



LAFAYETTE, NEW YORK 2021 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

DRAFT

COMMUNITY PROFILE

JUNE 2021

Town of
Lafayette

**Barton
& Loguidice**

2. COMMUNITY PROFILE

2.1 Regional Context & Local History

2.1.1 Location

The Town of LaFayette is located in south-central Onondaga County in Upstate New York. The Town borders the Towns of Onondaga, De Witt, Pompey, Fabius, Tully, Otisco, as well as the Onondaga Nation. The center of Town (the Hamlet of LaFayette), is less than a 15 minute drive from the heart of Downtown LaFayette.

The center of LaFayette 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 topography of the Town is hilly and broken. Between the Town's two principal streams, Butternut and Onondaga Creeks, have a high ridge between which rises in altitude from three to six hundred feet and includes deep declivities. The valleys on the east and west of this ridge, Sherman and Christian Hollows, extend the entire length of the Town.

2.1.2 Town History

The Onondaga Nation, one of the five nations of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, inhabited the land that makes up present-day LaFayette for centuries, most likely beginning between 1100 and 1200 AD. In 1791, the first European settlement was established by John Wilcox. Mr. Wilcox sold much fruit to the early settlers. Numerous other settlements were established.

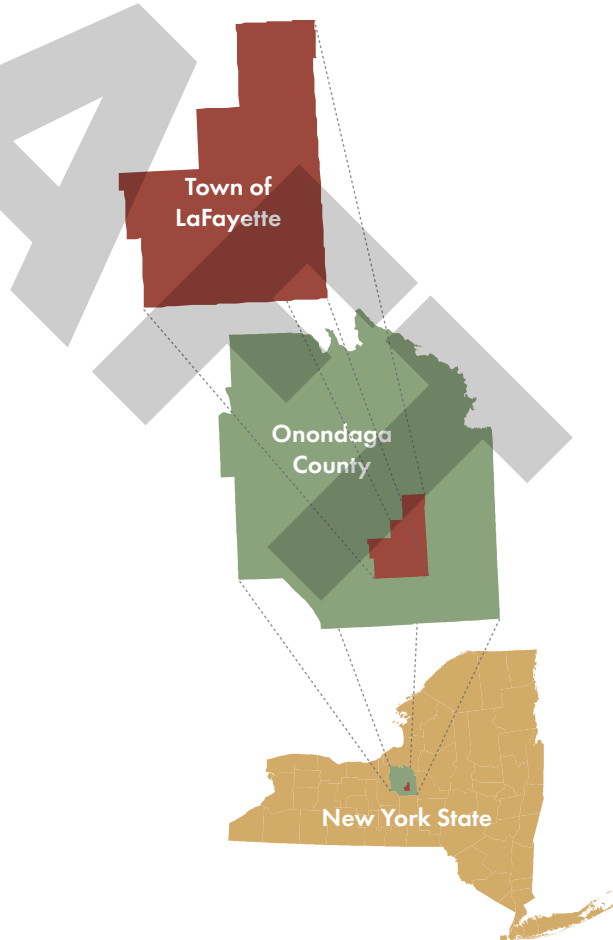
Two strong settlement areas that still remain are the Hamlet of LaFayette, also known as LaFayette Village and LaFayette Square, and the Hamlet of Cardiff. The Hamlet of Cardiff, originally known as Christian Hollow, was situated on the Syracuse and Tully Turnpike (current-day Route 11A) in the western part of the Town. At the turn of the 20th century, Cardiff contained 30 houses, three stores, one church, a hotel, two wagon shops, a grist mill, and a post office. The famous Cardiff Giant was "discovered" in late 1869. It had been made of gypsum and purposely buried on the Newell farm in Cardiff. George Hull of Binghamton contrived the story. Thousands visited the grave when it was first discovered but it was eventually dug up and displayed throughout the country until the hoax was discovered. The giant now resides in the Village of Cooperstown.

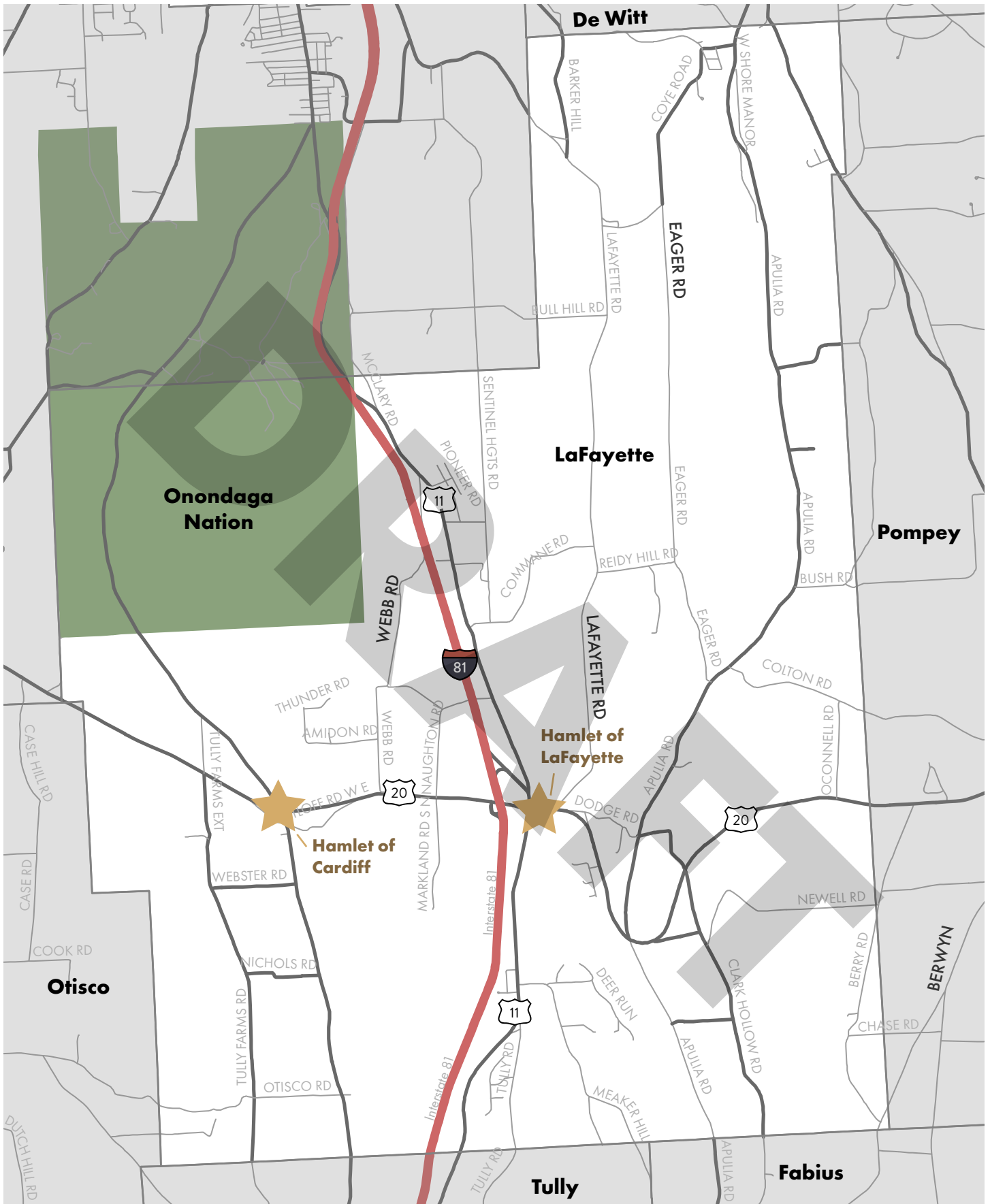
The Hamlet of Cardiff was a self-sufficient area at the turn of the 20th century. Once Interstate I-81 was built in the mid-1950's,

Cardiff ceased to be a commercial growth area due to its remote location from major transportation systems and lack of commercial infrastructure.

With the building of the Skaneateles and Cazenovia road (US Route 20), the "village" of LaFayette continued to grow as the commercial hub of the Town. In 1854, the railroad was constructed in the Hamlet of Onativia. A station closer to the LaFayette Hamlet area would have fortified the economy of the Hamlet, but instead people had to make the trek to the rail station which was located one mile to the east. Town residents used the rail system to access goods and services available in the City of Syracuse located to the north of the Town.

The LaFayette Central School, grades K-12 was erected in the hamlet in 1939, with additions completed in 1950 and 1965 (a new high school building was erected in 1970-1971). By the 1950s two grocery stores were located in the hamlet, one on the first level of the LaFayette Hotel and one located just south. The LaFayette Hotel, the hamlet's most prominent building, now sits vacant and deteriorating.





Map 1: Town of LaFayette

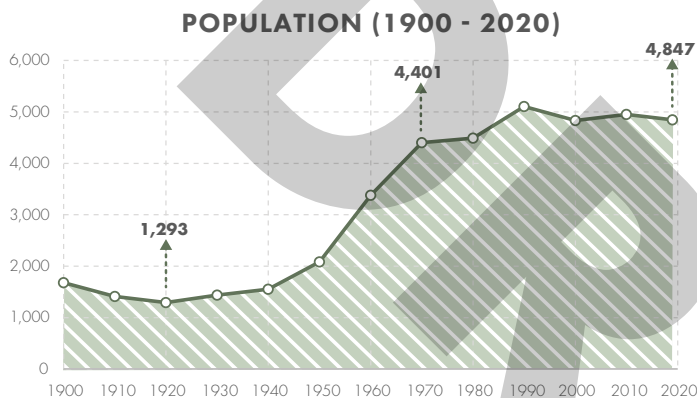


2.2 Population & Demographics

2.2.1 Population & Age

According to the 2019 American Community Survey (ACS), there are 4,847 people living in LaFayette. This number has stayed relatively stagnant for the past several decades, with some small fluctuations. The Town has grown 10 percent by population since 1970. Prior to this, the town experienced rapid growth in the early- to mid- 20th century. The Town's population more than tripled between 1920 and 1970, as shown in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2: Population Trends



The median age of LaFayette residents is 45.4; approximately six years older than that of Onondaga County (39.4 years) and New York State (39.2 years). This suggests that the Town has a larger proportion of older residents than the County and State. However, the most prevalent age category for residents is between 35 and 54 years of age.

Figure 2.3: Age Distribution

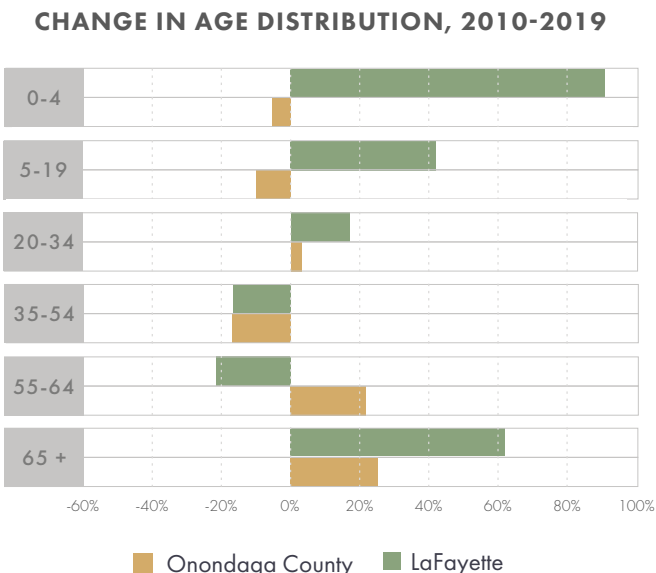


Figure 2.3 shows the shifts in age distribution between 2010 and 2019. The most significant shift was in the number of children under the age of 5, which increased by 91% within those nine years. This is a dramatic increase, particularly in contrast to the County's trends in this age category (a decrease of five percent). This trend, combined with the modest growth in the age category 20-34 (an increase of 17%), suggests that there may be an influx of new and young families in the Town.

Additionally, the percentage of residents aged 65 or older increased dramatically by 62%, compared to the County's growth of 25%. This shift in population may explain the significantly higher median age in LaFayette compared to the County and State. This trend is reflective of what is current at a national scale, as the American population continues to age.

2.2.2 Education & Employment

36.2% of LaFayette residents over the age of 25 have a Bachelor's degree or higher; similar to both the County (36.6%) and the State (35.9%). This number has risen significantly over the past decade by almost eight percentage points, from 28.5% in 2010. This suggests that either residents are pursuing post-secondary education, or a more educated population is relocating to the area.

Figure 2.4: Employment Industries

TOP 5 EMPLOYMENT INDUSTRIES (2019)



Approximately 29% of employed residents over the age of 16 work in educational services, health care, and social assistance. This has remained the most prevalent industry in the Town since 2010 (30%). The second most prevalent industry is finance and insurance; and real estate, rental, and leasing (11%). This share of the employed residents has increased from 6% of the workforce in 2010. In 2010, the second most prevalent industry in the Town was construction. Figure 2.4 shows the top 5 employment industries in the Town.

The above mentioned growth in population with a post-secondary education, as well as the shift in employment trends from manual labor to professional services suggests that there is an influx of educated professionals in the Town.

The median income for LaFayette households was estimated to be \$68,185, similar to the State average (\$68,486), but higher than that of the County (\$61,359). This number has nominally risen from 2010's median income (\$65,490), however, adjusting for inflation, this represents a decrease in average wages for the Town's population.

According to 2018 Census data, 2,059 residents are employed outside of the Town's borders. 201 residents both live and work in LaFayette, and 824 additional workers commute in to LaFayette. This data may be unreflective of current trends, particularly due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on commuting patterns. However, the data shows that more people live in LaFayette than work in LaFayette. It also suggests that there is a lack of employment opportunities in the Town compared to other regional municipalities. The average travel time to work is 28.1 minutes, significantly longer than that of Onondaga County (21.0 minutes). The vast majority (95.8%) of employed residents drive to work; and only 1% of the population use alternative forms of transportation such as walking or biking. Both the comparatively lengthy commute time and the low percentage of workers walking or biking to work is reflective of the rural character of the Town and its location in the southern part of the County compared to other more developed suburbs of the City of Syracuse.

Figure 2.5: Commute Patterns



2.3 Local Economy

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, Saint Joseph's Hospital, Wegmans, and Crouse Hospital; which corresponds to the high percentage of Town residents employed in educational services, health care, and social assistance.

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. The Town hosts a business database on its website to help promote local services and goods. The database currently has 42 businesses listed in the following categories:

- Business & Services: 16
- Food & Dining: 6
- Recreation: 4
- Event Venues & Catering: 3
- Health & Beauty: 2
- Real Estate: 1

Smaller businesses are vital to the Town's economy. The majority of businesses in LaFayette employ less than five people. 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, and act as a resource in assisting businesses with taking the steps necessary for a successful move.

The LaFayette Hamlet currently has the greatest concentration of businesses in the Town. These businesses include food services, personal services such as a dentist office and a bank, and some limited retail operations. Additionally, Byrne Dairy's corporate office is located at the southern edge of the Hamlet. However, all of these businesses are limited in their capacity to expand due to the lack of public water and sewer currently in the LaFayette Hamlet.

The Town's economy is also influenced by the prevalence of apple orchards and other agricultural operations, discussed in further detail in Section 2.5. These farms attract many visitors, particularly during harvest season in the fall. This agritourism is supported further by Apple Festival, held in mid-October, as well as Beak & Skiff Orchards, which has been growing apples in the Town since 1911, and now also produces hard ciders, and has transformed in to a major recreational facility.

2.4 Natural Resources

2.4.1 Slope & 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 is the lowest elevation.

2.4.2 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 2.5.

2.4.3 Rare Plants & 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. The [DEC's Environmental Resource Mapper](#) provides general locations of rare plants & animals throughout the state. This map shows portions of the Town as in the vicinity of several rare plants, mosses, & bats. The DEC can be contacted directly for more information regarding rare and at-risk plants and animals in the area. Several rare plants & mosses have been found historically within the Town, including the following species:

- Burrhead
- Lindsey's Aster
- Schweinitz's Sedge
- Yellow Giant-hyssop
- Starke's small pottia moss

2.4.4 Groundwater

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.

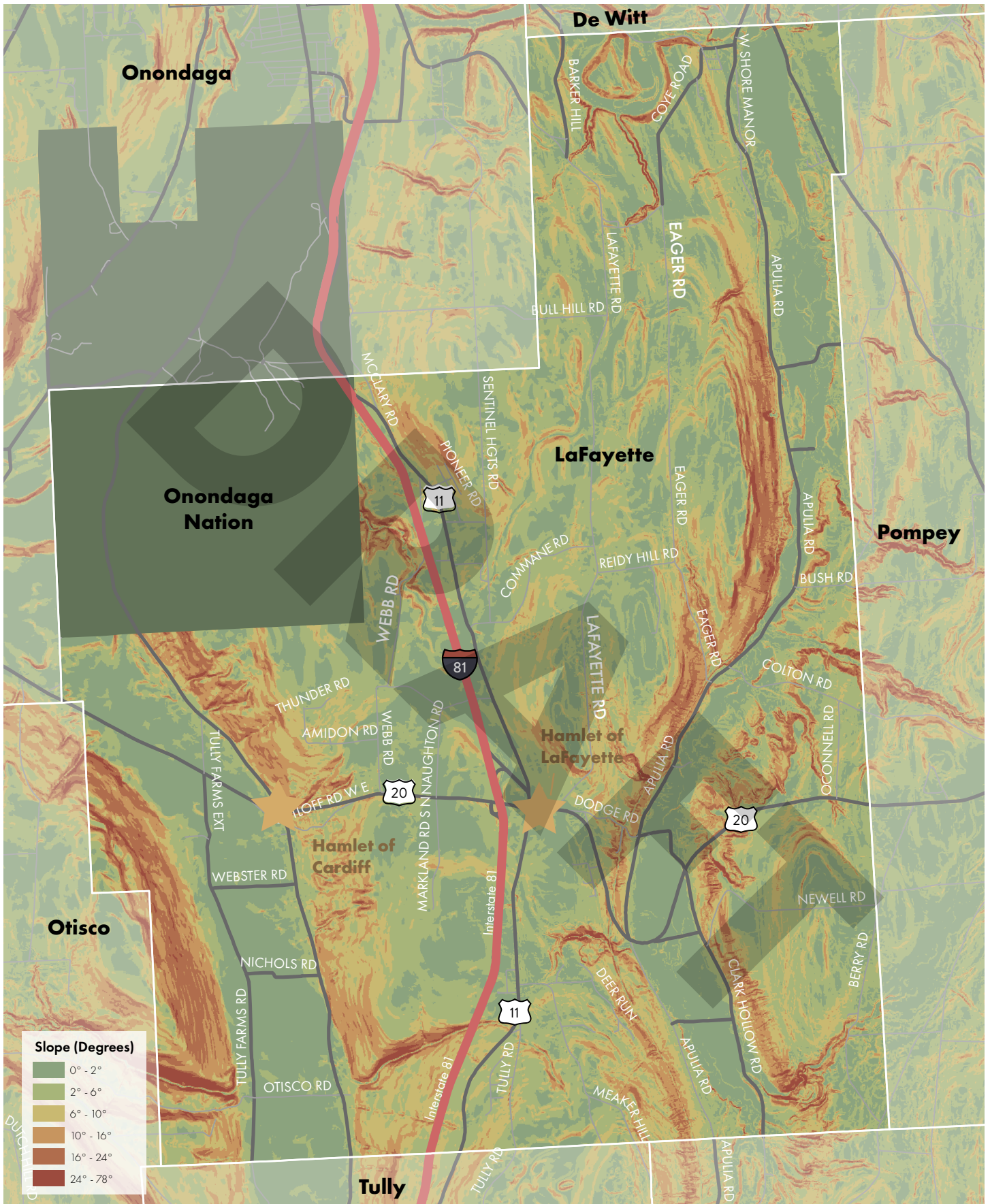
The majority of the Town is defined by till soils where water yields are in a rather low range, generally under two gallons per minute. The Onondaga Creek Valley is an area of moderately high water yield where sand and gravel is located beneath less permeable materials; however, it is also an area where 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 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.

The Hamlet of Cardiff has historically experienced ground water contamination from 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. The Town should coordinate with the County and neighboring municipalities to ensure protection of its valuable ground and surface water resources.



Map 2: Topography



2.4.5 Surface Waters

Major and tributary surface waters in the Town are depicted on Map 3. 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. The Town is within the Oswego River / Finger Lakes Watershed, one of New York State's largest. The headwaters originate in the southwest Adirondack Mountains and eventually empty into Lake Ontario.

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.

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). Butternut Creek and its tributaries are classified as Class C(T), and Onondaga Creek and its tributaries are classified as Class C; meaning that both creeks are suitable only for fishing and recreational boating.

2.4.6 Wetlands

Wetlands are areas that contain soils that are saturated by ground water or surface water and support wetland plants, and provide a multitude of ecological, economic, and social benefits. 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 periodically, although 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.

Wetland in New York State are regulated by the DEC based on 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.

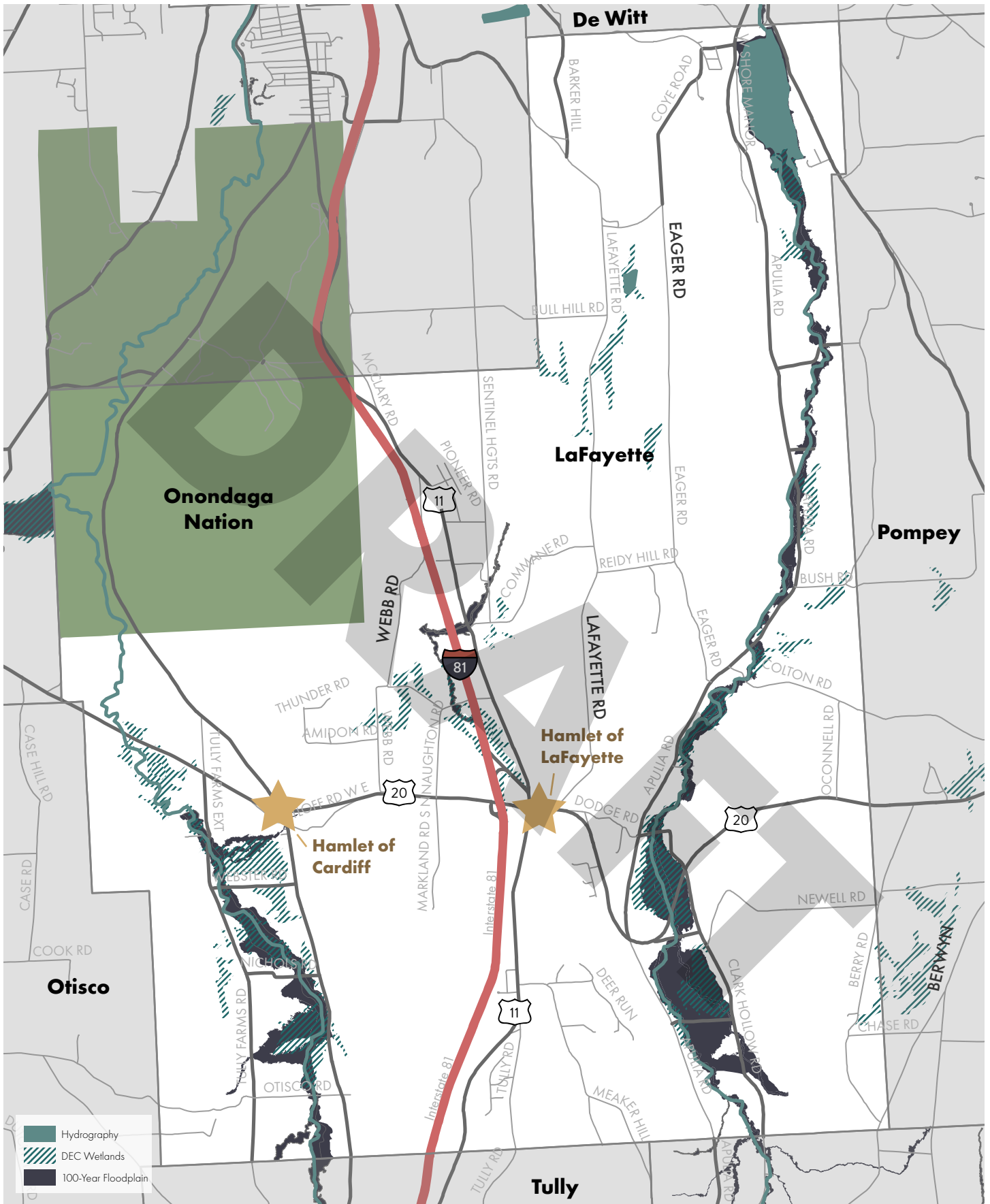
There are number delineated wetlands in the Town as shown on Map 3. Most are adjacent or near to the two major Town waterways, on Onondaga Creek and Butternut Creek. There are also some wetlands near the I-81 Corridor that were created when the highway was constructed in the 1960's, blocking traditional 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.

2.4.7 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. 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 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. 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.

Mitigating measures may be necessary to prevent additional runoff from new developments from increasing flood frequency and severity. It is predicted that due to the increasing impacts of climate change, flooding 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 3. LaFayette adopted its most recent Flood Damage Prevention Local Law in 2016 and is, therefore, a participant in the National Flood Insurance Program.



Map 3: Wetlands & Floodplains



2.5 Agriculture & Open Space

2.5.1 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 (55%) of the land in LaFayette is farmland, forest, parks, cemeteries or vacant. This percentage has decreased by 6% since the 2012 Comprehensive Plan; suggesting a modest increase in development. Another 24% of land in the Town consists of residential lots with ten or more acres. Therefore, 80% of the land area of LaFayette contributes to the open, natural character of the Town (Map 4). 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 5% 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.

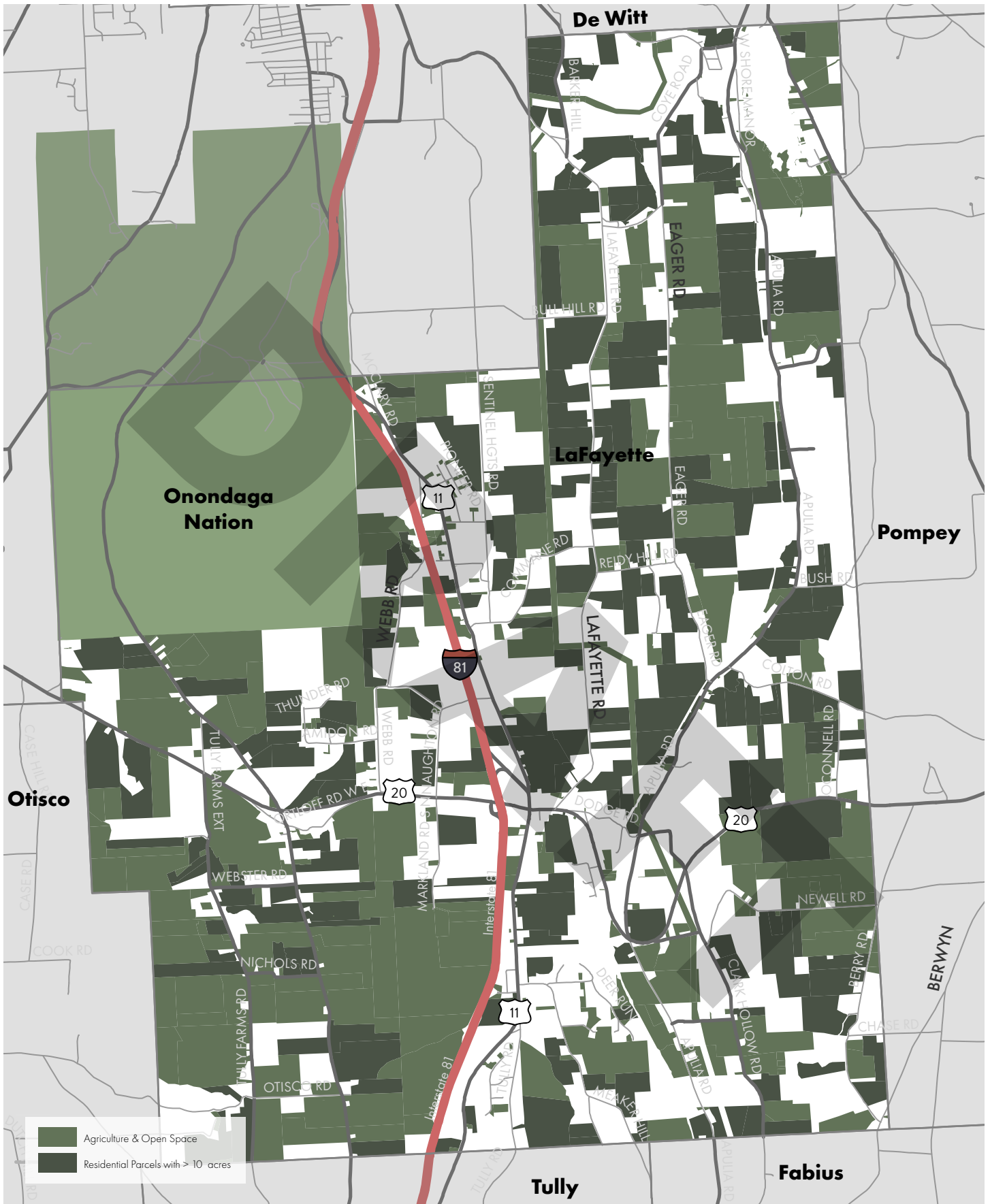


The Town of LaFayette is home to a rolling landscape, with several areas of steep terrain including Bare Mountain, Irish Hill, Mason Hill, Meeker Hill, and the east sides of the Tully and Butternut Valleys. Many of these areas are valuable to the Town from a scenic standpoint. One or more of these hills 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%. 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.

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 subsection 2.5.2: Agriculture. It is important to note the critical role agricultural land plays in contributing to the Town's open space and rural character.

Both environmental constraints as well as a lack of water and sewer infrastructure has deterred concentrated development in most areas of the Town. While the lack of public water and sewer



Map 4: Parks & Open Space

assists in maintaining valuable open space within the Town, the other result is that, much of the Town’s development over the years has occurred along rural highways and major roads. Historically, smaller parcels along these 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.

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, and typical of rural areas all over New York State, 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.

The vast, scenic open space within LaFayette is one of its most precious resources, and this plan will outline tools, policies, and strategies that the Town can use moving forward to ensure that it is preserved and protected appropriately in the future.



2.5.2 Agriculture

Agriculture plays an important role in LaFayette, contributing both to the economy and to the open space and rural character of the Town. Approximately 18% of land in the Town is used for productive agriculture. The total acreage within the Town used for agricultural purposes has decreased slightly from 5,136 to 4,927 over the past ten years, representing a total of less than 1% of the Town’s land converted from agricultural uses to other uses. This acreage is comprised of 92 productive agricultural parcels under 55 different owners. Again, this number has stayed relatively consistent over the past decade. The static nature of these figures within the past ten years indicates that agriculture remains a stable and viable industry within the Town, despite development pressure that exists within the County that may threaten agricultural lands.

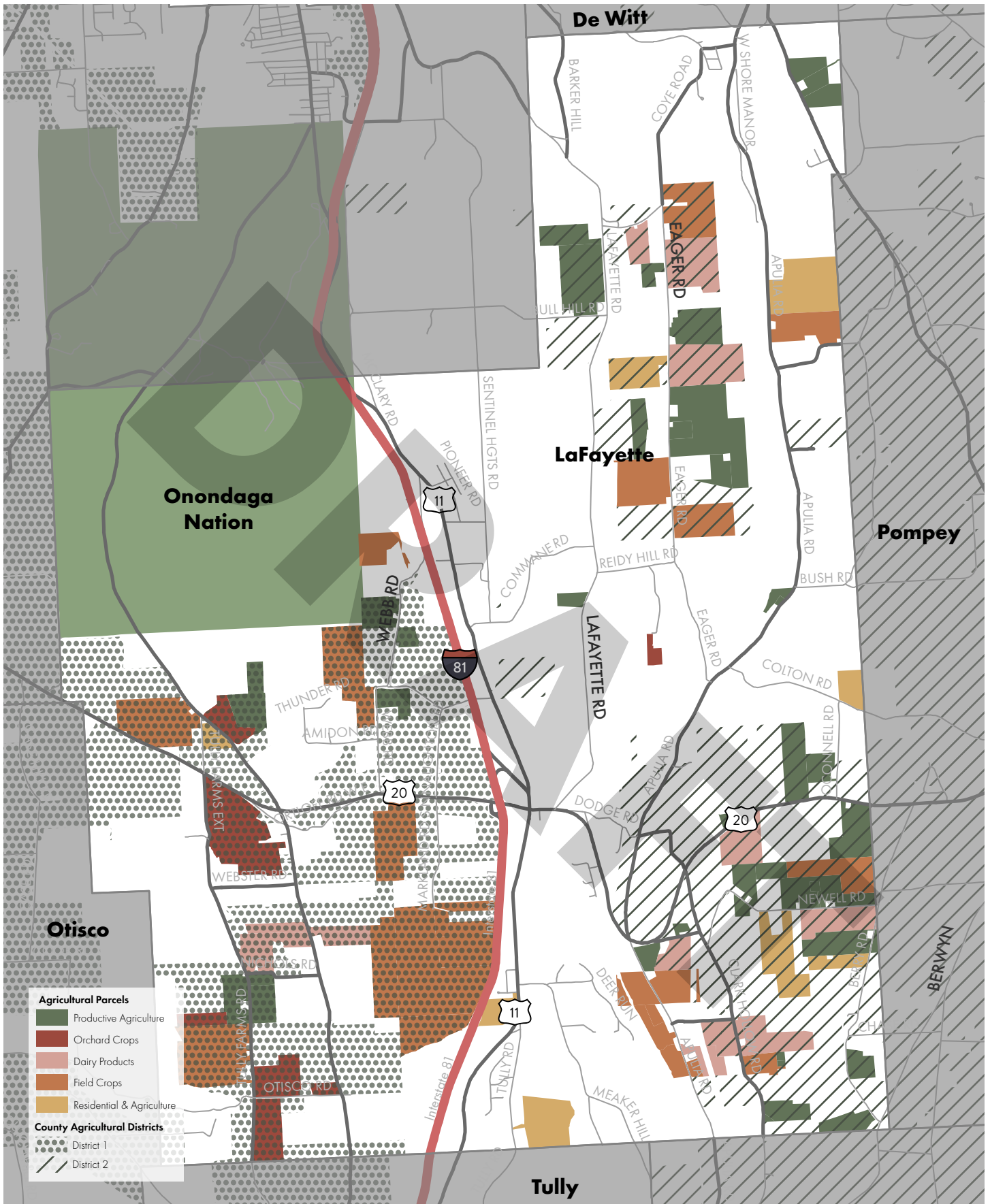
The majority of the farms in the Town farms produce field crops, such as potatoes, wheat, hay, corn, or oats; followed by dairy farms. The distribution of types of farms are shown in Table 2.1 below:

Table 2.1: Types of Farm in LaFayette

Type	Acres		% Change (2010-2020)
	2020	2010	
Dairy Products	734	852	-14%
Field Crops	1,820	2,103	-13%
Orchard Crops	430	461	-7%
Productive Agriculture	1,417	1,338	+6%
Residential & Agriculture	526	362	+45%
Total	4,927	5,136	-4%

**Productive Agriculture refers to land use as part of an operational farm, not specifically related to other categories.*

This distribution of agricultural products produced in the Town is consistent with the profile of farms throughout the County. 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 (Map 5). The active farms in the Town are part of the 623 farms, or 160,717 acres of agricultural land county-wide, according to the 2017 Census of Agriculture. While the overall number of farms has decreased in the County since 2012, the acreage and average size of farms in the County has increased. This suggests that larger agricultural operations are acquiring smaller local farms throughout the County. According to the Census of Agriculture, Onondaga County farms made record breaking total farm sales of \$178.4 million in 2017, up from \$152.4 million in 2012.



Map 5: Agricultural Land & Districts





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.

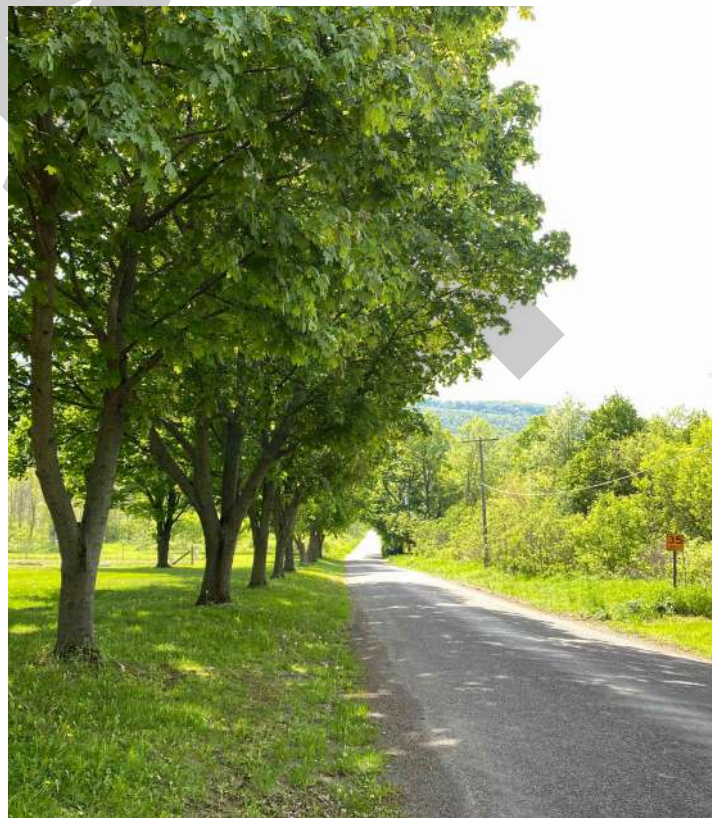
There are several factors that contribute to LaFayette's advantageous position with regards to agriculture. First, the Town is rich in high quality soil. Onondaga County soils have been categorized as some of the best in New York State. The southern portions of the County have alluvial soils along valley 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. 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.

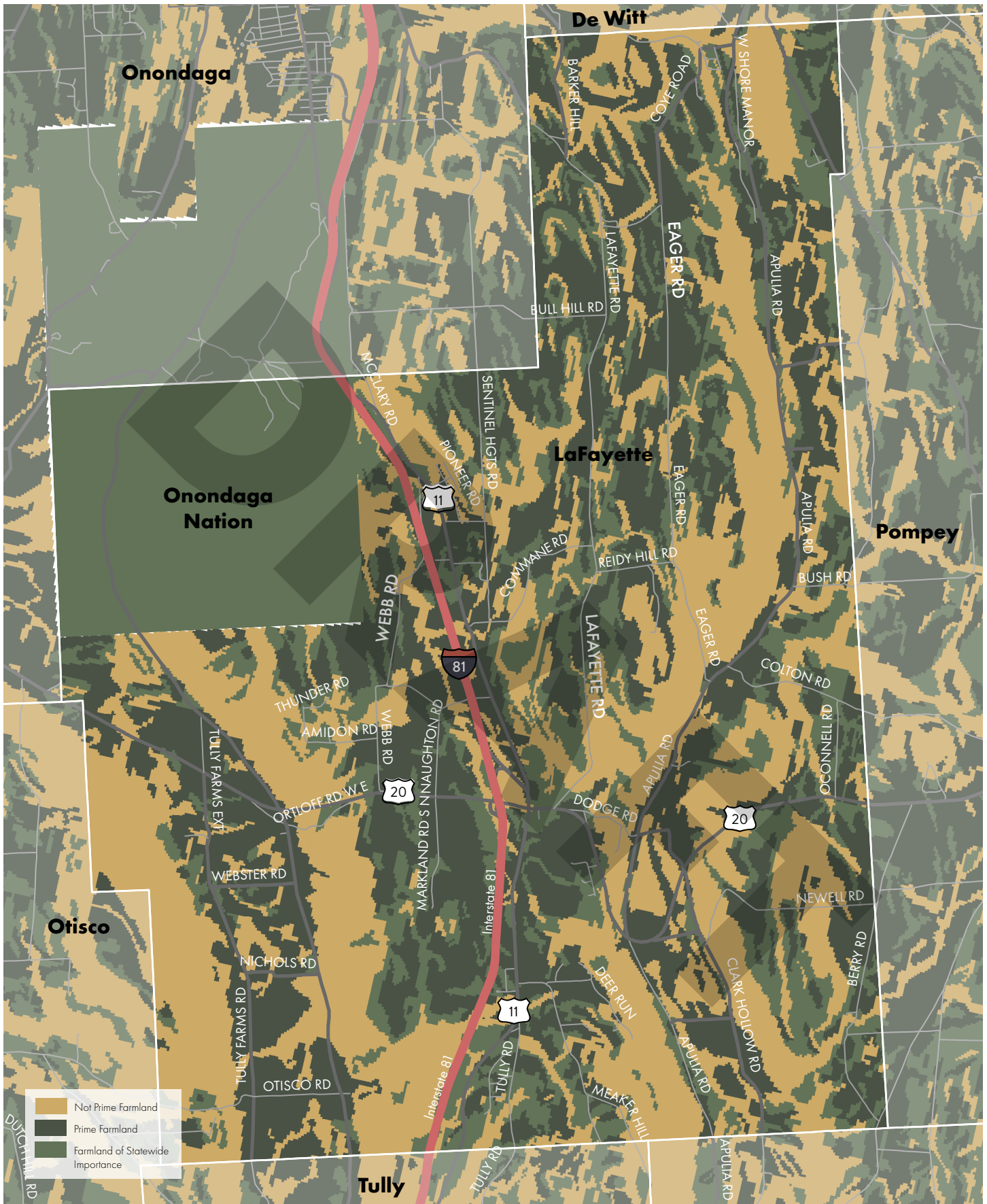
Secondly, agriculture in and around the Town of LaFayette has a strong system of infrastructure, support businesses, and nearby markets to support the industry. Interstate Route 81 and US Route 20 provide easy transport for trucks taking product to markets or for supplies to be brought to farms. The Town is minutes from the City of Syracuse, with a population of approximately 151,000

people, and within the Syracuse Metro Area, with over 662,000 people. In addition, the Town is within a day's drive of over 130 million people, including New York City, Boston, and Toronto. The many dairy farms in the area have several milk processing facilities nearby, and there are also several feed suppliers and local machinery dealerships in and near the Town.

Although the preservation of agricultural activity in the Town looks promising, there are several challenges that may threaten some local farm's long-term viability. First, the livestock industry is a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions worldwide (18% of). While there is some research being conducted regarding reducing the livestock sector's carbon footprint, the existing solutions, such as methane digester are generally cost-prohibitive for smaller local farms. Additionally, as suggested previously, there is a significant amount of farm consolidation occurring within the County. This often results in a loss of rented farmland for smaller farmers, who need that rental income to support their agricultural operations. Lastly, growing suburbanization and an increase in residential development pose threats to existing agricultural land.

The Town developed an [Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan](#) in 2014. The Plan inventories agricultural resources within the Town, identifies priority areas for protecting farmland, and provides a toolbox for preserving agricultural land and activities. This Plan is an important tool for to further protect the Town's rural, agrarian character, and support agriculture as a sustainable industry.





Map 6: Agricultural Soils



2.6 Parks & 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. The parks and recreation facilities within the Town are described in future detail below.

2.6.1 Town-Owned Recreation 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 7, 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, and has three main areas, linked by a one-mile exercise track. The north area includes an exercise track, ball fields, a playground; restrooms; a pavilion with grills and a barbecue pit; a sand volleyball court and horse shoe pits. There is also a small shelter with a grill area attached to the bathroom facility. The central area includes tennis courts/basketball court; a playground; a exercise track; a fishing pond walking track; a pavilion with grills (Jack's shack); and picnic tables. Lastly, the south area includes ball fields; an exercise track; restrooms; and a pavilion with a grill.

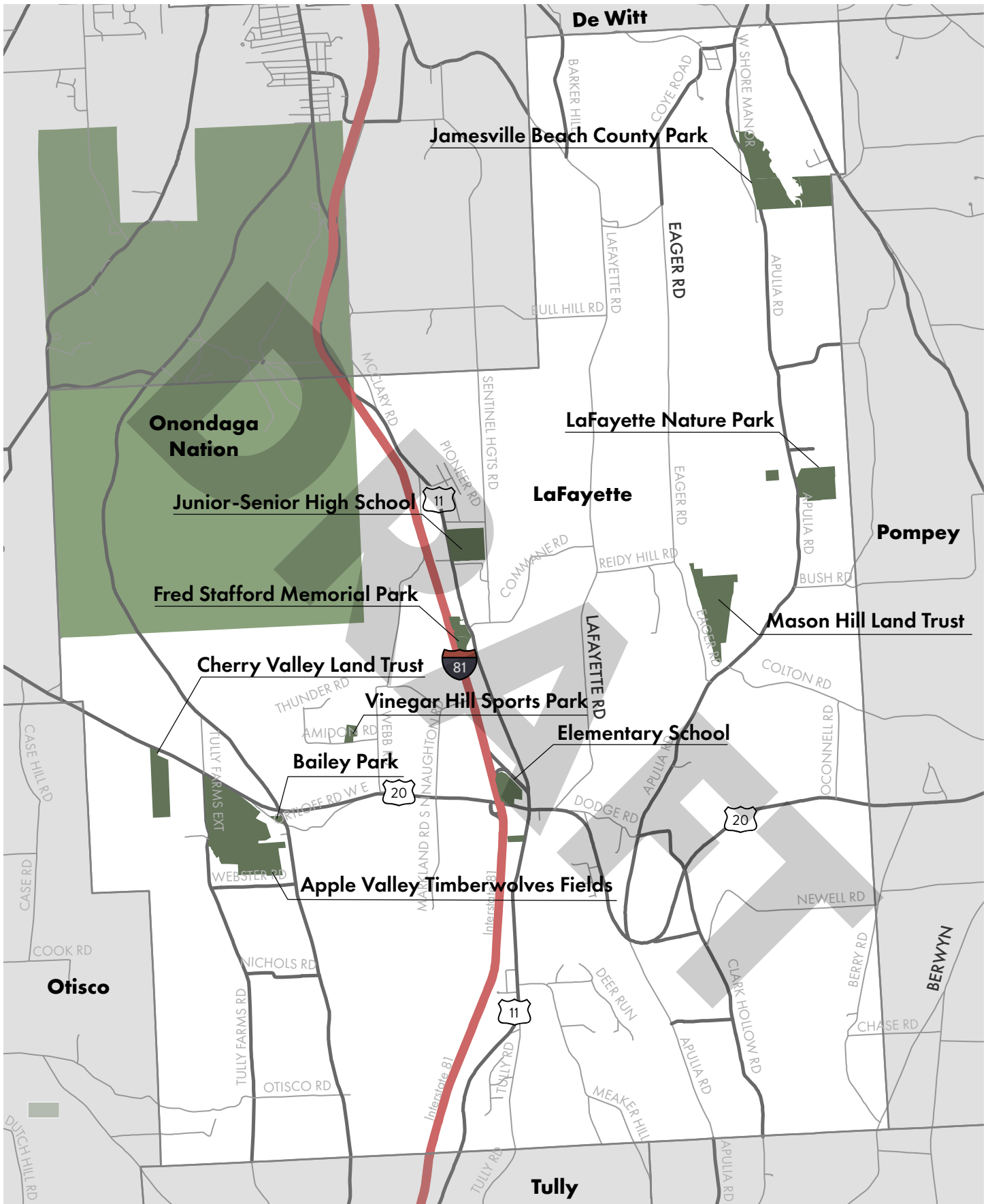
Bailey Park. This small park is located in the hamlet of Cardiff, and is only 2.1 acres in size. The park primarily services residents of the hamlet and includes a basketball court; a playground; a ball field and picnic tables.



LaFayette Community Center. The Town-owned community building is an older, residential style structure near the four corners in the hamlet. It includes a large first floor open space, a kitchen, and restrooms. The space is relatively small, making it difficult for the various groups that use it to utilize the space. Nevertheless, the building is an important community asset and it has the potential to serve the community to a greater level than it currently does.



Vinegar Hill Sports Park. Formerly LaFayette Beach Park, this park is located in the central part of the Town, west of I-81, and is 6.9 acres in size. The park used to be one of two public locations for swimming in the Town, but currently the swim area is closed due to poor water quality. Amenities in this park include a basketball court, lacrosse box, a bounce back wall, swings, a sandbox, and a pavilion.



Map 7: Parks & Recreation



2.6.2 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 facilities are summarized below:

Jamesville Beach County Park. This 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



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:

- Football/Lacrosse Field
- Baseball Field
- Softball Field
- Restroom Facilities
- Cinder track
- Indoor wellness/fitness center
- Playgrounds
- Multi-use fields



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 4.1 acre 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, three picnic tables and portable restroom facilities.

Apple Valley Timberwolves 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.

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.

2.7 LaFayette Hamlet

The area known as the LaFayette Hamlet is located at the historic crossroads of Route 20 and Route 11. In a revision to the Town's zoning ordinance in 1999, the Hamlet District was established, formally defining the parcel-based boundaries where the Hamlet exists. Map 8 shows the boundaries of the zoned Hamlet and the land uses contained within.

The Hamlet of LaFayette 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. 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.

2.7.1 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.

In 1854, the railroad was constructed in the nearby hamlet of Onativia. 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 rapid adoption of 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.

2.7.2 Hamlet Character

Public visioning sessions from the 2012 Comprehensive Plan 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 defined.

A Visual Preference Exercise conducted in 2011 showed mutually agreed preferences in regards to character, including:

- Architectural styles reminiscent of historic and/or agricultural 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

Much of the Hamlet's historic commercial building stock has been lost. The major remaining commercial structure, the LaFayette Hotel, one of the Hamlet's prominent landmarks has sat vacant for many years, primarily due to the inability of its small lot to support the needed water and sewer infrastructure. 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 late 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 vision for the Hamlet. 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, the eastern approach into the Hamlet, on Route 20, most closely resembles the desired character for the rest of the Hamlet to emulate (shown in the photo below). 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.



2.7.3 Commercial Development

According to real property data, there are 31 commercial properties within the Hamlet, which is over half of all commercial parcels in the Town. Over the years, however, businesses providing everyday goods and services have been declining. Major clusters of business types include, medical facilities, eateries, some limited retail, auto services & supplies, and financial institutions. Presently the only places to buy limited groceries are the Fastrac station or the Dollar General. The gas station and McDonald's restaurant draw significant numbers of travelers off of I-81.

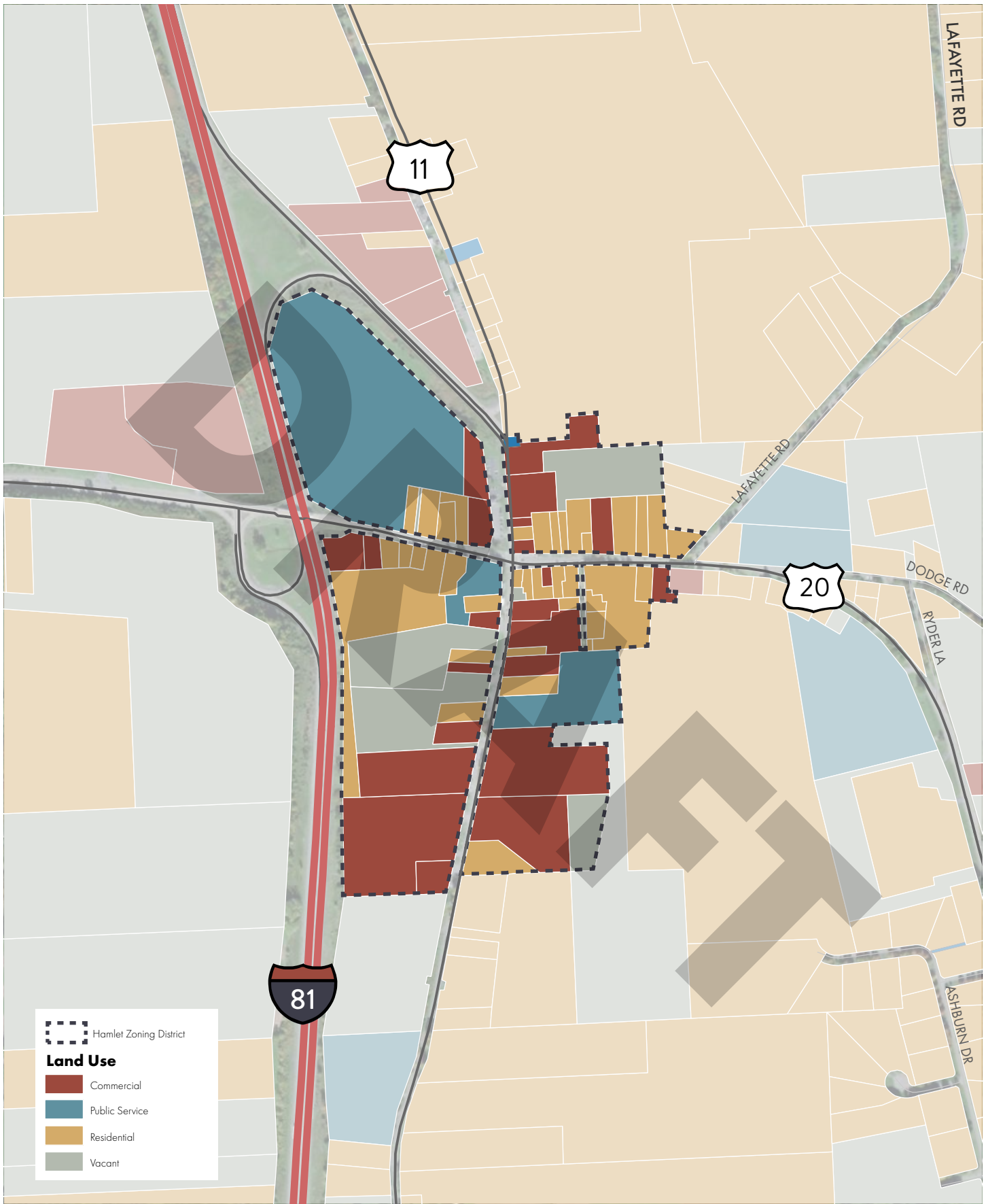
Given the existing concentration of business, as well as the opinions of residents and stakeholders solicited over the years, it is clear the preferred location for more commercial development within the Hamlet. It is also clear that residents are concerned that new development does not diminish the Town's rural agrarian character. Future commercial development is hampered by the lack of public water and/or sewer facilities (see Section 2.9: Infrastructure and Telecommunication). The development of a public water system will assist existing businesses, and allow for easier development of new compatible businesses.

2.7.4 Housing

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 in 2012, 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 than 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.





Map 8: LaFayette Hamlet



2.7.5 Transportation

There is significant traffic activity at the Route 11 & Route 20 intersection. With exit and entrance ramps to I-81 nearby, it is the most heavily traveled part of Town. Anecdotal evidence from residents suggests that there is congestion at the intersection particularly during peak commuting periods, as well as during the harvest season when agritourism is in full swing.

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) has had plans to reconstruct the intersection for well over a decade, however, there is no indication of the estimated timeframe for completion.

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 west of the Route 11 intersection and a center median on the 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.

Particularly given that a decade has passed since the development of these plans, 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.

There are a series of sidewalks in the hamlet, however, many lack handicap access and crossing at the four corners is dangerous. 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. There are also no bicyclist facilities within the Hamlet.

2.8 Housing

The Town of LaFayette includes 2,092 housing units per the 2019 American Community Survey. The percentage of owner-occupied housing units is 81.9%; down from 89.1% in 2010. Additionally, the percentage of homes that are single family is down from 84% in 2010 to 76% in 2019. These two statistics reflect national and regional building permit and housing construction trends, which indicate that multi-family housing has been growing in popularity over the past two decades. There is a 2.7% vacancy rate for all housing units; significantly lower than the rates of the County (11.1%) and the State (11.8%).

The majority, or 71%, of housing in the Town was built prior to 1960, and the median age of housing is 53 years (or built in 1968) (Table 2.2). The predominate housing character within the Town is a suburban-style development pattern; generally consisting of two-story single family homes generously set back from the road. There are some small residential housing tracts scattered throughout the Town; typical of the time period in which the majority of homes were built. However, given the rural character of the Town, as well as the lack of public water and sewer, the majority of homes front major Town roads. Additionally, 21% of the homes in LaFayette were built prior to 1939. These homes are typically larger farm homes set on large lots. The average lot size for residential properties in LaFayette is 5.6 acres; significantly larger than that of residential properties in all of Onondaga County (1.6 acres); mostly due to the lack of public water and sewer (discussed in Section 2.9). 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.

Table 2.2: Year Built: Residential Structures

Year Built	% of Homes
2000 or later	8%
1980-1999	22%
1960-1979	34%
1940-1959	16%
1939 or earlier	21%

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.

Table 2.3 below shows the rate of housing unit changes for the past 50 years. From 2010 to 2019, the number of housing units slightly declined, following a period of slower growth compared to the 1970-1980 and 1980-1990 time periods.

Table 2.3: Percent Change: Housing Units

Year	Housing Units	% Change
1970	1,225	
1980	1,540	+25.7%
1990	1,825	+18.5%
2000	1,925	+5.5%
2010	2,112	+9.7%
2019	2092	-0.9%

The average household size in LaFayette is 2.38; down from 2.48 in 2010. This is consistent with national trends of a shrinking household size over the past century and beyond; as the nuclear family rose in popularity in the mid-20th century and fewer individuals are choosing to get married and have children.

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 22%. This is up from 13% in 2000; a 62% increase. As mentioned previously, it is expected to continue to rise in subsequent decades as the Baby Boomer population continue to retire in record numbers. 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 currently no senior housing in the Town.

2.9 Infrastructure & Transportation

2.9.1 Water Supply

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). These water districts are contiguous, serving 234 households in the northern part of the Town (Map 9). The Onondaga County Water Authority (OCWA), who provides water for these districts, has 246 active accounts in

both districts combined. There are 1,846 housing units in the rest of LaFayette, leaving 88% 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. 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 nonpotable. 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. As of 2021, Honeywell is seeking to turn this system over to the Town; and the Town is negotiating with OCWA for its operation and maintenance.

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 I-81 and Route 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.

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).

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. As mentioned previously, Allied Chemical incorporated the private water supply in the Hamlet of Cardiff in the early 1900's due to well contamination from the brine wells.

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.

2.9.2 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. In order to redevelop the LaFayette Hamlet, it will be essential for the Town to explore funding opportunities to develop a public sewer system; which is currently underway.

2.9.3 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.

2.9.4 Fuel Sources

LaFayette residents use a variety of sources to heat their homes. 2019 American Community Survey data suggests that approximately 30% of households use fuel oil or kerosene, 26% use utility gas, 15% use bottled, tank or LP gas, 12% use electricity and the remaining 17% use coal, wood or some other fuel.

Zero percent of households use solar energy, and the ACS does not ask about wind or geothermal energy, but some of the 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.

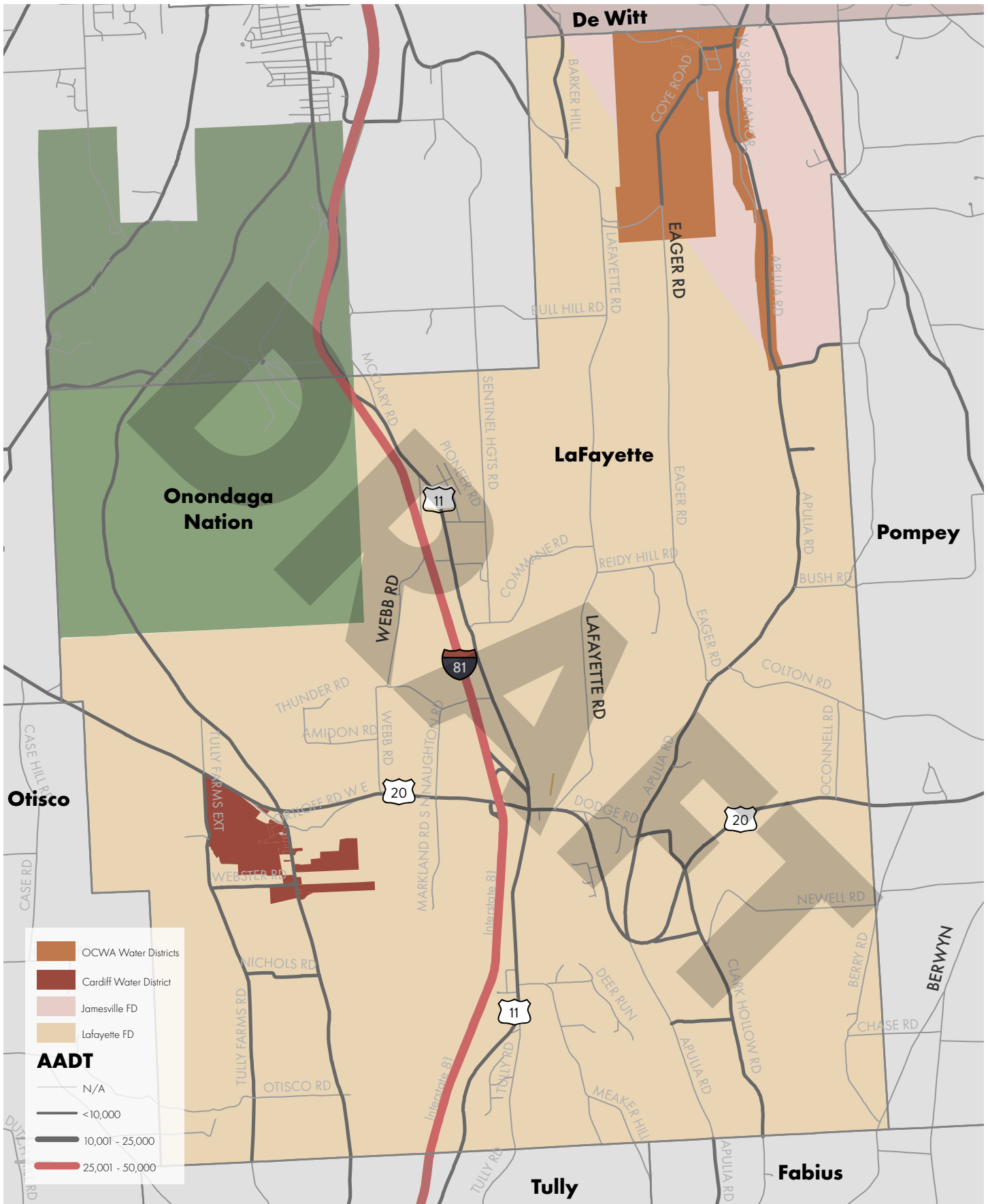
2.9.5 Roads

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.

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 1-81, 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. The DOT has had long-term plans in place to reconstruct this intersection, which is described further in Section 2.7: 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 I-81 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. I-8 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 over 35,000 vehicles travel along I-81 within the Town's borders every day. Traffic counts for Routes 11 and 20 vary depending on the stretch of roadway being referenced, but currently ranges between 2,000 and 5,000 vehicles per day (Map 9).



Map 9: Water and Fire Districts





2.10 Land Use & Zoning

2.10.1 Land Use Distribution

Table 2.4 below shows the prevalence of each land use in LaFayette as defined within the New York State Property Classification coding. According to 2020 Real Property Data, LaFayette’s most prevalent land use is residential, both by land cover and number of parcels. As mentioned in Section 2.8: Housing, the predominate residential character in the Town is suburban-style single family homes, and large historic farm houses. The majority (54%) of this residential acreage are rural residences with ten or more acres, followed by general single family homes (35%). There are only 36 parcels with multi-family residential structures. Residential land is generally scattered through the entirety of the Town.

Table 2.4: Land Use Distribution

	# of Acres	% of Land Coverage	# of Parcels
Agricultural	4,401	18%	84
Residential	9,770	40%	1,733
Vacant	8,562	35%	610
Commercial	233	1%	46
Recreation & Entertainment	18	0%	6
Community Services	146	1%	24
Industrial	252	1%	5
Public Services	430	2%	22
Parks & Open Space	618	2%	17
Total	24,431		2,547

Vacant land is the second most prevalent land use in the Town. The most prevalent type of vacant land is residential parcels with over ten acres, and the majority of other vacant land is also residential in nature. This includes both forested parcels that are undeveloped outside of the Hamlet, but also former agricultural land suitable for residential development. Similar to residential land in the Town, there are large swaths of vacant land in all areas of the Town.

The third most prevalent land use is agricultural, accounting for 18% of the acreage in the Town, but only 3% of all parcels. As mentioned in Section 2.5: Open Space & Agriculture, agricultural land and open space are some of the most significant defining features of the Town. Open space, as defined by this Plan, includes undeveloped, or vacant land. If combined, agricultural, vacant, and open space acreage accounts for over half (55%) of the total Town acreage; solidifying its influence on the Town’s character outside of the Hamlets.

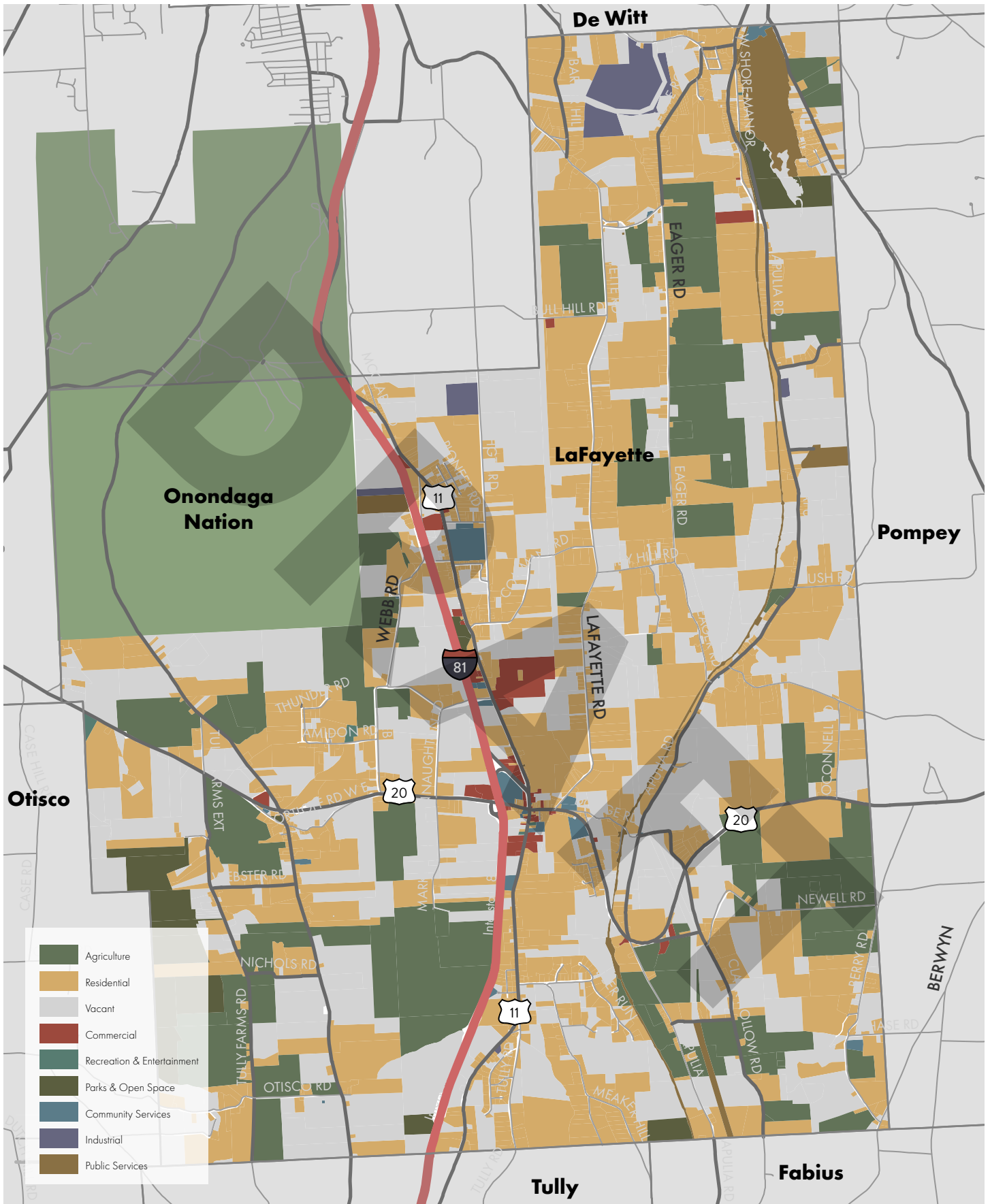
2.9.6 Bicycle & Pedestrian Facilities

Currently, there are limited sidewalk facilities present within the Town; which is to be expected given its rural nature. However, within the Hamlets of LaFayette and Cardiff, sidewalks are appropriate given the density of development as well as the Town’s desire to maintain and enhance the walkable character of the Hamlets. Route 11 has a sidewalk on the east side of the Roadway from the LaFayette V.F.W. to the south to the Fasttrac Gas Station to the north. Route 20 has sidewalk on both sides of the street from the Elementary School to approximately 500 feet to the west of the Route 11 intersection. The Hamlet of Cardiff currently has no sidewalks, nor are there any sidewalks connecting to the Junior-Senior High School. At the present time, there are no bicycle lanes in the Town, despite that fact that anecdotally there are many bicyclists using Town roads. However, Route 11 is a designated NYS Bike Route. Additionally, the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council released a Bicycle Suitability map for the entire County in 2012; on which several roads were rated as “Good,” including sections of Apulia Road, LaFayette Road, Coye Road, State Route 11A, and Tully Farms Road.

2.9.7 Public Transportation

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 reduced fares available for children, seniors, and individuals with disabilities. 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.



Map 10: Existing Land Use



The remaining 5% of the land in LaFayette includes commercial, industrial, recreation and entertainment, and community and public services. Commercial development only makes up 233 acres, or 1% of land coverage in the Town. Of this acreage, the most prevalent business types include twelve office buildings, seven storage and warehouse facilities, and three gas stations. As mentioned in Section 2.7: Hamlet Development, the majority of commercial development is clustered within or just outside the LaFayette Hamlet. Similarly, community services are also concentrated within the Hamlet, as well as along Route 11.

2.10.2 Zoning

The Town of LaFayette’s Zoning Ordinance was adopted in 1970, and most recently amended in 2020. The ordinance includes zoning regulations for nine districts, including Agricultural (AG), Single-Family Residential (R-1), Hamlet (H), Business (B), Industrial (I), Residential Planned Cluster (RPC), Residential Multifamily (RM), and Commercial Planned Development (CPD), and Cemetery (CEM), as seen on Map 11. The amount of acreage included in each district can be seen in Table 2.5 below.

Table 2.5: Zoning Distribution

	# of Acres	% of Land Coverage
Agricultural	21,907	90%
Business	569	2%
Cemetery	11	0%
Commercial Planned Development	7	0%
Hamlet	112	1%
Industrial	293	1%
Single-Family Residential	415	2%
Residential Multi-Family	575	2%
Residential Planned Cluster	543	2%
Total	24,431	

Agricultural (AG) District. The vast majority of the Town (90%) is zoned Agricultural. The purpose of this District is “preserve agricultural land, accommodate agricultural operations and to permit low-density development. The intent of this district is also to preserve open space and the Town’s rural character.” Permitted uses in this district include single- and two-family dwellings, farms, stables, and camps. A limited amount of commercial and other non-residential uses are permitted conditional upon site plan and/or special permit approval, including wineries/breweries/distilleries, marinas, and commercial greenhouses.

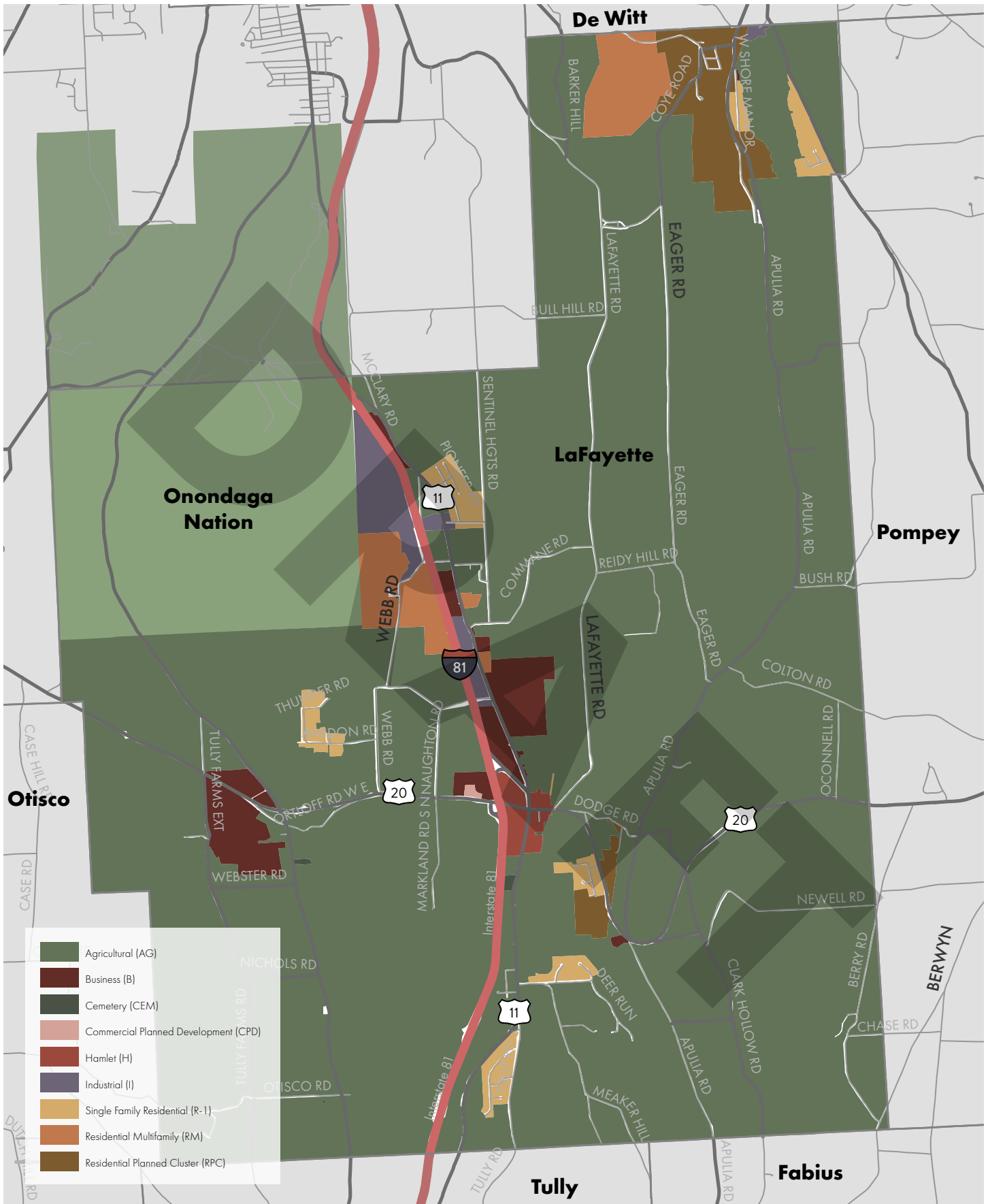
Business (B) District. 569 acres of the Town (or 2%) is zoned Business. The purpose of this District is “to provide for the development of commercial enterprise that may provide essential retail and service business to the community and region, in order

to provide a diversified economy.” This District is mainly located immediately north of the LaFayette Hamlet, as well as within the Cardiff Hamlet. The Town’s intent with the designation of this District is to allow for a wider variety of commercial development than what is desired within the LaFayette Hamlet, while not adversely impacting the adjacent residential and rural character of the Town. Some of the potentially larger-scale commercial development permitted within the B District includes commercial recreation facilities, retail stores and personal service businesses, and shopping centers.

Commercial Planned Development (CPD) District. One parcel in the Town is currently zoned as CPD; which currently is home to Byrne Dairy and Deli. The general purpose of designating a CPD District is to “allow for the development of well-planned commercial development that utilizes the natural beauty of the existing topography and watercourses in order to protect the community’s unique and significant natural resources.” As with many planned development districts, the intent is to allow for flexible land use regulations in order to allow for a particular type of development to occur.

Hamlet (H) District. As the name suggests, this District is located within the area of the LaFayette Hamlet, and makes up 112 of the Town’s acres. The purpose of this District is “to provide for the development of high-density, compact, pedestrian-oriented shopping, service, entertainment and residential districts.” The Town’s intent is to support mixed-use development, with flexible bulk and density regulations to “encourage dense development in the hamlet core of the community.” This District speaks to the Town’s desire to protect the character of the historic development center within the Town, especially “by encouraging redevelopment that focuses on architecturally appropriate design standards typical of the Town’s early development history.” Residential development is permitted within this District (with multifamily development requiring a special permit), and some commercial uses such as restaurants, professional offices, and theaters are permitted conditional upon site plan review.





Map 11: Existing Zoning



Industrial (I) District. Some industrial development is permitted within the Town with the Industrial District, located along Route 11 in the northwest portion of the Town. The I District is primarily intended “for uses engaged in light manufacturing, assembly, fabrication, warehousing and retail trade, and service operations which conduct all activities with little external impact or effect.” In addition to light manufacturing, this District permits single- and two- family residential development with no site plan approval or special use permit required, as well as some commercial development such as gas stations, car washes, restaurants, and offices (site plan approval required). Any industrial uses in this District must have both site plan approval as well as special use permit.

Residential Multifamily (RM) District. The RM District is the second most prevalent zoning district in the Town by acreage, at 575 acres, or 2% of the total land area. The intent of this District is to accommodate a wider variety of residential development typologies in the Town. As in many other Districts, single- and two- family dwellings are permitted by right, but multifamily dwellings must obtain site plan approval. Outside of residential development, there are very few permitted uses within this District, including bed and breakfasts, community facilities such as libraries, and commercial recreation facilities. This District also requires the provision of common open space for all residential development. Currently, this District is designated along Webb Road, where the Hidden Hills Country Homes mobile home park currently exists and the surrounding vacant and/or agricultural land; as well as along the northern edge of the Town, off of Smokey Hollow Road.

Residential Planned Cluster (RPC) District. The RPC District is another planned development district within the Town; however this District’s intent is to facilitate residential development. According to the LaFayette Zoning Ordinance, the purpose of this District is “to allow for the development of well-planned residential neighborhoods which utilize the natural beauty of the existing topography and watercourses in order to protect the community’s unique and significant natural resources.” Only single- and two- family dwellings are expressly permitted in this District; and community services such as places of worship and public parks are permitted with site plan approval. There are two clusters of this District within the Town: one generally along Apulia Road and Coye Road in the northern portion of the Town, and another off of Route 20 adjacent to existing residential development along Ashburn Drive.



Single Family Residential (R-1) District. The purpose of the R-1 District is to protect and provide solely for single-family, detached, residential dwelling units. The other uses that are permitted within this District include places of worship, public parks, police and fire stations, electrical substations, and solar energy systems, which all require site plan approval and/or a special use permit. Home occupations are also allowed through special use permitting. This District is located where existing residential tracts are developed, such as along the Jamesville Reservoir on West Shore Manor Road.



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