

## **CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION**

Broad community participation is an important aspect of the comprehensive planning process. In order to collect citizen input to include in this Plan, a “Comprehensive Plan Committee” (CPC) consisting of local boardmembers, town staff, and interested citizens was organized. This committee met on a monthly basis and provided a forum for community discussion. In addition, eight “subcommittees” were formed from the CPC in order to provide interested citizens with a forum for discussing and developing recommendations regarding specific issues of concern. Lastly, in order to gain broad input from as many stakeholders in the community as possible, survey forms were distributed to all landowners in the Town.

### **Section 2.1: The Town-wide Survey.**

At the beginning of the planning process, a survey was undertaken to offer the general public the opportunity to provide input for the Town’s new Comprehensive Plan. In order to gather information from as broad a segment of the Town’s residents and property owners as possible, the survey was mailed out to all real property owners in the Town, including both seasonal and year around residents, as well as farmers, grape growers, and commercial/business interests. Respondents were given about a month to respond to the survey. The responses were tabulated by a group of interested Town citizens and G/FLRPC staff. The results of the Town-wide survey were used in developing the recommendations in Chapter 5 of this Plan.

The key considerations used in preparing the survey were:

1. The survey should be distributed to as many stakeholders (i.e., town residents, local business owners, and property owners) as possible.
2. The survey should be easy to fill out and return to the Town.
3. The survey should include questions that allow members of the public to comment on where, if anywhere, in the Town they would like to see new development concentrated.
4. The survey should include questions that allow members of the public to comment on what types, if any, of new development they would like to see come into the Town.
5. The survey forms should allow respondents to indicate their agreement, disagreement, or neutrality with the questions.
6. The survey forms should include questions that ask the respondents to express their views on suggested land use regulations.
7. The survey should afford respondents the opportunity to provide verbatim comments.

The following statements describe how the above factors were accommodated in the survey process:

1. A list of all real property owners in the Town was obtained from the Town Clerk. Survey forms were mailed out based on this list.
2. The survey forms were designed to be as short and succinct as possible while still being practical

- to read and understand. In order to facilitate the return of the survey forms, a postage paid, self-addressed return envelope was included with all the survey mailings.
3. The survey forms offered respondents several choices of what general areas of the Town (lakefront/resort/residential, rural/agricultural, along Routes 14 and 54, and commercial districts) they thought new development should be focused in. In addition, respondents could write in any additional areas of the Town they thought would be appropriate for new development.
  4. The survey forms offered respondents the opportunity to comment on what general types of new development (single family residential, multi-family residential, recreational, commercial/light industrial, heavy industrial and agricultural) the Town should attract. In addition, respondents could write down specific types of development they thought should be attracted to the Town.
  5. The survey questions were designed to give respondents a range of options for their answers. Respondents marked their answers in columns labeled “Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree.” This system ensured that 1.) respondents could differentiate between simply agreeing or disagreeing with a question and 2.) respondents could express neutrality with a question. In addition, several questions provided a space for respondents to write additional answers and comments that were not captured by the choice of answers provided on the surveys.
  6. Several questions on the survey asked respondents to note whether or not they thought the Town should have regulatory oversight over a range of land use issues such as adult entertainment businesses, gravel pits, junkyards, lakefront rentals, landfills, light pollution, noise, odors, property maintenance, and wind turbines/farms.
  7. Question 12 on the survey form asked respondents to write down any general comments or concerns that they had regarding land use planning in the Town. Therefore, if they choose to, respondents could ensure that any thoughts, ideas, comments, or suggestions they had that were not covered by the survey questions would be brought to the attention of the Plan’s authors.



**Figure 2.1:** *The town-wide survey results indicate strong support from area residents for the retention of rural landscapes in the Town, such as this view of farm fields, wooded lots, and Seneca Lake.*

### Section 2.2: Survey Results Summary.

A more thorough analysis of the survey results are included in Appendix B of this Plan. However, a brief narrative review of the results is useful here because many of the Plan's recommendations are based on those results.

There was strong public support for protecting and preserving the Town's rural and agrarian character.

Survey respondents were generally in favor of new single family residential, recreational, commercial/light industrial, and agricultural development. The survey results did not support multi-family residential or heavy industrial development.

There was public support for ensuring that new development fits into the Town's current rural and agrarian character. Many respondents thought that new development should be coordinated with surrounding buildings, should preserve views of Seneca Lake and open spaces, should blend with the landscape, and should not be too noticeable or obvious in the Town's landscape.

Survey respondents were generally in favor of protecting the Keuka Outlet Trail and scenic views from development, as well as areas like the lakeshore, farmland, wildlife habitats and natural resources.

There was strong public support for municipal regulations addressing adult entertainment businesses, gravel pits, junkyards, lakefront rentals, landfills, light pollution, noise, odors, property maintenance, and wind turbines/farms.

There was also strong public support for the protection and preservation of natural and cultural resources. Most respondents were in favor of having land use regulations in place to protect scenic vistas, steep slopes, historic buildings and sites, wetlands, the natural lakeshore, and Seneca Lake water quality.

Several questions asked about transportation conditions in the Town. On the whole, respondents were satisfied with the current state of pavement quality, snow removal, signage clarity, and speed enforcement. Most respondents thought the Town should not pave public gravel and dirt roads. There was broad support for widening road shoulders and improving signage to better accommodate farm machinery, bicycles, horse-drawn vehicles, pedestrians, and other non-automobile road users.

In general, there was broad support for a variety of economic development initiatives such as attracting commercial and light industrial development to the Town, the promotion of tourist-based businesses such as bed & breakfasts and craft markets, and the protection of agriculture and viniculture activities. On the other hand, significant numbers of respondents were opposed to the idea of attracting heavy industry or fast food restaurants to the Town. Most respondents were in favor of installing public water and sewer systems, although a large minority was opposed to these actions.

The survey respondents were more evenly divided over questions asking them to rate the adequacy of business services in the Town. While most respondents thought that the Town was lacking in services such as groceries, gas, drugs, retail goods, and financial services, many others thought that these services were adequate. Several respondents commented that these services are readily available in nearby places like Penn Yan, Geneva, and Watkins Glen.

A large majority of respondents thought that the Town should hold off on approving large scale proposed developments while a new Comprehensive Plan is under development.

Question 12 of the survey provided respondents with the opportunity to write in verbatim comments. These comments touched on a broad range of issues related to land use in the Town. Many respondents noted that they liked the community's rural character and offered their own ideas and suggestions for improving the quality of life in Torrey.

Please refer to Appendix B at the end of this Plan for the complete survey results.



**Figure 2.2:** *This view of a stretch of the Town's lake shore shows the current status of lake front development. The survey results indicate that local residents want to ensure that any new construction that occurs along the lake shore, and any reconstruction of existing properties, is broadly in line with the scale of current development conditions.*

### **Section 2.3: Citizen Subcommittees.**

At the beginning of the planning process, the Comprehensive Planning Committee organized eight subcommittees consisting of local board members, officials, and interested citizens. Each subcommittee chose a topic of interest to research and devise recommendations for inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan.

The eight subcommittees were:

1. Agriculture

This subcommittee looked ways to preserve working agriculture in the Town and promote the expansion and ongoing development of agriculture and related agriculture-based businesses.

2. Wineries and Viniculture

This subcommittee consisted of the owners and operators of the major vineyards and wineries in the Town. This group was primarily concerned with the impacts of land use regulations on the local grape growing and wine making industry. The ideas and contributions of this group were mainly aimed at fostering the continued growth and development of local wineries and enhancing the tourism trade in the area.

3. Local Business and Real Estate

This subcommittee discussed and considered issues related to the promotion and expansion of local businesses, the expected location of future high-demand residential development, and what types of businesses would be beneficial to the Town.

4. Natural Resources

This subcommittee looked at a variety of issues related to the protection and preservation of natural resources in the Town, including water quality issues, the protection of steep slopes, glens, and woodlots; preservation of vistas; and wildlife preservation.

5. Transportation

The Transportation subcommittee concentrated on profiling current transportation conditions in the Town. In addition, with the input of the Town's Highway Superintendent, it prepared recommendations for improving transportation infrastructure in the Town.

6. Public Services

This subcommittee focused on profiling current public services provided in the Town. In addition, this group proposed methods of improving public and utility service delivery and various ways for the Town to collaborate with other agencies in order to upgrade public services.

7. Lakefront Development

This subcommittee focused on general lakefront land use and development issues, such as docking and mooring regulations, problems associated with "key-hole" development, and the need for some sort of municipal oversight regarding noise, sewage, parking, and other problems associated with lakefront rental properties. In addition, this group discussed a wide range of

environmental issues such as Seneca Lake water quality and the regulation of industrial wastes, light and air pollution, and the basic need to develop the lakefront in such a way so as to encourage long term sustainable development practices.

### 8. Community Organizations and Recreation

This subcommittee focused on profiling outdoor recreational opportunities currently available in the Town and on developing ideas to improve current recreational opportunities available to both youths and adults in the Town.

The subcommittees met on several occasions, on schedules of their own choosing, separately from regular Comprehensive Planning Committee meetings to discuss their topics. Each subcommittee was provided with a series of excerpts from other municipal comprehensive plans that assisted the members with conceptualizing and organizing their thoughts. The subcommittees used these excerpts as a guide for compiling their own notes, which were returned to G/FLRPC staff. G/FLRPC staff reviewed the subcommittees' notes and integrated them into the Plan document along with standard best planning practices for rural/agrarian towns like Torrey. There was a considerable degree of overlap among the topics covered by these subcommittees, which was partially intentional in that it allowed for broad community consensus to emerge on key issues.

Please see the "Acknowledgements" page at the beginning of this Plan for a list of the members of each subcommittee.

### **Section 2.4: Review of Plans, Reports, and Studies.**

The following plans, reports, and studies were reviewed by G/FLRPC staff to provide additional background information for the Torrey Comprehensive Plan. Good comprehensive plans should integrate, where applicable, a range of concepts and policies from related documents such as earlier comprehensive plans; the plans and reports of adjacent municipalities; county-wide and region-wide studies; corridor plans; watershed management and land use plans; and other documents that offer insights for consideration in the municipal comprehensive planning process.

**Title:** Town of Torrey Comprehensive Development Plan

**Year:** 1976

The Town of Torrey and the Village of Dresden jointly prepared the Town's current Comprehensive Plan in the mid 1970s. The Plan has not been revised or updated since then. The Plan is organized into four chapters: 1.) Introduction, 2.) Land Use Plan, 3.) Thoroughfare Plan, and 4.) Community Facilities Plan.

The Introduction includes a list of policy statements organized into three sections: Land Use Policies, Thoroughfare Policies, and Community Facilities Policies. The Land Use section is further divided into four subsections: Residential, Commercial, Industrial, and Agriculture. Each subsection includes from one to three specific policies regarding future land uses. The Thoroughfare section includes several policies on recommended improvements to local roads and infrastructure, while the Community Facilities section includes several policies on public services. All these policy statements are highly generalized and do not contain much detail regarding their proposals. Lastly, the Introduction also

includes a list of “Planning Systems,” which are simply a description of the various general types of land uses present in the Town.

The Land Use Plan, Thoroughfare Plan, and Community Facilities Plan consist of charts that explain what the Comprehensive Plan aims to accomplish (Objectives), what the procedures are to realize the Objectives (Recommendations), and lastly how those recommendations will be implemented (Programs). Some of the key objectives of this Plan include: protecting the quality of residential areas, locating new residences in areas served by utilities and infrastructure, encouraging a variety of housing types, focusing commercial development along Route 14, focusing new industrial development in the area best served by road and rail transport, protecting working agricultural land, designating the Keuka Outlet as a recreational area, improving local park facilities, improving local road infrastructure, upgrading water supply infrastructure and studying the practicality of installing public sewers, and improving the delivery of municipal services.

Where feasible and appropriate, planning recommendations in the new Torrey Comprehensive Plan have been designed to reflect and augment the contents and suggested actions of the Town’s old plan. The old plan does not include any detailed information that is still relevant, but it does have many general statements that remain valid and have been integrated into the new Comprehensive Plan.

**Title:** Village of Dresden Comprehensive Plan

**Year:** 2004

The Village of Dresden is located within the Town of Torrey. In 2003-2004 the Village prepared a new Comprehensive Plan, which was based on several earlier planning studies prepared for the Village, public input and involvement, and standard best planning practices for rural villages like Dresden. In general, land uses in the Village should be closely linked to land uses in the Town, and where feasible the Town and Village should mutually support and enhance each other in terms of land use and public service provision.

The Dresden Comprehensive Plan includes commentary on the Village’s history, geology and climate; profiles of its land use, demographics, public services, employers and economic base; a list with accompanying commentary on five main categories (Land Use/Zoning, Lakeshore/Recreation, Infrastructure and Community Facilities, Public Officials, Legal and Boundary Issues) that the Village will work, over time, to improve and enhance; and lastly a list of opportunities and challenges related to land use issues for the Village to address in the future.

The Dresden Comprehensive Plan calls for coordination and communication with the Town, County, state agencies, and federal agencies on a variety of land use issues. According to this Plan the Village:

- Should be involved in any studies of the Rt. 14 corridor running through Yates County, including studies on the installation of public sewer infrastructure;
- Should work with the Town on the regular inspection of septic systems to help improve the water quality of the Keuka Outlet and Seneca Lake;
- Should work with the Town to improve the small public park along the lake and investigate the creation of a public boat launch facility there;
- Should work with the Friends of the Outlet Trail to improve the use of the Keuka Outlet and the Keuka Outlet Trail as recreational resources;

- Should work with federal authorities and local Congressional representatives to ensure the U.S. Navy's land in the Village will be converted into a public recreational area should the Navy ever vacate the area;
- Should work with the Town of Torrey to determine the possibility of consolidating services and facilities in order to reduce expenditures on public services and save tax monies;
- Should work on resurveying the Village boundary to correct inconsistencies and clarify for both the general public and local officials the true location of the corporate limits (Town/Village boundary).
- Should work with outside interests such as the Yates County Industrial Development Agency to provide improved telecommunications services to residents and businesses.

Where feasible and appropriate, planning recommendations in the Torrey Comprehensive Plan have been designed to reflect and augment the contents and suggested actions of the Dresden Comprehensive Plan.

**Title:** Town of Benton Comprehensive Plan

**Year:** 1991; revised 2001.

The Town of Benton is located to the north and west of Torrey. As an adjacent town, its land use policies affect conditions in Torrey. The Benton Plan was prepared in 1991 and revised in 2001 to address the impacts of changing land uses such as the rise of home-based businesses and the regional tourism industry.

The Plan includes a thorough review of the reasons why the Town prepared the Plan and what it hopes to accomplish by having a Plan in place as well as a "community profile" with information on the Town's landscape and natural environmental characteristics, agricultural operations, business and economic activities, utilities and infrastructure, demographics, and zoning regulations.

The Benton Plan includes a list of twenty-four (24) "Goal and Objective" statements that serve as its land use recommendations. Key goals of the Plan include the protection and preservation of agriculture, the orderly development of residential areas, develop customized land use recommendations for unique areas of the Town, and develop a series of new zoning regulations to improve municipal oversight of land uses throughout the Town.

The Plan identifies five "special areas" and recommends specific land use policies for each. The five special areas are 1.) Hamlets, 2.) Seneca Lakefront and Route 14, 3.) Village of Penn Yan perimeter, 4.) Route 14A, and 5.) Pre-Emption Road Corridor. Each one of these areas has a narrative description of land use policies that are specifically designed to protect and enhance the unique characteristics of these areas. The Plan's recommendations will be implemented through zoning and subdivision regulations, as well as through the activities of interested citizen volunteers.

Where feasible and appropriate, planning recommendations in the Torrey Comprehensive Plan have been designed to reflect and augment the contents of the Benton Comprehensive Plan.

**Title:** Town of Milo Comprehensive Plan

**Year:** 1971; reformatted 1997.



The Town of Milo is located to the south and west of Torrey. Like Benton, its land use policies have an impact on Torrey. Milo's Comprehensive Plan was prepared in 1971 and reformatted in 1997; currently (November 2007) the Town is preparing a new Plan.

The Milo Plan is fairly short and lacking in detail. It has three sections: a list of general policy statements, a table describing its "Planning Systems", and lastly a "Planning Policy Chart." The policy statements are organized into three main categories: Land Use Policies, Thoroughfare Policies, and Community Facilities Policies. The category of Land Use Policies is further broken down into four subcategories, each one addressing one of the Town's main land uses: Residential, Commercial, Industrial, and Agricultural.

The "Planning System" section consists of a list of five land use categories (Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Agriculture/Residential, and Agricultural/Conservation) with accompanying generalized descriptions of the recommended land uses in each category. The "Policy Planning Chart" provides slightly more detailed descriptions of the objectives, recommendations, and implementation programs for each of the categories outlined in the "Planning System" section. Overall, this Plan recommends keeping agricultural operations in place throughout the Town, supporting the improvement of utilities and the transportation infrastructure to guide new commercial and industrial development into certain areas, safeguarding natural resources, and improving the delivery of public services.

Where feasible and appropriate, planning recommendations in the Torrey Comprehensive Plan have been designed to reflect and augment the contents of the Milo Comprehensive Plan. In the future, when Milo has completed its new Comprehensive Plan, the Torrey Planning Board should review it and determine whether or not revisions to the Torrey Comprehensive Plan are warranted.

**Title:** Yates County Looking Ahead: A Planning and Design Guide.  
**Year:** 1990.

This report, sometimes known as the "Trancik Report" after its author, Roger Trancik, is a comprehensive county-wide study of Yates County's scenic and aesthetic resources. This report was developed to provide municipal officials with a guidebook for preparing municipal land use planning documents. Essentially, this report argues that the County and its municipalities should strive for carefully considered, well planned growth in order to preserve their rich array of natural resources.

This valuable study includes background information on the geologic and human history of the County, an explanation of the impacts of human activities on natural resources, a detailed "scenic resources inventory" for each town that identifies natural and cultural resources such as scenic viewsheds, steep slopes, wooded areas, and historic sites that are worthy of protection through local land use regulations; extensive commentary on proper growth management practices and how to ensure new development fits within and conforms to the predominately rural and agricultural characteristics of the area; and information on how to realize such rural design principles through municipal planning and zoning practices and public outreach activities.

**Title:** Yates County Agricultural Development and Farmland Enhancement Plan.  
**Year:** 2004.

This plan was prepared by the Yates County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board with the assistance of the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Yates County, the Yates County Department of Planning, the Yates County Soil & Water Conservation District, and Shepstone Management Company.

This plan identifies the many critical contributions that working agricultural operations make to Yates County, including the preservation of rural land and wooded areas, the limiting of “urban sprawl” and reinforcement of rural character, the provision of year-round business and employment for area residents, and the reduction in cost and demand for public services such as water and sewer.

The Plan consists of a detailed profile of the economics of Yates County agriculture, including dairying, grape production, and forestry; a review of the legal techniques available to preserve working agricultural land; commentary and analysis of surveys done of agricultural producers, agribusiness, and non-farm residents, and lastly a detailed listing of specific policies and actions that can be undertaken by County agencies, municipalities, farmers, and private landowners to reinforce, protect, and encourage agricultural activities in the County. Key policies include protecting agricultural land through zoning codes and the enactment of strong right-to-farm laws in each town.

Where appropriate, material from this study has been integrated into the Torrey Comprehensive Plan, especially with regards to the Plan’s recommendations on preserving working agricultural land and natural resources.