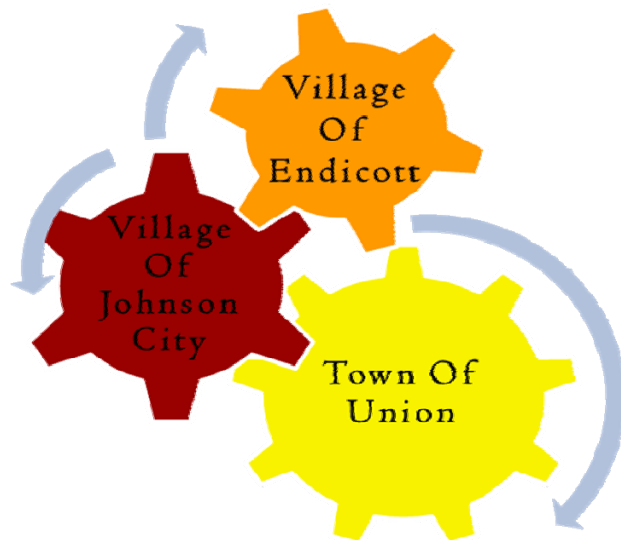


Goals & Objectives

Chapter 1



Introduction

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Introduction

1

“Think highly of yourself, for the world takes you at your own estimate” -Author Unknown-

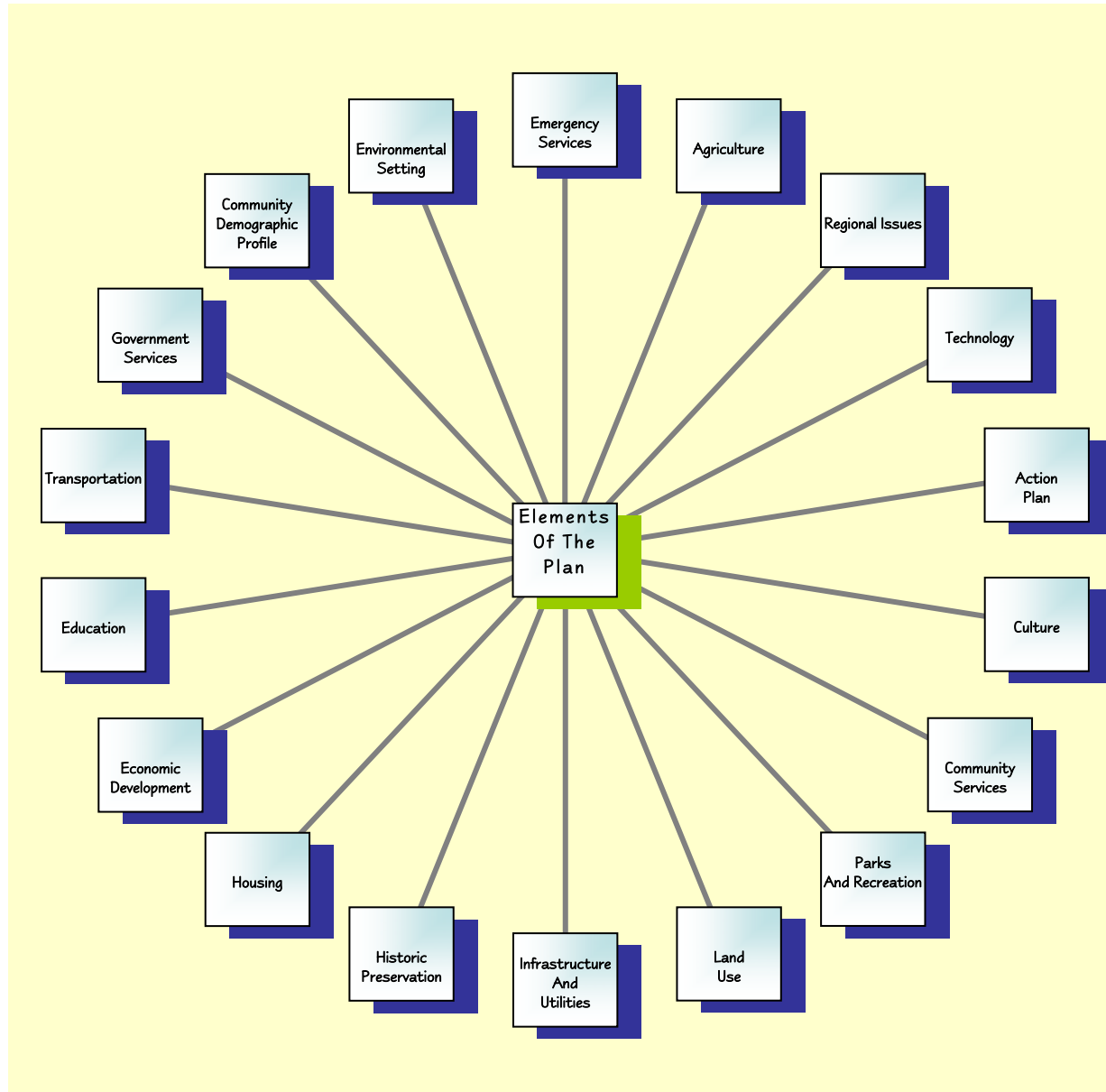
In preparation for a new Comprehensive Plan the Town of Union, Village of Endicott, and Village of Johnson City were divided into 25 neighborhoods for the purposes of a series of neighborhood meetings that were conducted during the late-1990s. At these meetings, a number of concerns and issues facing the community were identified which ultimately resulted in the preparation of a Statement of Goals, Objectives, and Policies with input from the following agencies:

- Town of Union Planning Department
- Town of Union Planning Board
- Village of Endicott Planning Board
- Village of Endicott Fire Department
- Village of Johnson City Planning Department
- Village of Johnson City Planning Board

The Statement of Goals, Objectives, and Policies was divided into the following elements (See **Figure 1** Elements of the Plan):

- Agriculture
- Regional Issues
- Technology
- Action Plan
- Culture
- Community Services
- Parks and Recreation
- Land Use
- Infrastructure and Utilities
- Historic Preservation
- Housing
- Economic Development
- Education
- Transportation
- Government Services
- Community Demographic Profile
- Environmental Setting
- Emergency Services

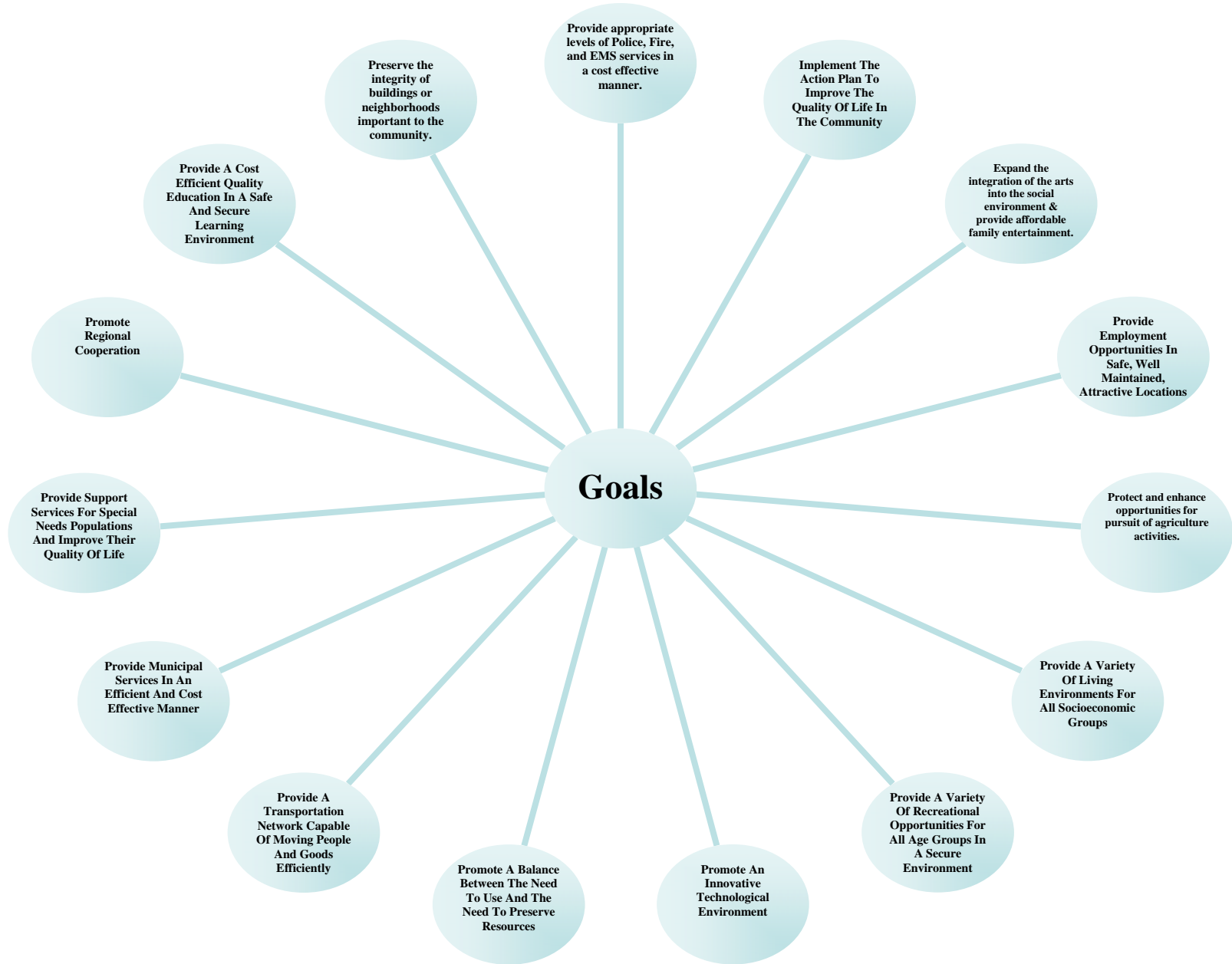
 Figure 1 ~Elements Of The Plan



The Goals and Objectives were divided into the following components (See **Figure 2** Goals and Objectives):

- Implement the Action Plan to Improve the Quality of Life
- Expand the integration of the arts into the social environment, and provide affordable family entertainment.
- Provide Employment Opportunities in Safe, Well Maintained Attractive Locations
- Protect and maintain agricultural activities as a land use option in order to preserve open space.
- Provide a Variety of Living Environments for All Socioeconomic Groups
- Provide a Variety of Recreational Opportunities for All Age Groups in a Secure Environment
- Promote an Innovative Technological Environment
- Promote a Balance Between the Need to Use and the Need to Preserve Resources
- Provide a Transportation Network Capable of Moving People and Goods Efficiently
- Provide Municipal Services in an Efficient and Cost Effective Manner
- Provide Support Services for Special Needs Populations and Improve Their Quality of Life
- Promote Regional Cooperation
- Provide a Cost Efficient Quality Education in a Safe and Secure Learning Environment
- Promote Historic Preservation
- Provide appropriate levels of Police, Fire, and EMS services in a cost effective manner

 **Figure 2 ~ Goals And Objectives**



Methodology

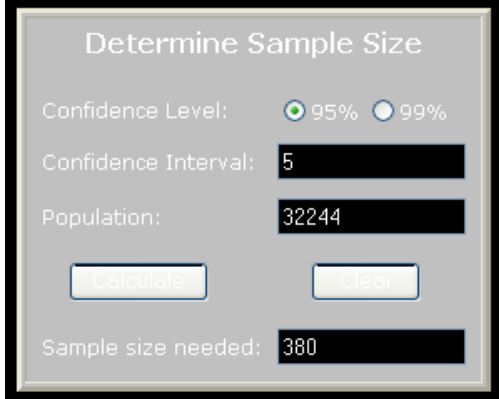
As mentioned previously, the early stages of plan formation involved the identification of issues and areas of concern to residents. This process was facilitated through a series of informal neighborhood meetings. One recommendation that arose from these meetings was to conduct a survey to test the validity of the issues and their relative importance on a townwide basis.

The Town worked in cooperation with the Broome County Board of Elections to obtain the most up-to-date voter registration list for the Town, including the incorporated villages of Endicott and Johnson City. There were a total of 32,244 registered voters. An online sample size calculator (<http://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm>)¹ was used to determine the number of responses needed to ensure a representative survey. Using information provided by the software, it was determined that a total of 380 responses would be needed to provide a 95% confidence level with a confidence interval of 5 (**Figure 3** Determination Of Sample Size).

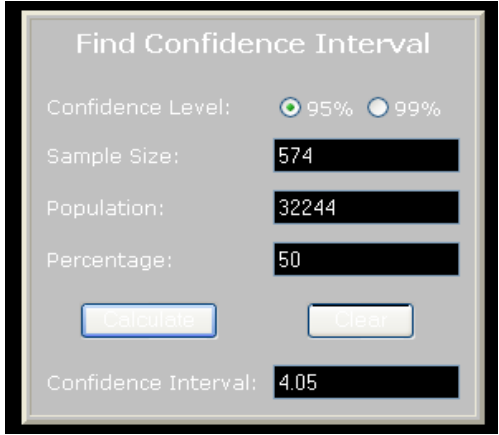
The **confidence interval** is the plus-or-minus figure usually reported in newspaper or television opinion poll results. For example, if you use a confidence interval of 5 and 47% percent of your sample picks an answer you can be "sure" that if you had asked the question of the entire relevant population between 42% (47-5) and 52% (47+5) would have picked that answer (**Figure 4** Confidence Interval Calculation).

The **confidence level** tells you how sure you can be. It is expressed as a percentage and represents how often the true percentage of the population who would pick an answer lies within the confidence interval. The 95% confidence level means you can be 95% certain; the 99% confidence level means you can be 99% certain. Most researchers use the 95% confidence level.

 **Figure 3 ~ Determination Of Sample Size**



 **Figure 4 ~ Confidence Interval Calculation**



¹ Calculator graphics and statistical definitions reprinted with permission of Creative Research Systems, Petaluma, CA

When the confidence level and confidence interval are put together, you can say that you are 95% sure that the true percentage of the population is between 42% and 52%. Although the Town initially planned for a confidence interval of 5, the large number of responses actually decreased the confidence interval to 4.03%.

Once the number of responses needed was determined, the Town created an electronic file containing only the voter identification numbers (all personal information such as name and address, date of birth, and political party affiliation was deleted) for the 32,244 registered voters. The file was then sent to Binghamton University where a random selection of 1,500 voter registration numbers was extracted. The file was then returned to the Town and the names and mailing address information was added for mailing purposes. The eight-page survey contained 128 questions for which the Town was seeking opinions. The initial mailing included a cover letter explaining the survey and also included a postage paid envelope for the completed survey to be returned to the Town. The cost of the survey was \$2,591, which included printing, folding, insertion, labeling, and all mailing costs.

From the results of the survey, it is clear that residents of the Town/Villages care deeply about their respective communities as evidenced by the tremendous response the Town received in conducting this survey. More than 574 residents took the time to complete and return the survey, many even taking time to write additional comments in the margins of the survey itself. What is also clear is that the respondents have very definite opinions about how to improve the quality of life in the community. These opinions can be summed up in two phrases:

1. Appearance matters.
2. Consider consolidation/shared services.

In compiling the results of the Comprehensive Plan survey a number of issues became apparent, many of which are interrelated. There is a very high level of dissatisfaction with the appearance of business districts throughout the Town/Villages. For example, 41% of respondents indicated that the appearance of business districts in the Town/Villages is worse than most places they know about.

There were a number of questions where the response “Strongly Agree” was selected by an outright majority (51% or more) of respondents:

- **64%** Strongly Agree that the Town/Villages should encourage high-quality mixed-use development of abandoned, vacant, or underutilized industrial or commercial sites.
- **58%** Strongly Agree that the Town/Villages should require that commercial/industrial development be compatible with the scale and character of surrounding areas and that design standards should be implemented to promote more attractive signage, landscaping, and building facades.

- **54%** Strongly Agree that when new regulations are adopted to improve the quality of development, businesses should be required to bring their properties into compliance within a specific amount of time.
- **67%** Strongly Agree that governments should be required to maintain or improve public facilities to the same standards imposed on businesses.
- **51%** Strongly Agree that the appearance of the building, parking lots, landscaping, cleanliness of premises, etc. are factors in selecting where they buy goods or services.
- **53%** Strongly Agree that the Town/Villages should be proactive and aggressively ticket code violations rather than wait until a complaint is received about a specific property.
- **69%** Strongly Agree that fines for code violations should increase for repeat offenders.
- **54%** Strongly Agree that the quality of neighborhoods and business districts would improve if code/zoning ordinances were strictly enforced.

There was also very strong support for municipalities to consider looking at consolidation or sharing of services for nearly every municipal service tested.

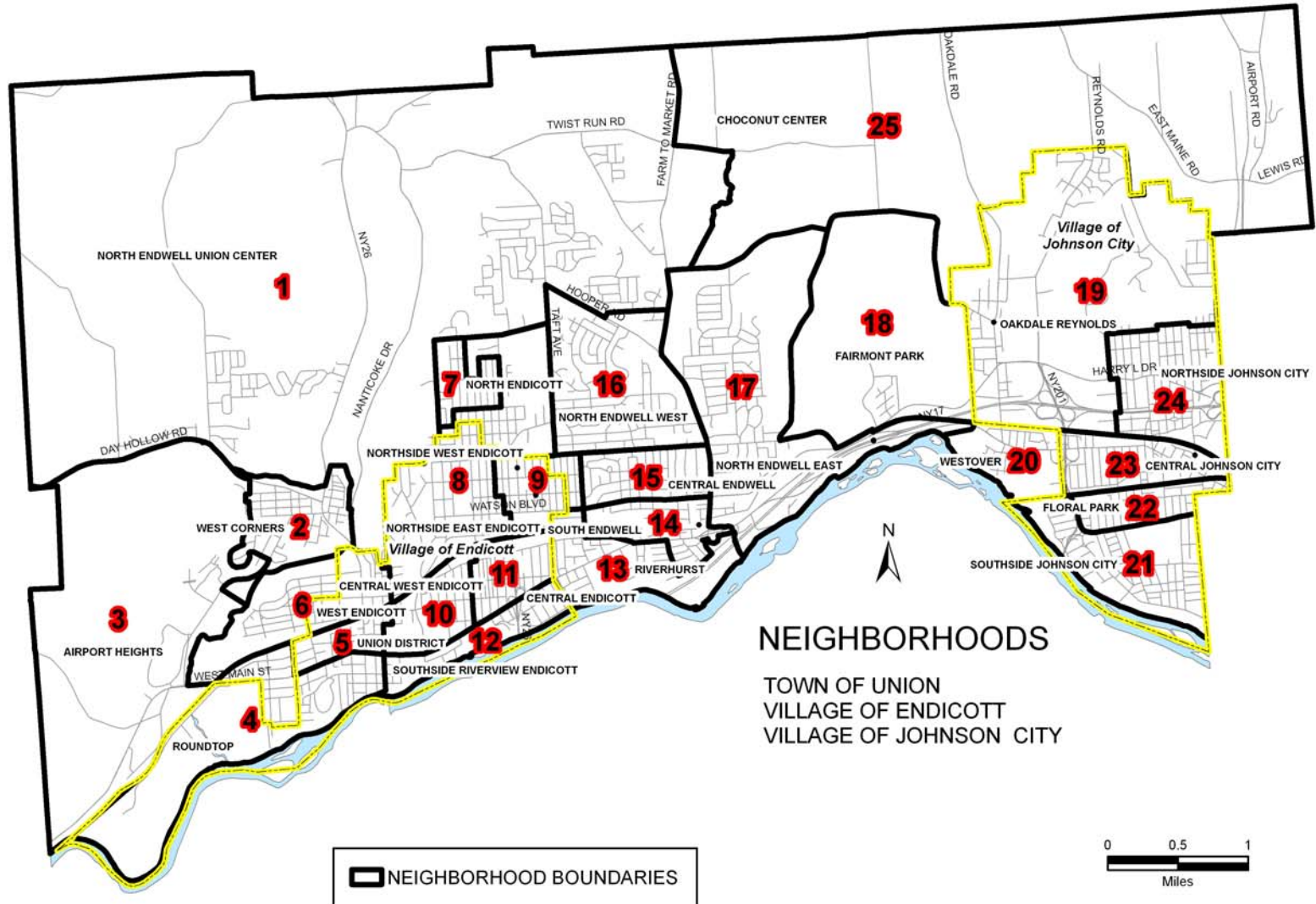
Neighborhood Planning

As mentioned previously, the Town and villages were divided into a series of “neighborhoods” for planning purposes (See **Table 1** Neighborhoods). The traditional definition of a “neighborhood” is a ten-minute walk in any direction from your home. However, due to the manner in which the federal government collects census data, it was decided to define neighborhoods by Census Tract boundaries (See **Map 1** Neighborhoods). This allowed census data to be tabulated for each neighborhood. This information will be useful to a wide range of interested parties looking to buy or lease homes or open a business.

 Table 1 ~ Town of Union 2008 Unified Comprehensive Plan Neighborhoods

| Town of Union Comprehensive Plan Neighborhoods | |
|---|------------------------------|
| Neighborhood Number | Neighborhood Name |
| 1 | North Endwell - Union Center |
| 2 | West Corners |
| 3 | Airport Heights |
| 4 | Roundtop |
| 5 | Union District |
| 6 | West Endicott |
| 7 | North Endicott |
| 8 | Northside - West Endicott |
| 9 | Northside - East Endicott |
| 10 | Central West Endicott |
| 11 | Central Endicott |
| 12 | Southside Riverview Endicott |
| 13 | Riverhurst |
| 14 | South Endwell |
| 15 | Central Endwell |
| 16 | North Endwell West |
| 17 | North Endwell East |
| 18 | Fairmont Park |
| 19 | Oakdale-Reynolds |
| 20 | Westover |
| 21 | Southside Johnson City |
| 22 | Floral Park |
| 23 | Central Johnson City |
| 24 | Northside Johnson City |
| 25 | Choconut Center |

Map 1 ~ Town of Union 2008 Unified Comprehensive Plan Neighborhoods



NEIGHBORHOODS
TOWN OF UNION
VILLAGE OF ENDICOTT
VILLAGE OF JOHNSON CITY

Comprehensive Plan FAQs

Q. What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A. A Comprehensive Plan is a long-range planning document that outlines the goals, objectives, and policies used to guide future land-use decisions within a community. § 272-a. 2 (a) of Town law defines the term 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”. § 7-722 of Village law defines the plan in a similar manner 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 village”.

Q. Are municipalities required to have a Comprehensive Plan?

A. No. New York State law encourages, but does not require municipalities to adopt Comprehensive Plans.

Q. If the Town and Village boards adopt the new plan, will the zoning of my property automatically change?

A. No. A Comprehensive Plan does not establish zoning districts. Although the Comprehensive Plan includes a generalized future land use map, it does not actually change the existing zoning of parcels. However, at some point in the future the Town and Village Boards may elect to proceed with selective rezonings in order to implement the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. Any new rezoning applications must conform to the Future Land Use map of the adopted Comprehensive Plan.

Comprehensive Plan FAQs (continued)

Q. Once adopted, how often will the Comprehensive Plan be updated?

A. State law now requires municipalities to identify in each Comprehensive Plan the frequency at which the plan will be reviewed and/or updated. It is the Town's intention to review the initial progress of the implementation phase four (4) years after the date of adoption. Thereafter, a full review and updating of the plan will be undertaken within two (2) years after the release of data from each United States Census.

Q. Is the Town required to prepare an environmental review before adopting the Comprehensive Plan?

A. Yes. While the Comprehensive Plan alone does not undertake site specific development projects the adoption of the plan is subject to an environmental review under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). The Act allows municipalities to prepare either a detailed Full Environmental Assessment Form (EAF) or a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS). Initially, the Town planned to prepare a GEIS but subsequently determined that completion of a detailed Full Environmental Assessment Form would meet the state requirements. This decision was based upon the fact that the town and villages secured a grant under the New York State Shared Municipal Services Initiative (SMSI) program to prepare a unified zoning ordinance. A major component of that effort is the preparation of a GEIS that will address the potential environmental impacts of a restructuring of the zoning ordinances for all three communities. The GEIS was seen as a more appropriate tool for assessing potential environmental impacts once the permitted uses are established for each zoning category.

Q. Will there be additional opportunities for public participation prior to the Town and Village Boards adopting the plan?

A. Yes. Prior to submitting a final draft plan to the Town Board, the Town and Village Planning Boards are required to conduct at least one public hearing to solicit comments from residents. During the preliminary draft phase of the Comprehensive Plan process, the Planning Department prepared neighborhood profiles, including proposed Future Land Use plans for each of the twenty-five "neighborhoods" identified in the early

Comprehensive Plan FAQs (continued)

stages of the planning process. The town and village Planning Boards hosted a series of five open house style meetings designed to encourage residents to provide input and allow opportunities for them to comment on the preliminary plan. Following the completion of the open house meetings, the Planning Boards will conduct a formal public hearing on the final draft of the plan before it is submitted to the town and village boards for consideration. Prior to adopting the Comprehensive Plan, the town and village boards must each conduct at least one formal public hearing.

Q. What is the effect of the Town and Village Boards adopting the plan?

A. Once the plan is adopted, all town and/or village land use regulations must be in accordance with the plan. Adoption would also require that other governmental agencies take the plan into consideration when planning capital projects on land covered in the adopted plan.

Q. My neighborhood is shown on the proposed Generalized Future Land Use Map as High Density residential. Does this mean that existing single-family homes can be legally converted to two-family units or that multi-family development will now be permitted?

A. No. In order to facilitate the discussion of proposed Future Land Use recommendations for residential development, the Planning Department undertook an analysis of parcel sizes for all of the existing residential development throughout the town in order to calculate an estimate of the median number of building lots per acre. Based upon this analysis, three residential Future Land use categories were suggested:

- Low Density
- Medium Density
- High Density

These designations are reflections of existing parcel build out. For example, a designation of High Density Residential can simply indicate that there are single-family homes built on relatively small lots as is the case in many of the older urbanized areas of Johnson City and Endicott where lots can be as small as 4,000 square feet

Comprehensive Plan FAQs (continued)

(40' x 100') in size. Keep in mind that the Generalized Future Land Use Map is not a zoning map and therefore does not dictate what uses are permitted by right. Zoning designations can only be made by the Town and Village Boards acting in their respective legislative capacities.

Q. Who prepared the preliminary draft of the Unified Comprehensive Plan?

A. The entire plan was completed by town and village employees, with the Town of Union Planning Department serving as the primary research and mapping entity, at an estimated minimum savings of approximately \$100,000 for a community of slightly more than 56,000 residents. Costs of similar studies for communities of similar size in upstate New York have recently ranged anywhere from \$85,000 to \$195,000.

Q. Are the villages obligated to adopt the plan?

A. No. In the absence of a written inter-municipal agreement, this project was undertaken as an informal “shared services” initiative. While the Town has prepared the document as a governmental courtesy, the villages are under no obligation to take any official action on it and may elect to adopt all of it, some of it, or none of it. The Town will provide the villages with digital versions of the plan with fully editable text should they wish to make changes. The Town will also assist the villages with any map amendments that may be required.

Zoning Overview

Although the concept of zoning has been around since the early 1900s (New York City is universally recognized as the first community to adopt a zoning ordinance), the first significant lawsuit relative to the constitutionality of zoning, *Ambler Realty Company vs. Village of Euclid*, was decided in 1926. The Village of Euclid (a suburb of Cleveland) adopted a zoning ordinance in 1922. Ambler sued to overturn the ordinance as a derogation of Section 1 of Article 14 of the United States Constitution, arguing that it restricted liberty and property without “due process”. The United States Supreme Court ultimately upheld the municipality’s right to zone as a legitimate exercise of “police power”.

The impacts of zoning are evident every day yet most people don't give much thought to the importance of the subject until an issue arises in their own neighborhood. Well crafted ordinances result in aesthetically pleasing and compact land use arrangements which complement each other and attract equally well-designed new development. Outdated, loophole filled ordinances tend to create conflicts among land uses and serve as a barrier to new high quality development to the detriment of the entire community.

Communities in New York State that adopt zoning ordinances are required to appoint a Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA).

Municipalities in New York State take their powers from the state. § 272-a. 2 (a) of Town law provides guidance on the preparation of Comprehensive Plans. § 7-722 of Village law provides similar guidance for villages. The legislative bodies have several options for the manner in which Comprehensive Plans are created. The first option is for the legislative body itself to prepare the plan. The second option involves the legislative body authorizing the Planning Board to create the plan. The third option is for the legislative body to appoint a special board to prepare the plan. If a special board is appointed it must include at least one member of the Planning Board. Under all three scenarios, the plan is not officially adopted until it is approved by the legislative body.

Purposes Of Zoning

- Regulate land use
- Prevent land use conflicts
- Allow growth to occur in an orderly manner

Goals of Zoning

- Promote the highest and best use of land
- Protect and maintain property values
- Promote and protect public health and safety
- Protect the environment
- Manage traffic
- Control population density
- Promote housing choice
- Manage aesthetics
- Provide for orderly development
- Help attract business and industry

Inventory and Analysis

At the earliest stages of a comprehensive planning effort, communities conduct a thorough inventory and analysis of the community reviewing issues such as:

- Historic and cultural resources
- Population and Housing
- Land use and zoning
- Vacant land/areas
- Agricultural resources
- Water resources
- Ecology
- Community Services
- Transportation
- Utilities
- Recreational Resources
- Economics

Issue Identification

- A summary of all the neighborhood meetings was drafted for the following categories:
 - Homeowner issues
 - Tenant issues
 - Public Safety (police, fire, etc.)
 - Schools
 - Community services
 - Environment, open space, recreation
 - Transportation
 - Land use and zoning
 - Commercial
 - Industrial
 - Government services

History Of Land Use Planning In The Town Of Union

In 1967 Comprehensive Development Plans were prepared for the Town of Union and Villages of Endicott and Johnson City. Funding for the plans was provided by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development and New York State Office of Planning Coordination. The plans were prepared by the Planners Collaborative out of Syracuse, NY. None of the three plans were ever formally adopted by the respective governing boards.

It appears that the Town's first zoning map was adopted in 1948 with subsequent substantial revisions in 1957 and 1984. The Town of Union Planning Board adopted a Future Land Use and Transportation Plan in 1979. The Villages of Endicott and Johnson City have never adopted formal Comprehensive Plans.

Future Land Use Focus

In mature, urbanized communities such as the Town of Union, the focus of land use planning tends to be directed toward preservation, infill, and redevelopment activities. The Comprehensive Plan reflects and builds upon existing land use patterns and is designed to enhance the high quality of life that Town residents have come to expect and enjoy.

Given that the villages of Endicott and Johnson City are essentially built out, these areas will likely experience "zero-sum" development in that nearly all new land uses will come at the expense of existing ones. This is particularly true of the former Endicott Johnson sites and other brownfield locations such as the former Union Forging facility that dot the community. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines the term brownfield as *"abandoned, idle, or underused industrial and commercial facilities where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination."*

Many of these facilities are located in areas adjacent to railroad tracks, and also within close proximity to major transportation routes thereby creating attractive redevelopment opportunities as environmental concerns are mitigated. As new development occurs, there will be a substantial opportunity to improve the appearance of the community by requiring a higher standard of development as new land uses are introduced.

Implementation

Many people mistakenly think that adoption of a Comprehensive Plan is the final step in the process when, in fact, it merely represents the beginning of the next phase of the process. Once a plan is officially adopted a number of land use tools including zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations, site plan review, sign ordinances, design guidelines, stormwater ordinances, floodplain development ordinances, capital improvement plans and other special studies are used to implement the plan.

Another important ongoing component of the process is to secure funding to implement various aspects of the plan. During the development of the Comprehensive Plan, the town and villages have been successful in writing grant applications for brownfield redevelopment, demolition of blighted structures, road and streetscape improvements, park improvements, and plan development. For example, the Town has received grants to hire a consultant to prepare a new zoning ordinance that will cover the town and villages, demolish blighted housing units, and acquire and demolish flood damaged homes located in the floodplain. Endicott has secured funds to raze the former Union Forging facility. The Village of Johnson City secured funds to demolish an abandoned dilapidated factory and restore the CFJ carousel. A key to successful grant writing is to identify, in advance, a flexible source of funds that can be used to meet the matching fund requirement of most grant programs.

Chapter 20 of the Goals and Objectives document outlines a number of suggestions for implementing the Comprehensive Plan.