

SECTION 9.0

**FINAL GENERIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
FOR THE
OAKFIELD-ALABAMA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Applicant:

Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield

Lead Agency:

**Town of Oakfield
Town Hall
3219 Drake Street
Oakfield, New York 14125**

Contact:

**Ken Dodd, Supervisor
585-948-5835**

**DGEIS Submitted: December 16, 2003
DGEIS Acceptance by Town Board: January 13, 2004
Public Hearings: January 26, February 5, and February 10, 2004
Comments Accepted Through: February 27, 2004
FGEIS Acceptance by Town Board: June 13, 2005
Findings Adopted by Town Board: July 11, 2005**

Prepared By:

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**NOTICE OF COMPLETION
OF THE
FINAL GENERIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
for the Towns of Oakfield and Alabama
and the Village of Oakfield**

Lead Agency: Town of Oakfield Town Board

Address: Town Hall
3219 Drake Street
Oakfield, New York 14125

Date: September 22, 2004

This notice is issued pursuant to Part 617 of the implementing regulations pertaining to Article 8 (State Environmental Quality Review Act) of the Environmental Conservation Law.

A Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement has been completed and accepted for the proposed action described below.

Name of Action: Adoption of the Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan for the Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield.

Location: Town of Oakfield (and the Town of Alabama and Village of Oakfield), Genesee County, New York

Description of Action: The Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield have completed and propose to adopt a Comprehensive Plan in accordance with Town Law Sections 272-a and 284, and Village Law Sections 7-722 and 7-741. The Plan will act as a comprehensive plan for each of the partnering communities and assist them in considering the region in their decisions and actions.

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A copy of the FGEIS may be obtained from:

*Kenneth A. Dodd, Supervisor
Town of Oakfield
Town Hall, 3219 Drake Street, Oakfield, New York
(585) 948-5835*

A copy of this Notice of Completion and the FGEIS have been sent to:

Commissioner, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
Division of Environmental Permits, 625 Broadway, Albany, New York 12233-1750

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Environmental Permits
Region 8, 6274 East Avon-Lima Road, Avon, New York 14414-9519
Attention: Peter A. Lent

Linda Franks, Town Clerk
Town of Alabama, 2218 Judge Road, Oakfield, New York, 14125
Attention: Supervisor Guy Hinkson

Shelly L. D'Alba, Village Clerk/Treasurer
Village of Oakfield, 1910 Bowen Road, Elma, New York, 14059-7699
Attention: Raymond F. Cianfrini, Mayor

New York State Department of Transportation
Donovan State Office Building, 125 Main Street, Buffalo, New York 14203-3088
Attention: Brian O. Rowback

Genesee County Planning Department
3837 W. Main Street Road, Batavia, New York 14020
Attention: James Duval

NYSDEC Environmental News Bulletin
625 Broadway, Albany, New York 12233-1750

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- Copy of letter received from the Genesee County Department of Health and other correspondence regarding on-going water quality problems with individual water supply wells and septic systems in Alabama hamlet

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SECTION 1 - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document is submitted as a final generic environmental impact statement (FGEIS) for the adoption of the Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan for the Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield, pursuant to the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) regulations set forth in 6 NYCRR Part 617.

The FGEIS contains correspondence from local municipal agencies and the public that was obtained during the public comment period for the Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS). The DGEIS was determined to be complete by the Lead Agency on December 16, 2003 and is made part of this FGEIS by reference (Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan and Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement dated January 2004). This action commenced the public comment period, during which time interested parties and the general public were encouraged to submit written comments or verbally express their comments at the public hearings held in the Village of Oakfield on January 26, 2004; the Town of Alabama on February 5, 2004; and the Town of Oakfield on February 10, 2004. In addition, by reference, the Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan for the Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield is made a part of this FGEIS.

Submission Objectives

The purpose of preparing and filing this FGEIS is to provide a response to the questions and comments raised during the public comment period for the DGEIS. A direct response is provided only for comments on the contents of the Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan and DGEIS that are substantive. All of the issues raised during the public comment period relate to the potential impact the Plan could have on the physical and social/cultural environment. This document will identify the components of the Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan that may be revised in order to address the concerns of the public and mitigate potential significant impacts.

In addition to providing responses to the comments, the filing of the FGEIS continues the SEQR process and allows the Lead Agency and other involved parties to prepare their Findings that will later be the basis for their decision on this adoption action.

Discussion of Substantive Issues

Several significant issues were raised during the public comment period. The majority of these comments were focused on at meetings held subsequent to the public hearings.

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On April 4, 2004, representatives of the Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan Committee and Wendel Duchscherer met with James Duval, the Director of the Genesee County Planning Department. This meeting was held to discuss the County Planning Board's vote to disapprove the Town of Oakfield's component of the Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan (see Notice of Final Action contained in the Appendix). The County Planning Board, under their review of the draft Plan pursuant to the 239-m referral process, had voted against the Plan for the Town of Oakfield, issued no vote for the Town of Alabama, and approved the component for the Village of Oakfield.

The April 4th meeting focused primarily on the County's perception and concern that the recommendations for long-term growth, as illustrated on the Vision Map and outlined in the Plan, deviated from the policies and recommendations of the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan. The County felt that the proposed long-term growth boundaries proposed in the Plan were considered to be too large and encompassed many areas that lie within State-designated Agricultural Districts. The communities and their consultant tried to explain that these areas were actually long-term planning areas where potential growth could occur. Presently, the Towns' have zoning that allows many uses throughout the entire study area community, providing little direction for growth. The Comprehensive Plan attempts to better focus this development into smaller areas for potential long-term growth around the established hamlets and the Village of Oakfield. The "Smart Growth Areas" illustrated in the County Smart Growth Plan allocate little area for long-term growth and basically represent areas that are already developed. The Comprehensive Plan recommends expanded areas for long-term growth to afford the Towns more focused options for future development. It is not the intent of the Town to have these areas immediately be designated Smart Growth Areas and have water supplied to them. Rather, these areas provide the Towns with ideas for long-term planning and possible infrastructure extensions, where warranted. It would be naïve of the County to think that no new development would take place in these communities over the next twenty years. Housing will be constructed and businesses started, and the communities must provide better direction for this growth, regardless of how fast or slow it occurs. The Town's are committed to updating their laws and regulations to better guide their future growth as part of the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. They understand that these recommendations in the Plan must be

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implemented before these new areas are designated for any new growth. These implementation actions include making changes to the Zoning Map, instituting lateral restriction policies for water line extensions through agricultural areas, and adopting Zoning Overlay regulations, local Right-to Farm legislation, Rural Development Guidelines and improved subdivision and site plan review regulations.

In addition to the comments received at the April 4, 2004 meeting, additional comments were received from the Genesee County Planning Department and the public, as outlined in Section 2 (as follows).

Additional Information

Title 6 of the New York Code of Rules and Recommendations (6 NYCRR), Part 617.14(I) requires that the FGEIS include the DGEIS (by reference) and any revisions or supplements to it. Section 3 of the FGEIS includes the amended pages and maps for the Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan and DGEIS.

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SECTION 2 – RESPONSES TO COMMENTS

Correspondence, Letters and Comments Received from the Involved and Interested Agencies and the Public

The following comments were received from the Genesee County Planning Department and the public. Copies of the original comment letters are provided in the Appendix. Revised pages of the Comprehensive Plan are included in Section 3.

Genesee County Planning Department (Email correspondence dated June 10, 2004)

Executive Summary, pg. 1 - "this plan identifies what areas in the County would qualify to receive public water... Those areas designated to receive water are know as Development Areas".

Comment: The Smart Growth Plan does not qualify areas for public water. Water lines and water service are not restricted to Develop Areas only, and they are not required for existing residents to connect into the County coordinated water system.

Response: The wording in this section of the report has been revised to acknowledge and reflect the comments.

Executive Summary, pg. 6 - (Oakfield) "Adopt Subdivision Regulations as per Section 276 of the New York State Town Law."

Comment: Oakfield adopted subdivision regulations in 1992.

Response: It is acknowledged that the Town of Oakfield adopted a Land Separation Local Law and Land Subdivision regulations in June of 1992. Although the Land Separation Law, which regulated minor subdivision (four or less lots), was repealed in 1997, the regulations for the major subdivision of land remain in effect. Subdivision of land is also addressed under Section 411.3 of the Zoning Ordinance. The Comprehensive Plan has been revised, where required to reflect these facts.

Section 4.2.1, pg. 4-10 - (Oakfield) "Town of Oakfield does not have a separate law for the regulation of the subdivision of land."

Comment: See above.

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Response: As noted above, it is understood that the Town currently regulates the subdivision of land by way of a provision in the Zoning Ordinance. The reviewer's comment does not appear to recognize the intent of the statement highlighted above, which is merely to identify the fact that the Town does not have stand alone regulations for subdivision. Hence, the text has been revised to clarify this intent.

Section 4.2.1, pg. 4-10 - (Oakfield Village) "Similar to other communities in the study area, the Village does not have separate regulations for subdivision."

Comment: Village adopted subdivision regulation in 1992.

Response: It is understood that the Village currently regulates the subdivision of land by way of a provision in the Zoning Ordinance. Again, the reviewer's comment does not appear to recognize the intent of the statement highlighted above, which is merely to identify the fact that the Village does not have stand alone regulations for subdivision. Hence, the text has been revised to clarify this intent.

Section 4.6.1, pg. 20 - "The Village and surrounding areas receive water from the City of Batavia via a line that runs up State Route 63."

Comment: The water line runs up NYS 63 to Galloway Road, heads due west on Galloway Road to South Pearl Road, then north to the Village.

Response: This comment is acknowledged and the text in the report has been revised to reflect the accurate routing of this water line.

Section 4.7.3, pg. 22 - "Police services are provided by the New York State Police."

Comment: The Genesee County Sheriff's office is the primary law enforcement entity. They receive all 911 calls.

Response: This comment is acknowledged and the text in the report has been revised to reflect the accurate provision of police protection in the area.

Section 4.7.4, pg. 22 - (Oakfield Village) "... and a water treatment plant in the Town of Batavia."

Comment: This treatment plant is now off-line.

Response: This comment is acknowledged and the text in the report has been revised to reflect the current status of the treatment plant.

Section 5.2.1, pg.1 - (Alabama) "Land use is regulated in the Town solely through the Zoning."

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Comment: It's a Zoning Law, not an ordinance.

Response: An ordinance, as defined (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2004), is a "law set forth by governmental authority, i.e. - a municipal regulation". Therefore, the term ordinance is used appropriately here. In fact, the Town of Oakfield zoning code is named "Zoning Ordinance".

Section 5.2.1, pg.2 - (Alabama) "The Genesee County Smart Growth Plan calls for minimizing the number of new water connections within agricultural districts."

Comment: The Genesee County Smart Growth Plan goes farther than "calling for", it officially restricts hook-ups to new, non-agricultural uses in Agricultural Districts unless located in a Development Area.

Response: The comment is acknowledged and the report text has been revised to reflect that the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan restricts the number of new water connections-ups to new, non-agricultural land uses in agricultural districts, unless they are located in a designated development area.

Section 5.2.1, pg.2 - (Alabama) "Population projections indicate that the Town's population will grow by an estimated 12.5 percent over the next thirty years."

Comment: This projection, cited from two statistical studies done by the GFLRPC, is false. A hybrid of two different studies conducted by the GFLRPC was improperly used. The 1997 projections were revised in the 2002 report to reflect the decrease experienced in the Town found in Census 2000. The Town population is expected to decline from 1,881 in 2000, to 1,814 in 2030.

Response: The comment is acknowledged and the report text has been revised to reflect the revised population projections.

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Section 5.3.1, pg.10 - (Alabama) "Water extensions should only be considered in accordance with the County's Smart Growth Plan (as amended by this plan) or in areas that have potential public health and safety concerns."

Comment: The Smart Growth Plan is not amended by local comprehensive plans. A report is prepared by the County Planning Department to recommend changes.

Response: This comment is acknowledged and the reference in the text regarding amendment of the Plan has been removed.

Section 5.3.1, pg.11 - (Alabama) "The provision of water services is essential to eliminate certain health and safety factors associated with contaminated wells and failing septic systems."

Comment: The Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan provides no scientific or survey evidence (with statistical significance) of well contamination or failing septic systems in the Town.

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Response: The factors contributing to the on going problems with individual water supplies and on-site subsurface wastewater disposal systems are outlined in a letter received from the Genesee County Health Department on November 17, 2004. Basically this letter confirms that problems exist and are aggravated by unsuitable soils, the age of the stormwater collections system in the area and the small size of the existing lots, which challenges the required separation distance between private wells and septic systems. The Comprehensive Plan has been revised to reflect this information.

Section 5.3.1, pg.12 - (Alabama) "In known groundwater problem areas, the Town should require larger lot sizes."

Comment: The Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan provides no scientific or survey evidence (with statistical significance) of well contamination or failing septic systems in the Town.

Response: See response to previous comment

Section 5.3.2, pg.15 - (Oakfield) "A primary opportunity for additional public water in the Town of Oakfield is to continue extending water along the main roads out of the Village. This pattern expands upon, but generally conforms to, the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan."

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Comment: The proposed plan does not generally conform to the Smart Growth Plan, since these areas are primarily agricultural. The Smart Growth Plan seeks to focus growth in hamlets, not expanding it into NYS Agricultural Districts, which the County Plan strictly avoids in as practical a manner as possible.

Response: The comment is acknowledged and the text has been revised to reflect these concerns and better clarify the long-term desires of the Town.

Section 5.3.2, pg.16 - (Oakfield) "Focus the provision of public water to locations that have urgent need due to health and safety issues."

Comment: The Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan provides no scientific or survey evidence (with statistical significance) of well contamination in the Town.

Response: Since the Genesee County Health Department only confirmed water quality concerns in the Town of Alabama, we have removed this recommendation from the Plan.

Section 5.3.2, pg.18 - (Oakfield) "Limit water extensions in the town to eliminate the potential for extensive growth. Water extensions should only be considered in accordance with the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan or in areas that have potential public health and safety concerns."

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Comment: The proposed plan does not conform to the Smart Growth Plan, since these areas proposed for water extensions are primarily agricultural. The Smart Growth Plan seeks to focus growth in hamlets, not expanding it into NYS Agricultural Districts, which the County Plan strictly avoids in as practical a manner as possible.

Response: The comment is acknowledged and the text has been revised to reflect these concerns and better clarify the long-term desires of the Town.

Section 6.4, pg. 8 - (Oakfield) "Adopt subdivision regulations as per Section 276 of the NYS Town Law."

Comment: They adopted subdivision regulations in 1992.

Response: As previously noted, the Comprehensive Plan document has been revised to reflect the fact that the Town adopted Land Subdivision Regulations in June of 1992 to regulation the major subdivision of land. At the time the Town had also adopted a Land Separation Local Law to regulate

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minor subdivision, but this law was repealed in 1997. The Town should adopt regulations to control the minor subdivision of land (splits of four or less parcels).

General Comment: The Plan doesn't address issues regarding the mines underlying land that should never be residentially developed.

Response: The general location of the former U.S. Gypsum mines has been illustrated on Map 10. Consideration to the location of these mines, and potential future residential development in areas underlain by mines, has been added to Sections 4 and 5 of the Comprehensive Plan.

Joseph J. Richthammer, 1240 Casey Road, Basom, New York 14013 (email dated August 4, 2004)

Comment: With the Highway Department being the biggest cost to the Town of Alabama, it should be required that our Town Council and Supervisor attend Highway Superintendent schools and seminars to help them understand the deployment of highway equipment and materials. This would also be helpful in formulating better cost effective decisions.

Response: This comment is acknowledged.

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B. Substantive Comments Received at the Public Hearings

Town of Oakfield (Held January 26, 2004)

None offered.

Town of Alabama (Held February 4, 2004)

None offered.

Village of Oakfield (Held February 10, 2004)

None offered.

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**SECTION 3 - AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAFT OAKFIELD-ALABAMA COMPREHENSIVE
PLAN AND DRAFT GENERIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
(DGEIS)**

The following section includes the pages that have been revised in the original Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan and DGEIS, with revision shown in bold italics. Maps that required major revisions have also been included. Some maps that only required minor changes have not been included, but descriptions of the changes are discussed.

These modifications, combined with the Findings issued for this action, will determine the Final version of the Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan. As mentioned previously, the entire Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan is incorporated into this FGEIS by reference.

SECTION 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction and Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

The Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan represents the culmination of a joint planning effort undertaken by the Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield. These three rural communities recognized the importance of such cooperation and joined together to formulate a common vision for managing future growth and development. This Plan was prepared in conformance with NYS Town Law Section 272-a and NYS Village Law Section 7-722 and is designed to be consistent with the principles of the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan.

The Genesee County Smart Growth Plan outlines a strategy for managing and controlling the extension of water service throughout Genesee County. **As a way of minimizing the potential impacts of additional growth and development, which would otherwise occur as a result of the extension of water service, this plan sets forth objectives aimed at ensuring that water extensions do not result in additional development that is inconsistent with the principles of "smart growth". The Plan designates "development areas" within which development and redevelopment would be encouraged and access to the County-funded portions of the County's water system would not be restricted. The "development areas" were delineated based on a certain set of criteria, and include areas with significant potential for economic development, as well as areas that are already relatively densely developed with residential, commercial or industrial uses.**

The Smart Growth Plan establishes guidelines for implementing an approval process for water hook-ups, which calls for the creation of a County-level administrative review committee. However, the County Legislature may choose to delegate the authority to approve water hook-ups to individual municipalities that have adopted a comprehensive plan consistent with the principles of the Smart Growth Plan.

Although the Smart Growth Plan and the potential ability to receive public water was the driving force behind the effort to create this document, there were other issues that warranted the preparation of this Plan by the three partnering communities. The Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan sets forth a strategy for addressing important issues and for guiding future growth and development, protecting **agricultural uses and** rural community character, and improving the quality of life in each community. The three communities have designed this plan to acknowledge existing conditions in each community,

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Recommendations for achieving the opportunities or addressing constraints were formulated for each community utilizing the goals and objectives outlined in Section 3.0. For each community, each goal is discussed and then followed by a series of recommendations. The recommendations are further developed in Section 6.0 (Implementation).

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1.7 Implementation

The Implementation section of the Comprehensive Plan outlines strategies for achieving the goals objectives outlined in Section 3.0, and for accomplishing many of the recommendations set forth in Section 5.0. The implementation strategy includes a step by step approach with established priorities. This Plan is an active document and over time, as local situations change, so may the priorities of each community. Therefore, upon adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, one of the first priority actions is for each community to designate an Implementation Advisory Committee to be responsible for the active implementation of this document.

Section 6.0 is broken into subsections for each participating community. Each implementation strategy for each community sets forth a prioritized, step-by-step approach. Priority 1 and 2 actions have been organized under four categories: Agriculture; Public Water/Smart Growth Plan; Zoning and other Land Use Regulations; and Other Actions. Priority 1 actions are those tasks that should be completed in the immediate term (one to two years). Priority 2 actions are those actions that should be undertaken over the short term (three to five years out). Priority 3 Actions are also included, which are either longer-term activities or alternative actions that may or may not be necessary depending on the outcome of Priority 1 and 2 actions. Key implementation strategies for each municipality are as follows.

Town of Alabama

- Revise the Agricultural–Residential zoning district to build upon the intent that agricultural uses are primary uses in the district.
- **Work with Genesee County to expand the designated development areas in the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan in a manner that does not impact agriculture and fully utilizes the existing infrastructure in the Town. The Vision Map depicts larger long-term planning areas. The development areas delineated in the existing Smart Growth Plan closely follow the existing pattern of hamlet development and represent appropriate limits for sustaining short term growth. As future demand for growth may dictate, the development area boundaries should be expanded to correspond with the Vision Map.**

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- Draft a set of rural development guidelines that provide written standards and graphic examples to ensure that the vision for growth and development set forth in this document is achieved.
- During future reviews of the County’s Agricultural District, recommend to Genesee County that non-agricultural lands be removed from the district. This is primarily the case in Basom and South Alabama.
- Investigate residents’ requests/needs for public water due to public health and safety concerns.
- Relocate Town Hall, along with other Town facilities, to the Alabama hamlet.
- Work with Genesee County and the Town of Oakfield to investigate the feasibility and potential funding for a rails-to-trails project on the abandoned Penn Central rail corridor.

Town of Oakfield

- Revise the schedule of permitted uses for the Residential Agricultural zoning district (R&A) to build upon the intent that agricultural uses are primary uses in this district.
- **Work with Genesee County to expand the designated development areas in the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan in a manner that does not impact agriculture and fully utilizes the existing infrastructure in the Town. The Vision Map depicts a larger long-term planning area around the Village of Oakfield that represents the Town’s long term vision for growth. The designated development area boundary established by the Smart Growth Plan, as depicted on the map, represents the most appropriate limit for sustaining short term growth, as the future demand for growth may dictate, the development area boundary around the Village should be expanded.**
- Identify a new growth area in the East Oakfield crossroads area of Lockport Road and Fisher Road for both public water and as a residential development area.
- Expand water from the Village of Oakfield to the growth area surrounding the Village. Lateral restrictions should be implemented along Fisher Road north to East Oakfield.
- **Adopt regulations for the review and approval of the minor subdivision of land, separate from the Zoning Ordinance, as per Section 276 of the NYS Town Law.**
- Revise zoning to include provisions for cluster residential subdivisions as per Section 278 of the NYS Town Law, with proper reference made in the Town's Subdivisions regulations.
- Establish a zoning overlay district for East Oakfield hamlet (within long-term growth boundaries on the Vision Map).
- During future reviews of the County’s Agricultural District recommend to the Genesee County that non-agricultural lands be removed from the district.
- Investigate residents’ requests/needs for public water due to health and safety concerns.
- Adopt Site Plan Review regulations.

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Town Line Road, and Drake Street Road in the southeastern portion of the Town. The majority of denser residential and mixed-use development within the Town of Oakfield takes place in and around the Village. Industrial development can be seen along Judge Road, just west of the Village with the largest tracts of land belonging to the U.S. Gypsum Company. **Starting in the early 1900's, U.S. Gypsum conducted subsurface mining operations in the vicinity of their facility in Oakfield, with mines extending to the west, into Alabama, and further east (see Map 10).**

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The Oakfield – Alabama Central Schools are located in the Town, just northwest of the Village on Lewiston Road. The following table offers a breakdown of land uses by percentage of the total area for the Town of Oakfield.

Figure 1B Town of Oakfield Land Use Percentages

| Land Use | Percentage |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| Agriculture | 58.02 % |
| Commercial | 0.20 % |
| Government/Public | 0.62 % |
| Industrial | 1.47 % |
| Multi-Family Residential | 0.41 % |
| Multiple Residential | 0.11 % |
| Parks | 0.27 % |
| Single Family Residential | 8.23 % |
| Unknown | 7.77 % |
| Utilities/Infrastructure | 0.21 % |
| Vacant/Undeveloped/Open Space | 11.56 % |
| Wildlife Conservation Areas | 11.13 % |

Source: Map 3 Existing Land Use

Village of Oakfield

The Village of Oakfield is the central hub for the three-community study area. It is a destination for residents from the surrounding area. People come to shop, do business, go to school, and more. The Village is the most densely populated and developed area in the three municipalities. The Village is developed mostly with residential uses, along with a mix of other community-oriented uses. Commercial uses are located primarily along North Main Street and South Pearl Street, although other commercial properties and some industrial uses can be found in other areas in the Village. The following table provides a break down of land uses by percentage of the total area for the Village.

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The following table contains a list of the zoning classifications and general permitted uses. The table is just an overview and generalization of the zoning class, specific inquiries should refer to the Town of Oakfield Zoning Law.

Figure 2B: Town of Oakfield Zoning Districts and Permitted Uses

| <i>District</i> | <i>Permitted Uses</i> |
|--|--|
| <i>R & A: Residential Agricultural</i> | Single family dwellings, mobile homes, farms and related agricultural operations, churches, schools, and other public uses and buildings |
| R: General Residential | Single and double family dwellings, farms and related agricultural operations, churches, schools, and other public uses and buildings |
| C: Commercial | Motor vehicle sales and service, retail shops, offices and banks |
| I: Industrial | General industrial uses (i.e. manufacturing, warehousing, research and development facilities, distribution facilities, etc.) |
| LC: Land Conservation | Farms and related agricultural operations |

Source: Town of Oakfield Zoning Law August 11, 1981

The Town of Oakfield’s zoning law also lays out each zoning class and lists all actual uses permitted by right, as well as those uses that are allowed by Special Use Permit. Bulk regulations for each zoning class and certain specified uses within those zoning classes are outlined in the Town of Oakfield Zoning Law. **The Town of Oakfield adopted a Land Separation Local Law and Land Subdivision Regulations in June of 1992. Although the Land Separation Law, which regulation minor splits of four lots or less, was repealed in 1997, the major subdivision regulations remain in effect.** Subdivision of land is also addressed under Section 411.3 of the Zoning Ordinance.

Village of Oakfield

The Village of Oakfield has six separate zoning classifications. Similar to the Towns of Alabama and Oakfield, the zoning classifications outline actual uses permitted by right, as well as those permitted by special use. The following table provides a generic overview of the zoning classifications and the uses permitted therein. Please refer to the Village of Oakfield zoning law for specific regulations. Bulk regulations for zoning classifications within the Village can be found in Sections 301, 305, and 504 of the Zoning Law, Sections 306 through 311. Certain issues and uses that require a higher level of scrutiny have been individually addressed under Article V, Supplementary Regulations. Examples of these include adult uses, mobile home parks, light industrial uses and cellular communication towers. **Similar to the Town of Alabama, the Village does not have separate regulations for subdivision; it is regulated under Section 301 of the Zoning Ordinance.**

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4.5.3 Public Transportation Services

The Batavia Bus Service (B-Line, BBS) provides limited bus service in the study area. The Batavia Bus Service offers “curb to curb” service from Alabama and Oakfield to Batavia and back on Tuesdays. This service costs \$3.00 for adults and \$1.50 for senior citizens and persons with disabilities. To use this bus service, however, you must call 24 hours in advance.

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4.5.4 Pedestrian and Bicycle Routes

No formal multi-use trails for pedestrians, bicycles or horses were identified in the study area. Although conversations with various local agencies confirmed that the abandoned Penn-Central railroad corridor is used informally by walkers/hikers, bikers, snowmobiles and farmers, it has not been formally designated as such.

4.6 Utilities

4.6.1 Water Supply

Currently public water is available to the Village of Oakfield and an area immediately surrounding the Village within the Town of Oakfield. Water is provided to these areas through a line that extends from the City of Batavia **along Route 63, Galloway Road and South Pearl Road into the Village**. The Village water treatment plant is located in the Town of Batavia on Route 63, just south of the Village. In 1994, the entire water system in the Town of Oakfield, outside the Village, was replaced. The remaining portions of Oakfield and the Town of Alabama receives potable water from private wells.

Although large portions of the study area do not currently have access to public water, an informal plan is in place to provide service to some of the more densely developed areas, **particularly areas in Alabama that are experiencing well contamination problems**. These areas are identified in the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan and include the hamlets of South Alabama, Alabama, and Basom. Initial plans call for water to be routed along State Routes 77, 63 and 262 to serve these areas. The possibility of extending this water service is presently several years off, however. **According to the Genesee County Department of Health problems with private wells and on-site septic systems are due to soils that are not suitable for conventional sewage disposal systems, the age of the existing stormwater collections system that does not remove standing water fast enough, and the small size of the lots in the hamlet areas (R. Garney, GCHD, November 17, 2004).**

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Oakfield-Alabama Central school district. This district also serves four other municipalities, including the Towns of Pembroke, Batavia, Elba and Barre. The school district facilities are located just northwest of the Village on State Route 63.

4.7.3 Emergency Services

Police services are provided by the Genesee County Sheriff's Office. None of the three communities has an individual police department. The Village of Oakfield, in the past, had contracted out police services from other agencies, but the process was deemed too costly and ineffective. Fire services are provided volunteer fire departments. The Town of Alabama is served by the Alabama Volunteer Fire Department Inc., which is located on Judge Road, adjacent to the Town Hall. The Town and Village of Oakfield are served by the Oakfield Volunteer Fire Department, located on Church Street in the Village.

4.7.4 Government Facilities

Town of Alabama

The Town of Alabama local government offices are located on Judge Road, just east of Knowlesville Road, in South Alabama hamlet. The town hall building is home to the Town Clerk's office, Town Court, and services a variety of other municipal needs. The Town of Alabama also has a facility located on the corner of State Route 63 and Ham Road. This building houses the Town's Highway Department.

Town of Oakfield

The Town of Oakfield municipal offices are located just east of the Village of Oakfield on Drake Street (State Route 262). The building houses the municipal offices and the Highway Department. The Town also owns and maintains the Haxton Memorial Library, as well as the Park located on Drake Street, both of which are situated in the Village.

Village of Oakfield

The Village of Oakfield municipal offices are located in the heart of the Village on Main Street. The Village also owns and maintains a public works building on South Pearl Street, the sewage treatment plant on Irving Parkway, the park in the center of the Village, and a water treatment plant located in the Town of Batavia **(which is currently not in operation).**

SECTION 5.0 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This section provides the Findings and Recommendations for each community, as they relate to the major goals and objectives. Utilizing the information found in Section 4.0 (Existing Conditions of the Communities), issues identified through the public opinion survey and comments gathered at the public information meetings, opportunities and constraints for achieving each goal were determined. Based on these opportunities and constraints, general findings for each community were established. Recommendations for achieving the opportunities or addressing constraints were then devised for each community. These ideas and recommendations were refined and evaluated, with input from the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee, and finalized as outlined in Sub-sections 5.2 and 5.3 below.

5.2 Findings/Opportunities/Constraints

Following the format of the Existing Conditions section of this Plan, the generalized findings (observations, opportunities and constraints) for each community are outlined as follows.

5.2.1 Town of Alabama

Existing Land Use

- Agriculture is the most significant land use by area and is spread fairly uniformly throughout the Town.
- Three land use categories (agricultural, Indian reservation and wildlife conservation areas) account for 90 percent of total land area. Indian reservation and wildlife conservation areas represent lands that are either not readily available for development or whose use is outside the jurisdiction of the Town. Conceptually, some believe that agricultural lands are also not available for development.
- The Tonawanda Indian reservation dominates the western sector of Town. A small area of the Town is insulated from the remainder of the Town by the reservation.
- There are four hamlets in Town (Alabama, Wheatville, Basom and South Alabama) comprised of slightly higher density mixed-use development.
- Land use is regulated in the Town solely through the zoning ordinance.
- A small amount of commercial development exists in and around the hamlets.
- A rock quarry is located in the south-central portion of the Town.
- **The south-central portion of the Town is underlain by former gypsum mines (see Map 10).**

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Agriculture and Farmland

- Most of the agricultural land is included in Genesee County Agricultural District No. 2.
- Agriculture is the predominant active land use, accounting for 83 percent of the land area outside of the wildlife and conservation areas and Indian Reservation.
- A large portion of the Town contains soils classified as prime farmland soil.
- **The Genesee County Smart Growth Plan restricts the number of new water connections-ups to new, non-agricultural land uses in agricultural districts, unless they are located in a designated development area.**
- Agricultural preservation is viewed as important by approximately 80 percent of the Alabama residents that responded to the public opinion survey. Sentiment contends that farms should be protected as viable businesses and open space, and for continuing the rural character of the Town.

Natural Environment and Constraints

- The topography of the Town is generally flat, with the exception of the escarpment that extends through the southern portion of Town. Steep slopes do not present a development constraint.
- Hydric soils are limited to the northern portion of the Town within the wildlife and conservation areas and along stream corridors.
- Floodplains were identified along Oak Orchard Creek.
- Most mapped wetlands and floodplains are located within the wildlife and conservation areas.
- Agricultural lands and the open wetlands in the wildlife and conservation areas provide valuable scenic vistas, adding to the unique character of the area.
- Most of the Town of Alabama lies within the Oak Orchard watershed, with smaller areas situated within the Murder Creek and Mud Creek watersheds.
- Small creeks and streams generally flow northward combining with the major streams, which flow out of the study area.
- **The abandoned U.S. Gypsum mines noted on Map 10 could potentially cause ground subsidence, which could result in damage to aboveground structures or personal injury. The location of the former mines should be noted in future land use decisions in affected areas.**

Demographics and Social-Economic Characteristics

- The Town population has remained relatively stable for over 40 years with modest decreases in population shown over the last ten years.
 - Population projections indicate that the Town's population will likely decline over the next 25 years.
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- Residents indicate that shared services and inter-governmental cooperation should be expanded for highway, recreation, garbage/solid waste disposal, youth services and seniors services.

Zoning

- The R Residential zoning classification, in particular the dimensional standards, is very similar in nature to the A-R classification and does not promote or limit particular uses in the hamlets.

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- Numerous uses are allowed by Special Use Permit in the AR and R districts, which essentially allows a wide number of uses in the residential districts.
- Within Alabama there is not a lot of commercially zoned land, but commercial and industrial uses can be achieved throughout much of the Town with a Special Use Permit.
- There are no hamlet design standards or other mechanisms to help define the hamlets.

5.2.2 Town of Oakfield

Existing Land Use

- Agriculture is the predominant land use by area.
- Agricultural, vacant/undeveloped/open space, and wildlife conservation areas account for 80 percent of the total land area.
- Residential land use is low-density in nature.
- The Town of Oakfield's primary method for land use regulation is through zoning.
- The Village of Oakfield is located in the southern section of the Town and contains the densest pattern of development.
- The densest land use patterns in the Town are located just outside the Village.
- The U.S. Gypsum site is just west of the Village and is currently underutilized.
- **The south-central portion of the Town is underlain by former gypsum mines (see Map 10).**

Agriculture and Farmland

- Most of the agricultural land is included in Genesee County Agricultural District No. 2.
- A large portion of the Town contains soils classified as prime farmland soils.
- The Genesee County Smart Growth Plan calls for minimizing the number of new water connections within agricultural districts.

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- Floodplains were identified along Oak Orchard Creek, in the northern portion of Town.
- Most of wetlands and floodplains are located in the Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management Area.
- The wildlife conservation area provides important open space, wildlife habitat, and a location passive recreation.
- Agricultural lands and the open wetlands of the wildlife conservation area provide valuable scenic vistas and add to the unique character of the Town.
- Almost the entire Town of Oakfield lies within the Oak Orchard watershed.
- Small creeks and streams generally flow northward combining with the major streams, which flow out of the study area.
- **The abandoned U.S. Gypsum mines noted on Map 10 could potentially cause ground subsidence, which could result in damage to aboveground structures or personal injury. The location of the former mines should be noted in future land use decisions in affected areas.**

Demographics and Social-Economic Characteristics

- Long range trends show modest decreases in population over the last ten years.
- Projections indicate that the population will grow slightly by an estimated 6.0 percent over the next thirty years.
- Combined growth in the Village and Town is expected to remain modest and be easily absorbed within the community.
- The population (Town and Village combined) decreased by 112 persons (3.4%) between 1990 and 2000. While the size of households has also decreased to 2.77 persons per household, the number of households has remained relatively stable.
- Unemployment is higher in the study area (6.0 percent) than in the County as a whole (4.3 percent).
- A majority of residents believe that commercial and industrial growth is needed in the Town of Oakfield.

Transportation

- State Routes 63 and 262, along with Albion Road and Lockport Road, are the major transportation routes in the Town. The major highways in Town converge with the Village.
- No major capacity or operational deficiencies were identified on state or local highways in the Town.

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- The Village is essentially built-out, with future development coming in the form of redevelopment.
- **The southeastern portion of the Village is underlain by former gypsum mines (see Map 10).**

Agriculture and Farmland

- The Village is not included within the boundaries of the County Agricultural District.
- The agricultural nature of the surrounding Towns plays a significant role in shaping the Village's commercial land use mix and character in general.

Natural Environment and Constraints

- Topography in the Village is generally flat; steep slopes are not an issue.
- Regulatory floodway and 100-year flood areas are limited to the relatively narrow creek corridors in the central and southeast sectors of the Village.
- **The abandoned U.S. Gypsum mines noted on Map 10 could potentially cause ground subsidence, which could result in damage to aboveground structures or personal injury. The location of the former mines should be noted in future land use decisions in affected areas.**

Demographics and Social-Economic Characteristics

- Modest decreases in population have been shown over the last ten years.
- Projections indicate that the Village is expected to lose approximately 3.0 percent of its population over the next thirty years (a typical trend in most built-out villages).
- Combined growth in the Village and Town is estimated to remain modest and be easily absorbed within the community.
- While the population has decreased, so has the size of households and, therefore, the net number of residential units has remained relatively unchanged.
- There are more rental units in the Village (30.6%) as compared to the two Towns (19.5 in Alabama and 12.0% in Oakfield).
- Unemployment is higher in the study area (6.0 percent) than in the County as a whole (4.3 percent).
- A majority of residents believe that commercial and industrial growth is needed in the Village of Oakfield.

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- The Village contains the greatest amount of commercially zoned property (in two distinct districts). There are no building form standards (architectural and historic) to control the character of new and redevelopment structures.
- The Planned Unit Development regulations do not provide for clustering.
- The Village allows a diverse range of housing to meet residents' preferences.
- Multi-family housing is not allowed in the commercial districts or as a permitted use in any of the other zoning district (requires a special use permit).
- Currently the zoning defines tourist homes (which includes bed and breakfast establishments) but neither are listed as allowed uses in any zoning districts.

5.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations are patterned after the goals that were established for each community. They are designed to address the opportunities and constraints identified for each area.

5.3.1 Town of Alabama

Goal: Protect, promote and preserve agriculture

The Town of Alabama is characterized by rural open space, wildlife conservation and wetland areas, open farmlands, and older residential structures mixed with some newer homes. Residential development is denser in the vicinity of the hamlets, but is very low density throughout the remainder of the Town. There has been little to no major subdivision activity in Alabama. There are a large number of active farms in the Town and a great amount of open land, which is situated within the wildlife and conservation areas. There is strong public sentiment in Alabama to protect farmland and preserve open space.

Devising and implementing measures for preserving farmland and prime farm soils is the most effective way to acknowledge the public's concern for protecting agricultural resources in the Town. Residential lot sizes should be reassessed in certain areas to better manage future growth and non-traditional development techniques implemented to preserve open space. Rural development guidelines should be instituted to avoid sprawl (e.g., better guidelines or standards for road frontage development and encouraging more creative development techniques). In formulating these recommendations, it must be understood that the extent of, and limited pressure for, growth is presently not impacting agriculture and agricultural operations in the community.

In addition, guidelines should be established to manage the development of wind turbines in the Town. The use of wind power can reduce energy costs for individual farmers. The decision to build individual wind turbines and, more importantly, larger wind farms requires a comprehensive study to identify wind speed and consistency, costs and benefits and impacts to local ecology.

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Develop hamlet overlay zoning, that incorporates traditional neighborhood design standards and allows for denser development in and around the hamlets, which is consistent with the policies of the County's Smart Growth Plan.

- Consider the adoption of a right to farm law that would be complementary to the State and County programs, and would offer additional protection against unwarranted complaints aimed at farming operations, such as noise, odor, etc.
- Special use permits could be written to support home occupations and secondary businesses that help residents and farmers generate additional sources of income, such as tourism activities or day camps for children.
- Limit water extensions in the Town to eliminate the potential for extensive growth **and to protect agricultural uses. The County's Smart Growth Plan should be considered when planning water extensions. Emphasis should be placed on addressing locations with potential public health and safety concerns, and on controlling development on individual parcels outside the hamlets by utilizing lateral (water line) restrictions.** Such restrictions may be necessary to minimize development pressure on farmlands and discourage non-agricultural uses in those areas.
- Long-term potential for sewer service or on-site (package) wastewater treatment systems should continue to be investigated as an option for the hamlet areas.
- Consider the establishment of an agricultural advisory committee to assist in clarifying and mediating, and alleviating, conflicts that may arise, and to promote the concerns and desires of farmers. This committee could be utilized to provide a better understanding of the needs of farmers and farming operations in the local community. Through this committee, this information could be for easily transferred to County and State governments to help keep farming viable in the region.
- **Adopt and enforce guidelines for siting, construction, site restoration and monitoring of individual wind turbines and wind farms.**

Goal: Maintain and enhance community character

The Town of Alabama is a rural farming community, with vast tracts of open space and farmland. Over 25 percent of the community encompasses wildlife and conservation areas. The Town has experienced no significant subdivision activity and the densest residential development exists in and around the four hamlets of Basom, Alabama, Wheatville and South Alabama. Every planning effort undertaken in the Town should take the preservation of rural character into consideration.

Recommendations:

Necessary road improvements to address drainage or safety concerns, which are undertaken outside the hamlets, should limit the installation of sidewalks, curbing, street lighting or other suburban features.

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- Focus attention on addressing traffic problems along State Route 77 at Ledge and Bloomingdale Roads, which are impacting the character of the community.
- Adopt and enforce rural development guidelines.
- Adopt and enforce hamlet development guidelines in the hamlets, and assess the zoning in these areas to support increased development densities in these areas ($\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ -acre lots are the smallest that can be approved in non-sewered areas).

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- Consider zoning overlay districts for the hamlets, with architectural and historic preservation standards, to protect and enhance the character of development in these areas.
- Zoning overlays could also be used to control develop along the two major road corridors, limiting commercial development to the hamlets (particularly Basom), and preventing commercial strip development. This is especially important in those areas that receive public water.
- Adopt zoning classifications, or strengthen existing zoning, to protect existing agricultural uses and prevent residential sprawl.
- Review and update permitted uses, and uses allowed by Special Use Permit in the AR Zone. Any revisions to the schedule of land uses should specify those existing land uses conforming to today's zoning would be able to continue as pre-existing uses.
- Identify and protect important scenic vistas that add to the character of the Town and include their consideration in the Town's adopted Subdivision regulations.

Goal: Provide public water to appropriate areas of the Town

Potable water in the Town of Alabama is procured from private wells. The Genesee County Smart Growth Plan outlines policies for extending water primarily to developed hamlets to prevent urban sprawl. The provision of water services is essential to address certain health and safety factors associated with contaminated wells and failing septic systems, **as acknowledged by the Genesee County Department of Health.**

Recommendations:

- Support and encourage the extension of public water along the major state highways, thus connecting the hamlet areas through a looped system of water line extensions along State Route 77, north to Alabama hamlet; east along Ham Road, with a northerly extension along Knowleville Road to Wheatville hamlet; south along Knowlesville Road to South Alabama; and west along State Route 63, back to State Route 77 (hydraulically efficient, servicing the most densely populated areas).

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expected to increase. Other controls such as the overlays can help control development in areas where water is primarily run to loop the water system

- Focus the provision of public water to hamlet locations that have urgent need due to health and safety issues.
- Ensure the extension of public water for targeted commercial and industrial growth.
- Protect groundwater resources from contamination. Sponsor educational opportunities in groundwater protection for households and farms.
- The looped water system will provide a backbone for the potential development of future water extensions (a very long-term consideration).

Goal: Protect the environmental features and resources of the Town

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The wildlife and conservation areas comprise approximately 26 percent of the land area in the Town of Alabama. The Town contains a variety of other important environmental features including wetlands, large expanses of mature woodlands, tributary stream corridors and floodplains. Groundwater is also an important environmental resource since the population of the Town relies on this resource for potable water. **The former U.S. Gypsum mines shafts extend through the southeastern and south central portions of Alabama (Map 10). Any proposals for future residential use in this area of the Town must take this into consideration, as these areas may not be suitable for such development.**

Recommendations:

- Groundwater quality must be protected. Efforts should be undertaken to ensure that on-site sanitary waste disposal systems are properly maintained, and that failing systems are detected and properly mitigated. The communities should work with the appropriate County and State agencies to address this problem through public education programs and the provision of technical assistance to help residents understand and address this important issue. Monies may be made available through Rural Development programs supported by the federal government.
- In **identified** groundwater problem areas, the Town should require larger lot sizes.
- In order to mitigate the impacts from aging and deteriorating on-site septic systems, communal septic systems or "package" wastewater treatment systems should be investigated for the hamlet areas.
- In those areas not receiving public water, consideration should be given to subdivision regulations that require soil testing as part of the application procedure. If poor or problematic soils are identified, stricter standards could be imposed, such as larger minimum lot size requirements, or limitations on the number of subdivisions.

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- To protect important environmental features, proposed development actions should avoid identified wetlands, floodplains and prime farm soils. (Depending upon the structure of the wetland, avoiding wetlands has the additional benefit of protecting the groundwater resource.) Mandate usage of cluster development or open development areas to help avoid these environmentally sensitive features.
- Wetlands protection should include both State and Federal wetland areas including the required 100-foot setback areas required by the State. A local law could be utilized to help protect these important areas.
- Support farming practices that recognize environmental resources and the importance of avoiding or minimizing point and non-point source contaminant threats to groundwater, surface water and the environment as a whole. This can be accomplished by working with organizations such as Cooperative Extension and County Soil and Water District.
- Assess the zoning in the vicinity of the wildlife and conservation areas to reduce potential impacts from development.
- Develop a more formalized trail system along the abandoned railroad corridor and encourage the State to establish official bike routes along State Routes 63 and 77.
- **With respect to the former underground gypsum mines, the Town should investigate the need to institute zoning revisions or additional regulations to address the risk to future property owners in underground mining areas. Assistance from the State should be sought for this effort. In addition, consideration should be given to adopting minor subdivision regulations to allow the Town to further evaluate the risks of subdividing and developing properties in these areas.**

Goal: Provide for economic development in the Town

The expansion of commercial and industrial growth, and other economic development activities, helps provide jobs and a build a stronger tax base for the community. Farming will continue to dominate as the primary industry in the Town of Alabama. An economically sound town helps support the school district and Village.

Recommendations:

New commercial uses should be limited to the hamlets, in particular, Basom and Alabama and to a lesser extent South Alabama. Focus should be placed on how State Route 77 should be developed, particularly in the vicinity of the Basom hamlet. Avoid zoning or zoning changes that would allow areas of commercial strip development to build up in the Town (outside the hamlet long-term growth areas

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the community. Presently, the Town's zoning regulations allow for diversity in the housing stock. However, single-family detached homes are the primary form of residential development in Alabama. The lack of sewers severely limits the types of construction that can take place in the Town. Higher density housing types should be expected in the Village of Oakfield, where sewer is available.

Recommendations:

- Denser development should occur in and around the hamlets in the Town. The zoning of these areas should be assessed to ensure that a variety of housing types are permitted.
- Promote alternative housing types to satisfy the needs of single individuals, seniors and other non-traditional households that are affordable in nature, such as in-law (accessory) apartments, and attached single-family dwellings.

Town of Oakfield

Goal: Promote the expansion of public water to appropriate areas in the Town

Potable water in the Town of Oakfield is primarily obtained from private wells. Some public water is provided to areas of the Town situated immediately outside the Village of Oakfield. The Genesee County Smart Growth Plan outlines policies for extending water primarily to developed hamlets to prevent urban sprawl.

Recommendations:

- The Town currently has public water in the areas adjoining the Village. **A primary opportunity for additional public water in the Town of Oakfield is to selectively extend water along certain main roads directly outside of the Village to enable a limited amount of new develop over the long term.** This plan is also being coordinated to help in providing water to the Town of Alabama.
- **Support and encourage the extension of public water along State Route 63 to connect the Five Corners area with the Village. Consider future long-term extensions to the East Oakfield hamlet, as warranted.**
- Consider providing public water to the Birdseye property and other suitable locations for commercial and industrial development.

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- Support farming as the primary industry in the Town and consider a separate zoning classification, or strengthening existing zoning, to protect and enhance this industry. Non-agricultural uses should be highly restricted on prime farm soils.
- Recreation-oriented economic activity should be supported, such as campgrounds, riding stables, etc. Support services for the recreational sector should also be encouraged.
- Work with the village in targeting areas for sewer extensions.

Goal: Protect and preserve agricultural land uses

Similar to Alabama, the Town of Oakfield is characterized by rural open space and large tracts of farmland. The Town has also has a large wildlife and conservation area, that characterizes the landscape. The large extent of farmland and undeveloped open space contributes to the rural character of the Town. There is also strong public sentiment in Oakfield to preserve and protect farmland and the overall rural nature of the Town.

Preserving farmland and good farm soils would address public concerns for protecting agricultural resources in the community. To better manage future growth, non-traditional development techniques should be implemented. Rural development guidelines should also be considered to avoid sprawl and the inefficient development of agricultural lands. **In addition, guidelines should be established to manage the development of wind turbines in the Town. The use of wind power can reduce energy costs for individual farmers. The decision to build individual wind turbines and, more importantly, larger wind farms requires a comprehensive study to identify wind speed and consistency, costs and benefits and impacts to local ecology.**

Recommendations:

- Consider the adoption of an agricultural zoning classification that would limit non-agricultural development. This district would incorporate large farms and areas of good farm soils and focus on development density as a means of protecting agricultural uses. This zoning category could be used in combination with conservation easements or a purchase of agricultural conservation easement (PACE) program to ensure that potential rezoning actions would not result in the development of prime farmland.
- Review and expand the Town zoning to include innovative non-traditional development standards, such as open development areas, overlay districts and rural cluster development regulations.

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as required. The Town should also evaluate the economic impacts of a purchase of agricultural conservation easement (PACE) program. It is suggested that this type of planning be done in conjunction with the Town of Alabama (a joint agricultural protection plan). Because of the low level of development pressure, programs such as PACE or PDR are considered long-term actions and should be considered as feasible actions when the time is right.

- Keep denser development activity centered in the areas around the village and in one hamlet area, consistent with the policies of the County's Smart Growth Plan, to prevent sprawl and protect agricultural land.
- Consider the adoption of a right to farm law that would be complementary to the State and County programs, and would offer additional protection against unwarranted complaints aimed at farming operations, such as noise, odor, etc.
- Special use permits should be written to support home occupations and secondary businesses to help residents and farm operations establish additional sources of income. The Zoning Code should be revised to more specifically address agriculturally related home occupations and secondary uses in the R-A zone.
- Limit water extensions in the Town to eliminate the potential for extensive growth **and to protect agricultural uses. The County's Smart Growth Plan should be considered when planning water extensions. Emphasis should be placed on providing water to areas that have potential public health and safety concerns, and on controlling development on individual parcels outside the Village by utilizing lateral (water line) restrictions.** Such restrictions may be necessary to minimize development pressure on farmlands and discourage non-agricultural uses in those areas.
- Any extension of the Village of Oakfield sanitary sewer system into the Town of Oakfield should be carefully scrutinized to ensure that such action does not place development pressures in areas of important agricultural use (west and south of the Village are high priority areas for protection).
- Consider the establishment of an agricultural advisory committee to assist in clarifying and mediating, and alleviating, conflicts that may arise, and to promote the concerns and desires of farmers. This committee could be utilized to provide a better understanding of the needs of farmers and farming operations in the local community. Through this committee, this information could be for easily transferred to County and State governments to help keep farming viable in the region.

Goal: Maintain and enhance community character

The Town of Oakfield is a rural farming community, with vast tracts of farmland, open space and wildlife and conservation area. Residential development in Oakfield is very low density, with denser

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- **Adopt and enforce guidelines for siting, construction, site restoration and monitoring of individual wind turbines and wind farms.**

Goal: Maintain and enhance community character

The Town of Oakfield is a rural farming community, with vast tracts of farmland, open space and wildlife and conservation area. Residential development in Oakfield is very low density, with denser development in the vicinity of the Village of Oakfield. Residential use outside the Village is typically frontage development, particularly in the Five Corners and East Oakfield hamlets and along Pearl Street, south of the Village. Major residential subdivisions do not occur in the Town. Every planning effort undertaken in the Town should take the preservation of rural character into consideration.

Recommendations:

- Necessary road improvements to address drainage or safety concerns, which are undertaken outside the hamlets, should not include sidewalks, curbing or street lighting (no suburban atmosphere).
- Require the use of non-traditional development techniques, such as open development area, cluster development and planned unit development to control future growth, manage sprawl and preserve farmland.
- Adopt and enforce rural development guidelines.
- Encourage and support residential development in and around the hamlets.
- Adopt and enforce hamlet development guidelines in the hamlets, and assess the zoning in these areas to support increased development densities in these areas.
- Consider zoning overlay districts for the hamlets, with architectural and historic preservation standards, to accomplish a protect and enhance the character of develop these areas.
- Zoning overlays could also be used to control develop along the two major road corridors, limiting commercial development to the hamlets and area adjacent to the Village and preventing commercial strip development.
- Adopt zoning classifications, or strengthen existing zoning, to protect existing agricultural uses and prevent residential sprawl.
- Identify and protect important scenic vistas that add to the character of the Town.
- Adopt minor subdivision regulations that better manage the division of properties into four or less lots.

Goal: Protect the environmental features and resources of the community

The study area contains numerous environmental features and is home to large wildlife conservation areas. **The former U.S. Gypsum mines shafts extend through the southern portion of Oakfield (Map 10). Any proposals for future development activity in this area of the Town must take this into consideration.**

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Recommendations:

- Groundwater quality must be protected. Efforts should be undertaken to ensure that on-site sanitary waste disposal systems are properly maintained, and that failing systems are detected and properly mitigated. The communities should work with the appropriate County and State agencies to address this problem through public education programs and the provision of technical assistance to help residents understand and address this important issue.
- In those areas not receiving public water, consideration should be given to subdivision regulations that require soil testing as part of the application procedure. If poor or problematic soils are identified, stricter standards could be imposed, such as larger minimum lot size requirements.
- To protect important environmental features, proposed development actions should avoid identified wetlands, floodplains and prime farm soils.
- Support farming practices that recognize environmental resources and the importance of avoiding or minimizing point and non-point source contaminant threats to groundwater, surface water and the environment as a whole.
- Assess the zoning in the vicinity of the wildlife and conservation areas to reduce potential impacts from development.
- Promote public education programs for the maintenance of septic systems to protect groundwater quality.
- Protect the Old Indian Woods area as a cultural and historic resource of local significance. This area is part of the Iroquois Nation and includes woodlands and a stream corridor that warrants protection.
- **With respect to the former underground gypsum mines, the Town should investigate the need to institute zoning revisions or additional regulations to address the risk to future property owners in underground mining areas. Assistance from the State should be sought for this effort. In addition, consideration should be given to adopting minor subdivision regulations to allow the Town to further evaluate the risks of subdividing and developing properties in these areas.**

Goal: Encourage a diversity of housing types in the Town

As the population of the Town changes over time, and the economic conditions vary, options for housing should be available to accommodate changing the lifestyles, incomes and needs of the community. Presently the Town's zoning regulations allows for diversity in housing stock. However, single-family detached homes are the primary form of residential development in the Town.

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5.4.2 Overall Regional Perspective

The remoteness of the study area helps to create the setting for the vision. Being located approximately 30 miles from both the City of Buffalo and Rochester, and approximately 10 miles from the population center of the City of Batavia, makes this region quite remote. The Indian reservation and the wildlife refuge and management areas also provide isolation from the surrounding communities.

These factors have led to very little development pressure and have allowed agriculture to remain as a viable land use. The Village of Oakfield has, therefore, thrived as the communities' center, with other community hamlets serving other needs.

Due to the strength of the Village core, the Town of Oakfield's development pattern has focused around the Village. Only one small rural hamlet area exists outside of the direct influence of the Village (just north of the Village at the intersection of Albion and Lockport Roads).

The Town of Alabama, on the other hand, has four hamlet areas. South Alabama acts as the community center with the Town Hall and Fire Department located in its boundaries. The other hamlets serve different purposes within the community and are discussed under the Town of Alabama's vision map.

The closing of the U.S. Gypsum Plant, the potential for waterline expansions, and other needs of the communities have forced these municipalities to look differently at their future. The success of implementing each individual community's vision is highly dependent and linked with development and planning actions in the other communities.

5.4.3 Town of Alabama Vision Map

In the Town of Alabama, the key issue for the Town is controlled growth, primarily in the areas surrounding the hamlets of Alabama, Basom, South Alabama and Wheatville. As shown on the Vision Map, the majority of the Town outside these hamlet areas is devoted to agricultural and conservation uses. **The Town would like to see future commercial and residential development located in and around the hamlet areas rather than having such uses sprawl throughout the Town in the form of residential frontage lots or commercial development that requires a special use permit. The hamlets are the areas where the Town would like to provide public water and this is where future, long-term growth should occur, particularly in Basom, Alabama and South Alabama.**

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The major transportation corridors in the Town of Alabama are State Route 77 and State Route 63, which bisect the Town. Three of the hamlets lie along these corridors, each serving a different purpose. The hamlet of Basom is located on State Route 77 as you enter the Town from points south, including the NYS Thruway. It is located near the major entry points to the reservation (Bloomingdale and Ledge Roads). The area presently has a few small businesses and a limited amount of residential development. The plan supports that the area encompassing the lands along State Route 77 between Bloomingdale and **Marble** Roads be considered as the area where **growth could occur over the long term**. Automobile-**related** uses, agrarian support businesses and limited residential development should be the focus of long-term growth in this area. This would allow the Town to take advantage of the traffic coming from the thruway and the traffic heading towards the reservation. Due to the existing pattern of vehicles moving in and out of the reservation, and problems associated with this traffic, the intersections of State Route 77 with Bloomingdale and Ledge Roads should be considered for future traffic mitigation to address these concerns.

The hamlet of Alabama, located at the intersection of Lewiston/Lockport Roads (State Route 77 to the west) and State Route 63, also carries traffic coming from the NYS Thruway heading to the north. It presently includes some auto-**related** businesses and a grocery store. The area includes the Town's highway garage, a fire hall, an American Legion Post and a cemetery. The long-term growth **envisioned for** this hamlet could include recreational and tourism-support businesses and residential development. **As a long-term planning area**, the hamlet could extend south to Ham Road to pick up town lands and west on State Route 77 pick up existing development patterns.

The Hamlet of South Alabama is located along State Route 63, towards the Village of Oakfield, and acts as the Town center. This area includes the Town Hall/historical building, a church and fire hall. There is little commercial development, but it has the largest concentration of residential development in the Town. A small growth area is included around this hamlet that would accommodate some additional **long-term** residential growth. This hamlet is the closest dense residential hamlet area to the Village of Oakfield.

The final hamlet in the Town is Wheatville, which is located north of South Alabama. This is a small residential hamlet with a church **that could experience a small amount of residential growth well into the future. Hence, this area is not considered an area that will see substantial long-term growth. The planning issue for this area is the provision of public water.**

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Throughout the Goals and Recommendations, the plan calls for increased development controls in the agricultural areas outside the hamlet areas. With the exception of the hamlet of Wheatville, the **long-term planning** areas identified on the Vision Map are **generally** in keeping with the proposed "development areas" as mapped in the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan. The major difference between the Town's plan and the County's is that this plan calls for larger long-term planning areas, while providing controls to **manage future growth**.

Expanding the **boundaries of the** hamlet areas will enable the Town **to better focus growth in these**

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areas and eases the expansion of water to these areas. It will also **help to achieve** the goal of preserving the surrounding agricultural land by concentrating **long-term** development in the hamlets.

To accommodate the **long-term** growth pattern of the Town of Alabama, it is proposed to expand a water system along State Route 63 and State Route 77. A loop would be added northward to Wheatville and along Ham Road to complete a loop of the water system. In areas that have waterlines proposed that are not in **long-term planning** areas, a strong lateral restriction policy should be put in place (restricting new residential **frontage lot** development from tying into the system).

The abandoned railroad line running east/west through the Town would provide an excellent connection feature from Basom to South Alabama to the Village of Oakfield. This feature could be utilized for biking, walking and other non-automotive forms of transportation. On-road bicycle lanes should be considered for State Route 77 from Pembroke into Niagara County. It also would run northward on State Route 63 into the wildlife areas and into Orleans County. It should also run east on State Route 63 to the Village of Oakfield. This would provide ties to three of the hamlets, the wildlife areas, and surrounding communities including the Village.

A quarry area in the south-central part of the town should be protected from non-compatible development (restrict residential in this area). **Furthermore, former underground mine locations must be considered when proposals for residential development are received. These areas are not considered suitable for future residential use.**

The areas along State Routes 77 and 63, not within hamlet areas should have rural development overlay in place that would protect rural-agrarian enhancement of these areas, and protect this important travel way in Alabama from poor development patterns (hurting the town image).

The remainder of the town (in white) should remain rural/agrarian and allow small development within rural development guidelines (suggest rural development guidelines law).

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5.4.4 Town of Oakfield Vision Map

The major features in the Town of Oakfield include the Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management area, the Village of Oakfield and the U.S. Gypsum facility. The Village by far is the most important feature and provides the focal point of the community. In support of the Village, the Town's **long-term planning** area surrounds the Village.

This area is **considered suitable for future, long-term residential and industrial development. It includes the U.S. Gypsum area and the area abutting Birdseye and is non-competitive with the Village. The reuse/redevelopment of the U.S. Gypsum site will not only benefit the Town, it could provide much-needed jobs for residents in the Village and in the region. Long-term residential growth should occur around the Village, where services are available, rather than sprawling throughout the Town in the form of frontage lot development (which is already occurring along Drake, Fisher, Albion, Lewiston and Maltby Roads.**

The "Five Corners" area of the Town (the intersection of Lewiston/State Route 63, Albion Road and Maltby Road) is included in this **long-term planning** area. This area includes the school, some **commercial and industrial** businesses and limited residential development. This area is an important focal point of the Town and Village, and should include **the development of regulations to foster** aesthetic improvements and gateway features.

The only other hamlet type area is north of the Five Corners area on Albion Road at its intersection with Lockport Road. This area could support a small residential growth pattern. In concert with the Town of Alabama, these growth areas would be supported by the planned expansion of the County water system on State Route 262, Pearl Street and State Route 63 from the Village through the Town of Oakfield to Alabama. This water system should also be looped down State Route 62 and up Fisher Road to State Route 262. It should also be looped up North Pearl to Maltby and west to the Four Corners area. Long-term, the Town should also look at extending the waterline up to the residential hamlet north of the Village. In waterline areas not within growth areas, the Town should place lateral restrictions.

The area included within the long-term planning area boundary encompassed by the Fisher Road waterline extension would be a long-term growth area and not intended for "change" in the near future. **Furthermore, planning efforts in this area are oriented toward securing providing water service and not dense residential development or the loss of viable farmland.**

Also in concert with the Town of Alabama, the abandoned railroad right-of-way should be utilized for a multi-use railway connecting two of Alabama's hamlets and part of the Town of Oakfield to the

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6.3 Town of Alabama

Priority 1 Action Items – Years 1 and 2:

General

1. Adopt the Comprehensive Plan and establish an Implementation Advisory Committee to oversee the implementation, review and updating of the Plan. The committee should be appointed by the Town Board and have representatives from the Town Board, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and key town officials. If desired, this duty could be assigned to the Planning Board.
2. Establish an annual budget for the implementation of the Oakfield - Alabama Comprehensive Plan.
3. The Implementation Advisory Committee should convene annually with the Implementation Advisory Committees from the Village and Town of Oakfield in order to map the progress of each municipality's implementation plan, initiate their annual review, discuss common implementation issues, and identify other inter-municipal planning opportunities.

Agriculture

1. Revise the Agricultural-Residential (A-R) zoning district in order to build upon the intent that agricultural uses are primary uses in this district, and residential uses are secondary. The A-R district should limit non-residential and non-agricultural uses by not allowing them as "permitted uses". Existing uses, including home occupations would remain as pre-existing uses. Under this new scenario, the A-R district would be reduced in geographic area to only those areas that would likely remain in farming, areas with prime farmland soils, areas outside the hamlets or other areas identified as development areas. Corresponding increases in the size of the Residential District (R) or other multi-use districts (around the hamlets) should be adopted in order to provide appropriate planning areas for potential long term residential growth (See Vision Map).
2. Incorporate prime farmland soils as into review criteria for non-agricultural development.
3. Consider adoption of a local Right to Farm Law.
4. Refer to the County Agricultural Protection Plan to identify properties for a Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement (PACE) program.

Water/Smart Growth Plan

1. Work with Genesee County to expand the designated development areas in the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan **in a manner that does not impact agriculture and fully utilizes the existing infrastructure in the Town.** The Vision Map depicts these areas **as larger, long-term planning areas. The development areas delineated in the**

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- existing Smart Growth Plan closely follow the existing pattern of hamlet development and represent appropriate limits for sustaining short-term growth. As future demand for growth may dictate, the development area boundaries should be expanded to correspond with the Vision Map.**
2. **Commence preliminary plan development for bringing public water service to Basom, Alabama and South Alabama.**

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3. Support the extension of water service from the Town of Newstead into the southwest corner of Alabama.
4. When water is provided, institute protective **lateral restriction** regulations to control residential building outside the **long-term planning areas** along Route 63 and Route 77. Restrictions on lateral water services **should also be established** on Knowsville Road and Ham Road. Water service hook-ups **along these roadways** should only be provided where water quality **problems have been identified**.
5. **Investigate appropriate remediation for failing septic systems in the Alabama and Basom hamlets to address water quality problems.**

Zoning and other Land Use Regulations

1. Outside of the identified **long-term planning areas**, review and update the list of non-agricultural land uses allowed by Special Use Permit.
2. To offset the more stringent use regulations proposed for the A-R district, expand the residential districts **within the boundaries of the long-term planning areas** surrounding the hamlet areas.
3. Establish Overlay Districts for hamlet areas (within long-term planning area boundaries on Vision Map).
4. Adopt regulations, **separate from the Zoning Ordinance**, for the minor and major subdivision of land in accordance with Section 276 of the NYS Town Law.
5. Revise the Town's cluster development regulations to incorporate rural development design guidelines.
6. **Permit the establishment of** bed and breakfast establishments in the A-R and R zoning districts

Other Implementation Actions

1. **Develop regulations to govern the construction of wind energy turbines and telecommunication towers.**
2. Establish a plan for creating attractive and informative gateway features at:
 - south end of Basom along Route 77 to guide travelers coming into Alabama from the south.

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Priority 3 Action Items - Long Term and Optional:

1. Relocate Town Hall, along with other Town Facilities, into the Alabama hamlet as it continues to grow as a Town Center.
2. Work with Genesee County and the Town of Oakfield to investigate the feasibility and potential funds for a rails-to-trails project on the abandoned Penn Central rail corridor.
3. Establish a mechanism to ensure that reclamation and reuse plans are in place for the quarry areas on Ledge Road.
4. Institute non-traditional rural development tools to control potential long term growth and preserve farmland, while at the same time not eliminate the landowners right to sell property.
Adopt provisions, including minimum lot size, for "open development areas" along

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Route 63 and Route 77 to allow minor subdivisions having more creative lot configurations – shared driveways, minimal frontage for access only.

5. Work with Genesee County and State agencies on ground water protection education programs.
6. Establish an inter-municipal shared services community with Oakfield, Village of Oakfield and the school district to investigate opportunities to continue to work together on shared services (water, sewer) or facilities.

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6.4 Town of Oakfield

Priority 1 Action Items – Years 1 and 2:

General

1. Adopt the Comprehensive Plan and establish an Implementation Advisory Committee to oversee the implementation, review and updating of the Plan. The committee should be appointed by the Town Board and have representatives from the Town Board, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and key town officials. If desired, this duty could be assigned to the Planning Board.
2. Establish an annual budget for the implementation of the Oakfield - Alabama Comprehensive Plan.
3. The Implementation Advisory Committee should convene annually with the Implementation Advisory Committees from the Village of Oakfield and Town of Alabama in order to map the progress of each municipality's implementation plan, initiate their annual review, discuss common implementation issues and identify other inter-municipal planning opportunities.

Agriculture

1. Revise the schedule of allowed uses for the Residential Agricultural District (R&A) in order to build upon the intent that agricultural uses are primary uses in this district, and residential uses are secondary. The R&A district should limit non-agricultural uses by not allowing them in as permitted uses. Under this new scenario, the R&A district would be reduced in geographic area to those areas most likely to remain in active farming, areas of prime farmland, areas outside the hamlets, and areas otherwise identified as agricultural development areas. Corresponding expansion of the General Residential Districts (R) should be adopted in order to provide appropriate areas for future residential growth **within the boundaries of the long-term planning areas** (See Vision Map).
2. Consider adoption of a local Right to Farm law.

Water/Smart Growth Plan

1. Work with Genesee County to expand the designated development areas in the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan **in a manner that does not impact agriculture and fully utilizes the existing infrastructure in the Town**. The Vision Map depicts a larger **long-term planning** area around the Village of Oakfield up through **that represents the Town's long-term vision for growth**. **The designated development area boundary established by the Smart Growth**

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Plan, as depicted on the map, represents the most appropriate limit for sustaining short-term growth, as the future demand for growth may dictate, the development area boundaries around the Village should be expanded.

Zoning and Other Land Use Regulations

1. Prepare an intent or introductory section for each zoning district in order to give the reader, Enforcement Officer, applicant or land owner an understanding of how the Town wants to see that particular district be utilized.
2. Adopt regulations, **separate from the Zoning Ordinance**, for the minor and major subdivision of land in accordance with Section 276 of the NYS Town Law.
3. Revise zoning to include provisions for cluster residential subdivisions as per Section 278 of the NYS Town Law.
4. Establish Overlay Districts for hamlet areas (within long-term **planning area** boundaries on Vision Map).
5. Incorporate rural development guidelines into subdivision regulations.

Other Implementation Actions

1. Draft a set of rural development guidelines to provide written standards and graphic examples to facilitate guiding potential long term growth to meet the vision.
2. Establish a plan for creating attractive informative features at:
 - Route 63 Lewiston Road near Fisher Road
 - Route 262 Drake Road between Fisher Road and the Town line
 - Route 63 Judge Road at Macomber Road - A site should be located that may be coordinated, visually, with a similar gateway feature for Alabama.
3. **Develop regulations to govern the construction of wind energy turbines and telecommunication towers.**

Priority 2 Action Items – Years 3–5:

General

1. The Implementation Advisory Committee should provide its annual report to the Oakfield Town Board.
2. The Oakfield Town Board should reappoint Implementation Advisory Committee members and appoint subcommittees, as necessary, to address the coming year's action items.

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- 1. Evaluate the feasibility of expanding public water service to the East Oakfield crossroads area of Lockport Road and Fisher Road.**
2. Work with Genesee County and the Town of Alabama to investigate the feasibility and potential funds for a rails-to-trails project on the abandoned Penn Central rail corridor.
3. Work with Genesee County and State agencies on ground water protection education programs.
4. Establish an inter-municipal shared services community with Alabama, Village of Oakfield and the school district to investigate opportunities to continue to work together on shared services (water, sewer) or facilities.

6.5 Village of Oakfield

Priority 1 Action Items – Years 1 and 2:

General

1. Adopt the Comprehensive Plan and establish an Implementation Advisory Committee to oversee the implementation, review and updating of the Plan. The committee should be appointed by the Village Board of Trustees and have representatives from the Village Board of Trustees, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and key village officials. If desired, this duty could be assigned to the Planning Board.
2. Establish an annual budget for the implementation of the Oakfield - Alabama Comprehensive Plan.
3. The Implementation Advisory Committee should convene annually with the Implementation Advisory Committees from the Town of Oakfield and Town of Alabama in order to map the progress of each municipality's implementation plan, initiate their annual review, discuss common implementation issues identify other inter-municipal planning opportunities.

Water/Smart Growth Plan

1. The entire Village of Oakfield is **contained** within one of the **designated development areas established by the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan. The Town of Oakfield is proposing that the designated area around the Village be enlarged. The Village should support the Town's efforts to expand the boundary of the development area around the Village. As the demand for growth dictates**, the Village should work with Town and Genesee County to expand the designated development area in **future updates** of the Smart Growth Plan.
2. A long-range water plan should be developed depicting where future water service may be expanded outside the Village.
3. Support the Towns of Oakfield and Alabama in their efforts to modify the "development areas" identified in the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan to reflect the long-term planning area boundaries, as shown on the Vision Map.
4. Investigate cost/feasibility for extending water out Route 63 into Towns of Oakfield and Alabama.

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APPENDIX