

DRAFT

TOWN OF ALDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



OCTOBER 2009





TOWN OF ALDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Town of Alden Comprehensive Plan was made possible through the efforts of the following:

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Section 1
Introduction



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SECTION 1.0 – INTRODUCTION

1.1 Regional and Local Setting

The Town of Alden is located on the eastern border of Erie County, New York, with the Town of Newstead to the north, Town of Darien in Genesee County to the east, the Town of Marilla and a portion of the Town of Bennington in Wyoming County to the south, and the Town of Lancaster to the west (Maps 1 and 2). The Town is situated mostly within Township 11 and Range 5 of the Holland Company's survey, and encompasses almost 35 square miles, or 20,833 acres, in area.

The surface topography is nearly flat along the northern portions of the Town and gently undulating in the southern portion. Ellicott (or Eleven-Mile) Creek flows northwesterly across the northern portion of the Town and Cayuga Creek flows in a northwesterly direction across the southwestern portion of the Town. Within the Town of Alden is the Village of Alden as well as several unincorporated hamlets.

The Town remains a rural community. In 2006, at the time of the last U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, the Town (outside of the Village of Alden) had an estimated population of 7,777 persons. Including the Village, the Town's population in 2006 was estimated at 10,358.

The Town of Alden is currently governed by a Town Board, which includes the Town Supervisor and four Council members. The number of Town Council members will be reduced from four to two in 2012. The Town is in the process of reducing their seven-member Planning Board to five members. This will be fully achieved in January of 2011. The Town also has a five member Zoning Board of Appeals.

1.2 Reasons for Preparing a Comprehensive Plan

New York State Town Law §272-a authorizes local municipalities to develop and adopt a Comprehensive Plan to help promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the community, with due consideration given to the needs of the people of the community. The Law states that

“Among the most important powers and duties granted by the legislature to a town government is the authority and responsibility to undertake town Comprehensive Planning and to regulate land use for the purpose of protecting the public health, safety, and general welfare of the citizens.”



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“The town Comprehensive Plan fosters cooperation among governmental agencies planning and implementing capital projects and municipalities that may be directly affected thereby.”

The Town of Alden last developed a Comprehensive Plan in 1972. Recognizing that this plan is outdated and no longer addresses the issues and opportunities of the community, the Town chose to undertake the preparation of an update to the Comprehensive Plan in 2008. The Town Board, in making its decision to authorize an update to the plan, recognized that the Comprehensive Plan is the most important document for managing the Town's physical growth and maintaining the rural character of the area.

There are many concrete benefits of a Comprehensive Plan. One critical benefit relates to the Town's zoning authority. Municipalities are given the power to regulate land uses within the community, but these decisions should be based on sound planning principles and developed through a process that represents a consensus of the community. The process of developing a Comprehensive Plan provides a rational basis for decisions regarding zoning and other land use regulations. This helps ensure better decision making, while providing the Town with a powerful tool to help direct growth in a manner and intensity that meets the community's vision for the future.

A Comprehensive Plan provides the vision for the future of the community and establishes goals and objectives that guide future growth, reflecting the principles and concepts that the community feels will enhance the character and quality of life therein. Therefore, another benefit of a Comprehensive Plan is that it helps guide local officials, who can look to this established vision and the goals and objectives for assistance in making future land use decisions. These elements of the plan also have an influence on other levels of government. All County, State or Federal governmental agencies that plan capital projects that will affect lands in the Town must take the Comprehensive Plan into consideration as part of their own decision-making processes.

The Comprehensive Plan, developed with the support and input from both municipal officials and the general public, acts as a standard for ensuring that the Town's land use regulations are built on a solid foundation and represent a consensus of the community. It shows the cooperation and commitment of the community that can aid in seeking governmental grants and other assistance. In short, the Town's Comprehensive Plan provides Alden with an effective tool for shaping its future. It influences local actions on the part of the Town and its citizens, as well as the actions of County and State and Federal agencies that are proposed and undertaken within the Town.



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1.3 Public Participation Overview

The Town of Alden is committed to the idea that a critical and necessary element of the Comprehensive Planning process is continuous and effective public participation. Hence, this Plan was prepared from the beginning with acknowledgement of public concerns and desires and consisted of on-going public outreach to build support of the Plan. The Town of Alden established an Advisory Committee to oversee the development of the Comprehensive Plan, which included representation from local government, the agricultural community, school district, and other organizations who worked hard to make sure this Plan expressed the vision of the Town. The Committee met on a regular basis (approximately monthly) to provide guidance and insight into the planning process and to ensure that the final document would be an effective Plan and that the concerns of local citizens were taken into consideration.

The Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee held a series of public meetings and conducted a public comment survey. The first public meeting was held on July 29, 2008, in the Alden Village Hall, to gather input from the general public as to the vision of the Town that the Comprehensive Plan should aim to attain. Input from this meeting was essential in developing the findings and preparing a draft set of goals and objectives. A second public meeting was held on November 18, 2008 in the Alden Village Hall to confirm the findings that were derived from the first public meeting and to present the draft goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. Input from this meeting was used to finalize the goals and objectives and begin establishing a vision plan for the Town. Finally, a third public workshop was held on June 10, 2009 to update local residents and stakeholders on the progress of the Comprehensive Plan and provide an opportunity to view the draft Vision Map and recommendations for the future of the Alden community. This meeting was very interactive with break out sessions and other opportunities for the public to provide their input on the ideas and materials presented. Project information, and information on the meetings, was also made available on the Town's website.

In addition, the Town distributed a public survey questionnaire to ensure that input was being gathered on a representative basis. The Advisory Committee wanted to make sure that residents from all aspects of the community were provided an opportunity to offer their comments and insights on what were deemed to be important local concerns. The response rate for this survey was good and it offered further information and confirmation of the community's position on the issues that were identified at previous meetings. The results of the public opinion survey were provided for review at the public workshop and posted on the Town's website.



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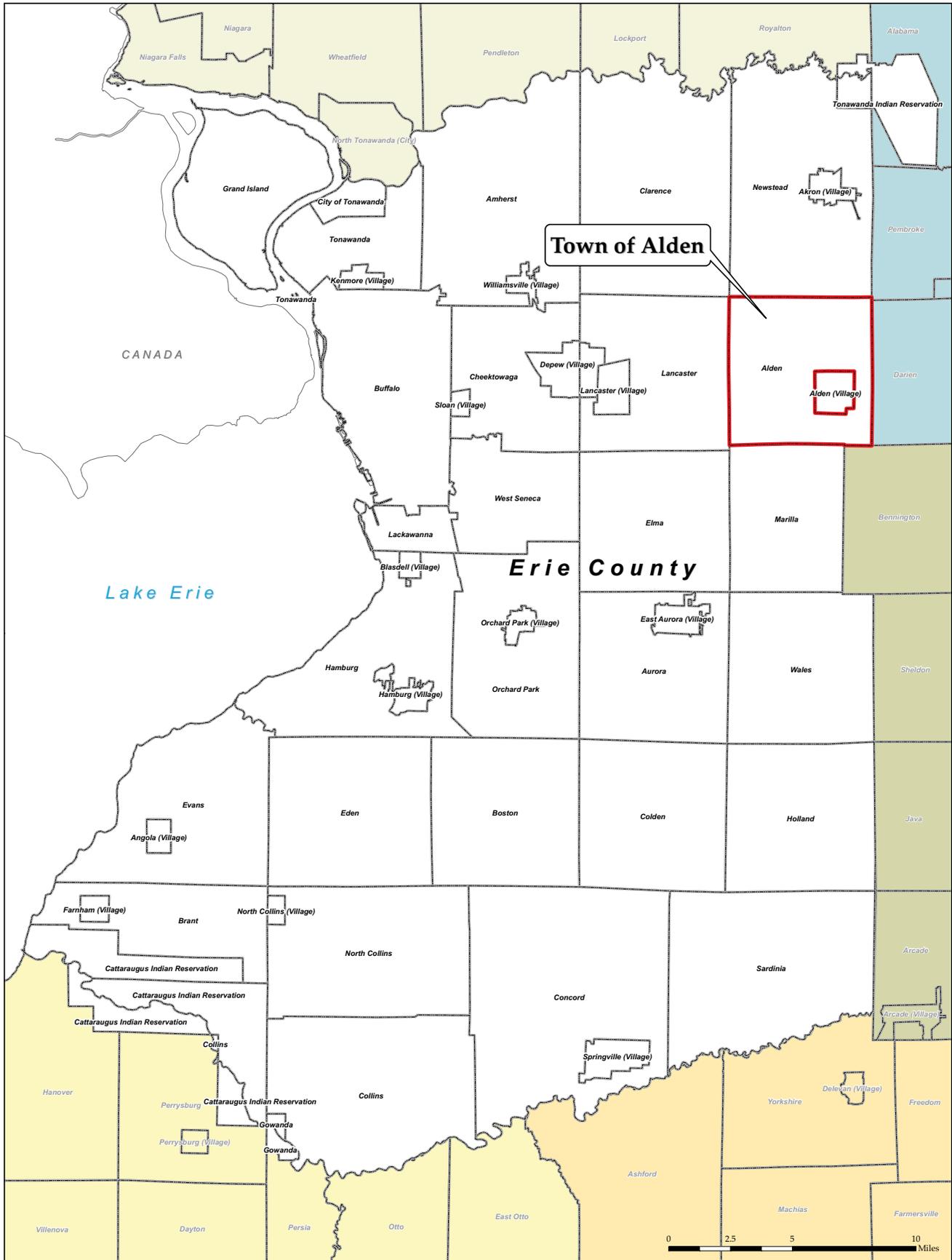
1.4 How the Plan will be Utilized

New York State does not dictate what form a Comprehensive Plan must take, but suggests that it consist of written and graphic materials, including but not limited to maps, charts, studies, resolutions, reports, and other descriptive material that identify the goals, objectives, and recommendations that the Town wishes to set forth to attain its vision. It examines the environmental, demographic, physical, and developmental aspects of the Town, as well as the regulatory setting that guides these factors.

While municipalities are given the power to regulate land uses within their communities, these decisions should be based on sound planning principles, and must not be arbitrary or capricious. As previously noted, Town Law generally indicates that municipal planning, zoning, capital budgeting, and other land use regulation decisions made in the Town should be done so in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan. A Comprehensive Plan provides an accessible and clear guide for entities seeking to undertake an action or project in the community. It also provides the Town with greater leverage on land use and planning related activities and programs instituted by other governmental authorities, such as State or County agencies, who are required to take local plans into consideration when proposing to undertake capital projects in local communities.

The Comprehensive Plan addresses the issues and concerns specific to the Town based on input from local residents and stakeholders, gathered through a variety of forums. The Plan provides a vision for a community and reflects the principals and concepts that the community feels will enhance its character and quality of life. The goals and objectives, recommendations, and implementation strategy included in this Plan are designed to address the Town's unique issues and concerns. This Plan demonstrates the cooperation and commitment of the community, which also lends strong support for grant funding opportunities. The Comprehensive Plan provides an assessment of where the community is, identifies what the community would like to be, and includes recommendations and strategies to attain its vision.

If and when adopted, the Town of Alden should begin to implement the Plan by amending its land use regulations to conform to the Comprehensive Plan and consider the Plan in all of its land use making decisions (site plans, subdivisions and zoning actions) and capital budgeting actions. Copies of the completed Comprehensive Plan must be filed with County and State agencies and must be utilized by those agencies in planning projects and actions that could affect the Town of Alden. The Town should actively utilize the plan as a tool, resource and guide for all future land use decisions.



Map 1 - Regional Setting



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LEGEND

 Town of Alden	 Chautauqua County	 Wyoming County
 Niagara County	 Cattaraugus County	 Genesee County



WENDEL DÜSCHKE-HEIER
PROJECT DESIGNERS
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Map Created: July, 2008

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Map 2 - Digital Orthoimagery



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LEGEND

 Town Boundary



WENDEL DUCHSCHERER
 CONSULTANTS
 WD Project # 438001
 Map Created: July, 2008

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Section 2
Goals and Visioning



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SECTION 2.0 GOALS AND VISIONING

This section of the Comprehensive Plan presents the Goals and Objectives that were developed for the Town of Alden with the assistance of the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee. The goals and objectives have been influenced by data from the inventory and analysis and input gathered from residents at public meetings and from written comments.

The goals and objectives focus on the major issues and opportunities identified by the Committee and residents. They are aimed at helping to guide future growth and development in the Town. The recommendations that are outlined in Section of this Plan include more specific actions that can be implemented to achieve the community's vision for the future.

2.1 Public Input

The Town of Alden is committed to the idea that a critical element of the planning process is effective public participation. This Comprehensive Plan was prepared with extensive public input. A variety of mechanisms were utilized to solicit input, including three public meetings, comment forms for the submittal of written comments, public opinion surveys, meetings with government officials and organizations, an internet website and press releases. In addition, the entire process was closely overseen by the Advisory Committee, which was comprised of residents and others from around the community who represented a variety of interests. The Committee met on a regular basis to provide guidance and insight into the planning process to ensure that the views and concerns of the community were effectively addressed.

A. Public Information Meeting

At the onset of the project, a public information meeting was held in the Alden Village Hall on July 29, 2008. This meeting was held to introduce the public to the planning consultants, the Advisory Committee and the project. A brief overview of the project, the reasoning behind it and an understanding of how the plan would be developed was provided. This was followed by an open discussion of important issues and opportunities designed to generate public comments. An important goal of this meeting was to gather as much public input as possible regarding what features residents liked about their community, where they had concerns and what they saw as key opportunities for improving their quality of life. Brainstorming encouraged those in attendance to articulate their vision for the Town. In addition, a short public opinion survey was presented to the attendees to reinforce what was heard. Based on the input gathered at this meeting, a preliminary draft of the goals and objectives was developed.



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B. Public Focus Meeting

A second meeting with the public was held on November 18, 2008 to present the draft goals and objectives and take the opportunity to reconfirm what was heard at the first meeting. The purpose of this meeting was to make sure the thoughts and concerns of the public were “heard” and that the planning process was heading in the right direction. The center point of this meeting was a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis of key issues that were identified at the public information meeting and through continued discussion with the Advisory Committee. In addition, a second public opinion survey was presented to strengthen the input gathered through the SWOT analysis.

C. Public Charrette Meeting

A third meeting was held with the public on June 10, 2009 in the form of a design charrette. The purpose of this highly interactive meeting was to allow residents and others to actively participate in the development and clarification of the recommendations for the Plan. The draft recommendations and a Vision Map for the community, which were developed by the planning consultants and the Advisory Committee, were presented for comments and critique. Citizens were divided into smaller groups to discuss the vision and specific recommendations in greater detail. The input from this meeting was used to strengthen and finalize the recommendations and vision for the Plan.



2.2 Goals and Objectives

The Goals and Objectives of a Comprehensive Plan set forth a shared vision for the Town's future. They represent the values and priorities of the community and serve as a guide for evaluating future land use and planning decisions. The shared vision articulated in the community's goals also provides guidance for decision makers at the local, County and State levels. The goals in the Comprehensive Plan are general in nature, so they can remain relevant over the long-term. These goals also form the foundation for the community's vision for the future, as well as the recommendations and specific actions that the Town will implement to achieve it.

A. Preserve and Promote the Rural Character and Quality of Life in the Town

The Town of Alden is mainly a rural community with several hamlets scattered throughout the countryside. Elements of the community that contribute to this rural character include low density residential development, open fields, forested lands and lands used for agriculture. The small town character promotes a diversity of social interaction that adds to the quality of the community. The following objectives support the protection of the quality of life and rural character of the Town:



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- Manage growth in the Town to ensure that development occurs at an appropriate scale, style, and pace, and in locations that are suitable for the type of development being proposed.
- Ensure new development is reasonably compatible with adjacent land uses.
- New development should be located in a manner that minimizes adverse impacts to viable farmland and farm soils.
- Maintain and protect the existing high quality of life and small-town identity of the community.
- Encourage non-traditional styles of development, such as cluster development and conservation subdivisions, in order to foster efficient use of land and transportation facilities.
- Promote walkability and reasonable connections to the Village of Alden.
- Control and improve the aesthetic character of Broadway (US 20) with appropriate architectural, landscaping and setback standards and manage the size and scale of commercial development in a manner that is in keeping with the character of the surrounding area.
- Encourage commercial growth in areas closer to the Village to promote walkability and connectivity and to support the Village as the Town's activity center.
- Support the adaptive reuse and redevelopment of existing vacant buildings.
- Connect the recreational uses and green spaces in the Town and Village.
- Promote sustainable land use practices and energy efficient development and redevelopment.



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- Promote and support the maintenance of the existing transportation system and infrastructure, including monitoring infrastructure systems to identify needs.
- Protect, promote and create community gathering spaces and areas for social interaction that bring people together.
- Prominent areas of the Town, including gateway entry points such as the Millgrove hamlet, should be enhanced to improve the image of the community.

B. Protect important Cultural and Environmental Resources of the Town

The Town of Alden consists of several cultural and historic resources that are deemed important to the community and should be protected. The Town consists of several natural habitat areas and other environmental resources that contribute to the rural character and beauty of the community. Additionally, there are a number of creeks and streams, wetlands and floodplain areas that are vital environmental resources in the community. The following objectives support the protection of natural habitats and other environmental resources throughout the Town.



- Educate the public on the importance of preserving the Town's culture and heritage.
- Promote cooperation with the Village of Alden to protect the quality of the groundwater and the groundwater aquifer to ensure continued viability of private wells.



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- Participate in State and County-sponsored watershed protection programs that affect the resources in the Town.
- Identify Ellicott and Cayuga Creeks as parts of stream corridors of regional significance and work with the County to identify means to preserve and enhance these resources.
- Protect and enhance the Joe Panza Nature Trail as an important recreational and environmental resource in the Town Park.
- Promote the preservation of the archaeologically-significant Slate Banks area of Ellicott Creek.
- Protect and promote the preservation important prime farmland soils in the community.
- Promote conservation farming to reduce the impact on natural habitats and environmental resources.
- Evaluate the agricultural resource value of the soils and lands along Broadway and devise appropriate ways to balance development interests in that area of the Town.
- Encourage public education to promote septic system maintenance.
- Promote the protection of natural drainage and stream corridors and watersheds.
- Promote the protection of floodplains and environmentally significant (protected) wetland areas, and limit the amount of development that occurs in these areas.
- Minimize the negative impacts of erosion, sedimentation and storm drainage on natural resources.
- Support and promote the collection of household hazardous wastes.
- Consider scenic resources as an important natural element and minimize the negative visual impacts of development so as to preserve these resources.
- Research and consider a plan to capitalize on the history of the Blackwater Baths that were an important element of the Town in the early 20th century.
- Support and promote the efforts of the Alden Historical Society.

C. *Encourage a Diversity of Economic Development Activity throughout the Town*

Economic development should be promoted to diversify the Town's economy, provide jobs, and increase the Town's tax base. Local businesses should be supported and protected. Agricultural operations are also an important part of the economy of the Town. The Town should encourage further economic development through the following objectives.

- Protect and support the existing economic base of the Town and viability of existing businesses.
- Make better use of existing commercial and industrial assets, including better promotion and enhancement to attract perspective tenants.
- Target areas for new businesses and industries along major transportation corridors and in areas with adequate infrastructure.



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- Encourage development of new businesses that are compatible with neighboring uses and are in character with the surrounding area.



- Support and enhance the community as an attractive destination.
- Increase the diversity of industry and commerce in the community.
- Encourage the development of retail and commercial uses along US 20, adjacent to the Village of Alden, and in appropriate locations along Route 33 and Walden Avenue.
- Promote cooperative programs that provide area youth with opportunities to learn and offer businesses improved manpower resources.
- Work cooperatively with, and support the goals of, the Alden Chamber of Commerce and the Alden Economic Development Committee to secure and expand business opportunities in appropriate locations in the Town.
- Engage regional economic development agencies to promote adequate and stable employment opportunities.
- Support home occupation uses that are not disruptive to the surrounding community.
- Encourage growth patterns, land use policies and conservation measures that are respectful of agricultural operations and productive farmland.
- Build public support for the community's farms and farmers and promote, protect and assist agriculture as a functional sector of the local economy.
- Promote agri-tourism as a means of enhancing the economic vitality of agriculture.
- Encourage and allow farm related business as a secondary interest and support service to farming.



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- Support organic farming and other appropriate methods as a viable form of sustainable agriculture.
- Continue to work with Erie County and the State of New York officials to ensure that State and County owned lands are properly maintained and contribute to the local economy by creating jobs, patronizing local businesses or other such benefits to the community.

D. Encourage a Diversity of Housing Types

As the population of the Town changes over time and the economic conditions vary, the housing stock should be diversified to accommodate the changing needs of the community. The following objectives encourage a diversity of housing types throughout the Town:

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



E. Ensure Potable Water Supply to Areas of the Town that are in Need

Potable water is a quality of life issue that can become tainted if the viability of private wells diminishes or if the quality of groundwater diminishes. The Town supports providing public water to appropriate areas of the Town, where feasible, in order to address the needs of its



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residents. The following objectives support providing potable water to appropriate areas of the Town:

- Continue to work with the Erie County Water Authority to further outline and identify what additional areas of the Town should receive public water.
- Provide public water to areas where the quality or quantity of potable water resources threatens public health.
- Help to protect groundwater and surface water resources from contamination from failing septic systems and other sources of pollution.
- Promote the provision of assistance for improving farming practices to protect the quality of groundwater and the environment.



F. Maintain and Promote Efficiency and Cooperation in Government

The Town of Alden should strive to offer the highest quality and most cost-effective services possible. The following objectives support the efficiency of government in the Town:

- Maintain and enhance the strong collaboration between the Town and the Village of Alden.



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- Promote the consolidation and sharing of services, equipment, and personnel, to the extent practicable, with the Village and other municipalities to cut costs and to maintain a high level of service.
- Maintain and enhance the strong collaboration between the community and the school district.
- Advocate effective zoning, land use and development regulations and enforcement.
- Manage long-term growth and development in the Town through a comprehensive planning process and through all aspects of government.
- Plan for and foster a balance and diversity of uses within the Town to control the costs of, and need for, public services and future service upgrades.
- Evaluate and potentially implement creative concepts for reducing costs within the community (energy, delivery of services, etc.).
- Address ownership issues of large tracts of undeveloped land under the jurisdiction of the County and State in an effort to return certain properties to the tax roll and promote private development.
- Work with the County and State to maintain and improve infrastructure systems, including roadways, in the Town.
- Work with the County on their implementation of the “Framework for Regional Growth” to ensure that the County’s policies and actions support the needs of the Town and its residents.

Section 3
Inventory of Existing Conditions



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SECTION 3.0 – INVENTORY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

This section identifies the existing conditions and resources of the Town of Alden, including demographics, land uses, environmental resources, transportation, infrastructure and utilities, and community facilities and services. A thorough evaluation of the existing conditions and resources provides an understanding of “where the Town is” today.

3.1 Existing Land Use Patterns

The Town of Alden is rural in nature, with an abundance of open space / greenspace that exists within its boundaries. Land use in the Town is characterized by a mix of agricultural land, low density residential development, commercial uses, institutional uses, and some areas of light manufacturing (Map 3). There are a number of small hamlets of denser development, with additional development spreading along the highway corridors throughout the Town. The Village of Alden represents the traditional Town center. Commercial and industrial development is located along Broadway (NYS Route 20), Walden Avenue, and Genesee Street (NYS Route 33), which are major arterial roadways in the Town.





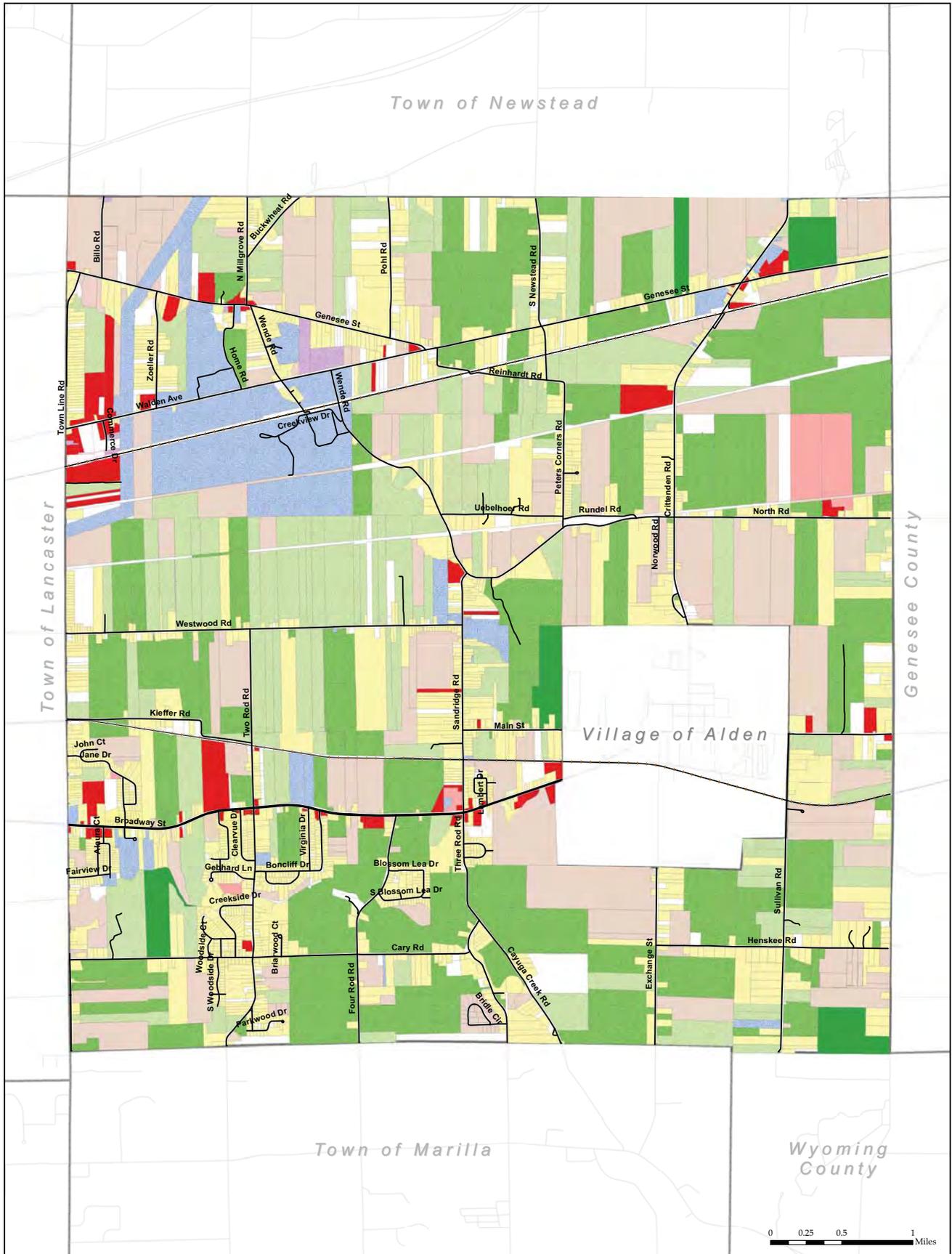
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Institutional uses in the Town of Alden include the Erie County Correctional Facility and Wende State Correctional Facility, located on Walden Avenue in the northwestern portion of the Town. There is also the Buffalo Correctional Facility, which has a capacity of 156 inmates and is accessible by way of the access road to the Wende State Correctional Facility. The Erie County Home and Infirmary is located on the north side of Walden Avenue, across from the Correctional Facility. This facility provides accommodations for County residents experiencing health related issues.





Map 3 - Existing Land Use

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LEGEND

Town Boundary	Rural Residential	Community/Public Service	Open Land
Road	Agriculture	Commercial	Industrial
Railroad	Residential	Recreation/Entertainment	Forested Land/Parks
		Unknown	

*LAND USE BASED ON RPS DATA IS ONLY AN APPROXIMATION OF GENERAL LAND USE.
 **RURAL RESIDENTIAL WITH ACREAGE CONSISTS OF A YEAR-ROUND RESIDENCE WITH 10 OR MORE ACRES OF LAND.

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 CONSULTANTS
 WD Project # 438001
 Map Updated: January, 2009

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In addition to the Village of Alden, there are a number of primary hamlet areas throughout the Town that represent smaller community centers, nodes of commercial activity or “four-corner” areas. These include:



- Alden Center – Located at the intersection of Westwood Road and Sandridge Road, west of the Village of Alden.
- Crittenden – Located at the intersection of Genesee Street (NYS Route 33) and Crittenden Road, in the northeastern portion of the Town.
- Millgrove– Located at the intersection of Genesee Street and North Millgrove Road, in the northwestern portion of the Town.
- West Alden – Located at the intersection of Broadway (NYS Route 20) and Sandridge Road, west of the Village of Alden.
- Town Line – Located at the western Town line at the intersection of Broadway and Town Line Road, in the southwestern portion of the Town adjacent to the Town of Lancaster.



3.1.1 Agriculture

A wide number of properties in the Town are used for agricultural activity, including the keeping of horses, raising livestock and farm crops. Farming and agriculture are historic land uses in the Town, which is due in part to the abundance of soils throughout the area that are well suited for crop production.

Erie County has an adopted Right-to-Farm Law that acts to protect and encourage agricultural interests and activities in the Town of Alden. The Right-to-Farm Law states that agricultural practices conducted on farmland shall not be found to be a nuisance if such agricultural practices are:

- Reasonably and necessary to the particular farm operation;
- Conducted in a manner that is not negligent or reckless;
- Conducted in conformity with accepted and sound agricultural practices;
- Conducted in conformity with all local, state, and federal laws and comprehensive plans, except for those that unreasonably restrict farm operations within an Agricultural District in accordance with NYS Agricultural and Markets Law Section 305-1;



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- conducted in a manner that does not constitute a threat to public health, safety, or welfare; and
- Conducted in a manner that does not unreasonably obstruct the free passage or use of navigable waters or public roadways.

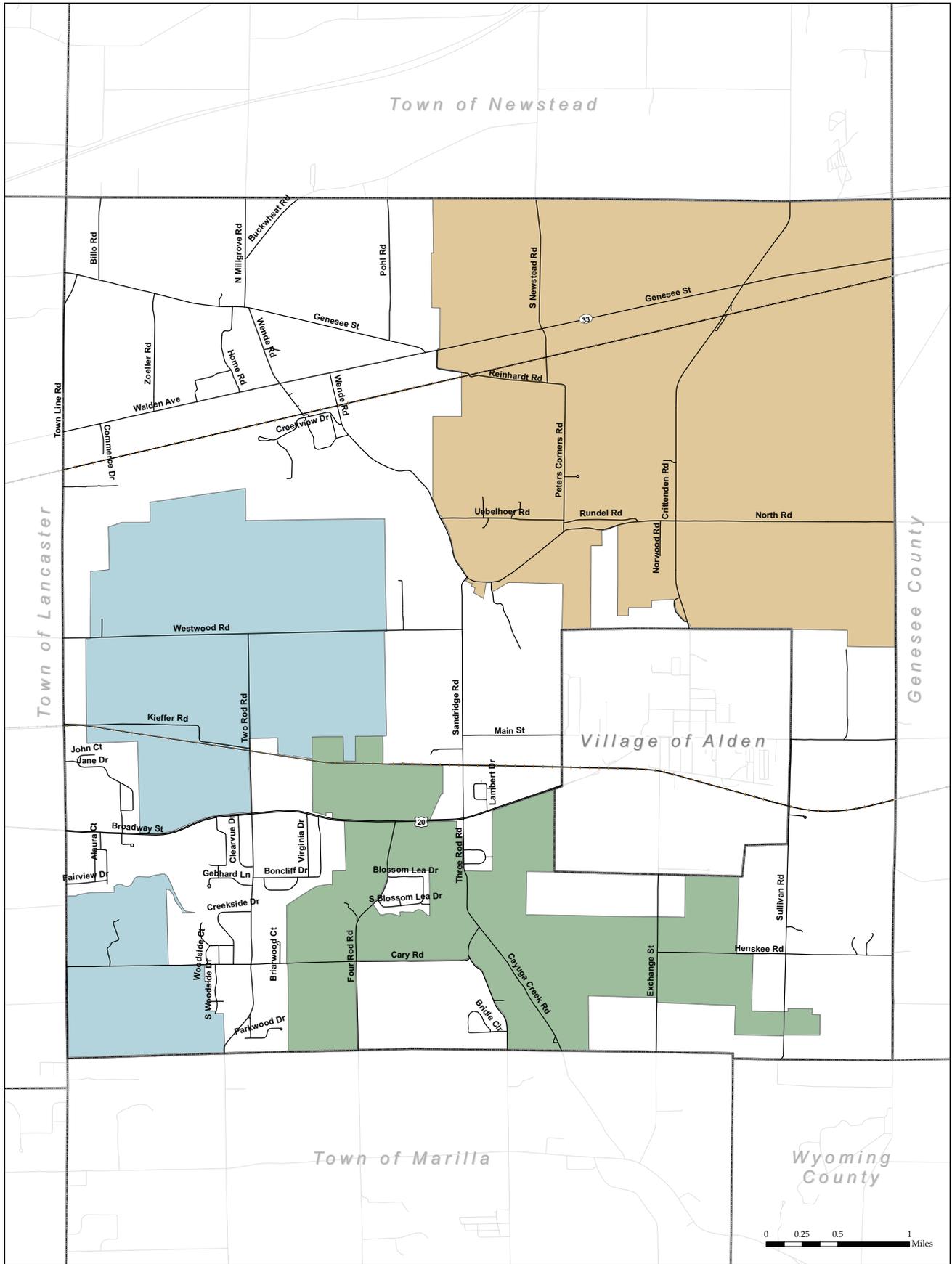


Agricultural Districts

A significant portion of the Town that is located within State-designated Agricultural Districts, which are subject to the regulations set forth in Article 25-AA of the New York State Agricultural and Markets Law. To be eligible for inclusion in an Agricultural District, lands must meet certain criteria specified by the State, with recertification occurring periodically. There are four designated agricultural districts in the Town (Map 4). These include:

- The Alden-Newstead District No. 1, which covers the northeastern portion of the Town;
- The Marilla District No. 5, which covers a very narrow strip of the Town, along the southern Town boundary;
- The Alden District No. 7, which stretches across the southern portion of the Town; and
- The Lancaster-Alden District No. 16, which is located in the western-central part of the Town.

The Agricultural districts law mandates that governmental agencies must avoid or minimize potential adverse impacts to farming operations when undertaking or acting upon any project within an Agricultural District that involves the acquisition of land or the use of public funds for

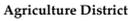
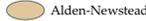


Map 4 - Agricultural Districts



TOWN OF ALDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

LEGEND

 Town Boundary	 Agriculture District	 Alden-Newstead
 Road	 Alden	 Lancaster-Alden
 Railroad		



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ARCHITECTS

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construction purposes. There are a number of benefits for agricultural landowners located within an Agricultural District. One is that agricultural land is assessed on its value as farmland, not on its potential development value, which reduces the tax burden on agricultural lands. State law also states that local laws may not unreasonably restrict farm operations within an Agricultural District and existing and proposed laws are subject to review by the State Department of Agriculture and Markets to ensure that they comply with the law and are not overly restrictive. Real estate agents are required to disclose to potential buyers that the property they are about to acquire is located in an Agricultural District or within 500 feet of any farm operation and/or farmland. In addition, any application for special use permit, site plan approval, use variance, or subdivision on lands within an Agricultural District or within 500 feet of any farm operation and/or farmland must submit an agricultural data statement to the reviewing authority.



3.2 Land Use Regulation

3.2.1 Zoning

The Town of Alden has an adopted Zoning Ordinance (Chapter 20 of the Town Code) that includes a number of zoning classifications for protection of the public health, safety, and



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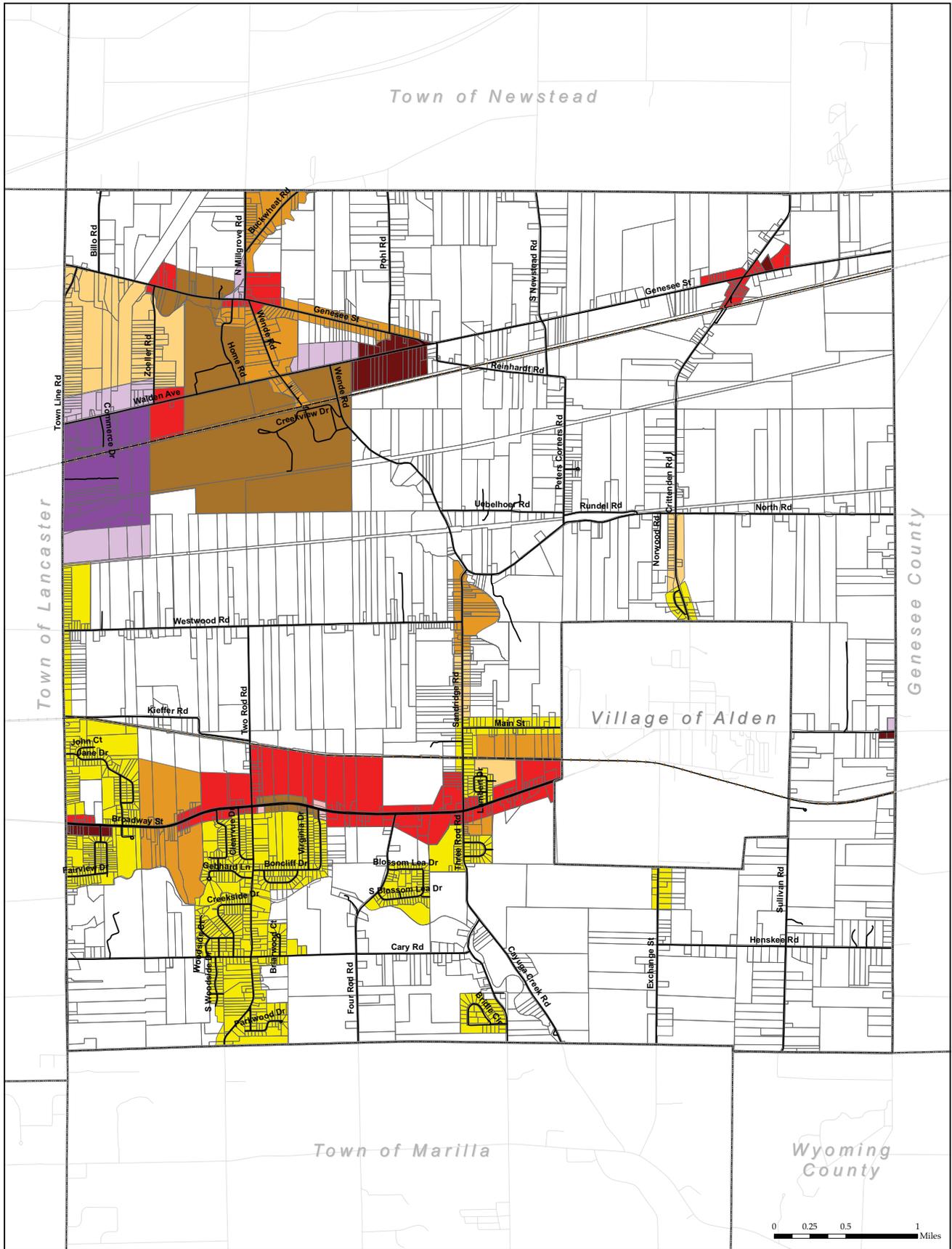
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welfare. These districts, as shown on Map 5, include the following (with a general description after each district):

- Residential (R-1): Single family residential units on 20,000 square foot lots.
- Residential (R-2): Single family and two family residential units on 20,000 square foot lots.
- Residential (R-3): Single family, two family, and multi-family units.
- Residential-Agricultural (R-A): Agricultural uses and single family and two family units on 80,000 square foot lots.
- Restricted Commercial (R-C): R-3 uses and small commercial uses.
- Commercial (C-1): R-C uses and larger commercial uses.
- Commercial (C-2): C-1 uses and larger commercial uses including automotive uses.
- Commercial (C-3): C-2 uses and larger commercial uses and some light industrial uses.
- Manufacturing (M-1): C-3 uses and manufacturing/ processing uses.
- Manufacturing (M-2): M-1 uses and junkyards.

Other highlights of the Zoning Code are as follows:

- Supplementary Regulations: Addresses accessory buildings, exceptions to yard requirements, visibility, solar access, automotive use areas, individual lot grading, storage, and well head protection area.
- Non-Conforming Uses: Standard section which also includes "existing undersized lots".
- PUD: Floating zone that requires Town Board Approval.
- Off-Street Parking: Addresses required parking spaces, standards and design issues, stacking, and Town Board allowance to modify.
- Adult Uses: Allowed by Special Use Permit in C-3, M-1, and M-2 Districts with location restrictions.
- Home Occupation: Allowed in any "R" District through Town Board approval.
- Special Permits: Fairly standard law allowing Special Use Permits through Town Board approval; includes site plan requirements and allowing temporary Special Use Permits.
- Site Plan Review: Town Board approval with Planning Board recommendation. Standards for process and other requirements included.



Map 5 - Existing Zoning



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LEGEND

		Zoning			

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 Map Created: March, 2008

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 ZONING DISTRICT BOUNDARIES ARE INTENDED TO FOLLOW PROPERTY LINES OR EXTENSIONS THEREOF. ZONING DISTRICT BOUNDARIES ARE INTENDED TO BE PARALLEL OR PERPENDICULAR TO THE CENTERLINES OF STREETS, RAILROADS, OR STREAMS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.
 IN MOST CASES, A ZONING DISTRICT BOUNDARY WHICH PARALLELS A STREET SHALL BE CONSIDERED TO BE A DISTANCE OF THREE HUNDRED (300) FEET FROM THE CENTERLINE OF THAT STREET UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED. THIS MAP IS TO BE USED AS A GUIDE ONLY. ACTUAL ZONING DETERMINATIONS ARE TO BE MADE BY THE TOWN CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER.



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- **Industrial Performance Standards:** Includes additional requirements for industrial uses in the M-1 and M-2 Districts. These requirements include standards for noise, vibration, dust, smoke, odor, toxic materials, detonable materials, fire hazard, and glaze.
- **Administration:** Establishes Zoning Enforcement Officer, Zoning Board of Appeals, and duties and procedures for each.
- **Amendments:** Process for amending the Zoning Ordinance.

3.2.2 Subdivision Regulations

The Town adopted Subdivision Regulations in 1979 and they have been amended through December 3, 2007. The regulations consist of the following basic sections:

- **Article I: General Provisions**
- **Article II: Definitions**
- **Article III: Procedure in filing subdivision applications**
 - Required sketch plan submittal
 - Approval of minor subdivisions:
 - Preliminary plat for major subdivisions
 - Final plat for major subdivisions
 - Required improvements
 - Filing of Approved Final Subdivision Plat
 - Public Streets: Recreation Areas
- **Article IV: General Requirements and design standards**
 - General, Street layout, Street design, Street names, and Lots
 - Drainage improvements
 - Parks, open space, and natural features
- **Article V: Documents to be submitted**
 - Sketch Plan
 - Minor subdivision final plat
 - Major subdivision preliminary plat and final plat



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- Appendix: Process flow chart, preferred layouts, pre-application, typical preliminary plat, typical final plat, Lot Grading, and Typical Grading Combinations.

3.2.3 Other Laws Affecting Land Use Issues

The following are other laws in the Code of the Town of Alden that can affect land use and development approval in the Town:

- Local Laws, Adoption of: Procedures for Local Law Adoption
- Signs: signage requirements in the Town
- Conservation of the Environment, Commission for: Establishes Conservation Advisory Board
- Enforcement Procedures: 1977 Enforcement process
- Environmental Quality Review: Local Law from 1980 for SEQR
- Drainage Control: 1976 Law updated in 2008
- Flood Drainage and Prevention
- Junkyards: Rules and Requirements for junkyards
- Mobile Home Parks: 1975 Law for Mobile Home Parks
- Storm Sewers and Stormwater
- Management and Erosion and Sediment Control: Updated (2008) drainage rules
- Property maintenance
- Telecommunication Facilities: 1997 Local Cell Tower Law
- Construction of Public Streets: Specifications and Procedures – In Appendix

3.3 Demographics

The demographic background, including population, housing, income, and economic data for the Town of Alden is based on the 2000 U.S. Census. Although this data is already eight years old, it provides the most comprehensive data for the area, as well as the preferred Town geography for the creation of a background report. The 2006 U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey provided population estimates for several communities, including the Town of Alden. The



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2007 Census Bureau population estimates do not go beyond the county level geography, and therefore, cannot be used for the Town.

3.3.1 Population

The Town of Alden had a total population of 10,470 persons at the time of the last Census in 2000. Of these residents, 2,666 lived within the Village of Alden, and 1,783 were classified as “institutionalized,” a category that includes both residents of the Erie County Home and prisoners at the correctional facilities in the Town. Considering only residents who live in households (i.e. in standard residential homes, and not in institutions), there were 6,019 residents in households in the Town outside the Village in 2000.

Recent population estimates indicate that the population of the Town is essentially stable. The estimates suggest that the Town has seen a slight decrease in population (112 persons, or -1.1%). These decreases are so small that they could fall within the margin of error for the estimate. Population losses within the Village are estimated to be slightly greater than in the Town outside the Village, with an estimated decrease of approximately 3 percent. This rate is comparable to that of Erie County overall, which also experienced a 3 percent decrease in population between 2000 and 2006.

Figure 1: Town of Alden Population

	1990	2000	2006
Total Town	10,372	10,470	10,358
Town Outside Village	7,915	7,804	7,777
In Households*	6,144	6,019	n/a
Village of Alden	2,457	2,666	2,581
Erie County	968,532	950,265	921,390

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

* Population in households excludes persons in institutions.

Figure 2: Change in Town of Alden Population

	1990-2000		2000-2006	
Total Town	98	0.9%	-112	-1.1%
Town Outside Village	-111	-1.4%	-27	-0.3%
In Households*	-125	-2.0%	n/a	n/a
Village of Alden	209	8.5%	-85	-3.2%
Erie County	-18,267	-1.9%	-28,875	-3.0%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

* Population in households excludes persons in institutions.



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3.3.2 Age Composition

The population in the Town of Alden is aging. Between 1990 and 2000, the proportion of residents who are aged 65 and older increased from about 14 percent of the total population to about 17 percent. Trends for the entire Town and for the Town outside the Village are comparable, although there is a slightly lower proportion of minors in the Town outside the Village.

Figure 3: Town of Alden Detailed Age Distribution (2000)

	Alden Entire Town		Alden Town Outside Village	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 5 years	490	4.7%	329	4.2%
5 to 9 years	597	5.7%	399	5.1%
10 to 14 years	690	6.6%	469	6.0%
15 to 19 years	617	5.9%	442	5.7%
20 to 24 years	515	4.9%	394	5.0%
25 to 34 years	1,366	13.0%	1,022	13.1%
35 to 44 years	1,961	18.7%	1,484	19.0%
45 to 54 years	1,475	14.1%	1,150	14.7%
55 to 59 years	575	5.5%	448	5.7%
60 to 64 years	450	4.3%	340	4.4%
65 to 74 years	799	7.6%	578	7.4%
75 to 84 years	647	6.2%	498	6.4%
85 years and over	288	2.8%	251	3.2%
Median age (years)	40	(X)	NA	(X)

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Figure 4: Town of Alden Age Distribution

	Alden Entire Town		Alden Town Outside Village	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Under Age 18	21.6%	20.8%	20.6%	18.9%
Age 18 to 64	64.3%	62.6%	65.5%	64.1%
Age 65 and older	14.1%	16.6%	14.0%	17.0%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census



3.3.3 Household Trends

The number of households in the Town of Alden grew between 1990 and 2000. There were 2,991 households in 1990 and 3,278 households in 2000, which represents an increase of 287 households, or almost 10 percent. Household increases in the Town outside the Village are slightly more modest, with an increase between 1990 and 2000 of 159 households, or just under 8 percent. Household growth was very strong in the Village, where the number of households grew by 129, or over 13 percent between 1990 and 2000.

Figure 5: Town of Alden Household Trends

	1990	2000	Change 1990-2000	
			Number	Percent
Total Town	2,991	3,278	287	9.6%
Town Outside Village	2,036	2,195	159	7.8%
Village of Alden	955	1,083	128	13.4%
Erie County	376,994	380,873	3,879	1.0%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

This strong household growth can be attributed to a decrease in household size, a trend that is common nationally. In particular, growth in the number of single-person households and a decline in the number of children living at home has contributed to household increases that outpace population trends. In 1990, the average household size in the Town was 2.88 persons, with an average household size of over 3 persons in the portion of the Town outside the Village. By 2000, the average number of persons living in a home had decreased to 2.65 town-wide, and to 2.74 in households located outside the village. The larger share of single person households seen in the Village depresses the average household size within the Village, which in 2000 was 2.45 persons per household.

Figure 6: Town of Alden Average Household Size

	1990	2000
Town of Alden	2.88	2.65
Town Outside Village	3.04	2.74
Village of Alden	2.56	2.45

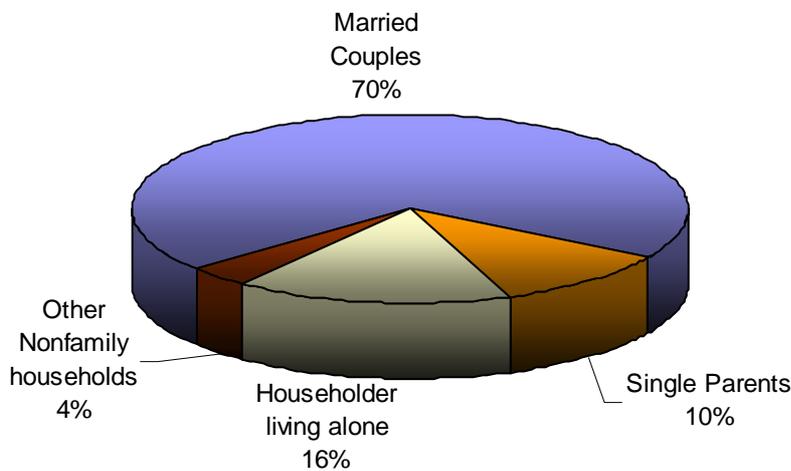


3.3.4 Household Composition

The majority of households in the Town of Alden are categorized as families. Over three-quarters (75.8 percent) of all households in the Town, including the Village, are family households. About 64 percent of households are married couples and the remaining family households are single parent households. For non-family households, the majority are single-person households.¹ Individuals living alone comprise 20 percent of all households in the Town. The remaining 4 percent of households are unrelated persons living in the same home (roommates, unmarried couples, etc.).

Total Town figures are influenced by the large proportion of single-person households living in the Village, where 28.3 percent of all households are persons living alone. The Town outside the Village is very family oriented. Fully 80 percent of all households in the Town outside the Village are classified as family households, and 70 percent of households are married couples. Single person households make up about 16 percent of households in the Town outside the Village.

Figure 7: Town of Alden Household Type, Town Outside Village



¹ Under Census definitions, a person living alone is not categorized as a family household.



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3.3.5 Housing

The number of housing units in the Town of Alden has also been increasing. At the time of the 2000 Census, there were 3,398 housing units in the Town, which represents an increase of 319 units, or just over 10 percent since 1990. New housing growth is taking place primarily in the Town outside the Village, which accounted for just over 68 percent of new housing units in the Town between 1990 and 2000.

Vacancy rates are low in the Town. Overall vacancy in the Town including the village is 3.5 percent. If the Village is excluded, vacancy in the Town drops to 2.6 percent. Homeowner vacancy was particularly low, at only 1.0 percent. Rental housing vacancy was higher, at 7.7 percent, which is slightly above the 5 percent vacancy rate considered 'normal' resulting from turnover in the housing market.

The majority of housing in the Town of Alden is owner-occupied. Just under 83 percent of the Town's housing units are owner occupied, and only 17 percent are rental units. In comparison, approximately 65 percent of the County's housing stock is owner-occupied. Rental housing in the Town of Alden tends to be concentrated within the Village. Of the 563 occupied rental units in the Town, over half (321 units, or 57 percent) were located within the Village of Alden.





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The majority of housing units in the Town (78.1 percent) are single-family homes. Mobile homes account for 172 housing units, or 5.3 percent. All mobile homes in the Town are located within the Village. Just under 8 percent of the housing stock consists of doubles and 9.2 percent of the housing stock is in buildings with 3 or more units per structure.

Compared to most of Erie County, the housing stock in the Town is relatively new. Only about 20 percent of the housing units in the Town were constructed prior to 1939. About 22 percent of the housing stock was built in the 1960's, with another 18 percent constructed between 1950 and 1959. Approximately 16 percent of the Town's housing stock was built in the 1970's and a similar percentage was constructed between 1980 and the time of the Census in 2000. The remaining 9 percent was built between 1940 and 1949.

3.4 Environmental Features and Resources

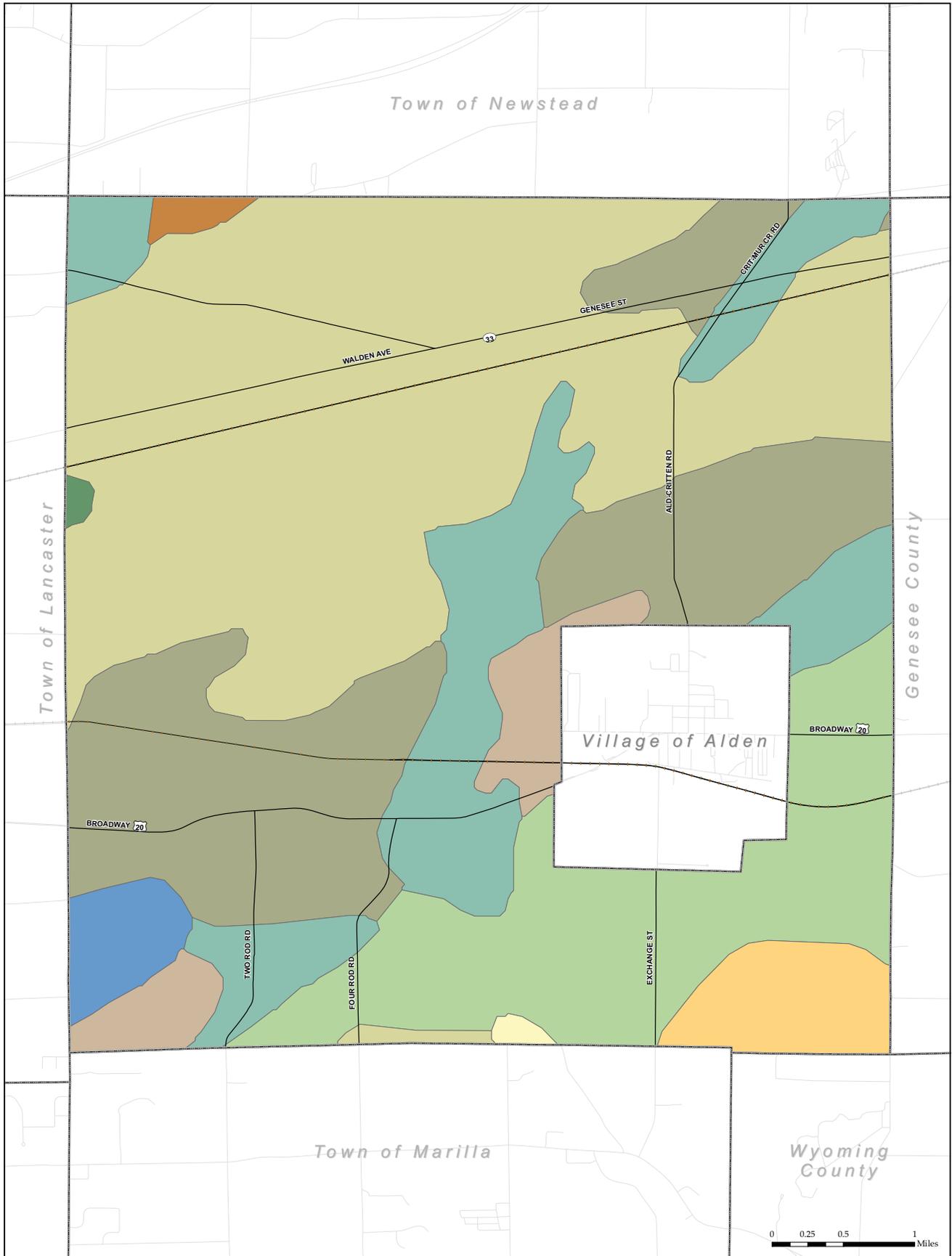
The Town of Alden is an environmentally uniform area in terms of general terrain and elevation. Nearly all locations within the boundaries of the Town are below 1000' feet of elevation.

3.4.1 Soils

The generally flat land, with only very gentle rolling hills, creates a wonderful climate for agricultural activities (Map 6). Prime farmland exists in areas throughout the Town, however much of it needs to be drained for continued agricultural use (Map 7). Areas of non-hydric prime farmlands are located in the south-central portion of the Town. This area extends along Sandridge Road south to Broadway, crossing over and continuing south of the area surrounding Cayuga Creek and along Two Rod Road. There are other areas of non-hydric, prime farmlands in the Town, but they are smaller and tend to be interspersed into areas of potentially hydric and hydric soils. There are ten separate soil groups that comprise the Town of Alden. The largest of the soil groups is Darien-Cazenovia-Nunda. There are three other soil groups that generally make up the other third of the Town and the remaining six soil groups occur in small isolated areas throughout the Town. (Hydric soils – Map 8).

Prime Farmland

Prime farmland is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, oilseed crops, and other agricultural crops with minimum inputs of fuel, fertilizer, pesticides, and labor, without tolerable soil erosion. Of the 20,362 acres of land in the Town, approximately 3,648 acres, or 18 percent, contain soils that have been identified as prime farm soils. An additional 7,443 acres, or about 37 percent of the Town, contain soils that meet the indicators of prime farmland if drained. In total, 11,901



Map 6 - General Soils



TOWN OF ALDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

LEGEND

-  Town Boundary
-  Major Highway
-  Railroad

Generalized Soils

 HUDSON-RHINEBECK-COLLAMER	 MINOA-ARKPORT-LAMSON	 REMSEN-HORNELL-ILION
 CHENANGO-HOWARD-PALMYRA	 LAKEMONT-ODESSA-FONDA	 SCHOHARIE-ODESSA-CAZENOVIA
 DARIEN-CAZENOVIA-NUNDA	 MARDIN-LORDSTOWN-VOLUSIA	 PALMYRA-ALTON-HOWARD




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*SEE PLAN FOR DISCUSSION OF SOILS.

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Map 7 - Prime Agricultural Soils



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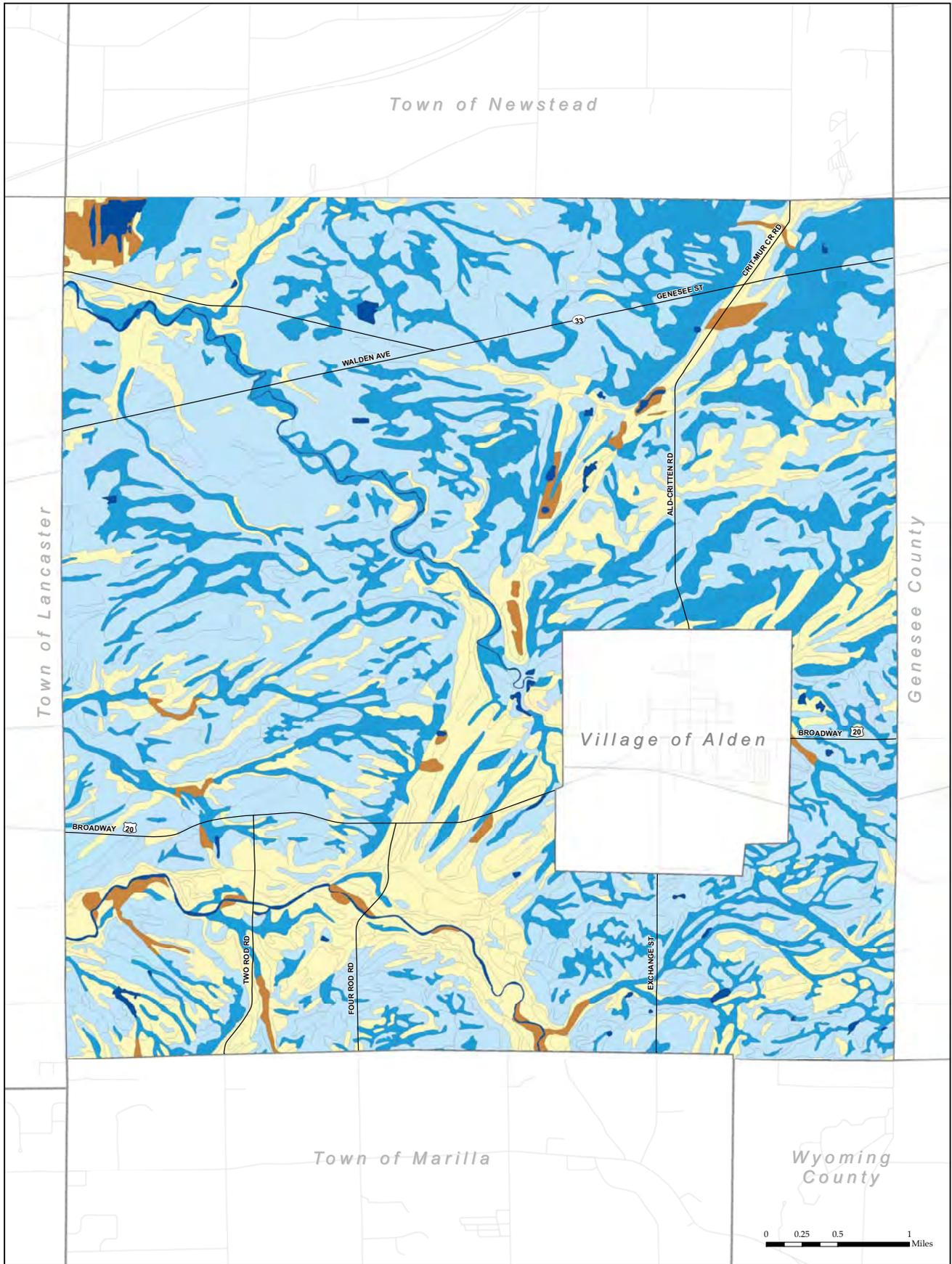
LEGEND

- Town Boundary
- Major Highway
- USDA Prime Farmland Classification
- Prime Farmland
- Prime Farmland (Where Drained)
- Important Where Applicable



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Map 8 - Hydric Soils



TOWN OF ALDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

LEGEND

- Town Boundary
- Major Highway
- Soil Type**
- Hydric - Site Investigation Necessary To Confirm
- Hydric
- Non Hydric
- Potential For Hydric Inclusions
- Water



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acres, or 54 percent of the Town has the potential to be prime farmland. The prime soils are found primarily in the south - central area of the Town, with smaller areas found in the northwest and northeastern portions of the Town (Map 7). In addition to the prime farmland soils, 7,310 acres of soils are classified as Soils of Statewide Importance. These soils are mainly located in the southeastern portion of the Town.



3.4.2 Surface Water Bodies and Aquifers

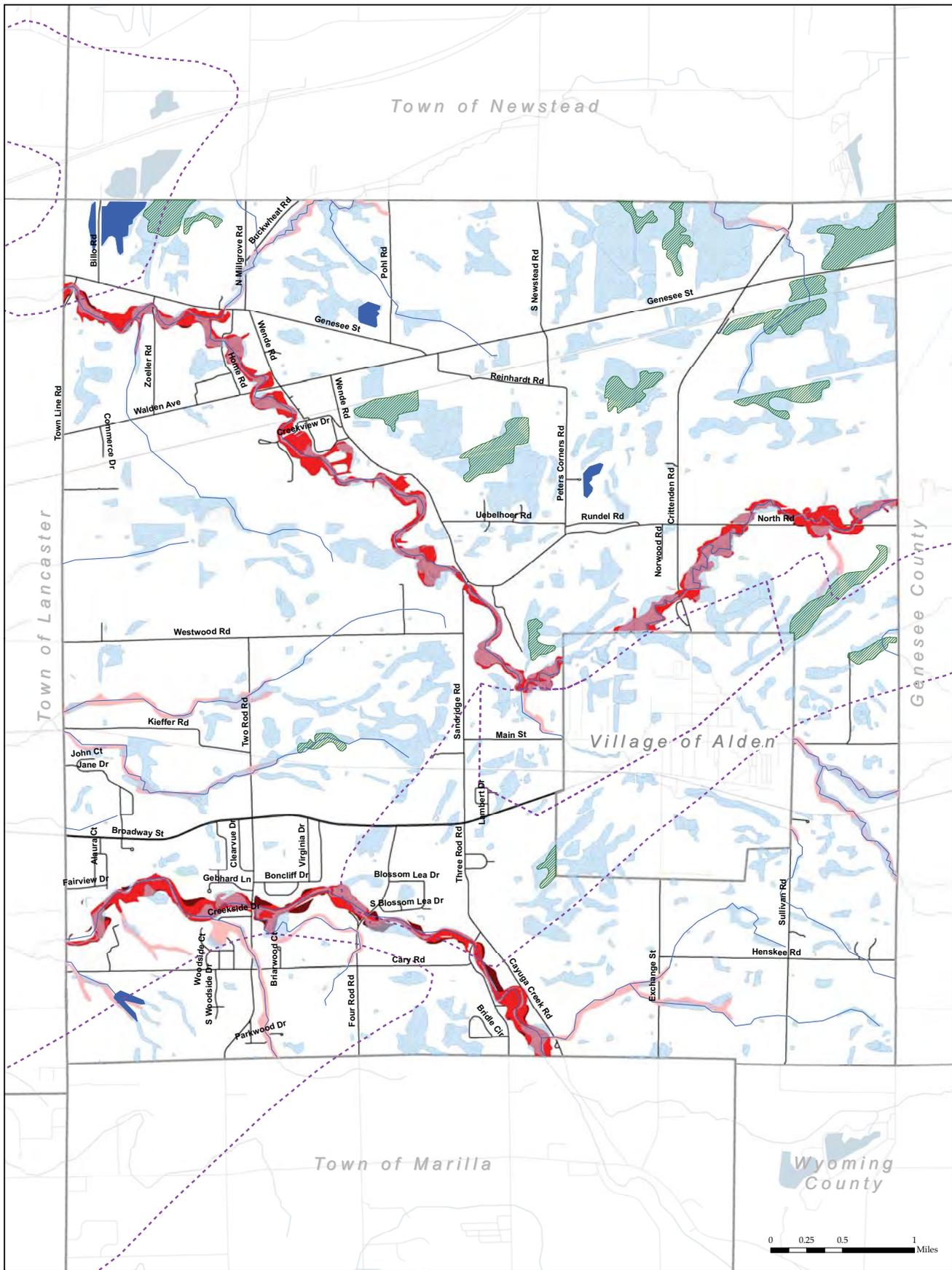
The two main water resources in the Town are Cayuga Creek and the Ellicott Creek (Map 9). These creeks run along the southern border of the Town and from the central portion to the northwest corner of the Town, respectively. Within the Town, there are four identified aquifers (Map 9). The area they cover makes it appear that one is spanning from the eastern boundary of the Town diagonally through the Town to the southwest corner and the other is located in the very northwest corner of the Town. The aquifer that spans the entire diagonal portion of the Town consists of three separate aquifers. The aquifers that run throughout the Town provide water at generally a rate between 10 and 100 gallons per minute.



3.4.3 Wetlands

Within the Town, there are many occurrences of both New York State (NYS) designated and federally designated wetlands (Map 9). All the wetland areas are spread throughout the Town with no significant pattern set forth. However, NYS wetlands appear most frequently in the north western corner of the Town, while the Federal wetlands appear throughout the Town without much pattern. In the entire Town, there are approximately 592 acres of NYS designated wetlands and 1,888 acres of federally designated wetlands, for a combined total of 2,480 acres of wetlands (approximately 12% of the Town).

State wetlands are those under jurisdiction of the New York State Department of Environment and Conservation (NYSDEC) and are identified by the existence of certain species of vegetation that grow well in wet soils. The Freshwater Wetlands Act protects all wetlands of 12.4 acres (5 hectares) or larger. The State also regulates the land area within 100 feet of protected wetlands. Wetlands smaller than this may be protected if they are considered to be of local importance. State wetlands are ranked in four classes ranging from Class I, which is a wetland of greatest importance and contains the highest restriction, to Class IV.



Map 9 - Environmental Features



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LEGEND

			Floodplain	
				
				



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Regardless of the wetland class, a permit is required to conduct any regulated activity within a wetland area or the 100' buffer that surrounds a wetland.

Federal wetlands are regulated under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers through Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, irrespective of their size, and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899. Many wetlands that are state wetlands are also federal wetlands, however, many smaller wetlands that do not meet the state's minimum size requirement are only under federal jurisdiction. Under the law, a permit is required for any structure or work that takes place in, under, or over a navigable waterway or wetlands adjacent to navigable waters (such as dock construction, dredging, and shoreline protection). In addition, any activity that involves a discharge of dredged material or fill material into navigable waters or associated wetlands requires a permit, as well as activities that would drain or flood wetlands or significantly disturb the soil (such as land clearing, ditching, stream channelization, and excavating).

3.4.4 Floodplains

There are two types of floodplains that exist within the Town, 100-year floodplains and 500-year floodplains. The 100-year floodplain is the area surrounding a water feature that is inundated with water during a 100-year flood event, or a flood that has a 1 percent chance of occurring each year. The 500-year floodplain is the area surrounding a water course that is inundated with water during a 500-year flood event. The 100-year floodplain is divided into the floodway and the floodway fringe. The floodway is the portion of the floodplain which includes the stream's channel and any adjacent areas that must be kept free of encroachments that might block flood flows or restrict storage of flood waters. The flood fringe is the area covered by flood waters but that does not carry strong currents of flood waters.

All the 100-year and 500-year floodplains within the Town are located immediately adjacent to the banks of the Ellicott Creek and Cayuga Creek (Map 9). Many of the small streams that serve as tributaries to these creeks have areas of designated 100-year floodplains. With the floodplains being mainly concentrated on the two creeks running throughout the Town, their impact is not significant to the majority of the Town residents.



3.5 Transportation

3.5.1 Existing Highway Network

The transportation system in the Town of Alden consists of a series of north-south and east-west roads that transect the Town (Map 10). The majority of roads within the Town are hard surfaced.

The three major State highways that run through the Town include:

- State Route 20 (Broadway) runs east-west through the Town, as it traverses the entire length of New York State from the Massachusetts border to the Pennsylvania border. The average annual daily traffic volume (AADT) for this roadway within the Town is 10,900 vehicles west of the Village of Alden and 7,900 vehicles east of the Village.
- State Route 33 (Genesee Street) runs east-west through the northern portion of the Town and runs the entire length of New York State. The AADT for this roadway within the Town is 3,100 vehicles west of Walden Avenue and 7,800 vehicles east of Walden Avenue.



TOWN OF ALDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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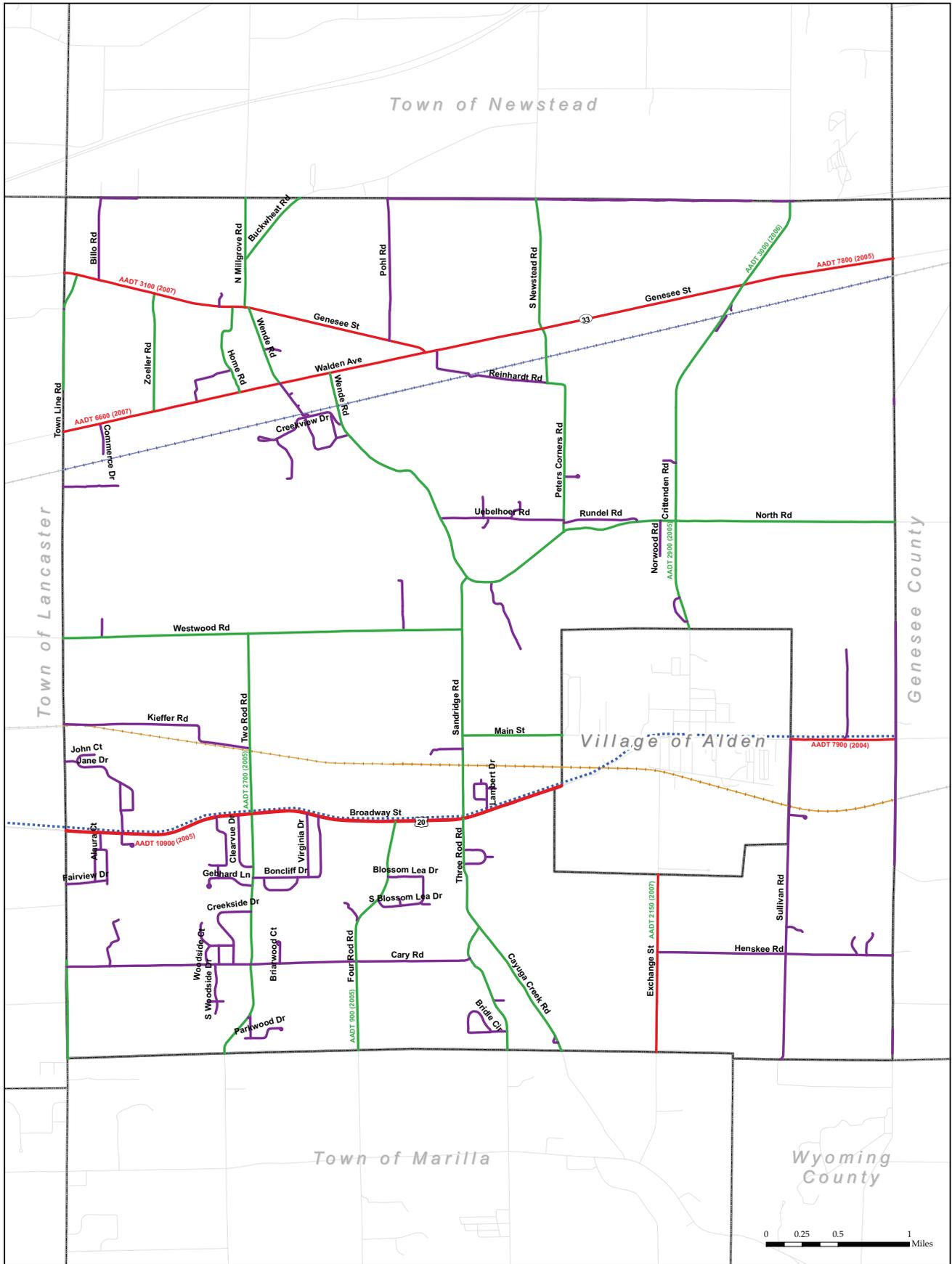
- Walden Avenue runs east west and intersects with Genesee Street. The AADT for this roadway is 6,600 vehicles.

All State roadways in the Town achieved a surface score of between six and nine on a scale of ten (NYSDOT rating system). This indicates that the roads in good repair and no major defects or deterioration is present.



The next level of jurisdictional roads that run through the Town are Erie County roadways. The majority of the County roads carry AADT volumes of between 1,000 and 4,000 vehicles (Map 10). The major County roadways for which data was available include:

- Alden-Crittenden Road (CR 1)
- Crittenden-Murder Creek Road (CR 246)
- Exchange Street (CR 578)
- Four Rod Road (CR 356)
- Two Rod Road (CR 547)



Map 10 - Transportation

TOWN OF ALDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

LEGEND

	Railroad Type	Road Jurisdiction	

****AADT = Average Annual Daily Traffic AADT Volume (Year)**

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The remaining roadways in the Town are controlled by the Town of Alden. Roadways such as these are considered local roads and usually access areas such as subdivisions, rural farm lands, recreational facilities, and rural lands.

The roadway network for the Town of Alden is small in direct comparison to other western New York municipalities. The system appears to have adequate routing structure to allow for easy north-south and east-west traffic flow in the Town.



The Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) is the regional metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Buffalo-Niagara Region. The GBNRTC manages and recommends all projects in the region that are selected for the TIP (Transportation Improvement Program), which is funded by the Federal Highway Administration. There are currently no TIP projects scheduled in the Town of Alden through the year 2012.



3.5.2 Railroad

There are two major rail corridors that traverse the Town. CSX Transportation, Inc. owns and maintains a multi-track line in northern portion of the Town, paralleling Genesee Street. This railway is a high capacity, double track line that allows freight trains to travel at speeds of up to 60mph. The rail line acts as a major connection between the Northeast and the Midwest and handles a substantial amount of rail freight. In addition, the rail lines provide a major connection for intermodal rail traffic between the Port of New York/ New Jersey and Canada. Rail tonnage along this corridor ranges from 60 to 75 million gross tons (MGT) per year.

Norfolk Southern owns and operates the other multi-track rail corridor in the Town that run east-west through the Village of Alden, roughly paralleling Broadway. The rail line provides a connection between the Northeast and Midwest and handles about half of the tonnage that the CSX line carries (25-40 MGT per year).

Amtrak operates passenger train services, known as the Empire Service, along the Empire Corridor route between the City of Niagara Falls and New York City. The train makes stops in Downtown Buffalo, Depew, Rochester, Syracuse, Rome, Utica, Amsterdam, Schenectady, Albany-Rensselaer, Hudson, Rhinecliff-Kingston, Poughkeepsie, Croton-on-Hudson, Yonkers, and New York City. Branching from the Empire Corridor, Amtrak provides extended service to Toronto, Chicago, and Montreal, as well as locations throughout the Northeast. The Amtrak Empire Corridor utilizes the CSX rail corridor that runs through the north portion of the Town. The nearest passenger rail station for the residents of the Town of Alden is located within the Village of Depew.

3.5.3 Public Transportation

The Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority has an express bus route (Route #69) to the Village of Alden, which operates Monday through Friday. This bus has two morning and two afternoon runs between the City of Buffalo and the Village. There are several stops along the bus route that allow connections to other bus routes. These occur at:

- Central Broadway (Lancaster);
- Broadway and Transit Road (Lancaster);
- Appletree Business Park (Union Road in Cheektowaga);
- Huron and Main Streets (Buffalo);
- Lower Terrace and Charles Street (Buffalo); and,
- Bailey Avenue and William Street (Buffalo).



TOWN OF ALDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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Route #24 provides service between downtown Buffalo and the Erie County Corrections and facilities on Walden Avenue. This bus makes a number of other stops along the way. Express service is also provided between the Erie County Medical Center and the Erie County Home and on Bus Route #203. Regular fare for travel on this bus route currently costs \$2.25 for a one-way trip. Discounts on the regular fare can be achieved through several different programs.

3.5.4 Bicycle and Pedestrian

Although not marked as such, the only New York State recognized bicycle route/lane in the Town is located on Broadway (NYS Route 20). This route runs east to west through the center of the Town and the Village of Alden. Route 20 has wide shoulders to provide accommodations for pedestrian travel. Within the Village of Alden, sidewalks provide a shared use area for bicyclists and pedestrians. Bicycle activity is occurring throughout the Town; however, there are no additional bicycle provisions. At present, the Town is pursuing grant funding for the redevelopment of a former rail corridor for use as a multi-use pathway to connect two parks, as well as provide connection to other communities.

3.6 Utilities

3.6.1 Water Districts

The Town of Alden is only partially serviced by a water district (Map 11). There are four water districts within the Town boundaries and they are all located in the western portion of the Town. The Village of Alden has its own water district. The four Town of Alden Water Districts are labeled Town of Alden Water District #1, #2, #3, and #4. Town of Alden Water District #4 is the largest and most extensive water district. Town of Alden Water District #3 covers the Broadway corridor and Sandridge Road corridor. Town of Alden Water District #2 covers only the small area at the crossroads of Millgrove. Finally, Town of Alden Water District #1 covers a very small sliver of land on the Town of Lancaster boundary for almost the entire length of the Town.

The entire eastern portion of the Town is not serviced by Town water; however, the Town is in the process of developing a water improvement area to service much of the remaining balance of the Town. This will include approximately 22 miles of water line. Additionally, there are known water well problems in the southeast portion of Town, as well as in areas like Zoeller Road. The problems in these locations range from very poor water quality, to e-coli contamination, to completely dry wells. These are serious concerns for both the residents



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and Town officials, which is why they are being addressed through the proposed new water service area.



3.6.2 Sewer Districts

The Town of Alden has two sewer districts that serve a very small portion of the Town (Map 12). The two districts are located southeast of Broadway and Town Line Road intersection, including the Alaura subdivision, which is a Town operated package plant that services 59 homes through a levied district. The other district is located on the southeast side of the Walden Avenue and Town Line and Road intersection and is part of ECSD #4. There are two additional sewer districts in the Town. One encompasses the entire Village of Alden and the second serves the Erie County Home and Penitentiary. Currently, the remaining 95 percent of the Town utilizes private septic systems to meet their sewer needs. There are no plans for additional sewer districts in the Town.

3.7 Community Facilities and Cultural Resources

The Town offers a range of community and cultural resources. These include churches, cemeteries, parks, schools, and public safety facilities (Map 13). In addition, the Town collaborates with the Village of Alden on a variety of community events that occur throughout the year. Many are hosted or assisted by a number of community groups.



Map 11 - Water Districts



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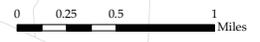
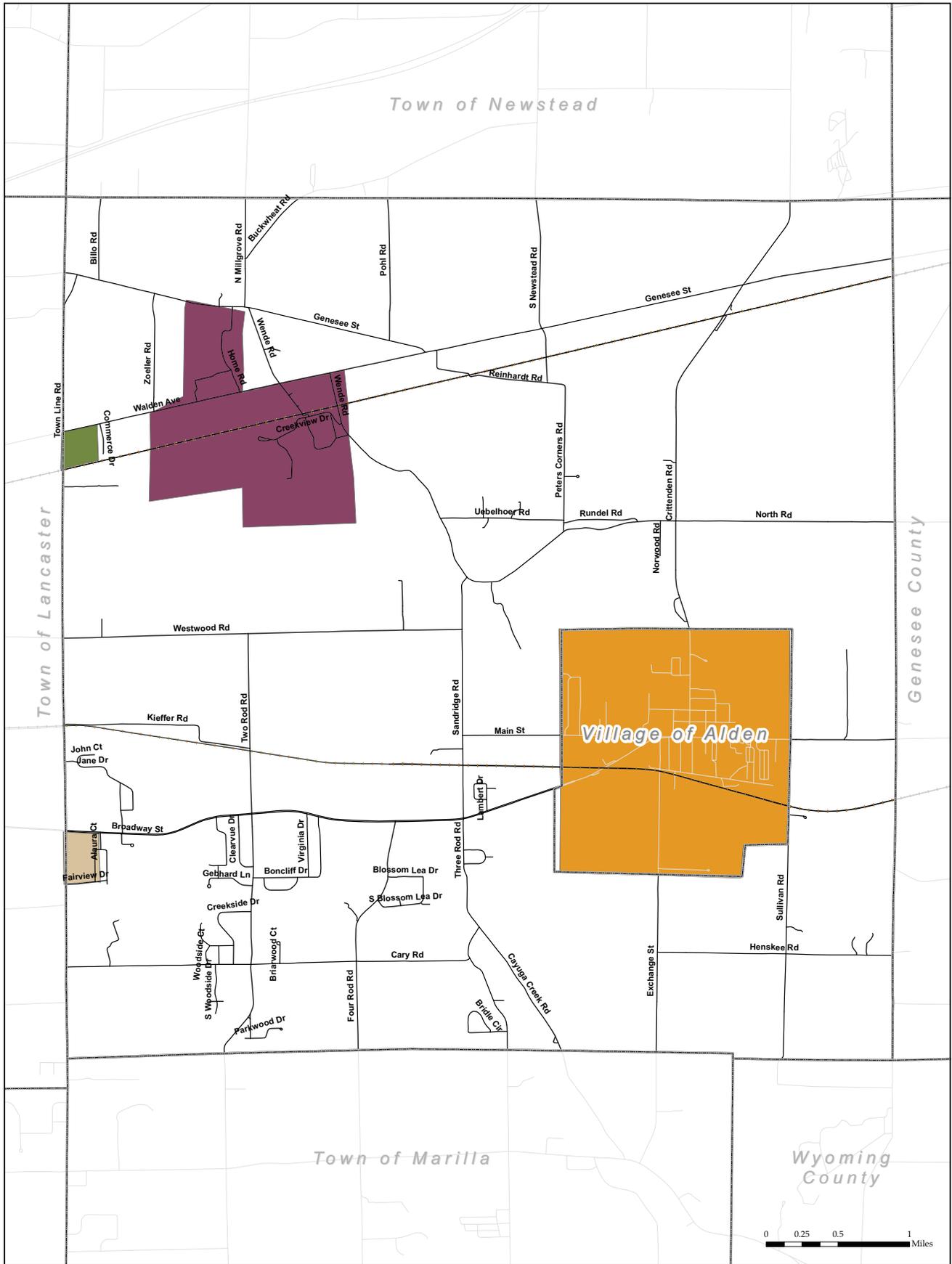
LEGEND

 Town Boundary	 Water District	 Town of Alden Water District #1	 Town of Alden Water District #3
 Road	 Exempt - Not a District	 Town of Alden Water District #2	 Town of Alden Water District #4
		 Village of Alden Water District	



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Map 12 - Sewer Districts



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LEGEND

 Town Boundary	 Sewer District	 AL-2	 Home & Penitentiary
 Road	 AL-1	 Alden Village	




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 CONSULTING ENGINEERS
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3.7.7 Fire/ Emergency/ Public Safety Services

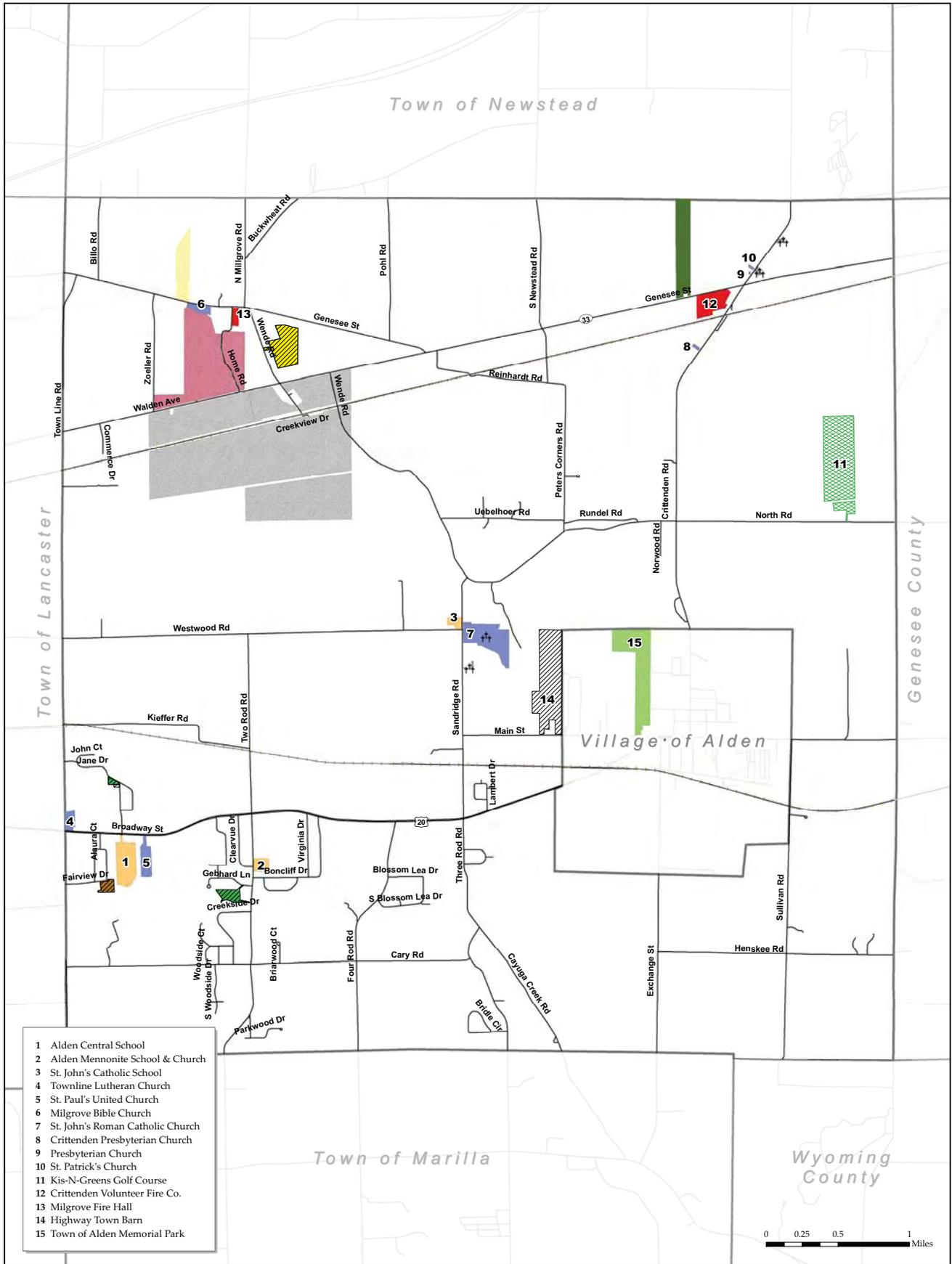
There are four separate volunteer fire companies that provide fire and emergency medical service coverage to the residents of the Town (Map 13). These include: the Alden Hook and Ladder Fire Company, Inc., located on Broadway in the Village; the Crittenden Fire Company located on Genesee Street in Crittenden hamlet; the Millgrove Fire Company located on Genesee Street in the Millgrove hamlet; and the Town Line Fire Company, which is located on Broadway.



The Town of Alden does not have its own police force. Police protection and road patrols are provided by the New York State Police, which have a sub-station in the Town Highway Garage on West Main Street, and the Erie County Sheriff's Department, which has a sub-station at Town Hall, on Wende Road. Rural Metro provides emergency response service to areas of the Town.

3.7.8 Health Care Facilities

The Erie County Home is located within the Town of Alden. There are no other large medical facilities within the Town, however, there are private medical practices and facilities providing out patient procedures. The largest regional hospitals are located in the City of Buffalo, approximately 30 minutes from the Town.



Map 13 - Community Resources



TOWN OF ALDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

LEGEND

Town Boundary	Town Owned Land	Alden Historical Society	Erie County Home	Cemetery	Sewage Treatment	Playground
Road	Town Hall	Golf Course	Cemetery	Police/Fire	Health Facility	School
Railroad	Town of Alden Memorial Park	Erie County Correctional Facility	Religious	Wild/Conservation Land		



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Alden Farmers Market



11th Annual Taste of Alden

3.7.1 Government

The Alden Town Hall is located at 3311 Wende Road and houses several Town departments. The Town's Highway Department and garage are located at 12800 Main Street near the Village of Alden.





3.7.2 Parks and Recreation

The Town of Alden has four public parks. Robert O. Smith Memorial Town Park is located near the entrance to the Town Highway garage on West Main Street. Alden Town Park is located within the Village boundaries, encompassing 62.5 acres of land. This park is home to the Joe Panza nature trail, which is a 1.5-mile trail that winds through approximately 35 acres of open area at the northern end of the park. An unimproved spur off this trail follows Ellicott Creek, a major open space feature that enhances the Town's rural nature. In addition, there is an area of 44 acres on the north side of Genesee Street and an 86-acre parcel on the north side of North Road set aside for wild/conservation land. Other public uses include the Town Hall property on Wende Road and the Town Highway facility on Main Street, at the western boundary with the Village of Alden. The Ewell Free Library is located in the Village of Alden. There are also two mini-parks in the Town, which service local neighborhoods. These include the park at Greenfield and Laray Drive and Alaura Drive park. A third mini-park was dedicated to the Town at Gebhard Lane and Two Rod Road, but never developed.

For the past two years, the Alden Recreation Advisory Board has been actively discussing the need and possibility of using existing Town properties, or purchasing available property within the Town, for the expansion and/or redesign of sports fields. The Town currently uses the following facilities:

Robert O. Smith Park

- 1 regulation hardball diamond
- 2 regulation softball/youth baseball diamonds (one with lights)
- 1 regulation soccer field
- 5 make-shift soccer fields (open field space as well as unused ball diamond outfields)
- 1 concession stand with restrooms
- Small playground area

Town Park

- 1 regulation softball/youth baseball diamond (with lights) – the outfield is used as a football playing field and available open space is used for football practice area.
- 1 concession stand
- Outdoor bathroom facilities
- 1 kiddie pool
- 4 picnic shelters
- 1 ice rink/roller rink area (currently under construction)



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Town Hall

- Available space for 1 regulation soccer field, 1 make-shift ball diamond and 1 make-shift soccer field
- Small playground area
- Indoor (restricted entry) restrooms



Current discussions have been centered around consolidating facilities and play areas: using Robert O. Smith parks specifically for baseball and softball; and using the Town Park specifically for football (using the ball diamond area for a regulation football field, with adjacent practice field) and adding a press box building. The immediate need is the establishment of a soccer facility, either by purchasing a new site or utilizing current Town-owned property that would have ample room for fields, parking, concession and restrooms.

The Town's youth sports are scheduled so that they do not overlap or conflict with one another. Baseball, soccer and AJF football are schedule at different times throughout the spring, summer and fall. Having individual sports facilities would make the scheduling of each respective sport easier. Maintenance and upkeep of the playing fields would be better organized, as well, and supplies and equipment needed for each respective sport could be used at one facility at a time. This would alleviate the continuing need to transport equipment from one place to another.

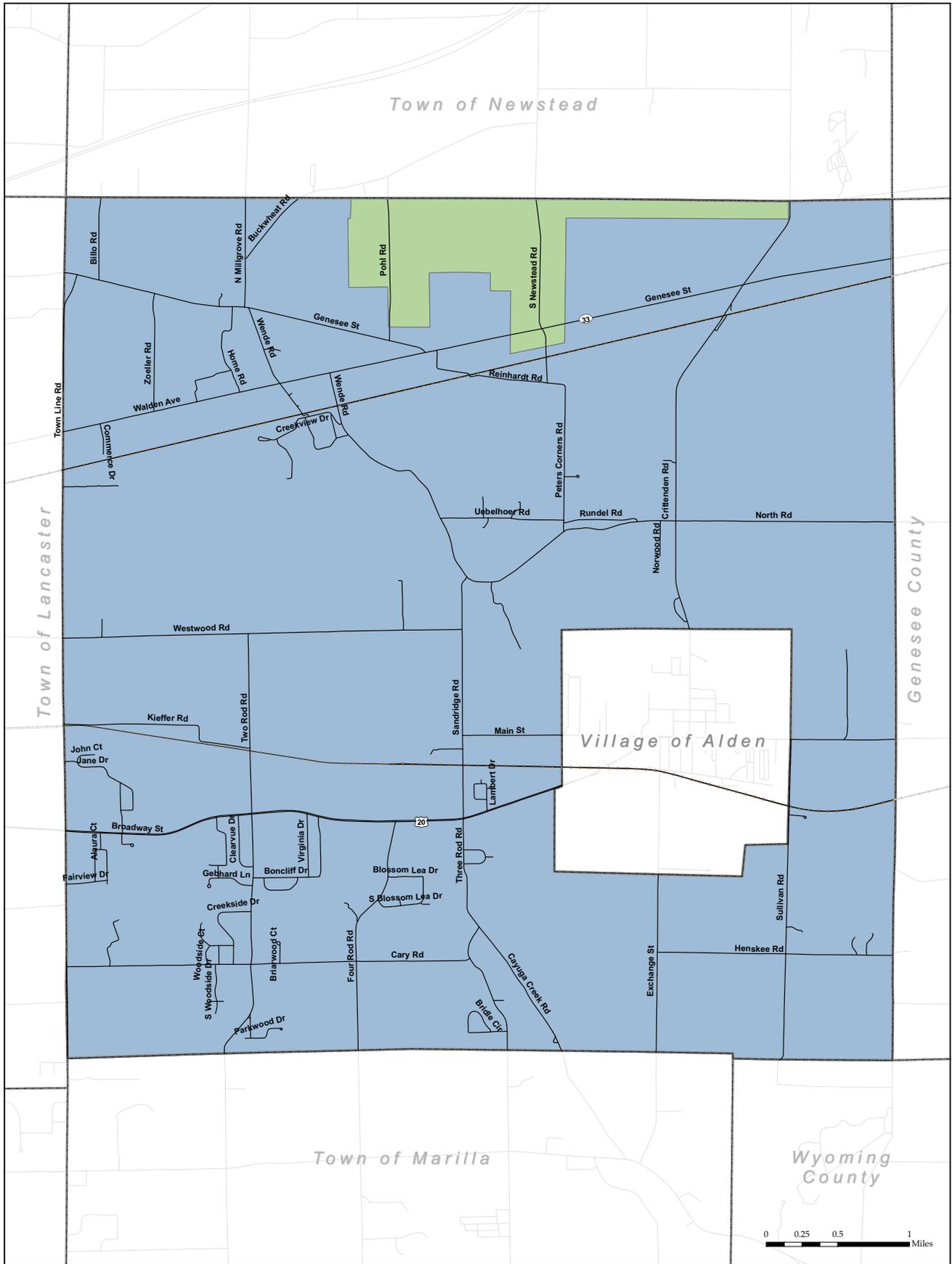


3.7.3 Churches

There are a number of churches found within the Town, including:

- Alden Mennonite Church, 923 Two Rod Road
- St. John's Roman Catholic Church, 2021 Sandridge Road
- Millgrove Bible Church, 11517 Genesee Street
- Alden Community Church, 1400 Sullivan Road
- Alden United Methodist Church, 13242 Broadway Street
- St. Aidan's Episcopal Church, 13021 Main Street
- Crittenden Presbyterian, 3320 Crittenden Road





Map 14 - School Districts



TOWN OF ALDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

LEGEND

-  Town Boundary
-  Road
-  Railroad
-  Akron School District
-  Alden School District



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PLANNING & DESIGN

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3.7.4 Schools

The Town of Alden is served by two school districts (Map 14), the Alden Central School District and the Akron Central School District. The following schools are located with Town boundaries:

- St. John the Baptist School – Pre-K through Grade 8
- Alden Intermediate School – Grades 3 through 5
- Alden Middle School – Grades 6 through 8
- Alden Senior High School – Grades 9 through 12
- Alden Primary at Townline – Kindergarten through Grade 2





3.7.5 Cemeteries

There are a number of cemeteries in the Town, including:

- Evergreen Cemetery – 11318 Broadway (Route 20) - First cemetery in Alden
- Alden Center Cemetery – 1835 - 1938
- Alden United Free Cemetery – County Line Road
- Maplewood Cemetery – 1195 Exchange Street
- St. John the Baptist Roman Catholic Cemetery – Sandridge Road at Westwood Road
- Town Cemetery – Sandridge Road
- Town Line Lutheran Cemetery – 1159 Town Line Road, north of Broadway
- Union Cemetery Association – 1625 Cary Road
- Union County Line Cemetery – County Line Road, south of North Street
- St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Cemetery – Crittenden Road north of Genesee Street
- Crittenden Rural Cemetery – Crittenden Road north of Genesee Street
- Private Cemetery – Crittenden Road, second cemetery north of Genesee Street
- Cemetery behind the Catholic Church of St. John the Baptist in Alden





3.7.6 Historic Resources

The Town of Alden has a Historical Society. This resource helps to enhance and preserve the rich history of the Town, which dates back to the early 1800's.



The Town of Alden does not have any sites listed on the National or State Register of Historic Sites; however, there are certain sites of local significance. One in particular is the Henskee Road School House. This original one-room school house was moved from its original location at the Roll Farm on Henskee Road to the Town Park. It has since be relocated within the park and renovated for public use.

There are several areas within the Town identified by the New York State Historic Preservation Office (NYSOPRHP) that are archaeologically sensitive. These areas are concentrated in the Northwest corner of the Town along Ellicott Creek and in the Mill Grove hamlet, the southern boundary along Cayuga Creek, and an independent area located just west of the center of the Town on County Route 343 near the Westwood hamlet. These areas may contain archaeological artifacts, fossils, or other items that could be disturbed through the development of these lands. Any disturbance to these lands of significant scale will require that at minimum, a Phase 1A Archaeological Assessment is completed and sent to NYSOPRHP for review. While archaeologically sensitive areas do not impede development, they do provide an additional layer for development to work through.

Section 4

Findings and Recommendations



SECTION 4.0 – FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section of the Comprehensive Plan identifies critical themes and key findings, outlines specific recommendations, and establishes the vision plan for the Town.

4.1 Critical Themes and Key Findings

A thorough analysis of the Inventory of Existing Conditions found in Section 3.0, consultation with the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee, and extensive public outreach has resulted in the development of the following critical themes and key findings. These themes and findings present existing and future issues within the Town and aid in the identification of opportunities that the Town can build upon to help achieve its goals and objectives, as well as constraints that can hold the Town back from achieving its vision for the future.

Regional Findings

1. The Alden Comprehensive Plan should consider and, as necessary, coordinate their comprehensive plan implementation efforts and other planning activities (such as Comprehensive Plan updates, zoning changes, etc.) with surrounding communities to insure that consistent planning occurs across municipal boundaries.
2. The Town is interested in extending public water service to certain areas of the Town to address potable water quality and quantity issues through the creation of water improvement area #5. The Framework for Regional Growth does not encourage the expansion of public water infrastructure beyond the limits of the established growth boundaries. The Framework supports expansion in these areas for public health reasons. Growth restrictions would likely be encouraged (restricted tap-ins / lateral restrictions). The Town will continue to work with the Erie County Water Authority and Erie County Department of Environment and Planning in planning for expanded public water service throughout the Town.
3. Water improvement area #5 is proposed to serve many areas of the Town outside of the Village that are not currently serviced by municipal water and are in need of potable supply. The Town of Alden and Town of Marilla have received a State Shared Municipal Services Grant of \$193,500 to begin examining shared infrastructure for water delivery services.
4. Portions of the Town along Walden Avenue receive public sanitary sewer service from the Erie County Sewer Authority providing potential opportunities for economic development and possible infrastructure extensions in the future.
5. The Town is examining the potential for consolidating certain services with the Village of Alden in an effort to save money and improve efficiency.
6. The Town is looking into the possibility of combining planning duties with the Village of Alden by merging planning board and zoning board responsibilities.



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7. The Town is supportive of the Village's efforts to protect the underlying aquifers, which provide a potable supply of drinking water for the Village, and will work to protect groundwater quality in the Town.

Community Character

1. The Town is rural in nature with agriculture and rural (large-lot) residential uses and extensive areas of open space comprising the majority of the Town. Denser traditional development can be found in the Village of Alden and the hamlets, with some suburban residential development located in the southwestern portion of the community. There is extensive public support for the preservation of the rural character of the Town.
2. There are several older homes and historic barns throughout the Town that add to the character of the community; preservation of these features is encouraged.
3. The growth of small businesses and other commercial uses has occurred in hamlet areas and areas closer to the Village. These development patterns should continue in the hamlets, where infrastructure is available and opportunities for connectivity and walkability exist.
4. Much of the development in Alden is good quality, with some areas where deterioration is occurring. Enhanced property maintenance regulations would help the Town to maintain the quality of existing development and improve the deteriorated conditions. In addition, design standards should be considered to require that new development be designed in a manner that continues the rural characteristics of the Town.
5. To preserve rural character, there is a need to utilize alternative techniques for residential development to integrate backlands into the development and move beyond frontage lot development patterns.

Land Use

1. Areas of denser residential development exist in hamlets, near the Village, and in the southwest section of the Town. Future residential development should be focused in and around these areas, with rural residential development continuing throughout the remainder of the Town.
2. Recent residential development in the Town is resulting in "strip-residential" patterns, where smaller lots are subdivided from larger parcels along existing street frontages, leaving large areas of undeveloped back lands. Westwood Road is an example of this. This creates a greater challenge for the future development of these areas, with few options aside from standard major residential subdivision. There is a need for the use of more creative residential development techniques to preserve rural character and open space.
3. Poor land use decisions and lack of growth management can adversely impact sensitive resources and lead to the potential loss of the rural character of the Town.



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4. There are large parcels of commercially zoned land along Broadway. Much of these lands are zoned C-2, with other small areas of differing commercial zoning throughout. Much of the land in this area is in agriculture use or undeveloped, with frontage lands along the corridor developed in places with residential dwellings and small businesses. There is a need to review and, possibly, consolidate / revise the zoning along the Broadway corridor.
5. Under current zoning, the potential exists for Broadway (outside of the Village transition area) to change over to a major commercial corridor; however, the infrastructure does not exist to support intensive commercial use, and portions of this area are situated in an agricultural district, have parcels with agricultural exemptions, and contain prime farm soils.
6. Lands along Walden Avenue, in the western portion of the Town, are zoned for manufacturing use. The existence of sanitary sewer in this area provides the potential for future light industrial or commercial (non-retail) development.
7. Single -family residential development exists in the northern part of the Town, along Town Line Road and Zoeller Road, north of an area that is zoned and used for light industrial development. This zoning district covers a portion of these residential uses and doesn't provide for transitional land uses to create a buffer for the nearby neighborhoods. Hence, there is the potential for conflicts between residents and industrial uses.
8. The State and County correctional facilities and the Erie County Home complex include large areas of undeveloped land. These undeveloped areas offer the potential for increased light industrial development, consistent with existing uses (Wilson Greatbatch and Doritex) and the vision for this area.
9. The State and County lands are zoned Restricted Commercial (R-C), which allows single and multi-family residential and small commercial uses. If these facilities should cease to operate and the land is sold, large scale residential development could occur under the existing zoning. This is an area of the Town where light industrial growth is desired and the zoning should reflect and allow for these types of uses.
10. The hamlet areas are currently built out with a small mix of residential uses and businesses. These areas should support denser, mixed-use development that provides for some of the daily needs of local residents.
11. Redevelopment of vacant storefronts and the upkeep of property should be a priority in the Town to enhance and protect community character. There is a need to review and likely update the property maintenance provisions in the Town Code.
12. There are many deep properties along Broadway and other roadways in the Town. Creative measures are needed to ensure that these areas are developed in a manner that maintains the rural character of the community and recognizes infrastructure constraints, but also allows for an economic return for these lands.



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13. There are five distinct hamlet areas in the Town – Town Line, Millgrove, Crittenden, West Alden and Alden Center. These areas each provide certain services to outlying areas and all need some degree of revitalization. These areas are important to the Town and planning, appropriate to each area, should be undertaken to help achieve the goals of this Plan.

Agricultural, Farmland Protection, other Land Protection

1. Numerous areas of prime farmland soils exist throughout the south-central and eastern portions of the Town. Protection of the important farmland soils in these areas is important for continued and expanded agricultural activity in the Town.
2. Although agriculture is not a large industry in the Town, it does generate valuable tax revenue while requiring minimal public services, making it the most cost-effective land use. Therefore, it is important to the community that agriculture be continued as a viable use in the Town to help balance the tax base (it is about more than just preserving open space).
3. The results of a public opinion survey indicate that there is overwhelming support for the protection of agriculture in the community.
4. The Town is adjacent to Genesee County, as well as the Town of Marilla, where agriculture is a significant component of the community character and local economy.
5. The active farms in Alden produce crops that are marketed locally. The Town should recognize the efforts of local farmers and promote the purchase of locally-grown produce.

Environmental Features

1. There are four aquifers that traverse the southern portion of the Town, with one located beneath the Village of Alden and one in the extreme northwest portion of the Town. Developed areas within the Village and nearby Town are located within portions of these aquifers. Future development should be considerate of these important resources.
2. Certain lands contain significant areas of prime farm soils in the south central and eastern areas of the Town that should be protected for continued and expanded agricultural use.
3. There is one area of farmland that borders the southwestern corner of the Village. Although this property offers opportunities for other uses, at present, it is being actively farmed and is very productive. Therefore, it should remain in agricultural use for now.
4. There are numerous federal and state jurisdictional wetlands located throughout the Town. There are also areas better suited for growth, such as the area west of the Village along Broadway, areas along Walden Avenue, and within the hamlet areas (where there are better soils and fewer wetlands).
5. Regulated floodplains exist along the Ellicott Creek and Cayuga Creek corridors could create some impediments to development along the Walden Avenue corridor and denser residential areas south of Broadway.



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6. Drainage corridors and patterns should be recognized to protect against the potential for increased flooding (changes to drainage patterns through development), particularly in the vicinity of the creek corridors.
7. The Ellicott Creek and Cayuga Creek corridors provide important animal and plant habitats and contain archaeological resources. These areas should be protected and opportunities for passive recreation in appropriate areas recognized and pursued.
8. To improve aesthetics and enhance rural character, more street trees (deciduous trees that are typically planted in the public right-of-way) should be planted in hamlet areas, in identified gateway areas and along more prominent roadways in the Town.

Economic

1. The Alden Economic Development Committee was developed to attract businesses to vacant storefronts and promote redevelopment of older commercial areas.
2. The Economic Development Committee's survey to local residents indicated that additional business development will occur based on community need and population. The Town needs commercial growth that results from investment by new businesses, as well as the relocation of existing businesses to hamlet areas.
3. The Economic Development Committee's survey also indicated a need for more retail options for the community and a desire to have existing vacant buildings filled with tenants. Subsequent outreach to national retailers has suggested that there is not enough population density to support much additional large-scale retail use.
4. There is a large percentage of non-taxable land in the Town that is owned by the State and County. Avenues should be explored to open up opportunities for private development of these lands to help build and balance the tax base.
5. The Walden-Broadway growth corridor illustrated in the Framework for Regional Growth extends along Broadway but stops in Lancaster. The extension of this corridor along Walden Avenue, into the Town, should be considered, particularly where sanitary sewer service exists. This would allow the Town to achieve additional light industrial growth and economic development opportunities in this particular area.
6. A small portion of the northwestern area of the Town is part of the "developing areas" planning policy area in the Framework for Regional Growth (due to the existence of public sewer). Consideration should be given to expanding this area to support infrastructure extension and to enhance opportunities for additional light industrial development.

Transportation

1. The majority of the roads throughout the Town are in good condition and capable of handling additional traffic without sacrificing safety and level of service.



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2. There are a few intersections in the Town that are considered dangerous, such as Wende Road and Genesee Street.
3. Numerous community facilities, such as schools and churches, exist along Broadway towards the western portion of Town. Pedestrian facilities currently do not exist to provide access to these facilities.
4. The transportation system surrounding the Village should include pedestrian facilities that connect to the existing sidewalks within the Village to improve connectivity and walkability.
5. The abandoned rail road corridor that traverses the Town offers the opportunity for use as a multi-use pathway for recreation and to connect the Town of Alden with adjoining communities outside of the roadway system.

Infrastructure

1. If water improvement area #5 is approved, the Town will need to institute water line lateral restrictions to control growth and ease development pressure on rural lands, especially within the Agricultural Districts.
2. The Village of Alden has limited excess sewer capacity, which provides the potential for growth within the Village; however, some capacity may be available to the Town for growth adjacent to the Village.

Cooperation / Coordination

1. The Town encourages the four volunteer fire departments to find ways to share services and equipment.
2. The Town currently coordinates certain services and activities with the Village and should strive to find additional ways to share services/facilities and coordinate activities.
3. The Town supports the Village's efforts to protect water quality.
4. Coordinate economic / planning activities at the western end of Broadway with the Town of Lancaster.
5. Coordinate planning for sewer and water infrastructure with Erie County.
6. Coordinate planning efforts for agricultural protection with the Town of Marilla and Newstead, where these uses extend across municipal boundaries.

Housing

1. In 2000, approximately 25 percent of the Town's population was 55 years old or older. To accommodate the needs of the aging population, the Town should evaluate opportunities for providing housing alternatives for seniors to help meet their changing needs.



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2. Senior housing should be placed near the Village or hamlets to provide connectivity/walkability (or shuttle services should be considered as a part of these developments if located further away).
3. Cluster residential subdivisions or conservation subdivisions offer alternative housing options and a way to protect sensitive resources and preserve rural character. Such development should be utilized to protect the rural character of the Town.

Community Facilities/ Parks and Recreation

1. The Town's Recreation Advisory Committee indicates that improvements to football and baseball facilities are needed.
2. The Recreation Advisory Committee has indicated a need for soccer facilities in the Town.
3. The public opinion survey conducted as a part of the Comprehensive Plan showed that a number of Town residents would like to see additional programs or activities for teens, particularly summer programs.
4. Develop a system of connecting greenways and multi-use trails throughout the Town that offer recreational opportunities, as well as alternative transportation access to important resources and services within and around the Town. The abandoned railroad corridor should be capitalized upon as a means of connecting the Town with other communities and offering an alternative for public recreation and fitness.

State and County Facilities

1. The long-term existence of the State and County facilities plays a role in the economic prosperity of the Town.
2. The State and County facilities located along Walden Avenue hold ownership of large tracts of undeveloped land that surround these facilities. The Town should continue the dialogue with these government entities to capitalize on the existing sanitary sewer infrastructure in the area and potentially use this vacant land to promote industrial development.

4.2 Recommendations

This section of the Comprehensive Plan identifies the vision for the Town and outlines specific recommendations that, when implemented, will guide the Town of Alden towards realizing its vision and attaining the goals and objectives identified in Section 2.0. The development of recommendations for the Plan is based on the inventory information, the findings, an assessment of the community's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) and public input. These recommendations are organized around the goals and objections for the community and are intended to provide guidance on how the Town can move toward achieving the Town's vision.



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The recommendations attempt to capitalize on the strengths of the community and the opportunities that exist in the region, while recognizing potential weaknesses and threats that may impact the Town's goals.

This section is best thought of as a "tool box" of recommendations for possible use by the Town; these recommendations represent things that could be done to improve the community. The Implementation section of the Plan prioritizes the recommendations, and lends direction on how to make the recommendations a reality.

Section 2.0 of the Comprehensive Plan identifies six Town-wide goals of the Town of Alden. For each goal, specific recommendations were developed to guide the Town toward its attainment.

Goal A:

Preserve and Promote the Rural Character and Quality of Life of the Town

The following recommendations are geared towards attaining the goal of Preserving and Promoting the Rural Character and Quality of Life of the Town.

1. Continue to support and comply with the Erie County Right-to-Farm law and explore the adoption of a companion local law.
2. Continue to work with Erie County to reevaluate the State-designated Agricultural Districts to ensure that properties that have the potential to operate as viable farmland are included in the District and identify other viable farmland that should also be included.
3. Consider the use of local land protection mechanisms to further preserve the rural/agricultural resources valuable to the Town, such as the following:
 - a. Development of a Farmland Protection Plan.
 - b. Conservation Easements – A tool used to permanently preserve land that contains open space or environmental and cultural resources of value to the Town. Conservation easements can be voluntary agreements between landowners and the Town, or the Town could set up a trust fund to purchase conservation easements.
 - c. Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE) – A tool used similarly to conservation easements, except that the landowner can voluntarily agree to, or agree to sell their development rights to permanently limit the uses of the land to agricultural.
 - d. Lease of Development Rights (LDR) – A tool used to preserve open space or environmental and cultural resources of value to the Town for a period of time (such as 25 years). This allows for the long-term preservation of these resources, however, does not restrict the landowner from ever developing or selling the property for development



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- purposes. An LDR can also be used to restrict the long-term use of land for agricultural purposes only and can be a viable alternative for farmers not willing to enter into a permanent conservation easement.
4. Consider a revision to the Town of Alden Zoning Law to require that residential subdivision of greater than 4 lots located in the Residential-Agricultural Residential R-A District be “clustered” to ensure that sensitive resources, prime farmland, and rural character are permanently preserved. The use of conservation subdivision design requirements for these lots would also achieve the same result.
 5. Consider the creation of an Agricultural Advisory Committee (in accordance with a local Right to Farm Law) to assist in clarifying, mediating, and alleviating conflicts that may arise, and to promote the concerns and desires of farmers. This committee would act as a liaison between the agricultural community and the Town, and would be utilized to provide a better understanding of the needs of farmers and farming operations in the Town.
 6. Adopt rural design guidelines and conservation subdivision regulations to ensure that the development of residential and other buildings, the removal of vegetation, and/or grading of lands within the Agriculture/ Aquifer Protection and Rural Residential/ Agriculture areas is undertaken in a manner that is consistent with the rural character of the area and preserves sensitive resources valuable to the Town.
 7. The use of incentive zoning, compliant with NYS Town Law 261-b, should be considered to allow a property owner to develop a site at an increased density as long as the development incorporates the use of green or sustainable practices and/or provides a public amenity. An example would be to establish various levels of incentive zoning based upon the four increments of LEED® certification and/or establish public amenities that shall be provided in order to achieve various levels of incentive zoning. Basically, the higher the level of LEED certification, the less restrictive the zoning would be.
 8. Continue to support local agriculture by promoting the sale of locally grown produce at the local farmers market, festivals, restaurants, wholesalers, and schools.
 9. Revise the Restricted Commercial R-C Zoning District (or develop a hamlet Overlay) to use for the Town's hamlet areas. This district or overlay should promote the reestablishment of the traditional hamlets of Millgrove, Crittenden, Town Line, and Alden Center as central gathering places and service centers for the nearby portions of the Town. Focus new development within these hamlets and preserve the small-scale, historic character of these traditional hamlets to help preserve the rural/ agricultural character of the Town.
 10. Adopt rural roadway design guidelines / standards for various roadways throughout the Town to preserve their rural character (context sensitive design).
 11. Zoning overlay districts along certain Town highways to protect the rural character (e.g., Westwood Rd., Genesee St., Two Rod Rd., Sandridge/Three Rod Rd., and Wende Rd.).



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12. Target important open space areas for protection / preservation.
13. Create a new agricultural zoning district that emphasizes protection and support of agricultural uses rather than a residential district that allows agricultural uses.
14. Improve gateway entrances to the Town in the areas noted on the Vision Map. These gateway locations should create a sense of identity for visitors and others entering the Town.

Goal B: Protect Important Cultural and Environmental Resources of the Town

The following recommendations are geared towards attaining the goal of Protecting the Important Cultural and Environmental Resources of the Town. Several of the recommendations identified under Goal A: Preserve and Promote the Rural Character and Quality of Life of the Town can be applied to preserving cultural and environmental resources, as well.

1. Consider creating an Aquifer Overlay District that covers the sections of the Town identified on the Vision Map for aquifer protection to preserve important ground water resources. Within the Aquifer Overlay District, consider increasing the minimum lot size for residential uses and provide maximum impervious area standards. Improved standards for drainage and septic systems should be investigated for these areas, as well.
2. Encourage the use of conservation farming techniques that protect sensitive resources.
3. Consider revising the Town of Alden Zoning Law to establish a minimum green/open space percentage (25%) for building lots for all non-residential and non-agricultural development within all commercial zoning districts that shall be preserved as natural vegetation, landscaped or seeded as lawn area (35% for industrial).
4. Develop a system of connecting greenways and multi-use trails throughout the Town that offers recreational opportunities, as well as alternative transportation access to important resources and services within and around the Town. The abandoned railroad corridor should be capitalized upon as a means of connecting the Town with other communities and offering an alternative for public recreation and fitness.
5. Continue to identify opportunities for additional parks and recreational facilities that would benefit the residents of the Town.
6. Consider measures, such as stream corridor overlay districts, to protect the natural significant of the creek corridors in the Town.



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Goal C:

Encourage a Diversity of Economic Development Activity throughout the Town.

The following recommendations are geared towards attaining the goal of Encouraging a Diversity of Economic Development Activity throughout the Town.

1. Continue to coordinate with Alden Chamber of Commerce, Alden Economic Development Committee, the Alden Merchants' Association and the Village of Alden to identify and pursue economic development opportunities throughout the Town.
2. Encourage non-retail commercial and industrial development along Walden Avenue.
3. Encourage retail and other commercial development along Broadway adjacent to the Village of Alden and within hamlet areas along Genesee Street and Broadway, near Town Line.
4. Revise the Town of Alden Zoning Law to locate and size commercial uses that may better meet the needs of the community.
 - a. Potentially reduce the number of commercial zoning districts and revise those districts to better accommodate the commercial and retail uses.
 - b. Reassess commercial zoning along Broadway to be consistent with the intent of the Community Vision Map outlined in this Comprehensive Plan.
 - c. Create an Overlay District for the Broadway corridor that requires enhanced aesthetics and landscaping of development sites, reduces sign clutter, limits light and noise impacts, and encourages alternative transportation modes (different areas have different requirements).
 - d. Maximum building size should be considered for certain commercial zoning categories consistent with the intent of the Vision Map.
 - e. Identify areas where streetscape improvements should be made along the Broadway to beautify the corridor and create "gateways" to the Town of Alden. Foster a relationship with the State to help initiate such improvements.
 - f. Incorporate access management along the Broadway corridor in the form of traffic signal synchronization, sufficient driveway spacing, cross-access, and shared drives to improve traffic flow and safety.
 - g. Incorporate sidewalks and pedestrian facilities along the Broadway corridor (in the Town Line hamlet and Village Transition areas) to allow for pedestrian friendly connections to the Village of Alden and the Town of Lancaster, and provide transportation options for seniors and children, especially near schools and other public facilities.
 - h. Ensure sufficient screening/ buffering of commercial uses from adjacent non-commercial uses.



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5. Develop a hamlet plan for Millgrove to organize the land use and functionality of the different sectors of the area to create a more conducive hamlet environment.
6. Continue to utilize incentives, such as the 485(b) program, to encourage redevelopment in the Millgrove area. Also look for grant programs that could help with this endeavor.

Goal D: Encourage a Diversity of Housing Types

The following recommendations are geared towards attaining the goal of Encouraging a Diversity of Housing Types.

1. Increase the density of residential development within the Village Expansion/ Transition Area, Suburban Residential Area, and hamlets (without harming the rural character of these areas - utilize hamlet and rural development guidelines).
2. Maintain quality of housing stock through active Code enforcement (consider tools such as an updated Property Maintenance Law).
3. Locate senior and multi-family housing within the Village Expansion/ Transition Area to provide opportunities for housing for seniors and to take advantage of the proximity to amenities of the Village.
4. Consider different styles of single-family housing that is in keeping with the character of the area it is located within (e.g., conservation subdivisions in the rural residential area, new urbanist style development in the Village Transition Area and hamlets, etc.).

Goal E: Ensure Potable Water Supply to Areas of the Town that are in Need

The following recommendations are geared towards attaining the goal of Ensuring a Potable Water supply to Areas of the Town that are in need.

1. Consider instituting water lateral restrictions within future water districts to protect viable farmland from development pressures and to focus development to preferred growth areas.
2. Promote educational opportunities on groundwater protection and septic system maintenance.
3. Promote programs that identify and mitigate failing septic systems to protect groundwater quality.
4. Continue to evaluate areas of the Town for public water based on need (poor water quality and quantity) and desire.



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Goal F: Maintain and Promote Efficiency and Cooperation in Government

The following recommendations are geared towards attaining the goal of Maintaining and Promoting Efficiency in Government.

1. Identify opportunities for shared municipal services and facilities and actively pursue resources for the study and implementation of shared services.
2. Encourage the local Fire Companies to continue and expand their efforts to coordinate and share services and/or equipment.
3. Locate community and governmental resources in centers of population (Village of Alden or hamlet areas of the Town).
4. Coordinate municipal planning efforts with neighboring municipalities.
5. Pursue grant money from NYSERDA for retrofit of municipal vehicles and facilities to alternative energy sources.
6. Support and enhance continued senior services offered by the Town to retain and nurture the senior citizen population base of the Town.
7. Evaluate ways of consolidating water and sewer districts to have them managed by Erie County.

Other Town-wide Recommendations

1. Work with County and State transportation officials to remedy identified transportation problem areas throughout the Town.
2. Maintain a Comprehensive Plan Committee to assist with implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and to reevaluate the Plan every 5 years or so and update, as necessary, to conform to changing conditions and to ensure that action items recommended in the Plan are attaining the goals and objectives.
3. Revise the Town of Alden Zoning Law to promote sustainable ("green") development and growth standards, especially in the areas of sustainable sites and water efficiency.



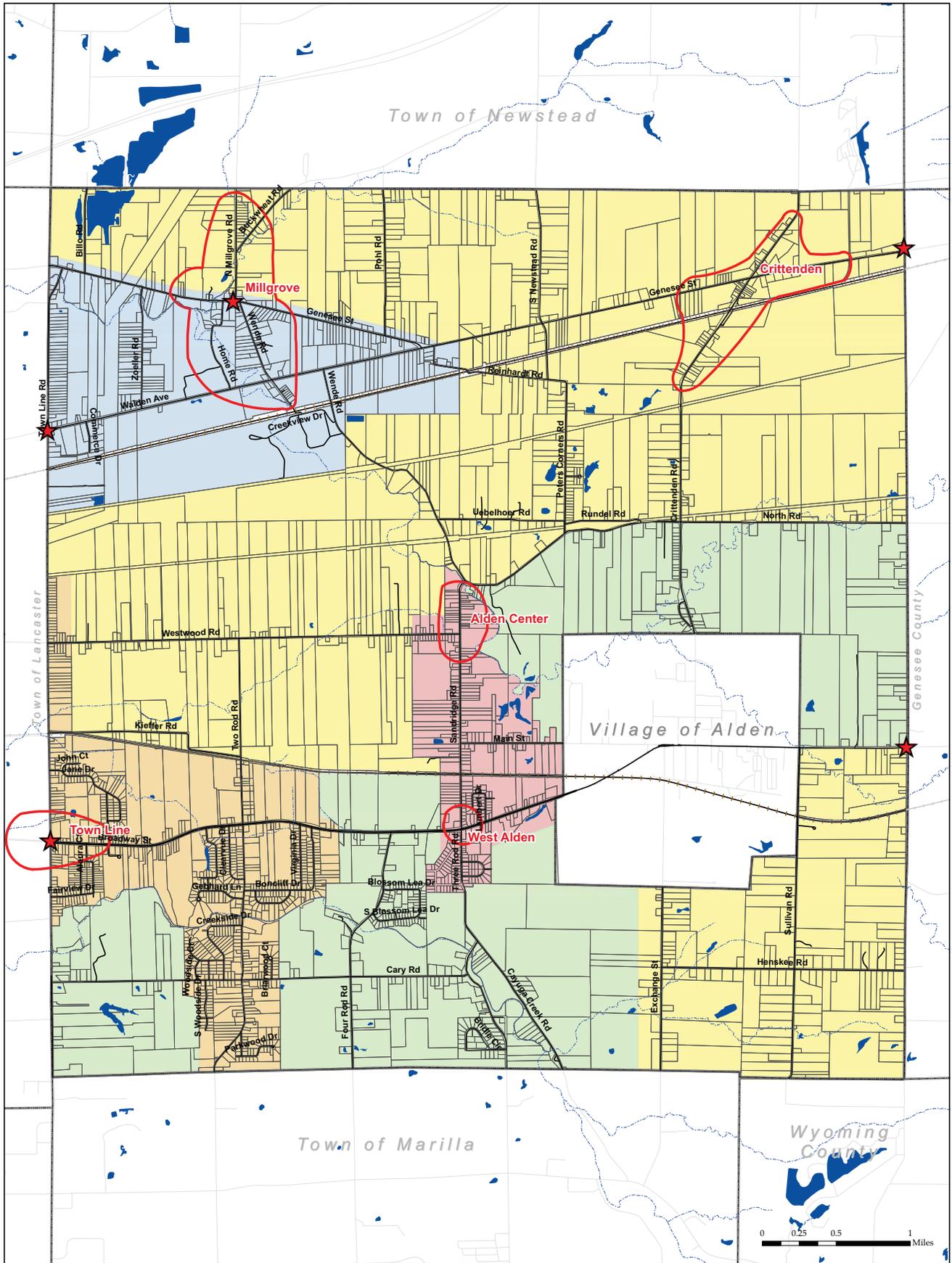
4.3 Community Vision Plan

To portray the overall vision for the Town, a Community Vision Map was created to identify areas with characteristics that are unique to the area and that require specific recommendations to preserve and enhance their character (see Map 15). Focus areas include the Village Expansion/Transition area, the Alden Suburban Residential Development area, the Millgrove Hamlet / Economic Expansion area, Agricultural / Aquifer Protection area, and the Rural Residential / Agricultural area. Vision is also set forth for the Hamlets and Gateway entrances to the Town. The following offers greater insight into the vision areas, along with some specific recommendations that have been identified for these areas. The objective is that, when implemented, these recommendations will guide the Town towards realizing its future vision.

4.3.1 Village Expansion / Transition Area

The Village Expansion / Transition Area is considered the logical location for denser or concentrated development allowing for a seamless and gradual transition from the Village core to the outlying Town of Alden. The intent of this area is to improve connectivity and walkability and strengthen the traditional Town center. This is the area where additional commercial (medium scale) and higher density residential growth should occur in a manner that supports and enhances, rather than competes with the Village, in an effort to improve overall economic development for the community as a whole. While it is understood that areas of prime farmland soils exist within the Village Transition Area, it is best to focus growth closer to the Village, where denser development has already occurred, rather than allow growth to sprawl across vaster areas of prime farmland in the Town. The Village of Alden also may have the potential to provide sanitary sewer service in this area to support more intensive development. Encouraging commercial development in the Village Transition area is also aimed at better organizing commercial development along Broadway and connecting with the West Alden hamlet to eliminate the potential for sprawling strip development along the length of this corridor in the Town, which is not an efficient or sustainable use of land.





Map 15 - Community Vision Map

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LEGEND

- | | | | | | |
|----------------|----------|--------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------|
| Town Boundary | Road | Stream/Creek | Vision | Rural Residential/Agricultural | Gateway |
| Parcels (2008) | Railroad | Hamlet | Agricultural / Aquifer Protection | Alden Suburban Development | |
| | | | Millgrove Hamlet / Economic Expansion | Village Expansion / Transition | |



WENDEL DÜSCH-SCHNEIDER
 CONSULTANTS
 WD Project # 438001
 Map Created: July, 2009

*The information on this document is based on data gathered from the following data sources and should not be used for design or construction. -Data Sources: NYS GIS Clearinghouse



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Village Transition Area Guiding Principles

1. Focus retail and other commercial development along Broadway, adjacent to the Village, to compliment and support the Village.
2. Locate denser development and more mixed use development in the Alden Center hamlet area, along Main Street and along Broadway (West Alden), and directly west of the Village of Alden, where public sanitary sewer infrastructure may be available.
3. Ensure adequate buffering between agricultural uses and non-agricultural uses to protect the viability of farming and minimize the impacts of one use on the other.
4. Promote connectivity and walkability, with direct connections to the Village of Alden, West Alden and Alden Center.
5. Support adaptive reuse and redevelopment of existing vacant structures.
6. Utilize design standards and guidelines to ensure that the character of building design is in concert with the surrounding area, particularly in the vicinity of the Village and Alden Center and West Alden hamlets.
7. Use incentive zoning techniques to allow for an increase in development density, particularly to achieve more sustainable development.
8. Re-evaluate the zoning district(s) in this area to ensure that the land use regulations support the type and density of development desired for the Village Transition area; use of a zoning overlay district should be a consideration.
9. Incorporate access management standards into the design for commercial projects to improve traffic flow and safety.
10. Continue to utilize incentives, such as the enhanced 485(b) program to encourage redevelopment of abandoned or underutilized properties.
11. Locate senior housing and multi-family (higher density residential development) housing closer to the Village and Alden Center hamlet.
12. Coordinate planning efforts in the Village Transition area with the Village of Alden.



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The following images depict how development in the Village Transition Area could include mixed uses designed in a denser fashion that are in keeping with the character of the surrounding community. Note the architectural elements, which move beyond standard franchise design, as well as a denser style of residential development that would fit well into a village setting.

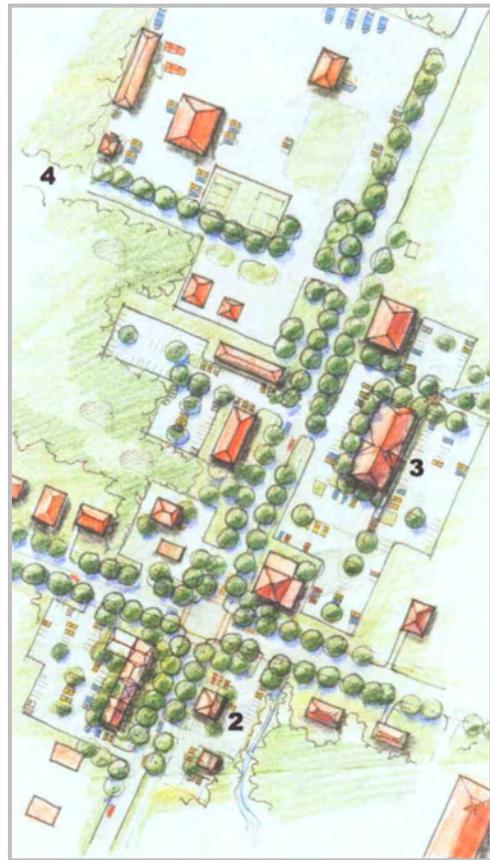
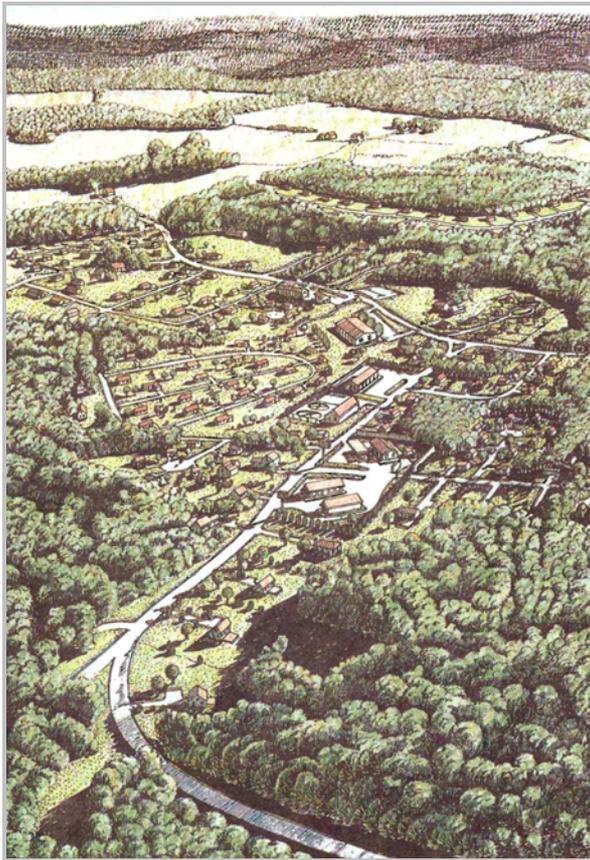




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The image on the left depicts the typical rural / suburban residential sprawl that can occur throughout the Town if growth is not controlled. The image on the right shows how development in the Village Transition Area should include more dense, mixed uses along major corridors to gradually transition from the Village core to the rural countryside.



Source: Arendt, Randall (1994). "Rural by Design: Maintaining Small Town Character". Planners Press. Chicago and Washington.

Source: Town of Clarkson, New York

4.3.2 Alden Suburban Residential Development Area

The Alden Residential Development Area is an area in the southwestern portion of the Town that has been developed with residential subdivisions that are more suburban in nature. This area is proximate to the Town Line hamlet area, which is considered a neighborhood service area in the Town, as well as in the Town of Lancaster. The vision for this planning area is to allow similar growth in undeveloped portions of the area that would support the Town Line Hamlet and smaller commercial uses along Broadway, near Town Line. The idea is not to compete or take away from the Village center, but to revitalize and strengthen the hamlet as a neighborhood-scale service center, which is envisioned to grow in concert with



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development across the Town boundary in the Town Line portion of Lancaster. Small businesses should be encouraged to locate and continue in the hamlet area to increase economic activity. With the use of design guidelines, the aesthetics of the area could be improved and enhanced to create a more prosperous mixed use area, including use of landscaping, lighting, signage, highway access and architectural standards. Sidewalks should be encouraged, primarily along Broadway, to improve connectivity and pedestrian access between the Town Line hamlet area and adjacent residential uses, as well as the school.



Alden Suburban Residential Development Area Guiding Principles

1. Locate mixed uses along the Broadway corridor, and along Town Line Road, close to the hamlet, to strengthen this area as a neighborhood service center.
2. Avoid commercial "strip" development by encouraging mixed use development and small-scale multi-story structures.
3. Adopt Hamlet Design Standards and Guidelines to ensure that the character of building design in Town Line is in keeping with the rural character of the area.
4. Promote connectivity and walkability between the hamlet and adjacent residential and community service uses (primarily along Broadway).
5. Improve the hamlet as a Gateway to the Town to create a welcoming sense of identity for visitors and others entering the area.
6. Support adaptive reuse and redevelopment of existing vacant structures.
7. Re-evaluate the zoning district(s) in this area to ensure that the land use regulations support the type and density of development desired for the Town Line hamlet and surrounding area; use of a zoning overlay district in the hamlet is a consideration.
8. Continue to utilize incentives, such as the enhanced 485(b) program to encourage redevelopment of abandoned or underutilized properties in Town Line hamlet.
9. Ensure adequate buffering between agricultural uses and non-agricultural uses to protect the viability of farming and minimize the impacts of one use on the other.
10. Maintain the quality of the existing housing stock through active Code Enforcement; consider updating the Property Maintenance Law.
11. Promote educational opportunities on groundwater protection and septic system maintenance and programs that identify and mitigate failing septic systems.



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Below are examples of how design and aesthetic standards can be used to enhance the appearance of standard retail strip plazas (first row). You can recreate "Main Street" with a mix of detailing and design elements to break up the monotony of the façade (second row).



Below are examples of how chain stores can be designed to fit into the rural character of an area.





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Here are additional examples of how development in hamlet areas and along roadway corridors can be designed to improve aesthetics, maintain rural character and improve the overall quality of the area. Incorporating landscaping, signage, pitched roof lines and other design features can enhance the appearance of commercial and retail uses making the area more attractive to visitors and local residents.





4.3.3 Millgrove Hamlet / Economic Expansion Area

The Millgrove Hamlet / Economic Expansion Area is another important neighborhood service center in the Town. This planning area includes two distinct areas: the hamlet that is situated along Genesee Street, in the vicinity of Wende Road and North Millgrove Road; and the Town Hall complex, County and State properties and lands that are valuable for commercial and light industrial development along Walden Avenue. The vision of this area is to promote the small-scale, mixed use development in the traditional hamlet area and Genesee Street, promote larger scale development along Walden Avenue and capitalize on the potential use of vacant County and State lands for additional economic development efforts. This area of the Town has vast potential as a gateway to the Alden community and is a future commercial growth area. Revitalization with mixed uses is essential to the well-being of the hamlet center and additional larger scale industrial uses along Walden. These issues are central to achieving the vision for this area. This is also an area where the County may support future infrastructure expansions that are solidly supported by sound planning.



Millgrove Hamlet / Economic Expansion Area Guiding Principles

1. Develop a hamlet plan for Millgrove to organize the land use and functionality of the different sectors of the planning area and to create a more conducive hamlet environment.
2. Locate denser development and mixed use development in and around the Millgrove hamlet area
3. Use incentive zoning techniques to allow for an increase in development density in and around the hamlet, particularly to achieve more sustainable development.
4. Re-evaluate the zoning district(s) in this area to ensure that the land use regulations support the type and density of development desired for Millgrove hamlet area; use of a zoning overlay district should be a consideration.



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5. Utilize design standards and guidelines to ensure that the character of building design will preserve the small-scale, historic character of the hamlet area.
6. Promote connectivity and walkability between the hamlet and surrounding area.
7. Continue to utilize incentives, such as the enhanced 485(b) program to encourage redevelopment of abandoned or underutilized properties.
8. Improve the hamlet area as a gateway to create a sense of identity for visitors and others entering the Town.
9. Incorporate access management standards into the design for commercial projects to improve traffic flow and safety.
10. Re-evaluate the zoning of the State and County lands to ensure that the land use regulations support the potential for increased commercial and light industrial development in this area (and prevent future large-scale residential development).
11. Work with the New York State Department of Transportation to improve the intersection at Genesee Street and Wende Road to improve traffic safety.
12. Work with New York State to implement streetscape improvements in the Millgrove hamlet area in the future.
13. Work with Erie County to extend the Walden-Broadway growth corridor, as outlined in the Framework for Regional Growth, into the Town along Walden Avenue to support infrastructure expansion and increased commercial and light industrial growth.
14. Work with Erie County and New York State to free up large areas of undeveloped land for private ownership to promote increased commercial and light industrial use development along Walden Avenue.
15. Support adaptive reuse and redevelopment of existing vacant structures.

Below are examples of high quality light industrial and office development that could be achieved by capitalizing on the available land and potential for infrastructure expansion in the Walden Avenue area of Millgrove.





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Existing structures can be redeveloped to maintain the historic character of an area.



Redevelopment and new development can be designed to recreate small-town character.





4.3.4 Agricultural / Aquifer Protection Area

The Town possesses some large areas of vital agricultural uses and prime farmland soils that are important to the character of the Town. There is broad public support for the preservation of these uses and resources. Once developed, prime farm soils are not recoverable for agricultural use so the value of these soils as a resource to the community must be recognized. This area also includes the expansive underground aquifer that is an important resource for the community and a source of potable water for the Town and Village. There are also creek corridors and wetland areas that are of local significance. The vision for this area is to encourage continued farming and discourage denser residential uses (which should occur in other areas of the Town) in an effort to protect and preserve the important natural resources that exist in this area.



Agricultural / Aquifer Protection Area Guiding Principles

1. Continue to support and comply with the Erie County Right-to-Farm Law and explore the adoption of a companion local law.
2. Consider the creation of an Agricultural Advisory Committee to help mediate and alleviate conflicts and promote farming in the Town.
3. Consider implementation of local land use protection mechanisms to preserve rural/agricultural resources such as the development of a farmland protection plan, conservation easements, lease of development rights.
4. Revise the residential subdivision regulations to incorporate rural development guidelines and require conservation subdivision and open development to preserve prime farmland and other important natural resources.
5. Promote the sale of locally grown produce at local farmers markets, festivals, restaurants, wholesalers, school, etc.
6. Create a new agricultural zoning district that emphasizes protection and support of agricultural uses rather than a residential district that allows farms.
7. Consider adoption of an aquifer overlay district to preserve and protect important groundwater resources and a stream corridor overlay district to protect the creeks.
8. Encourage the use of conservation farming techniques to protect prime farm soils.
9. New development should be located in a manner that minimizes adverse impacts to viable farming activities or farm soils.



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Here is an example of how conservation Subdivision design can help the Town protect farmland and important natural resources, keeping farmland active, while achieving residential use of land.

Existing Parcel



Standard Subdivision Yield



Identification of Significant Resources



Conservation Subdivision Layout



Final Design



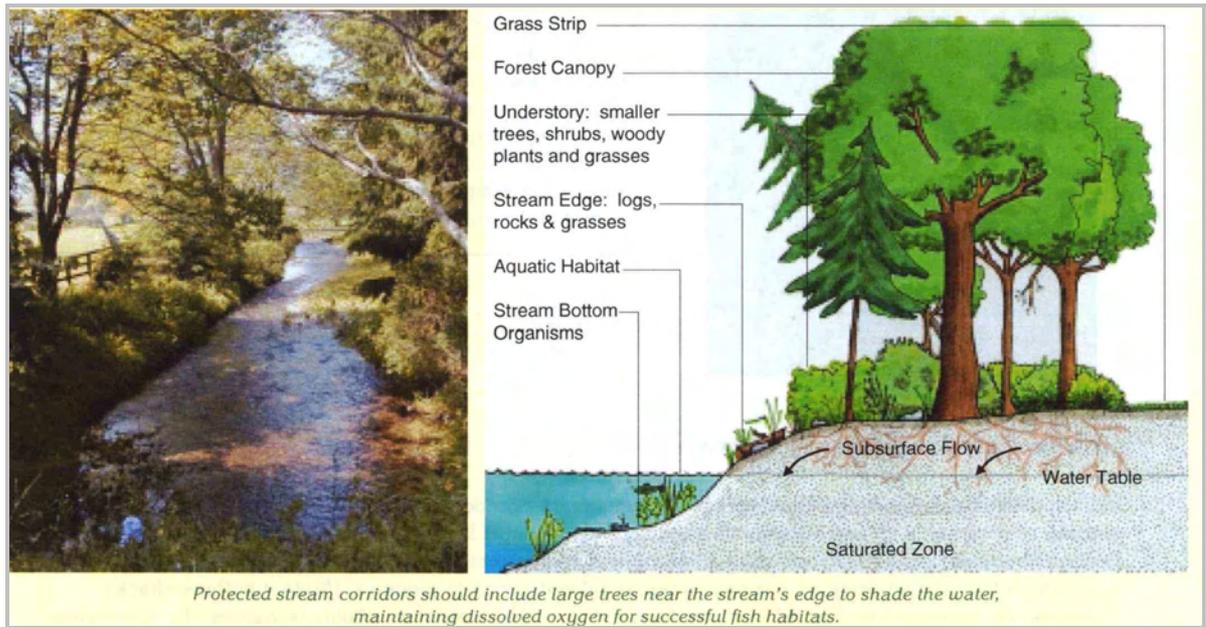
Source: Arendt, Randall G. (May 2009). "Visualizing the Options: Choosing Among our Alternative Futures – Chautauque County Design Principles Guidebook".



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This image shows the best management practice of stream corridor and lake shore protection. The multiple zone buffer system helps to remove nutrients, sediment, animal-derived organic matter, and pesticides from surface runoff.



Source: Dutchess County, New York Planning & Development Greenway Guide

4.3.5 Rural Residential / Agricultural Area

The Rural Residential / Agricultural Area comprises the remaining large areas of the Town. This area includes farmland, large rural residential lots, local roadways and portions of the Genesee Street corridor, and open space. The vision of the Rural Residential / Agricultural Area is to allow development, over time, that preserves and enhances the rural character of the Town. Future residential development in this area should include continued large lot residential uses, open development residential subdivisions and conservation subdivisions (where housing is clustered in a denser pattern) in an effort to preserve surrounding open space or farmland. This area also includes the Crittenden hamlet, which acts as another, smaller neighborhood service center. Roadways in this area should remain rural in nature, with no sidewalks or other improvements that would change the character of the area.



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Rural Residential / Agricultural Area Guiding Principles

1. Ensure that development occurs at an appropriate scale and pace, and in location that are suitable for the type of development that is proposed, and ensure that new development is reasonably compatible with adjacent land uses.
2. New development should be located in a manner that minimizes adverse impacts to viable farming activities or farm soils.
3. Revise the residential subdivision regulations to incorporate rural development guidelines to preserve farmland and open space resources.
4. Encourage non-traditional styles of development, including open development areas, conservation subdivision and clustered development to foster efficient use of land and reduce impacts to transportation infrastructure.
5. Encourage commercial activity to locate in the Crittenden hamlet area and promote walkability and connectivity between the hamlet and surrounding residential use.
6. Improve the Crittenden hamlet area as a gateway to create a sense of identity for visitors and others entering the Town from the north and east.
7. Connect the recreational uses and green spaces in the Town and the Village.
8. The abandoned rail corridor should be redeveloped as a multi-use trail to provide connectivity with other communities and increase opportunities for recreation.
9. Adopt rural roadway design guidelines or standards for local roadways throughout the Town to preserve their rural character (context sensitive design).





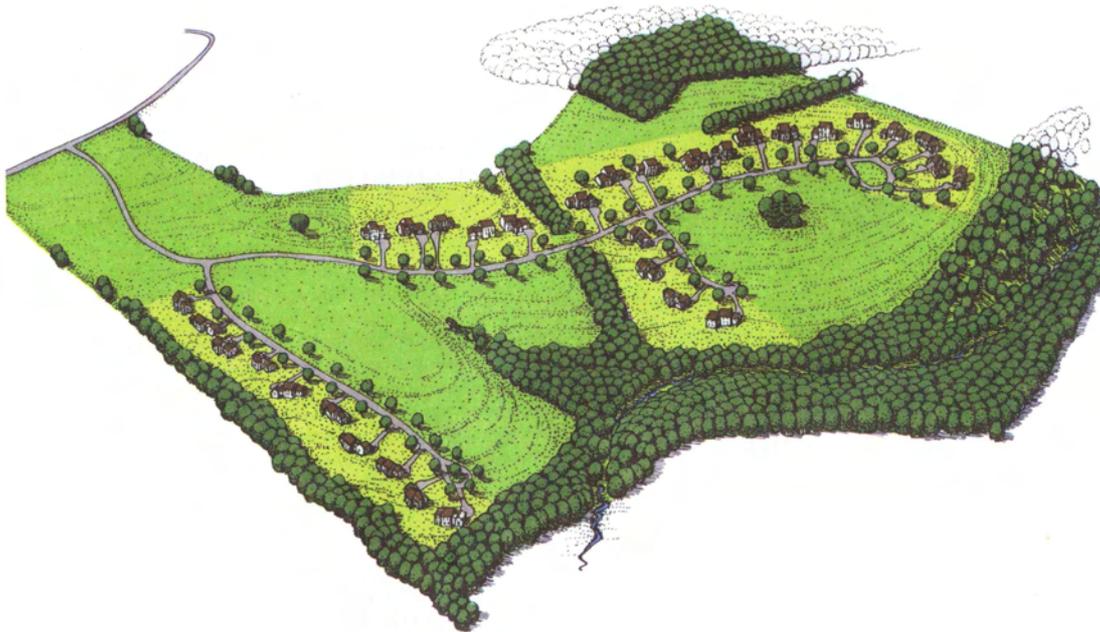
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This is an example of a large farm property that is developed as a traditional subdivision with 33 large lots. There is no preservation of farmland or open space, all the land has been subdivided for rural residential lots.



This is the same farm developed as a Cluster Residential Development which affords the developer more flexibility in exchange for preserving the farmland and open space.



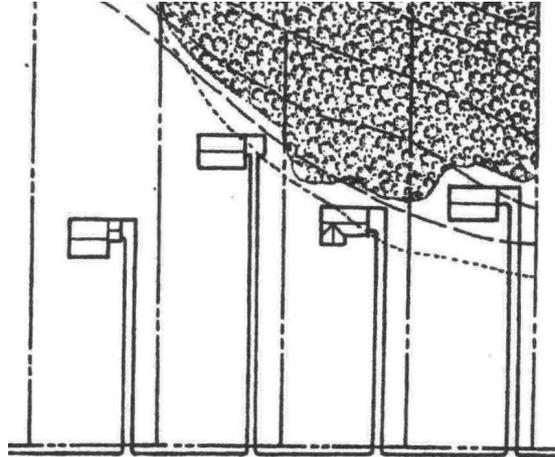
Source: Arendt, Randall G. (1996). "Conservation Design for Subdivisions, a Practical Guide to Creating Open Space Networks." Island Press. Washington, D.C. and Covelo, CA.



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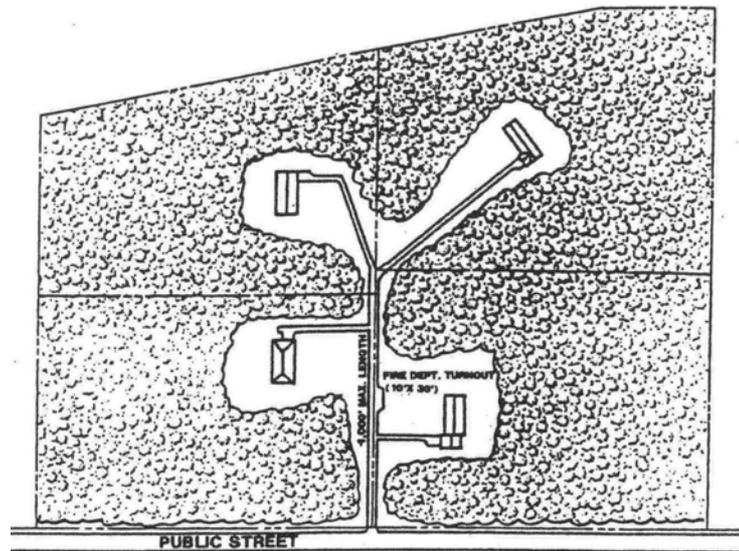
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The image below shows a typical rural residential development along road frontage that preserves little forested area.



Source: Heyer, F., (1990). "Preserving Rural Character". Planners Press. Chicago

The image below shows the same rural residential subdivision developed under Cluster Residential Development regulations, with the majority of the forested area preserved.



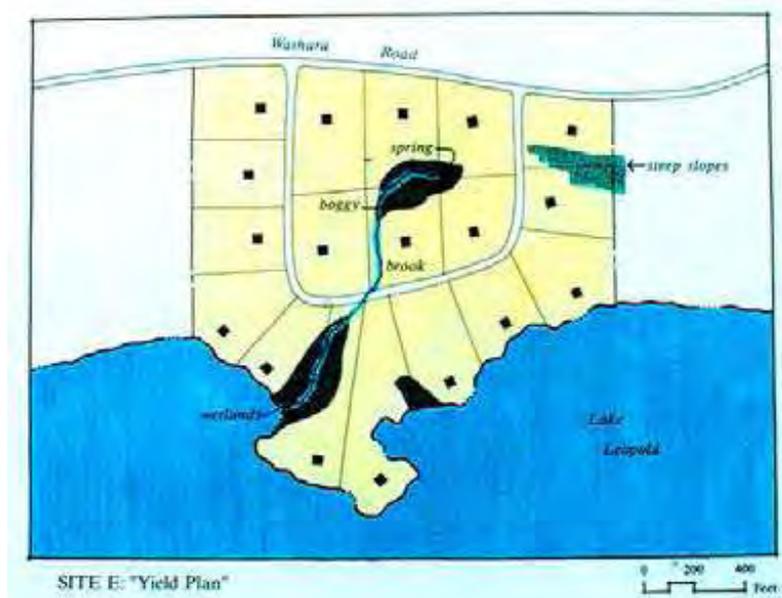
Source: Heyer, F., (1990). "Preserving Rural Character". Planners Press. Chicago



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Here is a conventional yield plan for an 18 unit residential subdivision



Here is a conservation subdivision design for the same 18 lots



Source: Arendt, Randall G. (May 2009). "Visualizing the Options: Choosing Among our Alternative Futures – Chautauqua County Design Principles Guidebook".



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Adapting the conservation design principle and trimming lot size and lot width can result in the same number of homes accommodated on half the available land, thereby preserving farmland or open space resource to maintain rural character..



Source: Arendt, Randall G. (May 2009). "Visualizing the Options: Choosing Among our Alternative Futures – Chautauqua County Design Principles Guidebook".

4.3.6 Hamlets and Gateways

Outside the Village of Alden, the hamlets of Town Line, Alden Center, West Alden, Millgrove and Crittenden have developed as neighborhood service centers, providing retail and commercial opportunities to support surrounding residential development. It is important for the hamlets to remain vital and prosperous areas of activity in the Town. They function differently than the Village of Alden (which is the true Town center) and should provide essential local services for those that use them. These hamlets also function as important "gateway" entrances where visitors and residents alike enter the Town. These areas should be improved in a manner that enhances the sense of identity and informs the public that they



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are entering the Town. Improvements could range from simple signage to more decorative plantings, monuments or other features that are aimed at emphasizing the local pride of the community.



Hamlet and Gateway Area Guiding Principles

1. Focus denser development and mixed use within the outside the Village and in hamlet areas to manage growth consistent with the vision for the Town, as shown on the Community Vision Map.
2. Ensure adequate buffering between non-agricultural uses and outlying agricultural uses to maintain the viability of farming and to minimize the impacts of one use upon the other.
3. Promote connectivity and walkability between the hamlets and surrounding residential areas.
4. Utilize design standards and Hamlet Design Guidelines to ensure that the character of building and site design is in concert with the surrounding area
5. Encourage the use of different styles of denser residential development in and around the hamlets (and the Village Transition area) to create and recreate viable neighborhoods and to provide alternative housing options for seniors.
6. Improve the Millgrove, Town Line and Crittenden hamlets as gateways to the community with improved design, signage and landscaping.
7. Gateways should include exit signs “thanking” travelers for visiting Alden; signage should identify businesses with dominating the landscape (ground signs, not pole signs).

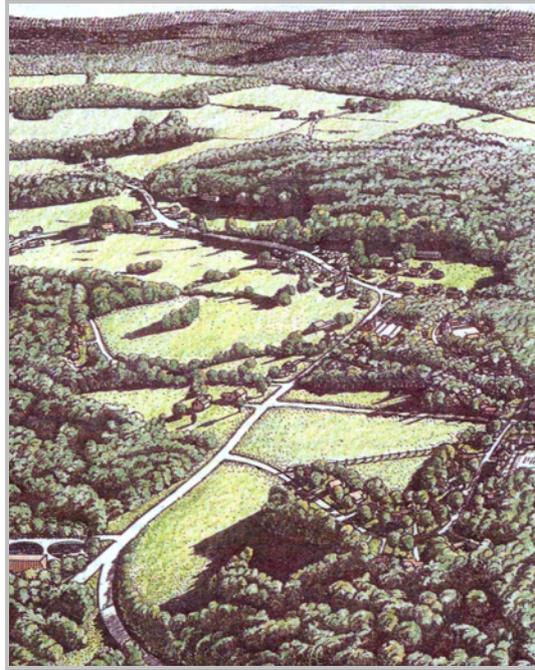




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The images below show how development of the rural countryside should be directed to the identified hamlets to preserve rural character of the Town.



Source: Arendt, Randall (1994). "Rural by Design: Maintaining Small Town Character". Planners Press. Chicago and Washington.



Source: Arendt, Randall G. (May 2009). "Visualizing the Options: Choosing Among our Alternative Futures – Chautauqua County Design Principles Guidebook".



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The following are examples of gateway treatments for hamlets, entry points or other key locations in communities.



Section 5
Implementation Strategy



SECTION 5.0 – IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The Town of Alden understands that local planning is an on-going process. The preparation of the Town of Alden Comprehensive Plan is only a first step. This plan outlines the preferred vision for the Town of Alden and establishes recommendations for how to achieve that vision. Putting the recommendations into action requires continued work that must occur after the adoption of the Plan. This is important to enable the Town to move forward with implementing the vision through the recommendations. It is recommended that the Town adopt this Plan. By adopting the Comprehensive Plan, the Town Board has demonstrated their commitment for managing the future of the Alden community and ensuring stronger compliance with, and use of, the Plan by other municipal agencies.

An effective Comprehensive Plan establishes a process that ensures that the document remains relevant and is continually updated. The Plan, itself, is a roadmap to an actual end product, which is an improved and better community. The Comprehensive Plan cannot be considered a success unless its provisions and recommendations are implemented. Therefore, this section of the Plan outlines an implementation strategy for accomplishing the recommendations contained herein, thereby moving the Town toward achieving its goals.

The recommendations and priorities set forth in Section 4.0 and outlined in this strategy were developed throughout the planning process based on comments and concerns of the Advisory Committee and other Town officials involved in the process, by assessing public input (as received from surveys, comments forms and meeting summaries), and by applying general planning principles. This implementation strategy reflects current circumstances and current priorities. However, as local conditions change or as certain elements of this strategy are accomplished, the Town should revisit the priorities to reassess their continued applicability and/or the timing for completing certain actions.

This implementation strategy summarizes and organizes the various recommendations contained within this Plan into a Table to guide the Town in achieving its goals. This Table organizes the recommendations (action items) around the goals outlined in Section 2.0 (Goals and Visioning), based on priority, type of action and responsibility. The action items are also categorized by timeframe to help the Town generally manage the order in which recommendations could be implemented. Actions are categorized as Immediate Actions, Near-Term Actions, Mid-Term Actions, Long-Term Actions, and On-Going Actions. Immediate Actions are those recommendations that would be carried out within the first year of the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. These actions are considered the most important and could impact the success of other recommendations. Near-Term Actions would be carried out within 1 to 3 years from the adoption of the Plan and are typically recommendations that address some of the more important issues. Mid-Term Actions would be carried out within 3 to 5 years from the adoption of the Plan. Long-Term Actions are typically those that would take longer to implement due to their



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cost, extent of planning involved, or because they are not as critical as other recommendations. These actions would be implemented beyond 5 years from the adoption of the Plan. On-Going Actions are recommendations that don't necessarily have a timeframe or target completion date and would be undertaken on an on-going basis.

In addition, each item contained on the Implementation Table also has an assigned a recommended priority ranking of high, medium or low. High priority items are considered to have the greatest important or urgency and are vital for achieving the goals of the Town. While it may take longer to accomplish some of these items, it is recommended that initial steps be commenced in the near term, after adoption of the Plan, to begin to put it into action. Items with moderate to low priority rankings are typically those that the Town can plan for as future actions.

Basically, the following Implementation Table and the actions it contains comprise a "Tool Box" of recommendations to be utilized by the Town to achieve the vision and respond to changes in the community. Although they have been scheduled for action and ranked in terms of priority, this has been done so as a guide; it is up to the Town to decide which implementation measures should be undertaken at any given time. If circumstances are such that it makes sense, it could be determined that certain longer-term or low priority items could be accomplished in advance of a near-term or higher priority item that is more complex or costly. For example, should funding become available for a particular action, the Town may choose to reassign it as a higher priority, that should be undertaken in the immediate future in order to take advantage of the funding opportunity. Therefore, reasoning may exist for the Town to pursue a lower priority action that can be readily completed, while working to institute larger high priority actions over a longer term. Hence, the timeframes and priority rankings of implementation actions should be viewed with flexibility. The idea is that the Town should be continually striving to implement the Plan, monitoring progress and priority and re-prioritizing actions, as necessary, as it moves forward with this process.

To help with the process or monitoring and prioritizing implementation actions on an ongoing basis, it is recommended that the Town maintain the existing Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (or establish a new committee) to help keep the Plan active. This committee would monitor progress, encourage continued momentum and recommend adjustments to the implementation strategy and priority of actions, over time, as circumstances dictate.

The Implementation Table identifies the type of action that should be undertaken by the Town in order to implement that recommendation. Types of actions include *Legislative* actions that require passage of a Local Law or other action by the Town Board; *regulatory* actions that may require amendments or revisions to the Town Code or the creation of new land use regulations; *administrative* actions that are typically clerical work to be completed by the Town Clerk; *procedural* actions that often involve a resolution for creating an advisory board or appointing committee members; *planning* actions that require planning-related work by the Town or other



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boards and agencies; *education* actions that require the education of the Town by other agencies or education by the Town of individuals on a certain topic; or *research* actions that require the Town or another agency to look into a topic further.

The Implementation Table also identifies which responsible party or parties should take the lead or assist in implementing a particular recommendation. The Town Board and Planning Board would be involved in the majority of recommended actions. Additional comments are added, when applicable, in the Comments column and can include more specific ideas or information on funding and grant opportunities for the respective recommendation.

Finally, the Implementation Table provides a column that can be used to track implementation efforts and success for each action item. This column should be used by the Comprehensive Plan Committee to document the accomplishments (noting which of the recommendations have been achieved) or the progress being made as part of the annual review of the Comprehensive Plan. When a specific recommendation is implemented, the column marked "Implemented" should be checked and dated and any comments provided. For actions that are on-going, the column can be marked with individual accomplishments that are geared towards achieving that recommendation.



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Figure 8: Implementation of Comprehensive Plan Recommendations

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (WITHIN 1 YEAR)

Administrative					
Action	Priority	Type of Action	Responsible Parties	Comments	Implemented
Adopt the Comprehensive Plan.	High	Legislative	Town Board	Requires that land use and capital improvement actions comply with the Plan.	
Authorize and maintain a Comprehensive Plan Committee.	High	Procedural	Town Board	To monitor the progress of implementation actions and success of Plan, and recommend reprioritization of implementation items, as required.	
Distribute Copies of the Plan (Boards, Departments, County, etc.).	High	Administrative	Town	To ensure familiarity with and use of the Plan by Town and other municipal agencies.	
Establish an Implementation budget.	High	Administrative	Town Board – Should be done annually	Allows for continued implementation of recommended actions, based on budget.	



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NEAR-TERM ACTIONS (1-3 YEARS)

Town-Wide					
Action	Priority	Type of Action	Responsible Parties	Comments	Implemented
Work with the County and State transportation officials to identify and remedy problem intersections and roadways in the Town.	High	Planning	Town Board Planning Board Highway Superintendent	Must coordinate such activity to achieve change; use Comprehensive Plan to support recommendations.	
Coordinate with and implement the recommendations of the Erie County Farmland Protection Plan.	High	Regulatory	Town Board Planning Board Agricultural community representatives	Enhance the opportunities for growth of agriculture and agricultural businesses.	
Adopt rural development guidelines and conservation subdivision regulations.	High	Regulatory	Town Board Planning Board	Maintains rural character, open space and agricultural land.	
Goal A: Preserve and Promote the Rural Character and Quality of Life of the Town					
Action	Priority	Type of Action	Responsible Parties	Comments	Implemented
Create a new agricultural zoning district in the agricultural/aquifer protection area that lends focus on agricultural uses over residential uses.	High	Regulatory	Town Board Planning Board Agricultural community representatives	Replace the Residential-Agricultural R-A zoning with a new Agriculture A or Agriculture-Residential A-R zoning district.	



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Adopt a local Right-to-Farm law.	High	Legislative	Town Board Planning Board Agricultural community representatives	Aimed at minimizing conflicts between agricultural operations and non-agricultural operations.	
Create an Agricultural Advisory Committee.	High	Legislative	Town Board Planning Board Agricultural community representatives	Provides input from the agricultural community and helps to mediate potential conflicts. Can be done with or without a Right to Farm Law.	
Require that subdivision of four lots or more provide an alternative design using conservation subdivision, open development or other similar techniques.	High	Regulatory	Town Board Planning Board	Aimed at preserving rural character and open space, and moving away from standard frontage lot design.	
Revise the Town's Zoning ordinance to redefine "agriculture".	High	Legislative	Town Board Planning Board Agricultural community representatives	Recognizes and allows for a greater range of agricultural operations.	
Promote the development of "gateway" features at prominent entry locations into the Town.	High	Planning	Town Board Planning Board Highway Superintendent NYSDOT ECDEP	Improve Town's image and identity and promote increased economic activity.	



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Adopt design standards for Broadway and Genesee Street (Millgrove hamlet) to improve aesthetics and visual quality (could use overlay districts).	High	Planning Regulatory	Town Board Planning Board Code Enforcement Officer	Improve landscaping, lighting, signage, screening/buffering, etc. to improve community character.	
Revise the Restricted Commercial RC zoning for use in hamlet areas to promote redevelopment (or develop hamlet overlay district regulations).	High	Regulatory	Town Board Planning Board Code Enforcement Officer	Aimed at re-establishing or enhancing these areas as neighborhood service centers	
Ensure that new development in the hamlets maintains their rural and historic character.	High	Planning Regulatory	Town Board Planning Board	Preserve small-scale, historic and traditional character of these areas.	
Require access management along Broadway and Genesee Street.	High	Planning Regulatory	Town Board Planning Board	Control highway access, curb cuts; require cross access, etc. to improve highway operations and public safety.	
Goal B: Protect Important Cultural and Environmental Resources of the Town					
Action	Priority	Type of Action	Responsible Parties	Comments	Implemented
Amend the Town Zoning Law to establish minimum green / natural open space standards (percentage) for all non-residential and non-agricultural development.	Medium	Regulatory	Town Board Planning Board Code Enforcement Officer	Will help to preserve open space, improve aesthetics through landscaping, help to provide connected greenspace corridors and provide buffering for adjacent sensitive uses.	



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Goal C: Encourage a Diversity of Economic Development Activity throughout the Town					
Action	Priority	Type of Action	Responsible Parties	Comments	Implemented
Revise the commercial zoning along Broadway.	High	Regulatory	Town Board Planning Board	Consolidate districts and have zoning along the corridor that is consistent with the Community Vision.	
Develop a hamlet revitalization plan for Millgrove.	High	Planning	Town Board Alden Economic Development Committee	Organize land use and functionality of the hamlet, including Genesee Street and Walden Avenue areas.	
Promote the development of “gateway” features at prominent entry locations into the Town.	High	Planning	Town Board Planning Board NYSDOT ECDEP	Improve Town’s image and identity and promote increased economic activity.	
Utilize incentives, such as PILOT, an enhanced 485(b) program, Rural Business Opportunity Grants (RBOG) or Rural Business Enterprise Grants (RBEG) to promote development in the Millgrove and Town Line hamlets.	High	Planning	Town Board Tax Assessor Economic Development Committee Erie County IDA	These techniques are vital for achieving revitalization in the hamlets and providing exemptions or other incentives for business development.	
Amend the local law that authorizes commercial, business or industrial Real Property Tax exemption, pursuant to NYS Real Property Tax Law, Section 485(b) to allow for the establishment of targeted programs.	High	Regulatory	Town Board Tax Assessor	Provides real property tax exemptions to commercial, business and industrial property owners who make improvements to buildings in targeted areas.	



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Increase the density of commercial and residential development within the Village Transition/Expansion Area and the hamlets.	High	Regulatory	Town Board Planning Board Code Enforcement Officer	Locate development in population centers and where infrastructure exists.	
Goal D: Encourage a Diversity of Housing Types					
Action	Priority	Type of Action	Responsible Parties	Comments	Implemented
Maintain quality housing stock through active Code enforcement and updating of the Town's Property Maintenance Law.	High	Regulatory	Town Board Planning Board Code Enforcement Officer	Enhance community character and address issues of blight.	
Goal E: Ensure Potable Water Supply to Areas of the Town that are in Need					
Action	Priority	Type of Action	Responsible Parties	Comments	Implemented
Institute lateral restrictions within water districts in the agricultural/aquifer protection area.	High	Regulatory	Town Board Erie County	For protecting viable farmland from development pressure and to focus development to preferred areas.	
Goal F: Maintain and Promote Efficiency and Cooperation in Government					
Action	Priority	Type of Action	Responsible Parties	Comments	Implemented
<i>There are no action items for this time period -- See Ongoing Actions</i>	--	--	--	--	



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MID-TERM ACTIONS (3-5) YEARS

Town-Wide					
Action	Priority	Type of Action	Responsible Parties	Comments	Implemented
Adopt rural roadway design guidelines and standards (ensure subdivision regulations promote rural roadway character).	High	Regulatory	Town Board Highway Superintendent Town Engineer	Aimed at maintaining the rural character of local roads and making sure new roads in subdivisions are not too wide.	
Target important open space areas for protection/preservation.	Medium	Planning Research	Town Board Planning Board	Important for long range planning and achieving the Vision for the community.	
Establish minimum greenspace/open space standards (e.g., 25% preserved) to improve the quality of commercial and industrial development.	High	Planning Regulatory	Town Board Planning Board	Preserves open space, existing vegetation, requires landscaping, etc. to improve site development and community aesthetics.	
Goal A: Preserve and Promote the Rural Character and Quality of Life of the Town					
Action	Priority	Type of Action	Responsible Parties	Comments	Implemented
Identify areas where streetscape improvements should be undertaken.	Medium	Regulatory	Town Board Highway Superintendent NYSDOT ECDPW	Improve aesthetics, community character and pedestrian activity.	



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Construct sidewalks and pedestrian facilities along Broadway in the Village Transition/Expansion area and the Town Line hamlet.	Medium	Planning	Town Board Highway Superintendent NYSDOT	Improve pedestrian circulation and safety.	
Goal B: Protect Important Cultural and Environmental Resources of the Town					
Action	Priority	Type of Action	Responsible Parties	Comments	Implemented
Revise the Town's Cluster Development regulations.	High	Regulatory	Town Board Planning Board	Promote conservation subdivision and other land use/rural character preservation techniques.	
Create of an Overlay District for Ellicott and Cayuga Creeks.	High	Planning	Town Board Planning Board Conservation Advisory Commission	Important for the protection of surface waters and to reduce potential for erosion.	
Create an Aquifer Overlay District.	High	Regulatory	Town Board Planning Board Conservation Advisory Commission	Focus on protection of important groundwater resources.	
Revise the Town Subdivision Regulations to require testing of soils in areas without public water service and/or public sanitary sewer service to identify problematic soils.	Medium	Regulatory	Town Board Planning Board County	Reduces the likelihood that septic systems will fail and helps to protect groundwater resources.	



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Goal C: Encourage a Diversity of Economic Development Activity throughout the Town					
Action	Priority	Type of Action	Responsible Parties	Comments	Implemented
<i>There are no action items for this time period - - See Ongoing Actions</i>	--	--	--	--	
Goal D: Encourage a Diversity of Housing Types					
Action	Priority	Type of Action	Responsible Parties	Comments	Implemented
<i>There are no action items for this time period - - See Ongoing Actions</i>	--	--	--	--	
Goal E: Ensure Potable Water Supply to Areas of the Town that are in Need					
Action	Priority	Type of Action	Responsible Parties	Comments	Implemented
Create an Aquifer Overlay District.	High	Regulatory	Town Board Planning Board Conservation Advisory Commission	Focus on protection of important groundwater resources.	
Goal F: Maintain and Promote Efficiency and Cooperation in Government					
Action	Priority	Type of Action	Responsible Parties	Comments	Implemented
<i>There are no action items for this time period - - See Ongoing Actions</i>	--	--	--	--	



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LONG-TERM ACTIONS (5+ YEARS)

Town-Wide					
Action	Priority	Type of Action	Responsible Parties	Comments	Implemented
Revise appropriate sections of the Town of Alden Zoning Ordinance to promote sustainable (Green) development and growth standards.	Medium	Planning Regulatory	Town Board Planning Board Town Code Enforcement Officer	This is important to help achieve development that will withstand the test of time, ensure wise use of resources and efficient use of land and promote energy efficiency.	
Encourage LEED certified building construction and green agricultural practices	Medium	Planning Regulatory	Town Board Planning Board	Protect and preserve resources and promote energy efficiency.	
Consider the use of incentive zoning (per NYS Town Law §261-b) to achieve LEED certified buildings and construction practices.	Medium	Regulatory	Town Board Planning Board	Allows increased development density in exchange for green design	
Goal A: Preserve and Promote the Rural Character and Quality of Life of the Town					
Action	Priority	Type of Action	Responsible Parties	Comments	Implemented
Develop local farmland protection measures such as Conservation Easements, Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements, and/or Lease of Development Rights.	Medium	Regulatory	Town Board Planning Board	These mechanisms are aimed at preserving rural/agricultural resources.	



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Goal B: Protect Important Cultural and Environmental Resources of the Town					
Action	Priority	Type of Action	Responsible Parties	Comments	Implemented
<i>There are no action items for this time period - - See Ongoing Actions</i>	--	--	--	--	
Goal C: Encourage a Diversity of Economic Development Activity throughout the Town					
Action	Priority	Type of Action	Responsible Parties	Comments	Implemented
Pursue NYSERDA funding and incentives to retrofit municipal vehicles and facilities for alternative energy.	Medium	Research Planning	Town Board	Promotes cost savings and energy efficiency.	
Goal D: Encourage a Diversity of Housing Types					
Action	Priority	Type of Action	Responsible Parties	Comments	Implemented
<i>There are no action items for this time period - - See Ongoing Actions</i>	--	--	--	--	
Goal E: Ensure Potable Water Supply to Areas of the Town that are in Need					
Action	Priority	Type of Action	Responsible Parties	Comments	Implemented
<i>There are no action items for this time period - - See Ongoing Actions</i>	--	--	--	--	
Goal F: Maintain and Promote Efficiency and Cooperation in Government					
Action	Priority	Type of Action	Responsible Parties	Comments	Implemented
<i>There are no action items for this time period - - See Ongoing Actions</i>	--	--	--	--	



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ON-GOING ACTIONS

Goal A: Preserve and Promote the Rural Character and Quality of Life of the Town					
Action	Priority	Type of Action	Responsible Parties	Comments	Implemented
Continue to support and comply with the Erie County Right-to-Farm Law.	High	Regulatory	Town Board Planning Board	Until such time that the Town adopts its own Law.	
Work with the Cornell Cooperative Extension and the State to provide agri-entrepreneurship programs.	High	Education	Town Board Cooperative Extension NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets	Agri-entrepreneurship programs provide farmers with education on business plans, management, financing, marketing, and operations.	
Continue to work with Erie County to re-evaluate the Town's Agricultural Districts to ensure that viable farmland is included in the districts.	High	Regulatory	Town Board Planning Board	Coordinate with County and NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets.	
Encourage the use of sustainable/conservation farming techniques.	Medium	Education	Town Board Planning Board Town Departments	Such practices help sustain the quality of prime farm soils and promote good land use practices.	
Maximum building size should be considered when evaluating development along Broadway and in the hamlets.	High	Planning Regulatory	Town Board Planning Board	Ensure that the design of commercial structures is in keeping with the character of the surrounding area, particularly in the hamlets.	



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Goal B: Protect Important Cultural and Environmental Resources of the Town					
Action	Priority	Type of Action	Responsible Parties	Comments	Implemented
Promote programs to identify and mitigate failing septic systems and explore potential grant opportunities to assist local residents in remedying failing systems.	Medium	Regulatory	Town Board Code Enforcement Officer Conservation Advisory Commission	Important for the protection of groundwater quality and the protection of public health.	
Establish stream corridor overlay districts for Ellicott and Cayuga Creek.	Medium	Planning	Planning Board Conservation Advisory Commission	Such measures help to protect water quality and wildlife habitat, and help with management of flooding and erosion.	
Identify and establish opportunities for future and improved public access to Ellicott and Cayuga Creeks.	High	Planning Legislative	Town Board Planning Board Conservation Advisory Commission	Seek permanent access easements or purchase of land.	
Develop a system of connecting greenways and bicycle trails throughout the Town, consistent with public safety requirements.	Medium	Planning	Planning Board Highway Superintendent Conservation Advisory Commission	An abandoned railroad line runs through the Town. This line should be redeveloped for recreational use and connected with other areas within and out of the Town.	
Continue to identify opportunities for additional parks and recreational facilities and activities.	Medium	Planning	Planning Board Conservation Advisory Commission	This is generally supported by the public.	



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Work with the Cooperative Extension and Erie County Soil and Water District to educate and promote minimizing non-point source pollution.	Medium	Education Regulatory	Town Board Planning Board Erie County	Essential for the protection of surface and groundwater quality.	
Support and sponsor educational opportunities on groundwater protection and septic system maintenance.	Medium	Education	Town Board County NYSDEC ECDEP	Essential for the protection of surface and groundwater quality.	
Goal C: Encourage a Diversity of Economic Development Activity throughout the Town					
Action	Priority	Type of Action	Responsible Parties	Comments	Implemented
Coordinate with the Erie County IDA and the Alden Economic Development Committee to identify and pursue development opportunities throughout the Town.	High	Planning Research Education	Town Board Planning Board Erie County IDA Alden Economic Development Committee	Focus efforts on Village Transition area, Walden Avenue and the hamlets.	
Promote small-scale retail and commercial development in the Millgrove and Town Line hamlets.	High	Planning	Town Board Alden Economic Development Committee	Revitalize these areas as neighborhood service centers.	
Support local agricultural activity by promoting the sale of locally grown products at local farmers markets, festivals, restaurants, wholesalers, and schools/ colleges.	High	Education Planning	Town Board Erie County School Districts Local businesses	Provides support to local farmers and other agricultural entities; also helps to market the area.	



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Promote organic farming practices.	Medium	Education	Town Board Planning Board Erie County Cooperative Extension	Promotes sustainable land use practices.	
Goal D: Encourage a Diversity of Housing Types.					
Action	Priority	Type of Action	Responsible Parties	Comments	Implemented
Locate senior and multi-family housing (denser residential development in general) within the Village Transition/Expansion area and in and around the hamlets.	High	Planning	Town Board Planning Board	Promote connectivity and walkability.	
Goal E: Ensure Potable Water Supply to Areas of the Town that are in Need					
Action	Priority	Type of Action	Responsible Parties	Comments	Implemented
Continue to evaluate areas of the Town for the provision of public water based on need.	High	Planning Regulatory	Town Board Town Engineer	Address issues of poor quality and quantity.	
Promote educational opportunities on groundwater protection and septic system maintenance.	High	Planning Regulatory	Town Board Planning Board Erie County Village of Alden	Protection of the quality of the groundwater aquifers is essential for potable water supply.	
Promote programs to identify and mitigate failing septic systems and explore potential grant opportunities to assist local residents in remedying failing systems.	Medium	Regulatory	Town Board Code Enforcement Officer	Important for the protection of groundwater quality and the protection of public health.	



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Goal F: Maintain and Promote Efficiency in Government and Cooperation in Government					
Action	Priority	Type of Action	Responsible Parties	Comments	Implemented
Coordinate municipal planning efforts with neighboring municipalities.	Medium	Planning	Town Board Planning Board	Ensures the planning efforts near municipal boundaries are compliant and seamless.	
Identify opportunities for shared municipal services and facilities.	High	Planning Research Regulatory	Town Board Planning Board	Work with Village of Alden, the Alden Central School District, Erie County and surrounding communities.	
Encourage local fire companies to continue and expand their efforts to coordinate and share services and equipment.	Medium	Planning Research Regulatory	Fire Companies Town Board	Results in efficiency of service and cost savings.	
Pursue grants opportunities through NYSERDA to retrofit municipal vehicles and facilities.	Medium	Planning Research	Town Board	Would result in cost savings and energy efficiency.	
Locate community and governmental resources in centers of population (Village of Alden and hamlets).	Medium	Planning Regulatory	Town Board Planning Board	Promotes efficient provision of public services.	
Support and enhance continued senior services offered by the Town to retain and nurture the senior citizen population base.	Medium	Planning Education	Town Board Planning Board New York State Office for the Aging	Help to address the growing needs of the elderly to make their life easier in the community.	



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Section 6
Annual Review



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SECTION 6.0 – ANNUAL REVIEW

One of the recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan is for the Town of Alden Town Board to establish a Comprehensive Plan Committee that will conduct an annual review of the Plan to ensure that it remains a dynamic and useful document that continuously aims to achieve the overall vision and individual goals of the Town. This is accomplished through constant implementation of the recommendations, monitoring of conditions and evaluation of applied measures. This Committee would most likely consist of members of the Town Planning Board, assisted by representatives from the local community, as designated by the Town Board. The Committee that was established to oversee the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan could also remain intact and be responsible for the annual review.

The annual review should include the following:

- All site plan and subdivision approvals issued during the previous year should be reviewed in conjunction with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan to determine where the development activity has occurred or is proposed, if it has designed to be consistent with the vision and recommendations of the Plan, and the overall impact of these planning approvals on general land use trends in the Town.
- All rezoning decisions approved during the previous year should be reviewed in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan to determine if these actions were undertaken in conformance with the vision and recommendations of the Plan and if the overall impact of the rezoning decisions are consistent with the general land use trends in the Town.
- The priority listing of Zoning Code amendments specified in the Comprehensive Plan should be reviewed to determine which items were accomplished and which ones should be undertaken in the coming years. The Comprehensive Plan Committee should also determine if there are any new Zoning amendments that should be added to this list.
- The list of other priority items, as contained in the implementation section of the Comprehensive Plan, should be reviewed to determine which items were accomplished during the previous year. It should also be determined if there is a need to update or amend this list.
- Comments from the Town Board, Town departments and committees, and public input gathered during the previous year should be evaluated in conjunction with the information ascertained from the reviews outlined above, and an action plan for Comprehensive Plan implementation activity in the coming year should be developed.



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- The Committee should prepare a statement outlining the accomplishments of the past year, including a listing of all site plan, subdivision, and rezoning approvals, and a list of accomplishments in terms of Zoning Code amendments and other implementation activities, as specified in the Comprehensive Plan. This information, along with the action plan for the continuing implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, should be presented to the Town Board for their review and approval.

By following this procedure, the Town will be able to continually monitor the effectiveness of the Comprehensive Plan for achieving the future vision it articulates. It is anticipated that the Comprehensive Plan Committee will need to meet several times during the first year in order to establish procedures and review the priority actions. As items are implemented and the procedure becomes more established, less frequent meetings are likely to be required. The adjustments, amendments and changes recommended by the Committee and approved by the Town Board will be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan by acceptance of the Town Board, and provided as an annual update document.

Approximately every five years, or as circumstances dictate the need, the Comprehensive Plan should be more thoroughly reviewed and updated, as required, to reflect current priorities, needs, and goals, using the annual update reports to assist in this effort. At the end of this more extensive review and update, the Town should incorporate all changes into an updated plan, and undergo formal adoption procedures (including public hearings and SEQR review) to accept the updated plan. Unless there are major changes to circumstances or conditions in the Town, it is anticipated that these reviews and re-adoption procedures will not be complicated. They are important, however, in order to ensure that the Comprehensive Plan remains a relevant and useful document to guide growth and development in the Town and help the citizens of Alden realize their vision and goals for its future.

Section 7
Environmental Review



SECTION 7.0 – ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

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

A GEIS, like any Environmental Impact Statement, includes a section on environmental setting. Section 3 of this Comprehensive Plan provides a review and analysis of the environmental setting of the Town of Alden as it exists now and includes information on the following:

- Existing Land Use Patterns (3.1)
- Agriculture (3.1.1)
- Land Use Regulations (3.2)
- Zoning (3.2.1)
- Subdivision Regulations (3.2.2)
- Other Laws Affecting Land Use Issues (3.2.3)
- Demographics (3.3)
- Population (3.3.1)
- Age Composition (3.3.2)
- Household Trends (3.3.3)
- Household Composition (3.3.4)
- Housing (3.3.5)
- Environmental Features and Resources (3.4)
- Soils (3.4.1)
- Surface Water Bodies and Aquifers (3.4.2)
- Wetlands (3.4.3)
- Floodplains (3.4.4)
- Transportation (3.5)
- Existing Highway Network (3.5.1)
- Railroad (3.5.2)
- Public Transportation (3.5.3)
- Bicycle and Pedestrian (3.5.4)



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- Utilities (3.6)
- Water Districts (3.6.1)
- Sewer Districts (3.6.2)
- Community Facilities and Cultural Resources (3.7)
- Government (3.7.1)
- Parks and Recreation (3.7.2)
- Churches (3.7.3)
- Schools (3.7.4)
- Cemeteries (3.7.5)
- Historic Resources (3.7.6)
- Fire/ Emergency/ Public Safety Services (3.7.7)
- Health Care Facilities (3.7.8)

7.1 Potential Significant Adverse Environmental Impacts

The underlying purpose and a major goal of the Comprehensive Plan is to promote appropriate land use and avoid significant adverse environment impacts in the Town that it covers. However, it is important here to acknowledge and discuss potential adverse impacts.

Short Term, Long Term, and Cumulative Impacts

Based on the environmental setting of the Town of Alden, to minimize or avoid the following potentially significant adverse environmental impacts the Town should provide the proper tools for the management of growth and development. The Comprehensive Plan is designed to properly guide growth in the Town in order to lessen the potential negative impacts of land use and development decisions.

7.1.1 Impacts on Land

- The Town of Alden remains largely rural and agricultural in nature, which is a characteristic that is valued by its residents. This rural, agricultural character should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts.
- The Town of Alden contains areas of hydric soils, wetlands, floodplains and creek corridors. These areas have been identified on maps in this report (see Section 3). These areas should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts.
- Some locations in the Town contain significant areas of mature woodland that should be protected to the greatest extent practicable to maintain the rural character of the Town and preserve areas of open space. These woodlands should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts.



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- There are large areas in Alden where the soils are categorized as prime farmland or prime farmland when drained. These soils should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts.

7.1.2 Impacts on Water

- Cayuga Creek, Ellicott Creek, and tributaries of these waterways run throughout the Town of Alden. These creeks are important for open space preservation, drainage, wildlife and fish habitat, and aesthetics and should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts.
- The Cayuga Creek and Ellicott Creek watersheds should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts. on water quality, groundwater resources, and habitats in the Town, and in downstream communities.
- Within the Town, there are four identified aquifers. An area containing three separate aquifers spans from the eastern boundary of the Town diagonally through the Town to the southwest corner. The fourth aquifer is located in the very northwest corner of the Town. The aquifers that run throughout the Town provide water at generally a rate between 10 and 100 gallons per minute. These aquifers should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts.
- The Town contains wetland areas spread throughout the Town with no significant pattern. However, NYS wetlands appear most frequently in the north western corner of the Town, while the Federal wetlands appear throughout the Town without much pattern. These wetland areas should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts.
- All the 100-year and 500-year floodplains within the Town are located immediately adjacent to the banks of the Ellicott Creek and Cayuga Creek and along the small streams that serve as tributaries to these creeks. These floodplains should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts.
- On-site septic systems are used to treat sanitary waste for a majority of the Town. Proper maintenance of septic systems should be promoted in order to avoid or minimize potential impacts to ground water resources.
- The Town of Alden contains areas of poorly drained soils. The environmental constraints associated with these soils should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts.

7.1.3 Impacts on Plant and Animal Habitats

- The Town has large areas of open meadows, hedgerows, active and abandoned farm fields and woodlands, as well as wetlands and creek corridors. These environments support many non-threatened and non-endangered plant, avian, and animal species. These areas provide important habitat for many resident and migrating species, and contribute to the rural character of the Town and should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts.



7.1.4 Impacts on Agricultural Land Resources

- A wide number of properties in the Town are used for agricultural activity, including the keeping of horses, raising livestock and farm crops. Farming and agriculture are historic land uses in the Town and are important to the local economy. These areas should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts.
- Large portions of the Town fall within a State designated Agricultural District that should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts.
- Agricultural lands are considered an important part of the character of the Town of Alden and should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid decreasing the viability of agriculture.

7.1.5 Impacts on Aesthetic Resources

- There are many aesthetic resources in the Town of Alden, including the rural character, creek corridors, areas of open space, woodlands, farmlands, the hamlets and Village of Alden, historic structures, cemeteries, churches, and parks that should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potentially diminishing the character of the Town.

7.1.6 Impacts on Archaeological, Cultural, and Historic Resources

- The Town consists of several hamlets which are of historical and cultural significance that should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts.
- There are a number of schools, parks, churches, and cemeteries throughout the Town that are deemed important cultural resources to the community that should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts.
- The Town of Alden does not have any sites listed on the National or State Register of Historic Sites; however, there are several areas within the Town identified by the New York State Historic Preservation Office that are archaeologically sensitive. These areas are concentrated in the Northwest corner of the Town along Ellicott Creek and in the Mill Grove hamlet, the southern boundary along Cayuga Creek, and an independent area located just west of the center of the Town on County Route 343 near the Westwood hamlet. These areas may contain archaeological artifacts, fossils, or other items that should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts.

7.1.7 Impacts on Open Space, Parks, and Recreation

- There are numerous parks and recreational areas, as well as important creek corridors, in the Town that should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts.



7.1.8 Impacts on Critical Environmental Areas

- There are no designated critical environmental areas in the Town of Alden.

7.1.9 Impacts on Utilities

- There are four water districts within the Town boundaries and they are all located in the western portion of the Town that should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts. In addition, extensions of water infrastructure through agricultural areas may result in growth pressure that could impact the viability of agriculture.
- The Town of Alden has two sewer districts that serve a very small portion of the Town. The two districts are located on the southeast of the Broadway and Town Line Road intersection and on the southeast side of the Walden Avenue and Town Line Road intersection. In addition, there is a sewer district that encompasses the entire Village of Alden and one that serves the Erie County Home and Penitentiary. Currently, the remaining 95% of the Town utilizes private septic systems to meet their sewer needs. Sewer issues should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts.

7.1.10 Impacts on Transportation

- The major routes through the Town of Alden are State Route 20 (Broadway), State Route 33 (Genesee Street), and Walden Avenue. Transportation issues should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid increasing demands on the transportation system or increasing potential conflicts between automotive and non-automotive traffic.
- The Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority operates an express bus route to the Village of Alden, which operates Monday through Friday. Public transportation should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts.
- Facilities for pedestrians and bicycles in the Town are limited outside of the Village of Alden. Pedestrian and bicycle accommodations should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts.
- The Comprehensive Plan does not recommend any development patterns that would significantly alter transportation patterns in the Town, but does recommend providing additional pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

7.1.11 Impacts on Energy

- Potential energy impacts should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize unsustainable increases in the use of energy.

7.1.12 Noise and Odor Impacts

- Potential noise and odor impacts should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts on sensitive land uses without proper buffering or mitigation.



7.1.13 Impacts on Public Health

- The public health, safety, and welfare of the Town's residents should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts.

7.1.14 Impacts on Growth and Character of Community or Neighborhood

- The population of Alden has remained fairly constant between 1990 and 2006, with no significant increases in population projected in the foreseeable future. The Comprehensive Plan does not propose any changes that would lead to increases in population or extreme changes in land use.
- The character of the Town is primarily rural and agricultural in nature and should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts.
- The Comprehensive Plan's Goals and Objectives clearly indicate support for directing growth toward the areas of Town in hamlets, adjacent to the Village of Alden, or along major corridors, and controlling the rate of growth in areas without services or along rural road frontages in order to protect rural character.
- The Comprehensive Plan identifies areas that are the most suitable for future growth at an appropriate pace and scale.

7.2 Adverse Environmental Impacts that Cannot be Avoided

With or without the adoption and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, the Town of Alden will continue to have new development activity that may potentially have impacts on the environment. There will be continuing pressure to subdivide agricultural lands for new building lots, particularly along existing street frontages. There will continue to be concerns about water quality, demand for public water, and the viability of sanitary septic systems. The growth of commercial development along major corridors threatens the aesthetic appearance of the Town. Improper development along the creeks and aquifers can impact water quality.

The adoption of this Plan and implementation of the suggested recommendations will allow the Town to better manage growth and development, reduce potential environmental impacts, and ensure better consideration of the environment in municipal decision making. All development actions taking place after the adoption of this Plan will be subject to the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) process on a site-specific basis. Nothing contained in this document supplants the necessity of adequate review of future actions, however, this Comprehensive Plan will be a resource that can be used to facilitate the review of proposed development actions.

7.3 Growth Inducing Aspects of the Plan

Most of the implementation recommendations outlined in this Plan will help to control and manage growth within the Town of Alden. Certain actions will act to encourage development in specific areas of the Town and redevelopment in targeted areas. These areas have been deemed to be the most appropriate areas for development. The Plan also discourages development in certain areas that are identified as more suitable for agricultural and low intensity



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uses or contain environmentally sensitive resources. The Plan places importance on quality development that will enhance the overall character of the Town.

7.4 Mitigation Measures

It is the intent of this Comprehensive Plan to help reduce the potential impacts that may be caused by future planning and development activities in the Town. This can be accomplished by providing techniques for guiding development that may occur, such as agricultural conservation programs, revised zoning or other development regulations, and other smart growth tools. Alternatively, the Plan can provide tools to help mitigate the potential impacts of development activities that themselves do not create other adverse environmental impacts. This Comprehensive Plan suggests a number of techniques for guiding development in the Town of Alden and tools for minimizing potential impacts of development on the environment.

The following section discusses the recommendations included in the Comprehensive Plan and the logic as to why and how they help mitigate potential impacts of future growth and development.

7.4.1 Land Resources

- The Comprehensive Plan recommends new standards aimed at directing development away from problematic or sensitive areas in the Town and towards areas where impacts to the environment will be reduced. Programs such as land conservation techniques, farmland protection measures, zoning changes, overlay districts, and rural design guidelines are recommended.
- In general, the Comprehensive Plan supports new growth being focused around the Village of Alden, in hamlet areas, and in established neighborhoods and corridors. It supports the preservation of prime agricultural lands for agricultural purposes, and generally directs growth away from these areas.
- The Comprehensive Plan supports the use of conservation farming techniques to protect sensitive resources.

7.4.2 Water Resources

- The creeks and streams, wetlands, and floodplains within the Town have been identified. Recommendations have been placed in the Plan for improving their protection and enhancing their quality. Recommendations include land conservation techniques, overlay districts, and rural design guidelines.
- The Comprehensive Plan supports protection of groundwater resources, and suggests creating an aquifer overlay district to minimize impacts to the aquifer areas.
- The Comprehensive Plan promotes educating residents on groundwater protection and septic system maintenance to preserve the quality of groundwater.

7.4.3 Air Quality

- The Comprehensive Plan supports increased buffering of industrial and commercial uses to minimize potential impacts on non-industrial and non-commercial uses.



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7.4.4 Plants and Animal Resources

- Habitat areas, such as creek and stream corridors, wetlands, grass fields, and woodlots are important resource areas in the Town. By targeting these areas for protection, the Town is minimizing impacts to plants and animals in these areas, and preserving habitats.
- The Comprehensive Plan recommends the use of overlay districts to protect important creek corridors.

7.4.5 Agricultural Land Resources

- The Comprehensive Plan contains a number of recommendations designed to preserve agricultural land resources. Specifically, the Plan recommends coordination with State and County programs, support of State Agricultural Districts, development of a farmland protection plan, creation of an Agricultural Advisory Committee, land conservation techniques, zoning changes, rural development guidelines, and other programs that will help preserve agricultural land uses.
- The Comprehensive Plan contains a number of recommendations designed to promote the viability of agriculture. Specifically, the Plan recommends support for locally grown produce and other programs that will improve the viability of agriculture.
- While it is understood that large areas of prime farmland soils exist within the growth areas, it is best to focus growth around areas that have already been developed, such as the Village and hamlet areas or along corridors, or are developing rather than allow growth to sprawl across the countryside, thus squandering the prime farmland soils in other areas of the Town. Over the long run, this will result in the preservation of more of the prime farmland soils throughout the Town than would be preserved with uncontrolled, low-density growth. However, areas of prime farm soils that are in active use within the growth areas would continue to be utilized in such a manner. The intent is not to displace, relocate or eliminate viable agricultural activity in the growth areas in favor of new development.

7.4.6 Aesthetic Resources

- The Comprehensive Plan makes a number of recommendations to preserve and enhance the important aesthetic resources of the Town such as rural roadway design guidelines, zoning overlay districts, the use of incentive zoning, enhanced development and streetscape along Broadway, and by promoting the use of "gateways" that define entrances into the Town.
- The Broadway corridor is identified in the Comprehensive Plan as an area recommended for aesthetic improvements. Recommendations include creating a zoning overlay that requires enhanced aesthetics, streetscape improvements, incorporating pedestrian facilities, and ensuring effective screening and buffering from non-commercial uses.

7.4.7 Archaeological, Cultural, Historic Resources

- The Comprehensive Plan recommends strategies aimed at protecting archaeologically, culturally, and historically sensitive areas in the Town. Programs include land conservation techniques, zoning changes, creation of zoning overlays, and rural design guidelines.



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- The Comprehensive Plan recommends amending the Residential R-C Zoning District or creating a hamlet overlay zone to promote the reestablishment of the Town's hamlet areas.

7.4.8 Open Space, Parks, and Recreation

- The Comprehensive Plan targets important open space areas for protection/preservation.
- The Comprehensive Plan recommends strategies aimed at protecting open space, parks, and recreational areas in the Town. Programs include land conservation techniques, zoning changes, creation of zoning overlays, and rural design guidelines.
- The Comprehensive Plan recommends creating an overlay district for the creeks and streams to protect these important open space areas.
- The Comprehensive Plan recommends zoning changes to establish minimum green/open space for all non-residential and non-agricultural development.
- The Comprehensive Plan recommends that the Town continue to identify opportunities for additional parks and recreational facilities that would benefit the residents. Included would be to develop a system of connecting greenways and multi-use trails that offer recreational opportunities as well as alternative transportation options.

7.4.9 Critical Environmental Areas

- There are no designated critical environmental areas in the Town of Alden.

7.4.10 Utilities

- The Comprehensive Plan recommends evaluating areas of the Town for public water based on need and desire and not for promoting development or growth.
- The Comprehensive Plan recommends instituting water lateral restrictions within the water districts to protect viable farmland from development pressures and to focus development to preferred growth areas. This will help preserve the rural character of the Town.

7.4.11 Transportation Resources

- The Comprehensive Plan does not recommend any development patterns that would significantly alter transportation patterns or impact highway capacity in the Town. It does make some recommendations that would enhance streetscapes and improve safety, including streetscape improvements and access management along Broadway.
- Transportation in the Town is highly dependent upon the automobile. This Plan proposes to increase opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle transportation.
- The Comprehensive Plan recommends that the Town work with County and State transportation agencies to remedy identified transportation problem areas.

7.4.12 Energy

- The Comprehensive Plan encourages the revision of the Zoning Law to encourage sustainable (green) development and growth.



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- The Comprehensive Plan recommends that the Town pursue grant money to retrofit municipal vehicles and facilities to alternative energy sources.

7.4.13 Noise and Odor

- The Comprehensive Plan supports increased buffering of industrial and commercial uses to minimize potential impacts on non-industrial and non-commercial uses.

7.4.14 Public Health

- The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to protect the public health, safety, and welfare.

7.4.15 Impact on Growth and Character of Community or Neighborhood

- The Comprehensive Plan contains a number of provisions designed to protect the rural and agricultural character of the Town. These include land conservation techniques, farmland protection measures, zoning changes, overlay districts, and rural design guidelines, guidance regarding placement and extension of utility infrastructure, and protection of important features.
- The Comprehensive Plan identifies areas adjacent to the Village of Alden and within hamlet areas for increased residential density and for senior and multi-family housing.
- The Comprehensive Plan encourages non-retail commercial and industrial development along the Walden Avenue corridor.
- The Comprehensive Plan encourages retail and other commercial development with enhanced aesthetic appearance along Broadway adjacent to the Village of Alden and within hamlet areas along Genesee Street and Broadway near Town Line.
- The Comprehensive Plan proposes instituting lateral restrictions within areas served by public water to preserve the rural/ agricultural character of the Town and minimize development pressure on viable farmland.
- The Town is not currently experiencing strong growth pressure. Although there may be more development as a result of the new public water infrastructure, it is expected that growth rates will remain modest.
- Recommendations in this Plan will help manage growth and target it to appropriate areas, thereby minimizing negative impacts to the character of the Town.

7.5 Evaluation of Alternatives

Throughout the comprehensive planning process, alternatives for helping the Town achieve its goals and objectives were evaluated. These recommendations and implementation alternatives were evaluated for not only their desired results, but also for their impact to the environment, the needs of local residents, private property rights, quality of life, and the vitality of the community.

It must be noted that long-term recommendations have not been thoroughly evaluated in this section. These actions are optional, designed to be considered only when circumstances within the Town indicate a need for more creative or aggressive techniques, for example, if the Town is



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seeing greater levels of growth pressure or where Plan recommendations are not achieving the desired results.

The "No Action" alternative was considered. Under the "No Action" scenario, the Town would not have a Comprehensive Plan document to guide growth and development, properly plan for the Town's vision, protect important community and environmental features, and preserve the character of the Town.

The adoption of the Comprehensive Plan will enable the Town to address issues of land and water resources; community character; aesthetic resources; environmental features; plant and animal habitats; archaeological, cultural, and historic resources; open space, parks, and recreation; agriculture; economic development; utilities; and transportation issues in a more effective manner. It forms the basis for zoning and other changes to the Town's regulations and helps guide future decisions regarding important issues such as infrastructure and public spending.

The proposed Comprehensive Plan more effectively allows the Town to achieve its goals and vision, and provides greater protection to the environment than the continuance of present trends under the No-Action alternative.



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