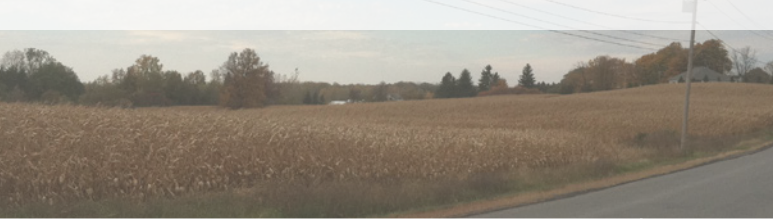


Town of Geneseo 2016 Farmland Protection Plan



ADOPTED DECEMBER 13, 2018



Acknowledgments

This plan was initiated by and completed under the stewardship of the Town of Geneseo Board. As of the writing of this Plan, the membership of the Town Board includes:

- ▶ Will Wadsworth, Town Supervisor
- ▶ Roberta Irwin, Deputy Town Supervisor
- ▶ Jerald T. Wrubel, Council Member
- ▶ Matthew Griffo, Council Member
- ▶ Patti LaVigne, Council Member

The Town of Geneseo would like to thank the individual volunteers who dedicated their time and effort to the development of this Farmland Protection Plan. We extend our gratitude to the numerous elected officials, board members, farmers, property owners, and residents who participated in this farmland protection planning process. Your input throughout was instrumental in creating this Plan and has helped to shape our vision for the future of agriculture in Geneseo.

There were also a number of organizations who assisted in this planning process, including the:

- ▶ Livingston County Planning Department
- ▶ Livingston County Farm Bureau
- ▶ Livingston County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board
- ▶ New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets



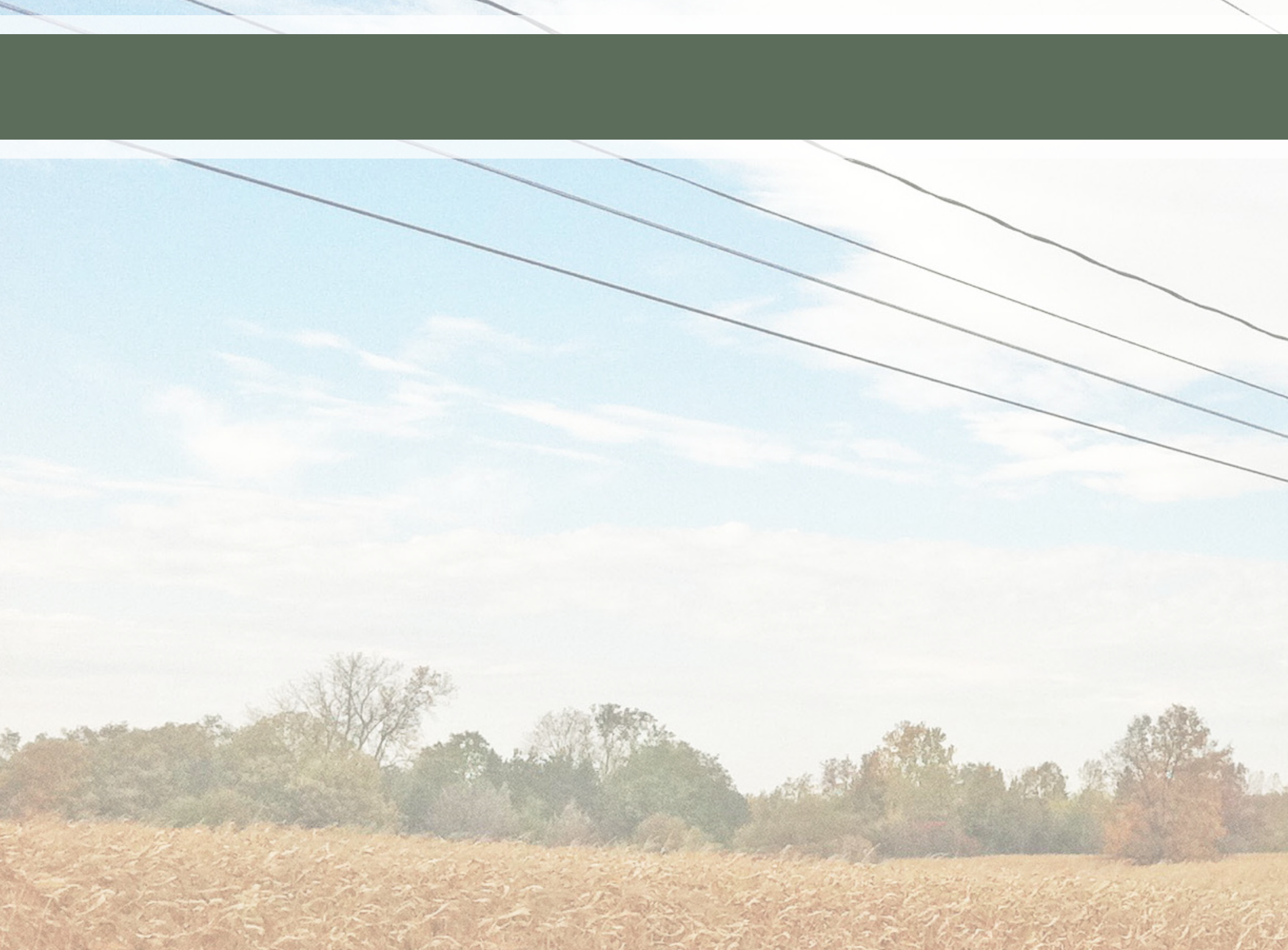
Funding for this Plan was provided by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets planning grants program.

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Commonly Used Acronyms

Ag	Agriculture / Agricultural
DEC	Department of Environmental Conservation
DOT	Department of Transportation
DPW	Department of Public Works
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FFA	Future Farmers of America
FPP	Farmland Protection Plan
GFLRPC	Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council
GVEP	Genesee Valley Educational Partnership
GVC	Genesee Valley Conservancy
LC	Livingston County
NYS	New York State
PDR	Purchase of Development Rights
RFP	Request for Proposals
SEQRA	State Environmental Quality Review Act
SUNY	State University of New York
TDR	Transfer of Development Rights
US	United States





Introduction



Introduction

Project Background

The Town of Geneseo’s agricultural roots date back to its initial settlement by the Wadsworth brothers in 1790. With foundations in a wide variety of agricultural uses, Geneseo has maintained its pastoral environment while growing its farming, dairy, and equine operations into thriving industries. The Town, with the help of Livingston County and other regional agricultural groups, has continued to seek ways in which it can support and develop its agricultural environment to ensure a thriving future not only for the benefit of farming operations, but also for the Town as a whole.

In an effort to achieve this, Geneseo applied for funding through the New York State Department of Agriculture Markets, an agency dedicated to preserving the viability of New York’s agricultural economy. The Department of Agriculture and Markets partners with municipalities across the state to develop and implement local farmland protection plans that help to guide and better inform future decision-making and policies as they relate to a community’s agricultural environment. Geneseo was awarded the Farmland Protection Implementation Grant in 2012, and subsequently began the process necessary to complete this Plan.

Plan Purpose and Intent

According to Article 25-AAA of New York State Law, “Agricultural lands are irreplaceable state assets. In an effort to maintain the economic viability, and environmental and landscape preservation values associated with agriculture, the state must explore ways to sustain the state’s valuable farm economy and the land base associated with it. External pressures on farm stability such as population growth in non-metropolitan areas and public infrastructure development pose a significant threat to farm operations, yet are the pressures over which farmers have the least control.”

The purpose of this Plan is to identify a diverse array of tools and techniques that farmers, property owners, local governments, and not-for-profits can utilize to preserve and protect agricultural activity at the local level. These tools and techniques include, but are not limited to:

- + Broadening types of farming, agricultural industries and markets;
- + Optimizing farming practices;
- + Identifying farm-friendly land use, zoning, and other regulatory approaches;
- + Preserving farmland;
- + Evaluating infrastructure constraints; and
- + Addressing environmental concerns.

It should be noted that the term “**protection**” in this planning effort is not intended to restrict the value or use of land by property owners within the Town of Geneseo. Rather this Plan is intended to provide a foundation on which further support can be developed for the long-term viability of both local and regional agricultural operations. Other terms and definitions relevant to this Plan have been included in Appendix A.



Planning Horizon

The planning horizon is defined by the length of time for which this plan is considered relevant and representative of the farming community in the Town of Geneseo. It also quantifies the length of time necessary to implement a majority of the plan's recommendations. The planning horizon for this effort is 10 years or until 2026, allowing for the inclusion of information made available from the 2020 Census in the next update of this document. It is recommended, however, that the Town review the information contained in this document every two to three years to ensure that it is relevant and beneficial prior to 2026.

Our Planning Process

The Town of Geneseo's Farmland Protection Plan (FPP) is a product of a significant amount of time and energy provided by the Steering Committee, Town officials, Livingston County Staff, NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, and the consultants hired by the Town. In completing this FPP process, the Town of Geneseo was able to engage in a dialogue with local and regional agricultural operations as well as educate residents about the importance of the Town's farming roots. The combination of public outreach and analysis of existing conditions has provided the Town with a better understanding of the current issues and opportunities facing the farming community.

The Steering Committee was appointed by the Town Board to oversee the development of this plan and determine the process by which it was completed. The planning process is outlined at right.



Farming Community Kick-Off Meeting, April 2014

- + *Grant Awarded to Town* September 2012
- + *Town Issued RFP for FPP* April 2013
- + *Farming Community Kick-Off Meeting* April 2014
- + *Inventory & Analysis* Spring - Summer 2014
- + *Farmer Interviews* August - December 2014
- + *Farming Community Meeting #2* October 2014
- + *Draft Policy Framework* Spring - Summer 2015
- + *Priority Parcel Mapping Workshop* February 2016
- + *Preliminary Plan* April 2016
- + *Farming Community Open House* April 2016
- + *Draft Plan* September 2016
- + *Public Hearing* November 2016
- + *Plan Adoption* December 2018



Introduction

Key Issue Summary

In April of 2014, the Geneseo Farmland Protection Plan Steering Committee held their Kick-Off Meeting for the project and invited members of the agricultural community in the Town to attend. At this meeting a brief overview of the project's purpose, intent, and process was given.

Attendees were also asked to participate in a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) brainstorming exercise as it related to agriculture in Geneseo. A summary of the key points made during this discussion have been included below (for a complete listing see the minutes included in the Appendix B).

STRENGTHS

- + Access to markets - Two grain elevators within 10 miles
- + Horse-friendly community - History and interest in equine continues
- + Generally good weather - Supports a broad range of agricultural uses and crops
- + Good access to major highways
- + Strong support from the County for agricultural protection and planning
- + Farm-friendly community and residents
- + History of farming and agriculture in the region
- + Agricultural uses have long-term conservation benefits

OPPORTUNITIES

- Young farm industries interested in the lifestyle, not necessarily the economics of farming (yogurt, hops, breweries, wineries, etc. in vogue right now)
- Gas drilling, if pursued appropriately
- Farmers could provide land for Village residents to grow small crops like a "community garden"
- Increase public awareness/public education - Go through programs at Wegmans, Farm Bureau, FFA at GVEP
- Increase education on the economic impacts of farming and address the perceived "image" of a farmer
- Continue Chamber of Commerce farmer/neighbor dinner

WEAKNESSES

- Conesus Lake - Conflict between dairy farm located uphill from the residential homes along the lake (runoff, fertilizers, water quality, etc.)
- Deer population control, "more deer than rabbits"
- Some properties don't allow hunting, creates "safe haven" for deer
- Difficult to cull deer population beyond hunting season, especially June
- Fewer farmers engaging with the community and serving as decision makers (lack of representation on boards, etc.)
- Moving equipment on roads is difficult - Secondary roads are narrow
- Difficult to find highly skilled labor, but is slowly getting better

THREATS

- × Increasing price/cost and taxes of land as Geneseo develops
- × Nuisance issues with new residents in rural areas
- × Subdividing prime farming lots for a single-family home in such a way that renders land useless for farming
- × Potential conflict between residents and farmers within the Genesee River watershed area
- × Lack of farm succession options for retirement (family farms, etc.)
- × Gas drilling - Environmental concerns, water table issues
- × Demographic shift away from the Town's agriculture base
- × Lack of education about the use of pesticides in farming



Farmer Interview Summary

Early on in the farmland protection planning process stakeholder interviews were conducted with various agricultural operators and agencies that have a significant presence in the Town. These operators represented each facet of the agricultural community within Geneseo, including croplands, dairy farms, equestrian stables, and the Genesee Valley Conservancy (GVC).

Based on the information gathered as part of these interviews and site visits, the list below highlights some of the most pressing issues or opportunities identified by the stakeholders by topic area. A complete summary of the Farmer Interview responses can be found in the Appendix C.

Farmland Operation & Management

- + Deer overpopulation is a problem for crops. Also concerns about coyote population and effect on cattle
- + Land prices are rapidly increasing
- + Profit margins are very narrow for milk/dairy production
- + Traveling on local roads with farm equipment can be difficult (speed/ amount of traffic, small shoulders, mail boxes close to road, etc.)
- + Liability issues with permitting use of lands for snowmobiling or horseback riding so many have helmet requirements, etc.

Local, County, State Policy

- + Taxes are very high
- + Worried about public encroachment on agricultural land
- + Changes to the EPA definition of protected waters to include waterways beyond what are “navigable” would make management of drainage much more difficult
- + Requiring sprinklers in barns used for events (i.e. wedding barns) would be costly and restrict the use in most cases

~ The Genesee Valley Conservancy ~

Founded in 1990 as a not-for-profit land trust, the Genesee Valley Conservancy (GVC), residents, and friends of the Genesee Valley have donated their time, funds, and land to permanently protect over 14,400 acres of important natural areas, open space, and farmland. The GVC holds lands in four counties, including Livingston, Wyoming, Allegany, and Ontario.

“The mission of the Genesee Valley Conservancy is to protect the habitat, open space and farmland in the Genesee Valley region of New York State.”

Greater Geneseo Community

- + New residents don’t understand agriculture/farming practices which can cause complaints (i.e. manure spreading)
- + Some neighbors complain about the use of cannons to scare birds or the spreading of manure, try to work with them when possible
- + Need protections for existing agricultural operations from new neighbors, especially those who don’t understand what comes with the desired “rural character”

Local Education Efforts

- + Education is needed about the benefits of agricultural operations (providing food, jobs, etc.)
- + Increase educational efforts for farmers and residents around farmland programs and grants, such as the Agricultural District Program, Soil and Water, Farm Service Agency, and National Resources Conservation Service
- + Should bring local agriculture to Geneseo classrooms - Look at Wyoming County’s farmland education component and how they promote agriculture in the community



Introduction

Previous Plan Summary

Ensuring the long term viability of agriculture remains a longstanding priority of the Town as well as Livingston County as a whole. In an effort to accomplish this, the following planning efforts were completed independently by the County and Town.

Livingston County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan

This plan was completed in 2006. Its intent is to 1) create recommendations for structural economic development programming to ultimately enhance the future of local agriculture; and 2) encourage long-term policy formation in support of agriculture while providing a specific short-term framework to guide local programs regarding specific agricultural economic development and land use initiatives. The Plan contains 13 key recommendations. Those that are most relevant to this planning effort include:

- + Create an Outreach and Public Relations Program
- + Support Entrepreneurship and On-Farm Skills Development
- + Support Regional Agricultural Leadership Development
- + Actively Support Town Based Agricultural Planning
- + Support a Purchase of Development Rights Program in the County
- + Promote Understanding and Appreciation of Livingston County Agriculture to the Non-Farm Public

These County-level recommendations have informed the Town's agricultural policy framework (beginning on page 29). They have also been incorporated into the key recommendations contained in this Plan.

Town of Geneseo Master Plan

The Town completed its Master Plan in 2008. The goals and objectives of the Town are organized around the following community planning concerns:

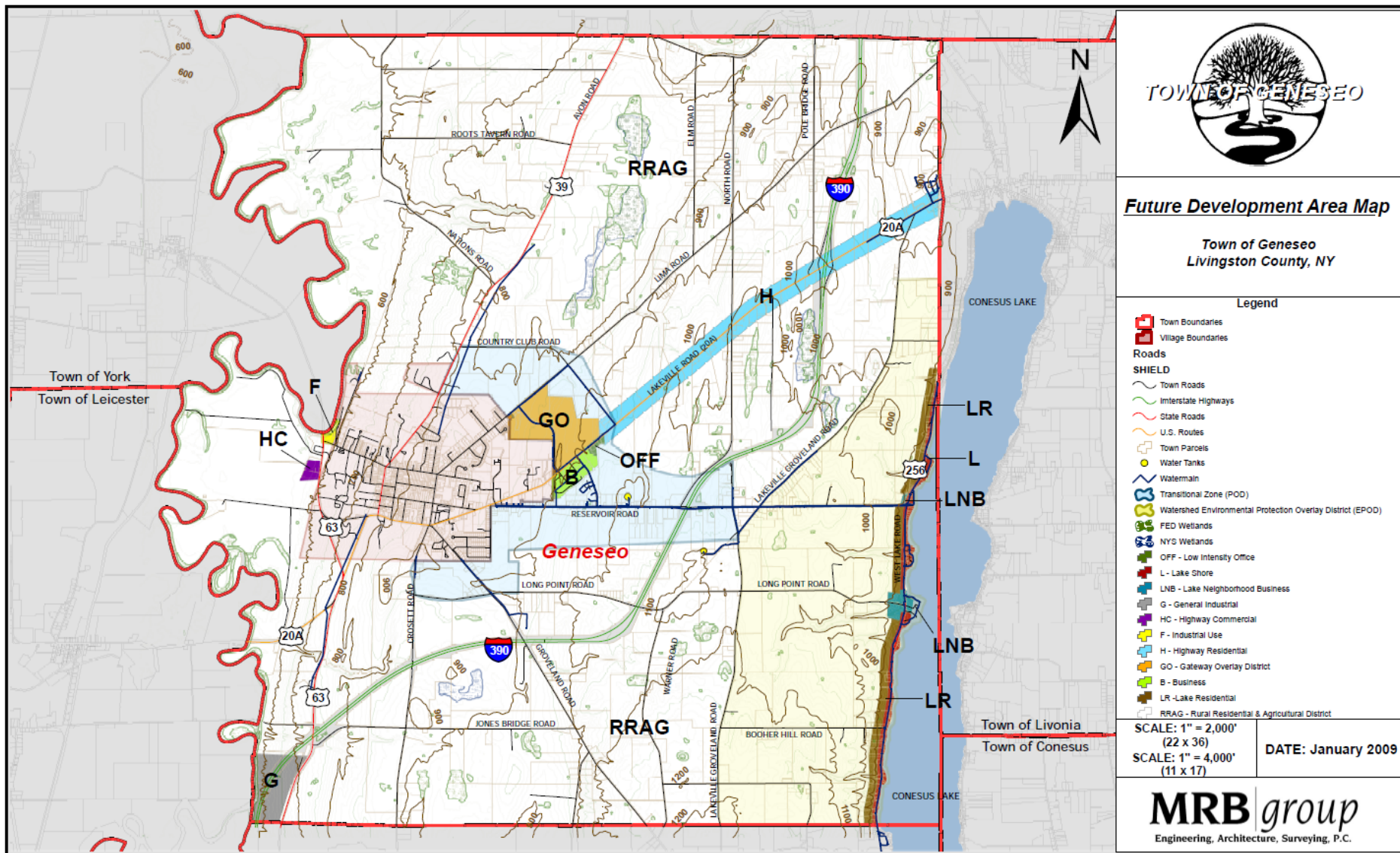
- + General Character
- + Farmland and Agriculture
- + Environmental Features
- + Recreation, Open Space & Public Amenities
- + Residential Land Use
- + Traffic and Transportation
- + Community Issues

According to the Plan, it is a goal for the Town to, "Maintain and promote agriculture as a viable industry." In order to achieve this goal, the Plan articulates the following objectives:

1. Increase the awareness of the economic and social importance of agriculture.
2. Make agriculture a priority in the community's vision for the future.
3. Create awareness and demand for locally produced agricultural products.
4. Establish tools and policies to protect farmland.
5. Develop policies that treat farms as both a business and a land use.

The Plan also contains a Future Development Area Map (shown on the opposite page). A review the Map indicates that a vast majority of the Town's land area is classified as Rural Residential & Agricultural District, shown in white. The purpose of this district is identify areas of the Town that are anticipated to remain in farming over the decade.

Map 1: Town of Geneseo Future Development Area







Agricultural Profile



Agricultural Profile

The following Agricultural Profile has been included as part of this farmland protection planning process to ensure there is a common foundation on which future decisions are made. By providing a comprehensive summary of key growth trends, land use patterns, and agricultural activity within the Town, decision-makers and users of this Plan have the background information necessary to understand the implications of future actions as well as the tools to make informed decisions. The information included in the Agricultural Profile was based on the key issues and opportunities identified in the Farmer Interviews and sound agricultural planning practices. Data sources used to complete this section include the:

- + Town of Geneseo;
- + Livingston County Planning Department;
- + Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council;
- + New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets; and
- + United States Census.

Location

The Town of Geneseo (shown in yellow in Figure 1 at right) is centrally located in Livingston County, New York. Also located within the Town is the Village of Geneseo, which is near to the center of the Town’s western border. The Town of Geneseo is surrounded by the Town of Avon to the north, Genesee River to the west, Town of Groveland to the south, and the Town of Livonia and Conesus Lake to the east. There are several major travel routes providing access to the Town including, Routes 63, 39, 20A, and Interstate 390.

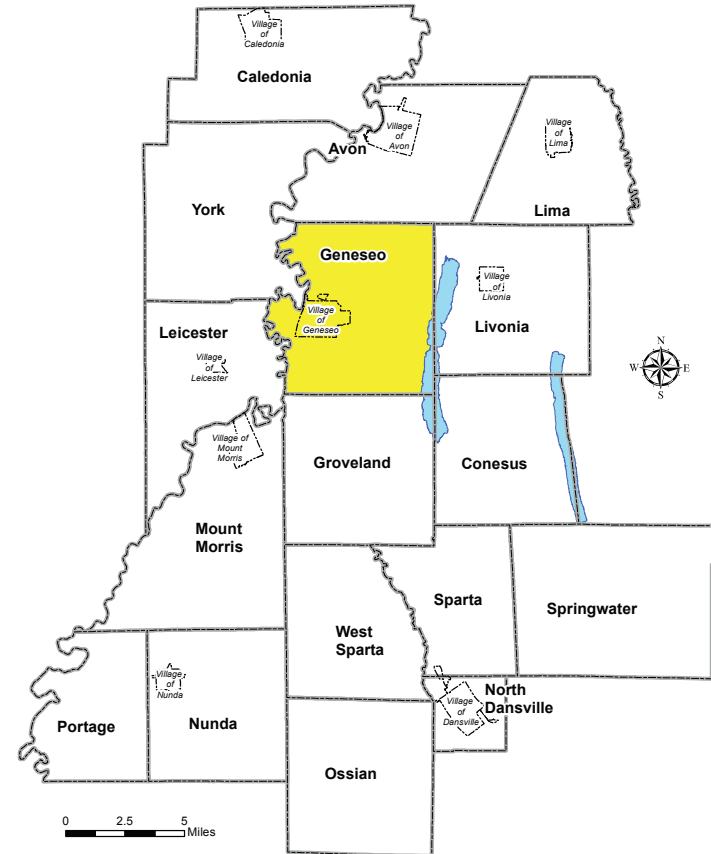


Figure 1: Map of Livingston County, Town & Village of Geneseo

~ The community of Geneseo serves as the seat for Livingston County governmental operations. ~



Population Trends

Since the 1970s, the Town's overall population has been increasing. The US Census reports the Town's population as a figure including the Village's population. However, Figure 2 below has separated these values for a more detailed picture of Geneseo residents who live in the Town versus the Village. The Town has historically had a smaller population than that of the Village due to the predominantly rural environment of the Town and denser neighborhood development pattern of the Village. The Town has seen a relatively slow rate of population growth compared to that of the Village and County, hitting a peak population of 2,452 residents in 2010. Based on the historical population growth estimates provided by the Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (GFLRPC), it is anticipated that the Town will decrease in population over the next three decades, while the Village and County are expected to see a slight increase in population size.

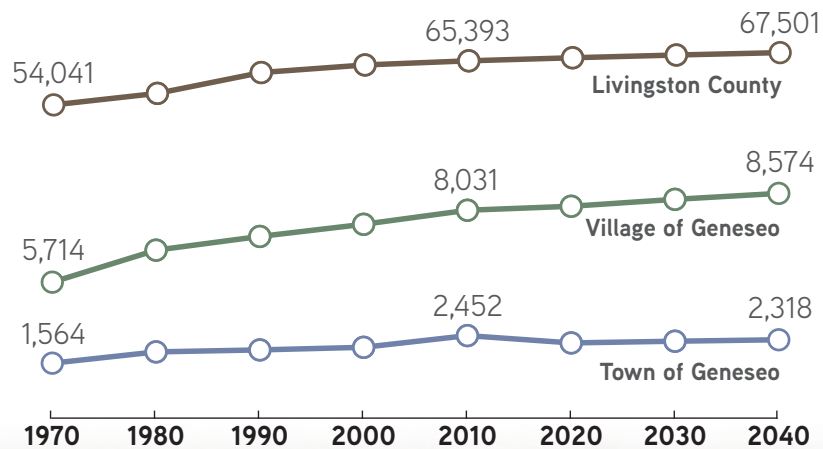


Figure 2: Historical Population Trends & Projected Growth

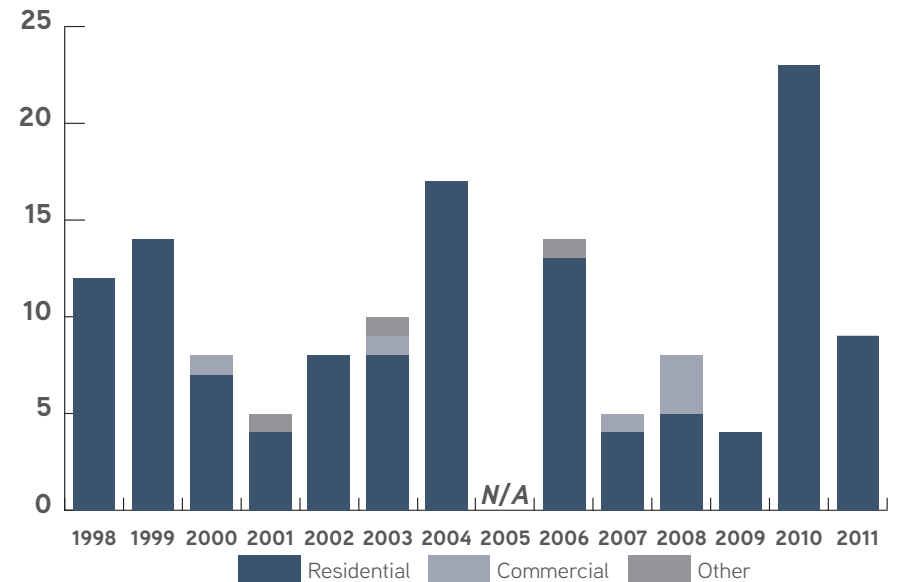


Figure 3: Town of Geneseo Development Permits Issued by Year & Type

Development Activity

Figure 3 above indicates the number of development permits issued by the Town of Geneseo from 1998 to 2011, as recorded by the GFLRPC. By and large the Town has issued more residential development permits than any other type. The highest year of issuance was 2010, with a total of 23 residential permits. Data for the year 2005, was not available. It is important to note that these numbers indicate the number of permits issued, not necessarily those that were acted upon and built. These figures do, however, provide a good indication of development pressures within the Town in previous years.



Agricultural Profile

As of 2014, the Livingston County Planning Department reported over 18,000 acres of farmland within Geneseo, comprising 66% of the Town’s total land area (see Figure 4 at right). These farmlands spread across the entirety of the Town, contributing to the overall rural character and landscape of the community. The following portion of the Agricultural Profile serves to provide a deep understanding and analysis of the current use of farmlands within the Town, as well as relevant environmental considerations. The topic areas and corresponding maps in this section include the following:

- 1) Farmland Tenure;
- 2) Agricultural Activity;
- 3) Agricultural Districts, Exemptions & Conserved Lands;
- 4) Prime Soils & Hydrography;
- 5) Water & Sewer Service; and
- 6) Town Zoning.

Farmland Tenure

The farm operator is the person making the day-to-day decisions for the agricultural operation, whether the person owns or rents the land. Operators can be full owners (own all the land they farm), part owners (rent some farmland but own some as well), or tenants (rent all the land they farm). Farmland that is rented is generally considered to be at greater risk of development than land that is owned by the farm operator and may carry additional expenses. Of the farmlands in the Town of Geneseo approximately 60% are rented, while only 22% are fully owner-operated. Map 2 on the opposing page shows the farmlands by parcel that are rented in light green. The Town’s share of rented lands is higher than that of the national average, which is nearly 40% of all US farmland according to the 2012 Census of Agriculture.

Total Farmland	18,452 Acres
Share of Total Town Acreage	66%

Farmland Tenure	
Owned	22%
Rented	60%
Other	18%

Average Farm Size	111 Acres
Median Farm Size	74.5 Acres

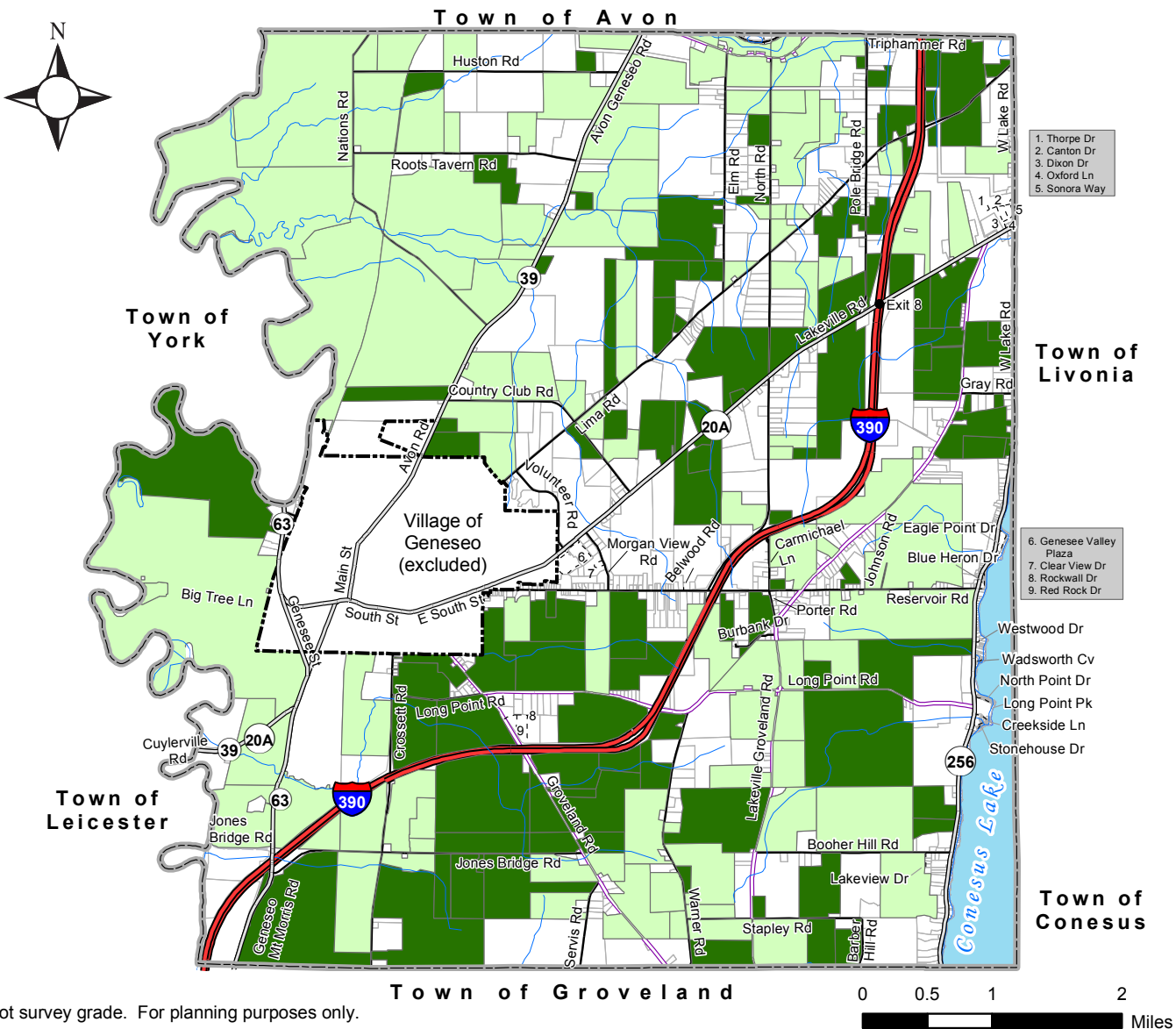
Farm Size	Number of Farms
1 to 9 Acres	9
10 to 49 Acres	50
50 to 179 Acres	79
180 to 499 Acres	25
500 to 9,999 Acres	2
1,000+ Acres	1
Total Operations	166

Figure 4: Farmland Tenure & Size Information Table (Livingston County Planning Department, 2014)

ten•ure (noun)

“The conditions under which property is held or occupied. Typically through a financial arrangement to rent or own.”

Map 2: Farmland Tenure



Livingston County

Legend

- Town Boundary
- Village Boundary
- Hydrography

RENTED

- Not Rented
- Rented

- Expressway
- State Highway
- County Highway
- Town Road
- Seasonal Road
- Private Road
- Tax Parcels 2014
- Lake

1. Thorpe Dr
2. Canton Dr
3. Dixon Dr
4. Oxford Ln
5. Sonora Way

6. Genesee Valley Plaza
7. Clear View Dr
8. Rockwall Dr
9. Red Rock Dr

Source: Livingston County Real Property Tax Services, Tax Parcel Parcels, 2014; Livingston County Agricultural Districts, 2013; input from Genesee farmers at public meetings.

Map prepared by the Livingston County Planning Department, October 2014 (rev. Dec. 2014)

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Not survey grade. For planning purposes only.



Agricultural Profile

Agricultural Activity

The Town has a longstanding and diverse agricultural history. The number and nature of farms and farming related activities that are present today continue the Town’s diverse agricultural heritage. Generally the Town’s agricultural operations can be categorized into one of the following: cropland, dairy, livestock, and equine. Figure 5 at right indicates the acreage and share of farmland for various agricultural activities in Geneseo, while Map 3 on the opposing page shows their general distribution and location across the Town. It should be noted that while some parcels may be classified as “rural residential” on the map, that does not preclude the use of the land for agricultural purposes. It is intended to be a general indication of where residential units are located among farmed parcels. The map was prepared using NYS Real Property Tax information for 2014, and adjusted based on input from members of the Geneseo farming community where appropriate.

Cropland

Cropland is the largest share of agricultural activity within the Town, at 37% of farmland use. Crops grown in the Town predominately include corn, wheat, and soybeans. Many dairy and livestock farms also cultivate corn and hay as feed for cows and cattle.

Dairy & Livestock

Dairy farms are the second most prevalent agricultural activities within the Town when excluding vacant farmlands. The size of dairy farms in Geneseo varies from operations with approximately 100 to over 1,000 milking cows. The most prevalent market for dairy is through the Upstate Niagara Cooperative. Other livestock operations in this category includes the general raising of cattle for beef and breeding stock.

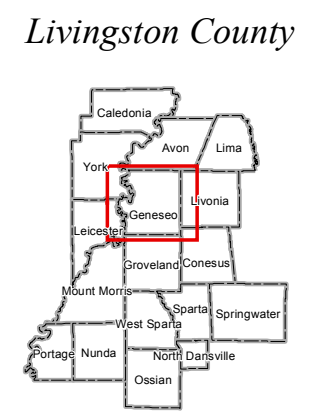
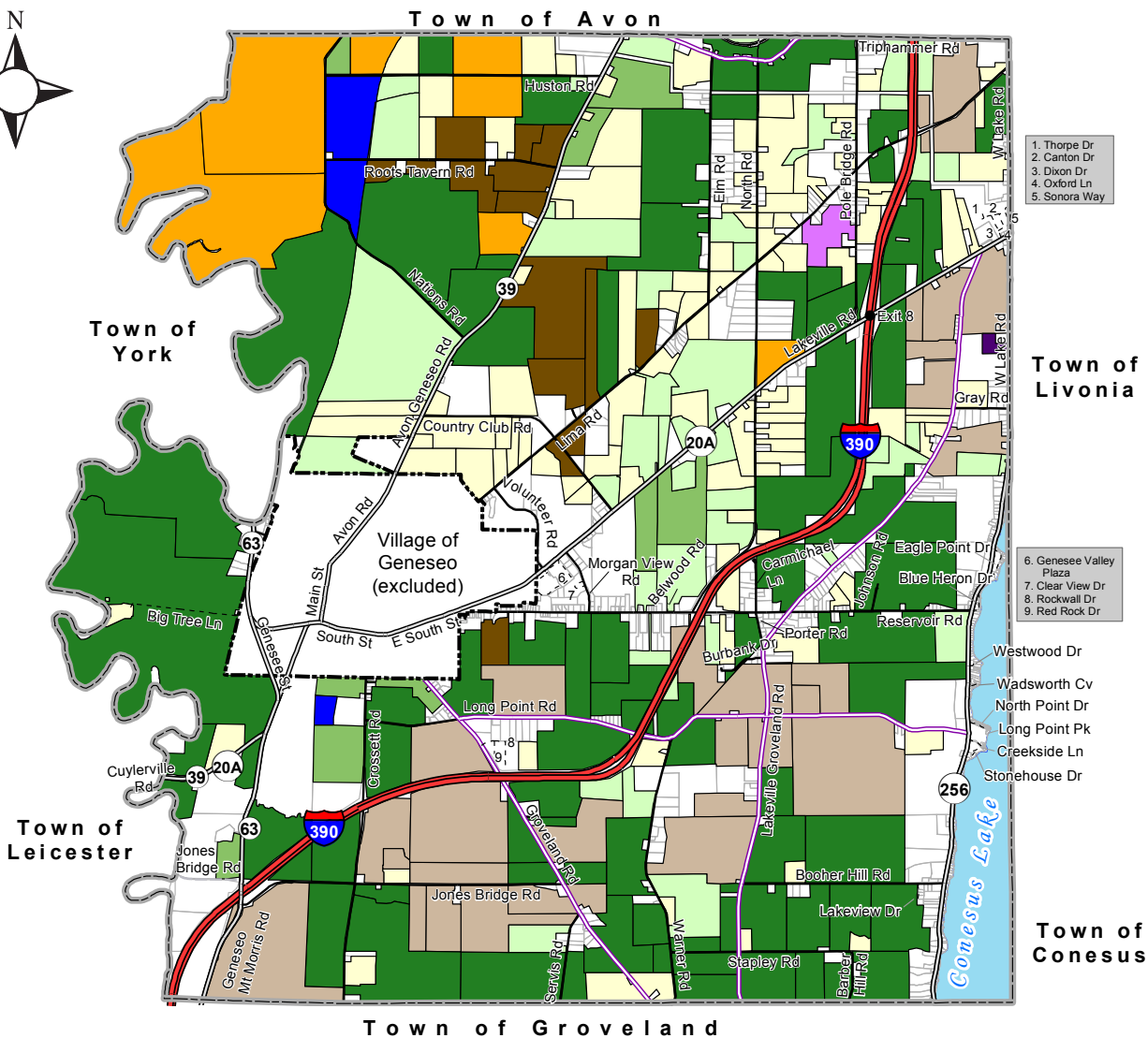
Agricultural Activity	Acres	Share of Farmland
Cattle Farm	330	2%
Dairy Farm	2,139	12%
Equine Operation/Horse Farm	754	4%
Other Livestock	88	0.5%
Field Crops	6,898	37%
Nursery and Greenhouse	72	0.4%
Pasture	1,414	8%
Tillable	178	1%
Vineyards	15	0.1%
Vacant Farmland	6,174	33%
Other	390	2%
Total Farmland	18,452	100%

Figure 5: Agricultural Activity by Acreage (Livingston County Planning Department, 2014)

Equine

The horse community in the Town of Geneseo has been a significant part of its history since the 19th century, before the start of the Genesee Valley Hunt in 1876 which continues the tradition still today. Stables located in the Town board and breed a variety of horses for riding lessons, shows, racing, and rehabilitation. There is also support from SUNY Geneseo in the equine industry as they have a competitive Equestrian Team and Club Teams.

Map 3: Agricultural Activity



- Cropland
- Tillable
- Vacant Agricultural Land
- Dairy
- Livestock
- Equine
- Nursery/Greenhouse
- Pasture
- Vineyard
- Rural Residential

1. Thorpe Dr
2. Canton Dr
3. Dixon Dr
4. Oxford Ln
5. Sonora Way

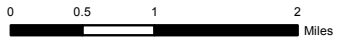
6. Geneseo Valley Plaza
7. Clear View Dr
8. Rockwall Dr
9. Red Rock Dr

Source: Livingston County Real Property Tax Services, Tax Parcel Property Class, 2014. Modified with input from Geneseo farmers.

Map prepared by the Livingston County Planning Department: March 2014 (rev. Dec.2014)

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Not survey grade. For planning purposes only.





Agricultural Profile

Agricultural Districts

By and large one of the most praised programs noted by local farmers in the Town was the NYS Agricultural Districts program. Enacted in 1971 by the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, the Agricultural (Ag) District program is administered by the County. The program seeks to support and promote agricultural operations and uses by giving priority and protections to farming related activities and open space in areas with viable agricultural land. Ag Districts create economic and regulatory incentives to encourage farmers to continue farming should they choose to apply for inclusion in the local Ag District, such as:

- + Taxation at reduced agricultural assessment value;
- + Limitations on local regulations that would unreasonably restrict or regulate farm operations;
- + Protection and promotion of sound agricultural practices;
- + Limitation on local benefit assessments for local levies or fees; and
- + Requirement for notice and impact assessment of government-sponsored development in an Ag District.

It is the policy of the state to encourage agricultural activities in Ag Districts insofar as it is consistent with the promotion of public health, safety, and welfare. A review is conducted of Ag District properties every eight years by the County.

There are three Agricultural Districts in Livingston County, the Town of Geneseo is part of Agricultural District #2. Map 4 on the next page shows the location of parcels within the Ag District, with and without an Ag Exemption as well as those receiving only an Ag Exemption.

Agricultural Exemptions

In an effort to support farming operations, NYS has also instituted an Agricultural Exemption for state taxes. The intent of this program is to provide qualifying agricultural lands with an “agricultural assessment” to provide property tax relief to the farm owner or operator. Unlike the Ag District program, there are strict requirements that a farm must meet in order to receive an Ag Exemption. These requirements include:

- + Seven acres of land used for at least two years for sale of crops and/or livestock; and
- + Annual gross sales of agricultural products of \$10,000 or more on average.

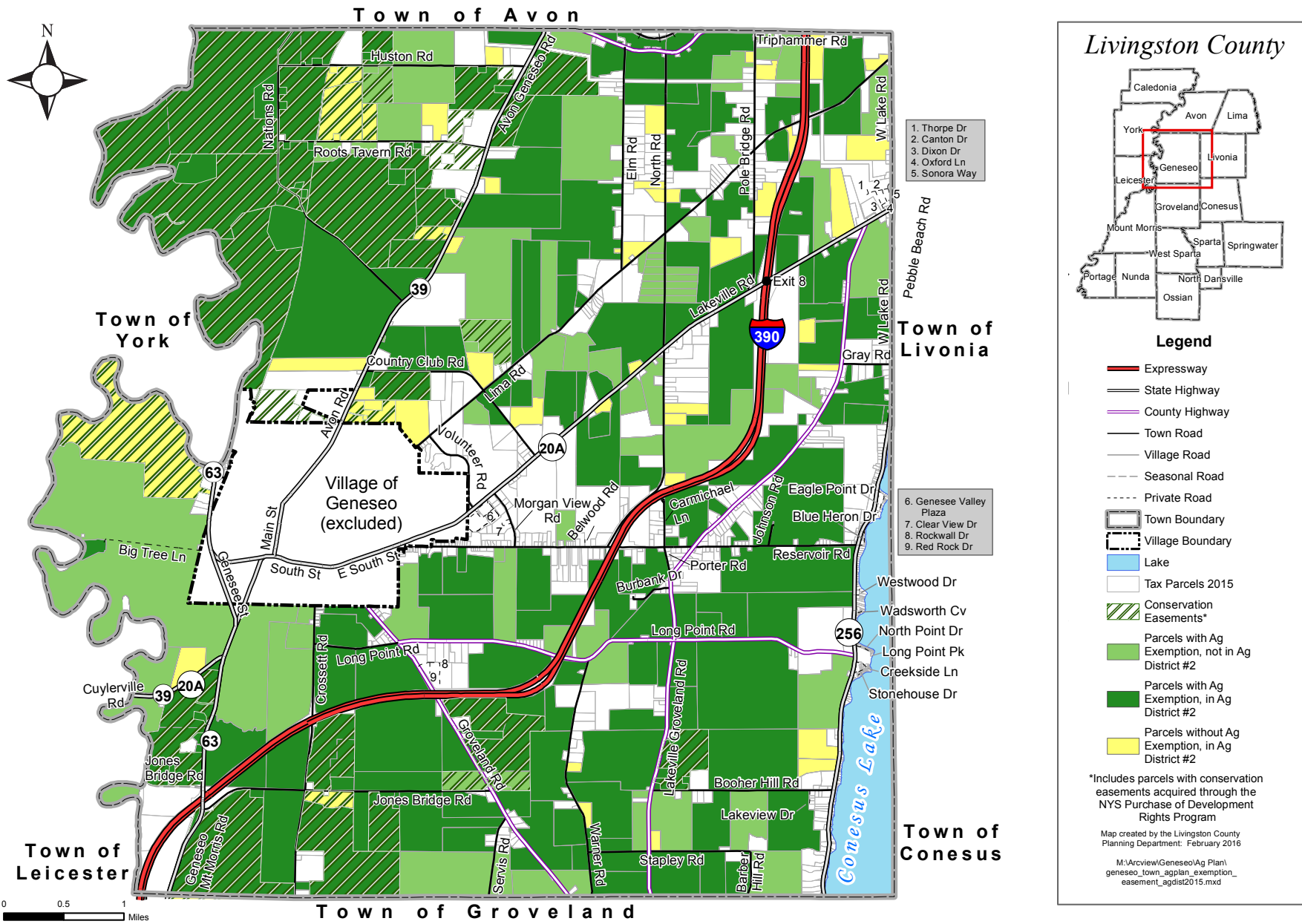
Lands receiving an Ag Exception within the Town are shown on Map 4.

Conserved Lands

Approximately 20% of the Town’s acreage, or nearly 6,000 acres, is conserved through either a Genesee Valley Conservancy (GVC) easement or Purchase of Development Rights (PDR), shown in green hatching on Map 4. Properties that have received protections from the GVC generally have been dedicated through an easement for farmland or open space, which restricts future development but permits continuing agricultural operations (see page 46 for more information).

At this time Merrimac Farms is the only user of a PDR program in the Town, conserving nearly 1,500 acres of their property. A PDR program is structured to compensate a farmer for selling the development rights to their property in an effort to preserve its agricultural use. In this case, the purchase “price” would be the highest anticipated development value (e.g. commercial) minus the agricultural market value.

Map 4: Agricultural Districts, Exemptions & Conserved Land



Livingston County

Legend

- Expressway
- State Highway
- County Highway
- Town Road
- Village Road
- Seasonal Road
- Private Road
- Town Boundary
- Village Boundary
- Lake
- Tax Parcels 2015
- Conservation Easements*
- Parcels with Ag Exemption, not in Ag District #2
- Parcels with Ag Exemption, in Ag District #2
- Parcels without Ag Exemption, in Ag District #2

*Includes parcels with conservation easements acquired through the NYS Purchase of Development Rights Program

Map created by the Livingston County Planning Department: February 2016

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Agricultural Profile

Prime Soils

According to the County’s FPP, “Soil quality is of primary importance in assessing agricultural productivity and represents an asset that remains relatively fixed over time. Livingston County has a wide range of soil qualities and conditions, anchored by the highly productive soils found in the towns of Mount Morris, Leicester, York, Caledonia, Geneseo, Avon, and Lima. USDA classified “Prime” and “Productive” soils are found in large contiguous blocks in these areas, and are otherwise found in dispersed pockets in other parts of the County. Because many of these soils are well drained, they are often considered prime candidates for development.”

Map 5 on the next page conveys the location of prime soils and soils of statewide importance within Geneseo. As the name implies, prime farmland is the highest quality farmland within our state and nation. According to the US Department of Agriculture, “prime farmland is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for the production of food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops. Some of the characteristics of these soils include:

- ✦ Consistently produces the most food and fiber with the least fertilizer, labor and energy requirements.
- ✦ Containing acceptable acidity or alkalinity, acceptable salt and sodium content, and few or no rocks.
- ✦ Not prone to excessively erosion or to be saturated with water for a long period of time, and they either do not flood frequently or are protected from flooding.

By comparison, soils of statewide importance do not meet the criteria for prime or unique farmland. Generally, this land includes areas of soils that nearly meet the requirements for prime farmland and that economically produce high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. Some areas may produce as high a yield as prime farmland if conditions are favorable.”

Every single minute of every day America loses two acres of farmland. ~ American Farmland Trust

There are a total of 28,769 acres of land within the Town. Approximately 10,609 are classified as prime farmland and 3,755 are classified as soils of statewide importance. A review of Map 5 indicates that the largest tracts of high quality farmland are located in the following areas:

- ✦ The northeast quadrant of the Town;
- ✦ West of the Village, on the west side of Route 63; and
- ✦ East of the Village, south of Route 20 and extending to Long Point Road.

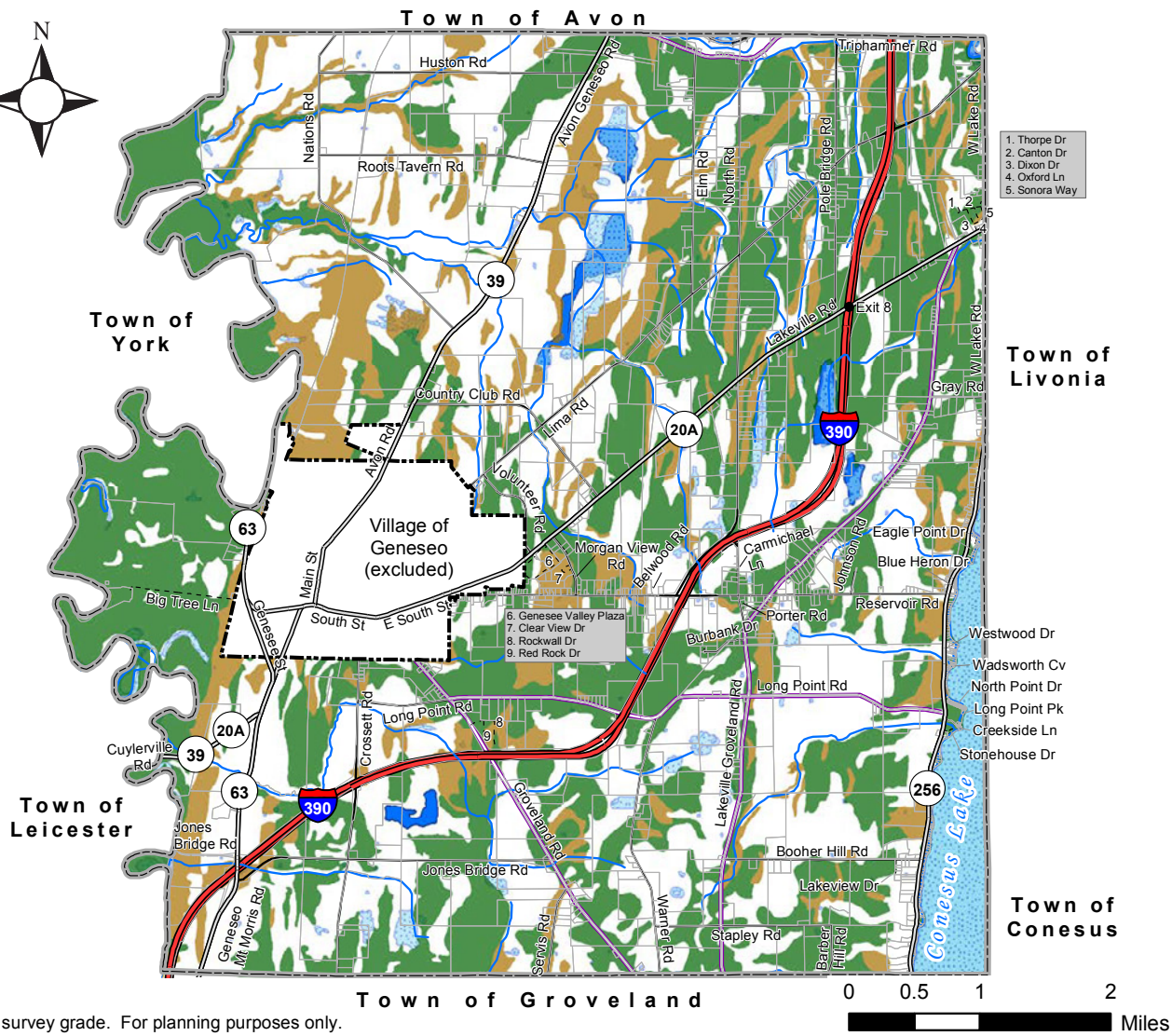
The remaining high quality soils are dispersed throughout the southern portion of the Town (between Interstate 390 and the southern town line) and along Geneseo’s border with the Town of York.

Hydrography

Map 5 also illustrates the locations of water bodies (streams, creeks, etc) and NYS and Federal Wetlands within the Town. A review of the Map indicates that there are relatively few wetlands within Geneseo. The largest collection of wetlands are located in the northern portion of the Town. These wetlands begin north of the Lima Road/Country Club Road intersection and extend north to the vicinity of Avon Geneseo Road. The remaining wetlands within the Town are generally scattered throughout the eastern and southern areas of the Town.

It is also important to note that the Town is located within the Conesus Lake Watershed, which has implications for controlling the use of pesticides and spreading of manure in areas near to the Lake.

Map 5: Prime Soils & Hydrography



Livingston County

Legend

- Hydrography
- Expressway
- State Highway
- County Highway
- Town Road
- Village Road
- Seasonal Road
- Private Road
- Railroads
- Town Boundary
- Village Boundary
- Tax Parcels 2012
- Prime Farmland
- Farmland of Statewide Importance
- Lake
- NYSDEC Wetlands
- Federal Wetlands

Map prepared by the Livingston County Planning Department March 2013

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Agricultural Profile

Water Service

The current limits of the public water available in the Town of Geneseo is shown in Map 6 on the opposite page. The public water system within the Town is owned and operated by the Town of Geneseo. Public water is primarily supplied to the Town by the Village of Geneseo, and also by the Livingston County Water and Sewer Authority (LCWSA) as a secondary provider. As shown in the Map, access to public water in the Town is limited. Water lines (shown in blue) extend eastward from outside of the Village along roadways including, but not limited to:

- + Reservoir Road to West Lake Road;
- + West Lake Road from the southern town boundary to the eastern town boundary;
- + Lakeville Groveland Road from Burbank Drive to approximately three quarters of a mile north of Reservoir Road;
- + Approximately one quarter of a mile of Long Point Road, west of Lakeville Groveland Road; and
- + Route 63 and lower Court Street, west of the Village boundary.

There are also some areas served by extended services or backlot mains, installed privately years ago. Dedicated mains that can be tapped for new services include Crosset Road and Route 39 – north and south of the Village.

As of the writing of this plan the Town has explored the possibility of extending public water northeasterly on Lima Road out towards I-390 based on residents who have petitioned for public water in this area. Any extension of public water in this or other areas will be dependent on public support, project feasibility, and regulatory approvals.

According to Penn State’s College of Agricultural Resources, a dairy cow requires 30 gallons of water per day and a horse requires 12 gallons per day.

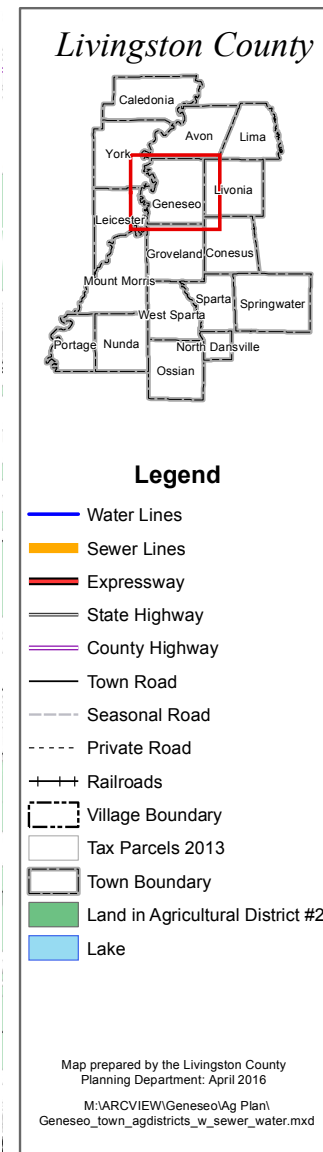
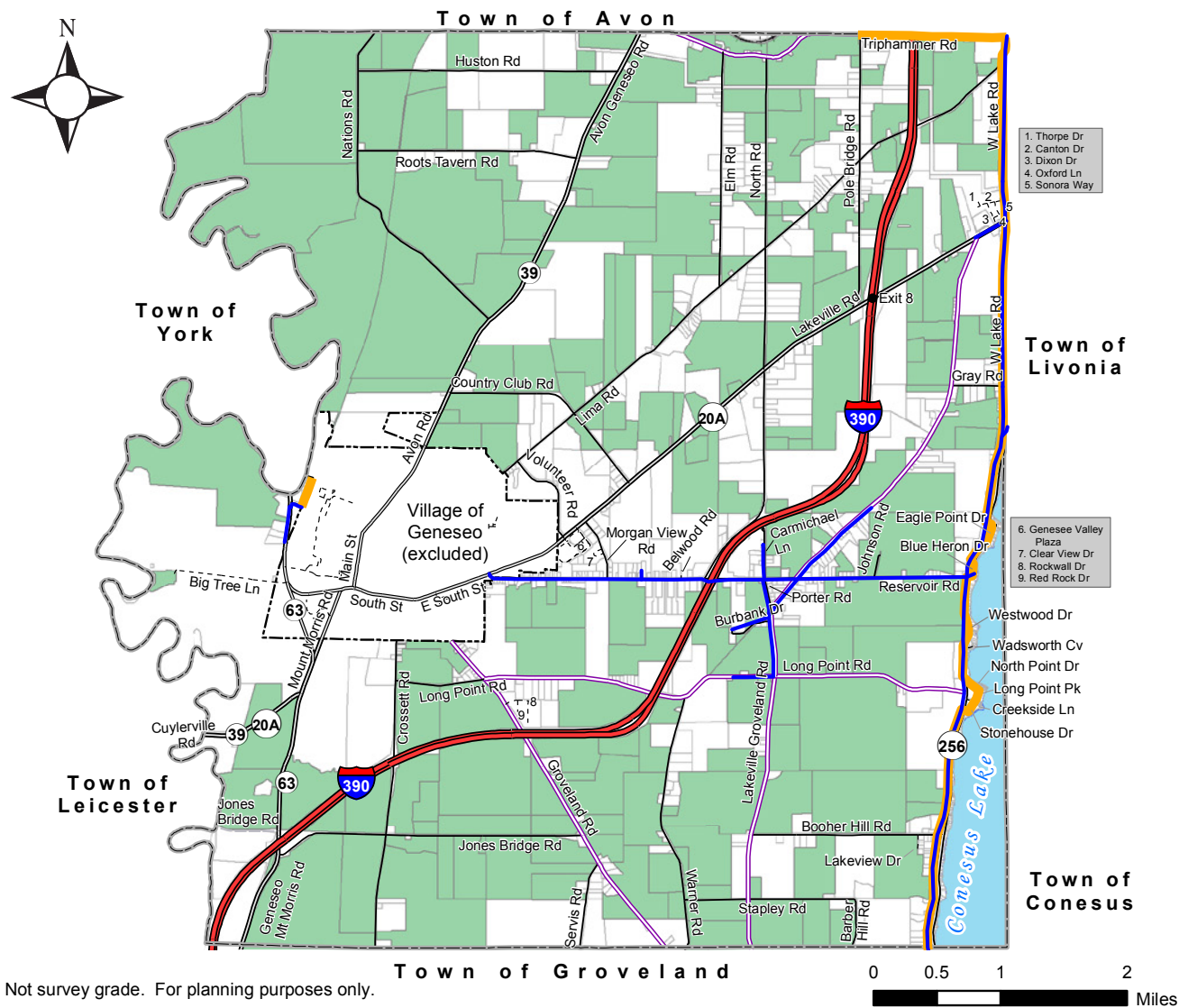
Sewer Service

Sewer service in the Town is very limited and is shown on Map 6. The sanitary sewer collection system in the Town is owned and operated by the Town of Geneseo. Most sewage from this system is conveyed to the Village of Geneseo system where it is treated at the Village’s wastewater treatment plant. Sewage on the eastern Town border, however, goes to the Livingston County sewer system in Lakeville. Public sewer is available along the following roads:

- + West Lake Road from the southern town boundary to the northern town boundary;
- + Morgan View Road;
- + Route 20A from Morgan View Road to the Village boundary (Primarily on an easement); and
- + Volunteer Road from Rt 20A to Lima Road.

There is also sewer service provided by the Village of Geneseo in the Town near the western Village boundary in the vicinity of Riverside Drive. There are no plans for additional service areas to be added in the near future.

Map 6: Water & Sewer Service





Agricultural Profile

Zoning Summary

Geneseo’s zoning requirements are contained in Chapter 106 of the Town Code. The Town currently has eleven zoning classifications represented on its official Zoning Map (shown on Map 7). The permitted and specially permitted uses are articulated through a system of 25 use classes. Agricultural uses are specially permitted via Use Classes 7 and 8.

According to the Town Code:

- + Use Class 7 permits, “agricultural and open space uses, including the production of agricultural, nursery, forest products and other agricultural operations, farm ponds, fire protection ponds, golf courses and landscaped areas.”
- + Use Class 8 permits, “animal hospitals, veterinary clinics, riding academies, stables of the boarding or breeding of horses, cows or other farm animals, animal kennels, livestock arenas and sales arenas and related accessory uses, camps, parks and recreation areas, game and hunting areas, cemeteries and mortuaries and farm wineries.”

~ During the Drafting of this Plan, the Town undertook a comprehensive Zoning Code Update, which was completed in November of 2016 ~

Agricultural uses are specially permitted in the Agricultural (A) and Residential (R) Districts (shown in white on the zoning map) and in the Highway Residential District along Route 20A (shown using green stripes). As the zoning map indicates, the A and R District encompasses a vast majority of the Town. Within this district any parcel under three (3) acres in size is classified as Residential. Any parcel larger than three (3) acres is considered Agricultural.

As of the writing of this Plan, the Town Code was updated and the Use Class System eliminated in favor of a more traditional framework that consists of districts, purpose statements, permitted uses, specially permitted uses and dimensional requirements. More information on the Zoning Code Update can be found on page 54.

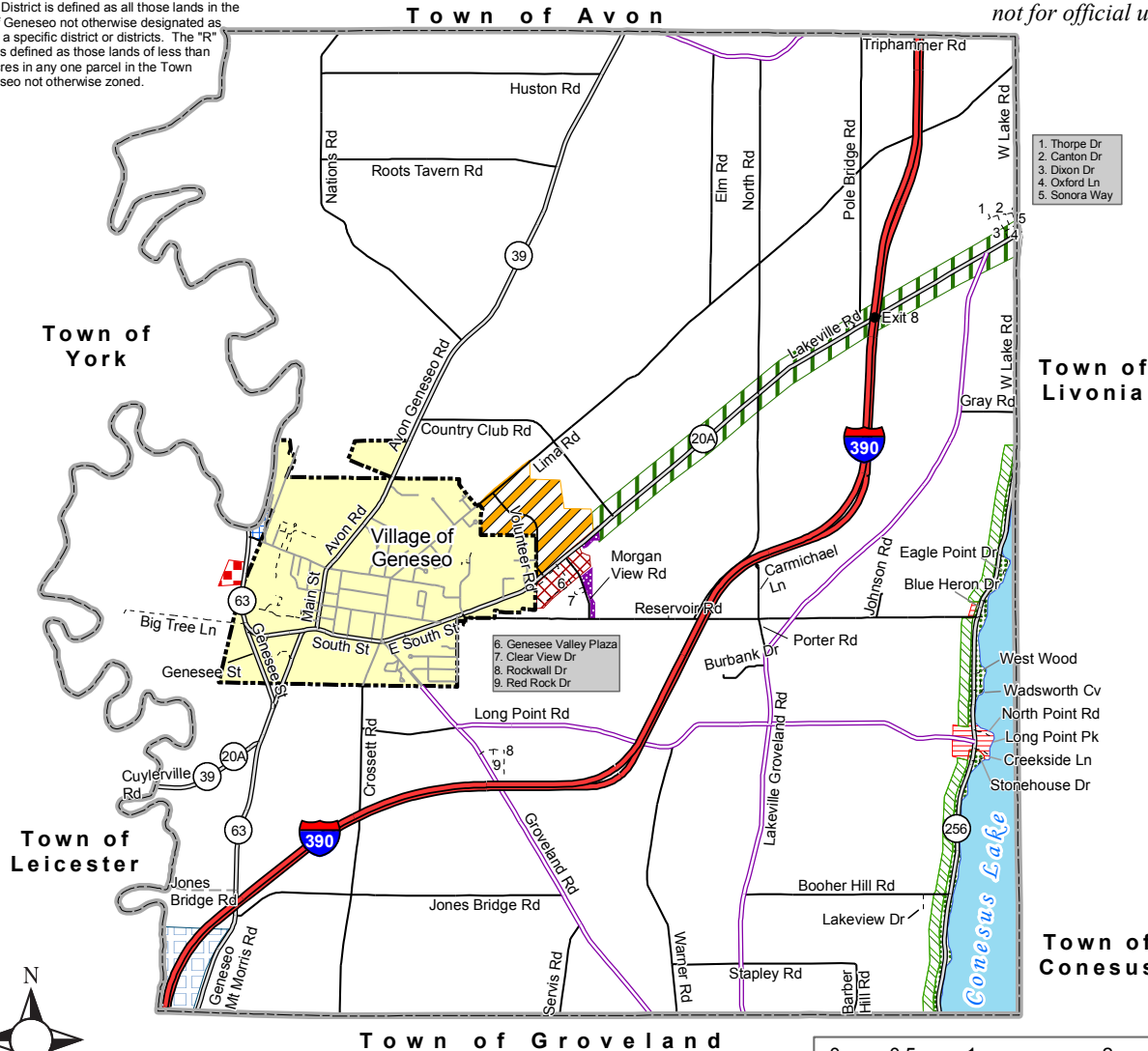
Map 7: Existing Town Zoning Map



* The Agricultural (A) and Residential (R) Districts are depicted in the same manner on this map. The "A" District is defined as all those lands in the Town of Geneseo not otherwise designated as being in a specific district or districts. The "R" District is defined as those lands of less than three acres in any one parcel in the Town of Geneseo not otherwise zoned.

DRAFT
not for official use

Town of Geneseo Zoning Map



1. Thorpe Dr
2. Canton Dr
3. Dixon Dr
4. Oxford Ln
5. Sonora Way

6. Genesee Valley Plaza
7. Clear View Dr
8. Rockwall Dr
9. Red Rock Dr

- Agricultural (A) & Residential (R)
- Highway Residential (H)
- Lake Residential (LR)
- Lake Shore (L)
- Business (B)
- Highway Commercial (HC)
- Lake Neighborhood Business (LNB)
- Low Intensity Office (OFF)
- Gateway Overlay District (GO)
- General Industrial (G)
- Industrial Use (F)
- Town Boundary
- Village Boundary
- Lake
- Expressway
- State Highway
- County Highway
- Town Road
- Village Road
- Seasonal Road
- Private Road

Map is for general planning purposes only.

Map prepared by the Livingston County Planning Department: December 2003 (rev. Apr 2011, Jan 2012)

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Agricultural Policy Framework



Our Agricultural Policy

Introduction

A successful Farmland Protection Plan is crafted and implemented on multiple levels, addressing the short- and long-term needs of the agricultural environment and community, while also providing varying levels of detail. In an effort to accomplish this, the Town of Geneseo 2016 FPP Agricultural Policy Framework is comprised of the following elements:

Policy Statement

A general statement of a future condition towards which actions are aimed. It should address a specific area or issue facing the community. Policies should not dramatically change over time, but rather be consistent throughout the planning horizon. Ideally, the agricultural policy contained in this plan should be useful for the 10-year planning horizon.

Objectives

A measurable action statement to be accomplished in pursuit of the policy, it refers to some specific aspiration that is reasonably attainable. Think in terms of action words like “increase,” “develop,” or “preserve.” It should be noted that the Town may already be undertaking some of the objectives articulated in this plan, and wish to ensure that they continue to do so over the next decade. The general lifespan of an objective is 6 to 10 years.

Implementation Items

A specific proposal to do something that relates directly to accomplishing an objective. It can take the form of a plan, project, or program. Implementation items can address both short- and long-term objectives with a lifespan ranging from one to 10 years, depending on the item. To assist the Town with taking action on the implementation items listed in this plan, they have been organized into implementation matrices as seen in the example below.

Implementation Items	Priority	Point of Contact	Potential Partners
1)			
2)			



It is the policy of the Town of Geneseo to uphold our agricultural heritage as a priority in the community's vision for the future. We will support our premiere farmland industries through the continued promotion of their economic, aesthetic, and cultural values. We recognize that the success of our Town is rooted in the growth of our harvest, husbandry, and equine operations. The prosperity of these operations directly impacts our community's wellbeing by providing local sustenance, jobs, a strong tax base, and pastoral open space. In order to protect the future of our agricultural community, the Town will employ sound development practices and land use regulations that cultivate economically viable and sustainable enterprises.

Policy Objectives

- A.** Ensure that the *infrastructure* necessary to support our agricultural community is in place and properly maintained.
- B.** Develop policies that support our *farm operations as sustainable business enterprises* and help create demand for our agricultural products in national and international markets.
- C.** Increase *community awareness* of our agricultural operations and their economic and social importance within the Town and across the region.
- D.** Employ *local tools, policies, and regulations* that protect prime soils and farmland and support sustainable agricultural activities.
- E.** Maintain *strong governmental partnerships* with the farming community to ensure our agricultural and environmental needs are well understood and represented.



Objective A Infrastructure

Ensure that the infrastructure necessary to support our agricultural community is in place and properly maintained.

Implementation Items	Priority	Point of Contact	Potential Partners
1) Work with the Village, County, and State to establish key routes for farming equipment along secondary roadways and make necessary improvements to decrease use of major highways, such as Route 20A.	<i>Medium/High</i>	Town Highway Superintendent	County Highway Department, NYSDOT
2) Complete roadway design improvements, such as increased shoulder widths, that would more comfortably accommodate equine and farm vehicle use and decrease potential conflicts with traffic.	<i>Medium/High</i>	Town Highway Superintendent	County Highway Department, NYSDOT
3) Clear and maintain drainage facilities on a regular basis.	<i>Medium</i>	Town Highway Superintendent	Private Property Owners
4) Continue to review building permit applications to ensure proper drainage patterns.	<i>Medium</i>	Town CEO	Town Highway Department, Private Property Owners
5) Relocate mailboxes and upgrade access drives to farm fields as part of road maintenance projects.	<i>Low</i>	Town Highway Superintendent	Town Highway Department, USPS
6) Ensure that future infrastructure planning efforts address the constraints imposed by the NYS Agricultural District Program.	<i>Low</i>	Town Highway Superintendent	NYS Agriculture and Markets

Acronyms - CEO: Code Enforcement Officer, NYSDOT: New York State Department of Transportation, USPS: United States Postal Service.





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Objective B Agribusiness

Develop policies that support our farm operations as sustainable business enterprises and help create demand for our agricultural products in national and international markets.

Implementation Items	Priority	Point of Contact	Potential Partners
<p>1) Work with the County and its partners to implement the following recommendations contained in the Livingston County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan to foster more profitable farming operations in Geneseo:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop an Agribusiness Retention Expansion and Attraction Plan. b. Enhance Business Development Programs and More Fully Incorporate Agricultural Needs. c. Expand Education and Training Programs. d. Support Entrepreneurship and On-Farm Skills Development. e. Support Broadened Access to Capital. 	<i>High</i>	TB Liaison	LC Planning Department
<p>2) Develop educational programs for local farmers, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Informational guide for new operators. b. Business management and marketing tools. c. New technology and best practices instruction. 	<i>Medium</i>	TB Liaison	LC-FB
<p>3) Provide resources to farms and other agricultural operations to help improve their business development and marketing strategies.</p>	<i>Medium</i>	TB Liaison	LC-FB
<p>4) Identify ways to connect smaller operations to regional distribution centers.</p>	<i>Low</i>	TB Liaison	LC-FB, Distribution Center Operators
<p>5) Continue to support the FFA program through the Genesee Valley Educational Partnership (GVEP).</p>	<i>Low</i>	TB Liaison	GVEP



Implementation items	Priority	Point of Contact	Potential Partners
6) Utilize relationship with the Chamber of Commerce to promote agriculture as an economic enterprise.	<i>High</i>	TB Liaison	LC Chamber of Commerce
7) Work with neighboring agricultural communities and the County to develop a regional marketing strategy for local agriculture.	<i>High</i>	*TBD	LC Chamber of Commerce, LC Economic Development
8) Assist operators in identifying succession options and other retirement plans.	<i>Medium</i>	*TBD	Private Investment/ Retirement Firms
9) Expand upon direct-to-market sales opportunities in the Town (e.g. Community Supported Agriculture [CSA] operations, etc.)	<i>Medium</i>	*TBD	LC-FB, LC Chamber of Commerce
10) Continue to develop relationships with neighboring communities for opportunities to go to market.	<i>Medium</i>	*TBD	AFPB
11) Promote micro-farming practices for smaller, local yield distribution.	<i>Medium</i>	*TBD	LC-FB, NYS Agriculture and Markets
12) Assist agricultural operators with identifying and applying for various grant opportunities.	<i>Low</i>	*TBD	GVC, NYS Agriculture and Markets, Grant Writer

Acronyms - AFPB: Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board (Livingston County), FB: Farm Bureau, GVC: Genesee Valley Conservancy, GVEP: Genesee Valley Educational Partnership, LC: Livingston County, TB: Town Board.

***TBD: To be Determined. This indicates that it was deemed appropriate to identify the Point of Contact in the future as these implementation items are initiated by the Town.**





Objective C Community Awareness

Increase community awareness of our agricultural operations and their economic and social importance within the Town and across the region.

Implementation Items	Priority	Point of Contact	Potential Partners
1) Ensure realtors understand and make prospective buyers aware of the potential for conflicts between residential and farm uses.	<i>High</i>	Town CEO	AFT, Local Real Estate Agents
2) Develop an advisory committee or neighborhood group to act as liaison between lakefront residents and the adjacent farming community.	<i>High</i>	Agricultural Advisory Committee	AFPB, LC-FB, CCE-LC, Conesus Lake Association
3) Work with the County and its partners to implement the following recommendations contained in the Livingston County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan to promote awareness in Geneseo: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Create an Outreach and Public Relations Program. b. Promote Understanding and Appreciation of Livingston County Agriculture to the Non-Farm Public. 	<i>Medium</i>	*TBD	LC-FB, AFPB
4) Work with the Geneseo Central School District to develop more opportunities for agricultural education and exposure.	<i>Medium</i>	*TBD	Board of Education
5) Provide new residents with informational packets about what it means to live in an agricultural community.	<i>Medium</i>	Town CEO	AFT, Local Real Estate Agents



Community Awareness



Implementation Items	Priority	Point of Contact	Potential Partners
6) Educate the community of the use of pesticides and fertilizers by homeowners and agriculture operations, especially along the lakefront.	<i>Medium</i>	*TBD	Conesus Lake Association, Conesus Lake Watershed Council
7) Continue to support the Geneseo Farmer's Market each summer and fall.	<i>Low</i>	Geneseo Farmer's Market	LC Chamber of Commerce, Village of Geneseo
8) Continue to support Livingston County Farm Fest each year and increase local operation participation to showcase the diverse agricultural community of Geneseo.	<i>Low</i>	LC-FB	Farm Fest Participants and Organizers
9) Explore the desirability of a community garden program.	<i>Low</i>	*TBD	CCE-LC, Local Farmers, SUNY at Geneseo, Village of Geneseo
10) Continue to support the Chamber of Commerce annual Farmer/Neighbor dinner.	<i>Low</i>	*TBD	LC Chamber of Commerce

Acronyms - AFPB: Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board (Livingston County), AFT: American Farmland Trust, CCE-LC: Cornell Cooperative Extension (Livingston County), FB: Farm Bureau, LC: Livingston County, SUNY: State University of New York.

***TBD: To be Determined. This indicates that it was deemed appropriate to identify the Point of Contact in the future as these implementation items are initiated by the Town.**





Objective D

Local Tools & Policies

Employ local tools, policies, and regulations that protect prime soils and farmland and support sustainable agricultural activities.

Implementation Items	Priority	Point of Contact	Potential Partners
<p>1) Support and participate in County and regional efforts to preserve farmland.</p> <p>a. Continue to participate in the County’s Purchase of Development Rights Program.</p>	<i>High</i>	*TBD	GVC, AFPB, Private Property Owners
<p>2) Adopt a Right-To-Farm Law and place indicator signage at entrances into Town.</p>	<i>High</i>	Town Supervisor	Town Attorney, TB
<p>3) Utilize soil mapping for the identification and protection of Class A and other prime soils.</p>	<i>High</i>	Town Planning Board Chair	AFPB, TPB, LCSWCD, LC Planning Department
<p>4) Review and revise zoning code to achieve the following:</p> <p>a. Incorporate strategies that preserve and protect farmland.</p> <p>b. Develop a series of Environmental Protection Overlay Districts (EPODs) to protect significant natural features and resources.</p>	<i>Medium</i>	Town CEO	TPB, ZBA, Professional Planner
<p>5) Continue to evaluate the need for more farm-friendly zoning district language for agricultural land uses.</p>	<i>Medium</i>	Town CEO	TPB, ZBA, Professional Planner
<p>6) Update the Town’s Comprehensive Plan to incorporate the policy statement, objectives, and key implementation items of this Plan.</p>	<i>Low</i>	Town Supervisor	TB, TPB





Implementation Items	Priority	Point of Contact	Potential Partners
7) Review and revise subdivision regulations to ensure that prime farmland is protected from unsustainable development practices.	<i>Medium</i>	Town Supervisor	LC Planning Department, AFPB, LC-PB, TPB, TB, Professional Planner
8) Adopt land use regulations that will protect agricultural operations from the encroachment of residential development and limit potential neighbor conflicts.	<i>Medium</i>	Town Supervisor	LC Planning Department, AFPB, TPB, TB, Professional Planner
9) Explore the demand and regulation of “wedding barn” facilities or other public assembly uses of farm buildings or property.	<i>Medium</i>	Zoning Board Chair	TB, TPB, NYS Agriculture and Markets
10) Review and revise the zoning code to better accommodate the growth of wineries and breweries and their associated industries.	<i>Low</i>	Town Supervisor	LC Planning Department, AFPB, TPB, TB, Professional Planner
11) Consider ways to preserve the affordability of farmland as development within the Town increases.	<i>Low</i>	*TBD	GVC, AFPB
12) Permit higher density development in areas already serviced by sewer and water.	<i>Low</i>	Zoning Board Chair	TPB, ZBA

Acronyms - AFPB: Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board (Livingston County), CEO: Code Enforcement Officer, FB: Farm Bureau, GVC: Genesee Valley Conservancy, LC: Livingston County, LCSWCD: Livingston County Soil and Water Conservation District, TB: Town Board, TPB: Town Planning Board, ZBA: Town Zoning Board of Appeals.

***TBD: To be Determined. This indicates that it was deemed appropriate to identify the Point of Contact in the future as these implementation items are initiated by the Town.**





Objective E Local Partnerships

Maintain strong governmental partnerships with the farming community to ensure our agricultural and environmental needs are well understood and represented.

Implementation Items	Priority	Point of Contact	Potential Partners
1) Work with the NYS DEC to help address the pressures of deer overpopulation.	<i>High</i>	*TBD	NYSDEC
2) Continue to participate in the NYS Agricultural District Program.	<i>High</i>	Town Supervisor	Property Owners, AFPB, LC Planning Department
3) To the extent possible, ensure there is farmer representation on all applicable boards and committees appointed by the Town.	<i>Medium</i>	Town Supervisor	TB
4) Support Agricultural Leadership Development as recommended in the Livingston County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan.	<i>Low</i>	*TBD	LC-FB, AFPB
5) Increase education among agricultural operators on the benefits and restrictions of the County Agricultural District.	<i>Low</i>	*TBD	AFPB, NYS Agriculture and Markets, LC Planning Department
6) Create an agricultural orientation program for new staff, officials, and all board members.	<i>Low</i>	Town Supervisor	AFPB, LC-FB, TB, TPB, NYS Agriculture and Markets



Local Partnerships



Implementation Items	Priority	Point of Contact	Potential Partners
7) Partner with the County and other regional agricultural agencies to ensure representation of the local farming community for decisions made at the state level.	<i>High</i>	Town Supervisor	AFPB, CCE-LC, LC Chamber of Commerce, NYS Agriculture and Markets
8) Continue communication and cooperation between the Town and land owners for drainage maintenance.	<i>High</i>	Town Highway Superintendent	LC-FB, NYSDEC
9) Continue to work with the County and DEC on the protection of the Genesee River and Conesus Lake Watershed.	<i>Medium</i>	Town Supervisor	TB, TPB, Conesus Lake Watershed Council
10) Continue to work with the Genesee Valley Conservancy to identify and protect significant farmlands and greenspace.	<i>Medium</i>	Town Supervisor	AFPB
11) Identify ways to facilitate cooperative efforts between operations (sale/trade of manure or feed, etc).	<i>Low</i>	*TBD	AFPB, LC-FB
12) Work with local, county, and state law enforcement agencies to mitigate traffic conflicts and safety issues associated with the movement of farm equipment on major roadways.	<i>Low</i>	Town Highway Superintendent	NYS DOT, LC Highway Department, Town Highway Department

Acronyms - AFPB: Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board (Livingston County), CCE-LC: Cornell Cooperative Extension (Livingston County), FB: Farm Bureau, LC: Livingston County, NYSDEC: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, NYSDOT: New York State Department of Transportation, TB: Town Board, TPB: Town Planning Board.

***TBD: To be Determined. This indicates that it was deemed appropriate to identify the Point of Contact in the future as these implementation items are initiated by the Town.**





Key Recommendations



Key Recommendations

Introduction

One of the primary roles that the Town has in achieving the previously identified agricultural policy is to pursue the implementation of the actions included as part of this Plan. Although each implementation item included within this Plan is important to the success of the Town improving and supporting the existing agricultural industry, this section is intended to outline a series of key recommendations. The key recommendations have been identified as those which may have a direct and immediate impact to the future of farming and agricultural activity in Geneseo.

Key Recommendations for the Town include:

- + Identification of Agricultural Priority Areas
- + Continuation of Conservation Easement and Purchase of Development Right (PDR) Programs;
- + Consideration of a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program;
- + Update the Town Master Plan;
- + Adoption of a local Right-to-Farm Law;
- + Adoption of Land Use Controls that Protect Prime Soils & Farmland;
- + Implementation of an Agricultural Zoning District; and
- + Implementation of a Lateral Restriction Policy.

Agricultural Priority Areas

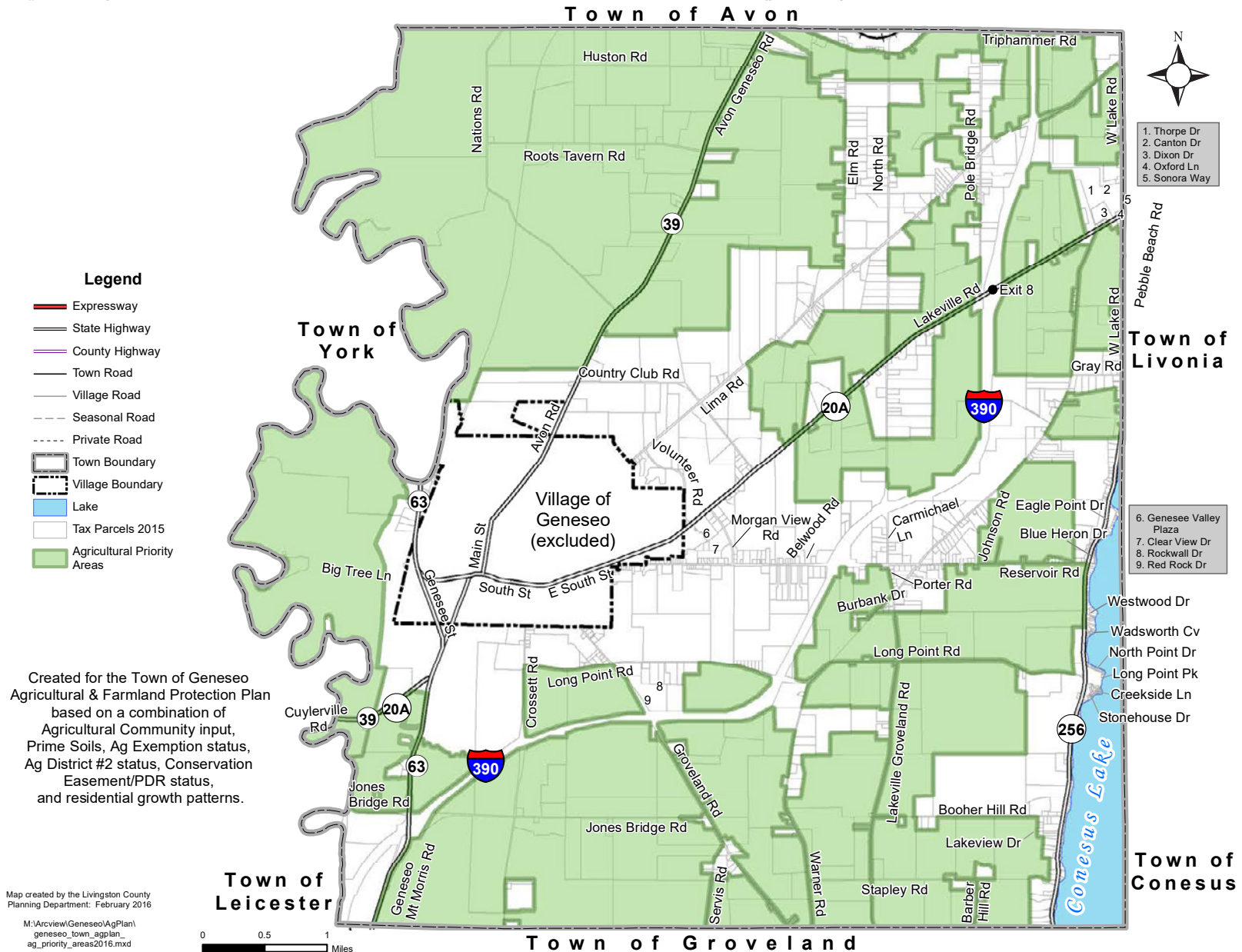
All farmland is not created equal, as some lands benefit from natural elements that improve farming conditions. These elements include conditions such as high soil quality, proper drainage conditions, and lack of steep slopes. In an effort to identify the areas within the Town that exhibit prime farmland characteristics, the following conditions were individually mapped on transparent sheets and laid over a base map of the Town.

- + Prime Soils and Soils of Statewide Importance;
- + Steep Slopes, wetlands, floodplains;
- + Agricultural Exemption Status;
- + Agricultural District #2 Status; and
- + Conservation Easement/PDR Status.

Properties that showed a significant overlap of the aforementioned conditions were identified on a single map and compared with the desired residential growth patterns of the Town (as identified by the Future Development Areas Map, page 11) and input from the farming community at an Open House held in April of 2016. The resulting Agricultural Priority Areas Map is shown on the next page (Map 8).

The term “priority” for the purposes of this map is intended to signify the presence of the previously listed criteria for consideration in future decision-making by the Town. This map will serve to inform future agricultural preservation, farmland protection, and grant acquisition efforts.

Map 8: Agricultural Priority Areas





Key Recommendations

Conservation Easements

Ownership of land includes a suite of legally recognized rights including the right to subdivide, develop, and farm. Property owners may choose to surrender a portion of these rights through a variety of programs in an effort to protect the land for future generations. These rights can be donated to, sold to, or obtained (through the development review process) by a municipality or land trust through the creation of a conservation easement. As previously stated on page 20, this easement process within the Town of Geneseo is administered by the Genesee Valley Conservancy (GVC). Under this process the landowner may continue to use the land for purposes that are not prohibited by the terms of the easement. The landowner continues to hold the deed to the property, including the right to sell, donate, or transfer the property for agricultural purposes or as open space.

A conservation easement restricts development of a property only to the extent necessary to protect the land's conservation value. For agricultural lands, the conservation value is often achieved by restricting new residential subdivisions to protect farming operations. This does not mean that new farm buildings are prohibited. A conservation easement is a carefully-crafted legal document with parameters that are flexible and can be defined by the landowner to ensure that their goals are met. When in place, agricultural easements:

- ✦ Limit future uses of the land that are inconsistent with or damage the agricultural value or productivity of the land;
- ✦ Encourage the business of farming;
- ✦ Permit the construction of new farm buildings and farm employee housing;
- ✦ Complement the right to farm provisions in the NYS Agricultural Districts Law;
- ✦ Do not require public access to the property;
- ✦ Retain private ownership of the farm.

Currently there are a number of properties within the Town that are protected via agricultural conservation easements. It is recommended that the Town continue to work with the GVC to promote the protection of local agricultural lands in this manner.

Purchase of Development Rights (PDR)

A PDR Program is a type of conservation easement program that is typically focused on farmland and open space protection. Unlike a conservation easement where land may be donated, a PDR program provides willing landowners with appropriate compensation for choosing to preserve their property and limit future development. The end goal is still the same, however, as property development rights are purchased from a landowner in order to ensure that the land is kept undeveloped.

The benefit to the property owner includes the receipt of a cash payment for agreeing to keep the land in farming production, as well as the possibly of tax benefits for a reduced assessment (based on open space or farming value rather than development potential) and in many cases, the comfort of knowing that the farm legacy will live on. Conservation easements implemented as part of a PDR program carry the same implications as those created through a donation of lands.

Typically, the value of a conservation easement equals the property's fair market value minus its restricted value (the value once it can no longer be developed). The NYS Farmland Protection Program pays farmers up to 75% of the cost to complete the PDR transaction. The remaining 25% must come from other sources, such as the land owner or land trust.



Financing Strategies

Designate a Specific Bond Amount

Some communities have successfully pursued voter approval for a designated amount of funding authorization—or bond. While funds expended under this authorization must meet the purposes under which it was bonded, the work remains to identify specific farmland preservation projects and to bring projects to closure. The advantage of this approach to funding an open space program is that the community has a commitment of funding to work on the fee-simple purchase of lands as well as for the purchase of conservation easements. However, the specific projects are not necessarily identified by the time the community votes to bond for these funds. This approach also postpones the costs of preparing the projects. The Town of Penfield, following this approach, obtained successful voter authorization and has successfully spent the \$10 million raised by the bond.

Project-Driven Bond Proposal

Some communities choose to identify specific projects first and then propose a body of projects for authorization for funding. The benefit of this approach is that the Town Board and voters know exactly what projects are proposed for funding. This approach requires up-front costs to identify and refine the proposed projects ahead of an authorization. The Towns of Pittsford, Webster and Parma identified specific parcels for investment through this process.



GVC helped to preserve 1,182 Acres of the Hamilton Family's Farmland in 2015.
Image Source: GVC

Genesee Valley Conservancy (GVC) Partnership

The GVC is the primary facilitator of conservation easement and PDR programs in Livingston County. In partnership with Livingston County, GVC seeks funding for local farmland protection projects through the NYS PDR grant program. According to the GVC webpage:

"This is a very competitive program across the State and locally. The grant pays a farmer up to 87.5% of the value of the development rights on the land and 87.5% of the project costs. Due to limited funding and the high level of interest locally, Livingston County farmers must complete a pre-application and meet a set of eligibility criteria to be considered for the State grant. These pre-applications are ranked by the Agricultural & Farmland Protection Board and the top farms are invited to work with the GVC on submitting an application to NYS."

The number of farms selected will be determined each year by funding availability, the projected budgets of the top ranking projects, and the capacity of Genesee Valley Conservancy. More information can be found at: www.co.livingston.state.ny.us OR www.geneseevalleyconservancy.org



Key Recommendations

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program

A TDR program is quite different from a PDR program (previously discussed on pages 20 and 46) in that it does not utilize public funds. A TDR program creates a system which utilizes incentives that result in the private sector funding land conservation. Essentially a TDR program designates areas where development is desirable and where it should be avoided--otherwise known as “receiving” and “sending” areas, respectively (see graphic at right).

Sending areas are designated conservation areas (such as large, contiguous areas of farmland) and receiving areas are those where future concentrated growth and development is desired. Under a TDR program, development rights for property in the sending area are transferred to the receiving area. Previously defined parameters established by the Town would assist in defining the appropriate transfer of density.

There are three potential applications of a TDR Program to preserve farmland in Geneseo. The first capitalizes on the existing development in and around the Village of Geneseo. The second and third focus on the designated Gateway Overlay and Low Density Residential (transition zone) development areas indicated on the Future Development Area Map (page 11).

These areas could form the basis for up to three receiving areas, while the areas designated as Agricultural Priority Areas would serve as sending areas (page 45). Map 9 on the following page shows the location of the potential Receiving Areas (yellow, orange, and purple) and the Sending Areas (green) for the community of Geneseo.

Conceptual Approach to a TDR Program

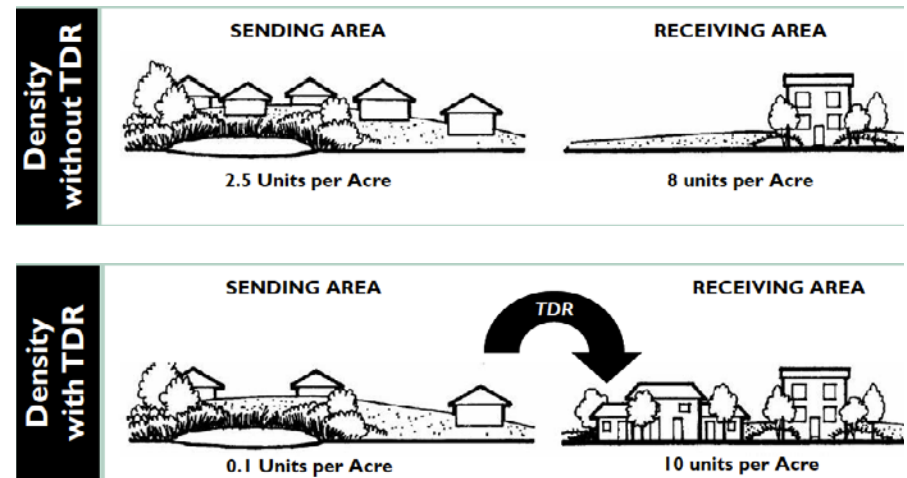
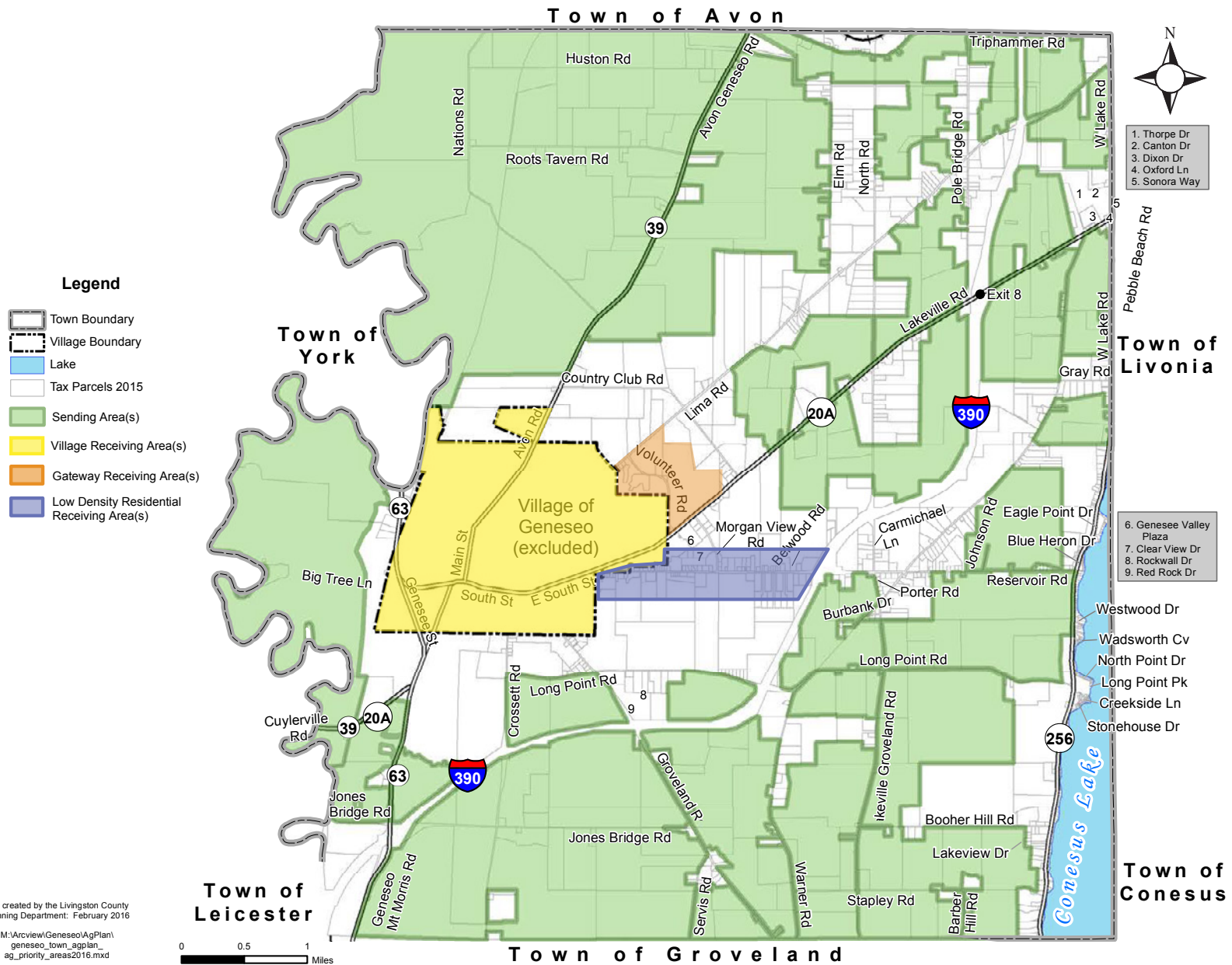


Image Source: Michigan Planning & Zoning Center

It should be noted that the size and location of the sending and receiving areas shown on Map 9 are for conceptual purposes only. Any effort to implement a TDR program in Geneseo should begin with a detailed planning effort in partnership with the Village of Geneseo, GVC, Livingston County Planning Department and Farm Bureau in order to more clearly define the appropriate sending and receiving areas in the Town.

At the time of writing this Plan, the Town and County do not consider a TDR program an appropriate approach for the preservation of farmland within Geneseo.

Map 9: Potential TDR Sending & Receiving Areas





Key Recommendations

Town Master Plan Update

As outlined on page 10, the current Master Plan adopted by the Town was completed in 2008. Since then, the Town has initiated a number of planning related efforts that have impacted local policy and law, including this Farmland Protection Plan and a Comprehensive Zoning Law Update. It is recommended that the Town update its Master Plan to reflect the newly drafted Agricultural Policy and proposed land use regulations contained within this Plan.

The Future Development Area Map (page 11) should also be updated as part of the Town's Master Planning efforts, as it may be desirable to amend the map with regard to the Agricultural Priority Areas identified as part of this process, and zoning district changes proposed as part of the 2016 Zoning Law Update.

The Town may also wish to consider redefining its Master Plan as a Comprehensive Plan as part of the update process. While traditionally the terms have been used interchangeably, over the years the approach of a Comprehensive Plan has broadened beyond physical land use and infrastructure considerations.

Policies and recommendations that address community character, resident wellbeing, and social issues are examples of additional topics covered by a modern Comprehensive Plan. Whereas, modern Master Plans typically continue to focus on the physical development of an entire community or a portion of it, such as transportation, infrastructure, or redevelopment sites.

An updated Plan that addresses a broader vision for the Town of Geneseo will help to inform future decision-making related to the health, safety, and wellbeing of both people and property. Additionally, the Town will increase its ability to compete for funding through newer initiatives, such as the Cleaner, Greener Communities program.

Right-To-Farm Law

The Town should create and adopt a local right-to-farm law aimed at maintaining a supportive farming environment by limiting conflicts between farmers and their non-farm neighbors. Such a law would support the State's Agricultural Districts Law and the protections it provides to farmers located within agricultural districts. Creating a local right-to-farm law and increasing an awareness of this law is especially useful in growing communities, such as Geneseo, to assist the community in dealing with farm and non-farm neighbor conflicts in a supportive and constructive manner. Initial discussions with elected officials and Steering Committee members indicates that there is a large amount of support for a Right-To-Farm Law and it will likely be initiated upon the adoption of this plan. Typical elements that are part of a right-to-farm law include:

- ✦ The legislative intent and purpose of the law;
- ✦ Definitions that are applicable to the law;
- ✦ A right-to-farm declaration that includes a description of acceptable agricultural practices; and
- ✦ Process and procedures to resolve conflicts.

The Town would need to establish a Farmland Advisory Committee to serve as a resource when addressing agricultural issues. Under a local right-to-farm law, the Farmland Advisory Committee would become a legal entity within the Town government to help mediate conflicts and determine what is considered acceptable farming practices.

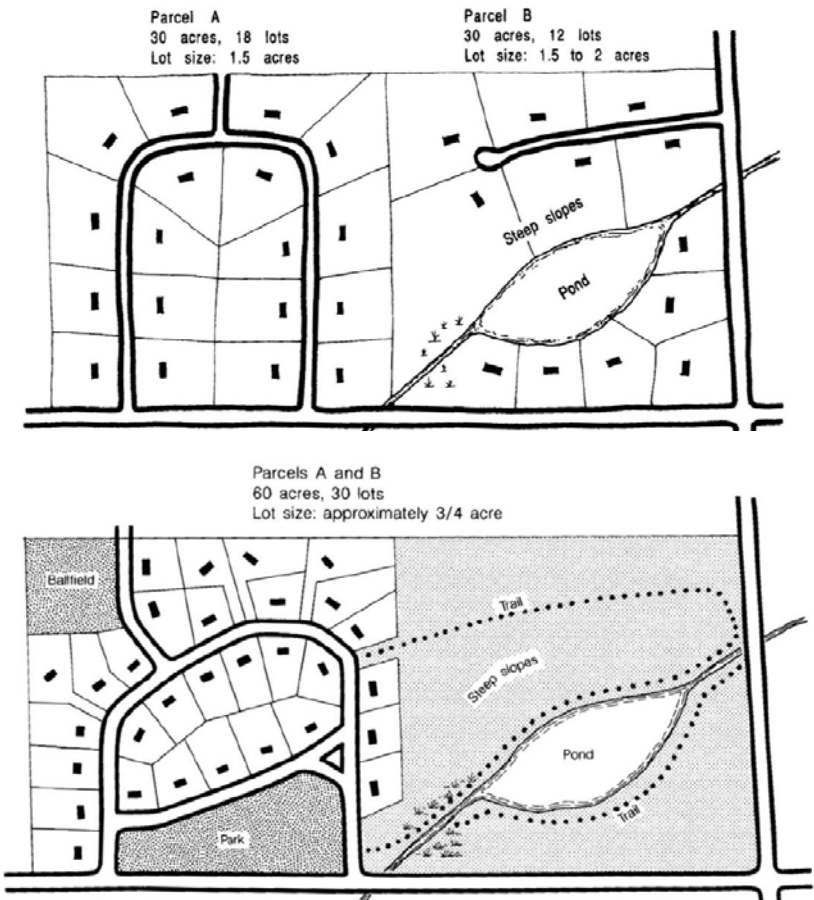


Land Use Controls that Protect Soils & Farmland

Clustering

Geneseo has incorporated the ability to develop cluster subdivisions pursuant to the provisions contained in Chapter 106 Article 5 of Town Law. Typically cluster development is defined by single-family residential subdivisions that permit a reduction in lot area and bulk requirements, provided that there are no increases in the number of lots permitted under a conventional subdivision and the resultant land area is devoted to open space. The graphics to the right illustrate how the concept of clustering can be applied to a development proposal. These sketches depict the same site developed in two different ways. The top image is a more typical approach that divides the site into large, single family lots. The lower image uses smaller lots that are clustered to avoid environmentally sensitive areas and create usable open space and other amenities.

It should be noted that clustering is typically used to preserve open space and can be used to provide needed buffers between new residential development and farming operations. However, it is generally not an effective tool to preserve prime or active farmland. In order to provide the Town with a more robust tool box to protect farmland, the Town Board may wish to consider including the following land use controls within the Town Zoning Code as well.



Source: "Rural By Design" by R. Arendt



Key Recommendations

Incentive Zoning

Incentive zoning is granted through Section 261-b of NYS Town Law:

“The system by which specific incentives or bonuses are granted, pursuant to §261-b of NYS Town Law, on condition that specific social, economic, or cultural benefits or amenities are provided to the community.”

The purpose of this law is to allow, the Town Board to make appropriate adjustments to zoning provisions such as population density, use, and bulk requirements, “for the specific purpose of preserving farmland and open space at a minimum cost to the residents and taxpayers.” It accomplishes this by authorizing the Town to accept the permanent preservation of farmland in exchange for greater development densities than those allowed in the current zoning district. At the time of the writing of this plan, the Town has not had any landowners or developers request an incentive zoning application.

Sliding Scale Zoning

“Sliding scale zoning limits the number of times that a parent parcel (a parcel existing on the date of ordinance adoption) can be split, based on its size, i.e., the larger the parcel the more splits that may occur, up to a maximum number established. Sliding scale zoning allows some non-farm residential development without special land use or other reviews. Sliding scale zoning can be useful in agricultural areas where there are significant development pressures and land speculation. The use of sliding scale zoning is most effective in areas where a wide range of parcel sizes exist and non-farm residential development has already begun to occur.”

Source: “Watershed Resource Papers” developed for the Dowagiac River Watershed Project.

Lot Area (Acres)	Max # of Subdivided Lots
At least 2 but less than 6	1
At least 6 but less than 30	2
At least 30 but less than 80	3
At least 80 but less than 130	4
At least 130 but less than 180	5
At least 180 but less than 230	6
At least 230 but less than 280	7

The scale contained in the table above is an example of the method the Town of Geneseo may wish to use to determine the number of permissible subdivisions under a sliding scale zoning approach. When utilizing sliding scale, other farm-friendly zoning regulations may be desirable as well, such as:

- + Prescribing a minimum and maximum lot size for residential uses; and
- + Requiring a larger rear setback for residential uses than for agricultural uses.



Density Requirements

A growing number of communities are using density requirements as a technique to preserve farmland. There are a wide range of density related tools that can be incorporated into a local zoning code. The most applicable to Geneseo may be a maximum residential density requirement like the one used by the Town of Seneca.

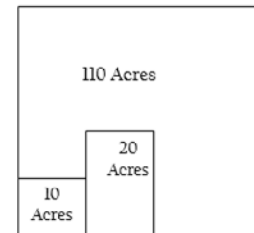
The Town of Seneca, in Ontario County, limits the amount of residential development that can occur in the Agricultural Zoning District by restricting the number of residential subdivisions based on the size of the original parcel. For parcels under 200 acres in size, Seneca uses a sliding scale zoning approach to limit residential intrusions into farmland (as shown in the code excerpt to the right). For parcels over 200 acres in size, Seneca permits one residential unit per 50 acres of land.



Where existing lot is more than 5 Acres and Less than 100 Acres in size

Example:
Existing lot = 75 Acres
1 Subdivided Lot is Permitted
Minimum Lot Size = 1 Acre

Existing lot = 140 Acres



Where existing lot is more than 100 Acres and Less than 150 Acres in size

Example:
Existing lot = 140 Acres
2 Subdivided Lots are Permitted
Minimum Lot Size = 1 Acre

Source: Town of Seneca Zoning Code 2008 - Agricultural Zoning District

“One of the greatest failures of typical zoning ordinances is that by prescribing large minimum lot sizes in rural areas of the community they are denying landowners the opportunity to subdivide in a manner that will best promote continued forest management and retention of a critical mass of agricultural land.”

-- www.des.nh.gov



Key Recommendations

Agricultural Zoning District

During the development of this Farmland Protection Plan the Town of Geneseo also conducted a comprehensive update to its Zoning Code (Chapter 106). The same consultant team was retained to complete both projects to ensure coordination between both efforts. During the FPP planning process, the Zoning Code Update was completed and adopted by the Town Board in November of 2016.

At the start of this FPP process and Zoning Code Update the potential for an Agricultural Zoning District was discussed. Throughout these planning efforts, the farming community of Geneseo came forward with the request for a designated Agricultural Zoning District as well as the addition of more farm-friendly zoning language.

Originally the Town of Geneseo Zoning Code defined its Agricultural (A) and Residential (R) District as the unmapped area outside of other designated zoning districts (see page 27).

Based on the input from the Agriculture Priority Area mapping exercise for this Plan, a portion of the priority areas were mapped as a new, independent Agricultural Zoning (AZ) District in the updated Zoning Code. Some parcels were absorbed or excluded to help create a continuous district and avoid potential spot zoning conflicts. Map 10 on the opposing page shows the Adopted 2016 Zoning Map that accompanies the Town's updated Chapter 106.

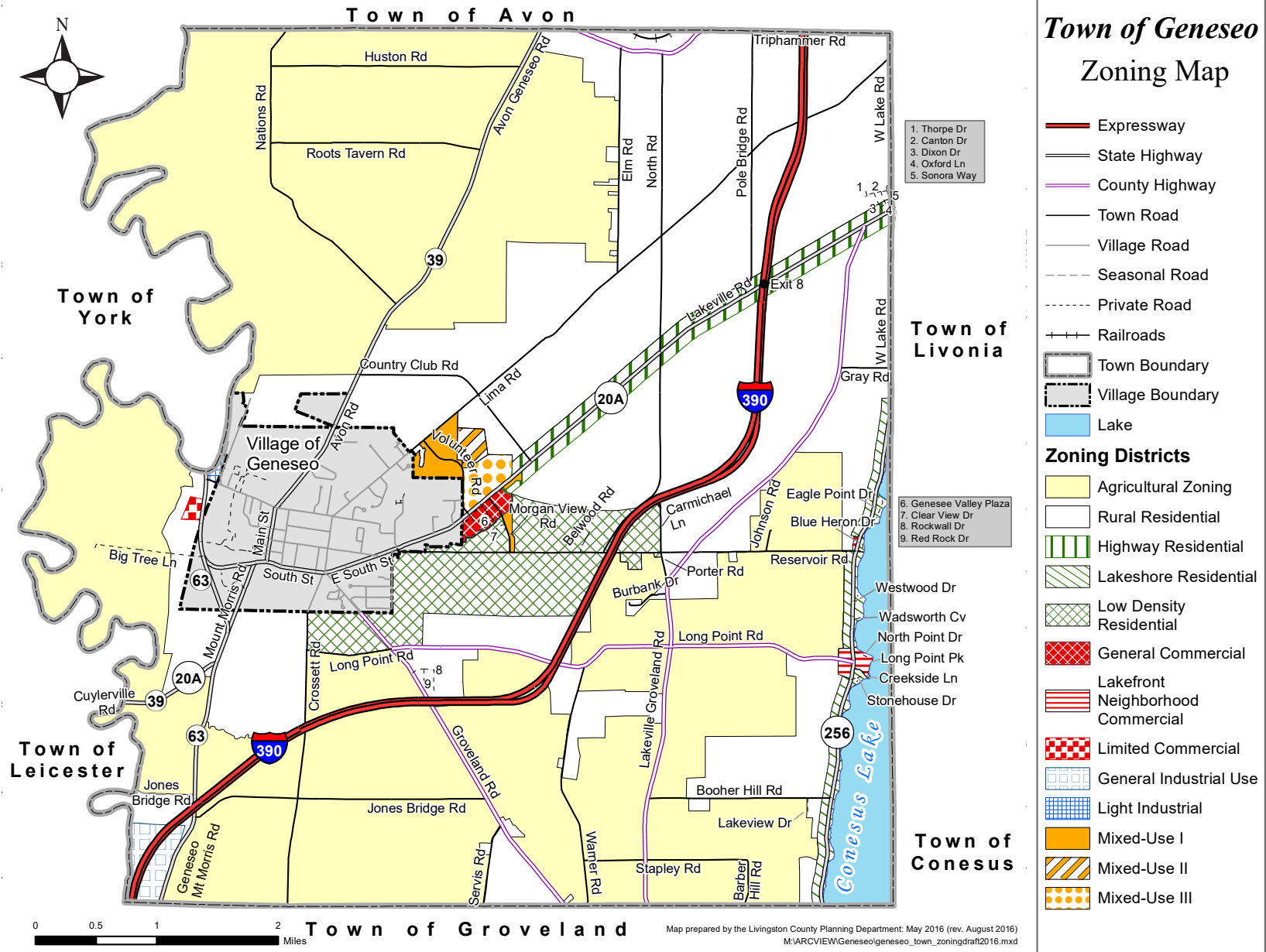
The 2016 Zoning Code includes a unique purpose statement for the AZ District, which reads as follows:

"The purpose of the AZ District is to implement the agricultural designation of the Comprehensive Plan, to protect predominantly agricultural areas from nonagricultural development pressures, to encourage the continuation of commercial agriculture and the associated operations necessary to support it, to prevent scattered nonfarm growth, to reduce land use conflicts, and to preserve the Town's open space and natural resources. Since agriculture is the intended primary use, the impacts associated with normal, reasonable and generally accepted farming practices shall not form the basis for violations under any part of this Chapter."

Although the use, dimensional, and bulk regulations applicable to the AZ District remain the same as those applied to the Rural Residential District, the inclusion of a designated AZ District lays the groundwork for the implementation of more farm-friendly zoning and regulatory approaches in the future, such as those listed on pages 51 through 53.



Map 10: Amended 2016 Zoning Map





Key Recommendations

Lateral Restriction Policy

Lateral restrictions are recommended by NYS Ag & Markets as a local policy action for municipalities to fulfill the statutory duty to minimize or avoid adverse impacts from development within a county-maintained agricultural district (see page 20 for more information on the NYS Agricultural District Program).

The purpose of a lateral restriction policy is to restrict hookups for non-farm structures to new and existing water and sewer lines that extend through a NYS agricultural district.

In working with both the County and NYS Ag & Markets, the Town developed a lateral restriction policy for the water and sewer lines along Lima, Elm, North, and Pole Bridge Roads within Agricultural District #2. This policy states:

“The only land and/or structures which will be allowed to connect to the proposed waterline (or sewer) within an agricultural district will be existing structures at the time of construction, future agricultural structures, and land and structures that have already been approved for development by the local governing body prior to the date of filing of the Notice of Intent by the municipality.”

This policy is anticipated to be adopted in December of 2018. The complete lateral restriction policy language may be found in Appendix D.



End of Plan

