
Town of
OSCEOLA
Plan

ADOPTED BY TOWN BOARD RESOLUTION FEBRUARY 8, 2023

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Introduction

PURPOSE of the Plan

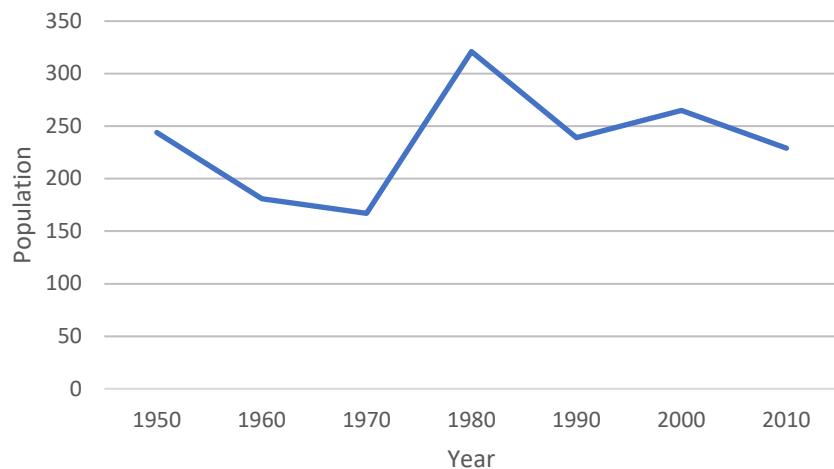
The purpose of the plan is to provide guidance for the physical development of the Town of Osceola for the future. It is based on and reflects the planning ideals laid out in the Planning Accord for Tug Hill and the Tug Hill Reserve Act. The plan is intended to provide a framework for land development and land subdivision controls. It will also help assure that the growth of the area will be in concert with plans for infrastructure and road development, and will not negatively impact natural resources and rural character. Finally, it is hoped that other governments (state, county, and other local governments) will find the plan useful in shaping their future development activities. It is the purpose of this plan to create a vision for the community's future that is a shared vision of the citizens of Town of Osceola.

PERIODIC REVIEW and Update of the Plan

It is recommended that this plan be reviewed and updated every five to eight years by the Town Board and others, as designated by the Town Board. A periodic review will refresh the Board's perspective on the longer range issues affecting Osceola, and help to reinforce the link between day-to-day development decisions and longer range town policies. In addition, a periodic update will keep the plan current with the ever-changing conditions of the town without the need for large-scale planning efforts.

Town of Osceola Demographics Profile

POPULATION TREND



POPULATION characteristics

Osceola's population shows little long-term trend. After a spike in 1980, the population fell overall, but could rise again. Between 2000 and 2010, Osceola lost 36 people (-13.6%), while both the county and state saw growth. Both the number and size of households decreased by larger proportions than usual for the area.

In the same time period, the median age of residents increased by a larger amount than the county and state. 27 new housing units were added, proportionally outstripping both state and county.

	2000	2010	Change	Change in Lewis Cty.	Change in NYS
Population	265	229	-13.6%	+0.5%	+2.1%
Number of Households	112	103	-8.0%	+4.7%	+3.7%
Average Household Size	2.37	2.22	-6.3%	-4.1%	-1.5%
Median Age	40.9	48.8	+7.9 years	+3.4 years	+0.4 years
Housing Units	402	429	+6.7%	-0.1%	+5.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (Full Census)

EMPLOYMENT/INCOME

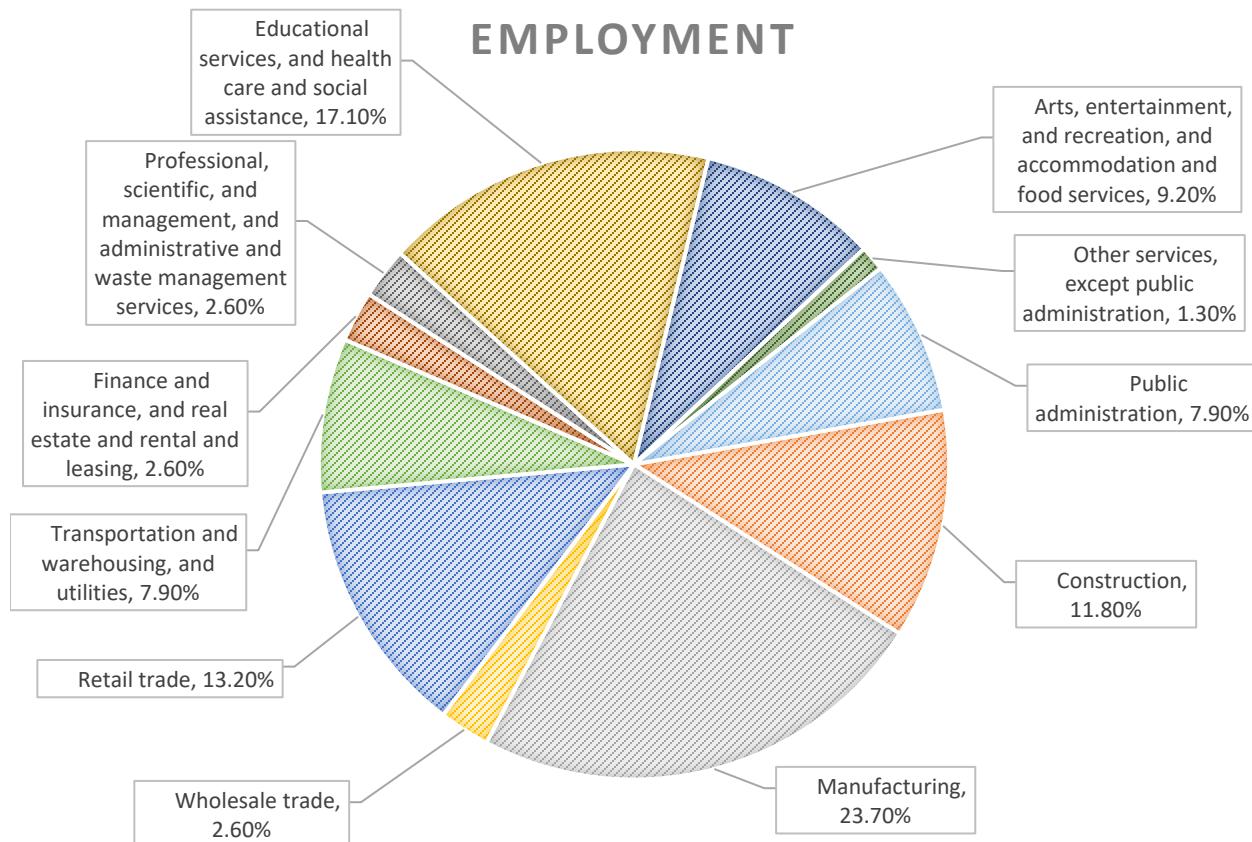
characteristics

Osceola's median income was roughly 42% its median housing value in 2015, which is considered generally healthy. Almost 18.2% of the population is below the poverty line, and the median household income is quite low.

2015 Median Household Income	\$38,250
2015 % of Population Below Poverty Line	18.2%
2015 Median Housing Value	\$90,600
2015 Mean Travel Time to Work	34.1 min.

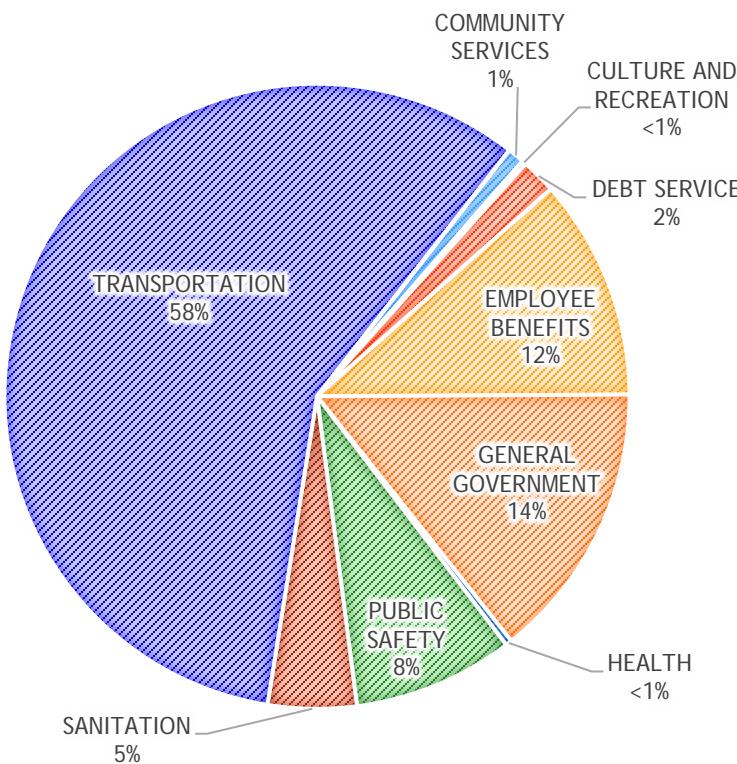
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (American Community Survey)

The average travel time to work in 2015 was estimated to be about 34 minutes. About 83.6% of residents worked outside Lewis County (Osceola borders both Oswego and Oneida Counties). Residents of Osceola were employed in a variety of fields, primarily manufacturing (23.7%) and educational/health care services (17.1%).



Note: Data from the American Community Survey is subject to a variable margin of error, and is not exact.

EXPENDITURES



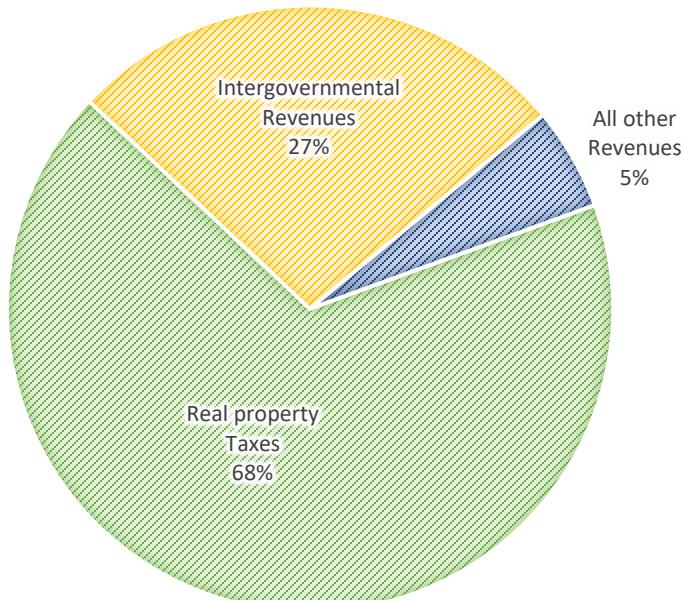
Expenditures (\$)	Osceola
Community Services	5008
Culture and Recreation	1257
Debt Service	10449
Economic Developments	0
Employee Benefits	65798
General Government	82796
Health	1886
Public Safety	47766
Sanitation	26335
Transportation	333483
Utilities	0
Total by Town	574778

REVENUES

TOWN BUDGET characteristics

In 2015, Osceola's total revenue (\$588,929) exceeded total expenditures by \$14,151. Most revenues came from property taxes, accounting for \$397,897. Intergovernmental revenues (\$158,768) also contributed.

The greatest expenditures were Transportation (\$333,483), General Government (\$82,796) and Employee Benefits (\$65,798), together accounting for 84% of total expenditures.



ROAD MILEAGE

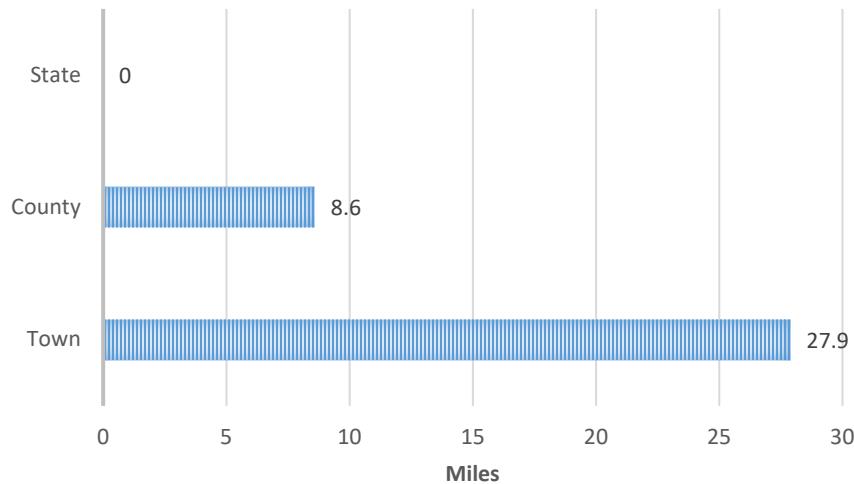
LAND USE

characteristics

As of 2017, 76.4% of Osceola's roads are owned by the Town, 23.6% by Lewis County, and none by New York State. Osceola has a total of 36.5 miles of roadway.

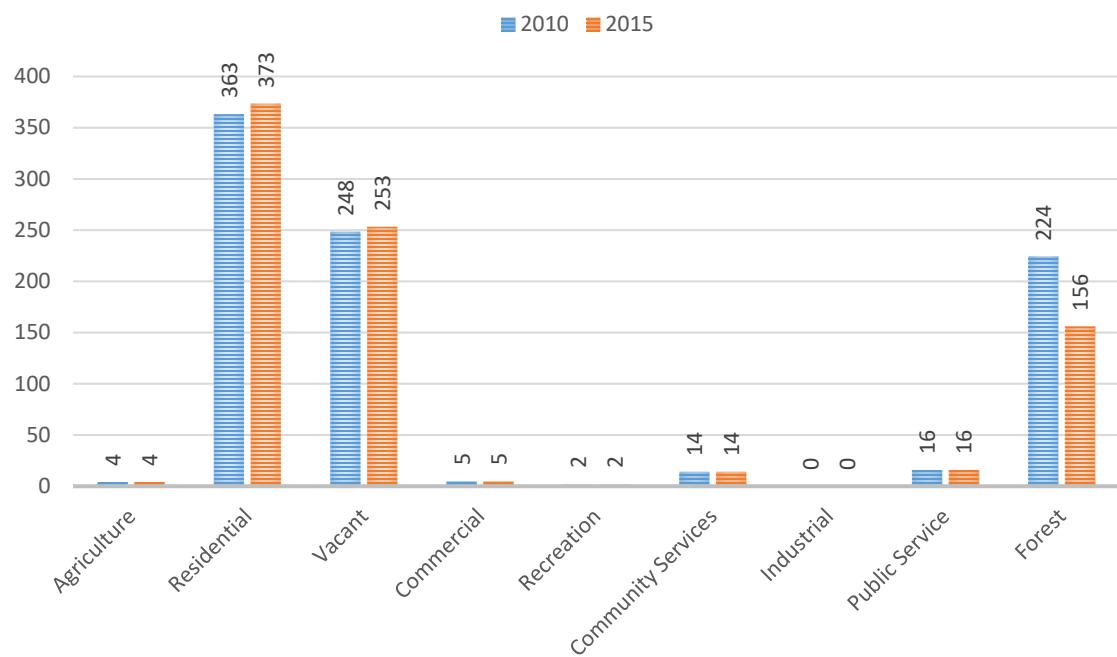
Overall, Osceola's properties are mostly residential (45.3%), vacant (30.7%), or forest (19.0%).

During the five years from 2010 and 2015, there was an increase of ten residential (+3%) and five vacant properties. At the same time Osceola lost 68 forest properties (-30%). Bear in mind that this data only captures the number of tax parcels in Osceola, not the acreage. For more complete information, refer to a map of the area.



Source: NYS Dept. of Transportation, 2017

TAX PARCELS BY PROPERTY CLASS



Source: NYS Office of Real Property Tax Svcs.

Town of Osceola Community Resources Profile

Osceola is in the southwest corner of Lewis County, touching both Oswego and Oneida Counties. It is bordered by the town of Montague to the north, West Turin to the east, Lewis to the southeast, Florence to the south, and Redfield to the west. The hamlet of Osceola is on the Salmon River, and many of the town's streams flow toward the Salmon River Reservoir in neighboring Redfield. As stated before, there are no state-owned roadways in Osceola, it is a generally low-traffic area. The busiest road is Florence Road with an average daily traffic of 318 vehicles in 2015. The town contains portions of Lewis County Agricultural District #212.08-04-13.100.

COMMUNITY BUILDINGS

Osceola Public Library	On National Register of Historic Places, built 1882
	About 1,900 sq ft.
	Website: www.osceolapublic.org
	2117 N Osceola Rd, Camden, NY 13316



The Osceola Public Library was originally built as a Methodist Church in 1882. Later it was converted into the Osceola Town Hall, and now the historic building serves as the town's library. It faces east on North Osceola Road.

PUBLIC LANDS

Osceola is central to the Tug Hill region. Although it does not have as many large tracts of public lands as other towns in the area, the northern half of it is largely uninhabited/abandoned and much of it is a densely wooded wilderness. Due to high snowfalls, the area attracts cross-country skiing enthusiasts.



East Osceola State Forest	• 1,975 acres
Line Brook State Forest	• 1,116 acres
West Osceola State Forest	• 1,900 acres

East and West Osceola State Forests are located near the hamlet of Osceola in the southern half of the town. East Osceola S.F. (County Route 46) is entirely contained in the town and offers convenient fishing access on the Salmon River and chances to hike, hunt and snowmobile. West Osceola S.F. (Fox Road) offers hunting, trapping, and snowmobiling opportunities. Osceola also holds the entirety of Line Brook State Forest (Jackson Road). Located near Line Brook, the maple, cherry, and ash forest has hunting and fishing access.

Goals for the Future

1.0 Retain the quality of our area's surface and groundwater. These waters are essential to providing individual and municipal water supplies. They are essential to many industries of our area. They are important to the retention of fishing opportunities and wildlife habitat.

- 1.1 Discourage adverse development near major wetlands and concentrations of wetlands.
- 1.2 Discourage adverse development near major stream corridors.
- 1.3 Discourage adverse development near significant springs, wellhead areas of water supply systems, and aquifers.
- 1.4 Continue to identify and map major wetlands, concentrations of wetlands, major stream corridors, significant springs, water supply well head areas, and aquifers.
- 1.5 Raise awareness of the importance of Tug Hill waters.

2.0 Retain major forested areas most important to forest industry, hunting, fishing, and other types of recreation. Major blocks of forest land on Tug Hill are not only important for retaining the area's economy and recreation opportunities, they are also important in providing wildlife habitat and the very character of the area. In addition, Tug Hill's vast reaches of forest are key to maintaining the purity of its waters and to controlling rates of runoff.

- 2.0 Continue to identify major forested areas.
- 2.1 Discourage subdivision and development that would take major forested lands out of productive use for forest industry, hunting, fishing and other types of recreation.
- 2.2 Discourage unreasonable restrictions on forestry activities that adversely affect businesses.
- 2.3 Encourage forestry-related businesses as a means of maintaining a healthy economy, and as a means of retaining large parcels of forestland.
- 2.4 Encourage educational programs that show the importance of forested lands to the area's environment, economy and recreational opportunities.
- 2.5 Promote sound forestry practices for all commercial and private harvesting through the establishment of minimum forest management standards.

3.0 Retain the area's most important wildlife habitat and unique areas to conserve hunting, fishing, and recreational opportunities, and to help retain the character and biological richness of our area. Important wildlife habitat areas and unique areas such as our gulfs are a significant part of the character of our heritage, and can provide important recreational opportunities. They also are of great importance to our economy because of the economic contributions hunting and fishing make to the area, and the economic benefit that comes from the viewing of wildlife and scenery by snowmobilers, skiers, hikers, motorists, and others.

3.1 Discourage adverse development in important wildlife and plant habitat areas, and in and near gulfs.

3.2 Support town-by-town identification of important wildlife habitat and unique areas. Encourage further research to identify such areas.

3.3 Encourage educational programs regarding the importance and benefit of habitat and unique areas for use in schools and with civic and adult groups.

4.0 Retain area's existing farms and best farm soils for farm production. Local action alone cannot retain our farms. This depends on the individual actions of our farmers, the natural economy and state and national farm policy. Locally, we can take actions that help keep good farm land from inappropriate development and help farm diversification.

4.1 Support identification of important farm lands, and updates of existing farm land inventories.

4.2 Update land use controls that would limit farm lands being taken out of production.

4.3 Support voluntary actions taken by individual farmers to keep their farms in production, through tools such as ag districts, and ag land assessments.

4.4 Support programs to help strengthen dairy farming and to help farmers that wish to diversify their operations.

4.5 Encourage educational programs that demonstrate to school students and adults the importance of farming to our area.

4.6 Discourage development which would tend to disrupt agricultural practices.

4.7 Encourage only those land uses which lend support to the agricultural industry.

5.0 Retain private and public hunting and fishing opportunities, and other outdoor recreational activities, in our area.

- 5.1 Support voluntary actions, of private landowners to improve hunting, fishing and other recreational access to public lands designated for these uses, such as the sale of access easements, or involvement in fish and wildlife cooperator programs.
- 5.2 Discourage actions that would lead to the subdivision of lands important to hunting, fishing and other recreation where that subdivision would remove lands from such use.
- 5.3 Identify areas important to recreation. These might include designated public motorized and nonmotorized recreation trails, public roads opened for recreational trail use, and parking areas.
- 5.4 Encourage educational programs that demonstrate the importance of hunting, fishing and recreation to our way of life and our area's economy. Also encourage educational programs and appropriate law enforcement to protect private property rights and to provide safe hunting, fishing and other recreational opportunities.
- 5.5 Direct the development of active recreation facilities and programs to areas near population concentrations where services can be provided more economically.
- 5.6 Encourage the proper design and management of passive recreation activities in the more remote areas in order to conserve the water and forest resources and to minimize change to the area's character.

6.0 Retain historic sites and structures that are important to the character of our area.

- 6.1 Identify historic sites and structures.
- 6.2 Discourage development that would diminish the quality of historic sites and structures through town planning and land use controls.

7.0 Control the costs of public road maintenance.

- 7.1 Discourage new public roads into or across remote areas not now served by public roads, especially in the core forest of our area, in areas that would lead to the breakup of lands important to forest management, wildlife, farming, hunting, fishing and other recreation.
- 7.2 Identify portions of roads that might be appropriate for some form of abandonment, minimum maintenance designation, or seasonal use designation.
- 7.3 Support state legislation that would limit town responsibilities for maintenance on designated remote roads.
- 7.4 Discourage development of year-round residences along seasonal roads.

8.0 Help keep villages and hamlets good places to live.

- 8.1 Plan for village and hamlet improvement projects, and apply for grants to assist in such work.
- 8.2 Direct development, through regulation and other means, into and around already existing hamlets and communities away from those portions of the region where significant physical and economic limitations to growth exist.

Town of Osceola Development Laws

The Town of Osceola Zoning Law was last amended in 2014. The town also has a subdivision law adopted earlier in 1987.

The town has also adopted the following laws: a law outlining road standards now superseded by subdivision law (1970s), a law “for opting out of the responsibility for enforcing the New York State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code” (1985) and a law regulating the construction of new driveways (2012).

LAND USE & ZONING laws

The Town of Osceola Zoning Law has been tweaked over the last 30 years. It establishes five districts:

- **Hamlet** – Developed to some extent and includes low or medium density residential uses with some commercial and industrial uses.
- **Rural Residential** – Sparsely settled, but generally accessible by highway. Some forest and agricultural use may be present.
- **Agriculture** – Generally used for agricultural activities. Mostly open in character with some scattered spots of forest, wetland, and residential use.
- **Forest** - Predominantly covered by dense vegetation and contains many wet areas and stream courses. Relatively inaccessible by automobile and contains few permanent residences and some seasonal residences. It is intended to maintain the character of this land with dense vegetation, the resulting animal life, and pure water resources for creeks and streams.
- **Core Forest** - Part of the large, contiguous, central portion of Tug Hill characterized by forest cover, few public roads, headwater areas of major streams, and concentrations of wetlands. They contain no permanent residences and some seasonal residences. It is intended to maintain the character of this land with dense vegetation, the resulting animal life, and pure water resources for creeks and streams.

The law defines general regulations for all districts, such as uses permitted, lot sizes, height, setbacks from roads, and waste disposal standards. The law outlines processes and procedures and provides rules for amending the law, changing zones, and applying for permits.

Agricultural parcels in Osceola are additionally subject to New York State laws such as Article 25AA.

“Special Areas” in Osceola are subject to the provisions of the Tug Hill Reserve Act, Chapter 486 of the New York State Laws of 1992. The town board must be consulted before development by public entities takes place in these areas.

SUBDIVISION laws

The Town of Osceola Subdivision Control Law regulates the process for creating subdivisions. It provides general design standards and road standards. The Town of Osceola’s authority to maintain development standards and outline development procedures is further protected by this law.

