

**TOWN OF SARATOGA 2002 COMPREHENSIVE LAND  
USE PLAN**

**TOWN OF SARATOGA  
SARATOGA COUNTY, NEW YORK**

Adopted March 11, 2002

By

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## VISION STATEMENT

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The comprehensive planning process is a citizen-based effort to plan for the future of the Town of Saratoga. Recognizing that the community has experienced unprecedented growth over the past decade, this project was initiated to help Saratoga understand the various issues that the community faces. The Plan establishes goals, objectives and strategies that will guide growth in the future.

With input from the public sector through a land use questionnaire, the Steering Committee for the development of the Comprehensive Plan recognizes many relevant and important community issues. The Town of Saratoga is mostly rural with the majority of its visual landscape being clearly agricultural. The statistically growing population, though not dramatic in actual numbers, is becoming a reason for concern. Saratoga County experienced the highest rate of growth in the Capital District and the second highest rate of growth statewide over the last decade. There is a reasonable fear that future residential demand will impact the Town of Saratoga, therefore, the community wants to be prepared with an updated Comprehensive Plan.

Saratoga has extraordinary open rolling expanses of fields and other rural scenes, and has become a very attractive location for residential housing. The community is struggling with creating new land use regulations that allow the tax base to grow without putting an undo strain on community infrastructure and facilities. The community is also deeply concerned about the potential loss of prime farmlands to residential development and is seeking incentives that will give farmers the best possible chance to remain in business.

The Town of Saratoga borders the northeastern shore of Saratoga Lake and all of Fish Creek, the natural outlet of the lake. The Steering Committee realizes the importance of this resource for recreational value and as a contributor to the economic vitality of the region as well. There is a vital need to protect and improve the water quality of Saratoga Lake. This can be achieved by educating residents about how activities in the watershed can impact or influence the lake's water quality.

The Town has two village centers, Schuylerville and Victory, both of which have suffered urban decline. The general appearance and the viability of the commercial districts in these centers need substantial improvement. There are a number of areas in the village environment that may be appropriate for the development of light industry. This opportunity should be explored in order to provide future employment for young people who desire to live and work in the same community.

The major strengths related to the Town of Saratoga remain its natural beauty, its cultural heritage and its proximity to the economically prosperous City of Saratoga Springs. These assets may in the future yield strong new opportunities for the Town, however, they may also signal a change in community character and potentially create an unreasonable demand for local services. Factors that may serve to constrain growth include the lack of a central downtown area and the physical separation from Saratoga Springs by the Adirondack Northway.



## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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The development of a Comprehensive Land Use Plan for the Town of Saratoga, Saratoga County, New York, began in 1999 and was adopted by the Town Board on March 11, 2002. The original and only Town Master Plan was developed in 1971. Experiencing a continued loss of farmland to residential housing subdivisions and sensing an escalating future demand for residential development, the community leaders authorized the financing for a new Comprehensive Plan. Participants in the process included the entire Town Board, Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals.

The Steering Committee directed the framework for the Comprehensive Plan. It includes the collection and evaluation of background data including existing land uses, regional history, natural resources and environmental conditions, population trends, an inventory and analysis of local services, housing distributions, land use and development patterns, and local economic conditions.

The project was also designed to stimulate citizen participation in the development of alternative solutions. A survey was distributed to all households in the community soliciting impressions on quality of life, land use and development, economics, local services and other factors that typically influence community life. A summary report of the survey results is tabulated and reported in Appendix A.

Issues, goals and implementation measures were derived from Committee discussions, the survey responses and public meetings. The Action Plan includes a specific recommendation of implementation strategies that is prioritized according to the actions to be initiated through the zoning ordinance, and actions to be initiated through educational channels and other community networks.

The Comprehensive Planning Committee thoroughly explored land use techniques for preserving open space. These techniques included large lot zoning, incentive zoning, sliding scale density, and density averaging. The Committee concluded that there was not strong support in the community for large lot zoning and other techniques would not consistently accomplish conservation goals. Instead, the Committee chose to include agricultural preservation and conservation principles into the site plan review process and subdivision regulations. This is to ensure that all development in the community, regardless of type and size, is equally subjected to the same standards of review for open space and conservation. The Committee understands that this approach will not ensure that farms will be preserved in the future, but that the open space character and rural working landscape of the community will be maintained to the greatest extent possible.

The implementation section identifies the actions and programs that need to be implemented by the Town to put the goals and objectives into practice and to achieve the preferred land use pattern. The principles that guide these actions should be proactive and consistent with the goals, objectives and future land use pattern chosen by the community. In some cases, the actions recommended will require a commitment of funds and resources by state and county agencies or cooperation with developers, landowners, residents and adjacent communities.

## CHAPTER 1 COMMUNITY PROFILE

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### 1.1 Historic

The Town of Saratoga is located in central Saratoga County bounded by the City of Saratoga Springs on the west and the Hudson River on the east. Figure 1-1, “Study Area Location Map” indicates the Town’s regional location. Water has greatly influenced the visual character and history of the Town. Saratoga Lake and Fish Creek border it on the west and the Hudson River to east. Fish Creek crosses the northern portion of the Town from west to east through a broad floodplain.

The adjoining municipalities include the Town of Northumberland to the north, Washington County to the east, the Town of Stillwater to the south, the Town of Malta to the southwest and the City of Saratoga Springs to the west. The Villages of Schuylerville and Victory Mills are within the Town of Saratoga. The Town is approximately 27,400 acres or 43 square miles, including the area of the Villages.

Saratoga is enriched with a wealth of history. Its lands have been the sites of some of the most important battles in American military history. Its ample waterpower led it to become one of the early industrial areas in the colonies. Fish Creek, below the present dam and bridge, on the north side, was the site of the first flax mill for producing linen cloth in the United States. Timber cut in the forests surrounding Saratoga was used to build houses in Albany and New York. Finished cotton was shipped to Boston, New York, and other major eastern cities. Trains were used to ship produce. Saratoga has grown with the United States since the Revolutionary War; only in the twentieth century has it lagged behind.

The Saratoga National Historical Park commemorates the turning point in the Revolutionary War. Although this park is located in the Town of Stillwater, in spirit it is very much a part of Saratoga. It was as a matter of fact, within the district of Saratoga at the time of the battle.

The architecture within the community is also a reflection of history; Saratoga is blessed with an abundance of old buildings and historic sites. They have been located on the Historic Sites map by numbers that correspond with the listings in this report. Furthermore, the a door-to-door survey indicated a significant number of homes built prior to 1866, and these have been located on the map according to their approximate locations.

The Villages of Schuylerville and Victory continue to be unique in their design. The alleyways, which divide each block, are probably of Dutch origin, and were part of a master plan which had its inception in the early 1800's. A map of Schuylerville in 1866 showed that two streets west and parallel to Green Street were actually laid out on paper in anticipation of increased growth.

Because heritage tourism has become one of the fastest growing industries in the region, the historic sites and buildings throughout the Town of Saratoga are an increasingly important part of the community's image.



## 1.2 Opportunities and Constraints

Inherent in every community is a set of limitations that shape the past, present and future of the demographics and physical landscape. These opportunities and constraints are summarized for the Town of Saratoga in the following broad categories: environmental, geographic, economic, and developmental. Environmental constraints to development relate to the presence of water including floodplain areas, wetlands and hydric soils. Steep slopes are the second main inhibitors to development. Generally, slopes of 15 percent or greater begin to compromise the ability of the land to absorb most development. Because of the views, the higher elevations of the Town are, however, the most desirable locations for the development of single-family homes. With new development of this type comes the building of new roads, the clearing of land, and the construction of septic systems. Approximately 43 percent of the land in the Town has moderate to severe limitations for development due to environmental constraints. At the same time, the abundant natural and scenic resources of the Town offer a high quality of life for residents, and new development arising from this interest boosts the real property tax base for the community.

Geographic constraints to development in the Town include decline of the Village of Schuylerville as the community center. Suburbanization has caused more residents to feel disconnected to the City of Saratoga Springs (separated from Schuylerville by the Adirondack Northway), and too distant from the Villages of Schuylerville and Victory to feel any real sense of connection. While the rural quality of the Town is the greatest attraction for new residents, there is also a need for a sense of community and connection to a place where people collect and share similar concerns.

The lack of commercial and industrial areas in which to direct development is a major limiting factor to economic growth. While these areas typically require public water and sewer services, they do not place much demand on other expensive public services. In fact, most communities depend on commercial businesses to assist in controlling the cost of providing community services to the residential sector. Without this ability to balance costs, property taxes could spiral out of reach for farmers and other residents whose ability to pay is limited. The issue is that there is not enough of an economic base in the Town to support many new businesses that rely on numbers of physical customers. The economic development plan prepared for the Village of Schuylerville in 1997 can be expanded upon to encompass the Town of Saratoga since the two communities are bonded by so many factors. Such a plan would help direct appropriate businesses into the existing business centers in the Villages, while supporting other types of businesses that typically require larger parcels to areas in the Town of Saratoga.

Demand, available land, and the availability of support services dictate development opportunities. The Potential Development Map (Figure 4-8), consists of an overlay of vacant lands onto the Suitability Composite Map (Figure 4-5). This map shows parcels of land that are most at risk for development because of the availability and the lower anticipated cost of development. Demand for large parcels for the subdivision and development of land is expected to continue, as Saratoga County becomes an even more attractive and viable living and working location for people.

### 1.3 Public Participation

Public participation for the development of the 2001 Comprehensive Land Use Plan has been solicited through several different venues. These have included a questionnaire for residents, a questionnaire for landowners of 100 acres or more and two public meetings seeking input on goals and objectives for the plan. Two separate formal public hearings on the Plan were held in April and May. Input from the public meetings has been incorporated into the text of this document. The complete survey and the summary of responses, ideas and comments from the survey and the public meetings can be found in Appendix A.

The following narrative represents an analysis of the results of the survey that was sent out to residents in the fall of 1999. The overall response rate was good to excellent and represented about a 12 percent return.

The vast majority, or approximately 72 percent of all survey respondents, was from the Town of Saratoga. Survey input from the Village of Schuylerville and the Village of Victory was 18 percent and 10 percent, respectfully. Nearly one-half the respondents have been residents of the community for 20 years or less. Approximately 13 percent of this group have lived in the Town less than 6 years. Over 40 percent of the community have lived in Saratoga for more than 30 years.

The community characteristic that respondents hold in highest regard is the rural setting. The fact that the region is not perceived as being overcrowded and is also rich in scenic beauty and open space resources ranks it as being the best feature about living in the Town of Saratoga. Quality of life factors also rate very high in the community. Friendliness, peacefulness, low traffic, good roads, fair local taxes and good schools all contribute almost equally under this category. The third highest-ranking characteristic is the community's proximity to the City of Saratoga Springs and the cultural and other activities it has to offer. Access to the Adirondack Northway is also perceived as important since it is the corridor to the North Country Region and to Albany and New York City as well.

The highest numbers of responses regarding detractions in the community are related to taxes. School taxes are perceived as being too high for community residents. Over 21 percent of respondents feel that the tax rate or assessments are too high and that there is a need to develop the tax base further to offset this problem. Municipal services are ranked next with over 11 percent concerned about the lack of water, natural gas, and solid waste services.

Town regulations were the third highest-ranking drawbacks to living in the Town. Concerns include loose and barking dogs, and poor code enforcement especially with regard to junkyards. Roadside trash and the burning of trash in open pits are also major concerns. Residents cited the need for improvements to local roads such as plowing in the winter and the patching of potholes in the spring. In the Village environments, the highest perceived detraction is the overall appearance of Schuylerville and Victory. Residents cite problems with empty storefronts, abandoned or run down buildings, as well as the lack of a distinctive charm.

The community rates fire, police and emergency medical services quite favorably. Each service received a good or fair response in 85 percent or more of the responses. Police protection is rated lowest of these, likely because it is a regional rather than a local police force. Road conditions are rated good by just over 50 percent of the respondents. It is worth noting that the other 50 percent believe that road conditions and maintenance are only fair or poor.

The majority of respondents rate public recreational facilities as only fair. The balance of opinion is split between good and poor. This could be due to the lack of a single central community park or the Town-wide lack of parks in general.

Town government is generally rated as positive. Good and fair responses received were 87 percent with poor at only 13 percent. The community is rated only fair by 41 percent of the community respondents. 27 percent believe that community appearance is poor and only one-third of residents rated community appearance as good.

Residents were asked to rate how certain types of land uses should be allowed to grow in the community. Under the no growth scenario, mobile homes and shopping malls were overwhelmingly shot down. Approximately one-third of respondents do not favor industrial uses and nearly one-half do not favor multiple-family housing. No land use was singled out for rapid growth but the need to maintain and expand both agricultural uses and recreational facilities was clearly favored. Land uses identified for moderate growth included single-family housing, multiple-family housing, senior housing, affordable housing, recreational facilities, agricultural uses, retail stores, restaurants, office uses, lodging facilities, and industrial uses.

Suggested improvements to the community centered on several themes. The most common remark revolved around community appearance. Most people seem to be pleased with their chosen place of residency but are unhappy with the general appearance of the two village centers and the upkeep of many properties around the Town. Other remarks were geared towards infrastructure improvements.

A second survey was developed in December and sent to landowners of properties of 100 acres or more. The goal of the survey was to get a sense of whether large landowners would support large lot zoning in order to protect the extensive farmland throughout the most rural parts of the Town of Saratoga. There is consensus from the surveys that the minimum lot area in the Rural District should remain at its present level of just under 2 acres. Comments, however, appeared to indicate a strong interest in preserving open space in some capacity. Their comments are supported by the nearly split support for and against the sliding scale density concept which is a technique that attempts to preserve the largest single land parcels. The responses for mandated clustering and incentive zoning were also almost evenly split.

It can generally be concluded that the persons who returned the surveys want to keep the open space character of Saratoga intact. However, most are unsure of what mechanism will work the best while not depriving the landowner of their property rights or of just compensation for the loss of the right to develop at some future time. In terms of direction for the Committee, the results of the survey point to selecting a balanced approach that integrates conservation and open space planning concepts for future land development and economic development and land use initiatives that encourage farmers to stay in business.

## CHAPTER 2 STATEMENT OF ISSUES, GOALS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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### 2.1 Agricultural and Open Space Preservation

#### A. Issues

One prime motive behind open space preservation is the realization that the Town can no longer afford to look at all farmland as a commodity of vacant land that is ripe for residential or non-residential development. Farmland is already developed as farmland, a use that is critical to our well being and survival.

It is well known that residential development is attracted to agricultural development by homebuyers who are seeking a rural environment. The problem occurs when new residents discover that agricultural uses function more like industrial uses with heavy equipment, extended work hours, odors, noise, etc. This results in farmers who are badgered with complaints from new home owners, vandalism to crops, and increasingly unsafe roads which are congested with rushing commuters blowing their horns at large farm equipment.

New residential development builds the real property tax base but also imposes a substantial tax burden upon the existing landowners within the community. In contrast, many studies have shown that the cost associated with the purchase of open space is much less than the cost of services necessary to support new residential development. Studies have also shown that open space areas can substantially raise the value of adjoining lands. Many communities are discovering the merits of open space preservation on the tax rate and are developing ambitious programs for the purchase or leasing of development rights. The Town of Saratoga was the first community in Saratoga County to initiate a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) agreement on an individual parcel. The Town has been initiating PDR projects on an individual basis and could benefit by having a formal PDR program in place.

Recognizing the irreplaceability of the Town's "Prime" agricultural soils, the importance of actively farmed lands to the agricultural industry, the rural landscape character of the community, and the inherent susceptibility to development, the long-term goal is to preserve the "Prime" agricultural soils and actively-farmed land to the greatest extent possible.

Of equal importance is the preservation of the most environmentally sensitive lands. These lands include steep slopes, floodplains, wetlands, mixed forests and streams, together with a protection corridor on both sides. The long-term goal is to preserve one hundred percent of these sensitive environmental resources.

Subdivision clustering allows development to occur on a limited area of a site while leaving a portion of a site available for open space. Environmental protection standards help to establish a basis for cluster development and establish the criteria for the protection of specific areas. Open space that is set aside through clustering can be used to preserve farmland (prime agricultural soils), woodlands, stream corridors, etc. Clustering and open space zoning regulations should be

based upon open space goals. One of the most important goals is to create interconnected networks of permanent protected woodlands and green corridors. There will remain a development impact, and some encroachment to the agricultural district area. However, this is another way of preserving open space without any cost to the community.

The Comprehensive Planning Committee thoroughly explored land use techniques for preserving open space. These techniques included large lot zoning, incentive zoning, sliding scale density, and density averaging. The Committee concluded that there was not strong support in the community for large lot zoning and other techniques would not consistently accomplish conservation goals. Instead, the Committee chose to include agricultural preservation and conservation principles into the site plan review process and subdivision regulations. This is to ensure that all development in the community, regardless of type and size, is equally subjected to the same standards of review for open space and conservation. The Committee understands that this approach will not ensure that farms will be preserved in the future, but that the open space character and rural working landscape of the community will be maintained to the greatest extent possible.

Preserving open space in the Town of Saratoga will require a collective effort on the part of agencies, concerned citizens, and individuals over a prolonged period of time. Open space planning is not something that is realized over a few years; rather it is realized over a twenty-five to thirty year time period. Because it is over a long period of time, it is critical that it be ongoing and not lose momentum due to small setbacks or lack of direction.

“Persistence” is the keyword in measuring the success of an open space initiative. This can best be achieved by maintaining a proactive Open Space Committee to work with the Town to identify the resources that need to be protected and find the funding necessary to meet target goals of the program and monitor progress on a monthly basis.

“Flexibility” is the second keyword in ensuring the success of the program. In this regard, it is important to remember that the success of the program is directly related to the landowners’ willingness to participate. The greater flexibility provided for the landowners, indicates the greater the opportunity for them to support the program.

“Education” is the last word in the equation of open space preservation. Landowners will continue as the stewards of land within the Town of Saratoga. The long-term success of this open space management plan will depend upon well-informed citizens and landowners that will work to achieve and support the objectives of the plan. It is equally as important to inform young people in the community who will provide the next generation of leadership and stewardship for the implementation of the plan.

## B. Goals

1. Preserve the existing level of agricultural land use and, where possible, enhance complementary uses.
2. Encourage development patterns that preserve farmlands and open spaces.
3. Encourage development designs that are creative and provide a quality setting in keeping with the agricultural industry and rural character of the Town.

## C. Recommendations

Amend the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations to incorporate open space land preservation techniques that direct residential development away from the most agriculturally and environmentally valuable lands to the greatest extent possible. This plan should include but not be limited to the following specific measures for use in all zoning districts.

1. Incorporate Open Space Development as a major feature in the site plan review and subdivision regulations. Develop specific standards for application that may include but are not limited to (b) under this section. Incorporating this principal does not take away development options but rather allows for the best alternative and most flexible design for the individual property being presented for subdivision. Open Space Development does not mandate clustering but rather allows for three alternatives in order to give the greatest amount of flexibility to the developer and the best chance for the preservation of open space resources to the community. Whether a developer opts for clustering, conventional subdivision, or density averaging subdivision, open space design is a built-in feature to the process. Under the direction of the planning board, the developer can select the subdivision design based on the best “fit” for the parcel and market demand.

Open Space Development (OSD) is a development tool that encourages land protection in situations where donations, purchase of development rights or acquisition are not feasible. Under OSD, development is limited to a specific portion of a parcel to help protect unique or natural features located on the property. As a tool, it has the capacity to direct development to areas of the parcel that are least important to agricultural operations or conservation goals. This process allows landowners to realize a return from their property and at the same time safeguard its natural resource assets or its value as a working farm. To ensure the highest value for the lots, the landowner has the option of a conservation easement on the balance of the property.

Open Space Development utilizes principles for conservation design and is applicable to all subdivision applications over five (5) lots whether they are of conventional design or clustered. Conservation design applies land conservation standards, which aim to preserve agricultural soils, workable fields, scenic vistas and natural features on the site by identifying the resources before the site plan is developed. Home sites are then sited along with roads and then lot lines are drawn. Under a conventional subdivision plan, individual lot owners hold the lands that are deemed important for the purposes of conservation. Control over the

use of these lands such as cutting restrictions are through deeds and covenants and are part of the subdivision approval. This approach is typically used in situations where the landowner has no interest in creating commonly owned open space.

Another flexible design alternative for subdividing land without creating commonly owned space is a technique called density averaging. Density averaging allows the developer to create building lots without mandating that lots individually contain the minimum lot area. The average density of all the lots in the subdivision, however, must not exceed the minimum lot area dictated by the underlying zoning district. This concept is similar to the present town-wide clustering option for major subdivisions, except that there is no common open space lot created.

Conservation design works most effectively with the subdivision technique known as clustering. Area and bulk regulations used with conventional subdivisions are not applicable and more emphasis is placed on aesthetics and the protection of unique natural features.

2. Review and improve the present clustering provision to better promote the preservation of lands with the highest scenic or natural resource values and increase flexibility in the land use regulations. Consider implementing the following standards:
  - a. Incorporate a provision for conservation clustering which is intended to preserve the most environmentally sensitive lands as open space. As stated above, subdivision designs must first identify the area to be set aside for open space. Lot layout and design should not be discussed until the applicant and Planning Board mutually agree about the size, location and shape of the area to remain as open space.
  - b. A single contiguous parcel containing a minimum of between 25 and 50 percent of the total area must be retained as open space (subdivisions with on-site septic- 25 percent and subdivisions with public sewer -50 percent). Wherever reasonable, the open space lot should be connected to other adjacent open space lands. Lands with constraints that are not considered for the purposes of calculating the number of lots cannot be included for the purposes of calculating the open space standard.
  - c. Develop a method to offer or keep open space lands, created through clustering, in agricultural or natural resource uses to the greatest extent possible. Lands with soils classified as “Prime” or “Statewide Importance” should be held in reserve wherever practicable.
  - d. Develop an agricultural land bank or trust that can make lands held as open space through clustering available for special uses such as tree farming, grazing and crop production.
  - e. Set minimum lot sizes in clustered subdivisions at the following levels:
    - Lots with municipal sewer *and* water- 10,000 square feet;
    - Lots with municipal sewer *or* water- 20,000 square feet;
    - Lots with on-site sewer and water- 30,000 square feet.

- f. Ownership and maintenance of open space lands can occur under the following options:
- The homeowners' association for the sole use of its members
  - Sold "in fee" to the homeowners' and leased back to local farmers
  - Deeded to a land trust
  - Held by the farmer with the development rights sold to the homeowners'.  
This is the best option since the field could conceivably be sold to another farmer, reflecting the agricultural value of the land rather than the potential lot value.
- g. Clustered lots should be separated from farmland by buffer strips of 75-100 feet wide.
3. Form an Open Space Committee to develop an Open Space Plan. The Committee should seek funding resources from individual and not-for-profit agencies and work with other land conservation organizations to see that it is a comprehensive effort.
- a. The Committee should develop a checklist for reviewing and ranking lands in the Town in need of protection. They should further develop a list of lands that have exceptional natural resource or scenic value and are at risk for being developed. Rankings should further be developed using the following criteria:
- Lands that are presently for-sale.
  - Lands owned by individuals nearing retirement.
  - Lands owned by builders and developers.
  - Lands owned by estates or banks.
  - Lands owned by long tenant farmers that are not near retirement age.
- b. The Open Space Committee should undertake a study regarding the fiscal impact of various land preservation techniques on the real property tax roll in the Town of Saratoga.
- c. Develop a public outreach program that communicates to residents of the community the importance of land stewardship, the economic benefits of land conservation, and strategies that are available to implement the Open Space Plan. Put together a brochure for the public that promotes the various strategies that the Town has incorporated into their farmland protection program.
- d. Work with the Land Trust of the Saratoga Region to develop a program and procedures for accepting and managing lands dedicated for open space.

4. The Open Space Plan to be prepared in the future should also include provisions for the following programs:
  - a. Expand the existing Purchase of Development Rights program. Incorporate a provision for a Development Right Leasing option, which allows the community to lease the development rights over a set period of years. This is much less costly option and can preserve the lands until the funds are found for the outright purchase.
  - b. Establish a Conservation Easement local law. Make it widely available to landowners and set standards for its use. Include a provision for “escrowed commitments” where farmers can tentatively commit to a conservation easement, but do not want to finalize until neighboring farmers also commit. The arrangement allows valuable time for a comprehensive package of conservation easements to be developed.
  - c. Incorporate provisions for land exchanges between private and public entities. Landowners can exchange lands with low agricultural value but high scenic or other values for lands of high agricultural value.
  - d. Encourage deed restrictions and covenants that limit the number of buildings and their size or preserve views and other land features for landowners who are not interested in conservation easement or the purchase of development rights programs.
  - e. Develop a “sale lease back” option for farm owners who have decided to sell the property yet want to continue to operate the farm. Buyers purchase the land at its appreciated value, then lease the rights to operate the land back to the farmer, at its agricultural value.
5. Recognize that the most predominant land use in the Rural District is agricultural. Change the name of the “Rural District” to “Rural Agricultural District.”
6. Map component to illustrate existing Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) agreements, conservation easements, and potential sending and receiving areas of Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) arrangements. Sensitive lands or places and scenic vistas should also be mapped.
7. Review the Town’s current Right-to-Farm Ordinance to see whether new language should be added such as notification to prospective buyers and a dispute resolution process. In order to build a higher level of support among all the communities in the county, Saratoga County should develop a countywide Right-To-Farm law.
8. Conduct an inventory and map which identify important community open space and scenic views. Once completed, set priorities for their protection.

## 2.2 General Land Use

### A. Issues

Land use issues in the Town of Saratoga, other than agricultural and open space, primarily evolve around expanding the commercial and light industrial real property base. The community presently has a floating industrial zone and is considering designating several specific sites along major road networks. At this stage, the Town believes that it has the greatest level of flexibility by allowing industrial zones to “float.” The community does not have a planned unit development (PUD) provision in the ordinance nor a planned development district (PDD) on the zoning map. At issue is whether there are appropriate areas in the Town to support PDD’s, and whether the intense development style will take away from the rural character of the community.

### B. Goals

1. Encourage land uses that meet the needs of the population.
2. Manage growth in a manner that is consistent with the desires of the residents.
3. Preserve the rural character of the Town.
4. Shape future development to match the existing character of the Town.
5. Manage the growth of residential developments in a manner that is consistent with the desires of the Town’s residents.
6. Develop an up-to-date, progressive land use regulatory program.

### C. Recommendations

1. As the present Village Extension zoning districts become developed in the future, consider expanding these zoning districts.
2. Consolidate the zoning and subdivision ordinances to simplify the application and review process and eliminate the possibility of incompatibility between two ordinances.
3. Incorporate flexible zoning regulations to individualize specific development to specific sites. Revise the ordinance to allow agricultural uses in all zones.
4. Develop a model Planned Unit Development (PUD) to be included in the zoning ordinance to provide for complementary mixed uses at relatively high densities, protection of open space, and pedestrian scale development. Incorporate standards and a description of the types of uses and the locations or zoning districts where the Town will consider a PUD. Standards should limit the scale of commercial development and housing types to single family detached.
5. In writing, notify all residents who live within 500 feet of a specific project boundary, of the public hearing process for all zoning variances, site plan review applications and subdivisions.

6. Develop and adopt general design guidelines for commercial, industrial and institutional building architecture that allow design flexibility and encourage designs that blend rather than conflict with the natural surroundings. The rural landscape should remain the most outstanding feature following construction. Develop a standard that limits the size of commercial buildings.
7. Consider expanding land uses along Saratoga Lake and the Hudson River to include uses that will serve to maintain the integrity of existing residential neighborhoods while allowing for limited commercial/tourism uses. Bed and Breakfast businesses should be allowed in the Lake Zoning District. Definitions and standards should be provided.
8. Develop a hamlet overlay district for the area along Route 9P at the north end of Saratoga Lake with appropriate uses and standards.
9. Prepare a corridor management plan for Route 32.
10. Consider allowing flag lots under the provision that the front lands are kept undeveloped. Define keyhole lots in the ordinance.
11. Update the Town of Saratoga Comprehensive Land Use Plan on a regular 5-year schedule.
12. Develop standards for “old fashioned country lanes” that are less restrictive in terms of width which do not take up unnecessary resources and will better represent the character of the community.
13. Review and update the Town Zoning Ordinance as necessary to allow certain private recreational uses in particular districts as “allowed by special permit.”
14. Develop consensus on methods to steer the demand for high-density, residential housing to existing, vacant housing stock within the Villages of Schuylerville and Victory. Such methods may include proactive contact with local homebuilders, renovation contractors, realtors, etc.
15. Add a definition for junkyards to the Zoning Ordinance and strengthen regulatory language.
16. Revise the sign ordinance to prohibit billboards and back-lit signs. Incorporate the sign ordinance with the Zoning Ordinance during the update process.
17. Encourage home occupations and cottage industry businesses by specifically permitting them in the Zoning Ordinance.
18. Revise the Zoning Ordinance to adjust density, height, bulk and area requirements, which serve to restrict commercial and high-density residential development in the Town.

19. Develop revisions to the use schedule and minimum lot sizes that protect open space and limit rural sprawl. These should include conservation design standards.
20. Incorporate illustrations into the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations to better direct how the community wants to look like in the future.
21. Revise and/or add definitions in the zoning ordinance to reflect the specific types of uses, particularly agricultural uses, so they will not be discouraged from locating in the community.
22. Develop and adopt design site development guidelines that provide direction for prospective developers and designers for building placement, landscaping, parking lot placement and operation, road layout and design, drainage, lighting, buffering, access, and pedestrian access. Add height restrictions for residences (35 feet is suggested).
23. Develop and adopt an animal control ordinance.
24. Adopt a livestock ordinance.
25. Develop standards for the operation of marinas. Include provisions for parking, garbage, pump outs, stormwater runoff, boat storage and dock expansion.
26. Investigate the need to regulate the number of docks at residential properties and the use of those docks by non-residents.

### **2.3 Commercial and Industrial Development**

#### **A. Issues**

The general consensus in the community is that commercial and light industrial uses should be promoted in order to build the real property base and provide more opportunities for local employment. It is difficult to attract industries and commercial enterprises in Saratoga because there is no Town-wide sewer and water infrastructure, and it is not possible to provide truly shovel-ready sites without establishing an industrial zone. The Town of Saratoga presently has a “floating” industrial zone and does not intend to designate specific zones or sites at this time.

#### **B. Goals**

Encourage the establishment of light industrial land uses.

## C. Recommendations

1. Add and define the term “Employment Opportunity Zones” to the Zoning Ordinance.
2. Identify and evaluate areas on the Proposed Zoning Map for the establishment of “Employment Opportunity Zones.” Employment opportunity zones accommodate light industrial uses such as low intensity, non-polluting manufacturing, assembly, production, and warehousing. Light industry would include accessory uses such as office space, storage, parking and areas for loading and unloading.
3. Revise the Town Zoning Ordinance to include Employment Opportunity Zones with use schedules and height, bulk, and area requirements that are attractive to prospective industries and consistent with the desires of the community. Define this term in the ordinance.
4. Develop and adopt building floor area to lot area ratios that reflect smaller scale commercial and industrial development in keeping with the scale and character of existing development.

Work with the Saratoga Economic Development Corporation (SEDC) to target complementary light industry (i.e., agricultural related, food processing, storage, distribution, etc.).

Develop a strategy to take complete advantage of the opportunities provided by the newly designated Empire Zone.

## 2.4 Natural Resources Protection

### A. Issues

There is a network of important and valuable natural resources throughout the community. The Town places a high value on protecting these resources from degradation. There are obvious threats to both surface water and groundwater resources from agricultural runoff and individual septic fields from residences. Although much of the resources in the community have not been tested for quality assurance, some resources, such as Saratoga Lake, are known to have become overly productive due to runoff from various land uses. To offset potential environmental problems, best management practices can be put in place for all realms of development.

### B. Goals

1. Preserve scenic vistas.
2. Preserve the qualities of the natural environment.

### C. Recommendations

1. Create an Environmental Protection Overlay District in the Zoning Ordinance that permits floating overlay zones and identifies specific areas in need of special protection including flood hazard areas, watershed protection areas, federal and state freshwater wetlands, slopes 15 percent or greater, wildlife corridors and scenic vistas. Specific standards should be developed for the above situations so that a greater level of protection exists in the overlay district.
2. Strengthen provisions in the zoning ordinance for the management of stormwater, erosion and the placement and maintenance of individual on-site septic systems.
3. Increase setback requirements for land use activities adjacent to lakes, streams and wetlands as directed by the Environmental Protection Overlay District.
4. Adopt a groundwater protection ordinance under the guidance of the Saratoga County Soil and Water Conservation District.
5. Adopt a set of conservation design guidelines that protect the integrity of the natural landscape and direct development to the most appropriate locations on individual sites.
6. Consult the Saratoga Lake Watershed Management Plan for recommendations regarding land use regulatory provisions necessary to protect natural resources in the Saratoga Lake watershed.
7. Participate and promote the Special Place Stewardship Plan developed by the Land Trust of the Saratoga Region.
8. Adopt a scenic overlay district to preserve scenic vistas along Route 4 as recommended by the Champlain Canal Byway Enhancement Plan. Consider the same for other areas in the community that are designated as scenic by the plan.
9. Design and distribute an educational brochure about the natural resources in the community and the various ways the Town, residents and visitors and individuals can contribute towards their protection.
10. Participate in the Champlain Canal Heritage Area Program that is proposing to establish a Greenway corridor along the Hudson River.
11. The Planning Board should adopt a watershed approach when reviewing projects to ensure that potential impacts on downstream resources are reasonably considered.
12. Recognize that hillsides are a highly desirable place to build houses and develop land use standards that address land clearing, road construction and building height.

13. Add State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) provisions to the Zoning Ordinance so that they are considered an integral part of the comprehensive planning process for each application to which they are applicable.

## 2.5 Recreation

### A. Issues

Recreational needs in the community are growing with the increasing numbers of residents living in the Town. At issue is whether to design a centrally located community park with playing

fields, playground, picnic sites, etc. or create smaller pocket parks throughout the residential sections of the Town. There are additional recreational opportunities being established through heritage tourism efforts along the Champlain Canal corridor and bikeway connections from neighboring communities.

Another issue is creating more public access to the water resources that border and traverse the entire community. The water quality of the Hudson River



may be impacted for many years, should dredging be carried out to remove PCB's. All of these potential opportunities and constraints must be taken under consideration to best meet the growing demands from the residential and tourist community.

### B. Goals

Improve the variety and availability of recreational facilities.

### C. Recommendations

1. Develop a Town Recreation Plan. Include the components under this section. Research potential ways to finance various aspects of the plan. Consider recreation fees for major subdivisions to help pay for recreational facilities.

2. Identify and improve access and points of contact along shorelines of the Town and market these areas for water-based recreation activities. Identify and develop points of access along Fish Creek for non-motorized boats.
3. Consult with other communities regarding the control of jet skis on Saratoga Lake and Fish Creek.
4. Identify areas for passive forms of recreation such as expansion of the nature trail. Expand the existing Bog Meadow Nature Trail along the former railroad tracks to Schuylerville.
5. Explore methods to link with regional bikeways, heritage trails, scenic byways, etc.
6. Work with the Land Trust of the Saratoga Region and the Saratoga County Heritage Trail Committee to identify appropriate recreation uses on open space lands. Consider hiking, cross-country skiing, snow shoeing, horseback riding, mountain biking, etc. as they might relate to a countywide trail system.
7. Establish a Town bicycle plan that supports the recommendations of the Saratoga County Bicycle Plan.

Authorize the preparation of a site assessment and feasibility analysis to identify the optimum location for a Town Park considering especially Town owned property in Quaker Springs. As part of the analysis, sponsor public meetings and a design workshop to solicit public input on specific preferences for location and design of the park. Apply for funding through the NYS Environmental Protection Fund and the Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act to subsidize the installation of planned improvements and facilities. During the Town budget process, allocate sufficient funding for facility maintenance and upkeep. Look for appropriate funding for a pocket park and renovation for “Springwell” in Quaker Springs.



## 2.6 Economic Development

### A. Issues

There is no established economic development policy or strategy for the Town of Saratoga however the Saratoga County Economic Development Corporation is an excellent resource in which to develop incentives and initiatives to attract certain industries. The community also wants to maintain farming as the primary commercial enterprise and needs to develop a set of economic initiatives that help support local agricultural.

### B. Goals

1. Preserve agricultural businesses to the greatest extent possible.
2. Provide more quality jobs within the region.
3. Encourage light industry to locate within the Town.
4. Enhance tourism opportunities.

### C. Recommendations

1. Create a committee of in-Town farmers to act as a liaison between the farm community and the Town and County government and the Saratoga Economic Development Corporation (SEDC). The purpose of the committee would be to communicate the economic issues of the farm community.
2. Promote economic development initiatives that complement crops and livestock raised in the community as means to increase the profitability of the farms in the Town.
3. Consider the development and implementation of a Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) system as a means to determine the quality of land for agricultural uses and to access sites for their agricultural economic viability.
4. Develop a Local Economic Development Strategy in conjunction with the Saratoga Economic Development Corporation (SEDC) and Village governments. They should work to achieve the following initiatives:
  - a. Develop incentives (loan programs, innovative lease arrangements, retail incubators, etc.) to attract new businesses into the Village centers.
  - b. Work with SEDC to develop a progressive program inclusive of marketing, financial incentives, design/build alternatives, site readiness initiatives and lease/purchase options that are attractive to the targeted industries.
  - c. Identify methods to provide job training for eligible, unemployed residents.

- d. Encourage the SEDC to regularly survey high school juniors and seniors to assess trends in job performances and career paths. Begin to target industry and job opportunities that are responsive to these future jobholders.
- e. Target progressive businesses and industries which supply comprehensive benefit packages for their employees including health insurance coverage, profit sharing, retirement planning, flexible work scheduling, compensatory time programs, incentives for internal advancement, etc.
- f. Develop a marketing program that specifically targets industry that meets the criteria of the Town. Such industry should be responsive to the skill levels and career qualities of the Town's work force, be progressive in the employee benefits offered and pay wages that exceed the per capita and family income levels existing in the Town.
- g. Develop a marketing strategy to develop a tourism industry for the community.
- h. Support the recommendations outlined in the Champlain Canal Byway Plan regarding heritage and recreational tourism development along the Route 4 corridor from Waterford to Whitehall.
- i. Coordinate event-oriented planning initiatives with marketing to attract targeted segments of the tourist population.

## **2.7 Community Pride Initiatives**

### **A. Issues**

The continued trend of residential growth into the more rural sections of the Town is causing some residents to feel less connected to the community. This is typical when people move further and further away from the community's center. Creating a new center will only promote more residential intrusion into agricultural lands and further dilute the local business away from the Villages of Victory and Schuylerville. It makes more sense to improve connections and communications with the village centers and hold virtually all community events in these population centers. Residents who experience a sense of true community are more likely to serve on emergency squads and fire departments, support school budgets and make other important contributions.

### **B. Goals**

Improve the quality of life and community appearance for residents in the Town.

## C. Recommendations

1. Initiate a project to design and place attractive welcome signs at important entryways to the community.
2. Develop a Town Newsletter that publishes events, meetings, land use initiatives and other news that encourages community spirit, pride and involvement.
3. Conduct semi-annual public workshops as a means to learn of the public's concerns, provide an update as to the remedial actions being taken, and receive input on various community issues. Maintain a record of issues, concerns and potential resolutions, which are raised at various meetings.
4. Meet with local businesses and industry leaders to discuss suitability of the road system servicing their respective businesses.
5. Initiate a Consolidation Study that considers fiscal and other ramifications of dissolving the Villages of Schuylerville and Victory or sharing services.
6. Develop educational and leadership programs for adults and younger residents that emphasize community service and the advantages of positive civic behavior.
7. Schedule events (community days, picnics, recreational contacts, etc.) that bring the community together and provide a forum for integration of the land stewardship and other educational programs.
8. Support the Village centers of Schuylerville and Victory as the main commercial centers. Continue to help promote their downtown redevelopment efforts by not creating new commercial centers in the Town of Saratoga.

## 2.8 Community Services

### A. Issues

Suburbanization typically creates a sprawl effect where people desire more space and then demand the community services that go along with neighborhood subdivisions and suburban life. This has the effect to spread the demand to less dense areas which in turn tends to be more expensive for the community and creates the need to increase the tax base to lessen the overall cost. The most impacted community service has been fire protection. The need for volunteers has increased due to the amount of coverage and risk of fires, while the number of actual volunteers has decreased. The cost of providing paid staff for fire departments cannot be borne by the residents of the community at this time.

B. Goals

1. Provide efficient fire protection services to all areas of the Town.
2. Maintain the safe and secure environment currently existing in the Town.
3. Advance inter-municipal cooperation between the Town and the Villages.

C. Recommendations

1. Investigate the possibility and benefits, if any, associated with amending fire district boundaries. Meet with the chiefs from the fire companies servicing the Town to discuss existing status and equipment conditions and suggestions for consolidation or amending boundaries. Gather input from the committee as to what they feel are important considerations for improvement of fire service to all areas of the Town. Such considerations may include, but not be limited to, existing response times, response routes, physical restrictions associated with response routes, existing areas of development, projected areas of development, and alternatives for boundary configurations for improvements of service and limitations due to the shortage of volunteer firemen.
2. Develop and activate a recruitment plan for roughly 30 volunteer firefighters in the Lake District with the ultimate goal of locating a supporting substation along Saratoga Lake.
3. Continue to identify the need for replacement as well as new additional equipment to meet the needs of the Town over the next twenty-five (25) years. Adequately fund capital reserves to plan for future costs associated with replacement and purchase of new equipment.
4. Continue to maintain current funding, staffing and equipment levels of the law enforcement services within the Town. As needs increase with the increasing population, plan to increase levels of funding, staffing and equipment accordingly.
5. Initiate a cost of community services study to examine the fiscal impact of residential, commercial, industrial and agricultural development in the community. Allow the study to assist in identifying and controlling the kinds of development the community wants to encourage and to discourage.
6. Continue to maintain adequate code enforcement for proper administration of NYS Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code, local codes and laws and approvals and conditional approvals as granted by the Town Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals.
7. Conduct joint meetings between the Town Board and the Village Boards of Schuylerville and Victory to set goals and standards for regional growth. Discuss how shared services may be enhanced to support the infrastructure needs of the region and further advance the methods developed.

## **2.9 Infrastructure**

### **A. Issues**

Infrastructure issues center on providing safe passable roads for residents. Additional significant issues are related to the provision of extending municipal sewer and water services to areas beyond the immediate boundary of Saratoga Lake and beyond the Villages of Victory and Schuylerville.

### **B. Goals**

Improve the quality of transportation systems and infrastructure in the community.

### **C. Recommendations**

1. Develop road specifications that are adequately configured given the projected level of use. For example, local collector roads would require reduced lane widths, shoulders, and total right-of-way when compared to a regional arterial. Develop road design and layout standards that require roads to conform to the features of the natural landscape and reduce cuts and fills of the natural grade.
2. Forward design guidelines for roads on to the regional office of the NYS Department of Transportation and the County highway department so these agencies are aware of the Town's intentions for all roads in the community.
3. Develop a Capital Improvements Plan that reviews sewer and water districts and plans for new service and extensions based on recommendations in the new Comprehensive Plan. Pay careful attention to the areas around Saratoga Lake and future impacts of development on that sewer district. Consider areas where there can be an extension of the existing sewer and water lines. Refer to the new sewer study being conducted by Saratoga County.
4. Continue to develop a regular schedule of maintenance on Town roads for resurfacing and drainage and repairs. Develop a detailed prioritized list of capital projects for improving Town roads by addressing dangerous curves, unsafe intersections. Work with the County Department of Public Works, the NYS Department of Transportation and the Capital District Transportation Council as necessary to make improvements to the Transportation Improvement Program.
5. Financially support annual education and training programs for the Town Highway staff such as the Cornell Local Roads Program.
6. Identify intersections and road sections which do not have suitable dimension for truck access such as Burgoyne Road.

**3.1    Plan Implementation**

This section identifies the actions and programs that need to be implemented by the Town to put the goals and objectives into practice and to achieve the preferred land use pattern. The principles that guide these actions should be proactive and consistent with the goals, objectives and future land use pattern chosen by the community. In some cases, the actions recommended will require a commitment of funds and resources by state and county agencies or cooperation with developers, landowners, residents and adjacent communities.

**Plan Implementation Strategy**

The proposed implementation program does not attempt to catalog all of the actions that could be undertaken. Since it is a long-term plan, many actions cannot or need not be undertaken all at once. Instead, the proposed implementation program focuses on the most important actions that are needed in the next few years. This strategy insures that the most pressing current concerns are addressed. It also establishes a strong foundation for deciding more specific actions in the future.

The top priority is identified first and is followed by a list of high priority actions that should be undertaken as part of the Town's ongoing efforts to implement the Town of Saratoga 2002 Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

Where recommended, committees should be formed whose tasks will be to take planning beyond the document phase. These committees are particularly important for the development of an Open Space Plan, Recreation Plan and the implementation of economic development initiatives. All are continuous initiatives and will be subject to changing community needs and availability for funding. It is essential that the Town have its own internal capabilities to seize opportunities as they arise.

The Comprehensive Plan should be reviewed every five years to make sure it remains consistent with the changing goals of the community. This committee should look at what provisions have actually been implemented and their relative success. The committee should also examine why or why not certain elements of the Plan were not adopted and make appropriate revisions.

**Priority Recommendations**

The first step in the implementation process is formal adoption of the 2002 Comprehensive Land Use Plan by the Saratoga Town Board. That should be followed by a resolution by the Saratoga Town Board designating the Comprehensive Plan as the official planning document for the community. The Plan should be published and distributed to all boards, interested citizens in the community and to other appropriate local, county and state agencies. It should be made clear to all the boards and staff that all subsequent actions coming before the boards should be evaluated

in the context of their consistency with the new Comprehensive Plan. A Town newsletter should describe and report actions taken to implement the Comprehensive Plan.

Simultaneously, the Town Board must review the Comprehensive Plan according to the State Environmental Quality Review Act. An Environmental Assessment Form (Long Form) must be filed with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. The Town Board must find that the Comprehensive Plan will not have a significant impact on the environment or, if it finds that the action may cause a significant impact, the Board must develop an Environmental Impact Statement for the project.

Although the Comprehensive Plan has no legal status, it does provide the foundation for the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations and the basis for guiding subsequent actions directed by the public or private sector. The Town should begin the implementation of its planning program with the following actions within the first few months of the Plan's adoption:

Commence work on revisions on the Town of Saratoga Zoning Ordinance including the recommendations listed in Chapter 2.

Develop revisions to the subdivision regulations as recommended in the Comprehensive Plan.

### **3.2 The Action Plan**

The Action Plan is illustrated in Figures 3-1, "Plan Implementation Chart," following Section 3.3. Actions are organized by type. Priority actions, time frame for implementation and the organization that will be responsible for implementing the task will be outlined in the final document.

### **3.3 Description of proposed Zoning Map**

There are no proposed revisions to the existing Zoning Map. The district known as the "Rural District" shall be renamed "Rural Agricultural District."

**4.1    Population, Housing and the Economy**

**INTRODUCTION**

Demographic information is used to develop many aspects of a comprehensive plan. A community's population, age distribution, characteristics of workforce and economic structure are used to identify needs, opportunities, and services that may require improvement. The projection of demographic information provides the means to anticipate the future needs of the community and can help to develop plans and programs to meet future demands. The 2000 Census has presently released limited data, therefore, 1990 Census data is utilized for many other demographic characteristics.

**POPULATION TRENDS**

Over the last sixty years, the population of the Town of Saratoga (excluding the villages) has steadily increased. Between 1930 and 2000, the population increased by 2,257 from a total of 1,143 people in 1930 to a total of 3,400 people in 2000. The highest rate of population growth within the Town occurred between 1960 and 1970 at a rate of 39.7 percent. Since that time, the population has grown at a significantly lower rate of 19.5 percent during the 1970's, 12.8 percent during the 1980's, and 8.8 percent in the last decade. Refer to Table 4-1, for specific figures on population.

The populations of the two villages, which exist inside the Town of Saratoga, have fluctuated between periods of growth and periods of decline. From 1930 to 2000, the Village of Schuylerville's population declined by 214 people while the Village of Victory's population grew by 71 people over the same period. A closer look at the data indicates that both villages experienced a decline in population during the 1940's. Both municipalities then steadily grew in population until the 1970's. Between 1970 and 1980, the population for the Village of Schuylerville declined by a total of 134 persons or 9.6% while the population for the Village of Victory increased by 71 persons or a growth rate of 14.2%. During the last decade, both municipalities have experienced significant population loss, with Schuylerville losing 167 people and Victory losing 37 people.

**Table 4-1**  
**Population Trends 1930-2000**  
**Town of Saratoga and Villages of Schuylerville and Victory**

Year	Town of Saratoga		Village of Schuylerville		Village of Victory	
	Persons	# Change	Persons	# Change	Persons	# Change
1930	1,143		1,411		473	
1940	1,245	102	1,447	36	520	47
1950	1,423	178	1,314	-133	488	-32
1960	1,657	234	1,361	47	497	9
1970	2,316	659	1,390	29	500	3
1980	2,768	452	1,256	-134	571	71
1990	3,124	356	1,364	108	581	10
2000		276		-167	220	-37

Source: US Bureau of the Census

The rate of population growth for the Town of Saratoga, including the villages is relatively high in comparison to the regional rate of growth. For the period from 1990 to 2000, the rate of population growth for all of New York State was 5.5 percent, while the rate for Saratoga County was 10.7 percent. The growth rate for Saratoga County was the highest of all the counties in the Capital District and the second highest rate of growth statewide. The Town of Saratoga experienced an increase of 8.8 percent in the rate of growth in population for the same ten-year period.

To shed additional light on the reasons for the population changes, the birth and death statistics for the Town were analyzed for the period from 1980 to 1995. Table 4-2 summarizes all the NYS Department of Health figures for recorded live births and deaths for the fifteen-year period and provides a comparison to the total population figures provided by the US Census for the same period. The comparison helps to illustrate what appears to be influencing the population growth in the Town.

**Table 4-2**  
**Vital Statistics Comparison**  
**From 1980 to 1995**

Town of Saratoga			Village of Schuylerville			Village of Victory		
Births	Deaths	Difference	Births	Deaths	Difference	Births	Deaths	Difference
		(623)			(84)			(11)
646	320	326	438	244	194	134	79	55

Source: US Census Data and NYS Department of Health

\* Actual population change is represented in parentheses.

The comparison indicates that roughly half the growth in the Town of Saratoga (excluding the villages) was due to the birth rate, the other half to in-migration. For the two villages, the opposite appears to be true. The total population growth is less than the population growth attributable to births. This would indicate that despite an overall growth of population, people are continuing to move out of the village centers.

### Age Distribution

An analysis of the distribution of age groups within the Town's population can help to identify how the population will change in the future. This, in turn, can help to anticipate the needs of a changing populace and to identify the need for future services and programs. An older population, retirees will demand one set of services which are different from the needs of younger families with school-aged children. Generally, the Saratoga area population is gradually aging, particularly in the 65 and over age group. According to the statistics provided by the US Census and the Capital District Regional Planning Commission, the trends in population characteristics in the Town follow the same patterns exhibited in Saratoga County.

The largest segment of the Town's population is within the 25-49 year old age bracket. The total for this bracket is 1,218 persons or 39% of the Town population. This is consistent with the County breakdown as this segment of the population accounts for 41% of the County population. The concentration noted above is consistent with the national trend of an aging population. The large 25-49 age group is reflective of the "baby boomer" generation influence on the overall population.

The age distribution of the populations of the Town of Saratoga, Schuylerville, Victory and the County were compared from the census data of 1970 and 1990. An evaluation of the age distribution indicates the following general trends over the twenty-year period: Both the Town and the Villages experienced a decline in population for all age groups of 25 years and less. This segment of the population decreased by approximately 11% in the Town of Saratoga for the period.

There was a sharp increase in the age groups from 25 to 34 years and from 35 to 44 years of age in all municipalities. The Town of Saratoga experienced an 11% growth in these age groups with a total of 914 people (22%) between the ages of 25 and 44 in 1970 and 1,653 people (33%) in 1990.

The general trend for the change in population found in the older aged families was one of a slight decline, particularly in the Villages. Only the Village of Victory showed a rise in the age group from 55 to 65 years. In 1970, the percent of the population in the Town of Saratoga between the ages of 45 and 65 was 21%. In 1990, the age group represented 19% of the total population.

The 65 years of age and older group increased in all municipalities, most notably in the Village of Schuylerville. In 1970, this age group represented 13.4% of the population. In 1990, the same group represented 17.2%.

## Housing

The three main issues concerning housing within any community are its availability, condition and affordability. These issues, as they relate to conditions in the Town of Saratoga, have been analyzed in a recently updated (1998) report by the Saratoga County Affordable Housing Coalition. This section will refer to information from this recent report and projections provided by the Capital District Regional Planning Commission.

As one might expect, given the population increase, the number of housing units has also increased from 1,499 in 1970 to 2,135 in 1990, an increase of 636 housing units 42% (See Table 4-3 below).

The pace of growth in housing was greatest between 1970 and 1980. Of the 636 units added since 1970, 550 were added from 1970 to 1980. Of additional note is the drop in owner-occupied housing units. In 1980, owner-occupied housing accounted for nearly 8 of 10 housing units in the Town. By 1990, this ratio is down to just over 6 out of 10.

**Table 4-3**  
**Housing Units**  
**Town of Saratoga, Village of Schuylerville, Village of Victory**

Year	# of Units	Owner Occupied	% Owner Occupied
1970	1,499	1,166	77.8
1980	2,049	1,613	78.2
1990	2,135	1,344	62.9

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

## Household Size

In 1990, the majority of households in the Town of Saratoga are comprised of two persons, with the average family size at 3.16 persons (See Table 4-4). However, of the 1,875 households in the Town in 1990, 911 or 48.5% had three or more persons in the household.

**Table 4-4**  
**1990 Household Size**

Persons in Household	# of Households
1 Person	380
2 Person	584
3 Person	369
4 Person	314
5 Person	159
6 Person	42
7 or more	27

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Place of Work

In 1990, most workers (persons 16 years of age and older) residing in the Town worked within the County. This is different from the working population of Saratoga County who have historically worked outside of the County (See Tables 4.5 and 4.6 below).

**Table 4-5**  
**Town of Saratoga**  
**Place of Work**  
**(Workers 16 Years of Age and Older)**

Year	Working in Own County	Working in Other County
1990	1,641 (10%)	710 (30%)
1980	1,329 (72%)	506 (28%)
1970	N/A	N/A

*Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census*

**Table 4-6**  
**Saratoga County**  
**Place of Work**  
**(Workers 16 Years of Age and Older)**

Year	Working in Own County	Working in Other County
1990	42,579 (47%)	47,305 (53%)
1980	N/A	N/A
1970	19,736 (47%)	21,939 (53%)

*Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census*

Travel Time to Work

A majority of workers, 16 years of age and older, travel between 15 and 34 minutes to work. This is reduced somewhat from 1980 when a majority traveled between 20 and 44 minutes to work (See Table 4-7 below).

**Table 4-7**  
**Town of Saratoga**  
**Travel Time to Work**

	1980	1990
Less than 5 min.	122	175
5 to 9	263	184
10 to 14	220	187
15 to 19	238	286
20 to 29	438	617
30 to 44	418	419
45 to 59	143	250
60 or more	91	96

*Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census*

Of the total working population in the Town, 137 or 5.8% work at home. This is approximately twice the County rate of 2.8% of the working population working at home.

**Educational Attainment**

A majority of the persons in the Town who are 25 years of age and older, have at minimum earned a high school diploma or equivalent. Of the 3,280 that are 25 years of age or older and reside in the Town, 1,280, or 29%, have a high school diploma or equivalent. Another 351 persons or 11% have a bachelor’s degree and 200, or 6%, have a graduate/professional degree. (See Table 4-8 below).

**Table 4-8  
Town of Saratoga  
Educational Attainment**

<b>Education</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>Saratoga County 1990</b>	<b>NYS 1990</b>
Less than High School Diploma	N/A	36% (993)	24% (773)	17%	25%
High School Graduate	35% (733)	38% (1,005)	39% (1,280)	32%	29%
Bachelor’s Degree	7% (156)	12% (328)	11% (351)	15%	13%
Graduate/Professional Degree	5% (111)	N/A	6% (200)	9%	10%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

**Size of Labor Force**

The labor force of the Town of Saratoga (persons 16 years of age and older) has grown steadily through the period from 1970-1990. During the twenty-year period, the labor force grew by just over 59% (See Table 4-9 below).

**Table 4-9  
Town of Saratoga  
Size of Labor Force  
(Workers 16 Years Old and Over)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>
# of Workers in Work Force	1,601	2,270	2,554

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

**Work Status**

This category of data considers employment by industry and by occupation for a twenty-year period from 1970 to 1990. Employment in the Town has been diverse and equitably dispersed over the various employment classifications listed (See Tables 4-10 and 4-11).

**Table 4-10**  
**Town of Saratoga**  
**Employment by Industry**  
**(Persons 16 Years Old and Over)**

	1970	1980	1990	1970-1990 Change (%)
Agriculture	164	103	115	- 49
Wholesale/Retail Trade	186	416	462	+276 (+148%)
Manufacturing	448	438	489	+ 41 (+9%)
Construction	127	142	213	+ 86 (+68%)
Professional and Related Services	299	356	472	+173 (+58%)
Business and Repair Services	9	35	47	+ 38 (+422%)
Transportation and Utilities	92	63	139	+ 47 (+51%)
Public Administration	93	134	177	+ 84 (+90%)

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

**Table 4-11**  
**Town of Saratoga**  
**Employment by Occupation**  
**(Employed Persons 16 Years Old and Over)**

WORK STATUS BY OCCUPATION	1970	1980	1990	1980-1990 Change (%)
Professional and Managerial	N/A	383	453	+ 70 (+18%)
Technical, Sales and Administration Support	N/A	456	664	+208 (+46%)
Farming, Forestry and Fishing	N/A	103	108	+ 5 (+5%)
Service Occupations	N/A	233	282	+ 49 (+21%)
Operators, Fabricators, Etc.	N/A	437	500	+ 63 (+14%)
Precision Production	N/A	219	334	+115 (+53%)

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

#### Class of Workers

This category of data considers the nature of the entity that is supplying the employment. The breakdown is as follows: private, government (local, state and federal) and self-employed workers. Approximately one in four workers in the Town were employed in government jobs in 1990 (See Table 4-12).

**Table 4-12**  
**Town of Saratoga**  
**Class of Worker**  
**(Employed Persons 16 Years Old and Over)**

	1980	1990	Change (%)
Private	1,290	1,678	+388 (+30%)
Government	410	456	+ 46 (+11%)
Self-Employed	126	198	+ 72 (+57%)

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Income

Data for income is presented for families and per individual for a twenty-year period from 1970 to 1990. Income, exclusive of inflation, has risen steadily through the period.

**Table 4-13**  
**Town of Saratoga**  
**Income Per Capita**

1970	1980	1990	Change (%)
\$4,692	\$6,409	\$12,288	\$7,596 (+161%)

**Family Income**

\$9,372	\$16,782	\$33,878	+24,506 (+261%)
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Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Employment/Unemployment

Employment data is available on the county, state and national level. In July of 1999, unemployment rate of 3 percent. Three years later, the unemployment rate is reported even lower at 2.3 percent. By comparison to the rest of the State and the County, Saratoga County experiences an exceptionally low rate of unemployment.

**Table 4-14**  
**County of Saratoga**  
**Unemployment Rate**

	Unemployment Rate		
	County	NYS	USA
July, 1998	2.8%	5.6%	4.7%
July, 1999	3%	5.3%	4.5%
July, 2000	2.5%	4.4%	4.2%
July, 2001	2.3%	4.5%	4.7%

Source: NYS Department of Labor

In order to provide a more accurate description of the local economy, further data was reviewed regarding employment, average annual wages, average weekly wages and average weekly wages adjusted for inflation for Saratoga County. The data for each of these data elements is provided

from 1975 to 1997. The data is further broken down by industry using classifications from the “Standard Industrial Classification Manual, 1987” as published by the Congressional Office of Management and Budget.

Specifically, data is presented for all industries, and the following specific industrial classifications: agriculture, mining and unclassified industries; manufacturing; transportation and utilities; retail trade; and services. (See Tables 4-15 through 4-20).

**Table 4-15**  
**Saratoga County**  
**Wages-All Industries**

Year	# of Establishments	Average Annual Employment	Average Annual Wages	Average Weekly Wages	Adjusted Average Weekly Wages
1975	1,830	21,040	\$9,391	\$180.60	\$335.68
1980	2,235	32,432	\$11,909	\$229.02	\$277.94
1985	2,584	39,183	\$16,329	\$314.02	\$291.84
1990	3,445	50,402	\$21,115	\$406.07	\$310.69
1995	3,987	53,759	\$24,881	\$478.49	\$313.97
1997	4,070	57,350	\$26,025	\$500.48	\$311.82
Change	+2,240 (+122%)	+36,310 (+173%)	\$16,634 (+177%)	\$319.88 (+177%)	-\$23.86 (-7%)

*Source: NYS Department of Labor – “Employment and Wages, New York State and Counties” as derived from the Unemployment Insurance Program*

**Table 4-16**  
**Saratoga County**  
**Wages-Agriculture, Mining and Other**

Year	# of Establishments	Average Annual Employment	Average Annual Wages	Average Weekly Wages	Adjusted Average Weekly Wages
1975	44	200	\$8,016	\$154.15	\$286.52
1980	74	285	\$9,673	\$186.02	\$225.76
1985	94	543	\$13,698	\$263.41	\$244.81
1990	107	557	\$18,115	\$348.36	\$266.54
1995	132	590	\$17,434	\$335.28	\$220.00
1997	130	690	\$18,817	\$361.87	\$225.46
Change	+86 (+195%)	+490 (+245%)	+\$10,801 (+135%)	\$207.72 (+135%)	-\$61.06 (-21%)

*Source: NYS Department of Labor – “Employment and Wages, New York State and Counties” as derived from the Unemployment Insurance Program*

**Table 4-17**  
**Saratoga County**  
**Wages-Manufacturing**

<b>Year</b>	<b># of Establishments</b>	<b>Average Annual Employment</b>	<b>Average Annual Wages</b>	<b>Average Weekly Wages</b>	<b>Adjusted Average Weekly Wages</b>
1975	101	5,910	\$12,956	\$249.16	\$463.12
1980	110	5,775	\$18,372	\$353.31	\$428.77
1985	127	6,583	\$25,193	\$484.48	\$450.26
1990	151	7,772	\$32,062	\$616.58	\$471.76
1995	154	6,946	\$38,198	\$734.57	\$482.00
1997	162	7,109	\$41,508	\$798.23	\$497.34
Change	+61 (+60%)	+1,199 (+20%)	+28,912 (+223%)	+\$549.07 (+220%)	+\$34.22 (+7%)

*Source: NYS Department of Labor – “Employment and Wages, New York State and Counties” as derived from the Unemployment Insurance Program*

**Table 4-18**  
**Saratoga County**  
**Wages-Transporting and Utilities**

<b>Year</b>	<b>#of Establishments</b>	<b>Average Annual Employment</b>	<b>Average Annual Wages</b>	<b>Average Weekly Wages</b>	<b>Adjusted Average Weekly Wages</b>
1975	71	797	\$11,719	\$225.36	\$418.88
1980	70	820	\$17,426	\$335.12	\$406.70
1985	78	824	\$22,330	\$429.41	\$399.08
1990	92	1,290	\$28,481	\$547.71	\$419.06
1995	128	1,560	\$35,527	\$683.20	\$448.30
1997	129	1,546	\$36,853	\$708.71	\$441.56
Change	+58 (+82%)	+749 (+94%)	+\$25,134 (+214%)	+\$483.35 (+214%)	+\$22.68 (+5%)

*Source: NYS Department of Labor – “Employment and Wages, New York State and Counties” as derived from the Unemployment Insurance Program*

**Table 4-19**  
**Saratoga County**  
**Wages-Retail Trade**

<b>Year</b>	<b># of Establishments</b>	<b>Average Annual Employment</b>	<b>Average Annual Wages</b>	<b>Average Weekly Wages</b>	<b>Adjusted Average Weekly Wages</b>
1975	642	6,046	\$6,397	\$123.02	\$228.66
1980	735	8,072	\$7,947	\$152.82	\$185.46
1985	836	10,280	\$10,293	\$197.94	\$183.96
1990	941	13,278	\$12,011	\$230.97	\$176.72
1995	1,099	13,914	\$13,520	\$259.99	\$170.60
1997	1,047	13,812	\$14,512	\$297.07	\$173.87
Change	+405(+63%)	+7,766 (+128%)	+\$8,115 (+127%)	+\$156.05 (+127%)	-\$54.79 (- 24%)

Source: NYS Department of Labor – “Employment and Wages, New York State and Counties” as derived from the Unemployment Insurance Program

**Table 4-20**  
**Saratoga County**  
**Wages-Services**

<b>Year</b>	<b># of Establishments</b>	<b>Average Annual Employment</b>	<b>Average Annual Wages</b>	<b>Average Weekly Wages</b>	<b>Adjusted Average Weekly</b>
1975	503	5,423	\$7,943	\$152.75	\$283.93
1980	650	11,740	\$10,894	\$209.49	\$254.24
1985	784	13,377	\$15,473	\$297.56	\$276.54
1990	1,041	17,314	\$20,747	\$398.98	\$305.26
1995	1,313	19,678	\$25,414	\$488.73	\$320.69
1997	1,410	22,031	\$25,252	\$485.61	\$302.56
Change	+907(+180%)	+16,608 (+306%)	+\$17,309 (+218%)	+\$332.86 (+218%)	+\$18.63 (+7%)

Source: NYS Department of Labor – “Employment and Wages, New York State and Counties” as derived from the Unemployment Insurance Program

### Economy

In order to describe the existing conditions of the local economy, the following categories of data from the 1990 census were assessed: Population, Age of Population, Housing, Household size, Place of Work, Travel Time to Work, Educational Attainment, Size of Labor Force, Work Status, Class of Worker, Income by Family and Per Capita, Employment/Unemployment.

In addition to assessment of the data listed above, a trend analysis on wages was also performed.

## Summary of Findings

Generally speaking, the existing economy of the Town and Saratoga County in general is quite stable and strong.

Influences which contribute to the positive economy, are:

- A growing population. The average growth for each decade since 1950 is 12 percent. This is not dramatic and has not resulted in tremendous growth pressure. However, this has contributed to a growth in the labor force, resulting in increased income in the local economy.
- The agricultural industry by comparison to other regions of the state continues to be a significant force in the local economy. Although employment in the industry is down slightly, from a land use perspective, this industry remains the principal use in the Town.
- Although travel times to work are getting longer reflecting increased job opportunities to the southern part of the County, most workers continue to work in the County. This reflects the strong in-County job growth (up 173% from 1975-1997) and the continued influence of agriculture as the principal land use.
- Educational attainment in the Town lags slightly when compared to the County and New York State. This is especially true for those persons obtaining a bachelor's or graduate degree.
- The work force has grown by an average of 28% from 1970 through 1990. Having a resource of workers to draw upon is a fundamental element to existing expanding businesses and attracting new business to the Town.
- The employment status is relatively diverse with strong growth in wholesale and retail trades, public administration and service-based industries.
- Occupations have been added in each category of employment listed for the period from 1970-1990.
- Income has grown dramatically from 1970-1990 with pre-capita income up 161% and family income up 261%.
- Unemployment in recent years has been exceptionally low even when compared to the state and national rates.

The assessment of the data for Saratoga County from the NYS Department of Labor (Tables 4-15, 4-20) provides more detail concerning the current regional economy. These are as follows:

- When inflation is considered, the effective buying power of the wages paid is actually less than what it was in 1975.
- Manufacturing jobs and wages have the most dramatic impact yielding the highest average weekly wages. Manufacturing wages, with inflation considered, have increased by 7% for the period of 1975-1997.
- Retail trade jobs and wages have had somewhat less of an impact. Although the number of positions has more than doubled through the period, average weekly wages are the lowest of all the industries reported. Additionally, with inflation considered, the buying power of the wages paid has declined by 24%.
- The service industry has had the most dramatic impact on jobs and wages in Saratoga County since 1975. Employment has grown by over 300%, adding over 16,000 jobs. This represents 45% of all the new jobs added since 1975. Average weekly wages have risen by over 200%. With inflation considered, average weekly wages for service industry jobs have increased by 7%.



## 4.2 Land Use

### Zoning

The Town Board adopted the Town of Saratoga's Zoning Regulations on December 17, 1981 and they were later amended in 1992. The seven zoning districts are: Rural District, Rural District 2, Rural/Residential, Moderate Density Residential, Village Extension, Hamlet, Conservancy, Lake and Industrial. The majority of the Town is zoned as a Rural District. The Rural and Moderate Density Residential districts are located along NY Route 29, on the northern edge of the Town. The Conservation districts are located the portions of Fish Creek and the Hudson River. The following is a general description of each district's purpose, permitted uses and minimum lot size requirements. Figure 4-1, "Existing Zoning Map," illustrates the boundaries of the zoning districts.

The Rural District is intended to preserve and enhance agricultural uses. The permitted uses and minimum lot sizes include agricultural pursuits with 10 acres; one family detached dwelling unit with 80,000 sq. ft.; two-family dwelling units with 160,000 sq. ft. and horse farms with 10 acres.

The Rural District 2 accommodates moderate density residential development in areas serviced by public sewer. The permitted use and minimum lot sizes include one family detached dwelling unit with 80,000 sq. ft. which may be reduced to 40,000 sq. ft. on lots with public sewer.

The purpose of the Rural/Residential District is to accommodate low density residential development without compromising existing agricultural resources and areas exhibiting physical constraints to development. The permitted uses and minimum lot sizes include one family detached dwelling unit with 60,000 sq. ft. and two-family dwelling units with 120,000 sq. ft.

The Moderate Density Residential District accommodates moderate residential growth in areas relatively free from physical constraints and linked to services, facilities and employment opportunities by NY Route 29. The permitted uses and minimum lot sizes include one family detached dwelling unit with 40,000 sq. ft. and two-family dwelling units with 60,000 sq. ft. and agricultural pursuits with 10 acres.

The Village Extension District accommodates high-density, mixed-residential land uses in areas of the Town adjacent to existing villages which are dependent on the availability of public water and/or sewer. The permitted uses and minimum lot sizes include one family detached dwelling unit (excluding mobile homes) with 40,000 sq. ft. and two-family dwelling units with 60,000 sq. ft.

The Hamlet District recognizes the existing high-density, mixed-land use area, Quaker Springs. The permitted uses and minimum lot sizes include one family detached dwelling unit with 40,000 sq. ft. and two-family dwelling units with 60,000 sq. ft. and agricultural pursuits with 10 acres.

The Conservancy District's purpose is to preserve, protect and conserve significant areas of wetlands and floodplains. It also has the purpose of protecting current and future residents from the adverse conditions associated with the development of wetlands and floodplains. The permitted uses and minimum lot sizes include agricultural pursuits with 10 acres; one family detached dwelling unit with 80,000 sq. ft. and horse farms with 10 acres.

The purpose of the Lake District is to insure the orderly development and redevelopment of seasonal and year-round dwelling units, and commercial and residential uses. The permitted uses and minimum lot sizes include one family detached dwelling unit (excluding mobile homes) with 40,000 sq. ft. and two-family dwelling units with 60,000 sq. ft.

The Industrial District's purpose is to accommodate new industrial land uses without compromising the essential rural/agricultural character of the community. The district's location is flexible and allowed in any zoning district. Permitted uses include: specific varieties of manufacturing, fuel storage, research laboratories, freight terminals, power plants and storage, maintenance and repair facilities.

#### Cluster Development

The Town's Zoning Regulations was amended in 1998 to allow "Cluster Developments." The purpose of this amendment is to encourage flexibility of design within residential and mixed-use developments in order to:

- Retain open space and views;
- Preserve natural, scenic and environmentally sensitive features;
- Provide for the provision of Townhouse units, attached or semi-attached; residential structures, single family homes on small lots, designed as a unit or as a residential housing development;
- Provide for mixed-use development, designed as a unit;
- Provide for more efficient and economical provision of streets, water supply, sewage disposal, utilities and other development infrastructure.

#### Subdivision Regulations

The Town Board approved the Town's Subdivision Regulations in 1972. They have not been updated since that time. The regulations are a basic version with definitions and application procedures, design and construction standards for storm drainage, sanitary waste, water, and streets.

The Town's Subdivision Regulations require that "the Owner shall offer to the Town, usable land equal in size to five percent (5%) of the Owner's subdivided tract. This land shall be used

by the Town for parks, playgrounds, or for other specific public recreational uses.” (Subdivision Regulations & Design and Construction Standards, Section VII, paragraph 15 - 17, pg. 23.)

### Right-To-Farm Law

Right-to-Farm is local legislation designed to protect a farmer against regulations and private nuisance lawsuits that would prevent the farmer from conducting normally accepted agricultural practices. Specifically, the legislation prohibits municipalities or private citizens from filing nuisance suits against farming operations that adhere to generally accepted farming activities and best management practices. It also protects farmers from unnecessary local or state regulations that would prevent farmers from conducting normal operating activities such as plowing, spraying, manure application, harvesting, etc. The Town of Saratoga enacted the first Right-to-Farm law in Saratoga County.

### Purchase of Development Rights

The Town of Saratoga has Saratoga County’s first and only Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) project. PDR is the acquisition of the right to develop by a public corporation, government agency or non-profit organization. Once the rights are sold, there is an easement placed on the property, which prohibits further development. PDR is a voluntary program for which the landowner receives cash for the difference between market value and agricultural value of the land. The PDR agreement allows the landowner to retain the land and use it for agricultural purposes. It cannot be developed for other purposes, however. It provides the landowner a method of obtaining some value from the land while ensuring that the land remains agricultural.

The Town of Saratoga Demonstration Project, which is the first project of its kind in Saratoga County, involves the protection of needed cropland for two expanding local dairy farms. This effort has the additional benefit of protecting the viewshed of the new National Cemetery. The

local cash match for this demonstration project was provided by the Open Space Institute, a local funder of conservation-based projects.



The project has received widespread publicity and support, including the unanimous support of the County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board. As a demonstration project, the potential benefit to agricultural preservation and protection is greatly enhanced, because it will serve as a viable example of what can be accomplished throughout the Saratoga County.

#### Other Zoning Considerations

Presently there are no designated zoning districts in the Town of Saratoga for industrial development. Under current zoning regulations, individual applications are permitted if the Town Board issues a rezoning of the property. The Comprehensive Plan should weigh the benefits of designating actual sites versus adding a regulation permitting Planned Development Districts (PDD). PDD's allow a high degree of flexibility in the planning of a development and usually accommodate a mix of uses on the same site.

### **Existing Land Use And Development Trends**

#### Existing Land Use

Land use in the Town of Saratoga is now characterized as predominantly residential. Although, characteristically a rural-agricultural community, residential land use now comprises a majority of the land area in the Town. Commercial uses are clustered in the two village centers, Schuylerville and Victory, with increasing commercial development along the major traffic corridors. Although generally stable, agricultural land use has experienced some conversion to residential development in recent years. Figure 4-2, "Existing Land Use Map," shows land use patterns throughout the community.

Since the last comprehensive plan in 1971, the number of parcels and land area used for residential purposes has increased. Industrial land use is minimal. This has resulted in those residents employed in manufacturing or light industry to commute out of Town to neighboring municipalities and counties where industrial employment centers are located.

The updated information regarding land use and specific parcel counts and land area has been obtained from the Saratoga County Real Property Tax Office. Recent development in geographic information system (GIS) technology relating to digital mapping and assessment of spatial relationships allow for more detached and precise analysis of land use patterns and trends using data from the real property tax office.

### Residential Land Use

Residential land use exists on 1,828 parcels encompassing 9,649 acres. This represents 38.5 percent of the land area in the Town. The average lot size, at over 5 acres/lot, however, is large and reflects the rural nature of the landscape.

According to the Town plan done in 1971, 1,350 residences were identified in the Town (including Schuylerville and Victory). The current amount of residences at 1,828 represents an increase of 35 percent and an average of 26 new residences per year from 1971-1999.

Developed lands represent parcels that have a structure that is not related to agricultural uses. Figure 4-3, "Developed Lands Map," depicts the pattern of essentially residential development versus agricultural and all other "open space" lands. Residential growth is occurring "sprawl" style extending well into central Saratoga and areas once dominated by family farms.

Concerns with the type of growth include the increased demand for services. The residential sector generates far less property tax than they demand in community service costs. According to the American Farmland Trust, farms and open lands typically generate three times more in tax revenues than they receive in public services. The shift from agricultural to residential can, therefore, have a significant impact on the community and is an impetus to strengthen ways to preserve agricultural industries.

The Town of Saratoga appears to be experiencing a wave of retirees as new residents. While this trend may help keep the number of school-aged children in check, it does not lessen the need for other services such as police and fire protection, emergency medical services and senior housing.

The density of housing development is more concentrated in the two village settings. Lot sizes are smaller, reflecting the availability of municipal services and a clustered development pattern in close proximity to business, services and institutional type uses such as schools.

The types of residential housing are predominantly single family detached dwellings. Historical and existing conditions indicate that the demand for multiple units or Town-home style units has been comparatively low.

It is expected that external development forces, such as increased employment opportunities in the region, will continue to place pressure on increasing residential development.

### Agricultural Land Use

Visually, agricultural land use continues to comprise the most extensive land use in the Town. The vast expanses of fields and orchards dominate the landscape and contribute heavily to the rural quality of the Town. According to data from the County Real Property Tax Office, there are 153 parcels under an agricultural use. These parcels comprise 8,396 acres or 33.5 percent of Town's land area. The resulting average parcel size is 55 acres. In 1971, approximately 87% of the Town's land area was described as being in woodlands or open space. An undetermined amount of this area included agricultural uses. Given the precision now available with GIS mapping, more specific data is available relating to a given land use, and the area or parcels currently being used for a specific type of land use.



The lack of specific data from the 1971 plan concerning the amount of agricultural land area and the corresponding number of parcels means it is not possible to quantify the decrease of agricultural land uses. However, given the increase in residential land use noted above, it is apparent that there has been a loss of small agriculture land and it is likely that this has come through conversion to residential dwellings.

Saratoga ranks second among Towns in Saratoga County in terms of farmland acreage. Farmers in the Towns of Saratoga and Northumberland formed the first agricultural district in Saratoga County in 1972. Agricultural District #4, formed in 1979, totaled 38,400 acres within the Towns of Saratoga, Stillwater and Wilton. In 1997, Districts #1, 3 and 4 were combined to form Consolidated Agricultural District #1.

Unfortunately, the conversion of farmland to residential and other uses is a national trend, which has seriously affected agriculture in Saratoga County. Despite the loss of agricultural land countywide, agriculture continues to be a healthy industry in the Town of Saratoga. In 1950, there were 142 farms in the Town comprising 19,880 acres. By 1976, some 10,838 acres of farmland and 33 farms remained. There are presently 36 farms in the community totaling 8,396 acres. Typically, those farms that disappeared were relatively small and many were simply absorbed by larger existing farms. While the overall number of farms has declined, many of the remaining farms have expanded and are stronger economically. The quality of the soils within the Town



contributes to the vitality of agriculture.

In addition to the protection afforded by Agricultural Districts, the Town of Saratoga has sought to bolster the industry of agriculture through the County's first Right –To-Farm Law. Saratoga is also home to the County's first and only Purchase of Development Rights project.

### Commercial/Recreation and Entertainment

As described in the 1971 plan, there were 136 commercial establishments within the Town of Saratoga (including Schuylerville and Victory). This comprised an area of approximately 125 acres.

In the period since 1971, commercial use has decreased in the Town. Commercial uses now exist on 120 parcels and comprise just over 570 acres of land. This represents a slight decrease from the total noted in 1971. The difference in area is likely explained by the differing approaches to land use analysis from 1971 to the current day. Assumptions for commercial land area were made in 1971 without specific knowledge of commercial parcel size. Parcel size now can be calculated for each parcel resulting in more accurate data. This is the likely explanation for the wide difference in land area totals. These uses continue to be concentrated in the villages, along major thoroughfares, and to a lesser extent, along Saratoga Lake.

Such a development pattern is typical of a rural Town. It is expected that as traffic volume increases along major routes, such as Route 29, Route 9P and Route 4, interest in developing additional or expanding existing commercial uses will continue. In summary, current commercial land use, in terms of growth, is best characterized as stagnant.



Recreational land use has a significant presence in the Town of Saratoga. The Town encompasses approximately 3 miles of shoreline frontage along the northwest shore of Saratoga Lake. Most of the shoreline is covered with seasonal and year-round residences, however, there is a large marina business in the north end and several small motels as well. The Fish Creek State Boat Launch is located just north of the Route 9P bridge.

### Industrial

Industrial land use historically has been non-existent within the Town of Saratoga. The 1971 plan makes mention of two parcels within the Village of Victory as the only industrially used parcels within the three municipalities (Town of Saratoga and Village of Schuylerville and Village of Victory). The two parcels total 9 acres in size.

Since 1971 there has been little industrial development within the Town. The land use data from the County Real Property Tax Office indicates that there are two industrial sites in the Town comprising just over 17 acres or 0.07% of the total area of the Town.

### Vacant/Wild, Forested, Conservation Lands, Parks

Open space land in 1971 comprised approximately 87 percent of the Town's land area. However, this figure is somewhat misleading, as agricultural land uses were included in this category. Figure 4-4, "Vacant Land Use Map," illustrates vacant land throughout the community.

Today, it is possible to separate and quantify vacant, wild, forested, conservation lands and parks. Lands of this category total just over 5,200 acres or 21% of the Town's total land area. Of the 2,886 parcels in the Town, 134 (4.6%) parcels are classified as vacant, forested, wild, conservation lands or parks. It is noteworthy that of the 5,200 acres referenced above, 3,033 acres are within parcels which are classified as vacant residential over 10 acres. This is a relatively high figure, representing a capacity for future residential development.



### **Development Trends**

#### Building Permits

Residential building permits were issued at the average rate of 22 per year during the last decade. In comparison, Stillwater annually issued 28, Malta issued 41, and Clifton Park issued 150 during the same time frame.

The number of residential lots created from subdivision has been averaging approximately 18 lots per year. A total of 275 lots were created from 1985 to 1999. There were eight subdivisions of greater than 10 lots during the past 15 years, totaling 170 lots. However, of the 170, 69 of these were located in the Village of Schuylerville.

#### Development by Zoning District

*Rural District:* There have been several residential projects in the southeastern portion of the Town: Haas Road-15 lots; Russell Road-13 lots; Casey Road-30 lots. The Casey Road subdivision is a good example of a subdivision project that has lots of open space and a tangible public benefit. This district has been partially effective in preserving agriculture. A Purchase of Development Rights project that protects 150 acres of agricultural land is located in this district adjacent to the Saratoga National Cemetery. There are many other land use mechanisms that could be added to the regulations in this district to best direct growth including incentive zoning and conservation design.

*Rural Residential District:* This district has been effective in concentrating growth away from the central, agricultural portion of the Town and limiting access off Route 29. It shares a boundary with the Moderate Density District. At issue is whether there is a need for a new district that would transition the differences between the two districts.

*Moderate Density District:* There have been only two residential projects that have received approvals during the past 15 years in this district. The access roads to both of these developments originate outside the Town of Saratoga boundary. This district has perhaps the best potential for the development of a light industrial zone.

*Village Extension District:* There has been no recent development occurring in these two districts located to the west and south of the Village of Victory. There exists the potential to expand the district along Burgoyne Road and Route 29 to encourage a greater variety of allowable uses in this area.

*Conservancy District:* Environmental constraints in this zone have been effective in limiting residential development. The present guidelines regarding protection of the natural resources in this district should be evaluated for their effectiveness for protecting water quality. The Saratoga Lake Watershed Management Project will be considering and recommending best management practices in the watershed area, which includes the western half of the Town.

*Lake District:* Approximately 25 building permits were issued in the Lake District during the 1990's. Growth pressure from subdivisions and individual building permits is evident on secondary roads near the lake including Brown Road. The stated purpose of the district to "encourage redevelopment and rehabilitation of seasonal dwellings" has been successful and has had a significant benefit to the tax base. However, the district has been ineffective in its purpose to "encourage a reduction in densities and larger waterfront lots."

#### Development Suitability

As regional growth demands assert development pressure on the Town of Saratoga, it becomes imperative that the community have a fair idea of where development should be directed. Good planning dictates avoidance of flood plains, steep slopes, hydric soils, wetlands, and other sensitive areas. This is particularly true in communities such as Saratoga that do not have public water and sewer. Figure 4-5, "Suitability Composite Map," layers the above limitations onto a single map and attempts to show the best areas for development. Figure 4-6, "Development Suitability Map," illustrates how this map was made.

Obviously, present development has followed the path of least resistance along existing roadways where power and other resources are available. A more powerful and meaningful map is created however, when overlaying the vacant open and forested parcels onto the Suitability Composite Map. Figure 4-7, "Suitability Agricultural/Vacant Lands Map," visualizes the land available for development when including existing agricultural lands in the mix. Figure 4-8, "Potential Development Map," combines all these factors and depicts the most suitable and available areas for development.

## 4.3 Community Resources

### Introduction

The type and extent of a community's facilities and services is in most part a factor of demographics, land uses, settlement patterns, geographic conditions, and economics. The information below provides an inventory and analysis of the existing community facilities and services.

### **Emergency Response Services**

#### Police

The Saratoga County Sheriff's Department and the New York State Police provide police protection to Town residents. A 911 system is in place and all calls are dispatched through the Wilton office of the New York State Police. State Police coverage is out of the Malta Station and the Substation located in Schuylerville. This Substation, while not manned on a 24-hour basis, serves as a base for all communications. On average, there are two troopers covering the Towns of Saratoga, Malta and Stillwater at any one time. Patrols are around the clock. There are 10 troopers, 2 sergeants and 4 investigators assigned to the Malta Station, and they are an additional 2 troopers stationed out of Schuylerville. Coverage is perceived as thin. The Resident Survey noted only a 47.5% rating of "good" for police services in general.

The Saratoga County Sheriff's Department has additional patrol duties throughout the Town of Saratoga. One of their main functions is the transport of prisoners. The Department has additional responsibilities on public waters in the Town including Saratoga Lake and the Champlain Canal/Hudson River. During the summer season, they maintain a regular patrol checking for navigational violations and responding to emergencies on the water.

#### Fire

Quaker Springs Fire Department, Schuyler Hose Company, and Victory Mills Fire Department provide fire protection in the Town. Quaker Springs has the only fire district and covers most of the rural areas of the Town. The firehouse is located on Blodgett Road. It houses the following equipment: 1,000 gallon pumper tanker; tanker truck carrying 1,500 gallons; a mini-pumper carrying 275 gallons; mini-pumper with 500 gallons of compressed air foam; 4WD truck; and a rescue vehicle. The 35 active volunteer firemen respond to an average of 80 incidents per year. Mutual aid becomes essential during the hours of the day when most firemen are out of the area at work. Automatic 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. mutual aid is in effect for the entire area. The Quaker Springs Fire Department has plans for an addition to the firehouse in the near future. Other needs relate to the development of a reliable cold water reserve in Saratoga Lake for use in the northern lake region and constructing a satellite fire station in the vicinity of Stafford's Bridge.

The Schuyler Hose Company is located on Spring Street in the Village of Schuylerville. Approximately 50 active volunteer firemen respond to an average of 125 calls annually. The Towns of Saratoga, Easton, Greenwich, Northumberland and the Village of Schuylerville receive part or whole coverage by contract to the Company. The Company has the following equipment:

engine tanker, engine rescue, engine ladder truck, tanker, brush truck, and rescue walk-in van. Their present needs include a new engine ladder truck and a dedicated meeting room.

The Victory Mills Fire Department provides additional fire protection to a small area of the community. Figure 4-9, “Fire District Boundaries Map,” illustrates the location of all involved fire departments.

Local volunteer fire departments are experiencing the same difficulty across much of rural New York. There is a lack of volunteers willing to put up with the rigors of training and the commitment of the job. This has put a good deal of stress on rural fire departments and companies. Also, as residential neighborhoods develop in rural districts, the companies must search for additional ways of providing quality, efficient coverage to these areas. Often local budgets are not growing at the same pace as the needs of the fire departments. This situation is certainly true for Quaker Springs Fire Department which is in the process of evaluating the possibility of a satellite firehouse closer to where development is occurring in the northeast corner of the community. Some relief for additional coverage at the northern end of Saratoga Lake may be coming in the future as the City of Saratoga Springs is presently evaluating their needs in this location.



### Emergency Medical Services

Ambulance service for the community is split between the Schuylerville Rescue Squad and the Stillwater Ambulance Squad. Coverage appears to be adequate but the need for volunteers continues to be a critical problem.

### Public Health Facilities

Most health facilities and services are found in the City of Saratoga Springs. Saratoga Hospital and its affiliate, Saratoga Care, offer a complete range of inpatient and outpatient care. The Hospital was founded in 1895 and today employs a staff of 1,150, including 180 physicians. Hospital services include: 24-Hour Emergency Services, Skilled Nursing Staff, Same Day Surgery Center, Short-term Rehabilitation, Radiology/Medical Imaging, Full-Service Laboratory, Cardio-Respiratory Services, Family-Centered Childbirth, Pediatrics, Inpatient Hospitalization for Mental Health, Lifeline Program for In-Home Emergency Assistance, Support Groups, Nutritional Counseling, and Educational Programming.

Saratoga Care is an extension of hospital services meant to provide outreach to the rural communities of Saratoga County. One such facility is the Schuylerville Family Health Center on 200 Broad Street in Schuylerville. Their hours are 8:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday and Thursday, and 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday.

Additional health services can be found approximately 20 miles east of Schuylerville at the Mary McClelland Hospital in Cambridge.

### Educational and Cultural Facilities

Schuylerville Central School District provides educational services to most of the entire Town of Saratoga. District boundaries also extend into parts of Greenfield, Fort Edward, Easton, Northumberland, Wilton, and Stillwater. Presently there are approximately 1,700 children registered in the school district.

The school district has been growing steadily in recent years. Since 1985, there has been a total increase in the elementary, intermediate, and junior/senior high school of approximately 276 students. Over one-half of this increase was experienced in the last 5 years. Increases in student population have primarily been seen in the elementary school. Renovations have recently been completed at the high school to accommodate the rising elementary population and to meet new state-mandated space requirements. The improvements include the following: the addition of new classrooms, renovation of the athletic field, construction of a new sod football field, new parking lot, new all-weather track, and new maintenance building.

### **Recreational Resources**

#### Parks

The Town of Saratoga itself has no formal public parks. This is a significant issue that the community wants to address in the Comprehensive Plan. Present park resources are located in the Village of Schuylerville. The main park is 30-acre Fort Hardy located along the Hudson River on the north side of Route 4. This site represents the field of grounded arms where the British surrendered their weapons. This resource has recreational ball fields and a park with benches located adjacent to the river which is generally used for passive pursuits. Recent improvements to the recreation area include a gazebo overlooking the river, a visitor's center, and a boardwalk. There is no swimming allowed at this site.

The water quality is presently being re-evaluated so that access for swimming may once again be possible. Schuylerville also has a small park at the end of Broad Street known as Village Memorial Park that is primarily used for small seasonal gatherings. The park is listed as an important historic resource for the community and contains a Revolutionary War Marker. The park is equipped with benches, plantings, and a small bandstand. The main recreational area for children is the playground located on the grounds of the Schuylerville Elementary School.

Schuyler's Canal Park is located on the south side of Route 29 along the Old Champlain Canal. The Park is the origination of a 1.5-mile self-guided walking tour that follows the historic canal route along the towpath and ends at Lock 5 to the north. NYS Canal Lock 5 is a recreational destination in itself since recent improvements were made to the grounds. It is one of the few remaining locks located in the Old Champlain Canal system. Visitors can watch boats "lock through" and enjoy a picnic at this site as well.



### Other Recreational Resources

Other forms of recreation can be found throughout the community. The Bog Meadow Nature Trail is a walking trail that originates along the south side of Route 29 just inside the Saratoga Springs boundary. The trail meanders over Bog Meadow Brook along the former railroad bed that leads into Schuylerville. The trail is about a mile in length and officially ends at Meadow Brook Road, not far from the intersection of Staffords Bridge Road.

Several miles of Saratoga Lake shoreline bound the Town of Saratoga. The Town does not have any municipal public access to the lake, but the New York State Boat Launch at Saratoga Lake is located just north of the Route 9P Bridge on Fish Creek. This facility accommodates boat launching and a limited amount of fishing. Both Saratoga Lake and Fish Creek offer high quality recreational opportunities. Saratoga Lake experiences an annual profusion of non-native aquatic vegetation that impedes the passage of boats and is aesthetically unpleasing. The Saratoga Lake Protection and Improvement District is presently studying the lake to identify recreational conflicts and water quality problems throughout the watershed.

Planning standards indicate that recreational needs are likely being met by existing open space. However, there may be facility needs or neighborhood park needs that are not being met in the Town. The Town is presently investigating funding options for creating parklands and ballfields on Town-owned lands near Quaker Springs and the Hudson River.



There is access to the Hudson River/Champlain Canal via two local marinas. Presently, the closest launch facility is in Stillwater. However, under the HUD Canal Corridor Initiatives, the Village of Schuylerville has planned and received funding for a boat launch facility and a trail and signage program to enhance its ability to connect to the regional efforts to develop a heritage network. There are charter and cruise boats, boat rentals and other marina support services offered here for the area visitor.

Two important national sites of recreational and cultural interest are the Saratoga National Historical Park, which includes the Saratoga Monument and the Saratoga Battlefield, and the new Saratoga National Cemetery. The Park is located in the Town of Stillwater along the Saratoga municipal border and the Cemetery is located just to the north in the Town of Saratoga.

The NYS Department of Transportation administers the NYS Scenic Byways Program. The State program promotes “Byways,” which are packaged and promoted tourism products. Locally, the Champlain Canal Byway is a group of local communities that have banded together to explore the possibilities of designing an economic development strategy that focuses on the Canal Corridor as an historic resource that also offers significant scenic and recreational opportunities. Their goals are to:

- Identify, promote and interpret examples of our heritage as an historic travelway;
- Improve physical and visual access to the Hudson River and Champlain Canal;
- Strengthen the link between historic villages, attractions and the adjacent waterways;
- Enhance the ethic of stewardship for the historic, water and scenic resources;
- Develop needed services and facilities to ensure the comfort and safety of visitors and residents.

The Byways Program calls for new ways for communities to partner together to take advantage of the “recreational revolution” that is presently generating strong public interest across the country. The main strategy is to redefine Saratoga’s industrial, cultural, historical and agricultural heritage to include tourism and recreation as part of its economic revitalization.



The Byway is promoting bicycle trails along the Champlain Canal which utilizes portions of the Old Champlain Canal towpath and the service road along the newer sections of the Canal. The Canalway Trail is part of Saratoga County’s Heritage Trail System. The Plan is to eventually have an unbroken bike trail from Waterford to Whitehall. Additional links could be made into the Glen Falls Feeder Canal Trail and the Warren County Bike Trail, both of which have very strong historical and cultural links to the region.

There are two other programs that share the idea of developing a regional linear corridor designed to increase tourism by promoting historic, cultural, recreational and open space community assets. The Hudson River Valley Greenway wants to link significant resources to the “traditional centers of community life as well as providing public access to the Hudson River.” The Saratoga County

Heritage Trail organization is the local connection to the Greenway and their focus is on the development of special bicycle routes and automobile tours.

The other alliance that is connected to this effort is the Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor Commission. They propose to link existing Byways in the Capital District to the eastern waterside gateway into the Mohawk Valley. Its organizational counterpart is the Champlain Valley Heritage Corridor Project, which links counties across the Champlain Canal and Lake Champlain in both

Vermont and New York to preservation and promotional opportunities of the region's important cultural and natural resources. The program's goal is to have this area designated as a special heritage area, which would make it eligible for grants and technical assistance programs. New York State has recently allocated special funds through the Heritage New York Program to finance the Revolutionary War Heritage Trail. This program will be available for capital projects for the protection and interpretation of Revolutionary War historic sites.

Collectively, these programs all work to the Town of Saratoga's advantage. Once it is understood how the programs interconnect and support one another, the Town will gain perspective as to how their future recreation planning can be a good fit in the regional picture.

#### Utilities

Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation supplies the power needs for the community. The hydroelectric dam on Fish Creek is owned and operated by the Long Lake HydroPower Corporation. They supply power to the general power grid and not to any local customers. Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation also supplies natural gas. The natural gas line extends east from Saratoga Springs along Route 29 to Hickey's Corners.

AT&T and Verizon Telephone supplies local phone service and Time Warner Cable supplies cable television services throughout the community.

#### **4.4 Municipal Affairs**

The Town of Saratoga currently operates out of the Town Hall located in the Village of Schuylerville. The Town is exploring sites for a new Town hall to be constructed in the next few years. One possible location is on Route 32 near the present site of the Town Garage. This location is more central to residents of the Town. As the community grows and actually becomes more suburban, there is a tendency for residents to desire more identity for the Town. This interest can take the form of a Town Center where people gather for recreation, voting, meetings and other activities.

Over the years, there have been several attempts to consider consolidation of some services that are shared by the Villages of Victory and Schuylerville and the Town of Saratoga. Since there are many implications including, among other things, debt services and real property taxes, a study should be commissioned to fairly consider the costs and benefits of consolidation of some or all of the government services.

## 4.5 Infrastructure

### Public Water Supply

The vast majority of Town residents get potable water from individual wells. Water is in plentiful supply throughout the community with no significant regions reporting problems with well depth or well water quality. Well water has a tendency to be moderately hard with excessive amounts of iron.

A small part of the Town adjacent to the Village of Schuylerville receives water service from the Village of Schuylerville. The Village line extends out to approximately 20 residential households in the Town of Saratoga. The Schuylerville-Victory Joint Water Commission governs the water district that serves about 2,500 people. The water supply system consists of spring-fed channels that are collected in an open reservoir in the Town of Easton. This system has been out of compliance according to the New York State Sanitary Code since late 1991. The Commission is presently constructing a filtration system for the reservoir supply and constructing new wells near the Hudson River as a supplemental supply since the system is operating at near capacity. The improvements are expected to cost the community approximately \$1.2 million and will be completed in 2001. The Commission has not made any decision regarding future extensions of the water line.

### Sewage Disposal

Most residents in the Town have private, individual septic systems. The exceptions are the residents that live along the shores of Saratoga Lake and just across the road along Route 9P, and a few residents who live just outside the Village of Schuylerville limits. While the Saratoga Lake Sewer District extends beyond the perimeter of the lake, service is presently limited to the Route 9P area only.

The Schuylerville-Victory Wastewater Treatment Plant, located on Canal Street, supplies services to about 50 households along Chestnut Street in the Town of Saratoga. There is no official sewer district. Operational capacity is considered quite good when the weather is on the dry side, however, the Plant is considered at capacity during especially wet weather. The Town engineer is presently conducting an infiltration-inflow analysis and sewage system inflow study to determine whether the sewer plant needs rehabilitation. The study will also consider whether the separation of stormwater or the removal of sump pumps from the system will make a significant difference in sewer inflows.

### Transportation Facilities

There is no form of public transportation in the Town of Saratoga. Private automobile is the primary mode of transportation. The main highways are State Route 29 which runs from Saratoga Springs to Schuylerville and east into Vermont, and State Route 32, which runs south from Schuylerville into Stillwater. State Route 9P runs north-south around the eastern perimeter of Saratoga Lake. The remaining roads in the community are county and local roads. Road conditions and road maintenance were both ranked good to fair by more than 88 percent of survey respondents. The overall condition and maintenance of roads throughout the Town was rated fair or poor by 50 percent of residents on the Resident Survey.

## 4.5 Historic Resources

As an update to the Comprehensive Plan, the historical data as compiled in 1971 (H. Klunder Associates, Inc.) is repeated. This data is accurate and, therefore, will remain unchanged in this edition.

### An Indian Crossroads

During the glacial epoch and the succeeding erosion, a river valley was formed, which was to become a major north-south passageway in the state of New York. Along the river, where the land was flat and fairly open, easy passage was found for the early travelers. Furthermore, the area was abundant with fish and game. The area around Schuylerville was an old crossroads of Indian trails, often being used by war parties of Iroquois or Algonquin.

Further settlement came on November 1, 1683. The area in the territory now embraced by the State of New York was divided into ten counties. The ten original counties were Albany, Dutchess, Kinap, New York, Orange, Queens, Richmond, Suffolk, Ulster and Westchester.

In 1684, Colonel Peter Schuyler (the first mayor of Albany and the great uncle of General Schuyler), and six partners acquired the Saratoga Patent, an area of over 168,000 acres, stretching 22 miles along both sides of the Hudson River from north of Mechanicville to north of Schuylerville.

During the French and Indian Wars, Saratoga was an important point on the many expeditions to and from Canada. It is recorded that some Huguenots were living in the region of Stillwater and Saratoga prior to 1688-1689.

A blockhouse, built in 1690, was the first in a series of fort structures built here to protect what was then a northern frontier in the English colony of New York against French invaders from Canada.

In the 1745 Massacre at Schuylerville, this community was sacked and burned, Colonel Philip Schuyler was killed and all the other settlers were killed or captured by French and Indians. The Saratoga estate then became the responsibility of Col. Philip Schuyler's young nephew, Philip, who later became the General. With the coming of peace in 1763, he began to develop the property he had inherited. His enterprises included lumbering, fisheries, farming, and the building of gristmills and sawmills to use the abundant waterpower.

## The Revolutionary War

The Lake Champlain-Hudson River route had been a strategic highway through the northeast prior to 1776. During the Revolution, the British used this strategic route in an attempt to take Albany.

General John Burgoyne's plan was to move southward from Montreal, capturing the strategic valley of the Hudson. St. Leger would move east from Lake Ontario to assist Burgoyne, and General Howe would move north from New York City, traveling up the Hudson River to meet Burgoyne in Albany. If the expedition had been successful, the British would have divided the colonies and gained control of an important inland waterway.



General Howe never received instructions to move north, and instead moved toward Philadelphia, which was then the colonists' capital. Furthermore, St. Leger was defeated by the colonists at the Battles of Oriskany and Fort Stanwix, and withdrew. At first Burgoyne's army was more successful. After leaving Montreal in June 1777, it moved south and captured Fort Ticonderoga. Burgoyne then began pursuing the fleeing Americans who, led by General Philip Schuyler, slowed the British advance by cutting trees, flooding streams, and burning bridges. The invading army's food supplies were getting low and the inhabitants of the valley, fleeing before it, left little to forage. When Burgoyne finally arrived in the vicinity of Fort Miller, five miles north of Saratoga, now Schuylerville, he sent two detachments to Bennington to capture supplies. The first detachment was defeated before it entered Vermont; the second retreated.



On September 13th, Burgoyne crossed to the west bank of the Hudson River on a bridge of boats north of the present Schuylerville Village line, and then began marching towards Albany. The Americans were entrenched on Bemis Heights, which had a commanding view of the Albany Road (now Route 4), the surrounding farmland, and the Hudson River. For Burgoyne to advance on Albany, he would have to drive the Americans from Bemis Heights. He moved forward on September 19, 1777 won the field of battle, but was not able to take Bemis Heights. In a second engagement on October 7, 1777 a gallant American effort defeated Burgoyne. He then retreated, under constant pursuit to Saratoga (now Schuylerville) where his army became entrenched in the village and on the height to the west. The Americans bottled them in and by taking up strategic positions on higher ground began a siege. With his army unable to move on, short of food, and under continuous fire from the enemy, Burgoyne entered into negotiations with the Americans on October 14 and formally surrendered his army of 6,000 on October 17, 1777. This victory was to become one of the most important in American military history. It was the turning point of the Revolution and, according to the master English historian Creasy, it was one of the fifteen decisive battles of world history. It was the first time a British army surrendered on the North American Continent.

### The Primary Growth Era

After the war the area around Old Saratoga (which is now Schuylerville and Victory) resumed its growth. Again Saratoga's growth was fostered by its unique location. Before the railroads and canals, Saratoga was at the intersection of two main arteries of travel: the old Montreal-Albany Military Road and a stage route running east to Boston from Saratoga Springs. With an increased population, it was inevitable that the area around Saratoga would officially become a Town, and this happened on March 7, 1788. In 1772, the New York Colonial Legislature had divided nearly all of what is now Saratoga County plus the Town of Easton into two districts of Albany County. The Saraghtoga (Saratoga) district was the portion north of Anthony's Kill, which enters the Hudson at Mechanicville. Under the Town Act of 1788, the New York Legislature set up Towns, and the area of those two districts became four Towns, with Saratoga as the northeastern one. The Town of Saratoga lost territory as other Towns or parts of Towns were created from it until after the creation of Saratoga Springs in 1819, it obtained its present size. The Town of Saratoga reached a peak historic population of 4,522 in 1875. Saratoga County was formed by legislative act in 1791.

On April 16, 1831, Schuylerville was incorporated and named in honor of the Schuyler family. About 1840, Col. George Stover, a native of Bryants Bridge in the Town of Saratoga, bought the Schuyler House from the assignee of Philip Schuyler, the grandson of the General and the house was occupied by members of his family for three generations. Through the generosity of his grandchildren, George Lowber and Jesse Lowber Marshall, the house is now a part of the Saratoga National Historical Park.

The first known structures at the Victory location were the Schuyler Saw Mills. The Victory Manufacturing Company established its first mills there in 1846.

The Village of Victory was incorporated in 1848. The name Victory Mills was established as the post office designation. The manufacturing company built most of the homes and rented them to employees.

Although there were no sidewalks and the streets were unpaved, there was a park. Victory was described as an attractive community. In 1894, the hand-lit street lamps were changed to Carbon Arc Lighting furnished by Consolidated Electric Company. A fairly high level of development existed within Victory and Schuylerville at that time.

### The Railroad Era

In the mid-nineteenth century, the steam railroads became the main arteries of trade and travel. Communities located along them had a strategic advantage. Saratoga Springs was fortunate in being served by one of the very early railroads and later by what became the Delaware and Hudson, the main route from Albany to Montreal. Schuylerville now ceased to be the important crossroad it had been when post roads and later canals were the main means of transportation, although the full effects would not be felt for forty years.

In 1883, the Boston, Hoosic Tunnel and Western Railroad which became the Fitchburg was granted the rights to run a railroad through the Town of Saratoga from Saratoga Springs to Victory Mills and Schuylerville. In 1900, this became part of the Boston and Maine System. There was a

connection to the main line in Mechanicville traveling through the Township east of Saratoga Lake. At one time, there were eight trains a day in and out of Schuylerville. With the development of paved highways and truck shipping, the railroad ceased to be economically feasible in 1928; the Boston and Maine Depots in Victory and Schuylerville closed. Passenger service to Saratoga Springs ended in 1931, to Mechanicville in 1945.

In the late 1920's the trolley closed down, and for the first time in almost two centuries, Saratoga was almost isolated. The remaining residents worked in the surrounding communities or in the carton factory in Victory. Although buses and autos superseded the trolley, clearly Schuylerville and Victory were no longer the prospering, industrial communities they had been in the nineteenth century.

### Since 1971

The Town has seen the beginnings of a shift in land use from agricultural to residential. However, the dominant visual influence through this period continues to be the rural elements associated with a farm-based economy and vast tracks of open space. Expansion of major employment centers in other parts of the County and in the Capital District to the south has influenced the demand for additional housing in the region.



However, although in lesser numbers, a majority of the residents of the Town continue to work within Saratoga County. The two village centers have been affected by increased commercial use at the regional commercial centers in Wilton, Clifton Park and Queensbury. Many of the local shops have closed, leaving high vacancy rates among commercial district buildings. Industrial uses have not increased during the period. The Town continues to be rural/agricultural in character with an increasing presence of single family dwellings in the Town. The lakeshore and the area immediately surrounding it have also experienced some development pressure in the form of seasonal and second-home development.

### Historic Structures

The NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation provided information regarding historic structures constructed prior to 1866. These homes and other historic sites and structures are identified in Figure 4-10, "Historic/Natural Resources Map." General locations of sensitive archeological sites were provided by the New York State Museum and are also sited on this map.



## 4.7 Natural Resources

### Topography/Landform

The terrain in the Town of Saratoga can be divided into a number of regions of distinct landscape character. The areas are defined primarily by the surficial geology of the area and include the following generalized regions: the Saratoga Hills, the Saratoga Lake\Fish Creek floodplain, the Saratoga Plateau and the Hudson River floodplain (See Figure 4-11, "Landform Map"). These generalized regions are a useful way to look at the character of the landscape within the Town. The surficial geology strongly defines the landform, drainage and soils of a region, which in turn influences the development of vegetation. As man settles and develops the land, distinctive cultural landscapes evolve as a result of the unique natural and cultural influences of the area. Each landscape unit thus becomes a recognizable area of distinct visual character, which can be used for the planning of land use and open space resources within the Town.

The Saratoga Hills are low rolling hills with a maximum elevation of 620 feet at Bear Hill. The hills are defined by bedrock outcrops of graywacke/shale complexes and glacial till deposits. The hills occupy the western half of the Town with the mass having a north-south orientation. Sucker Brook divides the hills with a small valley which flows north into Fish Creek.

The Saratoga Plateau is located to the east of the Saratoga Hills with an average elevation of about 125 feet above the Hudson River floodplain. The region is dissected by a number of streams cutting deep ravines into the plateau as they flow to the Hudson River. The region is formed from glacial lake sand, silt and clay deposits.

The Saratoga Lake/Fish Creek Floodplain region is a broad flat floodplain terrace created by the repeated flooding of Fish Creek. The bottomland soils are formed from the deposits of silts and sands carried during the flood events. Much of this region is covered by wetland vegetation and soils with perennially or seasonally high water tables.



The Hudson River Floodplain is similar in character to the Fish Creek region but associated with the Hudson River. The flat bottomlands along Route 4 represent a significant percentage of the Town's prime agricultural soils and are the setting for the oldest farms of the area.

Topography is a key constraint to how a site is utilized. Steepness correlates generally with suitability and density for development, but the relationship is not absolute because the land takes on such a variety of configurations.

Areas containing slopes with a 3 to 8 percent grade generally are acceptable for development. Some problems may arise, however, as the steepness of the slope increases from 8 to 15 percent. Such problems may include road and driveway construction, installation of sewage disposal

facilities, storm water runoff, soil erosion, and increased construction costs. These limitations can usually be overcome with careful site planning and additional development costs.

Land areas containing slopes of 15 percent or more present considerable constraints to development, which can necessitate significant investments of funds to adequately control development before, during and after construction. Development on these slopes can create significant increases in erosion and sedimentation related problems. Disturbance of existing vegetation on these slopes often results in increased rates and volumes of surface runoff. Excessive grading may result in concentrating or redirecting storm water and may even encourage slippage or slope failure.

The extreme sensitivity of the soil characteristics occurring on slopes greater than fifteen percent requires that protection and preservation efforts be enacted to control the density of development, and that these regulations be extended beyond the boundaries of the affected topography lines. A buffer area at the toe (or base) and top of the slopes should also be preserved. Slopes in the Town of Saratoga can generally be described as a rolling landscape. Figure 4-12, "Slope Map," shows that the majority of the Town has slopes of less than 15%. Slopes of 25-35% are located in the southeastern corner of the Town.

#### Hydrology

The surface waters in and around the Town of Saratoga have greatly influenced its development. The Hudson River was the travel corridor, part of the great warpath, for both the French and Indian Wars and the Revolutionary War as well as the route into the frontier for development and trade. Today, the abundant water resources of the Town provide important recreational boating and fishing opportunities.

A well-developed stream network is found throughout the Town. Saratoga Lake drains into the controlled Fish Creek, which flows east into the Hudson River at Schuylerville. Two of the larger stream systems and watersheds in the Town include; Sucker Brook which flows north into Fish Creek and the Kroma Kill which flows southeast into the Town of Stillwater, through the Battlefield site and into the Hudson.

The 100 Year floodplains in the Town are fairly extensive and are associated primarily with the Hudson River, Fish Creek and Saratoga Lake. The open water in the Town totals approximately 1,618 Acres and the total extent of floodplains is estimated to be approximately 2,500 acres. Open water represents an estimated 6.5% of the total area of the Town while floodplains encompass an estimated 10% of the total area. Figure 4-13, "Hydrology/Floodplain Map," illustrates the 100-year floodplain and all water bodies and streams in the Town.

The Saratoga County Water Quality Committee of the Soil and Water Conservation District has developed a priority list of watersheds and aquifers in the County. Of the eleven designated watershed areas, the Saratoga Lake/Fish Creek/Kayaderosseras watershed is the number one priority in the County. A portion of the Wilton Aquifer along Route 29 was designated as priority four of seven designated aquifers countywide.

The Sucker Brook watershed has also been identified as a priority project area by the USDA NRCS due to its concentration of livestock within the watershed. An estimated 1/3 of the livestock of the county is found within the area. The Water Quality Improvement Project is focused on controlling the sediment and nutrient loading from the brook as it flows into Fish Creek.

### Wetlands

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation regulates wetlands that are larger than 12.4 acres as documented on a series of official wetland maps maintained by that agency. In certain instances, wetlands less than 12.4 acres may be mapped and regulated if they contain unique or rare wetland resources. State wetlands are divided into four classes: Class I through Class IV. Class I wetlands provide the highest or most critical wetland benefits to the State, while Class IV wetlands provide some wildlife or open space benefit but are not considered to be as important a resource as those in Class I.

In the Town of Saratoga there are 29 DEC regulated wetland areas totaling 1,991 acres or an estimated 7.5% of the Town's land area. The largest regulated wetland is a Class I area of 535.4 acres in the Town's Conservation Zoning District and is located between Fish Creek and Fitch Road. Figure 4-14, "Wetlands Map," depicts DEC and National Wetland Inventory, wetlands as well as hydric and potentially hydric soils.

During 1998 and 1999 the DEC updated the official wetland maps for all of Saratoga County.

### Soils

The soils of the Town of Saratoga have been formed in five distinct types of parent material. The table found in Figure 4-15, "Soils Map," indicates the breakdown of the principal types of material.

#### Soils Formed in Lacustrine Deposits

The largest percentage of soils in the Town have been formed on lacustrine deposits, approximately 34% of the total area. lacustrine deposits are formed from glacial lakes during a melting period of the Pleistocene. The soils were deposited in the old lake bottoms in alternating layers of fine sands and silts. Eleven of the soil units found in the Town today are formed in Lacustrine materials. The soil texture tends to be characterized as either very fine sands or silts. In most instances a silty clay soil texture will be found in the substratum at depths of 30 inches or more. As a result, the soils are typically well drained in the upper horizons and are dense and poorly drained in the lower horizons.

#### Soils Formed in Outwash Plains

Outwash soils comprise approximately 26% of the Town and make up the second largest category of soils in the Town. These soils are characterized as deep to very deep deposits that are moderately coarse textured. This soil group ranges from silt loam to loamy sand and also includes sand and gravel pits.

Outwash soils are generally featured along the lower rolling landscapes including both sides of Fish Creek. Much of the Town's agricultural lands are located in outwash soils. There are numerous sites where soils are classified as Soils of Statewide Importance as well as Prime Farmland Soils. Prime farmland is best suited to the production of row, forage and fiber crops. This is generally due to level topography, good drainage, adequate moisture supply, favorable soil depth, and favorable

soil texture. Figure 4-16, “Agricultural Soils Map,” indicates the location of these soils as they are overlaid onto lands that are presently used for agricultural purposes.

Prime soils tend to be resistant to erosion and runoff and, therefore, support intensive cultivation with minimal adverse environmental impacts. Farmland of statewide importance has similar properties and provides fair to good yields of crops where treated and managed according to modern farming methods.

### Upland Till

Upland till soils characterize the central portion of the Town making up the areas of highest elevation and steepest slopes. They can also be found intermittently in the western region and to the south and west of the Village of Schuylerville. The compact soils of the upland till range from shallow and medium textured to very deep and moderately coarse. Upland till soils make up the third largest category of soils in the Town.



### Floodplains, Soils, Swamps and Water

Floodplains contain frequently flooded fluvaquents and other silt loam or sandy loam soils. These soils comprise 5% of the Town. Swamps make up just under 2% of the landscape and water, just under 6%.

### Forests

Forested lands cover a significant amount of land in the Town of Saratoga. Figure 4-17, “Forested Areas Map,” shows the distribution of forest cover throughout the community. Maintaining a contiguous range of forest cover is keeping a good balance of key wildlife throughout the Town. Development should be sensitive to this issue especially as some of the most rural areas of the community are lost to residential housing development.

DEC’s Natural Heritage Program identified 3 locations in the Town where significant habitats may support endangered species. These are located on Figure 4-10.