

The Town of Florida

Comprehensive Plan

Montgomery County, New York
February, 1996



Table of Contents

1.	Introduction-Purpose.....	1
2.	The Planning Process and Method.....	3
3.	Development History.....	6
4.	Regional Setting.....	10
5.	Natural Resources.....	11
	A. Geology.....	11
	B. Topography.....	12
	C. Soils.....	13
	D. Groundwater/Water Supply.....	15
	E. Surface Water.....	16
	F. Flood Zones.....	17
	G. Sensitive Terrestrial and Aquatic Areas.....	17
	H. Wetlands.....	18
6.	Socio-Economic Resources.....	19
	A. Agricultural Resources.....	19
	B. Transportation.....	21
	C. Land Use.....	24

	D. Zoning.....	26
	E. Municipal and Community Resources.....	27
	F. Cultural Resources.....	28
	G. Sewage Disposal.....	31
	H. Demographics.....	32
	Population Characteristics.....	32
	Employment Characteristics.....	37
	Housing Characteristics.....	40
	Household Economic Characteristics.....	42
7.	Goals and Objectives.....	43
8.	Shortcomings of the Current Zoning Map.....	46
9.	Development Constraints-Opportunities and Impact Avoidance.....	48
10.	Alternative Future Development Patterns.....	49
	Alternative Land Use/Zoning Maps.....	50
	Alternative Uses.....	51
	Alternative Lot requirements.....	56

	Evaluation of Alternatives.....	59
11.	Recommendations for Future Development.....	62
12.	Growth Inducing Impacts and Cumulative Impact.....	74
13.	Irretrievable Commitment of Resources and Adverse Effects Which Cannot Be Avoided...	77
14.	Energy Consumption.....	77
15.	Effects on Solid Waste Management.....	78
16.	Plan Adoption and Schedule of Decisions Required.....	79

1. Introduction-Purpose

In New York State, the General Town Laws provide that local planning boards of towns may prepare a comprehensive land use plan for the future development of the entire municipality. These laws state in part that:

"Among the most important powers and duties granted by the legislature to a town government is the authority and responsibility to undertake town comprehensive planning and to regulate land use for the purpose of protecting the public health, safety and general welfare of its citizens" (section 272-a of the Town Law).

The Town of Florida has recognized this fact by deciding to formulate a new Comprehensive Plan for its future growth, development and preservation. In recent years, the Town of Florida has experienced a change in both its economic and demographic condition. This change has been characterized by a reduction of small farms and agricultural production, an increased demand for undeveloped land, the loss of local job opportunities, and the loss of the town's youth to other more opportune areas. These changes have brought about new problems and challenges for a community concerned about its future. How can farming and farmland be protected? How can we preserve our rural setting? How can we provide jobs and opportunities for the upcoming generations? How can we stabilize our tax base? How can we allow and encourage new development without harming the environment?

The town's location, adjacent to both the New York State Thruway Exit 27 and the City of Amsterdam, has made it a candidate for potential new industrial activity. The town, however, is concerned about rapid development and the subsequent loss of both its rural character and its farming community. Finding solutions to these seemingly conflicting challenges requires a balanced, intelligent and equitable approach. The Town of Florida is faced with the classic challenge of how to balance environmental preservation with economic development.

The town has come to believe that the most effective means of dealing with this challenge is to formulate a new Comprehensive Plan for the entire community. A Comprehensive Plan would include an inventory and analysis of the town's

environmental and social resources and trends. This information, along with the public's input, would allow the town to make informed, balanced and representative decisions about how it should develop in the future. The Comprehensive Plan would serve as both an informational document of the town's natural and human resources and as a policy guide for the town's future growth and development. Furthermore, the Comprehensive Plan would identify any shortcomings of the town's current land use regulations and offer specific recommendations and revisions that will enable the town to make their plan a reality.

New York State zoning enabling statutes provide that if a community adopts zoning, the zoning regulation must be "... in accordance with a comprehensive plan". These requirements apply to the initial adoption of a municipality's zoning law or ordinance and to any subsequent amendments. Therefore, if the Comprehensive Plan is adopted, any amendments to the town's existing land use regulations would have to be in conformance with the policy established in the Plan.

The Town of Florida adopted its first "master plan" in 1965. Since that time, however, the plan has lied dormant and many of its suggestions have not been implemented. The Town also adopted subdivision regulations in 1964 and a zoning ordinance in 1976. The zoning ordinance was subsequently revised in 1986, 1988, and 1989 and the subdivision regulations were revised in 1989.

2. The Planning Process and Method

This Comprehensive Plan has been prepared pursuant to Section 272-a of the Town Law of the State of New York and Article 8 of the Environmental Conservation Law, the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) and accompanying regulations under 6 NYCRR 617. The process for preparing the Plan began in 1993 when a Comprehensive Planning Committee was established by the town board, composed of representatives of the town board, planning board, and interested members of the community. The town board also hired a planning consultant to assist the development of the plan. The planning committee met on a monthly basis to analyze, discuss and formulate the policies and recommendations found in this plan. The public was invited to all of these monthly meetings and their participation was encouraged.

The process of developing the Comprehensive Plan began by formulating a comprehensive plan survey that was subsequently distributed to all the residents of the town. This survey was used to assist the comprehensive planning committee in formulating the goals and objectives of the plan. The response to the survey was exceptional with an almost 60% return rate. The planning committee also considered the results of a recently completed Youth Survey completed by 785 students in the five different school districts of the county.

The committee's next step was to formulate a "Vision Statement". This "statement" served as a starting point and general outline of policy to guide the planning process.

The next procedure in the comprehensive planning process was to take inventory and analyze the existing environmental and social conditions of the community. This inventory includes descriptions and charts(where applicable) of the following: topography(slopes); soils; groundwater/water supply; surface water; flood zones; critical natural habitat areas; agricultural resources; transportation infrastructure and conditions; current land use; current zoning; municipal and community resources; and

human resources (population and other census information). The results of this analysis, the community survey, the youth survey, the vision statement, and the public's input were then used by the comprehensive planning committee to identify key issues in the town's future, and to help formulate the goals, objectives, and recommendations of the Plan.

The comprehensive planning committee also analyzed its current zoning ordinance and subdivision law and made suggested revisions to each based on the goals and objectives of the Plan.

Next the town hired the Montgomery County Department of Planning and Development to complete an environmental impact statement analyzing any impacts that the proposed Comprehensive Plan and land use revisions may have. A Draft Environmental Impact Statement(DGEIS) was prepared and accepted by the town as complete. A joint public hearing was then held on the DGEIS, the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan and the proposed rezoning and subdivision law revisions. Comments submitted during the public comment period and during several subsequent public meetings led to town to reconsider several of the proposals included in the Plan and the rezoning. Additionally, the town felt that it was confusing to be considering four different and complex documents at one time (Draft GEIS, Comprehensive Plan, rezoning and subdivision revisions). Also, the town felt that there was a great deal of redundancy between the Comprehensive Plan and the Generic EIS.

To remedy these problems the town decided to: withdraw the Draft GEIS, terminate the current SEQR process, and revisit the comprehensive plan. The comprehensive planning committee was reformulated to again include members of the town board, planning board, and interested members of the community. The comprehensive planning committee, with the assistance of the county planning department, redefined several of the goals of the Comprehensive Plan and expanded these goals into a series of more concrete objectives. The county planning department also expanded the environmental inventory included in the Plan by developing a series of small scale maps that would be included in the Plan (maps were not included in the first draft), and a series of large scale maps that would be used by the planning committee and the public to better visualize and analyze the town's environmental and land use characteristics.

In addition, the town decided to incorporate the GEIS and the Comprehensive Plan into one unified document and to consider its adoption prior to any revisions to the town's existing land use regulations. The Comprehensive Plan has been designed using the town's environmental conditions as one of the primary bases for making decisions about where new development could and should take place. Environmental features such as wetlands, topography, soils, flood prone areas, hydrography, geology, and critical natural habitat areas were mapped and analyzed so that the impact of any new development proposals could be mitigated by avoiding any sensitive environmental features. In this manner the Comprehensive Plan is inherently mitigative in that it seeks to give the town's environmental features a detailed examination and then make proposed land use changes based on minimizing the environmental (as well as economic and social) impacts. In addition, a series of alternative land use locations, uses and intensities were considered. The alternative land use/zoning map chosen to guide the town's future development pattern was the one the town felt would balance the development needs of the community while preserving the environment and reducing the impact of future development to the maximum extent possible.

Any future revisions to the towns existing land use regulations (i.e. zoning ordinance or subdivision law), if in accordance with the proposals included in this plan, would then be exempt from further environmental review since their impacts have already been considered and avoided to the maximum extent possible. Any future site specific development proposals would have to undergo their own separate environmental quality review.

3. Development History

The first inhabitants of the Town of Florida were the Mohawk Indians, the strongest and most powerful of the Iroquois Confederacy. Their villages were scattered throughout the entire Mohawk Valley. At the point where the Schoharie Creek flows into the Mohawk River, the area now called Fort Hunter, the Mohawks had their "Lower Castle". They called this village TI-ON-ON-TO-

GEN. It was in important center for tribal gatherings and decision making.

The French Jesuits Missionaries attempted to Christianize the Mohawks as early as 1642 , but their efforts were largely unsuccessful. The French crown twice tried to destroy this Mohawk stronghold , once in 1667 and again in 1693. Both times the Indians escaped and returned to reconstruct their village.

In 1709, Peter Schuyler, a civil and military leader of Albany, took five Mohawk Indian chiefs to England to be presented at the court of Queen Anne. Schuyler hoped to gain the Indians allegiance to the British crown by impressing them with the power of England and the grandeur of the court. Schuyler also hoped to draw British attention to the plight of the colonies now embroiled in Queen Anne's War with the French and Indians.

One result of Peter Schuyler's visit was an increased concern in England for the saving of the Indian's souls. As a result, "The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts" ordered the construction of a fort containing a chapel and mission house in the Mohawk Valley. Queen Anne herself donated a set of communion silver to the Mission.

On October 11, 1711, Governor Hunter of New York contracted with four men from Schenectady to build a fort on the east side of the Schoharie Creek where it enters the Mohawk River. This was the beginning of the settlement known as Fort Hunter, the first white settlement in what is now the Town of Florida .

From the time of the fort's construction until 1722, when Fort Oswego was built, Fort Hunter was the western frontier outpost of the New York colony. Enclosed within its walls was a stone chapel which was named for Queen Anne, who furnished the communion set and other items. During the Revolution, the chapel served as a fort. It was torn down when the Erie Canal was constructed and the stones were used in building the canal locks. The manse, built for the chaplain of Queen Anne's Chapel, is a two-story stone structure. It was "modernized" in 1888 and continues in use as a private residence.

The earliest land patent in the Town of Florida was granted to John Peterson Maibee in 1703. It comprised the area in and around Fort Hunter and also on the opposite side of the Schoharie Creek. During the 1730's Walter Butler purchased a tract of land from the Indians located on the south side of the Mohawk River. He then divided it into six tracts. The largest portion was transferred

to Charles Williams and others on August 29, 1735. The tenants on this tract were to pay a yearly rent of two shillings and six pence for each 100 acres, and agreed to clear at least three acres out of every 50 within three years. It was also agreed that all trees measuring 24 inches in diameter, 12 inches up from the ground, were to be reserved for masts for the Royal Navy.

This same tract was later purchased by Sir Peter Warren in approximately 1737. He named his large estate Warrensbush. The other five tracts were much smaller than Warrensbush, and lay on its eastern boundary. These tracts were either purchased or given to Edward and Phyllis Harrison, Anne Willmot, Maynard and Elizabeth Guerin, Henry Cosby and William Cosby Jr, in the year 1735. There was also a Fishers Patent, which was along the Schoharie Creek, but not much is known of this land grant. It is all of these patents of land that make up the present day Town of Florida. Most of these early owners of the soil never saw their property. They were wealthy citizens of Great Britain, who simply counted these vast land patents as a portion of their numerous assets.

In 1738, Sir Peter Warren summoned William Johnson, his nephew from Ireland, to serve as an overseer of his property. His responsibilities were to settle farmers onto Warrensbush and trade with the Indians. The location of this trading post is not known but it is believed to be near the intersection of the present day Route 5S and Cleveland Avenue. William Johnson worked at this capacity for several years and then decided to start a business of his own by purchasing property on the North side of the Mohawk River. His house became known as Mount Johnson and was about one mile east of Fort Johnson.

In addition to his contribution of maintaining peaceful relations with the Indians of the Iroquois Nation and stimulation the settlement of the Mohawk Valley region (especially near The Town of Florida), Johnson was responsible for the construction of schools, roads, mills and churches, some of which still stand in the area. Notable among these buildings are Fort Johnson, where he lived from 1749 to 1762, and Johnson Hall, built in 1762 in Johnstown, where Johnson lived until his death in 1774.

During the French and Indian Wars, and later during the Revolutionary War, the Mohawk Valley region was the scene of repeated invasions, attacks and battles. During the Revolution, the Iroquois Indians maintained their alliance with the Tories, led by Sir John Johnson and the Indian chieftain, Joseph Brandt. Raids on the Mohawk Valley settlements were renewed with devastating effect during this period of time.

The Town of Florida was officially formed on March 12, 1793, from the Mohawk District. This district at one time embraced all that part of the county which is covered by the Towns of Glen, Charleston and part of Root. It is generally believed that the Town of Florida derived its name from the fact that its date of formation was the anniversary of Ponce de Leon's discovery of the State of Florida on March 12, 1512. The first Town of Florida meeting was held at the home of Ezra Murray on the first Tuesday in April, 1794. The purpose of this meeting was to elect officers to govern the new town.

The Mohawk River and the water level route through the Mohawk Valley facilitated the path of settlement westward. Later, it afforded traders, farmers and manufacturers in the mid-Mohawk region easy access to markets and populated centers in the East. Before Dutch settlers arrived in the area in the early 17th century, Indians had used the Mohawk corridor as a principal route for centuries. Subsequently, fur traders followed the Mohawk River from Albany into the interior, ultimately arriving at Oswego, the center of the fur trade after 1720. Prior to the Revolution, the Mohawk River was traversed by pioneers who settled in the Mohawk Valley. During the Revolution, troop movements through the valley introduced many soldiers to the fertile lands of central New York and many returned after the war to settle in the Valley.

With the increase in settlement after the Revolution came the need for improved roads. The stagecoach periods began in 1790 with trips from Albany to Johnstown and Canajoharie. This line was extended in 1792 to Utica. In 1800, the Mohawk Turnpike Company was incorporated and a road was built from Schenectady to Utica. In the same year, the Great Western Turnpike was improved from Albany to Syracuse when stagecoach service through the area ended. Meanwhile, the Erie Canal was completed in 1825. The Utica and Schenectady Railroad connected Amsterdam with distant points in 1836. Improvements have been made steadily in road, rail and canal transportation in the Mid-Mohawk area. The Erie Canal system was expanded and improved upon in 1841 and the Barge Canal system authorized by the legislature in 1903 further improved the canal.

Examples of major periods of canal construction in New York State are depicted in the vicinity of Fort Hunter. These include: the original Erie Canal and Empire Lock 20, both built in 1820; remains of the guard lock and dam at the Schoharie Creek Crossing; the enlarged 1841 Erie Canal and the enlarged Empire Lock 29; remains of the 1841 Schoharie Creek aqueduct; and the Barge Canal and Lock built in 1917 in the canalized section of the Mohawk River.

Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, the Town of Florida developed as a farming community. In recent years, however, the town has experienced an increase in single family houses built on land once used for farming. In addition, there has been an increase in the amount of former farmland that now lies fallow. In general, the Town of Florida still remains primarily an agricultural community.



The remains of the 1841 Schoharie Creek 1

4. Regional Setting

The Town of Florida is 50.4 square miles in size, roughly triangular in shape, and is located on the southeastern boarder of Montgomery County in the Mohawk Valley. The town is bounded on the west by the Schoharie Creek and on the north by the Mohawk River and the City of Amsterdam, the only city in Montgomery County. Schenectady County serves as the eastern and southern border.

Montgomery County is a smaller than average rural-urban-suburban county and is located 21 miles to the Northwest of Albany in the Capital District. The County is located at the approximate geographic center of New York State and is bisected by both the Mohawk River and the New York State Thruway



A farm in the town with the City of Amsterdam in the background

5. Natural Resources

A. Geology (see Geologic Map)

The Town of Florida's current natural landform was created by glaciers thousands of years ago. Millions of years ago, the changes taking place on the earth created the bedrock on which the soils were formed. The final glacier retreat in Florida was between 10,000 and 15,000 years ago and was known as the Wisconsin Glacier. The glaciers changed river patterns, cropped bedrock, and deposited a mixture of unconsolidated materials. The primary glacial deposit in Florida is glacial till.

The Town of Florida is predominately underlain by soft Canajoharie and Utica shales and eroded to depths of approximately 1,000 feet below surrounding highlands of the Adirondack Mountain range and Appalachian Upland. This bedrock group was deposited under marine conditions during the Ordovician period (435 to 525 million years ago) and the Paleozoic period (360 to 570 million years ago). There is also a section approximately 4 sq. miles in the southeastern portion of the town that is underlain by bedrock of the Schenectady formation.

A narrow strip of the town adjacent to the Mohawk River is underlain by Glens Falls, Amsterdam, and Lowville Limestones and by Tribes Hill Limestones and Little Falls Dolomite. In selected areas along Route 5S east of Amsterdam, this limestone is presently being extracted by commercial mining companies and is included in the Town's current Natural Products Zone(as defined in the Zoning Ordinance).

B. Topography (see Steep Slopes Map)

Information concerning topographic conditions is necessary when identifying areas suitable or unsuitable for development, including the construction of houses, commercial and industrial buildings, roads, and the installation of utilities. Development on steep slopes creates problems due to the increased risk of soil erosion and stream sedimentation, increased construction and land excavation costs, and difficulty accessing the site during winter months (especially for emergency vehicles). Lack of slope, on the other hand, retards the drainage of surface water and limits the effectiveness of sanitary sewerage disposal systems. In general, development should be avoided on slopes of over 20 percent. Precaution should be taken when considering development on slopes between 10 and 20 percent, particularly for large commercial and industrial structures. Slopes between 0 and 8 percent have slight restrictions limitations for structural development. On site inspection is necessary to determine if a site has a slope conducive to development.

The slope of site can be determined by examining the contours of a topographic map or site development plan. It can be calculated by placing the vertical rise over the horizontal distance between two points. The equation for this reads:

$$\text{SLOPE} = \text{Vertical Distance} \textit{ divided by } \text{Horizontal Distance} \times 100$$

In the Town of Florida there is considerable variety in topography with much land having gentle slopes and a rolling or undulating appearance. Relatively level areas are found northeast of Minaville, along portions of the shore of the Schoharie Creek, west of Sager Road and at Fort Hunter. The Steep Slopes Map shows that steep slopes of over 10 percent exist in various locations throughout the town. Large Scale industrial and commercial development should be avoided in these areas.

Elevations range from 239 feet at the point where the Mohawk River leaves the town on the east, to a high of 1,216 feet above sea level on Bean Hill, west of Minaville. The Mohawk River falls from an elevation of about 280 feet above sea level at the confluence of the Schoharie Creek to 239 feet at the southeastern town boundary. The Schoharie Creek descends from an elevation of 490 feet where it enters the town to 280 feet at its confluence with the Mohawk River. Minaville, on the South Chuctanunda Creek, has an elevation of 573 feet.

C. Soils

Knowledge of specific soil characteristics is necessary to determine the limits and capabilities of a site for particular uses. Soil data for the town is provided by the United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service (formerly the Soil Conservation Service) in the form of a Soil Survey. The Soil Survey provides, among other things, information on the properties of soils and their effect on selected non-farm uses of the land. The soil survey is available for no cost from NRCS and a copy of it should be obtained by the planning board and used as a guide to determine the most suitable use for a particular area and to eliminate some sites from further consideration. It should be noted, however, that the Soil Survey should not supplant direct, detailed, on site investigations when a development is being planned. Not considered are proximity to established business centers of transportation lines and other economic factors that are important and that often determine the ultimate use of an area.

The Soil Survey expresses soil limitations for selected uses as either *slight*, *moderate*, or *severe*. A rating of slight indicates that the soil has properties favorable for the rated use. A rating of moderate indicates that the soil has properties moderately favorable for the rated use. The limitations can be mitigated with special planning, design, or maintenance. A rating of severe indicates that the soil has one or more unfavorable properties for the rated use. It is difficult and costly to alter the soil or to design a structure to compensate for soil limitations that are severe. A severe rating, however, does not mean that the soil cannot be used for the specific use.

A large scale Soils Constraints Map has been prepared for the town for this Comprehensive Plan. This map has been used to examine the suitability of soils throughout the town for various types of development (commercial and industrial in particular). This map will be kept at the Florida Town Hall and should be referenced by the planning board when future developments are proposed.

The soils constraints map indicates that the vast majority of the town contains soil that are listed as severe for commercial and industrial development. This indicates that special planning, design, and/or maintenance would have to be considered for most types of large scale commercial or industrial development, regardless of its location within the town. Also, other considerations such as the proximity to established business centers, transportation lines, and availability of sewer and water would gain more weight in considering the location or appropriate locations for this type of development.

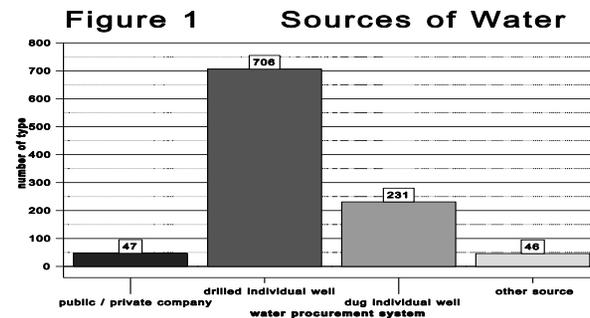
A large scale agricultural soils map has also been prepared. This map indicates the location of soil groups 1 through 6 of the N.Y. State Land Classification System. These soil groupings are based on the value (productivity) of each soil group for agricultural purposes. This map is also available for public reference at the Florida Town Hall. This map indicates that there exists a moderate amount of prime agricultural soils (groups 1 through 4) in the town. Groups 1 and 2 are found primarily along river, creek and stream banks (flood prone areas). Groups 2 and 3 are located in limited areas throughout the town.

D. Groundwater/Water Supply

The Town of Florida relies predominately on groundwater for its on-site, individual water supplies (see Figure 1). According to the Montgomery County U.S.G.S. Water Resources Bulletin, 76% of the wells in the town derive their water from bedrock sources. Of these bedrock wells, 66% are located in the Canajoharie and Utica shales, 27% are in the Little Falls Dolomite and 7% are in the Schenectady Formation. The remaining 24% of the wells in the Town derive their water from Pleistocene sands and gravels, and recent alluvium.

According to a report on Hydrogeologic conditions and Water Supply in the Town of Florida by C.T. Male Associates, bedrock wells in the town reportedly provide adequate, reliable yields for individual water supply systems. The average well yield from bedrock sources is 3 gpm (gallons per minute). Several wells reported yields of less than 1 gpm, while a few reported yields greater than 20 gpm. Saturated gravel deposits exist in limited areas of the town, including areas along the Mohawk River, Schoharie Creek and Chuctanunda Creek. Wells located in the saturated unconsolidated deposits in the above areas generally have higher yields ranging from 10-30 gpm.

Water quality in the town ranges from good to treatable. The State Health Department and local drillers (according to the C.T. Male report) do not report any areas of the town which may have naturally occurring noxious or unpotable water. However, conditions such as the presence of hydrogen sulfide gas, water hardness, chloride and iron are common.



Source: US Census Bureau 1990

E. Surface Water

The Town of Florida has few bodies of water of any substantial size. Youngs Lakes, off Power House Road, are the only lakes in the town. The Mohawk River, which makes up the northern boarder, is the only river in the town. The Schoharie Creek forms the western border of the town. The two other major streams in the town are the South Chuctandunda Creek and the Terwilleger Creek. All four of these water bodies are classified as C waters. By the definition presented in 6 NYCRR, Class C waters are suitable for fishing and fish propagation. The water quality is suitable for primary and secondary contact recreation even though other factors may limit the use for this purpose. These waters are protected and a permit will be required for any stream disturbance due to future development.

The Montgomery County Water Quality Committee has identified five primary watersheds in the Town of Florida: Schoharie Creek, South Chuctanunda Creek, Central Florida, Terwilleger Creek, and Quarries Watershed. Wetlands, which are special types of surface water, are addressed separately.



The Mohawk River defines the town's northern boarder.

F. Flood Zones

The Town of Florida is part of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Program. It joined the program in August of 1974 when maps were promulgated for the town. The FEMA maps show that 100 year flooding occurs along the Mohawk River, the Schoharie Creek, the South Chuctanunda Creek, and in an area north of Youngs Lakes. See the Flood Prone Areas Map for an indication of the approximate location of these flood prone areas.

G. Sensitive Terrestrial and Aquatic Areas

Sensitive natural habitat areas are those areas determined to contain special plant and animal species. These species may live on land or in water. Special consideration should be given when any development is considered near these areas.

The only critical natural habitat areas currently known in the Town of Florida are wetlands and deer wintering areas. Deer wintering areas are places where deer congregate during the hard times of winter. These areas are mainly located in more isolated forested areas at the southern tip of the Town near Burtonsville (Town of Charleston).

Other areas of importance for Terrestrial and Aquatic species include the Mohawk River, the Schoharie Creek and each of the several other small trout streams within the town. These water bodies are important for fish, birds, mammals and other species that rely on river ecosystems, including a variety of migratory species.

H. Wetlands

Wetlands aid in the recharge of the groundwater system by serving as natural storage and filtration basins for storm water. In addition, wetlands are important natural wildlife habitats. According to the Freshwater Wetland maps published by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the Town of Florida has 12 wetlands. New York State DEC wetlands are at least 12.4 acres in size. In total there are approximately 891 acres of state wetlands in the town. State regulations prohibit the disturbance of wetlands and prohibit development within 100 feet of a wetland boundary unless a permit is granted. The State DEC wetlands located in the Town of Florida are identified on the accompanying State DEC Wetlands Map.

In addition to N.Y. State regulated and mapped wetlands, there also exists a large number of smaller, undocumented wetlands throughout the town which are regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. These wetlands have no minimum size. The previously mentioned Soils Constraints Map available at the Florida Town Hall indicates, among other things, the location of hydric soils in the town. These soils can be used as an indication of the probable location of federal wetlands. Their existence would have to be verified on a site/project specific basis according to vegetation, soil, and hydrologic conditions.

6. Socio-Economic Resources

A. Agricultural Resources

The primary land use in the town is agricultural. According to the most recent information provided by Cornell Cooperative Extension, the Town of Florida has 39 dairy farms, 99 crop farms and 1 bee farm. The town is completely located within Montgomery County Agricultural District seven, established in accordance with Article 25AA of the New York State Agriculture and Markets Law. This program is designed to protect farming by protecting farmers from anti-nuisance ordinances, limiting promotion of non-farm development, limiting the acquisition of land by eminent domain, and protecting farmers from excessive real property taxation by valuing farmland based solely on its productive capacity. The county will begin the town's eight year Agricultural District review in the summer of 1995. This review determines what lands are in agricultural production and should remain in the Agricultural District. Consideration is being given to consolidating the town's agricultural district with those of Glen, Charleston and Root. This would allow for easier administration and more efficient periodic reviews. According to the last Agricultural District review for the Town of Florida there were: 33,811 acres in the Ag District; 23,329 acres in farms; 17,496 acres cropped; 22,099 acres owned by farmers; and 6,999 acres rented by farmers.

An "Agricultural Soils" map has been prepared for this comprehensive plan. This map shows the suitability of soils in the Town of Florida for agricultural production. Due to the scale necessary to portray soil series information, this map has not been included in this plan. Rather, this map will be on display at the Florida Town Hall.

Map categories are based on soil group ratings according to the New York Agricultural Land Classification. Soil groups 1 and 2 are shown as one category, groups 3 and 4 as another, and 5 and 6 as the last category. Groups 1 and 2 are the best ("prime") soils for intensive agricultural use (row, forage and fiber crops) and should be preserved wherever possible. Groups 3 and 4 are nearly prime soils ("important") and are used for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage and oilseed crops. The importance of these soils should also be considered when development is proposed. The final category, groups 5 and 6, are soils that can be used for agricultural production, however, their natural yield capacity is only moderate and therefore their preservation is not required.



Dairy farms and corn fields are a common site in The Town of Florida



B. Transportation

The Town of Florida's highways are maintained by three agencies: the New York State Department of Transportation, the Montgomery County Highway department and the Town of Florida Highway Department. The town residents, like most people, are almost completely dependent on their automobiles for transportation.

Traffic volume counts related to the town have been taken by the New York State Department of Transportation (see Table 1). The highest average annual daily traffic count (AADT) was 10,867 cars recorded in the City of Amsterdam on Route 30 just north of the Thruway interchange. This includes arterial traffic going to and from the City of Amsterdam and the Town of Florida. Route 5S east of the Thruway interchange also carries a large amount of traffic with an AADT of 5023.

In addition, a separate Level-of-Service and Capacity Analysis (at a planning analysis level) have been completed by the State DOT along Route 5S east of the City of Amsterdam (RM 5S 2503 1298 to RM 5S 2503 1306). These studies indicated a Design Hour Volume (DHV) of 210 VPH; an Annual Average Daily Traffic Count (AADT) of 3,350; a Level-of-Service (LOS) of "B"; and a Capacity (C) of 770 VPH (one way). These figures show that this area of Route 5S is operating well below capacity (capacity is 2,000 VPH) and would be able to adequately support additional traffic flow. Additionally, a LOS of "B" indicates near ideal conditions.

Table 1. Traffic Counts at Selected Stations

Town of Florida, NY

Location	Station	AADT	DH
Route 5S	278	3256	349
Route 5S (In City)	279	5023	523
Route 30 (In City)	280	10867	1105
Route 5S	290	3763	368
Route 30	281	4600	425
Route 5S	282	4120	374
Route 30	291	2208	236
Route 30	461	3578	361
Route 161	292	1453	14

*Note: DH stands for Design Hour which is a computed figure representing the 30th highest volume of traffic in an hour during the year.

Highways

The Town of Florida is served by a 125.95 mile network of state highways, county roads and town highways. There are 21.7 miles of state highways, plus 10 miles of the New York State Thruway; 51.96 miles of county roads; and approximately 42 miles of town highways. The 31.7 miles of total state operated highways make up 25 percent of the total road mileage in the town. The state highways include Interstate Route 90 (State Thruway), and Routes 5S, 161 and 30. The county roads comprise 41 percent of the total road mileage in the town and the town highways comprises 33 percent.

The predominate pavement width on county roads is 15 feet and a third of all county road mileage is 15 feet or less in width, and about 40 miles or 84 percent of county road pavements are less than 20 feet in width. Only about 8 miles of all county roads have a pavement width of 20 feet or more. By comparison, 15 miles (35%) of the town roads have pavements less than 12 feet wide and 12 foot pavements are most common.

Bridges

There are seven county bridges having over 20-foot spans, five of which are on county roads and two on town roads. The two county bridges on town highways are located on Cemetery Drive and Hartley Road. The other county bridges are located on Dunlap Road, Fort Hunter, Pattersonville, Sulphur Springs and Thayer Roads.

C. Land Use

A parcel specific land use map has been prepared for the town (see Land Use Map). This map was created using the town assessor's property code classifications on record at the Montgomery County Real Property Tax Service Agency. There are 33,811.2 total acres of land in the Town of Florida. The primary land use in the town is agricultural which includes approximately 60 % of the town. Agricultural land totals 20,592 acres with an average parcel size of 54 acres. Forestry is the second largest use of land with 4,275 acres devoted to this use or 13% of the total land area. Brushlands constitute another 3,712 acres or 11% of the land area (the brushland and forests categories have been combined on the land use map).

Commercial land use in the town is primarily located along the Route 30 corridor and in a limited area on Route 5S in the Northwestern portion of the town. Manufacturing uses are located in a small area along Route 5S between the City of Amsterdam and the Schenectady County border, a small area just south of Amsterdam, and in a small area along Route 5S west of Amsterdam across from Hirschfeld Road. There are also natural product uses (mining) adjacent to the first manufacturing area. A mobile home residential area is located in the Northeastern corner of the town. Historical areas include the hamlet of Fort Hunter. This area includes several historic sites relating to the Canal area such as "Clinton's Ditch", the Schoharie Creek Aqueduct and the Queen Anne Parsonage. Residential dwellings exist throughout the town.



Industrial uses on Route 5S east of Amsterdam

A limestone mine in the Natural Products Zone



D. Zoning

A zoning ordinance serves as the means of implementing a comprehensive plan. Part of the process of formulating this

Comprehensive Plan involved analyzing the town's current zoning ordinance to determine its adequacy in implementing the goals and objectives established in this Plan. Were it was determined that the current zoning ordinance was inadequate, revisions in conformance with this Plan are suggested (see section 8, "Shortcomings of the Current Zoning Map ").

Zoning is the most common tool in the United States for regulating the use of the land. Zoning is the division of a municipality into districts which are subject to different regulations regarding the use of the land, and the height and bulk of buildings which are allowed. The Town of Florida adopted its first zoning ordinance in 1976 . The zoning ordinance was subsequently revised in 1986, 1988, and 1989.

The town's current zoning ordinance allows for seven different land use categories: R-1 Residential; R-M Mobile Home residential; A-Agricultural; C-1 Commercial; M-1 Manufacturing; N-P Natural Product; and H-P Planned Historical (see Zoning Map). The overwhelming majority of the town, 86 %, is zoned Agricultural. 7.3 % of the town is zoned Residential; 2.3 % Planned Historical; 2.2 % Natural Products; 1.1% Commercial; 1 % Mobile Homes; and .5% for Manufacturing. The town's zoning ordinance includes a "schedule" that lists the districts, permitted principal uses, special exemption uses, minimum lot size, lot coverage, minimum living area, building height, and yard dimensions.

E. Municipal and Community Resources

The Town of Florida has one library located at Fort Hunter. The Amsterdam library is also available to all residents of the

town. There is a new seven mile bicycling/hiking trail, part of the Erie Canal Trailway, along the Erie Canal/Mohawk River beginning at the confluence of the Schoharie Creek and extending east towards Pattersonville.

There are three churches in the town - the Florida Reformed in Minaville, Family Bible on Thayer Road and the Methodist Church in Fort Hunter.

The town has a Youth Commission, a women's civic association, two diners and two bars. It's oldest historical structure is Queen Anne's Parsonage which was built in 1712.



A new section of The Erie Canal Trailway/Bikepath

The Florida Volunteer Fire Department contracts annually with the Town of Florida for protection in a duly established Fire

Protection District that includes all of the territory of the town except for "The Fort Hunter Fire District" and "The Fort Hunter Fire Protection District" which provide protection for the hamlet of Fort Hunter and its surrounding area. The Florida Volunteer Fire Department owns two firehouse structures. The main station is located on Route 30 in the center of Minaville. The auxiliary station is located on Bulls Head Road at Pattersonville Road near the eastern border of the town.

Ambulance service is provided to the town by the Greater Amsterdam Volunteer Ambulance Corp. and to a limited extent by the Fonda-Fultonville Area Volunteer Ambulance Corps. Inc.

Police protection in the town is provided by the New York State Police and the Montgomery County Sheriff's Department. The Sheriff's Department has also established an E-911 system for the County including the Town of Florida.

The Town of Florida also owns the Florida Town hall which is located on Fort Hunter Road near Minaville. The town hall serves as the focus of the town's civic business, as the headquarters of the town highway department and as the location of the municipal courthouse.

F. Cultural Resources

The Town of Florida contains many historic, architectural and cultural resources which evoke its noble heritage. These visible reminders of the accomplishments of the past serve as a source of civic pride and provide educational and cultural benefits to the citizenry. The distinctive character they lend to the town creates pleasure and appreciation, with the result that land values are stabilized and improved. These landmarks and historic areas likewise serve to attract visitors, thereby providing support and stimulus to the economy.

Among the significant properties or areas that have been identified to date are:

The Erie Canal National Historic Landmark which is located partly in The Hamlet of Fort Hunter and runs from the easterly most property line of the Schoharie Crossing Historic Site, crossing the Schoharie Creek at the point where the canal is broken by the N.Y. State Thruway. This area is owned by New York State and protected by state and federal historic preservation laws.

Fort Hunter, in an area next to Schoharie Creek and the Erie Canal National Historic Landmark, was also the site of three other important historical sites. The first of these sites is I-CAN-DE-RO-GA or TI-ON-ON-TO GEN of the Lower Castle Mohawks' Wolfclan. This was the last Mohawk Indian village in the Mohawk Valley (1700-1775). This same area contains the site of Old Fort Hunter, built between 1711-1712 for the protection of the Mohawk Indians. The fort was stockaded and surrounded Queen Anne Chapel. The chapel was torn down in 1821 to make way for the Erie Canal.

Another important historical landmark in the town is The Queen Anne Parsonage, a stone house built in 1734 to serve the Queen Anne Chapel. The parsonage is located east of Fort Hunter along Queen Anne Road.

Additionally, because of the town's location along the Mohawk River, there is the possibility of the existence of unknown archaeologically sensitive sites and artifacts.



Schoharie Crossing State Historical Site with Schoharie Creek, Aqueduct, and historical markers shown.



Site of the "old school house" in Fort Hunter

Part of the Original Erie Canal 1822

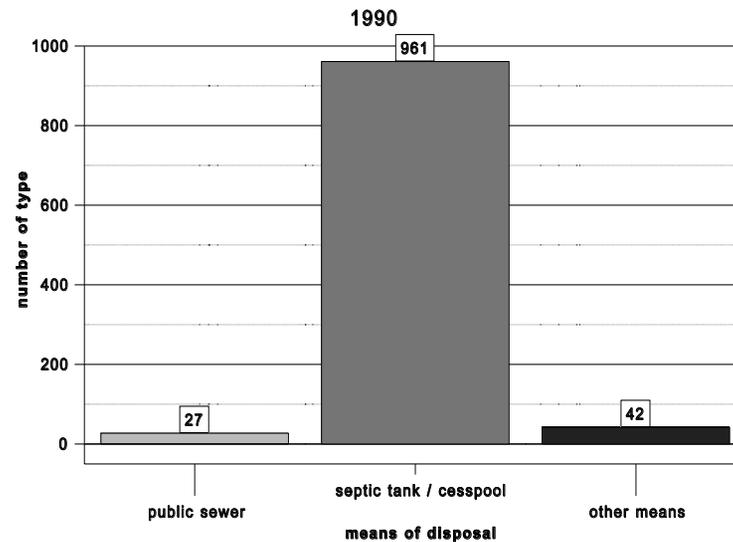


G. Sewage Disposal

According to 1990 US Census (see Figure 2), 961 residents use a septic tank or cesspool as a means of sewage disposal. 27 people are serviced by public sewers, and 42 people use "other means". These systems are regulated by the town's zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations based on standards that have been promulgated and are enforced by the New York State Department of Health.

The lack of a public sewer disposal and treatment facility in town is a concern in terms of both the public health and safety and in terms of future development potential.

Figure 2 Means of Sewage Disposal



Source: US Census Bureau 1990

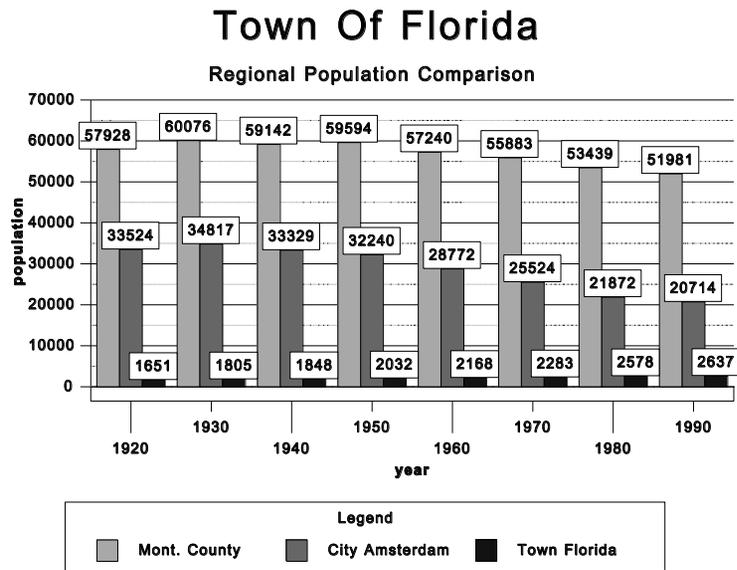
H. Demographics

The information contained in this section is based on the U.S. Census and other recorded statistical sources. The purpose of this section is to analyze and show graphically, certain characteristics and trends of the residents and housing stock within the Town of Florida. The following four topics will be discussed: **1) Population Characteristics, 2) Employment Characteristics, 3) Housing Characteristics, and 4) Household Characteristics.**

Population Characteristics

The Town of Florida's 1990 population of 2,673 is the highest it has been in the past 100 years. In fact, unlike most surrounding municipalities and Montgomery County as a whole, the Town of Florida has experienced a steady, uninterrupted increase in the number of residents over the past seven decades . This growth rate, however, has slowed in the past ten years (2.3% from 1980-1990) compared to the previous four decades (see Figures 1, 2, and Table 2). The town's greatest increase in population occurred between 1970 and 1980 when the town grew by 295 people at a growth rate of 12.9 %.

Figure 3



Source: US Census Bureau

Figure 4

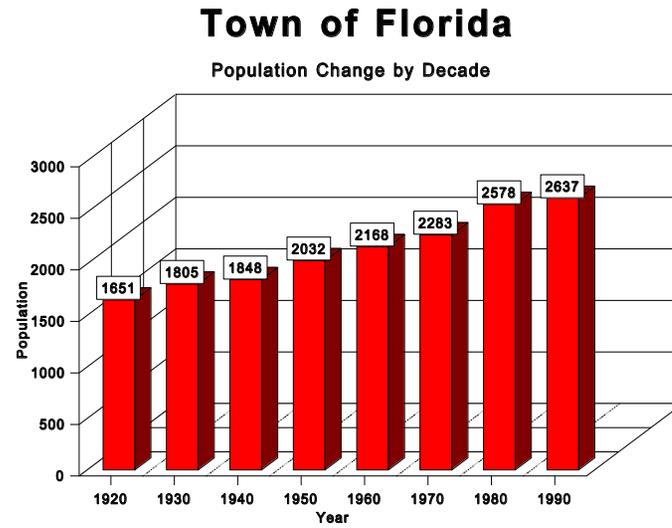


Table 2

Percent Population Change By Decade

Decade	Number of Persons	Percent Change from Previous Decade
1990	2673	2.3
1980	2578	12.9
1970	2283	5.3
1960	2168	7
1950	2032	10
1940	1848	2.4
1930	1805	9.3
1920	1651

Source: US Census Bureau

Many factors will have an impact on the future growth rate in the town. These factors include: the future increase of population in the City of Amsterdam; the change in the demographic make up of the Amsterdam population; and an increase in the crime rate in Amsterdam. These factors have elsewhere led to an increase in suburbanization as city residents fled to the periphery in search of more abundant and cheaper land and to escape increases in crime, pollution, congestion and high taxes. In addition, the growth rate in the town will greatly depend on future employment opportunities in the region. Employment opportunities will depend on many factors including those that are local, national and international. Local factors include Montgomery County's successful completion of its proposed industrial parks and local economic development officials success in attracting new businesses into these

parks.

According to the 1990 Census, the median age of the residents in the town is 34.9 years, which is slightly below the county average of 36.6 years and slightly above the state average of 33.9 years. Figures 5 and 6 show age distribution by gender in 10 year intervals.

Figure 5

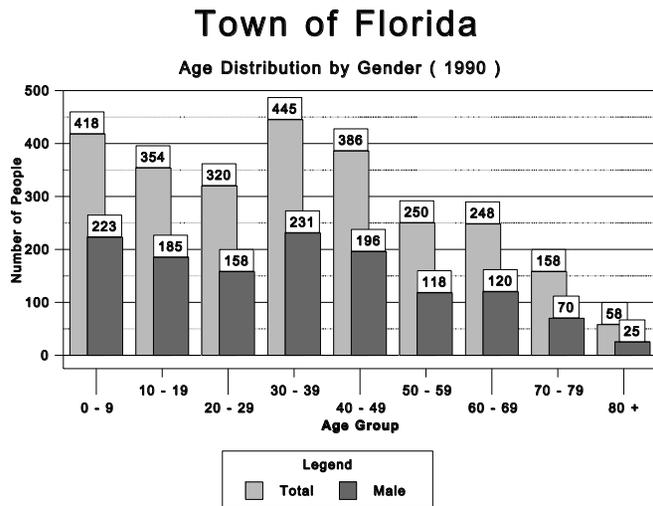
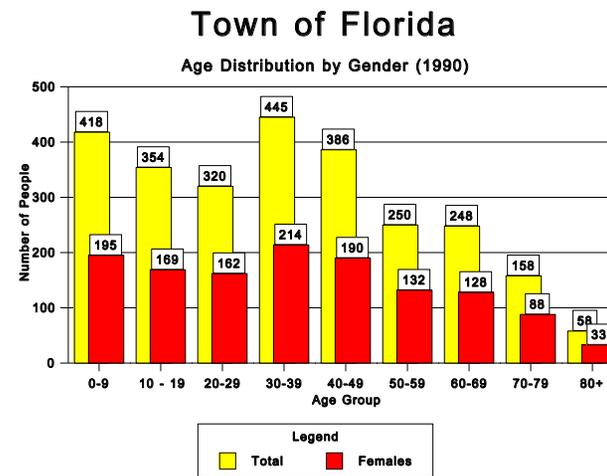


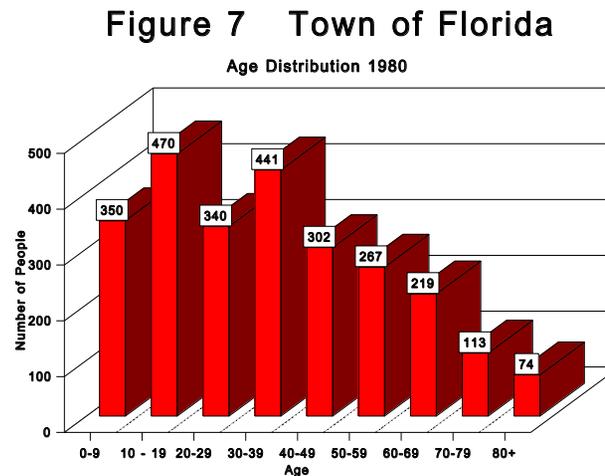
Figure 6



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figures 5 and 6 indicate that, similar to national trends, there are a greater number of males in the age groupings below 60 years of age. After that, females begin to outnumber males. This is due to the fact that females tend to live longer than males. The total number of males in the town is 1326 as compared to a total of 1311 females.

According to Figures 5 and 6 (Totals), the largest part of the town's population is between 30 and 50 years old. There is a noticeably sharp decrease in the total number of town residents in the age groups between 10 -19 and between 20 - 29. Compare this information with Figure 7 (Age Distribution 1980). According to Figure 7, the age group with the largest number of people is the 10-19 group. You would normally expect that ten years later (1990), the 20-29 group would be one of the town's largest groups. This, however, is not the case. In fact, the age group between 20-29 for 1990 contains less people than the 0-9, 10-19, 30-39, and 40-49 age groups. These figures then indicate that the town is losing a large number of its young residents between the ages of 20-29.



Race and Ancestry are two other important population characteristics to consider. Similar to Montgomery County as a whole, the Town of Florida is predominately White. Less than 3 % of the town residents are a race other than White. This includes 34 Hispanics, 17 Blacks, 3 Asians, 1 Indian, and 6 persons classified as other.

Polish, German, and Irish, respectively, are the most common ancestral origins of the town's residents. Other dominate ancestral origins in the town include Italian, Dutch, and Hispanic. The town's ancestral origins are similar to those of the other municipalities in Montgomery County.

The final population characteristic to be considered is the density of persons per square mile. The Town of Florida is comprised of 33,811.2 acres or about 50.4 square miles. By dividing this number by the town population of 2,637, we get a population density in the town of approximately 52.3 persons per square mile. This figure represents an overall average density for the entire town. Certain areas such as Fort Hunter, Minaville and Scotch Bush contain densities moderately higher.

Employment Characteristics

This section will include information pertaining to labor and employment trends, commuting times, and means of transportation to work. Figure 8 indicates town employment by the type of industry. This information should not be confused with "occupation" (Figure 9), which is the actual job performed by the individual. For example, if a person were a manager of mining operation, his occupation would be a manager but he would be employed in the mining industry.

Figure 8

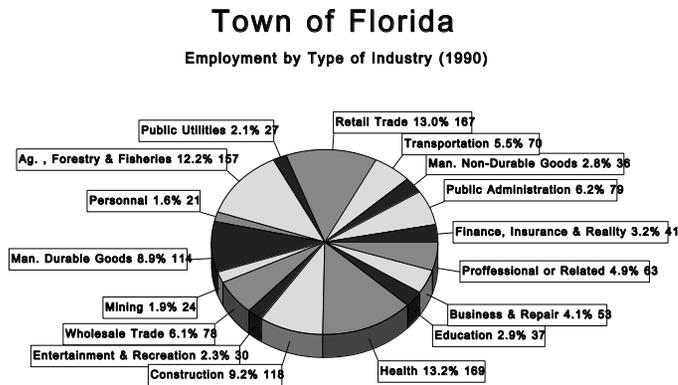
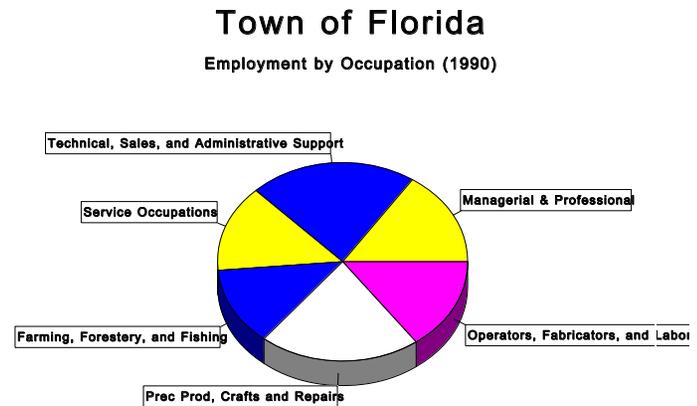


Figure 9



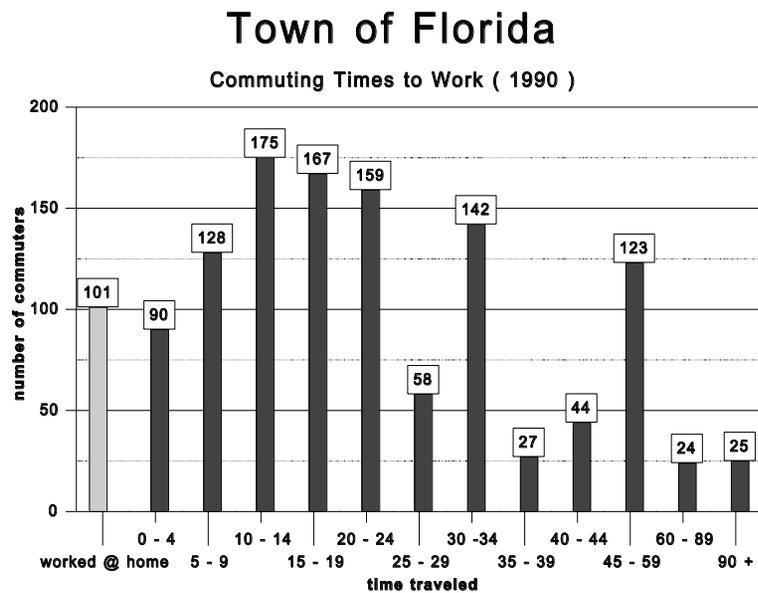
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The health industry represents the largest type of employment for town residents (13.2 %). This is followed closely by retail trade (13 %); agriculture, forestry and fisheries (12.2 %) and durable goods manufacturing (8.9 %).

It has been of particular concern to the Town of Florida residents that farming as an occupation has been declining. According to the 1980 Census, there were 225 people employed in the Agriculture and Forestry industry. By 1990 there were 157 people in the town employed in the same industries. In only a ten year period the town has experienced a 30 % reduction in the number of its residents employed the Agricultural and Forestry.

Of the 1,274 employed persons in the town, 776 people work within Montgomery County. The remainder commute outside the County for work. 81 % of the commuters travel less than 35 minutes to work. This accounts for most of people who work within Montgomery County, Fulton County, Schoharie County, and the Eastern Capital District.

Figure 10



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 11

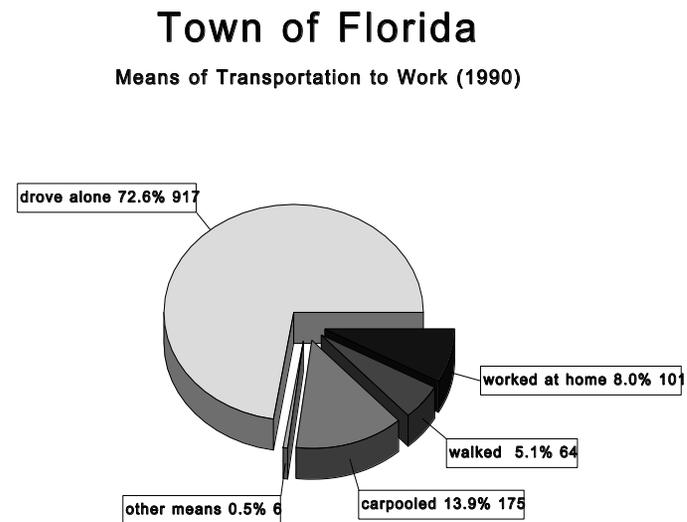


Figure 11 displays the means of transportation to work for the town residents. This characteristic is important for analyzing the need for transportation related services such as park and ride areas and bus services. The automobile is clearly the dominant mode of transportation to work: 86.5 % of the towns commuters either drive alone or car- pool.

Housing Characteristics

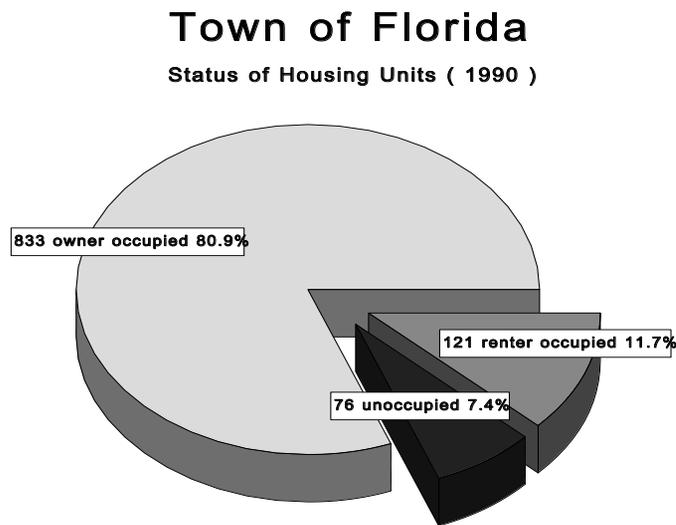


Figure 12

A *housing unit* is defined as any room or group of rooms intended to be occupied as separate living quarters. According to the 1990 Census, there were 1030 housing units as of March 1990. Figure 12 displays the status of these units.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 13

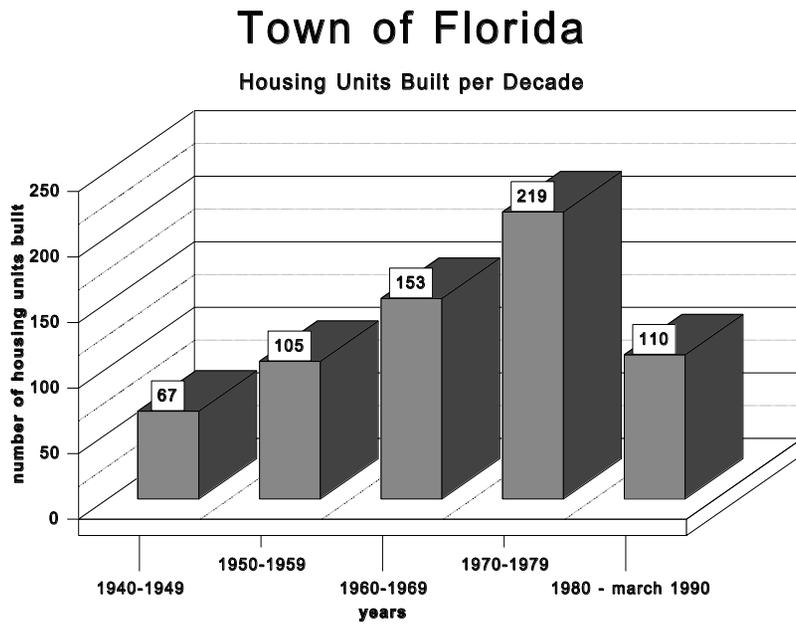


Figure 13 displays the number of housing units built in the town since 1940. Prior to 1940 there were a total of 376 housing units built. According to Figure 13, the most housing units built in a ten year period were 219, built between 1970 and 1979. This number has decreased considerably in the past decade (1980-1990).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Household Economic Characteristics

A *household* is defined as the number of occupied housing units and is the central concept linking population and housing. Households are made up of one or more persons sharing a housing unit. Another important definition to remember when discussing household characteristics is the *family*. According to the US Census, a *family* is persons related by blood, marriage or adoption, living together in a household. According to the 1990 Census, there are 938 households in the Town of Florida with 732 of these defined as families.

An important characteristic of households and families is income levels. The median household and family incomes provide a figure for the average income of each occupied housing unit. Per capita income defines the average income in the town per person. A regional comparison of household, family and individual income levels is shown in Table 3.

Table 3 **Economic Characteristics 1990**

	FLORIDA	CITY OF AMSTERDAM	MONTGOMERY COUNTY
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME	\$27,386	\$22,166	\$24,068
MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME	\$29,741	\$29,893	\$29,252
PER CAPITA INCOME	\$11,739	\$11,991	\$11,640
% BELOW POVERTY LEVEL PER CAPITA	4.8 %	13.3 %	11.5 %

7. Goals and Objectives

The following goals and objectives define the principles that should be used to guide the town's future growth and development.

Goal #1. Preserve farming.

Objective #1. Continue the promotion of and the participation in the New York State Agricultural Districts Program.

Objective #2. Promote the preservation of farmland through appropriate land use controls.

Goal #2. Improve employment opportunities for the residents of the area.

Objective #1. While maintaining farming as a primary industry, promote industrial development as an additional source of employment.

Objective #2. Designate a viable area of the town for industrial development if adequate space is not currently available. This development should be in an area that may be serviced by sewer and water, has adequate transportation infrastructure, has adequate fire protection capacity and is large enough to accommodate a mix of light manufacturing industries.

Goal #3. Preserve the town's rural character and open spaces.

Objective #1. Allow cluster housing and/or small lot residential subdivisions in areas where either sewer and water are available or where soil conditions support such development.

Objective #2. Allow limited, clustered, small scale commercial development contiguous to existing commercial areas while avoiding a linear commercial sprawl appearance.

Objective #3. Limit industrial and large scale commercial development to an area of the town where it will have the least impact on the overall rural character of the community. Such development should be as close as possible to existing built up areas.

Objective #4. Enhance and maintain existing recreational areas.

Goal #4. Cooperate with the town's adjacent municipalities and with Montgomery County.

Objective #1. Institute land use policies, where practical, that also promote regional economic development and environmental goals.

Objective #2. Allow the extension of sewer and water where necessary to compliment land use objectives. In particular, development of sewer and water systems for development should be limited to that required either for the protection of the natural resources or to service light industrial or commercial/light industrial development that require these services. All costs associated with the development or extension of sewer or water systems should be born by the developer and/or those utilizing the services.

Objective #3. Continue to support the two fire departments, state police and the county sheriff's department.

Goal #5. Enhance and encourage preservation of the town's historical character.

Objective #1. Preserve the town's historic character through appropriate land use controls.

Objective #2. Promote small scale tourism while avoiding a heavily commercial tourist-trap atmosphere.

8. Shortcomings of the Current Zoning Map

One of the primary purposes of a comprehensive plan is to suggest a future development pattern for the municipality. As mentioned previously, in the United States, zoning is the tool commonly used to implement and enforce a desired development pattern. As such, part of the process of developing this plan involved analyzing the current development pattern and the existing zoning map to determine if they are consistent with the newly formed goals and objectives of this plan, and then to suggest any necessary changes to the zoning map in order to better implement these goals and objectives.

After the analysis of these factors by the comprehensive planning committee, several shortcomings of the existing zoning map have been noted. First, the current zoning map does not contain an adequate industrially zoned area to meet Goal #'s 2 and 4 (compare Zoning Map and Goals and Objectives). Goal #2 states:

Improve employment opportunities for the residents of the area.

Objective #1. While maintaining farming as a primary industry, promote industrial development as an additional source of employment.

Objective #2. Designate a viable area of the town for industrial development if adequate space is not currently available. This development should be in an area that may be serviced by sewer and water, has adequate transportation infrastructure, has adequate fire protection capacity and is large enough to accommodate a mix of light manufacturing industries.

The current zoning ordinance allows for industrial uses in two small industrial zoned areas (see Zoning Map). These areas total 166 acres or .5 % of the town. Both of these areas already contain existing industrial uses and, therefore, neither of these areas contain enough land area to provide space for new industrial development. Expansion of these zones would not be feasible because some of the undeveloped portion of the larger site east of Amsterdam lies within a flood plain and the site is bound by an active rock quarry, the state thruway, and the Mohawk River. The smaller site, adjacent to the southern boundary of Amsterdam, is wedged between the city and the state thruway. If the town wishes to attract new industrial development, a new industrial zone would be

necessary.

Also, Goal #4 states: **Cooperate with the town's adjacent municipalities and with Montgomery County.** And Objective #1 under this goal states: **Institute land use policies, where practical, that also promote regional economic development and environmental goals.** The Montgomery County Board of Supervisors and The Montgomery County IDA are currently developing plans and completing the environmental review on a proposed industrial park site off Hirschfeld Road. In addition, the owners of the land of the proposed site have approached the Florida Town Board and requested that their land be rezoned to industrial. This area, therefore, should be one alternative considered for a new industrial zone.

Another shortcoming of the current zoning map that has been identified is the lack of available commercially zoned land. The expansion of the amount of land zoned commercial would be consistent with Goal #2 -**Improve employment opportunities for the residents of the town.** Any expansion of commercially zoned land, however, would also have to be consistent with Goal #3, Objectives 2 and 3 which state:

Preserve the town's rural character and open spaces.

Objective #2. Allow limited, clustered, small scale commercial development contiguous to existing commercial areas while avoiding a linear commercial sprawl appearance.

Objective #3. Limit industrial and large scale commercial development to an area of town where it will have the least impact on the overall rural character of the community. Such development should be as close as possible to existing built up areas.

9. Development Constraints-Opportunities and Impact Avoidance

A composite development constraints map has been prepared for this plan (see Development Constraints Map). This map overlays the town's NY State DEC wetlands, water bodies, flood prone areas, and steep slopes. These are areas that the Comprehensive Planning Committee avoided when considering the potential location of most types of new development (some residential units could be built in areas with slopes between 11 and 20 %). Conversely, those areas shown in white on the map were considered potential opportunities for new development. Other factors were also considered such as: the desires of the town residents; the availability of sewer and/or water; the proximity to transportation routes; the existing character of the area and the proximity to other similarly developed areas.

In addition to the constraints map, as noted earlier, a Soils Constraints Map was also developed. Due to the scale necessary to convey soil series information, this map has not been included in this plan, but instead is available for viewing at the Florida Town Hall. The Development Constraints (and opportunities) Map and the Soils Map were used by the Comprehensive Planning Committee as a guide to determining the best potential locations for new development such that this development would have the least impact to the natural environment.

Analysis of the Soils Constraints Map indicates that when considering soil characteristics for development (commercial and industrial in particular), the vast majority of the town presents constraints as most of the town is listed as "severe". Therefore, in the Town of Florida, when considering soil characteristics for commercial and/or industrial development, no one dominant area emerges that is favorable for development. This does not mean that no areas in the town can sustain this type of development, but rather, that additional precautions may be necessary when development occurs (see discussion under "Soils").

The soils constraints map does show areas that, in addition to those that coincide with the Development Constraints Map, should also be avoided when considering development. These areas are shown in green on the soils map and they indicate "hydric soils". These areas should be avoided because of their wet, impermeable characteristics and because they indicate probable federal

wetlands (see discussion under "Wetlands").

10. Alternative Future Development Patterns

After consideration of all the elements so far discussed in this Comprehensive Plan, the town then examined several different alternative future development patterns. These alternatives include potential zoning maps, their allowed uses, and in some cases, specific lot requirements within each zone. The town will be deciding on the alternatives that best implement the goals and objectives of the plan while causing the least harm to the environment.

A. Alternative Zoning Maps/Zones

The Comprehensive Planning Committee considered several different zoning maps and zones with the hope of alleviating the identified shortcomings of the existing zoning map as it relates to the newly established goals and objectives. Due to the identified shortcomings, the zoning categories "Commercial" and "Industrial" were given particular attention. For each zoning category, several different general development patterns were discussed, and then a combination of the most feasible patterns and uses were applied to the parcel specific zoning map alternatives.

Commercial patterns include:

1. No change; leaving the zone locations as they currently exist.
2. A continuous, linear pattern along route 30.
3. Nodal expansion of existing commercial areas based on adjacent parcel configuration.
4. Expansion and/or addition of new commercial areas north of the State Thruway.

The different types(based on the allowed uses) of Commercial zones considered were: Commercial (C-1), Light Retail(LR or C-2) Commercial Business(CB or C-3); Light Industrial/ Commercial(LI/C or C-4).

Industrial patterns include:

1. No change, leaving the zone locations as they currently exist.
2. Industrial zone expansion adjacent to existing zones.
3. Addition of a new industrial zone east of the City of Amsterdam and north of the State Thruway.
4. Addition of a new industrial zone south of the State Thruway.
5. Addition of a new industrial zone west of the City of Amsterdam and north of the State Thruway.

The different types of Industrial zones considered were: Manufacturing (M); Light Industrial (LI); Industrial Business Park (IBP); Light Industrial/ Commercial (LI/C).

Alternative Zoning Map #1.

This map is the no action alternative: there are no changes to the existing zoning map.

Alternative Zoning Map #2.

This map proposes:

- * A linear Light Retail zone along route 30 in place of the existing Commercial nodes;
- * The elimination of the Scotch Bush Commercial zone;
- * A new Light Industrial zone between route 5S and Hirschfeld Road;
- * A new Agricultural zone behind the proposed industrial zone;
- * A new Commercial/Light Industrial zone just east of Amsterdam between the State Thruway and the Mohawk River and;
- * Changing the Historic District zone to Light Retail and expanding its size.

Alternative Zoning Map #3.

This map proposes:

- * Creating a large Commercial Business zone along Route 30 beginning at the City of Amsterdam;
- * Expansion of the Commercial node at the intersection of Route 30 and Route 161;
- * Reconfiguring the Minaville Commercial zone;
- *Expanding the Scotch Bush Commercial area;
- * Expanding the Commercial area on 5S west of Amsterdam;
- * Creating an Industrial/Business Park zone along 5S west of Amsterdam;
- * Creating an Industrial/Business Park zone along 5S east of Amsterdam;

Alternative Zoning Map #4.

This map proposes:

- * Expansion of the Commercial node at the intersection of Route 30 and Route 161;
- * Reconfiguring the Minaville Commercial zone;
- * Reconfiguring the Scotch Bush Commercial zone;
- * Expanding the Commercial area on 5S west of Amsterdam;
- * Creating an Industrial/Business Park zone along 5S west of Amsterdam;
- * Creating an Industrial/Business Park zone along 5S east of Amsterdam;

B. Alternative Uses

The following new and/or existing allowed uses and special permitted uses were considered for each new and/or existing zoning category.

R-1 Residential

PRINCIPAL USES

One-family dwelling
Two-family dwelling
Home occupation
Public or parochial school or college
Church, parish house, convent
Community park, playground or building
Golf Course or country club (private)
Farm and accessory buildings or uses
Accessory use or building

SPECIAL PERMIT USES

Public utility station
Nursing, convalescent or home for the aged
Mobile home (temporary)
Launderette
Retail store
Town houses
Two family dwelling
Multi-family (more than two family) dwelling
Bed and breakfast establishment
Public or parochial school or college
Mobile home as part of a farm operation
Community park, playground or building
Home occupation
Accessory use or building

R-M Mobile Home Residential

PRINCIPAL USES

One family dwelling
Mobile home
Mobile home park
Two-family dwelling
Accessory use or building
Playground
Farm and accessory buildings or uses

SPECIAL PERMIT USES

Launderette
Retail store
Public utility station
Mobile home park
Multiply family dwelling
Bed and breakfast establishment
Mobile home as part of a farm operation

A - Agricultural

PRINCIPAL USES

Farm and accessory buildings and uses
Picnic grove, fish or game club (private)
Nursery
One-family dwelling
Two-family dwelling
Community park
Mobile home as part of a farm operation
Accessory use or building
Uses permitted in the R-1 district
Golf course or country club
Home occupation

SPECIAL PERMIT USES

Commercial recreation
Bed and breakfast establishment
Mobile home as part of a farm operation
Nursing, convalescent or home for the aged
Public utility station
Farm products plant
Mobile home park
Boarding or rooming house
Church, parish house, convent
Animal/Veterinary hospital
Public or parochial school or college
Radio, TV transmitter or receiving tower
 Golf course or country club
Home occupation

N-P Natural Products

PRINCIPAL USES

One-family dwelling
Earth, sand, gravel or mineral excavation
Bituminous concrete mixing plant
Ready-mix concrete plant
Concrete products manufacture, including blocks, staves,
 pipe beams and structures; and construction equipment
Portland cement manufacture
Agricultural lime manufacture
Inorganic fertilizer manufacture
Accessory use or building
Farm and accessory building
Rock quarry operation

SPECIAL PERMIT USES

Earth, sand, gravel or mineral excavation
Bituminous concrete mixing plant
Ready-mix concrete plant
Concrete products manufacture, including blocks, staves,
 pipe beams and structures; and construction equipment
Portland cement manufacture
Agricultural lime manufacture
Inorganic fertilizer manufacture
Accessory use or building
Rock quarry operation
 One-family dwelling
 Two-family dwelling

C-1, 2, 3,4 Commercial; Light Retail

PRINCIPAL USES

Uses permitted in the A-1 Agricultural district,
including existing dwellings
Retail shop/ store
Launderette
Bank, professional office, studio
Custom work shop
Museum
Restaurant
Motel/ hotel
Bowling alley
Funeral home
Utility substation
Public garage
Gas station
Animal/ Veterinary hospital
Automobile, boat, farm implement or mobile home sales or rental
Feed, lumber, seed or fertilizer building
Personal service shop
Cabinet, electrical, heating, plumbing, or air conditioning shop
Marina
Public park or playground
Retail bakery
Radio, television, or household appliance sales or service
Laundry or dry cleaning plant
Farm and Accessory use or building
Public golf course, picnic grove, fish and game club
One-family dwelling
Two-family dwelling
Fire station or Municipal Buildings
Bed and Breakfast Establishment
Historic Building or Site
Accessory Use or Building
Small Scale Retail Shop or Store

SPECIAL PERMIT USES

Retail shop/ store
Personal service shop
Launderette
Bank, professional office, studio
Custom work shop
Museum
Restaurant
Motel/ hotel
Bowling alley
Funeral home
Utility substation
Public garage
Gas station
Animal/ Veterinary hospital
Automobile, boat, farm implement or mobile home sales or rental
Feed, lumber, seed or fertilizer building
Materials sales or storage
Cabinet, electrical, heating, plumbing, or air conditioning shop
Marina
Shopping center/ mall
Professional offices
Fuel sales and storage
 Laundry or dry cleaning plant
Drive- in restaurant
Storage of non-liquid, non-gaseous fuel
Fuel sales or storage
Carwash
Multi-family dwelling
Bed and Breakfast Establishment
Small Scale Retail Shop or Store
Mobile Homes as part of a Farm Operation

M-1 Manufacturing; IBP Industrial Business Park; Light Industrial

PRINCIPAL USES

Wholesale storage or warehouse
Light manufacturing
Bakery or confectionery
Printing or publishing plant
Tool, die, pattern or machine shop
Manufacture or processing of dairy or other food products
Manufacture of textile products or leather goods
Manufacture or fabrication of metal, concrete, stone, plastic
paint, fibre or wood products
Manufacture or assembly of electronic devices or instruments
Truck terminal
Customary accessory use or building
Professional offices
Cold storage plant
Farm and accessory use or building
Distribution center
Research and development center
Farm and Accessory Uses or Buildings

SPECIAL PERMIT USES

Wholesale storage or warehouse
Light manufacturing
Bakery or confectionery
Printing or publishing plant
Tool, die, pattern or machine shop
Manufacture or processing of dairy or other food products
Manufacture of textile products or leather goods
Manufacture or fabrication of metal, concrete, stone, plastic
paint, fibre or wood products
Manufacture or assembly of electronic devices or instruments
Truck terminal
Customary accessory use or building
Distribution center
Cold storage plant
Farm and accessory use or building
Bulk storage of inflammable liquids
Uses permitted in the Commercial districts
Ready mix concrete
Transportation services, including automobile and truck rentals and Public garages
Automotive repair shops and garages
Public utilities

H Historic; Planned Historic HP

PRINCIPAL USES

One-family dwelling
Community park or playground
Public or parochial schools, churches
General store, antique store
Fire station, municipal building
Historic building or site
Hotel/ motel
Marina
Gas station
Farm and accessory building or uses
Customary accessory building or use
Two-family dwelling

SPECIAL PERMIT USES

Public or parochial schools, churches
Hotel/ motel
Marina
Gas station
Multiple family dwelling
Bed and breakfast establishment
Retail store or shop
Personal service shop
Bank, professional offices, studio
Custom work shop
Museum
Launderette
Funeral home
Restaurant
Mobile homes as part of a farm operation

CLI Commercial/ Light Industrial

PRINCIPAL USES

Community Park/Playground
Farm and Accessory Use and Buildings
Retail Store/ Shop
Personal Service Shop
Launderette
Bank, Office, Studio
Custom Work Shop
Museum
Restaurant
Motel/ Hotel
Bowling Alley
Funeral Home
Animal Hospital/ Veterinary Clinic

SPECIAL PERMIT USES

Community Park/ Playground
Retail Store/ Shop
Personal Service Shop
Launderette
Bank, Office, Studio
Custom Work Shop
Museum
Restaurant
Motel/ Hotel
Bowling Alley
Funeral Home
Utility Station
Public Garage
Gas Station
Animal Hospital/ Veterinary Clinic

C. Alternative Lot requirements

The Comprehensive Planning Committee identified several potential alternative revisions to the lot requirements in each zone including:

1. Leaving the lot requirements as they now exist.
2. Allowing a 30,000 sq. ft. minimum lot size requirements for the R-1 and RM zones (as opposed to the normal 80,000 sq. ft. requirement) if public sewer and water are available.
3. Allowing cluster development and a 15,000 sq. ft. minimum lot size in R-1 zones.

The Town of Florida
Draft Comprehensive Plan /
Generic Environmental Impact Statement

Montgomery County, New York

October, 1995

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Lead Agency: Town of Florida Town Board
181 STHWY 161
Amsterdam, NY 12010
Supervisor: Ronald Mead
Contact Person: Jacqueline Francisco, 843-1277

Comprehensive Plan/
DGEIS Preparer: Montgomery County Department of Planning and Development
County Annex Building, P.O. Box 1500
Fonda, NY 12068-1500
Director: Michael J. Kayes
Project Planner/contact person: Todd M. Fabozzi 853-8139

Date of Acceptance:
Comment Period:

Florida Town Board

Florida Planning Board

Appreciation is extended to former

Table of Contents

E. Surface Water	Error! Bookmark not defined.
F. Flood Zones	22
G. Sensitive Terrestrial and Aquatic Areas	22
H. Wetlands	23
6. Socio-Economic Resources	24
A. Agricultural Resources	24
B. Transportation	26
C. Land Use	29
D. Zoning	30
A zoning ordinance serves as the means of implementing a comprehensive plan. Part of the process of formulating this Comprehensive Plan involved analyzing the town's current zoning ordinance to determine its adequacy in implementing the goals and objectives established in this Plan. Were it was determined that the current zoning ordinance was inadequate, revisions in conformance with this Plan are suggested (see section 8,	31
E. Municipal and Community Resources	31
F. Cultural Resources	33
G. Sewage Disposal	36
H. Demographics.....	37
Population Characteristics.....	37
Employment Characteristics.....	42
Housing Characteristics	45
Household Economic Characteristics.....	47
7. Goals and Objectives	48
8. Shortcomings of the Current Zoning Map	52
9. Development Constraints	54
A. Alternative Zoning Maps	55
B. Alternative Uses	54
Alternative Lot requirements	60

