

Orleans County Planning Board
Planning and Zoning Referrals

00-46 WESTERN ORLEANS Request for Adoption of Comprehensive Plan for Towns and Villages in Western Orleans County (Towns of Ridgeway, Yates, and Shelby, Villages of Lyndonville and Medina).

For the past 18 months the three towns and two villages that comprise the western tier of the County have been jointly preparing a Comprehensive Plan to replace their current versions of various lengths, formats, and ages. The collaborative approach to municipal master planning in the County was most recently done prior to this effort in Albion (Town and Village) and the Town of Barre. All parties considered the Albion/Barre effort to be a success, as it facilitated a dialogue among adjoining municipalities that have mutual interests in land use issues and allowed an economy of scale in the preparation of the plan.

A crucial step in reaching consensus on the goals of the Plan was the result of a survey. Every household and property owner in the 5 municipalities received the survey, and was thus given the opportunity to provide input. This is arguably the most inclusive, confidential, and effective means of assuring all residents can have their voices heard on land use policy. Additionally, input from interested agencies ranging from the County Chamber of Commerce to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (steward of the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge) was solicited.

As with every comprehensive plan, a significant portion was dedicated to an inventory and analysis of existing land uses, policies, environmental features, and conditions. These include plans from other jurisdictions, such as the KYC Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan and the Erie Canal Corridor Plan. The result is a very useful one-stop source of background, historic, and demographic data. Moreover, the conversion of some manually drawn maps to a digital format will likely lend the digital version to more practical and thereby frequent use by the public, as well as local land use boards, in the future.

Time constraints do not allow a discussion of each and every goal that was drafted based on survey responses. However, they are all linked to specific actions, responsibilities, and timeframes for implementation. Among the most prominent goals are: the encouragement of new, diverse commercial and industrial development in and adjacent to existing villages and hamlets, promotion of economic development, the retention of the rural character of the area, consistency – but not uniformity – of zoning provisions, maintaining a viable agricultural industry, renovation and redevelopment within the commercial and industrial cores of the villages, maintenance of the vitality of the central business districts, improvement in residential property appearance and maintenance, retention of designated single-family zoning districts, increased public access to recreational resources, increased intergovernmental cooperation, improvement of public water and transportation infrastructure, and installation of up-to-date, readily upgradeable telecommunications infrastructure.