Town of Amsterdam

Montgomery County
New York



Comprehensive Plan

April 2004

Town of Amsterdam Vision Statements

To guide the Town of Amsterdam through the development and implementation of responsible planning which will protect the Town's historical, cultural and natural resources while providing for a vibrant economic climate for the present and future.

To protect human health and the environment of the Town of Amsterdam through responsible planning supported by sound science, effective management and efficient uses of the Town's resources.

To make the Town of Amsterdam attractive to families and businesses, so that they will want to locate and remain here, by providing sound economic growth, a safe and healthy environment and recreation, while preserving the history and beauty of the Town.

To make the Town of Amsterdam attractive to families and businesses by providing them with safety, a healthy environment, recreation and opportunities for employment, while preserving the history and beauty of the Town.

The Town of Amsterdam is a continuing growth area. The area's selling points are its location near the New York State Thruway, its proximity to the Capital District, and its function as a gateway to the vacation areas to the north, such as the Adirondacks, Lake George and Saratoga. It has large areas of desirable undeveloped land, some of which are adjacent to the main rail line, Route 5 and the barge canal. The Town needs some enhancements to continue its growth. It needs water and sewer to develop to its full potential as a bedroom community for the Capital District. Water and sewer are also needed for retail and industrial sites. It needs more recreation areas while taking advantage of the many bodies of water available for boating, fishing and camping. Industrial development is possible along the main rail line, barge canal and Route 5, although this is a possible flood area and hazards may need to be reduced. Our low land costs could attract high tech companies if we work with the County and State development agencies.

Town of Amsterdam

Vision Statement

A Town that is attractive to families and businesses
by providing a safe and healthy environment, sound economic growth,
recreational and employment opportunities, and preservation of
the Town's historic, cultural and natural resources.

Goals

Preserve and Enhance the Town's Rural Character and Open Spaces

Preserve the Natural Environment

Encourage Commercial and Industrial Development
which is compatible with existing land use

Encourage the development of affordable housing in the Town

Provide adequate Recreational Opportunities in the Town

Enhance and Encourage Preservation of the
Town's Historical Character

Promote a Safe and Efficient Transportation System
throughout the Town

Maintain and Enhance the Aesthetics of the Town

Cooperate with the Town's adjacent municipalities
and Montgomery County

Continue an Open Dialogue on the Future
of the Town of Amsterdam

Acknowledgements

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Date of Acceptance: April 21, 2004

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Preface

Introduction - Purpose

The Town of Amsterdam is facing important decisions today which will affect its future for many years. The Town is concerned about questions that will shape the future of this community. How can we encourage new commercial development without contributing to sprawl or straining our transportation systems? How can we provide safe and pleasant residential areas with a variety of affordable housing? How can we provide jobs and opportunities for upcoming generations and stabilize our tax base? How can we encourage industrial development without harming the environment or destroying our rural setting? How can we preserve and celebrate our historical character? How can we cooperate with adjacent municipalities for the common good of our residents?

The Town's location near the New York State Thruway and along Route 30N has contributed to an influx of new commercial development. The Town is concerned about this rapid development and the subsequent impact on its quality of life and transportation systems. The Town is faced with the challenge of how to balance economic development with environmental and historic preservation.

The purpose of the comprehensive planning process is to provide guidance to Town Officials when making decisions that will shape the future of the community. A key purpose of the planning process is to ensure that the Town is in control of its own destiny, rather than having outside forces determine its future. Whether these forces are developers, state agencies, or the general economy, the Town runs the risk of losing its identity if it does not clearly articulate its goals for the future. The Town of Amsterdam has recognized this fact by deciding to formulate a Comprehensive Plan for its future growth, development and preservation.

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

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

These laws further define a Town Comprehensive Plan as:

"The materials, written and/or graphic, including but not limited to maps, charts, studies, resolutions, reports and other descriptive material that identify the goals, objectives, principles, guidelines, policies, standards, devices and instruments for the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development of the town located outside the limits of any incorporated village or city." (§272-a)

The purpose of the Town of Amsterdam's Comprehensive Plan is to provide a coherent *vision* of the future. This vision is a Town that is attractive to families and businesses by providing a safe and healthy environment, sound economic growth, recreational and employment opportunities, and preservation of the Town's historic, cultural and natural resources.

This comprehensive plan is not a law, ordinance or regulation. It will serve both as an informational document on the Town's natural and human resources, and as a policy guide to be used by Town Government in the course of routine activities. It is a living document which will be periodically reviewed and revised to ensure that it remains relevant to the changing conditions within the Town.

This plan forms the basis for land use regulations and assures that these laws are designed to achieve legitimate community objectives. It sets down specific actions the Town can take to assure that the goals and objectives of this plan are realized. The plan's structure of goals, objectives, and implementation tasks is intended to provide the Town's policy makers with logical information to make coherent decisions. This comprehensive plan will only be valuable to the extent that it is used by the Town's elected officials, planning board, and citizens to work together to build a prosperous future for the community.

Plan Format

This Comprehensive Plan consists of two basic parts. The first part gives a detailed profile of the past and present Town of Amsterdam. The Town's environmental features (geology, topography and slopes, soils, wetlands etc.) were inventoried and mapped. This section also includes the Town's present socioeconomic situation (land use, transportation network, housing, demographics, etc.) The demographic and housing sections are based on the most current data available from the 1990 and 2000 United States Census, and should be updated as more information is released.

The second part of this plan includes the future recommendations for the Town. It begins with statements of goals, objectives and implementation tasks, developed from a Town-wide survey and community meetings. Goals are broad policy statements regarding future Town development. Objectives are more narrow, designed to address specific issues. Implementation tasks are specific actions intended to realize goals and objectives. The future land use and transportation plans are critical parts of the Comprehensive Plan which will guide future development patterns in the Town.

PART ONE:
TOWN OF AMSTERDAM
COMMUNITY PROFILE

Chapter One

Historical and Regional Overview

This chapter is intended to give an overview of the significant events and development patterns, both local and regional, that have had an impact on the Town of Amsterdam. Understanding and interpreting these past events and regional influences is very important for a community comprehensively planning for it's future.

The information contained in this chapter was arrived at by researching a number of documents related to the early history of New York State, Montgomery County and the Town of Amsterdam (please see bibliography). Further assistance and insight was provided by the Montgomery County Department of History and Archives.

As previously mentioned, this chapter is only intended to provide an overview. Additional historical and cultural resource inventory and analysis is included in Chapter 3: Socio-Economic Resources.

Historical Outline
Town of Amsterdam

1710: Sparse and temporary early settlement by German Palatines.

1716: Philip Groat, of Rotterdam (Holland) acquired the title, direct from the Mohawk Iroquois, to a strip of land in the eastern part of the town.

1740 Sir William Johnson built a homestead in the town, near the present day western end of the city.

1742: Sir William Johnson built and moved into Fort Johnson on the Kayaderosseras creek.

1755: Mrs. Eva Van Alstyne was wounded and scalped by Indians, while crossing the stream near Cranesville. The stream now bears the name Eva's Kil creek.

1772: Tryon County formed, which included the Mohawk District, the lands north and south of the river from the Hoffmans rock cut to "The Noses" near Sprakers and Palatine.

1777: Joseph Hagaman founded the settlement of Hagaman's Mills.

1778: Mohawk District realigned, all land north of the river designated as Caughnawaga.

1793: Caughnawaga was divided into four towns: Johnstown, Mayfield, Broadalbin and Amsterdam.

1794: First Town Board on record.

1804: David Crane operated a hotel along Mohawk Turnpike, in the hamlet now known as Cranesville.

1810: Town population of 3,039 in U.S. census.

1838: Fulton County formed from Montgomery County, the Town of Perth separated from the Town of Amsterdam.

1857: The "Star Hosiery Mills" were established in Hagaman.

1880: Town population (including the City of Amsterdam) of 11,710 in U.S. census.

1870s: "Hurricana Farms" thoroughbred racing stables established by Stephen Sanford.

1885: City of Amsterdam incorporated and divided out of the Town.

1890: Town population of 2,948 in U.S. census.

1940's: First major apartment complex completed (Northampton Court).

1960's: Several major industries relocate from the City to the Town of Amsterdam, including Amsterdam Printing Company and Mohawk Finishing Products. The Earl Matthewson Farm was subdivided to create residential properties on Country Ridge Drive.

1963: The Stephen Collins farm of 140 acres was developed into the Big N Shopping Center. Amsterdam Memorial Hospital relocates over the City line to Route 30.

1964: Town prepares Master Plan and adopts Subdivision Regulations.

1968: Part of the Matthewson Farm was developed into the Family Bargain Center.

1972: Town adopts Zoning Ordinance. Greater Amsterdam School District opens Tecler Elementary School on Northern Boulevard.

1973: New Town Hall containing Town offices dedicated on Manny Corners Road.

1977: Two new County roads are constructed: Miami Avenue connecting Midline Road to Route 30, and Maple Avenue extension connecting the Village of Hagaman to Route 30. Greater Amsterdam School District opens the new Amsterdam High School on Miami Avenue in the Town.

1990: Town population of 5,962 in U.S. census. Commercial development continues along the Route 30 corridor.

1993: Big box retail giants Wal-Mart and Super K-Mart open new stores opposite each other along NYS RT. 30.

1994: Town adopts Site Plan Review Regulations.

Late 1990s: Commercial development continues along Route 30, including Kem Plaza, Sanford Farms and Town Square Shopping Centers. Former Kmart and Price Chopper Plazas redeveloped for commercial use. Super K-Mart and Office Max close. Discussions begin with Home Depot to locate in Hannaford Plaza.

2000: Town population of 5,820 in U.S. Census. Town works with the City of Amsterdam and DEC to extend water service along the Route 30 corridor to serve new development. Plans begin to reuse former Hurricana Farm barn as a cultural center and museum.

2001: Home Depot opens in Hannaford Plaza.

2002: Town signs 40-year water contract with City. Ruby Tuesday opens in Hannaford Plaza.

Historical Background and Development Patterns

The most modern pre-European inhabitants of the area that is now called the Town of Amsterdam were the Native Americans, referred to as the Mohawks. The Mohawks were a member of what the British called the "Five Nations", or the French called the "Iroquois Nation". This nation began as a confederation of five eastern woodland Native American tribes. The other tribes of this nation were the Oneidas, Onondogas, Cayugas and Senecas. The Mohawks were the most eastern tribe, and controlled the area from present day Albany westward to the Susquehanna and Delaware Rivers, and as far north as the St. Lawrence River. The Mohawks and other tribes would come to play a legitimate role in the settlement of the area, and later during the American war for independence.

European settlements in the Town supposedly commenced as early as 1710. Little information is available, but the earliest pioneers are thought to be German Palatines sent here under the patronage of Queen Anne of England. At the same time Holland Dutch settlers also moved up the Mohawk Valley from Schenectady and other parts.

The earliest patent was issued to Geraldus Camfort on April 22, 1703. The title was to twenty acres of land lying within the present day town of Amsterdam. This is thought to be the first patent granted by the English Colonial Government within the present limits of Montgomery County. The Chatsandackte patent was granted to Ebenezer Wilson and John Abeel on February 22, 1706. This also was within the town. However no evidence exists that any of these early title holders or their representatives settled their lands.

The earliest known family to settle within the Town was that of Philip Groat. Groat, of Rotterdam (Holland), acquired the title, direct from the Mohawks, to a strip of land near present day Cranesville. This is probably the earliest grant obtained from the Mohawks. The Mohawks conveyed "all the land between the creeks (about one mile, embracing Cranesville), as far north from the river as the grantee may desire." Philip Groat never settled his land, but was drowned in the Mohawk, near Schenectady, by breaking through the ice in a sleigh. He was in route to his new land. His widow, three sons, and several domestics, made the intended settlement. The first grist mill on the north side of the Mohawk river was erected in 1730 by the Groat brothers, at what is now Cranesville. The mill, for a time, served the settlement of German Flats some fifty miles up river.

An interesting side note of Groat family history surrounds the youngest of the three brothers, Lewis. In the summer of 1755, Lewis Groat was taken prisoner by three hostile Native Americans belonging to the Owenagunga tribe. He was taken to their homeland in Canada, where he was forced to run the gauntlet, a ritualistic combat challenge. He was later sold to a French Canadian, named Louis de Snow. He remained his servant until the declaration of war between Great Britain and France. He was then claimed as a British prisoner, and sent to St. Francis Way, near Montreal.

He remained imprisoned there for six months. Finally he was liberated, and returned home after an absence of four years and four months.

This was apparently a dangerous time in the Town. In 1755, while on her way from Johnstown to Schenectady, Mrs. Eva Van Alstyne was wounded and scalped near present day Cranesville. The attack took place at a stream which now bears the name Eva's Kil creek.

This hostility and subsequent delay in early settlement was in part due to the ill-famed Kayaderosseras patent. A 1704 land swindle that infuriated the Mohawks when they discovered that the "big enough for a farm" tract of land they had conveyed was actually about 700,000 acres lying between the Mohawk and Hudson rivers. Over fifty years passed before the Mohawks were compensated, and then only partially.

In 1738 Sir William Johnson built the first of his many homesteads in the Mohawk Valley at Warrensbush, in the present day Town of Florida. Warrensbush was his uncle's holdings, and Sir William, at the age of 23, was sent to manage his affairs. He later moved to a site near the present day City and Town of Amsterdam boundary along the Mohawk River. In 1742 he again moved to a site about two miles further west on the Kayaderosseras Creek, on land he had purchased. In 1744 he built a flouring mill and stone mansion, calling his new estate Fort Johnson.

Sir William played an important role in the early settlement of the Mohawk Valley. His influence over the Native American tribes led to his position as "Chief of Indian Affairs" for the British government. His knowledge of their customs and language led to the Mohawks giving him the honorary rank of chief. During the French and Indian War he attained the rank of major-general in the Provincial forces. He and his family remained loyal to the British government throughout the later half of the 18th century, in particular during the Revolution.

Following the closure of the Revolution and its associated hostilities, settlement around the Town began to flourish. By the end of the 18th century a number of farm settlements were located throughout the Town. Around 1797, the first schoolhouse was erected on "Olmstead Hill," at the intersection of present day Route 67 and Jones Road. The first religious organization was formed in 1792 in connection with the Dutch Reformed Church. Meetings were held in barns, groves or dwellings until 1800, when a church building was constructed at Manny Corners. This Church was the forerunner of the present day United Presbyterian Church of Amsterdam and the Calvary Reformed Church in Hagaman.

After the Revolution the need arose for improved transportation systems. As early as 1790, stage coach service was provided from Albany to Johnstown and Canajoharie. The Mohawk Turnpike Company was incorporated in 1800 and a road was built between Schenectady and Utica. In 1804, David Crane operated a hotel along the Turnpike, in the hamlet now known as Cranesville. In 1825, the Erie Canal was completed, increasing trade, commerce and settlement in the region. The first railroad connecting Amsterdam with

distant points opened in 1836. Improvements have been made to all transportation systems over the years, greatly enhancing the accessibility of the Town and its environs.

The Town of Amsterdam had several areas which developed into villages and hamlets. Until its charter as a city in 1885, the Village of Amsterdam was the largest village in the Town. Well over half of the Town residents at the time lived in the Village of Amsterdam. The original settler of the "village" was Aaron Vedder, who established a saw-mill and grist-mill near the mouth of the North Chuctanunda creek. The mouth of this stream is nearly opposite a matching stream on the south shore of the Mohawk, and they were both named from the Native American word for "twin sisters."

In 1813, the "village" was described in one writing: "On the Mohawk turnpike, near the mouth of the Chuctanunda creek, is a small collection of houses called Amsterdam or Veddersburg, where is a post-office, a Presbyterian church, a school-house, 25 dwellings and some stores, mechanics' shops, mills, etc.," with a population which did not exceed 150.

Close to the time Aaron Vedder arrived at the mouth of the North Chuctanunda, Joseph Hagaman settled on land further up stream that would one day become the Village of Hagaman. This was the northern most settlement in the Town at this time. In fact, the only road north of Manny Corners was an opening cut through the forest just wide enough to allow the passage of a wagon. Following the lead of Joseph Hagaman and Aaron Vedder, a number of mills were established in the area. In 1802, it was reported that five mills were along the North Chuctanunda (this included West Galway, which at the time was part of the Town). In 1813 it was reported that along the same stream there were established: 5 grain mills, 4 saw mills, 2 carding and 2 fulling machines used to manufacture wool cloth, 2 oil mills, a trip hammer, and an extensive iron manufacture. The hamlet of Hagaman Mills incorporated as the Village of Hagaman in 1892.

The area near the mouth of the Kayaderosseras creek was originally settled by Sir William Johnson. By the latter part of the 19th century the area was known as Akin, named after the Ethan Akin family who owned much of the land in the area. In 1903 the hamlet of Akin incorporated and officially designated its name the Village of Fort Johnson.

Cranesville and Tribes Hill were, and still are today, important hamlet areas of the Town. Both developed along transportation lines and were important areas of commerce for residents of the area. Today the hamlets are primarily residential communities. Cranesville is situated on the north bank of the Mohawk, about three miles east of the City of Amsterdam. It was named in honor of David Crane, who settled there in 1804, and kept a hotel for many years. It contained a small station of the New York Central Railroad, a church, store, saw mill, post office, and cluster of homes. Tribes Hill is a hamlet located partially in the western section of the Town of Amsterdam, and partially in the Town of Mohawk. Its name came from the tradition of Native American tribes assembling at this prominent point overlooking the Mohawk River. A suspension bridge was built in

1853 spanning the Mohawk River and connecting Tribes Hill to Fort Hunter. By the late 1800s the hamlet contained a post-office, two churches, a store, school house, shops, and a railroad station.

The Town has continued to grow both as a residential community and as the area's commercial center. In the early 1960's the first shopping center developments were built along Rt. 30 North. Today the Rt. 30 corridor in the Town is referred to as "the miracle mile." Since the opening of the new Big Box retail stores (Wal-Mart and Super K-Mart) in 1993, the Town has seen a rapid increase in development proposals along the corridor. Square footage of commercial space doubled along the Route 30 corridor from 1990 to 2000. Route 67 has also experienced a moderate increase in development. The Town reviews each new development proposal, hopefully ensuring that any impact will be mitigated to the extent practical.

Residential development is also on the rise in the Town, with approximately 6 new housing starts per year. The Town's regional location, low taxes, rural character, and other amenities have encouraged new residential development.

Regional Setting

The Town of Amsterdam is located in the northeastern portion of Montgomery County, in New York State's historic Mohawk River valley. The Town is approximately 34.9 sq. miles in size and lies on the north shore of the Mohawk River. The Town's eastern boundary is also the eastern boundary of Montgomery County. This boundary line borders the Town of Glenville in Schenectady County, and the Towns of Charlton and Galway in Saratoga County. The Town's northern boundary is formed by the Town of Perth in Fulton County. The Town's western boundary is the Town of Mohawk. The southern boundary is formed by the City of Amsterdam, and the Mohawk River / NYS Barge Canal. Other neighboring municipalities include the Town of Florida across the Mohawk River.

The Town has two incorporated municipalities within its boundaries; the Village of Hagaman along the banks of the North Chuctunanda creek, and the Village of Fort Johnson near the confluence of the Kayaderosseras creek and the Mohawk river. The Town also has two established hamlet areas both along the Mohawk River; Tribes Hill to the west, and Cranesville to the east.

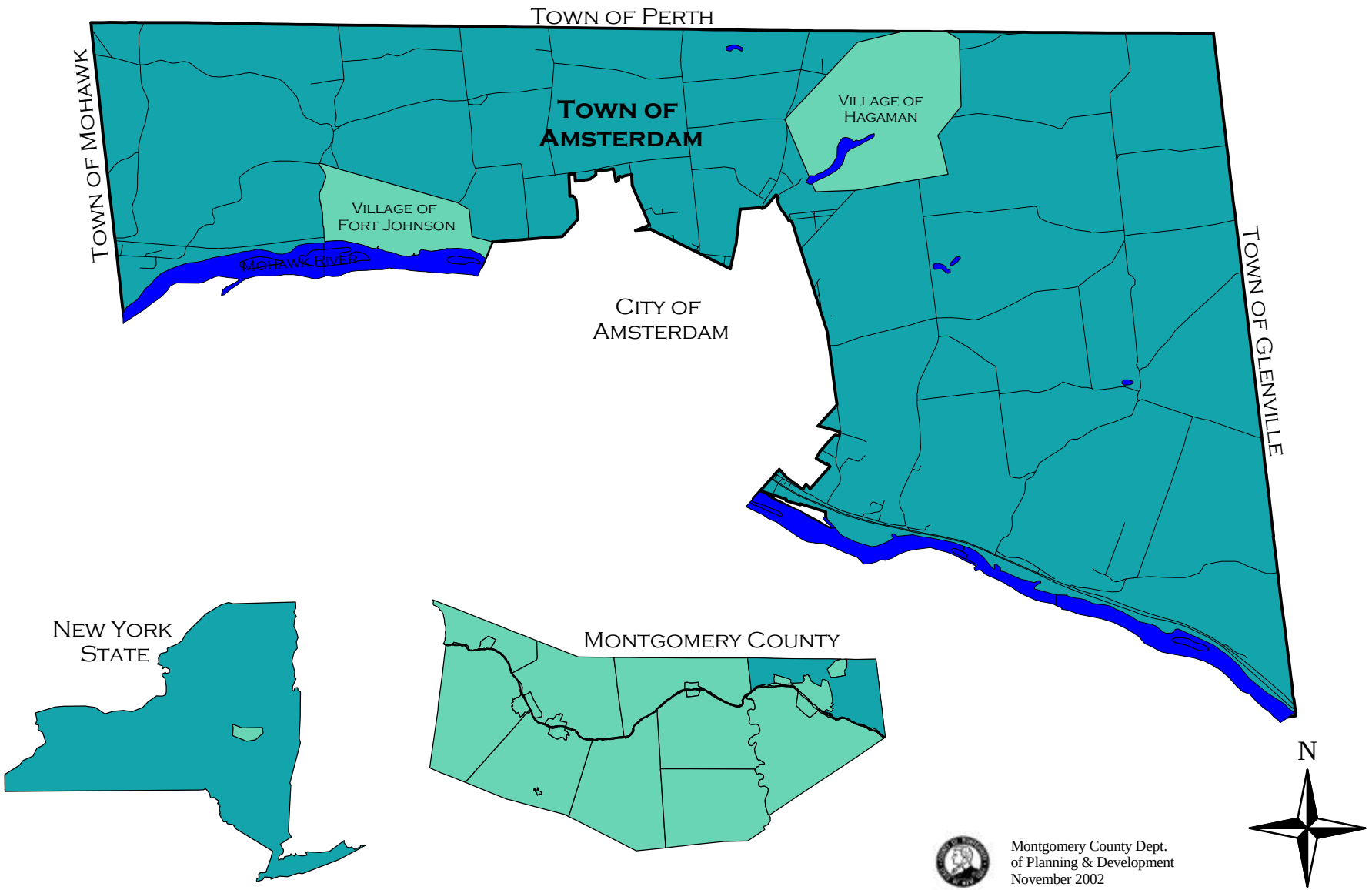
A large portion of the Town was chartered into the City of Amsterdam in 1885. The steep drop of the North Chuctanunda Creek provided power to a host of industrial activities causing this area of the Town to develop rapidly. The City of Amsterdam originally was a village within the Town. It first bore the name Veddersburg and then later adopted the name Amsterdam.

The Town of Amsterdam and Montgomery County are very near the geographic center of New York State. To the east the Capital Region city of Schenectady is approximately 15 miles. The City of Albany and the State Capital are less than 30 miles to the southeast. The Saratoga region is approximately 20 miles to the northeast. To the north the southern Adirondack region and the Great Sacandaga Lake are reached in less than 15 miles. To the northwest, less than 10 miles, lie the Glove Cities of Johnstown and Gloversville. Heading west from the Town one would travel up the Mohawk Valley region to the Central Leatherstocking Country. The Catskill region is reached in about one hour by traveling south on NYS Rt. 30.

Excellent transportation routes such as the NYS Thruway, NYS Barge Canal, Conrail mainline and NYS Routes 5, 30 and 67 make the Town accessible to much of the North East, Mid Atlantic, Great Lakes and southern Canada regions, in less than a days travel time. This also puts the Town within easy travel distance of a large percentage of North America's population centers.

The Town's accessibility, both regionally and nationally, coupled with its other amenities, should be important factors in the Town's future development patterns.

Town of Amsterdam
Regional Location Map



Montgomery County Dept.
of Planning & Development
November 2002

Chapter Two

Natural Setting

One of the most significant characteristics of a community is its natural setting. The natural setting is comprised of the community's physical, geologic, and environmental characteristics or resources. Natural resources include the geology, topography and slopes, soils, groundwater, surface water, flood prone areas, critical or sensitive environmental areas, wetlands, and plant and animal species. These resources are an especially important part of the Town of Amsterdam's character and appearance.

A comprehensive inventory of these resources will be critical to the Town as it identifies areas suitable for various forms of development. Many of these resources also play an important part in the development of a particular parcel. With this in mind, the more specific the information is the more useful it will be during the evaluation of the environmental impacts of a proposed development.

This chapter contains a graphic and written inventory of the Town of Amsterdam's natural resources. It also provides some basic information on each resource to emphasize the importance that it has on the physical environment. This, along with the following chapter on Socio-Economic Resources, will provide information needed by the Town when making decisions, to ensure that its people will be able to earn a decent living while also providing a healthy environment for all to enjoy.

Geology

About 550 million years ago the land that is presently the Town of Amsterdam was a nearly featureless plain underlain by ancient igneous and metamorphic rocks.

During the Cambrian and Ordovician period, 570 to 430 million years ago, the present day bedrock of Amsterdam was deposited under marine conditions. During these periods broad interior seas extended from the Adirondacks and New England westward to the Mississippi Valley. The types of sedimentary deposits left by this activity still exist in the present day Town of Amsterdam. The western portion of the Town is predominately underlain by Canajoharie and Utica Shales, the eastern portion is predominately comprised of Tribes Hill Limestone (Ordovician) and Little Falls Dolimite (Cambrian). Amsterdam, Glens Falls, and Lowville Limestones form the bedrock of much of the area to the north and east of the City of Amsterdam. Please see the Geologic Map on the next page.

The Paleozoic Era, which included the Cambrian Ordovician, ended with the Appalachian Revolution, 220 million years ago. This event formed the Appalachian Upland and permanently raised most of the state above sea level.

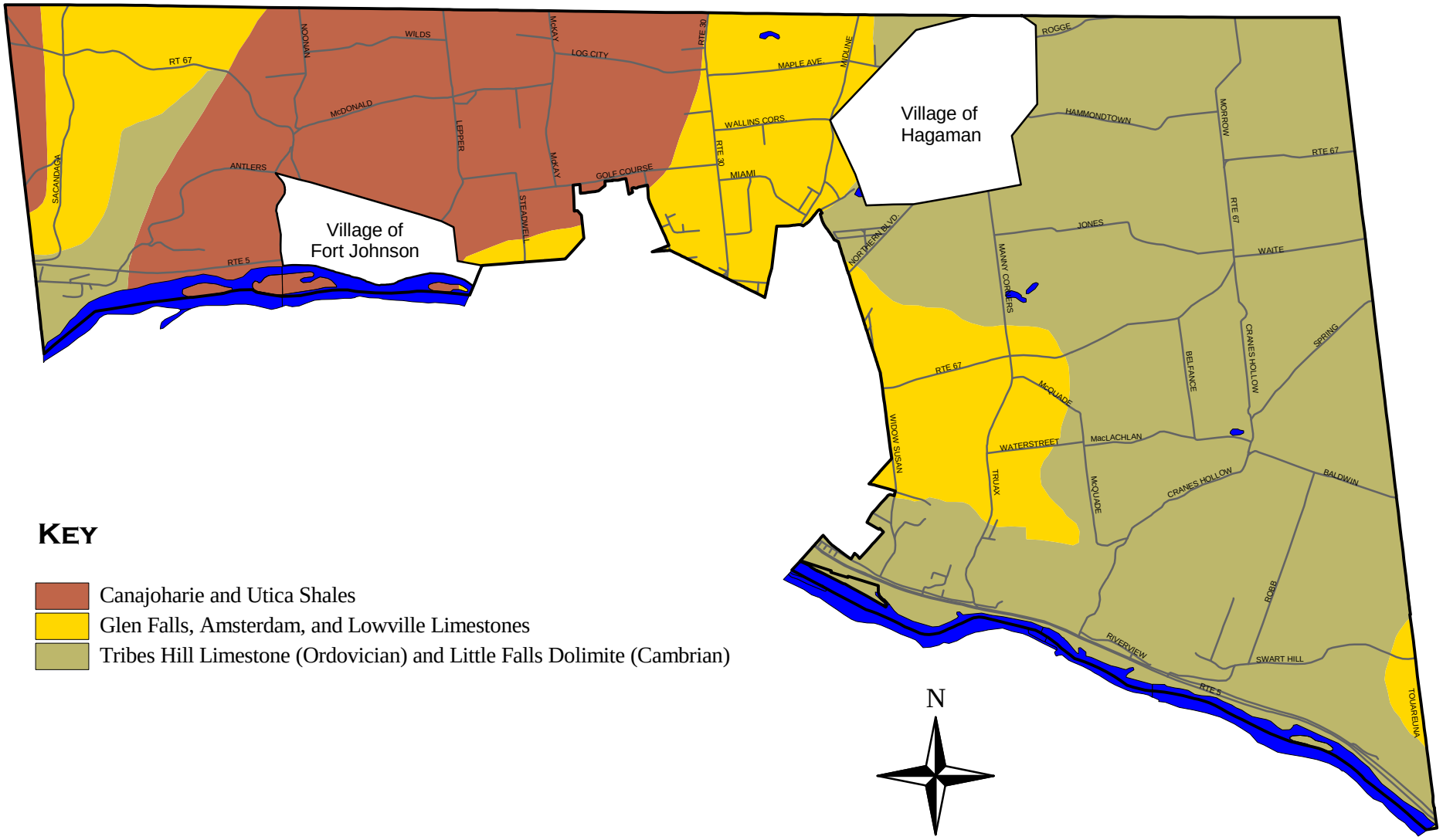
The next major geologic event that effected the natural landscape of the Town of Amsterdam was the advance and subsequent retreat of the glaciers. The glacial stage in New York State probably began 50,000 to 100,000 years ago during the Pleistocene ice age. The glaciers greatly transformed the landscape changing river patterns, rounding out mountains, and depositing debris as they retreated.

Throughout this ice age there were a series of glacial advances and retreats. The final glacial retreat occurred 8,000 to 10,000 years ago and was known as the Wisconsin glacier. In their wake the glaciers left glacial till, which is the material deposited beneath a moving glacier. The make up of this material is influenced by the local bedrock over which the glacier moved. This factor leads to the varied soil conditions of the Town.

Subsequent “modern” erosion has given the Town its present geologic look. Although natural erosion has the greatest effect, the presence of humankind is the newest and most influential force on the Town’s future geologic condition.

The Mohawk River Valley is the most predominate geologic landform in the Town. Formed as a result of glacial erosion the valley rises moderately from the flood plain and then gradually levels off. A number of tributaries form their own valleys as they make their way to the Mohawk. Other significant geological features include Hoffman’s rock cut, Cranes Hollow, and the Tribes Hill bluff high above the Mohawk River.

Town of Amsterdam
Geologic Map



Key

- Canajoharie and Utica Shales
- Glen Falls, Amsterdam, and Lowville Limestones
- Tribes Hill Limestone (Ordovician) and Little Falls Dolimite (Cambrian)

Montgomery County Dept.
of Planning & Development
November 2002

Source:
Soil Survey of Montgomery and Schenectady Counties

Topography and Slopes

Topographic features such as slope and elevation strongly influence the type and intensity of development the land can support. Intensive land uses require substantial alteration to the existing characteristics of the land they influence. Therefore, severe slopes of greater than 15% generally remain unsuitable for this type of development. Historically, in the Town of Amsterdam and throughout the Mohawk Valley, development progressed from the valley floor up the sloping hillside to the flat upland areas. Industrial and commercial uses generally located in the valleys or other flat areas (ie. NYS RT 30 corridor). Residential uses were more flexible, locating throughout the Town landscape.

New engineering and construction technologies allow more intense development on severe slopes, but it is very important that the cumulative impact of the development is properly reviewed. Severe slopes are generally more unstable and prone, when disturbed, to erosion and runoff problems. In addition, the costs associated with developing on steep slopes rise due to the extra measures needed to ensure stability and reduce associated impacts. On site inspection should always occur to determine if a site's slope is suitable for development.

Lack of slope also places certain constraints on development. Many times these areas contain wetlands or seasonally wet soils. The effectiveness of sanitary sewage disposal systems (i.e. septic tanks) are also jeopardized by lack of slope.

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

Slope = Vertical Distance divided by **Horizontal Distance x 100**

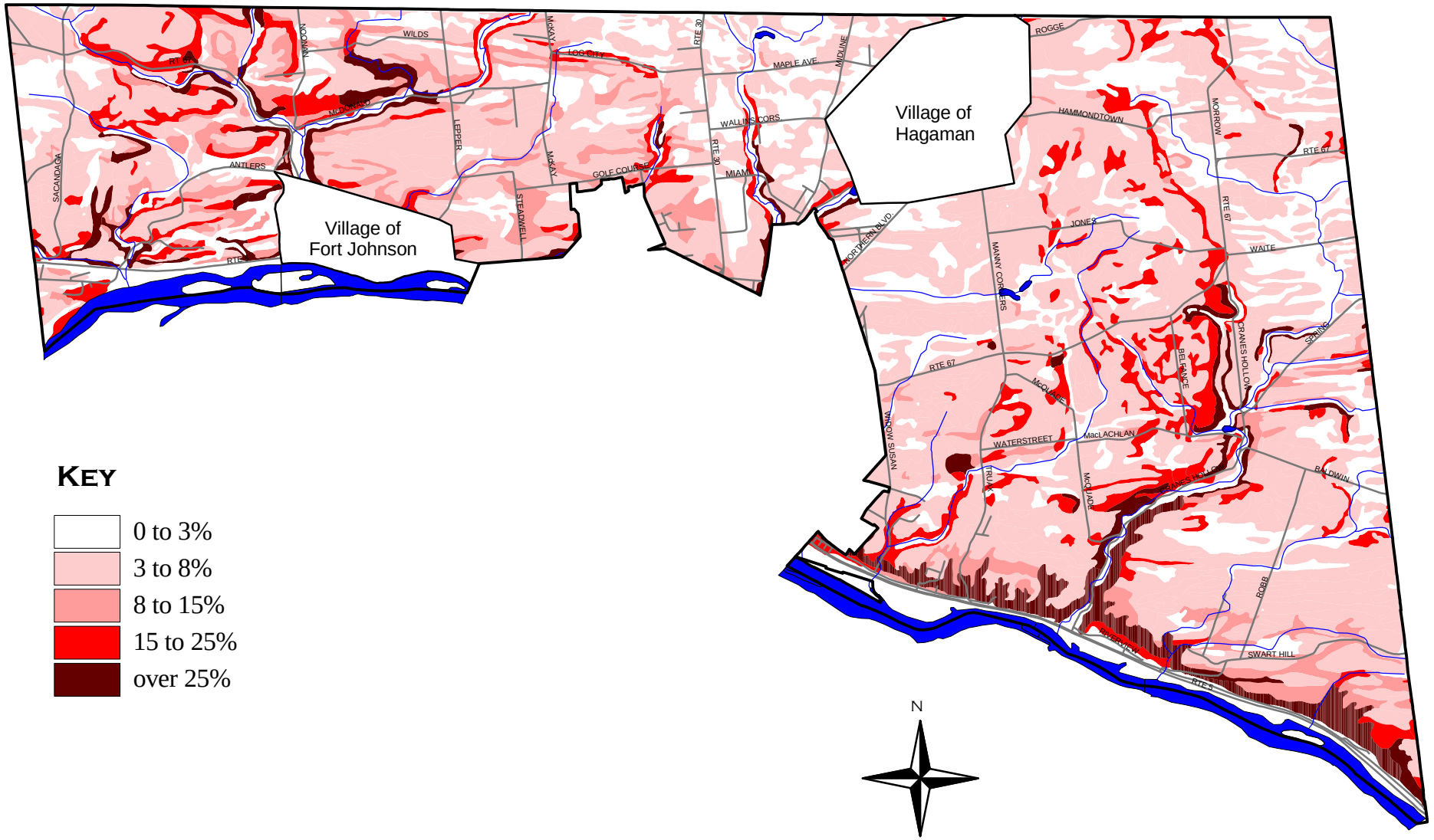
Considering the above information and standard construction limitations based on slope percentages the following categories were developed. Slopes of 0 to 3% are generally poorly drained and are likely to include wetlands, seasonally wet soils, or flood prone areas. These characteristics should be carefully analyzed when considering development on any of these percentages. Slopes of 3 to 8% are the most suitable for development providing there is careful consideration of site specific features, such as ground cover, soils, and water features. Development on moderate slopes (8 to 15%) should be analyzed carefully and the necessary erosion control techniques should be practiced. Large commercial and industrial structures should be discouraged from building on lands with a moderate slope. In general, all development should be avoided on severe slopes (greater than 15%) because development of these slopes will most likely result in severe erosion.

The Town of Amsterdam is comprised of a wide variety of topographic conditions. Gentle slopes (3%-8%), which are very suitable for development, comprise the vast majority of the land area (61%) of the Town.

The rolling topography associated with moderately steep slopes in the 8%-15% range are visible along Lepper, McKay Steadwell, and Golf Course Roads. Steep slopes of 15% and over are most prevalent in the larger drainage basins (i.e. McQueen Creek, Bunn Creek, and Cranes Hollow), and are especially apparent along NYS RT 5 in the eastern end of the Town.

Elevations in the Town range from a low of approximately 240 feet above sea level at the point where the Mohawk River exits the Town in the east to a high point of 815 feet above sea level at a point south of Hammondtown Road.

Town of Amsterdam
Slopes Map



Key

- 0 to 3%
- 3 to 8%
- 8 to 15%
- 15 to 25%
- over 25%

Montgomery County Dept.
of Planning & Development
November 2002

Source:
Soil Survey of Montgomery and Schenectady Counties

Soils

In simple terms *soil* is defined as "all unconsolidated mineral and organic material of whatever origin that overlies bedrock and can be readily excavated." Soil composition directly affects all land-use planning and development, including building and road construction, septic systems, water availability and agriculture. The structural bearing capacity and subsurface drainage of soils are important criteria in selecting new areas for development. Accurate soil information is necessary to determine the capabilities and limits of a site for particular uses. It also can help determine appropriate patterns of residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural and recreational use.

Drainage capacity affects the density of residential development when it is dependent upon individual septic systems or sanitary drain fields and private wells. Soils with poor drainage and slow permeability must have well-designed systems, because wet and dense soils can be easily contaminated.

Soil data for the Town of Amsterdam is provided by the United States Department of Agriculture, National Resource Conservation Service in the form of a Soil Survey. The Montgomery County Department of Planning and Development has this soil survey on its Geographic Information System in digital format. The Department is able to overlay any parcel within the County onto this soil map and delineate what type of soil is found there and its characteristics.

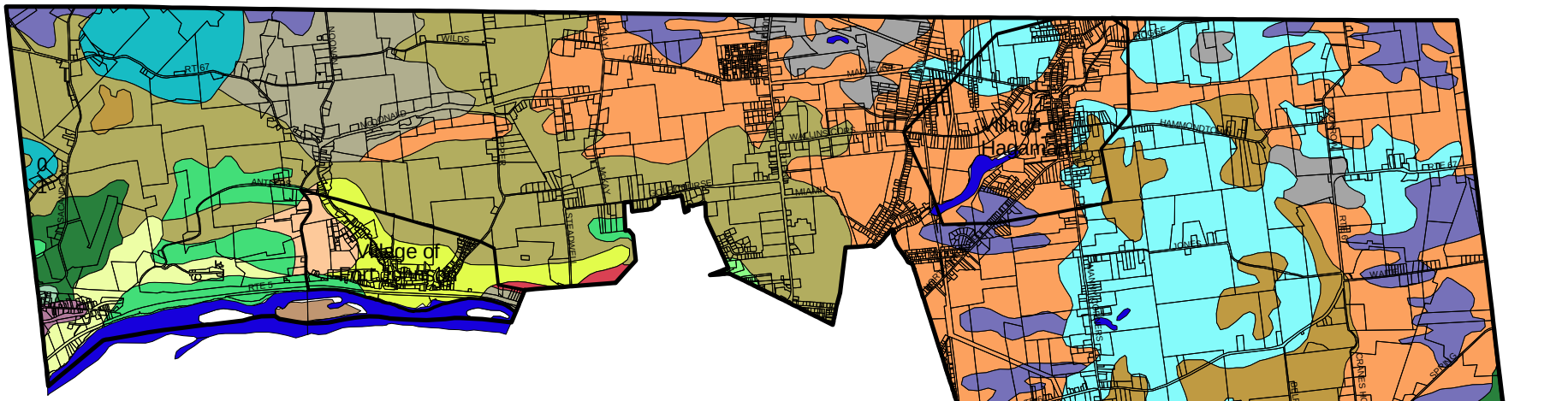
The Soil Survey provides information on the properties of soils and their effect on selected non-farm uses of the land. The Soil Survey expresses soil limitation for selected uses as either slight, moderate, or severe.

The rating of *slight* indicates that the soil has properties favorable for the rated use. Soil limitations are minor and can be easily overcome. A rating of *moderate* indicates that the soil has properties moderately favorable for the rated use. The limitations can be mitigated with special planning, design or maintenance. A rating of *severe* indicates that the soil has one or more unfavorable properties for the rated use. Limitations are difficult and costly to overcome, but a rating of severe does not mean that soil cannot be used for the specific rated use.

Several large scale Soils Constraints maps have been prepared for the Town. These maps examine the suitability of soils throughout the Town for commercial development and septic systems. The Soil Survey and maps will help the Planning Board when considering the most suitable use of a particular piece of land. This should not supplant direct and detailed on-site investigation when a development is being planned.

Town of Amsterdam
General Soils Map

with limitations to Community Development



Key

- Mohawk-Lansing association, sloping. Moderate limitations: slope
- Lansing-Mohawk association, very steep. Severe limitations: slope
- Lansing-Appleton association, gently sloping. Slight limitations
- Appleton-Lansing association, gently sloping. Severe limitations on concave hillsides, slight on convex hilltops
- Darien-Ilion-Burdett association, gently sloping. Severe limitations: seasonal wetness
- Ilion-Fonda association, nearly level. Severe limitations: prolonged wetness
- Mosherville-Broadalbin association, gently sloping. Severe limitations: seasonal wetness
- Palatine-Angola association, gently sloping. Severe limitations: bedrock 20-40", seasonal wetness
- Wassaic-Angola association, gently sloping. Severe limitations: bedrock 20-40", seasonal wetness
- Farmington-Wassaic association, gently sloping. Severe limitations: bedrock 10-40"
- Farmington-Rock outcrop association, moderately steep. Severe limitations: bedrock 0-20", extremely rocky
- Rock outcrop-Farmington association, very steep. Severe limitations: bare rock, slope
- Hudson-Howard association, sloping. Moderate limitations: slope; Severe limitations: seasonal wetness
- Hudson-Howard association, steep. Severe limitations: slope
- Churchville-Madalin-Rhinebeck association, nearly level. Severe limitations, seasonal and prolonged wetness
- Madalin-Fonda-Ilion association, nearly level. Severe limitations: prolonged wetness
- Plainfield association, nearly level. Slight limitations: shallow excavations subject to sloughing
- Howard association, gently sloping. Slight limitations: shallow excavations subject to sloughing
- Fredon-Phelps association, nearly level. Severe limitations: prolonged wetness.
- Hamlin-Wayland-Teel association, nearly level. Severe limitations: subject to flooding, prolonged wetness

Note: Limitations to Community Development are based on dwellings with basements, local roads and shallow excavations. Problems of sewage disposal, water suppy or maintaining vegetation are not included.

Montgomery County Dept.
of Planning & Development
November 2002

Source:
Soil Survey of Montgomery and Schenectady Counties, USDA

The Soils Capability Map for agriculture shows the suitability of soils for most kinds of field crops. Map categories are based on soil group ratings established by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. The groups are made according to the limitations of the soils when used for field crops, the risk of damage when they are so used, and the way they respond to treatment. Classes 1 and 2 are the best ("prime") soils for intensive agricultural use (row, forage and fiber crops) and should be preserved wherever possible. Classes 3 and 4 are nearly prime soils ("important") and are used for the production of food, feed fiber, forage and oilseed crops. Classes 5 and 6 are soils that can be used for agricultural production, however, their natural yield capacity is only moderate and therefore their preservation is not required. The classification does not take into account major reclamation projects or landforming that would change slope, depth, or other characteristics of the soils. It also does not apply to rice, cranberries, horticultural crops, or other crops that require special management.

The following is a list of the eight capability classes for agriculture and a general description of each:

- ***Capability Class 1***
  Soils have few, if any limitations that would restrict their use as soils for field crops of any kind.

- ***Capability Class 2***
  Soils have few, if any limitations that reduce the choice of plants being grown or that require moderate conservation practices to be installed for proper management of the soil resource.
- ***Capability Class 3***
  Soils have severe limitations that reduce the choice of plant grown, that require special conservation practices or both.

- ***Capability Class 4***
  Soils have very severe limitations that reduce the choice of plants grown, that require very careful management, or both.

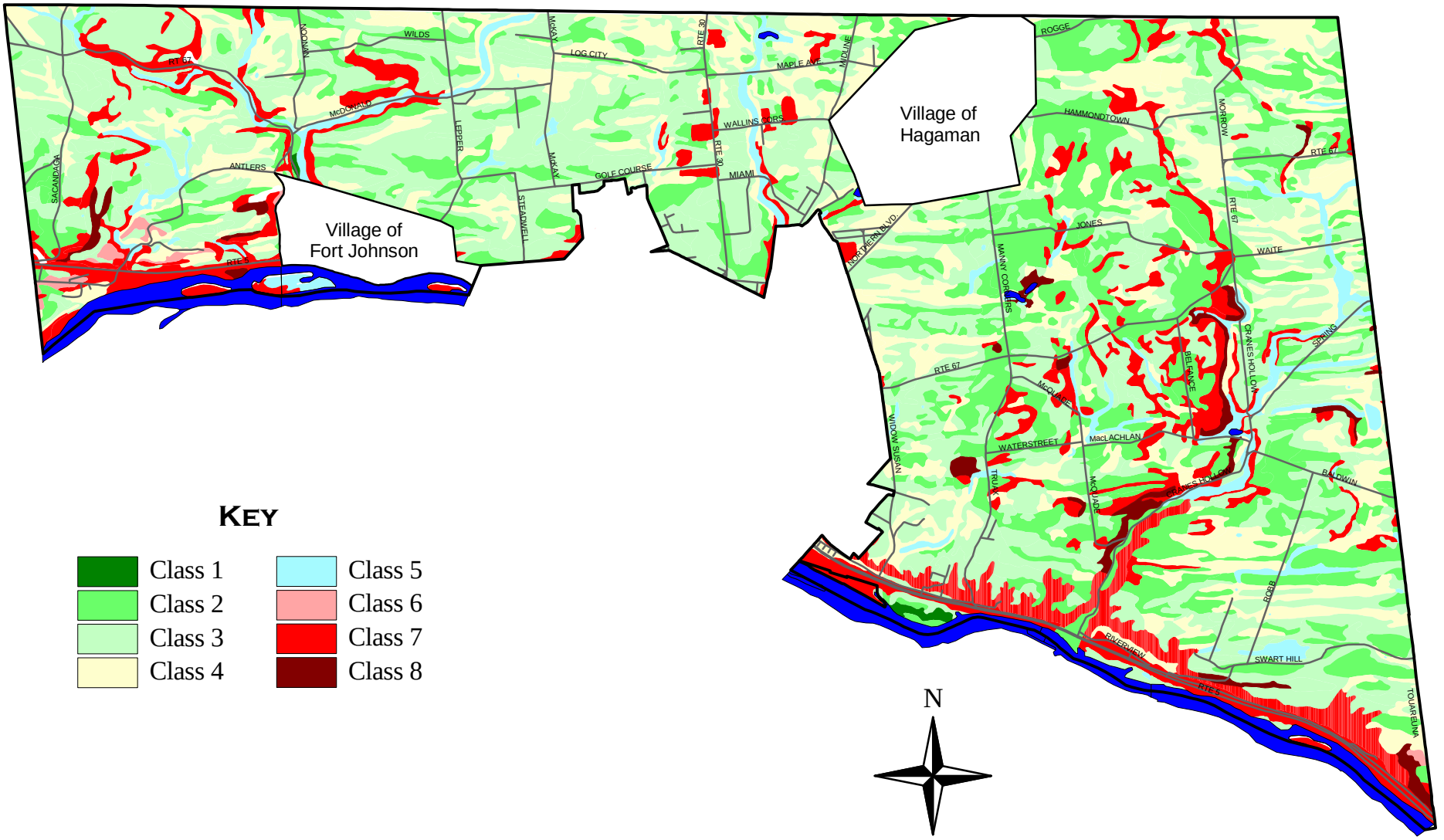
- ***Capability Class 5***
  Soils are not likely to erode, but have other limitations that limit their use largely to woodland or wildlife land.

- ***Capability Class 6***
  Soils have severe limitations that make them generally unsuitable for cultivation and that limit their use largely to pasture, woodland or wildlife land.

- ***Capability Class 7***
  Soils have very severe limitations that make them unsuitable for cultivation and that limit their use to woodland or wildlife land.

- ***Capability Class 8***
  Soils and landforms have limitations that preclude their use for commercial plants and that restrict their use to recreation, wildlife land and aesthetic purposes.

Town of Amsterdam
Soil Agricultural Capability Class



Key

- Class 1
- Class 2
- Class 3
- Class 4
- Class 5
- Class 6
- Class 7
- Class 8

Montgomery County Dept.
of Planning & Development
November 2002

Source:
Montgomery County Soil and Water Conservation District
and USDA Natural Resouces Conservation Service

Groundwater

Groundwater is precipitation that seeps into the ground and is stored in subsurface layers of sand, gravel and porous rock, called aquifers. Aquifers act as reservoirs and natural filters for groundwater and help maintain the balance in the water system of a region. Groundwater naturally discharges into streams, wetlands and springs. It is a major source of water supply in rural areas and a valuable resource. When development occurs, proper planning is essential to protect the quantity and quality of groundwater. Leaking septic tanks and sewage lines, unsealed landfill sites, and sewage disposal sites can allow pollutants to pass directly into groundwater and contaminate the drinking water supply.

Town of Amsterdam residents who live outside the villages rely primarily on groundwater for their water supply. According to the 1990 U. S. Census, 73.9% of these households use water from a drilled well, 6.5% use a dug well, 17.7% rely on public or private systems, and the remaining 1.9% use another source. Data on water supply was not collected in the 2000 census.

In the summer of 2002, the Town of Amsterdam signed a 40-year contract with the City to purchase up to 150,000 gallons of water per day to serve the Town's three water districts and several smaller water service areas. The Harrower Water District serves residences along Harrower Lane, Pioneer Street, Miami Avenue, Hollywood Road and Midline Road to Wallins Corners. The Route 30 Water District serves development on both sides of Route 30 south of Miami Avenue, including Amsterdam Memorial Hospital and the Hillcrest Spring Adult Care Facility.

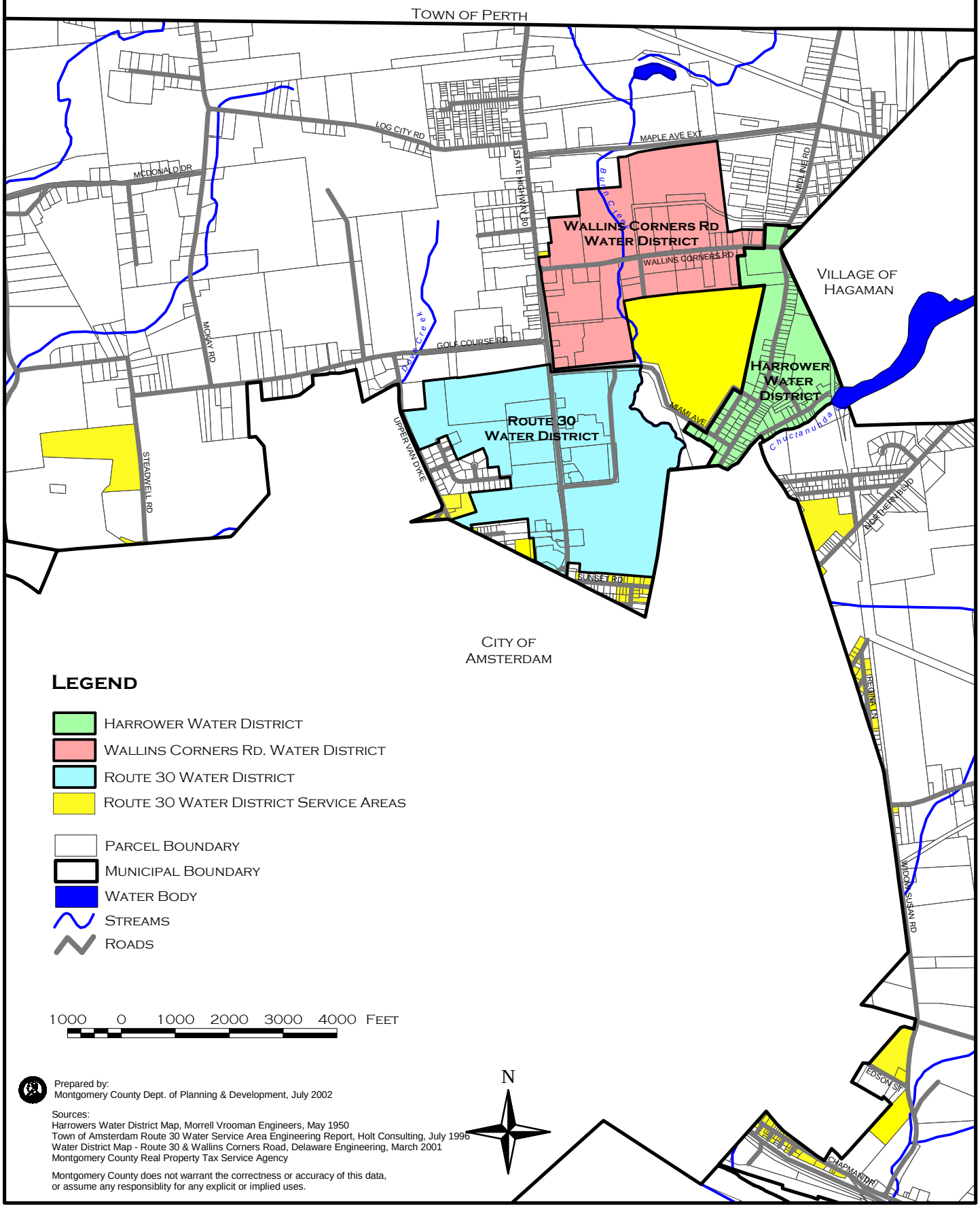
The new Wallins Corners Road Water District was created in 2002 to serve development on the Route 30 corridor north of Miami Avenue and along Wallins Corners Road. A 20-inch line serves the east side of Route 30 and a 12-inch line runs along Wallins Corners Road. A new 250,000 gallon water tower has been built near Amsterdam Printing and Litho, and improvements will be made to the Harrower Pump Station.

There are also several water service areas which are part of the Route 30 Water District. They serve Amsterdam High School, Tecler Elementary School, residences along Steadwell Road, Upper Van Dyke and Ramsey Avenues, and areas around Sunset Road, Regina Lane and Chapman Drive, and several commercial properties on Edson Street.

The Town is currently investigating the creation of a new water district which would include the remaining portions of Route 30 north to the Perth Town line, as well as Maple Avenue, and portions of Golf Course Road, Log City Road, Midline Road, and Lorraine Boulevard.

The Town of Amsterdam Route 30 Sewer Service Area provides service to development along the expanded Route 30 corridor. Phase I includes properties on both sides of Route 30 north to the County line. Phase II includes Wallins Corners Road, and Phase III includes County Ridge Drive and part of Upper Van Dyke Avenue. Phase IV was recently completed and includes the section of Midline Road between Wallins Corners and Maple Avenue Extension, and Francisco Drive.

Town of Amsterdam
Water Districts

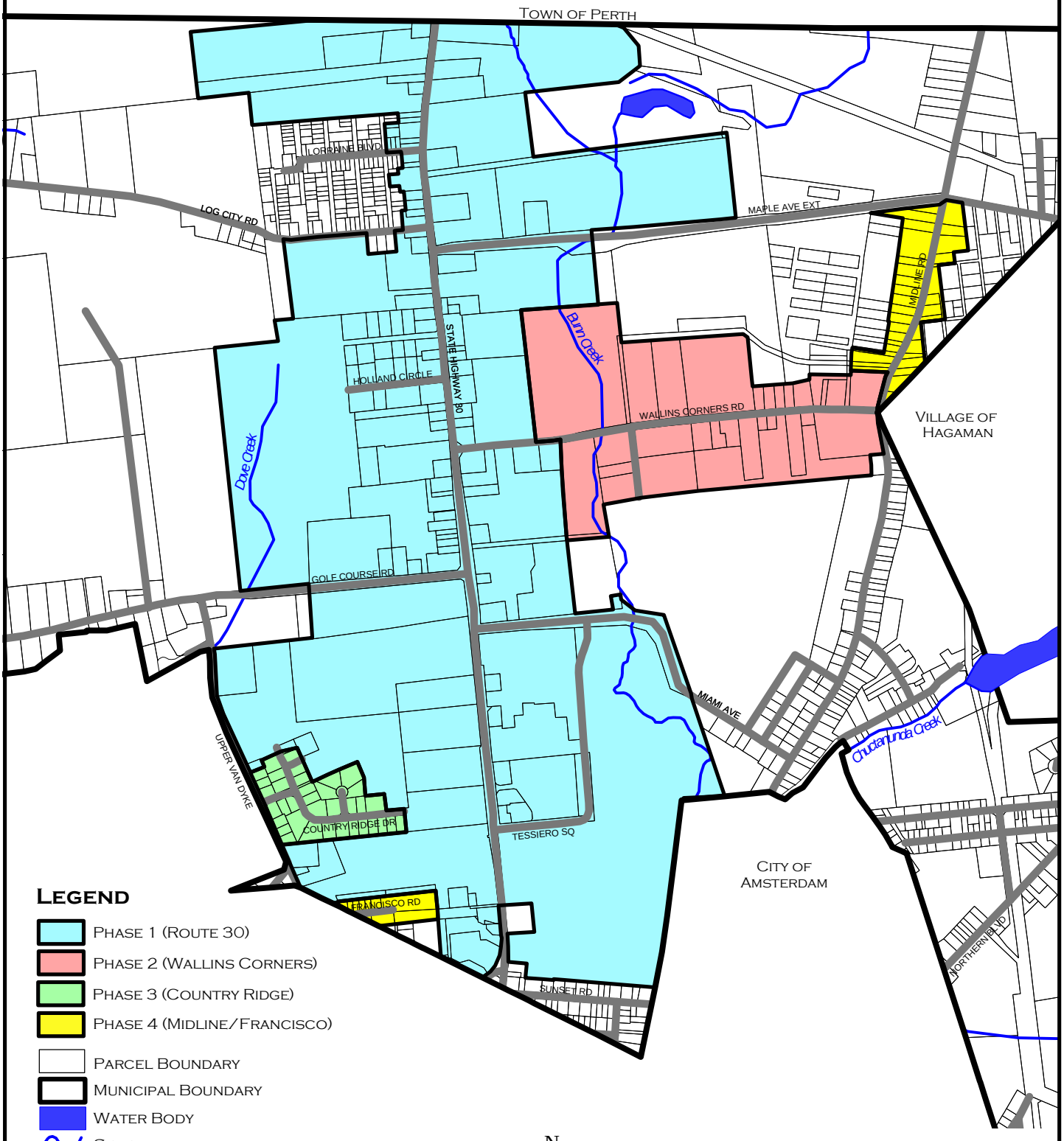


Prepared by:
Montgomery County Dept. of Planning & Development, July 2002

Sources:
Harrowers Water District Map, Morrell Vrooman Engineers, May 1950
Town of Amsterdam Route 30 Water Service Area Engineering Report, Holt Consulting, July 1996
Water District Map - Route 30 & Wallins Corners Road, Delaware Engineering, March 2001
Montgomery County Real Property Tax Service Agency

Montgomery County does not warrant the correctness or accuracy of this data,
or assume any responsiblity for any explicit or implied uses.

Town of Amsterdam
Route 30 Sewer Service Areas



Prepared by:
Montgomery County Dept. of Planning & Development, August 2002

Sources:
Phase 1-3: Route 30 Sewer Service Area Reports,
Standard Engineering Corporation, 1987, 1990 and 1992
Phase 4: Delaware Engineering, 2002

Montgomery County does not warrant the correctness or accuracy of this data, or assume any responsiblity for any explicit or implied uses.

Surface Water

Surface water includes permanent bodies of water such as rivers, lakes, ponds, streams, creeks and estuaries. They are a valuable source of water, food, recreation, transportation, and power generation. The principal reasons for controlling development on or near water are to protect watersheds, preserve the quality and quantity of the water supply, and prevent damaging floods. In regions where agriculture is a major land use, water availability and quality are as important as the soils.

The Town of Amsterdam is bounded on the south by the City of Amsterdam and the Mohawk River. There is a rich network of creeks throughout the Town. These include the Kayaderosseras, McQueen, Dove, Bunn, North Chuctanunanda, and Degraff Creeks, and Eva's and Compaanen Kills. There are also several bodies of water in the Town, including Harrower Pond on North Chuctanunanda Creek, Kellogg Reservoir on Bunn Creek, and McLachlan Pond on Eva's Kill.



Picture 1. *View overlooking the Mohawk River*

All of the creeks in the Town are classified as Class C waters by the New York State DEC, which are suitable for fishing and fish propagation. The water quality is suitable for primary and secondary contact recreation even though other factors may limit the use for this purpose.

The Mohawk River, where it borders the Town of Amsterdam, is classified as class B west of the Village of Fort Johnson, and class C east of the Village. Class B waters are suitable for primary contact recreation and any other uses except as a source of water supply for drinking, culinary or food processing purposes. Classified waters are protected and a permit is required for any stream disturbance due to development.

A watershed is simply defined as the catchment area of a stream, river or other body of water. The Montgomery County Water Quality Committee has identified seven primary watersheds in the Town of Amsterdam. The Town's watersheds are: Tribes Hill, Kayaderossaras Creek, Dove Creek, North Chuctanunda Creek, Degraff Creek, Cranes Hollow (Eva's Kill) and Compaanan Kill. The following information is taken from the watershed report prepared by the Water Quality Committee.

The Tribes Hill watershed has an area of 3,655 square acres within Montgomery County. This is comprised of several small watersheds that start by Fulton-Montgomery Community College and meander to the Mohawk around Tribes Hill.

The Kayaderosseras Creek watershed covers 3,541 acres in Montgomery County. The creek begins as a series of small drainages that flow south through the Town of Perth in Fulton County until it enters Montgomery County in the Town of Amsterdam. After flowing about a mile through a series of slate escarpments the creek passes under McDonald Drive Bridge. The DEC stocks the creek with about 800 trout annually. Just below the bridge, the creek meets up with McQueen Creek, which also supports brook trout. The mouth of the creek as it joins the Mohawk River, offers excellent smallmouth bass fishing. Water from the creek has been used to flood the baseball field in the Village of Fort Johnson, creating an ice skating rink in the winter.

The Dove Creek watershed covers 1,563 acres in the county. Dove Creek flows south through the Amsterdam Municipal Golf Course and the Sassafras Nature Preserve in the City of Amsterdam.

The North Chuctanunda Creek watershed covers 6,508 square acres in Montgomery County. The creek flows south from Galway Lake and enters Montgomery County in the Village of Hagaman. A small dam still exists in the village that once provided power to the mills that lined its banks. The dam creates a small pond which is surrounded by a community park. The creek then flows southwest until it is dammed once again creating Harrower Pond. Although most of the dam is gone, remnants on the pond still exist. The creek then enters Shuttleworth Park and the City of Amsterdam. In the park, a small dam, which regularly needs repairs due to high spring runoff, creates a small pond, which is regularly stocked by the Reid Hill Fish and Game Club. The creek is dammed numerous times as it flows through the City. Its water power was what drew the first settlers and industrialists to Amsterdam. In the spring and at times of high water, a quite spectacular series of waterfalls can be seen from Kirk Douglas Park near the Public Safety Building in downtown Amsterdam.



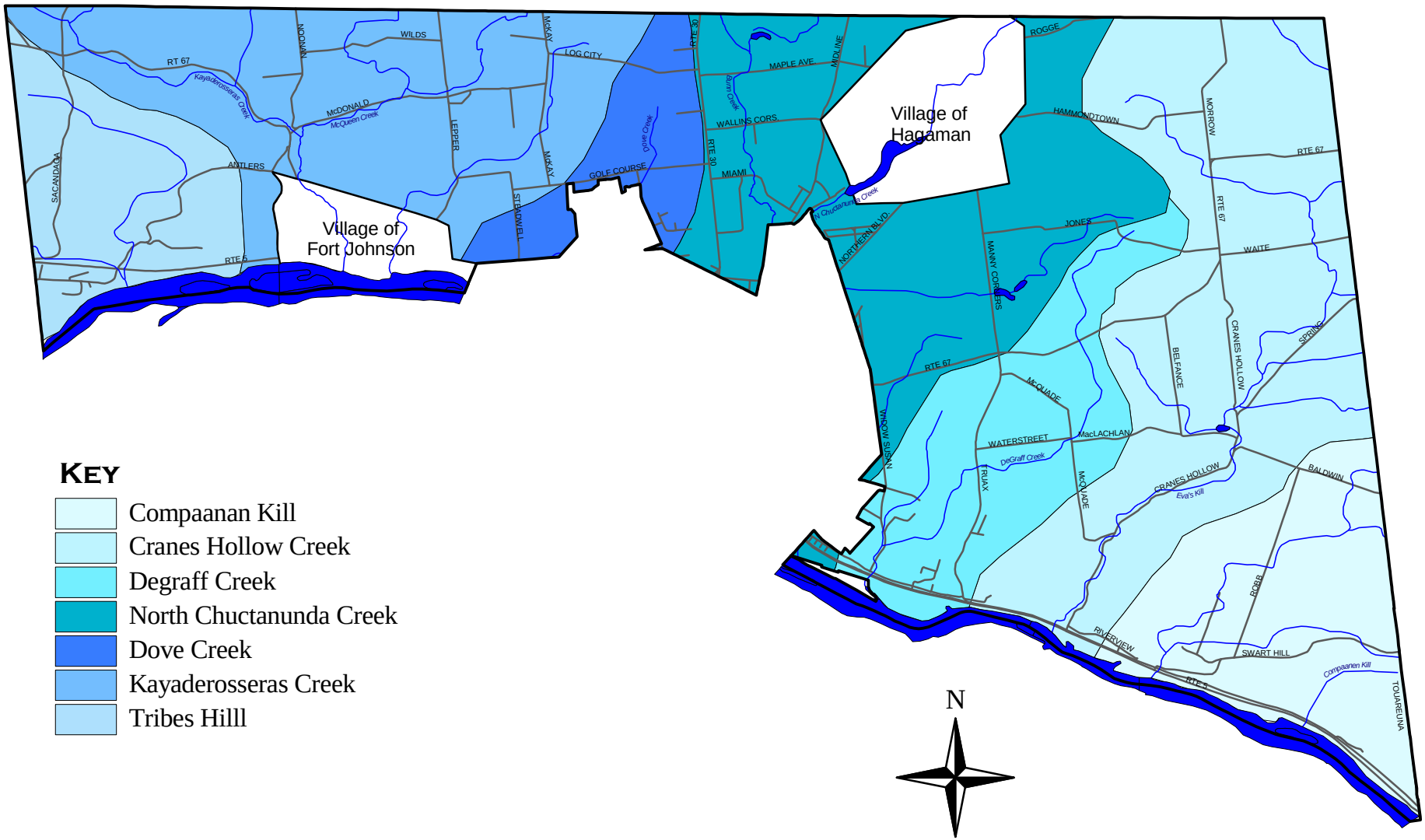
Picture 2. *North Chuctanunda Creek*

The Degraff Creek watershed has an area of 2,511 sq. acres in the county. There is a small waterfall near the Tepee Restaurant along Route 5 east of the City of Amsterdam.

The Cranes Hollow (Eva's Kill) watershed covers 4,423 sq. acres in Montgomery County. Cranes Hollow Road follows this creek, crossing it seven times in the narrow valley that holds it. The mouth of this creek is at the Mohawk River across from the railroad tracks in Cranesville.

The Compaanen Kill watershed covers 2,083 acres in Montgomery County. This collection of small watersheds drains Swart Hill and parts of Robb Road.

Town of Amsterdam
Watershed Map



Montgomery County Dept.
of Planning & Development
November 2002

Source:
USDA Natural Resource Service
Montgomery County Watershed Map

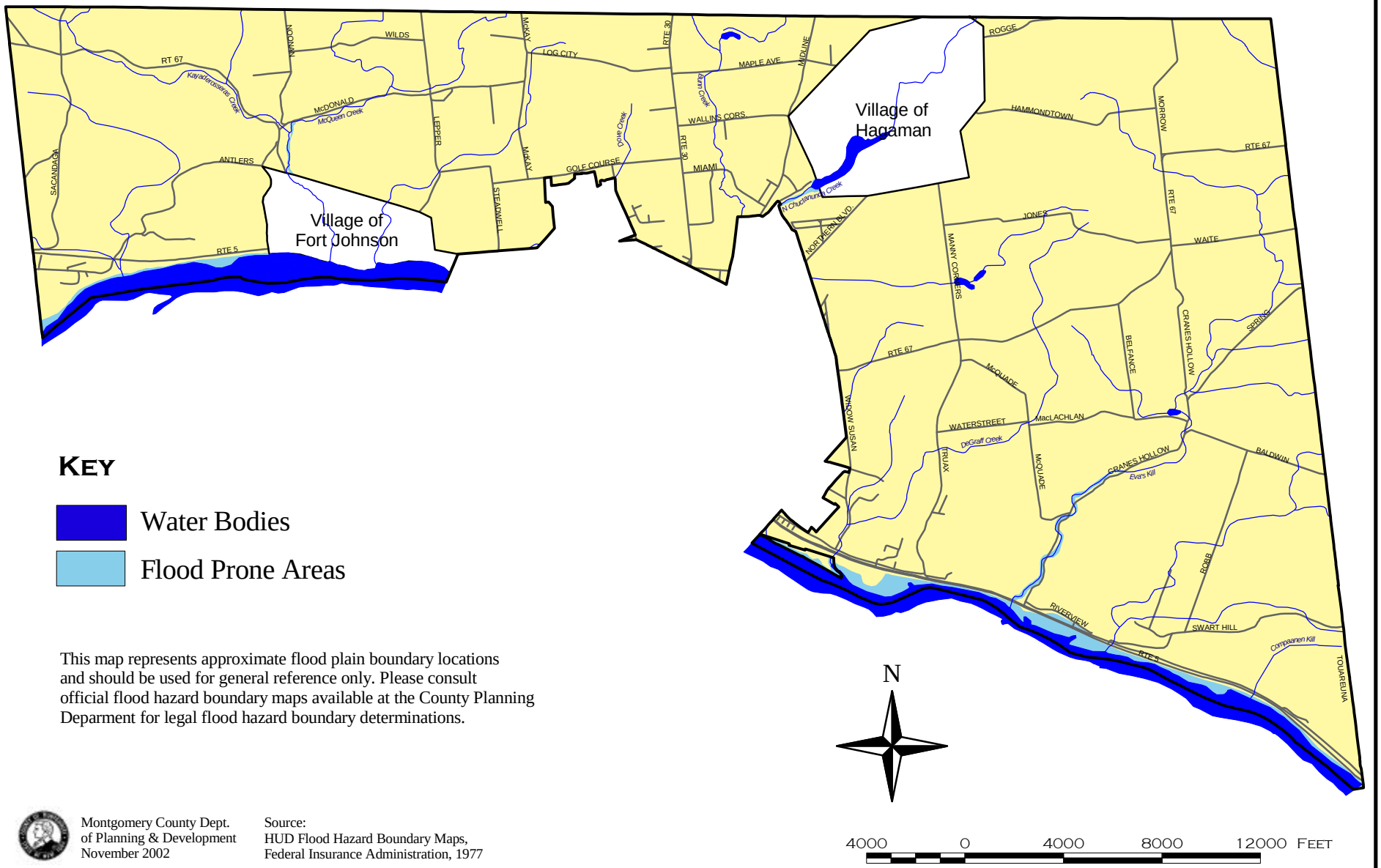
Flood Zone Areas

Floodland is the land area adjacent to a body of water which is covered by excess water during periods of flooding. Flooding is a natural occurrence and problems arise when homes, roads and other developments are placed in its path. Filling, damming, or leveling floodplains decrease storage capacity and increases flood velocity and flood potential downstream.

Floodlands are divided into zones based on the frequency of inundation. These distinctions are very important for land-use and development controls because building on floodplains endangers human life and property. Agriculture is often an ideal use in floodplains as the soils are very fertile and there is usually substantial groundwater. Floodplains can also add to a community's open space and recreational needs.

The Town of Amsterdam participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Flood hazards were initially identified in July of 1974 and updated in 1977. Flood Hazard Boundary Maps became effective in December of 1987. These maps show areas of 100 year flooding potential along the Mohawk River, North Chuctanunanda Creek, McQueen Creek, and Cranes Hollow Creek (or Evas Kill). This zone describes the 100-year flood area, which means that statistically, it has a one-percent chance of being flooded in any given year.

Town of Amsterdam
Flood Prone Areas



Key

Water Bodies

Flood Prone Areas

This map represents approximate flood plain boundary locations and should be used for general reference only. Please consult official flood hazard boundary maps available at the County Planning Deparment for legal flood hazard boundary determinations.

N

4000 0 4000 8000 12000 Feet

Montgomery County Dept. of Planning & Development
November 2002

Source:
HUD Flood Hazard Boundary Maps, Federal Insurance Administration, 1977

Wetlands

Wetlands are tracts of low-lying lands that are saturated with moisture and usually overgrown with vegetation. Wetlands act as sponges that absorb excess runoff and thus reduce flooding potential. Once thought to be detrimental to public health and safety, their positive contributions to social, economic, and environmental health are now recognized and protected.

Wetlands act as natural flood control devices by storing runoff from heavy rains and melting snow. They also protect water quality in lakes, streams, rivers, and wells by filtering pollutants, sediments, and nutrients from runoff. Wetlands support a great variety of wildlife and are essential breeding grounds for several rare and endangered species. They are areas of scenic beauty which can enhance the quality of life, private property values and tourism.

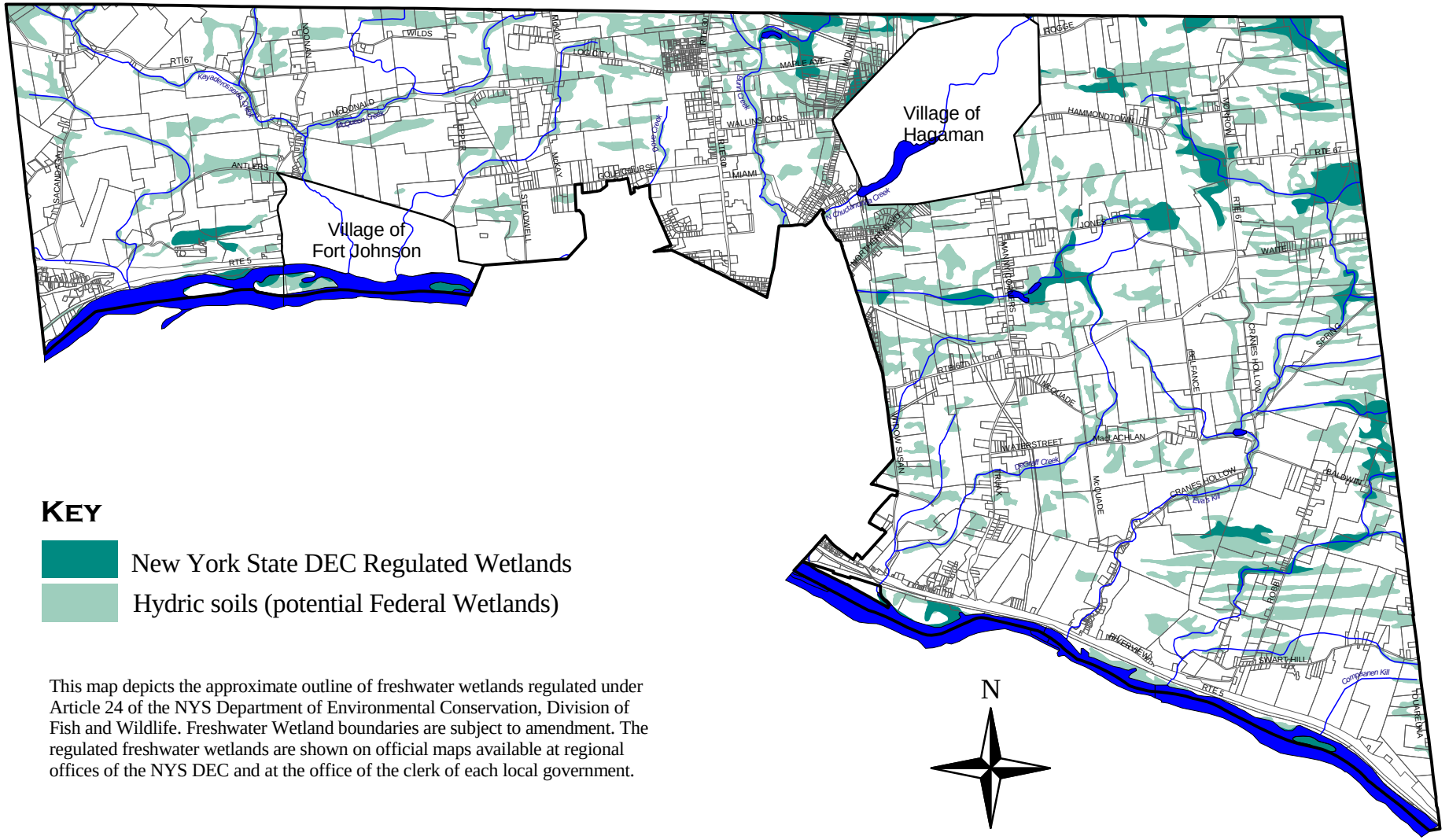
Due to their importance, wetlands are regulated and mapped by New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. New York State DEC maps all wetlands that are at least 12.4 acres in size. State regulations prohibit the disturbance of wetlands without a permit, and prohibit development within 100 feet of a wetland boundary. A large New York State wetland is located within the Town's manufacturing district along Maple Avenue and wetland mitigation measures must be followed during development.

New York State Freshwater Wetlands are scattered throughout the Town of Amsterdam. There are 24 regulated wetlands totaling approximately 1,747 acres.

There are also a large number of smaller and undocumented wetlands throughout the Town. These wetlands have no minimum size, and have traditionally been regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. However, a recent U.S. Supreme Court decision has excluded small isolated intrastate wetlands, which are not proximate to navigable waters, from the Army Corps of Engineer's jurisdiction.

Hydric soils are identified on the Wetlands Map, and can be used as an indication of the probable location of these undocumented wetlands. These wetlands must be verified on a site specific basis according to vegetation, soil, and hydrologic conditions.

Town of Amsterdam
Wetlands



Key

New York State DEC Regulated Wetlands

Hydric soils (potential Federal Wetlands)

This map depicts the approximate outline of freshwater wetlands regulated under Article 24 of the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Fish and Wildlife. Freshwater Wetland boundaries are subject to amendment. The regulated freshwater wetlands are shown on official maps available at regional offices of the NYS DEC and at the office of the clerk of each local government.

Montgomery County Department
of Planning & Development
November 2002

Sensitive Environmental Areas

The former Eastern Landfill, located on Antlers Road in the western section of the Town, was opened by Montgomery County in 1974. It was transferred to MOSA, the Montgomery-Otsego-Schoharie Solid Waste Management Authority, in 1989. This 40 acre unlined landfill was closed at the end of 1996 by order of New York State DEC. After the closure, MOSA purchased land adjacent to the landfill as a buffer zone. MOSA performs ongoing maintenance of the cap and leachate collection system. Groundwater enters the landfill during times of heavy rain and melting snowfall, creating a heavy flow of leachate. Approximately 2 million gallons of leachate per year is taken to wastewater treatment plants in the City of Amsterdam and Canajoharie. MOSA must monitor and maintain the site for at least 30 years from the date of closure, or until DEC determines that it is no longer necessary.

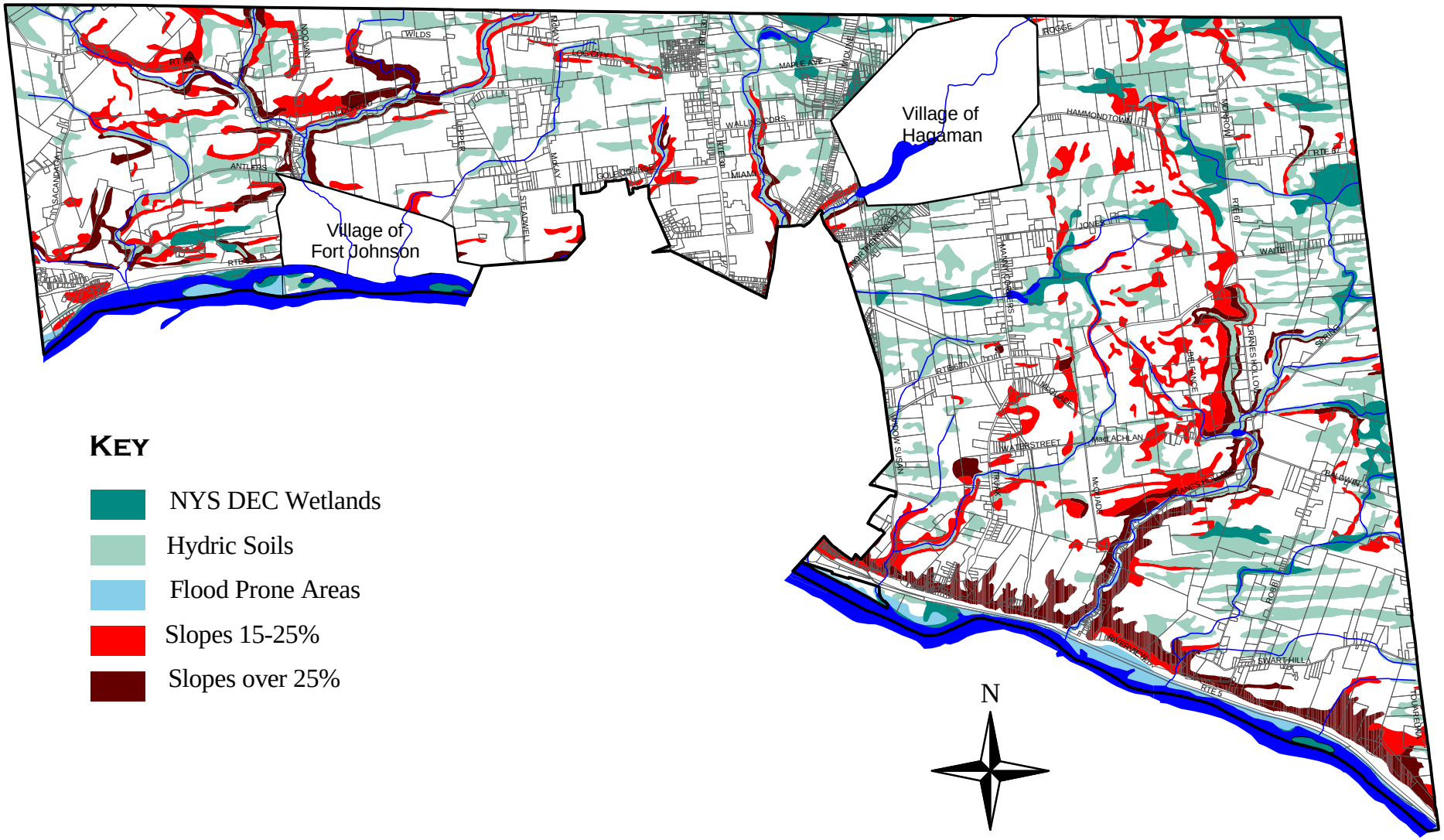
Sensitive natural habitat areas are areas containing special plant and animal species which live on land or in water. Special consideration should be given when a development is proposed near these areas. The New York State DEC Wildlife Resources Center has done a computer search of their databases to identify rare and endangered species in the Town of Amsterdam. They have no records of known occurrences of rare or state-listed plants, animals, or significant natural communities or habitats in the Town. The absence of data does not mean that these communities do not exist, but that a comprehensive field survey has not been conducted.

The Mohawk River and creeks within the Town are important habitats for fish, birds and mammals that rely on river ecosystems, including a variety of migratory species. Wetlands and woodlands support complex animal communities that are intrinsically important and may not be tolerant of nearby development. Unique habitats should also be preserved for scientific and educational reasons. Wild turkeys, pheasants, blue heron, osprey, deer, red and gray fox, coyotes, raccoons, skunks, opossum, beaver, wood chucks and ground hogs are some of the common animal populations in the Town. Development should also be watched in or near woodlands because they play an important role in the protection of watersheds. Their vegetation prevents erosion and filters water as it percolates downwards.

Development Constraints

A composite development constraints map has been prepared that overlays the Town's New York State DEC Wetlands, hydric soils, flood prone areas, and steep slopes. These are areas that should be avoided when considering the potential location for most types of new development. Conversely, development in the areas shown in white on the map will have the least impact on the natural environment.

Town of Amsterdam
Development Constraints



Key

- NYS DEC Wetlands
- Hydric Soils
- Flood Prone Areas
- Slopes 15-25%
- Slopes over 25%

Montgomery County Dept.
of Planning & Development
November 2002

Source:
Soil Survey of Montgomery and Schenectady Counties
NYS DEC Wetlands Maps, HUD Flood Hazard Maps, 1977

Chapter Three

Socio-Economic Resources

Land Use

The primary or dominant use of a particular parcel of land is labeled as its land use. Inventorying and mapping the existing land use patterns of the Town of Amsterdam allows the community to recommend goals and objectives that are compatible with the general character of the Town. The land use map lays the foundation for a revised zoning map that will reflect the present and desired future land use patterns in the Town.

A parcel specific property classification map has been prepared for the Town of Amsterdam. This map was created using the Town assessor's current property classification codes on record at the Montgomery County Real Property Tax Service Agency.

The 2002 Property Classification map shows a patchwork pattern of three dominant land uses: agriculture, residential, and vacant land. There is a also a large spine of commercial uses clustered along the Route 30 corridor, and a smaller concentration along Route 67 near the Manny Corners intersection.

There are approximately 19,398 total acres in the Town of Amsterdam, including the Villages. There are 458 acres in the Village of Fort Johnson and 988 acres in the Village of Hagaman. The Town of Amsterdam, excluding the Villages, covers approximately 17,952 acres.

The primary land use in the Town is agricultural, totaling 5,340 acres and covering 30% of the Town land area. There are 111 agricultural parcels with an average size of 49 acres.



Picture 3. *A farm and grain operation in the Town*

Residential land is the second largest use of land within the Town, comprising 5,267 acres or 29% of the Town. There are 1,340 residential parcels with an average size of 3.9 acres. Vacant lands (property that is not in use, is in temporary use, or lacks permanent improvement), is the third largest land category, encompassing 3,706 acres or almost 21% of the Town.



Picture 4. *Walmart on Route 30N*



Picture 5. *Price Chopper and Towne Square, Rt 30N*



Picture 6. *Sears Hardware, Route 30N*



Picture 7. *Hannaford Superstore, Miami Avenue*



Picture 8. *Home Depot, Miami Avenue*



Picture 9. *Ruby Tuesday, Miami Ave. at Route 30N*

Commercial land totals 866 acres, or about 4.8% of the Town. Retail businesses and services are primarily clustered along Route 30N with a smaller group along Route 67E. Industrially assessed lands total 38 acres, or about 0.2% of the Town.



Picture 10. *Amsterdam Printing & Litho, Wallins Corners Road*



Picture 11. *Quandt's Food Service Distributors, Route 5*



Picture 12. *Former Super Kmart, Route 30N, available for redevelopment*

Community services, which include schools, hospitals, cemeteries, and public buildings total 719 acres or 4% of the Town. Public services, which include public utilities, cover 364 acres or about 2%. Wild, forested and conservation lands cover 755 acres or 4% of the Town. Land assessed as recreational use covers 171 acres, or 1% of the Town.

The existing land use map was consulted when developing the future land use plan for the Town of Amsterdam. Hopefully, this will ensure that future development is compatible with the present land use patterns and community character of the Town.

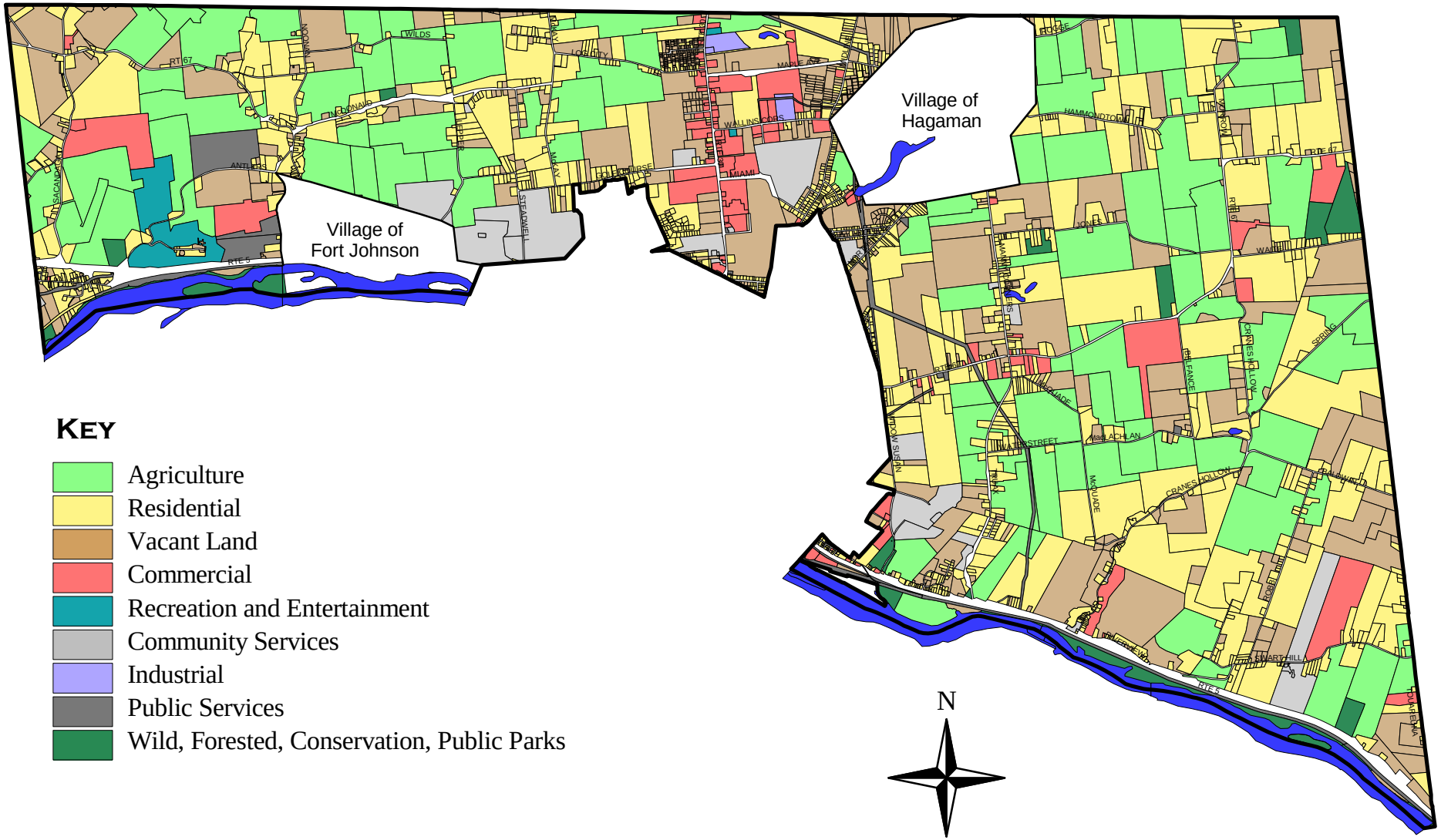
2002 Real Property Classification
Town of Amsterdam, excluding Villages

Land Use Category	*Number of Parcels*	*Total Acres*	*Average Size (Acres)*	*Land Area Percentage*
Agricultural	111	5,399.77	48.65	30.1%
Commercial	115	865.65	7.53	4.8%
Community Services	40	718.64	17.97	4.0%
Industrial	4	38.13	9.53	0.2%
Public Services	51	363.68	7.13	2.0%
Residential	1340	5,266.58	3.93	29.3%
Recreation and Entertainment	5	170.77	34.15	1.0%
Vacant Land	782	3705.85	4.74	20.7%
Wild, Forested, Conservation Lands & Public Parks	18	755.48	41.97	4.2%
Other (roads)		667.45		3.7%

Table 1

Source: Montgomery County Real Property Tax Service Agency
Based on Property Classification by Town Assessor

Town of Amsterdam
2002 Real Property Classification



Key

- Agriculture
- Residential
- Vacant Land
- Commercial
- Recreation and Entertainment
- Community Services
- Industrial
- Public Services
- Wild, Forested, Conservation, Public Parks

Montgomery County Dept.
of Planning & Development
March 2003

Source:
Montgomery County Real Property Tax Service Agency,
Based on Town Assessor's classification

Existing Zoning

Zoning is the tool most commonly used in the United States to establish and enforce a desired development pattern. It divides a municipality into districts which are subject to regulations regarding the permitted land use, and the height, bulk and location of permitted buildings. A zoning ordinance also serves as a means of implementing a comprehensive plan. It is necessary to analyze the current Town of Amsterdam zoning ordinance to determine its adequacy in furthering the goals and objectives established in this Plan.

The history of land use regulations in the Town goes back to 1964, when the first Subdivision Regulations were adopted. A Zoning Ordinance was adopted in 1972 and has been amended several times. A revised Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations were enacted in 1991, but were thrown out in court in 1992. A Site Plan Review section was added to the Zoning Ordinance in 1994, a Personal Wireless Service Facilities Overlay District was added in 1998, and Planned Unit Development Districts were added in 1991 and 2000.

The Town's existing zoning ordinance contains seven base land use districts: R-1 Residential, R-2 Multiple Residential, A Agriculture, B-1 Business, B-2 Restricted Business, M-1 Manufacturing, and PUD Planned Unit Development District. The zoning ordinance includes a schedule of districts, permitted uses, special exceptions, minimum lot size, lot coverage, minimum living area, building height and yard dimensions.

The vast majority of the Town is zoned as R-1 Residential, which is the most restrictive zoning district. This district permits only single family residential homes, home occupations, schools, churches, parks, public buildings, golf course and country clubs, existing farms and mobile homes as part of an existing farm operation. Hospitals, nursing homes and public utility stations are permitted by special exception.

The Town has two R-2 Residential districts. These include a small area on the north side of Rogge Road, between the Village of Hagaman and the County line, and a large area between Widow Susan Road and Truax Road. The Rogge Road area abuts a Mobile Home district in the Village of Hagaman. The R-2 district permits all R-1 uses, and also allows two-family dwellings, multiple family dwellings and mobile homes.

There are three Agricultural zoning districts in the Town: the area between the western edge of the Village of Fort Johnson and Antlers Road, the area north of the Village of Fort Johnson between Lepper Road and Noonan Road, and the area north of Baldwin Road between Cranes Hollow and Morrow Roads on the west and the eastern Town boundary. The Agricultural zoning district permits all R-1 and R-2 uses and also allows new farm operations, nurseries and truck gardens, boarding houses, picnic groves, fish or game clubs, and public stables. Airports, slaughter houses, camping grounds and kennels are permitted as special exceptions.

The Town has four B-1 Business districts. The largest and most significant

district extends along the Route 30 corridor from the City line north to the County line. A secondary district extends east from the City line along Route 67 to a point 150' past Manny Corners Road. There are two very small, undeveloped business districts along Riverview Drive parallel to Route 5, and along Mohawk Drive in Tribes Hill. Permitted uses include a variety of commercial uses including retail stores; personal service shops; launderettes; banks, offices and studios; restaurants; motels and hotels; bowling alleys; funeral homes; utility substations; automobile, boat, farm implement, mobile home and trailer sales; public garages; fuel, feed, lumber, seed and building materials sales and storage; electrical and HVAC shops; gas stations, animal hospitals and kennels. Mobile home courts and dwelling units accessory to a business are permitted as special exceptions.

There is a small B-2 Restricted Business district on the eastern end of Wallins Corners Road bordering the Village of Hagaman. The permitted uses include retail stores; personal service shops; professional offices; banks, offices and studios; funeral homes; single, double and multiple family dwellings. Warehouses are permitted as special exceptions.

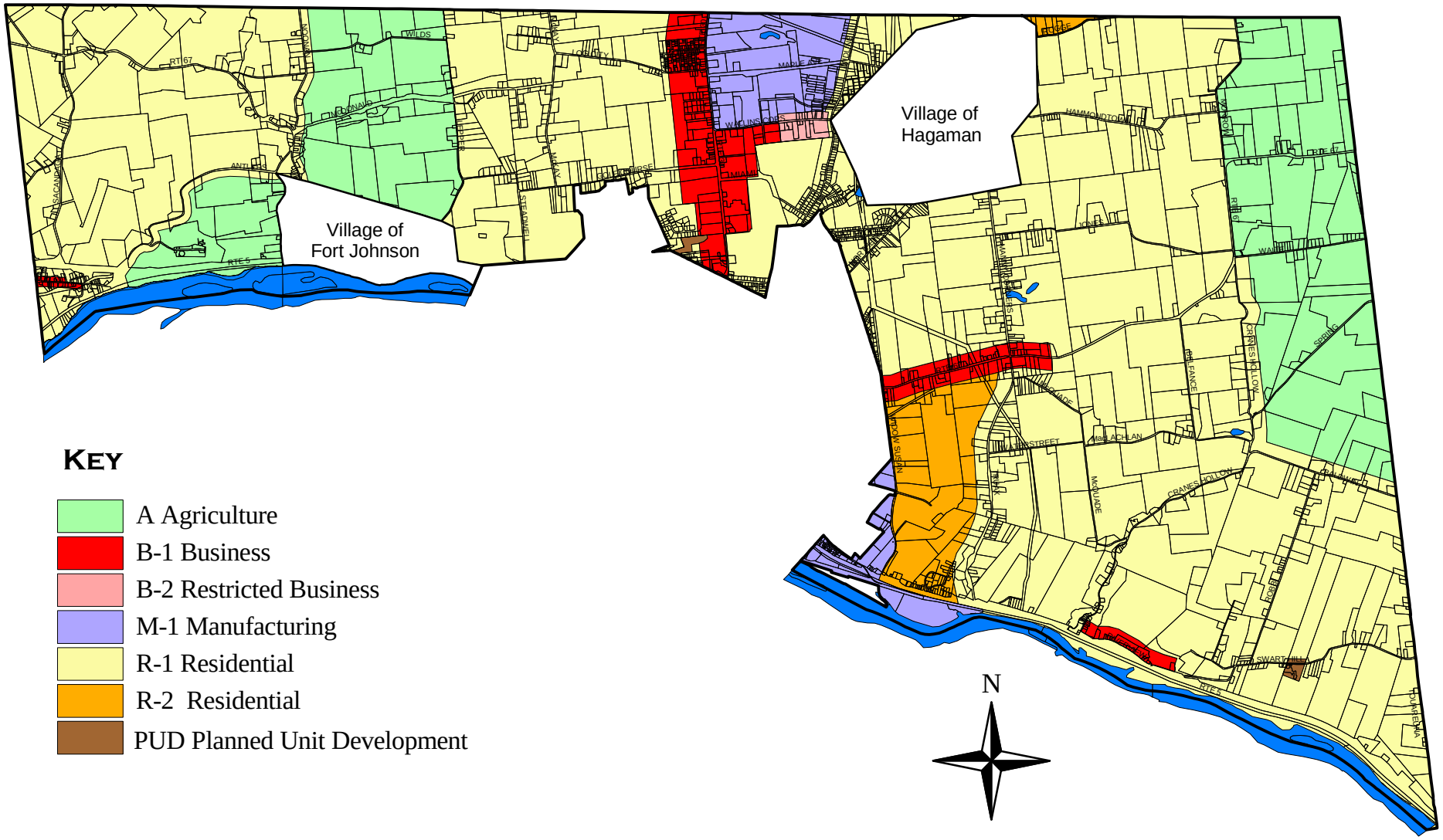
There are two M-1 Manufacturing districts in the Town. One extends north to the County line from Wallins Corners Road between Route 30 and Midline Road. The other is along the Mohawk River east of the City line. Permitted uses include all B-1 uses and a variety of manufacturing uses. Slaughter houses are permitted as special exceptions.

The PUD Planned Unit Development District is a mechanism for planning large-scale residential, commercial, recreational or mixed land use developments. It provides flexible land use and design regulations in order to encourage a variety of land uses that might otherwise be restricted. There are currently two PUDs in the Town, the Mount Loretto complex on Swart Hill Road and the proposed Senior Housing project behind Amsterdam Memorial Hospital.

The Town's existing Zoning Ordinance also includes a PWSF Personal Wireless Facilities Overlay District. This district overlays the B-1 Business, B-2 Restricted Business and M-1 Manufacturing districts, and regulates the siting and construction of cellular communication towers.

There are several limitations in the existing zoning. Minimum lots sizes are too small to permit adequate separation of wells and septic systems in the areas of the Town without sewer or water infrastructure. The vast majority of the town is zoned R-1 residential which permits primarily single-family residential homes. There are few areas which permit a variety of housing types such as senior citizen housing, townhouses or condominiums. There are no buffer areas between the residential zones and commercial/industrial zones. Light manufacturing uses are permitted only in the M-1 zones, whose developable acreage is somewhat limited by New York State wetlands and floodzones. There are also no provisions for clustered subdivisions which would preserve open space and prevent scenic roadways from being eaten up by housing lots.

Town of Amsterdam
Zoning Map



Key

- A Agriculture
- B-1 Business
- B-2 Restricted Business
- M-1 Manufacturing
- R-1 Residential
- R-2 Residential
- PUD Planned Unit Development

Montgomery County Dept.
of Planning & Development
November 2002

Source:
Town of Amsterdam Zoning Ordinance, Amended May 2000
Montgomery County Real Property Tax Service Agency

Agricultural Resources

An agricultural land use map has been prepared, depicting the various types of agriculture in the Town of Amsterdam. According to the Montgomery County Real Property Tax Service, there are approximately 5,340 acres of assessed agricultural land in the Town, excluding the Villages. 2,085 acres are used for field crops, 1059 acres for dairy products, 141 acres for cattle, 75 acres for orchard crops, 60 acres for horse farms, 35 acres for livestock and products, and 21 acres for donkeys and goats. In addition, there are 1,923 acres of agricultural vacant land, which is productive land used as part of an operating farm.

The Town is rich in fertile farmland, as indicated on the Prime Agricultural Land map. Prime farmland has the combination of physical and chemical soil properties and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields of crops in an economic manner. Approximately 27% of the Town is prime agricultural land, and an additional 2% would be prime farmland if drained.



Picture 13. *A farm and grain operation and pond*



Picture 14. *A scenic farmstead in the Town*

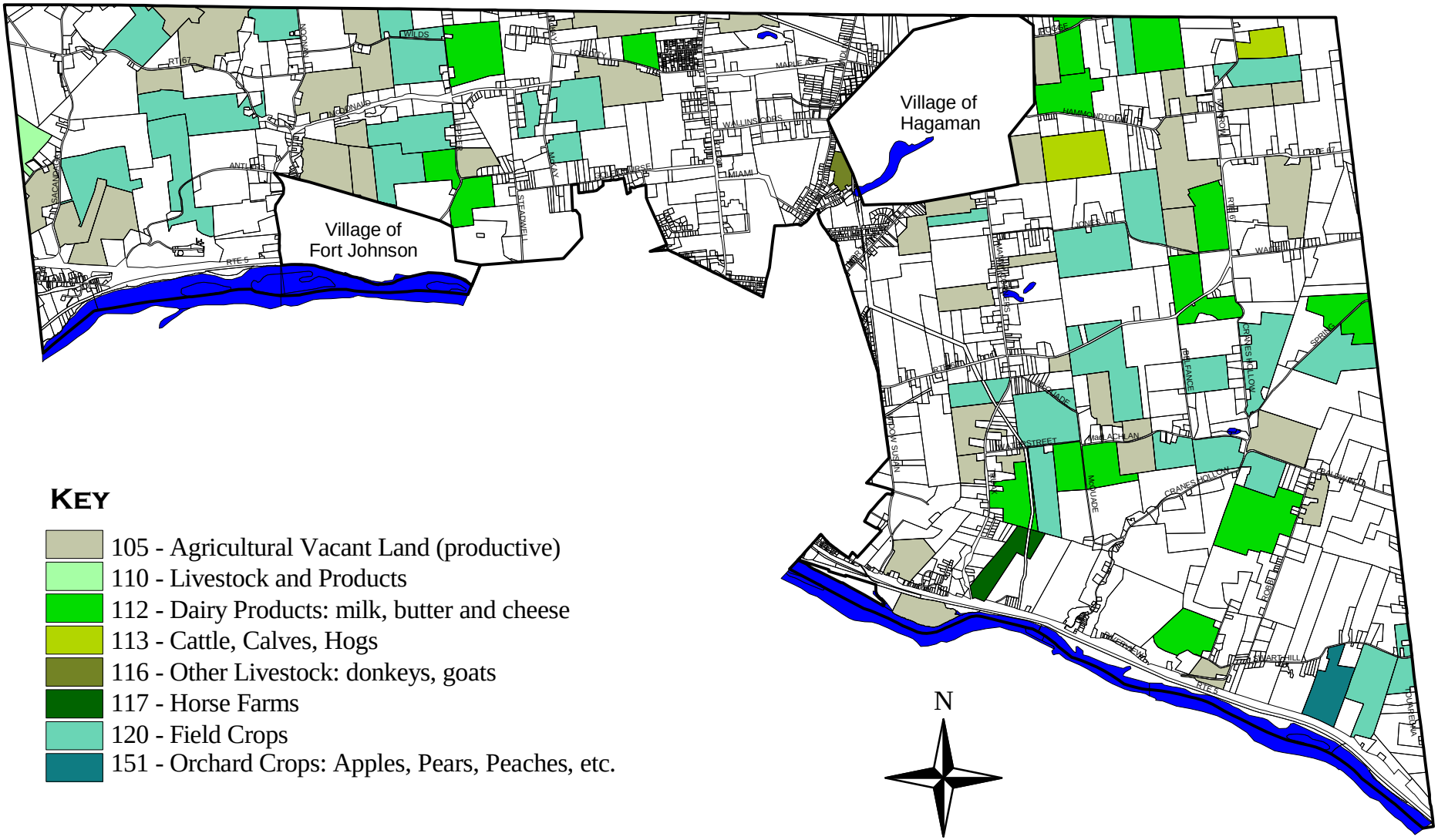
The Town of Amsterdam currently has 3,063 acres of farmland included in Montgomery County Ag District Two. The Agricultural District program is designed to promote agriculture by protecting farmers from anti-nuisance ordinances, limiting promotion of non-farm development, limiting the acquisition of land by eminent domain, and protecting farmers from excessive real property taxation by valuing farmland on its productive capacity.

The area west of McKay Road was originally included in District 6 when it was established in 1976, in accordance with Article 25AA of the New York State Agricultural and Markets Law. This District also included the Town of Mohawk. In 1995, all the districts in Montgomery County on the north side of the Mohawk River were combined and recertified as District Two. This district included the Towns of St. Johnsville, Mohawk, Palatine, and western Amsterdam.

Agricultural District Three was recertified in 1998 and combined the districts on the south side of the river including the Towns of Root, Glen, Charleston and Florida. Several farmers in the eastern section of the Town of Amsterdam requested that 8 parcels, totaling 475.65 acres, be included in District Three at this time.

Agricultural District Two underwent its eight year recertification review in 2001, and all agricultural landowners in the Town were contacted to collect data on their farms. According to their Ag District Worksheets, there are 19 farms in the Town, including 9 dairy farms, 5 grain operations, 3 christmas tree farms and 1 orchard. The new District consolidates all agricultural lands on the north side of the Mohawk River, including the eight parcels from Ag District Three. In the Town of Amsterdam, there are 3,063 acres in Agricultural District Two. 3,098 of these acres are in farms, and 1755 of these acres are cropped.

Town of Amsterdam
2002 Agricultural Land Classification



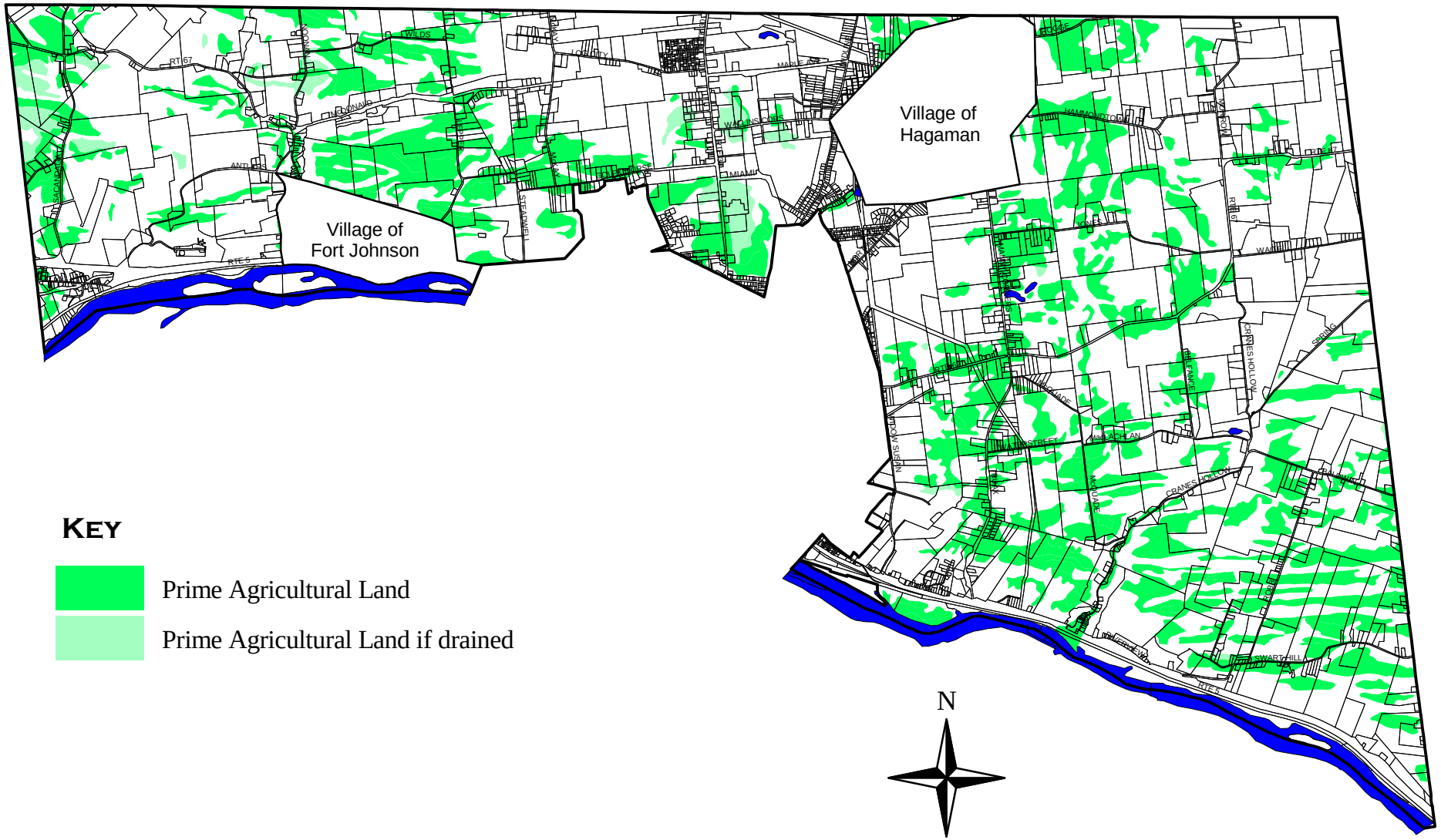
Key

- 105 - Agricultural Vacant Land (productive)
- 110 - Livestock and Products
- 112 - Dairy Products: milk, butter and cheese
- 113 - Cattle, Calves, Hogs
- 116 - Other Livestock: donkeys, goats
- 117 - Horse Farms
- 120 - Field Crops
- 151 - Orchard Crops: Apples, Pears, Peaches, etc.

Montgomery County Dept.
of Planning & Development
November 2002

Source:
Montgomery County Real Property Tax Service Agency,
Based on Town Assessor's Classification

Town of Amsterdam
Prime Agricultural Land



Key

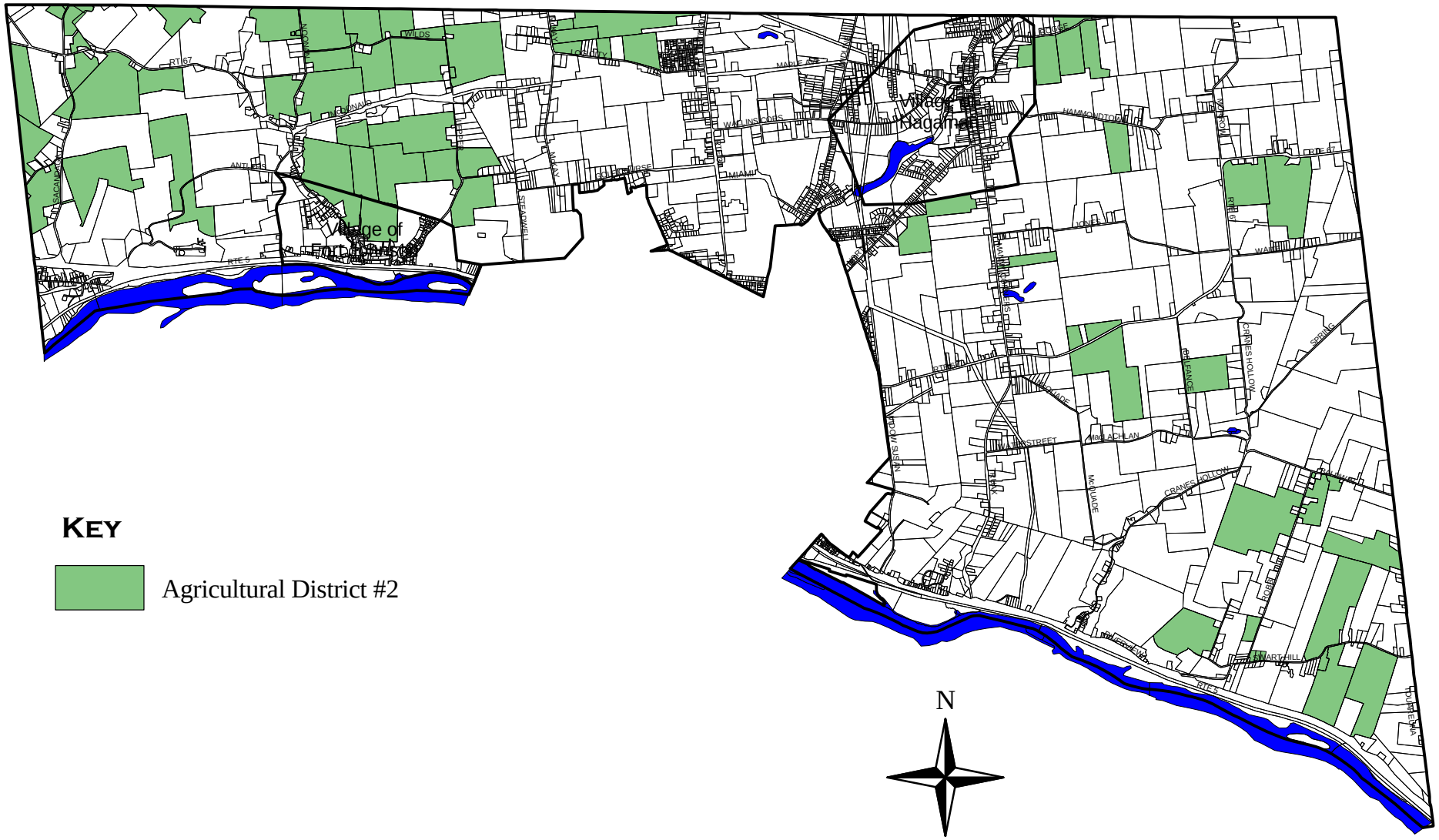
Prime Agricultural Land

Prime Agricultural Land if drained

Montgomery County Dept.
of Planning & Development
November 2002

Source:
Montgomery County Soil and Water Conservation District,
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Town of Amsterdam
Montgomery County Agricultural District #2



Key

Agricultural District #2

Montgomery County Dept.
of Planning & Development
November 2002

Source:
Ag District Review Worksheet, Montgomery County Soil and Water
Conservation District, Montgomery County Real Property Tax Service Agency

Transportation

The transportation network of a town ties the community together and links it to the outside world. Transportation networks are important to the economic growth and stability of a town or community, and provide needed access to markets, goods and services that are not available locally. Historically, the proximity to major transportation routes contributed greatly to the development of the Town of Amsterdam and Montgomery County. Today, the Town has a well developed infrastructure typical for a suburban community.

There are 22.67 miles of state highways in the Town, made up of Routes 5, 30 and 67. Route 5 is a major east-west arterial which runs north of and parallel to the Mohawk River. It is a divided four-lane limited-access highway connecting the Town to Scotia and Schenectady on the east and Tribes Hill and Fonda on the west. Route 67 is a U-shaped east-west highway with its central section lying within the City of Amsterdam. The western leg connects Fort Johnson with Johnstown and Gloversville on the northwest. The eastern leg connects the Town with Saratoga County, the Upper Hudson Valley and Vermont on the northeast.

State Route 30 is a major north-south route from the Adirondack Mountains in the north to the Catskills in the south, heavily traveled by recreation travelers. This primarily two-lane highway connects the New York State Thruway Interchange 27 with the Amsterdam area and bisects the City and Town. Route 30 is heavily used by commuters, and is also the major focus of commercial development in the Town. Access management issues are of prime importance. Maintaining the flow of traffic in terms of capacity and speed must be balanced with providing means of safe access to commercial development on both sides of the highway. The State Department of Transportation must approve any new curb cuts along Route 30, and it has recently required that turning lanes be constructed to provide access to several new developments.

The Town is currently working with New York State Department of Transportation on access management planning and recommendations for the Route 30 corridor and surrounding road network. Town and state planners are concerned about the cumulative impact of existing and future Route 30 development on the local access roads supporting this corridor. Existing traffic counts have been studied and preliminary analysis indicates that some local roads have experienced up to a six-fold increase in traffic volume since 1992. DOT performed additional traffic counts on Log City, Maple Avenue, Midline, Wallins Corners, Golf Course, McKay, McDonald, Steadwell and Route 30 during 2001.

In 1993, the Town Planning Board studied and proposed a Concept Road Plan, a pair of parallel access roads to relieve traffic congestion on the Route 30 corridor. Portions of this road network have been constructed by commercial developers behind the former Super K-Mart, Walmart, Towne Square and Home Depot. The southern end of the road network crosses Route 30 at a signaled intersection aligned with the north entrance to Amsterdam Memorial Hospital and the south entrance to

the Towne Square Plaza. The proposed western road network runs behind Kmart Plaza, crosses Golf Course Road and ultimately connects to Route 30 at Maple Avenue. The eastern road network runs behind Towne Square, Walmart Plaza and Home Depot, crosses Wallins Corners Road and eventually connects to Maple Avenue.

The New York State Department of Transportation and Boswell Engineers are performing a corridor study on a three mile section of Route 30 between the Amsterdam city line and Voorhees Road in the Town of Perth. An average of 20,600 vehicles travel this corridor daily, making it one of the most heavily traveled highways in the region. Several design proposals were submitted to the Amsterdam and Perth Town Councils for consideration and recommendations. These alternatives address widening a section of Route 30, installing sidewalks, and improving existing intersections.

New York State DOT has also made several proposals for the reconstruction and realignment of the Route 67 and McDonald Drive intersection. This project is currently in design stages and is included in DOT's 5 year capital program.

There are 25 county highways in the Town, which total 38.49 miles and are arranged in a loose grid system. These are reviewed on an ongoing basis by the Montgomery County Department of Public Works and resurfaced as necessary. The county also maintains nine bridges crossing the Town's creeks. There are six bridges on Cranes Hollow Road, two in the Village of Hagaman, and one on McDonald Drive.

The Town Highway Department maintains 19.4 miles of town roads. These are predominantly local access roads to residences and farms. Both town and county roads are primarily two-lane, 16-18 foot wide, constructed of bituminous concrete with gravel shoulders and open drainage swales. Some of the newer roads are 20-22 feet wide with paved shoulders.

Town of Amsterdam residents are almost completely dependent upon automobiles for transportation. The City of Amsterdam currently provides regular daily bus routes along Route 30, starting at the Riverfront Center and ending at Hannaford Plaza. Upon recommendation of DOT, the City has implemented a demand response service for City residents in order to maximize the efficiency of the transportation system. Daily commuter routes to Albany and FMCC will be maintained.

The Town has limited provisions for pedestrian access to the shopping areas along Route 30. Sidewalks are currently constructed in front of Walmart Plaza and the new Ruby Tuesday Restaurant along Route 30, with a crosswalk to the west side of Route 30 at Miami Avenue. The Montgomery County Public Safety Board has recommended that sidewalks be constructed along Miami Avenue for the safety of Amsterdam High School students. Although the County would pay for construction of these sidewalks, the Town would be responsible for maintenance.

The nearest train station is along Route 5 in the City of Amsterdam. The closest commercial airport is 30 miles to the east in Albany. There is also a small private airfield in the Town, immediately west of the Village of Fort Johnson.

Town of Amsterdam
Highway Mileage by Jurisdiction

Location	Jurisdiction		
	Town or Village	Montgomery County	New York State DOT
Town of Amsterdam	19.40	38.49	15.79
Village of Fort Johnson	4.07	-	2.08
Village of Hagaman	8.22	-	-

Table 2
Source: NYS DOT 1999 Highway Mileage Report

Town of Amsterdam
Highway Mileage by Functional Class

Jurisdiction	Principal Arterial	Minor Arterial	Collector	Minor Collector	Local
New York State DOT	1.3	12.89	3.68	-	-
Montgomery County	-	-	6.78	4.02	27.69
Town of Amsterdam	-	-	0.83	0.44	18.13
Village of Fort Johnson	-	-	-	0.45	3.62
Village of Hagaman	-	-	3.04	-	5.18

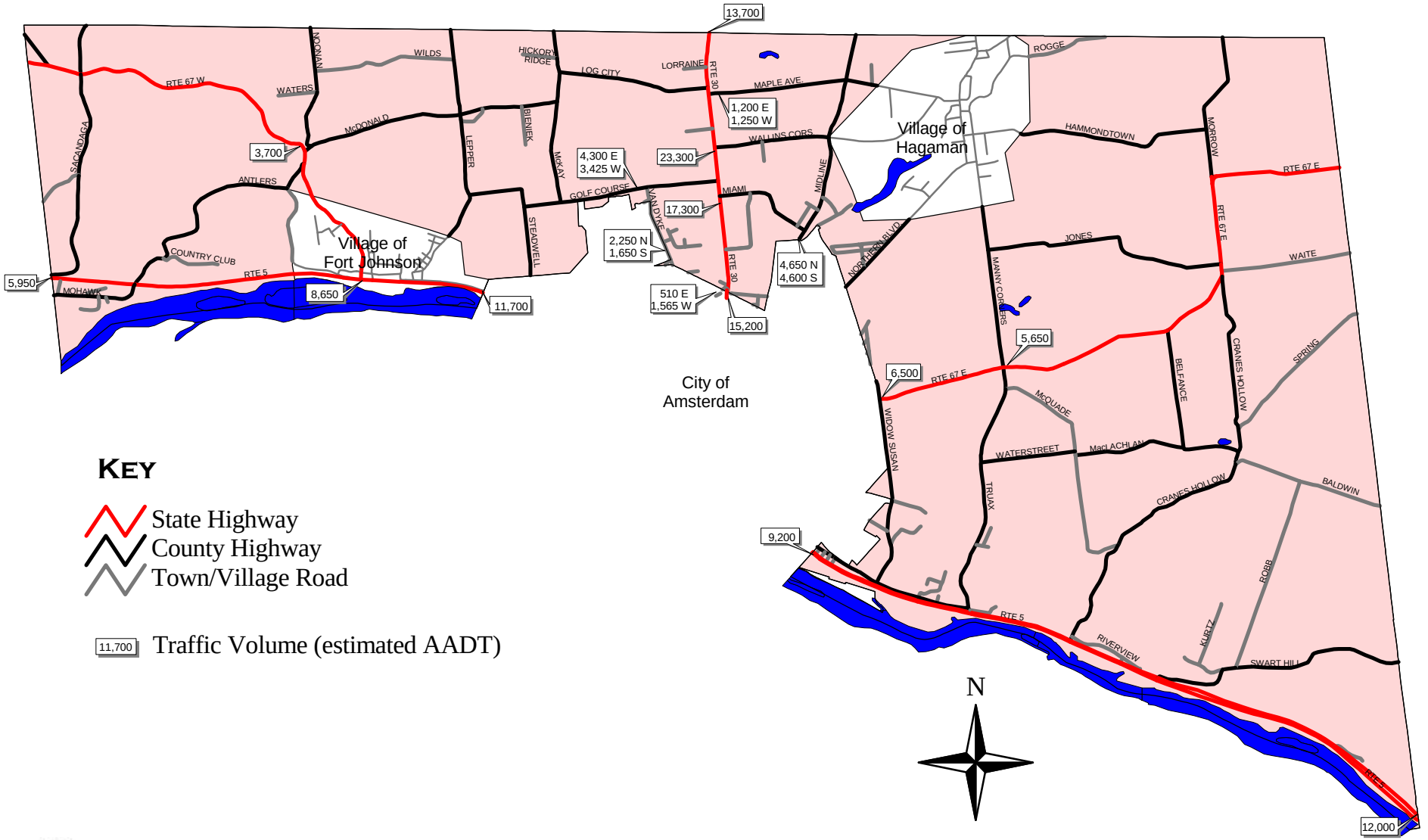
Table 3
Source: NYS DOT 1999 Highway Sufficiency Ratings

Town of Amsterdam
Traffic Volumes at Selected Locations

LOCATION	1999 Estimated Average Annual Daily Traffic AADT	Previous Estimated Average Annual Daily Traffic AADT	Change in AADT/	Percent Change	Design Hour Volume	Count Station Number
Route 67W at McDonald Drive	3,700	3,800 (91)	-100	-2.6%	220	030
Route 67W/Route 5 at Western City Line	11,700	10,400 (92)	+1,300	12.5%	690	273
Route 67E at Northern City Line	6,500	5,800 (92)	+700	12.1%	390	296
Route 67E at Manny's Corners	5,650	5,450 (93)	+200	3.7%	370	287
Route 5 at Mohawk Town Line	5,950	4,950 (92)	+1,000	20.2%	350	012
Route 5 at Rt. 67 in Fort Johnson	8,650	7,150 (92)	+1,500	21.0%	540	144
Route 5 at Eastern City Line	9,200	8,950 (93)	+250	2.8%	550	285
Route 5 at Schenectady Co. Line	12,000	10,900 (92)	+1,100	10.1%	710	288
Route 30 at Northern City Line	15,200	13,200 (90)	+2,000	15.2%	910	001
Route 30 at Miami Avenue	17,300	14,300 (92)	+3,000	21.0%	1140	046
Route 30 at Wallins Corners	23,300	14,300 (92)	+9,000	62.9%	1500	045
Route 30 at Fulton Co. Line	13,700	12,700 (92)	+1,000	7.9%	910	018

Table 4
Source: NYS DOT 1999 Traffic Volume Report and Highway Sufficiency Ratings

Town of Amsterdam Road Network
Jurisdictional Map with Traffic Volumes



Key

State Highway
County Highway
Town/Village Road

11,700 Traffic Volume (estimated AADT)

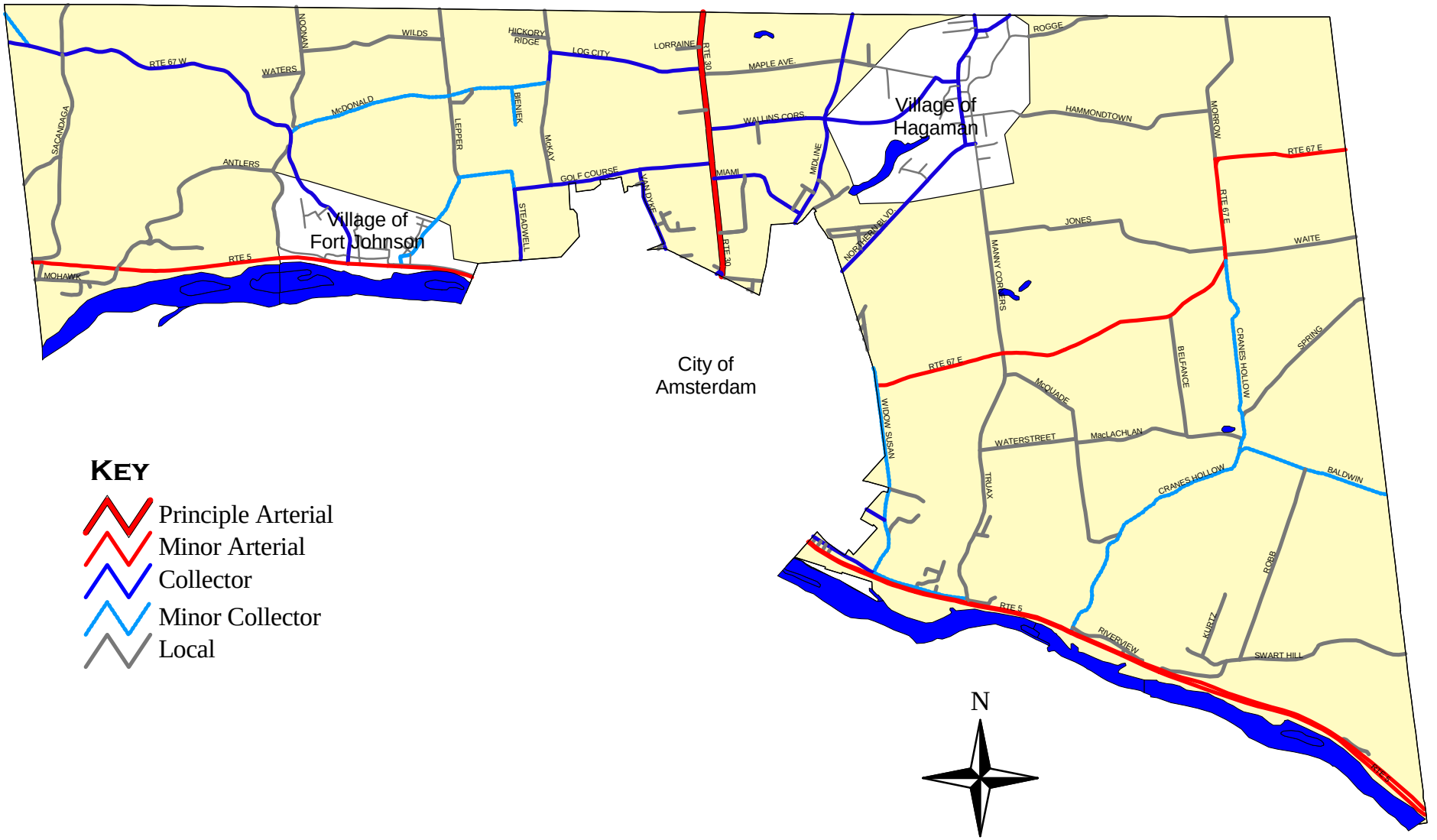
N

4000 0 4000 8000 12000 Feet

Montgomery County Department
of Planning & Development
November 2002

Source:
Montgomery County Highway Map, 1995
NYS DOT Region 2 Traffic Volume Report 1999, 2000

Town of Amsterdam Road Network
Functional Class Map



Key

- Principle Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Collector
- Minor Collector
- Local

Montgomery County Department
of Planning & Development
November 2002

Source:
Montgomery County Highway Map, 1995
NYS DOT Highway Sufficiency Ratings, 1997

Community Facilities and Services

Community facilities and services encompass areas such as police and fire protection, ambulance service, medical care, education, and solid waste disposal.

The Amsterdam Town Hall, located at 283 Manny Corners Road, is the focus of the Town's civic business. This municipal building holds offices for the Town Supervisor, Clerk, Bookkeeper, Tax Collector, Zoning Officer and Assessor. It also serves as the Town Courthouse, and as the site for Town Board, Planning Board and ZBA meetings and public hearings. The same site contains the Highway Department garage and a toddler playground.



Picture 15*. Amsterdam Town Hall*



Picture 16. *Town Highway Garage*



Picture 17. *Cranesville Reformed Church*



Picture 18. *United Methodist Church*

There are six churches within the Town of Amsterdam, and four of these are located within the villages. The two churches in the Town are United Methodist Church on Golf Course Road and Cranesville Reformed Church at the intersection of Route 5 and Cranes Hollow Road. St. Stephen's Roman Catholic Church, Calvary Reformed Church and First United Methodist Church are within the Village of Hagaman. The First Apostolic Church is located in the Village of Fort Johnson. There are also thirteen cemeteries located within the Town.

Five school districts serve the Town of Amsterdam. The vast majority of students live within the Greater Amsterdam School District. Amsterdam High School is located on Miami Avenue in the Town. Tecler Elementary School is located on Northern Boulevard, and Project Head Start operates out of the old Truax Road School.



Picture 19. *Greater Amsterdam High School*



Picture 20. *Tecler Elementary School*



Picture 21. *Project Headstart at Truax Road School*

Students in the Tribes Hill area are in within the Fonda-Fultonville Central School District. Broadalbin-Perth Central School District serves students living in the Log City and McKay Road area and north of Maple Avenue. The northeast corner of the Town is served by the Galway Central School District and the southeast corner is within the Scotia-Glenville School District.

Fulton-Montgomery Community College, part of the State University of New York system, is located directly across the western Town border in the Town of Mohawk. FMCC offers associate degree and certificate programs. It also has a commitment to life-long learning and offers an extensive continuing education program.

The closest library to the Town is the Amsterdam Free Library in the City of Amsterdam. Post Offices are located in Hagaman, Fort Johnson, and the city of Amsterdam. The communities of Cranesville, Hagaman, Fort Johnson and Tribes Hill each have Youth Commissions and Senior Citizens Clubs.

The Town of Amsterdam is well served by healthcare facilities. Amsterdam Memorial Hospital and the Mohawk Valley Medical Arts Building are located on Route 30N. St. Mary's Hospital operates a Diagnostic Services Center providing lab and x-ray services at Holland Circle Drive. The Town also has several facilities designed for senior citizens. Hillcrest Spring, an assisted living community, is located on Route 30N, Wilkinson Residential Health Care Facility is located behind Amsterdam Memorial Hospital, and Mount Loretto Nursing Home is located on Swart Hill Road.



Picture 22. *Amsterdam Memorial Hospital*



Picture 23. *Mount Loretto Nursing Home*



Picture 24. *Hillcrest Spring Assisted Living Facility*

The Town of Amsterdam is policed by the Montgomery County Sheriffs Department and the New York State Police. The Town and its residents have access to the county wide E-911 system which was established by the Sheriffs Department.

Like most towns of its size in New York, fire protection in the Town of Amsterdam is provided by volunteer fire companies. The Town is separated into four fire districts and has contracts with the Cranesville, Fort Johnson, Hagaman and Tribes Hill Volunteer Fire Departments. Ambulance service is provided by GAVAC, the Greater Amsterdam Volunteer Ambulance Corps. Emergency care is also offered by the emergency medical technicians assoc-iated with each volunteer fire department.



Picture 25. *Cranesville Volunteer Fire Department*



Picture 26. *Fort Johnson Fire Station No. 2*

Waste disposal in the Town is provided through contracts with private haulers. Garbage is collected weekly, recyclables are collected twice a month, and rubbish collection is scheduled about three times per year.

Historic and Cultural Resources

The Town of Amsterdam has several historic and cultural resources which contribute to the community's character. These sites are important visible reminders of the Town's heritage. They have the potential to generate community pride, provide educational and cultural opportunities to residents, and enhance tourism in the area.

Fort Johnson is the most prominent historic site in the Town. This sturdy stone house and fortress was the home of Sir William Johnson, a key figure in the settlement of the Mohawk Valley in the decades prior to the Revolution. Johnson played many roles in regional history including merchant, soldier, negotiator, king's representative and superintendent of Indian affairs. Johnson built the three-story Georgian style house in 1749, near the spot where the Kayaderosseras Creek flows into the Mohawk River. Over the next ten years he added a gristmill, blockhouse, barracks, stables, barns, a posh outhouse, and accommodations for the Indians who held council on the site.



Picture 27. *Fort Johnson*

In 1763, Johnson built a more refined mansion at Johnson Hall in Johnstown, and gave Fort Johnson to his son, John. Sir William collapsed and died outside Johnson Hall in 1774, while speaking to an audience of over 600 Indians. When the Revolution broke out in 1775, Sir John remained loyal to the British Crown. He was declared a traitor, fled with his family to Canada and returned to raid the Mohawk and Schoharie Valleys with his regiment, Johnson's Royal Greens. In 1777, Fort Johnson was seized by the Tryon County Committee of Sequestra-tion. The building and furnishings were sold at auction. Fort Johnson had a series of many owners during the nineteenth century. In 1905, General John Watts de Peyster, grandnephew of Polly Watts, the wife of Sir John Johnson, purchased the Fort and presented it to the Montgomery County Historical Society.

A marker placed by the New York State Education Department declares Fort Johnson an important military post and Indian Council site. Another marker points out Johnson Trail, the path used by Sir William Johnson between Fort Johnson and Johnson Hall. Fort Johnson is listed on both the State and National Register of Historic Places as an important example of eighteenth century architecture with historical significance. Although most of the outbuildings are gone, the house has survived untouched. Several rooms have been restored to reflect eighteenth century life in Fort Johnson, and contain original or period furnishings. The Montgomery County Historical Society operates Fort Johnson as a museum with exhibits on Montgomery County, the Mohawk Valley and its cultures.

The Samuel and Johanna Jones Farm, located on Ballston Road (Route 67) near the Saratoga County line, was listed on the State and National Register in 1993. The Jones farm is a significant intact example of the family farms that took root in the pioneer settlements of the late-eighteenth century. The 100 acre farm runs approximately 1400 feet along the south side of Route 67 and spreads south towards the head of Eva's Kill, a tributary north of the Mohawk River. The farmstead was established in 1795 by Samuel and Johanna Jones, immigrants from Orange County, New Jersey. It was maintained by their descendents as a successful family farm for nearly two hundred years. The U-shaped farmhouse, built in 1840, is a distinguished example of Greek Revival domestic architecture. There are five outbuildings: a cow barn, milkshed, chicken coop, machine shed and outhouse. The foundation of an Erie Canal mule stable has been incorporated into the barn.



Picture 28. *The Samuel and Johanna Jones Farm*

Samuel Jones taught at the first schoolhouse in the Town, on nearby Olmstead Hill. Samuel and Johanna both played an active role in the local Presbyterian church at Manny Corners. This church did not survive very long in competition with the large congregation in the city. It was unused when it burned in the late nineteenth century. Manny Corners cemetery remains at the site of the church and parsonage, three miles west of the Jones farm. The burial ground still marks the remains of five generations of the Jones family who lived and died at the farmstead. A historic marker on the site states that four revolutionary soldiers are buried there.



Picture 29. *Manny Corners Cemetery*

Four historic markers were also placed by the New York State Education Department along Route 5 near Cranesville. Markers point out Adriutha, where the De Groot family settled and built a mill around 1700, and Eva's Kill, the stream near where Mrs. Eva Van Alstyne was scalped in 1755. About 2 1/2 miles east of Cranesville, a marker denotes the hotel of John Van Eps, where Commodore Perry and other notables were entertained. Another marker was placed two miles east of Cranesville, commemorating the gravesite of Campaan, the Oneida. Several markers were also placed in the Village of Hagaman. Two cemeteries were marked: Old Hagaman Cemetery, which is about 75 feet west of Pawling Street, which is noted for the gravesites of seven revolutionary soldiers,

and the Hagaman Mills Cemetery on Pawling Street. A marker was also placed on Main Street for the first church in Hagaman, erected in 1835.



Picture 30. *"Adriutha Farm" Barn in Cranesville*



Picture 31. *"Mohawk Country" marker, Cranesville*

One of the most important sites in the history of the Amsterdam area is Hurricana Farm, the former thoroughbred horse farm established by carpet mogul Stephen Sanford. In 1870, Sanford, owner of the Sanford Carpet Mills, began buying properties north of the city of Amsterdam, which he combined into the 1,000 acre stud farm in 1880. By the early 1890s the stable was renowned for the breeding and racing of thoroughbreds. Many of these horses were champions at Saratoga and at national and international meets, including the Kentucky Derby and English Grand National Steeple Chase. The Sanford family's love of Mohawk Valley history and landmarks was reflected in the names of their horses: Rockton, Yankee Hill, Danascara, Mill Point, Chuctanunda, Guy Park, Freysbush, Polly Watts, Canajoharie, and Tribes Hill, to name a few. Five-foot high stone memorials describing the deeds of Sanford champions were proudly displayed along the edge of the Hurricana property, parallel to Route 30. They were a testament to the deep respect that the Sanfords had for their horses and their achievements.

From 1903 to 1907, the Sanfords held Amsterdam Day at Hurricana Farm on Independence Day weekend. About 15,000 spectators attended these matinee races annually to see the best race horses of their day. Stable hands, exercise boys and trainers literally walked 25 or 30 thoroughbreds to Saratoga every year for the August meet. Stephen Sanford died in 1913 at the age of 86. The Sanford Memorial Stakes is still run at Saratoga every summer in memory of his contributions to Saratoga racing.

Stephen Sanford's son, John, took over the operations at Hurricana Farm and started horse breeding operations in Europe as well. John and his son Stephen (Laddie), who won numerous championships, favored thoroughbreds trained for jumping, steeple-chase racing and polo. At its peak, there were 150 thoroughbreds in residence at the farm. After a disastrous barn fire in January, 1939, which destroyed 26 horses, the breeding program was discontinued. The racing stable still flourished with a smaller number of horses racing at major tracks until Laddie Sanford's death in 1977.

The farm had dwindled to about 200 acres and was sold by the Sanford trustees in 1986. The new owners painted the barns, restored the fences and farmhouse, and planned to operate a boarding facility and training track. But in the last few years, sections of the former farm have been sold and undergone rapid development as the Sanford Farms and Towne Square Shopping Centers.



Picture 32. *Barns from the original Hurricana Farm*



Picture 33. *Proposed Town Historical Museum*

The Town of Amsterdam is currently working to obtain title to one of the larger remaining barns. The Town hopes to restore the barn as a community cultural center, including an exhibit on Hurricana Farm and its role in the history of Amsterdam. In recognition of the deeds and spirit of the Sanford champions, the Town also hopes to restore their original stone monuments to the site. A committee has been formed to work on an application nominating the site to the State and National Register of Historic Places.

As the Town continues to grow and develop, individual buildings of historic significance may be at risk for replacement or alteration. Sensitive prehistoric and historic archaeological resources could be disturbed and lost. The Town should actively support efforts to help protect its historical, architectural, archaeological and culturally important sites.

Recreation

Recreational areas and open space are extremely important in creating a high quality of life in a community. Neighborhood and community parks provide opportunities for recreational activities, a focal point for community events, and preserve the natural environment for future generations.

In 1996, the Town of Amsterdam inventoried existing public open space and recreational facilities in the Town and Villages as part of a Municipal Parkland Survey and Needs Assessment. The Amsterdam Town Hall has a toddlers' playground and approximately 9.4 acres of athletic fields available to local youth athletic leagues.



Picture 34. *Toddler Playground on Town Hall site*

The Village of Hagaman contains two small parks with a total acreage of approximately 3 acres. There is a full-court basketball facility and minor league baseball diamond behind the Hagaman Civic Center. There is also a small waterfront park along the Chuctanunda Creek which offers a well-maintained play area, a pond for fishing and ice skating, and a creekside nature walk.

The Village of Fort Johnson also has two municipal parks. Fort Johnson Park contains one acre of green space located along Route 5. The Ted Ellenwood Memorial Park contains 8.6 acres along Fort Johnson Avenue. It contains a baseball diamond, basketball court and playground equipment. A section of the park is flooded during the winter to create an ice skating rink. A warming hut for the skaters has been recently built, and it also may be used for indoor activities. The park is located along the Kayaderosseras Creek, which is a NYS DEC stocked trout stream.

The New York State Barge Canal system also offers opportunities for boating and fishing in the Town, although access is limited by Route 5, the CSX Railroad right of way, and private land.

In addition to these publicly owned parks and open space, Town residents have access to recreational sites owned by the Greater Amsterdam School District. Tecler Elementary School on Northern Boulevard, and Project Headstart in the old Truax Road school, have a total of approximately 20 acres of land available for recreational use. Both schools have playground equipment used by neighborhood children, and fields available to area athletic teams for practices and games. Amsterdam High School also has approximately 75 acres of open land used as athletic fields by local youth softball and soccer teams.

There are also several private recreational sites in the Town. The Antlers Country Club in Fort Johnson has a total of 165 acres of land, including a golf course, swimming pool and tennis courts. There is a also bowling alley along Route 30 for indoor recreation.



Picture 35. *Antlers Golf Course*

The Amsterdam YMCA has recently renovated the St. Stephen's Parish Center (the old Buchanan School) in Hagaman. The building includes a gym, fitness center, aerobics room, multi-purpose room and day care center. This site includes 32 acres of land with a hiking trail and basketball court. Long-range plans include construction of an indoor-outdoor swimming pool.

Town residents also have access to Shuttleworth Park and the Arthur Carter Amsterdam Municipal Golf Course, which are located along the Town/City border. Portions of both sites were originally on Town land and were later annexed into the City of Amsterdam.

Shuttleworth Park was opened as Crescent Park in 1914 and became the biggest local recreational attraction of the early part of the century. It later was home to the "Rugmakers" baseball team in the Canadian-American League and was re-named Mohawk Mills Park. In 1977, it was re-named again as Herbert L. Shuttleworth Park. The park currently includes two baseball diamonds with bleachers and lights for night games. These fields are used by Amsterdam High School and Recreation Department sponsored softball teams. The park also includes a picnic pavilion, restrooms, tennis courts and a playground. It is located along the banks of the Chuctanunda Creek, which is regularly stocked by the Reid Hill Fish and Game Club.

The Arthur Carter Amsterdam Municipal Golf Course was designed by renowned landscape architect Robert Trent Jones. It was built during the depression and dedicated in 1938. This 18 hole course covers approximately 200 acres and includes a clubhouse, restaurant and pro shop.

A private developer is currently planning to build a 143 acre 18 hole public golf course on Route 67W in the Town of Amsterdam.

Table 5
Municipal Parks and Open Space Survey
Town of Amsterdam 1996

FACILITY	MUNICIPALITY	ACRES	PLAY-GROUND	OPEN SPACE	PICNIC FACIL-ITY	WATER BODY	ATHLETIC FIELDS / COURTS	TRAILS / WALKS	OTHER	COMMENTS
Ted Ellenwood Memorial Park	Village of Fort Johnson	8.6	Yes	Some	No	Yes	Yes	No	Ice Skating, warming hut/ limited indoor activities	Park located along NYSDEC stocked Trout Stream. Basketball court needs backboard and hoop. Playground equipment poor condition. Baseball diamond good condition.
Fort Johnson Park	Village of Fort Johnson	1	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	open space	Memorial is located near the Fire House.
Kayaderos-seras Creek	Town of Amsterdam/ Village	N/A	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Trout fishing	Tributary to Mohawk River stocked by NYSDEC. Limited access along State and County right-of-way and at Ted Ellenwood Park.
Chuctanunda Park	Village of Hagaman	approx. 1.5	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Ice Skating (winter) Fishing (sum-mer)	Play area in very good condition. Park area clean and well kept. Bridge, creek, and pond offer nature walk for children.
Hagaman Civic Center	Village of Hagaman	approx. 1.5	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Limited indoor events	Full court basketball facility (out-door). Minor league baseball dia-mond.
Amsterdam Town Hall	Town of Amsterdam	9.4	yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	Limited indoor events	Athletic fields available to local youth groups and upon individual request to the Town. New toddlers' playground.
New York State Barge Canal System	Town of Amsterdam	N/A	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Boating & Fishing	Land side recreation limited by highway, railroad, and private land.

Demographic Profile

A. Population Characteristics:

Demographics are the statistical characteristics of human populations. The purpose of this section is to analyze and graphically illustrate characteristics and trends of the population and housing stock within the Town. This will help prepare the Town for the impact of future growth or decline on land use and community facilities. All data and graphs describe characteristics of the Town of Amsterdam including the Villages of Fort Johnson and Hagaman, unless otherwise noted. The information contained in this section is based primarily on the 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census. All data which is currently available from the 2000 census has been included.

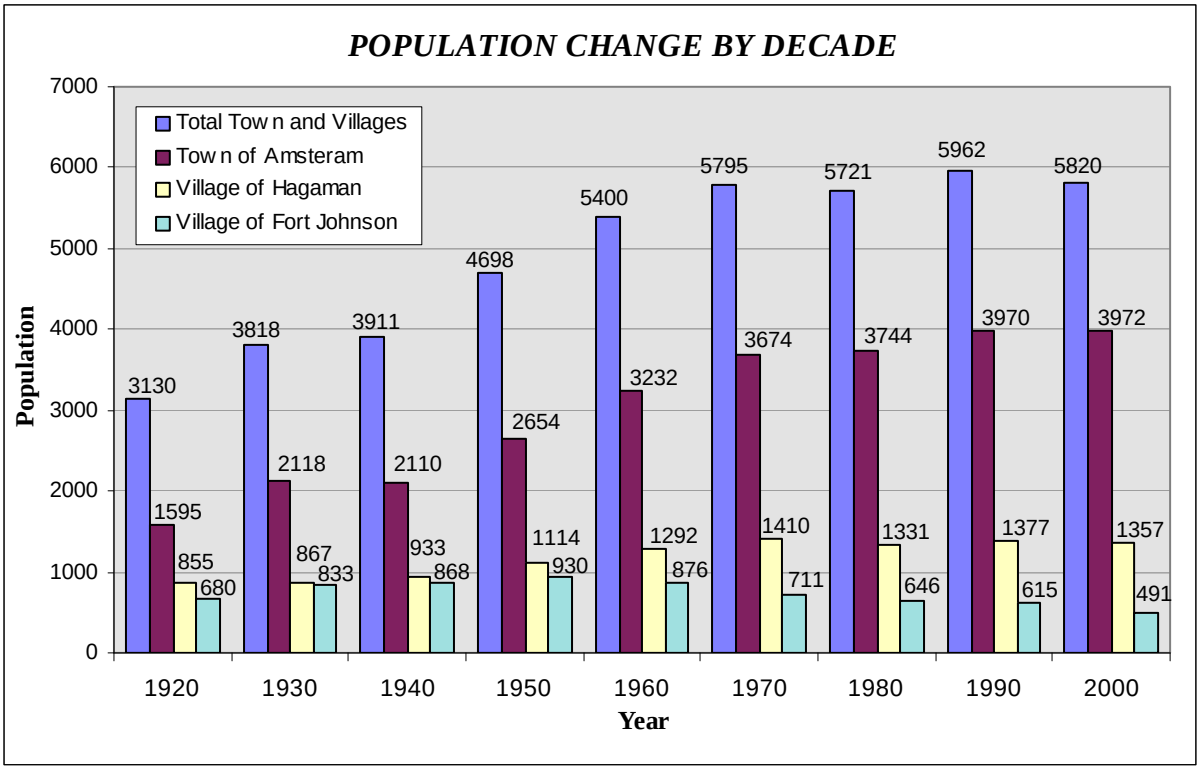
The population in the Town of Amsterdam almost doubled between 1920 and 2000, growing by 86%. The greatest increases in population occurred between 1920-1930 at a rate of 22%, and between 1940-1960 at an average growth rate of almost 18% per decade. The Town has experienced more moderate growth since 1960, with most of the growth occurring outside the Villages. Although many villages in Montgomery County lost population between 1920-2000, the Village of Hagaman has shown an unusually strong growth of 59%. According to the 2000 Census, the Town of Amsterdam outside the Villages maintained a stable population (+.05%), the Village of Hagaman showed a moderate decline (-1.5%) and the Village of Fort Johnson showed a major decline (-20.2%). Overall, the Town showed a slight drop in population of 2.4%.

Population density is the amount of persons per unit of land. This is calculated by dividing the Town's population by its area. The Town, including the villages, is approximately 30.3 square miles with a population density of 192 persons per square mile. The Town, outside the villages, is 28 square miles with a population density of 142 persons per square mile.

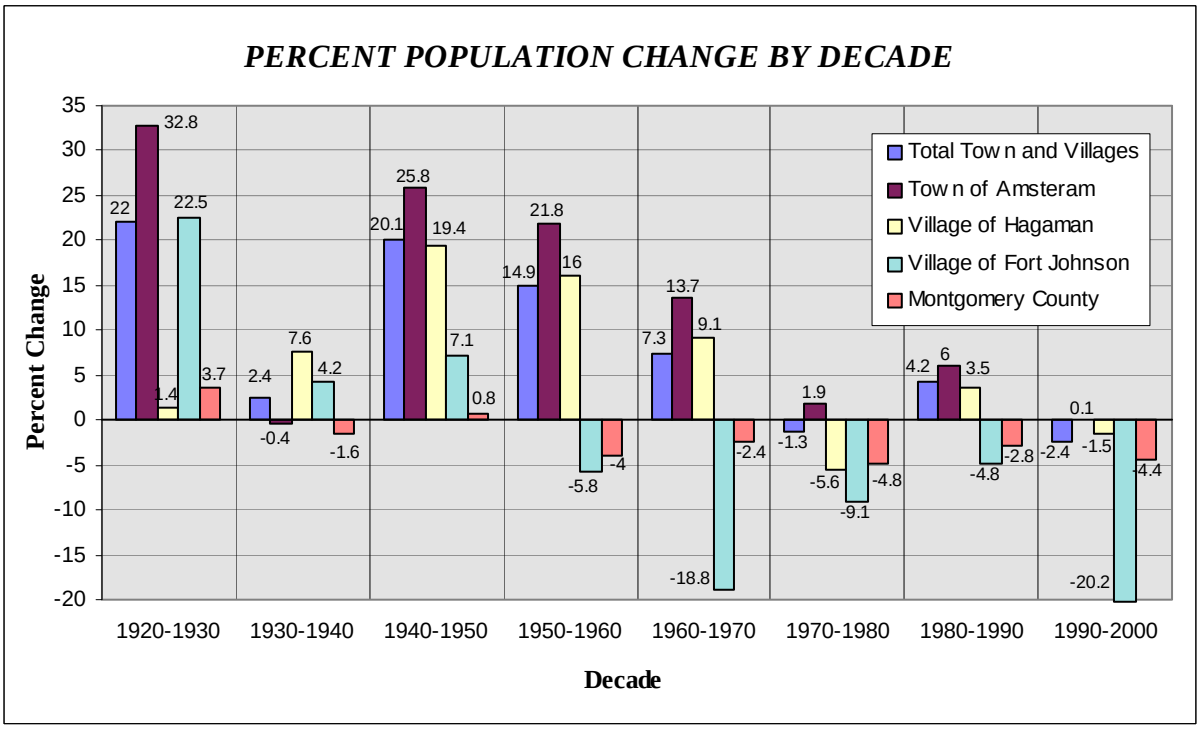
Town of Amsterdam Total Population 1920-2000

Year	Population	Population Change	Percent Change
1920	3130	N/A	N/A
1930	3818	688	22.0%
1940	3911	93	2.4%
1950	4698	787	20.1%
1960	5400	702	14.9%
1970	5795	395	7.3%
1980	5721	-74	-1.3%
1990	5962	241	4.2%
2000	5820	-142	-2.4%

Table 6

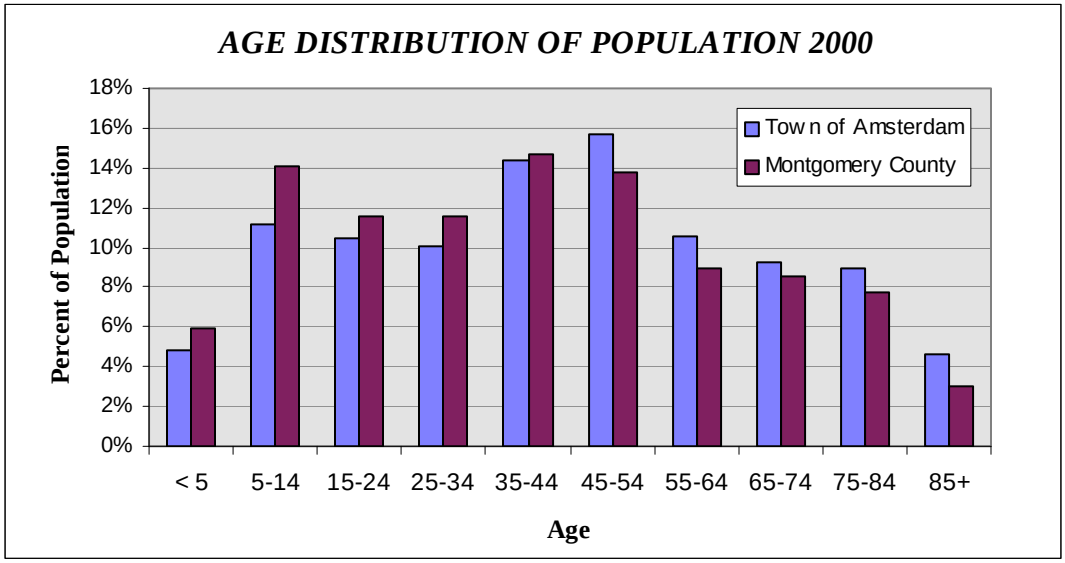


Graph 1



Graph 2

The chart below is based on the 2000 census, and shows the age distribution of residents of the Town of Amsterdam by percent of total population. Adults who are 45-54 year olds make up the largest group in the population, comprising 15.7% of the Town residents. The second largest age group are the 35-44 year olds who make up 14.4% of the population. The Town has a slightly "older" population than the County as a whole, with a median age of 44.5 years compared to 39.7 years. In general, there is a greater percentage of adults over the age of 45 than in the county-wide population, with a corresponding decrease in the percentage of younger residents.



Graph 3

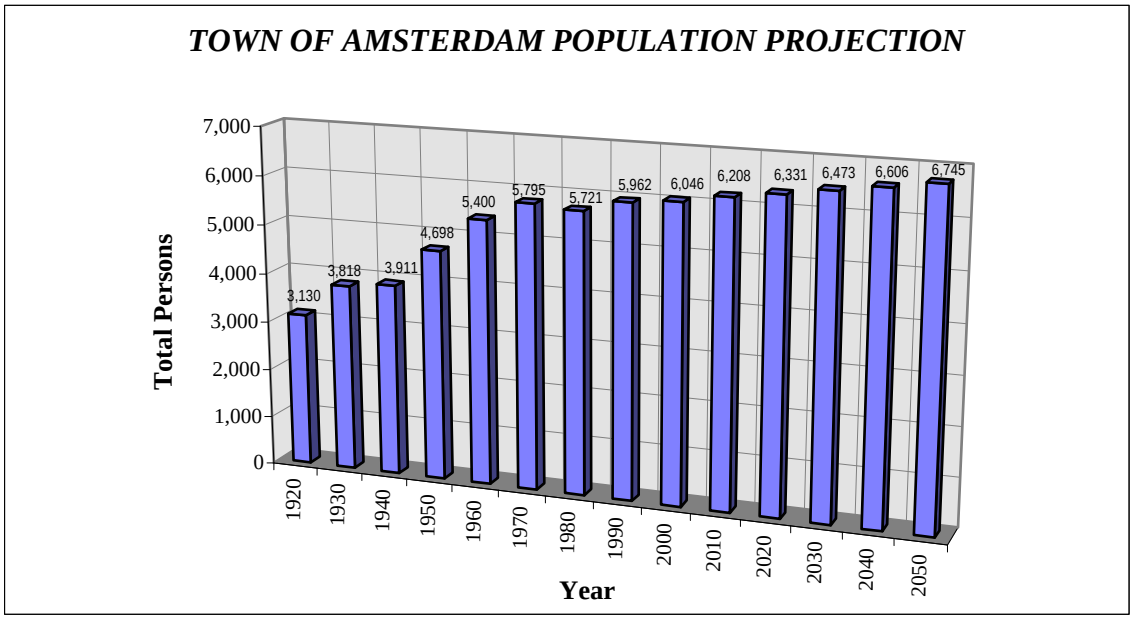
According to the 2000 census, almost 98% of the population of the Town is white. Residents whose race is Black, Asian, American Indian or other comprise approximately 2% of the population. Hispanic or Latino residents, but of any race, also comprise about 2% of the population. Polish, Italian, German and Irish are the most common ancestral origins. There is also a significant proportion of the population with English and Dutch roots.

Population projections done by the Montgomery County Planning Department in the mid 1990's anticipated a slow steady increase of about 2% per decade for the Town of Amsterdam, over the next 50 years.

It should be noted that population projections have many limitations. This is particularly true at the municipal level where they are based on judgements about the interrelationships of regulations, infrastructure and market conditions. For example, adoption of or changes to zoning regulations could impact population projections. The introduction or expansion of water and sewer systems within a rural community will most likely increase the population projection. A major factor is future employment opportunities in the region. Population projections at the town level are useful only to the extent that they are based on realistic assumptions.

There are many factors that may have an impact on the future growth rate in the Town. The successful completion and marketing of the two industrial parks in Montgomery County would greatly increase the employment opportunities in the region, and have a major impact on the population projections. Large school tax increases could negatively effect population growth.

In general, the villages in the county have shown a steady decrease in population as the town populations have increased. The Village of Hagaman is an exception to this trend. In other areas, the population shift to more rural areas has been attributed to a search for more abundant and cheaper land, and relief from congestion, pollution, crime and high taxes.



Graph 4

B. Household Economic Characteristics:

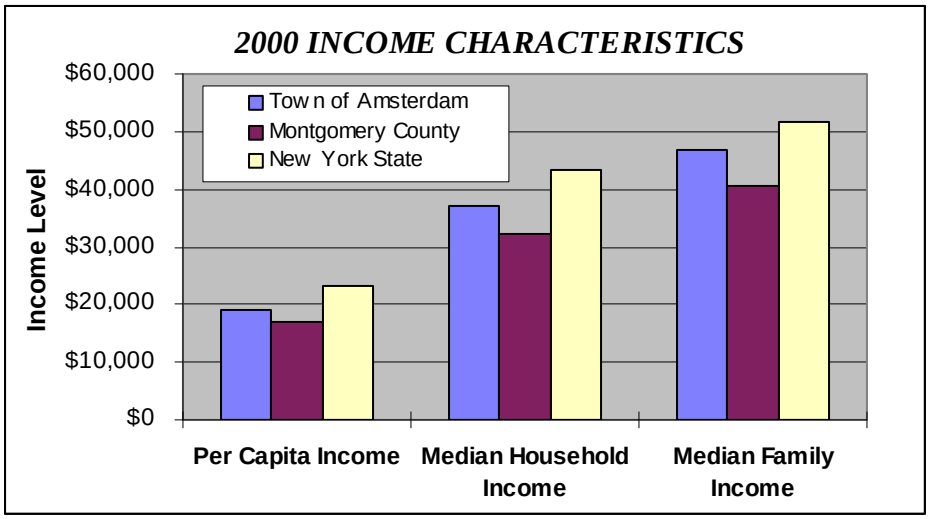
Household economic characteristics include average household size, median household income, per capital income and poverty rate.

According to the U.S. Census, a *household* is defined as an occupied housing unit and is the central concept linking population and housing. Households are made up of one or more persons sharing a housing unit. A *family*, is persons related by blood, marriage or adoption, living together in a household. According to the 2000 census, there were 2,250 households in the Town of Amsterdam, and 1,546 of these were defined as families.

An important characteristic of households and families is their income level. *Per capita income* defines the average income in the Town per person. The median household, family, and per capita incomes in the Town are higher than those in Montgomery County as a whole, but less than comparable incomes in New York State. A regional comparison of economic characteristics is shown in the following table and graphs.

Table 7 ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS 2000

	Town of Amsterdam	Montgomery County	New York State
Median Household Income	$37,097	$32,128	$43,493
Median Family Income	$46,667	$40,688	$51,691
Per Capita Income	$19,099	$17,005	$23,389
% Persons Below Poverty Level	7.0%	12.0%	14.6%

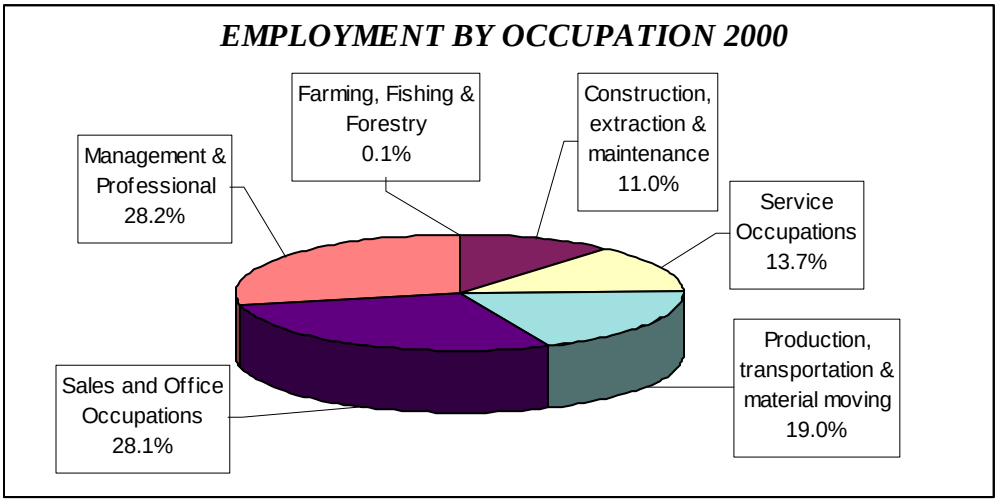


Graph 5

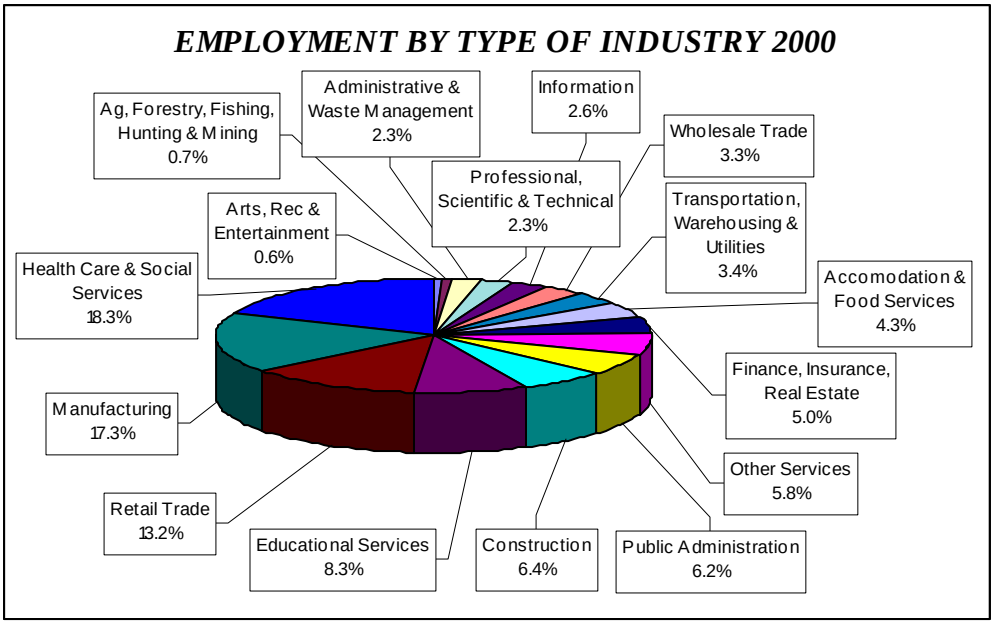
C. Employment and Education Characteristics

This section will contain information on types of employment, occupation, means of transportation, commuting times and educational levels of the Town's residents. The graphs below compare employment by occupation and type of industry.

According 2000 U.S. Census, there were 2,673 employed persons aged 16 and older in the Town of Amsterdam. The Town's workforce has more people employed in white collar (69.9%) than blue collar (30.1%) occupations.



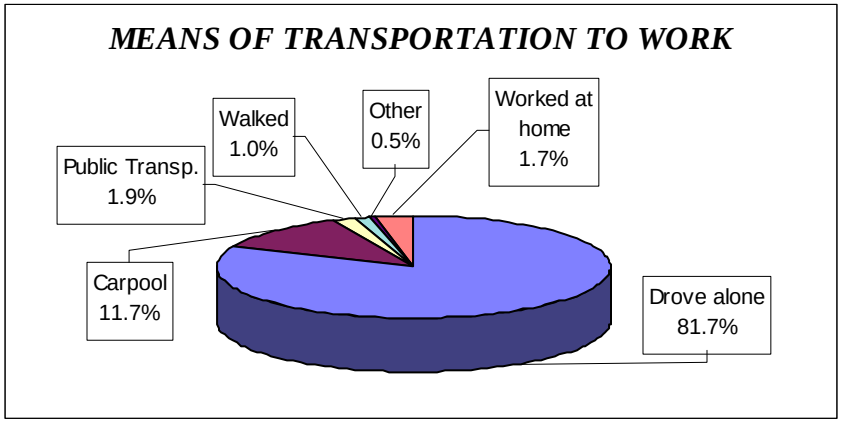
Graph 6



Graph 7

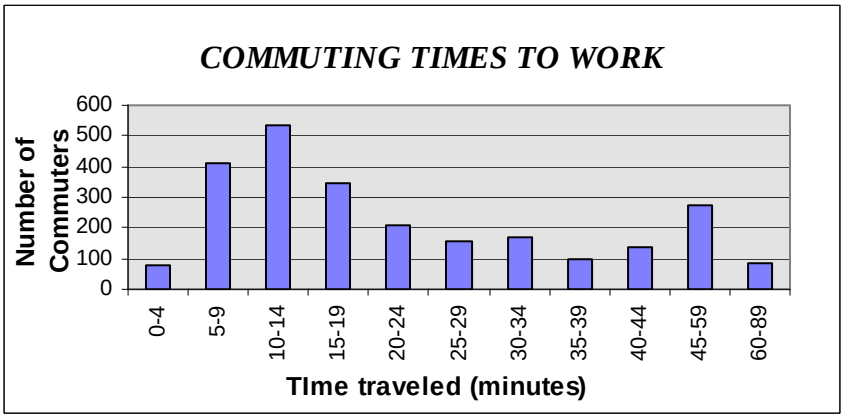
Among employed Town residents who were 16 years and older, health care and social services was the largest type of industry (18.3%). This was followed closely by manufacturing (17.3%), retail trade (13.2%), educational services (8.2%), construction (6.4%) and public administration (6.2%).

The following educational levels have been attained by the group of Town residents who are 25 years of age or older: 17.6% have not graduated from high school, 41.2% have only a high school diploma, 18.3% have completed some college but have no degree, 9.1% have an Associate degree, 7.3% have a Bachelor's degree and 6.5% have a graduate degree.



Graph 8

The automobile is the dominant method of transportation in the Town. 93.4% of workers either drove alone or carpooled, 3.2% worked at home, 1.9% used public transportation, and 1% walked to work. Of the 2,635 employed persons in the Town, 1,555 work within the county and 1,080 work outside the county. Average travel time to work is 24 minutes, with 75% of the commuters traveling less than 35 minutes. This includes most of the people who work within Montgomery, Fulton, and Schoharie Counties and the Capital District.



Graph 9

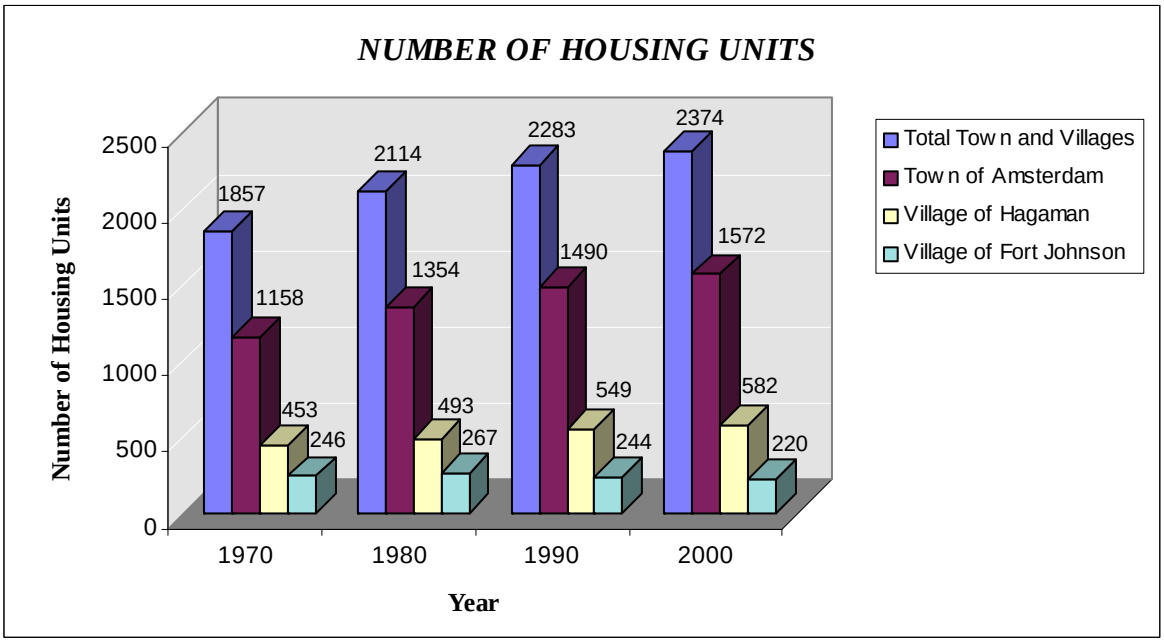
Housing Profile

The availability of affordable and safe housing is a key ingredient in a community's appearance and ability to accommodate growth. A wide variety of housing types exist in the Town of Amsterdam. Some of the most common housing types are colonials, raised ranch and cape cod style homes and historic two-story farmhouses.

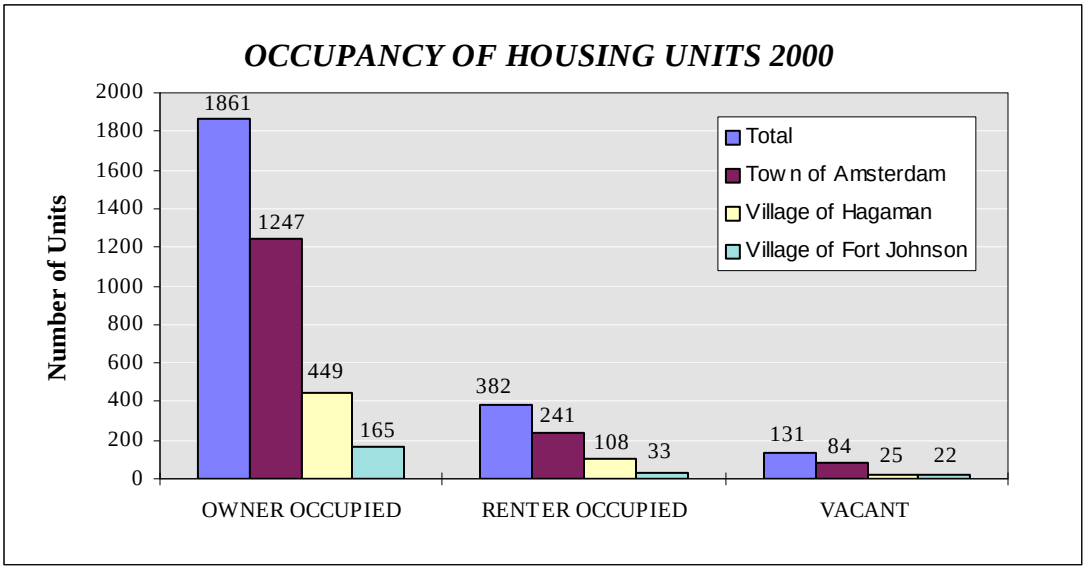
The following figures and graphs are based on data from the 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census. A *housing unit* is defined as any room or group of rooms intended to be occupied as separate living quarters. In 2000 there were 1,572 housing units in the Town of Amsterdam outside the villages. The number of housing units in the entire Town has increased steadily from 1,857 units in 1970 to 2,374 in 2000.

According to 2000 census figures, the median value of owner occupied housing in the Town was $79,300. This was slightly above the County value of $67,600, but significantly below the State value of $148,700. These figures indicate that home ownership is very affordable in the Town as compared to the rest of New York State.

In 2000, rental housing was also quite affordable in the Town of Amsterdam. The median contract rent was $476, not including utilities. Although this is slightly higher than the County median of $464, it is well below the New York State median contract rent of $672 per month.

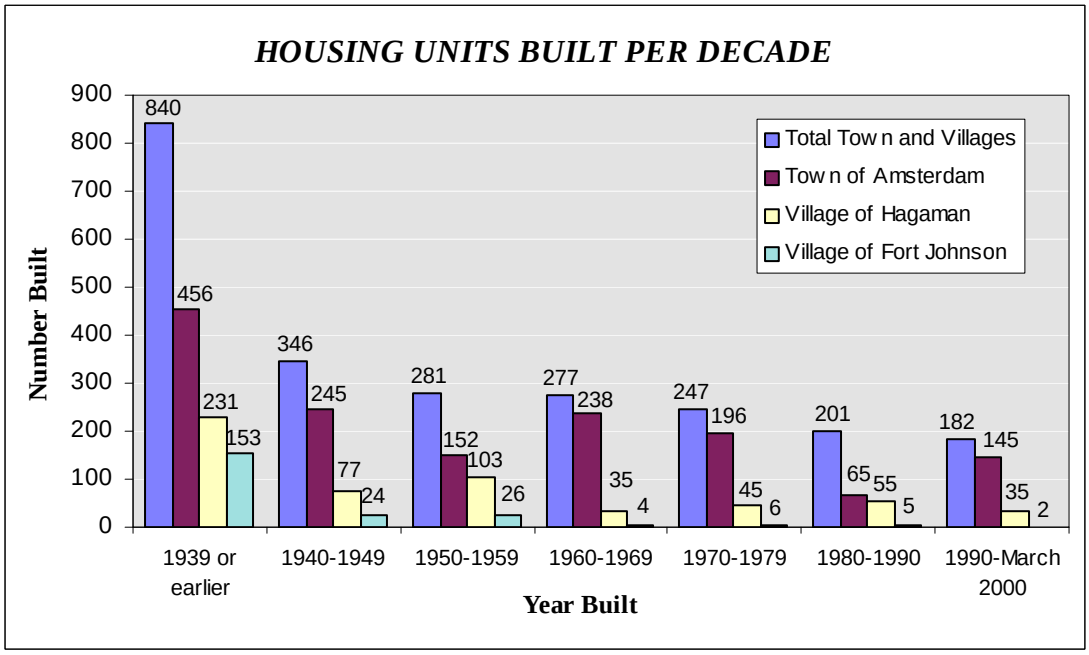


Graph 10



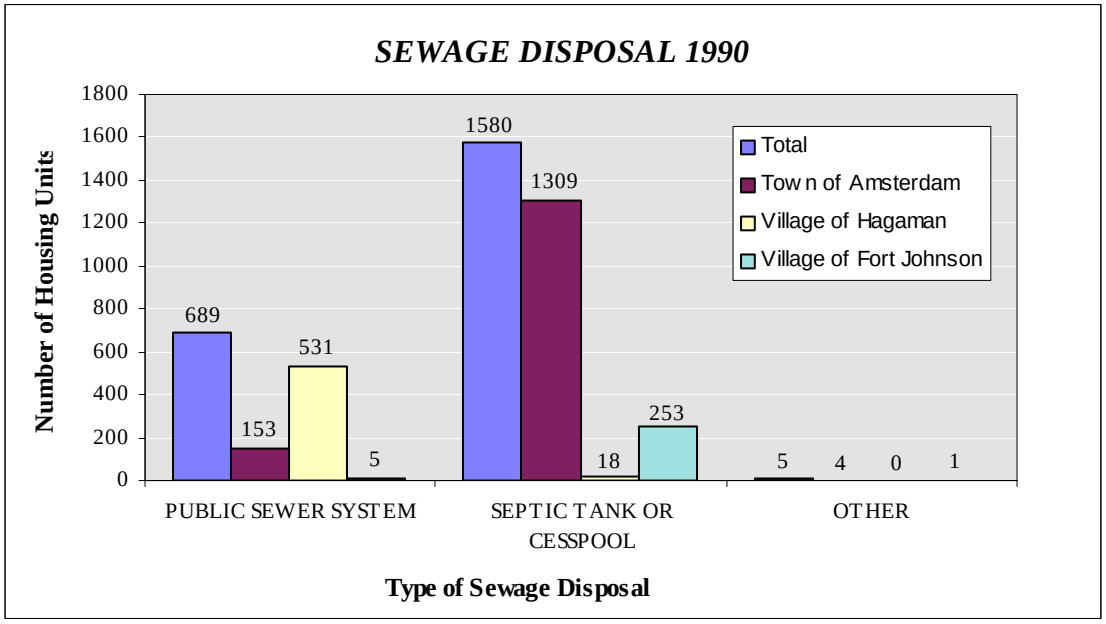
Graph 11

According to the 2000 Census, of the 1,572 housing units in the Town outside the villages, 1,247 were owner occupied, 241 were renter occupied, and 84 were vacant. Prior to 1940, 840 housing units were built in the Town. Between 1970-2000 approximately 200 dwelling units were built each decade. The median year built was 1950. Additionally, current Town records show that 30 residential building permits were issued since 1995, with an average of 6 new homes built per year.



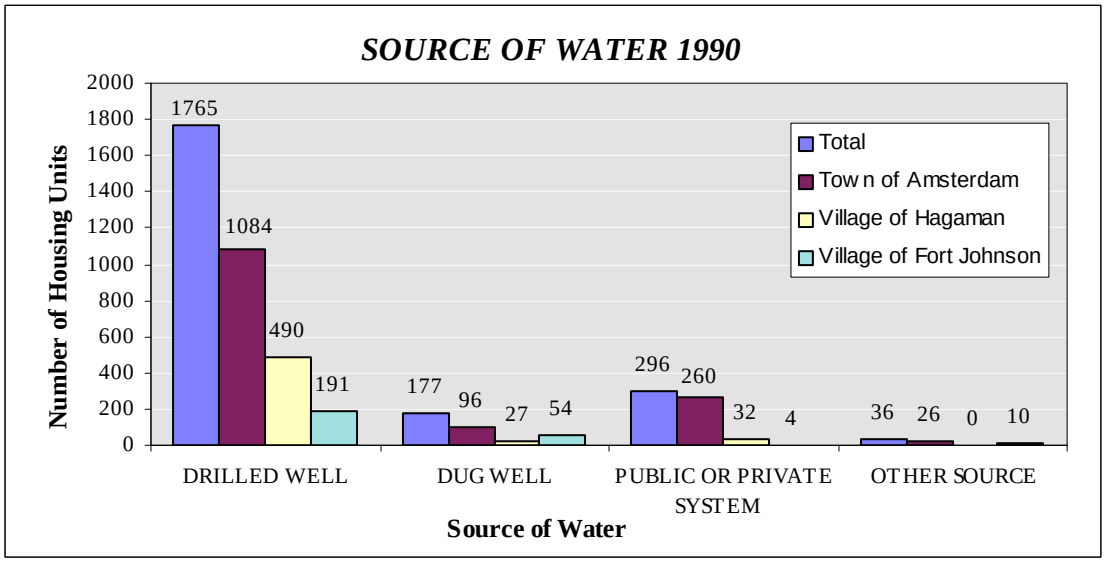
Graph 12

The 1990 U.S. Census collected data on the availability of public sewer and water The housing profile indicates that septic tanks and cesspools are the most common type of sewerage system in the Town outside the Villages, and are used by 1,309 housing units. Only 153 housing units are serviced by public sewers, and the remaining 5 units use "other means." There are only 260 housing units in the Town that rely on a public system or private company for their water supply. 1,034 housing units rely on a drilled well, and 96 units rely on a dug well and 26 have an “other source.” Sewer and water data was not collected in the 2000 census.



Graph 13

(Note: the Village of Fort Johnson installed a sanitary sewer system in 2000.)



Graph 14

PART TWO:
FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter Four

Goals Formulation

Arriving at the Goals

The goals and objectives of this plan were formulated through many years of planning, surveys, workshops and public hearings on a wide variety of land use issues in the Town. There has been a continuity of public involvement in the planning process during this time.

In 1994, the Town Board contracted with the Montgomery County Department of Planning and Development to provide technical assistance to the Planning Board in developing the Comprehensive Plan. In February 1995, the Planning Board prepared a community questionnaire and mailed it to 3,100 residents of the Town using E911 addresses. The purpose of the questionnaire was to obtain opinions on land development issues to guide the Town in future decision making. The questionnaire elicited a 25% response rate and its results are summarized in the appendix to this plan.

The Planning Board inventoried and analyzed the natural setting, developmental history, and socio-economic resources in the community. The Board then formulated the goals, objectives and recommendations of this plan using the survey results, the community analysis, and the public input at workshops and hearings on land use issues.

Two public workshops on the draft plan were held in 2001, and the goals and objectives were modified to further reflect public input.

Chapter Five

Goals, Objectives and Implementation Tasks

Goals, Objectives and Implementation Tasks

The goals, objectives, and implementation tasks define the principles that should be used to guide the Town's future growth and development. The goals, objectives, and implementation tasks listed in this chapter are the most important elements of this plan, and were developed after analyzing the results of the Town-wide survey and public workshops. These goals and objectives can only be realized if the Town's policy makers implement them.

It should be noted that the goals listed in this chapter are not listed in order of priority. They are all equally important and should be treated as such by the Town's officials and its people.

Overall Goal:

Promote land uses that complement and enhance the Town's existing development patterns and are consistent with the Town's rural character, while recognizing natural resources and constraints on development.

Goal 1: Preserve the Town's Rural Character and Open Spaces

Objective 1*:* Encourage and enhance the preservation of open space in the Town.

Implementation Tasks:

- Promote low-density development throughout most of the Town where sewer and water is neither available or feasible.
- Allow higher density development in areas served by public sewer or water systems, or served by private engineer-designed systems.
- Encourage open space conservation through cluster development provisions within the subdivision regulations.
- Limit commercial and industrial development to areas proximate to existing development, where it will have the least impact on the rural character of the community.

Objective 2: Preserve the Town's existing farm operations by the promotion of, and participation in, the New York State Agricultural District Program.

Implementation Tasks:

- Actively assist the Montgomery County Planning Board and Ag and Farmland Protection Board in ensuring that all active farms and agricultural land are included in Agricultural District #2.
- Educate landowners and Town officials of the provisions of New York State Ag & Markets Law Article 25AA. Enforce the Ag Data statement provision of this law in all appropriate review procedures.

Goal 2: Preserve the Natural Environment

Objective 1: Protect the Town's natural resources through project review.

Implementation Tasks:

- Make explicit the Planning Board's consideration of the protection of natural resources as a factor in subdivision and site plan review.
- Ensure that any project that the Town directly undertakes, funds or approves complies with SEQRA requirements.

Objective 2: Protect and preserve the natural resources of the Town through land use regulations and enforcement.

Implementation Tasks:

- Institute density restrictions that recognize the poor carrying capacity of the Town's soils. Amend the existing regulations to require larger lot sizes in areas without sewer or water systems.
- Strictly enforce minimum lot size and densities in the zoning regulations.
- According to NYS education and health law, all new residential septic systems must be designed by an engineer, architect, or exempted land surveyor. In order to comply with these regulations and not place an undue hardship on residents, the Town should develop several prototypical systems designed for a range of percolation tests and soil conditions, and approved by an engineer. All new septic systems must be designed and installed in compliance with these specifications, (or by an independent licensed professional) and be inspected by the Code Enforcement Officer.
- Require that all new wells be drilled or dug by drillers who meet current DEC registration and licensing requirements.
- Prohibit uses that are detrimental to the natural environment, including landfills, open mining, strip mining, open composting, salvage or junkyards, debris dumping, and open petroleum or chemical tank farms. Develop strict regulations and a permitting procedure for commercial logging.

Objective 3: Plan for future infrastructure needs of the Town, in order to protect soil and groundwater resources.

- Investigate the feasibility of establishing new public sanitary sewer districts in areas of failing septic systems, such as Midline Road. Such a system should also incorporate a closed storm drainage system into the engineered design.

Goal 3: Encourage Commercial and Industrial Development which is compatible with existing land use

Objective 1: Concentrate new professional business, commercial, and industrial development in areas already supporting this type of development, which are served by, or are able to be served, by adequate infrastructure.

Implementation Tasks:

- Work with the City of Amsterdam to implement the phased development of public sewer and water systems that are consistent with the Town's future development needs. The infrastructure should be designed to accommodate the maximum build-out of commercial and industrial areas.
- Develop the M-1 zone as a mixed use zone that allows compatible light industrial, commercial, and professional businesses to be intermixed in a planned environment.
- Permit select light industrial uses in the commercial zone, through special use permits.
- Encourage adaptive reuse of existing vacant commercial and industrial structures by developers.

Objective 2: Buffer existing single-family residential neighborhoods from commercial and industrial areas.

- Create B-2 and R-2 buffer zones between commercial/industrial zones and single-family residential areas, which permit a mix of small scale commercial and residential uses.

Goal 4: Encourage the Development of affordable housing in the Town

Objective 1: Provide a variety of housing in the Town through the development of residential districts which protect existing neighborhoods, but also permit new types of housing patterns.

Implementation Tasks:

- Preserve the character of established single family R-1 residential zones.
- Permit and encourage the construction of townhouses, condominiums, and senior citizen housing, especially in areas close to existing infrastructure, shopping and health services.
- Establish a Mobile Home Residential District for all new mobile homes in the Town, encompassing the site of the existing Waite Road mobile home park.

Goal 5: Provide Adequate Recreational Opportunities in the Town

Objective 1: Ensure the availability of adequate recreational facilities and opportunities.

Implementation Tasks:

- Investigate the feasibility of developing a central community park for passive recreation, including nature trails and an amphitheater.
- Investigate the possibility of providing a network of bicycle trails in the Town.
- Establish provisions which encourage residential developers to provide dedicated recreation areas or open space.

Goal 6: Enhance and Encourage Preservation of the Town's Historical Character

Objective 1: Identify and recognize historic properties warranting protection**.**

Implementation Tasks:

- Develop the Hurricana Farm Barn as a Town Historical Museum.
- Establish the Hurricana Farm site as a Historic Site on the State and National Register of Historic Places.
- Complete a historic resources survey. Inventory sites that the community feels are of historic significance to the Town and should be protected.
- Erect signs that identify these sites in an informative and attractive manner. Research available grant funding for enhancement and preservation of these historic sites.

Objective 2: Preserve the Town's historic character through appropriate land use controls.

Implementation Tasks:

- Create a Historic Overlay Zone which would require architectural review of any new development on the Hurricana Farm site. The scale, massing, materials and roof forms should be in character with remaining barns and structures.
- Implement buffering and landscaping requirements to provide adequate screening between significant historical buildings and new development.

Goal 7: Promote a Safe and Efficient Transportation System throughout the Town

Objective 1: Lessen traffic congestion and improve vehicular and pedestrian safety along the Route 30 corridor.

Implementation Tasks:

- Work towards the implementation of the proposed Route 30 Alternate Road Network.
- Pursue the realignment of Log City Road and Maple Avenue at Route 30 into a four-way signalized intersection, through design, funding and construction phases.
- Work with the NYS Department of Transportation to plan and implement access management improvements to the Route 30 corridor. These may include widening the highway, creating access lanes, improving intersections and installing sidewalks and bicycle lanes. Consider the adoption of Access Management Regulations.

Objective 2: Improve traffic safety of the Route 67 corridor.

Implementation Task:

- Work with the NYS Department of Transportation in planning and implementing proposed improvements to the Route 67 and McDonald Drive intersection.

Objective 3: Improve the safety of local streets and rural roads in the Town which are carrying high traffic loads.

Implementation Tasks:

- Work with the NYS DOT to determine the sufficiency of heavily traveled local roads, including Truax, Midline, Wallins Corners, Golf Course, Log City, and McKay Roads. Investigate the necessity and feasibility of upgrading these roads to safely carry their current and anticipated traffic loads.

- Investigate the cost and feasibility of upgrading the open culvert systems on heavily traveled local roads to a closed system with no open ditches.

Objective 4: Improve vehicular and pedestrian safety throughout the Town through the installation of underground utility lines.

Implementation Tasks:

- To benefit public safety, require underground utilities lines for new development in the Town where permitted by bedrock conditions.

- Investigate the feasibility of installing underground utility lines along the Route 30 corridor for existing development whenever there is major road construction.

Objective 5: Investigate and promote methods of alternative transportation.

Implementation Task:

- Work with the City of Amsterdam Transportation Department to determine the need for expanded public transportation routes in the Town.

Goal 8: Maintain and Enhance the Aesthetics of the Town

Objective 1: Through land use regulations, ensure that new development enhances the Town's character.

Implementation Tasks:

- Develop consistent design review guidelines addressing architectural style and facade development for all new commercial and industrial development in the Town.

- Simplify the existing Site Plan Review process so that developers are not required to go through a two-tier review. The Planning Board should have final approval power in both Site Plan Review and Special Use Permit applications.

- Ensure that all building codes are adequately enforced by the Code Enforcement Officer, and that all codes are met before a Certificate of Occupancy Permit is issued on any new building.

- To benefit public safety and enhance the Town's aesthetics, revise the Subdivision Regulations to require underground utilities for all new development where permitted by bedrock conditions.

Objective 2: Provide for site planning and landscaping that are compatible with the Town's character**.**

Implementation Tasks

- Implement buffering and landscaping requirements that provide for adequate screening between commercial/ industrial development and adjacent areas of residential development.

Goal 9: Cooperate with adjacent municipalities and Montgomery Co.

Objective 1: Coordinate governmental activities at all levels with surrounding communities.

Implementation Task:

- Develop a formal mechanism for regular inter-municipal government meetings to resolve issues of mutual concern and enhance efficient delivery of services.

Objective 2: Continue to support the existing public safety facilities in the Town.

Implementation Task:

- Continue to support the New York State Police, Montgomery County Sheriff's Department, and the Volunteer Fire Departments and ambulance services which protect the Town.

Goal 10: Continue an Open Dialogue on the Future of the Town of Amsterdam

Objective 1: Be responsive to the feelings and desires of the Town's residents with regards to future growth and development.

Implementation Tasks:

- The Planning Board should hold public meetings each spring and fall for the Town's people to discuss the present state of the Town and offer ideas for the future direction of the Town.
- Analyze this comprehensive plan on a yearly basis to ensure that the goals and objectives are being fulfilled and update it, if necessary, every five years.

Chapter Six

Future Development Plans

Future Land Use Plan

One of the primary purposes of a comprehensive plan is to suggest a future development pattern for the municipality. During the comprehensive planning process, the Town's current development patterns and existing zoning map were analyzed to determine if they are consistent with the plan's newly formed goals and objectives. Several alternate development patterns were studied in order to develop a Future Land Use Plan that best implements the goals and objectives of this plan. The Future Land Use Plan will become the basis for a revised Zoning Map and Law.

The **Future Land Use Plan** contains seven base land use districts and two overlay districts. The base land use districts are R-1 Residential, R-2 Residential, R-M Mobile Home Residential, A Agricultural, B-1 Business and B-2 Restricted Business, and M-1 Manufacturing/Mixed Use, and PUD Planned Development District. The two overlay districts which float above these zones are the H Historic Overlay District and the PWSF (Personal Wireless Service Facility) District.

In order to implement the goal *"Encourage the Development of Affordable Housing"* the future land use plan contains three different residential districts. Single-family housing is the most abundant and popular residential type in the town, but there is also a rapidly increasing need for senior citizen housing in areas close to existing shopping areas, transportation routes and medical services. This need will increase in the next ten years as the "baby boom" generation ages. Also, the Town of Amsterdam is ideally located to serve as a bedroom community for the Capital District, if it can provide a variety of housing types, including townhouses and condominiums, as starter housing for young professionals. A minimum lot size of 3 acres is proposed in areas not served by public or private sewer or water systems, in order to implement the goal *"Preserve the Natural Environment."* In order to realize the goal *"Preserve the Town's Rural Character and Open Spaces"* cluster developments will be encouraged, if permitted by site specific soil conditions.

The existing **R-1 Residential District** will remain the largest and most predominant district in the town. Its purpose is to preserve established single-family residential neighborhoods. This district will permit only single-family homes, home occupations, family and group family day care homes, community parks and public buildings. Accessory dwelling units, hospitals, nursing homes, schools, churches, golf courses and country clubs, bed and breakfast establishments, public utility stations, pleasure horses and kennels will be permitted by special permit.

The existing **R-2 Residential District** between Widow Susan and Truax Road will be expanded to the north side of Route 67, and a new R-2 district will be created west of the commercial strip on Route 30. The purpose of this district is to create areas for higher density residential development. These districts are located to buffer single-family residential areas from commercial development, and have the potential of tying into City of Amsterdam infrastructure. In addition to all R-1 principal and special uses, the R-2 district will permit two-family and multi-family dwellings, townhouses and condominiums. Funeral Homes will also be permitted by special permit.

The new **R-M Mobile Home Residential District** will be located at the intersection of Route 67 and Waite Road, in an expanded zone around the existing mobile home park. To preserve the community character of the Town, new mobile homes will be permitted only in this District, unless they are part of a farm operation. Permitted uses include single and two-family dwellings, mobile homes and mobile home parks, and farm operations.

The three existing **A Agricultural Districts** will remain in the Town. The agricultural districts permit all R-1 and R-2 uses and also allow new farms operations, nurseries and truck gardens. Camping grounds, animal hospitals, kennels, and stables will be permitted by special permit. New farm operations are also permitted on any land within Montgomery County Ag District #2.

The **B-1 Business District** will provide a location for high-traffic retail uses along the existing commercial corridors of Route 30 and 67E, and a smaller strip in Tribes Hill. New commercial development should occur within these existing zones, and developers should be highly encouraged to reuse abandoned retail space. Permitted uses include retail stores, shopping centers, personal service shops, day care centers, professional offices, banks, restaurants, laundry/dry cleaning plants, motels/hotels, bowling alleys, funeral homes, vehicle sales, building materials sales/storage, electrical and hvac shops, gas stations, garages, animal hospitals/kennels, and wholesale business. Dwelling units as accessory use to a business, self-storage units, public utility stations, car washes, warehouses, and light manufacturing will be permitted by special permit.

The **B-2 Restricted Business District** provides for a mix of smaller scale commercial and residential uses. These districts are located to buffer existing R-1 residential neighborhoods from intensive commercial and manufacturing uses. An existing B-2 zone along the eastern end of Wallins Corners Road will be expanded northward to buffer residences along Midline Road. A B-2 zone will also be created at the southern end of the Route 30

corridor near the City Line, wrapping around the existing shopping centers and including the hospital, medical and professional buildings. Permitted uses include retail stores, personal service shops, professional offices, banks, restaurants, day care centers, funeral homes, public buildings, community parks, single family homes, two-family and multiple family dwellings, townhouses and condominiums, family and group family day care homes, and bed and breakfast establishments. Special permit uses include hospitals, nursing homes, and public utility stations.

The **M-1 Manufacturing/Mixed Use District** will allow compatible light industrial, commercial and professional businesses to be intermixed in a planned environment. The two existing M-1 districts, along Route 30/Maple Avenue and the eastern edge of the City by the Mohawk River, are underutilized and have adequate acreage for future development. The extension of water infrastructure along Route 30 and Wallins Corners Road may help spur further industrial development. The M-1 District will permit all B-1 uses and a wide variety of manufacturing uses including tool or machine shops, manufacturing of food or paper products, printing or publishing plant, light assembly plant, manufacture of electrical or electronic devices, research and development center, warehouse/distribution center, transportation services, auto/truck rentals, and cold storage plant. Special permit uses include manufacture of textile or leather goods, manufacture of metal, concrete, stone, plastic, paint, fiber or wood products, adult uses, and public utility structures.

The **PUD Planned Unit Development District** is a mechanism for planning large-scale residential, commercial, recreation or mixed land use developments. It provides flexible land use and design regulations in order to encourage a variety of land uses that might otherwise be restricted by use and area regulations of the local district. There are currently two PUDs in the Town, the Mount Loretto complex on Swart Hill Road and the proposed Senior Housing Site behind Amsterdam Memorial Hospital.

The **PWSF Personal Wireless Services Facilities Overlay District** floats over the B-1 and M-1 zones and regulates the siting and construction of personal wireless service facilities, or cell towers.

The **H Historic Overlay District** floats over the former Hurricana Farm site. This site is one of the most important historical sites in the town and has undergone rapid commercial development. Further development in this district should be reviewed for architectural compatibility (massing, materials, scale, roof shapes, etc.) with the remaining barns and historic structures.

Proposed Districts and Uses

R-1 RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

Principal Permitted Uses:
One family dwelling
Customary Home Occupation
Family or Group Family Day Care Home
Community park or playground
Public building
Customary accessory use or building
Existing farm, nursery, truck garden
Mobile home as part of ex. farm operation

Special Permit Uses:
Accessory dwelling unit
Golf Course or Country Club
Hospital, Nursing Home, Home for Aged
Church, parish house, convent
Public or private school, college
Bed and Breakfast establishment
Public utility station or structure
Pleasure horses (w/appropriate acreage)
Kennels (w/appropriate acreage)

R-2 RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

Principal Permitted Uses:
One family dwelling
Two-family dwelling
Multiple-family dwelling
Townhouses and Condominiums
Accessory Dwelling Unit
Customary Home Occupation
Family or Group Family Day Care Home
Community park or playground
Public building
Customary accessory use or building
Existing farm, nursery, truck garden
Mobile home as part of ex. farm operation

Special Permit Uses:
Golf Course or Country Club
Hospital, Nursing Home, Home for Aged
Church, parish house, convent
Public or private school, college
Bed and Breakfast establishment
Public utility station or structure
Funeral Home
Pleasure horses (w/appropriate acreage)
Kennels (w/appropriate acreage)

R-M MOBILE HOME RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

Principal Permitted Uses:
One family dwelling
Two-family dwelling
Mobile Home
Mobile Home Park
Customary accessory use or building
Community park or playground
Farm operation, nursery or truck garden

Special Permit Uses:
Public utility station or structure

A AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT

Principal Permitted Uses:

One family dwelling
Two-family dwelling
Multiple-family dwelling
Townhouses, Condominiums
Accessory dwelling unit
Customary Home Occupation
Family or Group Family Day Care Home
Community park or playground
Public building
Customary accessory use or building
Farm operation, nursery or truck garden
Mobile home as part of a farm operation

Special Permit Uses:

Golf Course or Country Club
Hospital, Nursing Home, Home for Aged
Church, parish house, convent
Public or private school, college
Bed and Breakfast establishment
Public utility station or structure
Funeral Home
Camping grounds
Animal/Veterinary Hospital
Kennels
Stables

B-1 BUSINESS DISTRICT

Principal Permitted Uses:

Retail store or shop
Shopping Center
Personal Service Shop
Professional office
Day Care Center
Laundry or Dry Cleaning Plant
Bank
Restaurant
Motel, hotel
Bowling Alley
Funeral Home
Automobile, boat, farm implement, mobile home or trailer sales/rental
Fuel, feed, lumber, seed, fertilizer, construction or building materials sales or storage
Cabinet, electrical, heating, plumbing or air conditioning shop
Gasoline station
Public garage
Veterinary, animal hospital, kennels
Wholesale business

Special Permit Uses

Dwelling unit as accessory to business
Public utility station or structure
Car Wash
Warehouse
Self storage units
Light Manufacturing

B-2 RESTRICTED BUSINESS DISTRICT

Principal Permitted Uses:
Retail store or shop
Personal service shop
Professional office
Day Care Center
Bank
Restaurant
Funeral home
Public Building
Community park or playground
One-family dwelling
Two-family dwelling
Multiple-family dwelling
Town Houses, Condominiums
Bed and Breakfast establishment
Customary Home Occupation
Customary accessory use or building
Family or Group Family Day Care Home

Special Permit Uses:
Dwelling unit as accessory to business
Hospital, Nursing home, Home for Aged
Public utility station or structure

M-1 MANUFACTURING/MIXED USE DISTRICT

Principal Permitted Uses:

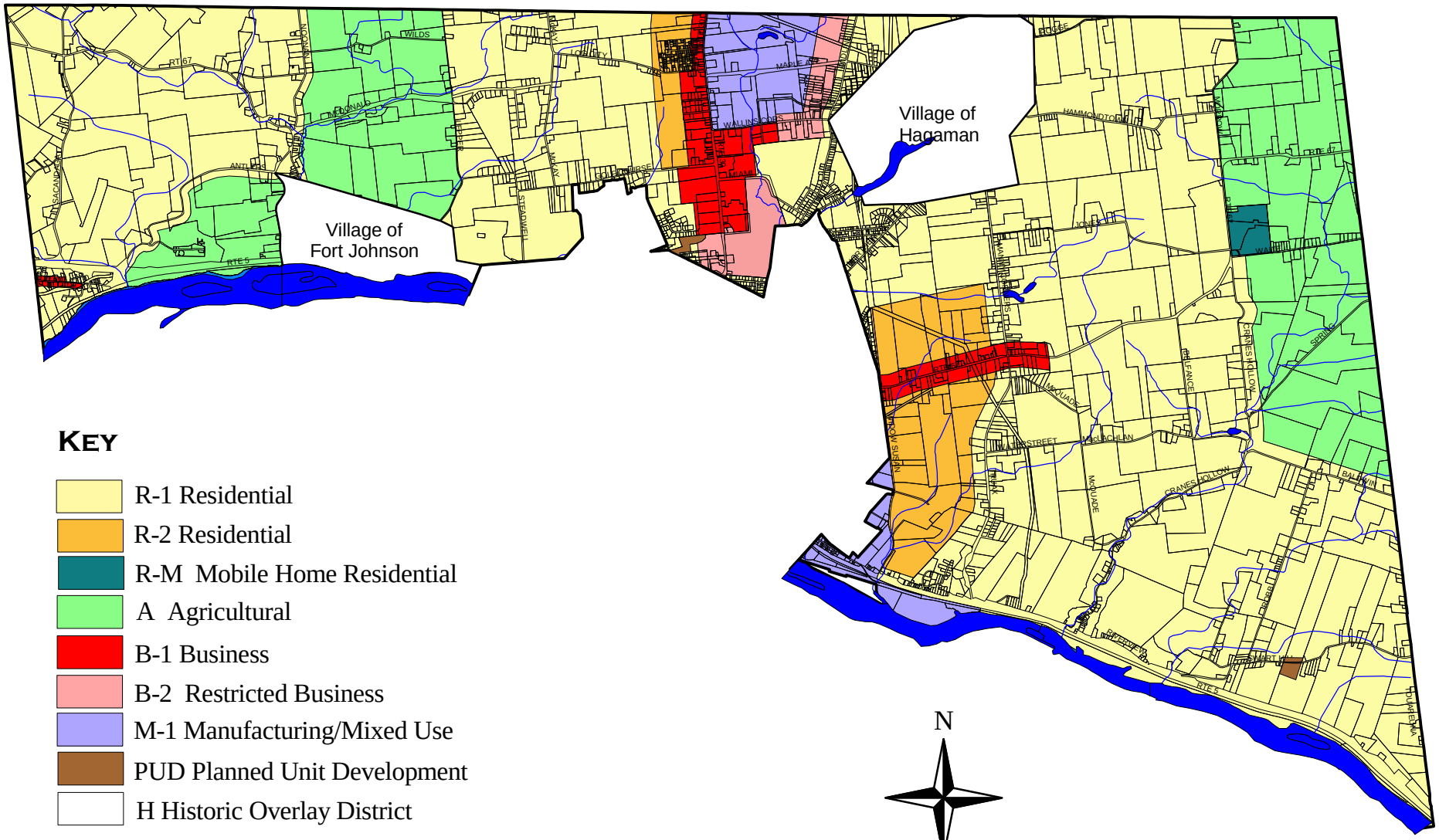
All B-1 Business Uses

Tool, die, pattern or machine shop
Manufacture or processing of food products
Manufacture of paper products
Printing or publishing plant
Light Assembly Plant
Manufacture or assembly of electrical or electronic devices or instruments
Research and development center
Warehouse/Distribution Center
Transportation services, auto/truck rentals
Cold storage plant
Accessory uses

Special Permit Uses:

Manufacture of textile or leather goods
Manufacture or fabrication of metal, concrete, stone, plastic, paint, fiber or wood products
Public utility station or structure
Adult Uses

Town of Amsterdam
Future Land Use Plan



Key

- R-1 Residential
- R-2 Residential
- R-M Mobile Home Residential
- A Agricultural
- B-1 Business
- B-2 Restricted Business
- M-1 Manufacturing/Mixed Use
- PUD Planned Unit Development
- H Historic Overlay District

Montgomery County Dept.
of Planning & Development
November 2002

Source:
Montgomery County Real Property Tax Service Agency

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Future Transportation Plan

Planning Principles

This section has been prepared with the knowledge and expertise of Steve Munson, NYS DOT Transportation Planner. The following Planning Principles guided the development of the Transportation Plan:

- The transportation system should serve the needs and objectives of the community.

- Transportation services and infrastructure should provide for the safe and efficient movement of goods and people.

- Transportation services and infrastructure are public assets and development should be planned and implemented in a manner that minimizes impacts on these assets.

Issues and Opportunities

A. Route 30 - Amsterdam's Principal Economic Corridor

1. Issues:

In 1965 Russell B. Bailey Associates prepared a Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Amsterdam which identified Route 30 as the most important north-south highway in the Town, serving multiple users including commuter and recreational traffic as well as commercial developments. The Plan also predicted that it would continue to be the focus of commercial development in the future.

As predicted, the Route 30 commercial corridor has been the focus of commercial and retail growth in the Town. Indeed, between the years 1990 and 2000 commercial square footage more than doubled, from 526,000 square-feet to 1,068,000 square feet. This development has substantially increased traffic along Route 30: between 1992 and 1999 traffic volumes in the most heavily developed section of the corridor grew from an average of 14,300 vehicles per day (vpd) to 23,300 vpd, or by slightly less than 70-percent, for example.[1]

In order to maintain or enhance Route 30 as the focus of future commercial development, and the resulting increase in traffic that would occur with such development, it would appear that three issues need to be addressed.

a. The operational characteristics of Route 30 (e.g. level of service, travel time, and safety) have to be maintained at as high a level as possible.

A reasonably large share of the vehicles using Rt. 30 are commuters or recreational traffic. At some degraded level of operations these users will take alternative routes and this would reduce the volume of potential customers available to businesses along Rt. 30 and place increased stress on local roads. The Route 30 corridor currently shows signs of degraded operations.

Increased traffic is not the only determinant of deteriorating traffic conditions on Route 30, however. Three-legged local road connections, the number and proximity of signals, and the proliferation and design of driveways are also implicated in declining level of service, increased travel time and increased accidents. For example, traffic volumes on Route 30 are "artificially" increased as are turning movements as vehicles are forced to jog along Route 30 from one intersection to the next in order to cross. Similarly, the number and proximity of signals reduces capacity and increases travel time.[2]

b. The lack of a linear and efficient east-west connection to Route 30 north of the City line reduces the market reach of the Route 30 corridor.

Amsterdam's road system is laid out in a rough grid pattern of north-south and east-west roads. Most north-south roads are linear and it is possible to drive from one side of the Town to the other without making a turn at an intersection. The same is not true for the east-west roads, with the exception of Rt. 5 through the City. For example, 6 turns would be involved in driving from the point where Rt. 67E crosses the eastern town line to the commercial area of Rt. 30. Increased travel time impedes the ability of businesses located on the Rt. 30 corridor to compete with businesses in Schenectady and Rotterdam to the east and Johnstown and Gloversville to the west.

c. The local roads serving the Route 30 corridor must have the capacity to serve traffic accessing Route 30 safely and efficiently, and this use must not infringe on other users of the roadways.

The impacts of traffic moving to and from developments along Rt. 30 also extends to local roads serving Rt. 30, including both intersecting roads (Miami, Wallins Corner and Maple on the east side of Route 30 and Log City and Golf Course on the west) and parallel roads, particularly Midline and Van Dyke. An analysis of traffic volumes on Route 30 suggests that traffic volumes moving from local roads onto Route 30 increased by more than 6,000 vpd between 1992 and 1999. But, because traffic counts for these roads are not available prior to this year, the impact of development on Rt. 30 on traffic on specific local roads serving Rt. 30 cannot be determined. (In order to evaluate traffic conditions on these roads as well as the impacts of future development, the New York State Department of Transportation agreed to take traffic counts at 13 locations. These counts were completed by the Department on April 5, 2001.)

Analyses of the traffic count data provided by NYSDOT suggests that traffic on these local roads has not yet reached their operational capacity at a reasonable level of service. (For example, one-way, peak hour traffic on the most heavily traveled road, Midline Avenue just south of the Miami Ave. intersection is just over 500 vehicles per hour.) At the same time, and more subjectively, existing traffic volumes appear inconsistent with the needs and objectives of other users of these roads, particularly where there are substantial residential or institutional developments.

As might be expected given their lower traffic volumes, these local roads have fewer accidents than is the case for Route 30. At the same time, there are a number of intersections and intersection approaches

which have had a relatively large number of accidents between (1994 and 1999) and, because of the relatively small volume of traffic, the accident rates may be substantial.

2. Actions:

This Comprehensive Plan contains a number of recommendations which favor development along Rt. 30. These include the following: (i) allow higher density development in areas served by public sewer or water systems; (ii) expand the M-1 zone to allow compatible light industrial, commercial and professional businesses, particularly along Rt. 30; (iii) concentrate new commercial and professional development along the Rt. 30 (and 67E) corridors, and, (iv) develop the Hurricana Farm Barn as a Town Historical Museum. If successful these would significantly affect traffic operations on Rt. 30 and its supporting local road system. [3]

No single initiative will suffice to enhance the use of Rt. 30 for retail, commercial and light industrial development while minimizing the transportation impacts of such development. Instead, a mix of treatments will be required, including the following actions.

a. Continue development of the Route 30 Alternate Road Network.

The 1965 Comprehensive Plan prepared by Russell Bailey Associates recommended that access to Route 30 be limited and that parallel frontage roads be required for new building projects. The Town Planning Board expanded on the Bailey proposal by developing a "Concept Road Plan" with Standard Engineering in 1993. As part of the site plan review and approval large developers have been asked to build the sections of this proposed network that abut their developments. The developers have complied, although the original alignments have been modified in some places.

This road network has numerous benefits including the fact that it provides safer and more efficient access to businesses while reducing both traffic volumes and turning movements along Route 30. In addition, the access road network improves opportunities for future development in that the reduction in traffic volumes resulting from use of the access road system actually increases the capacity to serve additional developments while providing frontage for growth away from Rt. 30. This frontage could be used for commercial, mixed use or residential development. Conceptually, once the system is completed and consumers can move between establishments along the access road rather than Rt. 30, the traffic volumes on Rt. 30 will be greatly reduced.

b. Pursue the realignment of the Log City and Maple Avenue Intersection.

The northern end of this Alternate Road Network terminates near the Log City, Maple Avenue and Route 30 intersection. The number of traffic accidents at this intersection is quite high and its safety would be greatly improved by realignment of Log City and Maple Avenue, creating a 4-way intersection with a potential traffic control device. The Town should investigate the most desirable realignment at this intersection, pursue state funding, and propose it as part of the DOT Route 30 corridor project which is currently in the planning stage.

c. Evaluate the need for local road improvements

While there are substantially fewer accidents on local roads serving Route 30 than on Route 30 itself there are a number of areas with a relatively large number of accidents and with, presumably, high accident rates. These should be evaluated to determine whether there are opportunities for safety improvements. They include the following:

a. the Maple / Midline intersection

b. the Van Dyke / Golf Course intersection

c. the easterly approach to the Van Dyke / Golf Course intersection

d. the northerly and westerly approaches to the Midline / Wallins Cr. Intersection.

e. the Miami approach to Route 30

f. the Wallins Corner approach to Route 30

While local roads do not appear to have capacity problems at present, increased development along the Rt. 30 corridor could generate sufficient traffic to create problems. The Town should increase set-backs along the roads which intersect Rt. 30 to preserve room to widen the roads should this be warranted in the future and should ensure that permanent structures, including parking, are not allowed within the area that might be required for road widening.

d. Work with New York State DOT on the Route 30 improvement project

NYSDOT is currently in the process of planning an improvement project for the Route 30 corridor. The Town should work with the Department to ensure that the Town's needs and objectives are reflected by the final composition of the project. Specific elements that should be addressed include the following:

- realignment of Log City to create a 4-way intersection with Maple,
- potential realignment of driveways and or intersecting roads to reduce the number of signals,
- safety improvements, including improvements on local road approaches to Route 30,
- provision of sidewalks and landscaping to enhance the appearance of Route 30 as well as to improve pedestrian access to and between businesses,
- expanded bus service between the City and the Rt. 30 commercial area,
- curbing and driveway delineation.

e. Implement development sensitive land-use management controls to preserve the safe and efficient operation of Route 30

The Town's ability to manage developments along and connections to Rt. 30 has a substantial impact on its traffic operations and safety and its supporting system of local roads.[4] And, traffic operations and safety are significant factors in the location decisions of businesses. There are, however, a number of no- or low-cost zoning and subdivision management actions that can substantially benefit traffic operations and should be implemented by the Town.

They include the following:

- increase setbacks to allow for eventual development of seven lanes as well as landscaping and pedestrian facilities (and do not allow construction of permanent structures or parking in this width);

- require subdivisions to provide an access management plan based on full development of the subdivision prior to approval; the plan should emphasize internal access to all parcels and through and side connections to local roads when possible;

- require interconnection between abutting parcels with compatible uses and particularly where large developments occur behind multiple smaller developments;

- do not allow facilities that require signals to locate the signals so as to serve their business or location only; instead, require that such signals be located so as to serve businesses or roads across Rt. 30 as well as abutting businesses;

- establish driveway design standards to ensure that vehicles can move between parking areas and the public roadway safely and efficiently;

- increase frontage requirements and establish driveway spacing standards which promote the use of Rt. 30 by higher value businesses.

B. Other Transportation Issues and Opportunities

1. Traffic operations and safety

An analysis of the available traffic volume and capacity data, together with a driving tour of the major and many minor roads during peak hours, suggests that there are no roads outside of the Rt. 30 corridor that are approaching traffic volumes which would warrant capacity improvements.

Despite the generally lower traffic volumes there are a number of areas with relatively high numbers of accidents, and particularly the intersections of (a) Truax and Rt.67E, (b) Rt. 5 and Antlers, (c) 67W / McDonald / Waters, (d) 67W and Sacandaga, and (e) Manny Corners and 67E. In addition, there are also a relatively large number of accidents on the stretch of 67W between McDonalds and Sacandaga.

Action:

- *Work with NYSDOT to evaluate the intersection approaches and geometry and determine whether major or minor fixes are warranted.*

2. Road Alignment and Design Issues

The design and alignment of roads take into account a wide variety of factors including terrain, drainage, wetlands, actual and potential traffic demand, and the nature and extent of potential land uses along the road. As a generality, however, road designs and alignments intended to serve relatively low traffic volumes do not function well when traffic volumes increase, or development along the roads increase turning movements. The road system in Amsterdam has a number of characteristics that typically create problems when traffic volumes increase, including the following.

a. Narrow local roads with minimum shoulders, open drainage ditches and vegetation often reducing sight lines.

This type of design can reduce safe operations, even at current traffic volumes, when weather conditions deteriorate and/or when vehicles stop and park by the road.

Safety deteriorates as traffic volumes increase and/or development along the road increases entering and exiting movements. But, where development has already occurred, the ability to widen the road (by widening lanes and shoulders, or adding lanes) is compromised.

Actions:

- *Increase setbacks to allow for the addition of at least 2 lanes, wide shoulders and sidewalks on arterials and collectors; and to create 12 foot lanes with shoulders and sidewalks on local roads.*
- *Evaluate opportunities to eliminate open drainage ditches or increase shoulder width and spacing between the road and drainage ditches as reconstruction occurs.*

b. Lack of Sidewalks and Bikepaths

By and large residential development in Amsterdam, away from the Route 30 corridor and its and supporting local roads, is of a distributed, rural, nature. Pedestrians and bicyclists most frequently use the shoulders of roads which are not designed for such uses and conflicts are inevitable.

Actions:

- *Establish a committee to develop a bike and pedestrian plan for a system of off-road trails linking residential development areas with the business area along Route 30, the school system, and parks; and to*
- *identify roads most likely to serve bike and pedestrian users and widen the shoulders to accommodate such users; and to*
- *identify intersections most frequently used by pedestrians and / or bicyclists and evaluate the need for related improvements such as signage, striping, signals, and the like.*

c. Conflicts between Development and Transportation

There has been limited development away from the Route 30 corridor over the last 10 years and the development that has occurred has generally been located along the frontage of existing roads. At the same time, development is unpredictable and

there are circumstances under which growth would occur. (For example, substantial growth stimulus would result if Route 67 were improved to create a functional arterial between Ballston Spa and the commercial area of Route 30.)

Development generally has three types of impacts on the road system: (i) it increases traffic volumes, which decreases safety and can produce congestion; (ii) it increases the number of turns into and out of properties along the road, which further decreases safety and increases congestion; and (iii) it reduces the ability of state and local transportation agencies to resolve the safety and congestion problems associated with development, and can increase the costs of potential improvements substantially.

At the same time, the impacts of development related traffic problems also accrue to the developments, themselves. Complaints about the volume, speed and noise of traffic from residences and businesses along roads are common. Further, if capacity or safety improvements are necessary and possible they can infringe on properties, particularly in regards to right-of-way needs, which often infringes on parking, driveway locations and design, and the like.

While development may be unpredictable, the impacts of unplanned and unmanaged development are not. Fortunately, however, there are a number of no-cost or low-cost land use management techniques that can be applied to address these problems well in advance of the time when they would occur, as follows.

Actions:

Implement transportation sensitive site plan and subdivision requirements. The following four techniques can substantially reduce the impacts between development and transportation in areas away from the Route 30 corridor:

- increase setbacks to allow for additional lanes, shoulder width, drainage, and pedestrian and landscaping improvements. Setbacks should be largest for areas which have business or institutional zoning, along arterials and collectors, and for corner properties.
- increase corner clearance for driveways to corner properties.
- reduce the proliferation of properties with minimum frontages along arterials and collectors. This might be accomplished by a subdivision requirement for internalized access and minimum driveways to the arterial or collector prior to subdivision approval.
- provide (large) minimum driveway spacing standards for properties on arterials and collectors.

Footnotes:

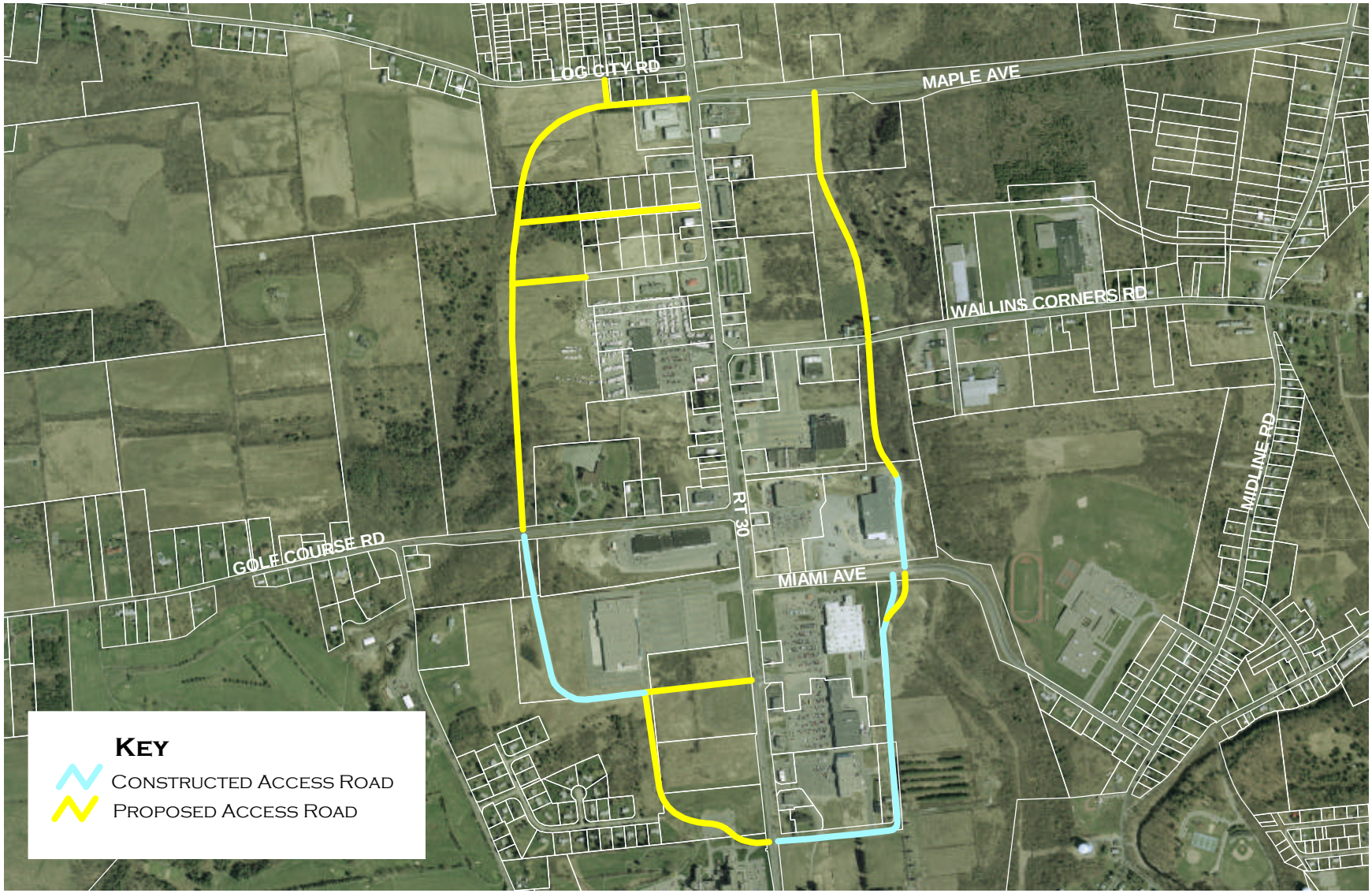
1. The increase in traffic on Route 30 is dominantly the result of traffic flowing to commercial development along Rt. 30. Two facts back up this assertion. First, the population in the core of the Rt. 30 market area, the City and Town of Amsterdam and the villages of Fort Johnson and Hagaman, declined by approximately 8.8% between the 1990 and 2000 censuses. The increase in traffic on Rt. 30 cannot, thus, be explained by an increase in drivers unless they come from outside the market area. But, this cannot be the case because traffic volumes at the southern end of Rt. 30 in the City of Amsterdam actually declined during this the same period while traffic volumes at Fulton-Montgomery county line, to the north, grew by only 8%.

2. For example, a single lane has a capacity of between 1,200 and 1,500 vehicles per hour at LOS D. If a signal is installed, assuming normal signal operations, the capacity will fall to between 700 and 900 vehicles per hour at the same level of service. In addition, travel time will be increased by the amount of time spent waiting at the signal, plus some additional time lost due to acceleration and deceleration. These problems are, obviously made worse when multiple signals are involved, and particularly when the signals are spaced too closely.

3. It is not unreasonable to assume that an increase in retail, commercial and light-industrial development of approximately the same magnitude as occurred between the years 1990 and 2000, 500,000 square feet, would generate 6,000 or more additional trips per day along the Route 30 corridor.

4. The studies available all show that local development decisions have a large impact on traffic operations and safety, particularly along moderately to heavily developed corridors. The absence of traffic sensitive land-use management results in an increase in accidents, a decrease in service and an increase in travel times of up to 30% as compared to corridors with traffic sensitive land-use management standards.

Town of Amsterdam
Route 30 Alternate Road Network



Montgomery County Dept.
of Planning & Development
July 2003

Source:
NYS Office for Technology Digital Orthoimagery, April 2001
Standard Engineering Concept Road Plan, 1993

N

1000 0 1000 2000 3000 Feet

Chapter Seven

Adopting and Updating the Plan

Plan Adoption and Schedule of Decisions Required

According to New York State Town Law, a public hearing must be held on the Draft Comprehensive Plan before its acceptance by the planning board. The Planning Board must then pass a resolution recommending that the Plan be sent to the Town of Amsterdam Town Board for review and adoption.

The Town Board should review the draft plan and pass a resolution accepting the draft plan as complete; and commence the State Environmental Quality Review Process. The Town Board should declare itself lead agency, and complete Parts 1 and 2 of the Full Environmental Assessment Form. The Town Board must determine significance within 20 days of establishing itself as lead agency. If the Town Board finds that the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan will not result in any large and important impacts and will not have a significant impact on the environment, then the Town Board must prepare a negative declaration in accordance with 6 NYCRR Part 617.

The Town Board should also schedule a public hearing on the Draft Plan and provide notice of public hearing in a newspaper of general circulation in the Town at least ten (10) calendar days in advance of the hearing. The proposed Comprehensive Plan shall be made available for public review during this ten (10) day period at the office of the Town Clerk. The public hearing on the proposed Comprehensive Plan must be held within 90 days of the Planning Board's resolution recommending the plan.

The Town should then refer the draft plan to the Montgomery County Planning Board for review and recommendation as required by §239m of the General Municipal Law. At the end of the required 30 day comment period for the County Planning Board and after the public hearing, the Final Comprehensive Plan should be prepared.

The Town Board, upon completion of the Final Comprehensive Plan and all SEQR requirements, should adopt the Town of Amsterdam Comprehensive Plan as the Town's official development policy. The adopted Plan shall be filed in the office of the Town Clerk and a copy should be filed in the office of the Montgomery County Planning and Development Department.

Implementing the Plan

The mere statements of goals, objectives, and implementation tasks in this plan will not produce the desired results unless the Town implements its goals and objectives through land use regulations, public investment and cooperation and/or partnerships with adjacent municipalities.

Once the Comprehensive Plan is adopted, the Town Planning Board should begin revisions to the Town's existing zoning and subdivision regulations to bring them into accordance with the Comprehensive Plan. Upon completion of these regulations, the Planning Board should forward them to the Town Board for consideration and adoption.

Updating & Amending the Plan

The Town of Amsterdam Comprehensive Plan should be reviewed by the Town Board and Planning Board annually to ensure that its goals, objectives, and implementation tasks are relevant to the changing conditions within the Town. It is recommended that the entire Comprehensive Plan be reviewed by the Town Board and Planning Board at least once every five years, and be amended when needed. The plan should be updated at least once every ten years.

Bibliography

The Town of Amsterdam Planning Board developed this Comprehensive Plan using a variety of references and original data. The following is a list of the written material which was referenced in this document. They include, but are not limited to:

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Town of Florida Comprehensive Plan. February 1996.

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Town of Niskayuna Comprehensive Development Plan. Schenectady County, New York. 1993.

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Traub, C., Church, D. *A Practical Guide to Comprehensive Planning.* New York: New York Planning Federation, 1996.

United States Department of Agriculture. *Soil Survey of Montgomery and Schenectady Counties.* New York, 1972.

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Survey Results

In February 1995, the Town of Amsterdam mailed 3100 questionnaires to residents in the Town of Amsterdam, including the Villages, using E911 addresses. The purpose of the questionnaire was to obtain public opinions on land development issues to guide the Town Board in its future decision-making. A total of 772 questionnaires were returned, which was a 25% response rate. The following are the summarized results of the survey.

1. Where do you live?

Town of Amsterdam	67.1%
Village of Hagaman	23.2%
Village of Fort Johnson	8.3%
Other	1.4%

2. According to the 1990 Census, our Town population is 5962. What size would you like it to be in 10 years?

Stay the same	24.9%
Slight increase	33.4%
Moderate increase	32.3%
Significant increase	9.4%

3. Additional housing opportunities should be provided in the Town of Amsterdam including the following:

	Very Important	Fairly Important	Not Important	No Response
a. Single Family housing	47.1%	35.5%	10.1%	7.3%
b. Duplexes	8.6%	35.3%	39.8%	16.2%
c. Multi-family housing	10.1%	24.9%	49.4%	15.6%
d. Cluster housing	10.1%	27.1%	45.9%	16.8%
e. Subsidized housing of any type	6.4%	14.4%	54.9%	24.3%
f. Townhouses	12.1%	34.2%	38.9%	14.7%
g. Trailer parks	4.1%	9.0%	66.5%	20.4%
h. Single mobile homes on individual lots	7.5%	13.3%	59.8%	19.4%
i. Apartments in homes	7.9%	26.8%	46.0%	19.4%

4. How important to you are each of the following aspects of the Town of Amsterdam?

	Very Important	Fairly Important	Not Important	No Response
a. Overall Attractiveness	75.3%	18.4%	1.5%	4.8%
b. Rural/small town character	62.4%	26.4%	6.0%	5.2%
c. Agriculture	40.0%	35.2%	16.3%	8.5%
d. Desire to be near family and/or friends	45.2%	33.3%	14.5%	7.1%
e. Housing Opportunities	33.0%	32.8%	25.2%	9.0%
f. Job Opportunities	67.4%	20.5%	7.5%	4.6%
g. Shopping services	55.5%	33.2%	7.8%	3.5%
h. Opportunities for first time home buyers	44.7%	39.1%	10.8%	5.3%
i. Housing opportunities for senior citizens/empty nesters	38.4%	40.1%	16.1%	5.4%
j. Adequacy of daycare facilities	30.2%	35.7%	24.7%	9.4%
k. Sidewalks	25.9%	28.6%	38.4%	7.1%

5. The Town of Amsterdam should promote commercial development:

	Very Important	Fairly Important	Not Important	No Response
a. Route 30	54.0%	23.0%	15.0%	7.9%
b. Route 67	39.4%	29.4%	21.3%	9.9%
c. Other	20.2%	11.3%	15.9%	52.5%

6. The Town of Amsterdam should expand its sewer districts to accommodate future growth.

Very Important	Fairly Important	Not Important	No Response
52.9%	22.5%	17.6%	7.0%

7. The Town of Amsterdam should develop its own public water district.

Very Important	Fairly Important	Not Important	No Response
43.9%	22.9%	24.1%	9.1%

8. How important are local land use controls over what gets built in you neighborhood as they relate to:

	Very Important	Fairly Important	Not Important	No Response
a. Density	58.0%	24.8%	8.1%	9.1%
b. Restrict Commercial/ Industrial uses	59.6%	25.7%	7.7%	7.1%
c. Preserve vegetation	54.8%	28.4%	9.8%	7.0%
d. Protect farmland	56.5%	25.2%	11.3%	7.0%
e. Building design and landscaping (aesthetics)	51.2%	28.5%	12.2%	8.0%

9. How important do you think the following issues are for the next five to ten years?

	Very Important	Fairly Important	Not Important	No Response
a. Maintain rural/suburban character	67.0%	24.2%	5.5%	3.2%
b. Control rate of development	56.7%	31.9%	6.5%	5.0%
c. Protect farmland	55.6%	28.7%	11.3%	4.3%
d. Maintain natural environment	60.4%	31.0%	4.5%	4.1%
e. Attract new business/industry	54.7%	32.4%	8.8%	4.1%
f. Develop affordable housing	29.1%	35.4%	28.7%	6.8%
g. Improve traffic flow	63.8%	27.2%	6.3%	2.8%
h. Improve local roadways	64.1%	30.0%	3.4%	3.5%
i. Protect historic structures	47.9%	33.6%	14.1%	4.4%
j. Develop recreation facilities	39.1%	37.2%	18.3%	5.4%

10. How important is the availability of the following recreational opportunities in our area?

	Very Important	Fairly Important	Not Important	No Response
a. Parks	43.0%	33.3%	18.1%	5.6%
b. Nature preserve	38.0%	39.6%	16.5%	5.8%
c. Outdoor athletic facilities	32.2%	39.9%	22.0%	5.9%
d. Indoor athletic facilities	24.6%	36.9%	31.6%	6.9%

11. How important would it be to have a Sheriff"s Satellite Station in our town?

Very Important	Fairly Important	Not Important	No Response
45.0%	31.0%	19.4%	4.5%

12. What is the best thing about the Town of Amsterdam? (33% sample)

Rural Location	33.2%
Close to . . .	12.2%
Low Taxes	7.4%
Friendly People	7.1%
Small Size	6.2%
Growth Potential	5.6%
Services	5.6%
Great Town	4.2%
Attractiveness	3.9%
Safe Environment	3.6%
Good Roads	3.3%
Community Development	3.0%
Out of City	2.4%
Available land	1.2%
Drinking water	0.8%
Zoning	0.3%

13. What is the worst thing about the Town of Amsterdam?

Politics	39.1%
High Taxes	8.3%
Route 30	7.4%
Planning	5.0%
Traffic	5.0%
Bad Services	4.1%
Lack of Jobs	4.1%
Overdeveloped	3.8%
Empty buildings	3.6%
Lack of Recreation	3.6%
Lack of Sewers	3.6%
Poor Roads	3.0%
Lack of water	2.1%
Poor schools	1.8%
Poor Zoning enforcement	1.5%
Sanford Farm destroyed	1.5%
Drugs/Violence	0.3%
The Recorder	0.3%

14. The Town of Amsterdam's biggest problem is:

Politics/Elected Officials	48.2%
Route 30	6.0%
High Taxes	5.7%
No Planning	5.4%
Traffic	5.1%
Lack of Jobs	4.5%
Empty Buildings	3.3%
Lack of Sewer	3.0%
Overdeveloped	3.0%
Drugs/Violence	2.7%
Water	2.4%
Lack of Zoning enforcement	1.8%
Bad Roads	1.8%
Lack of Recreation	1.8%
Lack of Services	1.5%
Lack of Shopping	1.2%
Annexation	1.2%
Lack of Housing	0.9%
The Recorder	0.3%

15. Why did you choose to live in the Town of Amsterdam?

Rural setting	26.6%
Born and raised here	25.5%
Location	13.7%
Low Taxes	8.4%
Affordable housing	6.4%
Near family and friends	4.2%
Like the town	3.6%
Marriage	3.1%
Employment	2.5%
Love Property	2.2%
Friendly People	2.0%
Safe	1.7%

16. You shop for day-to-day items (groceries, gasoline) in:

a. Route 30	87.9%
b. City of Amsterdam	5.3%
c. Outside the area	4.0%
d. Hagaman	2.4%
e. Fort Johnson	0.5%

17. You shop for major purchase items (appliances, clothes) in:

a. Outside the area	59.3%
b. Town of Amsterdam	37.5%
c. City of Amsterdam	3.2%

18. Adults/Children for entertainment we/they usually go to:

a. Outside the area	55.3%
b. Town of Amsterdam	26.3%
c. City of Amsterdam	18.4%

In order to learn about the people who complete this questionnaire, please check the appropriate boxes below.

1. Age:

19 or younger	0.3%
20 - 34	10.7%
35 - 54	42.1%
55 - 64	17.4%
65 or older	29.5%

2. Sex:

Male	53.8%
Female	46.2%

3. Who lives with you?

Spouse	59.0%
Children	33.2%
Parents or other family	3.8%
Roommate	1.8%
I live alone	15.0%

4. Do you own your home?

Yes	92.3%
No	7.7%

5. What kind of work do you do?

Agricultural	1.7%
Construction	3.4%
Management/Professional	26.6%
Manufacturing	6.6%
Clerical, sales or service	12.0%
Retired	30.6%
Homemaker	6.4%
Other	12.7%

6. Where do you work?

Within the Town/Villages	27.2%
Schenectady County	22.2%
Albany County	14.9%
Saratoga County	4.8%
Fulton County	7.5%
Other areas	23.4%

Comments and Suggestions:

Town needs quality men's and women's clothing stores.
Town needs department stores such as Sears and JC Penney's.
Town needs a good nightclub for the thirty-something generation.
Use old, abandoned buildings on Route 30 or tear them down.
Better enforcement of zoning when dealing with half done homes and cars on lawns.