

# Introduction

## Purpose

The purpose of the Town of Owasco Comprehensive Plan is to guide local officials and community members in making decisions that will affect the future of the Town. Future Town actions that will be based on the policies and recommendations in the Plan include revisions to zoning and other local laws and regulations, capital budgeting, and providing services to the community. The Comprehensive Plan addresses the full spectrum of issues facing the Town and balances competing needs and interests in the community.

## Legal Basis

The Comprehensive Plan has been prepared pursuant to NYS Town Law §272-a. Town Law §272-a specifies that the Town Board is responsible for preparing and adopting a Comprehensive Plan. As the law also permits the Town Board to delegate this responsibility to an ad hoc committee established for the express purpose of preparing Comprehensive Plans, the Town Board appointed a Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC) to guide the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan is a policy document that does not, in itself, have the force of law. However, the Plan will influence changes in Town laws and regulations as well as funding decisions and other Town actions during the next 10 to 15 years. In particular, local zoning regulations must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

## Process of Preparing the Plan

The Town of Owasco Comprehensive Plan represents the culmination of a planning process that began in August 2000. The Comprehensive Plan Committee met monthly for more than one year to coordinate the preparation of the Plan.

Members of the CPC included representatives from the Town Board, Planning Board, and Zoning Board of Appeals, as well as general citizens. The following community representatives served on the Comprehensive Plan Committee:

- William Whiting
- Suzanne Baird
- Fred Westover
- Thomas Burns
- Joseph Wasileski
- Frank Delfavero
- Richard Knaul
- Walter Wasserman
- Barbara Clary
- Kathryn McLane
- Gary Duckett
- Mike O'Leary

## ***Introduction***

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The Town retained a team of consultants led by Stuart I. Brown Associates, a planning and management consulting firm based in Fairport, New York, to facilitate the planning process and prepare the plan document. MRB Group, based in Rochester, New York, provided engineering assistance, prepared the maps, and assisted in public participation and coordination.

Public participation included a Residents Survey, distributed in October 2000, a public informational meeting to present the results of the Residents Survey (November 30, 2000), a CPC public hearing (November 15, 2001), and a Town Board public hearing (\_\_\_\_\_).

Several CPC meetings also included roundtable discussions with representatives of various interest groups. Roundtable discussions were held with:

- local farmers (February 15, 2001),
- environmentalists (June 21, 2001),
- business representatives (March 15, 2001) and
- developers (March 15, 2001).

### **Plan Organization**

The **Land Use Overview and Plan Summary** presents an overview of the community, summarizes the issues addressed in each section, and shows how the individual topical areas relate to one another. It also presents an introduction to zoning and subdivision regulations, which are the primary tools available to the Town to help achieve the land use goals of the Plan.

A **Future Land Use Map** presents the Town policy regarding land use, and will be used as a guide in revising the Town's zoning map.

**Topical sections** of the Comprehensive Plan address the major issues identified by the community:

- watershed protection and environmental quality;
- farmland and agriculture;
- housing and residential neighborhoods;
- parks and recreation;
- transportation and infrastructure; and
- government and community services.

Each section identifies the community's goals, presents background information and an analysis of the issues and opportunities, identifies tools and techniques that can be used to address the issues and take advantage of the opportunities, and recommends actions that the Town can take to help achieve the community's goals.

## ***Introduction***

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The **Implementation Strategy** summarizes the recommended actions by topic, with a proposed time frame, responsible agency, cost estimate, and potential funding sources. A summary of the recommended actions by time frame provides a year-by-year guide to implementing the Plan.

“**Sidebars**” within the Plan document present additional information that supports and/or provides the context for the recommendations in the Plan.

- Relevant Plans and Programs include summaries of plans prepared by the Town or other government agencies and descriptions of State or County government programs.
- Residents Survey Highlights present the relevant findings from the survey of Owasco residents conducted in Fall 2000. The final report from the Residents Survey is available at the Town Hall and is included as an appendix to the Comprehensive Plan.
- Highlights of Roundtable Discussions summarize the issues and recommendations presented by residents and resource people who met with the CPC.

### **Photographing Visual Preferences**

During the summer of 2001, members of the CPC participated in an exercise “Photographing Visual Preferences.” The objectives of the exercise were to:

- Record participants’ visual preferences through photography;
- Identify what people consider “special” in the community; and
- Compare opinions about particular features of the community

The photographs present an inventory of scenic resources, landscape features, and community characteristics in Owasco. Several of the photographs have been used in the Plan document.

The photographs were mounted on maps that are on view at the Town Hall. Summary reports of the participants “photographic diaries” have been compiled into an Appendix to the Comprehensive Plan.