

COMMUNITY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN Comprehensive Plan Report..... Volume - I



The Town of Ira and Cato Joint Community Comprehensive Plan



Engineers • Environmental Scientists • Planners • Landscape Designers

**Towns of Ira and Cato
Cayuga County, New York**

Comprehensive Plan

Report

Volume I of III

June 2008

(Edited Sept 3, 2008)

**Adopted September 3rd, 2008 by the Town of Ira
Adopted September 4th, 2008 by the Town of Cato**



Engineers • Environmental Scientists • Planners • Landscape Architects

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Acknowledgements

~ In Memory of Donald Teter ~

The people of the Towns of Ira and Cato have developed this Joint Community Comprehensive Plan over a period of 12 months beginning in the summer of 2006. The document is the result of several public scoping sessions including public visioning and community workshops sponsored by the Ira/Cato Comprehensive Plan Ad-Hoc Committee and the Ira and Cato Town Boards.

Local officials are aware of the fact that changing trends and times require the development of planning documents that will allow the Towns of Ira and Cato to continue as a Quality Communities well into the future. However, it is also understood that change should be embraced as long as it is sustainable, supported by the community and provides opportunity for residents of the area. It is also important that changing trends do not have negative consequences with respect to community vision. Therefore, this document is designed to be reviewed and reevaluated periodically to ensure that the vision of the community remains intact for the next generation of residents.

Based upon the results of the planning process, the Towns of Ira and Cato owe a debt of gratitude to the many residents, experts and agency officials who devoted time and energy to create a blueprint for the future by providing local expertise and public opinion. Considerable emphasis was placed on community involvement and the community responded accordingly.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Authorization

On May 10, 2006, the Ira Town Board authorized Barton & Loguidice, P.C. (B&L) to assist in undertaking the preparation of a Comprehensive Plan (The Plan) pursuant to, and in accordance with Section 272-a of New York State Town Law (NYSTL). Upon adoption of a resolution, the Town Board authorized the formation of a Special Board (Ad-Hoc Committee) consisting of one or more members of the Town Planning Board (272 NYSTL) appointed by the Town Board to develop a vision for the future of the community.

On this date, the B&L planning team held a public presentation at the Ira Town Hall to discuss the planning process and the need for input from the surrounding communities. As a result, the Town of Cato determined that the best and most effective approach to completing their Comprehensive Plan was to work with Ira and combine efforts for undertaking a Community Inventory and public participation process. At that time, the Town of Cato appointed members of the community to participate in a combined Ad-Hoc Committee (e.g., a Steering Committee for the planning process). Therefore, the community inventory and planning process that accompanies this Plan was undertaken as a combined effort between the Towns of Ira and Cato and in cooperation with the Villages of Cato and Meridian. In developing the inventory and analysis, it became readily apparent that the Towns of Ira and Cato, though they are unique, share a very similar environment and cooperative spirit among community members. As a result, the process of developing the inventory and undertaking public visioning sessions in the fall of 2006 led to a single cohesive plan document and coordinate future planning efforts within the communities of Ira and Cato.

The outcome of this partnership effort is a combined Comprehensive Plan for the preparation of policy documents for the Towns of Ira and Cato. Implementation may take place within the individual communities as planning strategies are employed, but ultimately, project goals are devised to encompass a long term joint planning effort. In creating this joint comprehensive planning document, input from the Villages of Cato and Meridian was solicited to ensure that the population centers of the two Towns receive due consideration in the planning process. Due to scheduling conflicts, the Villages had

limited input into the planning process, but the Town of Cato assigned one Village resident to the Committee. In addition, special meetings were held with Village officials to inform them of ongoing planning efforts.

1.2 Purpose

The primary purpose of the Ira-Cato Comprehensive Plan is to provide guidance to local officials and residents as they work to accommodate future physical growth and development of the community. The Plan addresses areas within both Towns and considers land use policy within the context of the two village centers. The Plan provides community goals, objectives, and strategies derived from visioning sessions and a series of workshops based upon a comprehensive inventory and an analysis pursuant to citizen input. The Plan provides guidance to at least three levels of community interest.

First, the Plan serves to guide Town officials but provides insight to all four of the municipalities as they engage in a coordinated approach to planning for the future. Secondly, the Plan provides guidance to local, State and County agencies for the development and maintenance of facilities in the area. Third, the plan will guide public agencies, private business, not-for-profit agencies, and citizens in working toward a collective vision for Ira and Cato. The Plan recognizes that Ira and Cato are important in the context of surrounding communities, Cayuga County and Central New York.

Officials in Ira and Cato understand that the act of governance is the art of balancing limited resources with unlimited demands. During periods of limited public resources, Comprehensive Planning serves as a tool to strategically guide the public and private sectors to a sustainable future. This guidance is necessary to provide effective and efficient expenditures of public funds for the maintenance and development of critical infrastructure and facilities. Once adopted, the Plan will help Ira and Cato achieve its vision for the next generation and promote a sound and reasonable approach to public and private investment.

1.3 Overview of Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is critical to the development of local land use policy and the rationale for future planning decisions. About 64% of New York municipalities have adopted comprehensive plans to guide future growth and development. The planning process allows the community to envision the kind of future they want and develop a strategy to achieve a common vision.

Community planning is a proactive tool because it anticipates and prepares for, rather than reacts to, potential future opportunities or development pressure. It works in any community's favor because it can be used to manage development in growing areas; attract development to slow growth areas; allow for logical extensions and improvements to local infrastructure; and preserve open spaces. One of the important roles of the comprehensive plan is to identify natural resources that can be managed in ways that will benefit the community as a whole. Communities that lack comprehensive plans and are unprepared for change may miss critical opportunities to direct changes according to a larger community vision.

This Comprehensive Plan has three major components:

- 1) Community inventory and analysis (The Inventory – Volume II) – in the case of Ira and Cato, an extensive mapping inventory and analysis is based upon a computerized Geographic Information System (GIS). While the inventory is contained in Volume II, it is the first step in the planning process.
- 2) Community goals, objectives, and action strategies (The Plan – Volume I) derived as the result of the inventory and planning process.
- 3) The environmental assessment and record of public scoping to satisfy the requirements of a Comprehensive Plan that serves as a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS).

Elements of the final plan include implementation strategies and describe how progress in achieving the goals of the community can be measured and monitored. The plan will also identify resources available to the community to facilitate and support community

strategies. The key to plan success lies within the community goals, objectives, recommendations, and strategies that are established to achieve a vision for the next generation of residents. They are defined as follows:

Goal – A community goal is a broad statement that represents a long-term goal for each component of the plan. The combination of goals sets the framework for the future long-term vision of the community and is based upon extensive public input.

Objective – Objectives are more specific steps toward achieving long-term goals but will take a period of time to accomplish. Objectives may require a periodic review and may be adjusted to changes in the regulatory landscape or unanticipated issues that arise due to unforeseen trends or events.

Implementation Strategy – Implementation strategies are specific, short-term policy-oriented actions that may be employed immediately or be initiated within a 1 to 5 year timeframe. They provide direction toward the ideal approach when choosing between several alternatives. Strategies assist the decision-making process of local officials based upon the analysis and evaluation of best available alternatives suggested by panel guests, participating agencies, and the planning consultant. The success of short-term strategies should be reviewed every 5 years and updated as needed. For example, development of an expanded community water system may be a local objective, but the Towns may target funding to complete a feasibility study as a strategy to approach long-range water supply improvements.

1.3.1 Plan Contents

The Environmental, Historic, and Cultural Resources section of the Plan describes the natural resource base of the area. This is organized in NRI (Natural Resources Inventory) format and is designed to satisfy the natural resource inventory under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). It recommends measures to enhance local natural resources through cooperative management and public and private stewardship.

The Historic and Cultural Resources portion of the Plan explores the ways in which local history and historic preservation efforts can become part of the community revitalization process, particularly in the Villages of Cato and Meridian. Historic and archeological resources enhance the understanding of how the local community developed over time and can assist in projecting the direction of current trends.

The Parks and Recreational Resources section of the Plan identifies existing recreational resources and makes recommendations to explore new recreational opportunities for local residents.

Water Supply and Wastewater Disposal planning addresses the basic needs of the community and provide for public health. Existing water and limitations with respect to on-site wastewater treatment are described. Demands on the resources are identified and challenges occurring in the way these services are provided are addressed. This is important in approaching the needs of the community in a cost effective and efficient manner.

The Transportation Planning portion of the Plan is intended to help facilitate the logical growth of the street network while preserving highway function and maximizing efficiency. The presence of State Routes 370 and 34 have and will continue to have a major impact on the growth and land use patterns within the town. The presence of the Cayuga County Trail system and proximity to the New York State Canal System also represent major opportunities to increase multi-modal connections and increase the number of visitors to the community. The importance of maintaining a safe and efficient multi-modal transportation system is explained. Coordination with current Federal and State D.O.T. initiatives is recommended.

The Utilities and Communication portion of the Plan is intended to plan for improvements, particularly with respect to communication, in a way that is compatible with farming and the rural character of the community. At the same time, recent improvements in cellular and wind generating technology may provide opportunities to improve the efficiency of farming and local businesses. For example, wind turbines that

are privately owned to support individual farms are considered, as well as the potential for future commercial wind turbines that may have a negative impact upon local farms.

The Land Use Planning section of the Plan pulls together all of the previous planning elements to help determine the most appropriate land use decisions to achieve the goals and objectives of the Plan. In essence, the land use plan addresses issues with respect to housing, commercial development, community facilities (i.e., libraries, public safety services, etc.), agriculture, and other forms of land use within the Towns. In addition, it addresses community design alternatives relative to density of development, layout, logical extensions of growth, and strategic locations. The land use plan addresses current land use patterns and trends as the basis for making predictions as to the future impacts of land use within the Towns, County, and Villages.

1.3.2 The Planning Process

The Plan was developed over a period of 14 months and utilized a public visioning/scoping process. These visioning sessions maximized public input regarding the issues outlined above and support the scoping requirements of SEQRA. The process included three visioning sessions held during the fall of 2006 that solicited public concerns regarding subject areas of the Plan. Interim workshops were undertaken to prepare for public sessions, generate ideas for the Plan document and build consensus regarding planning goals (see Figure 1-1: Comprehensive Plan Process Flow Chart).

1.3.3 Funding Potential

Proposed project goals, objectives, and strategies listed in this plan may require funding through current and future grant sources. Some of these sources, including the Quality Communities Program, The New York State Environmental Protection Fund and the Land and Water Conservation Fund, place emphasis on the use of funds in accordance with a Town Comprehensive Plan or other regional planning initiatives. This will become an important component of future phases of implementation. A list of funding programs is included in the appendix of this plan to provide information for funding future projects. In-kind services are welcomed by most of these grant programs and cooperative efforts

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IRA / CATO JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROCESS

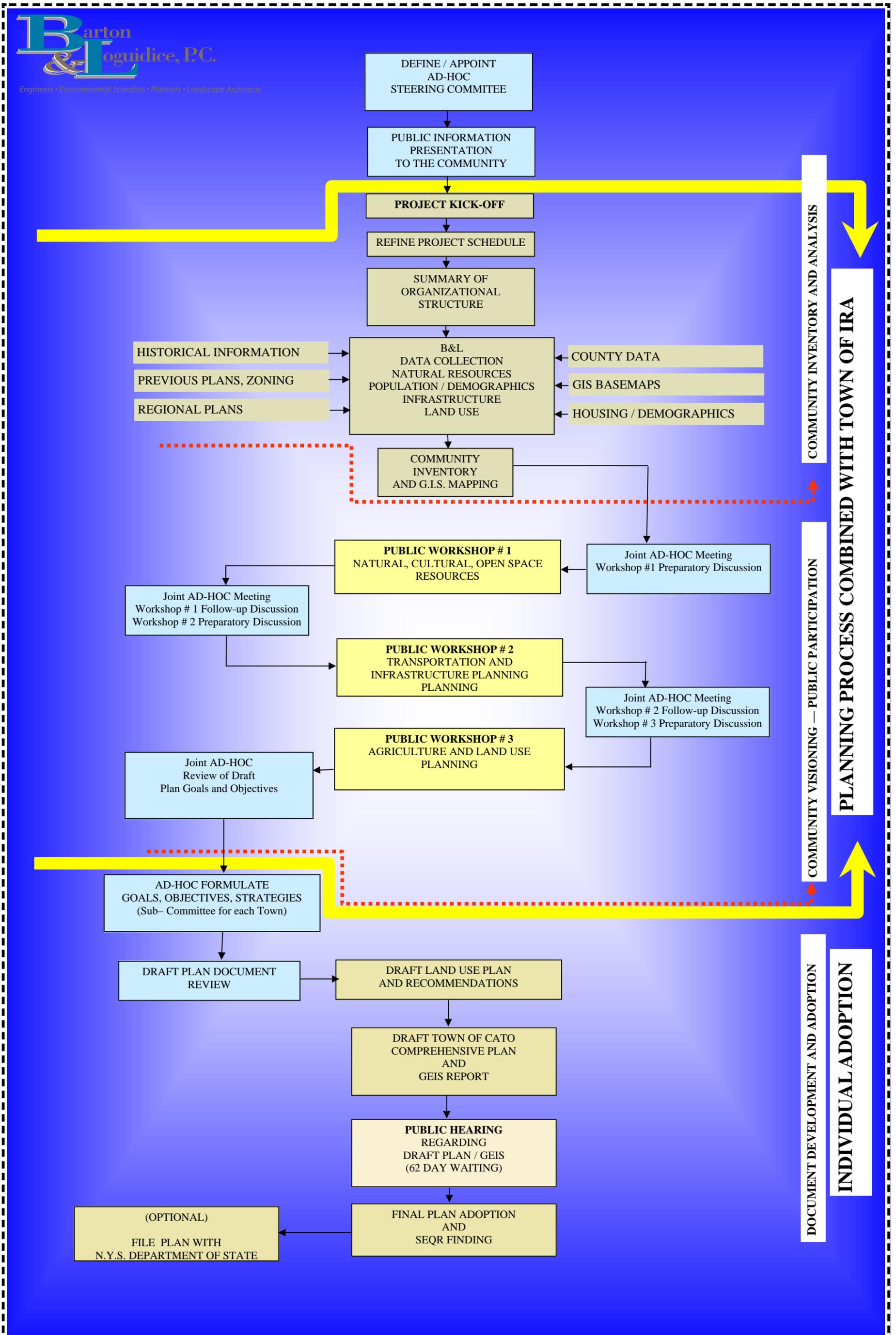


Figure 1-1

between local citizens and interest groups can be used as matching sources. This approach will help the Towns in achieving the future goals and objectives of the plan by maximizing the availability of grant funds. In fact, the Towns have received generous Member Item grants from Assemblyman Robert Oaks and a joint grant application was submitted through the Quality Communities Initiative. Unfortunately, the Quality Communities Grant to support development of the Community Inventory was not funded.

In addition, inter-municipal cooperation ranks very high with many available funding programs. Through addressing the Comprehensive Plan issues in a cooperative manner, each Town will be well served through available funding programs in the future.

1.3.4 Public Visioning

As an integral component of the Comprehensive Planning process, the Ira-Cato Ad-Hoc Committee held three visioning sessions. Each session provided for extensive public outreach and interaction with State and local officials and local residents. The sessions were designed to provide substantial opportunity for both verbal and written input into the planning process. Each visioning session was publicized through local newspapers, radio and television media. These sessions were followed by a meeting summary and an evaluation of the issues raised during the public visioning sessions. These evaluations were formulated into planning goals, objectives, recommendations, and strategies for this Comprehensive Plan document. Expanded visioning summaries and meeting minutes are contained in Volume III of the Comprehensive Plan.

The sessions were attended by several agencies including the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), and the Cayuga County Department of Planning and Development. A brief inventory of the sessions is listed in Section 1.3.5 below.

1.3.5 Summary of Public Visioning Sessions

Public Visioning Session No. 1 was held on Wednesday, September 13, 2006, between 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. at the Cato-Meridian Middle School on State Route 370. The purpose of this session was to inform the public of the purpose and scope of the plan and to solicit public

opinion with respect to the importance of natural, cultural, and recreational resources in Ira and Cato.

The session included a public presentation by Brian K. Madigan, R.L.A. and Senior Land Use Planner for B&L. Special guests included Amy D'Angelo of the Cayuga County Department of Planning and Development and Fran Caracillo, an expert in Historic Preservation from the Village of Seneca Falls.

Public Visioning Session No. 2 was held on Wednesday, October 11, 2006, between 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. at the Cato-Meridian School on State Route 370. The purpose of this session was to scope public opinion regarding transportation, utilities, and the potential for developing water supply and wastewater disposal infrastructure within both Towns.

The session began with a presentation by Brian K. Madigan, R.L.A. and Senior Land Use Planner for B&L. Special guests included William Egloff, P.E. of NYSDOT, Region 3, and Jeffrey Rowe, P.E. and engineer from B&L's water and wastewater group.

Public Visioning Session No. 3 was held on Wednesday, November 8, 2006, between 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. at the Cato-Meridian School on State Route 370. The purpose of the session was to scope public opinion with respect to the future of agriculture and land use within both Towns.

This session involved a presentation by Brian K. Madigan, R.L.A. of B&L illustrating the many planning techniques designed to develop a sound approach to land use planning, maintaining an economically viable agricultural presence, and providing for open space protection.

All of the sessions began with a 20-minute informational presentation followed by an interactive brainstorming session, where the public was invited to discuss concerns and generate ideas to address all of the comprehensive planning elements to be considered within both Towns over the next 10 to 20 years.

1.3.6 Ad-Hoc Committee Public Workshops

Throughout the planning process, the Ad-Hoc Committee held monthly meetings beginning in July 2006. These meetings were designed to review the information from the inventory and discuss potential issues to seed discussion at each visioning session. Workshops that followed a visioning session were designed to use the issues raised by officials and local residents as a road map toward developing community goals and objectives. Subsequent meetings were designed to report on plan progress and develop a consensus among Ad-Hoc Committee members as to the appropriate strategies to achieve long-term planning goals. Minutes of these meetings are also provided in Volume III of the Comprehensive Plan.

1.4 **History of Settlement**

Prior to European settlement, the natural resources of the Ira-Cato area yielded generous hunting, fishing and agricultural opportunity to the Iroquois. The land provided an abundance of resources necessary to sustain the native population and support their culture. Upon the arrival of European settlers, growth in local industry resulted from forestry, farming, and rural manufacturing that grew out of the natural resource base. Local creeks and streams provided the water and power necessary for mills, farming, and rural manufacturing. As the Erie Canal developed, a major trade route along the Seneca River emerged and the transport of goods from farm to market became a major factor in the development of central New York.



Source: Cayuga County Parks & Trails

As transportation improved and opened up new trade routes, farms became more abundant. Agriculture became the primary lifestyle for the community and changing trends in transportation and technology began to improve efficiency.

During the first part of the 20th century, industry and manufacturing grew in nearby Syracuse and along the Canal, and the Ira-Cato area continued to provide agricultural

support to nearby urbanizing areas. As the railroad became more influential and the commercial use of the canal system began to wane, farming continued to be a major source of livelihood for the Towns. Agricultural products were first distributed within the region and then to markets throughout the northeast. With the advent of the New York State Thruway, land use patterns began to change in response to new roads and access to the State Highway System. This resulted in a greater number of residents commuting to nearby communities to work, while others remained in farming and agricultural commerce.

Ira and Cato have entered an era of advanced communication and technology. In light of this fact, new opportunities exist as the economy continues to become more service oriented. While agriculture dominates the character of the community, equestrian farms, tourism development, and a changing economy present new economically viable pursuits. The area is slowly becoming a bedroom community due to easy access to adjoining communities and single-family residential development will likely become the primary trend in growth.

The conflict between farming and residential development will likely grow as land is slowly subdivided for residential purposes and farmland becomes prime real estate rather than prime farmland. As in the adjoining Town of Lysander, residential growth is beginning to affect the economic viability of farming as more and more large agriculture parcels become subject to development pressure. This results in a fragmentation of



farmland and natural resources, and a loss in the viability of agriculture. Today, agriculture is subject to volatile markets and requires more acreage and mechanization to be profitable.

Therefore, local farms are struggling to compete in regional markets. Farmers throughout New York State are experiencing difficulty in

maintaining a profitable level of viability. Protection of the agricultural heritage of the Towns is likely to continue to be an important regional issue.

As the economy continues to become more service oriented and the impact of residential development continues, it is likely that most manufacturing oriented commercial development and related employment will either remain in the greater Syracuse, Rochester, and Auburn markets or continue to decline. Prime access to the New York State Thruway and the State and County highway system makes trips to the larger regional centers and beyond fairly easy. Therefore, commuting between these commercial centers and outlying rural areas will continue to be a factor in single family residential development. However, in today's economy, with advanced communication, many businesses do not rely on centralized locations and home occupations and telecommuting are becoming more popular. This affords current and future residents the opportunity to enjoy a rural lifestyle with more manageable commutes. Unfortunately, increasing residential growth uses more in services than it returns in tax base, so it is important to identify opportunities for existing commercial businesses to improve and for new home based cottage industries to thrive within the community. This growth may have greater benefits if it is anticipated and planned for in a cooperative manner.

1.5 General Demographic Analysis

Data contained within the 2000 Census indicates an increase in population as compared to other Towns in Cayuga County. While the County as a whole experienced a .4% decline in population in the past decade, the two Towns experienced a combined growth rate of 16.45% (Ira +21.9% and Cato +11%). In light of this fact, Ira and Cato are unique to most of the rural communities in New York State. During the 1990s, both Towns experienced growth resulting in a larger number of families with children and a more youthful population. This is in contrast with the general trend in municipalities throughout New York State that are experiencing an aging population.

The question of why the area is experiencing this type of population growth may be explored by looking to neighboring communities. A combination of suburban development and the fast pace of single-family residential construction in the neighboring Town of Lysander may be a sound indicator that growth in Ira and Cato during the 1990s was the result of ex-urban migration from the greater Syracuse area and suburbs.

While this rate of population increase suggests that planning for future growth and pressure on local services is warranted, it is also important to recognize this trend may be slowing. This theory is supported by noting a reduction in the number of building permits issued over the past few years. For example, the Town of Ira experienced an increase of 298 housing units in the 1990s (average of 30 units per year). However, there has been a decline in the number of units constructed since 2001. In 2005, only three units were constructed in Ira. This slowing of residential construction also appears to be taking place in the adjoining Town of Lysander and may reflect a slowing trend in the single-family housing market. However, when planning for the future, it is important to realize that the housing market runs in cycles and average growth will continue over a long period of time.

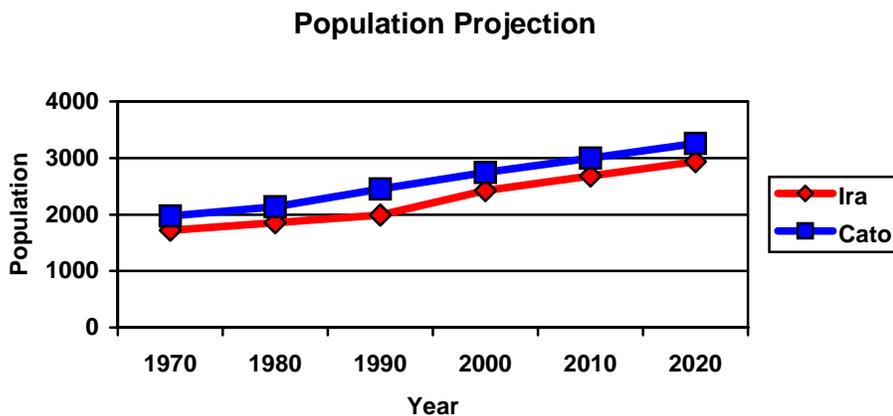
It is also important to note that the majority of the population in both Ira and Cato ranges in age between 25 and 55 years of age, suggesting that most of the population of the area is within prime wage earning age. Most residents either commute for employment or are involved in the agricultural commerce of the community. More than 60% of the population in both Towns includes married couples living together (41% in Ira and 35% in Cato have children under 18 years of age). In profiling the current population in Ira and Cato, it is evident that the community is generally cohesive and consists of young to middle-aged residents with children who enjoy the quality of life that is consistent with a rural lifestyle.

While the population increase experienced in the 1990s has slowed in the first decade of the 21st century, it is safe to assume that suburban flight to rural areas will continue and land values will continue to rise. It is likely that growth will continue in the form of single-family residential development as new residents migrate from growing suburban areas. Because growth in the Ira-Cato community is being affected by suburban growth surrounding the greater Syracuse area, it is likely that low interest rates and current economic trends will continue to increase private investment in real estate as evidenced during the last decade. Barring a major change in short term economic forces, this trend will play out into the foreseeable future. Therefore, planning for services to provide for new residents is important to this plan. Single-family residential development will have a greater impact upon farming, natural resources, community resources, and infrastructure needs than any other land use in the foreseeable future.

In generating a projected rate of growth for the two communities, a review of population growth since 1970 provides an indication of the average growth rate over a 30-year period. By averaging the increase in population over the previous three decades, projected growth can be determined. By estimating the population growth over each decade since 1970 and averaging that rate, we can estimate future growth potential in each Town.

The Town of Ira population has increased by an average of 255 individuals per decade between the years 1970 and 2000. Using the same method of averaging growth between 1970 and 2000, the Town of Cato reflects an average population growth rate of 256 individuals per decade. This reflects a relatively uniform rate of population growth over the previous 30-year period. Based upon this evaluation, a projected rate of population growth over the next 10 to 20 years can be estimated at approximately 10% for the Town of Ira and 9% for the Town of Cato.

In considering an average combined growth rate of 16.5 % between the two Towns in the 1990s (Ira = 21.9% and Cato = 11%), a projected growth rate of approximately 9% for both Towns is conservative and should be considered in planning for future land use and infrastructure (Chart 1-1 below).



Year	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
Ira	1720	1855	1990	2426	2681	2936
Cato	1975	2137	2452	2744	3000	3256

Chart 1-1 – Growth since 1970 and projected to 2020.

Another trend identified by the Town Supervisor is the purchase of land by out-of-Town investors. The high cost of real estate in areas along the east coast is beginning to foster speculative land purchases in the area. Land speculation from downstate New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut may become a factor over the next 10 to 20 years as residents from urban areas continue to look for real estate and a more rural lifestyle. This trend should be re-evaluated within a five-year timeframe to determine if land speculation may impact the construction rate of future single-family residential units in the future.

1.6 Summary of Plan Recommendations

1.6.1 Assessment of Planning Alternatives

Ira and Cato are rural communities and most of their development issues are a function of population density and proximity to the Villages, the waterfront, and highway system. The intent of identifying and evaluating strategic planning alternatives is to provide solutions to potential development issues based on the community's vision for the future. The complexity of some issues may require several steps to ultimately solve local problems (for example, potential groundwater contamination, impacts to agriculture, and loss of rural character). Therefore, it was critical to identify and analyze the environmental setting and land use issues in detail.

In order to focus discussion, specific recommendations and action strategies are grouped into general topics identified as *Planning Components* in the following Chapters. These Planning Components include Natural Resources, Parks and Open Space, Historic and Cultural Resources, Water and Wastewater Supply, Transportation, and Land Use. An analysis of individual Planning Components and visioning sessions resulted in three (3) Community Planning Alternatives to guide future land-use policy and decision-making in the Towns of Ira and Cato. These alternatives are discussed below:

“Planned infrastructure should be concentrated near anticipated growth areas”

-Brian Madigan,
RLA, Planning
Consultant-

1.6.1.1 Community Planning Alternative A – Nodal (Compact) Development at a Schedule Matching the Anticipated Rate of Growth

This community planning approach is most compatible with the goals and objectives outlined in this Plan. The concept is to anticipate development, evaluate its potential impacts, and respond by establishing guidelines to ensure such development occurs at a rate and, in a manner that would not degrade infrastructure, utilities, and quality of life. For example, planning for local infrastructure improvements in areas that are logical extensions of growth within proximity to the Villages, or adjacent to the existing residential density along Cross Lake represents a "ground up" approach to manage and guide development in the future by encouraging smart growth outward from existing centers of activity (i.e., the Villages of Cato and Meridian and existing residences on the west shore of Cross Lake).

This alternative would require revisions to local land use policy, zoning codes, and subdivision regulations to direct higher density, and thus, more sustainable development adjacent to these areas in order to maximize existing infrastructure and minimize the potential cost burden associated with poor or unplanned growth management. It also would allow for a phased approach to infrastructure investments within areas that are anticipated to support future development. For example, by planning for improvement and/or extension of water infrastructure adjacent to the Villages, the system will provide services to the greatest number of users with the least amount of operation and maintenance, thereby minimizing associated costs for its intended users. At the same time, residents who are not likely to be served with public water service within the planning horizon will not be required to pay for infrastructure improvements that may never be realized. It also mitigates the potential for unanticipated growth in agricultural and open space areas of each Town.

Community Planning Alternative A anticipates and is premised upon additional demand for residential development along or within proximity to NYS Route 370 as a result of ongoing improvements to this important highway. Route 370 carries fairly significant amounts of traffic between Syracuse and Rochester which could represent potential for future commercial development. Simultaneously, improvements to the highway will allow for better commuter access and more demand may result for residential development in the area. As residential development grows, there will be more interest in locating commercial support services along

the highway corridor. The commercial development that may follow should be carefully planned so that a proliferation of strip commercial development does not occur, which would result in degradation of functionality and level of service of Route 370 and the surrounding highway system.

In addition, demand for waterfront residential development along Cross Lake should be anticipated. Water service to this area is important to provide a safe water supply to existing residents. However, as seasonal units are converted to year round use and as the remaining land areas become developed, it is important to ensure that ground and surface water contamination issues are considered.

Under this planning alternative, water infrastructure would be concentrated within proximity to the Village centers and along the Cross Lake shoreline to prevent typical suburban sprawl into existing farmland and agricultural taxing districts (Figure 3-1).

Given the current and short-term demand for development in the Towns of Ira and Cato, this alternative would be the most suitable approach to achieve Town goals and protect important agricultural lands, open space, and environmental resources over the course of a 20-year planning horizon. Support for this alternative is found in the following sections of this plan and is based upon the inventory and analysis information contained within Volume II of this document. Based upon the information obtained and evaluated during the Comprehensive Planning process, it is recommended that Community Planning Alternative A be adopted as the primary recommendation of this Comprehensive Plan. While some of the recommendations in this Plan may be implemented in concert with each of the three planning alternatives evaluated, Planning Alternative A would best accommodate the needs and desires of Ira and Cato within the 20-year horizon of this Plan.

1.6.1.2 Community Planning Alternative B – Linear Growth Associated with Road Front Infrastructure Improvements.

Essentially, most of the recommendations outlined under Community Planning Alternative A above would be implemented in this alternative. However, water infrastructure may be developed on a Town-wide basis. Under such a scenario and without careful planning, it

“Highway function needs to be considered. We don’t want Route 370 to become Route 31 through the Town of Clay”

-Resident attending Public Visioning Session-

could encourage growth that may result in an undesirable land use pattern – suburban strip development. This Planning Alternative would improve water service to all residents in Ira and Cato, but it is likely that Town-wide water districts would be cost prohibitive and expensive to maintain. Without tight controls on future development, the following impacts could result and should be evaluated:

- Proliferation of single-family development in agricultural areas.
- Fragmentation of agricultural lands.
- Impacts to environmentally constrained areas.
- Proliferation of residential development along collector roads.
- Increased impacts to surface and groundwater supplies.
- Increased impact to drainage patterns and runoff.
- Aesthetic impacts to the rural character of the community.
- Reduction in highway safety and mobility.
- Increased demand on local services and infrastructure.

In general, many of the recommendations in this plan will address several of these issues if they are implemented under this alternative. A Town-wide water district is certainly possible if the Ira-Cato community is willing to pursue this alternative. However, Alternative B may result in growth impacts that are undesirable to the community. If this alternative should be pursued, many of the recommendations in the plan should be revisited and adjusted to mitigate the long-term impacts of associated growth.

Although a viable planning approach and more proactive than the Null Alternative, this approach may be programmed to meet with several community goals and objectives contained in this report, and it is recommended to serve only as a measure to protect environmental resources and valuable agricultural lands that would otherwise be adversely impacted under the Null Alternative outlined below.

1.6.1.3 Community Planning Alternative C - No Action Alternative

The No Action, or Null Alternative evaluated under SEQRA would allow the current zoning and land use policies to remain. Under the current scenario, large lot residential development will eventually creep into agricultural areas, fragment vast open space and natural resources, erode the highway network, and result in cost prohibitive mitigation measures.

In this approach, water supply will remain limited primarily to residents within the two Villages. With no plans for public water improvements or future wastewater treatment facilities, groundwater contamination issues and lack of available and potable public water will limit the amount of development that will occur. Generally, residential units will occupy large lots necessary to accommodate private wells. Additionally, large lot sizes will be necessary to accommodate permanent on-site wastewater disposal systems that may impact groundwater supplies due to the soil limitations within the community. As single-family development slowly continues, these large lots will begin to fragment agricultural lands and will have a long-term impact on the rural character of Ira and Cato. Recommendations for land use approvals would continue to be made on a case-by-case basis, which is how the Town generally operates under current review procedures.

In addition, inadequate water infrastructure will limit the potential for commercial uses in proximity to the two villages and the New York State Thruway. This may result in an imbalance of commercial and agricultural land use as opposed to predominantly single-family residential development that will ultimately place a strain on the local tax base.

By continuing the current trend of growth and not proactively pursuing and utilizing dynamic planning strategies, residential sprawl will likely be concentrated on higher speed collector roads and will result in "strip style" residential development. This will result in the degradation of highway function and greater vehicle conflicts along high speed collector roads.

Ultimately, the No Action Alternative would not satisfy the Goals and Objectives formulated during the planning process. As such, this alternative should not be pursued.

As the Towns of Ira and Cato adopt and pursue implementation of this Comprehensive Plan, it is strongly recommended that the Towns evaluate the success of adopted alternatives every five (5) years to ensure the Goals and Objectives established throughout this process are effectively being met. Unforeseen development trends may force Ira and/or Cato to adjust strategies or planning approaches to situations in order to mitigate potential adverse impacts as a result of those trends, which could only be done by periodic evaluations of the adopted Comprehensive Plan.

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2.0 NATURAL, HISTORICAL, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

2.1 Natural Resources and Open Space

2.1.1 Introduction

The long-range planning policy for Ira and Cato should include careful consideration of the protection and preservation of environmentally sensitive areas. At the same time, maintaining rural character and agriculture is clearly important among members of the community and should be a consideration of all future planning decisions. The most prominent and distinctive natural features in the area are the glacial drumlins that are oriented from north to south throughout both Towns.



These features are an important component of local rural character along with the lakes, streams, and wetlands and provide the foundation for all of the visual and physical aspects of the area.

Many of the goals, objectives, and strategies in this section of the plan may, on the surface, seem very general in nature. However, *all* of the plan sections that follow are intrinsically linked to sustainable growth scenarios. The protection of natural resources and open space is the primary foundation for planning decisions as future growth and development occurs over time. It is important to state that in order to create a sustainable future for new generations and maintain the rural nature of the community, natural resource conservation is the underlying premise of all planning decisions. At the same time, it is critical to maintain the economic viability and profitability of agriculture as the primary engine of the local economy, all while managing future infrastructure investments and upgrades at a rate matching development.

Therefore, based upon public comment and discussions among members of the community, the following goals, objectives, and strategies are set forth with respect to the natural resource and open space conservation within Ira and Cato:

“This area contains the 2nd largest drumlin field in the world. Perhaps this geologic feature should be highlighted somehow. “

-Resident attending
Public Visioning
Session-

2.1.2 Goal

The Towns of Ira and Cato will foster a balanced use of natural resources within the community to maintain a healthy environment and preserve rural character by employing growth management and sound land use policy.

2.1.3 Objectives

- Coordinate with adjoining communities that share local watersheds to establish common goals with respect to growth patterns and the conservation of local surface and groundwater resources.
- Protect the quality and quantity of surface and ground water throughout the Towns of Ira and Cato.
- Establish and maintain land use policy that will protect the quality of groundwater serving individual wells throughout the community.
- Consider the water quality of the watersheds of the Seneca River, Cross Lake, Otter Lake, Parker Pond and Mud Lake when addressing future land use issues throughout both Towns.
- Promote land use patterns that protect air quality, surface and groundwater resources while working to eliminate or minimize all sources of non-point source pollution.
- Protect environmentally sensitive areas and stream corridors within both Towns.
- Implement policy that provides for land use and density that is compatible with the soil's ability to support development, while protecting prime agricultural soils, existing farmland, and farming operations wherever possible.

- Encourage high quality design and construction, with the retention of existing trees and natural features wherever possible.

Work with all levels of government to encourage cooperative resource allocation, watershed management, and land use planning .

- Employ growth management to protect agriculture and open space, particularly economically viable agriculture, support services, and agricultural commerce, for the benefit of future generations.
- Retain a viable amount of open space to preserve the rural small town character of the community that residents currently enjoy.
- Encourage local farmers to work with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to ensure farming practices help protect local surface and ground water quality.
- Promote outdoor education and environmental awareness within the community in cooperation with the Cato-Meridian School District.

2.1.4 Implementation Strategies

2.1.4.1 Adopt a uniform land conservation overlay district in both townships.

An “overlay” builds upon the underlying zoning by establishing additional standards and criteria. The standards of the overlay zone apply in addition to those of the underlying zoning district. Overlay zoning can be an effective tool for communities to use in protecting specific resources from development pressures.

The Land Conservation Overlay District (LCO District) is an overlay that protects sensitive natural features of a site or area within the Towns. The uses in the underlying districts are permitted subject to Planning Board review. The review process for an LCO district has two parts. The first step is a determination of the presence and importance of natural features on the proposed development site. If important natural features are present (i.e., the site is within

“Open space character of towns is a big reason people live here. This character should be maintained.”

-Jerry Hunter,
Cato Town Board
Member-

the one-hundred-year floodplain or regulated wetlands), the Planning Board would take a more detailed review of the project. It is recommended that both Towns employ a uniform LCO District over land areas that are:

- Within 100 feet of the mean high water level of a lake or pond.
- Within 100 feet of the mean high water level of a river or stream.
- Within 100 feet of a wetland regulated by New York State.
- Within 500 feet of the zone of influence of any existing or planned municipal water supply.

This proposed overlay district is illustrated in Figure 2-1. It is recommended to be included as an amendment to the official Town Zoning Map for each municipality, and written into each municipality's local Zoning Ordinance.

2.1.4.2 Employ efforts to minimize drainage impacts from developing areas during subdivision and site plan review.

As stated in the inventory (Volume II), the largest threat to surface and groundwater quality is the increased runoff that occurs when land is developed for single-family residential use. Each Town should encourage both public and private sector efforts to maintain runoff from development sites to pre-development rates when possible. This can be accomplished through the use of low technology stormwater management (detention ponds, retention ponds etc.) and limits to the impervious surfaces of developed sites. Lot coverage requirements should be incorporated into local land use policy to ensure that an unwarranted increase in runoff is not generated as future development occurs.

In addition, developers and landowners should be encouraged to maintain natural vegetation wherever possible to allow natural drainage patterns and nutrient uptake throughout the community. Requiring vegetation and landscape development plans in new subdivisions should be encouraged and the community can facilitate tree planting along streets and parking areas through State and local grant programs.

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Another method of addressing surface and groundwater conservation is for both Towns to coordinate and enact Ira's Stormwater Management and Erosion Control Local Law #1 1993. This law is very progressive for a rural community and can help to accomplish several goals and objectives of this section of the Comprehensive Plan. ***The Town of Cato may wish to adopt the document by reference in order to provide a coordinated land use policy and approach to provide for surface and groundwater protection.***

2.1.4.3 Utilize State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and a Coordinated Review Process.

When reviewing new development proposals, particularly major subdivisions, the Planning Board should take advantage of SEQRA as a means to obtain information on the environmental and community impacts of proposed development. Both Towns should call for coordinated reviews (under the NYS Environmental Quality Review Act) with respect to development projects that disturb more than five acres (excluding agriculture) in order to improve inter-agency understanding of the impacts of new development proposals. It would also help to flush out public opinion by making potential concerns open to public comment and would encourage the exploration of alternative site design scenarios that could mitigate impacts to the natural resources.

2.1.4.4 Continue to encourage incentive zoning as a means of conserving open space throughout the community.

When appropriate, each Town should encourage the utilization of incentive zoning, conservation subdivisions, voluntary conservation easements, and the expansion of natural resource conservation areas in order to balance private property rights with natural resource conservation. These planning tools should be encouraged in order to accomplish objectives relating to open space protection and preservation of scenic views that are important to the community.

“This area has been visited and studied from an academic standpoint, but not from a tourism standpoint. These geologic features [drumlins] should be highlighted.”

-Amy D'Angelo,
Cayuga County
Planning
Department-

2.1.4.5 Link natural resource protection with future residential development.

Currently, residential development is the primary threat to farmland and open space. Although the community is predominantly rural, there are signs that suburban development is beginning to sprawl along the local highway system. For example, the linear pattern associated with road frontage is evident in some of the newly constructed homes located on Bonta Bridge Road.

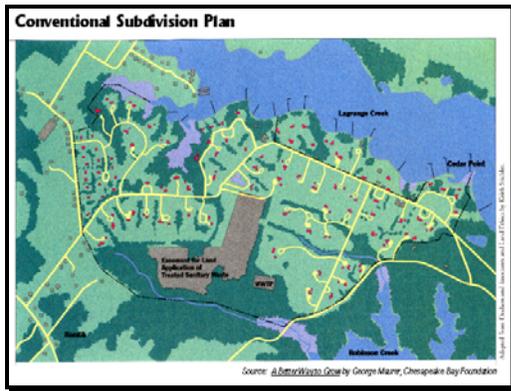
Unplanned single-family residential development results in the fragmentation of farms, forests, watersheds, and habitat; and the degradation of level of service along associated roadways, and increased pressure on existing infrastructure. It also increases the rate of non-source pollutants (i.e., pollution from automobiles, failing septic systems, and surface runoff). The end result is a linear pattern of road front development, widely known as suburban strip development that has a marked impact on the efficiency and economic viability of agriculture and the rural character of the community. However, new housing is a necessity and can enhance the community as long as it does not take the form of sprawling suburban development that consumes farmland and open space, and erodes how local roadways function. Where housing demands cannot be met by increasing the allowed density in existing communities, conservation design can minimize the impact new residential development has on environmental health, wildlife habitat, recreational land, aesthetic values, agriculture, and forestry.



“...how can clustering work if we don't have the infrastructure to provide for clustering or conservation subdivisions. I understand that it may be difficult to get a package wastewater plan approved by DEC.”

-Member of the Ad-Hoc Committee-

Clustering, a concept popularized by Randall Arendt of the Natural Land Trust, promotes conservation designs for new development on a portion of a parcel so that the remainder can be preserved as natural open space. This approach addresses land conservation as the primary factor upon which development lots and roads are strategically and sensitively designed. The concept is to preserve at least half the land area of that particular parcel (or parcels) in addition to wetlands, flood plains, and steep slopes that are already encouraged to be protected under current Town Codes, and utilize those lands as recreational and/or aesthetic features to enhance that particular development.



2.1.4.6 Educate and encourage smart growth practices to achieve sustainable developments that preserve valuable natural resources and open space.

Smart Growth preserves working lands and natural areas by decreasing the development pressure on environmentally sensitive lands and agricultural open space. The establishment of programs that preserve natural areas can aid in efforts to support rural economies and direct growth to existing population centers. By encouraging smart growth principals, local officials can balance property rights with environmental protection and preserve rural open spaces that are important to the community.

Smart Growth practices also encourage investment into existing communities (i.e., Villages of Cato and Meridian), to ensure that residents have access to valuable open spaces and natural resource areas of the Towns for their enjoyment. At the same time, infrastructure investments by the Towns and areas adjacent to population centers can serve to mitigate suburban sprawl into important farmland.

2.2 Historic and Cultural Resources

2.2.1 Introduction

The historic and cultural past is always an important component of community identity. This is particularly the case for agricultural communities. The presence of agriculture is an important component of rural living and quality of life that people generally prefer.

Farming in rural communities, represents heritage value to people even though they may not actively participate in an agricultural way of life. This is important to new residents who will choose to move to and live in Ira and Cato. Farms and farm buildings represent a strong



community spirit. Americans, in general, tend to view local farms as a symbol of stability and freedom that bonds the local culture to the landscape. For this reason, the goals and objectives of this section may be useful in gaining local support to protect the future of farming in the community.

The preservation and protection of local historic and cultural assets has become a substantial social, aesthetic, and economic benefit to towns throughout New York State. Farmsteads, old buildings and historic sites possess special character and craftsmanship that is not evident in our times. At the same time, rural villages and hamlets represent a historic settlement pattern that is the direct result of the agrarian nature of the community. Many communities have come to appreciate the value and importance of these elements of history and have developed strategies to convey an understanding of local heritage. Revitalization of villages and hamlets can provide a strong visual link with the community's past and sets a baseline for the direction of future growth and development.



Therefore, the basis for formulating the following goals, objectives, and strategies lies in the history of both Towns as an agricultural community.

2.2.2 Goal

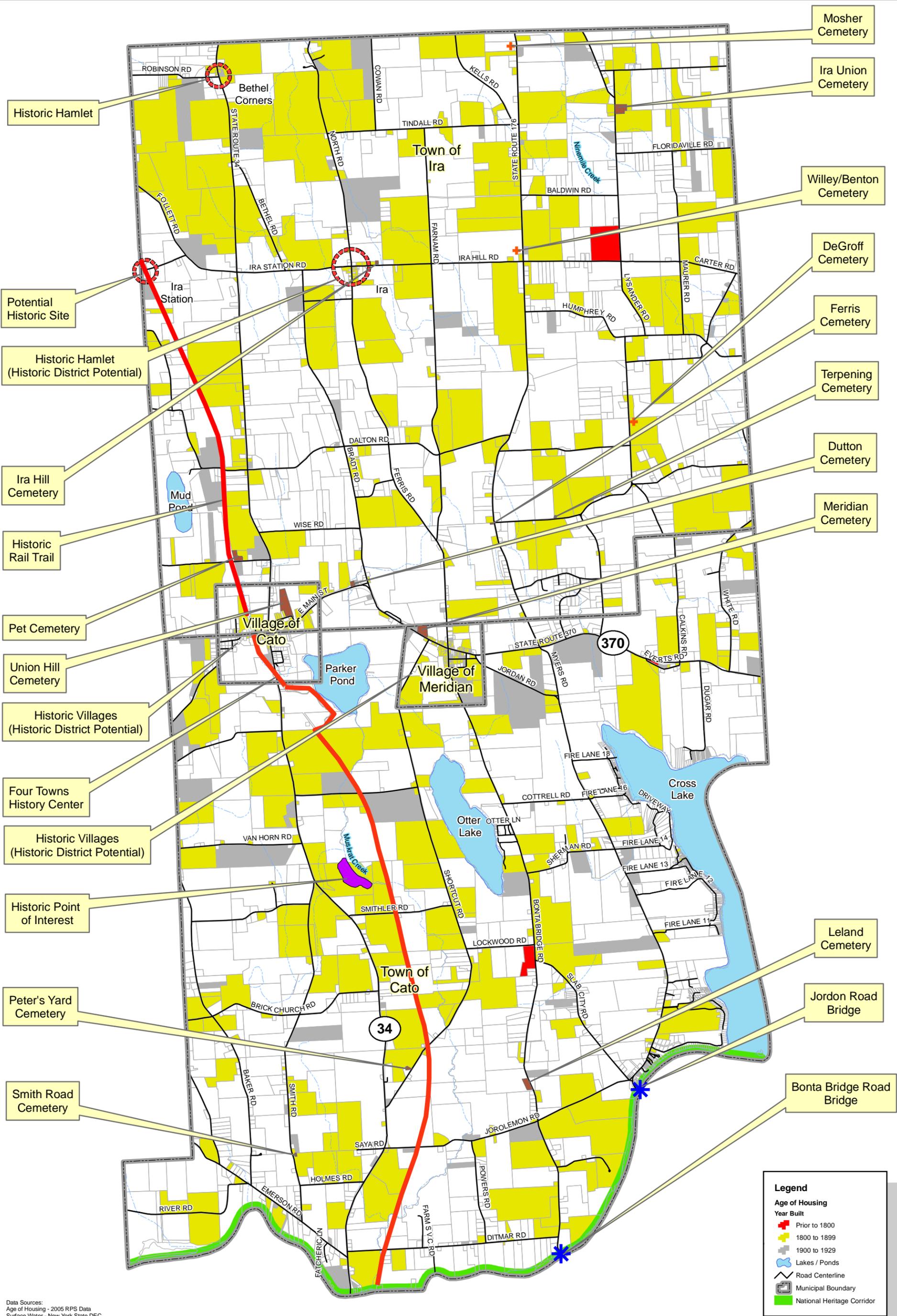
The Towns of Ira and Cato will maintain the local cultural heritage for future generations by highlighting connections with the natural and historic development of the area.

“...historic register designation does not necessarily mean that no alteration of a structure is allowed. Depending on funding for restoration, restraints may vary.”

-Amy D'Angelo,
Cayuga County
Planning
Department-

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Data Sources:
 Age of Housing - 2005 RPS Data
 Surface Water - New York State DEC
 Road Centerlines - New York State DOT
 Municipal Boundary - U.S. Census



**TOWN OF IRA - TOWN OF CATO
 JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Town of Ira Town of Cato
**Potential Historic Structures
 and Sites Map**
 Cayuga County 7/20/07 New York



FIGURE
 2-2
 Project No.
 1069.001

2.2.3 Objectives

- Ira and Cato will work to identify and facilitate protection and restoration of historic buildings, sites, and roadside cultural features to ensure that new development respects historic traditions.
- We will work with local historians to document historic sites and structures in the area and support the benefits of becoming a Certified Local Government.
- Encourage the maintenance, protection, and restoration of historic sites and structures.
- We will encourage new structures to be designed to compliment rather than clash with existing structures.
- We will develop a plan for the installation of attractive markers or small signs to signify places of historic interest to educate residents as well as visitors.
- We will encourage historically sensitive rehabilitation of properties that are being adapted to new uses.
- We will work with the Cato-Meridian School District and local historians to expand opportunities to educate residents and visitors about local history.
- We will highlight the agricultural heritage of the Towns through encouraging on-farm educational programs and agricultural tourism (e.g., harvest festivals, horseback riding, and local events)

2.2.4 Implementation Strategies

2.2.4.1 Engage in the Certified Local Governments Program.

One way to enhance historic preservation in a community is for municipalities to participate in the Certified Local Governments Program which is administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. This program could provide technical assistance to Ira and Cato to improve and support local historic preservation efforts for private landowners who wish to benefit from the program through grants and tax incentives. It is also recommended that local government provide sponsorship for grant applications to local residents who wish to participate in preservation programs.

2.2.4.2 Work with local historians to develop an inventory and understanding of properties and structures that may be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

Identifying properties and structures that may be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places would put Ira and Cato in a position to be part of a national program to help coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect its historic and archeological resources. Local historians have a great deal of knowledge about community history and genealogy and can provide key assistance in this task.

In addition, by identifying potentially eligible sites, awareness of the Towns' unique history can be promoted through local events and can continue to incorporate historical interpretation into local parks and recreation facilities like the Cayuga County Trail.

2.2.4.3 Coordinate local historical and cultural events with other events of surrounding communities.

The Towns are encouraged to coordinate any future local and cultural events with other events located within the region. This would allow for residents and visitors passing through to partake in any events in the area and to display to a wider audience the Towns' unique cultural and agricultural significance. Farm activities, on-farm tours, and harvest festivals are popular

among rural communities in Central New York and a coordinated approach to these events between farmers and local business can improve the business climate of the community.

2.2.4.4 Allow for flexibility in site review, subdivision and zoning requirements.

Local zoning codes for each Town should be amended to allow for flexibility when reviewing site plans and issuing building permits for instances where adaptive reuse of historic sites and structures or those potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places are proposed. This would encourage developers to use existing older structures for uses more compatible with the surrounding community, creating an environment more appealing to Town residents and visitors. Adaptive reuse of existing buildings could be encouraged by using discretion during changes in the use of structures or by including some permitted mixed uses in local home occupation regulations.

For example, the following may be considered appropriate as long as impacts to the site and neighborhood are evaluated: in-law apartments in existing homes, professional businesses that do not generate large traffic volume in residential areas, and small businesses that can benefit from abandoned agricultural buildings. If an existing structure can be re-used, the owners are encouraged to improve the appearance of the building and site so that the community can benefit in the long run.

2.2.4.5 Encourage local farmers to utilize the New York State Barns Restoration and Preservation Program on a voluntary basis.

The New York State Barns Restoration and Preservation Program goes beyond a tax incentive program and provides an additional incentive for the restoration and preservation of agricultural structures for the benefit of the public. This program helps to preserve the agricultural landscapes that the public has come to expect and enjoy. Agricultural landscapes have become a vital part of heritage tourism in New York State.

The New York Barns Restoration Program helps preserve historic barns and protect agricultural landscapes throughout the state. In addition to being symbols of the cultural lifestyles of earlier generations, farm structures tell a unique story of local agricultural history

and heritage, and provide a visual account of rural life, both past and present. They have become an integral part of our agricultural scenic landscape and one of heightened importance where agriculture has traditionally been, and continues to be, an industry of economic importance. It is important to protect these treasures and preserve the scenic landscape for future generations.

Any person interested in preservation of an eligible structure can apply for a Barn grant. If the applicant is not the owner of the structure that is the subject of the application, the owner's permission to apply and/or an explanation of the applicant's interest in the barn must be included with the application. This program was recently utilized in the Town of Granby to rebuild a deteriorating barn that was built in the late 1800s and has been used extensively throughout Madison County, New York.

2.3 Parks and Recreational Resources

2.3.1 Introduction

Recreational opportunity is directly related to the quality of life in a community and the drumlins, lakes, streams, and wetlands of northern Cayuga County provide a prime setting for outdoor recreation and sportsmanship. As Americans move toward a more health conscious population, the need to maintain open space for the benefit of future generations is becoming more important to residents. Opportunities for a variety of recreational activities ranging from hunting and fishing to field athletics is clearly a major component of day-to-day life in Ira and Cato. The community should leverage the rural nature of the community to improve the recreational options for all residents.



Source: Cayuga County Parks & Trails

“A lot of the towns’ recreational resources are spread out. It would be nice to have a central facility for recreation.”

-Resident attending Public Visioning Session-

Ira and Cato also exhibit a great deal of opportunity for other passive forms of recreation. The potential for outdoor museums, nature education, festivals, and cultural events is an important factor in considering future recreational opportunities. In addition, there is a great deal of

potential for agri-tourism and agricultural education. Providing the community with a variety of cultural events, recreational activities, and outdoor enjoyment will help generate an understanding and appreciation of the Towns' natural assets. From a planning perspective, the need for preserving open space and conserving natural resources is important so that future generations can benefit from a rural lifestyle. Therefore, the following community goals, objectives, and strategies are set forth:

2.3.2 Goal

The Towns of Ira and Cato will promote diverse recreational opportunities to enhance sense of place, provide recreational opportunities for people of all ages, and allow for the pursuit of traditional sportsmanship.

2.3.3 Objectives

- Establish a cooperative and coordinated recreation system in order to ensure that the populated areas of the Towns are equitably served with parks and that a variety of recreational opportunities are available.
- Improve recreational opportunities for people of all ages and encourage more events and programs for youth and seniors alike.
- Plan to build upon the quality of existing recreational facilities by ensuring that future parks provide unique recreational opportunities that do not duplicate existing facilities.
- Encourage greater private sector participation in the acquisition, development, and stewardship of open space and parklands.
- Encourage private landowners to enhance public access to local surface water resources through cooperation with State and local agencies and through acquisition, donation, or cooperative land management agreements.

- Promote and capitalize upon the local drumlin fields and local water resources as an outdoor classroom in an effort to support recreational opportunities within both Towns.
- Seek new and innovative methods of using any private sector funding sources for recreation such as land donations, donation of easements and other rights, and labor donations.
- Cooperate with local volunteer organizations to improve public access to and provide new amenities within existing recreational facilities.
- Seek funding assistance for a modest community center to provide an active setting for community events.
- Establish school-park partnerships and clearly define roles and responsibilities as well as a sound and equitable financial plan for future parks on school properties.
- We will work with local educational institutions and vocational programs to develop new outdoor nature education and future recreational facilities as working outdoor classrooms.
- Facilitate the enhancement of pedestrian circulation and connectivity of park and school facilities within the Towns and Villages to link recreational facilities to population centers.
- Establish a policy of requiring usable park/open space during development review and approval within the Towns (i.e., payment in lieu of park space).
- Encourage and employ open space planning techniques for the future subdivision of land in the Towns to provide space necessary for recreation, particularly within new major residential subdivisions.

2.3.4 Implementation Strategies

2.3.4.1 *Work with State and local agencies to improve recreational opportunities.*

Each Town should work with the New York State Canal Corporation, Department of Environmental Conservation, Cayuga County, and other interest groups to pursue new public access points for fishing and other outdoor recreation opportunities along the Canal System, Otter Lake, Parker Pond, Mud Pond, and the Cayuga County Recreation Trail, where possible. For example, completing the trail link between the Hojack Trail and the Canalway Trail will provide a major recreational asset to the community.

In addition, access to important wetlands and drumlins in the community can improve outdoor recreation and the traditional pursuits of hunting, fishing, and sportsmanship throughout the community.

2.3.4.2 *Adopt “Payment in Lieu of Park Space” (PILOPS) provision in the local subdivision regulations for future subdivisions.*

Town Law §277(4) makes provisions for town planning boards to approve a subdivision plat to show a park, open space or parks suitably located for playground or other recreational purposes. If the planning board finds that a proposed subdivision plat presents a “proper case” for requiring parkland for recreational purposes, but a suitable park or parks of adequate size to meet the requirement cannot be properly located on the development site, the Town can require a payment in lieu of the reservation of park land, “in an amount to be established by the town board.”

Any funds required by the planning board for park, playground or other recreational purposes must be deposited into a trust fund “to be used by the town exclusively for park, playground or other recreational purposes, including the acquisition of property.” This provides the opportunity for the Towns to purchase open space or develop park facilities that coincide with the subdivision of land for residential purposes that can either benefit new residents in a subdivision or, if the subdivider decides it is not practicable to provide

“More people need to volunteer and help out the community. There is too much pressure put on the volunteer organizations in the community.”

-Resident attending Public Visioning Session-

parks or open space within the subdivision, the Towns can create reserve funds that will benefit all existing or proposed recreational opportunities throughout the Towns.

2.3.4.3 Leverage financial and technical support for recreational improvements.

The Towns should work with Cayuga County Planning and grant writing consultants in coordinating Town and County park planning and potential grant funding for enhancements to parks and trails. This type of support is typically found beyond the immediate community. Grant opportunities should be explored on a continuing basis to ensure that local residents receive a fair share of funding available from State and Federal programs.

The presence of the New York State Canal System and Canalway Trail along the southern boundary of Cato and the Cayuga County Trail (North Trail) provides an excellent opportunity to leverage funding from various sources to make additional improvements to the areas recreational facilities. In addition, the presence of lakes, streams, and private outdoor recreational opportunities can support and complement a mix of public and private recreational areas ranging from active athletic fields to passive outdoor natural parks.

2.3.4.4 Establish priority-setting criteria for natural resource and open space acquisition.

To ensure that conservation efforts proactively enhance green infrastructure, Ira and Cato should establish priority-setting criteria. This Comprehensive Plan has helped establish an inventory of regional resources and conservation goals. To build off of this plan and implement some of the goals outlined above, a prioritization scheme can help preserve land in a cost-effective way. It can be tailored to preserve endangered wildlife and native habitats or focus on more elusive elements, such as sense of place.

Communities often pass bond referendums and other financial measures as a reactive response to “save the last wetland” or “save the last farm.” While a reactive preservation strategy can preserve critical lands, it often does so in a piecemeal manner. Small, disconnected fragments of conserved lands have less ecological value as wildlife habitat,

are less accessible to the public, and have reduced value in directing growth than larger parcels connected by a green infrastructure of corridors. Ira and Cato will be more financially stable by being strategic about which lands they acquire – especially in the face of limited funding.

2.3.4.5 Coordinate informational and directional signage for recreational facilities.

The Towns should work in partnership with Village, County, and State agencies to develop a coordinated and uniform system of directional signs to direct visitors to both public and private recreational venues in the area. This will also help to improve access to local businesses that depend on recreational visitors for business.

2.3.4.6 Explore the possibility of acquiring and developing a community park and a toboggan run/snowboard hill in the Town of Ira.

One way to improve winter recreation is to seek a location within the Town of Ira that will provide the opportunity for a toboggan run or snowboarding. The State Snowmobile Trail System is the primary source of active winter recreation and should be encouraged to continue. Additional recreational diversity during the long winters will serve to benefit the community and should also be encouraged. Although both Towns have adequate terrain and topography to accommodate this form of recreation, the Town of Ira has a large number of steep slopes on relatively vacant land that are well suited to low impact downhill sledding or snowboarding.

2.3.4.7 Improve non-motorized waterway access between Otter Lake and the Canal System.

The Town of Cato should incorporate “blueway” planning (similar to establishing a greenway) designation between Otter Lake and the Cross Lake/Canal System to provide better recreational opportunity for canoeists and kayakers. Otter Lake in particular should be programmed for a future outdoor recreation area that improves public access either through cooperation with a willing landowner and/or working with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to provide public access on existing State land. Public access

should be provided in a manner that does not degrade the environmental quality of the site or the associated waterways.

2.3.4.8 Highlight local farms for agricultural commerce opportunities.

The Towns should work with local farmers and business owners to improve the potential for agri-tourism in the area. If agriculture is visible to the public, residents will appreciate the presence of farming in the community, farmers will have the opportunity to diversify their businesses, and local business owners can benefit from the spin-off opportunities of agricultural tourism. Cato and Ira should work together to promote agricultural festivals, farm events, and on-farm educational programs in cooperation with local farmers.

2.3.4.9 Engage advocacy groups for farmland protection.

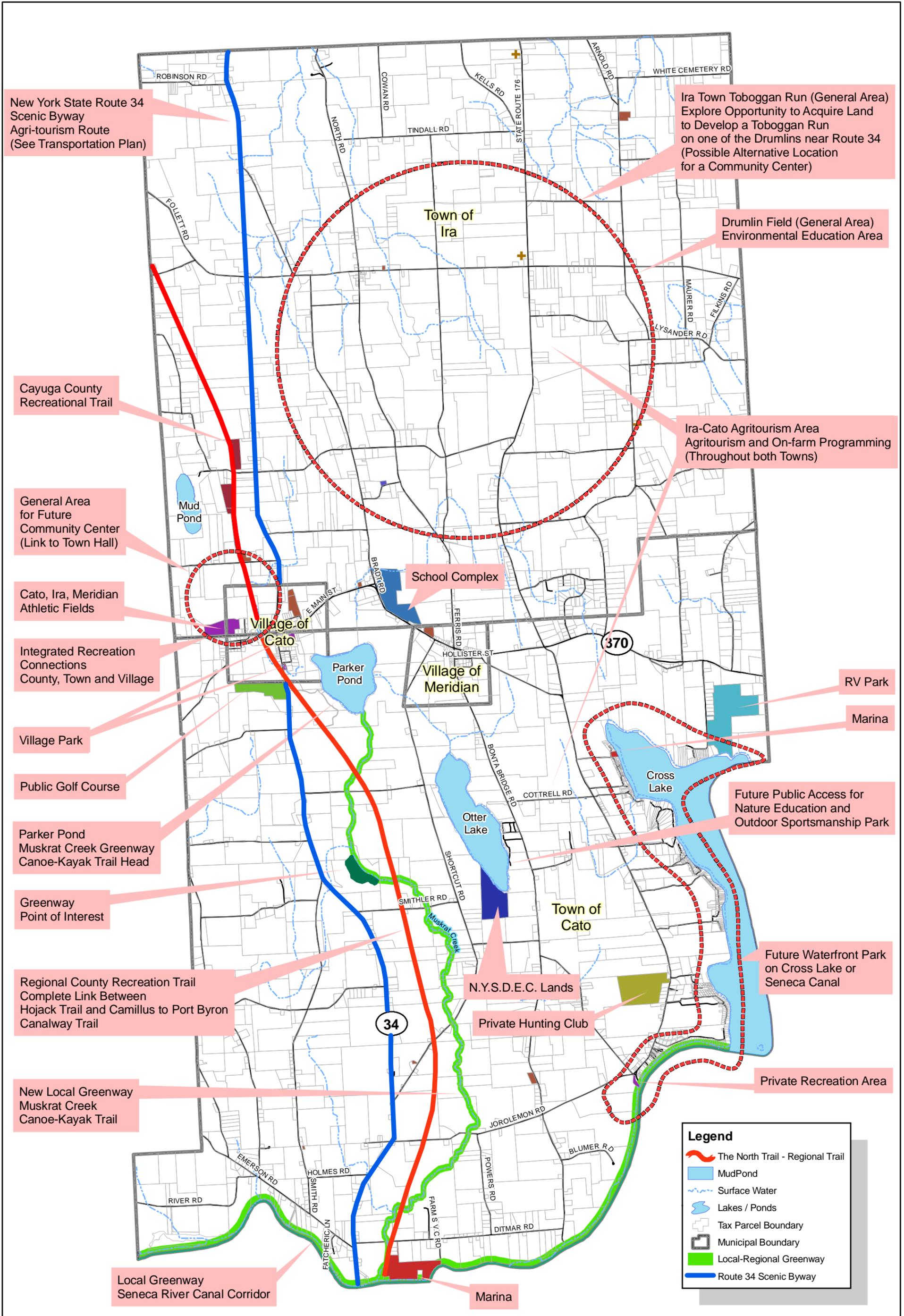
Each Town should engage groups like the Farmland Protection Board, the American Farmland Trust, and natural resource based groups to improve awareness and exchange information for the purpose of protecting local agriculture and open space.

2.3.4.10 Establish a Recreation Committee determined to enhance the community's growth and quality of life.

Forming a group of committed citizens, whether they are made up of elected officials, business leaders, or motivated residents, is an essential aspect to foster desired growth. Even well-drawn plans and strategic procedures cannot succeed without people who will raise funds, organize constituencies, promote collaboration, and demand change. This group may also explore ways to coordinate local farmers to provide entertainment and on-farm learning within the community.

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New York State Route 34 Scenic Byway Agri-tourism Route (See Transportation Plan)

Ira Town Toboggan Run (General Area) Explore Opportunity to Acquire Land to Develop a Toboggan Run on one of the Drumlins near Route 34 (Possible Alternative Location for a Community Center)

Drumlin Field (General Area) Environmental Education Area

Cayuga County Recreational Trail

Ira-Cato Agritourism Area Agritourism and On-farm Programming (Throughout both Towns)

General Area for Future Community Center (Link to Town Hall)

School Complex

Cato, Ira, Meridian Athletic Fields

Integrated Recreation Connections County, Town and Village

RV Park

Village Park

Marina

Public Golf Course

Future Public Access for Nature Education and Outdoor Sportsmanship Park

Parker Pond Muskrat Creek Greenway Canoe-Kayak Trail Head

Greenway Point of Interest

Regional County Recreation Trail Complete Link Between Hojack Trail and Camillus to Port Byron Canalway Trail

N.Y.S.D.E.C. Lands

Private Hunting Club

Future Waterfront Park on Cross Lake or Seneca Canal

New Local Greenway Muskrat Creek Canoe-Kayak Trail

Private Recreation Area

Local Greenway Seneca River Canal Corridor

Marina



**TOWN OF IRA - TOWN OF CATO
JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Town of Ira Town of Cato
Park, Recreation and Public Lands Plan
Cayuga County 7/20/07 New York

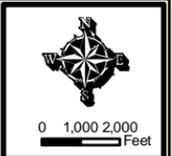


FIGURE 2-3
Project No. 1069.001

3.0 INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING

3.1 Introduction

Like all rural communities, the Towns of Ira and Cato rely on the continuous health of their water systems to maintain the quality of life that residents have come to expect. Since the inception of this comprehensive planning process, the need for expanded water service within Ira and Cato was a major discussion point among residents and became a key component of the Plan. Therefore, an expanded discussion of water and wastewater issues within the community is warranted in this section. Existing and future systems in Ira and Cato must be healthy and sources for increased capacities must be identified and readily available to support and attract people, industry, and jobs. Likewise, wastewater systems and the impacts of not planning strategically for a municipal treatment facility must be understood as Ira and Cato plan for the future.

The practice of water and wastewater utility planning requires the identification of potential changes in regional growth trends and identifies Best Management Practices (BMP's) to combat sprawl and development practices that are unsustainable. Growth management through careful planning of long-range infrastructure needs can prevent major impacts to local municipalities that become costly over time and degrade quality of life.

3.1.1 Water Supply

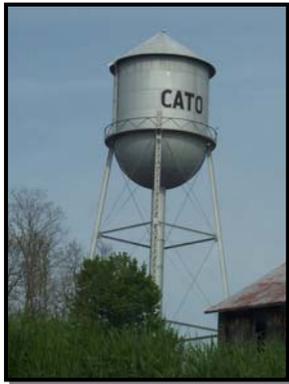
The recommendations that follow are the result of a systematic public visioning process which included input from experts in the field at State and County levels, members of the Ad-Hoc Committee, local residents from Ira and Cato, and the planning consultant. Specific to water and wastewater infrastructure planning, several agencies provided information in preparation for an October 11, 2006 workshop with officials from Ira and Cato, Paul Dudley of Dudley Water Supply, and residents from both towns. Particular issues and needs identified from that workshop are discussed in the *Volume II – Inventory and Analysis* Section 3.0.

“Improving municipal water supply is a must before any major commercial or residential development can occur”

Donald Teter, Ira Town Supervisor

Based upon the analysis of trends in water utility planning, it is clear that the Towns of Ira and Cato understand the need to plan for expanding water service. The issue of current water supplies, particularly within the Town of Ira, was raised at every public visioning session and workshop throughout the comprehensive planning process.

Currently, the two public groundwater supplies that service the Villages of Cato and Meridian are owned and operated by the Village of Cato and Dudley Water Supply Company. Public groundwater is also available from the Lake Breeze Water System and



within the Otter Lake Trailer Park (See Inventory Volume II for additional information). Although privately owned, Dudley Water Supply Company supplements the municipal water service to the Village of Meridian and private wells in the area through sale to local customers. The Village of Cato's system relies upon a 150,000 gallon storage tank that is over 50 years old and has likely exceeded its design life. Meridian lacks a storage facility and its largest water line is 3 inches in diameter.

As such, the availability and potential for expansion of existing water facilities from the Villages is restricted due to aging distribution systems and flow capacities (pipe size in diameter).

Outside the Villages of Cato and Meridian, with the exception of a small area west of the Village of Cato, residents in both Towns receive their water supply from individual wells – an extremely important consideration when evaluating future land use and growth opportunities. Although it is estimated that the installation of a new well in the general vicinity of the Village of Meridian could yield an additional 200,000 gpd or more (supplied by Dudley), the installation of a water storage facility may be a better short-term solution to provide adequate water quantity and quality to current and future residents in proximity to the Villages.

Ira and Cato are considering enhanced water services within the community by either expanding the existing groundwater system(s) or planning for a new water supply originating either in Weedsport, Victory, or Hannibal. It is assumed that improvements to the existing groundwater supply will be necessary regardless of the source of additional

water volume. If the distribution of public water increases, it will likely spawn new growth and development (mainly by converting agricultural land and open space to residential land use). The Towns must consider that long-term growth may follow as a result of future improvements to water service and there will be potential for strategic implementation of future water infrastructure. Therefore, there is a need to adjust land use policy as it relates to future water distribution systems, in order to ensure that *water infrastructure expansion occurs on a schedule matching the rate demands for future development*. This practice would provide long-term benefit to the public by providing a sustainable approach to future development and discouraging a sprawling pattern of subdivisions. However, this benefit must be weighed against the costs and the potential impact to agriculture and open space. Therefore, based upon extensive discussions regarding the need to expand water service within the community, the following goals, objectives and strategies are set forth:

3.1.2 Water Supply Goal

Ira and Cato will plan for a safe and adequate supply of potable water to accommodate anticipated future growth and provide the framework for enhancements to the local tax base.

3.1.3 Objectives

- Plan for water supply expansion at a schedule matching the anticipated rate of development.
- Establish a new long-range water supply that will benefit future growth and development in proximity to existing population centers.
- Seek inter-municipal cooperation with the villages during planning efforts to expand water infrastructure that could directly benefit the Ira and Cato community.

“If new storage tank is located outside the village on a higher drumlin, it could serve a larger area while providing same water pressure to village as currently exists.”

-Resident attending Public Visioning Session-

- Plan for a new future water supply in cooperation with adjacent municipalities in an effort to maximize the number of benefited users and mitigate the costs to local taxpayers.
- Expand local water storage to better serve current and future residents and businesses within the proposed primary growth area of the community.
- Encourage water supply improvements in the Town of Cato that may benefit limited highway-oriented commercial development in the southern portion of Route 34.
- Facilitate the improvement of local water service in a manner that mitigates impacts to farming and viable agriculture.
- Adjust land use policy to target infrastructure improvements within projected growth areas and away from agricultural areas with large lots that actively engage in productive agricultural operations.

3.1.4 Implementation Strategies

3.1.4.1 Evaluate the feasibility of expanding water supply into Ira and Cato from adjacent municipalities.

A major strategic recommendation of this plan is to undertake a Feasibility Study to evaluate the following factors necessary to improve the quality and quantity of potable water to the community:

1. Determine if a new groundwater source can serve the short-range or long-range needs of the community.
2. Determine an approach to improve the yield of existing groundwater sources as a short term strategy to increase volume and distribution of municipal water.

3. Develop a plan and approach to increase water storage capacity within the community.
4. Evaluate all potential outside sources of municipal water supply including Cayuga, Wayne, Oswego, and Onondaga Counties.
5. Evaluate the condition of existing water lines, estimate potential longevity, and replacement requirements.
6. Evaluate the possibility of forming a public/private partnership with Dudley Water Supply Inc. as a means to improve water service within the community.
7. Investigate the benefit and implications of establishing water districts to feasibly serve local residents.

All of these factors should be included in a Water Supply Feasibility Study in order to develop a long-range solution to improving municipal water quality and quantity.

3.1.4.2 Improve existing public groundwater sources until the community can achieve connection to a new alternative water source.

This strategy involves continuing to rely on existing public groundwater resources as the primary source for potable water. On the surface, this seems to be the most feasible short-term method of improving water quantity service to residents near the villages. This alternative does not satisfy the long-range goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan and should not be pursued as a sole solution for the future of the Ira and Cato communities. However, it is the most plausible short term approach to increasing available supply within the community over the next 5 to 7 years. Over time, the water distribution system should be expanded to provide for a certain amount of residential growth to accommodate the projected increase in population. On the other hand, care must be taken to ensure that expansion of the public water supply does not create residential sprawl. This could potentially impact individual groundwater supplies for residents who will be required to depend on groundwater throughout the planning horizon.

In the meantime, while this short term approach to water system expansion is being considered, the community can plan for a more reliable water source that may originate from Lake Ontario or Owasco Lake

Initial discussion regarding the long-range water service reveals that a Water Supply Feasibility Study should be initiated immediately to determine the best possible source of future short-term water infrastructure. This may involve programming for a new wellhead in cooperation with Dudley Water Supply and/or improving water storage capacity by evaluating the location of a new water storage tank that can tie into the existing water infrastructure. This will intentionally create redundancy in the existing system and expand storage capacity to serve areas in close proximity to the two villages.

The location of a new storage facility should be evaluated in light of the most appropriate new source of water in the future (either from Oswego, Wayne or Cayuga Counties) so that the investment in storage and infrastructure can be retrofitted to utilize a new water source in the future. Developing a Feasibility Study to evaluate these possibilities is the most prudent short term strategy to achieve the goal of this section of the Plan.

3.1.4.3 Coordinate with Dudley Water Supply Company to pursue a short-term water supply source and storage facility to which water can be pumped and distributed from via gravity to current and future residents in the primary growth areas.

This is the preferred short-term solution to the limitations of the area's water supply systems. Currently, Dudley Water Supply Company can serve up to 300,000 gpd. However, the installation of a new well and water storage facility would improve the current system by providing an additional supply not readily available within the existing system. It is estimated that this alternative could provide an additional 200,000 to 300,000 gpd – an adequate water supply to accommodate existing demand and short-term growth.

It is proposed that a storage facility be installed on high ground north of NYS Route 370 and west of NYS Route 176. This would allow Dudley Water Supply to increase storage capacity to accommodate existing residents and prepare for future growth. As proposed, the primary growth boundary is based upon the potential users that may develop parcels

“The feasibility of developing a public water supply needs to be evaluated. Sure it is cheaper to spend today's dollar than a dollar ten years from now, but is it feasible for the Town (s) to even develop a water supply?”

-Resident at
Public Visioning
Session-

within the area that would be served by gravity. This primary growth boundary as illustrated in Figure 3-1 indicates the general area that may logically be served by a future system without expanding into agricultural areas of the two Towns.

3.1.4.4 Coordinate with adjacent communities and establish an inter-municipal Water System Improvement Plan for long-term public infrastructure implementation.

The Towns of Ira and Cato must consider and identify long-term solutions to accommodate future growth, attract commerce and industry, and generally provide for a high quality living environment. The development of a strategic improvement plan that outlines a phased approach to public infrastructure implementation would ensure Ira and Cato invest capital in a sustainable manner that is in line with future development demands.

Sound water utility planning will determine where new water services can help direct desired growth into previously developed areas, thus discouraging low-density, unsustainable development. Generally, this can be accomplished by utilizing the proposed primary growth boundary (see Figure 3-1) as a basis for targeting areas for future infrastructure implementation and beyond which major investments should be discouraged. This would also ensure economic benefits and other incentives are provided within the Primary Growth Boundary to encourage growth and physical improvements within and adjacent to existing neighborhoods.

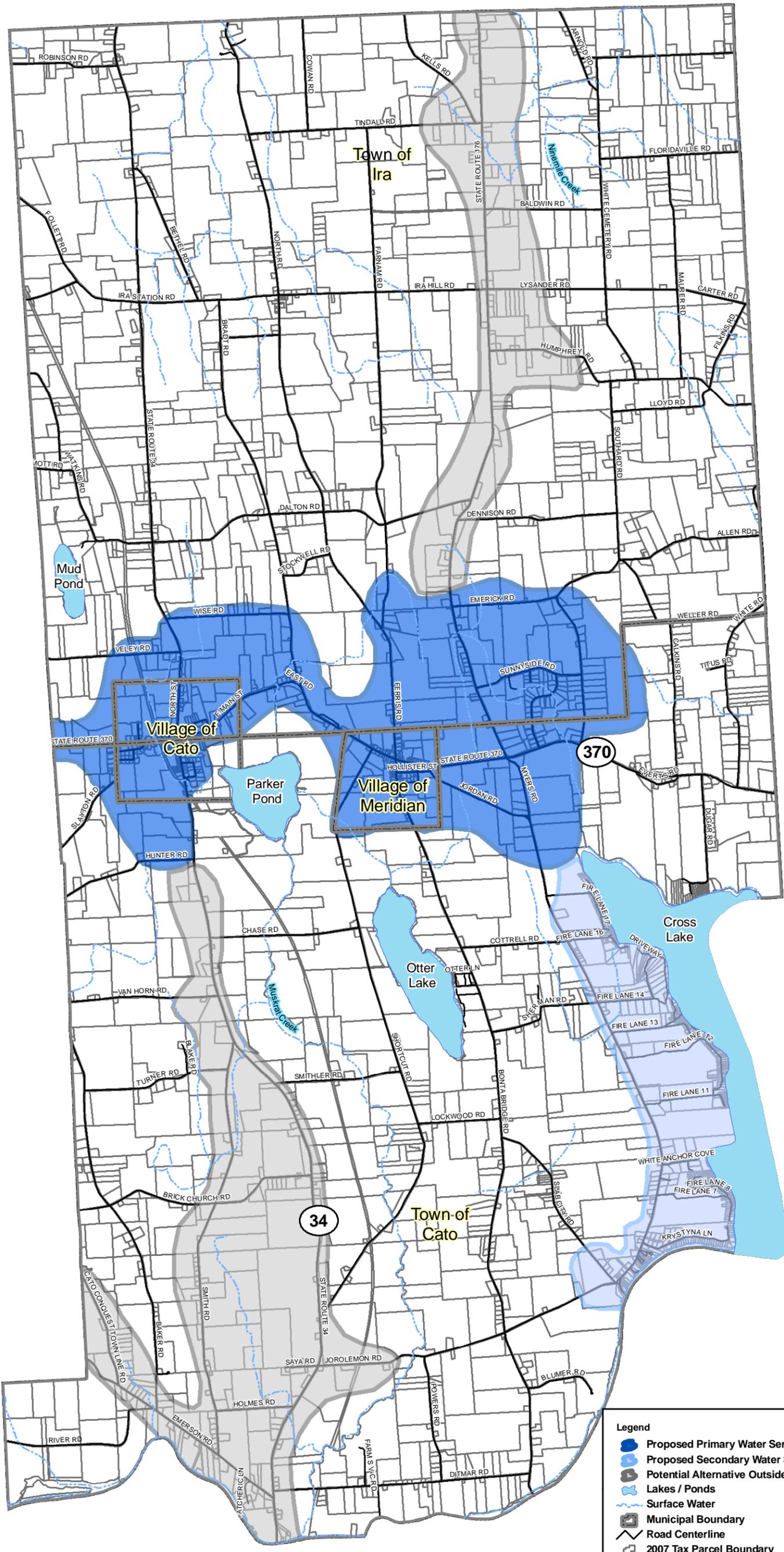
3.1.4.5 Establish an inter-municipal task force committee to coordinate with local, State, and Federal agencies.

This strategy involves a cooperative regional effort between adjacent communities to identify potential funding sources to assist in the planning process for water facility enhancement and expansion (i.e., Towns and Villages). In addition, this task force should utilize the Comprehensive Plan to help determine where future facilities should be targeted to accommodate sustainable growth, economic development, and industry. This approach would ensure future development occurs as a logical extension outward from the

“Eventually we will need a municipal water supply; the longer we wait, the fewer choices we will have. Potential sites for groundwater water supply development will be bought up, and those relying on surface water supplies (ex. Lake Ontario) will be subject to usage limitations. The time to act is now.”

- Member of the Ad-Hoc Planning Committee-

(Page Reserved for Figure 3-1)



Data Sources:
 2007 Tax parcels - Cayuga County RPTS;
 Surface Water - New York State DEC;
 Road Centerlines - New York State DOT;
 Municipal Boundary - U.S. Census;
 Cayuga County Water Study 1970-1990
 Cayuga County Source Assessment Report 2004

Legend

- Proposed Primary Water Service Area
- Proposed Secondary Water Service Area
- Potential Alternative Outside Municipal Water Source
- Lakes / Ponds
- Surface Water
- Municipal Boundary
- Road Centerline
- 2007 Tax Parcel Boundary

**TOWN OF IRA - TOWN OF CATO
 JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Town of Ira Town of Cato
Proposed Water Service Improvement Area
and
Potential Long Range Alternate Sources
 Cayuga County 7/20/07 New York



FIGURE
 3-1
 Project No.
 1069.001

existing neighborhoods of the Villages of Cato and Meridian, and would phase implementation costs over a manageable timeframe suitable for each municipality.

If a new source of public water is achieved from outside the community (i.e. Cayuga, Wayne or Oswego Counties), this plan should be revised to address potential growth within a proposed secondary growth boundary depending upon the direction of the source and specific locations of new water lines.

Members of this task force should include, at a minimum, members of the Village and Town Boards from:

- Town of Ira
- Town of Cato
- Village of Cato
- Village of Meridian
- Town of Victory
- And possibly Town of Granby

By including members from this list in planning for future water supply improvements, a coordinated and unified front can be established to seek possible funding alternatives. At the same time, district formation with cooperation from adjoining communities can increase the number of benefited parcels (i.e., users) and could spread cost sharing over a greater number of units. This will reduce the unit cost associated with formation of the district and the operation and maintenance (O&M) of future infrastructure.

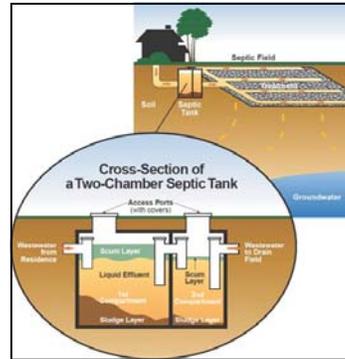
“The New York State Department of Health encourages use of different water supply sources for redundancy, in case there is a problem with one source.”

-Brian Madigan,
RLA Planning
Consultant-

3.2 Wastewater Treatment

3.2.1 Introduction

The Towns of Ira and Cato, including the Villages of Cato and Meridian, currently do not have a municipal wastewater treatment system. During the public meetings held in the fall of 2006 and during discussions with Ad-Hoc members and local officials, there was clearly concern that inadequate wastewater treatment may be a problem in the Villages. Due to the Villages proximity to known groundwater resources, this concern was heightened with concern for long term impacts to the only available public groundwater supplies. Since the 1960s, the issue of wastewater collection and treatment has been a topic of local discussion between local municipalities, Cayuga County and New York State. Throughout the public visioning sessions, several residents in both Towns expressed concern over contamination issues and believed there was a need for improved residential wastewater treatment due to poor suitability of local soils for onsite septic systems (Figure 3-2). This is of particular concern within the Villages of Cato and Meridian, and also for areas around Cross Lake because of higher densities, smaller lot sizes, and their close proximities to well heads that currently supply the local community with fresh water.



“...poor soils are mapped all over both towns; if lot sizes are not sufficient (ex. 2+ acres), there will likely be issues with installation/proper functioning of septic systems.”

- Jeffery Rowe, PE
Barton and Loguidice, P.C.-

Although a need has been identified by some in the past, the consensus during public sessions is that there has been no immediate plan for funding and construction of sewer facilities in the area, whereas water supply remains the most pressing issue for residents. Costs associated with wastewater treatment remains the most prohibitive factor with regard to delivering future sewer system infrastructure and treatment facilities.

One early step in the process of site selection has been undertaken by the Village of Cato. The Village owns a 3-acre parcel along an unnamed creek that empties into Parker Pond. Although no analysis of the feasibility of the site has been performed to ensure that the site is suitable for a municipal wastewater treatment plant, the property was purchased for that purpose. Essentially, the Village has taken a preliminary step in planning for the

future and understands that, at some point, it is inevitable and a wastewater treatment plant will be necessary.

The Towns of Ira and Cato, however, must understand the cyclical nature associated with the supply of future water systems, the potential for subsequent demand for development, and the eventual need for wastewater treatment facilities if the communities are to engage in sustainable growth and discourage typical sprawl development. It is important for the communities to identify potential wastewater system needs and the potential impacts associated with being reactive to these needs and not proactive.

The problem with progressing into the future without a wastewater treatment system plan is that this scenario requires the Towns to permit large-lot developments to accommodate the space allocation needed to maintain on-site septic systems. Large lot residential development may afford the community with protection of local groundwater by providing enough land area for adequate on-site wastewater treatment. However, large lot growth fragments valuable agricultural farmland and the vast natural resources, open spaces, forests, and wildlife that currently exist in Ira and Cato. Therefore, it would not be in keeping with many of the other goals and objectives of this plan. Significant growth in Ira and Cato will most certainly be incremental, but planning for an incremental implementation of sewer facilities would undoubtedly be less costly than reacting to this change many years from now when residential growth has already occurred.

Based upon these issues, the following Goal and Objectives have been identified:

3.2.2 Wastewater Treatment Goal

The Towns of Ira and Cato will plan adequate wastewater treatment facilities to preserve the quality of existing surface and groundwater resources and afford the community a clean and safe environment.

3.2.3 Objectives

- Ira and Cato will investigate current wastewater treatment standards, potential impacts to groundwater resources, and devise an approach for long-range treatment system implementation.
- Require future development that is driving demand for wastewater infrastructure to finance construction and expansion for the betterment of the communities.
- Coordinate with Cayuga County and the State to explore possible measures that may be taken to provide for adequate sewer facilities in areas adjacent to the Villages and Cross Lake in order to protect water quality.
- Work with County and State Health Departments and adjacent local municipalities to engage in planning for future facilities.
- Plan for future wastewater infrastructure in a manner that minimizes future maintenance costs to local taxpayers and discourages unplanned growth into actively operating agricultural areas.

3.2.4 Implementation Strategies

Based upon the above referenced goals and objectives, and to ensure they are achieved in a cost-effective and sustainable manner, the following recommendations and action strategies regarding Ira and Cato's wastewater issues are recommended:

3.2.4.1 Plan for future implementation of a wastewater system and treatment facility while evaluating available technology to treat wastewater under current conditions until such time development demand requires improvements.

As discussed in the above sections, current conditions in Ira and Cato likely do not warrant an immediate wastewater system and treatment facility. However, it is never too

early to evaluate treatment operations, the impacts of such, and future needs and timelines for implementation of new facilities. It is recommended the Towns of Ira and Cato spearhead an effort to coordinate with the Villages of Cato and Meridian to conduct such a study. An inter-municipal collaboration in this regard will outline issues, opportunities and constraints at a regional level while minimizing costs associated with future benefits that will apply to all four communities.

Meanwhile, the towns should continue to work with the County and State Health Departments to ensure existing and future septic systems are operating satisfactorily in efforts to eliminate any contamination to existing groundwater resources.

3.2.4.2 Plan for necessary improvements to local wastewater systems for areas in proximity to water bodies.

Generally, land areas and their uses adjacent to major water bodies are typically the most sensitive portions of the community. Shorelines provide the greatest measure of protection for maintaining water quality. However, they are also typically a very attractive place to live and result in higher land values due to unique location, scenic qualities, and the recreational benefits they offer. As a result, lake shores frequently become subject to seasonal use and absentee ownership. Such is the case along Cross Lake's shoreline in the Town of Cato and adjacent towns.

Haphazard development along Cross Lake's shoreline and the potential for an increase in future development on Parker Pond, Otter Lake, and Mud Pond will undoubtedly interrupt nature's ability to filter surface and groundwater runoff streaming into the lake. Home construction along the shoreline will have a major impact upon water quality without careful site planning and suitable design techniques. As a result, adequate sanitary treatment and water quality is compromised as the shoreline becomes more fragmented and eroded.

Due to many of the lots along Cross Lake in the Town of Cato being non-conforming in lot size, it becomes difficult to adequately treat effluent before it enters the lake waters. On-site wastewater treatment is typically problematic along shorelines in Central New

York due to consistently high water levels that tend to flood and disrupt septic system operations. This creates excessive concentrations of pollutants in site soils, particularly during the spring months and heavy wet weather conditions during the summer; thereby increasing non-point source pollution into Cross Lake.

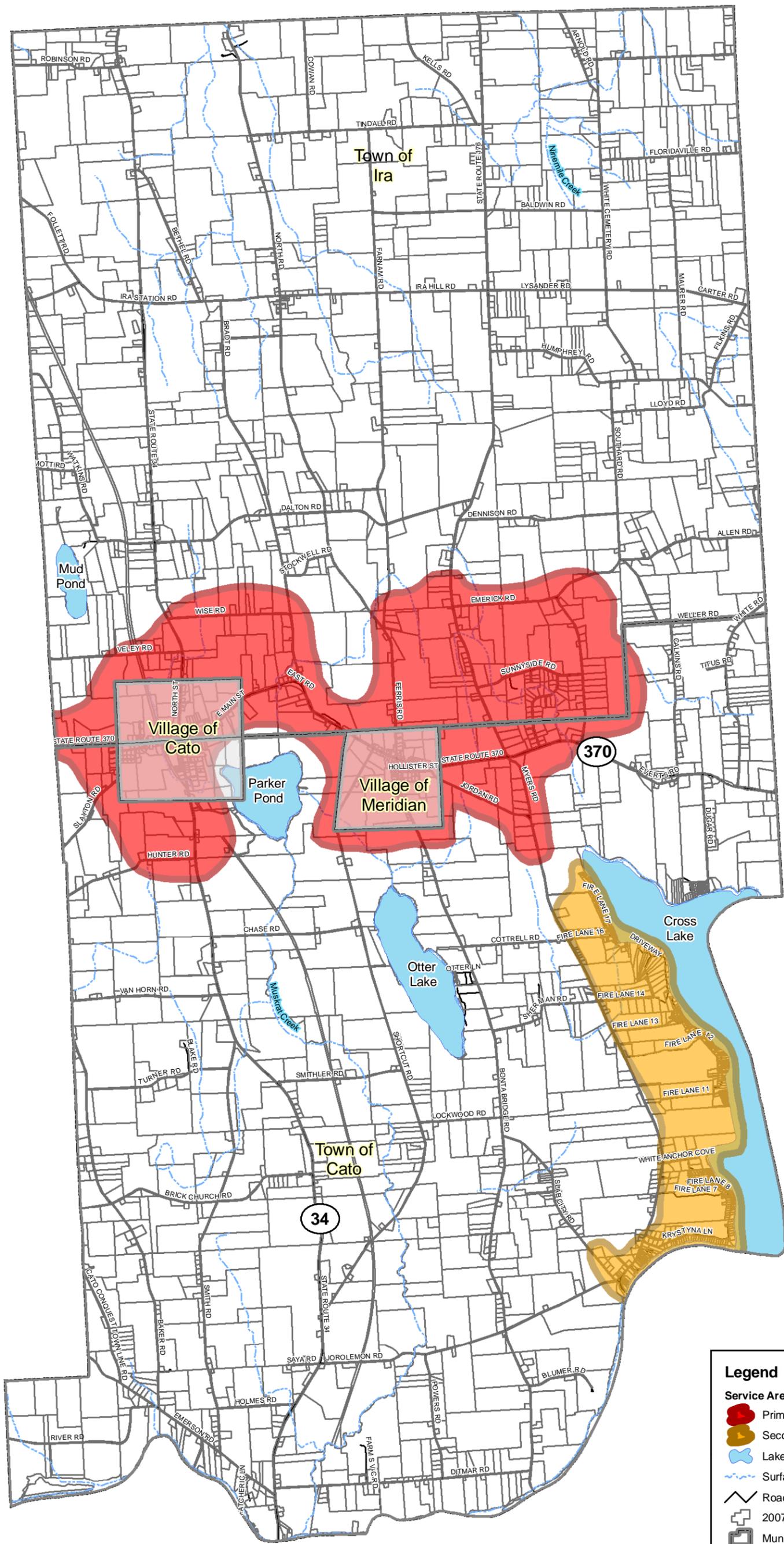
As such, planning for the incorporation of enhanced sewer services along the shoreline and immediate inland areas is critical to ensure the continued use of Cross Lake as a unique natural resource and destination to the local economy. The Town of Cato must work with Cayuga County to provide existing and future residents along the shoreline an appropriate level of protection against non-point source pollutants entering the Lake. Sewer district formation and alternate methods of wastewater treatment should be explored for areas adjacent to the Lake, potentially as an expansion from the Village of Weedsport.

3.2.4.3 Develop a Long-Range Infrastructure Improvement Plan that includes the continued use of on-site wastewater systems through best available technologies.

As a means to jump start planning and development of future infrastructure improvements within the Towns, it is recommended the Towns develop a short term infrastructure improvement plan to determine the amount of infrastructure that can be developed or replaced within the next 5-10 years.

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Legend

Service Area

- Primary
- Secondary

~ Lakes / Ponds

~ Surface Water

Road Centerline

2007 Tax Parcel Boundary

Municipal Boundary

Data Sources:
 2007 Tax parcels - Cayuga County RPTS;
 Surface Water - New York State DEC;
 Road Centerlines - New York State DOT;
 Municipal Boundary - U.S. Census;
 Cayuga County Water Study 1970-1990
 Cayuga County Source Assessment Report 2004



**TOWN OF IRA - TOWN OF CATO
 JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

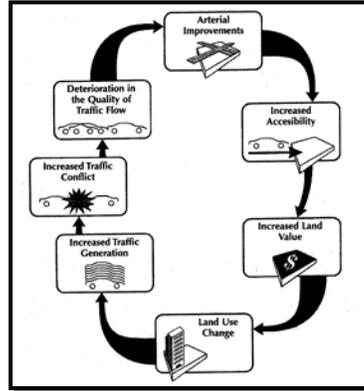
Town of Ira Town of Cato
Long Range Wastewater Service Area Map
 Cayuga County 7/20/07 New York



FIGURE
 3-2
 Project No.
 1069.001

4.0 TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Meeting mobility needs, supporting the economy, protecting the environment, and maintaining quality of life – all while managing investments in times of fiscal constraint – are challenges local municipalities face as they pursue economic growth and better communities. Transportation plays a significant role when shaping how a community will grow and function, and must be addressed when undertaking any comprehensive plan. The safety, capacity, operation, and accessibility of the local highway system in the Towns of Ira and Cato will eventually require improvement to maintain and stimulate economic growth into the future. The characteristics of these elements of transportation planning are a result of the shared relationship between land use and the functionality of the existing highway network.



Generally, the existing highway network in Ira and Cato accommodates traffic from adjacent municipalities primarily passing through and connects neighborhoods to commerce within and directly adjacent to the Towns. Additionally, these roadways provide corridors for utility installation to accommodate residents and ultimately influence the development of land areas over time.

4.1 Transportation Planning

As the Towns of Ira and Cato plan for the future, the local and regional transportation network must be considered when evaluating just about any development proposal or pursuing future economic development initiatives. Any development, whether a single family residence, an



office park, or a mixed-use town center, will have an impact in some way on adjacent roadways or even the regional highway system. NYS Route 370, particularly portions of the corridor immediately adjacent to the Villages of Cato and Meridian, is the roadway most likely to experience any significant residential or

“Residential development is spreading westward from Baldwinsville and Rte 370 improvements will make commute from Ira and Cato easier and perhaps more attractive than in the past.”

-Resident at Public Visioning Session-

commercial growth in the near future. As the major route connecting the Towns of Ira and Cato to Victory, Lysander, and the Village of Baldwinsville and beyond, State Route 370 is of vital importance to both towns.

The cumulative impact of unchecked development along this route jeopardizes traffic safety, mobility, and the general quality of life along the corridor and surrounding areas. State Routes 34 and 176 are likely to experience similar consequences as Ira and Cato become target areas for future development and ideal places for quality living.



As such, standards and policies must be in place to ensure land use and transportation decisions are being considered as a working unit, and not as separate entities. Guidelines for utilizing traffic impact studies and reviewing site plans must be instilled to ensure future development and the local transportation network evolve according to the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. Failure to do so will result in costly roadway and other infrastructure improvements, such as potential bridge rehabilitation / replacement projects,



road widening, etc, as a reaction to mitigate impacts of such development. Additionally, as time passes and development pressures increase, local policy should be reviewed to accomplish the following:

- Evaluate transportation and land use planning policy as it pertains to the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan;
- Determine land use patterns to be served by a given circulation system or determine what type of circulation system is needed to support future land use patterns;
- Identify and evaluate the level of service (LOS) of major travel corridors and provide projections of approximate volumes within such corridors through cooperation with

“Communities that are more pedestrian oriented, particularly along major highways are more desirable places to live. Getting people out of their cars is difficult in rural communities but DOT is now incorporating energy efficiency into our local transportation plans”

- William Egloff,
PE New York
State Department
of
Transportation,
Region 3 -

the NYS Department of Transportation, County Highway Department, and local highway departments;

- Identify major potential problem areas in any proposed transportation network; and
- Provide a basis for planning and programming major capital improvement projects.

Goals, objectives, and recommendations related to Ira and Cato’s transportation network are based largely upon results from a public visioning session held on October 11, 2006; specific issues can be reviewed in *Volume II – Inventory and Analysis*, Section 4.0.

4.1.1 Transportation Goal

The Towns of Ira and Cato will maintain a safe and efficient transportation system by preserving highway function and coordinating future land use decisions with State and local transportation officials.

4.1.2 Objectives

- Encourage land use activity that is compatible with the functional capacity of the adjacent roadway system.
- Employ corridor management for major highways within Ira and Cato, particularly for State Routes 370, 34, and 176.
- Enforce strategic access management principles during future residential, commercial, or industrial development along State Highways.
- Ensure that highway improvements are coordinated with local land use policy in order to avoid costly and unnecessary improvements to highway infrastructure.
- Facilitate the development of a multi-modal transportation and recreation network linking community trails and greenways to the Villages of Cato and Meridian, and the shorelines of Cross Lake.

“The Towns need to hold a coordinated SEQRA review (State Environmental Quality Review) for proposed projects along state highways, so that DOT is made aware of such projects.”

- Brian Madigan,
RLA Planning
Consultant -

- Improve the pedestrian environment by providing sidewalks and safe means of crossing high-volume roads between the Villages and points of destination.
- Facilitate the preservation of rural character by maintaining the visual and scenic character of major highways within the community.
- Coordinate with the County and State DOT to monitor and evaluate maintenance needs for the Bonta Bridge and Jordan Road Bridges over the Canal.
- Preserve and enhance the functionality of the Whitford Airport operations as necessary based upon current and future aviation demand levels.

4.1.3 Implementation Strategies

Based upon the issues and findings identified in the *Volume II – Inventory and Analysis*, and the above referenced Goals and Objectives, the following recommendations and action strategies are offered to ensure a safe and efficient local transportation system:

4.1.3.1 Establish and implement Highway Overlays on arterial and collector roads.

The Towns of Ira and Cato should cooperate to develop highway overlays for State Routes 370, 34, 176, and Jordan Road. The intent of a highway overlay is to help manage and coordinate desired development with the respective adjacent roadway and to ensure land use and transportation compatibility. Access management requirements and utilizing appropriate setbacks help ensure highway function is preserved in order to retain these routes as major collectors and arterials.

The highway overlay zone would build on the underlying zoning district regulations by establishing additional standards and criteria along these defined transportation corridors. Particular standards that may be incorporated in a highway overlay zone could include:

- Building setback
- Lot coverage

- Parking setback & Orientation
- Minimum lot widths
- Shared use of parking facilities
- Access

One important component of a highway overlay is the incorporation of distance requirements for driveways and entrances to new subdivisions. By employing overlays along State and County highways that experience higher volumes and high speeds, the community can manage the highway corridor to avoid excessive turning movements, points of conflict and the need for controlled intersections on major collector roads.

4.1.3.2 Improve Site Plan Review requirements.

The Towns of Ira and Cato should re-evaluate current Site Plan Review requirements as part of the local development process. This will help govern future proposals for development on individual parcels of land, particularly along major transportation corridors such as State Routes 370, 34, 176, and Jordan Road. Site Plan Review requirements can be adopted as a stand-alone regulatory document, or can be incorporated into local development review procedures.

Since site plan reviews focus on the development of a parcel or group of parcels (e.g., what the development will look like, types of land forms and features, and how a development will impact nearby residents, businesses or industries). Site plan reviews should, at a minimum evaluate the following:

- Location and dimension of structures and architectural features
- Parking layout, orientation, and surface
- On-site circulation
- Site access (vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle)
- Screening and buffers
- Signage
- Utilities

- Landscaping
- Drainage features and structures
- Adjacent land uses

This will assist the respective Planning Boards when reviewing projects that generate higher vehicle trips (i.e. traffic) along high speed collector roads to ensure that new development does not have a major impact on highway function.

4.1.3.3 Establish an inter-municipal Corridor Management Plan for primary transportation corridors.

In general, a regional Corridor Management Plan would identify transportation and land use issues relative to the growth potential along State Routes 370, 34, and 176, and propose an appropriate action plan to prepare for regional changes in land use relative to the local highway system. The value of implementing the Comprehensive Plan and developing a complementary corridor management plan is one of many implementation tools. To prepare for transitioning land use with each Town, it is important to understand that land use in the adjoining Towns is changing (particularly as farmland is converted to residential uses along Route 370). A regional corridor management plan can be coordinated with NYSDOT and can help each Town identify the potential traffic impacts locally.

Establishing planning criteria ahead of time will prevent exacerbation of future problems that could result from unchecked development. Laying out an overall plan initially allows the Towns to enact control measures to prevent undesired consequences. With an overall goal already established in the Comprehensive Plan, better estimates could be made about the effects associated with each new development project the Towns may face. The Corridor Management Plan would help to identify the potential cumulative impacts of development. Costs of improvements can be determined ahead of time so that each new development would bear an appropriate share of the burden of mitigation.

It is also recommended the Corridor Management Plan utilize NYSDOT’s Context Sensitive Solutions Initiative to establish criteria for a multi-modal pedestrian-oriented community. The benefits of pedestrian-friendly design are two-fold. First, residents of the community and users

“DOT needs to help protect major roadways from being ruined by driveways”
 - Resident at Public Visioning Session -

of the transportation network benefit from safe access to recreational areas and community activities. Children and adults can use an interconnected trail system to navigate through the community to the Villages of Cato and Meridian, Cross Lake, town parks, and the high school. Secondly, quality pedestrian access systems reduce dependence on vehicles. If residents and visitors can access the shorelines of Cross Lake, school facilities, town parks, and community activities by pedestrian means, the overall number of vehicle trips generated per household will be reduced.

4.1.3.4 Incorporate distance requirements for driveways and signs for new development on State, County, and Local Collector Roads.

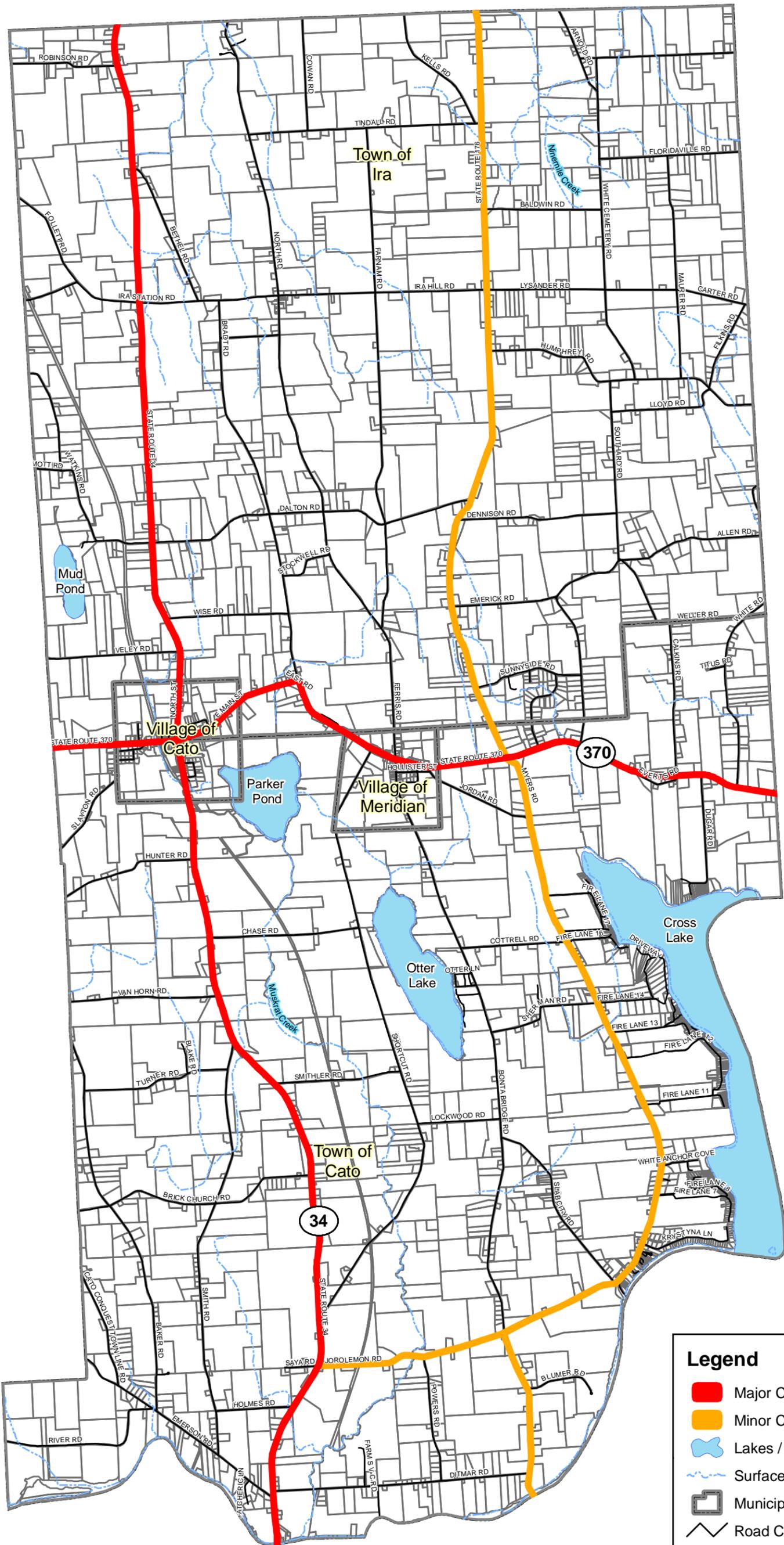
In an effort to maximize mobility and safety, and to limit accidents and traffic delays, driveway cuts for land uses (housing, commercial, etc.) should be discouraged within close proximity to major intersections on major collector roads.

A minimum driveway spacing requirement of 250 feet from intersections of any major arterial or collector road is recommended to be incorporated into local land use policy.

In addition, a minimum driveway spacing requirement of 200 feet along major collectors within the overlay zone should be considered for implementation throughout both Towns. Minimum driveway spacing should be considered along the following highways as shown on the Highway Overlay Map, Figure 4-1:

- | | | |
|----|---|-------------------|
| 1. | New York State Route 370 | (Major Collector) |
| 2. | New York State Route 34 | (Major Collector) |
| 3. | New York State Route 176 | (Minor Collector) |
| 4. | Myers Road/Jordan Road | (Minor Collector) |
| 5. | Jorolemon Road | (Minor Collector) |
| 6. | Bonta Bridge Road (Myers Rd. to Seneca River Segment) | (Minor Collector) |

(Page Reserved for Figure 4-1)



Legend

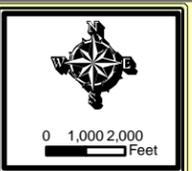
- Major Collector Overlay
- Minor Collector Overlay
- Lakes / Ponds
- Surface Water
- Municipal Boundary
- Road Centerline
- 2007 Tax Parcel Boundary

Data Sources:
 2007 Tax parcels - Cayuga County RPTS;
 Surface Water - New York State DEC;
 Road Centerlines - New York State DOT;
 Municipal Boundary - U.S. Census;
 Collector Overlays - B&L



**TOWN OF IRA - TOWN OF CATO
 JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Town of Ira Town of Cato
Highway Overlay Map
 Cayuga County New York
 7/20/07



Project No.
 1069.001

FIGURE
 4-1

The Town should also employ a minimum setback of 150 feet for all building structures; 75 feet for signs, and a minimum setback of 100 feet for all impervious surfaces (excluding access drives) along the following major collectors:

1. New York State Route 370
2. New York State Route 34

This strategy holds true particularly for commercial (and multi-family or industrial) uses that tend to generate high volumes of traffic. Poor corridor and access management will hinder the success of any investments in commercial or industrial uses and result in problems that are costly to mitigate. It is important to recognize that growth of any kind generates traffic. Most traffic generated in the Ira/Cato area, including “through traffic,” will utilize primary transportation corridors as a means to travel safely and efficiently (i.e., Route 370). If growth occurs unchecked, much of that subsequent increase in traffic will require traffic signals at the intersections of some of these primary routes. This scenario would reduce highway efficiency and function and cause a stopping condition on a highway that is designed to carry inter-community traffic. This situation is evident on Route 31 in Clay and it is not desirable to create this problem in a rural community.

4.1.3.5 Require a minimum site distance requirement for all new driveways on State, County and local roads.

Due to the rural nature of the community and the physical characteristics of the drumlin field, each Town should ensure that there is adequate site distance when new driveways are installed. Roads in the community cover long distances and vehicles tend to move at a fast pace along many roads in the area. At the same time, drumlins in the area create gaps in adequate site distance in residential areas. Therefore, each town should include a requirement that all driveways have a minimum of 550’ of site distance in order to maintain a high degree of traffic safety. This will become more important as residential growth occurs in the area, but it will also be important as new commercial driveways are installed in the future. If infrastructure improvements are implemented in the future, development may become more compact. Compact development is preferred in order to maintain agriculture and open space, but adequate site distance is an important tool for maintaining highway safety.

“Our standards are minimum standards and we have no control over local land use. We are a home rule state and it is up to local Planning and Zoning Boards to address land use along major highways”

- William Egloff,
PE New York
State Department
of Transportation,
Region 3 -

4.1.3.6 Work with State and Local agencies and development interests to implement Corridor Plans and local requirements for State highways.

Future development projects along Routes 370, 34, 176, Bonta Bridge Road, and Jordan Road may be reviewed and considered by the Towns based on priorities and resources. Careful consideration of potential development will help the Towns maximize opportunities to maintain highway safety, efficiency and mobility. The development of Corridor Plans for these collector roads in the community will ensure that projects serve complementary, not competitive, purposes. However, the implementation of highway overlays will require the Towns to coordinate development proposals with State and County Transportation officials to ensure that they are aware of the Towns' long-range vision (i.e., to maintain rural character).

This approach to future growth will generate cooperation between the Towns and their villages. It will also require cooperation between regional communities and the County.

4.1.3.7 Coordinate with State and County highway transportation officials to ensure that there are no lost opportunities or inefficiencies in maintaining the Highway System.

One major issue discussed at the public sessions was that the opportunity to improve water infrastructure in the Village of Cato was lost during upgrades to Route 370. William Egloff (Engineer for NYSDOT) attended the first of three public sessions and stated that if the community wanted to upgrade and/or replace water infrastructure during the reconstruction, it could have been requested during the design process. However, because there was no request, the waterlines in the State right-of-way were replaced "in kind" or not replaced at all. This will result in two possible scenarios. Either future water infrastructure improvements will require excavating along a newly upgraded section of Route 370 or future water service will be restricted to the current system within the right-of-way.

In addition, Jordan Bridge and Bonta Bridge in Cato have functional, historic and scenic value. Although the Town has no maintenance or inspection responsibility for these historic structures, this plan recommends improved coordination with New York State Department of

Transportation and the New York State Thruway Authority to ensure that these bridges are preserved and maintained in appropriate fashion. The highway function of these structures should be maintained to the greatest extent possible to prolong their use. In the event that increased traffic volume precludes their use, they should be creatively preserved and incorporated into replacement solutions, converted to multi-modal / trail use or relocated in a preserved state to an area in close to their current location.

By coordinating with State and County highway officials and making them aware of the Towns' Comprehensive Planning Goals, they can anticipate needed improvements now rather than "after the fact." This simple strategy of open communication will mitigate long term costs to State, County, and local taxpayers in the future.

4.1.3.8 Consider the New York State Scenic Byways Program for State Routes 370 and 34.

A scenic byway is not just a road; it's a road with a story to tell. A scenic byway might offer magnificent views or fascinating historical sites, recreational opportunities, wildlife or agricultural venues. It will also offer exposure to local businesses, outdoor activities or cultural attractions, interesting structures or important landscape features (waterfronts, drumlins, etc.). Whether or not a scenic byway offers one or many of these things, it always offers a great experience.

A scenic byway is a "win-win" arrangement for the travelers that use it and the communities that adjoin it. In Ira and Cato this is an excellent opportunity because Route 370 is arguably the most important commercial route in Cayuga County (with exception of the NYS Thruway). Routes 370 and 34 in the Village of Cato form a busy intersection and both highways carry a great deal of important commercial traffic. As "inter-community" routes, these highways can provide travelers with needed services and recreational opportunity and the communities profit by an organized management plan. At the same time it can serve to protect highway corridors from poor design and highway clutter and enhance these corridors to encourage increased tourism. With some of the strategies in the plan relating to agricultural tourism and improved awareness of recreational opportunities, Routes 370 and 34 offer an excellent opportunity as Scenic Byways.

New York State's Scenic Byway Program guidelines are flexible. Local, County, and State roads are eligible with each byway involving multiple communities. A byway is organized around at least one theme. A theme is based on related resources that are located along the byway corridor. These resources can be things like landmarks, buildings, drumlins, vistas, businesses, campgrounds, parks, farms or nearly anything of interest or value than is visible from, adjacent to, accessed by, or associated with the road.

4.2 Utilities and Communication Infrastructure Planning

In today's post 911 era, open discussions regarding the existing location of power, gas and communications facilities and mapping of those utilities is discouraged for interpretation by the general public.

During the process of conducting the inventory, information regarding the location and placement of fiber optic cables, gas lines, and power generation facilities was



sought. However, detailed information was unobtainable due to concern for revealing important regional infrastructure and communications systems. In short, the result of the investigation reveals that the community has more than adequate power transmission, gas transmission, and fiber optic communications facilities. Unfortunately, with respect to cable and on-line services, these important communications facilities are generally not available to the public at this time.

As indicated in the Inventory portion of this plan, the market climate for utilities and communications infrastructure is ever changing and a prediction of future trends in this area is difficult. However, during the planning process, it was recognized that there are several excellent assets in these two Towns that could be extremely beneficial to many aspects of this plan. To list a few:

- Both Towns have an excellent configuration of collector roads.
- NYS Route 370 is a major commercial route for transportation between northern industrial portions of Rochester and Syracuse.
- The New York State Thruway is adjacent to the Town of Cato.
- There is a major gas transmission line that runs through both Towns.

- There is a major electricity corridor that runs through both Towns.
- There are major fiber optic cables running through both Towns.

Therefore, it is safe to state that water and sewer infrastructure represent the greatest constraint to future expansion of the commercial and residential tax base. In addition, lack of available cable facilities has limited efficient online communications throughout the area. However, with the advent of wireless communication, cellular service and the improvements in satellite technology, the latter constraint will be resolved in a short period of time. As more residents seek satellite television services, cellular service, and “wi-fi” technology, the need for fiber optics and “hard wired” computer networks will become a thing of the past.

For planning purposes, the most important consideration is how to improve these services in a way that has a minimal impact to the scenic quality of the community and active farming within the community. Wireless technology requires the location of cellular towers and communication antennas to provide a reliable and seamless network of communication in order to bring Ira and Cato into a global system of communication. In addition, the need for energy efficiency has also resulted in locating new green technology in rural areas. An example of this technology’s impact is the increasing demand for locating wind farms and wind power generating facilities. While this technology is embraced as a way to generate clean energy, it may also impact the viability of farmland and the rural character that is a key component of this plan. However, by recognizing that these two technologies (i.e., wireless communications and wind power generation) are the most likely foreseeable trends in the future, it is possible to boil it down to one single land use issue, towers in the landscape. Therefore, the goals and objectives in this section will relate directly to the placement of towers in the community in a way that brings the community into a global communications age, and encourages alternative energy development with minimal impacts to farming, scenic quality, and rural character.

4.2.1 Wind Power Generating Facilities and Cellular Towers

Wind turbines may be used for residential, commercial, or industrial purposes and may affect several zoning districts. However, the most feasible location for wind generators is in the central and southern portion of the Town of Ira where the elevation is high enough to capture wind energy. During the planning process, the NYSERDA wind potential maps were reviewed and the Ad-Hoc Committee included language that will address the use of wind farms in the Towns.



With the exception of noise considerations, cellular towers and wind generating facilities should be treated in a similar fashion with respect to land use policy and the Towns must consider several factors when reviewing potential wind energy projects or cellular towers. Due to the potential for impacts to agriculture and a trend for individual farms to install windmills, wind farms should be anticipated. This is due to the possibility that improvements in technology may compensate for the lack of prime wind generation areas in the future. Some of the factors that must be addressed during Site Plan Review include:

1. Noise levels – Including noise associated with wind generators and the blades of the turbine.
2. Setback and operation – Including consideration for the potential failure of towers, turbine blades, or structural members.
3. Agriculture – Including the loss of tillable acreage, pastureland, or access to viable farmland.
4. Natural Resources – Including recent concerns with Federal Aviation Administration lighting requirements and wildlife migration patterns.
5. Interference – Including interference with both cable and wireless broadcast transmission and emergency service communications.

“Right now this area is marginal for wind turbines but technology may improve in the future. What is important is to anticipate the potential impacts to farmland. How can it benefit local farmers if they are private turbines that support the farm. If it is a commercial turbine you have to be prepared to address potential negative impacts to farmland and tillable acres. That is where State Agriculture and Markets is important”

- Brian Madigan,
RLA Planning
Consultant -

6. Visual Impact – Including the visibility of towers and their impact on rural character.
7. Municipal Boundaries – Including proximity to adjoining municipalities where wind turbines are restricted.

Based upon the issues listed above and the overriding theme of farmland protection throughout the planning process, the following goals and objectives are set forth with respect to wireless communication and wind based power generation.

4.2.2 Communications and Clean Energy Goal

The Towns of Ira and Cato will encourage state of the art wireless and clean energy technology that is compatible with agricultural operations in the most appropriate areas of the Towns.

4.2.3 Objectives

- Anticipate a potential for commercial wind generators in the upper elevations of the Towns.
- Encourage the location of future cellular towers within or in close proximity to commercial areas when possible.
- Promote wind technology that enhances agricultural viability and profitability throughout the agricultural zoning district.
- Manage the location of wind generators and cellular towers so they are away from active farmland or toward the edge of fields and tillable acreage.
- Encourage wireless and wind technology projects that will financially benefit local and regional residents.

- Discourage commercial and industrial cellular towers and wind generators near residential areas.
- Discourage visibility of cellular towers and wind generators along major scenic routes, local parks, lakeshores and buildings, or sites of historic significance.
- Encourage the use of design approaches and techniques that make towers aesthetically pleasing to the public and compatible with the rural character of the area.

4.2.4 Implementation Strategies

4.2.4.1 Require any future proposed wind generation projects to meet minimum standards developed by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets.

Based upon a review of wind generator operations in the Central New York Region, it is recommended that the Towns adopt Guidelines for Agricultural Mitigation for Wind Power Projects developed by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (Ag and Markets) as the standard for reviewing any future wind power projects throughout the community. Both Towns should coordinate any planned wind generation projects with Ag. and Markets and pursue clean energy opportunities as long as they do not impair or impede active farming. Due to the rural nature of both communities and the wind potential of higher elevations, local officials should direct any commercial or industrial proposals regarding wind generation to that portion of the Towns. Wind turbines for residential purposes should be discouraged in higher density residential areas, but should be permitted on agricultural parcels containing a minimum of 5 acres for self-sufficiency purposes on land in the Towns agricultural zoning district.

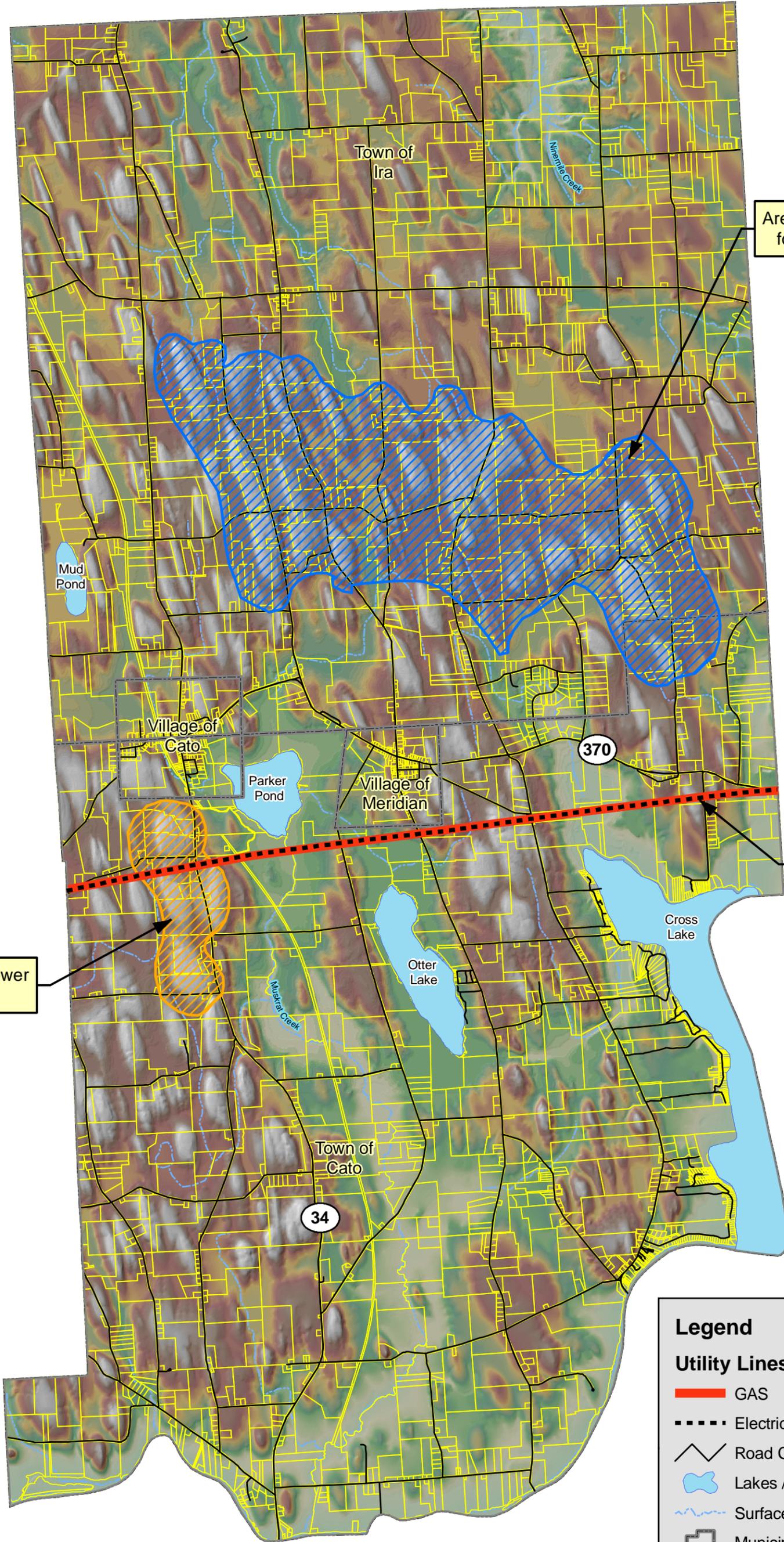
4.2.4.2 Require cellular towers to co-locate or locate on a subdivided parcel with road access.

The community should discourage the subdivision of farmland for cellular towers by requiring the co-location of wireless communications antennas. However, in the event that a freestanding tower is permitted, the tower facility should be located on a subdivided parcel that does not interfere with agricultural operations. It should avoid tillable acreage, forested land and sensitive environmental areas and be placed on a subdivided parcel with access to a public road. The parcel should be large enough so that a failing tower will fall within the property boundary. The subdivision process will also require the developer to provide independent access to the site. This will allow the developer to access the site for maintenance without crossing farmland. The rationale for this requirement includes:

1. Cell towers will be located on property subdivided and owned by the developer.
2. Cell towers can be reviewed to ensure they do not place undue burden on agriculture.
3. Liability for any failure cannot be transferred to an adjoining landowner or lessor.

This recommendation will safeguard the agricultural community and ensure that wireless communication can co-exist with farming. With the advent of cellular phones and GPS, farmers are becoming more dependent upon wireless communication to increase the efficiency of farming as a viable economic activity. Therefore, use of wireless technology and wind power by the agricultural industry should be encouraged in future planning decisions in order to facilitate the efficiency of farming operations.

(Page Reserved for Figure 4-2)



Area with Best Potential for Wind Generation

Major Power & Gas Corridor

Potential Cell Tower Location

Legend

Utility Lines

- GAS
- Electric
- Road Centerline
- ☪ Lakes / Ponds
- ~ Surface Water
- ▭ Municipal Boundary
- ⊕ 2007 Tax Parcel Boundary

Data Sources:
 2005 Tax parcels - Cayuga County RPTS;
 Surface Water - New York State DEC;
 Road Centerlines - New York State DOT;
 Municipal Boundary - U.S. Census;
 Utility Lines - B&L

4.2.4.3 Coordinate future project reviews with NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets.

It is recommended that the Towns direct any project sponsor to coordinate cellular or wind power generation projects with NYS Agriculture and Markets (NYSDAM) prior to the submission of an application for site plan review. This procedure will ensure that each Town utilizes professionals with adequate expertise to minimize the impacts of cellular towers and wind turbines on active agricultural operations.

In addition, this coordination will ensure aesthetic considerations in an effort to reduce the visual impact of towers and turbines on the rural character of the Towns by utilizing recommendations and design guidelines provided by NYSDAM.

4.2.4.4 Address cellular towers and wind energy systems in a coordinated manner in both townships.

It is recommended that the Towns amend the current zoning in a coordinated manner to address projects specific to cellular towers and wind energy systems and develop permitting requirements for any similar project to be used for residential, commercial, and industrial uses. As the proliferation of wireless communication and alternative sources of energy become an increasingly popular practice, it will be beneficial to the Towns to be prepared for such proposals by taking a proactive approach to this development potential.

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5.0 LAND USE PLANNING

The Land Use Plan serves to tie together all of the previous planning components with three overarching themes. Each Town Board and Planning Board for Ira and Cato should consider these themes when adjusting land use policy for their Town.

The first theme is recognition of the connectivity or interrelationships between different land use decisions and different visions. For example:

- What is the difference between traffic safety and pedestrian safety?
- Why is controlling runoff of surface water important to protect groundwater?
- How can residential development impact the efficiency of agriculture?
- How can water and sewer infrastructure be implemented as a growth management strategy?

Each section of this Plan contains recommendations that are examples of inter-relationships between issues that should be considered as part of the land use decision-making process.

The second theme is assuring that the Comprehensive Plan and local ordinances are consistent within both municipalities. This will assure consistency in land use policy and help to provide a regional consistency for the purposes of maintaining rural character. The Comprehensive Plan should reflect the community's vision of itself with respect to the present and the future. Local ordinances are tools that help achieve that vision, but the discretionary review by the Planning Board(s) and Zoning Board(s) are also important. To achieve the community's vision, policies should be consistent throughout the community and reflect the deliberate, often difficult choices a community makes in preparing for the future. Therefore, whenever an ordinance or Comprehensive Plan is updated, the other should be evaluated as well. This is the kind of proactive and creative thought process that is required for decision-making as the communities change over time. As new trends and theories in planning are developed that are relevant to the community and the region, Ira

and Cato should work together in determining if revisions are necessary to adapt to change.

The third theme is sustainability. Many recommended actions described in this Plan represent incremental progress in achieving a more sustainable future for each Town and for the region. Based upon our analysis of trends likely to affect each municipality over the next 20 years, the loss of viable agricultural land as it is being converted to single-family residential lots and small subdivisions is perhaps the most important sustainability issue for local residents.

Therefore, one overriding Land Use planning goal based upon these three themes for the Towns of Ira and Cato is as follows:

The Towns of Ira and Cato will engage in the planning process and strive to employ smart growth management to ensure that future development provides a diversity of land use to meet the needs of future generations and preserve rural character.

Recommendations pertaining to land use outlined in this section focus on various issues that each Town and the Villages should address to ensure quality sustainable development practices in the future. Planning recommendations presented herein will address the following: housing and rural residential development; agriculture and agribusiness; commercial and industrial development; and zoning and subdivision regulations. Each element that follows is a subcomponent of the Land Use goal of this Plan.

5.1 Housing and Rural Residential Development Policy

5.1.1 Introduction



Residential development and agriculture tend to compete for the same open space. It has been found that the land most suitable for agricultural use has the most development potential. Prime farmland soils are most suitable for

residential development because they are well drained, have adequate soil bearing capacity, and they are associated with rolling topography that provides the visual amenities homeowners prefer (i.e., views, streams, rolling woodlands and open space). As with any property, agricultural land can sustain a higher residential density if water infrastructure is provided and this makes it more attractive for development purposes. In addition, certain portions of agricultural parcels are more desirable for residential development, particularly with respect to farmland with large areas of road frontage.

The presence of agriculture is perceived by homebuyers as an important component of rural living and the quality of life that people generally prefer. Farming represents heritage value to people even though they may not actively participate in an agricultural way of life. Farms and farm buildings



also represent a strong community spirit and history. Residential homebuyers in general tend to view local farms as a symbol of stability, freedom, and cultural ties to the landscape. For this reason, appropriate planning for future residential land use can increase land values and help to provide local support to protect future agriculture, if addressed properly.

An unfortunate consequence of suburban development upon farmland is the loss of viable farms. As land is subdivided, residential development slowly erodes the viability of farmland and farm operations. Some of the ways in which this occurs includes:

- Loss of overall tillable acreage and prime farmland soils.
- Loss of large single parcels with adequate acreage or the proper physical characteristics (i.e., topography) to make agriculture economically viable.
- Fragmentation of acreage that creates remnant parcels and reduces efficiency for establishing and maintaining field crops.
- Loss of agricultural infrastructure (i.e., drainage tiles, farming support, feed stores, equipment sale and repair, etc.).

- Disruption of access to farm operations (farm infrastructure) due to the increase in public roads, traffic, and neighborhood development.

Having identified the paradox of residential development and agriculture, it is also important to understand that housing, like agriculture, is a basic human need and residential development is good for a community when it is anticipated and planned for in the proper manner. A new residential base will help to support local business and even local farms. Residential development may create new agricultural opportunities like farm stands, nurseries, and wood lots for the sale of fire wood. The problem with residential development is that it tends to erode the tax base due to the amount of services single family residential development requires. For example, according to the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, residential development can generate a demand upon local services that can be twice the amount it contributes to the tax base. For every dollar a single-family unit pays in taxes it may require as much as two dollars of service demand. At the same time, a community cannot exist without providing for basic housing needs within the community.

In planning for a balance of residential development and housing styles that can meet the community's needs, the Towns of Ira and Cato can accommodate a changing population in a way that does not have an overwhelming impact on the rural character of the community. Providing housing for aging residents is



important. For example, when a resident loses a spouse or reaches an age at which they can no longer maintain a farm or large parcel of land, it is beneficial to those residents to have local opportunities for apartment living, senior housing or assisted living. This may provide an affordable option to remain within the community and close to local family members. On the other hand, if they choose to seek a warmer climate for retirement, this type of housing will provide them with an opportunity to return to the community to be among family members on a seasonal basis. In many communities, seniors are forced to leave the area due to the lack of housing opportunities. On the other hand, housing for new residents or younger populations is also important to provide opportunity for a wide range of age groups and to provide quality of life for local residents. Providing

opportunities for the purchase of “starter homes,” patio homes, or quality rental units is important for new families and the younger population.

Therefore, in order to meet the housing need of the Ira and Cato communities, the following goal and objective strategies are set forth:

5.1.2 Housing and Rural Residential Development Goal

Encourage a wide range of affordable housing opportunities and interesting neighborhoods for current and future residents in keeping with the rural character of the community.

5.1.3 Objectives

- Provide for a variety of living experiences, including rural, suburban, waterfront, and village residential development; each with its own distinct style and character.
- Protect consumers’ housing options throughout the community by encouraging a mix of choices (i.e., location, accessibility, affordability, housing types, and style of neighborhoods).
- Promote open space or cluster subdivisions to help protect the rural character of the community and to maintain open space to preserve rural character and farmland.
- Encourage the preservation of open space throughout both Towns with Planned Unit Development (PUD) where appropriate.
- Investigate and incorporate Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND) for infill, adaptive re-use, or new developments within and adjacent to the existing villages.
- Discourage major residential subdivisions from encroaching into agricultural areas.

- Encourage the maintenance and development of quality housing.
- Promote projects that meet the housing needs of seniors, special needs populations, and first time homeowners in close proximity to the village centers within both Towns.
- Improve opportunities for home ownership in the community.

5.1.4 Implementation Strategies

5.1.4.1 Practice smart growth and sustainability by encouraging future residential developments to take place along side infrastructure extensions and adjacent to the villages.

The excessive extension of public utilities beyond a reasonable distance of the Villages should be discouraged in an effort to minimize the cost burden on local residents. This will enhance existing neighborhoods and help contain future residential sprawl. However, if Town-wide water districts are developed in the future, planning recommendations should be revised in order to prevent the loss of farmland to residential development.

Encouraging clustering provisions on lands within close proximity to the villages will minimize encroachment upon agricultural areas, protect critical environmental features, prevent sprawling into the countryside, and will also help maximize returns on infrastructure investments by State and local taxpayers.

5.1.4.2 Encourage and incorporate the preservation and mixing of open space and a variety of uses in new major subdivisions within the community through the use of Planned Unit Development (PUD).

Currently, Ira has established PUD districts (i.e., Incentive Zoning) that could address large-scale, new, and innovative projects where one or more uses may be contained within a single project. It is recommended that both Towns employ PUD when appropriate and that zoning be

amended to enhance the procedural review components of PUDs in order to better facilitate and promote unique and sustainable mixed-use developments.

By enhancing the review procedures of PUD districts, each Town should encourage developments that exhibit creative site design and employ a mix of uses. This can be encouraged by incorporating flexibility into standard zoning requirements, especially with regard to use, setbacks, and minimum lot sizes. It can also be a useful tool to mitigate future impacts to environmentally constrained areas and open space within the community.

It is within a PUD district that unique developments can be built that could include housing needs for seniors and first-time homebuyers with a mix of service-oriented and office uses. This will help to maximize returns on future investments in infrastructure (including transportation systems and public utilities). These developments should be located close to the villages, with access to collector roads, in areas where water infrastructure is planned or in areas that have evolved as local hamlets or clusters of residential development.

5.1.4.3 Industrial and commercial uses (including agriculture) should be buffered from residential areas with vegetative buffers and open space.

Although standard commercial and industrial land use is not extensive in the Towns of Ira and Cato, there are many agricultural operations in the Towns. These uses should be buffered from residential land use through the implementation of naturalized (i.e., in a natural state) vegetative buffers, as well as distance requirements between uses. For residential land uses next to agricultural lands, 100 foot buffers should be strongly recommended and should be wholly located on the residential parcel. When commercial uses are proposed as a stand alone use, the buffer requirement should be shared equally between the commercial and residential land use (i.e., 50 feet on the residential parcel and 50 feet on the commercial parcel). In the case on industrial uses, should they become more prevalent over time. Buffer requirements should strive to achieve a 100 foot buffer on the industrial parcel and a 50 foot buffer on the residential parcel.

5.1.4.4 Provide flexibility for developers who encourage implementation of low impact and smart growth approaches to residential subdivisions.

Developers, who seek to invest in Ira and Cato as growth continues, should be encouraged to incorporate innovative methods of development into their projects. Examples may include cluster developments with package plants (self-contained wastewater treatment plants), or Traditional Neighborhood Concepts (TND) with “low tech” methods of erosion control and stormwater management. Cluster subdivisions, as defined by Section 278 of the Town Law of New York State, is when you cluster buildings on one portion of a parcel of land so that the remaining portion can remain in open space or allow for the continuation of farming. This will benefit both the developer and the community at large because the developer can work within a more flexible regulatory framework while each Town can benefit from quality design and consider state-of-the-art development technology. It is recommended that local zoning and subdivision regulations be adjusted to show flexibility toward those developers who show interests in low impact and smart growth practices in design and development of project proposals.

5.1.4.5 Conduct density analyses along with a Water Supply Feasibility Study based on projected residential growth rates with target areas that can be accommodated by future transportation and infrastructure capacities.

In order to maximize returns on future infrastructure improvements and to ensure adequate capacity is in place to support growth, the community should conduct an analysis of future residential units (build-out analysis) within the proposed Water Feasibility Study. This will allow the community to anticipate and better target the appropriate location and density of future development. This approach will prepare the community for logical and phased growth and save public costs by directing new development to places contiguous to existing development (where sewer, water, roads, and other necessary services either already exist or are planned as part of this Comprehensive Plan).

5.1.4.6 Develop an Open Space Plan that links residential neighborhoods with trails, parks and other pedestrian amenities.

Trails, parks, greenways, and other open spaces are important ingredients in appeal and livability of both the Towns and the Villages. Building off of recommendations contained within this plan, the presence of the Cayuga County Recreation trail and recent pedestrian improvement along State Route 370, there is opportunity for an interconnected system of parks, trails, connections to entertainment areas (like the golf course, restaurants etc.) and greenways. This could link all existing and projected residential growth areas and create unique places and experiences for residents and visitors. In addition, an open space plan will also enhance multi-modal opportunities, thus minimizing vehicle trips (particularly along State Routes 370 and 34) by providing an alternative means of transportation to places within close proximity of residential areas. (For example, the County recreation trail and recent pedestrian streetscape improvements along Route 370.)

5.1.4.7 Accommodate the need for farm worker housing and utilize Special Use Permits.

Supporting worker housing for agricultural operations is a growing need among the farming community. However, the need for transient employee housing to support farms should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to ensure that it is safe and that it is located in a way that does not impact highway safety, drainage, or affect neighboring properties. It is recommended that both Towns utilize Special Use Permits to determine the merit of housing proposals that accommodate farm employees and allow for recommendations that may be beneficial to the farmer in maintaining the efficiency of the farm as a business enterprise.

5.2 Farming and Agricultural Policy

5.2.1 Introduction

The preservation of active farmland and rural character is one of the primary objectives of this Comprehensive Plan. Both agriculture and rural character tend to go hand in hand. However, in the eyes of the public, the cumulative impact of poor planning on farming is not readily apparent. Thus, the development of this plan provides an excellent opportunity for public

education. It will set the stage for highlighting the need for a planning strategy to address the future of the community. The process of implementing the plan will also reveal conditions that impact the viability of farming that are not readily understood by the public or developers (i.e., the value of a developer's project) and the benefits of farming to the public realm. For example, the impact of roadside development may not become apparent until complaints are received by residents regarding the use of pesticides of farm equipment traversing residential lots.

In section 5.1, it is stated that residential development costs up to twice as much in community services as it pays into the tax base. However, agriculture pays far more into the tax base than



it demands in local services. For example, according to the American Farmland Trust, a residential unit in Reading, New York costs \$1.88 for community services for every dollar it pays into the tax base. On the other hand, farmland in that same community only cost \$.32 in services for every dollar paid into the system. While these numbers may vary from community to community, the message is clear.

Agriculture pays far more into the tax base than it requires in community services. It also provides a benefit to the local economy.

The importance of agriculture in the Ira and Cato community should not be underestimated. There are many examples of communities who did not engage the planning process in time. Pittsford, Brookhaven, and many other towns in New York State are now trying to cope with the loss of farmland and rural character and working to preserve the last few farms in the face of residential sprawl.

Ira and Cato have the opportunity to address land use policies before it is too late. With or without improvements to future water infrastructure, the rural scenic character of the community will change over time as farmland is subdivided and fragmented. Therefore, growth management must be considered as the community moves forward over the next 10 to 20 years. Single-family residential development is inevitable in the community and can be received in a way that is sustainable. However, single family residential development over the

"The Town of Pittsford conducted an economic analysis and found that it would cost taxpayers 3 times the current rate in services if several farms in the town were developed into residential lots."

"The town used taxpayer dollars based on a public referendum to purchase the development rights to these farms."

-Brian Madigan
RLA Planning
Consultant-

next 20 years is likely to have the greatest land use impact on the economic viability of land for the purposes of agriculture.

In recognition of the growth potential of the community (whether it is spawned by future infrastructure or begins to sprawl on large lots due to a lack of infrastructure), this plan clearly recognizes farming as a commercial enterprise. Agriculture carries its own weight with respect to the tax base and has a minimal impact on community services.

Agriculture takes many forms but it requires support from other business and relies on support from other sectors of the economy. For example, transportation, communications, retail and wholesale services all support agriculture and yet benefit from agricultural commerce. Therefore, a major tenet of this plan is that local agriculture is part of the agricultural commerce of the region and is an important part of the future of the community.

Agriculture and farming are multi-faceted commercial enterprises and play an important role in defining the community. It not only provides the most basic of human needs (i.e., food for consumption), it defines the quality of life and rural character of the community. Future planning efforts and land use policy must support local agriculture, encourage diversification of agricultural commerce, and protect the interests of farmers in order to maintain economically viable agriculture for future generations.



Mid-range objectives of this section of the plan are fairly extensive and are based on a sound and reasoned approach to long-term farmland protection. In order for Ira and Cato to maintain economically viable agriculture for the next generation, the following goal and objectives and strategies are set forth:

5.2.2 Agricultural and Open Space Goal

The Towns of Ira and Cato will strive to maintain the viability of agriculture within the community as an integral part of the local economy and an important land use activity to sustain future generations.

5.2.3 Objectives

- Ira and Cato will encourage farming and agricultural commerce as a means to preserve rural character and open space.
- Ensure agriculture to continue as the primary economic activity in the community.
- Treat farming as a business enterprise and as the primary land use in the community.
- Encourage a supportive business climate for agricultural commerce.
- Support clean energy technology and cooperation with business that provides new paradigms to improve the economic viability of farming in the community (for example: bio-fuel support, bio-waste to energy production and nutrient recycling as described in Section 5.3 of the Inventory - Volume II).
- The Towns of Ira and Cato should coordinate to develop consistency in local land use procedures that addresses agriculture.
- The Town Planning Boards will discourage fragmentation of currently active and potentially active farmland for other land uses.
- Strive to maintain the most productive agricultural land for future generations.
- Work with local members of the agricultural community to encourage individual farmers to secure funding for farmland protection and open space conservation.
- Encourage sound farming practices in accordance with the guidelines of the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and Best Management Practices (BMP) to include:

“Some farmers don't have a choice but to sell out to a developer because they can't 'make it' farming”

- Resident at a Public Visioning Session -

1. Natural resource protection
 2. Runoff and erosion control
 3. Organic farming
 4. Open space protection
 5. Nutrient management
- Provide a climate where business, particularly locally owned operations, can benefit from the Towns’ agricultural heritage.
 - Discourage commercial or industrial activity that does not compliment agricultural infrastructure or operations from locating in the agricultural zoning district and encourage that those activities in areas adjacent to the Villages or within close proximity to the New York State Thruway.
 - Promote business development that supports and/or is supported by agriculture in the community.
 - Foster an economic climate that supports and promotes the expansion of agri-tourism within each municipality.
 - Provide incentives for specialty farms, hobby farms and self sufficiency farms and encourage agriculture that is compatible with residential development (i.e., farm stands, nurseries, local product outlets) in residential areas.

5.2.4 Implementation Strategies

5.2.4.1 *Form a Joint Agricultural Advisory Committee with members from both Towns.*

Local agricultural advisory committees are encouraged by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets and the Cayuga County Farmland Protection Board. It is also a strategic recommendation of this plan to ensure that farmers are engaged in local government and that they are familiar with future development proposals within the community. This committee can serve as a planning and knowledge base between local farmers and the

“If we can find ways to keep farming economically viable within the community, the farmer may choose to keep farming. The plan will not eliminate the farmers property rights but should provide a framework to keep farming viable.”

community. This group can also develop a local program for placing conservation easements on farmland, transferring leasing rights, engaging in “like kind trading” or developing local criteria and priorities for farmland protection.

5.2.4.2 Advocate for farming concerns when working with Federal, State and local elected officials.

One simple method of farmland protection that can be employed immediately is to promote the need for improving the agricultural climate in the community through networking with elected officials, agencies, and advocacy groups. The Towns should engage with the Natural Resource Conservation Service, Cornell Cooperative Extension, the College of Environmental Science and Forestry, the American Farmland Trust, as well as State and local agencies, elected officials and private interest groups. Local officials can also help to educate local residents and visitors as to the importance of agriculture to the local economy and the community as a whole.

5.2.4.3 The Local Planning Boards should strive to reduce potential future development pressures on viable farmland during the process of reviewing subdivisions and site plans proposed within the community.

The subdivision and site plan review process is an important tool to maintain a viable agricultural presence in the community. A few simple methods of applying this strategy to Planning Board evaluations include:

- Allow farming in all zoning districts within the community. For example, some agricultural operations (such as horticulture, tree farms, greenhouses, and farm stands) are compatible with residential development. Allowing these uses in residential areas will benefit citizens by providing venues where local produce and goods can be purchased by local residents.
- Require that buffer zones between land uses are not burdensome to farming. When residential development is proposed adjacent to farmland, natural vegetative buffers should be recommended between active farmland and

residential development due to spraying, odors, irrigation, and noise from machinery. To reduce the burden upon farmers, these buffers should be located wholly on development parcels and not on the adjoining farmland.

- Ensure that new development does not impede the farmer's access to land. One method of accomplishing this is to ensure that new development does not stand between farmers and agricultural fields. In Ira and Cato, development pressure has not risen to a high degree of conflict between residential and agricultural land use, but it is sure to increase over the next 20 years.
- Flexibility should be incorporated into review procedures for agricultural businesses. Farms and the business of farming require flexibility in local policies due to the unique requirements of agricultural operations. By using discretion in reviewing these proposals, Planning and Zoning Boards can make determinations that do not place a burden on the farm operation. This can be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and relates to the type of agricultural business that is affected.
- Require full disclosure to developers and owners of new projects. One simple method of alleviating landowner conflicts is to assure that adjoining farmers are aware that a project is proposed. At the same time, prospective home buyers should be made aware that farmers have the right to farm. Those who choose to live in an agricultural area must also choose to co-exist with farms before they invest in property. Therefore, disclosure notices should be provided to all that submit development applications to the Towns at the time of application. At the same time, Agricultural Data Statements (ADS) should be required from the developer and redeveloper should be given the responsibility for notifying farmers in writing that they are proposing development and should be engaged in the approval process. Developers should be required to provide, to the respective Planning Boards, proof of mailing the ADS to each landowner according to ADS requirements. This should be required before a public hearing is scheduled for the proposed project.

5.2.4.4 The Towns of Ira and Cato can encourage development to occur in a way that does not erode the viability of farming.

Balancing property rights with farmland protection can be difficult, but it is certainly attainable. This strategy can be accomplished through negotiations with developers during the subdivision review process. In instances where a development will clearly impact a farm operation, the municipality may facilitate negotiations between developers and farmers to create a win for both parties. For example, in the neighboring Town of Lysander, clear impacts to a large farm became evident when a new development was proposed. Over the course of 6 months, the Town facilitated meetings between the developer and the farmer to come to an agreement. The result was a land trade so that the farmer could consolidate access to his fields on more suitable areas, while the developer could cluster his development to one portion of the land. By being pro-active and facilitating compromise, the community can help the farmer and, at the same time, allow for the protection of property rights.

5.2.4.5 Implement percentage requirements for the subdivision of large lots with large expanses of road frontage.

Each Town has many parcels with expansive road frontage. To prevent fragmentation of agricultural lands and creation of landlocked parcels that reduce viability for farmland or development property, each Town should establish policy that requires rear lot access on large lots containing five or more acres of land with more than 1000 feet of road frontage. Once 30 percent of the road frontage of a lot is developed, a 60 foot rear lot right of way should be established by the purchaser (or seller) of the development lot, based upon local road standards. This will allow rear access to the lot for farm access or future local road connections between development parcels. This approach will also prevent “land locking” fragmentation and flag lots that will impact future farming operations. Through the Subdivision Review process, the landowner of the original parcel should be required to provide a sketch plan showing future build-out of the original parcel before more than 30 percent of the land can be subdivided along a highway or road.

This approach, among other recommendations in this section, will help limit the amount and type of development that disrupts or fragments land areas containing prime farmland soils or

soils of statewide importance. It will also allow for the orderly subdivision of land with a rational approach to the future local road network.

5.3 Commercial and Industrial Development Policy

5.3.1 Introduction

The development and growth of a community's commercial and industrial economy is influenced by several factors. These factors include: regional location; characteristics of the community population; existing commercial/industrial development patterns; availability of adequate sites; and proximity to State and local collector roads within the existing transportation system.

Each factor was evaluated during development of the Land Use Inventory (Volume II) and many of them are interrelated throughout the plan. This evaluation was developed to better understand forces driving current economic conditions and how these conditions can be maintained and enhanced through strategic land use planning.



Small retail operations and light to moderate industrial companies all have various criteria when making development decisions. Commercial land use in the area is primarily located in close proximity to the villages, and may, over time, begin to locate along the Route 370 corridor. A linear pattern of commercial development can begin to take place, unchecked, along major highways and can result in an undesirable pattern of development. The cycle of land use and changing traffic volume is discussed in the transportation portion of the plan. However, with respect to addressing undesirable highway commercial development, Ira and Cato have the opportunity to set policies in place that can prevent the type of commercial strip development that has occurred along Route 31 in the Town of Clay (other examples of poor local planning in commercial areas include NYS Route 57 in Clay, NYS Route 5 in the City of Oneida, or Route 92 in Manlius).

“Some commercial development is needed to offset the higher property taxes that result from increased residential development.”

- Resident at a Visioning Session -

The lack of water and sewer and the poor septic suitability of soils in the area prevent large scale commercial development at this time. However, sometime in the future, when



that hurdle is overcome, the community could become “ripe” for uncontrolled development. The local transportation system and the presence of local utilities can support a great deal of commercial development. On one hand, commercial growth is desirable to improve the local

tax base, but the form of commercial growth and its location can be detrimental to the community if it is not properly managed. By encouraging commercial and industrial activities that are diverse yet compatible with, or supportive of agriculture, each Town may work toward achieving the goals and objectives of this plan.

In implementing pro-active policies while the issues are manageable, the community will be in a better position to accommodate change in the future that is well planned and does not create land use patterns that conflict with the rural character of the community (or impair the economic viability of agriculture). Each Town can act in concert to consider a number of elements pertaining to commercial and industrial development decisions, including:

- The type of development that it wants to attract in light of community goals;
- The style, design, and character of commercial development that is appropriate for the rural character of the community;
- The amount of land area planned to accommodate the future population and benefit from “through traffic” along the Route 370 Corridor;
- The location of commercial and industrial land uses should be located in light of existing and planned public infrastructure improvements; and

- The commercial and industrial development should contain physical qualities and occupy development lots in a way that complements the rural character of the community.

The planning process was initiated by both Towns to determine the character of the desired development. Therefore, Ira and Cato plan to develop a means for carrying these concepts forth over a 20-year planning horizon. This section, based on inventory and analysis of existing conditions and public concerns and interests, presents recommended objectives and tools that both Towns should use to manage commercial and industrial development. These goals, objectives, and strategies are outlined below:

5.3.2 Commercial and Economic Development Goal

The Towns of Ira and Cato will facilitate and improve a business environment that creates new commercial opportunities for local residents and complements a wide range of agricultural economic opportunity.

5.3.3 Objectives

- Ira and Cato will encourage new commerce, including progressive energy development that relies on agriculture and supports agricultural production.
- We will encourage the development of commercial enterprise that is compatible with existing land use in areas with the best potential for future infrastructure improvements.
- We will encourage businesses that complement existing economic activity or that can provide for an underserved economic demand in the area.
- We will investigate sites close to the Villages of Cato and Meridian that may accommodate a future planned commercial development (PUD).

“We need commercial support to spur development and to keep the towns from continuing to be bedroom communities rather than communities in, and of themselves.”

- Resident at a Public Visioning Session -

- We will encourage private investment in the development of vacant or underutilized parcels within close proximity to the New York State Thruway and major collector roads in both Towns.
- We will strive to improve local infrastructure to support business development in strategic nodal locations along the Route 370 Corridor.
- We will favor new business that is related to green technology or clean technology, particularly enterprise that can complement agricultural commerce and the rural character of the area.
- We will promote agricultural processing facilities and small niche processing facilities to improve the presence of compatible industry and business.
- We will engage the Cato-Meridian School District to develop a mentoring program to introduce students to working farms and environmental stewardship.
- We will promote County cultural events and the recreational opportunities of the area in an effort to improve the local business climate.
- We will foster and encourage new business that can support agri-tourism and environmental education as well as improve the business climate for local recreation related business.
- We will ensure that new commercial and industrial development is in keeping with the rural character of the community.
- We will adjust policy in both Towns to provide uniform land use and development procedures in an effort to provide consistent and reliable standards for residents and developers seeking to develop land within the community.
- We will encourage the appropriate types, scale, and character of desired commercial and industrial developments.

- We will encourage compatible mixed land uses, in close proximity to housing and within existing developed areas to be supported by current and future water facilities.

5.3.4 Implementation Strategies

5.3.4.1 Improve Site Plan Review policy and procedures and require design guidelines for commercial and industrial development that complement the rural character of the community.

An important tool for local communities to encourage the desired type and style of commercial development is the Site Plan Review portion of the local law. By exercising the Planning Board(s) discretionary power to evaluate the appropriate site placement, street access and site design of commercial and industrial sites, the community can benefit from functional and aesthetically pleasing development projects in the future. While formal design guidelines may be encouraged in the future, the Planning Board can always include the aesthetics of site and building design in their reviews. In short, most developers will try to accommodate the community's wishes, but it is up to local officials to ask for better design, better building placement, and appropriate access locations to community infrastructure.

5.3.4.2 Encourage appropriate infill development in villages and hamlets.

The importance and positive impact that infill development can have on existing older neighborhoods within and adjacent to the Villages of Cato and Meridian can be useful when considering future commercial proposals. Understanding that building on underutilized sites within and around the villages can pose a number of problems to developers in comparison with construction activities on open lands (i.e, possible environmental contamination and design conformity, etc.). The community can identify priority sites for development and encourage prospective new businesses to locate in these areas. For example, by identifying the characteristics of a particular site such as information on blighted or abandoned properties, developers may be better able to target

“A reliable municipal water supply is a must before any commercial or residential development can occur.”
- Donald Teter, Ira Town Supervisor -

appropriate development lots. This is a proactive approach for the Towns to target key properties to help enhance quality of life and overall resident and visitor satisfaction.

5.3.4.3 Establish a strong inter-municipal relationship with the Villages and adjoining Towns when planning for economic development.

Identifying key aspects and areas for commercial and economic development through inter-municipal relationships between the Towns and adjoining municipalities will help establish development strategies that will complement one another, rather than compete. In the long-term, this cooperation can benefit the County and the region as a whole.

5.3.4.4 Develop a Capital Improvement Plan identifying where major, non-recurring facilities will be provided.

Having a Plan that identifies major investments in future facilities such as community facilities, public buildings, water facilities, sewage systems, and parks will help strategically program the local fiscal expenditures while coordinating public investment with the goals and objectives of this plan. It will also benefit business owners and new prospective commercial interests. It will help the Towns anticipate costs to the local tax base. Over the long-term, the process of estimating inflationary factors when considering infrastructure improvements will help the Towns in their planning and thus improve the local economy.

5.3.4.5 Identify land areas in close proximity to existing or anticipated water infrastructure that can reasonably be facilitated by future infrastructure improvements.

When planning for future infrastructure improvements, it is recommended that the Towns focus efforts on studying lands near the existing population centers that can be serviced by public water and sewer infrastructure to support commercial development in appropriate land areas. Limiting potential water and sewer extensions to areas within close proximity to the villages will help to preserve agricultural and open space areas of the Towns. Economic investments in these logical service areas will likely increase and result in

maintenance and improvement costs. Extending water and sewer to areas outside of immediate areas of activity will be much more costly to develop, operate, and maintain if it does not support a rational number of users (e.g., population). Therefore, without a reliable long-term solution to the lack of public water in the area, the community may not realize any economic return on other infrastructure investments (e.g. recreational, transportation, and community services, etc.).

5.3.4.6 Establish a local strategic planning committee.

It is recommended that a joint strategic planning committee be formed consisting of local business owners, citizens, and officials to focus efforts toward ongoing issues and economic development strategies (including improved public utilities). This strategic planning committee should include representatives from both Towns and the Villages of Cato and Meridian and should interact with adjacent communities. Having a group that is continually engaged in the promotion of the Towns and Villages will allow local officials to be ready and knowledgeable about future trends and growth management practices affecting its land, agriculture, and the economy.

5.3.4.7 Support small business development programs for local tourism related businesses.

The Community should support small business development programs targeted to local tourism and recreational businesses in appropriate areas of Ira and Cato. This can be accomplished by forming a Business Improvement District or by working with the local Chamber of Commerce or the Small Business Association to find start-up funding for small businesses. Business can be assisted for startup and improvement efforts if the Towns can serve as a municipal sponsor to business owner grant applications or revolving loan applications.

5.4 Community Services and Facilities

5.4.1 Introduction

Community facilities and services, as provided by local, county, and State government, and by emergency services such as volunteer fire departments, hospitals and libraries, are most often considered in terms of government to meet the needs and demands of the community's residents. Once again, due to the rural nature of Ira and Cato and the relatively small population, now is the time to anticipate the need for growing demands of an increasing residential population. These demands may not become critical within the current planning horizon. However, the present is the best time to anticipate future long-term growth.



“More community activities are needed, to bring a sense of community to the Towns.”

- Member of the Ad-Hoc Committee-

The types and quality of community facilities and services are critical to the quality of life in a community and can directly affect the potential for growth. As the population slowly, over time, continues to increase and change in character, the demand for facilities and services will also increase and change. More classroom space, police protection, social services, and recreation facilities will be needed sooner or later.

Public community facilities and services are provided on several levels, and the provision of these facilities and services is dependent on tax dollars, whether in the form of State aid, County supported programs or locally funded facilities and services. In addition, both public and private funds should be encouraged to support future facilities and services within the community.



With respect to land use, commercial and residential development should be encouraged in areas that are better suited to accommodate the type of business proposed. This can be accomplished by evaluating the business for compatibility with adjacent land uses based on the intensity of the commercial operation. (For example, a business that is likely to generate a high volume of traffic should be located in an area that has adequate access to major highways). While it is difficult to

anticipate the future growth demands on public facilities, consistent land use policy can help to encourage a proactive approach to long-term facility needs. The planning and provision of community facilities and services should be undertaken within overall context of the Comprehensive Plan and the community's long-term vision. More importantly, the individual municipalities should not act as an island when considering facilities or services. Ira and Cato should enhance cooperation with adjoining towns, villages, local municipal jurisdictions, and the school district to provide and improve facilities and services which are best provided regionally and do not duplicate nearby services.

This portion of the comprehensive planning process is perhaps the most difficult to project because improvements to water infrastructure will increase development pressure, but lack of water improvements will increase residential sprawl. Therefore, a balanced view must be established. On one hand, water infrastructure improvements may increase development demand. On the other hand, lack of water infrastructure may increase large lot residential development that will have a greater impact upon farmland. By cooperating in this planning process, both the Towns and Villages will be in a better position to prepare for the future. Therefore, for the purposes of this effort and at this point in the community's history, the following goals, objectives, and strategies are set forth.

5.4.2 Community Services and Facilities Goal

The Towns of Ira and Cato will maintain and improve public facilities to provide the framework for a stronger sense of community and to enhance activities that engage residents.

5.4.3 Objectives

- Encourage improvements to provide community facilities that are necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public.
- Cooperate with adjoining municipalities to improve the availability of water infrastructure for local emergency services to maximize fire fighting capabilities.

- Local officials will work with State and County officials to maximize safe and efficient egress from emergency service facilities to major collector roads.
- Encourage assistance for local emergency services to ensure that they can provide adequate support to local residents.
- Ensure that land use and local zoning policy allows for efficient access, ingress, egress, and circulation for the purposes of providing emergency services.
- Cooperate with Cato-Meridian School District to assist in cost effective use of facilities, and support quality education for students in the school district.
- Work with the Villages to seek opportunity for an urgent care facility within close proximity to the Villages of Cato and Meridian.
- Encourage the availability of affordable and quality day-care for families within the community to ensure that younger families and commuting families can remain within the community.

5.4.4 Implementation Strategies

5.4.4.1 Include input from local emergency services in the Site Plan/Subdivision Review process.

During site plan review of commercial, industrial, and residential projects, the Town Planning Board(s) should request input from local fire and emergency services. For example, if a retail store decides to locate in the Town and requests an area variance to build to 40 feet in height, the local fire department should be notified to determine if they have the proper apparatus to reach the roof of the building. To present another example, if a major subdivision is proposed in a remote area of a Town, the availability of water may limit fire-fighting capability. Therefore, it would be in the community's best interests to keep local emergency services abreast of pending project proposals during Planning Board review and request input from them regarding egress, access, and site circulation.

5.4.4.2 Plan for a Community Center in the future to improve community relations in the Town of Ira that is available to all members of the community.

In 2006, Ira Town Supervisor Donald Teter began to seek information for developing a Community Center in the Town of Ira and began inventorying available funding packages. As a result, the Town of Ira began to plan for a future community center and promote public accessibility and shared use of facilities between the Town, School District, CIMARF, and other facilities. This can also help to accomplish the coordination of events and sharing of facilities that can meet the needs of the Town in a way that does not lead to duplication of facilities. For example, there are limited facilities in the area to accommodate large receptions, community events or gathering places for people of all ages. By planning for a community center and municipal facilities that do not duplicate existing facilities, the community can make more efficient use of existing public assets and provide a venue for community gathering, events, and future programs.

5.4.4.3 Encourage a partnership with the Cato-Meridian School District.

Local school facilities have a certain amount of heritage value to the community. They can also make the community attractive to new residents and encourage current generations to remain in the area. By improving a partnership to develop future facilities that offer flexibility for public use, the community can plan for the future. For example, as growth occurs over time, each Town may be able to provide facilities that are not available within the current school district. If the community can anticipate future municipal facilities to include provisions that can be utilized by the school district, local government will have a part in reducing the tax burden of the school district. These measures may not have a large impact in mitigating fiscal impacts to residents in the near term, but they will begin to have an affect if and when growth occurs within the community.

In addition, encouraging the incorporation of school recreational facilities within the context of local recreational planning will reduce future expenditures by the school district and local municipalities (for maintenance and development). For example, the shared use of a new community center in close proximity to CIMARF fields and the County Recreation Trail,

represents an opportunity for shared parking, maintenance, athletic facilities, and outdoor education programs. Through this approach, the community, the local school district, and volunteers may discover ways to reduce liability, maintenance, and development costs while providing residents with activities at public facilities.

5.4.4.4 Ensure that school officials have input into future land use decisions, particularly when reviewing major residential subdivisions.

At this time there is limited demand for residential units in the Towns due to infrastructure limitations. However, availability of infrastructure or new technology in the future may facilitate unforeseen residential growth. As stated earlier in this section, residential development uses more in local services than it pays into the tax base. Therefore, if major subdivisions or multi-family proposals are set forth in the future, local school officials should be contacted to ensure that the local school system has adequate facilities to support additional students. If a project has the potential to have an impact on these services, the applicant should be required to assess the potential impact as part of the SEQRA process. This will ensure that the school system is not faced with an overcrowding situation or lack of facilities in the future. Including school officials in land use decisions will also allow the district to plan for an increased student enrollment rather than react to an unanticipated enrollment rate. At this time, an increase in enrollment does not appear to be an issue, but proactive planning for the future can prevent costly improvements to school facilities as a reaction to growth.

5.4.4.5 Work to increase public exposure to the Cato-Meridian School District.

One way to foster development of quality community assets is to encourage the use of school facilities for other community purposes and promote the quality of the school system. This can be achieved by holding public education and outreach events at the school so that area residents are exposed to the staff and facilities. The undertaking of Public Visioning sessions during the development of this plan is an excellent example. By holding meetings at the middle school facility, school officials became aware of the planning process and they were able to provide input into the plan.

(Page Reserved for Figure 5-1)

(Page Reserved for Figure 5-2)

6.0 SUMMARY OF LAND USES AND PLAN CONCLUSION

6.1 Proposed Approach to Land Use

The proposed Land Use Map (Figure 5-2) is the culmination of many of the goals and recommendations of this Comprehensive Plan and should set a framework to plan for existing and future land use over a 20 year period. Essentially, this will help to accomplish a Vision for the future based upon anticipated long term growth. It also provides a strategy for considering logical locations for infrastructure access and improvements. Ultimately, this plan is based upon the underlying premise that growth will occur over a long period of time. However, there is consensus among residents that there is no time like the present to manage growth in and effort to preserve the rural character of the Ira-Cato Community for future generations. Planning for growth in a nodal (compact) development pattern at a schedule matching the anticipated rate of development will result in logical, affordable, and reliable infrastructure improvements.

In an effort to outline a strategy for areas programmed for future land use, it is important to understand how the goals and objectives of this plan are reflected in the planning intent for portions of each Town. Therefore, as the community plans for the future, the intent of the land use designation indicated in Figure 5-2 is as follows:

6.2 Lands in Agricultural Areas

The Agricultural Land Use designation is intended to conserve rural portions of the town that are characterized by farms and agricultural operations. This area may include residential land use that is ancillary to farming and compatible with low density development. The preferred land use in this portion of Ira and Cato is agriculture and agricultural infrastructure. Properties in this area will rely on individual on site systems for the essential provision of water supply and septic disposal. Therefore, in order to ensure adequate separation of these essential systems and reduce potential for contamination and; to prevent any undue burden upon the natural environment, the required minimum residential lot size should remain the largest within the two Towns. The large lot is intended to promote separation of farms and non-agricultural uses to protect both activities from the potential adverse effects each has upon the

other. The overall level of development within this district should be maintained at a low intensity so that the cumulative effects of development do not conflict with environmentally constrained areas. At the same time, a lot size of more than 2 acres may perpetuate "large lot residential sprawl" into economically viable agricultural lands and open space.

Due to the fact that this land area may not be logically served with improved water and sewer infrastructure, lots should be no less than 80,000 square feet to ensure that on site wastewater disposal does not impact critical groundwater resources.

In light of the fact that each Town is working to maintain as much agricultural land as possible, a buildout analysis of this land use area is not conducted however, it is assumed that each town will strive to maintain approximately 90% of the land area outside of environmentally constrained areas as farmland and open space.

6.3 Lands in Projected Residential Growth Areas

Residential land use area is intended for undeveloped portions of the town in proximity to areas already developed for residential purposes. These areas are likely to be developed in proximity to existing services within villages, or the seasonal residences along Cross Lake. Residential development is proposed to occur in appropriate locations (e.g. within proximity to existing or proposed water infrastructure but not within proximity to existing or proposed wastewater infrastructure extensions). These Primary and Secondary Growth Areas are intended to accommodate the continued use of existing farms and to allow consider potential growth areas that may result from planned improvements to water infrastructure. Residential land use within this area will rely on individual on-site septic systems for wastewater disposal within an estimated planning horizon of at least 10 years. Therefore, future residential lots should be established at no less than one acre (40,000 s.f.) in size to ensure that wastewater effluent does not burden local groundwater supplies. At the same time, lot sizes in this area should not exceed 1-2 acres due to the potential for large lot sprawl into agricultural areas. A secondary rationale is to discourage the premature extension of public infrastructure beyond a reasonable level for the number of potential units to be served. If, in the future, public wastewater treatment is provided in this area, lot sizes in the Primary Growth Area of 1/2 acre (20,000 s.f.) may be considered.

In the Secondary Growth Area on Cross Lake, it is assumed that the trend in demand for waterfront development will continue. With a large number of non-conforming lots and a trend in converting seasonal units to year round use, it is important to ensure that future residential development does not exacerbate the pollution potential of non-point sources. While these non conforming lots will remain, future lots in this area should not be less than 40,000 square feet in area.

In light of the fact that both Towns plan to seek infrastructure improvements that will likely generate moderate growth in the primary residential area as indicated on in Figure 5-3 a general buildout analysis follows. This buildout analysis is based upon the assumption that units to be served by future water infrastructure improvements will be developed at an average density of one unit per acre (1 unit per 40,000 s.f.). Environmentally constrained areas and the school owned property is excluded from this estimate.

6.3.1 Buildout Analysis for Single Family Units in the Towns of Ira and Cato

Primary Residential Area

4150 acres	Estimated acres of future buildout
373 units	Total Number of Existing Units in Villages
258 units	Total Number of Existing Units in Towns
4261 units	Additional Unit Potential (with water supply improvements)
4519 units	Total Estimated Buildout outside of Villages (Unit Potential)
4892 units	Total Future Units to be served with Future Water Improvements (Based on Long Term Planning Horizon of 20 years)

Secondary Residential Area

1639 acres	Estimated acres of future buildout
309 units	Total Number of Existing Units
491 units	Additional Unit Potential
800 units	Total Future Units to be served with Future Water Improvements (Based on Long Term Planning Horizon of 20 years)

6.4 Lands in Rural Hamlet Areas

Rural Hamlets are historic forms that were intended to serve residents of surrounding farms a similarly developed setting with a limited "neighborhood style" or service oriented clusters. These areas may include a mix of residences and small businesses, small stores or home occupancies. Small commercial businesses less than 2500 square feet may be in proximity to residential uses and large scale businesses of traffic intensive uses should be discouraged. The interspersing of residential uses in "Traditional Neighborhood Design" is encouraged, including home occupancies, first floor shops with second story residential or professional office space, to enhance or maintain a neighborhood character.

It is assumed that the Rural Hamlets, will generally remain at the current level of development. While some units may be added over time, it is not projected that a great deal of residential growth will occur around the hamlets until such time as water and sewer infrastructure are provided. It is also assumed that this eventuality will not occur within a 20 year planning horizon.

6.5 Lands Available for Highway Commercial Activities

This area is intended for commercial services and manufacturing uses that require adequate highway access and large sites for buildings, structures outdoor storage, display or operation. It is also intended for commercial enterprise that supports the local agricultural nature of the community. This land use designation is intended for uses that focus on the movement, storage or processing of raw materials or semi-finished goods to the New York State Thruway and other major highways. Retail or non-retail uses that are not reliant upon close proximity to residential areas and which are not generally compatible to residential uses are encouraged in this area. Good access to major transportation routes and separation from and buffering to agriculture residential is to be encouraged but this area should be limited in size to the constraints of local water and sewer infrastructure. As a result, the Town of Cato should encourage a minimum lot size of 5 acres for commercial or industrial uses that plan to locate in this general area.

6.6 Plan Conclusion

The Ira-Cato Joint Community Comprehensive Plan is designed to guide Town officials in the application of sound land use policy for each of the major Planning Components. The major tenets of the plan are based upon the documented public outreach effort and overriding Goals formulated in conjunction with public opinion. Future implementation, including adjustments to local zoning, subdivision regulations, site plan review and overall fiscal policy, should reflect the planning Goals, Objectives, Recommendations and Strategies of the community.

Over time, trends may change and the Comprehensive Plan may require review and reevaluation. Therefore, the Community should adopt the plan as a living document to be reviewed every 5 to 7 years and adjusted to meet the needs of future populations. In light of the fact that agricultural communities are currently experiencing a proliferation of residential growth, Ira-Cato officials must keep abreast of regional issues and establish a sound and cooperative relationship with neighboring communities.

By developing this plan as a Generic Environmental Impact Statement, many of the measures recommended will reduce future impacts to the environment. These measures are intended to mitigate the effects of uncontrolled growth, suburban sprawl and future impacts to agriculture. Several recommendations will improve the quality of the community and make the community more attractive to future residents. For example, in the neighboring Town of Lysander, successful planning efforts has attracted growth and made the community a more desirable place to live. The act of preserving open space and farmland has actually increased the perceived quality of life in the community. As a result, demand for development is beginning to outgrow the planning approach that was established during the 1980s and adjustments are being made to address this trend. In the long run, the results of this plan may attract new residents to the area. By preserving agriculture and open space, residents from suburban areas will likely seek to find a home in the country. Therefore, as water and infrastructure improvements are implemented in the community, care must be taken to ensure that any growth inducing impacts are managed and sustainable. Therefore, the Towns must monitor growth (or lack of growth) and engage in pro-active planning whenever possible. If

growth begins to outpace the intent of this plan, it must be adjusted accordingly to ensure that policy in growth management is in keeping with the long-term goals of the community.

Many of the recommendations in the Ira-Cato Comprehensive Plan relate to the protection of open space and the environment and will improve the quality of local natural resources over time. Therefore, the Ira-Cato Ad-Hoc Committee has arrived at sound environmental and land use policy designed to mitigate long-term growth impacts to the community. All environmental impacts, as proposed, can be better evaluated through quality site plan and subdivision review and the Town's local land use policy will provide the necessary implementation tools.

Therefore, adoption of the Ira-Cato Comprehensive Plan will have no large scale, adverse environmental impacts to the region, the Town, or the adjoining communities. If the plan is implemented as proposed, it may significantly improve the local environment and quality of life for current and future residents. The plan also sets forth the appropriate approach to infrastructure planning and the protection of agriculture and open-space that is consistent in protecting the environment of the Ira-Cato community.