Chapter 3:
Inventory & Analysis

Section I. Natural Resources

As part of the Comprehensive Planning process, communities should make decisions that consider the preservation, maintenance, and responsible uses of natural resources. The Town of LaFayette has historically placed a high value on its rural appearance and natural resources. Below is a review of the important natural resources of the Town that exist today.

LAND RESOURCES

The Town of LaFayette includes 39.25 square miles of land area, with .35 square miles of surface water.

Slope and Topography - Slope and topography describe the shape and relief of the land. Topography describes the elevation and changes in elevation, while slope is a measurement of the percentage of change in elevation over a particular distance. LaFayette is located in the Allegheny Uplands, an area formed by glacial processes which resulted in steep hills, deep valleys, and lowland areas shaped by the Town's two major stream systems, Butternut Creek and Onondaga Creek. Elevations range between 540 - 1,500 feet above sea level. Hills and valleys in the Town run generally north and south, with the highest elevations and steepest slopes along a ridge in the east side of the Town and another ridge at the Town's western border. Mason Hill in the east, at just over 1,500 feet, is the highest peak in the town, while the Tully Valley Floor (see Map 5 at the end of the Section) is the lowest elevation.

LaFayette's topography of fertile valleys and steep slopes provide the Town's bucolic sense of place that residents cherish.

Soils - Soil characteristics affect a variety of human activities, from land use patterns, to transportation routes, to the installation of necessary community infrastructure. Soils in LaFayette are the result of ice-age glacial movements, which removed surface materials and redeposited them in an uneven pattern of soil and rock. The higher elevations tend to have stony, poorly drained soil that is not well-suited for cultivation or construction. By contrast, the valleys contain rich soils and extensive deposits of sand and gravel. More information regarding agricultural soils can be found in Section III, Agriculture.

Unique Natural Areas (UNAs) and Critical Environmental Areas (CEAs) - Unique Natural Areas (UNAs) are locally designated sites that are recognized because

of the outstanding qualities that render them unique and deserving of preservation in a natural state. UNAs include natural features such as woods, swamps, glens, cliffs, gorges, and streams that occur in a natural setting or in an urban greenspace. Often, the characteristics that make a site unique are extremely vulnerable to a wide range of both direct and indirect impacts and may be compromised by disturbing the site. UNA's are generally closed to the public.

Under the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), local agencies may designate specific geographic areas within their boundaries as Critical Environmental Areas (CEAs). To be designated as a CEA, an area must have an exceptional or unique character with respect to one or more of the following: a benefit or threat to human health; a natural setting, e.g., fish and wildlife habitat, forest and vegetation, open space and areas of important aesthetic or scenic quality; agricultural, social, cultural, historic, archaeological, recreational, or educational values; or an inherent ecological, geological, or hydrological sensitivity to change that may be adversely affected by any change. The designation of a CEA provides some regulatory protection for a site and functions as an indicator for developers, local officials, and other governmental agencies that the site is of significant environmental value. The designation of UNA's or CEA's can be a valuable tool to a community that is concerned about preserving sensitive environmental areas.

Currently the Town or LaFayette has not designated any sites within the Town as a UNA or CEA. They can, however, be important tools that can assist the community in ensuring that its most important and sensitive environmental assets are preserved.

Rare Plants and Animals - The New York State Heritage Program is a partnership between the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the Nature Conservancy. The purpose of the program is to facilitate conservation of rare animals, rare plants, and natural ecosystems, thereby maintaining the biodiversity of New York State.

Schweinitz's Sedge is rare plant found in certain wetlands. It was last confirmed in LaFayette in 2005

Information regarding the presence of rare or endangered plants and animals in a particular municipality can be accessed via a State maintained a website. The web address is http://www.dec.ny.gov/natureexplorer/app/. There is a disclaimer on the website that notes that rare and endangered species located in other towns in Onondaga County may not be listed for the Town of LaFayette. The list below only includes records of rare species and significant natural communities from the databases of the NY Natural Heritage Program. It is not a definitive statement about

the presence or absence of all plants and animals, including rare or state-listed species, or of all significant natural communities. For most areas, comprehensive field surveys have not been conducted, and this list should not be considered a substitute for on-site surveys. It should be noted that no endangered animals were reported for the Town. There are no State regulated wildlife management areas within the Town.

LAFAYETTE ENDANGERED AND THREATENED PLANTS AND MOSSES			
PLANT	**SUBGROUP**	**DISTRIBUTION STATUS**	**YEAR LAST DOCUMENTED**
Burrhead	Other flowering plants	Possible but not confirmed	1916
Lindsey's Aster	Asters, goldenrods, and daisies	Possible but not confirmed	1912
Schweinitz's Sedge	Sedges	Recently confirmed	2005
Yellow Giant-hyssop	Other flowering plants	Historically confirmed	1903
Starke's small pottia moss	Other mosses	Recently confirmed	2005

WATER RESOURCES

Water resources are critical to the public health, environmental, and economic well-being of a community. Economic and environmental activities dependent on the integrity of local water bodies and water supplies include tourism, recreation, education, agriculture, industry, and real estate. In the Town of LaFayette, there are significant surface water and groundwater resources that merit attention. The Town's 1988 *Land Use Plan* includes detailed information regarding water resources, and is referenced extensively below. Map 4 at the end of this Section, depicts rivers, streams, wetlands, and flood zones, in the Town.

Groundwater - Groundwater is any water that is located under the surface of the ground including underground streams and aquifers. The water table is how deep you would have to dig to reach soil that is saturated with water.

Groundwater is the overwhelming source of drinking water for housing units in the Town. Over 80% of households have drilled or dug wells, not including homes in Cardiff that were served by spring water furnished by the Allied Corporation.

With such a heavy dependency on groundwater supplies, the issue of finding adequate groundwater supplies and protecting these supplies from depletion or contamination are vital to the Town. The Town needs to conserve and protect its existing groundwater supplies and evaluate new development proposals in light of their impact on these supplies. Information concerning groundwater is not available in detailed form

for the Town, although studies have been completed regarding water availability for development of municipal water in the Town. The collection or such data Town-wide would require expensive ground surveying techniques and test borings. However certain generalized information is available which does provide indications of potential problem areas relating to groundwater.

The availability of groundwater in the Town is shown on Map 3 . The majority of the Town is defined by till soils where water yields are in a rather low range, generally under two gallons per minute, The Onondaga Creek Valley is an area of moderately high water yield where sand and gravel is located beneath less permeable materials; however, it is also an area where unconsolidated deposits may yield salty ground water. A freshwater zone from between 10 feet to more than 100 feet thick occurs above the salt water. This accounts for the fact that some good wells are located in this area whereas others yield salty, brine-like water. The Butternut Creek Valley is also an area of high ground water yields (above 50 gallons per minute), although in some mixed deposits areas the yields can be quite variable. One small area around "Big Bend" on Route 20 and areas north of the Hamlet have yields in the 5-50 gallon per minute range, which is also rather high. It is important to note that this is a highly generalized map and the water yields are estimated based on the saturated thickness and estimated permeability of water-bearing material; therefore, yields at any particular well site could be higher or lower.

The availability of wells that can serve multiple users or high volume users, such as the schools, indicates the variability of water yields in a Town where much of the water is derived from underlying shale deposits. At rock fracture lines or intersections of fractures, yields can be significant; in other places, well yields can be inadequate.

Several water sources (mainly springs) in Cardiff are necessitated by the salt water layer in the Tully Valley or by brine contamination from either former brine wells or brine pipeline. These water sources along the hillsides above Cardiff provide water through pipelines to residences in the Tully Valley. See Section IX, Infrastructure for more information regarding this system.

Groundwater can become contaminated from many sources such as rain and snowmelt runoff, which can carry a multitude of contaminants that enter the aquifer through direct recharge or surface runoff. Manmade pollutants such as oil and grease from cars, or degreasers, salts, and agricultural pollutants such as animal excrement, pesticides, and fertilizers enter the ground water directly and indirectly from surface runoff. An accidental spill from a vehicle traveling on Interstate 81, or other highways in the area, poses a significant threat, as do other spills in the Town. The production and storage of chemicals, including home heating oil, can lead to spills or leakage at industrial, commercial, and even residential sites and pose a major risk of contamination. The hamlet of Cardiff has already experienced ground water contamination for salt extraction and transportation industries. The Town also has some steep slopes that could contribute significantly to pollution of the ground water or aquifer if heavily developed.

Protection of the Town's groundwater resources must be an important priority for the Town, particularly in light of previous salt contamination of ground sources in Cardiff,

and the potential for natural gas wells, which are more detailed below. Because aquifer systems are often interconnected and crosses municipal boundaries, the Town should coordinate with the County and neighboring municipalities to ensure protection of its valuable ground and surface water resources.

Surface Water: Water Bodies - Surface water is any water that is exposed to the atmosphere. Major and tributary surface waters in the Town are depicted on Map 4. There are two major watersheds in LaFayette: Onondaga Creek, with five tributary watersheds, and Butternut Creek with six tributary watersheds. Butternut Creek is dammed at the north boundary of the Town to create the Jamesville Reservoir. Watershed boundaries define drainage areas that are separated by topographic divides or features on the landscape that confine drainage to particular basins. Watershed boundary maps are helpful in evaluating runoff and stream flow characteristics with respect to their impact on roads, culverts, storm sewers, and related facilities. Watershed boundary maps help indicate downstream areas that may be impacted by any new development and can assist in planning mitigating measures for runoff from a site. Furthermore, watershed boundary maps are helpful for water quality studies in investigating the movement of pollutants discharged to surface waters. When used in conjunction with stream gage and runoff data, the drainage area maps can provide information on the capacity of receiving waters to dilute sewage effluents.

The Jamesville Reservoir is located in the Town's far northeast corner

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's (NYSDEC) classification of the primary streams is based on water quality standards and is used to regulate discharges into surface water. Under the NYSDEC system, surface water discharges must be treated so as not to degrade the water quality of a receiving body below the standards set for that body of water. However, the classification given to a particular body of water does not necessarily indicate its actual water quality condition, which may be higher or lower than the standard. The original classification of surface waters by the New York State Health Department classified waters according to their "highest and best use" rather than by their actual condition. This classification program is now administered by NYSDEC, which updates it at periodic intervals.

The NYSDEC classification system is as follows: Class A and AA - suitable for public drinking water and use in food processing; Class B - suitable for swimming and other water related recreation where bodily contact is involved; Class C - suitable for fishing and recreational boating; Class D - poorest quality used only for agricultural irrigation or most industrial processes. Additional classification letters (T) or (TS) may be

assigned to Class A, B or C waters to indicate that there is sufficient dissolved oxygen to support trout (T) or trout spawning (TS).

All surface waters classified AA, A, Band C(T) or C(TS) are protected by State law. A "stream bed or bank disturbance" permit is required before the course, channel, or bed of a protected stream may be changed by dock or dam building, placing a culvert, or by dredging or filling operations. This stream protection permit program is administered by NYSDEC; in addition all projects or actions which will physically alter a protected stream are subject to the provisions of the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA).

Onondaga Creek is classified as C(T) in the Town and its tributaries are either C(T) or D. Butternut Creek is also classified C(T) with its tributaries either C(TS), C(T), or D. Jamesville reservoir is classified AA as is the reservoir immediately south of Coye Road.

Many of the streams and reservoirs in the Town are protected by the permit procedure of NYSDEC as well as protected from water discharges that would degrade the water quality of the receiving body. While Class D waters are not protected through the State permit procedure, these streams can be important since pollutants or discharges into these streams can eventually flow into higher classification streams and water bodies; therefore the Town should be protective of the water quality of even these streams to avoid problems elsewhere in the watershed. Furthermore, even intermittent streams can become significant water carriers during spring runoff or heavy rainfall periods; these intermittent streams need to be protected both from pollution and from unplanned alteration in their streambeds which can negatively impact downstream areas during heavy rainfall or runoff periods.

In addition to their environmental importance, surface water can also provide recreational opportunities. As detailed in Section VIII: Parks and Recreation, public fishing is available along portions or Butternut Creek. The Jamesville Reservoir provides opportunities for fishing, swimming, and boating.

Surface Water: Wetlands - Wetlands are a type of surface water. More specifically, wetlands are areas that contain soils that are saturated by ground water or surface water and support wetland plants. Wetlands provide a multitude of ecological, economic, and social benefits. They provide habitat for fish, wildlife, and a variety of plants. Wetlands absorb, store, and slow down the movement of rain and snow-melt, minimizing flooding and erosion, and stabilizing water flow. Wetlands recharge ground water and act as a filter that cleanses surface runoff containing manmade contaminants. Wetlands recycle nutrients, which then contribute to the foodchain and local biodiversity. Wetlands also provide areas for recreation, wildlife viewing, and educational opportunities for humans and are critical to the health of other ecosystems.

National Wetland Inventory - The National Wetland Inventory (NWI) program was established in the 1970's to inventory the nation's wetlands and report on their status. The program produces wetlands maps, which are periodically updated, as well as evaluating and reporting on changes in wetland status in response to natural processes and to human development. NWI designated wetlands do not carry restrictions as a result of such designation except to the extent they may be regulated by the U.S. Army

Corps of Engineers which is determined on a case-by-case basis.

Freshwater Wetlands Act - DEC regulated wetlands are governed by the Freshwater Wetlands Act (FWA), Article 24, of the Environmental Conservation Law. Wetlands greater than 12.4 acres, or smaller wetlands that are considered of unusual local importance, are regulated under the FWA. Additionally, around every wetland is an "adjacent area" of 100 feet that is also protected to provide a buffer for the wetland. The main provisions of the FWA seek to regulate those uses that would have an adverse impact on wetlands, such as filling or draining. A permit is required when conducting certain activities within DEC regulated wetlands.

There are number delineated wetlands in the Town as shown on Map 4 at the end of this Section. Most are adjacent or near to the two major Town waterways, on Onondaga Creek and Butternut Creek. There are also some wetlands near the I-81 Corridor that were created when the highway was constructed in the 1960's, blocking traditional drainage areas. Some of these are located or adjacent to potential development sites in the Hamlet. The protection of wetlands falls under a number of jurisdictions, such as the DEC. The Town must fulfill its role by ensuring that impacts on wetland from development is carefully considered as part of the planning review process for any projects.

Flood Zones - Flood hazard areas are typically defined as the 100-year floodplain: the area where each year there is a 1 in 100 (1%) chance that the land will be flooded. This criterion was established in 1968 through the enactment of the National Flood Insurance Act, which instituted the National Flood Insurance Program to reduce flood damages, promote wiser use of floodplains, and ensure that property owners have access to affordable flood insurance. The Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 made it mandatory for a community to regulate new floodplain development in order to remain eligible for the subsidized insurance rates. Flood hazard areas also includes "floodways". According to FEMA, a "Regulatory Floodway" means "the channel of a river or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved (from obstructions such as development) in order to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation more than a designated height." Development in floodways must be regulated by local jurisdictions to ensure that there are no increases in upstream flood elevations. Development within the Town is prohibited in floodways except where the developer can demonstrate that the proposed development would not impede the flow of floodwaters.

The two primary flood hazard areas in the Town are along Butternut Creek and Onondaga Creek. In addition, several areas along Kennedy Creek (a tributary of Onondaga Creek) also are designated as flood hazard areas. The location of these

areas is important so that development can be managed and/or restricted in flood hazard areas and potential future financial losses from flooding can be avoided. Flood prone areas are undesirable for residential purposes since septic tanks can be breached during floods, wells can be contaminated, and lives and personal property can be endangered. The Town must be aware of the impact of development, both in and out of flood zones, may have on flooding, including projects discharging runoff into flood areas. Mitigating measures may be necessary to prevent additional runoff from new developments from increasing flood frequency and severity. 2011 saw parts of the Central New York and the Southern Tier inundated with historic and devastating flooding. Climate scientists predict that such events are likely to occur more frequently in the future, and the Town should be prepared. The location of flood hazard areas in the Town are shown on Map 4 at the end of this Section.

LaFayette approved a Flood Damage Prevention Local Law in 1984 and is, therefore, a participant in the National Flood Insurance Program. The Town also has a Flood Plain District in its zoning ordinance that regulates development in such areas. The Town must remain diligent in ensuring that its regulations and strategies related to flood hazards are sufficient to meet changing conditions.

NATURAL GAS

Natural gas consists primarily of methane and is typically found associated with other fossil fuels, in coal beds, as methane clathrates, and is created by methanogenic organisms in marshes bogs, and landfills. Natural gas is often described as the cleanest fossil fuel, producing less carbon dioxide per joule than delivered by either coal or oil, and far fewer pollutants than other fossil fuels. It is often viewed as a transitional energy source as the world moves from oil to more sustainable sources due to global warming. Portions of the Town, including the LaFayette Hamlet, are served by piped natural gas supplied by National Grid (see Section IX, Infrastructure and Telecommunication). The Tennessee Gas Pipeline, which stretches from the Gulf of Mexico and splits to serve New York City and Boston, crosses the north end of the Town. A compressor station is located off Sentinel Heights Road to maintain pressure on the line. The access to large volumes of natural gas in the Town could be a benefit to economic development activities.

Much of Onondaga County, including the Town of LaFayette, is located over the Marcellus Shale Formation and the deeper Utica Shale Formation. The Marcellus formation is a unit of marine sedimentary rock found in eastern North America. Named for a distinctive outcrop near the village of Marcellus, just west of LaFayette, it extends throughout much of the southern New York, northern and western Pennsylvania, eastern Ohio, through western Maryland, throughout most of West Virginia, and extends into extreme western Virginia. The formation tends to be shallower at its northern reaches, including LaFayette. The Utica formation partially underlies the Marcellus formation and extends further northward. Both formations contain enormous reserves of largely untapped natural gas, and their proximity to the high-demand markets along the East Coast make them an attractive target for energy development, although the Marcellus formation is likely to see development far more quickly. There are already

natural gas wells in LaFayette and surrounding towns that extract natural gas not trapped within the shale formations.

The somewhat hilly terrain in the Town may limit significant development of the shale gas reserves in the community. There are, however existing natural gas leases in the Town, particularly in the southwest (west of I-81) and the east-central area near the border with Pompey that could be developed should the process be approved for use in New York. Regardless of the level of activity within Town borders, large-scale development and drilling in the region may have profound impacts on the Town's environment, infrastructure, housing, character, and economics.

The extraction of natural gas in the region would provide many potential benefits, including jobs, royalties to property owners, and increased tax revenue, in addition to bolstering national efforts for energy independence. However, there are a number of negative impacts that have caused significant concerns in the region. The nature of the shale formation requires specialized technologies to extract. The most common method is hydraulic fracturing, also know as hydrofracturing, hydrofracking, fracking, and simply frac. This is a process whereby water, various chemicals, and often sand, are pumped into the rock formations at high pressure, resulting in the creation of fractures in rocks, the goal of which is to increase the output of a well. This process had been used for over 60 years in more than one million wells. The newer, high-volume horizontal slickwater fracturing, such as would be used locally, is a much newer process. The chemicals in the hydrofracturing fluid could pose environmental hazards, particularly to groundwater. This can be due to surface spills at the drilling site, spillage of fluid during transport to a treatment facility, failure of underground pipe casings, or other unforeseen accidents. Large volumes of recaptured contaminated wastewater also need to be cleaned, processed, and disposed. Other concerns include the industrialization of farmland and open space, damage to roads and bridges from heavy truck traffic, increased housing demand, visual blight, social problems, and a loss of community character.

Development of the shale gas formations has the potential to significantly impact much of the area, including, directly or indirectly, the Town of LaFayette. It is recognized that any type of industrial hydrofracking operations, water withdrawal or transport, waste disposal, or other activities are considered by many in the community to be antithetical to the vision that the Town of LaFayette has for itself. It may be unlikely that significant drilling or extraction will occur within the Town limits, but with land in the Town currently under lease by extraction companies, it is possible. Even if drilling does not occur within the Town, other environmental and social impacts from natural gas extraction could occur.

The Town should remain aware of, and actively involved in, any discussions and appropriate planning related to the industrial use of land or Town roadways for natural gas extraction-related activities. The Town must also guard against any industrial impacts that threaten its rural agrarian character, and create potential for road and other infrastructure damage. The Town should proactively work to ensure that other potential negative impacts are avoided and that the opportunities provided by extraction are measured against potential threats. Local municipalities may be limited in the level of local oversight and control over the extraction of natural resources; however, a number

of communities in New York State have passed zoning changes that effectively prohibit industrial hydrofracking in the community. Because these laws are currently under litigation, the Town will need to work proactively with Onondaga County and other municipalities, and with New York State, to assure protection of the environment and the quality of life treasured by LaFayette residents.

COMMUNITY FORESTRY

Trees and vegetative cover in developed areas benefit communities in many ways. Trees help to manage stormwater, clean the water and air, improve ground water recharge, and provide a home for wildlife. People generally prefer to shop along tree-lined streets in hamlets and villages and to live on tree-lined streets in neighborhoods. Trees can increase property values and improve quality of life in a neighborhood. It is more pleasant to walk along streets lined with trees, as they shield pedestrians from traffic, sun, and wind.

Trees in the LaFayette hamlet and other developed areas in Town positively contribute to the character of those areas, especially large shade trees. They provide visual interest year-round. The Town should plant trees along the streets in the Hamlets of LaFayette and Cardiff, and other more developed parts of Town, where trees are lacking. Large shade trees should be planted where possible, and smaller ornamental trees should be planted under utility wires. The Town should also replace trees in the public right-of-way when they are removed due to damage or age. The Onondaga County Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) office organizes bulk bare-root tree purchasing each fall for municipalities. The Town can participate in this program, and have Highway Department employees or volunteers plant the trees to keep costs low.

In addition to developed areas, salt-tolerant trees can be planted along Interstate 81 to screen the highway from Town, and to screen unattractive buildings or sites from the highway. This will help improve the quality of life in Town, and improve the character of the community to those passing on I-81.

Invasive Species - Invasive species, or non-native species whose introduction causes economic or environmental harm, are a growing problem across the globe. Currently, the most urgent issue with invasive species for municipalities in Central New York is the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). The EAB is an invasive Asian beetle that infests and kills North American ash species (Fraxinus sp.) including green, white, black, and blue ash. It usually kills a tree within two to four years of infestation. The EAB spread recently from Midwestern states and has been found in western New York, the Hudson

Valley, and across the Canadian border, as of 2011. It is thought the borer will reach Central New York soon, if it has not already. In many communities, Ash trees were planted as street trees for many decades, creating a potentially costly situation if they all need to be removed. The Town of LaFayette should prepare by inventorying their street trees in the Hamlets and trees on Town property to determine how many, if any, Ash trees are its responsibility. Infested and dying Ash trees can become a hazard and liability for the community. Any Ash trees found should be monitored on an annual basis and removed if needed. It is possible to treat individual trees to prevent infestation, but this is costly and must be repeated over time, and therefore treatment is only recommended for important and valuable specimen trees. Other invasive species of concern are the Asia Long-Horned Beetle and the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid. Cornell University and the Onondaga County CCE office are useful resources for more information on managing EAB and other threats to community forests.

SUSTAINING OUR NATURAL RESOURCES

Growth is both inevitable and often desirable for a healthy community. The way a community manages its growth directly impacts not only the built environment but also all natural resources within the local jurisdiction and beyond. How growth in the Town of LaFayette might affect land use patterns, open space, and agriculture is discussed in their respective sections in this plan. However, buildings and energy usage have a significant impact on our natural resources, and are discussed here. Utilization of green building techniques, alternative energy sources, and interior home improvements that promote energy efficiency and conservation will make the Town a better place to live.

Green Building – The goal of building more sustainable buildings and making existing buildings "greener" is to reduce the overall impact of the built environment on human health and the natural environment. This can include efficiently using energy, water, and other resources; protecting occupant health; and reducing waste, pollution, and environmental degradation. Currently, buildings contribute over 39% of all carbon dioxide emissions. Most of these emissions come from the combustion of fossil fuels to provide heating, cooling, and lighting, and to power appliances and electrical equipment. The Town should support green building standards for the construction of new buildings and homes. This could include promoting Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards, and using renewable energy sources and new energy saving technologies. See Section VI. Housing for more information.

The Town has an opportunity take a leadership role in green building by modeling sustainability and energy efficiency in its own buildings and practices. The first step to reducing

usage is to make existing buildings more efficient. The Town should hire a contractor to perform an energy audit on the Town Hall, Library, Community Center, and/or other municipally owned buildings. There are currently opportunities with the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) that cover the cost of energy audits for local governments, under their FlexTech program. Typical energy audit results will provide steps that can be taken to improve energy efficiency, and often include the cost and the return on investment, so the Town can determine the most appropriate projects to do. The Town should highlight their experiences in their newsletter or elsewhere, encouraging Town residents to do the same, since at this time most New Yorkers and businesses are eligible for a free or reduced cost home energy audit.

Alternative Energy - After reducing energy usage, the next step to energy independence is to use alternative energy sources. This could include solar photovoltaic, solar thermal, geothermal, wind, biomass energy, hydropower, or methane digesters for farms. Which method is most appropriate will depend on the building's location and the site's environmental factors. The Town has recently updated its zoning code to allow for and regulate windmills. The Town should consider also updating the zoning regulations to allow for and regulate other forms of alternative energy.

There are currently three houses in the Town of LaFayette who have recently installed windmills on their properties. It is likely the trend to use alternative energy sources will continue to grow. The Town can encourage and advance the use of alternative energy by supporting building owners interested in this. LaFayette can also encourage developers of subdivisions to include some form of alternative energy to provide energy for either individual homes, or for the entire development. See Section VI: Housing for more detailed information.

GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

GOAL 1: Future development and redevelopment within the Town will not cause degradation of water resources.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Ensure that DEC regulations regarding stormwater pollution prevention plans are strictly followed for all new developments and that they are properly implemented and managed. Regularly review and revise, as needed, all local regulations dealing with stormwater runoff and retention to maximize protection of surface and groundwater resources.

B) Encourage use of alternative and emerging technologies for existing and new developments, such as pervious paving materials or other green technologies that minimize, redirect, or treat runoff from parking lots and driveways.

C) Utilize the SEQRA process to minimize impacts from development proposals adjacent to, or with the potential to impact, wetlands.

D) Ensure natural gas, and other natural resource extraction, does not harm surface or groundwater resources.

E) Gather third party baseline data for streams and public water sources so that any potential future contamination from natural gas extraction processes can be documented and verified.

F) Implement a program that encourages private property owners to regularly check the quality of their well water in order to determine baseline well water quality before gas drilling using hydraulic fracturing begins in the area.

G) Work with other municipalities, and County, State, and federal governments to preserve and protect the safety, quality, and quantity of the public water supply from any negative impacts related to natural gas extraction processes.

GOAL 2: Minimize flood risk and impacts of flooding

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Discourage new development in the 100-year flood plain. Where such development does occur, ensure that site plan regulations and processes are sufficient to determine that new development will not exacerbate flooding concerns and that projects are designed to minimize risks to safety and property.

B) In the event of a major flood that severely damages properties in the floodway, work to relocate/rebuild structures outside of the floodway.

C) Require new developments to manage stormwater runoff on-site to the greatest extent practicable, as required by the DEC, and encourage the capture and reuse of rainwater.

GOAL 3: Support and promote the use of sustainable technologies and green building practices in the Town.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Encourage energy conservation and efficiencies and promote the use of alternative/clean energy sources in homes and businesses, such as wind, solar, geo-thermal, hydropower, and co-generation. Encourage new construction to be built to LEED, or similar, standards.

B) Lead by example by undertaking energy audits on all Town-owned buildings, and by utilizing alternative energy sources, such as geothermal, wind, solar, and co-generation in all Town-owned building renovation or new construction projects to promote use of green technologies.

C) Publicize the availability of free or low cost energy audits to homeowners and businesses via Town venues and seek grant funds to assist private property owners to make properties more energy efficient and environmentally sustainable.

D) Support the renovation, reuse, or redevelopment of existing buildings as a more environmentally sustainable alternative than new construction due to the embodied energy in existing buildings.

GOAL 4: Ensure that future development and redevelopment within the Town complements and enhances the natural environment while not hindering or impeding desired development.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Inventory and identify sensitive environmental areas in the Town and designate Unique Natural Areas or Critical Environmental Areas as appropriate.

B) Review and amend land use regulations to protect and enhance the natural resources of the community while ensuring that new or enhanced regulations are not overly cumbersome or limiting to new development.

C) Strictly comply with SEQRA for projects that require such review to ensure protection of natural resources.

GOAL 5: Increase and improve the Community Forests in the hamlets and developed areas of the Town to enhance community character.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Establish a tree planting program to fill in areas of the hamlets lacking trees and to ensure a diverse public forest. This includes planting large trees where possible and smaller trees where necessitated by infrastructure.

B) Coordinate with NYS DOT and property owners to plant coniferous, salt tolerant trees along the east side of I-81 to screen less attractive buildings or sites and minimize impacts from the highway.

C) Inventory Ash trees on Town property and in the public right-of-ways. Monitor progress of the Emerald Ash borer in NYS and the health of Ash trees in the community, and take proactive action to project Ash trees of significant value

D) Remain aware of new and emerging threats to the community forest and implement actions to address their impacts.

Section II. Open Space

Open Space is a defining element to the character of the Town of LaFayette and to the quality of life of its residents. "Open Space" is land that has not been exhaustively developed for residential, commercial, industrial, or institutional purposes. It comes in many forms such as vacant land, parks, forests, and farmland, and is both privately and publicly owned. Over half of LaFayette's land is undeveloped or farmland, and another quarter is residential lots with ten or more acres, making open space a dominant feature in the Town's landscape. During visioning sessions for this plan, Town residents made it clear how important this open space is to them. Some of the major themes that came from these sessions include:

- Protect and preserve open space, views, and agricultural landscapes
- Concentrate development in the hamlet area
- Retain the "small town" character and sense of community while building upon assets

These sentiments are not new to the Town, as they were discussed in other planning documents over the years. In the Town's *1988 Land Use Plan*, the plan noted a certain development pattern occurring in Town, where lots along existing highways were being subdivided and developed, while inner lots remained open and the plan noted some issues with this type of development. In the *Focus 2010 Strategic Plan* completed in 2005, one of the four recommendations is to "develop a Master Plan that works hand-in-hand with Town businesses and land owners to protect LaFayette's rural character while addressing the Town's current and future needs and concerns". The plan states that the community appreciates and encourages controlled residential growth, but that uncontrolled development may diminish the town's rural character and their desire to preserve farmland and open space.

EXISTING OPEN SPACE

Approximately fifty-four percent (54%) of land in LaFayette is farmland, forested, parkland, cemeteries, or vacant (see Map 6 at the end of this section). Another 25% of land in the Town consists of residential lots with ten or more acres. The remaining 21% is developed. Most of the open space, however, is not protected. Approximately 25% of land in the Town is somewhat protected from development due to environmental constraints. This includes large portions of land that have relatively steep slopes (over

15%), and floodplains along Butternut and Onondaga Creeks and some of their tributaries. However, these areas can still be developed to varying degrees. Only approximately 6% of Town land is actually protected as permanent open space. This land includes two land trusts, Town and County parks, cemeteries, and wetlands. Additionally there are approximately six miles of Public Fishing Rights (PFR's) in the Town along Butternut Creek, with four parking areas for anglers.

There are no Wildlife Management Areas, State Parks, or State Forests in the Town, leaving no public land for hunting. No part of Town has been designated a Critical Environmental Area (CEA). Local agencies can designate CEAs, which are areas with exceptional or unique character including: a benefit or threat to human health; a natural setting; agricultural, social, cultural, historic, recreational, or educational values; or an inherent ecological, geological, or hydrological sensitivity to change. And finally, no farm in the Town has sold their development rights through New York State's Purchase of Development Rights program.

Topography and Scenic Views- The Town of LaFayette is home to a rolling landscape, with several areas of steep terrain including Bare Mountain, Irish Hill, Mason Hill, Meeker Hill, and the east sides of the Tully and Butternut Valleys. Many of these areas are valuable to the Town from a scenic standpoint. One or more of these hills can be seen at various points along each of the major roads and highways in Town. These viewsheds play a critical role in contributing to the rural character of the Town and providing natural scenic beauty for residents and those traveling through.

Many of the areas described above have slopes that average over 15% according to soils data. Slopes this steep can only be developed at great expense to developers, adjoining property owners, the Town, and the environment. While costly, they can still be developed to varying degrees, however, developing steep slopes can cause safety and environmental issues, such as increased erosion and sedimentation, increased risk of landslides, increased fire hazard, and septic systems can be unreliable. Even slopes averaging 8 to 15 percent can provide development problems, especially with driveway and road construction, road maintenance and snow plowing, stormwater runoff difficulties, soil erosion, and higher construction costs. Protecting these slopes, on the other hand, can preserve natural beauty, add value to properties, and provide educational and recreational opportunities. Careful planning is needed for construction on such sites.

The Town can begin its efforts to protect valued scenic views, and steep slopes that contribute to these views, by identifying and mapping important viewsheds and

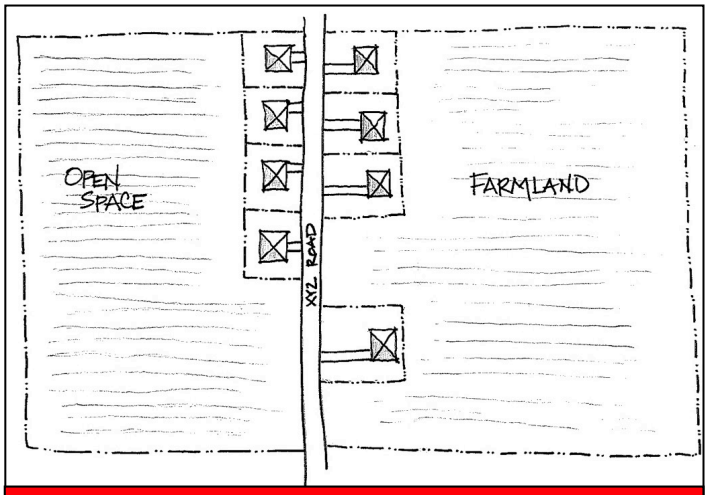
scenic views from key roads, public parks, and other locations valued by the community. After these are identified, the municipality can work with landowners and developers to minimize the impact of development on these views through careful design. There are also a variety of regulatory measures the Town can take to reduce the impact of development on steep slopes. These may include:

- Using overlay zones or development guidelines to limit the density of residential development, restrict incompatible land uses, or establish other specialized regulations
- Requiring conditional use permits for development on steep slopes
- Limiting the construction of streets or utility lines on steep slopes
- Establishing design guidelines that include screening to minimize the visual impact of development
- Requiring subdivisions to cluster lots outside of areas of concern

Agricultural Land as Open Space- Much of the Town's open space is agricultural land, particularly west of I-81, in the southeast part of Town, and along Eager Road. In addition to the many active agricultural lots, there are various abandoned agricultural lots which also contribute to the community's open space and have the potential to be farmed again in the future. Agriculture in the Town is discussed in more depth in Section III: Agriculture. It is important to note the critical role agricultural land plays in contributing to the Town's open space and rural character.

DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

During the 1990s an average of 14 building permits were issued each year, and between 2000 and 2006, that rose to an average of 26 each year. While LaFayette had less development than other parts of Onondaga County, cumulatively development has still had a dramatic impact on the landscape, particularly due to the pattern of development. Clusters of development exist in the LaFayette and Cardiff Hamlets, Jamesville Reservoir area, around the high school, and in the Meeker Hill Estates and Maple Grove subdivisions. However, environmental constraints and a lack of water and sewer infrastructure has deterred concentrated development elsewhere. Instead, much of the Town's development over the years has occurred along rural highways and major roads.



Typical development patterns along many roads in LaFayette consists of development of frontage lots, hiding the view of open space and farmland behind

Over time many of the frontage lots have been developed along many of the Town's highways. Smaller parcels along roads have been separated from larger parcels and developed. Along portions of some highways, such as the northern sections of Coye Road and Apulia Road, nearly every frontage lot has been developed. This pattern is probably due to several factors. In some areas, lots are too steep to develop, except immediately adjacent to the roads. In other cases, farmers continue to farm their land, but sell portions of their farm to provide family members with land, or for additional income, especially for larger one-time expenses like buying a new tractor or sending a child to college. The portion sold is often along the road frontage, because there is no need to build a road to the interior of the property. This has also occurred on many vacant lots in Town, probably also to avoid the costly construction of new roads. While this type of development is understandable, there are several reasons it should be avoided. As more frontage lots are developed along these through roads and highways, more potential conflict points are created between cars traveling on the highway and cars entering the road from residential parcels. In addition, this type of development effectively hides existing picturesque open space behind a thin crust of development. For example, a road that was once lined by farms can still remain mostly open, but with houses lining the road, the farmland and open space are no longer visible.

WHY PROTECT OPEN SPACE

Open space is an important contributing feature to the rural character of the Town of LaFayette and to the quality of life of its residents. Protecting open space preserves scenic views and agricultural land, which contribute to that character. Protecting open space also protects important wildlife habitat, drinking water quality and quantity, and important water bodies such as wetlands and streams. It also provides opportunities for new trail development, passive recreation, and environmental education. Onondaga County has expressed an interest in preserving open space throughout the county in their *2001 Settlement Plan*. Specifically, they express a "desire to maintain continuous natural corridors, which are essential to wildlife and other ecological systems". Due to the environmental constraints to development in some areas of the Town, and the recent slowdown in development, this is an opportune time for the Town to work towards preserving open space that protects scenic views, agricultural land, and existing ecological systems.

TOOLS FOR PROTECTING OPEN SPACE

There are a variety of steps the Town can take to help protect and preserve their open space, including developing an open space plan, implementing zoning changes, or rewriting the Town's zoning ordinance.

Open Space Plan- The Town can develop an Open Space Plan which would comprehensively plan for preserving scenic views, agricultural land, and continuous natural corridors. A plan involves a comprehensive and focused look at open space, including an inventory and analysis of development patterns, infrastructure, the regional context, existing conservation and recreation lands, and environmental conditions. The

plan should analyze the Town's needs, set a community vision for open space, prioritize areas of protection, consider the promotion of agricultural endeavors, provide suggested locations for trail systems, and provide overall goals and objectives. The plan should include a Natural and Cultural Resources Inventory, including open space and views, to better understand and map important resources and viewsheds from key roads, public parks, and other locations valued by the community. An Open Space Plan could be completed by the Town's existing Environmental Conservation and Advisory Board, or by a separate committee appointed by the Town.

Open Space Scoring System- The plan may also include an Open Space Scoring System to help determine the value of particular properties since it is difficult to determine the value, or public benefit, of open space. A scoring system can help to alleviate some of the subjectivity involved based on individual opinions. It provides a point value to a property based on the presence or absence of certain amenities, such as wetlands, steep slopes, scenic views, or if the location is adjacent to existing parks and preserves. A Natural and Cultural Resources Inventory should be referenced when scoring properties. The scoring system can then be used in two situations. If someone offers to donate property to the Town, or property is for sale, the Town can use the scoring system to gauge the merit of accepting or buying the property. While evaluating site plans and subdivision proposals, the scoring system can also be used; not to stop development, but to reshape the proposal to protect important open space (i.e. use conservation design principles, include a buffer, etc). It should be noted, however that there is still a level of subjectivity involved in determining the value of a property, and while the scoring system can be a useful tool, it should not be the only basis for making decisions, especially if common sense and logic disagree.

Land Trusts- In the Town of LaFayette Central New York Land Trusts (CNYLT) owns two parcels, which are preserved in their natural state in perpetuity. Land Trusts are typically established by private or non-profit organizations who work to conserve land by acquiring land or conservation easements for land. CNYLT's mission is to "*protect vital natural areas in Central New York for the health of the environment and the enjoyment of the public*". They typically acquire land either by donation or purchase and then keep it in its natural state. This is an important tool that can be used to preserve scenic views, unique ecological features, and contiguous stretches of land.

Purchase of Development Rights (PDR)- A PDR consists of a private party (typically an organization) purchasing the development potential of a property, thereby guaranteeing the preservation of valuable farmland or natural open space. This allows the landowner to continue to farm the land, and own all other rights to the property,

except the right to develop it. In Onondaga County, the American Farmland Trust and New York Agricultural and Farmland Trust hold the conservation easements and provide easement stewardship on behalf of the County. Nine farms in Onondaga County have secured NYS grant funding to do this since 1998, however, there is limited funding and no farms in LaFayette have secured funding through this program. In LaFayette, many farmers have periodically sold off portions of their property along the road frontage for additional income, as described earlier in this section. Onondaga County has suggested a **Modified Purchase of Development Rights** program in their 2001 Settlement Plan, where instead of purchasing development rights for an entire property, organizations focus instead on the front 400 feet with their purchases. This preserves the rural highway view, while providing the landowner with the additional income they need. Since there is limited funding, the advantage to this form of PDR is that it is less costly, however many PDR programs would require purchase of development rights for the entire property.

Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations-There are a variety of zoning tools that can be used to preserve open space, however, instead of covering all of them, the following are tools that are most appropriate for LaFayette based on existing development patterns, environmental and community needs, and the Town's capacity to manage them. The Town of LaFayette can rewrite its Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations, carefully considering what changes can be made to protect and preserve open space. When doing so the Town should include a "Purpose and Intent" at the beginning of each document explaining their policy to preserve open space, and other land use goals they would like to achieve. Changes to the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations is discussed further in Section XII: Land Use and Zoning.

Conservation Subdivision Design (CSD)- As mentioned previously, developing a Modified Purchase of Development Rights Program may help preserve farmland along highways. However, this has limited effect when a larger lot is subdivided. In such cases, Conservation Subdivision Design should be used to help protect open space. In areas of LaFayette where there are unique, scenic, or significant natural features to be preserved, such as steep slopes, wetlands, streams, or farmland, CSD should be employed. Conservation subdivisions can be likened to golf course communities without the golf course. With both types of development, there is careful attention to site design, proximity to a recreational amenity, a guarantee that the view onto open space won't change, and an exclusivity to the community, all of which make the properties more desirable on the market. However, with conservation subdivision design, instead of a golf course, there is natural open space, such as a meadow or woodlands. Unique, scenic, or significant natural features are identified and the site is designed to preserve large contiguous blocks of it. Homes and lots are laid out to maximize visual and physical access to the open space, with homes clustered together on smaller lots (but with an average overall density no greater than with conventional subdivision design). An easement or other mechanism protects the remaining open space.

Conservation Subdivision Design has many benefits for developers, the Town, homeowners, and neighboring citizens according to the *Conservation Subdivision Design Handbook* and studies completed on CSD. The review process can be smoother because usually fewer people object to preserving open space; road construction costs

are reduced, and therefore road maintenance costs for the Town are lower; the open space acts as a built-in marketing strategy for the developer; and homes sell faster and appreciate faster than in conventional subdivisions, benefiting homeowners. This type of development requires several factors for it to work: the presence of a real estate market for higher-end homes, and the presence of desirable site features. Many kinds of features can be preserved, but some are more marketable than others, such as mature woodlands rather than a recently restored forest. Additionally, some types of agriculture are better suited for CSD than others. Hayfields, orchards, Christmas tree farms, and some organic farming are usually more compatible, while noise, dust, chemicals, and odors associated with some other farming may be undesirable. Ownership of the open space will vary depending on the land, but usually is held by a homeowner's association, a farmer, or the Town, with a conservation easement held by the owner, or a third party, such as a non-profit land trust.

It should be noted that Conservation Subdivision Design is similar to Cluster Development however, the latter does not necessarily involve the careful protection of unique features.

In LaFayette, CSD should be used to protect steep slopes, scenic views, wetlands, floodplains, compatible agriculture, or other features as appropriate. CSD can be encouraged across the entire Town, but should be required in areas with an abundance of these features. For example, along Tully Farms Road, Route 11A, Eager Road, Apulia Road, and portions of Route 20.

Successful Conservation Subdivision Design requires innovative local government leaders. It is important that the Planning, Zoning, and Town Boards are educated in the elements involved in CSD. The Planning Board in particular will need to be more educated in the process of CSD in order to negotiate well with developers.

Steep Slope Zoning Guidelines- While Conservation Subdivision Design will help to protect steep slopes and scenic views that may be affected by larger subdivisions, they will not protect steep slopes from houses built on individual lots on hillsides. LaFayette should also add Steep Slope Guidelines to its Zoning Ordinance. Guidelines should require site plan review for any type of development on parcels with slopes greater than 15% and restrict development on slopes over 25%. Steep Slope guidelines should be applicable to all zoning districts in the Town. The guidelines should require that development proposals have sufficient detail to show site work (cut and fill), housing site location, erosion and drainage control measures, and road location. The guidelines should also include design principles such as, landscaping areas around structures to make them compatible with natural terrain, clustering residential units so there is minimum spoilage of land, shaping the grading to complement the existing land forms, encouraging split-level building sites, and retaining outstanding natural features, such as the highest crest of a hill range or natural rock outcroppings.

GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

GOAL 6: Preserve LaFayette's rural character and open space while allowing for controlled residential and commercial growth.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Develop an Open Space Plan that identifies specific areas the Town wishes to preserve.

B) Work with farm owners, Onondaga County, the American Farmland Trust, and the New York Agricultural and Farmland Trust to include LaFayette farms in the County's Purchase of Development Rights program and to determine the feasibility of developing a Modified Purchase of Development Rights program.

C) Promote residential and commercial development in and around the LaFayette Hamlet area to preserve open space in the rest of the Town.

GOAL 7: Re-examine and re-write LaFayette's Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations to include elements designed to preserve and protect open space in the Town.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Include Steep Slope Zoning Guidelines in the Town's Zoning Ordinance. Guidelines should apply to all zoning districts and should require site plan review for all development on slopes averaging 15% or higher.

B) Utilize Conservation Subdivision Design to protect steep slopes, scenic views, farmland, wetlands, floodplains, and other unique or significant natural features.

C) Provide adequate training for Planning and Zoning Board members to successfully implement new zoning and subdivision regulations.

Section III. Agriculture

Agriculture plays an important role in LaFayette, contributing both to the economy and to the open space and rural character of the Town. 91% of land is zoned Agricultural-Residential, and 4,775 acres, or almost 18% of land in the Town is used for productive agriculture, with another 362 acres classified as primary residential with productive agriculture. According to Real Property Data there are approximately 51 landowners that have parcels associated with agriculture in the Town. Presumably some of these owners run joint operations with other owners; rent some or all of their parcels to other farmers; or use farmland in LaFayette to support farms located outside of the Town boundaries. These farms are part of the 692 farms, or 150,499 acres of agricultural land county-wide. The average farm size of an Onondaga County farm is 217 acres. According to the Census of Agriculture Onondaga County farms made record breaking total farm sales of $137.3 million in 2007, up from $82.1 million in 2002.

The majority of farms in LaFayette belong to one of two agriculture districts. Onondaga County Agriculture District 1 includes farms west of I-81 in the Towns of LaFayette, Tully, Onondaga, and Otisco and District 4 includes farms east of I-81 in the Towns of LaFayette, Tully, Pompey, Fabius, and Dewitt (See Map 7). An initial inventory of farms in the Town of LaFayette using Real Property Data from 2010 shows 94 productive agricultural parcels under 51 different owners. LaFayette has 5,136 acres of productive agricultural land, including land used for dairy products, field crops, orchards, and more (see Table 1 below).

TABLE 1: AGRICULTURAL LAND IN THE TOWN OF LAFAYETTE

TYPE	DESCRIPTION	ACRES
Dairy Products	For raising livestock for milk, butter, and cheese	852
Field Crops	Potatoes, wheat, hay, corn, oats, or other field crops	2,103
Orchard Crops	Apples, pears, peaches, cherries, etc	461
Productive Agricultural	Land used as part of an operational farm, not specifically related to other categories	1,338
Residential & Agricultural	Primary residential, also used in agricultural production	362
	TOTAL	**5,136**

Source: 2010 Real Property Data

The types of farms in LaFayette are fairly consistent with other farming types found in southern Onondaga County. As detailed in the County's 1997 Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan, almost half of the orchards in the county were in the Towns of LaFayette and Onondaga. In addition, the County has a huge livestock industry, with dairy cattle being the most numerous. Corn and alfalfa, which support the dairy industry, are the top two acreage consuming crops in Onondaga County. These dairy farms and associated livestock are mostly in the southern half of the county. LaFayette only has two dairy farms based in Town, each with approximately 100 cows; however, much of the more than 2,000 acres of field crops in LaFayette is presumed to be used to support other farms associated with the dairy industry.

While not categorized separately above, there are several horse farms in the Town as well. The horse industry in Onondaga County is made up of pleasure, draft, and race horse operations. The County is supportive of horse operations with major shows like the New York State Fair and other competitions held at the fairgrounds in Syracuse and the draft horse sale held in nearby Cortland County.

AGRICULTURE AND THE LOCAL AND REGIONAL ECONOMY

Agriculture is an important part of the local and regional economy. A number of businesses in LaFayette are agricultural or equine based. As mentioned previously, there are almost 700 farms in Onondaga County, who made a record breaking $137.3 million in total farm sales in 2007 (from the most recent Census of Agriculture). The average market value of products sold per farm was $198,515. Between 2002 and 2007, the number of part and full time farm businesses decreased by 4.5%, however, the number of farms with over $10,000 gross farm sales increased from 325 farms to 338. The average net cash farm income of operations was $63,758 per farm, up from $17,019 in 2002. Additionally, the number of farms reporting net gains rose 13% between 2002 and 2007.

TABLE 2: OVERVIEW OF FARMS IN ONONDAGA COUNTY, NY		
	2002	**2007**
Number of Farms	725	692
Land in Farms	156,284 acres	150,499 acres
Average Size of Farm	216 acres	217 acres
Market Value of Total Products Sold	$82,164,000	$137,372,000
Avg. per Farm of Products Sold	$113,330	$198,515
Avg. per Farm Net Cash Farm Income of Operations	$17,019	$63,758
# of Farms with net gains	293	330
# of Farms with net losses	435	362

Source: 2007 Census of Agriculture

The economic impact of the agricultural industry goes beyond total farm sales. Three main sectors of the industry include farm production, direct farm sales, and agribusiness, and each sector supports and relies on the others. Farming supports a wide variety of agribusiness through the purchase of feed, fuel, fertilizers, chemicals, maintenance, machinery, and more. A study in Onondaga County, conducted by Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE), found that, on average, farm operators buy the majority of all supplies and services within 30 miles of their farm. In 2007, Onondaga County farms spent $21.7 million on feed, $15.4 million on hired farm labor, $12.7 million on supplies, repairs, and maintenance, $6.2 million on gasoline, fuel, and oils, and $4.8 million on fertilizer and soil conditioners.

While the economic outlook for farming in Onondaga County may look promising, it can still be a struggle financially for some farms. Profit margins are tight for many, and while fewer farms are reporting net losses, several hundred across the County still do. In 2007, over $2 million in government payments were paid to 230 Onondaga County farms through an array of farm programs, including direct payments, countercyclical payments, loan deficiency payments, emergency payments, and conservation payments.

Local Food Movement - The local food movement trend has been growing in the Central New York Region in the last few years. More area residents are interested in where their food comes from and are eating sustainably. For many this means eating locally grown and raised food which means less consumption of oil for transporting and which contains fewer pesticides. In recent years the area has seen an increase in farmer's markets and increased attendance at the Central New York Regional Market. Many new restaurants in the area have made commitments to buying locally grown food. Local specialty food markets, including the Syracuse Real Food Co-op and Natur-Tyme in Dewitt, have seen increased business and have plans to expand in 2012. A new local specialty food store, Green Planet, opened in Camillus in 2010. And finally, several local advocacy groups have formed, including Slow Food CNY and Syracuse First.

It is unclear at this point if the local food movement will be a long term trend or not. It is also unclear if this type of movement will increase business for agriculture as a

whole across the region, or simply for a few select farms. The trend, however, does provide an economic opportunity for farmers who are searching for supplemental income. This could be in the form of agri-tourism endeavors, direct sales to area stores and restaurants, or creating opportunities for direct farm sales to customers. This could include offering farm stays, apple picking, or cheese making classes, or selling value-added products such as apple cider, apple pie filling, maple products, or cheese. It may be hard for some dairy farms to take advantage of this if their primary product is milk, since their milk is processed off of the farm. However, other dairy farms and orchards can benefit from this, along with the few vegetable and beef farms in Town. While numbers are not available for the Town of LaFayette, in 2007, 39 of the Onondaga County's 692 farms produced and sold value-added commodities, and only 11 farms generated income from agri-tourism and recreational services.

The LaFayette Apple Festival takes place each fall at the Apple Festival grounds along Route 20 (See Section IV. Economic Development for a more detailed description). This annual festival draws tens of thousands of visitors each year, providing beneficial exposure to the community and area orchards, and revealing the rural and farming character of the Town to visitors. This exposure provides an opportunity for area farmers to continue to expand the area's agri-tourism offerings, gain from the local food movement, and grow financially.

LOCAL ASSETS TO FARMING

Soils - Onondaga County soils have been categorized as some of the best in New York State. The southern portions of the County have alluvial soils along valley bottoms, which means they are fine grained fertile soils deposited by water flowing over flood plains. Some deep acid soils on glacial till over hilly terrain can also be found in this portion of the County. The majority of soils in the Town of LaFayette are considered to be of significant local importance. (See Map 8: Agricultural Soils). Most of these soils are Prime Farmland Soils, which means they have the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops. Minimal fertilizer and energy is needed. There are also soils classified as Farmland of Statewide Importance, which means they provide fair to good yields of crops when treated and managed according to sound agricultural practices. LaFayette's high quality soils are an important asset to area farmers.

Location - Agriculture in and around the Town of LaFayette has a strong system of infrastructure, support businesses, and nearby markets to support the industry. Interstate Route 81 and US Route 20 provide easy transport for trucks taking product to

markets or for supplies to be brought to farms. The Town is minutes from the City of Syracuse, with a population of approximately 150,000 people, and within the Syracuse Metro Area, with over 662,000 people according to the 2010 Census. In addition, the Town is within a day's drive of over 130 million people, including New York City, Boston, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Buffalo, and Toronto. The many dairy farms in the area have several milk processing facilities nearby, including Byrne Dairy, Preble Milk Cooperative Inc, Cortland Bulk, and Dairy Marketing Services. There are also several feed suppliers in and near the Town, including CNY Feeds, JJ Feeds Inc, and Lee's Feed Store. And finally, there are several local machinery dealerships nearby, including Cazenovia Equipment and Amidon Tractor Sales.

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES

Sustainable agriculture involves food production methods that are healthy for people and animals, do not harm the environment or deplete natural resources, are humane for workers, provide a fair wage to the farmer, and support and enhance rural communities. With many aspects of sustainable farming to consider, there are a variety of ways in which farmers are or can incorporate sustainability into their work.

Field crops supporting dairy farms dominate the agricultural landscape in LaFayette and Onondaga County. Many dairy farming practices are already sustainable in nature, especially as it relates to protecting the environment and conserving natural resources. Cow manure is used as organic fertilizer for cropland and compost, reducing the need for commercial fertilizers that use fossil fuels. Onondaga County farmers are able to grow and buy feed for their cows locally, also reducing the need to ship feed great distances. Water is recycled on farms to wash barn alleys and irrigate fields. Farmers take care to spread manure on fields responsibly, to prevent the pollution of the local waterways they depend on for their cows. However, the livestock industry is responsible for 18% of greenhouse gas emissions worldwide, with the dairy sector estimated to be responsible for 2-5% of all emissions. Researchers' suggestions for solutions are limited so far, but include using higher production cows and using methane digesters. While some larger dairy farms in Onondaga County are using methane digesters, smaller farms cannot afford the high up front cost. Recent research has also found that injecting liquid manure into crop fields below the surface, and immediately incorporating manure into the soil, reduces ammonia emissions.

Practicing rotational or management intensive grazing is another way to protect the environment. Rotational grazing utilizes repeating periods of grazing and rest among two or more pastures with cattle, sheep, pigs, chickens, or other animals. The animals graze one portion of the pasture, while the other portion recovers. This allows the vegetation to renew energy reserves and deepen root systems, and often improves animal productivity and temperament. Per the 2007 Census of Agriculture, in Onondaga County, 148 of the 692 total farms practiced rotational or management intensive grazing. It is unknown how many farms in the Town of LaFayette practice rotational grazing.

Organic farming is a growing industry both in dairy and elsewhere in agriculture. For dairy farmers, the higher price a farmer receives for organic milk has generated

interest in becoming organic. However, to be organic, a cow's feed needs to be grown on land free of chemicals for three years, cows cannot be treated with hormones or antibiotics, and cows must graze for at least four months of the year, among other requirements. This makes organic dairy farming much more realistic for smaller farms with fewer cows. In 2007 there were 21 farms used for organic production in Onondaga County, and eight farms used for organic livestock and poultry products. There are few, if any, organic farms in LaFayette.

The agricultural industry is also working toward becoming more sustainable, and saving money over the long-term, by using alternative energy sources. This can include windmills, solar panels, or methane digesters for larger dairy farms. According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, only 7 of Onondaga County's 692 farms are generating energy or electricity on their farm. The Town of LaFayette recently updated its Zoning Ordinance to allow for up to 3 windmills on any farm actively used for agricultural purposes. It is unknown how many farms are using alternative energy sources in LaFayette, and the dairy farms in Town are not large enough to be able to afford methane digesters. However, with three residential lots in LaFayette having installed windmills as of 2011, it is likely some farmers will as well.

LOCAL CHALLENGES TO FARMING

Farm Consolidation- In November of 2009, a District 1 Farm survey was conducted by Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) and results are outlined in the District's Eight-Year Review dated March 2010. Thirty-two of the thirty-eight respondents reported different combinations of farm consolidations, fewer farms, and more houses. Several dairy farm operations have significantly increased their herd sizes, requiring more land, and farms in general are consolidating and growing. To meet their needs, many farms have purchased land from smaller farm operations and former rental lands, creating a competitive land market. This can be a challenge for smaller farmers who have lost the rented farmland they need to support their businesses. However it is important to note that this can also be helpful to some smaller farms, particularly those operated by older farmers who are planning to retire but have no family to take over the farm. The competitive land market allows them to sell or rent their properties when they might not have had that option otherwise.

Residential Development- Additional housing in District 1 has also brought challenges for many farmers. Between 1970 and 2000, Onondaga County's overall population declined from 472,835 to 458,336, however, the Syracuse Urbanized Area almost doubled in size from 96 square miles to 184. Over that same time period Onondaga County farm acres declined by 76 square miles. As a result, the northern portion of District 1 is becoming increasingly urbanized as water and sewer infrastructure is extended, especially in the Town of Onondaga, LaFayette's neighbor.

In the four Towns across District 1, this increase in residential development has been a challenge for many farms, although a few have found that the increase in houses has increased business. In the 2009 CCE survey, farmers noted that new neighbors have complained about noise, odors, manure, mud, and hours of operation. New

neighbors who used to live in urban or suburban neighborhoods are often uneducated about rural living. New York State has a Right-to-Farm Law meant to help protect farms. It offers farms in agricultural districts limited protection from private nuisance claims, and requires landowners in an agricultural district to provide a prospective buyer with a notice advising them about the sights, sounds, and smells associated with modern agriculture before they sign a purchase agreement. However, this is still an issue in the area.

A few farmers who were surveyed also noted issues such as ATVs trespassing and damaging crops, and the loss of rental land because more houses are being built. In addition, increased taxes and traffic from residential development is an ongoing problem. In 2002, 32% of the average farm operator's net income was used to pay property taxes in Onondaga County. This went down to 9.5% in 2007, but only because profits increased significantly. Because of the large amount of land needed, farmers are more susceptible to rising property taxes, especially when profits are down.

TOOLS FOR STRENGTHENING AGRICULTURE

There are a variety of zoning and other tools LaFayette can use to support agriculture. The Town should be sure that the tools they use support and do not hinder the development of smaller low-impact farms that serve local markets. These tools should also be used to encourage the growth of a wide range of agricultural services and businesses to support a sustainable local farming community.

Zoning Ordinance - The majority of land in the Town, 91%, is zoned Agricultural-Residential. This zoning permits farms and single-family dwellings without site plan approval, unless a lot is subdivided. This allows for agriculture in a large portion of the Town; however, the reality is that 38% of land is used for residential lots while only 17% is used for agriculture. With limited zoning districts dedicated to residential uses, conflict can arise between farmers and their residential neighbors. Certain types of farming are not compatible with residential areas due to the associated noises, odors, chemicals, conflicting hours, and other farming practices. As noted previously, this can create issues for working farmers, and also create an uneasy situation for homebuyers who are not sure if the neighboring lot may one day become a farm. Designating areas for residential growth and preserving larger blocks for agricultural production can help alleviate these issues. Since the Agricultural-Residential Zoning district has been a part of LaFayette's zoning for many decades it will take careful planning to change this, but it can be done.

Subdivision Regulations - The Town's Subdivision Regulations encourage the preservation of unique and natural features when possible, but they do not mention farmland. The subdivision regulations should include the preservation of the natural and scenic qualities of open lands and farmlands as part of the main purpose of the regulations to help developers understand the Town's goals. The Subdivision Regulations can also require the review of the potential impacts of new subdivisions on productive farmland and nearby farm operations, stipulating design standards that would help reduce negative impacts. For more detailed information see Section XII. Land Use and Zoning.

Town Right-to-Farm Law – As previously mentioned, farmers enrolled in state-certified agricultural districts receive important "right-to-farm" protections. The Town can also adopt a local right-to-farm law aimed at maintaining a supportive environment for agriculture by limiting conflicts between farmers and non-farm neighbors. A local right-to-farm law should document the importance of farming to the Town and notify non-farm rural residents that generally accepted agricultural practices are to be expected in farming areas. The law can also establish dispute resolution processes to mediate conflicts and avoid expensive legal battles. The New York State Agricultural Mediation Program (NYSAMP) can provide mediators trained in resolving disputes involving agricultural issues. For a Town right-to-farm law to be effective the Town must widely promote the dispute resolution process.

Purchase of Development Rights (PDR)- A PDR is where a private party (typically an organization) purchases the development potential of a property, guaranteeing its preservation as farmland. This allows the landowner to continue to farm the land, and own all other rights to the property, except the right to develop it. In Onondaga County, the American Farmland Trust and New York Agricultural and Farmland Trust hold the conservation easements and provide easement stewardship on behalf of the County. While nine farms in Onondaga County have secured funding for this since 1998, no farms in LaFayette have. A PDR program is a good way to preserve farmland and open space, while also providing the farmland owner with some financial support. See Section II. Open Space for more information regarding using PDR programs to preserve open space).

GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

GOAL 8: Support low-impact, sustainable agriculture as an important part of LaFayette's economy and rural character.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Develop an Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan.

B) Update the Town Zoning Ordinance to better support agriculture. Updates should support a farm-friendly business environment and small-scaled farms, and reduce the likelihood of conflicts between farms and non-farm neighbors by

providing for growth in appropriate areas and stabilizing larger blocks of agricultural land.

C) Adopt a Town Right-to-Farm Law aimed at maintaining a supportive operating environment for farmers by limiting potential conflicts between farmers and non-farm neighbors. This law should document the importance of farming to the Town and notify non-farm rural residents that generally accepted agricultural practices are to be expected in farming areas.

D) Work with the Cornell Cooperative Extension on educational outreach regarding issues such as alternative energy, agri-tourism, etc.

E) Encourage the use of Onondaga County's Purchase of Development Rights Program for LaFayette farms to preserve farmland and support farm operators financially.

GOAL 9: Utilize agriculture as a means of economic growth in LaFayette.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Encourage area farmers, including equine related farms, dairy farms, and apple orchards, to develop an agri-tourism industry in the Town.

B) Advocate for more programs and projects that strengthen the region's agricultural industry with the Onondaga County Office of Economic Development and other agencies.

C) Capitalize on LaFayette's annual Apple Festival as a means of branding the Town.

D) Encourage growth in a wide range of local agricultural services and businesses in support of a sustainable local farming community including local processing and markets.

Section IV. Economic Development

The Town of LaFayette's median household income is $65,301, higher than Onondaga County's median of $50,129 and New York State's $55,233, according to the Census Bureau's 2009 American Community Survey (ACS). Also per the 2009 ACS, LaFayette's unemployment rate was estimated at 4.3%, compared to Onondaga County's 6.1% and New York State's 7.0%. Unemployment rates overall have since risen to 8.6%, in Onondaga County in February of 2012. It would seem that LaFayette residents are doing well financially compared to Onondaga County, however, 31% of the Town's population has a low to moderate income. In other words, 31% of town residents live in households that make less then 80% of the median income. For example, in Onondaga County, a family of four, earning less than $51,450, is considered a low to moderate income household.

In addition to a 31% low to moderate income population, another issue the Town faces is that LaFayette is primarily a bedroom community to the City of Syracuse and does not provide a significant number of jobs to its residents within the Town. The 2009 ACD notes that LaFayette residents travel an average of 21.1 minutes to get to work each day. While this is not much higher than the county's average of 19 minutes, it is a sign that many residents travel outside of the Town to work. Traffic patterns on Interstate 81 and at exit 15 indicate the same trend. According to the NYS Department of Transportation, each day approximately 2,000 cars enter I-81 at exit 15 and travel northbound, then at some later point in the day return south.

The Town of LaFayette's largest employer is the LaFayette school district, employing approximately 200 people. Onondaga County's five largest employers include the Upstate University Health System, Syracuse University, Wegmans, Saint Joseph's Hospital, and Crouse Hospital. According to 2009 ACS data, the largest employment sector filled by LaFayette residents is "Educational services, and health care and social assistance". 833 people, or 30.5% of working Town residents are employed in this field. While many of them work for the LaFayette School District, it can be assumed many more commute to Syracuse, as four of the County's top five employers fall into this category, and these employers are easily accessible from LaFayette.

While many of LaFayette's residents will continue to commute to Syracuse in the future, it is important that the Town have a healthy economy that can provide jobs for its residents and provide support to the Town's tax base. In order to counteract these economic circumstances and rebuild and reinvent the Town's economy, it is imperative

that a strong and focused economic development program is in place. Currently, the Town does not have an economic development department or staffing. Instead the Onondaga County Office of Economic Development (OCOED) is responsible for promoting economic development throughout the County, including the Town.

Where possible, the Town's economic development program should advocate for county tax incentives and reduced fees for entities creating jobs and bringing wealth to the community. Public water must be provided to businesses and properties around the Hamlet area. It is also important to support existing and small businesses with their growth plans.

Some of the economic development issues facing the Town, and available economic opportunities, are detailed below.

EXISTING BUSINESSES

There are approximately 100 existing businesses in the Town of LaFayette. Based on a review of a Chamber of Commerce mailing list, which includes most of the Town's businesses, the majority of LaFayette's businesses are service based, construction and home repair, retail, or agriculture and equine based. Other businesses include restaurants, real estate services, auto repair, financial, and health services. There are only two manufacturing companies in the Town.

In 2011, a student enrolled in Syracuse University's Maxwell School worked with the Town to complete a Business Survey in LaFayette to help understand what barriers businesses face. The survey was mailed to 80 businesses, and 22 responded (a 27.5% response rate). Some of the more significant results are noted below:

- 36% were home based
- 59% have been in business for over 21 years
- 75% said there are goods and services they cannot get in LaFayette
- Businesses stated customers were: local (73%) or visitors/commuters (23%)
- 59% did not have a website for their business
- 36% planned to add employees in the near future

The survey asked businesses for suggestions to improve the business environment in the Town. Many of the answers fell into three categories:

- Pro-business: more freedom for businesses to expand and new ones to come in
- Fix the four-corners: clean it up and improve the hamlet area
- Water and Sewer: having water and sewer would help some businesses with their operations, and would increase the population base, therefore increasing businesses' customer bases

Prior to the 2011 survey, a Business Demand Survey was completed in 2007, also by a Syracuse University student. The goal of the survey was to collect information regarding the level of demand for various businesses, products, or services. Residents

were particularly interested in having more restaurants and a grocery store in the Town. In addition, a majority were also interested in a fitness center, building supply store, more banking options, and more handyman/woman services.

Small Business - In December 2009, the New York State Task Force on Small Business issued a report with recommendations. The report identified specific barriers to small business growth, which included the cost of doing business in New York, the difficulty accessing financial capital, including operating and start up capital, and the availability of technical assistance.

Smaller businesses are vital to the Town's economy. 82% of businesses in LaFayette employ less than five people, and none of the survey respondents employed more than 21 people. Successful small businesses, whether existing or startup, need access to both capital and training. Onondaga Community College (OCC), located in Syracuse, has a Small Business Development Center (SBDC) accessible to small businesses in the region, including LaFayette. They provide direct one-to-one counseling, at no charge, on business problems facing existing businesses or individuals considering starting a small business. They also provide educational programs targeted to the needs and interests of small businesses. This is an important resource businesses in the Town can avail themselves.

Many of the small businesses in the Town of LaFayette are home based businesses. Some of these businesses could be in a position now, or at a future time, to expand outside of the home. One way to bring more activity to the Hamlet is to encourage these businesses to move into buildings and offices in the Hamlet area, including into formerly residential structures. Again, the OCC Small Business Development Center can be a resource in assisting businesses with taking the steps necessary for a successful move.

Agriculture - Farming and farm related businesses are an important part of LaFayette's economy. 17.6% of land in the Town is actively farmed. The 2000 Census states that 62 people, or 2.4% of the Town's population is employed in "Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining". While this may seem like a small number, a larger proportion of the Town's businesses are farms, greenhouses, or farm related businesses. Addressing the needs and issues farms and related businesses face will strengthen the Town's economy as a whole. See Section III: Agriculture.

HAMLET

The Hamlet includes the greatest concentration of businesses in the Town. These range from small homegrown businesses to branches or stores that are part of large corporations. Oftentimes, a community focuses its economic development efforts on attracting new manufacturing facilities, which employ large numbers. The reality is that the vast majority of new jobs created in the country are created by small businesses such as those found in the Hamlet. In the 2007 Business Demand Survey, 78% of respondents said they would prefer development in the LaFayette Hamlet as opposed to the Jamesville Hamlet or elsewhere.

Building a strong Hamlet economy and supporting small businesses should be a primary focus of the Town's economic development efforts. Efforts to expand existing and attract new businesses should focus on the Hamlet area. However, the Town must be cognizant of the fact that economic development in a Hamlet takes a very different approach than typical economic development efforts, and may include measures that, historically, may not have been considered economic development, such as façade renovations or community events. Specific actions to revitalize the Hamlet are detailed in Section V: Hamlet Development.

Public Water - Access to public water in the hamlet area is key to attracting new businesses and expanding LaFayette's economic base. Many businesses need public water in order to operate or expand their services. In addition, as many businesses acknowledged in the 2011 Business Survey, public water will potentially increase the population of the hamlet area, increasing the customer base for businesses. One in three respondents to the 2011 Business Survey said municipal water would help their business. In addition, it was a common theme found in answers to an open-ended question asking what would help their business grow and prosper.

Commercial Park - The Town needs to provide sites that will provide an opportunity for new or expanding businesses to locate, which is connected to public water, and preferably with easy access to Interstate 81. The Town should work cooperatively with property owners and developers to plan for and create a commercial park.

There are several vacant parcels in and around the Hamlet that could be appropriate for a commercial park, especially if public water was extended to the Hamlet area. On the east side of I-81, there are parcels between 5 and 33 acres in size, and on the west side of Interstate, there are possible locations from 30 to 40 acres in size. Some of these lots are just outside of the Hamlet zoned area, however, depending on their neighboring uses, developing a Commercial Planned Development district, as allowed for in the Town's existing zoning ordinance, could be appropriate.

TOURISM

LaFayette's location immediately off of several transportation corridors, and the thousands of people who drive by everyday, provides an opportunity for economic

development. LaFayette can take advantage of its location by encouraging businesses who would both serve Town residents, and serve visitors and travelers. This would provide businesses with a larger customer base than if they primarily served Town residents.

LaFayette's location on Route 20, also provides other business opportunities. The annual antique show in Bouckville, east of LaFayette, and various antique stores in Cazenovia and Skaneateles in either direction, provide an opportunity for LaFayette to develop additional antique businesses and become a part of an "antique trail". In addition, Route 20 draws a number of long distance bicyclers. Currently there are few businesses in the Town that serve their needs or provide needed amenities.

The weekend of Columbus Day is traditionally the date of LaFayette's annual Apple Festival, which draws tens of thousands of visitors every year. The festival draws visitors from around New York State, and crafters and artisans from numerous states. It provides an opportunity for not-for-profit organizations to undertake fundraising, and provides some local businesses with additional revenues. Visitors to the apple festival enjoy the rural atmosphere and beautiful scenery that characterize LaFayette, providing beneficial exposure for the community. The festival takes place on the Apple Festival grounds, owned by LaFayette Apple Festival Inc., and include several large fields, and a few buildings and farm structures, including a cider mill.

The Apple Festival grounds sit empty for much of the year outside of the annual Apple Festival, except for a few events such as blue grass music festivals and tractor pulls. However, the grounds and buildings could be used more often or year-round as a means to create an agritourism industry in the Town of LaFayette. Agritourism is a niche tourism area that is growing in the United States. It may include farm stays, apple picking, learning wine and cheese making, tasting honey, riding horses, or shopping at farm stands or local markets. LaFayette should work with the owners of the Apple Festival grounds and area farmers to determine possible uses for the Apple Festival grounds during the rest of the year. They should consider how the grounds could provide links to those farms or other agritourism activities to boost the overall Town economy.

In order to continue to benefit from increased tourism traffic, whether it is antique shoppers, bicyclers, Apple Festival visitors, or other travelers, the Town must encourage the expansion of visitor services such as overnight accommodations and restaurants,

and must leverage existing events to ensure that the maximum impact is attained. For example, there are currently no bed-and-breakfast or inn style accommodations anywhere in the Town. This could be an excellent reuse for some of the Town's larger older homes which can be difficult to maintain as a single family home, and would also fill a niche in the local tourism market.

ZONING

The Town should review its Zoning Ordinance to be sure it is consistent with economic development goals and there are no impediments to establishing new businesses or expanding existing businesses. For more details see Section XII: Zoning and Land Use.

RESOURCES FOR BUSINESSES

The Onondaga County Office of Economic Development, CenterState CEO, and several partner organizations have programs and financial incentives available for new or expanding companies who are creating jobs. Some of these programs include the Recharge NY Program, GSBDC Revolving Loan Fund, CNY Quasi-Equity Fund, CNY Enterprise Development Fund, Onondaga County Revolving Loan Fund, and the CNY WORKS OJT Program. In addition, as mentioned previously, Onondaga Community College has a Small Business Development Center which offers one-to-one counseling and training programs.

GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

GOAL 10: Retain and expand existing businesses in the Town of LaFayette.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Promote and encourage the retention and expansion of businesses that provide goods and services needed by Town residents and that are consistent with the Town's character.

B) Work with the Onondaga County Office of Economic Development (OCOED) and other agencies to assist in retaining and expanding job opportunities in the Town. Assure that businesses are aware of County programs and they are easily accessible to Town businesses.

C) Provide public water and broadband service to the hamlet area.

D) Reduce the cost of doing business in the Town by controlling the costs such as property taxes and Town services.

E) Work with the LaFayette Chamber of Commerce to implement an ongoing communication program with businesses in the Town to assist in problem solving, joint marketing, shared business support, and other areas.

F) Encourage home-based businesses to expand into buildings in the Hamlet area, including formerly residential homes.

GOAL 11: Increase the number and variety of businesses in the Town, especially in the Hamlet area.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Work with Onondaga Community College Small Business Development Center to provide technical assistance for start up businesses in the Town.

B) Develop a commercial/business park with convenient access to Interstate 81, to promote business development in the Town.

C) Work with the OCOED to recruit businesses to the Town that will provide well paying job opportunities with adequate benefits.

D) Encourage development of small niche businesses, particularly in residential buildings near the Hamlet center.

E) Work cooperatively with developers to attract a grocery store, restaurants, and other retailers and services in the Hamlet area that will serve the needs of Town residents.

GOAL 12: Increase the economic impact of existing Town assets.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Capitalize on the numerous travelers on nearby transportation routes to increase the customer base for new and existing businesses.

B) Encourage the development of antique stores along the Route 20 antique trail, especially in the Hamlet area.

C) Encourage the development of one or more bed-and-breakfasts or other overnight accommodations in the Town, especially in the Hamlet area.

D) Work with LaFayette Apple Festival Inc. and area farmers to develop an economic use for the Apple Festival grounds and buildings at other times of the year.

E) Work with area farmers, including equine related farms and apple orchards, to develop an agritourism industry in the Town.

F) Working with the Onondaga Cycling Club, or other bicycle organizations, to develop a biking map and bike friendly amenities in the town.

GOAL 13: Ensure land use and zoning policies support economic development in the Town.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Streamline the approval process for establishing a new business or making changes to an existing business.

B) Review the zoning ordinance and reduce impediments to economic development.

Section V. Hamlet Development

The area known as the LaFayette Hamlet is located at the historic crossroads of Route 20 and Route 11. A revision to the Town's zoning ordinance in 1999 formally designated this area as "hamlet". For the purposes of this plan a larger geographical area than the official hamlet boundary was used. Map 9 shows the boundaries of the zoned Hamlet and the area focused on in this Plan.

HISTORY

The Hamlet of LaFayette, also known as LaFayette Village and LaFayette Square was once only one of a number of hamlets in the Town. Located in the heart of New York, the center of Lafayette Hamlet lies at the crossroads of two of the longest roads in the United States, Routes 11 and 20, which span all the way from Canada to Louisiana and the East Coast to the West Coast.

The completion of the Skaneateles and Cazenovia Road resulted in the "village" of LaFayette becoming the commercial hub of the Town. A village square was donated and became the focal point of the community. By 1835, LaFayette village had a Presbyterian church, two stores, a tavern, and twelve or fifteen dwellings. By 1886, it had two agricultural equipment stores, two blacksmiths, one furniture maker, two shoemakers, two hotels, three stores, three sawmills, a grist mill, two churches, a physician, milliner, and butcher. Although there were a number of commercial establishments, large swaths of agricultural land surrounded the development in all directions.

The main intersection in the Hamlet circa 1912 looking southeast toward the LaFayette Hotel

In 1854, the railroad was constructed in the nearby hamlet of Onativia, which had several feed stores, a grocery, and a hotel. Town residents used the rail system to access goods and services available in the City of Syracuse located to the north of the Town. A station closer to the Hamlet area would have fortified the economy of the Hamlet, but instead people had to make the trek to the rail station located one mile to the east. Because of this, and other forces, the Hamlet of LaFayette never grew into a substantial village. It did, however outpace other hamlets in the Town to become the predominate development concentration in the Town.

By the 1950's the American love affair with the automobile produced four gas stations in the LaFayette hamlet area. In addition, two grocery stores were located in the hamlet, one on the first level of the LaFayette Hotel and one located just south. The LaFayette Central School, grades K-12 had been erected in the 1939, with additions

completed in 1950 and 1965 (a new high school building was erected north of the Hamlet in 1970-1971). The construction of Interstate 81 in the 1960's further transformed the Hamlet and provided easy access by car to the City of Syracuse a few miles north.

HAMLET TODAY

The Hamlet of LaFayette, as aforementioned, never grew into a substantial Village or a traditional downtown. Nevertheless, it is the Town's most significant commercial and residential hub, and serves as the center of community and civic life. It is located adjacent to the Town's only exit off of Interstate 81 (Exit 15), hosts the majority of Town businesses, and is home to Town government offices, the library, the elementary school and the post office. There were and still are a series of sidewalks in the hamlet, however, many lack handicap access and crossing at the four corners is dangerous.

Centered around the crossroads of Route 11 and Route 20, The Hamlet is also figuratively at a crossroads: historic buildings have been lost; open space has been developed for newer commercial structures; everyday retail options have diminished; and traffic has increased. The Town must determine how the Hamlet will function and what it will look like in the future, and take actions to ensure this desired future, in order to stem the continued loss of character.

Below is a summary of the specific issues facing the Hamlet.

Hamlet Character – Public visioning sessions clearly demonstrated residents concerns to preserve, protect, and enhance the character and sense of place of the Hamlet. Character and Sense of Place are derived from many factors, including topography, roads and streets, landscaping, buildings, and signage. However, with a mix of older historic homes, a historic church, and a collection of more recent commercial buildings typical of highway commercial style development, the LaFayette Hamlet's character is not clearly evident, although residents have repeatedly referred to "rural" as touchstone for describing the character of the Town.

In order to better define the desired character of the Hamlet a Visual Preference Exercise was undertaken with the Steering Committee in the summer of 2011. The exercise included guided discussions of various images to determine preferred physical characteristics of the Hamlet's built environment. The results of the exercise, a summary of which is included in Appendix A, showed mutually agreed preferences, including:

- Architectural styles that are reminiscent of agricultural structures or early to mid 19th century commercial and residential structures
- Small to moderately sized buildings
- Chain and franchise stores that conform to local standards rather than generic designs
- Commercial buildings with gabled or hipped roofs instead of flat roofs
- Use of natural materials such as clapboard, brick, or stone.
- Two story buildings
- Architectural details such as dormers and cupolas.
- Sidewalk lined streets with trees and landscaping
- Smaller scale signage

The development of detailed Minimum Design Guidelines can assist both the Town and developers to create buildings that will enhance the character of the Hamlet. Enhanced site design requirements that include requirements for trees and landscaping will also further these efforts. Such requirements are typically welcome by developers as they remove a great deal of subjectivity in the planning review and approval process.

The existing gas station in the Hamlet typifies the type of generic commercial architecture the Town should avoid. This chain drugstore has been designed with architectural features reminiscent of agricultural buildings. The Town should develop design guidelines promote new development consistent with its rural character.

In addition to assuring that new construction (or major reconstruction) projects enhance the sense of place, the preservation of existing historic structures is important. Much of the Hamlet's historic commercial building stock has been lost. The major remaining commercial structure, the LaFayette Hotel, will likely be lost to the DOT intersection construction. This prominent landmark has sat vacant for many years, primarily do to the inability of its small lot to support the needed water and sewer infrastructure. Although the preservation of this landmark should be the first choice for the Town, the reality is that its future reuse is highly unlikely, and that removal of the structure by the DOT is the most prudent alternative. It is very important that the Town work to retain and preserve its remaining older structures, including historic residential buildings. Efforts should also be made to renovate existing buildings in the area that are in poor condition and are a blight on the Hamlet.

The Hamlet also includes a number of latter 20th century buildings that, while in good condition, are not architecturally consistent with the desired character of the Hamlet. There is little the Town can do to effect change on these existing structures, but future renovations, when undertaken, should be developed to bring them into closer conformance with the Town's goals. It is possible, however, for the Town to revise its sign ordinance and amortize out existing signs, which will improve the character of existing development.

Regarding the streetscape, committee members universally stated that the eastern approach into the Hamlet, on Route 20, most closely resembled the character that they wanted the rest of the Hamlet to emulate. The most defining feature of this gateway is the heavy tree canopy that lines and overhangs the roadway. Other than the front lawn of the church, there are few trees in the heart of the Hamlet. Concerted efforts should be made to plant trees in the commercial areas of the Hamlet, in particular large trees that will create a canopy over the roadway.

Commercial Development - The Hamlet includes the greatest number of commercial businesses in the Town, 42, which is approximately half of all commercial enterprises in the Town. Over the years, however, businesses providing everyday goods and services have been declining. For example, the Red and White grocery store existed in the hamlet until 15 years ago, and now no grocery exists. Major clusters of business types include:

- Medical (7)
- Eateries (6)
- Retail (5)
- Auto Service (4)
- Financial (4)
- Other services (3)

Presently the only places to buy limited groceries are the Nice and Easy gas station/ convenience store or the Dollar General Store. Several "newer" buildings include a bank, health center, library, NAPA dealership, dollar store, real estate and other personal service businesses. The LaFayette Hotel, the Hamlet's most prominent building, sits vacant and deteriorating and will likely be lost in the near future (see below). The gas station and McDonald's restaurant draw significant numbers of travelers off of I-81.

In 2005, the Syracuse University Maxwell School's Community Link Program completed a survey to ascertain the community's views on a number of issues, including issues that impact the Hamlet. Seventy-seven (77%) of respondents indicated they were

in favor of soliciting new businesses in the Town, while 94% favored "smaller businesses that provide modest employment opportunities". A grocery store and a pharmacy were the two business most often mentioned. An additional survey conducted by the Syracuse University Link Program in 2007 provides additional detail into the level of demand for various businesses, products, or services. Respondents were asked to rate 24 potential businesses on a five-point scale, from #1 being "very disinterested" to #5 being "very interested". The results, in decreasing order of demand are as follows:

1.	Restaurant	90% interested
2.	Grocery Store	83% interested
3.	Construction and Building Supply Store	62% interested
4.	Fitness Center	51% interested
5.	Banking	58% interested
6.	Handyman/women services	55% interested
7.	Healthcare provider & therapy services	52% interested
8,	Novelty item or gift stores	51% not interested
9.	Computer and Technical Services	58% not interested
10.	Children's daycare	59% not interested
11.	Cleaning services	59% not interested
12.	Educational products and toys	62% not interested
13.	Landscaping and lawn care	63% not interested
14.	Sporting goods	65% not interested
15.	Furniture store	67% not interested
16.	Home medical supply services	68% not interested
17.	Adult daycare services	68% not interested
18.	Beauty salon	69% not interested
19.	Attorney-at-law	71% not interested
20.	Interior design	74% not interested
21.	Investment and insurance	76% not interested
22.	Real estate	81% not interested
23.	Home security and alarm business	85% not interested
24.	Advertising/marketing firms	85% not interested

Residents were also asked if they preferred development in or near the hamlet of LaFayette, the hamlet of Jamesville, or "other". Eighty-six (86) respondents chose the LaFayette Hamlet, 12 chose the Jamesville Hamlet, and 12 chose "other", indicating a clear preference among residents for the location of future business development in the hamlet of LaFayette. The results of these surveys were reinforced via public visioning sessions held during the development of this plan. "Greater development of the Hamlet area" was identified as the greatest opportunity for the Town. It is clear that residents desire more commercial development in the Town, and that the Hamlet is the desired location for such development. It is also clear that residents are concerned that new development does not diminish the Town's rural agrarian character.

Future commercial development is hampered by the lack of public water and/or sewer facilities (see Section IX. Infrastructure and Telecommunication). The development of a public water system will assist existing businesses, and allow for easier development of new compatible businesses.

The Town must be proactive in creating an environment that encourages the establishment of compatible commercial businesses in the hamlet. This includes new construction on available developable properties that is of a size, scale and design that complements and enhances the rural, agricultural character of the community. Moderately scaled commercial development is most appropriate on the western and northern edges of the Hamlet, while smaller commercial businesses are most appropriate near the center of the Hamlet. The establishment of businesses in residential properties near the center of the Hamlet should be welcome, although the residential character of these structures should be preserved.

Housing Development – Housing is an important component of the character and sense of place of the Hamlet. While much of the historic commercial building stock has been lost, many historic residential buildings remain. Relatively few people, however, live in the heart of the Hamlet. According to demographic data provided by the Neilson Company, a demographic research company, 33 people reside within ½ mile radius of "the four corners". 263 people live within a 1 mile radius, and 966 live within 1.5 miles. Residential development nearest the heart of the Hamlet tends to be older homes (more then 75 years old) while newer residential development is located on the outskirts. Nearly all of the Town's rental housing is located in apartment complexes in or adjacent to the Hamlet.

Those homes located on Route 11 and Route 20 west of the intersection are likely to lose their residential appeal due to the heavy traffic on the highways. Rather than let these decay over time, the Town should encourage reuse as office or retail shops while retaining their residential identity.

Residential buildings that are used for commercial businesses should retain their historic, residential character and scale.

There is a nexus between residential and commercial development in the Hamlet. Future residential development will likely demand the availability of convenient goods and services. Conversely, commercial development, such as a pharmacy or grocery store will need a population concentration to be successful, with the exception of businesses deriving the majority of their patronage from I-81.

In order to further the overall community goal of preserving an open, rural sense of place, the Town should enact zoning and land use regulations to concentrate residential development in and adjacent to the Hamlet. There are appropriate development sites in the southern and eastern areas of the Hamlet area that could accommodate up to 90 new homes without public water, or over 200 new homes with public water. The higher level of concentrated residential development, if carefully implemented, will help to relieve development pressure in more rural areas of the Town,

provide a stronger base for commercial growth in and around the four corners, and a rural "village" atmosphere.

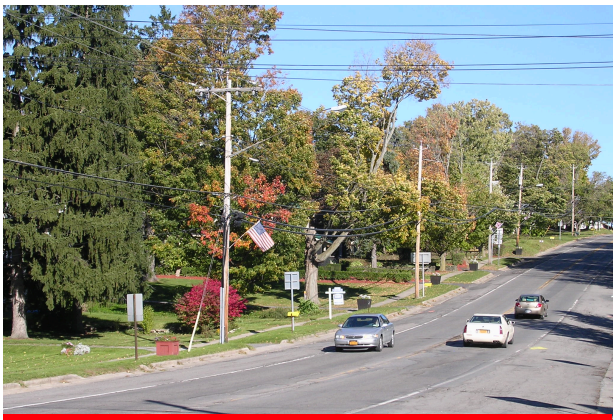
Reconstruction of Routes 20 & 11 Intersection – Routes 20 and 11 intersect at the heart of the Hamlet of LaFayette, with exit and entrance ramps to I-81 nearby. It is the most heavily travelled part of Town (see Map 17 for more detailed counts). The intersection and the immediate stretches of Routes 20 and 11 have fallen into disrepair in recent years as a result of this heavy use. The NYS Department of Transportation (DOT) is developing plans to reconstruct it, scheduled to be completed in 2013.

Areas of the streetscape in the hamlet have large, unbroken areas of pavement that detracts from its character

The most recent draft plans from the DOT, dated January 2011, include adding a center turning lane on Route 20, in front of the school and some houses; adding a left-turn only lane on Route 20 on the west side of the light; adding a center median on the opposite, or east, side; widening the roadway and increasing the corner radii at the main intersection; and moving the I-81 northbound entrance and exit ramps so that they intersect with Route 11 at a safer angle. These plans also include removing the vacant LaFayette Hotel at the southeast corner of the hamlet intersection, and giving the property to the Town of LaFayette. The initial proposed plans will help to address roadway conditions and traffic flow concerns that have been continuing problems. Initial designs, however, appear to not protect and enhance the character that the Town wishes to promote for the hamlet, and could be a detriment to it. The Town must work closely with DOT during the project design phase and advocate for a carefully considered design that balances the need for roadway and traffic improvements with the need to maintain a human scale to the hamlet, preserve its small town character, and address alternate transportation needs such as pedestrians and bicyclists.

The Town has already been involved in discussions with the DOT about the proposed changes to make sure what is implemented is beneficial for the community. Because the reconstruction is in the heart of the Hamlet, it is important that the design not only make the intersection more efficient for drivers, but also improve the pedestrian experience. Currently there are crosswalks on three sides of the intersection, but not one on the west side. There are sidewalks on each side of the road in each direction, except on the west side of the road heading north on Route 11. In addition, the sidewalks on the southwest corner are not universally accessible, with about a foot in elevation change from the road to the sidewalk.

In addition to making sidewalks accessible and adding crosswalks where they currently do not exist, there are other changes the Town can suggest the DOT include in their design that will not only improve the pedestrian experience but create a more inviting atmosphere in the Hamlet area. Improvements such as brick or stamped concrete crosswalks, and a brick or stamped asphalt median, instead of a striped one, on the east side of the intersection, help to define the area as the heart of the Hamlet and give it the character the Town is striving for. In addition, planting trees along stretches of road where there currently are none, or where trees will be removed, will make it a more pleasant environment.



The streetscape on the east side of Route 80, with curbing, grassy medians, and large trees, creates the character and sense of place the Town should build upon via the proposed highway reconstruction project

Finally, the future development of the lot where the old LaFayette hotel will be demolished is very important. The lot is highly visible since it is located directly on the corner of the intersection. It is important that it does not become a weed covered vacant lot, or even a parking lot, without the proper design. These would detract from the character the Town is striving to maintain and create in the Hamlet area. While a new building would be ideal for the corner lot location, this is difficult without public water or sewer. The lot is only .13 acres (5,662sf) in size. Typically at least 40,000 sf is recommended in new residential developments if both water and sewer are needed. There is a 12-acre vacant lot just south of the old hotel, but even if a developer were able to acquire this, that would bring the total size to only a quarter acre. While it may be possible to rebuild a structure on this lot, the other difficulty may be in finding a developer interested in doing so. In the interim, or if a new building is not possible, the Town should make plans for this lot before the NYS DOT removes former hotel. These plans should include designs to define the corner of this major intersection.

GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

GOAL 14: Ensure that new commercial development is compatible with the rural, traditional character and scale of the Hamlet.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Develop and adopt architectural design requirements for new buildings and major renovations to existing buildings in order to provide a consistent and attractive character to commercial areas.

B) Develop and adopt site design requirements to infuse more landscaping and greenspace, including trees, into developments and to create a better sense of place.

C) Revise the Town sign ordinance to limit primary site signage in the Hamlet to smaller scale or monument style signs at the roadway, prohibit internally lit signs, and limit the overall number of signs.

GOAL 15: Ensure and enhance pedestrian and bike access and safety in the Hamlet.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) All new developments should incorporate sidewalks or trails, connected to municipal sidewalks, in order to enhance pedestrian and bicycle access.

B) Sidewalks/crosswalks crossing business entranceways should be of a contrasting color and material, such as concrete, stamped concrete, brick, or stone. Such crosswalks should be consistent throughout the area.

C) Encourage bicycle racks and pedestrian amenities as part of site plan review requirements.

D) Install benches at various locations in the Hamlet.

E) Extend public sidewalks throughout the Hamlet.

F) Develop on-or-off road bike trails/lanes or shared pedestrian/bike paths.

G) Develop and adopt a sidewalk maintenance law to ensure maintenance for all public sidewalks.

GOAL 16: Ensure the planned DOT reconstruction of the Hamlet intersection is compatible with, and enhances the existing and desired character of the Hamlet.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Work with the DOT to minimize roadway widths and turning radii at the main intersection, and install other features, to create a human sense of scale.

B) Accommodate pedestrians and cyclists by incorporating multi-modal transportation alternatives and amenities, including sidewalks on both sides of the road in every direction, and bike lanes, either in the roadway or in multi-use pedestrian/bike paths.

C) Install and maintain crosswalks that are stamped asphalt or concrete made to look like brick or other natural materials. Install crosswalks on all four sides of

the main intersection, across from the Elementary School where it currently exists, and at the reconfigured northbound exit intersection. "Yield to Pedestrian" signs should be places at crosswalks.

D) Provide for and identify on-street parking in all possible locations where it does not result in significant widening of the roadway.

E) Advocate for a variety of trees to be planted along the right-of-way where they do not exist now, and replace trees that are removed as a result of construction. Plant larger shade trees where they can be accommodated. Use smaller trees under electrical wires to prevent costly future maintenance. Plant the largest diameter trees possible to ensure survival.

F) Work with the DOT to install a Town owned greenspace on the southeast corner of the intersection to replace the old hotel if it is demolished. The greenspace should include features that enhance the space for pedestrians and drivers passing by, such as benches, a walkway, trees, other plantings; a stone wall or other elements to define the corner; and interpretive information regarding the old hotel, the hamlet, and the intersection as the crossroads of two of the longest highways in the U.S.

G) Ensure that the re-aligned northbound I-81 off-ramp intersection is developed to create a welcoming gateway into the community including landscaping, crosswalks, and other design features.

H) Install decorative, human scaled streetlight fixtures.

I) Reduce the amount of road and directional signage to the lowest number possible.

J) Incorporate creative elements, such as pavement markings or signage, into the designs to identify this as the intersection of two of the longest highways in the U.S.

GOAL 17: Promote and support compatible residential development in and adjacent to the Hamlet in order to preserve open space outside the Hamlet.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Provide public water to support more compact development and revise zoning to reduce minimum lot sizes within the Hamlet.

B) Consider implementation of Incentive Zoning to encourage or require clustering of housing, provision of needed amenities, and/or types of housing.

C) Allow for and support development of mixed use buildings in the Hamlet center.

D) Support development of housing appropriate for young families and seniors.

GOAL 18: Promote and support compatible commercial development in the Hamlet area.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Establish clear and concise planning and land use controls to eliminate uncertainty in the development process.

B) Encourage development of small niche businesses, particularly in residential buildings near the Hamlet center.

GOAL 19: Protect and enhance the character of the Hamlet as the center of a rural agrarian community.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Institute a program to plant trees on public land and encourage planting of trees on private land.

B) Research a partnership with SUNY ESF to utilize the Hamlet as a research location for urban forests.

C) Establish a vacant building law to encourage renovation of blighting or vacant structures.

D) Maintain town properties and right of ways to a high level.

E) Preserve and protect historic structures from demolition or inappropriate alteration.

GOAL 20: Provide adequate parking opportunities for residents and businesses.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Provide for on-street parking where possible.

B) Investigate development of a public parking lot(s) in locations convenient to the Hamlet center but screened or located behind buildings.

Section VI. Housing

THE BUILT HOUSING ENVIRONMENT

The Town of LaFayette includes 2,112 housing units per the 2010 Census. The percentage of owner-occupied housing units is 89.1% which is not unusual for a rural township. The percentage of income property units is 10.9%. There is a 6.4% vacancy rate for all housing units which is lower than the County (9.3%) and the State (10.2%). A windshield survey of general housing conditions in the Town of LaFayette was conducted in the summer of 2011. The survey revealed a variety of housing styles and vintages. They tend to be located on a scattered site basis, with driveways fronting major Town roads. Since the suburbanization of the United States starting in the 1960's, there has been a tendency to create suburban development housing and cul-de-sacs. This is evidenced in a few areas of the Town including the general vicinity of the Jamesville Reservoir, Meeker Hill/Deer Run, and the area between Route 11 and Sentinel Heights. On average, the Town has done a credible job with housing setbacks and retaining greenspace in housing developments. This contributes to the overall character of the Town.

A majority of the Town's housing is in good to excellent condition, with most homes only needing cosmetic improvements such as painting or minor repairs. A small percentage would meet the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's definition of "substandard", meaning there are critical component deficiencies such as roof structure issues, wall structure deficiencies, failing foundations, window and door deficiencies, and code violations. While most of these homes can be found on a scattered site basis, a cluster of substandard housing is located in and around the hamlet of Cardiff.

Census data indicates moderate to slow growth in the housing construction market throughout the decades. See Table 3 following:

TABLE 3 HOUSING UNIT CHANGES				
1970	**1980**	**1990**	**2000**	**2010**
1,225	1,540	1,825	1,925	2,112
% Change	+25.7%	+18.5%	+5.5%	+9.7%

TABLE 4 AGE OF HOUSING STOCK BY DECADE									
	1939 or Earlier	**1940 to 1949**	**1950 to 1959**	**1960 to 1969**	**1970 to 1979**	**1980 to 1989**	**1990 to 2000**	**2000 to 2010**	**Total Units**
	329	130	314	350	248	368	186	231	2,112
% of Housing	17%	6.8%	16.3%	18%	13%	19.1%	9.6%	19.4%	

Map 10, is an illustration of the housing growth in the community since its inception.

Despite the growth noted in the Tables above, the lowest population densities in Onondaga County include all the contiguous townships in the southern portion of Onondaga including Lafayette, Pompey, Fabius, Tully, Otisco, and Spafford.

TABLE 5 DENSITY PER SQUARE MILE 1970-2000				
1970	**1980**	**1990**	**2000**	**PERCENT CHANGE 1970-2000**
31.21	39.24	46.50	49.04	57%

HOUSEHOLD TRENDS

Across the United States, marital disruption, increases in human longevity, and delays in marriage can account for greater percent increases in the number of housing units compared to the percentage of growth in population. The Town of LaFayette is no different in this regard.

TABLE 6
POPULATION/HOUSING CHANGES

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Population	4,401	4,488	5,105	4,833	4,952
% Change	30%	2%	14%	-5.3%	2.5%
Housing Units	1,225	1,540	1,825	1,925	2,112
% Change	-36.5%	+25.7%	+18.5%	+5.5%	+9.7%

Listed following is information related to household make up in the Town of LaFayette, as compared to Onondaga County. Of note, the average household in LaFayette includes a married couple (60% of all households). Thirty-six percent (36%) of households in the Town have children who are under the age of 18 years old. Over one in five households is a person who is living alone.

TABLE 7
ONONDAGA COUNTY/LAFAYETTE HOUSEHOLDS AND FAMILIES

	Total HH's	% Family	% Married Couple	% With Own Children Under 18 Yrs. Of Age	% Female with No Husband Present	% Non-family	% Living Alone	% 65 Years of Age and Older	Avg. Pop. Per HH	Avg. Pop. Per Family
LaFayette	1,826	73.3	60	35.7	9.5	26.7	21.8	8	2.64	3.09
County	181,153	63.7	46.9	31.9	12.9	36.3	29.4	10.8	2.46	3.07

SOURCE: 2000 CENSUS

OTHER QUICK FACTS RELATED TO HOUSING

SOURCE: 2005-2009 US CENSUS AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY

- The average household size in the Town is 2.5 persons
- The median household income in the Town is $65,301; Onondaga County: $50,129; NYS: $55,233.

- The median family income is $71,906
- Per capita income is $29,201
- The median housing value is $155,200
- The individual poverty percentage is low at 3.3%
- The smallest percentage age cohort in the Town are children under the age of five: 4.4%
- The percentage of those aged 65 or older is 14.3%

REAL ESTATE MARKET

The for-sale real estate market in the Town appears to be stable, if small. As of August 2011, the Greater Syracuse Multiple Listing Service showed 27 single family homes for sale in the Town. There were no multiple unit properties for sale. Prices ranged from $25,000 to almost $1.3M, with a median sales price of $187,000.

Lending institutions typically use 28% of annual income for determining housing costs as "affordable", while the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) uses 33% of annual income. Using either of these standards, a comparison of median income to median sales price indicates an affordable housing market:

Purchase Price	$187,000
Downpayment (20%)	- 37,000
Mortgage	$148,000

	Annual	Monthly
Principal and Interest	$9,540*	$795*
Taxes	$6,612	$551
Insurance	$800	$67
TOTAL	$16,953	$1,413

*30 year fixed mortgage@ 5%

	Annual	Monthly
Median Household Income*	$65,301	
28% (banks)	$18,284	$1,524
33% (HUD)	$21,549	$1,796

*2005-2009 US Census American Community Survey for a family of four

The above clearly shows that a family earning the median income can afford the median priced home for sale in the Town. With only 27 homes currently on the market, and with a number of those either very cheap or very expensive, it may prove difficult for a purchaser to find a suitable home.

Despite a seemingly affordable housing market, not all families in the Town have incomes that would allow them the dream of homeownership. According to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the percentage of those living at or below 80% of the Town's median income, often a yardstick for economic distress, is 28.6%. For those families, the dream of homeownership may be out of their reach since

a 20% downpayment and additional closing costs are ill-afforded. Southern Hills Preservation Company (SHPC), a rural preservation company whose service area includes the Town, works in conjunction with Onondaga County's Community Development Office and closely with Peace, Inc., under their Weatherization Program. SHPC has completed homeownership projects for existing homes in the Town on a small scale. The Town should advocate for housing programs that would make the dream of homeownership a reality for all income segments of the population.

Anecdotal information from professionals familiar with the local real estate market indicate that LaFayette's presumed remoteness from the urban areas of the County, the lack of easily accessed goods and services, and a poor reputation (deserved or not; see Section VII. Educational Resources) of the school district are the greatest negative factors impacting the market. Conversely, the community's rural character and somewhat cheaper housing costs strengthen the housing market. While real estate advertisements herald "cheaper Town of LaFayette taxes", local school and Town/County tax rates are commensurate with nearby towns. Town and County taxes are somewhat higher than nearby communities, but LaFayette School District taxes are lower than most others.

HOME OCCUPATIONS

The 2006-2010 Census Bureau American Community Survey notes that home occupations constitute 4.7%, or 120 persons, work from home in the Town. There is a national upward trend in the percentage of persons telecommuting and using their places of residence for home occupations. In response to this, the Town has enacted enabling legislation for home occupations in the AR and Hamlet Districts. The Town's law appears to recognize the need for these businesses, while preserving the character of residential neighborhoods, however, many of the Town's planning approval requests are a result of this law (See also Section XII. Land Use and Zoning). The Town should remain mindful of any emerging trends in home occupations so that its law remains current and meets the needs of its citizens.

HOUSING FOR THE AGING POPULATION

Medical advancements are resulting in people living longer. For the elderly, most prefer to age in place rather than move to a different climate or alternative living arrangement such as a nursing home. The present population of the Town, aged 65 years or older, is 14.3%. This is up from 8% in 2000, a 79% increase. It is expected to continue to rise in subsequent decades as the Baby Boomer population, those born between 1946 and 1964, continue to retire in record numbers. This will have social and economic implications for the Town of LaFayette.

Many seniors, or seniors-to-be, have or will have retired with secure pensions and savings accounts based on conservative spending and saving habits. Others will be totally reliant on fixed incomes, mainly provided by Social Security. Regardless of personal wealth, it is likely that as the population ages, they will need varying degrees of assistance with making their homes safe and habitable. This includes accessible utilities

that may need to be moved from basements, grab bars, accessible bathrooms and doorways, in addition to home maintenance and repair that may be beyond the financial and physical capabilities of the homeowner. For some, there will likely be a need and a desire to move to different living situations. However, there is no senior housing in the Town.

Presently, the Town has one subsidized family rental housing building with 35 units. It is Festival Gardens on Route 20 (the old school) operated by Longley-Jones. A marketing study that was completed SHPC, indicates a need for a facility(ies) of up to 177 beds of assisted living in LaFayette. While the needs of seniors vary: from independent senior communities, to assisted living, to nursing homes, it is incumbent on the Town to support the type of development that would allow long-time residents to remain in their community.

The Town has enacted zoning for Family Accessory Units which allows a separate living area with a kitchen, bathroom, and other living space for the family members of single family homeowners. This is an option that some families may want to take advantage of if they are put in the position of caring for an aging family member.

Regarding housing rehabilitation for the elderly, the SHPC works in concert with the Onondaga County Office of Community Development which disburses the County's CDBG entitlement funds provided by HUD. At the present time, Affordable Housing Corporation grant funds have been used to provide housing rehabilitation assistance to lower income owner-occupied households. These funds are provided as a 60% grant and 40% equity contribution. Often SHPC has been able to leverage other funds available through the County to minimize the 40% contribution. As the leveraged dollars have been shrinking in recent years, the age group least likely to be able to afford any type of financial contribution is lower income senior citizens. The Town should continue to work in whatever manner feasible, to facilitate housing rehabilitation for those unable to do it of their own accord. This not only impacts households on an individual level, it is a quality of life issue for the Town to preserve its housing stock.

SUSTAINABILITY IN HOUSING

Sustainability in housing and communities is now part of the American lexicon. At its core, it is a movement to lessen our dependence on fossil fuels; reduce greenhouse gas and other pollutants; harness rain, thermal, and wind power; preserve our natural resources; and recycle. The Town of LaFayette is committed to being more environmentally friendly.

The Census notes that 43.9% of households in the Town of LaFayette use fuel oil or kerosene to heat their homes. In 1998, the price of home heating oil was 76 cents per gallon and propane, which does not produce as many BTUs, was 97 cents per gallon. At its peak in June of 2007, home heating oil was $4.55 per gallon and propane was $2.88. In July of this year, heating oil was $3.74 and propane was $2.78 (Source: NYSERDA historical data on energy consumption). There are many predictions on where the United States is headed in terms of fossil fuel consumption. Most point to the fact that the price per gallon for all fossil fuels will continue to rise while developing countries such as China and India will provide more competition for declining resources.

Technological advancements are producing a myriad of options for both individual household and community efforts to reduce energy consumption, renewable energy, eliminate waste, capitalize on harnessing rainwater, and wind, solar, and geothermal power. Organic matter such as food scraps can be composted and reused, including use for individual and community gardens. It is likely that individual households and communities will rely on a "portfolio" of energy savings and other sustainability efforts.

Communities such as LaFayette will need to stay informed of emerging trends in energy and be responsive to individual household needs and those of the community at-large, particularly by enacting zoning laws that both encourage and control such things as building materials and design, and devices such as wood boiler furnaces and windmills. As technological advances are made, the Town needs to periodically access their impact on adjacent properties, and the aesthetics and safety of the Town.

GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

GOAL 21: Ensure all dwelling units are in compliance with New York State Property Maintenance Code.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Partner with entities such as Southern Hills Preservation Company, or other not-for-profit entities to seek financing sources to renovate housing through rehabilitation programs. Particular emphasis shall be paid to homeowners who struggle financially.

B) Continue to support comprehensive housing code enforcement efforts in the Town to maintain owner-occupied and income property units in compliance with the NYS Property Maintenance Code.

C) Partner with Onondaga County and other agencies devoted to housing related issues such as lead based paint, radon, energy efficiency, and safety issues. The Town will be a part of the referral network.

GOAL 22: There will be units in the Town, existing or proposed, which are affordable and accessible to all income, age, and disability segments of the population.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Promote home ownership through programs that provide assistance to first time homebuyers, particularly for young families.

B) Work with qualified developers who share a common vision with the LaFayette in developing new housing units to meet growing needs that are in keeping with the character of the Town.

C) Work with local, State, and federal housing agencies and organizations regarding the housing needs of special needs populations, including but not limited to, handicap access, visitability (the ability of the mobility impaired to access all homes and buildings), the needs of the elderly and frail elderly, etc., and assist with advocacy efforts when needed.

GOAL 23: Promote energy efficiency for new or existing housing units such as green build standards, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards, alternative energy sources, and/or new energy saving technologies. Energy saving or alternative energy appliances, technology, materials, or other apparatus shall be of such a nature that it will not interfere with any neighboring properties and/or will not negatively impact the Town of LaFayette environment, quality of life and/or aesthetics.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Support the development of housing that conserves energy, including such measures as green build components.

B) Remain cognizant of emerging energy conservation and renewable energy trends. While the Town will promote these measures, it may be necessary to prohibit structures, appliances, and/or equipment that are harmful to adjacent properties, to the Town environment or aesthetics, or are determined to be unsafe.

C) Partner with knowledgeable organizations to both educate Town residents and assist with implementing sustainable housing practices such as, but not limited to, reducing energy costs, harnessing wind, rain, and geothermal energy, alternative construction methods, recycling, composting, and pollution reduction.

GOAL 24: Encourage the continued development of home businesses.
IMPLEMENTATION MEASURE:

A) The Town's zoning regulations for home businesses need to be revisited from time-to-time to keep pace with emerging trends and technologies that would

allow for a greater variety of home businesses. The Town may also want to reconsider its list of allowable uses if it is not in its best interest. The Town should continue its zoning efforts to ensure that home businesses are in keeping with the residential character of the AR zoning district.

Section VII. Educational Resources

The Town of LaFayette is served by four different school districts including LaFayette, Tully, Jamesville-DeWitt, and Fabius-Pompey. The Tully, Fabius-Pompey, and Jamesville-Dewitt School Districts extend into the Town at its southwest, southeast, and northeast boundaries, respectively. The Onondaga Nation School is situated in the nation located on the Town's northwest border. It includes students in grades K through 8 who transfer to the LaFayette High School to complete their education (See also Map 11).

LAFAYETTE SCHOOL DISTRICT

The LaFayette School District is the Town of LaFayette's largest employer, with 200 faculty and staff and 870 students in grades K-12. The district includes a junior/senior high school, Grimshaw Elementary, the above-mentioned Onondaga Nation School, and the Big Picture School, an alternative high school. With few large local businesses in the Town, it is one of the top economic drivers in the community.

The most recent school year budget for the District is approximately $16.5 million, with almost 70% of that amount budgeted for salaries and benefits. The Town does and can continue to benefit financially from not only the educational and cultural benefits of the school's location in the Town, but also the disposable income of the staff, many of whom live in the Town, and the District's need to purchase local supplies and services.

As noted, two public visioning sessions were held in conjunction with the development of this Comprehensive Plan. *Local schools and their interaction with the community* was noted as one of the Town's greatest strengths. Conversely, some felt that there is a *poor perception of the school district*, deserved or not. This poor perception was also noted elsewhere during the development of this Plan.

According to School Superintendent Peter Tigh, graduation rates have been historically low but the District has worked hard to address this issue in recent years. In June 2011, the percentage rose to 87%. Once Regents scores are calculated for August 2011, there was a possibility that this percentage would rise to 90%, making the graduation rate among the highest in Onondaga County. There are new educational programs being put into place to address math scores and any other areas where there is an apparent underachievement. It is noted that with such small class sizes, approximately 60

students per grade level, a small number of students or a small number of dropouts in any given year, have the potential to skew percentages up or down.

The LaFayette School District has strong working relationships with the Fabius-Pompey and Tully School Districts. Since the class sizes at all three are considered small, and they want to maximize the learning experience for all students, the districts bus students to each other for subjects such as engineering, agriculture, and business. As a result, each school can offer a course to a larger number of students and not be forced to discontinue a class due to low enrollment. LaFayette and Fabius-Pompey also share some sports teams.

Four years ago a Big Picture School was established in LaFayette. It was first housed in Grimshaw Elementary and is now operating in leased space on Feather Drive in the southern portion of the Town. It includes grades 9 through 12. While the school is aimed at students who are at-risk of dropping out, its focus also includes students who already are on a career path. Students design their own learning plan and set their own goals. They work at internships two days a week. 140 businesses have volunteered to accept students for internships, both in and out of the Town. Students attending the school not only include LaFayette School District residents but also those from Fayetteville-Manlius, Jamesville-Dewitt, and the City of Syracuse, to name just a few. In addition to the number of students from outside the community commuting into the District for the Big Picture School, the District has seen an increase in the number of children previously home schooled returning to LaFayette.

The LaFayette School District also includes the Onondaga Nation School. The Onondaga Nation is a member of the Haudenosaunee (People of the Long House), an alliance of native nations united for hundreds of years by traditions, beliefs, and cultural values. The Nation School includes approximately 110 students in grades K through 8 who eventually transfer to LaFayette High School in grade 9.

The blending of the Onondaga Nation children into the LaFayette School student population presents a rare opportunity for non-Nation students to learn about Native American culture. The District petitioned the State to include the traditional Nation language as part of the NYS language Regents and it was accepted. The School District also flies both the American and Nation flags. Despite recent academic achievements and the cultural integration, there are still some negative perception concerns that more than likely prompted the negative comments made at public visioning sessions.

To keep the lines of communication open, the LaFayette School District has an active website and sends 10 newsletters to District households every year. The School

District maintains a positive working relationship with the *Syracuse Post Standard*, the Town's designated newspaper. This helps to portray a positive image of the District. There is a dual board committee that includes both selected members of the Town Board and School Board which meets to discuss school and Town issues. The school buildings are utilized by the community at no cost for activities associated with the weight room, basketball, and volleyball. In many ways, the District serves as the social hub of the community.

There are a number of opportunities for students to work and volunteer in the Town. Some examples include working at various businesses in the greater Syracuse area, including LaFayette. Students who are developing career skills in carpentry and benchwork have volunteered their talents to the Town. Students work on beautification efforts for both the community at-large and School, and the Town provides summer employment opportunities. As mentioned, 140 businesses in the greater LaFayette area have volunteered for Big Picture School students to intern at their place of work.

The District and Town have cooperated on fuel grants for busses and Town vehicles and share equipment whenever it is feasible.

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES – POST SECONDARY

There are no post secondary educational facilities located within LaFayette. The Town, however, is fortunate to be located within a 30 mile radius of a number of two- and four-year colleges and universities including Syracuse University, State University of New York (SUNY) at Cortland, LeMoyne College, SUNY Environmental Science and Forestry, Cazenovia College, Bryant & Stratton College, and Onondaga Community College. This presents a great learning opportunity for Town residents including recent high school graduates and non-traditional students who want to continue their education. This is also a quality-of-life asset for the Town and can be used to entice prospective homeowners to locate to LaFayette.

GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATIONS

GOAL 25: Partner with the School District in cultivating a broader positive image.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Provide more opportunity for the School District to place articles in the Town's newsletter. Conversely, work with the District so that Town/School partnerships and projects can be covered in the District's newsletter or other media.

B) Establish a yearly meeting with entities such as the Chamber of Commerce, Town government, Board of Realtors, other organizations, and the public at-large where an update of the District's successes can be showcased. Encourage attendees to spread the positive aspects of the District, including cultural diversity, as they go about their daily business.

C) Develop print, social, and other media that highlight the Town's assets.

D) Work with the School District to provide an opportunity for successful District graduates to speak about their career highlights and/or life experiences.

E) Expand the focus of the Town's Community Council to areas outside of sports.

GOAL 26: Encourage persons associated with the school district, including but not limited to, faculty, staff, parents, students, visitors, and others to patronize Town businesses.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Work with the LaFayette Chamber of Commerce and the LaFayette School District to provide a welcome packet for new district employees.

B) Network with Town businesses and the Chamber of Commerce on the benefits of advertising in media related to school events.

GOAL 27: Continue to provide hands-on work experience for students including internships and community service.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Facilitate the development of programs at the school so that students can work for pay or meet community service requirements in Town businesses, government, or not-for-profit organizations.

B) Continue to work to develop programs so that job training in the schools match the skill sets needed by area businesses.

GOAL 28: Showcase the Town's nearness to post secondary educational facilities.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURE:

A) Develop promotional materials that highlight the Town's location with respect to higher education facilities.

GOAL 29: Consolidate Town and school services to the fullest extent possible.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Work with the school district on cost sharing on items and services such as fuel for vehicles or needed equipment.

B) Work with the school on issues such as recycling and energy efficiency (See also Section XI. Intergovernmental Cooperation).

SECTION VIII. PARKS AND RECREATION

The Town of LaFayette is fortunate in that it has a wide variety of open spaces, parks, recreation facilities, and programs that serve local residents. For the purposes of this Plan, these are detailed below as "Recreation Facilities" and "Recreation Programs".

RECREATION FACILITIES

Recreation facilities available to Town residents include those owned by the Town, and those owned and operated by other entities.

Town Owned Facilities - The Town's parks and recreational facilities fall under the jurisdiction of the Town's Department of Public Works (DPW). Each facility is owned, operated, and maintained by the Town, with all of them being open to the public year-round, as weather permits. Certain amenities are limited to summer use only, such as swimming. The location of these parks and facilities is indicated on the Map 12 and each is detailed below.

Fred Stafford Memorial Park – This park contains 18.9 acres and is the primary, and largest, recreation park serving the community. It is located at the northern end of the hamlet off Route 11. It is open sunrise to sunset each day, year round, and includes the following amenities:

- Pavilions: 2 large and 1 smaller
- Playgrounds: 1 large jungle gym, swings, and a merry-go-round
- Four Ball Fields: Can be used for baseball, soccer or lacrosse
- Three Tennis Courts with a basketball hoop
- Sand Volleyball Court
- Walking Trails
- Restroom Facilities
- Pond and Stream
- Building where concessions could be served from

The existing facilities in the park are in generally good condition, and the Town has invested funds in recent years to maintain and improve facilities. The local Optimist Club has also assisted the Town in development and maintenance of facilities. The tennis courts have some cracks that will need to be addressed, and the basketball hoop is rusty and aging. The park has sufficient land to accommodate additional active and passive park amenities. A project to install fencing and plantings to screen the park from adjacent Interstate 81 is planned for 2012.

LaFayette Beach Park – Located in the central part of the Town, west of I-81, the park includes 6.9 acres This is one of only two public locations for swimming in the Town, with the other being Onondaga County's Jamesville Beach Park in the far northeast corner of the Town. The park gate is only open during swim lesson times, typically summer afternoons. There is very limited parking when the gate is closed. Amenities include:

- Swimming Pool/Pond
- Lacrosse Box
- Pavilion
- Bathhouse
- Swing set
- Basketball court

The condition of the park is poor and it is unwelcoming. The bathhouse is in good condition on the outside, but it not in useable condition on the inside. The swing set, the only playground equipment, is outdated and the chains for the seats have rusted. The pool/pond should be upgraded as well as the lacrosse box. The lack of a fence around the pool itself means that the park is, for all practical purposes, closed when the pool is closed. Despite its problems, the park is located centrally in the town, and located in a beautiful, rural setting.

Bailey Park - This small park is located in the hamlet of Cardiff, and is only 2.1 acres in size. The park primarily services residents of the hamlet and includes:

- Swing set, slide, and see-saw
- Picnic Tables
- Basketball Court
- Open Field

As of August 2010, there appeared to be visible, recent vandalism including a bench that was knocked over and a broken picnic table. There was also a small pile of trash on the basketball court. Otherwise, the facilities are in generally good condition, although the playground equipment is outdated. The Town must be vigilant in ensuring that all its facilities are clean and maintained, lest decay takes hold.

LaFayette Nature Preserve – This 59.3 acre park is located in the western part of the Town. The property was donated to the Town, and originally included a ropes

course that the Town eventually abandoned. Today it is a passive recreation park of open space, woodlands, and a nature trail.

Community Building **-** The Town-owned community building is an older, residential style structure on a small lot near the four corners in the hamlet. It includes a large first floor open space, a kitchen, and restrooms. The facility is handicapped accessible, but is in need of renovations such as painting, new lighting, and refinished floors. While the Community Building is a welcome indoor facility in the Town, its space is relatively small and it has multiple uses. One recreation program/activity must pick up all its equipment/materials in order for another group to use the space. This would make it difficult for a group of quilters, for example, to enjoy the Community Center facilities. There is little space for various groups to store supplies of equipment when not in use. There is also somewhat limited parking, and it is possible that the parking lot in front of the building may be wholly or partially lost due to the planned DOT reconstruction of the street. Nevertheless, the building is an important community asset and it has the potential to serve the community to a greater level than is currently does.

Other Recreation Facilities - Although the Town owns and operates the facilities detailed above, a number of amenities available to the public are owned and operated by entities other than the Town of LaFayette. These include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

Jamesville Beach County Park **–** Includes 197 acres owned and operated by Onondaga County. It is open April through October for a fee and includes:

- Beach and swimming
- Playground
- Volleyball court
- Shelters
- Picnic Tables
- Boat rentals
- Fishing including a fishing trail
- Cross-country running trail
- Off-leash dog area
- Horseshoe pits
- Disc Golf Course
- Restroom Facilities

DEC Fishing Access Sites **–** This includes fishing areas along Butternut Creek with three parking areas near Apulia Road on Dodge, Colton, and Weller Roads.

LaFayette Inn Fields – This 4.1acre property, at the south end of the LaFayette Hamlet is privately owned and is used primarily for privately sponsored softball leagues. Facilities include:

- Two baseball fields down a hill behind the restaurant
- Three picnic tables and portable restroom facilities

Toolon Tigers Apple Festival Fields – The 192.8 acre Apple Festival grounds are used primarily for the annual LaFayette Apple Festival. In addition to a series of buildings, and barns there are several playing fields which are used for a number of purposes and organizations, including various tournaments, the Upstate Lacrosse Association youth league, and the school district.

Land Trusts – The CNY Land Trust own two sites in the Town which collectively include 133.1 acres. These are:

- Mason Hill Land Trust (86.3 acres): There is no marked access and no marked trails, but there are a number of old roads that are used for walking and hiking. The parcel is largely landlocked which significantly limits public access, although there is a right of way off of Eager Road.

- Cherry Valley Preserve – (46.8 acres): A section of Onondaga Creek runs through the preserve, which includes unmarked walking trails. It has very limited parking, but can be accessed via the shoulder of Route 20.

LaFayette School District: School District Facilities have restricted use, but include**:**

Junior Senior High School
- Football/Lacrosse Field
- Baseball Field
- Softball Field
- Restroom Facilities
- Cinder track
- Indoor wellness/fitness center

Elementary School
- Playgrounds: two playground areas, each with a variety of activities
- Ball Fields
- Basketball hoop
- Two multi-use fields

The School District also has indoor recreation facilities, such as gyms, that are typical of school districts.

Snowmobile Trails – The LaFayette Trail Riders is a local snowmobile group that works in concert with other groups in the region. It is one of the oldest continuously operating snowmobile clubs in New York State, originally organized in 1969 and incorporated since 1970. They currently manage 60 miles of trails in Lafayette, Pompey, Fabius, Delphi and DeRuyter, mostly on the private land of over 120 property owners. Trails in the Town of LaFayette run roughly parallel to, and north of, Route 20 connecting the hamlet of LaFayette to the Village of Pompey, and then southward to the Village of Tully and Labrador Mountain Ski Center, respectively. Local trails connect to a larger statewide network of snowmobile trails. There are no snowmobile trails in the northern portion of the Town or west of I-81 and no convenient connection northward toward Syracuse and its suburbs.

There are also a number of 18-hole golf courses located just outside the Town, as well as three ski resorts within a short driving distance.

Condition, Use, and Adequacy - An inventory of existing facilities is essential in understanding and documenting the adequacy of available recreation and open space within the Town of LaFayette. The adequacy of parkland and open space in a given jurisdiction is calculated based upon the population. Both the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (AAHPERD) recommend a ratio of approximately one acre of parks and open space per 100 persons. Applying this standard to LaFayette (2000 Census population of 4,952), the Town should offer approximately 50 acres of parks and open space. The total cumulative acreage noted for the Town-owned facilities detailed above, is 87.2 acres, including the 59.3 acres in the LaFayette Nature Preserve. As detailed, there are other facilities serving Town residents, but the NRPA recommendation is strictly limited to property dedicated to municipal recreation, and not school/college facilities and land. Nevertheless, the Town has sufficient park acreage to meet national standards. The Town does not, however, have any indoor recreation facilities and limited winter facilities, such as a skating rink.

The overall condition of Town parks is fair. While routine maintenance is good, some park facilities are aging and in need of repair, replacement, or removal. It is essential that these fields, courts, and structures be in good condition, attractive, and well maintained so as to insure a positive public image, minimize risks, and maximize usage. Due to the associated nature and risks, some facilities require special attention and, often, additional funding. This is particularly true for swimming facilities as they frequently require more attention, and consequently, more expense to meet State and federal safety standards. To a certain degree, the same is true for playgrounds where the age and safety of the playground equipment is always a concern. With strict standards now in place for all new

equipment, all of the existing equipment and facilities should be routinely evaluated to insure their safe usage. The Town currently undertakes annual inspections and this practice should continue.

It is apparent that all of the Town parks maintain a strong identity within the community. There are three key factors that must be considered during any planning effort so as to ensure that this identity remains strong. They are:

Maintenance and Preservation - As mentioned earlier, the continued utilization of existing parks and open spaces will only be ensured if they are well maintained and provide the amenities desired by the community. By maintaining and improving these facilities, their full potential can be realized.

Present and Future Use - While the existing parks and open spaces experience significant usage, it is important to continually reevaluate recreational preferences and seek out all opportunities to maximize their potential. The Town must continue to evaluate, maintain, and preserve its facilities so that they remain available in the future.

Connectivity to Other Assets and Activities - Connectivity of open space and parkland focuses on the broader view of the interrelationship between the various spaces and activities that take place in the area. Pedestrian and bicycle links between recreational opportunities will enhance the facilities.

RECREATION PROGRAMS

Recreation programs in the Town are managed by the LaFayette Community Council, a non-profit organization, and the Town's Recreation Director. The Town works hand in hand with the Council to provide recreational activities and community events. The Town of LaFayette's Recreation Director, a Town employee, was hired in 1996 by the Community Council to work 10 hours per week. Due to an increase in recreational pursuits in the Town, this position is now 30 hours per week. It is anticipated that, over time, the position will continue to grow with respect to responsibilities. The present job entails recruitment of persons to participate in Town-sponsored recreational programs, managing the equipment and facilities, program inventory, supervising the programs in concert with volunteer coaches, and ordering new equipment.

The Recreation Director position was originally hired to manage the Town's youth programs, particularly organized sports, thus LaFayette still maintains a major focus on recreational opportunities for youth including:

- Wrestling
- Skiing (trips to Song Mountain)
- Volleyball
- Basketball (held in the elementary school gym)
- Baseball
- Lacrosse
- Swimming (at LaFayette Beach Park)

- Soccer
- Flag Football
- Track
- Tennis (Stafford Park)

Over time, there has been more of a demand expressed for adult offerings, so the Town has added classes in aerobics (primarily zumba), yoga, and general exercise, in addition to men's basketball. There is a local softball league that is managed by a bar/restaurant that is not under the purview of the Town.

To assist in managing these programs, the Town hired a part time lifeguard supervisor to assist at LaFayette Beach. The Community Council provides part time field maintenance services and the Town and the LaFayette School District share a field groomer. If the Recreational Programs are to grow, the Recreation Director position will need to become full time or additional part time staff will need to be hired.

Presently, the Recreation Director shares a desk with the tax collector in Town Hall to access a fax machine and the internet. Otherwise, the Recreation Director is often found in the Community Building, which is not set up as an office. The Town would best be served by a structure to house its indoor recreation programs and to provide suitable office space and storage for the Recreation staff.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

As noted, the use of the LaFayette parks is quite extensive and they appear to serve the community very well. Nevertheless, the Town is lacking in overall acreage of parkland and opportunities for growth should be explored. The Town must also consider alternative forms of recreational opportunities that meet the changing needs of its citizens and serve all segments of the population. Several opportunities include:

Indoor Recreation Facility – The Town would benefit from the development of a multi-purpose indoor recreation facility. Such a facility should be designed to be multi-generational and provide opportunities for recreational field sports, various meeting facilities, office space and storage. If a multipurpose/multigenerational recreation building were to be built, its preferred location would be in the area of Stafford Park or the hamlet. The Town would likely need to acquire more land for such a facility, such as the former casket company property and land to the south of the park. Such a facility has the potential to be a significant community gathering space, promote a sense of community among Town residents, and increase the Town's appeal as a place to live and work.

Greenway/Linear Park – As detailed above the Town has a number of parks and recreation facilities scattered about the Town. Linking these facilities, along with other Town nodes such as the hamlet, via a greenway would provide new recreational opportunities for residents, including biking, hiking, and cross-country skiing, as well as providing alternative opportunities to move people through the community. Greenways can also accommodate other public uses such as community gardens, exercise facilities,

playgrounds, or interpretive information related to the historic or natural environment of the area, and can be designed to link to greenways and trails in other communities.

Numerous studies have shown that property values increase in communities served by trails and greenways, and that trails can be significant economic drivers. Due to costs, land ownership issues, and other factors, the Town should create a master plan for development of the greenway, including public participation, and develop facilities and linkages over time as funding and land is available. The use of existing linear properties, such as utility right-of-ways, can be useful in development of the greenway.

Bike Trails and Routes – LaFayette already hosts a number of informal bike routes through the community, and certain roads are popular with cyclists. However, there are not any signed bike routes or off-road bicycle trails. The Town should work to create a bicycle-friendly community, both for recreation and transportation. This could include bike lanes in and around the hamlet (see Section V, Hamlet), designated bike routes along major roadways, and multi-use, off-road trails. Particular attention should be paid to creating linkages among major nodes in the community and to trails in the Syracuse area. Access to amenities such as bicycle racks and restrooms, are also important. (Also see Section X, Transportation).

Emerging Trends – The recreation needs of a community are not static. For instance, skateboard parks were rare 20 years ago, but have now become commonplace, as interest in that sport has increased. The public demand for multi-use trails has grown immensely in recent years. Demographic shifts can also alter levels of interest in amenities like community gardens or dog parks. A growing older population may increase the need for senior recreation facilities and programs, as well as handicapped accessible facilities. The Town also has limited winter use facilities such as a skating rink.

The Town must remain cognizant of emerging trends in order to ensure that its recreation facilities and programs meet the changing demands of its residents. It should work to find creative and cost effective solutions to provide the amenities that its citizens desire, and should be willing to retire facilities that have a declining demand.

GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

GOAL 30: Provide facilities that are safe, clean, well maintained, and handicapped accessible.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Identify all safety, cleanliness, and general maintenance concerns for all Town recreation facilities and institute corrective actions as needs arise. Issues of concern include playground equipment condition and types, dangerous or failing structures, un-mowed areas, deteriorating swimming areas, handicapped accessibility, poor lighting, litter, graffiti, etc.

B) Establish long-term maintenance plans for all Town-owned facilities including a review of responsibilities and budgets.

C) Undertake a program of park renovations and upgrades to address deficiencies in LaFayette Beach and Bailey Parks. Seek outside grant funding as needed.

D) Renovate and upgrade the Community Center to enhance use.

GOAL 31: Remain current with meeting the needs of the public and provide facilities and programs to meet those needs.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES**:**

A) Coordinate with the Community Council to conduct periodic needs assessments on recreation facilities and public desires and regularly evaluate programs and participation levels to anticipate and meet changing needs and trends.

B) Continue to build upon improvements and facilities at Stafford Park and develop new facilities at other parks as needed.

C) Work with the CNY Land Trust to improve public access to its two properties in the Town.

D) Work with the Community Council and nearby communities to provide new and/or enhanced recreational and social programs for adults and seniors.

E) Work with local biking organizations, Onondaga County, and other interested parties to establish bicycle routes and trails, and to provide amenities and services to cyclists (see also Section X. Transportation).

F) Work with the CNY Land Trust, the LaFayette Apple Festival, and other partners, to investigate creating enhanced and improved public access along Onondaga

Creek within the Apple Festival Grounds including amenities such as parking, trails, benches, and picnic sites.

G) Investigate acquiring property/access for public use and boat launching on Jamesville Reservoir.

GOAL 32: Develop a greenway and/or trails to connect major recreational and business nodes in the community, including Town parks, the hamlet, CNY Land Trust properties, and the Apple Festival Grounds.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES**:**

A) Identify and map existing nodes to be connected. Inventory and map utility right-of-ways, vacant land, public land, and other opportunities that can serve as corridors to connect them. Use this data to develop a Greenway Master Plan.

B) Seek grant funding and leverage force account labor to undertake phased improvements as land become available.

GOAL 33: Increase recreational opportunities for winter recreation.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES**:**

A) Construct a multi-use, multi-generational indoor recreation facility at or near Stafford Park.

B) Develop an ice skating rink at Stafford Park.

C) Cooperate with the LaFayette Trail Riders snowmobile group to ensure a well-maintained and interconnected system of snowmobile trails.

D) Develop opportunities and/or facilities for cross-country skiing/snowshoeing.

Section IX. Infrastructure and Telecommunication

WATER SUPPLY

There is no public water available in the Town of LaFayette outside of three water districts in the Jamesville Reservoir area, the Coye Road, East LaFayette, and Smokey Hollow Water Districts (see Map 14). In 2011 the Onondaga County Water Authority (OCWA), who provides water for these districts, had 234 active accounts in all three districts combined. There were 1,462 households in the rest of LaFayette, leaving 84% of the Town's households reliant on individual wells or privately operated water systems. In addition, almost all of the Town's businesses, industries, apartment buildings, and its two schools are located outside of the public water districts.

The availability of groundwater varies across the Town, as can be seen on Map 3. Much of the Town has poor access to groundwater, while the Butternut and Tully Valleys have Moderate to good access. However, the Tully Valley is home to salt deposits 1,200 feet below the surface. Brine from this bedrock aquifer can sometimes contaminate the aquifers closer to the surface. This situation, along with former brine wells, and a brine line running north-south through the valley, leave water from some wells in this area salty and non-potable. Due to these issues, Honeywell International Inc, responsible for the former Allied Chemical brine wells, provides spring-fed water for many households in the hamlet of Cardiff. The brine fields of the Tully Valley are discussed further in a later section.

In Onondaga County, each lot in a new realty subdivision (5 or more lots, each less than 5 acres), without public water and sewer, must be a minimum of 40,000 square feet. However, 40,000 square feet is a best case scenario which can only occur if there are very good soils. More often lots are larger. A smaller lot size with both a septic system and a well must have soils that are permeable enough for septic effluent to percolate away from the drain field, but fine grained enough to filter out pathogenic bacteria and viruses before they reach water feeding a well.

In some parts of Town, especially the hamlet of LaFayette, due to the poor soils and concentration of development, there are concerns about well contamination. The area also faces issues of possible salt contamination from Interstate 81, the DOT's salt storage property between routes 81 and 11, or the nearby underground salt deposits. In

recent years the Onondaga County Health Department has had reports in this area of contamination from sodium chloride (salt), coliform, iron, and magnesium. Property owners using their own well have no requirement to test their water regularly (public water and other private sources must do this). This means homeowners may go for years with contaminated water and not know it.

PUBLIC WATER

Coye Road, Northeast LaFayette, and Smokey Hollow Water Districts -The Town of LaFayette has three water districts, the Coye Road Water District formed in 1978 and Northeast LaFayette and Smokey Hollow Water Districts formed in 2007. Each of these systems are operated and maintained by the Onondaga County Water Authority (OCWA), water usage is billed by OCWA, and the Town covers capital costs through taxes paid by those in the district. These water districts are contiguous, serving 234 households in the northern part of the Town within the boundaries outlined on Map 14.

Potential Central LaFayette Water District – While it is unlikely the existing public water districts will expand too much in the near future, the Town has considered providing public water in the hamlet area, and has commissioned studies looking into this in 1992, 1995 and 2009. Most recently, Thoma Development Consultants completed a Public Water Survey in 2007 to gauge interest, and Dunn & Sgromo Engineers, PLLC then completed an engineer's report for the Central LaFayette Water District in 2009.

Thoma Developement Consultants surveyed the Hamlet area around the intersection of Routes 11 and 20, the area east of the Hamlet along Route 20, including the Applewood subdivision, and Route 11 between the hamlet and the northern Town line. The survey had a 47% response rate, and while 58% of respondents were satisfied with their well water, 66% were interested in receiving public water. Seventy-two percent (72%) in the hamlet area, and 75% north of the hamlet were interested in public water, but only 55% east of the hamlet were interested. However, of those who were interested, 57% were not willing to pay more than $400 a year for it. Throughout the surveyed area, many respondents described issues with their well water, including very hard water, which was harming their pipes and fixtures; iron and sulfur in the water; losing the ability to pump water during power outages; and running out of water during particularly dry weather.

After completing the Public Water Survey, the Town of LaFayette commissioned an engineering study for the project. The 2009 Engineer's Report proposes a Central LaFayette Water District for the Town's hamlet area. The area consists of 471 properties, including the area described above, plus Sentinel Heights Road to the northern boundary of LaFayette and the neighborhood between Sentinel Heights Road and Route 11. This overall area is the most densely populated area of the Town of LaFayette. The district has two schools with over 900 students between them, 190 apartment units, 322 single-family households, and 45 businesses. At the time of the

Report, 26 privately operating water systems in the area served the schools, apartments, and offices.

The proposed Central LaFayette Water District would connect to the existing Onondaga County Water Authority system on Sentinel Heights Road. To do this, the system would include new water mains totaling around 65,000 linear feet, fire hydrants every 600 to 800 feet, a duplex pumping station, and a 500,000 gallon storage tank. The Engineer's Report estimated the total cost for the project at $5.9 million.

In 2009 the Town initiated the legal process to form a water district in the hamlet area with a resolution passed July 15, 2009 estimating the total cost of the project at $5.7 million, an estimated minimum hook up fee of approximately $500, and an estimated annual cost of $500 for the typical property. The Town's resolution stated that the Town planned to finance the project through a combination of long-term, low-interest financing and available grants. A public hearing was held on August 3, and a Public Referendum was held on November 3, 2009. The referendum was voted down with 72 votes in favor and 249 opposed, or only 22% in favor. It seems that many who owned property in the district had concerns about the cost of the proposed system, and many were afraid it would cost more than estimated.

In 2011 a student with Syracuse University's Maxwell School worked with the Town to complete a survey of businesses in LaFayette to help understand what barriers they face to having successful businesses. The survey was mailed to 80 businesses, and 22 responded (a 27.5% response rate). Of those, 59% were located within the hamlet. 33% of all respondents said municipal water would help their business, while 57% said it would not and 10% did not know. At the end of the survey, respondents were asked what they would like to see to help their business grow and succeed. Several responses suggested public water would help.

The 2009 Engineer's Report outlined some other options for creating a water district and their advantages and disadvantages. One option could be to install a municipal well field and municipally owned distribution system for a somewhat smaller area than the proposed Central LaFayette Water District. This would have similar start up costs as connecting the system to the Onondaga County Water Authority's system, however, the operation and maintenance costs would be much higher, making it difficult for the community to afford.

Another option could be to create a smaller service area than originally proposed. However, the Engineer's Report believes this would leave too few participants sharing in the cost, most likely making it too expensive for those who remained in the district. Similarly, expanding the service area to more sparsely populated areas would also probably make it too expensive, as this would increase the overall costs by too much, compared to the number of added participants.

Moving into the future, the Town of LaFayette should pursue a public water district for the hamlet of LaFayette for a variety of reasons. The 2009 Engineer's Report discusses some issues with the current situation, including well contamination risks due to the dense concentration of septic systems, and higher fire insurance rates. According

to Dunn and Sgromo Engineers, in the concentrated hamlet area there are over 60 wells and septic systems within a .1 square mile area, including a school, auto repair shop, and a gas station. As was previously mentioned, the Onondaga County Health Department is also concerned about well contamination due to the dense concentration and poor soils in the area. In addition, a lack of public water makes it more difficult to attract certain businesses and industry. The Town should seek outside funding to assist in the development of a public water system and alleviate costs for residents of the village as much as possible. In addition, the Town should provide clear information to residents of the district about the costs and boundaries of the water district to help reduce false speculation.

BRINE FIELDS OF THE TULLY VALLEY

North flowing brine from underground the Tully Valley area was the source for "salty springs" found along Onondaga Lake's shoreline centuries ago. From the late 1700s to the early 1900s these springs were used to produce salt. When the concentration of brine began to diminish, the Solvay Process Company drilled several deep test holes south of Syracuse and eventually found halite (common salt) deposits in the Tully Valley. In the Tully Valley area, composite salt of around 150 feet thick lies at around 1,300 feet below land surface.

According to the United State Geological Survey's (USGS) publication "Salt Production in Syracuse, New York ("The Salt City") and the Hydrogeology of the Onondaga Creek Valley" (2000), over 120 wells were drilled into four halite beds in the southern end of the Tully Valley from 1890-1986. Over this 96-year period over 96 million tons of salt were withdrawn (over eight times the amount produced from the Onondaga Lake springs).

While it appears the brine wells were all located in the Town of Tully, a brine line runs north-south through the Town of LaFayette, and served LCP Chemical Inc. in Solvay at one time. The pipeline was formerly owned by Allied Chemical and now belongs to Honeywell International.

According to the USGS, in the Tully Valley, the local ground-water flow system has been altered from almost 100 years of halite removal, and subsequent bedrock subsidence (sinking) and fracturing. There are now connections between the bedrock aquifers and valley-fill aquifers, which were not there before. This allows salty water to enter the aquifers above, which puts water quality in the Onondaga Creek valley aquifer system at risk.

As was mentioned in a previous section, the hamlet of Cardiff has had issues with salt contamination in its well water in the past, from the situation described above, and from leaks in the brine line and wells. Because of this, today, Honeywell International Inc. provides spring-fed water for many households in the hamlet of Cardiff. While the situation is not ideal, at this time there is no need for public water in Cardiff. However, due to the inability of some residents to use well water, the Town should stay apprised of the situation to be sure residents always have access to clean water.

WASTEWATER

There is no public sewer system in the Town of LaFayette, including in the Jamesville Reservoir area. No portion of the Town is in Onondaga County's Sanitary District Boundary, the County's desired borders for future extensions of the sewer system. While it is possible to change these borders if municipalities or developers request it, it is unlikely that sewers will be extended from another part of the county in the near future. While providing a public sewer system for the Hamlet of LaFayette has been explored in the past, typically in a Town of LaFayette's size it is too expensive to have both sewer and public water, and water is normally less expensive to develop.

FIRE PROTECTION

The Town of LaFayette contracts with two fire departments to provide fire protection for their residents, the LaFayette Fire Department and the Jamesville Volunteer Fire Department. Both departments are private corporations, nonprofit entities with no independent authority to assume debt or collect taxes. The Town provides revenue for these departments by adding a fire tax to all property tax bills. Both departments are all volunteer departments. The LaFayette Fire Department provides first response service for the majority of the Town, including for eight miles of Interstate 81. The Jamesville Volunteer Fire Department provides service in the Jamesville Reservoir area. Both departments provide mutual aid service to other areas as needed.

The LaFayette Fire Department operates out of two stations, one on Route 11 near the LaFayette hamlet, and another on Rowland Road, near the hamlet of Cardiff. The department answers an average of 500 calls for service a year. In the first six months of 2011 the Fire Department responded to 91 fire emergencies with an average response time of 9 minutes and 33 seconds, for a staffed engine to the arrive at the scene. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) sets standards for response times for volunteer fire departments. The standard is 10 minutes for suburban areas and 14 minutes for rural areas. The LaFayette Fire Department is well within the standard for a rural area, and is even within the suburban standard. Even with these good response times, without public water and its associated fire hydrants, residents face higher fire insurance rates. However, this does not seem to be a concern in the community. In addition, the lack of public water requires the Fire Department to purchase more expensive equipment that can hold more water. They have been able to do so though, and currently have two 2,000 gallon tankers, two engines which hold 1,000 gallons each, and can call in mutual aid from nearby municipalities when more water is needed.

FUEL SOURCES

LaFayette residents use a variety of sources to heat their homes. The 2009 American Community Survey (U.S. Census Bureau) estimates that 43.9% of households use fuel oil or kerosene, 22.3% use utility gas, 19.4% use bottled, tank or LP gas, 7.6% use electricity and the remaining 6.8% use coal, wood or some other fuel.

The survey estimates 0% of households use solar energy, and the survey does not ask about wind or geothermal energy, but some of the 1.3% who use "other fuel" sources could be using these. While a small amount of residents use renewable energy sources to heat and power their homes now, residents expressed an interest in becoming a leader in sustainability and energy independence during planning workshops. In addition, in 2009, the Town updated their Zoning Ordinance to include a section to regulate the development of private windmills designed for home, farm and small commercial use, and to address related health, safety, and community welfare issues. Three households have since constructed windmills on their properties.

TELECOMMUNICATION

The majority of LaFayette has access to both DSL and cable broadband internet, as can be seen on Map 15. However, there are a few sections of town that are limited to one or the other, and there are three areas that do not have access to either. These areas with no broadband access include the very south-eastern corner of Town, the very north-western corner of Town, an area of about 3 square miles just southwest of where Routes 81 and 20 meet and stretches of Eager Road and Commane Road where numerous houses are located. Of the 22 businesses who responded to a 2011 survey completed by a Syracuse University Student (as mentioned in the Public Water Section) 11% were "very dissatisfied" with their broadband access, while 89% were "satisfied" or "very satisfied". Fiber broadband is available to portions of the municipalities just north of LaFayette, including the Town of Dewitt and the City of Syracuse. It is possible, as technology advances and changes, that this could be extended south into LaFayette. In addition to broadband, the major cellular providers offer service for the entire Town of LaFayette.

The majority of the Town also has access to cable television, or, if not, at least has the option to get satellite television. However, there are parts of Town that cannot get either option due to the topography. There are several households, including along Eager Road, that have no access to cable, and because of steep terrain south of them cannot get a satellite signal. Verizon Fios, a fiber optic network, is expected to begin offering service in the Town of LaFayette in the near future. The Town should take advantage of this opportunity to try to provide television and broadband access to all residents of the Town.

ROADS

Town Roads -The Town of LaFayette Highway Department is responsible for maintaining all Town roads, including making repairs and plowing, and has a contract with Onondaga County to plow certain County roads as well. The Town Department is also responsible for maintaining roadside ditches and drainage basins. The Department has a five-year maintenance plan, which is updated when they assess the roads each spring. The Department is responsible for approximately 28 miles of roads, not including the County roads they plow.

The condition of most Town roads are up to current standards. However, as in many upstate New York communities with harsh winters, the Town has to work hard to extend the lifespan of the roads. The new Highway Superintendent is taking steps to help roads last longer. The Department gets information from Cornell Cooperative Extension, through printed material and workshops, on the latest materials, methods, and research related to road infrastructure. The Highway Superintendent has changed some of the Department's methods and materials used for road repairs, based on what has proven to add the longest time to a road's lifespan.

While Town law requires industry to clean any spill that might occur on Town roads, there is no Road Preservation Ordinance in place, for industry to replace Town roads damaged after heavy use. Gas drilling in the Marcelus Shale, using High-Volume Hydraulic Fracturing, is possible in southern Onondaga County, including LaFayette, assuming the New York State Department of Conservation will permit it. Currently there are a few dozen oil and gas leases in the Town, mostly in the southwestern corner of Town, along with several dozen more in the neighboring towns of Onondaga, Otisco, and Tully. While it can be assumed State and County roads will see most of the possible increase in traffic, it is possible that Town roads, culverts, and bridges will also require more maintenance as a result of these changes.

To help protect their roads, the Town can do some or all of the following. LaFayette can conduct a thorough road inventory and assessment to provide a baseline for tracking changes in road wear over time. The Highway Superintendent should identify infrastructure in poor, vulnerable conditions, and if deemed necessary a Weight Restrictions Local Law can be passed to prevent vehicles over a certain weight from driving on these roads without a permit to do so. In addition, the Town can develop a Road Use Agreement which industry can voluntarily agree to. These detail rights and responsibilities of each party, which saves time and reduces the likelihood of litigation. They can establish a truck haul route, a means of recovering costs of road repair, how to value the costs of road damages, insurance requirements, and hours of the day trucks are permitted, among other things. The Town can also pass a Road Preservation Local Law, which would apply uniformly to all vehicles exceeding 8 tons, and would establish a permit system to operate vehicles on town highway systems. This would provide similar regulations as a voluntary Road Use Agreement, and they can be used in combination with each other. And finally, the Town can enact a Driveway Ordinance to protect waterways, control erosion, and provide safe access to and from adjacent roads. It would be useful for the Town of LaFayette to work with its neighbors if they enact any of

the above measures, especially Towns to the west and south, to make laws and use agreements consistent and easier for drilling companies and others to follow.

In addition to road maintenance, the Town Highway Department is responsible for signage. The Federal Highway Administration has new requirements for signs in all municipalities. By 2012, the Town of LaFayette must replace all road signs that do not meet retroreflectivity requirements, which make sure all signs are highly visible and easy to read at night. Nationally about half of all traffic fatalities occur at night, even though only one-quarter of travel happens at night. This will make roads safer for the community, especially as the population ages. The LaFayette Highway Department has a plan in place to replace all needed signs by 2012, and has created a comprehensive plan for replacement of these signs in future years.

Interstate and US Highways - Routes 20, 11 and 81 run through the Town of LaFayette. Routes 20 and 11 intersect at the heart of the Hamlet of LaFayette. Exit and entrance ramps to I-81 north and southbound lie less than 1000 feet away from this intersection on Route 11, and less than 2000 feet away on Route 20. Because of this, and because almost 2,000 cars travel daily from this junction to Syracuse or elsewhere north of LaFayette, the roads in this area see significantly more traffic than the rest of the Town. The intersection of Route 20 and 11 has fallen into disrepair in recent years as the NYS Department of Transportation (DOT) develops plans to reconstruct it. At this time reconstruction is scheduled to begin and be completed in 2013.

The most recent draft plans from the DOT, dated January 2011, include plans for Route 20 from the I-81 entrance ramp, east to around 600 feet beyond Dodge Road; and for Route 11 around 600 feet north of the I-81 entrance ramp, south to the John Deer building, about 1,500 feet south of the hamlet intersection. These draft plans include adding a center turning lane on Route 20, in front of the school and some houses; adding a left-turn only lane on Route 20 on the west side of the light; adding a center median on the opposite, or east, side; and moving the I-81 northbound entrance and exit ramps so that they intersect with Route 11 at a safer angle. These plans also include removing the old hotel at the southeast corner of the hamlet intersection, and giving the property to the Town of LaFayette. See the Section V. Hamlet Development for more information about the DOT reconstruction.

GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

GOAL 34: Ensure all residents and businesses in the Town of LaFayette have access to clean, affordable, and sufficient drinking water.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Implement a program that encourages everyone to regularly check the quality of their well water, especially in the Hamlet of LaFayette. Additionally, encourage residents to determine baseline well water quality before gas drilling using hydraulic fracturing begins in the area, and provide information about how and where to do so.

B) Create a Water District for the LaFayette Hamlet.

C) Keep apprised of the water situation in the hamlet of Cardiff and support residents' efforts to acquire clean and safe water as needed.

GOAL 35: Continue to provide well-maintained roads throughout the Town of LaFayette.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Conduct a thorough Inventory and Assessment of Town roads, and develop and adopt a Road Preservation Ordinance, Road Use Agreements, and/or a Driveway Ordinance to help protect roads that may be heavily used by trucks associated with high-volume hydraulic fracturing.

B) Work with the NYS DOT to complete the reconstruction of the Hamlet of LaFayette's main intersection in a timely fashion (in 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter), and in a manner appropriate for the scale and character of the Hamlet.

GOAL 36: Ensure that all residents and businesses have access to broadband internet and a television provider.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Work with providers to fill in any gaps in coverage within the Town

B) Work with providers to extend fiber optic coverage (television and internet service) into and throughout the Town, in particular the LaFayette Hamlet, and areas not currently covered by cable, DSL, or satellite.

GOAL 37: Continue to provide quality fire protection services for the Town of LaFayette.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Support the LaFayette Fire Department in their efforts to acquire needed apparatus, other fire equipment, and training.

**See Section V. Hamlet Development for other measures related to the NYS DOT's reconstruction of the Hamlet of LaFayette's main intersection.*

Section X. Transportation

ROADWAYS

The Town of LaFayette has a strong network of roadways that serves as the "lifeline" of the community: importing and exporting goods and services, and providing workers, residents, and visitors safe passage in, out, and around the community. It is a vital thread in the social and economic fabric of the community. A discussion of the condition of roadways and maintenance responsibilities can also be found under Section IX. Infrastructure and Telecommunication.

The main routes through the community are US Route 11 which runs north to south, US Route 20 which runs east to west, and Interstate 81 which also runs north to south and includes Exit 15 in the Town. Routes I-81, 20, and 11 are maintained and controlled by the State. Routes 20 and 11 are technically United States roadways but are under the jurisdiction of New York. Routes 11 and 20 intersect in the LaFayette Hamlet and 20 is the longest east/west highway in the country. The DOT has plans in place to reconstruct this intersection in 2013. This is detailed more fully in Section V. Hamlet Development.

Interstate 81 is the largest and most prominent LaFayette roadway. The City of Syracuse is located approximately 10 miles north of the LaFayette exit on I-81. This four lane, limited access road network traverses approximately 15 miles through the Town, through the central part of the community, and includes on/off access at Exit 15. Access to I81 is provided via on/off ramps on both the east and west sides of the highway. If a vehicle is traveling northbound on 81 and wishes to travel southbound, a driver must travel through the Hamlet. I81 traffic and traffic generated by the intersection of Routes 11 and 20 results in a significant amount of vehicles passing through the Hamlet each day.

The New York State Department of Transportation maintains Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) counts and notes that 33,231 vehicles travel from the south to Exit 15 and 37,356 vehicles travel from Exit 15 northwards every day. Approximately 2,500 cars use the east side of Exit 15 to access I-81 northbound and 2,675 vehicles get off every day on the west side of Exit 15. Traffic counts for Routes 11 and 20 vary depending on the stretch of roadway being referenced. For example, the portion of Route 20 directly west of the Hamlet intersection (before the bridge), experiences a daily traffic count of 6,422 vehicles per day.

Overall, the Town's roadway network meets the demands of the community.

Complete Streets

In 2011, New York State passed Complete Streets legislation requiring that communities take into consideration all aspects of street design for all users. As of April of 2010, the NYS DOT had already adopted a policy to "promote pedestrian and bicycle travel for all persons on the state transportation system," and further, "to develop a transportation system that offers travel mode choices that are inclusive of, accessible to, convenient and safe for pedestrians and bicyclists." The Complete Streets law holds DOT accountable, requiring that it produce a report within two years demonstrating the Department's compliance with the law and how it has modified its procedures to "institutionalize" complete streets design features. It is not known at this point, what impact the law will have on local municipalities. LaFayette should remain cognizant of the law's existence, track its development, and be prepared to integrate aspects of the law into local law, if required.

Sidewalks

Complete Streets recognizes the needs of pedestrians when designing roadways, including those with special needs. As the Town works closely with the DOT on the reconstruction of the LaFayette Hamlet roadway, this is an excellent opportunity to include sidewalks, crosswalks, signals, signage, etc. that will increase the walkability in and around not only the Hamlet area but to the LaFayette High School, as well. This includes not only consideration for those on foot, but also for those in wheelchairs, baby strollers, and bicycles. In its present state, the LaFayette Hamlet does not provide a safe and welcoming transportation network for pedestrians, the handicapped and bicyclists, as sidewalks are not in good condition and are unsafe, and it is difficult to cross at the intersection and elsewhere in the Hamlet. No sidewalks exist on Route 11 from the Hamlet to the high school.

The Town has a sidewalk ordinance that, among other things, notes that property owners are required to maintain their sidewalks and clear them of snow and other impediments. It is not strictly enforced. If the Town is going to promote the installation of more sidewalks throughout the Town, it will need to better enforce its ordinance.

Bicycle Trails/Paths

At the present time, there are no designated bicycle routes in the Town and there are no bicycle lanes, despite that fact that anecdotally there are many bicyclists using Town roads. However, in May 2003, the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation

Council (SMTC) announced the availability of a *Bicycle Suitability Map*, a product to assist the general public (primarily bicycle commuters) in determining which roads are currently the most suitable for bicycle travel In addition to rating streets (throughout Onondaga County, including the City of Syracuse) as being "Excellent, Good, Average, Fair, Poor" for commuter bicycling, the map includes various educational and safety related panels pertaining to bicycle and pedestrian travel, and the rules of the road. A number of roads throughout the Town were designated as "good" according to the Council.

At Town of LaFayette public visioning sessions held as part of this Plan, attendees have noted the beauty derived from the Town's sense of place. One way to discover this beauty is to provide safe bicycle passage along country roads and into the hamlet areas. It is recognized that the physical layout of some roads will be more conducive to this infrastructure than other areas. The Town should work with planners, bicycle clubs such as the Onondaga Cycling Club and Syracuse-Onondaga Cycling Coalition, and other advocates to develop a list of roadways where bicycle lanes and paths could be created, marked, and signed. Bicycle amenities such as bike racks should be included as part of the overall design and as part of the overall transportation network in the Town. The Town should strive to connect their trails to those already in existence in and around the City of Syracuse and its suburbs. This inventory could serve as a master plan for future road projects.

Pedestrian/Vehicular Conflict Points – Driveway Access

As the Town continues on a course of future development, it should be mindful of the need for shared driveway access, particularly in more densely developed areas. For example, limiting the number of driveway curb cuts on major roadways will serve to reduce vehicular and pedestrian accidents. Consolidating parking lots and driveways not only will increase safety but also decrease the amount of paved surfaces in the Town. As an example, the Town Hall presently shares parking and access with the health center and the library. This spares a driver from the hassle of trying to cut in and out of lanes of traffic if each entity was to have their own driveway. Shared parking and access should also be encouraged in more densely developed commercial and residential areas, including future industrial/commercial parks.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Centro Bus

Public transportation in the region, including the Town of LaFayette, is provided by Centro Bus. The system connects the City of Syracuse to outlying suburbs and rural areas and provides daily commutation. A bus is available for pick up and drop off each morning and evening at the LaFayette High School. A park and ride area is available on school grounds for the small number of people that take advantage of the bus service. Presently a round-trip fare can be purchased for $4, with discounts available based on volume. Senior citizens can travel for $2 round-trip and children under the age of six ride free.

Some commuters use the high school park and ride and a similar parking area near McDonald's to carpool. By and large, most employees drive their cars to work.

Railroad

The New York, Susquehanna, and Western Railroad is owned by the Delaware Otsego Corporation. The railroad right-of-way is owned by the Onondaga County IDA under a lease back agreement for tax purposes. The rail line passes through the Town, north to south, in the eastern portion of the community. Passenger service was abandoned decades ago. Today the rail line is limited to freight service. There have been ongoing discussions from a regional perspective about reinstating passenger service from Central New York to New York City. This will more likely be a serious consideration when gas prices start to exceed $4 per gallon and more. The Town should be supportive of regional efforts to increase rail passenger service. This service will support regional tourism and, from a global perspective, reduce our collective reliance on fossil fuels.

GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATIONS

GOAL 38: Enhance and encourage pedestrian and bicycle routes that promote connectivity and good health while reducing our reliance on vehicles.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Work with the DOT on the reconstruction project related to the Routes 11 and 20 intersection in the Hamlet to incorporate bicycle and pedestrian amenities. This could include crosswalks, signage, signals, bulbouts, bike lanes, and islands, included under the Complete Streets legislation. Ensure that all amenities are handicapped accessible.

B) Identify gaps within the Town's existing sidewalk system that could serve as key links to destinations in and around the Hamlet (Grimshaw Elementary School, library, Town Hall, shopping, churches, Nature Trail, jobs, etc.).

C) Work with the County, bicycle enthusiasts, and clubs to develop an inventory of roadways in the Town that are suitable for bicycle paths and trails. Provide signed and marked bicycle lanes. Provide amenities such as bicycle racks. As practical, connect these paths and trails to those already in existence in and around the City of Syracuse and nearby suburbs and townships.

D) Include requirements, as part of the Site Plan Review, for all new projects to incorporate pedestrian and bicycle routes and facilities as part of the new development, as may be appropriate.

E) Develop maps for public distribution to increase public awareness of designated sidewalks, trails, and bicycle routes. Include details of the health and environmental benefits of using non-motorized forms of transportation.

GOAL 39: Improve, develop, and promote the use of public transportation.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Work with representatives of Onondaga County and Centro Bus to improve services and to provide incentives to increase the use of the system.

B) Support an evaluation of the regional transportation network to examine the potential benefits and efficiencies that could be realized by coordinating and/or consolidating the regional bus system.

C) Support the continued evaluation, promotion, and development of passenger rail service linking Syracuse, Cortland, Binghamton and beyond.

D) Pursue a capital improvements program that increases opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle usage and safety.

GOAL 40: Institute access management planning within the Town including such infrastructure as access roads and driveways to reduce pedestrian/vehicle conflict points.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Develop regulations governing and requiring access management plans for multiple-family residential, commercial, and industrial development and redevelopment.

B) As part of access management plan requirements, reduce the number of curb cuts allowed on Routes 11 and 20 in the Hamlet area.

C) As part of access management plan requirements, evaluate allowable widths of curb cuts.

Section XI. Intergovernmental Cooperation

The Town of LaFayette cooperates with outside agencies to provide services to area residents in several ways. For example, the Town contracts with two fire departments, the LaFayette and Jamesville Fire Departments, to provide fire protection services for Town residents (See Section IX. Infrastructure and Telecommunication). In addition, the Town does not have its own Police Department. Instead, the Onondaga County Sheriffs Office and New York State Police serve LaFayette. The State Police operate a station in the Town, just north of the Hamlet of LaFayette. The Town also works with the Onondaga County Water Authority to provide water to residents in the three public water districts near the Jamesville Reservoir. (See Section IX. Infrastructure and Telecommunication).

LaFayette also works with neighboring towns' Highway Departments to save money and provide more efficient services, and contracts with Onondaga County to provide snowplowing services on certain County roads. The Highway Department also coordinates equipment purchases with neighboring towns when the need arises. They recently purchased an excavator and have an agreement to share use of it with Otisco and Tully. They will also share manpower, for example, when an extra flagman is needed at a worksite, instead of hiring additional permanent employees. And finally, LaFayette extends plowing of certain roads into neighboring towns, and vice versa, when it is practical to do so.

Working with neighboring communities, the fire departments, school districts, and other layers of government, to share services, can save taxpayers money and provide more efficient services for residents. According to the NY State Comptroller, certain administrative and office functions have a high potential for savings and are often easier to implement than other shared services. Some areas the Comptroller suggests Towns could investigate sharing with neighboring municipalities include accounting functions (payroll processing, software), procurement of goods and services, tax collection and assessment, records management, IT maintenance and support, and IT security. In addition, sharing facilities, such as vehicle storage and a fuel depot can be an easy and convenient opportunity. The Town of LaFayette has considered sharing a fuel depot with the Towns of Otisco and Tully, and area school districts in the future. Creating a purchasing cooperative with neighboring municipalities can also be an effective way to save money. And finally, area school districts can also share services, such as payroll, technology, utility purchases, and food delivery.

The Town is already doing a good job in combining services where it makes sense. The Town should be challenging itself to insure that other services it provides are scrutinized to eliminate duplication or inefficient expenditures of time and money. LaFayette should consider certain factors, such as liability, contract term, personnel assignments, and property agreements, before it decides to share facilities or services with another municipality.

The Town has resources available when investigating shared service opportunities. The State Comptroller's Office can provide technical and legal assistance, as well as data for cost-benefit analyses to local governments. In addition, their Local Government Management Guide provides guidance for local officials on how to explore shared services. There are also General Efficiency Planning Grants and Efficiency Implementation Grants available through New York State. The Town should also take advantage when opportunities present themselves, for example, when new equipment needs to be purchased or a vacancy is about to be created in a certain position.

In addition to working across municipal lines, it is also important to work with varying levels of government, including Onondaga County. It may be hard at times to gain the attention of the County as they are also working with the City of Syracuse, 18 other towns, and 15 villages. In addition, the mostly rural Town of LaFayette has different needs than some of the more developed areas of the county. However, successful collaboration is built on trust between governments. It is important that the Town work to keep the lines of communication with the County government open and active. For example, each member of the Town Board could act as a liaison between LaFayette and specific County Departments. Or the Town could form a coalition with neighboring Towns that have similar interests, such as Tully, Otisco, Fabius, and Pompey, to provide a louder voice when advocating for their needs. This can occur at all levels, and for a variety of purposes, whether it is working with their Community Development office to rehabilitate homes, or with their Highway Department to plow roads. In addition, the current County Executive's Office has a Director of Intergovernmental Relations, whose goal is to reduce the overall cost of government to taxpayers through increased consolidation and shared services among County municipalities. This person can also act as a liaison between LaFayette and Onondaga County. This person can and should be used as a resource when appropriate.

GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

GOAL 41: Work with neighboring municipalities, Onondaga County, the LaFayette School District, and Fire Departments to minimize costs and maximize services for area residents.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Create an inventory of potential areas of opportunity for sharing services with one or more local governments and research potential savings from implementing specific shared services.

B) Develop formal methods and processes to create and maintain lines of communication between the Town government and neighboring municipalities, Onondaga County, and the LaFayette School District.

C) Actively pursue grant opportunities (such as the NYS General Efficiency Planning Grants and Efficiency Implementation Grants) to more thoroughly study the potential savings from shared services; and to implement shared services projects and programs.

D) Form a partnership with neighboring rural Towns to provide stronger representation for common needs when working with Onondaga County.

SECTION XII. LAND USE AND ZONING

Land use planning involves making decisions about how to categorize various land uses and assess the interaction between them, while determining how to best use and preserve valuable built and natural resources. These decisions influence the landscape across the Town of LaFayette, including development patterns, agriculture, and open space. They can also encourage or hinder commercial and industrial growth. And finally, land use patterns are closely tied to issues of sustainability, such as the preservation of continuous natural corridors or reducing reliance on non-renewable energy resources.

LAND USE CLASSIFICATION

Each parcel of land in the Town is classified and coded for tax purposes according to its current land use. While there may be circumstances where a single parcel has more than one use, the parcel is classified according to its primary use. For example, there may be a residence with vacant acreage, but the parcel will be classified as residential. Each parcel also sits in a zoning district that regulates the use and other requirements for that parcel.

The majority of land in LaFayette is categorized as residential, vacant, or agricultural. Chart 1 and Table 8 below provide detailed land use percentages. More than a third of the Town's acreage is residential, however, it is important to note that 62% of residential acreage is made up of residential parcels with ten or more acres.

Chart 1: Percent Acreage by Land Use

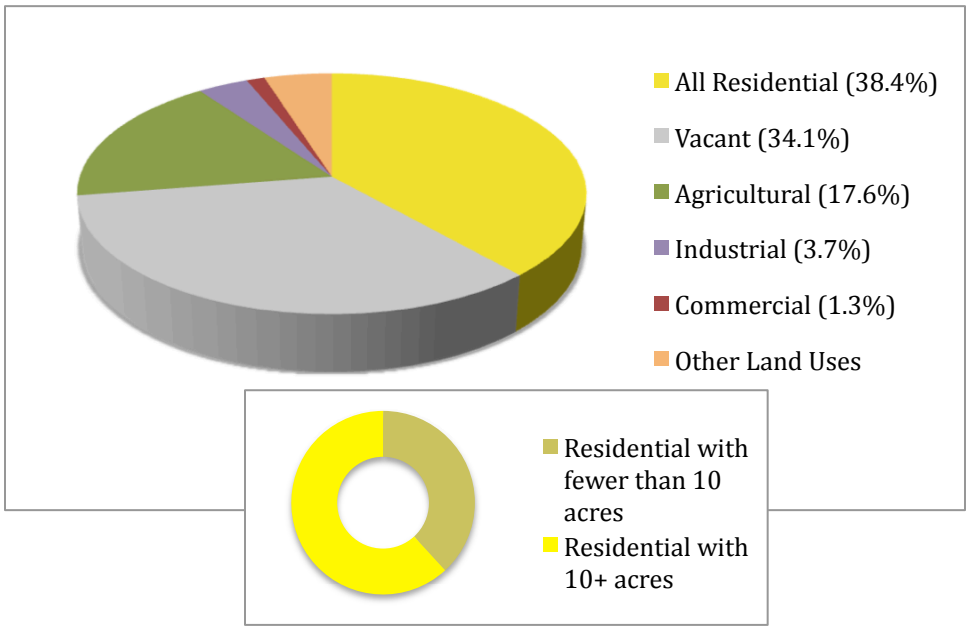


Table 8: Comparison of Land Use

Land Use	Acreage*	% of Total Land Use	Number of Parcels*
Residential	10,443	38.4	1,694
Vacant	9,278	34.1	646
Agricultural	4,775	17.6	88
Industrial	1,002	3.7	9
Wild, Forest, Conservation	470	1.7	11
Public Services	438	1.6	23
Commercial	361	1.3	61
Recreation & Entertainment	270	1.0	14
Community Services	157	.6	28
TOTAL	27,194	100%	2,574

*Acreage and parcel numbers determined from 2010 Real Property Services Tax Data.

Residential parcels are scattered throughout the entire Town, along Town roads and highways, and grouped in neighborhoods in some areas (See Map 18). Some of the more notable neighborhoods include Meeker Hill Estates, Maple Grove, and neighborhoods near the Jamesville Reservoir, around the LaFayette High School, and in the hamlets of LaFayette and Cardiff. Land classified as vacant is also scattered throughout the Town. Most of this is classified as either residential vacant land, meaning it is located in a residential area; abandoned agricultural land that is not productive or part of an operating farm; or other rural vacant lands, such as waste lands, swamps, rocky areas, or woods of commercial tree species. Most of the agricultural land is located in one of three areas, West of I-81; along Eager Road; or southeast of Route 20 and Apulia Road. Commercial land, public services, recreation, industrial, and community services are mostly located in the Hamlet of LaFayette or north of the Hamlet along Route 11.

ZONING DISTRICTS

The Town of LaFayette's Zoning Ordinance was adopted in 1970. The ordinance includes zoning regulations for eight districts, including Agricultural-Residential, Flood Plain, Residential Planned Cluster, Residential Multi-family, Business, Industrial, Commercial Planned Development, and Hamlet, as seen on Map 19. The amount of acreage included in each district can be seen in Chart 2 and Table 9 below. No Commercial Planned Development districts have been established in the Town at this time. The ordinance also includes additional land use regulations such as for parking, signs, building height, corner lots, roadside stands, family accessory units, and windmills.

Chart 2: Percent Acreage by Zoning

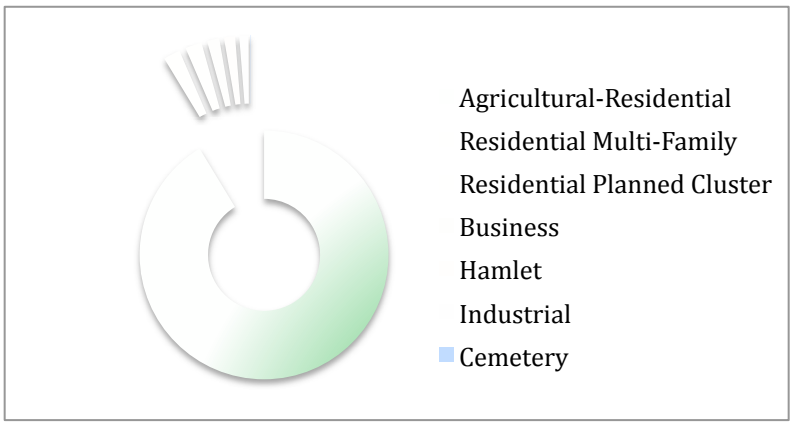


Table 9: Comparison of Zoning

Zoning	Acreage	% of Total Zoning
Agricultural-Residential	25,128	91.3
Residential Multi-Family	603	2.2
Residential Planned Cluster	594	2.2
Business	442	1.6
Hamlet	400	1.5
Industrial	336	1.2
Cemetery	12	0
*Flood Plain**	1,182	4.3

**Floodplain zoning overlays other zones.*

A description of each zoning district is detailed below:

Agricultural-Residential (AR) – The majority of the Town, 91.3%, is zoned as AR. Farms and their accessory units, and single family dwellings are permitted in this district. By special use permit, camps, storage trailers, outdoor recreational, commercial animal crematoriums, public and private stables, and windmills are also permitted uses in this district. The land use classifications across the district generally align with the permitted uses with few exceptions. AR uses are also permitted in Residential Planned Cluster, Residential Multi-Family, and Business districts.

Flood Plain (F) – The Flood Plain district follows the federally designated 100-year floodplains in the Town, mostly along Butternut and Onondaga Creeks. The F district is an overlay district, with most of it overlaying parcels in the AR district. The F district permits AR uses, however, they must meet a few additional requirements meant to reduce the impact of flooding on built structures. Structures must be approved by the Planning Board; cannot contain a basement or cellar; the first floor must be at least two feet above the highest elevations of land within the district; and all "fill" used for structural

support must be highly compacted and adequately protected by riprap or other means against water erosion.

Residential Planned Cluster (RPC) – There are two RPC districts within the Town, one which includes the neighborhood west of the Jamesville Reservoir, and another just southeast of the LaFayette Hamlet, off of Route 20. The RPC districts permit all AR uses, with different requirements if the district is served by "public water and sewage utilities", neither of which is defined in the ordinance. The RPC district adjacent to the Jamesville Reservoir is served by a public water district, however, the other district is not, and there is no public sewer system in the Town.

Residential Multi-Family (RM) – There are a few areas in LaFayette zoned RM, including several lots west of I-81 along Webb Road, a few lots along the east side of Route 11, north of the Hamlet, a lot off of Palladino Road on the east side of Town, and a few lots in the northern part of Town, off of Smokey Hollow Road. AR uses and two-family dwellings are permitted in RM zoned areas, along with multiple family dwellings and mobile home parks with Planning Board approval. Many of the parcels located in the RM district are apartment buildings, mobile home parks, or single family dwellings, and a few parcels are farmland. The parcels zoned as RM in the northern part of Town are classified as an industrial land use.

Business (B) – There are two areas which include a grouping of parcels zoned Business, both along Route 11 north of the LaFayette Hamlet. Very few of these are vacant, and there are wetlands limiting development in some of those that are. There are also a few other individual parcels located in Agricultural-Residential areas that are zoned Business, including the Apple Festival grounds. Business districts permit AR uses, and with approval, they permit RM uses, warehouses, businesses involved in light manufacturing, retail stores and personal services, shopping centers, banks and offices, restaurants and taverns, motels, hotels, and a variety of other specified businesses.

Industrial (I) – There are two areas in the Town that are zoned industrial, with a few other scattered parcels. The two main industrially zoned areas are along the west side of Route 11, north of the LaFayette Hamlet, and west of I-81 off of Groth Road. Industrial zoning permits all Business uses, including AR and MF uses, in addition to lumber yards, and with approval, junk yards and adult entertainment uses. Along Route 11, none of the uses are classified as industrial, instead Stafford Park, and a few businesses and single-family dwellings make up the district. The industrial district on the west side of I-81 includes some industrial uses, a mobile home park, and some vacant land.

Commercial Planned Development (CPD) – CPD is essentially a floating zone with no set location until a zone change is approved by the Town Board. A developer can submit an application to create or modify a CPD for Town Board approval.

Hamlet (H) – Hamlet zoning is in place around the Hamlet of LaFayette, at the intersections of Route 11 and Route 20. A variety of specified uses are permitted in this district meant to accommodate a range of uses traditionally found in rural hamlets, such as residential, community services, and commercial that are compatible in scale and character with a rural hamlet.

SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

The Town of LaFayette Subdivision Regulations were written and approved in 1987. The purpose of the regulations, as stated in the document, is to "provide for orderly efficient growth within the community, and to afford adequate facilities for the transportation, housing, comfort, convenience, safety, health and welfare of its population". The Planning Board must approve the division of any parcel of land into two or more lots, including any re-subdivision, or if the second lot is being sold, rented, or leased. The Subdivision Regulations provide a process and requirements for the subdivision of lots, with added requirements for any Major Subdivision, defined as five or more lots, or a subdivision requiring a new road.

ZONING RECOMMENDATIONS

Zoning Ordinance - The Zoning Ordinance was written over 40 years ago and has been amended 30 times since. There is certain language in the ordinance (e.g. controlled site approval) that is no longer consistent with the language used by New York State and many other communities today. The number of amendments has caused the document to be difficult to read and understand. Re-writing the Zoning Ordinance to reflect current language and make it more consistent with other communities will create a more "user-friendly" ordinance for the common layperson, business-owner, or developer. It should be rewritten to support the Town's goals which emerge from the Comprehensive Plan.

There are several ways a new Zoning Ordinance can be modernized and made easier to understand, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Separate the "uses" and the "requirements" for the districts into different sections of the ordinance to make it easier to understand.
- Separate the overlay districts (e.g. Floodplain, Commercial Planned Development, etc.) from the primary districts (e.g. Business, Industrial, etc.)
- Do not use cumulative zoning, whereby every less intensive use is allowed in the more intensive districts. For example, single family homes are allowed in industrially zoned districts, which could easily create a

conflict between neighboring properties, or could leave little room for new industry if housing is built throughout the entire district.

- Include more detailed Floodplain regulations (refer to federal regulations as noted in NYS regulations).
- Remove "Adult Entertainment Uses" from the Zoning Ordinance and put these regulations into a separate ordinance, eliminating the option for "adult uses" to obtain a variance.
- Include more and stronger definitions. Remove lengthy regulations from the definitions section.
- Since the adoption of the 1970 ordinance, NYS law regarding the granting of area variances has changed. The new ordinance should emphasize the need for the ZBA to consider, "detriment to the health, safety and welfare of the neighborhood and community" when granting area variances.

Re-writing the Zoning Ordinance should also involve making changes to the zoning map. For example, the Town should rename the AR district "Agricultural" and create new Residential districts, as is described below under the "Support Agriculture" section. The Town may not want to include a separate Residential Multi-Family district, but instead simply allow multi-family residential uses in another district. In addition, the Town should consider eliminating existing island districts, which may be perceived as "spot zoning", where a single parcel is zoned differently than the surrounding uses. For example, the location of the Apple Festival Grounds is zoned Business, while everything around it is zoned AR, so a large shopping complex could be built there if the parcel was ever sold. Instead this parcel should be considered an existing non-conforming use, and should be zoned AR.

The Town's Subdivision Regulations have been developed more recently and do not need to be completely rewritten, however, there are several ways the Town could update the regulations to strengthen them.

- "Major Subdivision" is currently defined as "a subdivision containing five or more lots..." The amount of time over which subdivisions can be made should be included. For example, "a subdivision containing five or more lots over three years."
- The Town should add regulations for a "Lot Line Adjustment" to simplify the process if someone wants to move their lot line and change its size by less than 10% of the original size of the lot.
- Include more and stronger definitions.
- Change "Variance" in Section 150 to "Waiver" so it is not confused with a zoning variance.
- Each time the document states, "The 1970 Zoning Ordinance of the Town of LaFayette", the year "1970" should be removed so that the regulations refer to the most recently adopted zoning ordinance.
- Fees can be removed from both the Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations and instead listed on a separate fee schedule that is referenced in both documents, leaving the ability to change the fee amounts as needed without going through a zoning amendment.

Reduce Impediments to Economic Development - Rewriting the Town's Zoning Ordinance is an important first step to reducing impediments to the development or expansion of businesses. Providing an easier to understand ordinance and streamlined procedure will help businesses that want to open or expand in LaFayette. As part of the process of rewriting the ordinance, LaFayette should consider expanding the area included in its Hamlet and/or Business districts. There are few vacant parcels in the existing Business District that do not have wetlands running through them, and there are few vacant parcels in the Hamlet District leaving limited development space for new businesses. The Town should also review the allowable uses and requirements in the Business and Hamlet Districts to be sure they are consistent with LaFayette's goals. For example, in the Hamlet, restaurants and taverns are only permitted to serve customers indoors, prohibiting outside dining. When examining these two districts more closely, the Town may find it is necessary to consider alternatives to the Hamlet and Business zoning districts currently in place. Whatever districts are used, the Town should ensure that the zoning achieves their goal of sustaining and encouraging a mixed-use, more developed town center.

The Town should also work cooperatively with property owners and developers to plan for and create a commercial business park. See Section IV: Economic Development for more details.

The new Zoning Ordinance should clearly outline Sketch Plan Review requirements (also known as Concept Plan Conference). Providing the opportunity for a submitting a sketch plan provides the applicant with the opportunity to consult early and informally with the Planning Board in order to save time and money and facilitate opportunities for desirable development.

The Town needs to update its sign regulations by adding needed definitions, not allowing illuminated signs in residential districts, and reducing the allowed height from the current 25 feet. LaFayette should also develop and adopt minimum design guidelines for new development and major renovations in the Hamlet district. These will assist both the Town and developers to create buildings that will enhance the character of the Hamlet. Such requirements are often welcomed by developers as they remove a great deal of subjectivity in the planning review and approval process. See Section V: Hamlet Development for more details.

Home Occupations - According to the 2010 American Community Survey (U.S. Census Bureau), 4.7% of people in the Town, or about 120 people, work from home. This number may rise in future years, as nationally there is an upward trend in the number of people telecommuting or running small businesses out of their homes.

Home occupations are currently permitted in the Agricultural-Residential and Hamlet Districts, requiring Planning Board approval if certain criteria is not met. Home occupations are defined in *Article VII. Definition of the LaFayette Zoning Ordinance*. It is defined as "an occupation or profession which is conducted wholly within a dwelling; is carried on by a member(s) of the family residing in the dwelling and no more than two additional outside employees; is clearly incidental and secondary to the use of the dwelling for residential purposes", and which conforms to a number of additional conditions. Several examples of home occupations are listed, and several examples of what is not considered a home occupation are also listed.

One concern with home occupations is the potential for increased traffic or parking in the neighborhood or other activity that would disturb the respite of neighbors. There are also concerns of outside storage of materials connected to the home occupation that are incompatible with surrounding residential uses and enjoyment. One way to expand allowable home occupations while protecting the neighborhood is to divide home occupations into "major" and "minor", with specific performance standards for each type depending upon the host zoning district. For example, in residential neighborhoods home occupations might be required to have smaller or no signs, stricter traffic and parking requirements, and meet other criteria to reduce the impact on neighbors. While in the Hamlet, area signage variations, relaxed parking requirements, and allowing multiple businesses in one dwelling might be more appropriate.

In the current Zoning Ordinance, the requirements for home occupations are described under its definition. The definition and the requirements for home occupations should be separated into different sections of the zoning ordinance.

Preserve Open Space and Rural Character - There are several ways the Town of LaFayette's zoning regulations can help to protect open space and the Town's rural character. Some are outlined below, and others, which also help to protect agriculture, are listed in the next section.

The Town should include a "Purpose and Intent" section at the beginning of the Zoning Ordinance and for each zoning district explaining what the Town hopes to achieve. For example, the Ordinance's purpose should emphasize the desire to concentrate development in the Hamlet area and preserve open space, farmland, and the Town's rural character. The Subdivision Regulations should also be updated to reflect the same goals.

In addition, the Town should complete a Cultural and Natural Resources Inventory, including open space and scenic views, to better understand and map these valued resources. This can be used in conjunction with an Open Space Scoring System

when evaluating site plans and subdivision proposals to help protect these resources. This inventory will be particularly useful when reviewing Conservation Subdivision Design proposals. See Section II. Open Space for more details.

New zoning tools the Town should include in the Zoning Ordinance include:

Conservation Subdivision Design (CSD) - The new Zoning Ordinance should develop and include guidelines for the use of CSD for new housing developments to help protect steep slopes, scenic views, wetlands, floodplains, compatible agriculture, or other unique or scenic natural features. CSD incorporates careful attention to site design, considering the protection of natural features when determining the placement of homes. An easement provides a guarantee that the open space will be preserved indefinitely and developers may build a trail or other means for neighborhood residents to enjoy the space. Encouraging the use of CSD in new housing developments will help to preserve some of the open space so important to LaFayette's character. For more information see Section II: Open Space.

Steep Slope Guidelines - The hills and mountains provide beautiful scenic views throughout the Town of LaFayette and contribute greatly to the open space and rural character of the Town. LaFayette should add Steep Slope Guidelines to its Zoning Ordinance, which require site plan review for any type of development on slopes greater than 15% and which restricts development on slopes over 25%. The guidelines should be applicable to all zoning districts and should require that development proposals show cut and fill needed for the project, building location on site, erosion and drainage control measures, and the location of any new roads. The guidelines should also include additional design principles as outlined in Section II: Open Space.

Support Agriculture- Over 91% of the Town's acreage is currently in the Agricultural-Residential District. The Town should change the name of this district to "Agricultural" and should create a separate Residential district. Changing the name of AR to Agricultural is an important first step to creating more supportive zoning regulations for farming. Residential uses would still be allowed in this district, however, changing the name would help to let current and future residents, and potential developers know that agriculture is important to the community and a critical component of that district.

In addition to changing the name, the new zoning regulations should require a larger minimum lot size than the current 60,000sf (1.37 acres). Currently this minimum lot size is the same throughout all districts in the Town, except in the Residential

Planned Cluster district. Implementing different minimum lot sizes in different zoning districts will help to create a different character in each district. It should be noted that without sewer or water it would be difficult to reduce lot sizes in the Hamlet. It should also be noted that increasing minimum lot sizes in the new Agricultural district does not necessarily protect agriculture. If housing development pressure is high, and there is a market for larger lot sizes, this can actually end up consuming more agricultural land because more land is required for each house. For this reason the Town should carefully consider the minimum lot size requirements they choose.

While changing the Agricultural-Residential district to Agricultural, and raising the minimum lot size in the Agricultural district, the Town should also designate an area of the Town as Residential, to help guide developers, and to provide the opportunity for smaller lot sizes. There are currently Residential Multi-Family and Residential Planned Cluster districts, however, neither leave much room for further residential growth. LaFayette can strategically designate areas to encourage growth in and around the Hamlet.

The current Zoning Ordinance defines a farm as "a parcel of land in excess of 40 acres devoted to agricultural use, exclusive of industrial-agricultural enterprises". This definition should be updated to include farms that are fewer than 40 acres in size. The Town of LaFayette should also add language into the zoning ordinance allowing certain agricultural businesses and light agricultural industries that would be compatible with other surrounding uses in an Agricultural district.

Training for Zoning and Planning Boards- While the new Zoning Ordinance is being written the current Zoning and Planning Boards should be included in the process and trained in any new regulations they may not be familiar with. In addition, a training packet should be developed to educate any new members of the Zoning or Planning Board as turnover occurs.

GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

GOAL 42: Write a new zoning ordinance that supports and reinforces the Town's goals that emerge from the Comprehensive Plan.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Modernize and simplify the language and formatting in the new zoning ordinance to make it consistent with the language used by other communities in New York State.

B) Update the zoning map to align it with the Town's goals.

C) Update the Subdivision Regulations as needed and as detailed in the sections above.

GOAL 43: Support the growth of compatible business and economic development through the new zoning ordinance.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Reduce unnecessary impediments to economic development and streamline the approval process when rewriting the zoning ordinance.

B) Expand the Hamlet and/or Business districts to allow for business growth.

C) Ensure that zoning regulations allow for the future development of a commercial park.

D) Update the Sign Regulations in the zoning ordinance.

E) Create Site Design Standards and Minimum Architectural Design Standards in the Hamlet area.

F) Include clear and updated Home Occupation regulations in the new zoning ordinance that provide appropriate and compatible requirements for each zoning district home occupations are permitted.

GOAL 44: Use zoning regulations to help support compact development in and around the hamlet, and the protection of open space, agriculture, scenic views, and the community's rural character throughout the Town.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Include a "Purpose" at the beginning of the zoning ordinance and for each district explaining the Town's goals of preserving open space, agriculture, and rural character.

B) Develop Conservation Subdivision Design guidelines for new housing developments, and encourage their use.

C) Develop Steep Slope Guidelines in the zoning ordinance to help protect slopes over 15%, as detailed in the sections above.

D) Change the name of the Agricultural-Residential District to "Agricultural" and increase the minimum lot size requirements in the Agricultural District.

E) Create a Residential District and revise the zoning map accordingly.

F) Update the definition of "Farm" in the ordinance and allow agricultural-related businesses in the Agricultural District.

G) Inventory and map valued natural and cultural resources in the Town, including open space and scenic views which can serve as a reference when making development decisions.