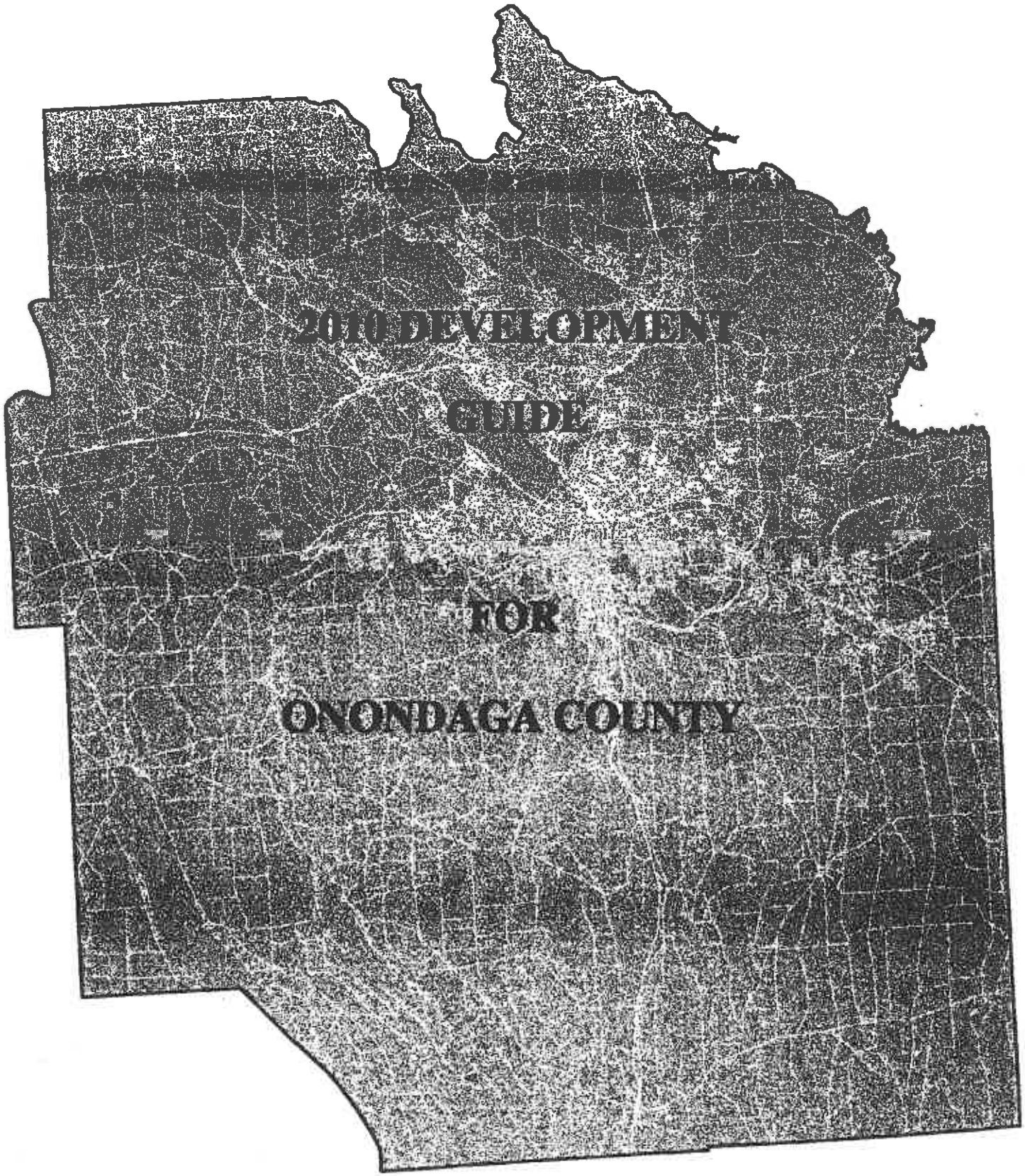


**SYRACUSE-ONONDAGA COUNTY PLANNING AGENCY**

**JUNE 1998**

## SYRACUSE-ONONDAGA COUNTY PLANNING AGENCY


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June, 1998

To the Citizens of Onondaga County:

The Syracuse Onondaga County Planning Agency and the Onondaga County Legislature have adopted the **2010 Development Guide for Onondaga County.** Onondaga County's goals include a vibrant, growing economy, a high quality of life, and fiscal strength. Our strategies in response to change require cost-effective infrastructure, sustainable development practices, and stewardship of our environment.

Onondaga County's policies for investment and land use call for investment in existing communities, preservation of infrastructure and transportation assets, sustainable urban and suburban settlement patterns, and protection of the rural economy, agricultural land, and access to natural resources.

Implementation of this county wide plan will depend on investments and decisions over the next decade, by county departments and state agencies, the City of Syracuse, towns, villages, and private individuals and business. Working together, we can build a community that offers diversity and choice for residents and attracts investment and new jobs.

This plan refines and updates the Development Guide originally adopted by the Legislature in 1991, based on a review of trends and extensive public input. Onondaga County will continue to review and update the Development Guide every five years. I encourage the City of Syracuse and the towns and villages to endorse this policy plan. And I encourage each municipality to update plans, land use regulations, and capital programs so that the entire community can move ahead together into the 21st Century.

I look forward to working with all the public officials, residents, and businesses in Onondaga County to attract jobs and investment, protect our architectural heritage and natural environment, and build an attractive community for our children and grandchildren.

Sincerely,

Nicholas J. Pirro
County Executive

100% RECYCLED PAPER

# SYRACUSE-ONONDAGA COUNTY PLANNING AGENCY

1100 Civic Center, 421 Montgomery Street, Syracuse, NY 13202 (315) 435-2611, Fax (315) 435-2439
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Roy A. Bernardi
Mayor

Michael J. Cunningham
Director

Nicholas J. Pirro
County Executive

RESOLUTION OF THE SYRACUSE-ONONDAGA COUNTY PLANNING AGENCY ADOPTING THE ONONDAGA COUNTY 2010 DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

WHEREAS, the Board of the Syracuse Onondaga County Planning Agency, has undertaken the review and update of the Onondaga County 2010 Development Guide, pursuant to the Charter of the County of Onondaga, Section 239 d of the General Municipal Law, and Resolution No. 160 - 1991 of the Onondaga County Legislature; and

WHEREAS, the Framework for Growth provides current data and information on socioeconomic trends, residential subdivision and development, transportation, fiscal capacity, environmental considerations, and parks and protected open space and

WHEREAS, the review of the data included in the Framework For Growth supports the continued relevance of the goals and policies of the 2010 Development Guide; and

WHEREAS, the proposed revisions to the 2010 Development Guide respond to requests for a more graphic presentation of concepts; and

WHEREAS, the revised 2010 Development Guide has been widely circulated to county and city departments, boards and agencies, county and municipal legislators, municipal planning boards, the New York State Department of Transportation, the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council, public libraries, and to citizens and civic organizations upon request; and

WHEREAS, the revised 2010 Development Guide was presented and discussed at meetings of the Onondaga County Planning Federation, municipalities and civic organizations and, in general, strong support was expressed for the goals, strategies, policies and recommendations; and

WHEREAS, Board finds that the revised 2010 Development Guide is a reasonable and fiscally sound approach to managing growth, prioritizing investments in infrastructure, and protecting environmental resources in Onondaga County through the year 2010;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Syracuse Onondaga County Planning Agency and its Constituent agencies the Onondaga County Planning Board and the Syracuse City Planning Commission on May 19, 1998 hereby adopt the updated 2010 Development Guide;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Syracuse Onondaga County Planning Agency recommends the updated 2010 Development Guide to the County Executive for implementation by county departments; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Syracuse Onondaga County Planning Agency recommends the adoption of the 2010 Development Guide by the County Legislature.

Ruben P. Cowart, Chair
SOCPA Board and City Planning Commission

Royden S. Parratt, Chair
Onondaga County Planning Board

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# PROLOGUE

The 2010 Development Guide encourages municipal and County officials in Onondaga County to think of the larger community in making land use and economic development plans. The essential question in all planning decisions should be: Does this development, activity, or decision move the community closer to its vision for future generations? The Development Guide emphasizes that the decisions we make today will have a lasting impact on the landscape and on the future strength of this community. If we think of ourselves as stewards of this community who will someday pass our legacy to our children and grandchildren, we will make better decisions than if we treat the community as a short-term investment.

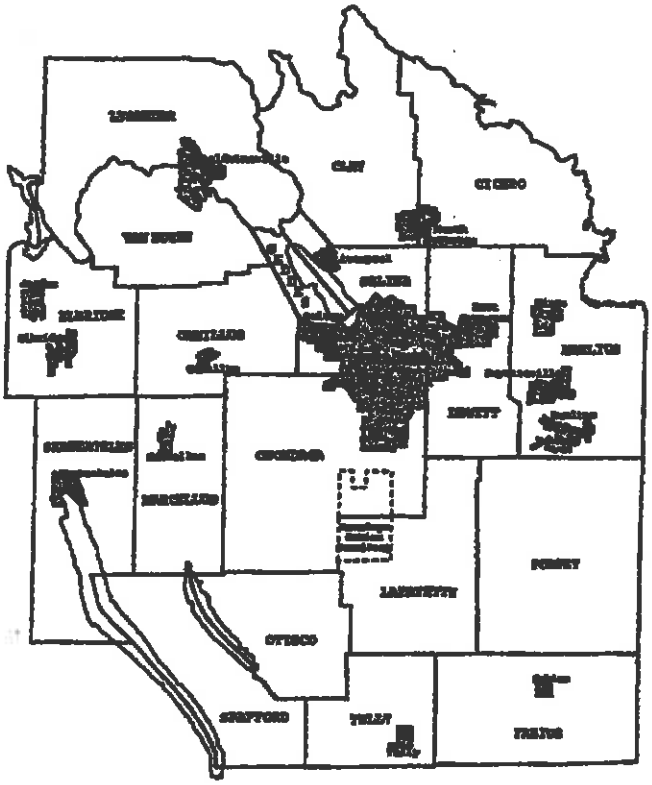
Onondaga County, Syracuse, towns and villages have large investments in highways, water and wastewater systems, parks, schools, libraries, and municipal buildings. This vast infrastructure creates the urban fabric and civic places where community life and the economy can grow.

The attractiveness of Onondaga County and Syracuse as a destination for new jobs, residents, and tourists depends on the attractiveness of all neighborhoods, main streets, civic places, and the country side.

Onondaga County offers residential settings ranging from elegant 1920's neighborhoods to 1980's planned communities, flourishing villages, and secluded country estates. Each setting provides distinct amenities creates unique private costs, and requires different public infrastructure.

All residents in Onondaga County have a stake in the success of every town, village, and city neighborhood as a good place to live and do business. Many, if not most, county residents live in one area but work, shop, or go to school in another neighborhood or town. Urban residents depend on the resources and enjoy the open space in rural towns. Rural residents find jobs, health care, recreation, and cultural events in urbanized towns and Syracuse.

Municipalities in Onondaga County



Working together, with effective planning, Syracuse, the towns and villages and Onondaga County enhance the future for the entire community. By maintaining our infrastructure and protecting the environment, within a manageable public budget, Onondaga County can attract economic growth and continue to prosper.

# INTRODUCTION

The future of the extended and complex community in Onondaga County depends on a shared vision of the future, private initiative and economic energy, and the cooperation of all municipalities. The 2010 Development Guide for Onondaga County establishes a framework for managing change and supporting growth, while protecting assets valued by the community. Changes that occur daily in the built environment and the natural environment should enhance the quality of life for county residents and contribute to a community reputation for the "best small towns and neighborhoods in America".

Cities, towns and villages in New York State have the primary responsibility for controlling land development, but counties and state agencies often have the primary responsibility for funding, constructing, and maintaining the linear infrastructure that supports land development. As the County of Onondaga adopts policy and administers services for a community of 468,000 residents, it works in cooperation with the City of Syracuse, nineteen towns, fifteen villages, the State of New York, and a number of public authorities. These jurisdictions must coordinate their actions related to land use, the environment, infrastructure and economic growth to ensure sound management of limited community resources.

## PURPOSES

The purpose of The 2010 Development Guide is to focus attention on key planning issues and community values; articulate a shared vision regarding settlement patterns, natural resources, and community assets: obtain consensus on goals regarding growth, the quality of life, and public investments: and outline strategies and policies for achieving these goals based on evolving federal and state policy, local and regional economic conditions, environmental constraints, county fiscal potential, institutional arrangements and administrative strengths. If actively pursued, this community vision will enhance the community's economic, environmental, social and cultural well being and lead to a higher quality of life for all residents.

The 2010 Development Guide is based on current demographic, economic, and development trends, existing infrastructure, fiscal conditions, and environmental considerations which are detailed in the companion report Framework for Growth in Onondaga County.

## BACKGROUND

The original 2010 Development Guide, commonly known as the "2010 Plan", was prepared in 1990 by the Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency (SOCPA) in concert with the County departments which maintain and finance infrastructure and protect the environment. Following public review, the Plan was endorsed by the Onondaga County Planning Board and referred by County Executive Nicholas J. Pirro to the Legislature. The Legislature's 1991 adopting resolution called for an update every five years.

## IMPLEMENTATION

The 2010 Plan encouraged economic growth in Downtown and the Lakefront District in Syracuse and in suburban sites with good access to interstate highways. Policies requiring cost-effective infrastructure, protection of the environment and farm land, and good fiscal management were designed to attract economic growth.

Since adoption of the Plan in 1991, these goals and polices have shaped the County's Capital Improvement Program and the Onondaga County Planning Board's recommendations on municipal land use and subdivision cases. In affirming Onondaga County's AA credit rating, bond rating agencies cited the 2010 Plan as evidence of County's intent to protect capital investments and manage fiscal resources.

The Long Range Transportation Plan for the Syracuse Metropolitan Area, which guides state and federal investments in highways, transit, and other transportation facilities, was based on 2010 Plan land use policies and supports a relatively compact urbanized area.

The Environmental Management Council used The 2010 Plan to expand community consideration of sedimentation and erosion control, storm water management, on-site wastewater treatment and soils suitability, and access to mineral resources. The Water Quality Management Agency has extended 2010 Plan goals to well head and watershed protection plans, and refined guidelines for extension of public water lines. The County's Farmland Protection Board drafted a Farmland Protection Plan which confirms the importance and future viability of agriculture in the County's economy and land use pattern.

Many towns and villages have incorporated 2010 Plan concepts into municipal comprehensive plans. Developers and investors depend on current data and County policy to guide private investment decisions.

## UPDATE PROCESS

The Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency Board, composed of the City Planning Commission and the County Planning Board, provided oversight and made invaluable contributions to the update process. A series of regional meetings was held with municipal officials and citizens to acquaint new local officials with 2010 Plan concepts and to elicit comments on plan impact in the first five years as well as current land use, infrastructure, and environmental issues.

The updated 2010 Development Guide is based on analysis of recent data and trends through 1996, changes in state and federal policy, and public comment which affirmed the relevance of county goals and development polices. The format of the Development Guide has been revised for graphic appeal, in response to thoughtful review and detailed comments by members of the former Environmental Management Council (now part of the Environmental Health Council). New maps link key concepts to county geography, illustrating the impact of policies to resources, development constraints, infrastructure, and existing land use patterns.

The updated Development Guide has been presented publicly to the Onondaga County Planning Federation and, on request, to various municipalities, civic organizations, and private groups. The updated Development Guide has also been distributed to county and state agencies and departments, every municipality in Onondaga County, and the Onondaga County Public Library System. FOCUS Greater Syracuse used the Development Guide in its Community Vision Fair held in May 1998.

Onondaga County will seek endorsement of the 2010 Development Guide by Syracuse, the towns and villages as a reflection of a shared community vision.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Development Guide frames a vision of a high quality of life for Onondaga County residents based on our assets: community life. grounded in tradition and committed to our children's future. rich in natural resources and economic diversity. vital village centers and distinguished architecture. This vision can be expressed in four goals which will guide public decisions. within the County's fiscal and natural resources.

## GOALS FOR ONONDAGA COUNTY

Economic Growth

An Attractive Community

Diversity and Choice

Fiscal Strength

The Development Guide outlines strategies and related policies designed to coordinate community efforts in terms of development and capital investments through good planning. fiscal responsibility, and stewardship of natural resources. Development Guide strategies will guide actions of public officials. developers, and residents as the community responds to proposals for change in the natural environment and the built environment.

## STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO CHANGE

Good Community Planning

Coordinated Community Efforts

Cost-effective Infrastructure

Sustainable Development Patterns

Natural Resource Stewardship

The Development Guide includes policies which amplify these development strategies to guide County decisions on infrastructure investment and environmental protection: land use and design codes. and development regulation by Syracuse. the towns and villages: and private investments and development practices. Policies related to the planning process and to urbanized and rural settlement patterns. The County Land Use Vision illustrates the anticipated impact in terms of land use.

## POLICIES FOR INVESTMENT AND LAND USE

### Planning Process

Conduct Coordinated Project Reviews

Consider Natural Resources. Environmental Constraints. and Infrastructure Costs

### Urbanized Areas

Invest in Existing Communities

Redevelop Obsolete and Vacant Sites

Protect and Maintain Existing Infrastructure

Create Urban and Suburban Settlement Patterns

Preserve Transportation Assets

Expand Infrastructure for Job Creation

### Rural Areas

Protect the Rural Economy. Agriculture. and Access to Natural Resources

Promote Sustainable Land Development Practices

Encourage Compact Development in Rural Areas

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The final section of the 2010 Development Guide, expands the five Strategies for Community Response to Change with recommendations for county departments and municipalities as they respond, together, to proposals for change in land use and infrastructure. As the Development Guide is implemented one project at a time, two criteria for development should guide every decision: Will this project improve our quality of life? Can the community afford this project?

Over time, concerted actions based on these policies will shape the landscape in Onondaga County and revitalize our community centers.

## LAND USE VISION

The land use vision for Onondaga County illustrates the effect of The 2010 Development Guide strategies and policies on the landscape. Based on existing land use and settlement patterns, environmental constraints, and natural resources, the map includes four land use categories: Natural Resource Areas, Special Use Districts, Neighborhoods, and Corridors. The vision includes historic centers - Syracuse, villages, hamlets and planned communities - which will remain the focus of neighborhoods, civic activity, community identity, redevelopment and growth. These centers are connected by corridors - highways, rivers and streams, and rail - which provide mobility within and through the county and help define the landscape between communities.

The development task before this community is to preserve and improve the quality of life for those who live here and for those we would like to attract. This must be done without increasing fiscal burdens on the community; therefore, it is prudent to encourage development in areas that do not need major investments in new infrastructure.

Anticipated growth can be accommodated in areas currently served by infrastructure; the land use vision does not recommend the creation of new urban land until there is substantial growth in employment and population. Within the County Sanitary District, 29 percent of the land is vacant and could accommodate 17,000 new residential parcels, at prevailing densities.

Household formation is projected at 7,500 units through the year 2010 and new residential construction at 10,000 new dwellings.

Recent subdivision trends suggest dispersion of residential uses into rural areas, beyond public water and sewer service; residential lots created since 1990 average 1.75 acres per lot or twice the size of lots created in the preceding decade. This trend is concurrent with disinvestment in the City, villages and older suburbs, and has the potential to increase the cost of government services for all county residents. Larger lots and houses also run counter to the projected growth in the housing market for empty nesters and the elderly and decreasing demand by young families.

Fiscal constraints and capital needs require reinvestment in existing neighborhoods and historic community centers; by capitalizing on community assets, Onondaga County can become the home of the "best small towns and neighborhoods in America".

The land use vision does not replace planning by the City, towns, and villages, but encompasses local plans within a county wide vision, subject to municipal review and endorsement. Cooperative actions of the County through investments and permits, the municipalities through land use codes, and developers through high quality projects in appropriate locations will be necessary to implement the land use vision.

## COMMUNITY STRATEGY

State, county, and municipal governments, residents, organizations, businesses, developers, and investors will work together to enhance our community identity, preserve our assets, and build our future. The 2010 Development Guide is a foundation for communication and cooperation as we address issues affecting the quality of the built environment, preservation of natural resources, and investment of public resources. Vision, planning and strategic actions can revitalize and energize the community through 2010 and beyond.

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# COMMUNITY VISION AND ASSETS

The Development Guide for Onondaga County outlines a vision for the community based on assets found in the natural setting, economy, urban infrastructure, settlement pattern, and land use which has evolved over 200 years. The community's choices for the future involve individual aspirations and public investments which will affect the quality of life in neighborhoods, access to housing, jobs, goods, and services for all residents, and the effectiveness of the transportation system.

The Development Guide outlines goals for the community's future, strategies for coordinating community efforts and achieving economic growth, and policies for making effective use of resources, managing land development, and public investments. These goals, strategies, and policies will have an impact on the future landscape of Onondaga County which is mapped as the Land Use vision for Onondaga County.

## COMMUNITY VISION

Choices for development will be guided by the community vision for Onondaga County as we prepare to enter the Twenty First Century. This community will preserve the rich and varied assets found in the natural environment, historic architecture, and institutions, even as it incorporates changes due to new technology, growth, and opportunity. As a community, we envision a high quality of life defined by beauty in our neighborhoods and in the natural environment; a vibrant civic life in attractive public spaces which include streets, parks, schools, libraries, theaters, and civic buildings; employment opportunities which pay family wages for all residents; health and personal safety; and choice in residential setting.

### Neighborhoods

Residents of all incomes will have affordable housing in attractive neighborhoods designed at human scale. Neighborhood land uses will allow access to activities of daily life and an efficient local transportation system which balances the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, and motorists.

### Economy

Onondaga County will remain the regional economic center and will have strong links with the global economy. Well maintained water, wastewater, transportation and communication systems will provide the capacity for growth. Regional transportation facilities will move passengers and freight seamlessly between national highway, air, rail, and canal systems.

### Quality of Life

Onondaga County will have an attractive, clean, and healthy environment; well maintained infrastructure with capacity for growth; and well located civic facilities. Quality of life will influence people to stay in Onondaga County in spite of job changes, retirement, life style changes, or enticements from warmer climates. Success in retaining and attracting residents including young families, older adults, and a well educated, industrious, and skilled workforce is critical; the community's future depends on its residents with all their individual variety and collective complexity.

## COMMUNITY ASSETS

Community assets are found in people, civic life and tradition, natural environment, economy, urban infrastructure, and historic settlement patterns. The community vision is based on preservation of specific valued assets as the basis for growth and a high quality of life.

### Sense of Community

- Residents, businesses, and institutions linked by tradition and continuity with the past and committed to the future.
- Rich architectural heritage and urban fabric in Syracuse and the villages.
- Civic commitment to strong, viable neighborhoods.
- Small town ambiance and convenient access to regional resources.

- A high degree of personal safety and health.

## Natural Beauty

- Rich visual landscape with marked variations in terrain, spectacular vistas, extensive open spaces, and diverse natural areas.

## Water Resources

- Abundant lakes, rivers, streams, and shorelines with excellent water quality and good public access for recreation.
- Wetlands which provide diverse wildlife habitat and flood storage capacity.

## Agriculture

- Viable farm economy based on abundant prime and unique agricultural soils, sufficient annual precipitation, and a moderate growing season.

## Central Location

- Transportation crossroads and trade center, with excellent access to national and international markets.

## Economic Diversity

- Strong regional center for health care, for educational, medical, retail, business services, and for governmental administration.
- Diverse economy with a variety of export industries, including manufacturing, knowledge and information technologies, colleges and universities, and agriculture.
- Highly skilled labor force.
- Tourist attractions and convention facilities.

## Sound Infrastructure with Capacity for Growth

- Excellent public water supply from Skaneateles Lake, Otisco Lake, and Lake Ontario.
- Central organization for wastewater collection and treatment.
- Interstate highway system, intermodal connections for passengers and freight.
- Hancock International Airport, with a central location, modern facilities, planned new runway, and growing air freight facilities.
- Mainline railroads, intermodal freight yard and planned intermodal passenger terminal.
- Well maintained local roads, good access to employment centers and civic facilities, and short trips to work.
- Centralized resource recovery system with garbage burning plant and advanced recycling program.
- Barge Canal for recreation, tourism, and transportation.

## Civic Facilities

- Diverse cultural facilities - Everson Museum of Art, Museum of Science and Technology, the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra, the Syracuse Opera Company, and Syracuse Stage.
- State and County parks focused on unique natural features and recreation; neighborhood parks and public squares.
- Syracuse University, Health Science Center, College of Environmental Science and Forestry, LeMoyne College, and Onondaga Community College contribute to the export economy and labor force skills.
- Sports Facilities - Syracuse University Carrier Dome, P & C Stadium, War Memorial, and New York State Fair race track.

## LAND USE AND SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

The land use pattern in Onondaga County is influenced by natural resources, topographic constraints, water lines, sewers, and roads. A relatively compact development pattern and the proximity of rural, suburban, and urban settings affords convenient access and close social connections between communities.

The urbanized area is centered in Syracuse and extends outward along former "farm to market" roads. Suburbs flow around villages, wetlands, and flood plains, avoiding glacial uplands and steep valleys in the southern towns. Farmland, woods, major parks and protected open space surround the residential subdivisions. Retail and commercial uses are concentrated downtown, in shopping malls and office parks, and along arterial roads. Industry, initially located near rail lines, is in an arc north of Syracuse, from Solvay to East Syracuse and beside creeks in villages. New industrial locations include Woodard Park and Radisson.

Urban settlements are based on neighborhoods and main streets which foster civic life and serve as points of reference for residents and visitors. Streets and sidewalks are the fundamental element of the urban fabric and civic infrastructure. Urban streets create public spaces - outdoor rooms - where all residents may meet one another in the course of the day; streets provide a basic forum for civic life in a community.

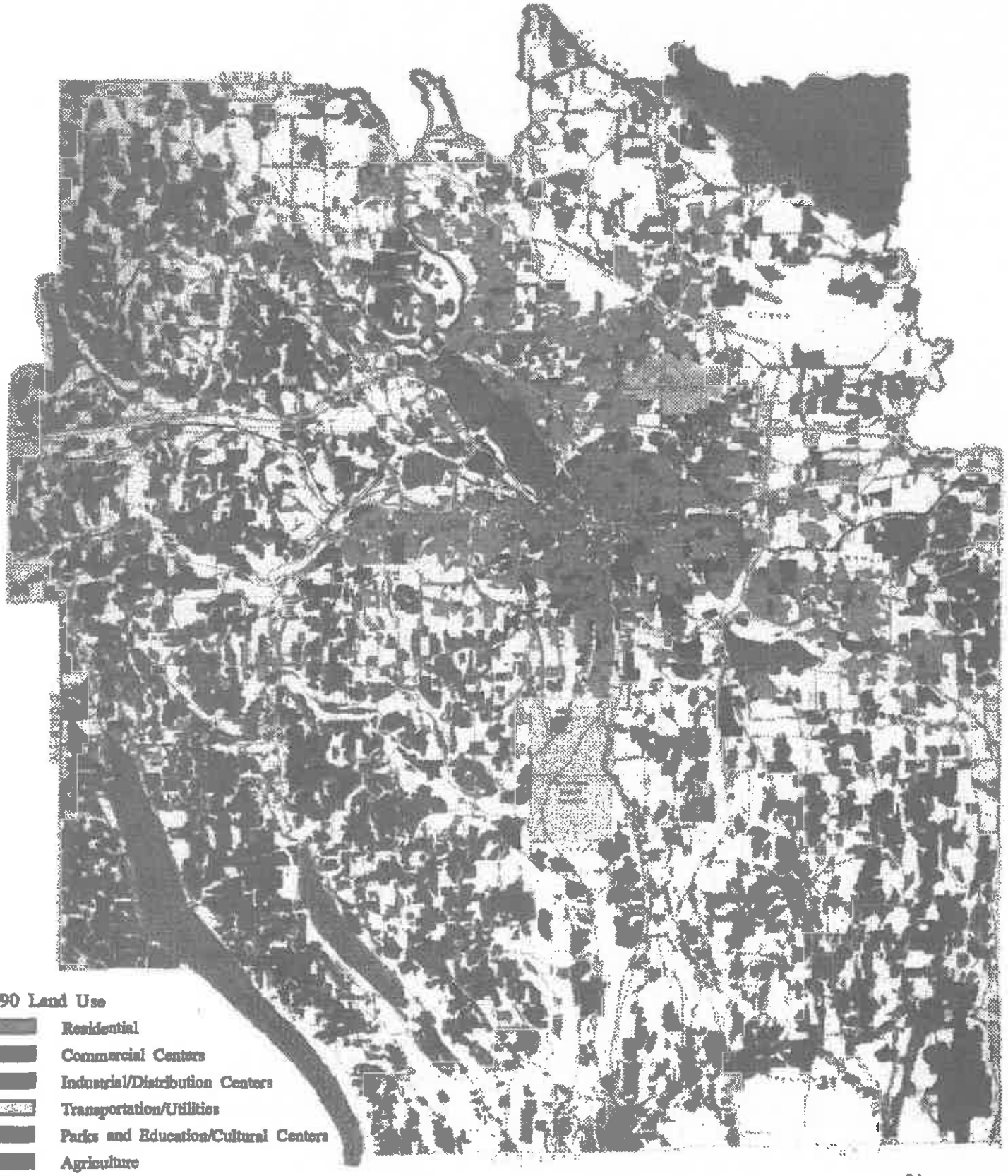
Downtown, the many neighborhoods in Syracuse, and each village and hamlet have distinct identities - an urban fabric based on historic architecture and a unique social and cultural life. The Villages of Skaneateles, Marcellus, Elbridge, Jordan, Tully, and Fabius and many hamlets create islands of urban fabric in the countryside.

Urban fabric is fine grained with many land uses and income groups close together. Neighborhoods built before 1950 offer mobility, access, and choice to the very young, older residents, and others who don't drive. Designed so that people could walk to parks, schools, jobs, and stores, streets and buildings are scaled to human needs. Sidewalks are separated from traffic by plantings, trees, and parked cars, transit extends pedestrian mobility, and low speed traffic affords relative safety for bicyclists. Parks provide access to nature, open space, and recreation facilities.

Suburbs, developed since 1950, are designed and scaled around the needs of the automobile. Large acreage in single land uses is devoted to low density subdivisions, school campuses, shopping centers and retail strip centers, industrial and office parks. Roads are designed for automotive mobility; "free" parking is abundant.

In rural areas, residents are sparsely settled along town roads, county and state highways. Interstate highways and the "farm to market" network of state and county roads serve as a commuter system which, combined with low priced fuel, provide short inexpensive trips to work for rural residents. Proximity to urban cultural resources and employment is valued by most rural residents.

# Land Use and Settlements




Onondaga County
2010 Development Guide
Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency

# GOALS FOR ONONDAGA COUNTY

The vision for Onondaga County can be summarized in four goals designed to guide public decisions within the framework of the community's fiscal and natural resources.

## ECONOMIC GROWTH

Economic growth - the creation of new jobs - is essential to the future of Onondaga County. Onondaga County's economy will grow, in tandem with the national economy, based on advantages of the community's business climate. The County will continue to support education and training, and the physical infrastructure necessary for growth. The County encourages economic growth in locations that have excess infrastructure capacity, where development can occur without adversely impacting the environment; the County will extend service areas when necessary for real job growth or new communities.

## AN ATTRACTIVE COMMUNITY

An attractive community is a requirement for economic growth, drawing new residents, businesses, investment, and tourism. Onondaga County will be a destination community, known for the "best small towns and neighborhoods in America". Onondaga County will include a vibrant urban core, walkable neighborhoods, suburban options, and rural farms and open space. Housing, work sites, and shopping will be conveniently located, close to and in harmony with one another. Streets will be clean and safe, designed at human scale; walkable neighborhoods will provide freedom and mobility for residents. Beauty in the built environment and the natural environment will be a consistent design choice.

## CHOICE AND DIVERSITY

Choice in residential setting, housing, employment, and recreation will exist for all residents. Residential options will include location, setting, housing type, and cost. Community decisions on land use, infrastructure, and public investments will ensure residential options, employment opportunities, and recreational alternatives for all county residents. Special attention will to be paid to the needs of the elderly for appropriate housing. Traditional villages and neighborhoods will be strengthened and suburban subdivisions will be designed in harmony with their surroundings.

## FISCAL STRENGTH

Wise use of fiscal resources, particularly in the public realm, will lead to a stable tax climate, well maintained urban infrastructure with sufficient capacity to support growth, and long-term economic strength. Public investments in existing communities and in support of job creation will promote sustainable growth. Expenditures to solve problems created by improper development practices will be avoided.

# COMMUNITY AND INDIVIDUAL CHOICES

The community vision preserves valued assets, even as it asserts the will to grow and embrace new technology. This vision will guide individual and collective choices by residents, investors, and public officials, within private and public financial resources. Every choice entails private tradeoffs and public costs.

## Residential Settings

Onondaga County has a variety of affordable housing in many settings and locations. In fine grained urban settings, houses are older and yards smaller but transportation by car, bus, bicycle or on foot is easy and convenient. Traffic is distributed over network of streets. Street lights, parks, neighborhood schools, and libraries are part of the infrastructure which supports civic life.

In suburban and rural areas, there is more private open space, direct access to nature, vistas and night skies. Larger residential lots offer privacy and distance from other uses and neighbors. The young and old who cannot drive are dependent and isolated; high speed traffic poses risks for pedestrians and cyclists.

In rural areas, groundwater can be limited in quantity, poor in quality and expensive to reach; subsurface sewage disposal can be difficult and expensive.

## Choices

Preserving historic community centers as suburban development surrounds once remote villages can present difficult choices. High traffic volumes and speeds, heavy trucks, and strip development threaten village character, pedestrian safety, and historic architecture and urban fabric. Village officials, developers, business owners and traffic engineers seek compromises to preserve on-street parking, main street businesses and pedestrian safety while moving rush hour traffic.

Other choices must balance rural demands for new infrastructure with a surplus of urban land. Rural residents initially build without public water and sewers but request public services to very low density development when on-site resources fail. But extending utilities for this purpose opens very large areas of new land for urban development. Syracuse and the older suburbs struggle to maintain an aging housing stock, redevelop vacant buildings and brownfields, and provide basic public services, despite a loss of population, jobs, and tax base to prematurely developed suburban land.

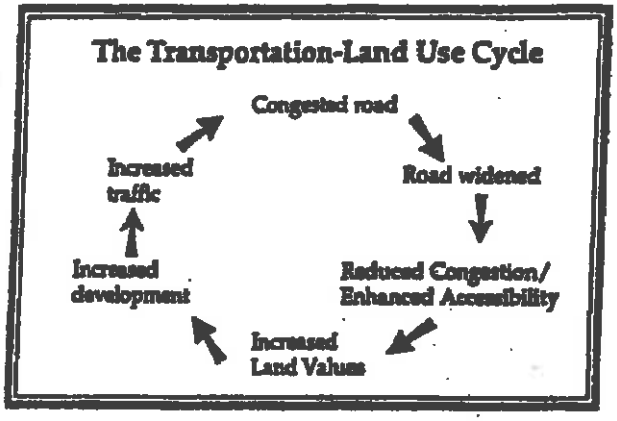
Public investments and regulations must be grounded in an understanding and acceptance of the fiscal, social, physical, and environmental impacts on the entire community, in an era of very limited growth. Public investments must enhance the quality of life, image, and attractiveness. Marketability of the entire community can be improved by investments in existing communities and in civic infrastructure such as schools, parks and libraries, in balance with linear infrastructure.

Conversely, premature extension of linear infrastructure creates a surplus of urban land which devalues public and private investments in existing communities and developments which have not been completed. Surplus urban land leads directly to the abandonment of the oldest community centers and neighborhoods and permanently destroys access to farmland and natural resources.

## Public Costs

Per capita costs of water, sewers, and streets are lower at urban densities, higher at suburban densities. The costs of most public services including transit, school busing, mail delivery and private energy costs are related to travel distances and are higher at lower suburban and rural densities. Suburban residents often forego local parks and public pools, sidewalks, and street lights, but seek ever increasing capacity on high speed arterial roads.

Arterial roads are expected to carry commuter traffic and provide access to shopping malls and retail strips, school campuses and churches, car dealers and gas stations, medical centers, office and industrial parks, and fast food restaurants. Massing of retail and service uses along arterials creates traffic congestion and begins the land use/transportation cycle. The "Big Box" development model for stores, theaters, schools, and other uses concentrates all trips generated by activities of daily life on arterials, during short periods of the days, often in conflict with rush hour commuter traffic.




In the "Land Use Transportation Cycle", traffic congestion leads to added highway capacity which attracts development which creates congestion; congestion creates demand for more capacity; new capacity provides the incentive for more development which brings more traffic and creates new congestion. It is not possible to build out of congestion by adding new travel lanes. An alternative distribution of many uses, at neighborhood scale, can provide access to services and an interconnected street network can decrease trips, trip length, and distribute lower volumes of traffic over more streets. This approach can effectively eliminate congestion.

# STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO CHANGE

Onondaga County's development strategies will guide actions of public officials, developers, and residents as the community responds to proposals for change in the natural environment and the built environment.

## GOOD COMMUNITY PLANNING

Coordinated actions by public officials and private sector decision-makers will be necessary to create the type of community that is attractive to residents, outside investors, and tourists. Good community planning requires a host of related regulations and actions including land use regulations, public health and sanitary codes, realty subdivision law, capital programming, and highway access control. Public officials, working with private business and civic initiatives, weave the web of decisions that shapes the physical appearance of a community.

Building an attractive community - in terms of the quality of life, the appearance, the physical design, and character of community centers - benefits residents and improves the product which is marketed to prospective residents, businesses, and tourists. Good planning will protect community assets, improve weakness in the urban fabric, and create new development based on the best local models. A community wide effort is required to strengthen community identity, create development guidelines and design standards, and coordinate the community's response to opportunities.

## COORDINATED COMMUNITY EFFORTS

Coordination can take many forms; informal coordination should begin early in the project proposal and preliminary design stages. The County strategy is to base major decisions on informed participation by major interested and involved parties. Coordination can be enhanced by consistent and complementary public plans, capital programs, and regulations, formal organizations, ad hoc meetings, and required procedures such as municipal referral of zoning and subdivision proposals to the Onondaga County Planning Board in accord with General Municipal Law, Article 12, Section 239; SEQR scoping and Draft Environmental Impact Studies, and Onondaga County Coordinated Project Reviews.

## COST-EFFECTIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

Urban and suburban development requires large investments in linear infrastructure. Water and wastewater treatment facilities, highways and parks represent significant County investments which must be maintained, replaced, and upgraded. Cost-effective infrastructure depends on capital improvement programs and development patterns, land use intensity, and site design.

*County capital improvement programs* will give priority to timely maintenance, rehabilitation and replacement of existing facilities, and addressing evolving standards for public water supplies, wastewater effluent, and highway safety and traffic system management. Investments in new capacity and service area extensions will be made when required for economic growth or new communities.

Infrastructure in Syracuse and many villages dates from the late 1890's to the 1920's. Much suburban infrastructure was built during the 1960's and 1970's and is nearing the end of its design life. Maintenance of this investment is essential; allowing facilities to deteriorate is unacceptable and costly in the long-term. Replacing and upgrading existing facilities will place a significant strain on local resources, representing real constraints to financing continued geographic dispersion or sprawl.

*Efficient use of water and sewer facilities* will support projected economic growth. Efficient use requires urban residential densities in areas with public water and sewers; build-out of vacant commercial and industrial sites; redevelopment of brownfields, vacant sites and obsolete buildings; revitalization of older neighborhoods in community centers.

*Efficient use of the highway network* requires protection of rights-of-way, capacity, and traffic mobility. Techniques include access management; street connections between neighborhoods and links between adjacent retail parking lots; sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and streets designed for pedestrian safety; residential densities and site designs which support transit; and land uses in neighborhoods which promote convenient access to shopping, work, worship, schools, and recreation.

*Onondaga County will minimize investment in new linear infrastructure* unless there is an assured yield in new jobs. Infrastructure expansion which increases community debt without economic benefits from employment growth weakens the community's competitive position. The only exception should be for proven health or safety emergencies; good planning and programmed maintenance should prevent future emergencies.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

Sustainable development balances natural resources, public investments, and individual choice. In environmental terms this means protecting surface and groundwater resources and siting in appropriate areas; avoiding unstable steep slopes, wetlands, floodplains; minimizing loss of valuable agricultural soils and mineral resources; maintaining air quality; managing energy resources; and ensuring the long-term viability of on-site wastewater treatment systems.

Inappropriate development in rural locations can outstrip private maintenance resources and become a public fiscal burden.

Sustainability in urbanized areas means use of existing public water and sewer service; building quality urban fabric and civic spaces based on good design standards; and appropriate siting, drainage, and construction practices to avoid remedial public expenditures.

Sustainability in rural areas means proper siting and maintenance of private wastewater and well water systems and sufficient land and financial resources to relocate, expand or modify these systems at the end of their design life or when climatic extremes (drought, flooding) or system failures require such actions. Proper planning, siting and sufficient land area can reduce the risk of system failures; education of homeowners can prepare them for the private financial obligations which these systems will require. Commercial and industrial development in rural areas must also be able to support on-site water and wastewater systems without public assistance.

Sustainability also means new development should be designed with the necessary elements to create and sustain community life for the long-term. This suggests development which mirrors and draws on the best elements of the existing community. Established neighborhoods and larger communities such as villages should have sufficient resources and reinvestment to assure their continued viability.

## NATURAL RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP

Onondaga County seeks a settlement pattern which works within the opportunities and constraints presented by the natural environment, preserves sensitive natural areas, and provides open space for natural habitat and human enjoyment. While all types of development inevitably impact the natural environment to some extent, there are locations where environmental impacts can be more easily minimized; development should be directed towards such locations. Resource protection also means siting and designing new development to minimize impacts on the landscape. The most sensitive locations should be preserved for wildlife habitat, open space, passive recreation or storm water drainage.

Natural resources which support the community and its economic base must remain viable and functioning. Such resources include the watersheds for Skaneateles Lake and Otisco Lake, productive soils and active farmland, groundwater recharge areas and community wellheads, access to mineral resources including construction quality limestone, sand and gravel, flood storage areas including flood plains, wetlands, woodlands and natural vegetation.

Protection of air quality is a federal and state mandate related to energy use for transportation, heating and cooling, and manufacturing. Air quality can be improved by land use patterns which decrease the need for automobile use and by building designs which make optimum use of natural light, ventilation, and solar heating. Conservation of water through plumbing fixtures and landscape designs can decrease energy needed for pumping and the costs of wastewater treatment.

Sites which have suffered previous resource degradation should be restored for the best reuse; brownfields in developed areas should be redeveloped. Care should be taken to avoid any future degradation of the environment due to poorly planned development.

## POLICIES FOR INVESTMENT AND LAND USE

### Planning Process

1.1 Conduct Coordinated Project Reviews

1.2 Consider Natural Resources, Environmental Constraints, and Infrastructure Costs

### Urbanized Areas

2.1 Invest in Existing Communities

2.2 Redevelop Obsolete and Vacant Sites

2.3 Protect and Maintain Existing Infrastructure

2.4 Create Urban and Suburban Settlement Patterns and Densities

2.5 Preserve Transportation Assets

2.6 Expand Infrastructure for Job Creation

### Rural Areas

3.1 Protect the Rural Economy, Agriculture and Access to Natural Resources

3.2 Promote Sustainable Land Development Practices

3.3 Encourage Compact Development in Rural Areas

Policies in the Development Guide reflect the critical relationships between land use, public infrastructure, and public finance. Good fiscal management and a stable tax climate improve the potential for economic growth but require a balance between the expansion of public infrastructure and total demand for urban land. Premature infrastructure expansion which leads to a surplus of urban land draws growth away from existing communities. Poor development practices and a failure to renew existing communities detracts from the ability of the community to attract growth.

These policies emphasize the responsibilities of county government as well as the role of towns, villages, the city, and the private sector in promoting growth, managing change, and taking advantage of opportunities. Coordinated, community wide effort to implement these policies is the only way to reach the community vision of an improved quality of life and the goals of economic growth, an attractive community, diversity and choice, and fiscal strength. No single government or private organization can accomplish these goals alone.

# PLANNING PROCESS

## 1.1 Conduct Coordinated Project Reviews

Coordinated Project Reviews bring involved County departments and Planning Agency staff, municipal officials, private developers, and other interested parties together to review proposed public and private projects which may have a major impact on State or County infrastructure, County budgets, plans and policies, or the natural environment. Ideally, the process is initiated early in the life of a proposed project. The goal of the process is to enable Onondaga County to consider each proposal in a comprehensive manner and to respond to each proposal in a unified way.

The process elicits concerns from responsible departments, provides permit requirements and other information, and facilitates sharing of information. Timely communication, coordination, and cooperation make the development process smoother and ensure that community interests are addressed.

### Thresholds For Coordinated Project Review

Proposed projects should be subject to coordinated review if they reach thresholds of significant new environment impacts, capital costs, creation of urban land, substantial impacts on County infrastructure, or approval by multiple public jurisdictions.

- Investment of County capital funds in excess of $200,000 or the potential construction of complimentary infrastructure capacity.
- Creation of urban land by extension of water or sewers, and a potential service area in excess of 100 acres.
- Extension of public water more than a quarter mile beyond the County Sanitary District or trunk sewer service area.
- Extension of water or sewer facilities for residential development with densities below 2 units per acre.
- Potential decrease of highway Level of Service or potential to exceed trunk sewer capacity.
- Location within 500 feet of an Agricultural District or farm with an eight year tax commitment.
- Environmental impacts: slopes in excess of 15 per cent, shallow bedrock, seasonal high water table, poor soil drainage, slow percolation, community aquifer, rare or endangered species.
- SEQR: Type I or unlisted action, long EAF with conditioned negative declaration or other potential impact.
- Permits: involving multiple state and county agencies.

# 1990 Environmental Constraints

Onondaga County
2010 Development Guide
Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency

## 1.2 Consider Natural Resources, Environmental Constraints and Infrastructure Costs

Consideration of environmental consequences is the initial step in any consideration of new development or redevelopment in the County. Development inevitably impacts the natural environment; however, there are locations where environmental impacts can be more easily minimized and others where they cannot. Identification of areas where vital natural resources and environmental constraints exist can lead to more responsible development plans and locations. Even within a particular project site, some areas may be more suitable for development while others should be left as permanent open space.

Development which is responsive to the environmental setting and designed to fit within that setting will be less expensive in the short and long-run. In the short-run, infrastructure can be less costly to install when uses are clustered in the most appropriate portions of a site rather than installed in areas of poor soils, wetness, steep slopes or where environmental difficulties have to be overcome with costly engineering. In the long-run, maintenance of facilities is less expensive when utility lines are short and when poor environmental conditions do not shorten the life of infrastructure.

The intent of this policy is to have the least intrusion on the natural environment in order to lower mitigation and maintenance costs. Compatibility with the environment can create a physical setting which is appealing to residents, functional, and protective of the natural environment. An appealing physical environment can have direct economic development benefits since quality of life is a major economic development enticement.

### Environmental Limitations to Development

Depth to Bedrock

| Limitations for Septic Absorption & Basements | | Limitations for Water & Sewer Lines | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Slight: | > 3½' deep | Slight: | >5' deep |
| Moderate: | 1½ - 3½' deep | Moderate: | 3½ - 5' deep |
| Severe: | < 1½' deep | Severe: | < 3½' deep |

Depth to Seasonal High Watertable

| Limitations for Septic Absorption | |
|---|---|
| Slight: | > 3' deep |
| Moderate: | 1 - 3' deep |
| Severe: | < 1' deep |

Slope

| Limitations for Development | |
|---|---|
| Slight: | < 8% |
| Moderate: | 8% - 18% |
| Severe: | > 18% |

# URBANIZED AREAS

Urbanized areas, with public water and sewers, support intensive development in special use districts and residential neighborhoods. Urban areas, including Syracuse, villages and hamlets, provide walkable neighborhoods with sidewalks and parks. Residential densities range from four to six dwellings per acre in city and village neighborhoods to two dwellings per acre in suburbs on the urban-rural fringe. Mixed residential and commercial uses, cluster developments, townhouses, and apartments at higher densities are all viable urban land use patterns and provide a variety of residential settings for residents of all income groups and housing needs.

Suburban areas, developed since 1950, are characterized by large scale massing of similar land uses, separation of uses and housing by income. Suburbs depend on a relatively few collector and arterial roads to carry all traffic except cars seeking access to residential property. Some areas on the suburban-rural fringe have public water but lack sewers. Development in such locations must accommodate on-site wastewater treatment but be amenable to the cost-effective installation of sewers when extensions become feasible.

## 2.1 Invest in Existing Communities

The community not only has a significant investment in existing infrastructure, but also has major private investments in the housing stock, businesses, factories, shops and civic buildings which make up the built environment. The community cannot afford the loss of neighborhood life, history and social networks associated with abandoning historic community centers as we spread further and further into the rural landscape.

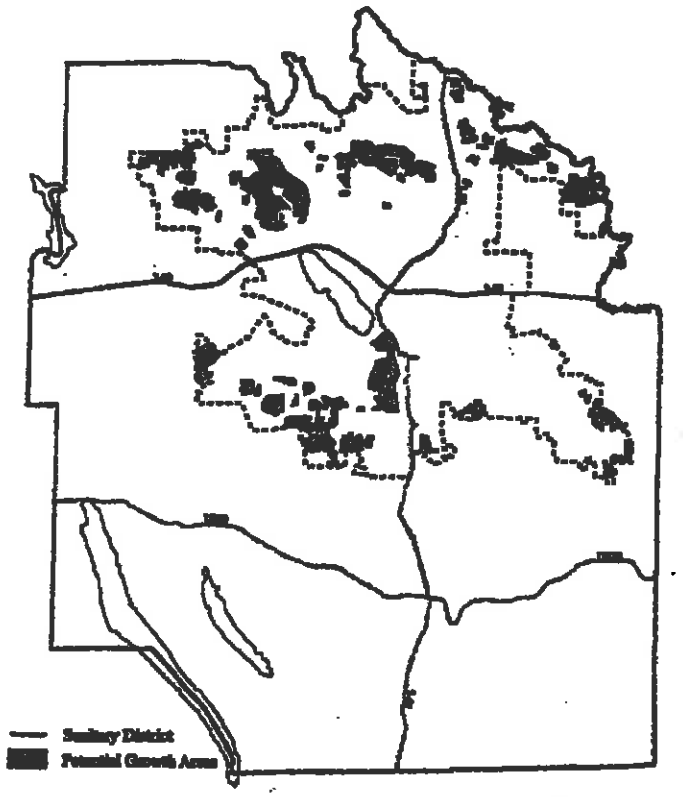
In order to create "the best small towns and neighborhoods in America", this community must maintain, restore and revitalize existing neighborhoods, and main streets. Such investments will cost less than building anew and will save irreplaceable architecture and a connection to our past.

Investment is most needed in the central core of the community - the City of Syracuse and the surrounding older suburbs. The distinctive architecture, variety of housing types and choices. the quality of existing neighborhoods already equipped with sidewalks. mature trees, schools, parks, churches and shops, and the sense of neighborhood in many of these areas argues decisively for reinvestment.

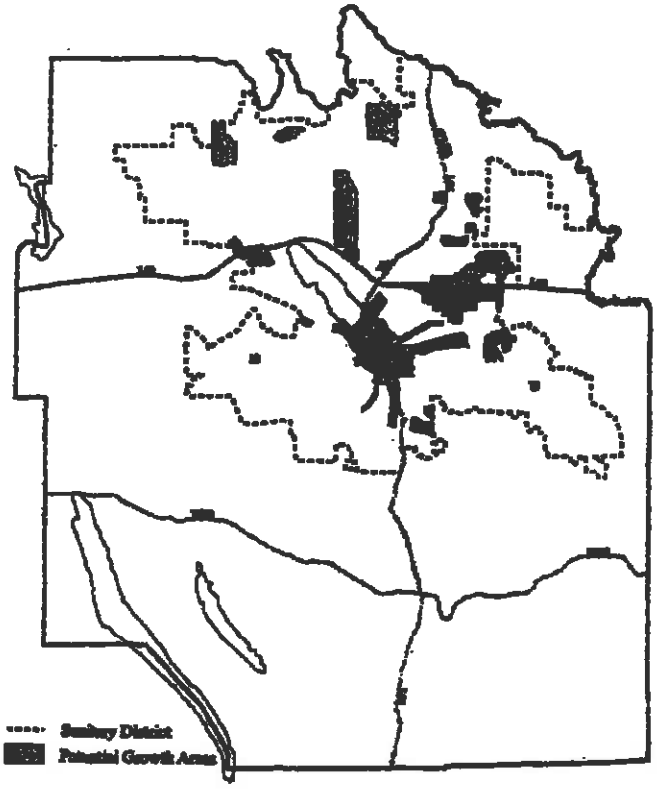
Investment is also needed in some newer suburbs and in rural areas. In some locations there is a backlog of unmet highway capacity needs created by development in past decades. Other suburbs built in the 1960's are reaching a point where turnover in ownership and age of structures will require substantial investment to retain the quality and character of these neighborhoods. In rural areas, older structures and farm buildings need upkeep. Rural villages struggle to maintain the quality of their communities; maintenance costs of older buildings, intrusions from traffic, competition from new rural developments, and pressure for strip style commercial uses threaten the appearance and quality of life in many villages.

With limited investment dollars available to the community and a major commitment required in infrastructure, investment in existing communities makes economic sense and provides the bridge between our identification with previous generations and our commitment to the future. Premature development in rural areas rather than investment in existing communities is a very expensive option and may impact our community identity, architectural heritage, and quality of life.

Major Residential Growth Potential



Major Economic Growth Potential



## 2.2 Redevelop Obsolete and Vacant Sites

Some sites that are served by infrastructure need more than rehabilitation of existing buildings. These sites may be vacant because buildings have been demolished or because they contain structures whose usefulness has ended because of design, lack of maintenance or contamination. Such sites provide an investment opportunity if certain constraints can be dealt with.

One constraint affecting use of obsolete and vacant sites is environmental contamination or the threat of liability from unknown contamination. Brownfields legislation under consideration by New York State would remove liability disincentives and provide financial incentives for redevelopment of minimally contaminated sites to achieve environmental and economic goals. Both brownfields legislation and the recently passed Environmental Bond Act will make reuse more economically feasible. Another constraint is lack of sufficiently sized parcels for newer buildings; this constraint will require assembly of vacant and/or underutilized parcels into larger parcels. At times, acquisition of properties may be required. Obsolete zoning/subdivision regulations can also hinder redevelopment so that flexibility in development rules is essential. Upgrading of utilities may occasionally be required but this is cheaper than bringing a full complement of new infrastructure to a greenfield site. Financial incentives such as provided by the City's Economic Development Zones may be required to get projects implemented. These types of projects also require careful design since they are being inserted into an existing urban/suburban fabric and they must be appropriate in scale, architecture and other design elements.

## 2.3 Protect and Maintain Existing Infrastructure

Onondaga County, Syracuse, the towns, and villages have large investments in highways, sewers, pump stations, and treatment plants, water lines, reservoirs, filtration facilities, parks, schools, libraries, and municipal buildings. The oldest facilities in Syracuse and the earliest suburbs were built between 1890 and 1930. Much of this infrastructure is underutilized and needs repairs or replacement. The newer infrastructure was built in the 1960's and 1970's with heavy federal and state subsidies - often exceeding 85% of total costs.

Subsidies have not only enabled expansion of the urbanized area, but encouraged it; as a result, land use spread outward from the city and adjacent towns. Large new residential developments were created in the suburban towns, especially north, east and west of the city. The subsidies for suburban sprawl by the federal government and New York State have ended, just as facilities built in the 1960's and 70's are nearing the end of their design life and need major upgrading.

Onondaga County is faced with major capital costs, almost all of which will have to be borne by current and future county residents. This circumstance has two implications: *the County must make full use of existing infrastructure to achieve the maximum return on its investment; maintenance and replacement of current facilities has fiscal priority over expansion of the urbanized area.*

Fortunately, enough developable land exists in areas with urban services and areas adjacent to existing infrastructure to accommodate anticipated growth. Policies of assessing true capital costs to new development can reduce the financial incentives for premature expansion.

*Protection of infrastructure also means protecting key community facilities from degradation by poor development practices.* For example, development which degrades community wells or water sources, or development too close to wastewater treatment plants can lead to complaints and demands for public investment to redress problems. Failure to manage development intensity in relation to highway capacity and failure to manage access along major arterials can create demands for major investments in new lane capacity.

Onondaga County's economic future depends on the quality and capacity of key infrastructure; poorly planned development must not be permitted to compromise the benefits of public investments in infrastructure.

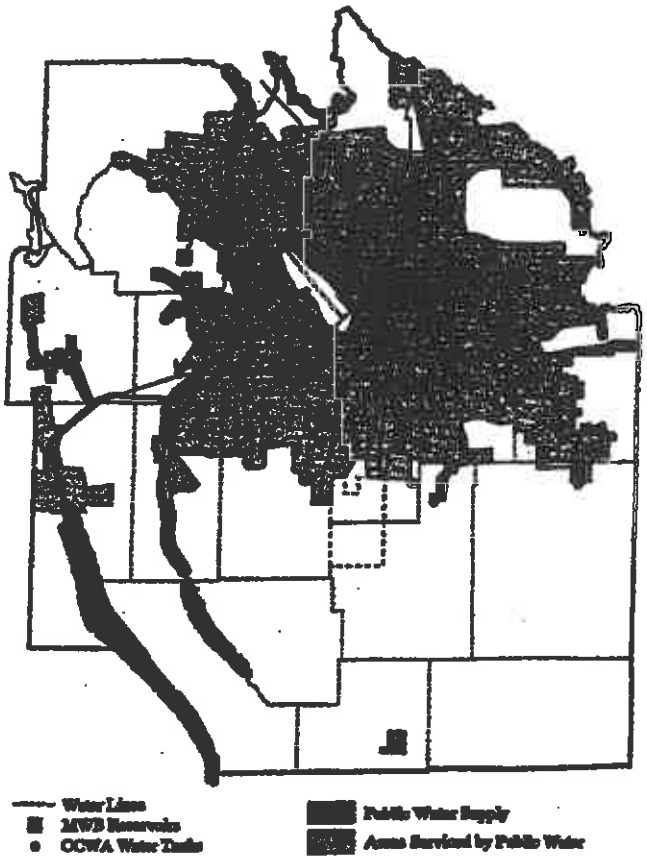
## 2.4 Create Urban and Suburban Settlement Patterns and Densities

Areas served with public water and sewer can sustain very high residential densities as evidenced by existing densities in cities. In Onondaga County residential densities need to be high enough to justify the large expense in public water and sewer infrastructure. Higher density development requires more design and planning input in order to create a viable living environment and to fit into the existing framework of development. Some locations on the suburban-rural fringe have public water but lack sewers. Development in such locations must accommodate on-site wastewater treatment but be amenable to the cost-effective installation of sewers when extensions become feasible.

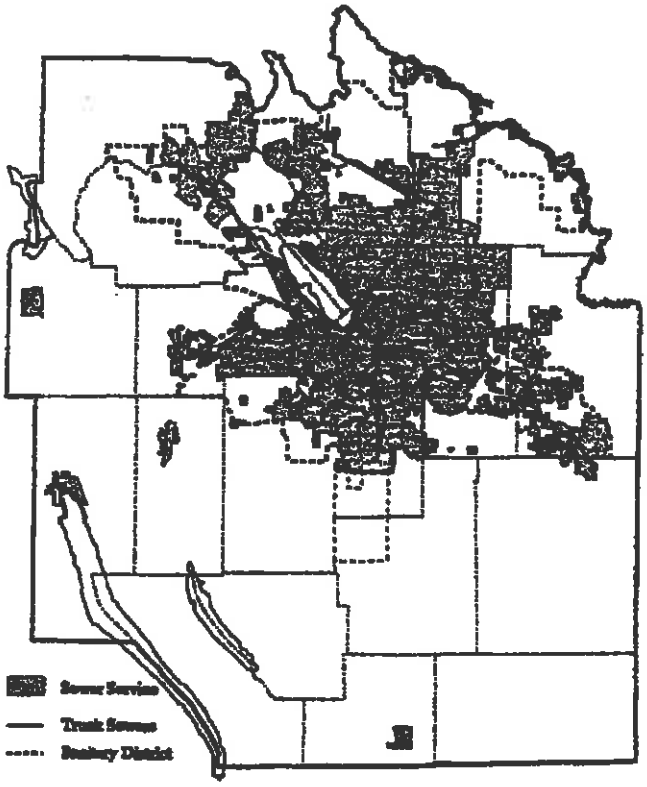
A variety of densities within communities and neighborhoods, combined with sufficient parks and open space, can provide a settlement pattern that is livable and commensurate with the existing investment in water and sewer infrastructure. Apartments, townhouses and condominiums can be interspersed with single and two-family residences. Innovative use of apartments over stores and other mixed uses situations can increase actual densities without altering perceived densities.

Villages and existing suburban areas with water and sewer infrastructure can use innovative planning and design to increase residential development without altering the perceived density in the community.

Public Water System



Public Wastewater System



Villages in rural areas without room for significant expansion can use annexation to increase their size while maintaining control over areas that wish to utilize available public water and sewer facilities. Growth which maintains and improves the livability of communities should be the goal of municipalities.

Better use of infrastructure combined with a variety of living arrangements and a relatively compact functioning neighborhood will become more important as the population ages. Older individuals will have less desire to maintain lawns and large suburban houses and less desire or ability to drive, yet want to remain in their current neighborhoods. Upgrading housing and increasing the density in areas with water and sewer can reinvigorate communities for the benefit of all age and income groups.

## 2.5 Preserve Transportation Assets

All modes of transportation are important to the community's future and must be enhanced through well-designed development, yet protected from improper development. Onondaga County's crossroads location, intermodal facilities, and excellent regional highways contribute to the importance of freight distribution, warehousing, and shipping in the economy. Within the community, good roads, pedestrian facilities, bikeways and transit provide mobility for people and the distribution of goods and services.

Transportation assets will be protected through appropriate investments in routine maintenance, capital improvements, right-of-way protection, and traffic system management. Transportation assets must also be protected by appropriate land use patterns, site design and access management.

Highway Network Jurisdiction

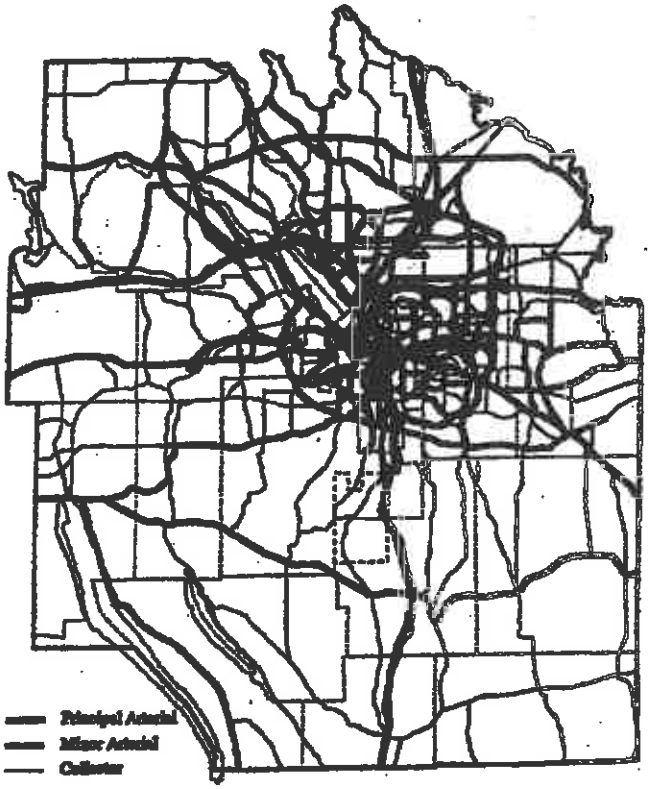
*The highway network* of state, county and local roads and streets forms the basis of our transportation system and creates a structure for land development and settlement patterns. The highway network will not be expanded or dramatically enhanced in the foreseeable future; preservation of the existing system is essential. Decreasing federal and state funding for highways, restricted local resources, and increasing travel demand require optimum use of the existing network.

Traffic mobility and highway level of service can be protected by a balanced distribution of uses, access management, and site designs which protect rights-of-way, level of service, and capacity. Each road should be regarded as part of the County's infrastructure and as a unique land use which must be compatible with adjacent uses in scale, intensity, and access. A well planned and designed relationship between roads and adjacent land uses can enhance traffic mobility, livability of neighborhoods, and viability of businesses. Management of access-the pattern of driveways, major retail site entrance roads, and intersections - is a key site design and subdivision element. Arterials and local streets represents the extremes in a continuum of roads which provide varying degrees of traffic mobility and land access.

*Arterials* are designed to provide traffic mobility; driveways and cross streets must be limited in number, carefully designed and well located. Direct off-road connections between adjacent commercial and retail sites should be required to separate local traffic from through traffic on arterials. High traffic generating uses can be located along arterials but excessive massing of major traffic generating uses creates congestion and conflicts with through traffic.

*Local roads* should be designed to provide land access, with frequent driveways for low traffic generating uses. Local streets should interconnect to permit travel between neighborhoods so that local traffic, pedestrians, bicyclists are not forced to use major collectors and arterials. Street design-width, turning radii, and parking lanes - can promote low speed and pedestrian safety; sidewalks or pedestrian paths are encouraged.

Functional Classification of Highways

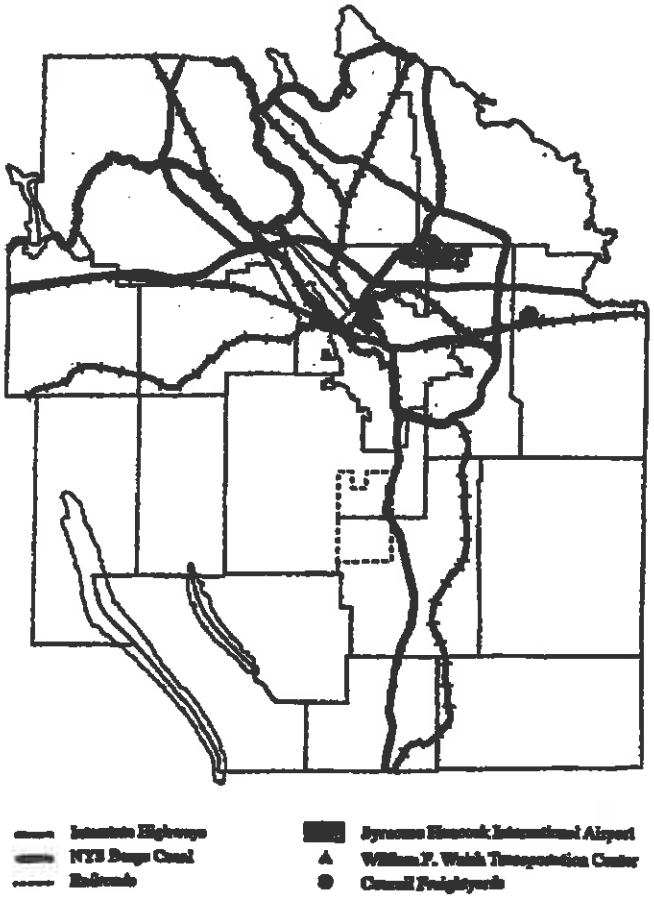


*Sidewalks and pedestrian paths* between land uses need to be incorporated into subdivision designs, and site plans. People should be able to walk from their homes to neighboring commercial uses. Collector streets and arterials need sidewalks and designated bicycle paths to promote pedestrian safety and use on these roads. Towns and villages are encouraged to construct sidewalks and bike paths along collector streets and arterials where appropriate. Plans for road improvements should consider impacts on pedestrians and bicyclists as well as vehicular flow. Land use objectives and the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, and transit may dictate different highway designs than traffic mobility objectives alone would require.

*Funding for routine maintenance and major highway improvements* should be sufficient to protect community investments. Appropriate annual highway maintenance will protect pavement quality and highway foundations and prevent the need for major reconstruction. Mitigation of development impacts should be required to protect the existing level of service in all locations.

*Rail, air and water transportation assets* must be protected from improper development. Residential development next to active rail lines can lead to protests when rail activity increases; likewise, residential development too close to the airport or within higher noise contours can lead to complaints and calls for restrictions on airport activities. Onondaga County depends on its central location and its transportation facilities as economic assets and proper planning must ensure that land use does not conflict with established transportation facilities.

Regional Transportation Assets



| Highway Planning and Design Guidelines (for new development under ideal highway conditions) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Design Characteristics | Class I | Class II | Class III |
| Expected Traffic Volumes (vehicles per day) | > 8,000 | 1,000-8,000 | < 1.000 |
| ROW Width - 4 lane | 100-125 ft. | 100 ft. | NA |
| 2 lane | 80 ft. | 80 ft. | 66-80 ft. |
| Intersection Sight Distance | * | * | * |
| Driveway Sight Distance | 10x | 10x | 10x posted speed |
| * Sight distance requirements vary with usage (volume and vehicle types). Design of intersections will be subject to AASHTO (American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials) standards. | | | |
| Land Use | major traffic generators | reverse frontage encouraged (may vary with location) | low traffic generators |
| Subdivision Design | reverse lot frontage or oversized frontage lots | reverse frontage encouraged (may vary with location) | minimum municipal standards |
| Minimum Frontage for lots with access (may vary with speed limit) | 300 ft. | 150 ft. | minimum municipal standards |
| Minimum Setbacks from ROW edge, for lots with access | 150 ft. | 125 ft. | minimum municipal standards |

## 2.6 Expand Infrastructure for Job Creation

A community depends on its job base for its current and future prosperity. Onondaga County has numerous industrial and commercial redevelopment sites serviced with all necessary infrastructure along with new sites in existing industrial parks in suburban areas. Occasionally a company will have specific site requirements which exclude locations within the urban service area. In such cases, the community must decide if the number and quality of proposed new jobs justifies a substantial investment in infrastructure to add to the urbanized area. If this investment is justified and no currently served site is acceptable, the investment should be made because of the extreme importance of jobs to the overall health of the community.

A major new business not only provides employment to persons working in the business, but also provides spin off employment to suppliers and to businesses who benefit from the purchases made by the new employees. Construction jobs also are created and the community image and appearance improves, enticing further growth. Onondaga County will provide necessary infrastructure for major employers that wish to locate or expand here and will work with the city, towns, and villages to plan and design such sites to enhance the quality of life in the community.

# RURAL AREAS

Resources in rural areas - including water, minerals, forests, agricultural soils, and natural areas such as wetlands, flood plains, and open space - are essential to the continued viability of the metropolitan area. In order to protect farmland and natural resources from development pressure, public water and sewer service are strongly discouraged in rural areas. Rural residents and businesses must depend on on-site wells and wastewater systems or community treatment systems to support very low density development and farms.

## 3.1 Protect the Rural Economy, Agriculture, and Access to Natural Resources

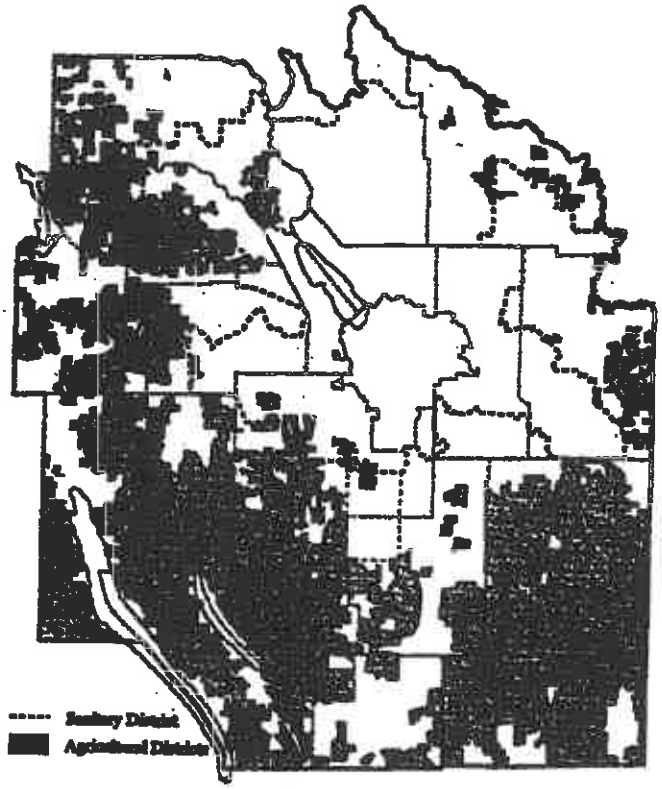
The rural economy is based on farming, forestry, and mineral resource extraction. These activities and rural residential growth co-exist in a delicate balance. Many rural activities can have off-site impacts similar to heavy industry including noise, odors, use of chemicals, long hours of operation for machinery, and heavy trucks. When farms go out of business or need to subsidize operations, land is often subdivided for building lots. New lots can create residential densities that impact on groundwater availability; new residents can object to remaining farming operations or increase local school taxes to the extent of further impairing the economic stability of remaining farms.

*Preservation of agriculture* is a basic requirement for sustainable rural development; the loss of farms and farmland will drastically change the rural landscape and alter the rural qualities that many move to the country to obtain. The economics of farming have changed; as livestock operations become larger and more intensive, off-site impacts will grow. Home occupations are often essential to subsidize an agricultural operations; these tend to be related to the storage, operation, and maintenance of heavy equipment and farm machinery, the manufacture and sale of handicrafts, or the sale of farm produce. Continued farming depends on economic conditions including enough local farms to support related activities like machinery repair shops and produce markets and the ability to market competitively priced products.

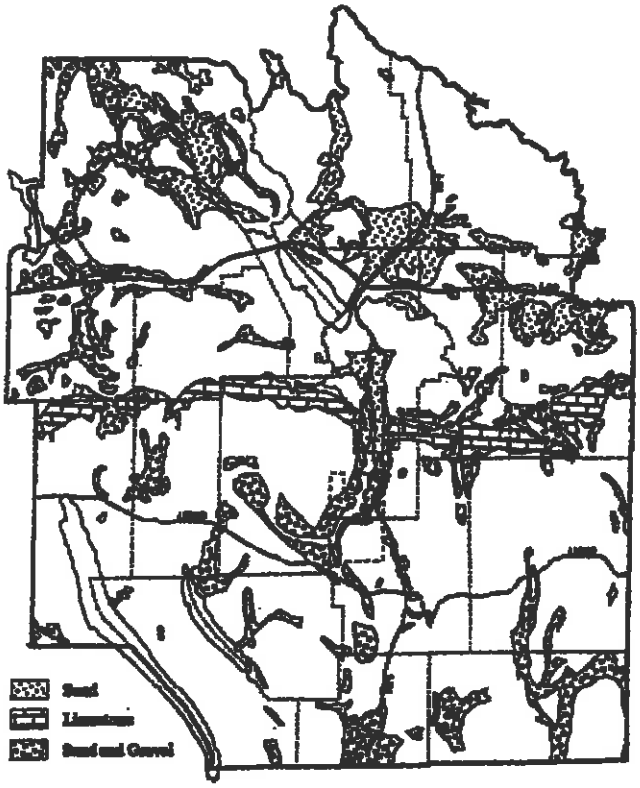
Local land use codes should consider these agricultural economic and environmental factors when permitting nonfarm residential development; location and density of nonfarm housing can have a critical, negative impact on agriculture.

Rural residential growth should be regulated to protect the viability of farming and the rural economy, to protect surface water from nonpoint pollution and sedimentation, and to prevent conflicts with resource extraction.

Agricultural Districts



Economic Geology

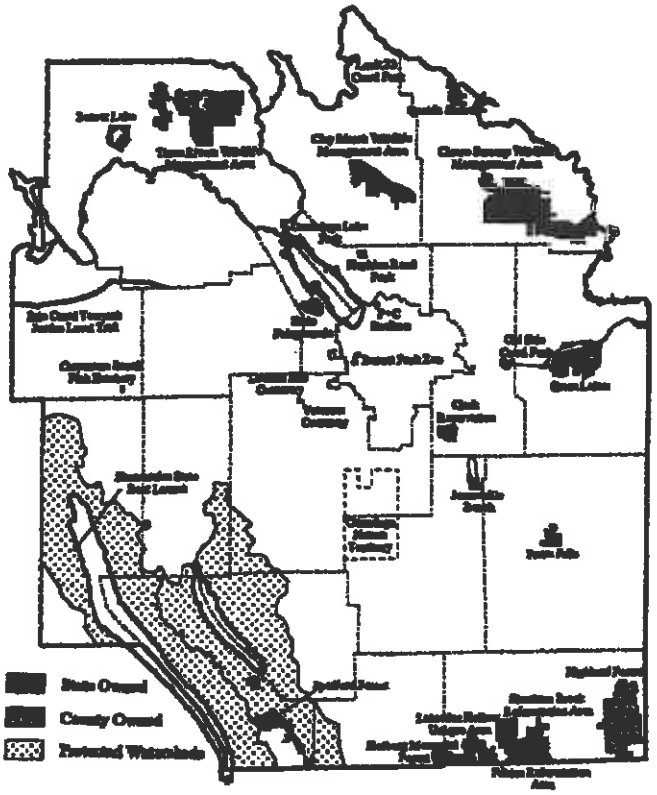


*Access to mineral resources* in sand, gravel and limestone quarries can be threatened by low density residential development located near quarries or along the roads leading to quarries. Quarrying is a traditional rural economic activity which is essential to the economic vitality of the metropolitan region.

*Open space with meadow, forest, wetland, or other natural vegetation acts* to retain stormwater runoff, provide flood storage capacity, inhibit soil erosion, and stream sedimentation. A variety of agricultural and natural vegetation creates complex ecosystems and wildlife habitats.

*Public parks and protected open space*, and private rural lands provide open space vistas while protecting water quality. The watersheds of Skaneateles Lake and Otisco Lake are protected by the City of Syracuse and the Onondaga County Water Authority; land use plans, regulation, and good agricultural practices work in tandem to protect the quality of the primary water sources for Syracuse and several suburban towns. Watershed protection is required as part of the City's filtrations avoidance agreement with Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), based on the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act.

Regional Parks and Protected Open Space



## 3.2 Promote Sustainable Land Development Practices

Sustainable land use practices in rural areas require that the intensity and density of development and site design be compatible with environmental constraints of the site and the area, over the long term. Natural systems such as groundwater aquifers and recharge areas, watersheds for public water sources, stormwater drainage basins, and view sheds can be negatively affected by poor planning and site design and the cumulative impact of scattered site development. Improper construction practices or soil disturbance can lead to erosion and stream siltation. Surface water can be polluted by poor agricultural practices or industrial scale livestock operations.

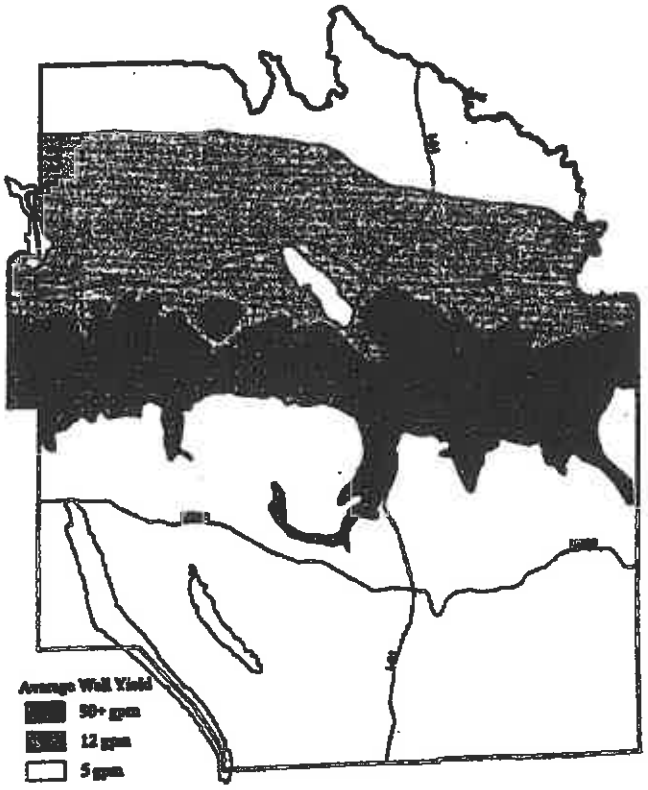
Residential development in rural areas poses special problems; location, density and site design are important considerations. The lot size necessary to provide sustainable use of wells and septic systems depends on soil conditions, slope, groundwater availability, and the intensity of residential use as measured by the number of bedrooms. Residential building lots must be large enough to accommodate a well and septic system, separated by at least 100 feet and set back from property lines, and to accommodate relocation of the leach field when it no longer functions properly.

*Soil* is part of the septic system treatment cycle; good drainage and moderate percolation of water through the soil are necessary for effective treatment of pathogens in effluent. Wetlands, a high seasonal water table, periodic flooding, and shallow soils diminish drainage and impede septic system function posing a potential for groundwater and surface water contamination. Glacial till, the soil characteristic of glacial uplands, tends to have very slow rates of percolation which can lead to ponding of contaminated water and surface drainage toward highway ditches. Unsuitable soils can require modification in wastewater system design or location, at significant cost.

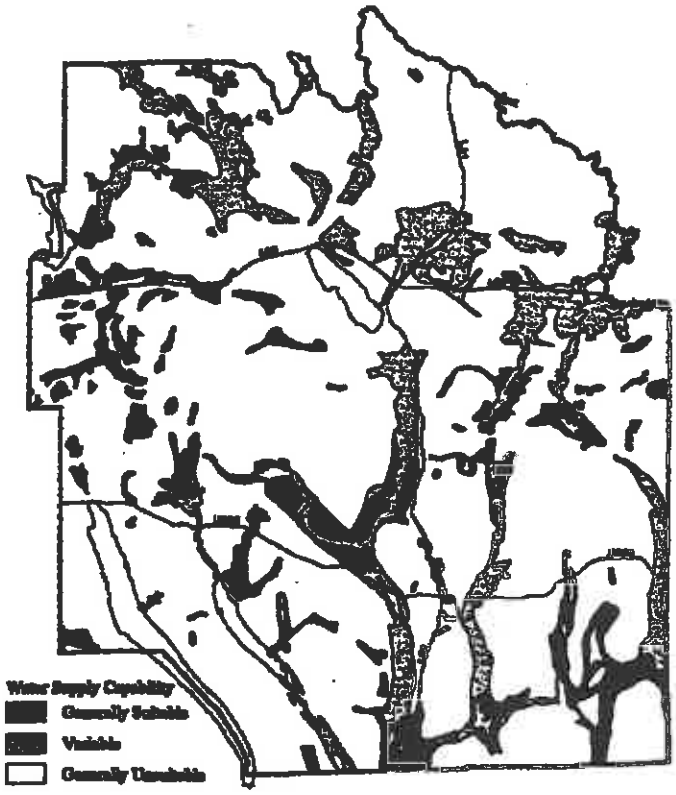
In glacial uplands, the most suitable soils for septic system leach fields are found intermingled in a fine grained pattern with very unsuitable soils. This pattern, illustrated on the map of soils suitability in Marcellus, is typical of many areas south of Syracuse. Suitable soils are often found in valleys which have good potential for groundwater yield; but sites in valleys may be subject to high water tables, poor drainage, and flooding. Municipal land use plans and rural site designs should take into consideration these complex soil groundwater, drainage and land use relationships.

Soil Suitability for On-Site Wastewater Systems

Water Availability in Bedrock




Surficial Water Availability




*Groundwater supply* is highly variable both in terms of quantity and quality in the county. Locations which have acceptable well yields can experience dramatic changes in quality and quantity of water due to drought, changes in the aquifer, well cave-ins, contamination from chemicals or microbes, and increases in the number of houses drawing on an aquifer. New wells, even at considerable distance from a site, can affect water yield of wells which are dependant on a fractured bedrock aquifer, which is common in the glacial uplands of the southern towns. The precarious nature of wells is not always understood by new rural residents who may be quick to demand public water when problems arise. Limited public resources, higher priorities for infrastructure investment, and the importance of protecting farmland for development pressures make it imperative that all new residential lots be sustainable on groundwater yields.

Sustainable rural development requires sites which have wells with adequate year-round flows and acceptable water quality; drainage and soils suitable for wastewater treatment or access to a community wastewater plant which meets NYS Department of Environmental Conservation standards; and driveway access designed to protected traffic safety, capacity and speed on commuter roads. Area wide density should be planned and development located so that it is sustainable without public water or sewers. Residential lot size must be based on soils, slope, and intensity of use, as measured by the number of bedrooms.

County government cannot financially remedy poor planning and subdivision decisions in rural areas. Those who choose to live in such areas must assume the risks inherent in private water and wastewater systems and have the financial resources and land area to upgrade of these systems. Municipalities should require proper lot sizes and appropriate wastewater system designs. Education to acquaint the public with the realities of rural living is encouraged.

| Water Quality Characteristics - Water Bearing Units and Surface Lake Supplies | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Geologic Layer | Ca | Mg | K | Na | Cl | S04 | Dissolved Solids |
| Sand and Gravel | 95.0 | 21.9 | 1.2 | 28.4 | 54.2 | 44.9 | 561.5 |
| Glacial Till | 86.5 | 19.5 | 0.8 | 11.6 | 31.7 | 31.0 | 482.1 |
| Devonian Shale | 58.8 | 13.7 | 0.9 | 58.4 | 57.4 | 26.9 | 500.8 |
| Silurian-Devonian Carbonates | 113.5 | 23.6 | 0.8 | 18.6 | 47.1 | 103.1 | 624.5 |
| Post Vernon Evaporites | 387.4 | 40.4 | 1.4 | 19.4 | 59.2 | 811.7 | 1625.6 |
| Vernon Shale | 391.8 | 32.4 | 11.1 | 51.1 | 117.3 | 828.9 | 1719.3 |
| Surface Supplies | | | | | | | |
| Lake Ontario | 36.0 | | | 12.0 | 21.0 | 14.0 | 310.0 |
| Otisco Lake | 42.0 | | | 11.0 | 16.0 | 21.0 | |
| Skaneateles Lake | 38.0 | | | 4.5 | 9.0 | 14.0 | 160.0 |

## 3.3 Encourage Compact Development in Rural Areas

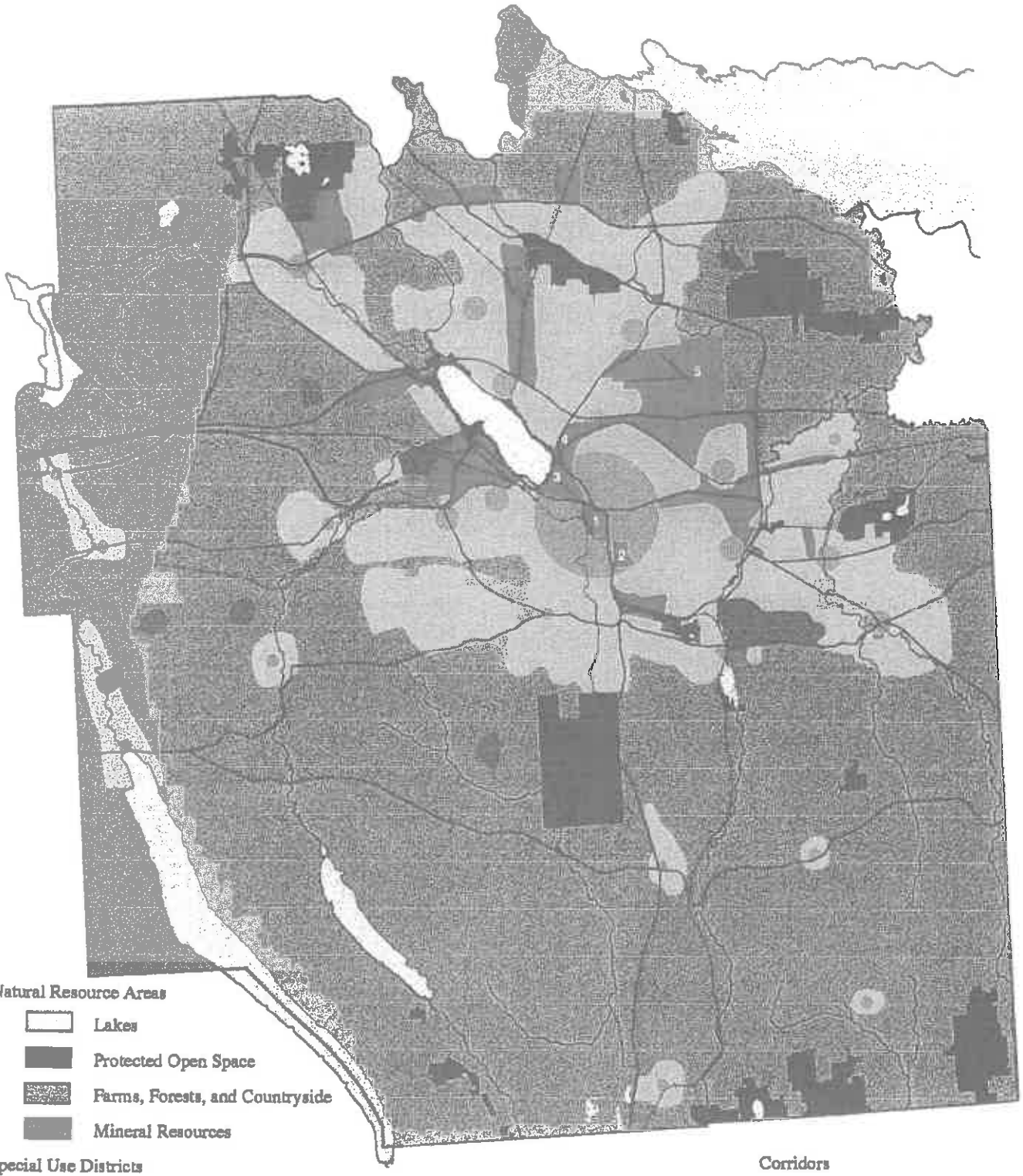
Compact residential settlement is encouraged in rural areas to preserve natural resources and rural character. While large rural lots may appear to address soil and groundwater issues, very low density rural development consumes land, including prime farmland at a high rate and may block access to natural resources. Even low density strip subdivisions along state and county highways detract from open space views and multiple driveways conflict with high speed traffic and safety on commuter roads. Scattered houses built along ridge lines can destroy agricultural landscapes. Low density, scattered site, and highway strip subdivisions should be discouraged.

Town plans can encourage residential growth adjacent to villages and hamlets. Villages offer a unique blend of small town lifestyle, urban amenities such as public water and sewers, main street shopping, and civic life, and a rural location. Villages and hamlets which do not have public water and sewers can accommodate growth by installing community wastewater systems.

When farm land is converted to residential use, towns can accommodate growth and maintain the open space desired by rural residents by requiring clustered subdivisions for residential and commercial uses. Cluster developments can enhance residential settings and retail centers while preserving rural character, traffic mobility, travel times, and safety on commuter highways and while protecting access to natural resources.

Revision of zoning and subdivision regulations may be necessary to achieve design flexibility; annexation by villages may be desirable to manage growth in some cases. Location, density, and site design are important considerations in rural land use regulations. Regulations should encourage clustering to preserve farmland and to protect access to and continued operation of sand, gravel and limestone quarries.

# Land Use Vision



Natural Resource Areas

- Lakes
- Protected Open Space
- Farms, Forests, and Countryside
- Mineral Resources

Special Use Districts

1. Downtown
2. University Hill
3. Lakefront
4. Stadium/Market/Transportation Center
5. Airport

- Industrial and Commercial Districts
- Neighborhoods
- Community Centers

Corridors

- Major Highways
- Streams
- Railroads

N

Onondaga County
2010 Development Guide
Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency

1997

# LAND USE VISION FOR ONONDAGA COUNTY

Onondaga County's land use vision is based on the strategies and policies of the 2010 Development Guide which reflect the minimal need for new urban land in Onondaga County. The land use vision incorporates the existing pattern of land use in Onondaga County and the land use plans of the City of Syracuse, the towns, and villages. The land use vision does not replace the need for or desirability of planning by municipalities, but unites municipal plans into a county wide, community vision. The land use vision is depicted on the Vision Map on page 33; this discussion of land uses is keyed to the map legend.

The land use vision is subject to revision following review and comment by municipalities and the public. After the Development Guide is adopted by the County and endorsed by the City, towns, and villages, implementation will depend on the cooperative actions of the County through investment decisions and permits, the municipalities through land use and subdivision regulation and design codes, and private developers and land owners through high quality development in appropriate locations.

The land use vision focuses on generalized uses and settlement patterns including natural resource areas, neighborhoods, and special use districts which have regional significance. The vision includes historic centers - Syracuse, villages, hamlets and planned communities - which will remain the focus of neighborhoods, civic activity, community identity, redevelopment and growth. These centers are connected by corridors - highways, rivers and streams, and rail - which provide mobility within and through the county and help define the landscape between communities.

Anticipated growth over the next 15 years can be accommodated within the area currently served by infrastructure; therefore, the land use vision does not project significant growth in new urban land during that period. Fiscal constraints on infrastructure and the need for public and private investments in every neighborhood and community suggest the best way to accommodate growth is by reinvesting in existing neighborhoods and historic community centers. In this way, Onondaga County can create "the best small towns and neighborhoods in America."

Because of development constraints in rural areas, very careful siting and planning will be required to create sustainable development. Constraints include the uncertain quantity and quality of groundwater, widespread limitations in soil percolation and drainage which impede on-site wastewater treatment, and steep slopes and shallow soil depth to bedrock particularly in the southern towns. Constraints are due to geologic and glacial history and are major factors is the existing pattern of settlement to the north, east and west of Syracuse and in the location of canals, railroads, and highways which make Onondaga County a major crossroads in New York State and the Northeast.

## LAND USE CONCEPTS

### Natural Resource Areas

Natural resource areas support all metropolitan development and human settlements; protection of these areas from premature or inappropriate development is essential to the long-term benefit of the community.

These resources include Skaneateles Lake and Otisco Lake, public water sources; Onondaga Lake and Oneida Lake which are part of the Barge Canal System and provide natural habitat and recreation opportunities; abundant prime agricultural soils which support dairy, fruit and vegetable production; public forests, parks, and protected open space which provide recreation and access to nature; major wetlands which provide wildlife habitat and flood storage capacity; and local sand, gravel, and limestone deposits which provide construction materials.

Development is not generally recommended outside of traditional community centers; even very low intensity development should be carefully sited with respect to farmland, natural resources, and soil and water constraints because public infrastructure cannot be cost-effectively extended to resource areas.

*Protected watersheds* include the drainage basins for Skaneateles Lake and Otisco Lake. The land uses within these areas are regulated and managed by the City of Syracuse, the Onondaga County Water Authority, the Towns of Skaneateles, Spafford, and Marcellus, and land owners to protect the excellent

water quality from these sources. Control of surface and subsurface water runoff from both farms and residential development is critical.

*Farmland* is determined by active agricultural use and New York State Agricultural Districts. Farmland accounts for about 30 percent of the County's land area and is critical to rural landscapes, identity, and magnificent vistas. Agriculture is a major economic activity in Onondaga County and New York State. The scale of farms involving livestock is shifting to larger, more intense operations which have the potential to become more industrial in character and less desirable in proximity to nonfarm neighbors. In some locations, a shift to production of high value vegetable and fruit crops can take advantage of proximity to urban markets; intensive use of farm chemicals decreases the desirability of nonfarm residential neighbors.

*Protected open spaces and forest lands* are found in state wildlife management areas, state and county reforestation areas and parks, and the Onondaga Nation Territory which has sovereign status. Steeper terrain which is unsuited to modern agriculture has reverted to private forests, although commercial forestry is not a major activity.

*Wetlands and flood plains* are found along the shores of most lakes, rivers, and stream valleys, particularly in Cicero, northern Manlius, Lysander and west along the Thruway and rail corridor. Together these lands provide wildlife habitat and flood storage capacity, and access to nature in rural and suburban locations to the benefit of all county residents. Flood storage capacity is economically important as a means of protecting the built environment from storm water damage and avoiding construction of expensive flood protection projects.

*Mineral resources* including limestone, sand and gravel are necessary to all construction including highways, retail centers, industry, and houses. Proximity and access to these resources is a major economic resource for this community which can be easily jeopardized by scattered or poorly planned residential development in rural areas. The value of the resource is outweighed by transportation costs when trucking time exceeds half an hour.

## Special Use Districts

Special use districts have significance to the entire county and surrounding regions: most have excellent connections to the regional transportation system. Special use districts include mixed use regional centers, large scale single use industrial office parks, major shopping centers, and unique facilities such as the airport. Most special use districts serve as employment centers for the entire community. Undeveloped sites and vacant facilities created by shifts in industrial production, technology, and markets have the potential for reuse. The planned Northern Clay Industrial Park is designed for a very large scale industrial project.

Some special use districts benefit from mixed land uses and tend to have a fined grained development pattern and connections to the local street network. These are to be located in Syracuse including Downtown, University Hill, the Lakefront, and the Stadium/ Market/ Transportation Center.

*Downtown* offers cultural institutions, museums, and entertainment facilities, OnCenter Convention Center, government offices including State and Federal Courts, regional offices, banking and business services, and unique retail centers such as Armory Square. Downtown is the historic center of the community and boasts a significant share of our architectural heritage. Additional retail activity on Salina Street, office development, and new market rate housing are development goals for Downtown. Renovation and preservation of historic structures will enhance the character of Downtown and are expected to have important economic benefits.

*University Hill* includes Syracuse University, SUNY Upstate Graduate Medical School, a diverse hospital complex which provides tertiary medical care for the region, and supporting health care, medical offices, and research facilities. The Carrier Dome is a major sports, entertainment, and assembly center catering to University and private events. Skytop Research Park offers potential for significant growth opportunities for research and development enterprises which can benefit from proximity to the University research community and facilities, and to the proposed connection the Interstate 481.

*The Lakefront Development District* encompasses the Barge Canal Harbor and borders Onondaga Lake. The Lakefront District is located at the geographic center of the County's population and has direct access from north/south and east/west Interstate highways. Recent redevelopment has begun to replace under-used oil tanks, scrap yards, and obsolete distribution and industrial uses with new retail centers, new housing and office buildings. Continued redevelopment will transform this area into a premier business, recreation, tourism and residential center.

Carousel Center is regional shopping and multiplex theater mall of over one million square feet, with a multi-state and international market area; Carousel Center attracts over 13 million visitors a year. The Center is linked to Syracuse University, Downtown, and the new P & C Stadium by OnTrack passenger rail service as well as by transit and excellent street network and interstate highway connections.

Franklin Square is at the center of a mixed use, mixed income neighborhood at the southern tip of the Lakefront District. New construction and adaptive reuse of industrial buildings have provided Class A office space and unique urban residential opportunities.

The development goal for the Lakefront District is to link these initial projects with new pedestrian neighborhoods, retail and industrial uses. The Harborfront will be developed as a regional tourist destination, to include the proposed Onondaga Lake Research Center and Aquarium.

The *Stadium/Market/Transportation Center* is east of Carousel Center. Major public investments have been made in Onondaga County's P & C Stadium for triple A baseball and community use. The Regional Transportation Center will link terminals for local transit, intercity buses, local and regional passenger rail, and an airport shuttle. Investments have been proposed for updated facilities for retail and wholesale produce sales at the Regional Market. These projects are expected to spur redevelopment along the Hiawatha Boulevard Corridor.

*Hancock International Airport*, located north of Syracuse, serves international passenger carriers and a growing air freight business. A planned parallel east/west runway to be located north of the passenger terminal will increase air traffic capacity and permit reconstruction of the main runway. Recent private development on the airport campus includes offices buildings and civil aviation and freight handling facilities. The Hancock Development Park is converting a former military air base to a private office and industrial park. In addition to encouraging compatible development on airport land. the Development Guide recommends that land uses under the main flight paths and within the 65 decibel noise zones be compatible with these airport impacts. The airport location in relation to business centers is a major asset for this community which should be protected for the long term.

*Industrial and Commercial Districts* include major retail and commercial areas, industrial parks, and the proposed Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency Landfill in the town of Van Buren. Many of these areas present opportunities for new development as well as reuse of vacant buildings and abandoned sites.

## Neighborhoods and Community Centers

*Neighborhoods* include residential uses and supporting public and private land uses. Neighborhoods are found in hamlets, villages, the City, planned communities, and suburban subdivisions. Neighborhood as mapped encompass existing neighborhoods, platted but undeveloped subdivisions, and undeveloped areas with water and sewer service and highway capacity to accommodate growth.

Most residential development in Onondaga County is at relatively low density and recent suburban trends favor even lower densities. There is choice in location, housing type, tenure, and cost. Housing costs are low compared with the national average. Settlement patterns are varied. In the 1800's, urban settlement in Onondaga County was based on neighborhoods built around commercial and transportation centers and industrial works. Urban land uses were mixed and residential lots were narrow to allow easy access to and from houses, stores, and factories in villages and hamlets. In 1848, Syracuse was incorporated as a city and over time adjacent villages which were annexed retained distinct identity as neighborhoods. After 1945, the surge in post war growth was accommodated in suburban towns north, east, and west of Syracuse. Suburban development was based on automotive transportation and the separation of residential subdivisions, industrial parks, shopping centers, and central school campuses.

Existing neighborhoods in Syracuse, the villages, hamlets, and suburban towns deserve long-term public and private investment; in return, these neighborhoods will provide housing for residents with a variety of needs and revitalize community identity and spirit. Investments in historic community centers will perpetuate neighborhoods built at a pedestrian scale; these neighborhoods contain civic spaces and recreation choices, housing for a range of income groups, and a variety of commercial uses including retail stores, services, and offices. This land use vision supports the creation of new neighborhoods in underused urban locations and when needed, in new locations. New neighborhoods should by modeled on the best historic examples in local community centers and should be developed to accommodate population growth. Premature neighborhood development will not be cost-effective and will divert housing market demand from areas where substantial investments remain unused.

*Community Centers* include villages, hamlets, city neighborhoods. Historic centers offer a range of civic spaces, recreation, employment, and commercial services to residents within a short walking distance. Based on a pedestrian scale, these centers fulfill the needs of human habitat within a limited geographic area. Successful urban fabric found in the older community centers is based on the use of continuous architecture to define the civic realm along the street. Streets which balance pedestrian and automobile mobility also define the edges of each neighborhood and provide easy and frequent connections to other neighborhoods.

## Corridors

Corridors connect community centers with each other and with regional and national markets. *Interstate, state, and major county highways* make up the most prominent set of corridors. The primary purpose of highway corridors is traffic mobility; a challenge for highway corridors is the preservation open space and rural landscapes between community centers. Visual access to natural landscapes along highways is the only way many county residents experience our superb natural environment. Strip development is to be discouraged on all major highway corridors. Both commercial and residential strip development along highway corridors has the potential to decrease traffic mobility and safety, destroy natural landscapes, and displace commerce from traditional community centers.

*Rivers, streams, and wetlands create natural corridors* between developed uses in Onondaga County. These features provide wildlife habitat and access to the natural landscapes for residents and tourists. Public preservation of these features as parks and natural areas is encouraged. Wetlands, lakes, rivers, and streams form a natural storm water drainage system and are subject to periodic flooding. Preservation of these natural corridors will add immeasurably to the future safety and quality of life of residents.

*Railroad corridors* provide links for passenger and freight between Onondaga County and national markets. They are important for our industrial base and for intermodal transhipment industries. Rail corridors should be protected from adjacent development which conflicts with railroad use. Abandoned rail corridors are valuable as future highway corridors and recreation trails.

## ALTERNATE DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

The alternative to this land use vision is continued suburban sprawl and concurrent abandonment, disinvestment, and depopulation of our historic residential, business, and community centers in Syracuse, villages, and older suburban towns. This alternative is increasingly expensive: sprawl requires that the community provide a full range of services and facilities in new locations, while maintaining older, often under utilized, facilities in original community centers. Sprawl has caused a 30% increase in annual per capita vehicle miles traveled over the last 25 years, leading to increased expenditures of fuel and time, highway and vehicle deterioration, air pollution, and a decreased quality of life with no offsetting contribution to the local economy.

The conversion of rural land to urban land has far out paced real growth, particularly since the County's population stopped growing in 1970. Large expenditures on public infrastructure have encouraged significant expansion of urban land, loss of prime farmland and wetlands, and disinvestment in traditional community centers. Continued sprawl is unaffordable and undesirable for the community's future.

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# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the Development Guide requires focusing development energies and the community's fiscal resources on the most strategic areas. Good development decisions are cost-effective, create a significant improvement in community appearance and quality of life, and lead to economic development.

Success will depend on cooperative efforts by Onondaga County, Syracuse, the towns and villages, the Onondaga County Water Authority, the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council, New York State, developers, and county businesses and residents.

## Strategy: GOOD COMMUNITY PLANNING

### Orderly Growth

Locate and develop new urban land according to priorities which emphasize: 1) reinvestment in existing communities and areas with complete urban infrastructure, 2) development at the suburban fringe in proximity to infrastructure, and 3) expansion into rural areas only when more cost-effective options are unavailable.

### Economic Growth

Target economic development efforts to retain and expand local business. Small and medium sized firms have the greatest growth potential. Economic development efforts should capitalize on the County's strategic regional location for distribution, health care, education, culture, tourist attractions, and a strong manufacturing base.

### Comprehensive Plans

Syracuse, the towns, and villages are encouraged to periodically review and update comprehensive plans so that they continue to be useful guides for economic development and community decisions. Plans should address community goals, identity and character, land use and development goals related to infrastructure, and design guidelines. Sites for economic growth, with direct access to transportation facilities, public water, and sewers should be identified. Open space, parks, protected areas, and farmland should be set aside from development, or incorporated within residential areas when appropriate.

### Land Use and Transportation

Towns are encouraged to include transportation elements in comprehensive plans and identify land use regulations designed to protect highways and other transportation facilities. Land use patterns, densities, and site designs should be supportive of the transit option. A third of the County population does not drive, including the young, elderly, handicapped and those who do not own a car: as the County's population ages, the size of this group will grow. Dispersed land use and very low density patterns in the County are not conducive to transit. A more compact, higher density pattern of development in strategic locations would improve transit usage and the mobility of the population.

Land use patterns can provide an effective and desirable alternative to adding highway capacity as a solution to congestion. Development patterns that reduce travel distance for daily activities, foster proximity of jobs, shopping, schools, recreation, and homes are encouraged. Sidewalks and bike paths are encouraged to provide alternatives to automobile usage. Obsolete restrictions on home occupations and legal impediments to compact, walkable neighborhoods should be removed from zoning codes.

Municipalities surrounding Hancock Airport are encouraged to update land use plans and zoning ordinances in order to ensure that areas impacted by flight noise will have compatible land uses. Protection of the community's air link to national and world markets is a vital economic development and transportation issue.

Municipalities are encouraged to adopt land use regulations and plans which will ensure compatible uses adjacent to main railroad lines and the Barge Canal.

### Cultural Resources

Municipalities should protect cultural resources through the SEQR process and municipal zoning reviews. Cultural resources include not only properties listed on the New York State or National Register of Historic Places, but also buildings or groupings of buildings that establish a community's character or sense of place. Municipalities should be cognizant of the best architectural features in their community and try to preserve and enhance these features.

### Compact Settlement Patterns

Municipalities should encourage compact land use patterns which provide jobs, shopping and housing within short distances on one another. Such compact land use patterns can reduce the growth in vehicular miles traveled and improve air quality.

### Land Use Regulations

Municipal land use regulations should be updated to reflect the desired land use vision for the community. If existing codes do not lead to an improved community appearance and quality of life for residents, then modifications should be made to zoning and/or subdivision regulations, with particular emphasis on design standards.

### Regulatory Procedures

Simplified, standardized procedures for zoning and subdivision applications could streamline the development process in Onondaga County and provide a predictable climate for development. A county wide approach to development would make Onondaga County more competitive with other locations. Cost savings though streamlined procedure could be transferred to civic amenities.

## Proposal Review Process

Consistent Approach: Impose municipal standards consistently over time, and across all municipal boards involved in the development process. The community appearance will be improved one project at a time.

Intermunicipal Cooperation: Coordinate land use plans and reviews with neighboring municipalities. Planning and development activities should occur with the recognition that each project affects surrounding communities and the county as a whole. Remember that poor development is not better than no development.

## Model Planning Regulations

The development of model regulations and codes based on traditional neighborhood, village, and hamlet settlement patterns and designed to promote compact settlement patterns and traditional urban fabric based on the best local models is recommended. The proposed codes would provide alternatives to existing codes based on suburban patterns of development but unintentionally lead to sprawl. The proposed codes would provide a regulatory mechanism with the potential to preserve historic community centers and settlement patterns such as neighborhoods, villages, and hamlets; protect architectural heritage; and permit new development based on traditional neighborhood patterns.

## Strategy: COORDINATED COMMUNITY EFFORT

Coordinated community effort entails public and private initiatives and investments, municipal land use regulations and decisions, and state and county permit and development approvals which are consistent with the shared community vision. Several formal mechanisms designed to enhance coordination are provided in New York State planning legislation and the Onondaga County Administrative Code.

### Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency

The Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency Board is formed by the Syracuse Planning Commission and the Onondaga County Planning Board meeting and acting jointly on issues of community wide importance. The SOCPA Board has provided policy direction for the first update and revision of the 2010 Development Guide, and recommends the endorsement of the Guide by the Onondaga County Executive and City of Syracuse Mayor and adoption by the County Legislature and Syracuse Common Council as an expression of community wide goals and policies related to development, infrastructure, the environment and natural resources, and publicly financed capital improvements.

### Onondaga County Planning Board

The Onondaga County Planning Board is formally charged with preparation and update of the County Plan every five years, the collection and distribution of planning information, research into business and industrial conditions, provision of planning services to municipalities, review of proposed subdivisions with access to existing or proposed right-of-way or site shown on the Onondaga County Official Map, and coordination of certain municipal zoning and planning actions.

#### Review of Proposed Municipal Planning, Zoning, and Subdivision Actions

The Onondaga County Planning Board reviews proposed municipal zoning and subdivision actions to assess county wide and intermunicipal impact, under the provisions of NYS General Municipal Law, Sections 239-k, l, and m. The Onondaga County Official Map will be used to establish the jurisdiction to review municipal case referrals.

Considerations of county wide and intermunicipal impact will include effects of the proposed change on adjacent municipalities, on state and county lands and facilities, including highways, parks, and drainage channels, and on farms located within Agricultural Districts.

Reviews will consider traffic and capacity of the highway system in relation to other land uses; impact on existing or proposed county or state uses; community character including land use, population density and the relation between residential and nonresidential areas; community appearance; drainage; community facilities; official development policies as expressed through plans, capital programs and regulations including the Onondaga County Sanitary Code; public convenience, governmental efficiency and maintenance of a satisfactory community environment.

#### Onondaga County Capital Program

Capital projects proposed in the County's Capital Improvement Plan will reflect the goals and policies of the 2010 Development Guide with respect to new infrastructure, increased system capacity, and geographic extensions of infrastructure. Projects will be reviewed in terms of cost-effectiveness, environmental impact, and consistency with other plans, facilities, and proposals.

#### Coordinated Project Review

The Coordinated Project Review of major development proposals or capital projects is conducted by the Onondaga County Planning Board in cooperation with county departments and state agencies and authorities with responsibility for the financing and provision of infrastructure and for the protection of the environment and with relevant municipal officials. The review procedure will be formalized as an effective means to implement the recommendations of the 2010 Development Guide, provide coordinated consideration of proposals by concerned officials, and expedite review of proposals early in the development process.

### Design Standards

Establish design standards which reflect the desired community character and identity. Poor development exacts costs which exceed the tax receipts promised; quality development attracts more development and underpins true economic growth.

Standards should be modelled on the best local examples of walkable neighborhoods, main streets, and suburban commercial and residential areas. Standards should be responsive to the human scale and social needs, while recognizing the requirements of effective vehicular traffic movement. Mixed uses are encouraged, integrated by control of scale and common design patterns. Home occupations, in context with surroundings, can be encouraged with appropriate standards.

## Onondaga County Planning Federation

The Onondaga County Planning Federation is a voluntary association of municipal planning officials, design professionals, and developers with the purposes of promoting community and intercommunity planning and distributing information on planning, platting, and zoning. The Federation will be asked to provide public information, review, and comment on the 2010 Development Guide.

## Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council

The Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC) is a regional agency charged with developing local priorities for the Federal transportation funds allocated to Onondaga County. The SMTC Policy Committee includes representation from Syracuse, Onondaga County, New York State, the Federal Highway Administration, and CONRAIL. The SMTC Long Range Transportation Plan included assumptions on land use and development patterns based on Onondaga County's 2010 Development Guide. In turn, the Development Guide was drafted and updated with an understanding of the limitations on funding for new highway capacity and the need to foster all modes of transportation including pedestrian and bicycle facilities and transit and to create intermodal systems and facilities for passengers and freight.

## Intermunicipal Cooperation in Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation

State law permits intermunicipal cooperation or consolidation of comprehensive planning and land use regulation. Cooperative approaches may be used to consolidate planning functions between adjacent municipalities or a village and the surrounding town, to ensure consistent land use policies and regulations for adjacent areas, or to plan for protection of natural features such as watersheds and drainage basins, groundwater acquifers, unique natural areas and resources which effect multiple municipalities. Protection of highway corridors and other transportation facilities which serve the metropolitan area also depends on intermunicipal planning and land use regulation.

## State Environmental Quality Review Act

The State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) is designed to provide consideration of potential impacts of proposed developments and projects and provide for mitigation of impacts. The SEQR regulations provide incentives for public scoping to establish the content of the review process and for preparation of generic environmental impact statements which take into account the cumulative impacts of projects. Municipal use of these provisions is encouraged to facilitate development reviews and obtain effective environmental reviews and mitigation.

## Strategy: COST-EFFECTIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

Public water, sanitary sewers and highways together support urban and suburban residential densities. Introduction of public water into a rural area eventually leads to demand for sewers and increased highway capacity.

watershed management activities for Skaneateles and Otisco Lakes to facilitate communication, education, and implementation of watershed management actions.

### Evaluation of Infrastructure Extension Proposals

Does the proposed extension conform with the town comprehensive plan and the County Development Guide?

Does complementary infrastructure exist or is it planned in the near future? If existing, is capacity adequate? If not, are remedial projects proposed ?

Is there a need for new urban land in this location or in the County?

Do the benefits of the project clearly outweigh direct and indirect costs?

Are there realistic alternatives, including privately financed solutions to site specific problems?

What is the impact on the County's overall fiscal situation, debt load and tax base?

Are there clear-cut benefits to Onondaga County that outweigh direct and indirect costs for extension of infrastructure to out-of-county users?

## Public Water System

### Water Conservation

Municipal and residential use of water conservation measures is recommended. Water conservation reduces the need for capacity expansion, wastewater treatment costs, and the use of alternate water sources.

### Watershed Protection

The Onondaga County Environmental Health Council, the Soil and Water Conservation District, and Cornell Cooperative Extension will continue community lake

Syracuse's Land Protection Plan for the Skaneateles Lake Watershed will serve as the basis for preserving the lake's water quality; Syracuse, Spafford, Skaneateles, other towns bordering the lake in Cayuga and Cortland counties, and involved public agencies will be crucial to implementation.

Town land use plans and regulations in the Skaneateles and Otisco Lake watershed should contain density regulations and zoning district patterns which help protect the quality of water in the watershed. The recently adopted Town of Skaneateles plan and zoning revisions are examples of such up-to-date regulations.

### Wellhead Protection

Municipalities should establish wellhead and water supply service protection measures for small community systems, with priority given to those far from alternative public water supply systems.

Wellhead protection includes prohibiting uses with potentially toxic impacts within the recharge area, establishing buffer areas or large setbacks, zoning for low intensity land uses, or constructing special drainage facilities to direct runoff away from recharge areas.

## Wastewater Treatment

### Comprehensive Sewerage Study Update

Onondaga County will update its the Comprehensive Sewerage Study, and include priorities and thresholds for trunk sewer extension and new service areas, a long- range maintenance and capital replacement plan, a plan for treatment capacity increases, and strategies to achieve combined sewer overflow abatement.

### Land Use Plans

The updated Sewerage Study will use town comprehensive plans for guidance in proposing changes in the Sanitary District service areas. Realistic assessments of growth and needs for new sewers, in light of impacts on other infrastructure plans, will be part of this study.

Realistic projections of sewer service areas may reduce the requirement for dry sewers in rural subdivisions where sewer service is not anticipated.

### Sewer Service Extension

Onondaga County will expand public sewer service within the County Sanitary District in relation to the need for additional urban land. Premature service to broad areas can drive up land prices and discourage development in those locations. Sewer lines which are underutilized because of land speculation are a fiscal burden.

### Community Wastewater Treatment Facilities

Onondaga County, particularly the Health Department, will carefully scrutinize small community wastewater treatment systems designed to serve remote residential developments. Financial resources, operations plans, maintenance capability, and capacities of receiving waters will be among the factors reviewed.

The formation of town sewer districts to finance community wastewater systems is encouraged, as a means of addressing questions of long-term ownership, operation, maintenance and funding of replacements.

### Fiscal Priorities

Onondaga County will use a fiscal strategy for the County owned wastewater treatment facilities based on the following priorities: (1) maintain existing facilities, (2) meet federal effluent standards, (3) replace worn out facilities and (4) address demands for new service and capacity.

### On-Site Wastewater Systems

Towns should require a complete engineering evaluation for proposed on-site wastewater systems, in cooperation with the Onondaga County Health Department, when reviewing subdivisions with individual wastewater treatment systems. Relevant factors include soils, drainage, percolation, slope, depth to impermeable layer, and depth to groundwater. Percolation tests alone are not sufficient to judge the acceptability of individual wastewater treatment systems, especially in areas with limited soils capability.

## Highways

### Highway Maintenance

The Onondaga County Department of Transportation will use pavement maintenance programs to protect existing surfaces and to avoid premature highway reconstruction caused by deterioration of the road foundation.

Onondaga County's construction priorities will be based on functional class, travel patterns, contribution to the highway network performance, and safety considerations to provide a balanced program of safety, foundation restoration, and capacity improvements.

The Onondaga County Department of Transportation will seek cooperative agreements with municipalities to share maintenance services and equipment to achieve cost-efficiencies and to establish a process promoting an exchange of roads between the jurisdic-

tions to enhance the transportation objectives of each level of government.

### Mobility Protection

To eliminate the detrimental impact of strip development on highway mobility and community appearance, planning, zoning and subdivision techniques can encourage nodal development, cluster development and innovative alternatives to strip development along arterial and collector roads.

### Access Control and Sight Distance

Onondaga County Department of Transportation will maintain current sight distance standards for locating new driveways and intersecting roads, in order to maintain public safety.

Access management on state roads is a cooperative effort between NYS Department of Transportation, the County Planning Board, and town planning boards. Direct communication between these agencies is recommended prior to permits and approvals being granted.

### Right-of-Way Protection

Towns and developers are encouraged to protect necessary rights-of-way for county and state roads so that highway improvements and maintenance can be carried on in a timely, efficient, cost-effective manner. Right-of-way donation for highway improvement purposes is encouraged as mitigation and as good corporate citizenship.

### Mitigation

Developers will be expected to mitigate impacts of new projects to maintain existing Levels of Service on County and State highways.

### Local Street Network

Towns are encouraged to create a network of local streets scaled for pedestrians and designed to promote low speed traffic, and collectors directing traffic to well-located and designed intersections. Access to major county and state roads should be designed to protect through traffic mobility. Direct connections between residential subdivisions are encouraged to reduce local trips on collectors or arterials and promote walkability.

### Highway Classification

Towns are encouraged to adopt a functional classification system for roads within the town as a tool to guide decisions on land use, traffic controls, speed limit, and road design.

### Jurisdiction of Local Roads

Towns are encouraged to request ownership of county roads which serve primarily local access functions, if town development goals include residential development, lower speed limits, and decreased sight distance standards.

### Land Use Reviews and Highway Access

The Onondaga County Planning Board (OCPB) will review zoning and subdivision case referrals (under General Municipal Law, Sections 239k, l, m) for transportation impacts on the basis of access management and site design standards appropriate to highway function, bicycle, pedestrian and transit provisions. The OCPB will protect capacity and preserve future right-of-way expansion in accord with the County Official Map.

## Transit

Land use patterns, densities, and site designs should be supportive of the transit option. About one third of the county population does not drive, including the young, elderly, handicapped and those who do not own a car. As the County's population ages, the size of this group will grow. Dispersed land use and very low density patterns in the county are not conducive to mass transit. While a more compact, higher density pattern of development would improve transit usage, anticipated land use changes are unlikely to have a significant enough effect to improve transit viability.

## Strategy: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The intention in every setting is to create development patterns and communities which will attract residents and serve communities for the long-term with the natural resources available and cost-effective public infrastructure. Recommendations for sustainable development vary by urban, suburban or rural setting.

### Urban Settings

Urban areas in Onondaga County include the City of Syracuse and the fully developed portions of adjacent towns and villages. For these urban areas, relatively little vacant land exists and most new development will occur as redevelopment of previously occupied or currently occupied sites.

#### Public Water and Sewer Service

Urban municipalities should insist that all new development in urban areas is serviced by public water and sewers since these utilities are available throughout the urban area.

#### Environmental Mitigation

Environmental constraints and on-site physical problems must be addressed during SEQR reviews and site plan reviews so that long-term viability of sites can be maintained.

#### Land Use Intensity and Density

Municipalities in urban areas should ensure that densities in urban sites generally match surrounding densities when infill development occurs. Mismatches of density between old and new sites can seriously affect the long-term viability of the new site. For larger vacant sites, densities can be more variable since compatibility with surrounding land uses is less critical.

Municipalities in urban areas should ensure that residential densities, in areas with public water and sewers and minimal physical development constraints, are high enough (greater than 2 units per acre) to justify and offset the cost of previous infrastructure investments and to relieve development pressures in areas without public water and sewers. The greater the level of development that occurs in areas with existing, underutilized infrastructure, the less pressure there will be to develop in less suitable areas where sustainability is a primary concern.

Municipalities in urban areas should use all available tools to maintain the viability of established urban neighborhoods including code enforcement, selective public investment and zoning regulations. Maintaining the health and viability of existing urban neighborhoods is much less expensive to the community than building new neighborhoods in suburban or rural areas.

### Suburban Settings

Residential development in suburban areas generally consists of converting raw land into new subdivisions; public water and sewer infrastructure is usually available in the vicinity of the development but must be extended to new sites along with new district formation. Primary emphasis is on construction of new units and redevelopment is not a significant source of residential growth.

#### Project Infrastructure Service

Suburban towns, in cooperation with involved county agencies, should designate in their land use plans those areas where eventual extensions of infrastructure will be permitted and encouraged. Generally extensions should be adjacent to existing facilities and infrastructure.

#### Infill Development

Suburban towns should encourage residential development on vacant parcels that are already serviced by public sewers and water. with secondary emphasis on the physical extension of utilities from existing serviced areas to adjacent vacant areas. The least desirable scenario for new residential development is leapfrogging into undeveloped areas nonadjacent and at a distance from existing development. Such development requires large investments in new utility lines and/or pump stations, water tanks or other major capital structures; the most cost-effective and sustainable development pattern is to make maximum use of areas where infrastructure investment has already been made.

### Orderly Development

Suburban towns should discourage the construction of houses in locations which are not served by public sewer and water. Scattered site development impedes orderly extensions of utilities, may prohibit economic service, and eventually requires subsidized service in order to be sustainable.

### Cost of Development

Suburban towns should be aware of the full costs associated with residential development: the cost of services generally exceeds tax revenues generated by the new houses. Costs should be assessed fairly among developers, new residents, and existing residents. The SEQR process should be used to identify costs and resolve cost recovery issues before development proceeds.

Suburban towns where public water, but not sewers, is available for a proposed residential development should ensure the long-term sustainability of that project by considering all wastewater disposal options and costs. Options include dry sewers with short-term use of septic systems (which may require larger lots), community treatment plants, and community septic systems. Schedules for extensions of sewers and future financing methods should be established before any interim wastewater disposal methods are allowed.

### Lot Size and Infrastructure

Suburban towns must ensure that minimum lot sizes for residential development are commensurate with the goal of sustainability. For lots with public sewers and water, lot sizes of less than 1/2 acre are desirable in order to achieve sufficient density to keep costs reasonable for each homeowner. For lots with public water but no immediate access to sewers (dry sewers available), lot sizes of approximately one acre are necessary to accommodate temporary septic systems; exact lot sizes can vary depending on soil conditions in the area and system design. For lots in suburban towns with no likely access to public water and sewers, lot sizes should be greater than one acre with lot size dependent on soils and the ability to locate a well, a septic system and an eventual replacement septic system on the lot.

## Rural Settings

Rural areas generally do not have public sewers and water; residential development depends on private or community septic systems and wells or springs. The primary issue is to insure that any residential development in rural areas is sustainable, i.e. will not require costly remedial actions by government to solve private drinking water and wastewater disposal problems.

### Water

Most rural areas of the County should remain without public water for the life of this Guide because of the high cost of providing water to rural areas, the detrimental effects on existing infrastructure of higher density development in rural areas, the need to control the costs of new infrastructure for the County as a whole, the ubiquity of poor soils for individual septic systems in rural areas of the County (and hence the need to keep residential densities low) and the desire to protect farming and the existing rural lifestyle from overly dense residential development. The scattered residential development that does occur in these areas should rely on groundwater sources.

Rural towns should require developers to furnish site specific hydrogeological data to prove that a suitable groundwater supply is available to sustain any proposed development. Providing this information should be required as part of the residential subdivision approval process.

### Lot Size

Rural towns and villages must require residential building lots which are large enough to maintain necessary distances between a well and septic field and to allow for eventual replacement of the septic field without interfering with the well or other structures on the property. Minimum lot sizes of 1½ to 2 acres are generally necessary given the wide distribution of poor and marginal soils for wastewater disposal throughout the County. A fixed minimum lot size of 1½ to 2 acres can suffice where more detailed soils and groundwater data is unavailable. Variable minimum lot sizes based on site-specific soil, slope and groundwater attributes may be a reasonable alternative where sufficient environmental data and administrative expertise is available.

## Density and Design

Sustainability is impacted by the overall density and the cumulative effects of development in rural areas. Overly dense development can lower groundwater levels (sometimes to the extent of requiring new or redrilled wells) or can cause pollution from failing septic systems which affect neighboring properties or water supplies. Too many scattered residences in rural areas can impact the ability of farmers to maintain their operations because of higher real estate taxes, complaints of residents about farm operations, or increases in land values which make it more difficult for farmers to expand their land holdings.

One acre zoning may permit large scale subdivisions which are not intended by rural towns; larger lot size requirements do not necessarily alleviate this potential. Better design requirements and innovative subdivision layout can lead to real sustainability. Clustering of houses can minimize the land used for residential purposes, maximize open land, lessen impacts on neighboring farm uses by buffering residential areas from farms, and make economically feasible the financing of community subsurface wastewater disposal systems.

## Groundwater Protection

Rural towns should ensure that industrial, commercial and municipal land uses in rural areas are located, designed, and monitored to protect groundwater. Groundwater can be contaminated by improper salt storage, gasoline leaks, improper toxic chemical disposal, and other environmental mistakes. Groundwater is an extremely valuable resource that must be protected in order to avoid costly environmental cleanups. This protection is especially important when community or municipal water supplies are involved.

## Development Constraints

Rural towns need to insist on the proper location of development. Avoidance of areas with unsuitable soils, high water table, shallow depth to bedrock or steep slopes can enhance sustainability of development.

Towns should inform new rural residents of the fragility of groundwater supplies and the costly consequences of groundwater pollution, septic system failure or well failure. New residents should be encouraged to be responsible for protecting their own systems and admonished that government solutions to self-created problems are unlikely.

## Housing Options

Rural municipalities should consider sustainable residential options for elderly residents. Many elderly rural residents wish to stay in rural areas but need suitable housing options. Isolated country houses with large lots and high maintenance costs may become too difficult to maintain. Housing in or near villages and hamlets that offers a range of shopping, services and social contacts within walking distance will offer an alternative for rural residents as they age.

## Farmland Protection

The Onondaga County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan was adopted by the County Legislature in 1997. The Plan recommends a number of actions to enhance agriculture and farmland resources in Onondaga County. One newly implemented strategy is to purchase development rights of farms threatened by development using grants from the Department of Agriculture and Markets. Continued implementation of the purchase of development rights can help preserve and reduce development pressures on prime farmland.

## Strategy: NATURAL RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP

Natural resources form the base which supports all community development and economic development. Emphasis must be on protecting the sensitive and unique features of the environment, remediating past harmful effects to the environment, assuring continued access to residential resources, and creating development which harmonizes with the natural environment.

### Environmental Review

Onondaga County will conduct a thorough review of all environmental impacts and necessary mitigation measures before undertaking any physical or infrastructure development. The County recognizes that poorly planned infrastructure placement can bring with it unanticipated environmental impacts. Municipalities in the County are encouraged to seriously consider environmental impacts of any project they undertake or authorize to be constructed.

All County agencies authorized to issue permits or approvals relating to development will take natural site limitations, such as steep slopes, shallow depth to bedrock, shallow depth to watertable and poorly suited soils, into consideration in issuing permits.

Towns requesting water service to new areas should prepare a comprehensive environmental and economic analysis of the proposed extension with particular emphasis on identifying and protecting any environmentally sensitive areas that may be involved.

### Agricultural Districts

The 2010 Development Guide endorses the use of agricultural districts as a means of assisting farmers to remain in business. Agricultural districts are only marginally restrictive of development in the sense that they provide an additional disincentive to develop in areas not presently served by sewers and water. Agricultural districts provide some property tax relief to farmers and certain other minor benefits.

Municipalities should use agricultural districts in their planning decisions. The districts indicate where farmers are serious about staying in business and serve as indicators of areas where local zoning and subdivision regulations should be crafted to protect farm operations, not encourage major residential development. Municipalities should review agricultural district boundaries, zoning district boundaries and text, and utility district boundaries to insure that conflicting policies are not in effect.

The County Sanitary District should be adjusted in areas where it is in conflict with agricultural districts, to provide clear policy intentions regarding construction of water and sewer projects which are discouraged within the districts.

### Mineral Resources

Mineral extraction plays an important role in the community's continued growth. Land use plans and zoning ordinances must balance the need for sand, gravel and limestone quarries with the concerns of residents. Buffer zones with restrictions to residential development should accompany the areas designated for mineral extraction in order to minimize conflicts between residential land uses and mining.

### Watershed Protection

The City of Syracuse and Onondaga County Water Authority are charged with protecting water quality in Skaneateles Lake and Otisco Lake through watershed management. Cooperative efforts are required by towns and villages in the watersheds and by individual property owners.

Efforts by the City of Syracuse, Soil and Water Conservation District, Water Quality Management Agency, and other agencies and municipalities will continue to reduce nonpoint source pollution (the runoff from land surfaces, farmlands and urban/suburban development during storms) in the area's streams and lakes, particularly those lakes used as drinking water sources.

### Environmental Constraints

Municipalities should limit development in environmentally sensitive areas by identifying and mapping areas which are comprised of unsuitable soils, high water tables, shallow depth to bedrock, and steep slopes within their jurisdictions, and making use of the information in preparing land use plans and zoning regulations and in making land use decisions.

Municipalities and developers should use environmental constraints maps and on-site investigations to determine where environmentally sensitive areas exist on sites being proposed for development. In addition, other limitations such as inadequate groundwater or special soil conditions should be investigated before any development is approved.

Municipalities can use the "Guidelines For Urban Erosion and Sediment Control" published by the Empire State Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society to assist in stormwater management; this document is regularly updated. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation also publishes a variety of publications and regulations that are key to municipal management of stormwater and erosion.

Municipalities should use SEQR reviews and their municipal engineers to insure that erosion control measures will be sufficient during any proposed construction and after construction is completed.

Intermunicipal cooperation in reviewing the impacts of development is essential since environmental impacts can affect more than one municipality. Such cooperation is particularly necessary for stormwater management in drainage basins. Drainage basins generally involve more than one municipality and development decisions in an upstream area can affect the remainder of the drainage basin. Cooperative planning efforts in drainage basins can assure that each municipality's decision is made in context of the total drainage basin's needs rather simplify the needs of the particular development.

## Compact Settlement Patterns

Municipalities should encourage compact development patterns which provide jobs, shopping and housing within short distances on one another. Such compact development patterns can reduce the growth in vehicular miles traveled, decrease energy consumption and improve air quality. Compact development patterns can help preserve access to natural resources and protect fragile or unique natural resources.

# APPENDIX

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