

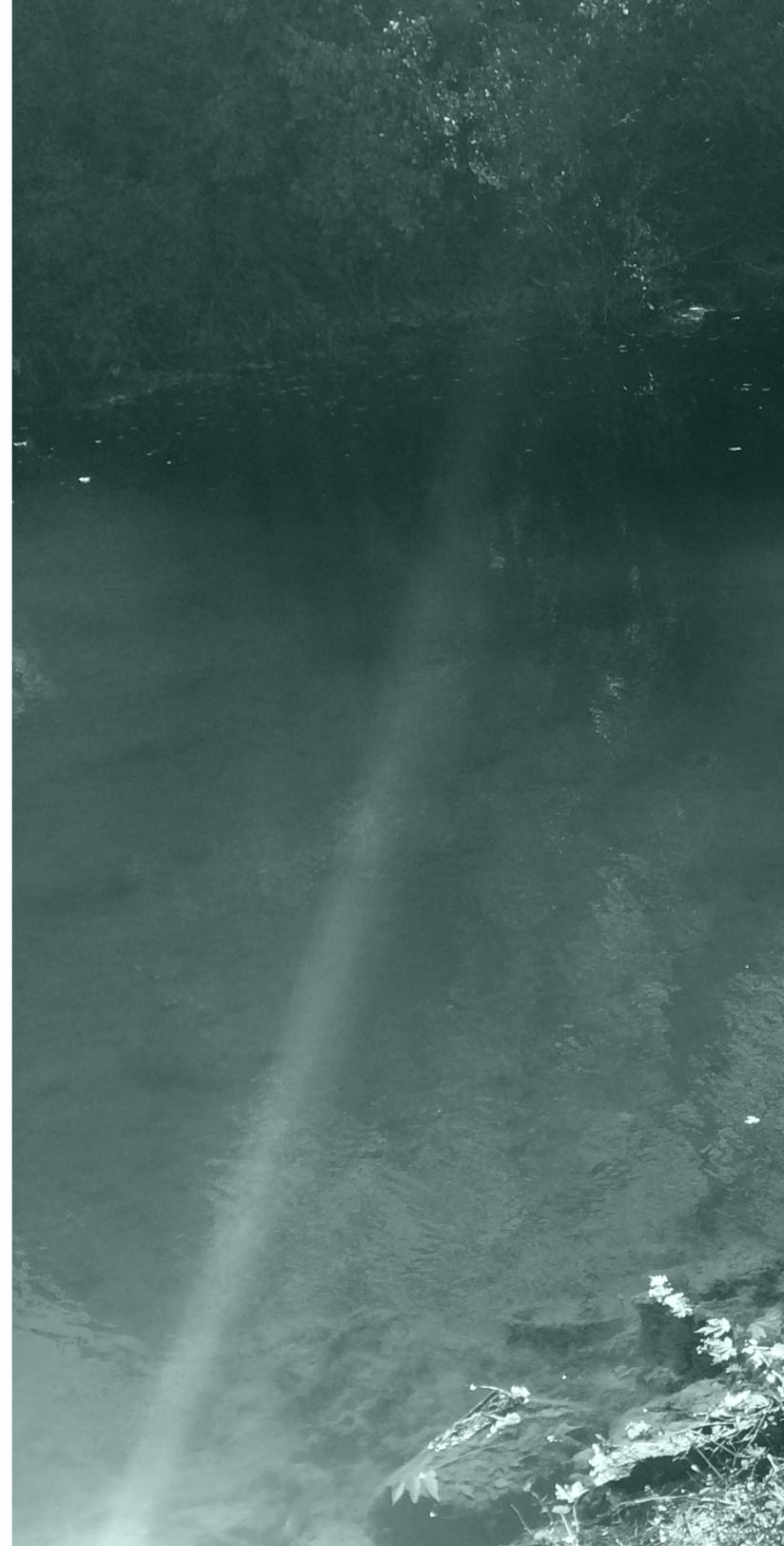


TOWN OF  
**Dewitt**

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

2017 Update

Adopted 4.24.2017





## **TOWN OF DEWITT**

Edward M. Michalenko, PhD., Supervisor  
Samuel Gordon, Director of Planning and Zoning

## **TOWN BOARD MEMBERS**

Joe Chiarenza, Jr.  
Karen Docter  
Jamie Frank  
Kerry Mannion  
Kerin Rigney  
Sam Young

## **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE COMMITTEE**

Samuel Gordon, Chair  
Christine Manchester, Secretary  
Ilana Cantrell  
Susan Fleming  
Kerry Mannion  
Michael Lazar  
Kerin Rigney  
Michael Rigney  
Steven Schroeder  
Deborah Shanahan  
Jamie Sutphen, Esquire



# CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
PURPOSE	1
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE	1
Development of the 2002 Comprehensive Plan	1
Development of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update	1
METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS	2
STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, AND PLANNING PRINCIPLES	2
Strengths	2
Weaknesses	2
Planning Principles	2
RELATED STUDIES	3
+ Figure 1–DeWitt Population Characteristics since 1990	5
<b>BACKGROUND INFORMATION</b>	<b>5</b>
POPULATION AND HOUSING	5
+ Map 1–Existing Land Use	6
EXISTING LAND USE	6
+ Map 2–Residential Neighborhoods	8
RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS AND EMPLOYMENT CENTERS	8
+ Map 3–Employment Centers	9
+ Map 4–Town of DeWitt Open Space Systems	10
NATURAL SYSTEMS AND OPEN SPACE	11
HIGHWAY TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC MOVEMENT	11
REGIONAL CONTEXT	12
General Concepts	12
Natural Resource Areas	12
Existing Communities	12
Obsolete and Vacant Sites	12

Existing Infrastructure	13
Preserve Transportation Assets	13
Wastewater Treatment	13
Highways	13
<b>POLICY, GOALS AND ACTIONS</b>	<b>15</b>
TOWN POLICY, GOALS and ACTIONS	15
GROWTH	15
EXTENSION OF UTILITIES	16
HOUSING	16
NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER	17
NON-RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT	17
NATURAL RESOURCES	18
RECREATION	18
TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION	19
ASSUMPTIONS OF THE PLAN	20
LAND USE CHARACTER AREAS	20
Hamlet Development	20
+ Map 5–Town of DeWitt Land Use Character Areas	21
Residential Development:	21
Conservation Areas	22
Parks and Recreation	23
Institutional	23
Commercial	23
Industrial	24
LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS	25
IMPLEMENTATION PROFILES	26





# INTRODUCTION

## PURPOSE

Developing a Comprehensive Plan is essential to the future of any municipality. The Comprehensive Plan serves as the primary vehicle for indentifying opportunities for economic growth and development; as well as a means for preserving and protecting community resources and character. The Comprehensive Plan for the Town of DeWitt was adopted in 1961. In 2000, the Town Planning Board obtained authorization from the Town Board to proceed with the development of a new Comprehensive Plan. This document presented a strategy and vision for the Town identifying guidelines and actions that the community would follow to achieve its goals and objectives. In 2014 the Town Board established a Comprehensive Planning Committee to review the 2002 Plan and to provide recommendations for necessary updates to the Plan.

## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

### DEVELOPMENT OF THE 2002 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

In order to best utilize limited community funds, the organizational structure for the

2002 Comprehensive Plan placed heavy emphasis on the expertise of local people already involved in planning, conservation and development issues. The Planning Board, authorized by the Town Board to be the primary body with oversight responsibilities for the project, created a Working Committee and assigned it the detailed task of preparing the Plan. The Working Committee engaged the firm Planning Environmental Research Consultants (PERC) to assist with the process of plan development. The Committee and PERC sought technical input from the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council and from committees, departments and representatives from Town government. In addition, to assure a broad perspective, a Focus Group was formed with participation from various organizations, businesses and other representatives of the larger community.

### DEVELOPMENT OF THE 2016 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

In 2014 the DeWitt Town Board established a Comprehensive Planning Committee to review and provide recommended updates for the Comprehensive Plan that was adopted in 2002. The committee was comprised of representatives from the DeWitt Town Board, DeWitt Town Planning Board, the Director of Planning and Zoning; as well as assistance from the Syracuse Onondaga County Planning

Agency (SOCPA). The review was intended to identify whether the Town had experienced substantial changes from the assumptions that were identified in the 2002 report. The committee also reviewed the implementation plan to identify and recommend changes based on the completion of work tasks since 2002; or new strategies that should be employed based on changing circumstances. A DRAFT update document was circulated to the various boards and committees of the Town of DeWitt prior to finalizing the document. Changes were made to the document based on feedback from those internal committees prior to recommendation to the Town Board.

## METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS

Understanding the underlying community values that will shape decisions about future land use and development is crucial to a successful planning program. Recognizing this, one of the first tasks undertaken by the Working Committee in 2002 was the identification of shared values that would guide the planning process. To develop this understanding, a simple value-scan exercise and planning philosophy survey were completed by the committee. These results were combined with a more detailed discussion about needs.

Committee members were able to develop consensus positions on a number of concepts that would form the basis for the Plan. These included (1) the recognition that quality of life values are an important characteristic of the Town, (2) the need to evaluate the

Town's natural resources and determine which are most important to preserve, (3) the importance of improving and cleaning up deteriorated properties, (4) the importance of maintaining DeWitt's neighborhood identities and (5) the positive impact that strong land use and development regulations can have on the future growth and development of the Town. The complexity of planning issues facing the Town was emphasized by the need to blend growth and economic development with neighborhood improvement and open space preservation.

## STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, AND PLANNING PRINCIPLES

Working through the process of consensus-building led to identification of the Town's Strengths and Weaknesses and the development of a set of Planning Principles that guided the planning process throughout. Strengths, weaknesses and planning principles, as outlined below, reflect the current core values of the community as interpreted by the 2002 Working Committee and the Focus Group; these were reconfirmed and/or updated by the 2014-2016 Comprehensive Plan Update Committee.

### STRENGTHS

- + Good value in home prices
- + Excellent school systems and choices

- + Central location; good transportation system
- + Accessible shopping, as well as public and private recreational resources within Town limits and nearby
- + Safe living environment
- + Diversified real estate tax base
- + High level of public services (i.e. infrastructure, highways, etc.)
- + Preservation of undeveloped open space areas

### WEAKNESSES

- + Arterial highways divide community
- + Pass-through traffic using DeWitt as a corridor
- + Limited pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure
- + Limited connectivity within the parks and open space system
- + Limited number of small neighborhood parks (i.e. pocket parks)
- + Inadequate buffering of residential areas adjacent to commercial/industrial areas.

### PLANNING PRINCIPLES

A planning approach that reflects realistic goals and reasonable expectations with regard to the following:

#### Private Property

- + preservation of property values

- + improved enforcement techniques
- + long-term community improvement and economic development
- + the quality of older neighborhoods to be maintained and strengthened to ensure that they remain attractive to homeowners
- + badly deteriorated vacant properties to be eliminated and the level of property maintenance in older areas to be upgraded and increased as feasible and appropriate

**Traffic**

- + Cut-through traffic in residential neighborhoods to be reduced
- + Sub-standard intersections to be improved and traffic flow on collector and arterial roads to be improved by working cooperatively with County and State agencies

**Open Space**

- + Establish strategies for incorporating open space and important natural resources into future development proposals and capital investment planning

**New Development**

- + design elements to be considered that will improve the quality of renovation projects and new development: lighting, landscaping, sidewalks, open space preservation, etc.
- + visual pollution to be reduced through improved sign regulations, use of underground utility connections, architectural review procedures and similar measures

**RELATED STUDIES**

An analysis of traffic and transportation systems and conditions constitutes a very important part of the comprehensive planning process. In DeWitt, traffic movement is a major factor in any assessment of current conditions and plans for the future.

To provide this analysis for the 2002 plan, the Town engaged the assistance of the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council.

The SMTC traffic review and analysis resulted in an extensive and detailed report containing 10 chapters and 12 maps. SMTC examined and evaluated existing data including an analysis of traffic movement in and through the town, accident and congestion locations, public transit and possible future traffic volumes on the DeWitt road system. Also included are chapters covering traffic calming measures, bicycle and pedestrian transportation, air transportation, rail and truck transportation, water transportation and implementation of the State regional canal plans. Four potential traffic scenarios were analyzed to provide an indication of the nature and extent of DeWitt traffic conditions in the future.

A summary of the SMTC study was included as Appendix C of the 2002 Comprehensive Plan report. The full study and report as prepared by SMTC is available for review at the DeWitt Town Hall.





# BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This section of the Plan contains demographic information about the Town of DeWitt as well as information on existing land use, infrastructure and natural features.

## POPULATION AND HOUSING

Figure 1 shows how population has changed since 1990 in Onondaga County, the Town of DeWitt and comparison communities. Onondaga County as a whole gained population since 2000, while DeWitt's population, along with the Town of Manlius, appears to have leveled off since 2000. Note that figures for DeWitt exclude the Village of East Syracuse.

Onondaga County lost almost 10,000 residents between 1990 and 2000. The City of Syracuse lost over 10% of its population during that timeframe. Town population remained relatively stable over that time.

The number of households in DeWitt grew from 7,122 in 1970, to 8,675 in 2000, and 10,329 in 2010. At the same time, household size was gradually declining from 3.31 persons in 1970, to 2.40 persons in 2000, to 2.35 in 2010.

The occupational mix for residents of DeWitt has remained quite constant over the years with approximately 75 percent employed in managerial, professional, technical, sales or administrative positions.

Median household income in DeWitt grew from \$14,993 in 1970, to \$32,276 in 1990, to \$46,759 in 2000, to \$55,349 in 2010, and \$63,175 in 2014.

**FIGURE 1—DeWitt Population Characteristics since 1990**

Place	1990	2000	% Change	2010	%Change	2013*	%Change
Onondaga County	468,973	458,336	-2.3	467,026	1.9	467,202	0.0
Syracuse	163,860	146,435	-10.6	145,170	-0.9	144,742	-0.3
DeWitt**	21,805	21,764	-0.2	22,754	4.5	22,704	-0.2
T. Manlius**	17,899	19,515	9.0	19,844	1.7	19,852	0.0
Cicero**	23,499	25,961	10.5	29,641	14.2	29,758	0.4
E. Syracuse	3,343	3,178	-4.9	3,084	-3.0	3,063	-0.7
V. Manlius	4,764	4,819	1.2	4,704	-2.4	4,689	-0.3
Fayetteville	4,248	4,190	-1.4	4,373	4.4	4,372	0.0
Minoa	3,745	3,348	-10.6	3,449	3.0	3,470	0.6

Source: U.S. Census of Population 1990 - 2010

\*Source of 2013 estimates: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 5-Year American Community Survey

\*\*Town figures exclude villages

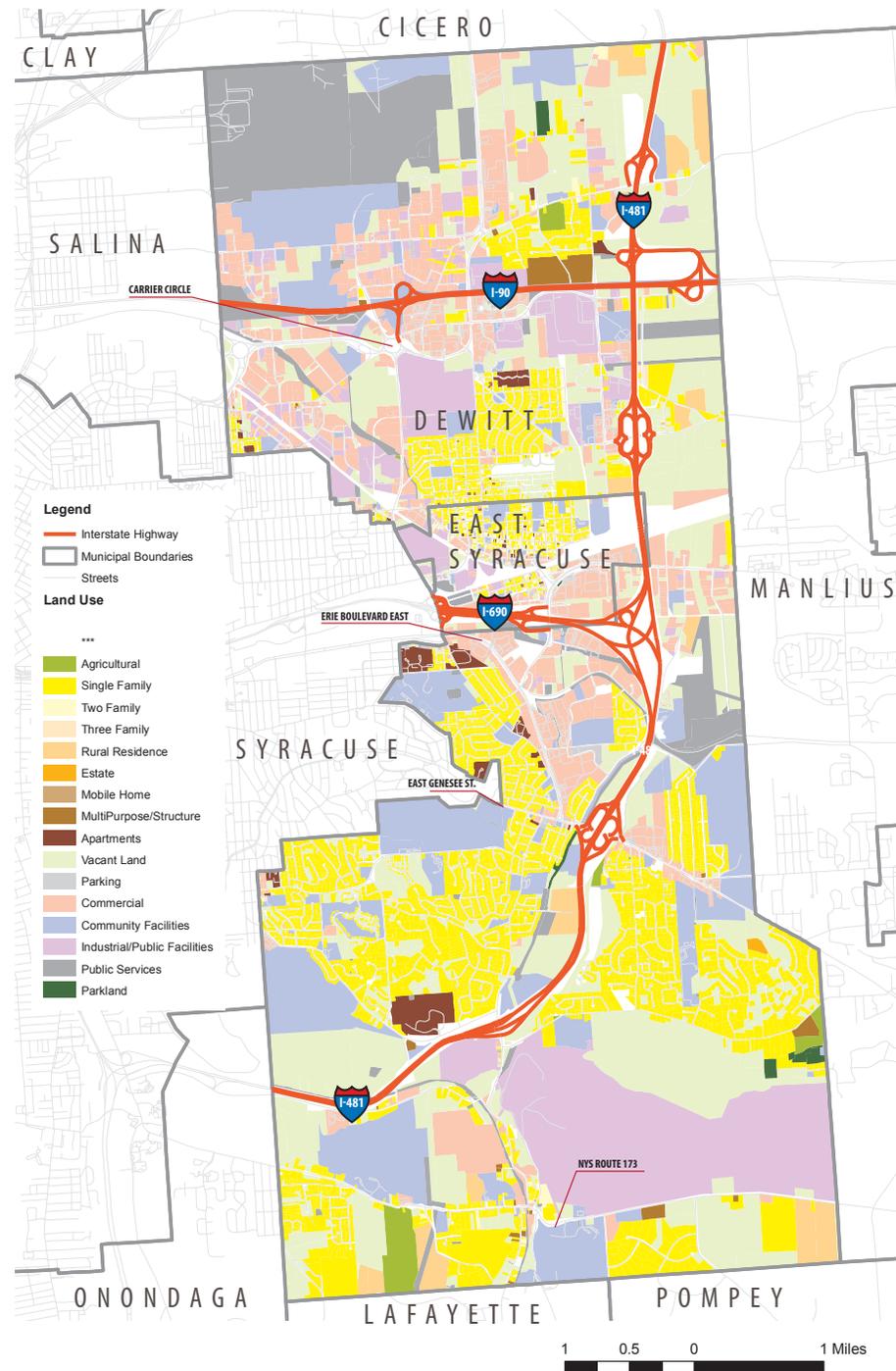
**MAP 1—Existing Land Use**

At the opposite end of the spectrum, 474 of the Town's household units were considered to be below the poverty level in 1990 which, for a family of four, was \$12,674, which increased to 810 households considered being below poverty level in 2013. (Poverty status is determined by a number of indicators and is related to family and household size).

Between 1970 and 2000, the number of housing units in the Town increased from 7,256 to 9,191; and by 2010 housing units had increased to 10,967. Continuing the historical trend, ownership continues to be the most popular form of tenancy, with over 75 percent of the 8,675 occupied units in the Town owner-occupied in 2000, 7,436 of 10,329 occupied units were owner occupied in 2010 (72%), and 7,179 of 10,095 occupied units considered owner occupied in 2014 (71%). The Town's housing supply consists mostly of single-family homes, accounting for slightly over 71 percent in 1990, 68 percent in 2010, and 70 percent in 2014. Mobile homes accounted for 4 percent of the units in 2000 and 2 percent of units in 2014. Apartment complexes with between 3 and 9 units accounted for 13.6 percent in 2000, and approximately 13.1 percent in 2014. There were 636 units in complexes of 10 to 49 units, about 7 percent of the total in 2000; and 838 units in complexes of 10+ units in 2014, about 8 percents of the total.

## EXISTING LAND USE

Existing Land Use information on Map 1 is based on the uniform classification code developed by the NYS Office of Real Property Services as recorded in the Onondaga County Real



Property File in July 2016. There are nine basic categories of land use and a number of sub-categories. Each parcel in DeWitt is assigned to one of these nine land use categories. Development since July 2016 will not be reflected on Map 1.

Like other suburban communities that have developed over many decades, land in DeWitt is used for a wide variety of purposes. While political boundaries define DeWitt and separate it from its neighbors, land use patterns on the east side of Syracuse blend into those of this adjacent suburb.

The land use map illustrates the great diversity of DeWitt. Graphically, the Town appears to be roughly divided by the diagonal of East Genesee Street. To the north are large concentrations of commercial and industrial activities and, to a lesser extent, residential neighborhoods and scattered-site housing. Except for the quarry, housing dominates the character of developed land south of Genesee Street. It is reasonable to expect that these general development patterns will continue in the future.

Large areas of land in DeWitt are occupied by portions of the region's arterial highway system. This complex of highways facilitates high-speed, high-volume traffic of all types and promotes development; it also effectively segments the Town and creates significant visual and physical barriers. These highway-related impacts significantly affect local land use decisions and community character.

Hancock International Airport, located in the northwest corner of the Town, and the Jamesville Quarry, near the southeast corner,

are the largest single-purpose parcels in DeWitt. The economically dynamic activities resulting from the presence of these large-scale land uses have influenced the development potential of adjacent lands and will continue to do so.

Land classified as some form or variety of "commercial" uses dominates development in the geographic center of DeWitt between Erie Boulevard and Routes 481 and 690. Similar major concentrations of commercial uses are located west of Thompson Road and north of the Thruway. These concentrations are large employment centers and heavy traffic generators. These commercial areas are dominated by automobile oriented low-density suburban style office parks, retail strip shopping centers, and single-use commercial retail/office parcels. The Erie Boulevard East corridor in particular is bordered by residential neighborhoods to the west and south and better connections could be made to these adjacent neighborhoods through bike and pedestrian accommodations, as well as through improvements to the Erie Boulevard East corridor itself to include landscaping, special lighting, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Mixed-use development should be studied along this corridor.

Aside from the Jamesville Quarry operation, land classified as "industrial" is largely concentrated between the Thruway and the northern boundary of East Syracuse. This area was once dominated by two large industrial operations and provided the greatest concentration of jobs in DeWitt. The southern border of the Jamesville Quarry along route 173 should be studied to provide for the appropriate protection of viewsheds

along that corridor as well as to provide for the compatibility of uses with the residential district on the southern edge of 173.

Land classified as "recreational" includes golf courses, Clark Reservation State park and smaller Town parks in scattered locations. A very important component of the recreation opportunity available in DeWitt is provided by the numerous schools, which show on the land use classification map as "public service" uses.

Despite extensive development that has occurred in DeWitt, some sections of the Town remain undeveloped. Some of these areas contain sensitive or ecologically valuable sections that should be protected and preserved as part of the Town's open space system. (see [Map 4 on page 10](#)).

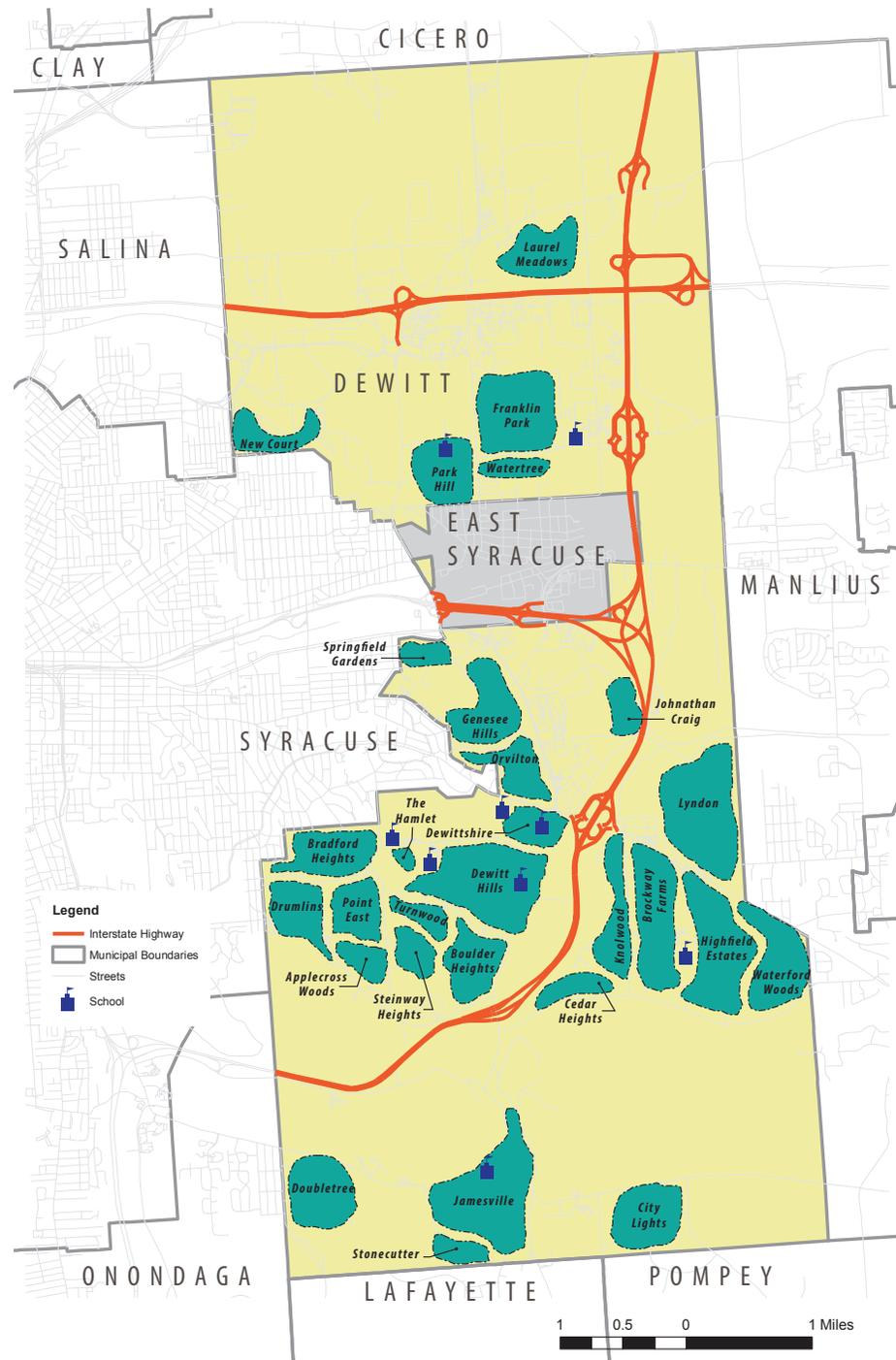
With the exception of the Doubletree neighborhood in the Town's southwest corner, the area generally south of Woodchuck Hill and Nottingham Roads did not have public sewage disposal services as of 2002. In addition, significant portions of the neighborhood areas to the east and west of Maple Drive are without public sewer. An area east of I-481, from the railroad to the Thruway, continues to be similarly restricted. Several private disposal systems served portions of these areas as of 2002 and the need for individual septic systems will continue to impact general development pressures and the minimum lot size for dwellings. This issue was partly addressed by the establishment of the Jamesville sewer district and construction of public sewers in the Hamlet.

MAP 2—Residential Neighborhoods

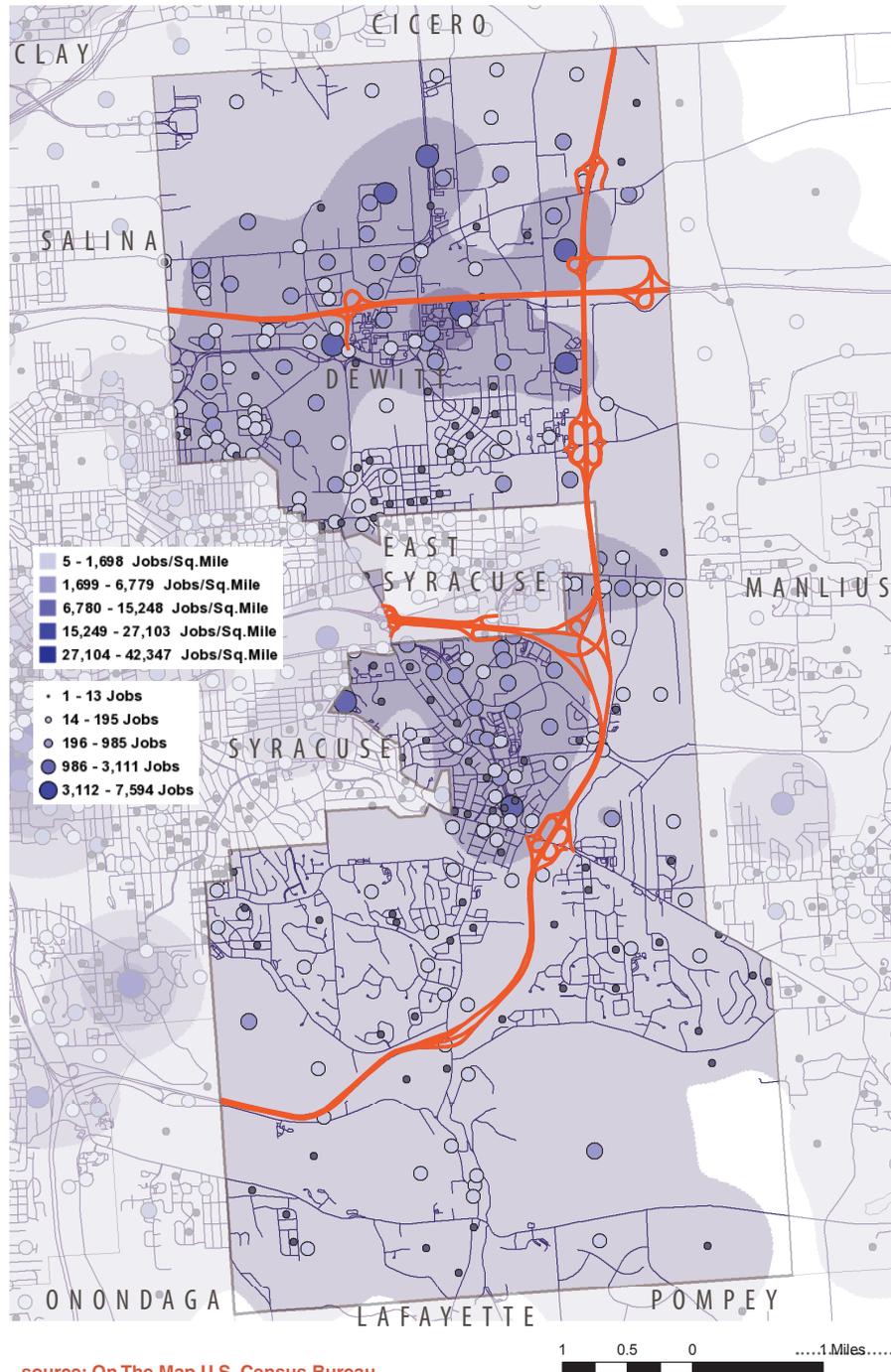
Full development of all available residential land in DeWitt is a plausible consideration even though this might take many years. In order to evaluate the impact of this potential, for the 2002 comprehensive plan, the approximate acreage of all vacant land zoned for residential development was calculated. Total vacant acreage was reduced by 30 percent to account for new streets, topographic limitations and other likely constraints. The remaining acreage was divided by the minimum area for each lot as specified by zoning. While this build-out calculation was a rough approximation, it indicated at the time that 2,000 to 2,100 additional dwelling units could be built in the Town based on current zoning regulations and constraints. Since 2002 an additional 418 units of new single-family dwellings have been constructed, representing that approximately 80 percent of the developable land for single-family dwellings as calculated in 2002 remains.

## RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS AND EMPLOYMENT CENTERS

DeWitt is a community with long established as well as newly emerging residential neighborhoods. Many of these neighborhoods have distinct identities and social organizations. In addition to a desirable residential setting, the regional economic importance of DeWitt as a significant center of employment is also widely acknowledged.



**MAP 3—Employment Centers**



source: On The Map U.S. Census Bureau

Map 2 indicates the general location and configuration of DeWitt’s major residential neighborhoods. Map 3, page 9 depicts the location of the Town’s largest employment centers with the approximate number of employees and employment densities.

DeWitt residential neighborhoods offer a wide variety of environmental settings and generate substantial resident identity and pride. Typically, they consist of single-family dwellings on individual lots with consistent yard setbacks determined by zoning regulations. In some neighborhoods there is also a scattering of multifamily residences; townhouse development has succeeded in some locations.

Between East Genesee Street and the Thruway, older neighborhoods that have developed over a number of years have generally smaller lots that are similar in size and shape. Relatively flat topography allows for the traditional grid street system. Relatively long, straight and parallel streets provide easy access to adjacent home sites and were well-suited for the low-volume local traffic of the period.

The design impact of zoning regulations is clearly demonstrated in the more recent housing development south of East Genesee Street. Topography in this area is often steep and has had a direct influence on street layout and lot subdivision. In some instances the Town has utilized cluster development in order to minimize the impacts on steep and sensitive slopes (i.e., Winterton, Applecross). These neighborhood areas were still developing at the time of the 2002 plan, as demonstrated by the number of residential

**MAP 4—Town of DeWitt Open Space Systems**

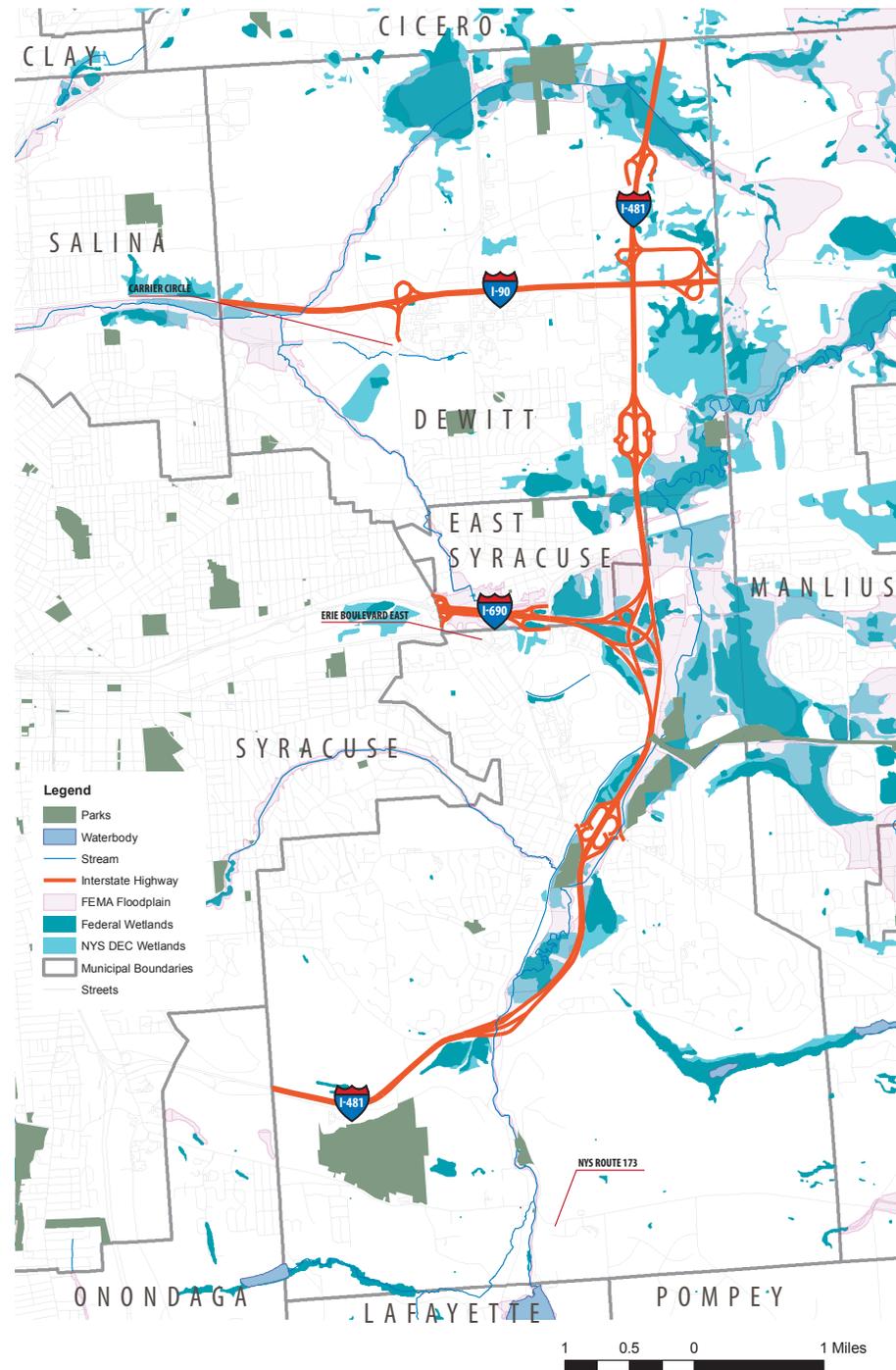
building permits issued in the six-year period from 1995 to 2000. However, the rate of development of new units since 2002 has declined significantly.

While some new housing construction can be anticipated in the Town's newer neighborhoods, infill development and upgrading of older homes are the likely activities in established neighborhoods.

Since the collapse of the U.S. housing market in 2008 there has been a significant restructuring of the housing market in Central New York. The Town has experienced slow growth in residential development since then. National trends indicate that aging baby boomers as well as young professionals are seeking different market products that include walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods where individuals can live, work, play, and shop in close proximity. A housing-market study would better determine the potential impacts of these market trends on the Town.

Residential development north of the Thruway is scattered and uses the existing street system rather than new streets created as part of a subdivision. The location and extent of nonresidential development in this area has significantly impacted the amount of residential growth.

Development in Jamesville has occurred slowly over decades and reflects the type of picturesque mixed land uses that typically occurred at major crossroads and railroad stops. The Town of DeWitt has continued to support the growth and development of the Jamesville Hamlet through the development of a special zoning overlay district and the



establishment of a public sewer district. Development of the Hamlet area could be further supported through a concentrated effort to provide shared parking areas, as well as better pedestrian and bicycle accommodations to reinforce the mixed-use walkable nature of this traditional neighborhood area.

The location of major employment centers north and south of East Syracuse reflects the impact of commercial and industrial development on the demand for residential land in these parts of DeWitt. According to U.S. Census Bureau statistics there are 100,327 primary jobs in DeWitt, 75,829 of those jobs are for people who live outside the Town (76%), while 24,435 (24%) of those employed in the Town live in the Town. This impact can be expected to continue into the future, affecting both traffic patterns and the location and type of future housing development.

## NATURAL SYSTEMS AND OPEN SPACE

Map 4 illustrates existing natural systems that provide important ecological services for the Town, and that also present limitations on future development in DeWitt. Natural systems included on this map consist of waterbodies, wetlands defined and regulated by New York State and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, as well as 100-year flood plains established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Surface water drainage in DeWitt is generally to the north by way of Butternut Creek, and the north and south branches of Ley Creek.

According to Onondaga County GIS records, there are approximately 1,300 acres of wetland area regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and approximately 2,700 acres of wetland area regulated by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, within the Town of DeWitt. It should be noted that in some cases U.S. Army Corps and NYS DEC jurisdictions overlap, so the total acreage of wetlands in the Town is not a sum of the two numbers, but rather closer to the 2700 acres of the NYS DEC regulated wetlands. There are wetland complexes associated with both the Butternut Creek and Ley Creek corridors, located along the Town's eastern boundary and northern boundary respectively.

The Town put in place additional protections for stormwater management within the Ley Creek watershed in 2011. These protections apply to new development projects within this area. This area of the Town has experienced multiple flooding events over the past decade, and may require more proactive measures to be taken on the part of the Town to develop a comprehensive flood management strategy.

After a heavy rainfall, wetlands become valuable storage areas and absorb significant amounts of flood water runoff. Among other things, they function as retention basins and moderate the volume and speed of storm water flow. Even so, there are large areas near the creeks and adjacent to wetlands that FEMA has designated as 100-year flood plains. Additional runoff created by development can increase flooding potential.

Portions of Interstate 481 were constructed in or adjacent to wetlands of Butternut Creek. Affected areas stretch roughly from the

Jamesville Road intersection to the Kirkville Road intersection. The large land area occupied by the complex 481/690 intersection, and all the area between Cedar Bay and the railroad, is impacted by wetlands and the 100-year flood plain.

The North Branch of Ley Creek traverses the northern part of DeWitt. The broad, shallow basin and poor soils of this drainage way have produced extensive wetlands and flood plains along the Cicero border and into Manlius. This has tended to restrict development to date despite extensive development to the northwest and southwest.

A long, narrow wetland between the Jamesville Quarry and Woodchuck Hill Road has been identified by the Nature Conservancy and other environmental interests as a valuable natural resource. This area is currently in single ownership which helps to limit potential development pressures and to promote the preservation of a unique resource.

## HIGHWAY TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC MOVEMENT

As part of the development of the Comprehensive Plan in 2002, at the request of the DeWitt planning program the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTCC) agreed to review and present summaries of basic transportation background information, project future traffic conditions based

on several development scenarios and prepare a series of maps showing existing transportation and traffic conditions in the town. This detailed and important study by SMTC is contained in a separate report; a summary of the study was included as Appendix C of this Comprehensive Plan report. Traffic congestion in DeWitt had increased for two major reasons: the Town had become a major industrial and retail employment center (since the first comprehensive plan for the Town was adopted in 1961) and the number of commuters within and through the Town had increased substantially.

Modeling of four possible future traffic scenarios suggested that traffic on DeWitt roads would increase less than one percent per year for the next ten years. The largest increases were projected to be along Route 5 east of Lyndon Corners.

Public transit service is predominantly a hub-and-spoke system. One of the three primary hubs is located at Shoppingtown Mall. Expansion of the number of suburban transit centers with interconnections has been recommended to the Regional Transportation Authority.

Implementing traffic calming measures on specific roadways could lower traffic volumes by about two percent. There would be slight traffic redistribution to major arterials and away from local roads currently used as shortcuts.

If plans for developing an intermodal freight facility within the region are realized, truck traffic is expected to increase, as well as rail traffic. Utilization of the Susquehanna

Railroad line through Jamesville to service an intermodal facility could significantly increase train traffic through the Hamlet which would impact residential neighborhoods, commuter traffic, and emergency response along the 173 corridor.

Since the SMTC study was undertaken in 2002 the State of New York has identified a major highway study that is looking at the future for the elevated highway viaduct portion of Interstate 81 through Downtown Syracuse. The project has identified several alternatives; including alternatives that would reroute through traffic currently travelling along Interstate 81 between the 481 interchanges North and South of the City of Syracuse to the 481 corridor located within the eastern half of DeWitt and running north south from the Jamesville area to the border with the Town of Cicero to the north. Additionally, the SMTC is undertaking a regional transit study that may impact the mode share of commuters within (and through) the town.

## REGIONAL CONTEXT

As part of Onondaga County's developing urban core, the Town of DeWitt will be affected by long range policy and planning at the County level. While DeWitt must determine its own development future, local planning efforts should properly be related to the broader context of the surrounding region.

In 1998, the County Legislature adopted the 2010 Development Guide for Onondaga County. The Development Guide sets forth a vision for future land use, strategies for responding to change, policies related to

development and recommendations for implementation of the Guide. Onondaga County developed a DRAFT Sustainable Development plan in 2012, which has yet to be adopted by the County Legislature. Statements below have been extracted from the 2010 Guide and have special relevance to planning policy in the Town of DeWitt.

## GENERAL CONCEPTS

Anticipated growth over the next 9 years can be accommodated within the area currently served by water and sewer infrastructure. The County's land use vision does not project significant growth in urbanized land.

The best way to accommodate growth is by reinvesting in existing neighborhoods and historic community centers.

## NATURAL RESOURCE AREAS

Protection of natural resource areas is essential to long-term benefit of the community. Resources include: prime agricultural soils, public parks and protected open space, major wetlands, floodplains and local sand, gravel and limestone deposits.

## EXISTING COMMUNITIES

Onondaga communities must maintain, restore and revitalize existing neighborhoods and main streets.

## OBSOLETE AND VACANT SITES

Obsolete and vacant sites should be redeveloped and this might require financial incentives, flexibility in development regulations and careful design review.

## EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

The County must make full use of existing infrastructure to achieve the maximum return on investment. Maintenance and replacement of current facilities has fiscal priority over expansion of the urbanized area.

## PRESERVE TRANSPORTATION ASSETS

The highway network will not be expanded or dramatically enhanced in the foreseeable future; preservation of the existing system (by appropriate land use patterns, site design and access management) is essential. This basic assumption may be challenged based on the outcomes of the Interstate 81 viaduct project.

## WASTEWATER TREATMENT

The County will update the Comprehensive Sewerage Study and use town comprehensive plans for guidance in proposing changes in the sanitary district service area. Realistic assessment of growth and needs for new sewers will be determining factors.

Onondaga County will expand public sewer service within the County Sanitary District in relation to the realistic need for additional urban land.

A fiscal strategy for County-owned sewage treatment facilities will use the following priorities: 1. maintain existing facilities; 2. meet federal effluent standards; 3. replace worn out facilities; 4. address demands for new service and capacity.

## HIGHWAYS

Towns are encouraged to create a network of local streets scaled for pedestrians and designed to promote low-speed traffic; collector streets should direct traffic to well located and designed intersections.

Direct connections between residential subdivisions are encouraged to reduce local trips on collector streets or arterials and to promote walkability.

## LAND USE INTENSITY AND DENSITY

Urban area municipalities should use all available tools to maintain the viability of established neighborhoods.

Suburban towns should discourage the construction of houses in locations which are not served by public water and sewer.

Consistent with the general context and intent of the County's 2010 Development

Guide, DeWitt has considered various alternatives policies related to future development and land use within the town.





# POLICY, GOALS AND ACTIONS

## TOWN POLICY, GOALS and ACTIONS

A series of policies, reflecting a realistic assessment of current attitudes and community values, are the foundation upon which this Comprehensive Plan is built. These policies will form the basis for future decisions on land use and land development regulations. One or more goals have been identified for each policy coupled with specific actions that should be taken to achieve the goal. In Section V, Implementation Profiles for each of these actions are outlined in more detail including assignment of responsibility and priority. These policies, supporting goals, and actions will result in DeWitt's continued success as a quality community with a stable tax base and a high level of public and community services.

### GROWTH

Population projections for Onondaga County have not changed significantly since the publication of its Framework for Growth document (1998). This study predicted population stability or very slow growth in the County for the next decade. Little change

or a small decline was anticipated in the number of people living in DeWitt during this period. It is the Town's policy to promote population stability and to attempt to prevent possible future declines by enhancing living conditions in existing housing areas and accepting new residential development in appropriate locations. The Town will strive to maintain and promote the high quality-of-life standards that are reflected in existing residential neighborhoods and to ensure that high standards prevail as new non-residential growth occurs.

### Goals:

- + Develop a long-range comprehensive land use plan for both developed and vacant land that is based on anticipated changes in population and on non-residential development opportunities.
- + Develop zoning regulations and standards for future development consistent with long-range planning goals and capital investment programs.
- + Develop a schedule for capital projects aimed at upgrading neighborhoods and public places.
- + Develop a system for measuring and evaluating quality-of-life in the Town.

- + Develop a mechanism for attracting non-governmental resources to support community services and facilities beneficial to the DeWitt community.

### Actions:

1. Conduct public presentations of this Comprehensive Plan, revise as appropriate, submit to Town Planning Board, complete a SEQR review<sup>1</sup> and determination, submit to the Onondaga County Planning Board for review and present to the Town Board for adoption.
2. Develop a formal needs assessment structure for and prepare a capital budget and a five-year capital Improvement program.
3. Review and amend the Town Zoning Ordinance (Chapter 192) to address zoning inconsistencies with policies and goals stated in the Comprehensive Plan (complete SEQR review, submit to County Planning Board and recommend to the Town Board for adoption). Changes should be kept on file and incorporated into subsequent iterations of the Town's Comprehensive Plan (anticipated to occur on a 10 year review cycle).

<sup>1</sup> Per the New York Department of Environmental Conservation's SEQR Handbook (<http://www.dec.ny.gov/permits/6465.html>): *Most local government "actions" are subject to SEQR. Determining whether a governmental activity is an "action" under SEQR is the first step in deciding if SEQR applies. As defined by SEQR, the term "action" includes all discretionary decisions to fund, approve or directly undertake projects or physical activities that may affect the environment by changing the use, appearance or condition of any natural resource or structure. The definition also includes adoption of local laws, ordinances, and resolutions that may affect the environment.*

## EXTENSION OF UTILITIES

Development of suitable land within the current service boundaries of the consolidated sanitary district should occur before public infrastructure is significantly extended into presently non-served areas. It is the Town's policy to support development within existing districts and to request expansion of current boundaries only to adjacent areas that can be effectively served by an extension of infrastructure already in place.

### Goals:

- + Develop programs to encourage the use of undeveloped parcels (infill) in areas where water and sewer services are currently available.
- + Develop land use regulations that reflect appropriate development densities in existing and new utility service areas.
- + Develop zoning and land subdivision regulations that allow for an increase in development density in unsewered areas if a public sewage disposal system becomes available.
- + Full comprehension of the potential implications of new development that will be served with public water but rely on private sewage disposal systems.
- + A clear and rational program for extension of utilities that is based on the Town's comprehensive development plan.

### Actions:

1. Identify areas or portions of the existing sewer and water system that are deteriorating or obsolete (including areas

that are not currently served by public sewers) and need replacement within the next five years, incorporate into capital improvement program.

2. Review zoning and subdivision regulations and consider the effectiveness and appropriateness of current standards and requirements related to water and sewer infrastructure.

## HOUSING

DeWitt is an attractive and desirable residential community as well as a center of commerce and industry. Housing in its many residential neighborhoods is predominantly single-family owner-occupied in a variety of styles and price ranges. Rental housing has been developed in a number of areas throughout the Town providing housing options for renters with a range of prices; according to the 2000 Census, rental units comprised about 23 percent of the occupied housing units in the Town. It is the Town's policy to maintain and preserve existing patterns of residential development, particularly single family homes on lots of various sizes ;clustered housing; and mixed-use development that promotes cost effective development while retaining open space.

### Goals:

- + Maintain owner-occupancy as the prevailing form of tenancy.
- + Provide sufficient housing choices to accommodate the families and individuals who choose to make DeWitt their home, and who represent a range of socio-economic demographics

- + Rental housing that is well maintained and responsibly managed.

**Actions:**

1. Undertake a housing study that identifies the impact of key trends such as changes in household configuration, rates of owner occupancy, aging of the population and income trends on housing supply and demand with particular emphasis on aging in place, include a survey of town residents.

## NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

DeWitt’s residential neighborhoods comprise one of its strongest assets. In most cases, these neighborhoods are identifiable with distinct boundaries and signature architectural styles that provide continuity and create tradition. It is the Town’s policy to support and affirm existing neighborhoods by investing in the elements that establish character and identity and enhance safety and convenience such as lighting, sidewalks, signage, entry and street plantings etc., and to require developers of new neighborhoods to provide the same level of amenities. The Town will also encourage a high level of property maintenance and adherence to local ordinances, and will prevent the intrusion of conflicting land uses into residential neighborhoods. Public-private partnerships with neighborhood groups will be sought to engender grassroots support for neighborhood initiatives.

**Goals:**

- + Encourage strong neighborhood identity within recognizable geographical areas.

- + Encourage development that reflects neighborhood identity concepts.
- + Foster land use patterns that enhance livability and support civic life.
- + Maintain safe neighborhoods that emphasize pedestrian safety.
- + Encourage strong neighborhood associations that participate actively in community decision-making.

**Actions:**

2. Develop a neighborhood design manual that provides guidance on appropriate lighting, entry and street plantings, transit stops and shelters, traffic calming techniques and other design features. Establish a town-wide wayfinding system.
3. Explore potential areas where mixed-use development should be incorporated as related to the Town of DeWitt land use vision and develop appropriate updates to the Town of DeWitt zoning code. Review and update mixed use development guidelines in the existing code to establish preferred development densities as well as to optimize allowed uses based on existing zoning districts.
4. Improve lighting, pedestrian, transit, and bicycle amenities along major thoroughfares as needed.
5. Encourage the establishment of neighborhood associations, continue support for new Neighborhood Watch groups and strengthen those that already exist.
6. Encourage the placement of utilities underground whenever possible.

## NON-RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

DeWitt is centrally located between the City of Syracuse and the eastern suburbs, which provides for transportation network advantages. These advantages are attractive to various types of non-residential development including business, retail, industrial and office. The Town will accommodate new non-residential development that is appropriate and beneficial to the community, along with encouraging the continued improvement of older properties. The Town also recognizes that economic benefits of such development must be balanced with the associated public cost to maintain a high quality of life. The Town will continue to promote quality employment opportunities through projects that complement existing businesses, are needed by the community and do not unduly generate additional traffic pressures on existing streets and neighborhoods.

**Goals:**

- + Maintain a healthy balance between assessed value of residential and nonresidential development.
- + Encourage development and landscaping plans that will help to reduce the visual and environmental impact of large buildings and extensive parking lots.
- + Promote new, revitalized or upgraded projects that are compatible with adjacent and surrounding development in terms of use, size, architectural character and landscaping treatment and that can efficiently capitalize on available utility

infrastructure and the existing system of roadways and traffic controls.

- + Ensure a reduction of the overall adverse impact of signs and similar advertising and identification methods.
- + Encourage more efficient use, reuse and upgrading of obsolete or vacant sites with development potential.
- + Develop flexible programs to support rehabilitation of existing non-residential buildings that have deteriorated or are abandoned or obsolete.

### Actions:

1. Examine, and modify as appropriate, zoning regulations affecting non-residential development, particularly site plan review regulations and requirements, to assess adequacy and effectiveness in light of current goals and actual experience.
2. Compare existing non-residential development patterns with the zoning map to assess the need for amendments of zoning district classifications and boundaries.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

It is the Town's policy to protect natural resources such as drumlins and other geologic features, streams, wetlands, floodplains; ecologically, environmentally, or aesthetically significant trees, important habitat and similar areas from inappropriate development. Within this context, and recognizing that quarrying is an economic activity of great importance, the Town will seek assurance of appropriate land reclamation upon cessation or reduction

of quarrying operations. When reviewing subdivision applications and development proposals, the Town will give high priority to conservation opportunities, focused on preserving resources that are ecologically and environmentally significant and sensitive to development.

### Goals:

- + A comprehensive inventory of publicly and privately owned natural resources and environmental features.
- + Complete and maintain a comprehensive street tree and park inventory.
- + Proactive programs to protect and preserve exceptional natural features and environmentally sensitive areas whenever possible.
- + Land use plans and regulations that clearly acknowledge the existence of a variety of natural features and resources.
- + Incentives to incorporate important natural features into development proposals.
- + Procedures for purchasing development rights, obtaining conservation easements or accepting donations of open space.
- + Reclamation plans that capitalize on the natural amenities of the area to be reclaimed.

### Actions:

1. Utilize natural resource and ownership data to identify and designate Critical Environmental Areas within the Town in

accordance with NYS DEC Environmental Conservation Law.

2. Investigate various tools for protection and preservation of natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas such as overlay districts, easements, and incentives for developers, and others as may be applicable.
3. Identify areas where there are existing or potential drainage concerns/issues. Review and update town policies and ordinances to reduce stormwater runoff. Review design guidelines to encourage adoption of green infrastructure practices.
4. Participate in the development of reclamation plans to ensure that innovative concepts for reclamation and reuse of quarry sites are considered.
5. Complete an urban forest management plan that includes preservation opportunities for trees on public and private lands.

## RECREATION

It is Town policy to support the work of the Parks and Recreation Commission and to incorporate its work into the Comprehensive Plan. It is also Town policy to encourage the development of partnerships between the Town and other municipalities, school districts and private interests to implement recommendations contained in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

### Goals:

- + A Park and Recreation Master Plan that is regularly reviewed and modified as

necessary to fully capitalize on available resources.

- + An effectively integrated and coordinated recreation program including State, County, Town and School District facilities as well as programs sponsored by the private sector .
- + A rationale for assessing the need for, and type of, new community or neighborhood parks and recreation facilities and for evaluating potential sites.
- + Investment of cash contributions, in lieu of parkland, that is based on a comprehensive assessment of need, type of facility and suitable location.
- + New or improved trails and bikeways that will become part of a town-wide system.

#### Actions:

1. Review and update the Parks and Recreation master plan every 5 years. Incorporate parks improvement and maintenance activities into the capital improvement program on an annual basis.
2. Review current recreation programs and resources available to Town residents and identify gaps. Evaluate the role and function of the Town Park system in the context of changing community needs.

## TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION

Increased traffic on regional and local roads is anticipated as a byproduct of continued expansion of DeWitt and the adjacent towns. The Town acknowledges this likely impact but will examine and implement

techniques that can reduce through traffic and speeding, especially on neighborhood streets. In addition, systems that can safely accommodate pedestrians and bicycles as well as automobiles on local streets will be promoted in subdivision design and capital improvement budgets. It is also Town policy to encourage increased public transit usage and to participate in cooperative efforts with State and County agencies to improve problem intersections and manage traffic effectively.

#### Goals:

- + A highway system that provides the Town with an integrated network of local, collector and arterial streets to enable efficient traffic movement and minimize points of conflict and delay.
- + A local street system that discourages through and “short-cut” traffic and promotes safe, low-volume, low-speed vehicular movement within and between neighborhoods.
- + Subdivision layouts that promote the rational inter-neighborhood connection of local streets without promoting cut-through traffic.
- + Public transit routing and scheduling that offer maximum opportunity for use.
- + A long-range plan for an interconnected system of pedestrian and bikeways.
- + Realistic off-street automobile parking requirements for public and private land uses.
- + Design standards for all streets that are based on the desired traffic-carrying

function of such streets and the needs of neighborhoods.

- + A land use plan that incorporates the optimum use of arterial, rail and air transportation systems within the Town.
- + A proactive relationship between the Town, SMTTC, County DOT, CENTRO and NYS DOT to effect needed infrastructure improvements and traffic management strategies.

#### Actions:

1. Review road construction standards and requirements of the Town subdivision rules and regulations to assess consistency with goals of the Comprehensive Plan.
2. Document a pavement management system that results in a five-year capital plan for improvements to existing streets.
3. Review off-street parking requirements and parking area design standards to look for opportunities for incorporating green infrastructure, also incorporate a commercial project road spec that provides guidance for sidewalk placement and on street parking.
4. Examine potential traffic calming techniques that can reduce through traffic and speeding on residential streets and identify streets where such techniques should be considered.
5. Identify strategies and work with State, County, and other governments to implement mitigation strategies for major arterials such as Interstate 481, East Genessee Street, Erie Boulevard, NYS Route 290, and NYS Route 298 to reduce the impact of these roadways on the connectivity within the Town, and to protect adjacent neighborhoods.

6. Develop a pedestrian and bicycle master plan for the Town that improves pedestrian and bicycle safety and mobility. Identify important pedestrian generators (schools, churches, transit stops, etc.), activity nodes (playgrounds, community parks, etc.) and destination points (municipal offices, libraries, trailheads, etc.) that could be linked by pedestrian walks and bicycle paths to complement those included in the Canal Recreationway Trail and other existing and proposed walks and paths.
7. Implement complete streets projects on Town owned facilities where appropriate and partner with the County, state and regional agencies in order to improve alternative mobility options including walking, cycling, and transit.
8. Finalize Town policy and standards for location, design, construction, maintenance and retrofitting of sidewalks.

## ASSUMPTIONS OF THE PLAN

Since there is no reliable way to predict the future, the best that can be done in planning for the future is to consider a range of plausible alternatives and decide which alternative best satisfies current needs and protects current values. The assumptions listed below have been established in an attempt to hone in on the number of variables that impact the way land in DeWitt will be used in the future.

General growth trends in DeWitt will reflect those of the past decade resulting in a

relatively stable population base with little or no growth over the next 10 to 15 years.

Family size will not increase in the future but the number of people in older age groups (over 50) will constitute a larger percentage of the total population.

Most new residential development in Onondaga County will occur in areas to the north and east of DeWitt.

DeWitt has traditionally captured a proportionately greater share of commercial and industrial development when compared to other Towns in Onondaga County. While the Town has a large proportion of suburban office and industrial parks, national trends indicate a decline in these facilities which the Town should prepare for.

No major new roads will be constructed in DeWitt and adjacent areas. Although the decision around the future of the Interstate 81 corridor will have a significant impact on the Town.

Development in the eastern suburbs will continue to increase the number of vehicles circulating within, and passing through, DeWitt. Rail and air service will continue to be an important factor in the overall economy of DeWitt.

The extensive quarrying operations in the southern part of the Town will continue in its present form for the foreseeable future.,

Expansion of water and sewer districts will not occur in any significant way.

## LAND USE CHARACTER AREAS

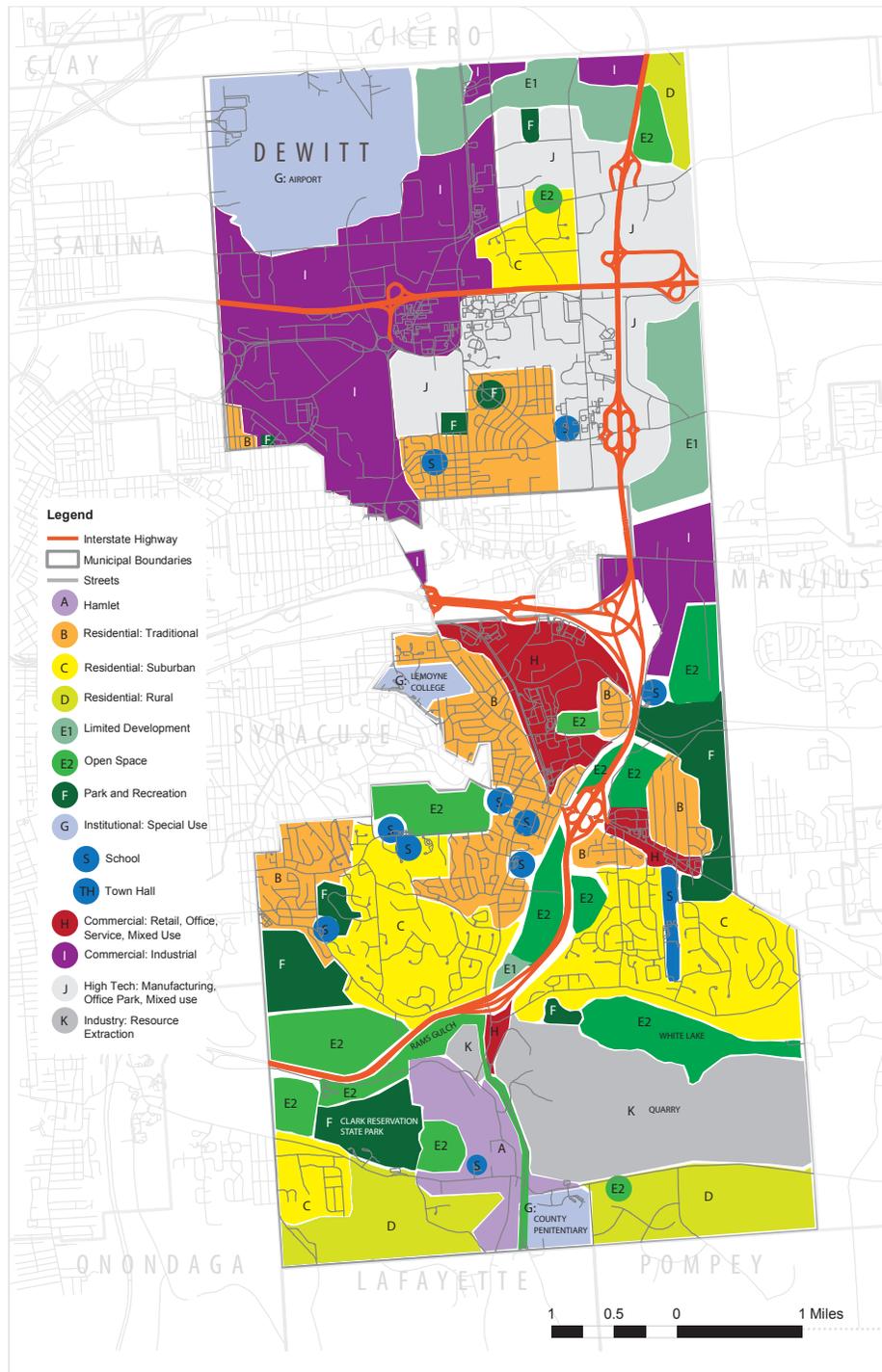
As illustrated on the Proposed Land Use Character Areas [Map 5, page 21](#), the Comprehensive Plan proposes that the Town be divided into identifiable areas based on the nature of existing and proposed land use. In most cases, character areas are geographically distinct, each with similar physical characteristics and settlement patterns. Each character area has important qualities which either exist at present and are to be enhanced or preserved, or are desirable and achievable as change occurs in the future.

A general description of each character area follows. Desired characteristics of the natural and built environment are discussed and specific planning concerns related to future change and development identified. Zoning and other land use and development regulations can be tailored to address these planning concerns with appropriate controls.

### HAMLET DEVELOPMENT

The hamlet of Jamesville is a small but concentrated neighborhood with a strong historic and social identity. While it is viewed primarily as a residential cluster, an historic mixture of nonresidential land uses, or multiple land uses in one structure, has added to the visual and physical diversity of past development and is appropriate for the future. Historically, development has clustered around road intersections or has located along main roads serving the hamlet. Traffic is generally slow moving due to a relatively inefficient road system, topographic

**MAP 5—Town of DeWitt Land Use Character Areas**



variation and an at-grade railroad crossing in the hamlet center. These conditions are characteristic of the hamlet atmosphere. In the future, some hamlet characteristics might be replicated in areas like Collamer and Lyndon Corners.

The actual physical extent of the hamlet area must be flexible since it tends to blend into adjacent areas at the edges. Planning issues relate to maintaining the historic integrity of the area, supporting a variety of new land use activities that are compatible with existing development, adjusting to inevitable traffic increases and providing adequate water and sewer services to accommodate new growth.

## RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT:

### Traditional

These areas describe portions of the Town where concentrated housing development has occurred over an extended period of time and where identifiable neighborhoods have been established. Density, lot size and dwelling type vary but the prevailing and desired character is that of relatively dense, single-family housing concentrated in an urban setting. Schools and small parks are often focal points of cohesive neighborhood activity. In some locations small concentrations of retail and personal service businesses have been established and have survived. These businesses provide land use diversity and a measure of convenience to residents of the surrounding area.

Planning concerns in traditional residential areas include the need to maintain the historic

character of various neighborhoods, encourage sensitive and compatible development on the few lots that remain vacant, improve visual and environmental quality through landscaping, lighting of public spaces, building sidewalks as appropriate and encouraging a high level of property maintenance. Limiting extraneous vehicular traffic in these areas is also a challenge of considerable magnitude that should be a high priority for the Town.

## Suburban

The predominant and desired land use is single family, detached housing; density is consistently lower than in traditional residential development areas. A limited amount of residential clustering has occurred and more would be suitable. Established as well as developing neighborhoods are found in these areas and schools often provide a strong community focal point. Topography, always a factor in land subdivision, can result in a road system that is free form and curvilinear to accommodate steep slopes. There are areas within this designation that do not have public sewers, which may be a consideration to support the long-term success of these residential areas. A continuation of the current land use character and development style is appropriate.

As emerging residential areas develop, there is a concern that road systems in independent subdivisions be tied together to provide appropriate continuity for intra-neighborhood traffic. Consistency of road design, street lighting and new landscaping will also be important to the future aesthetic character of these areas. Even though development density is low in suburban residential areas,

the opportunity for establishing small, strategically placed, neighborhood areas for passive recreation, possibly through clustering, should be pursued.

## Rural

Agriculture is not a major activity in DeWitt. A few farming areas survive near town boundaries and will probably be sustained for another decade or two. Such areas are not currently served by public sewer systems and probably will not be served in the foreseeable future. The road system serving these areas and connecting them to other parts of the region is not extensive. Some non-farm development, mainly residential, has occurred; more can be expected and would be suitable if the essentially open character now existing can be preserved. Land subdivision and development in rural residential areas is probably marketable but should, if possible, be delayed until most available vacant land in emerging residential areas has been used and an extension of utilities can be justified.

Planning concerns in rural residential areas relate to the ability to limit the extent of nonfarm development and retain the existing rural character until public utilities are available. If development pressure occurs before utility districts are expanded, the density of such development should be low with lots large enough to meet performance standards for on-site sewage disposal systems. Large lots will minimize the impacts of surface water runoff and erosion.

## CONSERVATION AREAS

These areas consist of environmentally sensitive land or features. Specific examples of such areas are:

- + Extensive floodplains and designated wetlands associated with Butternut and Ley Creeks.
- + Onondaga Escarpment—prominent limestone cliffs and karst topography extending in a narrow corridor (east-west) across the southern portion of the Town inclusive of the following:
  - The White Lake wilderness area, which has been the subject of much study and conservation efforts for over a century.
  - Clark Reservation State Park
  - Ram's Gulch, an important natural heritage area in the Town
  - Areas impacted by historic quarrying (e.g., Rock Cut quarry pits north and west of Clark Reservation State Park)

There is great concern that the unusual geology and any rare species of fauna and flora found in these areas could be impacted by development. Potential habitat impacts due to increases in deer population and the spread of invasive species is also a concern. Continued encroachment on, or reduction of, these natural resources is clearly inappropriate from an environmental viewpoint. NYS Route 481, constructed adjacent to Butternut Creek from Jamesville Road to Kirkville Road, passes through extensive wetlands on one or both sides of the highway along this 4.5 mile stretch. The North Branch of Ley Creek has created numerous wetlands and causes

periodic flooding across the northern and eastern sections of the Town.

In terms of future land use, conservation areas are divided into two types:

### Conservation/Limited Development

These are wetlands and floodplains associated with Ley Creek and lying along Butternut Creek north of the CSX marshaling yards. Some of this land is undeveloped; in other areas there is a scattered mixture of residential, commercial and industrial land uses. The continuation of mixed development of various types is appropriate for these areas provided it is low density and protects the natural resources. Some type of light industrial or technology concentrations are becoming dominant because of good highway access. Planning concerns focus on ensuring that State wetland requirements and federal floodplain regulations are followed when development is proposed.

### Conservation/Open Space

These areas have unique characteristics that warrant placing effective limitation on future development. The largest is the White Lake complex south of Woodchuck Hill Road and north of Jamesville Quarry. Other conservation/open space areas flank Route 481 and therefore are subject to significant air and water quality impacts due to the highway corridor. A large wetland/floodplain area lies north of Cedar Bay. Much of this area is already preempted by high tension electric lines and a large substation. To the extent possible, development in conservation/open space areas should be limited and restricted

to preserve the environmental integrity of such areas. Cemeteries are included in this designation.

## PARKS AND RECREATION

These areas include land and facilities used for public and private recreational purposes. Historic sites are also included in this designation as are other important open spaces such as golf courses. Many of these recreation areas and open spaces have been in existence for a number of years and their continued importance to Town residents is clear. One historical recreation area, Fiddler's Green, has been re-established since adoption of the 2002 Comprehensive Plan. Schools offer additional recreation resources that are critically important to the quality of life in neighborhoods. It is appropriate for Town officials and the school boards to work cooperatively to maintain and expand existing facilities as necessary. Public recreation areas are identified in the Town's Park and Recreation Master Plan, which also includes a number of alternative recommendations for additional public facilities.

Planning interests include the need for additional public recreation facilities in the appropriate locations to correct existing deficiencies and accommodate new residential growth. Proposals for new park development will be formulated in conjunction with the Parks and Recreation Commission.

## INSTITUTIONAL

### Special Use

This land use category designates several large areas in the Town that have been developed for special purpose institutional uses. Three such areas are designated on the Land Use Character Areas map: Syracuse International Airport, LeMoyne College and the Onondaga County Penitentiary.

Planning concerns relate to the potential impact that these uses have, or could have, on the development and use of adjacent land and in the surrounding area. In this regard, the Syracuse airport is, arguably, the institution that could have the greatest impact on the development character of adjacent areas of the Town.

## COMMERCIAL

### Retail, Office, Service/Mixed Use Residential

This land use category describes large concentrations of development that includes retail sales of all types, offices ranging from small individual businesses to corporate headquarters, regional shopping centers and a variety of large and small professional, retail and service business. Some of these commercial activities have a large employment and/or customer base, require extensive areas for buildings and parking and generate substantial traffic. Small owner-operated businesses or specialty shops with few employees and limited impact on their surroundings are at the other end of the scale.

Restaurants, entertainment, professional and personal services and convenience shopping will also be found in these areas. The visual character is large scale, concentrated, sometimes strip-commercial development rather than scattered or small groupings of commercial activity.

Planning considerations of importance in these areas are primarily site accessibility and traffic impacts on surrounding land and the community in general. Adequate off-street parking, surface water drainage, landscaping of the site, and the visual impact of such things as site and parking lot lighting and signs, are important concerns. Excessive strip commercial development is a concern in some locations. These areas could incorporate mixed-use development overtime as determined appropriate.

## Commercial/Industrial Mix

Several areas, mainly in the north and northwest section of the Town, fit into this category where many types of land use, including commercial, industrial and scattered housing can be found. Parts of these areas have been developed for some time and, in some locations, there is evidence of obsolescence and deterioration. Street patterns in older areas reflect a limited concern about access and ease of traffic movement. Current activity consists of filling some of the scattered vacant sites or replacing older structures with new and more efficient buildings. As the title implies, a broad mix of land use activities has evolved over time. Large and small retail businesses, professional and personal services, small and medium-sized manufacturing activities, automobile sales and service, warehousing,

storage facilities, scattered housing and other uses are represented here. Some of these land uses have been in the area for many years; some are relatively new. Significant evidence of land use transition is also reflected in the concentration of motels and related transient housing services around Carrier Circle.

Planning concerns relate to improving the overall visual and functional quality of these areas as redevelopment continues, simplifying traffic patterns at intersections, focusing on and considering measures to upgrade the visual and environmental quality of current development and phasing out scattered residential uses over time. On larger sites new development or redevelopment should focus on reducing the types of uses permitted and achieving additional landscaping and visual improvements.

## INDUSTRIAL

### High Tech Manufacturing, Industrial and Office Park

The dominant character of such areas is established by manufacturing buildings or planned developments for industry or offices with special emphasis and attention given to integrated site planning and aesthetics. Manufacturing activities occupy sites large enough to accommodate employee parking and other transportation services. Direct and easy access to the regional highway and rail network, and an international airport are major benefits. Industrial and office parks are typically developed in accordance with an overall plan that provides for individual lots, an integrated street system,

extensive landscaping and provisions to assure development compatibility. Industrial parks often contain activities related to research, testing, electronics, computer hardware and software production, prototype refinement and other high-tech development, experimentation and refinement. Large parcels of undeveloped land with utilities, adequate drainage and highway access are likely sites for these types of land uses.

Planning concerns relate to the level of compatibility of such development with the surrounding area, traffic impact on adjacent local or collector roads and the quality of site improvements such as landscaping, parking lot design and lighting. Site plan review that incorporates, at least, minimum standards for such development are important.

## Resource Extraction

Excavation and removal of extensive geologic deposits is a major economic activity in DeWitt, occupying a substantial east-west swath of land running across the southern portion of the Town. This industry has existed for several centuries and the natural resource (limestone and gravel) on which it is based is expected to support the extraction activity for many years. In addition, asphalt and lumber industrial activities exist here and are reasonably compatible with the quarrying use. Moving gravel from the quarry to numerous construction sites requires large-scale trucking activity and easy access to the regional highway system.

Planning concerns relate to the continued effectiveness of the regional highway system to accommodate transport vehicles and the

suitability of the local road system connecting the quarry to state highways. In the long term, prospective reuse of quarry land after excavation is terminated will be an important land use consideration. Further industrial activities such as lumbering or asphalt operations should be discouraged unless they are part of a long range reclamation plan.

## IMPLEMENTATION

This section sets forth Town policy, goals and actions related to local regulations that affect development and the way land is used. It also discusses the three main elements of plan implementation. These include the regulatory framework that will guide future development decisions, an action agenda that will be necessary if plan goals are to be realized and a process for measuring progress toward plan implementation.

## LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

DeWitt is a community that values its strong tax base, its efficient system of municipal services, its environmental resources and its quality of life. As growth and change occur, the Town will need to employ all tools and techniques at hand to assure sound land use patterns, to enhance the built environment and to prevent needless loss of existing natural resources. Amendments to zoning laws, land subdivision regulations and related laws might become necessary to implement parts of the Town's Comprehensive Plan and to provide maximum effectiveness in directing

the extent, location and aesthetic impact of new and modified development. The goal statements that follow support this policy.

### Goals:

- + Zoning and land subdivision regulations and standards that will help implement the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.
- + Local development and conservation laws and regulations that are integrated to ensure purposeful and fair treatment.
- + A process for updating local regulations as necessary to promote flexibility and encourage the quality development desired in DeWitt.
- + Clarity and simplicity in land use controls and the approval processes.
- + In order to accomplish these goals, the following specific actions must be taken:
  - + Continuously review in detail the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations.
  - + Consider additional design and development criteria that would help guide the Planning and Zoning Department and the Planning Board.
  - + Review requests for zoning variances or amendments over a 5-year period to identify patterns or problem areas that should be addressed by ordinance modifications.
  - + Amend local ordinances and laws as appropriate after public comment, SEQR determination and review by Onondaga County.

## REVIEW OF BASIC IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

The DeWitt Comprehensive Plan establishes specific policies and broad goals for long-range preservation, improvement and general development in the Town. There are several effective statutory measures available to New York municipalities for implementing planning policy.

Zoning is the authority to divide land within municipalities into districts and to regulate the type and nature of land use activity and population density permitted in each district.

Site development plan review, often a part of zoning, is a procedure by which detailed plans for certain specified development proposals are reviewed and modified as necessary before a building permit is issued.

Subdivision approval enables communities to review and modify physical design and site improvement proposals for privately owned land that is to be subdivided into lots for development.

Preliminary review of these implementation measures has been made as a Technical Memorandum prepared as a supplement to this plan document.

## MEASURING SUCCESS AND AUDITING PROGRESS

If the Comprehensive Plan is to achieve its full potential, it is important to establish milestones that determine the extent to

which the Plan's goals are being met and to institutionalize a process for regular review or audit of progress. Specific measures of progress, described as "Success Indicators" on the Implementation Profiles which begin on page 28, are directly related to the specific actions needed to advance the policies and goals set forth in the Comprehensive Plan.

These indicators are the yardsticks which can be used to provide the Town with feedback on the Plan's effectiveness. Is it being used as a guide for growth and development? Is it too ambitious? Does it need adjusting or updating in light of new information? Answering these questions and others regularly will keep the Plan current and ensure that its underlying philosophy is supported. Some suggested Success Indicators are outlined below but, as noted in the Implementation Profiles section, indicators specific to each action item should be established when the action is initiated by the responsible agency.

### Potential Success Indicators

- + The process for adoption of the Comprehensive Plan has been completed and formal action has been taken.
- + All key individuals and departments agree on a format and procedure for reviewing and scheduling capital projects.
- + Capacity, pressure, obsolescence and similar limitations of existing water and sewer infrastructure have been documented.
- + The Planning Board has completed its review of amendments to the zoning ordinance and map and made a recommendation to the Town Board.

- + The Parks and Recreation Commission has reviewed and updated the 2009 Parks and Recreation Master Plan and made recommendations for specific projects.
- + The Parks and Recreation Commission has established priorities for additional recreation facilities and programs.
- + Intermunicipal Recreation Partnership has been formed between Town, County, school district(s) and private sector to coordinate recreation resources and programs.
- + The DeWitt Advisory Conservation Commission has initiated a program to identify, map and evaluate special environmental features in order to designate Critical Environmental Areas per NYS DEC guidelines.
- + A program has been established to encourage preservation of open space and natural areas through easements and other measures.
- + A master plan has been developed for improved trail and bikeway connections.
- + A prototype program has been developed to engage neighborhood associations in the process of identifying key neighborhood characteristics and potential enhancements.
- + Development standards related to site plan review and residential subdivisions have been reviewed and evaluated.
- + Examples of programs and techniques used to encourage a higher level of exterior property maintenance have been obtained and evaluated.
- + Current real property tax assessment and incentive policies affecting rehabilitation

and property improvement have been evaluated.

- + At least two target areas for potential infill/rehabilitation programs have been delineated and a procedure for analysis and evaluation of sites and buildings has been established.
- + Quality-of-Life assessment committee has been established and its role and responsibilities defined.
- + Potential incentive programs to encourage and support rehabilitation of older non-residential structures have been identified.
- + The work of the Friends of DeWitt Parks and the LDC (Local Development Corporation) continues.
- + Traffic calming techniques/installations being tested in several neighborhoods.

## IMPLEMENTATION PROFILES

As noted in Section III Policy, Goals and Actions, goals have been identified for each policy coupled with specific actions that should be taken to achieve the goal. The **twenty-six** specific actions recommended will require considerable time and resources to implement. Clearly, some are more important than others in affecting future development in the Town. Some might well fall by the wayside; others may never come to fruition due to cost, political reality or changing needs and attitudes.

These actions are presented in the following pages in a format that quickly identifies what needs to be done, when the project should be initiated and how long it will take to complete, who is responsible, where the funding will come from, and what key steps

are required in order to get the action moving. The recommended project start date reflects a priority hierarchy that recognizes the need to focus limited resources on what currently appears to be the most critical issues and needs. This priority determination is based on the following model:

Priority I Priority II Priority III

Action should be initiated within the next 12-18 months

Action should be initiated within 3 years

Action can be postponed beyond 3 years

The Implementation Profiles also include action items that are already underway either

by virtue of the Comprehensive Plan project or because they are already an established feature of Town government. Review of the Town's regulatory framework is an example of the first type; continued support for and strengthening of existing projects and programs fall into the latter category. Because these Implementation Profiles are seen as a functional work plan for action, a space is provided for the insertion of a success measure for each action. These Success Indicators should be established when the action is initiated by the responsible agency based on agreement with affected parties on expected outcomes.

Implementation Profiles			Project Timeframe		First Steps	Funding Source	Responsibility for Implementation	
ID	Area	Description	Start	Duration			Primary	Support
G1	Growth	Complete public presentation of the Comprehensive Plan, review as appropriate, submit to Town Planning Board, complete SEQRA review and determination, submit to SOCPA for review and present to the Town Board for adoption.	Underway 3/2017	1 year/ review every 5 years	Established Comprehensive Plan review committee, review comprehensive plan document and implementation plan	Town of DeWitt General Fund	Comprehensive Plan Committee	Planning Board, Town Board, Department of Planning and Zoning
G2	Growth	Develop a formal needs assessment structure for and prepare a capital budget and a five-year capital improvement program.	Concurrent with 2017 Budget process	Ongoing	Work with Town Manager and Town Board to integrate capital program process as a regular part of Town budget	Town of DeWitt General Fund	Town Manager, w/Comptroller	Town Engineer, Planning Board, Town Board, Highway, Parks, Planning and Zoning
G3	Growth	Review and amend the Town Zoning Ordinance (Chapter 192) to address zoning inconsistencies with policies and goals stated in the Comprehensive Plan (complete SEQR review, submit to SOCPA and recommend to the Town Board for adoption). Changes should be kept on file and incorporated into 5 year review of comprehensive plan.	Underway 3/2017	Ongoing (review annually)	Since the zoning rewrite was completed in 2008 the Town Planning Board has reviewed the Zoning Ordinance Annually for revisions	Town of DeWitt General Fund	Planning Board	Department of Planning and Zoning, Zoning Board of Appeals
EU1	Extension of Utilities	Identify areas or portions of the existing sewer and water system that are deteriorating or obsolete (including areas that are not currently served by public sewers) and need replacement within the next five years, incorporate into capital improvement program.	Underway 3/2017	Ongoing	Review information already available; identify gaps to be filled; identify areas not served by public sewers	Town of DeWitt General Fund, County WEP	Town Engineer	Support: Town Water Department
H1	Housing	Undertake a housing study that identifies the impact of key trends such as changes in household configuration, rates of owner occupancy, aging of the population and income trends on housing supply and demand with particular emphasis on aging in place, include a survey of town residents.	2017	1 year	Develop a draft scope of work for inclusion in a request for proposal for services	Town of DeWitt, NYS?	Planning and Zoning (consultant services)	Planning Board
NC1	Neighborhood Character	Develop a neighborhood Design Manual that provides guidance on appropriate lighting, entry and street plantings, transit stops and shelters, traffic calming techniques and other design features. Establish a town-wide wayfinding system.	2017	1-3 years	Seek consultant expertise on wayfinding and design manual development	Town of DeWitt	Planning and Zoning (consultant services), Highway, Parks	Planning Board, SOCPA, SMTCC, CENTRO

Implementation Profiles			Project Timeframe		First Steps	Funding Source	Responsibility for Implementation	
ID	Area	Description	Start	Duration			Primary	Support
NC2	Neighborhood Character	Explore potential areas where mixed-use development should be incorporated as related to the Town of DeWitt land use vision and develop appropriate updates to the Town of DeWitt zoning code. Review and update mixed use development guidelines in the existing code to establish preferred development densities as well as to optimize allowed uses based on existing zoning districts.	2017	1 year	Review guidance documents on mixed-use zoning from APA, state level guidance, LEED ND	Town of DeWitt	Planning and Zoning, Planning Board, Comprehensive Plan Committee	Town Board
NC3	Neighborhood Character	Improve lighting, pedestrian, transit, and bicycle amenities along major thoroughfares as needed.	2017	1-3 years	Moving DeWitt Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Process	Town of DeWitt, other jurisdictions as appropriate	Primary: Planning and Zoning, Moving DeWitt Committee	Support: Parks, Highway, Planning Board, Town Board
NC4	Neighborhood Character	Encourage the establishment of neighborhood associations and continue support for Neighborhood Watch groups and strengthen those that already exist.	2017	continuing	Presentation to the Town Board on Neighborhood Watch by Police Department	Town of DeWitt	Police Department	Neighborhood Associations
NC5	Neighborhood Character	Encourage the placement of utilities underground whenever possible.	2017	continuing		National Grid/private development	Planning Board, Planning and Zoning	Town Board
ND1	Non-Residential Development	Examine zoning regulations affecting non-residential development, particularly site plan review regulations and requirements, to assess adequacy and effectiveness in light of current goals and actual experience.	Underway 3/2017	continuing	Town Planning Board continues to review and update the Zoning Ordinance annually	N/A	Planning Board	Planning and Zoning, ZBA
ND2	Non-Residential Development	Compare existing non-residential development patterns with the zoning map to assess the need for amendments of zoning district classifications and boundaries.	Underway 3/2017	continuing	Town Planning Board continues to review and update the Zoning Ordinance, and review land use annually	N/A	Planning Board	Planning and Zoning, ZBA
NR1	Natural Resources	Utilize natural resource and ownership data to identify and designate Critical Environmental Areas within the Town in accordance with NYS DEC Environmental Conservation Law.	2017	w/in 1 year	DACC to outline process that will be followed; gain agreement on approach	N/A	DACC	Planning and Zoning, Planning Board
NR2	Natural Resources	Investigate various tools for protection and preservation of natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas such as overlay districts, easements, incentives for developers, and others as may be applicable	2017	1 year	Undertake literature search to identify best practices	N/A	Planning and Zoning, Planning Board	DACC

Implementation Profile			Project Timeframe		First Steps	Funding Source	Responsibility for Implementation	
ID	Area	Description	Start	Duration			Primary	Support
NR3	Natural Resources	Identify areas where there are existing or potential drainage concerns/issues. Review and update town policies and ordinances to reduce stormwater runoff. Review design guidelines to encourage adoption of green infrastructure practices.	2017	w/in 1 year	Review goals with DACC; jointly determine needs	N/A	Planning and Zoning, Planning Board	DACC
NR4	Natural Resources	Participate in the development of reclamation plans to ensure that innovative concepts for reclamation and reuse of quarry sites are considered.	2018	5+ years	Research new concepts in reuse and reclamation	Town of DeWitt	Planning and Zoning, Planning Board	DACC
NR5	Natural Resources	Complete an urban forest management plan that includes preservation opportunities for trees on public and private lands.	2017	w/in 1 year	Hire consultant to develop urban forest management plan	Town of DeWitt/ NYS DEC	Planning and Zoning	DACC/Tree
R1	Recreation	Review and update the Parks and Recreation master plan every 5 years. Incorporate parks improvement and maintenance activities into the capital improvement program on an annual basis.	2017	1-3 years	Request Parks & Recreation Commission to develop this procedure	Town of DeWitt	Parks and Recreation Commission	Planning and Zoning, DACC, Planning Board
R2	Recreation	Review current recreation programs and resources available to Town residents and identify gaps. Evaluate the role and function of the Town Park system in the context of changing community needs.	2017	Continuing	Request Parks & Recreation Commission to undertake project	N/A	Parks and Recreation Commission	School Districts, State, County, Private Sector
T1	Transportation	Review road construction and repair standards and requirements of the Town subdivision rules and regulations to assess consistency with goals of the Comprehensive Plan.	2017	Within 1 year	Request input from all support agencies	Town of DeWitt	Planning and Zoning, Planning Board	Town Engineer, Highway, CNY Stormwater Coalition, Police, Fire, and EMS providers
T2	Transportation	Document a pavement management system that results in a five-year capital plan for improvements to existing streets.	2017	Within 1 year	Evaluate various pavement management systems to determine most appropriate for Town purposes	Town of DeWitt	Highway, Town Engineer	SMTC
T3	Transportation	Review off-street parking requirements and parking area design standards to look for opportunities for incorporating green infrastructure, also incorporate a commercial project road spec that provides guidance for sidewalk placement and on street parking.	2018	Within 1 year	Integrate into Planning Board activities and P&Z work plan	Town of DeWitt	Planning and Zoning, Planning Board	Highway, Town Engineer

Implementation Profiles			Project Timeframe		First Steps	Funding Source	Responsibility for Implementation	
ID	Area	Description	Start	Duration			Primary	Support
T4	Transportation	Examine potential traffic calming techniques that can reduce through traffic and speeding on residential streets and identify streets where such techniques should be considered.	2018	Within 1 year	Integrate into Planning Board activities and P&Z work plan	Town of DeWitt/ SMTC	Planning and Zoning, Planning Board	SMTC, Highway, Town Engineer
T5	Transportation	Develop a pedestrian and bicycle master plan for the Town that improves pedestrian and bicycle safety and mobility. Identify important pedestrian generators (schools, churches, transit stops), activity nodes (playgrounds, community parks), and destination points (municipal offices, library, trailheads) that could be linked by pedestrian walks and bicycle paths to compliment those included in the Canal Recreationway Trail and other existing and proposed walks and paths.	2018	Within 1 year	Moving DeWitt Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Process	Town of DeWitt	Planning and Zoning, Moving DeWitt Committee, Planning Board	Town Board, Highway, Town Engineer
T6	Transportation	Implement complete streets projects on Town owned facilities where appropriate and partner with the County, state and regional agencies in order to improve alternative mobility options including walking, cycling, and transit.	2017	Continuing	Adopt complete streets policy	N/A	Planning and Zoning, Highway, Town Engineer	Town Board, Planning Board
T7	Transportation	Finalize Town policy and standards for location design, construction, maintenance and retrofitting of sidewalks.	2017	Within 1 year	Research best practices from other communities	N/A	Town Engineer, Highway, Planning and Zoning	Town Board, Planning Board
T8	Transportation	Identify strategies and work with State, County, and other governments to implement mitigation strategies for major arterials such as 481, East Genessee Street, Erie Boulevard, 290, 298 to reduce the impact of these roadways on the connectivity within the Town, and to protect adjacent neighborhoods.	2017	Ongoing	Review best practices for transportation	N/A	Planning and Zoning	Planning Board, Town Board



Town of DeWitt  
5400 Butternut Drive  
East Syracuse, NY 13057