VILLAGE OF GROTON

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2026

Preserving Our Heritage, Planning Our Future





Groton lumber yard, office, etc., 1914





NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY. Department of State

Prepared with funding provided through the New York State Department of State

SMART GROWTH PLANNING PROGRAM

VILLAGE OF
GROTON
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Grant funding assistance provided by the NYS Department of State

NEW YORK STATE
Department of State
Planning, Development & Community Infrastructure

Prepared by the Village of Groton in Partnership with Thoma Development Consultants

THOMA
DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANTS

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VILLAGE OF GROTON
SMART GROWTH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

VILLAGE OF GROTON VISION STATEMENT

The Village of Groton, situated on the Owasco Lake Inlet, purposefully leverages its strengths and assets to create a quality community focused on active small-town living. Positioned between the larger urban centers of Ithaca, Cortland, and Auburn, the Village embraces its role as a bedroom community and focuses on a high quality of life, abundant natural and recreational resources, and its unique history to attract families seeking an active lifestyle. A Historic downtown, the Owasco Inlet, and an engaged citizenry are foundational strengths on which the community prospers.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background

This Comprehensive Plan serves as an inclusive and forward-looking guide to promoting the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of the Village of Groton. Comprehensive planning provides the foundation for municipal efforts to guide the development and stewardship of the Village's natural and built environments while sustaining and enhancing overall quality of life. This plan reflects the community's shared vision for Groton's future and recognizes the importance of sustainability, resiliency, and responsible growth. It is designed to help the Village move confidently into the future while preserving the small-town character, historic identity, and sense of place that residents value.

The Comprehensive Plan has been developed with Smart Growth principles in mind. These principles emphasize compact, efficient development patterns; reinvestment in existing neighborhoods and infrastructure; a mix of land uses; walkability; and transportation choices that support residents of all ages and abilities. By encouraging development that is appropriately scaled, environmentally responsible, and economically viable, the plan seeks to balance growth with preservation of open space, agricultural lands, and natural resources. Smart Growth also supports fiscal responsibility by maximizing the use of existing infrastructure and public investments while minimizing unnecessary sprawl.

Significant public decisions and actions affecting the short- and long-term protection, enhancement, growth, and development of the Village can be influenced by the goals, policies, and implementation strategies set forth in this Comprehensive Plan. The plan not only serves as a guide for addressing key issues facing the Village today but also provides a flexible framework for responding to future opportunities and challenges. As a long-range planning document, it offers recommendations for future action and assists local leaders in prioritizing investments and allocating resources in a manner consistent with community values.

This Comprehensive Plan also serves as a foundation for the Village of Groton's zoning regulations and any future amendments to those regulations. While the plan itself is not a regulatory document, land use management strategies, policy changes, and zoning updates are often direct outcomes of its implementation. A well-conceived and adopted Comprehensive Plan helps provide a sound legal basis for the Village's land use decisions and regulatory actions.

The overall purpose of this Comprehensive Plan is to focus attention on the Village of Groton's goals and objectives and to establish a clear conceptual roadmap for achieving them. It provides guidance to elected officials, municipal boards, partner agencies, community organizations, local businesses, and residents to ensure that community needs are addressed both now and in the

future. The plan is long-term in nature, typically looking ahead approximately ten years, and places particular emphasis on land use policy and practical strategies for integrating those policies into future Village decisions in a manner consistent with Smart Growth and sustainable development principles. The DOS Smart Growth Principles are attached as Appendix C.

Statutes and Authority

New York State statutes authorize local governments, including villages, to prepare and adopt comprehensive plans and recommend specific elements for their inclusion. The State recognizes that many of the most consequential decisions affecting community character, environmental quality, and long-term economic vitality are made at the local level. One of the most important powers granted by the New York State Legislature to local governments is the authority to engage in comprehensive planning. For villages, New York State Village Law § 7-722 defines a comprehensive plan, identifies the elements that may be addressed, and establishes the procedural requirements for its preparation and adoption. While adoption of a comprehensive plan is voluntary, it provides the Village of Groton with a policy framework to guide future growth and investment in a manner consistent with Smart Growth principles, including compact development, efficient use of existing infrastructure, preservation of natural resources, and reinforcement of the Village's historic settlement pattern.

New York State law further requires that land use regulations be adopted in accordance with a comprehensive plan. Pursuant to Village Law § 7-704, zoning regulations and zoning amendments enacted by the Village of Groton must be made "in accordance with a comprehensive plan." Maintaining land use regulations that are consistent with an up-to-date comprehensive plan provides important legal support while advancing Smart Growth and climate resilience objectives. Land use regulations extend beyond conventional zoning that establishes districts and controls permitted uses, building dimensions, and yard requirements; they may also include policies and standards intended to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, encourage walkable and mixed-use development, protect environmentally sensitive areas, manage stormwater and flooding, conserve steep slopes, safeguard historic and cultural resources, and preserve scenic viewsheds. Through alignment of zoning and other land use tools with this Comprehensive Plan, the Village can promote sustainable development patterns, enhance resilience to climate-related impacts, and protect community assets for current and future generations.

Purpose and Intent of the Comprehensive Plan

The Village of Groton, like many communities, is shaped by the ongoing decisions and actions of public agencies, private organizations, businesses, and individual property owners. These decisions, whether made independently or collectively, have lasting effects on the Village's

physical character, environmental quality, economic vitality, and overall quality of life. Periodic comprehensive planning provides an opportunity to step back and evaluate the broader context in which these decisions occur, assess emerging trends, address land use and development issues, understand the concerns of residents and stakeholders, and determine whether policy changes are needed to guide the Village toward its desired future.

This Comprehensive Plan is the result of the Village of Groton's proactive effort to more effectively manage growth and respond to changing conditions in a manner consistent with Smart Growth principles. The Village's previous plan was a joint comprehensive plan with the Town of Groton. In the absence of a previously adopted comprehensive plan dedicated solely to the Village, this document establishes a coordinated policy framework to guide future land use, infrastructure investment, and regulatory decisions.

This Comprehensive Plan is intended to serve as a blueprint for future action by the Village Board, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and other local boards and committees, as well as a reference for residents, property owners, and investors as the Village addresses growth, change, and reinvestment. The planning process was conducted over an extended period of time from 2024 through 2025 and was grounded in meaningful public participation. The plan reflects the values, priorities, and concerns expressed by Village residents, landowners, and stakeholders through participation on a steering committee, public meetings and workshops, written comments, and community surveys. This inclusive approach ensured that the plan responds to local needs and aspirations and enabled the Village to identify its strengths, opportunities, challenges, and critical issues. Additional information regarding public participation and community outreach is provided elsewhere in this document.

Funding

Preparation of the Plan was supported by a $50,000 Smart Growth Comprehensive Planning Grant awarded by the New York State Department of State (DOS). The grant program encourages communities to plan for compact, efficient development; reinvestment in existing neighborhoods and infrastructure; protection of natural and historic resources; and development patterns that enhance walkability, sustainability, and community character.

Plan Preparation

The Village of Groton retained Thoma Development Consultants (Thoma) to assist with the preparation of the Village's Comprehensive Plan. Founded in 1980, Thoma is a community development consulting firm based in Cortland, New York, with more than 35 years of experience in municipal planning and community development. Thoma has worked with the Village of Groton for many years on a range of planning and development initiatives.

In preparing this Comprehensive Plan, Thoma analyzed information obtained through public meetings, community surveys, and Steering Committee discussions. The firm also reviewed relevant U.S. Census data and other demographic information to inform the planning process.

Input and recommendations were provided based on the professional experience of Thoma's staff and their longstanding familiarity with the Village. All data sources are cited within the plan, as appropriate.

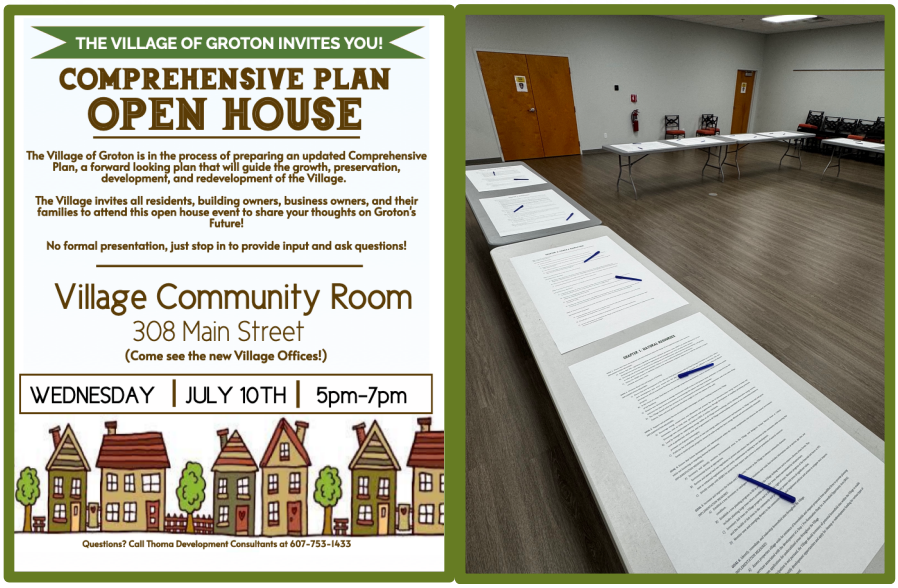
Public Participation

Meaningful community participation was a fundamental component of the Comprehensive Plan process. Engaging a diverse group of residents, business owners, and community stakeholders ensured that multiple perspectives were represented and helped foster a shared sense of responsibility for the plan's outcomes. This collaborative approach allowed community members to contribute directly to shaping the Village's long-term direction.

To support this effort, the Village implemented a broad and inclusive public engagement program designed to gather local input, promote transparency, and establish a common vision for the future of Groton. Several outreach methods were employed during the planning process, including:

- Formation of a Steering Committee to provide guidance, share local knowledge, and represent a range of community interests throughout the planning process.
- Distribution of a community-wide survey to identify key issues, priorities, and ideas for the Village's future.
- Public workshops and meetings, along with Steering Committee sessions, which were held at accessible locations and open to all residents.

Feedback gathered through these efforts informed the development of the Comprehensive Plan and is reflected in the topics discussed in the following sections.



Images: Public meeting advertisement and public input activity stations.
Source: Thoma Development Consultants

Steering Committee

The Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee was established by the Village's governing body to guide development of the plan. The Committee included a cross-section of participants, such as local officials, municipal staff, business representatives, and residents at large. Serving as a forum for discussion and collaboration, the Steering Committee helped identify opportunities, evaluate alternatives, and shape the shared goals and strategies that form the foundation of the Comprehensive Plan.

The membership of the Village of Groton Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee included:

Frank Heine, Resident
Glenn Morey, Former Town Supervisor and County Legislator
Nancy Niswender, Village Clerk and Administrator
Chuck Rankin, Former Village of Groton Administrator and Resident
Ted Skibinski, Code Officer and Local Entrepreneur
Ashlyn McCarty, Deputy Clerk

Resident Survey

A survey of Groton residents was conducted as part of this plan. The survey was available in hard copy, online via a link posted on the village website, and by a QR code which was mailed to all village residents. The survey instrument and results are included in Appendix X. The survey was conducted in 2024 while the plan was in the early stages of development. The results are summarized below.

A total of 126 residents submitted survey responses. The survey largely focused on obtaining public perception on the quality and/or importance of village services and operations, amenities, and local issues and initiatives.

Some key responses that should be noted include the following:

- Downtown revitalization was identified as the most important initiative for the Village to focus on in the future. This was closely followed by the need to attract commercial development, maintaining sidewalks and pedestrian connections, and housing rehabilitation.
- The most needed amenities in the Village are a grocery store and a pharmacy.
- When asked to describe the village, respondents most used the terms “friendly”, “potential”, “home”, and “peaceful”.

Comprehensive Plan Implementation

The goals established in the Village of Groton Comprehensive Plan are the result of extensive consideration by the Village’s appointed Steering Committee. They are grounded in a careful review of information provided by residents, property owners, community organizations, and other stakeholders with an interest in Groton, as well as the professional analysis and observations of the Village’s consultant. Care was taken to ensure that all goals and implementation measures align with the Village’s long-term Vision Statement. Many goals are intentionally broad and express the community’s aspirations for the Village’s character, growth, and development. Village officials, boards, and departments should use these goals as a framework to guide future policies, decisions, and investments to ensure consistency with the community’s shared vision.

Each goal is accompanied by a set of Implementation Measures that identify specific actions and strategies to advance the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. These measures are prioritized to provide direction regarding the anticipated timing and sequencing of initiatives. The Village recognizes that evolving conditions, new opportunities, and unforeseen challenges may require periodic review and adjustment of these measures. As such, the Implementation Measures should be revisited and updated as necessary to remain responsive to current circumstances while continuing to advance the Plan’s overall goals.

CHAPTER 2: SETTING THE SCENE

HISTORY

The Village of Groton is a small rural community in the northeastern corner of Tompkins County, along the border with Cortland County. Its history reflects broader patterns common to Central New York with early settlement tied to post-Revolutionary land division, nineteenth-century agricultural expansion, and a twentieth century rise and decline of manufacturing.

The area that is now Groton was originally part of the Central New York Military Tract, established to compensate soldiers of the American Revolutionary War. Settlement began in the late 18th century, with early residents drawn by abundant land and access to water resources such as the Owasco Inlet. The community developed gradually as a small agricultural hamlet, with early civic institutions, including churches, schools, and mills, establishing the grounds for village life. The Village of Groton was formally incorporated in 1860 as a municipal entity.

By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Groton evolved into a modest industrial and commercial center, serviced by rail connections that linked it to regional destinations. The most significant chapter in the Village's history began in 1909 with the establishment of the Smith Corona (later Smith Corona Marchant, or SCM). For decades, SCM served as the economic backbone of the Village and the surrounding region, including Cortland County. The company employed approximately 6,000 workers in the Groton–Cortland area at its peak, profoundly shaping the community's identity, growth patterns, and housing stock. Between 1915 and 1920, the company constructed roughly 50 worker homes in the Village, many of which remain today and contribute to the Village's historic character.



Image: Groton Lumber Yard, 1914. Source: Village of Groton

The latter half of the twentieth century brought significant economic disruption. Beginning in the 1970s, SCM faced increasing competition from foreign manufacturers, leading to substantial workforce reductions. In 1983, the company closed its Groton plant after 74 years of operation, and the facility was demolished the following year. Although the site was remediated and later redeveloped, the closure marked the end of an industrial era. Remaining operations were consolidated and moved, and by 2001, SCM had fully exited the region.

The loss of SCM had a profound and lasting impact on the Village of Groton. Many displaced workers experienced reduced wages, lost retirement benefits, and long-term economic hardship. The Village's relatively remote location has made it difficult to attract replacement industry at a comparable scale, and the economic base has shifted toward smaller-scale service and institutional employment, with the Groton Central School District now serving as the largest employer.



Image: Smith Corona Typewriter, Groton, NY. Source: Groton Historical Society

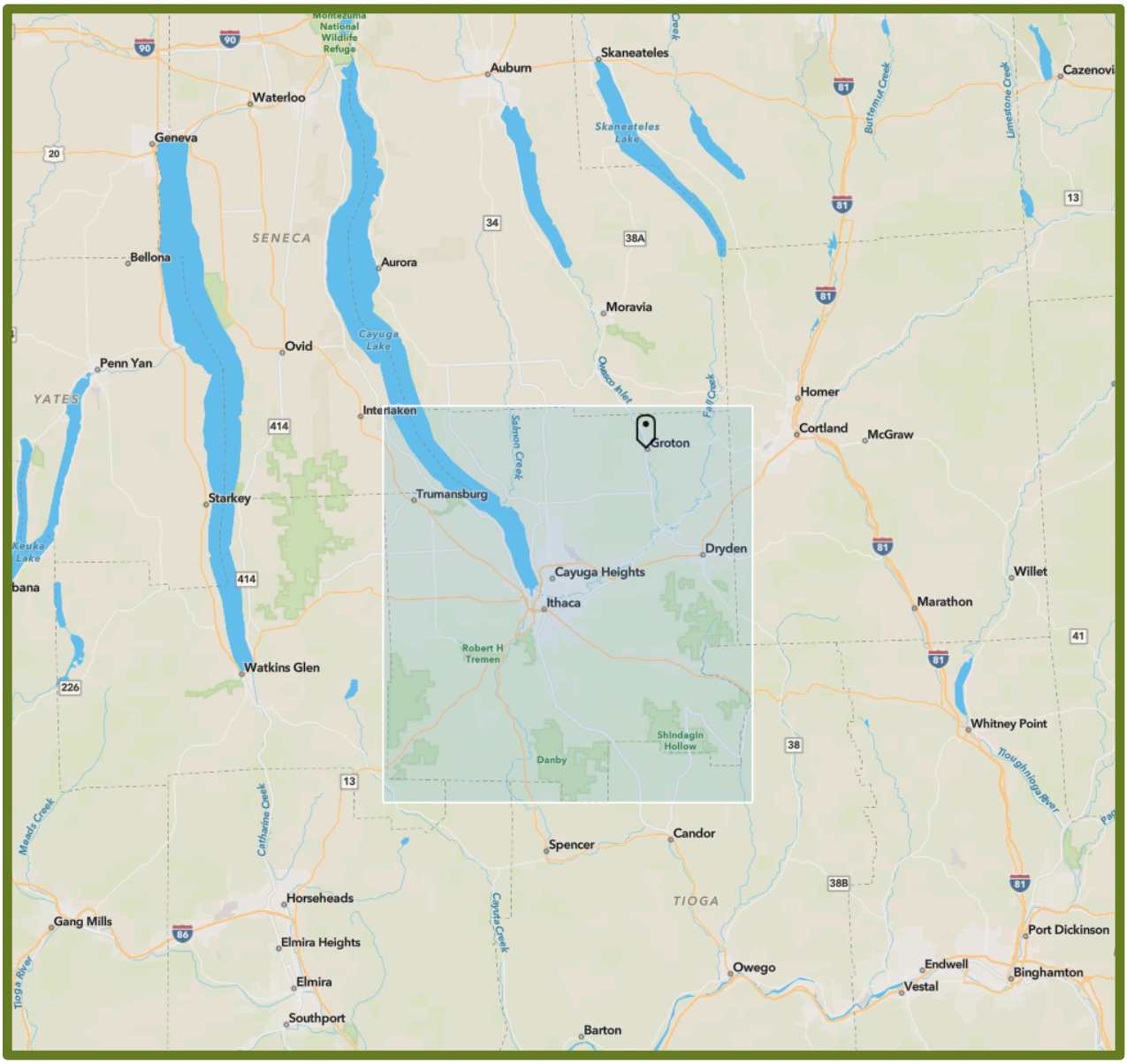
GROTON TODAY

Despite being located within Tompkins County which is home to major educational institutions such as Cornell University, Ithaca College, and Tompkins Cortland Community College, the Village

of Groton more closely resembles neighboring Cortland County in its rural character and socioeconomic conditions. Both counties are part of the federally designated Appalachian region, and Groton has experienced higher unemployment rates and lower income levels than the Tompkins County average.

Today, the Village's history is reflected in its built environment and demographic trends. The Village, with a 2026 population of roughly 2,100 resdients, is now generally a bedroom community to the nearby larger cities of Ithaca, Cortland, and Auburn. Much of its housing stock dates to the early and mid-twentieth century, with a significant portion constructed before 1939. The legacy of its industrial past, combined with decades of economic transition, has contributed to ongoing challenges related to housing conditions, income levels, and population change. As a result of the transition from its industrial past, Groton's economy is mostly supported by local institutional jobs at the Groton School District and smaller service-oriented business located in the downtown.

The historical trajectory of the Village of Groton, from early settlement and agricultural roots, through industrial notoriety and subsequent economic decline, provides essential context for current planning efforts. Understanding this history is critical to shaping policies that address economic revitalization, the preservation of the community's unique character, and the promotion of an active lifestyle that has been adopted by many residents.



Map: Geographic Context. Source: Tompkins County Open Data Portal

Demographics - The following section provides an overview of demographic data for the Village of Groton based on information from the U.S. Census Bureau. Data included in this analysis is drawn from the 2010 and 2020 Decennial Census, along with the recent American Community Survey (ACS) five-year estimates. The facts, figures, and accompanying analysis are intended to provide insight into historical population trends, demographic characteristics, and changing community conditions. This information helps inform the Comprehensive Plan by identifying relevant trends and issues that may influence future planning decisions, policies, and community priorities.

Population Characteristics - The Village of Groton experienced a population decline of more than 10 percent between 2010 and 2025, with the current estimated population at approximately 2,100 residents. In contrast, Tompkins County, where the Village is located, saw an overall population increase of approximately 3 percent during the same period. This countywide growth is atypical compared to many counties across New York, which generally experienced stagnant or declining populations over the past decade. Groton's population decline is consistent with trends observed in many small upstate communities, where demographic shifts, including the aging of the Baby Boomer generation, retirements, and out-migration, have contributed to long-term population loss.

The Village also reflects a noticeable aging trend. According to the 2023 American Community Survey (ACS), approximately 35 percent of Groton residents are age 60 or older. The Village's median age is 46, notably higher than the median age of 33 in Tompkins County overall. Recent demographic changes indicate particularly strong growth among residents ages 60 to 64, further reinforcing the trend toward an older population. This shift has important implications for future planning, including housing needs, transportation access, healthcare services, and the continued provision of age-friendly community amenities.

Educational Characteristics - According to the 2025 ACS, approximately 40% of Groton residents over the age of 25 have attained high school graduation as their highest level of education. To compare, Tompkins County's estimate for high school education as the highest-level of educational attainment was about 16% of the population. About 22% of Groton residents have attained a bachelor's degree or higher, whereas roughly 58% of Tompkins County residents have achieved the same.

Housing Characteristics - The Village of Groton contains approximately 1,082 housing units (2023 ACS), though this estimate has a high margin of error. A 2025 housing conditions survey identified 588 single-family homes, 49 two-family homes, and the remaining units are in multi-family or mixed-use downtown structures. Roughly 63% of occupied units are owner-occupied and 37% are renter-occupied (2021 ACS). The 2025 conditions survey found that 30% of the village housing stock is in substandard condition.

The Village includes two senior/affordable housing developments: Center Village Court I (60 income-restricted one-bedroom units for seniors and qualifying disabled residents) and Schoolhouse Gardens (28 subsidized senior units in a converted historic school). Both facilities are at capacity with waiting lists.

The housing stock is relatively old, with 66% of occupied units built prior to 1939 and over 88% built before 1980. Only 31 units have been constructed since 2000, indicating limited recent development and a largely aging housing inventory, likely requiring ongoing rehabilitation and system upgrades.

Income and Workforce Characteristics - Household income, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, represents the combined income of all individuals living within a single housing unit, regardless of familial relationship, and is generally considered a more comprehensive measure of economic conditions than family income alone. According to the 2023 American Community Survey (ACS), the median household income in the Village of Groton was $57,347, an increase from $52,321 reported in 2018. This represents an approximate 9 percent increase over a five-year period.

While household income in the Village has increased modestly, the rate of growth has lagged behind broader regional trends. During the same period, the median household income in Tompkins County increased from $58,626 to $71,948, representing approximately 20 percent growth. The Village's median household income also remains below the statewide median for New York, which was estimated at approximately $84,000 in 2025. These trends suggest that Groton faces ongoing economic challenges related to income growth and household purchasing power, which may influence housing affordability, consumer spending, and overall community economic resilience.

The labor force in the Village of Groton is roughly 930 residents. According to the 2024 ACS, approximately 30% of Groton residents are employed in educational services and healthcare. This is the largest industry segment amongst employed Groton residents. The next largest industry segment is in retail for about 14% of Groton residents. After that, residents primarily work in manufacturing, professional services, and arts and entertainment.

CHAPTER 3: PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

2005 JOINT TOWN AND VILLAGE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Village of Groton's Comprehensive Plan was originally adopted in 2005 with the intent that it be updated on a ten-year cycle; however, subsequent updates were delayed due to budgetary and staffing constraints. Since its adoption, the Village has experienced a range of changes, including ongoing participation the NY Forward program for downtown revitalization, the implementation of local design standards, and participation in Community Development Block Grant programs for economic development, infrastructure, and housing rehabilitation. These efforts, along with emerging local concerns, have underscored the need for a full update of the Comprehensive Plan. In addition, the existing plan predates many contemporary planning priorities, including New York State Climate Act goals, environmental sustainability, smart growth principles, climate resilience, energy efficiency, and consideration of alternative energy opportunities. The Village is now seeking to develop an updated Comprehensive Plan that responds to these evolving conditions, incorporates findings from recent assessments, and

establishes a forward-looking framework for community preparedness, sustainability, and long-term resilience.

2007 MAIN STREET CORRIDOR STRATEGIC PLAN

The 2007 Main Street Corridor Strategic Plan was developed following completion of the Village's intermunicipal Comprehensive Plan with the Town of Groton, in response to a recognized need for improved organization and coordinated management of the Village's Main Street corridor. The plan was created through a collaborative public planning process intended to share community visions, generate new ideas, and revive previously identified opportunities for revitalization. It serves as a framework for strengthening the corridor by identifying key issues, assessing existing physical, social, economic, and political conditions, and evaluating the forces shaping current trends. The plan emphasizes public input to define community needs, development opportunities, and priorities, and establishes a step-by-step implementation strategy to guide the creation of a vibrant downtown that supports local goods and services, strengthens the local economy, and attracts visitors. It also includes benchmarked projects and implementation resources intended to guide decision-makers in achieving identified goals. Overall, the Strategic Plan functions as an actionable tool for advancing positive change within the Main Street corridor while reinforcing the broader goals of the Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan and the Town/Village Comprehensive Plan and is intended to be updated over time as conditions and priorities evolve.

2015 MAIN STREET TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The 2015 Main Street Technical Assistance Program provided a detailed analysis of priority buildings in the downtown core to support adaptive reuse, accessibility improvements, and façade enhancements. Focusing on key properties along Main Street just south of the Cortland Street intersection, the study evaluated opportunities to strengthen downtown's physical character and economic vitality through more cohesive, pedestrian-oriented development. Each building assessment included a visual evaluation of physical and historic condition, identification of building code and accessibility, and the development of concept-level floor plan layouts demonstrating feasible reuse scenarios. The analysis also incorporated façade design recommendations to restore or reinforce significant architectural features while improving elements such as signage, lighting, windows, and materials in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and eligibility for New York Main Street funding. Preliminary cost estimates and phasing considerations were also provided to help inform project feasibility and guide future investment decisions that balance historic preservation with highest and best use outcomes.

2023 NY FORWARD INITIATIVE

The Village's ongoing participation in the NY Forward program reflects a continued commitment to revitalizing the downtown through strategic, community-driven investment. As a New York State initiative focused on supporting the revitalization of smaller downtowns, NY Forward provides funding, technical assistance, and a structured planning process to identify and advance catalytic projects that strengthen economic vitality, improve walkability, and enhance overall quality of life. Through this program, the Village has engaged residents, business owners, and stakeholders to develop a targeted downtown investment strategy that builds on previous planning efforts and existing assets. The process is helping to refine priority projects that support building reuse, streetscape improvements, and public space enhancements, with the goal of creating a more vibrant, cohesive, and resilient downtown core.

2025 HOUSING CONDITIONS SURVEY

The Village's 2025 Housing Conditions Survey provides a comprehensive, village-wide assessment of residential property conditions to identify substandard housing and support future housing rehabilitation and funding efforts. Conducted by Thoma Development Consultants during the summer of 2025, the study included exterior inspections of all residential structures across single-family, two-unit, and multi-unit housing types, with properties mapped and organized into walkable neighborhood areas for systematic evaluation. Each structure was classified as standard, moderately substandard, or severely substandard in accordance with New York State Office of Community Renewal CDBG Housing Rehabilitation guidelines, based on observed minor, major, and critical deficiencies. The survey was designed to provide the Village with critical data to prioritize housing improvements and document local need for state and federal programs such as CDBG, HOME, and AHC. Together, the survey results establish a clear framework for targeting rehabilitation resources and improving overall housing quality and affordability throughout the Village.

CHAPTER 4: INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

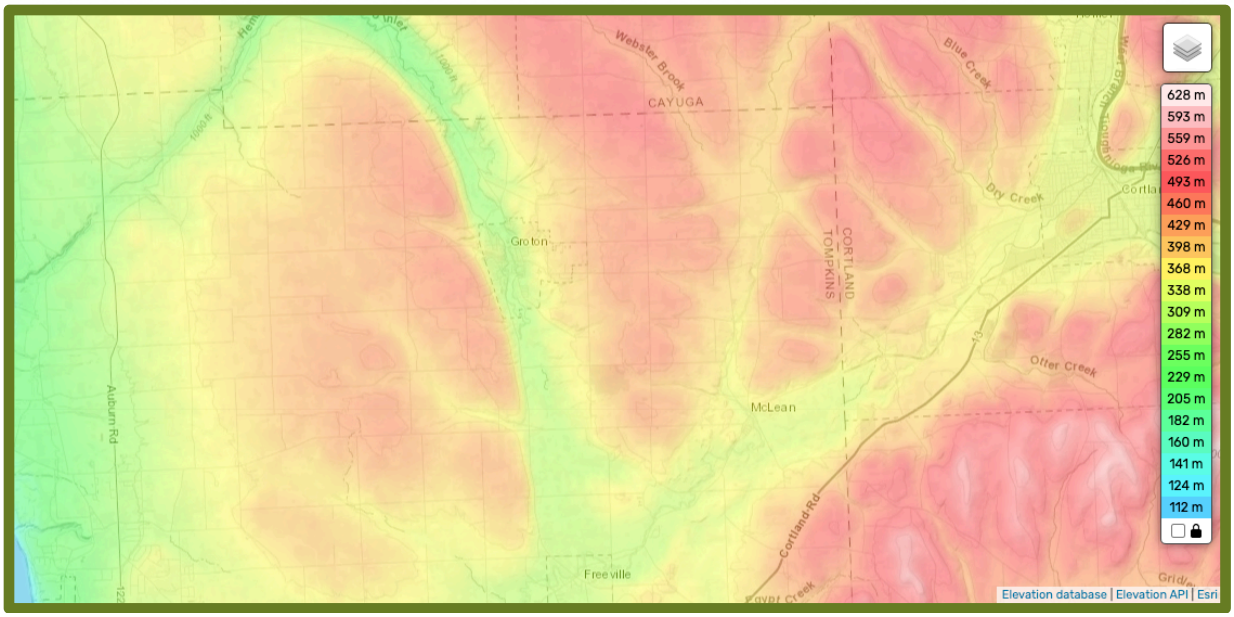
NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

As part of the Comprehensive Planning process, communities should make decisions that contemplate the preservation, maintenance, and responsible uses of natural resources. Natural resources play an important role in a community's quality of life. Polluted or degraded air or water quality can impact the health of residents and impede economic development efforts. Below is a review of the important natural resources of the Village, which exist today.

LAND RESOURCES

The Village of Groton includes 1.7 square miles of land area, with a small amount of surface water along the Owasco Lake inlet that stretches through the Village.

Slope and Topography - Slope and topography describe the shape and relief of the land. Topography describes the elevation and changes in elevation, while slope is a measurement of the percentage of change in elevation over a particular distance. The Village of Groton is primarily flat with gently sloping areas carved out by glaciers 10-20,000 years ago. Glacial action cut deep into valley floors and created the basins now filled by the Finger Lakes. Tributaries of the streams that occupied the valleys that were deepened by the glaciers cut deep gorges and ravines into the valley walls to create the many glens and gorges in the region. In their retreat at the end of the Ice Age, the glaciers also deposited moraines in its path, including the Owasco Inlet Valley where Groton lies. Elevation through the village varies little between 900 and 1,200 feet above sea level. (See map of slope and Topography) The valley floor and sides are marked by irregular hills, terraces, and hummocks comprised of undifferentiated sand and gravel deposits, some cut by small streams. These deposits have slopes in excess of 15 percent in many places. Within the village, about 30 percent of the land is covered by such slopes.



Map: Slope and Topography. Source: ESRI

Hydrology- The major drainage system in and near the village of Groton is the Owasco Inlet, which runs north to Owasco Lake through the center of the village. The village is within the Owasco Inlet watershed.

Soils - Soil characteristics affect a variety of human activities, from land use patterns to transportation routes, to the installation of necessary community infrastructure. Much of the soil in the village is identified as Bath and Valois soils, Langford Channery silt, and Genesee silt loam. Most soils are well drained prime agricultural soils, or soils of statewide importance, though this is largely irrelevant from an agricultural perspective since it is unlikely that the few parcels that are undeveloped will be used in an agricultural capacity.

Unique Natural Areas (UNAs) and Critical Environmental Areas (CEAs) - Unique Natural Areas (UNAs) are locally designated sites that are recognized because of the outstanding qualities that render them unique and deserving of preservation in a natural state. UNAs include natural features such as woods, swamps, glens, cliffs, gorges, and streams that occur in a natural setting or in an urban greenspace. Often, the characteristics that make a site unique are extremely vulnerable to a wide range of both direct and indirect impacts and may be compromised by disturbing the site. UNA's are generally closed to the public.

Under the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), local agencies may designate specific geographic areas within their boundaries as Critical Environmental Areas (CEAs). To be designated as a CEA, an area must have an exceptional or unique character with respect to one or more of the following: a benefit or threat to human health; a natural setting, e.g., fish and wildlife habitat, forest and vegetation, open space and areas of important aesthetic

or scenic quality; agricultural, social, cultural, historic, archaeological, recreational, or educational values; or an inherent ecological, geological, or hydrological sensitivity to change that may be adversely affected by any change. The designation of a CEA provides some regulatory protection for a site and functions as an indicator for developers, local officials, and other governmental agencies that the site is of significant environmental value. The designation of UNA's or CEA's can be a valuable tool to a community that is concerned about preserving sensitive environmental areas.

The Village of Groton has two designated Unique Natural Areas (UNAs) that are comprised of 61.7 acres, which is 5.8% of the total percentage of the Village. These Unique Natural Areas include the Groton Bank Swallow Colony, located by the Town Court building on Conger Ave, and the Groton Swamp, which is located along the Owasco Inlet in the southern portion of the village.

Rare Plants and Animals - The New York State Heritage Program is a partnership between the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the Nature Conservancy. The purpose of the program is to facilitate conservation of rare animals, rare plants, and natural ecosystems, thereby maintaining the biodiversity of New York State.

Information regarding the presence of rare or endangered plants and animals in a particular municipality can be accessed via a State maintained a website. The web address is http://www.dec.ny.gov/natureexplorer/app/. There is a disclaimer on the website that notes that "rare and endangered species located in other towns in the County may not be listed for the village of Groton. The list below only includes records of rare species and significant natural communities from the databases of the NY Natural Heritage Program. It is not a definitive statement about the presence or absence of all plants and animals, including rare or state-listed species, or of all significant natural communities. For most areas, comprehensive field surveys have not been conducted, and this list should not be considered a substitute for on-site surveys." It should be noted that no endangered animals were reported for the Village. In addition, the New York Nature Explorer website also indicates that there are no rare animals or plants identified within the village of Groton. There are also currently no State regulated wildlife management areas within the Village.

WATER RESOURCES

Water resources are critical to the public health, environmental, and economic well-being of a community. Economic and environmental activities that are dependent on the integrity of local water bodies and water supplies include tourism, recreation, education, agriculture, industry, and real estate. The map at the end of this Section, depicts rivers, streams, wetlands, and flood zones, in the Village.

Groundwater - Groundwater is any water that is located under the surface of the ground including underground streams and aquifers. The water table is how deep you would have to dig to reach soil that is saturated with water. According to the USGS, the village of Groton draws from two aquifers: (1) a thin upland unconfined sand and gravel aquifer tapped by an infiltration gallery water collection system, and (2) a local unconfined or semi-confined aquifer in the Owasco Inlet valley.

Surface Water: Water Bodies - Surface water is any water that is exposed to the atmosphere. Major and tributary surface waters in the Village are depicted on the map below. The main watershed in the village of Groton is the Owasco inlet. Watershed boundaries define drainage areas that are separated by topographic divides or features on the landscape that confine drainage to basins. Watershed boundary maps are helpful in evaluating runoff and stream flow characteristics with respect to their impact on roads, culverts, storm sewars, and related facilities. Watershed boundary maps help indicate downstream areas that may be impacted by any new development and can assist in planning mitigation measures for runoff from a site. Furthermore, watershed boundary maps are helpful for water quality studies in investigating the movement of pollutants discharged to surface waters. When used in conjunction with stream gauge and runoff data. The drainage area maps can provide information on the capacity of receiving waters to dilute sewage effluents.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's (NYSDEC) classification of the primary streams is based on water quality standards and is used to regulate discharges into surface water. Under the NYSDEC system, surface water discharges must be treated so as not to degrade the water quality of a receiving body below the standards set for that body of water. However, the classification given to a particular body of water does not necessarily indicate its actual water quality condition, which may be higher or lower than the standard. The original classification of surface waters by the New York State Health Department classified waters according to their "highest and best use" rather than by their actual condition. This classification program is now administered by NYSDEC, which updates it at periodic intervals.

The NYSDEC classification system is as follows: Class A and AA - suitable for public drinking water and use in food processing; Class B - suitable for swimming and other water related recreation where bodily contact is involved; Class C - suitable for fishing and recreational boating; Class D - poorest quality used only for agricultural irrigation or most industrial processes. Additional classification letters (T) or (TS) may be assigned to Class A, B or C waters to indicate that there is sufficient dissolved oxygen to support trout (T) or trout spawning (TS).

All surface waters classified AA, A, B and C(T) or C(TS) are protected by State law. A "stream bed or bank disturbance" permit is required before the course, channel, or bed of a protected stream may be changed by dock or dam building, placing a culvert, or by dredging or filling operations. This stream protection permit program is administered by NYSDEC; in addition, all projects or

actions which will physically alter a protected stream are subject to the provisions of the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA).

Owasco Inlet is a Class C(T) waterbody which is suitable for fishing and recreational boating, and has sufficient oxygen to support trout.



Image: Owasco Inlet along Main Street. Source: Village of Groton

Surface Water: Wetlands - Wetlands are a type of surface water. More specifically, wetlands are areas that contain soils that are saturated by ground water or surface water and support wetland plants. Wetlands provide a multitude of ecological, economic, and social benefits. They provide habitat for fish, wildlife, and a variety of plants. Wetlands absorb, store, and slow down the movement of rain and snow-melt, minimizing flooding and erosion, and stabilizing water flow. Wetlands recharge ground water and act as a filter that cleanses surface runoff containing manmade contaminants. Wetlands recycle nutrients, which then contribute to the food chain and local biodiversity. Wetlands also provide areas for recreation, wildlife viewing, and educational opportunities for humans and are critical to the health of other ecosystems.

National Wetland Inventory - The National Wetland Inventory (NWI) program was established in the 1970's to inventory the nation's wetlands and report on their status. The program produces wetlands maps, which are periodically updated, as well as evaluating and reporting on changes in wetland status in response to natural processes and to human development. NWI designated wetlands do not carry restrictions as a result of such designation except to the extent they may be regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers which is determined on a case-by-case basis.

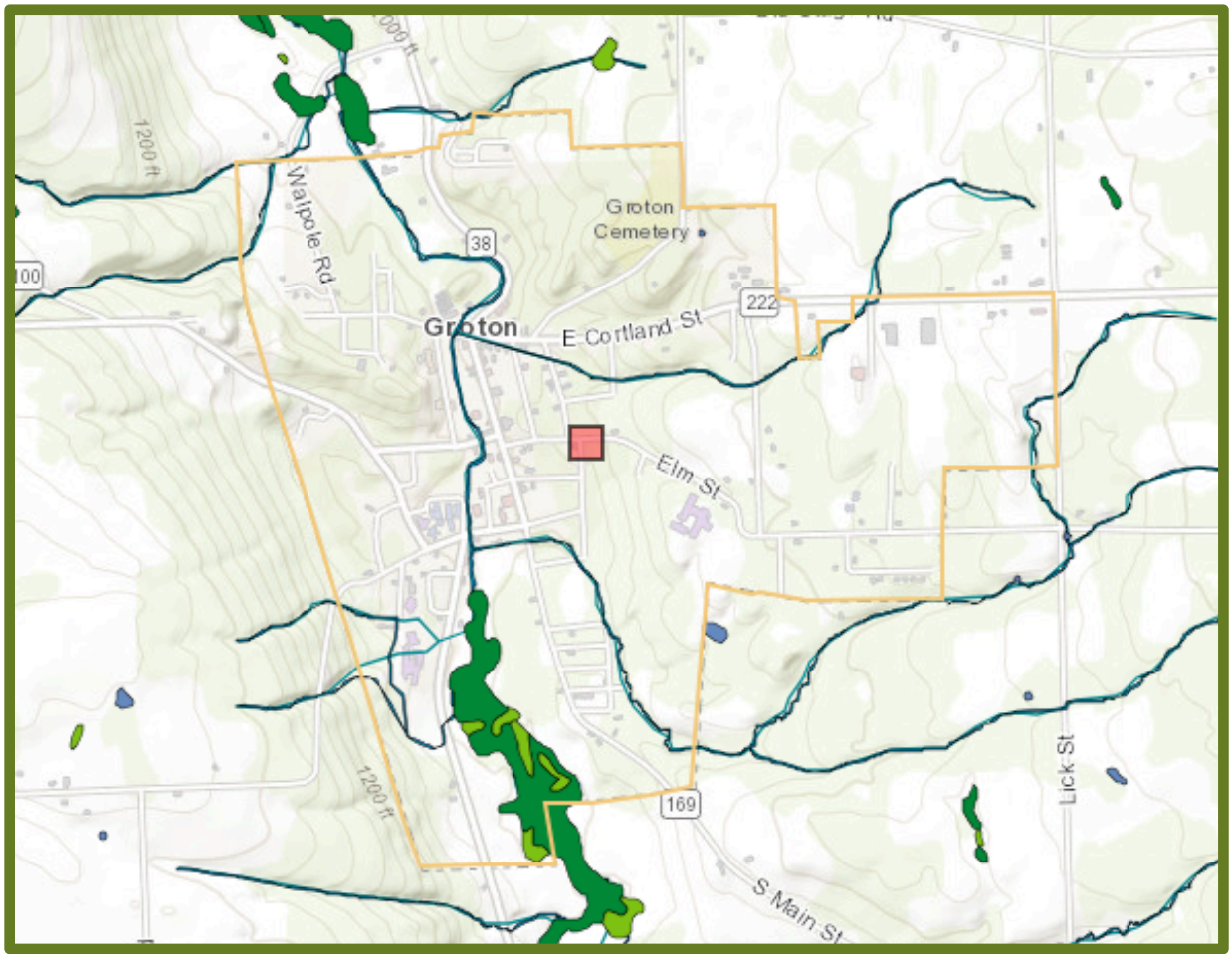
Freshwater Wetlands Act - DEC regulated wetlands are governed by the Freshwater Wetlands Act (FWA), Article 24, of the Environmental Conservation Law. Wetlands greater than 12.4 acres, or smaller wetlands that are considered of unusual local importance, are regulated under the FWA. Additionally, around every wetland is an "adjacent area" of 100 feet that is also protected to provide a buffer for the wetland. The main provisions of the FWA seek to regulate those uses that would have an adverse impact on wetlands, such as filling or draining. A permit is required when conducting certain activities within DEC regulated wetlands.

There is currently one delineated State Regulated Freshwater Wetland within the Village of Groton. It is in the southern portion of the village along the Owasco Inlet, and is comprised of approximately 47.4 acres. Very often, development and changes to land can cause wetlands to occur, and any further occurrence of wetlands will be required to be protected. The protection of wetlands falls under a number of jurisdictions such as the State Department of Environmental Conservation and the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers. The village must fulfill its role by ensuring that impacts on wetlands from development are carefully considered as part of the SEQR and planning review processes for any projects proposed in the Village.

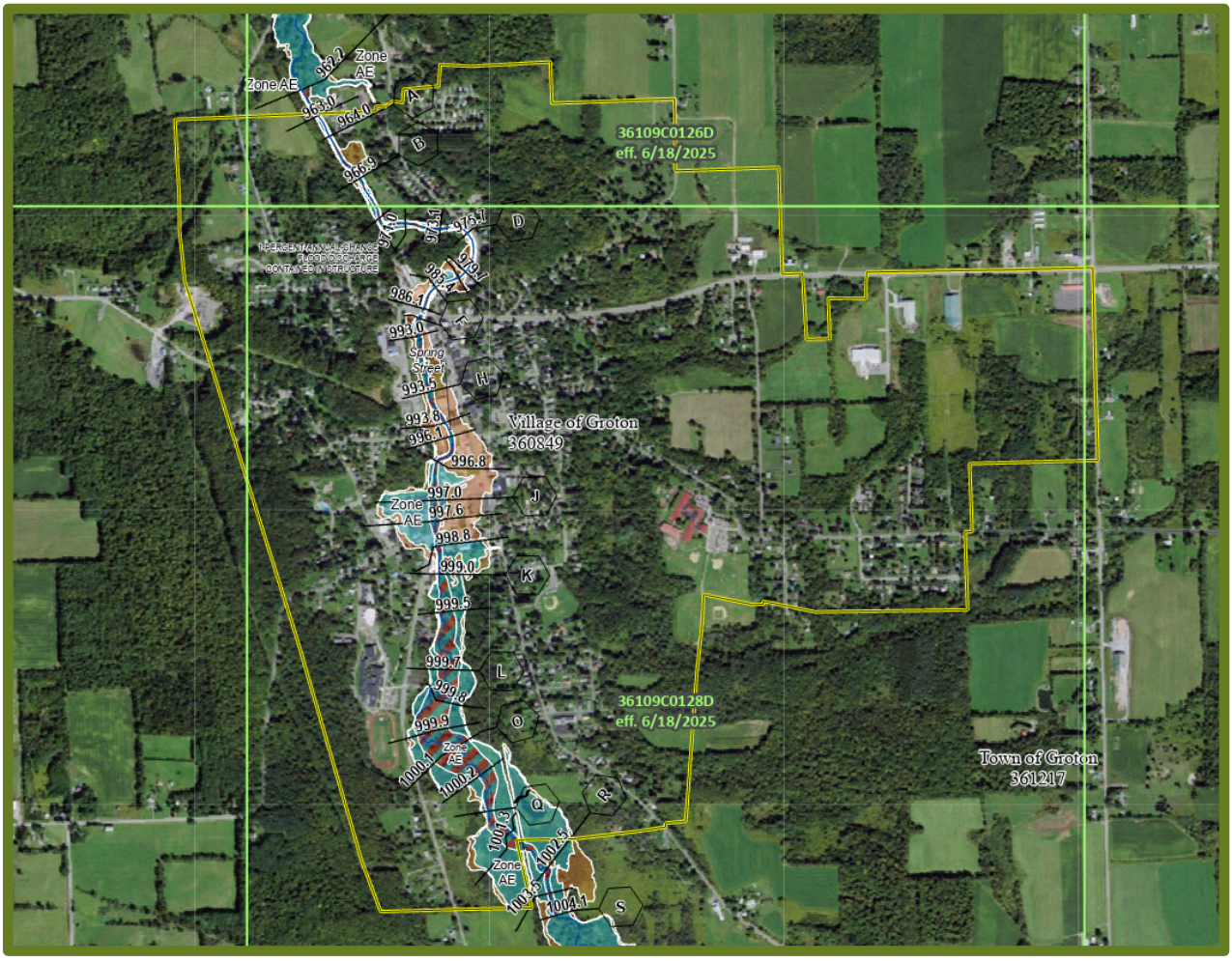
Flood Zones - Flood hazard areas are typically defined as the 100-year floodplain: the area where each year there is a 1 in 100 (1%) chance that the land will be flooded. This criterion was established in 1968 through the enactment of the National Flood Insurance Act, which instituted the National Flood Insurance Program to reduce flood damages, promote wiser use of floodplains, and ensure that property owners have access to affordable flood insurance. The Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 made it mandatory for a community to regulate new floodplain development in order to remain eligible for subsidized insurance rates. Flood hazard areas also include "floodways". According to FEMA, a "Regulatory Floodway" means "the channel of a river or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved (from obstructions such as development) in order to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation more than a designated height." Development in floodways must be regulated by local jurisdictions to ensure that there are no increases in upstream or downstream flood elevations. Development within the Village is controlled and limited by the Flood Damage Prevention Law of 2012.

The flood hazard areas in the village of Groton are along the Owasco Inlet. The identification of these areas is important so that development can be managed and/or restricted in flood hazard

areas and potential future financial losses from flooding can be avoided. Flood prone areas are undesirable for residential purposes since septic tanks can be breached during floods, wells can be contaminated, and lives and personal property can be endangered. The village must be aware of the impact that development, both in and out of flood zones, may have on flooding, including projects discharging runoff into flood areas. Mitigating measures may be necessary to prevent additional runoff from new developments to prevent an increase in flood frequency and severity. 2011 saw parts of the Central New York and the Southern Tier inundated with historic and devastating flooding. Climate scientists predict that such events are likely to occur more frequently in the future, and the Village should be prepared. The location of flood hazard areas in the Village are shown on the map at the end of this Section.



Map: Surface Water and Wetlands. Source: NYS DEC Resource Mapper



Map: Flood Zone Map. Source: FEMA's National Flood Hazard Layer Viewer

AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

An invasive species is any individual, group, subspecies, or population that enters an ecosystem outside of its historical native range. Introduced plant and animal species can cause problems for both those who use the natural environment for both business and pleasure. Plants such as the Hydrilla, Eurasian Watermilfoil, Variable Leave Milfoil, and Curly-leaf Pondweed have the ability to grow quickly and form quick mats of plant material that can choke out native species and destroy boat motors. The Zebra Mussel and Asian clam can attach to submerged surfaces, altering food web dynamics and contributing to the demise of many native animal species.

It is important to understand the impacts of these invasive species and educate those that use Village facilities on the adverse impacts of these species and how to prevent them. Education and posting of procedures for disposing of bait and cleaning of boats that enter and exit the village waterways is an important step toward protecting the watershed from unwanted species.

BROWNFIELDS

According to the NYSDEC, nearly every community in New York State is affected by contaminated and/or abandoned properties, known as brownfields. Brownfields are typically former sites of underused or abandoned commercial and industrial facilities. Some, but not all, brownfield sites are contaminated with toxins. Left untouched, brownfields pose environmental, legal, and financial burdens on a community and its taxpayers. However, after cleanup, these sites can contribute to the economic welfare of the community by providing jobs, tax revenues, and housing. There are currently no official brownfield sites in the Village, though any underused or abandoned commercial or industrial property has the potential to be labeled as such. The Village should inventory all underutilized or abandoned properties in the Village to better understand local land use patterns and mitigate occurrences of future brownfield sites.

SUPERFUND SITES

In 1980, in response to the devasting discoveries at contaminated toxic sites such as the Love Canal in Niagara Falls, NY, the United States Congress passed the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA). CERCLA is widely known informally as the Superfund program. CERCLA permits the EPA to clean up contaminated sites and places liability on the responsible party. Under CERCLA, a responsible party pay be forced to clean the contaminated site or reimburse the government for EPA cleanup efforts. There are currently no EPA Superfund sites in the Village of Groton

COMMUNITY FORESTRY

Trees and vegetative cover in developed areas benefit communities in many ways. Trees help to manage stormwater, clean the water and air, improve ground water recharge, and provide a home for wildlife. Patrons generally prefer to shop along tree-lined streets in hamlets and villages and to live on tree-lined streets in neighborhoods. Trees can increase property values and improve the quality of life in a neighborhood. It is pleasant to walk along streets lined with trees, as they shield pedestrians from traffic, sun, wind, and other elements.

Trees in the Village positively contribute to the character of neighborhoods, especially large shade trees. They provide visual interest year-round. The Village should plant trees along all Village streets, where trees are lacking. Large shade trees should be planted where possible, and smaller ornamental trees should be planted under utility wires. The Village should also replace trees in the public right-of-way when they are removed due to damage or age. A tree inventory would assist the Village in maintain its current tree stock as well helping the village to strategically plan for planting of new trees. A tree inventory would also be advantageous if the Village were to pursue tree planting funds from the DEC Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program.

Terrestrial Invasive Species - Invasive species, or non-native species whose introduction causes economic or environmental harm, are a growing problem across the globe. Currently, the most urgent issue with invasive species for municipalities across New York State is the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). The Ash Borer is an invasive Asian beetle that infests and kills North American ash species (Fraxinus sp.) including green, white, black, and blue ash. It usually kills a tree within two to four years of infestation. The Ash Borer spread recently from Midwestern states and as of 2011 has been found in western New York, the Hudson Valley, and across the Canadian border. As of 2015, the Ash Borer has also spread into Central New York and the Southern Tier. In many communities, Ash trees were planted as street trees for decades, creating a potentially costly situation if they all need to be removed. The Village of Groton should prepare by inventorying their street trees in the Village, and trees on Village property to determine how many, if any, Ash trees are its responsibility. Infested and dying Ash trees can become a hazard and liability for the community. Any Ash trees found should be monitored on an annual basis and removed if needed. It is possible to treat individual trees to prevent infestation, but this is costly and must be repeated over time, and therefore treatment is only recommended for important and valuable specimen trees. Other invasive species of concern are the Asian Long-Horned Beetle and the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid. Cornell University and the Cornell Cooperative Extension are useful resources for more information on managing threats to community forests.

SUSTAINING OUR NATURAL RESOURCES

Growth is both inevitable and often desirable for a healthy community. The manner in which a community manages its growth directly impacts not only the built environment but also all natural resources within the local jurisdiction and beyond. Buildings and energy usage have a significant impact on our natural resources, and are discussed here. Utilization of green building techniques, alternative energy sources, and interior home improvements that promote energy efficiency and conservation will make the Village a better place to live.

Green Building – The goal of building more sustainable buildings and making existing buildings "greener" is to reduce the overall impact of the built environment on human health and the natural environment. This can include efficiently using energy, water, and other resources; protecting occupant health; and reducing waste, pollution, and environmental degradation. Currently, buildings contribute over 37% of all carbon dioxide emissions. Most of these emissions come from the combustion of fossil fuels to provide heating, cooling, and lighting, and to power appliances and electrical equipment. The Village should support green building standards for the construction of new buildings and homes. This could include promoting Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards and using renewable energy sources where applicable and using energy saving technologies. See the chapter section on Housing for more information.

The Village has an opportunity to take a leadership role in green building by modeling sustainability and energy efficiency in its own buildings and practices. The first step to reducing usage is to make existing buildings more efficient. The Village should hire a contractor to perform an energy audit on any older municipally owned buildings. There are currently opportunities with the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) that cover the cost of energy audits for local governments, under the FlexTech program. Typical energy audit results will provide steps that can be taken to improve energy efficiency, and often include the cost and the return on investment, so the Village can determine the most impactful projects to pursue. The Village should highlight its experiences in its newsletter or elsewhere, encouraging Village residents to do the same, since at this time, most New Yorkers and businesses are eligible for a free or reduced cost home energy audit.

Alternative Energy - After reducing energy usage, the next step to energy independence is to use alternative energy sources. This could include solar photovoltaic, solar thermal, geothermal, or wind energy. The method which is most appropriate will depend on the building's location and the site's environmental factors. The Village should consider updating the zoning regulations to allow for and clearly regulate the many forms of alternative energy.

There are currently very few buildings in the Village of Groton, if at all, that have installed solar panel arrays. With increasing energy prices, it is likely the trend of using alternative energy sources will continue to grow. The Village can encourage and advance the use of alternative energy by supporting interested building owners. Groton can also encourage developers to include some form of alternative energy that could serve either individual homes or the entire development. See the section on Housing for more detailed information.

GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

GOAL 1: Ensure that future development and redevelopment within the Village will not negatively impact water resources.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Ensure that DEC regulations regarding stormwater pollution prevention plans (SWPP) are strictly followed for all new development and that they are properly implemented and managed as part of the site plan review process.

B) Encourage use of Green Infrastructure for existing and new developments, such as pervious paving materials, rain gardens, or other green technologies, that minimize, redirect, or treat runoff from parking lots and driveways.

C) Utilize the SEQRA process to minimize impacts from development proposals adjacent to, or with the potential to impact, wetlands and surface water.

GOAL 2: Minimize flood risks and impacts of flooding.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Ensure that new development in the 100-year flood plain complies with the Flood Damage Prevention Law of 2012. Where such development does occur, ensure that site plan regulations and processes are sufficient to determine that new development will not exacerbate flooding concerns and that projects are designed to minimize risks to safety and adjacent property.

B) In the event of a major flood that severely damages properties in the floodway, work to relocate/rebuild structures outside of the floodway.

C) Require new development to manage stormwater runoff on-site to the greatest extent practicable, as required by the DEC and local site plan review procedures and encourage the capture and reuse of rainwater.

D) The Village should enlist the services of an environmental professional to conduct a stormwater audit of the entire village. Federal, State, and local grant funds should be sought to cover the expense of the audit.

GOAL 3: Support and promote the use of sustainable technologies and green building practices in the Village.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Encourage energy conservation and efficiencies and promote the use of alternative/clean energy sources in homes and businesses, such as wind, solar, geo-thermal and co-generation through development of simplified permitting processes. Encourage new construction to be built to LEED, or similar, standards.

B) Lead by example by undertaking energy audits on all Village-owned buildings, and by utilizing alternative energy sources, such as geothermal, wind, solar, and co-generation in all Village-owned building renovation or new construction projects to promote use of green technologies.

C) Publicize the availability of free or low-cost energy audits to homeowners and businesses via Village venues and seek grant funds to assist private property owners to make properties more energy efficient and environmentally sustainable.

GOAL 4: Ensure that future development and redevelopment within the Village complements and enhances the natural environment while not hindering or impeding desired development.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Inventory and identify sensitive environmental areas in the Village and designate Unique Natural Areas or Critical Environmental Areas as appropriate.

B) Review and amend land use regulations to protect and enhance the natural resources of the community while ensuring that new or enhanced regulations are not overly cumbersome or limiting to new development.

C) Strictly comply with SEQRA for projects that require such review to ensure protection of natural resources.

GOAL 5: Increase and improve the Urban and Community Forests in the Village to enhance community character.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Establish a tree inventory or catalogue of tree locations and voids that includes information such as species, age, size, and condition.

B) Establish a tree planting program to fill in areas of the Village lacking trees and to ensure a diverse urban forest. This includes planting large trees where possible and smaller trees where necessitated by infrastructure.

C) Inventory Ash trees on Village property and in the public right-of-ways. Monitor progress of the Emerald Ash borer in NYS and the health of Ash trees in the community, and proactively protect Ash trees of significant value.

D) Monitor new and emerging threats to the community forest and implement policies and actions to mitigate their impacts.

GOAL 6: Identify, remediate, and redevelop brownfield sites throughout the Village.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Assess properties village-wide for existence of brownfields and request proposals from qualified firms to provide planning services associated with the development of a Step 1 Pre-Nomination Study for a Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) program application for underutilized areas throughout the Village.

B) If BOA participation is not pursued, the Village should inventory all potential brownfield sites within the Village to enable landowners to identify development opportunities and apply for cleanup or redevelopment funding for various types of reuse or infill development.

PARKS AND RECREATION

The Village of Groton has a mix of park facilities and open space properties that are dedicated to serve the recreational needs of Groton residents. Those assets are detailed below.

MUNICIPAL FACILITIES

The Village parks fall under the jurisdiction of the Town and Village of Groton Recreation Department and the Village Department of Public Works (DPW). The facilities are owned, operated, and maintained by the Village. The DPW is responsible for maintaining the parks and open space facilities and the programing responsibility falls to the joint Town and Village of Groton Recreation Department.

Memorial Park (Sykes Street) – This main village park consists of 17.7 acres of land located in the west side of the village along the border between the Village and Town of Groton. This facility is suited for both active and passive recreation. The park is bordered to the North, East, and South by residential land uses. It is bordered to the West by a large swath of forest land.

The park offers the following amenities:

- Playground
- Seasonal Pool and Kiddie Pool
- Small and Large Pavilions
- Seasonal Bathrooms
- Open Green Space
- Trailhead for the Groton Trail System
- Gaga Ball Pit
- Basketball Courts

The playground was constructed in 2016 as part of a community build effort. The park amenities have been maintained in relatively good condition, and the pool was recently renovated with assistance from a State and Municipal Facilities Grant. As these facilities age, it is important that the Village complete routine maintenance and continue to seek grants to match with local funding for these important community assets.



Images: Memorial Park Playground and Pavilion. Source: Village of Groton

Conger Boulevard Mini-Park – The smaller linear, greenway park is located between Conger Boulevard and the Owasco Inlet. The narrow greenspace is roughly two-tenths of a mile long and covers almost four acres of open space. Although the Owasco Inlet is accessible from this park for fishing and other limited water recreation, the park is largely suited for passive recreation such as walking, picnicking, and lounging. The park contains open green space, several picnic tables, a small pavilion, and a monument to memorialize the Groton Bridge and Manufacturing Company. There is also a pedestrian bridge that spans the Owasco Inlet to connect the greenway to Main Street in downtown Groton.



Image: Conger Boulevard Mini Park. Source: Village of Groton

Graves Memorial (Main Street) – This small pocket park is located on Main Street in downtown Groton. The park consists of a small brick paved plaza adorned with benches, small trees, decorative plantings, and a stone monument to memorialize Terrance C. Graves, Congressional Medal of Honor recipient. The pocket park serves as a nice place for people to relax when visiting businesses in downtown Groton.



Image: Graves Memorial (Main Street). Source: Village of Groton

Groton Trail System – The Groton Trail System consists of roughly five miles of hiking trails located in the Town and Village of Groton. There are multiple trailheads located in the Village at the Groton High School and at Memorial Park. The small scenic trail system is open to the public year-round from dawn to dusk and allows mountain biking, hiking, and snowshoeing. There is potential to link the Groton trail system with neighboring trail systems.

ORGANIZED RECREATION PROGRAMS

The Groton Recreation Department is the result of a shared services agreement between the Town and Village of Groton. Programs are open to residents of both the Town and Village. The recreation committee is made up of representatives from the Town Board, Village Board, School Board, and community members. The mission of the Town and Village of Groton Recreation Program is to enhance the quality of life for all residents of Groton by offering a variety of programming, recreation, and cultural activities. Activities include youth sports camps, youth and adult sports leagues, arts and crafts, wilderness survival, photography, and dozens of other subjects.

NON-MUNICIPAL FACILITIES AND AMENITIES

Aside from the public recreational facilities owned by the Village, there are other exciting opportunities for recreation in and near Groton. These amenities and opportunities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Groton Central School District: The Groton School District has invested millions of dollars in recent years to upgrade its athletic facilities. Upgrades include a new multi-use sports stadium with a turf field and upgrades to the school's baseball fields. These facilities are utilized for school sports and by the Town and Village Recreation leagues.
- Owasco Inlet: The Owasco Inlet runs directly through downtown Groton. The inlet flows northward for 24 miles through the villages of Groton, Locke and Moravia where it runs into Owasco Lake. According to the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, there are six Public Fishing Rights Areas along the Owasco Inlet within the Village of Groton.
- Finger Lakes: The Village is conveniently located just 20 minutes from Owasco Lake, Cayuga Lake, and Skaneateles Lake. These lakes offer some of the best opportunities for fishing, boating, and other water recreation in all of New York State.

CONDITION, USE, AND ADEQUACY

Maintenance and Preservation - The continued utilization of existing parks and open spaces will only be ensured if the facilities are well maintained and provide the amenities that the community desires. The Village's existing parks are generally in good condition, and major renovations have recently been completed. Recent renovations and improvements were complete with assistance from a SAM grant. The Village should continue to seek grant opportunities in the future to help maintain existing assets and expand upon its municipal parks and recreation offerings.

Use and Adequacy - The existing parks and open spaces experience regular usage during the spring, summer, and fall months, especially the pool and pavilions at Memorial Park.

The adequacy of a municipality's volume of parkland and open space can be calculated based on population. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) recommend a ratio of approximately one acre of parks and open space per 100 residents. Applying this standard to Groton (roughly 2,100 residents), the Village should offer over 21 acres of parks and open space. The total cumulative acreage noted for the facilities detailed above, is about 32 acres, meeting the NRPA recommendation. However, that total includes about 13 acres at Memorial Park which is currently occupied by wooded land which may not be suitable for open space recreation.

It is also important to continually evaluate recreational preferences and seek opportunities to maximize park potential. It is recommended that the Village acquire additional parkland, when available. With additional land and expanded facilities, the Village can broaden the scope of programs and activities that it offers to the community. The Village must continue to evaluate, maintain, and preserve its facilities so that they remain available in the future.

Connectivity with Other Assets - Connectivity of open space and parkland focuses on the interrelationship between the various spaces and activities that take place in a municipality or region. Pedestrian links to the downtown and other recreational opportunities that may develop are essential. The Village should consider future park projects that can provide connective links between existing community assets.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

As mentioned, the Village should continually monitor the recreation needs of the community to maximize opportunities for residents. Multi-use trails have become exceedingly popular over the last 20 years, providing a diverse form of recreation in the form of biking, hiking, snowshoeing, and skiing. These trails can also provide important links between various community assets. The corridor created by the Owasco Lake Inlet may provide a unique opportunity for the village to develop a multi-use connective trail right through the center of the Village.

Owasco Inlet Trail – This potential park project was discussed and proposed within the Village's successful proposal to Round 2 of the New York Forward program. A new 2,000-foot multi-use trail could be developed along the inlet on a former railbed from West Cortland Street to West South Street. The remnants of the railbed are currently used as an informal trail by many residents. Half of the inlet trail would be in the Village's waterfront park on Conger Boulevard and nearly all would be on Village-owned property. To complete the trail, the Village will only need to acquire a single 160 foot right of way. The trail could be constructed primarily of stone dust with asphalt paving at transition areas. The simple trail would connect major nodes and points of interest in the downtown, including the Benn Conger Inn, the historic downtown, the new Municipal Office and Community Building, the historic Railroad Depot on Railroad Ave., the Groton Fitness Center, and Center Village Senior Apartments. The new trail would also allow greater access to the inlet waterfront for fishing. In the future, a 750' spur trail could also connect

the main trail to Memorial Park, Groton's primary recreation facility and location of the public swimming pool.

Open Space Recreation – There is currently four acres of treed land located on the edge of downtown on the west bank of the Owasco Inlet, behind the existing Speedway Gas Station. If the Village were to develop the Owasco Inlet Trail, it could conveniently connect to that four-acre lot for additional passive recreation. The Village should explore the opportunity to acquire that land for public park use. Residents and officials have also discussed the potential for a dog park in the Village and this land could potentially accommodate that use.

Village Green - The Village owns a municipal parking lot between Main Street and the east bank of the Owasco Inlet, with access to the existing greenway park on Conger Boulevard and potential trail on the west bank via an existing pedestrian bridge. A large section of this lot could be repurposed to establish a new "Village Green". The green could extend an existing pocket park on Main Street (the Graves Memorial) to the waterfront and connect the center of downtown to the inlet. The green could be used for community events and summer concerts as part of a larger effort to reconnect the downtown to the Owasco Inlet, as proposed in the Village's New York Forward application. This proposal would provide a higher and better use for the waterfront but would require that existing public parking be relocated.

Overall, the Village should remain cognizant of emerging trends and demographic shifts to ensure that its recreation facilities and programs evolve to meet the changing demands of its residents. It should work to find creative and cost-effective solutions to provide desired amenities.

GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

GOAL 1: Identify underutilized spaces and facilities that have the potential to create additional and/or improved recreational opportunities for all age groups.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Develop and maintain a current inventory and database of all facilities, open spaces, and programs.

B) Review and assess inventories on an annual basis to ensure the satisfaction of all interests and ages.

C) Regularly assess community needs and continue to collaborate with the School District to ensure full utilization of facilities to meet community needs.

D) Add additional facilities to existing parks, including walking path connections, exercise trails, and community gardens.

E) Continue to investigate the development of the Owasco Lake Inlet Trail and seek appropriate development funding through the Office of Parks or the New York Forward program.

GOAL 2: Provide facilities that are safe, clean, and well-maintained.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Identify all safety, cleanliness, and general maintenance concerns. Issues should include playground equipment types, dangerous or failing structures, un-mowed areas, handicapped accessibility, poor lighting conducive to misbehavior, litter, etc.

B) Review local responsibilities and budget constraints to address these issues and establish a long-term maintenance plan.

C) Seek grant funding for park renovations and upgrades where appropriate.

GOAL 3: Increase the amount of parkland in the Village and develop partnerships for external opportunities.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Consider all land types for additional recreation facilities, such as tax foreclosed properties, vacant lands, and estate donations, to develop small open spaces for recreation facilities in proximity to neighborhoods.

B) Continue to investigate the feasibility of acquiring the four-acre wooded lot located on the west bank of the Owasco Inlet, behind the existing Speedway Gas Station.

C) Develop the Owasco Inlet Trail as a multi-use trail connecting important existing nodes such as the downtown and existing recreational assets.

D) Develop and maintain partnerships with neighboring municipalities, the J.M. McDonald Center in Cortland, the Rink and Field in Lansing, local school districts, and SUNY Cortland and TC3 to utilize recreational facilities and programing.

GOAL 4: Remain current with evolving trends and needs of the public and provide facilities and programs to meet those needs.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Conduct periodic needs assessments to identify existing park usage and anticipate emerging trends to appropriately adapt existing parks and programing to meet future needs.

B) Periodically review fees and budgets to perpetuate future programs and facility maintenance.

C) As new park projects are identified, the Village should seek grants as a source of matching funds to supplement the Village recreation and facilities budget.

DOWNTOWN

The Village's "downtown" is defined on Village Zoning maps as the High-Density Development District, and includes much of the Route 38 Corridor from the southern Village limits to north of Cortland Street as well as parts of East and West Cortland Streets. However, only a portion of this area, centered around the intersection of Cortland Street and Main Street (Route 38) is a traditional mixed use downtown area. This area is anchored by the Groton Hotel, the Dempsey building and a number of attached, multi-story buildings situated at the sidewalk edge.

The downtown includes both Village and Town government offices, a post office, a library, police and fire stations, retail shops, two senior housing projects, a health center, banks, convenience store, bowling alley, and other commercial establishments. The Groton High School is located at the southern end of what could be considered the downtown area. This area also includes the Owasco Lake Inlet which flows north roughly parallel to Main Street.

Over the years, the commercial area has lost large parts of its historic character, the most impactful of which was the closing of the Smith Corona factory and demolition of the imposing buildings that housed it. These have been replaced by generic "highway commercial" development, including a gas station and convenience store, that have large parking areas along the roadway. Developments such as these have weakened the historic sense of place. Nevertheless, a significant amount of the traditional downtown remains. In 2023, the Village was awarded the NY Forward designation by New York State, in recognition of the strides made in revitalizing the downtown and for its transformational plans for its future. This $4.5M in public investment will leverage significant private investment and set the stage for downtown revitalization efforts for years to come.

A survey completed as part of the NY Forward application has provided insight into residents' views, opinions, and wishes for the downtown area. This shows that the downtown has a bit of an image problem in the eyes of residents, with over 70% of respondents describing the downtown in a negative context. Primary major concerns included building conditions, along with a lack of business activity, including a grocery store. It is important to note that a new local food store has since opened, which may help address the need for local, healthy foods, though it is not a full-service grocery. Assets noted include the people and their commitment to the community, small town atmosphere, anchor businesses, and walkability. The survey also showed that, despite current negative opinions, residents had optimistic views on the future of the downtown and its potential. A survey conducted as part of the Comprehensive Plan reinforces the earlier survey. It posed the question, "*what Issues/Initiatives would you like to see the Village focus on in the future*? "Downtown revitalization" was the top response by a wide margin, followed by "attracting commercial development." Implementation of the NY Forward award will help the Village to realize this potential and change local opinions on the downtown. It is important that the

community continue revitalization efforts following the NY Forward investment to continue to strengthen the downtown against the inevitable threats it will face in the future and to implement actions to safeguard it.

In 2006 the Village of Groton completed a Downtown Planning Study. This Strategic Plan identified strategies and projects designed to enhance the downtown and improve the local economy. As a result, the Groton downtown is in a stronger position now than it was 20 years ago. Despite these successes, the downtown faces a number of problems typical of many other small downtowns. These problems and issues are detailed below:

Downtown Economy - A strong downtown economy is the foundation of a healthy downtown. Groton is fortunate to have strong retail/service anchors bolstered by the presence of non-traditional anchors such as municipal offices, the Post Office, and banks. Although the vacancy rate of first floor commercial businesses is relatively low there is a tendency for many smaller retail businesses to come and go. While many essential goods and services for residents can be found downtown, there is no pharmacy or grocery store in the community, which results in leakages to the larger cities of Cortland and Ithaca. The lack of a grocery store is the most common concern voiced by residents. It is vital that the community work to strengthen retail and service businesses, including restaurants, shops, and accommodations, to ensure that the downtown is sustainable and does not become obsolete and irrelevant for future residents.

Downtown Market Study and Marketing Plan – As part of this comprehensive plan, the Village of Groton completed a market study and marketing plan for the downtown. Much in line with the characterization of Groton as a bedroom community, the market study identified downtown Groton as a small-town commercial center, rather than a traditional shopping district. Although there is a mix of service, retail, dinning, and civic uses, downtown Groton's commercial core is mostly limited by uneven vastation and the automobile-oriented character of the downtown as a passthrough for traffic via Route 38. The Market Study and Plan are attached to this comprehensive plan as an exhibit and the findings and proposal are adopted by reference.

Building Conditions – Many of the downtown's buildings are older, often 100 to 150 years old. The Groton Hotel dates from 1853. The downtown enjoys a solid occupancy rate on its first floors. Vacancies are more common on upper floors of commercial structures. For buildings to be maintained in good condition, they need to be economically viable. It is difficult to provide proper maintenance on an older structure when only half or a third of the building is generating income. Full occupancy and use of structures is important in ensuring their survival. Older commercial buildings also require more specialized and careful renovations as compared to new buildings or residential construction.

With only a few exceptions, the appearance of downtown commercial buildings is good. Most facades are attractive and have quality signage. However. many of the commercial structures are

in need of repair, renovation, and restoration. Older buildings are generally grandfathered from the most current building codes, so few are serviced by sprinklers or have integrated fire detection systems. These factors combine to create a dangerous situation, and it is very possible that a fire in any one downtown building could take out other buildings or the entire block. There is little in the way of regulations that may help ensure that the desired character of the downtown area is achieved and maintained. There are no local laws protecting historic homes or commercial buildings from inappropriate alterations, incompatible new buildings, or demolition.

The Village must work diligently to ensure that buildings are well maintained and protected from deferred maintenance, decay, fire, and other hazards. The Village should strictly enforce all applicable building codes regarding downtown buildings, and assist property owners with undertaking renovations and upgrades, including sprinklers, by seeking financial assistance for property owners and developing programs to ease the financial burden of renovations. The recent NY Forward award should provide financial resources to assist building owners in undertaking renovations and restorations and provide momentum for continuing the progress of the initial award.



Image: Main Street Groton, Northern Block of Buildings. Source: Village of Groton

Parking – As is typical in most 19th Century downtowns, parking is a concern in the downtown area, although large parking lots associated with new development mitigate these concerns somewhat. The primary public lot is located adjacent to the Owasco Inlet and may not be the highest and best use of that waterfront site.

There are actions that the Village should consider to further enhance the parking in the downtown. Physical improvements to municipal parking lots, such as curbed and landscaped planting areas, improved lighting, and new signage, should be undertaken to promote usage and to create attractive urban spaces. Parking areas should be well lit and have direct connections to the Main Street. The Village should remain cognizant of the need to properly manage parking as the downtown evolves and changes over the years.

Waterfront – Groton is fortunate to have the Owasco Inlet running through it. Much of the Inlet is bordered by a village park located on the western bank of the Inlet along Conger Boulevard. Although the park is attractive, the Village does not fully capitalize on the potential of its waterfront location to support downtown development. The NY Forward application identified a number of potential projects that could better leverage the waterfront, including a new trail. pedestrian bridge and festival ground. The Village should continue to seek opportunities to leverage the waterfront as both a recreational resource and a catalyst for economic growth.



Image: Pedestrian Bridge over the Owasco Inlet in Downtown. Source: Village of Groton

Organization and Marketing – Compared to many other downtowns in upstate New York, Groton competes well. The downtown is attractive, has a series of annual events, and a number of businesses that serve residents and draw customers from outside the area. There is not, however, a formalized marketing effort to promote and strengthen the downtown.

For positive and proactive change to occur, and for the strategies and recommendations of this plan and the NY Forward investment to bring about lasting change, an organizational framework for long-term revitalization should be established. Currently, The Groton Business Association is a loose-knit group of businesses from both the Town and Village of Groton. The organization works to promote businesses in the community and provides a solid foundation for the development of a more formalized organization.

There are several organizational models that could be utilized for organizing the downtown, ranging from the current loose affiliation or network of existing groups to developing a highly structured, incorporated, non-profit organization with professional staff. It is unlikely, however, that Groton could support a professional staff, nor would require one. Regardless of the level and type of organization, the community should follow the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Four-Point Approach. The Main Street model has been successfully used to revitalize downtowns throughout the nation. The program outlines four broad areas important to downtown revitalization including Organization, Design, Promotion, and Economic Restructuring. It also stresses that revitalization efforts must be undertaken in partnership with the various downtown and community stakeholders, and that efforts must be incremental in nature. A formal Main Street Program typically has a paid staff person, a Main Street Manager, who runs the program. Due to the small nature of the Village's downtown, it is unlikely that a highly structured Main Street program with staffing is feasibly. Some type of organization, however, is vital to the success of the downtown and its businesses, and the Main Street Four-Point Approach should be followed regardless of the size or formality of the organization. Due to the relatively small number of businesses and property owners in the downtown, a rather informal organizational structure is recommended as a starting point. As the organization gains successes, its organizational structure can become more formalized.

GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

GOAL 1: Preserve and enhance the character of the downtown.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Seek funding sources and other incentives to assist owners of commercial properties in the downtown to renovate buildings, upgrade facades; install appropriate signage; and

redevelop interiors for housing, retail, and commercial office use. Market rate rental housing should be encouraged.

B) Seek designation of a National Register Historic District and/or individual structure listings to financially support renovation of buildings with Historic Tax Credits

C) Develop incentives to encourage property owners to utilize "green" building techniques or to seek LEED certification to improve energy efficiency and overall sustainability of the Village's built environment.

D) The Village should continue to implement its existing downtown design guidelines and establish a Historic District Overlay zoning district for the historic central area of the downtown. Within the overlay, renovations of existing buildings should be in compliance with the National Park Service's Standards for Rehabilitation and new construction should maintain existing architectural styles in scale, proportion, composition, materials, design and setbacks.

E) Establish commercial design standards for downtown areas outside the historic overlay district to ensure that new commercial construction is consistent with the desired character of the community in terms of scale, proportion, materials and site plans, include siting building near the roadway with parking in the side or rear.

F) Revise the sign ordinance to ensure that signage in the downtown is consistent with the desired character of the downtown.

G) Continue to maintain and improve public spaces, including streetscapes, parking areas, and parks to ensure a desirable sense of place.

GOAL 2: Improve connectivity between the downtown and Owasco Inlet.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Develop the planned waterfront trail from W. Cortland Street to W. South Street with spur connections to Main Street.

B) Repurpose a portion of the existing Main Street parking lot into a community green connecting Memorial Park and the pedestrian bridge.

GOAL 3: Support a healthy, diverse, Downtown economy

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Seek funding, such as CDBG Microenterprise Assistance Programs, where possible, to assist new and expanding businesses

B) Seek opportunities to attract and support the establishment of essential businesses, including a grocery and pharmacy.

C) Support the growth of the Village's accommodations to support a strong tourist market.

D) Implement the recommendations of the market study.

GOAL 4: Establish a stable, sustainable downtown organization

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Assist the Groton Business Association in developing a new organizational framework based on the four principles of the "Main Street Approach".

B) Consider providing public financial support for a portion of the organization's operating budget.

C) Provide technical support and training for organization leaders and members to build a strong foundation for success.

GOAL 5: Redevelop the former Village Fire Station

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Determine the most beneficial use for the land and structure and create a strategy to implement that vision (potential for multiuse parking space).

Historic and Cultural Resources

The village of Groton possesses a rich tapestry of historic and cultural resources that reflect both the past and present of the community. Historic resources refer to physical entities, such as buildings, structures, sites, or districts that have significance in history, architecture, archeology, engineering, or the culture of the village. These resources contribute to the understanding of the past and the development of the village of Groton.

Cultural resources are community assets that influence economic development, community revitalization, education, and civic pride. Every community has cultural resources, the material evidence of past and existing human activities. These resources are finite and non-renewable and must be preserved. Many of the local cultural resources in the village of Groton are the very attributes that attract people to the community. Groton's Historic and Cultural resources are summarized in this section.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

The village of Groton is rich in history and pride in its beginnings. A community's architecture, more than any other single trait, defines its character and tells the story of its history, reflects its socio-economic standing, and demonstrates the values of the community. The village of Groton's older structures tell a story of the village's past and provides ample opportunities for the future. The village of Groton was incorporated in June of 1860, and in the 19th century, Groton was well known for the manufacture of machinery, iron truss bridges, and carriages. In 1909, the Standard Typewriter Company moved to Groton, eventually becoming Smith-Corona and the first factory in the world to make a portable typewriter, employing 1,700 people at the factory's production peak. Though the old factory has since been razed, the remnants of these giants in their industry are reflected in the houses, shops, and railroad corridor that still hold steady in the community.

Listing in the State or National register of Historic Places, while an honor and a way of recognizing important structures in a community, it does not protect a property from alteration or demolition on its own. The National Historic Preservation Act was established in 1966, followed by the New York State Preservation Act of 1980. The purpose of this was to identify and preserve buildings, structures, districts, objects, and sites with significance in history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. Registered properties in these voluntary programs may receive a 20% federal income tax credit for the costs of rehabilitation and are also afforded a measure of protection from the effects of state or federal agency-sponsored, licensed, or assisted projects through a notice, review, and consultation process. The Village of Groton, currently, contains only one property on the National register. This building, the former Groton High School at 117 Main Street, was designated in 1992, and while isn't being used as a school any longer, it is a centerpiece of the village, reminding those living in the village, or those passing through, of the community's history.

While the village only has one site formally listed on the National Register, there are several buildings that have been determined as eligible according to the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation's online Cultural Online Resource Information System (CRIS). These properties include the Groton Hotel on E. Cortland Street, the Groton Public Library, also located on E. Cortland Street, and the Congregational Church on Church Street. Other buildings and sites of significance include the Benn Conger Inn, Nubia Bridge, and several other homes and sites that have been deemed significant by the Groton Historical Association.



Image: Groton Hotel, Main Street 2026. Source: Thoma Development Consultants

CULTURAL RESOURCES

According to the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation's online Cultural Online Resource Information System (CRIS), a majority of the village of Groton is considered archeologically sensitive. An archeologically sensitive area highlights the archeological significance of these areas, and the need potential developers to seek professional archeological advice to ascertain the archeological significance of a site. For a community of relatively small size, Groton has an abundance of cultural facilities and events that enhance community life. Some of the more notable cultural resources and events include.

Groton Historical Association- The village's historical society is not-for-profit profit organization dedicated to preserving the history and heritage of the Town and Village of Groton. A focal point of their efforts is the display of Smith-Corona memorabilia, military memorabilia, and a plethora of other historically significant objects that represents the history and background of the village. This collection of items is located within the Association's museum located at 168 Main Street, the renovated "Olde Baptist Meeting House."

Groton Public Library- The Groton public library was chartered in 1896. Local physician Miles Goodyear commissioned prominent architect William Henry Miller to design the building in memory of his mother. Completed in 1917, the Georgian brick exterior and neo-classic interior have been maintained throughout the years, providing space and light into the building, even through expansions and reorganization.



Image: Groton Public Library. Source: Thoma Development Consultants

The Village of Groton is full of pride for their community and show that with the many events throughout the year. The level of engagement with the community is shown in the attendance of such events as the “Groton Olde Home Days”, held in the last weekend in August. It features a carnival, Children’s activities, craft show, food venders, bands and a parade, among other activities. This event is one that showcases the pride the citizens have in the Village.

The Village holds holiday events for Halloween and Christmas, and the Library is extremely active in the community, providing events and programming for both adults and children in the Village.

The Groton Fire Department has public education programs to teach about fire safety and distracted driving, as well as an annual summer camp for children 4-12 years old. The American Legion has a Summer Concert Series sponsored by the Groton Recreation Association as well as several Charitable and community oriented social activities.

GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

Goal 1: Recognize and promote village history and the role and value of cultural resources within the village of Groton.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A. Seek funding and support appropriate funding requests to preserve and rehabilitate historic structures within the village, including housing rehabilitation for owner and renter-occupied housing.

B. Partner with other entities such as the schools, library, or the Groton Historical Association to educate the public on the importance of historic architecture, increase support and appreciation for historic preservation, and celebrate local architecture.

C. Maintain existing and foster new partnerships with the school district and local preservation organizations to develop elementary, middle, and high school curriculum programs designated to educate students on the village's history, historic architecture, and the connections between the built environment and social development of the community.

D. Partner with community groups, local churches, not-for-profit organizations, educational institutions, the village Historian, and other interested entities to continue to advance quality cultural events such as the Groton Olde Home Days, and educational opportunities that benefit the citizens of the Groton community.

Goal 2: Recognize the role and value of historic architecture in the village of Groton.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A. Amend the zoning regulations and zoning map to include a Historic District overlay zone district, that at a minimum governs new development and redevelopment along the historic Main Street.

B. Establish an Architectural Review board to oversee the preservation of local historic structures and ensure that alterations/changes to existing structures are historically appropriate. Historic review should be limited to those areas or areas of most concern to the village.

C. To ensure fair and objective design review, clear and concise design guidelines should be established as part of the zoning code, or as a stand-alone ordinance.

Goal 3: Leverage historic, cultural, and waterfront resources within the village to improve the local economy and way of life.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A. Foster partnership among local museums and cultural institutions including the library, and the Groton Historical Association.

B. Enhance the stature of local institutions by using community partnerships with neighboring communities.

C. Encourage and establish social media advertisement of the village's historic and cultural resources.

TRANSPORTATION

Assessment of the transportation system within the Village of Groton must be considered from two perspectives. First, logistical information identifying exactly what the system is, roads, railroad, trails, and sidewalks; who has jurisdiction over these elements, County, State, or Village; and who uses them, public or private. Second, the condition of each component must be considered and evaluated.

ROADS AND HIGHWAYS

The road network in the Village of Groton is primarily under the jurisdiction of the Village. There are exceptions, such as E. Cortland Street (NYS Rte. 222), which enters the Village on the east, and intersects with Main Street. Cayuga Street, Main Street, and Peru Rd. (NYS Rte. 38), running north and south through the Village are also state roads.

There are no county roads within the Village, and all other roads within the municipal boundary are maintained and controlled by the Village. As with any public thoroughfare, all these roadways are shared with public utilities and are utilized by the traveling public. Due to the buildout of the Village, it is unlikely that the number of users of either infrastructure or networks of public roadways will increase.



Image: Main Street/NYS 38. Source: Thoma Development Consultants

The overall condition of all streets within the Village is satisfactory, with very few problem areas. As roads age, they tend to deteriorate and are typically slated for an upgrade such as milling, paving, resurfacing, or new shoulders. If construction projects for roads are anticipated, other than routine maintenance, it is strongly recommended that they be evaluated for improvements to drainage and shoulders of the area are to be impacted of replacement of curbing, and to determine whether buried utilities such as water and sewer need replacement.

There is some concern relative to the transportation system within the Village, as Main Street (NYS Rte. 38) is part of a larger network of roads that lead to both Auburn to the north, and Ithaca to the south. There are few, if any pedestrian safety features along Main Street, and with the larger volume of traffic, it would be beneficial to the citizens in the community to determine any needs for crosswalks, lighting, truncated domes, curb ramps, or any other pedestrian safety features.

NYS Route 222 runs into the Village from the east and is heavily traveled by those going to and from the City of Cortland. The traffic volume on this route is approximately 2,485 vehicles per day. NYS Route 38, the route that runs north and south through the Village and is Groton's Main Street averages approximately 3,406 vehicles per day according to the New York State Department of Transportation Traffic Data Viewer.

SIDEWALKS

The Village of Groton has a robust network of sidewalks throughout the community. Conditions of sidewalks vary. Overall, the condition of sidewalks is satisfactory, though many sidewalks in residential areas need repair. The Village has maintenance and replacement responsibility for only those sidewalks that are located along municipally owned Village properties. The remainder of the sidewalks in the Village is the responsibility of the landowners along whose frontage the sidewalk is located. In some instances, this causes problems when a homeowner allows the walk to deteriorate, becoming Insafe, impassible, and in severe cases, forcing people to walk in the roadway. The Village needs to be consistent in enforcing maintenance requirements to ensure safe pedestrians and may need to consider programs to help community members who are unable to pay for the reconstruction of their sidewalks due to income or disability.

Additionally, serious consideration should be given to incorporating sidewalk improvements into any infrastructure and roadway type projects. Relative to the connectivity of the sidewalks within the Village, it would be a clear improvement to extend and fully connect the sidewalks in the Village to all recreational trails, parks, or landmarks within the Village. Not all intersections adequately provide full handicapped accessibility. When street and roadway projects are undertaken, these accessibility issues should also be addressed.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Downtown Groton is walkable, compact, and easily navigated. The Village has a thorough system of sidewalks and pedestrian friendly amenities that make the community safe for both pedestrians and bicyclists. Bus transportation is available through Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit (TCAT). The TCAT system is expansive and countywide, serving Cornell University, Ithaca College, and all communities throughout Tompkins County. TCAT connects to Centro Cortland through Route 43 at TC3.



Image: Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit. Source: Thoma Development Consultants

In addition, the Village of Groton is located approximately 18 minutes (12.8 Miles) from Ithaca-Tompkins International Airport, and 50 minutes (49.4 miles) from Syracuse Hancock International Airport.

RAIL

The Village of Groton has a long history with the railroad, and it is evident by the old rail bed that runs through the center of the Village. In the past, the Village was served by the Southern Central Railroad, and then later by the Lehigh Valley Railroad. There is currently no rail line in the Village,

but the rail bed does provide an opportunity for recreation as it has the potential to be converted to a multi-use walking trail for the health and enjoyment of the community.

BICYCLE FACILITIES

There is no officially designated bike route through Village streets. The provision of bike routes, bike trails, and bike facilities such as racks, are important to promote the use of bicycles and alternative forms of transportation. The Village should work to accommodate and promote bicycle use in the community as an alternative form of transportation. Connections of key destinations around the Village should be accessible by bicycles and pedestrians, along with other forms of alternative transportation. Providing safe, clean streets and designated bike routes will encourage people to explore the Village in a responsible manner. Educational opportunities and workshops, as well as bicycle clinics may be offered to children and adults to educate citizens on rules and bicycle safety procedures.

OTHER FORMS OF TRANSPORTATION

In this time of increasing gas prices and environmental sustainability, the trend for many communities has been toward using alternative forms of transportation. Some ways to encourage this trend of sustainable travel can include the following.

- Commuting
- Complete Streets (Encouraging bicycle travel)
- Electric Vehicle Charging Stations
- Alternative Fuel Vehicles

GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

Goal 1: Maintain, enhance, and encourage pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, which promote connectivity and good health while reducing reliance on vehicles.

a) Identify gaps in the Village's existing sidewalk, trail, and bikeway system that could serve as key links to destinations in and around the Village (parks, schools, shopping, downtown, jobs, etc.) and develop and expand such a system to close gaps.
b) Include requirements, as part of a Site Plan Review, for new projects to incorporate pedestrian and bicycle accommodations and facilities as part of the new development, as may be appropriate.
c) Pursue capital improvement programs that increase opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle usage and safety.
d) Develop an informational brochure for public distribution that details the health and environmental benefits of using non-motorized forms of transportation.

Goal 2: Improve and promote the use of public transportation.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

a) Improve and expand service to the City of Cortland to increase the use of existing public transportation system.
b) Ensure the public bus system is safe, user friendly and convenient, particularly for the disabled and elderly.

Goal 3: Improve and promote the use of alternative forms of transportation.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

a) Provide bicycle lanes, sharrows, bicycle racks, and other amenities where appropriate.
b) Promote bicycle safety by holding bicycle clinics where children/adults can be educated on the proper rules and safety of cycling.

Goal 4: As part of an overall capital improvements program, continue to target existing streets and sidewalks in need of repair.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

a) Pursue capital improvements that remedy storm water flooding along roads and address infrastructure repair and replacement as part of the project.
b) Identify streets and locations where improvements/maintenance are most needed.
c) When applicable, coordinate designs with other agencies (DOT) that meet the needs of the Village.
d) Seek outside financial assistance to fund needed capital improvements.
e) Identify sidewalks in need of repair, pursue remedies to alleviate the problem.
f) Ensure that crosswalks and curb cuts to crosswalks are handicap accessible

INFRASTRUCTURE & UTILITIES

INTRODUCTION

Infrastructure is a key contributor to quality of life for all residents of a community. In the Village of Groton, residents receive a number of services from their local government. The quality and cost of these services depend upon the existence, stability, and sustainability of community infrastructure. This section of the Plan examines the infrastructure upon which Village of Groton residents depend, to better understand its capacity to serve the community now and in the future.

WATER SUPPLY

The Village operates and maintains its own water system. This system serves approximately 2,363 residents with 765 service connections providing 308,000 gallons of water each day. The Village of Groton uses two sources of water: the Morton Works (infiltration gallery) and the Conger Boulevard well field.

The water from the Morton Works flows by gravity to the Clark Street tank, where it is filtered by a micro-filtration process to meet the federal guidelines for surface water treatment. It is then disinfected by chlorine gas and distributed to the Village.

The Conger Boulevard wells, are also disinfected and treated to reduce corrosion, then pumped into the distribution system on command of the water level in the Clark Street tank. Pumps at Clark Street serve a second, higher-level zone with a 200,000-gallon concrete storage tank on Elm Street.

The Village has the responsibility for water services to the curb box. From the curb box to the building, it is the property owner's responsibility. Water rates are charged per 100 cubic foot (748 gallons). Rates are double for customers outside of the Village.

The Village's water report indicates that there are no violations regarding contaminants in the drinking water. That said, it means that there are no levels that exceed the Maximum Allowed Contaminate levels established by the EPA and Department of Health.

DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

The water distribution system in the Village includes water mains, valves, control valves, hydrants, tanks, services and meters. All residents in the Village have public water. The Village staff handles operation and maintenance of the system.

SANITARY SEWER

Waste Water Treatment Plant - The Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) is located at 205 Cayuga Street in the Village of Groton. The daily average flow of wastewater through the village system is about .28 million gallons per day and the plant is regulated to a maximum flow of .5 million gallons per day. The Village does provide an emergency generator for the WWTP in the event of an electrical outage.

The Village was recently awarded a WQIP grant from the State of New York to make upgrades to the wastewater plant that will improve treatment processes and the quality of discharge to the Owasco Inlet. The Village will continue to identify upgrades required for the wastewater treatment plant and pursue grant funding as appropriate.

Distribution System - The entire waste flow generated by the Village is discharged to the plant. Several thousand lineal feet of sewer exist within the Village, serving a population of 2,055 customers. The Village should inventory the age and condition of the sanitary sewer lines and create a priority list for either relining or replacement. By undertaking these improvements, the infiltration/inflow will be reduced which mitigates the flow of rainwater to the plant.

Expansion Possibilities - Expansion of the sewer system is not anticipated. However, the Plant is under capacity based on permitted flow and average flow for 2019. Based on these values and the average flow per household (225GPD) the plant can accommodate approximately 2,200 households or equivalent thereof. Light industry or heavy water user that may have large biological loading could reduce the expansion capability. Such industries need to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. In addition, such industries may be required to provide pre-treatment to mitigate impacts to the Plant.

STORMWATER

In general, the Stormwater drainage system in the Village is old and in deteriorated condition. Because stormwater drainage system replacement projects can place a significant burden on

resident taxpayers, the Village is forced to replace sections of the stormwater system in small phases to avoid system failures.

TRAFFIC AND PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

The Village of Groton has two main access points via NYS Route 222 and Route 38 in both the north and south. These roads are traveled by more than 3,400 vehicles per day. The Village has a well-connected and complete network of sidewalks that serves most of the community. There are small sections of streets that may only have sidewalks on one side, or no sidewalks at all, but it is not indicative of an issue. Overall, the condition of sidewalks is satisfactory.

The Village maintains and replaces sidewalks that are located along municipal owned properties as needed. The remainder of the sidewalks are the responsibility of the landowners along whose frontage the sidewalks are located. The Village should work to seek state and federal grant funding sources to ensure that the Village is walkable and bikeable for all ages and levels of ability.

CLIMATE IMPACTS

Climate changes have been significant in the past several years. There has been an increase in the frequency and intensity of storms. In many circumstances there has been related impacts on infrastructure specifically the Wastewater Treatment Plant and the Water Treatment Plant. High impact storms can increase the flow to the Wastewater Treatment Plant requiring additional flow to be treated. This uses more energy.

Storms can result in power outages that impact efficient operation of the plant. Both the Wastewater Treatment Plant and the Water Treatment Plant have emergency generators installed.

ELECTRICITY AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The Village of Groton owns and operates its own municipal electric department. The Village has a power purchase agreement with the New York Power Authority's Niagara Project which enables it to supply electricity to homes and businesses at one of the lowest rates in the country. The Niagara Project is a sustainable source of hydroelectric energy.

Television services are provided by Spectrum. Satellite television service is also available. A number of companies provide land-line telephone service. Cell phone coverage in the Village is adequate and broadband internet service is available through Spectrum. There does not appear to be any unique service delivery or capacity problems with any of the services. Broadband and internet access has proven to be an important asset to all communities since the Covid-19 pandemic. Many people now often work from home, and students are

increasingly participating in remote educational programs. Dependable internet access ensures that residents, families, and students can stay connected

With continuous technological development, many alternatives are now available compared to these traditional services. For example, more people are now utilizing cell phones only and no longer have landlines to their homes. There is also a continuing consolidation of services, with traditional television cable companies offering phone service, and telephone companies providing high speed internet. Such consolidations will undoubtedly continue, with electricity, television, and phone service more closely intertwined. With the introduction of streaming television, residents have been provided with custom alternative to cable and satellite dish television. The Village should remain cognizant of emerging trends and work to ensure that Village residents and businesses have access to the most current technologies.

ENERGY OVERVIEW/PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

Village residents can technically install residential solar energy systems on their homes, but the locally owned grid does not currently support net metering. Solar energy has become more economically viable for homeowners due to advancements in technology which have led to cost reductions and tax and rebate incentives. The village should continue to explore opportunities to convert the grid infrastructure for net metering to accommodate residential scale alternative energy sources.

Some Village residents also own electric or hybrid cars that are designed to reduce dependence on oil. With fluctuating electric and oil prices, it is ideal for residents to own both electric and gas vehicles, when feasible, from an affordability perspective.

Wind energy has not been utilized in the Groton area, likely due to cost constraints and significant required turbine clearances. The proximity of residential properties within the Village makes large scale wind energy infeasible, however, it is possible to pursue small scale wind turbines that would fit in with the surrounding community while also providing a renewable energy source that is important for the future of the Village.

POTENTIAL VILLAGE PROGRAMS FOR ENERGY SAVINGS

In addition to the facilities mentioned above, the Village of Groton could benefit from a thorough evaluation of energy consumption across all facets of Village operations. An independent energy audit performed specifically to identify opportunities to implement energy-efficient equipment, fixtures, or even operational procedures could result in a comprehensive strategy to reduce consumption, and therefore costs. It could also recommend a sequence of implementation which makes the transition to energy efficiency

more affordable. The Village of Groton should also encourage its Code Office to stay current on Energy Code enforcement training as energy technology continues to advance.

Street Lighting - The Village replaced its old streetlights with energy efficient LED lights. The LED lights can be approximately 2 to 3 times more costly than conventional fixtures but will save energy over time which eventually covers the initial capital expenditure. In addition, the LED lights have a longer life span than incandescent and fluorescent lights. The life span of LED lights is roughly 40 times that of incandescent and 5 times greater than fluorescent. This reduces replacement cost and maintenance by Village staff. It is the general concusses in the Village that more street lighting is desirable.

Solar Panels - The Village should explore the use of solar panels on Village buildings along with other public facilities as a supplement to the existing power supply. Grant funding opportunities may make solar panels a desirable and feasible option.

Vehicle Replacement - As the Village reviews its annual replacement cycle for vehicles and road equipment, a focus on fuel consumption reduction should be a priority for both its environmental benefits and its potential to reduce operational costs. The balance between reduction of the carbon footprint and reduction in operational expenses is a worthy discussion as legislative and social priorities are established each year.

Programs - The Village is investigating available programs that foster energy savings. NYSERDA has several Planning and Implementation programs available to municipalities and private residents.

Climate Smart Communities is a program through the Department of Environmental Conservation that is working toward a network of New York communities actively engaged in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving climate resilience.

Clean Energy Communities is a program through NYSERDA that the Village of Groton could take advantage of, considering the actions that this Comprehensive Plan is proposing. The Clean Energy Communities program is for local governments in New York State and provides tools, resources, and technical assistance to communities for sustainability efforts. The program recognizes leadership for the completion of specific clean energy projects and makes grant funds available to communities who have initiated certain sustainability efforts.

GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

GOAL 1: Ensure the long-term safety and reliability of the public water and sewer system.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Continue to repair and replace water and sewer mains and investigate "unauthorized discharges" to reduce inflow and infiltration.

B) Upgrade Wastewater Treatment Facility as needed.

C) The Village should seek state/federal funding for the replacement of the stormwater drainage system along Broad Street and village wide.

GOAL 2: Seek creative alternative uses for stormwater runoff that can benefit the community

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Investigate and develop information concerning re-use of stormwater collected at residential properties such as rain gardens, re-directed downspout flows, rainwater irrigation systems.

B) Utilize the Village's site plan review authority to encourage/require green infrastructure such as vegetated swales, permeable surfaces, and natural stormwater management to reduce flooding risks and improve water quality.

GOAL 3: Relocate overhead power lines to underground locations where possible

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Develop regulations to require installation of underground power lines for new development and major redevelopment projects, including burying of service lines from main lines to buildings.

B) Pursue funding sources and other opportunities to bury/relocate overhead power lines within the Village when opportunities are possible.

GOAL 4: Ensure that all possible action is made to reduce energy consumption.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Undertake a solarize campaign to increase the number of solar rooftops in the Village and convert the grid to support net metering.

B) Replace fleet vehicles with energy efficient vehicles and install electric vehicle charging stations.

C) Pursue High Impact Action Items through NYSERDA to obtain a Clean Energy Community designation.

D) Pursue Climate Smart Certification.

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

GROTON CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Summary - The Groton Central School District is the principal school for K-12 education for residents of the Village of Groton. Annual student enrollment in the district is roughly 700 students. Most students in the district live within the Town and Village of Groton. The school district operates from two school buildings, the Groton Elementary School which houses Pre-Kindergarten thru Grade 5, and the Groton Junior-Senior High School, where grades 6-12 are located. With both facilities located within the Village, the Groton Central School District is the Village's largest employer with over 100 jobs.

Over the past several years, the Groton Central School District has invested over $20 million in capital projects, including state aid, into projects that directly benefit the Groton community. Key developments include the creation of two state-of-the-art Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM) Labs—one at the High School and one at the Elementary School. These cutting-edge facilities provide students with dynamic, hands-on learning experiences that go beyond the traditional classroom environment, fostering exploration and creativity.

The school district has also made major improvements to its athletic facilities, including upgrades to the baseball fields and the construction of a brand-new, multi-purpose stadium with a turf field. The turf field supports various high school sports and is also utilized by local municipal recreation leagues for flag football and other youth sports in the Groton community. 72% of the Comprehensive Plan survey respondents rated the school district and associated services as good or excellent.



Image: Groton School STEAM Lab. Source: Groton Central School District

Safety - The Village of Groton Police Department provides support to the Groton School District on an "as needed basis." There is not currently a dedicated School Resource Officer program for the district. While many area schools have partnered with local law enforcement agencies on an SRO program, the Groton School district has opted to offer student support through mental health services and emergency resources which are provided on their web site as well as within the school.

The school has a district safety plan and a building level plan which is reviewed annually. These plans outline the school's response protocol to many items and are filed with the Village of Groton Police, Tompkins County Sheriff, and the NY State Police. Remote activated double entries have been installed in both school buildings. An extensive number of resources have been utilized for surveillance equipment on the inside and outside of buildings. Staff attend annual training covering a variety of related topics.

The School District has indicated that discussion on the position of an SRO will be revisited in the future if the need arises. The Village is open to the possibility of a partnership with the school on an SRO program.

Transportation - The school district provides bus service to and from school for all students in grades K-5. Students in grades 6-12 who reside within the Village core are not eligible for transportation services. This means that many students walk to the high school daily. The Village should complete an inventory of its sidewalks and create a hierarchy to prioritize streets for sidewalk installation and repair. Streets where children typically walk to school should be given priority for installation and/or repair. The Village should continue to explore funding opportunities for sidewalks and Safe Routes to School through the Transportation Alternatives Program. The school district also provides transportation for students to the parochial schools in Cortland.

By 2035, all school bus fleets in the State of New York are expected to be zero-emission and all school buses purchased by districts after 2027 must be zero-emission. The Village and School District are mindful of this requirement and should continue discussions on how to best comply with the state's electrification/emission requirements, especially given that the Village of Groton locally owns the municipal electric department which supplies electricity to the district. Initiatives could include an electrical grid survey, service upgrades, and a dedicated service line to the school district to meet increased electrical needs. Funding may be available through the 2022 Environmental Bond Act to support the electrification transition.

TST BOCES

The Tompkins-Seneca-Tioga Board of Cooperative Educational Services (TST BOCES) plays a vital role in local education by providing alternative programs and services to local school districts.

Serving 900 students and hundreds of adults, TST BOCES employs a team of over 300 staff members. Educational offerings available to Groton residents include Adult Education, Career and Technical Education, Exceptional Education, the TST P-TECH Academy, and the Regional Alternative School. The Groton School District provides transportation services for district students who attend TST BOCES.

TST BOCES also provides a range of services to support School Improvement, Health and Safety Programs, Central Business Office support, Special Education School Improvement, Data Analysis, Energy Management, and various professional development programs for teachers.

HIGHER EDUCATION

There is no secondary learning institution located within the Village of Groton. However, there are several universities and colleges located in proximity to the Village. This includes, within just a 25-minute drive, Cornell University, Ithaca College, SUNY Cortland, and Tompkins Cortland Community College. High School students in Groton have access to over 100 college credits available in dual enrollment course work through Tompkins Cortland Community College. Many Groton students graduate from High School having already attained an associate's degree.

GROTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Nestled in the heart of downtown Groton on East Cortland Street, the Groton Public Library (GPL) has been a cornerstone of the community since its charter in 1896. Originally established to serve the Groton School District, the library's journey has been one of growth and transformation. Its stately Georgian-style brick building, constructed in 1917, has expanded twice, once in 1981 and again in 2021, reflecting the evolving needs of the community.

More than just a place to borrow books, GPL is a vibrant community space. Patrons can enjoy a cozy reading room, a dedicated teen space, a dynamic children's area, a community event space, office facilities, a fully equipped kitchen, and even a community pantry. As a member of the Finger Lakes Library System, GPL connects residents to an extensive network of books, media, and educational resources far beyond its own collection.

The library provides early literacy programs for preschoolers and their families, educational support for local schools and independent learners, and a diverse collection of recreational reading materials. Special programs, exhibits, and events run throughout the year, engaging youth and adults with opportunities in the arts, science, and technology.

Recognizing the importance of fostering literacy from an early age, GPL dedicates much of its energy to serving the youngest members of the community. The annual Summer Reading Program plays a vital role in children's literacy development, ensuring that learning continues

beyond the school year. With its latest expansion, GPL has created a versatile community space where youth programming and activities take place Monday through Saturday.

Since its inception, the Groton Public Library has been a story of success, one built on the synergy of community support and library expertise.

GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

Goal 1: Continue to work with the School District on bus electrification efforts.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Continue to explore capacity improvements for the municipally owned electric grid.

B) Secure state and federal funding for fleet transition and needed improvements for local electrical supply.

Goal 2: Develop programs to enable children to safely walk to school.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) The Village should inventory the existing sidewalks noting location, condition, and missing connections so that future maintenance and improvements can be prioritized based on need.

B) The Village will continue to maintain and improve existing sidewalk and trail infrastructure and add additional connections to ensure that walking to school is safe.

C) The village should explore funding opportunities through the Transportation Alternatives Program / Safe Routes to School.

Goal 3: Support local recreation and sporting opportunities for youth and adult residents.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Continue collaboration between the school district and Town and Village of Groton Recreation department to support athletics programming and shared use of facilities.

Goal 4: Encourage persons associated with the school district, including faculty, staff, students and visitors to support local business and events.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Collaborate with the Groton Community Business Association, local businesses, and the school district to create student internship opportunities.

B) Work with the Groton Community Business Association to encourage local businesses to advertise in media related to school events.

HEALTH AND PUBLIC SAFETY

HEALTH CARE

There is one small family practice health care facility located in the Village of Groton. There is also one dental practice and chiropractic office. Groton residents primarily rely on the Guthrie Medical Center and Centralus Health (formerly Cayuga Health) located in the Ithaca and Cortland area for medical services. Both Guthrie and Centralus offer full service medical and emergency care through a comprehensive network of providers within 35 minutes of the Village of Groton. Guthrie and Centralus also operate urgent care facilities in both Cortland and Ithaca. Groton residents also have access to the Family Health Network which offers Family Practice and Pediatric medical services in nearby Cortland and Homer. For long term care, the Village is also home to the Groton Community Health Care Center, an 80-bed residential rehabilitation and nursing center.

When surveyed on the issue of access to quality health care, only 30 percent of survey respondents believe that village residents have good or excellent access to health care. This is likely the case since there are limited healthcare providers directly within the Village and most residents travel to Cortland or Ithaca for medical services.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

The Village of Groton Police Department is the main law enforcement agency serving the community. The department currently employs one Officer in Charge (part time), a Desk Sergeant (part time), two fulltime officers, seven parttime officers, and one school crossing guard. The department often has open officer positions which it needs to fill. In emergencies, mutual aid is provided by the Tompkins County Sheriff's Office and the New York State Police. The Groton Police Department also provides law enforcement services for special events held by the school district and assists the Town of Groton Court when court is in session and during criminal arraignments.

Like many other departments statewide, the Groton Police face ongoing budget challenges, with rising costs for services, equipment maintenance, and upgrades making securing adequate funding a critical priority. Budgetary constraints can make officer recruitment difficult, and the Village must balance limited resources with the need to hire new officers. The Police Department purchases one new service vehicle each year and typically has a fleet of two SUV’s and one sedan for office use. Fleet costs have increased significantly since 2019.

Approximately 65% of the calls that the Village Police Department respond to are domestic in nature. The village police partner with the Tompkins County Crisis Alternative Response and Engagement unit (CARE) to assist with these types of calls. The CARE unit’s primary purpose is to

provide mental health services to persons in crisis to reduce the time that patrol officers must dedicate to an incident. 30% of calls are for petty offenses and about 5% are felony level incidents. From the public perspective, nearly 85% of the Comprehensive Plan survey respondents rated local police services as good or excellent in the Village of Groton.

FIRE PROTECTION / EMS

Fire Protection, emergency management, and ambulance service all fall under the purview of the Groton Fire Department. The Fire Department is principally funded by contracts with the Town and Village of Groton. The ambulance service also generates revenue through insurance company billings. In 2024, the Village of Groton constructed a new fire station attached to the Village offices at 308 Main Street.

The Fire Department is largely staffed by a robust network of volunteer labor from roughly 65 community volunteers. The Fire Department also employs several paid positions including one fulltime paramedic, a fulltime Critical Care provider, and six part-time paramedics. The Fire Department could utilize a few additional paramedics. The biggest hurdles for the fire department are the ever-increasing cost of equipment and fire apparatus and the growing difficulty of recruiting volunteer labor. The department is finding that it is becoming increasingly more difficult to satisfy new OSHA standards and minimum training requirements for its volunteer staff, both of which significantly impact the department's budget. These issues are not unique to the Groton Fire Department but are prevalent statewide.

Most calls for service from the fire department tend to be for car accidents and other medical emergencies. Even with the noted difficulties, over 90% of the Comprehensive Plan survey respondents rated the local fire services, EMS, and ambulance service as good or excellent.



Image: Groton Fire Station, Constructed 2024. Source: Groton Fire Department

GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

Goal 1: The Village will provide/contract for emergency services so that residents can live peacefully and safely within the community.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Assist emergency service entities in searching and applying for grant funds when opportunities become available. This could include funding available through the CDBG Public Facilities program for the acquisition of new fire apparatus.

B) Continue to provide adequate facilities for emergency services such as the new fire station. Explore funding opportunities for the construction of a new police station centrally located in the Village.

C) Continue to fund police and fire services and incorporate cost saving measures such as sharing services with nearby municipalities.

D) Continue conversations with the School District regarding the potential for an SRO program.

Goal 2: Ensure that development does not negatively impact the health and safety of residents.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) The Village Planning and Zoning Boards should consider and determine the impact of any new development on emergency services and the possible need to expand fire and police capacity as a result.

HOUSING

HISTORY AND CHARACTERISTICS

According to the US Census Bureau, there are 1,066 housing units in the Village of Groton. 54% of the housing in the Village was constructed prior to 1940. A very small percentage (about 3% or 31 units) of the housing in the Village was constructed after 2000. Most of the homes are medium sized and contain two or three bedrooms. 63% of the occupied housing units in the Village are owner occupied. There is a vacancy rate of roughly 5%.

According to the Census Bureau, the predominant type of housing in Groton are single family homes, representing about 58% of the total housing in the Village. Those homes were constructed in a mix of styles including Victorian, Colonial Revival, Craftsman, and some pockets of more modern 70's/80's split level and ranch homes. It is important to note that there are no townhome or condo developments within the Village.

There are also neighborhoods including Spring Street, Linderman Ave., and West Cortland Street with several homes that were construct by the Smith Corona Typewriter Company around 1915. The Smith Corona homes were constructed by the Smith Corona Building and Improvement Company for corporate employees and tend to be smaller in size with a simple design aesthetic. These homes were mostly balloon-frame construction and in their original state, were poorly insulated.

Approximately 20% of the housing in the village is in housing structures that contain two to four units and another 20% of the housing is in multifamily structures with more than 5 units per structure. The two larger multifamily developments in the Village include the Center Village Court Apartments and the School House Gardens Apartments, both senior living communities which are at maximum capacity.

Through its housing efforts, the Village of Groton achieved the "Pro-Housing Communities" certification in 2024. This allows the Village to apply to discretionary funding programs including the DRI and NY Forward programs, the Regional Council Capital Fund, the Market NY Program, the New York Main Street program, and others.

HOUSING AFFORDABILLITY

Tompkins County is amid a housing crisis, particularly regarding rental costs and availability of housing in and around the City of Ithaca. Housing values in the Village of Groton have historically been lower than elsewhere in the County, in part due to its location at the northeastern end of the County. The age and condition of many Village homes is also a factor that impacts cost. It also

means that home values won't typically increase as quickly and therefore may not be as enticing of an investment as elsewhere. As detailed below, property taxes increase the burden of property ownership in the Village. Nevertheless, Groton's for-sale market remains affordable to the average home purchaser.

The American Community Survey (ACS) shows that the median home value in 2022 was estimated to be $153,000 with many homes (54%) in the Village valued between $100,000 to $200,000. This is significantly lower than the countywide median home value of $263,100.

Given that housing within the Village of Groton is predominately owner-occupied, the table below is an assessment of the affordability for residents regarding their housing cost/burden ratio. According to HUD, those who spend more than 30% of their income on housing expenses are cost burdened. Housing affordability is an increasingly urgent issue in many places around the United States, and particularly in Tompkins County. Data from the ACS estimate shows that in the Village of Groton 24.4% of homeowners with a mortgage (which constitute over 60% of all homeowners) are cost burdened, while 16% of those without a mortgage are burdened by housing expenses. Despite the county having a significantly higher median home value, the percentage of cost burdened homeowners in the county is lower than the Village's.

With the Village median income of $53,347, a family generally can afford the median purchase price of a home in the Village (see table below). This is contingent upon a buyer having a +/- $30,000 down payment, which is often a more significant barrier to homeownership than regular carrying costs.

Home-Buying Affordability		
Median Home Price	$153,000	
Down Payment (20%)	$30,600	
Mortgage	$122,400	
	Monthly	Annual
Principal and Interest (30 yr @ 6.9%)	$806	$9,672
Taxes	$450	$5,400
Insurance	$100	$1,200
TOTAL	**$1,356**	**$16,272**
	Monthly	Annual
Median Household Income	$ 4,445	$ 53,347
30% (HUD)	**$ 1,333**	**$ 16,004**
28% (banks)	**$ 1,245**	**$ 14,938**

While the national real estate market has changed significantly since 2022 because of the Covid pandemic and resulting inflation, this seems to have had little impact on local costs. The real estate market in the Village is very limited, with fewer than 10 residential properties for sale in the spring of 2025. Approximately half of homes for sale are single-family and the rest are multi-unit properties. Single family home prices range from $117,000 to $260,000, commensurate with the 2022 ACS median. Homes at the lower end of the cost range typically need significant repairs, which adds to the cost. The shortage of listed homes is an indicator of a lack of housing available in the Village.

The median rent in the Village of $831 is far less than the county median of $1,383. Nevertheless, a high percentage of Village renters are cost burdened, with 34.8% of renters paying more than 30% of their income toward rent. This compares favorably to the county rate of over 63%. The more affordable rents in the Village have resulted in lower income renters seeking cheaper housing in the Village. This has also been associated with some unscrupulous landlords providing over-crowded and poor-quality housing which has impacted neighborhood quality of life.

HOUSING CONDITIONS

The condition of housing in the Village varies with some homes being in substandard or severely substandard condition and others that are pristine, well maintained historic homes. As mentioned, most homes in the Village of Groton were constructed prior to 1940 (54%). Although many older village homes are in excellent condition, the oldest homes are susceptible to decay from deferred maintenance over time.

The Village of Groton conducted a housing conditions survey concurrently with this comprehensive plan and determined that 30% of housing structures in the village are in substandard condition. The most prevalent observed housing defects were windows and doors (118 properties or 18% of surveyed residential structures), defective roofing material (85 properties or 13% of surveyed residential structures), defective siding materials (75 properties or 11% of surveyed residential structures), and defective porches and stairs (60 properties or 9% of surveyed residential structures). The Village of Groton should utilize the information gathered in the housing conditions survey to apply for future housing rehabilitation grants from funding sources such as the CDBG and HOME programs.



Image: Sample housing rehabilitation project. Source: Thoma Development Consultants

Many of the homes that are in the worst condition are rental housing. This is due in part to a small number of landlords that live outside of the community who have failed to invest in and maintain their properties. Through the efforts of local code enforcement, this problem is slowly being rectified.

RENTAL HOUSING

According to the ACS, approximately 37% of housing units in the Village of Groton are renter-occupied units. This is roughly 370 of the 998 occupied housing units in the Village. Most of the rental housing in Groton is in multi-family structures with three or more units. The ACS also indicates that approximately only 40 of the 370 occupied rental units in the Village are in single or two-family homes. 187 rental units are housed within structures that contain three to nine apartment units. 146 rental units are housed in structures that contain 10 or more apartments. The multifamily structures notably include 28 apartment units at the Schoolhouse Garden Apartments on Main Street and 60 apartments at Center Village Court. Both rental communities are for older adults and adults with disabilities.

According to local real estate professionals, there is a decent volume of two-bedroom apartments in the Village. Recently there has been high demand for apartments with one, three, and four bedrooms which is not being met by the current local rental housing supply.

There is one mobile home park in the Village that leases lots. Valley View Park has 45 sites for single and double wide manufactured homes. The park is nearly fully occupied. There is also limited rental housing in downtown Groton, along Main Street on the upper floors of mixed-use buildings. Much of this housing is outdated or vacant. The Village is actively incentivizing the development of new downtown housing and the revitalization of existing upper floor housing units through the NY Forward program. The Village should continue these efforts through other grant programs like the New York Main Street and Restore NY programs.

As mentioned, some of the poorest housing conditions are found among rental properties. Although some of the rentals in the Village are well maintained, the Village has historically had several absentee landlords that have not properly invested in and maintained their properties. Through diligent local code enforcement, the village is slowly addressing this issue and should continue its efforts.

The Village should also consider pursuing grants for income property rehabilitation to assist responsible landlords who provide housing for lower income tenants. This funding is available through the Community Development Block Grant program. This is particularly important in Groton, as many lower income tenants have moved to Groton from the nearby City of Ithaca where there is currently a significant housing shortage and housing cost crisis.

HOUSING FOR THE AGING

Center Village Court I - There are two main options for community-style senior living in the Village of Groton. Center Village Court I is an affordable housing development that offers 60 one-bedroom apartments. To be eligible to live in this senior community, a resident must either be 62 year of age or older or meet certain disability criteria if under 62. The units are rent limited based on 30% of the tenants adjusted income (very low income) and income limits apply. These apartments are regulated by USDA Rural Development. The Center Village Court Apartments are at capacity and there is currently a waitlist of eligible tenants that are seeking an apartment.



Image: Center Village Court Apartments. Source: Thoma Development Consultants

Schoolhouse Gardens - The Schoolhouse Gardens Apartments is located on Main Street in Groton, in the original Groton High School building. This independent senior living apartment complex offers 28 one and two-bedroom accommodations for seniors over the age of 62 and adults with disabilities. Schoolhouse Gardens is also a rent-subsidized affordable housing community. This facility is popular with senior residents and there is currently a waitlist for tenants.

Groton Community Health Care Center - There is also a rehab and nursing care facility in Groton at the Groton Community Health Care Center. This non-profit organization offers short-term rehabilitation, long-term care – including 24-hour nursing care for residents and dedicated physician care, and palliative care. The Groton Community Health Care Center has 80 beds.

Given the statistically aging population and the fact that both primary senior living facilities have wait lists, there is demand for additional senior living in the Village of Groton. The village should review current land use patterns and zoning restrictions to determine if there are any suitable locations that could accommodate additional multi-family senior housing, especially market rate housing.

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability in housing can mean several things. It can be sustainability from the perspective of limiting the residential carbon footprint and at the same time it can also mean maintaining affordability. In a historic village like Groton, where most land is already built out, a reduction in the use of fossil fuels can most easily impact the carbon footprint and is ideally achieved through energy efficiency retrofits of existing homes. The most popular retrofits include technologies such as residential solar, geothermal heat, and the use of cold weather electric heat pumps. Retrofits such as new energy efficient windows and doors, new modern insulation such as spray foam and professional air sealing, use of smart thermostats, and installation of newer home appliances are some of the ways to reduce energy with a quick return on the homeowner investment.

Installing residential solar has many benefits to the homeowner and the environment. Benefits include lower utility bills after the initial investment has been recouped, increased home values, and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Residential solar also has little to no impact on the homeowner's land because of the ability to affix the system to the roof of the home. The Village of Groton should support and encourage the use of residential solar installations. Currently, the village owned electric department, which provides electricity to Groton residents, does not support net metering which is an important component to the generation of residential solar energy. To ready the local grid for net metering the Village should continue to work with the electricity supplier to enact the required tariffs. The Village should continue to explore funding opportunities to covert the village electrical infrastructure to accommodate net metering for residents and commercial customers.

The current supply of electricity for the Village of Groton residents is largely clean energy with 89% coming from hydro sources, 7% from nuclear sources, and 4% from wind energy. Net metering with the use of residential solar will further reduce the residential carbon footprint over time and will also increase grid capacity.

The Village of Groton is also home to nearly two miles of the Owasco Inlet which is a major tributary to Owasco Lake. To protect this resource, the Village of Groton monitors point source discharges to the inlet, however, much of the development around the inlet is residential. The Village should develop programing to educate residents on methods to reduce residential nonpoint source runoff. Effective methods of reducing harmful nonpoint source runoff from residential properties include use of rain barrels, reduced use of pesticides and fertilizers, programs for the proper disposal of household hazardous waste, erosion control with grass plantings and straw at home construction sites, and the use of rain gardens to prevent residential runoff from reaching streets.

FUTURE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

As mentioned previously, most of the land in the Village of Groton is already built out. However, as the Village has developed over time, with the oldest housing and densest development nearest to Main Street, and some more modern housing near the outer limits, there is still some available space for housing. On the East end of the Village there is vacant farmland along Carpenter Avenue and Elm Street. There are 12 building lots that have already been subdivided north of Elm Street, and East of Beechwood Drive. These lots are zoned for single family use. In total, there is about 60 acres of land which could potentially be developed for new housing around Carpenter Avenue and Elm Street if the appropriate infrastructure was installed or existing infrastructure could be utilized in accordance with smart growth principles. The village has ample water supply for new housing, but increased sewer capacity may be necessary to accommodate new housing.

Although space is limited near the core of the Village, there is some space where infill development could occur. The village should complete an inventory of land uses and open space to identify these locations. This information could be utilized to promote infill development near the downtown for residential use. Infill development is a desired smart growth standard.

GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

Goal 1: Ensure all dwelling units comply with the Property Maintenance Code of New York State and local codes.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) The Village will continue to support comprehensive code enforcement efforts to maintain the existing housing stock.

B) The Village will seek financing resources including grants to renovate the existing housings stock through rehabilitation programs. The sources could include the CDBG program, HOME program, the AHC program, and other similar sources.

C) The Village should partner with CAPCO to leverage weatherization funding with other available housing resources to ensure village homes are maintained, especially for low and very low-income residents.

Goal 2: There will be housing units in the Village, existing and proposed, which are affordable and accessible to all income classes, age groups, and disability segments of the population.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) The Village will partner with developers to create new market rate housing.

B) The Village will promote home ownership through programs that aid first time homebuyers.

C) Given that there is a waitlist for the senior housing developments in the Village of Groton, the Village will work with local, state, and federal housing agencies and organizations regarding the need for adequate housing for seniors and persons with disabilities.

D) The village should review current land use patterns and zoning restrictions to determine if there are any suitable locations that could accommodate additional multi-family senior housing, especially market rate housing.

Goal 3: Future housing development, or modifications to existing housing, will be consistent with the size, scale, aesthetics, architecture, character, and historic nature of the Village and its neighborhoods.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) The Village should consider adopting design guidelines that cover housing development so that new construction and significant rehabilitation/renovation of existing housing is in keeping with the character/architecture of the neighborhood in which the project is being undertaken.

Goal 4: New housing and renovations to existing housing will incorporate energy efficiency and sustainability measures.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) The Village should continue to explore the conversion of the municipally owned electric grid to accommodate net metering for residential solar installations.

B) Any new development of multifamily housing should incorporate sustainability measures such as green build components or higher density development that reduces the need for significant investment in infrastructure. Such development, and its benefits, should be detailed in new zoning regulations.

C) The Village should remain cognizant of emerging housing and energy conservation trends, and update zoning regulations to accommodate as determined appropriate.

D) The Village should ensure that all qualified residents are aware of the opportunity to participate in the locally sponsored Independent Energy Efficiency Program (IEEP) which can provide rebates for household conversion to high efficiency electric heating equipment.

Goal 5: The Village will limit potentially harmful impacts to the Owasco Lake Inlet that could result from residential stormwater runoff.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) The Village should develop programming to educate homeowners on the value of utilizing rain barrels, rain gardens, reducing the use of pesticides and fertilizers, and keeping storm drains clear of leaves and other debris.

Goal 6: Rental housing will be safe and affordable for residents in the Village of Groton.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) The Village will continue to enforce the Property Maintenance Code and bring legal action against absentee landlords that fail to invest in and maintain their residential rental properties to code.

B) The Village should consider securing grant funding for income property rehabilitation to incentivize responsible landlords to complete renovations and upgrades for apartments that will be occupied by lower income tenants.

LAND USE AND ZONING

Land use planning requires making informed decisions about how to designate different land uses, analyze their interactions, and ensure the responsible utilization and conservation of both built and natural resources. Village officials and planning boards must navigate complex land use choices that will ultimately shape the character and functionality of the community's natural and built environments. While this is a significant task, it can be tackled effectively with the right direction from the Comprehensive Plan and well-structured regulations.

Groton's current land use policies have played a key role in preserving some of its most valued qualities, such as its welcoming small-town atmosphere, active downtown, and pleasant residential areas. However, to sustain this appeal, the Village must consider challenges including but not limited to housing and density, commercial zoning and uses, and smart growth principles.

CURRENT LAND USE SUMMARY

In the Village, each parcel of land is assigned a classification and tax code based on how it is currently used. While some parcels may serve multiple functions, they are categorized according to their primary use. For example, if a property includes both a residence and additional vacant land or a secondary function, it is still classified as residential. Furthermore, every parcel falls within a designated zoning district, which establishes guidelines for its permitted uses, size, and layout restrictions.

The table below outlines the various land use classifications for parcels throughout the Village. Although it does not break down distinctions between single-family, two-family, or three-family residences, nor does it differentiate specific types of commercial properties, these details are crucial for community planning. Ideally, land use classifications should closely align with local zoning regulations, and in the Village of Groton, they largely do. The table provides a comparison of land use categories based on both acreage and the proportion of total land they occupy. According to tax records, there are approximately 970 acres of land, excluding roadways and the Owasco Inlet, equivalent to about 1.5 square miles.

SUMMARY OF LAND USE

Land Use	Acres	Percentage of Total Land Use	Number of Parcels
Residential	456.55	47.15	664
Agriculture	112.46	11.62	9
Community Service	109.39	11.29	26
Vacant	170.25	17.59	128
Commercial	56.83	5.87	66
Recreation	32.79	3.39	6
Industrial	23.02	2.38	5
Public Service	6.86	0.71	4
TOTAL	**968.15**	**100**	**908**

Residential Land Uses - In Groton, residential land uses range in size and accommodation from one- and two-family homes up to multifamily housing developments with the largest containing 60 units of housing. In total, current residential land uses in the Village occupy about 47% of the land area within the Village. There are 664 parcels that are utilized for residential purposes, with the smallest parcels measuring just over 1/10th of an acre and the largest measuring over 10 acres in the rural residential periphery of the Village.

Of the 664 residential properties in the Village of Groton, the predominant type of housing is single family homes, representing about 58% of the total housing stock. Only about 6% of the residential stock are two-family residential homes and about 14% of the housing stock are three- or four-unit properties. About 20% of the housing stock is made up of residential structures that contain five or more housing units. The remaining 2% of residential use is accounted for by mobile homes. The mixed-use buildings in the downtown are classified as commercial use although there is a small amount of rental housing on the upper floors along Main Street.

A comparison of the current land use map and the zoning district map confirm that nearly all, if not all, current residential land uses are in a zoning district that is designed for residential use or mixed-use. The highest density of housing is located centrally in the Village adjacent to the historic downtown area. The only area of the Village that is largely devoid of residences is the land to the far eastern extent of the Village along Cortland Road where zoning is designed for special commercial uses.

Commercial Land Uses - Commercial land uses in the Village of Groton largely consist of retail and service-oriented businesses. These uses include a building supply store, insurance company,

restaurants and cafes, beauty salons, small gift stores, real estate sales offices, a bank, convenience stores, and other similar uses. These uses are largely centered on Main Street and South Street, which together form the core of downtown Groton, along State Route 38. There are very few commercial uses scattered throughout the remainder of the Village which is predominantly residential.

In total, there are roughly 60 acres of commercial land uses. This is about 6% of the total land area in the Village. Most of the commercial development is in historic multi-story mixed-use buildings but there is some limited highway commercial type development including a Dollar General Store, a vacant Family Dollar, and a large Speedway gas station with an integrated Dunkin Donuts store. Because of the differing intensities and required structural accommodations of these commercial uses, the Village should review the types of commercial land uses that currently exist and determine if the commercial district which is currently zoned "High Density" should be re-defined to represent the types of uses that best fit the different sections of the commercial corridor. For example, it may be beneficial for the Village to define a Central Business District along the northern section of Main Street, separate from a Commercial zoning district which may befit the southern end of Main Street and West South Street.

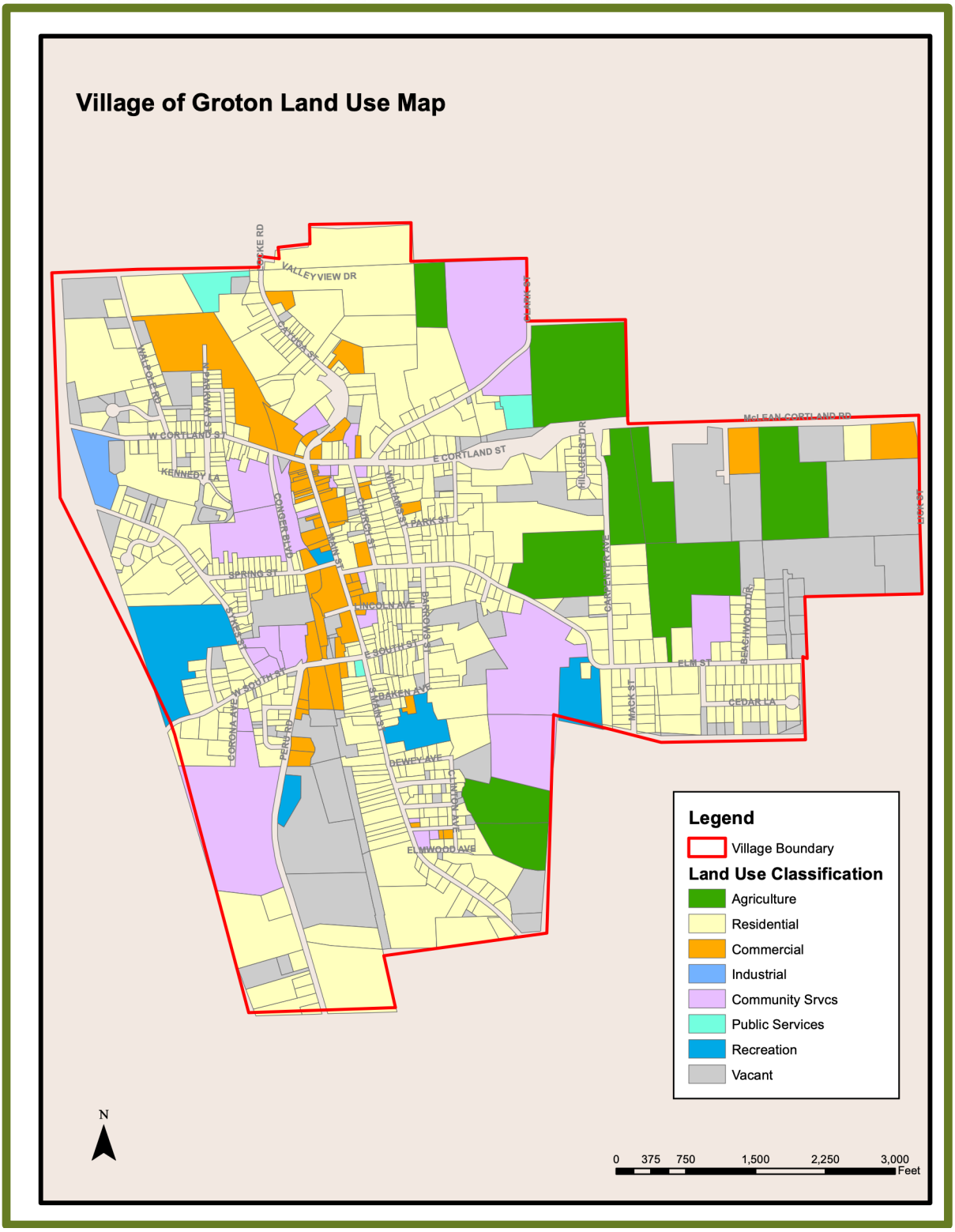
Industrial - The current industrial uses in the Village are limited to the Groton Industrial Park which is zoned "Special Commercial" and one separate five-acre parcel of land on Spring Street. The Special Commercial district contains six parcels of land totaling roughly 40 acres. About half of this land is currently in industrial use and the other half is a former agricultural aquaculture use. Industrial uses in the village are currently very limited, amounting to just over 2% of the total land area.

Recreation - Recreational land uses in Groton encompass roughly 33 acres, or 3% of the total land area in the village. Recreational land is scattered throughout the village but is mostly located in the southern and central areas of the community. Recreational land uses include, but are not limited to, nearly 18 acres of active and passive recreation at Memorial Park, the Conger Boulevard Mini-Park greenway along the Owasco Inlet, and the recreational and sports facilities owned by the Groton Central School District. The Groton Trail System also offers several trailheads, and five miles of hiking trails located in the Village and Town of Groton. Based on Groton's population of around 2,100, the Village should ideally have at least 21 acres of such spaces per NRPA recommendation. With a total of about 33 acres currently available across the listed facilities, Groton exceeds the NRPA's standard for recreation space.

Agriculture - According to real property tax records, there are roughly 112 acres of agricultural land use within the village limits. A large percentage of the agricultural land in the village is operated as part of the Neville Farm, the village's only farm and small dairy that milks 50-60 head of cows daily. 17 of the acres that are currently classified as an agricultural use are the former Finger Lakes Aquaculture property, a fish farm, located in the village's industrial park. This lot is now vacant and underutilized.

Community and Public Services - 116 acres of land in the village are currently classified as Community and Public Service uses. This is about 12% of the land in the village. Included in that acreage are schools, the Village and Town Hall, fire and police stations, the library, churches, cemeteries, and all historic and cultural centers. 5.8 of those acres are the former Franziska Racker center, which is now vacant. Community and Public Service uses are scattered throughout the village.

Vacant Lands - Tompkins County real property records indicate that there are about 170 acres of vacant land within the Village of Groton. There are a few areas of vacant land that stand out as noteworthy. Over 35 acres of the village's vacant land consists of protected wetland areas surrounding the Owasco inlet in the southern end of the village. There is also roughly 30 acres of vacant land in the far east end of the village that is a mixture of open space and wooded lands. The vacant parcel that may have the most potential for development is located near the center of the village behind the Speedway gas station on Main Street. This 5.2-acre lot is adjacent to the new Village Office and Community Center and could be an ideal location for a new village park along the Owasco Inlet.



Map: Land Uses as of 2025. Source: Thoma Development Consultants

REVIEW OF LAND USE REGULATIONS

Land use regulations are legal measures established by local authorities to manage various aspects of land use and the preservation of community resources. These include zoning laws, subdivision rules, special use permits, site plan requirements, and other regulations that determine how properties can be used, as well as the scale, location, and intensity of development. These regulations do not solely apply to existing buildings and land uses but also serve as a framework for shaping future growth. In the Village of Groton, these land use policies are governed by the "Zoning Law of the Village of Groton."

The primary goal of zoning is to organize a municipality into distinct areas designated for residential, commercial, industrial, and other uses, while limiting conflicts between neighboring uses. These zones are typically separate from one another, with distinctive regulations applied within each district. Within these primary zoning categories, additional restrictions may be imposed, such as defining permissible building types, regulation of accessory structures, building setbacks, height limitations, lot frontage requirements, minimum lot sizes, yard dimensions, and off-street parking requirements to name a few.

ZONING DISTRICT SUMMARY

The Zoning Law of the Village of Groton was originally adopted in 1974 and was most recently updated in 2011. The zoning law includes nine zoning districts, many supplemental regulations, and other substantive regulations governing land use issues including but not limited to parking, signage, nonconforming uses, site plan review, a variance process, and special permits.

The existing zoning districts include:

High-Intensity District - Current Intent Statement: *To define and establish uniform regulations for specific areas in the Village of Groton where residential concentrations and a variety of nonresidential land uses provide a community service center; where a pattern of medium-to-high-density residential development and concentrations of compatible nonresidential land use activities are in keeping with broad planning objectives; and, where land use controls are needed, to preserve and enhance the general environmental quality.*

The High-Intensity District encompasses all downtown Groton along Main Street the commercial area of West South Street. This district permits the typical commercial uses that are present in most downtowns, including but not limited to, retail sales establishments, professional services, restaurants, banks, office space, and indoor recreation. The high intensity district also permits single-family, two-family, and multifamily residences. Industrial uses are also permitted. It should be noted that it is not customary to permit single-family and industrial uses in a traditional downtown.

The High-Intensity district is intended to represent a downtown commercial district and should be renamed the Central Business District. Central Business District is more representative of the center of a community, and from the perspective of a property owner or potential developer, better reflects the types of uses that are desired in the downtown

Medium-Intensity District - Current Intent Statement: *To define and establish uniform regulations for specific areas in the Village of Groton where existing development is residential in character; where a pattern of medium-density development with a limited mixture of compatible land uses is in keeping with broad planning objectives; and where land-use and density controls are needed, to preserve neighborhood and property values.*

The Medium-Intensity District covers most of the land area immediately adjacent to the High-Intensity District of downtown. This district shows a preference toward the establishment of high density, single- and two-family homes with a mixture of limited, compatible commercial uses such ass offices, home occupations, social clubs, and bed and breakfast facilities.

Although not permitted in the district, there are several multi-family structures in the Medium-Intensity District. Multi-family homes have proven to be a compatible use in the district and the Village should consider allowing them with special conditions. This will promote more diversity of housing within the Village and could include apartment buildings or townhomes.

For simplicity of use for property owners and potential developers, the Medium Intensity District could be renamed the Residential-2 District, or R2 District. This would be more consistent with the generally accepted terms and standards for this type of zoning district.

Medium-Intensity Single-Family Residence District - Current Intent Statement: *To define and establish uniform regulations for specific areas in the Village of Groton where existing development is residential in character; where a pattern of medium-density single-family residential development with a limited mixture of compatible land uses is in keeping with broad planning objectives; and where land use and density controls are needed, to preserve neighborhood and property values.*

The Medium-Intensity Single-Family Residence District is located in three separate areas of the Village's most outer extents along South Main Street, Sykes Street and part of Spring Street, and Walpole Road. These areas are largely built out and almost exclusively occupied by single-family residential structures apart from the recreational space at Sykes Park. Other notable permitted uses include offices, home occupations, and bed and breakfasts, although this does not significantly distinguish the Medium-Intensity Residence District from the Single-Family Residence District which has very similar regulations. The Village should consider consolidating the Medium-Intensity Residence District and the Single-Family Residence District with some bulk

distinctions for properties that are served by public utilities and those that are not served by utilities.

Single-Family Residence District - Current Intent Statement: *To define and establish uniform regulations for specific areas of the Village of Groton where the land is generally either rural or of a low-density character or development and is suitable for development and use as a low-density one-family residential area; where public sewer and water facilities may not be available; and where a pattern of low-density land uses, related primarily to the development of residential neighborhoods, is in keeping with the broad planning objectives of the Village.*

The Single-Family Residence District is located in the eastern extents of the Village, mostly along Elm Street and Carpenter Avenue. Uses permitted in this district include single-family homes, home occupations, and bed and breakfasts. This is where the modern era housing was constructed, and the lots tend to be slightly larger here than in other residential areas of the village. The predominant land use is single-family residences which are mostly ranch and split-level homes. As mentioned previously, there are few features which distinguish the Single-Family Residence District from the Medium-Intensity Single-Family Residence District. All of these areas are located on the periphery, where the village boarders meet with the Town of Groton. The village should consider consolidating these two districts and renaming them the Residence 1 District, or R1 District.

Low-Intensity District - Current Intent Statement: *To define and establish uniform regulations for specific areas in the Village of Groton where the overall character is rural; where nonagricultural development has not been extensive; where public water and sewer facilities are not generally available; and where a pattern of mixed, moderate-to-low-density land uses which are related primarily to agriculture and the development of residential neighborhoods is in keeping with the broad planning objectives of the Village.*

The Low-Intensity District is located in the far eastern and northern extents of the Village along East Cortland Street/State Route 222 where the Village boarders with the Town of Groton. These are the Village's only active agricultural lands and are mostly occupied by a locally owned dairy farm. The wooded land and ball fields behind the Groton Elementary School are also zoned Low-Intensity. At first glance this district appears to be geared toward agricultural uses, however there is a variety of different uses that are permitted. Permitted uses include but are not limited to various types of farm operations, veterinarian clinics and kennels, single- and two-family homes, offices, home occupations, bed and breakfasts, and agricultural equipment sales. The Village of Groton should consider renaming this district as the Agricultural- Residential District, or AR District, as it is more descriptive and would better align with the Intent statement for the more rural areas of zoning in the village.

Planned Development District - Current Intent Statement: *To introduce a degree of flexibility in land use regulations which will encourage development in an imaginative and innovative way while, through the process of review and discussion, ensuring efficient investment and protection of community interest. A planned development, as defined in §200-3, Definitions, of this chapter, shall be a permitted land use activity when it is undertaken in accordance with the terms of this section.*

The Planned Development District is a regulatory scheme that allows flexibility for various mixed uses to co-exist together like a planned unit development or PUD. This allows flexibility for future development that would not fit within the traditional zoning districts but would otherwise be beneficial to the village and its residents. The Planned Development District operates like a floating zone in that it is not located on the official zoning map until a request for designation by a developer or landowner is approved by the village.

The regulations for the Planned Development District are difficult to locate within the zoning because they are housed within Article X under "Special Conditions and Special Permits." It may be beneficial for ease of use if the Planned Development District Regulations were relocated to a designated zoning article along with the other traditional zoning districts.

By its nature, Planned Development Districts encourage the implementation of smart growth principles, especially where mixed-use neighborhoods are a component. During its review of a proposed Planned Development District, it is recommended that the Planning Board and Village Board make a concerted effort to implementing smart growth principles. The review process should account for the impact on existing infrastructure, the presence and preservation of open space, and the creation of a "sense of place" that is aligned with the future goals of the village. This requirement could be codified in the zoning regulations to ensure proper implementation.

There is one designated Planned Development District located along Route 222, between the Single-Family Residence District and the Villages Special Commercial District. The permitted uses are industrial in nature with an allowance for the Village Board to permit a mix of residential and commercial uses. This designation from 1985 appears to have been created as a buffer between the residential neighborhood and the village's industrial park. To date, this area is undeveloped agricultural land. The village should further explore this designation to determine if it is still appropriate given the passage of time and changes in development patterns.

Special Commercial District - Current Intent Statement: *To permit, where appropriate, the construction of research-and-development-oriented industries, high-technology enterprises, light manufacturing facilities and other moderately intensive industrial activities which would not generally be appropriate in residential areas, but which may not require the same level of separation from residential areas as more intensive industrial uses. It is intended that no residential development will take place in this district, and its establishment is generally*

promulgated for a suitable area for economic development activities to take place. Areas may be zoned Special Commercial District by the Village Board or upon application for a specific proposal, all in accordance with normal zoning procedures. Generally, but without limiting the discretion of the Board, such rezoning will be permitted only in areas where public water and sanitary facilities are available, where other resources and facilities that complement multiple light industrial uses are found and where public transportation may be readily available. In reaching its decision on whether to rezone to a Special Commercial District, the Village Board shall consider the general criteria set forth in this article, the most current comprehensive or master plan for the Village and this statement of purpose.

The Special Commercial District encompasses the land along Route 222 and Gerald L. Moses Drive. This area is the Village's industrial park and includes six parcels with a total of roughly 40 acres. Permitted uses include government buildings, offices, automotive sales and repair shops, certain residential and commercial contractors, light assembly, manufacturing, and industrial uses, and equipment sales establishments. All uses in the industrial park require site plan review and approval from the village planning board. The two current land uses are electronics manufacturing and assembly at C&D Assembly and artisanal cheese manufacturing at Old Chatham Creamery. The remaining space in the industrial park, rough 32 acres, is vacant. This includes 17 acres which houses the former Finger Lakes Aquaculture facility. As of 2025, the Village owns 5.47 acres of land in the park that it could market for future economic development. These areas are served by public water and sewer, making them an ideal place for future economic development activity. Promoting economic development in this area will further the Smart Growth principle of concentrating development around existing infrastructure.

Adjacent to the east of the Special Commercial District there are three parcels fronting on Route 222. These three lots cover 11.3 acres of land and are zoned High Intensity. This area of High Intensity Zoning is far removed from the downtown which is the main area of High Intensity zoning. The downtown zoning regulations are not a fit for this area and the village should consider rezoning the three parcels into the adjacent Special Commercial District. One of the lots is entirely vacant, the second lot is a residential use, and the third is a motorcycle repair shop.

Special Purpose District - Current Intent Statement: *To define and establish uniform regulations for specific areas in the Village of Groton which are located adjacent to the Owasco inlet; which have natural qualities of immeasurable value to the future of Groton; where a pattern of agricultural or very-low-density residential land use is in keeping with broad planning objectives; and where land use control will be required to preserve the environment in essentially its natural state.*

As the intent statement indicates, the areas of land in Groton that are designated in the Special Purpose district are sensitive land areas adjacent to the Owasco Inlet and areas that are designated freshwater wetlands. The uses that are permitted in the Special Purpose District

include single-family residences, kennels and commercial boarding facilities, home occupations, public and private outdoor recreation, bed and breakfasts, and utility transmission stations.

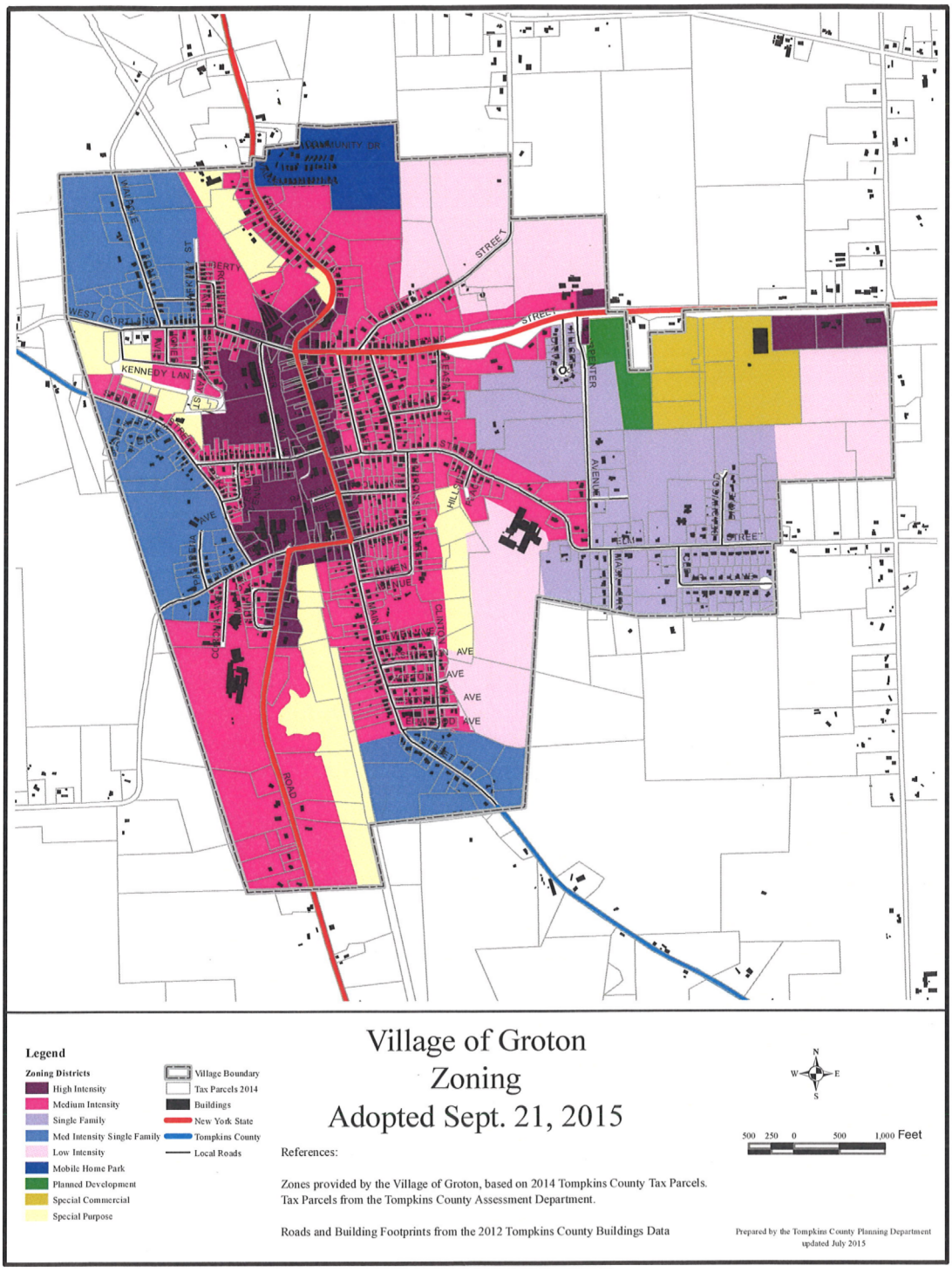
The only notable area restrictions within the Special Purpose District are the minimum lot size of 30,000 square feet and the minimum open space requirement of 90% per lot. To promote compliance with Smart Growth principles, the Village should conduct a comprehensive analysis of these district regulations to ensure that future development does not negatively impact the sensitive natural features of the lands within the district, especially the Owasco Lake Inlet and associated wetland areas. Some of the designated Special Purposed District areas may be unsuitable for development.

Mobile Home Park District - Current Intent Statement: *To promote the health, safety and general welfare of the inhabitants of the Village of Groton, Tompkins County, New York, by the regulation of site design for manufactured housing parks and the establishment of site and occupancy standards for all manufactured housing parks located in said village.*

There is no regulatory language for this district in Chapter 200, the zoning section of the Village of Groton code. Although the Mobile Home Park District is established in section 200-4 of the zoning and is designated on the zoning map, Manufactured Housing Parks are largely regulated by chapter 127 of the Village Code.

The village regulations for manufactured home parks are comprehensive and address the establishment and layout of new parks as well as the regulation of existing parks. The Mobile Home Park District promotes a greater diversity of housing choice within the village, which is a recognized Smart Growth principle. The village should continue to support diverse housing opportunities.

For ease of use, the Village should consider relocating the Manufactured Home Park regulations from chapter 127 of the Code to chapter 200, alongside the village's other zoning regulations.



Map: Existing Zoning Map. Source: Village of Groton and Tompkins County Planning

REVIEW OF ZONING TOOLS

Site Plan Review - Zoning laws typically don't address site-specific concerns like traffic, noise, drainage, lighting, or architectural design. Site plan review helps ensure that development proposals align with local policies and accepted design practices. These reviews, authorized through zoning codes or standalone ordinances, evaluate elements of development beyond basic zoning requirements.

A site plan is a drawing that includes required development features, along with a descriptive narrative. According to General Municipal Law §27-a.2, typical elements include parking, access, screening, signage, architectural details, landscaping, building locations and dimensions, and protective features for adjacent properties. Municipalities may also require considerations like environmental impacts, pedestrian and vehicle circulation, and stormwater drainage.

A Planning Board must base their decisions on the criteria defined in the site plan law. These criteria can be qualitative (e.g., preserving natural features) or quantitative (e.g., requiring a 30-foot setback). Although their authority is limited, detailed standards and the broad power granted by state law give municipalities significant oversight over individual development proposals.

Chapter 200 of the Village of Groton Zoning outlines the regulatory framework and procedural requirements for site plan review in the village as defined under Article XVI of the local zoning law. It provides detailed guidance for applicants, the Planning Board, and other involved entities on the purpose, authority, applicability, objectives, procedures, required elements, and criteria for approval related to site development. Single- and two-family residences are excluded from site plan review. A summary of the village's Site Plan regulatory scheme follows:

Purpose: Emphasizes the public interest in ensuring site development maintains community aesthetics, safety, and environmental stewardship.

Authority: Grants the Planning Board the power to approve, conditionally approve, waive, or deny site plans, including amendments.

When Required: Site plan approval is mandatory for non-residential land uses and any changes to building footprint, site access, utilities, or design features.

Objectives: Lists specific objectives such as traffic management, landscaping, preservation of natural features, architectural compatibility, and public utility adequacy.

Procedure: Describes the optional pre-submission conference, submission requirements, SEQR compliance, public hearings, and review timelines.

Site Plan Elements: Specifies what information a site plan must contain, including legal data, existing site conditions, proposed development features, utility layouts, and architectural elevations.

Planning Board Considerations: Details criteria the Planning Board uses to evaluate site plans, such as traffic flow, visual buffers, drainage, and emergency access.

To strengthen the effectiveness of site plan review, the village should request that all developers consider Smart Growth principles during the planning phases of development. To encourage Smart Growth, the village should develop a Smart Growth checklist and require that it be completed and submitted by all developers that submit for site plan review. The checklist would support the inclusion of core smart growth principles into each new development. Checklist criteria could include principles that:

- favor walkable, mixed-use site layouts
- encourage clustered site layouts and shared infrastructure
- include sidewalks, crosswalks, and pedestrian-scale lighting
- ensure ADA-compliant pedestrian connectivity within and beyond the site
- favor compatibility with local architectural and historic character
- prioritize retention of existing trees and natural features

Subdivision Regulation Review - The Village of Groton regulates the subdivision of land through Chapter 177 of the Village Code to ensure safe, orderly, and well-planned development. The Planning Board reviews all subdivision proposals to promote public health, safety, infrastructure adequacy, and neighborhood compatibility. The following serves as a summary of the subdivision regulations:

Subdivision Types and Process

- Minor Subdivision: 4 or fewer lots on existing streets, no new roads or utilities.
- Major Subdivision: 5 or more lots or any proposal involving new infrastructure.
- Sketch Plan: Initial concept submitted for classification and feedback.
- Minor Subdivision: Simple review with a small fee.
- Major Subdivision: Two-step review — preliminary and final plats — with required public hearings and detailed documentation.

Infrastructure and design elements that are incorporated in the subdivision review include but are not limited to:

- Proposed and existing roads, sidewalks, drainage, water/sewer, street trees, and fire hydrants must meet village standards.
- Streets must be safe, accessible, and connect with existing systems.

- Lots must be buildable and follow logical layouts.
- Drainage systems must manage stormwater without harming neighboring properties.
- Open space is required for larger developments (3 acres per 100 units or fee in lieu).

The subdivision review process in Groton allows for flexibility but must also promote the welfare of the public. To that end, the Planning Board may grant waivers or variances when strict application of the rules is impractical, as long as public interest is maintained. The Board may also reject any subdivision that poses risks to health, safety, or the environment, even if it meets the technical subdivision requirements.

Like the recommendation above regarding site plan review, the village should develop a Smart Growth checklist and require that it be completed and submitted to the planning board as part of the Major Subdivision process. This will ensure that smart growth principles are considered during preliminary design and planning rather than retrofitting smart growth design elements into already completed development plans.

Special Use Permits and Conditions - Special Use Permits, also known as conditional uses, special permits, or special exceptions, provide municipalities with a flexible tool to evaluate proposed developments that require closer scrutiny. While many land uses are allowed by right under zoning regulations without discretionary review, some uses may have greater potential impacts on the surrounding area. These uses are permitted only after a review process ensures they meet specific standards outlined in the zoning code and are compatible with the character and intent of the district.

The Village of Groton Zoning does provide for special conditions and supplemental regulation of certain uses through a Special Permit process. The special permit regulations in Groton impose very specific conditions on certain types of development and provide more loose guiding principles for other uses. The special permit also allows the Planning Board discretion to impose other conditions or requirements “as are reasonably determined to be necessary.”

In general, special permits are required for more intensive uses of land such as commercial or industrial uses that could negatively impact a neighborhood. However, Special Permits are not required in the Village’s Special Commercial District. A site plan review is required for those uses. The village should conduct a review of the special permit uses to ensure that they are sufficiently regulated and to identify opportunity to integrate smart growth principles into the permit review process. The same smart growth checklist could be utilized for site plan review and special permits.

Overlay Zoning - Overlay zoning is a planning tool that superimposes a secondary zoning district over a base zoning district to apply additional regulations aimed at protecting specific resources or guiding development in targeted areas. While the base zoning remains in effect, the overlay

can impose stricter standards (e.g., for environmental protection or historic preservation) or allow greater flexibility (e.g., reduced parking or increased density in downtown or transit-oriented zones). Overlay zones may follow or cross base zone boundaries.

Common uses of overlay zones include managing development in environmentally sensitive areas, downtowns, historic districts, or economic corridors. For example, a historic overlay might regulate architectural materials to preserve character, while a gateway overlay could guide design and land use along a major roadway.

Because the Village is relatively small and largely built out, the effectiveness of overlay districts may be limited. However, the village should consider implementing a historic downtown overlay district to preserve the historic character of the village and maintain the sense of place. Creating an overlay involves three steps: (1) define its purpose, (2) map its boundaries based on relevant natural or cultural features, and (3) adopt specific regulations that differ from the base zone. Clear, consistent standards are essential to ensure fairness and alignment with the comprehensive plan, as well as compliance with state and federal law. Public engagement and education are critical for transparency and support.

GOALS & IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

GOAL 1: Modernize and simplify the zoning Code to make the zoning more user-friendly and aligned with current planning practices.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Relocate all land use regulations, including mobile home park standards, into Chapter 200 for consistency.

B) Clearly organize and update district intent statements with plain language and assess permitted uses for all districts.

C) Use consistent, modern naming conventions (e.g., R-1, R-2, CBD, AR) for clarity.

D) This goal may require a comprehensive update of the zoning, and the Village should seek funding from the NYS Smart Growth Community Planning Program or other similar funding source for this endeavor.

GOAL 2: Diversify housing options and provide a mix of housing types to meet the needs of all residents, including seniors, young professionals, and families.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Consolidate overlapping residential districts into more intuitive R-1 and R-2 zones, simplifying regulations.

B) Allow multi-family housing and townhomes in the R-2 (Medium-Intensity) District by special use permit.

C) Preserve existing mobile home park zoning and relocate those regulations to the primary zoning code for easier reference.

D) Promote adaptive reuse of upper floors in downtown buildings for housing.

GOAL 3: Support a vibrant and mixed-use downtown and reinforce the village center as the heart of community and commerce.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Rename the High-Intensity District to Central Business District (CBD) to better reflect intended uses.

B) Develop and adopt a Historic Overlay District for the downtown core to guide design, façade improvements, preservation, and promote the sense of place.

C) Review parking requirements in the CBD to encourage reuse of historic buildings and walkability.

GOAL 4: Preserve natural and agricultural resource to conserve sensitive environmental areas and farmland while directing growth away from ecologically valuable lands.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Rename the Low-Intensity District as the Agricultural-Residential (AR) District and refine allowable uses accordingly.

B) Strengthen development standards in the Special Purpose District to protect wetlands and the Owasco Inlet.

C) Utilize overlay zoning to add environmental protection standards to key areas if needed.

GOAL 5: Promote smart, sustainable growth patterns**,** direct development to areas with existing infrastructure, reduce sprawl, and encourage efficient land use.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Revise zoning to support higher densities and mixed-use in the downtown/Central Business District.

B) Rezone underutilized or misaligned districts (e.g., reclassify parts of the High-Intensity District not located downtown).

C) Encourage infill development on vacant or underused parcels within developed areas.

D) Adopt Planned Development District criteria that explicitly integrate Smart Growth principles such as walkability, mixed use, and infrastructure efficiency.

E) Develop commercial property design standards for the commercial area along Route 38, outside of the historic downtown.

GOAL 6: Strengthen development review processes to ensure that all new development aligns with community goals and Smart Growth principles.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Require a Smart Growth Checklist as part of Site Plan Review, Special Use Permit, and Major Subdivision applications.

B) Revise site plan and special permit criteria to include walkability, connectivity, historic compatibility, green infrastructure, and sense of place.

C) Ensure Planning Board training includes best practices in Smart Growth and environmental design.

GOAL 7: Encourage economic development in designated areas to promote job creation and business growth in areas suited for economic activity.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Rezone isolated High-Intensity parcels along Route 222 into the adjacent Special Commercial District.

B) Promote infrastructure-ready industrial parcels in the Special Commercial District for light manufacturing and tech-based businesses.

C) Streamline review for appropriate commercial uses in economic corridors.

GOAL 8: Ensure public involvement and transparency to strengthen community trust and participation in land use decisions.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

A) Host public forums when creating or amending overlay zones and during comprehensive rezoning efforts.

B) Provide accessible, plain-language summaries of zoning updates and planning tools.

C) Launch educational materials on the benefits of Smart Growth and the rationale behind zoning reforms.

CHAPTER 5: ADOPTION AND MAINTENANCE

FORMAL ADOPTION

The Village Board appointed a Special Board, known as the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, to guide the preparation of this Comprehensive Plan. Upon completion of its work, the Steering Committee shall, by resolution, recommend the proposed Comprehensive Plan to the Village Board for consideration and adoption in accordance with New York State Village Law. The Committee must hold a public hearing on the proposed plan prior to making its final recommendation.

Prior to adoption, the proposed Comprehensive Plan must be referred to the Tompkins County Planning Board for review and recommendation as required by New York State General Municipal Law. Following receipt of the Steering Committee's recommendation, the Village Board shall conduct at least one public hearing on the proposed Comprehensive Plan within the period prescribed by State law.

The adoption of a comprehensive plan is subject to the requirements of the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). Because adoption of a comprehensive plan is classified as a Type I action under SEQRA, the Village of Groton must complete the applicable environmental review process and satisfy all SEQRA requirements before the Comprehensive Plan may be adopted.

PERIODIC REVIEW AND FILING

As time passes, community conditions, values, and attitudes may change. If the Comprehensive Plan no longer reflects the values of the Village, the plan should be revisited and amended according to the community's new vision. Revisiting the plan on a periodic basis for amendment considerations will keep the Village's comprehensive plan up to date. Therefore, the Village will review the Comprehensive Plan every five years, which will be the maximum interval for a review process.

EFFECT OF ADOPTION

Should the Village decide to adopt any type of land use regulation in the future, the regulation shall be in accordance with this Comprehensive Plan. In addition, all plans for capital projects of another governmental agency on land included in the Village of Groton Comprehensive Plan should take this plan into consideration.

APPENDIX A

GOALS MATRIX

NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT
GOALS & IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

Goal	Implementation Measures	Timeframe
GOAL 1 Ensure that future development and redevelopment within the Village will not negatively impact water resources.	**A)** Ensure that DEC regulations regarding stormwater pollution prevention plans (SWPP) are strictly followed for all new development and that they are properly implemented and managed as part of the site plan review process.	Ongoing / Longterm
	B) Encourage use of Green Infrastructure for existing and new developments, such as pervious paving materials, rain gardens, or other green technologies, that minimize, redirect, or treat runoff from parking lots and driveways.	
	C) Utilize the SEQRA process to minimize impacts from development proposals adjacent to, or with the potential to impact, wetlands and surface water.	
GOAL 2 Minimize flood risks and impacts of flooding.	**A)** Ensure that new development in the 100-year flood plain complies with the Flood Damage Prevention Law of 2012. Where such development does occur, ensure that site plan regulations and processes are sufficient to determine that new development will not exacerbate flooding concerns and that projects are designed to minimize risks to safety and adjacent property.	Ongoing / Long Term
	B) In the event of a major flood that severely damages properties in the floodway, work to relocate/rebuild structures outside of the floodway.	
	C) Require new development to manage stormwater runoff on-site to the greatest extent practicable, as required by the DEC and local site plan review procedures and encourage the capture and reuse of rainwater.	
	D) The Village should enlist the services of an environmental professional to conduct a stormwater audit of the entire village. Federal, State, and local grant funds should be sought to cover the expense of the audit.	
GOAL 3 Support and promote the use of sustainable technologies and green building practices in the Village.	**A)** Encourage energy conservation and efficiencies and promote the use of alternative/clean energy sources in homes and businesses, such as wind, solar, geo-thermal and co-generation through development of simplified permitting processes. Encourage new construction to be built to LEED, or similar, standards.	Long Term
	B) Lead by example by undertaking energy audits on all Village-owned buildings, and by utilizing alternative energy sources, such as geothermal, wind, solar, and co-generation in all Village-owned building renovation or new construction projects to promote use of green technologies.	
	C) Publicize the availability of free or low-cost energy audits to homeowners and businesses via Village venues and seek grant funds to assist private property owners to make properties more energy efficient and environmentally sustainable.	
GOAL 4 Ensure that future development and redevelopment within the Village complements and	**A)** Inventory and identify sensitive environmental areas in the Village and designate Unique Natural Areas or Critical Environmental Areas as appropriate.	Short Term
	B) Review and amend land use regulations to protect and enhance the natural resources of the community	

enhances the natural environment while not hindering or impeding desired development.	while ensuring that new or enhanced regulations are not overly cumbersome or limiting to new development.	
	C) Strictly comply with SEQRA for projects that require such review to ensure protection of natural resources.	
GOAL 5 Increase and improve the Urban and Community Forests in the Village to enhance community character.	**A)** Establish a tree inventory or catalogue of tree locations and voids that includes information such as species, age, size, and condition.	Long Term
	B) Establish a tree planting program to fill in areas of the Village lacking trees and to ensure a diverse urban forest. This includes planting large trees where possible and smaller trees where necessitated by infrastructure.	
	C) Inventory Ash trees on Village property and in the public right-of-ways. Monitor progress of the Emerald Ash borer in NYS and the health of Ash trees in the community, and proactively protect Ash trees of significant value.	
	D) Monitor new and emerging threats to the community forest and implement policies and actions to mitigate their impacts.	
GOAL 6 Identify, remediate, and redevelop brownfield sites throughout the Village.	**A)** Assess properties village-wide for existence of brownfields and request proposals from qualified firms to provide planning services associated with the development of a Step 1 Pre-Nomination Study for a Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) program application for underutilized areas throughout the Village.	Long Term
	B) If BOA participation is not pursued, the Village should inventory all potential brownfield sites within the Village to enable landowners to identify development opportunities and apply for cleanup or redevelopment funding for various types of reuse or infill development.	

PARKS AND RECREATION
GOALS & IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

Goal	Implementation Measures	Timeframe
GOAL 1 Identify underutilized spaces and facilities that have the potential to create additional and/or improved recreational opportunities for all age groups.	**A)** Develop and maintain a current inventory and database of all facilities, open spaces, and programs.	Long Term
	B) Review and assess inventories on an annual basis to ensure the satisfaction of all interests and ages.	
	C) Regularly assess community needs and continue to collaborate with the School District to ensure full utilization of facilities to meet community needs.	
	D) Add additional facilities to existing parks, including walking path connections, exercise trails, and community gardens.	
	E) Continue to investigate the development of the Owasco Lake Inlet Trail and seek appropriate development funding through the Office of Parks or the New York Forward program.	
GOAL 2 Provide facilities that are safe, clean, and well-maintained.	**A)** Identify all safety, cleanliness, and general maintenance concerns. Issues should include playground equipment types, dangerous or failing structures, un-mowed areas, handicapped accessibility, poor lighting conducive to misbehavior, litter, etc.	Ongoing
	B) Review local responsibilities and budget constraints to address these issues and establish a long-term maintenance plan.	

	C) Seek grant funding for park renovations and upgrades where appropriate.	
GOAL 3 Increase the amount of parkland in the Village and develop partnerships for external opportunities.	**A)** Consider all land types for additional recreation facilities, such as tax foreclosed properties, vacant lands, and estate donations, to develop small open spaces for recreation facilities in proximity to neighborhoods.	Long Term
	B) Continue to investigate the feasibility of acquiring the four-acre wooded lot located on the west bank of the Owasco Inlet, behind the existing Speedway Gas Station.	
	C) Develop the Owasco Inlet Trail as a multi-use trail connecting important existing nodes such as the downtown and existing recreational assets.	
	D) Develop and maintain partnerships with neighboring municipalities, the J.M. McDonald Center in Cortland, the Rink and Field in Lansing, local school districts, and SUNY Cortland and TC3 to utilize recreational facilities and programing.	
GOAL 4 Remain current with evolving trends and needs of the public and provide facilities and programs to meet those needs.	**A)** Conduct periodic needs assessments to identify existing park usage and anticipate emerging trends to appropriately adapt existing parks and programing to meet future needs.	Long Term
	B) Periodically review fees and budgets to perpetuate future programs and facility maintenance.	
	C) As new park projects are identified, the Village should seek grants as a source of matching funds to supplement the Village recreation and facilities budget.	

DOWNTOWN
GOALS & IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

Goal	Implementation Measures	Timeframe
GOAL 1 Preserve and enhance the character of the downtown.	**A)** Seek funding sources and other incentives to assist owners of commercial properties in the downtown to renovate buildings, upgrade facades; install appropriate signage; and redevelop interiors for housing, retail, and commercial office use. Market rate rental housing should be encouraged.	Short Term
	B) Seek designation of a National Register Historic District and/or individual structure listings to financially support renovation of buildings with Historic Tax Credits.	
	C) Develop incentives to encourage property owners to utilize "green" building techniques or to seek LEED certification to improve energy efficiency and overall sustainability of the Village's built environment.	
	D) Establish a Historic District Overlay zoning district for the historic central area of the downtown. Within the overlay, renovations of existing buildings should be in compliance with the National Park Service's Standards for Rehabilitation and new construction should maintain existing architectural styles in scale, proportion, composition, materials, design and setbacks.	
	E) Establish commercial design standards for downtown areas outside the historic overlay district to ensure that new commercial construction is consistent with the desired character of the community in terms of scale, proportion, materials and site plans, include siting	

	building near the roadway with parking in the side or rear.	
	F) Revise the sign ordinance to ensure that signage in the downtown is consistent with the desired character of the downtown.	
	G) Continue to maintain and improve public spaces, including streetscapes, parking areas, and parks to ensure a desirable sense of place.	
GOAL 2 Improve connectivity between the downtown and Owasco Inlet.	**A)** Develop the planned waterfront trail from W. Cortland Street to W. South Street with spur connections to Main Street.	Short Term
	B) Repurpose a portion of the existing Main Street parking lot into a community green connecting Memorial Park and the pedestrian bridge.	
GOAL 3 Support a healthy, diverse, Downtown economy.	**A)** Seek funding, such as CDBG Microenterprise Assistance Programs, where possible, to assist new and expanding businesses.	Long Term
	B) Seek opportunities to attract and support the establishment of essential businesses, including a grocery and pharmacy.	
	C) Support the growth of the Village's accommodations to support a strong tourist market.	
	D) Implement the recommendations of the market study.	
GOAL 4 Establish a stable, sustainable downtown organization.	**A)** Assist the Groton Business Association in developing a new organizational framework based on the four principles of the "Main Street Approach".	Short Term
	B) Consider providing public financial support for a portion of the organization's operating budget.	
	C) Provide technical support and training for organization leaders and members to build a strong foundation for success.	
GOAL 5 Redevelop the former Village Fire Station.	**A)** Determine the most beneficial use for the land and structure and create a strategy to implement that vision (potential for multiuse parking space).	Short Term

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES GOALS & IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

Goal	Implementation Measures	Timeframe
GOAL 1 Recognize and promote village history and the role and value of cultural resources within the Village of Groton.	**A)** Seek funding and support appropriate funding requests to preserve and rehabilitate historic structures within the village, including housing rehabilitation for owner and renter-occupied housing.	Long Term
	B) Partner with other entities such as the schools, library, or the Groton Historical Association to educate the public on the importance of historic architecture, increase support and appreciation for historic preservation, and celebrate local architecture.	
	C) Maintain existing and foster new partnerships with the school district and local preservation organizations to develop elementary, middle, and high school curriculum programs designated to educate students on the village's history, historic architecture, and the connections between the built environment and social development of the community.	
	D) Partner with community groups, local churches, not-for-profit organizations, educational institutions, the	

	village Historian, and other interested entities to continue to advance quality cultural events such as the Groton Olde Home Days, and educational opportunities that benefit the citizens of the Groton community.	
GOAL 2 Recognize the role and value of historic architecture in the Village of Groton.	**A)** Amend the zoning regulations and zoning map to include a Historic District overlay zone district, that at a minimum governs new development and redevelopment along the historic Main Street.	Short Term
	B) Establish an Architectural Review board to oversee the preservation of local historic structures and ensure that alterations/changes to existing structures are historically appropriate. Historic review should be limited to those areas or areas of most concern to the village.	
	C) To ensure fair and objective design review, clear and concise design guidelines should be established as part of the zoning code, or as a stand-alone ordinance.	
GOAL 3 Leverage historic, cultural, and waterfront resources within the village to improve the local economy and way of life.	**A)** Foster partnership among local museums and cultural institutions including the library, and the Groton Historical Association.	
	B) Enhance the stature of local institutions by using community partnerships with neighboring communities.	
	C) Encourage and establish social media advertisement of the village's historic and cultural resources.	

TRANSPORTATION
GOALS & IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

Goal	Implementation Measures	Timeframe
GOAL 1 Maintain, enhance, and encourage pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, which promote connectivity and good health while reducing reliance on vehicles.	**A)** Identify gaps in the Village's existing sidewalk, trail, and bikeway system that could serve as key links to destinations in and around the Village (parks, schools, shopping, downtown, jobs, etc.) and develop and expand such a system to close gaps.	Short Term
	B) Include requirements, as part of a Site Plan Review, for new projects to incorporate pedestrian and bicycle accommodations and facilities as part of the new development, as may be appropriate.	
	C) Pursue capital improvement programs that increase opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle usage and safety.	
	D) Develop an informational brochure for public distribution that details the health and environmental benefits of using non-motorized forms of transportation.	
GOAL 2 Improve and promote the use of public transportation.	**A)** Improve and expand service to the City of Cortland to increase the use of existing public transportation system.	Long Term
	B) Ensure the public bus system is safe, user friendly and convenient, particularly for the disabled and elderly.	
GOAL 3 Improve and promote the use of alternative forms of transportation.	**A)** Provide bicycle lanes, sharrows, bicycle racks, and other amenities where appropriate.	Short Term
	B) Promote bicycle safety by holding bicycle clinics where children/adults can be educated on the proper rules and safety of cycling.	
GOAL 4 As part of an overall capital improvements program, continue to target existing	**A)** Pursue capital improvements that remedy storm water flooding along roads and address infrastructure repair and replacement as part of the project.	Ongoing / Long Term
	B) Identify streets and locations where improvements/maintenance are most needed.	

streets and sidewalks in need of repair.	**C)** When applicable, coordinate designs with other agencies (DOT) that meet the needs of the Village.	
	D) Seek outside financial assistance to fund needed capital improvements.	
	E) Identify sidewalks in need of repair, pursue remedies to alleviate the problem.	
	F) Ensure that crosswalks and curb cuts to crosswalks are handicap accessible.	

INFRASTRUCTURE AND UTILITIES GOALS & IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

Goal	Implementation Measures	Timeframe
GOAL 1 Ensure the long-term safety and reliability of the public water and sewer system.	**A)** Continue to repair and replace water and sewer mains and investigate "unauthorized discharges" to reduce inflow and infiltration.	Short Term
	B) Upgrade Wastewater Treatment Facility as needed.	
	C) The Village should seek state/federal funding for the replacement of the stormwater drainage system along Broad Street and village wide.	
GOAL 2 Seek creative alternative uses for stormwater runoff that can benefit the community.	**A)** Investigate and develop information concerning re-use of stormwater collected at residential properties such as rain gardens, re-directed downspout flows, rainwater irrigation systems.	Long Term
	B) Utilize the Village's site plan review authority to encourage/require green infrastructure such as vegetated swales, permeable surfaces, and natural stormwater management to reduce flooding risks and improve water quality.	
GOAL 3 Relocate overhead power lines to underground locations where possible.	**A)** Develop regulations to require installation of underground power lines for new development and major redevelopment projects, including burying of service lines from main lines to buildings.	Long Term
	B) Pursue funding sources and other opportunities to bury/relocate overhead power lines within the Village when opportunities are possible.	
GOAL 4 Ensure that all possible action is made to reduce energy consumption.	**A)** Undertake a solarize campaign to increase the number of solar rooftops in the Village and convert the grid to support net metering.	Short Term
	B) Replace fleet vehicles with energy efficient vehicles and install electric vehicle charging stations.	
	C) Pursue High Impact Action Items through NYSERDA to obtain a Clean Energy Community designation.	
	D) Pursue Climate Smart Certification.	

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES GOALS & IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

Goal	Implementation Measures	Timeframe
GOAL 1 Continue to work with the School District on bus electrification efforts.	**A)** Continue to explore capacity improvements for the municipally owned electric grid.	Ongoing
	B) Secure state and federal funding for fleet transition and needed improvements for local electrical supply.	

GOAL 2 Develop programs to enable children to safely walk to school.	**A)** The Village should inventory the existing sidewalks noting location, condition, and missing connections so that future maintenance and improvements can be prioritized based on need.	Short Term
	B) The Village will continue to maintain and improve existing sidewalk and trail infrastructure and add additional connections to ensure that walking to school is safe.	
	C) The Village should explore funding opportunities through the Transportation Alternatives Program / Safe Routes to School.	
GOAL 3 Support local recreation and sporting opportunities for youth and adult residents.	**A)** Continue collaboration between the school district and Town and Village of Groton Recreation department to support athletics programming and shared use of facilities.	Ongoing
GOAL 4 Encourage persons associated with the school district, including faculty, staff, students and visitors to support local business and events.	**A)** Collaborate with the Groton Community Business Association, local businesses, and the school district to create student internship opportunities.	Ongoing
	B) Work with the Groton Community Business Association to encourage local businesses to advertise in media related to school events.	

HEALTH AND PUBLIC SAFETY
GOALS & IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

Goal	Implementation Measures	Timeframe
GOAL 1 The Village will provide/contract for emergency services so that residents can live peacefully and safely within the community.	**A)** Assist emergency service entities in searching and applying for grant funds when opportunities become available. This could include funding available through the CDBG Public Facilities program for the acquisition of new fire apparatus.	Ongoing / Long Term
	B) Continue to provide adequate facilities for emergency services such as the new fire station. Explore funding opportunities for the construction of a new police station centrally located in the Village.	
	C) Continue to fund police and fire services and incorporate cost saving measures such as sharing services with nearby municipalities.	
	D) Continue conversations with the School District regarding the potential for an SRO program.	
GOAL 2 Ensure that development does not negatively impact the health and safety of residents.	**A)** The Village Planning and Zoning Boards should consider and determine the impact of any new development on emergency services and the possible need to expand fire and police capacity as a result.	Ongoing

HOUSING
GOALS & IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

Goal	Implementation Measures	Timeframe
GOAL 1 Ensure all dwelling units comply with the Property Maintenance Code of New York State and local codes.	**A)** The Village will continue to support comprehensive code enforcement efforts to maintain the existing housing stock.	Long Term
	B) The Village will seek financing resources including grants to renovate the existing housings stock through rehabilitation programs. The sources could include the CDBG program, HOME program, the AHC program, and other similar sources.	
	C) The Village should partner with CAPCO to leverage weatherization funding with other available housing resources to ensure village homes are maintained, especially for low and very low-income residents.	
GOAL 2 There will be housing units in the Village, existing and proposed, which are affordable and accessible to all income classes, age groups, and disability segments of the population.	**A)** The Village will partner with developers to create new market rate housing.	Long Term
	B) The Village will promote home ownership through programs that aid first time homebuyers.	
	C) Given that there is a waitlist for the senior housing developments in the Village of Groton, the Village will work with local, state, and federal housing agencies and organizations regarding the need for adequate housing for seniors and persons with disabilities.	
	D) The village should review current land use patterns and zoning restrictions to determine if there are any suitable locations that could accommodate additional multi-family senior housing, especially market rate housing.	
GOAL 3 Future housing development, or modifications to existing housing, will be consistent with the size, scale, aesthetics, architecture, character, and historic nature of the Village and its neighborhoods.	**A)** The Village should consider adopting design guidelines that cover housing development so that new construction and significant rehabilitation/renovation of existing housing is in keeping with the character/architecture of the neighborhood in which the project is being undertaken.	Long Term
GOAL 4 New housing and renovations to existing housing will incorporate energy efficiency and sustainability measures.	**A)** The Village should continue to explore the conversion of the municipally owned electric grid to accommodate net metering for residential solar installations.	Long Term
	B) Any new development of multifamily housing should incorporate sustainability measures such as green build components or higher density development that reduces the need for significant investment in infrastructure. Such development, and its benefits, should be detailed in new zoning regulations.	
	C) The Village should remain cognizant of emerging housing and energy conservation trends, and update zoning regulations to accommodate as determined appropriate.	
	D) The Village should ensure that all qualified residents are aware of the opportunity to participate in the locally sponsored Independent Energy Efficiency Program (IEEP) which can provide rebates for household conversion to high efficiency electric heating equipment.	
GOAL 5 The Village will limit potentially harmful impacts to the Owasco	**A)** The Village should develop programming to educate homeowners on the value of utilizing rain barrels, rain	Short Term

Lake Inlet that could result from residential stormwater runoff.	gardens, reducing the use of pesticides and fertilizers, and keeping storm drains clear of leaves and other debris.	
GOAL 6 Rental housing will be safe and affordable for residents in the Village of Groton.	**A)** The Village will continue to enforce the Property Maintenance Code and bring legal action against absentee landlords that fail to invest in and maintain their residential rental properties to code.	Ongoing
	B) The Village should consider securing grant funding for income property rehabilitation to incentivize responsible landlords to complete renovations and upgrades for apartments that will be occupied by lower income tenants.	

LAND USE AND ZONING
GOALS & IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

Goal	Implementation Measures	Timeframe
GOAL 1 Modernize and simplify the Zoning Code to make the zoning more user-friendly and aligned with current planning practices.	**A)** Relocate all land use regulations, including mobile home park standards, into Chapter 200 for consistency.	Short Term
	B) Clearly organize and update district intent statements with plain language and assess permitted uses for all districts.	
	C) Use consistent, modern naming conventions (e.g., R-1, R-2, CBD, AR) for clarity.	
	D) This goal may require a comprehensive update of the zoning, and the Village should seek funding from the NYS Smart Growth Community Planning Program or other similar funding source for this endeavor.	
GOAL 2 Diversify housing options and provide a mix of housing types to meet the needs of all residents, including seniors, young professionals, and families.	**A)** Consolidate overlapping residential districts into more intuitive R-1 and R-2 zones, simplifying regulations.	Long Term
	B) Allow multi-family housing and townhomes in the R-2 (Medium-Intensity) District by special use permit.	
	C) Preserve existing mobile home park zoning and relocate those regulations to the primary zoning code for easier reference.	
	D) Promote adaptive reuse of upper floors in downtown buildings for housing.	
GOAL 3 Support a vibrant and mixed-use downtown and reinforce the village center as the heart of community and commerce.	**A)** Rename the High-Intensity District to Central Business District (CBD) to better reflect intended uses.	Ongoing
	B) Develop and adopt a Historic Overlay District for the downtown core to guide design, façade improvements, preservation, and promote the sense of place.	
	C) Review parking requirements in the CBD to encourage reuse of historic buildings and walkability.	
GOAL 4 Preserve natural and agricultural resources to conserve sensitive environmental areas and farmland while directing growth away from ecologically valuable lands.	**A)** Rename the Low-Intensity District as the Agricultural-Residential (AR) District and refine allowable uses accordingly.	Short Term
	B) Strengthen development standards in the Special Purpose District to protect wetlands and the Owasco Inlet.	
	C) Utilize overlay zoning to add environmental protection standards to key areas if needed.	
GOAL 5 Promote smart, sustainable growth patterns, direct development to areas with	**A)** Revise zoning to support higher densities and mixed-use in the downtown/Central Business District.	Short Term
	B) Rezone underutilized or misaligned districts (e.g., reclassify parts of the High-Intensity District not located downtown).	

existing infrastructure, reduce sprawl, and encourage efficient land use.	**C)** Encourage infill development on vacant or underused parcels within developed areas.	
	D) Adopt Planned Development District criteria that explicitly integrate Smart Growth principles such as walkability, mixed use, and infrastructure efficiency.	
	E) Develop commercial property design standards for the commercial area along Route 38, outside of the historic downtown.	
GOAL 6 Strengthen development review processes to ensure that all new development aligns with community goals and Smart Growth principles.	**A)** Require a Smart Growth Checklist as part of Site Plan Review, Special Use Permit, and Major Subdivision applications.	Short Term
	B) Revise site plan and special permit criteria to include walkability, connectivity, historic compatibility, green infrastructure, and sense of place.	
	C) Ensure Planning Board training includes best practices in Smart Growth and environmental design.	
GOAL 7 Encourage economic development in designated areas to promote job creation and business growth in areas suited for economic activity.	**A)** Rezone isolated High-Intensity parcels along Route 222 into the adjacent Special Commercial District.	Short Term
	B) Promote infrastructure-ready industrial parcels in the Special Commercial District for light manufacturing and tech-based businesses.	
	C) Streamline review for appropriate commercial uses in economic corridors.	
GOAL 8 Ensure public involvement and transparency to strengthen community trust and participation in land use decisions.	**A)** Host public forums when creating or amending overlay zones and during comprehensive rezoning efforts.	Short Term
	B) Provide accessible, plain-language summaries of zoning updates and planning tools.	
	C) Launch educational materials on the benefits of Smart Growth and the rationale behind zoning reforms.	

APPENDIX B

PUBLIC SURVEY AND SURVEY RESULTS

Village of Groton Comprehensive Plan
Community Survey
Your voice matters!

WHAT THIS IS ABOUT AND WHY SHOULD YOU COMPLETE IT?

The Village of Groton is starting the process of updating their Comprehensive Plan. A Comprehensive Plan is a document that describes the history, current state, and future vision for the community. It will guide future growth and development, while promoting a healthy, safe place for Village residents to live.

WHO SHOULD COMPLETE THE SURVEY

The Comprehensive Plan should reflect the ideas and opinions of Groton's residents. **ALL** Village residents and/or property owners are invited to complete this survey. Renters and owners of rental properties are also encouraged to complete this survey.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your name and email address will be kept 100% confidential.

WHEN TO SUBMIT YOUR SURVEY

Please submit your completed survey by March 31, 2024. Estimated time to complete the survey: 10 minutes.

HOW AND WHERE TO SUBMIT THE SURVEY

ON PAPER

Drop it off at Village Hall, (143 E. Cortland St.) or send it by U.S. mail to: Comprehensive Plan Survey, Thoma Development Consultants, 34 Tompkins Street, Cortland, NY 13045. Paper copies are available at the Groton Village Hall and the Groton Public Library.

ON-LINE

To complete the survey on-line, go to https://forms.office.com/r/X2YiCiVcFc or Scan the following QR Code!

Do you still have questions about how to complete or submit this survey? Write to Colleen Nelson with Thoma Development Consultants at colleen@thomadevelopment.com , or call at 607-753-1433

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!

The Village of Groton is starting the process of updating their Comprehensive Plan. A Comprehensive Plan is a document that describes the history, current state, and future vision of a community. We need your help to shape that future!

ONLINE SURVEY

Please fill out the brief survey (approximately 10 minutes) on the following website:

https:// forms.office.com/r/X2YiCiVcFc

Information and suggestions from this survey will be taken into consideration as the Village outlines their long-term priorities.

Paper copies of the survey can be obtained and dropped off at the Village Clerk's office, at 143 E. Cortland Street, or the Groton Public Library at 112 E. Cortland Street.

Questions? Call Thoma Development at 607-753-1433



Village of Groton

Comprehensive Plan Survey

We want to know what YOU think of the Village of Groton!

The Village of Groton is updating their Comprehensive Plan. This plan will guide future growth and development, while promoting a healthy, safe place for Village residents to live. We need your help to do this!

1. Your Name (Optional and Confidential)

2. Your email address for future information on the Comprehensive Plan (Optional and Confidential)

3. Where do you currently live?

- ◯ Village of Groton
- ◯ Town of Groton
- ◯ Outside of the Village and Town of Groton

4. Do you Own or Rent your property?

- ◯ Owner
- ◯ Renter

5. What is the Primary Use of your Property?

- ◯ Residential
- ◯ Commercial
- ◯ Industrial
- ◯ Community Service
- ◯ Recreational

6. Your age range:

- ◯ Under 18
- ◯ 18-24
- ◯ 25-34
- ◯ 35-44
- ◯ 45-54
- ◯ 65 and older

7. Please rate the following services and amenities that are located within the Village of Groton from Poor to Excellent

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Fire Services	◯	◯	◯	◯
Ambulance Services	◯	◯	◯	◯
Police Services	◯	◯	◯	◯
Healthcare Services	◯	◯	◯	◯
School District Services	◯	◯	◯	◯
Housing Quality	◯	◯	◯	◯
Housing Availability	◯	◯	◯	◯
Housing Affordability	◯	◯	◯	◯
Sewer System	◯	◯	◯	◯
Electric Service	◯	◯	◯	◯
Water System	◯	◯	◯	◯
Drinking Water Quality	◯	◯	◯	◯
Air Quality	◯	◯	◯	◯
Pedestrian Safety	◯	◯	◯	◯

Bicycling Safety	◯	◯	◯	◯
Walkability / Pedestrian Access	◯	◯	◯	◯
Bikeability / Bike Access	◯	◯	◯	◯
Recreational Opportunities	◯	◯	◯	◯
Snow Removal	◯	◯	◯	◯

8. Please rank the following Village Operations from Poor to Excellent

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Building Code Enforcement	◯	◯	◯	◯
Zoning Code Enforcement	◯	◯	◯	◯
Village Board Procedures	◯	◯	◯	◯
Accessibility/ Availability of Village Clerk	◯	◯	◯	◯
Village Information Delivery	◯	◯	◯	◯
Village Website	◯	◯	◯	◯

9. What Issues/Initiatives would you like to see the Village focus on in the future? (Choose 3)

- [ ] Attracting Commercial Development
- [ ] Attracting Manufacturing Development
- [ ] Downtown Revitalization
- [ ] Job Opportunities
- [ ] Services for seniors
- [ ] Services for children/teens
- [ ] Recreational Opportunities
- [ ] Stormwater Management
- [ ] Sidewalk Improvements
- [ ] Housing Rehabilitation Programs
- [ ] Building Code Enforcement
- [ ] Zoning Code Enforcement
- [ ] Pedestrian Safety/Access
- [ ] Community Events
- [ ] Property Maintenance
- [ ] Other- Place Response in Comments

10. What Amenities would you like added to the Village of Groton? (Choose 3)

- [ ] Bicycle/Walking trails
- [ ] Waterfront Access
- [ ] Grocery Store
- [ ] Pharmacy
- [ ] Medical Services/Urgent Care

- [ ] Affordable Housing
- [ ] Upscale Dining Options
- [ ] Family Dining Options
- [ ] Office Space
- [ ] Entertainment Venues
- [ ] Neighborhood Retail
- [ ] Hotels
- [ ] Small Inns / Bed and Breakfasts
- [ ] Residential Solar
- [ ] Other- Place Response in Comments

11. Please describe the Village of Groton in <u>one</u> word

12. Additional Comments-

Please return completed surveys to the Village Clerk, or Mail to: Comprehensive Plan Survey, Thoma Development Consultants, 34 Tompkins Street, Cortland, NY 13045.

Responses Overview

Closed

Responses	Average Score	Average Time
126	0	19:30

1. Please enter your name (Optional and Confidential) (0 point)

71
Responses

3 respondents (4%) answered Frank for this question.

2. Please enter your email address for future information on the Comprehensive Plan (Optional and Con fidential) (0 point)

70
Responses

2 respondents (3%) answered Street for this question.

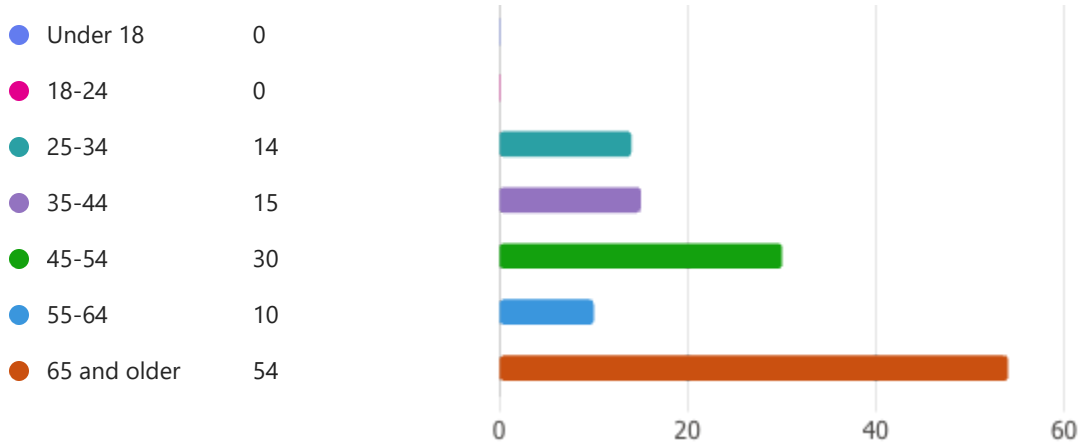


3. Where do you currently live? (0 point)

Village of Groton	116
Town of Groton	5
Outside of the Village and Town of Groton	5



4. Your age range: (0 point)



5. Do you Own or Rent your property? (0 point)



6. What is the Primary Use of your Property? (0 point)

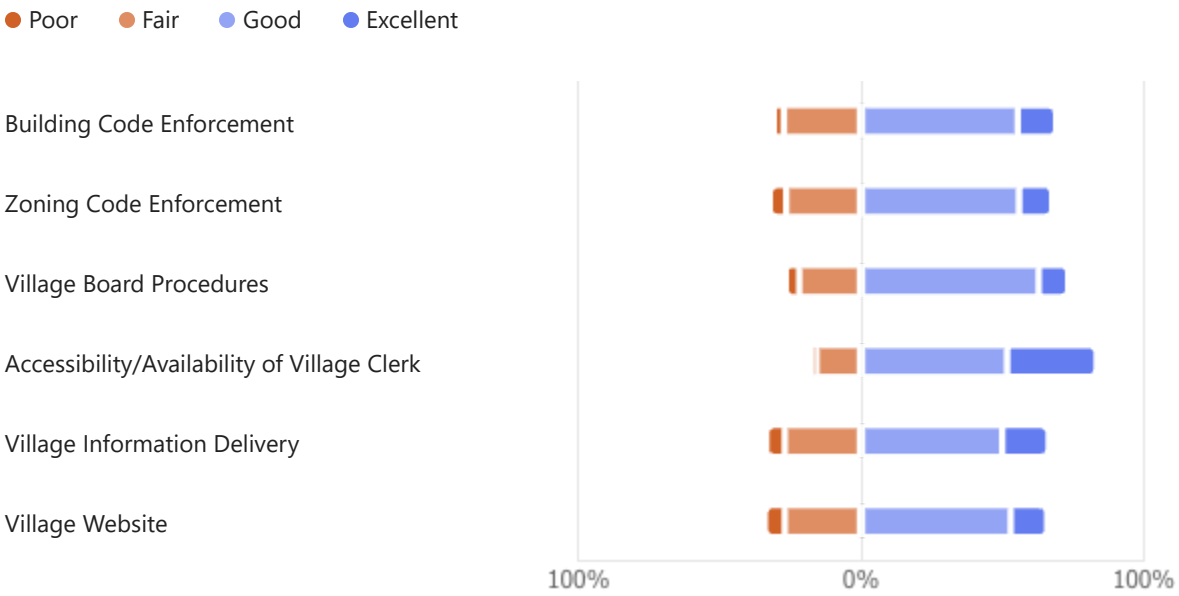
Residential	119
Commercial	6
Industrial	0
Community Service	0
Recreational	0



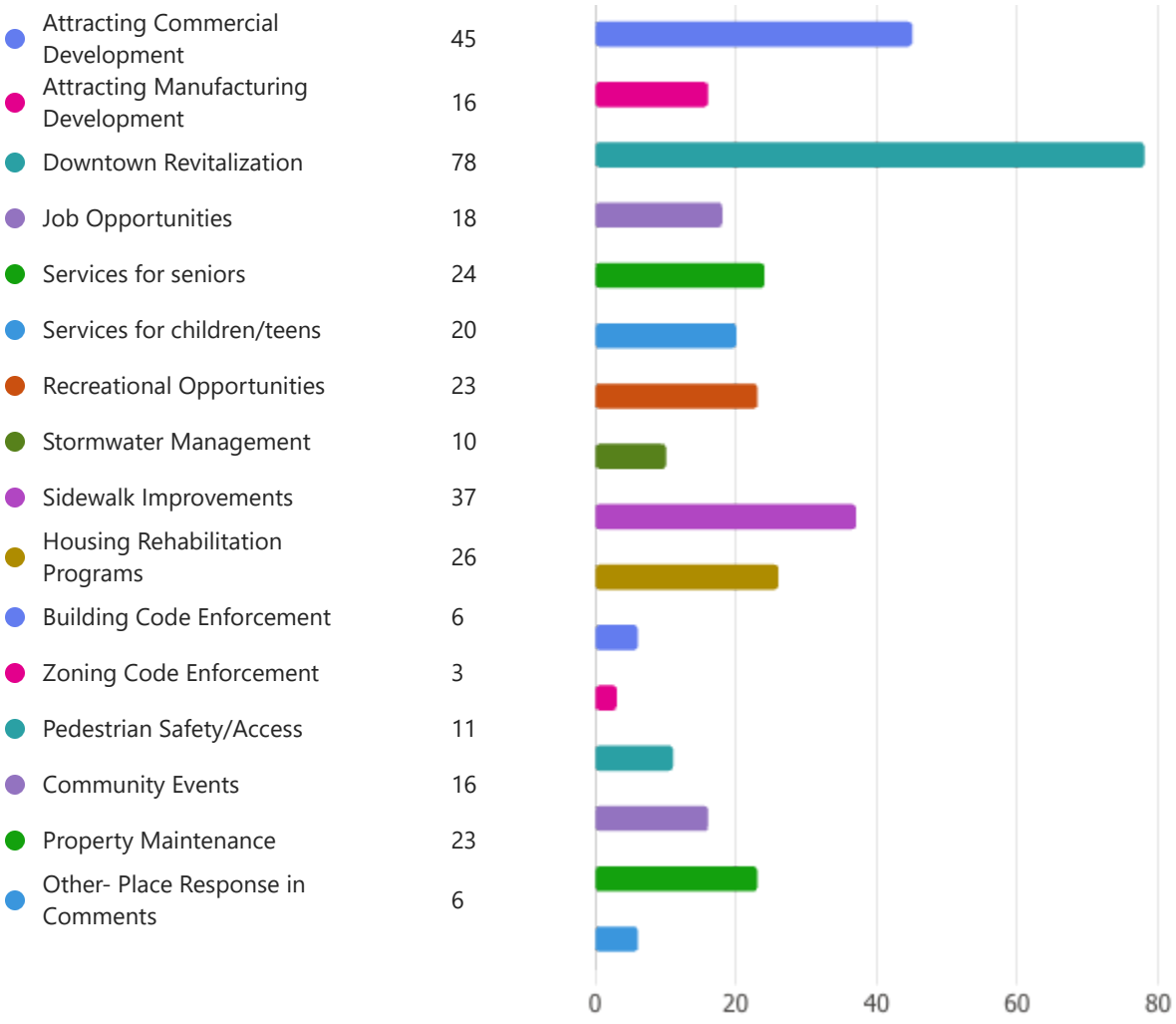
7. Please rate the following services and amenities that are located within the Village of Groton from Po or to Excellent (0 point)



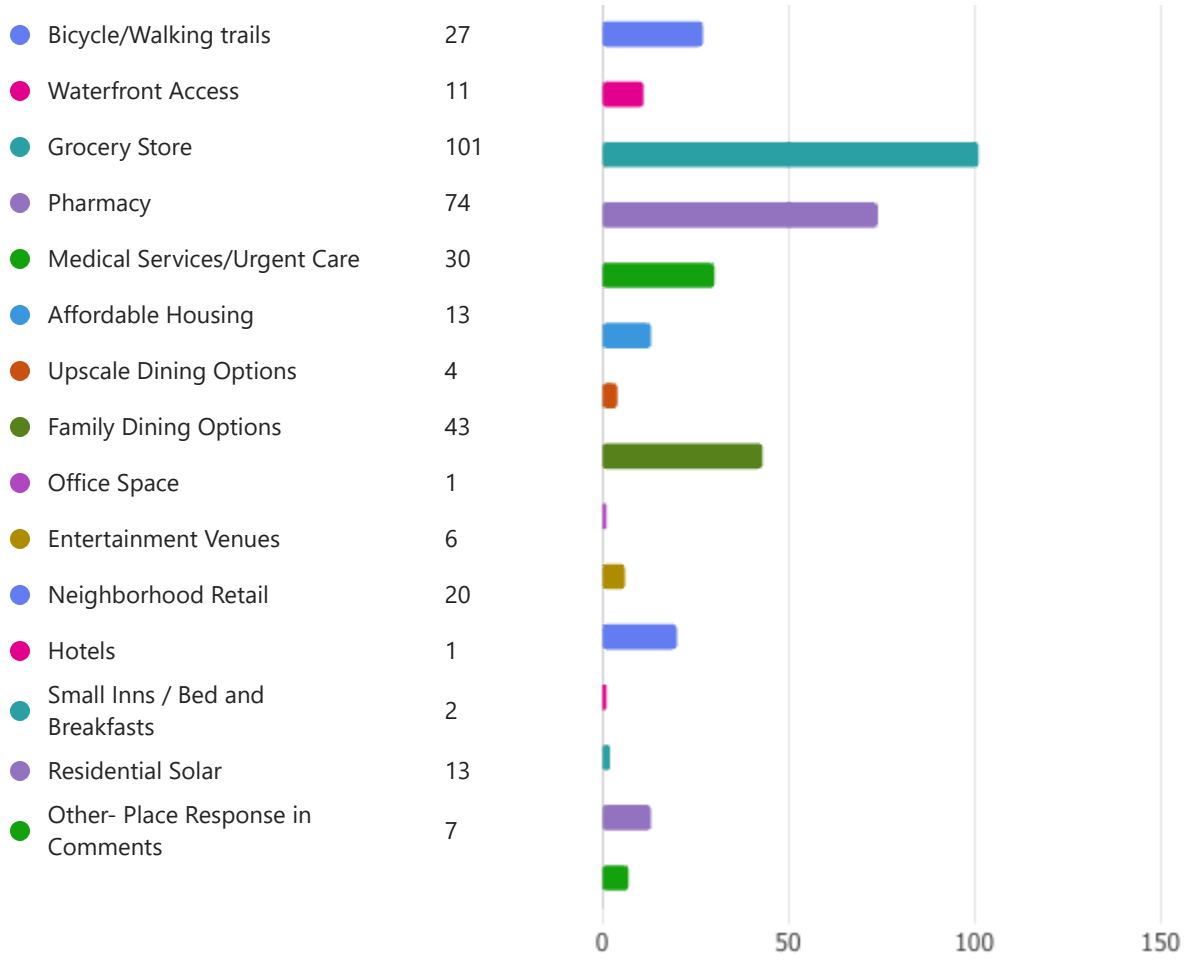
8. Please rank the following Village Operations from Poor to Excellent (0 point)



9. What Issues/Initiatives would you like to see the Village focus on in the future? (Choose 3) (0 point)



10. What Amenities would you like added to the Village of Groton? (Choose 3) (0 point)



11. Please Describe the Village of Groton in one word (0 point)

109
Responses

8 respondents (7%) answered Friendly for this question.



12. Additional Comments- (0 point)

62
Responses

Latest Responses

"Lack of Police presence on Cayuga Street. So many speeder... "

"Been 1 year now and wall between driveway and stream is s... "

. . .

18 respondents (29%) answered village for this question.



APPENDIX C

SMART GROWTH PRINCIPLES

Smart Growth Principles (NYS DOS)

Smart Growth promotes the creation of livable, sustainable and equitable communities. The Department of State (DOS) has established ten Smart Growth principles to achieve those aims. These principles guide and permeate all programs within the DOS Office of Planning, Development & Community Infrastructure.

Smart Growth Principles:

1. **Allow for and encourage neighborhoods with a mix of uses, such as residential, commercial and community spaces.** Mixed-use neighborhoods encourage a range of diverse uses that allow people to easily access common needs and amenities. They are generally comprised of residential, commercial, civic, and recreational uses. These uses should be incorporated at a building, street, or neighborhood scale and should facilitate transportation options, like walking, biking, or public transportation.

2. **Enable a diverse mix of housing types, providing opportunity and choice for people of all ages, abilities and incomes.** A housing supply that meets needs of current and future residents regardless of income, ability, or age includes diverse types of housing, such as detached single-family, townhomes, apartments, accessory dwelling units, cooperative housing units, and other configurations of housing. Diverse housing types should be integrated into and across communities and neighborhoods.

3. **Prioritize infill and redevelopment of existing buildings to revitalize neighborhoods and downtowns, including areas around public transit.** Infill development prioritizes the use of underutilized or vacant sites in existing neighborhoods. Such development should complement the surrounding built environment and increase density, add diverse uses, and encourage reinvestment.

4. **Provide well-planned, equitable, and accessible public spaces for people of all ages and abilities.** Well-planned and designed public spaces, including parks, sidewalks, and buildings, should be designed to provide users of all ages and abilities with the opportunity to use and enjoy these community resources. Age-friendly public spaces should be distributed equitably across the community, extend beyond basic ADA compliance, and provide a range of options and amenities that enable diverse programming and activities.

5. **Encourage compact neighborhood design and concentrated development around existing infrastructure.** Compact neighborhood design makes efficient use of existing infrastructure and enables easy access to common needs and amenities by locating development in existing neighborhoods. Development should facilitate walking, bicycling, and the use of public transportation.

6. **Preserve open space, agricultural resources and natural resources.** Land preservation directs development toward areas that are already developed, minimizing encroachment on open space and natural resources. Such efforts include actively protecting farms, forests, wetlands, and other sensitive areas from development.

7. **Prioritize transportation options that are safe and accessible for everyone, including pedestrians, cyclists and public transit users.** Safe, reliable, and diverse transportation options provide access to common needs and amenities for all ages and abilities. Transportation investments should prioritize pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, as well as access to public transportation.

8. **Promote climate resiliency and adaptation, preferably through nature-based solutions, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.** Nature-based solutions that restore and enhance natural features in the built environment build climate resiliency and reduce the risks associated with extreme weather and a changing climate. Additionally, efforts to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and promote clean energy and energy efficiency will contribute to long-term resilience

9. **Build on unique traits to create an attractive and welcoming community with a strong sense of place.** Each community has unique attributes, such as historic buildings, natural surroundings, local traditions, or small businesses. Highlighting and caring for these unique traits through good design and improvements to public spaces can create places that are welcoming, distinctive, and rooted in a local identity.

10. **Engage in an inclusive, collaborative public planning process that considers the needs and character of the community.** Successful community planning engages many different stakeholders, including historically underrepresented populations. Planning processes should be open, accessible, transparent, and welcoming, providing opportunities for public discussion.