



Existing Land Use - Village of Fredonia

Traditional Village Downtown

The Village's downtown contains a traditional Main Street aesthetic that is common to many older New York villages. Many downtown buildings have historic character and significance and they are positioned close to the public realm to encourage pedestrian connectivity and safety.

Most of the existing downtown buildings are between 2-3 stories and exist as mixed use buildings with retail storefronts on the first floor and office or residential space on the upper floors. In order to maintain this existing land use and downtown character, the Village should consider establishing a mixed use district in the zoning code that prioritizes and expressly permits mixed use development and requires specific design standards that will preserve the existing aesthetic and urban fabric.

Residential Land

A large portion of existing properties in our communities, particularly denser communities, are used residentially. The Village of Fredonia is comprised of 3,490 parcels and 2,501 of these are identified with a residential land use code according to Chautauqua County's property information file.

The vast majority of Fredonia's residential properties are single-unit homes. Nearly 85% of Village residential parcels are classified as single-unit residential properties. The remaining 15% are comprised of two-unit homes, three-unit homes, apartments and rural /large lot homes. This leaves the Village with housing that is nearly homogeneous. Single-unit residential development is an important housing type for any community, but the Village of Fredonia should consider methods and policies that will encourage a wider mix of housing types - including multi-unit homes, townhomes, mixed use development and live-work housing. Many of these single-unit homes also function as renter-occupied housing, especially for college students. With a high demand for rental housing, the Village should consider housing types that are more amenable to renters including townhomes and other multi-unit options.

Traditional Neighborhood Development

Fredonia housing that is nearer the edges of the Village consists of single-unit homes that are on larger lots and are abutting undeveloped or vacant land. One of these areas is in the southwest portion of the Village along portions of W Main Street, Chautauqua Street and Seymour Street. These larger parcels do help to ease the transition to the rural Town of Pomfret. However, they may not be an optimal use of residential land. The Village should consider pursuing or encouraging traditional neighborhood development (TND) in this and other areas with similar character. TND will help the Village to preserve open space, use infrastructure efficiently and provide more housing density in the Village. This is further detailed in the Future Land Use section.

Opportunities for Industrial Land

The Village has few existing industrial properties. According to the County's property information file, only two Village parcels are identified as ones containing industrial land uses.

The Village has one existing industrial district in their zoning code located on the east side of Newton Street and west of the railroad. This area of the Village is well-suited for future industrial land uses. There are large undeveloped parcels here that do not lend themselves to future residential or commercial use. They are removed from the Village's Main Street with existing connections via local streets including Clinton Avenue and Prospect Street. There are currently over 100 acres of vacant land in this area that could be better positioned for a variety of light industrial uses, live-work housing, maker's space, warehousing and other compatible land uses.

Fredonia should consider expanding their existing industrial district and permitting a wider variety of light industrial uses and other land uses that are compatible with light industrial uses. This is further detailed in later sections of the plan.

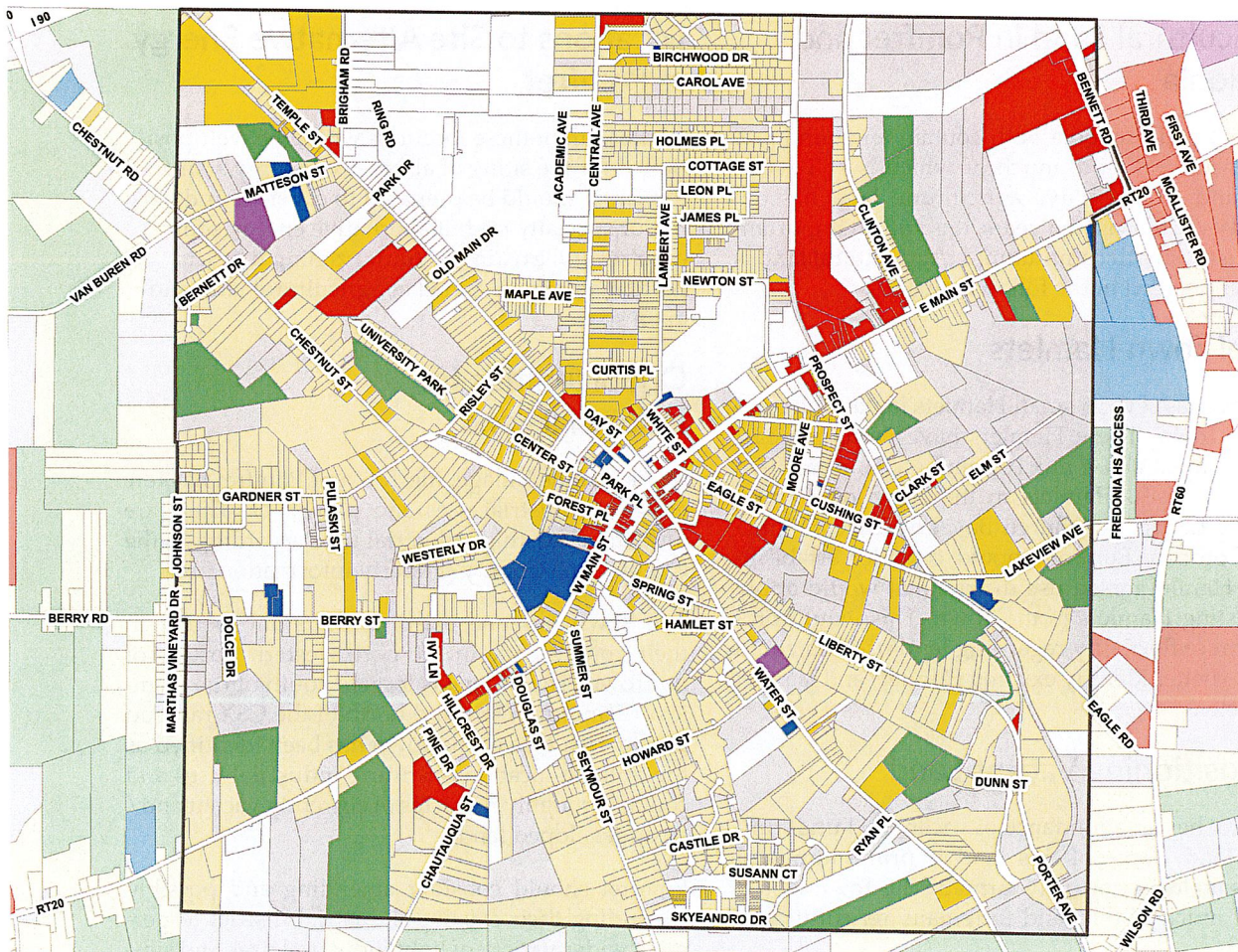
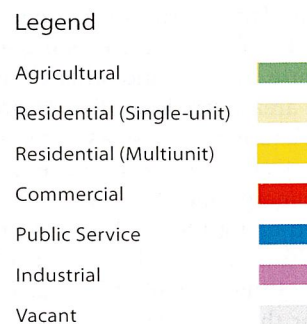


Figure 4: Fredonia Existing Land Use
 Source: 2021 Chautauqua County Property Information File
 Graphic: Ingalls Planning & Design



Existing Land Use - Town of Pomfret

Agricultural Land in Pomfret and Fredonia

Pomfret and Fredonia both contain an abundance of agricultural land, much of which is still active farmland. While active agricultural land has declined over the last ten years, it is still an important land use for both communities. Agricultural land is further detailed in the following pages.

Rural Town Hamlets

Pomfret has several small Hamlets in various parts of the Town. These Hamlets have more compact development and a mix of commercial, residential and civic uses. Hamlets in the Town of Pomfret include Laona, Van Buren Bay, Lily Dale, Shumla and Cordova. Pomfret should consider establishing a Hamlet mixed use district that would apply to existing Hamlets in the Town. This would provide more flexibility regarding land use and could help to better identify existing Hamlets and Hamlet character.

Repositioning Vacant Land

Pomfret has an abundance of vacant and underutilized land. Some of this land is prime farmland that is no longer actively farmed. The Town would prefer much of this land to remain agricultural in nature.

Several swaths of vacant land, however, are either forested land or rural land that is less likely to be future farmland due to existing soils, existing infrastructure, location and other environmental factors. These areas were identified during the comprehensive planning process as potential sites for future alternative energy sources, i.e. solar array systems, wind energy facilities, etc. Two such locations are located along Ellicott Road in the western portion of the Town and land on either side of Spoden Road south of the Hamlet of Laona. These areas contain greater than 330 acres of vacant and undeveloped land. These areas are further detailed in the Future Land Use section of this plan.

Locations to Site Alternative Energy in Pomfret

While both of these locations would be well-positioned for the siting of alternative energy sources, the Town should be prepared to consider and permit or specially permit alternative energy sources in several existing or future zoning districts, particularly those aimed at agricultural land and open space.

Opportunities for Industrial Land

Similar to the Village, the Town of Pomfret has few existing industrial uses and properties. There are only three existing industrial uses according to the Chautauqua County property information file.

The Town has one existing industrial district in their zoning code in the northwestern portion of the Town. The district is located south of the Hamlet of Van Buren Bay and north of the CSX railroad tracks. This area of the Town has been identified as the optimal location for future industrial uses and contains roughly 525 acres of currently vacant and/or undeveloped land.

Pomfret should consider amending and possibly expanding their existing industrial district to permit a wider variety of light industrial uses and similar and compatible land uses. This is further detailed in later sections of the plan.

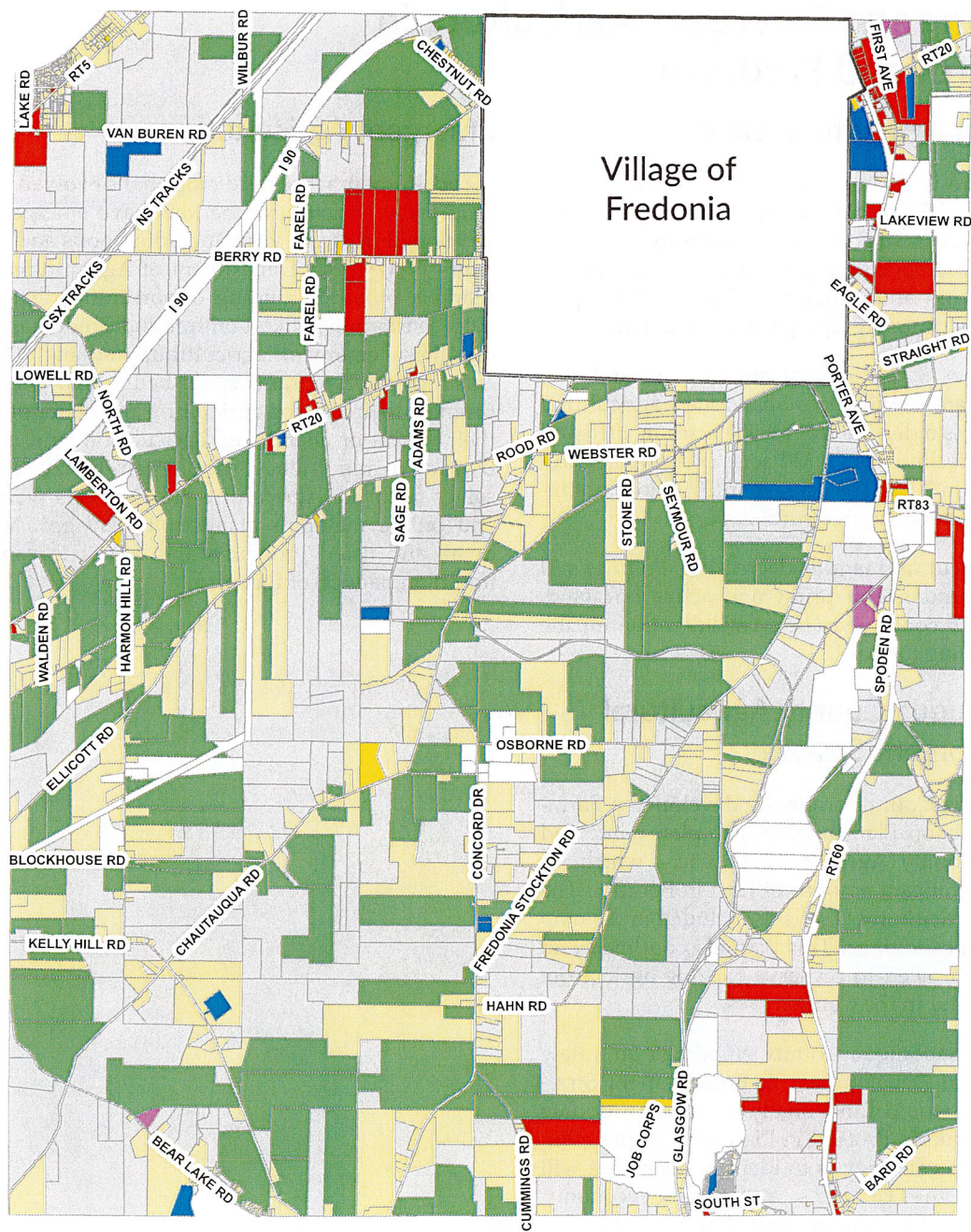


Figure 5: Pomfret Existing Land Use
 Source: 2021 Chautauqua County Property Information File
 Graphic: Ingalls Planning & Design

Legend

Agricultural	Green
Residential	Yellow
Commercial	Red
Public Service	Blue
Industrial	Purple
Vacant	Grey

Existing and Emergent Agriculture in Pomfret and Fredonia

Existing Agricultural Land

Agriculture is an important aspect to life in both Pomfret and Fredonia. Much of the existing agricultural land is in the Town of Pomfret, although Fredonia has several larger parcels containing active farmland and agriculture. These Village parcels mostly contain grape-growing cropfields.

Pomfret has 8,750 acres of agricultural land, 125 of which are classified as abandoned agricultural land. This is a decline from 9,000 acres in 2016 and a further decline from 9,350 acres of active agricultural land in 2010. The acreage in 2010 does not include abandoned agricultural land.

While agricultural land is decreasing, Pomfret still has an abundance of prime and active farmland. This should continue to be a consideration for the Town moving forward.

Chautauqua County Agricultural Development Strategy

Chautauqua County originally developed a Farmland Protection Plan in 2000. The plan reinforced existing County Agricultural Districts, which include a significant amount of land in Pomfret. The County Agricultural District is included in the map on the opposite page. This plan also outlined and detailed the need to preserve existing agriculture and farmland in the County.

In 2019, Chautauqua County embarked on a new Agricultural Development & Enhancement Strategy which would functionally serve as an update to the Farmland Protection Plan. One of the main tasks for this strategy is to identify goals that will invigorate the County's agricultural economy. Pomfret should consider recommendations in this plan that will align with the County's Agricultural Development & Enhancement Strategy.

Emergent Agriculture

Agricultural practices and crops have evolved over time. New agricultural markets have emerged or developed in recent years including hops and cannabis. New York's Department of Agriculture and Markets provides funding opportunities that can help communities like Pomfret and Fredonia pursue these emergent agricultural markets. Other existing State programs could better help Pomfret promote their existing agriculture and better utilize their vacant or abandoned agricultural land. Both the Town and Village should familiarize themselves with the Agriculture and Markets website and online materials at agriculture.ny.gov. More detail and listed programs and resources can be found on page 58 of this plan.



Figure 6: Pomfret Existing Agricultural Land
 Source: 2021 Chautauqua County Property Information File
 Graphic: Ingalls Planning & Design

Legend

- Agricultural Land 2021
- Agricultural Land 2016
- Chautauqua County
Agricultural District

Existing Zoning - Village of Fredonia

District Framework

Fredonia has seven existing zoning districts including three residential districts, two commercial districts, an industrial district and an open space district. The zoning code and zoning map have not been through a comprehensive update since 2009 and some of these existing districts will need to be amended to better reflect the vision, values and planning principles in this comprehensive plan.

The existing districts are divided into individual articles for each district and while this keeps them compact and separate, it can also make codes less concise. In a larger code update, the Village should consider using comprehensive tables to convey detailed information for all districts in a single location. For example, permitted land uses can all be included in a single table for all zoning districts.

Mixed Use Development

Fredonia's existing zoning code mostly regulates via permitted land uses. This is a traditional euclidean approach to zoning wherein each district both permits and prohibits land uses and this acts as the primary regulating force. The Village should consider a future update that encourages and requires quality design standards - particularly for downtown development - rather than relying solely on permitted land uses.

Currently, the existing C-1 district identifies more than 35 different land uses that are permitted. Many of these could be consolidated or combined to provide more flexibility in land use. This will make it easier to place more emphasis on how a building or structure is designed rather than its land use.

The Village should further consider establishing a mixed use district to better accommodate a wide mix of both vertical and horizontal mixed use development in the downtown district. This provides for additional flexibility regarding land use and can still accompany high quality design features.

Permitted Housing Types

Fredonia has three existing residential districts that function to provide both single-unit and multi-unit housing. The R-2 and R-3 districts both permit two-unit housing and the R-3 district also has provisions for multi-unit housing.

During this comprehensive planning process, it became clear to the project steering committee that the Village does not have a wide enough variety of housing types. While the existing code does permit housing types beyond single-unit housing, the vast majority of Fredonia's residential properties are single-unit homes. A future code update should consider and encourage a wide variety of housing types including various forms of multi-unit housing, townhomes, apartments, etc.

Industrial Uses and Site Design

The existing permitted uses in the M-1 district are mostly light industrial including manufacturing, production, food processing, furniture processing and other similar uses. There are currently no existing site design standards for the M-1 district. The only existing zoning process that would require attention to site design is the site plan review process, which does not include design-specific requirements.

The project steering committee identified an opportunity to expand and bolster the existing industrial district to permit a wider mix of industrial uses and similar compatible uses. Additionally, a new industrial district should include design standards that encourage landscaping, screening, buffering, pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, and building design and placement provisions.

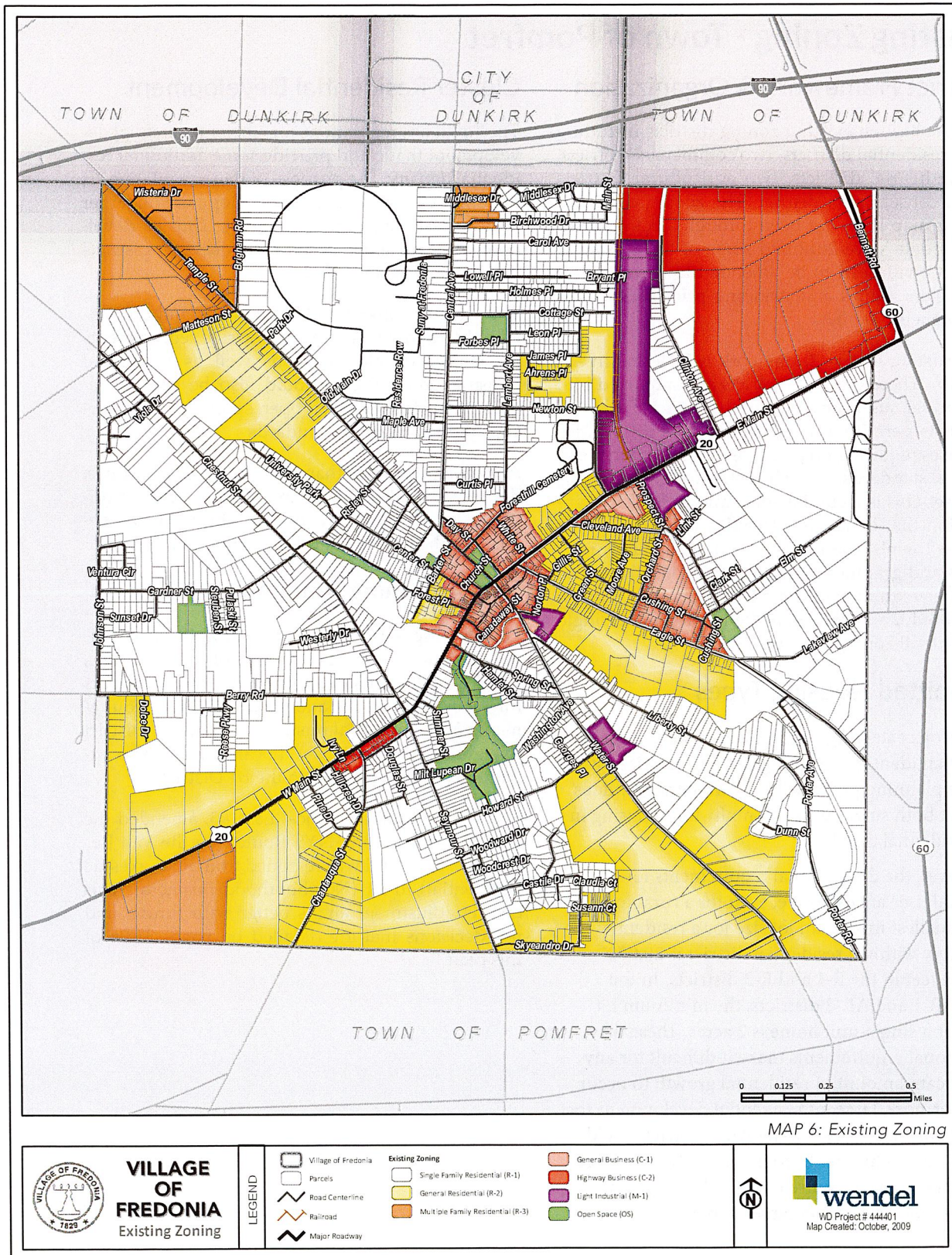


Figure 7: Fredonia Existing Zoning
Source: Official Village Zoning Map

Existing Zoning - Town of Pomfret

District Framework & Organization

Pomfret has ten existing zoning districts including three residential districts, two commercial districts, two industrial districts, two agricultural districts and a conservation district. The zoning code and zoning map have not been through a comprehensive update since 2012 and some of these existing districts will need to be amended to better reflect the vision, values and planning principles in this comprehensive plan.

The existing district framework is included in Article IV. These existing districts are organized into individual sub-articles for each district. Each district lists permitted uses, specially permitted uses and uses requiring no permit in order. Dimensional or area standards are then listed for each permitted use. This is a cumbersome and unwieldy organization that is not user-friendly. A future update to the Town's zoning code should include more tables and graphics that can better consolidate use and area requirements for all districts. For example, permitted land uses can all be included in a single table for all zoning districts.

Permitted Housing Types

The project steering committee for the comprehensive plan identified housing as a key priority early in the planning process. The Town currently does permit both single-unit and multi-unit housing in all residential districts.

However, the dimensional requirements for residential uses are excessive, even for a rural town. The smallest minimum lot size for a residential property within a residential district is 20,000 square feet in the R-1 and R-3 districts. In the R-2, AR-1 and AR-2 districts, the minimum lot size for a single-unit home is 2 acres. These dimensional requirements make it difficult for any significant amount of residential growth to occur. Furthermore, large lot residential development that could currently occur in the AR1 District would likely cause a heavier burden on the Town's sewer and water infrastructure by spreading residential homes out across fewer larger parcels.

Cluster Residential Development

The Town has regulations for cluster residential development that could provide some additional residential density. The purpose of these regulations is to permit denser residential development on larger undeveloped sites and properties. Cluster development is currently permitted in several districts including AR-1 and AR-2.

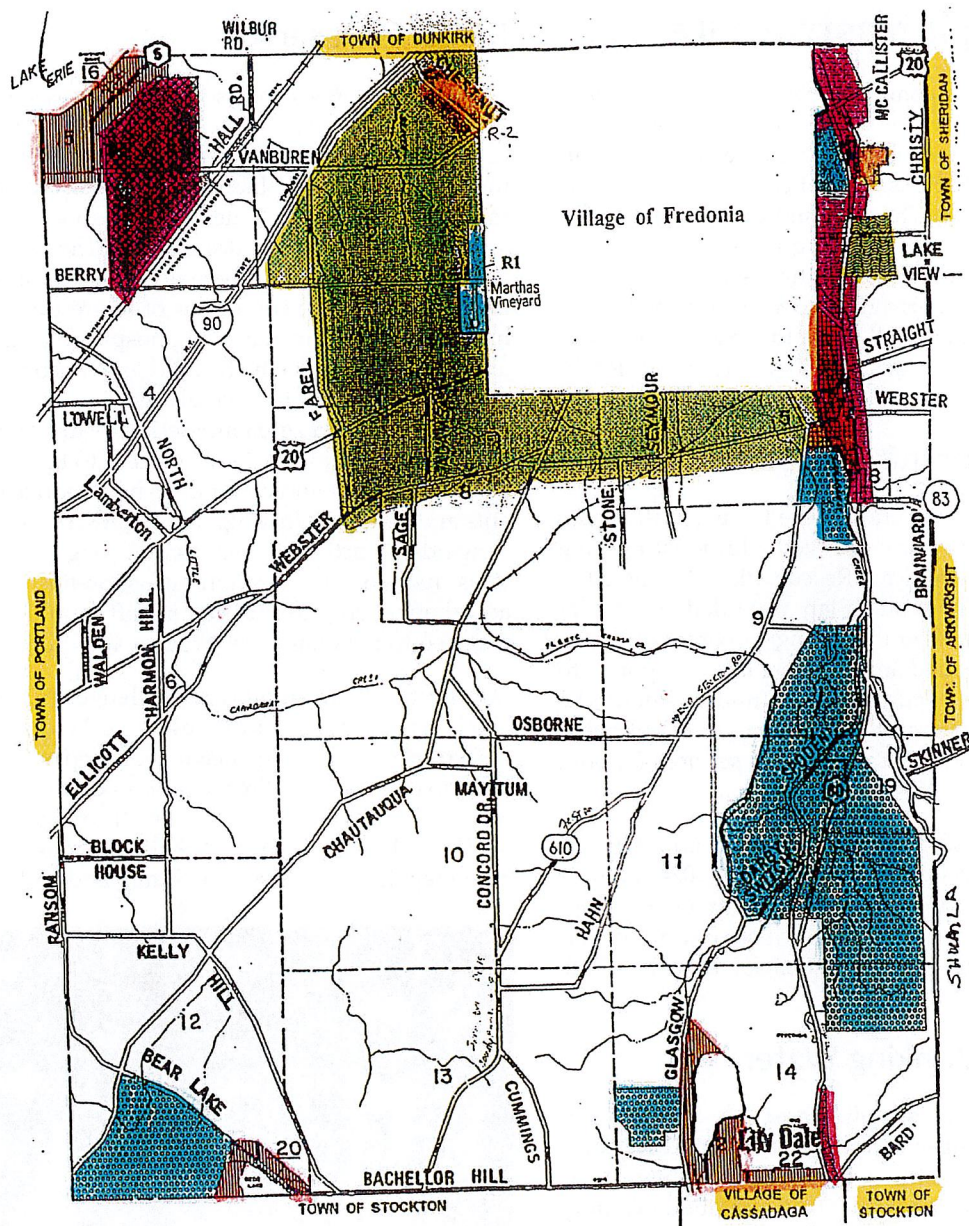
These regulations should be amended and upgraded to better define more specific size requirements for cluster developments as well as individual housing units. There should also be specific requirements for protected open space and other design and landscaping standards.

Additionally, rather than permitting this as a use, the Town should identify areas where a cluster-oriented district should be located. This is further detailed in the Future Land Use section of this plan.

Recent Zoning Amendments

Pomfret implemented two new local laws amending the Town's zoning code. One of the local laws, Local Law #2, amended dimensional requirements for lot sizes, setbacks and square footage requirements for commercial businesses in the B1 District (Neighborhood Business). Local Law #2 also expanded permissible uses in the B1 District.

The second local law, Local Law #3, amended the zoning district along NYS Route 5 in the Van Buren area. This land was re-zoned from R3 (Lakeside Residential) to B1 (Neighborhood Business). This district adjustment aligns better with future land use decisions that are detailed on pages 35-36 of this plan.



TOWN of POMFRET ZONING MAP

November 1994

LEGEND







	R1	RESIDENTIAL		C1	CONSERVATION
	R2	LARGE LOT RESIDENTIAL		B1	NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS
	R3	LAKESIDE RESIDENTIAL		B2	HIGHWAY BUSINESS
	AR1	AGRICULTURAL / RESIDENTIAL		I1	INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT
	AR2	AGRICULTURAL / RESIDENTIAL		I2	INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT

Figure 8: Pomfret Existing Zoning
Source: Official Town Zoning Map

Existing Infrastructure

The quality of a community's infrastructure sends a message. A low level of maintenance and areas and/or services in disrepair conveys to residents and visitors that basic and necessary services are being neglected. This can indicate a community that does not value a high quality-of-life. On the other hand, infrastructure that is properly maintained and regularly upgraded is indicative of a community that is well-cared for and conscientious of the importance of a high quality-of-life for its people.

Funding For Infrastructure

Like many communities in the United States, both Fredonia and Pomfret received additional funding through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. The American Rescue Plan provided a total of \$1.8 trillion of federal funding to communities to assist with needed improvements in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This funding should be considered and used to address a variety of needed upgrades to infrastructure and services for both communities.

The funding does not need to be used immediately, but must be spent before the end of 2024. Eligible uses for these funds include investments in sewer and water infrastructure, which should be considered for repairs and upgrades for both Fredonia and Pomfret.

Fredonia Drinking Water

Fredonia's water supply has been through significant challenges in recent years. In 2020, there were major concerns concerning the safety of the Village's drinking water. The Chautauqua County Public Health department implemented a "boil water order" for the Village in September of 2020 for all drinking and cooking. This concern stemmed from algal blooms that emerged in the Village's reservoir in the summer of 2020. The Village pursued improvements to the water treatment plant which, in part, addressed and improved these significant water quality concerns.

Fredonia Reservoir

The Fredonia Reservoir is the primary water supply for the Village of Fredonia. The water temperature of the reservoir increased in recent years, leading to increased microbial growth which can lead to minor taste and odor issues. Phosphorus and algae levels have also increased since 2006. The New York Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC) monitors the conditions of the reservoir and has observed an increase in phosphorus, calcium and nitrogen levels which could lead to conditions that are amenable to several invasive species including algae and zebra mussels. A buffer of native plants has been maintained adjacent to the water's edge and this should continue to help reduce nutrients and sediment loading into the reservoir. Other stewardship activities such as pumping septic systems, reducing fertilization and shoreline erosion and channelizing stormwater runoff should also be pursued to maintain or improve water quality.

Due to the recent significant challenges to the Village's water supply in the reservoir, Fredonia has determined to identify needed upgrades and repairs to the reservoir. Fredonia is conducting an engineering report to best determine the needs for the reservoir, but it is expected that upgrades will include repairs to the reservoir's dam and spillways.



The Fredonia Reservoir provides drinking water to the Village. Fredonia are seeking to identify needed repairs to the reservoir's dam (pictured above) and spillways.

Fredonia Wastewater

In the spring of 2021, the Village identified several needed improvements for the wastewater treatment plant located nearer Lake Erie. Considered improvements include replacing one of the main pumps, the grit removal system, clarifiers and final tanks. The Village should consider using some funding from the American Rescue Plan Act to make some of these needed upgrades.

In addition to improvements to the wastewater treatment plant, Fredonia should consider and pursue projects that will help to improve the existing sanitary sewer system. As communities in New York contend with an aging system of sewer lines that demand significant investment for repairs and upgrades, Villages like Fredonia should consider solutions that are equitable and efficient for its community members.

Broadband Infrastructure

The need for high-speed internet has only grown in the 21st century. The proliferation of streaming services and the number of devices that require an internet connection have made broadband integral and necessary community infrastructure.

The term 'broadband' commonly refers to high-speed internet access that is always on and faster than traditional dial-up access. It includes high-speed transmission technologies including cable, fiber-optic and digital subscriber line (DSL). Just over 84% of Pomfret and Fredonia households have a broadband internet subscription according to American Community Survey estimates. This leaves 16% of households without current access to broadband internet. This is higher than the percentage of households with broadband access in Chautauqua County.

Pomfret and Fredonia are fortunate to be able to provide broadband access to the vast majority of their residents. Access to broadband internet, however, is not the only indicator of overall quality of a community's broadband and internet infrastructure.

As we continue to move into a future that requires reliable and fast internet access, both Fredonia and Pomfret should pursue fifth generation (5G) technology. Providing 5G access often becomes a "last-mile" challenge, especially for rural communities

such as Pomfret. The physical infrastructure that connects fiberoptic cable is often the most difficult to physically and financially provide in rural communities such as Pomfret. The Town is in more need for improved broadband access than the Village, but both Fredonia and Pomfret should pursue various State and/or Federal funding to support long-term broadband infrastructure investments to offset some of these "last-mile" costs.

The Village has been actively improving their broadband infrastructure since 2020 through the assistance of grant funding obtained through New York's Rural Broadband Grant. This funding has helped the Village expand its fiber-optic network and the process of expansion has continued into 2022. It should be noted that the data used to inform this sub-section were derived from American Community Survey Estimates. Furthermore, these data do not indicate whether the population without broadband access is attributed to personal choice or by a lack of physical infrastructure/connectivity.

Capital Improvement Programs

Capital improvement planning or programming (CIP) is the scheduling of physical plans and facilities for a community over a certain period of time. Improvements are based on a community's priorities and should account for a community's desire for such improvements as well as their anticipated financial standing. Communities have a finite amount of resources and capital to devote to improvements to public facilities, infrastructure and other projects. A CIP can help communities like Fredonia and Pomfret prioritize, budget, and schedule future projects.

Capital improvement programs should be reconsidered and readopted on a yearly basis. This should also include a re-evaluation of anticipated expenditures and adjustments in light of any changed financial conditions, technological advances, costs, available materials and manpower. Both Fredonia and Pomfret should consider implementing CIPs to better compile and track anticipated major capital expenditures for the communities.

Community Engagement

Ideas Wall and Project Website

It can be incredibly difficult for community members to think to the future with the unsolved challenges of today on their minds. For this reason, it is important to encourage community engagement that helps community members visualize how the future of their communities could be brighter. In this way, communities can cultivate positive discussions during community engagement that focus on solutions to existing issues, methods to capitalize on existing opportunities and ways in which to leverage existing community assets.

During the first round of community engagement, the project steering committee established a project website to solicit feedback. One of the components of the website was an Ideas Wall which encouraged open dialogue and comments between and among community members who visited the site. The Ideas Wall used three questions as prompts to elicit feedback that helped develop the comprehensive plan. The questions below were used as prompts:

- What is working?
- What isn't working?
- What is missing?

The image below shows the most commonly used words in comments and responses posted to the Ideas Wall on the project website. The larger words were used more frequently, but each included word was used multiple times throughout the 50+ comments and responses.



Above is a word cloud taking the most commonly used words from responses submitted to the Ideas Wall on the project website. These responses - including the most common words and phrases - helped to guide the development of the community vision for Fredonia and Pomfret.

Community Survey

The project steering committee developed and carried out a community-wide survey in late 2021 during the first round of community engagement. The survey gave an opportunity for community members to give valuable input for the planning process. The survey included questions concerning a variety of topics including but not limited to existing issues, core and aspirational community values, and several questions regarding the quality of life for residents of Fredonia and Pomfret.

Survey Results

The community survey on the project website garnered 149 responses from community members. Most of these respondents were homeowners who had lived in the Village or Town for more than 5 years. There was a fairly even age distribution of respondents, including teenagers, college students, younger professionals and senior citizens.

One of the survey questions asked respondents to identify the three most significant issues facing Fredonia and Pomfret. The issues that were included in the survey question were developed through conversations and meetings with the project steering committee, Village and Town officials, and key community leaders and stakeholders. Answer selections included poor water quality, lack of activities for families, deteriorating downtown buildings, limited variety of housing, lack of affordable housing, poor property maintenance, poor broadband quality and others. Every selection was chosen at least once, but the three most selected issues were:

- Poor Water Quality - selected 105 times
- A Lack of Activities for Families - selected 62 times
- Deteriorating Downtown Buildings - selected 49 times

Quality of life can be a vague concept to consider but it generally relies on the perceptions of community members to determine and voice what makes life good or not good for them. The project team decided to include three questions that asked community members to consider their current quality of life. The first question asked respondents to rate their current quality of life. Most respondents selected “satisfactory,” which further specified that “there are some things about the community that bug me or that I find wanting, but the good outweighs the bad.”

The remaining two quality of life questions asked respondents to identify the biggest positive impacts and the biggest threats to their quality of life. Respondents selected “sense of community” and “recreational opportunities” as the biggest positive impacts on quality of life. These responses show that community events and activities, public space, and parks and recreation should be considered in this comprehensive plan.

The two biggest threats, according to survey responses, were “available housing that does not reflect needs” and “housing is of poor physical quality.” These responses further reinforced the need to address housing choice, housing options and types in this comprehensive plan.

VISION, VALUES & PLANNING PRINCIPLES

What is Visioning?

Looking toward the future is a complex but necessary exercise for our communities. The planning process requires us to think about the direction we want our communities to go. The visioning process is a participatory one for which the goal is to identify a long-term desired outcome for the community. This process works best when it is inclusive and open to all community members and when creative methods are used to cultivate a vision that is not only desired but also achievable. A community vision does not need to shy away from existing challenges, but it should primarily paint a positive outlook for the future.

What Makes a Good Vision?

Visioning is a beneficial activity during the development of a long-range comprehensive plan. All too often, however, vision statements are crafted in ways that lack specificity, avoid existing challenges and cloak the message in vague phrasing. A vision should have an appropriate level of specificity that allows for an authentic statement that resonates with community members. Vague words and phrasing such as 'creating a vibrant and healthy community' should be avoided not because they are desirable but because they are not specific enough to help guide decision-making. Communities should also be mindful of existing challenges to further ground the vision, although it's imperative to avoid handcuffing a future vision to the problems of today.

Above all, vision statements require community feedback from residents thinking about the future that they want for their communities. A vision began to take shape during the first round of community engagement. Discussions and comments on the project website's Ideas Wall helped to solidify certain words and phrases that were commonly included in response to what is working, what is not working, and what is missing from Fredonia and Pomfret. The community vision for the future of both Fredonia and Pomfret is on the next page.