

South of the Thruway: Update to the Town of Pittsford Comprehensive Plan



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Town of Pittsford, New York



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South of the Thruway:
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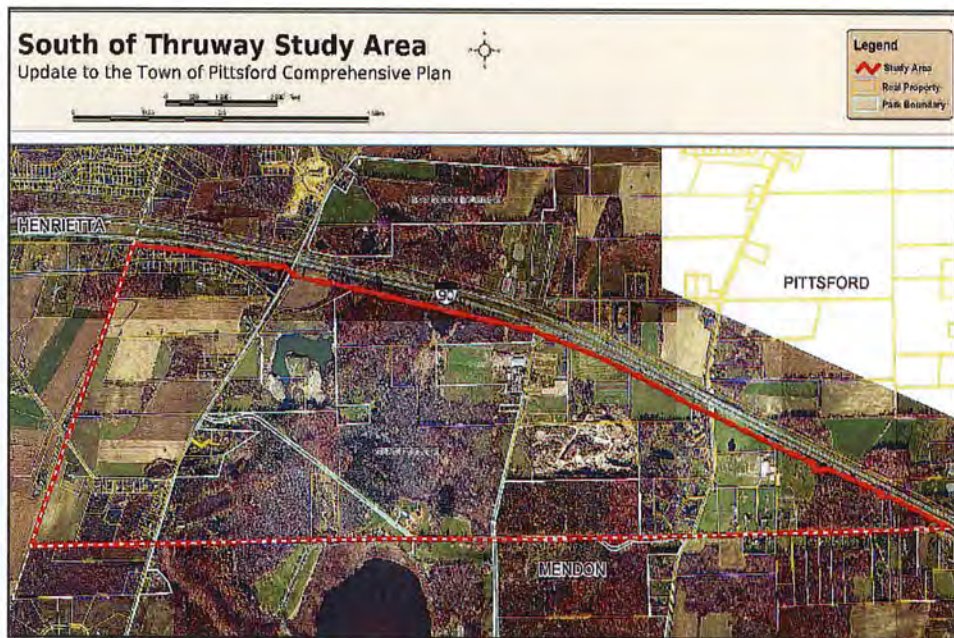
- A. South of the Thruway Study Area Map
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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Overview and Background

Public concern about the potential growth patterns for the area south of the New York State Thruway prompted the Town of Pittsford to re-examine the relevance of its existing land use plans.

The study area is adjacent to the Town of Henrietta to the west and the Town of Mendon to the south. The New York State Thruway defines the northern portion of the area. Mendon Ponds Park is a central community and environmental feature (Please refer to the Appendix for a larger rendition of the graphic below.).



The implementation of the *Greenprint for the Future* in 1995 enabled the Town of Pittsford to make significant progress in its goals of protecting

approximately 2,000 acres of farmland. Since that time, land not designated in the *Greenprint* has experienced substantial residential growth. One such area, the southwest corner of town (the study area, located south of the New York State Thruway) was rated during the *Greenprint* land identification process as having generally low-to-moderate agricultural, greenway and ecological values, while other lands in the town north of the Thruway were more highly rated. Thus, the southwest corner of town was considered an area where some growth would be acceptable.

Today, as lands north of the Thruway and outside of the *Greenprint* are approaching build-out, the lands south of the Thruway are experiencing greater residential development pressure than before. Landowners, including farm families, are facing estate issues and decisions amidst the growing interest in their lands for development. Thus, it is an appropriate time to evaluate all available options for realizing the equity in their lands. Other residents of the study area have expressed sentiments in favor of protecting the agricultural countryside aesthetic of these lands, regardless of the area's prior exclusion from the *Greenprint* plan. Residents are concerned that the currently allowed zoning densities may result in a potential visual impact of intense, clustered, residential development that is too intense and could negatively impact the area's attractive countryside aesthetic.

In addition, current zoning does not recognize agricultural uses and horse farming activities as primary uses, making it difficult for landowners to continue farming or to transfer lands to keep them in agricultural uses. In this area, the non-farm community *is* supportive of agriculture that does not adversely impact nearby residential uses.

As a response to this range of issues and concerns specific to the southwest area of town, in August 2003, the Town of Pittsford Town Board adopted a temporary moratorium on development within the

study area. The moratorium afforded the Town of Pittsford and the community an opportunity to implement a public planning and visioning process during the fall of 2003. The desired outcome is an update to the *Town of Pittsford Comprehensive Plan (1995)* relative to the study area.

As part of the planning process, the town and its consultant conducted a series of public meetings to obtain commentary from the community. Owners of farmland and open lands, a mining operator, residents, local developers and builders, town officials and staff, and other interested citizens participated at the public workshops and meetings held on October 27, 2003, November 19, 2003, and January 7, 2004. Citizens unable to attend the meetings either phoned or submitted in writing to the town comments concerning their vision for the future of the area.



The planning process identified the resources within the study area that the community values for conservation and protection from development. The process also allowed the community to identify the acceptable types of land uses, the desired development intensities of land uses and the appropriate patterns of land development they wish to see in the future.

1.2 Existing Environmental Features and Land Uses

Environmental Features (Please refer to the Environmental Features and Open Space Map located in the Appendix.)

Topography

The topography of the study area is mostly gently rolling drumlins. The steepest slopes are east of Clover Street around the former quarry and to the east of Mendon-Center Road around the existing operational quarry and residences.



Geology and Soils

As identified in *The Town of Pittsford Comprehensive Plan (1995)*, the study area is mostly made up of gravelly or sandy glacial water deposits. Drainage of these soils varies from well to poor.

Wetlands and Drainage Ways

Within the study area, there are a number of wetlands. Most of these are located within Mendon Ponds Park. An easily visible wetland is located at the corner of Tobin Road and Clover Street.



The study area also hosts parts of the Irondequoit Creek and Honeoye Creek Watersheds.

Agriculture and Horse Farms

Within the study area, agriculture is the second most common land use. While these farming areas are not as large as those in other parts of the town, their presence is important to maintaining the countryside aesthetic that community members enjoy.



Croplands and farm buildings are located along Clover Street. Lands in agriculture also provide buffers and act as transitional areas between the New York State Thruway, residential areas and Mendon Ponds Park.

Several horse farms are located in the study area. These include Silver Creek Horse Farm on Mendon Center Road and Canfield Road and Lehman Farms on South Wilmarth Road.

Residential

Residential land uses are an established use in the study area. Most of the homes are one or two-family residences and are found along Clover Street, Tobin Road, Hines Road, Reeves Road and Canfield Road. The housing in this area is located near a range of open space areas, primarily agricultural and park lands. The predominant character of current development is rural-residential, with a more dense and suburban blend of housing than the surrounding Town



of Mendon. However, it is considerably less dense than development in the Town of Henrietta to the northeast.

Commercial and Industrial

Currently, the only industrial use in the study area is an existing gravel mine operation located on South Wilmarth Road on part of a horse farm that is adjacent to park and residential land uses.

Another gravel mine, formerly in operation, is located on the east side of Clover Street and is an opportunity for environmental reclamation, reuse and development of the area. This former gravel mine is adjacent to Mendon Ponds Park and residences.

A veterinary practice that is classified as a commercial use within the Town of Mendon is located along the south side of Canfield Road adjacent to the study area.

There are currently no other commercial or industrial land uses in this portion of the town.



Utilities

Public water is available in this area of Pittsford. However, the municipal sanitary sewer has not been extended south of the New York State Thruway.

Most homes in the study area are equipped with propane tanks for home fuel supply.

Transportation

The New York State Thruway (Interstate 90) borders the northern edge of this area. The Thruway cannot be accessed directly within in the Town of Pittsford. I-90 is accessible indirectly via state highway 490, or by traveling through the adjacent towns of Henrietta and Victor.



Two major routes, 64 (Mendon Road) and 65 (Clover Street), provide northern and southern access to this portion of town and surrounding areas. Route 65 is also a designated bicycle route. Route 64 is not a designated bicycle route, but it is often used by bicyclists as part of a Route 64/Route 65/Mendon Ponds riding loop or as another route to Honeoye Falls.

The study area does not have sidewalks, nor any designated crosswalks for pedestrians to cross roads to reach Mendon Ponds Park. An extensive multi-use trail system exists within Mendon Ponds Park.

1.3 Existing Zoning

The land in the study area is currently zoned in the Rural Residential District (RRAA). According to the Pittsford Town Code, under this zoning, parcels less than 10 acres may be developed at a density of 1.3 residential dwelling units per acre. Parcels that are less than 32,000 square feet but larger than 16,000 square feet may be developed with one dwelling unit. Parcels that are 10 acres or more may be developed at a density of one residential dwelling unit per 10 acres. These parcels may also develop at a higher density of 1.3 residential dwelling units per acre provided that 50% of the land remains as a permanent rural conservation site (50-50 zoning option).

Potential land use scenarios under existing zoning:

- Agricultural uses and vacant lands
- On parcels less than 10 acres:
 - 80+/- homes could be built
- On parcels greater than 10 acres:
 - 45+/- homes on 10 acre+/- lots could be built

OR

- 585 +/- homes on 229.5 acres or less, AND 229.5 acres of open space or rural conservation lands could be developed

OR

- Some combination of the above

Permitted uses in the RRAA (Rural Residential District) are those listed under the AA (Residential District) as well as agricultural uses and open space.

The following are permitted uses in the RRAA district:

- 1) Single family dwellings
- 2) Accessory uses (outlined in section 185-113).
 - a) Private greenhouse
 - b) Private tennis or outdoor recreational court
 - c) Aboveground deck
 - d) Gazebo or tree house
 - e) Freestanding air-conditioning machinery
 - f) Servants' quarters for full time servants only
 - g) Storage structure
 - h) Private swimming pool
 - i) Fence
 - j) Keeping of horses
 - k) Sale of produce
 - l) Satellite antennas
 - m) Flagpole
 - n) Garden shed

Prohibited accessory uses include (not limited to): outdoor storage, subject to provisions of section 185-115 of *The Code of the Town of Pittsford*.

- 3) Special Permit Uses
 - a) Place of worship
 - b) Golf course
 - c) School

No more than one residential building can be built on any one lot.

1.4 Neighboring Land Uses and Zoning

In order to plan properly for land uses in the study area it is important to know the zoning of lands adjacent to it to identify potential uses and development densities. This not only informs the analysis, but is another tool that local residents can utilize to make effective land use decisions.

Town of Mendon (Town of Mendon Town Code, Chapter 200, Zoning)

To the south of the study area, the Town of Mendon has zoned adjacent lands primarily as RA-5 (Residential Agricultural District) that establishes a five-acre size lot minimum per one single-family dwelling. Zoning of RA-2 (Residential Agricultural District), a two-acre lot minimum, and Town Law 278 (Clustering) also are present in smaller areas.

Mendon allows the following permitted use in its RA-5 zone: One-single family dwelling per lot; normal agricultural farming operations and the use of land for agricultural production purposes; buildings and structures used exclusively in support of agricultural operations; historic, scenic preservation and conservation areas; public parks and playgrounds and additionally allows for accessory and special permit uses.

The Town of Henrietta (Town of Henrietta Town Code, Zoning, Article V, Section 295-6)

Adjacent to the West of the study area, the Town of Henrietta has zoned lands as an R-1-20 residential district at a minimum of 20,000 square foot lots, or the equivalent of about one unit per ½ acre.

Henrietta's R-1-20 residential district adjacent to the study area in Pittsford allows for the following permitted uses: Single-family dwellings, farms, greenhouses, plant nurseries, agricultural operations, home occupations, private garages, churches, schools, institutions of higher education, public hospitals, public libraries, municipal district buildings, golf courses (by special permit), child care centers, day care centers, nursery schools, preschools and family daycare homes.

1.5 Considerations from the 1995 Comprehensive Plan

In *The Town of Pittsford Comprehensive Plan* (1995) several suggestions were made with respect to the study area. The options discussed ranged from promoting rural residential densities, building a conference center, modifying the extension of utilities into the study area and preserving agricultural lands. These were revisited during the public planning process in order to determine if they were still options residents desired to see implemented in the study area. The following are specific concepts in the 1995 plan mentioned in relation to the study area:

Mendon Ponds Park Area – Site Four:

--Town of Pittsford Comprehensive Plan December 1995 p. VII-12

“Located south of the Thruway, the southwest portion of the town is currently used for agriculture, fallow land, and soil mining. Any option for the reuse of the mined portion of the site needs to consider the costs for recontouring the site to create a more attractive visual environment. One option identified for this site is to develop it as an expansion of the existing county park providing opportunities for more active recreation facilities. Another option is to develop it for low-density residential use

with preservation of farmlands and open spaces. This area may also be attractive for development of a conference/training center.”

Southwest Pittsford Agricultural Area – Site A:

--Town of Pittsford Comprehensive Plan

December 1995 p. A4-2

“The large area of remaining farmland in the southwestern portion of the town has been recommended for agricultural preservation.

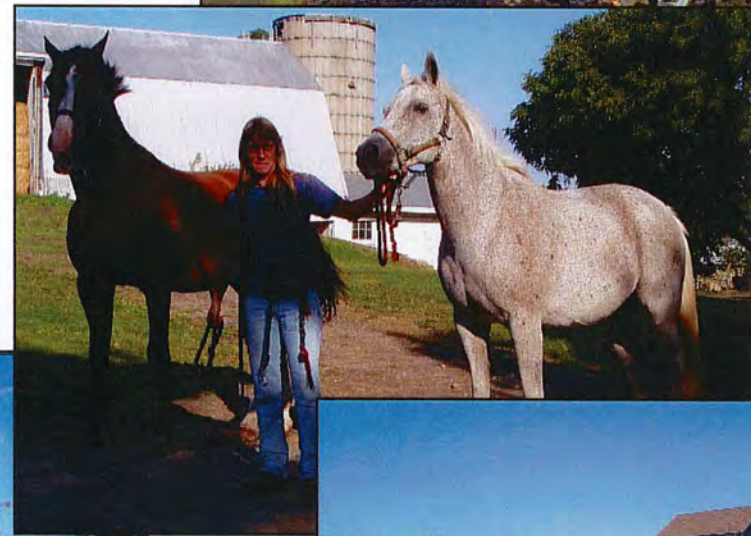
Analysis - Preservation of Site A exclusively for agricultural uses will not be practical in that it represents the bulk of the land resource available for development. Further, its preservation is limited by the lack of sufficient sites to act as receiving zones for the transfer of development rights. It is also limited by the high costs of acquiring the development rights outright. In order to preserve as much agricultural land as possible, several adjustments to the proposed land use policy need to be accomplished. They include:

- Expansion of permitted non-agricultural uses to include rural-residential. This housing type would require special guidelines for location and site design to guard against traditional “cookie cutter” subdivision plans and to create incentives to maintain a critical mass of farmland;
- Modification to utility extension policies to provide service to non-agricultural uses without inhibiting the basic agricultural preservation process; and
- Adjustments to district boundaries in response to an analysis of the economic feasibility of preserving agriculture in the district.”

1.6 Summary of Community Character

The community character in the study area is formed by the combination of farm fields, horse farms, Mendon Ponds Park, wooded areas and hedges, rolling topography and residences. The community cited the open agricultural fields along Clover Street and Tobin Road as important scenic views. The farm buildings and barns on Clover Street located across from the former gravel pit were noted by the community as contributing to the character of the community as a resource they wished to preserve, possibly adapting it for another use while maintaining the original structure. Additionally, two horse farms, Silver Creek Horse Farm and Lehman Farms, contribute to the bucolic countryside aesthetic that residents in the area enjoy.

All of these features collectively contribute to the overall agricultural countryside aesthetic and community character that residents take pleasure in and cherish.

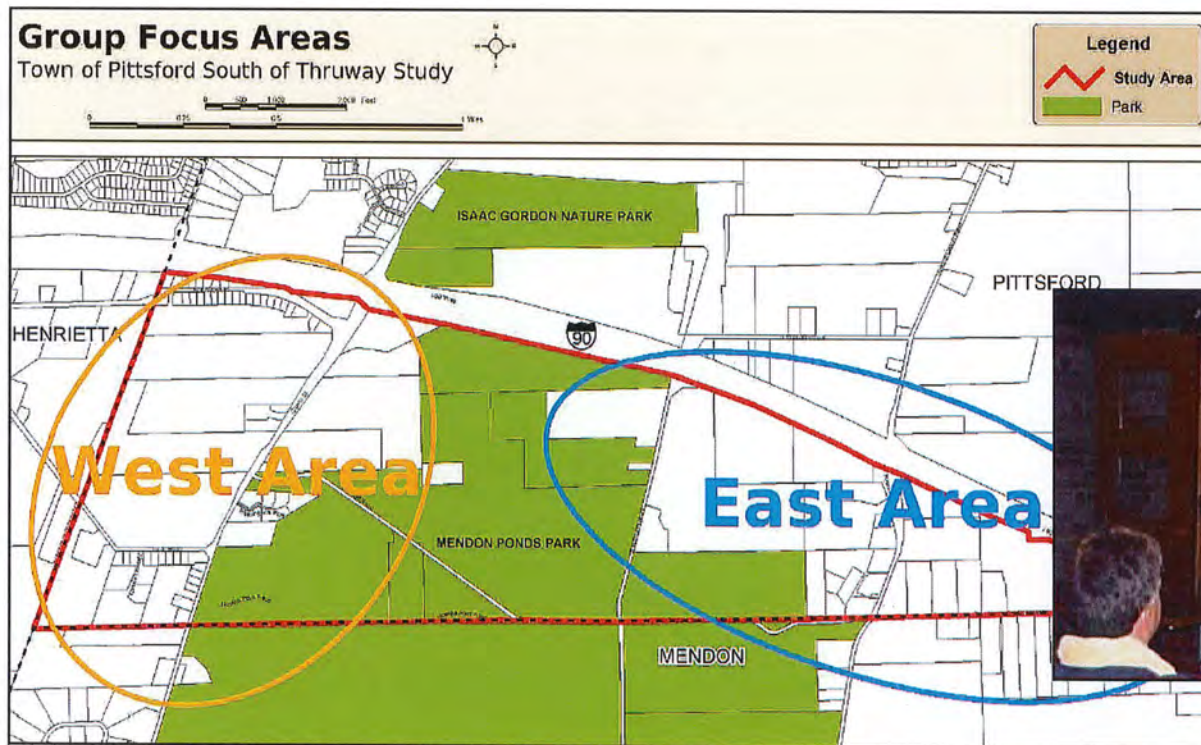


2.0 Developing the Plan's Concepts

Overall, the southwest corner of the Town of Pittsford offers the following assets for consideration in formulating planning concepts:

- Lands for agricultural, residential, conservation and/or other creative development
- Recreation and natural features
- A well-traveled corridor to and from Pittsford, Mendon and Henrietta
- A core trail network at Mendon Ponds Park

To help formulate planning ideas for the study area, the town and its consultant presented these assets and an analysis of current land uses to the public for comment and consideration through a series of public meetings. Citizens unable to attend the meetings called the town and submitted written comments about their vision for the future of the area. Further, the town's consultant and town staff processed the public's input from these meetings to refine and focus planning ideas and concepts to complete the planning process. The town's draft report for this study area was presented to the public for additional comments and input.

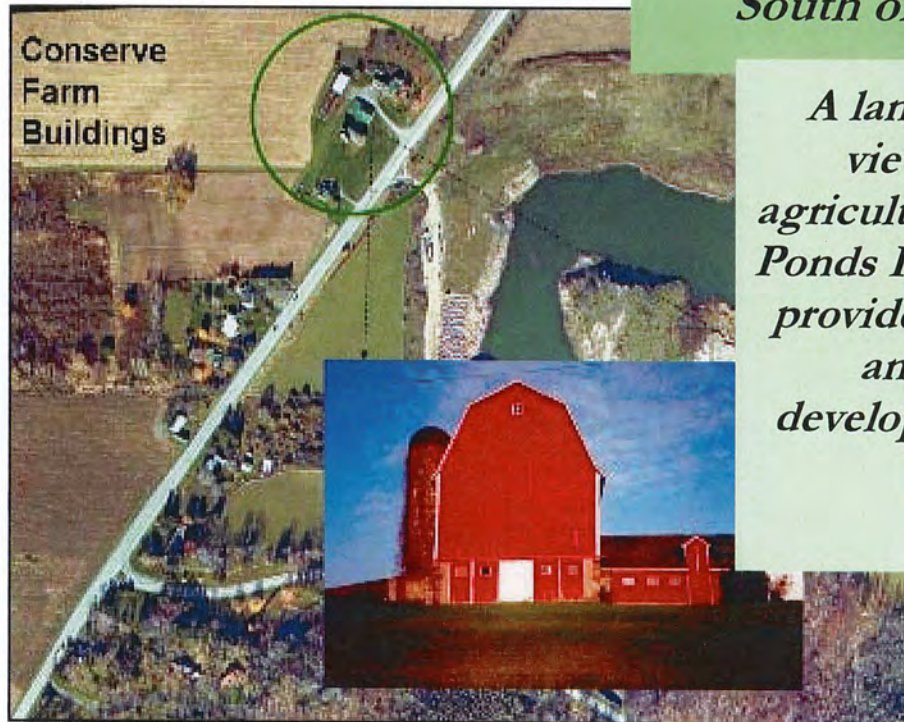


Please refer to a larger rendition of this map in the Appendix.



2.1 Vision Statement

The vision statement addresses the primary community characteristics that the plan is intended to achieve. This vision statement was formulated by community members through the public planning process and supports the guiding principles and recommendations found within this plan.



South of the Thruway

A landscape that preserves the significant viewsheds and elements of the town's agricultural character, that recognizes Mendon Ponds Park as a vital community resource, that provides opportunities for outdoor recreation and wildlife and that accommodates development in a manner consistent with the overall sense of place.

Community Vision

2.2 Community Values

As part of the planning process, community values were identified and a preliminary site analysis was conducted for the study area.

Specific Features and Assets Important to the Community:

Particularly important to the community are the views of open space and agricultural lands, especially along the west side of Clover Street and the north-northeast side of Tobin Road. This includes, but is not limited to, views of hedgerows, wetlands, farm fields and farm



buildings. The farmstead and barns located on the west side of Clover Street were noted by the community as an important agricultural feature contributing to the countryside setting of the area. Other noted features were Mendon Ponds Park and its entrances and views, the numerous horse farms

and agricultural uses throughout and in general, the open, country landscape and forested landscape along roads in the study area. The community also identified current visual buffers as specific features they would like to see preserved and incorporated into future development as well as extended along the lands between the New York State Thruway. The community also expressed its desire to maintain, as part of the countryside aesthetic, the dark night skies.



Development and Land Use Preferences:

The community expressed the desire for future development to maintain and enhance the countryside aesthetic of the area. The community would like to see the continuance of agricultural uses and horse farms in the area as well as the adaptive reuse of agricultural



structures. They also expressed an interest in settlement patterns that support their desire to maintain country views and the overall countryside impression of the area, including local neighborhood trail connections that enhance community access to Mendon Ponds Park. The community also has an interest in keeping the former quarry and pond as a natural area. There were mixed opinions on sewer extensions into this part of town, specifically in terms of how much development would result from such extensions. The community requests that the current mining operation be limited in its expansion, if at all, and that more visual buffers be developed to prevent nearby residential areas from visually accessing the site. The development of a comprehensive restoration plan for the mine was also preferred by the community.

Desired Patterns of Development and Conservation:

The community supports the implementation of low-impact development patterns and land uses, especially for residential and agricultural uses, that blend visually with surrounding parklands and countryside. The community expressed interest in supporting development that preserves and connects important conservation areas of open space and wildlife habitat.

Residents expressed interest in allowing limited commercial uses that support agricultural businesses in the area. However, the community would like to avoid the development of new schools, retail commercial, big box commercial, confined animal feeding operations (CAFO) and the 50/50 RRAA zoning which results in large, tight clusters of housing. They also wish to avoid residential development densities similar to that currently occurring in the Town of Henrietta.

In combination with the community's desire to foster the countryside aesthetic, community members would like to restrict the use of billboards and large-scale signage and encourage sign usage that supports the countryside impression of the area.

In summary, the community recognizes and appreciates the agricultural countryside aesthetic of the area and wishes to maintain this natural beauty while promoting development that preserves homeowner privacy. Residents also support the ability of landowners to keep horses, provided adequate space is available for pasture and the ability of existing horse farms in the area to remain economically viable.

2.3 Synthesis of Community Values

The resulting map, the Community Values Map, identifies resources and features of import to the community.

The Community Values Map should be adopted as a tool to guide the site planning process for the community. This map will serve as a visual aid to identify where conservation and development should be generally located within the study area. In order to obtain site plan approval, additional site analysis above and beyond the analysis with the map will be necessary. However, utilizing the Community Values Map as a support tool in the site planning process will assist in the initial steps of promoting development that is in agreement with the community's planning objectives. It provides greater clarity in guidance than is currently available for landowners.



Community Values Analysis Map

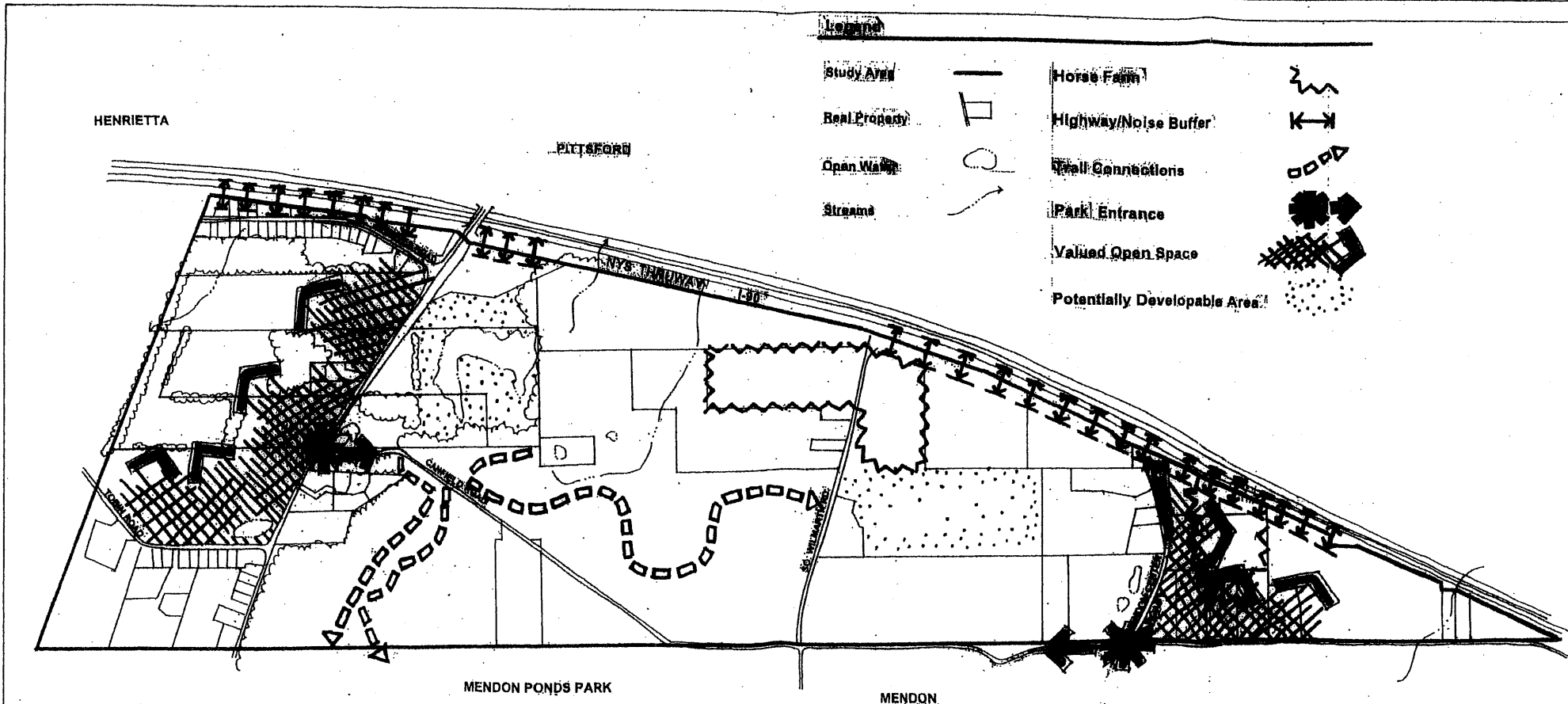
Town of Pittsford South of Thruway Study

By: Behan Planning Associates, LLC.

0 500 1000 FEET



Source: Town of Pittsford GIS
Monroe County GIS services division



2.4 Principles Guiding Growth and Change

Key guiding principles were developed based on the community's vision for the area and assessment of community values. These guiding principles should be followed to ensure that any proposed change in the landscape occurs in a manner consistent with the overall sense of place and desired community vision for the study area. The guiding principles are listed as follows in order of importance to the community:

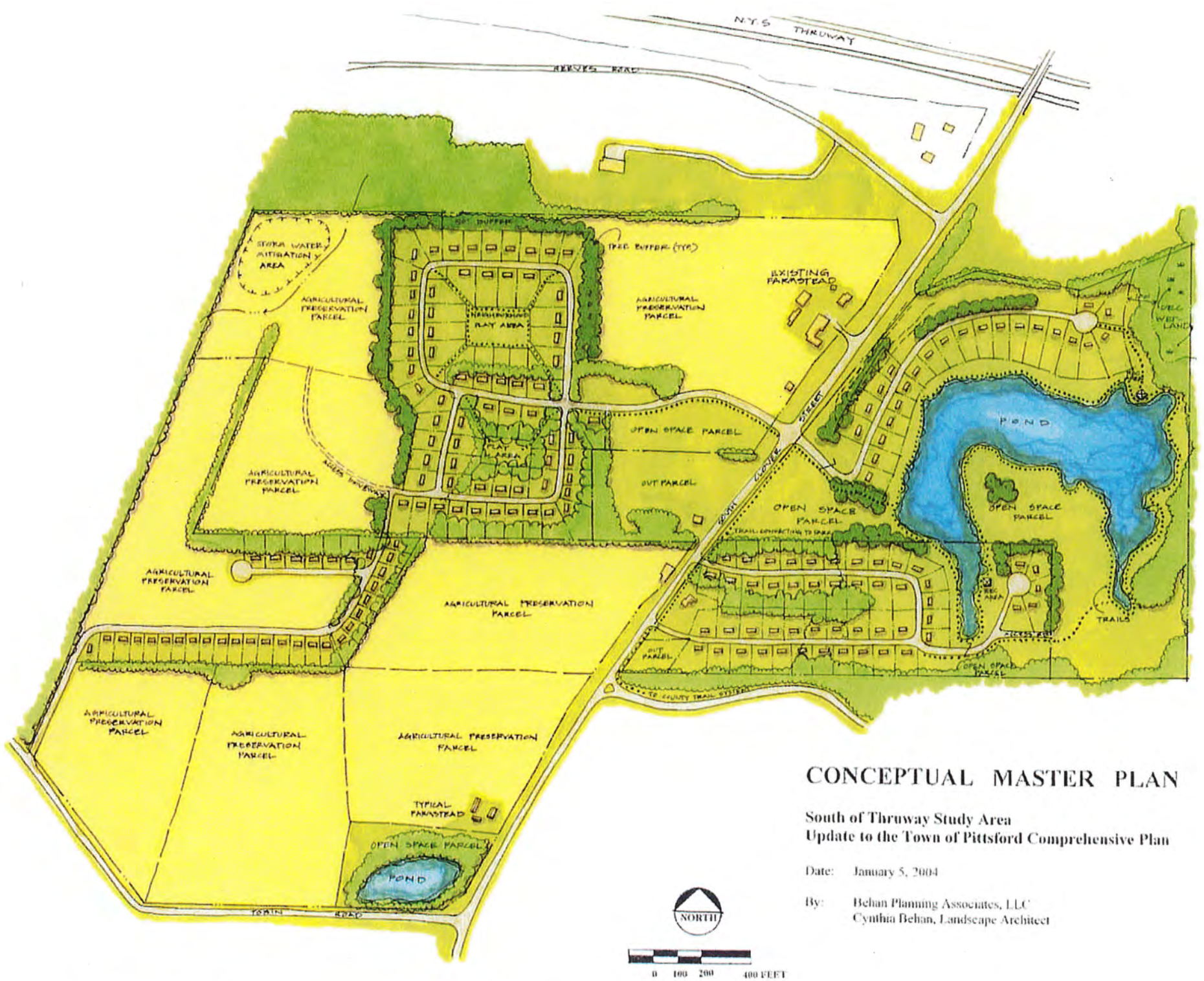
1. Preservation of agricultural lands and uses.
2. Permanent protection of larger contiguous areas of significant open space resources which are visible to the general public including farmlands and natural wildlife habitats and corridors.
3. Buffer new development from existing residences and public views.
4. Restoration and adaptive reuse of mined landscapes.
5. Provision of trail connections through the neighborhood.
6. Provision of public sewers.
7. Adaptive reuse of farm structures that preserves the agricultural setting and uses such as the farmstead, barns and surrounding fields.
8. Creative site planning that maintains residential uses, pastures and rural character (i.e. not cookie-cutter design) allowing for direct visual access to open land, woodlots, horse farms, scenic views, etc.

9. Design that respects and buffers Mendon Ponds Park.
10. Protection of dark night skies through limited lighting and appropriate placement, design and construction standards.

An example of planning with a high level of applied amenities would be a project that protects all of the land along the public roads as agricultural open space, provides a majority of a development site as protected open space, includes a planted and fenced buffer along the edge of the developed area, includes restoration/adaptive reuse of historic farm structures, provides trails connecting neighborhoods together and supports other elements of the principles guiding growth and change.

Illustration of Community Principles – A Conceptual Master Plan

To help illustrate the application of the guiding principles on actual parcels to a reasonable maximum, a Conceptual Master Plan (January 5, 2004) was prepared showing planning concepts for how change could occur on two particular parcels in the study area. The Conceptual Master Plan is shown on the following page. This plan is designed and presented to be a guide and does not reflect an actual site plan that landowners could rely upon for application to the town's planning board. Additional site-specific refinements and work would be necessary. The concepts shown in this graphic could be applied to other parcels in the study area – including the area east of Mendon Ponds Park. This area was selected as an example because of the highly visible farm lands which pose a challenge to conserving the rural character. There may be other approaches that are acceptable to the planning board and the community. However, this example approach sets a direction and tone for any applicant to propose refinements and changes.



CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN

South of Thruway Study Area
 Update to the Town of Pittsford Comprehensive Plan

Date: January 5, 2004

By: Behan Planning Associates, LLC
 Cynthia Behan, Landscape Architect

The Conceptual Master Plan illustrates one approach to how changes in this highly valued landscape could occur. This concept plan is not meant to encourage or spur growth in the area depicted. Rather, if development is proposed to convert the land from agricultural use this concept plan, along with the guiding principles, should be viewed as a model for approaching any future change. The concept plan is not a final site plan, but illustrates how to apply the community values principles. The concept plan illustrates one portion of the study area – just along Clover Street on the west side of the study area.

Key Calculations for Density and Layout

The total acreage depicted is approximately 209+/- acres of lands that have potential for change* along both sides of Clover Street. [*A small portion of the land shown is already developed as residential and was not included in any calculations. Each one of these residential parcels is labeled as an “out parcel.”] Of the 209 acres, some of the lands are constrained for development based on preliminary review totaling approximately 27+/-acres of unbuildable acreage. Thus, the total buildable acreage for this illustration is an estimated 182+/- acres. For actual site plan approval or subdivision approval, the total buildable acreage may vary once detailed, site-specific analysis is performed by an applicant.

For achieving the highest level of compliance with the community’s values the maximum density would be allowed and is thus shown. Maximum density is one unit per one acre of buildable land. Thus, the maximum density on 182 buildable acres would be approximately 182+/- units. This concept plan shows 172 units on approximately 70.5** acres. (**Note: Agricultural preservation parcels are not included in this calculation – but are anticipated to support up to one unit per each of the eight agricultural preservation parcels depicted.

Therefore, up to another eight units may be carefully sited on large lots on the 91 agricultural use acres.)

Application of Principles Guiding Growth and Change in a Conservation Design Approach

The conceptual plan illustration shows how nine out of ten of the community’s values can be incorporated into a development proposal. Below is a checklist of the guiding principles with an accompanying description of how the concept plan successfully meets each principle:

1. Preservation of agricultural land and uses. [Total agricultural preservation area – of about 91 acres total out of 209 acres (or about 44% of the land area).]

- Houses are set in a cluster pattern to be protective of a maximum of agricultural preservation lands.
- An existing farmstead and complex of barns and farm structures is maintained along Clover Street as part of an “Agricultural Preservation Parcel.” This existing farmstead is envisioned for continued use for active agricultural purposes *or* for use in an agricultural-related business that maintains the farmstead setting and character. The aesthetic look of a farmstead must remain for any adaptive reuse of the farmstead to minimize visual impacts to the neighborhood and agricultural countryside character.
- A total of eight agricultural preservation parcels are depicted in this one approach to protecting the open, spacious character of the existing farm fields. These eight parcels are envisioned as large-lots, such as 10-acre lots, for one unit per parcel with accompanying horses and pastures possible on such sized lots. The intent with these agricultural preservation parcels is also to contain the area that is covered by any buildings or pavement to protect the open space feature valued by the community. Agricultural preservation parcels will require conservation easements in order to ensure these lands would not be further subdivided in the future.

- Placement of buildings in the agricultural preservation parcels will require careful consideration in order to be the most protective of the open space aesthetic and maintain an agricultural countryside character.

2. Permanent protection of larger contiguous areas of significant open space resources which are visible to the general public including farmlands and natural wildlife habitats and corridors.

[Approximately 48 acres are open space parcels plus the above agricultural parcels of 91 acres contribute to this guiding principle. A total of 139 out of 209 acres (or about 66% of the land area) could be counted for this principle.] The agricultural preservation parcels, open space parcels and tree buffers are indicated as guiding design features in the concept plan. The plan is highly protective of the views along Clover Street and Tobin Road. Two neighborhood-scale play areas and a small recreation area are shown for neighborhood use of some of the open space. Open space parcels will need to be designated with conservation easements to assure permanent protection of open space, whether for private or public use.

3. Buffer new development from existing residences and public views. Buffer areas and open space areas are clearly identified on the concept plan. Enhancements to the landscape buffer would be welcomed as supporting this principle.

4. Restoration and adaptive reuse of mined landscapes. The former quarry site on the east side of Clover Street and adjacent to Mendon Ponds Park is depicted as reclaimed and restored and reused as a residential neighborhood. Not only will this former quarry be safely reclaimed from its current poor conditions, it will also provide an area to receive growth and thus reduce the need for impacting the highly visible agricultural fields on the west side of Clover Street.

5. Provision of trail connections through the neighborhood. The concept plan illustrates neighborhood trail connections for pedestrians to connect neighborhoods and the county park. This plan does not show what may be additional pedestrian needs, such as safety features for crossing Clover Street to reach Mendon Ponds Park.

6. Provision of public sewers. In order to be more protective of the open, countryside so visually important to the community, this concept plan shows houses in conservation clusters. The ability to cluster homes requires sewer (and water) infrastructure which would be needed for this concept plan.

7. Adaptive reuse of farm structures that preserves the agricultural setting and uses such as the farmstead, barns and surrounding fields. As mentioned above, this concept plan shows continuance of the farmstead and its complex of farm buildings and farm setting as an important design feature. The farmstead, farm buildings and a significant sized large lot at a minimum should be retained to support future reuse for an agricultural-related use.

8. Creative site planning that maintains residential uses, pastures and rural character (i.e. not cookie-cutter design) allowing for direct visual access to open land, woodlots, horse farms, scenic views, etc. This concept plan illustrates respect for natural features in its conservation approach to siting development. For this particular concept plan the highest value was to be protective of visual resources and thus the approach shows “tucking homes” into some small wooded areas. Another conceptual approach may illustrate fewer houses or show houses more compact in arrangement, thus being even more protective of existing wooded areas and existing habitat.

9. Design that respects and buffers Mendon Ponds Park. This concept plan is most significantly protective of Mendon Ponds Park through maintaining the agricultural countryside corridor along Clover Street as one arrives at the entrance to the park.

10. Protection of dark night skies through limited lighting and appropriate placement, design and construction standards. This is not specifically depicted on this type of concept plan but it should be included in any development proposal.

2.5 Related Land Use Goals and Objectives

Owners of large acreages expressed the need to realize the equity value of their landholdings for their estate and financial planning purposes. Other landowners and business owners in the area indicated the need to be able to continue and even expand their existing business operations, such as mining. The existing zoning limits farmers in their abilities to conduct certain agricultural commercial activities, such as riding academies and tack shops.

Other landowners and residents in the area indicated concern that the current comprehensive plan and existing zoning allows for a potential growth pattern in the area that is too dense and is ultimately not desired by the community.

By incorporating the Community Values Map as a tool for site planning, the Town of Pittsford may communicate the community's overall vision for the area to potential developers. This tool will provide a clear and consistent source of information to guide decision-making for siting the development desired for any particular parcel of land in this part of town.



3.0 Recommendations and Conclusion

3.1 Land Uses

- ◆ To truly support agriculture, the working landscape and its contributions to maintaining countryside character as an ongoing rural activity desired in this portion of the Town of Pittsford, not only rural residential uses, but also agricultural and agricultural-related uses that are low-impact to residential neighbors should be permitted as allowed primary land uses. The types of compatible agricultural-related uses considered appropriate for this area include, for example, horse farms, riding academies, tack shops and veterinarian's offices.
- ◆ Encourage the restoration and reclamation of mined lands and mining sites on an accelerated basis. Mining operations should be buffered and the permanent protection of open space amenities should be secured as part of mining projects. Incentive zoning could be a tool to allow minor (for example, ten to fifteen percent) expansion of existing operations to achieve these goals provided that these and other performance standards are met (e.g., minimal impact access roads, acceptable hours of operation, guaranteed schedule and performance standards for reclamation and restoration of landscape and adequate buffers and setbacks).
- ◆ Consider allowing certain non-residential uses that are low-impact to the community, such as a country store and farmers market, through incentive zoning. Project proposals that demonstrate the application and advancement of the guiding principles and community conservation values to a significant degree may be considered for this option.

- ◆ Maintain the current level and scale of the study area as a link in the transportation corridor network. Avoid future creation of a new exit/interchange off of the New York State Thruway in this area of the Town of Pittsford.

3.2 Zoning

- ◆ Amend the Town of Pittsford Zoning Code to create a new zoning district, Rural Residential South Pittsford (RRSP), encompassing the whole area south of the NYS Thruway to reflect the desired changes outlined in this plan. The following ideas should be incorporated into the zoning amendment:
 - Change the base density to be applied throughout the new zoning district from one unit per ten-acre parcel to one unit per five-acre parcel. The proposed new zoning base of one unit per five-acre parcel would be applicable to all parcels throughout the RRSP. A five-acre rural lot settlement pattern is more appropriate in small subdivisions, such as those on parcels less than twenty acres, and is not as appropriate for large-acreage development.
 - For parcels twenty acres or more in size that are proposed for development, establish a system of conservation standards matched to the guiding principles. The standards should help to mitigate the adverse impact of growth, secure community amenities and conserve important community values, including open space, in exchange for allowing density up to a maximum of one-unit per one-acre. The goal is to protect to a significant extent the lands valued by the community, including open space lands in the area.

- As noted previously, the conservation-based development standards will allow increases in development density from the base of one residential unit per five acres of developable land to a maximum of one residential unit per one acre. However, such conservation standards would allow increases in development densities based on the degree to which a proposal provides for community conservation amenities. Lot sizes will be flexible as long as open space is integral to the development. Minimum lot sizes will be established based on dwelling type.
 - Use the Community Values Map and the Conceptual Master Plan developed in this plan as illustrative examples to guide the application of community values and principles as well as the design of future growth and improvements in the study area. One approach is for the two maps and complementary text to be a supplement/ amendment to the town's *Greenprint Design Guidelines* specific to the study area. The maps should be referenced in the zoning for this area and linked to the principles guiding growth and change as outlined in this plan. The development community, landowners and the planning and zoning boards should use the maps as a tool to help guide development in this area of town. Development should be protective of the components characterized in the maps.
- ◆ Review and revise, as needed, the town's design guidelines for development in rural residential areas and in subdivisions, including the proposed new zoning district of Rural Residential South Pittsford (RRSP).

- ◆ Review and revise, as needed, the town's subdivision regulations as is necessary.

3.3 Conclusion

By working together, residents, landowners, community leaders, town staff and the town's consultants developed the "South of the Thruway Update to the Town of Pittsford Comprehensive Plan" as an amendment to the town's 1995 comprehensive plan. Overall, this 2004 plan update highlights opportunities to protect natural and cultural resources in a creative way. The recommendations made here will help to increase the kind and type of land uses as well as reinforce the agricultural countryside aesthetic that the community desires for this part of Pittsford.

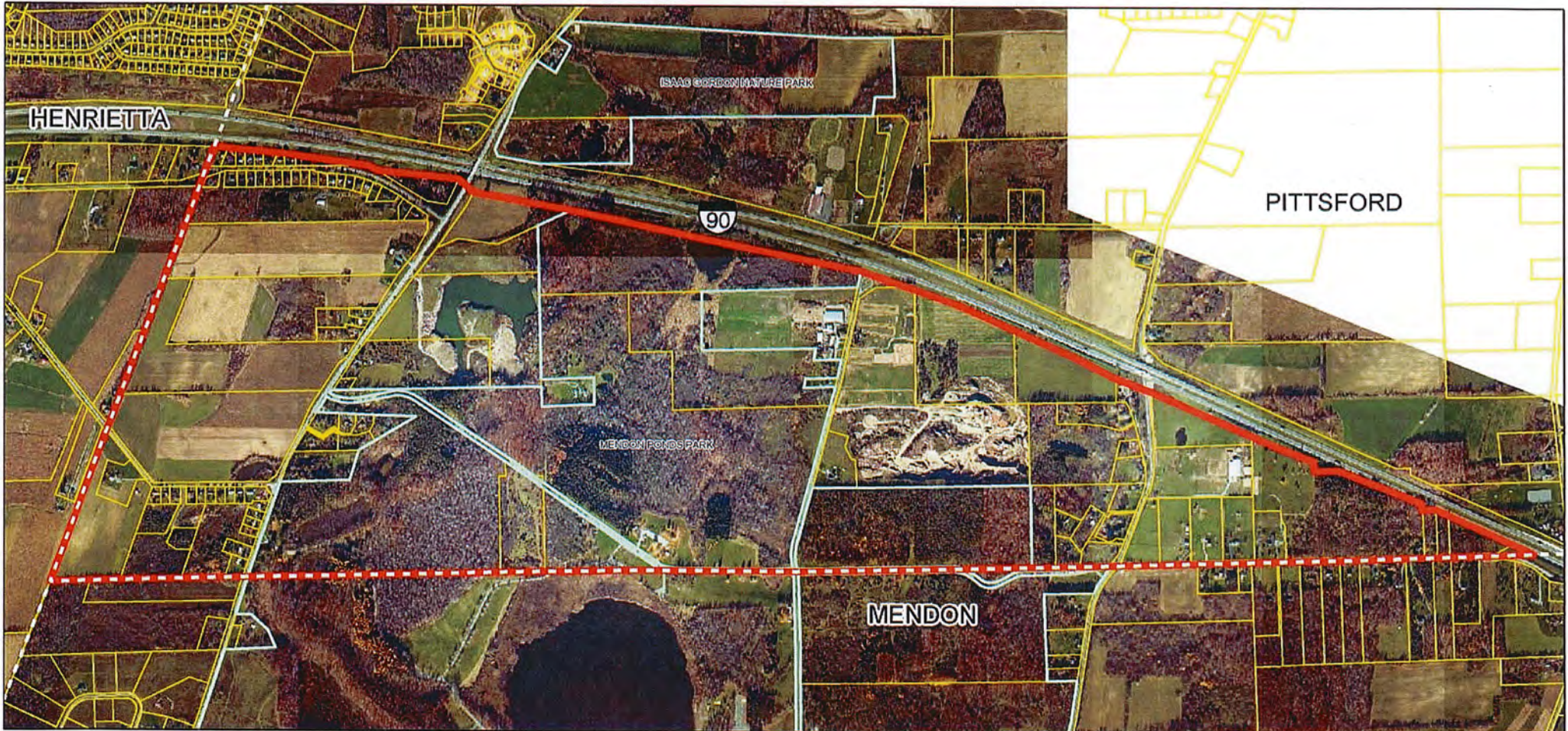
South of Thruway Study Area

Update to the Town of Pittsford Comprehensive Plan



Legend

- Study Area
- Real Property
- Park Boundary

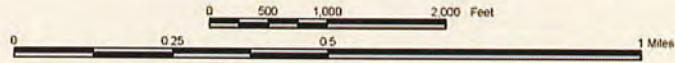


Environmental Features and Open Space

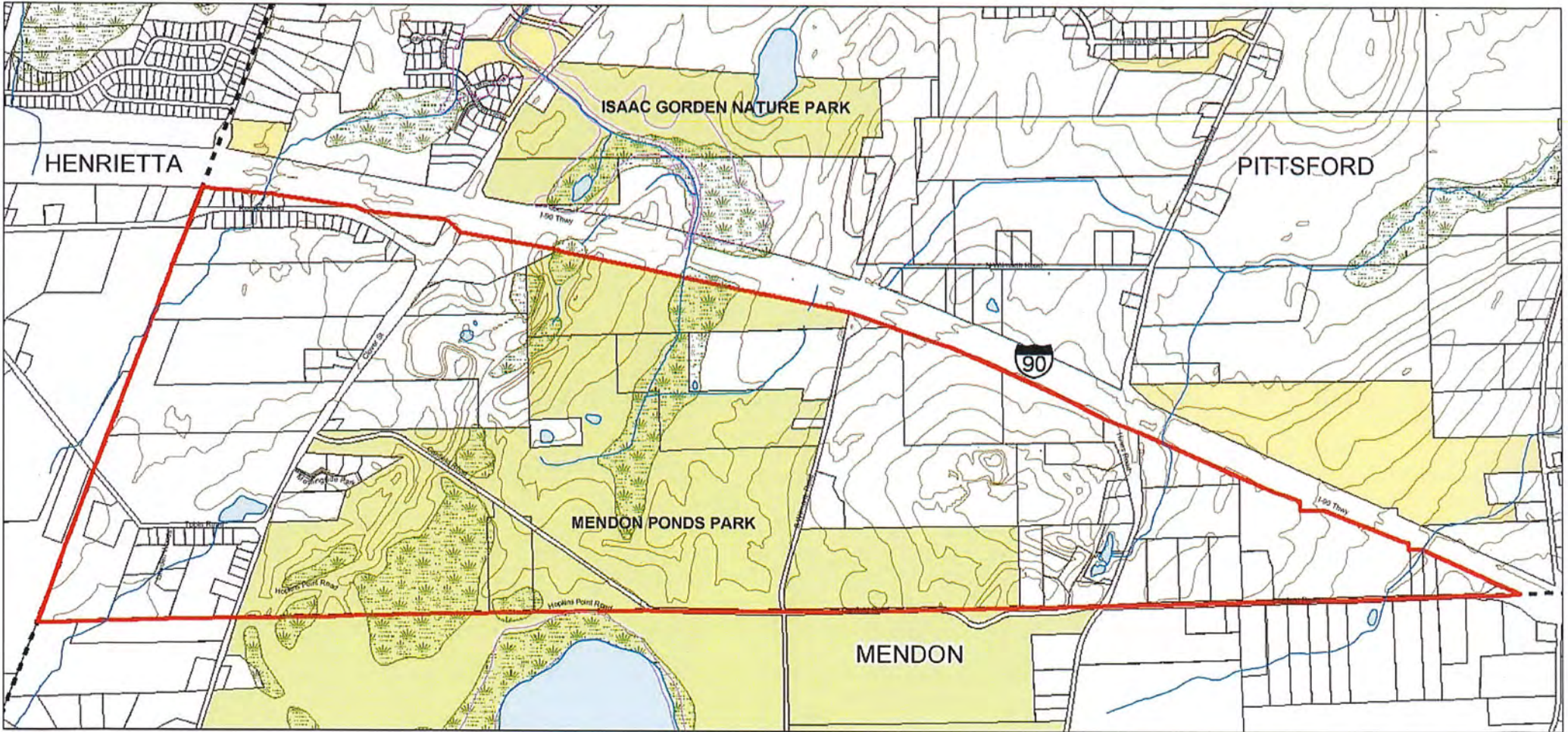
Town of Pittsford South of Thruway Study



Legend	
	Study Area
	Real Property
	Park
	Open space
	NYS DEC Wetland
	FEMA Flood Zone
	Streams
	Open water
	Elevation Contours (20ft interval)

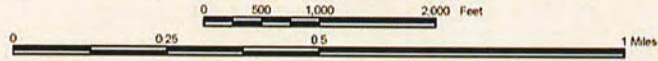


Source: Town of Pittsford GIS
Monroe County GIS services division



Real Property Land Classification

Town of Pittsford South of Thruway Study

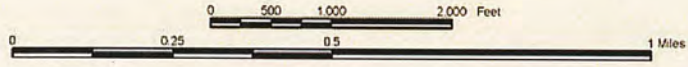


Source: Monroe County Real Property Services, 8/2003



Group Focus Areas

Town of Pittsford South of Thruway Study



Legend

- Study Area
- Park

