulations remain in effect. Subdivision of land is also addressed under Section 411.3 of the Zoning Ordinance.

Village of Oakfield

The Village of Oakfield has six separate zoning classifications. Similar to the Towns of Alabama and Oakfield, the zoning classifications outline actual uses permitted by right, as well as those permitted by special use. The

following table provides a generic overview of the zoning classifications and the uses permitted therein. Please refer to the Village of Oakfield zoning law for specific regulations. Bulk regulations for zoning classifications within the Village can be found in Sections 301, 305, and 504 of the Zoning Law, Sections 306 through 311. Certain issues and uses that require a higher level of scrutiny have been individually addressed under Article V, Supplementary Regulations. Examples of these include adult uses, mobile home parks, light industrial uses and cellular communication towers. Similar to the Town of Alabama, the Village does not have separate regulations for subdivision; it is regulated under Section 301 of the Zoning Ordinance.

Figure 2C: Town of Oakfield Zoning Districts and Permitted Uses

District	Permitted Uses
R-1: Residential	Single family dwellings
R-2: Residential	Single and double family dwellings
C-1: Neighborhood Commercial	Small to medium sized commercial uses (i.e. bakeries, retail stores, restaurants, etc.)
C-2: Central Commercial	Concentrated commercial development (i.e. business and professional offices, hotel/motel, banks, etc.)
I: Industrial	General Industrial Uses (i.e. manufacturing, warehousing, freight or trucking terminal, etc.)
PUD: Planned Unit Development	Permitted uses will vary. Each PUD is looked at on an individual basis.

Source: Village of Oakfield Zoning Law

4.3 Natural Environment

4.3.1 Topography and Steep Slopes

The majority of the study area is extremely flat with very gently sloping land. There are a few areas of steep slopes although they are small and limited. Areas of slopes can be found in the Town of Alabama along Ledge Road and in the northeastern portion of the Town of Oakfield along Fisher Road.

4.3.2 Hydric Soils

Map 7 shows the location of hydric soils within the study area. Hydric Soils are defined by the USDA as, "….a soil that formed under conditions of saturation, flooding, or ponding long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions in the upper part." Essentially hydric soils are those soils that may be wet during parts of the year and typically support wetlands. The majority of these soils are concentrated in the northern portion of the two Towns, in the vicinity of the wildlife conservation areas. There is another concentration of these soils along the south side of Ledge Road in the Town of Alabama.

4.3.3 Stream Corridors and Watersheds

There are four watersheds located within the study area: Mud Creek, Ledge and Tonawanda Creeks, Murder Creek, and Oak Orchard Creek (see Map 8). The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines watersheds as the area of land that catches rain and snow melt, which drains or seeps into a marsh, stream, river,

lake or groundwater. Two watersheds drain approximately 96 percent of the land within the study area, the Ledge and Tonawanda Creek, and Oak Orchard Creek Watersheds.

The smallest of the watersheds in the study area is Murder Creek, in the southwest corner of the Town of Alabama. The Murder Creek Watershed represents less than one percent of the land area drained.

The Mud Creek Watershed is located in the northwest corner of the Town of Alabama and represents three percent of the land drained. It drains the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge and the Tonawanda State Wildlife Management Area.

The Ledge and Tonawanda Creeks Watershed drains the majority of the land in the southwestern portion of the Town of Alabama. This watershed represents just under 23 percent of the total land area. The land area that is drained by this watershed is dominated by agricultural land uses, the Tonawanda Indian Reservation, a small portion of the Tonawanda State Wildlife Management Area, and the hamlet of Basom. Tonawanda Creek runs almost directly through the center of the watershed boundary parallel to Meadville/Sand Hill Road with Ledge Creek being located in the southwest portion of the watershed, running parallel to Wright Road.

The Oak Orchard Creek Watershed is by far the largest watershed in the study area, covering just over 73 percent of the land area. This watershed covers almost the entire central and eastern portions of the Town of Alabama along with the entire land area of the Town and Village of Oakfield. Oak Orchard Creek runs along the northern portions of the Towns of Alabama and Oakfield through the Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management Area and the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge. Because of the size of this watershed, it encompasses a myriad of land uses from agricultural, residential, forested lands, commercial and industrial, among others.

Oak Orchard Creek

4.3.4 Flooding and Wetlands

The region contains flood zones that have been designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as areas subject to flooding. These areas are depicted on FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps. The

flood zones are established based upon the degree to which an area is susceptible to flood damage. There is one flood zone that exists within the study area:

- 100 – Year flood zone, base elevations unknown – (also called the "A" Zone and the area of special flood hazard) is that area of land that would primarily experience still water flooding, without significant wave activity, during the 100-year storm event.

These natural flood zones or plains are flat areas surrounding streams that are periodically inundated with water due to overbank flow. As shown on Map 9: Environmental Features, most floodplains are located in the northern portions of the study area, within the wildlife conservation areas and along Tonawanda Creek within the Tonawanda Indian Reservation. Another small area of 100-year floodplain is contained primarily within the Village along the creek corridors.

By examining Map 9, it is easily apparent why the northern portions of the study area have been designated wildlife conservation areas. These lands contain an inordinate amount of environmental features. These areas covered by the 100-Year Floodplain and are also dominated by wetlands.

Wetlands are defined by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) as transition areas between uplands and aquatic habitats. They are identified by a variety of factors including the presence of standing water, vegetation type, and soil type. Map 9 shows that wetlands, both state and federal are located throughout the entire study area. State-designated wetlands are defined and regulated as any wetlands area measuring 12.4 acres or larger. Regulated federal (or non-jurisdictional wetlands) can measure between 0.1 acre and 12.4 acres and require association with a navigable waterway.

Wetlands are an extremely important environmental resource that performs numerous functions. The NYSDEC has listed some of these functions as flood and storm water control, surface and groundwater protection, erosion control, pollution treatment and nutrient cycling, and fish and wildlife habitat, as well as public enjoyment.

4.3.5 Wildlife Conservation Areas and Significant Wildlife Habitats

Map 10 shows the location of the wildlife conservation areas within the study area. There are four such areas, which include the Tonawanda State Wildlife Management Area, Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge, and Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management Area, which together are known as the Alabama Swamp Complex. The fourth is the New York State John White Memorial Game Farm. In total, the wildlife conservation areas cover approximately 19,000 acres of land area and occupy approximately 25 percent of the land within the study area (excluding the Tonawanda Indian Reservation). These areas serve as important wildlife habitat and provide permanent protection for important environmental features. They are also important recreation areas for the residents of, and visitors to, the communities, as well as a regional resource.

4.3.6 Scenic Resources

In general, there are many scenic resources within the study area. The wildlife conservation areas, farms, and rural residences throughout the area are all important resources. Particular views of interest include Fisher Road overlooking the Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management Area and

Above are views of the Oak Orchard SWMA, Kenyon Road looking north, and a sweet corn field Kenyon Road looking north to the Somerset Power Plant. The Village also offers quaint visual appeal, with its historic structures and small town charm. The scenic landscape contributes significantly to the rural character of the three communities.

4.3.7 Historic and Archaeological Features

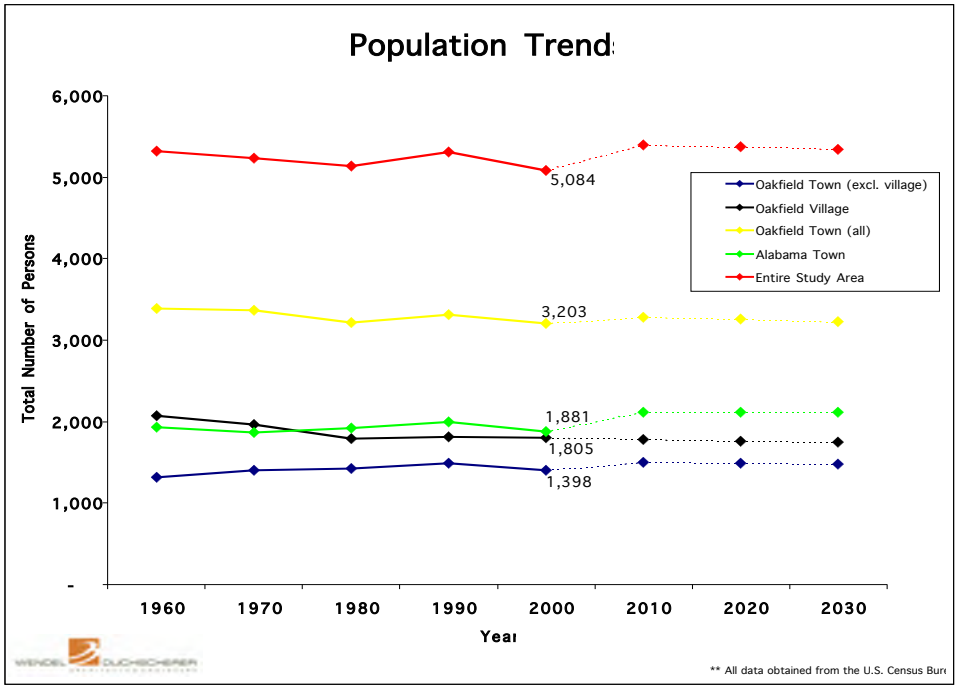
The Oak Orchard Creek Marsh was designated as a National Natural Landmark in May of 1973. The marsh is located within the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge and the Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management Area. The marsh is one of only 26 areas in New York State designated by the National Park Service (NPS) as a National Natural Landmark. It is described by the NPS as an area that is a relatively undisturbed marsh, which is rare for this part of New York State.

4.4 Demographics and Socioeconomic Conditions

4.4.1 Existing Population and Projections

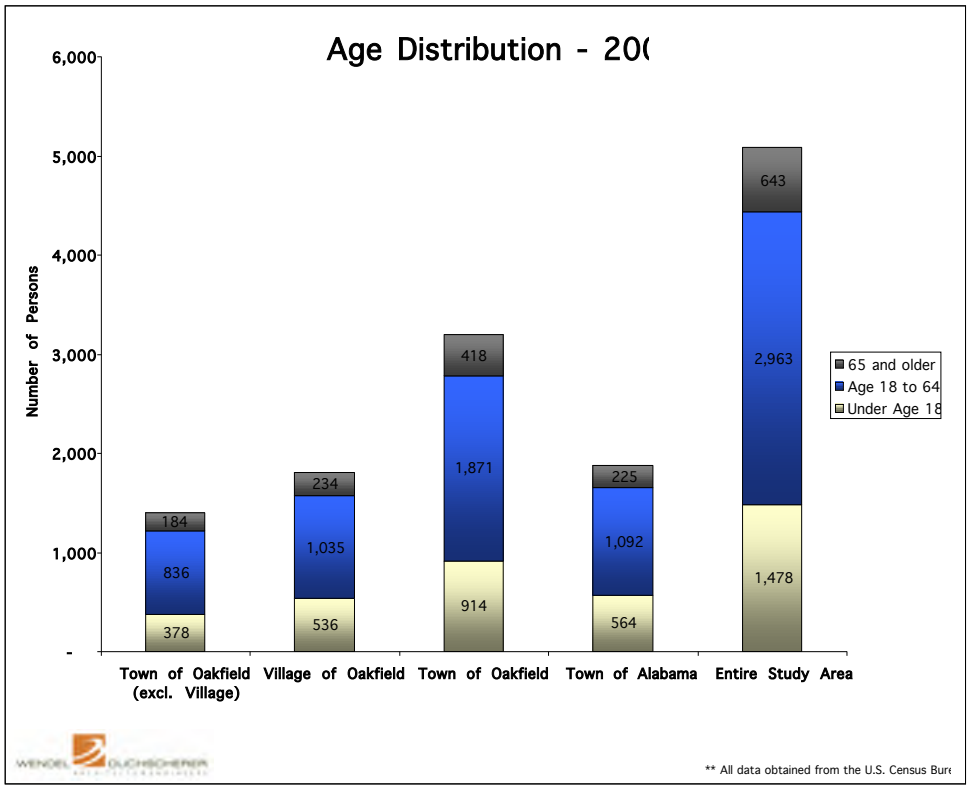
The Oakfield-Alabama area has experienced some modest decreases in population over the past ten years. The population in the Town of Alabama declined by 117 persons, representing 5.9 percent of the population. Oakfield, Town and Village, lost a combined 112 persons between 1990 and 2000, or 3.4 percent of the total population. Over the same time period, Genesee County was essentially unchanged, with an increase of 310 persons, or about 0.5 percent.

Figure 3



The composition of the populous in the Oakfield-Alabama study area tends to be somewhat younger than that of Genesee County. Approximately 30 percent of the population is under the age of 18, compared to 26.6 percent in the County. Persons aged 65 and older make up about 13 percent of the population in the Town and Village of Oakfield, and 12 percent of the population in Alabama. Fourteen percent of the population of the County is aged 65 or older. This age distribution pattern is very similar to the age distribution of ten years ago, with only a very slight increase in the numbers of seniors, and a slight decline in the number of children under age 18.

Figure 4



The Genesee-Finger Lakes Regional Planning Board has prepared projections for the area, showing population trends to 2030. Overall, the Oakfield-Alabama region is expected to grow slightly over the next thirty years, increasing to 5,347 persons by 2030. Most of the growth is expected to occur in the Town of Alabama, which is projected to increase by 12.5 percent. The Village of Oakfield is expected to lose about three percent of its population, whereas the Town outside the Village is expected to grow by approximately six percent. The net effect in the Town of Oakfield, including the Village, is to remain essentially stable. The projections were prepared prior to the release of the 2000 Census. They overestimated growth in the Towns between 1990 and 2000, and underestimated growth in the Village. It is projected, however, that growth over the next thirty years will be relatively modest and easily absorbed within the communities.

4.4.2 Household Characteristics

The number of households in the Towns and Village has remained essentially stable. The Town and Village of Oakfield had 25 fewer households in 2000 than in 1990, and the Town of Alabama lost four households between 1990 and 2000. Household growth was stronger in Genesee County, with an increase of 5.7 percent (1,225 households) between 1990 and 2000.

Following national trends, the average household size in each of the communities declined between 1990 and 2000. There are an average of 2.77 persons per household in Oakfield, and 2.84 persons per household in Alabama. This is modestly higher (almost 10 percent) than the County, where there is an average of 2.59 persons per household.

The majority of households in Oakfield and Alabama are family households. Between 72 and 75 percent of households in each community are families. Slightly more than half of all family households include children under the age of 18 who are living at home. The majority of non-family households are one-person households. On average, roughly five percent of all households in the study area are "non-traditional" households, consisting of non-related persons living together. This proportion is slightly higher in the Village of Oakfield. These data indicate that the households in the study area communities are families, unlike the entire U.S. where non-family households are predominant.

4.4.3 Housing Characteristics

There are a total of 1,950 housing units in the study area, which essentially is unchanged since 1990, when there were 1,944 units. Vacant units total 136, or 7 percent of the housing stock. The Town of Alabama has the lowest vacancy rate of the three communities, with 5.3 percent of the housing stock unoccupied. The Town of Oakfield, outside the Village, has the highest vacancy rate, at 8.2 percent.

Most residents own rather than rent - - 78.7 percent of all households in the study area are owner-occupied. The Village of Oakfield has the largest proportion of renters, where 30.6 percent of all households are in rental units. About 19.5 percent of the housing in the Town of Alabama is renter-occupied, as is about 12 percent of the housing in the Town of Oakfield, outside the Village.

4.4.4 Employment Statistics

Approximately 2,500 persons in the Oakfield-Alabama study area are employed. The unemployment rate is about six percent in each of the individual communities. In comparison, unemployment in Genesee County is 4.3 percent.

In terms of the composition of the workforce, roughly one-quarter of employees classify themselves as in management or professional occupations, with a similar proportion in sales or office occupations. About 18 percent of Oakfield residents and 20 percent of Alabama residents work in production or transportation occupations.

The industrial category that employs the most residents in Oakfield is education, health and social services, with approximately one-quarter of the workforce falling into this category. In Alabama, the largest share of employment is in the manufacturing industry, which employs 24 percent of the Town's workers. Oakfield Town, outside the Village, is the most agriculturally oriented, with 18 percent of the workforce working in agricultural, forestry, fishing or mining industries, compared to seven percent in Alabama, and just three percent in the Village of Oakfield.

4.4.5 Income

Median income in Oakfield and Alabama is comparable to the County median, which is $40,542. In the Town of Alabama, median household income is $40,223. Oakfield Village has a median income of $40,580, while the Town, including the Village, has a slightly higher median income of $41,579.

Because households tend to be somewhat larger in Oakfield and Alabama and there are slightly more children under the age of 18, per capita income lags the county somewhat, ranging from about $14,800 in Alabama to approximately $16,400 in the Town of Oakfield, including the Village. In Genesee County, per capita income is approximately $18,500.

About 7.8 percent of residents of the Town of Oakfield, and 6.3 percent of the residents of the Town of Alabama, are classified as living in poverty status. Poverty in the Town of Oakfield is heavily concentrated in the Village, where 211 of the 248 individuals in the Town classified with poverty status are located. The poverty rate is comparable to that of the County, where 7.6 percent of the population is below the poverty line. Statewide, 14.6 percent of the population is under the poverty level.

4.5 Transportation

4.5.1 Roadways and Highway Access

There are three major New York State roads that make up the backbone of the roadway system within the study area, Routes 77, 63 and 262 (see Map 11). Route 77 runs north to south, between the northwest corner of Alabama and its southern boundary with the Town of Pembroke. It's here in the Town of Pembroke, on Route 77, that access is gained to the State Thruway system, via exit 48A. Exit 48, in the Town of Batavia (just off of Route 63), provides a second point of access to the Thruway.

State Route 63 runs from the north central portion of Alabama, where it borders the Town of Shelby, east to the Village of Oakfield, exiting the study area in the southeast corner of the Town of Oakfield. State Route 262 runs from the center of the Village of Oakfield east to the Village of Elba, and points beyond. The following table provides traffic counts for certain points along these major thoroughfares within the study area.

Figure 5: NYS Route Traffic Counts

Route #	Where to Where	AADT
77	Niagara County Line to Route 63	2750 vehicles
77	Judge Road to Bloomingdale Road	8300 vehicles
77	Bloomingdale Road to southerly Town line	5900 vehicles
63	Northerly Town line to Route 77	3900 vehicles
63 & 77	Lewiston Road to Judge Road	4950 vehicles
63	Route 63 and 77 intersection to Macomber Road	4750 vehicles
63	Route 262 to southerly Town line	7300 vehicles
262	Route 63 to easterly Town line	1600 vehicles

Source: Genesee Transportation Council
*AADT – Average Annual Daily Traffic taken in 2000

A brief analysis of these data shows where the majority of the traffic is headed within the study area. The majority of traffic appears to be headed to and from the NYS Thruway via Routes 77 and 63 or to the Tonawanda Indian Reservation. The AADT's increase significantly along these portions of roadway system as compared to other roadways within the study area (see Map 11).

There are no roadway construction and improvements projects within the study area that are listed on the transportation improvement program (TIP) for the NYSDOT or the Genesee Transportation Council (GTC). The TIP is a long-range plan that outlines upcoming work that is in various stages of the planning process. The TIP for the NYSDOT is for work on State roadways and, similarly, the TIP for the GTC is for work on roadways receiving Federal funding. It is possible, however, that State Routes 63 and 262 in the Village of Oakfield will be reconstructed in 2006, but it has yet to be placed on the NYSDOT's TIP for various reasons. The Village has been regularly replacing and repairing its roads and will continuing with these upgrades in the foreseeable future.

4.5.2 Railroad Service

As shown on Map 11, the only railroad lines that run through the study area are abandoned. There are no active lines in the three communities, although there are active lines in other parts of the County.

4.5.3 Public Transportation Services

The Batavia Bus Service (B-Line, BBS) provides limited bus service in the study area. The Batavia Bus Service offers "curb to curb" service from Alabama and Oakfield to Batavia and back on Tuesdays. This service costs $3.00 for adults and $1.50 for senior citizens and persons with disabilities. To use this bus service, however, you must call 24 hours in advance.

4.5.4 Pedestrian and Bicycle Routes

No formal multi-use trails for pedestrians, bicycles or horses were identified in the study area. Although conversations with various local agencies confirmed that the abandoned Penn-Central railroad corridor is used informally by walkers/hikers, bikers, snowmobiles and farmers, it has not been formally designated as such.

4.6 Utilities

4.6.1 Water Supply

Currently public water is available to the Village of Oakfield and an area immediately surrounding the Village within the Town of Oakfield. Water is provided to these areas through a line that extends from the City of Batavia along Route 63, Galloway Road and South Pearl Road into the Village. The Village water treatment plant is located in the Town of Batavia on Route 63, just south of the Village. In 1994, the entire water system in the Town of Oakfield, outside the Village, was replaced. Water is also available in the western portion of the Town of Alabama. The remaining portions of Oakfield and the Town of Alabama receives potable water from private wells.

Although large portions of the study area do not currently have access to public water, an informal plan is in place to provide service to some of the more densely developed areas, particularly areas in Alabama that are experiencing well contamination problems. These areas are identified in the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan and include the hamlets of South Alabama, Alabama, and Basom. Initial plans call for water to be routed along State Routes 77, 63 and 262 to serve these areas. The possibility of extending this water service is presently several years off, however. According to the Genesee County Department of Health problems with

private wells and on-site septic systems are due to soils that are not suitable for conventional sewage disposal systems, the age of the existing stormwater collections system that does not remove standing water fast enough, and the small size of the lots in the hamlet areas (R. Garney, GCHD, November 17, 2004)

4.6.2 Wastewater Disposal

Similarly to water service, the only portion of the study area that has sanitary sewer service is the Village of Oakfield and a very limited number of properties just outside the Village. Unlike water, where there are numerous properties outside the Village that receive service, only a few of those same properties are provided sanitary sewer service. The remaining areas outside of the Village in the Town of Oakfield, and the entire Town of Alabama, utilize on-site septic systems. The Village has a sewage treatment plant, which is located at the north end of Irving Parkway, which is privately operated by Valley River Inc. The plant has a capacity of 500,000 gallons per day but operates at about half its capacity, or approximately 225,000 gallons per day.

4.6.3 Solid Waste Management

The Town of Oakfield does not pick up solid waste, it is handled by private haulers, mainly Modern Disposal. The Town operates a recycling center and garbage composting and yard waste facility.

4.7 Community Facilities

4.7.1 Parks and Recreation

The Towns of Alabama and Oakfield host large tracts of publicly owned wildlife and conservation areas, which are available for both active and passive recreation such as hiking, bird watching, hunting, fishing, boating (non-motor), nature programs, limited camping, dog training and cross-country skiing. Due to their size (over 19,000 acres, including areas in neighboring towns), these open space features dominate the land in the northern sector of both towns. They include the two NYSDEC Wildlife Management Areas (Oak Orchard and Tonawanda) and the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge. As previously noted, these features are characterized by state and federal wetlands and are located in a floodplain. A fourth conservation area is the John White Memorial Game Farm on Route 77, north of Route 63, which is closed to the general public. However, the game farm is leased to environmental and hunting organizations for training and education programs. The wildlife and conservation areas together provide important open space, wildlife habitat and recreation areas, as well as limiting future development in the northern twenty percent of the study area.

Within the Village of Oakfield are three recreation areas each offering different amenities. Located on Church Street is the Oakfield Fire Department, which has a ball diamond. In the center of the Village is the Village Park, which is the site of the annual Labor Daze Festival. This park is passive in nature with benches and walks spread throughout, and provides a pleasant venue for taking a stroll or just sitting and enjoying the Village scenery. The Town of Oakfield also owns and maintains a park on Drake Street in the Village.

4.7.2 Schools

There are actually five school districts within the study area - - Royalton-Hartland, Akron, Medina, Elba, and Oakfield-Alabama (see Map 12). Royalton-Hartland, Medina, and Elba all make up small portions in northwest

Alabama, northeast Alabama, and eastern Oakfield, respectively. Akron Central school district covers a large area of the western portion of the Town of Alabama, including the entire Tonawanda Indian Reservation. The remainder of the communities are served by the Oakfield-Alabama Central school district. This district also serves four other municipalities, including the Towns of Pembroke, Batavia, Elba and Barre. The school district facilities are located just northwest of the Village on State Route 63.

4.7.3 Emergency Services

Police services are provided by the Genesee County Sheriff's Office. None of the three communities has an individual police department. The Village of Oakfield, in the past, had contracted out police services from other agencies, but the process was deemed too costly and ineffective. Fire services are provided volunteer fire departments. The Town of Alabama is served by the Alabama Volunteer Fire Department Inc., which is located on Judge Road, adjacent to the Town Hall. The Town and Village of Oakfield are served by the Oakfield Volunteer Fire Department, located on Church Street in the Village.

4.7.4 Government Facilities

Town of Alabama

The Town of Alabama local government offices are located on Judge Road, east of Knowlesville Road, in South Alabama hamlet. The town hall is home to the Town Clerk's office, Town Court, and services a variety of other municipal needs. The Town of Alabama also has a facility located on the corner of State Route 63 and Ham Road. This building houses the Town's Highway Department.

Town of Oakfield

The Town of Oakfield municipal offices are located just east of the Village of Oakfield on Drake Street (State Route 262). The building houses the municipal offices and the Highway Department. The Town also owns and maintains the Haxton Memorial Library, as well as the Park located on Drake Street, both of which are situated in the Village.

Village of Oakfield

The Village of Oakfield municipal offices are located in the heart of the Village on Main Street. The Village also owns and maintains a public works building on South Pearl Street, the sewage treatment plant on Irving Parkway, the park in the center of the Village, and a water treatment plant located in the Town of Batavia (which is currently not in operation).

SECTION 5.0
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This section provides the Findings and Recommendations for each community, as they relate to the major goals and objectives. Utilizing the information found in Section 4.0 (Existing Conditions of the Communities), issues identified through the public opinion survey and comments gathers at the public information meetings, opportunities and constraints for achieving each goal were determined. Based on these opportunities and constraints, general findings for each community were established. Recommendations for achieving the opportunities or addressing constraints were then devised for each community. These ideas and recommendations were refined and evaluated, with input from the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee, and finalized as outlined in Sub-sections 5.2 and 5.3 below.

5.2 Findings/Opportunities/Constraints

Following the format of the Existing Conditions section of this Plan, the generalized findings (observations, opportunities and constraints) for each community are outlined as follows.

5.2.1 Town of Alabama

Existing Land Use

- Agriculture is the most significant land use by area and is spread fairly uniformly throughout the Town.
- Three land use categories (agricultural, Indian reservation and wildlife conservation areas) account for 90 percent of total land area. Indian reservation and wildlife conservation areas represent lands that are either not readily available for development or whose use is outside the jurisdiction of the Town. Conceptually, some believe that agricultural lands are also not available for development.
- The Tonawanda Indian reservation dominates the western sector of Town. A small area of the Town is insulated from the remainder of the Town by the reservation.
- There are four hamlets in Town (Alabama, Wheatville, Basom and South Alabama) comprised of slightly higher density mixed-use development.
- Most residential development consists of low-density single-family housing, situated along Town highways.
- Land use is regulated in the Town solely through the zoning ordinance.
- A small amount of commercial development exists in and around the hamlets.
- A rock quarry is located in the south-central portion of the Town.
- The south-central portion of the Town is underlain by former gypsum mines (see Map 10).

Agriculture and Farmland

- Most of the agricultural land is included in Genesee County Agricultural District No. 2.
- Agriculture is the predominant active land use, accounting for 83 percent of the land area outside of the wildlife and conservation areas and Indian Reservation.

- A large portion of the Town contains soils classified as prime farmland soil.
- The Genesee County Smart Growth Plan restricts the number of new water connections-ups to new, non-agricultural land uses in agricultural districts, unless they are located in a designated development area.
- Agricultural preservation is viewed as important by approximately 80 percent of the Alabama residents that responded to the public opinion survey. Sentiment contends that farms should be protected as viable businesses and open space, and for continuing the rural character of the Town.

Natural Environment and Constraints

- The topography of the Town is generally flat, with the exception of the escarpment that extends through the southern portion of Town. Steep slopes do not present a development constraint.
- Hydric soils are limited to the northern portion of the Town within the wildlife and conservation areas and along stream corridors.
- Floodplains were identified along Oak Orchard Creek.
- Most mapped wetlands and floodplains are located within the wildlife and conservation areas.
- The wildlife and conservation areas provide important open space, wildlife habitat, and locations for passive recreation.
- Agricultural lands and the open wetlands in the wildlife and conservation areas provide valuable scenic vistas, adding to the unique character of the area.
- Most of the Town of Alabama lies within the Oak Orchard watershed, with smaller areas situated within the Murder Creek and Mud Creek watersheds.
- Small creeks and streams generally flow northward combining with the major streams, which flow out of the study area.
- The abandoned U.S. Gypsum mines noted on Map 10 could potentially cause ground subsidence, which could result in damage to aboveground structures or personal injury. The location of the former mines should be noted in future land use decisions in affected areas.

Demographics and Social-Economic Characteristics

- The Town population has remained relatively stable for over 40 years with modest decreases in population shown over the last ten years.
- Population projections indicate that the Town's population will likely decline over the next 25 years.
- Household size has decreased from 2.84 to 2.59 persons per household. At the same time both the number of households and number of occupied housing units have remained stable.
- Unemployment is higher in the study area (6.0 percent) than in the County as a whole (4.3 percent).
- A majority of respondents believe that commercial and industrial growth is needed in Alabama.

Transportation

- State Routes 63 and 77 are the major transportation routes through the Town.
- Bloomingdale Road and Ledge Road provide access from the Tonawanda Indian reservation to State Route 77, in the western portion of the Town.
- No major capacity or operational deficiencies were identified on state or local highways.

- An abandoned railroad corridor runs west to east, through the Indian reservation to the Village of Oakfield, continuing to the east and out of the study area. It is currently being utilized by snowmobilers and ATV riders.
- Some problematic intersections were noted along State Route 77, at Ledge and Bloomingdale Roads.

Utilities

- There currently is no public water service in the Town.
- The Genesee County Smart Growth Plan identifies Alabama, South Alabama and Basom hamlet areas as "future development areas," where public water could be extended.
- Public water supply could be made available through Darien, Pembroke or Newstead from the west or Oakfield to the east.
- Most residents responding to the public opinion survey indicated that public water should be provided Town-wide.
- There currently is no public sewer service in the Town. The closest sewer system is located in the Village of Oakfield.

Community and Government Facilities

- Besides the wildlife and conservation areas, there are limited public facilities in the Town.
- Town facilities include the Town Hall, Fire Hall and Town Highway Garage.
- The majority of students in the Town of Alabama are part of the Alabama-Oakfield Central school district. Other areas are served by Akron Central, Royalton-Hartland or Medina Central school districts.
- Residents believe additional recreational facilities are needed, such as playgrounds, sports facilities and picnic areas.
- Residents indicate that shared services and inter-governmental cooperation should be expanded for highway, recreation, garbage/solid waste disposal, youth services and seniors services.

Zoning

- The R Residential zoning classification, in particular the dimensional standards, is very similar in nature to the A-R classification and does not promote or limit particular uses in the hamlets.
- Numerous uses are allowed by Special Use Permit in the AR and R districts, which essentially allows a wide number of uses in the residential districts.
- Within Alabama there is not a lot of commercially zoned land, but commercial and industrial uses can be achieved throughout much of the Town with a Special Use Permit.
- There are no hamlet design standards or other mechanisms to help define the hamlets.

5.2.2 Town of Oakfield

Existing Land Use

- Agriculture is the predominant land use by area.
- Agricultural, vacant/undeveloped/open space, and wildlife conservation areas account for 80 percent of the total land area.
- Residential land use is low-density in nature.
- The Town of Oakfield's primary method for land use regulation is through zoning.

- The Village of Oakfield is located in the southern section of the Town and contains the densest pattern of development.
- The densest land use patterns in the Town are located just outside the Village.
- The U.S. Gypsum site is just west of the Village and is currently underutilized.
- The south-central portion of the Town is underlain by former gypsum mines (see Map 10).

Agriculture and Farmland

- Most of the agricultural land is included in Genesee County Agricultural District No. 2.
- A large portion of the Town contains soils classified as prime farmland soils.
- The Genesee County Smart Growth Plan calls for minimizing the number of new water connections within agricultural districts.

Natural Environment and Constraints

- Local relief is generally flat and, with localized exceptions, steep slopes do not present a development constraint.
- Hydric soils are most widespread in the northern portion of Town within the Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management Areas, along stream corridors, and within a large wetland area north of the Village.
- Floodplains were identified along Oak Orchard Creek, in the northern portion of Town.
- Most of wetlands and floodplains are located in the Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management Area.
- The wildlife conservation area provides important open space, wildlife habitat, and a location passive recreation.
- Agricultural lands and the open wetlands of the wildlife conservation area provide valuable scenic vistas and add to the unique character of the Town.
- Almost the entire Town of Oakfield lies within the Oak Orchard watershed.
- Small creeks and streams generally flow northward combining with the major streams, which flow out of the study area.
- The abandoned U.S. Gypsum mines noted on Map 10 could potentially cause ground subsidence, which could result in damage to aboveground structures or personal injury. The location of the former mines should be noted in future land use decisions in affected areas.

Demographics and Social-Economic Characteristics

- Long range trends show modest decreases in population over the last ten years.
- Projections indicate that the population will grow slightly by an estimated 6.0 percent over the next thirty years.
- Combined growth in the Village and Town is expected to remain modest and be easily absorbed within the community.
- The population (Town and Village combined) decreased by 112 persons (3.4%) between 1990 and 2000. While the size of households has also decreased to 2.77 persons per household, the number of households has remained relatively stable.
- Unemployment is higher in the study area (6.0 percent) than in the County as a whole (4.3 percent).
- A majority of residents believe that commercial and industrial growth is needed in the Town of Oakfield.

Transportation

- State Routes 63 and 262, along with Albion Road and Lockport Road, are the major transportation routes in the Town. The major highways in Town converge with the Village.
- No major capacity or operational deficiencies were identified on state or local highways in the Town.
- An abandoned railroad line runs from west to east through the Town and Village and is currently being utilized by snowmobilers and ATV riders.
- The intersection of State Route 63, at the school entrance, has been identified as a location of safety concerns. This intersection will be part of a planned NYSDOT reconstruction project on State Route 63 through the Village.

Utilities

- Only limited areas along State Route 63, South Pearl Road and North Pearl Road, currently receive public water.
- In the Town of Oakfield, the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan limits future development to areas immediately adjacent to the Village. These areas are located along State Route 63-Lewiston Road, North Pearl Road, South Pearl Road and State Route 262.
- The Smart Growth Plan promotes future water line extensions along State Route 63 to the west and State Route 262 to the east, but discourages non-agricultural development.
- Public sewers extend to a very small area of the Town from the Village of Oakfield. The remainder of the Town utilizes on-site septic systems for sanitary waste disposal.

Zoning

- Similar to the ordinance in Alabama, the R&A – Residential Agriculture zoning district is very similar in nature to the R – General Residential classification and does not promote significantly different uses in either district.
- The R district does not limit (or encourage) particular uses in the hamlets.
- Because sewer service can be extended from the Village, and the capacity exists, higher residential densities for residential development with sewers could be accommodated in areas outside the Village.
- There are no design standards or guidelines to control random development to ensure that it is in keeping with the character of the Town.
- The possibility of the redevelopment of the U.S. Gypsum site should be acknowledged and planned for, with consideration given to the routing of truck traffic and other potential impacts to Village and surrounding area.

5.2.3 Village of Oakfield

Existing Land Use

- The Village is the commercial center of the study area.
- The Village is comprised of mixed-use development.
- The Village has higher residential densities.
- Land use on Main Street consists of a mix of commercial and residential uses, government offices and some institutional uses.
- Residential land use accounts for 46 percent of the total land area in the Village.

- Almost all multi-family and multiple residences that exist in the study area are located in the Village.
- The Village's primary method for land use regulation is zoning.
- There are a number of large commercial and industrial uses in the southwestern section of the Village.
- The Village is essentially built-out, with future development coming in the form of redevelopment.
- The southeastern portion of the Village is underlain by former gypsum mines (see Map 10).

Agriculture and Farmland

- The Village is not included within the boundaries of the County Agricultural District.
- The agricultural nature of the surrounding Towns plays a significant role in shaping the Village's commercial land use mix and character in general.

Natural Environment and Constraints

- Topography in the Village is generally flat; steep slopes are not an issue.
- Regulatory floodway and 100-year flood areas are limited to the relatively narrow creek corridors in the central and southeast sectors of the Village.
- The abandoned U.S. Gypsum mines noted on Map 10 could potentially cause ground subsidence, which could result in damage to aboveground structures or personal injury. The location of the former mines should be noted in future land use decisions in affected areas.

Demographics and Social-Economic Characteristics

- Modest decreases in population have been shown over the last ten years.
- Projections indicate that the Village is expected to lose approximately 3.0 percent of its population over the next thirty years (a typical trend in most built-out villages).
- Combined growth in the Village and Town is estimated to remain modest and be easily absorbed within the community.
- While the population has decreased, so has the size of households and, therefore, the net number of residential units has remained relatively unchanged.
- There are more rental units in the Village (30.6%) as compared to the two Towns (19.5 in Alabama and 12.0% in Oakfield).
- Unemployment is higher in the study area (6.0 percent) than in the County as a whole (4.3 percent).
- A majority of residents believe that commercial and industrial growth is needed in the Village of Oakfield.

Transportation

- State Routes 63 and 262 are the major highways serving the Village.
- No major capacity or operational deficiencies were identified on state or local highways.
- Only limited public bus service is available and requires a 24-hour advanced request.
- The abandoned railroad corridor is currently being utilized by snowmobilers and ATV riders.

Utilities

- The entire Village is serviced by public water.

- The Village has identified the need for a new water tower and associated improvements to the water distribution system. A new tower could be designed to service areas in the Towns of Oakfield and Alabama.
- The Genesee County Smart Growth Plan includes the entire Village and some of the surrounding area in the Town of Oakfield within its recommended development area.
- The Village Wastewater Treatment Plant currently operates at approximately half of its 0.5 million gallon per day capacity leaving sufficient opportunity for connections with new development in the Village and the immediately adjacent area in the Town.

Zoning

- The Village has few areas of vacant land.
- The smallest lot sizes and highest development densities are allowed in the Village.
- The Village contains the greatest amount of commercially zoned property (in two distinct districts). There are no building form standards (architectural and historic) to control the character of new and redevelopment structures.
- The Planned Unit Development regulations do not provide for clustering.
- The Village allows a diverse range of housing to meet residents' preferences.
- Multi-family housing is not allowed in the commercial districts or as a permitted use in any of the other zoning district (requires a special use permit).
- Currently the zoning defines tourist homes (which includes bed and breakfast establishments) but neither are listed as allowed uses in any zoning districts.

5.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations are patterned after the goals that were established for each community. They are designed to address the opportunities and constraints identified for each area.

5.3.1 Town of Alabama

Goal: Protect, promote and preserve agriculture

The Town of Alabama is characterized by rural open space, wildlife conservation and wetland areas, open farmlands, and older residential structures mixed with some newer homes. Residential development is denser in the vicinity of the hamlets, but is very low density throughout the remainder of the Town. There has been little to no major subdivision activity in Alabama. There are a large number of active farms in the Town and a great amount of open land, which is situated within the wildlife and conservation areas. There is strong public sentiment in Alabama to protect farmland and preserve open space.

Devising and implementing measures for preserving farmland and prime farm soils is the most effective way to acknowledge the public's concern for protecting agricultural resources in the Town. Residential lot sizes should be reassessed in certain areas to better manage future growth and non-traditional development techniques implemented to preserve open space. Rural development guidelines should be instituted to avoid sprawl (e.g., better guidelines or standards for road frontage development and encouraging more creative development techniques). In formulating these recommendations, it must be understood that the extent of, and limited pressure for, growth is presently not impacting agriculture and agricultural operations in the community.

In addition, the Town should enforce the newly adopted wind energy regulations. The use of wind power can reduce energy costs for individual farmers. The decision to build individual wind turbines and, more importantly, larger wind farms requires a comprehensive study to identify wind speed and consistency, costs and benefits and impacts to local ecology.

Recommendations:

- Consider the adoption of an agricultural zoning classification that would limit non-agricultural development. This district would incorporate large farms and areas of good farm soils and focus on development density as a means of protecting agricultural uses. This zoning category could be used in combination with conservation easements or a purchase of agricultural conservation easement (PACE) program to ensure that potential rezoning actions would not result in the development of prime farmland.
- Review and expand the Town zoning to include innovative non-traditional development standards, such as open development areas, overlay districts and rural cluster development regulations.
- Adopt and enforce rural development guidelines, to control growth, manage sprawl and preserve farmland (which do not take away the right to develop, but enable development to occur in a more managed fashion to achieve particular goals). Unlike some other communities, the limited level of development pressure and low growth rate in Alabama reduces the need for utilizing these guidelines. Therefore, the tools should be used as follows:
  - Establish subdivision regulations, with a particular emphasis on minor subdivision.
  - Utilizing (permitting) open development areas could be helpful along State Routes 77 and 63, and in areas that have important views or environmental resources that should be preserved. The use of open development areas provides a more creative approach for allow minor subdivisions, helping to avoid the standard creation of roadway frontage lots which result in long "bacon strip" parcels.
  - Overlay zoning could be used in areas that require more creativity in residential design and along major roadway corridors to establish more appropriate setback standards. They can also be used for the incorporation of aesthetic standards, such as landscaping, architectural design or signage, in certain areas (such as the hamlets).
  - Rural development guidelines may be the most important tool to guide potential developers with site designs that are in concert with the surrounding community. These guidelines could be inserted into the zoning code or subdivision regulations for easy reference and utilization. The Town could begin the preparation of rural development guidelines by researching what they like and dislike in terms of subdivision design.

  It should be noted that none of these tools and land use measures eliminate the right to develop land. Rather, they provide flexibility and guidance to enables land to be developed in a manner that achieves the goals and objectives of this Plan.
- Institute programs to preserve important areas of farmland and prime farm soils, such as a purchase of development rights (PDR) program, conservation easements and other similar mechanisms. The Town should work with the County to ensure that such efforts are consistent with the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan and the Smart Growth Plan. Agricultural conservation easements may be the first step, to be followed at a later date with a PDR program as required. The Town should also evaluate the economic impacts of a purchase of agricultural conservation easement (PACE) program. It is suggested that this type of planning be done in conjunction with the Town of Oakfield (a joint agricultural protection plan).

Because of the low level of development pressure, programs such as PACE or PDR are considered long-term actions and should be considered as feasible actions when the time is right.

- Develop hamlet overlay zoning, that incorporates traditional neighborhood design standards and allows for denser development in and around the hamlets, which is consistent with the policies of the County's Smart Growth Plan.
- Consider the adoption of a right to farm law that would be complementary to the State and County programs, and would offer additional protection against unwarranted complaints aimed at farming operations, such as noise, odor, etc.
- Special use permits could be written to support home occupations and secondary businesses that help residents and farmers generate additional sources of income, such as tourism activities or day camps for children.
- Limit water extensions in the Town to eliminate the potential for extensive growth and to protect agricultural uses. The County's Smart Growth Plan should be considered when planning water extensions. Emphasis should be placed on addressing locations with potential public health and safety concerns, and on controlling development on individual parcels outside the hamlets by utilizing lateral (water line) restrictions. Such restrictions may be necessary to minimize development pressure on farmlands and discourage non-agricultural uses in those areas.
- Long-term potential for sewer service or on-site (package) wastewater treatment systems should continue to be investigated as an option for the hamlet areas.
- Consider the establishment of an agricultural advisory committee to assist in clarifying and mediating, and alleviating, conflicts that may arise, and to promote the concerns and desires of farmers. This committee could be utilized to provide a better understanding of the needs of farmers and farming operations in the local community. Through this committee, this information could be for easily transferred to County and State governments to help keep farming viable in the region.
- Adopt and enforce guidelines for siting, construction, site restoration and monitoring of individual wind turbines and wind farms.

Goal: **Maintain and enhance community character**

The Town of Alabama is a rural farming community, with vast tracts of open space and farmland. Over 25 percent of the community encompasses wildlife and conservation areas. The Town has experienced no significant subdivision activity and the densest residential development exists in and around the four hamlets of Basom, Alabama, Wheatville and South Alabama. Every planning effort undertaken in the Town should take the preservation of rural character into consideration.

Recommendations:

- Necessary road improvements to address drainage or safety concerns, which are undertaken outside the hamlets, should limit the installation of sidewalks, curbing, street lighting or other suburban features.
- Require the use of non-traditional development techniques, such as open development area, cluster development and planned unit development to control future growth, manage sprawl and preserve farmland.
- Focus attention on addressing traffic problems along State Route 77 at Ledge and Bloomingdale Roads, which are impacting the character of the community.
- Adopt and enforce rural development guidelines.
- Adopt and enforce hamlet development guidelines in the hamlets, and assess the zoning in these areas to support increased development densities in these areas (½ to ¾-acre lots are the smallest that can be approved in non-sewered areas).

- Consider zoning overlay districts for the hamlets, with architectural and historic preservation standards, to protect and enhance the character of development in these areas.
- Zoning overlays could also be used to control develop along the two major road corridors, limiting commercial development to the hamlets (particularly Basom), and preventing commercial strip development. This is especially important in those areas that receive public water.
- Adopt zoning classifications, or strengthen existing zoning, to protect existing agricultural uses and prevent residential sprawl.
- Review and update permitted uses, and uses allowed by Special Use Permit in the AR Zone. Any revisions to the schedule of land uses should specify those existing land uses conforming to today's zoning would be able to continue as pre-existing uses.
- Identify and protect important scenic vistas that add to the character of the Town and include their consideration in new subdivision regulations.

Goal: **Provide public water to appropriate areas of the Town**

Potable water in the Town of Alabama is procured from private wells. The Genesee County Smart Growth Plan outlines policies for extending water primarily to developed hamlets to prevent urban sprawl. The provision of water services is essential to address certain health and safety factors associated with contaminated wells and failing septic systems, as acknowledged by the Genesee County Department of Health.

Recommendations:

- Support and encourage the extension of public water along the major state highways, thus connecting the hamlet areas through a looped system of water line extensions along State Route 77, north to Alabama hamlet; east along Lewiston Road, with a northerly extension along Knowleville Road to Wheatville hamlet; south along Knowlesville Road to South Alabama; and west along State Route 63, back to State Route 77 (hydraulically efficient, servicing the most densely populated areas).
- Utilize lateral restrictions along the roadways between the hamlets to control growth and protect agricultural uses from development pressures. This would also apply to any future extension along State Route 63, between South Alabama and Oakfield, where development pressures are expected to increase. Other controls such as the overlays can help control development in areas where water is primarily run to loop the water system.
- Focus the provision of public water to hamlet locations that have urgent need due to health and safety issues.
- Ensure the extension of public water for targeted commercial and industrial growth.
- Protect groundwater resources from contamination. Sponsor educational opportunities in groundwater protection for households and farms.
- The looped water system will provide a backbone for the potential development of future water extensions (a very long-term consideration).

Goal: **Protect the environmental features and resources of the Town**

The wildlife and conservation areas comprise approximately 26 percent of the land area in the Town of Alabama. The Town contains a variety of other important environmental features including wetlands, large expanses of mature woodlands, tributary stream corridors and floodplains. Groundwater is also an important environmental resource since the population of the Town relies on this resource for potable water. The former U.S. Gypsum mines shafts extend through the southeastern and south central portions of Alabama (Map 10). Any proposals for future development activity in this area of the Town must take this into consideration.

Recommendations:

- Groundwater quality must be protected. Efforts should be undertaken to ensure that on-site sanitary waste disposal systems are properly maintained, and that failing systems are detected and properly mitigated. The communities should work with the appropriate County and State agencies to address this problem through public education programs and the provision of technical assistance to help residents understand and address this important issue. Monies may be made available through Rural Development programs supported by the federal government.
- In identified groundwater problem areas, the Town should require larger lot sizes.
- In order to mitigate the impacts from aging and deteriorating on-site septic systems, communal septic systems or "package" wastewater treatment systems should be investigated for the hamlet areas.
- In those areas not receiving public water, consideration should be given to subdivision regulations that require soil testing as part of the application procedure. If poor or problematic soils are identified, stricter standards could be imposed, such as larger minimum lot size requirements, or limitations on the number of subdivisions.
- To protect important environmental features, proposed development actions should avoid identified wetlands, floodplains and prime farm soils. (Depending upon the structure of the wetland, avoiding wetlands has the additional benefit of protecting the groundwater resource.) Mandate usage of cluster development or open development areas to help avoid these environmentally sensitive features.
- Wetlands protection should include both State and Federal wetland areas including the required 100-foot setback areas required by the State. A local law could be utilized to help protect these important areas.
- Support farming practices that recognize environmental resources and the importance of avoiding or minimizing point and non-point source contaminant threats to groundwater, surface water and the environment as a whole. This can be accomplished by working with organizations such as Cooperative Extension and County Soil and Water District.
- Assess the zoning in the vicinity of the wildlife and conservation areas to reduce potential impacts from development.
- Develop a more formalized trail system along the abandoned railroad corridor and encourage the State to establish official bike routes along State Routes 63 and 77.
- With respect to the former underground gypsum mines, the Town should investigate the need to institute zoning revisions or additional regulations to address the risk to future property owners in underground mining areas. Assistance from the State should be sought for this effort. In addition, consideration should be given to adopting minor subdivision regulations to allow the Town to further evaluate the risks of subdividing and developing properties in these areas.

Goal: **Provide for economic development in the Town**

The expansion of commercial and industrial growth, and other economic development activities, helps provide jobs and a build a stronger tax base for the community. Farming will continue to dominate as the primary industry in the Town of Alabama. An economically sound town helps support the school district and Village.

Recommendations:

- New commercial uses should be limited to the hamlets, in particular, Basom and Alabama and to a lesser extent South Alabama. Focus should be placed on how State Route 77 should be developed, particularly in the vicinity of the Basom hamlet. Avoid zoning or zoning changes that would allow areas of commercial strip development to build up in the Town (outside the hamlet long-term growth areas identified on the Vision Maps) which would adversely impact the character of the community. This is especially important with retail uses that should only be allowed in certain hamlets or the village. Farm related businesses or some "nuisance business" should continue to be allowed in the rural areas by special use permit.
- The Basom Hamlet could allow auto dependant uses in response to the traffic to the reservation. It must be done in such a way not to destroy the rural atmosphere of this area.
- The South Alabama Hamlet is the community center but should not have a focus on business or retail development, but is a residential hamlet. The Town Hall may or may not continue at this location.
- Efforts should be centered on revitalizing the hamlets through redevelopment and in-fill activities.
- Support farming as the primary industry in the Town and consider a separate zoning classification, or strengthening existing zoning, to protect and enhance this industry. Non-agricultural uses should be highly restricted on prime farm soils. However, secondary commercial or home occupations related to agriculture should be encouraged.
- Target locations for future commercial and industrial development along State Route 77 and Ledge Road. The Ledge Road area (near the existing quarry) should be restricted for residential development and only allow agriculture or other uses not impacted by the quarry operations.
- Recreation-oriented economic activity should be supported, such as campgrounds, riding stables, etc. Support services for the recreational sector should also be encouraged. Again, these uses could be allowed in the more rural areas outside the hamlets. The Alabama Hamlet could have a focus on tourism support uses.
- Promote visitation to the wildlife and conservation areas and find ways to capitalize on this environmental tourism. Include specific regulations in the zoning codes for bed and breakfast establishments in the hamlets and surrounding areas.
- Coordinate activities with the State, and cross market these recreational – tourism related activities. Help in marketing the attributes of the region.

Goal: **Maintain and promote efficiency of government**

The Town of Alabama, in cooperation with the surrounding Town and Village of Oakfield, must strive to offer the highest quality and most cost-effective services to the community.

Recommendations:

- Cooperation between the communities will be essential for infrastructure expansion. Consider joint or regional funding grant applications.
- Utilize this Comprehensive Plan to promote continued cooperative approaches and plans with the Town of Oakfield, and where feasible, the Village of Oakfield. The three-community committee should be continued and should meet yearly to review the plan.
- Continue to work with the Town of Oakfield to develop ways to share essential services, equipment and personnel.
- Implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan to establish appropriate and alternative development standards and regulations to manage growth.
- Utilize and enforce land use regulations to properly manage growth and encourage the development of a mix of uses to balance the tax base and control the costs of public services.
- Keep working with the surrounding communities of Village of Oakfield and Town of Alabama to develop ways to share recreational opportunities.
- Continue and strengthen the relationship with the Oakfield-Alabama School District to sharing services and improving relations between the Towns and Village.
- Many of the recommendations for the Town of Alabama are the same for the Town of Oakfield, and therefore these communities could work together in implementing these recommendations. This could keep costs down and ensure that regulations are similar in these adjoining communities.

Goal: Encourage diversity of housing types in the Town

As the population of the Town changes over time, and the economic conditions vary, a variety of housing options should be available to accommodate the changing lifestyles, incomes and needs of the community. Presently, the Town's zoning regulations allows for diversity in housing stock. However, single-family detached homes are the primary form of residential development in Alabama. The lack of sewers severely limits the types of construction that can take place in the town. Higher density housing types should be expected in the Village of Oakfield, where sewer is available.

Recommendations:

- Denser development should occur in and around the hamlets in the Town. The zoning of these areas should be assessed to ensure that a variety of housing types are permitted.
- Promote alternative housing types to satisfy the needs of single individuals, seniors and other non-traditional households that are affordable in nature, such as in-law (accessory) apartments, and attached single-family dwellings.

5.3.2 Town of Oakfield

Goal: Promote the expansion of public water to appropriate areas in the Town

Potable water in the Town of Oakfield is primarily obtained from private wells. Some public water is provided to areas of the Town situated immediately outside the Village of Oakfield. The Genesee County Smart Growth Plan outlines policies for extending water primarily to developed hamlets to prevent urban sprawl.

Recommendations:

- The Town currently has public water in the areas adjoining the Village. A primary opportunity for additional public water in the Town of Oakfield is to selectively extend water along certain main roads directly outside of the Village to enable a limited amount of new develop over the long term. This plan is also being coordinated to help in providing water to the Town of Alabama.
- Support and encourage the extension of public water along the major roadways, thus connecting the Five Corners and East Oakfield hamlets with the Village through a system that extends water along State Route 63, out Drake Road and northwest on Lewiston to Maltby Road. Consider future long-term extensions along Maple and Hutton Roads.
- Consider providing public water to the Birdseye property and other suitable locations for commercial and industrial development.
- Utilize lateral restrictions along the roadways between the hamlets to control growth and protect agricultural uses from development pressures. This would also apply to any future extension of water along State Route 63, between Oakfield and the South Alabama hamlet where development pressures could increase in the future.
- Over the long term, focus the provision of public water to locations that are identified as having an urgent need due to health and safety issues.
- Protect private wells from contamination. Sponsor educational opportunities in groundwater protection for households and farms.
- Based upon the existing land use pattern, anticipated growth, and lands available for development (or re-development), it is recommended that the future development area surrounding the Village continue to expand outward from the Village (there are several opportunities).
- The area along State Route 63 between the Village and South Alabama should receive public water in order to bring water to appropriate areas in Alabama. An overlay zone of enhanced land use controls should be established in order to control the type and density of new development that may wish to benefit from public water.
- A looped water extension should continue east on State Route 262 to Fisher Road and south to State Route 63 to provide a more hydraulically efficient system. This area would be a long-term growth area and should not be considered for near term development.

Goal: Provide for economic development

The expansion of industrial and commercial growth, and other economic development activities, helps provide jobs and a stronger tax base for the community. A vibrant Town also provides opportunities for Village businesses as long as they don't compete.

Recommendations:

- Commercial uses should be limited to the Five Corners hamlet or the Village of Oakfield. Avoid zoning or zoning changes that would allow commercial retail strip development in the Town.
- Support and promote the retention and expansion of existing industrial uses through zoning and capital improvements. Non-retail businesses surrounding the Village will help the Village by providing customers for the Downtown.
- Target areas along State Route 63 and South Pearl for commercial and industrial development.

- Develop a redevelopment strategy for the U.S. Gypsum property. Work with the property owner, county and state officials to appropriately locate new uses on this site.
- Identify new target industries that could be compatible with the existing infrastructure, land use patterns and community objectives (in the U.S. Gypsum area and off the southwest corner of the Village).
- Support farming as the primary industry in the Town and consider a separate zoning classification, or strengthening existing zoning, to protect and enhance this industry. Non-agricultural uses should be highly restricted on prime farm soils.
- Recreation-oriented economic activity should be supported, such as campgrounds, riding stables, etc. Support services for the recreational sector should also be encouraged.
- Work with the village in targeting areas for sewer extensions.

Goal: Protect and preserve agricultural land uses

Similar to Alabama, the Town of Oakfield is characterized by rural open space and large tracts of farmland. The Town has also has a large wildlife and conservation area, that characterizes the landscape. The large extent of farmland and undeveloped open space contributes to the rural character of the Town. There is also strong public sentiment in Oakfield to preserve and protect farmland and the overall rural nature of the Town.

Preserving farmland and good farm soils would address public concerns for protecting agricultural resources in the community. To better manage future growth, non-traditional development techniques should be implemented. Rural development guidelines should also be considered to avoid sprawl and the inefficient development of agricultural lands. In addition, guidelines should be established to manage the development of wind turbines in the Town. The use of wind power can reduce energy costs for individual farmers. The decision to build individual wind turbines and, more importantly, larger wind farms requires a comprehensive study to identify wind speed and consistency, costs and benefits and impacts to local ecology.

Recommendations:

- Consider the adoption of an agricultural zoning classification that would limit non-agricultural development. This district would incorporate large farms and areas of good farm soils and focus on development density as a means of protecting agricultural uses. This zoning category could be used in combination with conservation easements or a purchase of agricultural conservation easement (PACE) program to ensure that potential rezoning actions would not result in the development of prime farmland.
- Review and expand the Town zoning to include innovative non-traditional development standards, such as open development areas, overlay districts and rural cluster development regulations.
- Adopt and enforce rural development guidelines, to control growth, manage sprawl and preserve farmland (which do not take away the right to develop, but enable development to occur in a more managed fashion to achieve particular goals). Unlike some other communities, the limited level of development pressure and low growth rate in Oakfield reduces the need for utilizing these guidelines.
- Rural development guidelines may be the most important tool to guide potential developers with site designs that are in concert with the surrounding community. These guidelines could be inserted into the zoning code or subdivision regulations for easy reference and utilization. The Town could begin the preparation of rural development guidelines by researching what they like and dislike in terms of subdivision design.
- Zoning overlays and cluster regulations should be carefully designed to help preserve features in the community and to not allow the proliferation of long narrow "bacon strip" farm lots.

- Institute programs to preserve important areas of farmland and prime farm soils, such as a purchase of development rights (PDR) program, conservation easements and other similar mechanisms. The Town should work with the County to ensure that such efforts are consistent with the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan and the Smart Growth Plan. Agricultural conservation easements may be the first step, to be followed at a later date with a PDR program as required. The Town should also evaluate the economic impacts of a purchase of agricultural conservation easement (PACE) program. It is suggested that this type of planning be done in conjunction with the Town of Alabama (a joint agricultural protection plan). Because of the low level of development pressure, programs such as PACE or PDR are considered long-term actions and should be considered as feasible actions when the time is right.
- Keep denser development activity centered in the areas around the village and in one hamlet area, consistent with the policies of the County's Smart Growth Plan, to prevent sprawl and protect agricultural land.
- Consider the adoption of a right to farm law that would be complementary to the State and County programs, and would offer additional protection against unwarranted complaints aimed at farming operations, such as noise, odor, etc.
- Special use permits should be written to support home occupations and secondary businesses to help residents and farm operations establish additional sources of income. The Zoning Code should be revised to more specifically address agriculturally related home occupations and secondary uses in the R-A zone.
- Limit water extensions in the Town to eliminate the potential for extensive growth and to protect agricultural uses. The County's Smart Growth Plan should be considered when planning water extensions. Emphasis should be placed on providing water to areas that have potential public health and safety concerns, and on controlling development on individual parcels outside the Village by utilizing lateral (water line) restrictions. Such restrictions may be necessary to minimize development pressure on farmlands and discourage non-agricultural uses in those areas.
- Any extension of the Village of Oakfield sanitary sewer system into the Town of Oakfield should be carefully scrutinized to ensure that such action does not place development pressures in areas of important agricultural use (west and south of the Village are high priority areas for protection).
- Consider the establishment of an agricultural advisory committee to assist in clarifying and mediating, and alleviating, conflicts that may arise, and to promote the concerns and desires of farmers. This committee could be utilized to provide a better understanding of the needs of farmers and farming operations in the local community. Through this committee, this information could be for easily transferred to County and State governments to help keep farming viable in the region.
- Adopt and enforce guidelines for siting, construction, site restoration and monitoring of individual wind turbines and wind farms.

Goal: Maintain and enhance community character

The Town of Oakfield is a rural farming community, with vast tracts of farmland, open space and wildlife and conservation area. Residential development in Oakfield is very low density, with denser development in the vicinity of the Village of Oakfield. Residential use outside the Village is typically frontage development, particularly in the Five Corners and East Oakfield hamlets and along Pearl Street, south of the Village. No major residential subdivisions have occurred in the Town. Every planning effort undertaken in the Town should take the preservation of rural character into consideration.

Recommendations:

- Necessary road improvements to address drainage or safety concerns, which are undertaken outside the hamlets, should not include sidewalks, curbing or street lighting (no suburban atmosphere).
- Require the use of non-traditional development techniques, such as open development area, cluster development and planned unit development to control future growth, manage sprawl and preserve farmland.
- Adopt and enforce rural development guidelines.
- Encourage and support residential development in and around the hamlets.
- Adopt and enforce hamlet development guidelines in the hamlets, and assess the zoning in these areas to support increased development densities in these areas.
- Consider zoning overlay districts for the hamlets, with architectural and historic preservation standards, to accomplish a protect and enhance the character of develop these areas.
- Zoning overlays could also be used to control develop along the two major road corridors, limiting commercial development to the hamlets and area adjacent to the Village and preventing commercial strip development.
- Adopt zoning classifications, or strengthen existing zoning, to protect existing agricultural uses and prevent residential sprawl.
- Identify and protect important scenic vistas that add to the character of the Town.
- Adopt minor subdivision regulations that better manage the division of properties into four or less lots.

Goal: Protect the environmental features and resources of the community

The study area contains numerous environmental features and is home to large wildlife conservation areas. The former U.S. Gypsum mines shafts extend through the southern portion of Oakfield (Map 10). Any proposals for future development activity in this area of the Town must take this into consideration.

Recommendations:

- Groundwater quality must be protected. Efforts should be undertaken to ensure that on-site sanitary waste disposal systems are properly maintained, and that failing systems are detected and properly mitigated. The communities should work with the appropriate County and State agencies to address this problem through public education programs and the provision of technical assistance to help residents understand and address this important issue.
- In those areas not receiving public water, consideration should be given to subdivision regulations that require soil testing as part of the application procedure. If poor or problematic soils are identified, stricter standards could be imposed, such as larger minimum lot size requirements.
- To protect important environmental features, proposed development actions should avoid identified wetlands, floodplains and prime farm soils.
- Support farming practices that recognize environmental resources and the importance of avoiding or minimizing point and non-point source contaminant threats to groundwater, surface water and the environment as a whole.
- Assess the zoning in the vicinity of the wildlife and conservation areas to reduce potential impacts from development.
- Promote public education programs for the maintenance of septic systems to protect groundwater quality.
- Protect the Old Indian Woods area as a cultural and historic resource of local significance. This area is part of the Iroquois Nation and includes woodlands and a stream corridor that warrants protection.

- With respect to the former underground gypsum mines, the Town should investigate the need to institute zoning revisions or additional regulations to address the risk to future property owners in underground mining areas. Assistance from the State should be sought for this effort. In addition, consideration should be given to adopting minor subdivision regulations to allow the Town to further evaluate the risks of subdividing and developing properties in these areas.

Goal: Encourage a diversity of housing types in the Town

As the population of the Town changes over time, and the economic conditions vary, options for housing should be available to accommodate changing the lifestyles, incomes and needs of the community. Presently the Town's zoning regulations allows for diversity in housing stock. However, single-family detached homes are the primary form of residential development in the Town.

Recommendations:

- Denser development should occur in and around the Village in the Town. The area around the Village has easier access to water and sewer services, which are needed to support denser development.
- The zoning around the Village and in the hamlets should be assessed to ensure that a variety of housing types are permitted. Provisions should be made to expand the R Residential district to accommodate more properties available for multi-family development.
- Promote alternative housing types to satisfy the needs of single individuals, seniors and other non-traditional households that are affordable in nature, such as multi-family units (apartments), in-law (accessory) apartments, and attached single-family dwellings.

Goal: Maintain and promote efficiency in government

The Town of Oakfield, in conjunction with the Town of Alabama and Village, must strive to offer the highest quality and most cost-effective services to the community.

Recommendations:

- Utilize this Comprehensive Plan to promote continued cooperative approaches and plans with the Village of Oakfield and Town of Alabama.
- Continue to work with the Village of Oakfield to develop ways to share essential services, equipment and personnel.
- Implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan to establish appropriate and alternative development standards and regulations to manage growth.
- Utilize and enforce land use regulations to properly manage growth and encourage the development of a mix of uses to balance the tax base and control the costs of public services.
- Keep working with the surrounding communities of Village of Oakfield and Town of Alabama to develop ways to share recreational opportunities.
- Continue and strengthen the relationship with the Oakfield-Alabama School District to sharing services and improving relations between the Towns and Village.

5.3.3 Village of Oakfield

Goal: **Promote and encourage investment and economic development in the Village**

The Village of Oakfield is the commercial service center in the community. It serves as a community center and is an important component of the community's character. There is potential for the re-use of existing structures and for some in-fill development. There are also some opportunities for new development. The challenge is to maintain the unique identity of the Village and provide a distinct business experience that can offer essential services to the surrounding community and compete, as required, with other districts in the region.

Recommendations:

- Develop an economic revitalization strategy to promote business in the downtown, including an assessment of the public's desire for services and amenities in the area.
- Support and preserve the vitality of the Main Street corridor.
- Develop a clear identity for the Village that is useful in the promotion of the area.
- Implement a streetscape project to improve the economic prosperity of the Village, as well as the visual quality of the area. The streetscape project should focus on the central business district (CBD), but provide other types of aesthetic improvements in the areas north and south of the CBD.
- Projects and policies should be designed to encourage walking and biking in the Village and to manage traffic congestion, which can have a negative impact on the Village center.
- Adopt the proposed zoning revisions that provide design guidance for signs and awnings.
- Improve the availability, appearance and visibility of parking in the Village center.
- Plan appropriately for vacant land in and around the Village. Ensure that any new development or redevelopment is compatible with existing development in terms of size, scale, setbacks and historic/architectural characteristics.
- Develop a strategy to capitalize on tourism associated with both the wildlife and conservation resources (which draw visitors to the surrounding area) and agricultural uses in the community. Consider adopting bed and breakfast regulations or allowing this use by special permit.
- Take advantage of the Small Cities and Community Development Block Grant programs to revitalize the Village.
- Support growth around the Village by working with the Town in extending water and sewer service to appropriate areas. This growth will benefit the Village business district and the overall vitality of the Village. Redevelopment of the US Gypsum site would provide needed jobs, activity and people to the area.
- To assist with redevelopment in the central business district, utilize the 485(b) tax incentive program.
- Explore use of a Business Improvement District (BID) or a Business Enhancement district for the downtown area.
- Identify grant or low-interest loan programs (county, state or federal programs) to help fund a façade improvement program in the CBD.

Goal: **Preserve the traditional neighborhood character of the Village**

The Village of Oakfield is a charming community that possesses a rural appeal, with a small-town atmosphere. There are few agricultural uses in the Village and limited areas of undeveloped land. Residential development in the Village consists of one and two-family dwellings on small lots. Many structures in the commercial

district have second-story residential or office space. Most of the housing stock is older, enhancing the character of the community.

The commercial district functions as the rural service center for the surrounding area and contains a number of public uses, as well as historic structures. The area is pedestrian friendly, which adds to its appeal.

Village population has been essentially stable over the past decade, but modest growth is projected for the next 15 years. Increases in the number of households in the Village are also expected to continue, but at a pace that the Village can absorb. While the Village will continue to have a large proportion of family households, it is expected that there may be an increasing number of empty nester (parents without children) and senior households in the future, whose housing needs will change. There are areas in the vicinity of the Village center that can accommodate in-fill development. Emphasis should be placed on accommodating changing lifestyles and further diversifying the existing housing stock.

The former U.S. Gypsum mines shafts extend through the southeastern portion of Oakfield Village (Map 10). Any proposals for future development activity in this area of the Village must take this into consideration.

Recommendations:

- Complete the Village streetscape plan for incorporation into a NYSDOT reconstruction project that is proposed for State Route 63 prior. Request the NYSDOT to assist with streetscape and/or landscape improvements as a part of this project.
- Promote walking and the preservation of the pedestrian friendly atmosphere throughout the Village. This issue is closely linked with the community character of the area.
- Adopt architectural standards or guidelines, possibly in conjunction with hamlet development guidelines, to preserve and protect important structures and ensure that new development and redevelopment is designed in harmony with the character of the Village. Architectural standards could be accomplished through the creation of a zoning overlay district for the Village (or tied to a Village sponsored façade improvement program).
- Implement rural and hamlet development guidelines.
- Adopt landscaping standards or guidelines to help improve the visual quality of commercial and industrial development and redevelopment in the Village. These landscaping standards could be linked with a zoning overlay (noted above).
- Consider developing community gateways at the major entry points to the Village.
- Secure land within the Village for the establishment of a Village park.
- Ensure protection of important historic structures in the Village. Consider adopting standards or guidelines for protecting and enhancing historic character, which could be linked with a zoning overlay district (noted above).
- Continue and maintain the diversity of housing types in the Village.
- Future revisions to zoning requirements and procedures should anticipate and facilitate redevelopment proposals rather than the development if vacant open space.
- Make sure 485b programs are well advertised and utilized by the existing businesses in the community.
- The school, although not within the Village, is an integral part of the character of the community. Connections to the school property should be encouraged. The streetscape project should extend out to the school.

- We respect to the former underground gypsum mines, the Village should investigate the need to institute zoning revisions or additional regulations to address the risk to future property owners within underground mining areas. Assistance from the State should be sought for this effort. In addition, consideration should be given to adopting minor subdivision regulations to allow the Village to further evaluate the risks of subdividing and developing properties in these areas.

Goal: Maintain and promote efficiency of government

The Village, in conjunction with the two surrounding Towns, must strive to offer the highest quality and most cost-effective public services to the community.

Recommendations:

- As the Village is considering replacing its water tower, initial planning and design should include future expansion into the Towns of Alabama and Oakfield as per the recommended areas in the Vision Map.
- Utilize this Comprehensive Plan to promote continued cooperative approaches and plans with the Town of Oakfield, and where feasible, the Town of Alabama.
- Continue to work with the Town of Oakfield to develop ways to share essential services, equipment and personnel.
- Implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan to establish appropriate and alternative development standards and regulations to manage growth.
- Utilize and enforce land use regulations to properly manage growth and encourage the development of a mix of uses to balance the tax base and control the costs of public services.
- Keep working with the surrounding communities of Town of Oakfield and Town of Alabama to develop ways to share recreational opportunities.
- Continue and strengthen the relationship with the Oakfield-Alabama School District to sharing services and improving relations between the Towns and Village.

5.4 Vision Plan

5.4.1 Introduction

The Vision Plan for the three communities is represented as Map 14 and Map 15 for the Village of Oakfield. The Vision Plans are based on the findings and recommendations outlined in the previous sub-section and were developed to more specifically illustrate the vision concepts for the area. These plans do not directly correlate to zoning or land use (not future land use or zoning maps. These maps are overall guidance tools that represent the overall vision for the communities and can help with the recommendations outlined in the Plan.

The vision represented on Map 14 is useful in illustrating the synergy between the three communities. The Vision Map for the Village (Map 15) is provided for ease in viewing more detail in this area and should be used along with the overall Vision Map.

5.4.2 Overall Regional Perspective

The remoteness of the study area helps to create the setting for the vision. Being located approximately 30 miles from both the City of Buffalo and Rochester, and approximately 10 miles from the population center of the City of Batavia, makes this region quite remote. The Indian reservation and the wildlife refuge and management areas also provide isolation from the surrounding communities.

These factors have led to very little development pressure and have allowed agriculture to remain as a viable land use. The Village of Oakfield has, therefore, thrived as the communities' center, with other community hamlets serving other needs.

Due to the strength of the Village core, the Town of Oakfield's development pattern has focused around the Village. Only one small rural hamlet area exists outside of the direct influence of the Village (just north of the Village at the intersection of Albion and Lockport Roads).

The Town of Alabama, on the other hand, has four hamlet areas. South Alabama acts as the community center with the Town Hall and Fire Department located in its boundaries. The other hamlets serve different purposes within the community and are discussed under the Town of Alabama's vision map.

The closing of the U.S. Gypsum Plant, the potential for waterline expansions, and other needs of the communities have forced these municipalities to look differently at their future. The success of implementing each individual community's vision is highly dependent and linked with development and planning actions in the other communities.

5.4.3 Town of Alabama Vision Map

In the Town of Alabama, the key issue for the Town is controlled growth, primarily in the areas surrounding the hamlets of Alabama, Basom, South Alabama and Wheatville. As shown on the Vision Map, the majority of the Town outside these hamlet areas is devoted to agricultural and conservation uses. The Town would like to see future commercial and residential development located in and around the hamlet areas rather than having such uses sprawl throughout the Town in the form of residential frontage lots or commercial development that requires a special use permit. The hamlets are the areas where the Town would like to provide public water and this is where future, long-term growth should occur, particularly in Basom, Alabama and South Alabama.

The Town of Alabama's largest land use features include the Indian reservation and major wildlife areas. The reservation isolates a small area in the southwestern corner of the Town, which is a mixed-use area. This area has a potential for receiving water through the Town of Newstead, which could enable future development and redevelopment in this area.

The major transportation corridors in the Town of Alabama are State Route 77 and State Route 63, which bisect the Town. Three of the hamlets lie along these corridors, each serving a different purpose. The hamlet of Basom is located on State Route 77 as you enter the Town from points south, including the NYS Thruway. It is located near the major entry points to the reservation (Bloomingdale and Ledge Roads). The area presently has a few small businesses and a limited amount of residential development. The plan supports that the area encompassing the lands along State Route 77 between Bloomingdale and Marble Roads be considered as the area where growth could occur over the long term. Automobile-related uses, agrarian support businesses and limited residential development should be the focus of long-term growth in this area. This would allow the

Town to take advantage of the traffic coming from the thruway and the traffic heading towards the reservation. Due to the existing pattern of vehicles moving in and out of the reservation, and problems associated with this traffic, the intersections of State Route 77 with Bloomingdale and Ledge Roads should be considered for future traffic mitigation to address these concerns.

The hamlet of Alabama, located at the intersection of Lewiston/Lockport Roads (State Route 77 to the west) and State Route 63, also carries traffic coming from the NYS Thruway heading to the north. It presently includes some auto-related businesses and a grocery store. The area includes the Town's highway garage, a fire hall, an American Legion Post and a cemetery. The long-term growth envisioned for ~~area of~~ this hamlet could include recreational and tourism-support businesses and residential development. As a long-term planning area, the hamlet could extend south to Ham Road to pick up town lands and west on State Route 77 pick up existing development patterns.

The Hamlet of South Alabama is located along State Route 63, towards the Village of Oakfield, and acts as the Town center. This area includes the Town Hall/historical building, a church and fire hall. There is little commercial development, but it has the largest concentration of residential development in the Town. A small growth area is included around this hamlet that would accommodate some additional long-term residential growth. This hamlet is the closest dense residential hamlet area to the Village of Oakfield.

The final hamlet in the Town is Wheatville, which is located north of South Alabama. This is a small residential hamlet with a church that could experience a small amount of residential growth well into the future. Hence, this area is not considered an area that will see substantial long-term growth. The planning issue for this area is the provision of public water.

Throughout the Goals and Recommendations, the plan calls for increased development controls in the agricultural areas outside the hamlet areas. With the exception of the hamlet of Wheatville, the long-term planning areas identified on the Vision Map are generally in keeping with the proposed "development areas" as mapped in the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan. The major difference between the Town's plan and the County's is that this plan calls for larger long-term planning areas, while providing controls to manage future growth. Expanding the boundaries of the hamlet areas will enable the Town to better focus growth in these areas and eases the expansion of water to these areas. It will also help to achieve the goal of preserving the surrounding agricultural land by concentrating long-term development in the hamlets.

To accommodate the long-term growth pattern of the Town of Alabama, it is proposed to expand a water system along State Route 63 and State Route 77. A loop would be added northward to Wheatville and along Ham Road to complete a loop of the water system. In areas that have waterlines proposed that are not in long-term planning areas, a strong lateral restriction policy should be put in place (restricting new residential frontage lot development from tying into the system).

The abandoned railroad line running east/west through the Town would provide an excellent connection feature from Basom to South Alabama to the Village of Oakfield. This feature could be utilized for biking, walking and other non-automotive forms of transportation.
On-road bicycle lanes should be considered for State Route 77 from Pembroke into Niagara County. It also would run northward on State Route 63 into the wildlife areas and into Orleans County. It should also run east

on State Route 63 to the Village of Oakfield. This would provide ties to three of the hamlets, the wildlife areas, and surrounding communities including the Village.

A quarry area in the south-central part of the town should be protected from non-compatible development (restrict residential in this area). Furthermore, former underground mine locations must be considered when proposals for residential development are received. These areas are not considered suitable for future residential use.

The areas along State Routes 77 and 63 that are not within hamlet areas should have a rural development zoning overlay put in place that would protect rural-agrarian enhancement of these areas, and protect this important travel way in Alabama from poor development patterns (hurting the town image).

The remainder of the town (in white) should remain rural/agrarian and allow small development within rural development guidelines (suggest rural development guidelines law).

5.4.4 Town of Oakfield Vision Map

The major features in the Town of Oakfield include the Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management area, the Village of Oakfield and the U.S. Gypsum facility. The Village by far is the most important feature and provides the focal point of the community. In support of the Village, the Town's long-term planning area surrounds the Village. This area is considered suitable for future, long-term residential and industrial development. It includes the U.S. Gypsum area and the area abutting Birdseye and is non-competitive with the Village. The reuse/redevelopment of the U.S. Gypsum site will not only benefit the Town, it could provide much-needed jobs for residents in the Village and in the region. Long-term residential growth should occur around the Village, where services are available, rather than sprawling throughout the Town in the form of frontage lot development (which is already occurring along Drake, Fisher, Albion, Lewiston and Maltby Roads.

The "Five Corners" area of the Town (the intersection of Lewiston/State Route 63, Albion Road and Maltby Road) is included in this long-term planning area. This area includes the school, some commercial and industrial businesses and limited residential development. This area is an important focal point of the Town and Village, and should include the development of regulations to foster aesthetic improvements and gateway features.

The only other hamlet type area is north of the Five Corners area on Albion Road at its intersection with Lockport Road. This area could support a small residential growth pattern. In concert with the Town of Alabama, these planning areas would be supported by the planned expansion of the County water system on State Route 262, Pearl Street and State Route 63 from the Village through the Town of Oakfield to Alabama. This water system should also be looped down State Route 62 and up Fisher Road to State Route 262. It should also be looped up North Pearl to Maltby and west to the Four Corners area. Long-term, the Town should also look at extending the waterline up to the residential hamlet north of the Village. In waterline areas not within growth areas, the Town should place lateral restrictions.

The area included within the long-term planning area boundary encompassed by the Fisher Road waterline extension would be a long-term growth area and not intended for "change" in the near future**.** Furthermore,

planning efforts in this area are oriented toward securing providing water service and not dense residential development or the loss of viable farmland.

Also in concert with the Town of Alabama, the abandoned railroad right-of-way should be utilized for a multi-use trailway connecting two of Alabama's hamlets and part of the Town of Oakfield to the Village of Oakfield. Non-automotive transportation access (bike lanes) should be added to State Route 63 on both sides of the Village and connecting to the hamlet to the north. The residential growth areas immediately surrounding the Village should also be tied with sidewalks to the Village, and some areas considered for sewer extensions.

5.4.5 Village of Oakfield Vision Map

The Village of Oakfield is an integral component of the region. This three-community map depicts how the communities fit together and how their visions can be completed together. Due to the scale of this map, the vision for the Village is also depicted on Map 15.

The key features of the Village are the Main Street corridor and central business district, the industrial area, the school (which is actually outside the Village in the Town), and the residential streets. Like many rural villages, Oakfield is struggling to keep its central business district (CBD) a vibrant center of the community. The vision map illustrates the village's CBD as the area along Main Street from Forest/Maple to Pearl including the Library and Park. Main Street to the north of this is mainly residential with a small mix of businesses. Similarly, the area to the south is mainly residential with a few businesses. These areas should be the focus for development and redevelopment, and the investment of Village, County and State monies. Another area for attention and investment is the industrial (Birdseye) area, in the southern portion of the Village. This area provides vital jobs and supports downtown businesses. This area is especially important since the closure of the U.S. Gypsum site. This area also has the potential for the expansion of industrial uses.

Areas of focus for the CBD include parking improvements, a future passive park, streetscape improvements and economic incentive programs. The vision map illustrates gateway features at each end of Main Street, as you enter the Village. To a lesser extent, gateways are also featured at the southern end of the Village on South Pearl and at the eastern end on Drake Street.

The southern end of Main Street also includes a large vacant parcel that is envisioned for multi-family housing. Surrounding this area and around much of the Village are agrarian lands, that the Town is utilizing for potential long-term residential development. This growth would provide residential support to the Village downtown.

It is important that major features in the community be tied together by sidewalks, walkways and trails. The vision map depicts a potential for a greenspace/trail between the Old Indian Woods and the school, which could be linked to the sidewalk system that leads to the central business district.

SECTION 6.0
IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 Introduction

The preparation and adoption of the Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan is only the beginning of an overall planning process. The Comprehensive Plan is an active document and should continually be utilized and updated to guide local decision making. Therefore, the Towns and Village should take the necessary steps to ensure that the recommendations of this Plan are implemented. This section of the Plan outlines an implementation strategy for accomplishing many of the recommendations set forth in Section 5.0 and achieving the goals and objectives, as outlined in Section 3.0 of this document. The following implementation strategy includes a step by step approach with established priorities.

It should be understood that because the Oakfield – Alabama Comprehensive Plan is an active document and, over time, as local circumstances change, so too may the priorities of each community. Therefore, upon adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, one of the first priority actions is for each community to designate an Implementation Advisory Committee that would be responsible for the implementation of this document. The local Legislative Board in each community shall maintain the authority to appoint representatives from their respective community to assist with this action. Furthermore, information contained in the Comprehensive Plan must be kept current. That way, the recommendations, as well as the implementation process, are based on and reflect current conditions. As outlined in Section 8.0 of this Plan, an annual or bi-annual review process should be established to allow for the continuing review and updating of this Plan.

In addition, members of the Implementation Advisory Committee or their designated representatives should meet with other local, County and State agencies to discuss the recommendations and implementation strategy outlined in the Oakfield – Alabama Comprehensive Plan. The goal would be to determine how these agencies could help each community with the implementation of this Plan.

6.2 Utilization of this Section

This section is broken into subsections for each participating community. In this manner, each community can look at its respective implementation strategy and discern the steps they need to take to accomplish their vision and achieve their goals and objectives. The general intent of implementation actions is to tailor land use controls to guide potential long term residential development, but not restrict what existing residents can do on their property.

Each implementation strategy outlines a prioritized, step-by-step approach for the community. Priority 1 actions are those tasks that should be completed in the immediate term (one to two years). Priority 2 actions are those actions that should be undertaken over the short term (three to five years out). Priority 3 Actions are also included, and are either longer-term activities or alternative actions that may or may not be necessary depending on the outcome of Priority 1 and 2 actions. Priority 3 actions are considered “tool box” actions—a list of alternative ideas to consider if Priority 1 or 2 Actions do not yield the desired results.

For the priority 1 and 2 action items, the actions have been broken down into four categories: Agriculture, Water/Smart Growth Plan, Zoning and Land Use Regulations, and Other Actions. The first category focuses on a variety of issues related to supporting agriculture in the region as the primary factor in defining the community character. The second category deals with recommendation items that can support the individual community's request to modify certain provisions of the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan. The third category, Zoning and other Land Use Regulations, are actions to be utilized by legislative boards to control land use in their community. The last category may include cooperative actions that should be done in cooperation with the other participating communities or the County and/or some other agency. Under each of the categories, there is also a methodology section that explains who should complete the actions and how they should be accomplished.

6.3 Town of Alabama

Priority 1 Action Items – Years 1 and 2:

General

1. Adopt the Comprehensive Plan and establish an Implementation Advisory Committee to oversee the implementation, review and updating of the Plan. The committee should be appointed by the Town Board and have representatives from the Town Board, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and key town officials. If desired, this duty could be assigned to the Planning Board.
2. Establish an annual budget for the implementation of the Oakfield - Alabama Comprehensive Plan.
3. The Implementation Advisory Committee should convene annually with the Implementation Advisory Committees from the Village and Town of Oakfield in order to map the progress of each municipality's implementation plan, initiate their annual review, discuss common implementation issues, and identify other inter-municipal planning opportunities.

Agriculture

1. Revise the Agricultural-Residential (A-R) zoning district in order to build upon the intent that agricultural uses are primary uses in this district, and residential uses are secondary. The A-R district should limit non-residential and non-agricultural uses by not allowing them as "permitted uses". Existing uses, including home occupations would remain as pre-existing uses. Under this new scenario, the A-R district would be reduced in geographic area to only those areas that would likely remain in farming, areas with prime farmland soils, areas outside the hamlets or other areas identified as development areas. Corresponding increases in the size of the Residential District (R) or other multi-use districts (around the hamlets) should be adopted in order to provide appropriate planning areas for potential long term residential growth (See Vision Map).
2. Incorporate prime farmland soils as into review criteria for non-agricultural development.
3. Consider adoption of a local Right to Farm Law.
4. Refer to the County Agricultural Protection Plan to identify properties for a Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement (PACE) program.

Water/Smart Growth Plan

1. Work with Genesee County to expand the designated development areas in the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan in a manner that does not impact agriculture and fully utilizes the existing infrastructure in the Town. The Vision Map depicts larger long-term planning areas. The development areas delineated in the existing Smart Growth Plan closely follow the existing pattern of hamlet development and represent appropriate limits for sustaining short term growth. As future demand for growth may dictate, the development area boundaries should be expanded to correspond with the Vision Map.
2. Commence preliminary plan development for bringing public water service to Basom, Alabama and South Alabama.
3. Support the continued extension of water service from the Town of Newstead into the western portion of Alabama.

4. When water is provided, institute protective lateral restriction regulations to control residential building outside the long-term planning areas along Route 63 and Route 77. Lateral restrictions on water service should also be established along Knowsville Road and Lewiston Road. Water service hook-ups should only be provided where water quality problems have been identified.
5. Investigate appropriate remediation for failing septic systems in the Alabama and Basom hamlets to address water quality problems.

Zoning and other Land Use Regulations

1. Outside of the identified long-term planning areas, review and update the list of non-agricultural land uses allowed by Special Use Permit.
2. To offset the more stringent use regulations proposed for the A-R district, expand the residential districts within the boundaries of the long-term planning areas surrounding the hamlet areas.
3. Establish Overlay Districts for hamlet areas (within long-term planning area boundaries on Vision Map).
4. Adopt regulations, separate from the Zoning Ordinance, for the minor and major subdivision of land in accordance with Section 276 of the NYS Town Law.
5. Revise the Town's cluster development regulations to incorporate rural development design guidelines.
6. Permit the establishment of bed and breakfast establishments in the A-R and R zoning districts

Other Implementation Actions

1. Establish a plan for creating attractive and informative gateway features at:
   - south end of Basom along Route 77 to guide travelers coming into Alabama from the south,
   - north end of Basom in the vicinity of Bloomingdale Road
   - Establish informative directional signage at the intersection of Route 63 and Route 77 in order to link Basom, the Tonawanda Indian Reservation, Alabama and the Tonawanda Wildlife Management Area.
   - Northwest of Alabama, on Route 77, coming out of Wildlife Management Area.

Priority 2 Action Items – Years 3-5:

General

1. The Implementation Advisory Committee should provide its annual report to the Alabama Town Board.
2. The Alabama Town Board should reappoint Implementation Advisory Committee members and appoint subcommittees, as necessary, to address the coming year's action items.
3. With input from Implementation Advisory Committee, the Town Board should prioritize the coming year's action items and budget accordingly.

Agriculture

1. Establish a Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement (PACE) program.

2. In future review of the Agricultural District, recommend to Genesee County that non-agricultural lands be removed from the district. This is primarily the case in Basom and South Alabama.

Water/Smart Growth Plan

1. Investigate the need and feasibility of bringing water to the crossroads in Wheatville.

Zoning and other Land Use Regulations

1. Investigate the necessity and intent on accommodating junkyards in the Zoning Ordinance – Section 609. If retained as an acceptable use in the Town, junkyards should only be allowed in the Industrial District and not in the A-R district. If it is determined not to allow junkyards anywhere, then they should be prohibited and Section 609 (and corresponding definition) be removed from the ordinance.
2. Sections 503 and 613 should be amended to only allow Adult Uses in the Industrial District with a Special Use Permit. Adult Uses do not have to be allowed as permitted uses; they can be limited to Special Use Permits. Although adult uses must be allowed in some district within the Town, the Town does not have to ensure that there is land available in that district. If the Town is attempting to encourage additional commercial activity in the hamlet areas (Basom and Alabama) the commercial districts may expand and open more opportunity for adult uses to attempt to locate in the hamlets.

Priority 3 Action Items - Long Term and Optional:

1. Relocate Town Hall, along with other Town Facilities, into the Alabama hamlet as it continues to grow as a Town Center.
2. Work with Genesee County and the Town of Oakfield to investigate the feasibility and potential funds for a rails-to-trials project on the abandoned Penn Central rail corridor.
3. Establish a mechanism to ensure that reclamation and reuse plans are in place for the quarry areas on Ledge Road.
4. Institute non-traditional rural development tools to control potential long term growth and preserve farmland, while at the same time not eliminate the landowner's right to sell property. Adopt provisions, including minimum lot size, for "open development areas" along Route 63 and Route 77 to allow minor subdivisions having more creative lot configurations – shared driveways, minimal frontage for access only.
5. Work with Genesee County and State agencies on ground water protection education programs.
6. Establish an inter-municipal shared services community with Oakfield, Village of Oakfield and the school district to investigate opportunities to continue to work together on shared services (water, sewer) or facilities.

6.4 Town of Oakfield

Priority 1 Action Items – Years 1 and 2:

General

1. Adopt the Comprehensive Plan and establish an Implementation Advisory Committee to oversee the implementation, review and updating of the Plan. The committee should be appointed by the Town Board and have representatives from the Town Board, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and key town officials. If desired, this duty could be assigned to the Planning Board.
2. Establish an annual budget for the implementation of the Oakfield - Alabama Comprehensive Plan.
3. The Implementation Advisory Committee should convene annually with the Implementation Advisory Committees from the Village Oakfield and Town of Alabama in order to map the progress of each municipality's implementation plan, initiate their annual review, discuss common implementation issues identify other inter-municipal planning opportunities.

Agriculture

1. Revise the schedule of allowed uses for the Residential Agricultural District (R&A) in order to build upon the intent that agricultural uses are primary uses in this district, and residential uses are secondary. The R&A district should limit non-agricultural uses by not allowing them in as permitted uses. Under this new scenario, the R&A district would be reduced in geographic area to those areas most likely to remain in active farming, areas of prime farmland, areas outside the hamlets, and areas otherwise identified as agricultural development areas. Corresponding expansion of the General Residential Districts (R) should be adopted in order to provide appropriate areas for future residential growth within the boundaries of the long-term planning areas (See Vision Map).
2. Consider adoption of a local Right to Farm law.

Water/Smart Growth Plan

1. Work with Genesee County to expand the designated development areas in the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan in a manner that does not impact agriculture and fully utilizes the existing infrastructure in the Town. The Vision Map depicts a larger long-term planning area around the Village of Oakfield that represents the Town's long term vision for growth. The designated development area boundary established by the Smart Growth Plan, as depicted on the map, represents the most appropriate limit for sustaining short term growth, as the future demand for growth may dictate, the development area boundary around the Village should be expanded.
2. Lateral restrictions on public water service should be implemented along Fisher Road (see Vision Map).

Zoning and Other Land Use Regulations

1. Write an intent or introductory section for each zoning district in order to give the reader, Enforcement Officer, applicant or land owner an understanding of how the Town wants to see that particular district be utilized.

2. Adopt regulations, separate from the Zoning Ordinance, for the minor and major subdivision of land in accordance with Section 276 of the NYS Town Law.
3. Revise zoning to include provisions for cluster residential subdivisions as per Section 278 of the NYS Town Law.
4. Establish Overlay Districts for hamlet areas (within Long Term Planning Area boundaries on Vision Map).
5. Incorporate rural development guidelines into subdivision regulations.

Other Implementation Actions

1. Draft a set of rural development guidelines to provide written standards and graphic examples to facilitate guiding potential long term growth to meet the vision.
2. Establish a plan for creating attractive informative features at:
   - Route 63 Lewiston Road near Fisher Road
   - Route 262 Drake Road between Fisher Road and the Town line
   - Route 63 Judge Road at Macomber Road - A site should be located that may be coordinated, visually, with a similar gateway feature for Alabama.

Priority 2 Action Items – Years 3–5:

General

1. The Implementation Advisory Committee should provide its annual report to the Oakfield Town Board.
2. The Oakfield Town Board should reappoint Implementation Advisory Committee members and appoint subcommittees, as necessary, to address the coming year's action items.
3. With input from Implementation Advisory Committee, the Town Board should prioritize the coming year's action items and budget accordingly.
4. Adopt hamlet development guidelines for the East Oakfield and Five Corners areas.

Agriculture

1. In future review of the Agricultural District recommend to the Genesee County that non-agricultural lands in East Oakfield be removed from the district.
2. Establish purchase of agricultural conservation easement (PACE) program.

Water/Smart Growth Plan

1. Investigate residents' requests/needs for public water due to health and safety concerns.
2. Consider the need to continue plans for any water expansion outside the Village that did not occur in years 1 and 2. Focus on Route 262/Fisher Road/Route 63.
3. If the Town's desired changes to the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan were not made by the County, the Town should review and update its recommendations and request revisions as a part of the next update of the Plan.

Zoning and Other Land Use Regulations

1. Investigate the necessity and intent on accommodating automobile junkyards and sanitary landfills in the Zoning Ordinance – Section 570. If retained as acceptable uses in the Town, automobile junkyards and sanitary landfills should be assigned to a specific district. If not, than they should be prohibited and Section 570 (and corresponding definitions) removed from the ordinance.
2. Adopt Site Plan Review requirements, standards and review procedures for a defined list of land uses allowed as Permitted Uses as well as Special Use Permit.
3. Adopt a new zoning district (separate from R&A) that would focus on protecting agriculture uses from intrusive or incompatible uses, and prime soils from subdivision designs that would call for the development of this resource.

Other Implementation Actions

1. Work with U.S. Gypsum, Genesee County and NYS agencies to develop a reuse strategy for U.S. Gypsum facilities that may become available for redevelopment.
2. Work with State and Federal agencies on methods to coordinate conservation areas (signage, awareness, events) with local recreation-oriented businesses.
3. Extend Village streetscape project to the Oakfield - Alabama School property.

Priority 3 Action Items – Long Term and Optional:

1. Consider incorporating Site Plan Review requirements/procedures into Zoning as authorized by NYS Town Law Section 274-a.
2. Consider incorporating powers and authorities of Planning Board into the Zoning as allowed by NYS Town Law Section 272.
3. Work with the Village of Oakfield to create a long-range plan for expanding sewer service into the Town within the identified long term planning areas.
4. Evaluate the feasibility of expanding public water service to the East Oakfield crossroads area of Lockport Road and Fisher Road.
5. Work with Genesee County and the Town of Alabama to investigate the feasibility and potential funds for a rails-to-trials project on the abandoned Penn Central rail corridor.
6. Work with Genesee County and State agencies on ground water protection education programs.

7. Establish an inter-municipal shared services community with Alabama, Village of Oakfield and the school district to investigate opportunities to continue to work together on shared services (water, sewer) or facilities.

6.5 Village of Oakfield

Priority 1 Action Items – Years 1 and 2:

General

1. Adopt the Comprehensive Plan and establish an Implementation Advisory Committee to oversee the implementation, review and updating of the Plan. The committee should be appointed by the Village Board of Trustees and have representatives from the Village Board of Trustees, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and key village officials. If desired, this duty could be assigned to the Planning Board.
2. Establish an annual budget for the implementation of the Oakfield - Alabama Comprehensive Plan.
3. The Implementation Advisory Committee should convene annually with the Implementation Advisory Committees from the Town of Oakfield and Town of Alabama in order to map the progress of each municipality's implementation plan, initiate their annual review, discuss common implementation issues identify other inter-municipal planning opportunities.

Water/Smart Growth Plan

1. The entire Village of Oakfield is contained within one of the designated development areas established by the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan. The Town of Oakfield is proposing that the designated area around the Village be enlarged. The Village should support the Town's efforts to expand the boundary of the development area around the Village. As the demand for growth dictates, the Village should work with Town and Genesee County to expand the designated development area in future updates of the Smart Growth Plan.
2. A long-range water plan should be developed depicting where future water service may be expanded outside the Village.
3. Support the Towns of Oakfield and Alabama in their efforts to modify the "development areas" identified in the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan to reflect the long-term planning area boundaries, as shown on the Vision Map.
4. Investigate cost/feasibility for extending water out Route 63 into Towns of Oakfield and Alabama.

Zoning and other Land Use Regulations

1. Establish an overlay district for the Central Business District (CBD). The CBD Overlay District would require that new and re-development projects meet architectural design guidelines, landscaping standards, special signage and parking standards.
2. Amend zoning to allow multi-family housing in the commercial districts with special use permit.
3. Add tourist homes and Bed & Breakfast Inns as uses allowed with a special use permit in the R-1 and R-2 districts.

Other Implementation Actions

1. Expand Village open space/parkland by acquiring and developing the land for a future passive park on underutilized commercial land on the south side of Maple Street.

2. As an incentive for reinvestment, adopt a local law allowing the Village to participate in the Real Property Tax Law Section 485-b to partially exempt from taxation the value of improvements made to commercial and industrial facilities.
3. Apply to Governor's Office for Small Cities for funding from the Community Development Block Grant program to conduct a strategic revitalization plan for the Village.
4. Establish a Business Improvement District. Seek assistance from New York State Urban Council, Inc.

Priority 2 Action Items Years 3-5:

General

1. Develop an overall streetscape plan to be implemented as improvements are made to Route 63.
2. Seek funding (CDBG) to establish a façade improvement program in CBD.

Water/Smart Growth Plan

1. Support expansion of water into the Town of Oakfield within the designated long-term planning areas.

Zoning and other Land Use Regulations

1. Amend the zoning to allow, by Special Use Permit, bed and breakfast inns. Establish enhanced regulations specific to bed and breakfast inns (related to parking, lighting, signage, and number of guests) for their review and approval.
2. Establish landscape standards in zoning as part of site plan review (site plan waiver).
3. Amend zoning to protect locally significant historic structures by facilitating reuse, but requiring additional approvals for "tear-down" development.

Other Implementation Actions

1. Continue to work with the New York State Department of Transportation in implementing the streetscape and Main Street improvements previously designed and initiated.
2. Assist a key group of Village business owners to establish a local businessmens' association.
3. Develop an overall plan to create attractive and information gateways:
   - near Village line on South Pearl Street
   - on Route 63 Main Street at beginning of streetscape project
   - near Farnsworth

Priority 3 Action Items – Long Term and Optional:

1. Continue to work with the Town of Oakfield to create a long-range plan for expanding sewer service into the Town within the identified long term planning areas.
2. Establish an inter-municipal shared services community with Alabama, Oakfield and the school district to investigate opportunities to continue to work together on shared services (water, sewer) or facilities.
3. Consider eliminating Mobil Home parks as allowed uses in Planned Unit Developments.
4. Acquiring easements to assemble an open space/creek corridor linking Old Indian Woods with the school property.

5. Identify potential locations for a Village Park.

SECTION 7.0
ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

7.1 Introduction

Typically, the potential environmental impacts of a Comprehensive Plan are evaluated through a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS). To meet this requirement, the Comprehensive Plan itself can be set up to represent the GEIS (see §272-a.8 of NYS Town Law and §7-722.8 of NYS Village Law). This format enables the reviewers, the Lead Agency, Involved Agencies, Interested parties, and the public to review one comprehensive document that outlines plans for the future and the evaluation of the potential environmental implications of these plans. This section of the Comprehensive Plan has been provided to assist with the environmental review for this document.

7.2 Environmental Setting

A GEIS, like an Environmental Impact Statement, includes a section on Environmental Setting. Section 4 (Existing Conditions) of this Comprehensive Plan provides a review and analysis of the environmental settings of the Towns of Alabama and Oakfield and the Village of Oakfield, as they exist now. Section 4 includes information on the following:

- Existing Land Use (4.1)
- Farmland and Agriculture (4.1.2)
- Land Use Regulations (4.2)
- Topography and Steep Slopes (4.3.1)
- Hydric Soils (4.3.2)
- Stream Corridors and Watersheds (4.3.3)
- Flooding and Wetlands (4.3.4)
- Wildlife Conservation Areas and Significant Wildlife Habitats (4.3.5)
- Scenic Resources (4.3.6)
- Demographics and Socioeconomic Conditions (4.4)
- Transportation (4.5)
- Utilities (4.6)
- Parks and Recreation (4.7.1)
- Schools (4.7.2)
- Emergency Facilities (4.7.3)
- Government Facilities (4.7.4)
- Historic and Archeological Features (4.7.5)

7.3 Potential Significant Adverse Environmental Impacts

The underlying purpose and a major goal of the Comprehensive Plan is to promote appropriate land use and avoid significant adverse environment impacts in the communities that it covers. However, it is important to acknowledge and discuss potential adverse impacts. For this multi-jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan, the impacts specific to each community are outlined individually. Although this leads to some redundancy, it facilitates review of the document by all involved and interested parties.

Short Term/Long Term and Cumulative Impacts

Based on the environmental settings of the Towns of Alabama, Oakfield, and the Village of Oakfield, the following potentially significant adverse environmental impacts could occur if these communities do not plan appropriately and provide the proper tools for the management of growth and development. The reader can also refer to Section 5 (Findings and Recommendations) for an understanding of potential impacts. The Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan is designed to properly guide growth in the Towns and Village avoiding significant adverse impacts on land use and development decisions, which are made outside the framework of a community plan.

a. ***Impacts on Land*** *(See Existing Land Use Map, Prime Farmland Soils Map, Hydric Soils Map, and Environmental Features Map in Section 4)*

Town of Alabama

- The Town of Alabama is very rural in nature, a characteristic that is valued by area residents. Inappropriate planning and development actions could negatively impact the character of the Town.
- The Town of Alabama has significant areas of hydric soils, wetlands and floodplains, primarily in the northern quarter of the Town and following drainage corridors. Improper development of these areas could result in drainage, flooding and/or erosion problems within the Town and in downstream areas.
- A large portion of Alabama has soils that are categorized as “prime farmland”, or “prime farmland when drained”. Over-development in areas having these soils could result in a significant cumulative loss of irreplaceable resources (prime farmland soils).
- Outside the Tonawanda Indian Reservation and State and Federal wildlife conservation areas, there are only a few significant areas of mature woodland in Alabama. Inappropriate development of these areas could have a negative impact on the rural character of the Town, wildlife habitat and important open space.

Town of Oakfield

- The Town of Oakfield is very rural in nature with the exception of the Village of Oakfield. This rural attribute helps define the character of the community with agricultural lands and open space. Inappropriate planning and development actions could negatively affect the character of the Town.
- The Town of Oakfield has only minor areas characterized by steep slopes of 15 percent or higher (northeast along Fisher Road).
- The Town of Oakfield has significant areas of hydric soils, wetlands and floodplains, primarily in the Oak Orchard Wildlife Management Area in the northern quarter of the Town

and, to a lesser extent, following drainage corridors in the remaining areas. Development of these areas could lead to erosion, drainage or flooding problems.

- There are some large areas of soils that are categorized as "prime farmland", or "prime farmland when drained" in the Town of Oakfield. Over-development in areas having these soils could result in a significant cumulative loss of irreplaceable resources (prime farmland soils).
- Outside the Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management Area, there are only a few significant areas of mature woodland in the Town of Oakfield. Inappropriate development of these areas could have a negative impact on the rural character of the Town, wildlife habitat and important open space.

Village of Oakfield

- The Village of Oakfield is an important rural center for the surrounding communities. There is a Central Business District (CBD), existing and some underutilized industrial spaces, and some remaining agricultural land.
- Less than nine percent of the Village is categorized as vacant, undeveloped or open space. Inappropriate planning and development/redevelopment actions could impact its character and its viability as an economic center.
- Inappropriate development of the creek corridors running through the Village could lead to flooding or erosion problems and a loss of open space.
- There are no significant areas of steep slopes or wetlands in the Village that represent constraints to development.

b. ***Impacts on Water*** *(See Hydric Soils Map, Watershed Boundaries Map and Environmental Features Map in Section 4)*

Town of Alabama

- Tonawanda Creek, Witney Creek, Ledge Creek, Brinningstool Creek, and numerous tributaries of these waterways run through the Town of Alabama. These creeks are important for environmental protection, open space preservation, drainage, wildlife habitat and aesthetics, particularly in the case of those that run through the two major wetland areas in the Town: Tonawanda Wildlife Management Area and the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge.
- Floodplains surround portions of some of these waterways, primarily Tonawanda Creek. Inappropriate development could lead to flooding or drainage problems, and hazards to public safety.
- Most of the Town of Alabama is within the portions of four watersheds. Ledge- Tonawanda Creek covers the west to southeast portion of Alabama. Mud Creek covers a small area in the northwest corner of Alabama. Murder Creek is located on very small area in southwest corner. The Oak Orchard Creek watershed covers the entire north central to east half of the Town. Inappropriate development in these watersheds could potentially have adverse impacts on water quality, groundwater resources and habitats in the Town and downstream of the Town.
- The Town of Alabama is dependent upon groundwater resources for their potable water supply. Improper or inappropriate development could affect these groundwater resources.
- Nearly all residences also use on-site septic systems to treat sanitary waste. The effluent of which is ultimately discharged to groundwater.
- At times the groundwater resource can be under stress due to drought conditions, accidental spills or contamination.

- The Town is investigating the possibility of extending water from Newstead into the southwest corner, and out from the Village of Oakfield (county water service). This will improve water quality and quantity for residents, but could cause additional problems with septic system failures and induce growth. Uncontrolled development could create potential groundwater resource supply problems, have adverse impacts on community character, and cause conflicts with agriculture uses.
- Town residents use on-site septic systems to treat sanitary waste. The effluent is ultimately discharged to groundwater. Lack of maintenance and failing systems can pose threats to groundwater wells.
- There are areas of wetlands and hydric soils. Inappropriate development in these areas could lead to flooding and drainage problems, and adversely impact groundwater resources and wildlife habitat.

Town of Oakfield

- The Town of Oakfield is traversed by Oak Orchard Creek and its numerous tributaries. Floodplains surround the major creeks, and many areas of wetlands are found in their vicinity. These creeks are also important for environmental protection, open space preservation, drainage, wildlife habitat and aesthetics, particularly in the case of Oak Orchard Creek, which runs through the Oak Orchard Wildlife Management Area. Inappropriate development of these lands could lead to flooding, erosion, and drainage problems. Threats to public safety could also result. These creeks are important for environmental protection, community character, open space preservation, drainage, wildlife habitat and aesthetics.
- The entire Town of Oakfield falls within the Oak Orchard Creek watershed. Inappropriate development could have adverse impacts on water quality, groundwater resources and habitats.
- Only some of the Town's residential areas that are located near the Village have public water. The majority of residents are dependent upon groundwater resources for potable water supply.
- Town residents use on-site septic systems to treat sanitary waste. The effluent is ultimately discharged to groundwater. Lack of maintenance and failing systems can pose threats to groundwater wells.
- The Town is investigating bringing water out from the Village of Oakfield (county water source). Uncontrolled development could create potential groundwater resource supply problems, have adverse impacts on community character, and cause conflicts with agriculture uses.
- There are areas of wetlands and hydric soils. Inappropriate development in these areas could lead to flooding and drainage problems, and adversely impact groundwater resources and wildlife habitat.

Village of Oakfield

- Two creeks run through the Village of Oakfield. Flooding is not a particular problem. However, inappropriate development within the floodplain could lead to flooding, erosion and threats to public safety. Drainage problems could also result. In a village setting, creeks are important for flood mitigation, community character, open space preservation, drainage, and aesthetics.
- All of the Village of Oakfield is within the Oak Orchard Creek watershed. Inappropriate development could have adverse impacts on water quality and/or groundwater resources for downstream communities. Habitats could also be affected.

- The only areas of wetlands and hydric soils in the Village are those areas associated with the creek corridors. Inappropriate development in these areas could lead to flooding and drainage problems, and adversely impact groundwater resources.

c. ***Impacts on Plants and Animals*** *(See Digital Orthoimagery and the Environmental Features Map in section 4)*

Town of Alabama

- The NYS Tonawanda Wildlife Management Area and Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge and John White Memorial State Game Farm are significant resources for wildlife habitat, which together cover approximately 25 percent of the northern portion of the Town. The Tonawanda Wildlife Management Area and Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge (part of the larger Alabama Swamp complex) provide excellent bird and fish habitat, including state-listed endangered, threatened and special concern bird species. Because these areas are under the ownership and management of State and Federal conservation agencies it is not anticipated that any changes resulting from the implementation of this Comprehensive plan will result in significant adverse impacts. Areas just outside of these resources could have some effect on them.
- Outside the wildlife conservation areas, the Town's expansive areas of agricultural fields, open meadows, and old fields, as well as the wetlands and creek corridors, provide a variety of habitats for many non-threatened and non-endangered plant, avian and animal species. These areas also provide an important element of the rural character of the Town. Inappropriate development and poor site planning could adversely impact these resources.

Town of Oakfield

- The NYS Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management Area (part of larger Alabama Swamp complex) is a significant wildlife habitat resource in the northeast corner of the Town. Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management Area, together with the Tonawanda Wildlife Management Area and Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge provide excellent bird and fish habitat, including state-listed endangered, threatened and special concern bird species. Because the Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management Area is under the ownership and management of the State Department of Environmental Conservation, it is not anticipated that any changes resulting form the implementation of this Comprehensive plan will result in significant adverse impacts to this area.
- Outside the wildlife conservation areas, the Town's expansive areas of agricultural fields, open meadows, and old fields, as well as the wetlands and creek corridors, provide a variety of habitats for many non-threatened and non-endangered plant, avian and animal species. These areas also provide an important element of the rural character of the Town. Inappropriate development and poor site planning could adversely impact these resources.

Village of Oakfield

- There are areas within the Village of Oakfield with open fields, hedgerows, wooded areas and creek corridors. The creek corridors through the Village also are important habitats for a variety of vegetation, avian and animal species. Inappropriate development or poor site design could have a negative impact on these areas.

d. ***Impacts on Agricultural Land Resources*** *(See the Agricultural Data Map, Existing Land Use Map, and Prime Farmland Soils Map in Section 4.0)*

Town of Alabama

- Agricultural land resources are an important part of the rural character of the Town and the region. Agricultural land use is still an important part of the local land use pattern and local economy. Large areas of "prime farmland soils" and "prime farmland soils when drained" are important to the continuation of agriculture as an industry and as a way of life. Agricultural land resources are a critical element that helps define the Town's rural character. Inappropriate or uncontrolled development could have a negative impact on these resources.
- Agricultural lands comprise a significant proportion of the Town of Alabama land use. Nearly all lands in the Town, excluding lands in the wildlife management areas and Tonawanda Indian Reservation, are within the State-designated Agricultural District No. 2. Location within an Agricultural District provides benefits (agricultural value assessment) and generally encourages landowners to continue to leave farmland in production. Although increased development pressures could have a major negative impact on these resources, the Agricultural District designation helps to somewhat reduce the potential for development that would significantly affect these agricultural resources.

Town of Oakfield

- Agricultural land resources are an important part of the rural character of the Town and the region. Agricultural land use is still an important part of the local land use pattern and local economy. Large areas of "prime farmland soils" and "prime farmland soils when drained" are important to the continuation of agriculture as an industry, and as a way of life. Agricultural land resources are a critical element that helps define the Town's rural character. Inappropriate or uncontrolled development could have a negative impact on these resources.
- Agricultural lands comprise a significant proportion of the Town of Oakfield land use. Nearly all lands in the Town, excluding lands in the Wildlife Management Areas are within the State-designated Agricultural District No. 2. Location within an Agricultural District provides benefits (agricultural value assessment) and generally encourages landowners to continue to leave farmland in production. Although increased development pressure could have a major negative impact on these resources, the Agricultural District designation helps to somewhat reduce the potential for development that would significantly affect agricultural resources.

Village of Oakfield

- Agricultural lands are not a significant resource within the Village of Oakfield. The agricultural lands in the surrounding communities are an important component of the character of the Village and the region. It is not anticipated that the actions called for in this Comprehensive Plan will impact agricultural resources related to Village.

e. ***Impacts on Aesthetic Resources***

Town of Alabama

- The aesthetic resources of the Town of Alabama include significant views, rural landscapes of farm fields and wood lots, open space (characterized by the Tonawanda Wildlife Management Areas and Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge), and creek corridors. The hamlets also provide an aesthetic resource contributing to the character of the Town. These resources contribute to the quality of life and community character of the Town, and could be negatively affected by inappropriate development.

Town of Oakfield

- The aesthetic resources of the Town of Oakfield include significant views, rural landscapes of farm fields and wood lots, open space (characterized by the Oak Orchard Wildlife Management Areas), and creek corridors. The hamlets also provide an aesthetic resource contributing to the character of the Town. Inappropriate development could result in negative impacts on the quality of life and community character of the Town.

Village of Oakfield

- The aesthetic resources of the Village include views of the rural landscape surrounding the Village, but more significantly, the buildings and landmarks in the central business district and the residential housing stock also contribute to the Village's aesthetic character. These resources could be negatively affected by inappropriate in-fill development or redevelopment of existing facilities that are incompatible with the surrounding area in terms of architectural style and scale, or based on poor site design.

f. ***Impacts on Historic. Cultural and Archeological Resources***

Towns of Alabama and Oakfield and Village of Oakfield

- The historic resources of each municipality are described in Section 4.7.5. Oak Orchard Creek Marsh (located within the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge and the Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management Area) was designated as a National Natural Landmark in May of 1973. This relatively undisturbed marsh is rare for this part of New York State. Although inappropriate development or management could negatively impact this resource, it's location within the publicly owned and managed wildlife areas makes it unlikely that changes resulting from the implementation of this Comprehensive Plan will result in negative impacts.

g. ***Impact on Open Space, Parks and Recreation*** *(See Community Features Map)*

Town of Alabama

- Parks and recreation resources in the Town of Alabama are identified in Section 4.7.1.
- A significant area (approximately the north quarter of the Town) is within the NYS Tonawanda Wildlife Management Area, Iroquois National Refuge conservation areas and the John White Memorial Game Farm. These areas provide significant open space and recreation opportunities for the Town, as well as the region. Because these areas are under the ownership and management of State and Federal conservation agencies it is not anticipated that any changes resulting form the implementation of this Comprehensive plan will result in significant adverse impacts to recreation or open space resources.

Town of Oakfield

- Parks and recreation resources in the Town of Oakfield are identified in Section 4.7.1.
- The NYS Oak Orchard Wildlife Management Area provides significant open space and recreation opportunities for the Town as well as the region. Because this area is under the ownership and management of the State Department of Environment Conservation, it is not anticipated that any changes from the implementation of this Comprehensive plan will result in significant adverse impacts to open space or recreational resources.

Village of Oakfield

- Parks and recreation resources located in the Village of Oakfield are identified in Section 4.7.1.
- The Village also has important recreation areas including: ball diamonds at the Oakfield Fire Hall, Village square at Pearl/Drake and Main Street, Village open space off Mill Street and the Town of Oakfield Park on Drake Street.
- Inappropriate development could have an adverse effect upon these resources. Although present growth trends in the Village are stable, growth trends around the Village in the Town of Oakfield could place increased demand on these resources.

h. ***Impact on Critical Environmental Areas***

Towns of Alabama and Oakfield and Village of Oakfield

- There are no designated Critical Environmental Areas in any of the three study communities.

i. ***Impact on Transportation (See Transportation Map)***

Town of Alabama

- The transportation system in the Town of Alabama is heavily dependent upon roadways and automobiles. Public transportation is very limited, and there are no active rail lines.
- The major roadway corridors in the Town are described in Section 4.5.1. They include Routes 77, 63 and 262.
- Travel for pedestrians and bicyclists can be difficult in the Town. There are no designated bicycle routes or paths. The abandoned Penn-Central railroad corridor is informally used for hiking, bicycling and snowmobiling, although no formal designation exists.
- Additional development in the Town has the potential to increase demands on the transportation network. More intensive development may also increase potential conflicts between automotive and non-automotive modes of transportation.
- The Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan does not recommend development patterns that will significantly alter the transportation patterns of the community.

Town of Oakfield

- The transportation system in the Town of Oakfield is heavily dependent upon roadways and automobiles. Public transportation is very limited, and there are no active rail lines.
- The major roadway corridors in the Town are described in Section 4.5.1. They include Routes 63 and 262.
- Travel for pedestrians and bicyclists can be difficult in the Town. There are no designated bicycle routes or paths. The abandoned Penn-Central railroad corridor is informally used for hiking, bicycling and snowmobiling, although no formal designation exists.
- Additional development in the Town has the potential to increase demands on the transportation network. More intensive development may also increase potential conflicts between automotive and non-automotive modes of transportation.
- The Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan does not recommend development patterns that will significantly alter the transportation patterns of the community.

Village Oakfield

- The transportation system in the Village of Oakfield is strongly oriented toward the automobile.
- The major roadway corridors in the Town are described in Section 4.5.1. They include Routes 63 and 262 and North/South Pearl Street.

- The Village also has a higher proportion of pedestrian and bicyclist traffic. This is because activity centers are close enough to support non-vehicular traffic, and the physical infrastructure (sidewalks, streets) makes it easier to walk or bike. Traffic congestion is not a problem.
- NYS Department of Transportation is in the planning stages to reconstruct Main Street (Route 63) through the Village center in the near future. This redesign may incorporate improved pedestrian and streetscape features.
- Additional development in the Town and redevelopment in the Village have the potential to adversely impact the transportation network. In particular, more intensive development and/or redevelopment may result in potential conflicts between automotive and non-automotive modes of transportation.

j. ***Impact on Growth and Character of Community or Neighborhood*** *(See Vision Maps)*

Town of Alabama

- The population of the Town of Alabama slightly decreased (5.9%) between 1990 and 2000. Population projections suggest that there will be growth (12.5%) over the next three decades. However, current trends suggest the population will remain relatively stable.
- The rate of residential construction in Alabama, since 1990, has been modest. The Comprehensive Plan does not encourage or facilitate uncontrolled development, but rather directs reasonable growth within use and design parameters in limited areas.
- The Town's Goals and Objectives (Section 3.2.1) clearly support controlling growth to protect community character.
- The hamlets of Alabama, Wheatville, Basom and South Alabama serve as activity centers (residential/business/public facilities) for the Town. The Town recognizes the importance of these hamlets and wishes to provide support for local businesses.
- The Town's goals and objectives clearly indicate the preference for directing growth toward the hamlet areas, and to control the rate of growth in areas without services or along rural road frontages, in order to protect community character.
- The Comprehensive Plan recommends that public water service be extended into the Town of Alabama, primarily to serve the existing residences within the hamlet areas and allow limited development in the surrounding areas. Although it is possible that public water may induce higher growth rates, it is more likely that the availability of public water will steer what limited growth that does occur, to the desired areas.

Town of Oakfield

- The population of the Town of Oakfield (including Village) slightly decreased (3.4%) between 1990 and 2000. Population projections suggest the Town will grow by 3.0% between 2000 and 2030.
- The rate of residential construction in Oakfield, since 1990, has been modest. The Comprehensive Plan does not encourage or facilitate uncontrolled development, but rather directs reasonable growth within use and design parameters in limited areas.
- The Town's goals and objectives (Section 3.2.2) clearly support controlling growth to protect community character.
- The Town has limited non-residential development. The Village Oakfield serves as the central business district and service center for the Town of Oakfield.
- The Town's goals and objectives indicate the preference for directing growth (beside the Village) toward the hamlet areas of Five Corners and East Oakfield, and to control the rate of

growth in areas without services or along rural road frontages, in order to protect community character.

- The Comprehensive Plan recommends that public water service be extended further into the Town of Oakfield, primarily to serve the existing residential hamlets and allow limited development in the immediately surrounding areas. Although it is possible that public water may induce higher growth rates, it is more likely that the availability of public water will steer what limited growth that does occur to the desired areas.

Village of Oakfield

- The population of the Village of Oakfield declined between 1990 and 2000. Because the Village is primarily "built-out", projections suggest slight decreases in population from 2000 to 2030.
- Similar to the Town of Oakfield, the rate of residential construction in Oakfield, since 1990, has been flat. The Village of Oakfield provides the central business district and service center for the region. The Village is very supportive of the business district and supports efforts for continued investment in, and revitalization of, these businesses in order that the Village may continue to effectively fulfill its function into the future.
- The Comprehensive Plan outlines recommendations and actions to strengthen the Village without adversely changing its character.

7.4 Adverse Environmental Impacts that Cannot be Avoided

With or without the adoption and implementation of the Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan, the three-community study area will continue to have limited new development, some reuse, and pressures to sell-off building lots in the agricultural areas. There will continue to be concerns regarding water quality and quantity and, therefore, an increasing demand for public water. The adoption of this plan will allow the Towns and Village to better manage growth and development, and reduce potential environmental impacts. All development actions taking place after the adoption of this plan will still be subject to the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) process on a site/project specific basis. This comprehensive plan will assist with the review of development actions. In the instance of a rezoning request, this plan will have a much greater impact on that decision and the SEQR process. Zoning must be in accordance with the community's comprehensive plan.

7.5 Growth Inducing Aspects of the Plan

Most of the implementation actions outlined in this plan will help to control and moderate growth within the three communities. Certain actions will act to encourage development in and around the hamlet areas of Oakfield and Alabama. Specifically, redevelopment in and around the Village of Oakfield is encouraged and public water is recommended for the smaller hamlet areas in each of the Towns.

These areas have been deemed to be the most appropriate areas for development. While the Comprehensive Plan indicates some areas for growth (see Long Term Growth Boundaries on Vision Map), it equally provides rational for restricting growth in a majority of the Towns of Alabama and Oakfield. The extension of public water and development in the more rural areas of the Towns will be not be encouraged as a high priority action, unless shown necessary for health and safety reasons.

7.6 Mitigation Measures

It is the objective of this Comprehensive Plan to help reduce the potential impacts that could be caused by future development in the three study communities. This can be accomplished by providing techniques for guiding development that may occur, such as amending zoning, adopting other development regulations, or providing tools to help mitigate the possible impacts of development (limiting infrastructure, increased/improved design standards for development, etc.). This Comprehensive Plan provides techniques for guiding the direction of growth in the partnering communities, and the tools for minimizing impacts to a level that does not create significant adverse environmental impacts. The following section discusses the recommendations of the Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan, analyzing why and how they help mitigate the potential impacts of future growth.

a. ***Impacts on Land***

Towns of Oakfield and Alabama

- To protect the rural character and environmental resources of the Towns of Alabama and Oakfield and the Village of Oakfield, this plan recommends zoning revisions, aesthetic regulations, infrastructure limitations, new development regulations and guidelines, and protection and preservation of important features.
- Agricultural lands in the Towns will be protected. Depending upon the situation, the land will be preserved through various techniques:
  - Town of Alabama: amendment of the Agricultural-Residential (A-R) zoning district, recommending the use of rural development guidelines, adopting a Right to Farm Law, and the use and adoption of more flexible zoning techniques (open development areas, zoning overlay districts and cluster provisions for residential subdivisions).
  - Town of Oakfield: amendment of the Residential and Agricultural (R and A) zoning districts, recommending the use of rural development guidelines, adoption of a Right to Farm Law, and the use and adoption of more flexible zoning techniques (open development areas, zoning overlay districts and clusters provisions for residential subdivisions).
  - Lateral Restrictions on some proposed public water extensions. (See Vision Map).
  - Use of Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE) for farmland preservation.
  - Utilizing prime farmland soils information when making land use decisions.
  - Participation in the NYS Agricultural Districting program.
  - Adopting Minor Subdivision Regulations.
- In general, the Towns of Alabama and Oakfield are presently not experiencing high rates of growth and are under minimal pressure for development. The Comprehensive Plan generally allows these communities to continue this course by providing techniques to protect the community's land resources, and also ways of directing growth to appropriate areas. This is a pro-active approach rather than being re-active to development pressure and demands for growth.
- Where practicable, residential subdivision is recommended to be encouraged in and around the Village and designated hamlet "Long-term Growth Boundaries" (See Vision Map).

Village of Oakfield

- The plan calls for growth in the Village to be primarily in the form of redevelopment, re-use or in-fill development.
- The adoption of a zoning overlay district could provide architectural and site design guidelines in the central business district.
- The Plan calls for protection of some of the remaining important open space features in the Village and expanding the amount of public parkland.

- The Plan directs growth away from the creek corridors.

b. ***Impacts on Water***

Towns of Alabama, and Oakfield and Village of Oakfield

Smart Growth Plan

- The Comprehensive Plan mitigates potential impacts from growth through its general support of the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan. The Comprehensive Plan builds upon the concepts in the Smart Growth Plan by establishing "Short-term and Long-term Growth Boundaries" (see Vision Map). Where public water is proposed to be extended, the plan also calls for lateral restrictions or other protective techniques to control growth outside of the designated areas. The Comprehensive Plan does not anticipate significant increases in residential growth rates, but it does provide the Town's enhanced land use controls to best guide that growth and minimize potential adverse impacts.

Surface Water

- An objective of the Comprehensive Plan is the protection of the important stream corridors and floodplains within the three-community study area.
- Increased drainage standards, and avoidance of poor soil areas, will also reduce potential impacts from development on surface waters.

Groundwater

- Directing growth to areas where public water extensions are recommended will help in the protection of groundwater resources in the Towns of Alabama and Oakfield.
- In Alabama and Oakfield, the extension of public water will relieve the problems associated with strained private wells and failing or faulty septic systems, alleviating health and safety concerns due to water quality and quantity.
- The plan suggests employing education and awareness programs for local residents as they relate to the maintenance and repair of septic systems.

c. ***Impacts on Plants and Animals***

Towns of Alabama, and Oakfield and Village of Oakfield

- As discussed previously in this section, the three communities will be undertaking efforts to protect and preserve the stream corridors and open space areas. By targeting these important habitats for protection, the Towns are minimizing potential impacts to the flora and fauna of the region.
- The plan also identifies important features like floodplains, wetlands and unique environmental features, so that they can be properly incorporated into site designs and preserved. The plan also enhances the ability of the communities to plan together and save more contiguous features in the region.
- The Comprehensive Plan recommends adopting minor and major subdivision regulations and cluster provisions in the Towns of Alabama and Oakfield in an effort to protect environmentally sensitive or resource-constrained areas.

d. ***Impacts on Agricultural Land Resources***

Towns of Alabama and Oakfield

- The mitigation actions recommended above for minimizing potential impacts to the land also apply to potential impacts to agricultural land resources in the Towns of Alabama and

Oakfield. In some cases agricultural land resources will be preserved through one or more of the following techniques:

- Town of Alabama: amendment of the Agricultural-Residential (A-R) zoning district, requiring the use of rural development guidelines, adopting a Right to Farm Law, and utilizing more flexible land use techniques (open development areas, zoning overlay districts and cluster provisions for residential subdivisions).
- Town of Oakfield: amendment of the Residential and Agricultural (R and A) zoning districts, requiring the use of rural development guidelines, adopting a Right to Farm Law, and utilizing more flexible land use techniques (open development areas, zoning overlay districts and cluster provisions for residential subdivisions).
- Lateral Restrictions on some proposed public water extensions (see Vision Map).
- Use of Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE) for farming.
- Use of prime farmland soils information in making land use decisions.
- Participation in the NYS Agricultural Districting program.

- Each of the Towns will seek to manage growth and development and focus on the common goal of agricultural preservation. This involves balancing the need to maintain viable farming operations and contiguous farmland with the need to provide opportunities for residential growth.

e. ***Impacts on Aesthetic Resources***

The preservation of community character is one of the major goals of the Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan.

Towns of Alabama, and Oakfield

- Community character includes the aesthetic resources in the Towns, such as scenic views, open space, farmland, locally significant and historic structures, and the communities' overall rural quality of life. Each Town has identified community character as a significant resource, and has outlined actions to proactively protect and preserve those features that establish community character in their area.

Village of Oakfield

- The Village has identified significant visual and cultural resources, as well as methodologies for protecting and preserving these features. The Village has a central business district and plans to improve the streetscape in this area.
- The aesthetics of the CBD will also be protected through recommended code revisions, the adoption of a zoning overlay district, and a recommended façade improvement program.

f. ***Impacts on Historic and Archaeological Resources***

- In considering future development proposals that require discretionary approvals (site plans and subdivisions) the Towns and Village must consider impacts to cultural resources. These reviews are coordinated with the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and will result in the identification of cultural resources and appropriate methods for minimizing potential impacts to these resources.

g. ***Impacts on Open Space, Parks and Recreation***

- The plan identifies the key open space and recreation features in the three-community study area.

- The wildlife management areas have a total of approximately 19,000 acres. All of these are under the control of New York State and the federal Department of the Interior and, therefore, are outside the direct jurisdiction of the Towns of Oakfield and Alabama.
- The Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan avoids recommending development of infrastructure extensions in the vicinity of the wildlife management areas. The exception is the John White Memorial Game Farm, which is a more active educational and training facility (presently unutilized), located between the hamlets of Alabama and Basom in the Town of Alabama.
- The Comprehensive Plan also provides methodologies to protect and preserve open space resources from potential adverse development impacts.
- The communities can cooperatively plan to ensure that open space features are protected to the maximum extent possible, recreational needs are efficiently provided, and parks are connected and considered in development scenarios in each community.

h. ***Impacts on Critical Environmental Areas***

- There are no Critical Environmental Areas, designated through SEQR, in the Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan study area.

i. ***Impacts on Transportation***

- Transportation in the Oakfield-Alabama study area is heavily reliant on roadways and automobiles. There are no significant transportation issues/deficiencies that will be exacerbated by the plan.
- A major recommendation of this plan is to work with the New York State Department of Transportation and the Genesee Transportation Council to implement streetscape improvements along Route 63 in the Village of Oakfield and down to the school property in the Town of Oakfield.
- To avoid sprawl, growth is being targeted around the Village and existing hamlets in the Towns. This helps to preserve community character and protect environmental features by reducing the potential for potential transportation-related impacts.
- The Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan also identifies a potential multi-use trail along the abandoned Penn-Central railroad grade to provide for non-vehicular related travel and recreation.

j. ***Impact on Growth and Character of Community or Neighborhood***

- Growth rates and pressure for development in the three communities is low, and for planning purposes, this is not projected to dramatically change. The plan for each community directs and accommodates growth within appropriate areas, without impacting resources or the character of the community.
- It is clear from the goals and objectives of the three communities, that community character and quality of life should not be adversely impacted by growth. Many of the recommendations of the plan provide ways to achieve this through the direction of growth to the Village and hamlet areas, emphasis on the protection of agricultural land uses, and the preservation of significant natural resources.
- The recommendations for public water extensions focus future development in and around the Village and the hamlet areas, providing residents who are currently experiencing water quality and quantity problems with the opportunity to obtain public water. The recommended "Long-term Growth Boundaries", as shown on the Vision Maps, are not intended to create demand for development but, rather, they provide the communities a means for controlling and guiding growth in a manner that minimizes potential environmental impacts.

7.7 Evaluation of Alternatives

Throughout the planning process, alternatives for helping the three municipalities achieve their goals and objectives were evaluated. These recommendations and implementation alternatives were evaluated for not only their desired results, but also to assess their potential impact on the environment, the needs of local residents, private property rights, quality of life, and the vitality of each community.

It should be noted that long term recommendations have not been thoroughly evaluated in this section. These actions have only been outlined for consideration under circumstances where the Towns and Village experience greater levels of growth pressure as the result of the implementing short term recommendations, or where short term recommendations are not achieving the desired results.

No-Action Alternative

Town of Alabama

- The No Action alternative (not adopting the Comprehensive Plan) was considered for the Town of Alabama. However, this alternative does not adequately enable the Town to direct and manage growth trends to achieve the Town's vision.
- The No Action alternative does not allow the Town to properly plan for its chosen future, or to better direct and manage growth and development.
- The No Action alternative does not support the concentration of development and revitalization activities in the hamlet areas.
- The No Action alternative does not address local need for public water supply.
- The proposed plan would more effectively allow the Town to realize it future goals, and provide greater protection to the environment than the continuance of present trends under the No Action alternative.

Town of Oakfield

- The No Action alternative (not adopting the Comprehensive Plan) was considered for the Town of Oakfield. However, this alternative does not adequately enable the Town to direct and manage growth trends to achieve the Town's vision.
- The No Action alternative does not allow the Town to properly plan for its chosen future, or to better direct and manage growth and development.
- The No Action alternative does not support the concentration of development and revitalization activities in the hamlet areas.
- The No Action alternative does not address the local need for public water.
- The proposed plan would more effectively allow the Town to realize it future goals, and provide greater protection to the environment than the continuance of present trends under the No Action alternative.

Village of Oakfield

- The Village of Oakfield is largely built-out. The No Action alternative (not adopting the Comprehensive Plan) does not provide methods to guide revitalization and redevelopment activities within the CBD.
- The No Action alternative does not provide for a higher level of protection to the environmental features in the Village, or more effectively manage future growth and

development in a manner that is consistent with the desired goals, as articulated by area residents and officials.

- The No Action alternative would not enable the Village to make effective use of its infrastructure or plan growth effectively with the Town of Oakfield.

SECTION 8

ANNUAL REVIEW

Each of the three partnering communities should conduct an annual review of the Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan to ensure that the Plan remains a dynamic and useful document, and to gauge the accomplishments of each community, individually and in partnership, in implementing and achieving the goals and objectives of the Plan. This review should be conducted by the Planning Board or a review committee, as designated and authorized by the respective Town and Village Boards. This annual review should include some or all of the following.

- A review of all major site plan and subdivision approvals issued during the previous year in conjunction with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan to determine where this activity has occurred, and if it has occurred consistent with the recommendations of the Plan. These planning approvals should be assessed with regard to their overall impact on the general land use trends in the community and their potential impacts on adjoining communities.

- A review of all major rezoning decisions issued during the previous year in conjunction with the recommendations of the Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan to determine if these actions were consistent with the recommendations of the Plan. These actions should also be assessed with regard to their overall impact on the general land use trends in the community and their potential impacts on adjoining communities.

- A review of the priority listing of zoning amendments specified for each community to determine which items were accomplished and which ones should be undertaken in the coming year. The overall impact of these rezoning decisions should be evaluated with respect to general land use trends as well. It should also be determined if there are any new zoning actions that should be added to this list in each community.

- A review of the list of other priority items, as contained in Section 6.0 of the Plan (Implementation), to determine which items were accomplished during the previous year. It should also be determined if there is a need to update or amend the individual community lists.

- A review of any comments received from respective Town and Village Boards, departments and committees, and any public input gathered during the previous year, in conjunction with the information ascertained from the reviews outlined above. This information should be utilized to assist in the development of an implementation action plan for each community for the coming year.

The Planning Board or designated review committee in each community should prepare a statement outlining the accomplishments of the past year, including a listing of all major site plan, subdivision and rezoning approvals, and other accomplishments, as specified in the Comprehensive Plan (including joint efforts by the partnering communities). This information, along with the action plan for the continuing implementation of the Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan, should be presented to the respective Town and Village Boards for their review and approval.

By undertaking this review on a yearly basis, the communities can evaluate their achievements for implementing the Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan, so as to keep the implementation process moving forward and make adjustments to the implementation strategy, as required. The information generated from this

review process should be incorporated into each community's Comprehensive Planning files through the formal acceptance of the respective Legislative Board.

Approximately every five years (or sooner if deemed necessary), the Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan should be more extensively reviewed (using these annual reports) and updated, as necessary, through a formal adoption process (including draft changes, public hearings and SEQR review).

SECTION 9.0

FINAL GENERIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE OAKFIELD-ALABAMA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Applicant:

Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield

Lead Agency:

Town of Oakfield
Town Hall
3219 Drake Street
Oakfield, New York 14125

Contact:
Ken Dodd, Supervisor
585-948-5835

DGEIS Submitted: December 16, 2003
DGEIS Acceptance by Town Board: January 13, 2004
Public Hearings: January 26, February 5, and February 10, 2004
Comments Accepted Through: February 27, 2004
FGEIS Acceptance by Town Board: June 13, 2005
Findings Adopted by Town Board: July 11, 2005

Prepared By:

Wendel Duchscherer
95 John Muir Drive, Suite 100
Amherst, New York 14228

Contact:

Wendy E. Weber Salvati, AICP, Project Manager
Andrew C. Reilly, P.E., AICP, Principal in Charge

NOTICE OF COMPLETION OF THE FINAL GENERIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT for the Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield

Lead Agency: Town of Oakfield Town Board

Address: Town Hall
3219 Drake Street
Oakfield, New York 14125

Date: September 22, 2004

This notice is issued pursuant to Part 617 of the implementing regulations pertaining to Article 8 (State Environmental Quality Review Act) of the Environmental Conservation Law.

A Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement has been completed and accepted for the proposed action described below.

Name of Action: Adoption of the Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan for the Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield.

Location: Town of Oakfield (and the Town of Alabama and Village of Oakfield), Genesee County, New York

Description of Action: The Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield have completed and propose to adopt a Comprehensive Plan in accordance with Town Law Sections 272-a and 284, and Village Law Sections 7-722 and 7-741. The Plan will act as a comprehensive plan for each of the partnering communities and assist them in considering the region in their decisions and actions.

A copy of the FGEIS may be obtained from:

Kenneth A. Dodd, Supervisor
Town of Oakfield
Town Hall, 3219 Drake Street, Oakfield, New York
(585) 948-5835

A copy of this Notice of Completion and the FGEIS have been sent to:

Commissioner, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
Division of Environmental Permits, 625 Broadway, Albany, New York 12233-1750

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Environmental Permits
Region 8, 6274 East Avon-Lima Road, Avon, New York 14414-9519
Attention: Peter A. Lent

Linda Franks, Town Clerk
Town of Alabama, 2218 Judge Road, Oakfield, New York, 14125
Attention: Supervisor Guy Hinkson

Shelly L. D'Alba, Village Clerk/Treasurer
Village of Oakfield, 1910 Bowen Road, Elma, New York, 14059-7699
Attention: Raymond F. Cianfrini, Mayor

New York State Department of Transportation
Donovan State Office Building, 125 Main Street, Buffalo, New York 14203-3088
Attention: Brian O. Rowback

Genesee County Planning Department
3837 W. Main Street Road, Batavia, New York 14020
Attention: James Duval

NYSDEC Environmental News Bulletin
625 Broadway, Albany, New York 12233-1750

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Genesee County Planning Board Zoning Referrals Notice of Final Decision for the Town of Oakfield
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Copy of letter received from the Genesee County Department of Health and other correspondence regarding on-going water quality problems with individual water supply wells and septic systems in Alabama hamlet

SECTION 1 - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document is submitted as a final generic environmental impact statement (FGEIS) for the adoption of the Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan for the Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield, pursuant to the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) regulations set forth in 6 NYCRR Part 617.

The FGEIS contains correspondence from local municipal agencies and the public that was obtained during the public comment period for the Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS). The DGEIS was determined to be complete by the Lead Agency on December 16, 2003 and is made part of this FGEIS by reference (Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan and Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement dated January 2004). This action commenced the public comment period, during which time interested parties and the general public were encouraged to submit written comments or verbally express their comments at the public hearings held in the Village of Oakfield on January 26, 2004; the Town of Alabama on February 5, 2004; and the Town of Oakfield on February 10, 2004. In addition, by reference, the Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan for the Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield is made a part of this FGEIS.

Submission Objectives

The purpose of preparing and filing this FGEIS is to provide a response to the questions and comments raised during the public comment period for the DGEIS. A direct response is provided only for comments on the contents of the Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan and DGEIS that are substantive. All of the issues raised during the public comment period relate to the potential impact the Plan could have on the physical and social/cultural environment. This document will identify the components of the Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan that may be revised in order to address the concerns of the public and mitigate potential significant impacts.

In addition to providing responses to the comments, the filing of the FGEIS continues the SEQR process and allows the Lead Agency and other involved parties to prepare their Findings that will later be the basis for their decision on this adoption action.

Discussion of Substantive Issues

Several significant issues were raised during the public comment period. The majority of these comments were focused on at meetings held subsequent to the public hearings.

On April 4, 2004, representatives of the Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan Committee and Wendel Duchscherer met with James Duval, the Director of the Genesee County Planning Department. This meeting was held to discuss the County Planning Board's vote to disapprove the Town of Oakfield's component of the Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan (see Notice of Final Action contained in the Appendix). The County Planning Board, under their review of the draft Plan pursuant to the 239-m referral process, had voted against the Plan for the Town of Oakfield, issued no vote for the Town of Alabama, and approved the component for the Village of Oakfield.

The April 4th meeting focused primarily on the County's perception and concern that the recommendations for long-term growth, as illustrated on the Vision Map and outlined in the Plan, deviated from the policies and recommendations of the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan. The County felt that the proposed long-term growth boundaries proposed in the Plan were considered to be too large and encompassed many areas that lie within State-designated Agricultural Districts. The communities and their consultant tried to explain that these areas were actually long-term planning areas where potential growth could occur. Presently, the Towns' have zoning that allows many uses throughout the entire study area community, providing little direction for growth. The Comprehensive Plan attempts to better focus this development into smaller areas for potential long-term growth around the established hamlets and the Village of Oakfield. The "Smart Growth Areas" illustrated in the County Smart Growth Plan allocate little area for long-term growth and basically represent areas that are already developed. The Comprehensive Plan recommends expanded areas for long-term growth to afford the Towns more focused options for future development. It is not the intent of the Town to have these areas immediately be designated Smart Growth Areas and have water supplied to them. Rather, these areas provide the Towns with ideas for long-term planning and possible infrastructure extensions, where warranted. It would be naïve of the County to think that no new development would take place in these communities over the next twenty years. Housing will be constructed and businesses started, and the communities must provide better direction for this growth, regardless of how fast or slow it occurs. The Town's are committed to updating their laws and regulations to better guide their future growth as part of the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. They understand that these recommendations in the Plan must be

implemented before these new areas are designated for any new growth. These implementation actions include making changes to the Zoning Map, instituting lateral restriction policies for water line extensions through agricultural areas, and adopting Zoning Overlay regulations, local Right-to Farm legislation, Rural Development Guidelines and improved subdivision and site plan review regulations.

In addition to the comments received at the April 4, 2004 meeting, additional comments were received from the Genesee County Planning Department and the public, as outlined in Section 2 (as follows).

Additional Information

Title 6 of the New York Code of Rules and Recommendations (6 NYCRR), Part 617.14(I) requires that the FGEIS include the DGEIS (by reference) and any revisions or supplements to it. Section 3 of the FGEIS includes the amended pages and maps for the Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan and DGEIS.

SECTION 2 – RESPONSES TO COMMENTS

Correspondence, Letters and Comments Received from the Involved and Interested Agencies and the Public

The following comments were received from the Genesee County Planning Department and the public. Copies of the original comment letters are provided in the Appendix. Revised pages of the Comprehensive Plan are included in Section 3.

Genesee County Planning Department (Email correspondence dated June 10, 2004)

Executive Summary, pg. 1 - "this plan identifies what areas in the County would qualify to receive public water… Those areas designated to receive water are know as Development Areas".

Comment: The Smart Growth Plan does not qualify areas for public water. Water lines and water service are not restricted to Develop Areas only, and they are not required for existing residents to connect into the County coordinated water system.

Response: The wording in this section of the report has been revised to acknowledge and reflect the comments.

Executive Summary, pg. 6 - (Oakfield) "Adopt Subdivision Regulations as per Section 276 of the New York State Town Law."

Comment: Oakfield adopted subdivision regulations in 1992.

Response: It is acknowledged that the Town of Oakfield adopted a Land Separation Local Law and Land Subdivision regulations in June of 1992. Although the Land Separation Law, which regulated minor subdivision (four or less lots), was repealed in 1997, the regulations for the major subdivision of land remain in effect. Subdivision of land is also addressed under Section 411.3 of the Zoning Ordinance. The Comprehensive Plan has been revised, where required to reflect these facts.

Section 4.2.1, pg. 4-10 - (Oakfield) "Town of Oakfield does not have a separate law for the regulation of the subdivision of land."

Comment: See above.

Response: As noted above, it is understood that the Town currently regulates the subdivision of land by way of a provision in the Zoning Ordinance. The reviewer's comment does not appear to recognize the intent of the statement highlighted above, which is merely to identify the fact that the Town does not have stand alone regulations for subdivision. Hence, the text has been revised to clarify this intent.

Section 4.2.1, pg. 4-10 - (Oakfield Village) "Similar to other communities in the study area, the Village does not have separate regulations for subdivision."

Comment: Village adopted subdivision regulation in 1992.

Response: It is understood that the Village currently regulates the subdivision of land by way of a provision in the Zoning Ordinance. Again, the reviewer's comment does not appear to recognize the intent of the statement highlighted above, which is merely to identify the fact that the Village does not have stand alone regulations for subdivision. Hence, the text has been revised to clarify this intent.

Section 4.6.1, pg. 20 - "The Village and surrounding areas receive water from the City of Batavia via a line that runs up State Route 63."

Comment: The water line runs up NYS 63 to Galloway Road, heads due west on Galloway Road to South Pearl Road, then north to the Village.

Response: This comment is acknowledged and the text in the report has been revised to reflect the accurate routing of this water line.

Section 4.7.3, pg. 22 - "Police services are provided by the New York State Police."

Comment: The Genesee County Sheriff's office is the primary law enforcement entity. They receive all 911 calls.

Response: This comment is acknowledged and the text in the report has been revised to reflect the accurate provision of police protection in the area.

Section 4.7.4, pg. 22 - (Oakfield Village) "... and a water treatment plant in the Town of Batavia."

Comment: *This treatment plant is now off-line.*

Response: This comment is acknowledged and the text in the report has been revised to reflect the current status of the treatment plant.

Section 5.2.1, pg.1 - (Alabama) "Land use is regulated in the Town solely through the Zoning."

Comment: It's a Zoning Law, not an ordinance.

Response: An ordinance, as defined (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2004), is a "law set forth by governmental authority, i.e. - a municipal regulation". Therefore, the term ordinance is used appropriately here. In fact, the Town of Oakfield zoning code is named "Zoning Ordinance".

Section 5.2.1, pg.2 - (Alabama) "The Genesee County Smart Growth Plan calls for minimizing the number of new water connections within agricultural districts."

Comment: The Genesee County Smart Growth Plan goes farther than "calling for", it officially restricts hook-ups to new, non-agricultural uses in Agricultural Districts unless located in a Development Area.

Response: The comment is acknowledged and the report text has been revised to reflect that the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan restricts the number of new water connections-ups to new, non-agricultural land uses in agricultural districts, unless they are located in a designated development area.

Section 5.2.1, pg.2 - (Alabama) "Population projections indicate that the Town's population will grow by an estimated 12.5 percent over the next thirty years."

Comment: This projection, cited from two statistical studies done by the GFLRPC, is false. A hybrid of two different studies conducted by the GFLRPC was improperly used. The 1997 projections were revised in the 2002 report to reflect the decrease experienced in the Town found in Census 2000. The Town population is expected to decline from 1,881 in 2000, to 1,814 in 2030.

Response: The comment is acknowledged and the report text has been revised to reflect the revised population projections.

Section 5.3.1, pg.10 - (Alabama) "Water extensions should only be considered in accordance with the County's Smart Growth Plan (as amended by this plan) or in areas that have potential public health and safety concerns."

Comment: The Smart Growth Plan is not amended by local comprehensive plans. A report is prepared by the County Planning Department to recommend changes.

Response: This comment is acknowledged and the reference in the text regarding amendment of the Plan has been removed.

Section 5.3.1, pg.11 - (Alabama) "The provision of water services is essential to eliminate certain health and safety factors associated with contaminated wells and failing septic systems."

Comment: The Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan provides no scientific or survey evidence (with statistical significance) of well contamination or failing septic systems in the Town.

Response: The factors contributing to the on going problems with individual water supplies and on-site subsurface wastewater disposal systems are outlined in a letter received from the Genesee County Health Department on November 17, 2004. Basically this letter confirms that problems exist and are aggravated by unsuitable soils, the age of the stormwater collections system in the area and the small size of the existing lots, which challenges the required separation distance between private wells and septic systems. The Comprehensive Plan has been revised to reflect this information.

Section 5.3.1, pg.12 - (Alabama) "In known groundwater problem areas, the Town should require larger lot sizes."

Comment: The Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan provides no scientific or survey evidence (with statistical significance) of well contamination or failing septic systems in the Town.

Response: See response to previous comment

Section 5.3.2, pg.15 - (Oakfield) "A primary opportunity for additional public water in the Town of Oakfield is to continue extending water along the main roads out of the Village. This pattern expands upon, but generally conforms to, the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan."

Comment: The proposed plan does not generally conform to the Smart Growth Plan, since these areas are primarily agricultural. The Smart Growth Plan seeks to focus growth in hamlets, not expanding it into NYS Agricultural Districts, which the County Plan strictly avoids in as practical a manner as possible.

Response: The comment is acknowledged and the text has been revised to reflect these concerns and better clarify the long-term desires of the Town.

Section 5.3.2, pg.16 - (Oakfield) "Focus the provision of public water to locations that have urgent need due to health and safety issues."

Comment: The Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan provides no scientific or survey evidence (with statistical significance) of well contamination in the Town.

Response: Since the Genesee County Health Department only confirmed water quality concerns in the Town of Alabama, we have removed this recommendation from the Plan.

Section 5.3.2, pg.18 - (Oakfield) "Limit water extensions in the town to eliminate the potential for extensive growth. Water extensions should only be considered in accordance with the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan or in areas that have potential public health and safety concerns."

Comment: The proposed plan does not conform to the Smart Growth Plan, since these areas proposed for water extensions are primarily agricultural. The Smart Growth Plan seeks to focus growth in hamlets, not expanding it into NYS Agricultural Districts, which the County Plan strictly avoids in as practical a manner as possible.

Response: The comment is acknowledged and the text has been revised to reflect these concerns and better clarify the long-term desires of the Town.

Section 6.4, pg. 8 - (Oakfield) "Adopt subdivision regulations as per Section 276 of the NYS Town Law."

Comment: They adopted subdivision regulations in 1992.

Response: As previously noted, the Comprehensive Plan document has been revised to reflect the fact that the Town adopted Land Subdivision Regulations in June of 1992 to regulation the major subdivision of land. At the time the Town had also adopted a Land Separation Local Law to regulate

minor subdivision, but this law was repealed in 1997. The Town should adopt regulations to control the minor subdivision of land (splits of four or less parcels).

General Comment: The Plan doesn't address issues regarding the mines underlying land that should never be residentially developed.

Response: The general location of the former U.S. Gypsum mines has been illustrated on Map 10. Consideration to the location of these mines, and potential future residential development in areas underlain by mines, has been added to Sections 4 and 5 of the Comprehensive Plan.

Joseph J. Richthammer, 1240 Casey Road, Basom, New York 14013 (email dated August 4, 2004)

Comment: With the Highway Department being the biggest cost to the Town of Alabama, it should be required that our Town Council and Supervisor attend Highway Superintendent schools and seminars to help them understand the deployment of highway equipment and materials. This would also be helpful in formulating better cost effective decisions.

Response: This comment is acknowledged.

B. Substantive Comments Received at the Public Hearings

Town of Oakfield (Held January 26, 2004)

None offered.

Town of Alabama (Held February 4, 2004)

None offered.

Village of Oakfield (Held February 10, 2004)

None offered.

SECTION 3 - AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAFT OAKFIELD-ALABAMA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND DRAFT GENERIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (DGEIS)

The following section includes the pages that have been revised in the original Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan and DGEIS, with revision shown in bold italics. Maps that required major revisions have also been included. Some maps that only required minor changes have not been included, but descriptions of the changes are discussed.

These modifications, combined with the Findings issued for this action, will determine the Final version of the Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan. As mentioned previously, the entire Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan is incorporated into this FGEIS by reference.

SECTION 1.0
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction and Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

The Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan represents the culmination of a joint planning effort undertaken by the Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield. These three rural communities recognized the importance of such cooperation and joined together to formulate a common vision for managing future growth and development. This Plan was prepared in conformance with NYS Town Law Section 272-a and NYS Village Law Section 7-722 and is designed to be consistent with the principles of the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan.

The Genesee County Smart Growth Plan outlines a strategy for managing and controlling the extension of water service throughout Genesee County. **As a way of minimizing the potential impacts of additional growth and development, which would otherwise occur as a result of the extension of water service, this plan sets forth objectives aimed at ensuring that water extensions do not result in additional development that is inconsistent with the principles of "smart growth". The Plan designates "development areas" within which development and redevelopment would be encouraged and access to the County-funded portions of the County's water system would not be restricted. The "development areas" were delineated based on a certain set of criteria, and include areas with significant potential for economic development, as well as areas that are already relatively densely developed with residential, commercial or industrial uses.**

The Smart Growth Plan establishes guidelines for implementing an approval process for water hook-ups, which calls for the creation of a County-level administrative review committee. However, the County Legislature may choose to delegate the authority to approve water hook-ups to individual municipalities that have adopted a comprehensive plan consistent with the principles of the Smart Growth Plan.

Although the Smart Growth Plan and the potential ability to receive public water was the driving force behind the effort to create this document, there were other issues that warranted the preparation of this Plan by the three partnering communities. The Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan sets forth a strategy for addressing important issues and for guiding future growth and development, protecting **agricultural uses and** rural community character, and improving the quality of life in each community. The three communities have designed this plan to acknowledge existing conditions in each community,

Recommendations for achieving the opportunities or addressing constraints were formulated for each community utilizing the goals and objectives outlined in Section 3.0. For each community, each goal is discussed and then followed by a series of recommendations. The recommendations are further developed in Section 6.0 (Implementation).

1.7 Implementation

The Implementation section of the Comprehensive Plan outlines strategies for achieving the goals objectives outlined in Section 3.0, and for accomplishing many of the recommendations set forth in Section 5.0. The implementation strategy includes a step by step approach with established priorities. This Plan is an active document and over time, as local situations change, so may the priorities of each community. Therefore, upon adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, one of the first priority actions is for each community to designate an Implementation Advisory Committee to be responsible for the active implementation of this document.

Section 6.0 is broken into subsections for each participating community. Each implementation strategy for each community sets forth a prioritized, step-by-step approach. Priority 1 and 2 actions have been organized under four categories: Agriculture; Public Water/Smart Growth Plan; Zoning and other Land Use Regulations; and Other Actions. Priority 1 actions are those tasks that should be completed in the immediate term (one to two years). Priority 2 actions are those actions that should be undertaken over the short term (three to five years out). Priority 3 Actions are also included, which are either longer-term activities or alternative actions that may or may not be necessary depending on the outcome of Priority 1 and 2 actions. Key implementation strategies for each municipality are as follows.

Town of Alabama

- Revise the Agricultural–Residential zoning district to build upon the intent that agricultural uses are primary uses in the district.
- **Work with Genesee County to expand the designated development areas in the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan in a manner that does not impact agriculture and fully utilizes the existing infrastructure in the Town. The Vision Map depicts larger long-term planning areas. The development areas delineated in the existing Smart Growth Plan closely follow the existing pattern of hamlet development and represent appropriate limits for sustaining short term growth. As future demand for growth may dictate, the development area boundaries should be expanded to correspond with the Vision Map.**

- Draft a set of rural development guidelines that provide written standards and graphic examples to ensure that the vision for growth and development set forth in this document is achieved.
- During future reviews of the County's Agricultural District, recommend to Genesee County that non-agricultural lands be removed from the district. This is primarily the case in Basom and South Alabama.
- Investigate residents' requests/needs for public water due to public health and safety concerns.
- Relocate Town Hall, along with other Town facilities, to the Alabama hamlet.
- Work with Genesee County and the Town of Oakfield to investigate the feasibility and potential funding for a rails-to-trials project on the abandoned Penn Central rail corridor.

Town of Oakfield

- Revise the schedule of permitted uses for the Residential Agricultural zoning district (R&A) to build upon the intent that agricultural uses are primary uses in this district.
- **Work with Genesee County to expand the designated development areas in the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan in a manner that does not impact agriculture and fully utilizes the existing infrastructure in the Town. The Vision Map depicts a larger long-term planning area around the Village of Oakfield that represents the Town's long term vision for growth. The designated development area boundary established by the Smart Growth Plan, as depicted on the map, represents the most appropriate limit for sustaining short term growth, as the future demand for growth may dictate, the development area boundary around the Village should be expanded.**
- Identify a new growth area in the East Oakfield crossroads area of Lockport Road and Fisher Road for both public water and as a residential development area.
- Expand water from the Village of Oakfield to the growth area surrounding the Village. Lateral restrictions should be implemented along Fisher Road north to East Oakfield.
- **Adopt regulations for the review and approval of the minor subdivision of land, separate from the Zoning Ordinance, as per Section 276 of the NYS Town Law.**
- Revise zoning to include provisions for cluster residential subdivisions as per Section 278 of the NYS Town Law, with proper reference made in the Town's Subdivisions regulations.
- Establish a zoning overlay district for East Oakfield hamlet (within long-term growth boundaries on the Vision Map).
- During future reviews of the County's Agricultural District recommend to the Genesee County that non-agricultural lands be removed from the district.
- Investigate residents' requests/needs for public water due to health and safety concerns.
- Adopt Site Plan Review regulations.

Town Line Road, and Drake Street Road in the southeastern portion of the Town. The majority of denser residential and mixed-use development within the Town of Oakfield takes place in and around the Village. Industrial development can be seen along Judge Road, just west of the Village with the largest tracts of land belonging to the U.S. Gypsum Company. **Starting in the early 1900's, U.S. Gypsum conducted subsurface mining operations in the vicinity of their facility in Oakfield, with mines extending to the west, into Alabama, and further east (see Map 10).**

The Oakfield – Alabama Central Schools are located in the Town, just northwest of the Village on Lewiston Road. The following table offers a breakdown of land uses by percentage of the total area for the Town of Oakfield.

Figure 1B Town of Oakfield Land Use Percentages

Land Use	Percentage
Agriculture	58.02 %
Commercial	0.20 %
Government/Public	0.62 %
Industrial	1.47 %
Multi-Family Residential	0.41 %
Multiple Residential	0.11 %
Parks	0.27 %
Single Family Residential	8.23 %
Unknown	7.77 %
Utilities/Infrastructure	0.21 %
Vacant/Undeveloped/Open Space	11.56 %
Wildlife Conservation Areas	11.13 %

Source: Map 3 Existing Land Use

Village of Oakfield

The Village of Oakfield is the central hub for the three-community study area. It is a destination for residents from the surrounding area. People come to shop, do business, go to school, and more. The Village is the most densely populated and developed area in the three municipalities. The Village is developed mostly with residential uses, along with a mix of other community-oriented uses. Commercial uses are located primarily along North Main Street and South Pearl Street, although other commercial properties and some industrial uses can be found in other areas in the Village. The following table provides a break down of land uses by percentage of the total area for the Village.

The following table contains a list of the zoning classifications and general permitted uses. The table is just an overview and generalization of the zoning class, specific inquiries should refer to the Town of Oakfield Zoning Law.

Figure 2B: Town of Oakfield Zoning Districts and Permitted Uses

District	*Permitted Uses*
R & A: Residential Agricultural	Single family dwellings, mobile homes, farms and related agricultural operations, churches, schools, and other public uses and buildings
R: General Residential	Single and double family dwellings, farms and related agricultural operations, churches, schools, and other public uses and buildings
C: Commercial	Motor vehicle sales and service, retail shops, offices and banks
I: Industrial	General industrial uses (i.e. manufacturing, warehousing, research and development facilities, distribution facilities, etc.)
LC: Land Conservation	Farms and related agricultural operations

Source: Town of Oakfield Zoning Law August 11, 1981

The Town of Oakfield's zoning law also lays out each zoning class and lists all actual uses permitted by right, as well as those uses that are allowed by Special Use Permit. Bulk regulations for each zoning class and certain specified uses within those zoning classes are outlined in the Town of Oakfield Zoning Law. **The Town of Oakfield adopted a Land Separation Local Law and Land Subdivision Regulations in June of 1992. Although the Land Separation Law, which regulation minor splits of four lots or less, was repealed in 1997, the major subdivision regulations remain in effect.** Subdivision of land is also addressed under Section 411.3 of the Zoning Ordinance.

Village of Oakfield

The Village of Oakfield has six separate zoning classifications. Similar to the Towns of Alabama and Oakfield, the zoning classifications outline actual uses permitted by right, as well as those permitted by special use. The following table provides a generic overview of the zoning classifications and the uses permitted therein. Please refer to the Village of Oakfield zoning law for specific regulations. Bulk regulations for zoning classifications within the Village can be found in Sections 301, 305, and 504 of the Zoning Law, Sections 306 through 311. Certain issues and uses that require a higher level of scrutiny have been individually addressed under Article V, Supplementary Regulations. Examples of these include adult uses, mobile home parks, light industrial uses and cellular communication towers. **Similar to the Town of Alabama, the Village does not have separate regulations for subdivision; it is regulated under Section 301 of the Zoning Ordinance.**

4.5.3 Public Transportation Services

The Batavia Bus Service (B-Line, BBS) provides limited bus service in the study area. The Batavia Bus Service offers "curb to curb" service from Alabama and Oakfield to Batavia and back on Tuesdays. This service costs $3.00 for adults and $1.50 for senior citizens and persons with disabilities. To use this bus service, however, you must call 24 hours in advance.

4.5.4 Pedestrian and Bicycle Routes

No formal multi-use trails for pedestrians, bicycles or horses were identified in the study area. Although conversations with various local agencies confirmed that the abandoned Penn-Central railroad corridor is used informally by walkers/hikers, bikers, snowmobiles and farmers, it has not been formally designated as such.

4.6 Utilities

4.6.1 Water Supply

Currently public water is available to the Village of Oakfield and an area immediately surrounding the Village within the Town of Oakfield. Water is provided to these areas through a line that extends from the City of Batavia **along Route 63, Galloway Road and South Pearl Road into the Village**. The Village water treatment plant is located in the Town of Batavia on Route 63, just south of the Village. In 1994, the entire water system in the Town of Oakfield, outside the Village, was replaced. The remaining portions of Oakfield and the Town of Alabama receives potable water from private wells.

Although large portions of the study area do not currently have access to public water, an informal plan is in place to provide service to some of the more densely developed areas, **particularly areas in Alabama that are experiencing well contamination problems**. These areas are identified in the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan and include the hamlets of South Alabama, Alabama, and Basom. Initial plans call for water to be routed along State Routes 77, 63 and 262 to serve these areas. The possibility of extending this water service is presently several years off, however. **According to the Genesee County Department of Health problems with private wells and on-site septic systems are due to soils that are not suitable for conventional sewage disposal systems, the age of the existing stormwater collections system that does not remove standing water fast enough, and the small size of the lots in the hamlet areas (R. Garney, GCHD, November 17, 2004).**

Oakfield-Alabama Central school district. This district also serves four other municipalities, including the Towns of Pembroke, Batavia, Elba and Barre. The school district facilities are located just northwest of the Village on State Route 63.

4.7.3 Emergency Services

Police services are provided by the Genesee County Sheriff's Office. None of the three communities has an individual police department. The Village of Oakfield, in the past, had contracted out police services from other agencies, but the process was deemed too costly and ineffective. Fire services are provided volunteer fire departments. The Town of Alabama is served by the Alabama Volunteer Fire Department Inc., which is located on Judge Road, adjacent to the Town Hall. The Town and Village of Oakfield are served by the Oakfield Volunteer Fire Department, located on Church Street in the Village.

4.7.4 Government Facilities

Town of Alabama

The Town of Alabama local government offices are located on Judge Road, just east of Knowlesville Road, in South Alabama hamlet. The town hall building is home to the Town Clerk's office, Town Court, and services a variety of other municipal needs. The Town of Alabama also has a facility located on the corner of State Route 63 and Ham Road. This building houses the Town's Highway Department.

Town of Oakfield

The Town of Oakfield municipal offices are located just east of the Village of Oakfield on Drake Street (State Route 262). The building houses the municipal offices and the Highway Department. The Town also owns and maintains the Haxton Memorial Library, as well as the Park located on Drake Street, both of which are situated in the Village.

Village of Oakfield

The Village of Oakfield municipal offices are located in the heart of the Village on Main Street. The Village also owns and maintains a public works building on South Pearl Street, the sewage treatment plant on Irving Parkway, the park in the center of the Village, and a water treatment plant located in the Town of Batavia **(which is currently not in operation).**

SECTION 5.0
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This section provides the Findings and Recommendations for each community, as they relate to the major goals and objectives. Utilizing the information found in Section 4.0 (Existing Conditions of the Communities), issues identified through the public opinion survey and comments gathers at the public information meetings, opportunities and constraints for achieving each goal were determined. Based on these opportunities and constraints, general findings for each community were established. Recommendations for achieving the opportunities or addressing constraints were then devised for each community. These ideas and recommendations were refined and evaluated, with input from the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee, and finalized as outlined in Sub-sections 5.2 and 5.3 below.

5.2 Findings/Opportunities/Constraints

Following the format of the Existing Conditions section of this Plan, the generalized findings (observations, opportunities and constraints) for each community are outlined as follows.

5.2.1 Town of Alabama

Existing Land Use

- Agriculture is the most significant land use by area and is spread fairly uniformly throughout the Town.
- Three land use categories (agricultural, Indian reservation and wildlife conservation areas) account for 90 percent of total land area. Indian reservation and wildlife conservation areas represent lands that are either not readily available for development or whose use is outside the jurisdiction of the Town. Conceptually, some believe that agricultural lands are also not available for development.
- The Tonawanda Indian reservation dominates the western sector of Town. A small area of the Town is insulated from the remainder of the Town by the reservation.
- There are four hamlets in Town (Alabama, Wheatville, Basom and South Alabama) comprised of slightly higher density mixed-use development.
- Land use is regulated in the Town solely through the zoning ordinance.
- A small amount of commercial development exists in and around the hamlets.
- A rock quarry is located in the south-central portion of the Town.
- **The south-central portion of the Town is underlain by former gypsum mines (see Map 10).**

Agriculture and Farmland

- Most of the agricultural land is included in Genesee County Agricultural District No. 2.
- Agriculture is the predominant active land use, accounting for 83 percent of the land area outside of the wildlife and conservation areas and Indian Reservation.
- A large portion of the Town contains soils classified as prime farmland soil.
- **The Genesee County Smart Growth Plan restricts the number of new water connections-ups to new, non-agricultural land uses in agricultural districts, unless they are located in a designated development area.**
- Agricultural preservation is viewed as important by approximately 80 percent of the Alabama residents that responded to the public opinion survey. Sentiment contends that farms should be protected as viable businesses and open space, and for continuing the rural character of the Town.

Natural Environment and Constraints

- The topography of the Town is generally flat, with the exception of the escarpment that extends through the southern portion of Town. Steep slopes do not present a development constraint.
- Hydric soils are limited to the northern portion of the Town within the wildlife and conservation areas and along stream corridors.
- Floodplains were identified along Oak Orchard Creek.
- Most mapped wetlands and floodplains are located within the wildlife and conservation areas.
- Agricultural lands and the open wetlands in the wildlife and conservation areas provide valuable scenic vistas, adding to the unique character of the area.
- Most of the Town of Alabama lies within the Oak Orchard watershed, with smaller areas situated within the Murder Creek and Mud Creek watersheds.
- Small creeks and streams generally flow northward combining with the major streams, which flow out of the study area.
- **The abandoned U.S. Gypsum mines noted on Map 10 could potentially cause ground subsidence, which could result in damage to aboveground structures or personal injury. The location of the former mines should be noted in future land use decisions in affected areas.**

Demographics and Social-Economic Characteristics

- The Town population has remained relatively stable for over 40 years with modest decreases in population shown over the last ten years.
- Population projections indicate that the Town's population will likely decline over the next 25 years.

- Residents indicate that shared services and inter-governmental cooperation should be expanded for highway, recreation, garbage/solid waste disposal, youth services and seniors services.

Zoning

- The R Residential zoning classification, in particular the dimensional standards, is very similar in nature to the A-R classification and does not promote or limit particular uses in the hamlets.

- Numerous uses are allowed by Special Use Permit in the AR and R districts, which essentially allows a wide number of uses in the residential districts.
- Within Alabama there is not a lot of commercially zoned land, but commercial and industrial uses can be achieved throughout much of the Town with a Special Use Permit.
- There are no hamlet design standards or other mechanisms to help define the hamlets.

5.2.2 Town of Oakfield

Existing Land Use

- Agriculture is the predominant land use by area.
- Agricultural, vacant/undeveloped/open space, and wildlife conservation areas account for 80 percent of the total land area.
- Residential land use is low-density in nature.
- The Town of Oakfield's primary method for land use regulation is through zoning.
- The Village of Oakfield is located in the southern section of the Town and contains the densest pattern of development.
- The densest land use patterns in the Town are located just outside the Village.
- The U.S. Gypsum site is just west of the Village and is currently underutilized.
- **The south-central portion of the Town is underlain by former gypsum mines (see Map 10).**

Agriculture and Farmland

- Most of the agricultural land is included in Genesee County Agricultural District No. 2.
- A large portion of the Town contains soils classified as prime farmland soils.
- The Genesee County Smart Growth Plan calls for minimizing the number of new water connections within agricultural districts.

- Floodplains were identified along Oak Orchard Creek, in the northern portion of Town.
- Most of wetlands and floodplains are located in the Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management Area.
- The wildlife conservation area provides important open space, wildlife habitat, and a location passive recreation.
- Agricultural lands and the open wetlands of the wildlife conservation area provide valuable scenic vistas and add to the unique character of the Town.
- Almost the entire Town of Oakfield lies within the Oak Orchard watershed.
- Small creeks and streams generally flow northward combining with the major streams, which flow out of the study area.
- **The abandoned U.S. Gypsum mines noted on Map 10 could potentially cause ground subsidence, which could result in damage to aboveground structures or personal injury. The location of the former mines should be noted in future land use decisions in affected areas**.

Demographics and Social-Economic Characteristics

- Long range trends show modest decreases in population over the last ten years.
- Projections indicate that the population will grow slightly by an estimated 6.0 percent over the next thirty years.
- Combined growth in the Village and Town is expected to remain modest and be easily absorbed within the community.
- The population (Town and Village combined) decreased by 112 persons (3.4%) between 1990 and 2000. While the size of households has also decreased to 2.77 persons per household, the number of households has remained relatively stable.
- Unemployment is higher in the study area (6.0 percent) than in the County as a whole (4.3 percent).
- A majority of residents believe that commercial and industrial growth is needed in the Town of Oakfield.

Transportation

- State Routes 63 and 262, along with Albion Road and Lockport Road, are the major transportation routes in the Town. The major highways in Town converge with the Village.
- No major capacity or operational deficiencies were identified on state or local highways in the Town.

- The Village is essentially built-out, with future development coming in the form of redevelopment.
- **The southeastern portion of the Village is underlain by former gypsum mines (see Map 10).**

Agriculture and Farmland

- The Village is not included within the boundaries of the County Agricultural District.
- The agricultural nature of the surrounding Towns plays a significant role in shaping the Village's commercial land use mix and character in general.

Natural Environment and Constraints

- Topography in the Village is generally flat; steep slopes are not an issue.
- Regulatory floodway and 100-year flood areas are limited to the relatively narrow creek corridors in the central and southeast sectors of the Village.
- **The abandoned U.S. Gypsum mines noted on Map 10 could potentially cause ground subsidence, which could result in damage to aboveground structures or personal injury. The location of the former mines should be noted in future land use decisions in affected areas.**

Demographics and Social-Economic Characteristics

- Modest decreases in population have been shown over the last ten years.
- Projections indicate that the Village is expected to lose approximately 3.0 percent of its population over the next thirty years (a typical trend in most built-out villages).
- Combined growth in the Village and Town is estimated to remain modest and be easily absorbed within the community.
- While the population has decreased, so has the size of households and, therefore, the net number of residential units has remained relatively unchanged.
- There are more rental units in the Village (30.6%) as compared to the two Towns (19.5 in Alabama and 12.0% in Oakfield).
- Unemployment is higher in the study area (6.0 percent) than in the County as a whole (4.3 percent).
- A majority of residents believe that commercial and industrial growth is needed in the Village of Oakfield.

- The Village contains the greatest amount of commercially zoned property (in two distinct districts). There are no building form standards (architectural and historic) to control the character of new and redevelopment structures.
- The Planned Unit Development regulations do not provide for clustering.
- The Village allows a diverse range of housing to meet residents' preferences.
- Multi-family housing is not allowed in the commercial districts or as a permitted use in any of the other zoning district (requires a special use permit).
- Currently the zoning defines tourist homes (which includes bed and breakfast establishments) but neither are listed as allowed uses in any zoning districts.

5.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations are patterned after the goals that were established for each community. They are designed to address the opportunities and constraints identified for each area.

5.3.1 Town of Alabama

Goal: Protect, promote and preserve agriculture

The Town of Alabama is characterized by rural open space, wildlife conservation and wetland areas, open farmlands, and older residential structures mixed with some newer homes. Residential development is denser in the vicinity of the hamlets, but is very low density throughout the remainder of the Town. There has been little to no major subdivision activity in Alabama. There are a large number of active farms in the Town and a great amount of open land, which is situated within the wildlife and conservation areas. There is strong public sentiment in Alabama to protect farmland and preserve open space.

Devising and implementing measures for preserving farmland and prime farm soils is the most effective way to acknowledge the public's concern for protecting agricultural resources in the Town. Residential lot sizes should be reassessed in certain areas to better manage future growth and non-traditional development techniques implemented to preserve open space. Rural development guidelines should be instituted to avoid sprawl (e.g., better guidelines or standards for road frontage development and encouraging more creative development techniques). In formulating these recommendations, it must be understood that the extent of, and limited pressure for, growth is presently not impacting agriculture and agricultural operations in the community.

In addition, guidelines should be established to manage the development of wind turbines in the Town. The use of wind power can reduce energy costs for individual farmers. The decision to build individual wind turbines and, more importantly, larger wind farms requires a comprehensive study to identify wind speed and consistency, costs and benefits and impacts to local ecology. Page 5-8

Develop hamlet overlay zoning, that incorporates traditional neighborhood design standards and allows for denser development in and around the hamlets, which is consistent with the policies of the County's Smart Growth Plan.

- Consider the adoption of a right to farm law that would be complementary to the State and County programs, and would offer additional protection against unwarranted complaints aimed at farming operations, such as noise, odor, etc.
- Special use permits could be written to support home occupations and secondary businesses that help residents and farmers generate additional sources of income, such as tourism activities or day camps for children.
- Limit water extensions in the Town to eliminate the potential for extensive growth **and to protect agricultural uses. The County's Smart Growth Plan should be considered when planning water extensions. Emphasis should be placed on addressing locations with potential public health and safety concerns, and on controlling development on individual parcels outside the hamlets by utilizing lateral (water line) restrictions.** Such restrictions may be necessary to minimize development pressure on farmlands and discourage non-agricultural uses in those areas.
- Long-term potential for sewer service or on-site (package) wastewater treatment systems should continue to be investigated as an option for the hamlet areas.
- Consider the establishment of an agricultural advisory committee to assist in clarifying and mediating, and alleviating, conflicts that may arise, and to promote the concerns and desires of farmers. This committee could be utilized to provide a better understanding of the needs of farmers and farming operations in the local community. Through this committee, this information could be for easily transferred to County and State governments to help keep farming viable in the region.
- **Adopt and enforce guidelines for siting, construction, site restoration and monitoring of individual wind turbines and wind farms.**

Goal: **Maintain and enhance community character**

The Town of Alabama is a rural farming community, with vast tracts of open space and farmland. Over 25 percent of the community encompasses wildlife and conservation areas. The Town has experienced no significant subdivision activity and the densest residential development exists in and around the four hamlets of Basom, Alabama, Wheatville and South Alabama. Every planning effort undertaken in the Town should take the preservation of rural character into consideration.

Recommendations:

Necessary road improvements to address drainage or safety concerns, which are undertaken outside the hamlets, should limit the installation of sidewalks, curbing, street lighting or other suburban features.

- Focus attention on addressing traffic problems along State Route 77 at Ledge and Bloomingdale Roads, which are impacting the character of the community.
- Adopt and enforce rural development guidelines.
- Adopt and enforce hamlet development guidelines in the hamlets, and assess the zoning in these areas to support increased development densities in these areas (½ to ¾-acre lots are the smallest that can be approved in non-sewered areas).

- Consider zoning overlay districts for the hamlets, with architectural and historic preservation standards, to protect and enhance the character of development in these areas.
- Zoning overlays could also be used to control develop along the two major road corridors, limiting commercial development to the hamlets (particularly Basom), and preventing commercial strip development. This is especially important in those areas that receive public water.
- Adopt zoning classifications, or strengthen existing zoning, to protect existing agricultural uses and prevent residential sprawl.
- Review and update permitted uses, and uses allowed by Special Use Permit in the AR Zone. Any revisions to the schedule of land uses should specify those existing land uses conforming to today's zoning would be able to continue as pre-existing uses.
- Identify and protect important scenic vistas that add to the character of the Town and include their consideration in the Town's adopted Subdivision regulations.

Goal: **Provide public water to appropriate areas of the Town**

Potable water in the Town of Alabama is procured from private wells. The Genesee County Smart Growth Plan outlines policies for extending water primarily to developed hamlets to prevent urban sprawl. The provision of water services is essential to address certain health and safety factors associated with contaminated wells and failing septic systems, **as acknowledged by the Genesee County Department of Health.**

Recommendations:

- Support and encourage the extension of public water along the major state highways, thus connecting the hamlet areas through a looped system of water line extensions along State Route 77, north to Alabama hamlet; east along Ham Road, with a northerly extension along Knowleville Road to Wheatville hamlet; south along Knowlesville Road to South Alabama; and west along State Route 63, back to State Route 77 (hydraulically efficient, servicing the most densely populated areas).

expected to increase. Other controls such as the overlays can help control development in areas where water is primarily run to loop the water system
- Focus the provision of public water to hamlet locations that have urgent need due to health and safety issues.
- Ensure the extension of public water for targeted commercial and industrial growth.
- Protect groundwater resources from contamination. Sponsor educational opportunities in groundwater protection for households and farms.
- The looped water system will provide a backbone for the potential development of future water extensions (a very long-term consideration).

Goal: **Protect the environmental features and resources of the Town**

The wildlife and conservation areas comprise approximately 26 percent of the land area in the Town of Alabama. The Town contains a variety of other important environmental features including wetlands, large expanses of mature woodlands, tributary stream corridors and floodplains. Groundwater is also an important environmental resource since the population of the Town relies on this resource for potable water. **The former U.S. Gypsum mines shafts extend through the southeastern and south central portions of Alabama (Map 10). Any proposals for future residential use in this area of the Town must take this into consideration, as these areas may not be suitable for such development.**

Recommendations:

- Groundwater quality must be protected. Efforts should be undertaken to ensure that on-site sanitary waste disposal systems are properly maintained, and that failing systems are detected and properly mitigated. The communities should work with the appropriate County and State agencies to address this problem through public education programs and the provision of technical assistance to help residents understand and address this important issue. Monies may be made available through Rural Development programs supported by the federal government.
- In **identified** groundwater problem areas, the Town should require larger lot sizes.
- In order to mitigate the impacts from aging and deteriorating on-site septic systems, communal septic systems or "package" wastewater treatment systems should be investigated for the hamlet areas.
- In those areas not receiving public water, consideration should be given to subdivision regulations that require soil testing as part of the application procedure. If poor or problematic soils are identified, stricter standards could be imposed, such as larger minimum lot size requirements, or limitations on the number of subdivisions.

- To protect important environmental features, proposed development actions should avoid identified wetlands, floodplains and prime farm soils. (Depending upon the structure of the wetland, avoiding wetlands has the additional benefit of protecting the groundwater resource.) Mandate usage of cluster development or open development areas to help avoid these environmentally sensitive features.
- Wetlands protection should include both State and Federal wetland areas including the required 100-foot setback areas required by the State. A local law could be utilized to help protect these important areas.
- Support farming practices that recognize environmental resources and the importance of avoiding or minimizing point and non-point source contaminant threats to groundwater, surface water and the environment as a whole. This can be accomplished by working with organizations such as Cooperative Extension and County Soil and Water District.
- Assess the zoning in the vicinity of the wildlife and conservation areas to reduce potential impacts from development.
- Develop a more formalized trail system along the abandoned railroad corridor and encourage the State to establish official bike routes along State Routes 63 and 77.
- **With respect to the former underground gypsum mines, the Town should investigate the need to institute zoning revisions or additional regulations to address the risk to future property owners in underground mining areas. Assistance from the State should be sought for this effort. In addition, consideration should be given to adopting minor subdivision regulations to allow the Town to further evaluate the risks of subdividing and developing properties in these areas.**

Goal: Provide for economic development in the Town

The expansion of commercial and industrial growth, and other economic development activities, helps provide jobs and a build a stronger tax base for the community. Farming will continue to dominate as the primary industry in the Town of Alabama. An economically sound town helps support the school district and Village.

Recommendations:

New commercial uses should be limited to the hamlets, in particular, Basom and Alabama and to a lesser extent South Alabama. Focus should be placed on how State Route 77 should be developed, particularly in the vicinity of the Basom hamlet. Avoid zoning or zoning changes that would allow areas of commercial strip development to build up in the Town (outside the hamlet long-term growth areas

the community. Presently, the Town's zoning regulations allow for diversity in the housing stock. However, single-family detached homes are the primary form of residential development in Alabama. The lack of sewers severely limits the types of construction that can take place in the Town. Higher density housing types should be expected in the Village of Oakfield, where sewer is available.

Recommendations:

- Denser development should occur in and around the hamlets in the Town. The zoning of these areas should be assessed to ensure that a variety of housing types are permitted.
- Promote alternative housing types to satisfy the needs of single individuals, seniors and other non-traditional households that are affordable in nature, such as in-law (accessory) apartments, and attached single-family dwellings.

Town of Oakfield

Goal: Promote the expansion of public water to appropriate areas in the Town

Potable water in the Town of Oakfield is primarily obtained from private wells. Some public water is provided to areas of the Town situated immediately outside the Village of Oakfield. The Genesee County Smart Growth Plan outlines policies for extending water primarily to developed hamlets to prevent urban sprawl.

Recommendations:

- The Town currently has public water in the areas adjoining the Village**. A primary opportunity for additional public water in the Town of Oakfield is to selectively extend water along certain main roads directly outside of the Village to enable a limited amount of new develop over the long term.** This plan is also being coordinated to help in providing water to the Town of Alabama.
- **Support and encourage the extension of public water along State Route 63 to connect the Five Corners area with the Village. Consider future long-term extensions to the East Oakfield hamlet, as warranted.**
- Consider providing public water to the Birdseye property and other suitable locations for commercial and industrial development.

- Support farming as the primary industry in the Town and consider a separate zoning classification, or strengthening existing zoning, to protect and enhance this industry. Non-agricultural uses should be highly restricted on prime farm soils.
- Recreation-oriented economic activity should be supported, such as campgrounds, riding stables, etc. Support services for the recreational sector should also be encouraged.
- Work with the village in targeting areas for sewer extensions.

Goal: **Protect and preserve agricultural land uses**

Similar to Alabama, the Town of Oakfield is characterized by rural open space and large tracts of farmland. The Town has also has a large wildlife and conservation area, that characterizes the landscape. The large extent of farmland and undeveloped open space contributes to the rural character of the Town. There is also strong public sentiment in Oakfield to preserve and protect farmland and the overall rural nature of the Town.

Preserving farmland and good farm soils would address public concerns for protecting agricultural resources in the community. To better manage future growth, non-traditional development techniques should be implemented. Rural development guidelines should also be considered to avoid sprawl and the inefficient development of agricultural lands. **In addition, guidelines should be established to manage the development of wind turbines in the Town. The use of wind power can reduce energy costs for individual farmers. The decision to build individual wind turbines and, more importantly, larger wind farms requires a comprehensive study to identify wind speed and consistency, costs and benefits and impacts to local ecology.**

Recommendations:

- Consider the adoption of an agricultural zoning classification that would limit non-agricultural development. This district would incorporate large farms and areas of good farm soils and focus on development density as a means of protecting agricultural uses. This zoning category could be used in combination with conservation easements or a purchase of agricultural conservation easement (PACE) program to ensure that potential rezoning actions would not result in the development of prime farmland.
- Review and expand the Town zoning to include innovative non-traditional development standards, such as open development areas, overlay districts and rural cluster development regulations.

as required. The Town should also evaluate the economic impacts of a purchase of agricultural conservation easement (PACE) program. It is suggested that this type of planning be done in conjunction with the Town of Alabama (a joint agricultural protection plan). Because of the low level of development pressure, programs such as PACE or PDR are considered long-term actions and should be considered as feasible actions when the time is right.

- Keep denser development activity centered in the areas around the village and in one hamlet area, consistent with the policies of the County's Smart Growth Plan, to prevent sprawl and protect agricultural land.
- Consider the adoption of a right to farm law that would be complementary to the State and County programs, and would offer additional protection against unwarranted complaints aimed at farming operations, such as noise, odor, etc.
- Special use permits should be written to support home occupations and secondary businesses to help residents and farm operations establish additional sources of income. The Zoning Code should be revised to more specifically address agriculturally related home occupations and secondary uses in the R-A zone.
- Limit water extensions in the Town to eliminate the potential for extensive growth **and to protect agricultural uses. The County's Smart Growth Plan should be considered when planning water extensions. Emphasis should be placed on providing water to areas that have potential public health and safety concerns, and on controlling development on individual parcels outside the Village by utilizing lateral (water line) restrictions.** Such restrictions may be necessary to minimize development pressure on farmlands and discourage non-agricultural uses in those areas.
- Any extension of the Village of Oakfield sanitary sewer system into the Town of Oakfield should be carefully scrutinized to ensure that such action does not place development pressures in areas of important agricultural use (west and south of the Village are high priority areas for protection).
- Consider the establishment of an agricultural advisory committee to assist in clarifying and mediating, and alleviating, conflicts that may arise, and to promote the concerns and desires of farmers. This committee could be utilized to provide a better understanding of the needs of farmers and farming operations in the local community. Through this committee, this information could be for easily transferred to County and State governments to help keep farming viable in the region.

Goal: Maintain and enhance community character

The Town of Oakfield is a rural farming community, with vast tracts of farmland, open space and wildlife and conservation area. Residential development in Oakfield is very low density, with denser

- **Adopt and enforce guidelines for siting, construction, site restoration and monitoring of individual wind turbines and wind farms.**

Goal: **Maintain and enhance community character**

The Town of Oakfield is a rural farming community, with vast tracts of farmland, open space and wildlife and conservation area. Residential development in Oakfield is very low density, with denser development in the vicinity of the Village of Oakfield. Residential use outside the Village is typically frontage development, particularly in the Five Corners and East Oakfield hamlets and along Pearl Street, south of the Village. Major residential subdivisions do not occur in the Town. Every planning effort undertaken in the Town should take the preservation of rural character into consideration.

Recommendations:

- Necessary road improvements to address drainage or safety concerns, which are undertaken outside the hamlets, should not include sidewalks, curbing or street lighting (no suburban atmosphere).
- Require the use of non-traditional development techniques, such as open development area, cluster development and planned unit development to control future growth, manage sprawl and preserve farmland.
- Adopt and enforce rural development guidelines.
- Encourage and support residential development in and around the hamlets.
- Adopt and enforce hamlet development guidelines in the hamlets, and assess the zoning in these areas to support increased development densities in these areas.
- Consider zoning overlay districts for the hamlets, with architectural and historic preservation standards, to accomplish a protect and enhance the character of develop these areas.
- Zoning overlays could also be used to control develop along the two major road corridors, limiting commercial development to the hamlets and area adjacent to the Village and preventing commercial strip development.
- Adopt zoning classifications, or strengthen existing zoning, to protect existing agricultural uses and prevent residential sprawl.
- Identify and protect important scenic vistas that add to the character of the Town.
- Adopt minor subdivision regulations that better manage the division of properties into four or less lots.

Goal: **Protect the environmental features and resources of the community**

The study area contains numerous environmental features and is home to large wildlife conservation areas. **The former U.S. Gypsum mines shafts extend through the southern portion of Oakfield (Map 10). Any proposals for future development activity in this area of the Town must take this into consideration.**

Recommendations:

- Groundwater quality must be protected. Efforts should be undertaken to ensure that on-site sanitary waste disposal systems are properly maintained, and that failing systems are detected and properly mitigated. The communities should work with the appropriate County and State agencies to address this problem through public education programs and the provision of technical assistance to help residents understand and address this important issue.
- In those areas not receiving public water, consideration should be given to subdivision regulations that require soil testing as part of the application procedure. If poor or problematic soils are identified, stricter standards could be imposed, such as larger minimum lot size requirements.
- To protect important environmental features, proposed development actions should avoid identified wetlands, floodplains and prime farm soils.
- Support farming practices that recognize environmental resources and the importance of avoiding or minimizing point and non-point source contaminant threats to groundwater, surface water and the environment as a whole.
- Assess the zoning in the vicinity of the wildlife and conservation areas to reduce potential impacts from development.
- Promote public education programs for the maintenance of septic systems to protect groundwater quality.
- Protect the Old Indian Woods area as a cultural and historic resource of local significance. This area is part of the Iroquois Nation and includes woodlands and a stream corridor that warrants protection.
- **With respect to the former underground gypsum mines, the Town should investigate the need to institute zoning revisions or additional regulations to address the risk to future property owners in underground mining areas. Assistance from the State should be sought for this effort. In addition, consideration should be given to adopting minor subdivision regulations to allow the Town to further evaluate the risks of subdividing and developing properties in these areas.**

Goal: Encourage a diversity of housing types in the Town

As the population of the Town changes over time, and the economic conditions vary, options for housing should be available to accommodate changing the lifestyles, incomes and needs of the community. Presently the Town's zoning regulations allows for diversity in housing stock. However, single-family detached homes are the primary form of residential development in the Town.

5.4.2 Overall Regional Perspective

The remoteness of the study area helps to create the setting for the vision. Being located approximately 30 miles from both the City of Buffalo and Rochester, and approximately 10 miles from the population center of the City of Batavia, makes this region quite remote. The Indian reservation and the wildlife refuge and management areas also provide isolation from the surrounding communities.

These factors have led to very little development pressure and have allowed agriculture to remain as a viable land use. The Village of Oakfield has, therefore, thrived as the communities' center, with other community hamlets serving other needs.

Due to the strength of the Village core, the Town of Oakfield's development pattern has focused around the Village. Only one small rural hamlet area exists outside of the direct influence of the Village (just north of the Village at the intersection of Albion and Lockport Roads).

The Town of Alabama, on the other hand, has four hamlet areas. South Alabama acts as the community center with the Town Hall and Fire Department located in its boundaries. The other hamlets serve different purposes within the community and are discussed under the Town of Alabama's vision map.

The closing of the U.S. Gypsum Plant, the potential for waterline expansions, and other needs of the communities have forced these municipalities to look differently at their future. The success of implementing each individual community's vision is highly dependent and linked with development and planning actions in the other communities.

5.4.3 Town of Alabama Vision Map

In the Town of Alabama, the key issue for the Town is controlled growth, primarily in the areas surrounding the hamlets of Alabama, Basom, South Alabama and Wheatville. As shown on the Vision Map, the majority of the Town outside these hamlet areas is devoted to agricultural and conservation uses. **The Town would like to see future commercial and residential development located in and around the hamlet areas rather than having such uses sprawl throughout the Town in the form of residential frontage lots or commercial development that requires a special use permit. The hamlets are the areas where the Town would like to provide public water and this is where future, long-term growth should occur, particularly in Basom, Alabama and South Alabama.**

The major transportation corridors in the Town of Alabama are State Route 77 and State Route 63, which bisect the Town. Three of the hamlets lie along these corridors, each serving a different purpose. The hamlet of Basom is located on State Route 77 as you enter the Town from points south, including the NYS Thruway. It is located near the major entry points to the reservation (Bloomingdale and Ledge Roads). The area presently has a few small businesses and a limited amount of residential development. The plan supports that the area encompassing the lands along State Route 77 between Bloomingdale and **Marble** Roads be considered as the area where **growth could occur over the long term**. Automobile-**related** uses, agrarian support businesses and limited residential development should be the focus of long-term growth in this area. This would allow the Town to take advantage of the traffic coming from the thruway and the traffic heading towards the reservation. Due to the existing pattern of vehicles moving in and out of the reservation, and problems associated with this traffic, the intersections of State Route 77 with Bloomingdale and Ledge Roads should be considered for future traffic mitigation to address these concerns.

The hamlet of Alabama, located at the intersection of Lewiston/Lockport Roads (State Route 77 to the west) and State Route 63, also carries traffic coming from the NYS Thruway heading to the north. It presently includes some auto-**related** businesses and a grocery store. The area includes the Town's highway garage, a fire hall, an American Legion Post and a cemetery. The long-term growth **envisioned for** this hamlet could include recreational and tourism-support businesses and residential development. **As a long-term planning area**, the hamlet could extend south to Ham Road to pick up town lands and west on State Route 77 pick up existing development patterns.

The Hamlet of South Alabama is located along State Route 63, towards the Village of Oakfield, and acts as the Town center. This area includes the Town Hall/historical building, a church and fire hall. There is little commercial development, but it has the largest concentration of residential development in the Town. A small growth area is included around this hamlet that would accommodate some additional **long-term** residential growth. This hamlet is the closest dense residential hamlet area to the Village of Oakfield.

The final hamlet in the Town is Wheatville, which is located north of South Alabama. This is a small residential hamlet with a church **that could experience a small amount of residential growth well into the future. Hence, this area is not considered an area that will see substantial long-term growth. The planning issue for this area is the provision of public water**.

Throughout the Goals and Recommendations, the plan calls for increased development controls in the agricultural areas outside the hamlet areas. With the exception of the hamlet of Wheatville, the **long-term planning** areas identified on the Vision Map are **generally** in keeping with the proposed "development areas" as mapped in the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan. The major difference between the Town's plan and the County's is that this plan calls for larger long-term planning areas, while providing controls to **manage future growth.** Expanding the **boundaries of the** hamlet areas will enable the Town **to better focus growth in these**

areas and eases the expansion of water to these areas. It will also **help to achieve** the goal of preserving the surrounding agricultural land by concentrating **long-term** development in the hamlets.

To accommodate the **long-term** growth pattern of the Town of Alabama, it is proposed to expand a water system along State Route 63 and State Route 77. A loop would be added northward to Wheatville and along Ham Road to complete a loop of the water system. In areas that have waterlines proposed that are not in **long-term planning** areas, a strong lateral restriction policy should be put in place (restricting new residential **frontage lot** development from tying into the system).

The abandoned railroad line running east/west through the Town would provide an excellent connection feature from Basom to South Alabama to the Village of Oakfield. This feature could be utilized for biking, walking and other non-automotive forms of transportation. On-road bicycle lanes should be considered for State Route 77 from Pembroke into Niagara County. It also would run northward on State Route 63 into the wildlife areas and into Orleans County. It should also run east on State Route 63 to the Village of Oakfield. This would provide ties to three of the hamlets, the wildlife areas, and surrounding communities including the Village.

A quarry area in the south-central part of the town should be protected from non-compatible development (restrict residential in this area). **Furthermore, former underground mine locations must be considered when proposals for residential development are received. These areas are not considered suitable for future residential use.**

The areas along State Routes 77 and 63, not within hamlet areas should have rural development overlay in place that would protect rural-agrarian enhancement of these areas, and protect this important travel way in Alabama from poor development patterns (hurting the town image).

The remainder of the town (in white) should remain rural/agrarian and allow small development within rural development guidelines (suggest rural development guidelines law).

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5.4.4 Town of Oakfield Vision Map

The major features in the Town of Oakfield include the Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management area, the Village of Oakfield and the U.S. Gypsum facility. The Village by far is the most important feature and provides the focal point of the community. In support of the Village, the Town's **long-term planning** area surrounds the Village. This area is **considered suitable for future, long-term** residential and industrial **development. It includes the** U.S. Gypsum area and the area abutting Birdseye and is non-competitive with the Village. The reuse/redevelopment of the U.S. Gypsum site will not only benefit the Town, it could provide much-needed jobs **for residents in the Village and** in the region. **Long-term residential** growth **should occur around** the Village, **where services are available, rather than sprawling throughout the Town in the form of frontage lot development (which is already occurring along Drake, Fisher, Albion, Lewiston and Maltby Roads.**

The "Five Corners" area of the Town (the intersection of Lewiston/State Route 63, Albion Road and Maltby Road) is included in this **long-term planning** area. This area includes the school, some **commercial and industrial** businesses and limited residential development. This area is an important focal point of the Town and Village, and should include **the development of regulations to foster** aesthetic improvements and gateway features.

The only other hamlet type area is north of the Five Corners area on Albion Road at its intersection with Lockport Road. This area could support a small residential growth pattern. In concert with the Town of Alabama, these growth areas would be supported by the planned expansion of the County water system on State Route 262, Pearl Street and State Route 63 from the Village through the Town of Oakfield to Alabama. This water system should also be looped down State Route 62 and up Fisher Road to State Route 262. It should also be looped up North Pearl to Maltby and west to the Four Corners area. Long-term, the Town should also look at extending the waterline up to the residential hamlet north of the Village. In waterline areas not within growth areas, the Town should place lateral restrictions.

The area included within the long-term planning area boundary encompassed by the Fisher Road waterline extension would be a long-term growth area and not intended for "change" in the near future. **Furthermore, planning efforts in this area are oriented toward securing providing water service and not dense residential development or the loss of viable farmland.**

Also in concert with the Town of Alabama, the abandoned railroad right-of-way should be utilized for a multi-use trailway connecting two of Alabama's hamlets and part of the Town of Oakfield to the

6.3 Town of Alabama

Priority 1 Action Items – Years 1 and 2:

General

1. Adopt the Comprehensive Plan and establish an Implementation Advisory Committee to oversee the implementation, review and updating of the Plan. The committee should be appointed by the Town Board and have representatives from the Town Board, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and key town officials. If desired, this duty could be assigned to the Planning Board.
2. Establish an annual budget for the implementation of the Oakfield - Alabama Comprehensive Plan.
3. The Implementation Advisory Committee should convene annually with the Implementation Advisory Committees from the Village and Town of Oakfield in order to map the progress of each municipality's implementation plan, initiate their annual review, discuss common implementation issues, and identify other inter-municipal planning opportunities.

Agriculture

1. Revise the Agricultural-Residential (A-R) zoning district in order to build upon the intent that agricultural uses are primary uses in this district, and residential uses are secondary. The A-R district should limit non-residential and non-agricultural uses by not allowing them as "permitted uses". Existing uses, including home occupations would remain as pre-existing uses. Under this new scenario, the A-R district would be reduced in geographic area to only those areas that would likely remain in farming, areas with prime farmland soils, areas outside the hamlets or other areas identified as development areas. Corresponding increases in the size of the Residential District (R) or other multi-use districts (around the hamlets) should be adopted in order to provide appropriate planning areas for potential long term residential growth (See Vision Map).
2. Incorporate prime farmland soils as into review criteria for non-agricultural development.
3. Consider adoption of a local Right to Farm Law.
4. Refer to the County Agricultural Protection Plan to identify properties for a Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement (PACE) program.

Water/Smart Growth Plan

1. Work with Genesee County to expand the designated development areas in the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan **in a manner that does not impact agriculture and fully utilizes the existing infrastructure in the Town**. The Vision Map depicts these areas **as larger, long-term planning areas**. **The development areas delineated in the**

existing Smart Growth Plan closely follow the existing pattern of hamlet development and represent appropriate limits for sustaining short-term growth. As future demand for growth may dictate, the development area boundaries should be expanded to correspond with the Vision Map.
2. **Commence preliminary plan development for bringing** public water **service** to Basom, Alabama and South Alabama.

3. Support the extension of water service from the Town of Newstead into the southwest corner of Alabama.
4. When water is provided, institute protective **lateral restriction** regulations to control residential building outside the **long-term planning areas** along Route 63 and Route 77. Restrictions on lateral water services **should also be established** on Knowsville Road and Ham Road. Water service hook-ups **along these roadways** should only be provided where water quality **problems have been identified**.
5. **Investigate appropriate remediation for failing septic systems in the Alabama and Basom hamlets to address water quality problems.**

Zoning and other Land Use Regulations

1. Outside of the identified **long-term planning areas**, review and update the list of non-agricultural land uses allowed by Special Use Permit.
2. To offset the more stringent use regulations proposed for the A-R district, expand the residential districts **within the boundaries of the long-term planning areas** surrounding the hamlet areas.
3. Establish Overlay Districts for hamlet areas (within long-term planning area boundaries on Vision Map).
4. Adopt regulations, **separate from the Zoning Ordinance**, for the minor and major subdivision of land in accordance with Section 276 of the NYS Town Law.
5. Revise the Town's cluster development regulations to incorporate rural development design guidelines.
6. **Permit the establishment of** bed and breakfast establishments in the A-R and R zoning districts

Other Implementation Actions

1. **Develop regulations to govern the construction of wind energy turbines and telecommunication towers.**
2. Establish a plan for creating attractive and informative gateway features at:
   - south end of Basom along Route 77 to guide travelers coming into Alabama from the south.

Priority 3 Action Items - Long Term and Optional:

1. Relocate Town Hall, along with other Town Facilities, into the Alabama hamlet as it continues to grow as a Town Center.
2. Work with Genesee County and the Town of Oakfield to investigate the feasibility and potential funds for a rails-to-trials project on the abandoned Penn Central rail corridor.
3. Establish a mechanism to ensure that reclamation and reuse plans are in place for the quarry areas on Ledge Road.
4. Institute non-traditional rural development tools to control potential long term growth and preserve farmland, while at the same time not eliminate the landowners right to sell property. **Adopt provisions, including minimum lot size, for** "open development areas" along

Route 63 and Route 77 to allow minor subdivisions having more creative lot configurations – shared driveways, minimal frontage for access only.

5. Work with Genesee County and State agencies on ground water protection education programs.
6. Establish an inter-municipal shared services community with Oakfield, Village of Oakfield and the school district to investigate opportunities to continue to work together on shared services (water, sewer) or facilities.

6.4 Town of Oakfield

Priority 1 Action Items – Years 1 and 2:

General

1. Adopt the Comprehensive Plan and establish an Implementation Advisory Committee to oversee the implementation, review and updating of the Plan. The committee should appointed by the Town Board and have representatives from the Town Board, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and key town officials. If desired, this duty could be assigned to the Planning Board.
2. Establish an annual budget for the implementation of the Oakfield - Alabama Comprehensive Plan.
3. The Implementation Advisory Committee should convene annually with the Implementation Advisory Committees from the Village Oakfield and Town of Alabama in order to map the progress of each municipality's implementation plan, initiate their annual review, discuss common implementation issues identify other inter-municipal planning opportunities.

Agriculture

1. Revise the schedule of allowed uses for the Residential Agricultural District (R&A) in order to build upon the intent that agricultural uses are primary uses in this district, and residential uses are secondary. The R&A district should limit non-agricultural uses by not allowing them in as permitted uses. Under this new scenario, the R&A district would be reduced in geographic area to those areas most likely to remain in active farming, areas of prime farmland, areas outside the hamlets, and areas otherwise identified as agricultural development areas. Corresponding expansion of the General Residential Districts (R) should be adopted in order to provide appropriate areas for future residential growth **within the boundaries of the long-term planning areas** (See Vision Map).
2. Consider adoption of a local Right to Farm law.

Water/Smart Growth Plan

1. Work with Genesee County to expand the designated development areas in the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan **in a manner that does not impact agriculture and fully utilizes the existing infrastructure in the Town**. The Vision Map depicts a larger **long-term planning** area around the Village of Oakfield up through **that represents the Town's long-term vision for growth. The designated development area boundary established by the Smart Growth**

Plan, as depicted on the map, represents the most appropriate limit for sustaining short-term growth, as the future demand for growth may dictate, the development area boundaries around the Village should be expanded.

Zoning and Other Land Use Regulations

1. Prepare an intent or introductory section for each zoning district in order to give the reader, Enforcement Officer, applicant or land owner an understanding of how the Town wants to see that particular district be utilized.
2. Adopt regulations, **separate from the Zoning Ordinance**, for the minor and major subdivision of land in accordance with Section 276 of the NYS Town Law.
3. Revise zoning to include provisions for cluster residential subdivisions as per Section 278 of the NYS Town Law.
4. Establish Overlay Districts for hamlet areas (within long-term **planning area** boundaries on Vision Map).
5. Incorporate rural development guidelines into subdivision regulations.

Other Implementation Actions

1. Draft a set of rural development guidelines to provide written standards and graphic examples to facilitate guiding potential long term growth to meet the vision.
2. Establish a plan for creating attractive informative features at:
   - Route 63 Lewiston Road near Fisher Road
   - Route 262 Drake Road between Fisher Road and the Town line
   - Route 63 Judge Road at Macomber Road - A site should be located that may be coordinated, visually, with a similar gateway feature for Alabama.
3. **Develop regulations to govern the construction of wind energy turbines and telecommunication towers.**

Priority 2 Action Items – Years 3–5:

General

1. The Implementation Advisory Committee should provide its annual report to the Oakfield Town Board.
2. The Oakfield Town Board should reappoint Implementation Advisory Committee members and appoint subcommittees, as necessary, to address the coming year's action items.

1. **Evaluate the feasibility of expanding public water service to the East Oakfield crossroads area of Lockport Road and Fisher Road.**
2. Work with Genesee County and the Town of Alabama to investigate the feasibility and potential funds for a rails-to-trials project on the abandoned Penn Central rail corridor.
3. Work with Genesee County and State agencies on ground water protection education programs.
4. Establish an inter-municipal shared services community with Alabama, Village of Oakfield and the school district to investigate opportunities to continue to work together on shared services (water, sewer) or facilities.

6.5 Village of Oakfield

Priority 1 Action Items – Years 1 and 2:

General

1. Adopt the Comprehensive Plan and establish an Implementation Advisory Committee to oversee the implementation, review and updating of the Plan. The committee should be appointed by the Village Board of Trustees and have representatives from the Village Board of Trustees, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and key village officials. If desired, this duty could be assigned to the Planning Board.
2. Establish an annual budget for the implementation of the Oakfield - Alabama Comprehensive Plan.
3. The Implementation Advisory Committee should convene annually with the Implementation Advisory Committees from the Town of Oakfield and Town of Alabama in order to map the progress of each municipality's implementation plan, initiate their annual review, discuss common implementation issues identify other inter-municipal planning opportunities.

Water/Smart Growth Plan

1. The entire Village of Oakfield is **contained** within one of the **designated development areas established by the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan**. **The Town of Oakfield is proposing that the designated area around the Village be enlarged. The Village should support the Town's efforts to expand the boundary of the development area around the Village. As the demand for growth dictates,** the Village should work with Town and Genesee County to expand the designated development area in **future updates** of the Smart Growth Plan.
2. A long-range water plan should be developed depicting where future water service may be expanded outside the Village.
3. Support the Towns of Oakfield and Alabama in their efforts to modify the "development areas" identified in the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan to reflect the long-term planning area boundaries, as shown on the Vision Map.
4. Investigate cost/feasibility for extending water out Route 63 into Towns of Oakfield and Alabama.