

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2010

TOWN OF SPARTA  
FEBRUARY, 1993

TOWN PLANNING BOARD

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TOWN OF SPARTA  
 COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN 2010

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## CHAPTER I

### THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

#### INTRODUCTION

This Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Sparta serves as a guide for growth and development within the community and to accommodate future development in a manner that best protects the environment, preserves current community values and attributes and maintains the rural nature of the Town. The plan should be viewed as a summary of the desires, issues, opportunities and policies of the residents of Sparta at this time. To be meaningful, the Comprehensive Plan, its policies and action statements, should be referred to on a continuing basis and amended as necessary to reflect change as the Town grows and existing conditions change.

#### COMPREHENSIVE PLAN THEME

The theme of the Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Sparta accepts the premise that the community will continue to grow at a modest rate and that this growth will be greatly influenced by decisions made in both the public and private sectors in the Town, the County, Region and State. Accepting this premise, necessitates the identification of particular land use concepts, policies and actions deemed appropriate to accommodate the level of growth that is considered appropriate and to establish regulations which are essential to achieve these development objectives and to protect the environment.

The Comprehensive Plan is based on the following premises:

1. The Town of Sparta will remain a rural residential community during the twenty year horizon of this plan, with the Village of Dansville providing most of the commercial and personal services needed by Town residents.
2. The conservation of environmentally sensitive areas will be initiated or continued, particularly areas with steep slopes, highly erodible soils, woodlands, wetlands, floodplains and other critical environmental features.
3. The preservation of those remaining, actively farmed areas which are located on prime agricultural soils will be supported.
4. The infill development of housing and neighborhood services will be emphasized particularly in and near the Hamlets of Scottsburg and Reeds Corners.
5. The control of residential and the few commercial frontages, will continue to be important.
6. The completion and occupancy of a functional and attractive Dansville-Sparta Industrial Park will be a priority.

The Comprehensive Plan has been developed to satisfy the three basic needs of the Town – social, economic and environmental. This introductory section describes the conceptual framework which provides the overall theme for the Plan and how the community intends to satisfy these needs.

## **Social**

The Comprehensive Plan's social theme is to protect viable agricultural lands and operations, while improving the overall quality of the community as a place to live. The Plan suggests that efforts be made to channel new development into the Hamlet areas of Scottsburg and Reeds Corners and away from prime production lands. Small convenience commercial areas near the center of the hamlets would provide for only the most basic goods and services deemed essential by Town residents. While agri-business activities would be supported throughout the community, the principal location for new job opportunities would be in the Dansville-Sparta Industrial Park.

The Plan's social component suggests that the Town takes steps to provide a variety of housing types affordable to persons of different age groups and incomes. Another important component of the social environment is to maintain the quality of open space throughout the community and to establish a sense of community. In this regard it may be to Sparta's benefit to develop a small community park or recreation area that would assist in bringing people together. A community center building could serve the same purpose.

## **Economic**

The Comprehensive Plan's economic theme includes policies and actions to:

1. Continue to support and foster agriculture and agri-business as the primary component of the Town's economic base.
2. Encourage commercial, business and industrial growth scaled to meet the needs of the community.
3. Encourage residential growth with moderate densities within or adjacent to the two hamlets; limit residential growth and development to areas having minimal environmental constraints; and, promote growth in those areas which are best suited and capable of sustaining new development.
4. Establish public facilities and services consistent with the Town's goals and objectives for development.

## **Environmental**

The third and final theme which shapes the Comprehensive Plan relates to environmental awareness and protection. The principal environmental objectives of the Plan are directed to:

1. Minimize conflicting land use policies which are inconsistent with the themes of the Plan.

2. Insure that new development is located and planned consistent with the physical ability of the land to accommodate growth.
3. Enact land use controls that would protect the community's land and water resources, streams, wetlands, steeply sloped areas, woodlands, and scenic vistas as well as other environmentally sensitive and physically unique areas.

The implementation of these themes will provide vitally needed awareness and direction to assist the Town in managing its natural resources.

## THE NEED FOR PLANNING

When we look at the County and Region around us, we can point to problems which have resulted from the lack of planning or inadequate attempts at planning. These problems are reflected in: misuse and neglect of prime agricultural soils; pollution of ground water and water resources; flood damage; inadequate housing; and uncoordinated government policies. As Sparta considers policies to guide future decisions affecting land use and development, Town officials and residents alike must recognize that existing problems will intensify and new ones will emerge - problems that must be dealt with at the taxpayer's expense and problems that transcend local municipal boundaries.

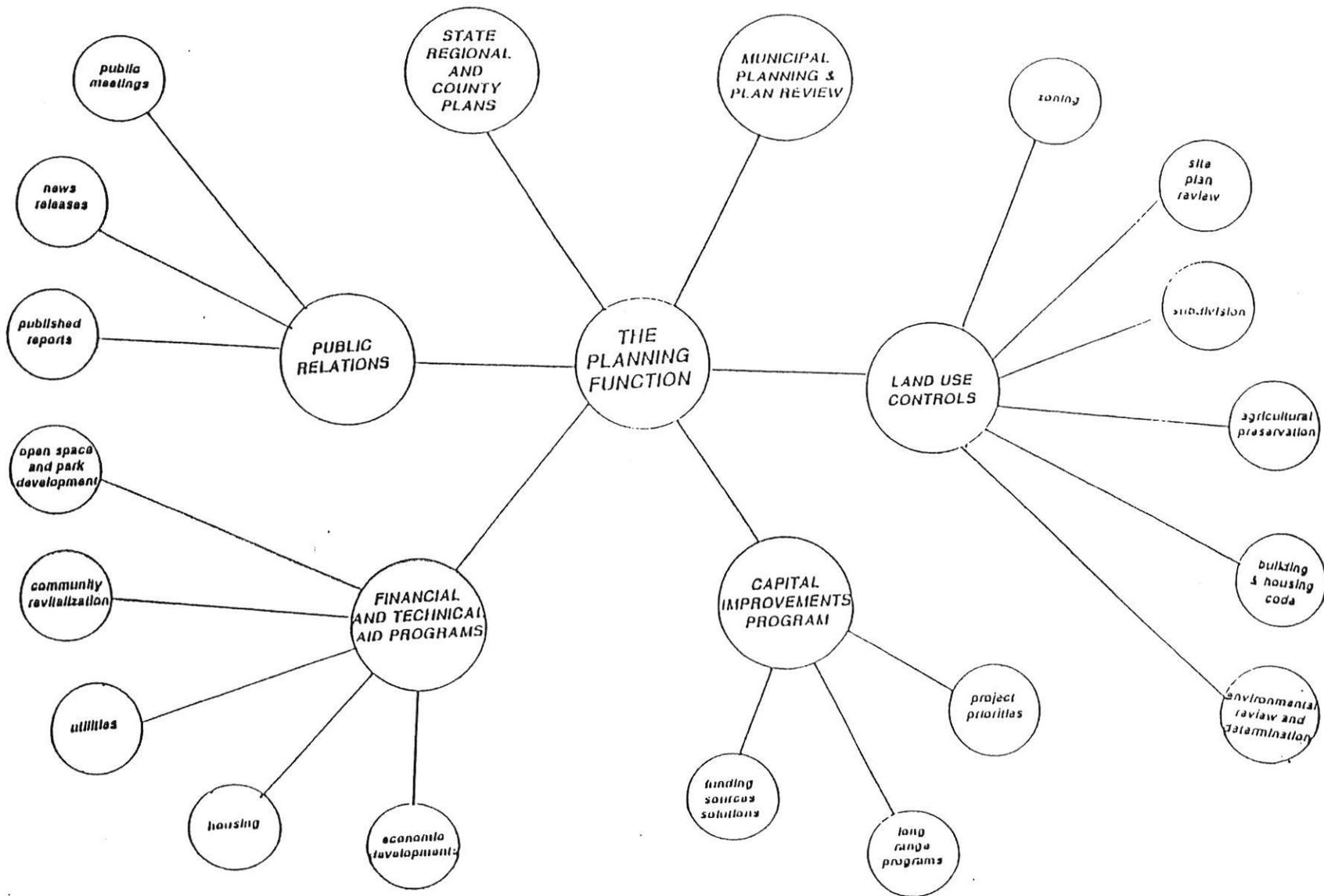
A successful comprehensive planning program will enable the Town to anticipate and deal with these growth and development problems rather than reacting to their occurrences on a "crisis" basis. Figure 1 identifies all of the relationships which would be addressed in a coordinated and effective local planning program.

Through the use of police power and zoning regulations, local governments have a great deal of influence on the way in which a community develops. The regulation of land, buildings, facilities and improvements by local governments give form to the community and stimulate or constrain the development of privately owned land. As local governments in New York State have the means to coordinate the overall pattern of physical development within their jurisdiction, it is important that the land use decisions of the local government are made by a legislative body which represents the citizenry at large. In this instance, the decision by the Town Board to authorize the creation of a comprehensive plan enhances the expressed desires of Sparta residents who, through a community survey, have expressed a desire that Town officials should manage the Town's land use and natural resources in a coordinated and planned fashion.

In order to ensure that the exercise of local police power works for the benefit of the community as a whole, the courts have held that local governments need an instrument that establishes comprehensive and long-range general policies for the physical development of the community in a coordinated, unified manner, which can be referenced on a continuing basis to assist local boards in making decisions on development issues. The Comprehensive Plan is such an instrument.

The Comprehensive Plan is a graphic and written report that provides direction (both policies and actions) to guide future growth and development in the Town of Sparta. The Plan should be viewed as an expression of the desires of the people of the community at this time. It is with this sense of community that the Plan has been created and hopefully, it is with this same sense of community that, the Planning Board will adopt the Plan as its official municipal plan document.

FIGURE 1



The creation and adoption of a comprehensive plan is a conscientious commitment by the Planning Board to begin a comprehensive planning process for the community. The recommendations and policies/actions of the written plan will need to be evaluated on a regular basis and amended as necessary to reflect changing desires and needs over periods of time.

## CHAPTER II

### PURPOSES OF PLANNING

#### ENSURE PROPER LAND UTILIZATION

A municipality may be thought of as being comprised of people, land and a certain community spirit that is manifested as the people and land develop in harmony. Our society is very mobile, and, as such, people come and go. Over periods of time, this has the effect of changing the spirit of a community. The municipality, however, is fixed to the land. As the municipality's only inherent possession is land, the well-being and prosperity of the community is dependent upon the manner in which this land is utilized. It is imperative, therefore, that the use of land be intelligently planned for the maximum benefit of the Town of Sparta and its residents.

#### DATA ELEMENTS

In order to produce an effective plan document, many sources of background information must be collected and analyzed. This documentation is needed in order to help the Town Board and Town Planning Board determine the most appropriate future distribution and intensity of land uses in the community. Several background studies have been accomplished as part of the planning program in order to provide the necessary base of information to project future land use needs and to understand community objectives. These studies have included:

1. Gathering of current data and preparation of base maps used in the planning program.
2. Survey of land use, mapping and analysis.
3. Completion of a detailed resident's survey to determine local priorities, view points and to begin the process of establishing local planning objectives.
4. Inventory and analysis of natural features including topography, floodplains, wetlands, soils and other physical resource characteristics.
5. Assessment of housing conditions and needs, population trends and projections, and business and economic potentials.
6. Assessment of community facilities and services.
7. Identification of problems, opportunities, and issues related to land development and the provision of services.

#### PROVIDING A BASIS FOR COMMUNITY ACTION

Based upon the findings of these analyses, the Planning Board has prepared a series of goals and policies. These statements are designed to met the needs and objectives of the people of the community and to respond to the issues and opportunities identified during the planning process. Policies can be translated to specific land use recommendations, thus providing the

basis for the establishment of the Comprehensive Plan. The Town's Comprehensive Plan depicts the most desirable pattern for future land use and defines areas for residential, commercial and industrial development as well as conservation and open space uses.

The Comprehensive Plan becomes the community's message to its residents, to developers and to other levels of government that the Town of Sparta has given consideration to its environs and has proposed a development program based upon sound planning principles and direction. It is important for the Town to have such a policy statement backed with appropriate supporting documentation.

Business and industrial firms and, to some extent, individuals are all engaged in looking into the future in order to provide direction and goals for their day-to-day activities. Most businesses and industrial firms, for instance, project their anticipated needs and goals for at least a five-year period. Communities, too, must have some direction to its day-to-day activities. Due to the complexity of governmental issues and limited flexibility, however, communities should think ahead fifteen to twenty years. A comprehensive plan can provide the necessary insight and direction for community action.

A comprehensive plan can help guide local planning activities in the following ways:

1. By dealing with minor problems so that they do not become major problems in the future.
2. By limiting the impact of changes which can be foreseen and which will occur in the future.
3. By shaping new development to the community's needs.
4. By guiding both public and private action to save money, time and effort.
5. By providing continuity of future programs for community improvement.
6. By providing a unifying focal point for the efforts of all community interests.

The responsibility for preparing the Town Comprehensive Plan is the role of the Town of Sparta Planning Board. This responsibility is specified in Section 272a of the Town Law of the State of New York. The implementation of the Plan is the joint responsibility of the Planning Board, other appointed boards and officials serving the Town of Sparta and the Town Board. It is the Town Board which must take the major actions to carry out the plan's recommendations through the enactment of zoning and other codes and ordinances required to achieve the goals of the plan and the authorization for local funding to carry out needed local projects.

## CHAPTER III

### POPULATION AND HOUSING TRENDS

An effective Comprehensive Plan requires a solid foundation of basic information regarding existing conditions in the community. This information provides an accurate picture of the major features of the community that impact on land use and development and serve as the foundation upon which the other elements of the Plan may be built.

This chapter of the Plan report examines the major characteristics of population and housing in the Town of Sparta and the predominant trends over the last several years. Projections of population changes through the year 2010 are also presented. Comparative data regarding the population and housing characteristics of Sparta's neighboring communities and Livingston County as a whole are provided as well. By placing data for the Town of Sparta in an historical and comparative perspective, a better understanding and clearer picture of the community is achieved.

#### POPULATION TRENDS

As Table 1 shows, the population of the Town has increased substantially but irregularly over the last four decades. Between 1950 and 1990, population in the Town increased by 607 persons, from 971 in 1950 to 1,578 persons in 1990. This represents an increase of 63%. This rate of growth surpassed that of Livingston County which increased by 55 percent during the same time period. Table 1 also indicates that there has been a considerable degree of variation in the rate of population growth from one decade to another.

The period of greatest population growth in Sparta occurred during the 1970's. During the ten year period between 1970 and 1980, the Town's population grew by 26.02 percent, an increase of 301 residents. This period of rapid growth which occurred in the 1970's was somewhat later than the baby boom era of the 1950's and 1960's when many communities experienced their greatest amount of growth. For example, as can be seen from Table 1, Livingston County's growth rate of 5.49 percent during the 1970's was much lower than Sparta's and much lower than the 22.67 percent rate of growth that the County experienced during the 1960's.

It may have been that Sparta's population composition was generally younger during the baby boom period, such that a relatively large proportion of the population did not enter child-bearing age until later. The Town's rapid growth during the 1970's may also be attributed to the outmigration of population from Monroe County and other areas during this decade. It should be noted that during the 1970's, the population of the Village of Dansville decreased by 457 people, a drop of 8.4 percent. More than likely a number of these people moved to the Town of Sparta.

Table 2 compares population change in the Town of Sparta with its neighboring communities and with Livingston County during the twenty year period between 1970 and 1990. During these two decades the Town's population grew by 36.39 percent. This was more than twice the rate of growth experienced in Livingston County, which registered a 15.42 percent increase in population. The rate of growth in the Town of Sparta since 1970 is similar to, but somewhat less

**TABLE 1**  
**POPULATION TRENDS 1950 - 1990**  
**TOWN OF SPARTA - LIVINGSTON COUNTY**

Year	Town of Sparta	% Change	Livingston County	% Change
1990	1,578	8.23	62,372	9.41
1980	1,458	26.02	57,006	5.49
1970	1,157	13.54	54,041	22.67
1960	1,019	4.94	44,053	9.43
1950	971	--	40,257	--
<b>TOTAL CHANGE 1950-1990</b>	<b>607</b>	<b>62.51</b>	<b>22,115</b>	<b>54.93</b>

Source: U.S. Census of Population

**TABLE 2**  
**POPULATION CHANGES 1970 - 1990**  
**TOWN OF SPARTA AND**  
**ADJACENT MUNICIPALITIES**

Location	Percent Change					
	1970	1980	1990	1970-80	1980-90	1970-90
Sparta	1,157	1,458	1,578	26.02	8.23	36.39
Conesus	1,533	1,970	2,196	28.51	11.47	43.25
Springwater	1,678	2,143	2,407	27.71	12.32	43.44
N. Dansville	6,358	5,994	5,783	(5.73)	(3.52)	(9.04)
W. Sparta	935	1,100	1,335	17.65	21.36	42.78
Groveland	3,004	2,140	3,190	(28.76)	49.07	6.19
Livingston County	54,041	57,006	62,372	5.49	9.41	15.42

Source: U.S. Census of Population.

than, the growth rates experienced in the neighboring Towns of Conesus (43.25 percent), Springwater (43.44 percent) and West Sparta (42.78 percent). However, the growth rate for Sparta was much greater than that of Groveland (6.19 percent) and North Dansville, which reported a 9.04% decline in population during the 1970's and 1980's.

The 1990 figure for the Town of Groveland includes the inmate population of the State Correctional Facility that was established in the Town during the 1980's. Groveland's population, similar to that of North Dansville, would have reported a decline during the 1970 to 1990 period had the State not chosen the Town as the site for the new institution.

Table 3 presents an estimate of the future population of the Town of Sparta for the year 2010 and the intervening five year intervals between 1990 and 2010. The projections were prepared by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation in 1985. Based on the results of the 1990 Census, these projections have proven to be reasonably accurate for many communities. We can see from Table 3 that the 1,600 persons projected for Sparta for 1990 is only at variance by 22 persons from the actual 1990 population of 1,578. This is a very accurate projection that is off by only slightly more than 1 percent. If we were to accept the State's projection of the Town's population for 2010, there will be 272 more residents in the Town in twenty years. This represents a growth rate of 17%, which is comparable to the 15% growth rate projected for Livingston County.

This projection assumes a continuation of existing factors without much change. It should be recognized, however, that decisions and actions the Town may take regarding land use and development can exert a significant impact on accelerating, moderating or retarding growth. A zoning change and the extension of water and/or sewer services, for example, could lead to the construction of a new manufacturing facility that may employ a substantial number of new workers. Such a development could, in turn, bring a significant influx of people into the Town if an adequate supply of housing were available to meet the increase in demand.

Table 4 shows how the age composition of the Town's population changed during the twenty-year period from 1970 to 1990. The overall trend has been toward an "aging" of the population, that is, a larger proportion of senior citizens and a smaller percentage of children. We can see from Table 4 that between 1970 and 1990, the number of seniors in the Town, 65 years and older, increased by 76 persons, or by 82.6 percent. In 1970, seniors accounted for 8.0 percent of the Town's total population. Today, this age group comprises 10.7 percent of the Town's population.

The number of children under 5 years of age in the Town declined by 9.1 percent (from 121 to 110), between 1970 and 1990. The number of children between the ages of 5 and 14 decreased by a much larger amount, 21.9 percent, (or from 283 to 221), during this same period. In 1970, children 14 years and younger comprised 35 percent of Sparta's population. Twenty years later, this segment of the Town's population accounts for only 21 percent of the total.

There are reasons to believe, however, that this aging trend has subsided and may be reversing in some respects. We can see in Table 4, for example, that the number and proportion of children under 5 years of age in 1990 has rebounded from the 1980 figures. In 1980 there were 95 children under 5, which was 6.5 percent of the Town's total population. In 1990 the number of children in this age group had increased by 15, to 110, representing 7.0 percent of the total

**TABLE 3**  
**POPULATION PROJECTIONS 1990-2010**  
**SELECTED COMMUNITIES**

	1990*		1995	2000	2005	2010
Sparta	1,600	[1,578]	1,700	1,750	1,800	1,850
Conesus	2,400	[2,196]	2,500	2,650	2,750	2,850
Springwater	2,400	[2,407]	2,500	2,500	2,600	2,650
N. Dansville	6,150	[5,783]	6,250	6,450	6,600	6,750
W. Sparta	1,200	[1,335]	1,250	1,300	1,350	1,400
Groveland	2,200	[3,190]	2,250	2,350	2,450	2,550
Livingston County	61,653	[3,190]	67,639	67,178	69,371	71,603
Monroe County	726,729	[62,372]	737,878	743,384	748,845	749,600

**NOTE:** The 1990 figures are projections made in 1985 by the N.Y.S. Department of Environmental Conservation. The 1990 figures in brackets are actual population counts based on preliminary figures from the 1990 U.S. Census.

Source: Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Overall Economic Development Program 1989, Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council.

**TABLE 4**  
**POPULATION CHANGES IN SELECTED AGE GROUPS 1970 - 1990**  
**TOWN OF SPARTA**

	1970		1980		1990		Change 1970 - 1990	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 5	121	10.5	95	6.5	110	7.0	(11)	(9.1)
5 - 14	283	24.4	298	20.4	221	14.0	(62)	(21.9)
15 - 24	169	14.6	238	16.3	215	13.6	46	27.2
25 - 44	280	24.2	433	29.8	498	31.5	218	77.9
45 - 54	119	10.3	155	10.6	213	13.5	94	79.0
55 - 64	93	8.0	112	7.7	153	9.7	60	64.5
Over 65	92	8.0	127	8.7	168	10.7	76	82.6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,157</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,458</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,578</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>421</b>	<b>36.0</b>

Source: U.S. Census of Population

population. In addition, the number and proportion of Town residents entering or already in the prime child-bearing ages and reproductive potential (15-24 and 25-44), are much larger in 1990 than they were twenty years earlier. The proportion of Sparta's total population in these age groups amounted to 45.1 percent in 1990. The comparable proportion in 1970 was 38.8 percent.

Table 5 demonstrates that the average size of households (i.e. occupied housing units) in the Town of Sparta has declined significantly in the twenty years between 1970 and 1990. The average number of persons per household in the Town was 3.57 in 1970. By 1990 this average had declined to 2.87 persons. This decline is consistent with a national trend toward smaller household units. A number of factors (i.e., more couples having no or fewer children, greater longevity, increasing divorce rate, later marriage and other social and demographic changes) contribute to this phenomenon.

## HOUSING TRENDS

Table 6 depicts the trend in the total number of housing units in the Town between 1970 and 1990. By comparing the data in Table 6 with Table 2, it can be seen that between 1970 and 1990, the growth in the number of housing units in the Town occurred at a much higher rate than the growth in total population. There was a 64.0 percent increase in the total number of housing units during this period compared to a 36.4 percent increase in population.

Although the rate of growth in housing was greater than the rate of population growth, it did not result in an abnormally high vacancy rate as might have been expected. (See Table 7.) Rather, the 1990 vacancy rate of 6 percent is close to what is considered "normal" in a healthy housing market. A vacancy rate of about 5 percent is needed to accommodate housing turnover and movement. The formation of new, but smaller, households in the Town has apparently created a sufficient demand for housing to absorb the relatively large number of units that were added to Sparta's housing supply between 1970 and 1990.

As can be seen from Table 7, owner-occupied housing continues to be, by far, the most prevalent tenure type. Eighty-two (82) percent of all housing in the Town is owner-occupied. This rate of homeownership exceeds the Livingston County average of 67% (see Table 8). The 1990 Census reports that only 12% of the housing in Sparta is renter-occupied.

Table 7 also shows that although seasonal housing represents only 3% of all housing in the Town, the number of seasonal housing units increased from one (1) unit in 1970 to 18 in 1990.

Table 9 describes the distribution of housing structures by type. The information, which indicates that one- and two-family homes comprise 80 percent of all housing in 1990, is indicative of the high percentage of owner-occupied housing that exists in the Town.

It can also be seen from Table 9 that the number and proportion of mobile homes in the Town has increased by a significant margin between 1970 and 1990. In 1970, there were 20 mobile homes in the Town. This amounted to 6% of all housing units. By 1990, this number had increased by nearly five times to 98 mobile homes, or 17 percent of the total number of housing units in the Town.

TABLE 5  
HOUSEHOLD POPULATION 1970-1990  
TOWN OF SPARTA

	1970	1980	1990
Persons in Household	1,157	1,458	1,578
Number of Households	324	457	550
Average Household Size	3.57	3.19	2.87

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing.

TABLE 6  
HOUSING STOCK 1970-1990  
TOWN OF SPARTA

	Housing Units	Change	
		Number	Percent
1990	584	96	19.7
1980	488	132	37.1
1970	356	-	-

Housing Stock  
Change 1970 - 1990

Number Increase	Percent Increase
228	64.0

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing.

**TABLE 7**  
**HOUSING STOCK CHARACTERISTICS 1970-1990**  
**TOWN OF SPARTA**

Housing Units	1970		1980		1990		Change 1970 - 1990	
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	Percent
Year Round	355	99	474	97	566	97	211	59
Occupied	324	91	457	94	550	94	226	70
Owner	283	79	385	79	481	82	198	70
Renter	41	12	72	15	69	12	28	68
Vacant	31	9	17	3	34	6	3	10
Seasonal	1	.3	14	3	18	3	18	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>488</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>584</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>64%</b>

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing.

**TABLE 8**  
**HOUSING STOCK CHARACTERISTICS 1970-1990**  
**LIVINGSTON COUNTY**

Housing Units	1970		1980		1990		Change 1970 - 1990	
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	Percent
Year Round	16,053	95	19,276	95	22,125	96	6,072	38
Occupied	15,088	90	18,252	90	21,197	92	6,109	40
Owner	11,285	67	13,233	65	15,543	67	4,258	38
Renter	3,803	23	5,019	17	5,654	24	1,851	49
Vacant	965	6	1,024	5	928	4	(37)	(4)
Seasonal	792	5	1,025	5	959	4	167	21
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16,845</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>20,301</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>23,084</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,239</b>	<b>37%</b>

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing.

TABLE 9  
HOUSING TYPES 1970-1990  
TOWN OF SPARTA

	1970	1980	1990	Change 1970 - 1990	
				Number	Percent
1 & 2 Units	329	398	470	141	43
3 + Units	6	16	16	10	167
Mobile Homes	20	60	98	78	390
<b>Total Year Round</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>584</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>65</b>

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing.

## CHAPTER IV

### DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS ANALYSIS

This Chapter presents an assessment of Sparta's natural and manmade environment and describes the community's ability to support development. Good comprehensive planning must include an assessment of a community's strengths and weaknesses in maintaining existing activities as well as a review of existing features that impact on development. This analysis serves to highlight those opportunities and constraints which can ultimately improve community decision making.

Appendix A contains a series of maps which were prepared to support this analysis. These maps should be used as resources by the Planning Board and other Town officials as they are required to make land use and development decisions.

The major features of the natural environment discussed in this section of the plan include location, topography, soil conditions, water resources, forests and brushlands. The features of the manmade environment include major land use types, transportation facilities, utilities and water supply and waste disposal.

#### THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

##### General

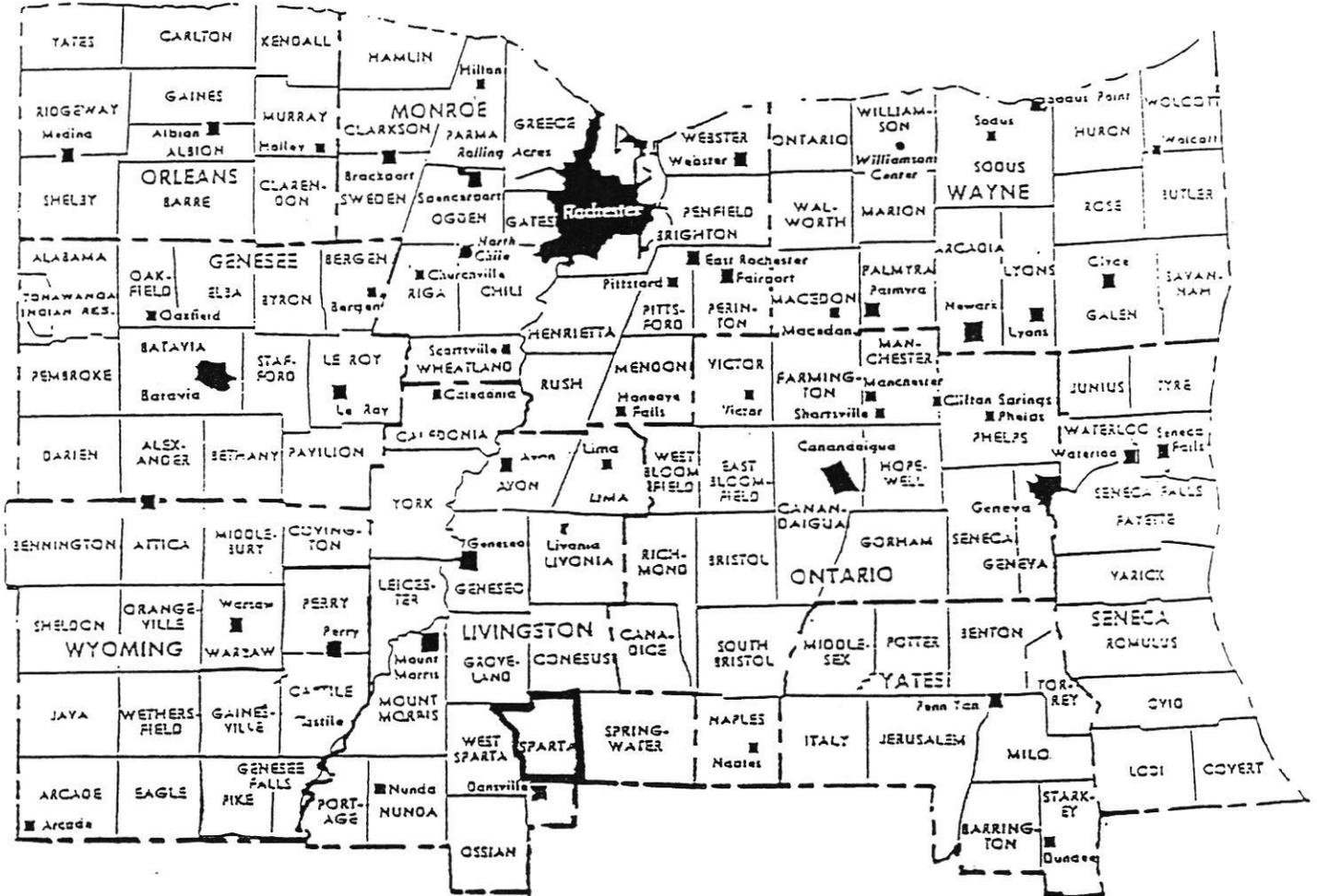
The Town of Sparta encompasses an area of approximately 27 square miles, or 17,280 acres, of land formed by linear boundaries in the north, south and east. This linear pattern is contrasted by the very irregular shape of the western boundary of the Town, which is largely the path of Canaseraga Creek.

The Town is located approximately 35 miles south of the City of Rochester and is well within commuting distance of the area's major employers. Geneseo is located about 14 miles north of the Town while Dansville is located 5 miles south/ southwest. Sparta is a rural, predominantly residential, community which is well positioned to take advantage of the economic, cultural and natural features which characterize the region. Figure 2 depicts the location of Sparta within the region.

##### Topography

The picturesque natural surroundings of Sparta are an asset to the Town. The hills and deep valleys create many vistas from the hillsides and tops. Views to the west include the broad valley of Canaseraga Creek, the high hills beyond and magnificent sunsets. The highest elevations in Sparta measure 1,800 feet to more than 2,000 feet above sea level, while the elevation of the lower points Figure 2 which are located in the western part of the Town, measure less than 600 feet above sea level.

FIGURE 2  
 REGIONAL LOCATION MAP  
 TOWN OF SPARTA



The hilly topography, combined with abundant forestland, allows potential development to be tucked into hillsides, reducing its visual impact and giving the impression of an undisturbed natural area. As respondents to the resident's survey expressed concern over "keeping the rural character" of the Town intact and preventing "overdevelopment/overpopulation," the sensitive siting of houses and other buildings is important in limiting their visual intrusion. The results of the resident's survey are included in Appendix B.

The local topography also presents certain limitations which must be recognized by the Comprehensive Plan. Steep hillside areas combined with shallow, erodible soils and exposed bedrock (i.e., east of Route 63 south of Hammond Road and along Route 256 between Powell and Springwater Roads) are inappropriate building sites. Any development proposed for these areas as well as other steep hillside locations should be reviewed scrupulously, not only for impacts on the development itself but also for downhill effects.

State Routes 63, 255 and 256, Reeds Corners Road and Parker Hill Road run generally north/south conforming to the orientation of the hills. East/west travel is extremely difficult due to the very rugged topography. As reported in the resident's survey, most employment related traffic (75%) is destined north, to other portions of Livingston County and to Rochester and Monroe County. Residents travel south to Dansville for shopping, most business services and employment. It appears that journeys to work and shopping are not significantly hampered by deficiencies in the local east/west road system at this time. Should employment opportunities expand significantly in the southwest part of the Town, this deficiency may need to be corrected.

### Soil Conditions

Although the Town of Sparta possesses some prime agricultural soils, marginal and unproductive agricultural lands are more prevalent. Prime agricultural lands form a continuous band extending north and south along Sparta's eastern boundary with the Town of Springwater. A second rather continuous band of productive agricultural land extends along the western boundary of the Town in the floodplain areas of Canaseraga and Mud Creeks.

While farming in Sparta consists of generally smaller operations of a less intensive nature than farms in the flatter, more northern parts of Livingston County, local planning efforts should focus on preserving these soils for cultivation, while discouraging the indiscriminate conversion of such land areas to building lots for houses. While the future of relatively small scale farming seems limited, once farmland changes to non-farm use, it is almost always lost forever to agriculture.

The resident's survey indicated support for farming as "the most preferred type of economic development for the Town." Hopefully residents of Sparta are well aware of the nature of farming operations and are not like some newcomers to rural areas who "love the idea of agriculture, but loathe its practice." Conflicts between agriculture and housing can be reduced if sufficient buffering is maintained between the two potentially incompatible land uses.

Soil drainage is generally moderate to poor in the northern half of the Town with generally better drainage in the southern half. While soil drainage impacts on agricultural production, as residents are dependent on private septic facilities, it also has a direct bearing on the Town's ability to support new development.

There is a wide band of alluvial soils (i.e. deposited by streams) in the western lowlands of the Town bordering Canaseraga and Mud Creeks. These finer grain materials have been deposited by streams and they overlay coarser sand and gravel that is of a glacial origin. Much of the upland surface area of the Town is comprised of glacial till, which represents unsorted clay, sand and gravel deposited by melting glaciers in a previous geological era. These unconsolidated surface soils range from a few feet in thickness to more than 100 feet in depth from the surface to the underlayment of bedrock. Shallow soils are located adjacent to Route 63, from the intersection 255 and Springwater Road north to the Town Line, east of the Hamlet of Reeds Corners, east of the Hamlet of Scottsburg and east of the intersection of Reeds Corners Road and Route 256.

In general the location of bedrock close to the surface increases the cost of development. Bedrock close to the surface may prohibit the construction of conventional foundations, sometimes channels underground springs toward foundation walls thereby weakening their structural integrity and can prohibit proper functioning of septic systems. If questions arise regarding soil depth, it may be appropriate to conduct test borings of potential development sites.

### **Water Resources**

There are no large waterbodies in the Town and only a few small ponds. Conesus Lake, however, lies about 3.5 miles north of the Town boundary and plays an important environmental role in the Town. For example, the Conesus Lake Inlet and several of its small tributaries provide drainageways for surface water runoff from rain and melting snow over much of the northern portion of the Town. Conesus Lake, therefore, collects and stores much of the Town's surface water runoff.

There are several small streams in the Town, some of which are intermittent and appear as dry creek beds for much of the year. These streams generally run down the hillsides in a westerly direction as tributaries of Canaseraga Creek and Mud Creek or in a northerly direction as tributaries of the Conesus Lake Inlet. These waterways provide surface water drainage and, through erosive action, contour narrow, sometimes steep, valleys and gullies that extend in a perpendicular direction from the hilly ridges.

Portions of several streams are subject to flooding and are defined as areas of special flood hazard by FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency). Flooding hazards exist along the stream on the east side of Scottsburg; around the bed of a stream originating near Strong Hill Road near the southeastern corner of the Town and along the entire western boundary of the Town along Canaseraga and Mud Creeks.

The NYSDEC (New York State Department of Environmental Conservation) has identified a Class II Wetland in the southwestern corner of the Town. This area is located north of the Dansville Municipal Airport and west of Route 63. Floodplains, which include both floodways and flood fringes, along with wetlands are natural features which, if left undisturbed, provide repositories for heavy spring and fall runoff.

Wetlands are recharge areas for underground aquifers and are important in maintaining local water quality. Floodplains and wetlands are inappropriate areas for development and all NYSDEC and FEMA regulations pertaining to these natural features should be enforced.

## Forest and Brushland

Much of the Town's surface area is covered by woodlands which is comprised mostly of deciduous hardwoods with a noticeable intermixture of evergreens and larches. In addition, large expanses of open spaces are covered with shrubs and undergrowth with occasional trees. Trees and shrubs add to Sparta's natural amenity, help to control water run off from steep slopes, provide habitat for wildlife and prevent soil erosion. Development should avoid the removal of stands of trees or particularly large specimens. This is especially important on steep hill sides.

## THE MANMADE ENVIRONMENT

### Land Use

#### o Agriculture

The Town of Sparta exhibits a pattern of land use that is characteristic of many small, rural communities. Most of the acreage in the Town is undeveloped, including a considerable amount of land used for agriculture. Land devoted to agriculture is considered "undeveloped" for the purpose of the Comprehensive Plan, as it is susceptible to conversion to urban uses such as housing subdivisions and businesses.

Active farms in the Town of Sparta are relatively small and cultivation is generally less intensive than the larger farms prevalent in the northern and less hilly parts of Livingston County. Some of the larger dairy farms in Sparta, for example, range from thirty to forty acres with fifty to eighty cows. This compares to larger farms in Avon and York with four to five hundred acres and several hundred cows. The average farm size for Livingston County is 318 acres, which is the second largest among New York State counties. Much of the cultivated acreage in Sparta is used to produce feed to support livestock herds and little is raised as cash crops intended for human consumption.

#### o Residential

The predominant form of development in Sparta is conventionally constructed year round single family homes on large lots. In the absence of public water and sewer services, this pattern is not expected to change significantly.

As discussed in Chapter III, mobile homes comprise a significant proportion of the Town's housing stock. Table 9, reports that about 17% of the Town's total housing stock is classified as mobile homes. As the Town does not have any mobile home parks, all of the mobile homes are on individual lots. Judging by the significant increases in the number of seasonal housing units (from one in 1970 to eighteen in 1990), land taken up by such uses has also increased over the last several years. Seasonal housing still comprises a small proportion of the Town's total development acreage. Despite these changes, the predominant form of development continues to be land used for conventional, single-family homes on large lots.

According to the New York Department of Environmental Conservation, the Town is expected to grow from its 1990 population of 1,578 to 1,850 people in 2010 - an increase of 272 people. If we were to assume that the average household size will decline to 2.5 people over this 20 year period, there will be a need for 109 new housing units to be added by 2010. This equates to an average of 5 or 6 new housing units to be added per year throughout the Town. The natural beauty of the Town combined with its excellent location relative to the regional transportation system would indicate that these projections may prove to be on the conservative side. This consideration makes it increasingly more important for the Town to have an active and ongoing planning program in order to properly influence the location, type, quality and amount of future growth.

Most of the developed land in the Town is located along road frontages, while interior portions remain largely undeveloped. This pattern is most evident along the major transportation arteries such as Routes 63 and 256.

Land availability is not a constraint for Sparta. At the level of new housing construction anticipated by State projections, the Town should be able to accommodate the projected development while preserving the Town's existing character. Housing could be located in attractive areas on in-fill sites along paved roads between existing development, or in small clusters on the undeveloped interior land areas.

Sufficient land area is available to support new housing in the Hamlet of Scottsburg as well as the area immediately adjacent to the Hamlet. The installation of a public water supply in this area would increase its attractiveness for new development.

o **Commercial**

Commercial land uses are not anticipated to experience any significant change in the future. About 22% of the residents participating in the survey expressed a desire for "neighborhood serving commercial activities." Presumably this would include the sale of groceries, sundries and some personal services. Scottsburg area respondents expressed the highest demand for these services (nearly 28%). However, 55% of the residents of Sparta expressed the opinion that no additional commercial facilities are needed or desired. As a large percentage of residents commute out of Town for work, it seems redundant to establish commercial activities which can be provided more efficiently in larger places.

Home operated business activities may increase in the future. It is recommended that additional public review and regulation of home occupations may be required. This is not meant to unduly impose limits on an individual's economic pursuits, but rather to insure that such activities do not become a nuisance or hazard to neighboring properties.

o **Industrial**

The primary industry of Sparta is agriculture. While farming operations in Sparta are not as extensive as they are in the northern portions of Livingston County, new non-farm development should be discouraged on prime agricultural soils. From the resident's

survey, it appears that some local farmers are anticipating retirement in the near future. These farmers are under the most pressure to sell off land for non-farm use. It is recommended that the Town coordinate its efforts to preserve an active agricultural economy with the Cooperative Extension and other farmer's organizations.

The Livingston County Industrial Development Agency and the Dansville Economic Development Corporation have been working cooperatively to develop the Dansville-Sparta Industrial Park and to attract industrial concerns to this site. Plans are being prepared to extend water and sewer facilities to this location from the Village of Dansville. The ultimate development of this property will have "spin-off" development impacts in the Town that will likely impact the population forecasts previously developed by the DEC.

The development of the industrial park may exert a considerable impact on Route 63 and other area roads. Site development plans should be carefully reviewed so as to minimize these impacts as well as potential adverse impacts on the Mud and Canaseraga Creek Floodplains, the Class II Wetland and existing development in the immediate area.

A significant increase in industrial development will likely create an increased demand for housing in Sparta. Without specific information on the nature of the businesses deciding to locate in the area and the skill/wage levels of employees, it is difficult to predict the demands that may be placed on the Town's housing market. Clearly, the full development of the industrial park may have a considerable impact on housing within the entire region.

## **Water Systems**

Water is supplied to most Town residents by individual wells and springs. A number of residents in the Scottsburg area are experiencing water problems. The lack of a sufficient water supply and the poor quality of water in the Hamlet area is a major community concern. As a result of these problems, the Town received a State grant to develop a series of test wells in the Scottsburg area to determine if a sufficient ground water supply exists that would enable the Town to form a public water district. The results of these exploratory efforts were unsuccessful in that the engineer was unable to certify that the wells tested would be able to yield a sufficient volume of supply to serve the needs of the Hamlet.

Despite this setback, the Town Board is pursuing additional funds to drill test wells in other areas near the Hamlet. The ability of the Scottsburg area to support additional development would be enhanced by the availability of a public water supply. Adding homes and small businesses to an existing settlement like Scottsburg has several advantages. The need for additional investments by the Town (i.e., for road improvements and public services, etc.) is minimized, while the addition of new residences and possibly a few small businesses would contribute to local vitality.

As relatively small annual increments in the Town's housing stock are anticipated, residents throughout most of the Town will continue to be dependent on private ground water supplies. Over time, however, the cumulative effect of drilling additional wells in areas with private septic systems will reduce water quality and perhaps even the quantity of supply. Larger scale

development would require serious consideration of the advisability of installing public water services.

### **Sewage Disposal**

At present, the Town is entirely dependent upon private septic systems. Soils which drain poorly predominate in the northern half of the Town, including areas just east of the Hamlet of Scottsburg. In view of the limited scale of future development which is anticipated in the Town, individual subsurface disposal systems can continue to be developed. Periodic monitoring of conditions by the Health Department, however, would probably be warranted around Scottsburg. If a public water system is developed for Scottsburg, public health concerns resulting from potential groundwater contamination would certainly be reduced.

Should a large scale residential, commercial or industrial development be proposed, a public or privately owned treatment system would most likely be required. As previously noted, public water and sanitary services will be extended from the Village of Dansville to support the proposed industrial park.

### **Storm Drainage**

Drainage culverts to hold and channel storm water are the only existing drainage improvements in the Town. Several small bridges span Sparta's streams.

The amount and pace of residential development projected in the Town is such that a public storm sewer system will not be necessary. However, if a large development project is planned, improvements such as ditch cleaning, culvert replacement and/or the installation of storm sewers will be necessary. As a large area of the Town is characterized by poor drainage, local officials should carefully review all development projects for their potential effects on drainage.

### **Natural Gas and Electric Service**

Electricity is available throughout the Town and the system is capable of supplying increased demand. Natural gas is available in only one part of the Town at this time. According to the resident's survey, nearly 70% of Town residents felt that the Town Board should pursue efforts to make natural gas available as a heating source to a larger area of the Town. Further investigation of this fuel source and its cost to consumers is recommended.

### **Transportation**

#### **o Roadways**

According to the New York State functional classification of public roads in rural areas, Route 63 has the highest level of usage in the Town and is classified as a Minor Arterial highway. Routes 255 and 256 function at a somewhat less intensive level and are classified as Major Collectors. Springwater and Reeds Corners Roads are Minor Collectors while all the other public roads in the Town are classified as local highways.

Routes 63, 255 and 256, Springwater and Reeds Corners Roads are all in fair to good condition and have excess capacity available to handle additional volumes. These roads connect to such major inter-regional highways as Route 390, the Thruway and Route 20.

The arterial and collector roads in the Town have a total length of about 24 linear miles, while the total length of local roads is estimated to be 31 miles. The Town has made a significant and continuing effort to install an improved year-round surface on its local road system. As a result of this effort, only a small percentage of the local roads are still unpaved.

Given the slopes of many of these east/west local roads and the variety of soils, depth to bedrock and permeability, year round use is difficult to maintain, particularly in the winter. The difficult topography makes it extremely important that the Town consider the impacts of new development on the local road system as part of its development review process. This review should insure that: run-off and erosion is minimized; adequate sight distances are maintained; proper gradients and turning radii are employed; and, the number of access driveways are limited.

It is unlikely that the construction of new roadways will be needed within the twenty year horizon of the Comprehensive Plan. Most improvements will likely include the installation of highway safety features and the paving of existing dirt roads. The Town should establish a schedule of road improvements as part of an ongoing capital improvements program.

Should the development of the Dansville-Sparta Industrial Park generate heavy truck traffic, there may be a need for new road improvements. Signalization, signage and highway lighting may also be required at business exits and entrances.

#### **o Rail Service**

A small section of the Dansville and Mt. Morris Railroad runs diagonally across the southwest corner of the Town, adjacent to the Dansville - Sparta Industrial Park. The availability of rail service may be very important to future tenants of the industrial park and is an asset to the community.

### **SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS**

The Town of Sparta is similar to many rural communities in that it has both "strengths and weaknesses" for development. The Town's natural setting and the manmade improvements (both in their existing condition and how they may be affected and expanded) are key features of the local planning process. Sparta's relative strengths and weaknesses for development are summarized as follows:

#### **Strengths**

1. The Town provides a beautiful setting for rural living and small farms. There is a general consensus of Town residents that they want to preserve Sparta's rural, low density character.

2. Adequate land areas exist along paved roads and near the hamlets for housing infill. Undeveloped land areas exist behind existing roadside development. This allows new housing to be clustered and tucked into the natural topography and vegetation.
3. The Town is within reasonable commuting distance of Rochester and is close to Dansville, Geneseo and several other employment centers. Good access is available to major transportation arteries.
4. Areas of prime agricultural land continue to exist within the Town.

#### Weaknesses

1. No public water or sanitary sewer services are presently available. If public water were to become available in Scottsburg, consideration should be given to providing sufficient capacity to meet existing and future needs.
2. Areas of flood hazard, wetlands, hilly topography, shallow depth to bedrock, poor soil drainage and erodible soils make development within several areas of the Town unwise.
3. East/west travel is difficult due to poor road conditions and rough topography.
4. Residents are almost completely dependent on "out of town" locations for commercial goods and services (Rochester, Dansville, other Livingston County communities, etc.). There is no defined center which serves as a "focus" for Town activities. With the exception of Scottsburg, development and population is widely dispersed.
5. The lack of large bands of consistently prime farm soils limit the size of farming operations.

If the scale of development remains small, the existing weaknesses are not likely to be critical. These weaknesses could, however, substantially limit the Town's ability to attract and serve larger scale development.

## CHAPTER V

### GOALS AND POLICIES

The planning process has provided opportunities for residents and officials of the Town of Sparta to identify future land use and development goals. Opportunities for such input were accomplished through the resident's survey, participation at public meetings leading to the development of the Comprehensive Plan, interviews with elected and appointed officials, and other means. As the Plan is shaped in the coming months, additional opportunities will be provided for residents to participate in the process.

Planning goals represent a vision of the nature and character of the type of community that residents would like Sparta to be in the future. The process of setting goals allows the community to assess its options and to choose the most appropriate courses of action. In this manner, goals provide direction for the creation of the long range plan and help to establish an overall development philosophy for the community over a twenty year period. The goals also provide needed direction for the day to day decisions which influence land use and development in the Town.

The goals contained herein encompass the following areas: land use, including agricultural, residential, commercial and industrial uses; transportation; open space, conservation and recreation; and, community facilities and services. In conjunction with each goal, policies have been recommended to provide direction to assist in achieving the goals. The policies are intended to guide the Town Board and Town Planning Board as well as other advisory boards and administrative officials in making decisions on matters which impact on land use and development, regulations, infrastructure improvements and similar matters.

The goals and policies provide the basis for the Town's land use strategy. The goals help establish direction for future land use patterns and densities, while the policies provide the means by which the Town can, over time, achieve its goals. The policy guidelines thus provide the basis for:

- o recommending specific land use regulations;
- o making decisions on development projects under consideration by local officials;
- o establishing priorities for deploying community resources that influence development; and,
- o coordinating investments and sharing responsibilities between the Town, neighboring municipalities and Livingston County.

The goals and policies for the Town of Sparta Comprehensive Plan are as follows:

## LAND USE GOALS AND POLICIES

### Agricultural Goals and Policies

#### Goal

Maintain the viability of the Town's agricultural economy, protect prime production lands and maintain Sparta's rural character.

#### Policies

1. Foster agriculture through the adoption of land use regulations which do not curtail farming operations within the Town's agricultural areas.
2. Limit residential development in productive agricultural areas to low density single family units.
3. Permit commercial and industrial land uses in agricultural areas only where such uses will not be detrimental to agricultural and farming operations.
4. Utilize site plan techniques to minimize the potential loss of prime agricultural soils and disruptions to farming operations that could result from new non-farm development.
5. Support State and County activities that foster agricultural growth as elements of the regional economic development program.
6. Encourage the State and County to renew and sustain the Agricultural District formed within the Town under the New York State Agricultural Districts Law.
7. Limit the placement of public waterlines, highways, power lines and other investments that would encourage new non-farm development in those areas of the Town designated as agricultural on the land use plan.
8. Support the development of tax abatement programs that would encourage property owners to keep land in agricultural uses and to preserve and protect open space and conservation resources.

### Residential Goals and Policies

#### Goals

Coordinate the location and density of new residential development with the ability of the land to absorb such growth.

Undertake a continuing program to eliminate blight and/or deteriorating conditions and to preserve the Town's existing housing stock.

Meet the housing needs of the community by providing for a variety of choices in new housing.

Establish and maintain a program that insures the development of quality residential areas through the use of good site planning principles.

#### Policies

1. Encourage a suitable housing mix that will provide adequate and affordable housing for all age groups and incomes, including young marrieds, families, single-headed households and retired persons.
2. Maintain the integrity of residential areas by allowing only those uses which are compatible with the nature and intensity of existing residential uses.
3. Encourage new residential development to locate within or adjacent to the established hamlet areas in order to limit sprawl and the dispersion of development.
4. Limit new residential development in areas which are environmentally sensitive. This would include areas subject to natural flooding, areas with erodible soils, wetlands, steeply sloped areas and other locations characterized by similar physical limitations.
5. Achieve a high quality of design in residential developments through the use of such measures as clustering to protect natural features, conserve energy and reduce public service costs.
6. Existing development regulations which unnecessarily add to the cost of housing should be modified or eliminated.

#### **Commercial Goals and Policies**

##### Goal

Limit the development of new commercial and business uses in the Town. Residents shall continue to be dependent on facilities and services in Dansville and other communities for the majority of their basic needs.

##### Policies

1. Encourage the grouping of community commercial uses within the Hamlet of Scottsburg.
2. Stabilize and improve existing commercial uses through the encouragement of building renovation, parking and access improvements and landscaping in order to minimize potential traffic hazards and to upgrade the general attractiveness of such areas.
3. Carefully regulate the conversion of residential uses to commercial uses. Require a high standard of design and construction for such conversions and limit commercial uses to home occupations that will not diminish, or negatively impact on, the area's residential character.

4. Discourage strip commercial development along the major roads in the Town. Control highway access so as not to impede the flow of traffic and to maintain traffic safety standards.
5. Require adequate landscape screening and separation between residential and commercial areas so as to minimize potential land use conflicts.

### **Industrial Goals and Policies**

#### Goals

Be receptive to proposals for small scale limited industrial uses as a means of strengthening the community's economic base.

Promote industrial development that would stimulate additional agricultural production within the Town.

#### Policies

1. Develop a positive plan to attract desirable industrial uses in order to provide increased employment and to broaden the local tax base. Industrial uses should be of a nature and scale so as not to create a burden on public services and negatively impact upon the rural/agricultural character of the Town.
2. Identify potential sites that would be suitable for future industrial development. Such sites should be physically capable of supporting such uses and be consistent with the Town's overall land use and development goals.
3. Support the objectives of the Dansville Economic Development Corporation and participate in local efforts to promote the development of the Dansville-Sparta Industrial Park and the general economic health of the Dansville area.
4. Encourage actions that would improve the appearance of existing commercial and industrial operations. This would include building renovations, parking and access improvements, landscaping and buffering.

### **Transportation Goals and Policies**

#### Goal

Provide a circulation system that supports the Town's proposed land use plan with maximum economy, safety and amenity.

#### Policies

1. Enact subdivision regulations and development standards that would require private developers to provide needed road and drainage improvements.

2. Encourage and support a functional highway classification system which is consistent with, and furthers the objectives and recommendations of, the Comprehensive Plan.
3. Encourage the State to carry out a coordinated program of highway improvements to eliminate existing traffic safety problems along Routes 255, 256 and 63. "Spot improvements" to correct deficiencies in sight distances, minor highway realignments, intersection improvements and turning radii modifications are direly needed in specific areas.
4. Continue the Town's program of paving the remaining gravel surface roads to improve their safety, convenience and all-weather usefulness.
5. Recognize that the circulation system also serves as a component of the local recreation system and therefore should enhance the opportunities and special amenities for driving pleasure, sightseeing, bicycling, walking, etc.
6. Minimize, to the extent feasible, the number of individual access drives to major highways in order to maintain their safety and traffic-carrying capacity. This can be accomplished by requiring the use of such measures as:
  - a. parallel access roads;
  - b. cul-de-sacs and loop roads;
  - c. shared entranceways for neighboring uses; and,
  - d. reverse frontage, whereby lots front on an internal subdivision street rather than on the major highway.

Particular emphasis should be given to applying this policy to development along State Routes 63 and 256.

7. Encourage the provision of adequate facilities for pedestrian and bicycle access in the Hamlet of Scottsburg and other areas, as may be appropriate.

## **Open Space, Conservation and Recreation Goals and Policies**

### Goals

Direct the Town's land use and development program in a manner that enhances the natural landscape, helps to create an open space system and establishes a natural environment that reinforces the rural character of the community.

Protect the community's important environmental resources (e.g. aquifers, soils, wetlands, steep slopes, woodlands and floodplains) from the potential adverse effects of development.

### Policies

1. Coordinate efforts to improve drainage systems with neighboring communities which share common drainage basins with the Town of Sparta.
2. Prepare development regulations that are sensitive to local drainage problems. Carefully evaluate the effects of all proposals for development on drainage.
3. Enact subdivision regulations that would require developers/subdividers to be responsible for installing drainage features as a condition of subdivision approval.
4. Participate with the Village of Dansville, the local school districts and area municipalities to insure that Sparta residents have access to a variety of recreational facilities and programs.

### **Community Facilities and Services Goals and Policies**

#### Goal

Provide facilities for municipal government offices, services and maintenance responsibilities that are sufficiently financed, properly sited and adequately designed to meet the Town's existing and future needs.

#### Policies

1. Establish a program for capital improvements that will allow for needed improvements to be undertaken without significant increases or fluctuations in the Town tax rate.
2. Implement an ongoing program to insure adequate maintenance, repair and replacement of existing Town lands, buildings and equipment, roads and drainage facilities.
3. Consider the costs/benefits of developing potential public water systems and assess the impact of such systems on the Town's land use and development objectives.
4. Work closely with County and State officials to insure that local concerns are addressed in their decisions which affect the Town, particularly decisions concerning improvements to County and State highways.
5. Pursue various State and/or Federal grant programs as potential sources of revenues to help defray the cost of needed public improvements to local taxpayers.
6. Participate in the planning and development of cooperative programs that would maximize the availability of public services to Town residents without placing an undue burden on local taxpayers.
7. Work to establish a focal area for the Town that would bring together residents of all ages from all areas of the Town in order to help unify and identify a "Sparta Community." This may be a small Town park or a community center established in conjunction with a local recreation area.

CHAPTER VI  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2010

**GENERAL FEATURES**

This Comprehensive Plan for Sparta is designed to address:

- o beneficial existing development and desirable characteristics that need protection;
- o existing problems that need correction;
- o potential opportunities that should be enhanced; and
- o significant constraints that should be respected.

Some of the actions that are described would be expected even without the existence of a Plan. Other actions are proposed to protect against unwanted outcomes and to provide better guidance for expected actions - guidance that will minimize future problems.

Of course, no plan is immutable. Despite the best efforts, no one can be assured of having recognized every existing benefit, potential opportunity or significant constraint. Even for those factors that are recognized, no one can claim to have proposed a set of actions that will completely protect, correct and guide an entire community for a period of nearly 20 years.

Consequently, the 2010 Plan is not a detailed rendering of the future that is expected for Sparta. It is, instead, a design for controlled growth involving modest improvements and important additions to the existing, basically sound, development foundation. In providing such a design, the 2010 Plan outlines a framework for future development. Using the Plan, the various parties involved in development actions, whether they are public agencies or private developers, can coordinate their actions to the mutual benefit of all more efficiently and effectively. In addition, the consequences of any adjustments that are needed can be assessed more easily and meaningfully.

**Major Trends**

Prior to World War II agriculture was the major economic sector in the Town of Sparta. Today, few Town residents are full time farmers. Most residents work outside the Town at jobs which pay salaries and wages. A number of residents, however still maintain a small dairy or beef herd, keep pleasure horses, lambs, pigs or poultry which contribute to the rural character of the Town and provide products for the home or for sale. Some prime agricultural soils, particularly in the broad Canaseraga flood plain valley, are actively farmed in crops like hay, corn, wheat and oats. Some farmland is in use as orchards and to grow nursery stock.

Sparta is a small community which has grown consistently since 1950. During the most recent decade (1980 through 1990), Sparta grew by more than 8%, or from 1,458 to 1,578 residents. As indicated previously, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation expects

the Town to grow from its 1990 population of 1,578 to 1,850 people in 2010 - an increase of 272 people. If we were to assume that the average household size will decline to 2.5 people over this 20 year period, there will be a need for 109 new dwelling units to be added to the Town's housing stock by 2010. This equates to an average of 5 or 6 new dwellings added to the Town each year. In view of the many attributes the Town possesses, it would not be surprising if this estimate of growth proves to be rather conservative.

Although the development pattern in the Town is generally dispersed along the major north/south thoroughfares, some more concentrated development occurs in the Hamlets of Scottsburg and Reeds Corners. Recent additions to the Town's housing stock have generally occurred outside of the hamlets, and consist of a combination of mobile homes/manufactured housing and conventionally constructed single family homes.

### **The 2010 Plan Vision**

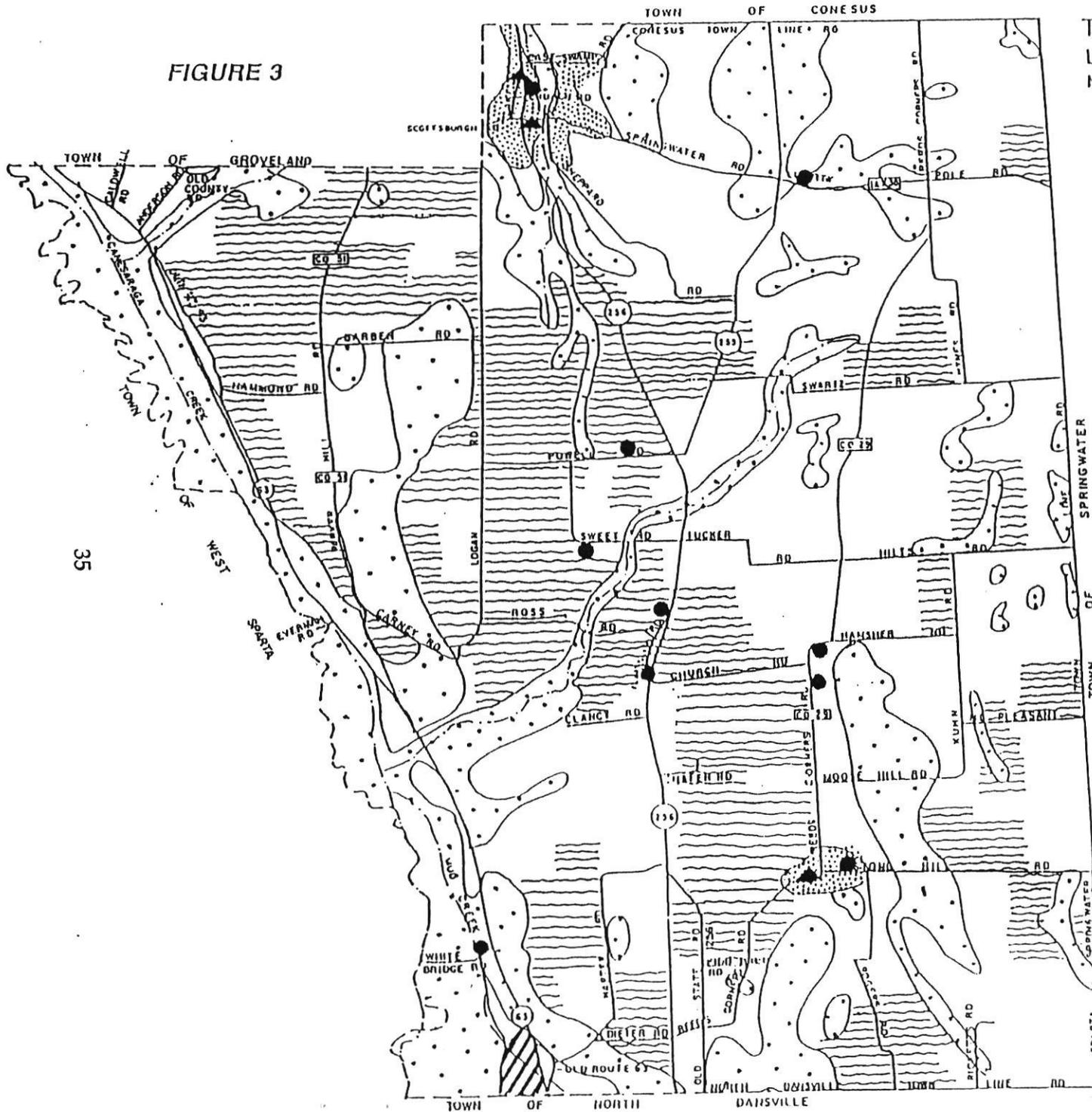
Figure 3 graphically summarizes the 2010 Plan. The foci of the plan are:

1. The Town of Sparta will remain a rural residential community during the twenty year horizon of this plan, with the Village of Dansville providing most of the commercial and personal services needed by Town residents.
2. The conservation of environmentally sensitive areas will be initiated or continued, particularly areas with steep slopes, highly erodible soils, woodlands, wetlands, floodplains and other critical environmental features.
3. The preservation of those remaining, actively farmed areas which are located on prime agricultural soils will be supported.
4. The infill development of housing and neighborhood services will be emphasized particularly in and near the Hamlets of Scottsburg and Reeds Corners.
5. The control of residential and the few commercial frontages, will continue to be important.
6. The completion and occupancy of a functional and attractive Dansville-Sparta Industrial Park will be a priority.

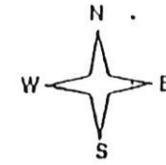
### **Improvements Should Acknowledge North/South Movement**

The important roads in Sparta run north and south. These roads house the few commercial activities and most public uses that currently exist in the Town. The majority of Sparta residents travel north for job opportunities, commercial goods and services and natural and cultural attractions. A second major destination is Dansville, particularly for weekly shopping (Sparta Resident's Survey, 1991) and further south for such natural attractions as Stony Brook State Park and southwest to Letchworth State Park. These areas are well established and should continue to provide most of the commercial and recreation needs of Town Residents.

FIGURE 3



TOWN OF SPARTA  
LIVINGSTON COUNTY  
NEW YORK STATE



# 2010 COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN

-  AGRICULTURAL
-  RURAL RESIDENTIAL
-  LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
-  CONSERVATION  
OPEN SPACE
-  GENERAL  
BUSINESS/COMMERCIAL
-  INDUSTRIAL
-  PUBLIC & SEMI-PUBLIC

2000 0 2000  
SCALE 1" = 1/4" = 100'

MAP PREPARED BY:  
STUART I. BROWN ASSOCIATES  
640 CROSSKEYS OFFICE PARK  
FAIRPORT NEW YORK 14450

No major new highway construction is recommended in the 2010 Plan. Instead a program of regular maintenance and upgrading is recommended. In general, improvements to roads and other associated facilities should be focused upon the north/south movement. Several of the east/west roads are still unpaved, making them muddy, dusty and in some cases, impassable for a good portion of the year. Paving should be undertaken in a planned fashion, with consideration given to the nature and pace of existing and new development of homes and other buildings.

When possible, additional housing and services development should occur in the northeastern quarter of the Town, close to Scottsburg. If sufficient water can be located to support Scottsburg's current and future residents, the northern portion of the Town can be expected to grow modestly with fewer constraints. Without public water, undeveloped land in the wider north/northeast area would likely accommodate a smaller portion of the total amount of development anticipated in Sparta during the next 20 years.

A second area for development of residences is in and around Reeds Corners. As can be seen on the resource maps included in Appendix A, few environmental or manmade constraints exist near this Hamlet and infill development at a density of 2 units per acre is appropriate.

Some additional rural residential development is also expected to be located within the south eastern portion of the Town, east of Route 63, as outlying development to Dansville. The 2010 Plan recommends a density of one housing unit per two to three acres in this area.

If an adequate supply of groundwater can be located to serve Scottsburg's needs, the wellhead and surrounding aquifer would require protection. One of the implications of wellhead protection includes limiting the quantity and type of development in the immediate vicinity of the water source. Facilities such as septic tanks, buried fuel and chemical tanks and other potentially polluting structures or equipment would either be prohibited or only allowed under certain conditions.

At present, the Town is entirely dependent upon private septic systems. Soils which drain poorly predominate in the northern half of the Town, including areas just east of Scottsburg. In view of the scale of future development anticipated in the Town, individual subsurface disposal systems can continue to be developed. Drain fields will need to be laid out carefully, to avoid problems with soils which percolate poorly. Periodic monitoring of conditions by the County Health Department, would probably be warranted around Scottsburg. Depending upon the nature of future development in the Hamlet and the vulnerability of the aquifer, public sewage disposal may eventually be necessary in this area.

### **Affordable Housing**

In the implementation of the 2010 Plan, it is important to maintain the quality of the community's existing housing supply. Not only is the rehabilitation of existing housing the most economic solution to maintaining the housing stock in Scottsburg and Reeds Corner's, it is the approach which affords these communities the most character and appeal. One of the advantages of the existing houses in the two hamlets is that they are not overly large. Therefore, they can continue to be maintained by households of moderate means. Community

Development funds may provide a source of loans and grants to assist elderly and lower income households to keep up their homes and this source of funding should be investigated.

An increasing percentage of Sparta's population is over sixty five years of age. This could create an increase in the demand for senior housing in the Town as elders find it more difficult to keep up individual homes in the more outlying areas of the community and need additional services which are more easily provided in denser settlements. The Hamlets of Scottsburg and Reeds Corners are too small to provide the full range of services that may be needed for a small senior housing project. As Dansville provides a far better location for any increments to such specialized housing, the Town should cooperate with the Village of Dansville in efforts to expand the supply of senior housing. By actively addressing this need, existing housing in the Town will become available to younger households. This transition would increase the possibility that the Town's existing housing stock would be maintained and kept in standard condition.

### Historic Structures

Sparta contains a number of farmhouses and hamlet residences, former commercial buildings and churches that were built during the late 18th and 19th centuries. The Town has several very attractive old barns and other agricultural outbuildings of note. The Town Hall was a former schoolhouse under School District #2, before it was adapted to its present public use. In addition, there are a number of cemeteries which provide one with a glimpse of life in the past. A handsome stand of maple trees planted in 1910 still stands on what was the old Traxler homestead.

An inventory of the Town's historic resources was initiated during Sparta's recent bicentennial celebration. It is recommended that data from this effort be coordinated with information in the Livingston County Historian's Office and that a central record be established. These records will be invaluable in helping individuals and groups sensitively restore older structures in the Town. Once the inventory is completed, it is recommended that the Town investigate the establishment of a historic preservation ordinance.

Figure 3 depicts the proposed future land use plan for the Town of Sparta. The plan presents a concept for the future of the community and provides a basis for local boards and officials to use in making the day-to-day decisions which shape the Town. The individual land use categories and the development philosophies that drive each of the use classifications are described in the following section of this chapter.

### AGRICULTURAL USE AREAS

The Comprehensive Plan strongly supports farmland preservation in both the agricultural and rural residential areas, depicted on the 2010 Plan map. This objective is especially important on lands which:

- o Contain soils identified by the Soil Conservation Service as being of primary importance;
- o are within an agricultural district;

- o are used for agricultural production and include at least 100 contiguous acres or, if the area is smaller, is used for intensive or specialized agriculture like nursery stock production; and
- o have been in agricultural production for at least one of the preceding three years, or the land is in the agricultural conservation and stabilization service.

The development of new housing in agricultural areas should be planned so as to minimize the conversion of productive lands to non farm uses. In order to accomplish this objective, housing proposed in agricultural areas should be channeled to less productive agricultural soils. In the implementation chapter, Chapter 7, under "Zoning Ordinance Revision", a new Agricultural Zone is described. Although this zone would allow single family non-farm dwellings on farmland within agricultural areas, as the size of the farmland holdings increase, the number of single family structures allowed would not increase proportionally. This is called "sliding scale" zoning. In addition, the proposed Agricultural Zone would encourage clustering or the grouping of residential development in order to minimize the intrusion upon active farmland.

#### RURAL RESIDENTIAL USE AREAS

The 2010 Plan map shows rural residential use in many areas throughout the Town, but outside the Hamlets of Scottsburg and Reeds Corners. These areas are generally appropriate for large lot (2 to 3 acres) development. A number of such locations exist along Routes 63, 255, 256 and Reed Corners Road. Efforts should be made at the time of site plan review to limit individual access drives onto these thoroughfares. Where appropriate, shared drives or collector roads are encouraged to reduce the number of access points along the highway. Common use of access drives will have the added benefit of reducing infrastructure costs to the homebuilder.

Rural residential use at the densities envisioned will allow adequately sized parcels for private water and septic systems, even in areas where soil and groundwater conditions are considered moderate. The Town should encourage developers in rural residential areas to maintain vegetative buffers and tree borders along roadways and between adjacent residences, no matter how modest the residence. Also, housing should be sited on parcels so as to respect the topography; this would mean limiting cut and fill activities and where possible, "tucking" housing into locations which are less visible from the road. This would help to maintain the rural appearance which is so highly valued by residents (Sparta Residents Survey, 1991).

Home occupations have the potential to create negative traffic impacts and visual clutter in residential areas. Chapter 7, "Implementation" recommends that sections of the zoning ordinance which deals with home occupations be reviewed to reflect current directions and practices in home occupations. It is also recommended that the Town's junkyard ordinance and its enforcement procedures be reviewed (see Chapter 7, "Implementation") to limit continued storage of junk vehicles, worn out appliances, building debris and other scrap materials.

Sparta has experienced an increase in seasonal use residences over the years, from 1 structure in 1970 to 18 in 1990. Presumably these seasonal dwellings are used during hunting season and as retreats. The Town should review its policy on the location of such dwellings near other year round residential areas. As hunting may pose safety hazards to residents, hunting cabins and camps are not compatible with established residential areas.

## LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL USE AREAS

If public water becomes a reality in Scottsburg, the area should be able to absorb additional housing. This does not mean that the Scottsburg area should become a community where infill housing results in single family houses with very small lots (four to five houses per acre). The 2010 Plan recommends that Scottsburg and Reeds Corners be designated as low density residential areas. For the most part, the density of housing within the hamlet areas should not exceed 2 housing units per acre.

Neighborhood scale commercial uses can be located in low density residential areas. The resident's survey indicated that Town residents would like to have an additional grocery store, convenience store and shops that provide personal services. As residents would probably continue to travel to Dansville or to the Rochester area - Monroe County area for all but the most necessary goods and services, any substantial increase in commercial services could not be supported by Town residents. New commercial uses should have sufficient on site parking available as travel to such areas is likely to be by car. Parking should be located to the side or behind the buildings, so as to maintain the building facade pattern of the hamlets. Consideration should also be given to site plan standards which requires that parking areas be screened or buffered from adjacent residential sites.

It is noted that some existing land uses within the Town's hamlets may be inconsistent with the future vision of the 2010 Plan. If such activities become less viable within the planning period, decision makers should welcome proposals to replace them with commercial activities scaled to serve the more immediate surrounding neighborhood.

## CONSERVATION USE AREAS

The conservation use area shown on the 2010 Plan encompasses portions of the Town which possess environmentally sensitive features such as wetlands, woodlands, floodplains, highly erodible soils and areas with steep slopes. This use classification should not be necessarily be viewed as a development constraint, as residential areas located adjacent to such sensitive areas can provide unique and highly attractive amenities. For example, housing located near forested areas would be afforded the silence, shade, wildlife and air quality of a large stand of trees.

The most appropriate use of land within a conservation area is as a buffer, separating potentially incompatible uses. Conservation areas can also be put to limited recreational uses. Floodplains can make fine ball fields during the dry season and wetlands can be excellent bird watching areas.

The 2010 Plan shows conservation areas at a very small scale. Sensitively located, limited, low density development of residences in a conservation use area may be possible. In such cases, however, topographic, wetland and vegetation maps and other resources should be consulted. In addition, when development is proposed within the area (i.e. one unit per 5 acres), a site visit should be made by members of the Planning Board and/or Town staff, as field investigation often reveals information which is not available from other sources. The Town may require applicants for building permits in conservation areas to provide certain technical information, paid for at their own expense, where questions arise regarding particularly sensitive features (i.e. unique flora or fauna, wetland impacts, etc.).

Chapter 7, "Implementation of the 2010 Plan" suggests a site plan review process for development within conservation areas. Also recommended is a conservation overlay district which identifies sensitive natural areas and would assist developers and the Town in appropriately reviewing development proposals for sites in flood hazard areas, wetlands, stream corridors, mature forests, public wellhead and watershed protected areas and in areas with erodible soils.

## PUBLIC AND SEMIPUBLIC LAND USES

This use includes the Town Hall, Highway Garage, Fire Hall, places of worship, cemeteries and other community facilities. Consideration regarding future public uses which serve a community center type function should include proximity to Scottsburg.

School children in Sparta are served by several different school districts. All of the existing school facilities serving Town residents are located outside of Sparta. According to the residents' survey, the Town's population is satisfied with the quality of existing educational services. In order to continue serving families with school age children, Town officials should coordinate municipal activities with school officials as development of housing occurs, as well as on other issues of joint Town/School concern.

Schools often serve as center of activities. In addition, the quality of the school system is an important factor which can influence the type and quality of development which occurs in a community. The fragmentation of the school age population into different districts in Sparta works against community cohesiveness. It is suggested that the Town consider developing a small park, with an area for active recreation, which may assist in bringing families and individuals together. A community center building could serve the same purpose, while allowing more year round use.

There are no health care services located in Sparta. The population is too small and most residents regularly seek services in nearby larger communities. The nearest location for such services is Dansville. The center of the system is Noyes Memorial Hospital which provides most community and regional level hospital services. There are physicians, dentists, preventive health care clinics (well child, family planning, mental health and WIC clinics), pharmacies and a nursing home in Dansville. Additional clinics are provided in Springwater, Mt. Morris and Nunda. Adult day care services are available in Mt. Morris, while there is an adult community home in Nunda.

The Livingston County Health Department provides visiting nursing services to home bound Town residents. In 1990, there were 50 residents who received referrals for home health care services. The resources of the Rochester health care system are accessible for more specialized services. The current health care system seems adequate for Sparta at this time and into the near future.

In the absence of public water, Sparta should investigate establishing a system of farm ponds throughout the Town for use in fire fighting. This will improve the ability of fire fighters to suppress fires and have the potential for lowering the Town's fire insurance rating (ISO rating). The implication of a lower rating is that fire insurance costs would be reduced to local property owners in the Town.

## INDUSTRIAL LAND USE

There is only one area recommended for light industrial manufacturing. It is located in the southwestern corner of the Town, the eastern boundary is the west side of Route 63, the western boundary is the DEC designated wetland and Mud Creek, the southern boundary is the Town line with the Town of North Dansville, while the northern boundary is approximately 500-600 feet south of White Church Road. The area encompasses the Dansville-Sparta Industrial Park.

The Dansville-Sparta Industrial Park is proposed for new manufacturing activities. The Livingston County Industrial Development Agency and the Dansville Economic Development Corporation have been working cooperatively to attract industries to the site. Public sewer and water service will be extended from Dansville to serve the new site occupants.

The Town should join with the economic development agencies in the early review of site and development plans. Site specific analyses of floodplain and wetland impacts should be completed and mitigation measures implemented.

In reviewing the plans for proposed developments, it is recommended that all parking for new facilities be located to the west of the building(s), so that the view from Route 63 is of buildings, not a series of parking lots. The Town should insist upon landscaping plans which enhance the building facades and provides a landscaped buffer along Route 63, along the entryways to the industrial building, within and around the parking lots and areas designated for exterior storage. Consideration should be given to employee amenities like lighted walkways to parking areas and improved outdoor areas for eating and relief breaks.

Once industrial users are identified, the Town should work cooperatively with the Industrial Development Agency and the Development Corporation to determine the impact of job related traffic and any heavy truck traffic onto and off of Route 63. Access off of a secondary road at the south end of the Industrial Park is more appropriate for trucks. In addition, depending upon the size of the firms and the nature and rhythm of their operations, road modifications and safety controls may be required (i.e. turning lanes, traffic control lights, stop signs, etc.) for Route 63.

As a general rule, the Town should employ the State Environmental Quality Regulations (SEQR) in reviewing development proposals involving major industrial, commercial or housing projects. The regulations will assist the Town in systematically evaluating the environmental or manmade impacts of any project, will improve project quality and reduce or mitigate potential adverse impacts associated with such proposals.

The Town must consider the floodplain and wetland area in industrial site plan review. All Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) and Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) regulations must be observed by the developer and the Town.

## CHAPTER VII

### IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2010 PLAN

Regardless of how desirable or logical the goals and recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan may appear, they have no real authority and will not affect the future growth of Sparta unless they are recognized as official policies and incorporated into specific ordinances and regulations. Only in this manner will the results of the planning process be useful in guiding the day-to-day decisions of the Town and provide direction to private developers, local businesses and individual citizens. State enabling legislation assigns broad authority to local governments to regulate growth and development. This Chapter of the report discusses some of the ways in which the Comprehensive Plan can become a positive tool for local development.

#### REGULATORY ACTIVITIES

A wide range of regulatory devices are available to assist municipalities in their efforts to control land development patterns and achieve planning objectives. As the implementation of many of the suggestions in the Plan are dependent upon the enactment of such regulations, it is essential that the policies and priorities which support these ordinances be clearly identified and understood by local officials, landowners and developers affected by such policies. The following narrative describes several of these techniques which may be utilized by the community to guide future land use decisions.

#### Zoning Regulations

The zoning ordinance is probably the most familiar means of regulating land use to the average citizen. Zoning regulates two basic elements: the use of the land (i.e., residential, industrial or commercial); and, bulk or dimensional requirements (i.e., building heights, lot coverage and setbacks). The zoning ordinance also establishes procedures to be followed in the review and processing of development proposals.

By grouping together compatible uses, zoning seeks to:

- o Conserve the value of individual properties, uses and unique areas;
- o Assure orderly and efficient community growth; and
- o Protect the general public welfare.

In order to achieve the land use concepts of the Comprehensive Plan, existing zoning regulations should reflect the plans and policies described in this report. Unlike the Comprehensive Plan, which is a policy and conceptual document, zoning is backed by State law and has the force of police power.

While traditional zoning rules and regulations are often quite effective in enforcing the status quo in urban or suburban neighborhoods, it must be recognized that the use of "standard" zoning controls can be very ineffective in regulating and determining land use in undeveloped

areas. As market forces can render the "best" ordinances obsolete, the current thrust in zoning for undeveloped areas is to emphasize services (i.e., water, sewer and transportation) and physical features (steep slopes, wetlands, floodplains, etc.) rather than the simple mapping of zones. Sub-sequent revisions to the Town of Sparta Zoning Ordinance should be designed to reflect this two-fold approach. Regulations should also acknowledge and consider the Town's projected rate of development over a specific period of time.

There are several special zoning techniques which may be particularly useful in helping the Town of Sparta carry out the intent of the Town's Comprehensive Plan. Three such techniques are briefly described herein.

Environmental Protection Overlay Districts (EPOD): The EPOD concept establishes special regulations to protect land areas that are environmentally sensitive. The regulations are superimposed over an existing primary zone district and can be designed to address the land areas with such special characteristics as erodible soils, steeply sloped areas, woodlands, wetlands and flood hazard areas.

Variable Density Distribution: This technique permits higher density development in specific areas of proposed developments in exchange for the establishment of open space areas in other portions of the same development site.

Sliding Scale Zoning: In areas with productive agricultural soils, the Town Board may wish to consider the creation of a new Agricultural Zone which embodies the sliding scale concept. The sliding scale is used to maintain low densities by limiting the number of non-agricultural parcels that may be created within farmland areas. Although the number of non-agricultural parcels that may be created will increase as the size of the farmland parcel increases, the number of new parcels does not occur in the same proportion as the size of the farm parcel. In addition, instead of requiring very large lots to discourage land subdivisions, this concept imposes a maximum size for development parcels and requires that development takes place on lands with the lowest production values.

### **Subdivision Regulations**

While zoning is largely concerned with the uses and arrangement of buildings on individual lots or properties, subdivision regulations are concerned with the arrangement of individual lots in relationship to one another and to the land on which they are located. In addition, subdivision regulations can direct the type of services to be made available within a development as well as imposing standards for their location and construction.

Subdivision regulations are often viewed merely as a procedure to improve the layout of new developments. In actual practice, however, the proper use of the subdivision process can be most instrumental in determining the future character, style and efficiency of the Town. Subdivision regulations benefit the Town in the following ways:

- o Insure a quality residential area by involving health and environmental authorities in the development process prior to construction;

- o Minimize potential strip development problems and insure adequate access to interior land areas;
- o Reduce maintenance, public service costs and potential health and safety problems by insuring that adequate provisions have been made for drainage and other necessary improvements;
- o Improve fire protection and emergency services through effective street design and naming requirements; and
- o Reduce energy consumption by creating more efficient land development patterns.

The Town Planning Board should review Sparta's existing subdivision regulations. Modifications should be made where necessary to reflect the development policies outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. Development proposals should be reviewed for compliance with these policies prior to approval.

### **Other Regulations**

Although zoning and subdivision regulations are the most commonly used devices to control development, several other tools are available to assist governments in their efforts to direct future development. The most significant of these tools are described below:

Wetlands Management Act: A State law which gives municipalities the authority to adopt local legislation to preserve freshwater wetlands. Under this legislation, localities have the authority to regulate activities which would drain, fill or pollute wetland resources. The implementation of such controls would insure the preservation of wetlands essential to the local ecology and prevent development from occurring in environmentally significant locations.

Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR): This State law requires local governments to determine whether actions they undertake directly or those for which they issue licenses, permits or other entitlements may have a significant effect on the environment. If proposed actions may cause a significant environmental impact, an environmental impact statement describing both the positive and negative impacts and alternatives of the proposed action must be prepared. The implementation of this legislation insures that information on major developments affecting the community will be analyzed to determine potential environmental impacts.

Official Map: An Official Map is an ordinance which identifies and protects public services (streets, parks, drainage areas, etc.) which are essential to properly serve future development. Once the Map is adopted, no development may occur that would modify the public services shown on the Map unless a public hearing has been held and a variance granted to allow such use to occur. An Official Map would be useful to insure the retention of drainage facilities, rights-of-way for improvements in the transportation system and locations for future parks.

Property Maintenance: State laws give municipalities the authority to regulate the maintenance of properties and buildings in accordance with established property standards. The purpose of such legislation is to protect the health and safety of residents and to preserve the value of