

Village of Perry, New York

Village of Perry Final Comprehensive Plan

ADOPTED SEPTEMBER 21, 2015

VILLAGE OF PERRY FINAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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VILLAGE OF PERRY FINAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
ESD	Empire State Development Corporation
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
GTC	Genesee Transportation Council
HUD	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
LWRP	Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan
MSA	Metropolitan Statistical Area
NYS DEC (DEC)	New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation
NYS DHCR (DHCR)	New York State Dept. of Homes and Community Renewal
NYS DOS (DOS)	New York State Dept. of State
NYS DOT (DOT)	New York State Dept. of Transportation
NYS EFC	New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation
NYSERDA	New York State Energy Research and Development Authority
NYS OPRHP	New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation
NYS ORPS	New York State Office of Real Property Services
PCSD	Perry Central School District
PMSA	Perry Main Street Association
REDC	Regional Economic Development Council
RHED	Rural Housing and Economic Development program
SC	Village of Perry Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee
TDR	Transfer of Development Rights
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
WCIDA	Wyoming County Industrial Development Agency
ZBA	Village of Perry Zoning Board of Appeals
Zoning Districts	
C-1	Commercial Central Business
C-2	Commercial General Business
L-D	Lakefront Development Special
M-1	Manufacturing Light Industry
R-1	Residential One Family
R-2	Residential Two Family
R-3	Residential Multiple Dwelling

LETTER FROM THE STEERING COMMITTEE

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE CHERISH

Perry is “a village that’s still a village.” It is a historic, charming and walkable place in a rural setting. We are a strong community of caring residents and business owners. We take great and justifiable pride in our regionally-renowned events, our independent school district, our top-notch recreational facilities, and our dynamic, locally-owned businesses. Our village is complex yet compact with a mix of land uses that signal a sustainable economy and social life.

Perry has a tradition of entrepreneurship and a storied history as a recreation destination and a magnet for artists and artisans. We treasure our identity as a gateway to Letchworth State Park and Silver Lake. The Village’s history, people, Main Street and homes as well as the creek that bisects the Village and the farmlands surrounding it are cherished assets. All of this – our traditions, history, physical form and setting – require continual nourishment and attention.

OUR PHYSICAL STRUCTURE: CENTER AND EDGE

And so, the Village must be a celebrated place – edge to center, end to end, every block, and throughout. Our edges must be welcoming and send signals to those arriving in Perry that they are entering a *community*. Entryways into Perry must communicate the great pride we feel about Perry, illustrated through preservation and standards of care.

When residents and visitors arrive onto Main Street, they must come into an even more special place, one that is cherished, because it is our place. It is where we celebrate with parades, festivals and farmers’ markets; where we gather and cross paths and greet one another. From Main Street, the contours slope up toward the surrounding residential streets, around which our Village’s edges must be in sharp relief in their relationship to our marvelous countryside.

DECISION-MAKING AND PRIORITIES

To safeguard this character, we will make decisions that reinforce our sense of place and the character of our community. Our community will continually strengthen our neighborhoods and confidently enhance our corridors. We will provide direct investment to support Main Street while ensuring that our edges and surrounding lands reinforce our rural essence. In every way we will remain a Village. Our time, our money and our energy will be the tools to accomplish this. Our actions serve as the expression of who we are.

The Village will be physically special end to end. Underneath is our commitment to ourselves and our heritage as an independent community of farmers, entrepreneurs, skilled workers and strong families. Our priorities will reflect these values and ambitions.

This is our vision.

Village of Perry Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee
2015

PART I: INTRODUCTION

Wyoming County, New York, is a place where the concurrence of western Upstate’s natural and built characteristics are seen at every turn. New York State Route 39 connects the region’s historic population centers by way of dairy farms, quiet downtowns and industrial buildings. The beauty of hills west and south of the Letchworth gorge cradle the region. Perry is located in this setting. The community of 3,600 is paving its own path, investing in its existing assets, working to enhance the quality of life for residents and preserving its village character.

Perry is about one hour from Buffalo and Rochester and some distance from any major highways. Perry has transformed itself in recent years from a village in decline – reflective of Upstate New York’s post manufacturing economy stagnation – to an active and engaged community with a historic district on the National Register and a docket of events that any community would covet.

Today, Perry has a well-deserved and hard-earned reputation for undertaking major planning initiatives that require creative thinking, energetic implementation and follow through. This includes transportation, Main Street and other area plans that have been helpful in bringing us to the present, a moment that requires action. The community has worked hard to direct energy and investment toward Main Street and to the amenities and activities that make life in Perry rich and rewarding.

Yet progress is also set in a regional context. Wages in Wyoming County peaked in 1999; in surrounding Erie, Genesee, Cattaraugus, Allegheny, and Livingston counties, wages peaked in 1969 and have been declining for 45 years.¹

As such, the Village is at a crossroads.

Perry must take advantage of its strengths while addressing long-neglected issues and preparing for unknown future challenges. Residents value Perry’s diverse neighborhoods, active community organizations, historic Main Street and rural charm. However, like many small communities in upstate New York, the Village now faces challenges associated with an aging population, a changing economy and a housing stock that, while rich in character, is costly to maintain.

Particularly during periods of economic uncertainty, Perry must also deal with the perception by some younger residents in the region and within Perry as a place to move away from rather than a place to stay in and raise a family.

This plan marks a turning point in Perry’s history. It acknowledges that change will not be easy or rapid. It recognizes that communities, particularly those nearby, are constantly engaged in competition for economic growth and new residents. It will define how Perry wants to grow and who it wants to attract.

¹ Income amounts are estimates of median household income as reported by the US Census or the Census Bureau’s American Community Survey. Year-to-year differences may be within the margin of error for the estimates. Amounts calculated were adjusted to 2013 dollars.

ABOUT THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

SETTING GOALS

The Village of Perry Comprehensive Plan is an officially-adopted policy document that establishes the Village's goals for the future. It provides direction for decisions affecting the use and development of land, conservation of open space, maintenance of transportation systems, partnerships with other agencies and organizations, economic growth, the expansion and maintenance of public facilities, and the relationship between land use patterns and fiscal policies.

The plan as a whole is written to guide local officials in their decision-making process as they manage changes both anticipated and unexpected in the coming decade. For example, while we know that the dairy industry will continue to be an important player in Perry and the surrounding area, it is less-well known what changes in the market and the regional economy may bring. In addition, if Perry is successful in capturing a larger segment of the region's tourism economy (as it relates to Letchworth State Park and Silver Lake) we must decide how to balance the needs of a tourism sector with the requirements of our agricultural economy. This plan brings clarity to the local decision-making process on these and other issues we are bound to face.

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Adoption of a comprehensive plan in New York State is voluntary. However, State enabling statutes require that zoning be in conformance with a comprehensive plan. At its most basic level, a comprehensive plan provides the foundation for local zoning laws. This comprehensive plan goes beyond that fundamental requirement. It describes Perry's current condition, articulates a community-defined vision, communicates guiding principles for future development and conservation and publishes a set of action items for implementing the vision.

The plan envisions Perry as a municipality with residential areas (including Silver Lake) of distinctive qualities, together with the village core, and agricultural and industrial areas. The recommendations contained here address Perry as a whole, as well as those distinct areas. Although the plan is specifically for and about the Village of Perry, it also considers adjacent and nearby areas such as the Towns of Perry and Castile and Letchworth State Park to provide a greater context for the recommendations herein.

The Village has written this plan with the anticipation that officials, organizations and residents will actively use it: the Village Board, in making decisions regarding regulations and spending; the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) when analyzing applications for development; other boards and agencies (including those outside the Village such as NYS Department of Transportation (NYS DOT)) in determining how or whether to proceed with projects or studies, and residents and businesses, as a source of information.

PLANNING APPROACH AND PROCESS

In recent years, the Village has completed a variety of planning initiatives. Nonetheless, it has lacked a guiding philosophy to help tie together the physical elements of the Village to the Village's economic condition and resulting state of fiscal affairs. In 2014 Perry's Board of Trustees recognized the need to update the Village's existing comprehensive plan, which was written in 1969 and amended with a brief update in 1984. The trustees appointed a steering committee of local residents, business owners and government officials to frame a public outreach strategy and guide the plan's development. They also hired a consultant to guide the steering committee through a planning process and to write the plan.

Perry is fortunate in that it has a dedicated group of volunteers including residents and business owners spanning demographic and interest groups. Perry's energetic volunteer base was instrumental in the public outreach and development of this plan.

The steering committee noted early in the planning process that Perry has fulfilled most of the strategies that are easily achievable and that it needed guidance on prioritizing what steps to take next. Through the process, the community identified the Village's most significant issues. They include housing, a sustainable economy, downtown blight and the balance between developed and rural land.

The group met one to two times per month for nine months, developed and distributed a community survey, and held a series of focus groups and public meetings to measure public sentiment on the evolving vision and goals.

OBSERVATIONS

Perry's demographics, history, economy, physical characteristics and trends – a full description of which is found in the Appendix – led the steering committee to the following observations.

Perry was first established as a small village within an agricultural area. It developed similarly to other small villages of this era and location, and this economy functioned quite well until the 1920s.

Perry's second act was an overlap of its first with the advent of manufacturing and the economic rise of the belt of cities along the Great Lakes. Perry's location was close enough to benefit from this economic condition during the mid-20th Century. This worked until the manufacturing sector began to decline in the 1960s. For the next fifty years, the historic formula of agriculture and manufacturing did not work to the Village's benefit. Decline was largely incremental, often hard to see and thus difficult to respond to. Although the Village made some physical improvements during this period and Main Street began to improve, the overall condition of Perry's housing stock went the opposite direction.

As the economies of so many upstate communities declined over the past four decades, compensatory reliance by local government on state and federal grants increased. With this trend has been the growing tendency to mold problem definitions to fit existing grant parameters rather than to intervene strategically. As manufacturing jobs in and around Perry declined, grants from outside the community grew. While the impacts of declining local tax revenue were somewhat offset by federal, state, and county aid, the underlying conditions were not addressed. This was not a durable strategy.

The challenges facing Perry include decades of reduced investment in our residential neighborhoods, an image problem and increased obsolescence of our housing and infrastructure.

These are serious challenges. However, our strengths are considerable.

They include a historic village form, an active community of engaged and informed residents and business owners, and a natural setting fully capable of anchoring regional tourism.

The time has come for the Village of Perry to have a third act.

This plan describes such a future. It presents Perry's assets and its marketable strengths. It presents a strategy for reinvesting in ourselves that positions the Village to be preserved physically, the community to be strengthened, assets to be nurtured and a third act to "re-become" a truly vibrant Village.

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

The housing stock in the Village of Perry is architecturally significant and offers a compelling opportunity for buyers and renters alike to raise families in a genuine village setting. However, Perry's excess "low-end" housing and need for diversification of the housing stock were identified as key issues in public meetings. A significant² percentage of the stocks have suffered from deferred maintenance for extended periods of time and persistent market weakness has discouraged owners from making capital improvements. The consequence is that Perry's housing stocks need investments on both the continual maintenance side of the equation as well as significant upgrades. These are investments that the market will not do by itself at this time. Encouragements by the Village in the form of policy and programs, married to resident engagement and code enforcement, will be needed to spur investment.

ENVIRONMENT

The plan addresses water quality as well as agricultural and open space issues. This plan pays particular attention to protecting the farmlands surrounding the Village core and residential neighborhoods as a strategy for maintaining the small-town quality of life in Perry. It recommends infill housing development as a primary strategy with development concentrated in the existing residential and Central Business District (CBD) zoning districts. The recommendations also promote additional street trees to help increase shade for pedestrians and property values for homeowners and overall streetscape improvements throughout the Village. Finally, the Village has expressed interest in creative ideas such as green infrastructure, such as deriving energy from agricultural waste and establishing "renewable energy districts" on Main Street. These align with the goals of this plan.

TRANSPORTATION

The plan acknowledges the Main Street Improvement Project currently in progress, which will help to balance the transportation and land uses in the Village core. The residential development proposed in the plan would have a minor impact on the transportation system. The plan does not recommend adding additional roads. However, it does advocate for sidewalk capital projects and maintenance. Sidewalk, and intersection improvements (particularly as they relate to access to downtown, Silver Lake and Letchworth State Park) should be considered. Concurrent with and after the Main Street Improvement Project is implemented, the Village should continue efforts to improve bikeability and walkability on public property. The Village has received funding for a Silver Lake Trail study, which could result in a key new transportation linkage and recreational opportunity, and strengthen Perry's position as a regional tourism destination.

ZONING

Perry's zoning ordinance is based upon a zoning map that organizes the Village into seven districts that are essentially residential, commercial and industrial in nature. The code itself includes use and dimensional standards that apply to each district and a

² The average score of residential property was 3.18 on a six point scale (1-6) with 1 being "ready to sell in current condition to a qualified buyer (future owner occupant). The amount needed to bring a property to a condition ready to sell to such a prospective buyer is also the amount by which offers are typically discounted. A 3.00 in Perry constitutes roughly \$10,000 in estimated offer discounts, which is roughly equivalent to the estimated net present value of deferred maintenance.

series of supplemental regulations related to land use and development that are designed to protect the health, safety and general welfare of Village residents. The code is written in typical “Euclidean” style very common in Upstate communities that adopted their zoning from the 1960s onwards.³ In terms of zoning recommendations, this plan considers how much land would be required to accommodate the uses that Perry residents want and need, as well as the location and composition of zoning districts.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The plan confirms the current designation of the Perry Downtown Historic District, comprised of 41 buildings along Main Street. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2012. The National Register is an honorific designation that allows owners of contributing buildings the opportunity to access significant tax credits for improvements, while not limiting their autonomy if state or federal money is not involved. New York State also has a tax credit for contributing residential properties in a National Register District. The Village should continue to work with property owners to invest in its historic buildings and possibly expand its scope to residential neighborhoods.

³ Euclidean zoning represents conventional zoning laws across the US, which organizes land by uses into districts of similar type, i.e. single-family residential, multi-family residential, commercial, industrial, etc.

PART II: PLANNING PRINCIPLES

1. MARKET STRENGTH

Actions Will Be Taken That Result in a Strong Market.

Market strength is measurable. It can be planned for. It is tangible. The Village of Perry must be a place where the demand for our housing exceeds our supply. Where the demand for space on Main Street exceeds the number of opportunities. Where demand for older buildings exceeds the volume of what we have. Where demand for empty, buildable lots is greater than our supply.

Without excess demand, prices are unstable at best and declining at worst. When values are not rising, tax revenues aren't able to keep up with the cost of delivering municipal services. Every policy and action in and taken by the Village should explicitly aim to increase the demand in the regional market for the spaces we have.

The best strategy for achieving increased values is to limit supply. By limiting the supply of developable land on the fringe – in Perry by its own hand and outside of Perry through cooperative partnerships with the Towns and other jurisdictions – what is developable grows in value. But limiting supply by itself is only part of a successful strategy. The other part is redirection. Demand by a retailer for commercial space should not be curtailed by limiting supply on the fringe alone but by redirecting it toward Main Street whenever possible. Demand by a housing developer for greenfield space on the edge of the Village should not only be constrained by restrictions but, using encouragements, redirected toward the core.

A vibrant village with a strong market is characterized by scarcity. Fewer spaces to build new than for which there is demand. Fewer homes on the market than there are prospective buyers. Fewer leasable retail opportunities on Main Street than there are business owners. The resulting condition is rising values without which owners will not conclude it makes sense to upgrade. When owners of any Village property are not frequently concluding that it makes sense to invest in a high level of ongoing maintenance or to make capital improvements, prospective neighbors conclude “maybe going to another place makes more sense ... these people don't seem to care very much.” Scarcity is a core part of the remedy for the problem of falling values.

The Village must exhibit signs of pride of ownership and tenancy. Business signage must be attractive and communicate pride. Retail facades should be well maintained. The front porches of homes should be polished, well-appointed, well lit and sit amidst raked and landscaped yards. Streets should be lined with sidewalks that are maintained and lamps that are attractive. The whole environment should signal order and care. There can be no excuses for residential rental property being poorly maintained or for property – residential or otherwise – or entryways to be disorderly or in disrepair. The market will not insist on higher standards (through the allocation of demand) until the idea of being in Perry is synonymous with self-respect, beauty, reinvestment and pride. These attributes will not materialize until standard-setting regulations are in place, enforced and tirelessly championed. There will come a time when it is not regulations but the force of the market that will maintain high standards, and to get there the framework needs to be installed.

This combination of scarcity and pride constitute dual pillars of market strength. Pride leads to scarcity. Scarcity leads to more pride. Together, values and revenues rise and when reinvested in still more improvements, true stability is achieved.

2. VILLAGE FORM

Actions Will be Taken That Preserve and Protect Our Village Form.

The counties and incorporated municipalities of New York that exist today approximately match those established in the half-century following the conclusion of the Revolutionary War. Like many small communities in upstate New York, the early development of Perry hinged on its natural locational advantages. In Perry's case, its proximity to Silver Lake and the Silver Lake Outlet enabled mills to thrive. The Silver Lake Railroad opening in 1872 further promoted this industry. Early settlers built their roads, homes, schools, churches, library and community buildings around the built and natural features of water and rail, resulting in the pattern of streets and blocks that comprise Perry today.

WHY IS VILLAGE FORM IMPORTANT?

The places within Perry that people naturally gravitate toward are those that have evolved from this historic, traditional development into healthy blocks that contain a mix of uses at a comfortable neighborhood scale. These are described in more detail below.

A. TRANSECT

The gradation of form and character within a place is often referred to as a *transect*. In historic Upstate villages, a transect might typically be characterized as the place where transitions from rural to Main Street gradually occur. Rural on the outer boundary transitions to predominantly suburban residential neighborhoods, and then into a small historic Main Street at the village core. This layout is typical of communities developed prior to the automobile, when the limitations of transportation meant that residents could not travel long distances from their homes to go about their daily lives. Farmers and other agricultural producers in rural areas also required ready access to local markets and freight corridors (canals or railroads) to sell their goods. This historic village form eroded in the 20th Century with the profusion of low-density suburban development, growth in the road network (the first section of the New York State Thruway between Utica and Rochester opened in 1954) and the loss of population from city centers. Transects are a helpful way to think about the transitions that occur between different land uses and development styles within a community and the various purposes they serve. Transects are also used extensively to establish guidelines for community character in form-based codes.



SmartCode Transect, www.transect.org

In the mid-20th Century the dominant development pattern throughout America and no less in Upstate New York was suburban, auto-oriented, separated by uses and low in density. This form of development had the advantage of being easy to finance, and its newness – a competitive advantage – put many older, existing communities at risk.

Development across America, in Wyoming County and throughout the region during the period 1946-2000 was almost exclusively “greenfield” (outside the core and often on formerly agricultural lands as opposed to within the core on an “infill” basis). As a result, it often came at the expense of the charming rural character that preceded it. Formerly rural landscapes and family-operated farms gave way to subdivisions, and auto-centric commercial real estate.⁴

This pattern of development was reinforced by the Village of Perry’s 1969 Comprehensive Master Plan and Perry’s current zoning ordinance adopted in 1994.

It is a pattern that will not serve the Village well in the future as its continuance imperils the very basis of our community – vibrant, village-scale residential and commercial life in Perry surrounded by the unmatched beauty of working Wyoming County farms.

Today, Perry’s transect can be categorized as agricultural along the Village boundary, with a small commercial core along historic Main Street, and a mix of uses in the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

The land along Silver Lake is primarily residential and privately owned. Overall, the Village has retained a relatively compact layout with smaller parcels clustered along

⁴ From 1946 through the present day, development in America outside of cities has primarily been in low-density, auto-oriented form. Homes that before World War II were close to the street, began to be sited with deeper setbacks. Neighborhoods organized along grids and that had alleys and garages gave way to curvilinear development and driveways. Front porches gave way to porticos and back decks. Two and three story homes became one story ranches. Development that previously was near commercial centers and that tapped into existing infrastructure shifted to the edges of developed areas on “greenfield” sites. Such patterns of development were fundamentally organized around certain core ingredients such as an auto orientation instead of a pedestrian orientation, a rearward instead of front porch manner of engagement and a focus on separating rather than integrating uses. The foundation of this style and location of development - sub-urban - emerged in America in its earliest forms in Hartford, CT in the early 19th century. Second and third generations of such development occurred in Great Britain and the United States in fits and starts through the 1870s and into the early 20th century. It was following WWII and during America’s postwar expansion that the suburban style that came to dominate residential development was rooted.

Routes 39 and 246 and larger industrial and agricultural parcels toward the Village boundary. The patterns of development along Perry's rural to urban transect demonstrate the changes to Perry's form that have occurred since the 19th Century as a result of suburbanization on Route 246 and the separation of uses through use-based zoning. The transect also demonstrates the ways in which Perry has retained and enhanced the pattern of development established in the 19th Century even as the Village's economy has shifted.

B. MAIN STREET

The vast majority of Upstate New York's villages were incorporated in the mid-19th Century prior to the advent of the private automobile as the primary means of transportation. As such, compact development centered on a vibrant commercial Main Street with a wide variety of goods and services in close proximity is a defining feature of historic upstate Villages. As the negative impacts of suburban sprawl development are increasingly acknowledged, revitalizing Main Streets to encourage the development of dense, walkable urban centers is an important strategy for improving quality of life. Main Streets are important not only for their economic impact but the character-rich environment that draws residents and visitors. The physical form of historic streets is well-known: buildings that line the sidewalk to create a 'wall', transparent shop windows, street trees that provide shade for pedestrians and slow traffic, stores on the first floor and offices or residences above that enliven the street day and night. It is a model that accommodates the automobile as well as pedestrians and bicyclists. Local businesses that employ local residents mean less driving, healthier workers and tax dollars that stay in the local economy.

Many older villages already have historic main streets but lack the resources or know-how to rehabilitate buildings and attract small businesses and tenants. Perry's historic Main Street, located in close proximity to the mill area along the Silver Lake Outlet, established the early commercial core of the Village. Today, organizations, entrepreneurs and community investors have worked hard to reinvigorate Main Street with new retail, professional office and residential uses housed in rehabilitated historic buildings. By leveraging local investment and historic preservation tax credits, these groups are reestablishing a historic mixed-use downtown with a view to the future.

C. NEIGHBORHOODS

Village neighborhoods are much more than a collection of houses. They are places with residents, histories and distinct identities. They grow, change and occasionally shrink. Neighborhoods are qualitative (communities) as well as quantitative (housing markets). Whether owned or rented, houses that comprise neighborhoods are at the very core of village life. Neighborhoods are the sum of their parts: they may be categorized as stable, transitional or distressed according to the overall condition of the dwellings within them.

D. EDGES

Edges are transitions defined by largely invisible municipal boundaries. In Perry the rural to inner core transect begins with open space and large parcels dedicated to agricultural production and some industry. Along Silver Lake, the Village is bordered by privately-owned residences. Any proposed changes at the edges should consider the existing land uses, utility and infrastructure patterns.

E. ENTRYWAYS

Western New York's rural villages were at the frontier of early settlement in the decades following the Revolutionary War. Their remote locations and limited transportation isolated these communities from the outside world. As road transportation has steadily expanded since the 1950s, villages are connected to surrounding communities primarily by state and county routes rather than historic waterways and railroads. Gateways play an important role in defining village character, bestowing pride, and attracting visitors. The Village of Perry is itself a gateway into Letchworth State Park and Silver Lake and boasts a colorful history of drawing in visitors with the mythical "Sea Serpent," concocted by a local hotel owner in the 19th Century.

3. FISCAL STABILITY

Actions Will Be Taken That Result in the Village Being Fiscally Stable.

Property tax rates and other taxes in New York have created a fiscal environment for municipalities that has resulted in a reliance on grant funding from the state and federal government to meet the financial demands of providing basic services. Current tax rates in New York State, with Perry being no exception, are among the highest in the country. Perry does have the advantage of a balance of commercial, industrial, agricultural and residential land uses so the share of the taxes is spread among various property owners and does not fall unfairly on homeowners. The Village is in decent fiscal condition. However, any additional taxes to implement this plan—including any capital projects beyond what is accounted for in the current budget—may be perceived unfavorably and, therefore, the Village will need to be creative when determining funding solutions for implementation.

WHY IS FISCAL STABILITY IMPORTANT?

Perry's vision of itself as a vibrant village is predicated on it possessing the traits of a fiscally stable municipality. These include an efficient, self-sustaining economy; population growth or – at the very least – stability; a trend toward less reliance on social services; strong local schools; and healthy neighborhoods, properties and businesses.

This plan looks at Perry's current fiscal condition. The Village obtains revenue through property taxes, user fees, fines, inter-municipal contracts, and state per capita highway aid. This includes Perry's annual allocation of Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS) funding for highway repairs. The general fund is primarily used for costs related to administration (personnel, pensions, insurance), equipment, highways, recreation and communications. Public safety constitutes a significant portion of the annual budget. Every year the general fund has a small and varying amount of money which could be directed toward other projects.

The Village presently has an unallocated fund balance, a portion of which can be used for discretionary projects. These funds may be designated for Village improvements recommended in this plan.

The list of actions in Part IV has been developed based on these three principles – Market Strength, Village Form and Fiscal Stability – and a realistic budget scenario for the next ten or more years.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development typically is understood as having three elements: business development, real estate development and workforce development. For Perry's long-term future to be viable, all must be activated.

Incentives for businesses need to exist, in addition to those offered by federal, state, and county programs. The Village should provide incentives directly in one form or another.

Real estate has to make sense for business. The cost of acquiring and bringing to code older vacant properties has to be affordable, so the Village should be an active partner to businesses in the work of securing and upgrading property at affordable terms. This can be as grant partner. But the Village must be involved in the process of matching Village real estate to entrepreneurs in ways that help make business ventures prove feasible on one hand, and contribute to the strengthening image of Perry as a vibrant village on the other. The following are some suggestions:

1. Focus on providing incentives for the development of independent and tailored, or very specific, retail and services. In many instances, this will mean adding new and additional products and services to existing businesses. There are several products and services for which enough market demand might exist to support one or more new businesses, such as restaurants and perhaps groceries, if the grocery store is able to differentiate itself from others within the region, such as by offering specialty products or making deliveries.
2. Simultaneously focus on development of a small cluster of regionally-serving destination businesses. Perry (both the Village and Town) and Wyoming County are losing sales in many categories. It is likely that with very good merchandising, marketing, and management a small cluster of regionally-serving businesses could successfully attract customers from throughout the area to downtown Perry. Furniture and home furnishings could be a good option as downtown Perry already has a regional market foothold in this store category. It is imperative that businesses in this cluster use a variety of methods to reach customers augmenting in-store sales with online sales, deliveries and other sales channels. Until the cluster is well established, businesses in the cluster should expect to generate about half of their revenue from in-store sales and the other half from online sales, mobile sales, sales at trade shows, sales within other stores and other channels.
3. Provide incentives for the development of a few home furnishings-related businesses to complement existing businesses. Wyoming County has a modest (almost negligible) sales leakage in this category in large part because of the presence of an existing business. However, both Buffalo and Rochester have sizable leakages. A cluster of home furnishings businesses could be viable by capturing only a small percentage of these two Metropolitan Statistical Areas' (MSA) \$121.6 million in unmet market demand in this store category. For example, capturing just 3% of this unmet market demand would translate into capturing roughly \$3.6 million in new sales, enough to support approximately 14,600 square feet of new store space.
4. Provide incentives for the development of one or two new restaurants downtown. One or two new restaurants could make downtown Perry more attractive as a regional dining option. Capturing 12-15% of Wyoming County's \$7.9 million leakage

in restaurant sales would make it possible to support two restaurants. Ideally, the new restaurant (or restaurants) would provide some diversity in dining options and perhaps grow produce directly on site in an adjacent lot or on a rooftop.

5. Provide incentives for the development of a co-working space. Consider creating a small co-working space, providing work space for people who work from home-based businesses and/or who would like to collaborate with others. Perry's newer residents include some who have tech-related and location-neutral jobs within the region and who have chosen to live in Perry. Some of these might be ideal co-working candidates.
6. Use Village resources to establish a forgivable loan program to stimulate business development. Forgivable loan programs help make it possible for a community to attract or develop businesses that offer products and services that are high priorities for the community. The programs also ensure that the businesses supported by the program meet certain criteria, such as locating in a ground-floor space, and/or in a specific block, or that it be open a specified minimum number of hours. A forgivable loan program could perhaps be capitalized with a New York Main Street grant, Community Development Block Grant, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development grant, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant, Rural Housing and Economic Development (RHED) grant or other sources.
7. Provide incentives for the creation of a pop-up business program. Pop-ups can be a great way to both incubate new businesses and generate visibility for the downtown. In essence, a pop-up program would work with one or more owners of vacant storefront spaces to make these spaces available for a few months (typically three) to an entrepreneur with a good idea for a new business. The program vets potential businesses and streamlines the utility and property insurance process for property owners.
8. Boost support for current and new downtown businesses by steadily working to increase the supply of downtown and near-downtown housing. Downtown residents provide a built-in customer base for downtown businesses, improve the district's safety and cleanliness and in many instances, provide property owners with additional sources of rental income.
9. Streamline and focus marketing and promotional activities. The Village offers many marketing and promotional events. Continue to bring as many of these events as possible downtown to help build familiarity, visibility, and enthusiasm for downtown development activities and gradually reverse negative perceptions.
10. Cooperate with the Wyoming County Department of Planning & Development, the Arts Council for Wyoming County, the Wyoming County Chamber & Tourism, and the Wyoming County Industrial Development Agency in the development and implementation of the Wyoming County Rural Arts Initiative (WCRAI). The hope is to demonstrate our County's "Pride of Place" by honoring our agricultural/rural heritage through the WCRAI, while greatly increasing tourism and commerce in the Village of Perry.

Background information about these recommendations is in the Appendix.

PART III: LAND USE, ZONING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

LETTER TO THE REGION

While this is Perry's plan, the recommendations must consider what is taking place not only within the Village boundaries but in the surrounding region as well. The destinies of the municipalities in Wyoming and Livingston Counties and the greater area are tied to each other. If market conditions cause Geneseo to suffer, for example, Perry, Mount Morris and Warsaw will feel those negative impacts. Underpinning the success of Perry and its regional neighbors are the farmlands lying between them. While the market today does not suggest that our farmlands are at risk, we would be remiss in our duty to future generations not to plan around this issue while we are able to do so.

This plan articulates a vision for Perry. It is a vision that is dramatically more attainable if neighboring jurisdictions adopt regional forms of land management practices aligned collectively. A policy that Wyoming County might consider piloting is the creation of sending and receiving districts with a goal of preserving farmland.

A "sending" area or district is a designated part of a county – or group of counties – where development is discouraged. A "receiving" area is where development is encouraged. The vested property rights of the former remain, but an incentive to channel development elsewhere is created in the form of increased development rights in the latter. Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) is the mechanism for keeping farmland in the hands of families and for orienting development toward the inner core of towns and villages. In this way, land values are stabilized, the rural character of the area can be preserved and even strengthened, and the feasibility of redeveloping the village core increases.

"Sending" and "Receiving" districts and the banking mechanism needed have been in place in different ways and to degrees across America, such as in Warwick, New York; Marin County, California where the Marin Agricultural Land Trust is, or Washington where the Regional Alliance of Puget Sound Counties operates a regional TDR effort.

ZONING

Perry's zoning ordinance is a conventional, use-based code that tends to concentrate use of land within in each district. Along with the underlying zoning codes, innovative communities are using other regulatory approaches such as design standards and overlay zones to encourage mixed uses and appropriate styles of development. Perry's zoning ordinance has been amended and updated numerous times, most recently in 1994. At that time, references to an Agricultural-Residential (A-R) zone were removed. However, agricultural land remains in parts of the Residential One Family (R-1) district and small pockets of Lakefront Development Special (L-D), Commercial General Business (C-2), Manufacturing Light Industry (M-I) and Residential Two Family (R-2) are included in New York State Agricultural District #3. The Village should consider reinstating agricultural zoning to retain and enhance the current agricultural uses and to enhance the rural character that forms the Village edge with the neighboring towns.

Residential areas allow accessory uses but do not expressly allow accessory dwelling units. A large percentage of the Village is zoned R-2, and there is empirical evidence that the conversion of single-family homes into two-family dwellings has had and continues to have a negative impact on the R-2 district and the Village's marketability overall. The

Village should decide whether to expand the R-1 district or address residential conversions through alternative means such as requiring site-plan review or regulating absentee landlords. Dwellings are allowed in the C-2 District but are not expressly permitted in the Commercial Central Business (C-1) District. With the recent rehabilitation of historic buildings on Main Street the zoning ordinance should be amended to encourage second floor residential apartments downtown.

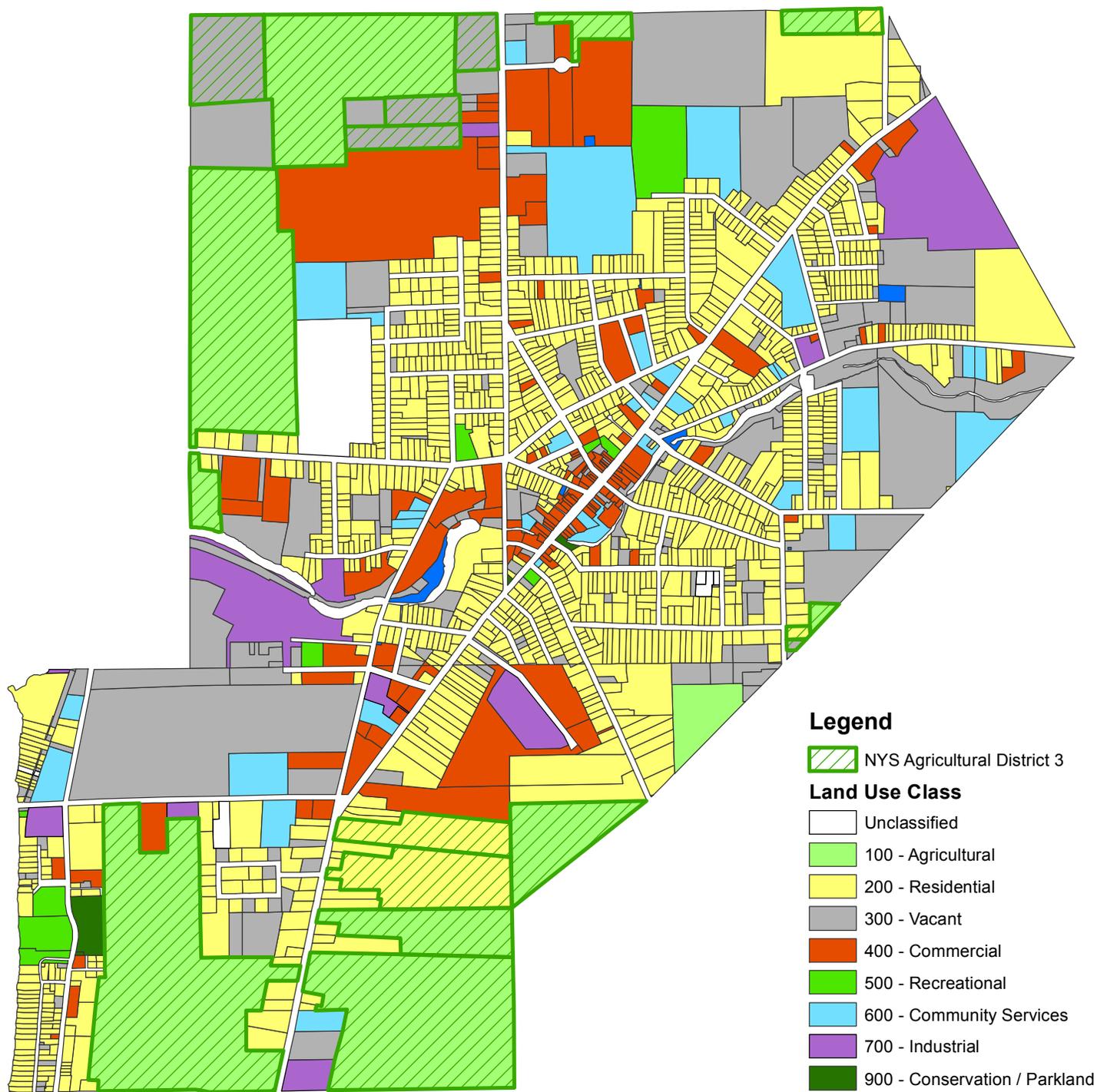
An examination of Perry's land use map (Figure 1) in comparison to its zoning map (Figure 2) reveals that the land use patterns are somewhat but not closely aligned with zoning districts. This may be the result of many of the land uses predating zoning and also because as a historic village, a mix of uses within "residential" or "industrial" is commonly found even with the presence of the use-based zoning ordinance. For example, commercial and agricultural land uses can be found in R-1 zones, and commercial and community uses are interspersed in the R-2 zones.

The maps also reveal some notable disjoints that warrant discussion. For example, although Perry developed around a thriving mill industry, as the above figures show, today 34% of land in the Village is classified as residential while 64% of land is zoned for R-1 or R-2. Better alignment going forward – reflective of the mix of uses and type of housing that Perry hopes to encourage – is needed. Another example is that of agricultural land. Though 19.5% of land in Perry is dedicated to agricultural production – the third-largest land use in the Village – and 23.2% of land is protected by Agricultural District #3, there is currently no zone in the Village dedicated to agricultural use. The greenbelt of working farms that surround the developed areas of Perry is critical to its community character. Regulatory protections can help prevent this land from being converted into low-density residential housing and commercial development in the future.

Although ranking the categories of land use and zoning districts by land area can be a useful exercise to determine the consistency between land use and zoning—and therefore help to inform potential changes to the zoning code—this analysis only tells part of the story.

Uses such as agriculture or large-scale manufacturing require more land than more compact uses such as small retail shops and offices. Therefore, the overall acreage devoted to a particular land use tells us very little about the significance nor the location and composition of this land use for Perry's economy. For example, Perry's most defining area—its historic Main Street—comprises only 1.2% of the total land area in the Village. Its composition on a series of small blocks, the richness in granular detail apparent in the building stock and the importance of Main Street to the local economy, gives this area a central significance to residents that belies its small physical footprint. Conversely, the C-2 district located along Route 246 has a much larger footprint than C-1. However, this area was developed more recently, and the larger buildings with dedicated parking lots require more land area. Overall, small parcels are concentrated in the center of the Village, transitioning to larger parcels toward the periphery. When considering zoning changes that could evolve out of the comprehensive planning process, the action plan (Part IV) considers how much land desired uses actually require, as well as the location and composition of zoning districts.

VILLAGE OF PERRY EXISTING LAND USE

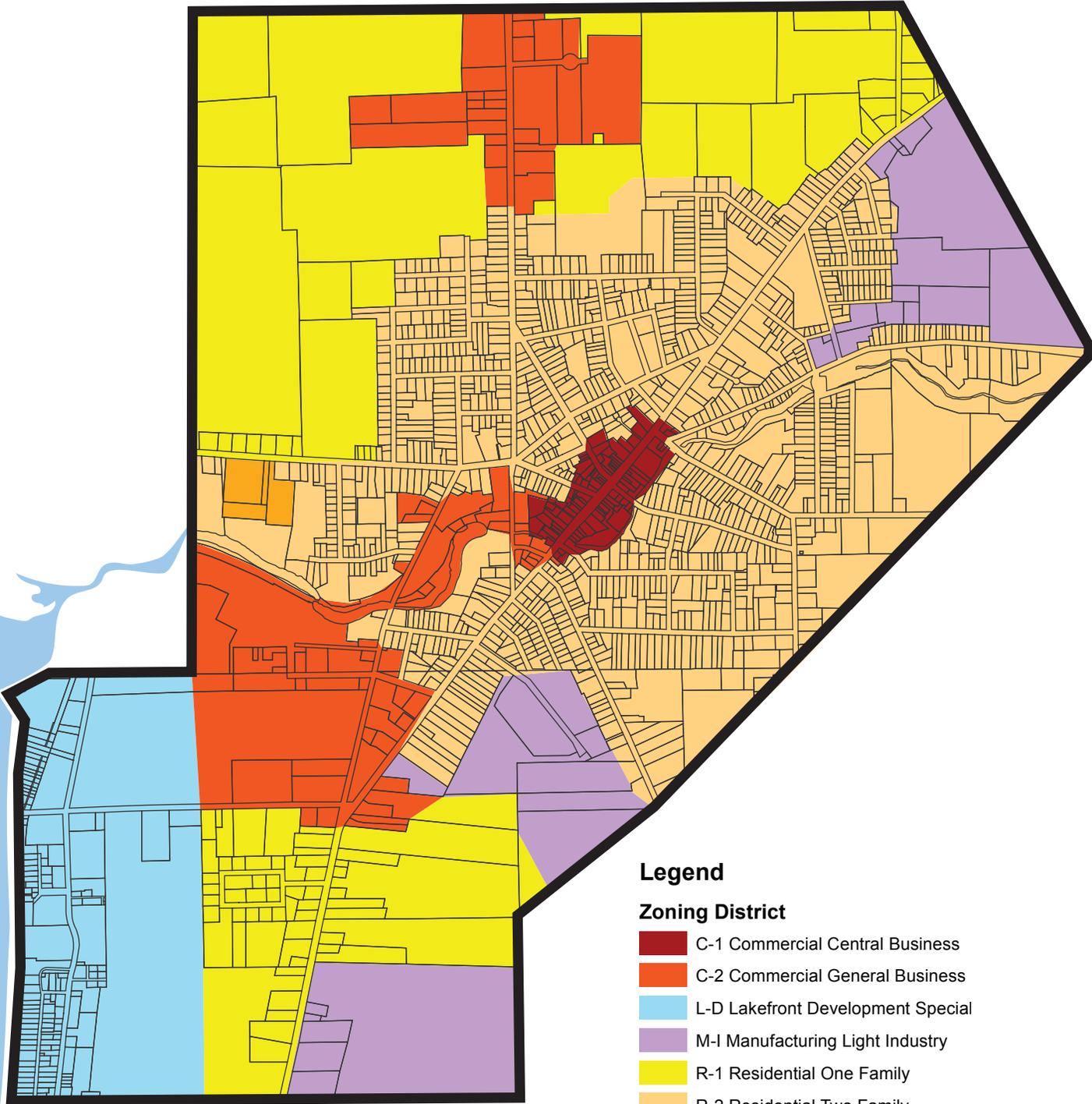


Date: December, 2014
Data Source: Wyoming County, New York State
Agricultural Districts Mapping Program
Projected Coordinate System:
New York State Plane (West) Feet

0 0.1 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 Miles



VILLAGE OF PERRY EXISTING ZONING

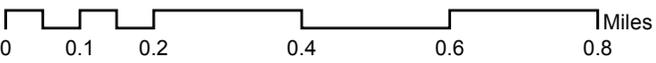


Legend

Zoning District

- C-1 Commercial Central Business
- C-2 Commercial General Business
- L-D Lakefront Development Special
- M-I Manufacturing Light Industry
- R-1 Residential One Family
- R-2 Residential Two Family
- R-3 Residential Multiple

Date: December, 2014
Data Source: Wyoming County,
Projected Coordinate System:
New York State Plane (West) Feet



HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

In a market economy, the choice made by a family looking for a home to live in one place *but not another* is the ultimate expression of that household's belief in what makes sense for them at that moment in their lives.

When it becomes the norm in the area for households with good economic prospects to choose to live in the Village of Perry over good options they have elsewhere, then the Perry housing market will be healthy.

Today it is not.

It is the objective of the Village of Perry to be able to compete successfully for households so that the Village has a healthy housing market. This healthy market is characterized by stable and rising values, high standards of care, continual property reinvestment, and blocks and neighborhoods that, overall, communicate pride. Indeed these are the measures that will be used to determine if our housing market and our neighborhoods are succeeding:

1. Residential property values are stable and rising at rates equal to or greater than the median rate for the area comprised of Wyoming, Genesee and Livingston Counties.
2. Residential properties in the Village are being reinvested in as shown by visible signs of continual physical property maintenance as well as capital improvements.
3. Residential properties signal pride as shown by seasonal treatments, exterior lighting and landscaping.

We recognize that for a young person just starting out, one's first dwelling after college or high school may be an apartment. Apartments in Perry should be appealing to the market of young renters so that they choose to live in the Village even when excellent rental options exist nearby.

Over time, housing needs change, as young renters start families and seek larger and different kinds of homes. During the course of one's life, those needs change several times. The number of bedrooms and bathrooms needed for households at certain life stages do not always work for households at other life stages. The presence of a yard or the nearness to schools, as examples, matters differently at different times and in different ways to different households.

The Village of Perry is not big enough to provide a supply of every kind of housing unit for every kind of household at every stage of their lives.

But the Village should have a complement of housing options. In addition to rental units for young households just starting out, the Village should have a supply of larger units available for rent so that families not wanting to buy but still wanting to live in Perry can do so. Owing to a history of conversions, these units will sometimes be in formerly single-family homes, but every effort should be made to curtail additional conversions. There should also be rental housing options for seniors who may wish to downsize their living arrangements when appropriate. When possible and when it makes market sense, new units suitable for senior living should be developed. As in the the case of rental options for young households, suitable supply should not derive from new conversions of formerly single-family detached stocks.

The core of residential life in the Village of Perry should be oriented around owner occupancy of single-family detached homes in recognition of the nature of existing stocks (the vast majority being single-family homes) and of the stability that home ownership provides. Residential life organized around owner occupancy should also be organized around preserving the spectacular single-family detached housing stocks in the Village, almost all built between 1860 and 1930. These structures give the Village a profound competitive advantage so long as they are well maintained, upgraded continually, and act as an anchoring source of pride for residents and the community as a whole.

To achieve stability and eventually strength in housing values, it will need to make increasing sense for households to invest their time, their energy and their money into their Village homes. To achieve this level of neighborhood health, the Village will need to leverage its housing advantages – affordability, architectural beauty, walkability of the Village, proximity to parks and Main Street and schools – and implement policies and actions that support family life in Perry.

Some actions for setting Perry on this course:

Slow Rental Conversions by Preserving and Expanding the Village’s R-1 Districts.

Perry’s homeowners are a great strength for the Village. More homeowners with capacity to care for their homes and blocks will improve the housing market. Perry should preserve and when possible expand its R-1 districts to slow the rate at which single family homes are being divided into multiple-unit structures. It must also explore other more fine-tuned strategies for discouraging unhealthy conversions.

Build a Firm Floor in the Housing Market by Setting and Enforcing Standards.

Perry as a community must draw a line in the sand when it comes to the condition of residential properties. All properties, regardless of whether they are occupied by owners or renters, must meet minimum community standards. Perry needs to develop an in-house capacity to enforce New York State building and property maintenance codes to ensure that properties are not only safe but also not detracting from the public good through their deterioration. Zoning and code enforcement are tools with extreme limitations when it comes to encouraging community revitalization. They can only establish minimum standards.

Begin to Grow Demand by Building and Rewarding Pride.

All else being equal, buyers will take a chance on a less than perfect house if the block looks like a good place to live. Too many blocks in Perry in 2014 look as if more than a tolerable number of homes are poorly maintained, signaling to potential strong buyers that “life on this street might not be acceptable” and to existing owners that “it might not make sense to upgrade.” The Village should develop programs and incentives that help homeowners and neighbors improve their homes and blocks and celebrate the positive behaviors that make houses and blocks shine. Pride-building initiatives facilitate the extraordinary actions that will help set new and higher expectations in Perry.

Ensure Safe Living Conditions for Low Income Households by Regulating Quality.

Perry is not in need of additional affordable housing. Perry’s main housing challenge is that while its housing is inexpensive to buy, it is costly to bring into marketable contemporary condition. The market has concluded those costs are not likely recoverable through future sale. This will eventually be remedied as the Village builds a firm floor in the local market by building a firm floor in the standards it is unwilling to go below. Only when the Village agrees on a firm standard of care and imposes that

standard will the market respond and prices stabilize. In the meantime, though, special care should be taken to ensure that low-income households in Perry do not face unsafe or unsanitary living conditions. To this end, the Village must develop the in-house capacity to regularly investigate and address violations of New York State building and property maintenance codes on or within rental properties.

LAND USE PLAN

The Land Use Plan is a visual and thematic representation of the proposed physical plan of the Village as represented in the previous sections of the Comprehensive Plan. This is a significant component of the plan as it will help guide Perry toward the vision expressed at the outset of this document. Again, this document is not regulatory but provides a blueprint of how the Village hopes to progress. The Land Use Plan is meant to *guide* zoning revisions as they will be necessary to achieve the changes in land use.

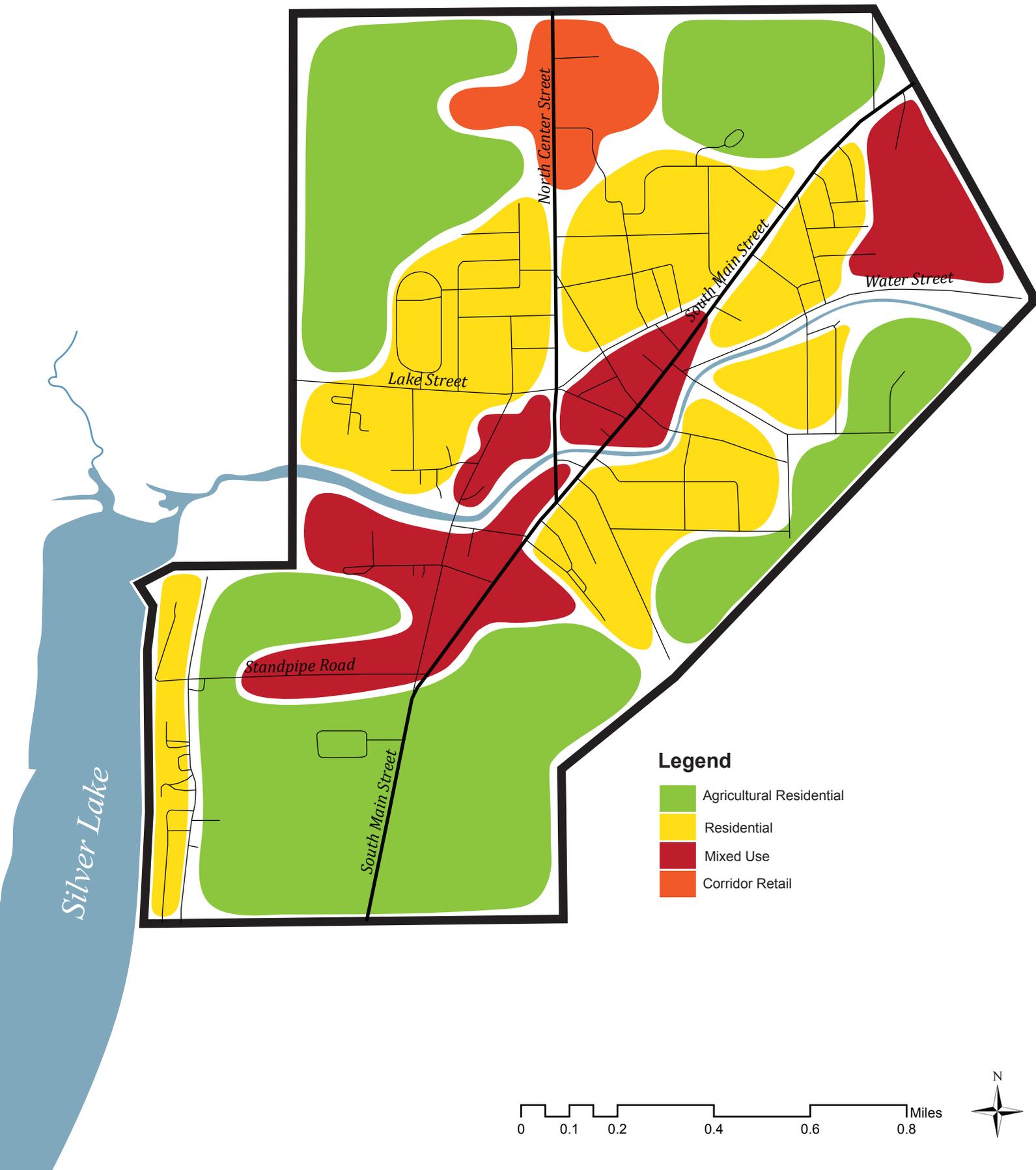
Almost 80% of the land in Perry is classified as developed (residential, commercial, industrial, etc.) while approximately 20% is classified as agricultural land and theoretically available for development. While the value of farmland is high and, therefore, will not be developed in the foreseeable future, we believe that the greenbelt of farmland around the developed areas of Perry is integral to its uniqueness. This means that if the outlying areas are ever developed in sprawl patterns, the result would be harmful to Perry on various levels. Such development would negatively impact Perry's fiscal condition and community character.

The Land Use Plan reflects the Village's desire to retain its edges for agriculture while redefining the developed commercial areas with land uses that reflect the 21st Century economy. Rather than traditionally large industrial zones, the Village prefers to dedicate land for light industrial uses, incubators, artisans and other small industries that will be attracted to Perry by the spirit of entrepreneurship. The Village will retain space for car-centric commercial uses, but it will not dedicate further land for expansion of so-called "corridor retail."⁵ Overall, the Land Use Plan demonstrates Perry's wish to diversify its economy by encouraging a pattern of land development that concentrates in the center with a dense mix of uses, progresses into historic, lower-density neighborhoods and small industries that require larger parcels, into a periphery of protected agricultural lands that complement the transition into the Towns of Perry and Castile. A form-based code for areas of Perry in which mixed-use development is preferred may be appropriate for such districts when the Village revises its zoning ordinance in the near future.⁶

⁵ Before zoning, traditional human settlement was usually done in a "mixed-use" fashion, with residential, commercial and other uses developed together in a walkable fashion. With the advent of use-based zoning in the mid-20th century, uses were increasingly separated in the name of public health. Current mixed-use zoning sets standards for the blending of residential, commercial, cultural, institutional and sometimes industrial uses. This type of development is generally higher in density than single-use residential or strip commercial, and thereby allows for more compact, walkable, "village-like" development. The resulting land use efficiency and housing variety helps to reduce energy consumption and transportation costs, and may strengthen neighborhood character as well.

⁶ Form-based codes (FBCs) are zoning ordinances that regulate design and form rather than use. They provide design standards based on a vision for what a community would like to be. Although FBCs regulate uses in a very general way, they are more concerned with how a building, street and neighborhood feel and function at the "person scale" as opposed to the automobile scale. For more on FBCs see www.formbasedcodes.org.

VILLAGE OF PERRY LAND USE PLAN



0 0.1 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 Miles



PART IV: PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

Like most places, Perry is home to a wide variety of people: the established residents whose families have resided here for generations, the newcomers who settled upon Perry and are making their own way, those who perhaps “married into” Perry and have their own vision for the future based on where they have been, those who left and then returned to be near family and provide their children with a childhood experience similar to their own, those who value the local entrepreneurial spirit and are working to cultivate their ideas and businesses here.

These are some of the people who make up Perry and are testament to its appeal to diverse groups of people who value its historicity, its connectivity, its natural beauty and its potential. This plan is working to nurture the good ideas that are perhaps just beyond what the substantial pool of local officials and volunteer groups are able to accomplish alone.

Regardless of identity, we should be able to enter Perry feeling proud of our gateways; drive or walk or bike to your house on a healthy, quality block; stroll to pick up some locally grown produce; enjoy an activity such as catching up with friends or taking a yoga class or boating on Silver Lake, and take pleasure from life in this Village.

This plan is an acknowledgement that in order to realize Perry’s “third act,” we must first design it, develop a coherent philosophy and then organize our actions around it. How do you convince your younger residents that Perry is a place to put down roots, not a place to leave behind? How do you market an agriculture- and industry-based economy as an opportunity rather than a constraint? How do you help your seniors to age in place with a quality of life that surpasses that of sunnier but less connected places?

Perry’s Strengths to Leverage

- *Downtown historic district*
- *Main Street on the upswing*
- *Community appearance*
- *Healthy residential blocks*
- *Eclectic neighborhoods*
- *Preservation of sustainable agriculture*
- *Natural resources: Silver Lake, Letchworth State Park*
- *Potential for regional tourism*
- *Access to and connectivity through the region*
- *Active volunteer base*
- *Well-regarded local schools*
- *Available jobs*
- *Water and sewer throughout the Village*
- *Accessibility and parking*

If implemented correctly, this plan will help to create the Perry that focuses on these priorities:

Priority 1: Continual Reinvestment in the Village’s Infrastructure. This includes capital improvements and maintenance costs for the Village’s utilities, including water, stormwater and sanitary sewer systems, streets and sidewalks.

Priority 2: Constant Improvement of the Village’s Image. Maintain and improve residential property and downtown. Restore a balance in housing types.

Priority 3: Continual Promotion of the Village. Promote Perry’s strengths with a coherent philosophy and marketing strategy (land and views, dairy farms, local agriculture). Maintain the quality of life and authenticity.

Priority 4: Constant Protection of the Village through regulation of use, form and the market. This includes improvements to Perry’s buildings, entryways and streets.

ACTION PLAN

Short-term actions are those that the plan recommends initiating in the next one to two years. Medium-term actions are for the three to five-year time frame. Long-term actions are to be completed within six to ten years. Other actions should be continued on an ongoing basis.

HIGH-PRIORITY ACTIONS

The following actions should be addressed in 2015 shortly after adoption of this plan

- Revise the zoning ordinance.
- Collaborate with Wyoming County Department of Planning & Development and the Wyoming County Industrial Development Agency on shovel-ready sites.
- Create a plan for a new multi-use trail along the Silver Lake Outlet on public property that will direct the Village toward appropriate funding sources for implementation.

Longer descriptions of these actions are found under “Short-Term Actions,” below.

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS (INITIATE WITHIN ONE TO TWO YEARS)

- Revise zoning ordinance to focus on village-appropriate form:
 - Revisit the regulations on uses in the C-1 District to stimulate demand.
 - Move to slow rental conversions by preserving and expanding the Village’s R-1 Districts to strengthen residential property values and the quality of life on residential blocks in Perry.
 - Enact protections of farmlands to ensure Perry is set in the rural landscape that helps the village remain special.
 - Write parking and design requirements that encourage and fit in with more compact development.
 - Modify the existing industrial districts into more flexible mixed-use districts that encourage artisanal businesses, entrepreneurship and collaboration.
 - Enhance sustainability by providing for compact land use patterns that reduce vehicle dependency and improve overall health of residents.
 - Consider implementing design guidelines or standards for high-visibility areas such as Main Street.
 - Provide for innovative approaches that expand the range of development opportunities by modifying the C-1 and residential districts to adapt to current use and investment patterns.
 - Identify potential zoning changes and initiatives to preserve and enhance structures with architectural significance in the Village core and residential neighborhoods.
- Promote reuse and redevelopment of underutilized parcels in the Village core and residential neighborhoods.
- Set and enforce standards. Establish high standards of care and regulate them with attention to building exteriors, landscaping and signage. Investments in these elements of a property provide low-cost, high-return changes.

- Promote the Village’s (and school district’s) recently-passed home rule laws that provide property tax relief for improvements. For example: a developer could build five new homes and income-qualified homebuyers could ease into the full assessed value over five years. Homeowners could make home improvements and the assessment increase would phase in over eight years.
 - 485a regarding mixed use buildings
 - 421f regarding single- or two-family homes
 - 457 abates increases in taxes for first time homebuyers of new homes.
- Each year for the next ten years, provide a 1:1 match for the first 25 Village homeowners who install up to \$250 in the following exterior home improvements (porch lights, flags, mailboxes and house numbers are examples).
- Meet with employers to ask about their employee residence and commuting patterns. Discuss with them the goals of this comprehensive plan and of housing in particular. Develop incentives for employees who work in the Village to live in the Village. For example, institute a “Live Where You Work Program” that leverages local banks’ First-Time Homebuyers Programs with a Village sweetener to encourage residents to buy within the Village.
- Implement the recommended improvements to the Waste Water Treatment Plant from the Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (2016) (financed through user fees, USDA/NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC) loans or grants, and bonds).
- Collaborate with Wyoming County Department of Planning & Development and the Wyoming County Industrial Development Agency to prepare shovel-ready project sites within the Village for light industry/artisanal businesses.
- Improve signage to Letchworth State Park and Silver Lake from Perry’s primary entry points.
- Conduct a Silver Lake Trail Feasibility Study in partnership with adjacent town, aimed at linking local recreational corridors with regional attractions, and providing concept plans for key opportunity areas along the trail in the village.

MEDIUM-TERM ACTIONS (INITIATE WITHIN THREE TO FIVE YEARS)

- Establish a 30-year timeline to migrate 100% of Village properties into compliance with new standards through both regulatory requirements and policy and other encouragements
 - 50 properties/year on average
- Begin to grow demand by building and rewarding pride.
- Ensure safe living conditions for low-income households by regulating quality.
- Identify potential regulatory changes to improve stormwater management practices.
- Consider a plan to invest in improved connections and facilities for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists. This plan may include a coordinated approach to these improvements through design standards for the street and streetscape that include sidewalks, crosswalks, parking and bicycle facilities.
- Implement the recommended improvements to the drinking water system from the Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan financed through user fees, USDA/EFC loans or grants, and bonds.
- Carefully consider any utility expansions beyond the areas targeted for development in this Comprehensive Plan. During the public workshop

participants expressed a preference for new development in areas already served with utilities and sidewalks as opposed to those areas without them.

- Pursue funding through NYS Department of State to prepare a Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP) for a comprehensive lakefront strategy to protect and improve the waterfront and water quality. Work with other Silver Lake communities and Wyoming County to accomplish this. An LWRP is a planning document that reflects community consensus and provides a clear direction for appropriate development. It establishes a partnership among local government, community-based organizations, and the state. A Silver Lake LWRP will protect the rights of property owners and concern the needs of the Village and Towns in relation to water quality, resource protection, recreation and tourism.
- Implement some of the short-term recommendations from the SLT Feasibility Study.

LONG-TERM ACTIONS (INITIATE WITHIN SIX TO TEN YEARS)

- Improve Main Street as linked segments, each with its own timeframe for redevelopment and its own character.
- Consider the establishment of a renewable energy district in the Central Business District (CBD) in which commercial buildings would receive tax credits or incentives for harvesting renewable energy from rooftops through photovoltaic (PV) or solar electric systems. New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) regularly provides cash incentives for installation of these systems.
- Utilize a long-term strategy to transition some medium-density residential districts into single-family neighborhoods. Prevent additional multifamily conversions and construction of new multi-family units and/or put design standards in place.
- Consider joining the Tree City USA program. Managed by the Arbor Day Foundation, the program provides education and best practices for strategically managing your tree canopy. Initiate a modest fund for planting future trees.⁷
- Implement the medium-term recommendations from the SLT Feasibility Study.

ONGOING ACTIONS

- Strengthen the Village Core as a vibrant, walkable mixed-use district.
- Join the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation's Climate-Smart Communities compact. This program is overseen by NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and encourages communities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase climate resiliency at a municipal level.⁸
- Promote regional cooperation and shared services.
- Revisit the Comprehensive Plan every four years.
- Continue to maintain the general fund for administration, communication, infrastructure, maintenance, recreation and public safety while allocating extra money in this fund toward other projects listed in this document, as appropriate.

⁷ <http://www.arborday.org/programs/treecityusa/>

⁸ <http://www.dec.ny.gov/energy/50845.html>

APPENDIX A
Implementation Matrix

**Appendix A
Implementation Plan**

This Appendix expands upon the Action Plan written in Part IV of the Comprehensive Plan. High Priority Actions are marked with an asterisk(*).

Short-Term Actions (Initiate within 1-2 years)

ACTION	POTENTIAL FUNDING
Revise Zoning Ordinance*	NYSERDA Cleaner Greener, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Building Blocks (technical assistance), General fund
Collaborate with Wyoming Co. to prepare shovel-ready project sites.*	Empire State Development (ESD) funds, private businesses
Create a plan for a multi-use trail along Silver Lake Outlet.*	Genesee Transportation Council (GTC)
Promote development of underutilized parcels.	n/a
Preserve and enhance structures with architectural significance.	OPRHP (tax credits)
Set and enforce standards for residential and commercial buildings.	General fund
Promote and utilize the incentive system for residential property upgrades.	
Provide match for home owners who install up to \$250 in improvements.	Business Development Loan (BDL) program
Meet with employers to discuss the “Live where you work” program; develop incentives for employees to live in Perry.	BDL program
Infrastructure Improvements	User fees, USDA/EFC loans or grants, bonds
Improve signage to Letchworth State Park and Silver Lake	General fund, businesses
Conduct a Silver Lake Trail Feasibility Study in partnership with adjacent town, aimed at linking local recreational corridors with regional attractions, and providing concept plans for key opportunity areas along the trail in the village.	GTC, General fund

Medium-Term Actions (Initiate within 3-5 years)

ACTION	POTENTIAL FUNDING
Establish 30-year timeline to migrate all Village properties into compliance with current standards.	NYSERDA energy grants, General fund
Draft maintenance standards for property within the Village that exceed NYS minimum code requirements.	n/a
Build and reward pride.	n/a
Regulate quality of housing.	n/a

ACTION	POTENTIAL FUNDING
Identify changes to improve stormwater management.	Community Development Block Grants, NYS DEC Green Infrastructure
Consider a plan to invest in improved connections and facilities for transportation of various modes.	GTC, Transportation Alternatives Program (NYS DOT)
Implement changes to drinking water system.	User fees, USDA/EFC loans or grants, and bonds
Carefully consider any utility expansions beyond the areas targeted for development in this Comprehensive Plan.	n/a
Pursue funding through NYS DOS to prepare a Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan for a comprehensive lakefront strategy	NYS DOS LWRP grant
Implementation of some of the short-term recommendations from the SLT Feasibility Study.	Transportation Alternatives Program (NYS DOT), General fund

Long-Term Actions (Initiate within 6-10 years)

ACTION	POTENTIAL FUNDING
Continue to improve Main Street as linked segments.	NYS DOT funding (Transportation Enhancements or other), General fund
Consider establishing a renewable energy district.	NYSERDA Cleaner Greener or other funding, NYS DEC Green Infrastructure Grants, ESD
Utilize a strategy to evolve some medium-density residential areas into single-family areas.	General fund
Join Tree City USA program.	Arbor Day Foundation
Implementation of the medium-term recommendations from the SLT Feasibility Study	Transportation Alternatives Program (NYS DOT), General fund

Ongoing Actions

ACTION	POTENTIAL FUNDING
Continue to strengthen the Village Core.	As stated above.
Join NYS DEC Climate-Smart Communities compact.	n/a
Promote regional cooperation and shared services.	NYS DOS shared services grants.
Revisit the comprehensive plan regularly with a checklist.	n/a
Continue to maintain the General fund as needed.	n/a

APPENDIX B
Existing Conditions

An Introduction

Wyoming County, New York is a place where the natural and built characteristics of western Upstate are found at every turn. New York State Route 39 connects the region's historic population centers by way of dairy farms, quiet downtowns and industrial buildings. The beauty of hills west and south of the Letchworth gorge cradles this region. Perry is located in this setting. The community of 3,613 is setting its own path, investing in its existing assets and working to enhance the quality of life for its residents.

Perry is about one hour from Buffalo and Rochester, and a considerable distance from any major highways. Perry has transformed itself in recent years from a village in decline, reflective of the Upstate transition away from the manufacturing economy. It is now an active and engaged community with a historic district on the National Register and a docket of community events that a much larger community would covet. Perry also has a reputation for undertaking major planning initiatives that require creative thinking. These include transportation, Main Street and brownfield area plans that have been helpful in getting to this moment.

Residents value Perry's diverse neighborhoods, historic Main Street, community organizations and rural charm. However, like many small communities in upstate New York, Perry faces the challenges associated with an aging population and lack of senior housing, a lack of appropriate housing for people working in Perry and historic housing stock that is rich in character but costly to maintain. Particularly during periods of economic uncertainty, Perry must also deal with the reality that it is perceived by some younger residents as a place to leave rather than a place to stay and raise a family. This plan marks a turning point in Perry's history. It acknowledges that change will not be easy or rapid. It recognizes that communities, particularly those nearby, are constantly engaged in competition for economic growth and new residents. It will define how Perry wants to grow and who it wants to attract.

About the Comprehensive Plan

Adoption of a comprehensive plan in New York State is voluntary. However, state enabling statutes require that zoning be in conformance with a comprehensive plan. At its most basic level, a comprehensive plan provides the foundation for local zoning laws. This comprehensive plan goes beyond that fundamental requirement. It describes Perry's current condition; sets forth a vision and guiding principles for its future growth, development and conservation; and articulates a set of action items for implementing the vision. The plan as a whole is written to guide Village officials in their decision-making process to effectively manage changes both anticipated and unexpected in the coming decade.

For example, while we know that the dairy industry will continue to be an important player in Perry and the surrounding area, it is less-well known what changes in the market and the regional economy will bring to bear. In addition, if Perry is successful in capturing a larger segment of the tourism economy as it relates to Letchworth State Park and Silver Lake, how will the village balance the needs of the tourism sector and the needs of the agricultural economy, if they are ever at odds? This plan will bring clarity to the local decision-making process.

The Village has written this plan with the anticipation that the following parties will actively utilize it:

- The Village Board in making decisions regarding regulations and spending.
- The ZBA and Planning Board in analyzing applications for development.
- Other Boards and Agencies in determining how or whether to proceed with projects or studies.
- Residents and businesses as a source of information.

Planning Process and Framework

In 2014 village officials recognized the need for a comprehensive land use plan. They appointed a steering committee of local residents, business owners and public officials to frame a public outreach strategy and guide the plan development. In recent years the Village has completed a variety of planning initiatives but lacked an overarching philosophy to help guide its physical and fiscal growth. The Steering Committee noted early in the planning process that Perry has fulfilled most of the strategies that are easily achievable and that it needed guidance on prioritizing what steps to take next. Through the process, the significant topics in Perry emerged. These focused largely on housing stock, economic development opportunities on Main Street and throughout the Village, the balance between urban and rural life and land, and mentorship of Perry's next generation of leaders.

The steering committee met monthly for nine months and was actively involved in all phases of plan development. Committee members represented various perspectives (civic groups, education, government, business owners and residents) and helped to publicize public meetings. In addition to regular meetings, the committee conducted an extensive public outreach process that offered Village residents a variety of opportunities for input. Those involved with this plan strived to ensure that the comprehensive plan would reflect the entire community's vision for the future. The public outreach strategy included the following elements.

Community Survey

In September 2014 the Village conducted a community survey to obtain input on various issues and to help inform the focus and direction of the Comprehensive Plan. The survey included questions addressing daily life in Perry, values, and community needs, as well as demographic information. The Village conducted the survey online through Survey Monkey and also made hard copies available at the Village Hall and Public Library. In total, 225 surveys were completed.¹

Focus groups

Through September and October 2014 CPC members led focus groups on a variety of topics to gather more detailed input from residents. CPC members decided on these demographic groups:

- Long-time residents
- Silver Lake residents
- Businesses
- Rotary
- Families
- Young choosers
- Development/real estate
- Youth
- Non-profit

¹ Because the survey was made available online, it is not possible to accurately calculate a return rate. The survey was designed to allow a single response per computer to reduce the likelihood of an individual submitting multiple responses.

The focus groups were conducted in “lounge room” format in homes and business locations. Each group met once or twice to ensure full participation. Meetings were scheduled to run for two hours. The focus groups provide the CPC with the opportunity to understand the concerns of stakeholders belonging to these various groups and enabled committee members to develop a community narrative that was used as the basis for the first public workshop.

Public Workshops

The first public workshop was held on November 17th. Members of the steering committee facilitated a conversation with members of the public, discussing issues such as infrastructure, maintenance of housing and storefronts (and possible solutions), and types of business the Village would like to attract. The committee presented some of the concepts about market and capacity that they had discussed in previous meetings with the consultant team. For example, that by improving the capacity and the condition of the village we will improve Perry’s image and therefore attract new residents and businesses. The Steering Committee held a second public workshop on May 14, 2015 to gain public input about the Draft Comprehensive Plan and incorporate comments as needed into its final draft version.

Public Hearing and Adoption

The Steering Committee held its public hearing on June 29, 2015. Subsequent to the public hearing, the Village Board adopted the plan on September 21, 2015.

Plan Structure

The Village of Perry Comprehensive Plan is structured as follows.

- Chapter 1: Baseline Conditions
 - What Current Conditions Tell Us
- Chapter 2: Community Values, Priorities and Target Market
 - Who We Are
 - Our Priorities
 - Our Target Market
- Chapter 3: Major Issues and Guiding Principles
 - Leveraging Perry’s Strengths
 - Our Challenging Demographics
 - Vision Statement
- Chapter 4: Plan Implementation

Baseline Conditions

Perry's history, demographics, economy and trends.

One of the initial steps in this comprehensive planning process is to take stock of what comprises Perry in terms of history, demographics, physical form and non-tangible assets, all of which are summarized in this chapter.

Perry's History

Perry's buildings, streets, natural resources, cultural activities and residents exist in this location because of strategic economic decisions made in the 19th Century. Silver Lake Outlet, running from Silver Lake to the Genesee River, gave rise to many mill industries, which in turn created employment opportunities and drew in residents. These settlers built schools, churches, a library, and a village hall, and made their lives in Perry.

Originally known as Slabtown, Shacksberg, Beechville, Columbia and Ninevah, the village took its current name from Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry, hero of the Battle of Lake Erie. The Village was incorporated in 1830. Perry's location facilitated its growth into a thriving mill community with a rich industrial heritage encompassing production of cloth, leather and spokes. The Silver Lake Railroad was established in 1871, and opened up further opportunities for business and industry. A salt company operated within the Village between 1886 and 1909. The Perry Knitting Company, established in 1881, employed over 1,000 people and led to Polish immigrants locating to the Village beginning in 1903. Other 20th-century industries included Robeson Cutlery Company (1898-1974); Tempest Knitting Company (1907, later Wyckoff Knitting, 1916-1934); and Duracraft/Champion (1935-1998). Today the sites of the old mills are marked by inscribed boulders.

In 1855, Perry became a tourist attraction after a sea serpent sighting in Silver Lake. Local fishermen reported that the serpent was 60 feet long with glowing red eyes. The media frenzy that followed in the wake of the sighting created a boom for Perry and Silver Lake. Remains of the canvas "monster" were later discovered in the ashes of the Walker Hotel on Main Street, which burned down in 1857. Its proprietor A. B. Walker had successfully concocted the scheme to attract business to his hotel. The mythical sea serpent remains a popular character in the area today, and its likeness has been incorporated into the splash pad at the Village Park that opened in 2014. The serpent also lends its name to the Sea Serpent Softball Tournament. Perry is eager to capitalize on its substantial physical assets to attract new economic opportunities and residents, much as the mythical sea serpent drew visitors to the area one hundred years ago.

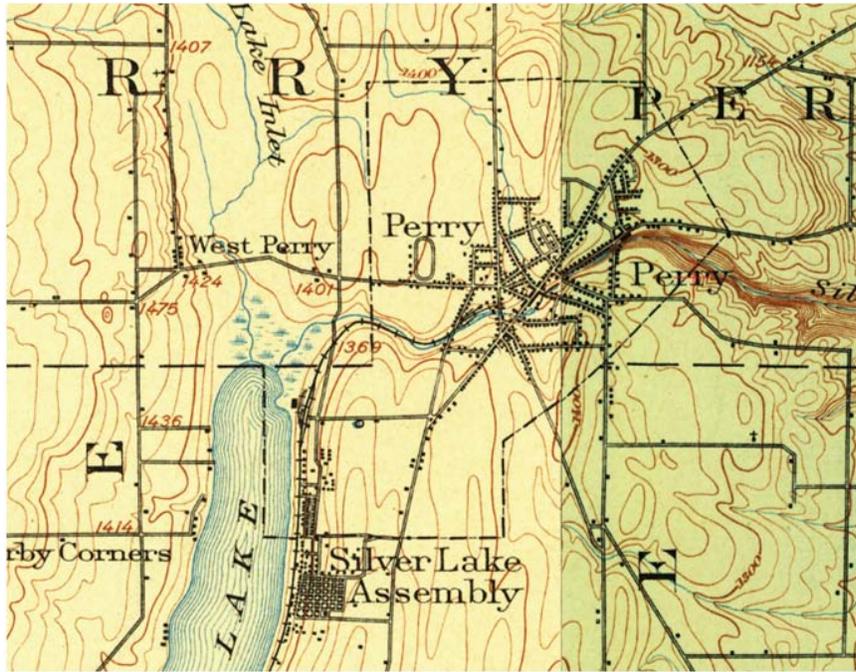


Figure 1. Village of Perry, 1905. Source: USCG Historical Topographic Map Explorer (Maps: Nunda and Portage, 1905). Features of note include the Silver Lake Institute (“Silver Lake Assembly”) to the east of Silver Lake, the Silver Lake Railroad, and the Perry Park track.

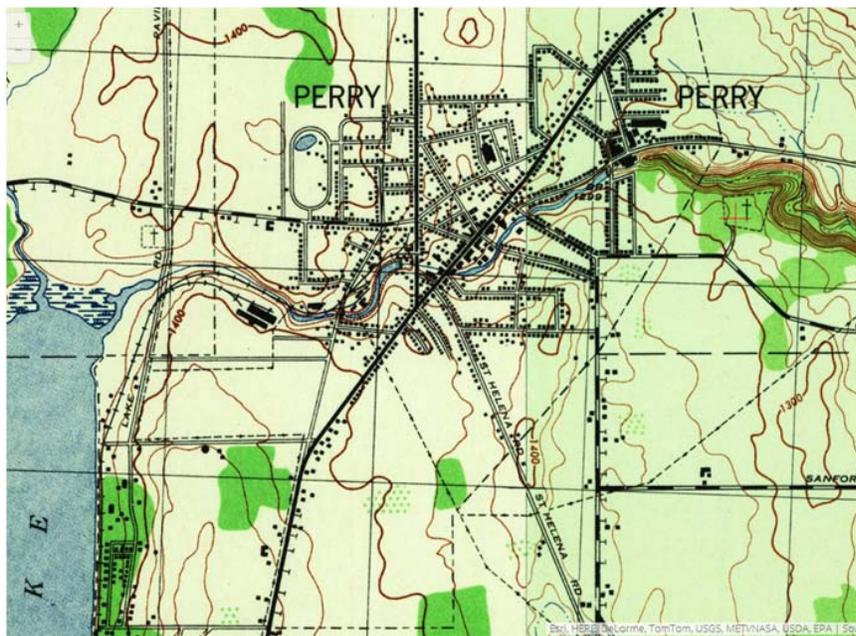


Figure 2. Village of Perry, 1944. Source: USCG Historical Topographic Map Explorer (Maps: Mount Morris and Castile, 1944). Features of note include the Elementary school, the development of Main Street, and the growth of industrial buildings along Silver Lake Outlet.

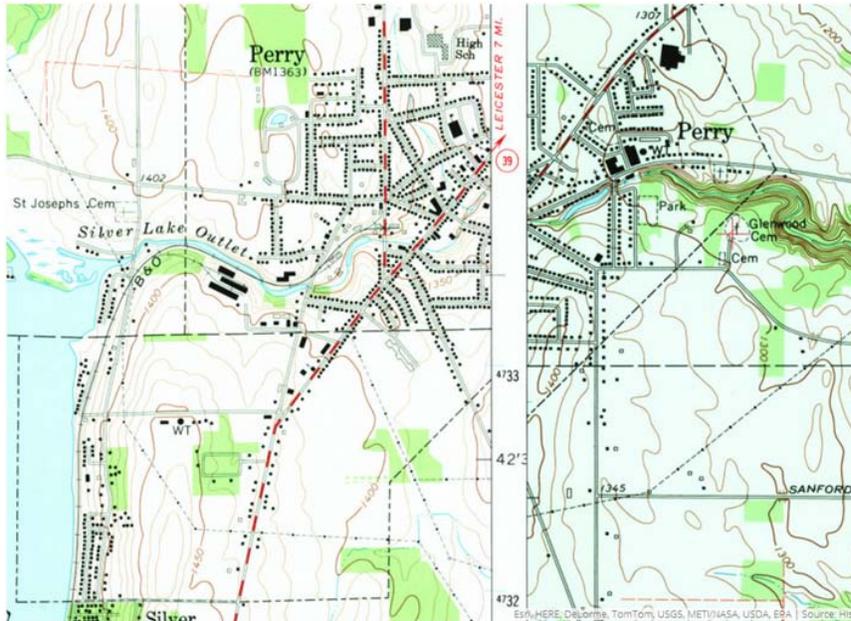


Figure 3. Village of Perry, 1972. Source: USCG Historical Topographic Map Explorer (Maps: Mount Morris and Castile, 1972). Features of note include the development of the High School, Birchwood Acres neighborhood, and the water treatment plants (labeled “WT”).

Demographics

Population

As shown in Figure 4, Perry’s population reached a peak of 4,538 in 1970, which coincided with the publication of the 1969 comprehensive master plan. Between 1980, when the comprehensive plan update was published, and 1990 the population stabilized at around 4,200 residents. Since the 1990 census the population of the Village has steadily declined, reaching 3,945 in 2000 and a low of 3,673 in 2010. The most recent population estimate available from the American Community Survey suggests that the population is continuing to decline, albeit at a slower rate, with 3,613 Village residents in July 2013.

Figure 4, Village of Perry population and percentage change, 1940-2010.

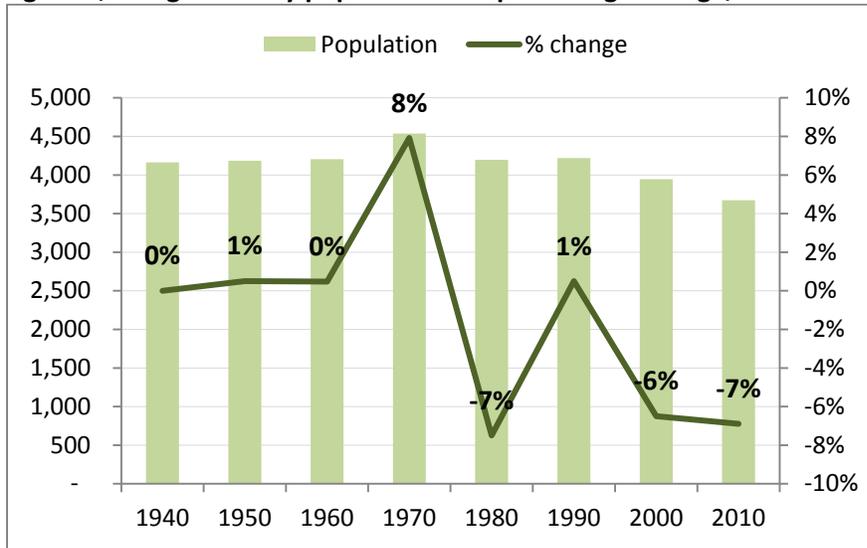
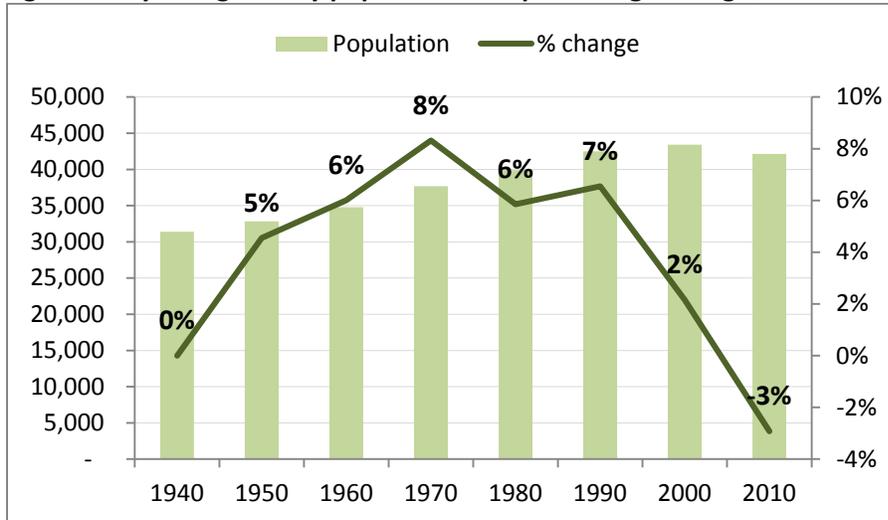


Figure 4. Source: US Census Bureau.

Although the general decline in Perry’s total population is a trend reflected in small communities across upstate New York, it is the composition of the decline—especially among families—that has most concerned residents throughout the development of this plan. The composition of the population decline is discussed in more detail in the following sections.

Figure 5. Wyoming County population and percentage change, 1940-2010.

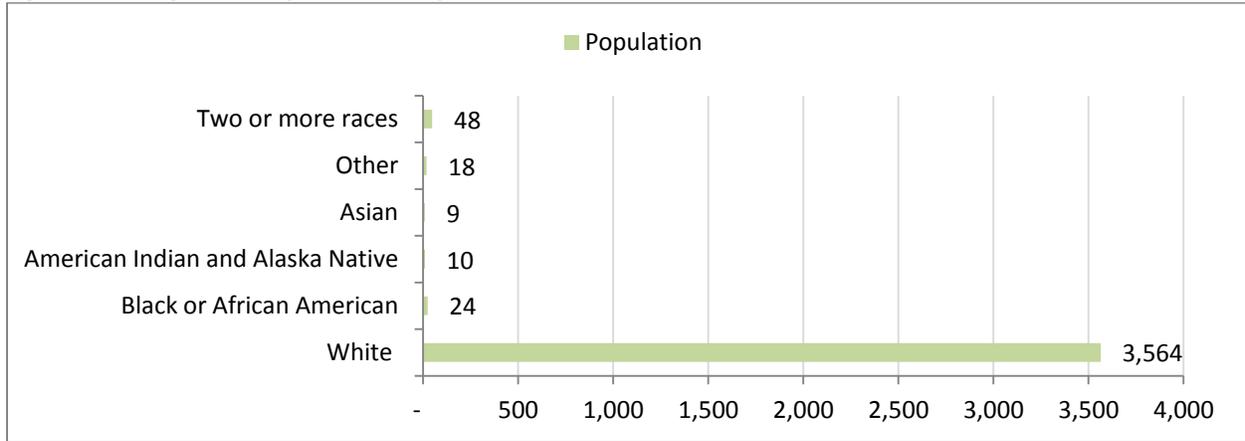


Source: US Census Bureau.

In contrast to Perry, the population of Wyoming County (Figure 5) continued to increase between 1970 and 2000, with a small decline registered between 2000 and 2010. The county’s population in 2010 was 42,155, slightly below the 1990 peak of 42,507.

Age & Race

Figure 6. Village of Perry, racial composition, 2010.



Source: US Census Bureau.

The Village of Perry is predominantly white with 3,564, or 97% identifying as such. Just 2.4% of Village residents identify as Hispanic and 1.3% identify as having two or more races. Black or African American residents make up 0.7% of the population, and American Indian and Alaska Native are only 0.3%.

Households & Families

In 2000, nearly half (48%) of Perry's households were married-couple families and roughly one-fifth (21%) were married-couple families with children (Table 1). Over the course of the 2000s, these shares both dropped (to 41% and 14%, respectively). By 2012 less than half (48%) of all families with children were married-couple families, down from nearly two-thirds (62%) in 2000.

As married-couple families with children declined, the number and portion of female-headed families generally and female-headed families with children under 18 in particular both rose. Among all families with children, one-fourth (28%) were headed by single females in 2000 compared to 40% in 2012.

This decline is also reflected in the number of children enrolled in school (Table 2). Perry's population enrolled in school skewed more towards high school students between 2000 and 2012. High school-age children accounted for 27% of students in 2012 compared to just 23% in 2000. While the share of students in preschool and elementary school stayed fairly constant, the number of students at those levels declined particularly among elementary school-age children. This could suggest that families in town are aging and the children in them getting older while new Perry households do not include younger children to take their place.

Yet another sign that Perry is failing to attract young families is reflected in the decline of homeowners aged 35 to 44 (Graph 1). Between 2000 and 2010, the portion of owners in Perry aged 35 to 44 declined from 22% to 16%. At the same time the percentage of owners aged 55 to 64 increased from 14% to 21%.

Also down was the percentage of owners with an outstanding mortgage: 64% of Perry owners had mortgages in 2000 compared to just 54% in 2012 (Table 3). This suggests that longer-term owners who have now paid their mortgages in full are increasingly outnumbering new owners who are more likely to take out a mortgage when they purchase their homes.

Workforce and Employment

Educational Attainment

In another trend, Perry adults (those 25 years old and older) are becoming more educated: by 2012, a much smaller share of adults had less than a high school degree (14% vs. 20%) or just a high school degree (36% vs. 42%) than in 2000 (Table 4). The number of adults with at least a bachelor's degree declined even as the number and portion of adults with "some college" or an associates degree increased substantially.

Household Income

At the same time, the median household income crept up in Perry between 2000 and 2012 from nearly \$35,600 to over \$39,000 (Table 5). However, the number of households with incomes below \$25,000 fell the most dramatically during this time. While these households accounted for 37% of all households in 2000, they accounted for just 30% of all households by 2012. The portion of households "in the middle" with incomes from \$25,000 to \$74,999 stayed fairly constant, and the number and share of households with incomes over \$75,000 increased.

Among families the median income rose from roughly \$41,000 in 2000 to nearly \$53,000 by 2012 (Table 6). The share of families with incomes below \$25,000 fell from 24% to 21%, yet the share of families "in the middle" with incomes between \$35,000 and \$49,999 also fell – from 25% in 2000 to 16% in 2012. The number of higher-income families with incomes above \$75,000 more than doubled from 100 to 233. While the number and percentage of households and families with incomes greater than \$75,000 certainly rose in Perry between 2000 and 2012, Perry has less than its fair share of these households when compared to nearby towns.

Despite these gains made in the percentage of households with incomes greater than \$75,000, the percentage of households with earnings fell from 77% in 2000 to 70% in 2012 and the percentage of households receiving cash public assistance more than doubled from 4% in 2000 to 10% in 2012. By 2012, 15% of Perry households received food stamps.

The number and percentage of families with incomes below the poverty level more than doubled from 6.5% in 2000 to 15.7% by 2012. The same increases held for individuals: in 2000, 8.7% of Perry residents lived below the poverty level; this stood at 18.7% by 2012, closely approaching a level that is considered high (20%). When compared to surrounding towns, Perry has one of the highest percentages of households receiving public assistance income, SNAP benefits and Supplemental Security Income.

Perry's stagnant incomes and increased reliance on public assistance are likely due to rising unemployment and a shifting economy. During the Great Recession of 2007/2008 and its aftermath, the unemployment rate in Perry increased from 9.4% in 2000 to 16.6% in 2012. The ranks of the unemployed increased by more than 100 even as the village's population at or over 16 declined by 330.

The industries in which local residents worked stayed fairly consistent between 2000 and 2012 with the notable exception being an increase in the number and share of residents working in education services and health care and social assistance jobs.

The Housing Market

American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2008-2012) suggest that there are fewer housing units overall in Perry today than there were in 2000 (Table 11). And the make-up of the housing stock has also

shifted. Single-family detached units are down from 62% of all units in 2000 to 55% in 2012. Units in multifamily buildings with 3 or 4 units per structure are up from 8% to 17%. Such rise in multifamily construction often accompanies weakening demand for single-family units. This is supported by the fact that homeownership rates also declined: from 65% in 2000 to 58% in 2012. When compared to homeownership rates in surrounding towns, Perry homeownership rate is below average, approximately 62%.

Home values rose slightly even as these homeownership rates and the number of owners declined. By 2012, 23% of Perry's owner-occupied units were valued at or above \$100,000, up from just 7% in 2000. And the median value in the village increased from roughly \$61,000 to \$75,600. When compared to surrounding towns, Perry's has the smallest percentage of homes valued above \$100,000.

Interestingly, excessive housing costs are now impacting owners without mortgages to the same extent as owners with mortgages. Some 16% in both groups had unaffordable housing costs in 2012. The number and percentage of cost-burdened owners with mortgages fell, suggesting that new homeowners have incomes sufficient to afford Perry's fairly affordable homeowner housing. In contrast, the number and percentage of cost-burdened owners without mortgages more than doubled. This is likely more a result of declining household income than increasing housing costs since mortgage payments are not a factor for these households.

Rents rose to a far greater degree than home values between 2000 and 2012 in Perry. The median rent jumped 23% from \$499 to \$613. And while just 5% of rentals rented for \$750 or more in 2000, this was true of 29% of rentals by 2012. Not surprisingly, during the same period the percentage of renters with unaffordable housing costs rose from 36% in 2000 to 52% in 2012.

Land Use

Land use in Perry is reflective of the Village's historic development around the Silver Lake outlet and Route 39. The existing land use map shows commercial and community services land uses concentrated along Main Street, with additional pockets of commercial land use on larger parcels scattered throughout the Village. The highest-density commercial blocks in the central business district (CBD) are historic multi-story buildings on Main Street with retail on the ground level and office or residential uses above. The most successful downtown blocks on either side of Lake Street contain an interesting and useful mix of buildings with safe and comfortable sidewalks. The Silver Lake outlet is a stream that flows from Silver Lake on the Village's western boundary through the CBD and along Water Street. The land uses along the Outlet have historically been industrial and commercial on the western half and residential or commercial toward the east.

The most prevalent land use in Perry is residential at just under 34% of total land, followed by agricultural (19.5%), vacant (21.6%) and commercial (11.4%). Perry's residential neighborhoods are located primarily within walking distance of two main roads, Routes 39 and 246 along which Perry is organized. These neighborhoods include a mix of homes of various sizes and styles and are diverse in terms of housing quality and maintenance. No single neighborhood is significantly more comfortable or distressed than the others. Many of the residential streets are lined with sidewalks and street trees that provide shady connections to other areas of the Village.

A neighborhood of homes, many of which are seasonal cottages, and a small public village beach populate the east side of Silver Lake. Although Perry does not have any big box retail development, newer commercial uses such as a grocery store and pharmacy are located at the north end of Perry on

Route 246. Whereas the land use map shows a mix of uses in the Village core, the uses along Route 246 and the south end of Route 39 are more segregated and automobile-centric. The outlying areas of Perry are less densely developed than the central core and are, therefore, more suitable for the existing agricultural and industrial uses. Although vacant land is the third most prevalent land use in Perry, vacant parcels are dispersed through the Village, and the larger vacant parcels tend to be found adjacent to agricultural lands along the Village boundary.

Agricultural Districts

The purpose of Agricultural Districts in New York State is to encourage the continued use of farmland for agricultural production by providing right-to-farm benefits and favorable tax assessments to farmers and landowners. Agricultural districts are authorized under Article 25-AA of the NYS Agricultural and Markets Law. Agricultural Districts must be at least 500 acres in size and contain both active and viable farmland. Ag districts are approved at the county level before they are certified by the Department of Agriculture and Markets. The program offers protections from overly-restrictive local laws, private nuisance lawsuits and impacts of new, nonfarm development. Farmland that meets eligibility requirements may also be assessed at its value for agricultural use rather than “highest and best” use. This provides tax relief to landowners. The Agricultural Districts Law also limits the taxation of farmland for certain municipal infrastructure improvements such as water or sewer.

Approximately 314 acres out of 1350 in Perry is included in NYS Agricultural District #3. This is approximately 23% of land in the Village. Within the Agricultural District, 82% of land is classified as agricultural, 10% as residential and 9% as vacant. Aside from the protections offered by the Agricultural District, farmland is not protected from development by any other land use regulations including the local zoning ordinance.

Zoning

The Village adopted its zoning law, Chapter 490 in the Municipal Code, in 1994. The Village is divided into seven zones comprising residential, commercial, manufacturing and lakefront uses. As shown in the Village Zoning Map (Figure X), the Commercial Central Business district (C-1) is located at the center of the Village, surrounded by the Residential Two Family (R-2) district, except where C-1 adjoins Commercial General Business (C-2) to the west. A second C-2 district is located in the north of the Village along Route 246. There are three Manufacturing Light Industry (M-1) zones, to the northeast and south of R-2, and in the southeast corner of the Village bordering the Town of Castile. Lower-density Residential One Family (R-1) districts are located in the northern and southern sections of the Village. The Lakefront Development Special District (L-D) is located in the southwest of the Village directly adjacent to Silver Lake. This zone borders R-2 and C-2 districts to the east.

According to data from Wyoming County, over 60% of land in Perry is devoted to residential use. The Village has zoned 13% of land for commercial use and 12.3% for manufacturing. The density of development is regulated according to availability of Village infrastructure. The intent of each zoning district is described in more detail below.

R-1. The intent of the R-1 district is to provide land for low-density single-family detached residential development. The maximum density in the R-1 zone is approximately three dwellings per gross acre in areas with sewer service and approximately two dwellings per acre in areas without sewer. Permitted principal uses in the R-1 district are single-family dwellings; churches, public schools, parks and playgrounds; and fire and rescue stations. Permitted accessory uses in the R-1 zone include private garages, swimming pools, private greenhouses and home occupations. The minimum lot size for areas

with sewer service is 15,000 square feet and 25,000 square feet for non-sewer areas. R-1 districts are located to the north, northwest and south of Perry.

R-2. The intent of the R-2 district is to provide areas for residential development such as is permitted in the R-1 district. In addition, two-family dwellings are permitted upon issuance of a special permit. The maximum density allowed in R-2 is approximately 5 dwelling units per gross acre in sewered areas and 3 dwelling units per gross acre in unsewered areas. (The minimum lot size is 9,000 square feet in areas with sewer service and 14,000 square feet in areas without sewer.)

R-3. The intent of the R-3 district is to provide areas for residential development at a maximum density of roughly eight dwelling units per gross acre in areas with sewer service or roughly four dwelling units per gross acre in areas without sewer. Multiple family dwellings are permitted as a principal use. The minimum lot size in sewer areas is 5,000 square feet and 10,000 square feet in areas without sewer.

C-1. The intent of the C-1 district is to provide areas in which to shop, dine and conduct business and to provide a focal point for the economic, social and cultural life of the community.

C-2. This district is to provide areas for commercial use which will include various uses conducted out of doors, in addition to those of a C-1 nature. Such commercial uses shall include wholesale or retail sales of goods and/or services, warehousing, distribution and light manufacturing similar to those uses listed below. Existing uses may continue within limits set by Article V, § [490-38](#). Uses essentially similar to those listed may be permitted as long as structures remain viable for such uses and safety, site plan and environmental standards are strictly adhered to.

M-1. The intent of the M-1 district is to provide areas for planned industrial uses and to ensure compatibility between industrial operations and the existing character and quality of the community. More specifically, the planning of such elements as streets, parking, architectural features and landscaping shall take into consideration aesthetic appeal and the promotion of an openness and park-like character. Activities shall conform to M-1 industrial performance standards.

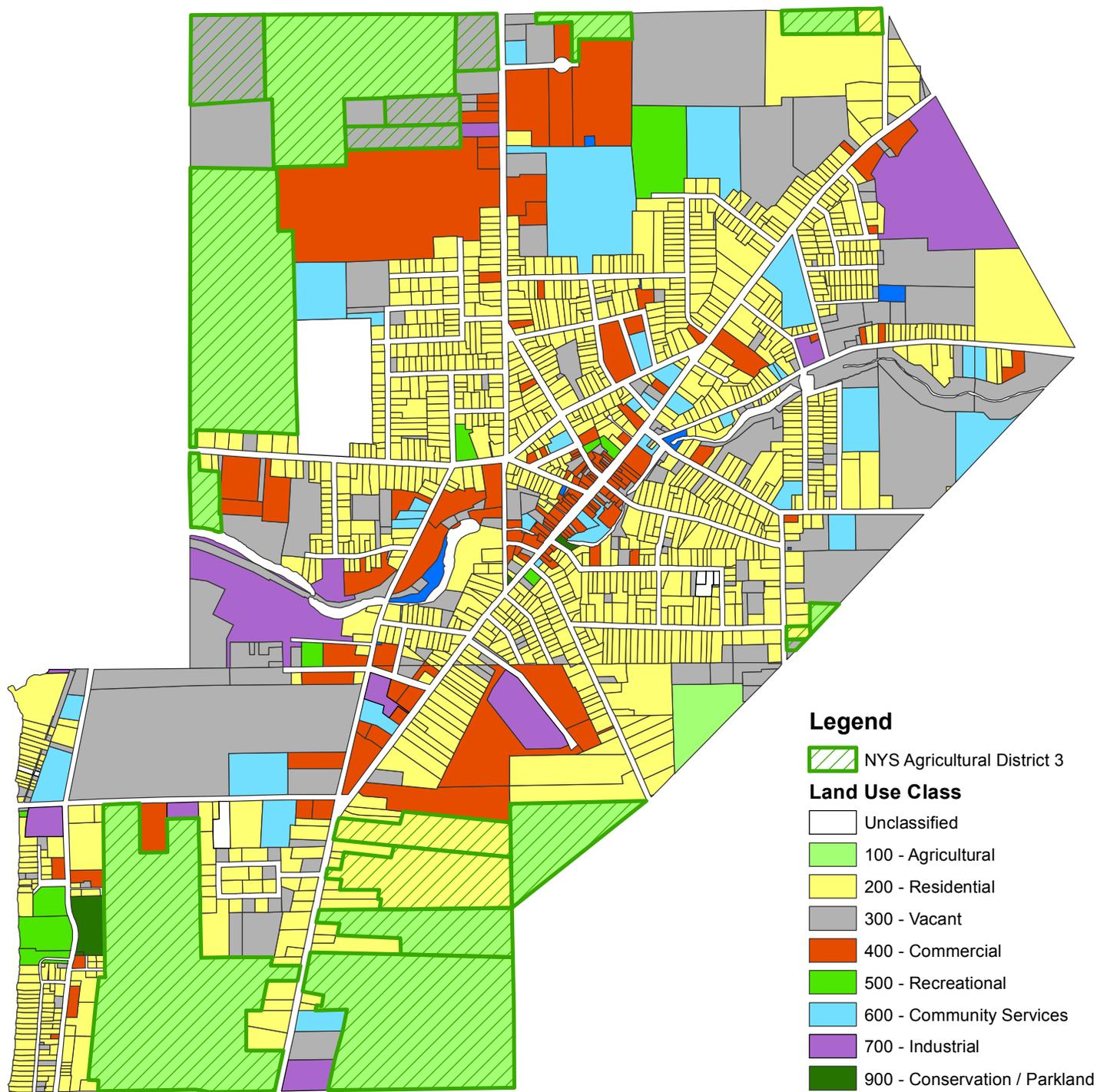
L-D. This district provides flexibility in permitted land uses in recognition of the need for limited medium-density residential and certain nonresidential development in the Silver Lake area.

An examination of Perry's land use map in comparison to its zoning map reveals a fairly organic pattern of land use than would be expected to occur under the zoning law alone. For example, commercial and agricultural land uses can be found in residential zones. The maps also reveal some notable disjoints that warrant discussion. For example, although Perry developed around a thriving mill industry, as the above figures show, today less than 4% of land in the Village is classified as industrial even though 12% of land is zoned for the purpose of manufacturing and light industry. The shift away from manufacturing towards a service-oriented economy consistent with wider trends affecting many communities in Upstate New York is reflected in land use. Furthermore, even though 19.5% of land in Perry is dedicated to agricultural production, the third-largest land use in the Village, and 23.2% of land is protected by Agricultural District #3, there is currently no zone in the Village dedicated to agricultural use.²

Although ranking the categories of land use and zoning districts by land area can be a useful exercise to determine the consistency between land use and zoning—and, therefore, help to inform potential

² A Rural-Agricultural District (R-A) was removed when the current code was adopted in 1994.

VILLAGE OF PERRY EXISTING LAND USE

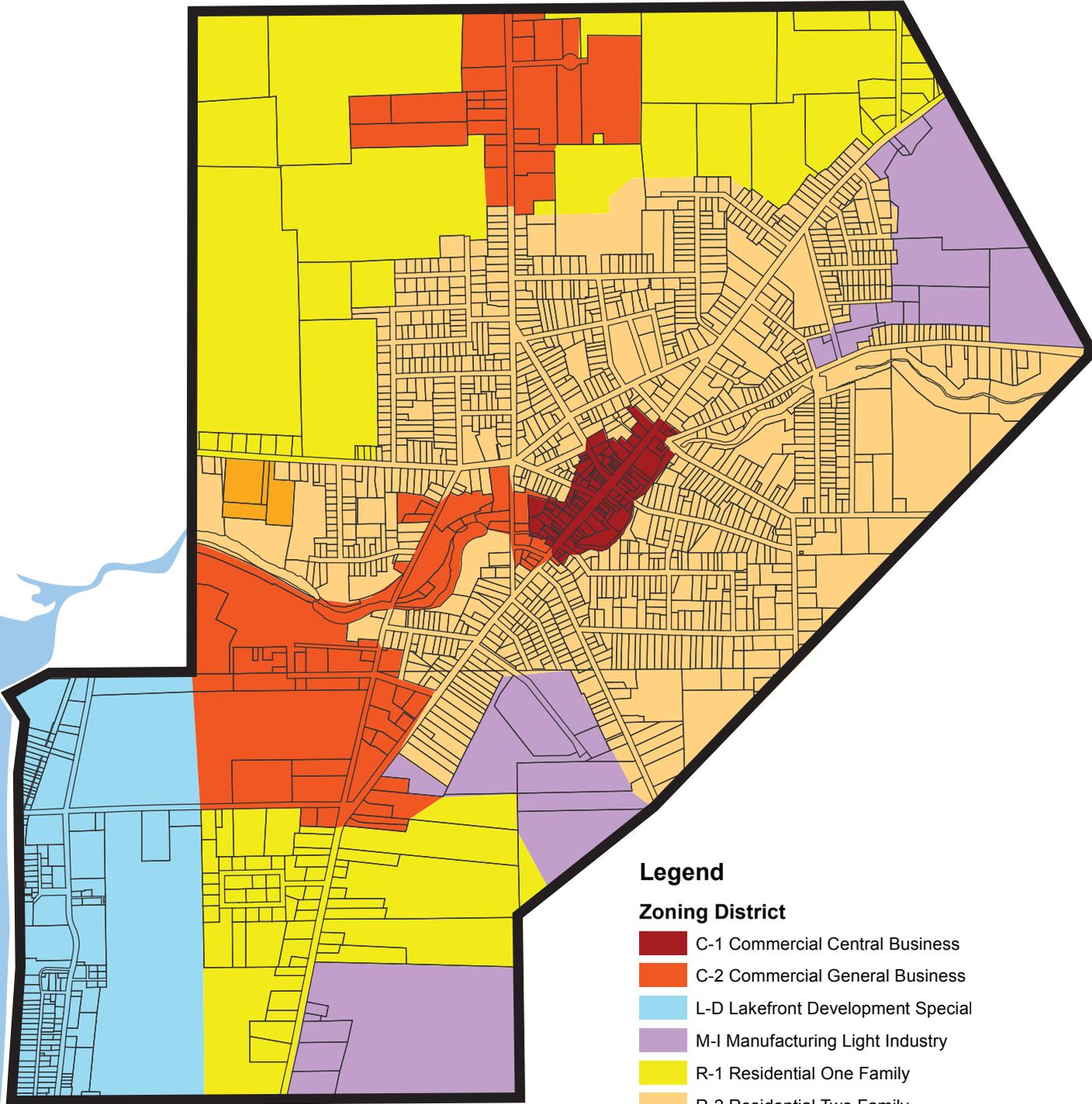


Date: December, 2014
Data Source: Wyoming County, New York State
Agricultural Districts Mapping Program
Projected Coordinate System:
New York State Plane (West) Feet

0 0.1 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 Miles



VILLAGE OF PERRY EXISTING ZONING

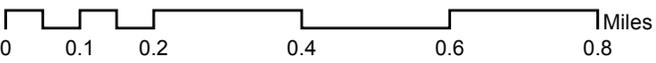


Legend

Zoning District

- C-1 Commercial Central Business
- C-2 Commercial General Business
- L-D Lakefront Development Special
- M-I Manufacturing Light Industry
- R-1 Residential One Family
- R-2 Residential Two Family
- R-3 Residential Multiple

Date: December, 2014
Data Source: Wyoming County,
Projected Coordinate System:
New York State Plane (West) Feet



changes to the zoning code—this analysis only tells part of the story. Naturally, uses such as agriculture or large-scale manufacturing require more land than more compact uses such as small retail shops and offices. Therefore, the overall acreage devoted to a particular land use tells us very little about the significance of this land use for Perry’s economy nor its location and composition. For example, Perry’s most defining area—its historic Main Street—comprises only 1.2% of the total land area in the Village, but its composition on a series of small blocks, the richness in granular detail apparent in the building stock, and the importance of Main Street to the local economy gives this area a central significance to residents that belies its small physical footprint. Conversely, the C-2 district located along Route 246 has a much larger footprint than C-1. However, this area was developed more recently, and the larger buildings with dedicated parking lots require more land area. Overall, small parcels are concentrated in the center of the Village, transitioning to larger parcels towards the periphery. Therefore, when thinking about changes to zoning that might evolve out of the comprehensive planning process, this plan will consider how much land desired uses actually require as well as the location and composition of zoning districts.

Natural Resources

Water Resources

While water comprises approximately 0.5% of the land area in Perry, the influence of water resources on the Village is significant. Silver Lake borders the western edge of the L-D district, which is the only lakefront area within the Village boundary. The main water body within the Village is the Silver Lake Outlet which provided the water source for Perry’s mill industry in the 19th Century. The outlet flows into the Genesee River and north into Lake Ontario. The outlet meanders through the Village in a northeast direction, crossing underneath Main Street above the intersection with Dolbeer Street. A trail follows the outlet from South Federal Street to Walker Road. Additional access to the outlet is limited although the Village is considering developing a trail on public property only in this area.

Soil

Soil conditions are an important factor to take into account when making determinations on the location and composition of future land use within the Village. Soil conditions determine the suitability of land for development especially in terms of the ability for soils to support structures, absorb water and safely absorb sanitary sewage effluent in areas where septic tanks are used. Soil characteristics also play an important role in community resilience by determining how effectively the land can absorb excess water after heavy rain or floods. The Soil Survey of Wyoming County prepared by the US Department of Agriculture in April 1974 classifies the soil types in Perry into four groups³ based on drainage conditions and quality for agriculture. Most soils within the Village are well-drained and, therefore, well suited to both agricultural uses and the development of buildings. Floodplain soils along Silver Lake Outlet are poorly drained, and the steep slopes in this area can lead to erosion problems.

Topography

The Village is located between Silver Lake and Letchworth State Park on a plateau overlooking both the Genesee Valley and the Oatka Valley. The topography within the Village is generally level with the exception of excessive slopes (more than 15%) along the Silver Lake Outlet, especially towards the easternmost section. Elevations range from 1,280 feet above sea level to 1,440 feet.

³ The soil associations used are generalized here for planning purposes.

Transportation

The transportation network determines how easily residents can move to and throughout the Village, and establishes what goods and services they are easily able to access. The transportation system in Perry consists of roadways, public transportation and sidewalks. Although it is not the purpose of this Comprehensive Plan to develop a long-range transportation plan, transportation issues are inherently related to land use and zoning decisions.

Road Network

Within Perry's boundaries roads are maintained by the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), Wyoming County and the Village. Within Perry, Wyoming County maintains 1.35 miles of roadway along routes 6 (Borden Avenue), 22 (Walker Road), 25 (Simmons Road) and 30 (Lake Street). The County contracts plowing and snow removal along these roads to the Village.

Bicycle & Pedestrian Network

Perry boasts a comprehensive network of sidewalks that link the Village's historic downtown core to residential neighborhoods. However, it takes more than good amenities for pedestrians to make a community walkable rather than simply pedestrian friendly. One of the most important factors contributing to walkability is the presence of amenities within easy walking distance of people's homes, so that trips for basic goods and services can more easily be made by foot than by car. In turn, walkability is related to all manner of benefits including economic development, public health and protection of natural resources. This is what walkability expert Jeff Speck calls "wealth, health, and sustainability." According to the popular website Walk Score® Perry is "Very Walkable," which means that most errands can be accomplished on foot. However, it is important to note that WalkScore® is an overall measure of walkability based on data available, and the website does not take account of physical conditions on the ground such as the quality of sidewalk maintenance or pedestrian crossings.

Perry is the densest village in Wyoming County with 1,745 people per square mile, compared with 925 for the Village of Warsaw. This density is complemented by Perry's built environment which benefits strongly from the Village's avoidance of strip-style development and big box stores. Even though the Village has good bones for walkability, there is still potential for improvement. For example, the trail along Silver Lake Outlet does not easily connect to the sidewalks on the Village side and the road along the lake has insufficient shoulders for walking.

Perry residents are responsible for keeping their sidewalks free of snow and ice in winter. Maintaining safe sidewalk conditions year-round is an important component of walkability as icy sidewalks can easily deter pedestrians and schoolchildren from walking. In response to concerns that the Village was unable to address complaints about lax sidewalk maintenance, in 2013 the Planning Committee drafted a new policy that included procedures for complaints while finding a way to assist property owners who needed help keeping their sidewalks well-maintained. Owing to community opposition, the policy was not subsequently adopted by the Village Board.

Recognizing the importance of walkability to the well-being of its citizens and quality of life in general, Perry has been proactive in documenting its pedestrian environment through the establishment of the Perry Pedestrian Task Force (PPTF) in summer 2013. Volunteers have walked all 17 miles of sidewalks in the Village to document and rate their condition. The PPTF also sent a survey to property owners to gather feedback on sidewalk use and strategies to fund improvements.

In addition to being very walkable, Perry is well suited to bicycling. Its relatively low traffic volumes, quiet streets and mostly flat elevations make it ideal for getting around by bike. Like many rural communities, Perry does not have an extensive network of bicycle infrastructure or facilities. There are also no state-designated bike routes in Perry. Tour de Per-RY is an annual community bike ride offering two routes: a 17-mile loop around Silver Lake and a more challenging 53-mile (with 3000' of hills) loop through an area of Letchworth State Park. Tour de Per-RY features rest stops with refreshments and finishes just in time for riders to see the Perry Chalk Art Festival and Taste of Summer dining event. In 2014, 200 riders took part in Tour de Per-RY. Perry Bikes organizes group rides on Thursdays from May to September for riders of all levels and abilities.

Public transportation

Transit service is provided in Perry by the Livingston/Wyoming County bus and Wyoming Transit (WYTS). WYTS provides Dial-A-Ride service in Perry Monday-Friday. The Green Loop service connects Perry with Warsaw, Wyoming, Castile and Silver Springs.

Wayfinding

Wayfinding refers to signage and other graphic communication that assists people in orienting themselves and navigating a place. Aside from their practical purpose, wayfinding systems are a useful way to market a place by evoking a sense of character. Currently, the Village maintains typical street signs such as directional, stop signs, intersection markers, road name signs, seasonal signs and the like. The Perry Chamber of Commerce and Perry Main Street Association (PMSA) initiated gateway signage, and the PMSA raised money for small metal signs at key locations to assist visitors with wayfinding.

Public Facilities

Village Hall opened in 1913 to house all Village services in a single building. The Village is governed by a five-member Village Board consisting of an elected Mayor, Deputy Mayor/Trustee, and three Trustees. The term for Mayor is two years while Trustees are elected to four-year terms. The Village employs a Clerk, Administrator/Treasurer, Attorney, Superintendent of Public Works and a Park Maintenance Supervisor. A part-time zoning officer helps to enforce reasonable standards of property maintenance and to augment Perry's various efforts to attract new residents and investment.

The Perry Public Library opened in 1914 and is housed in a historic Carnegie building on Main Street. The Library offers a variety of materials to borrowers as well as printed resources on local history. It is also home to the Stowell-Wiles Art Gallery, dedicated as an addition to the Library in 1935. The Library is a member of the Pioneer Library System comprising Livingston, Ontario, Wayne and Wyoming counties.

Schools

The Perry Central School District includes the Perry Elementary/Junior High School and Perry High School. The Elementary School is Pre-K to Grade 6; Junior High is Grades 7 and 8 and High School is Grades 9 to 12. The graduating classes typically number between 70-80 students. A new building for Perry Elementary on Olin Avenue was completed in 2000, replacing the 100-year-old school building on Leicester Street, which has since been converted for office and residential use. Perry High School on Watkins Avenue was built in 1953 and extended in 1958. During the Steering Committee's focus group sessions many attendees stated the strengths of the Perry Central School District (PCSD) as one of the benefits of living in Perry, as well as the desire for the district and schools to remain independent and in their current locations.

Utilities

The Village's Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) was constructed in 1954 and extensively upgraded in 1994. In 2012, the Village commissioned the development of an Integrated Capital Improvement Program for the Village. The Plan made recommendations for improvements to the WWTP and distribution network and Waste Water Treatment Facility (WWTF) and collection system. More recently, the Village commissioned an engineering study of WWTF and Waste Water collection system. "The study includes evaluating improvements and assessing the existing conditions of the WWTP, prioritizing and evaluating specific projects outlined in the 2012 Capital Improvement Plan, and analyzing stormwater inflow and groundwater infiltration in the sanitary sewer collection system," as stated in the introduction. The Village also has a January 2015 engineering report that evaluates the storm sewer system and prioritizes projects.

Emergency Services

Perry Police Department consists of the part-time Chief of Police, full-time and part-time officers, and one secretary. The Fire Department is a volunteer department offering fire protection and other life safety protection, as well as fire prevention education to the people of the Village and Town of Perry. Through the mutual aid system, our fire protection/rescue services extend beyond the borders of Perry into the surrounding towns of Wyoming, Livingston and Genesee Counties. Perry Emergency Ambulance, Inc. was founded in 1967 as an independent volunteer ambulance service which operates as a non-profit organization. Perry Ambulance provides service to the Village and Town of Perry and to other communities through the mutual aid system. Perry Ambulance currently operates two fully equipped transport ambulances and is New York State certified as a paramedic level service provider.

Recreation

Perry has several noteworthy recreational attractions, including Village of Perry Park, a 20-acre open space located on Lake Street. Village Park has a new splash pad, play areas for toddlers and older children, a paved and lighted half-mile walking path, five tennis courts, a pond, softball pitch, baseball diamond and two pavilions available for rent. Barney Kalise Park on Park Avenue has sports fields and undeveloped open space. A pocket park is located downtown at the corner of Main and Dolbeer Streets. Also of note is the Perry Community Garden, established in 2010 with 20 plots that are available to residents for their personal use. It is located near Route 246 in the village.

Silver Lake is located along Perry's southwest boundary. Home to A. B. Walker's legendary sea serpent, the lake is notable for having its inlet and outlet at the same end. Silver Lake State Park, located at the south end of Silver Lake in the Town of Castile, is a popular destination for boating and fishing. Formal recreational resources include a boat launch, picnic area and comfort station. The lake is 3 miles long and half a mile wide, and with a maximum depth of 37' it is the first lake in New York to freeze in winter, attracting more anglers in winter than in summer. The lake hosts several contests throughout the year. The Silver Lake Watershed Commission includes members from the Village, Towns of Perry and Castile, Mt. Morris, Silver Lake and the Soil and Water Conservation District.

The Silver Lake Trail runs along Silver Creek (also called "Silver Lake Outlet"). This ¾-mile informal trail connects Walker Road with South Federal Street along an abandoned railway line. The Silver Lake Trail Council (SLTC) was established by residents from the Village of Perry and Silver Lake to extend the existing trail on public land to ultimately connect Letchworth State Park and Silver Lake State Park. The SLTC has chosen four locations around Main Street Perry and Silver Lake as focus areas: Memorial Park, South Federal Street Trail Head, Walker Road Bridge and Perry Public Beach. Each location has significance for historic value, recreational potential and enhancing the trail's connectivity. There is

potential for the section of the trail between the focus points to have interpretive signage that brings Perry's rich history to life for trail users. The trail is also intended to give lake residents access to downtown Perry. The proposed extension to the trail on public property only will utilize public roads and paths without encroaching on private property unless specifically granted.

Letchworth State Park, popularly known as "the Grand Canyon of the East," is a magnificent natural wonder open to visitors year-round. Letchworth State Park is easily accessible from the Village of Perry with an entrance located approximately 3.5 miles southeast of downtown.⁴ The Genesee River flows over three major waterfalls with cliffs are 600 feet high in some places. The park offers 66 miles of hiking trails as well as trails for horseback riding, biking, snowmobiling and cross-country skiing. Other resources include the historic Glen Iris Inn, a conference center, Maplewood Lodge, camping facilities including winterized cabins, the William Pryor Letchworth Museum and guided nature tours. Groundbreaking for a new nature center will take place in Spring 2015.

Events and Organizations

Perry is a community of entrepreneurs as evidenced by the wealth of activities and initiatives described below. As the Strengths, Opportunities and Perceptions exercise conducted at the first Steering Committee meeting revealed, Perry's spirit of volunteerism and grassroots efforts has done a lot to significantly enhance the community in recent years. Notable Village events include the Chalk Art Festival, Rotary Show, Shake on the Lake, Holiday DeLights, Last Night Perry, Tour de Perry, the Perry Farmers Market and regional softball tournaments. Several of these events are held in Festival Plaza on Main Street.

Planning Initiatives

During the planning process, participants were educated on other planning initiatives, not only local but also in the region and throughout New York State, that may have a bearing on the recommendations included within this plan. These include the following studies and programs.

Genesee Transportation Council CAP Study

The CAP Study was commissioned by the Genesee Regional Transportation Council (GTC) as part of its Circulation, Accessibility and Parking (CAP) Program in 2008. The purpose of the study was "to enhance the livability and economic vitality of the Village of Perry by identifying physical, operational and regulatory changes that enhance circulation, accessibility and parking for all users." The preferred alternative for the study was developed through a process of public outreach. The design includes bulb-outs and a pedestrian refuge median to enhance safety and street landscaping, maintains on-street parking (also an important aspect of pedestrian safety), adds bicycle lanes throughout the Village, and widens existing sidewalks.⁵

Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council

In 2011, Governor Cuomo created 10 Regional Councils throughout the state, including the Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council (FLREDC) which includes Wyoming County. The councils were charged with developing long-term strategic plans for regional economic growth. These councils are comprised of local experts and stakeholders from business, academia, local government and other organizations and are a key component of the Governor's transformative approach to economic development. FLREDC has been successful in pursuing funding for projects throughout its nine-county

⁴ <http://www.letchworthpark.com/>

⁵ http://www.villageofperry.com/documents/MSMP_final_report.pdf

area in which Perry is located. The Village should continue to coordinate with FLREDC on its proposed capital and maintenance projects with the goal of obtaining support for those projects, particularly those that relate to regional economic growth. In the FLREDC Progress Report and Recommendations for Priority Projects (2014), one project that may have an impact on Perry is the proposed Wyoming County Dairy Institute. Though it would be located in the Village of Warsaw, the project would represent a significant investment in the dairy industry and the surrounding community.

Perry Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA)

This 2012 study focuses on a 100-acre area comprising at least seven potential brownfield sites located near Perry's central business district. The site has been vacant since A&A Metal Fabricating Inc. closed in 2001, concluding 85 years of industrial use there.⁶ Infill development of brownfield sites is a priority for Wyoming County, which aims to provide new space for development and reduce pressures for sprawl.⁷ The Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council and NYS Department of State (DOS) prepared this pre-nomination study/Step 1 with funding from the Brownfield Opportunity Areas (BOA) Program. Pre-nomination studies comprise the first of three program steps that lead to State designation of a BOA. The project steering committee developed six goals to guide the project, including the expansion of job opportunities within the BOA and surrounding community; enhancement of the physical appearance of properties within the BOA and along the Silver Lake Outlet waterfront; cleanup and remediation of environmentally contaminated areas; and upgrading streetscape and utility infrastructure. Currently the state is not funding any additional BOA studies. However, if funding is available in the future, Perry would like to submit for funding for Step 2 or Nomination Study. This would include a thorough economic and market trends analysis.

Finger Lakes Regional Sustainability Agenda

In 2013, The Genesee-Finger Lakes Region completed the development of the Finger Lakes Regional Sustainability Plan under Phase I of the Cleaner, Greener Communities Program. The Regional Sustainability Plan establishes a sustainability planning framework to aid in statewide infrastructure investment decision making, while the second phase is providing \$90 million for implementation of projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and provide energy efficiency savings. The plan mentions Perry as a place where more sustainable land development practices are occurring, due to the revitalization efforts in downtown. The Perry Main Street Association's program is noted for the variety of techniques used in the adaptive reuse and historic preservation of existing buildings, and the collaborative approach that Perry New York LLC is taking to directly invest in historic buildings. "Through education and outreach, municipalities should promote the use of innovative approaches like Perry's community investment corporation."⁸

Main Street Improvement Program

In 2013, NYSDOT awarded Perry with a federal Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP) grant to fund its Main Street Improvement Project. The project, slated to begin construction in April 2016, will focus on downtown streetscape improvements, including storm sewer, widened sidewalks, crosswalks, curbing and lighting. These improvements will contribute to the walkability and marketability of the business district. The Village sees the project as an essential investment in the public realm that will draw businesses into Perry and build on the revitalization of downtown spearheaded by Perry New York LLC, a local advocacy group.

⁶ <http://www.gflrpc.org/Publications/PerryBOA/Final/index.htm>

⁷ G/FLRPC 2012-2013 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Update, p. 105.

⁸ <http://sustainable-fingerlakes.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/FLRSP-Final-Plan.pdf> (88)

Genesee-Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council

The Genesee-Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (G/FLRPC) is an organization responsible for fostering coordination in regional planning across a nine-county area that includes Wyoming County. In recent years, G/FLRPC has provided planning assistance to the village (see BOA, above). As the administrative and policy-making organization for the federally-designated Economic Development District, G/FLRPC is responsible for developing a Comprehensive Economic Development Update (CEDS) each year.⁹ Municipalities in the region are invited to submit projects for inclusion in the CEDS, which acts as the annual economic development work program. The 2013 CEDS lists projects or sites within Perry, including the Perry Commerce Center as a Qualified Build-Now NY site and the A&A Facility (part of the Perry BOA). Perry itself was listed as a regional strength during one of the CEDS stakeholder sessions.

Restore Population Workshops

Over summer 2013 Perry held a series of workshops on the topic of restoring population. Three major initiatives with the potential to assist current homeowners and attract new residents were identified: help with essential home repairs, provide incentives to invest in housing through State property tax programs, and prepare an inventory of property suited to infill residential development to help grow the population.¹⁰ The Village adopted two tax abatements in 2014 to assist homeowners and first-time buyers of new homes. The programs encourage homeowners to improve their properties by phasing in any increase in assessed value over 8 years. In 2014 the Village also received \$400,000 in funding to assist income-qualified homeowners with essential repairs to single-family, owner-occupied homes.

⁹ http://www.gflrpc.org/Publications/CEDS/2012-13/2013CEDS_Final.pdf

¹⁰ Mayor's Corner, November 2013

APPENDIX C
Clue Group Report



Memo

TO: Charles Buki
FROM: Kennedy Smith
DATE: September 12, 2014
SUBJECT: Commercial revitalization/development in Perry

Thank you for inviting me to participate in the comprehensive plan process for the Village of Perry and to examine conditions and possibilities for business development. I have summarized my research and suggestions here and hope this information will be helpful in the ongoing community discussions about the Village's future and in shaping its new Master Plan.

First, a quick note about retail markets and catchment areas: Commercial activity does not conform to political boundaries. People shop in myriad ways and buy things from many different places – local shops, shopping malls, nearby communities, big-box stores, online retailers, vending machines, Tupperware parties, and on and on. For the purposes of this research, I have therefore looked *primarily* at the purchasing power of the residents of both the Village and Town of Perry – but I have also looked at the purchasing power of Wyoming County residents and people who pass through Perry.

MARKET CHARACTERISTICS

Demographic characteristics

There are several key demographic characteristics that are usually useful predictors for the types of goods and services for which market demand exists in a community, or that might exist in the future:

- **Population size and growth trends:** The populations of both the Village and Town of Perry are shrinking. Both the Village and Town have lost more than 13 percent of their residents since 1990 [Table 1]. The County has lost about one percent of its population over that period of time. Ironically, the Village's 1969 Master Plan

projected that the community’s population would grow to 5,975 by 1990 – more than 1,700 people more than actually lived in Perry that year.

Without population growth, there is no *organic* growth in demand for retail products and services. Instead, growth must come from either finding new customers to whom to sell products and services and/or from selling more to existing customers.

	1990	2000	2010	2012	% change, 1990-2012
Village of Perry	4,211	3,940	3,665	3,641	-13.5%
Town of Perry	5,353	6,654	4,616	4,610	-13.9%
Wyoming County	42,507	43,424	42,155	42,092	-1.0%

Table 1: Total population 1990-2012 for the Village and Town of Perry and for Wyoming County, and the percent change from 1990-2012 (*Sources:* US Census Bureau’s 1990, 2000, and 2010 *Censuses of Population* and 2012 American Community Survey).

- **Households and household size:** Households spend money in more predictably similar ways than individuals do – and for that reason, changes in the numbers of households in a community or region are often a better indicator of retail market demand than changes in population. While the Village and Town have lost households over the past decade, they have done so at a slower rate than that of population loss [Table 2]. The number of households in Wyoming County grew by four percent.

	2000	2010	% change
Village of Perry	1,560	1,514	-2.9%
Town of Perry	1,905	1,872	-1.7%
Wyoming County	14,906	15,501	4.0%

Table 2: Number of households in the Village and Town of Perry and in Wyoming County in 2000 and 2010, and the percent change (*Sources:* US Census Bureau’s 2000 and 2010 *Censuses of Population*).

The fact that the number of households shrank at a lower rate than the number of residents means, of course, that households in the Village, Town, and County are becoming smaller. And, in fact, between 2000-2010, the average size of a household in the Village shrank dropped from 2.48 people to 2.39 people. The average size of households in the Town and County dropped from 2.55 to 2.45 and from 2.62 to 2.46, respectively [Table 3].

	2000	2010	% change
Village of Perry	2.48	2.39	-3.6%
Town of Perry	2.55	2.45	-3.9%
Wyoming County	2.62	2.46	-6.1%

Table 3: Average household size for the Village and Town of Perry and for Wyoming County in 2000 and 2010, and the percent change (*Sources: US Census Bureau's 2000 and 2010 Censuses of Population*).

- **Household income:** Median household income in the Village and Town of Perry appears to have grown slightly between the 2000 and 2010 decennial censuses. However, when adjusted for inflation, it appears that median household income actually declined slightly (by 4.5 percent in the Village and 7.0 percent in the Town) between 2000-2010. Median household income remained flat in Wyoming County [Table 4].

	2000	2000, adj. for inflation	2010	% change
Village of Perry	\$ 35,596	44,613	42,589	-4.5%
Town of Perry	39,455	49,449	46,011	-7.0%
Wyoming County	39,895	50,000	50,075	0.2%

Table 4: Median household income for the Village and Town of Perry and for Wyoming County in 2000, 2000 adjusted for inflation, and 2010; and the percent change (*Sources: US Census Bureau's 2000 and 2010 Censuses of Population; US Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Price Index*).

- **Age:** The populations of the Village, Town, and County are becoming older. Between 2000-2010, the median age of residents of the Village of Perry increased by 5.2 percent, from 36.8 years in 2000 to 38.7 years in 2010 [Table 5]. The Town of Perry and Wyoming County both experienced double-digit increases in median age during that time period.

	2000	2010	% change
Village of Perry	36.8	38.7	5.2%
Town of Perry	35.3	39.4	11.6%
Wyoming County	36.7	40.9	11.4%

Table 5: Median age for the Village and Town of Perry and for Wyoming County in 2000 and 2010, and the percent change (*Sources: US Census Bureau's 2000 and 2010 Censuses of Population*).

This is a regional and, to an extent, a statewide trend. The median age of an American in 2010 was 37.2 years; in New York State, it was 38.0 and, in Upstate New York (all counties north of Orange and Dutchess), 40.0.

The overall numbers of individuals and households in a community strongly influence how much money the community's residents are likely to spend on retail products and services, but other factors, such as household size, residents' ages, levels of educational attainment, and ethnicity influence the types of products and services people buy and the ways in which they prefer to shop. For example, a household with several children is likely to prefer convenient, family-style restaurants rather than fancier, quieter restaurants. Younger households are more likely to spend money on home furnishings (particularly moderately-priced furniture and furnishings) than older households that have already bought most of the furniture they need. And household income influences both how much money the residents of an area are likely to spend and also how they are likely to shop.

Retail demand

Using demographic information for Village, Town, and County residents, we estimated the amount of money that local residents are likely to spend annually on a variety of retail products and services [Table 6].

We also estimated the amount of money that the households represented by the people driving through Perry are likely to spend annually¹. Many of these people are of course likely to be Village, Town, or County residents, also – but looking at this data separately makes it easier to understand the potential magnitude of the retail buying power of people traveling through downtown Perry every day.

We estimate that Village of Perry residents spend roughly \$13.8 million annually on retail products and services. They spend an additional \$11.8 million each year on transportation, health care, and education – categories not typically included in estimates of retail market demand, but business categories that are important to downtown development, given the role of medical offices, pharmacies, dance studios, auto parts stores, and other retail- and service-sector businesses in these categories in attracting people to downtown districts.

¹ The New York State Department of Transportation reports that, in 2012 (the most recent year for which traffic counts are available), the average daily traffic count on Rt. 39 between S. Federal Street and Simmons Road in downtown Perry was 4,803 vehicles. To estimate the amount of market demand represented by the people driving these cars, we very conservatively estimated that each car represents just one household, that every vehicle makes a round-trip (e.g., that it has been counted twice – once going each way), and that only 80 percent of the vehicles represent unique households (e.g., that 20 percent of the vehicles are driven by members of households already included in the daily count).

Product/service category	Village	Town	County	Vehicles
Food/beverages consumed at home	\$ 4,465,000	5,580,000	46,732,000	5,612,000
Food/beverages consumed away from home	2,498,000	3,139,000	26,726,000	3,158,000
Housekeeping supplies	650,000	808,000	6,826,000	813,000
Furniture + home furnishings	1,299,000	1,626,000	13,878,000	1,633,000
Apparel + footwear	1,668,000	2,084,000	17,501,000	2,096,000
Transportation	7,405,000	9,332,000	81,170,000	9,387,000
Health care	3,500,000	4,448,000	38,523,000	4,475,000
Entertainment	2,556,000	3,202,000	27,440,000	3,221,000
Personal care	573,000	717,000	6,105,000	721,000
Reading	96,000	121,000	1,041,000	122,000
Education	876,000	1,070,000	8,143,000	1,077,000
Tobacco products/smoking supplies	21,000	27,000	235,000	27,000
Total	\$ 25,607,000	32,154,000	274,320,000	32,154,000
Total w/o trans, health care, education	13,826,000	17,304,000	146,484,000	17,403,000

Table 6: Retail market demand generated by residents of the Village and Town of Perry, of Wyoming County, and of households represented by drivers traveling on Rt. 39 through downtown Perry (Sources: 2010 Censuses of Population, 2012 Consumer Expenditure Survey, CLUE Group).

Retail supply

Estimating retail demand is a relatively straightforward process. Unfortunately, estimating retail supply – the actual volume of sales being captured by a community’s businesses – is not so straightforward.

There are typically three sources of information on retail supply:

1. **State departments of revenue:** Many states provide information on the volume of taxable sales that take place in different types of businesses in the jurisdictions from which they collect sales and use taxes. Unfortunately, while New York State provides this data at the county level, it does not provide it at the town or village level. It also releases data several years after sales taxes have been collected – so, the most recent year for which data is available is the year ending February 2011 [Table 7].

Store category	3/09 – 2/10	3/10 – 2/11	% change
Motor vehicles and parts	\$ 68,716,000	74,311,000	8.1%
Furniture + home furnishings	3,576,000	3,794,000	6.1%
Electronics + appliances	4,152,000	4,369,000	5.2%
Bldg materials + garden equipment	16,972,000	15,392,000	-9.3%
Food + beverage (groceries)	18,420,000	17,442,000	-5.3%
Health + personal care	1,584,000	1,608,000	1.5%
Gasoline stations	6,685,000	6,741,000	0.8%
Clothing (excluding local sales)	1,046,000	1,577,000	50.1%
Sporting goods, hobby, book, music	1,073,000	1,098,000	2.4%
General merchandise	21,755,000	22,334,000	2.7%
Miscellaneous retail	4,169,000	4,356,000	4.5%
Nonstore retail	7,526,000	8,652,000	15.0%
Food services (restaurants)	24,939,000	24,881,000	-0.2%
Total retail	155,674,000	157,318,000	1.1%
Total food services	24,939,000	24,881,000	-0.2%
Total	\$ 180,613,000	182,199,000	0.9%

Table 7: Taxable retail sales and purchases for Wyoming County for March 2009 – February 2010 and for March 2011 – February 2011, and percent changes for each store category (Source: New York State Department of Taxation and Finance, Office of Tax Policy Analysis, *Taxable Sales and Purchases: County and Industry Data for March 2010 - February 2011*, published August 2012).

2. **Census of Retail Trade and Nonemployer Statistics:** In addition to conducting the decennial *Census of Population*, the US Census Bureau also conducts an economic census every five years (in years ending in -2 and -7). It publishes its data in a series of reports – one for each major industry segment – released 2-3 years after the census is conducted. However, the *Census of Retail Trade* gathers information only from businesses with employees, which excludes small businesses whose owners pay themselves by taking owners’ draws or distributions, rather than by paying themselves salaries. To augment this, the Census Bureau also collects and releases data from “nonemployers” (including many mom-and-pop businesses). Unfortunately, the most recent data sets available from both of these surveys is the 2007 data set – and only the *Nonemployer Statistics* provides data for the Village of Perry (the *Census of Retail Trade* is available for counties, but not for smaller units of government) [Table 8].

There are two other important limitations, also. First, the Census Bureau does not release sales data in store categories in which there are only one or a few establishments, since doing so would reveal the sales of specific businesses. So, in smaller counties (including Wyoming County), the Census Bureau’s data does not reflect total reported sales in all retail categories. Second, if a business has multiple

outlets, the Census Bureau typically assigns sales to the jurisdiction in which the business is headquartered – which means that sales often appear inflated (and sometimes dramatically inflated).

Store category	Census of Retail Trade	Nonemployer Statistics	Total
Motor vehicles and parts	\$337,990,000	11,101,000	349,091,000
Furniture + home furnishings	84,075,000	1,716,000	85,791,000
Electronics + appliances	3,178,000	448,000	3,626,000
Bldg materials + garden equipment	4,380,000	(D)	4,380,000
Food + beverage (groceries)	32,549,000	387,000	32,936,000
Health + personal care	69,081,000	2,250,000	71,331,000
Gasoline stations	29,433,000	114,000	29,547,000
Clothing (excluding local sales)	54,829,000	(D)	54,829,000
Sporting goods, hobby, book, music	1,330,000	61,000	1,391,000
General merchandise	1,668,000	771,000	2,439,000
Miscellaneous retail	38,095,000	366,000	38,461,000
Nonstore retail	(D)	1,418,000	1,418,000
Food services (restaurants)	(D)	2,729,000	2,729,000
			\$703,961,000

Table 8: Retail sales as reported by the US Census Bureau for Wyoming County for employers (*Census of Retail Trade*) and nonemployers (*Nonemployer Statistics*) for 2007 (Sources: 2007 *Census of Retail Trade*, 2007 *Nonemployer Statistics*, CLUE Group).

3. **Geospatial data firms:** There are several private-sector geospatial data firms that aggregate information from a variety of sources, including the *Census of Retail Trade*, *Nonemployer Statistics*, state-level taxable sales data, and commercial databases (such as infogroup) to estimate actual sales volume for a given area [Table 9]. These data usually adjust for some of the limitations of other data sources (such as state government data on taxable retail sales and Census data). But, like the Census Bureau’s data, this data omits sales estimates for categories in which there are only several businesses [Table 9].

Retail sales voids

Retail sales voids - the difference between retail supply and retail demand – can sometimes help identify potential opportunities to develop new businesses or to add new product and service lines to existing businesses. For example, if a community’s grocery stores are generating, say, \$20 million in sales, but the people who live in that community are spending \$30 million annually on groceries, the community is experiencing a leakage of \$10 million in grocery sales. Depending on why the leakage

exists, this could mean that the community might have an opportunity to re-capture some or all of that leakage.

Store category	Village of Perry	Town of Perry	Wyoming County
Motor vehicles and parts	\$ 8,771,000	7,235,000	59,665,000
Furniture + home furnishings	(D)	889,000	7,214,000
Electronics + appliances	(D)	1,296,000	1,784,000
Bldg materials + garden equipment	746,000	1,204,000	20,354,000
Food + beverage (groceries)	8,107,000	7,237,000	52,037,000
Health + personal care	5,984,000	3,366,000	13,590,000
Gasoline stations	2,841,000	3,963,000	25,893,000
Clothing (excluding local sales)	146,000	2,713,000	1,797,000
Sporting goods, hobby, book, music	599,000	921,000	1,626,000
General merchandise	(D)	4,465,000	37,320,000
Miscellaneous retail	680,000	1,196,000	19,657,000
Nonstore retail	(D)	4,025,000	5,391,000
Food services (restaurants)	2,102,000	3,781,000	8,939,000
	\$ 28,010,000	38,510,000	255,267,000

Table 9: Retail sales estimates by ESRI, a private-sector geospatial data firm, for the Village of Perry, Town of Perry, and Wyoming County (*Source:* ESRI).

Using our estimates of retail demand and data on actual sales from ESRI², we estimated sales voids for major retail categories for Wyoming County [Table 10]. We found that the County is experiencing sales leakages – including some fairly hefty leakages – in all but two retail store categories:

- Building materials and garden equipment (\$9.3 million sales surplus – meaning that the County’s building materials and garden equipment stores are generating \$9.3 million more in sales than the County’s residents are spending)
- Miscellaneous retail (\$9.0 million surplus). This category includes florists, office supply stores, stationery stores, gift stores, used merchandise stores, and other stores that do not fit into other major store categories.

² We chose ESRI data because its estimates of actual retail sales are the most current and complete of the three major data sources. And, we chose to estimate sales voids for Wyoming County, rather than for the Village or Town, because the small numbers of businesses in some store categories in the two smaller jurisdictions made accurate estimates impossible.

The County is experiencing sales leakages in all other major retail categories – and some of these could represent opportunities for the Village (more about this in “Suggestions”, below).

Store category	Supply	Demand	Void
Motor vehicle and parts	\$ 59,665,000	64,051,000	(4,386,000)
Furniture + home furnishings	7,214,000	7,811,000	(597,000)
Electronics + appliances	1,784,000	11,329,000	(9,545,000)
Bldg materials + garden equipment	20,354,000	11,023,000	9,331,000
Food + beverage (groceries)	52,037,000	63,152,000	(11,115,000)
Health + personal care	13,590,000	29,951,000	(16,361,000)
Gasoline stations	25,893,000	34,811,000	(8,918,000)
Clothing	1,797,000	23,386,000	(21,589,000)
Sporting goods, hobby, book, music	1,626,000	8,024,000	(6,398,000)
General merchandise	37,320,000	38,971,000	(1,651,000)
Miscellaneous retail	19,657,000	10,639,000	9,018,000
Nonstore retail	5,391,000	35,856,000	(30,465,000)
Food services (restaurants)	8,939,000	16,869,000	(7,930,000)
	\$ 255,267,000	355,873,000	(100,606,000)

Table 10: Retail sales voids for Wyoming County (Sources: ESRI, CLUE Group).

COMMERCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Village and Town business composition: We obtained an inventory of business entities (including for-profit, nonprofit, and government entities) from Polk City Directories. Combined, the Town and Village of Perry have almost 240 business entities (including industries, retail businesses, service-sector businesses, nonprofit organizations, and public agencies) [Table 11].

Retail businesses comprise the largest percentage of business entities (19.3 percent), followed by “other services (except public administration)” (18.1 percent)³, then health care and social assistance (10.9 percent).

According to information provided to us by the Mayor of the Village of Perry, half of downtown Perry’s 52 current businesses were here in 2005; the other half have opened since then. Assuming the half that have opened since 2005 took the places of businesses

³ This category includes services not included in another North American Industry Classification System group – services like machinery repair, religious activities, grantmaking, laundry services, personal care services, and death care services.

that closed (versus, say, moving into new buildings or into spaces that were vacant in 2005), business churn has been roughly six percent – fairly typical of older downtowns.

NAICS	Industry group	# entities	%
11	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	6	2.5%
21	Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	0	0.0%
22	Utilities	2	0.8%
23	Construction	14	5.9%
31-33	Manufacturing	8	3.4%
42	Wholesale trade	6	2.5%
44-45	Retail trade	46	19.3%
48-49	Transportation and warehousing	3	1.3%
51	Information	3	1.3%
52	Finance and insurance	7	2.9%
53	Real estate and rental and leasing	5	2.1%
54	Professional, scientific, and technical services	16	6.7%
55	Management of companies and enterprises	0	0.0%
56	Admin. and support and waste mgmt. and remed. svcs.	7	2.9%
61	Educational services	6	2.5%
62	Health care and social assistance	26	10.9%
71	Arts, entertainment, and recreation	6	2.5%
72	Accommodation and food services	14	5.9%
81	Other services (except public administration)	43	18.1%
92	Public administration	20	8.4%
		238	100.0%

Table 11: Numbers and percentages of business entities, by North American Industry Classification System category, for the Village and Town of Perry (*Sources:* Polk City Directories, CLUE Group).

Commercial context

There is no large regional shopping mall within 20 miles of the Village, and the closest sizable malls or shopping centers are at least 30 miles away [Table 12]. There are, however, several large discount superstores nearby – a Walmart Store in Warsaw (roughly nine miles away, currently considering expanding to a Walmart Supercenter) and a 204,137 square foot Walmart Supercenter one in Geneseo (roughly 15 miles away), plus several others within 30 miles (in Batavia, Hornell, and Rochester). Batavia and Rochester, of course, offer a variety of shopping options, with several million square feet of commercial space.

Miles	Name/address	SF	Representative tenants
7.1	Warsaw Shopping Center 461 N Main St; Warsaw	90,000	Tractor Supply, Sears Hometown Store, Dollar General
7.1	Tops Plaza 2382 Rte 19; Warsaw	74,105	Tops Friendly Markets
12.1	Genesee Valley Shopping Ctr 4276 Lakeview Rd; Geneseo	191,284	Fashion Bug, Dollar Tree, Staples, Peebles, Tractor Supply
18.0	Tops Plaza 128 W Main St; Leroy	62,747	Tops Friendly Markets; SuperCuts; Subway; H&R Block
18.7	Tops Plaza 35 Franklin St; Dansville	74,010	Tops Friendly Markets; T-Mobile; Radio Shack; Liberty Tax
19.1	Tops – Avon 264-290 E Main St; Avon	62,988	Tops Friendly Markets
21.4	Batavia City Centre Main & Rt. 5	234,000	JCPenney
22.9	Towne Center at Batavia State Rt 90 + Veterans Mem	370,000	Lowe’s, Target, Bed Bath & Beyond, Michaels
30.7	Hornell Plaza State Rt. 36 & Bethesda Dr.	253,513	Walmart, Wegmans
31.3	South Town Plaza Jefferson & W Henrietta	509,353	Burlington Coat Factory, Jo-Ann Fabrics, OfficeMax
31.4	The Marketplace Mall W Henrietta & Jefferson	1,166,000	Macy’s, Sears, JCPenney, Bon-Ton

Table 12: Representative sample of shopping centers over 50,000 square feet within 30 miles of the Village of Perry (*Sources:* International Council of Shopping Centers, CLUE Group).

Business and commercial property development tools and incentives

The Village has done admirable work in using historic rehabilitation tax credits to help finance the rehabilitation of older downtown commercial buildings. And it has created a business loan program, funded by Urban Development Action Grant repayments, to capitalize a small revolving fund for business loans.

OBSERVATIONS

- The region is experiencing considerable sales leakage – and this could translate into business development opportunities for Perry:** Wyoming County is experiencing sales leakages in all but two major retail categories. While we do not know definitively where Wyoming County residents are shopping, vehicular traffic counts suggest that it is very likely that they are going to shopping malls and power centers in and near Buffalo, Rochester, and Cheektowaga. Data on actual sales in the Village of Perry is not available, but it is also very likely that Perry residents are doing a large percentage of their shopping in the region’s major cities.

One might expect both the Rochester and Buffalo-Cheektowaga-Niagara Metropolitan Statistical Areas to therefore have significant retail sales surpluses in most retail categories – but, in fact, they are both experiencing sales leakages in most major retail store categories. Even though the region has lost population in recent years, it has also lost retail space, and this could translate into new opportunities for retail development in downtown Perry.

Store category	Retail sales voids		
	Rochester	Buffalo	Wyoming Co
Motor vehicle and parts	(122,460,000)	322,400,000	(4,386,000)
Furniture + home furnishings	(89,966,000)	(31,614,000)	(597,000)
Electronics + appliances	(92,167,000)	(134,842,000)	(9,545,000)
Bldg materials + garden equipment	(22,340,000)	33,142,000	9,331,000
Food + beverage (groceries)	189,307,000	(11,766,000)	(11,115,000)
Health + personal care	(280,370,000)	(166,134,000)	(16,361,000)
Gasoline stations	708,518,000	(250,377,000)	(8,918,000)
Clothing	(307,867,000)	(16,798,000)	(21,589,000)
Sporting goods, hobby, book, music	(10,072,000)	32,322,000	(6,398,000)
General merchandise	316,979,000	186,271,000	(1,651,000)
Miscellaneous retail	15,048,000	28,404,000	9,018,000
Nonstore retail	(862,619,000)	(818,749,000)	(30,465,000)
Food services (restaurants)	(35,080,000)	158,498,000	(7,930,000)
	(710,635,000)	(722,639,000)	(100,606,000)

Table 13: Retail sales voids for the Rochester and Buffalo-Cheektowaga-Niagara Metropolitan Statistical Areas and for Wyoming County (*Sources:* ESRI, CLUE Group).

- Potential exists to develop small business concentrations:** There is too little unmet retail market demand within the County to attract the attention of a shopping center or shopping mall developer – but there appears to be ample unmet market demand for smaller concentrations of businesses. In most retail store categories, a

concentration of businesses – small clusters of businesses that sell complementary products and services and/or that cater to similar types of customers – have a greater chance of attracting shoppers than the businesses would individually.

- **Commercial rents are affordable:** Commercial rent levels in downtown Perry are relatively low, particularly compared with rent levels in the region’s larger cities. Businesses that target customers within the Buffalo-Rochester region could parlay this into a significant strategic advantage.

Here’s an example: A woman who owned a wedding gift store (she sold place settings – crystal, china, silver) about ten years ago in a small town about 30 miles from Memphis captured about 15 percent of Memphis wedding gift sales by offering her customers ten cents back in cash for every dollar spent on a wedding gift in her store. She charged prices comparable to those charged by major Memphis department stores – but, because her rent was so low, she was able to recoup the ten percent rebate through rent savings. Customers did not need to physically visit her store – they simply needed to call her to place their wedding gift orders, and her business made daily deliveries throughout the Memphis metropolitan area.

- **Incentives exist for both business and property development, but for a relatively narrow range of circumstances:** The Village has made better use of historic rehabilitation tax credits than many communities of comparable size, and it is relatively rare for a village of Perry’s size to offer any incentives at all for business development – so, comparatively speaking, Perry offers more downtown development incentives than most small towns in the US. But these incentives address a relatively small range of circumstances. A deeper arsenal of incentives might be needed to help the Village reach its downtown revitalization goals.
- **Significant variations in property condition and market-readiness:** Some of the commercial buildings in downtown Perry have been rehabilitated/redeveloped, and some are good candidates for rehabilitation. But there are some in need of rehabilitation but with uncooperative property owners, complicated ownership issues, or other problems that make it unlikely that redevelopment will occur within the next several years, at least not without concerted effort.

SUGGESTIONS

1. **Focus on developing hyper-local retail and services.** In many instances, this will mean adding new and additional products and services to existing businesses. But there are several products and services for which enough market demand might exist to support one or more new businesses, such as restaurants and perhaps groceries (if the grocery store is able to differentiate itself from others within the region, such as by offering specialty products or making deliveries).

2. **But, simultaneously, focus on development of a small cluster of regionally-serving destination businesses.** Perry (both the village and town) and Wyoming County are losing sales in many categories, and it is likely that – with very good merchandising, marketing, and management – a small cluster of regionally-serving businesses could successfully attract customers from throughout the area to downtown Perry. Furniture and home furnishings would likely be a good option, since downtown Perry already has a regional market foothold in this store category.

It is imperative that businesses in this cluster use a variety of methods to reach customers, augmenting in-store sales with online sales, deliveries, and other sales channels. Until the cluster is well established, businesses in the cluster should expect to generate about half of their revenue from in-store sales and the other half from online sales, mobile sales, sales at trade shows, sales within other stores, and other channels.

3. **Consider developing a few home furnishings-related businesses to complement Family Furniture.** Wyoming County has a modest – almost negligible – sales leakage in this category, in large part because of the presence of Family Furniture. But both Buffalo and Rochester have sizable leakages. A cluster of home furnishings businesses could be viable by capturing only a small percentage of these two MSA’s \$121.6 million in unmet market demand in this store category. For example, capturing just three percent of this unmet market demand would translate into capturing roughly \$3.6 million in new sales, enough to support approximately 14,600 square feet of new store space⁴.

There are scores of possibilities for specialty furniture and home furnishings product lines, such as:

- Lighting and electrical supplies
- A woodworking co-working shop
- Used furniture and furnishings
- Unfinished and self-assembly furniture
- Antiques of all types
- Architectural salvage
- Closet organization supplies and services
- Upholstery fabric and upholstery services
- Office furniture and furniture rentals
- Small appliances
- Decorative and antique hardware

⁴ This assumes new businesses in this store category would generate \$250/square foot in gross sales.

- Artificial/silk plants
- Lawn and patio furniture
- Interior and exterior shutters
- New and vintage posters
- Rugs and floor cloths
- Lamps and lighting fixtures
- Bed and bath linens
- Vintage kitchen appliances
- Weather vanes
- Draperies and window blinds
- Futons

4. **Consider developing one or two new restaurants downtown.** One or two new restaurants could make downtown Perry more attractive as a regional dining option. Capturing 12-15 percent of Wyoming County’s \$7.9 million leakage in restaurant sales would make it possible to support two restaurants. Ideally, the new restaurant (or restaurants) would provide some diversity in dining options and would be unique within the region – e.g., perhaps by growing produce directly on site (in an adjacent lot or on a rooftop) or by offering special programming (cooking demonstrations or entertainment, for example). A few examples of small-town restaurants that have established strong regional market presence for themselves include these:

- A restaurant in South Carolina offers only one entrée each evening – and the first person to reserve a table gets to choose what the entrée will be (the restaurant of course accommodates people with food allergies or special dietary needs). The person reserving the first table almost always invites lots of friends and family, giving the restaurant a core customer group most evenings.
- A restaurant in Oregon has a magician who goes from table to table performing card tricks for diners. The restaurant offers a slightly more elegant environment than other restaurants, and locals enjoy bringing their out-of-town guests here.
- A restaurant in Georgia films a cooking show every week in the restaurant’s open kitchen.
- A restaurant in New Jersey hires voice students as servers – and when someone asks what the restaurant’s ice cream flavors are, all the servers rush to the table and sing the ice cream menu. As with the Oregon restaurant, area residents enjoy bringing out-of-town guests here.

- A restaurant in Iowa features a voting booth for its patrons in its lobby, asking unusual poll questions each week and issuing weekly press releases publicizing the results.
5. **Consider creating a coworking space.** Consider creating a small coworking space, providing work space to people who work from home-based businesses and/or who would like to collaborate with others. Perry's newer residents include some who have tech-related and location-neutral jobs within the region and who have chosen to live in Perry, and some of these might be ideal coworking candidates.
 6. **Consider creating a forgivable loan program to stimulate business development.** Forgivable loan programs help make it possible for a community to attract or develop businesses that offer products and services that are high priorities for the community and to also ensure that the businesses supported by the program meet certain criteria (such as locating in a ground-floor space, and/or in a specific block, or that it be open a specified minimum number of hours, for example).

Downtown Waterville, Maine's forgivable loan program offers loans up to \$50,000 to qualified businesses (both new businesses and existing ones interested in expanding downtown). Loans must be matched 1:1 by owner equity. Businesses make interest-only payments for five years, at which point the loan principal is forgiven (assuming the businesses remain compliant with the original terms of their agreement). Priority is given to businesses identified by downtown Waterville's most recent retail market analysis as priorities. Businesses receiving forgivable loans must agree to be open a minimum of 48 hours per week, and they must locate in ground-floor spaces. The program is funded by Tax Increment Finance (TIF) revenue.

TIF is probably not a practical option for downtown Perry at this point, but a forgivable loan program could perhaps be capitalized with a New York Main Street grant, National Grid grant, Community Development Block Grant, USDA Rural Development grant, HUD RHED grant, or other sources.

7. **Create a pop-up business program.** Pop-ups can be a great way to both incubate new businesses and also generate visibility for the downtown. In essence, a pop-up program would work with one or more owners of vacant storefront spaces to make storefront space available for a few months (typically three months) to an entrepreneur with a good idea for a new business. The program vets potential businesses and streamlines the utility and property insurance process for property owners.

A number of communities offer pop-up business competitions in order to encourage entrepreneurship and promote the availability of pop-up space. For example, Florence, South Carolina's Main Street program makes two storefronts available

each year, offering three months of free rent to the two businesses that receive the highest scores in the Main Street program's pop-up business plan competition. The Main Street program works with owners of vacant property to streamline the process. In its first two years, three of the four pop-up businesses have signed leases at the end of the three-month pop-up period.

8. **Consider community capital for high priority businesses.** A growing number of downtown businesses have had part or most of their start-up costs covered by community capital. There are three common models:
 - Crowdfunding websites, like Kickstarter and Indiegogo, have raised start-up money for businesses like Persimmon Hollow Brewing Company (a microbrewery in Deland, Florida), Bradley's Bistro (a farm-to-table restaurant in Saginaw, Michigan), the Antioch Theatre (Antioch, Illinois), and the Freight Shed (a winter farmers market in Bath, Maine).
 - Community-owned businesses, such as Township Grocery in Bonaparte, Iowa and the Mercantile in Powell, Wyoming, are capitalized by shares of stock sold to area residents.
 - Private investment groups – typically groups of fewer than a dozen residents that pool their money (usually forming a limited liability company) – have launched hundreds of businesses in downtowns throughout the country.
9. **Boost support for current and new downtown businesses by steadily working to increase the supply of downtown (and near-downtown) housing.** Downtown residents provide a built-in customer base for downtown businesses, improve the district's safety and cleanliness, and, in many instances provide property owners with additional sources of rental income.

A number of small towns offer incentives for downtown upper-floor housing development. For example, Walla Walla, Washington abates property taxes for ten years on the increased property value resulting from upper-floor housing development.

10. **Streamline and focus marketing and promotional activities.** The Village offers many marketing and promotional events – but many of them take place outside the downtown district. Bringing as many events as possible downtown will help build familiarity, visibility, and enthusiasm for downtown development activities and will gradually reverse negative perceptions.

We recommend choosing events based on the likelihood that they will reinforce the major downtown economic development strategy the Village chooses to pursue (or,

if it chooses to pursue two strategies simultaneously, that will reinforce one or both of these strategies). For example, if Perry were positioning itself as a family-friendly community, its marketing activities should consistently reinforce this position – store hours would be aligned to best meet the needs of area families, events would appeal to families, etc. – as would merchandising, window display design, and other activities.

Finally, for inspiration, here are a few examples of small towns that have strategically transformed their downtown districts:

Lanesboro, Minnesota (pop. 754). Over the past 25 years, Lanesboro has undergone a remarkable transformation, based largely on development of a bike trail and a theatre. In 1980, 38 of its 40 downtown storefronts were vacant. Several years later, community leaders decided to convert an abandoned rail bed to a biking and hiking trail. A few B&Bs popped up near the trail – and one of the B&Bs hired an award-winning chef. In 1989 the Lanesboro Arts Council bought a vacant theatre building downtown – for \$5,000 – and invited three local residents to create a local theatre company. The Commonwealth Theatre Company now produces 4-6 plays annually, hosts a summer residency program, and organizes an annual Ibsen Festival, tapping into the community's Norwegian heritage. Several months ago, *Smithsonian Magazine* included Lanesboro in its 2014 list of "20 Best Small Towns to Visit". It has been included in scores of other "top" lists, as well, from *Outside* magazine's list of "American Dream Towns" to ArtPlace's list of "Top Small Town ArtPlaces". It won one the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Great American Main Street Awards in 1998.

Floyd, Virginia (pop. 429). Like Lanesboro, Floyd's transformation has been partly based on arts and culture. Floyd's revitalization began when the new owner of the Floyd Country Store began inviting local musicians to play there on Friday nights. The Floyd Country Store quickly became a popular community gathering spot – so much so that someone bought a vacant mill building next to the Floyd Country Store and opened a restaurant and small theatre, the Sun Music Hall. When the Sun Music Hall's owner decided to close the restaurant several years later, community members pooled their money, created an LLC, and bought the building and business. Since then, several additional arts and music venues have popped up, along with a number of B&Bs. About ten years ago a community group organized a four-day music festival – FloydFest – that is now an annual event attracting more than 10,000 visitors (this year's roster included Ben Harper, Lauryn Hill, and Ziggy Marley).

Powell, Wyoming (pop. 6,314): When Powell's only clothing store closed, Powell residents realized that driving 60 minutes to the next-largest town would be too much of a hardship for the community. So, a group of residents decided to launch a community-owned variety store. They sold shares of stock, for \$500 each, to 800 Powell residents, raising \$400,000 to launch the store. Because the Powell Mercantile is

community-owned and doesn't have the profit motivation a national chain store might have, it is able to keep prices low – but still manages to be profitable. After five years of operation the Merc paid its first dividend to shareholders (\$75/share), and revenues topped \$700,000. The store's buyer is able to be very responsive to customers' requests, making a wide variety of merchandise available to them.