



LEWIS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



“Working to be the premier rural county in New York State”

FINAL PLAN OCTOBER 6, 2009



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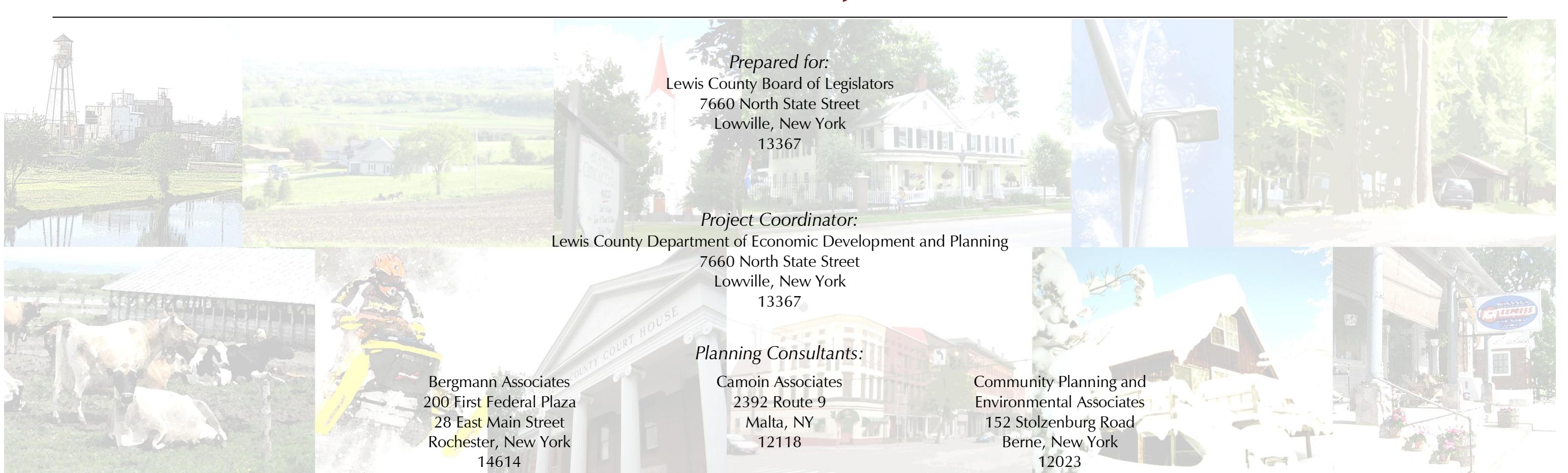
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**FINAL PLAN
OCTOBER 6, 2009**



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HIGH PRIORITY GUIDEBOOK (Separately Bound)

The purpose of the High Priority Guidebook is to summarize the vision, policy areas and high-priority action items in the Comprehensive Plan and identify key areas where the concepts of the Plan can be used at the local level. This document should be utilized as a companion quick-reference guide to the overall Comprehensive Plan, as it outlines the action items and recommendations the County should make a priority during Plan implementation.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

County Board of Legislators

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Steering Committee Membership

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Larry Dolhof	Anne Merrill
Joe Farney	Rick Porter
Carl Golas	Randy Schell
Lee Hinkleman	Cheryl Shenkle-O'Neil
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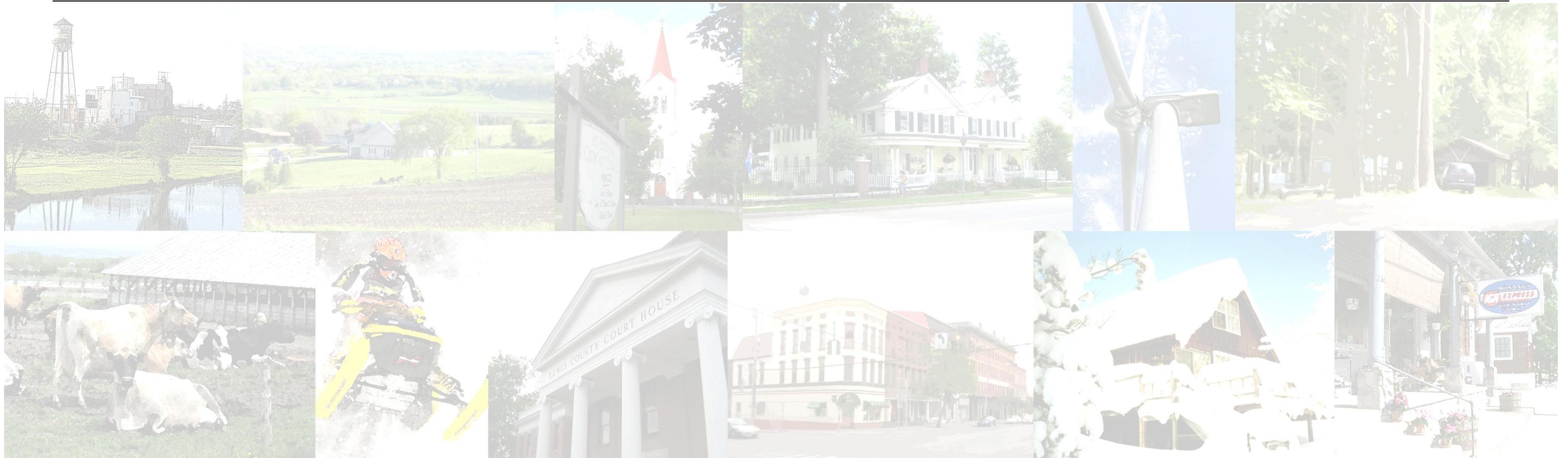
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LEWIS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION





INTRODUCTION

Lewis County is a quiet, rural-agricultural region within the portion of New York known as the North Country. The county is located within three major geographic regions: the Tug Hill Plateau, the Black River Valley, and the Adirondack Foothills. Each of these geographies has significantly influenced the development patterns and economies within the county. The fertile Black River Valley promotes high quality lands for

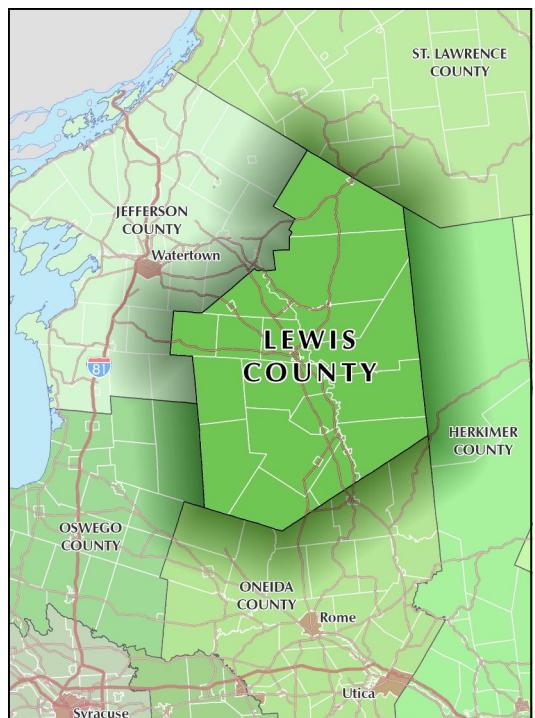
crop production and grazing, while the hilly and steep terrain of the plateau and mountains limit these areas to forestry. As a result, the largest industries within the county's 26 municipalities are dairy farming and timber/wood products. The rugged terrain and often extreme North Country climatic conditions have limited development potential within the county, resulting in a small and scattered population of approximately 26,000 residents across nearly 1,300 square miles.

Although populations are spread throughout the county, municipalities are dealing with common issues, such as the loss of farmland and forestland, a stagnant economy, declining population, and aging infrastructure. Chapter 2 includes further information on Existing Conditions. County municipalities are also facing issues of increasing tourism and an expanding market for seasonal properties. None of these issues are constrained by municipal boundaries, with impacts, both positive and negative, distributed across the county.

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THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: COUNTY LEVEL POLICY, LOCAL GUIDANCE

Lewis County recognizes the need for a comprehensive and strategic approach to the complex issues faced in the 21st Century. This collection of small towns and villages needs to be able to effectively leverage its assets and overcome challenges in order to continuously improve the quality of life of its citizens. This County Comprehensive Plan is designed to play a foundational role in that effort over the next 10 to 15 years.



The Plan provides an overall framework for future public and private investment and decision making in the county. Investment can take many forms, such as, but not limited to, financial, civic, and creative resources. It is this collective investment by residents, businesses, institutions, churches, volunteer organizations, and county and local government that will shape the physical, social, and economic character of the community. The Plan articulates an overall vision for the county and the means to achieve the objectives set forth.

This Plan will function at two levels. First, upon adoption it will become the primary policy document for Lewis County government that provides a path forward on a host of issues critical to the future of the region, the most significant being the utilization and deployment of resources. County level policies, which are outlined in detail in Chapter 3, are relatively broad statements that provide a framework for the future of Lewis County. This Comprehensive Plan provides a necessary level of continuity and consistency to assist county officials and staff in working towards common objectives on topics such as tourism, recreation, economic development, infrastructure and regional coordination, among others. At the county level, future decisions and investments shall be in accordance with this document, as it is the adopted policy of Lewis County. Furthermore, by state law, all plans for capital projects at the local, county, and state level shall take the contents of this Plan into consideration prior to action or implementation.

The second functional level of this Plan is the provision of guidance and recommendations on issues common to all communities. Plan policies provide recommendations on opportunities for county municipalities to work together in leveraging resources, learning from each other, and solving problems collectively. This Plan uncovers opportunities seldom discussed at the individual town or village level for intermunicipal cooperation or the leveraging of common resources.

This Plan is not a regulatory document at the local level; Lewis County does not have the authority to impose policies presented in this Plan upon county municipalities beyond the jurisdictional areas it currently enforces, such as County highways. County municipalities are not required to approve or adopt this Comprehensive Plan. However, significant effort was taken to provide a level of continuity across the county, especially within the County Character Area Plan (see Chapter 4). This portion of the document has the greatest impact on linking together the County's 26 municipalities under a common framework. The County Character Area Plan provides recommendations and guidance on land use issues to towns and villages; yet, it does not provide regulations that are enforceable at the county level. However, the towns and villages can utilize this Plan as a starting point in their own discussions regarding the future of their communities, as they work to make Lewis County the premier rural county in New York State.

THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, DEFINED

The process for and the contents of the Plan are consistent with New York State General Municipal Law (GML) 239-d, which states the following:

The county comprehensive plan may include but shall not be limited to the following topics at the level of detail adapted to the special requirements of the county:

- (a) General statements of goals, objectives, principles, policies, and standards upon which proposals for the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development of the county are based;
- (b) Consideration of regional needs and the official plans of other governmental units and agencies within the county;
- (c) The existing and proposed location and intensity of land uses;
- (d) Consideration of agricultural uses, historic and cultural resources, coastal and natural and scenic resources and sensitive environmental areas;
- (e) Consideration of population, demographic and socio-economic trends and future projections;
- (f) The location and types of transportation facilities, including the reuse of abandoned transportation facilities;
- (g) Existing and proposed general location of public and private utilities and infrastructure;
- (h) Existing housing resources and future housing needs, including affordable housing;
- (i) The present and future general location of educational and cultural facilities, historic sites, health facilities, and facilities for emergency services;
- (j) Existing and proposed recreation facilities and parkland;
- (k) The present and potential future general location of commercial and industrial facilities;
- (l) Specific policies and strategies for improving the county economy in coordination with other plan topics;
- (m) Proposed measures, programs, devices, and instruments to implement the goals and objectives of the various topics within the county comprehensive plan;
- (n) All or part of the plan of another public agency;
- (o) Any and all other items which are consistent with the protection, enhancement, orderly growth and development of the county; and



(p) Consideration of cumulative impacts of development, and other issues which promote compliance with the state environmental quality review act under article eight of the environmental conservation law and its implementing regulations.

According to New York State General Municipal Law (GML 239-d), the comprehensive plan must be adopted by the county legislative body following a public hearing. The approval process, however, does not preclude future review or amendments. The vision and policies contained in the Plan should be perceived as flexible. As the conditions upon which the document is based change, it is reasonable to assume that its contents may need to be changed as well. According to GML 239-d, a county comprehensive plan must establish the interval of periodic review of the document. It is recommended that this Plan serve as a guide for the next 10 to 15 years. However, the Plan should be reviewed, at most, every seven years to gauge progress on implementation and perform needed maintenance. A revision should include an update to relevant existing conditions data, verification of stated vision and policies, a summary of completed action items and those underway, and the addition of other relevant implementation steps based on the changing needs of the County. A more formal revision should occur at the end of the 15-year planning period.

Key Points

- Comprehensive Plans develop a cohesive and coordinated set of policies and goals that assist decision making and investment.
- Future capital investments at the local, county and state level must be reviewed for consistency with the County Comprehensive Plan.
- The County Comprehensive Plan is not regulatory at the local level, yet provides guidance and recommendations on numerous important topics.
- Comprehensive Plans are required in order to qualify for some grant and funding sources at the state and federal level.
- Planning and policy recommendations should be regularly reviewed and amended, as needed, to remain relevant as conditions change.

It is the policy of New York State to encourage comprehensive planning for the sake of the health, welfare, and general prosperity of its citizens. Therefore, many state agencies recognize the existence of a comprehensive plan as a favorable, and sometimes required, condition for grants and other funding assistance for municipal projects. Funding agencies encourage municipalities to act in concert with a stated vision and clear objectives, and to eliminate ad hoc projects and assure that

funds are spent in pursuit of a well-defined purpose. Ultimately, this Plan will likely improve the County's level of success at procuring funding from multiple sources.

PROCESS OVERVIEW

The process for the Lewis County Comprehensive Plan was initiated to provide the community with an opportunity to participate in the creation of a plan that will guide the future of the region. As every good comprehensive plan should, this Plan builds upon the county's strengths, addresses its weaknesses, capitalizes on opportunities and identifies the threats to the overall quality of life. The Plan accomplishes this by establishing a community vision and identifying policies, objectives and action items that address numerous issues related to improving the quality of life for residents.

In order to accurately develop the key components of the Plan, numerous and varied opportunities were provided for the public and interested stakeholders to participate in the process. These opportunities included public meetings, community workshops, stakeholder groups, focus groups, and steering committee meetings. This depth of input gathering was designed to capture multiple perspectives from business owners, local planning board members, recreation enthusiasts, industry experts, elected officials, regional authorities, and the general public. A summary of these participation opportunities follows.

Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

In 2008, a Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee was convened and charged with the task of directing the planning consultants to develop the comprehensive plan in an efficient and effective manner to the greatest benefit of the community. As well, this Committee was charged with providing local perspectives on issues identified during the planning process. The Committee included representatives from businesses, local government, regional organizations, not-for-profits, and the community at large.

Steering Committee Members

Renee Beyer, Chair	Frank House	Rick Porter
Larry Dolhof	Matt Johnson	Randy Schell
Joe Farney	Jennifer Karelus	Cheryl Shenkle-O'Neil
Carl Golas	Michelle Ledoux	Scott Steve
Lee Hinkleman	Scott Mathys	Charles Sullivan
Brad Horn	Anne Merrill	Wayne White

Committee members represented diverse perspectives from within the county and served as an initial information source and sounding board for ideas and recommendations. Managed by the county's Department of Economic Development and Planning, the group was involved with all aspects of the project, including identifying key issues to be addressed, facilitating public input, and continuous review of each of the Plan's components. Over the course of 18 months, the group met over 10 times in addition to regular attendance at the various public meetings. The objective of these efforts was to solicit public input in order to build consensus around a vision for the county's future.

Stakeholder Meetings

In May 2008, a series of stakeholder meetings were held to gain insight from agencies, departments, organizations, professionals, and volunteers dedicated to a specific purpose. Roundtable discussions with each of these bodies yielded valuable knowledge that was foundational to the development of a vision and series of objectives for the county. The following groups were met with as part of this series:

- Tug Hill Commission
- Agricultural Industry Experts
- ATV Associations
- Snowmobile Associations
- County Board of Legislators
- County Department of Economic Development and Planning
- County Industrial Development Agency
- Transportation and Highways

Notes from each of these meetings can be found in the Appendices.

Municipal Meetings

In June 2008, the project consultant and county staff met with each town and village in the county. In some cases towns and villages met in clusters, and in some cases individual meetings were held. The purpose of the meetings was to introduce the project to municipal officials and to request they stay involved with the Plan throughout its development. Additionally, there were extensive discussions regarding the greatest needs and challenges facing each local government, as well as ideas and opportunities that they felt should be examined as part of the Plan.

At the conclusion of this round of meetings, a series of key points and common themes were identified:

- Issue #1 - increases in cost of fuel and cost of living (creating municipal and personal challenges)
- Rural quality of life is valued, strong community pride and identity exist



- Need for property tax relief while balancing rising municipal costs
- Challenge of declining population needed to support desired services and amenities
- Consider shared services (formal and informal agreements)
- Need to prepare county for redensification, a reversal of late 20th century trends where non-agricultural rural living increased
- Enthusiasm about wind farms and other potential alternative energy projects
- Need for more/improved infrastructure for economic development (rail, water and sewer, county roads, etc.)
- Finding a balance between improving seasonal/low-volume roads and preserving their rural character that requires minimal maintenance
- Desire for more promotion and support for natural resources, which are the county's primary assets
- Need for more education related to the value of planning, land use regulations, and local board operations
- Concerns about Ft. Drum and downstate/out of state real estate pressures
- Concerns about managing impacts of proposed industries

Additional notes from these meetings can be found in the Appendices.

Community Meetings

A series of three Community Workshops were held in August 2008 to introduce the public to the project. Attendants were given a presentation that summarized the Existing Conditions report as well as some key points that came out of meetings with municipal officials. A Visioning Exercise concluded the meetings, which allowed participants to submit their hopes, visions, or ideal characteristics related to priority issues such as the economy, tourism, infrastructure, agriculture, and forestry. Attendants were given the opportunity to read other people's ideas and vote for their favorite submissions. This exercise was also performed with the Steering Committee, and the results of each are shown in Appendices.

Business Community Meetings

In August 2008, a focus group session with a group of Lewis County businesses was conducted, followed by a series of telephone interviews and in-person interviews with specific businesses. The goal was to identify priority issues facing the business community in the county. Interview questions were aimed at building on the work of previous planning documents, including the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Interviews focused on key issues including tourism, alternative energy, workforce development and infrastructure improvements. The interviews were used to check in with businesses to see if new issues had developed since the CEDS was finalized in 2006.



Results from the Visioning Exercise at the Lowville Community Meeting in August 2008

The business interviews yielded a number of positive insights about what the county can do to strengthen economic development moving forward. They also revealed common themes that could be addressed in the planning process. A summary of these meetings and interviews can be found in the Appendices.

Focus Group Meetings

In September 2008, planning consultants facilitated a series of nine Focus Group meetings, the topics of which were in part driven by the results of the aforementioned Visioning Exercise. These meetings were held with representatives from the local communities as well as experts on relevant topics. They offered an in-depth discussion on the issues and opportunities associated with each particular topic, as shown below. The findings of these Focus Group meetings were utilized in the development of each policy area's objectives and action items, as seen in Chapter 3, Vision & Implementation. Notes from each of the meetings can be found in the Appendices.

Focus Group Topics

- Dairy
- Forestry
- Tourism and Marketing
- Housing
- Real Property Assessment
- Regional Coordination and Government Operations
- Education
- Renewable and Sustainable Energy
- Weekend and Seasonal Residents

Community Workshops

A pair of community workshops dedicated to land use issues were held in April and June of 2009. The first workshop focused on the purpose and benefits of the County Comprehensive Plan, as well as a discussion of land use and zoning issues. A particular focus of the meeting was the inter-relationship between natural resources, the economy, and the overall quality of life of residents. Attendants were also introduced to a draft of the County Character Area Plan (CCAP, see Chapter 4). Break-out groups were held to discuss the CCAP, focusing on people's desires and concerns for each land use type.

The second workshop summarized the key points that emerged from the first workshop. The meeting, which was largely attended by municipal officials and board members, also included a discussion of how the County Comprehensive Plan can be implemented at the local level, as well as the merits of developing a comprehensive plan at the town or village level.



Community Workshop Part I in April 2009



Public Hearings

Public Hearings on the Comprehensive Plan were held on August 3rd and October 6th, 2009. These meetings, required by New York State General Municipal Law, were more formal in nature and gave residents the opportunity to give comments on the Draft Plan in front of the Steering Committee and Board of Legislators.

PLAN COMPONENTS

The planning process was broken down into three distinct phases. The first phase examined existing information, data, and physical conditions throughout the county. The second phase takes the previous findings and utilizes additional information to develop policy recommendations. The third phase culminates the research and policy development through recommendations for the physical character of the county.

Existing Conditions (Chapter 2)

This section of the Plan includes an analysis of current information such as demographics, housing, economics, and education. An extensive collection of maps is included, showing natural features, transportation systems, and other conditions relevant to planning for the county's future. This analysis provides the community with a better understanding of who they are today, which improves the ability to plan for the next 10 to 15 years.

Vision and Implementation (Chapter 3)

Utilizing the information collected from the existing conditions analysis, focus groups, and Steering Committee meetings, a vision was developed that provides an overall statement guiding the implementation of the Plan. In addition, policy statements were developed for each of the seven policy areas. Policy statements are typically broad in nature and form the framework for a variety of objectives. Several objectives were developed for the policy areas, followed by a series of strategies or action items which can be used to achieve each of the objectives. Action items were broken down into short-term, mid-term, long-term and ongoing time frames. Action items determined to be high priority were noted for special consideration by the county for implementation. This provides an additional level of guidance to community leaders as they seek to put the Plan into immediate action.



Community Workshop Part I in April 2009

County Character Area Plan (Chapter 4)

The County Character Area Plan (CCAP) identifies areas of common character for nine types of land uses found throughout the county. Although primarily a delineation of existing land use patterns, the CCAP identifies areas recommended for future development, including residential, commercial, and mixed-use areas. It also provides guidance on issues relevant to each land use category, such as revitalizing Main Street or protecting farmland.

The CCAP is not a formal land use plan. It is not intended to delineate precise land use boundaries, nor should it be interpreted as a zoning ordinance; it is a physical and geographic expression of the values and priorities contained in the community vision and policy statements.

While significant or concentrated growth pressures are not being felt throughout Lewis County, change does occur over time, typically along the edges of existing developed areas. For example, the county is bisected by several state highways. Over the course of a few decades, much of these corridors have transitioned to a mix of residential and commercial uses while the rest has remained farmland and forestry. It is in these frequently changing transitional areas where opportunities exist for recommendations and guidance to preserve the existing rural-agricultural character, while allowing for growth and redevelopment to occur at an appropriate scale and form.

High Priority Guidebook (separate document)

The High Priority Guidebook is a quick-reference companion document that summarizes the vision, policy areas and high priority action items in the Comprehensive Plan, and identifies key areas where the concepts of the Plan can be used at the local level. This document will be of significant value to the individual municipalities within Lewis County, as it condenses the recommendations from the Comprehensive Plan into a more streamlined, user-friendly format.



Lewis County
NEW YORK
October 6, 2009

COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

HIGH PRIORITY GUIDEBOOK FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this High Priority Guidebook is to summarize the vision, policy areas and high-priority action items in the 2009 Lewis County Comprehensive Plan and identify key areas where Plan concepts can be used at the local level. It is not intended to be a stand-alone document, but rather a companion quick-reference guide to the Comprehensive Plan.

In 2008 and 2009, Lewis County developed a Comprehensive Plan to identify the community's short and long-term needs and tie together broad ideas with specific and targeted activities that will guide community decision-making in the county over the next 10 to 15 years. The purpose of the Plan is to address various topics of inter-community interest with county-wide impacts and to develop strategies to protect, enhance and encourage orderly growth and development. The Plan development included input from a multitude of sources, including an analysis of existing conditions data, Steering Committee meetings, public meetings and stakeholder group meetings.

The Comprehensive Plan should be reviewed and revised every seven years, per New York State General Municipal Law 239-d 10. A revision should include an update to relevant existing conditions data, verification of stated vision and policies, a summary of completed action items and those underway, and the addition of other relevant implementation steps based on the changing needs of the county.

ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK

The framework of the Plan, which includes Policies, Objectives and Action Items, is designed to support the Vision Statement for the county. The Plan has four key elements, which are described below:

Vision Statement

A general statement about the future condition or state of the community; it is the end toward which all actions are aimed.

Policy Statement

Policies are narrower in scope and tend to target a specific area or topic. They imagine what the community should have or become.

Objective

A statement of measurable activity to be accomplished in pursuit of the policy. They consider broad actions or aspirations, and include words such as increase, develop, or preserve.

Action Item*

A specific proposal to do something that relates directly to accomplishing an objective, which usually takes the form of a plan, activity, project, or program.

*Note: Only high priority Action Items are listed in this Guidebook. Refer to the full Comprehensive Plan for a list of funders and partners and all other action items. Action Item numbers are taken directly from the Comprehensive Plan.

The plan development included input from a multitude of sources, including:

- Meetings with county staff and elected officials
- Community Meetings open to the public
- Review of current and past planning efforts, both at the county and local level

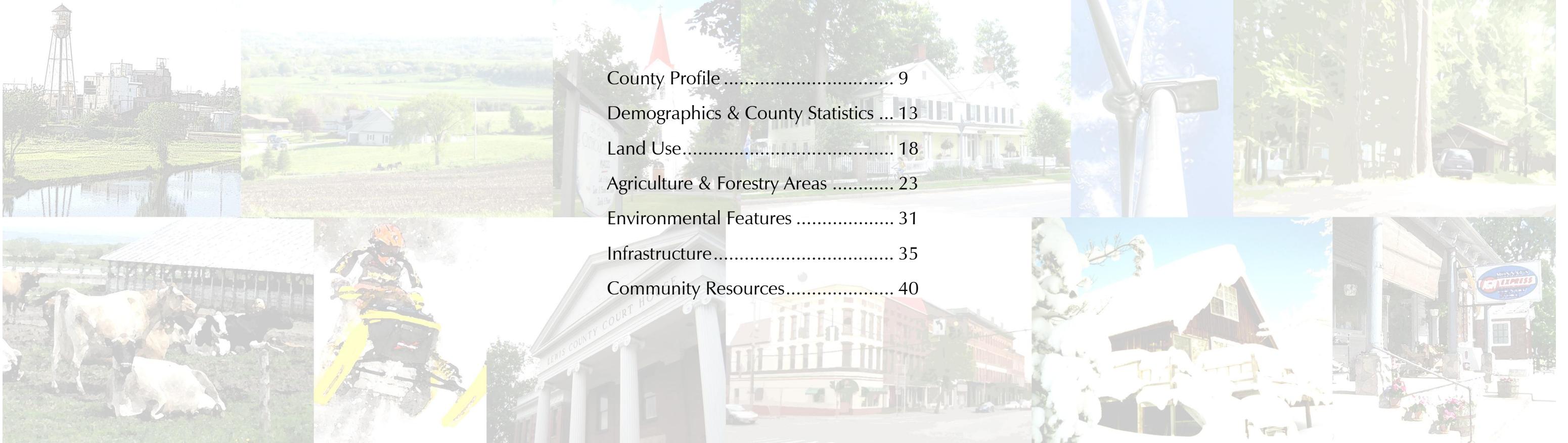


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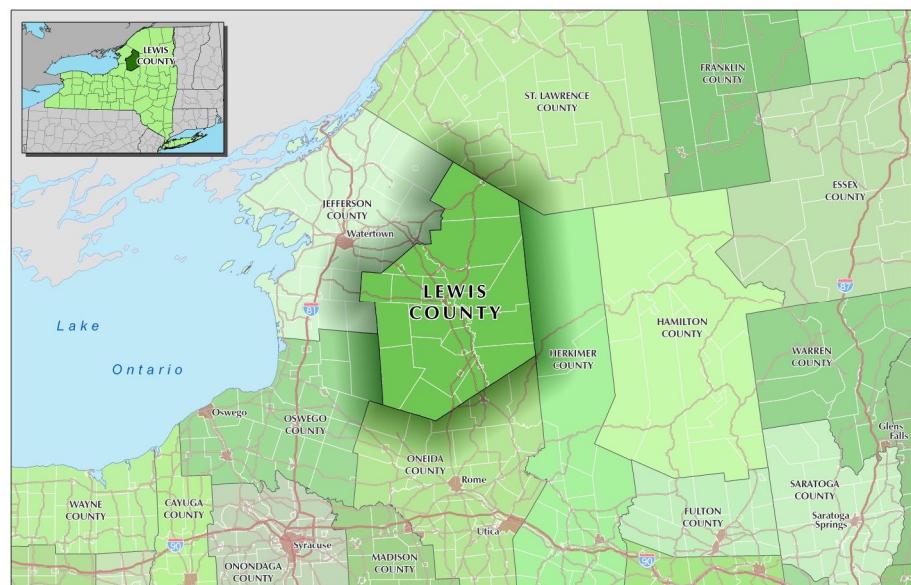
COUNTY PROFILE

Location

Lewis County, part of what is commonly referred to as the 'North Country' of New York State, is located north of the New York State Thruway corridor and the Utica-Rome metropolitan area, east of Lake Ontario, and southeast of the City of Watertown. The primary organizing feature of the county is the Black River Valley which runs south-north through its center, and constitutes one of three primary geographic regions within the county. The Black River Valley is flanked by the other Tug Hill Plateau to the west and the Adirondack Foothills to the east. Eastern portions of five of the towns in the county are also within the Adirondack Park Blue-Line boundary.

Lewis County is bounded by five other New York counties including: Jefferson County to the northwest; St. Lawrence County to the northeast; Herkimer County to the east; Oneida County to the south; and Oswego County to the southwest. Within the region, the cities of Watertown (Jefferson County), Rome (Oneida County), Utica (Oneida County), Syracuse (Onondaga County), and Ogdensburg (St. Lawrence County) are all within a 90 mile trip from the County Seat in Lowville (see Figure 1). From a state-wide perspective, Lewis County is located 120 miles northwest of Albany, the state capital, 225 miles northwest of New York City, and 216 miles northeast of Buffalo.

Figure 1: Lewis County's Regional Context



County History

Present day Lewis County was originally part of Oneida County and was formed by an act of the New York State Legislature on March 28, 1805. The county was named in honor of Morgan Lewis, then governor of New York State. The county originally consisted of five towns: Leyden, Turin, Martinsburg, Lowville and Harrisburg. Early settlers of Lewis County ventured westward from New England, north from the Mohawk Valley and from as far away as France, Switzerland and Germany to the unknown wilderness of northern New York.

Transportation systems opened up the North Country to settlement and economic growth, including roads that were built in the county as early as 1797. In 1803, with the authorization of the NYS Legislature, construction began on a road which would pass through Turin, Lowville and Watertown. Today, that same road is known as NYS Rte 26. Construction of the Black River Canal connecting Rome with Carthage was undertaken in 1836, and completed by 1855. The Black River Canal connected Lewis County at Lyons Falls, and travelled approximately 35 miles south to the City of Rome where it connected with the Erie Canal. The Black River Canal was the longest surviving of the Erie Canal System feeder canals, with segments remaining in use until circa 1920.



Historic Black River Canal Lock

The earliest railroads began to appear in the county in 1853, with the Utica and Black River Railroad reaching Carthage in 1871. This more efficient mode of transportation led to the decline of the Black River Canal, a transition that was happening throughout New York State. In 1882, locomotives were changed from wood burning to coal burning and by 1885, ten passenger trains were traveling through Lowville daily. By the mid-1900s, passenger and freight rail service was in steady decline due to the increase in automobile and truck traffic. The first asphalt roads arrived in 1910 and connected Lowville to the top of the hill in Martinsburg.

Early on, and as a result of the canal, Lewis County developed an economy based upon forest products and agriculture, shipping its vast resources economically down the canal to Rome. Resource extraction

opportunities led to the development of large industrial mills, such as T.B. Basselin (1883-1909) at Castorland and the Beaver River Lumber Co (1890). As technology improved, pulp and paper were also produced on an industrial scale in mills operated in Croghan, Diana, Lyons Falls, Port Leyden, and Greig. Thin soils and a cold climate made Lewis County primarily a location best for the grazing of cattle. The first load of butter and cheese was shipped to Deerfield (Oneida County) in 1833 by Levi Bowen of West Rd. As a result of the climate, dairying became an important endeavor and farmers embraced cheese production, building 49 factories by 1875 which made the county ninth in the state. Refrigerated cars for dairy products were introduced on the railroad in 1899, opening up the market for Lewis County dairy products on a regional level.

The Black River Gazette, the first newspaper printed north of the Mohawk Valley, was begun in Martinsburg on March 10, 1807. The first county courthouse was constructed in Martinsburg in 1812, and was relocated to Lowville in 1864 where it stands today. The county was governed by a board of town supervisors until it established a 10-district county legislature in 1970. The legislature first appointed a county manager in 1988.



Amish hay wagon in Martinsburg

Lewis County has a long tradition in dairy farming, with over 4,000 farms concentrated primarily in the Black River Valley by 1875. In the following quarter century the area in farms increased slightly, but the number of farms had already begun to decline. After World War I, farms given up by longtime operators were taken up by new immigrants; but ultimately only the best of the county's land could support modern agriculture. The number of farms declined dramatically in the 20th century despite an increase in average farm acreage. In recent years Amish farmers have begun to settle in Lewis County, separate from the long-established Mennonites. In the 20th century Lewis County continued to have a significant industrial sector; furniture was made in Lowville, knit goods in Port Leyden, and bowling pins in Croghan. Paper was an important product made in Diana until the mid-1950s and in Lyons Falls until 2001.

By 2003, however, fewer industries remained. Wood and other forest products continued to be harvested, and manufacturers including Burrows Paper Corp, Kraft (cream cheese), Climax (boxes), AMF (bowling pins,



flooring), Fibermark (paperboard), Interface Solutions (binders, gaskets), Otis Technology (gun-cleaning products), Harrisville Dry Kiln (lumber), and Viking Cives (snowplows), continued operations through 2008. Suzorite Mineral Products continues to mine talc in Diana, a town that lost a large part of its usable land area to state reforestation efforts in the 1930s and to the expansion of Fort Drum beginning in 1941 and continuing today. Tourism is Lewis County's growth industry, with its lakes, forests, and public lands attracting vacationers and recreation oriented visitors for camping, hiking, skiing, snowmobiling and other activities enhanced by Lewis County's vast collection of natural resources.

County Government Structure

Lowville is the County Seat of Lewis County, home to the majority of county-level agencies and services. The county's original governing body was a Board of Supervisors with one elected Supervisor representing each Town and having one vote. In 1971, a reapportionment plan went into effect, providing for ten districts of approximately equivalent populations and the creation of the Board of Legislators. The present governing body is the County Board of Legislators, with a representative from each of the ten districts. The Board elects a Chairman from its members who serves as the Chief Elected Official of the county government. There are nine standing committees of the Board, addressing a variety of issues. Several county departments, agencies, and staff positions exist for the purposes of managing government operations and providing services to citizens.

Lewis County is part of the 47th District in the State Senate, the 122nd District in the State Assembly, and the 23rd District in the US House of Representatives.



Lewis County Courthouse in Lowville

County Municipalities

The county contains 26 separate municipalities (17 towns and nine villages, see Figure 2) spread across approximately 1,272 square miles of land dominated by woodlands and farmlands. The following is a list of towns along with their respective villages.

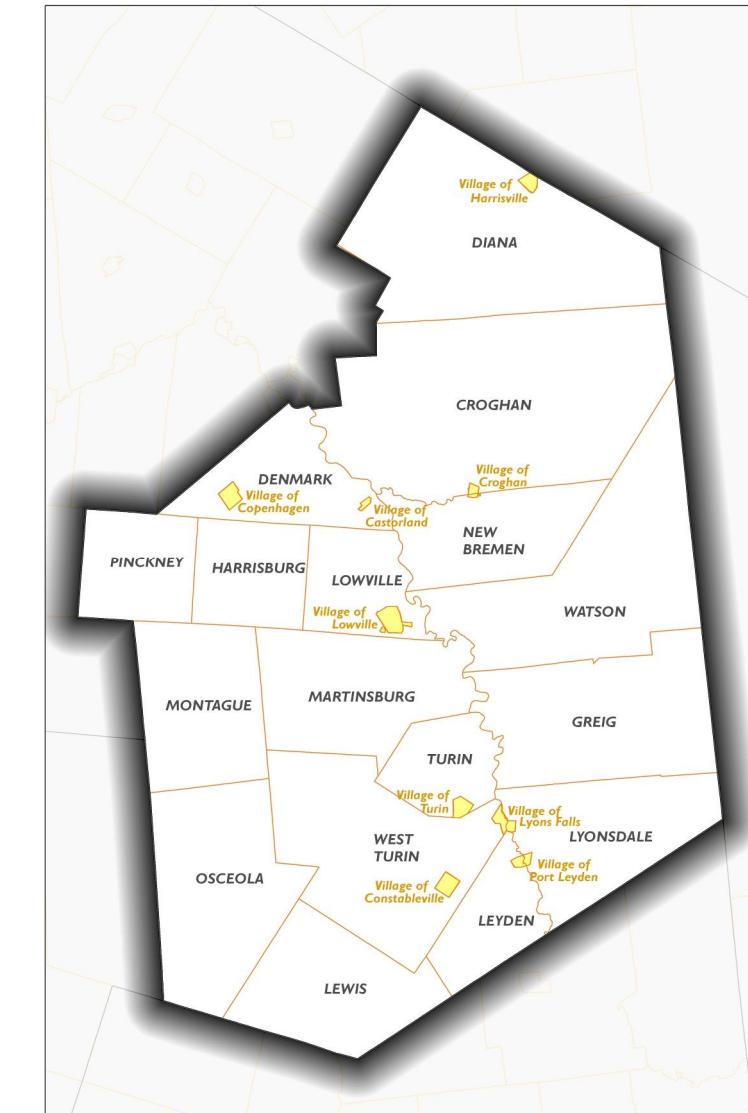
<u>Towns</u> (17)	<u>Villages</u> (9)
Croghan	→ Croghan (part)
Denmark	→ Copenhagen, Castorland
Diana	→ Harrisville
Greig	
Harrisburg	
Lewis	
Leyden	→ Port Leyden (part)
Lowville	→ Lowville
Lyonsdale	→ Port Leyden (part), Lyons Falls (part)
Martinsburg	
Montague	
New Bremen	→ Croghan (part)
Osceola	
Pinckney	
Turin	→ Turin
Watson	
West Turin	→ Constableville, Lyons Falls (part)

The county can be roughly divided in half by the Black River, with six towns and two villages located to the east, and 11 towns and five villages located to the west. The remaining two villages (Lyons Falls and Port Leyden) straddle the Black River, each with portions located in multiple towns. The largest municipality by geographic area is Croghan (181 square miles), while the smallest in area is the Village of Castorland (0.27 square miles). Villages make up 28.9 percent of the population, while accounting for 0.6 percent of the geographic area. With a population density of 932 people per square mile, these urbanized areas are significantly more dense than the surrounding towns.

Defining Sub-Regions of Lewis County

Lewis County's location within the Adirondack Region and the abundance of natural resources from which the community can benefit for economic and recreational purposes creates a high quality of life for residents and visitors. The Tug Hill Plateau, Adirondack Foothills, and Black River Valley represent the three most influential environmental resource regions within Lewis County (see Figure 3). The Tug Hill Region and Adirondack Park in their entirety provide more than 10,000 square miles of forests, mountains, rivers, and lakes throughout northern New York State.

Figure 2: Lewis County Municipalities



Tug Hill Plateau

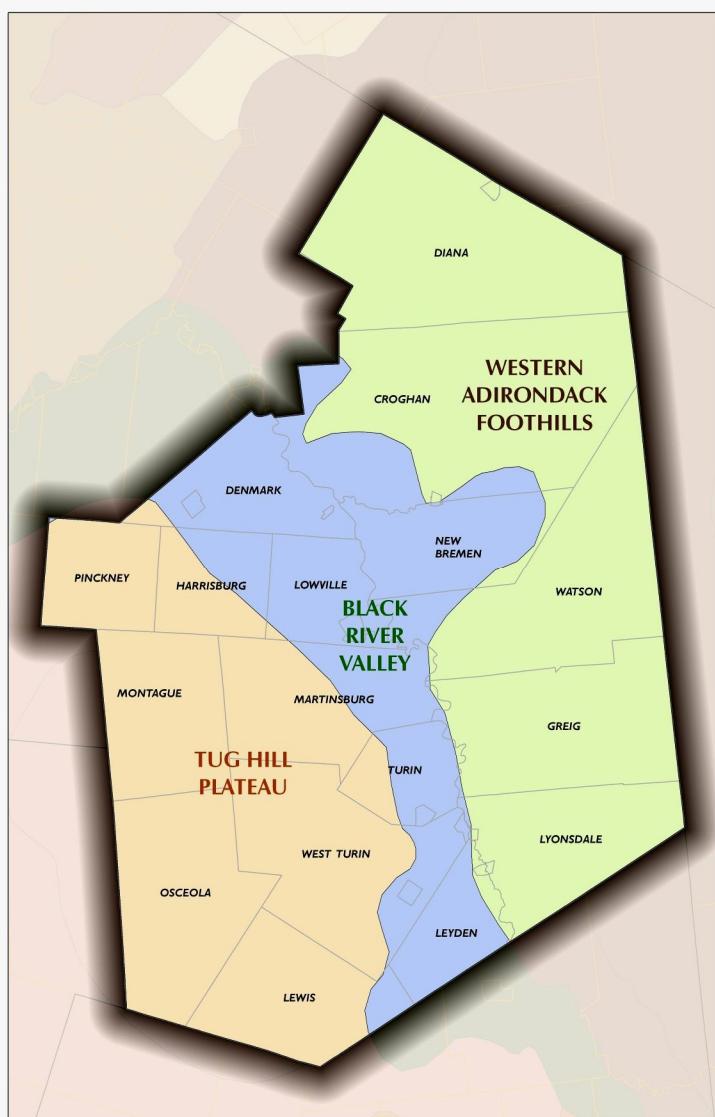
The Tug Hill Plateau is one of only a few distinct, large plateaus in the Eastern US. It lies between Lake Ontario, the Black River and Oneida Lake, and is approximately 2,100 square miles. It encompasses towns and villages scattered in a vast acreage of forest and farm land. The core of the region encompasses more than 800 square miles of remote forest land and the headwaters of several major rivers, with much of the area inaccessible by public road. The plateau's location on the eastern end of Lake Ontario makes it the most substantial lake-effect snow location in the country. These lands and waters are important to the state of New York as municipal water supply, as wildlife and plant habitat, and as key resources supporting the forest industry, farming, recreation and tourism, and traditional land uses such as hunting and fishing.



Adirondack Foothills

Lewis County contains a portion of the western foothills of the Adirondack Mountains. The Adirondack Park was created in 1892 by the State of New York amid concerns for the water and timber resources of the mountainous region. Today, the park is the largest publicly protected area in the contiguous United States, greater in size than Yellowstone, Everglades, Glacier, and Grand Canyon National Parks combined. The boundary of the Park encompasses approximately six million acres, nearly half of which belongs to all the people of New York State and is constitutionally protected to remain "forever wild" forest preserve. The remaining half of the park is private land which includes settlements, farms, timber lands, businesses, homes, and camps. The wild forest, water, wildlife and aesthetic resources of the Park along with its open space character provide an outdoor recreational experience of national and international significance.

Figure 3: Geographic Sub-Regions



Black River Valley

The Black River flows from its headwaters in the western Adirondacks, through Lewis County along the edge of the Tug Hill Plateau and into Lake Ontario. The River plays an important role in the economy of the North Country region, and was historically utilized to capitalize on water power which could be harnessed to run mills and transport goods. In addition, the Black River was a connection point for the Erie Canal at Lyons Falls via the Black River Canal. Today, the Black River is a recreational corridor used for fishing, canoeing, whitewater rafting, kayaking and wildlife viewing along its 114-mile length. The 42-mile flatwater section through Lewis County from Lyons Falls to Carthage is known locally as the "Black River Flats." The river drops only approximately 15-feet over the 42-mile distance. The river is in a broad open valley that is between two and five miles in width. Changes to the river's cross-section created deep sections that flow at a slow to moderate pace, suitable for small boats such as canoes, kayaks and shallow-draft motorboats. Periodic flooding of the river valley has resulted in the presence of high quality soils, which contributes to the dominance of agricultural land uses in the valley.

Regional Agencies with Influence in Lewis County

Tug Hill Commission

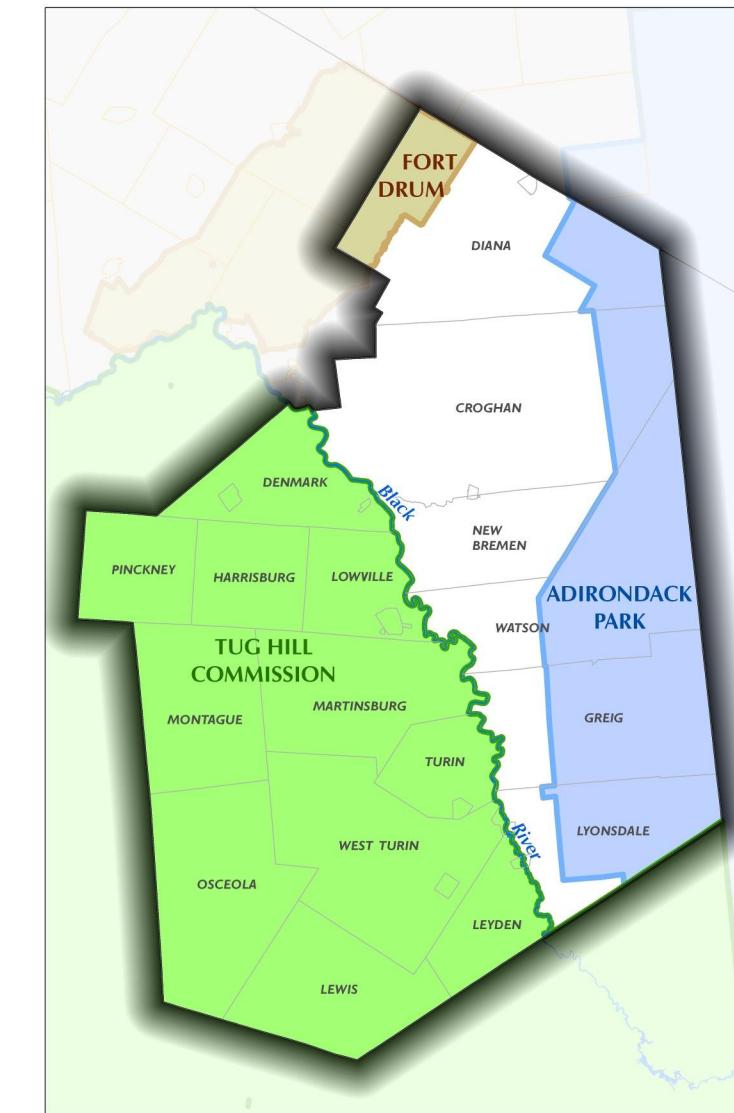
Originally established in 1972 as a temporary body, the Tug Hill Commission (THC) was created to enable local governments, private organizations, and individuals to shape the future of the Tug Hill Region. The non-regulatory THC provides technical assistance to the region's 62 local governments, economic development organizations, and other local groups in the areas of land use planning, community economic development, and natural resource management. The THC also provides training and information for local officials through workshops and issues papers on a variety of topics.

All municipalities within Lewis County west of the Black River are included within the Tug Hill Commission's jurisdiction, of which participation is voluntary. This accounts for 18 of the county's 26 municipalities, including: the towns of Denmark, Harrisburg, Lewis, Leyden, Lowville, Martinsburg, Montague, Osceola, Pinckney, Turin, and West Turin; and the villages of Castorland, Constableville, Copenhagen, Lowville, Lyons Falls, Port Leyden, and Turin (see Figure 4).

Adirondack Park Agency

The Adirondack Park Agency (APA) was created in 1971 by the State Legislature to develop long-range land use plans for both public and private lands within the Adirondack Park. The primary purpose of the APA is to insure conservation, protection, preservation, development and use of the unique scenic, aesthetic, wildlife, recreational, open space,

Figure 4: Regional Agencies with Influence in Lewis County



historic, ecological and natural resources of the park. A further purpose of the APA is to focus the responsibility for developing long-range park policy that takes into consideration the needs of the entire state.

In contrast to the Tug Hill Commission, the APA is a regulatory body that strives to ensure that current and projected future pressures on the park's resources are provided for within a land use plan that recognizes matters of local concern along with those of surrounding regional and New York State. It is this intermingling of public and private lands that provides the Adirondack Park with its unique character. In an effort to cope with unregulated development on private lands, the APA created a framework to assist local governments within the park, including those within Lewis County, against the pressures of development and to help these municipalities exercise their discretionary powers to guide growth.



Portions of five municipalities (Diana, Croghan, Watson, Greig, and Lyonsdale) are within the APA boundary, also known as the Blue Line. The Town of New Bremen shares its eastern boundary with the Park (see Figure 4).

United States Army Base at Fort Drum

Since its reactivation in 1984, the 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) of the US Army has called Fort Drum home. Recent expansion of United States Army facilities at Fort Drum in support of conflicts around the globe has lead to significant development within the surrounding communities.



10th Mountain Division Monument at Fort Drum

Fort Drum has a long history as a military installation. It has been used as a military training site since 1908; however, the Army's presence in the North Country may be traced back to the early 1800's. Originally known as Pine Camp, the area saw its largest growth spurt with the outbreak of World War II in 1942. At that time the area was selected for a major expansion and an additional 75,000 acres of land was purchased.

Pine Camp became Camp Drum in 1951. During and after the Korean Conflict a number of units were stationed and trained here to take advantage of the terrain and climate. The post was designated Fort Drum in 1974 and a permanent garrison was assigned. On September 11, 1984, the announcement was made that Fort Drum would be the new home of the 10th Light Infantry Division.

Today, approximately 17,296 acres (27 square miles) of the 107,265-acre military installation are located in the extreme northern portions of Lewis County (see Figure 4). The majority of these lands are undeveloped. Although most of the growth and economic impact has occurred in Jefferson County, some of that impact extends into Lewis County, especially along the Route 26 corridor south of Carthage.

Regional Impacts of Fort Drum on the North Country

The North Country region has long been defined by the presence of Fort Drum, with significant contributions to the region's economy coming from the military base as a generator of direct employment. In addition, the services required by personnel and military families stationed in the area benefit permanent residents through the provision of jobs and economic opportunity. The presence of the base and the resulting demand for housing has also put upward pressure on the cost of rental and owner-occupied properties, impacting the residents of surrounding communities throughout the region. The activities at Fort Drum make it one of the largest generators of traffic and visitation on an annual basis to the region, and a primary driver of economic opportunity in Lewis, Jefferson and St. Lawrence counties.

Due to growth generated by Fort Drum, two organizations have been created to manage regional impacts while fostering communication between the public and the military. The Development Authority of the North Country and the Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization are currently working together towards the effective and efficient communication of the needs of each parent organization, while identifying economic growth opportunities through improved leveraging of military spending.

Development Authority of the North Country

As a result of the decision to locate the 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum, a need arose for a regional entity with the capability to effectively and efficiently communicate with the United States Army to address the fort's economic and social impacts on the region. In 1985, New York State formed the Development Authority of the North Country (DANC) and charged it with providing the region with the capability to effectively plan and develop the infrastructure needs of the three-county region (Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence counties) as a result of expansions of Fort Drum.

As one of its first official tasks, in 1986 DANC undertook a comprehensive economic evaluation of the region and developed a detailed, long-range economic development strategy. Currently, the Development Authority administers several business loan programs to promote job creation and retention among small businesses. The Authority also provides funding for the development of quality, affordable housing in Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence Counties through its housing programs. In addition, the Authority's staff advises several local development corporations including those in Clayton, Carthage and Lewis County.

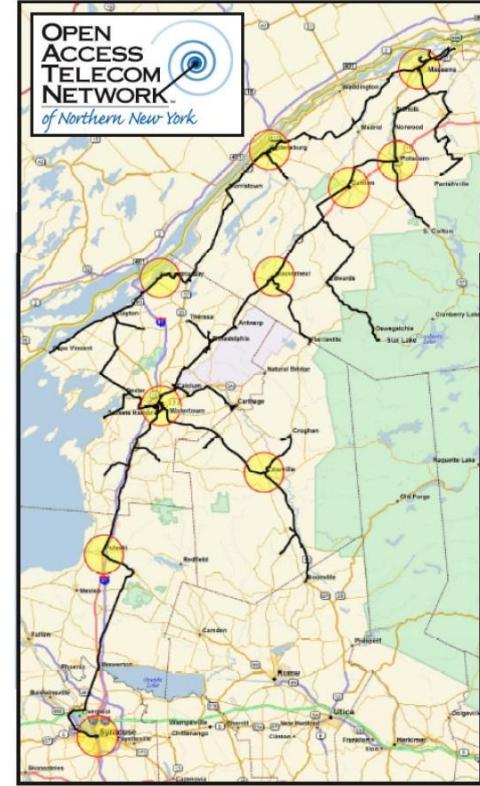
DANC's programmatic areas of interest include: community development, solid waste management, water and wastewater, and telecommunications. In 2004, the Open Access Telecom Network went into service, providing connectivity in the tri-county region with major telecommunications carriers in New York State.

Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization

Citizens of the tri-county region of Northern New York directly impacted by the location of the 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum formed the Fort Drum Steering Council, a predecessor to the Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization. The primary purpose of the Council was to be a first point of contact between the military and civilian communities. The Council was originally slated to disband in 1990 when it was determined that its planning role was no longer necessary.

The civilian and military communities in the Fort Drum Impact Area felt that a follow-on organization was necessary to keep the lines of communication open between them. The Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization (FDRLO) was formed, recognizing the need for various organizations and agencies both on base and off to maintain regular contact on specific issues and programs. The FDRLO became the point of contact for those issues which transcend the specific missions of any individual organization or agency in either the civilian or military communities.

The FDRLO fills a range of roles including efforts to promote integration and leveraging of Fort Drum activity with outside community and business development. Since its creation, FDRLO has sponsored numerous studies of how Fort Drum can aid the region's economy, ranging from the Fort Drum economic impact update to military housing in the community and even joint use airport options. Most recently, FDRLO conducted a study focused on identifying and exploring ways to improve the quality of jobs in the North Country. The study addressed leveraging opportunities associated with national changes in how the military procures contracts and services from private business.



DANC's Open Access Telecom Network



DEMOGRAPHICS & COUNTY STATISTICS

Planning for the future requires a clear understanding of current conditions and recent trends. A look at these trends allows community leaders to make informed decisions about future direction. Demographic composition is a collection of population characteristics that define a community. Future policies, land use decisions, and development often depend on a community's growth or decline, age distribution, educational attainment, transportation choices, places of work and occupation, changes in income, and household characteristics.

Data Analysis

In many of the categories of this section, data from multiple points in time are provided to show the trends in the county. Observing changes over time allows the region to make assumptions about future progress. Where possible, information from other sources is included as well, providing context and a glimpse of regional dynamics that may be affecting Lewis County.

The majority of data compiled for this research was gathered from the 1990 and 2000 Decennial Census developed by the U.S. Census Bureau. A large majority of the federal database is over nine years old, though some estimates were available, and the ability to draw timely inferences from this information is limited due to its age and scope of reference. In some cases, the American Community Survey (ACS) 2005-2007 three-year estimates were included, where appropriate. It is recommended that this data be updated and analyzed once information from the 2010 Census is published.

Where appropriate, reliable sources such as the US Bureau of Labor and Statistics, NYS Department of Labor, NYS Department of Transportation, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, and the Lewis County Department of Economic Development and Planning were used to compile the data needed for an accurate representation of Lewis County and the surrounding region. In addition, data and information was compiled from the Lewis County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) updated in 2006.

Population

A majority of the county's sparse population is located along the Black River Valley. In the earliest days of settlement within the region, development occurred along the river valley. This was the primary transportation corridor along the Black River Canal system, connecting the river and the communities along it with the Erie Canal. In addition to commerce and transport, the Black River also provided opportunities for hydropower in certain locations, and the fertile floodplain offered prime

agricultural lands. These historic and environmental factors have made the Black River Valley the most densely populated area of Lewis County, averaging 66 persons per square mile, which is triple the county average of 22 persons per square mile, and six times the Tug Hill average of 10 persons per square mile. Table 1 shows population density for each of the municipalities in the county.

Yet, even with the former connection to the Erie Canal system and the continued significance of the Black River to the region, Lewis County remains the fourth least populated county in the State. Potential factors involved with the limited population include the developmental limitations of the regional topographies of the Tug Hill Plateau and Adirondack Foothills, along with the high percentage of public and resource lands within the county.

County Population Trends

From 1900 through 1950 Lewis County's population dramatically declined, falling almost 18 percent from 27,427 to 22,521. Beginning in

Table 1: Population Density by Municipality, 2000

Municipality	Population	Area (mi ²)	Population Density (persons per square mile)
Towns			
Croghan	2,784	181.28	15.4
Denmark	1,576	49.68	31.7
Diana	1,008	139.95	7.2
Greig	1,365	94.68	14.4
Harrisburg	423	39.71	10.7
Lewis	857	65.05	13.2
Leyden	1,320	33.12	39.8
Lowville	1,072	36.22	29.6
Lyonsdale	1,023	69.05	14.8
Martinsburg	1,249	76.00	16.4
Montague	108	65.40	1.7
New Bremen	2,434	55.65	43.7
Osceola	265	87.21	3.0
Pinckney	319	41.12	7.8
Turin	530	30.28	17.5
Watson	1,987	117.06	17.0
West Turin	835	100.51	8.3
Villages			
Castorland	306	0.27	1,149.4
Constableville	305	1.13	270.7
Copenhagen	865	1.18	730.5
Croghan	665	0.42	1,569.2
Harrisville	653	0.79	829.4
Lowville	3,476	1.87	1,862.4
Lyons Falls	591	1.02	578.9
Port Leyden	665	0.67	999.9
Turin	263	1.01	259.4
County Totals	26,944	1,282	21.02

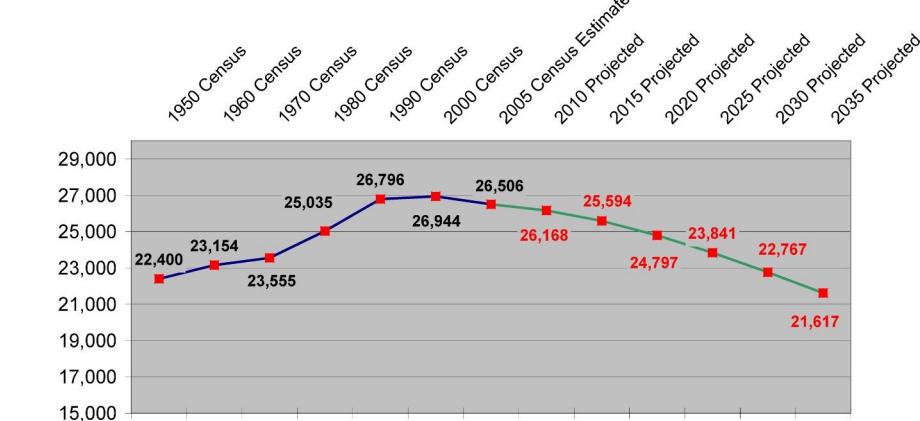
Source: US Census

1950, the county began to experience a trend reversal and has experienced population growth each decade through 2000 (see Table 2). This population growth, however, has diminished significantly since 1990. From 1990 to 2000, the growth rate was nearly stagnant at 0.55 percent, a significant departure from the 6.3 percent and 7 percent population increases experienced in the decades 1970 to 1980 and 1980 to 1990, respectively.

The US Census American Community Survey (ACS) three-year estimates for 2005-2007 gave a population for Lewis County of 26,374. The ACS three-year estimate is an average of estimates for years 2005, 2006, and 2007 and cannot be utilized to infer data for a specific point in time. The data shown on Table 2 are single-year estimates and projections also developed by the US Census. The Cornell University Program on Applied Demographics in 2008 projected that Lewis County's population in 2010 will be 26,168, a 2.9 percent decline from 2000. The Cornell projections are developed based on county-specific assumptions regarding fertility, mortality and migration rates (see Table 2). The Cornell projections and ACS estimates continue to imply a decline in population. County planners and administrators should keep abreast of future estimates, projections, and trends on this important statistic. Growth rates similar to those in the 1970s and 1980s are not expected for the foreseeable future.

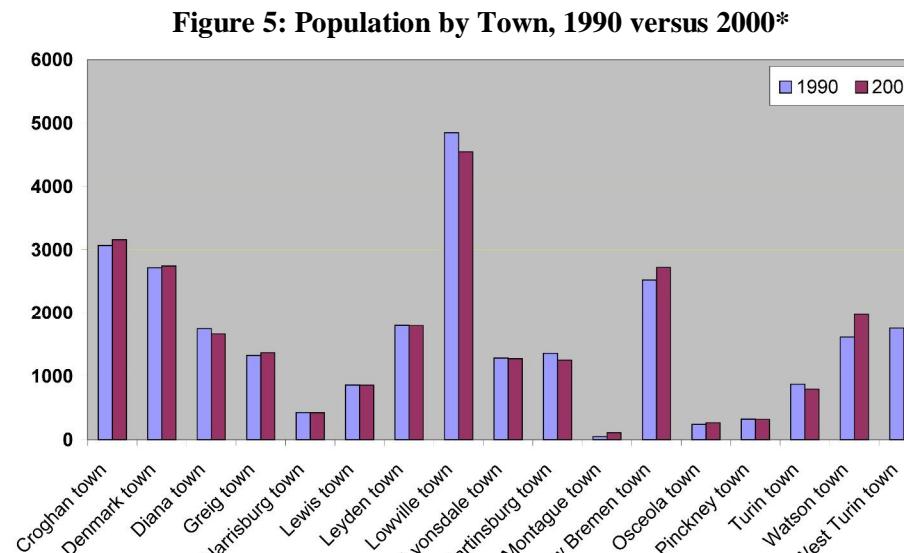
Town/Village Growth Trends

Table 2: Lewis County Population, 1950 to 2035 (Projected)



Source: US Census and Cornell University

Although the county as a whole grew 19.3 percent since 1950, growth and decline at the local level varied dramatically both in terms of specific municipalities and by municipal type. From 1950 to 2006 (estimated), population trends collectively for the towns versus the villages varies markedly. While the towns collectively grew 41.9 percent from 1950 to 2006, village populations were down 15.9 percent during the same period. As well, the percentage of county population living within the villages declined from 38.7 percent to 28.9 percent.



Source: US Census

* Town data includes village population within town boundaries

Although Lewis County is categorized as one of two rural counties in New York State (with the other being Hamilton County), it is experiencing the same population migration patterns consistent with other urbanized areas of the United States since the end of World War II. The movement of residents from urbanized and built up areas to the surrounding rural areas is being felt in Lewis County, albeit on a smaller scale and a lower intensity.

Collectively, the county's villages have experienced significant declines in population since 1950, with the exception of Lowville and Copenhagen. This loss of population is similar to what many other municipalities experienced through the 1980s. However, the construction of military 801 housing to support the Fort Drum expansion along with publicly funded senior and low-moderate income multi-family housing construction during the 1980s resulted in significant growth in both communities.

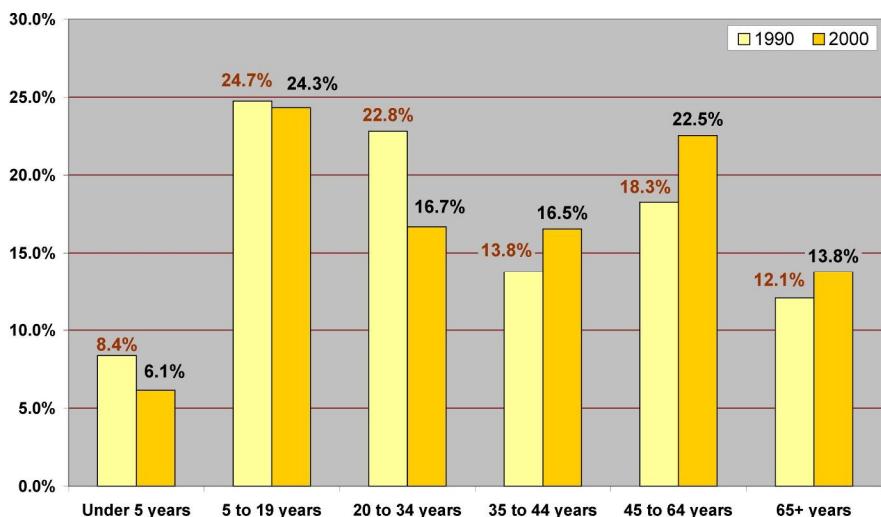
On the opposite end of the spectrum from their village counterparts, towns in the county collectively experienced significant population growth over the past 58 years. The communities experiencing the most growth included the Towns of Denmark, Greig, Lewis, Lyonsdale, New Bremen, and Watson. The population growth within these communities has generally occurred as a result of retirement and the construction of seasonal homes and camps by both locals and persons from outside Lewis County. Towns with the greatest rates of decline have occurred in the Tug Hill Region, including the towns of Harrisburg, Montague, Osceola, and Pinckney.

Population Characteristics

Lewis County's median age climbed from 28.5 years in 1980 to 31.5 in 1990, with 2005-2007 ACS estimates of 38.6 years. Although this follows trends at the State level, the county aged at a much quicker rate compared to its relatively young population in 1980. Over the past decade, the percentage of population 0 to 4 years decreased to 6.1 percent of the county total (see Figure 6). The percentage of the population aged 5 to 19 years of age was relatively stagnant, representing 24.3 percent of the total in 2000 as compared to 24.7 percent in 1990. As a percentage of the county population, 20- to 34-year olds decreased to 16.7 percent in 2000 from 22.8 percent in 1990, with a significant 26.8 percent decline in cohort population. Those 35 to 44 years of age saw an increase to 16.5 percent of the population in 2000, while those individuals 45 to 64 years of age increased to 22.5 percent over the 10-year period. Individuals aged 65 years old and over increased a small yet not insignificant amount.

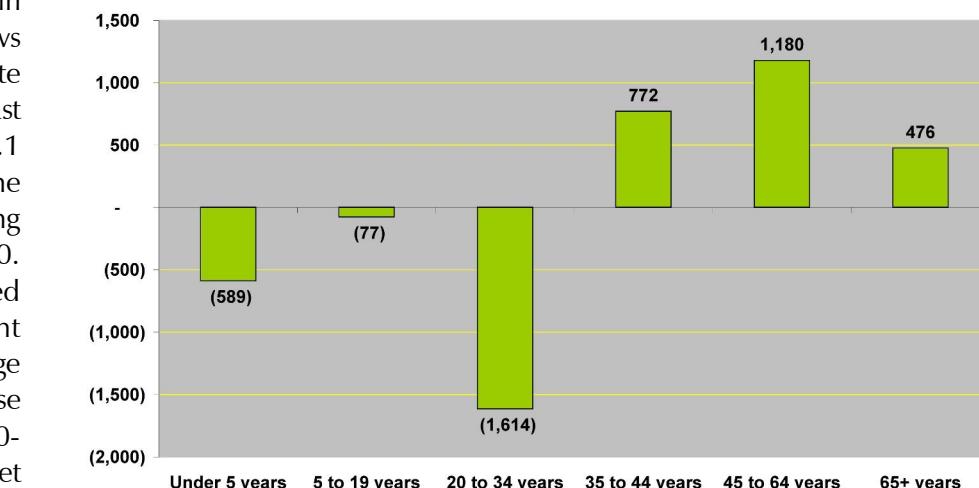
While smaller changes are taking place at the periphery of the cohort populations, the trends of individuals between the ages of 20 and 44 is of significant concern (see Figure 7). This category of the population is of great importance for three primary reasons. First, this category represents the bulk of the labor force. Second, these individuals are either entering or are in the middle of peak spending years where a majority of large consumer purchases are made (homes, cars, durable goods, etc.). Lastly, the portion of the group aged 20-34 is in their prime reproductive and family development cycle. As can be seen in Figure 7, this age group was the single largest loser of population within the county, seeing a net decrease of 1,614 people between 1990 and 2000. By extension, the population aged 20-44 has a significant impact upon the surrounding

Figure 6: Age by Cohort, 1990 versus 2000



Source: US Census

Figure 7: Absolute Change in Cohort Populations, 1990 to 2000



Source: US Census

cohorts by controlling the rate of births while at the same time determining the rate at which the population will age in place or potentially relocate elsewhere.

For these reasons, keeping a close watch on the age group representing 20 to 44 year olds is of great importance. In Lewis County, this cohort decreased as a percentage of the total population (from 36.6 percent in 1990 to 33.2 percent in 2000) and in overall numbers (a loss of 842 individuals in this age group).

In addition to the 20-44 cohort, the age groups on the periphery can also have a significant impact on future planning and land use policies at the county level. A decreasing population ages 0-4 years will have ramifications on school enrollment as well as in the retail sector. Meanwhile, an increasing population ages 65 and older, even as a small percentage of the overall population, can have great impacts on the provision of housing and services for seniors. There were 476 more seniors aged 65 years and older in 2000 than in 1990. This cohort is in or near retirement age, and this transition in life brings significant changes in housing, health and social needs. The current trends evident in Lewis County for middle-aged individuals to age in place make this number likely to climb, as can be predicted from Figure 7.

The rise in the senior population is compounded by the decline in children ages 0-19, leading to the overall median age in Lewis County to continue climbing as seniors are living longer lives, while the younger populations have fewer children and the region loses additional youth due to out-migration.

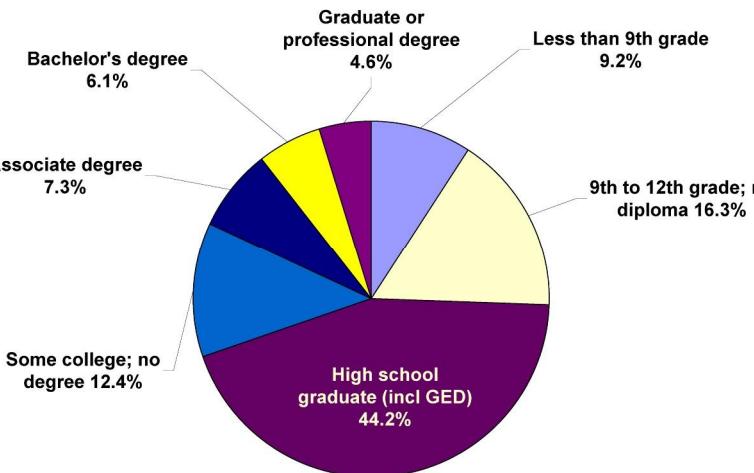


According to the NYS Department of Economic Development, it is not anticipated that significant changes will occur in the distribution of the population through 2010. As a result, it is not anticipated that these population trends will change significantly, requiring these issues to be addressed further in the comprehensive plan's recommendations section.

Education

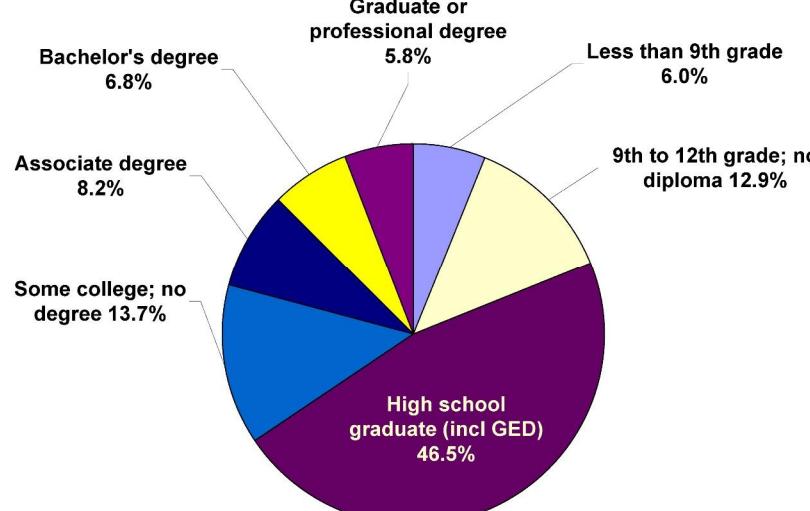
One of the most influential factors in determining a community's quality of life, especially for families with children under age 19, is the quality and success of the educational system. The percentage of county residents with less than a high school diploma or GED decreased by 6.6 percent between 1990 and 2000, while those with a high school/GED education or higher increased (see Figures 8A and 8B). Overall, 34.5 percent of county residents in the year 2000 had some level of post-

Figure 8A: Educational Attainment at Age 25, 1990



Source: US Census

Figure 8B: Educational Attainment at Age 25, 2000



Source: US Census

secondary education by age 25, compared with 30.4 percent in 1990. In terms of raw numbers, there was a decrease of 2,381 persons who earned a high school diploma/GED or less over the decade and an increase of 301 persons with some college or an advanced degree. A loss of 2,062 persons counted at age 25 accounts for the remaining change between 1990 and 2000. While the numbers do not denote a high level of college level education, the trend indicates that the community as a whole is improving and pursuing higher education, which positively impacts the potential for higher-paying job development.

Economy

The economy of Lewis County is heavily dependent upon agriculture and forestry, including the manufacture and production of agricultural and forest products such as lumber, maple syrup and dairy products. A more in-depth reporting and analysis of the county's economy can be found in the County's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) that was developed in 2006. Where appropriate, findings from that report are mentioned here.

Employment & Occupations

Unemployment rates in the North Country have fluctuated from approximately 5.5 percent in the summer months to near seven percent in the winter months. The 2005-2007 ACS estimates stated that Lewis County had an unemployment rate of 7.2 percent, with a labor force of 13,236 individuals at or above the age of 16 years. This estimate is in line with NYS Department of Labor rates. As of April 2008 there were approximately 900 unemployed individuals, or 6.7 percent, in Lewis County — an increase from the year previous of 5.9 percent. While unemployment increased from April 2007 to April 2008, so did the number of employed individuals, with an additional 200 jobs created during this period. Unemployment rates tend to fluctuate greatly throughout the year due to agriculture and construction activities. As of 2000, agriculture and construction accounted for 15.7 percent of employment within the county, or approximately one in six jobs. Agriculture and forestry as a sector is discussed at length in the Agriculture Section of this document (see page 23).

According to the New York State Department of Labor Non-Farm data, the largest industry by employment in Lewis County in 2008 was government, with 37 percent of non-farm jobs (see Table 3). The largest collection of private sector jobs is in manufacturing, capturing 19 percent of non-farm employment. From 1990 to 2008, private sector jobs have steadily decreased in both number and percentage of total employment. Meanwhile, the number of public sector jobs in 2008 depicts an increase of approximately 25 percent from 1990 levels. Table 4 denotes Lewis County's major industrial employers as of 2008. These employers include those within the wood products, dairy, paper, and packaging industries.

Table 3: Non-Farm Employment by Industry, 1990, 2000, 2008 (thousands)

Industry	2008		2000		1990	
	Avg Annual	% Total	Avg Annual	% Total	Avg Annual	% Total
Total Nonfarm	6.7	100%	6.7	100%	6.6	100%
Government	2.5	37.3%	2.4	35.8%	2.0	30.3%
Total Private	4.2	62.7%	4.3	64.2%	4.6	69.7%
Goods Producing	1.7	25.4%	1.8	26.9%	2.3	34.8%
Natural Resources, Mining and Construction	0.4	6.0%	0.3	4.5%	0.3	4.5%
Manufacturing	1.3	19.4%	1.5	22.4%	2.0	30.3%
Service-Providing (incl Gov't & Private)	5.0	74.6%	4.9	73.1%	4.3	65.2%
Private Service-Providing	2.5	37.3%	2.5	37.3%	2.3	34.8%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	0.9	13.4%	1.0	14.9%	1.0	15.2%
Information	0.1	1.5%	0.1	1.5%	0.1	1.5%
Financial Activities	0.1	1.5%	0.1	1.5%	0.2	3.0%
Professional and Business Services	0.2	3.0%	0.3	4.5%	0.1	1.5%
Educational and Health Services	0.4	6.0%	0.3	4.5%	0.3	4.5%
Leisure and Hospitality	0.5	7.5%	0.5	7.5%	0.5	7.6%
Other Services	0.3	4.5%	0.3	4.5%	0.2	3.0%
Government	2.5	37.3%	2.4	35.8%	2.0	30.3%

Source: NYS Department of Labor

Table 4: Industrial Employers, 2008

Industrial Employer	Number of Full-Time Employees	Product
Kraft Foods	325	Cream Cheese
Fibermark	190	Specialty Paper
Climax Manufacturing	190	Packaging
QuibicaAMF	110	Bowling Pins
Otis products	100	Gun Cleaning Products
Interface Solutions	100	Gasket Paper
Viking Cives	80	Snow Plows
HDK Wood Products	45	Lumber
Lewis County Dairy	38	Kosher Dairy
Burrows Paper Corp.	37	Specialty Paper
Omniafiltra	35	Specialty Paper

Source: Lewis County Dept. of Economic Development & Planning

Income

Median per capita income is traditionally the measure by which communities gauge the prosperity of their residents. However, in rural and less affluent study areas, a more accurate measure is median household income. Traditionally, less affluent areas are more likely to have multiple generations living together, each providing some level of income to the household. While each of the incomes provided by household members may be below state or regional levels, in the aggregate these households compare favorably. As a result, household income figures provide a more accurate depiction of purchasing power within less affluent areas than does per capita figures alone.



Table 5: County Household Income, 2000 versus 2005-2007

	2000		2005-2007		Absolute Change in Households
	Households	% Total	Households	% Total	
Under \$25,000	4905	39.3%	2,997	27.1%	-1,908
\$25,000 to \$49,999	3820	30.6%	3,914	35.3%	94
\$50,000 to \$74,999	2434	19.5%	2,340	21.1%	-94
\$75,000 to \$99,999	839	6.7%	757	6.8%	-82
\$100,000 to \$149,999	315	2.5%	793	7.2%	478
Over \$150,000	155	1.2%	277	2.5%	122
Totals	12,468	100%	11,078	100%	-1,390

Source: US Census

The ACS 2005-2007 three-year estimates give Lewis County a median household income of \$40,012, a 16.4 percent increase from the 2000 median household income of \$34,361. When adjusted for inflation, the 16.4 percent increase in median household income from 2000 to 2007 reverts to a decrease in purchasing power of 6.4 percent from 2000 levels. This represents a decrease in county residents' ability to advance economically and compounds a lagging or stagnant local economy.

From 2000 to 2007, however, there were some positive results regarding household income levels in the aggregate. In 2000, more than 39 percent of households earned less than \$25,000; by the 2005-2007 ACS estimates, the percentage decreased to less than 30 percent of households. The same trend of increasing household incomes was seen in the \$25,000 to \$49,999 range. As can be seen in Table 5, the numbers of households earning over \$50,000 increased 11 percent from 2000 to 2007, while those households earning over \$150,000 nearly doubled.

According to the ACS estimates for 2005-2007, the percentage of the population living in poverty increased slightly from 2000 to 2007, while overall numbers decreased (see Table 6). The poverty line income figure adjustment is currently \$17,050. A potential bright-spot when considering Lewis County's poverty levels is a reduction in the numbers of young children (aged 0-4) and seniors aged 65 and above. However, with approximately 1 in 7 residents living below the poverty line, the issue is of the highest importance, with far reaching ramifications for public health, education, employment, transportation, housing and social services within Lewis County.

Table 6: Poverty Status by Selected Age Cohort, 2000 versus 2005-2007

	2000		2005-2007 est.		Absolute Change in Persons
	Persons	% Total Pop	Persons	% Total Pop	
Overall Income below poverty level	4,666	13.6%	4,114	15.6%	-552
Related Children Under 5 yrs below poverty	440	1.3%	240	15.4%	-200
Related Children Ages 5-17 below poverty	1,190	3.5%	1,371	26.4%	181
Ages 65 and older below poverty	730	2.1%	356	9.3%	-374

Source: US Census

Housing

As of the 2005-2007 ACS estimates, Lewis County had a total of 15,977 housing units, an increase of 5.6 percent from 2000 (see Table 7). According to the US Census Manufacturing, Mining and Construction data, an additional 1,263 housing units were built from 2000 to 2007, for a total of approximately 16,397 housing units when added to 2000 decennial census figures (see Figure 9). The difference between the 2005-2007 ACS estimate and the extrapolated figure for 2007 may be attributed to the loss of detail in the estimates, as well as the demolition of housing units during the 2000-2007 time period. The majority of new construction shown in Figure 9 can be attributed to the expansion of Fort Drum, with seasonal home/camp growth as an additional contributing factor. The county is expected to experience additional housing growth in the border towns of Diana and Denmark from the continued expansion of facilities and capacity at Fort Drum, with particular pressure placed on those areas located approximately 30 miles or less from Fort Drum.

Occupancy Status

The number of owner occupied housing units increased slightly between 1990 and 2000 to over 77 percent (see Table 7). However, the number of vacant structures also increased, rising from 29.8 percent to 33.7 percent of total housing units. The majority of this increase can be attributed to seasonal and recreational homes/camps. As of 2000, vacant seasonal and recreational housing units accounted for 24.6 percent of total housing, or approximately one in four units. From 1990 to 2000, vacant and seasonal housing units accounted for 43 percent of new housing units within Lewis County. While these properties continue to pay property taxes, and require less services than traditionally occupied units, the lack of a year-round presence diminishes their economic impact, with concentrated usage at small periods of time throughout the year.

There are four towns in which vacant housing exceeds occupied housing: Greig, Montague, Osceola and Watson. This is predominantly attributed to the large percentage of seasonal and recreational housing units in these municipalities. Locations within the core of the Tug Hill Plateau and Adirondack Park regions may be a significant contributing factor to the high level of seasonal and recreational structures in these communities.

Low-Moderate Income Housing

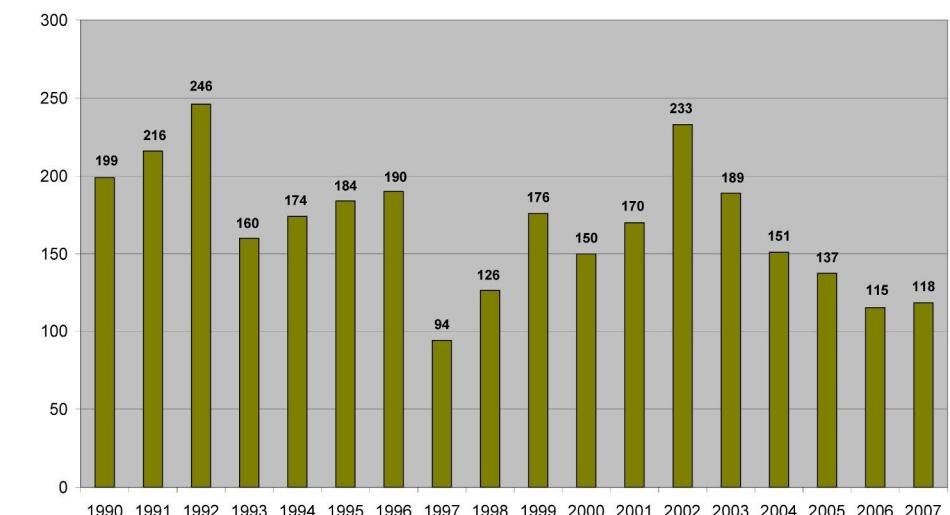
Two not-for-profit agencies in Lewis County (Snow Belt Housing Company and Lewis County Opportunities, Inc.) are involved in housing rehabilitation, new construction, elderly housing, low-moderate income housing, subsidized housing (including Section 8 housing vouchers), weatherization and other housing programs. Quality housing choices

Table 7: Overall Housing Change, 1990 to 2000

	Total Housing Units	Occupied Housing Units	Total Vacant Units	Other Vacant	Percent Other Vacant	Vacant Seasonal & Recreational	Percent Vacant Seasonal	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Percent Owner Occupied
1990	13182	9253	3929	1050	8.0%	2879	21.8%	7057	2196	76.3%
2000	15134	10040	5094	1377	9.1%	3717	24.6%	7749	2291	77.2%
Change	14.8%	8.5%	29.7%	31.1%	29.1%					

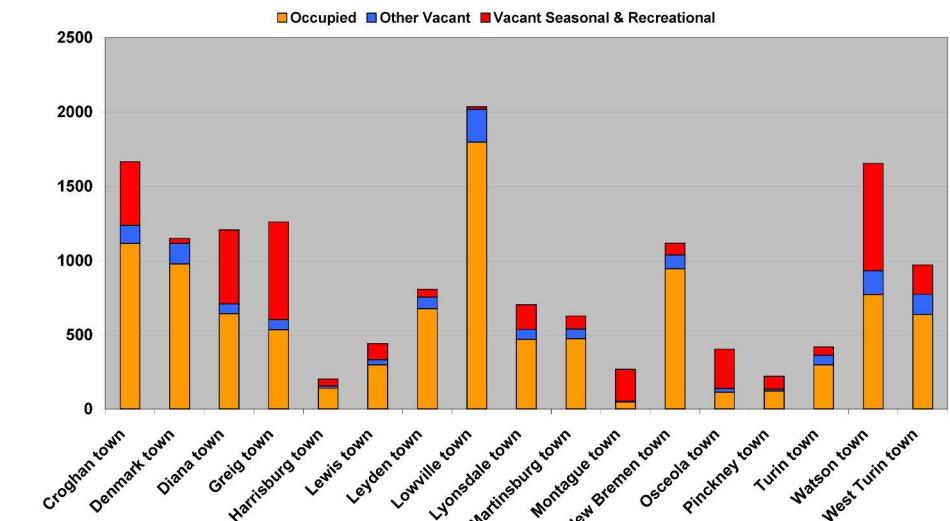
Source: US Census

Figure 9: Lewis County Building Permits, 1990 to 2007



Source: US Census

Figure 10: Housing Occupancy by Type, 2000



Source: US Census

(Note: Town data includes portions of villages within town boundaries)



within Lewis County are extremely limited due to the age of the housing stock and the poor physical condition of many housing units. As of 2000, 39 percent of county housing units were constructed in or before 1939; only 15 percent of housing units were built after 1990 (see Figure 12). As a result, most quality housing units are outside the price range of low-income families and some moderate-income families, leaving them with lesser quality options.

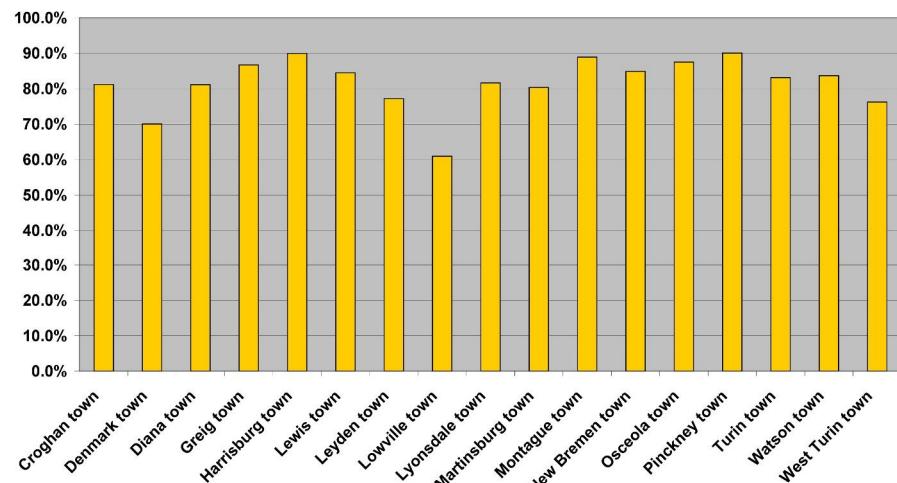
The lack of newer market-rate housing is compounded by the age of the less expensive housing stock. The high repair and maintenance costs for these older structures places enhanced financial stress on low-income residents, resulting in consistently deferred maintenance, leading to further diminished housing values as well as threats to health, safety, and community character. The lack of housing options for seniors leads to the elderly staying in older housing units which they are unable to maintain.

Housing Affordability

A common analysis tool utilized to determine housing affordability is a comparison of the median value of single-family units with median household income. Nationally, a ratio of 2.0 or less is considered "affordable." For example, the purchase of a home costing \$200,000 by a household that earns an income of \$100,000 would achieve a ratio of 2.0.

In 2000, the affordability ratio for Lewis County was 1.8, with the median home value of \$63,300 being 1.8 times the median household income of \$34,361. According to LandMax Data Systems, the median single-family home sales price in Lewis County was \$83,528 in 2007, a 38 percent increase from 2000. Utilizing this figure, the median family income would have to be approximately \$46,400 in 2007 to retain the year 2000 affordability ratio of 1.8. According to the ACS 2005-2007 estimates

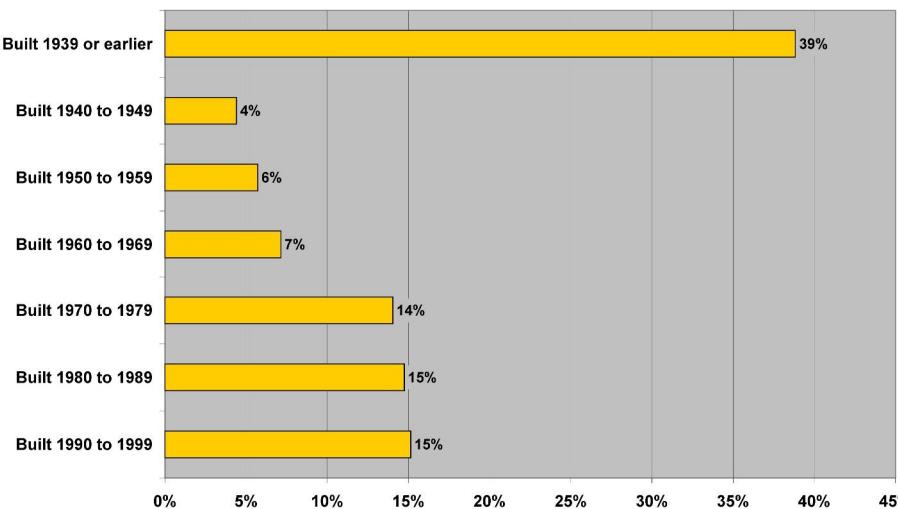
Figure 11: Owner Occupancy Rate, 2000



Source: US Census

(Note: Town data includes portions of villages within town boundaries)

Figure 12: Relative Age of Housing, 2000



Source: US Census

Lewis County's median household income for this period is \$40,012. When combined with 2007 median home sales value the current housing affordability ratio in Lewis County a value of 2.1. According to the data, housing affordability has declined over the past seven years by a modest amount. This is likely attributable to the increased development pressure from seasonal homes and the expansion of Fort Drum. As well, relatively accessible funding and low interest rates increased demand for housing, and drove up prices. The increase in prices, 32 percent from 2000-2007, is not in step with the changes in median household incomes, which equate to a 6.4 percent loss of purchasing power. As a result, housing affordability has declined for many residents.

Public Housing

Lewis County lacks public housing, with only a handful of apartment buildings being managed by not-for-profits. Therefore, many low-income renters are left to deal with private investors and sometimes absentee landlords. As a result of being forced into the private market place for affordable housing, the lack of a reporting mechanism leads to poor and worsening conditions within the lower cost units. As well, a high degree of competition for low cost housing leads tenants to be less likely to report violations to local code enforcement officials. Such a complaint may ultimately result in the condemnation of the property, further reducing the supply of low cost housing and forcing residents out to seek housing elsewhere. Ultimately, this downward cycle of affordable housing in the private market place makes it more likely for low-income renters to tolerate unsafe or hazardous living conditions and live in substandard housing.

Barriers to Housing for Families

Older, affordable housing stock is also predominantly smaller in size, leading to problems of overcrowding for large low-income families. Large

housing units available in the market are typically for sale only, leaving large low-income families who cannot afford to buy with few rental options. Additionally, barriers to affordable housing also include high energy costs, with some very low-income families spending more than half of their income for housing plus heat and utilities. The harsh North Country winters combined with the inefficiencies of the older housing stock makes energy costs a primary concern for low and moderate income families.

Housing Programs

Lewis County Opportunities (LCO) administers a weatherization program to address deferred maintenance and the energy efficiency problems typically found with older homes. This program helps low- and moderate-income homeowners by providing an energy audit and necessary repairs and maintenance to improve the efficiency of a home's ductwork, insulation, and heating and cooling systems. In 2005, 70 families received services through LCO's weatherization program. In addition to weatherization, LCO also administers the county's Section 8 Housing Voucher program, with 367 available vouchers for those in need of affordable housing assistance.

Recent Property Sales

Cumulative property sales data for Lewis County for January 2005 through January 2008 detail 3,371 transactions (including residential, commercial, and land) totaling over \$145,000,000. Of the 2,291 sales that included price information (1,080 transactions listed the sales price as either \$0 or \$1, and were excluded from analysis except for counting towards the total number of transactions), the median property sale was \$37,900, while the average was \$63,835. There were several large transactions that were considered outliers due to their price and the entities involved, totaling more than \$15.9 million. Excluding these outliers from the average property sales calculation lowered the overall average to \$57,193 (see Table 8).

Table 8: Lewis County Property Sales Data
January 2005 through January 2008

	2005	2006	2007	2008	Overall
Total No. of Sales	1270	964	1048	89	3371
No. of Sales with data*	870	659	704	58	2291
Total Value of Sales	\$47,604,000	\$38,640,000	\$56,386,000	\$3,614,000	\$146,244,000
Median Value of Sales	\$35,000	\$38,000	\$40,000	\$46,000	\$37,900
Average Value of Sales	\$49,300	\$58,600	\$80,000	\$62,300	\$63,835
Average Value w/o outliers**	\$48,000	\$56,600	\$63,800	-	\$57,193

* Excludes prices recorded as either \$0 or \$1

** Outliers include large transactions for commercial or forestry purposes

Source: Lewis County Real Property Tax Service Agency



LAND USE

Land Values

Lewis County has 24,692 parcels representing 812,885 acres (roughly 1,270 square miles) of land (see Table 9). The county's total assessed land value is \$1,574,393,000 (including structures and improvements), while the land alone is valued at \$529,696,000. County-wide taxable revenue is generated on just over \$1.17 billion, or 74.5 percent of the total assessed valuation for real property. This high proportion of county property as non-taxable (\$1 out of every \$4 of valuation) is due to the large tracts of land owned by New York State, which total nearly 20 percent of the county's land area.

Existing Land Use (see Map 1)

The following is a breakdown of certain land uses in the county, organized according to categories defined by the New York State Office of Real Property Services. Although there may be some minor inconsistencies in classifications due to reporting by local assessors, Table 9 and Map 1 provide an overall picture of location and proportions of different land uses.

Agricultural

Lands for agricultural purposes comprise nearly 20 percent of the area of Lewis County, second only to conservation and forest lands (54 percent). As depicted in Map 1, the majority of agricultural land is located in a belt



Agricultural land uses in the Town of Lowville.

along the Black River valley, generally following the watercourse and State Routes 12 and 26, with a spur of agricultural activity surrounding the Village of Croghan. Agricultural lands comprise approximately 12 percent of the county's total assessed value, with approximately 68 percent of the agricultural lands being of taxable status. The largest agricultural parcel is 1,293 acres, yet the median is 47 acres. For a further discussion of agriculture and the role it plays in Lewis County, see the Agriculture section on page 23.

Residential

Approximately 49 percent of Lewis County's parcels are assessed as residential. These nearly 12,000 parcels account for only 14 percent of the county's land mass, yet generate over 55 percent of its taxable revenue. In general, residential development is



Residences in Constableville

distributed along the periphery of the agricultural belt that follows the Black River. As well, residential land uses are most prevalent adjacent to and within the county's nine villages and numerous hamlets. However, some of the most dense areas of residential development can be found in the north adjacent to Fort Drum — a result of continued expansion of facilities at the Army base. Parcel sizes range from less than a fifth of an acre to a very large parcel of 2,153 acres adjacent to Fort Drum. However, the median parcel size of one acre is in line with typical single-family residential lot sizes throughout the Northeast.

Commercial

The county has only 536 parcels classified as commercial properties, with 64 of these classified as apartment buildings. These commercial areas are found primarily within the villages and hamlets. There are sporadic areas of commercial development within the county, with a limited variety of retail, restaurant and service establishments. The less than 1,700 acres of commercial land within the county account for 3.5 percent of both the county's assessed and taxable value. In more populated counties, this number would be significantly higher, yet the lack of a commercial center within the county limits the value of these properties. As well, the limited population and traffic generated by local highways does not provide a substantial market for conventional suburban style commercial development. Since commercial uses tend to demand less in public services than residential uses, maintaining an appropriate balance between residential and commercial land is critical to minimizing the tax burden placed on county residents.



Example of commercial property in Croghan

Industrial

Sixty-one parcels encompassing 1,407 acres are classified as industrial uses in Lewis County. Most of these parcels are associated with the paper and agri-industry portions of the county's economy. Approximately 75 percent of industrial assessments are taxable; however, this equates to less than 2 percent of total taxable revenue for the county.



Example of industrial property in Lyons Falls (currently vacant)

All of the 61 industrial parcels are classified generally as manufacturing and mining, which includes manufacturing, light and heavy industrial uses, quarrying, and hydropower facilities. Industrial uses are concentrated in the Village of Lowville, with the remainder scattered along the Black River Valley.

Vacant

Vacant lands represent 7.2 percent or 58,483 acres of property in Lewis County. The approximately 5,100 parcels are located throughout the county, yet as depicted on Map 1, most vacant lands are interspersed amongst residential lands and along the periphery of agricultural areas. Generally, vacant lands within the county are either vacant residential lots or abandoned and fallow agricultural lands not currently part of a working farm operation. Despite the negative connotation of the Vacant classification, many of these lands play an important role in the region's rural and scenic quality.

Wild, Conservation and Forest

This land use classification comprises the majority of Lewis County's land mass, with more than 54 percent of the county classified as conservation and forest. A substantial amount of State land exists within the county, accounting for over 154,000 acres, or roughly 19 percent of the county. There is only one State park located in the county — Whetstone Gulf State Park (2,100 acres) in the Towns of Martinsburg and West Turin. The remaining State lands include: forest preserve (60,700 acres), state forests (86,800 acres), and wildlife management areas (5,100 acres). New York State holds conservation easements on an additional 74,000 acres of private lands. According to the most recent assessment rolls, 68 percent of conservation and forest land assessed values are taxable, equating to over 11 percent of Lewis County's taxable revenue from property taxes. This is equivalent to those lands categorized as



Moose River in Lyonsdale

agricultural. A contributor to the large portion of taxable forest lands may be the large acreages under control by the private forestry industry. For example, GMO Forestry Fund is a timber investment company that owns and manages over 30,000 acres in Lewis County, assessed at nearly \$5.5 million.

Conservation and Forest lands are concentrated in the Adirondack Park as well as the Tug Hill Plateau regions. These areas are considerably less desirable for development due to topography and remoteness, making them prime lands for resource investment and harvesting. These lands are predominantly held in tracts of 20-30 acres or more per parcel, with the largest single parcel containing 14,570 acres.

Table 10: Land Cover Type Descriptions

Category	Description
Open Water	all areas of open water, generally with less than 25 percent cover or vegetation or soil comprise this cover type
Agriculture	this represents areas of grasses, legumes, or grass-legume mixtures planted for livestock grazing or the production of seed or hay crops, typically on a perennial cycle, as well as areas used for the production of annual crops, such as corn, soybeans, vegetables, tobacco, and cotton, and also perennial woody crops such as orchards and vineyards. Pasture/hay or area crop vegetation accounts for greater than 20 percent of total vegetation
Urban	this represents all developed areas, from high intensity areas where people reside or work in high numbers, to open areas with a mixture of some constructed materials and vegetation in the form of lawn grasses and impervious surfaces less than 20 percent of total cover
Barren Land	barren areas of bedrock, desert pavement, scarp, talus, slides, volcanic material, glacial debris, sand dunes, strip mines, gravel pits and other accumulations of earthen material. Generally, vegetation accounts for less than 15 percent of total cover
Forest	all areas dominated by trees generally greater than 5 meters tall, and greater than 20 percent of total vegetation cover comprise this cover type
Grassland/ Shrub	this includes areas dominated by shrubs; less than 5 meters tall with shrub canopy typically greater than 20 percent of total vegetation, including true shrubs, young trees in an early successional stage or trees stunted from environmental conditions. This category also includes areas dominated by gramanoid or herbaceous vegetation, generally greater than 80% of total vegetation. These areas are not subject to intensive management such as tilling, but can be utilized for grazing
Wetlands	areas where forest or shrub land vegetation accounts for greater than 20 percent of vegetative cover, or where perennial herbaceous vegetation accounts for greater than 80 percent of vegetative cover, and the soil or substrate is periodically saturated with or covered with water

Land Cover (see Map 2)

Land cover describes both the vegetative and man-made features that characterize a particular area. It reflects the climate, topography, soils, geology, and other environmental features that have made various types of land use possible and that have shaped settlement patterns and current economic activities. Land cover is determined based on the interpretation of aerial photography and is not constrained by parcel boundaries (i.e., one parcel could consist of multiple land cover types). Land use, in contrast, refers to how the land is used and is primarily defined at the parcel-level (i.e., only one use is assigned to each parcel).

Examples of land cover types include forest, urban, or wetland, all of which can be further divided into more detailed subcategories such as deciduous forest versus evergreen forest. Understanding land cover, particularly changes in land cover over time, is critical to assessing regional ecosystem impacts and development trends. It is useful for developing the tools necessary to protect ecosystem health and agricultural vitality.

Land Cover, 2001

Using data provided by the Multi-Resolution Land Characteristics Consortium (an association of nine federal agencies), land cover types from 2001 were mapped for Lewis County. As depicted in Map 2, seven general land cover types comprise Lewis County – open water, agriculture, urban, barren land, forest, grassland/shrub, and wetlands. A detailed description of each land cover type is provided in Table 10.

Much of the county's agricultural production is limited to the Black River valley, while urban development occurs in small nodes (villages and hamlets) throughout the valley and in areas immediately adjacent to the Black River. Forested and wetland areas, however, occur primarily at the higher elevations of the Tug Hill Plateau, within the Adirondack Park Blue Line, and in the northern portion of Lewis County.

Table 11: Land Cover, 2001

	Area (acres)	Percent Cover
Open Water	16,688	2.0%
Agriculture	115,551	14.0%
Urban	8,580	1.0%
Barren Land	216	0.0%
Forest	492,118	59.5%
Grassland/Shrub	70,541	8.5%
Wetlands	122,966	14.9%
Total Acreage	826,659	

LAND USE



Based on the data provided in Table 11, forest comprises more than 492,000 acres and is the single largest land cover type in the county (59.5 percent of total area). Wetland and agricultural areas are the next largest cover types, comprising approximately 123,000 acres (14.9 percent) and 116,000 acres (14.0 percent), respectively. Areas classified as urban account for only one percent, or 8,580 acres, of land in Lewis County.

Land Cover Change, 1992 to 2001

In addition to mapping Lewis County land cover types for 2001, Multi-Resolution Land Characteristics (MRLC) data was also used to determine changes to land cover from 1992 to 2001. Note that each land cover category both lost and gained acreage from 1992 to 2001 (see Table 12). If one acre of forest area in 1995 was cut down and turned into tillable agricultural land, Table 12 would denote a loss of one acre of forest and a gain of one acre of agricultural land. Land cover categories can exhibit both a loss and gain of acreage as the land cover of specific areas throughout the county changes over time, shifting to other categories. The Net Acres column of the table provides an overall snapshot for the total acreage of a given land cover type between 1992 and 2001. For example, four acres categorized as barren land in 1992 have changed to another land cover type as of 2001; meanwhile, 90 total acres from across multiple land cover types have transitioned to barren land, resulting in a net gain of 87 acres (-4 + 90) of barren land throughout Lewis County.

In terms of net change, forested areas saw the biggest decline from 1992 to 2001 as they lost more than 6,100 acres, representing a loss of 1.3 percent of total forest cover in the county. More detailed analysis indicates that 2,671 acres, or 34 percent of forested acres, were lost to agriculture. Additional forest areas were also added from 1992 to 2001 – a transfer of approximately 1,200 acres from wetlands and 400 acres from open water. Since land cover calculations are based on aerial photography and not on-the-ground field explorations, these additions to forest cover likely resulted from the expansion of tree canopy over previously inventoried wetland and open water areas.

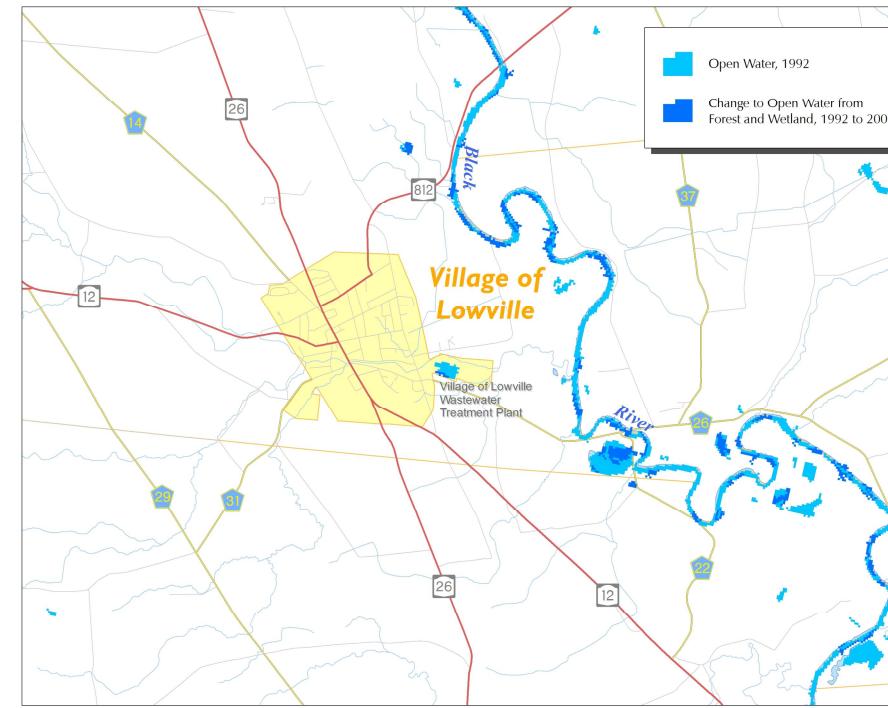
Table 12: Land Cover Change, 1992 to 2001*

LAND USE	Acres Lost	Acres Gained	Net Acres (1992 to 2001)	Percent Change (1992 to 2001)
Open Water	-1,878	3,711	1,833	9.9%
Agriculture	-650	3,231	2,581	2.2%
Urban	-118	523	405	4.5%
Barren Land	-4	90	87	28.7%
Forest	-7,827	1,694	-6,133	-1.3%
Grassland/Shrub	0	3,621	3,621	4.9%
Wetlands	-5,368	2,974	-2,394	-2.0%

Source: Multi-Resolution Characteristics Consortium

* Data rounded to nearest acre

Figure 13: Change to Open Water from Forest and Wetland, 1992 to 2001



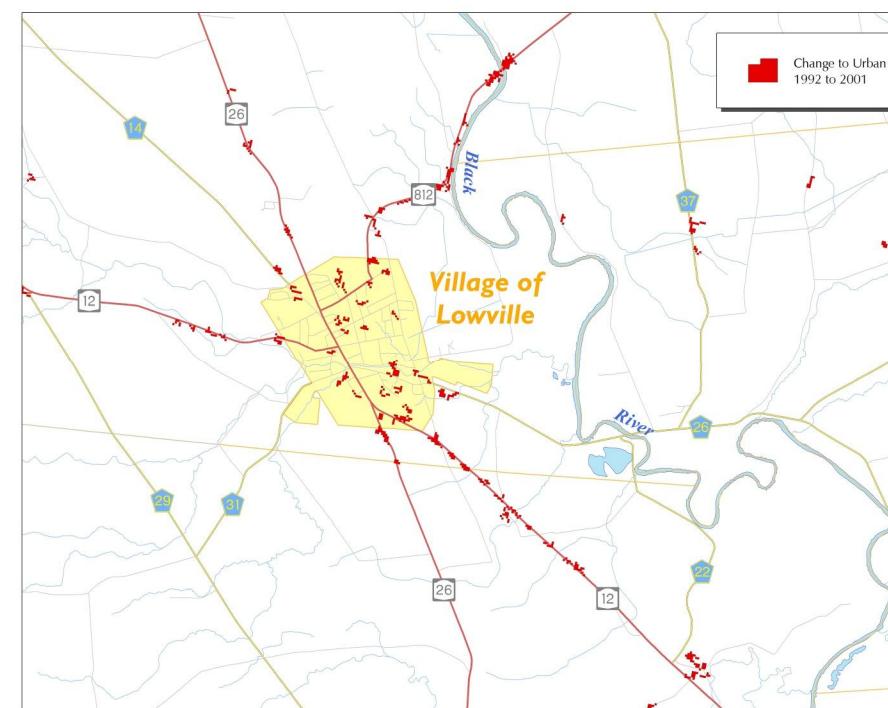
Source: Multi-Resolution Characteristics Consortium

As a percentage, the largest net loss of area was in wetland categories (two percent, 2,394 acres). More specifically, 41 percent of wetland acres were lost to open water (2,217 of 5,386 total acres lost), which likely resulted from the loss of wetland vegetation along streams, lakes, and other waterbodies. It should be noted that wetlands lost to urban areas accounted for only 93 acres, or 1.7 percent of wetland acres lost.

In relative terms, barren lands saw the largest increase in land area (28.7 percent), although in absolute terms this cover type only gained 87 acres. Open water areas also realized a considerable increase in acreage (1,833 net acres, or 9.9 percent) from 1992 to 2001. Further analysis of this change suggests that the loss of tree canopy cover and wetland vegetation due to cutting and filling is primarily responsible. Figure 13 provides an illustrative example of the change from forest and wetland areas to open water along the Black River in the vicinity of the Village of Lowville.

Finally, the amount of land classified as urban also increased from 1992 to 2001. While urban areas experienced only a minor increase of 4.5 percent (405 acres), the population of Lewis County grew by less than 0.6 percent (see Table 2 on page 13), which suggests sprawling land development patterns. As is depicted in Figure 14, much of the increases in urban land area in and around the Village of Lowville occurred along existing transportation corridors, indicative of sprawl.

Figure 14: Change to Urban, 1992 to 2001



Source: Multi-Resolution Characteristics Consortium



AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY AREAS

Lewis County's economic history has been tied closely to the area's abundant supply of water, wood, and dairy production. A majority of the county's earlier growth occurred along the Black River Valley, with links to the Erie Canal in Rome, NY via the Black River Canal System. The Black River Valley provides a large alluvial plain with high quality soils and relatively flat topography — good for growing crops and providing grazing lands for cattle. The region's cool climate and well-distributed rainfall also contribute to making dairy the primary agricultural industry in Lewis County. Although the amount of land classified as farms is decreasing within the county, approximately 20 percent of current land area remains in agriculture (see Map 1 and Map 3).

In addition to the dairy corridor along the Black River Valley, the county's vast forestry base contains the Tug Hill Plateau to the west and the Adirondack foothills to the east, with over 54 percent of the county's land area as forestland and conservation. A majority of the land in these areas is unsuitable for farming due to soil, climate and topography, lending itself to forestry and recreational uses.

Agriculture (see Map 3)

History

The continued progress of agriculture in Lewis County has been significantly impacted by the formation of organizations and institutions to enhance the knowledge and practices of local farmers. A local "farmer's institute" held in 1903 is recognized as the earliest recorded attempt to bring farmers together in an effort to share information and improve methods of operation. In 1917 the New York State Food Supply Commission, the predecessor of the Cornell Cooperative Extension and the Farm Bureau Association, opened an office in Lowville. In 1918 the Cornell Cooperative Extension was formally created, with the official spin-off of the Farm Bureau taking place in 1955. The Cooperative Extension and the Farm Bureau provide meaningful information to farmers and farm families on topics ranging from cattle raising and improved methods of milk production to improvements in the growth and harvesting of crops.

In addition to institutions that enhance and promote farming activities, the Home Bureau was organized in 1920 to improve activities done within the household. The Home Bureau was eventually absorbed by the Cooperative Extension as the Home Economics Division, and covered various community projects such as improved nutrition awareness,



Team of horses in Turin, circa 1946

cooking skills, parenting and household needs, and survives today as the Community and Family Education Program. The Cornell Cooperative Extension programs and Farm Bureau Association continue in their assigned roles providing relevant and up to date support and information for agriculture producers in Lewis County.

As a result of the well-established and large scale dairy production in the county the Lowville Farmer's Cooperative was founded in 1920 to provide goods and services to the farming community. An additional cooperative, the Lowville Producers Dairy Cooperative, was established in 1936. Located on Route 12 in Lowville, this co-op is made up of over 200 member/owner farms that produce in excess of 300 million pounds of milk per year. In addition to coordinating much of the county's milk production, the Lowville Producers cooperative also has a retail store and markets the county's famous cheese, maple syrup, and Croghan Bologna.

Agriculture has long been considered the largest industry in Lewis County, with the 2007 Census of Agriculture indicating total agricultural sales of approximately \$112.6 million from farm producers. This differs from the USDA reported cash receipts for the same year of \$103 million. The sale of animal products, such as milk and meat, accounts for the largest percent of sales, with the remaining revenue derived from commercial horticulture as well as the traditional sales of hay and other crops. From 1982 to 2007, the number of farms decreased 20 percent, while acres of land in farms decreased 18.8 percent (see Table 13). Market value for products in the aggregate within this same time period increased from approximately \$59 million to approximately \$112 million, although it results in a decrease of 11 percent when adjusted for inflation to 2007 dollars.

Dairy

According to Cornell Cooperative Extension, Lewis County ranked fifth in New York in 2006 milk production, generating 485 million pounds of milk from 28,700 cows on 273 dairy farms. In 2007 the number of dairy cows decreased slightly to 28,400, yet the average production per cow increased from 16,900 to 17,200 pounds of milk, with total Lewis County milk production increasing slightly to 488 million pounds. According to the NYS Agricultural Statistics Service, milk sales accounted for nearly 85 percent of the county's \$76.7 million in agriculture product sales (dairy, crops and maple syrup) in 2006, an increase from \$72 million in 2002.



Dairy cattle outside of Lowville

The increased efficiency and production of dairy farms mirrors overall farm productivity trends found throughout the county. In contrast to total farm sales for the county, inflation-adjusted average sales per farm increased 137 percent from 1982 to 2007, equating to an increase of 10.6 percent when adjusted for inflation. This is due to the 20 percent decrease in farms and improved capabilities. When compared to 2002, 2007 per farm values increased 58 percent. These increases are a positive signal of the overall value of agricultural activity in Lewis County. It is likely that much of the increases are the result of improved efficiency and productivity from the farms over 1,000 acres. However, this dramatic increase of purchasing power has not lead to significant investments county-wide, as Lewis County's low- and moderate-income families continue to struggle.

The continued contraction of small family farms between 50 and 1000 acres aides in the out-migration of residents in search of work and income. Thus, some of the major pressures influencing agriculture and the economy in Lewis County are external and largely beyond the control of county residents or local leaders. While the continued loss of dairy and other farm acreage impacts the local agricultural economy, it also creates opportunities for alternative land use patterns within the county. However, the utilization of prime agricultural lands for uses other than agricultural activity should be done with deliberate consideration to the compounded impacts a loss of agricultural land may mean to the county and its economy.

Table 13: Lewis County Agricultural Characteristics

Lewis County	1982	1997	2002	2007	Percent Change (1982 to 2007)
Number of Farms	771	623	721	616	-20.10%
Land in Farms (acres)	205,846	179,696	196,774	167,249	-18.75%
Average Farm Size (acres)	267	288	273	272	1.87%
Farms by Size:					
1 to 9 acres	20	18	24	31	55.00%
10 to 49 acres	34	41	92	81	138.24%
50 to 179 acres	200	151	204	184	-8.00%
180 to 499 acres	444	333	304	246	-44.59%
500 to 999 acres	70	65	83	56	-20.00%
1,000 or more acres	3	15	14	18	500.00%
Harvested Crop Land (acres)	91,237	82,748	97,402	82,977	-9.05%
Market Value of Agricultural Products Sold (\$1,000)	\$59,337	\$61,686	\$72,178	\$112,629	89.81%
Average Value per Farm	\$76,961	\$99,015	\$100,108	\$182,839	137.57%

Source: US Census of Agriculture



Maple Syrup

According to the USDA 2007 Census of Agriculture, Lewis County continues to be the state's largest producer of maple syrup. In 2007, the 112 maple producers had approximately 171,643 taps that produce 28,786 gallons of syrup, accounting for approximately 13 percent of the state's maple syrup production from 13 percent of its taps.

The US Forest Service estimates there are approximately 289 million sugar and red maple taps available in New York State. Currently, it is estimated that state maple producers utilize only 0.5 percent of available taps. Lewis County, however, utilizes approximately two percent of available taps, which is higher than the statewide average. Even a small percentage increase in tap utilization within Lewis County may have a dramatic economic impact. Data from the June 2008 USDA Maple Report suggests that the approximate 2007 crop of maple syrup generated an estimated \$964,000 in sales based on an average price of \$33.50 per gallon.

In order to explore the economic potential of maple syrup, the county is currently partnering with Cornell Cooperative Extension to develop a feasibility study for locating a maple syrup bottling/processing plant in the county. This is an example of value-added agri-products that the county intends to foster as part of its current economic development strategies.

Forestry Areas (see Map 3)

Lands devoted to the forestry industry are owned and managed by logging firms, sawmills, paper mills, finished/secondary wood products processors, and the wood energy industry. The NYSDEC estimates that there are more than 125 logging operations that originate in Lewis County. In addition, at least 30 businesses within the county process raw wood into finished products. The waste generated from these processing operations in many instances is sent to the Lyonsdale Biomass facility, which produces power, steam and wood ash. Yet, industry is not the only group to benefit from Lewis County's abundance of timber. Thirty-six percent of residential households within the county utilize wood for heating, consuming an estimated 12,000 cords annually.

The county's abundant timber and natural resources have permitted annual growth to exceed annual timber removals, even though removals of growing-stock outside of the Adirondack Park Preserve have increased by as much as 36% from 1993 to 2005.



Collecting sap in Croghan, circa 1974

The subdivision of large forest areas into smaller tracts, however, often precludes sustainable forestry techniques at the parcel level due to the loss of economies of scale. As a result, some forest landholders are turning to conservation easements and special taxing programs to continue to make the growing of forests for timber affordable by reducing their tax burden and maintaining the ability to actively harvest limited amounts of timber. However, as stated previously, the county's taxable revenue is approximately 75 percent of its assessed valuation. Further use of conservation easements be studied for long term fiscal impacts associated with reductions in taxable property.

Forest-based Manufacturing

Lewis County's forest-based manufacturing system consists of timber harvesting and associated trucking, primary manufacturing, and secondary manufacturing. Large and small operations in the timber harvesting sector cut the trees down and sell the logs and waste products to markets in Lewis County, New York State and throughout the region. After cutting, timber is rated by quality to determine the ultimate utilization of the wood, which is then trucked to mills throughout the region for processing. Sawlogs, the portions of harvested trees that are large enough to be sawed for lumber, are trucked to sawmills, with the highest value logs shipped to veneer mills that take thin layers from the log to produce products such as plywood. Low quality timber is predominantly refined by mills to create the pulp used in the manufacture of paper. In addition to pulpwood, low quality timber is also utilized by the wood energy industry, which takes whole trees or residues such as chips and sawdust from sawmills and uses the material as fuel for the production of electricity via steam powered generators. In some instances, the steam is also used for manufacturing processes such as dry kilns, greenhouses or piped to other industrial users.

Primary Manufacturing

The conversion of trees or parts of trees into lumber, veneer, pulp or energy starts with the primary manufacturing sectors. In Lewis County and throughout the state, the pulp and paper industry was once the primary end user of the wood harvested.

However, the sawmill and wood energy industries increasingly are the major wood users within New York and Lewis County. The state has approximately 125 substantial sized sawmills and additional specialty wood products mills; Lewis County has a total



Example of bundled slab wood

of seven mills with an annualized output of 15 to 30 million board feet of timber in 2008. The products from these mills are sent to secondary processors to be included in products.

Secondary Manufacturing

Secondary manufacturing refers to the drying, planing, cutting and assembly of lumber into parts or finished products. The diversity of tree species growing in Lewis County contributes to an established secondary forest products industry composed of over 30 companies that provide jobs and economic stability to the community. In Lewis County, secondary products include kitchen cabinets, furniture, countertops, custom millwork, molding, stakes, benches, swings, and the nation's only location for the production of bowling pins. Many other products are manufactured from the varied hardwood and softwood tree species available.



Forestland in Watson

According to the USDA Forest Service, Lewis County gained about three percent of timberland between 1993 and 2005. The increase in timberland has also led to a 14 percent increase in net saw-log volume of growing-stock trees, and an 18 percent increase in growing-stock volume on timberland over the same time period. The growth in growing-stock and saw-log volume county-wide, however, is off-set by a substantial decrease in these categories outside of the Adirondack Park Preserve, where volumes are down as much as 35 percent on a board-foot basis. In addition, the number of growing stock trees has declined 6.7 percent from 1993 to 2005. There is also a larger portion of timberland stands classified as small diameter currently than was present in 1993. This could potentially be explained by the reforestation of previously harvested stands or newly reforested areas.

Table 14: Lewis County Timberland by Ownership (acres)

	Ownership				Total
	Department of Defense or Energy	State	Local (county, municipal, etc.)	Undifferentiated private	
2002-2005	22,740	105,081	11,591	432,491	571,902
1993	6,067	80,520	*	468,119	554,705
Change	274.8%	30.5%	*	-7.6%	3.1%

* Data not available

Source: USDA Forest Service

Lewis County N E W Y O R K

Prime Farmland & Hydric Soils

Map 5

June 2008

Map Scales
11 x 17 Sheet
36 x 56 Plot
1 inch = 4 miles
1 inch = 1.25 miles
1 inch = 2,000 feet

Main Map

Inset Maps

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Map 5:
Prime Farmland & Hydric Soils



As of 2005, it is estimated that private interests hold 75.6 percent or roughly 432,500 acres of the timberland in Lewis County, a decrease of 7.6 percent from 1993. The State of New York holds roughly 18.4 percent, or 105,000 acres, an increase of over 30 percent from 1993. As can be seen in Table 14, the federal government also holds approximately four percent of the county's timberland, a near four-fold increase from 1993. Local municipalities now hold the remaining two percent of timberlands, whereas in 1993 no timberland was reported under local ownership. It should also be noted that roughly 61,000 acres of NYS Forest Preserve lands in Lewis County are not included as timberland.

Agriculture Districts (see Map 4)

As defined by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets:

The purpose of agricultural districts are to encourage the continued use of farmland for agricultural production. The Agricultural Districts program is based on a combination of landowner incentives and protections, all of which are designed to forestall the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses.

Lewis County's first Agricultural District was formed in 1975 and included portions of Lewis, West Turin, Leyden and Lyonsdale. Agricultural Districts 2, 3, and 4 were formed in 1976 and included portions of Lowville, Martinsburg, Harrisburg, Watson, West Turin, Lewis, Lyonsdale, Greig, Martinsburg, Leyden, and Turin. Agricultural District Number 5 was formed in 1978 and included portions of Denmark, Lowville, Montague, Harrisburg, and Pinckney. Agricultural Districts are required to be reviewed every eight years, and recertified by the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets as viable Agricultural Districts.

The County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board recommended the five existing Agricultural Districts be consolidated as Agricultural District 6. Since the original five districts were contiguous with one another, the consolidation aids in the management and administration requirements as dictated by the Department of Ag & Markets Law 25-AA. The process of consolidating these five Districts began in April of 2007 and the certification date of Ag District 6 is February 15, 2008. There are 246,141 total acres of land within the County Agricultural District, 151,891 acres of which are active agricultural land. To be considered a viable Agricultural District at least 50% of the District must be made of land that is being used for active agriculture.

County-level planning and policy should provide for the review of land use and policy recommendations by the county's Agricultural District administrator to ensure uniformity with Agricultural District Law and the intent of Lewis County's districts. In conjunction with the county's

agricultural district, Lewis County has also developed an Agricultural Enhancement Plan that defines an overall vision, goals and primary recommendations that will improve the community's knowledge and understanding of agriculture's importance to Lewis County, increase the profitability of agriculture in the county, and increase the competitiveness of the county within the region.

Prime Farmland & Hydric Soils (see Map 5)

There are two levels of soils data available for interpretation and analysis from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The most detailed mapping database supplied by the NRCS (SSURGO), is designed for use by landowners, townships, and county natural resource planning and management. This data, which includes Soils of Statewide Importance, is not currently available in an updated format. The STATSGO soil database utilized for this report is a generalized version of the SSURGO, and is designed for broad planning and management uses covering state, regional, and multi-state areas. An additional level of detail available through the database is Prime Agricultural Soils and Hydric Soils (see Map 5). These measures provide generalized information on the appropriate use for soils based on crop yield potential and the tendency to support wetland habitats.

According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), prime farmland is:

Land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and that is available for these uses. It has the combination of soil properties, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields of crops in an economic manner if it is treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods.

Approximately 21 percent of Lewis County comprises prime farmland soils (see Table 15). As is depicted on Map 5, areas of prime farmland in Lewis County are largely confined to the Black River valley, although an extensive swath of potential prime farmland (when drained) is located along the foothills of the Tug Hill Plateau on the western edge of the valley. Much of the areas identified as prime farmland are within the boundary of Agricultural District 6 (see Map 4).

In addition to prime farmland soils, hydric soils also play a role in planning for future development. Hydric soils are those soils that "formed under conditions of saturation, flooding or ponding long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions in the upper part" (NRCS). These poorly drained soils are characterized by high water tables (often at or just below the surface) and are often located within the

floodplains of creeks, streams, and rivers. Areas highly concentrated with hydric soils can impose a wide range of limiting conditions on development resulting from fair to poor load-bearing capacities, as well as medium compressibility and shear strength. In more rural areas, hydric soils can limit the efficient operation of septic drain fields.

Only 3.2 percent of all land in Lewis County is identified as comprising hydric soils (see Table 15). Of the approximately 26,000 acres of hydric soils, more than 85 percent are located outside of the Black River valley and away from existing nodes of development. Currently, soils mapping for Lewis County is being updated, with new data expected in early 2011.

Table 15: Prime Farmland and Hydric Soils

Soil Classification	Acres	Percent of Lewis County
Prime Ag Soils	170,076	20.6%
Prime Ag Soils, when drained	56,068	6.8%
Hydric Soils	26,259	3.2%

Source: Natural Resources Conservation Service

Lewis County N E W Y O R K

LEWIS COUNTY TOWNS



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Map 6

June 2008



Map Scales

11 x 17 Sheet

1 inch = 4 miles

1 inch = 1.25 miles

36 x 56 Plot

1 inch = 2,000 feet

Inset Maps

Local Roads

State Roads

Interstates

ADIRONDACK PARK BLUE LINE

Fort Drum

Hamlets/Unincorporated Places

Villages

County Roads

Demark

Watertown

Lowville

Jefferson

County

Worth

Montague

Redfield

Florence

Oswego

County

Greig

Denmark

Demark

Lowville

Wilna

Carthage

Wilna

Carthage

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</div

Lewis County N E W Y O R K

LEWIS COUNTY
TOWNS

New York State
LEWIS COUNTY



Castorland
DENMARK

Feaver Falls
CROGHAN

Harrisville
NEW BREMEN

Map 7: Elevation & Steep Slopes

Map Scales
11 x 17 Sheet
36 x 56 Plot

Main Map
1 inch = 4 miles
1 inch = 1.25 miles
Inset Maps
1 inch = 2,000 feet

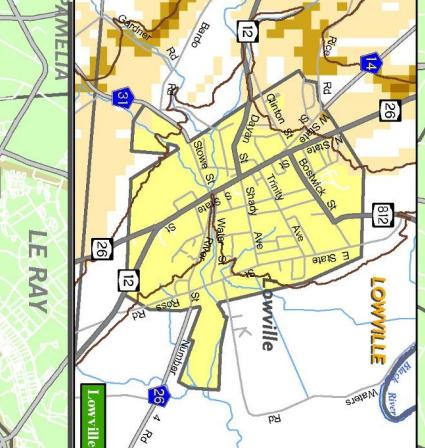
Local Roads
State Roads
Interstates
Fort Drum
ADIRONDACK PARK BLUE LINE

Elevation Contours - 50 ft
5% - 15% Slope
15% - 25% Slope
Slope greater than 25%

Fowler
PITCAIRN

St. Lawrence
County

FORESTPORT
FINE



Map 7
LEWIS COUNTY
June 2008



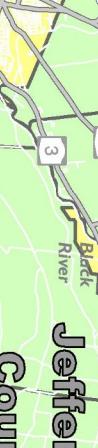
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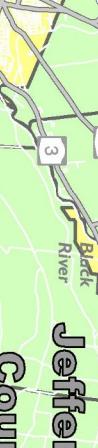
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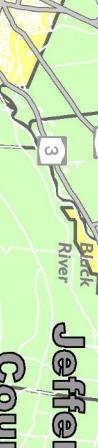
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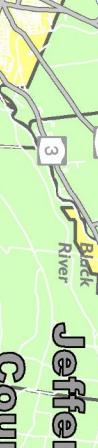
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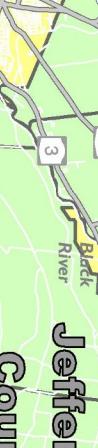
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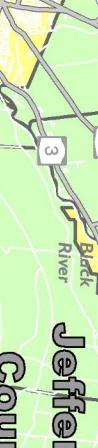
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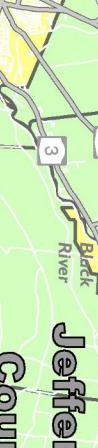
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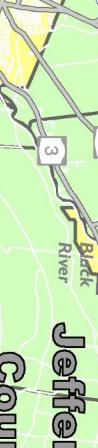
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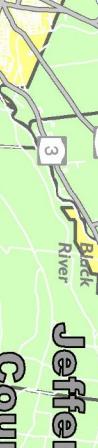
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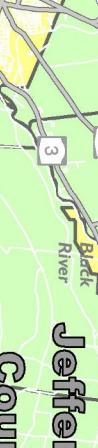
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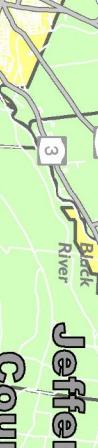
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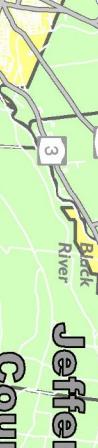
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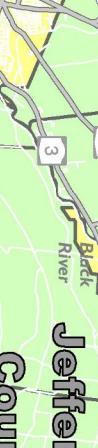
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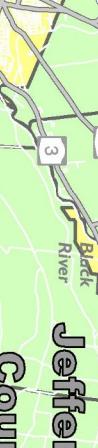
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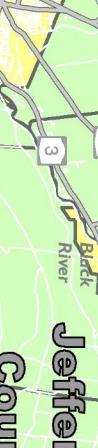
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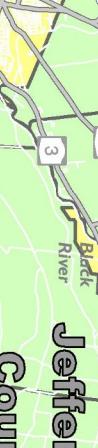
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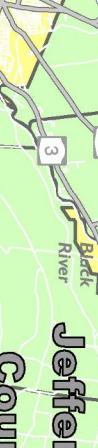
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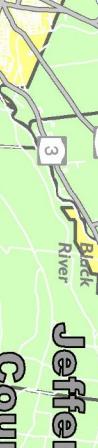
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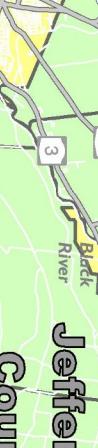
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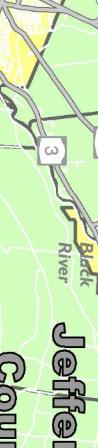
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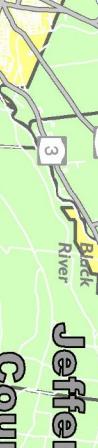
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LEWIS COUNTY
June 2008



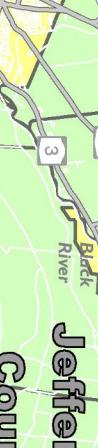
Map 7
LEWIS COUNTY
June 2008



Map 7
LEWIS COUNTY
June 2008



Map 7
LEWIS COUNTY
June 2008



Map 7<br



ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

Topography (see Maps 6 and 7)

Lewis County's settlement pattern, economy and social structure are largely defined by its topography. The county is composed of three primary regions: the Tug Hill Plateau (421 square miles), the Black River Valley (308 square miles), and the Adirondack Foothills (561 square miles). These three regions offer drastically different topographies that have shaped how the land has been utilized since the first settlers arrived at the end of the 18th century (see Figure 3 on page 11). Map 6 shows the contiguous topography of the county, while Map 7 depicts elevation contours and highlights the location of steep slopes. More specifically, slopes are broken out into three categories – five to 15 percent, 15 to 25 percent, and greater than 25 percent. As a general rule, housing should be constructed on slopes no greater than 20 to 25 percent, septic field sites should not exceed slopes of 10 to 15 percent, and croplands are generally limited to slopes less than 18 percent.



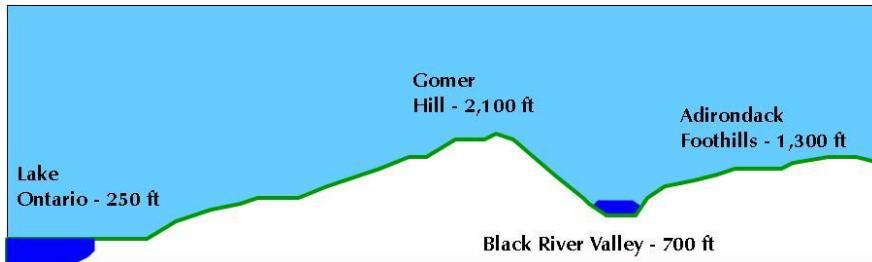
The Black River flowing north from Lyons Falls

Valley bisects the county nearly in half with a broad alluvial plain that varies from three to five miles in width. The river valley plain is extremely flat, dropping only 15 feet from the downstream side of Lyons Falls to Carthage in Jefferson County. The flat topography of this region is prone to flooding, yet also provides the productive alluvial soils that are the basis of Lewis County's agricultural strength.

Tug Hill Plateau

The Tug Hill region is characterized by the steep escarpment that forms the western boundary of the Black River Valley, and covers more than 32 percent of the county. The top of the plateau is relatively flat and represents the pinnacle of this landform's rise from Lake Ontario 38 miles to the west. As shown in Figure 15 and Maps 6 and 7, the slopes along the descent of the plateau to the Black River are extremely steep, forming a natural barrier that is relatively impenetrable with few roads leading from the valley up to the hilltop. On the western side of the escarpment is a relatively flat region near the pinnacle of the formation at Gomer Hill in the west corner of the Town of Turin. At approximately 2,100 feet above sea level, this location is more than 1,400 feet above the Black

Figure 15: Tug Hill Plateau Cross Section



River, and 800 feet above the Adirondack Foothills. Overall, the Tug Hill region within Lewis County ranges from approximately 1,200 to 2,100 feet above sea level. The inaccessibility of this region due to the escarpment, along with its remoteness in the North Country and remarkable snowfall totals has led to little to no development in these areas and a sparse population.

Adirondack Foothills

The Adirondack Foothills in Lewis County represent the 'front door' to New York's Adirondack Park. This region differs from the valley plain and the plateau by offering dramatic changes in elevation as the numerous stream valleys empty the mountains of the Adirondacks into the Black River. The directional east to west flows of these streams has formed collections of peaks and valleys that stretch along the entire length of Lewis County from north to south. While slopes in most areas do not rival the steepness of those found along the Tug Hill escarpment,



View of the Adirondack Foothills

the topography of the Adirondack Foothills forms an expansive zone of inaccessibility from the edge of the Black River Valley eastward into Herkimer County, greatly hindering the development potential of this region.

Waterbodies (see Map 8)

Rivers, Streams & Creeks

While Lewis County is defined by its topography, its topography is greatly shaped by the watercourses that run along the land, eroding, cutting and moving the earth en route to their final destination in the Atlantic Ocean. As discussed previously, the Black River is the primary waterbody within Lewis County. Meandering across a broad, flat alluvial plain, this watercourse flows tranquilly across Lewis County from Lyons Falls to Carthage. Despite its size, however, the Black River is only one of many

major rivers and creeks present within the county, with others including: Moose River, Independence River, Beaver River, Deer River, and Fish Creek. For a more informative understanding of where rivers, streams and creeks drain and flow, see Map 9.

Lakes & Ponds

The North Country region within New York State is well known for its thousands of lakes and ponds that occupy the low, flat spaces amongst the many hills and mountains. Lewis County has many lakes and ponds located primarily in the Adirondack Foothill and Tug Hill Plateau regions. The largest of these include: Brantingham Lake, Copper Lake, Chase Lake, Beaver Lake, Soft Maple Reservoir/Effley Falls Pond, Long Pond, and Lake Bonaparte. These and the hundreds of other named/unnamed lakes and ponds connect to the county's system of rivers, streams and creeks, forming watersheds and subwatersheds that move ground and surface waters into, through and out of Lewis County.

Wetlands

The numerous valleys, lowlands and flats offer locations where waters collect and form wetlands. These waterbodies are loosely connected to the surrounding drainage patterns, only flowing into the surrounding creeks and streams during periods of high water. Wetlands provide numerous benefits to the environment, including the filtering of run-off and rain water, along with the provision of a breadth of plant and animal habitat not found in most ecological formations. Acting as a natural filtering system, wetlands are high value waterbodies in many locations, and are vigorously protected by both the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), as well as the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACoE).



Wetlands in the Town of Diana

Within Lewis County there are three primary areas of wetlands. The first is the Tug Hill Plateau. The relatively gently sloping western portions of this region have a heavy concentration of wetlands protected by both the NYSDEC and the USACoE. The second region is the broad alluvial flats flanking the Black River. These areas receive periodic inflows from river flooding and serve to protect the river by filtering incoming drainage. The third area is located in the broad plane located in the towns of Croghan and Diana. This area comprises the largest contiguous wetlands within Lewis County, with much of this region owned by the State for conservation and preservation purposes. It should be noted that National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) mapping is unavailable for a large portion of Lewis

Lewis County

N E W Y O R K

LEWIS COUNTY



DENMARK

CROGHAN

NEW BREMEN

CROGHAN

LEWIS



W

S

E

N

Map 9

June 2008

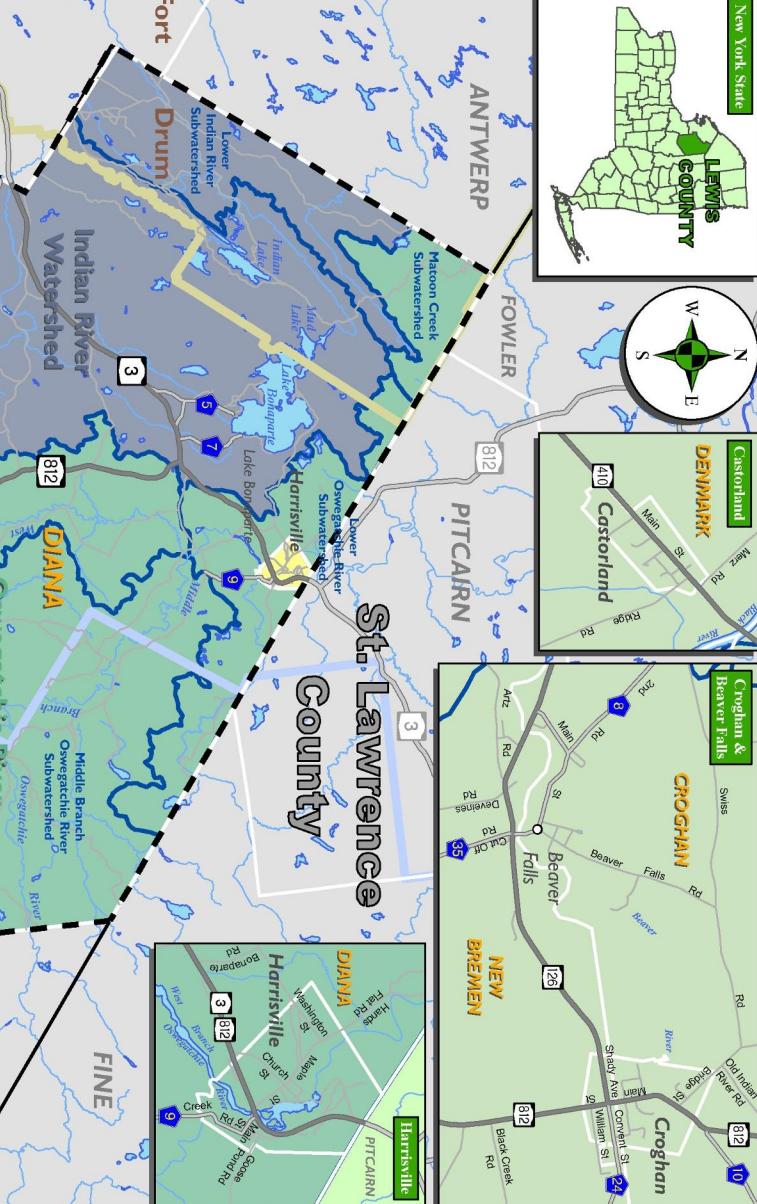
Watersheds

Map Scales
11 x 17 Sheet
36 x 50 Plot

Main Map
1 inch = 4 miles
1 inch = 1.25 miles
Inset Maps
1 inch = 2,000 feet



Watersheds
Black River*
Oneida Lake*
Salmon River*
Indian River**
Oswegatchie River**
Mohawk River***
Subwatersheds
* Drains into Lake Ontario
** Drains into St. Lawrence River
*** Drains into Atlantic Ocean via Hudson River



Herkimer County

DIANA
Oswegatchie River
Watershed

WATSON
ADIRONDACK PARK
PARK

FINE

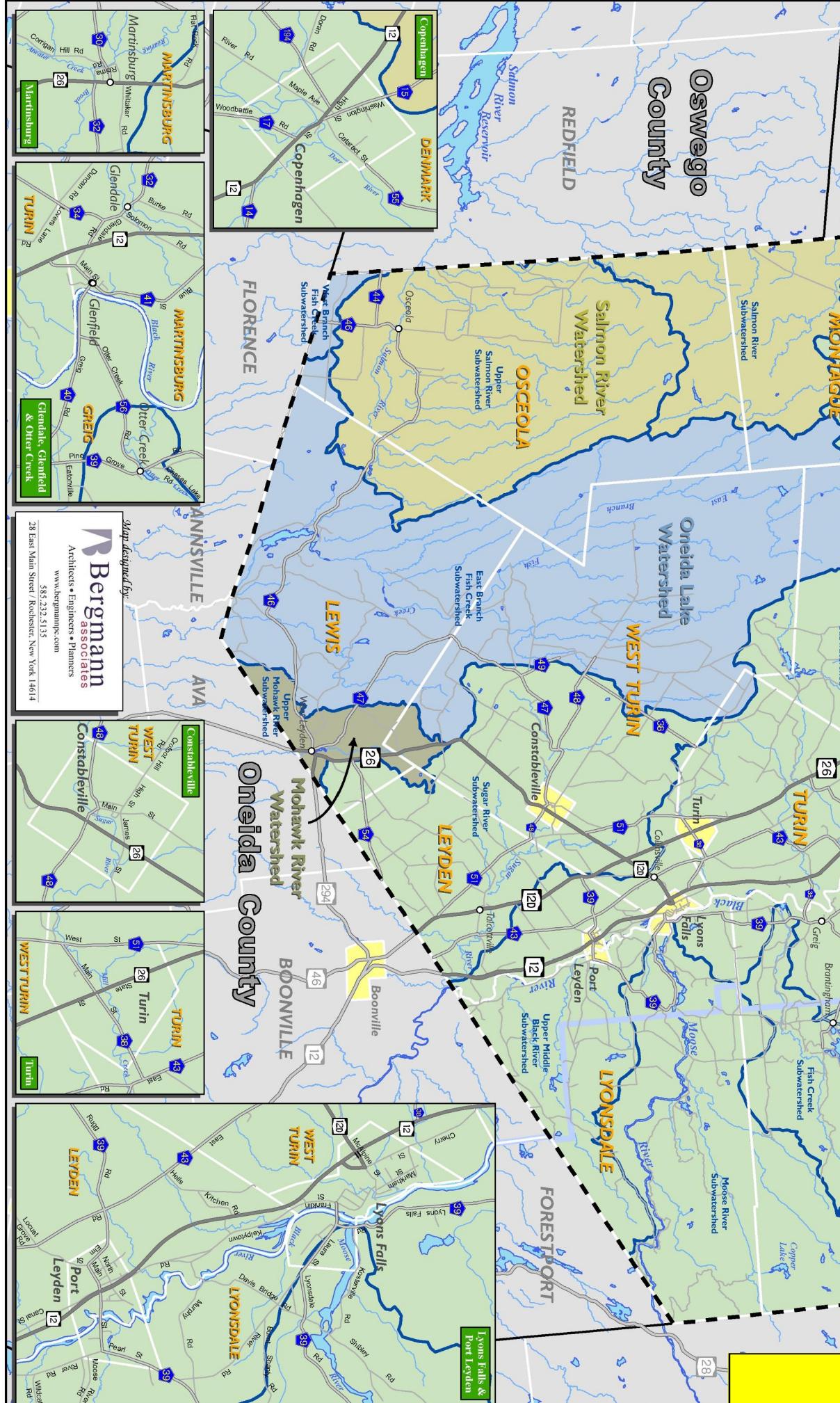
Jefferson
County

RODMAN
WATERTOWN
LE RAY
CHAMPION
PINCKNEY
HARRISBURG
DENMARK
LOWVILLE
CROGHAN
NEW BREMEN
WATSON
ADIRONDACK PARK
PARK

WORTH
REDFIELD
FLORENCE
ANNINSVILLE
LEWIS
AVA
WEST TURIN
LEYDEN
TURIN
WATSON
LYONSDALE
FORESTPORT
WEBB

PAMELLA
GARDNER
LOWVILLE
FORT DRUM
PITCAIRN
FOWLER
ANTWERP
CROGHAN & NEW BREMEN
HARRISVILLE
CROGHAN
NEW BREMEN
HARRISVILLE
CROGHAN

Map 9:
Watersheds



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County. The NWI mapping service is currently updating maps for the region. NYSDEC mapping remains available for these areas; all wetlands mapped in Lewis County can be seen on Map 8.

Watersheds (see Map 9)

There are six primary watersheds and 25 subwatersheds that drain Lewis County and the surrounding areas. Subwatersheds are those areas from which groundwater and surface water drain and contribute to the flow of a larger watershed or drainage basin. The drainage from these watersheds primarily moves west and north into Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River, with a small portion of the county draining into the Mohawk River and ultimately into the Hudson River over 220 miles to the east (see Table 16 for watershed collection area information). Watershed protection and management is a primary concern in Lewis County due to the high level of agricultural activity, particularly dairy, taking place in the region. These types of activities are large single-point sources of pollution, greatly impacting downstream water quality. Currently, a Black River Watershed Management Plan is being developed that will provide guidance to county planners and landowners on best practices regarding the protection of the Black River.

Black River Watershed

As depicted in Map 9 and Table 16, the largest watershed within Lewis County drains into the Black River and covers 61 percent of the county. Its 12 subwatersheds vary in size and shape, relating directly to the underlying topographic regions. The subwatersheds in the Adirondack Foothills are narrow and relatively linear, stretching from east to west. The subwatersheds within the Black River Valley and along the Tug Hill Plateau are generally larger and less linear. The Black River Watershed drains into Lake Ontario at the Village of Dexter, and then into the St. Lawrence River on its way to the Atlantic Ocean.

Oneida Lake, Salmon River & Mohawk River Watersheds

These three separate watersheds drain the majority of the western extents of the county, together draining 21 percent of Lewis County. While these watersheds occupy a similar geographic area, they drain into drastically different basins en route to their final destinations. The Oneida Lake Watershed drains large portions of the Tug Hill Plateau into Fish Creek, flowing south to Oneida Lake and then into Lake Ontario via the Oswego River at the City of Oswego.

The Salmon River Watershed drains almost the entirety of the Town of Osceola and the southern portions of Montague on the Tug Hill Plateau. It's two subwatersheds drain into the Salmon River Reservoir en route to its destination in Lake Ontario at the Village of Pulaski.

The Mohawk River Watershed occupies the smallest distinct drainage area within Lewis County, covering just 6,370 acres. This represents the headwaters of the Mohawk River, traveling from its northern reaches in the Town of West Turin into the Mohawk River and onto Rome and points east, ultimately meeting up with the Hudson River at the City of Cohoes. From there it flows south via the Hudson into the Atlantic Ocean.

Indian River and Oswegatchie River Watersheds

These two watersheds drain the northern reaches of Lewis County. Representing 18 percent of the overall drainage area of the county, they cover vastly different geographies on their way to Lake Ontario. The Oswegatchie watershed has its origins in the Adirondack Mountains at Cranberry Lake and covers the northern portions of the Adirondack Foothills in Lewis County. Within Lewis County, the Indian River begins

Table 16: Lewis County Watersheds

Watershed ¹	Subwatershed ²	Area ³ (acres)	Total Area (acres)
Black River	Deer River	62,183	502,780
	Mill Creek	22,512	
	Upper Middle Branch Black River	84,885	
	Sugar River	38,181	
	Moose River	37,478	
	Fish Creek	14,966	
	Otter Creek	27,638	
	Independence River	31,562	
	Beaver River	72,182	
	Crystal Creek	17,085	
	Middle Black River	81,353	
	Lower Middle Black River	12,757	
Oneida Lake	East Branch Fish Creek	83,705	83,705
Salmon River	Upper Salmon River	41,120	85,971
	Salmon River Reservoir	19,738	
	Sandy Creek	3,594	
	South Sandy Creek	21,520	
Indian River	Black Creek	1,977	69,705
	Upper Indian River	59,243	
	Upper Middle Indian River	8,485	
Oswegatchie River	Upper West Branch Oswegatchie River	32,418	76,098
	Middle Branch Oswegatchie River	30,537	
	Lower West Branch Oswegatchie River	9,618	
	Mattoon Creek	3,526	
Mohawk River	Delta Reservoir	6,370	6,370
		Total Area	824,631

1 HUC-8 Watersheds
2 HUC-11 Watersheds
3 Represents area within Lewis County

Source: USGS

in the Town of Croghan near Belfort, and drains a large area of the Lake Ontario plain north into St. Lawrence County. These two rivers meet just a few miles inland of the City of Ogdensburg, draining into the St. Lawrence River as the Oswegatchie River.

Plant and Animal Ecology

Lewis County is home to many ecological communities across its varied terrain. Within those communities exist a variety of rare, threatened, and endangered plant and animal species. Table 17 lists species protected by state and federal law within Lewis County.

Table 17: Lewis County Rare, Threatened, & Endangered Species*

Animals

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status
Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>	T
Clay-colored Sparrow	<i>Spizella pallida</i>	T
Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	E
Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>	T
Henslow's Sparrow	<i>Ammmodramus henslowii</i>	T
Least Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus exilis</i>	T
Northern Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	T
Pied-billed Grebe	<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>	T
Sedge Wren	<i>Cistothorus platensis</i>	T
Upland Sandpiper	<i>Bartramia longicauda</i>	T

Plants

Auricled Twayblade	<i>Listera auriculata</i>	E
Awned Sedge	<i>Carex atherodes</i>	E
Blunt-lobe Grape Fern	<i>Botrychium oneidense</i>	E
Broad-lipped Twayblade	<i>Listera convallarioides</i>	E
Brown Bog Sedge	<i>Carex buxbaumii</i>	T
Cloud Sedge	<i>Carex haydenii</i>	E
Cork Elm	<i>Ulmus thomasii</i>	T
Creeping Sedge	<i>Carex chordorrhiza</i>	T
Dragon's Mouth Orchid	<i>Arethusa bulbosa</i>	T
Dwarf Sand-cherry	<i>Prunus pumila var. depressa</i>	T
False Hop Sedge	<i>Carex lupuliformis</i>	R
Golden Corydalis	<i>Corydalis aurea</i>	T
Hill's Pondweed	<i>Potamogeton hillii</i>	T
Jacob's-ladder	<i>Polemonium vanbruntiae</i>	R
Marsh Horsetail	<i>Equisetum palustre</i>	T
Marsh Valerian	<i>Valeriana uliginosa</i>	E
Northern Bog Aster	<i>Sympetrum boreale</i>	T
Northern Bog Sedge	<i>Carex gynocrates</i>	E
Northern Running-pine	<i>Diphasiastrum complanatum</i>	E
Northern Wild Comfrey	<i>Cynoglossum virginianum var. boreale</i>	E
Pink Wintergreen	<i>Pyrola asarifolia ssp. asarifolia</i>	T
Puttyroot	<i>Aplectrum hyemale</i>	E
Ram's-head Ladyslipper	<i>Cypripedium arietinum</i>	T
Rattlebox	<i>Crotalaria sagittalis</i>	E
Rhodora	<i>Rhododendron canadense</i>	T
Rock-cress	<i>Draba arabisans</i>	T
Schweinitz's Flatsedge	<i>Cyperus schweinitzii</i>	R
Sheathed Sedge	<i>Carex vaginata</i>	E
Slender Marsh Bluegrass	<i>Poa paludigena</i>	E
Smooth Cliff Brake	<i>Pellaea glabella ssp. glabella</i>	T
Sparse-flowered Sedge	<i>Carex tenuiflora</i>	E
Striped Coralroot	<i>Corallorrhiza striata var. striata</i>	E
Swamp Birch	<i>Betula pumila</i>	T
Wiegand's Sedge	<i>Carex wiegandii</i>	E
Wild Sweet-william	<i>Phlox maculata ssp. maculata</i>	E

Source: NYS Natural Heritage Program

* (R) Rare, (T) Threatened, (E) Endangered



INFRASTRUCTURE

Power & Utilities (see Map 10)

Unlike its more urbanized counterparts, Lewis County lacks contiguous networks of water, sanitary sewer, and natural gas services primarily due to a small, sporadic population coupled with environmental limitations. Lewis County's low population densities require extensive infrastructure investments to service customers throughout the county. This equates to higher overall service costs to consumers.

It should be noted that the information on Map 10 represents locations for known infrastructure based on available information such as maps, GIS data, and personal accounts from municipal representatives. Due to the scale and breadth of this County Comprehensive Plan, it was impractical to research and depict the full extent of utility and infrastructure penetration within each municipality.

Electricity

Electric service is by far the most ubiquitous utility throughout Lewis County. National Grid supplies electric service to most of the county, with the Municipal Commission of Boonville Electric and Water Department supplying electric service to the extreme southern portions in the towns of Leyden and Lewis. Lewis County is home to several power generation facilities, including thirteen hydroelectric facilities, one wind farm, and two cogeneration facilities.

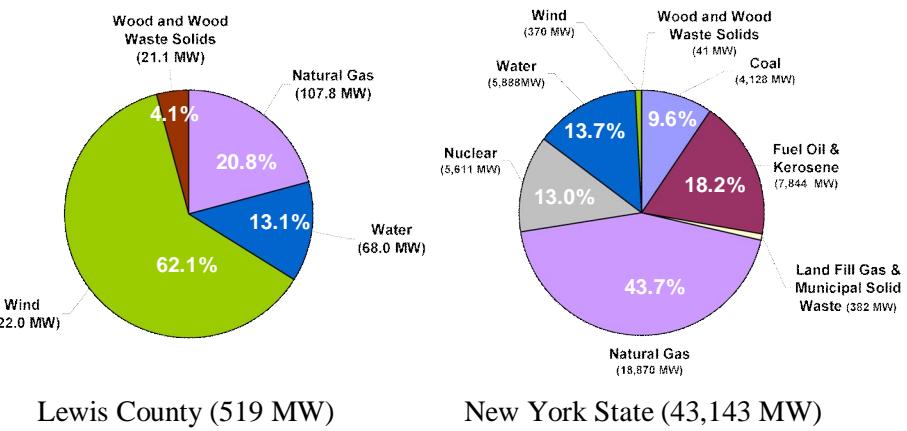
Known information regarding the four hydroelectric energy producers within the county located along the Deer, Beaver, Moose and Black rivers, includes:

- Brookfield Renewable Energy, seven facilities on the Beaver River totaling 36.8 MW;
- Algonquin Power, one facility on the Deer River and three on the Beaver River totaling 4.25 MW;
- Kruger Energy, one facility on the Black River and two on the Moose River totaling 8.5 MW; and,
- FortisUS Energy Corporation, one 12.5 MW facility on the Moose River.

In 2006, all electric generation facilities accounted for a total capacity of 518.9 Megawatts, or 1.2 percent of New York State's total (see Figure 16). Power generated at these locations is fed to the national power grid and is not necessarily utilized locally.

There are four primary transmission corridors within Lewis County. The primary of these corridors is owned by the New York Power Authority, and transects the county from north to south, supplying electricity

Figure 16: Electricity Generation Capacity by Source, 2006



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration

generated along the St. Lawrence River to downstate consumers. The other transmission corridors in part service localities within Lewis County, creating a loop that services a majority of the Black River valley from Croghan to Leyden. There are numerous transmission facilities located throughout the county, as seen on Map 10.

Lewis County has created a Municipal Power Corporation that could potentially buy bulk electricity to provide directly to its citizens. The most recent feasibility study did not find sufficient savings in the potential purchase of bulk power by the Power Corporation. This opportunity should be revisited regularly as energy costs continue to fluctuate.

Natural Gas

The recent installation of a large natural gas pipeline from Canadian production fields south through the center of the county by Iroquois Gas Transmission System (IGTS) has greatly expanded the development of commercial/domestic gas distribution within Lewis County. There are currently two natural gas service providers within the county: St. Lawrence Gas (SLG) and New York State Electric and Gas (NYSEG). SLG has franchises in the Town of New Bremen, Town of Croghan and the Village of Croghan, while NYSEG has franchises in the Towns of Lowville, Turin, West Turin, Martinsburg, and Lyonsdale and the Villages of Lowville, Turin, and Lyons Falls. NYSEG has also installed domestic service along New York State Rte 12 from Lowville through Lyons Falls and in the Town of Lyonsdale. In this instance, Lewis County benefited from its location between Canadian production facilities and the New York metropolitan region, which is the major end user for the Iroquois pipeline.

Water and Sanitary Sewer

According to New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) records, ten of the twelve public water supply systems in Lewis County have available capacity. Notable exceptions include the Village of Port Leyden and the Village of Croghan which exceed available capacity during periods of peak flow (see Tables 18 and 19). The Village of Lowville has the greatest excess capacity in terms of actual supply, with approximately

Table 18: Lewis County Community Water Systems

Community/Water District	Source	System Capacity (gpd)	Peak Flow (gpd)	% Capacity Available (gpd)
Village of Castorland	two drilled wells	180,000	32,816	82%
Village of Constableville	two springs/unnamed reservoir	85,000	50,000	41%
Village of Copenhagen	two drilled wells; emergency use of Deer River	100,000	65,000	35%
Village of Croghan (also serves Beaver Falls Water District)	two gravel-packed wells	250,000	223,877	10%
Glenfield Sewer District	two drilled wells	30,000	20,000	33%
Hillside Water Users/Osceola	spring	10,000	2,000	80%
Village of Harrisville	three drilled wells	575,000	100,000	83%
Village of Lowville	Youngs Pond and two streams	1,600,000	1,100,000	31%
Village of Lyons Falls	gravel-packed wells	313,920	140,000	55%
Town of Martinsburg	five drilled wells	86,400	46,000	47%
Village of Port Leyden	two infiltration galleries	120,000	120,000	0%
Village of Turin	two drilled wells and iron filtration facility	108,000	45,000	58%

gpd = gallons per day

Source: 2009 Burley and Gumiak Comprehensive Public Water Supply Study

Table 19: Lewis County Centralized Waste Water Systems Capacity

Community	Permitted Flow (gpd)	Average Flow (gpd)	Peak 30-day Flow	% Capacity Available (gpd)
Beaver Falls	20,000	4,300	5,000	5,000*
Village of Castorland	45,000	39,000	88,000	0
Village of Constableville	39,300	31,000	39,200	0
Village of Copenhagen	110,000	97,000	174,000	0
Village of Croghan	70,000	41,500	60,000	10,000
Town of Martinsburg (Glenfield Sewer District)	60,000	39,000	86,000	0
Village of Lowville	1,800,000	1,170,000	1,700,000	100,000
Village of Lyons Falls	72,300	42,300	51,000	10,000**
Village of Port Leyden	55,000	41,300	55,000	0

gpd = gallons per day

* There is concern that the facility may not be able to treat the full design flow due to initial startup issues and the current low flows

** Lyons Falls capacity is limited due to operational concerns

Source: 2009 Burley and Gumiak Sanitary Waste Water Study



125,000 gallons per day of excess remaining. Lewis County commissioned a Comprehensive Public Water Supply Study and Sanitary Waste Water Study in 2008, receiving the final report in May 2009. The study was undertaken to determine the potential for additional sources of ground water that may provide added capacity to existing or new utility networks.

While Lowville's water system appears to be meeting demand, its sanitary sewer facility is nearing capacity, with roughly 100,000 gallons per day, or nine percent, of excess capacity remaining. In total, there are nine communities with wastewater treatment facilities, most of which appear to be nearing or at capacity (see Table 19). Map 10 denotes water and sanitary service within the inset maps along the periphery of the page.

The newest addition to the county's list of sanitary sewer providers is the Hamlet of Beaver Falls (Town of Croghan). In 2006, Beaver Falls constructed a small sewage treatment facility to service approximately 65 homes that previously discharged into the Beaver River. The reduction of effluent discharges into the Beaver River will improve water quality for downstream residents and quality of life for river users. However, this system is already near capacity, and the Burley and Gumiak Waste Water Study introduces concerns about the system's ability to meet current design capacity.

Sewage treatment capacity at most municipal facilities in Lewis County is limited to primary treatment, such as the removal of solids and grit from the effluent via sand filtration and the disinfection of the effluent by hypochlorination. Currently, Lowville is the only system providing secondary treatment via aerated lagoons that further digest waste. With these limitations in mind, future development may need to supply its own wastewater treatment, or upgrades to existing facilities may be warranted. The most current sanitary systems were constructed to address failed septic systems and direct flows into streams, creeks and rivers. The capacity of the installed systems was largely driven by funding availability, rather than required capacities for current or future flows.

The availability of water and sanitary service are two critical components to an enhanced quality of life for residents, and are also determining factors in the location and development of business and industry.

Telephone & Telecommunications

Telephone service is available throughout the county, with Frontier Communications and Verizon as the primary service providers. In addition, cell phone service is available in nearly the entire county and is continuing to expand into remote areas. In 1999, DANC embarked on the process of establishing advanced telecommunications infrastructure throughout Lewis, Jefferson, and St. Lawrence Counties. The Open Access Telecommunications Network (OATN) connects the North

Country region to carrier collocation facilities in Syracuse, and is comprised of approximately 450 miles of fiber optic cable, and 10 points-of-presence (POPs). The POPs allow service providers to connect with local customers and with services from outside of the region, and are equipped to support any type of service provider. Within Lewis County, a POP at Lowville will help local businesses and institutions become more competitive, and could attract outside investment from telecommunications intensive companies.

Alternative Energy (see Map 10)

Lewis County is home to a number of alternative energy facilities, with more planned for the future. The most prominent is wind energy, which in addition to its energy production has become somewhat of a tourist attraction. Efforts are underway to expand and improve bio-mass and methane-based facilities present in the county. Cornell University and SUNY ESF (Syracuse) are actively exploring technological advances such as the use of switch grass and willows rather than corn as a biomass source. This potential new process removes the impacts on food prices caused by corn as an input, and opens up tremendous opportunities for the use or re-use of lands that are not prime for agriculture or forestry.

Wind Energy

The availability of wind energy near the pinnacle of the Tug Hill Plateau is a highly regarded asset for Lewis County and its land owners. A typical wind tower project will involve the development of a series of agreements with local landowners to provide permanent easements onto properties for the placement of the tower and necessary transmission infrastructure. In return, landowners generally receive a stream of income, similar to a land leasing structure. Currently, there is one wind energy project operating in Lewis County, with additional projects proposed for the future.

The Maple Ridge Wind Power Project consists of 195 wind turbines and three permanent meteorology towers on the Tug Hill Plateau just west of the Village of Lowville. In 2005, a total of 120 Vestas wind turbines were constructed within the Phase I project area; the remaining 75 turbines in Phase IA and II of the project were constructed in May to December 2006. Each 1.65 MW turbine consists of a 262-foot tall tubular steel tower, a maximum 269-foot diameter rotor, and a nacelle which houses the generator, transformer, and power train. When the rotor blades are in the 12 o'clock position the tower stands 390 feet above the ground.



Wind tower in the Town of Lowville

The Maple Ridge Wind Farm has the capacity to produce 321 MW of power in a one-hour period. According to William Moore of PPM-Atlantic Renewable, a typical 1.65 MW wind turbine tower in New York State will produce approx 4,400 MWh of energy per year. When extrapolated to the Maple Ridge Wind Farm, this equates to approximately 3.7 billion MWh of energy generation capability in a year's time, and up to 2 percent of the state's residential power needs. All of the electricity is sold to the New York Independent System Operator (ISO), which operates the State's bulk electric grid.

Due to the tremendous potential for wind energy on the Tug Hill Plateau, an additional project is proposed for the southwest corner of the Town of Martinsburg. As of July 2008, the 40-tower Roaring Brook Wind Power Project is still in the agreement and approval stages.

Other Alternative Energy Projects

The wood energy sector has seen a renewed resurgence as fossil fuel prices have skyrocketed. As of 2005, the state had two stand-alone wood energy plants, one of which is the Lyonsdale Biomass facility in Lewis County. In addition, the NYSDEC and the Adirondack Energy Smart Park Initiative (E\$PI) are administering a grant program for municipal and institutional facilities interested in exploring the feasibility of utilizing locally sourced wood to reduce annual heating costs. This program further supports the forestry industry in Lewis County by providing the opportunity for an additional market place for timber products.

Wood fiber and bark burned for energy are referred to as biomass fuel and come from three sources: tree tops and low quality stems of harvested trees (whole tree chips) which come from forestry harvests, land clearing or development and, sawmill/secondary wood manufacturing residue. Other minor sources of wood for energy may also come from storm damaged trees/urban wood waste and used pallets, railroad ties and other used manufactured wood.

The Lyonsdale Biomass wood-fired cogeneration facility is located in the Town of Lyonsdale. The 19 MW facility utilizes a boiler, steam turbine, and generator to produce electricity for delivery to the New York ISO and 17,000 pounds per hour average steam flow to nearby Burrows Paper Corporation. The facility consumes an average of 700 tons of wood chips, sawmill residues and other wood waste (feedstock) per day for fuel, producing five tons of wood ash per day as a by-product. This wood ash, through a process developed by the Lyonsdale facility in conjunction with Cornell University, is tested and distributed to local farmers for use as a soil amendment and a liming substitute. The Lyonsdale Biomass facility is an excellent example of resources being utilized efficiently and sustainably, while providing enhanced economic benefits. The parent



company, Catalyst Renewables, is currently partnering with SUNY ESF to improve the process of creating cellulosic ethanol from wood chips, an energy generator that could utilize the county's vast renewable timber resources.

A commercial demonstration bio-refinery will be built adjacent to the Lyonsdale Biomass cogeneration facility once the research is complete. Based on research from SUNY-ESF, the plant, to be constructed in 2009 to 2010, will consume 25 dry-tons per day of feedstock, and produce 130,000 gallons per year of ethanol and 6,000 tons per year of acetic acid. The feedstock will then be burned at the adjacent biomass facility for power generation. The goal is to grow most of the feedstock regionally using short rotation woody crops such as willows.

In addition to the wood-energy industry taking advantage of Lewis County's abundant forest resources, the opportunity exists to leverage the county's vast agricultural and dairy industry to aid in the production of energy. Kraft Foods' cream cheese manufacturing facilities in Lowville apply anaerobic treatments to the cheese by-product, whey, to power the plant's steam boilers. The methane produced will help replace more than a third of the facilities' natural gas needs. Additionally, Lewis County, the Village of Lowville, and Cornell Cooperative Extension are currently exploring a community digester concept whereby animal waste from local farms and food waste from restaurants, schools, and the hospital can be converted into energy at a centralized facility.

Transportation (see Map 11)

Roadways

Throughout the year, the primary mode of transportation in Lewis County is the automobile. The county's roadway network consists of state highways and county roads concentrated in the Black River Valley primarily connecting points north and south. Topography limits opportunities for east-west travel outside of the valley. Exceptions to these limitations include County Road 46 which links State Route 26 in Lewis with Osceola. As well, State Route 177 and County Road 26 link Jefferson County with the Adirondack Park in Watson and the two routes converge in the Lowville area. In the north, State Route 126 links Carthage with Croghan, and State Route 3 cuts across Diana connecting Harrisville with points west and south.

The interstate highway system does not enter Lewis County. I-81 is the closest route, connecting the Thousand Islands to Syracuse and skirting Lewis County's western border. The lack of convenient access to the interstate highway system is often cited as a barrier to economic growth. However, I-81 south to the NYS Thruway is a primary connection to points east and west for goods being shipped out of Lewis County.

Responsibility for roadways is shared amongst three groups: the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) - 360 lanes miles of

roadway; Lewis County - 496 lane miles; and towns and villages approximately 1,800 lane miles. The county highway system ranges from two lane gravel roads to four lane arterials. Based on discussions with engineers from NYSDOT and the Lewis County Highway Superintendent, the majority of roads on the NYSDOT and county system are rated to be in good condition with a small percentage as fair or poor. The state and county's primary concern for the road network is the provision of available resources for proper maintenance and repair.

Emphasis is being placed on the reconstruction and reinvestment of existing roadways; there are no solid plans to construct new roads in the foreseeable future. However, DANC is currently studying potential for improvements to Route 12 between Lowville and Watertown. In addition, the county, towns and NYSDOT have shared services agreements for snow plowing, fueling, heavy equipment sharing and maintenance of roads. These agreements help offset the burden of infrastructure maintenance and upkeep, and create efficiencies and economies of scale not readily available to a sparsely populated area such as Lewis County. There are three functional categories of roads in Lewis County, including:

Arterials — roadways designed to accommodate both through traffic and access to residential and commercial uses. State Routes 3, 12, 12D, 26, 126, 177, 410, and 812 are major arterial routes through the county.

Major Access — roadways that generally accommodate traffic from residential and commercial areas and direct it to arterials. They are most commonly county roads, including CR 39, CR 51, CR 14 and CR 43.

Local Streets — consist of all other streets at the local municipal level, primarily serving residential and local commercial areas.

Mass Transit

There is no public transportation system in Lewis County. The only mass-transit service to the county is provided by the Birnie Bus Service, with stops at Lowville and Port Leyden providing service to the City of Utica during weekdays. There is one private taxi service located in Lewis County, although numerous private liveries provide service to the more remote regions of Lewis County and the North Country. Additionally, a variety of county and regional human service programs provide on-demand transportation services to residents in need. The county has completed a transportation study outlining the provision of efficient and effective transit services to more of its citizens.

Railroads

Rail service within Lewis County is freight only. Amtrak's Empire Line services Rome, Utica and Syracuse, 41 miles, 49 miles and 60 miles away, respectively. The Empire Line connects to Niagara Falls to the west and New York City to the southeast. Lewis County's freight service links

Lyons Falls south to Utica via the MHWA short line and CSX. In 2001, Lyons Falls Pulp and Paper, the main purveyor of the rail line in Lyons Falls, closed which lessened the usage of the Utica line. Currently this infrastructure is underutilized and has the capacity for expanded usage in the future.

Genesee Valley Transportation (GVT), the owner of the rail lines from Lowville to Croghan and from Lowville to Carthage is no longer providing rail service and is proposing to abandon those lines. The Black River-St. Lawrence Resource Conservation and Development District (RC & D) is seeking to purchase the line from Lowville to Carthage, while GVT has agreed to donate the line from Lowville to Croghan to RC & D. Lewis County is proposing to convert these rail beds to multi-modal trails, which would connect with the existing county trail system. The Railway Historical Society of Northern New York intends to use the portion of the line from Beaver Falls to Croghan for tourist excursions. Finally, another freight line connects Carthage with Harrisville and points east to Newton Falls in St. Lawrence County, with connections to the CSX network from Carthage. This line is proposed to be rehabilitated and reopened to serve Newton Falls Fine Papers and Benson Mines. Other companies in Harrisville may benefit from the revived service.

Bike and Pedestrian Network

There is one official bike route within Lewis County that is utilized for recreation and transportation between Harrisville and Boonville, traveling along the Route 12/812/3 scenic byway. Most state and county highways are occasionally used by bikers, with varying shoulder widths and conditions limiting this option. Hiking and walking trails within parks and conservation areas are discussed within the Recreation section on page 41. Pedestrians in nearly all county villages are served by a limited sidewalk network.

Air and Waterfront Infrastructure

There are no public air or water ports in Lewis County. The closest commercial air service is located in Watertown, 30 miles to the west, and Syracuse, 90 miles to the southwest. Two small private airfields are located in the Town of Pinckney and the Town of New Bremen (currently inactive). The St. Lawrence Seaway system provides the closest available water transportation to Lewis County at the port of Ogdensburg in St. Lawrence County; a study is currently underway to determine the flows of goods to/from this location and the surrounding counties. The Port of Ogdensburg and the Port of Oswego in Oswego County are approximately 90 miles from Lowville and are linked to the county via Interstate and State Highway systems. The Black River is navigable between Carthage and downstream of Lyons Falls.



Recreation (see Map 12)

Recreation is an important segment of Lewis County's economy, and is responsible for the majority of tourism dollars and traffic in the region. The abundance of lakes, rivers, and streams, along with large tracts of public and private open space (over 232,000 acres) provide the foundation for outdoor recreation activities. Additionally, the region's remarkable snowfall levels make it one of the most popular destinations in the northeast for snowmobiling. Other popular activities include ATVing, horseback riding, mountain biking, boating, fishing, hiking, camping, hunting, skiing, and canoeing.

Forest-Related Recreation and Tourism

In New York, many recreation and tourism activities are linked to the forest, but it is difficult to estimate the specific contribution made by the forest environment towards recreation and tourism expenditures. The activities that take place primarily in a forest environment include camping, hiking, hunting, downhill skiing, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, fall foliage viewing and wildlife viewing. According to the North East State Foresters Association, statewide recreation activities contribute \$2.48 billion in sales to the economy in 2006. The portion attributed to the forest resource is \$1.88 billion, distributed among purchases at food and beverage stores, automobile gasoline service stations, accommodations, eating and drinking establishments and a host of other retail trade or service sectors. At the state level, passive-recreation activities (fall foliage viewing, camping, and wildlife viewing) account for nearly two-thirds of total sales, with the remaining sales attributed to active recreational activities such as hiking, hunting, skiing and snowmobiling. The abundance of forest resources located in Lewis County provide a myriad of opportunities for tourism related economic development activities that take advantage of these statewide trends in spending and visitation.

Snowmobiling

Snowmobiling is one of the most key elements to Lewis County's identity. Heavy snow, especially in the Tug Hill Region, allows for over 470 miles of public and private snowmobile trails throughout the county. Snowmobiling accounts for the largest percentage of tourism dollars generated by any activity or destination in



Snowmobiling on the Tug Hill Plateau

Lewis County, and helps feed numerous spin-off businesses including lodging, camps, restaurants, equipment and retail sales. Map 12 shows the location of designated snowmobile trails in the county.

Snowmobile traffic on Tug Hill has steadily increased in recent years, with approximately half a million riders using the trails every season. This is due in part to lower recent snowfall totals in other parts of the northeast. However, local snowmobile clubs and associations are struggling to keep pace with trail grooming and maintenance as state funding sources have decreased. The state now reimburses snowmobile associations for trail maintenance at a rate of around \$300 per mile of trail, down from recent levels of about \$500 per mile. Simultaneously, the snowmobile registration fees that contribute to the State's reimbursement pot have either stayed constant or increased. This leaves local advocates looking for answers from the state and looking for alternative sources of funding.

Kite Skiing

Kite Skiing, a sport where skiers are attached to a parachute-like kite that pulls them across the snow, is a relatively rare but growing activity in the US. In February 2008, Lewis County hosted the first annual Ozone North American Kite Skiing Basecamp Tour. This event was held on Tug Hill in the Maple Ridge Wind Farm, an ideal location providing the two critical elements — snow and wind. Over 100 kite skiers participated from all over the East Coast, along with over 200 spectators. The growing popularity of this sport, coupled with ideal conditions in Lewis County, present great opportunities for expanding the already abundant recreational options in the region.



Kite-skiing the Tug Hill Plateau near Lowville

Other Winter Activities

Lewis County's long winters and legendary snowfall totals support a variety of other winter sports, such as cross-country skiing, downhill skiing, snowshoeing, ice skating, and even dog sledding. These activities are made possible by an extensive number of State and privately maintained cross-country ski trails, and a regional commercial downhill ski area in southern Lewis County (Snow Ridge Ski Resort).

ATV Riding

ATV riding is nearly as popular as snowmobiling, and has somewhat higher participation levels from locals versus out of state tourists. According to a 2006 study, ATVs have a direct economic impact of \$23.1 million, and a total economic impact of \$35.3 million in Lewis County alone.

Map 12 shows the designated routes where ATVing is permitted. It is expected by Fall of 2009 that County Lands will once again be open to ATV use. However, the industry is currently battling over access to other lands and roadways.



An ATV ride in Martinsburg

A recent change in policy by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) prohibits ATVs on state owned land, specifically the NYSDEC truck trails that were popular with riders. County roads have also recently been closed to ATV use. Both of these changes are currently being contested by local advocates, with considerable support from the county. Meanwhile, Lewis County is coordinating with ATV clubs to develop a countywide ATV trail network in the absence of State lands and county roads. Their goal is to assemble networks consisting of private properties where landowners allow ATV use, connected by town roads and possibly county roads. A Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement was completed in January 2009 to determine the impacts of this proposed trail network.

In addition to addressing trail networks, local clubs and county staff work to develop an off-trail presence of the ATV industry. This includes educational programs as well as rides and events to benefit charitable causes. Currently, the Lewis County Department of Recreational Trails is partnering with Cornell Cooperative Extension and the Lewis County Sheriff's Department Recreational Deputy to begin implementation of an ATV and Bicycle safety component as part of physical education programs at local schools. The initiative is in its infancy, but the county hopes to have it as a permanent part of the schools' curriculum in the near future.

Fishing

The county has an abundant coldwater fishery, which boasts many rivers, creeks, streams, and lakes that support a variety of trout species. The Black River, among others, is a warm water fishery that contains walleye, pike, and small mouth bass. Public access to these fisheries continues to expand through easements and boat and canoe launches.



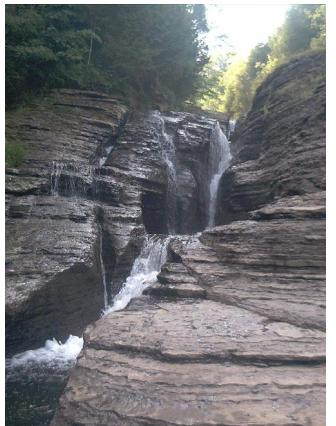
Other Summer Activities

Beyond ATVing and fishing, Lewis County boasts other summer recreation activities such as horseback riding, mountain biking, golfing, and hiking. These recreational opportunities are available at specific facilities located on State and County Land. Lewis County is home to one of the largest horseback riding trail networks in the northeast including approximately 64 miles of trails, 100 covered tie horse stalls, and camping facilities. Canoe trails have been developed along both the Black and Beaver Rivers. In addition, the Indian and Oswegatchie Rivers and numerous ponds provide additional flat water opportunities.

State/County Lands and Recreational Facilities

Whetstone Gulf State Park

Named in 2007 as one of the Top 100 Campgrounds in the nation, Whetstone Gulf State Park is built in and around a three-mile-long gorge cut into the eastern edge of the Tug Hill Plateau, featuring spectacular vistas. The park has wooded campsites, a scenic picnic area along Whetstone Creek, a man-made swimming area and trails for hiking and cross-country skiing. Above the gorge is Whetstone Reservoir, stocked with tiger muskie and large-mouth bass for fishermen, and popular for canoeing.



Whittaker Falls Park

Whittaker Falls Park

Located east of Whetstone Gulf State Park in the Town of Martinsburg, Whittaker Falls Park offers camping and hiking opportunities, along with impressive views of Whittaker Falls as it traverses down the Tug Hill Plateau towards the Black River.

Tug Hill Wildlife Management Area

This 5,112 acre woodland tract is located near the summit of the Tug Hill Plateau in the Town of Montague. This forested area is characterized by hardwood uplands and conifer wetlands, with approximately seven miles of truck trails designed to facilitate public access. During the winter months the truck trails are great for cross-country skiing, while permitting hiking and camping during the summer months.

Lewis County Reforestation Lands

There are extensive existing trails on the county reforestation lands. In the summer and fall months the trails are used for ATVing, mountain biking, hiking and wildlife viewing. In the winter months, with allowable snow, the county intends to groom part of those trails for cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and dog sledding. This will add more than 30 miles of non motorized winter recreation trails to the county.

Carpenter Road Cross-Country Ski Trails

Located on the Lesser Wilderness State Forest in the Town of Turin, these three loops with connecting trails encompass approximately 7.8 miles. These are predominantly woods trails, and are designed for the novice and intermediate cross-country skier. The Snow Ridge Inc. Cross Country Ski Trails connect with the Carpenter Road Trails adding another 6.2 miles to the network.

Osceola-Tug Hill Cross Country Ski Trail

Located in the Town of Osceola, this system has approximately 20 miles of groomed trails for novice to expert skiers. An additional 1,900 acres of State land adjacent to the ski center can be accessed by the Malloy trail. About 25 percent of the State land trails are novice, 60 percent intermediate, and 15 percent expert.

Lowville NYSDEC Demonstration Area

Located on 92 acres at the former Lowville Tree Nursery, the Lowville NYSDEC Demonstration Area is a nature trail that is good for hiking and biking in the summer and cross-country skiing in the winter.

Cultural & Historic Destinations

American Maple Museum

Located in the Village of Croghan, this museum portrays the history of the maple industry through numerous exhibits of artifacts and equipment used to make maple syrup and its products. The American Maple Museum was founded in 1977 to preserve the history and evolution of the North American maple syrup industry. In 1980, a 3-story former schoolhouse was acquired along with a collection of antique syrup making equipment and logging tools. Other artifacts have been gathered from maple syrup regions across the U.S. and Canada.



Constable Hall in Constableville

Constable Hall

Located in Constableville, Constable Hall housed the Constable family from the day William Constable, Jr. moved into the newly constructed mansion in 1819. Five generations of the Constables lived in the house until the sale of the estate in 1947 for

restoration as an Historic House Museum, owned and operated by the Constable Hall Association, Inc.

The son of an army doctor from Dublin, William Jr. became one of the state's largest post-revolutionary landholders with the purchase of 4,000 acres in Lewis County. Constable Hall has retained much of its original furniture, with the Hall itself remaining unchanged in plan or architectural detail, and was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1973.

The Mennonite Heritage Farm

Owned and operated by the Adirondack Mennonite Heritage Association & Historical Society, the Mennonite Heritage Farm is located in Kirscherville near Croghan, and was home to three generations of the Moser family. Brothers Joseph and John Moser emigrated from Alsace-Lorraine in the 1820's. They cleared the land, built a shelter and brought in animals. They then brought their remaining family, parents and siblings to join them in Lewis County. The heritage farm buildings have exhibits and displays of artifacts and information about the life of the early Amish-Mennonite settlers in the Croghan area (1830-1900).

Croghan Depot Museum

Located in the Village of Croghan, it is home to the Railway Historical Society of Northern New York. The museum houses artifacts, historic images, and memorabilia from its past use on the Lowville-Beaver River Railway line.

Town of Diana Museum

This facility contains a comprehensive and expanding collection of materials for viewing and research on the history of Diana and Harrisville. The museum is housed in the former Harrisville Train Depot, an historic two-story structure located in the Village of Harrisville.

Lewis County Historical Society Museum

The museum, located in the village of Lowville, includes exhibits, a gift shop, and brochures of information relating to areas of interest in Lewis County, and is housed in the historic Masonic Temple. The building also contains the offices for the historical society and the county historian's office.

State and National Register of Historic Places

Lewis County has several properties and homes of historical significance. Those sites that are listed on the New York State and National registries of Historic Places can be found in Table 20. The National Register of Historic Places, administered by the National Park Service, is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation.

Table 20: State and National Register of Historic Sites in Lewis County

Name of Historic Site	Location	NYS Register Date	National Register Date
Collins, Jonathan C., House and Cemetery	Constableville	9/19/1988	11/9/1988
Constableville Village Historic District	Constableville	8/12/1983	9/15/1983
Constable Hall	Constableville	6/23/1980	3/7/1973
Wilson, Edmund, House	Port Leyden	6/23/1980	11/26/1973
Methodist Episcopal Church of West Martinsburg	West Martinsburg	8/12/1983	9/15/1983
Hough, Franklin B., House	Lowville	6/23/1980	10/15/1966
Gould Mansion Complex	Lyons Falls	6/23/1980	4/19/1978
Bateman Hotel	Lowville	11/10/1993	2/18/1994
Saint Mark's Church	Port Leyden	6/23/1998	8/6/1998
Martinsburg Town Hall	Martinsburg	12/22/2000	3/21/2001
Lewis County Fairgrounds	Lowville	12/3/2001	2/14/2002
Forest Presbyterian Church and Manse	Lyons Falls	11/3/2003	9/24/2004

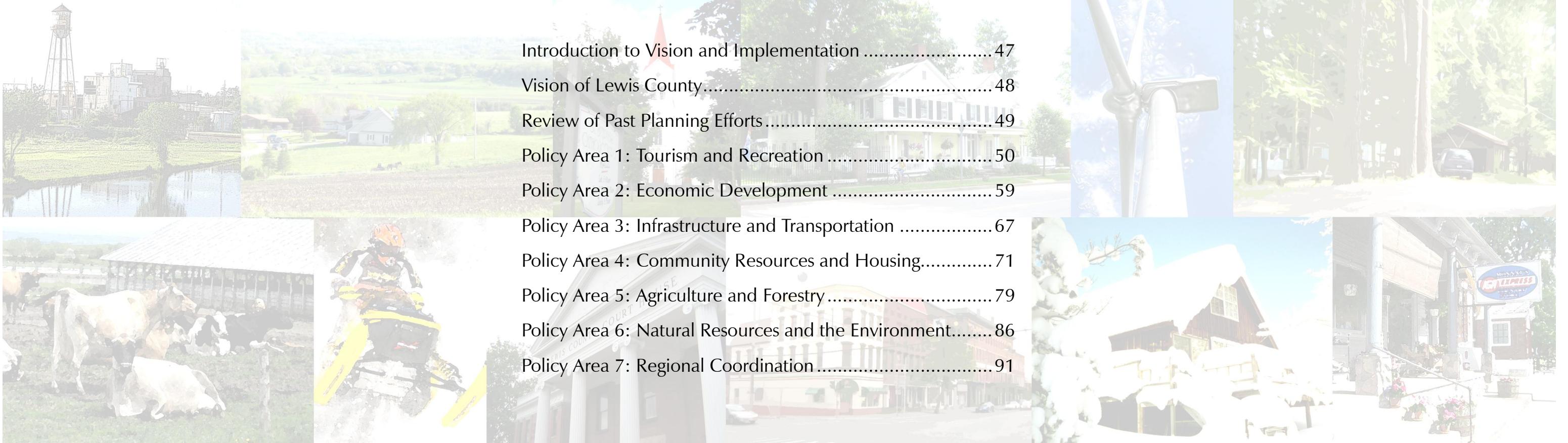
Source: New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation

LEWIS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

“Working to be the premier rural county in New York State”

CHAPTER 3 VISION AND IMPLEMENTATION

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INTRODUCTION TO VISION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Overview

A comprehensive plan should be developed on a framework that ties together broad ideas with specific and targeted activities, effectively identifying the community's short- and long-term needs. This chapter of the Plan identifies broad and specific actions that should be undertaken in an effort to implement the vision of the comprehensive plan.

Effective policies for Lewis County will guide community investment and decision-making in the county over the next decade and beyond. The framework of the Plan is intended to function just as a blueprint for a building with all of the components – from the largest to the smallest – fitting together in order for the structure to stand and function for many years to come. The Policies, Objectives, and Action Items are designed to support the vision statement for the county.

The Vision and Implementation Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan has four key elements, which are described below.

Vision Statement

A general statement about the future condition or state of the community; it is the end toward which all actions are aimed.

Policy Statement

Policies are narrower in scope and tend to target a specific area or topic; imagine what the community should have or become.

Objective

A statement of measurable activity to be accomplished in pursuit of the policy which is reasonably attainable. Consider broad actions or aspirations, using words such as increase, develop, or preserve.

Action Item

A specific proposal to do something that relates directly to accomplishing an objective, which usually takes the form of a plan, activity, project or program.

How Do The Policy Elements Fit Together?

The following non-planning example helps to illustrate how each of these key items relates to one another.

Example:

Vision Statement — To raise a healthy and close-knit family.

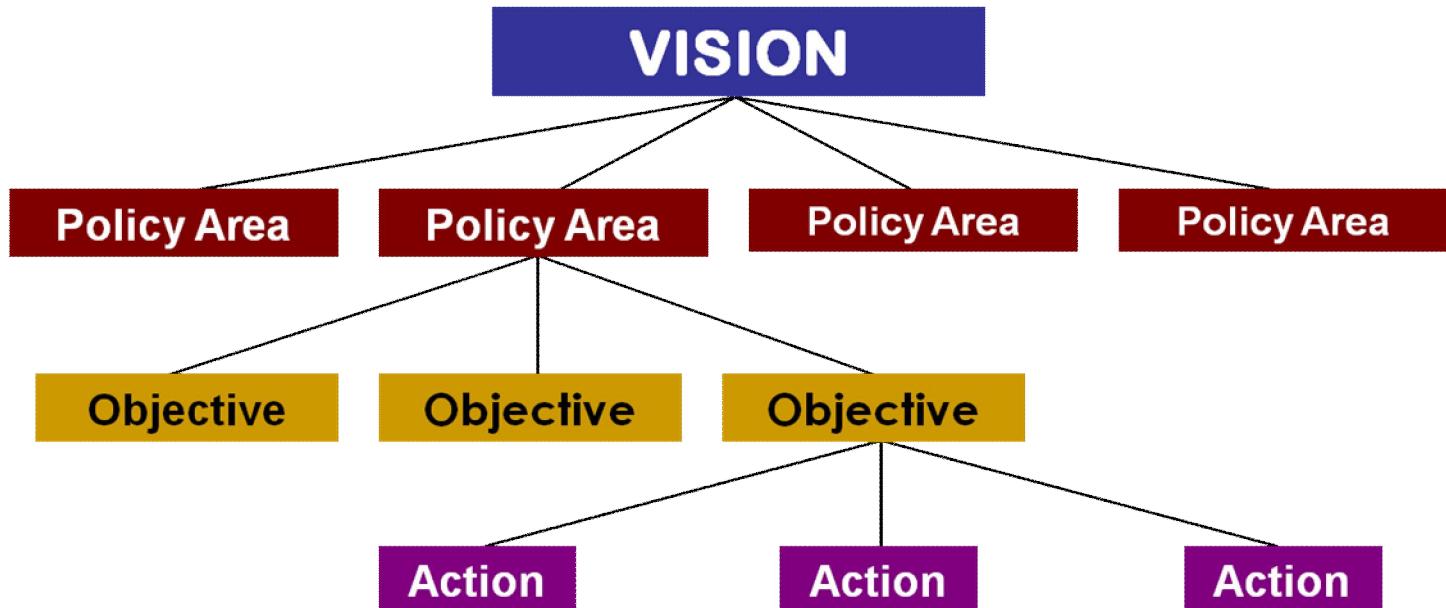
Policy — To have a well educated child.

Objective — Increase my child's vocabulary.

Action Item — Introduce one new word per week at dinner time, repeating it three to five times a day.

The vision and implementation steps are intended to address various aspects of the county which are most important to residents and reflect the quality of life and character desired by residents. The steps outlined in this section have been developed from a multitude of sources including:

- Analysis of existing conditions data (demographics, socio-economic data, GIS mapping data, public infrastructure, environmental features, etc.)
- Steering Committee meetings
- Stakeholder group meetings
- Focus Group meetings
- Meetings with village and town officials
- Meetings with business leaders
- Meetings with county staff and elected officials
- Community Meetings open to the public
- Review of current and past planning efforts, both at the county and local level





Implementation Framework

The Policies, Objectives, and Action Items found in this chapter of the Comprehensive Plan examine specific areas of focus for the county in order to advance the Vision statement. The Objectives and Action Items can be generally categorized according the following seven Policy Areas. Subtopics are included to demonstrate the coverage of each area.

- ⇒ *Tourism and Recreation*
 - Organizational and leadership capacity
 - Marketing and promotions
 - Services and infrastructure
- ⇒ *Economic Development*
 - Sustainable and renewable energy
 - Business and workforce development
 - Industrial development
- ⇒ *Infrastructure and Transportation*
 - Transportation network
 - Public infrastructure (water, sewer, gas, electric, etc.)
 - Telecommunications
- ⇒ *Community Resources and Housing*
 - Education
 - Housing
 - Village revitalization
- ⇒ *Agriculture and Forestry*
 - Farming and agri-tourism
 - Forestry and maple industries
- ⇒ *Natural Resources and the Environment*
 - Environmental protection
 - Rural character preservation
- ⇒ *Regional Coordination*
 - Intermunicipal coordination and efficiencies
 - Land use planning



VISION OF LEWIS COUNTY

In Lewis County, we take pride in our small town culture, pristine landscape, tremendous recreation opportunities, rich farming and forestry heritage, vast energy resources, and overall quality of life. As we protect and enhance these assets, **we will work to be the premier rural county in New York State**. To achieve this, we will:

- Encourage economic growth by supporting existing businesses, attracting new employers, fostering emerging industries, and revitalizing our downtowns;
- Explore opportunities that will improve our standing as a leader in renewable and sustainable energy;
- Adhere to sustainable policies that address environmental stewardship, economic health, and government operations;
- Develop strategic partnerships between government, citizens, and leaders in the fields of education, industry, agriculture and forestry, health and human services, housing, and tourism to achieve a vibrant community;
- Enhance and expand our extensive recreational opportunities in a manner that balances tourism interests with environmental impacts;
- Employ a strategic and cooperative approach to the provision of infrastructure and other scarce resources; and
- Be governed by officials that are mindful of the quality of life enjoyed in Lewis County and are fully equipped to enforce all of these values and priorities.



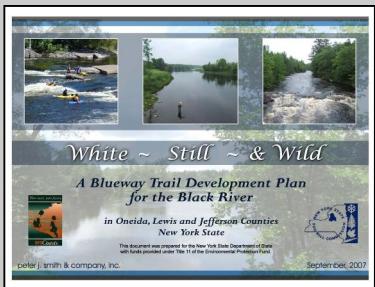


REVIEW OF CURRENT AND PAST PLANNING EFFORTS

This Comprehensive Plan is built upon a solid base of prior planning and development efforts. Reflecting the numerous challenges and opportunities present in the county, numerous plans and studies have been developed, which represent countless hours of public input and strategic planning. Although most of these efforts focus on a particular location or resource, all reach similar conclusions as to the strengths, challenges, and opportunities present in Lewis County. Given the depth of previous planning efforts, a major focus of this Plan will be to centralize and coordinate key actions identified in past plans, so that the county and its various partners can more effectively implement strategies and actions.

Below is a brief summary of these plans and studies. Some of the major projects are referenced directly in the Objectives and Action Items tables that follow each policy area. The table is organized to highlight strategies that are common to previous planning efforts, as well as present numerous additional recommendations that were developed as part of this project.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) – The initial CEDS process was completed and an original document was adopted by Lewis County in 2000, and a five year update was completed in September of 2006. This comprehensive strategy evaluates current conditions in Lewis County, discusses major economic sectors, and details each sector's economic characteristics and development strategies. It outlines both long and short-term actions for the county to implement. A list of priority action items to be undertaken in each sector has been created in conjunction with the plan.

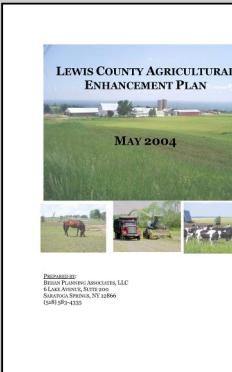


character and resources of the corridor and makes recommendations related to marketing, trail policies, environmental protection, river access, community character and education. The plan includes a master plan for the trail encompassing roads, gateways, trails, river access, camping, view enhancement, interpretation, signage, and trail management. Although focused on the Black River Corridor, many of the recommendations are relevant to the entire county and are thus consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Black River Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan – The NYS Tug Hill Commission is working with the Adirondack North Country Association (ANCA) and local communities to develop a corridor management plan for the Black River Scenic Byway that runs from the City of Rome at the south end, follows Route 46 northward to Boonville, runs along the Black River on Route 12 to Lowville where it crosses the river and continues north toward Ogdensburg.

Maple Traditions Scenic Byway – The northern section of the Black River Trail Scenic Byway actually has no connection to the Black River and a new corridor management plan has been drafted to rename Route 812 as the Maple Traditions Scenic Byway. This was developed to better reflect that portion of the area's key attributes and community assets. The corridor management plan includes vision and theme statements, an inventory of its qualities and assets, goals, and detailed implementation actions.

Black River Corridor Economic Adjustment Strategy – This 2001 study by The Center for Community Studies at Jefferson Community College examined the economic potential of recreation and tourism associated with the Black River. This study focused on the Jefferson County portion of the river, but contains information relevant to the overall corridor as well.



Lewis County Agricultural Enhancement Plan – Finished in May of 2004, this plan evaluates current agricultural conditions in Lewis County and offers guidelines for both the county and agricultural support organizations to protect farmland and enhance agriculture. It establishes a vision and goals to help agriculture thrive and continue to play an essential role as the most important industry in the regions' economy. A comprehensive set of goals, recommendations and specific actions items are provided.

Black River Blueway Trail Plan – This September 2007 plan for Oneida, Lewis and Jefferson Counties creates a blueway trail along the Black River. A blueway is a water-based recreation trail that connects communities and attractions along a river. The vision is to have the Blueway Trail revitalize the Black River communities through tourism and to enhance sustainable development practices along the Black River Corridor. It identifies the

character and resources of the corridor and makes recommendations related to marketing, trail policies, environmental protection, river access, community character and education. The plan includes a master plan for the trail encompassing roads, gateways, trails, river access, camping, view enhancement, interpretation, signage, and trail management. Although focused on the Black River Corridor, many of the recommendations are relevant to the entire county and are thus consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

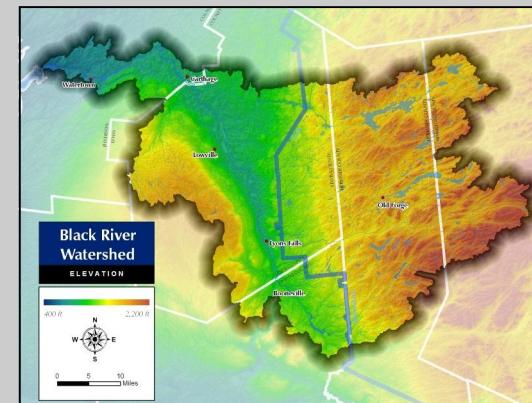
ATV Impact Study/Generic Environmental Impact Statement for Trails – A January 2006 study quantified the potential economic impacts of an ATV trail system in the area. The study estimated a \$35.2 million fiscal benefit (direct and indirect) supporting 701 jobs, or 369 full-time equivalent jobs. The study also evaluated costs for developing, maintaining and enforcing a trail system and offers recommendations related to enforcement, siting of ATV trails and promotion. The Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) was drafted in May of 2008 by Lewis County. The purpose of the document is to identify and evaluate potential significant environmental impacts associated with the operation and use of an ATV trail network in Lewis County. Impacts on air, land, water, wetlands, wildlife, historic sites, community character, and community services were evaluated and a series of mitigation actions recommended where impacts were found.



Bicycle Master Plan – The Bicycle Master Plan for the Adirondack North Country Region of New York State was prepared in November of 1994. This extensive report discusses the many benefits of bicycling, trends and opportunities, promotion of bicycling, and provides a framework for developing a bicycle friendly region. The Plan includes a strategic analysis of bicycling county by county, including specific recommendations and methods to implement the Plan. For Lewis County, the plan highlights the need for highway departments to work with bicycle planners and promoters, to develop a trail along the Lyons Falls to Burdicks Crossing rail line, link better to the Watertown area, and map and promote this activity through tourism organizations better.

Black River Watershed Study

The Black River Watershed Management Plan is a concurrent planning effort that focuses on the development of recommendations to protect and restore water quality in the Black River and its tributaries. The watershed study area encompasses land in Lewis, Jefferson, Hamilton, Herkimer, and Oneida Counties. Through the planning process a working consensus will be developed among watershed communities and organizations to identify a strategy for the collective implementation of specified actions and measures. In conjunction with the Management Plan, a Groundwater Analysis, Socio-Economic Analysis, and Stakeholder Plan are being completed for the same geographic area. The Watershed Management Plan is expected to be completed by the end of 2009.



Local Plans

In addition to these county-wide and regional plans, the following local plans were reviewed:

- Town and Village of Lowville Comprehensive Plan
- Joint Town-Village Turin Planning Board Land Use Plan
- Town of Lewis Land Use Plan
- Village of Harrisville Comprehensive Plan
- 4-Town Comprehensive Plan (Montague, Harrisburg, Martinsburg, Pinckney), currently under development

**POLICY AREA 1: TOURISM & RECREATION****Policy Statement**

Lewis County has a *unique and attractive rural character, which makes it a wonderful place to visit and explore. The region abounds with recreation opportunities that attract visitors from great distances. We will build upon these existing attractions with a strategic approach to branding and marketing. We will seek to balance economic success with impacts on the environment and the peaceful nature of our communities. Coordinated efforts between government agencies, not-for-profits, and local businesses will make Lewis County a renowned tourist destination for generations.*

Overview

Lewis County has a wealth of existing and potential tourist and recreational opportunities. These include outdoor recreation, agri-tourism, cultural attractions, and heritage opportunities. Large areas of public land and forested open space, along with an abundance of rivers, lakes, and streams that support warm and coldwater fisheries, allow people to participate in a large variety of activities. Snowmobiling and ATVing are the most popular draws in the county, but other important recreational activities include canoeing, fishing, skiing, hiking, camping, horseback riding and hunting.

According to the New York State Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, participation in outdoor activities is growing and will continue to grow. The 2003 State Plan finds that the fastest growing outdoor activity in New York State is touring historic sites. Visiting parks followed by walking were activities with the most participation. Other top activities include (in order of percent of population participating in those activities): swimming, biking, historic sites, boating, fishing, and field sports. Lewis County has the advantage of offering people opportunities to participate in all these activities.

Recreational development is an important component associated with the quality of life for Lewis County residents. As part of the economy, recreational opportunities form the underpinning of the tourism industry and play an important role in job creation and forming a regional identity. Furthermore, additional demands by transient residents for housing, goods and services are often sparked by recreational opportunities in rural communities. Yet, the importance of a well balanced economy in Lewis County cannot be understated, as tourism and recreation are often fickle industries with seasonal and lower paying jobs. This is especially a concern in tight economic times where family budgets tend to cut luxuries such as recreation and travel before necessities.

Strengths

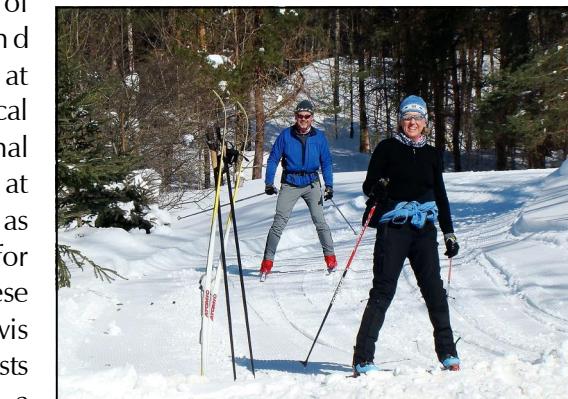
The county is renowned for its winter recreation opportunities, especially snowmobiling, with almost 500 miles of groomed snowmobile trails. The proximity to Lake Ontario and the unique topography of the region account for significant snowfalls that support these activities. Boating (flat water and white water) along the Black River is also an important outdoor recreation activity. In addition to these impressive recreational activities, Lewis County also contains portions of the Black River Trail Scenic Byway (NYS Route 12) and the Olympic Trail Scenic Byway (NYS Route 3), with the Central Adirondack Trail (NYS Route 28) very close to its southern border with Oneida and Herkimer counties. There are currently plans to establish NYS Route 812 through the county as the Maple Traditions Scenic Byway. Byways have intrinsic



Snowmobiling remains a key part of Lewis County's tourism economy.

cultural, historic, recreational, and visual characteristics that add to the quality of life for residents and are attractive to tourists.

Lewis County is also home to many artisans, and their works are shown and sold in retail stores, at local festivals, special events, and on the internet. Music and theatrical performances are also featured and include the North American Fiddlers Hall of Fame in Osceola and the Black River Valley Concert Series (an eclectic mix of folk, bluegrass and international music) held at the Lewis County Historical Society. Local and regional musicians are heard at various local events such as the Lewis County Relay for Life, Lowville Cream Cheese Festival, and the Lewis County Fair, which also hosts a performance by a nationally touring band.



Cross Country skiing is also gaining in popularity in parts of Lewis County, such as the Tug Hill Plateau.

Other tourism and recreational strengths include, in no particular order:

- Rural environment with ample open spaces and scenic views
- Diversity of outdoor recreation opportunities
- Black and Moose Rivers and other waterways
- Traditional and quaint villages with a small town atmosphere
- Strong cultural and historical resources and events, including Lewis County Historical Society
- Maple Ridge Wind Farm as a tourist draw (sightseeing, kite skiing, and mountain biking)
- Other emerging attractions such as a new winery, horseback riding, the Adirondack International Speedway

Challenges

There are several major issues that Lewis County should address related to tourism. A major constraint to maximizing tourist and recreation opportunities is a lack of coordination, organization, and leadership to pull together the many positive but separate initiatives taking place in the county. Coupled with a lack of consensus and vision on tourism development, the county has not fully capitalized on its diverse and rich resources.

While the county recognizes that the area's natural resources and recreation have great economic potential, lack of coordination and prioritizing tourist and recreation activities has resulted in many excellent regional planning efforts that have not been adequately implemented. At the same time, public input collected throughout several years of planning efforts at county-wide, regional, and local levels has consistently indicated that there is a strong desire to preserve the rural character and environment of Lewis County. An important role of this Plan is to establish the policy that tourism and recreational development must be consistent with and balance community character and the environment so as to maintain a high quality of life for residents.



Hay rides are a popular tourism activity in the fall season.



Other tourism and recreational challenges include, in no particular order:

- Snowmobiling, the major tourist draw, has a short season (12 weeks)
- Agri-tourism opportunities have not been completely capitalized on
- Lack of retail businesses that attract and cater to tourists
- Need for more lodging accommodations - lack of year round occupancy prevents expansion of hotel development
- Lack of consensus on tourism development due to impacts on the environment and quality of life

Tourism and Recreation: Key Points

- Recreational opportunities are not only the underpinning of the Lewis County tourism industry, but play important roles in creating jobs and enhancing the quality of life for residents.
- There is a strong desire among residents to preserve the rural character and environment of Lewis County.
- The tourism and recreational draw of the county can be substantially enhanced by expanding and promoting non-winter activities.
- Many positive, but separate recreation and tourism planning efforts have been initiated in Lewis County, but a lack of coordination has prevented the county from fully capitalizing on its diverse and rich resources.
- A primary role Lewis County can play is to provide leadership and organization to coordinate recreation and tourism programs with other agencies and organizations in the region.

Opportunities

Four Seasons of Tourism and Recreation

Due to the unpredictability and limited nature of winter-based tourism, there is a need to diversify tourism to have a year round orientation. Lewis County has an extensive snowmobile trail system and a developing ATV trail system. While this infrastructure is very important to the tourism industry, multiple plans and public input indicate that there is a growing desire from local residents for non-motorized trails. Lewis County should expand its trail emphasis beyond ATV's and snowmobiles to include multi-use trail development for non-motorized recreational activities. This will help address the seasonal concerns. Additionally, non-motorized trails and pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure will contribute to improved public health throughout the county.



Children playing on mounds of hay is an example of utilizing farm products for agri-tourism and recreation purposes.

In order to support a diverse and year round tourist industry, the county needs to enhance its tourism related infrastructure and services. This includes dining, accommodations, signage, promotion, parking, shopping and activity development, as well as enhancing telecommunications to accommodate the more sophisticated visitor. It is also important to recognize that enhancing recreational opportunities benefits residents as well as tourists. Finally, funding is needed to ensure effective coordination and implementation of tourist and recreation related action items identified in this Plan.



Developing infrastructure and activities geared towards families will be critical to enhancing the agri-tourism industry in Lewis County.

Enhancing and Expanding the Industry

Communities have begun to leverage the region's geography, topography, and climate to their economic advantage through the recreation and tourism industries. While these two industries are exceptionally finicky and are traditionally the first expenditures to be reduced during times of financial hardship, Lewis County communities should continue to develop markets and products for recreational and tourist activities. Economic development initiatives related to tourism should be at the region's population centers. Most of Lewis County's recreational and tourist activities are geared towards the enjoyment of scenic and wide open spaces, but the greatest impact to communities will be felt if visitors spend time and money in the hamlet and village centers.

The encouragement of visitors to stop and stay (and spend) depends upon a host of factors, including accessibility, wayfinding, marketing, and product development. The county should assist communities in the improvement of these areas to help extend the duration of visits by tourists and recreation enthusiasts. Existing studies, including the Black River Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan and the Maple Traditions Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan have developed numerous action items for implementation to improve visitor experience. These actions include the coordinated development of brochures, directory information, wayfinding systems, websites, and lodging availability systems.



A child practices 'milking' a cardboard cow at a farm in Milford, Ontario, Canada.

A primary initiative that should begin at the county level is the creation of a brand identity for Lewis County. The branding process should include coordination with local businesses and organizations, as these populations often have the greatest exposure to outsiders and are the de facto messengers of the community. While most existing members of individual towns and villages have their own community identity structure, the larger community remains fractured and lacks a coordinated vision and message. In the broadest sense, the Lewis County community should strive to communicate with one voice and one message.



Kite skiing is also becoming an increasingly popular activity on the Tug Hill Plateau.

Organization and Dedication of Resources

The county is fortunate to have numerous established organizations within the region that will be able to play important collaborative roles in a broader partnership. The county is in a logical position to take the lead on efforts to expand and improve tourism and recreation economic development. Currently, the government structure is not established to facilitate Lewis County to assume this leadership role, and organizational changes would need to be made to effectively collaborate and manage these efforts. For example, a county legislative committee dedicated to recreation and tourist efforts would improve coordination.

Another possible approach is the establishment of a tourism and recreation department within the county, or at least additional dedicated staff. It is reasonable to assume that the Department of Economic Development and Planning may have a role to play, and that this office is well positioned to be on the front-lines to coordinate these efforts. Of particular significance is the coalescence of existing regional and resource-oriented plans into a unified document that incorporates the major action items listed in the Implementation Plan.

In addition, the Lewis County Chamber of Commerce has an important role to play in business development and networking, as well as in promotion and marketing. Other organizations such as the Tug Hill Commission and the various byway and trail organizations/committees and local businesses must all remain active and be primary stakeholders in this process, with the county taking the leadership position in coordination of these organizations.

The Implementation Plan for this policy area contains numerous recommendations that are aimed at bolstering the tourism and recreation industries. Most importantly, the items listed under Objective A are critical to the implementation and success of the remaining items. There is a tremendous opportunity to enhance the tourism and recreation industry in Lewis County by dedicating more resources to organizing efforts and promoting assets.



Wayfinding Signage

An important component of a tourism and recreation strategy involves wayfinding signage. These are small signs placed at important gateways, crossroads, and destinations. Wayfinding signage efforts in Lewis County might include the following:

- Town, village and county gateways
- Historic sites
- Trails or other outdoor recreation facilities
- Unique or important businesses/destinations
- Unique natural areas

Wayfinding signage efforts should be coordinated whenever possible to create a consistent theme, much the same as the Adirondacks have a distinct flavor to their signage.

Objectives and Measures

The following Objectives should provide guidance for county-level policy and decision making related to tourism and recreation. Specific strategies, or Action Items, for each Objective are listed in a table on the next page.

Objective A: Create the organizational and leadership capacity to develop and market tourism.

Measures:

- Number of new staff, or staff hours, dedicated to tourism promotions and organization
- Amount of funds allocated and/or grants obtained to promote tourism

Objective B: Enhance promotional and marketing efforts that bolster support for tourism and recreation investments at the county level.

Measures:

- Number of new programs, initiatives, and publications developed to promote tourism
- Number of hits and visitation to new county website
- Number of tour/travel partnerships established
- Number of events and locations included in promotional materials

Objective C: Expand tourism strategies to increase year-round visitation.

Measures:

- Percent increase in county visitation
- Number of new non-winter events
- Number of new four-season businesses
- Percent change in bed tax receipts

Objective D: Provide additional infrastructure and training to enhance the recreation and tourism network.

Measures:

- Number of wayfinding signs installed
- Number of trailheads installed and signed
- Number of programs offering training and the number of people trained

Objective E: Ensure that recreation and tourism activities are designed to protect the environment and maintain rural community character

Objective F: Increase available funding sources dedicated to recreation and tourism.

Measures:

- Dollars collected and distributed from the county bed tax
- Tracking of revolving loan fund balance and liabilities
- Tracking of impact and use fees generated



TOURISM & RECREATION IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Objective A: Create the organizational and leadership capacity to develop and market tourism.

#	Action Item	Originating From or Consistent with*					Implementation				Notes
		Comp Plan	CEDS	Blue	Black	Maple	Time Frame	High Priority	Potential Partners	Funding Resources/Strategies	
1	Establish a tourism entity, such as a department or Visitor's Bureau, to coordinate and collaborate tourism and recreation development. An initial effort of this entity should be to create a unified policy and action document from existing regional and resource plan that summarizes all major items in a single location	✓					short-term	X	County Legislature , County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning, NYS Dept of Economic Development	Bed tax	Examples from other counties: Oswego - has a county tourism department with 5 staff; a few local Chambers, but the county takes the lead. St. Lawrence - has a county standing committee and a county Chamber, which takes the lead and is designed to serve members. Greene - has a county tourism department and a county Chamber, the county takes the lead. All 3 counties have websites dedicated to tourism promotions.
2	Create a tourism committee as a standing legislative committee to take on the role of coordinator of tourism activities.	✓				✓	Short-term	X	County Legislature	N/A	
3	Establish an annual "Tourism Summit" among stakeholders to develop long- and short-term planning objectives.	✓		✓	✓		Short-term		County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning , all tourism-related stakeholders		
4	The County Government should make funding for tourism and recreation efforts a high priority.						Short-term	X	County Legislature	Bed tax	
5	Support and participate in implementing the Blueway Trail Development Plan for the Black River and the Black River Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan.	✓		✓	✓		On-going		County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning , all tourism-related stakeholders - Tug Hill Commission, Towns and Villages along the river	See Plans for specifics	Key recommendations of these plans are included in this Comprehensive Plan, as indicated by the "Originating" columns to the left.
6	Support and participate in implementing the Maple Traditions Scenic Byway Management Plan.	✓				✓	On-going		County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning , all tourism-related stakeholders - Towns and Villages along the route, Maple Museum	See Maple Traditions Plan for specifics	Key recommendations of this plan are included in this Comprehensive Plan, as indicated by the "Originating" columns to the left.

* Key:

Comp Plan = Lewis County Comprehensive Plan

CEDS = Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, Project Priority List

Blue = Blueway Trail Development Plan for the Black River

Black = Black River Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan

Maple = Maple Traditions Scenic Byway Management Plan

Potential partners in **bold** are lead entities



TOURISM & RECREATION IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, CONTINUED

Objective B: Enhance promotional and marketing efforts that bolster support for tourism and recreation investments at the county level.

#	Action Item	Originating From or Consistent with*					Time Frame	High Priority	Potential Partners	Implementation		Notes
		Comp Plan	CEDS	Blue	Black	Maple				Funding Resources/Strategies	Completed	
1	Develop a tourism management plan. Components should include: branding and identity, targeted marketing plan, strategy for forming strategic alliances within the industry, strategy for acquisition of new lands, and an implementation schedule with roles, responsibilities and time frames.	✓			✓	✓	Short-term	X	New County Tourism director/office, all tourism-related stakeholders	Empire State Development Corp. funding, County funds		The county should take a lead role in this effort, specifically in coordinating all partners and previous planning efforts. Each business within Lewis County needs to become a champion for the region. Area industry/trade groups should also be targeted as recipients and messengers of the new branding process.
2	Develop a County recreation master plan.	✓					Short -term	X	County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning, Recreational Trails, outdoor recreation clubs, municipalities, OPRHP	County funds, Planning Grants		
3	Create a brochure for placement within public buildings, tourist destinations, highly trafficked businesses, and public spaces displaying locations within Lewis County where travelers can purchase locally produced foods, crafts, and wood products.			✓	✓		Short-term	X	New County Tourism director/office, Merchants Association, Chamber , LCIDA, trade and business organizations	County funds		
4	Engage the services of a travel writer for the purposes of opening new markets and solidifying the county's tourism vision and identity.	✓					On-going		New County Tourism director/office, Empire State Development Corp.	Empire State Development Corp. funding, County funds		Travel writers are also good sources of feedback and consultation.
5	Establish strategic alliances with tour operators, hotels and travel agents.	✓					On-going		New County Tourism director/office, Empire State Development Corp., hospitality industry representatives	N/A		
6	Hire a website developer to create a single-source tourism related website, complete with strategic links to other websites, state of the art trip planning tools, and a comprehensive list of destinations and events.		✓	✓	✓	✓	Short-term	X	New County Tourism director/office, County Information Technologies, LCIDA, LCDC, Chamber of Commerce, related businesses	Empire State Development Corp. funding, County funds		Website travel planning is a major mechanism that people use to plan trips. The current websites that have tourism and recreation related features are not coordinated or in some cases, even linked together. There is no place or mechanism for a visitor to comprehensively see what activities are available.
7	Develop a web-based calendar of events that promote large- and small-scale events and locations.	✓					Short-term	X	County, Chamber of Commerce, municipalities, tourist industry representatives			
8	Develop theme-based tourist packages such as eco-tourism or winter getaways.			✓	✓	✓	On-going		New County Tourism director/office, Chambers, lodging, tourism destinations			
9	Ensure that agri-tourism is part of a coordinated tourism program.		✓				On-going	X	New County Tourism director/office, CCE, Farm Bureau, farm operations	N/A		See B-1 above.



TOURISM & RECREATION IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, CONTINUED

Objective B (continued)

#	Action Item	Originating From or Consistent with*					Implementation				Notes
		Comp Plan	CEDS	Blue	Black	Maple	Time Frame	High Priority	Potential Partners	Funding Resources/Strategies	
10	Create a presentation on the benefits of tourism for both the public and local officials.	✓			✓	✓	Short-term	X	New County Tourism director/office		
11	Develop an updated fiscal impact study on tourism and recreation.	✓					Short-term	X	New County Tourism director/office, Empire State Development Corp. funding, County funds		
12	Support the Chamber of Commerce's efforts to develop and distribute a comprehensive recreation/tourism map.						Short-term		Chamber of Commerce, Empire State Development, NYS Thruway Authority, County Recreational Trails, NYSDEC	Empire State Development Corp. funding, County funds	The Chamber should partner with ESDC's "I Love NY" campaign for distribution opportunities. Involvement of the NYSDEC will help improve accuracy.
13	Update the Tug Hill Recreation Guide to reflect new destinations/features, new guidelines/restrictions for use of public lands, and changing target audiences.	✓					Short-term	X	Tug Hill Commission, NYSDEC, County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning, new County Tourism director/office	Tug Hill Commission funds	
14	Continue to participate in the I Love NY program through the Chamber of Commerce as Lewis County's tourism promotion agency		✓				On-going		Chamber of Commerce, Empire State Development, various media outlets, Lewis County	County budget item	



TOURISM & RECREATION IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, CONTINUED

Objective C: Expand tourism strategies to increase year-round visitation.

#	Action Item	Originating From or Consistent with*					Time Frame	High Priority	Potential Partners	Implementation		Notes
		Comp Plan	CEDS	Blue	Black	Maple				Funding Resources/Strategies	Completed	
1	Maintain the existing trail development program and ensure that it also enhances planning for multi-use and non-motorized trail uses.			✓	✓		Short-term	X	County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning, Recreational Trails, NYSDEC, NYSDOT, municipalities			
2	Continue to capitalize on the wind farm as an additional tourist opportunity.	✓	✓				On-going		County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning, new County Tourism director/office, Recreational Trails		Sight-seeing, mountain biking, and kite skiing are emerging examples of this potential.	
3	Work to establish new boat launch sites and public access points.		✓	✓	✓	✓	Long-term		County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning, municipalities, NYSDOT, County Highway Dept., NYSDEC	Transportation Enhancements Program, local capital budgets	The Blueway Trail Plan provides specific recommendations for sites.	
4	Explore the feasibility of a birding and wildlife trail, connecting important sites throughout the county.	✓					Long-term		County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning, NYSDEC, Audubon Society, Recreational Trails			
5	Encourage the development of recreation related businesses such as boat livery, tackle shops, and sporting goods along the Black River.		✓	✓	✓		On-going	X	County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning, Merchants Association, Chamber, LCIDA			
6	Support and participate in implementing the Bicycle Master Plan for the Adirondack North Country, specifically those items pertaining to Lewis County.	✓					On-going		County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning, bicycle advocacy groups, NYSDOT, County Highway Dept., Recreational Trails	See Bicycle Master Plan for specifics	Improvements include signage installation, "share the road" initiatives, and bike map production/distribution.	
7	Continue to pursue rails-to-trails and rails-with-trails opportunities on the abandoned rail lines between Lowville and Carthage and between Lowville and Crogan.			✓	✓		Short-term	X	County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning, Recreational Trails, Railroad Society of Northern NY, NYSDOT, Parks and Trails NY, Genesee Valley Transportation Co., Lowville and Beaver River Railroad Co.	County funds, Transportation Enhancements Program, SAFETEA-LU	Railroad Society of Northern NY is in the process of acquiring the corridor.	
8	Identify abandoned rail lines or other rights-of-way that could potentially be developed as multi-use trails.	✓					Short-term		County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning, Recreational Trails, trail user groups, NYSDOT		Preservation of rights-of-way, whether developed into trails or not, is recommended for long-term consideration of railroad service restoration.	
9	Develop a county-wide year round calendar of activities, events, and things to do.					✓	Short-term		County, TAUNY, ANCA, municipalities	TAUNY, ANCA, Municipalities		



TOURISM & RECREATION IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, CONTINUED

Objective D: Provide additional infrastructure and training to enhance the recreation and tourism network.

#	Action Item	Originating From or Consistent with*					Implementation				Notes
		Comp Plan	CEDS	Blue	Black	Maple	Time Frame	High Priority	Potential Partners	Funding Resources/Strategies	
1	Develop county-wide and coordinated signage, to be installed at important gateways, crossroads, and destinations.			✓	✓	✓	short-term	X	New County Tourism director/office, County Highway Dept., NYSDOT	County and local funds, Empire State Development Corp. funds	Current signage is not effective. Different plans suggest different themes and signage. Signage should be coordinated so that different programs and resources work together and are viewed by the public as part of one system.
2	Evaluate and develop additional trailhead parking and signage.			✓	✓	✓	On-going		County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning, County Highway Dept., NYSDOT	County and local funds	The Blueway Trail Plan provides specific recommendations for sites.
3	Promote snowmobile and ATV trail connections into villages and hamlets that will bring riders in for goods and services.	✓					On-going		New York State Snowmobile Association, local clubs, County Recreational Trails	County staff coordinates of executes inventory and analysis, pursue funding via the Transportation Enhancements Program	Develop a prioritized list of these 'comfort' and service locations throughout the county, and then allocate funding for trail expansions and realignments according to an agreed up framework.
4	Conduct a market and product gap analysis for tourist-oriented goods and services, including lodging, within Lewis County, then develop technical assistance and workshop training sessions that will assist businesses in diversifying and filling these gaps.			✓	✓		Short-term	X	County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning, Merchants Association, Chamber, LCIDA	County funds	
5	Provide hospitality training to employees that work at tourist oriented businesses.			✓	✓		On-going		Chamber of Commerce, Merchant Association, Seasonal Business Owners		
6	Explore the feasibility of a centralized community center for the county.	✓					Long-term		Village/Town of Lowville, schools, JCC	County funds for the study, actual community center would require multiple funding sources	According to a survey by JCC, 93% of county residents support the idea of a community center, likely to be located in Lowville.
7	Support the Adirondack International Speedway's proposed expansion to a one mile track, along with additional seating capacity and amenities.		✓				On-going		Adirondack International Speedway, LCDC, Town of New Bremen	LCDC funds	May result in future tourism development such as lodging, restaurants, and other services.
8	Support the development of the Maple Ridge Center as a multi-use recreational facility.	✓					Short-term		Pratt-Northam Foundation, Town/Village of Lowville, Lowville Mennonite Church, County Fairgrounds, Lowville Academy, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Cornell University	Funding from various partners	An important project whose collective leveraging ability among potential partners is unrivaled in the county. Consideration should be given to Cornell University's utilization of the extensive stable facilities.
9	Promote the retention of public access along remaining undeveloped portions of lakes, ponds, creeks and rivers throughout the County during the site plan approval process.	✓					On-going		County Department of Economic Development and Planning, municipalities, NYSDEC		Many of the small lakes, ponds, creeks, and rivers are becoming completely privatized, diminishing the public's access for recreation and tourism.
10	Focus on the creation of additional public passive and active recreation infrastructure that will improve the health of the community.	✓					On-going	X	Municipalities, Recreational Trails, County Economic Development and Planning		
11	Encourage the development of new lodging/resturant facilities within the County.	✓					On-going		Municipalities, Recreational Trails, County Economic Development and Planning		



TOURISM & RECREATION IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, CONTINUED

Objective E: Ensure that recreation and tourism activities are designed to protect the environment and maintain rural community character.

#	Action Item	Originating From or Consistent with*					Implementation				Notes
		Comp Plan	CEDS	Blue	Black	Maple	Time Frame	High Priority	Potential Partners	Funding Resources/Strategies	
1	Support preservation of historic resources and traditional development styles consistent with Lewis County villages.	✓		✓	✓		On-going		Municipalities, SHPO, County Historical Society, local historic preservation organizations	Local land use regulations, Participate in SHPO's Certified Local Government program	
2	Continue to support the development of the ATV trail system, consistent with the goals, objectives, and mitigation outlined in the Lewis County Recreational Trails Plan (2007) and the Generic Environmental Impact Statement.	✓	✓				On-going		County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning, Recreational Trails , outdoor recreation clubs, municipalities, local landowners		
3	Perform an inventory of historical structures and sites within the county and coordinate with historical associations to promote and improve these assets.	✓					Short-term		Municipalities, SHPO, County Historical Society, local historic preservation organizations, County Department of Economic Development and Planing		

Objective F: Increase available funding sources dedicated to recreation and tourism.

#	Action Item	Originating From or Consistent with*					Implementation				Notes
		Comp Plan	CEDS	Blue	Black	Maple	Time Frame	High Priority	Potential Partners	Funding Resources/Strategies	
1	Maintain the bed tax and ensure that funds from this source are dedicated to tourism and recreation development that serve both residents and tourists.	✓					Short-term	X	County Legislature, lodging industry, LC Chamber of Commerce		Bed tax is currently 5% and goes directly into the general fund, providing no direct benefit to those who charge it or the tourism industry in general.
2	Evaluate methods to initiate a fee system for motorized trail use. Fees should go to trail maintenance and development of new recreational opportunities.	✓					On-going	X	State and local outdoor recreation clubs, County Recreational Trails	N/A	
3	Encourage municipalities to consider an impact fee on the construction of seasonal camps in rural areas, recognizing their impacts on the recreation industry. Funds from these fees should be dedicated to enhancing recreation facilities and/or their promotion.	✓					Short-term		Municipalities, Tug Hill Commission , state and local outdoor recreation clubs	Local land use regulations	



POLICY AREA 2: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Policy Statement

It is the policy of Lewis County to support existing businesses and encourage the attraction of new businesses that meet the needs of residents and visitors. The economic vitality of the community depends on having locally supported businesses and sustainable employment opportunities. The county will build upon existing assets and growing economic sectors such as recreation, health care, and value-added agricultural and forestry products. Additionally, we will place a particular emphasis on growing the renewable and sustainable energy sector, which will have positive impacts both locally and regionally. As these sectors expand, we will strengthen our ability to retain and attract young people to live, work, and raise families in Lewis County.

Overview

Throughout history, the people of Lewis County have relied upon the land and its resources as the center of their economic well-being, with social and cultural traditions formulated around the seasons and activities linked to agriculture and forestry. The economy in Lewis County continues to be based largely on agriculture and forestry. The manufacture and production of raw goods and value-added products from those industries provide for the county's primary employment generators. The continued refinement and advancement of value-added wood, paper, and agricultural products should be an on-going effort to stimulate new investment and foster a sustainable economic base.

Recently, the burgeoning alternative and renewable energy industries have begun to introduce 21st century investment and technology into a county which is largely operating on 19th and 20th century infrastructure and principles. These new industries are harnessing existing resources, by-products, and climatic conditions to produce energy, and in the process pose the potential to create hundreds of jobs in related or supporting industries.

Much of Lewis County's economy will continue to function based on agricultural and forestry activities, with processed dairy, wood, and specialty papers the primary goods of manufacture. Yet opportunities exist to leverage existing technology and manufacturing processes with the latest advancements in science and engineering to create resurgence in Lewis County's economy. More specifically, some existing processes involve inputs that may be obtained from other sources in the county, creating strategic partnerships between businesses and promoting the reuse and recycling of materials.

Strengths

Lewis County's towns, villages, and hamlets offer the idyllic small town atmosphere, where low crime rates, quality schools, and close-knit communities provide the backdrop for a high quality of life enjoyed by residents and visitors. Ample recreational opportunities reinforce Lewis County's economy through the attraction of visitors throughout the year to enjoy hiking, snowmobiling, water sports, and sight-seeing. Tourism is seen by many as an increasingly strong growth industry within the county and throughout the North Country, and communities have enhanced efforts to leverage these additional sources of income and revenue.

Additionally, the county's manufacturing sector has taken advantage of niche markets related to specialty products in the paper, wood, and dairy industries, leveraging its proximity to raw materials in the region. Of the ten largest manufacturing employers in the county, only two create products outside of the wood, paper, and dairy industries. While the continued diversification of the manufacturing sector in Lewis County remains important, the agriculture and forestry industry clusters offer significant opportunities to attract additional businesses and operations.

Although the county's population is small, its citizens possess a strong work ethic and are dedicated to their communities and employers. This strong work ethic and dedication are particularly responsible for the success of the county's agricultural industry. All of the active farms are family owned and operated, and the agri-business infrastructure and available resources to farmers create a self-supporting system, and continue to be tremendous assets within Lewis County.

Growth rates are limited and many of the area's villages are intact, largely avoiding the suburban sprawl development pattern that hindered and often eroded traditional communities elsewhere in Upstate New York. The lack of development pressure has also benefited the forest industry, as forest timberland and growing stock have climbed, and saw-log volumes have increased from 1993.

Challenges

As conditions continue to change throughout the global economy, Lewis County is confronted with multiple challenges and threats over which it has little control. For instance, lumber and agricultural products are susceptible to commodity cycles on a national and global scale, with unchecked 'super-cycles' limiting the dependability of prices, thus potentially inhibiting investment. As well, continued pressures on labor costs and the exportation of manufacturing operations has caused an exodus of people and jobs in search of reliable and good-paying employment. In an economy the size of Lewis County's, even modest

decreases in investment and skilled labor represent significant hurdles, as each dollar of economic activity is proportionately more significant in smaller population centers (See sidebar on page 60).

At the same time, Lewis County's economic challenges are not solely the result of national and global phenomena. There are significant weaknesses within the local economy, the greatest of which is its reliance on two raw goods products: timber and milk. These industries are mature, with a strong core of skilled and trained employees. Yet, the technology utilized is antiquated in some respects, and the manufacturing processes found in Lewis County can be done in other markets for less labor cost. Without the increased technological capabilities found in other marketplaces Lewis County is also losing ground in the production of higher value products. Taken together, industries such as timber and dairy are threatened by lower production costs for raw goods and increased technology requirements to compete in the value-added markets.

In addition to a reliance on the manufacture of two primary goods, Lewis County's economic challenges are compounded by geographic, topographic, and climatic constraints. While these limitations have been in existence prior to the county's formation, they significantly impact infrastructure investment, industry development, and population characteristics. Located in New York State's North Country, Lewis County is one of the least populated counties within the state, and remains relatively isolated from large urban centers. Much of this isolation is due to the dramatic topography of the Tug Hill Plateau and the Adirondack Foothills. The steep slopes and rolling, jagged terrain have precluded significant investments in infrastructure due to cost. The limited infrastructure investment impacts the ability of industry to operate, which in turn impacts population growth.

It is no secret to any current inhabitants that the county's weather and climate, while pleasurable during the summer and an asset for winter recreation, are hard on its people, animals, and industries. Snow and ice arrive long before the official winter season begins, with Lewis County experiencing some of the highest snowfalls in the east, accompanied by harsh temperatures. Research has shown that Americans prefer warm weather climates over colder climates. As a result of this tendency, Lewis County communities have difficulty attracting year-round residents in part due to the weather.

Numerous internal and external challenges are placing negative pressure on the county's industry and its workforce. With the economy at a potential turning point related to the alternative and renewable energy industry, residents, business owners, and public officials must be ready and willing to take advantage of opportunities as they arise, and plan for significant changes in the methods and means for accomplishing a sustainable growth pattern.



Economic Multipliers: Predicting Ripple Effects of Economic Activity

Economic multipliers help leaders predict the “ripple effects” of new industry and business expansions. A new or expanding industry can have economic impacts beyond the jobs and income generated by the original project. If used wisely, multipliers provide planners and community leaders with estimates of employment, gross sales and income that will result from new economic activity. A multiplier summarizes the total impact that can be expected from change in a given economic activity. For example, a new manufacturing facility or an increase in exports by a local firm are economic changes which can spur ripple effects or spin-off activities. Multipliers measure the economic impact of these new exports, including the resulting spin-off activities.

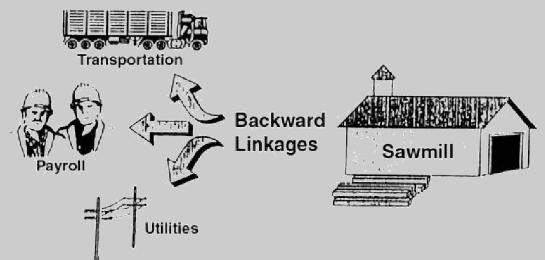
For example: \$1 is received into the local economy from export sales of a commodity. Of this one dollar, 40 cents is spent for goods and services within the community. The firms and individuals who receive this 40 cents spend 16 cents within the community. Of the 16 cents, only six cents is spent locally, and so on. The total amount of money received by local firms and residents as a result of the initial \$1 in added export earnings is \$1.62. Therefore, the multiplier is 1.62.

To understand how multipliers are calculated, knowing the meaning of direct, indirect and induced effects is essential. To illustrate the three effects an example of the Lumberland sawmill will be used.

Direct effects occur to the firm that exports additional goods or services. Lumberland gets an order from a Japanese furniture manufacturer for \$1 million in lumber products. Because of the new contract, Lumberland must add workers and spend additional dollars for transportation, utilities and other production needs. These expenditures for additional production inputs used in manufacturing the Japanese order are referred to as “direct effects.”

Indirect effects occur to linked industries that supply the exporting firm. Lumberland’s additional spending triggers a series of chain reactions, or spin-off effects. Logging companies and businesses which supply Lumberland Inc. with raw materials and services must increase their production to meet Lumberland’s needs.

Likewise, the increase in sales of Lumberland’s suppliers generates more business for the firms that supply them. These effects are referred to as “indirect effects” and occur in the backward linked industries.



Induced effects result from households spending additional income received. Each dollar of employee income earned in the direct and indirect activities triggers an additional chain of spending. This spin-off effect is referred to as an “induced effect,” which is sometimes called the consumption effect. Induced effects occur as households spend some of their additional income on goods and services in the local community.

Adapted from *Economic Multipliers: How Communities Can Use Them for Planning*, by Wayne P. Miller, Extension Economist, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service.

Opportunities

Alternative Energy

Nationally and internationally, alternative energy is one of the global economy’s biggest growth industries. As the world confronts a future of fossil fuel scarcity, research and investment has significantly increased in energy sources that are renewable and sustainable, such as wind, solar, geothermal, wave and biomass. Tapping these sources of energy, while environmentally and socially acceptable, is also economically beneficial since the availability is practically unlimited, the technologies are often scalable, and overall infrastructure costs are typically smaller than those in the fossil fuel industry.

It is at this confluence of energy resource availability and environmental acceptability that Lewis County has entered the alternative and renewable energy industry. The county is extremely fortunate to have an existing economy based on plant and animal resources. Such resources offer a significant opportunity for enhanced efficiencies and the leveraging of waste and by-products. In addition, Lewis County’s topography, largely defined by the Tug Hill Plateau, Black River Valley, and Adirondack Foothills, provide tremendous opportunities to further harness wind energy.

Lewis County has the opportunity to continue its support for the agriculture and forestry industries by placing an enhanced level of effort into leveraging the products from these industries for energy production. For example, newly developed techniques for creating ethanol from woody biomass can utilize waste from existing products, lumber and treetop timber from forests, or plantations on marginal lands. A technology currently in the laboratory will be deployed at the Catalyst Renewable Energy facility in Lyonsdale to create high value-added products in the form of ethanol and acetic acid. The county should continue to explore the further deployment of biomass to energy technologies and seek partnerships with higher education, state agencies, investors, and local businesses to expand the production of energy from wood. In addition to alternative energy products, bio-mass can be used for other products such as wood pellets.

An existing technology currently employed in Lewis County is anaerobic digestion. The KRAFT cream cheese manufacturing facility has constructed a waste stream pretreatment and renewable energy production plant that will utilize the by-products of the cream cheese making process. Utilized extensively in Europe, this process transforms animal and food wastes into biogas (methane) which can then be burned to create steam and/or electricity. Preliminary discussions regarding a centralized facility within Lewis County to be supplied by a feedstock of cattle and food waste indicate that this promising technology has several potential benefits to the community.

As a process, the ability to turn a waste product and liability into a source of energy is noteworthy. A safe, efficient, and cost effective means for recycling animal waste would then permit the county’s cattle density to increase, allowing for a higher production of milk. Additionally, the by-product of anaerobic digestion (digestate) has the potential for utilization as compost, fertilizer, or low-grade construction materials such as fiberboard, further leveraging the region’s agricultural and forestry activities.

Lewis County’s wind power industry is poised for further expansion. The 195 tower Maple Ridge wind farm in the Towns of Martinsburg, Lowville, and Harrisburg may potentially be joined by Roaring Brook wind farm, a 40 tower complex to the south and east. It is likely that additional opportunities exist to harness wind power within Lewis County, and further investigation and discussion should be had regarding the leveraging of these investments for the economic benefit for all county residents. For example, a somewhat unexpected outcome of the wind farm development has been in the form of tourism. Lewis County’s already rich outdoor recreation industry has been enhanced by an influx of sight-seers, as well as the emergence of mountain biking, kite skiing, and related events centered around the wind mills.

Finally, the county should focus on continued reinvestment in hydroelectric power along the Black, Beaver, and Moose Rivers to increase generation capacity, and bring abandoned or underutilized facilities on-line. Some of these efforts are underway and should continue to be supported by elected officials and county staff.

Business and Workforce Development

The primary engine of every economy is its labor force. The level of skill, education, and training of potential employees is one of the primary indicators utilized by businesses seeking to expand or relocate, and the improvement of these indicators will be critical to attracting internal and external investment. There are many opportunities to partner with existing education providers such as universities, colleges, and training facilities to upgrade the skills and knowledge of the existing labor force.

Particular attention should be given to enhanced skills required to fully participate in the formation and growth of the alternative and renewable energy industries. For example, Brookfield Power, which operates hydroelectric facilities in the county, is working with SUNY Oswego to develop a renewable energy-based degree program to help meet labor needs. As the level of technology employed within the county increases, the level of skill and training required to construct, maintain, repair, and manage these systems also increases.

However, skill development and training should also go beyond a reactive approach to technology and investment imported from outside



the community. Lewis County should also strive to promote entrepreneurship and business development from within. An example of this would be the ability to foster the development of new businesses related to the food industry. The county is already home to multiple successful food products such as maple syrup, cream cheese, milk, and bologna. Efforts should be made to leverage and add value to these products, potentially through the development of an incubator kitchen or shared-use facility for research, development, and technology transfer.

Industrial Development

Lewis County's existing industrial and manufacturing base relies primarily on timber and raw milk as its feedstock. While these products are abundant within the county, the diversification of manufacturing activities remains a worthwhile goal to expand the economy and protect against global commodity cycles. Opportunities within the alternative and renewable energy industries discussed previously will allow for greater efficiencies, the reduction of waste, and the leveraging of resources for new products and markets. The collocation of new enterprise adjacent to energy generation facilities should be a primary goal as the alternative and renewable energy industry unfolds in Lewis County.

The placement of by-product consumers, energy producers, and energy consumers together would limit the need for costly infrastructure investment, and would begin the development of sustainable economic clusters. For example, the by-products of anaerobic digestion include compost and fertilizer, with methane gas the primary product. The compost and fertilizer could be utilized by greenhouse operations, and in some circumstances organic farming, with a portion of the methane gas produced at the plant also providing heat and energy to the facility. Excess waste from the greenhouse operation could then be fed back to the anaerobic digestion plant, completing the cycle. This is one example of many potential renewable energy and value-added manufacturing clusters.

To prepare for new investment and development, the county will need to create an incentive for the formation of these relationships and value-added clusters. The identification of sites for development and investments in infrastructure and advanced permitting will make Lewis County an attractive location in addition to its wealth of resources. The formation and advancement of these industrial park sites, along with enhanced marketing and promotional efforts, will provide the county with the necessary incentives to attract industry.

The Open Access Telecommunication Network (OATN) that has been created by the Development Authority of the North Country (DANC) presents a significant opportunity for the attraction of bandwidth and data-intensive businesses. The installed network is at the leading edge of industry standards, and should appeal to a host of businesses, including,

Economic Development: Key Points

- The abundant and cherished natural resources are in part a product of the unique geography of the county. These features have also limited the development of critical infrastructure as well as population and industrial growth.
- To protect against global economic cycles, it is critical for the county to expand its industrial and economic base beyond the two primary resources of timber and raw milk.
- Lewis County is well positioned to further expand into the energy industry. Its wealth of natural resources, proximity to higher education and research institutions, and emerging businesses should be leveraged together to continue the momentum established in recent years.
- Alternative energy, specifically biofuels, presents opportunities for stimulating the agriculture and forestry industries.
- Partnerships should be established or enhanced with educational institutions. Colleges and universities within the region, as well as BOCES and local school districts, can play an important role in workforce development.
- The county should consider value-added products as a particular focus for expanding the local economy. The proliferation of these products can strengthen existing businesses as well as attract new ventures.

but not limited to: internet service providers; wireless service providers; data and security firms; video and TV providers; educational and medical institutions; manufacturing and distribution facilities; IT-intensive services such as back-office operations; and financial firms. With a major OATN network hub located in the Village of Lowville, the attraction of investment and jobs within the village center would have an enhanced impact on local businesses and the housing market.

While the alternative energy industry continues to garner much attention, existing industries in Lewis County should continue to be refined and expanded. Lewis County is the state's number one maple syrup producer. However, much of the syrup is collected and shipped out of the county to be bottled. The county has recently begun investigation into the development of a bottling facility and to explore the possibility for additional value-added maple products. These efforts, in conjunction with a potential incubator kitchen or food venture center, could result in the development of new products that will foster growth and expansion. In addition to the development of new manufacturing and industrial facilities, existing underutilized and abandoned sites are also primary

opportunities to leverage previous infrastructure development and capital. Sites such as the former Beaverite package facility and the Lyons Falls Pulp and Paper property are available for redevelopment. With a lack of infrastructure county-wide, the focus should be on developing sites that have existing underutilized infrastructure.

The presence of Fort Drum in the northern reaches of the county also presents opportunities for spill-over effects from continued base expansion. The county should investigate opportunities to absorb additional housing and services demand generated by military personnel and families by actively soliciting the engagement of DANC and FDRLO. It is recognized that a prime opportunity exists for the Village of Lowville to directly benefit from the influx of residents and play a central role in leveraging current and future investment.

Objectives and Measures

The following Objectives should provide guidance for county-level policy and decision making related to economic development. Specific strategies, or Action Items, for each Objective are listed in a table on the next page.

Objective A: Leverage the assets and momentum of the renewable and sustainable energy industry to provide a solid foundation for economic growth.

Measures:

- *Track number of alternative energy start-up companies*
- *Track volume of wood and dairy waste consumed by alternative energy operations*
- *Track volume of refuse going to Rodman landfill*
- *Track number of alternative energy demonstration facilities*

Objective B: Establish the necessary training, networking and organizational capacity to improve the county's labor pool and enhance existing businesses.

Measures:

- *Track number of programs, partnerships and companies established*
- *Track number of micro-loans applied for and obtained*
- *Number of youth (age 18-34)*

Objective C: Provide the infrastructure necessary for industrial operations to expand in or relocate to Lewis County.

Measures:

- *Number of sites prepared, sold, and developed*
- *Square feet of office space utilized in village centers*
- *Number of telecommunications-intensive firms*

Note: Issues related to the health and vitality of village centers can be found in the Community Resources & Housing Section.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Objective A: Leverage the assets and momentum of the renewable and sustainable energy industry to provide a solid foundation for economic growth.

#	Action Item	Originating From or Consistent With*					Implementation				Notes
		Comp Plan	CEDS	Blue	Black	Maple	Time Frame	High Priority	Potential Partners	Funding Resources/Strategies	
1	Hold an annual or biannual Sustainable Energy Summit between Lewis County, local businesses, higher education, and industry/research experts that will identify improvements and investments to support the continued development of alternative and renewable energy businesses within the County and surrounding region.	✓					Long-term		County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning , County IDA, NYSERDA, businesses, higher education, industry/research experts	County funded or state grants	The Summit will be a regular opportunity to establish and enhance networks and to generate ideas for leveraging collective assets. The County should take a lead role in this effort.
2	Work with SUNY ESF or other consultant on developing an action plan that will support the emergence of woody biomass production and processing within Lewis County.	✓	✓				Short-term	X	SUNY ESF , NYSERDA, relevant businesses, landowner representatives	SUNY ESF or NYSERDA funds	The action plan should also provide recognition of next steps to bring this research into practice on a large scale, and opportunities, if any, beyond the Lyonsdale facility.
3	Develop a comprehensive database and conceptual network of feedstocks and waste products for all industries. Examine opportunities for strategic links in that network that will further sustainability goals while boosting the local economy.	✓					Short-term	X	SUNY ESF , NYSERDA, ESDC, local businesses	NYSERDA funds	There may be such a database previously developed which can be amended as needed. This database can then be cross-referenced to link suppliers, producers and consumers of like feedstocks and waste products.
4	Investigate options for reducing the amount of organic waste exported from Lewis County to the Rodman Landfill and divert this waste to the production of energy within the County.	✓					On-going		County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning , DANC, NYSERDA		
5	Support the Rodman Landfill's efforts to find an end-user for the facility's naturally produced methane gas.	✓					Short-term		County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning, DANC , NYSERDA	N/A	
6	Continue to support the development of an anaerobic digestion facility that will utilize local organic waste to generate heat and power, and investigate the use of by-products by end-user.	✓					Short-term	X	County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning, NYSERDA, CCE , LCDC, LCW&SD local farms	N/A	
7	Investigate the potential for an industrial park with an agriculture-based business focus that provides tenants with low cost power via wind, geothermal, biomass, anaerobic digesters, etc.	✓	✓				Short-term	X	County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning, NYSERDA, LCDC, LCIDA, Empire State Development Corp.	CDBG economic development grants, NYSERDA, ESDC	The possibility for park tenants to send their waste streams for power production could also off-set costs elsewhere.

* Key:

Comp Plan = Lewis County Comprehensive Plan

CEDS = Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, Project Priority List

Blue = Blueway Trail Development Plan for the Black River

Black = Black River Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan

Maple = Maple Traditions Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan

Potential partners in **bold** are lead entities



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, CONTINUED

Objective A (continued)

#	Action Item	Originating From or Consistent With*					Implementation				Notes
		Comp Plan	CEDS	Blue	Black	Maple	Time Frame	High Priority	Potential Partners	Funding Resources/Strategies	
8	Develop a page on the county's website, with an accompanying presentation, that highlights the growing list of companies and initiatives taking place within Lewis County's alternative/renewable energy industry.	✓					Short-term		County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning, NYSERDA		This presentation should be aimed at an audience of potential investors, start-up companies, and existing businesses seeking expansion or other efficiencies.
9	Conduct a county-wide energy assessment of potential supply and production capacity for non-fossil fuel and renewable energy sources.	✓					Long-term	X	County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning, NYSERDA , renewable energy suppliers, other relevant businesses	NYSERDA funds	Primary goals of this study include: understanding the potential energy capacity within the county for solar, wind, hydropower, biomass, geothermal, and animal/food waste sources; and developing a marketing program for consumers, suppliers, and producers to inform on the opportunities present within the county.
10	Develop a marketing strategy that highlights the available resources, infrastructure, and existing businesses within the alternative energy industry to attract additional investment.	✓					Short-term	X	County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning, NYSERDA, ESDC, renewable energy suppliers, other relevant businesses	NYSERDA funds, ESDC, CDBG economic development grants	



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, CONTINUED

Objective B: Establish the necessary training, networking and organizational capacity to improve the county's labor pool and enhance existing businesses.

#	Action Item	Originating From or Consistent With*					Implementation				Notes
		Comp Plan	CEDS	Blue	Black	Maple	Time Frame	High Priority	Potential Partners	Funding Resources/Strategies	
1	Investigate the feasibility of a business incubator, shared use kitchen or food venture center within the county to provide assistance to beginning and established food entrepreneurs and assist smaller agricultural based added value businesses.	✓	✓				Short-term		Northeast Center for Food Entrepreneurship and the New York State Food Venture Center at Cornell University, Maple Ridge Center, County	Funding from various partners	The facility could offer services, outreach, training, and research development opportunities in areas such as business and product process development, product safety, process/product technology transfer and product commercialization.
2	Investigate industries that would potentially benefit from the cooperative model and facilitate the creation of these organizations.	✓					On-going		County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning, Lowville Producers Co-op, Chamber, LCIDA, CCE	N/A	The process could examine the Lowville Producer Co-op model, its strengths and weaknesses, and its application to other products/industries.
3	Continue to provide local access to training on business basics, including marketing, accounting, finance, and access to assistance programs to support various small businesses and larger agricultural and forestry producers.	✓			✓	✓	On-going		Small Business Development Center , County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning, Merchants Association, Chamber, LCIDA, BOCES	N/A	The county should seek to build a critical mass of interested business owners to facilitate classes being held in Lowville, rather than Watertown.
4	Encourage and assist business owners in applying for business micro loans to facilitate small business start-ups and expansions.	✓					On-going		Small Business Development Center , County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning, LCIDA		As an example, the Sun Feather Foundation provides loans to "economically and educationally challenged businesses."
5	Create a "Brain Gain Commission" in partnership with area schools, colleges, universities, businesses, and municipalities that is charged with developing an action plan for retaining and recruiting young professionals.	✓					Short-term	X	County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning , Merchants Association, Chamber, LCIDA, municipalities, higher education		
6	Assist the local business community in a process that will allow them to define a "Community Vision" for the economic future of Lewis County.	✓					Short-term		Merchants Association, Chamber , LCIDA, Downtown Lowville Business Association		Outreach could include additional social/promotional events, a business survey (potentially conducted by area JCC students), and enhancing partnerships with other organizations such as the Lowville Producers, LCIDA, and the Chamber.
7	Partner with regional education providers and relevant businesses to develop training programs such as skilled manufacturing, forestry, animal husbandry, crop production, alternative energy, and electric and instrumentation technical skills, and foster the development of energy focused degrees, concentrations, and certification programs.	✓					Short-term	X	County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning, SUNY Oswego, SUNY ESF, Clarkson University, Cornell University, JCC, BOCES	Funding from various partners	Important industry skills include: programmable logic controllers (PLC), computer numeric control (CNC), and injection molding machines.
8	Develop and support a county-wide microloan program for the establishment of new business and the expansion of existing businesses within the county.	✓					Short-term	X	County Department of Economic Development and Planning, LCDC	CDBG	



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, CONTINUED

Objective B (continued)

#	Action Item	Originating From or Consistent With*					Implementation				Notes
		Comp Plan	CEDS	Blue	Black	Maple	Time Frame	High Priority	Potential Partners	Funding Resources/Strategies	
9	Conduct a feasibility study for an on-line/distance learning/training center to be located in the Village of Lowville that will take advantage of the Open Access Telecom Network Point of Presence in Lowville.	✓					Short-term	X	SUNY Oswego, Clarkson University, Jefferson Community College , Utica College, Syracuse University, Cornell University	CDBG economic development grants	
10	Spearhead an effort to encourage BOCES and or Local School District to offer distance learning opportunities as a result of a demonstrated need.						Long-term		BOCES, local school districts, County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning		
11	Expand efforts to brand locally made products as "Pride of NY" and "Made in Lewis County, NY."	✓					Short-term	X	NYS Dept. of Agriculture and Markets, LCIDA		



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, CONTINUED

Objective C: Provide the infrastructure necessary for industrial operations to expand in or relocate to Lewis County.

[Note: Additional infrastructure elements such as roads and railroads are further addressed in the Infrastructure and Community Resources policy area.]

#	Action Item	Originating From or Consistent With*					Implementation			Notes
		Comp Plan	CEDS	Blue	Black	Maple	Time Frame	High Priority	Potential Partners	
1	Continue to investigate alternatives and options for the generation and transmission of electricity that will improve direct benefits and access to low cost electricity for residents in targeted locations within the county.	✓					On-going		County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning, NYSERDA, NYISO, NYPSC, energy producers/suppliers, LCIDA, County Municipal Power Authority	NYSERDA funds
2	Explore alternatives for the sale of low-cost electricity to industries that collocate adjacent to local generation facilities.	✓	✓				Short-term		County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning, NYISO, NYPSC, LCIDA	
3	Conduct a site assessment and feasibility study for the location of 'shovel ready' industrial sites and/or parks within Lewis County.		✓				Short-term	X	County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning , LCDC, LCIDA, Empire State Development	LCDC funds
4	Complete a Generic Environmental Impact Statement for potential industrial park sites, and undertake any required infrastructure investments to improve the marketability of these locations.	✓	✓				Long-term		County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning , LCDC, LCIDA , Empire State Development	CDBG economic development grants, ESDC programs
5	Encourage office operations to locate in places that will provide the greatest economic multiplier, such as village and hamlet centers.	✓					On-going		County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning , LCIDA, chambers, merchant associations	N/A
6	Continue efforts towards the development of a maple syrup bottling and/or co-bottling facility and the enhancement of the maple syrup products industry within Lewis County.	✓	✓				Short-term	X	County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning , LCIDA, Empire State Development Corp.	CDBG economic development grants, ESDC programs
7	Leverage the presence of the county's fiber optic network to attract new businesses.	✓					Short-term	X	LCIDA , County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning	



POLICY AREA 3: INFRASTRUCTURE & TRANSPORTATION

Policy Statement

Lewis County must promote a purpose-driven regional approach to enhancing its infrastructure systems. Assets such as road and rail networks, sewer and water systems, and energy systems are critical components to the health of our people and our economy. The county will provide guidance to towns and villages related to growth patterns, infrastructure investment, and other vital systems. This guidance will engage localities in a county-wide strategic perspective, ensuring that existing assets are maintained and additional investments are sound.

Overview

The critical elements considered as part of this Policy Area include roadways, railroads, water and sewer systems, and telecommunications.

With a population of just over 26,000 people, Lewis County is one of the most sparsely populated counties in the state. Approximately 29 percent of the population is concentrated in the nine small villages which account for 0.6 percent of the county's total area. The remaining 71 percent of the population is dispersed over a large area on farmsteads and in single-family homes in a country setting.

Due to its small population and low density of residents, the county has a limited concentration of infrastructure resources. Existing infrastructure is located where population densities permit the economies of scale necessary to justify public or private investment. Infrastructure is primarily concentrated in village and hamlet centers, and the systems are typically small and of limited complexity. The US Department of Agriculture classifies Lewis County as a Nonmetropolitan Noncore area, which is a county that does not contain an urban cluster of 10,000 or more, and often faces a "disadvantage in efforts to expand and diversify its economic base."

Strengths

Despite the limited scale of infrastructure networks, many residents speak of the quality of life they enjoy in the county. Water quality is generally considered good, and most public water systems have adequate capacity to meet current needs. In a series of meetings with each of the towns and villages, most residents were satisfied with town and county infrastructure, yet some expressed strong dissatisfaction with the condition of county highways in particular. Amidst some of the heaviest snowfalls in the east, most communities felt their highway departments do well to stay on top of plowing. In terms of roadway maintenance, public sentiment is mixed.

Telecommunications infrastructure within the county is notably one of its most advanced systems, offering world-class connectivity and network opportunities for businesses to the broader North Country region and beyond. The Open Access Telecommunications Network (OATN), developed and constructed by the Development Authority of the North Country (DANC), services Lewis, Jefferson, and St. Lawrence Counties, and connects to carrier collocation facilities in Syracuse. The OATN provides ten points-of-presence (POP), which are analogous to highway interchanges, where businesses can access the high-speed network and connect to the internet. The location of a POP in the Village of Lowville is a significant strength for Lewis County's economic hub to attract commerce and investment.

Challenges

One of the county's greatest challenges is the public's expectation for public infrastructure improvements. Infrastructure investment is a balancing act of supplying an acceptable level of service at an acceptable cost to consumers and residents. In the public realm, community expectations for the provision of services such as water, sewer, and roads must be tempered with the realities of life in a sparsely populated county. In most instances, user costs are higher for systems with small numbers of users. Additionally, as the locations of infrastructure users become more widespread, the cost per user must compensate for the added capital expense associated with installing a larger system.

A primary example of this balancing act is the provision of water service. The cost to install one mile of water line in a village setting is relatively equal to the same installation in a rural setting. However, the investment is likely to be more sustainable in a village setting, where the costs of installation, operation, maintenance, and debt service are shared amongst hundreds of users. In a rural setting, a near equal amount of costs would be shared by far fewer households. This is a clear example of economies of scale, with areas of higher population density experiencing incrementally smaller costs per user. Expectations for water and sewer service within Lewis County must be moderated by residents' desires for country living and low density development patterns.

An additional example relates to the plowing and maintenance of roadways. Many residents choose to enjoy the peacefulness and beauty of the rural portions of the county and are thus often faced with longer travel distances for commuting, shopping, and other trips. The majority of the road network in the county was established at a time when people made considerably fewer trips of shorter distances. Today, that same road network is in place amidst much higher expectations for travel, with further expectations for the continued maintenance and repair of this infrastructure despite a declining tax base and rising fuel and material

costs. Simultaneously, the county and municipalities face constant pressure from residents to *lower* taxes. The desire for better road conditions and maintenance is inconsistent with acceptable levels of taxation.

The same challenges, due to discrepancies between the public's expectations and the county's inability to provide at current levels of funding, are present in other elements of the county's infrastructure and transportation network. County government and local municipalities must face these sobering realities and plan accordingly. Lewis County must be forthright in communicating these challenges with its residents, and must support municipal governments as they do the same. At the same time, residents will be faced with adjusting their expectations for the provision of infrastructure and services.

Other issues related to infrastructure and transportation include, in no particular order:

- Disconnected and underutilized railroad network
- Lack of quick access to interstate system
- Some water/sewer systems in need of repair and upgrades
- Limited natural gas and electric infrastructure and capacity

Opportunities

Despite these challenges, there are many opportunities for improving systems and assets that serve the people of Lewis County. Targeted investments should be explored that leverage existing assets and support a critical mass. Such investments should be aimed at improving the overall quality of life for residents while minimizing risks amidst an uncertain future.

Transportation Infrastructure

The county's transportation network, which includes road, railroad, and pedestrian facilities, is a critical part of everyday life. The network supports commuting patterns, affects potential economic expansion, drives land use patterns, and helps define public space. While the transportation network is limited, the ability of residents and businesses to access these facilities plays an important role in the overall quality of life of residents.

It is not likely that major changes will occur to the state highway network in the near future, although DANC is currently examining improvements to Route 26 between the Village of Lowville and Fort Drum. The state DOT and its roadways play a vital role in defining the character of village centers, and should therefore be a consistent partner in improving safety and livability of "Main Streets," including improvements and extensions to the sidewalk system.



Outside of villages, roadway improvements should be focused on the maintenance and operation of county highways, as well as the connectivity and logic of the network. Additionally, towns should avoid building new roads into remote areas that would further break up lands important to forest management, wildlife, farming, hunting, fishing, and recreation resources. Jurisdictional and cooperative issues are discussed in the Regional Coordination policy area section.

The county should work with local towns and villages to develop a long-range plan for improvements and maintenance to roads and bridges. This initiative has been a challenge in recent years, as fluctuations in county and local budgets, coupled with unstable material costs, make it difficult to plan accurately. However, the effort should be considered in the interest of operational efficiencies and coordinated investments.

The railroad network in the county is only a fraction of what it was in its heyday. Some segments remain operational, but they are disconnected and represent a piecemeal system defined by surviving businesses. The county should continue to pursue enhancements to serve existing businesses, with the hope that the resurgence of freight rail at a national level will trickle into Lewis County and attract more businesses. Opportunities may exist for the emerging energy sector to utilize the rail system.

Public Transportation System

The county is currently studying the feasibility of a public transportation system. Currently, Birnie Bus provides the only form of mass transit, offering limited service between Lowville, Port Leyden, and Utica. The county and other regional agencies provide on-demand service to targeted residents. Additionally, many school districts use their bus fleet for community programs and events, as well as offer their buses for rental to not-for-profits and municipalities. These collective efforts, however, may not meet the needs of the entire county.

Throughout this project, residents have expressed the desire for public transit despite the low population and sparse settlement patterns that present challenges to establishing a system. Many other rural counties in New York have overcome these challenges by developing appropriately-scaled bus systems that connect residents with goods and services. Lewis County should continue to examine a potential public transportation service, recognizing present needs as well as the impact that an aging population and fossil fuel scarcity will have on public transportation and private automobile use in the future.

Infrastructure & Transportation: Key Points

- Many residents express satisfaction with some of the services and infrastructure available in the county. Suggested improvements are centered on the condition of roadways, and water and sewer systems.
- Enhancements to infrastructure can have a direct impact on attracting more businesses. Modern telecommunications, as an example, is an important factor for businesses considering expanding or relocating.

Telecommunications

The OATN presents a significant opportunity for the Village of Lowville to attract investment and jobs. One of the inherent challenges faced by Lewis County is its isolation from the surrounding region and its lack of transportation connectivity. Continuing the analogy of the OATN as a highway, Lowville's POP is the county's major information interchange, where telecommunications intensive industries such as education, health care, call centers, and multi-media production can access the network at a major switching location. This increases the village's competitiveness by providing a low-cost alternative and an incentive for companies to locate operations within Lewis County.

The attraction of telecommunications intensive companies could act to diversify the economic and business climate away from agriculture and forestry, while at the same time opening up these traditional industries to opportunities for the advanced use of information networks. These benefits will extend beyond the Village of Lowville, as DANC has installed fiber optic cable to Croghan, Beaver Falls, Lyons Falls, Turin, and Boonville. This will allow residential and small business connections to the network, and will reduce the isolation of these communities within the region.

Other Infrastructure

Additional opportunities related to this topic are addressed in the Objectives and Action Items table, including improving water and sewer systems with the potential for county-wide administration.

Objectives & Measures

The following Objectives provide guidance for county-level policy and decision making related to infrastructure and community resources. Specific strategies, or Action Items, for each Objective are listed in a table on the next page.

Objective A: Ensure the transportation network promotes economic development, is consistent with smart-growth policies, and enhances the overall quality of life in the county.

Measures:

- Miles of new and improved roadways
- Number of municipalities with long range capital plans
- Track the change of vehicle speed in village/hamlet centers
- Number of trains and rail cars utilizing tracks
- Number of miles of low-maintenance roads

Objective B: Enhance and expand public infrastructure and services in a manner that maximizes investment and supports the land use and economic goals of this Plan.

Measures:

- Miles of new telecommunications network cable
- Number of new water and sewer service connections
- Number of wireless hotspots



INFRASTRUCTURE & TRANSPORTATION IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Objective A: Ensure the transportation network promotes economic development, is consistent with smart-growth policies, and enhances the overall quality of life in the county.

[Note: maintenance, jurisdictional, and shared service issues are further addressed in the Regional Coordination policy area, trails are addressed in the Tourism and Recreation policy area.]

#	Action Item	Originating From or Consistent With*					Time Frame	High Priority	Potential Partners	Implementation		Notes
		Comp Plan	CEDS	Blue	Black	Maple				Funding Resources/Strategies	Completed	
1	Inventory, evaluate, and plan for the improvement of roadside shoulders, pullouts, and parking areas used for rest stops, scenic views, hunting areas, and access to recreational facilities (trails, waterways, picnic areas, historic sites, etc.).			✓	✓	✓	Short-term		County Highway Dept. , local highway depts., NYSDOT, NYSDEC	County staff coordinates or executes inventory and analysis, pursue funding via the Transportation Enhancements Program		
2	Support NYSDOT and local government efforts to enhance safety in hamlets and villages through traffic calming techniques.				✓	✓	On-going		Local government officials, County Highway Dept. , NYSDOT	NYSDOT Transportation Enhancements Program, National Trust's Main Street program		
3	Encourage and support NYSDOT's "context sensitive design" and the application of smart-growth principles in all infrastructure projects.				✓	✓	On-going		Local government officials, County Highway Dept., NYSDOT	N/A		
4	Support efforts to upgrade the railroad bed and tracks between Carthage and Newton Falls, including a stretch through Northern Lewis County.		✓				On-going		Lewis County IDA , Genesee Valley Transportation, NYSDOT	NYSDOT Transportation Enhancements Program		Important asset for HDK Wood Products (Harrisville) and Newton Falls Fine Paper (Newton Falls).
5	Continue to support the stabilization and improvement of the rail line between Lyons Falls and Utica.		✓				On-going		NYSDOT, Genesee Valley Transportation			
6	Continue coordinating transportation efforts as recommended in the County Coordinated Transportation Plan. The Plan should be reviewed and updated within the next five years.	✓					Short-term	X	County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning , NYSDOT, County Highway Dept., other county departments			
7	Support local efforts to change state legislation, which would limit towns' responsibilities for maintenance on low volume and minimum maintenance roads.	✓					On-going		Tug Hill Commission , town highway depts., Farm Bureau, Nature Conservancy	N/A		Investigate how this may impact access to forest lands.
8	Encourage all municipalities to develop a long-range plan for maintenance and improvements to roads and bridges.	✓					Short-term	X	County Highway Dept. , local highway depts.			Supported in the Lewis County Highway Study from 1983. This initiative should result in operational efficiencies and coordinated investment.
9	Encourage all municipal entities to create capital budgets to optimize equipment replacement and purchasing.	✓					Short-term	X	County Highway Dept., local highway depts., County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning			Supported in the Lewis County Highway Study from 1983. The exercise should investigate alternative methods of purchasing, i.e. leasing, cooperative purchasing, standardization, sub-contracting, private financing, etc.
10	Encourage all municipal entities to upgrade and standardize their budgeting, record keeping and accounting systems.	✓					On-going		County Highway Dept., local highway depts., County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning			Supported in the Lewis County Highway Study from 1983. This effort will facilitate cooperative arrangements and make it easier to see cost-saving opportunities.

* Key:

Comp Plan = Lewis County Comprehensive Plan

CEDS = Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, Project Priority List

Blue = Blueway Trail Development Plan for the Black River

Black = Black River Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan

Maple = Maple Traditions Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan

Potential partners in **bold** are lead entities



INFRASTRUCTURE & TRANSPORTATION IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, CONTINUED

Objective B: Enhance and expand public infrastructure and services to maximize investment and support the land use and economic goals of this Plan.

#	Action Item	Originating From or Consistent With*					Implementation				Notes
		Comp Plan	CEDS	Blue	Black	Maple	Time Frame	High Priority	Potential Partners	Funding Resources/Strategies	
1	Promote and protect water quality by reducing, eliminating, and preventing water pollution through storm water control and wastewater management.			✓	✓	✓	On-going		Local governments, NYSDEC , NYS DOT, USDA Rural Development	Municipalities adopt site plan review and/or subdivision regulations	
2	Complete "Last Mile" of telecommunications infrastructure, including connections to Lewis County General Hospital, Lewis County Public Safety Building, Maple Ridge Wind Farm, and through the southern end of the county to Utica.		✓				Short-term	X	Lewis County Development Corporation, Development Authority of the North Country (DANC)	DANC, EDA, USDA Rural Development Community Connect Grant Program	This initiative would complete the Fiber Loop in the county.
3	Investigate the provision for a free/low-cost wireless network in the Village of Lowville area, as well as in all village centers, to encourage business and commerce activity.		✓				Short-term		Village of Lowville, Lewis County Development Corporation	CDBG economic development grant	
4	Implement the recommendations of the county-wide water study.		✓				On-going	X	County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning, County Public Health Dept., local governments, NYSDEC	USDA Rural Development Grants and Loans, CDBGs	Ensure any system extensions are consistent with the land use goals and objectives in this Plan as well as local land use plans.
5	Encourage adjacent towns and villages to consider consolidating water and sewer operations	✓					Short-term	X	County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning, County Public Health Dept., local governments, NYSDEC	USDA Rural Development Grants and Loans, CDBGs	Ensure any system extensions are consistent with the land use goals and objectives in this Plan as well as local land use plans.
6	Continue to support efforts to restore the Croghan Island Dam, as well as the potential for development of a hydroelectric facility at the site.		✓				On-going		County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning, Village of Croghan	CDBGs, ESDC funds	Important facility that protects homes, supports recreation on the Beaver River, and is a source for fire protection and hydroelectricity.
8	Identify other locations in Lewis County where water and/or sewer infrastructure investments are necessary and are consistent with the land use planning policy established in this Plan	✓					Short-term		County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning, local government officials	Technical assistance grant through the NYSDOS Shared Service Program	



POLICY AREA 4: COMMUNITY RESOURCES & HOUSING

Policy Statement

It is the policy of Lewis County to have community resources that enhance our quality of life and improve our economic standing. These resources include affordable and quality housing, community centers, parks, education, and public safety systems. We recognize that these components are intertwined and therefore must be approached holistically. The county will actively support agencies, municipalities, and individuals as they seek to enhance these resources. Such partnerships will ensure that future generations will continue our heritage of pride and investment in our communities.

Overview

Quality of life is a concept that weaves together many unique elements including the social, cultural, economic and physical attributes of a place. The relationship between these elements creates a unique community fabric that dictates the quality of life a resident will experience. A high quality of life is often associated with affordable housing, good schools, a prospering economy, access to recreation and entertainment, and a healthy environment. However, to many citizens, another critical factor in the perception of quality of life is the interaction of people with their surroundings, including people, places, the environment, organizations and institutions. For example, multi-use trails are not only a recreation amenity, but they also enhance the mental and physical well-being of residents. Trails and recreation resources enhance quality of life by providing public health and social benefits to communities. It is the balance of all these factors that shapes the quality of life for residents in a given community. In Lewis County, quality of life elements include the unique rural setting, the small town atmosphere in village and hamlet centers, the peaceful countryside, safe communities, and a connection to the surrounding natural environment.

Strengths

Despite the limited scale of community services, many residents are satisfied with the quality of life they enjoy in Lewis County. The county's numerous village and hamlet centers are the functional cores for daily life. These activity centers have a strong sense of place and are unique to their rural and agricultural surroundings. Village centers offer the county's greatest concentration of population, and as a result, are the locations of public infrastructure and other community services, such as schools, that improve the quality of life for village residents. Nearly all of these village centers have been spared from the impacts of urban renewal and suburban sprawl, and remain relatively intact and true to their

historic beginnings. The preservation and enhancement of these community centers should be a high priority for county and local policy makers.

The county's participation in the North Country HOME Consortium is a noteworthy strength, as this organization provides access to housing funding, resources, and capacity on a regional scale. This collaborative organization was created to access funding directly through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), rather than indirectly through New York State. The consortium allows local control of federal housing funds earmarked for low- to moderate-income families. Pre-authorized not-for-profit organizations can access HUD funding directly through local channels rather than state or federal government agencies. Since 1993, the Consortium has allocated funds to assist nearly 14,000 housing units in a three-county region.

In addition to its participation in North Country HOME, Lewis County is serviced by the non-profit Snow Belt Housing Company. Formed in 1982 to promote the availability of decent, safe, and affordable housing to residents of Lewis County, Snow Belt Housing administers grants and loans for home improvement and purchase assistance, and provides grants to municipalities for community revitalization efforts. The presence of this organization is an asset to the provision of safe and affordable housing in Lewis County.

Other community resources strengths include, in no particular order:

- Excellent Schools
- Ample resources for farmers (agri-business infrastructure)
- High quality of life in villages – quiet, little or no crime, friendly people, community pride
- Responsive emergency services
- Section 8 Choice Housing Voucher Program and weatherization information
- Strong hospital and outreach clinic
- Ample youth activities
- Good libraries

Challenges

Although the county consists of small towns and rural areas, most of it is within less than an hour's drive of larger cities, including Watertown, Utica, Rome, and Syracuse. Therefore, most residents are familiar with the wealth of amenities and conveniences found in these cities and surrounding suburbs. One of the county's greatest challenges will be to

address the level of expectation that comes with that familiarity, but may not be consistent with the market realities of a sparsely populated county. These expectations must be addressed when it comes to the provision of community resources, including educational, recreational, commercial, and retail opportunities.

For example, most residents enjoy the variety of retail, dining, and service options near Watertown or Syracuse, and would prefer not to have to drive long distances to reach these businesses. While villages like Lowville and Croghan may provide many of the necessary day-to-day goods and services, they lack the size to attract multiple large retailers found in most suburban settings.

Recreational and educational resources are also high in demand, yet difficult to provide in an efficient and cost effective manner. Programmed recreational spaces such as ball fields, playgrounds, swimming pools, and hard courts are expensive to install, require maintenance, and represent operations obligations for municipalities. A noted strength in Lewis County is the provision of public libraries, youth recreation activities, and emergency response services. However, each of these require significant expenditures on the part of municipalities, and in turn, residents. In difficult economic times, with tightening municipal and household budgets compounded by rising energy costs, county residents will have to grapple with expectations related to the provision of these goods and services.

A significant challenge that will require action at both the public and private levels is the provision of safe and affordable housing. The county's housing stock is aging significantly, with nearly 40 percent of housing units constructed before 1940, and only 15 percent constructed since 1990. These figures suggest many homeowners are attempting to maintain older, less efficient homes in an area known for harsh winter weather. Predominant housing issues in Lewis County are affordability, weatherization and continued disinvestment due to prolonged periods of deferred maintenance. These issues are a direct result of an aging housing stock coupled with stagnating and declining income levels.

Recent US Census data from the 2005-2007 American Community Survey suggests that housing affordability in Lewis County declined from 2000 to 2007, with the affordability ratio increasing during this time period. A score of 2.0 is considered affordable, indicating that median home values are two times median income values; higher scores indicate a decline in affordability. It should be noted, however, that on a national scale, a score of 3.0 is considered the upper end of affordability. In 2000, the Lewis County median housing value was only 1.7 times the median household income. This increased in 2007 to median home values 2.1 times median income levels.



While affordability has changed, this data does not suggest that housing is out of reach for many families, yet affordability is trending in a negative direction. Several additional factors work to negatively impact housing affordability, including high energy costs, a long and intense winter heating season, a growing second-home market, and increasing property taxes. Relatively low income levels only act to compound these issues, making housing affordability an issue to be monitored within Lewis County.

Other community resources challenges include, in no particular order:

- Struggling village centers
- Limited, inequitable, and uncoordinated housing code enforcement
- Population that is generally resistant to change, even if for the better
- Lack of higher education facilities
- Large numbers of inefficient and non-compliant manufactured homes
- Educational and training programs in farming and industry lack the latest technologies and best practices
- Lack of emergency, special needs, and low-income housing options
- Rising housing costs affecting long-time residents and low- and middle-income households

Opportunities

Lewis County has significant opportunities to improve the quality of life for its residents through targeted investments in community resources and housing. Similar to the provision of infrastructure, investments should leverage existing assets. However, not all policies and actions need to focus solely on areas of dense populations. Investments should be aimed at improving the overall quality of life for all residents, in both village centers and rural areas, to maintain the diversity of lifestyles within the county.

Village Centers

While the labor force can be considered the economic engine of Lewis County, its hamlets and villages are the centers of county social and cultural fabric, and are an important community resource. The preservation and revitalization of the county's population centers should be considered a primary objective. Revitalization efforts should include the encouragement of higher density residential development within the core areas to increase activity, foot traffic, and accessibility of consumers to markets.

One method of achieving increased activity and coordination within village centers is the development of a Business Improvement District. Business Improvement Districts (BID) are organizations formed to provide enhanced services to the benefit of all district members. BID members

Community Resources & Housing: Key Points

- Many residents express satisfaction with their quality of life within the county. Suggested improvements are centered on issues such as the character of "Main Streets" and the condition of dilapidated housing stock.
- County and local governments must face the sobering realities of economic uncertainty and rising energy prices. These challenges, coupled with the county's low population and sparse settlement pattern, hinder the efficient provision of goods and services.
- Public schools have an opportunity to leverage their established presence in the community to provide enhanced career training for young people and adults.

pay an additional tax, with proceeds being utilized for services that benefit from economies of scale, such as advertising, streetscape improvements, security, and maintenance duties.

Several grant funding opportunities exist through various state agencies for the improvement of streetscapes, façade rehabilitation, and community revitalization strategies. Lewis County should support, promote, and train communities to take advantage of these sources of funds to reinvigorate the small town atmosphere and sense of place that make individual town and hamlet centers unique and viable places to live, work, and raise a family.

As village centers struggle to compete with larger commercial areas in the region, there are strategic steps that can be taken to restore their place in the county. A primary consideration should be given to overcoming present limitations for upper story residential redevelopment, including the requirement of on-site parking and restrictions on in-law apartments. Communities should consider the creation of public incentives for private investment in repairs and rehabilitations for long vacant village structures through the leveraging of grant resources such as the Restore NY program through the Empire State Development Corporation. The increased utilization of upper-story residential units within village centers offers a good opportunity to fill much needed voids in affordable housing close to services, while at the same time actively reinvigorating the community core.

The Lewis County General Hospital and Residential Health Care Facility has the opportunity to draw additional development into villages to meet expanding needs for assisted living environments. The county's aging population and limited housing stock make this type of development an attractive partnership opportunity for the hospital and private industry. Opportunities for assisted living housing should be explored in the largest population centers within the county.

The entire country currently faces uncertain times related to the economy, employment, housing, and energy prices. It is difficult to predict the effects that these challenges will have on the various communities in Lewis County. One potential outcome, as noted by county residents and professional planners alike, is that cities and villages will experience a rebirth of sorts, as people return to more compact communities that require less driving and offer more services. This trend has been in place at observable levels in much larger cities since the mid-1990s, but as more of a cultural shift. Another potential outcome is that population densities will shift out of Lewis County to neighboring cities such as Watertown, Utica, and Rome. These migration trends may be amplified by employment and economic concerns, as well as the risk of increased energy prices. How this will play out in Lewis County remains to be seen, but there are steps that can be taken to prepare for and encourage revitalization of villages, with established communities such as Lowville, Croghan, and Lyons Falls possibly as the direct benefactors.

Education

Lewis County residents are extremely proud of their schools. When asked about the state of education in the county, participants in the development of this Plan repeatedly noted the quality of teachers and schools as well as the wealth of programs available to both students and adults. The schools have already established themselves as community centers that are well integrated into the daily activities of residents. Moving forward, the county should partner with public schools, municipalities, BOCES, businesses, and colleges and universities in the region to further integrate these assets into the community. Opportunities exist for leveraging the established presence of local schools to help boost the economy and meet additional education needs throughout the county. In particular, public schools should partner with local farms, BOCES, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and other agriculture-related organizations to better prepare young people for modern agricultural practices and business models.

As with most components of this Plan, the major challenge facing schools is financial in nature. Specifically, residents and administrators are concerned about the stability of state aid, which comprises roughly two-thirds of most school budgets. Districts are not prepared to absorb the potential loss of all or a portion of that aid. According to a panel of superintendents and other administrators, schools rarely decline requests



for additional programs and services, and thus offer a wide variety of options for adults as well as youth. While these are important to the community, a more pro-active role in preparing for financial uncertainty is highly recommended.

Actions recommended in this Plan are designed to increase efficiency and play a more strategic role in rebuilding the local economy. The county is not positioned to control the organization and operations of public schools, but it should encourage districts to explore opportunities for increased efficiency through consolidation or shared services.

Housing

The Snow Belt Housing Company cannot currently meet the housing needs of all county residents without assistance from Lewis County. While the duplication of services and efforts should be avoided, the county should investigate the provision of additional resources that would permit Snow Belt Housing to improve its efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery. As well, the county should take a lead role in identifying targeted locations for housing investment and assistance that will be leveraged by other revitalization initiatives. By undertaking a coordination and facilitation role, the county's responsibility should be to ensure that housing improvements and initiatives are a primary consideration in comprehensive community revitalization strategies.

Additional opportunities to provide assistance to Snow Belt Housing should be explored through support of the on-going county-wide Housing Task Force. This task force can assist with outlining a comprehensive housing strategy that deals with affordability, weatherization, rehabilitation, senior housing and assisted living facilities. This task force can also help determine a comprehensive approach to code enforcement that can be applied to all municipalities within Lewis County as a minimum standard practice.

Objectives and Measures

The following Objectives should provide guidance for county-level policy and decision making related to community resources and housing. Specific strategies, or Action Items, for each Objective are listed in a table on the next page.

Objective A: Restore villages as centers of commerce, community, and civic life.

Measures:

- *Track percent change in vacancy rates in village centers*
- *Number of streetscape projects completed*
- *Track percent change in residential and commercial rents*
- *Number of façade projects completed and dollars invested*
- *Track funding obtained from community development grants*
- *Track percent change in population and housing units*

Objective B: Enhance educational facilities and programs to better serve the needs of children and adults in the community.

Measures:

- *Number of students in on-line/distance learning*
- *Number of apprenticeship positions filled*
- *Number of buses utilized during off-hours, and miles traveled*
- *Number of educational programs created and attendance*

Objective C: Encourage the provision of safe, affordable, and diverse housing options for county residents.

Measures:

- *Number of priority housing sites identified*
- *Number of affordable housing units created and/or rehabilitated*
- *Number of municipalities with In-law Apartment ordinances*
- *Number of senior housing units*
- *Dollars spent on code improvements and weatherization and number of homeowners assisted*
- *Number of emergency shelters*
- *Number of residents requiring home heating assistance*



NY Route 812 bisects the core business district in the Village of Croghan.



The age of the County's housing stock, coupled with the regional climate, make weatherization and heating system improvements a difficult task.



COMMUNITY RESOURCES & HOUSING IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Objective A: Restore villages as centers of commerce, community, and civic life.

#	Action Item	Originating From or Consistent With*					Implementation			Notes
		Comp Plan	CEDS	Blue	Black	Maple	Time Frame	High Priority	Potential Partners	
1	Develop a listing of grant and funding resources, complete with contact information, recurring dates, and eligible activities for use by County municipalities to enhance streetscapes, facades, historic structures and other community assets. This should be followed up with regularly scheduled primers and 'how-to-apply' sessions in advance of funding due dates.	✓			✓	✓	Short-term	X	Villages, County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning, NYSDOS, NYSDOT, SHPO, Tug Hill Commission, NYS DHCR	
2	Improve and expand sidewalk networks in the villages.	✓					On-going	X	Village of Lowville, NYSDOT, County	Safe Routes to School, Transportation Enhancements Program (NYSDOT), local capital projects, CDBG Small Cities
3	Encourage local governments to participate in the Certified Local Government Program, which supports historic preservation efforts.			✓	✓		On-going		Villages, SHPO	Apply for status with the State Office of Historic Preservation
4	Preserve remaining government services, agencies, and departments within the village core areas to retain a critical mass of services, businesses, employees, and local jobs.	✓					On-going		County legislators, villages	Future considerations for the relocation of existing services, agencies, or departments should offer villages as a primary consideration to enhance activity levels and support sustainable population centers.
5	Promote existing and encourage new special events such as farmers' markets and festivals to increase foot traffic and activity in the county's villages and hamlets.	✓				✓	On-going	X	Villages, merchant associations, chambers	NYS Dept of Ag & Markets
6	Inventory brownfield/spill sites in villages that would be good candidates for remediation and redevelopment through state & federal funds.			✓	✓		Short-term		Villages, NYSDOS	NYS Brownfield Opportunity Area Program (BOA)
7	Identify key sites and structures in village centers for rehabilitation and redevelopment including site/building condition and suitability for use/reuse; pursue funding these projects.	✓					Short-term	X	Villages, Empire State Development	Restore NY Program & Upstate Regional Blueprint Fund (ESD)
8	Investigate the potential formation of a Business Improvement District within villages.	✓					Long-term		Chambers, merchant associations, Tug Hill Commission	Rehabilitated structures or new buildings should be consistent with the historic village character. A mix of uses, including retail and services on the first floor and office and residences on upper floors, will add to the vibrancy of the village.

* Key:

Comp Plan = Lewis County Comprehensive Plan

CEDS = Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, Project Priority List

Blue = Blueway Trail Development Plan for the Black River

Black = Black River Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan

Maple = Maple Traditions Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan

Potential partners in **bold** are lead entities



COMMUNITY RESOURCES & HOUSING IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, CONTINUED

Objective A (continued)

#	Action Item	Originating From or Consistent With*					Implementation			Notes
		Comp Plan	CEDS	Blue	Black	Maple	Time Frame	High Priority	Potential Partners	
9	Develop a sample set of village center design guidelines, addressing streetscapes design, architectural standards, signage, access management and site design. Encourage participation from all villages.	✓					Short-term		Villages, Tug Hill Commission , County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning, NYSCA	NYSCA grant for Architecture, Planning and Design, CDBG Small Cities
10	Identify and redesign intersections or street segments where a lack of pedestrian safety and activity may be hindering the vibrancy of village centers.	✓					Long-term		Villages, NYSDOT, County Highway Dept.	Transportation Enhancements Program (NYSDOT), CDBG Small Cities, NYS DHCR Main Streets, Upstate Regional Blueprint Fund
11	Continue to support façade improvement programs so commercial building owners can receive matching grants for renovations, consistent with context-sensitive design guidelines.	✓					Short-term	X	Villages, Lewis County Development Corporation, Chamber of Commerce, merchants associations, Snow Belt Housing Company	CDBG economic development grants, NYS OCR Main Street,
12	Pursue redevelopment of the vacant Lowville Plaza, an important and underutilized site on the southern edge of the Village of Lowville.	✓					Short-term	X	Village of Lowville, Lewis County Development Corporation, County Department of Economic Development & Planning, ESDC	Restore NY (ESDC), Upstate Regional Blueprint Fund
13	Conduct an inventory of vacant or underutilized property within village centers for the purpose of redevelopment.	✓					On-going		Villages, County Economic Development and Planning, Snow Belt Housing, Tug Hill Commission	The site's vacancy has an economic impact on the village and county. It affects the perception of visitors and residents, as it is located at an important village gateway.



COMMUNITY RESOURCES & HOUSING IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, CONTINUED

Objective B: Enhance educational facilities and programs to better serve the needs of children and adults in the community.

#	Action Item	Originating From or Consistent With*					Implementation				Notes
		Comp Plan	CLDS	Blue	Black	Maple	Time Frame	High Priority	Potential Partners	Funding Resources/Strategies	
1	Explore the potential for county agencies to offer support services at local schools. These services could be targeted to adults as well as children.	✓					On-going		County government , school districts	N/A	Additional county services, i.e. medical, social, emotional, at these locations will reinforce this idea, and in some cases can reduce travel times, number of household trips, and even the amount of time students are absent from school.
2	Work with BOCES and school districts to establish a job apprenticeship or shadowing program for 9th and 10th graders.	✓					On-going		BOCES , school districts		Will help to engage their interests and exploratory skills at an earlier age.
3	Work with BOCES to expand their internship and shadowing programs to include emerging businesses such as aqua farming, organic farming, nurseries/landscaping, biofuels, and other non-traditional agri-businesses or value-added products businesses.	✓					Short-term		BOCES , school districts, County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning, Cornell Cooperative Extension		Current internship and shadowing programs are largely student-driven. As these new business types emerge, teachers and administrators could take a more active role in promoting exciting new fields and products.
4	Strive to create partnerships with educational facilities to increase the availability of specialty and higher education opportunities within the county.	✓					On-going	X	County government, school districts , higher education facilities		Personal and professional development opportunity



COMMUNITY RESOURCES & HOUSING IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, CONTINUED

Objective C: Encourage the provision of safe, affordable, and diverse housing options for county residents.

[Note: assessment related issues are addressed in the Regional Coordination policy area.]

#	Action Item	Originating From or Consistent With*					Implementation				Notes
		Comp Plan	CEDS	Blue	Black	Maple	Time Frame	High Priority	Potential Partners	Funding Resources/Strategies	
1	Identify priority sites for development/redevelopment of affordable housing units. Priority should be given to existing buildings and infrastructure, such as buildings in a village core with upper story apartments.		✓				Short-term	X	Snow Belt Housing Company , County Office for the Aging, USDA Rural Development	USDA Rural Community Development Initiative funding, NYS DHCR	
2	Pursue grants for development/redevelopment of sites for affordable housing.	✓	✓				On-going		Snow Belt Housing Company , County Office for the Aging, USDA Rural Development	NYS DHCR, NYS OCR, DANC, USDA Rural Development	
3	Encourage municipalities to develop strict code enforcement policies related to property maintenance, safety, and public health.	✓					Short-term		Local governments, Tug Hill Commission , NYSDOS		Work with Tug Hill Commission and NYSDOS on model code language and code enforcement training
4	Develop a biannual meeting with large and emerging businesses in the area to better understand the housing needs of new employees moving to the area.	✓					Medium-term		Snow Belt Housing Company, local businesses, County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning	N/A	
5	Investigate the demand for and opportunities to provide 'enriched' housing options for the elderly.	✓					Short-term	X	Snow Belt, Lewis County General Hospital, County Office for the Aging	NYS DHCR, HUD	Enriched housing is rental housing with associated housekeeping, cooking and other services
6	Through the development of model code language, encourage municipalities to permit the division of larger homes and buildings for in-law apartments, to promote affordable housing options for seniors, young adults, and small, low-income families.	✓					Medium-term		Snow Belt Housing, Local governments, Tug Hill Commission	N/A	In particular, in-law apartments found in villages help repopulate those communities, increasing the support for goods and services within walking distance.
7	Continue to utilize the resources available through membership in the North Country HOME Consortium to address housing rehabilitation needs.	✓					On-going		County, DANC, Snow Belt		The HOME Consortium is administered by the Development Authority of the North Country (DANC). County and local participation needs to be reauthorized every 3 years.
8	Continue to encourage the formation of public/private partnerships for the development and delivery of housing and rehabilitation programs.	✓					On-going		County, DANC, Snow Belt, Lewis County Opportunities	NYS DHCR	



COMMUNITY RESOURCES & HOUSING IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, CONTINUED

Objective C (continued)

#	Action Item	Originating From or Consistent With*					Implementation			Notes
		Comp Plan	CEDS	Blue	Black	Maple	Time Frame	High Priority	Potential Partners	
9	Investigate opportunities to expand and augment the provision of rehabilitation and weatherization programs through the NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal's Weatherization Assistance Program.	✓					Short-term		DANC, NYS DHCR, Lewis County Opportunities	NYS DHCR's Weatherization Assistance Program, CDBG Small Cities
10	Develop a resource that assists homeowners in determining the financial viability of home heating system conversions.	✓					Medium-term		Snow Belt, DANC, County	
11	Continue to work with the DEC regarding the use of woody biomass to heat residential structures.	✓					Short-term		County, DEC	
12	Investigate the need for emergency housing shelters and temporary and transitional housing, and assist stakeholders with the process of bringing those services to the area.	✓					Medium-term		Snow Belt, County, Lewis County Opportunities, Kindred Home, Points North Coalition	Homeless Housing Assistance Program, NYS DHCR
13	Continue to support the Snow Belt Housing Company in its development and delivery of housing programs, including housing rehabilitation and first-time home buyers programs, and the efforts of the Housing Task Force.	✓					On-going	X	County, Snow Belt, Lewis County Opportunities	



POLICY AREA 5: AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY

Policy Statement

It is our policy to actively support the county's vast agricultural and forestry resources. From the Tug Hill Plateau to the Black River Valley to the Adirondack Foothills, these assets represent our heritage and our future. Policies and actions at the county level will be designed to preserve and enhance these industries, including emerging sustainability-based practices. The county will support economic development initiatives, land use policies, and strategic alliances that will bolster the farming and forestry industries as they face a myriad of challenges in the 21st Century.

Overview

Agricultural activities have been the dominant economic engine throughout Lewis County's history. The Black River's expansive alluvial plain provides high quality soils and relatively flat terrain, creating a prime environment for grazing animals and growing crops. In addition to agriculture, the forestry and wood products industries also play major roles in the production of raw and value-added goods. Each of these industries employs hundreds of semi-skilled and skilled laborers in the creation of primary and secondary products ranging from slab and veneer wood to Adirondack chairs and wafer-thin paper gaskets.

Although the county relies heavily on the production of milk and wood products, there remains a strong diversity of production and employment opportunities within the agriculture and forestry industries. For example, the Lewis County maple industry leads the state in taps and gallons produced, with a value-added syrup products market that is beginning to grow and flourish. As well, North America's last remaining bowling pin factory is in Lewis County, also taking advantage of the region's high quality supply of maple trees. With an abundance of natural resources, Lewis County can become a leader in the development of niche, alternative, and value-added agriculture and forestry products markets.

Strengths

Agriculture

Although farm and farmland losses have occurred over time, the dairy industry in Lewis County remains strong. This critical mass of farms allows greater access to land and services, and reduces production costs and milk hauling fees. Lewis County has a strong and stable market for milk anchored by the KRAFT facility, which uses 65 percent of the milk produced in the county for cream cheese production. All farms remain

family owned and operated, with many small farms reinvigorated by Amish families or incorporated into larger farms. In addition, the dairy industry in Lewis County benefits from collective leveraging through the Lowville Producers Dairy Cooperative.

The agricultural industry is supported by many organizations, agencies, and programs. Primary among them is the NYS Agricultural District's program that regulates approximately 30 percent of the county's land base as part of Agriculture District 6. Additionally, organizations such as Cornell Cooperative Extension, Lewis County Soil and Water Conservation District, and a variety of smaller programs and businesses such as equipment dealerships, banks, and cooperatives, round out the continuum of support for agriculture in Lewis County. In 2004, the county adopted an Agricultural Enhancement Plan that outlined goals and recommendations to improve public support, profitability, and competitiveness for agriculture throughout the county.

Forestry

Lewis County utilizes a significant portion of its forest resources for the production of value-added goods, including maple syrup. As the state's largest producer of maple syrup, Lewis County's maple industry is supported by the Lewis County Maple Producers (LCMP) Association. The LCMP markets the supply of syrup to obtain a fair price for producers and provides educational and information-sharing opportunities to maintain and expand the maple syrup industry within the county. The LCMP also advocates for maple programs through joint efforts with Cornell Cooperative Extension and lobbying through state and local leaders to improve the legislative and regulatory environment for maple producers.

Beyond maple syrup, large areas of forested lands outside the Black River Valley support a significant timber harvesting economy. The forest products industry supports more than 125 logging and 30 finished products firms in the county. Contrary to log harvesting trends throughout New York State, growing stock removals in Lewis County increased 36 percent from 1993 to 2005. The county's timber growth continues to outstrip removals, with a three percent increase in timberland acreage during the same period. In addition, the quality and quantity of growing stock have increased, with a 14 percent increase in saw logs and an 18 percent increase in growing stock volumes during the same period. Thus, more acres of forest are available, with more trees on timberland that will fetch the highest value post cutting. Additionally, the state-sponsored 480-a tax relief program assists forestland owners and promotes strategic forest management by reducing tax burdens, thereby making logging a prosperous endeavor for those who wish to undertake it in a responsible manner.

The county's forest-based manufacturing industry is a mature system of timber harvesting and associated trucking, primary manufacturing, and secondary manufacturing companies. The sectors of this system are highly inter-related, with large and small supporting businesses that provide value-added services from the forest stand to retail stores. The low-grade wood market is strong in Lewis County, with approximately 36 percent of households utilizing 12,000 cords of firewood annually. In addition, the Lyonsdale co-generation plant consumes approximately 700 tons of low grade and waste wood products each day. The combination of infrastructure, resources and increasing growing stock makes the forest-based manufacturing industry poised for continued growth in Lewis County.

In addition to refined wood and dairy products, the agricultural and forest-based manufacturing industries are primary generators of waste and low-grade materials that are at the center of a burgeoning alternative energy industry in Lewis County. The technological capability to burn, synthesize, and decompose these waste streams and generate meaningful amounts of power is a tremendous asset to the county. Currently, Lewis County accounts for 50 percent of electricity generated by wood and wood waste solids in New York State. It is believed that only a small fraction of the available alternative energy potential is being harnessed via projects such as the Lyonsdale Biomass Facility, the Catalyst Renewables cellulosic ethanol demonstration bio-refinery, and anaerobic digestion processes for milk whey. Additionally, opportunities for the processing of cow manure are also being investigated. Utilizing a comprehensive strategy to take advantage of these resource streams, Lewis County can become an alternative energy leader in the North Country and throughout New York State.

Challenges

Agriculture

The agricultural products market place is global in scale, with many factors and forces impacting commodities prices in the United States and abroad. These forces can be from within the industry, such as the continued consolidation of farms and the industrial agriculture model, or external, such as regulatory and trade barriers. The global market place creates a distinct disadvantage for smaller family farms to remain competitive in agricultural commodities due to diminished economies of scale and limited access to large markets. Many of these forces continue to be outside the control of farmers and policy makers in Lewis County. However, recommendations found in the Implementation Plan tables of this section attempt to address the issues that are relevant at the county and local level.



Although agriculture remains a vital industry in Lewis County, the amount of land dedicated to farming continues to decline, with a 0.6 percent decrease from 2005 to 2006. While small in percentage, this loss represents over two square miles of farmland in one year (see side bar at right). Increased production costs and bulk price volatility continue to erode profit margins in milk production in spite of a generalized up-trend of per farm sales adjusted for inflation. While many agri-businesses that support agriculture still exist, the slow attrition of specialized support services may contribute to the further decline of farms over time.

Keeping up with changing technologies is another challenge in the dairy business. Many small- and medium-sized farms do not have access to the capital required to purchase the technological investments and upgrades needed to stay competitive. As well, many farm businesses lack sufficient labor, telecommunications technologies, and in some cases, the road and bridge infrastructure needed to support farm activities. Each of these contributes to increased costs, unrealized potential, decreased profitability, and a loss of competitiveness.

The New York State administered Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO) program provides a set of federal regulations that control water pollution from medium and large farms, with requirements based on the number of animal units on each farm. Dairy farmers have expressed concern that if current CAFO regulations were eventually required of all farms, regardless of size, the small operations would face additional challenges to profitability.

A separate and unique challenge to the modern farming industry is legacy farming, where farmers are confronted with difficulties in transferring farms from one generation to the next. Typical business models outside of the farming industry are developed and managed with a specific exit strategy for owner/operators. However, farms are often managed within the same family for multiple generations, making transfer to individuals outside the family difficult and tenuous. The farming community also lacks a sufficient number of young farmers interested in taking on the hard lifestyle associated with agriculture. Additionally, there are high costs associated with starting new farms and purchasing turnkey farms. New farmers often lack capital needed to purchase land and fund farming activities.

Smaller farms looking to expand are facing increasing competition for land from developers and very large dairy farms. This struggle has contributed to the escalation of land values and uncertainty about the long-term affordability of the industry due to the lack of supporting agricultural lands. Additionally, the growing of crops such as willow or corn for energy may also increase competition for prime agricultural lands.

Agriculture & Forestry: Key Points

- Expand programs and policies that strengthen agriculture and forestry activities on a county-wide basis and for individual enterprises to improve efficiency and productivity.
- Improve education and outreach to the general public on the importance of agriculture and forestry to Lewis County's economy, and the link between these resources and the tourism industry and overall quality of life.
- Promote the development of value-added and alternative farming activities to diversify the local economy, create jobs, and compete on a regional scale with products "Made in Lewis County!"

Many farmers have also experienced incidences of conflict with non-farmers. There are concerns that the attitudes of the non-farm population are changing, and current levels of support for agriculture may deteriorate in the future. New non-farm development can negatively impact the success of the agricultural industry in part through the fragmentation of farmlands. Additionally, the need for increased public services and infrastructure brought by new development often leads to tax increases for all landowners.

Forestry

Although Lewis County has significant forest resources, numerous challenges exist to optimize the wood products industry and access timber resources on state owned forestlands. Concerns about high logging and transportation costs, exotic and invasive pest species, foreign competition, the subdivision and fragmentation of quality forestland, and a locally declining demand for wood products are all considered threats to the forest industry. The loss of locally-owned sawmills, paper plants, other forest product manufacturers, and primary markets have resulted in the loss of jobs and businesses related to timber, which in turn has created uncertainty for local workers. Increasing portions of the county's timber resources are being exported out of the area prior to maximizing local value-added opportunities.

Forest products are bought and sold on a global scale, and international competition in the forest products industry has grown significantly. Lumber can be traded similar to other commodities such as oil and gasoline, leading to a reduction of profit margins for local companies. Unplanned and over-development of forested areas has resulted in the

Economic Impact of Lost Farmland

According to the 2007 NYS Agricultural Statistics Service, Lewis County lost 1,300 acres of farmland between 2005 and 2006. The following table uses an economic multiplier to quantify the economic impact of the loss of productive farmland based on average yields per acre for numerous crops within Lewis County in 2006.

	Yield per acre*	Commodity Value**	Value per acre	Total Value (1,300 acres)
Hay-baled (tons)	2.5	\$117	\$293	\$380,250
Corn (bushels)	112	\$3.47	\$389	\$505,232
Soybeans (bushels)	36	\$9.39	\$338	\$439,452
Oats (bushels)	64	\$3.08	\$197	\$256,256
Wheat (bushels)	43	\$7.32	\$315	\$409,188

* Yields for Lewis County, New York Agricultural Statistics 2006-2007 Annual Bulletin.

** New York Crop & Livestock Report, December 2008

As can be seen in the table above, the New York Agricultural Statistics Service reports that an acre of cropland in Lewis County has an approximate commodity value between \$200 and \$400. At an average value of say \$300 per acre, one square mile (640 acres) of commodity cropland in Lewis County is worth approximately \$192,000. This measure is more accurate and appropriate on a per farm / per acre basis, and is less likely to provide accurate values when dealing with farmland values countywide.

According to a 1996 study by the Cornell Cooperative Extension Department of Agriculture, Resource, and Managerial Economics[†], the multiplier effect for agricultural production in New York (dairy or crops) is 2.3 for total income. This means that every \$1 increase in income or payroll at a given farm creates \$2.30 of income in the local economy through products and services that support agriculture (see page 60 for more information on economic multipliers). Therefore, from the table above, the economic impact of a loss of 1,300 acres of soybeans is equivalent to a loss of approximately \$1,010,740 (\$439,452 x 2.3) to the economy in a calendar year. This clearly illustrates the value of farmland to the economy of Lewis County and makes a strong case for its protection and enhancement.

[†] Policy Issues in Rural Land Use, Vol. 9, No 2, Cornell Cooperative Extension Department of Agricultural, Resource, and Managerial Economics, December 1996.



Alternatives to Traditional Farming

In 1985, the USDA created the Alternative Farming Systems Information Center (AFSIC) to locate, access, organize and distribute information related to sustainable and alternative agricultural systems, crops and livestock. The AFSIC developed a listing of Alternative Crops and Enterprises for Small Farm Diversification, which highlights innovations being utilized throughout the US by farmers in attempts to diversify operations and further leverage economic opportunities associated with farming and the rural way of life. This list provides ideas for farms in Lewis County, as well as for county staff and agricultural support services. Relevant parties should explore these non-traditional farming opportunities as they look to expand this emerging sector of the economy.

The listing offers alternative field crops for feed, forage, fiber, fuel, edible and industrial oils, food grains, pseudo-cereals, and legumes. As well, alternatives for farm and home enterprises include opportunities for enhanced services, recreation and education, value-added products, and on-farm processing.

The following is a sample from the USDA publication on farm and home enterprises:

Services

- Antique shop/antique restoration
- Direct marketing operations - U-pick, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)
- Composting services and products
- Custom planting and care of vegetable gardens
- Farm sitting, gift shops
- Pet motels for large and small animals

Recreation and Education

- Fee hunting and fishing/game farms
- Hunting, fishing, and nature hike guides, tours for school children and the general public
- Lectures on herbs, gardening at a farm
- Museum of old farm equipment on working farm
- Petting zoo, trail rides, sleigh rides with work horses
- Vacations on a farm

Value-added Products/On-farm Processing

- Confections and candles
- Dried fruits and flowers
- Fresh or stone ground grains, wheat-weaving
- Honey and beeswax products
- Meat processing, e.g. jerky
- Sawmill, soap-making, wool processing and spinning

subdivision of forested lands, making large scale forestry operations increasingly less viable. Fragmentation of forest ownership has also increased the competition for use of forests between recreational users and the timber industry. There is also concern that there are changing attitudes and less support for forestry operations amongst neighboring and recreational tourist populations.

Many in the forest products industry continue to be concerned about taxation and assessment policies which penalize forest landowners and make it less likely that landowners will engage in forest management and timber sales. Limitation on the use of seasonal roads for logging operations along with deteriorated road and bridge conditions increase logging costs and limit productivity. There is also a concern that the forest industry in Lewis County is not recognized for its economic contributions, and that county government is not sufficiently involved to maximize forest industry opportunities.

Maple Products

Maple producers are concerned about the long-term health of maple trees and labor shortages. A recent DEC Forest Health Survey indicated several areas of severe defoliation within Lewis County due to numerous environmental and pest causes. The LCMP association also has raised concerns regarding forest health, and this issue remains a critical challenge to the maple industry. Additionally, many small maple syrup producers do not meet the agricultural exemption criteria and thus do not benefit from the tax relief received by other farmers. The abundance of producers and lack of close markets has kept competition high and consumer prices low. While being the leading county in the actual production of maple syrup, Lewis County is near the bottom in production per tap. In 2005, the most recent year of available data, Lewis County was first in taps, overall gallons produced, and number of producers, yet 31st of 53 New York counties in production per tap.

Opportunities

Agriculture

Lewis County has a strong agricultural industry, an expansive natural resource base, and an idyllic rural community character. Each of these elements plays a significant role in resident quality of life, and act as the economic foundation of the county. However, given the challenges, Lewis County's dairy farms, forest industries, maple producers, and other agri-businesses need enhanced support in order to remain competitive.

The county's natural resource base provides many opportunities for agribusiness to be developed as a cornerstone of its economic development initiatives. Critical elements and opportunities include farmer training, enhanced marketing, creation of alternative, niche, agri-tourist and value-added farms (see sidebar at left), and efforts to enhance public awareness about agriculture in the county. Smaller farms in particular can be maintained through alternative and niche farming, and existing larger farms could diversify to include value-added products. While milk is likely to continue to be the primary agricultural product, there are many opportunities to strengthen the forest products and maple industries as well as promote more locally-grown food, value-added products, and specialized farms.

The joint development of a community-kitchen or food venture center should be explored that will permit local entrepreneurs, farmers, and existing businesses to experiment and undertake research and development on new products from existing raw materials. Such a facility could be linked with educational institutions to provide opportunities for classroom students and training programs for residents. Research of this kind into the development of value-added products will help strengthen markets for raw and semi-improved dairy and maple products.

In order to support the agricultural industry, Lewis County should implement the various recommendations found in its Agricultural Enhancement Plan, the Black River Watershed Management Plan, the Blueway Trail Development Plan, and other tourism and recreation strategies. Recommendations found in these plans that are consistent with the scope and purpose of this Plan are repeated in the Implementation Tables. Lewis County is in a unique position to take a leadership role in coordinating activities, creating policy, and creatively funding programs that continue the agricultural traditions of the area. Policies should be initiated to ensure that decisions made at the county level support the continued expansion of agricultural businesses and funding provided for effective coordination and implementation.

The numerous agencies and organizations that exist to support agriculture should enhance coordination efforts to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of farmers and value-added businesses. For example, Lewis County maple producers are not as efficient on a per tap basis as many of their counterparts. The county should assist the investigation into why this is the case, and coordinate solutions and strategies to mitigate any weaknesses in methods or technology. In addition, the maple products industry is currently working with the county on the development of a maple processing and bottling facility. This is an opportunity for maple producers to gain some economies of scale in the bottling and sales of syrup, while also opening the door for the manufacture of value-added products such as candies, sweeteners, and novelty-food items.

Forestry

With a strong low-grade wood market already in place, Lewis County should focus a significant amount of its attention on the development of value-added products from high-grade wood. High-grade wood users and the value-added process, such as furniture and cabinet makers, provide more economic activity than low-grade users, such as paper mills, for the same volume of material. Existing users of high-grade wood should be supported through business management and marketing assistance to retain jobs and expand employment opportunities in the forest products industry. The value-added opportunities from finished wood products also leverage the ingenuity and creativity of local entrepreneurs, artisans, carpenters, and trades people, and will help build the forest products industry cluster in Lewis County.

Although a concentration on value-added products from high-grade wood should be a primary consideration, the continued advancement of the use of low-grade wood materials should not be overlooked. Existing DEC regulations prohibit the transport of firewood greater than 50 miles from its source without being heat treated to a specific core temperature. The construction of a dry kiln could produce firewood for transport outside of Lewis County, likely sold as low-volume, high mark-up goods in convenience and grocery stores throughout the state.

Low-grade wood materials are also the primary fuel source of the alternative energy industry. A significant level of research and investment is taking place within New York State and beyond to develop technologies that harness the energy potential from wood. The county should continue to promote efficient utilization of all forest resources to minimize untapped waste and encourage a sustainable resource cycle. The county should expand its partnerships with area institutions and organizations to enhance forest management practices, while concurrently seeking methods to expand the forest-based manufacturing and alternative energy industries.

Objectives and Measures

The following objectives should provide guidance for county-level policy and decision-making related to agriculture and forestry. Specific strategies, or Action Items, for each Objective are listed in a table on the next page.

Objective A: Expand programs and policies that strengthen the dairy, maple and forest product industries.

Measures:

- Number of Agricultural Enhancement Plan (AEP) recommendations fulfilled
- Number of hours devoted to implementation of the AEP
- Number of farms receiving tax incentives, by size
- Number of PDR or LDR agreements
- Dollars dedicated to farmland preservation

Objective B: Improve education and outreach to industry, organizations, municipalities, and general public regarding important issues pertaining to agriculture, forestry, and the environment.

Measures:

- Number of training/educational sessions offered and their attendance
- Dollars spent on agri-business development
- Number of new farmers and farm transfers
- Number of forest product marketing initiatives and local business involvement

Objective C: Promote programs and policies that develop value-added, niche, alternative, and agri-tourist oriented farming activities.

Measures:

- Number of farms offering agri-tourism 'products'
- Number of CSA's created and farmers supported
- Number of new value-added products entering market place
- Track volume of wood waste utilized for alternative products
- Track change in overall sales of products and services

Agritourism

In addition to alternative, niche, and value-added product opportunities, farmers can also enter the growing agritourism industry. Many farm businesses in New York State today are opening their doors to visitors. Farm stands, wineries, maple syrup and honey producers, greenhouses and plant nurseries, petting zoos, and Christmas tree farms are just a few of the many types of farm-based businesses that have catered to the public's curiosity surrounding the production and manufacture of agricultural products.

As a result, farmers are undertaking marketing, promotions, and advertising activities along with their daily business operations. According to a 2000 market study, anywhere from one-fifth to one-half of agritourism visitors originate from their home county. Due to Lewis County's sparse population and remote location, marketing to outside communities will be important for the creation of a sustainable agritourism industry.

Understanding the characteristics of visitors is another important component of developing programs and marketing efforts. According to the 2000 market study, the predominant visitor group was family (72%), followed by friends (31%). The average size was found to be between two and four persons, consisting largely of children with adults ages 20-59, and more than three-quarters of visitors making day trips.

The study also found that a large number of customers learned about agritourism businesses via word-of-mouth, followed by the newspaper and business signage.

The owner's type of business will likely influence the make-up of its customer base. For example, farm-stands attract predominantly local traffic, while a winery or farm-stay bed and breakfast garners visitors from throughout the region and possibly the state and beyond. Regardless of marketing efforts and the mix of customers, the long-term success of any agritourism business depends on the quality of the experience and products that visitors receive and the spread of positive word-of-mouth advertising.

Adapted from Agritourism in New York: A Market Analysis, by D. Hilchey, Cornell University, and D. Kuehn, SUNY ESF, 2001.



AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Objective A: Expand programs and policies that strengthen the dairy, maple and forest product industries.

#	Action Item	Originating From*						Implementation				Notes
		Comp Plan	CEDS	Blue	Black	Maple	Time Frame	High Priority	Potential Partners	Funding Resources/Strategies	Completed	
1	Update and implement the County Agricultural Enhancement Plan (AEP) and investigate the creation of an entity or partnership between the county and other ag-related agencies to lead and manage its implementation.		✓				Short-term	X	County, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Lewis County Soil & Water District, municipalities, THC	Various sources depending on implementation item		
2	Investigate the creation of an agricultural development specialist position for the day-to-day implementation of the AEP and to provide expertise on agricultural economic development.	✓					Medium-term		County, Cornell Cooperative Extension , Lewis County Soil & Water District	County funds		This could be a county position or a partnership with CCE and/or LCSWD.
3	Continue support for the Cornell Cooperative Extension, Lewis County Soil and Water Conservation District, and other ag-related efforts including the "Regional Come Farm with Us" program.		✓				Short-term	X	County, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Lewis County Soil & Water District, THC	County funds		
4	Support Cornell Cooperative Extension's efforts to create a Dairy Institute, complete with training modules for skills such as calf management.	✓					Short-term		County, Cornell Cooperative Extension , local farms	CCE funds		
5	Investigate the benefits of partnering with Jefferson County Agricultural Development Corporation to enhance the health of farming in the region.	✓					Short-term	X	County, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Jefferson County Ag Development Corp	N/A		
6	Consider strengthening county and local Right-to-Farm and Right-to-Forestry Laws to include methods of conflict resolution.	✓					Long-term		County, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Lewis County Soil & Water District, NYS Ag & Markets, DEC	N/A		Right-to-Farm and Right-to-Forestry acts at the local level protect these industries from certain nuisance liabilities.
7	Investigate the creation of a dedicated Farmland Preservation Fund at the county level to fund the development of a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program, and to provide working capital for farming continuation and the transition from one generation to the next.	✓					On-going		County, CCE, THC, Ag&Mkts, DOS	N/A		Researching this program could be done by planning staff. The actual program is funded by a combination of tax dollars, grant funds, and fees.
8	Continue to provide opportunities for tax incentives through agricultural exemption programs for maple and other agricultural producers.	✓					Short-term		County, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Lewis County Soil & Water District, NYS Ag & Markets, DOS, NYS Taxation & Finance	N/A		
9	Continue to support the process of revising the Lewis County soil survey maps.		✓				On-going	X	Lewis County Soil & Water Conservation District	N/A		Project is underway, expected to be completed in 2015.

* Key:

Comp Plan = Lewis County Comprehensive Plan

CEDS = Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, Project Priority List

Blue = Blueway Trail Development Plan for the Black River

Black = Black River Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan

Maple = Maple Traditions Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan

Potential partners in **bold** are lead entities



AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, CONTINUED

Objective B: Improve education and outreach to industry, organizations, municipalities, and the general public regarding important agriculture and forestry issues.

#	Action Item	Originating From*					Implementation				Notes
		Comp Plan	CLDS	Blue	Black	Maple	Time Frame	High Priority	Potential Partners	Funding Resources/Strategies	
1	Continue to work with the Cornell Cooperative Extension to expand training and education, with a concentration on public education and training for local boards.	✓					On-going		County, CCE, Ag&Mkts, municipalities, real estate professionals	Current county funding	
2	Work with the Lewis County IDA to place more emphasis on support of farm businesses and ag-related business development.	✓					Short-term	✗	County, LCIDA		Ensuring that the LCIDA benefits a diversity of agricultural businesses is an important priority.
3	Develop an agricultural clearinghouse website for guidance, education, assistance, forms, and other relevant information in support of the county's agricultural objectives.	✓					Short-term	✗	County, CCE, THC, DEC, Ag&Mkts, municipalities		
4	Support and strengthen mechanisms or information networks geared towards connecting parties within the agricultural community. For example, a network of farmers looking to sell/divest operations with a network of beginning farmers seeking opportunities to start their own operation.	✓					On-going		County, CCE, THC, DEC, Ag&Mkts, municipalities	County funds	Tompkins County is currently developing a "LANDLINK" system that accomplishes this task. Also currently offered by NYS Farmlink / Farmnet.
5	Work with the forest products industry to strengthen the marketing of wood resources and products within Lewis County, including programs that encourage low-grade wood use.		✓				Short-term	✗	County, CCE, THC, APA, DEC, Ag&Mkts, municipalities, ANCA		
6	Develop a 'decision making tree' for pursuing production on agricultural lands.	✓					Long-term		CCE, County		Cornell Cooperative Extension is currently developing this program.



AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, CONTINUED

Objective C: Promote programs and policies that develop value-added, niche, alternative, and agri-tourist oriented farming activities.

#	Action Item	Originating From*					Implementation				Notes
		Comp Plan	CEDS	Blue	Black	Maple	Time Frame	High Priority	Potential Partners	Funding Resources/Strategies	
1	Establish programs that promote the redevelopment of existing farms for non-traditional farming uses and provide best practices and model reuse scenarios.		✓				Short-term	X	County, CCE, THC, DEC, Ag&Mkts, municipalities	County funds	This task is also part of the implementation of the county Agricultural Enhancement Plan.
2	Coordinate with the Cornell Cooperative Extension and other organizations on the development and implementation of programs that promote and market locally grown foods.	✓					Short-term	X	County, CCE, THC, DEC, Ag&Mkts, municipalities, LCIDA, Chamber, local retailers	SARE Farmer/Grower Grant Program	The "Buy Local! Buy Lewis County!" brochure recently developed by CCE and other partners is a good example. The county should support widespread distribution of this brochure.
3	Continue to support the creation of farmers markets and community supported agriculture (CSA) operations that promote locally grown foods and products, including meat, dairy, and vegetables.	✓					On-going		County, CCE, THC, DEC, Ag&Mkts, municipalities	NY Ag & Mkts, SARE Farmer/Grower Grant Program	This task is also part of the implementation of the county Agricultural Enhancement Plan.
4	Investigate the creation of a farm micro-enterprise program focused on fostering agricultural innovations and value added products within niche farming and agri-tourism markets.	✓					On-going		County, CCE, DEC, ESDC, LCIDA, Chamber	NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant, SARE Farmer/Grower Grant Program	
5	Continue to promote a branding campaign for products grown or produced in Lewis County.	✓					Short-term	X	County, CCE, municipalities, LCIDA	County funds	Support and/or expand the "Buy Local! Buy Lewis County!" and "Made in Lewis County" initiatives.
6	Explore how the county can promote use of an industrial dryer or kiln for local firewood.	✓					Medium-term		County, CCE, DEC, ESDC, LCIDA		Coordinate this exploration with the major wood products industries in the County.
7	Support other wood-based technologies including willow growth for biofuels.		✓				Short-term		County, CCE, DEC, ESDC, LCIDA, SUNY ESF		
8	Work with Fort Drum personnel and decision makers to expand marketing at the base for local products.		✓				Short-term	X	County, CCE, THC, DANC, FDRLO	SARE Farmer/Grower Grant Program	
9	Explore other partnerships to promote agriculture including cooperative programs with organizations such as the Wine and Culinary Center in Canandaigua, NY.	✓					Short-term		County, CCE, THC, DEC, Ag&Mkts, municipalities, NY Wine and Culinary Center		The New York Wine and Culinary Center actively promotes agricultural products grown in the state. Such a partnership can open up new markets in other regions of New York.
10	Assist local farms to partner with tourist destinations in the development of weekend vacation packages.	✓					Short-term		County, CCE, farms, tourist destinations, Chamber		

**POLICY AREA 6: NATURAL RESOURCES & THE ENVIRONMENT****Policy Statement**

Lewis County has an abundance of natural resources, including water, wind, soils, and wildlife. Together with our citizens, they form a unique ecosystem that must be preserved and sustained for future generations. These assets are the foundation for the quality of life we enjoy and play a major role in people's decisions to live in or visit Lewis County. The county will provide leadership by promoting sound development practices, supporting strategic land use planning, and encouraging community stewardship initiatives to reduce or eliminate the degradation of these resources.

Overview

The economy of Lewis County is largely dependent upon the health of the natural environment. The productivity of the agricultural and forestry industries is directly tied to the natural features that shape Lewis County: the Black River Valley, Tug Hill Plateau, and Adirondack foothills. The county's forests and farmlands can be considered the lungs of the regional economy, with its survival closely linked to the management of these resources. As well, the county's tourism industry is reliant upon a healthy and accessible natural environment and the unique rural character associated with Lewis County's varied landscape. Hikers, snowmobilers, trail riders, and other recreational enthusiasts enjoy Lewis County's diverse opportunities for passive and active outdoor activities. Therefore, the protection, enhancement, and sustainable use of these environmental features are important to the economic future of Lewis County residents and businesses.

Strengths

Lewis County's natural environment contributes greatly to the high quality of life residents enjoy, offering clean water and air resources, diversified wildlife habitats, and numerous recreational opportunities. The topography of the county is considered one of its greatest assets. From a visual and aesthetic perspective, the Tug Hill Plateau and the Adirondack Foothills offer some of the most dramatic scenic views within the county. The undulating and climbing terrain of these features offers a stark contrast to the Black River plain, which is most evident when touring the county from west to east or vice versa.

Historically, the Black River and its flood plain was the life line for county residents, with most communities sprouting along its banks or within reach via smaller water courses. Although the Black River does not currently function as a primary community artery, it maintains a prominent role in the natural environment of Lewis County. Throughout

most of the county, the river is slow moving, with little vertical drop as it meanders between Lyons Falls and Carthage. These characteristics make the Black River a high-quality recreational amenity, affording opportunities for boating, fishing, kayaking and sight-seeing. As part of a multi-county planning effort, Lewis County is involved in the development of the Black River Watershed Management Plan. This Plan will offer comprehensive recommendations related to water quality and environmental protection of the watershed.

In addition to recreational opportunities, the Black River and tributaries such as Moose River, Beaver River, and Deer River are locations for hydro-electric power stations that generate approximately 13 percent of the county's total electricity production. As one of the county's first non-fossil fuel sources of power, these watercourses are the precursor to the emerging alternative energy industry. One of the most prominent and successful ventures in harnessing the potential of the natural environment is the development and operation of the Maple Ridge Wind Farm. This complex, located on the northern ridge of the Tug Hill Plateau, has established Lewis County as a focal point in the discussion of renewable energy resources. The winds coming across the Tug Hill are some of the strongest in New York State, and now represent a significant asset to Lewis County residents.

While the county's topography, watercourses, and wind potential are notably some of its greatest assets, it is the rural/agricultural landscape and land use pattern that provides Lewis County with a unique natural resource strength. The scenic views and long vistas across the varied landscapes are exceptional in quality and quantity. However, much of these patterns are due to the underlying high quality soils. The historic development patterns throughout the county are directly linked to the presence, or absence, of high quality soils and other natural resources.

Challenges

Communities often take a passive approach to the design and location of development when there is the perception of little growth. However, over time, a small number of developments can have significant impacts on valuable natural or cultural resources. This is a particular challenge for the small communities in Lewis County. In the interest of job creation and economic development, a town or village can be faced with a scenario of permitting a new industry or residential subdivision whose design or location conflicts with community, land use, or environmental objectives.

From a regional or county perspective, the lack of consistent land use regulations, natural resource protections, and perceptions of private property rights is a significant challenge to overcome in developing policy recommendations across numerous municipalities. The diversity of

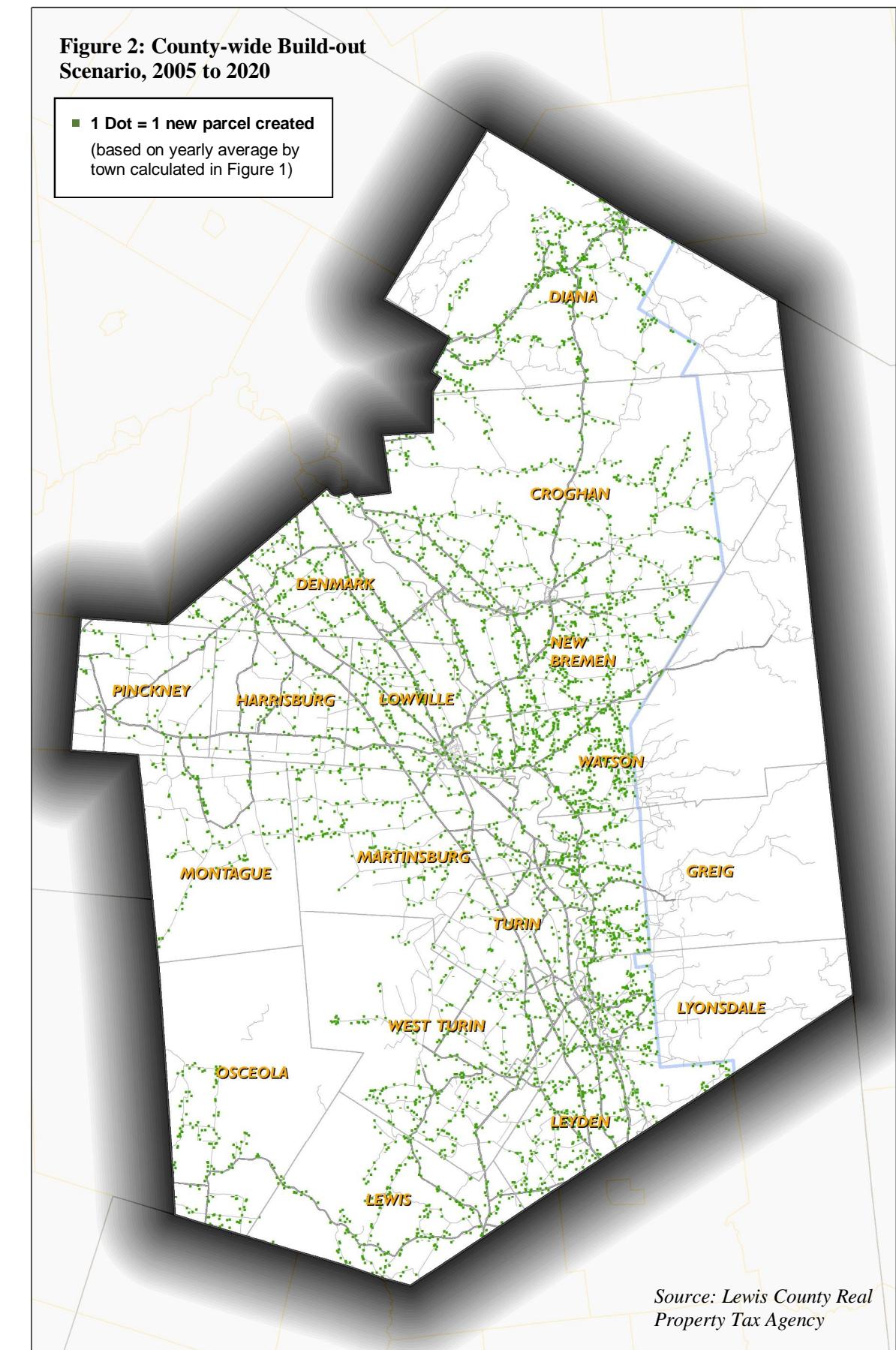
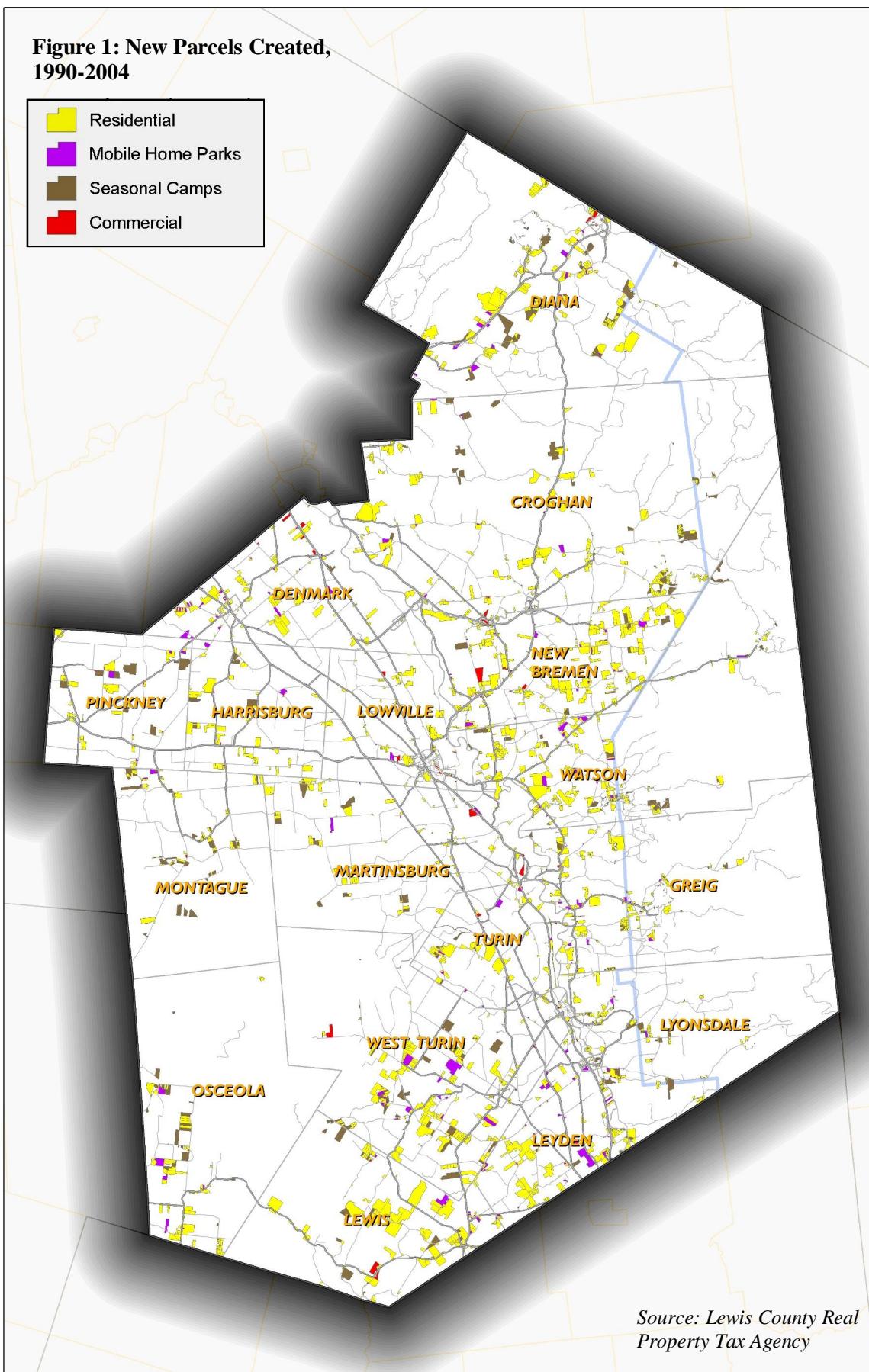
landscape types throughout the county makes this even more difficult, eliminating the possibility of single or catch-all policies to be useful for Osceola on the Tug Hill Plateau and Lowville in the Black River plain. Lands suitable for development are often those most suitable for profitable agriculture or forestry. The challenge for Lewis County is to balance development needs with the preservation of productive soils for farming and healthy forests for logging. While many of the county's natural features serve to limit development, they also contribute to the environmental health of the landscape. Poor or unplanned development can degrade these resources resulting in loss of water quality, open spaces, rural character, and wildlife habitats. Meanwhile, over-development could lead to a loss of environmental integrity, impacting tourism and recreation industries as well as agricultural activities.

Outdoor recreation can also have a negative impact on the environment, with the most sensitive and fragile natural resource environments attracting the most traffic and attention. Areas such as wetlands, watercourses, and steep slopes offer dramatic experiences and scenic qualities that are improved or amplified when experienced firsthand. In these instances, traffic volumes for pedestrians and motorized vehicles should be anticipated and properly mitigated. For example, a well planned motorized trail system, combined with proper rider behavior, is critical to preserving sensitive wetlands.

Good planning will also limit development impacts on the agricultural land use pattern that dominates the county's small towns. Currently, some municipalities lack zoning ordinances, and many more lack a comprehensive plan that sufficiently lays out a vision for the future of the community. Without proper land use and zoning regulations, county municipalities are not equipped with the proper tools to protect natural resources or mitigate potential environmental impacts associated with development.

Over time, a significant amount of the county's farmland and forestland has been carved up by development. Figure 1 at right shows the amount of new tax parcels created between 1990 and 2004. During that 15-year period, the county saw approximately 4,400 new tax parcels, including 1,300 single-family residential properties. This occurred during a time when the county lost population. Several factors contributed to this disparity, including the migration from Lewis County villages to the surrounding countryside, the development of second homes and seasonal camps, and a population that shifted from old homes to new construction.

These development patterns are a concern because of the loss of valuable natural resources on farms and in forests. If this trend continues, as shown in Figure 2, the county will experience a significant amount road frontage development, resulting in the fragmentation and decreased accessibility of prime farming and forestry lands.



Chapter 3: Vision and Implementation

POLICY AREA 6
NATURAL
RESOURCES
& THE
ENVIRONMENT



Opportunities

Lewis County has an extensive diversity of natural resources that cross multiple jurisdictional boundaries and are encompassed by a patchwork of municipalities. Although development pressures are currently low in the county, a proactive approach to sound land use and development practices should be a high priority in order to preserve these county-wide assets. There is the need for expanded coordination of land use and development policies associated with existing agricultural, environmental and natural resources. The county, in partnership with entities such as the Tug Hill Commission, the Adirondack Park Agency, the NYSDEC and the Lewis County Soil and Water Conservation District, should cooperatively develop a series of recommended design guidelines for municipalities that promote best practices and provide tools for the protection of prime agricultural soils, rural character, and sensitive environmental features. These issues are addressed in a limited fashion in the County Character Area Plan chapter of this document. A more detailed set of design guidelines could be modeled on a document entitled "Greenway Connections" established by the Dutchess County Planning Department.

To further coordinate a county-wide discussion on natural resource preservation, a county task force made up of state, county, and local entities with members of the general public could be charged with developing a priority listing of properties and environmental features that are worthy of preservation. As a follow up, a purchase of development rights (PDR) or lease of development rights (LDR) program could be created with willing property owners on lands identified by the county as critical preservation initiatives. Funding and assistance in the development of these programs is available through the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets.

The Black River Watershed Management Plan makes numerous recommendations regarding the protection of this important hydrologic resource through the development of best management practices for the use of pesticides, maintenance of septic systems, land use patterns, and other impacts to water quality. Efforts should be made on the part of the county to have municipalities adopt the recommendations from this Plan, and seek ways to coordinate any associated county-wide implementation strategies.

The county can also take a leadership role in the development of programs to educate visitors on the appropriate enjoyment of Lewis County's natural resources. This program can be developed in coordination with the NYSDEC, the Tug Hill Commission, and the Adirondack Park Agency to provide a unified voice on the acceptable utilization of recreational facilities and natural features during their stay in Lewis County.

Natural Resources & the Environment: Key Points

- Preserve critical environmental resources, such as farm soils and forestland, to protect the local economy directly connected to the agriculture and forestry industries.
- The preservation of Lewis County's rural character is critical to sustaining the high quality of life enjoyed by residents and the resources that make the county a destination for recreation and tourism.

Objectives and Measures

The following objectives should provide guidance for county-level policy and decision-making related to natural resources and the environment. Specific strategies, or Action Items, for each Objective are listed in a table on the next page.

Objective A: Preserve and protect critical environmental resources, including agricultural soils, hydrology, open spaces, woodlands, and wildlife habitats.

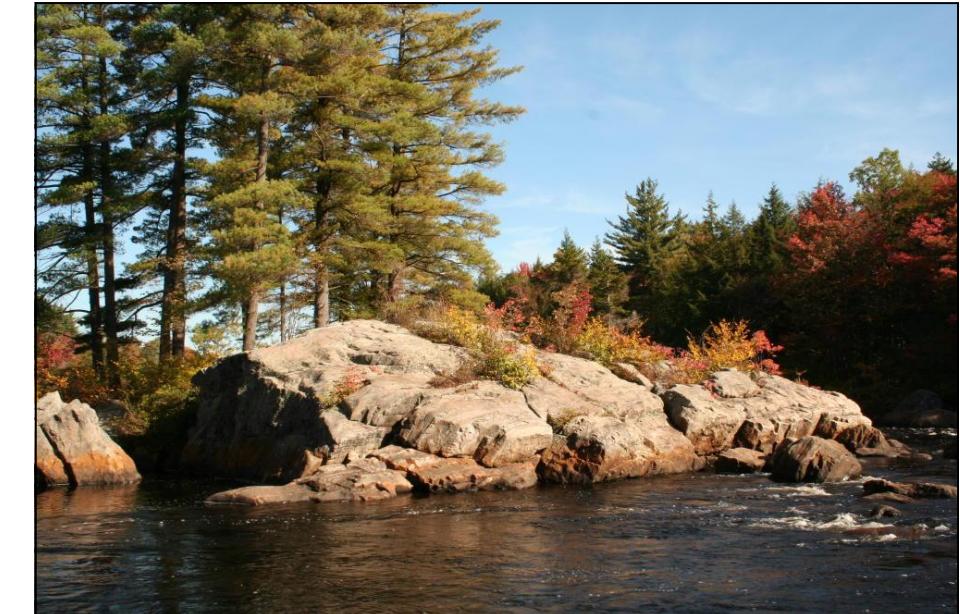
Measures:

- Number/acreage of critical habitats identified for preservation
- Number of brownfield sites identified
- Miles of stream bank restored and protected
- Track loss of prime soils to activity other than agriculture
- Track loss of prime forestland to activity other than forestry
- Number of municipalities adopting design guidelines and best practices

Objective B: Preserve and protect the rural character of Lewis County.

Measures:

- Number of acres of protected land
- Number of development projects located within/outside of village and hamlet centers
- Number of towns and villages with comprehensive plans
- Number of training programs to educate public on zoning and planning boards



The Moose River in Lyonsdale.



Forest lands in Pinckney.



NATURAL RESOURCES & THE ENVIRONMENT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Objective A: Preserve and protect critical environmental resources, including agricultural soils, hydrology, open spaces, woodlands, and wildlife habitats.

#	Action Item	Originating From*					Implementation				Notes
		Comp Plan	CEDS	Blue	Black	Maple	Time Frame	High Priority	Potential Partners	Funding Resources/Strategies	
1	Fully consider potential negative environmental impacts of a proposed project when conducting the required County Planning Board review (GML 239-m) of local projects.	✓					On-going		County , CCE, THC, DEC	N/A	The County Planning Board should emphasize review of a project's impact on agriculture from a comprehensive and long-range perspective. Each project that diminishes agricultural resources adds to the cumulative loss of farms. An appropriate role for the County in its required 239-m reviews is to take a broader view of project impacts on agriculture.
2	Work with the Tug Hill Commission and the Adirondack Park Agency to cooperatively develop a series of recommended design guidelines for municipalities to protect prime agricultural soils, critical farmlands, and environmental features.			✓			Short-term		County, CCE, THC , APA, DEC, municipalities	NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant	See the Greenway Connections established by the Dutchess County Planning Department. It is recommended that the County create a unified set of development guidelines that could be used in towns and villages.
3	Work with local towns to identify and encourage protection of critical wildlife habitats.	✓					Long-term		County, CCE, THC, APA, DEC, municipalities		The county could be a clearinghouse and information source for local planning boards so that this information is easily attainable.
4	Implement water quality improvement recommendations contained in the Black River Watershed Management Plan.			✓	✓		On-going	X	County, CCE, THC , APA, DEC , municipalities, LCSWD	State and Federal funds	
5	Inventory brownfield/spill sites along the Black River (such as abandoned gas stations) that would be good candidates for remediation and redevelopment under the NYS Brownfield Clean-up Program	✓				✓	Short-term		County , DEC, DOS, CCE	State and Federal funds	
6	Protect and enhance river corridors and stream banks to maintain natural vegetation.			✓	✓	✓	On-going		County, DEC, CCE, LCSWD, municipalities	State and Federal funds, local land use regulations	
7	Promote use of Best Management Practices for forestry and farming operations.	✓					On-going		County , DEC, USDA		The NYS DEC and other agencies publish a variety of best management practice guidelines. The role of the county should be to promote these practices and help local towns and villages and local operators understand and implement them.
8	Develop an integrated program to monitor, manage, and educate about invasive species.					✓	Short-term		County, DEC, USDA, LC Soil and Water Conservation District		
9	Support preservation of open spaces, environmentally sensitive features, and scenic vistas.	✓		✓	✓	✓	On-going		Municipalities, NYSDEC, THC	Local land use plans and regulations, County-wide Purchase of Development Rights program	
10	Support the improvements and expansion of the Oswegatchie Education Center, which promotes environmental stewardship, outdoor education, and leadership development.		✓				On-going		NYS Future Farmers of America , CCE, Farm Bureau, NYSDEC	NYS FFA Leadership Training Foundation	

* Key:

Comp Plan = Lewis County Comprehensive Plan

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Potential partners in **bold** are lead entities



NATURAL RESOURCES & THE ENVIRONMENT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, CONTINUED

Objective B: Preserve and protect the rural character of Lewis County.

#	Action Item	Originating From*					Time Frame	High Priority	Potential Partners	Implementation	Notes
		Comp Plan	CEDS	Blue	Black	Maple					
1	Identify, protect, and enhance an integrated network of ecologically valuable land and open spaces.	✓					On-going		County, CCE, THC, APA, DEC, municipalities, LCSWD	County Funds	
2	Encourage municipalities to support and promote nodal growth and in-fill development patterns within hamlets and villages to protect critical agricultural and environmental areas.	✓					Short-term	X	County, LCIDA, municipalities, Lowville Merchants, Chamber		The county should be proactive in encouraging appropriate land use patterns, using the Future Land Use Map in this Plan as a guide.
3	Encourage municipalities to support and promote the development of employment opportunities near population bases and infrastructure.	✓					On-going		County, LCIDA, municipalities, Chamber of Commerce		The county should be proactive in encouraging development in villages, hamlets, and other dense areas and discouraging development that sprawls in undeveloped areas. County-based decisions to approve or fund a project should take this objective into consideration.
4	Through a public input process, define scenic viewsheds and develop recommended guidelines for their protection.			✓	✓	✓	Long-term		County, CCE, THC, APA, DEC, municipalities, LCSWD	County funds	This action step could result in a county-wide map showing important viewsheds and a set of guidelines for protection of them that could be used by local town and village decision makers.
5	Promote comprehensive planning and the development of zoning regulations at the town and village level.	✓					Short-term	X	County, CCE, THC, APA, municipalities		Both the THC and APA assist communities with local planning efforts.
6	Promote the use of buffers between new non-farm and existing farm uses.	✓					On-going		County, CCE, THC, municipalities		Can be addressed in subdivision and site plan review regulations.
7	Promote the use of conservation subdivisions and clustering to protect open spaces and rural character.	✓					On-going		County, CCE, THC, APA, DEC, municipalities, LCSWD		Can be addressed in zoning, subdivision regulations, or by developing a Planned Development District (PDD) regulation.
8	Protect agricultural areas from incompatible capital projects such as highways, schools, sewer, water etc. to discourage sprawling development patterns.	✓					On-going		County, CCE, THC, DEC, municipalities, LCSWD		
9	Promote understanding and training of town boards, planning boards, and ZBA's on the range of techniques that are available to protect the rural character of Lewis County.	✓					On-going		County, CCE, THC, municipalities, LCSWD, Ag&Mkts	County Funds	New York State now mandates training of local planning board, and zoning board members. The county has a key role in providing this training on topics that will help promote implementation of policies, plans, and other actions that meet the objectives of this Plan.
10	Investigate the creation of a PDR or LDR program with willing landowners on lands identified by the county as being the highest priority to preserve.	✓					On-going		County, CCE, THC, DEC, municipalities, LCSWD, DOS	NYS Ag&Mkts grants	Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) and Lease of Development Rights (LDR) are programs that protect valuable farmland, and are eligible for state funding.
11	Promote Lewis County agricultural, wood and forest products history.			✓			On-going		County, CCE, THC, APA, DEC, municipalities		



POLICY AREA 7: REGIONAL COORDINATION

Policy Statement

Lewis County will be a leader in Upstate New York for inter-governmental cooperation and strategic partnerships. The county has a large geographic area with low population densities and some communities lack the critical mass to support all the desired services of its residents. Therefore, we must leverage our collective assets rather than compete or exist independent of one another. We recognize that constrained budgets at every level of government require us to make difficult choices. As such, we will engage in meaningful dialogue across municipal boundaries, and continue to engage entities with regional significance, such as the Tug Hill Commission, Adirondack Park Agency and Fort Drum. These efforts, both formal and informal, will result in increased efficiencies, improved health and well-being, and benefits that are irrespective of physical boundaries.

Overview

Similar to most counties in New York State and elsewhere, Lewis County faces the challenge of providing a sustained level of services to its residents in an era of diminishing and scarce resources. For decades, adjacent municipalities have been able to exist in near isolation from one another, and have had a limited impetus to coordinate services and activities ranging from the maintenance of roadways to land use planning. However, governments are increasingly confronted with calls to maintain or reduce taxes, while maintaining or improving services. In Lewis County, the pressure to lower taxes is coupled with a low density development pattern throughout 26 separate municipalities, further impacting the ability of these municipalities and the county to provide efficient and cost-effective services.

In the past 10 to 15 years, shared services agreements between municipalities and counties have begun to leverage regional efficiencies in areas such as highway maintenance and equipment purchasing programs. Lewis County municipalities have developed similar agreements, as seen on the following page. Regional coordination efforts must continue to become part of the normal mode of operations for municipalities as they attempt to maintain or raise service levels while they face rising operational costs. As well, communities should consider the benefits of coordinated, shared, and consolidated service delivery arrangements between public works departments and develop additional agreements for administrative services such as finance, law, information technology, and planning.

Strengths

Unlike many rural counties in New York, Lewis County is serviced by regionally significant agencies and organizations that can act as a model for regional coordination. The Tug Hill Commission (THC), which serves the western portion of the county, provides technical assistance to local governments, economic development organizations, and other local groups in the areas of land use planning, community economic development, and natural resource management. THC also provides skill development and information for local officials through workshops and documents on various topics. The Annual Local Government Conference facilitated by the THC brings area municipalities together to discuss and learn about land use and natural resource issues that pertain to the specific needs of Tug Hill communities. Embedded in THC's model is the promotion of local coordination through joint planning or zoning boards and other land use planning initiatives. Currently THC is facilitating a four-town comprehensive plan involving Pinckney, Harrisburg, Martinsburg, and Montague.

The Development Authority of the North Country (DANC), which services Lewis, St. Lawrence, and Jefferson Counties, provides technical assistance in areas such as economic development and finance to businesses, municipalities, and organizations. DANC also provides regional services including water, sewer, solid waste, and telecommunications.

Serving the eastern portion of the county, the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) provides a framework for local governments that seek to preserve the unique natural resources within the Park boundary. The APA aids communities with local planning initiatives, encourages coordinated zoning regulations, and provides education related to land use issues in the region.

Lewis County also benefits from the presence of the Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization (FDRLO). This entity was established as a point of contact between the military base at Fort Drum and civilian interests in the surrounding towns. The FDRLO promotes integration between the fort and adjacent communities, studies and advises on economic policy in the region, and addresses other issues such as housing and airport usage.

Together, these organizations provide extensive services and resources to much of Lewis County. They have laid a foundation for regional coordination, leveraging the collective resources of small communities throughout the county. However, each of the towns and villages must continue and expand beyond that foundation, constantly strengthening relationships with neighboring communities and looking for new opportunities for efficiency and collaboration.

Regional Coordination Options for Land Use & Development

Given the extremely low populations of some towns and villages in Lewis County, it is often difficult for communities to adequately address land use and development issues. They lack the critical mass to have sophisticated municipal planning departments and often have difficulty finding dependable volunteers for planning or zoning boards.

One of the Tug Hill Commission's (THC) initiatives is to aid local governments dealing with these issues by providing education and resources for establishing joint boards or coordinated land use plans. THC also has a Councils of Government and Circuit Rider program whereby multiple communities pool resources and work with the THC to deal with land use issues, pursue grants, and receive technical assistance. This model should be expanded upon within Lewis County, beyond the jurisdiction of the THC. Options for greater collaboration include:

- Joint Planning Boards
- Joint Zoning Board of Appeals
- Joint Comprehensive Plans
- Joint Farmland Protection Plans, including Purchase of Development Rights programs
- Coordinated zoning districts
- Consistent Design Standards for development
- Corridor studies that cross municipal boundaries
- County-wide or multi-town real property assessment departments
- Adoption of elements of a County-wide Comprehensive Plan

Challenges

Low Population Densities

The most significant challenge facing regional coordination efforts in Lewis County is its low population density spread across a large number of municipalities. Having a small population within a vast geographic area makes it difficult to achieve viable economies of scale for service delivery. On average, there are just over one thousand persons per government entity, and the county as a whole has a population density of 21 persons per square mile, well below the population density of New York State (409 persons/sq. mi.) and the Nation (86 persons/sq. mi.).

Furthermore, relatively small municipal budgets are strained to provide services to a small population over a large area at a reasonable cost. As mentioned previously in the Infrastructure and Transportation Policy Area, the public pressure for lower taxes and greater services places Lewis County's municipalities in a difficult position in the face of scarce resources and rising costs. Finding the balance between an acceptable



Municipal Service Reorganization Options

Municipal reorganization deals with consolidation of some or all services offered by multiple jurisdictions using a number of mechanisms. Lewis County should participate in, when applicable, and support efforts of local governments to explore reorganization initiatives. The following provides a summary of available options:

Mutual Aid

Enhances service delivery through the use of mutual aid agreements in areas such as fire/rescue, law enforcement, water/waste water emergencies, and weather emergencies.

Exchange of Services

Exchange of in-kind services between two or more entities. For example, one municipality plows snow in the winter while the other maintains right-of-ways in the summer.

Intergovernmental Cooperative Agreements

Agreements or contracts between municipalities or other entities to provide a specific service. Often limited to specific services (municipalities contracting with the county for road maintenance, snow plowing, waste water treatment, public safety communications, etc.). See page 93 for more on Intergovernmental Cooperative Agreements.

Functional Consolidation

Involves the merger of service delivery between two or more communities at either the service level (snow plowing) or at the departmental level (recreation).

Special District

Creates a new entity to handle the delivery of specific services, such as fire, water, sewer, and drainage districts.

Municipal Consolidation

Restructures multiple municipalities into a new single entity, completely eliminating multiple jurisdictions.

Example Evaluation Criteria

Cost effectiveness

Existing efforts at regional service delivery

Service improvements

Legal feasibility of the regional alternative

Community support

Enhancement of regional competitiveness

Adapted from Summary of Municipal Service Alternatives: Villages of Carthage and West Carthage, New York, by DMG-MAXIMUS, Framingham, MA, July 1999.

level of service and an acceptable cost to residents remains one of the largest challenges to the coordination, sharing, and/or consolidation of municipal services.

Need for Training and Education

There is a general lack of knowledge and awareness on the part of local municipal officials of the options available for the coordination, sharing, or consolidation of services. Many of the small municipal governments within Lewis County lack the experience and staff necessary to develop and manage multi-party agreements. In other instances, the sometimes complex arrangements needed may be perceived as intimidating and overly sophisticated for their community.

Perceived Loss of Local Identity

A significant hurdle to overcome in discussions regarding coordinated, shared, or consolidated services is the perceived loss of local identity. Common sources of community identity include: school districts and their athletics; public spaces, such as parks; core development areas, such as village centers; police and fire departments, and; municipal departments, such as public works.

While many sources of community identity are linked to a specific place or physical location, many more are connected with organizations or the services they deliver to the community. The delivery of these services is often carried out by local residents with offices or facilities located within the community. As well, many of these organizations and services have been in place for multiple generations, further solidifying their role in shaping the identity of the community. It is a common concern that a community's identity will be weakened when services are shared or consolidated among municipalities and counties, resulting in a centralized location or organization for service delivery.

Perceived Loss of Power and Control

An additional barrier to overcome regarding coordinated, shared, or consolidated services is the perceived loss of local power and control. Similar to a perceived loss of identity, if services and organizations are physically redistributed throughout a region, often in centralized locations, the surrounding communities may feel a loss of influence. A pivotal obstacle to coordinating, sharing, or consolidating services is the development of an agreed upon structure that retains a satisfactory level of influence and control at the individual local level, while achieving enhanced efficiencies and coordination.

In addition to the shared or coordinated provision of services, the development of local land use, infrastructure, and resource policies are also considered a sacred right due to New York's Municipal Home Rule Law. The development and application of regionally coordinated plans and policies needs to be cognizant of the powers relinquished by the

Table 1: Listing of existing service agreements in Lewis County

Towns	Agreement With	Agreement Type	Written	Informal
Croghan	County	Snow Plowing	✓	
	County	Salt Procurement	✓	✓
	T's of Diana, New Bremen, Watson	Share Equipment - Trucks		✓
Denmark	County, V of Copenhagen, V of Castorland	Snow Plowing	✓	
	County	Mowing Road Sides	✓	
	V of Copenhagen	Snow Removal	✓	
	All T's and County	Share Equipment - Trucks	✓	
	V of Copenhagen	Assessors	✓	
	V of Castorland			✓
Diana	County	Snow Plowing	✓	
	T of Croghan, V of Harrisville	Share Equipment - Trucks	✓	
Greig	County	Snow Plowing	✓	
	T's of Lyonsdale, Watson			✓
	T's of Martinsburg, Watson, Lyonsdale	Share Equipment - Trucks		✓
Harrisburg	T's of Montague, Pinckney	Share Equipment	✓	
	T's of Montague, Pinckney	Justice	✓	
Lewis	County	Snow Plowing	✓	
Leyden	County	Snow Plowing	✓	
	T of Turin	Assessors	✓	
	V of Port Leyden	Justice Court		✓
	County	Purchase of Fuel	✓	
	County	Dog Control	✓	
	T of Lyonsdale	Share Equipment - Trucks	✓	
	T of Western & V of Boomville (Oneida Co.)	Share Equipment - Trucks	✓	
	T of West Turin	Share Equipment - Trucks		✓
Lowville	NYS DOT	Plowing and Sanding	✓	
	Neighboring Municipalities	Share Equipment		✓
	T and V of Lowville	T/V Planning Board	✓	
	T and V of Lowville	T/V ZBA	✓	
	T and V of Lowville	Assessors	✓	
	T and V of Lowville	Code Enforcement and Zoning	✓	
Lyonsdale	County	Snow Plowing	✓	
	V of Port Leyden, T of Lyonsdale	Snow Plowing		✓
	T's of Leyden, Greig	Share Equipment and operator	✓	
Martinsburg	County	Snow Plowing	✓	
	all Towns and County	Share Equipment		✓
Montague	County	Zoning/Building Codes	✓	
	Pinckney	Highway Mowing	✓	
	County	Snow Plow Parking Lot	✓	
	T of Lewis, County	Shared Highway Services	✓	
	T of Osceola	Assessor	✓	
New Bremen	T's of Croghan, Watson	Paving	✓	
	V of Croghan	Sweeping and Paving		✓
	T of Watson	Assessors	✓	
Osceola	County	Snow Plowing	✓	
	T of Montague	Assessor	✓	
Pinckney	T of Rodman (Jefferson County)	Snow Plowing	✓	
	T of Harrisburg, Montague	Mower Tractor - Joint Purchase	✓	
	T of Harrisburg	Shared Justice	✓	
	T of Harrisburg	Road maintenance		✓
	County	Snow plowing	✓	
Turin	T of West Turin	Snow Plowing	✓	
	T's of West Turin, Martinsburg	Share Equipment	✓	
Watson		No Response		
West Turin	T of Turin	Snow Plowing		✓
	T's of Turin, Martinsburg, Leyden, County	Share Equipment	✓	
	V of Lyons Falls - No charge to Town	Use of Justice Court Room		✓

Villages	Agreement With	Agreement Type	Written	Informal
Castorland	V of Lowville	Water and Sewer Testing	✓	
	T of Denmark	Snow Plowing		✓
Constableville	T of West Turin	Snow Plowing		✓
Copenhagen		No Response		
Croghan	County	Snow Plowing	✓	
	T's of New Bremen, Croghan	Share Equipment		✓
	T of Croghan (Beaver Falls responsible to fix lines in their jurisdiction)	Water Line Maintenance	✓	
Harrisville	T of Diana	Snow Plowing	✓	
	T of Diana	Fire and EMS Building and Services		✓
	T of Diana, V of Harrisville, T of Pitcarin (St Lawrence County)	Playground Maintenance	✓	
	T of Diana	Justice	✓	
	T of Diana	Assessor	✓	
	T of Diana	Registrar	✓	
	T of Diana	Share Equipment		✓
Lowville	T of Lowville	Code Enforcement	✓	
	T of Lowville	Assessor	✓	
	T's of Lowville, Watson, New Bremen	Water Districts	✓	
	NYS DOT, County Highway	Share Equipment/Services	✓	
	T of Lowville, V of Castorland			✓
Lyons Falls	T of West Turin	Justice Court Room		✓
Port Leyden	None	None		
Turin	T of Turin	Shared Municipal Building		✓

Source: Lewis County Department of Economic Development and Planning



Intergovernmental Cooperative Agreements

The use of cooperative agreements to provide services is one of the most useful alternatives available to local governments. As is stated in New York State Law, governments may perform any function or service jointly which they may perform individually. In addition, Article 12-C of the General Municipal Law authorizes governments to form joint survey committees to study and plan cooperative measures to ensure the legal, financial, and logistical results are beneficial to all parties involved.

Intergovernmental cooperation may be defined as an arrangement between two or more governments for accomplishing common goals, providing a service or solving a mutual problem. Examples of cooperation range from informal undertakings and/or the exchange of information or equipment, to more formal arrangements, including binding legal agreements. Several basic considerations for municipalities that enter into agreements include:

Economies of scale

Numerous public-sector supplied services lend themselves to attaining economies of scale, whereby unit costs decrease as the volume increases. These services most often present opportunities for cooperation in areas such as public works.

Convenience

Cooperation is often sought when one government can more easily perform a task, with the common example being town highway departments contracted to plow county roads. The proximity and familiarity of town highway departments with local road systems can sometimes yield more efficient performance.

Unequal distribution of natural resources

Natural resources such as water, sand, and gravel are not equally available in every jurisdiction, yet are required by governments to fulfill the needs of their communities. Contracting for water service between municipalities is the most common example of this type of agreement.

Surplus facilities

Population decline, a shift in local priorities, or other changes may leave municipalities with surplus physical facilities. Contracting for or sharing facilities such as office space often yields savings. Village and town governments in some instances share single municipal buildings to house the administrative operations of both municipalities.

Duplication of services

Where neighboring municipalities provide like facilities or services, combined or consolidated operations may be of significant benefit. Certain police and fire services, for example, can be shared by establishing single dispatching centers, combined investigative teams or coordinated road patrols.

state to local municipalities, and requires a framework for incorporation and adoption at the local level.

Opportunities

Improved Education and Outreach

A primary objective of Lewis County should be to raise awareness at the local level of opportunities for coordinated, shared, or consolidated services. An education and outreach program could be developed that includes the creation of an educational series by topic, with live presentations, videos, webinars, tutorials, and/or pamphlets that provide information to officials. Examples of topics could be public works, finance, information technology, assessment, land use planning, or any other topic of interest. The educational series should explain the benefits and efficiencies gained from each opportunity for coordinated, shared, or

consolidated services. Consideration should be given to developing such a resource in partnership with regional and state agencies such as the Tug Hill Commission and the New York State Department of State.

As an example, an educational series surrounding land use planning could provide an introductory presentation on the roles of various appointed boards, the differences between land use and zoning, and an understanding of the benefits of land use planning. This educational series could also include guidance to municipalities on navigating the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) process as well as adherence with review procedures under General Municipal Laws 239-L, 239-M, and 239-N. In addition, the series could include information on the benefits and drawbacks of joint/intermunicipal zoning and planning boards.

Two Types: Service and Joint Agreements

Service Agreement

A formal written agreement between governments in which one local government contracts with another to provide a service at a stated price.

Intermunicipal service agreements may be more appropriate where the participants are substantially different in size or capability, or where other elements of mutuality are absent. The contractual form is better suited where a readily definable "commodity" is being provided, such as data processing, water supply, sanitary sewer service, or refuse disposal.

Joint Agreement

A formal written agreement in which participating governments agree to share in the performance of a function or the construction and operation of a facility; usually provides for significant participation by each of the local governments.

Joint agreements typically require a similar level of contribution from each participant, and usually imply a rough equality among the participants with regard to capabilities, resources, and facilities. For example, joint provision of fire service by a large city and a few small suburban towns might be difficult to implement, whereas development of joint water supply by two neighboring villages of similar size would be more feasible.

Adapted from Intergovernmental Cooperation, part of the NYS Department of State James A. Coon Local Government Technical Series, revised January, 2008.

The culmination of these efforts could include individual or group sessions sponsored by Lewis County to bring municipalities together with legal and financial experts to discuss options for coordinating, sharing or consolidating services.

Models and Best-Practices

In coordination with an improvement of education and outreach, the county should consider the development of models and best practices that can provide a framework or starting point for municipal agreements. This could include model language for shared services agreements, statutes, resolutions, or other legal declarations required to enact or approve intermunicipal agreements. This Comprehensive Plan includes substantial guidance to towns or villages for adopting a Future Land Use Plan, including an approach which encourages coordinated and consistent policies across the entire county (see Chapter 4). In addition,



model zoning code language could be developed to deal with common issues such as resource extraction, outdoor furnaces, and residential/agricultural conflicts. Having a coordinated tool for these types of nuisance issues would be beneficial for the equitable protection of all county residents.

Lewis County could also identify best-practices and 'how-to' tools for issues such as the development of a comprehensive plan, zoning ordinance, or a form-based code for villages. The county should continue to coordinate with the Tug Hill Commission on leveraging the planning and natural resource tools it has created for its municipalities, including its recent work on low-volume and seasonal roads.

In addition to existing and recommended tools and model programs, numerous case studies have been completed under the New York State Shared Municipal Services Incentive Program that highlight the myriad of agreements currently underway. These reports can be accessed at the New York State Department of State's (DOS) website.

Partnerships and Municipal Coordination

Lewis County should continue to pursue partnerships with the Tug Hill Commission, the Development Authority of the North Country, the Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization, and the Adirondack Park Agency to leverage the efforts of each of these regional organizations. The county should consider sponsoring the creation of a commission comprised of these organizations to coordinate activities within Lewis County at semi- or tri-annual meetings. Additionally, the county should consider the formation of task forces on specific topics that include state agencies such as the DEC, DOS, DOT, Agriculture and Markets, along with local organizations such as the Adirondack North Country Association or the Lewis County Maple Syrup Producers Association. These task forces should be formed for a limited duration and with a specific scope to identify particular issues, solutions, or opportunities pertaining to economic development, agriculture, forestry, transportation, land use planning, and other topics within Lewis County.

In addition to partnerships amongst existing organizations and agencies, the county should investigate opportunities for municipal partnerships and coordination efforts that will improve service delivery, cut costs, and improve efficiency. This could include coordination, sharing, or consolidation of public works responsibilities, real property assessment, or land use planning and zoning functions.

For example, the county recently commissioned a Real Property Tax Administration Improvement Study (RPTAIS) to investigate reform opportunities for local property tax systems. The study, funded by the New York State Office of Real Property Services, provides the county and municipalities with five options for assessment structures that would

ensure all properties in Lewis County are evaluated in an equitable manner. Three of the five alternatives created municipal service agreements, a fourth called for the complete consolidation of assessment services at the county level, and the final alternative made modest improvements to the current structure. While the study did not conclude with specific recommendations, it provides the information necessary for municipal official to determine an appropriate course of action regarding municipal coordination for real property assessment services.

Lewis County is currently applying for a grant to undertake a Joint Highway Management Initiative (JHMI) between five municipalities to collectively maintain an inventory of pavement conditions and other municipal infrastructure. This initiative includes the development and utilization of software and hardware for each municipality, and a joint contract with consultants to collect the data. This project will require an intermunicipal agreement between the five municipalities and the county.

Additional studies such as the RPTAIS and JHMI should be conducted on various opportunities for the coordination of services between municipalities. These investigations should include the completion of a cost of services analysis by municipality that will benchmark service delivery costs for the region, and compare municipalities across the county. Additionally, case studies of best practices by service type should be completed that will further inform the development of model frameworks and agreements as mentioned above. With the results of these investigations in hand, the county should encourage municipalities to consider the coordination, sharing, or consolidation of services where appropriate, and offer to educate participants and guide the process.

Municipal Consolidation

Municipal consolidation, such as the dissolution of a village into a town or the merger of two adjacent towns, is one of the more ambitious options available for achieving sustainable local government operations. Numerous communities in New York have explored consolidation or dissolution, with some proceeding with the proposal and others opting to remain separate entities. While these proposals are often met with opposition, Lewis County should support localities who wish to explore the option. However, it should be noted that the first steps towards the consolidation of municipalities should likely be a phased approach to the sharing of services. This will help ease the transition, and assist communities in determining if a full consolidation is necessary.

The county has an extremely low population density, demonstrated by the fact that 14 of the 26 municipalities have less than 1,000 people. Seven of those communities have less than 500 people. Villages in particular face substantial challenges, as most lack the critical mass to support multiple businesses on their Main Street. Lowville and Croghan

Regional Coordination: Key Points

- The county should actively support municipalities and other entities investigating the benefits of shared or consolidated services. While not all arrangements are expected to be beneficial, they should at least be explored.
- Opportunities exist for the county to play a lead role in facilitating regional coordination. From workshops to informational resources, the county should assist in the advancement of regional goals at the local level.
- The county should provide models and best practices for use by municipalities to improve the level of consistency throughout the county regarding land use, zoning, and development policies.
- The development of regional partnerships with organizations and municipalities will reduce the level of redundancy and improve cost efficiencies through the regionalization of service delivery.

have somewhat established central business districts, but most other villages have lost most of their goods and services offerings over time.

New York State, given its current fiscal constraints, has thrown substantial support behind consolidation efforts in the interest of government efficiency. It is recommended that the county adopt a similar policy, providing resources for interested communities and encouraging those seeking greater efficiency. While it is not certain that every consolidation scenario would result in greater efficiency, let alone acceptable levels of service or local representation, the majority of case studies suggest that the option is worth exploring. Therefore, the county should support feasibility studies or similar initiatives that aim to achieve efficiency and improve the effectiveness of local governance, especially those related to land use regulations and delivery of services.

Each town and village in the county is faced with the challenge of delivering a myriad of services to its residents while performing the day-to-day operations required of a local government entity. Some non-required functions, such as having a planning board or code enforcement staff, are either performed at very low levels or are non-existent. A large number of states in the U.S. with similarly rural counties address this issue by simplifying local government structures. Local governments in Maryland, for example, consist of city and county entities. City governments are in place for the larger established localities such as Annapolis or Baltimore, while the "spaces in between" that are not part of an incorporated city are, by default, under a county's jurisdiction.



Five Guiding Principles to Shared Service and Municipal Consolidation Initiatives

The Center for Governmental Research (CGR) has conducted eight Shared Municipal Services Incentives studies over the past two years. As a result of these studies and in addition to previous research, CGR has developed general guiding principles that apply to municipal shared service agreements and consolidation initiatives. The following five key findings can be applied in most instances when undertaking shared services/consolidation studies:

1. Shared services fiscal savings are typically between two and five percent for combined functions. The joint management of common functions creates opportunities to achieve personnel, purchasing, and/or operational efficiencies.
2. Consolidating governments typically saves more money than shared services agreements.
 - A. Consolidation eliminates overhead costs associated with a second, potentially redundant level of government.
 - B. New York State government's Aid and Incentives to Municipalities provides significant funding boosts to those governments that decide to consolidate services. As long as this funding stream is maintained, municipalities will receive significant increases in aid from the state.
3. Consolidating governments offers long term cost and efficiency improvements that a single government is unlikely to achieve for services better supplied on a regional level.
4. In many instances where consolidation is considered, the municipalities lack well-defined physical boundaries, and often share or cross-utilize services, such as schools, utilities, and identities.
5. Key community leaders and elected officials often support consolidation, a key determining factor in gaining the momentum and buy-in from the remainder of the community.

While potential savings quoted above are based on findings from municipal consolidation studies, there remains a lack of historic data from actual consolidations. Long term solutions for fiscal savings to municipalities must be determined on a case-by-case basis. From a land use and comprehensive planning perspective, the consolidation of adjacent or coterminous municipalities raises distinct issues, including appropriate land use patterns, development standards, and the potential loss of a sense of place. These issues should be discussed openly and continuously throughout all consolidation investigations.

[†]Adapted from a memorandum on the consolidation study for the Town and City of Batavia, New York, by the Center for Governmental Research, December, 2008.

In addition to the efficiencies created by this approach, there is a more consistent set of policies related to land use and development. This is in contrast to New York State, where these policies are established by numerous independent municipalities with competing interests. A classic example in New York is the competing interests of a village's central business district versus the surrounding town's commercial strip. This approach is especially problematic in sparsely populated areas, where communities lack the critical mass to adequately provide services or address development pressures.

Lewis County is a prime example of where the interests of adjacent municipalities, such as a town and a village, are better served by coordinated, rather than competing, models. For example, the Town and Village of Lowville provide coordinated recreational programming for area residents. Recreational programming may be fiscally out of reach for many individual municipalities, yet coordination can make these services a reality in Lewis County. Furthermore, the successful application for funding assistance through grants and loans will be greatly improved by the presence of these types of agreements.

The concept of municipal consolidation has been garnering much support from the New York State Attorney General. However, as the example of the Town and Village of Lowville indicates, municipal consolidation is not the only solution. Greater coordination between towns, villages, the county, and regional agencies will increase the likelihood of achieving a set of goals that are otherwise unattainable when a community lacks a critical mass. In times of scarcity, sparsely populated regions must leverage their assets together in order to be more sustainable.

Objectives and Measures

Objective A: Investigate the benefits of shared and/or consolidated municipal services.

Measures:

- Number of shared service agreements
- Number of municipalities seeking help and applying for Local Government Efficiency grants

Consolidation Example: Cherry Creek, NY

In 1995, the Town and Village of Cherry Creek, Chautauqua County, conducted a feasibility analysis for the dissolution of the village and the formation of a merged government. The study found that the services of the two separate entities could be merged at no additional cost to taxpayers in the aggregate. Tax rates, however, did not become equalized throughout the town after dissolution. Property tax rates for those individuals residing outside the former village boundaries increased 11.6 percent as a result of the merger. Property tax rates for those within the former village boundaries decreased 18.9 percent, yet remained higher than those outside. This is a result of Village Law, 19-1914, which states that a town must take over and continue to provide all former village functions and services, which then must become a charge upon the taxable real property of the former village. Thus, services such as sidewalks, street lighting, fire protection, and other infrastructure must continue to be provided. The town, prior to dissolution of the village, established garbage, sidewalk, and street lighting districts encompassing the former village, and was therefore able to develop separate taxation rates to charge for those services.



REGIONAL COORDINATION IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Objective A: Investigate the benefits of shared and/or consolidated municipal services.

#	Action Item	Originating From*					Implementation				Notes
		Comp Plan	CEDS	Blue	Black	Maple	Time Frame	High Priority	Potential Partners	Funding Resources/Strategies	
1	The County should work with towns and villages to investigate the benefits of municipal consolidation and shared service agreements.	✓					Short-term	X	County, DOS	DOS Shared Municipal Services Incentive Program (SMSIP), DOS Local Government Efficiency Grant Program	
2	Continue to investigate opportunities for improved coordination of transportation services.	✓					Short-term	X	County DOT, NYSDOT, municipalities, school districts, other transportation providers in the region	SMSIP	This should be one of the outcomes of the county's public transportation system study.
3	Develop a listing of best practices by municipal service delivery type, and investigate opportunities for shared, coordinated, or leveraged financial services between municipalities.	✓					Short-term		County, DOS, NYS Comptroller	SMSIP, Local Government Efficiency Grant Program	Opportunities may include employee benefits, purchase of equipment, accounting/banking services, or hiring staff.
4	Investigate a cost of services analysis by municipality to benchmark municipal service delivery costs.	✓					Short-term	X	County, DOS, NYS Comptroller, municipalities	SMSIP, Local Government Efficiency Grant Program	
5	Investigate the options presented within the NYS Real Property Tax Administration Improvement Grant Study. Further evaluation of a county-wide assessment program or other options for consolidated assessment should be explored and implemented if determined beneficial to municipalities and residents.	✓					Short-term	X	County Real Property Tax Office, NYSORPS		
6	Continue to support a coordinated and consolidated approach to code enforcement throughout the county.	✓					On-going		County, municipalities	DOS Local Government Efficiency Grant Program	
7	Investigate the feasibility of privatizing the maintenance and snow plowing of underutilized roadways within municipalities.	✓					Long-term		County Highway Dept., local highway depts., County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning	Local Government Efficiency Grants	

* Key:

Comp Plan = Lewis County Comprehensive Plan

CEDS = Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, Project Priority List

Blue = Blueway Trail Development Plan for the Black River

Black = Black River Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan

Maple = Maple Traditions Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan

Potential partners in **bold** are lead entities



REGIONAL COORDINATION IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, CONTINUED

Objective B: Improve education and outreach programs regarding municipal options for cooperation, consolidation, and shared services.

#	Action Item	Originating From*					Implementation				Notes
		Comp Plan	CEDS	Blue	Black	Maple	Time Frame	High Priority	Potential Partners	Funding Resources/Strategies	
1	Develop model shared agreement language, statutes, and resolutions for municipalities to utilize in coordination efforts.	✓					Short-term		County, municipalities, THC , DOS		
2	Develop and facilitate educational and consultation panels to jointly discuss coordination and service consolidation with interested municipalities; panels to be composed of teams of experts, including legal, financial, and land use.	✓					Short-term	X	County, municipalities, THC, DOS , Comptroller's Office, DEC	DOS Local Government Training Program	
3	Create an educational presentation on the importance and impacts of the real property assessment process.	✓					Short-term	X	County Real Property, NYSORPS , municipal assessors	County, NYSORPS	
4	Improve lobbying efforts at the state level to persuade lawmakers to reform state regulations that simplify the legal process of municipal consolidations and dissolutions.	✓					Short-term		County, DOS, THC		

Objective C: Develop partnerships and agreements to leverage the efforts of county-wide agencies and organizations.

#	Action Item	Originating From*					Implementation				Notes
		Comp Plan	CEDS	Blue	Black	Maple	Time Frame	High Priority	Potential Partners	Funding Resources/Strategies	
1	Continue to work closely with DANC and FDRLO to improve opportunities for spill-over effects from investments at Fort Drum.	✓					On-going	X	County, DANC, FDRLO		
2	Coordinate with organizations such as the Adirondack North Country Association and Traditional Arts of Upstate NY to promote connections and linkages to scenic byways throughout the region.					✓	Long-term		County, TAUNY , ANCA , municipalities		
3	Create a management partnership among county and private entities to implement and market the Blueway Trail Development Plan.			✓			On-going		County, TAUNY , ANCA , municipalities, THC, APA		



REGIONAL COORDINATION IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, CONTINUED

Objective D: Provide models, best-practices and improved education and outreach on issues pertaining to land use planning and zoning.

#	Action Item	Originating From*					Time Frame	High Priority	Potential Partners	Implementation		Notes
		Comp Plan	CEDS	Blue	Black	Maple				Funding Resources/Strategies	Completed	
1	Develop model code language and recommended best practices regarding land use regulations to address resource extraction, outdoor furnaces other relevant nuisance issues.	✓					Short-term	X	County, THC, APA, DOS	DOS Local Government Training Program		
2	Develop an educational series that will improve the public's understanding and perceptions of planning and zoning, and disseminate tools and information regarding the development of comprehensive plans and zoning codes.	✓					Short-term	X	County, THC, APA, DOS	DOS Local Government Training Program		Elements of these processes are included in the County's Comprehensive Plan (see Chapter 4).
3	Develop model code language to provide consistent subdivision regulations regarding lot sizes and roadway access management to protect rural and agricultural character.	✓					Short-term	X	County, THC, APA, DOS	NYS Ag & Mkts, DOS Local Govt Training Program		
4	Develop informational materials on form-based codes and regulations geared towards rural villages.	✓					Long-term		County, THC, APA, DOS, municipalities	DOS Local Government Training Program		
5	Identify roadways that may be appropriate for abandonment or transition to seasonal use, and in partnership with the THC, coordinate an educational/informational program regarding low-volume and/or seasonal roadways and the pros and cons of keeping them in their current state of construction.	✓					Short-term		County, THC, APA, DEC, DOT, municipalities, Recreational Trails	THC, DOS, Local Govt		
6	Develop educational/guidance programs to assist municipalities on 239-L, 239-M, and 239-N review procedures and other relevant training sessions in locations throughout the County.	✓					Short-term	X	County, DOS, THC, APA			
7	Assist in the development and dissemination of literature and educational materials on the formation of joint planning and zoning boards.	✓					Short-term	X	County, DOS, THC	DOS		



REGIONAL COORDINATION IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, CONTINUED

Objective E: Investigate opportunities for regionally applied planning efficiencies and improvements.

#	Action Item	Originating From*					Implementation				Notes
		Comp Plan	CEDS	Blue	Black	Maple	Time Frame	High Priority	Potential Partners	Funding Resources/Strategies	
1	Investigate improvements/expansions to the county highway system that will improve the logical connectivity and travel efficiency of the network.	✓					Long-term		County, DOT, municipalities	NYSDOT Statewide TIP, CHIPS	
2	Investigate opportunities for shared or combined planning and/or zoning boards between municipalities with a shared set of regulations.	✓					On-going		County, municipalities, THC, DOS		
3	Investigate the creation of a county water authority to improve efficiencies and quality of service.	✓					Long-term		County, municipalities, DEC, DOS		
4	Investigate the development of a regionally coordinated and administered façade improvement program for village centers.	✓					On-going		County, municipalities, NYSOCR		
5	Continue to work with the Tug Hill Commission and municipalities regarding policies for seasonal and low-volume roads.	✓					On-going		County, THC, DEC, DOT, municipalities	CHIPS	
6	Investigate the possibility of adopting the Blueway Trail Development Plan for the Black River as the Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP) for a given municipality or group of municipalities.	✓		✓			Short-term		County, municipalities, DOS		The NYS DOS requires an adopted LWRP for certain funding sources. The Blueway Plan accomplishes the majority of what is typically found in an LWRP, but the DOS would need to agree to the Plan as an acceptable fulfillment of the LWRP requirements.

LEWIS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

“Working to be the premier rural county in New York State”

CHAPTER 4 COUNTY CHARACTER AREA PLAN

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OVERVIEW

The Lewis County Character Area Plan (CCAP) provides a blueprint for growth, preservation, and land use management at both the county and local level. The purpose of the CCAP is to:

- Delineate areas of common identity and character, similar to a generalized existing land use map;
- Identify areas recommended for future development, including residential, commercial, and mixed-use areas;
- Provide guidance on issues relevant to each category, such as revitalizing Main Street or protecting farmland; and
- Establish a common starting point for Future Land Use Plans at the Town or Village level.

The CCAP provides recommendations for land use patterns from a county-wide perspective. These recommendations are not enforceable at the local level, as each Town or Village retains the local control to pursue land use regulations at their discretion. However, each community should consider these recommendations, and work closely with the Lewis County Department of Economic Development and Planning, Tug Hill Commission, Adirondack Park Agency, and other relevant agencies to develop a sound land use plan. A coordinated and collaborative approach across municipal boundaries will ensure important natural and community resources are preserved and that growth and investment are focused in appropriate locations.

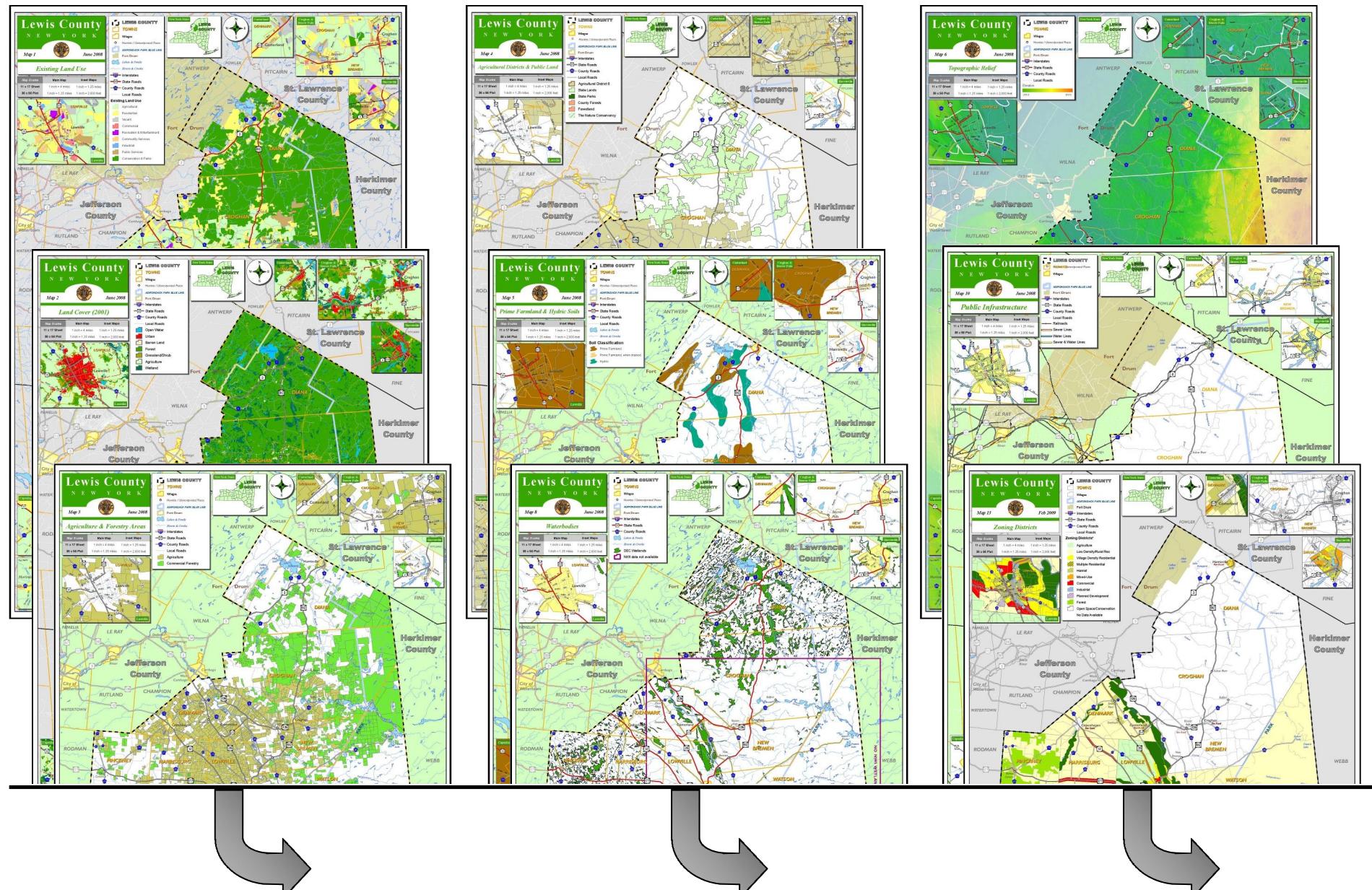


OVERVIEW

A Town or Village may choose to adopt the CCAP, as it pertains to their community, as their local land use plan. They may also use it as a starting point subject to modification and additional level of detail. Ideally, each Town and Village in the county would engage in a land use planning process consistent with the CCAP, providing for a cohesive and strategic approach to managing the ever-changing landscape of Lewis County.

The project team utilized the following geospatial data to identify existing land use patterns, limitations or incentives affecting future development.

- existing land use
- existing land cover
- agriculture & forestry areas
- Agricultural Districts & public land
- prime farmland & hydric soils
- topography
- waterbodies
- public infrastructure
- zoning districts



A variety of geospatial data was utilized when developing the Character Area Plan found on the next page.

Lewis County N E W Y O R K

LEWIS COUNTY TOWNS

ADIRONDACK PARK BLUE LINE

Character Areas



Map 13 July 2009

Character Area Plan

Map Scales
11 x 17 Sheet
36 x 56 Plot
Main Map
Inset Maps
1 inch = 4 miles
1 inch = 1.25 miles
1 inch = 2,000 feet

Character Areas
State Roads
Interstates
County Roads
Local Roads
Active RR
Riparian Buffers*
Village Center
Village Transition
Rural Living
Lakefront Living
Village Living
Industry
Fort Drum
Hamlets & Crossroads

Character Areas
State Roads
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Village Center
Village Transition
Rural Living
Lakefront Living
Village Living
Industry
Fort Drum
Hamlets & Crossroads

Jefferson County

WILNA



FOREST CHARACTER AREA

Overview

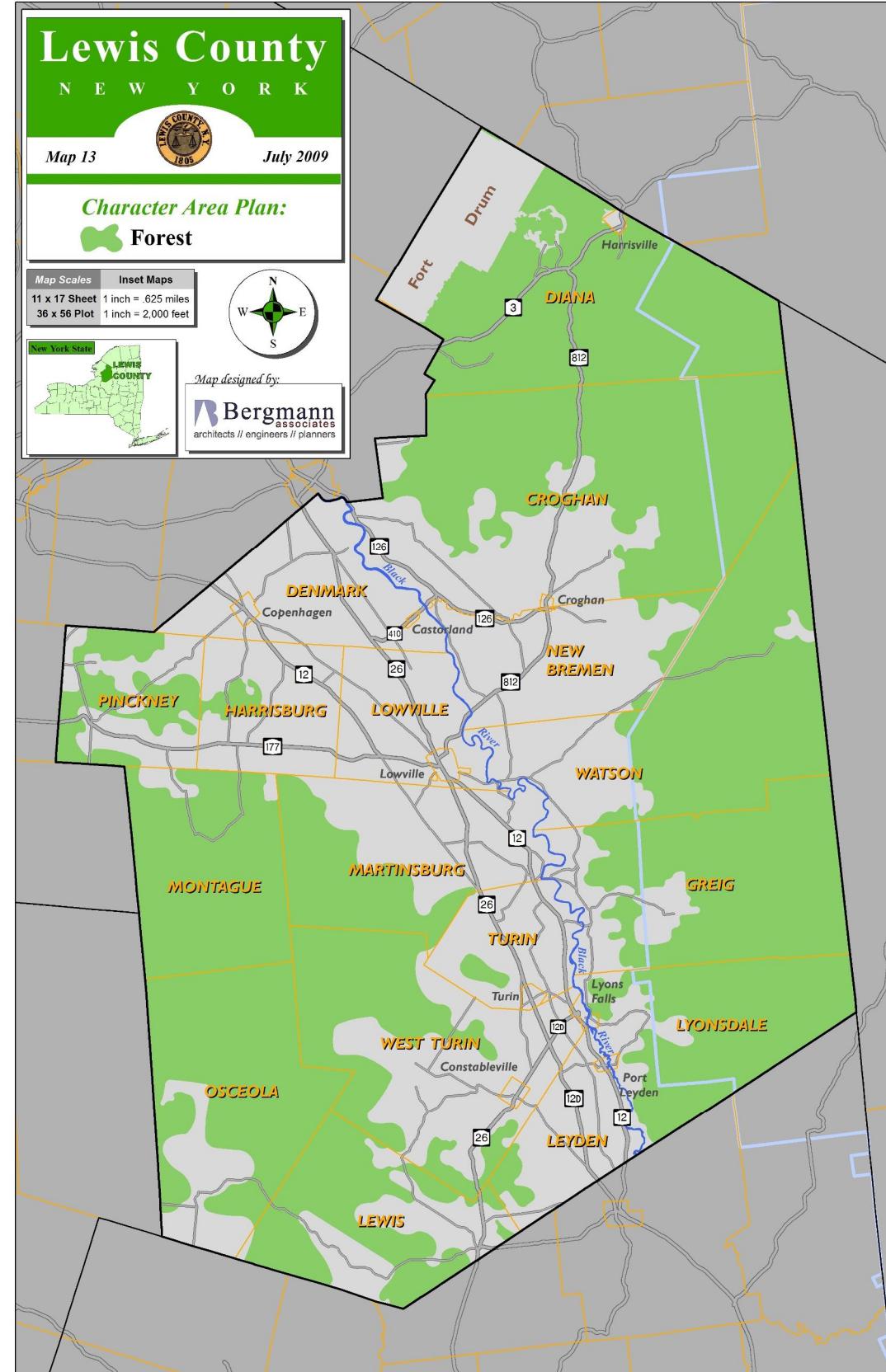
Forest is the largest Character Area within Lewis County, comprising more than half of its land area. The forests are a mix of coniferous and deciduous trees, with coniferous comprising a larger share of the land. Most of the land has a high density of trees, including many areas that demonstrate planting patterns typical of the logging industry. They are abundant with wildlife, which include deer, bears, beavers, moose, and a variety of birdlife. The wealth of species that inhabit the lakes, rivers, and wetlands are also a rich part of the forest's ecosystem. Approximately 95 percent of the area designated as Forest on the Character Area Plan is comprised of some form of conservation designation, including state and county lands and land within the Adirondack Park.

These areas are largely uninhabited, yet do contain pockets of residences and numerous seasonal camps and homes utilized for recreation. This pattern has emerged as a defining characteristic in recent years, with an increase in downstate and out of state investment into camps or second homes. This trend, coupled with a struggling forestry industry looking for alternate income sources, is slowly changing the character of the county's forests. While much of these areas are free of traditional development, not all forest lands are designated conservation areas, as the logging and forest products industries require large amounts of timberland to maintain a viable existence.

The Character Area Plan at right identifies the Forest areas within Lewis County.



Forest and wetland area in Pinckney.



Greenways and connective habitat corridors, such as the one above, create recreation and transportation opportunities for residents and visitors while also acting as riparian buffers.

Greenways: Connecting People with Forest Resources

A greenway is a corridor of protected land that is managed for conservation, transportation and/or recreation. Greenways follow natural land or water features, like ridges or rivers, or infrastructure features like roads, railroads or canals. They link natural reserves, parks, cultural and historic sites with each other and potentially with populated areas.

Greenways come in various shapes and sizes, such as multiple-use recreational trails on abandoned railroad corridors, paddling trails along rivers or shorelines, large-scale natural areas, and motorized and non-motorized trails that connect areas of forest or farmland. There is no predetermined corridor length required to identify a resource corridor as a greenway.

In Lewis County, greenways can be used to protect working landscapes such as farms and private forest lands through the development of conservation easements. Conservation easements across these lands can allow traditional land uses, such as farming and timber harvesting, to continue while providing corridors for people and habitat for native wildlife. See the following page for more information on conservation easements.

Greenways in Lewis County can also protect environmentally-sensitive lands and wildlife, while providing people with access to outdoor recreation and by serving as alternative transportation routes. Alternative forms of transportation help reduce air pollution, road congestion, and energy consumption, and are economical and healthy for communities. Greenways can also share transportation corridors with the logging and farming industries to preserve the viability of these important drivers of Lewis County's economy.

* Adapted from the Florida Community Resource Guide for Greenways Project.



Trail Planning and Design

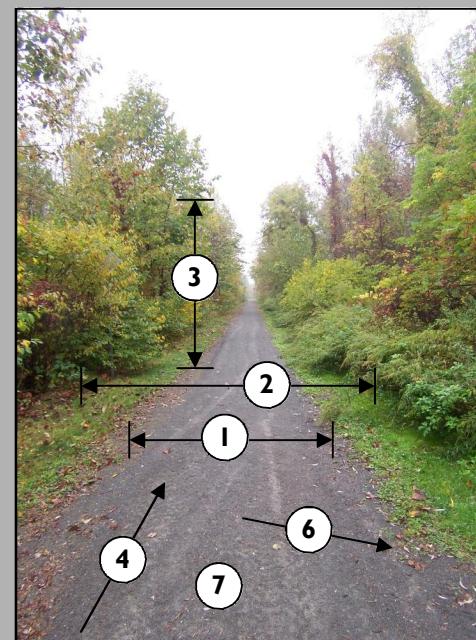
Snowmobiling, ATVir, and hiking are significant activities associated with Lewis County's economy, and the development of an advanced and interconnected network of trails will enhance the county as a four-season recreation destination. The development of a recreational trail system should be done in accordance with industry and NYSDEC standards to limit impacts to the environment and the sensitive ecology of forest areas. The county should encourage municipalities to retain and plan for linkages between existing and potential trail corridors throughout the Forest Character Areas.

Lewis County should create a set of design standards for motorized and non-motorized trails to provide a base-level of continuity and consistency. The following are best-practices for trail design as determined by the National Park Service:

- ensure a consistent look without compromising local control,
- promote a high standard of quality without over-building,
- provide a basic level of safety without removing all risk, and
- foster accessibility, where practicable.

Trail design standards should meet these objectives without compromising the character of the trail or imposing undue hardship upon those who maintain the trail. Design standards for trails within Lewis County should be tailored by landscape setting and intended users. For example, it would not be appropriate to build a trail to urban standards in a forested setting. Consistency can be achieved through signing, logo color, and the continuity between segments. Primary elements in trail design include:

1. **Tread Width** - the actual walking surface of the trail.
2. **Clearing Width** - the area kept free of brush, limbs, and other obstructions.
3. **Clearing Height** - the area cleared above trail objects (e.g. a hiker's backpack). A design consideration of particular concern in Lewis County is allowance for snow pack.
4. **Sustained Slope** - trail slopes should be less than 10 percent, and ideally less than 7 percent.
5. **Maximum Slope** - less than 2-times the sustained slope and less than 100 feet in length.
6. **Cross Slope** - the slope across the trail is typically between 3 and 8 percent.
7. **Trail Surface** - in Lewis County's forests, native surface materials should be utilized; in other landscape settings, surface materials should be provided in conformance with accessibility standards and intended users.



* Adapted from the National Parks Service: Handbook for Trail Design, Construction and Maintenance for the North Country National Scenic Trail, Chapter 4.

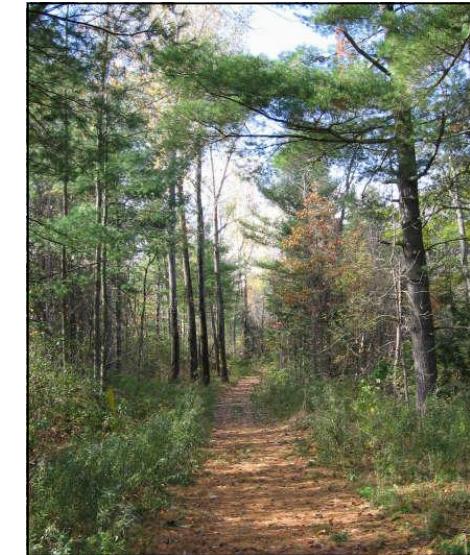
Design Considerations

Perhaps the most significant design consideration within the Forest Character Area is the creation of recommended guidelines for site development. County municipalities should encourage limitations on the amount of clearing permitted along road frontages for site development projects to protect the visual and spatial characteristics unique to forest areas, such as the sense of enclosure, restricted viewsheds, and the vertical delineation of space along roadway corridors. Without protections in place, Forest Character Areas could potentially blend with Rural Living Character Areas, resulting in a loss of Lewis County's unique rural identity.

Forest areas provide a source of timber, areas for recreation, and habitat for wildlife. There are several design considerations for future development within Forest Character Areas that impact the viability of this precious resource to sustain many of these activities. Forest fragmentation and the subdivision of viable forestland into smaller parcels is a primary concern in Lewis County. The subdivision of timberland inhibits efficient logging and harvesting of wood resources by increasing the mobilization and labor costs associated with relocating operations between smaller plots of land.

The retention of forest access easements, linkages, and roadways between timber stands is crucial to maintaining a viable timber harvesting industry in Lewis County. Municipalities should consider requirements for access retention during the subdivision process, including easements, access roads, and resource corridors to permit the movement of equipment between areas. The county and NYSDEC should assist municipalities with the development of appropriate standards and guidelines for the legal framework of agreements and the design of physical improvements. The development of greenways and conservation easements can also assist in linking adjacent forest resources (see sidebars at right and left).

Directly linked to the utilization of forest resources by the wood products industry is the status of low-volume roadways. Recommendations for the abandonment of roadways should be made on a case-by-case basis, and changes to public roadway designation should consider forest access requirements of the wood products industry.



The image at left is of an abandoned railroad bed turned into a trail. The width and height clearance on this trail is suitable for motorized and shared-usage with hikers. There are numerous opportunities within Lewis County for rail-to-trail corridors that link villages and hamlets with forest resources. These trails can be formed utilizing a combination of greenways, conservation easements, and access agreements with land owners.

Conservation Easements and Forest Resources

Conservation easements are a significant land use tool utilized across the United States to protect important natural resources and landscape features, such as working forests, agricultural land, wildlife habitats and scenic areas, among others. Conservation easements limit or eliminate future development rights to lands in exchange for reductions in property taxes.

Conservation easements are often utilized by land trusts to protect resources from undesirable land uses, although the purpose and terms of each easement are tailored to the specific characteristics of each property. For example, an easement designed to protect agricultural land is different from an easement designed to protect a scenic area, or one focused on protection of forest resources. Most easements allow traditional uses of the land, such as forestry, agriculture, or recreation, to continue as long as they meet property conservation goals.

In Lewis County, the creation and utilization of conservation easements is a useful tool to help support the preservation of viable timberland. Separate from the state's 480-a Forest Tax Law Program, land owners utilize the tax benefits from the diminished property valuation and continue to harvest timber on their property. As well, the protection of forest resources assists in the development of enhanced tourism and recreation opportunities associated with motorized and non-motorized trails. For additional techniques used in forestland preservation, see page 103.

It should be reiterated that conservation easements reduce a municipalities taxable value, and that the extensive use of this tool in a single community may financially strain its ability to levy taxes and supply services. It is recommended that municipalities undertake a property tax-base analysis to determine the appropriate use of these instruments in their community.

* Adapted from the NYSDEC website.



FARMLAND CHARACTER AREA

Overview

Farmland is the second largest Character Area within Lewis County, accounting for more than one-quarter of the land area. These areas are found along the Black River Plain, with the majority occurring west of the river's banks. As can be seen in Map 14, nearly all of the county's incorporated villages and hamlet areas are surrounded by farmland. This clearly illustrates the economic, cultural, and historic importance of farming in Lewis County.

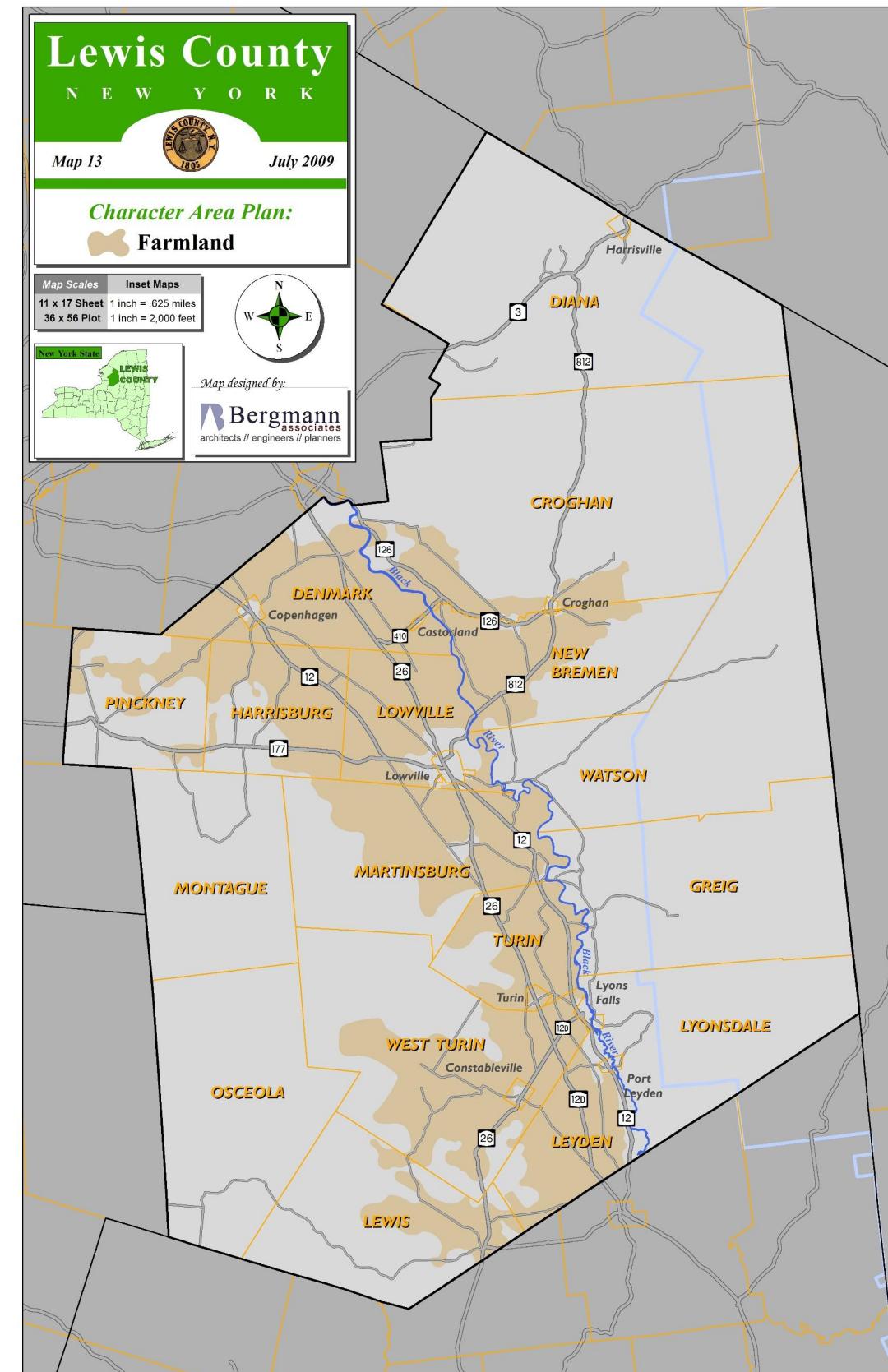
Farmland areas are dominated by large fields utilized for crops and grazing. In addition, there are groupings and pockets of residences that occur primarily in a linear fashion along roadways. The majority of this Character Area is in the county's Agricultural District, and contains quality soils for farming. While many residences without farms exist, agriculture is the dominant land use. There are also numerous forest stands, which have fluctuated over time due to the changes in the farming industry. Overall, this Character Area plays a vital role in the identity of the county. Although an increase in employment and economic development is a primary goal of the County, these benefits are sought while preserving its rural landscape and agricultural character.

The Character Area Plan identifies Farmland in the following locations:

- Majority of the west side of the Black River Valley, with swaths reaching up onto the Tug Hill Plateau (including the Maple Ridge Wind Farm)
- East side of the Black River Valley along the Routes 812 and 126 corridors.



A typical farm complex along Route 12 in Lowville.



Map 13

July 2009

Character Area Plan: Farmland

Map Scales
11 x 17 Sheet 1 inch = 625 miles
36 x 56 Plot 1 inch = 2,000 feet

Inset Maps
Map designed by:
Bergmann
architects // engineers // planners



Map 13

July 2009

Character Area Plan:
Farmland

Map Scales
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Map 13

July 2009

Character Area Plan:
Farmland

Map S

Design Considerations

Design and policy considerations in the Farmland Character Area should promote new development that minimizes impacts on farmland and farm activities. Development in these areas must be carefully sited to avoid fragmentation of farmlands, preserve the most productive soils, and reduce nuisance conflicts – all of which are noted in this Plan as critical issues to Lewis County farmers. In order to accomplish this, the footprint of new non-farm development should be limited, overall residential density should be low, and new structures should be directed to the least agriculturally productive portions of a parcel being developed. The preservation of farmland and agricultural resources is good for community character and the environment, but it is also critical to support agriculture as a viable industry in Lewis County.

Conservation subdivisions can be effectively used to cluster or move new structures away from prime farmland soils. Towns should pay careful attention when approving subdivisions or site plans so new structures do not prevent farm equipment access to rear or undeveloped parcels, and are sited to create as much useable farmland as possible. Many communities use road frontage requirements as a way to reduce density and space new development out. However, large road frontage requirements are often counter-productive to protecting agricultural lands and often result in large residential lots which encumber land that could still be potentially farmed. Towns can reduce these standards and promote creative siting of new houses in farmland areas. Buffers between new development and farms are critical to minimize potential future conflicts and should be established by the new non-farm use.

A commonly utilized, yet often ineffective, regulation to protect farm land or open space is the determination of minimum lot sizes, such as one, two or three acres for each new lot created. Minimum lot sizes typically result in suburban style development and consumption of all available land resources into house lots. Rather than conventional minimum lot size requirements, communities should devote more attention to the overall density of development on a parent parcel, which should allow for a great deal of landowner flexibility while preserving open lands for farming (see page 108 for more information). Ideally, development proposals should approximate the size of an economically-viable farm field for continued agricultural use, and then determine minimum development acreages for the remaining lands.

Agriculture Protection / Rural Development Tool Kit

Site Design Guidelines/Standards

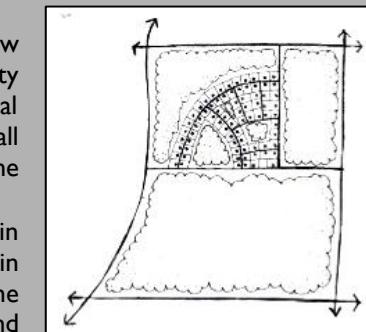
- The establishment of guidelines or standards for the clearing and development of land ensures that a base level of consistency occurs within a given area, or town-wide.
- The municipality can choose to establish general guidelines or standards for the entire town/village, or for a select district.
- Discourage clearing and earthwork beyond that necessary for construction and the general use and enjoyment of the land.
- Encourage the preservation of woodlots, hedgerows, undulating terrain, fence lines, and other heritage elements of the landscape.

Infrastructure Management

- Municipalities should consider creating Capital Improvement Plans for their publicly-owned roadways and utility infrastructure based on 10-15 year cycles.
- These Plans should dictate the extent of service coverage and the reasonable conditions required for the extension of infrastructure.
- Infrastructure investments should be consistent with the County Character Area Plan or any relevant local land use plans.

Conservation Easement Design

- Farms are small mixed-use enterprises that consist of residential, commercial, industrial, warehousing, storage, agricultural, and potentially retail activities.
- The drafting of conservation easements for agricultural activities needs to provide this flexibility to protect the operations and viability of a farm.



Conservation and Cluster Subdivisions

- Clustered subdivisions are a tool that allow developers to preserve existing community character and sensitive environmental features, while also preserving the overall density of development available to the property owner.
- The adjacent image depicts a scenario in which development is tightly arranged within a small area of the property, and the surrounding natural features are retained and placed under a conservation easement.

Frontage Requirements

- Consider requiring a minimum percentage of roadway frontage as open space, and/or requiring a minimum vegetative buffer of undisturbed land 200 feet or more in depth from the roadway.

Access Management

- For residential development, allow one driveway curb cut per lot, and only one driveway per 660 feet (1/8 mile) to limit the number of frontage lots with roadway access.
- On state highways, such as NY Route 12, consider setting a threshold on the number of lots within a given frontage distance that will trigger the need for shared access.

Local 'Right-to-Farm' Law

- Right-to-farm laws are designed to strengthen the legal position of farmers when neighbors sue them for private nuisance and to protect farmers from anti-nuisance ordinances and unreasonable controls on farming operations.
- These laws document the importance of farming to the state or locality, and put non-farm rural residents on notice that generally-accepted agricultural practices are reasonable activities to expect in farming areas.

Lease of Development Rights (LDR)

- Essentially a term conservation easement, this program provides incentives to landowners who voluntarily commit to keeping their land undeveloped for a defined period of time, rather than in perpetuity.
- Additional programs include Purchase and Transfer of Development Rights. These programs are more costly and are less likely to have a significant impact in Lewis County, due to the lack of concentrated development pressure.



RURAL LIVING CHARACTER AREA

Overview

Rural Living represents a transitional area between farmland/forest and village/hamlet areas where residential development encompasses a large share of active land uses. In these Character Areas, housing does not occupy the largest portion of the land, as it would in Village Living, but there are a large enough proportion of residences that are not linked to agricultural activities to change its character. Rural Living areas were historically populated by farmhouses, as transportation limitations reserved these areas only for those working the land. However, since the mid-20th century, and especially in the last 20 years, the population of these areas has grown with the onset of "country living" patterns that did not include agriculture activity. The automobile, coupled with an abundance of cheap energy, allowed people to build small to mid-sized homes in a rural setting while commuting to population centers such as Lowville, Watertown, Rome, and Syracuse.

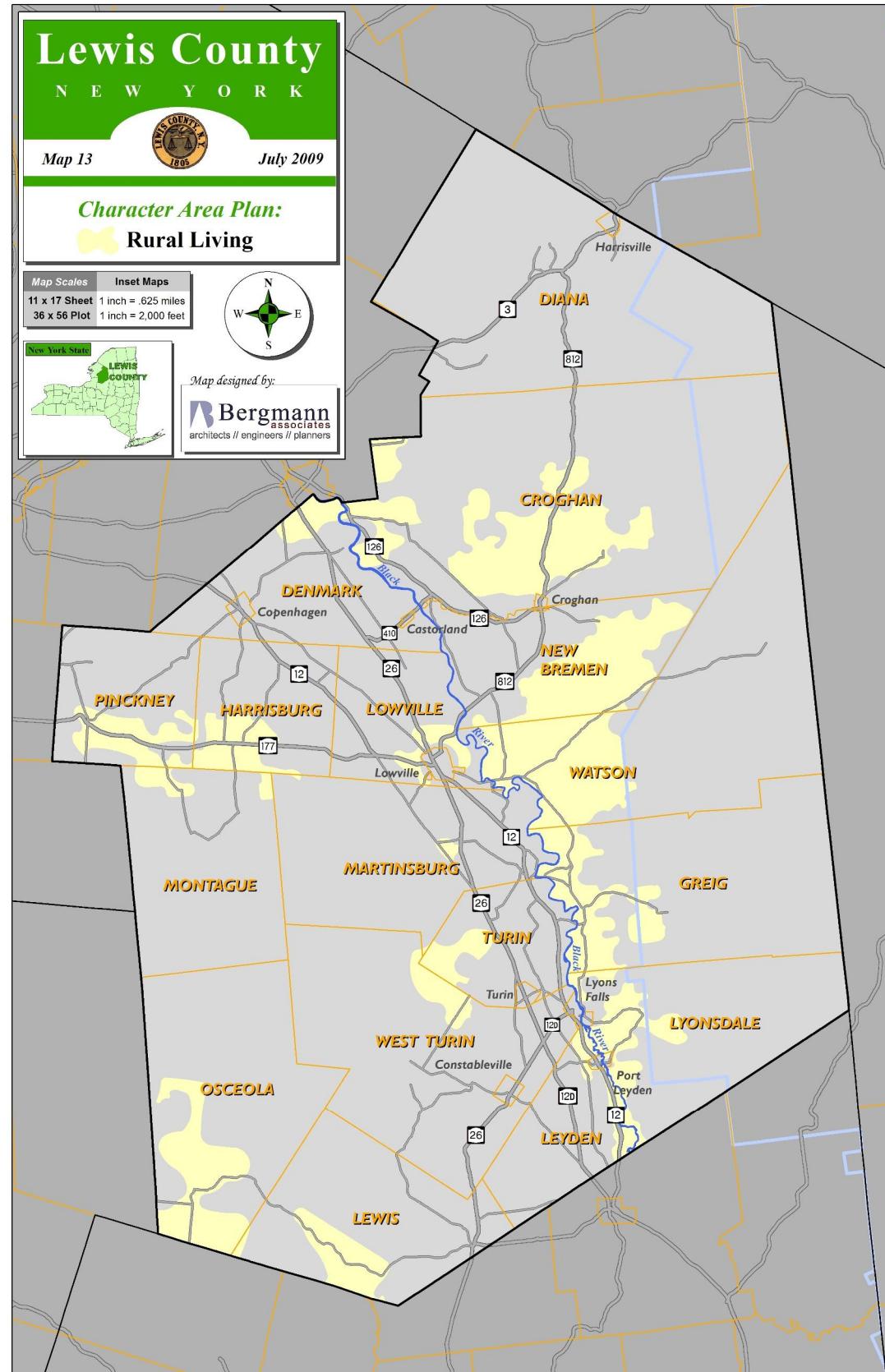
This pattern exists throughout the entire county, but the Character Area Plan identifies specific clusters of Rural Living where farming and forestry, although present, are not the dominant land use. There is a noticeable presence of this on the east side of the Black River, where, although some farms exist, the land is not as conducive to farming as the west side of the river. Yet the area is a quick commute to Lowville and other activity centers which attracts those wishing for a peaceful, natural setting within a reasonable distance of goods, services, and jobs.

The Character Area Plan identifies Rural Living in the following locations:

- South and east of the Village of Carthage
- North of the Village of Croghan
- Along Route 177
- Black River east shore from New Bremen to Port Leyden
- West of the Village of Turin on the Tug Hill Plateau
- Along County Road 46 in the Town of Lewis
- Around the hamlet of Osceola



Rural living residence in the Town of Martinsburg.



Recommended Land Uses

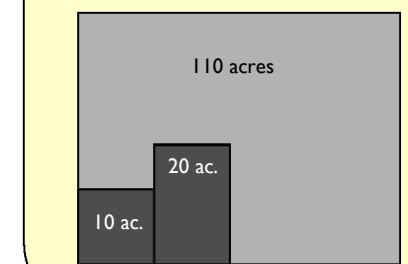
Land use goals should preserve the remaining rural, historic and agricultural character in this area by minimizing the visual impact of development from public roadways and protecting important environmental features. Planning should encourage innovative development, more opportunities for traditional community living, employment, housing, recreation, and the conservation and efficient use of open space. Future land uses should include residential dwellings mixed with commercial/retail farm support, religious, public/municipal, and recreational uses. Rural Living area development should be carefully designed and sited, and each town should consider a strategy for managing residential development based on the methods outlined in this section and the Farmland section (ppg. 106-107). Small-scale, neighborhood-based retail businesses should be retained for hamlet and village areas.

Town of Seneca Agricultural Zoning District

The Town of Seneca, NY created its Agricultural Zoning District to preserve existing agricultural lands and protect the rural character of the area that reinforces the special quality of life enjoyed by residents. The creation of the Agricultural Zoning District illustrates the Town's commitment to farming and agricultural uses as a preferred use in these districts, and protects existing agricultural areas from suburban and urban development, encourages the continuation of agriculture, reduces land conflicts and preserves open space and natural resources.

The following is an example of how the Seneca ordinance addresses density in the Agricultural Zone:

- A single subdivided lot is allowed on parent parcels that are between 5 and 100 acres in total size.
- Up to 2 subdivided lots are allowed on parent parcels that are more than 100 acres and up to 150 acres in total size.
- Up to 3 subdivided lots are allowed on parent parcels that are more than 150 acres and up to 200 acres in total size.
- Parent parcels that are greater than 200 acres in size are allowed 1 subdivided lot per 50 acres.



Example:
Parent parcel = 140 acres
2 subdivided lots are permitted
Minimum lot size = 1 acre

For additional techniques used in farmland preservation, see page 107.



Many new residents join the Lewis County community from urban or suburban locations. While the country atmosphere and open environment of Lewis County are highly desired, many public services and amenities that people are used to from other locations are not economically feasible to be provided for or are not consistent with small town living. This discrepancy of expectations can be problematic. Throughout the planning process, participants indicated that there is a need to educate newcomers to Lewis County about living in a rural area. The following information addresses topics where conflicts often arise. This information could be provided to local realtors to assist prospective buyers, and provide an improved understanding of the character of Lewis County.

1. Public water and sewer systems are limited to the areas around villages, and home owners should be aware of their responsibility to provide for their individual water and waste treatment, via wells and septic systems, on their own property.
2. Electrical, telephone, cellular, and internet services may be unavailable or may not operate at urban standards. Repairs can often take much longer than in cities. Prior to construction, property owners should determine the proximity of electrical power and other utilities, as the extension of these services often comes at great expense.
3. Property owners should be aware of the budgetary challenges facing municipalities, which are in part the result of providing modern services to small populations across a large geographic area.

Design Considerations

Conventional, suburban style subdivisions and strip commercial development are land development patterns that should be discouraged within the Rural Living Area. Design considerations should be oriented to allow for new development that reduces sprawl, reduces negative traffic impacts on Route 12 and other major arterials, minimizes impacts on the environment, reduces impacts on agriculture and forest lands, and maintains small town rural character. Residential development should build upon the historic development pattern of Lewis County. Towns should promote development that displays the design features of traditional hamlets and low density development in this part of the county. Commercial development may be appropriate if it does not create objectionable noise, glare, or odors, and where the visual and open space characteristics of the area are reinforced.

Life in Rural Areas

4. Many local roads are gravel and will not be paved. Unpaved roads are not always smooth, are often slippery when they are wet, and can be muddy during the spring thaw. An increase in vehicle maintenance costs may be experienced from regular travel on rural, unpaved county roads. Property owners are advised to understand the municipality's road maintenance programs and determine the maintenance designation of their local roads, as not all roadways are eligible for year-round care.
5. Growth is occurring in Lewis County, and the views and vistas surrounding a given parcel may change in the future. Prospective property owners should investigate the local municipality's land use and zoning regulations to determine if changes to the character of the landscape are likely.
6. Farming is a common activity in Lewis County and is a very important part of the community. Farm activities require large machinery travelling on local and county roads between fields. Farm and forestry traffic may slow travel down at times.
7. Farmers often work around the clock, especially during planting and harvest time. Chemicals are often used in growing crops. Animals and their manure may cause objectionable odors. It is possible that adjoining agricultural uses may disturb the relative peace and quiet of the country side, and prospective owners should take these factors into consideration prior to purchasing property in the rural areas of Lewis County.
8. Dark skies are usually thought of as a very valuable rural experience. Prospective buyers and current home owners should be considerate of light pollution, and use light fixtures that direct light downwards and consider the increased utilization of timers.



Wherever feasible, towns should retain and reuse existing old farm roads and lanes rather than constructing new roads or driveways. Preserving stone walls and hedgerows will maintain these traditional landscape features, define outdoor areas, and create corridors useful for wildlife. New structures should be placed either at the edges of fields or in wooded areas. Existing vegetation and topography can be effectively used to buffer and screen new buildings. Buildings can be grouped in clusters or tucked behind tree lines or knolls instead of spreading them out across the landscape in a sprawling or haphazard pattern.

Clearing of vegetation at the edge of the road is not desirable and should include only what is necessary to create a driveway entrance with adequate sight distance. Where possible, existing vegetation can be used as a backdrop to reduce the prominence of the structure within the landscape. Cut and fill earthwork should be minimized to limit impacts on the environment and its visual character.

In the future, Lewis County towns have many opportunities to ensure that large residential developments are designed to complement the rural living character. Through use of conservation subdivision design (see sidebar on page 106), and encouraging development in and around existing population centers, the sense of community and character of the area can be preserved. Lewis County also can enhance planning for small, incremental growth as single family minor subdivisions and seasonal homes are developed. Site plan review, subdivision, zoning, and other local building lot laws can all be used to incorporate good rural design principles.



HAMLETS & CROSSROADS CHARACTER AREA

Overview

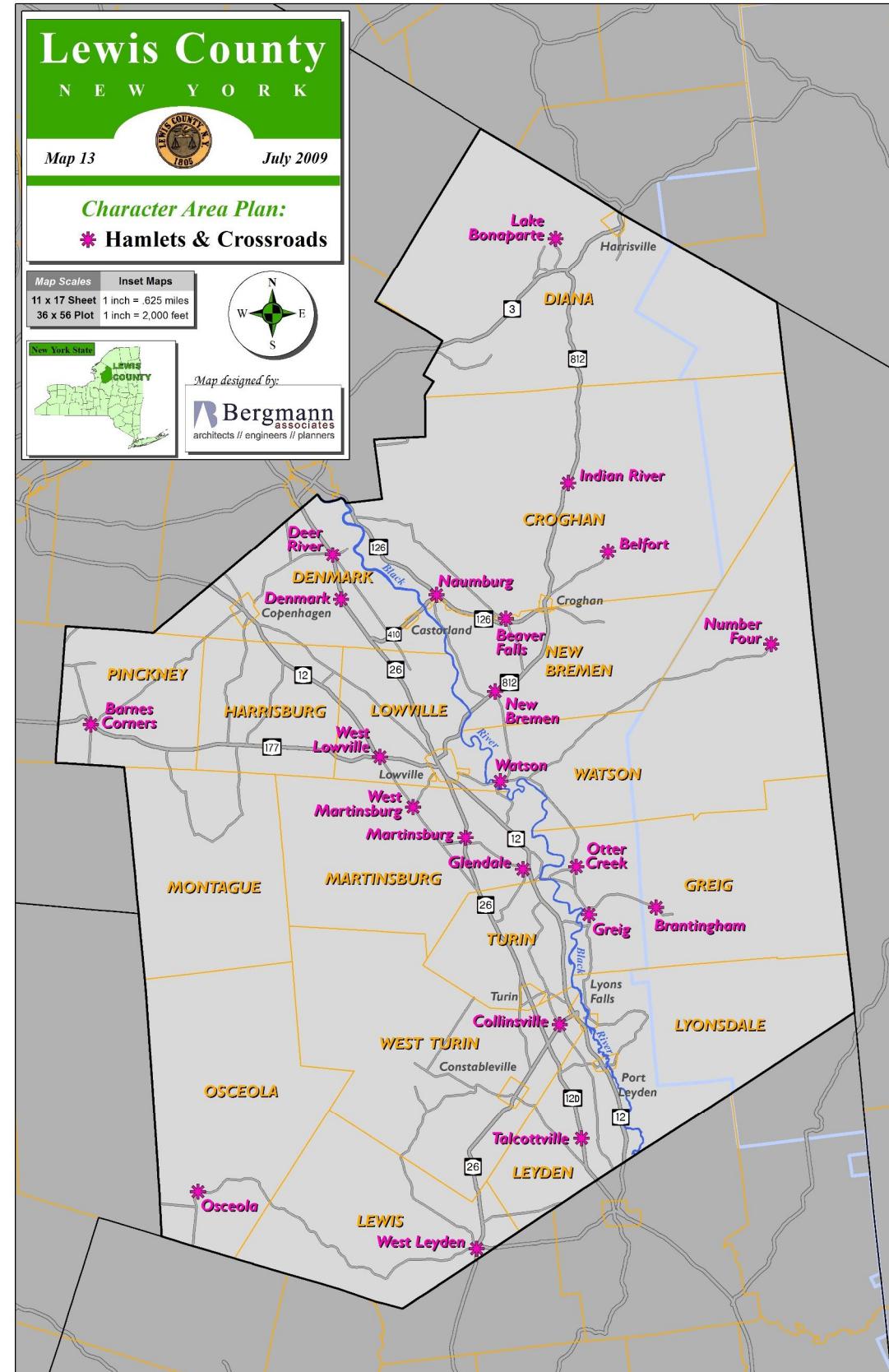
Lewis County contains numerous small population clusters, and those that are unincorporated are known as hamlets. The county's hamlet areas range in scale from small village-like communities, such as Number Four (Beaver Lake), to simple rural crossroads with a small collection of homes, such as West Martinsburg. The more developed hamlets share similarities with villages, yet have notable differences between their land use character. These hamlets are predominantly residential in nature, and do not have a strong central node of activity and commerce like Village Center Character Areas. However, these hamlets often include the occasional commercial, retail, or civic use. Many also contain churches, which were often the source of the enclave's identity. Historically, these centers were important crossroads for surrounding farmsteads, yet likely never achieved the critical mass to emerge as notable villages.

While the village-like hamlets may be located along a main thoroughfare, other hamlets or crossroads may take on a more rural character. These areas are smaller in scale, typically focused around a single intersection, and in most instances are a collection of no more than a few dozen structures. Typical to all hamlet and crossroads Character Areas is a sense of place created by an easily defined neighborhood. The larger hamlets have a strong identity both to its residents and the surrounding areas, with this identity notably linked to churches, industry or natural features.

The Character Area Plan identifies Hamlets & Crossroads in the following locations:*

- Lake Bonaparte
- Indian River
- Belfort
- Beaver Falls
- Deer River
- Denmark
- Naumburg
- Barnes Corners
- West Lowville
- Martinsburg
- West Martinsburg
- Glendale
- Watson
- New Bremen
- Number Four (Beaver Lake)
- Martinsburg
- West Martinsburg
- Greig
- Otter Creek
- Brantingham
- New Bremen
- Collinsville
- Talcottville
- West Leyden
- Osceola

* Recommendations in the Village Center and Village Living Character Areas are in some cases relevant to Hamlets and Crossroads, as some of these locations share a similar character to incorporated villages.



Future Land Uses

Hamlet and crossroad areas are appropriate locations for single family residences, two-family residences, small scale mixed use buildings (residential/commercial), institutional uses such as a post office, firehouse, community center, or library, religious buildings, and small scale retail commercial buildings.

Hamlet Form

Hamlets take many different development forms, depending upon their location and the economic history behind their development. The following presents a cross section of hamlets within Lewis County, ranging from an informal collection of frontage lots along a state highway, to a more formalized development pattern complete with a small residential neighborhood.



Indian River is a small, low density hamlet along Route 812 that formed as a collection of homes and farms, rather than a center of economic activity.



New Bremen has an increased development density and includes limited commercial and retail land uses, as well as more extensive transportation infrastructure.



Brantingham has commercial and public service infrastructure as well as a more established residential component, with the development form being dictated largely by the forest areas.

Maintaining Hamlet Character

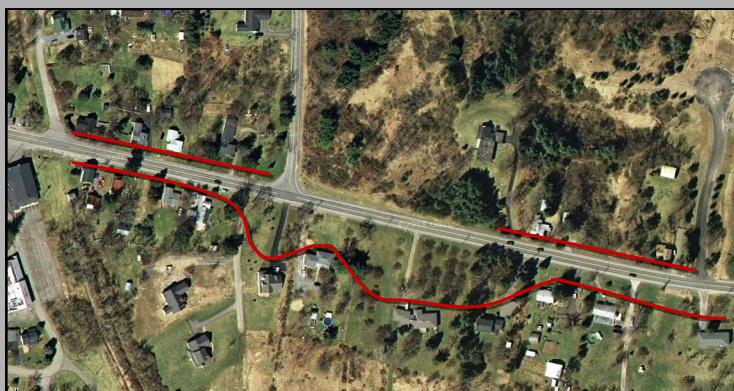
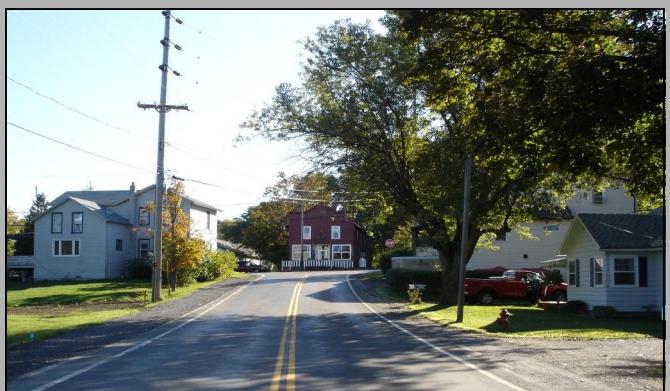
Lewis County hamlets each have their own distinctive character and sense of place within the rural setting. Most hamlets formed at the junction of two roadways, transforming these intersections into destinations within the surrounding landscape. The limited density of development occurring at these junctions creates a distinct contrast to the surrounding sparsely populated rural countryside. While not formally recognized entities, each hamlet has its own identity and character, both important elements that should be maintained into the future.

Development pressure within Lewis County's hamlet areas is extremely low. As a result, this section provides recommendations on maintaining and enhancing existing hamlet areas through small, incremental improvements. An issue of primary importance in most hamlets is alerting motorists on their approach and travel through the settlement. Vehicle speeds in rural areas can become excessive, and in many instances there is little forewarning for travelers as they approach the hamlet and quickly pass through. Improved signage, striping, and shoulders can enhance the sense of arrival for motorists and help maintain County hamlets as high-quality places to live.



The addition of gateway or arrival signage can enhance the identity of a small hamlet, as seen above for the Hamlet of Ionia, NY. The images at left and right depict the influence roadway striping and shoulders can have on the appearance of a settlement. The image at left does not have any formalized striping, and no dedicated shoulders, which is in contrast to the hamlet at right. The added definition to the roadway through striping improves motorist visibility and provides a safety zone for pedestrian travel along the corridor.

Hamlets widely differ in form and development pattern. Some hamlets are tightly clustered around a primary intersection, while others extend along a corridor for one-half mile or more. Regardless of a hamlet's historic form, the primary element that gives each hamlet a unique character is the relationship between structures and the roadway. While communities and settlements change over time, the characteristics that give each a unique sense of place should be preserved and enhanced. Of particular importance is the orientation of buildings, building setbacks and yards, and the maintenance of consistent street frontage in both mass and height.



The hamlet at left denotes a pronounced sense of arrival through the clustering of buildings tight to the primary intersection. New development in the hamlet at right has deviated significantly from the historic setback line, causing an inconsistent street frontage, as depicted by the red lines. Town planning and zoning boards should strive to maintain consistency in street setbacks in an effort to retain the historic character and settlement pattern the separates hamlets from rural living areas and suburban-style development.

Design Considerations

Many of the design considerations discussed in the Village Living Area also pertain to Hamlets and Crossroads, yet at a smaller scale. The preservation of small lots, limited commercial building footprints, and traditional architecture are design goals for hamlet and crossroad settlements. The County and towns should work to extend the existing close-knit pattern of small lots and improve walkability within these areas through targeted infill development.

Existing architecture should be preserved wherever possible and new development, both public and private, should be designed in a style that is consistent and architecturally compatible with the heritage character of the area. Lewis County hamlets and crossroads have distinctive character, and their unique identity and sense of place should be preserved and enhanced through future development activities.

Design considerations important to hamlets and crossroads include:

Setbacks and frontages

- Retain uniform setbacks along a street frontage
- Reduce or eliminate 'saw-tooth' lots created by vacancies or deep setbacks

Building heights

- Retain consistent building heights along a street frontage
- Buildings should be no more than 2 1/2 to 3 stories tall

Building and entry placement

- Parking lots should be placed in rear or side yards
- Orient principal entrances to primary streets
- Connect entrances to sidewalks (if present)

Building design

- Construction materials should be consistent with traditional building materials found in the hamlet
- Architectural character should emulate traditional or vernacular styles within the North Country

Landscaping

- New development should include significant landscaping
- Retain specimen and/or mature trees, especially those along the roadside
- Utilized only native and/or hearty species that will survive in the North Country



LAKEFRONT LIVING CHARACTER AREA

Overview

There are four areas depicted as Lakefront Living on the County Character Area Plan; these include the areas surrounding Brantingham, Chase and Beaver Lakes, and Lake Bonaparte. All four areas are surrounded by Forestry Character Areas and are located in or adjacent to the Adirondack State Park, with Lake Bonaparte the only area located outside of the Adirondack Foothills. Nearly all the uses in these areas are single family detached structures that are used for permanent or seasonal residences, with occasional small scale convenience retail or services. Although small in physical area, the character of these locations is significantly different from the surrounding landscape, with the proximity to water resources providing additional support for a separate Lakefront Living category.

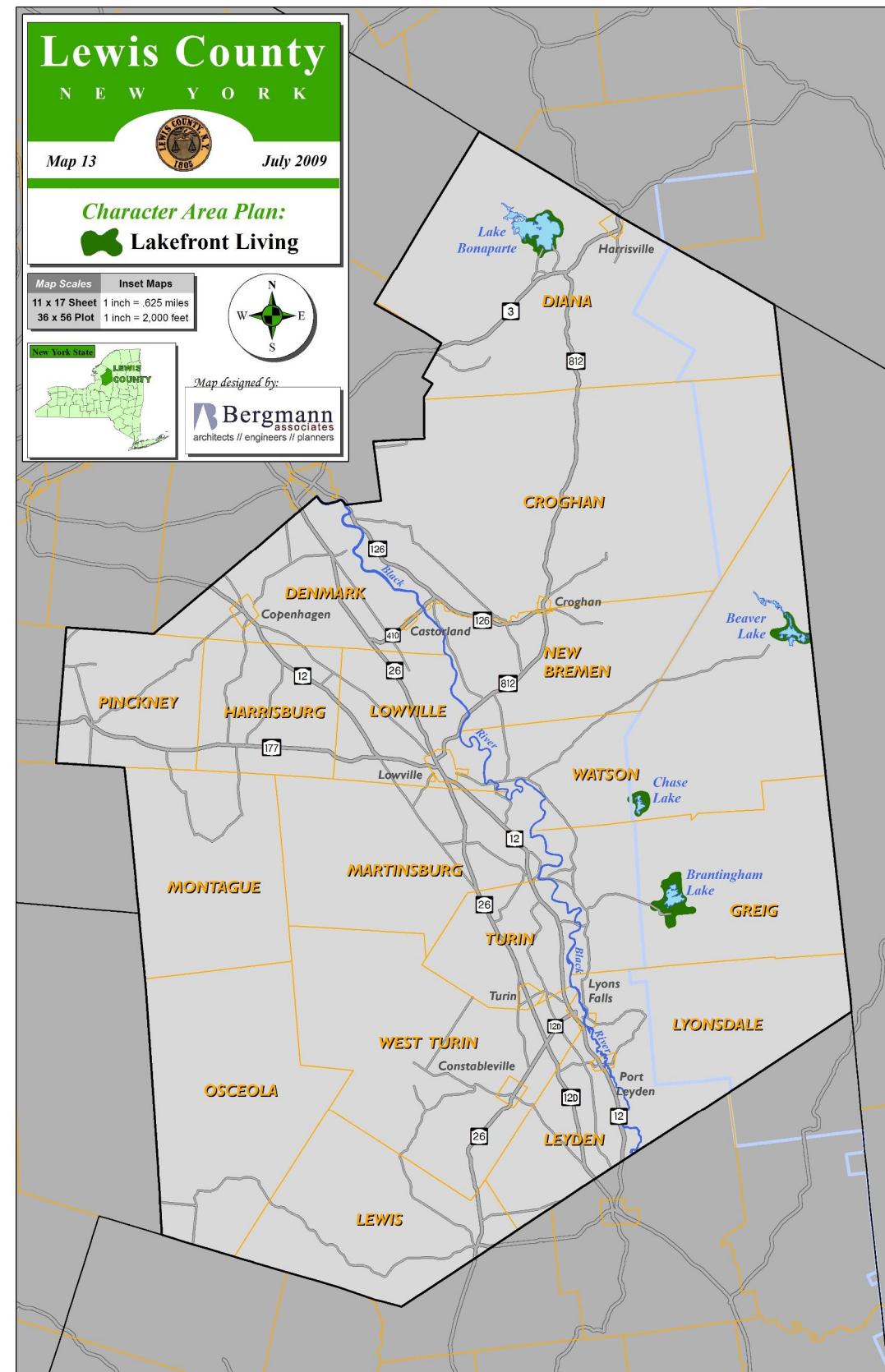
This character area contains a mixture of older and contemporary housing stock. The most recent national real estate boom brought about a dramatic increase in new and redevelopment of lakefront properties during the past 10 years. As a result, places such as Brantingham Lake do not have any remaining public frontage along the shoreline.

The real estate boom drove up property prices significantly, resulting in property reassessments that have negatively impacted the tax requirements for long-time residents. The influx of seasonal and year-round property owners in these remote locations has also brought about conflicts between the services local municipalities are able to provide and the expectations of new land owners.



Typical Lakefront Living residence in the Brantingham Lake area.

However, benefits of the recent real estate boom include an increased municipal tax base, an influx of disposable income to be spent on local goods and services, the added attention and draw for tourism and recreation, and the improved image of the county. Municipalities and residents must recognize and balance the benefits and drawbacks of growth and change to their advantage.



Design Considerations

Primary design considerations for the Lakefront Living Character Areas include the provision of public access to the waterfront, where feasible, and the protection of water resources. Lewis County has very few large lakes available for public recreational use. The high demand for property in the Lakefront Living areas has led to a dramatic privatization of these important natural resources. Municipalities should work with willing landowners to develop public access plans for these and other small lakes and ponds to ensure accessibility for future generations of residents and visitors. The retention of public access to these lakes will be extremely important to Lewis County's developing tourism industry. Visitors are drawn to the beautiful landscapes and vistas of the county's forests, and the promise of direct access to water resources will retain and expand the tourism economy. Chase Lake and its shoreline is completely developed and controlled by a resident's association, therefore providing public access is not recommended for this location. Opportunities for public access in other locations should be further investigated as they arise.

Additionally, the status and effectiveness of private infrastructure in these character areas is becoming an increasingly important topic of discussion. Municipal sewer and water infrastructure is not available to lakefront residences, therefore aging and undersized septic systems are of concern, specifically around Brantingham Lake (septic systems in Chase Lake are not a concern in that respect). Many existing systems were installed before the advent of strict NYSDEC standards. While regulation of this infrastructure is out of the hands of local municipalities, the investigation of potentially failing systems and the development of mitigation measures is something that could be addressed by a consortium of towns in conjunction with the APA and NYSDEC. The goal of such a program should be to improve the effectiveness of the systems and the safety of the environment, not to punish property owners. This consortium could seek grant funding for investigations and repairs/replacements to limit the burden on individual property owners.



The scarcity of buildable lakefront property around Lake Bonaparte has caused significant competition and development on the little available shoreline, as can be seen above.



RIPARIAN BUFFERS

Overview

Riparian buffers are lands adjacent to a body of water that serve as an interface with the surrounding upland areas. These areas are often comprised of a variety of land cover types; in Lewis County the predominant land cover is forest and farmland. In more urbanized locations, such as county villages, land cover is typically pavements and lawns in residential and commercial areas. Riparian areas are often located in floodplains and, as a result, can be highly productive for many agricultural uses.

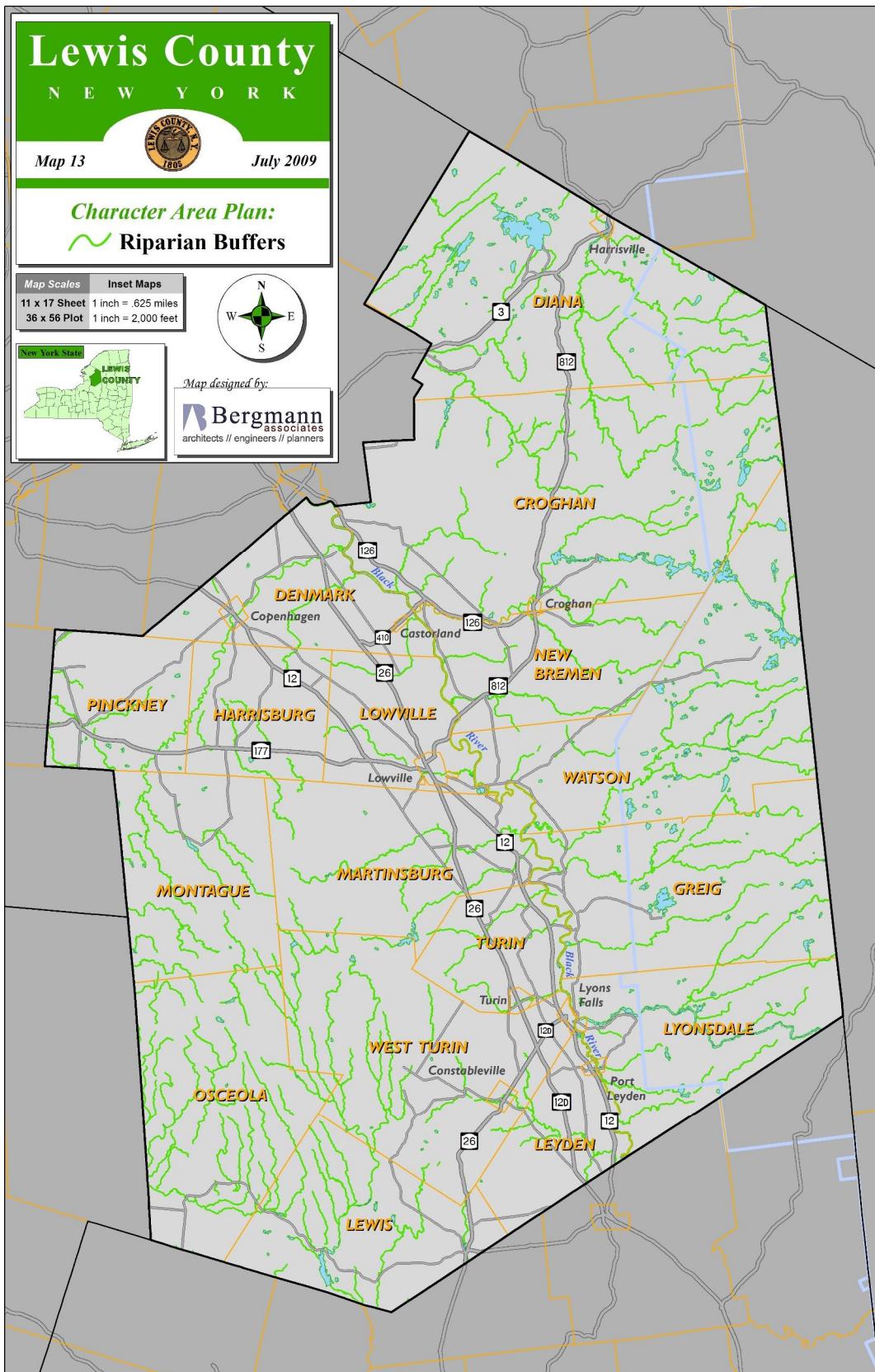
In Lewis County, riparian buffers should be located along all primary rivers and creeks, as well as ponds and lakes to protect water quality. The majority of these buffer areas are located on the Tug Hill Plateau and in the Adirondack Foothills, however the most significant buffer would be along the Black River.

Design Considerations

Riparian land plays an important role in the protection of water quality and other ecosystem services by trapping soil and sediments, and reducing the amount of siltation and nutrients moving from upslope areas into a given water body. A 50- to 100-foot forested riparian buffer in agricultural areas, for example, can reduce erosion, bank slumping, wetland siltation, stream turbidity, and nutrient loading (e.g. animal waste or fertilizers) that would otherwise result if plowing or grazing were to occur directly adjacent to streams.



An example of a small riparian area in an agricultural setting that lacks any buffering from activity. Notice the bank erosion and the lack of vegetation to absorb and prevent nutrients and silt from entering the creek.



An example of a small riparian area in an agricultural setting that lacks any buffering from activity. Notice the bank erosion and the lack of vegetation to absorb and prevent nutrients and silt from entering the creek.

Forested riparian areas also regulate water temperature through shading, keeping rivers, creeks, ponds and lakes cool for aquatic life. In Lewis County, a majority of the rivers and creeks have their headwaters within Forest Character Areas, then traveling through Farmland and Rural Residential areas as they exit the county. As well, most water bodies travel through multiple municipalities, increasing the need for a regionally coordinated effort to protect water quality.

Riparian areas also play an important role in the lifecycle of many native plants and animals by providing food, cover, corridors for movement, and refuge during time of drought or fire. Municipalities should strive to retain a 100-foot buffer of no disturbance around water bodies to protect water quality.

Multiple municipal water systems in Lewis County rely on streams and ponds as their source of potable water. A healthy riparian buffer along these water bodies will help improve water quality, while also potentially reducing the cost of purification. The natural environment is a primary driver of Lewis County's tourism industry, making the protection of water quality for water-dependent and water-enhanced recreation and sight seeing activities an issue of economic importance.



An example of a large riparian area in a forested setting with significant buffering from activity. Notice the amount of shade the trees provide the shallower areas near the shoreline, keeping the water cool for fish and helping ease algae growth.



VILLAGE CENTER CHARACTER AREA

Overview

Villages represent core areas of commerce, investment, and activity within Lewis County. Commonly referred to as "Main Street," "Downtown," or the "Central Business District" Village Center Character Areas are relatively compact with development focused along short stretches of state highways or flanking primary intersections. The land use mix of these centers typically includes retail, services, offices, schools, churches, parks, and municipal buildings. While they are characterized by a commercial concentration, most Village Centers in Lewis County also contain some single- and multi-family homes and upper-story apartments.

Village Centers can contain multi-story buildings located near or to the street line with minimal setbacks between structures. The ground floors of buildings are predominantly retail, office, and professional services, while upper story areas include offices and residences. These multi-story buildings, which typically define the precise center of the village, are surrounded by houses and single-story commercial buildings arranged in a less-dense pattern. Unfortunately, many of these buildings in Lewis County have vacancies, especially in upper stories.

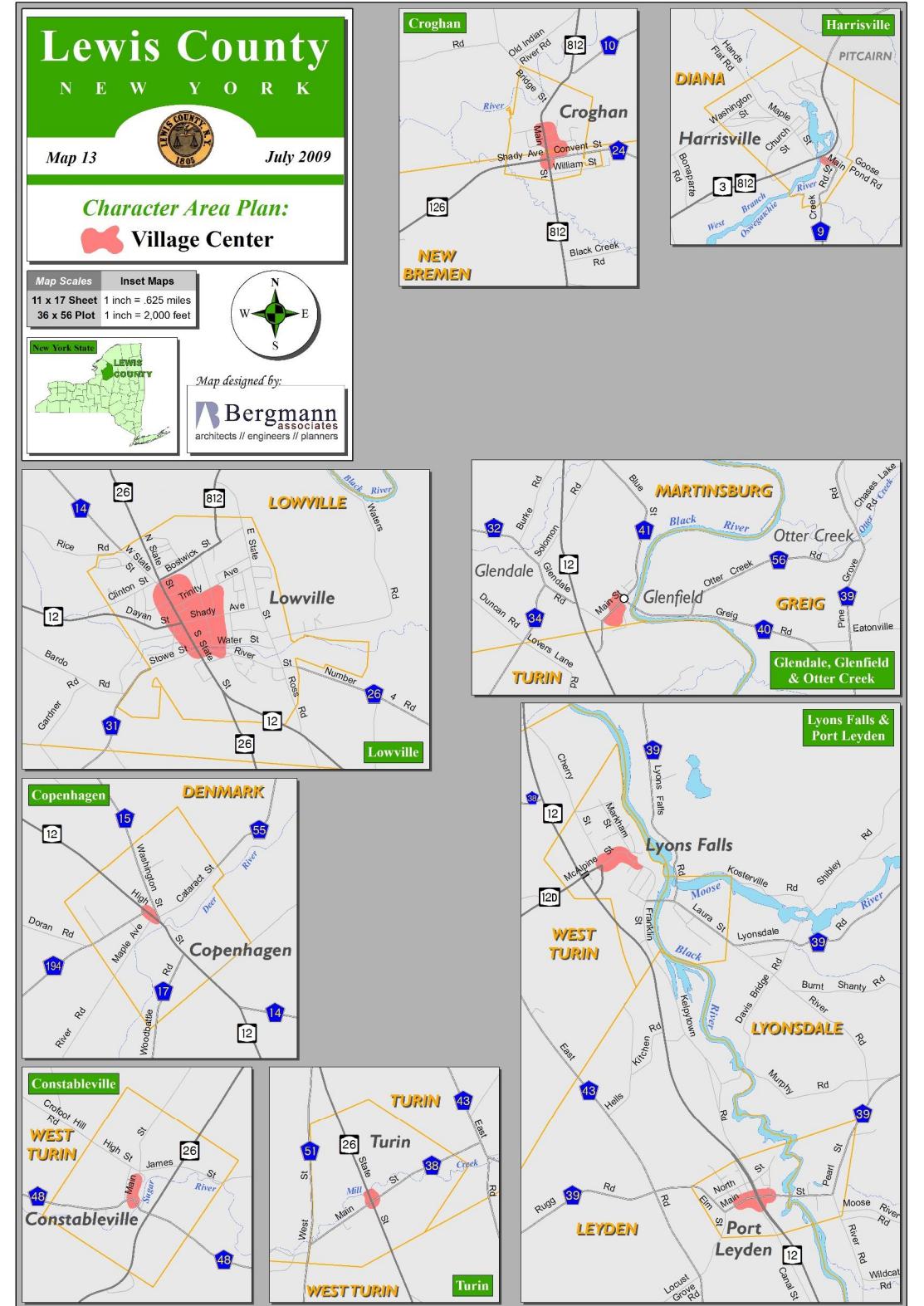
The architectural character of Village Centers is usually a vernacular style based on colonial revival and federal design patterns. On some main streets, the sidewalks are broadened to allow for enhanced pedestrian activity and the streetscape typically includes street trees, light poles, and other pedestrian amenities uniformly spaced along the right-of-way. Overall, these centers play a major role in defining the image and quality of life for their respective village, their surrounding town, and collectively for the entire county.

The Character Area Plan identifies Village Centers in the following locations:

- Harrisville
- Copenhagen
- Croghan
- Lowville
- Glenfield*
- Lyons Falls
- Port Leyden
- Constableville
- Turin

*Although Glenfield is not an incorporated village, its residential areas have a similar character to other villages. Therefore, the recommendations in this section are relevant to Glenfield.

Turin and Castorland are the other incorporated villages in the county, yet they lack a distinct and substantial commercial center. From the list above, Lowville and Croghan have the most established Village Centers, with numerous local businesses and consistent pedestrian traffic. Lowville is four times larger than the next largest village in the county, and is the only locality with a noticeable presence of three to four story buildings.



Activating Upper Stories

There are numerous psychological, economic, and social benefits to re-activating upper stories in Village Center buildings. The Village of Lowville in particular would benefit greatly from the added activity in the thousands of square feet of space currently vacant and idle in its Village Center.

Benefits

- The utilization of upper stories will re-activate the entire building façade throughout the day, with activity flowing out to the street level in the form of foot traffic. The added visual activity will improve the appearance and impression of a vibrant and healthy community.
- Economic benefits impact the individual building and the surrounding businesses through the addition of foot traffic. Additional foot traffic and improved vibrancy will lead to increased demand and higher rents. Additional foot traffic also leads to more consumer activity in the Village Center, and an expanded consumer pool.
- The addition of residences and offices will increase around-the-clock activity, and will spark demand for additional services and amenities such as parks, open spaces, sidewalks, and events.

Barriers

- Zoning and building codes often do not permit the mixed-use nature of multi-story buildings and the vertical organization of space.
- Code enforcement officers must be amenable to working with property owners within the New York State Uniform Fire Prevention Code to allow for the reuse of upper stories for residences.
- The lack of elevators in older multi-story buildings often limits the activities available to upper story areas, as well as the desirability of these spaces. Small cities, such as Oneonta, NY, provide precedents for the shared use of a single elevator amongst multiple buildings.





Revitalizing Main Street

The following represents potential options for municipalities to consider when revitalizing their 'Main Streets' or primary thoroughfares. Numerous tools and catalyst projects can be employed to kick-start a sustained reinvestment in existing commercial centers.

Formation of a Business Improvement District (BID)

- Formally recognized entity that provides enhanced services, such as safety, maintenance, and event coordination for a defined geographic area.
- BIDs help business owners work together and leverage resources in the attraction of customers to their district; increased foot traffic is beneficial to entire district.
- An additional flat assessment charged to BID members funds activities and services.
- Must be contiguous parcels, and must have agreement of 51 percent of the property owners or 51 percent of the assessed valuation within the proposed district.

Formation of a Local Development Corporation (LDC)

- LDCs are often established to focus on specific areas, such as a downtown, a waterfront area, a commercial corridor, or a specific site with redevelopment potential.
- The corporation is empowered by the New York State Department of State to establish programs that promote economic development.
- These programs are typically established for a variety of purposes such as attracting new business and industry, making physical improvements, retaining existing businesses, and administering loans.
- LDCs differ from BIDs as they do not have a finite geographic area, and are managed by a board of directors composed of local elected and appointed officials.

Focus on Infill Development

The limited growth taking place in Lewis County should be directed to existing Village Centers, enhancing their character, viability, and function and improving the quality of life for existing residents. The following are some of the benefits of infill development:

- Reduction in growth pressure on rural areas by absorbing growth;
- Help neighborhoods become more connected and sociable places;
- Fill gaps of existing community structure, provide continuity and enclosure; and
- Enhance circulation and walkability of a community by replacing vacant, deserted sites with end uses within walking distance of Village Living areas.



Public Space and Facade Improvements

- Improvements to streetscapes, parks, and plazas create an inviting atmosphere and help increase foot traffic.
- Façade improvement programs such as New York Main Streets assist property owners in making improvements to signage, storefronts, windows, and exteriors to improve their appearance.

Recommended Land Uses

Typical land uses recommended within Village Centers include retail, office, restaurants, accommodations, residential, institutional, public services and open space.

Design Considerations

There are numerous design elements and strategies associated with the revitalization and preservation of the county's village centers. These include concepts such as the vertical organization of space within multi-story buildings, the retention or attraction of pedestrian traffic generators, and the need to promote high-quality infill development within voids and vacant lots.

Village Centers are intended to be destinations and activity nodes for the village and outlying areas. As a result, the built environment should be pedestrian friendly in both design and development pattern. A primary driver of community character within Village Centers is the relationship between buildings and the street. As with development in Hamlets and Crossroads Character Areas, consistency of height and massing is extremely critical to the sense of place within Village Centers. The greater density and height of Village Center development creates distinct opportunities and challenges for communities striving to grow and revitalize.

Typical in most villages throughout New York, upper-story square footage is largely vacant and/or boarded up. The impact of the non-use of these spaces can be perceived economically, visually, and psychologically through the loss of activity and foot traffic. The re-activation of these upper-story areas is critical to the future of the village centers. Villages and small cities throughout New York and the nation are experiencing a dramatic increase in the desire of people to relocate into centers of activity. The upper-story spaces of existing buildings are perfect opportunities for new residential units, providing added vitality and foot traffic to individual properties and adjacent businesses, while improving community atmosphere. See the sidebar on page 113 for further discussion of upper-story residential and the vertical organization of space within Village Centers.

In addition to the re-activation of upper-story spaces, Lewis County's Village Centers can also be reinvigorated through policies that promote and encourage infill development. Over time, numerous vacant lots have appeared throughout county Village Centers as a result of fire, disinvestment, or abandonment. While these gaps detract from the physical environment, they

also pose opportunities to absorb future development within the community. See the sidebar at left for more information on the barriers to and benefits of infill development.

A potential tool to retain existing character and promote high-quality future development is the use of a form-based code. Unlike traditional zoning which controls development through regulations on the use of land, form-based codes dictate the form, appearance, and relationship of structures to each other and public spaces. By describing what a property owner "can do" rather than "can't do," a form-based code provides a greater level of consistency and reliability during the development and site plan review process. See the sidebar below for more information on form-based codes.

Definition of a Form-Based Code

A form-based code is a method of regulating development to create predictable public spaces primarily by controlling physical form, with a lesser focus on land use. These types of regulations address the relationship between building facades and public spaces, the form and mass of buildings in relation to one another, and the scale and types of streets and blocks. The regulations and standards in form-based codes are presented in both diagrams and words, and are keyed to a map (regulating plan) that designates appropriate locations for distinct areas based on the form and scale (and therefore, character) of development, rather than only distinctions in land use types. Form-based codes are regulatory tools, and should not be confused with design guidelines or general statements of policy.

The following are some benefits of form-based codes (FBCs):

- FBCs are prescriptive (they state what you want), rather than proscriptive (what you don't want), and therefore can achieve a more predictable physical result.
- FBCs work well in established communities because they effectively define and codify a neighborhood's existing "DNA." Vernacular building types can be easily replicated, promoting infill that is compatible with surrounding structures.
- FBCs may be more enforceable than design guidelines, as their stated purpose is the shaping of a high quality public realm, a presumed public good. Compliance with the codes can be enforced because a failure to comply would diminish the good that is sought.

In Lewis County, form-based code development is likely plausible for only the largest villages, and may not be necessary to expand beyond the Village Center Character Areas. The sustainability of existing character in the county's Village Centers is critical to expanding the tourism industry while protecting the quality of life for residents.

* Adapted from "Definitions of Form-Based Codes" and "Eight Advantages to Form-Based Codes," www.formbasedcodes.org, last accessed June 17, 2009.



Overview

Lewis County has a diversity of living arrangements, ranging from homes on farms and along country roads, to small groupings of residences at a crossroads or houses tucked into forestland. However, the majority of the population lives within village-type development patterns.

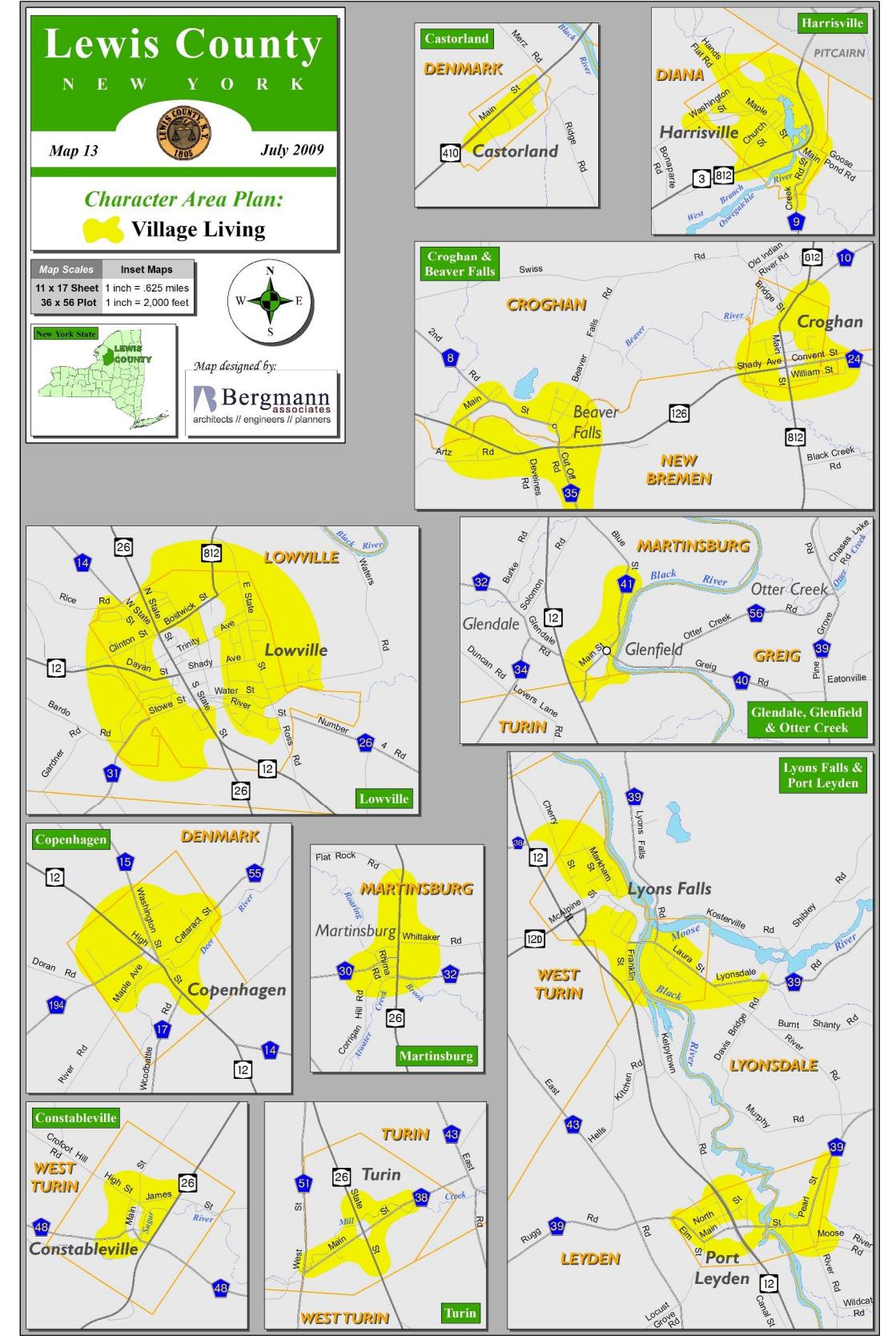
Village Living Character Areas contain single- and multi-family residences, and are typically well-defined neighborhoods that offer a diversity of housing choices within short walking distance to Village Centers. Homes, most of which were built prior to World War II, front along primary streets and side streets, often with front porches and entryways that connect to the street via sidewalks. Building setbacks from the street line are shallow and predominately uniform, with narrow lots that place homes in close proximity to each other and garages in rear yards. Residential streets in these areas are lined with sidewalks, trees, and sometimes street-lighting, and are of a width that promotes slower vehicular speeds. Residences are of a variety of architectural styles, yet pitched roofs are typical to the vernacular styles due to the region's significant snow fall. While residences are the primary land use within this Character Area, they can also be dotted with schools, small scale retail and offices, parks, and churches.

The Character Area Plan identifies Village Living in the following locations (regardless of a place's status as an incorporated village):

- Harrisville
- Copenhagen
- Lowville
- Castorland
- Beaver Falls*
- Croghan
- Constableville
- Martinsburg*
- Glenfield*
- Turin
- Lyons Falls
- Port Leyden

There is a range of density patterns in each of these locations, yet each contains a cluster of housing that forms a cohesive identity. This is in contrast to residences in rural areas, which are typically built independent of surrounding properties, one unit at a time.

**Although these communities are not incorporated villages, their residential areas have a similar character to other villages. Therefore, the recommendations in this section are relevant to these communities.*



Parks and public open space should have more than one access point. The park above, in Lowville, is only accessible from a vehicular drive on the east side, with no direct sidewalk connections from surrounding residential streets. Residents must walk significantly out of the way to enter the park, leading to an increase in short vehicular trips to access one of the village's only public spaces.

Housing Diversity

Diversity in housing includes the style and design of the structure, as well as the cost of access to occupants. There are numerous housing styles found within Village Living Character Areas in Lewis County, including single- and multi-family homes, conversions, and apartment complexes. Typical Euclidian Zoning utilized throughout the United States has segregated housing by type and from other land uses, creating large blocks of homogeneous residential areas with little to no diversity. As a result, social diversity in communities has also diminished, with singles and young couples that trend toward apartment and multi-family living being segregated from single-family households. The recent pattern of large housing developments catering specifically to seniors and baby-boomers creates an additional housing type, further separating community demographic groups, while at the same time impacting community character.

While a degree of uniformity and order is appropriate in communities, current zoning practices remove opportunities for variety and limit social interaction among different age and income groups. A potential solution is to permit a greater mixing of housing types, while continuing to provide protections for residents and property values. For example, by re-working commonly utilized in-law apartment ordinances, communities could promote multi-generational neighborhoods while reducing the demand for senior-driven housing developments. Additionally, appropriate design and implementation regulations regarding the conversion of large single-family homes into multiple units can retain neighborhood character and adjacent property values while increasing the diversity of housing choices. A greater diversity in choices typically equates to greater affordability, healthier environments, and improved community character.



Design Considerations

There are several important design characteristics that separate Village Living Character Areas from other residential living arrangements, including density, building arrangement, streetscape design, and access to public spaces.

The most critical design consideration for Village Living Character Areas is the density of housing units. This character area has the highest unit-per-acre density of any living arrangement within the county other than apartment buildings and multi-use structures in Village Centers. Densities of three to five units per acre are common, helping create the neighborhood atmosphere associated with these areas. As densities decrease, the character of the neighborhood shifts, and the close-knit feeling often experienced through proximity to neighboring families can be lost. In addition, higher densities are required to provide the economies of scale necessary to supply services and infrastructure in a cost effective manner.

The perception of density is closely associated with the arrangement and orientation of buildings. The neighborhood character of Village Living areas is dominated by houses with shallow setbacks on narrow lots. The placement of buildings close to the street with smaller side setbacks creates the appearance of increased density, regardless of lot depth. The arrangement of buildings in this manner also creates a structure and sense of enclosure when traveling down the street. The proximity of houses to one another, both side-to-side and across the street, allows neighbors to interact spontaneously during everyday activities. An important design element for Village Living Character Areas is the presence of front porches that face the roadway and are connected to the sidewalk network. In a well-designed neighborhood residents would be able to interact with one another from their respective properties, perhaps even from their own front porch, improving the social atmosphere. Front porches represent an important transition between public and private space.

Additional design considerations for successful Village Living Character Areas are the quality of the streetscape and connectivity to public spaces. Design elements associated with streetscapes include sidewalks, street lights, street trees, roadway design, and the architectural character of buildings. These design elements work together to form a unique character and sense of place for each street (see sidebar at right for more information on Streetscape Design). Communities may also develop design guidelines and recommendations for architectural character in specific neighborhoods to ensure consistency or protect historic districts. Guidelines provide recommendations and examples of quality design and implementation practices that can be utilized by property owners.

A final primary design consideration for Village Living Character Areas is the connectivity of neighborhoods to public spaces. Village Living neighborhoods often have small lot sizes that prohibit expansive areas for relaxation and recreation. As a result, there is often a demand for larger open spaces and programmatic options for families and children. Centralized public open spaces vary in size, and provide opportunities for structured play or passive recreation. In Lewis County municipalities, neighborhood-level parks can range in size from one-quarter acre to two acres and adequately serve the needs of the community.

Open spaces must have direct pedestrian connections surrounding neighborhood street networks, and should maintain maximum visibility within the community (see image on previous page). In instances where access easements with adjacent property owners may be necessary to provide connectivity from the adjacent neighborhood, the County should assist the municipality through the facilitation of negotiations and legal processes. Municipalities should avoid the tendency to create open spaces from left-over, odd-shaped parcels inconveniently located within the community, as parks should play a prominent role in the village's identity.

Residential Infill Development

In-fill and redevelopment projects should be complementary to existing development patterns and architectural character, and should improve connectivity and housing diversity within communities. The image below depicts appropriately-scaled and complementary infill development, while the images at right depict what Lewis County communities should avoid in their Village Living Character Areas. The three most important design elements of a neighborhood are sidewalks, street trees, and front porches.

Appropriate Village Living In-Fill Development



Sidewalks, street trees, rear/side loaded garages and front porches highlight the new infill development on the top half of the street.

Not Appropriate In-Fill Development



Large setbacks, no street trees or sidewalks



Garage too prominent



Garage too prominent

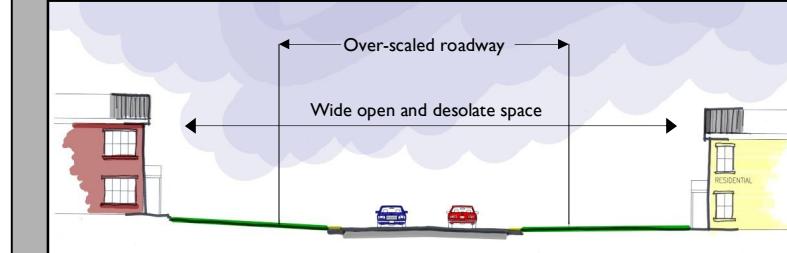
Streetscape Design

Few new roadways will likely be developed within Lewis County's villages and hamlets. The following is a brief discussion on streetscape recommendations to consider when existing roadways are upgraded or improved. The reconstruction of a roadway is a perfect opportunity to reconsider the streetscape design elements that have a significant impact on neighborhood character. These elements include:

- Roadway widths
- Curbs or gutters
- On-street parking
- Sidewalks
- Tree lawns
- Street trees
- Street lights

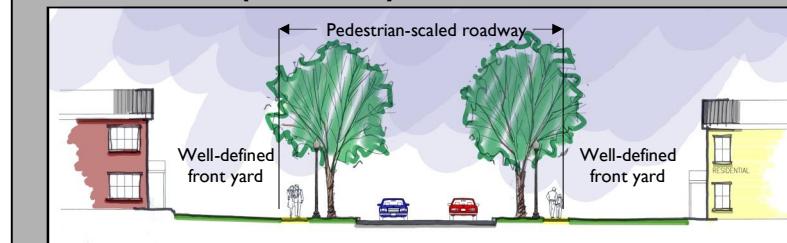
With routine maintenance, the average life-span of a residential street is 20 to 25 years, after which the roadway would likely need a complete reconstruction. The following is a fictitious example of a roadway within a village or hamlet before and after reconstruction, depicting how the redesign of the roadway can have significant impacts on neighborhood character and function.

Example Roadway: Before Reconstruction



This example roadway is 35 feet in width with concrete gutters in a 60-foot right-of-way and 25 foot front-yard setbacks. There are no sidewalks, street trees, or street lights to differentiate the roadway-zone from the residential-zone. As a result, the space between homes feels desolate, out of scale, and unappealing to pedestrians and homeowners.

Example Roadway: After Reconstruction



This example depicts the same roadway following its reconstruction. The right-of-way and front setback remain the same, however the roadway width has been reduced to 28 feet and curbing has been installed. The redesign included sidewalks, street trees, and street lights to help define distinct spaces associated with the roadway-zone and residential-zones. The final streetscape is pedestrian scaled and provides appealing and functional spaces in front yards and along the roadway.



VILLAGE TRANSITION CHARACTER AREA

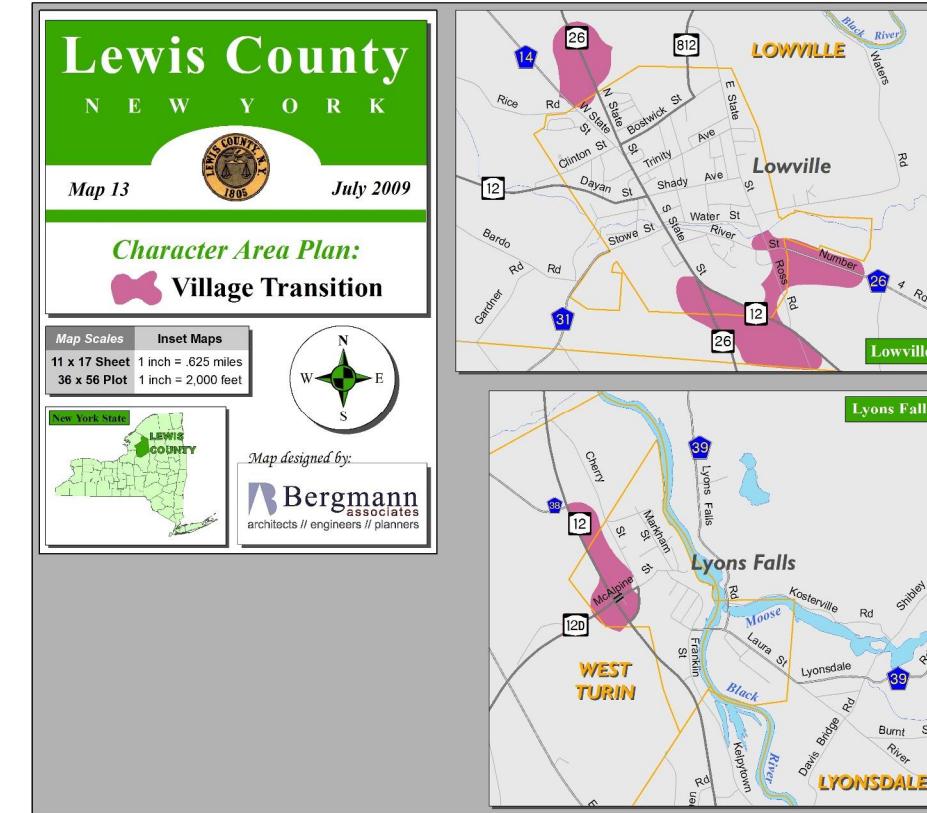
Overview

Beyond the boundaries of the Village Center and Village Living Character Areas is a transitional zone of commercial activity that lies between urbanized areas and surrounding farmlands, forests, and rural-residential areas. While a few villages in Lewis County contain an occasional business that fits into the Village Transition category, only the north and south side of Lowville and the west side of Lyons Falls contain a concentration of such uses that form a distinct Character Area. These areas, though quite small in size, are somewhat suburban in character. The south side of Lowville in particular contains a small collection of national chain restaurants and retailers, as well as some residences that are different in character than those found in villages.

This character area should be cognizant of the surrounding rural land use patterns while providing opportunities for development of a scope and scale different from that of the Village Center. Whereas the Village Center provides a greater density of services and development, commercial development within the Village Transition Character Area includes larger, predominantly single-story buildings on large parcels with greater setbacks from the



Examples of transitional corridors outside of Lewis County. The top corridor depicts desirable design aspects such as shared and cross access, while the bottom example shows conventional transitional corridor development patterns.



road and increased distances between adjacent properties. Most properties are designed exclusively for access by automobile, although the Village and Town of Lowville have constructed a sidewalk along Route 12 through this area to enhance pedestrian connectivity.

All areas currently undeveloped within Village Transition Character Areas have been identified as locations for potential growth and development. For example, the Village Transition areas outside of the Village Center in Lowville contains a good deal of space for future retail and commercial expansion. The Route 12 corridor outside of Lyons Falls also contains areas capable of absorbing new development into the foreseeable future. The identification of areas for potential growth differentiates the Village Transition and Village Living character areas from the others, and permits development in locations most beneficial to Lewis County communities.



Contrasting architectural styles outside Lewis County. The left building features architectural elements that compliment the area's rural and agricultural heritage, while the right example is typical of auto-oriented development with limited attention to overall design.

Recommended Land Uses

Typical land uses recommended within this Character Area include retail, restaurants, convenience retail, office, and residential. Towns and villages should consider working together on land use regulations and design guidelines for these districts so that Village Transition areas do not compete directly with Village Centers.

Gateways

Gateway areas should denote a sense of arrival and provide a distinct transition point between adjacent village and rural areas. Gateways should be located at both ends of the Village Transitional Character Area to denote that motorists are entering a uniquely separate part of Lewis County. Gateway designations should be improved through the use of signage, landscaping, and streetscape enhancements.

The suburban nature of existing uses in the Village Transitional areas hinders the possibility of creating a scale and density consistent with Village Center Character Areas. However, future development should strive to uphold certain principles found in village cores, including sidewalks and other pedestrian connections between businesses, shorter building setbacks, tree-lined streets, and parking lots in the rear or side yards. Municipalities should consider the development of modest design guidelines for building form, site design, parking placement, and pedestrian connectivity to enhance the continuity of development with adjacent areas.



The graphic above depicts a potential gateway scenario in the Village of Lowville at the intersection of Routes 12 and 26. Improvements could include the addition of grass medians, trees, landscaping, and gateway signage welcoming motorists into the heart of the village.



Design Considerations

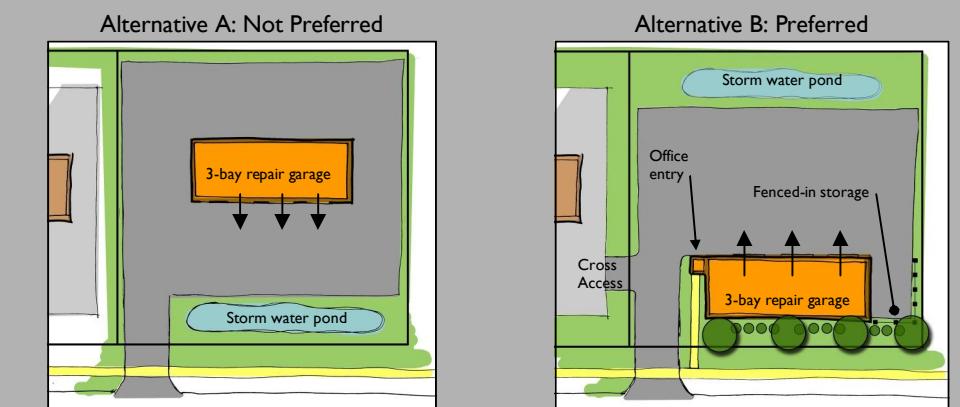
Primary design considerations within the Village Transitional characters areas deal with the interaction of pedestrians and vehicles, as well as the built form of new development. The areas along the outskirts of town and village centers tend to be automobile dominated, and offer little connectivity and access for pedestrians. As well, the design character is typically at odds with the historical development patterns currently in place or adjacent to the district. As a result, new development appears out of scale and place, and is difficult to access other than by car.

Municipalities should make a concerted effort to extend existing sidewalk networks along the transportation corridor in Village Transition areas. In the event that fiscal constraints dictate that only one side of the roadway shall receive sidewalks, adequately striped crosswalks should provide cross access at appropriate locations. The provision of an expanded shoulder, either by restriping or additional pavement, on the opposite side of single-sidewalk roadways would be beneficial to providing enhanced pedestrian and bicyclist safety along the corridor. In addition to sidewalk accessibility along the right-of-way, developers and property owners should be encouraged to provide sidewalk connections from principal building entrances to the sidewalk system, improving corridor connectivity, safety, and appearance.

Guidelines for Development

The graphics below depict two development scenarios that are often found in transitional corridors. The hypothetical building below is a 3-bay automobile repair/service garage typically found in the transitional corridor setting. Alternative A can be considered conventional development practices, whereby the building is surrounded by paved areas and disconnected from the street. Due to large required setbacks that move buildings and development away from the street, storm water ponds are often placed in front yards for efficient use of available land.

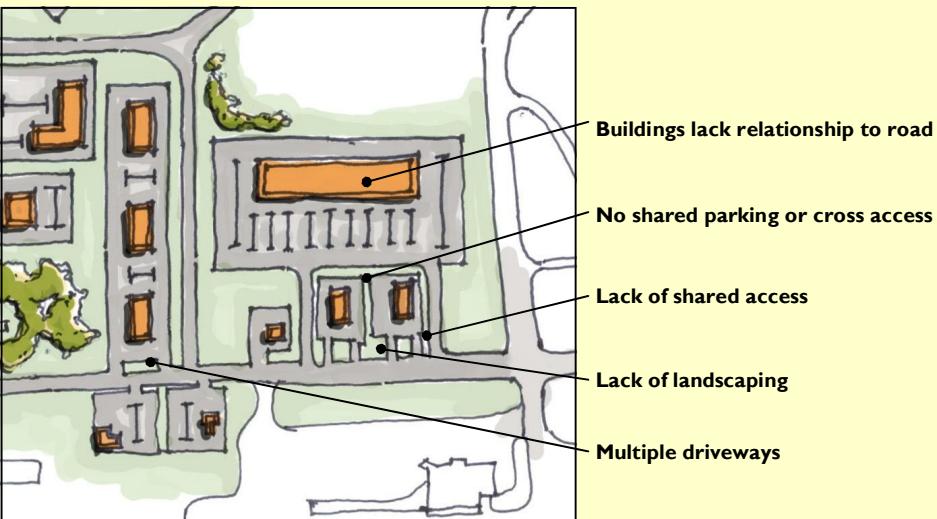
Alternative B locates the building close to the right-of-way, and connects the business office area with the sidewalk area along the road. The storm water pond is located in the rear of the property, and a majority of the site's parking is behind the building, with the service bays facing the rear of the property. Additionally, cross access to the adjacent parcel is created, reducing the number of turning movements onto the roadway. Finally, the front of the parcel is enhanced with landscaping and trees, improving its appearance from the street.



Development in the Village Transition Character Area should strive to improve access management through limitations on the number and frequency of curb cuts, as well as the promotion of shared access, parking, and cross access between adjacent parcels. A reduction in the number of vehicular trips on public and private drives will also lead to a decrease in the number of accidents and traffic volumes. See the sidebar below for more information on access management in the Village Transition Character Areas.

The design of development within these zones should provide high quality built form, and should attempt to minimize the visual impact of parking lots, loading areas, and storage yards. Architectural styles should take cues from vernacular buildings, including the use of pitched roofs, multi-story buildings, and added detailing around entryways, windows, and doors. The placement of buildings and parking areas is also important to the visual appeal of the corridor for both pedestrians and motorists. Buildings should be pushed close to the corridor right-of-way, and parking areas should be encouraged to the sides and rear of buildings, with occasional exceptions made for a single convenience row of parking between the building and roadway. Landscaping and trees should be provided in the front yard to enhance curb appeal and better define the shape of the roadway. For additional information, see the sidebars below and at left.

Option A: Conventional Development Scenario

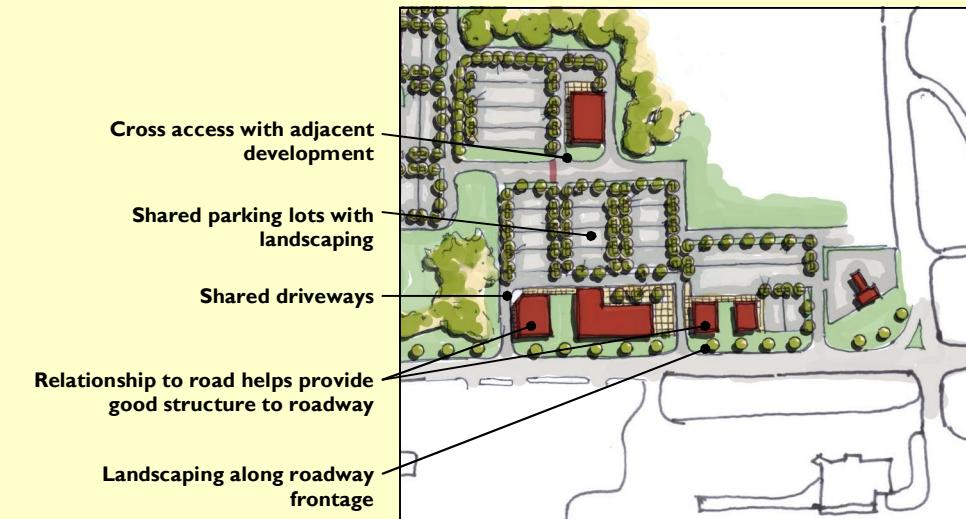


Access Management

The two graphics presented here offer contrasting scenarios relative to access management for development along a rural corridor. The scenario at left is typical of conventional development, with multiple driveways for each development, a lack of shared access, a lack of cross access, and no shared parking. The scenario at right is a modified approach, bringing the buildings closer to the roadway, and placing parking areas behind the structures. Parking is shared, and accessed via shared drives. The reduction in the number of driveways improves safety along the corridor for both motorists and pedestrians by providing fewer potential conflict points.

In Lewis County Village Transitional Areas, development should strive to achieve the form of Option B. Development in this manner will provide a smoother transition from Village Center to Rural Living Character Areas, while improving the sense of place for these busy corridors.

Option B: Preferred Development Scenario



VILLAGE
TRANSITION
CHARACTER
AREA



INDUSTRY CHARACTER AREA

Overview

Industry Character Areas are traditionally found adjacent to or within villages and hamlets. There are numerous small to mid-sized industrial operations throughout the county, but only a handful of substantial, distinguishable industrial areas exist. These are either a grouping of a few businesses, such as along the former rail line in Lowville, or a single large operation of county-wide significance, such as Viking Cives in Harrisville.

This Character Area contains a mix of older industry that played an important role in the growth villages, and newer installations largely driven by the forest products and alternative energy sectors of the economy. Most industrial areas are located on a rail line or an important waterway.

The Character Area Plan identifies Industry in the following locations:

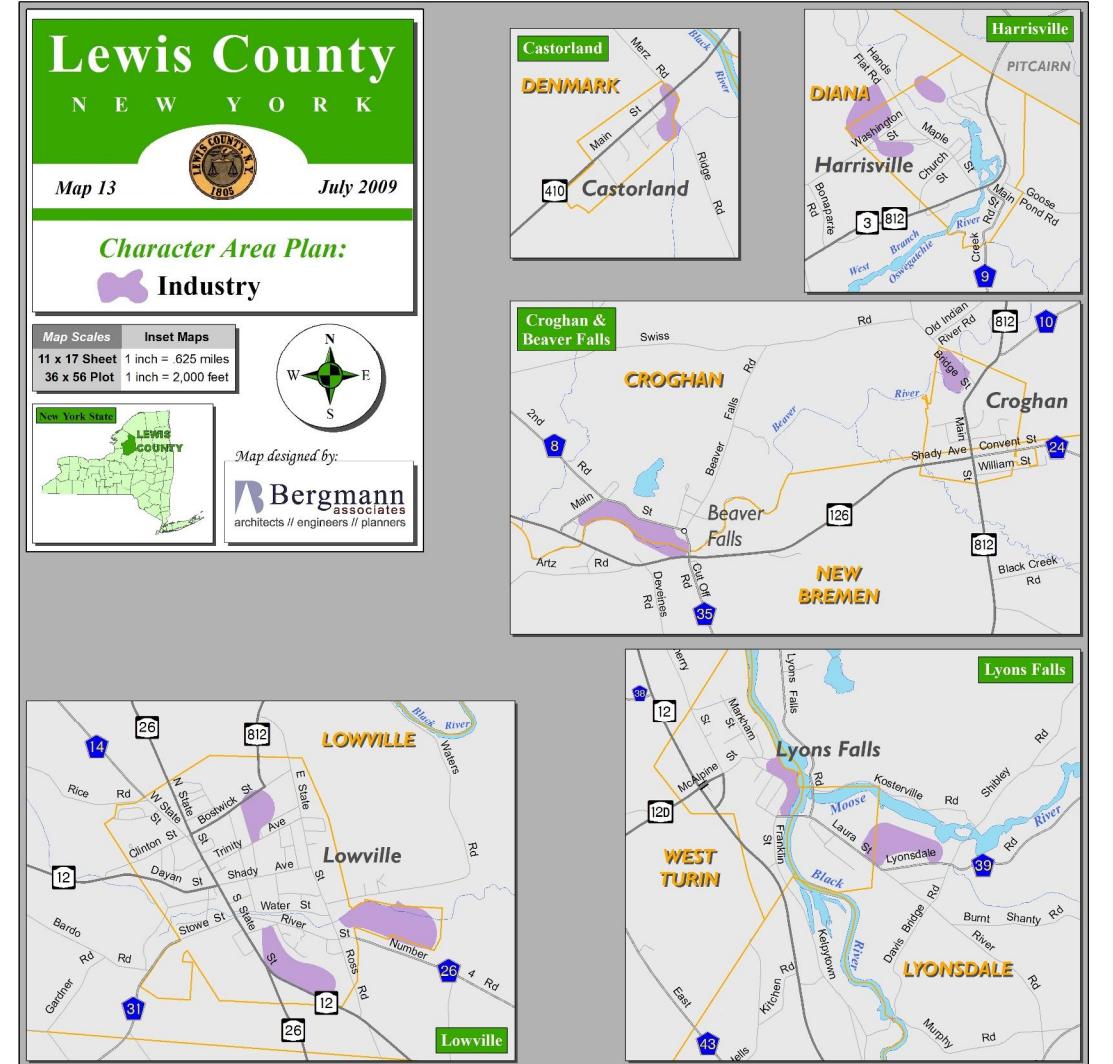
- northern edge of the Village of Harrisville
- in the hamlet of Beaver Falls and the Village of Croghan
- east side of the Village of Castorland
- along the former rail line in the Village of Lowville
- east side of the Village of Lowville
- in the Village of Lyons Falls

Typical land uses within this category include industrial, manufacturing/processing, commercial, warehousing/shipping, resource reclamation, and public services.

Design Considerations

One of the primary design considerations when dealing with industrial and manufacturing land uses is buffering to adjacent uses, especially residences. Buffers typically include land form, such as berms, trees, and fences. The distance between opposing land uses is also critical to mitigate psychological and visual impacts as well as noise attenuation. It is recommended that future development in these areas include a combination of berms, landscaping, and fencing to mitigate visual and psychological impacts.

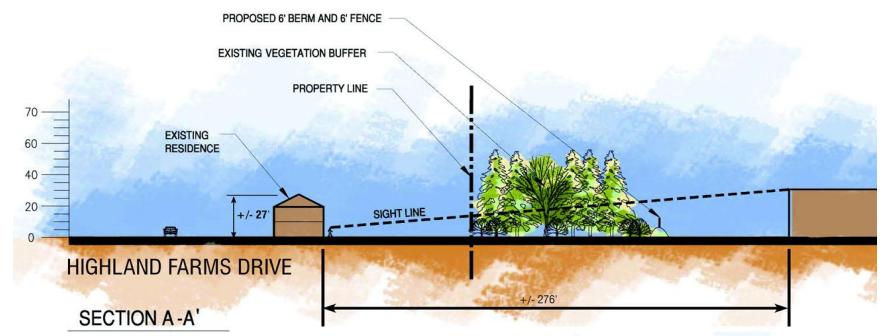
Municipalities should consider requiring new industrial development site plan approval applicants to provide a cross section from the proposed building(s) to adjacent land uses. These cross sections should depict the location of vegetation, land



Example of industrial operations in Lewis County

form, and fencing to scale; this would provide planning and zoning boards with good visual representations of what will actually be constructed. See below for an example cross section.

The design of the site and building for industrial/manufacturing projects need not suffer as a result of budgetary constraints. Municipalities should not limit the enforcement of codes and design guidelines for industrial and manufacturing facilities, and should approach these uses as they would commercial and retail development. Where possible, primary entrances to office space should be linked via sidewalks to parking areas and public streets. Building materials for facades fronting on primary streets should be clad in high quality materials such as brick, stucco, or stone. Parking areas should be located at the side or rear of the structure, where practical. Buildings should be located close to the street line, unless the activities taking place within the structure prevent this from happening due to noise, odor, or traffic.



This cross section depicts an earthen berm with fencing and landscaping to buffer a commercial development from an adjacent residential neighborhood.

Sustainable Design for Industrial and Manufacturing Facilities

Sustainable design practices are often geared towards a reduction in energy usage which results in a cost savings. The use of passive and active solar energy, wind energy, geothermal, biomass and biogas should be encouraged by municipalities in Lewis County. The expanding alternative energy industry is the biggest growth sector in the county's economy, and efforts should be made to allow new, non-energy industries to take advantage of the region's significant resources.

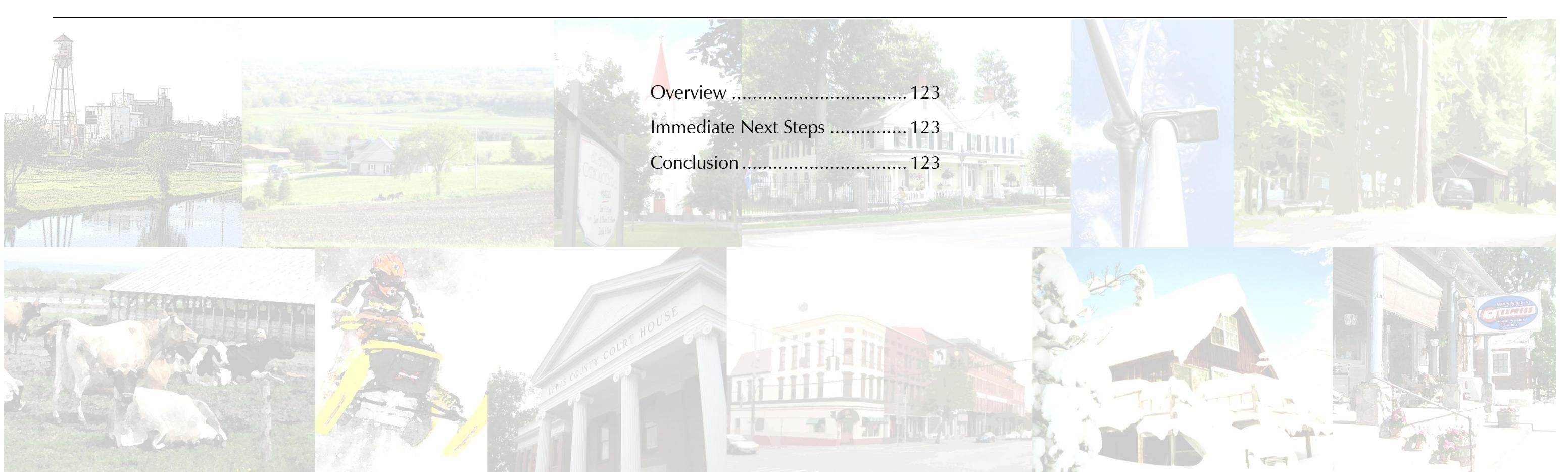
In Lewis County, the concept of 'green' or sustainable industrial design should not be merely considered a trend of the industry, but rather should become a goal for all future development. In an era of dwindling resources and increasing energy scarcity, new developments should strive to meet business model needs while creating infrastructure and investments that will be viable for many years into the future.

LEWIS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

“Working to be the premier rural county in New York State”

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

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OVERVIEW

The Comprehensive Plan includes recommended objectives and action items that Lewis County should undertake over the next 10 to 15 years to address each of the seven identified policy areas. These objectives and action items work in concert with the County Character Area Plan to determine the overall direction of activity, development and investment within the county.

While the Comprehensive Plan creates the framework for the future of Lewis County, it will not be a successful endeavor without a methodology for its implementation. The implementation plans associated with each policy area summarize the primary steps necessary to capitalize on opportunities discovered during this process, as well as additional planning and investigative activities that will be necessary for Lewis County to move forward in achieving the policies and objectives stated in the Comprehensive Plan.

The implementation tables represent 213 action items, organized by policy, and each given a potential timeframe for action. In addition to ideas generated during the Comprehensive Plan process, the tables also include key recommendations from recent planning initiatives such as the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and the Blueway Trail Development Plan for the Black River. This approach consolidates all key activities into a single document. While seemingly an overwhelming list of things to do, a few watershed action items will get the ball rolling and provide the momentum for continued implementation and success. These pivotal action items are discussed below.

IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS

Several major planning and administrative projects will be necessary triggers to go after state and federal funding for projects within the Plan.

Primary Planning Action Items

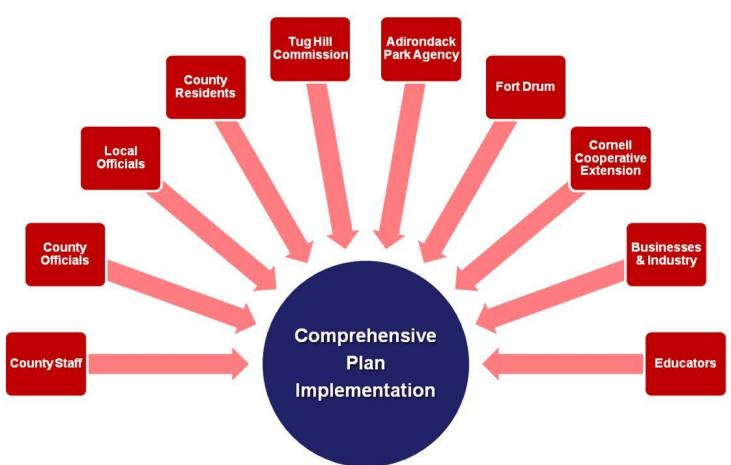
The development of a Tourism Management Plan will be necessary to direct future investments in this important industry. This plan should include sections on branding and identity creation, marketing strategies, and the outline of an organizational structure for implementation. The County should continue to support the emergence of the alternative energy industry by conducting a county-wide assessment of potential supply and production capacity, including the identification of a comprehensive database of feedstocks and waste products for all industries.

The County should focus on expanding their partnership with the Tug Hill Commission to create a set of design guidelines for use by municipalities during the site plan review process. The County should also seek a partnership with municipalities along the Black River to undertake the development of a Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan, helping align these communities for future economic development funding. In addition, the County should undertake an analysis of the cost of services at the local municipal level to benchmark delivery costs and set the stage for efficiency improvements.

Primary Administrative Action Items

The establishment of a formal tourism entity at the county level, either a department or Visitor's Bureau, will be a critical first step for the implementation of tourism and related economic development initiatives outlined in the implementation tables. The creation of a "Brain Gain Commission" will be significant to stem the tide of population loss amongst the younger generations. In support of this, a partnership with regional educational institutions to provide relevant training programs will help improve the workforce pool, and provide local options for future graduates and those in transition between jobs. This effort should focus in particular on training for emerging industries such as agri-tourism, alternative energy (all components of the process) and organic farming.

The development of a compiled listing of grant and funding opportunities for use by county municipalities will be an important step in funding specific recommendations of this Plan at the local level. An action item of significance that should be implemented in the near-term is the development of a program to facilitate discussions on the coordination and consolidation of municipal services with teams of experts. The county will need to take a leadership role by providing access to information to assist decision making at the local level.



This graphic depicts the importance of cooperation and the collective implementation of the Plan by numerous entities in Lewis County.

This is just a sampling of what are potentially the most critical issues to be addressed following adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. The County Department of Economic Development and Planning will be required to provide regular reviews and assessments of the implementation items to adjust for changing circumstances and to make relevant decisions in a timely fashion as opportunity and information arises.

CONCLUSION

Lewis County faces numerous challenges and opportunities as it moves into the 21st Century. Strategic decisions made today will impact the journey and destination of the region over the next 20 years. The 2009 County Comprehensive Plan is a culmination of over a year of review and planning and provides the foundation for decisions that will drive community development and investment. As the county embarks on this journey, it must build upon its many assets, particularly its wealth of natural resources, while addressing conditions that adversely affect the quality of life of its citizens, such as infrastructure and housing decay.

Lewis County has a proud, rich and diverse history and is full of well-established communities and a unique rural character that must be protected and promoted. Community character could be compromised if the various challenges identified in this Plan are not addressed in a strategic and comprehensive manner.

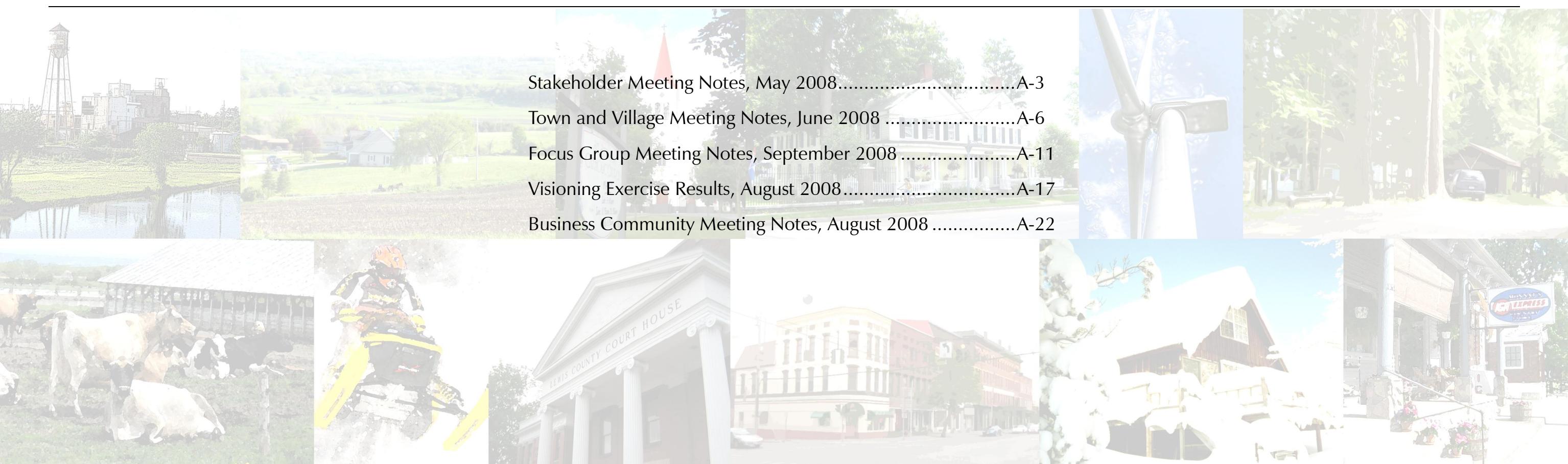
The vision, policies, objectives, and action items set forth in the Plan should be used to guide future actions and decision making at the county level, while providing much needed guidance to local municipalities. The County Character Area Plan provides an additional level of guidance, identifying areas of existing character to be promoted and retained, while providing some general design guidelines and recommendations on how to accomplish Plan objectives. The Plan is designed to be a user-friendly, working document for key county officials and staff members, local community leaders and other involved community stakeholders.

The activities outlined in the Plan cannot be undertaken by the County governmental leaders and departments alone. Over the next several years, residents and other stakeholders will need to come together to complete the tasks included in the Plan. Successful implementation requires ongoing communication and cooperation among the leaders and residents of the entire county. Collectively, Lewis County can ensure a healthy and prosperous future for generations to come.

LEWIS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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APPENDICES



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- Town and Village Meeting Notes, June 2008A-6
- Focus Group Meeting Notes, September 2008A-11
- Visioning Exercise Results, August 2008A-17
- Business Community Meeting Notes, August 2008A-22



STAKEHOLDER MEETING NOTES

Meeting with Tug Hill Commission

May 12, 2008

Attendents:

Katie Malinowski, THC
Phil Street, THC
Jean Waterbury, THC
Matt Johnson, THC
Renee Beyer, Lewis County Economic Development
Kevin Kelley, Bergmann Associates
Nan Stolzenburg, CPEA

MEETING NOTES

- Some towns/villages look forward to getting counsel and guidance from the County and THC
- Opportunities for learning from each other, sharing resources
- Communities don't have adequate land use regs to deal with natural resource extraction facilities (mines, water bottling, natural gas, hunting camps, etc.) - plan should provide the tools for addressing those sites—mitigating impacts to the community and the environment
- The Plan should be a partnership between the Counties, the towns/villages, and the THC
- A grass roots approach will be more successful—success is always more labor intensive
- Establish better communication between THC and County so each is aware of current initiatives, past plans/studies, available data and resources
- THC working on state-level legislation to keep seasonal roads seasonal. Also referred to as low volume roads. Broad support, but many legal obstacles
 - ⇒ Majority of seasonal roads are snowmobile trails
 - ⇒ Municipalities don't want them improved (cost, maintenance), increasing number of residents do (plowing, bus service, etc)
 - ⇒ If legislation succeeds, it would be a tool to allow locals to control their own destiny
 - ⇒ Not able to use "official map" to address this, although Pinckney has official map
 - ⇒ 4 towns have adopted low volume roads and maintenance
- Ag District 6 is pending approval. It will be a consolidation of 1-5.
- About THC
 - ⇒ 3 Divisions: Planning, Natural Resources, Community Development
 - ⇒ Funded by NYS to help municipalities, non-profits, and other agencies
 - ⇒ 18 staff, including Circuit Riders. Have done 14+ plans/studies over 11 years
 - ⇒ Staff attends most planning board meetings using Circuit Riders
 - ⇒ State mandate for the THC is to focus on the environment and economy
 - ⇒ No regional plan in place
 - ⇒ Have a Resource Management Plan (1978) that most towns in the region use as the basis for their local laws
 - ⇒ Function as a "free consultant", with voluntary involvement from each town/village

- ⇒ Have developed a number of "Issue Papers" (found on website) such as wind farms, Tug Hill aquifer, snowmobiles, winter logging, ATV, winter recreation, etc.
- ⇒ Grass roots approach, not top-down
- ⇒ Has created many model laws for different issues — Comp Plan should provide a tool that is a compilation of all models
- Comp Plan needs to assemble the expressed vision and goals from individual towns/villages
- Refer to St. Lawrence and Oswego County Comp Plans
- Towns struggle to design any complexities into zoning (limited staff, training)
- THC often recommends a joint Zoning Board of Appeals (more streamlined, more objective, not neighbor vs. neighbor)
- Shared services are somewhat utilized, could be used more—Comp Plan should provide shared agreement language
- Association of Towns has collected shared service agreements
- County does not have a preservationist atmosphere, but are looking for middle ground—smart growth that mitigates impacts
- THC recommends improving the County Hwy system—currently not logical system because of the many gaps and dead ends—the network is an aid-based system, there should be a more extensive County Hwy system. Plan should provide recommendations for what should be considered a county road (minimum dimensions, conditions, connections)
- Plan should provide suggestions of how towns can save \$ reorganizing with County Hwy—expand county network, more logical system, consolidated services, etc.
- Explain benefits of access management. Specific areas of concern—south of Lowville, mines on Rte 12 in Port Leyden and Rte 26 north of Lowville, major farms on Rte 12 and 26. Multiple curb cuts over time can have negative impact on traffic flow.
- Plan should provide guidance on 239-m review program

Agriculture Round Table Discussion

May 12, 2008

Attendents:

Michele Ledoux, Cornell Cooperative Extension
Jen Karelus, Lewis County Farm Bureau
Michael Kraeger, Ag and Farmland Protection Board
Arleigh Rice, Ag and Farmland Protection Board
Kelly Dickenson, Ag and Farmland Protection Board
Caryn Kolts, Ag and Farmland Protection Board
Fred Munk, Ag and Farmland Protection Board
Ashley Marlof, Ag and Farmland Protection Board
Haskel Yancey, Ag and Farmland Protection Board
Renee Beyer, Lewis County Economic Development
Kevin Kelley, Bergmann Associates
Nan Stolzenburg, CPEA

MEETING NOTES

- Types of agriculture taking place in the County are:
 - 1) Dairy, dairy crops
 - 2) Forestry
 - 3) Maple
- Some beef production, alpaca, hunting preserves, few fruit crops
- Not much agri-tourism except during maple syrup season
- Majority of farms are 50-100 cows
- Regarding forestry, any State Lands outside the Blue Line can be commercial forestry
- Amish have moved into the region, mostly around Lowville and mostly in the last 10 years
- Majority of milk produced goes to Kraft through Lowville Producers co-op
- The co-op (<http://www.gotgoodcheese.com>) markets Lewis County cheese, cheese curd, maple syrup and Croghan bologna
- Large amount of land, owned by non-farmers, is rented to farmers
- In Martinsburg, there are increasing conflicts between residential and ag uses, such as residents insisting that farmers reduce pesticide spraying and manure spreading
- Supposedly some developers have turned down opportunities in the Town of Lowville due to the smell
- Other than those instances, there are relatively low ag-res conflicts, but there may be more in the future. County needs to be proactive in preventing those conflicts, rather than wait for it to be a problem and take a reactive approach.
- Generally, wind farms are positive for farmers, providing supplemental income and helping land stay in agricultural production
- Wind farm conflicts are mainly related to noise levels and shadow flicker
- Farmers in general are losing some support service b/c of a decrease in overall farming, lack of rail service, and the fact that some of the larger farms have their own supply systems
- Many support services (parts, dealers, repair) used to be available in Lowville and some smaller villages, they are now concentrating in Watertown
- High unemployment discourages growth in farming industry
- Overall, number of farms has decreased
- Farm labor is an issue—immigrant labor force is growing
- Young people are moving away, so it's difficult to pass the trade onto the next generation
- Ethanol has driven up the costs of feed
- Forestry industry is limited by seasonal road conditions and conflicts with snowmobiles. Seasonal roads can't support modern equipment
- Value of forestry land is based on recreation, not timber
- 70% of milk produced in the County goes to the co-op, 95% of that milk goes to Kraft
- 1 farmers market in the County, no CSA's. 1 new vineyard.
- Idea proposed to set up a co-op for the Amish so they can expand their business opportunities.
- A few farmers are using organic practices, but it is largely an untapped industry in the County
- Potential for new maple syrup bottling plant—County has put out an RFP for a feasibility study



- County is very interested in promoting/pursuing value-added products in all forms of agriculture (dairy, maple syrup, forestry, crops, etc.)
- Forestry products are primarily processed elsewhere. Paper mills are gone and are not likely to return.
- Need to emphasize smaller, home grown businesses
- Opportunities for alternative energy sources—currently a cellulosic ethanol plant in Lyonsdale, and a methane plant as part of the Kraft facility
- Opportunities for other wood-based technologies—utilize thinning and management materials from forestry, unadulterated wood that is a bi-product of the lumber industry, plenty of land for growing willow
- Corn-based ethanol has been a problem because of the reliance in the area on corn for dairy purposes.
- Opportunities for natural gas exploration, some is currently underway
- According to some farmers, County government is very supportive of agriculture; support agencies and ag groups are willing to work with farmers
- Ag Enhancement Plan (2004) is well accepted, though little has been implemented
- Chamber of Commerce recently underwent reorganization, new leadership is supportive of agri-tourism. Need to leverage multiple anchors (maple syrup, dairy, wind, recreation, Croghan bologna, etc.) in order for this to succeed.
- PDR programs may not have strong support because of low development pressures

Meeting with ATV Association May 14, 2008

Attendants:

Dick Seller, Lewis County ATV Association
Joe Onyon, Lewis County ATV Association
Floyd Rivers, ATV advocate
Bob Diehl, Lewis County Trail Coordinator
Renee Beyer, Lewis County Economic Development
Kevin Kelley, Bergmann Associates

MEETING NOTES

Funding/Maintenance/Access Issues

- No ATVs on any state land, DEC truck trails are now closed — working on amending state law, would like to remove the language that states that roads can only be opened if it connects two ATV trails that are “otherwise impossible to connect”.
- State claims that ATV trails on DEC truck trails are not necessary.
- NYSDEC closed truck trails mainly because of claims of alleged damages.
- Some State Lands are Forest Preserve (forever wild) — no motorized traffic
- State Wildlife Management Area — no motorized traffic
- Now all County roads are closed.
- ATVs allowed only on designated routes, County Roads hope to be reopened in August
- DEC has in effect created a safety issue by restricting access — many people ride anyway

- Trail fund is depleted. DEC said they would build trails with fund, nothing has been built — all regular fees go to the general fund.
- B&L working on GEIS to add private lands, private roads, county roads to ATV system.
- Establishing network of ‘areas’ (properties) where landowners agree to allow ATVs — clubs can then connect the dots.
- Goal is to have extensive network on private/public lands, but need to connect the dots with County and Town roads.
- Some town roads are open, but network is not extensive enough to serve all the camps where riders stay — plan is to assemble properties on other roads, then connect the dots — getting roads open is just for connecting to each property.

Other Notes

- Fuel costs not much of an issue, most riders will use around 20 gallons/year.
- County has one-day events sponsored by clubs / organizations that are fund raisers — State law allows County roads to be opened for one-day events.
- Public awareness is important — what’s open, what are the actual road/trail impacts, promote the positive effect on the economy.
- Vision of ATVing is to promote environmental stewardship, multi-generational experience, enjoy nature, community service / charitable functions.
- County working on educational programs with schools (through 4H) promoting education.

Meeting with Board of Legislators May 13, 2008

Attendants:

David Pendergast, County Manager
Rick Lucas, Legislator
Patrick Wallace, Legislator
John Boyd, Legislator
Kelly Dickenson, Legislator
Jerry King, Legislator
Joyce Hoch, Legislator
Rich Graham, County Attorney
Warren Rosenthal, Lewis County Economic Development
Renee Beyer, Lewis County Economic Development
Andy Raus, Bergmann Associates
Kevin Kelley, Bergmann Associates

MEETING NOTES

Plan Process

- Towns are currently critical of process — need to explain how Town Comp Plans fit in with County plan — letter prior to meeting with individual Towns.
- Need to address difference between CEDS and Comp Plan — compare two and summarize the difference.
- Provide summary of process, including addressing the above issues.

Economics

- Taxes and assessment is a big issue.

- Demonstrate that tax cuts will only come from cutting services or attracting more industry.
- For farmers to increase their land holdings, price of land is becoming prohibitive because of recreation driving the price up.
- County recently put out RFP for maple bottling / processing plant (feasibility study) somewhere in County — collaborative effort between County and Cornell Cooperative Extension.
- County is targeting value-added products for all agriculture, would like to connect better with local markets, outlets.
- No actual industrial park in the County (HDK is only company in Harrisville Park).

Consolidation

- Demonstrate benefits of consolidation or at least shared services.
- Provide range of opportunities for municipal efficiencies — don’t necessarily recommend outright, just provide the resources.

Transportation

- A variety of County agencies provide transportation services — need recommendations on how to improve / expand on services.
- Birnie Bus offers service to Utica.
- What is the vision for transportation?
- Need to improve infrastructure to attract development.
- No real capacity issues on highways.
- Only active rail line is in south to Lyons Falls.
- Northern sections are rarely used.

Other Current Issues

- Two mines coming on line (Leyden, Lowville).
- Use of roads for ATVs
- Zoning Issue — explain the benefits of zoning, consequences of not using it, ideas for how to address hot button issues, then let the communities decide what they want to do.
- Croghan and Greig have bottled water extraction projects
- Kraft has a new digester, they are investing in their facilities.
- County has created a municipal power corporation established that could potentially buy bulk electricity — last time they looked at it, only a 7% savings (that wasn’t enough) — potentially examine this again.



Meeting with Economic Development Staff May 13, 2008

Attendants:
Warren Rosenthal, Lewis County Economic Development
Renee Beyer, Lewis County Economic Development
Andy Raus, Bergmann Associates
Kevin Kelley, Bergmann Associates

MEETING NOTES

- CEDS – not proprietary, use data whenever appropriate – can either reference it or insert data.
- Economic Development – major problem is no product to offer (shovel ready sites)
- County had entertained idea of a “community kitchen” where variety of agricultural entrepreneurs can utilize space to work on value-added products – possible facility exists at Maple Ridge Center.
- Major industries for the most part are stable, potential for paper and pulp site in Lyons Falls
- Most villages are quite small and face challenges in sustaining services, local businesses.
- Land Use / Zoning – address where certain uses are appropriate, mitigate non-compatible uses.
- Housing prices are high because of Ft. Drum and people downstate / New Jersey buying seasonal homes.
- Potentially create strategic plans for a Village type and a rural town type (forestland or farming).

Meeting with County IDA May 14, 2008

Attendants:
Ned Cole, Lewis County Industrial Development Agency
Andy Raus, Bergmann Associates
Kevin Kelley, Bergmann Associates

MEETING NOTES

Economy

- Major industries – Burrows Paper Mill, Otis Products (gun cleaning kits, sights), KRAFT, AMF (now supplies bowling pins to Brunswick – makes 90% of pins in the world), Fibermark (paper), Climax (corrugated boxes), some mining
- Greatest potential is in natural resources, recreation
- IDA services large and small businesses – provides start-up packages to new businesses including business plan assistance, multiple details that need to be addressed in order to be successful
- Empire Zone program is so far not very successful
- Project Priority List is a separate document from CEDS
- CEDS Subcommittees continuously meet to discuss issues – they include

industrial, agricultural, forest products, commercial and tourism, local government, education

Major Issues in the County

- Windmills – have been very positive
- Harrisville Industrial Park is being expanded – very modern sawmill, expanding to a manufacturing plant
- Consideration given to consolidation of water & sewer services – some opposition from towns and villages

Alternative Energy Projects

- KRAFT has a methane energy plant
- Harrisville Industrial Park currently converting waste into energy
- Chip plant in Lyonsdale sees 15-20 truckloads a day, working with ESF to develop an ethanol process using willows
- Snowbelt Housing handles issues like Main Street revitalization (residential component)

Meeting with Snowmobile Associations

May 14, 2008

Attendants:

Neil Pepper, Brantigham Snowmobile Club
Fred Siems, Brantigham Snowmobile Club
Brian Gillette, Lewis County Snowmobile Association
Gary Stinson, Lewis County Snowmobile Association
Bob Diehl, Lewis County Trail Coordinator
Renee Beyer, Lewis County Economic Development
Kevin Kelley, Bergmann Associates

MEETING NOTES

Recent Trends

- Have observed traffic on Tug Hill steadily increase, now see about 30,000/ weekend or 500,000/season
- Most riders are out of the County / out of State – registering out of County but riding mostly in Lewis County.
- Most sleds get 10-20 mpg, will be impacted by high fuel costs, already hearing of many riders cutting back.
- Have observed a decrease in snow fall in the rest of the state and other regions, but not in Lewis County.

Funding/Maintenance/Access Issues

- Trail fund created by user fees – trail reimbursement rates set by state's pot of \$3-4M, now they think its \$7-8M, not sure where remainder of pot is going. State is saying they're out of money.
- Reimbursement for maintenance used to be \$500/mile, now its in the \$300's. Also changing the “high snowfall add on”.
- Most clubs have two groomers.
- NYSSA (New York State Snowmobile Association) – Club's liaison with New

York State – administer insurance for trails.

- Snowmobiles allowed only on trails shown on map
- Need for education / promotions about access limitation issues in the County.
- High level of policing, but still can't have patrols on every trail.
- Need for making some logical trail connections – get riders into villages for goods and services.
- State won't allow any more miles in the county because they're out of money.

Transportation/Highways Discussion

May 15, 2008

Attendants:

Tom Sweet, Lewis County Highway Superintendent
Matt Bush, NYSDOT Resident Engineer
Frank Dolan, Bergmann Associates

MEETING NOTES

The transportation network in Lewis County provides the backbone for the movement of people and goods throughout the region. The network is comprised of roads and bridges owned, operated and maintained by New York State Department of Transportation, Lewis County Highway Department and the towns and villages.

Roads

- New York State DOT has the responsibility for three hundred and sixty (360) lanes miles of roadway, Lewis County four hundred ninety six (496) lane miles and the towns and villages approximately one thousand eight hundred (1800) lane miles.
- The system ranges from two lane gravel roads to four lane arterials.
- Based on discussions with Matt Bush Resident Engineer for NYSDOT in Lewis County and Tom Sweet Lewis County Highway Superintendent the majority of roads on the NYS and County system are rated to be in good condition with a small percentage as poor.
- The focus of the State and County on highways is to have the resources available to properly maintain and keep in good repair the road network.
- While there are no planned new roads planned to be constructed emphasis is on reconstructing existing roads that are experiencing failures due to sub base conditions.

Bridges and Culverts

- Bridges and Culverts are a critical element of the transportation network. NYSDOT has the responsibility for thirty seven (37) bridges, Lewis County ninety one (91) bridges and the Towns and Villages thirty eight (38) bridges.
- On the NYS system four (4) bridges have a rating of 4 or less, with twenty five (25) bridges on the County system with a rating of 4 or less, ten (10) have a load posting of 16 tons or less and one (1) bridge is closed. The Town system has eleven (11) bridges with a rating of 4 or less, twelve (12) bridges have a load posting of 19 tons or less, seven (7) bridges are closed.
- One (1) bridge on the village system is posted at 10 tons or less.
- Both Matt Bush and Tom Sweet expressed concern over the resources to maintain the bridges under their respective jurisdictions.



Appendices

- Culverts maintenance is another major concern within Lewis County. Many of the culverts are old and need replacement of major maintenance.
- NYSDOT estimates that approximately 17% of the culverts under their jurisdiction are in need of repair.

Rail

- Most of the rail lines within Lewis County are inactive at this time.

Bicycle and Pedestrian

- Both Matt and Tom were not aware of any active projects at this time.

Shared Services

- Within Lewis County there are excellent shared services agreements between the Highway departments NYS, Lewis County and the towns and villages. These agreements allow for good utilization of the limited resources.
- Both Matt Bush and Tom Sweet expressed concern about the future and having the available resources to adequately maintain the roads and bridges in the County.
- Lewis County has extensive tourism throughout the year with snowmobiles in the winters and ATVs in the spring, summer and fall. Good roads and bridges are important to maintain this business.

TOWN AND VILLAGE MEETING NOTES

Town & Village of Lowville

June 23, 2008

Attendants:

Mark Tabolt, Village Superintendent of Public Works
Eric Virkler, Village Clerk/Treasurer
Ruth Laribee, Town Councilman
Arleigh Rice, Town Supervisor
Charlie Stevens, Town/Village Code Enforcement
William Kilburn, Town/Village Planning Board
Richard Denning, Town
Renee Beyer, Lewis County Department of Economic Development
Kevin Kelley, Bergmann Associates

MEETING NOTES

Farming/Amish

- In recent years, Amish moving into the town
 - Buying/preserving small farms, investing
 - Successful farmers
 - Softening the blow somewhat of the decline of farming
 - Introducing more crops to the ag industry
 - Need for a co-op to coordinate efforts, get tax # to collect sales tax, similar to Lowville Producers (work w/ Cornell Co-op Ext to do this)

- County should leverage their presence as an asset
- Need for expansion of farmers market (currently at the fairgrounds) – perhaps increase in crop farming from Amish and others can support the expansion
- Major smell impacts from local farms – hinders retail, tourism
- Local grocery stores don't get produce or dairy from local farms – growing season too short and most of milk goes directly to KRAFT plant

Roads

- Heavy truck traffic has an impact on local roads
- Few seasonal roads left, not an issue compared to other towns Lack of funds available for maintaining roads
- Informal sharing of services between town/village exists
- Hesitant about formal agreements as they introduce another layer of bureaucracy – may be more appropriate for smaller towns/villages
- Creative, case by case approach to shared services is recommended for the County plan
- Shared Municipal Service Incentive grant being pursued for feasibility study – joint venture between Lowville Academy, Village, Town, County, and State DOT for a shared facility – may be an expansion of an existing property or built on a new property

Growth Pressures/Real Property

- Not substantial development pressures, more growth should be stimulated
- Need for infill development, nodal development, not sprawl
- Many landowners selling properties at unreasonable prices – hinders development
- Village has many tax exempt properties that are utilized by people outside the village
- Ames property owner very uncooperative with Village – content to leave it vacant as a tax write-off – negative impact on the Village, important property for infill/redevelopment
- Retail development in town hasn't had a noticeable impact on village businesses yet, although Wal-Mart is only a few years old and P&C is struggling; Kinney drug didn't lose as much business as anticipated
- Developer having trouble selling outparcels by Wal-Mart, may be an indication of lack of development pressure
- 801 housing (military) recently converted to market rate, had some negative impacts on the local economy
- Lowville is better positioned to absorb growth from Ft. Drum than surrounding towns (LeRay, Philadelphia) – Lowville has the schools, infrastructure, established community that may be a better for future expansion of the Fort – work with Fort to address this issue

Fuel Costs/Cost of Living

- 33% increase in Town Hwy Department's fuel costs over course of 6 months
- Believe fuel prices will result in redensification of villages, at least Lowville – need for aggressive approach to setting up the Village for redensification
- Example of impact of fuel costs – sidewalk to Wal-Mart is utilized more than

- expected – also an example of proactive design preparing for redensification
- Role of town and village is to be the geographic and commercial center of the county, including county offices and medical services; should also be the center for services/amenities provided to recreational tourists
- County DMV moved outside the Village – critical that remainder of County departments remain in Village to retain critical mass of daytime workers to support businesses, also to preserve jobs that are in walking distance or short drive from residences

Other

- Needs to be more recreation initiatives other than snowmobiles and ATVs – established recreation programming in the town/village is lacking
- County should share tax revenue with towns and villages
- Cooperative models are needed for many industries, not just dairy

Town of Lewis

June 23, 2008

Attendants:

Jane Allen, Town of Lewis
Karl Pewsele, Town of Lewis
Nan Stolzenburg, Community Planning and Environmental Associates

MEETING NOTES

What are the primary challenges facing the Town?

- Lots of land being bought for second homes and that has driven up the cost for land for everyone. At least there is the perception that taxes have or will go up as a result. However, only 6 people went to grievance day for tax assessments. The second homes are mostly for recreation use and there is little to no demand on the town from them.
- Seasonal residents want to use the solid waste transfer station and they have needed to start a ticket system. Other than that there are few demands on the town by the seasonal homes.
- Long term residents more concerned about loss of farms than new comers.
- Would like to see more local businesses.
- Landfill recently opened up. It is still an issue mostly because of truck traffic. Local towns fought it and local residents can not send trash there. No real complaints but they mentioned that there is a lot of bad feelings related to it.
- Roads: it is getting harder to maintain paved roads due to costs. They have no records of official roads due to loss of records and don't know what is seasonal or abandoned. Road ownership is an issue related to maintenance.
- Land in Core Forest area is mostly owned by paper company and they keep selling it. There is not a lot of stability there. State has development rights to a lot of it so they don't figure it is much development potential.
- Needs new file storage for town records.



- They own land in the village but can't build on it because it is small. There is well/septic separation distance issues. They want a new town hall and want to have a combined town hall, post office, sheriff satellite office. They don't have the land to do all that though.
- Feels they are left out of the county and often forgotten. They feel that Lowville gets the lions share of attention and that there is a need for more attention to the other towns.
- Land going to biofuels puts more pressure on farmers who rent that land. There is competition for the land. Corn is not a big crop due to the short season, but biofuels are contacting landowners for land contracts and this may make it harder for farmers to rent land they need.
- Law enforcement in town can be sketchy. It is too far for state police or sheriff. The Sheriff is seeking a sub-station in town to process DWI and other tickets, but not to beef up staff.

What opportunities are there that would address these or other issues?

- There is a National Bike Trail that goes along County 46 through town and it should be promoted much more than it is. Most people don't know about it.

What kind of development pressure is the Town facing?

- Little. There are 5 to 6 building permits for new homes per year, and the number has decreased over the past few years. Last 2 years has seen no subdivision activity at all.
- Loss of farms – 6 farms left; 4 lost in last year – they were older farmers and smaller farms. Farms have gone out, but much of the land has gone to other farms. Most ag support available.

What land use regulations or other Plans, if any, are in place? If none, how are impacts of new developments mitigated?

- They do have a planning board and zoning with 3 acres on road frontage; 5 of 10 acres needed for off-road frontage, and the Core Forest area requires 40 acres.
- Has new land use map and law (1999)
- So far they seemed very satisfied with their land use regulations and no real problems.

What shared resource initiatives are in place? Are there opportunities for more?

- Equipment with the county. But they would like to see more work and sharing with the county, especially in the summer.
- Fire departments. (issue with fire department is that their shared partner (Town of Ava) cannot bill the town of Lewis for their share. Makes paperwork a harder thing to do as a result.
- Same assessor as Town of Turin.
- Sharing file storage area with Town of Leyden.
- They use a circuit rider from Tug Hill Commission and are very happy with that arrangement.

What would make the County Comprehensive Plan most useful to the Town? The Plan will include guidance and recommendations on certain issues. Which would the Town/Village like to see addressed?

- Would like larger town-oriented maps because they have no real good maps now.
- General ag map is wrong for their town – needs updating.
- Show on recreation map the state owned easements which make up a lot of town.
- They would like to know what grants are available to them.
- Thinks seeing the county comp plan will help them learn what other towns are doing and thinking. They feel somewhat removed from the county and thinks this may help.
- Copies for the entire town board
- Have a website that allows public input during the planning process.

How do you see the Town's role in the County and region? What role can the Town play in meeting the objectives of the County and region?

- They are working with landowners and local landowners: ATV club is seeking year round access to land.
- Other than feeling isolated, they really didn't have much to say on this one.

Towns of Lyonsdale and Leyden, Village of Port Leyden

June 23, 2008

Attendants:

Lynette Ripp, Port Leyden Village Trustee
Rosalie White, Leyden Town Supervisor
David Rounds, Town of Lyonsdale
Peter Smith, Port Leyden Village Trustee
Donald Gydesew, Town of Lyonsdale
Pete Kraeger, Port Leyden Village Trustee
Nan Stolzenburg, Community Planning and Environmental Associates

MEETING NOTES

What are the primary challenges facing the Town/Village?

- Lack of employment is biggest concern. People are leaving and not coming back. Hundreds have lost jobs. Lack of employment for kids in the summer is a big issue. Nothing for them locally. They seemed very open to big business, industrial uses, etc.
- No young families coming to area. Smaller and smaller enrollments in school is not good.
- In Town of Leyden: quarry moving is next biggest issue. The quarry wants to move but local people don't want to see it due to trucks, noise, dust, safety. There is not a lot of employment with it, but taxes, and they were concerned that there is an anti-business attitude. Feels it is very hard to have big businesses come to town.
- Senior housing shortages – there is a big demand.
- Seasonal home market has changed the land values and market dramatically. Taxes are hurting residents.
- In Village – poor sidewalks and need to improve them is significant issue. Lack

of street trees or need to replace them an issue too.

- In Lyonsdale – big trucks for co-gen plant are tearing up roads. They are trying to get county to take over Moose River Road as a result. The CHPS money is not enough to keep up with the paving and repair needs.
- Village – west side of river has sewer but it is old and has a DEC consent order on it and they need significant repairs. The community has defeated this improvement twice now. Village has good water and good water quality but sewer is the limiting issue.
- Lyons Falls has sewer on one side and they feel that is a limiting factor to business growth.
- ATV's: In town of Leyden it is all open to ATV's and they have wanted to leave them open to help the county. County has draft trail in place. But, they don't really need all roads open and this should be looked into as to which ones. Recreation in town is really important. But no roads in Village are open to ATV's and that is contentious. Snowmobiles bring in lots of \$\$ to the local businesses.
- Lyonsdale has no agriculture left – it is not a land use in town. Much too wooded. But, Leyden has many small family farms still and they are struggling. Feels there is a need to protect ag lands there. Lots of maple sugaring and logging.
- Village – homes need to be restored. There are lots of historic buildings, but no \$\$ to fix them up. The Snowbelt Housing, Inc. has helped in the village somewhat.
- Concerned about upcoming winters cost of heating homes – especially for senior citizens. One person mentioned how there are many programs for seniors and low income folks, but average folks with median incomes also are in trouble and need help and there are no programs for them as they are not eligible.

What opportunities are there that would address these or other issues?

- There is a need for more motels and hotels.
- Would like to see more kayak and canoe opportunities to take advantage of the Black and Moose rivers more.
- More picnic areas and boat launch areas needed.
- The 2 rivers are underutilized. There is more acceptance for recreational related development so this should be pursued.
- In Lyonsdale – they feel their future must be in recreation.
- More shared services. There is much opportunity for sharing between Town and village especially. They also could see Greig and Lyonsdale working more closely together – especially highway. Feels County will eventually have to step in to help with road costs.

What kind of development pressure is the Town/Village facing?

- It has really slowed down – not much.
- Lyonsdale has the co-gen plant, refinery and Otis. They feel there is a lot of development going in town.

What land use regulations or other Plans, if any, are in place? If none, how are impacts of new developments mitigated?

- T. of Leyden has zoning but no subdivision.
- Lyonsdale is in process of doing zoning – they are afraid of big developers coming in. They have site plan review which the Town Board approves.



- Village of Port Leyden has no planning board and those present did not know if there was zoning in the village or not. They did something with the Tug Hill Commission to fix up storefronts, but they had no specifics on that either.

What shared resource initiatives are in place? Are there opportunities for more?

- Leyden shares assessor with Turin and they share a judge. They feel there is opportunity to share in the gas station clean up between the town and village.
- All have shared service agreements with the County. Although they admitted that it was confusing as to who has responsibility for fixing or maintaining which road as a result.
- Feels county will have to play more of a role in road maintenance.

What would make the County Comprehensive Plan most useful to the Town/Village? The Plan will include guidance and recommendations on certain issues.

Which would the Town/Village like to see addressed?

- Maps would be very helpful down to their scale.
- There needs to be more sharing of tax dollars from rich towns and county to poor towns and village. Wants to see more services provided by County.

Follow up Conversation with Mayor Scoutin of Port Leyden (July 8, 2008)

Biggest Concern: industry is gone and the village is mostly older/retired residents. There is no money to make the infrastructure improvements needed.

Sewer system needs serious repairs and his concern was where to find the dollars to upgrade it as required by DEC.

Public water is in great shape however, and he is exploring the possibility of selling water. They have ascertained that there is excess water and selling this spring water would not affect current or potential users. He has sent feelers out to two companies and the county but nothing concrete yet.

Other concerns is fuel prices, need for more big businesses, and NYS Route 12. Construction of that 4 lane highway through the village changed the character of the town from which they have not recovered. Not only does it change the visual character, but affected business, and pedestrian – lack of sidewalks. He felt that the state disproportionately put money into road improvements on Route 12 in Lowville, but neglected where it passes through the Village of Port Leyden. He felt the highway was a serious impediment to getting sidewalks.

Did not want to see the County get stretched too thin – feels they need to concentrate on maintaining their own infrastructure instead of taking over for towns and villages. Feels that certainly the villages will not be able to survive if the county does not take care of itself.

Town of Greig
June 24, 2008

Attendants:

Judith Wilson, Planning Board
Audrey Drake, Zoning Board of Appeals
Marilyn Patterson, Supervisor
Renee Beyer, Lewis County Department of Economic Development
Kevin Kelley, Bergmann Associates

MEETING NOTES

Land Use Issues

- Town has good zoning in place
- Need to be able to address outdoor furnaces
- Need guidance on funding sources for facilities improvements – town barn, town hall, etc.
- Proposal for a water bottling plant is a major issue – developer wants to utilize artesian wells on old farm off Sweeney Rd to extract water, pump it across the river to Route 12 in Turin, then bottle and ship
- Town is concerned about potential effects on Brantingham Lake – study performed was inconclusive
- Town currently trying to initiate a moratorium on water extraction
- Town considering purchasing land around Little Otter Lake (crosses into Herkimer County) – APA has a program whereby its making 500 acres per year available for sale to Towns of Greig and Watson
- Enforcement of ATV/snowmobile riding needs to be more strict (age limit, speed, location)

Fuel Costs/Cost of Town Operations

- Currently \$8 round trip from Brantingham to Lowville – need for public transportation
- Town considering returning the stipend for county road plowing, having the county be responsible for county roads

Economy

- Howard G. Sackett Technical Center (BOCES, based out of Watertown) currently focuses on machine shop skills, mechanics – need for small business training – train people on marketing, accounting, etc. – many of the County's small businesses would be much more successful if they had access to training on the basics of business
- Research Sun Feather Grants, a local business out of Potsdam that has set up grant programs for small businesses
- Cornell Vet School has mentioned possibility of expanding – can they establish a vet location in Greig, or somewhere else in the County? Not necessarily Cornell, but a vet would be a great new business
- Need for middle income / affordable housing – St. Lawrence County works with Adirondack Housing Trust on affordable housing

Towns of Pinckney, Harrisburg, Montague & Martinsburg
June 24, 2008

Attendants:

Jean Waterbury, Tug Hill Commission
Phillip Street, Tug Hill Commission
David Chase, Harrisburg Town Councilman
Daniel Pearson, Town of Pinckney
Terry Thisse, Town of Martinsburg
Stephen Bernat, Town of Harrisburg
Jan Bogdanowicz, Montague Town Supervisor
Kevin Kelley, Bergmann Associates

MEETING NOTES

Land Use Issues

- Pinckney – concerned about development pressures in the County – don't want sprawling development, don't want what's happening outside the fort – development is good, but it needs to be controlled, zoned, designed well
- County's land use plan should address commercial growth along Route 12 – development should be encouraged south of Lowville (close to town line) or in other hamlets/villages/areas where infrastructure is in existing and discouraged elsewhere

Roads

- County not spending all of the County Roads budget on improving roads
- Condition of roads is terrible relative to Jefferson, Oswego, St. Lawrence Counties
- Concern about mismanagement of county funds regarding maintenance
- Need for County Hwy Dept to meet with town hwy supers to address this problem
- Rising costs of fuel – county stipend for plowing county roads not keeping pace
- Seasonal land owners want roads plowed, towns want to keep some as "minimum maintenance roads" – Martinsburg especially, won't improve/plow despite seasonal camp owner's requests
- No fuel savings in combining highway departments – still have same # of road miles to plow
- Strategic placement of barns is important so that, for example, a county truck isn't traveling 15 miles to get to a town, and then start plowing

Other

- Wind farms – utility pays the taxes on easements, tax benefits go to: schools (44%), Harrisburg (11%), Martinsburg (12-13%), Lowville (10%), County (22%) – approximate numbers
- General opinion is that wind farms have been very positive
- Break ins at camps – people used to steal precious metals, now they steal gas, guns
- Need for enforcement of recreational uses
- Concern about social services dept growing too much
- Montague and Osceola have a shared assessment agreement



Town of Watson

June 25, 2008

Attendants:

Jim Freeman, Councilman
Jeff Hoch, Councilman
Ron Pominville, Councilman
Virgil Taylor, Supervisor
Kevin Kelley, Bergmann Associates

MEETING NOTES

Land Use Issues/Development Pressures

- Good relationship with APA – worked well with them on Chases Lake subdivision
- Town has a moratorium on subdivisions – want to have regulations in place before developer comes in and does something without meeting with the Town (APA regulates anything that happens inside the Blue Line)
- These small but important development pressures are a recent issue, some are seasonal some are year round homes
- Currently updating their zoning, adding subdivision regulations section
- Outdoor furnaces is another new issue – town's attorney is currently drafting a law regulating them (DEC is banning open barrel burnings) – research how APA has dealt with outdoor furnaces
- Snowbelt Housing built 32 units in hamlet – too dense, sandy soil is not good for septic systems
- Building permits rising fairly high in last few years, although not too concerned about development impacts – not much more room in the hamlet

Roads/Infrastructure

- County roads are in good shape, well-maintained, County plans to stripe all county roads
- Speeds are too high on County Roads
- Watson water users are part of the Lowville water district
- Share paving services with Greig, Croghan and New Bremen (informal agreement)
- Town will continue to plow County Roads as they are the access to all the town roads – no advantage to driving the County Roads with the blade up
- Town does a good job of plowing roads, maintenance, although difficult to keep up with plowing expectations, such as residents that work in Oswego County who need to leave very early in the morning to get to work
- Town plans on cutting back on paving because of increased costs – example: originally budgeted \$4-5,000 for fuel in February, ended up spending \$9,000

Recreation

- Horse trail system – not bringing significant economic benefits compared to snowmobiles/ATVs – no fees to use facilities, generally don't spend much money in the town or county – some negative impacts including traffic, manure in woods and near lake

- Snowmobile/ATV riders resentful of horse riders because of apparent preferential treatment given to them by the State
- Can county trail system use water line or power line easements for snowmobiles/ATVs?

Town of Osceola

June 25, 2008

Attendants:

Francis Yerdon, Town Board
Arlene Mosch, Zoning Board of Appeals
Jane Jones, Tug Hill Commission
Julie Painter, Supervisor
Kevin Kelley, Bergmann Associates

MEETING NOTES

Land Use Issues

- At one point Cooperative Council (5 towns) had a joint Planning Board – broke up because towns wanted to retain local control – need to consider this again, as it is increasingly difficult to find volunteers for boards
- Currently have a joint ZBA
- Planning and zoning training meetings (sponsored by the County) need to be in a variety of locations, evenings are best
- Current Planning Board is too quick to approve projects – making subjective decisions
- Concern about board members' lack of interest, professionalism, training
- Current zoning and subdivision regulations are antiquated, need to be updated to reflect best practices, modern issues

Roads

- Have had many requests from new home owners for updating, maintaining, plowing roads
- County may be able to maintain dirt roads better than black top
- Town doesn't receive anything from the County except road maintenance – frustrated about where their County tax dollars are being spent

Forested Lands

- 480A tax incentive program for forestry lands – approx. 80% tax breaks for forestry land owners, remainder of land owners shoulder the remainder of the tax base
- Increase in 480A lands, which amplifies the shrinking tax base problem
- Too much non-taxable land
- Development companies buy forested land, subdivide and sell for recreational camps – sell to out of state people for very high prices so assessors are forced to raise assessed value of surrounding property – locals can't afford it

Other Notes

- Important to review survey done by 4-Town Comp Plan (Martinsburg, Harrisburg, Montague, Martinsburg) – good summary of values of residents
- County should return portion of sales tax revenue to the towns/villages

Town of Diana, Village of Harrisville

June 25, 2008

Attendants:

Sheri Young, Harrisville Mayor
Bill Kellerhals, Village Trustee
Leroy Davis, Village Trustee
Jim Hunter, Village Trustee
Kimberly Baptiste, Bergmann Associates

MEETING NOTES

Primary Challenges Facing Village

- There is no land available in the Village for new development, not even good places for redevelopment
- Focus needs to be on rehab not new development
- Need to share services with Town – explore opportunities
- Interested in sharing Town offices and facilities
- Village Hall site – condemned in December – waiting for asbestos results – big concern is getting the building down – Village using Fire Hall in interim
- Village DPW – no place to house right now
- Already a shared services initiative in place between Village and school – joint fueling station at school – project being held up by grant requirements – may end up falling through if logistics can't be worked through
- Town and Village now share Fire Department but Village doesn't think Town pays its fair share
- ATV and snowmobile use on roads – only open road if it connects to existing trails
- Complete road analysis for snowmobiling
- Support sustainable economic development (Fort Drum not sustainable in long term, potentially)
- Area is impacted by Fort Drum – concern is Fort Drum is thinking too big – should utilize existing facilities and infrastructure before expanding too fast
- No ability to retain young population in area
- Good quality-of-life in region, but no jobs
- Electronic infrastructure – need better access
- Feels like County ignores Village, but the Village just ignores the County, too
- Village residents go to Watertown, not Lowville
- Feel like a bigger part of St. Lawrence County
- No place for people to stay overnight between Lowville and Cranberry



Opportunities

- Schools are important to involve throughout County
- Water system is not bad
- Plan completed to look at putting in sewer – cost would be \$5 million, Village is only worth \$14 million – would be in 3 phases with low density areas excluded
- Have zoning in place
- RR tracks cross streets and are not being used – easements – used for trails
- Unique recreational opportunities in Town and Village – cross country ski trails
- Promote Route 3 as the Olympic Trail – Gateway to the Adirondacks
- Play up local artist community – art is interesting to visitors – music is big here
- Maple syrup potential (County – RFP for maple production facility)

Miscellaneous

- Bad idea to get rid of Village of Harrisville as own entity – the best government is one that is close to the people
- County helped them to write a grant to do the playground adjacent to Fire Hall
- Large local employers include Viking, HDK, school, and the combination of Village business owners (Drs., Stewart's, various restaurants)
- Lots of special events associated with the Village that should be better promoted regionally – Tour of Trees (cycling), Harrisville Sports Car Rally (not occurring this year), Extreme Sports Triathlon (ended), kayaking
- Four day school days do not actually improve the situation with regards to gas consumption
- Harrisville Sports Car Rally through Sports Car Club of America (SCCA) – close roads and race through Town – brings in people from all over

Town of Denmark, Villages of Copenhagen & Castorland

June 25, 2008

Attendants:

Mark Moshier, Castorland Trustee
Charles Fanning, County Legislator
Ben Colton, Castorland Mayor
Donna Loucks, Castorland Clerk/Treasurer
Thomas Fleming, Denmark Supervisor
Mark Birchenough, Castorland Superintendent of Public Works
Kevin Kelley, Bergmann Associates

MEETING NOTES

Land Use / Property Values

- Some assessors service multiple towns, such as Rutland/Champion/Denmark
- Plan should address appropriate location for industrial uses
- Military presence is driving housing prices up – people on fixed incomes, young people, can't afford housing increases
- Percent of county tax is increasing faster than other towns because of military presence – perhaps a cap on raising assessments rather than a cap on property taxes would be more effective

- County consider county-wide assessment office to address inequalities in land values – need for training of local assessors to understand the big picture of the impacts of real estate values
- Croghan threw away their zoning because too many people opposed to setback requirements and other complexities in the code – rather than fixing these problems in the code, they removed the entire law – need for better education on the value of good land use regulations
- Croghan has major utility presence (dams, power lines, pipeline) that are paying taxes, which puts the town in better shape financially

Consolidation Issue, Municipal Challenges

- Castorland concerned about remaining a village – considering dissolving – lacks the population to support it
- Castorland has 3 large tax-exempt properties that hinder the tax base
- Concern that training requirements are increasing for water/sewer/hwy staff
- Generally support the idea of a water authority in the interest of efficiency, a possible result of the water study currently being performed
- Foreseeing a consolidation of services – water, sewer, fire, ambulance, etc. – as a trend statewide
- State and federal mandates (increases, more stringent requirements) are making operations at the local level cost prohibitive
- County should return the sales tax to the towns, although it might benefit some towns and hurt others if money is distributed proportional to the presence of business

Other Notes

- Need for accurate floodplain mapping – current maps are grossly outdated
- Concern about recent changes in State policy for ATV use – ATVs wouldn't have the negative environmental impacts if a proper trail system was in place
- Stewarts in Copenhagen – snowmobiles are approx. 30% of winter business
- Note from a farmer – concern that the majority of people that will be involved in the project are farmers – who tend to be self-sufficient, independent thinkers, and at times close-minded – these are valuable traits in some circumstances, but the progressive approach needed in the Plan may be in conflict with such a mindset
- Important to emphasize what the plan can give the towns/villages – educate them on issues, give answers, not questions

Town & Village of Croghan

June 27, 2008

Attendants:

Ruth Ann Hammond, John Jones, Jack Sweeney
Liz Jones, Bruce Widrick, Glen Gognier
Andy Raus, Bergmann Associates

MEETING NOTES

What they would like to see the County Comprehensive Plan Address

- How to organize a local municipal or intermunicipal comprehensive plan.
- Tools to help set up a local zoning ordinance or other land use regulations
- Potential for County Plan to have enough detail to function as the local municipal plan and the basis for future zoning or land use regulations
- How to maintain Main Street viability
- How to take advantage of the Empire Zone
- How to deal with an aging population, housing stock and difficulty of getting to basic services
- Possibilities for local municipal consolidation of services or consolidation of government (long term)
- How to set up an intermunicipal planning board and/or zoning board of appeals
- How to enhance code enforcement for property maintenance
- How to enhance local recreational resources (old bridge near Croghan dam, future multi-use of rail line connecting to Beaver Falls)
- How to increase usage of municipal services (sewer/water)
- Ways the County can enhance services for local municipal economic development initiatives including grants writing and administration
- A way for the County to target manufacturing/distribution associated with the value added products and services produced from local commodities (maple syrup, dairy, etc.)

Threats to the Community

- Continued increase in taxes
- Loss of Jobs
- No youth moving back
- Age of housing stock
- Proximity to health care
- Loss of tourism industry due to increasing regulations and cost of gas
- Lack of daily services in village area

Opportunities Specific to the Community

- Better services from County
- Croghan dam replacement, possible hydro dam retro-fit
- Incorporate old bridge by dam into recreation system
- Expand water and sewer system to appropriate growth locations
- Multi-use path between Croghan and Beaver Falls



Towns of Turin & West Turin, Villages of Lyons Falls, Constableville, and Turin
August 4, 2008

Attendants:

Ron Dorrity, Lyons Falls Mayor
Edward Hayes, West Turin Town Supervisor
William McGovern, West Turin Councilman
Jeff Hoskins, Lyons Falls Village Trustee
Jason Gibson, Lyons Falls Village Trustee
Mike Skorupa, Lyons Falls Village Trustee
Tina Paczkowski, Turin Town Supervisor
Grant Moshier, Constableville Mayor
Kevin Kelley, Bergmann Associates

MEETING NOTES

Primary Challenges

- Oil prices increasing, difficult for towns/villages to budget
- Jobs moving out of town, need for more jobs & better paying jobs
- Loss of taxpayers, no new families moving in
- Paper industry has been bought out by international companies
- Loss of grocery store in Lyons Falls (locally owned) — affects fixed/low income residents who can't afford to drive to Boonville or Lowville
- Out of staters not invested in local communities (transients), presence is driving prices up
- Farms continue to subdivide

Important Assets

- Route 12 and RR provide good access, good infrastructure
- Otis Technology steadily growing
- Recreational facilities, although County/towns/villages should be very cautious about basing their economy just on recreation

Opportunities to Address Challenges

- In light of rising costs, may have to cut back and limit paving in the future, or cut back on employee benefits
- County-wide assessment may reduce inconsistencies and bring more equality to taxes (well supported by group)
- Preserve Black River and other natural resources
- Support development of the Blue Way Trail
- Redevelop paper mill — group open to industry, more hydropower, recreation-based businesses (kayaking) or some mix thereof
- Take more advantage of locally-harnessed energy
- Need something to offer businesses, i.e. energy discounts
- More windpower, other "green" power
- Open to the possibility of some consolidation, certainly more sharing of services, but want to preserve local representation

- There are some inefficiencies that come with worrying about jurisdictional boundaries, i.e. plowing, patching potholes
- Need for more coordination between County and towns/villages for service

Development Pressures / Land Use Issues

- Mostly seasonal/recreational camps, only Otis and The Edge are expanding
- A few subdivisions for camps on the hill
- Some lots may be too small for water/sewer — need better subdivision regulations
- Lyons Falls considered zoning at one point, but abandoned the idea because it appeared overly complex, also because the mix of uses spread out across the village doesn't lend itself well to traditional zoning
- Lyons Falls is content with having this mix, would like to encourage more but traditional zoning may not achieve this
- Turin and West Turin have zoning, C-ville has some, all are somewhat outdated — West Turin facing frequent appeals from small businesses
- May be interested in design-based or form-based zoning for villages — this would help simplify the process for the benefit of both developers and administrators

FOCUS GROUP MEETING NOTES

Focus Group Meeting:

DAIRY

September 15, 2008

Attendants:

Jen Karelus, Lewis County Farm Bureau
Joe Schultz, Lowville Producers
Dwight Houser, Lowville Producers
Charles Sullivan, Comp Plan Steering Committee
Nan Stolzenburg, Community Planning & Environmental Associates

MEETING NOTES (*notes in italics* should be considered when developing objectives and actions in the Comprehensive Plan)

Positive Aspects of the Industry

- Great Lakes expansion will cause a large increase in the demand for milk. Farmers have already increased production to meet that demand.
- County's smaller farms don't have to comply with CAFO regulations yet and they don't have as many immigrant labor issues. Eventually, the regulations that are now applied to large farms will trickle down to smaller farms, we just don't know how long that will take. Small farms still have trouble getting reliable, local help.
- Past trends were that larger farms were getting larger and smaller ones were going out, but the Amish have helped balanced that out.
- Not much loss in farmland. Most land is sold to other farmers.

- Land competition is not too bad.
- Still good support for ag in Lewis County in terms of agri-businesses and other supports for farming.
- Very positive feelings about the number of children and next generation people who want to stay in farming.
- Maple syrup is a growing niche market.
- County still has a critical mass of farms, along with Kraft and Great Lakes allows efficient milk-truck pick up.
- Wind farms seen as a positive — mostly by those farmers who have land that can lease land to wind.

Negative Aspects of the Industry

- Highway budgets not big enough to maintain roads and bridges in good repair. Need to replace bridges can seriously impact farmer's ability to travel to fields.
- CAFO requirements cost those farmers who have to comply quite a bit of money
- Concerned about tourism and more people from the outside coming to Lewis County resulting in changes in land values so it makes it harder for farmers to afford land to buy and rent.
- Nuisance complaints from non-farmers are at a pretty low level now but there is concern that as more non-farmers move in that will become a problem.
- *New residents put pressure on towns to maintain seasonal roads to year round roads and this relates to taxes, which will impact the farmers.*
- Land rental rates are increasing. Big farms are causing higher land rental prices due to their need to spread manure. As they get bigger and need more land, they drive up the rental prices for all.
- Biggest challenge is the price increases in production costs.
- Lowville Farmers Cooperative — going downhill, and if they go out, this could be a problem for small items farmers need locally.
- Farm transfer from one generation to the next is a challenge from an economic point of view.
- Not much need for or interest in any kind of value-added farming related to dairy. No need for it so far.
- *If landowners who rent land to farmers decide to sell then most farms in County will be negatively impacted. We need those rented lands.*
- Participants were not aware that the county had an Ag Enhancement Plan.
- *ATV's that pass over farmland can be a problem.*
- Labor for large farms is more of a problem than for small farms. Immigration issues are of concern.
- Lack of cultural awareness and support for the immigrant labor pool.
- Water may be an issue for farms in the future.
- *Lack of high speed internet and quality phone service for farms.*

Opportunities to Enhance the Dairy Industry

- Keep nuisance complaints low — right to farm laws at town and county levels
- Land is still able to be bought and sold as farm land — keep land values affordable for farmers



- Have IDA focus much more on ag-related business development.
- Don't let farmland get fragmented because that is what is keeping it all together so far.
- Find options and funding for farmers to sell development rights. Not a lot of interest now, but there will be.
- Continue to research the idea of a community digester for regional manure management and local energy production (it hasn't been established that this idea is feasible).
- There needs to be more education of realtors in knowing their role in informing buyers about the Ag District.
- There needs to be more education of Planning Board members in their role in following the Ag and Markets 25-aa requirements (ag data statement, etc.)
- There is a need to inform people about the County Ag Enhancement Plan
- There is a need to get the County to implement the Ag Enhancement Plan and strengthen its role
- Heighten the importance of the Ag District
- Strengthen the role of the County Ag Legislative Committee and make them the ones in charge of overseeing implementation of the Ag Plan. They were not seen to be effective.
- County should place emphasis on ag economic development.
- County should make more effort to help the immigrant labor pool be more comfortable, supported, and welcomed here.

Focus Group Meeting:
FORESTRY
September 15, 2008

Attendants:

Fred Munk, NYS DEC
Rodney Buckingham, Lewis County Reforestation Foreman
Duane Farney, Farney Lumber Company
Carlton Carpenter, AMF Quibica
Carl Golas, ANCA
Evan Zehr, Lewis County Maple Producers
Haskell Yancey, Lewis County Maple Producers
Nan Stolzenburg, Community Planning & Environmental Associates

MEETING NOTES (notes in italics should be considered when developing objectives and actions in the Comprehensive Plan)

Positive Aspects of the Industry

- DEC harvests approximately 1000 acres of State Forest land in Lewis and Jefferson counties every year, with the majority of the acres located in Lewis County. The harvested wood is shipped many different places, including a number of wood products businesses in Lewis County
- Maple syrup industry is very positive. Prices are at an all time high. Everyone is expanding.

- Cornell Cooperative Extension still active related to maple syrup.
- Chip Plant in Lyons Falls. If not for this, there would be lots of loggers out of business. Chips are a major forest product now in County.
- More of the forest is being used now due to the biomass plant and increased demand for other forms of wood fuel such as pellets and wood bricks. Slash and trees that used to be left on forest floor are now used. This trend is expected to increase in the future.
- 29,000 acres in Lewis County are enrolled in the state 480a (Forest Tax Law) program.

Challenges for the Industry

- Loss of sawmills is very alarming
- Not profitable for sawmills – lots of costs for low price for product
- *Concern over introduction of exotic species and invasive species that could harm forests.*
- Forest product economy is poor – can't turn a profit by turning logs into lumber and the price of lumber has plummeted.
- Landowners may be more interested in leasing land for mineral rights or other uses if they can't make money off of timber operations.
- Foreign competition is a big problem for value-added wood products such as furniture. That has put a lot of small furniture manufacturers out of business.
- *Land is getting subdivided rapidly and that means it will be less likely those landowners will log.*
- Seeing either great big timber operations or very small family operations. Not many small logging firms left. Fewer people doing logging due to economy.
- Maple trees not dripping like they used to – might be weather related.
- Tree health is a concern to maple producers.
- Feels forest product industry in Lewis County goes under the County radar and is not recognized as a large part of the economy. Feels County is not really involved in the forest industry.
- National housing industry has a significant impact on the lumber industry – fewer houses/building means poorer economy for the forest products industry. Feels this will take a very long time to recover from.
- Traditionally, landowners here appreciate timber value but that is changing rapidly where timber land value is being converted to recreational land value.
- Perception that lots are worth more as building lots than the timber is worth.
- *Assessors tax land according to timber value, but this varies a lot from place to place. Theoretically if timber is sold then land value decreases for tax purposes.*
- It takes a lot of maple syrup to earn enough money to be eligible for the ag tax exemption.
- Labor may be difficult issue for maple syrup in the future.
- *Road maintenance on seasonal roads or lack of it that prevents logging trucks from getting to woods.*

Opportunities to Enhance the Forest Products Industry

- Forests need to be managed as well as possible to provide for future forest products.

- Developing a value-added wood pellet plant
- Industrial dryer for firewood.
- *County should have role to enhance the maple syrup industry.*
- Don't take timber forest value of land into account for taxes
- *Offer local tax incentives for maple syrup in addition to those through the ag exemption program.*
- *County should consider forest products industry in any decision making and program they make. They feel that the forest product industry is worth more to the county than the ATV effort. County decisions should have no negative impact on the forestry industry.*
- *Pass right-to-forestry laws may be important in the future.*
- Do not have towns pass logging permit programs. Doesn't want to see permits needed, nor additional fees or taxes to do this activity.

Focus Group Meeting:
TOURISM & MARKETING
September 15, 2008

Attendants:

Anne Merrill, Lewis County Chamber of Commerce
Lisa Becker, Lewis County Historian
Robert Diehl, Lewis County Trail Coordinator
Nan Stolzenburg, Community Planning & Environmental Associates

MEETING NOTES (notes in italics should be considered when developing objectives and actions in the Comprehensive Plan)

Positive Characteristics

- Lewis County Historical Society very active with lots of historical/cultural events.
- Lots of resources and things to do
- New winery
- Quaintness of village
- Chamber of Commerce – has marketing and website.
- Wind Farm
- Currently preparing a bike plan
- Good cooperation regionally for snowmobiles and ATV's.
- Chamber is preparing a map showing all recreational locations in the County.

Negative Characteristics

- Chamber lacks money to do more marketing and other organizations lack money too.
- People drive through County to get to Adirondacks but do not stop and stay



- Lacking downtown businesses in Lowville and other villages that cater to tourists. Wal-Mart killed local businesses and there is nothing to attract and keep tourists.
- *Unattractive streetscapes. There is a lack of curb appeal.*
- Lack of hotels. Can't get bigger chains to come in due to low summer use.
- Restaurants not busy enough in summer
- Major highways bypass the county
- Perception among people that there is nothing to do in Lewis County.
- Downtown merchants struggle to unite around a common direction/vision, partially because there is a limited number of merchants who participate in the Lowville Downtown Merchants Association
- There is no County office of tourism, no county legislative committee in charge of tourism and marketing, etc.
- Lack of coordination among organizations and agencies – everyone is pretty much on their own and doing their own self-promotion.
- Lots of people buying land for seasonal homes have the potential to drive up land values.
- Road systems do not support villages (by pass or cut them)
- *There is no brand, theme to market.*
- There is no vision or unified front on what kind of tourism is desired.
- Community has mixed feelings as some don't want the word to get out about the many things going on because they don't want to see more people and more growth. This was seen as a primary issue.
- Resentment among some residents over the growth of ATV and snowmobiling. Some long-term residents feel that the quality of life and peaceful nature of the county has decreased as a result. Conflicted over this.
- CEDS hardly touched on tourism.
- We are a hard area to get change through – it is very gradual, and many prevent change and acceptance of new ideas.
- Didn't feel that there was a lot of awareness of all the things going on among local residents as well as seasonal ones.
- *Didn't feel that the message about what a great quality of life Lewis County offers is getting out to potential employers*
- The good cooperation seen among snowmobile associations, and ATV interests does not extend to other recreational or cultural events.

Inventory of Strengths that Lewis County has to offer tourists:

- Tug Hill
- Black River
- Erie Canal
- 4-seasons
- Scenic beauty
- Small hometown feel
- Safe
- State land
- Recreation

- First and foremost is snowmobiling
- Speedway
- Horseback riding
- State Park
- Black River, Blueway Canoe – flat water
- White water
- Fishing
- ATV – base is growing, and soon there will be 7 counties connected and be among the largest ATV trails in the NE.
- Snowmobile Associations
- Kite Skiing
- Heritage Tourism
- RR Society in Croghan
- Maple Museum
- Mennonite Heritage Farm
- North American Fiddlers Hall of Fame – Osceola
- Constable Hall
- General Martin Mansion
- Festivals

Opportunities to Enhance Tourism and Marketing

- *Improve downtown streetscapes – they need to recreate what it used to be like and create an image in the core area of downtown.*
- *Do a walking tour of village.*
- Did not want to promote large venues and attractions (such as Water Safari).
- Quaintness of area should be the key to marketing and promotion as that is what people are looking for.
- Wind farm could be a bigger draw for County. It is already a tourist draw and this could be capitalized on.
- Market to Canada – should be a big draw.
- *There needs to be a vision and a meeting of the minds to bring people together as to what kind of and amount of tourism is appropriate.*
- *County could play a bigger role in developing appropriate tourism and marketing via a tourism plan. (on the other hand, they were aware that big government that tells people what to do is also not desired)*
- *Black River Canal for walking/skiing path.*
- *Market Lewis County to potential employers and emphasize the quality of life that could be offered to new employees.*
- There are lots of opportunities to cross-promote events and activities.

Focus Group Meeting: HOUSING September 15, 2008

Attendants:

Kathy Manning, Project Manager - Karcher Country Estates
Cheryl Shenkle-O'Neil, Snow Belt Housing
Jennifer Jones, Lewis County Dept of Social Services
Monique Branagan, Snow Belt Housing
Brenda Monnat, Housing Program Manager
Tina Stanford, Lewis County Office for the Aging
Andy Raus, Bergmann Associates

MEETING NOTES (*notes in italics* should be considered when developing objectives and actions in the Comprehensive Plan)

General Comments

- *There is an increased demand for senior affordable housing.*
- Current units available may not be very attractive or up to date.
- Affordable senior housing may be needed in Port Leyden, Lyons Falls, Croghan.
- Many affordable senior housing complexes funded through the USDA 515 Program allow for disabled persons of all age groups creating conflicts.
- Seniors want to stay local but often times need to move to other locations to find affordable housing which can be stressful and unsuccessful.
- *It is very difficult to provide affordable housing to seniors who desire a rural lifestyle.*
- There is market rate senior housing in the region now that is attractive to seniors that can afford it.
- There are existing programs for housing rehab and upgrades such as HOME, WRAP, Lewis County Opportunities, Church of the Nazarene and North Country Affordable Housing Trailer Replacement Program.
- *It is difficult for young families and first time buyers to find affordable housing.*
- *There is a service gap for households earning more than HUD low income threshold but still below median household income.*
- Transportation for seniors and low income families is a great concern.
- Rental opportunities are very limited in the County for lower income seniors and families.
- *Most rental rates are inflated due to influence from Fort Drum. This may change as the Fort is encouraging on-base relocation.*
- Homelessness, and programs for managing homelessness is a continuing problem in Lewis County.
- Affordable single family home programs, Watson Farmers Home Rural Subdivision, are difficult to build due to cost of materials and labor associated with each unit.
- Homes in Lewis County often have multi-generations in each structure and they are passed down.
- *Promotion of existing programs is currently released using newsletters, articles, postings at pharmacies, on the radio and at senior day.*
- Dead beat landlords are a real concern, impacting housing and neighborhood quality.



Appendices

- Lack of code enforcement is also a major concern.
- Property owners do not reinvest in the community due to fear of rising taxes.
- Housing in villages may not be diverse enough to support all groups, such as seniors.
- Rental options are not available for all income levels or groups; it's either for low income or high income.
- Many rentals are in bad condition in villages. Owners, often absentee, do not use rental rehab funds because it would require low income users.
- County should look into a strategic approach to RESTORE, NY for rehab of key Main Street structures in Villages that will allow for upper story housing opportunities.

Focus Group Meeting:
REAL PROPERTY ASSESSMENT
September 15, 2008

Attendants:

Roger Tibbets, Assessor
Brian Klossner, Assessor
Caryn Kolts, Lewis County Real Property Tax Service
John Whitaker, ORPS
Janet Lasell, ORPS
Erin Gratch, Assessor, Town of New Bremen
Ron Terrillion, Assessor
Eric Sunderhaft, Sunderhaft Appraisals
Tom Spina, Resident
John McDonald, Resident
Britt Abbey, Abbey Appraisals
Andy Raus, Bergmann Associates

MEETING NOTES (*notes in italics* should be considered when developing objectives and actions in the Comprehensive Plan)

Assessment Grant

Janet Lasell of the New York State Department of Real Property Services presented the recent State grant program for improving the consistency of real property assessment statewide. Lewis County was awarded a \$25,000 grant to analyze the current assessment procedures utilized at the County and local levels. The County will receive an additional \$25,000 when the study/analysis is presented to the Board of Legislators. This effort will result in a report that indicates potential opportunities for improvement. It will not recommend a preferred approach as this will be left to the County and local municipalities to determine. The report shall include an analysis of current practices and procedures, opportunities for improving transparency of the assessment process, the potential for defining a common re-assessment cycle and the definition of a consistent re-assessment process. The report should be completed by December, 2008 and will be available for our use when developing the Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Lasell provided an overview of programs currently funded by NYS Department of Real Property to assist with the cost of improving the assessment process. Current programs include:

- Up to \$5.00 per parcel annually if an annual reassessment process is adopted
- Up to \$5.00 per parcel every three years if three year reassessment process is adopted
- Up to \$7.00 per parcel one time grant for forming a Cooperative Assessment Program (CAP - multi-jurisdictional). This is pro-rated over ten years so, if a municipality pulls out of the program, then it will need to pay back a percentage of the grant.

General Comments from Focus Group Attendees: (*notes in italics* should be considered when developing objectives and actions in the Comprehensive Plan)

- Some local officials are not comfortable with full assessment because of the potential tax increase implications it would have on residents.
- The State should mandate a cycle period for assessments statewide.
- The profession is aging and interest is not present in younger generations to become assessors. This is partially due to it being undervalued as compared to responsibility.
- *The County Assessors Office could help local assessors by providing staff that will evaluate and verify sales countywide to ensure a consistent process.*
- There needs to be improved coordination between local assessors.
- *The County should explore a reasonable value system for assessing rather than basing everything on sale value due to impacts on affordability for local residents.*
- Assessors who manage more than one municipality generally receive more training opportunities from the State.
- *There is greater efficiency for the local municipality when an assessor manages more than one community due to sharing of reimbursable costs and operational overhead (office space, etc.).*
- Assessors by IAAO standards are only recommended to manage 2,500 parcels.
- Today, private assessors receive \$8-8.50 a parcel.
- *RPTL 1537 provides a framework for cooperatively sharing the duties for assessment between local municipalities and the County.*
- *In Schuyler County, NY local assessors were hired by the County to improve coordination and consistency. This was facilitated under RPTL 1537.*
- *CAP's should only happen with communities of similar land use makeup. Example, a community with waterfront property should not be combined with one that does not have waterfront property. This will skew the accuracy of the assessment.*
- *Others felt that it would not distort the accuracy of the assessment, but that it would be harder to maintain uniformity and the same level of assessment.*
- Seasonal and waterfront properties are increasing in value faster than other properties but forcing all properties to increase as well.
- Fort Drum, based upon past experience, has temporary impacts on assessment values.
- Waterfront property investment is not only out of town people. In fact, the Focus Group felt that local residents were actually buying more waterfront property than the out of town population.
- State allowed exemptions shift the burden of property tax to a smaller number of parcels while benefiting a few.

- *An educational program may be of value to help local owners understand the assessment business and process.*
- *The County should consider allowing people to pay taxes in installments rather than all at once. All tax bills should be lumped into one payment.*

Focus Group Meeting:
REGIONAL COORDINATION & GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
September 15, 2008

Attendants:

Kevin Jordan, Development Authority of the North Country
Eric Virkler, Village of Lowville Administrator
Dave Zembiec, Tug Hill Commission
Renee Beyer, Lewis County Dept of Economic Development & Planning
Andy Raus, Bergmann Associates

MEETING NOTES

General Comments from Focus Group Attendees: (*notes in italics* should be considered when developing objectives and actions in the Comprehensive Plan)

- Tug Hill Commission to provide a list of all cooperative planning efforts currently underway or recently completed within the County and surrounding region.
- Town and Village of Lowville currently have a joint planning and zoning board and a joint comprehensive plan. Currently, zoning codes and land use regulations are separate. May be good to look at consolidating into one set of regulations.
- County to provide a list of all known formal intermunicipal, county/municipal agreements.
- County to assist with developing a list of known informal agreements, which are very common and effective in the County.
- *The Plan should include an informal cooperation "case study" for informational purposes.*
- May be opportunities to share municipal financial services between several municipalities.
- Shared volunteer boards such as planning and zoning board of appeals may be the only viable option for many communities due to population size.
- The North Country Home Consortium is a good example of an intermunicipal cooperative approach to obtaining grant monies for housing rehab. Municipalities had to pass a resolution to be included in the Consortium. This cooperative approach allows the region to tap into funding that is not readily available to rural areas. This results in \$1.5M annually.
- The perception of intermunicipal cooperation, specifically government consolidation, is driven by fear of change. "I have to do what the group wants to do." Also, the fear of not having local representation is a big issue.
- *In the plan, we should list known examples of cooperation going on.*
- *The Plan should identify gaps in service where, if cooperation was in place or enhanced, the gap could be closed.*
- *Coordination efforts should focus on easy, quick fix opportunities at first. Government consolidation should be looked at as a last resort.*



- Education will be essential to building comfort with greater levels of cooperation.
- *Utilize local examples of how cooperation has led to improved quality of life benefits. Bring in speakers to discuss after plan is complete.*
- A potential case study for sewer system improvements in LeRay, Champion, Rutland, and Black River is currently underway.
- The County water study recommendations should provide insight into future cooperation for potable water service.
- The future land use recommendations in the comprehensive plan should be consistent with the water study recommendations.
- *There should be a designated Comprehensive Plan Implementation Coordinator position after adoption of the document.*
- *A topic area and training program should be created for the top five or six opportunities for cooperation.*
- *The County needs to complete a 5, 10, 15 year cost of services analysis for local governments to understand the fiscal condition it can expect in the future. This will help to educate decisions on cooperation. There is currently a funding opportunity for this through the NYS DOS.*
- *The Steering Committee should select five or six key areas for cooperation from the following list: water/wastewater, highway, land use planning and regulation, municipal facilities, economic development and grants, government financing and administrative services, housing, environment, alternative energy. Each of these areas should be focuses for education and building a cooperative framework for future implementation.*

**Focus Group Meeting:
EDUCATION
September 17, 2008**

Attendees:

Mary-Margaret Zehr, Copenhagen CSD
Jay Boak, BOCES
Ken McAuliffe, Lowville Academy
Leueen Smithling, Beaver River CSD
Rolf Waters, Harrisville CSD
Bill Kellerhals, Harrisville CSD
Frank House, South Lewis CSD
Doug Premo, South Lewis CSD
Sarah Bullock, Lewis County Department of Econ Dev & Planning
Kevin Kelley, Bergmann Associates

MEETING NOTES (*notes in italics* should be considered when developing objectives and actions in the Comprehensive Plan)

Challenges

- Loss of population (less state aid), lack of affordable housing.
- Influx of Ft. Drum, mainly an issue in the Copenhagen and Harrisville District.
- Brain drain – no jobs available.
- Sparse population, schools are the community center. So most people have to travel long distances.

- Lack of economic development in recent years (industry, ag) other than Otis, green energy.
- No longer have some of the traditional sports rivalries (i.e. Beaver Falls – Lowville football)
- Districts want to avoid the tipping point where remaining population can no longer support operations.
- State aid is in jeopardy, roughly 2/3 budget. How do we respond to this? Can steps be taken to reduce our dependence on the state, prior to the bottom dropping out? Some districts have attempted initiatives in this direction, but they lack support because they involve cuts in funding/programs.
- Pre-emptive steps have been explored but lack public support.
- Possibility of consolidation, more efficiencies in terms of teacher/student ratio, admin/staff. Mixed opinions about this, as local control and identity is very important.
- Most not willing to entertain consolidation unless can demonstrate bottom falling out, local identity, heritage, control are too important.
- Assessments have increased significantly in Denmark/Copenhagen.
- Transportation network not sufficient for economic development, same with higher education.
- Removal/decrease of state aid forces schools to raise taxes. Simultaneously, state has not raised income taxes (which would increase state aid) in a few decades.

Positive Aspects

- Development at Griffiss starting to have positive impact on South Lewis.
- Desire to preserve small town character, element of isolation.
- Small classrooms, small schools – can offer more in terms of relationship but maybe not in terms of amenities, technology (bells and whistles) that suburban schools in upstate might offer.
- Primary resources are natural resources (water, wind).
- South Lewis – athletic facilities are all free, offer a variety of services. Also offer 44 credit hours worth of higher education classes.
- “Summer vacation” no longer exists – events / programs available all summer.
- Local school boards generally offer almost anything locals ask for in terms of programs and services. The schools are the primary community center of most communities. This is why budgets mostly are approved – people recognize the value of these community centers.
- Most districts have some form of shared services/facilities.

General Comments

- BOCES – offers great programs but there is a lack of interest.
- Copenhagen, about 50% of students go to BOCES, although very few enter the fields they study.
- Started an entrepreneurship class, where kids learn how to write a business plan.
- Got a grant to start a photography-based class. (21st Century Learning Grant)
- Districts are providing transportation services that help make up for tight individual budgets. In effect creating a form of public transportation.
- Lewis County Opportunities also has a presence in the schools.

Opportunities

- *County can take wind turbine revenues to stabilize taxes. Need for County to seed economic development.*
- *Potential for more on-line learning programs.*
- *Districts are renting out buses to not-for-profits and municipalities. Possibility for expanding this and promoting it?*
- *More agencies (like Lewis County Mental Health) should provide more support services at local schools. One effect has been to keep kids in school longer (don't have to travel so far).*
- *Need for greater presence of Mountain View (private company that provides drug and alcohol counseling).*
- *Need for mini BOCES or apprenticeships available at 9th or 10th graders. Get them interested early on.*
- *Possibility for BOCES or Districts to offer more training for students and existing local businesses. Many programs exist (shadowing, internships).*
- *Kids are interested in these, interested in owing their own land, being their own bosses, but there are problems with work ethic (not wanting to work long hours).*
- *Opportunities for more internships / shadowing with emerging businesses (currently primarily student – driven). Can be more District driven based on knowledge of business. New winery cited as an example. Others include aqua farming, nurseries and landscaping, forestry, maple syrup, other non-traditional agri-businesses.*

**Focus Group Meeting:
RENEWABLE & SUSTAINABLE ENERGY
September 17, 2008**

Attendants:

Jon Elmer, Brookfield Renewable Power
Steve Murphy, Brookfield Renewable Power
Tammie Toth, TMT Biofuels
Bill Seifried, DANC (Rodman Landfill)
Kevin Kelley, Bergmann Associates

MEETING NOTES (*notes in italics* should be considered when developing objectives and actions in the Comprehensive Plan)

Description of Businesses Represented

- Brookfield Renewable Power – 100% renewable (hydro-electric, wind), currently in a growth mode.
 - *Currently working with SUNY Oswego County to develop an energy based degree to meet labor needs.*
- TMT Biofuels in Lyonsdale – utilize vegetable oil to create bio-diesel
 - *primarily getting their waste from restaurants (more promotion opportunities?)*
 - *began construction about one year ago, in operation about one month.*
 - *county will use these bio-fuels for their fleet, about 20-30% of use. (more promotion opportunities?)*
 - *glycerine is their waste bi-product (large surplus), which has potential for use as a cleaning application (soaps, de-greasers).*



COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Appendices

- Rodman Landfill (Jefferson County off Rte 177) — 1/3 of workforce is from Lewis County, 20% of waste comes from Lewis County.
 - 40-50% of waste is organic.
 - *Currently wasted opportunities for lost methane.*
 - 1500 acres, majority is a buffer (non-landfill).
 - *Looking at possibilities for locating industries to benefit from energy production.*
 - *Looking at greenhouse possibility utilizing excess heat from landfill (pursuing a tomatoes contract with Tops / Wegmans), would need to pipe in large quantities of water (hydroponic).*
 - Benefit of landfill is there is a constant fuel source (no variables).
- State and utility regs are too burdensome (to slow to adapt) to facilitate expansion.
- Logs are shipped to Canada for processing and shipped back to consumers b/c cost of energy of New York is too high.
- *Exploring possibility of kiln utilizing local energy in order to overcome this*
- Life of Phase I (75 acres) is 2018, Phase II is 2065.

Challenges & Opportunities

- *County has expressed strong support for these companies and their initiatives. Wants to have an ongoing dialogue regarding what they can do to support these companies and what additional investments could be considered.*
- *Great opportunities for more renewable and sustainable energy initiatives, but for those feeding energy to the grid (wind, hydro), there are major capacity issues. More transmission lines (more capacity) is needed to support these initiatives*
- *Lewis County can't utilize the energy they create locally (wind and hydro) b/c it all gets fed into the grid. Need a solution for generating and transmitting energy independent of the grid.*
- *TMT is an example of this solution, but its application is limited to motor vehicle fuel at the moment.*
- *In order to expand Kraft, need to expand cow density in the county. In order to do that, need to have a solution for disposing of the waste. Community digester facility at Kraft may accomplish this.*
- *County should explore possibility of selling low-cost power to industries that collocate at power sources.*
- *Need to explore smaller scale (residential and commercial) applications of renewable/sustainable energy, such as green buildings (LEED), solar, geothermal, wind, etc. [this scale of design not represented at group]*
- *Need to create a comprehensive list of companies/initiatives in the County and promote it to potential investors, start-ups and existing businesses looking to expand. Can also be promoted to a general target audience in order to highlight the County's unusually high number of companies/initiatives.*

Focus Group Meeting:

WEEKEND & SEASONAL RESIDENTS

September 17, 2008

Attendants:

Don Hunt, Pratt Northam Foundation
Roger Abbey, Good Morning Realty
Donna Loucks, D'loux Properties
Sarah Bullock, Lewis County Department of Economic Development & Planning
Kevin Kelley, Bergmann Associates

MEETING NOTES (*notes in italics* should be considered when developing objectives and actions in the Comprehensive Plan)

General Comments

- County's biggest asset – peace, quiet and green space.
- About 10-15% of Chases Lake is permanent residents.

Positive Impacts

- Positive impacts of weekend/seasonal residents – economic, create communities, develop recreational trails.
- Asset to churches, service organizations.
- Many artists.
- Somewhat involved in community, maybe a need for more opportunities to get them involved.
- Increasing turnover in ownership of seasonal properties.

Negative Impacts

- Negative impacts may not be known, but largely positive. Brantingham as an example.
- Too many reduces the peace and quiet.
- Affects delivery of local services – need for more sheriff patrols.
- Entitlement to have seasonal roads open.
- Increasing property sale prices (\$500K) impacting long-term permanent residents.
- Disparity in pressure on assessors to reach 100% equalization rate.
- West Turin can skate by with their assessments as pressure is applied to Greig to reach 100% equalization.

Opportunities

- *Need to develop a master plan for seasonal roads.*
- *Plan for which roads will open and which will stay seasonal.*
- *Plan for water activities, ATV trails (including maintenance), snowmobiles.*
- *Need to address and promote quality of life to attract more seasonal / permanent residents.*
- *Need to utilize wind and local energy sources to fund (thru wind) infrastructure.*
- *Potential for start-up businesses (by seasonal residents).*
- *Need for high speed internet.*
- *Need more infill development in Village, specifically the vacant lot at the 4 corners in Lowville, which is a major gateway and has an impact on visitors.*



VISIONING EXERCISE RESULTS

LEWIS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Developing Vision and Policy for the County

Results from Visioning Exercises

Steering Committee Meeting

CCE Meeting Room — August 4, 2008

Community Meetings

Lowville Fire Hall — August 5, 2008

Croghan Fire Hall — August 5, 2008

Lyons Falls Fire Hall — August 6, 2008



Bergmann
associates

Steering Committee Workshop Summary

Facilitated by Kevin Kelley & Andy Raus

Policy Area	Hope, Vision, or Idea	Priority Votes
Economy	Revitalize downtowns in villages	3
	Better paying jobs for county residents so they do not have to leave the county for work	2
	Encourage industry that adds value to farm and forest products	2
	Increased professional level job opportunities (less brain drain)	2
	Increase living wage employment opportunities for young families	1
	Jobs for all education levels; Good jobs for educated	1
	Keep Lewis county communities from becoming bedroom communities	1
	Attracting of related manufacturing facilities and retail establishments	
	Diverse economy - retail, industry, etc	
	Enough job opportunities for college kids to return to the community	
	Focus on 10 or less employees	
	Hire talent from within	
	Lower unemployment	
	More hi-tech job opportunities for our youth	
	Retention of existing manufacturing plants and jobs	
	Retire at age of retirement	
	Young adult opportunities	

Policy Area	Hope, Vision, or Idea	Priority Votes
AG, Forestry, and Environmental	Greater focus on 'other' ag products (produce). Add value forestry opportunities	3
	Become a producer of finished goods rather than raw materials, industry and agriculture	2
	"Brand" Lewis County Ag products (Idaho potatoes)	1
	"Smart" growth so that houses don't gobble up good farmland	1
	Alternative energy sources that make use of local resources	1
	More local ag production for local consumption	1
	More locally grown products and increased markets for these products	1
	Keeping the forest industry sustainable. Encourage land owners and loggers to work together	
	Better use of state lands available	
	Education between farm families and public	
	Education of forestry	
	Forestry processing facility for forest products	
	Improve marketing and use of maple products	
	Local recycling project; Food waste for energy	
	More opportunities for local farmers; Tax breaks	
	New value added processing facilities, ex: dairy, ethanol	
	Preserve farm land and forest land	
	Promote local farms and farm products	



Appendices

Policy Area	Hope, Vision, or Idea	Priority Votes
Tourism and Recreation	Year round marketing of year round activities	5
	Coordinated hiking, biking, 4-wheeler, snowmobile trail system, connecting communities	2
	Strive for a mix of motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities	2
	County wide recreation trail system	1
	Improve existing trail networks and increase advertising	1
	Increase in cultural tourism/attractions	1
	This is a "Sleeping Giant" and has tremendous opportunity to expand the snowmobiling and ATV trade	1
	Variety of activities that will entice visitors 12 months of the year	1
	12 months tourism and recreation base - not dependent on snow	
	Rail to trail from Carthage to Lowville	
	Build on wind farm - a tourist destination	
	Build strong tourism and recreational business working with towns, villages in county	
	Community shared goal (consensus on what is acceptable noise, trials, etc)	
	Get the support of the legislature to expand tourism and recreational opportunities	
	Limited dependence on tourism so that the county's economy isn't based on unpredictable income	
	More advertising for tourism and recreation	

Policy Area	Hope, Vision, or Idea	Priority Votes
Regional Coordination	Consolidation of municipalities that provide public services in a more coordinated cost effective manner	4
	Consolidation of all services by geography	2
	Consolidation of services between county, town and villages	1
	Public transportation	1
	Be more of a part of regional efforts	
	Best practice approach; reduced tax burden	
	Better coordination between school districts	
	Consolidate services between governments	
	Consolidate Village of Lowville and Town of Lowville would be an example	
	Consolidation of some of the town; More inter-municipal service agreements	
	Improve water and septic systems with consolidation	
	Less duplication of services between town and villages	
	Study and implement the combining of services by towns, villages and counties	
	Towns and villages and schools work to trim costs	
	Water to be shared throughout county	

Policy Area	Hope, Vision, or Idea	Priority Votes
Infrastructure and Community Resources	Dial-a-ride; Improved commutable travel options	2
	Municipal power	2
	Strive to recreate railroad line	2
	Adult education offerings locally	1
	County wide water authority - non-political	1
	Housing for all income levels - quality and quantity	1
	Industrial park	1
	Low cost power to industry from County's municipal power corporation	1
	Protect key development from over development	1
	Public transportation that will in a cost effective manner, allow citizens access to services, cultural events, healthcare, etc	
	Better drinking water options for residents (could be connected to economy/unemployment income)	
	Better roads and rail system	
	Coordinate road repairs, snow removal, etc at county level	
	Develop at least one major source of potable water	
	Higher education opportunities (two and/or four year college campus)	
	Infrastructure upgraded to allow companies to do turn key operations	
	More community play/areas - recreation	
	Provide high education opportunities locally for graduates and trades	
	Something to attract industry - an example would be cheap energy	
	Updated housing opportunities for low income families	



Community Workshop Summary - Lowville

Facilitated by Kevin Kelley

Policy Area	Hope, Vision, or Idea	Priority Votes
Economy	Spend to attract new business vs 4-wheel traffic	4
	Expand tax base - grow population	2
	Sales tax specials such as back to school buying. Have a unique hospital, better care	1
	Acceptable level of unemployment	
	Grant to offer tax break to new industry	
	Lower taxes	
	Maintain what we have Amish can market milk or craft or Great Lakes cheese to save on transportation	
	Stable expanded exporting	
	traffic	

Policy Area	Hope, Vision, or Idea	Priority Votes
Regional Coordination	Keep away from bigger government	3
	Lower sales tax; County wide health plan; Combine town/village/county services	3
	Combination of local and county govt for major services	2
	Town and villages maintain their autonomy	2
	Coordination in reforming village directiveness	1

Policy Area	Hope, Vision, or Idea	Priority Votes
AG, Forestry, and Environment	More small farms, growing energy producing products	3
	Smart growth - so that people can live comfortably, industry can keep producing, ag and forestry have room to keep producing	3
	Hiking, camping, cycling, musical concerts	2
	Produce higher value finished products instead of shipping out raw products	2
	More farming - market 1/week	
	Clean Air - no whey spread on fields	
	Maintain and ideally grow the ag and forestry infrastructure	
	Sustainable diversified agriculture	

Policy Area	Hope, Vision, or Idea	Priority Votes
Tourism and Recreation	Recreation that does not compromise the natural resources of Lewis County	4
	Communicate with Amish families to develop a shop/restaurant to combine with wind towers	1
	Other unique small restaurants and shops	1
	Paint ball, skate board places, help to build up Maple Ridge Park area, etc	1
	Common source for information; Lewis County tourist pass \$	1
	Trail system maintained by fee	1
	Make sure it is providing good jobs and is profitable	

Policy Area	Hope, Vision, or Idea	Priority Votes
Community Resources	Higher education opportunities	3
	Sidewalks, rec trails, very few standardized signs underground power / phone / principal internet / municipal power	3
	Education - Use BOCES Center for SUNY or JCC Classes Building Up BOCES. Need high Tec software opportunities. Outreach classes with video from JCC or other colleges	2
	County politicians need more background at lower level, so they make better decisions. Some may have suggested going back to Boards and supervisors	1
	Better roads	
	Better work ethic and teach respect for others and property	
	Community College	
	Continue to capitalize on our unique environment-like kite-skiing, etc	



Appendices

Community Workshop Summary - Croghan

Facilitated by Andy Raus

Policy Area	Hope, Vision, or Idea	Priority Votes
Economy	Good paying jobs so County residents do not have to leave the County to go to work	4
	Attract small high tech businesses	1
	Good local shopping opportunities. Quality jobs for people	1
	Increase and expand job base and opportunities	
	Jobs for all the young people who want to stay in the County	
	More local jobs available	

Policy Area	Hope, Vision, or Idea	Priority Votes
Ag, Forestry and Environment	Variety of farms offering more products. Well managed woodlands	4
	Expansion of Ag industry	2
	Plan to maintain open space and farming opp for our people	
	Redevelop existing farms	
	Sustainable agriculture with timber and forestry industries that protect the environment	
	Use of forestry resources to the maximum extent and protection of the environment	

Policy Area	Hope, Vision, or Idea	Priority Votes
Tourism and Recreation	Development of County wide tourism plan	3
	Year round activities with year round marketing efforts	3
	Better promotion of our tourism and recreation activities	
	More variety of activities for youth in the County	
	Recreation activities for 12 months of the year	
	Tourism and recreation that "pay for themselves" to protect the land	

Policy Area	Hope, Vision, or Idea	Priority Votes
Infrastructure and Community Resources	Improved with room to provide for newcomers (business)	4
	Affordable (decent) housing for the low income families	1
	Improve transportation infrastructure	1
	Create more public transportation options	
	Excellent communication network	
	Maintain and improve the quality and availability of wealth coming into County	

Policy Area	Hope, Vision, or Idea	Priority Votes
Regional Coordination	Combine services to decreased duplication cost Consolidation of boards and committees across Town and Village lines	4
	Coordination in local municipalities to cut cost of services	2
	Everybody on the same page	
	Little duplication of effort on the part of Village, Town government	

Community Workshop Summary - Lyons Falls

Facilitated by Nan Stolzenburg

Policy Area	Hope, Vision, or Idea	Priority Votes
Economy	Continue a well balanced economy with no boom/bust developments	5
	Grocery store in Lyons Falls and jobs	3
	High tech industries like Silicon Valley	3
	Lots of jobs	3
	Financially secure Village and Town and County	2
	Jobs for all levels of education that provide income people can live on	2
	More better paying jobs and lower costs for fuel	2
	Businesses in place of the mill for jobs	1
	Cooperative municipalities	1
	Everyone wanting a job would have one without hurting the community and environment	1
	Industries and lower tax base	
	Lewis County Community College	
	More jobs or industries	
	More well paying jobs to keep people here	

Policy Area	Hope, Vision, or Idea	Priority Votes
Ag, Forestry and Environment	Protect natural resources for future use	9
	Return of the small farms and protected farmland for our children	4
	It ain't broke don't fix it	3
	Control and limit rules and regulations and don't over-do it	2
	Managed working forest lands	2
	Farmers staying in business	1
	State forest managed to current forestry standards	1
	Clean and safe for all people to enjoy	
	Keep ag with an emphasis on being a retirement community	
	Sustain the base for natural resource lands and landowner base	

COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Policy Area	Hope, Vision, or Idea	Priority Votes
Tourism and Recreation	Hiking and biking trails	7
	County wide and village wide safe recreation of all kinds	3
	Coordinated non-motorized tourism and recreation and hiking	2
	Open Trails or walking and biking	2
	Town and County working closely on ATV and snowmobile trails	2
	Be a recreational area without motorization Clean environment	1
	Camping sites on Moose and Black River	1
	Full access to Black River for boating, canoeing, fishing; Emphasize Black River canal history	1
	Maintain recreation trail system	1
	More snow for snowmobiling	1
	Sports complex	1
	72 degrees and sunny all summer with rain only Monday and Thursday	
	Camping sites on Black River	
	Coordinated county wide snowmobile trail system	
	County wide network of walking and biking trails	
	More state support for motorized recreation	
	Separate motorized recreational trails	
	Snowmobile and ATV trails	
	Tourism and recreation that the locals don't feel overwhelmed by all the traffic that will come	

Policy Area	Hope, Vision, or Idea	Priority Votes
Regional Coordination	Our elected officials would represent their people versus their personal interests and work together	8
	Better cooperation between communities	6
	Coordination of overlapping and duplicative units and their budgets	6
	Reduce # of governments; merge town of Montague, Harrisburg and Pinckney, merge Town and Village of Lowville, merge Greig and Lyonsdale; reduce special districts	1
	Active County Youth Bureau	
	Coordinate historical and recreational opportunities	
	County wide real property tax assessment	
	Have county and towns and villages coordinate better	
	Redraw school district boundaries to reduce transportation and town costs	

Policy Area	Hope, Vision, or Idea	Priority Votes
Infrastructure and Community Resources	More stores	5
	County college	3
	Good roads in all towns and villages	3
	Auxiliary MVCC or JCC Campus	2
	Community center for all age groups in a central location	2
	New sidewalks and roads	2
	Remove old buildings	2
	Funding for repairs of roads and sidewalks	1
	Good sidewalks in all villages	1
	Moose River Road should be a county road	1
	Year round ability to play tennis in Lyons Falls for retirees and youth	1
	500 windmills generating electricity for all municipal operations	
	Everyone's house is looking good	
	Fairs and festivals dispersed throughout county all year long	
	Family counseling and support services	
	Funding toward village infrastructure	
	Have county work on this with towns and villages	
	Many levels of retirement living	
	Mass transportation system for everyone so that cars would not be necessary or be kept at a minimum	
	No need to drive 12 miles to buy groceries	
	South Lewis campus centralized in Turin	
	There is no need for financial assistance	

Appendices



Appendices

Business Interviews Summary

Lewis County Comprehensive Plan

September 2008

Prepared By



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INTRODUCTION

Camoin Associates conducted in-person interviews, telephone interviews and a focus group session with a select group of Lewis County businesses in August of 2008. The goal was to identify priority issues facing the business community in Lewis County. Interview questions were aimed at building on the work of previous planning documents, including the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). This allowed interviews to focus on key issues in Lewis County including tourism, alternative energy, workforce development and infrastructure improvements. These interviews were also used to check in with businesses to see if new issues had developed since the CEDS was finalized in 2006.

According to interviewees, businesses are located in Lewis County because they were founded in the County many years or decades ago and have remained here, or because company founders have a familial or personal connection to the area. Historically, the easy access to natural resources in Lewis County offered many businesses a competitive advantage. As the national and international economy has shifted, this advantage has been diminished. Many of the pulp mills and saw mills that had been located in the area because of the presence of timber have closed or moved away. Manufacturing has diminished significantly, agriculture has consolidated and new industry growth has not replaced the employment lost through these transitions.

The business interviews yielded a number of positive insights about what the County can do to strengthen economic development moving forward. The information gathered in the business interviews and focus group session revealed some common themes that could be addressed in the planning process. This brief report summarizes the major findings of the interviews.

COMMON THEMES

Vision, Commitment and Cooperation

Time and again the businesses interviewed talked about the need to have a clear focus and direction at the county level that transcends the individual personalities involved in the decision making and implementation process, and endures personnel turnover and political changes. Reaching consensus on a vision for the future will be a key component for Lewis County's long term development and the comprehensive planning process should develop this vision. While there is a vision statement in the CEDS, it is broad and general in nature. The business interview process showed that there is a need for a more specific focus. Some examples that were discussed include:

- Lewis County will be the premier motorized recreation capital of the Northeast.
- Lewis County will work to preserve its agricultural economy by focusing on dairy science education; developing agricultural support activities, such as community digesters; and investing in emerging forms of agriculture, such as organic farming.



- Lewis County will be known for its innovative rural economy, featuring alternative energy production and cutting-edge manufacturing processes that keep County-based manufacturers competitive.

Businesses also articulated a desire to see more commitment and cooperation within the community. This commitment includes public and private leaders investing in infrastructure, education, outreach, community development initiatives, and other programs and practices that support economic development. This also means the need for cooperation between community members, leaders and opposing interests in an effort to achieve community goals.

Finding a clear vision is often a challenge for communities. Identifying what you want to become can be an effective way to minimize the impact of naysayers, unite opposing interests, and establish a clear set of actions that need to be taken.

High Cost of Business

A universal concern of businesses, particularly those in manufacturing, is the high cost of doing business in New York State. This issue is not exclusive to Lewis County, and has been a consistent theme throughout Upstate New York. There are three specific areas in which costs are higher in New York State than in most other states. Those are:

- Taxes (corporate income tax and property tax)
- Energy (delivery of electricity)
- Workers Compensation and Health Insurance

Most of the reform required to reduce these costs must occur at the State level. There are some actions that could potentially occur at the County level. One action that was raised by interviewees is the creation of a municipal power authority to reduce the cost of power delivery to local business. The County has already established a municipal power corporation. A feasibility study showed that it is not likely to be cost-effective to use the power corporation County-wide. However, County leadership is looking at ways to use the corporation to deliver lower-cost power to specific commercial and industrial sites to facilitate business attraction and development.

Developing shared municipal service agreements within the County could provide benefits to taxpayers by helping local governments reduce their costs and reinvest the savings in the community.



Workforce

The Lewis County workforce was characterized by interviewees as dedicated and hard-working. Due to mill closures, semi-skilled experienced manufacturing workers are easy to find and jobs paying \$15 to \$20 an hour are filled quickly. However, many businesses expressed difficulty filling other types of positions. For example, manufacturers have a hard time finding young entry-level employees because local youth no longer choose manufacturing for a career. It is even more difficult to find people to fill experienced management and professional positions. Employee searches for these positions are usually conducted in labor markets outside of the County.

Some businesses have addressed these issues by developing internal leadership and professional development programs. Some businesses will conduct tours and outreach with local schools to build awareness and interest in the opportunities available to young people locally.

Domestic manufacturing operations are different today than manufacturing of the past. To stay competitive, companies invest in new equipment and focus on automation. New equipment and production practices require specific technical knowledge on how to operate and maintain programmable logic controllers (PLC), computer numerical control (CNC) machines, and injection molding machines. A few of the manufacturers interviewed articulated a need for training courses in Lewis County in these skills, as well as training for industrial electricians and Electrical & Instrumentation (E&I) Technicians.

Some businesses indicated a willingness to participate in or support a training program that focuses on dairy science or a technical aspect of manufacturing. Cornell Cooperative Extension or BOCES could be possible partners.

In addition, the County Hospital acknowledged that much of its staff is aging and that targeting young professionals in the medical field is important for them in general. They also stated that finding LPNs (Licensed Practical Nurses) for nursing homes is particularly difficult, perhaps because the BOCES does not have an LPN program anymore.

Infrastructure

Access to infrastructure is often an issue in rural counties, and Lewis County is no exception. Natural gas access is generally only available on the west side of the Black River. The local gas provider is reluctant to cross the river, except for very large users.

None of the interviewees expressed concern about access to telecommunications. The Lewis County Hospital is involved in a project through the Fort Drum Regional Health Administration to build a fiber optic loop that connects a number of health care providers in the region. This will provide an important expansion to the telecommunications network in Lewis County. Once the infrastructure is in place, it may be possible for other businesses to use it.

Refurbishing railroad lines is identified in the CEDS as a priority action. There appears to be a small market for rail freight among Lewis County manufacturing industries. Some interviewees



Appendices



expressed direct benefit from improved rail access, but the overall impact of such an investment is unclear.

Quality of Place

“Quality of place” refers to the desirability of a community as a place to live and a place to visit. In today’s world, a person’s decision to accept a job offer often depends as much on the characteristics of the community that the job is located in, as it does on the pay and duties of the job itself. Many interviewees felt that the quality of life Lewis County offers is one of its biggest strengths in terms of attracting new residents and businesses and that more pro-active marketing efforts targeting young families and professionals would be helpful. They also felt that increasing the number of retail establishments, restaurants, and recreational and cultural amenities would enhance local employers’ ability to attract new skilled employees, as well as add diversity to the County’s tourism offerings.

Lewis County businesses and residents have a lot of pride in their local school systems. Expressing the quality of schools to potential employees can sometimes be a challenge as businesses often do not have school performance statistics on hand to share. Some local school districts have offered tours to businesses or potential employees in the past. Working with local school officials to continue to offer this service could be important, in addition to pulling together statistics on school performance for employers to use in recruitment efforts.

Tourism

Interviewees agreed that Lewis County’s most significant tourist draw is snowmobiling, but the fact that the snowmobile season only lasts for a 12-week period in the winter leaves a significant gap for tourism-related businesses during the rest of the year. Establishing a more solidified and extensive ATV trail system and a means to allow ATVs to travel on public rights of way would provide many tourism operators with year-round business. An ATV trail system has been discussed in Lewis County for several years, and improved ATV trail access is an objective in the CEDS. Progress on this or progress on a permitting system for snowmobile and ATV use is stalled due to lack of community consensus and environmental concerns. Many interviewees felt that consensus needs to be reached on the direction of motorized sports in the County in order for tourism to grow.

There are other activities that draw limited numbers of tourists, but interviewees felt that there is no significant year round draw to speak of and that tourism promotion is presently limited. Horseback riding is a growing recreation activity in the area. Snow Ridge Ski Resort holds a large music festival in the summer, and the annual cream cheese festival is also a popular event. Other tourism assets include the Adirondack Speedway, Whetstone Gulf State Park, and other local events and festivals. However, there is no clear designation of the organization responsible for tourism development and promotion. Establishing this responsibility, developing a tourist guide, increasing promotional activities and creating additional events could bring more tourists to the area. Of particular importance is the need for increased hotel and lodging facilities. However, these activities are not likely to yield significant results until a year-round tourism industry is established.



Alternative Energy

Wind energy, solar power, biomass, hydropower, and the fuel for anaerobic digesters are all available in Lewis County. Several interviewees indicated that they utilize cogeneration facilities. Expanding on alternative energy production and identifying methods for greater utilization by local businesses could offer economic development solutions in the future. In addition, the availability of anaerobic digesters would assist dairy farmers in disposing of waste economically, which will help them stay competitive.

Alternative energy development obviously needs to be balanced with community concerns. The presence of these elements could also be leveraged as an attraction for the tourist industry since many family groups are looking for interesting educational activities while on vacation.

Support for Local Business Development

Some important issues related to business support were highlighted during the interview process.

- Many interviewees indicated that they or other small businesses are not aware of, or do not know how to utilize, public funding and support programs available to them. The Lewis County IDA has a listing on its website of all the financing and incentive programs available to Lewis County businesses. The Small Business Development Center for Jefferson and Lewis Counties provides one-on-one assistance to Lewis County businesses. However, when it comes to small business assistance, it can often be difficult to educate business owners of the resources available to them and even harder to get them to take advantage of such programs.
- The approvals process was also indicated as something that had discouraged business development. Ensuring that approvals are completed in a reasonable timeframe and without undue burden on the business is important.
- There is a need for greater access to financing for businesses in Lewis County.
- There may be a perception among many community members that business development is bad for the community. Year-round residential development often comes at a net loss to local governments, as the cost of services required by year-round residents is not fully supported by residential property taxes. This deficit is overcome through property taxes on commercial property and high-end seasonal property. Educating residents about the impact commercial development has on the tax base and the importance of investing in infrastructure may be important for future economic growth.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Lewis County, like many rural areas in the United States, is at a difficult transition in its history. Agriculture and manufacturing, historically both labor-intensive industries, are changing the way they do business. To stay competitive in the world market, these industries have looked to reduce labor costs through automation or consolidation, or moving operations overseas to lower-cost labor markets. This places a lot of pressure on the local economy as jobs are lost, people move away, and young people seek employment outside of the area.



Interviewees focused a great deal on growth in tourism and recreation when talking about Lewis County's future. There is certainly opportunity for tourism growth in Lewis County by focusing on snowmobiling, ATVing and horseback riding. Expanding recreation and tourism opportunities will also have indirect benefits by making the community more attractive to employees that are considering taking a job in the area. While there are undoubtedly benefits to investing in tourism development, it is also important to remember that this is a fickle industry that typically creates seasonal and low-paying jobs, and is the first hit in times of economic hardship.

Success in the future will also depend on expanded educational opportunities, support for small and growing businesses and development of niche industries with a global market. Based on the business interviews, review of previous planning documents, and other general knowledge, Camion Associates makes the following initial recommendations:

1. Develop cutting-edge training programs in agricultural sciences (especially dairy); skilled manufacturing (programmable logic controllers (PLC), computer numerical control (CNC), and injection molding machines); alternative energy; and electric and instrumentation technical skills.
2. Consider launching a campaign aimed at drawing young professionals back to Lewis County. This could include a homecoming weekend festival featuring a job fair, tours of local schools, recreational outings, music/cultural events, and information sessions on purchasing a home or starting a business.
3. Establish and provide resources to a tourism department to oversee development and marketing of attractions. One suggestion from the interviews was to dedicate a portion of the County bed tax to fund these activities.
4. Come to a consensus on a specific vision for the future foundation of the County's economy (i.e. tourism, alternative energy, etc.).
5. Enhance existing small business development programming by seeking new ways to reach out one-on-one to County businesses to educate them about the programs available to assist them in growing.
6. Continue moving forward with economic development projects identified by the CEDS committee.



BUSINESSES INTERVIEWED

- Brad Horn, Snow Ridge
- Cindy Shue, Shue Brothers Logging & Excavation
- Darin Zehr, Kraft
- Dennis Gigliotti, Burrows Paper Company
- Doreen Marks, Otis Technology
- Eric Burch, Lewis County General Hospital
- Gary Kline, Interface Sealing Solutions
- Gordon Yancey, Flatrock Inn
- John Tabolt, Interface Solutions, Inc.
- John DeGuardia, Timberview
- Larry Jerosko, Viking Cives
- Mark Richardson, Climax
- Scott Sauer, Plant Manager, Omnia Filtra
- Wayne White, AMF/Qubica

FOCUS GROUP ATTENDEES

- Ann Durant, Small Business Development Center
- Donna Smith, Lowville Business Association
- Tom Hanley, WPBS Watertown

