

# TOWN OF MARCELLUS 2024 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

**DRAFT** MARCH 2024



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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Town would like to thank the community members who provided their input and guidance in developing the vision for the Town of Marcellus 2024 Comprehensive Plan.

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### PLAN PREPARED BY:



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# CHAPTER 1: **INTRODUCTION**



# PLAN OVERVIEW

## PLAN PURPOSE

According to Section 272-A of NYS Town Law, a town comprehensive plan is defined as materials that:

*“identify the goals, objectives, principles, guidelines, policies, standards, devices and instruments for the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development of the town located outside the limits of any incorporated village or city.”*

The written and graphic materials of a comprehensive plan provide an overall roadmap for future public and private investment in a community by articulating an overall vision, as well as a means to achieve that vision. The plan provides a guide for regulating land use for the purpose of protecting the public health, safety and general welfare of its citizens. A number of municipal functions and initiatives are informed by the comprehensive plan including, but not limited to:

## ZONING, SUBDIVISION, & LAND DEVELOPMENT

A comprehensive plan helps determine future regulatory changes in a municipality. Over time, regulatory tools such as zoning and design standards should be brought into conformance with the comprehensive plan.

## GRANT ACQUISITIONS

Federal, state, and local funding opportunities are becoming increasingly tied to a community’s comprehensive plan. An updated plan can help provide a more competitive edge in any grant application process.

## BUDGETING & CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

The comprehensive plan is a tool to help develop a municipality’s annual budget. Projects and programs contained in the plan are often

included in the budgeting process to ensure the community’s priorities are being addressed.

## PLANNING PROCESS TIMELINE

The planning process of the Town of Marcellus 2024 Comprehensive Plan is outlined below:



## PLANNING HORIZON

The planning horizon is the length of time a plan is considered relevant and representative of the community’s goals. The planning horizon for the Town of Marcellus 2024 Comprehensive Plan is 10 years, or to 2033. It is recommended, however, the information contained in this Plan be reviewed and updated by the Town on a regular basis or as conditions in the community change.



## COMMONLY USED ACRONYMS

There are numerous agencies, organizations, and planning references used throughout this document. The following list provides the acronyms for commonly used names and titles:

- ACS: American Community Survey
- ADU: Accessory Dwelling Unit
- ATP: Active Transportation Plan
- CCA: Community Choice Aggregation
- CEO: Code Enforcement Officer
- DEC: Department of Environmental Conservation
- DOT: Department of Transportation
- DPW: Department of Public Works
- FLU: Future Land Use
- NYSDEC: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
- NYSERDA: New York State Energy Research & Development Authority
- NPS: National Parks Service
- NYS: New York State
- PB: Planning Board
- SEQRA: State Environmental Quality Review Act
- SHPO: State Historic Preservation Office
- SIS: Secretary of Interior's Standards
- US: United States
- USDA: United States Department of Agriculture
- ZBA: Zoning Board of Appeals

## PUBLIC INPUT SUMMARY

Two public workshops were conducted as part of the 2024 Town of Marcellus comprehensive planning process. These meetings are summarized below; for more detail please refer to the Appendix A for full meeting summaries.

### PUBLIC WORKSHOP #1

On Saturday, June 4th from 10 AM – 2 PM, the first public workshop was held for the Marcellus Comprehensive Plan update. The workshop offered an innovative format by setting up a booth at Olde Home Days, the Town's biggest community event. Presentation boards describing the project and asking for feedback were displayed, and the project team engaged in informal conversations with festival attendees to learn more about what residents and visitors like about Marcellus, and what they would like to see in the future in the Town.



### PUBLIC WORKSHOP #2

TO BE UPDATED FOLLOWING PUBLIC WORKSHOP #2

## PREVIOUS PLANS & STUDIES

### 2001 Marcellus Comprehensive Plan

The 2001 Comprehensive Plan laid the foundation for this Comprehensive Plan Update, and the updated Plan is based upon its established long term goals, objective, and recommendations for Marcellus. The 2001 Plan contains an environmental inventory and considerations, assesses existing infrastructure and performed a needs analysis for future investment in infrastructure, and identifies four development / land use areas with proposed zoning change recommendations - most of which were adopted following the adoption of the Plan. As the 2024 Plan is an update of the previous document, a significant amount of material included in the original plan is contained within this document, including some information in the Community Profile, several of the objectives and action items in the Vision and Goal Framework, and the Future Land Use Map. This Plan builds off of the successes of the 2001 Plan, and ensures that the long term goals of the Town are reflected into the future.

### 1999 Town of Marcellus Design Guidelines

The Town worked with SUNY ESF's Landscape Architecture program to develop local design guidelines to "aid in the effective communication of Marcellus' desire to maintain and promote its 'small town' character through physical design." The guidelines goals were to preserve rural character and historic landscape patterns, encourage developers to create connected communities, protect natural and cultural resources, support continued farming activity, and maintain a safe and effective road network in Town. These goals overlap with the goals of this Plan over two decades later, and the design guidelines should be considered as a relevant and useful tool for the community today.

### 2022 Onondaga County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan

The County's recently updated Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan is intended to guide policy pertaining to farming, and serve as a resource to the County's towns, cities, and villages. The Plan's goals include enhancing agricultural economic development activities, strategically protecting agricultural lands, promoting the importance of farming in the County, supporting the next generation of farmers, and continuing to enhance the relationship between agriculture and the natural environment. This document will be of particular value to Marcellus when working towards mitigating the challenges of agricultural run-off, as discussed further in the Plan.

### PlanONondaga

PlanONondaga, or PlanON, is Onondaga County's Comprehensive Plan, adopted in July 2023. The Plan defines a vision and goals for the shared needs, goals, and challenges of each of the County's municipalities, and lays the groundwork for positive growth and change. The Plan lays out five key themes, including:

- **Strong Centers** - to enhance quality of life in walkable communities
- **Housing & Neighborhoods** - to retain and attract residents
- **Community Mobility** - to enhance access and connectivity for all transportation users
- **Greenways & Blueways** - to protect and enhance recreation, wildlife habitat, and local ecological resources
- **Agriculture** - to maintain farming as a viable and integral part of the County's economy

# CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY PROFILE



# GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE

The community known as Marcellus, New York is governed by two separate municipalities: the Town of Marcellus and the Village of Marcellus. While this distinction between Town and Village may often go unnoticed by residents, it's essential for a clear understanding of how the two governments function. The following section provides further details regarding the origin of the two municipalities and their impact on comprehensive planning in the Town of Marcellus.

## DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

The boundaries of the Town and Village are intertwined with the historic development of this rural community. The Town of Marcellus was established in 1794 and is governed by a Town Board, which holds the ultimate authority to act on behalf of the Town. As the population of the Town grew and concentrated within a valley at the intersection of Nine Mile Creek and Seneca Turnpike, residents recognized the need for a separate organization<sup>1</sup> to provide municipal services for this population center. In 1853, the Village of Marcellus was incorporated as a voluntary unit, governmentally independent of the Town of Marcellus.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, while it remains part of the Town, the Village Board of Trustees holds the legislative powers of the Village.

1 Village of Marcellus Comprehensive Plan (2007) I-4. [www.villageofmarcellus.com/uploads/5/3/9/5/53954069/comprehensiveplan.pdf](http://www.villageofmarcellus.com/uploads/5/3/9/5/53954069/comprehensiveplan.pdf).

2 [www.villageofmarcellus.com/village-government.html](http://www.villageofmarcellus.com/village-government.html)

## PLANNING AND ZONING

Legislative bodies have the ability to create and grant powers to a planning board. In Marcellus, both the Town and the Village have their own planning boards. Among other roles, these boards have supported comprehensive plan development, with each municipality guided by its respective comprehensive plan. To implement these plans, both the Town and the Village have established Zoning Boards of Appeals and zoning regulations. **The result of each municipality in Marcellus having its own planning and zoning structure is that the Town regulates land use outside the Village boundary, while the Village regulates land use within the Village boundary.** According to the New York State Local Government Handbook, this power to zone separately from the remainder of the town provides an incentive for village incorporation.<sup>3</sup>

## TOWN-OWNED LAND IN THE VILLAGE

A potential cause for confusion in differentiating between the Town and the Village stems from the Town's ownership of property within the Village, where key community facilities such as Town Hall are located. While the municipal functions of the Town of Marcellus operate within Town Hall, the property is located within the boundaries of the Village and is therefore subject to the Village Comprehensive Plan and regulated by the Village Zoning Code. This overlap between Town and Village is a representation of the interrelated nature of the two governments which each serve the community of Marcellus.

3 New York Division of Local Services, Local Government Handbook (2023) 89. [dos.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2023/06/localgovernmenthandbook\\_2023.pdf](https://dos.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2023/06/localgovernmenthandbook_2023.pdf)

The Town of Marcellus Comprehensive Plan primarily focuses on the land area within the Town, outside of the Village of Marcellus. However, the Plan acknowledges central role of the Village in community life and recognizes the need for Town planning to align with this context. By working together, the Town and the Village can more effectively achieve the community vision.

## MAP 1. TOWN & VILLAGE BOUNDARIES

### TOWN OF MARCELLUS GOVERNMENT

The Town is governed by a Town Board that is comprised of a Supervisor and four Councilors. In addition, the Town has a seven-member Planning Board and a five-member Zoning Board of Appeals.

#### Contact Information:

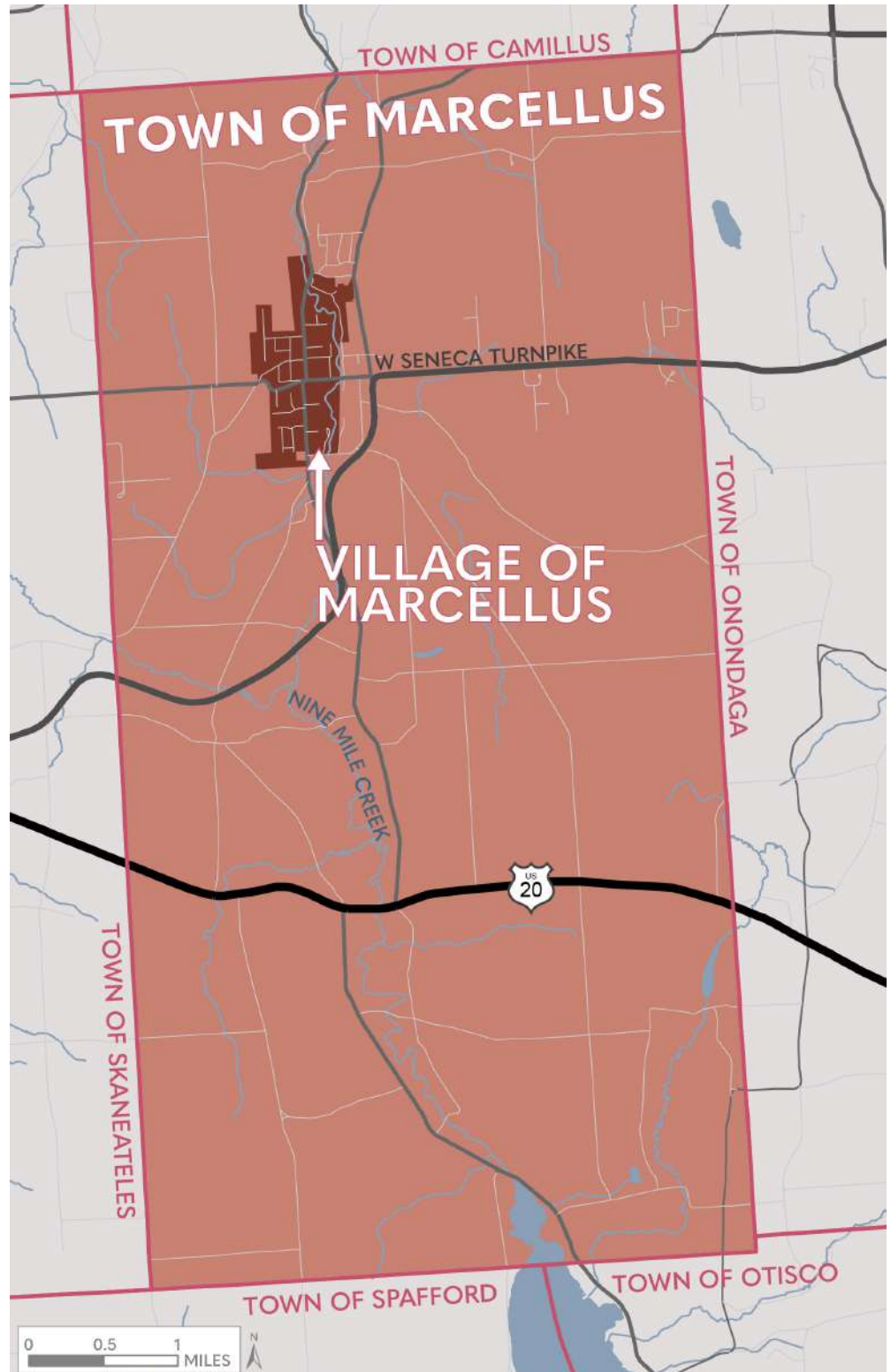
Marcellus Town Hall  
22 East Main Street  
Marcellus, NY 13108  
(315) 673-3269

### VILLAGE OF MARCELLUS GOVERNMENT

The Village is governed by a Village Board of Trustees that is comprised of a Mayor and two Trustees. In addition, the Village has a five member Planning Board and a five member Zoning Board of Appeals.

#### Contact Information:

6 Slocombe Avenue  
Marcellus, NY 13108  
(315) 673-3112



# COMMUNITY CONTEXT

## REGIONAL SETTING

Marcellus is located in Onondaga County, approximately 15 miles southwest of the City of Syracuse (Figure 1). The Town of Marcellus is often viewed as a “bedroom community,” providing housing for the employment centers in and around the City of Syracuse, but it also has a legacy of agriculture and maintains a rural character. The Village of Marcellus is located within the Town in its northwest quadrant. US Route 20 passes through the southern portion of the Town, and NY Routes 174 and 175 serve as two of the Town’s major transportation corridors. These roadways and other local roads connect the Town to the region including the Towns of Camillus, Skaneateles, Spafford, Otisco, and Onondaga, which border the Town of Marcellus.

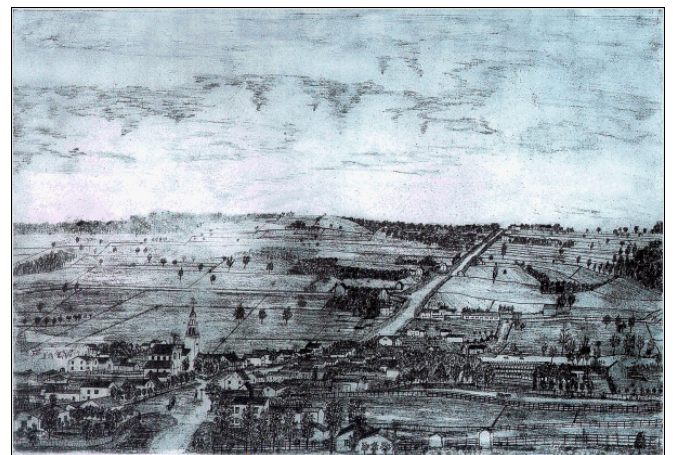
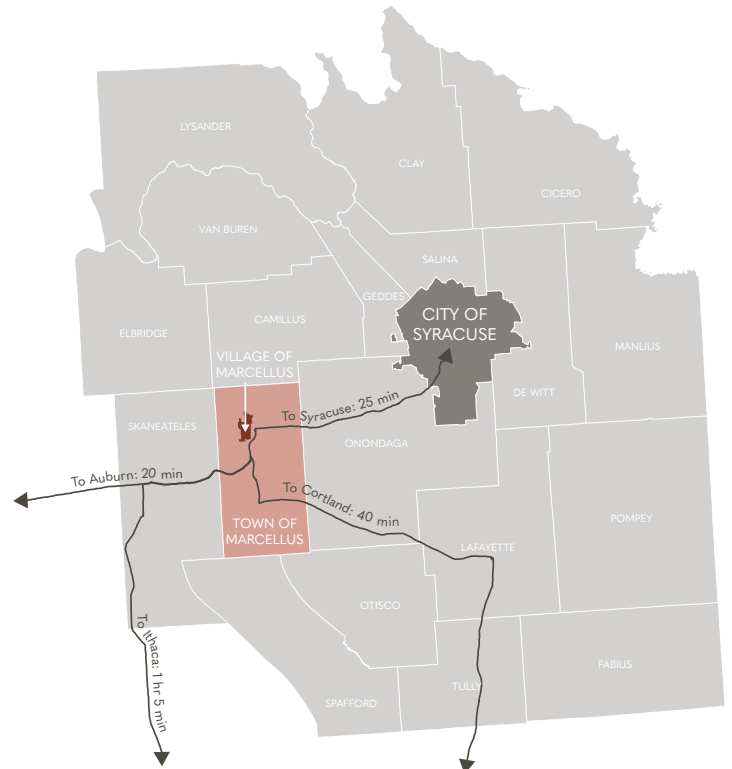
## LOCAL HISTORY

The land that now encompasses the Town of Marcellus was historically inhabited by the Onondaga Nation of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, who were estimated to have begun living in the area around 1200 AD. The Town of Marcellus was formed as Military Tract Township #9. These Military Tracts were established to compensate Revolutionary War veterans, and were comprised of 100 lots of 600 acres each. The Town originally included parts of Camillus, Skaneateles, Spafford, Marietta, and Onondaga Hill.

The first white settlers came to Marcellus in the late 18th century. As gradual development continued into the early 19th century, the Village of Marcellus became a center of activity in the region, and the Seneca Turnpike, which traversed the Village, was the most significant travel corridor for the region at the time. The Town continued to grow as an agricultural community with several mills locating along Nine Mile Creek. The importance of these

mills began to decline in the mid-20th century, and Marcellus began to transform from an agricultural and mill community to more of a residential community as it functions today.

**FIGURE 1. REGIONAL CONTEXT**



The Village of Marcellus and surrounding area in 1840.

Source: *Village of Marcellus*

# DEMOGRAPHICS

## POPULATION TRENDS

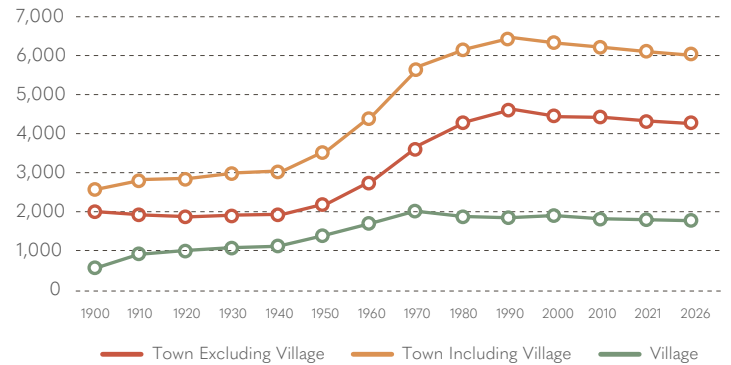
According to the Environmental Systems Research Institute’s (ESRI) Community Profile 2021 estimates (based off the 2010 US Census), there are 4,322 residents within the Town of Marcellus. This represents a minor decrease in population since 2010, when the population was 4,413. The Town’s population remained relatively consistent between 1900 and 1940, but grew considerably during the mid-20th century until it began to experience a slight decline following the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The population is forecasted to continue to marginally decline moving into 2026. As shown in Figure 2, the Village has experienced similar population trends. Overall, the Town’s population accounts for 1% of Onondaga County’s population.

## AGE DISTRIBUTION

Figure 3 shows the population distribution by age group in the Town of Marcellus (excluding Village residents). As of 2021, the most significant portion of the Town’s population is between 45 and 64 years of age; followed by the 25 - 44 age group. As shown in Figure 4, the population mostly increased within the older age cohorts between 2010 and 2021. However, the 25-34 age group also saw significant growth (+34%); suggesting that young professionals or new families may have moved in to the Town during this time period. The number of children between the ages of 5-14 decreased between 2010 and 2021, which is also reflected in school enrollment trends discussed later in this section.

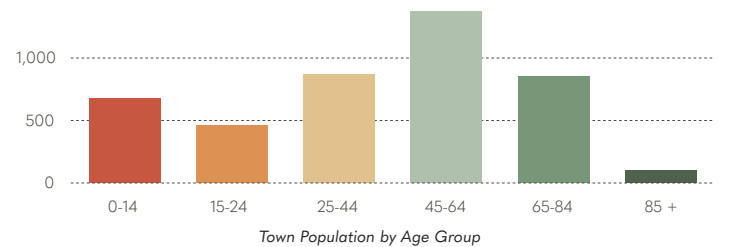
Looking into the future, the population is projected to continue to shift towards the 65 + age cohorts, while the younger age cohorts are anticipated to continue to decrease (Figure 4). These trends are consistent with both County-wide patterns, as well as the Nation-wide phenomena of an aging population.

FIGURE 2. POPULATION TRENDS, 1900 - 2026



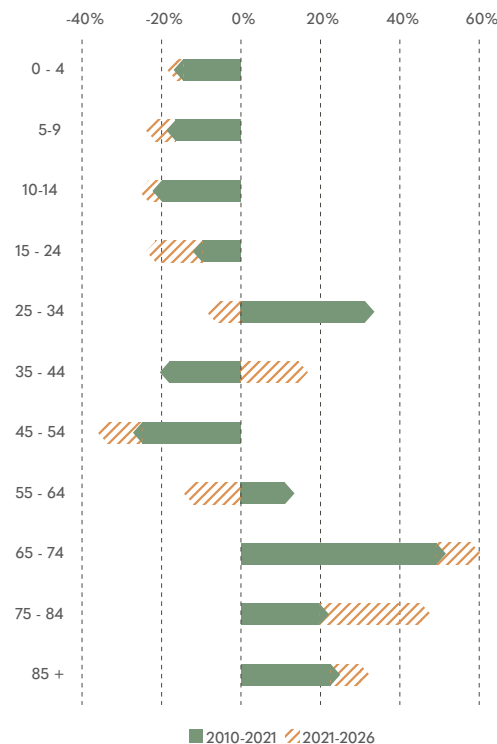
Source: US Census Bureau, 2021 ESRI Community Profile

FIGURE 3. TOWN POPULATION BY AGE GROUP, 2021



Source: 2021 ESRI Community Profile

FIGURE 4. AGE GROUP GROWTH RATES, 2010-2026



Town Population Change by Age Group

Source: 2021 ESRI Community Profile

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Over 70% of Town residents over the age of 25 have some level of college education. Of such residents, the majority have received at least some college or an associates degree (shown in Figure 5).

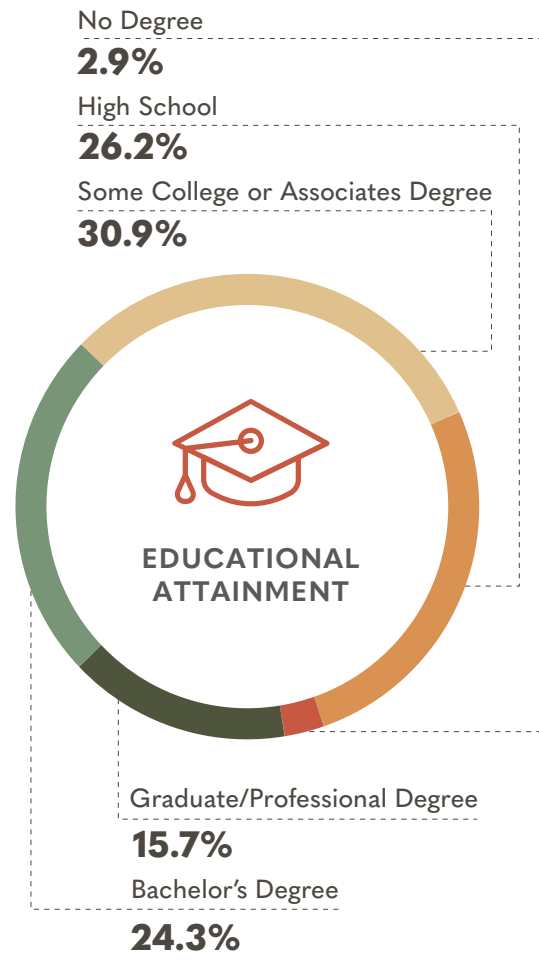
## AVERAGE INCOME

The average income for households in the Town is \$102,000. The Village’s average household income is lower than that of the Town, thus reducing the average income of Town and Village household combined (\$98,000). The Town’s average household is also significantly higher than the County as a whole. The average income is comparable to neighboring Towns such as Onondaga, Otisco, and Camillus.

## RACE

The Town’s population is predominately white (over 98%). This is anticipated to remain relatively consistent through 2026. Less than one percent of the Town identifies as Hispanic, which is forecasted to increase to approximately two percent in 2026.

FIGURE 5. 2021 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT



Educational Attainment of Town Residents

Source: 2021 ESRI Community Profile

## Marcellus at a Glance

|                                     | AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE | MEDIAN AGE | UNEMPLOYMENT RATE | PERCENT NON-WHITE | AVERAGE INCOME | PERCENT RENTERS |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| TOWN OF MARCELLUS EXCLUDING VILLAGE | 2.6                    | 47.9       | 2.7%              | 1.9%              | \$117K         | 14%             |
| TOWN OF MARCELLUS INCLUDING VILLAGE | 2.5                    | 47.5       | 3.3%              | 2.1%              | \$112K         | 19%             |
| ONONDAGA COUNTY                     | 2.4                    | 40.1       | 7.5%              | 18.9%             | \$83K          | 35%             |

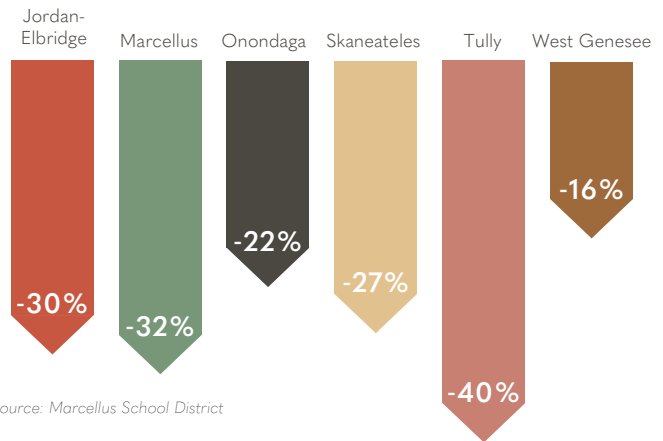
Source: US Census Bureau, 2021 ESRI Community Profile



## SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

As shown in Figure 6, enrollment in the Marcellus School District has decreased by 32% since 2005. This trend is seen throughout several neighboring communities, and all of Onondaga County’s School Districts have seen decreases in enrollment numbers. According to the Marcellus School District, enrollment is projected to continue to decline by another seven percent by the 2027-28 school year. The decrease in enrollment is most likely due to regional population trends of a stagnant or decreasing population, and the trends of an aging population discussed previously.

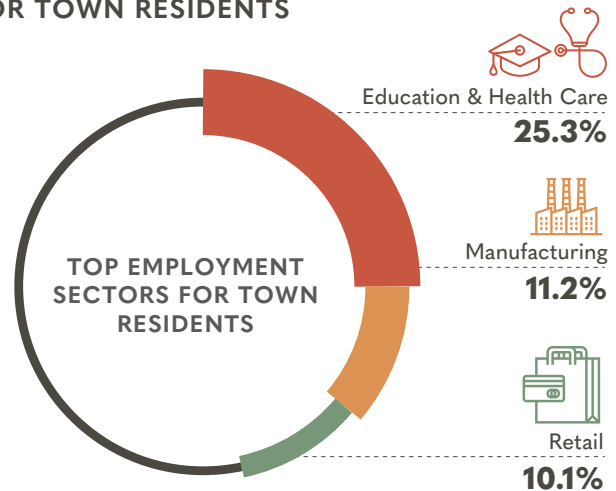
FIGURE 6. SCHOOL DISTRICT ENROLLMENT TRENDS



## EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

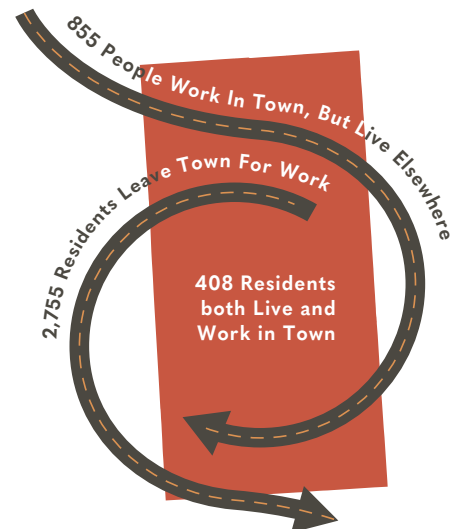
The most prevalent employment sector for employed Town residents in 2020 was Education & Health Care, as shown in Figure 7. This is reflective of national trends of “Eds & Meds” as major employers and drivers of the economy. Manufacturing is the second largest employment sector, followed by Retail. These three industries also were the most prevalent employment sectors for Marcellus residents in 2000.

FIGURE 7. TOP EMPLOYMENT SECTORS FOR TOWN RESIDENTS



The Town’s unemployment rate of 2.7% is significantly lower than both the current natural rate of unemployment (4.4%), as well as Onondaga County’s rate (7.5%). The majority of currently employed Town residents leave Marcellus for work (Figure 8). Most of these workers travel to the City of Syracuse.

FIGURE 8. COMMUTING PATTERNS

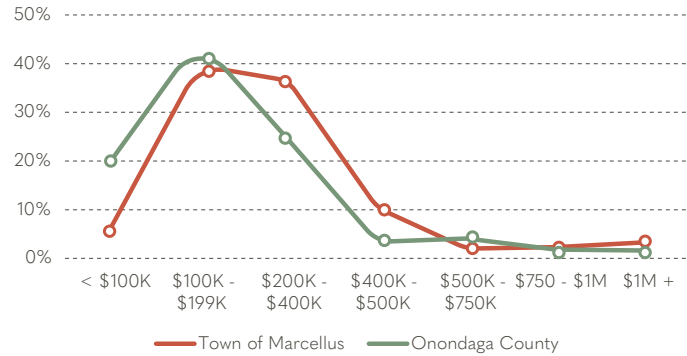


# HOUSING

## HOME VALUES

The average home value in the Town is \$301,107. When homes in the Village are included in this calculation, the average home value decreases by eight percent to \$276,188, suggesting homes in the Village are assessed as a lower rate on average. As shown in Figure 9, the distribution of housing values in the Town is similar to that of the County as a whole with a higher concentration of homes in the \$200-\$500K range in the Town, and a higher concentration of homes valued at less than \$100K in the County.

FIGURE 9. HOUSING VALUES



Source: ESRI 2021 Community Profile

## HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

A summary of local housing affordability is shown in Figure 10. An affordability ratio of median house value over median income was used to determine housing affordability in the Town, as well as other nearby communities. Marcellus has a relatively high affordability ratio as compared to neighboring communities, as well as compared to the County as a whole (excluding the City of Syracuse). However, compared to other metro areas in the Nation, Marcellus' ratio is relatively low.

FIGURE 10. HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

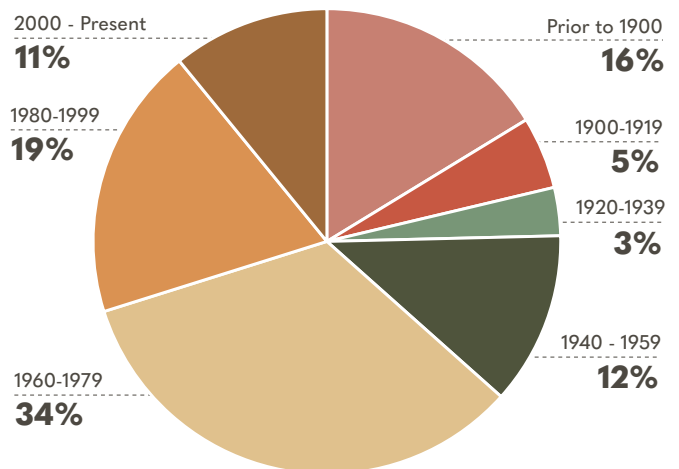
|                                    | Median House Value | Median Income    | Affordability Ratio |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| Onondaga                           | \$226,717          | \$106,462        | 2.1                 |
| Camillus                           | \$205,936          | \$90,546         | 2.3                 |
| Onondaga County (No City)          | \$240,399          | \$95,510         | 2.5                 |
| Elbridge                           | \$196,734          | \$76,831         | 2.6                 |
| Otisco                             | \$269,458          | \$95,864         | 2.8                 |
| <b>Marcellus Including Village</b> | <b>\$276,188</b>   | <b>\$97,875</b>  | <b>2.8</b>          |
| <b>Marcellus Excluding Village</b> | <b>\$301,107</b>   | <b>\$101,890</b> | <b>3.0</b>          |
| Skaneateles                        | \$515,588          | \$138,161        | 3.7                 |
| Spafford                           | \$485,906          | \$121,425        | 4.0                 |

Source: ESRI 2021 Community Profile

## HOUSING AGE

As shown in Figure 11, the majority (64%) of homes in the Town were built after 1960. As a result, the housing stock is predominately suburban-style single-family homes typical of the mid- to late-20th century. However, there also is a significant portion of homes (16%) that were built prior to 1900 - which may represent the traditional farmhouses found across Town.

FIGURE 11. TOWN HOUSING BY YEAR BUILT



Source: NYS Real Property Data

## HOUSING TENURE

According to the 2020 American Community Survey, 77% of Town and Village currently occupied housing units are owner-occupied, and 23% households are occupied by renters. Compared to renter-occupied homes, this represents a 7% decrease in owner-occupied homes since 2010, as shown in Figure 12. Four percent (4%) of housing units in the Town and Village are vacant - all of which are rental units. According to the American Planning Association, a 5% vacancy rate is ideal and creates a healthy balance between available supply and housing prices - which suggests that the Town’s housing supply is adequate but may be able to absorb some additional housing units.

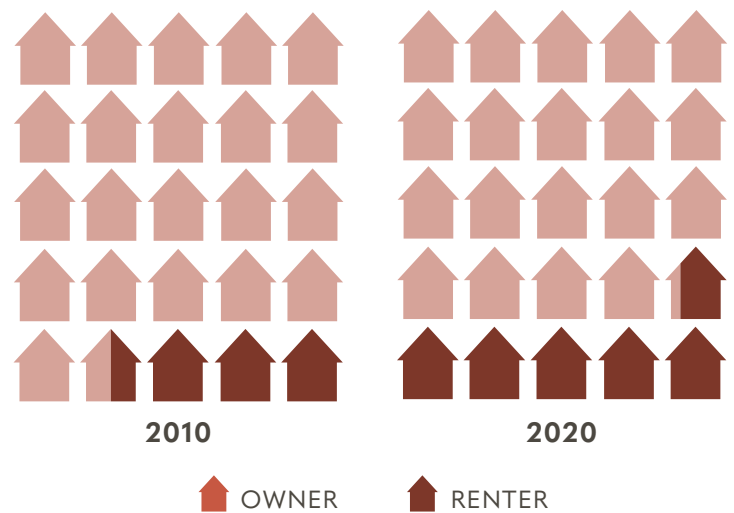
## RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION

According to the US Census Bureau’s Building Permit Survey, 523 of the 777, or 67% of residential units constructed in 2020 in the Syracuse-Auburn Combined Statistical Area (CSA) were single-family homes. By comparison, single-family homes comprised approximately 88% of total housing units built in the area in 2005. The total number of new single-family homes constructed has decreased by 176% between 2005 and 2020. As shown in Figure 13, residential construction trends have shifted to encompass more multi-family housing options. This aligns with national trends of increased demand for a variety of housing options.

These housing demands also align with the demographic shifts discussed earlier in this section and may explain the shift in housing tenure between 2010 and 2020 that reflect a 7% increase the percentage of renter-occupied homes as compared to the percentage of owner-occupied homes.

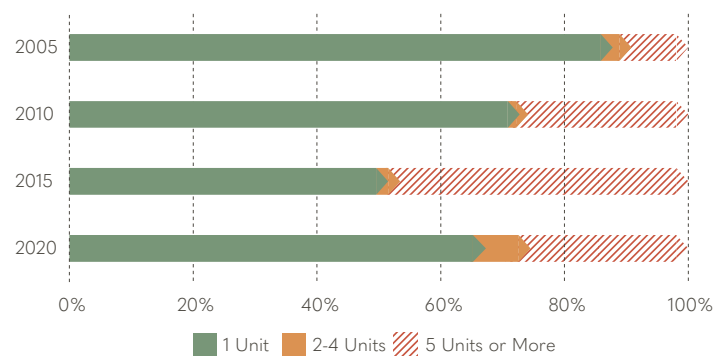
With the Town’s aging populations, residents may be starting to seek housing options with smaller footprints, and often within denser, walkable neighborhoods. Such housing options also typically appeal to young professionals and first-time homebuyers.

**FIGURE 12. TOWN AND VILLAGE HOUSING TENURE**



Source: 2020 American Community Survey, US Census

**FIGURE 13. NEW PRIVATELY OWNED HOUSING UNITS, SYRACUSE CSA (2005 - 2020)**



Source: US Census Bureau Building Permit Survey

# EXISTING LAND USE

## OVERVIEW

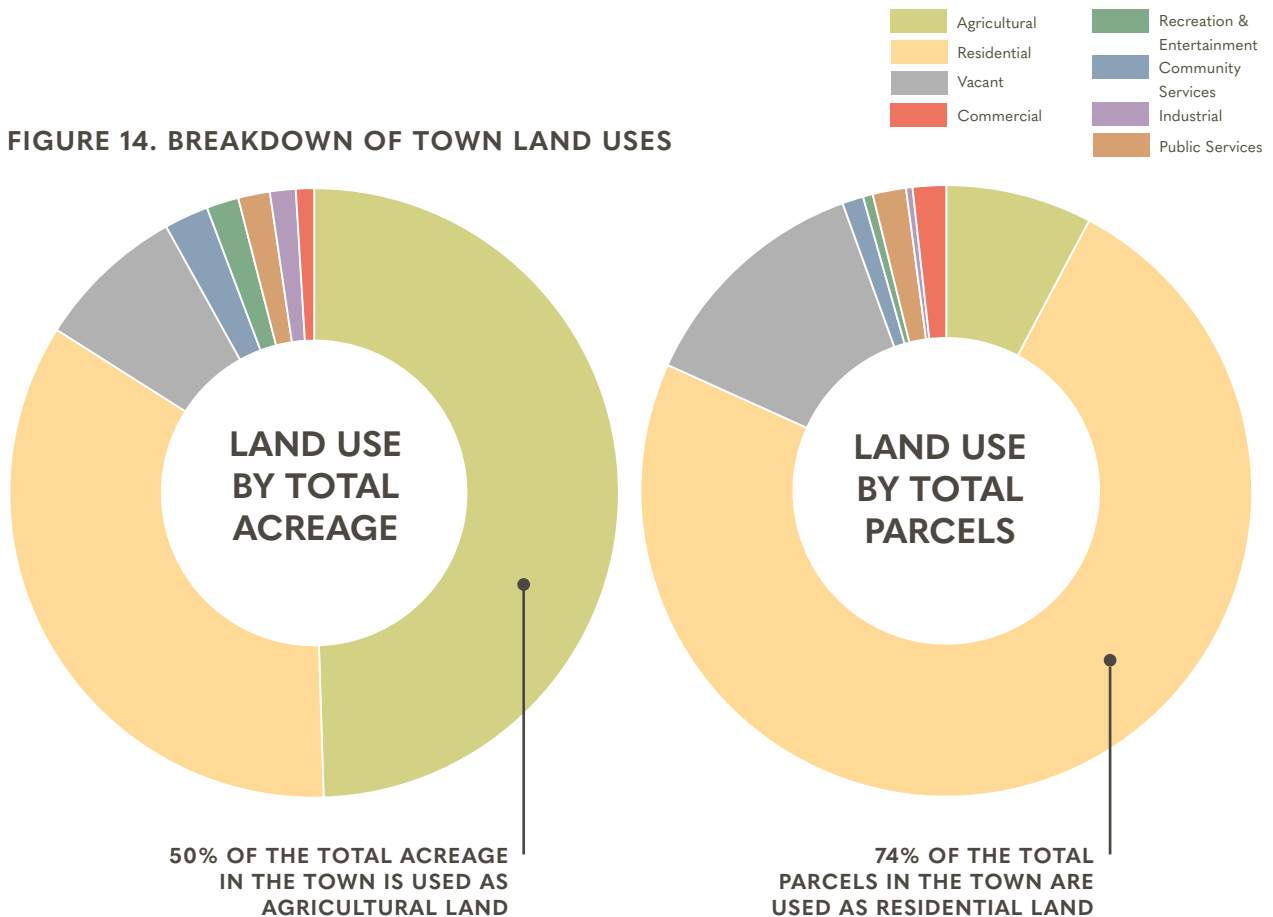
This section analyses the Town’s current land use to understand its distinct character areas and development patterns. Coupled with a comparison of land uses over time, the information highlights trends to guide land use policies and recommendations.

To complete the analysis, parcel data from Onondaga County was reviewed using Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping and the New York State property classification system. Focusing specifically on the Town land uses, the analysis excludes the parcels that comprise the Village of Marcellus. Figure 14 below shows the breakdown of land uses by acreage and parcel, and Figure 15 presents the same data in a tabular format.

## EXISTING TOWN LAND USES

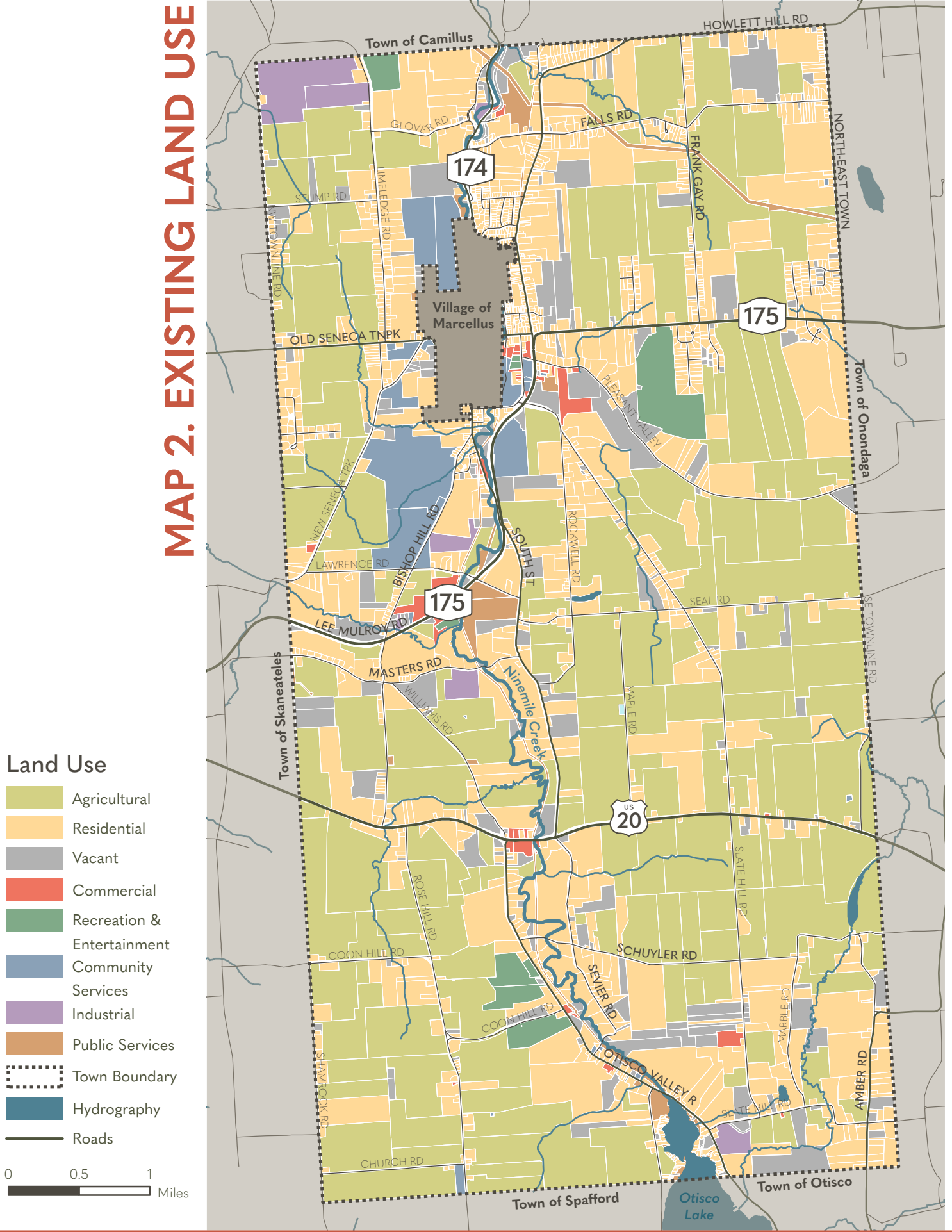
The majority of the land area in the Town of Marcellus is classified as either an agricultural land use or a residential land use. This combination reflects the Town’s history as a farming community as well as the regional proximity to employment centers in and around the City of Syracuse that allows the Town to support a commuter population. Other types of existing land uses within the Town include vacant land uses, community services, public services, recreation and entertainment, nonconforming industrial operations and commercial establishments.

**FIGURE 14. BREAKDOWN OF TOWN LAND USES**



*Note: Land use data compiled is for the Town of Marcellus only; Village of Marcellus land use data is excluded.*

**MAP 2. EXISTING LAND USE**



## AGRICULTURAL LAND USES

The agricultural land use category encompasses the most land area in the Town of Marcellus. At a total of 9,790 acres, approximately 50% of the Town's land area is classified as an agricultural land use. This land area is spread across 180 or 8% of the Town's total parcels, reflecting large parcel sizes for these uses. Parcel sizes range between 0.5 acres and 218 acres, with an average parcel size of 54 acres. Agricultural land uses are located throughout the Town, though generally outside of the residential concentrations around the Village of Marcellus and the Nine Mile Creek corridor. This agricultural land is used for dairy products; cattle, calves or hogs; sheep and wool; other livestock; field crops; nurseries and greenhouses; and productive agricultural vacant land.

## RESIDENTIAL LAND

The majority of parcels in the Town are classified as residential land use. These parcels tend to be smaller than agricultural land use parcels, ranging from 0.05 acres to 134 acres, with an average parcel size of 4 acres. With these smaller parcel sizes, residential land uses consist of only 34% of the total land

area. Residential land uses are generally concentrated around the Village of Marcellus, the Nine Mile Creek corridor and Lee Mulroy Road as well as along the northeastern and southeastern edges of the Town.

The majority, or 89% of residential parcels in the Town are one family year-round residences. These parcels tend to be smaller, with an average size of less than 2 acres and typically surround the Village or are along one of the Town's primary roadways. A significant component of the Town's residential land uses are those classified as rural residences with acreage and those classified as primary residential also used in agricultural production. With an average parcel size of just over 28 acres, these two types of residential land consist of 54% of the total land area for residential land uses.

Other types of residential land uses include two family year-round residences, seasonal residences (particularly around Otisco Lake) and mobile homes, each of which comprise approximately 1% of the total residential land use parcels.

**FIGURE 15. SUMMARY OF TOWN LAND USES**

| Land Use Category          | Total Acreage | Number of Parcels | Percent of Total Acreage | Percent of Total Parcels |
|----------------------------|---------------|-------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Agricultural               | 9,790         | 180               | 50%                      | 8%                       |
| Residential                | 6,661         | 1,719             | 34%                      | 74%                      |
| Vacant                     | 1,503         | 295               | 8%                       | 13%                      |
| Community Services         | 614           | 29                | 3%                       | 1%                       |
| Recreation & Entertainment | 379           | 13                | 2%                       | 1%                       |
| Public Services            | 332           | 41                | 2%                       | 2%                       |
| Industrial                 | 269           | 8                 | 1%                       | 0%                       |
| Commercial                 | 146           | 39                | ~0%                      | 2%                       |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>19,694</b> | <b>2,324</b>      |                          |                          |

Note: Land use data compiled is for the Town of Marcellus only; Village of Marcellus land use data is excluded.

## VACANT LAND USES

1,503 acres, or 8% of the Town's total land area is designated as vacant land. These vacant lands are primarily residential or rural, with only 2% of the vacant land area classified as commercial vacant land. Of the total vacant land area, 10% is designated as abandoned agricultural land. Vacant land is primarily located around the Town's residential concentrations.

## COMMUNITY SERVICE LAND USES

Community service lands comprise 3% of the total land area in the Town and include large and small parcels that are locally and regionally significant. Much of this land area is used as part of the Baltimore Woods Nature Center, which consists of approximately 270 acres within four parcels of land. Additional community service land uses that have over 10 acres of land include the 61 acre Marcellus Central School parcel, the 53 acre Spinks Memorial Camp parcel, the 19 acre Marcellus Park parcel, the 18 acre Highland Cemetery parcel and the 12 acre St. Francis Xavier Cemetery. Community service land uses also include smaller parcels for religious uses, highway garages, government office buildings, police and fire protection and cemeteries. Many of these uses are generally located around the Village of Marcellus.

## RECREATION & ENTERTAINMENT LAND USES

At only 2% of the total acreage of the Town, recreation and entertainment includes 13 parcels of a variety of uses including Sunset Ridge Golf Club, Orenda Springs Experiential Learning Center, Marcellus Airport, Otisco Lake Rod & Gun Club, Skaneateles Ski Club, Marcellus Youth Soccer, Ultimate Goal Family Sports Center, Marcellus Lanes, Martisco Lions Club Community Field, and Bishop Hill Road Pool Club.

## PUBLIC SERVICES LAND USES

Town public service land uses include water supply, telephone, landfill, sewage treatment and water pollution control, electric power generation facility and gas transmission improvement uses.

## NONCONFORMING INDUSTRIAL LAND USES

Although industrial land uses are no longer permitted by the current zoning regulations, several nonconforming industrial land uses exist within the Town. A nonconforming use is one that does not conform to the regulations of the zone in which it is located, but may be continued without alteration as detailed within Section 235-20 of the Town zoning regulations. This use is also known as a "grandfathered" use.

Most of the industrial land in the Town is dedicated to mining and quarrying with a small amount of land used for manufacturing and processing. The two largest parcels are owned by Hanson Aggregates of NY, LLC are located in the northwestern corner of the Town.

## COMMERCIAL LAND USES

Less than 1% of the total land area in the Town is classified as used for commercial land. This area consists of 146 acres and is generally located along arterial and collector roads. Commercial land uses include restaurants, motor vehicle services, storage, warehouse and distribution facilities, an auto dealership, a small retail outlet, a professional building, a veterinary clinic and other small commercial operations. Also included within the commercial land use classification are four parcels categorized as apartments - two on Glover Road, one on Rose Hill Road, and one on Route 174.



**VIEWS ACROSS AGRICULTURAL AND RESIDENTIAL AREA CONTRIBUTES TO COMMUNITY CHARACTER**

## **CHANGES IN LAND USE**

To assess how land uses have changed since the 2001 Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Marcellus, a visual analysis was completed to compare the 2001 existing land use map (Map 2) to the 2022 existing land use map (Map 1). The analysis illustrates the conversion of agricultural lands (as well as one identified as used for sand/gravel excavation) to residential lands, with concentrations of residential conversions in the northeastern and southeastern corners of the Town, as well as along primary roadways. Other changes in land uses include the addition of commercial uses at the intersection of NYS Routes 20 and 174 and along Lee Mulroy Road. Also of note, several properties in 2001 that were designated as single family residential (as well as one designated as sand/gravel excavation) have since converted to agricultural land uses. Finally, a recent change in land uses is the conversion of two parcels from an agricultural land use to a community service land use, adding to the Baltimore Woods Nature Center property along Bishop Hill Road.

The results of the comparison of land uses between 2001 and 2022 shows that while there has been increase in residential land uses, the same general pattern of land uses remains within the Town.

Another method of determining changes in land use is a review of building permits issued. Between 2011 and 2021, there were 1,291 different types of building permits issued. At 17% of the total building permits, the most common type issued was for a deck, porch or ramp, followed by 16% issued for sheds or accessory buildings and 11% issued for swimming pools. Within this 11 year period, 78 building permits were issued for single family dwellings and two building permits were issued for two-family dwellings, as shown in Figure 16.



**FIGURE 16. TOWN BUILDING PERMITS FROM 2011 TO 2021**

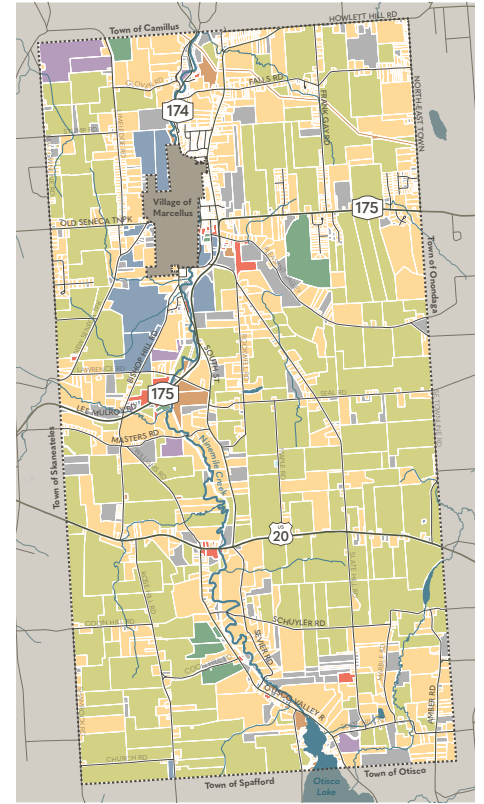
| Type of Building Permit    | 2021       | 2020       | 2019       | 2018       | 2017       | 2016       | 2015       | 2014       | 2013       | 2012       | 2011       | Total       | Percent of the Total Building Permits Count |
|----------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|---|
| Addition                   | 12         | 9          | 7          | 5          | 18         | 5          | 9          | 10         | 5          | 2          | 14         | 96          | 7%  |
| Antenna/Tower              | 8          | 2          | 0          | 6          | 0          | 5          | 1          | 4          | 5          | 2          | 0          | 33          | 3%  |
| Change of Use              | 0          | 1          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 1           | 0%  |
| Commercial                 | 5          | 1          | 2          | 1          | 1          | 3          | 2          | 2          | 5          | 5          | 0          | 27          | 2%  |
| Deck, Porch, Ramp          | 13         | 16         | 19         | 20         | 18         | 27         | 28         | 24         | 19         | 14         | 21         | 219         | 17%   |
| Dwelling - One Family      | 11         | 7          | 6          | 8          | 3          | 7          | 3          | 4          | 13         | 8          | 8          | 78          | 6%  |
| Dwelling -Two Family       | 0          | 1          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 1          | 0          | 0          | 2           | 0%  |
| Electrical                 | 1          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 1          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 1          | 3           | 0%  |
| Fence                      | 11         | 11         | 9          | 6          | 9          | 6          | 11         | 10         | 7          | 9          | 4          | 93          | 7%  |
| Garage                     | 5          | 7          | 4          | 10         | 4          | 5          | 10         | 4          | 1          | 5          | 4          | 59          | 5%  |
| Generator                  | 4          | 2          | 5          | 1          | 0          | 1          | 1          | 0          | 3          | 2          | 2          | 21          | 2%  |
| Heating Device / Fireplace | 10         | 7          | 17         | 3          | 10         | 6          | 9          | 10         | 19         | 10         | 22         | 123         | 9%  |
| Pole Barn                  | 5          | 7          | 3          | 3          | 6          | 9          | 1          | 4          | 3          | 3          | 3          | 47          | 4%  |
| Renovation / Alteration    | 6          | 9          | 13         | 7          | 3          | 10         | 11         | 10         | 13         | 13         | 12         | 107         | 8%  |
| Shed / Accessory Building  | 17         | 26         | 19         | 21         | 22         | 13         | 20         | 20         | 11         | 18         | 17         | 204         | 16%   |
| Sidewalk / Steps           | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 1          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 1           | 0%  |
| Sign                       | 1          | 0          | 0          | 2          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 1          | 0          | 4           | 0%  |
| Solar Panels               | 2          | 3          | 2          | 4          | 3          | 9          | 9          | 2          | 0          | 0          | 1          | 35          | 3%  |
| Swimming Pool              | 19         | 11         | 11         | 6          | 10         | 12         | 11         | 11         | 10         | 22         | 15         | 138         | 11%   |
| <b>Totals</b>              | <b>130</b> | <b>120</b> | <b>117</b> | <b>103</b> | <b>109</b> | <b>118</b> | <b>126</b> | <b>115</b> | <b>115</b> | <b>114</b> | <b>124</b> | <b>1291</b> | <b>100%</b>                                 |

Note: No building permits were issued during this time period for multiple family dwellings, mobile home dwellings, plumbing or windmills.

# MAP 3. 2001 EXISTING LAND USE MAP

## TOWN OF MARCELLUS LAND USE

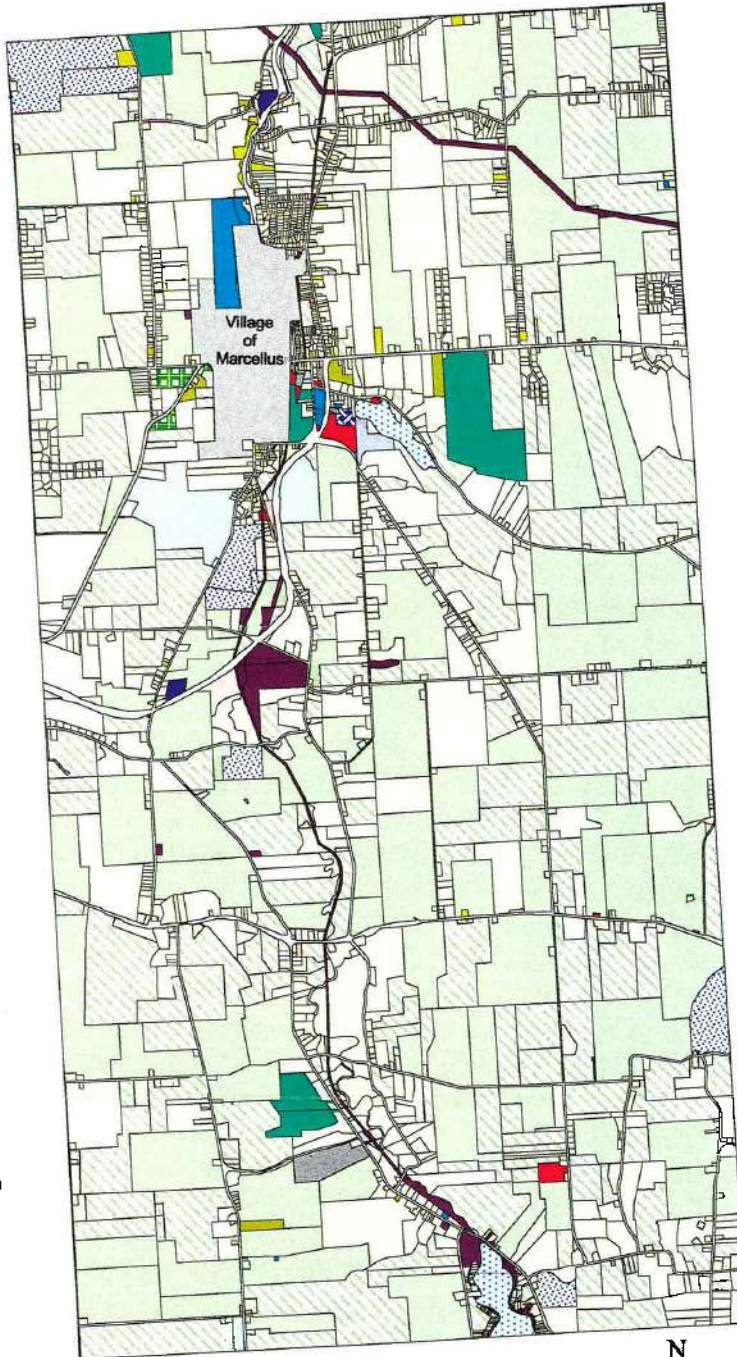
2022 EXISTING LAND USE MAP



- |              |                            |
|--------------|----------------------------|
| Agricultural | Recreation & Entertainment |
| Residential  | Community Services         |
| Vacant       | Industrial                 |
| Commercial   | Public Services            |

**LEGEND**

- Single Family
- 2/3 Family
- Multi-Family
- Agricultural
- Retail
- Office
- Automotive
- Parking Lot
- Utilities
- Warehouse/ Light Manufacturing
- Manufacturing
- Quasi-Government Religious
- Public
- Cemeteries
- Landfills/Dumps
- Sand/Gravel Excavation
- Outdoor Recreation
- Vacant
- Water Bodies



0.5 0 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles



PREPARED FOR THE TOWN OF MARCELLUS PLANNING BOARD  
BY THE SYRACUSE-ONDONAGA COUNTY PLANNING AGENCY

5/89  
Revised by Barton & Loguidice, P.C. 10/01

# ZONING

## OVERVIEW

Chapter 235 Zoning was adopted in the Code of the Town of Marcellus “for the purpose of regulating and restricting the location, erection and use of buildings, structures and the use of land in the Town of Marcellus.” As detailed in the code, eight zoning districts, six of which are currently mapped, are established with the purpose of promoting the public health, safety, morals and general welfare of the community (Map 3). A breakdown of the zones by acreage is displayed in Figure 17 and 18. Chapter 235 also establishes two overlay zones and provisions for cluster development. The following section summarizes the key features of these zoning regulations.

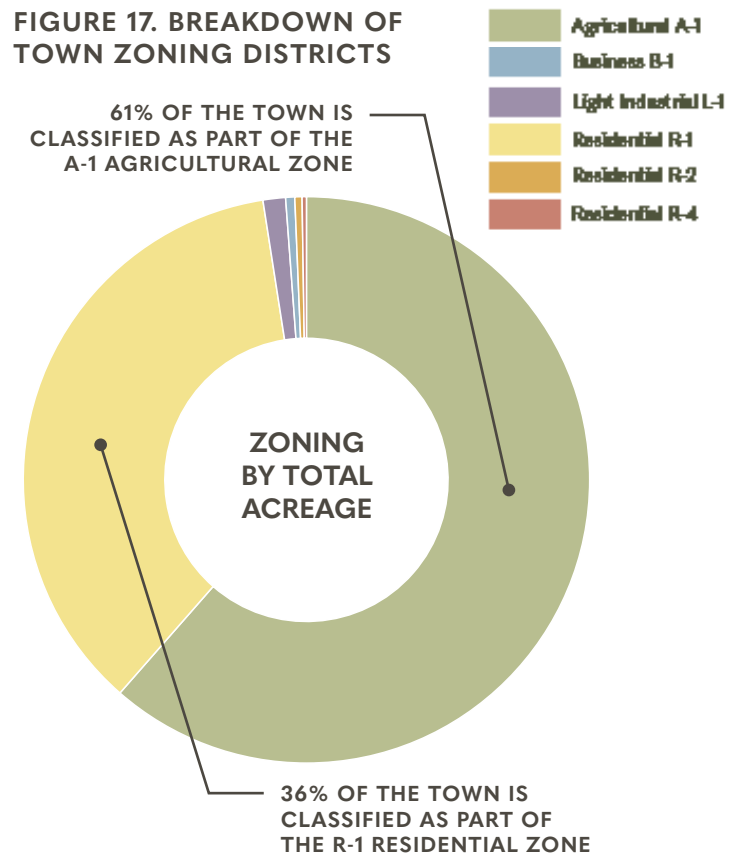
indoor and outdoor recreational activities, airports, kennels and animal hospitals, mobile homes, and country stores. The minimum lot size for this zone is 80,000 square feet. Currently, the majority of the A-1 Zone is used for agricultural purposes. However, there are also several residential parcels within the A-1 Zone, as well as some industrial uses.

## ZONING DISTRICTS

### A-1 Agricultural Zone

With 61% of the total land area classified as part of the A-1 Agricultural Zone, this is the largest zoning district within the Town. The zone is located primarily in the southern portion of the Town, outside of the key roadway corridors. Permitted uses and accessory uses include those within the R-1 Zone, including one-family dwellings, churches, public uses such as schools and libraries, and customary agricultural operations. In addition, two-family dwellings are permitted. A variety of uses are specially permitted such as farm product processing plants, nurseries and greenhouses,

**FIGURE 17. BREAKDOWN OF TOWN ZONING DISTRICTS**



**FIGURE 18. SUMMARY OF MAPPED TOWN ZONES BY ACREAGE**

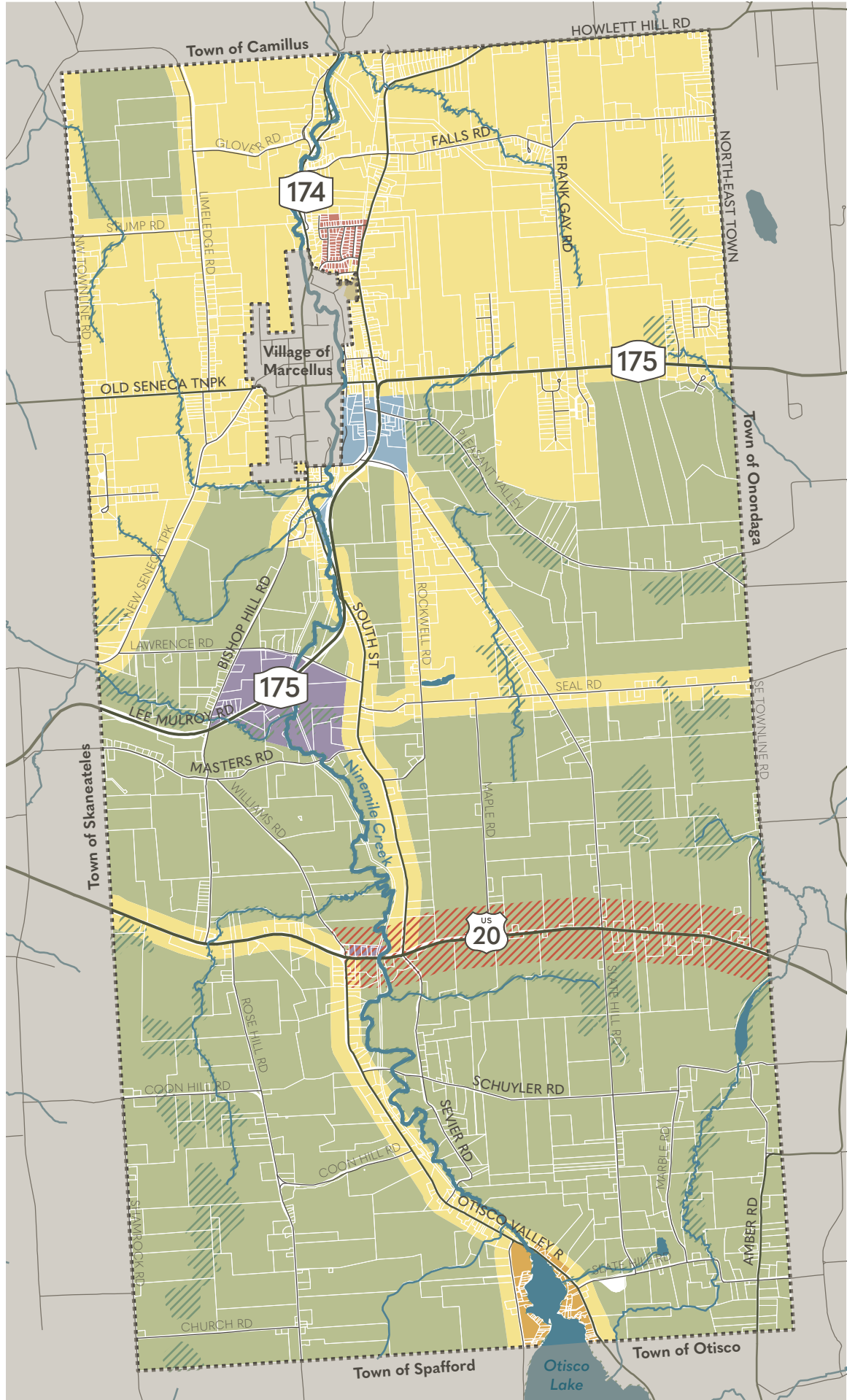
| Zone                      | Total Acreage | Percent of Total Acreage |
|---------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| A-1 Agricultural Zone     | 12,071.0      | 61.4%                    |
| R-1 Residential Zone      | 7,091.4       | 36.1%                    |
| R-2 Residential Zone      | 80.8          | 0.4%                     |
| R-4 Residential Zone      | 48.5          | 0.3%                     |
| B-1 Business Zone         | 101.6         | 0.5%                     |
| L-1 Light Industrial Zone | 252.5         | 1.3%                     |

Note: The R-3 Zone and the Planned Unit Development (PUD) Zone are currently not mapped and therefore not included in this table.

**MAP 4. EXISTING ZONING**

**Zoning**

- Agricultural A-1
  - Business B-1
  - Light Industrial L-1
  - Residential R-1
  - Residential R-2
  - Residential R-4
  - Highway Overlay
  - Critical Environmental Area Overlay
  - Town Boundary
  - Hydrography
  - Roads
- 0      0.5      1  
 Miles



## R-1 Residential Zone

With 36% of the total land area, the R-1 Residential Zone is the largest of the residential zones. The zone covers most of the northern portion of the Town as well as areas along key roadway corridors. This zone supports the traditional single-family home development pattern that is currently seen throughout the Town, and has the same permitted uses as A-1 (aside from prohibiting two-family dwellings). Some non-residential uses are specially permitted such as recreational facilities, cultural institutions, and day-care centers.

The R-1 Zone also supports agricultural operations as an accessory use, such as the raising of field, fruit and vegetable crops, a noncommercial greenhouse, the keeping of a horse or a cow. Other residential accessory uses permitted include home occupations, bed-and-breakfasts, family and group family daycares, and accessory apartments. The minimum lot size for this zone is 40,000 square feet. Currently, the majority of the mapped R-1 zone is used for residential purposes. However, there are several large agricultural parcels within the R-1, which could be subdivided and developed in to large residential tracts. There are also several vacant parcels within the R-1 Zone.

## R-2 Residential Zone (Lake Shore)

Located along Otisco Lake, the R-2 Residential Zone allows the permitted uses and accessory uses in the R-1 Residential Zone, excluding day-care centers, care homes, and medical care facilities. An additional provision in the R-2 Residential Zone is the designation of boat houses, bath houses, other structures (including boat hoists), and docks as permitted accessory uses. The minimum lot size for this zone is 10,000 square feet. This Zone primarily supports dense lakefront home development typically found throughout the Finger Lakes.

## R-3 Residential Zone (Multiple Dwelling)

Although the Town Zoning Map does not designate any area for the R-3 Residential Zone, it is established within the Zoning Chapter. Permitted uses include two-family dwellings and multiple-family dwellings.

## R-4 Residential Zone

The R-4 Residential Zone is limited to areas that are serviced by both public water supply and public sewerage facilities. As such, the area dedicated to the R-4 zone is located just north of the Village of Marcellus. The development pattern in this area is of a typical suburban residential tract, and is fully developed. Permitted uses are similar to those of the R-1 District, but allowed in a denser development pattern given the provision of public utilities. Permitted accessory uses include those in R-1 Zone, excluding a bed-and-breakfast use. The minimum lot size for this zone is 12,000 square feet.

## B-1 Business Zone

Located just east of the Village of Marcellus, the B-1 Business Zone consists of 1% of the total land area in the Town. The B-1 Zone is the Town's only commercial district, and complements the dense development pattern of the Village directly adjacent to the zone. Permitted uses within the zone include a variety of commercial uses such as retail business stores and shops, personal service shops, banks offices, restaurants, printing shops, and motor vehicle sales lots.

Uses by special permit include public garage or filling stations, warehousing and distribution, indoor and outdoor recreation activities, and storage containers and dumpsters. Permitted accessory uses include those in the R-1 Zone, signs, and a dwelling unit as an integral part of the principal structure. The minimum lot size for this zone is 10,890 square feet. While

this is the Town's only commercial zone, there are only a handful of active commercial operations currently within the area. The majority of the land area in the B-1 Zone is comprised of municipal uses such as the highway garage and a portion of Marcellus Park. The active commercial uses support industrial and agricultural uses, such as S & S Tractor Parts.

### **L-1 Light Industrial Zone**

Located along NYS Route 175 is the L-1 Light Industrial Zone, which consists of 1% of the total land area in the Town. Permitted uses within the L-1 Zone include all permitted uses in the R-1 and A-1 Zones, except for one and two-family dwellings and cemeteries, as well as all permitted uses in the B-1 Zone and permitted accessory uses in the R-1, A-1 and B-1 Zones. Several low-impact industrial uses are permitted in this zone, including analytical, pharmaceutical and commercial laboratories, research centers, and warehousing and distribution. Many trades are also supported by permitting uses such as cabinet makers, carpenter shops, furniture manufacturing and repair, and bookbinding. Uses subject to special permit include adult uses and other light industrial or manufacturing uses. The minimum lot size for this zone is 43,560 square feet. Currently within this zone there is only one industrial use. A water treatment plant, some commercial uses, a sports center, and several residential parcels are also located in this area.

### **Planned Unit Development Zone**

While none are currently mapped, Chapter 235 establishes provisions for planned unit development (PUD) zones to promote site design and land use flexibility not feasible in other zones. These zones are established through an applicant submission process that includes the approval of both the Town Board and the Planning Board.

## **OVERLAY ZONES**

Overlay zones can be used to apply additional regulations to the underlying zone to address specific issues. The Town of Marcellus utilizes two overlay zones: the Highway Overlay Zone and Critical Environmental Area (CEA) Overlay Zone. Both of these overlay zones are based on the implementation of zoning change recommendations from the Town's 2001 Comprehensive Plan. The following summarizes the purpose or intent and key regulations, as detailed in Chapter 235 of the Town Code.

### **Critical Environmental Area (CEA) Overlay Zone**

The purpose of this Overlay Zone is to preserve the Nine Mile Creek corridor and tributaries, protect the area from development that may threaten its special characteristics as well as provide recreational amenities and enhance the aesthetic quality of the community. The CEA Overlay Zone requires a special permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals for proposed activities, such as construction, excavation or fill, clearing of existing vegetation, destruction of wildlife habitat, or any activities that would cause erosion.

### **Highway Overlay Zone**

The intent of this Overlay Zone is to preserve scenic vistas while providing additional controls and/or opportunities for specific types of development. The Highway Overlay Zone is located along the U.S. Route 20, from NY Route 174 easterly to the Town line. Within the zone, hotels, restaurants, country stores, and professional office buildings are allowed by special permit. A key regulation within the Overlay Zone is the minimum front yard setback of 100 feet from the street line.

# PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE

## OVERVIEW

There are over 760 acres of parks, recreation and open space facilities within the Town of Marcellus, including public, private and nonprofit owned land. These facilities are an important part of the community and provide a variety of active and passive recreation opportunities.

A primary provider of recreational programs is the Town of Marcellus Parks and Recreation Department. The Department provides programming for youth, seniors and adults, including a variety of youth summer camps and a summer concert series in Marcellus Park.

**FIGURE 19. PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES BY ACRES**

| Parks & Recreation Area                     | Acres |
|---|-------|
| Baltimore Woods Nature Center               | 270.3 |
| Sunset Ridge Golf Club                      | 155.1 |
| Spinks Memorial Camp                        | 53.4  |
| Martisco Lions Club Community Field         | 42.9  |
| Marcellus Lanes                             | 42.5  |
| Orenda Springs Experiential Learning Center | 41.4  |
| Otisco Lake Rod & Gun Club                  | 40.2  |
| Marcellus Airport                           | 36.4  |
| Skaneateles Ski Club                        | 32.7  |
| Marcellus Park                              | 20.0  |
| Marcellus Youth Soccer                      | 14.8  |
| Ultimate Goal Family Sports Center          | 10.9  |

## PARKS AND RECREATION RESOURCES

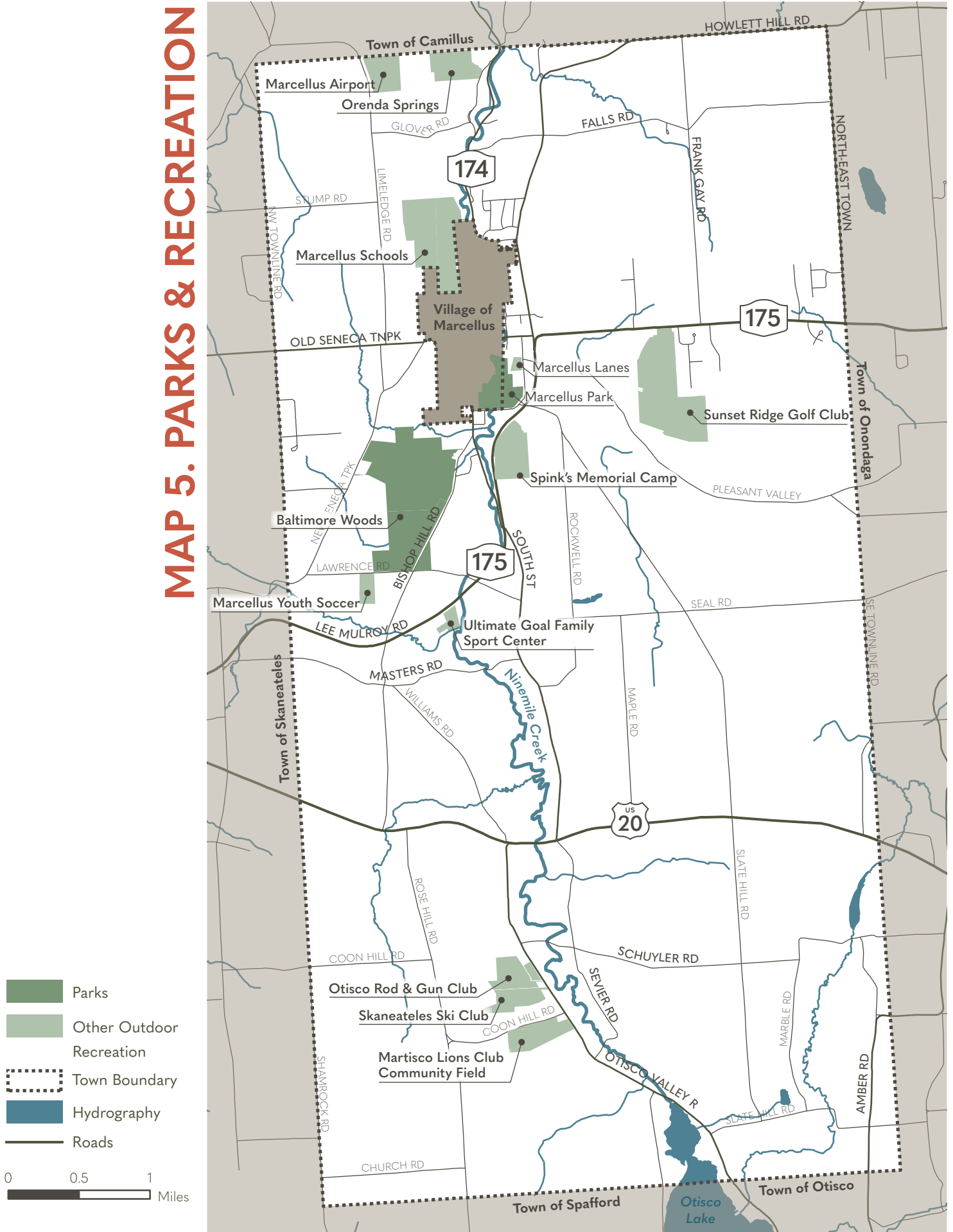
There are 11 different parks and recreation resources, several of which are made up of multiple parcels, as shown in Figure 19 and Map 4. These resources include parcels listed as community service land uses and those listed as recreation and entertainment land uses. The following summary provides a brief description of each resource.

### MARCELLUS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

A community service facility that also serves the recreational needs of the community is the Marcellus Central School District and its facilities, including seven athletic fields. The school complex is located on over 80 acres of land along Reed Parkway in the Town and Village of Marcellus. Community use of school facilities, which is in the public interest and don't conflict with school activities, is encouraged.<sup>1</sup> Also, the school facilities provide a location for many of the summer camps run by the Town of Marcellus Parks and Recreation Department.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.marcellusschools.org/teacherpage.cfm?teacher=822>

**MAP 5. PARKS & RECREATION**





## Baltimore Woods Nature Center

Located just south of the Village of Marcellus along Bishop Hill Road is Baltimore Woods Nature Center, which is run by a private nonprofit organization. The Nature Center offers over six miles of hiking on its system of nine trails as well as a variety of programming, events and camps on its expansive property. Also part of the Baltimore Woods Nature Center is an Interpretive Center at 4007 Bishop Hill Road. The park trails are open dawn to dusk every day with no admission or parking fees and currently the Interpretive Center is open on Saturdays.

Recently the Nature Center, together with Central New York Land Trust, acquired an additional 90 acres of land, expanding the property to approximately 270 acres. The additional land will allow for an expanded trail system and offer new environmental education programs and research opportunities.<sup>1</sup>

## Sunset Ridge Golf Club

This is a semi-private golf club with a restaurant and banquet room located at 2814 West Seneca Turnpike.

## Spinks Memorial Camp

Located along Lee Mulroy Road, Spinks Memorial Camp is a private nonprofit recreation area with woodlands and fields. The camp is open for day hikes and overnight

<sup>1</sup> <https://baltimorewoods.org/baltimore-woods-property-expansion/>



camping is allowed with permission. Facilities include picnic tables, lean-tos and two outhouses. Various local boy scout and girl scout groups use the property the most.<sup>2</sup>

## Orenda Springs Experiential Learning Center

This private recreation facility provides ropes courses, horseback riding, camping, mountain biking, cross country skiing, yoga, and art activities. The Center is also a location for programs run through the Town of Marcellus Parks and Recreation Department. The facility is located at 4939 Lawless Road.

## Otisco Lake Rod & Gun Club

Located at 3015 Marietta Road is the Otisco Lake Road & Gun Club, a private club for shooting, archery and fishing.

## Marcellus Airport

Located at 4910 Limeledge Road, the Marcellus Airport is a privately-owned airport used for recreational programs such as a Father's Day Fly in/Drive in Pancake Breakfast as well as a base location for Mercy Flight Central.

<sup>2</sup> <https://spinksmemorialcamp.org/about/>



BALTIMORE WOODS NATURE CENTER

### Skaneateles Ski Club

This ski club is a nonprofit, member-owned and volunteer-run ski hill that was established in 1959. The facility offers one main tow rope, a second bunny hill tow rope, snow-making equipment, night lights, groomed trails and a rustic lodge. The 33 acre facility is located at 2995 State Route 174.

### Marcellus Park

Marcellus Park is a regional destination for recreation with a variety of facilities including pavilions, swing sets and playground equipment, horseshoe pits, baseball fields, basketball courts, tennis courts, putting green, beach volleyball courts, restrooms, trails and an ice skating rink in the winter.

Marcellus Park is owned by the Town and located in the Town and in the Village of Marcellus. The park provides a location for a variety of Town Recreation programs including camps, concerts and events. The Town of Marcellus Parks and Recreation Department works together with the Friends of Marcellus Park organization to meet the needs of the park.

### Marcellus Youth Soccer

Located along Lawrence Road, near the intersection with Bishop Hill Road are the soccer fields for Marcellus Youth Soccer. The fields are used for a recreational program for children in kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

### Ultimate Goal Family Sports Center

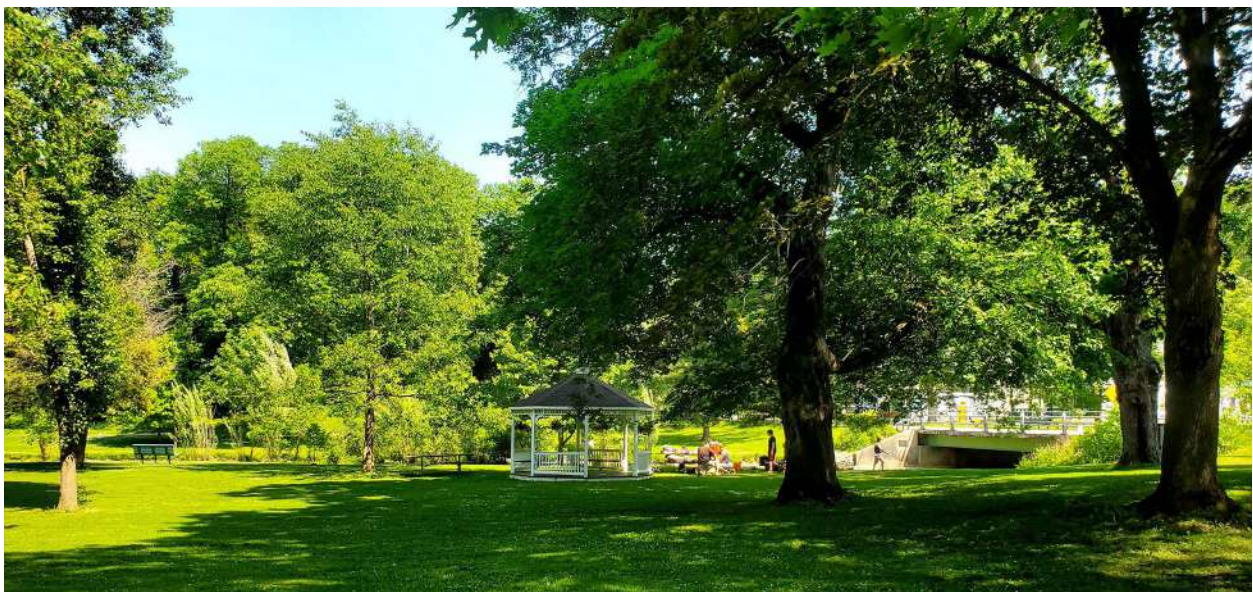
This private recreation facility provides two fields and a batting cage available for rent and offers sports programming and camps.

### Marcellus Lanes

Located at 4325 Slate Hill Road, Marcellus Lanes is a bowling alley with an ice cream shop and restaurant.

### Martisco Lions Club Community Field

Located at 2929 Marietta Road is the clubhouse and community field of the Martisco Lions Club. This service club organization was founded in 1970 and serves the areas protected by the fire departments of the towns of Marcellus, Amber, Borodino, Otisco, Navarino and Spafford.



**MARCELLUS PARK**

## PUBLIC FISHING RIGHTS STREAM ACCESS & PARKING AREA

The Nine Mile Creek corridor is approximately 22 miles, beginning at Otisco Lake and flowing through the Town of Marcellus before reaching Onondaga Lake. The Creek is stocked annually by the County and is a popular trout fishing destination that has five miles of Public Fishing Rights (PFR). These PFR areas are where the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation has purchased permanent easements from willing landowners for anglers to walk and fish along the bank of the creek.

In the Town of Marcellus, access to Nine Mile Creek can be found in Marcellus Park, at the crossing of Lee Mulroy Road, and along State Route 174 near the northern portion of the Town where there is a New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) parking area.



**NINE MILE CREEK FISHING ACCESS SITE**

## OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

Cemeteries can provide significant open space areas within a community. Within the Town of Marcellus there are two larger cemeteries including the 18 acre Highland Cemetery and the 14 acre St. Francis Xavier cemetery, both located along New Seneca Turnpike west of the Village of Marcellus. Additionally, several smaller cemeteries are located in various locations within the Town (detailed in Figure 20).

**FIGURE 20. CEMETERIES BY ACRES**

| Cemetery                   | Acres |
|----------------------------|-------|
| Highland Cemetery          | 18.0  |
| St Francis Xavier Cemetery | 14.3  |
| Catholic Cemetery          | 2.5   |
| Jackson Cemetery           | 1.1   |
| Feather Tree Cemetery      | 0.2   |
| Fellows Cemetery           | 0.2   |
| Burns Cemetery             | 0.1   |

# HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

## OVERVIEW

Historic and cultural resources contribute to the community character and social fabric of the Town of Marcellus. The historic farmhouse vernacular shows the agricultural heritage of the Town while the strong community ties to the school district shows the importance of youth development and education in Marcellus.

## HISTORIC RESOURCES

Although there are currently no properties listed on the State or National Register of Historic Places, it was determined that the C.S. Driver Middle School is eligible for listing. In addition, in 1979 Gail Doering of the Landmark Association of CNY, Inc., conducted Building-Structure Inventory Forms for several of the historic structures

in the Town. Although it has not been determined if these structures would be eligible for listing, the information provided in the forms highlight historic aspects of the area.

### C.S. Driver Middle School

In 2018, New York State Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation determined that the C.S. Driver Middle School is eligible for listing on the National and State Registers of Historic Places. Located at 2 Reed Parkway at the border of the Town and the Village of Marcellus, it is significant for its role in the history of public schools in this formerly rural town. Constructed in 1936 as the Marcellus K-12 Central School and designed by Carl W. Clark, the building is recognized as an outstanding example of a Georgian Revival school from the 1930s.



**C.S. DRIVER MIDDLE SCHOOL**

## Historic Structures

Using the Building-Structure Inventory Forms from the New York State Cultural Resource Information System (CRIS), a collection of historic properties were identified in the Town of Marcellus, outside of the Village. Together these properties illustrate the traditional farmhouse and vernacular architecture of the area. Figure 21 summarizes historic properties by roadway.



**MILLS HOUSE ON ROSE HILL ROAD**

**FIGURE 21. TOWN HISTORIC PROPERTIES IDENTIFIED**

| Description  | Year Built                      |
|--|---------------------------------|
| <b>West Seneca Turnpike</b>  |                                 |
| 2601 Seneca Turnpike: A residence that is an example of a Federal style vernacular interpretation of the early 1800s.  | c. 1830                         |
| 3209 Seneca Turnpike: A residence that is an example of a Federal style vernacular construction.   | c. 1830                         |
| <b>Amber Road</b>  |                                 |
| 2652 Amber Road: A farmhouse, hay barn and carriage barn. The Greek Revival style farmhouse is typical within the area. Additionally, the Italianate style carriage barn and hay barn demonstrate a complete picture of the farm as it may have appeared.            | c. 1850, c. 1865<br>(two barns) |
| <b>Rose Hill Road</b>  |                                 |
| Mills House and Vernacular Tenant House: The Queen Ann style residence was the home of the Mills family that founded and operated the Rose Hill Seed Company. The structure behind residence is a vernacular tenant house that is part of the residential complex.   | c. 1890 and c.<br>1870          |
| Rose Hill Seed Co Boarding House: A vernacular boarding house for those who worked at the Rose Hill Seed Factory, with separate sides of the building for men and women.   | c. 1890                         |
| 2805 Rose Hill Road: A gambrel roof residence with stick style and Colonial Revival elements.  | c. 1890                         |
| 2819 Rose Hill Road: A vernacular house with stick style or half-timber gables in close proximity to the Rose Hill Seed Farm buildings.  | c.1890                          |
| <b>Slate Hill Road</b>   |                                 |
| District #3 School House: While the existing structure no longer resembles structure described in inventory form, it may have been a former octagon-shaped schoolhouse. Additional research would be necessary to uncover whether or not this is the same structure. | c. 1865                         |
| 3846 Slate Hill Road: An Italianate style house featuring a square cupola.   | c.1860                          |
| <b>Bishop Hill Road</b>  |                                 |
| Baltimore Woods Interpretive Center - A Greek Revival style farmhouse that was moved from Rt. 233 at the intersection of Seneca Turnpike in Skaneateles to Baltimore Woods Nature Center.  | c. 1845                         |
| 4153 Bishop Road : A residence with an uncharacteristic style for the area that includes some Bungalow features with rounded second floor balcony.   | c. 1900                         |

Note: c. - circa



**HISTORIC HOUSE RELOCATED TO  
BALTIMORE WOODS PROPERTY**

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

Cultural resources within the Town include two religious facilities and the educational facilities of the Marcellus Central School District. In addition, the Village of Marcellus, where cultural institutions such as the Marcellus Free Library, Marcellus Town Hall, and The Marcellus Historical Association housed within Steadman House are located, is central to the Town of Marcellus.

Community events, such as Olde Home Days, also serve as significant cultural resources in the Town. Events are supported by community organizations, the Town Parks and Recreation Department, and the Marcellus Central School District.

For many, the Marcellus Central School District plays a critical role in the cultural identity of the community as the District serves residents in and around the Town. Additionally, in its 191,000 square-foot stadium, the District hosts approximately 125 events each year, potential expanding its reach beyond those enrolled or families of those enrolled.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.marcellusschools.org/teacherpage.cfm?teacher=911>



**OLDE HOME DAYS 2022**

# AGRICULTURAL LANDS AND ASSETS

## OVERVIEW

The agricultural landscape is a defining feature in the Town of Marcellus. The stretches of farmland characterize the roadways and provide a sense of rural open space within the community. In addition, agriculture is key part of the local economic heritage. According to the 2001 Comprehensive Plan, agriculture has served as the main industry of the community since the late 1800s.<sup>1</sup> The industry continues to evolve with the utilization of agricultural preservation techniques to maintain these agricultural resources for generations to come.

## TYPES OF AGRICULTURAL LAND

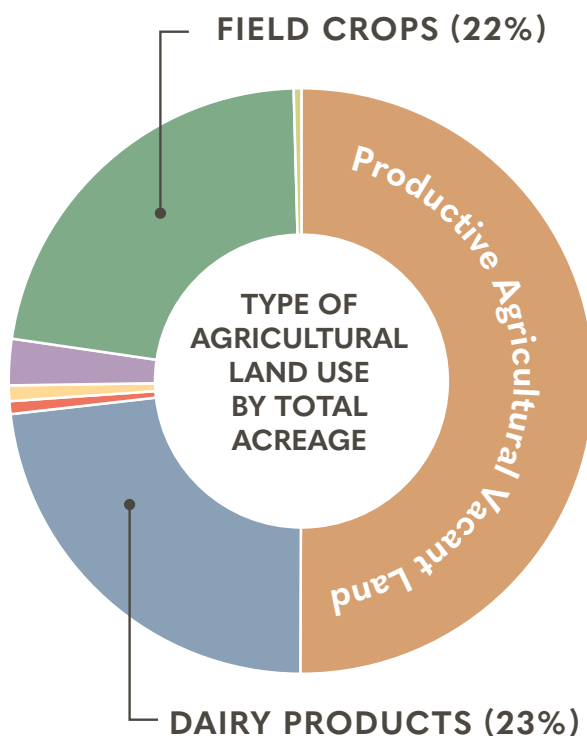
The primary agricultural uses within the Town of Marcellus include dairy products and field crops. Other agricultural uses within the Town include a cattle, calves or hog farming; sheep and wool; a category for other livestock, and nurseries and greenhouses.

As shown in Figures 22 and 23, the largest agricultural category is productive agricultural vacant land, which is land used as part of an operating farm. The concentration of productive agricultural vacant land is reflective of the 2001 Comprehensive Plan environmental inventory, which states that some farms within the Town are comprised of many individual parcels.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, although there are 180 parcels of agricultural land, there are only 108 different owners listed.

<sup>1</sup> Town of Marcellus. Comprehensive Plan and Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement. November 2001. IV-1.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

**FIGURE 22. TYPES OF AGRICULTURAL LAND USES**

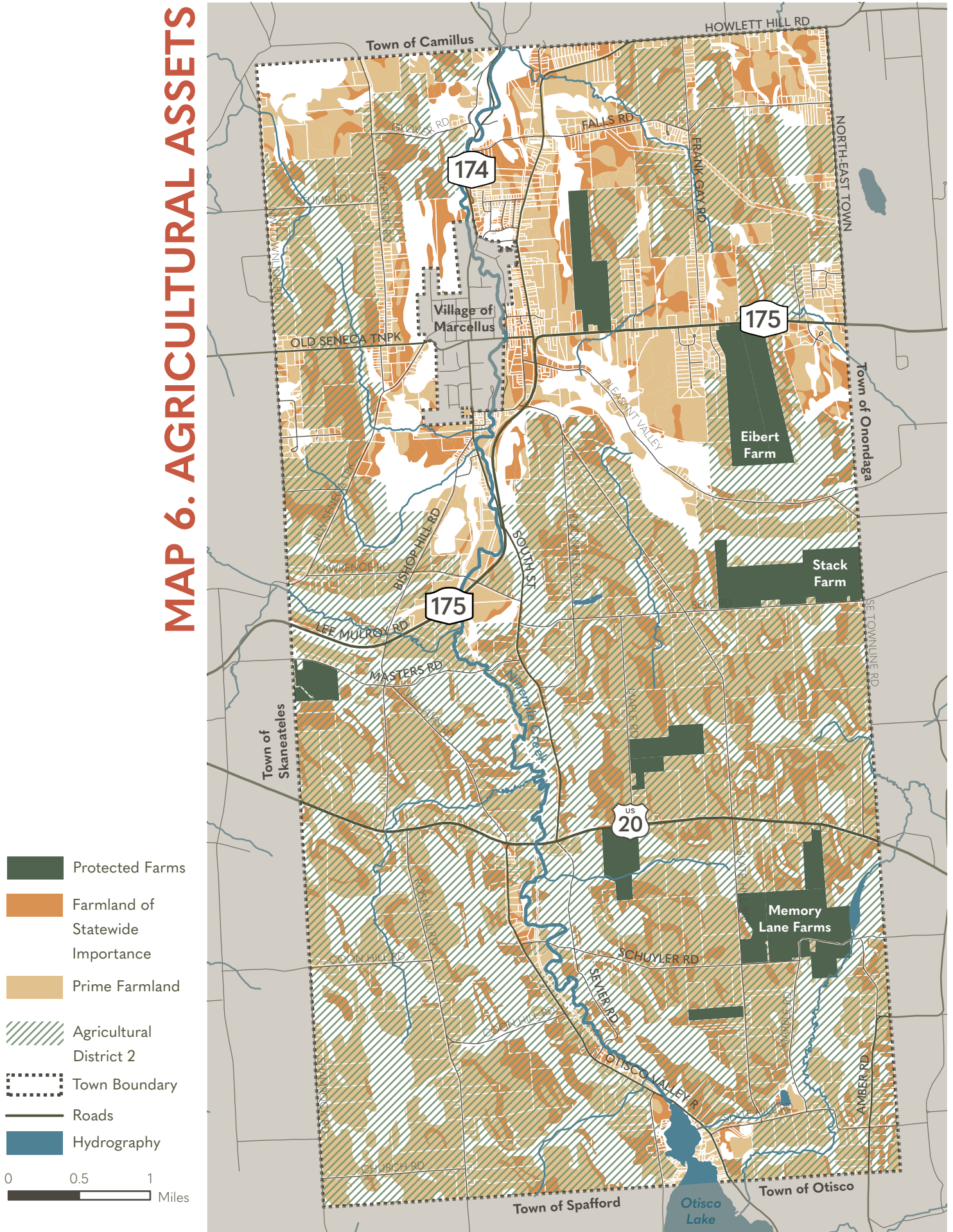


Note: Refer to Figure 23 for color coding of Figure 22.

**FIGURE 23. AGRICULTURAL LAND USE SUMMARY TABLE**

| Type                                | Acres   | Percent of Total Acreage |
|-------------------------------------|---------|--------------------------|
| Productive Agricultural Vacant Land | 4,880.9 | 50%                      |
| Dairy Products                      | 2,255.3 | 23%                      |
| Cattle / Calves / Hogs              | 68.9    | 1%                       |
| Sheep and Wool                      | 83.8    | 1%                       |
| Other Livestock                     | 248.9   | 3%                       |
| Field Crops                         | 2,170.0 | 22%                      |
| Nursery and Greenhouse              | 41.6    | 0%                       |

**MAP 6. AGRICULTURAL ASSETS**





The five largest agricultural land owners each own five or more parcels of agricultural land for a combined total of over 2,500 acres. Two of the larger agricultural operators include Maple Lane Farms, which produces for Cabot, and Elmer Richards & Sons Farm, which produces for Byrne Dairy.

## FARMLAND SOILS

Within the Town of Marcellus, 75% of all lands are classified as important farmland soils (Map 5). This number includes 49% classified as prime farmland, 19% classified as farmland of statewide significance and 7% classified as prime farmland, if drained. This soil classification is consistent with the significant role of farming in the Town of Marcellus.

## AGRICULTURAL PROTECTION IN ONONDAGA COUNTY

With nearly 70% of all lands in Onondaga County classified as important farmland soils, agriculture and agricultural preservation is a significant planning consideration in Onondaga County.<sup>3</sup> As such, the Onondaga County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan was developed in 2022. This plan is a major update from the County plan that was originally adopted in 1997. The plan serves as a decision-making tool and includes a report on the state of local agriculture and a framework for protecting and supporting the viability of agriculture within Onondaga County.

<sup>3</sup> Onondaga County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan. Draft, May 20, 2022. Page vi.

The 2022 plan also provides the following features for added utility:

- Municipal Farm-Friendly Toolbox
- Onondaga County Ag Mapper
- Venture Proposals

These resources and additional plan information can be found at the plan website: [agriculture.ongov.net](http://agriculture.ongov.net)

## ONONDAGA COUNTY FARMS AND FARMING

According to the 2022 Onondaga County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan, the data compiled reflects a stable local agricultural economy, yet changes are taking place related to modernization and evolution of agricultural practices as well as pressures of agriculture, urban development and competition for land.<sup>4</sup> The following highlights some of the findings from the plan to provide a Countywide context.

2017 United States Department of Agriculture data identifies 623 farming operations spread across Onondaga County, which produced \$178 million in annual sales. These numbers show a decrease in farm operations since 2002 when there were 725 farming operations. Still, the total acreage of farms increased during this period with more acres being farmed through fewer farming operations. This data reflects a plan finding that, while new small farms are emerging, mid-sized farms are in decline and being absorbed by larger operations or sold for urban development.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Onondaga County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan. Draft, May 20, 2022.

## AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT

Agricultural Districts were enacted in 1971 by State Legislature Article 25-AA of the Agriculture & Markets Law to protect and promote the availability of land for farming purposes. The law provides a locally initiated mechanism for the protection and enhancement of farm lands. Several benefits and protections are provided for agricultural landowners through the law. Particularly relevant to the development of the Comprehensive Plan, Agricultural District requirements direct local governments to realize the intent of the Agricultural Districts Law and to avoid unreasonable restrictions in the regulation of farm operations when exercising their powers to enact and administer comprehensive plans, local laws, ordinances, rules and/or regulations.<sup>5</sup>

Within the Town of Marcellus, approximately 77% of the total land area is part of Onondaga County's Agricultural District 2. This district also includes areas within the Towns of Skaneateles and Spafford, for a total of 47,733 acres according to the 2020 Eight Year Review for NYS Agricultural District 2.

<sup>5</sup> New York State Agriculture and Markets. *Agricultural Districts Law: A Current Summary*. Page 1. <https://agriculture.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/01/summary-agrdistrict-law.pdf>

## PROTECTED FARMS

Within Onondaga County, since 1998 almost 12,000 acres of important farmland have been protected from development in Onondaga County through the use of conservation easements.<sup>6</sup> Also known as "Purchase (or Donation) of Development Rights," conservation easements are voluntary legal agreements that restrict the development of land, either as a donation or through monetary compensation, with the goal of preserving land suited for farming.<sup>7</sup> In the Town of Marcellus, this program has been utilized to preserve approximately 1,000 acres of farmland in Marcellus. Specific farm properties protected include:

- Eibert Farm located along West Seneca Turnpike
- Stack Family Farm located along Seal Road
- Memory Lane Farms located along Smith Hollow Road

Additional protected farmland is dispersed across the Town for a total of 12 parcels identified as protected in the 2022 Onondaga County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan.

<sup>6</sup> Onondaga County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan. Draft, May 20, 2022. Page iii.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, Page 77.

## AGRITOURISM & VALUE-ADDED PRODUCTS

In addition to typical farming operations, Marcellus has several farm businesses that connect residents and visitors to local farm goods while supporting local farmers. These include agritourism opportunities that can provide additional revenue sources for farmers and value added products that can enable farmers to increase profit margins by changing the physical state, form or production of the product in a manner that enhances its value.<sup>8</sup>

Examples of farm businesses with agritourism and value-added products in Marcellus include:

- Oliver's Produce: A family-run farm and farmstand located at 4845 Frank Gay Road that sells produce as well as other local and value-added products such as pies, fruit breads, canned goods, and kettle corn.<sup>9</sup>
- Tyson Farm & Feed: A farm supply and feed store located at 3722 Bishop Hill Road that also sells Christmas trees and wreaths in the winter as well as goat's milk soap made in store.<sup>10</sup>
- Tim's Pumpkin Patch: A pumpkin and squash farm located at 2901 Rose Hill Road with a country store, bakery, gift shop, and farm activities for a seasonal agritourism experience.<sup>11</sup>

Each of these farm businesses share authentic stories of their farm on their respective websites, connecting the community to farming and farm products.

8 Onondaga County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan. Draft, May 20, 2022. Page 67.

9 [oliversproduce.com](http://oliversproduce.com)

10 [tysonfarmandfeed.com](http://tysonfarmandfeed.com)

11 [timpumpkinpatch.com](http://timpumpkinpatch.com)






**TYSON FARM & FEED**

**MAP 7. ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES**






**Wetlands**

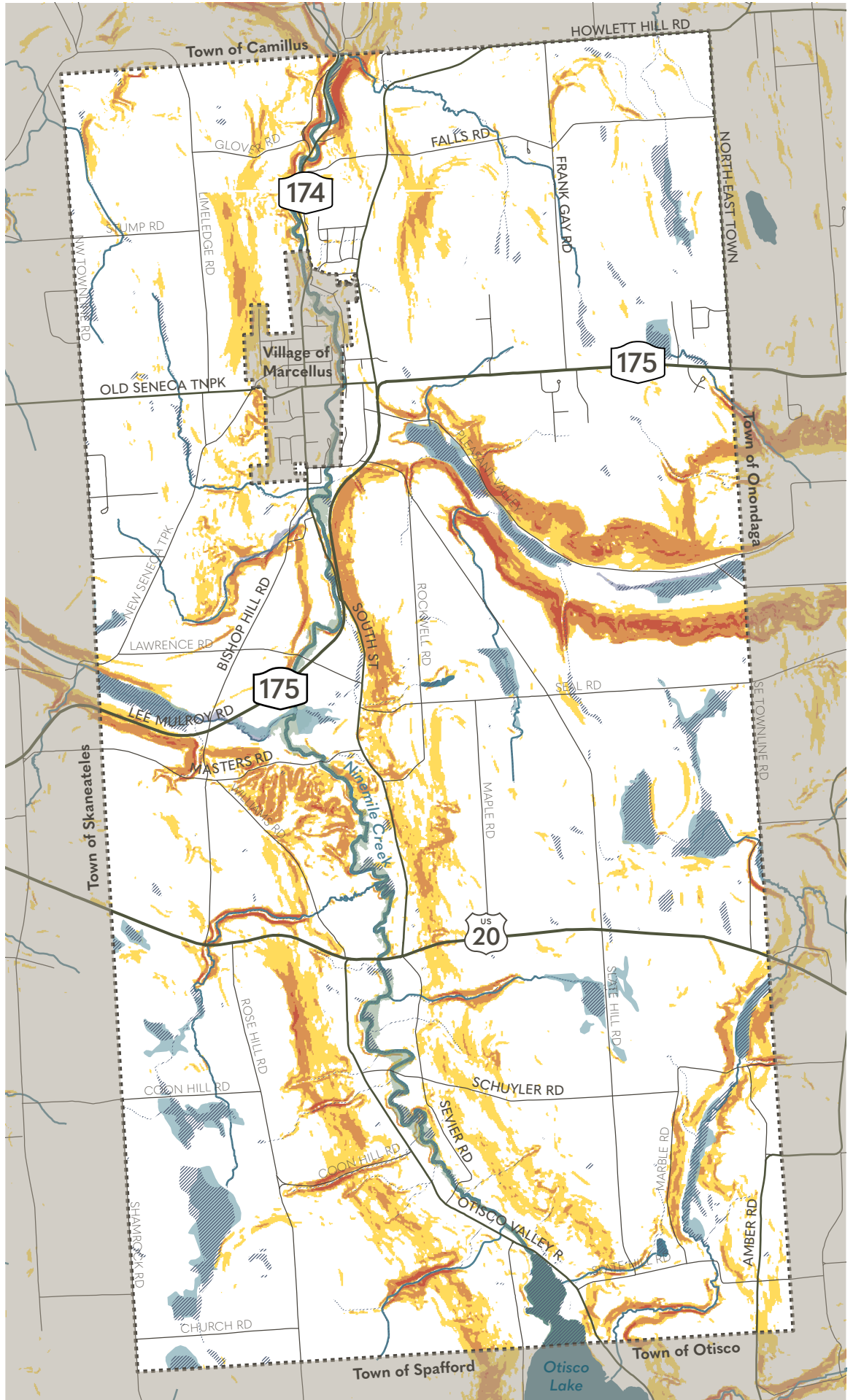
-  DEC Wetlands
-  NWI Wetlands

**Steep Slopes**

-  15% - 24.9%
-  25% - 49.9%
-  50% +

**100 Year Flood Zones**

-  A
-  AE
-  Town Boundary
-  Hydrography
-  Roads



# ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

## WETLANDS

Approximately 1,900 acres in the Town are state-regulated wetlands. The DEC regulates any wetland over 12.4 acres in size across the State, as well as a 100 foot buffer surrounding each wetland for further protection. Regulated activities in DEC wetlands include, but are not limited to construction of buildings, roadways, etc.; placement of fill, excavation or grading; modification or expansion of existing structures; and application of pesticides. All regulated activities require a permit from DEC, which may include conditions and / or mitigation efforts for any adverse impacts. Additionally, over 2,880 acres in the Town are also identified within the National Wetlands Inventory maintained by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The identified wetlands areas are dispersed throughout the Town, mainly along stream corridors (Map 6). These areas are mostly located within existing agricultural or vacant land uses, and will continue to limit development in these portions of Marcellus.

## STEEP SLOPES

Marcellus is characterized by rolling hills and valleys. This translate into several areas the Town that have steep slopes and are susceptible to erosion. Generally speaking, any slope over 15% is considered prohibitive of development due to erosion concerns. Map 6 on the previous page depicts the areas of Town which exceed 15% slope. A significant portion of the Town on either side of Nine Mile Creek has steep slopes, as well as both sides of Pleasant Valley Road and Disappearing Lake. These slopes help to maintain some of Marcellus' rural, low-

density development character, but also prevent more housing development in many areas.

## FLOOD ZONES

Approximately 490 acres within Marcellus are identified as having a one percent chance of flooding annually, commonly known as 100-year floodzones. The flood zones designated as "AE" have base flood elevation available, or the elevation to which a flood is anticipated to rise during a 100-year flood. "A" Flood zones are also 100-year floodzones, but do not have calculated base flood elevations.

The areas within Town that are designated as "A" or "AE" include the Nine Mile Creek corridor and one of its tributaries along Lee-Mulroy Road. The area surrounding Disappearing Lake along Pleasant Valley Road is also identified as a flood zone.

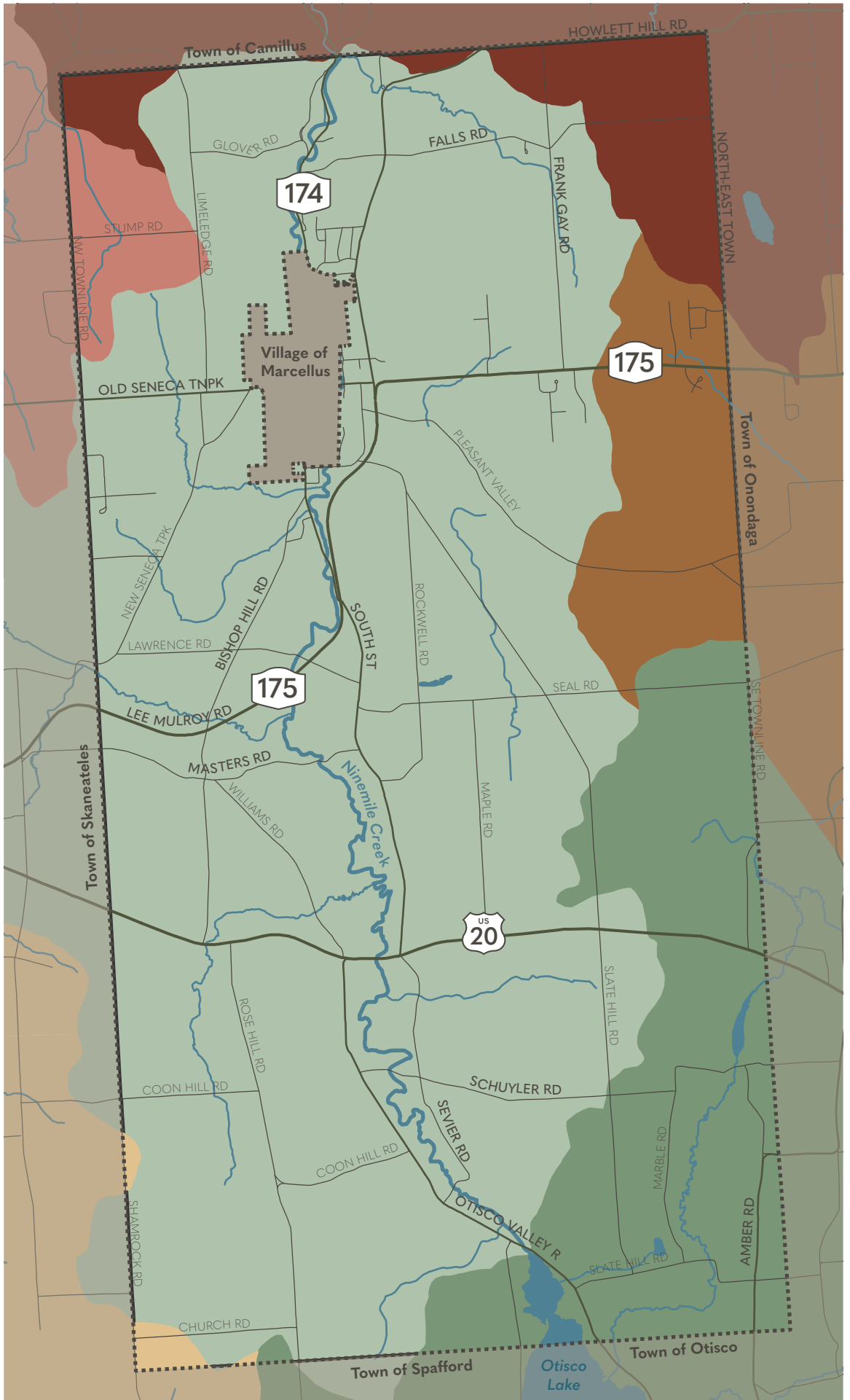
Given the risks of property damage within the special flood hazard areas as identified on Map 6, development should continue to be regulated carefully through Chapter 112: Flood Damage Prevention of the Town Code.

**Disappearing Lake is a unique geological feature of the Town, which is fed by groundwater flows underneath the surface that feed into Nine Mile Creek. The lake appears during the spring months, and typically subsides during the summer.**

**MAP 8. DRAINAGE BASINS**

**HUC 12  
Watershed  
Boundaries**

-  Outlet Skaneateles Lake
-  Tyler Hollow - Nine Mile Creek
-  Geddes Brook - Nine Mile Creek
-  Carpenters Brook
-  West Branch Onondaga Creek
-  Otisco Lake
-  Town Boundary
-  Hydrography
-  Roads



## DRAINAGE BASINS

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) maps the watersheds of the United States using a hierarchical system of hydrologic units codes (HUC). The system uses the number of digits to indicate the level of hierarchy. As the watersheds become more detailed and localized, the number of digits increase. For instance, HUC 4 represents the subregion level, HUC 8 represents the sub-basin level, and HUC 12 is a more local sub-watershed level that identifies tributary systems.

The majority of the Town falls within the Onondaga Lake - Onondaga Creek Watershed at the HUC 10 level, but a small portion in the northwest corner is within the Lower Seneca River Watershed, and an even smaller portion in the southwest corner of the Town is within the Skaneateles Lake Watershed. Map 7 depicts the various sub-watershed drainage basins (HUC 12) within the Town, of which there are six. As shown, the majority of the Town falls within the Tyler Hollow-Nine Mile Creek drainage basin.

## WATER QUALITY

The DEC maintains a Waterbody Inventory/ Priority Waterbodies List, which inventories the State's surface water quality. Within Marcellus, two waterbodies have been assessed: upper Nine Mile Creek and its tributaries, as well as Otisco Lake. Nine Mile Creek was classified as C(T), meaning it is most suitable for fishing, particularly for trout. Otisco Lake is classified as AA, meaning its best usage is for drinking water, swimming and other recreation, and fishing<sup>1</sup>. Onondaga County developed an Otisco Lake Watershed Management Plan in 2014, which provides specific recommendations to protect the water quality and ecology of Otisco Lake. The Town of Marcellus recently adopted the Otisco Lake Watershed Management Plan.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/73966.html>

**“A watershed is defined as the geographic area within the boundary of a drainage divide.**

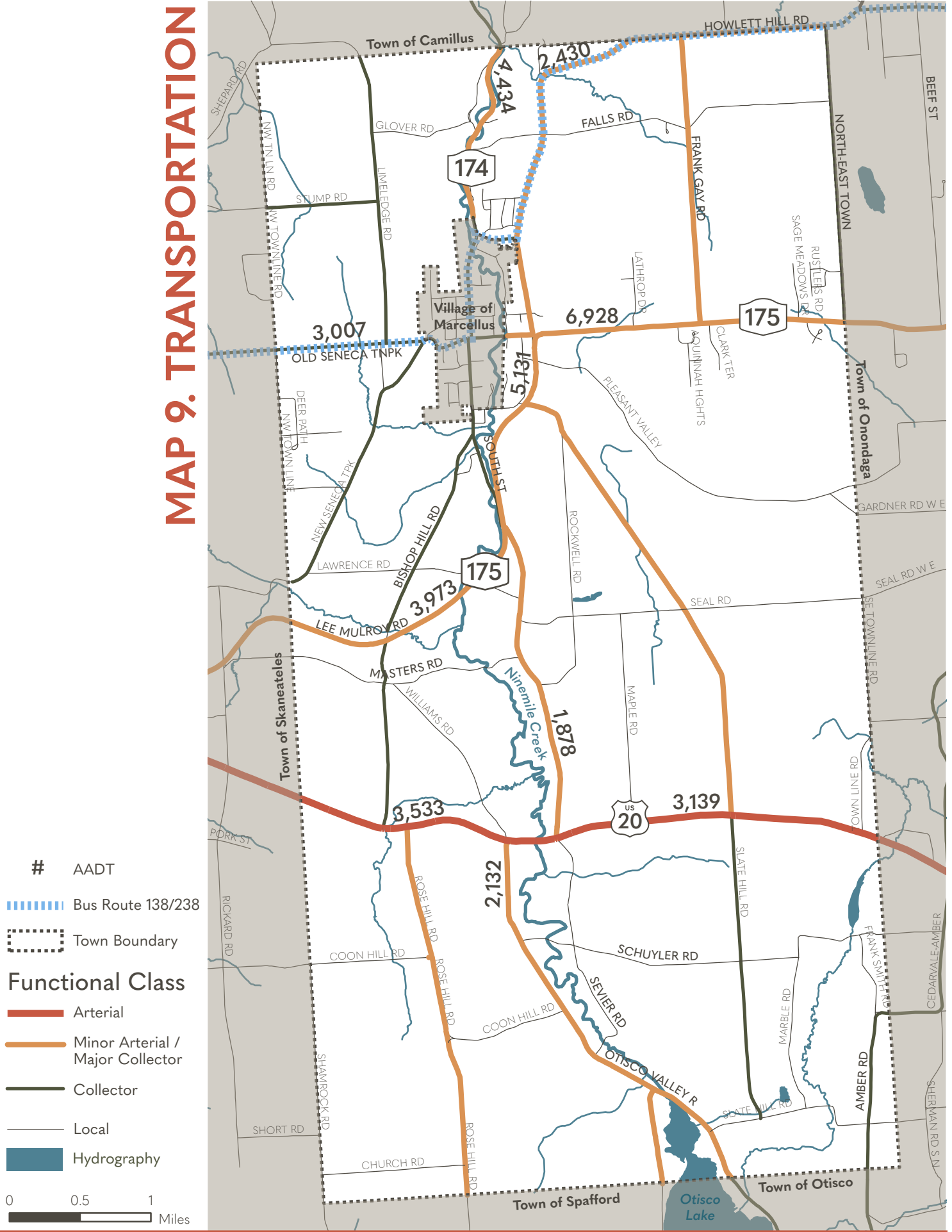
**Watershed boundaries follow the highest ridgeline around the stream drainage area; the bottom of the watershed or the pour point is the lowest point of the land area where water flows out of the watershed.**

**Hydrologic unit boundaries do not always surround a complete watershed but may delineate truncated portions of a larger watershed—for example, the mid-stem of a larger stream or river along with the tributaries in that area.**

**Hydrologic units are generally synonymous with watersheds when their boundaries include all the source area contributing surface water to a single defined outlet point.”**

**- EPA HUC Fact Sheet**

# MAP 9. TRANSPORTATION





# TRANSPORTATION

## ROADWAY NETWORK

The transportation network in Marcellus is defined by rural scenic roadways. The most significant roadway in the Town is US Route 20, an east-west US highway that runs from Boston, MA, to Newport, OR. As a principal arterial roadway, US 20 has the highest functional class of all roadways within the Town. However, it does not have the highest average annual daily traffic (AADT) compared to other roadways; seeing approximately 3,533 vehicles per day in the western portion of the Town, and 3,139 vehicle per day along the eastern segment.

The roadway with the highest AADT is NYS Route 175, or the West Seneca Turnpike. NYS Route 175 is a state highway that begins in the Village of Skaneateles and terminates at a junction with US 11 in Syracuse, as shown on Map 8. This stretch of roadway from its intersection with Dublin Road to the townline sees almost 7,000 vehicles per day. As Route 175 heads southwest and follows Lee-Mulroy Road, the AADT reduces to 5,131, and further reduces to 3,973 after the intersection with South Street.

Route 174, or North Street, north of the Village of Marcellus, also sees significant traffic volumes as compared to the rest of the Town at 4,434 vehicles. This state highway runs between the Town of Camillus and the Town of Spafford. Route 174 further south, or South Street, sees significantly less traffic than the segment to the north, at only 1,878 vehicles north of US 20.

AADT data was also available for Howlett Hill Road (2,430), Old Seneca Turnpike (3,007), and Route 174 south of US 20 (2,132). Overall, the Town sees relatively low traffic volumes compared to the region as a whole; contributing to the quiet, rural character of Marcellus.

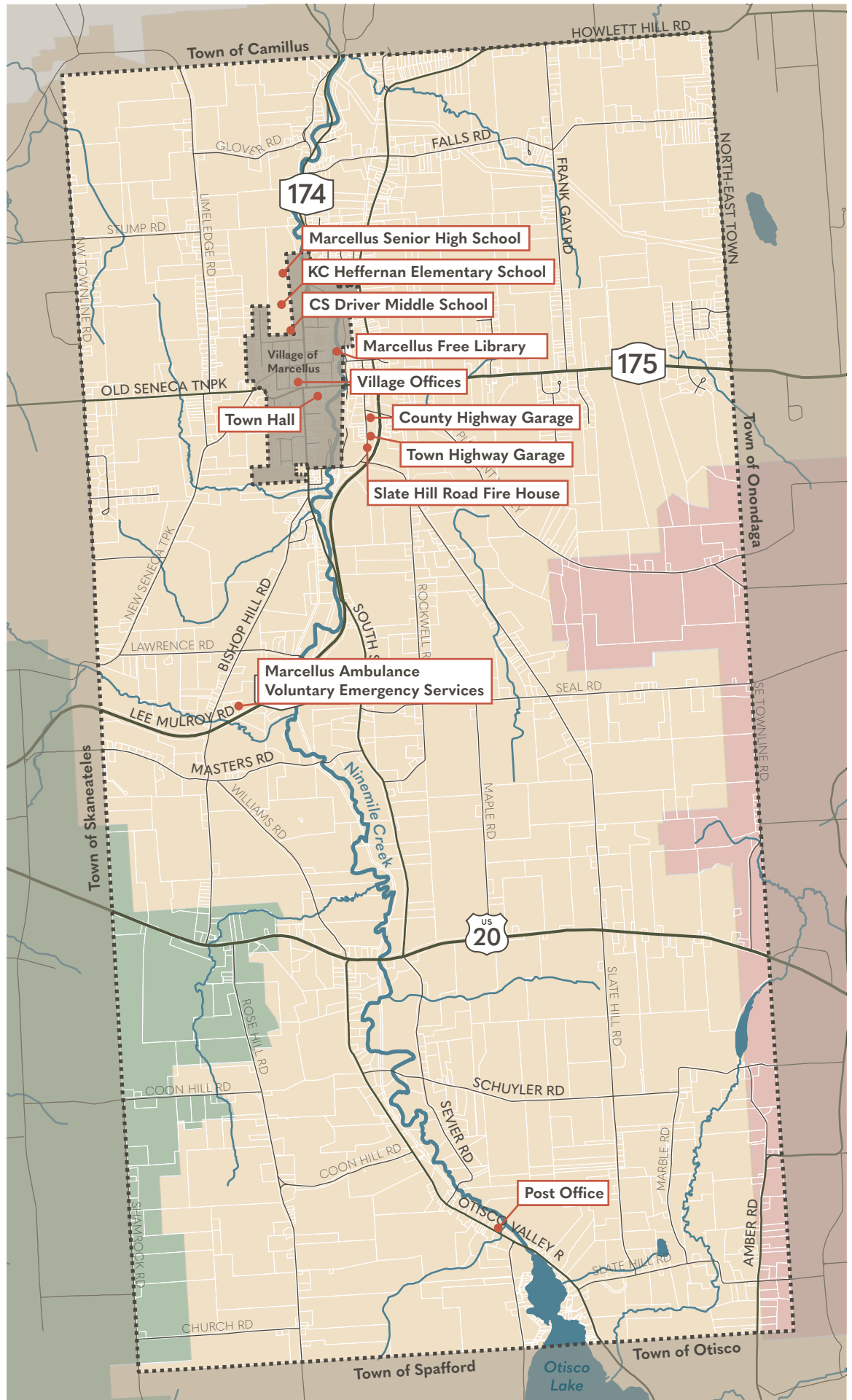
## PUBLIC TRANSIT

The Central New York Regional Transportation Authority (Centro) connects the Town of Marcellus to a regional public transportation network via the Aub38 bus route, which has a weekday and weekend route. Within the Town, the route travels along Old Seneca Turnpike, Main Street, North Street, Scotch Hill Road, and Howlett Hill Road, as shown on Map 8.

During the weekdays, the Aub38 bus route provides access from Auburn to Skaneateles, and stops at the intersection of North Street and Main Street in Marcellus. From there, Route 138 continues east, stopping in Taunton, and eventually terminating at the Transit Hub in the City of Syracuse.

Weekend service is provided by Aub38. The route travels along the same roadways, providing access to Auburn, Skaneateles, Marcellus, and Camillus. However, the route does not continue all the way to Syracuse during the weekends.

**MAP 10. COMMUNITY FACILITIES**



**School Districts**

- Onondaga CSD
- Marcellus CSD
- Skaneateles CSD
- Town Boundary
- Hydrography
- Roads



# COMMUNITY FACILITIES

## SCHOOLS

As shown on Map 9, the Marcellus Central School District has three schools that serve the Town's K-12 population: the K.C. Heffernan Elementary School, the C.S. Driver Middle School, and the Marcellus Senior High School. The schools are all located on the same campus along Learner's Landing, providing connectivity between the schools and also in close proximity to the Village center. Portions of the southwest area of the Town are served by the Skaneateles Central School District, and portions of the eastern edge of Town are served by the Onondaga Central School District.



**C.S. DRIVER MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Source: Marcellus Central School District



**RENDERING OF MARCELLUS TOWN HALL**

Source: QPX Design

## MUNICIPAL OFFICES

In 2022, Marcellus Town Hall was constructed at 22 East Main Street in the Village of Marcellus. This new building provides state-of-the-art facilities for Town operations. The Village Offices are nearby at 6 Slocombe Avenue off of West Main Street.

## EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Marcellus Ambulance Voluntary Emergency Services (MAVES) provides EMS services to the Town and surrounding area, and is located along Lee-Mulroy Road. The Slate Hill Fire House is home to the Marcellus Volunteer Fire Department, which provides service to both the Town and Village.



**MAVES STATION**

Source: Marcellus Ambulance Volunteer Emergency Services

## HIGHWAY GARAGES

The Town and the County both have highway garages along Lee-Mulroy Road (Route 174), adjacent to the Fire Hall.

## LIBRARY

The Marcellus Free Library is part of the Onondaga County Public Library System, and serves both the Town and the Village.



**MARCELLUS FREE LIBRARY**

Source: Friends of the Marcellus Free Library

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# CHAPTER 3: VISION, POLICY, & ACTION FRAMEWORK



# OVERVIEW

A successful comprehensive plan is developed and implemented on multiple levels, addressing the short- and long-term needs of a community while providing varying levels of detail. In an effort to accomplish this, the Vision & Policy Framework is comprised four key elements:

## VISION

A general statement that describes the aspiration of the Town. It is an end towards which all actions are aimed. The vision should not dramatically change over time but rather be consistent throughout the planning horizon. Ideally, the vision contained in this Plan should be useful for the 10-year planning horizon.

## POLICY

Similar to the vision statement in that it is a general concept of a future condition towards which actions are aimed. However, the scope of a policy is much more narrow. It should support the vision statement by addressing a specific topic area(s) or issue(s) facing the community. Policies should not dramatically change over time, but rather be consistent throughout the planning horizon.

## OBJECTIVE

A statement of a measurable activity to be accomplished in pursuit of a policy; it refers to some specific aspiration that is reasonably attainable by the Town and its partners. Think in terms of actions such as "increase," "develop," or "preserve." It should be noted that the Town might already be undertaking some of the objectives articulated in this Plan; including them helps to ensure that these efforts are continued moving forward until they have been achieved. The lifespan of an objective is usually 6 to 10 years.

## ACTION ITEM

A specific proposal to accomplish an objective; it can take the form of a plan, project, program, or Town Board action. The lifespan of an action can be immediate or vary from one to 10 years, depending on the item.



# COMMUNITY VISION

We in the Town of Marcellus are proud of our rural character and strong sense of community. We strive to celebrate our agricultural legacy while promoting smart development and enhancing quality of life for our residents. The key elements of our vision for the character in the Town of Marcellus include...



...preserving our **rural character** and agriculture while maintaining quality of life for residents;



...protecting our **natural resources** and environmental assets;



...diversifying our **residential living** options for residents of all ages, incomes, and backgrounds;



...promoting sustainable **economic growth** while maintaining our small-town feel; and



...enhancing and celebrating our **community resources** and facilities.

# RURAL CHARACTER

## POLICY



Open spaces and agricultural lands play a significant role in defining the character of the Town, and in providing scenic vistas, economic activity, and local food options. Therefore, the Town will continue to support the farming community to ensure the long-term sustainability of local agricultural operations. Furthermore, the Town will collaborate with local farmers to ensure that the impacts of agricultural practices do not detract from quality of life for all of Marcellus' residents and stakeholders. The Town will work closely with Onondaga County, the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, and other local entities to achieve this policy.

The Town, for the health, safety, and welfare of all residents, should include requirements surrounding the monitoring and control of the quantity, rate of flow, and quality of water runoff from all properties in the Town. This includes evaluating existing conditions and remediation actions where deemed necessary, within a designated period of time to facilitate necessary actions. Zoning and planning ordinances should be developed and adopted to address this ever increasing issue.

Since Marcellus is in large part a hill community, it is recognized that water runoff volume, velocity, and quality has a potentially large impact on the health, safety, and welfare of all residents. It is important that mitigation actions are studied, developed, and required. This should pertain to both existing properties as well as future development that may increase risks for downhill, or downstream properties or facilities.

## OBJECTIVES

- A.** Employ and support local and regional policies and regulations that protect prime soils and farmland.
- B.** Collaborate with large-scale agricultural operators to mitigate impacts of farming practices, such as increased surface water runoff.
- C.** Foster a community understanding of the social and economic significance of agricultural operations.
- D.** Target new residential development away from prime agricultural soils.

## ACTION ITEMS

The following implementation table details each action item to implement the rural character policy, including the identification of the action item priority level, potential planning partners and possible funding opportunities.



## Rural Character Implementation Table

| # | ACTION ITEM Description  | Priority | Planning Partners   | Funding Opportunities  |
|---|--|----------|---|--|
| 1 | <p><b>Work with the Onondaga County Soil &amp; Water Conservation District.</b> This partnership should help the Town encourage farmers to adopt the following practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Maintaining vegetative buffers between fields and streams, use of cover crops and no-till practices, water detention / retention ponds, and other techniques for the reduction of surface water runoff impacts and water quality impacts.</li> <li>» Address potential adverse impacts of manure storage for public health and quality of life for residents.</li> </ul>   | Short    | Local Farmers, TB, OCSWCD   | Town; OCSWCD; NYS AGM ANSACP, AEM, CRF programs; USDA  |
| 2 | <p><b>Develop an Agricultural Outreach Campaign.</b> The campaign should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Encourage the use of Onondaga County's Conservation Easement programs for Marcellus farms to preserve farmland and support farm operators financially.</li> <li>» Inform the public about the variety of contributions farms make to the Town, and what agricultural practices to expect in a farm community.</li> <li>» Collaborate with entities such as the Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) of Onondaga County to raise awareness of local farms and agricultural programming.</li> <li>» Increase coordination with the Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency (SOCPA) and Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB) to increase knowledge of and participation in County efforts and directives.</li> </ul> | Mid      | Local Farmers, NYS AGM, CCE of Onondaga County, AFPB, SOCPA, Onondaga County Agricultural Council, Local Land Trusts (e.g., New York Agricultural Land Trust, Finger Lakes Land Trust), Onondaga County Farm Bureau | NYS Grown & Certified Infrastructure, Technology, Research and Development Grant Program, Land Trust Grant Program (awards to land trusts) |
| 3 | <p><b>Develop a Town-wide Open Space and Recreation Plan.*</b> The plan should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Identify strategies for the preservation of open space, development of hiking, biking, and water trail systems, and enhancement of recreation facilities and programs within the Town.</li> </ul> <p><i>* Action item also included within the natural resources policy implementation table and the community resources policy implementation table.</i></p>   | Mid      | TB, PB, Parks & Rec. Dept., Village, County, Baltimore Woods, Local Recreation Facilities / Providers, Nine Mile Creek Conservation Council   | Town, SOCPA  |
| 4 | <p><b>Update the Local Development Regulations and Review Process.*</b> The regulations and review process should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Incorporate ways to address water runoff for the health, safety, and welfare of the Town and its residents.</li> </ul> <p><i>* Action item also included within the natural resources policy implementation table.</i></p>   | Short    | TB, PB, ZBA, Town, CPC  | Town, SOCPA, OPDCI Smart Growth Community Planning and Zoning Grant  |

# NATURAL RESOURCES

## POLICY



Marcellus has a wealth of environmental assets, and it is the policy of the Town to protect these resources to ensure our natural systems are sustained and enjoyed by residents for generations to come. Maintaining the health of floodplains, wetlands, woodlands, wildlife, creeks and tributaries, as well as parklands is essential to both community resiliency and quality of life in the Town of Marcellus. Sound development practices and proper land use regulations will help to achieve this policy and prevent degradation of these assets. In particular, Nine Mile Creek will be given special consideration given its ecological and culture significance in the community.

## OBJECTIVES

- A. Protect surface and subsurface water bodies as natural stormwater management systems and from water quality degradation.
- B. Minimize the impacts of mining on environmentally sensitive areas.
- C. Identify and preserve scenic vistas and critical environmental areas.
- D. Coordinate with local, state, and federal environmental agencies and departments.
- E. Promote the use of our environmental assets for recreational and cultural purposes.

## ACTION ITEMS

The following implementation table details each action item to implement the natural resources policy, including the identification of the action item priority level, potential planning partners and possible funding opportunities.

**Natural Resources Implementation Table**

| # | ACTION ITEM Description   | Priority | Planning Partners               | Funding Opportunities   |
|---|---|----------|---------------------------------|---|
| 1 | <p><b>Expand the Critical Environmental Areas (CEA) Overlay Zone in the Town of Marcellus Zoning Law.</b> The zone should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Include steep slopes to reduce impacts of erosion.</li> </ul> | Short    | TB, PB, ZBA, Town Attorney, CPC | Town, SOCPA, OPDCI Smart Growth Community Planning and Zoning Grant |
| 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Work with Onondaga County, NYSDOT, and other roadway owners to utilize vegetated swales along local roadway to convey stormwater and reduce runoff and erosion.</li> </ul>                   | Mid      | Town                            | Town, NYSDOT, Onondaga County Dept. of Transportation               |

Natural Resources Implementation Table (Continued)

| # | ACTION ITEM Description  | Priority | Planning Partners   | Funding Opportunities   |
|---|--|----------|---|---|
| 3 | <p><b>Update the Local Development Regulations and Review Process.</b> The regulations and review process should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Incorporate ways to address water runoff for the health, safety, and welfare of the Town and its residents.</li> <li>» Address stormwater runoff and retention to maximize protection of surface and groundwater resources.</li> <li>» Require that mature woodlands and other unique or valuable natural features be preserved in developments as part of site plan review process.</li> <li>» Continue to prohibit new and expanded mining operations in Marcellus, consistent with the direction from the Town's 2001 Comprehensive Plan.</li> </ul> | Short    | TB, PB, ZBA, Town Attorney, CPC   | Town, SOCPA, OPDCI Smart Growth Community Planning and Zoning Grant |
| 4 | <p><b>Develop an Incentive Package for Development.</b> The package should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Encourage the application of natural stormwater management practices, such as green infrastructure, with new development proposals.</li> </ul>  | Mid      | TB, PB, ZBA, Town Attorney, CPC, Local Developers, Onondaga County OED, Onondaga County OE            | Town, SOCPA, OPDCI Smart Growth Community Planning and Zoning Grant |
| 5 | <p><b>Develop a Water Quality Outreach Campaign.</b> The campaign should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Educate the public of the potential impacts to well water from faulty septic systems and underground fuel tanks.</li> </ul>   | Mid      | TB, CPC, OCWA, OLPA, Onondaga County OE, CCE of Onondaga, FLRWA, Local Citizens                       | Town  |
| 6 | <p><b>Develop a Town-wide Open Space and Recreation Plan.*</b> The plan should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Consider Town acquisition of environmentally sensitive areas.</li> </ul> <p><i>* Action item also included within the rural character policy implementation table and the community resources policy implementation table.</i></p>  | Mid      | TB, PB, Parks & Rec. Dept., Village, County, Baltimore Woods, Local Recreation Facilities / Providers | Town, SOCPA   |

# RESIDENTIAL LIVING



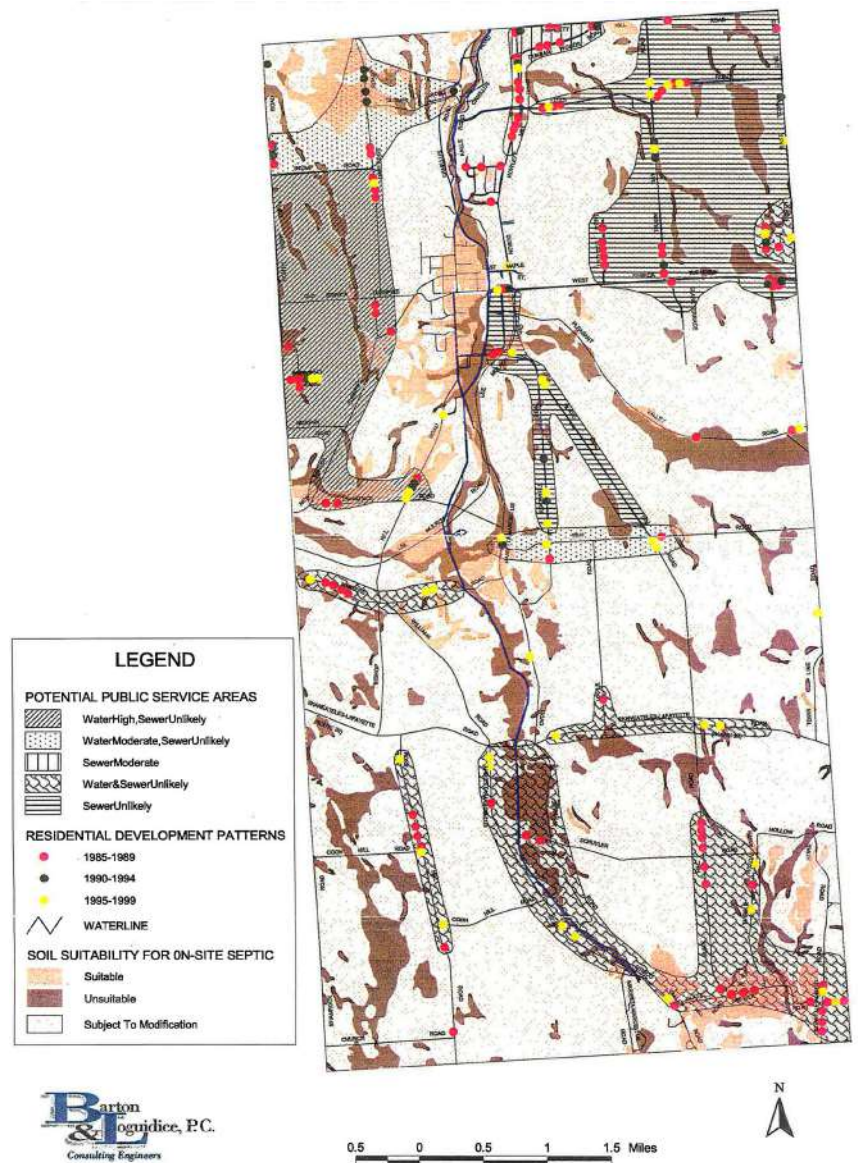
Marcellus is attractive to many families and individuals based on the quality of life in the Town. To maintain the Town's residential appeal and continue to attract new residents to Marcellus, it is the policy of the Town to facilitate the creation of diverse residential living options that accommodate shifting demographics and housing preferences. The Town will continue to preserve the quality and character of existing neighborhoods while developing new neighborhoods that reflect a more traditional development pattern. The Town will strive to locate new residential development in a manner that maintains high quality farmland and preserves the existing rural character.

## OBJECTIVES

- A. Determine and allocate the best areas within the Town to expand residential development.
- B. Diversify the Town's housing options in order to retain existing residents, particularly seniors who desire to age in place, while attracting new residents and younger generations.
- C. Ensure that access to new residential development is provided through a series of connected streets and limit the use of cul-de-sacs.
- D. Preserve existing housing values.
- E. Improve the appearance and aesthetic appeal of the Town's housing stock.

The continued residential development of Marcellus is significantly constrained by the Town's steep slopes and soil limitations for on-site sanitary systems.

The Town's 2001 Plan conducted a needs assessment of where potential public services may be located (shown at right), which will continue to guide future development patterns.



## Residential Living Implementation Table

| # | ACTION ITEM Description  | Priority | Planning Partners                                       | Funding Opportunities   |
|---|--|----------|---|---|
| 1 | <p><b>Review and Revise the Town of Marcellus Zoning Law.*</b> The zoning should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Promote the development of senior living options within walking distance to the Village of Marcellus.</li> <li>» Review and revise the zoning law to support the development of smaller footprint homes, such as patio homes.</li> <li>» Promote residential development in areas where soil suitability is better for on-site septic systems.</li> <li>» Bolster the Town’s cluster development provisions and consider conservation subdivision design.</li> <li>» Review lot sizes and bulk and dimensions standards to ensure they promote the Town’s rural character and reduce residential sprawl.</li> </ul> <p><i>* Action item related to zoning also included within the natural resources policy implementation table and the economic growth policy implementation table.</i></p> | Short    | TB, PB, ZBA, Town Attorney, CPC                         | Town, SOCPA, OPDCI Smart Growth Community Planning and Zoning Grant |
| 2 | <p><b>Conduct a Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study for the Development of Various Senior Housing Options.</b> The assessment should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Focus on senior living options within walking distance to the Village of Marcellus and serve as the first step in promoting this type of development.</li> </ul>   | Long     | TB, Village, CPC, Local Developers, Onondaga County OED | Town, Onondaga County Community Development Block Grant             |
| 3 | <p><b>Conduct a feasibility study for the expansion of the wastewater treatment facility.</b> During the study, the Town should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Continue to work with the Village to explore ways to share and/or expand the capacity of the Village’s waste water treatment facility to accommodate future development around the periphery of the Village.</li> </ul>  | Long     | TB, Village, Onondaga County WEP                        | Wastewater Infrastructure Engineering Planning Grant Program        |



UNDEVELOPED



CONVENTIONAL SUBDIVISION



CONSERVATION SUBDIVISION

Conservation Subdivision Design is aimed at preserving rural character by encouraging localized clusters of residential development on smaller lots, while maintaining large areas of open space.

# ECONOMIC GROWTH

## POLICY



Commercial development in Marcellus is currently limited, and the Town relies on the Village’s commercial activity to support daily life for residents. It is the policy of the Town to build upon the concentration of economic activity in the Village, and encourage any new commercial development in the vicinity of the Village borders. The Town will reward high-quality and sustainable development practices to ensure the long-term viability of non-residential development in Marcellus. Commercial development should primarily serve residents needs for goods and services, and should not detract from residential quality of life or the rural character of the Town.

## OBJECTIVES

- A. Attract and retain a variety of small, locally owned businesses to strengthen the local tax base, while maintaining the “small town” character of Marcellus and supporting longstanding business pillars of the community.
- B. Explore development at existing activity nodes, such as directly adjacent to the Village boundaries.
- C. Leverage existing public utilities and services to direct future growth patterns.
- D. Promote our scenic qualities and rural character to promote agritourism in the Town while protecting adjacent residential development from any adverse impacts.

## ACTION ITEMS

The following table details each action item to implement the economic growth policy, including the identification of the action item priority level, potential planning partners and possible funding opportunities.

**Economic Growth Action Implementation Table**

| # | ACTION ITEM Description  | Priority | Planning Partners               | Funding Opportunities   |
|---|--|----------|---------------------------------|---|
| 1 | <p><b>Review and Revise the Town of Marcellus Zoning Law.</b> The zoning should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Ensure commercial uses near residential areas are compatible and do not detract from the existing neighborhood character.</li> <li>» Ensure any new agritourism operations do not detract from residential quality of life due to traffic, safety, noise, runoff, or other adverse impacts.</li> <li>» Codify the 1999 Design Guidelines.</li> </ul> | Short    | TB, PB, ZBA, Town Attorney, CPC | Town, SOCPA, OPDCI Smart Growth Community Planning and Zoning Grant |

Economic Growth Action Implementation Table (Continued)

| # | ACTION ITEM Description  | Priority | Planning Partners   | Funding Opportunities                        |
|---|--|----------|---|--|
| 2 | <p><b>Establish a Business Advisory Committee (BAC).</b> The Committee should focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Facilitating the development of a Town marketing package.</li> <li>» Attracting new commercial development that supports daily life for residents.</li> <li>» Incentivizing area farmers to develop an agritourism industry, while protecting the Town's rural character, by establishing new and partnering with existing training, promotion and support for this local emerging industry.</li> <li>» Working with local partners such as the Onondaga Community College Small Business Development Center and the Onondaga County Office of Economic Development to attract new businesses and provide resources to prospective and existing business owners.</li> </ul> | Mid      | TB, CPC, Onondaga Community College Small Business Development Center, Onondaga County OED, NYS AGM, CCE of Onondaga County, Village, Marcellus Chamber of Commerce | Town   |
| 3 | <p><b>Develop a Town marketing package.</b> The package should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Identify specific ways to market the Town's assets to attract desired small business that are compatible with the Town's limited infrastructure.</li> <li>» Coordinate with the efforts of the Town's Business Advisory Committee (BAC)</li> </ul>  | Mid      | TB, CPC, Onondaga Community College Small Business Development Center, Onondaga County OED, BAC, Marcellus Chamber of Commerce                                      | Market New York, Town                        |
| 4 | <p><b>Support the establishment of a Marcellus Farmers Market in Marcellus Park.</b></p>   | Long     | Town, Village, Marcellus Chamber of Commerce, Local Farmers   | Town, USDA Local Agriculture Market Program, |

# COMMUNITY RESOURCES

## POLICY



The Town's community resources are intended to provide cost effective and high quality services to residents and business owners. Such resources include emergency services, a highway department, local schools, and public water and sewer in certain locations. It also includes services that contribute to well-being and enjoyment in Marcellus, such as the library and parks and recreation. As the population characteristics change both nationally and locally, it is imperative that the community resources continue to meet the needs of Town residents and stakeholders. Furthermore, the Town is committed to strengthening local partnerships to support Town operations.

## OBJECTIVES

- A. Create recreational trail systems and connect to existing trails systems, where possible.
- B. Increase pedestrian and bicyclist mobility and connectivity in residential centers and adjacent to the Village of Marcellus.
- C. Continue to evaluate the potential impacts and opportunities of the provision of public water and sewer systems in denser development areas of the Town.
- D. Provide access to recreational and educational programming and activities to meet the needs of our residents, regardless of age.
- E. Maintain the adequacy of community services, such as fire, police, emergency service responders, etc.

## ACTION ITEMS

The following implementation table details each action item to implement the community resources policy, including the identification of the action item priority level, potential planning partners and possible funding opportunities.

**Community Resources Implementation Table**

| # | ACTION ITEM Description  | Priority | Planning Partners                                    | Funding Opportunities |
|---|--|----------|--|-----------------------|
| 1 | <p><b>Develop and adopt a Complete Streets policy.</b><br/>The policy should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Maximize shoulder widths on roads for walking and biking.</li> <li>» Install sidewalks to and from key destinations.</li> </ul> | Mid      | TB, PB,<br>ZBA, Town<br>Attorney,<br>CPC, NYS<br>DOT | Town                  |



Community Resources Implementation Table (Continued)

| # | ACTION ITEM Description  | Priority | Planning Partners   | Funding Opportunities                                 |
|---|--|----------|---|---|
| 2 | <p><b>Develop a Parks Master Plan for Marcellus Park.</b> The plan should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Identify ways to enhance recreational opportunities and programming.</li> </ul>  | Mid      | TB, PB, Parks & Rec. Dept., Village, County   | EPF, Town, SOCPA                                      |
| 3 | <p><b>Develop a Town-wide Open Space and Recreation Plan.*</b> The plan should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Maintain public facilities at consistently high levels and commit resources for street and sidewalk maintenance, street cleaning and general community appearance.</li> <li>» Maximize shoulder widths on roads for walking and biking.</li> <li>» Incorporate Rail-to-Trail feasibility along Nine Mile Creek.</li> <li>» Incorporate sidewalk network and trail connection to Baltimore Woods Nature Center.</li> </ul> <p><i>* Action item also included within the rural character policy implementation table and the natural resources policy implementation table.</i></p> | Mid      | TB, PB, Parks & Rec. Dept., Village, County, Baltimore Woods, Local Recreation Facilities / Providers, Nine Mile Creek Conservation Council | Town, SOCPA   |
| 4 | <p><b>Establish a community outreach program.</b> The program should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Maintain a Town-wide newsletter.</li> <li>» Plan events and communication strategies that build resident relationships.</li> </ul>  | Mid      | TB, CPC, Town's Website Design Provider, Parks & Rec. Dept.   | Town  |
| 5 | <p><b>Develop a Rail-to-Trail Feasibility Study along Nine Mile Creek.</b> During the study, the Town should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Work with the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council to investigate the development of a Rail-to-Trail between Camillus and Marcellus along Nine Mile Creek, and potentially to Otisco Lake.</li> </ul>   | Long     | TB, CPC, Parks & Rec. Dept., SMTC, Camillus, , Nine Mile Creek Conservation Council   | RTP, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy Train Grants Program |
| 6 | <p><b>Develop community events or festivals surrounding and celebrating Nine Mile Creek.</b></p>   | Long     | TB, CPC, Parks & Rec. Dept., Local Residents, Nine Mile Creek Conservation Council  | Market New York, Town                                 |

## ACTION IMPLEMENTATION TABLE ABBREVIATIONS

The following list details the abbreviations used in each of the action implementation tables:

**AEM:** Agricultural Environmental Management Program

**AFPB:** Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board

**ANSACP:** Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement & Control Program

**BAC:** Business Advisory Committee

**Baltimore Woods:** Baltimore Woods Nature Center

**CCE of Onondaga County:** Cornell Cooperative Extension of Onondaga County

**County:** Onondaga County

**CPC:** Comprehensive Plan Committee

**CRF:** Climate Resilient Farming Program

**EPF:** Environmental Protection Fund

**FLRWA:** Finger Lakes Regional Watershed Alliance

**NYS AGM:** New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets

**NYS DOT:** New York State Department of Transportation

**OCSWCD:** Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation District

**OCWA:** Onondaga County Water Authority

**OLPA:** Otisco Lake Preservation Association

**Onondaga County OE:** Onondaga County Office of the Environment

**Onondaga County OED:** Onondaga County Office of Economic Development

**Onondaga County WEP:** Onondaga County Department of Water Environment Protection

**OPDCI:** Office of Planning Development, and Community Infrastructure

**Parks & Rec. Dept.:** Town of Marcellus Parks and Recreation Department

**PB:** Planning Board

**RTP:** Recreation Trails Program

**SMTC:** Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council

**SOCPA:** Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency

**TB:** Town Board

**Town:** Town of Marcellus

**Village:** Village of Marcellus

**ZBA:** Zoning Board of Appeals

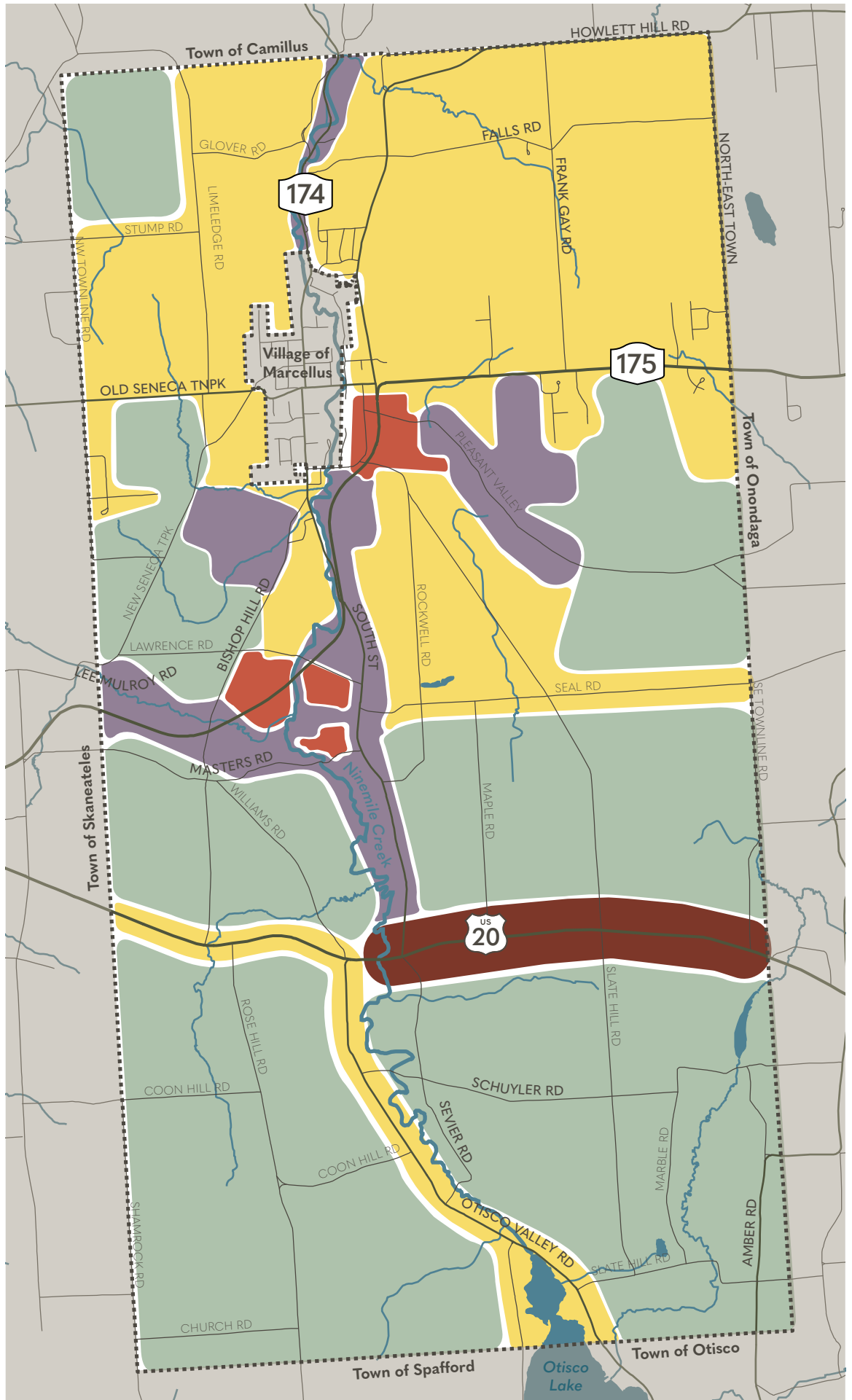
# CHAPTER 3: FUTURE LAND USE STRATEGY



# MAP 11. FUTURE LAND USE

## Future Land Use

- Agriculture
- Residential
- Local Commercial
- Corridor Commercial
- Open Space & Recreation
- Town Boundary
- Hydrography
- Roads



# OVERVIEW

One of the most important roles that a Comprehensive Plan plays is informing future land use decisions for local governments. The Future Land Use Strategy of this Plan is intended to function as a tool for decision making for future investment in the Town. The purpose of the Future Land Use Map is to identify general categories of land use, and represent the community's preferences regarding the location and character of various types of development in the Town.

Marcellus' Future Land Use Plan identifies "character areas" – or land use categories – each with distinct land use patterns, scales, and characters of development. Since the character areas are established to guide future regulatory changes and capital improvements as appropriate over the next ten years, they do not conform to parcel lines or rights-of-way. The exact size and boundaries of the land use classifications may change over time, while remaining consistent with the overall intent of this Plan. When a prospective land use lies on the border of two different character areas, the Town should consider land use design elements to transition between the two areas.

Marcellus' desired future land use is generally consistent with the existing character seen in the Town today. In these areas, the Future Land Use Plan promotes preserving and strengthening that existing character. In other areas, where modest changes are recommended, the Future Land Use Plan acts as a guide for revising zoning regulations, informing public investment in infrastructure, and implementing complementary placemaking strategies. The character areas identified for the Town of Marcellus are shown in Map 10 on the previous page, and are briefly described below:

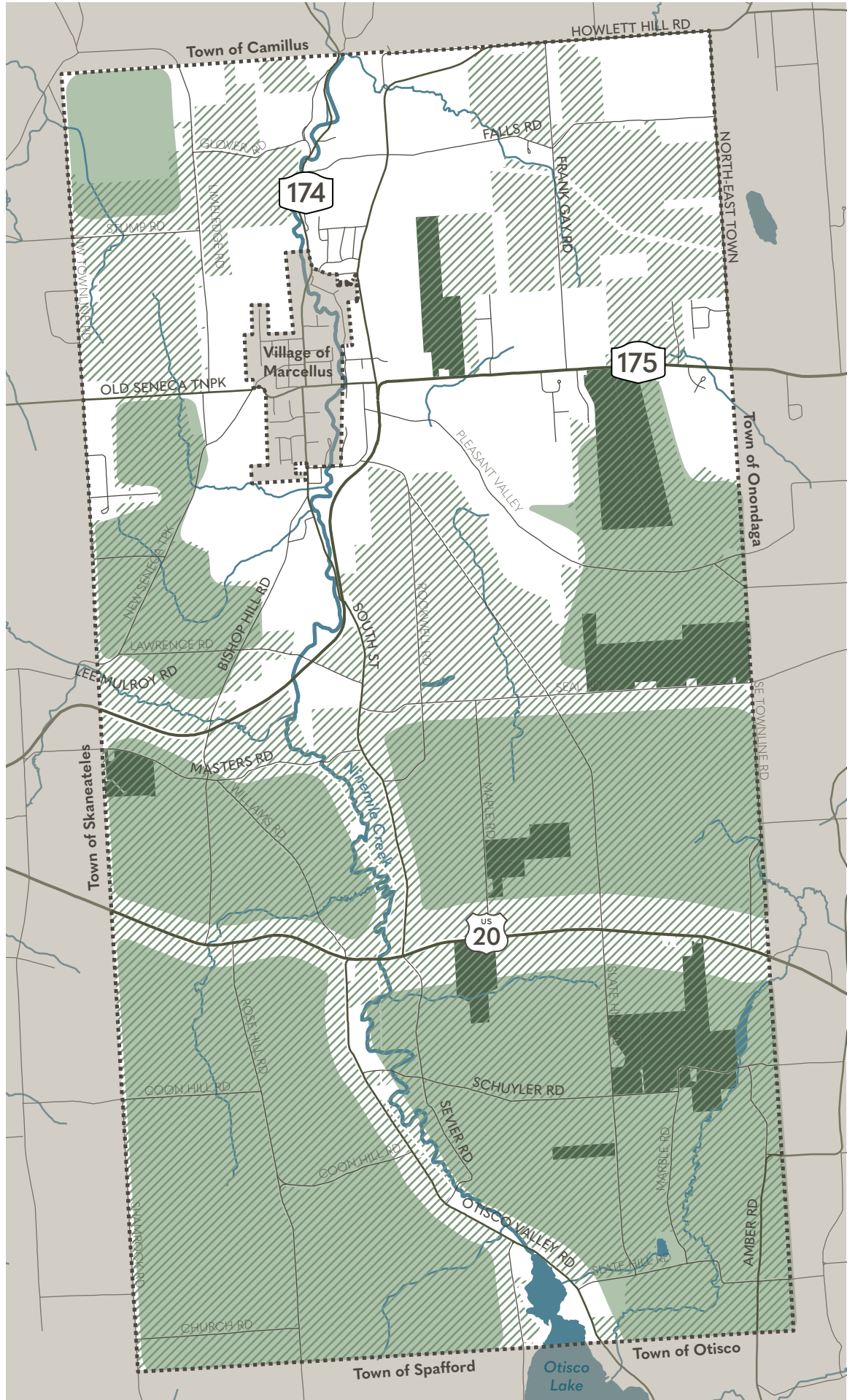
- **Agriculture:** Land to be used primarily for agricultural operations and farming related activities.
- **Residential:** Areas of existing or potential future residential neighborhoods; primarily consisting of single- and two-family homes.
- **Local Commercial:** A mix of non-residential uses that support daily living for Town residents.
- **Corridor Commercial:** Retail and service uses that cater to entertainment and services for the traveling public along US 20.
- **Open Space & Recreation:** Undeveloped land or open space areas to be preserved and protected from further development due to environmental constraints or natural resource conservation.

This Future Land Use Strategy does not preclude the Town's review boards from making decisions that do not align perfectly with the Future Land Use map, although such decisions should be grounded in well-considered rationale and careful consideration. The following pages summarize each character area in regards to existing and future land uses, and strategies that the Town may utilize to achieve the desired future community character.

# MAP 12. AGRICULTURE CHARACTER AREA

-  Onondaga County Agricultural District 2
-  Farm with Conservation Easement
- Future Land Use**
-  Agriculture
-  Town Boundary
-  Hydrography
-  Roads

0 0.5 1 Miles



# AGRICULTURE



The Agriculture character area covers the largest portion of the Town and, for the most part, encompasses properties that are actively farmed, or within Onondaga County Agricultural District #2. The County Agricultural Districts are a state sponsored program intended to help keep farmland in agricultural production. Agricultural Districts are reviewed by the County and re-certified by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets every eight years. Agricultural District #2 was review and re-certified in 2020. Active farming operations within the Agricultural District in Marcellus are anticipated to remain agricultural for the foreseeable future. Non-agricultural development within this character area, including residential, is expected to be limited.

The intent of the Agriculture character area is to conserve and support active farming operations; these operations not only uplift the Town economically, but also contribute to the Town's cherished rural character. Agriculture is the predominant land use in the Town, and is anticipated to remain a significant component of the Town's local economy. Several land owners have expressed their commitment to long-term farming within the community by participating in conservation easement programs, as shown on Map 11.

The Town is also intent on working closely with the farming community to ensure that any adverse impacts to community well-being are mitigated to the extent practicable, and to maintain the long term, healthy, safety, and well-being of the community. For instance, increased and uncontrolled agricultural run-off has increased flooding issues along local roadways and streams, and on adjacent properties, and has the potential to negatively impact water quality. The Town will work with local agricultural operators, Onondaga County, and the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets to determine practical solutions to reducing run-off, such as creating and enhancing vegetative buffers, conservation tillage, and planting cover crops. In addition, the Town will require the inclusion of detention or retention ponds to detain water, reduce exit velocity, and provide potential water infiltration on site.

The Town should continue to limit the number of non-agricultural uses established in this area and direct development away from areas with prime agricultural soils. Where non-agricultural uses are permitted, to maintain the Town's bucolic character, rural design principles should be considered. Design principles may include maintaining natural vegetation or farmland along the road frontages to preserve scenic views along the roadway and clustering buildings to preserve natural resources, prime farmland, and scenic views. Furthermore, to protect agricultural land from impacts of residential development, the Town may consider requiring site plan review for all non-agricultural uses, including single-family homes. It should be noted, however, that any such preservation based land use regulations must recognize and be balanced with the owner's right to develop their property.

# AGRICULTURAL RUNOFF: IMPACTS & SOLUTIONS



Source: Lynn Betts | USDA NRCS

Agricultural Runoff is the draining away of water from farmlands when there is more water than the land can absorb. This excess water flows from agricultural land to nearby creeks, and eventually into larger bodies of water. As runoff travels along a surface, it picks up pollutants such as pesticides, fertilizers, and pathogens. This has a significant impact on the overall water quality of the local watershed. As storm events increase in severity and frequency due to climate change, the impacts of this agricultural runoff will increase. Furthermore, increased runoff can also impact erosion of creeks and streams, and cause flooding impacts downstream.

There are a number of agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs) that farmers can utilize to help account for some of the environmental and public health impacts of agricultural practices. Furthermore, there are many state and federal assistance programs to help implement such practices. Some of these practices and programs that may be most beneficial to the Marcellus community are summarized below and on the following page.

## CONSERVATION TILLAGE

An increasing number of farmers across the country are utilizing reduced or no-till practices. This means that 30% or more of the soil surface is covered with crop residue which reduces water erosion and runoff, and can increase water holding capacity. Additionally, conservation tillage programs can reduce labor and save time - resulting in economic benefits for farmers.

## COVER CROPS

Cover crops are plants that grow between cash cropping periods, such as legumes, cereals, grasses, or a mix of such plants. They provide numerous benefits to farmers, including greater crop production stability, increased soil organic matter, and improved soil fertility. They also have the added benefit of increasing water holding capacity, and helping to prevent runoff and soil erosion.

## RIPARIAN & FIELD BUFFER RESTORATION

Planting trees, shrubs, and grasses along the edges of fields and water bodies can help reduce erosion, thus protecting viable crop land. Additionally, these vegetative buffers can help to filter sediment, nutrients, and pesticides from agricultural lands - protecting water quality. Lastly, riparian buffers hold water, and thus slow the flow of runoff water from farmland to the local waterbody network - reducing potential flood impacts.



## ONONDAGA COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) are located in each county in New York State, and are governed by a board of directors who represent farm and non-farm interests. They are natural resource entities that implement conservation programs at the local level, including Agricultural BMPs. The Town should continue to work with OCSWCD to educate and involve farmers in BMPs to mitigate agricultural runoff impacts.

The NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee publishes an **Agricultural Best Management Practice Systems Catalogue**, which provides guidance for selecting appropriate BMPs for communities, and is utilized by SWCDs across the State.

## STATE SUPPORT PROGRAMS

- **Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement & Control (ANSACP)**

ANSACP is a cost-share grant program that provides funding to address and prevent potential water quality issues that stem from farming activities. The program awards water quality protection projects that focus on environmental planning and best management practice systems. Project examples include nutrient management through manure storage, vegetative buffers along streams, and conservation cover crops.

- **Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM)**

AEM is a voluntary, incentive-based program available to all farmers in the Town through OCSWCD. AEM links farmers with local conservation professionals to identify local environmental concerns and support conservation practices.

- **Climate Resilient Farming (CRF)**

CRF is intended to support farmers in reducing the impact of agriculture on climate change and increase resiliency of farming. Included in the eligible projects are on-farm water management improvements.

## USDA PROGRAMS

- **Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA)**

AMA is a financial assistance program for the installation of conservation practices such as water management or irrigation structures, planting trees, and soil erosion control practices.

- **Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)**

EQIP provides technical and financial assistance to agricultural operators to assist with environmental and conservation improvements on their land.

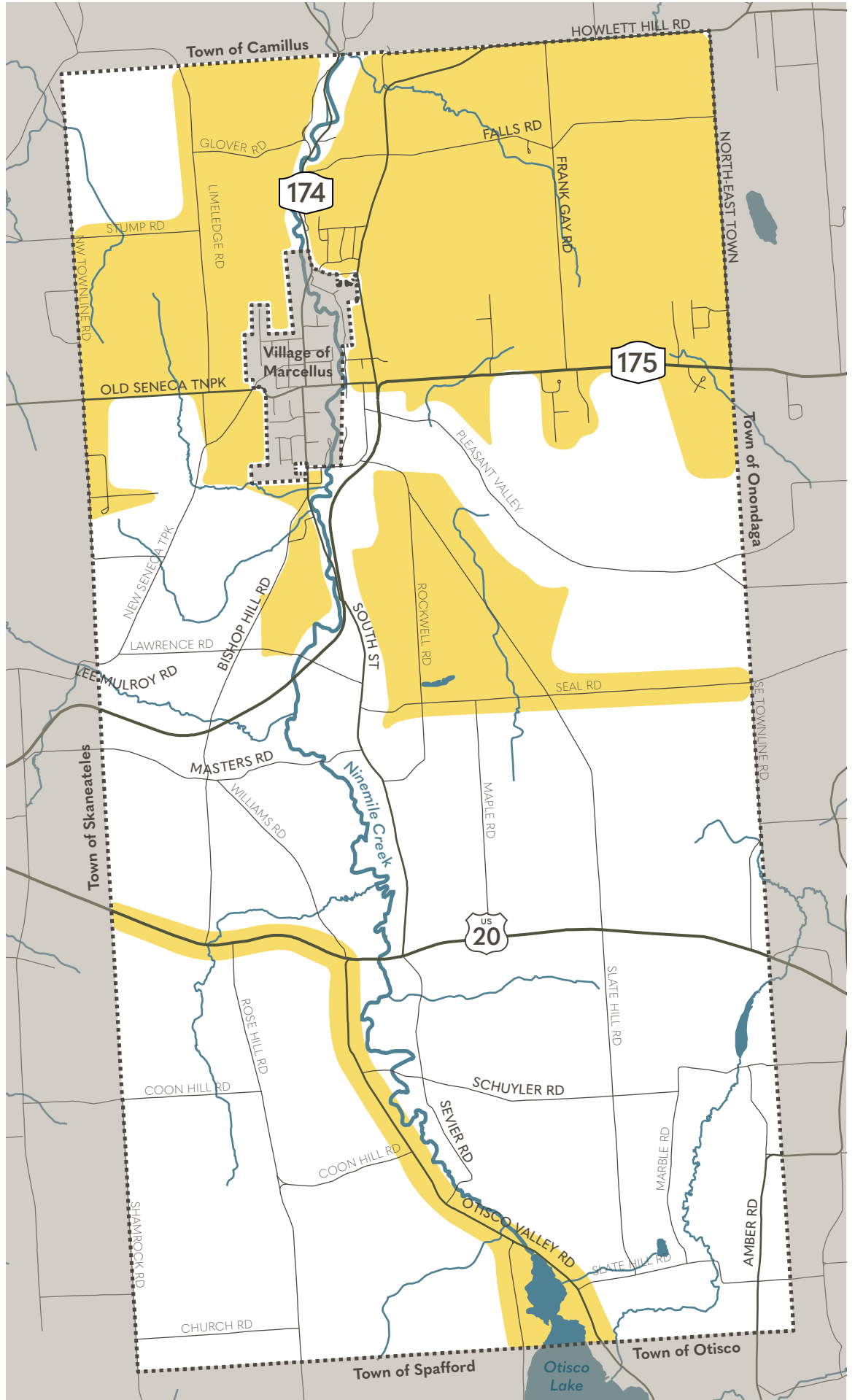
- **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)**

This program rewards farmers for maintaining and adopting conservation practices, and provides technical and financial assistance to farmers.

# MAP 13. RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER AREA

## Future Land Use

- Residential
- Town Boundary
- Hydrography
- Roads



# RESIDENTIAL



The Residential character area incorporates the majority of neighborhoods within the Town, as well as areas determined to be appropriate for future residential growth. As shown on Map 12, these areas are generally concentrated in the northern portion of Town, as well as along the Town's major roadways and along the shores of Otisco Lake. Existing land uses in these areas include a mixture of low density housing, agricultural uses, and open spaces.

As teleworking has grown in popularity in recent years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many individuals have the opportunity to live in their choice environment; in many cases, this has resulted in the movement of people from urban centers to rural areas. This may result in an increased demand for housing within Marcellus. The purpose of this character area is to allow for such residential growth, while ensuring that new development does not detract from existing residential quality of life or the rural character of the Town.

The residential character area will continue to provide residential opportunities that accommodate individuals and families of varying incomes, lifestyles, and housing preferences. By supporting appropriate residential subdivisions within this area, Marcellus can continue to ensure local housing needs are being met. In order to preserve existing natural resources and limit sprawl, opportunities for clustered development should be sought out, particularly during the planning of residential subdivisions. Future development is envisioned to be primarily single- and two-family housing development, but alternative housing arrangements such as senior living and/or multi-family dwellings may be accommodated closer to the Village of Marcellus based on the availability of public sewer and water service. Lot sizes of residential development will largely be determined by such public utilities, as well as the surrounding character, such as the small lot sizes along the northern shores of Otisco Lake. The images below depict the varying density of housing currently within the Town.



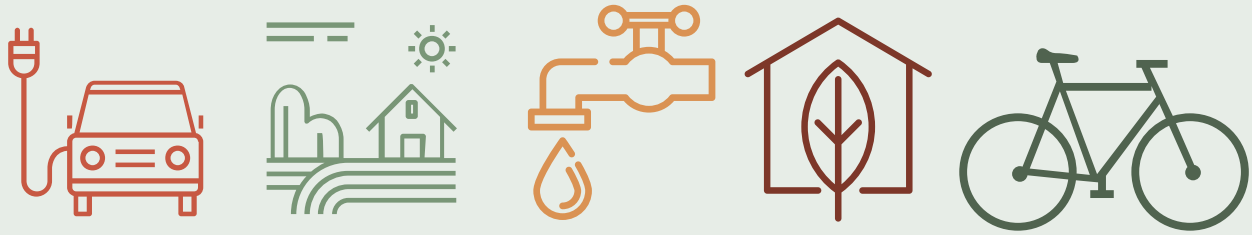
**< 0.5 ACRE LOTS**



**0.5 - 1.0 ACRE LOTS**



**1.5 ACRE LOTS**



# SMART GROWTH & COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

One of the five basic goals of the Town's 2001 Comprehensive Plan was **"to preserve the overall rural character of the Town, by advocating 'smart growth' of new development."** This Plan update retains and builds upon this goal within each policy area identified in the Vision, Policy, & Action Framework.

In order to achieve this, the Town should consider and incorporate smart growth policies into their Town's daily operations and long-term investment strategy.

The Smart Growth Network, a partnership of government, business, and civic organizations headed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), has developed and supports ten basic principles to guide smart growth strategies, including:

1. Mix land uses.
2. Take advantage of compact building design.
- 3. Create a range of housing opportunities and choices.**
4. Create walkable neighborhoods.
5. Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.
- 6. Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, & critical environmental areas.**
- 7. Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities.**
8. Provide a variety of transportation choices.
9. Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective.
10. Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions.

The principles that are most relevant to the Town of Marcellus and its needs are highlighted in bold above, and described in further detail on the following page.



### **Create a range of housing opportunities and choices.**

As stated in both the 2001 and 2024 Plan, and heard from community members as a part of this update process, a wider variety of housing should be considered in Marcellus -- particularly surrounding the Village, where access to public sewer and water is available. This includes senior housing, which would allow older residents to “age-in-place” and access goods, services, and entertainment in the Village for those no longer able to drive. Another potential variety of housing that is appealing to both older residents and younger generations are smaller footprint homes, which require less maintenance and are typically more affordable - such as patio homes.



### **Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, & critical environmental areas**

The rural character of Marcellus is one of its prized characteristics and a significant community asset. Locally, this can be achieved by supporting land conservation practices such as conservation easements, transfer/purchase of development rights, or conservation subdivision design. This Plan (and the 2001 Plan) also references wetland protection, which are critical for water quality, stormwater management, and wildlife habitat among other benefits. The Town should continue to coordinate with Regional, State, and Federal agencies to ensure the long-term preservation, and in some instances restoration of wetlands throughout the Town.



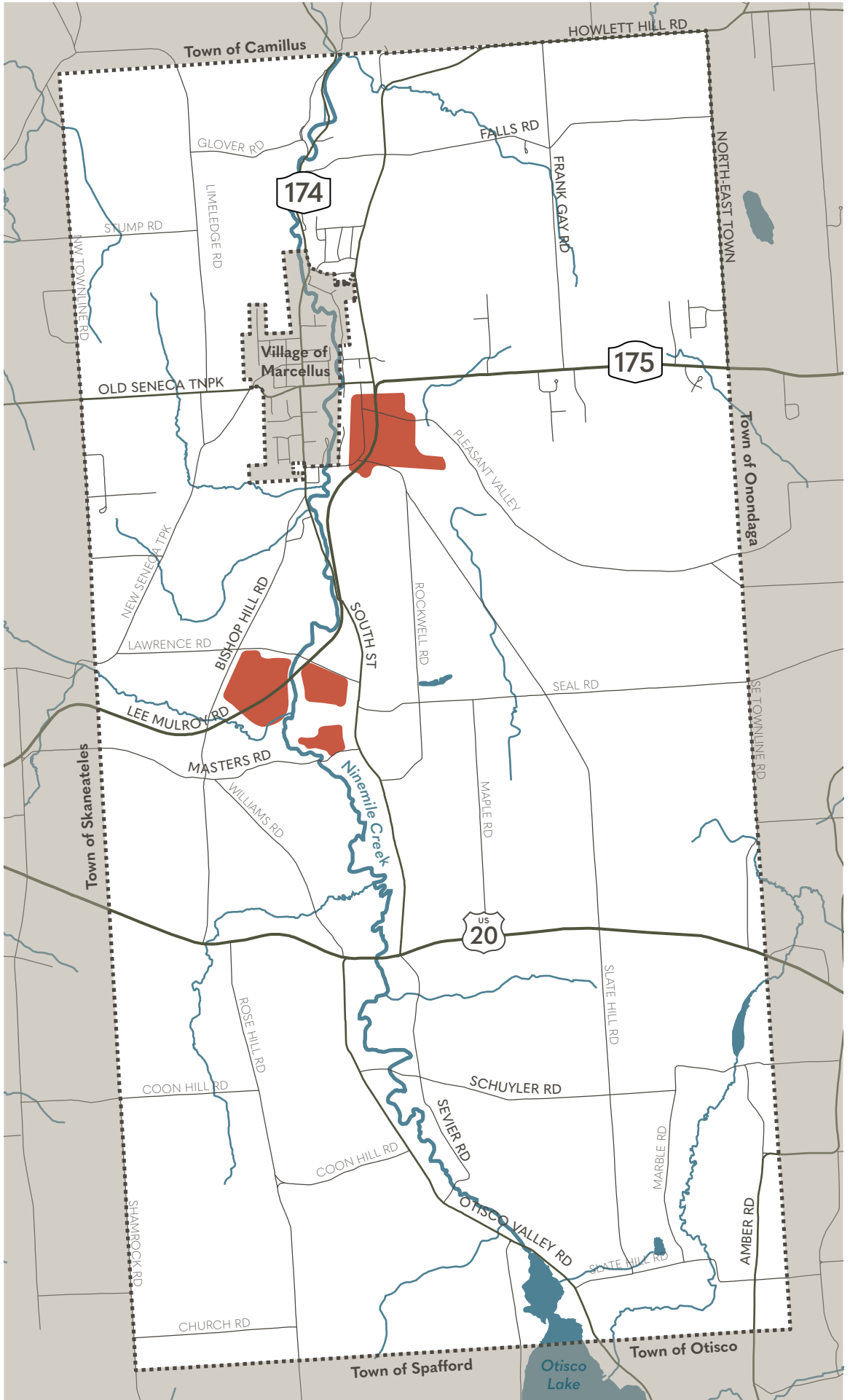
### **Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities.**

Locally, the Village of Marcellus acts as the hub of commercial and civic life, surrounded by the more rural areas of the Town. This Plan encourages the development of denser housing options and non-residential development adjacent to the Village boundaries to capitalize on existing resources in the Village, and also avoid unnecessary loss of agricultural lands and open space. On a regional scale, Marcellus can be viewed as a rural counterpart to the more suburbanized and urbanized areas of Onondaga County to the north. The Town should focus on preserving the scenic, natural, and agricultural resources that characterize the rural landscape.

# MAP 14. LOCAL COMMERCIAL CHARACTER AREA

## Future Land Use

- Local Commercial
- Town Boundary
- Hydrography
- Roads



# LOCAL COMMERCIAL



Lee-Mulroy Road Commercial Development

*“Small-scale commercial uses unrelated to entertainment and tourism development should be directed to the Light Industrial/ Commercial zone. This area has good access to the highway network and public services, and is generally away from residential areas.”*

*- 2001 Marcellus Comprehensive Plan*

The red areas on the Future Land Use Map, and shown on Map 13 are designated as Local Commercial character areas. The purpose of the Local Commercial areas is to accommodate a variety of commercial and light industrial uses that support daily living for Town residents. These areas should provide a wide variety of non-residential uses that support and do not detract from commercial activity concentrated in the Village. Additionally, uses that require a larger footprint than what is available and/or permitted in the Village should be concentrated in these areas.

Pedestrian and bicyclist connectivity should be considered, but is not anticipated to be as robust as such amenities found within the Village. The Town will promote high quality building and site design standards to ensure commercial investment is sustainable and does not detract from the character and quality of life in the Town. Such building and site design guidelines may include minimum landscaping standards, prohibitions on pole signs, and architectural guidelines for new structures.

The Local Commercial area to the east of the Village of Marcellus is currently zoned as B-1 (Business Zone), and the Local Commercial area to the south along Lee-Mulroy Road is zoned L-1. It is anticipated that both of these areas will remain zoned as such for the foreseeable future. The Town may review the permitted uses in both districts periodically to ensure they support the desired form of commercial investment in these areas. Additionally, the Town may consider the development of non-residential design standards or guidance to support the high quality building and site design mentioned previously.

**To be avoided**







**To be encouraged**

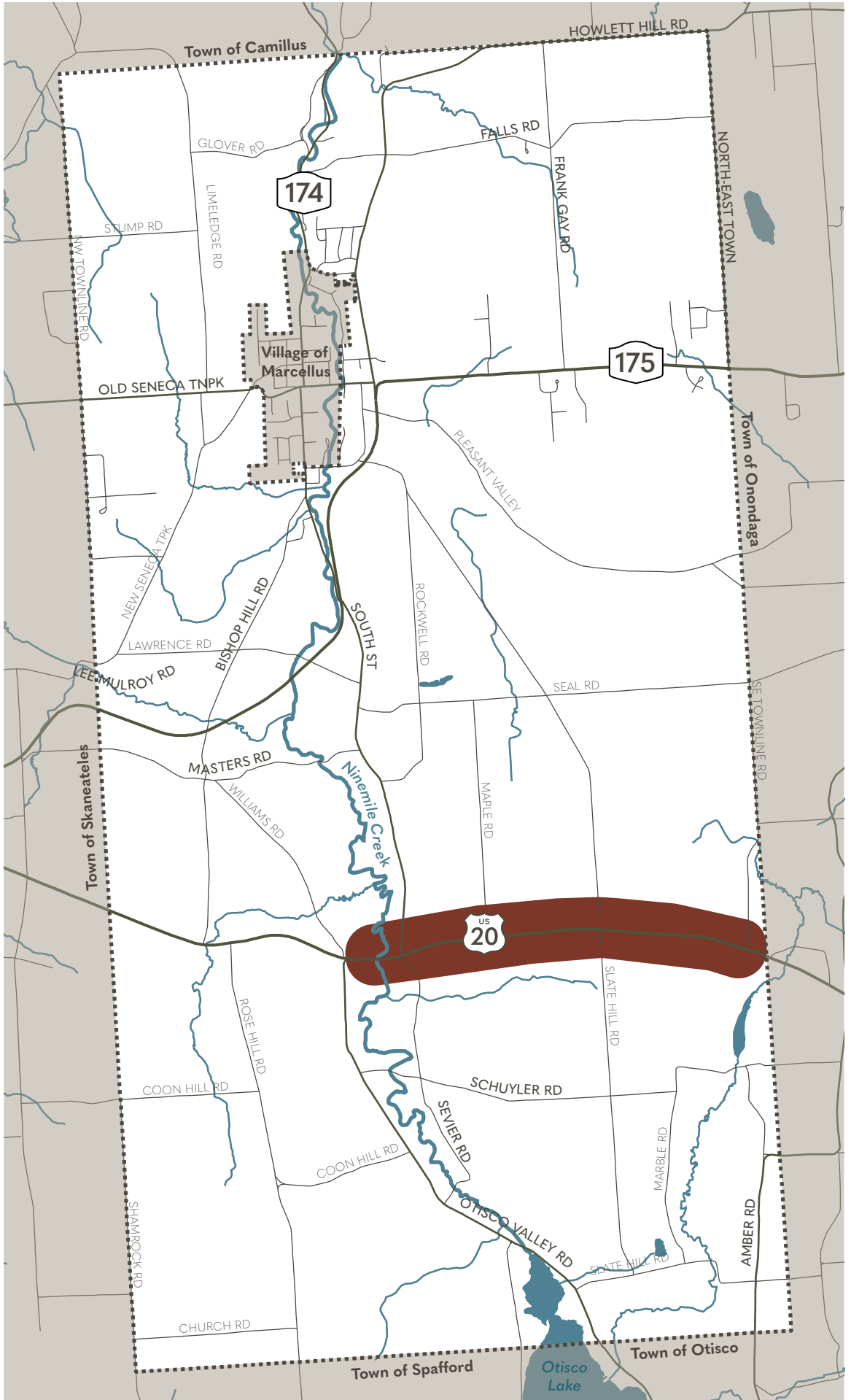


**Design standards or guidelines can assist in working with commercial operators to enhance the quality of building and site design.**

# MAP 15. CORRIDOR COMMERCIAL CHARACTER AREA

## Future Land Use

-  Corridor Commercial
-  Town Boundary
-  Hydrography
-  Roads





# COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR

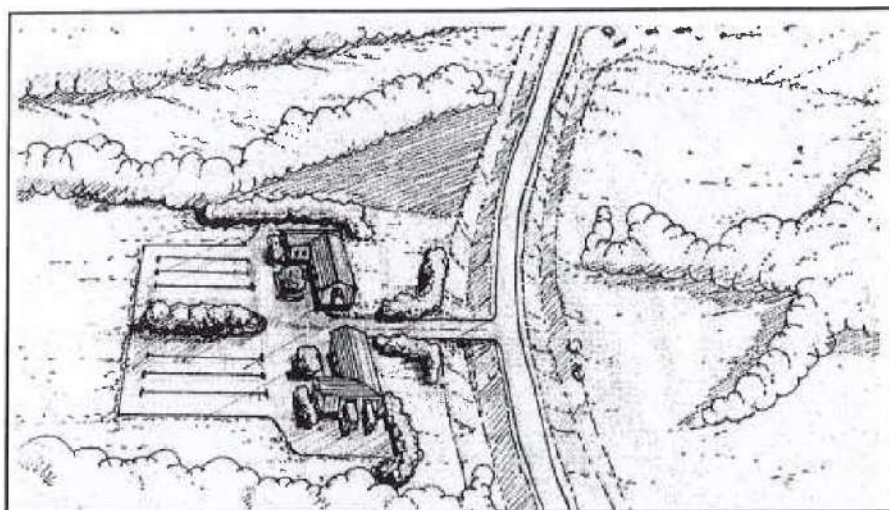


*"A Scenic Highway Overlay Zone [...] would give the residents more flexibility over allowable uses that are compatible with agriculture, while ensuring that the natural viewsheds associated with this transportation corridor are not diminished, and development is consistent with local land use activities."*

*- 2001 Marcellus Comprehensive Plan*

The Commercial Corridor character area encompasses the US 20 corridor from the eastern town line to Route 174 (as shown on Map 14). Currently, there is limited commercial development along this corridor. The existing businesses along the corridor vary significantly in regards to scale and use - including a restaurant, vintage store, audio equipment supplier, and veterinarian. This character area encompasses the existing Highway Overlay Zone within the Town's zoning code. The purpose of the overlay is to preserve scenic vistas that characterize the corridor while supporting development that caters to the traveling public along US 20. Specially permitted uses in this overlay district include country stores, hotels, restaurants, and professional office buildings, in addition to the permitted uses in the underlying zoning (which is primarily A-1 Agricultural Zone).

The lack of public water and sewer service will be a limiting factor in the density of commercial development along this corridor for the foreseeable future.



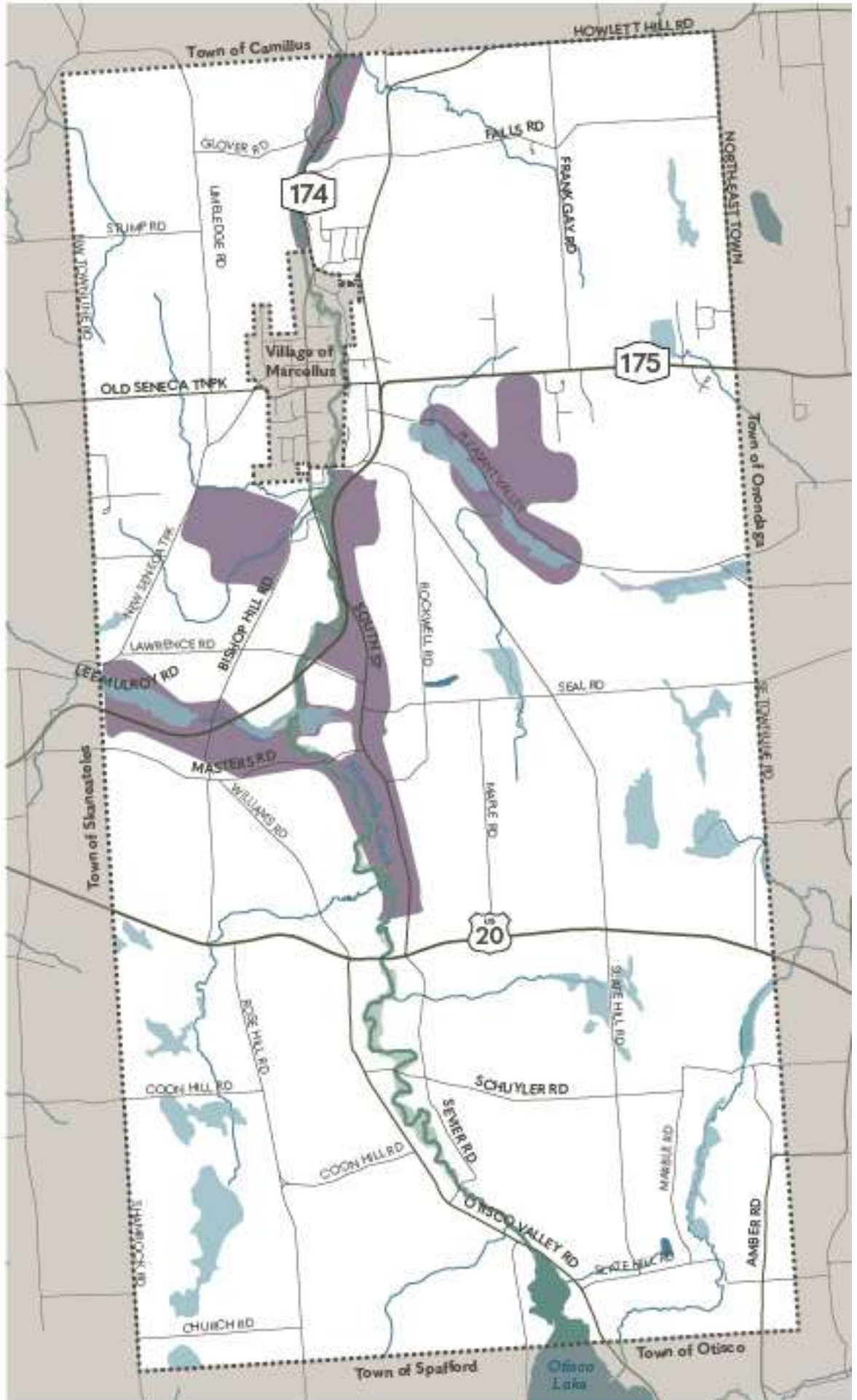
The Town should consider the inclusion of additional rural design standards as part of the Highway Overlay Zone that help to preserve the natural features of the corridor and reduce visual impact of any new investment, such as restrictions on vegetative clearing, building siting, colors and exterior finishes, and lighting regulations.

**"The site plan should address the fit between new development and the surrounding rural landscape, protect unique natural features on site and avoid excessive grading and removal of existing vegetation."**

*- 1999 Town of Marcellus Design Guidelines*

# MAP 16. OPEN SPACE & RECREATION CHARACTER AREA

-  DEC Wetlands
  - 100 Year Flood Zones**
  -  A
  -  AE
  - Future Land Use**
  -  Open Space & Recreation
  -  Town Boundary
  -  Hydrography
  -  Roads
- 0 0.5 1 Miles



# OPEN SPACE & RECREATION



Nine Mile Creek

*The 2001 Plan recommended the development and adoption of a Critical Environmental Area (CEA) Overlay Zone to protect “human health, open space of important aesthetic or scenic quality, [and] areas of agricultural value or an inherent ecological sensitivity to change.” An action item of the 2024 Comprehensive Plan is to expand the CEA Overlay Zone, which should include steep slopes to reduce impacts of erosion.*

The Open Space & Recreation character area is intended to identify those areas of the Town that are currently used for enjoyment of the Town’s natural resource, and those areas that are environmentally sensitive and thus further development should be limited. The abundant open space of Marcellus is one of its defining features, and of high value to residents. Therefore, these spaces should remain undeveloped to allow for continued recreational opportunities and to ensure little to no negative environmental impacts occur to the Town’s natural resources - in particular the Nine Mile Creek corridor. Map 15 shows the areas identified as this character area, as well as wetlands and floodplains.

Existing recreational facilities in this area include the Baltimore Woods Nature Center, Sunset Ridge Golf Club, Spink’s Memorial Camp, and Marcellus Park. These areas should be maintained as outdoor recreation assets in the Town, and should be considered for enhanced programming opportunities, such as community-wide events celebrating the Creek corridor. Additional lands within the Open Space & Recreation character area includes environmentally sensitive locations surrounding the Nine Mile Creek corridor, as well as along Pleasant Valley and Disappearing Lake where there are NYSDEC regulated wetlands. Development should be avoided in these areas to ensure the benefits of wetlands, including stormwater retention and wildlife habitat are maintained.

This character area is currently zoned as both A-1 Agricultural and R-1 Residential. Much of these areas are also included within the Critical Environmental Area Overlay Zone, which requires a special permit for most activity in the area, including construction, excavation or filling, and clearing of vegetation. The Town may consider amending the CEAs to include steep slopes to further protect fragile natural resources in the Town.



The Town should consider additional programming opportunities along Nine Mile Creek, such as this cardboard canoe race in Medford, MA.

Source: Greg Cookland.

TOWN OF MARCELLUS  
**2024 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**