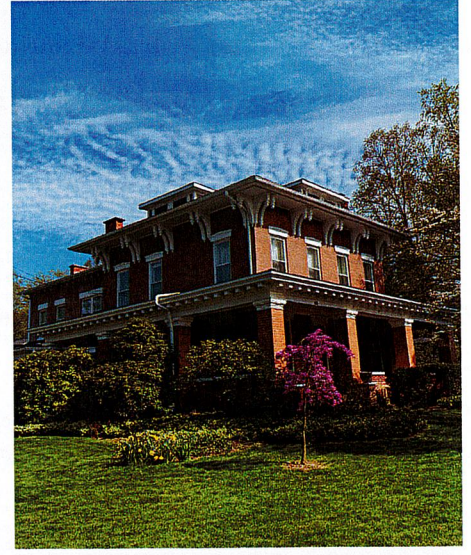
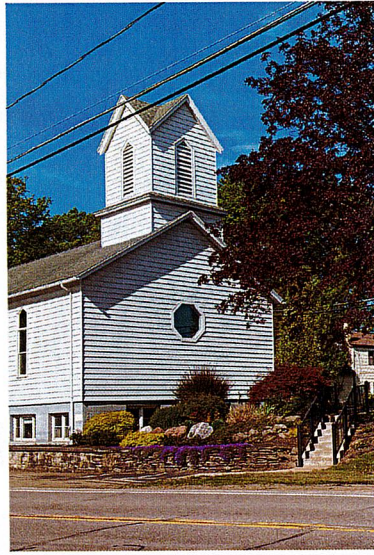
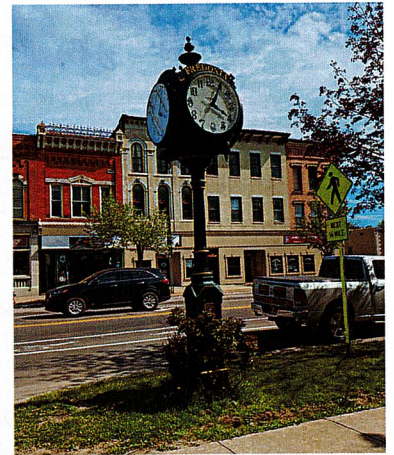


FREDONIA-POMFRET COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

ONE VILLAGE, ONE TOWN, ONE COMMUNITY



MARCH 2023

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to all the committee members and the community for all your time and effort on the development of the comprehensive plan. The following committee members were instrumental in the development of the plan for the future of the Village of Fredonia and the Town of Pomfret, residents and businesses.

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History for both the Town of Pomfret and the Village of Fredonia on Page 3 of this plan were accessed from <https://townofpomfretny.org/> and <https://www.villageoffredoniany.com/history.html>.

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INTRODUCTION

Why do comprehensive plans matter?

Comprehensive planning helps communities understand a broad range of issues and topics. The result is a single resource that should be used to progress toward desirable outcomes for these important issues and topics. A comprehensive plan utilizes a collaborative community-wide approach that includes a broad cross-section of stakeholders and residents. The primary purpose of this plan is to provide guidance to those in both the private and public sectors when making decisions that affect the future. It is not a detailed plan but rather a conceptual road map stating community outcomes with necessary actions to reach these outcomes.

Who should be using the Comprehensive Plan?

Under New York State Village Law and New York State Town Law, both the Village Board and the Town Board are responsible for adopting or accepting and maintaining the Comprehensive Plan as a guide to the community's development. It serves as a basis for the control of land uses and accountability of decisions by the various boards and agencies and for directing public improvements to help achieve a desired pattern of land uses as well as making decisions regarding public investment.

The adoption of this Comprehensive Plan exemplifies the commitment by Fredonia and Pomfret to maintain and improve the quality of life for its residents. Village and Town boards and committees should regularly use this Plan to help make informed decisions regarding development and zoning applications and how they relate to various aspects of the Plan including the vision, values, principles, and priorities. Citizens should also use this plan to better understand their community and evaluate the effectiveness of local government.

What was the process for this plan?

A project steering committee comprised of Fredonia and Pomfret officials, residents, and other key stakeholders oversaw the development of this Comprehensive Plan. Their decisions informed key components and helped contribute to a vision for the future of the communities. The committee also provided several rounds of virtual community engagement including a community-wide survey to identify key issues, opportunities and other specific topics related to Fredonia and Pomfret. Qualitative feedback from community members was an invaluable ingredient to this plan and provided important groundwork that eventually led to a community vision, values, principles, priorities, and actions.

When should we do this again?

The comprehensive plan should guide development in a community, but it should neither be the only tool for development nor should it exist in perpetuity without update or review. Demographics, priorities, and economic trends all shift over time and a regular update to the comprehensive plan is necessary to account and plan for these community changes. Communities should undergo a minor update to their comprehensive plan at least once every 5 years and a full update should take place every 10 years. The extent of these regular updates may vary but maintaining a regular timeframe will help Fredonia and Pomfret adjust priorities as circumstances change.



PLANNING CONTEXT

A Brief History of the Communities

Town of Pomfret

The Town of Pomfret is located in Northern Chautauqua County in the westernmost part of New York State. The Town was officially created in 1808, but its true beginning is seen with the arrival of Zattu Cushing in the spring of 1805. Mr. Cushing was the first permanent settler in Pomfret, although he was quickly joined by a number of other early settlers in the first five years of the town's existence. Cushing came here to settle because he had passed through the area a few years earlier on his way home from Presque Isle (Erie) where he had been hired to supervise the building of a ship to be called "The Good Intent". He was so impressed with the area, that he decided to come back and settle as soon as possible.

Village of Fredonia

In 1821, William Hart dug the first well specifically to produce natural gas in the United States on the banks of Canadaway Creek in Fredonia. It was 27 feet (8.2 m) deep, excavated with shovels by hand, and its gas pipeline was hollowed out logs sealed with tar and rags. It supplied enough natural gas for lights in two stores, two shops and a gristmill (currently the village's fire station) by 1825. Expanding on Hart's work, the Fredonia Gas Light Company was formed in 1858, becoming the first American natural gas company. A stone monument in downtown Fredonia marks the site of the first gas well.

The village of Fredonia was incorporated in 1829. The area's original name was Canadaway (from the Indian word Ganadawao, meaning "among the hemlocks"). The name "Fredonia" was coined by Samuel Latham Mitchill, coupling the English word "freedom" with a Latin ending. He proposed it as a replacement name for the United States. It failed in that regard, but became the name of many towns and cities.

Significant Historic Sites

There are several important historic sites in Pomfret and Fredonia, many of which are in the older Village downtown. Several of these sites could be considered for historic designation at either the local, State or National level.

Below is a table of important historic sites that were discussed with stakeholders and community members during the comprehensive planning process. The table includes both current historic sites and includes sites with a rich history that are not currently designated as historic sites.

The White Inn is considered historic by community members, and it is reportedly eligible for historic tax credits. It is not included in either the State or National Historic registries, but the Cultural Resource Information System lists the site as eligible for the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

Site	Address	Date Designated
Old Main Inn	24-30 Water Street	N / A - No Designation - Eligible
Fredonia Commons Historic District*	9 Church Street	1978 - National and State Designation
Fredonia Grange	58 W Main Street	1994 - National and State Designation
W Main Street	33-53 W Main Street	N / A - No Designation - Eligible
White Inn	54 E Main Street	N / A - No Designation - Eligible

**The Fredonia Commons Historic District includes 25 structures and is bounded by Center Street, Main Street, Day Street and Church Street. Some of the included structures are the Village Hall and Opera House, the US Post Office and the Darwin Baker Library.*

Fredonia Commons Historic District

The Village of Fredonia has a historic district in its downtown that is loosely defined by several streets and sites around the Barker Commons. The district is officially named the Fredonia Commons Historic District.

As shown in the map below, this district includes sites and structures along Main Street, Center Street, Church Street and Day Street. These streets comprise the general boundary of the district.

This district includes several historically significant sites and structures including the Village Hall and Opera House, the former Fenner Fire Station, the Fredonia Baptist church, the United Methodist church, the Citizens Trust Company building, the International Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) & Citizens Building, and the Barker Commons. In 1994, the district was expanded to include sites between Center Street and Canadaway Street, including the Fredonia Grange.



Figure 1: Fredonia Historic District
Source: 2021 Chautauqua County Property Information File
Graphic: Ingalls Planning & Design

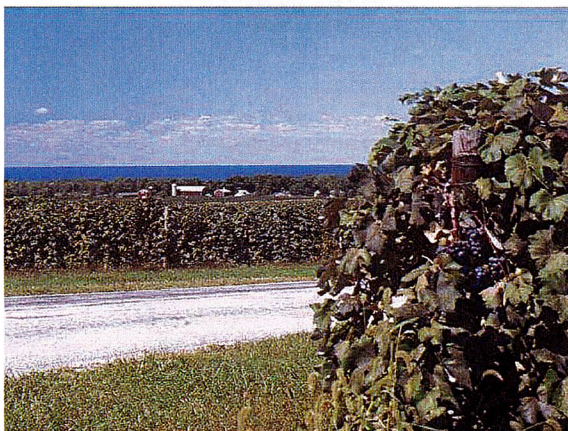
Previous Plans & Studies

Town of Pomfret Comprehensive Agricultural Protection Plan

In 2010, Town of Pomfret initiated an agricultural protection plan that also functions as the Town's comprehensive plan. The main objective of this plan was to manage future growth and development to preserve and enhance the viability of agriculture in the community.

The plan included 7 different goals to guide implementation for recommended actions and projects. Many of these goals focused on protecting and promoting rural character and the Town's agricultural and environmental resources. Additional goals address increasing diversity in housing, providing potable water and maintaining efficiency in government. The goals from the 2010 plan are still relevant today and were incorporated into this joint comprehensive plan through identified priorities, a community vision, core and aspirational community values, joint planning principles and recommended actions.

Each of the 7 goals in the 2010 comprehensive plan are further bolstered by a group of respective recommendations. Many of these are still relevant to this joint comprehensive plan and were considered and /or addressed in later sections of this plan.



Agricultural and rural character is important to both the history and future of the Town of Pomfret. Moreover, existing farmland and agriculture continue to bolster the local economy.

Fredonia-Dunkirk Roadmap for Central Avenue

In 2016, Fredonia collaborated with the City of Dunkirk to develop a forward-thinking strategic plan for Central Avenue. Central Avenue directly connects the Village to Dunkirk's downtown district and waterfront.

The plan developed the following four principle-based areas of investment:

- Waterfront
- Dunkirk Business
- Fredonia Village Center
- Historic Neighborhoods

A primary objective for this plan was to develop a long-term vision for the corridor that would strengthen connections between the two communities that properly leverages and enhances both downtown districts, the waterfront, and historic neighborhoods.



This historic image of Central Avenue in Dunkirk NY conveys the significant economic and architectural character of the corridor. Historic buildings and a consistent street enclosure highlight the potential that this corridor has to develop and benefit both Fredonia and Dunkirk in the future.

Ongoing Planning Efforts and Initiatives

There are two significant ongoing planning efforts that are relevant to both Fredonia and Pomfret. One of these ongoing initiatives is the continuing development of a Local Waterfront Revitalization Program for communities along Lake Erie. This program includes the Town of Pomfret and will also include several proposed projects along the lakefront in the Town. These projects include developing a trail to the Village of Fredonia and improving water quality for drinking water sourced from the lake.

A plan for Canadaway Creek is currently being developed with the assistance and support of the Lake Erie Management Cooperation. The objectives of this plan are to prioritize and improve both access to and environmental preservation of the creek.



Canadaway Creek is an important waterway and link to Lake Erie. The Creek runs through both the Village of Fredonia and the Town of Pomfret. Access to the creek should be prioritized moving forward to better connect the creek to the region and provide access along this waterway as well as north to the lake.

Chautauqua 20/20 Comprehensive Plan

The primary purpose of Chautauqua County's comprehensive plan is to provide a decision-making framework for County government, local municipalities, private and non-profit/institutional sectors and County residents and citizens.

The plan includes 15 focus areas, each of which includes a set of action items to pursue. Focus areas that are most relevant to Fredonia and Pomfret include: Agriculture/Foods, Infrastructure/Public Investment, Historic Preservation/Architecture/Community Revitalization, Active Living/Recreation, Youth, Housing and Local Government.

Both Pomfret and Fredonia seek to expand opportunities for light industrial development and similar compatible uses. This is further detailed later in this plan.



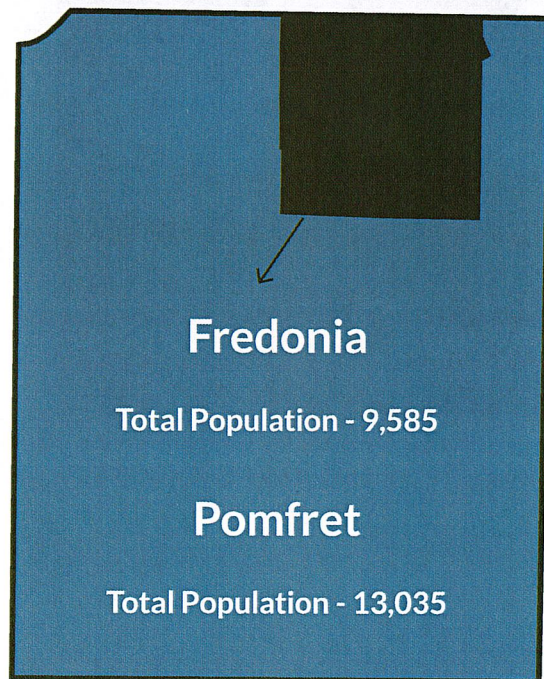
Chautauqua County 20/20 emphasizes the importance of active recreation and natural assets including Lake Erie, pictured above.

Key Demographics and Data

Total Population is Declining

The Village's total population is 9,585 according to 2020 US Decennial Census. This is a change from 11,230 in the 2010 US Census, a decrease of about 15% of the total 2010 population. Pomfret's population is 13,035 according to the 2020 US Census, which is a decrease of about 13% from the Town's population in 2010.

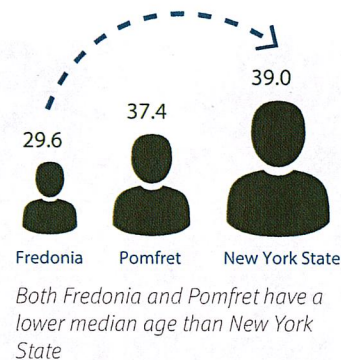
This is not uncommon for a community in western New York State. Population figures have continued to decline for communities across New York State and the northeast in general. The COVID-19 pandemic likely had an outsized impact on the 2020 Census for the Village and Town. The SUNY Fredonia Campus and student residence halls were all but closed when the 2020 Census was taken. Students residing on and off campus are traditionally counted as residents of Fredonia and Pomfret, but the college closure may have forced students to reside elsewhere while the census was being taken.



Fredonia and Pomfret should consider strategies and methods to market the Village as a desirable place to live for all people, particularly for younger families and individuals. The regular influx of young people attending SUNY Fredonia provides Fredonia and Pomfret with a unique opportunity to regularly reach out to and engage with a younger population.

The Village and Town should continue to embrace the student population and encourage them to look fondly on their years spent in Fredonia.

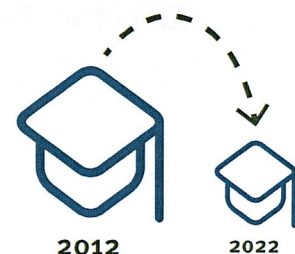
Many communities in central New York are aging at a faster rate than the State. Pomfret and Fredonia are fortunate to have a consistently low median age due to the presence of SUNY Fredonia students. The median age in Fredonia is 29.6, while the median age in the Town of Pomfret is 37.4. Both of these numbers are lower than the median age for both Chautauqua County and New York State.



Enrollment is Declining

Enrollment at the State University of New York (SUNY) at Fredonia has been on the decline over the last decade.

The number of enrolled students at the university has dropped by 1,900 students in a decade. This decline in the student population has doubtlessly had an effect on the local economies of Fredonia, Pomfret, Dunkirk and other nearby communities.



From 2012 to 2021, enrollment decreased from 5700 students to 3800 students.

Housing Data

Probable Rental Housing is High

Rental housing in the Village of Fredonia remains high and has increased slightly over the years. The methodology for determining a probable rental included at least one of the following factors:

- Multi-unit properties;
- Properties where the owner's address did not match the property's address; and
- Properties owned by an LLC

These probable rental housing properties increased from 470 in 2016 to 573 in 2021 - an increase of roughly 21%. The map below conveys all of the properties that are considered probable rentals based on the criteria listed on this page.

A high proportion of rental housing units is expected in a community with college. However, as demand for rental housing increases, the Village should consider expanding permitted housing types to better address the rental market.



Figure 2: Probable Village Rental Housing
 Source: 2021 Chautauqua County Property Information File
 Graphic: Ingalls Planning & Design

Legend

Probable Rental Housing

Cluster and TND Housing

There were several discussions during meetings with both community members and the project's steering committee regarding housing in Fredonia and Pomfret. One of the most pressing issues in the communities centers on a need to expand housing without sacrificing rural land or open space. There are several areas in both the Village and Town where additional housing would be beneficial, including land near the boundaries and edges of the Village of Fredonia. Both cluster housing and traditional neighborhood development (TND) are types of residential development that would provide for compact housing on smaller lots while preserving open space. Additionally, cluster and TND development are a lesser burden on existing infrastructure systems due to their density.

Pomfret currently has provisions for cluster residential development in the Town's zoning code, but these could be updated and strengthened to better encourage and permit cluster residential development in specific areas in the Town. The graphic below shows how cluster residential development acts to provide a similar amount of housing to a typical residential subdivision without sacrificing open space and/or agricultural land. Cluster development should be employed strategically in the Town of Pomfret, but it should be considered for all residential zoning districts. Some areas within the Town are immediately well-suited to cluster development and these have been identified in the Future Land Use map on pages 35-36.

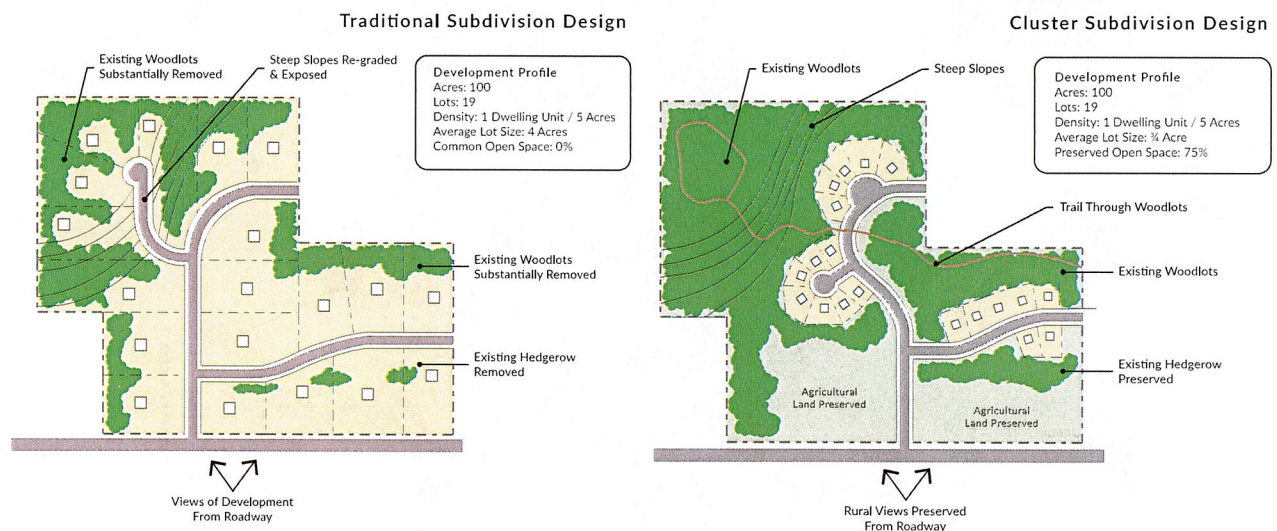


Figure 3: Cluster Residential Development and Traditional Subdivision
Graphic: Ingalls Planning & Design

TND is more appropriate for denser communities including Villages and Cities. Rather than permitting or encouraging winding roads with limited interconnectivity, TND requires roads that connect to major streets in more of a grid-like pattern that is more consistent and applicable to compact communities with a high level of walkability. Moreover, connected sidewalks and consistent tree lawns are necessary for TND to better promote a walkable and connected residential fabric that is befitting an urban village. The image to the right conveys the type of consistent sidewalk and tree lawn that are appropriate for TND residential streets.