

SUMMARY

OF THE. 2003 TOWN OF DANBY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted September 22, 2003

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Intent of the Comprehensive Plan

The primary intent of the Danby Comprehensive Plan is to articulate an overall vision preserving the Town's rural character, while providing guidelines for its residential and economic development. The Plan should also guide Town planning for public facilities, infrastructure, and community service programs, provide information for applications from the Town and its organizations for funding, and educate agencies, governments, and potential developers and residents about Danby's goals and objectives. NOTE: The full text document "2003 Town of Danby Comprehensive Plan" also includes maps, appendices and references that are not included in this summary.

B. Town Vision

As the Town of Danby enters the 21st century we seek to plan for:

- A community that values and seeks to conserve its rural character.
- An economically viable and socially diverse community that provides for, and values, a variety of lifestyles, interests, and opportunities.
- Orderly growth that will not unduly or unreasonably disrupt neighborhoods.
- A town that provides activities, education, and facilities to promote a sense of community and cooperation for all its residents.
- A community that encourages innovative and responsible uses of its historic and natural resources, to enhance both environmental protection and economic development

C. Planning Process and Implementation

The development of the Comprehensive Plan began with a survey of residents in 1998, and has included review of previous Town planning documents, data collection, map preparation, analysis of information, identification of Town goals and objectives, public *input sessions, joint meetings of the Town Board and Planning Board, and revision and approval of this draft by the Planning Board. Following public hearings the Planning Board will revise the draft and submit it to the Town Board. The Town Board will review the draft, hold a public hearing for input from the residents and finally adopt the Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan is meant to be an active document. While remaining consistent with the philosophy of the 1989 Comprehensive Plan, it has built upon it and been updated to reflect current conditions in Danby. As a continuing process, the Planning Board, the Town Board, and the public can move from vision to action by establishing priorities for strategy implementation, gathering updated data, adopting new policies, and regulations as necessary to conform to the Goals and Objectives of the Plan, and coordinating with neighboring municipalities and Tompkins County.

D. Goals, Objectives and Strategies of the Comprehensive Plan

The Goals that are included in each section of the Comprehensive Plan describe desired characteristics of Danby for the next ten years. Accompanying each goal are Objectives that propose general approaches for meeting that goal, and for each of the objectives a set of Strategies suggests tasks or mechanisms for achieving the objective. Collectively these Goals, Objectives and Strategies will enable Danby to achieve its vision.

E. Danby Today

The Town of Danby, which encompasses 53.6 square miles, is located in the rural south, central portion of Tompkins County in the Finger Lakes region of central New York. It is bordered by the towns of Ithaca, Caroline, Candor, Spencer, and Newfield. According to the 2000 Census, the Town has a population of 3,007, most of which resides in northern Danby. Approximately one-quarter of the Town land area is located within the Danby State Forest, which dominates the southern, portion of the Town. The Town includes two unincorporated hamlets: West Danby, on Spencer Road (Route 34/96), is primarily residential, while Central Danby, on Danby Road (Route 96B), is somewhat larger and contains commercial, institutional, and industrial sites. Almost all of the Town's business development is currently found along Route 96B.

F. Recent Development

During the 1960s and 1970s, university and light industrial development in the area impacted Danby's growth significantly. This growth continued through the 1980s and 1990s, when several residential and commercial development projects were approved in Danby and the population increased steadily. In the mid-1990s, this growth slowed, giving Danby a modest increase in population over the past decade. The growth in Danby in the 21st century will continue to be influenced by change in the surrounding areas. The major challenge to the Town in the coming, decade will be to maintain a small-town, rural identity while encouraging improvement of housing, services and economic vitality.

II. CURRENT CONDITIONS AND GOALS FOR THE FUTURE

A. Population and Housing

Danby's population of 3,007 translates to only 56.1 persons per, square mile, one of the lowest population densities in the County. The median household income in Danby is relatively high and the poverty rate is one of the lowest in the County. The Southern Tier East Regional, Planning Development Board, using 1990 Census data, projected that the population of Danby would increase by 800 residents over the succeeding twenty years. However, in the first decade of this period the actual increase was only 149 residents. Based on age data from the 2000 Census, the proportion of elderly residents will increase in the next ten years.

The number of housing units in Danby has increased by 16% over the past decade; this increase is primarily in owner occupied housing. The overall rental occupancy rate is small, using particularly in comparison to the surrounding area. A significant portion of the housing stock in Danby is substandard and requires rehabilitation. Despite this, both owner occupied and rental housing in the Town are expensive in comparison to County averages. With this small number of rental units and general high pricing, demand for diversity of housing for families of moderate and lower income brackets may increase and thus become a planning issue.

Goal A1: A broad range of housing options is available for all present and future Town residents.

Objective A1.1: Identify the size and scope of existing and future housing resources.

Strategies:

A1. 1. 1 Develop an inventory of the Town's current housing resources.

A1.1.2 Prepare a projection for housing demands over the next twenty years, keeping in mind the, expected demographic changes in Danby.

A1. 1.3 Define the areas of the central Danby and West Danby hamlets, for use in future zoning and land use planning.

Objective A1.2: Create and support opportunities for diversity and quality in Danby's housing

Strategies:

A1 .2.1 Develop a housing plan that realistically provides for a full range of housing options for all Danby residents.

A1.2.2 Identify and apply for funding to support housing rehabilitation, homeowner's repair clinics, and low-income housing assistance.

A1.2.3 Explore the possibility of establishing a local rural housing fund with a dedicated revenue source.

A1.2.4 Explore ways to enhance awareness of Town residents concerning issues and programs for senior and affordable housing by sponsoring informational sessions on local, County, State, and Federal resources and creating a bulletin board at the Town Hall for senior and affordable housing information.

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Objective A1.3: Address regulatory barriers to the development of high quality, affordable housing.

Strategies:

A1.3.1 Modify relevant zoning provisions in accordance with the housing plan discussed in Strategy A1.2.1

A1.3.2 Institute density bonuses targeted to growth areas to encourage more use of clustered residential development.

A1.3.3 Consider the use of both minimum and maximum lot size restrictions in the High Density Residential Zones and any areas targeted for future development,

A1.3.4 Base residential land use regulations on "performance zoning" and similar contemporary techniques, in which land use intensity, not exclusively specific land uses, is regulated.

B. Natural Resources

The Town of Danby is rich in natural resources including wetlands, open water, view sheds, aquifers, State Park and Forest land, Unique Natural Areas, endangered/protected plant and animal species, farmland, and privately protected lands. Various regulations and protective measures exist for the preservation of some natural resources, while it is the responsibility of the Town to prioritize others for preservation and protection. Danby's preservation efforts should be accompanied by programming that increases the resources value as community recreational, economic, and historic assets, whenever this can be accomplished without degrading the natural environment. Overall, respondents to the 1998 Comprehensive Plan Survey stated a strong preference for maintaining the rural character of the Town and protecting its open spaces and environment

Goal B1: Danby's natural resources and natural areas are maintained, enhanced, and protected by public and private activities.

Objective B1. 1: Support and create public and private programs related to natural resources.

Strategies:

B1.1.1 Educate Town officials and residents in planning tools and techniques that protect natural resources and maintain rural character.

B1.1.2 Work with groups such as the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and Tompkins County, to identify significant habitats and endangered natural resources in order to establish priorities for resource protection.

B1.1.3 Support efforts of private conservation agencies, such as the Finger Lakes Land Trust, in coordinating conservation easements and preserves in threatened areas.

B1.1.4 Consider establishing a municipal conservation easement program and work on connecting nearby parcels and trails.

B1.1.5 Explore ways to change the tax structure to provide incentives for leaving land in open space/green space.

Objective B1. 2: Promote public awareness and appreciation of Danby's diverse natural resources.

Strategies:

B1.2.1 Support and publicize ongoing outdoor education programs sponsored by the Danby Community Council, the State Parks Department, and others.

B1.2.2 Involve residents in conducting a scenic resource inventory of Danby as a community effort to plan for preserving Danby's natural resources and rural character.

B1.2.3 Encourage community awareness of Danby's natural resources and unique viewsheds by developing fair exhibits, brochures, and events such as walking tours, bicycle tours, and photo contests.

Objective B1. 3: Be active in planning for preservation and use Of State Forest lands.

Strategies:

B1.3.1 Develop and pursue a regular and productive working relationship with the State Department of Environmental Conservation and the State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation in joint management and planning for the Danby State Forest

B1.3.2 Encourage the DEC to improve access to the State Forest by making specific improvements which may include but are not limited to improving parking areas, creating map, and identifying trail entrances.

B1.3.3 In conjunction with the DEC, and using local volunteers, provide access to identified State Forest areas for people with disabilities.

B1.3.4 Propose and work with the State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to develop both a natural history walking tour and a cultural history walking tour through the State Forest to highlight Danby's Unique Natural Areas and geological formations as well as its settlement and agricultural past.

Objective B1. 4: Protect water resources from sedimentation, run-off from erosion, drainage, contamination and flooding

Strategies:

B1.4.1 Enhance the study of drainage, runoff, and water use in the review of development applications and require drainage planning or improvements and erosion and sedimentation control as needed.

B1.4.2 Develop a funding program for a Town salt shed that adequately protects the surrounding wetlands.

B1.4.3 Participate in the activities of other agencies and organizations in water resource planning, such as the County Water Resources Board and the Cayuga Lake Watershed Association.

B1.4.4 Support the wetlands protection enforcement efforts of State and Federal agencies.

B1.4.5 Encourage residents to obtain assistance from the County Soil and Water Conservation District for wetlands restoration and pond construction. Maintain informational materials at the Town Hall to encourage resident use.

B1.4.6 Identify properties outside the 100-year flood plain that are, frequently subject to flooding and develop plans for flood hazard mitigation. Consider applying to FEMA for related hazard mitigation funding.

B1.4.7 Discourage development in aquifer recharge areas, when these areas have been identified.

B1.4.8 Discourage development on erosion-prone steep slopes.

Objective B1.5: Actively work with County, State, and Federal agencies to improve hunting, fishing, and wildlife management programs on State lands.

Strategies:

B1.5.1 Encourage the County and the State to establish a Quality Deer Management Program to promote a healthy and viable deer population and to reduce overpopulation.

B1.5.2 Encourage the State to investigate stocking Jennings Pond with such species as are viable in a shallow water impoundment.

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Goal B2: Innovative and responsible land use policies enhance both environmental protection and local economic development..

Objective B2. 1: Enhance use of existing regulations that balance the conservation of natural resources with new construction and development Draft and adopt new regulations where appropriate.

Strategies:

B2.1.1 Encourage developers to use voluntary preservation of open space and conservation methods.

B2.1.2 Study improvements to the Town's present regulations to further protect natural resources while providing for sensible and flexible development patterns. Examples include, but are not limited to, conservation overlay zoning, incentive zoning (which would provide density bonuses in exchange for the protection of important open spaces) and rural development guidelines.

B2.1.3 Streamline the development review process, particularly with respect to small subdivisions. Consider a minor land division permit for clustered subdivisions that meet certain rural development and environmental impact criteria.

B2.1.4 Establish conservation standards for Unique Natural Areas and buffer zones around these areas.

C. Economy,

Danby is primarily a residential community. Its low population density, low poverty level, and high median income, particularly in comparison to the rest of the County, represent three of its greatest strengths. The Town has, however, only a small number of community oriented commercial and service establishments. In addition, residential development pressure on some of Danby's best agricultural land presents a challenge for economic health in the agricultural sector, which is no longer a major sector of employment. However, Danby's agricultural lands, as well as its State Park and Forest lands are economic resources that can provide a basis for future employment in education, recreation and tourism. Current Danby residents primarily work in the educational and social services sector outside the Town and commute an average of 23 minutes to work. A few residents are employed in Danby by local businesses and the Town, while 7.2% of the population is self-employed.

Goal C1: A viable and diverse local economy supports, and benefits from, growth in the regional economy.

Objective C1.1: Develop a cooperative relationship with other towns and agencies in the region.

Strategies:

C1.1.1 Maintain active dialogue with other Town governments in the region.

C1.1.2 Work with regional economic development agencies, such as Tompkins County Area Development (TCAD), to achieve growth strategies based on contemporary economic trends and technologies as well as on local priorities and conditions.

C1.1.3 Ensure that, as Danby benefits from regional growth, adverse impacts are minimized through economic and policy arrangements with other municipalities in the region.

C1.1.4 Plan for transition of incubator or start-up businesses to the next stage in a small business park in Danby, or in another municipality with tax advantages for Danby and the business.

Goal C2: Danby promotes the best use of its resources to stimulate the local economy.

Objective C2.1: Enhance the economic development base potential of public and private land use related to active and passive recreation.

Strategies:

C2.1.1 Encourage businesses that enhance and support tourism and recreation.

C2.1.2 Utilize and promote State Park and Forest lands for recreation and tourism. (See also Objectives B 1.2 and B 1.3.)

C2.1.3 Support programs and efforts to link agricultural resources, both active and historic, to tourism. (See also Strategies D1.1.5, D1.1.6, D1.2.4 and D1.2.5.)

C2.1.4 Investigate creation of horse riding trails with linkage to horse boarding facilities, riding schools, bed and breakfasts, etc.

Objective C2.2: Preserve and support Danby's historic and cultural resources to promote recreation and tourism.

Strategies:

C2.2.1 Ensure that existing zoning and subdivision regulations are consistent with this objective.'

C2.2.2 Create a local sign program to inform visitors about historic sites.

C2.2.3 Encourage local participation in regional tourism and cultural programs such as the Greater Ithaca Art Trail.

C2.2.4 Determine the feasibility of designating Danby's State routes in national and State historic and scenic byway programs (such as the New York Scenic Roads Program) to encourage retention of viewsheds and discourage billboards. Consider drafting local legislation to recognize and protect the rural/pastoral qualities of certain roads and views in agricultural areas.

Goal C3: Business development and employment opportunities adapt to current and future trends in rural communities.

Objective C3.1: Support the development of community-oriented, small-scale business, and service establishments such as a diner, gas station, farmers' market, post office, and health care services. Work with them to ensure there is adequate space and infrastructure for their development.

Strategies:

C3.1.1 Facilitate participation by local and regional businesses in the planning and policymaking process.

C3.1.2 Support the formation of a local business association.

C3.1.3 Review zoning and subdivision ordinances as well as site plan review procedures to ensure flexibility for contemporary trends in business while ensuring compatibility with neighborhood character and the environment

C3.1.4 Identify locations for a low-impact small business; incubator space within the Town to provide for local employment opportunities.

Objective C3.2: Support the development of innovative employment options for Danby residents in community-oriented, small-scale businesses and service establishments."

Strategies:

C3.2.1 Encourage employment of residents in these local businesses and organizations.

C3.2.2 Support senior employment opportunities to accommodate labor force changes.

C3.2.3 Encourage local youth employment.

Objective C3.3: Restrict traffic-generating business development in Danby to the areas of the Central and West Danby hamlets, strengthening them as traditional centers of commerce.

Strategies:

C3.3.1. Alter zoning map to concentrate commercial zoning in or near the hamlets.

C3.3.2 Revise zoning ordinance to allow the integration of compatible small business uses in traditional neighborhood areas near the hamlet centers.

C3.3.3 Ensure that there are incentives for centralized commercial development in the hamlets.

C3.3.4 Continue to implement the Central Danby Hamlet Revitalization Plan and develop a similar plan for West Danby. Begin implementation through a review and approval process with the Town Board.

C3.3.5 Encourage participation in the State Agritourism Initiative.

D. Agriculture

Farming in Danby today is in a period of continuing transition, as it is in other towns in the County. Currently seventeen farms own or rent land in Danby, ten of which are eligible for the County Agricultural Assessment Program based on income and acreage. A significant number of other active agricultural lands in the Town are used for small, part-time agricultural purposes other than conventional farming. Agricultural land uses include livestock operations, orchards, hay production, vegetable production, dairy, horse operations, Christmas tree farms, and perennial plant production. Most of the large acreage farms are located in the broad valleys and plateaus in the northern half of town, which is the most level ground in the Town but is also under the most residential development pressure from the neighboring Town of Ithaca. In the 1998 Comprehensive Plan Survey, respondents identified maintenance and protection of open spaces and agricultural lands as significant priorities for the next ten years. Results of a 1999 public meeting to discuss agriculture in Danby identified produce price instabilities, taxes, price of farmland, and poor economic incentives as major concerns for farmers. Recent efforts to boost agriculture in Danby and the surrounding area include the inception of a Farmer's Market, the implementation of initiatives recommended by the Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan, and the formation of the County-wide Agricultural Development Subcommittee which will examine potential methods of farmland preservation. An Agricultural Resource Center is also being developed in conjunction with the Danby Agricultural and Environmental School.

Goal DI: Current and future agricultural initiatives are supported within the Town.

Objective DI. 1: Promote agriculture as an active and vital part of Danby's economy.

Strategies:

- D1.1.1 Involve the farming community in relevant Town planning and decision-making.
- D1.1.2 Pursue fire tax abatements on agricultural lands and review fire district regulations regarding assessed values.
- D1.1.3 Research ways to provide tax relief on land owned by farmers who do not qualify for Agricultural Assessment.
- D1.1.4 Consider tax relief in exchange for protection by conservation easements for targeted areas.
- D1.1.5 Start a local farm-link/match-up program connecting retiring farmers with homebuyers interested in entering farming.
- D1.1.6 Provide information at the Danby Town Hall on regional outlets for farm products, regional farm supply stores, community supported agriculture (CSA) opportunities, farm tourism and Cornell University's Farming Alternatives program.
- D1.1.7 Encourage innovation and diversification of agricultural practices to complement traditional animal farming.
- D1.1.8 Support the recent development of the Farmer's Market in Danby.

Objective D1.2: Develop an appreciation of Danby agriculture through local activities, policies, and programs.

Strategies:

D1.2.1 Maintain agriculture as a permitted use in all districts.

D1.2.2 Seek to educate residents in farming areas about standard farming activities.

D1.2.3 Pass local nuisance and right-to-farm laws to protect farmers who practice generally accepted management methods.

D1.2.4 Seek a grant to create a brochure about agriculture and fanning in Danby, highlighting historic significance, products, hours of operation if products are available from the farm, where products are available if they are not sold on the premises, and a contact number. Make this brochure available to the public at the Danby Town Hall, stores, and the Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce visitor's center.

D1.2.5 Organize a "Danby Farms Day" celebration to bring children and adults on tours of local farms to see where their food is produced.

Goal D2: Agriculture is protected as a potential "steward", of the environment and open space.

Objective D2. 1: Enhance viable, environmentally responsible agricultural uses in the Town of Danby.

Strategies:

D2. 1.1 Gather current and accurate information about the locations of active and inactive agricultural lands in Danby.

D2.1.2 Adopt and implement an open space protection plan with incentives to link open space with agricultural land uses.

D2.1.3 Review current zoning regulations to identify their impact on development of actively farmed or unused farmland and explore approaches, such as cluster subdivisions, flag lots, and rural compounds, that will promote conservation of farms without compromising land owners' rights to a fair economic return.

D2.1.4 Through Cornell University's Farming Alternatives Program and the Cornell Cooperative Extension, encourage the use of Best Management Practices and IPM (Integrated Pest Management) to minimize negative environmental impacts.

Objective D2.2: Work cooperatively with organizations and municipalities to preserve farmland

Strategies:

D2.2.1 Develop a working relationship with adjoining municipalities with which Danby shares contiguous farmland.

D2.2.2 Encourage the voluntary conveyance of conservation easements and development of buffer programs, coordinating this work with the Finger Lakes Land Trust.

D2.2.3 Ensure that plans for farmland preservation are consistent with the plan of the Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board.

D2.2.4 Communicate with the County's Agricultural Development Subcommittee in developing policies and programs for sustaining Danby's farmland.

E. Transportation

A network of State, County, and local roads serves Danby. The two main State routes are Routes 96B and 34/96, which pass through the hamlets of Central Danby and West Danby, respectively. The functional classifications of Danby's roads, which indicate the amount of traffic occurring on the road and road characteristics such as width, do not reflect the actual conditions or traffic volumes of several roads in the Town. The functional classifications also do not correspond with the road jurisdiction; for example, one high traffic "Rural Minor Collector" route in Danby includes road sections under Town and County jurisdictions. These incongruities should be identified and considered in planning. Public transportation exists on major routes in Danby and while limited, is improving. Public transportation received strong support on the 1998 Comprehensive Plan Survey and a majority indicated that they would be willing to pay higher taxes for increased public transport service.

Goal E1: Roads are designed for their planned use, are constructed and maintained to make efficient use of funds, and balance safety, ease of travel, protection of neighborhood character, and quality of life.

Objective E1.1: Rationalize capital improvement and maintenance spending on roads to ensure cost-effectiveness.

Strategies:

E1.1.1 In cooperation with Tompkins county, define and maintain a road classification system. identifying primary connectors and secondary, limited maintenance, seasonal and private roads.

E1.1.2 Develop construction specifications and maintenance criteria based on classification use, and neighborhood character.

E1.1.3 Seek transfer to Tompkins County of jurisdiction for through routes in exchange for less-traveled roads now under County jurisdiction.

E1.1.4 Lobby for State capital improvement funding to be conditioned on minimum criteria for traffic volume and/or housing density.

E1.1.5 Prioritize road capital improvement projects and seek outside funding consistent with their priority and scope.

Objective E1.2: Promote safe travel for all road uses, including vehicular, pedestrian and equestrian traffic.

Strategies:

E1.2.1 Adequately fund preventive maintenance.

E1.2.2 Ensure that Town road construction planning is accompanied by planning for safety, such as speed limits corresponding to design criteria and neighborhood characteristics, traffic measures when they are feasible and appropriate to limit speed to desired speed, safety signage, increased enforcement of vehicle and traffic laws, and other measures to protect neighborhoods.

E1.2.3 Seek updated information on traffic volumes and accident statistics from NYSDOT, NY State Police, and the Tompkins County Sheriffs Department on an annual basis and use this information to identify areas of concern related to roadway use and conditions, intersection safety, and environmental capacity, and plan for safety improvements.

E1.2.4 In coordination with other agencies, implement road safety improvements for farm vehicles.

E1.2.5 In cooperation with other municipalities in Tompkins County, consider pursuing New York State authorization of Town control of speed limits on Town and County roads, weighing the increased local administrative and enforcement costs that such local control would generate.

Objective E1.3: Base road construction and maintenance on rural development guidelines and design criteria that complement desirable characteristics associated with the Town.

Strategies:

E1.3.1 Create rural development guidelines and design criteria based on locally desirable: (i.e., neighborhood-based) characteristics for road widths, speed limits, proper roadside maintenance, erosion control techniques, and site amenities.

E1.3.2 Enhance opportunities of public input related to road maintenance and improvement plans.

Goal E2: A variety of transportation options reduces automobile traffic while meeting community needs.

Objective E2. 1: Identify transportation needs, support existing resources for the Town of Danby, and consider alternative modes of transportation in future planning.

Strategies:

E2.1.1 Create a resident task force to identify public transportation needs within the 'Community

E2.1.2 Consider bus, walkway, bike, and trail systems in all development plans and improve regulations and develop guidelines for these systems.

E2.1.3 Publicize the existing Park-and-Ride site in Central Danby and request the development of additional sites throughout the Town, as necessary.

Objective E2.2: Actively participate in area mass transportation planning.

Strategies:

E2.2.1 Develop a Multimodal Transportation Plan for Danby.

E2.2.2 Work with agencies such as MAT and Gadabout to expand transportation options for the entire population, particularly senior citizens and youth.

Goal E3: Road related construction minimizes negative impacts on neighborhoods and natural resources.

Objective E3. 1: Base road construction and maintenance on rural development guidelines and design criteria that complement desirable characteristics associated with the Town.

Strategies:

E3.1.1 Create rural development guidelines and design criteria based on locally desirable (i.e., 'neighborhood based) characteristics for road widths, speed limits, proper roadside maintenance, erosion control techniques; and site amenities such as walkways, bike lanes, lighting and landscaping.

E3.1.2 When upgrading or downgrading roads that fall under Town jurisdiction, emphasize joint planning and decision making between the Town Highway Department, Planning Board, and the Town Board, as well as input of all concerned Town residents.

F. Historic and Cultural Resources

In 1998 Historic Ithaca conducted a reconnaissance level survey of all structures in Danby. The survey noted that agricultural sites and structures, along with historic cemeteries, are Danby's most threatened cultural resources; it also recommended more in-depth studies of early settlement, agriculture, and commerce in Danby. A 2001, study of "Historic Farm Resources in the Town of Danby, NY" identified significant cultural and natural resources including but not limited to farm buildings, active and inactive agricultural lands, fields, and fence rows. This report also proposed a process for preservation of these resources. The study suggested that the areas in greatest need of preservation efforts in Danby include part-time and non-working farms, as they are in the most danger of losing farmland and buildings. It also identified eight clusters of properties in Danby and prioritized these clusters based on their need for preservation. The four highest priority clusters are 1) the northeast part of the Town including East Miller, Hornbrook, and Nelson Roads, 2) an area south of central Danby including Danby, Steam Mill, Curtis and Hill Roads, 3) the northwest portion of Danby, and 4) West Danby, which is cited as the Town's best candidate for an historic district. Other areas recommended for agricultural preservation were 5) Spencer Road south of the West Danby hamlet, 6) Brown and Bruce Hill Roads, 7) Coddington Road at Banks Road, and 8) the hamlet of Central Danby.

Goal F1: Preservation policies and public awareness protect Danby's historic and cultural resources.

Objective F1.1: Articulate the importance of historic and cultural resources in the Town's land use regulations.

Strategies:

F1.1.1 Consider adding more protective language and specific references to working with historic landscapes and sites to both the Zoning Ordinance and the Subdivision Regulations.

F1.1.2 Develop design standards for new construction that reflect Danby's architectural heritage.

Objective F1. 2: Maintain existing historic and cultural resources and designate additional sites as appropriate.

Strategies:

F1.2.1 Submit grant proposals for the Town to support historic preservation, but provide basic Town funding to support projects if grant awards are not received.

Objective F1. 3: Further identify document, and maintain archival records for the Town's historic and cultural resources.

Strategies:

F1.3.1 Continue to support a Town Historian and provide opportunities to share significant findings.

F1.3.2 Provide Adequate space for archival storage of significant documents and Town records.

F1.3.3 Coordinate with the Town Historian, Historic Ithaca, and local school or community groups to collect oral histories. Encourage intergenerational participation of youth and seniors within Danby in this project.

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F1.3.4 Solicit resident input to create a list of potential historic sites and cultural resources.

F1.3.5 Create a list of historically, economically or aesthetically important buildings and develop ways of preserving and enhancing them.

Objective F1.4: Encourage grassroots preservation of historic and culturally related sites, structures and resources.

Strategies:

F1.4.1 Educate residents about the 1998 reconnaissance level survey, the 2001 historic farm resources report, and any subsequent studies. Make these documents available at the Town Hall Reading Center, circulate it among interested community groups, and encourage residents to add information.

F1.4.2 Provide resources at the Town Hall for owners of historic properties to encourage historically sensitive restoration. Resources include: a) information about financial programs that support preservation, such as tax credits for work on agricultural and commercial structures, b) style and design standards adopted by the Town, c) contact information for organizations and contractors with relevant knowledge and experience, and d) a directory of photographs, plans and other historical records useful in aiding restoration of Danby's historic buildings, indicating where such records can be found and how they can be accessed.

F1.4.3 Research the feasibility of establishing an historic preservation revolving loan fund.

F1.4.4 Recruit and train community volunteers to survey and maintain the Town's historic cemeteries.

Goal F2: Historic and cultural resources promote Danby's economic development, rural character, and community identity.

Objective F2. 1: Link preservation activities to economic development.

Strategies:

F2.1.1 Use Danby's historic and cultural resources creatively as assets to promote tourism or recreational activities such as the development of scenic drive and cemetery tours, bike trails that pass by historic resources, and walking trails near historic farmlands, where appropriate.

F2.1.2 Make a brochure describing Danby's resources available at the Chamber of Commerce and to local real estate agencies.

F2.1.3 Encourage Federal adoption of the proposed Historic Homeownership Assistance Act, which would allow tax credits for the rehabilitation of eligible historic properties.

Objective F2.2: Link preservation activities to maintenance of Danby's rural character.

Strategies:

F2.2.1 Establish a task force to: a) review the 2001 report on Historic Farm Resources, b) hold focus group work sessions where residents identify which aspects of the landscape they most wish to preserve, c) make recommendations for future preservation efforts, and d) consider special agricultural zoning based on historic farming patterns in Danby.

F2.2.2 Investigate tools available for preservation of historic farming communities, with a focus on New England and the Mid-Atlantic.

F2.2.3 Conduct a comparative study of the 1853, 1866, and current Town maps to identify the location and distribution of historic structures and homestead sites throughout the Town.

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Objective F2.3: Generate community identity, spirit, and pride through activities, and programs focused on historic and cultural, and scenic resources.

Strategies:

F2.3.1 Promote the establishment of a local historic association for the Town of Danby.

F2.3.2 Host community-based activities such as photo contests of historic and scenic sites and structures, and exhibits at the Danby Fair.

F2.3.3 Create spaces in locations throughout the Town to display local historic artifacts. Such spaces could be located at the Town Hall, a future community center, or could complement a local interpretive site.

F2.3.4 Develop a brochure featuring Danby's history through its buildings, landscapes and significant sites aimed at educating both residents and visitors.

F2.3.5 Coordinate with Historic Ithaca to determine the feasibility of nominating several of Danby's resources to the National and State Registers of Historic Places, focused on historic buildings in the hamlets of Central and West Danby. This feasibility study should take into account the possible social impact of such designations on these moderate-income communities.

G. Community Services

Community services and facilities that exist in Danby include Town government, public safety, education, community organizations including churches, human services, solid waste management, and recreational facilities and activities. Fire safety in Danby is provided by the all-volunteer Danby Fire District, which includes the Danby and West Danby Fire Departments'. The Fire Departments, though dedicated, do not have a sufficient number of volunteers. Danby is the only town in Tompkins County that does not presently have a K-12 school within its boundaries; the building that was previously used as an elementary school, however, is being developed into the Danby Agricultural and Environmental School (DAES), a project spearheaded by the Tompkins-Seneca-Tioga BOCES program. Other services that are not available in Danby are medical facilities, senior care, and public child care. The Danby Community Council sponsors Youth programs such as summer recreation, outing programs, nature study, holiday parties, and computer training, and produces the *Danby Area News*. In response to a desire for additional community programming, the Danby Community Park Association was formed to transform land adjacent to the Danby Federated Church into a public park. The absence of public facilities for expanded community programming should be considered in planning, Recreation, child and senior care, and a community center were all supported by a majority of the respondents in the 1998 Comprehensive Plan Survey and many respondents expressed a willingness to pay higher taxes for these services.

Goal G1: Municipal services and facilities meet residents' present and long-range needs.

Objective G1.1: Fund maintenance and improvement programs for municipal facilities and services.

Strategies:

G1.1.1 Develop, adopt and fund a multi-year capital improvement plan to ensure maintenance and improvements on Town buildings and properties, machinery and equipment

Objective G1.2: Ensure a safe community by evaluating public safety needs and coordinating with other organizations to improve the safety of the community,

Strategies:

G1.2.1 Review public safety needs in the Town and work with the Danby Fire District, the Tompkins County Sheriffs Department, and the New York State Police to meet those needs.

G1.2.2 Develop ways to deter speeding and to protect the variety of users of roads in the Town.

G1.2.3 Encourage the formation of neighborhood watch groups.

G1.2.4 Involve the Danby Fire District in planning for development so that water sources and accessibility for fire prevention and protection are adequately considered.

G1.2.5 Evaluate need for improved Fire District facilities.

G1.2.6 Assist the Danby Fire District in recruitment efforts for new volunteers.

G1.2.7 Develop Pre-disaster Mitigation and Disaster Preparedness Plans for the Town of Danby.

Objective G1. 3: Ensure that solid waste management facilities and services are accessible for Town residents.

Strategies:

G1.3.1 Consult with the Tompkins County Solid Waste Management Division about reestablishing a local recycling center.

G1.3.2 Consult salvage and auto dismantling businesses about creating a local drop-off station and pickup program for the collection of scrap metal, junked cars, and appliances.

G1.3.3 Consider establishing a local composting site.

Objective G1 4: Enhance the attractiveness of the hamlets as places to live by siting public and private services within walkable villages.

Strategies:

G1.4.1 Amend or enact new land use regulations to encourage public and private service providers to locate their facilities as close to the centers of the hamlets as possible, in structures designed for compatibility.

Goal G2: Community and, social services enhance the quality, of life of all residents.

Objective G2. 1: Support the provision of quality education to all residents.

Strategies:

G2.1.1 Work closely with the Ithaca City School District and with T.S.T. BOCES to ensure that the Danby Agricultural and Environmental School will be located in Danby and will benefit the Danby community as an educational opportunity and as an asset to the agricultural sector of the economy

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Objective G2.2 Support social organizations, programs, facilities and efforts to address quality of life issues.

Strategies:

G2.2.1 Facilitate the provision of space adequate for community organizations and programs.

G2.2.2 Continue plans for a community center.

G2.2.3 Sponsor, in cooperation with community organizations, a Danby Volunteer Fair for information and recruitment of new volunteers.

G2.2.4 Support community efforts to address quality-of-life issues including excessive noise, burning of toxic materials, and speeding vehicle traffic.

Objective G2.3: Ensure that adequate human services are available to all Danby residents.

Strategies:

G2.3.1 Support local services such as the Danby Food Pantry.

G2.3.2 Communicate with such agencies as the Tompkins County Human Service Coalition, Food-Net, Gadabout, and the American Red Cross related to enhancing residents' accessibility to agency services.

G2.3.3 Actively promote the establishment of outpatient health care facilities in Danby or in the southern part of Tompkins County.

G2.3.4 Study demand for both youth and senior day care facilities and develop plans for facilities that are needed.

Objective G2.4: Develop recreational opportunities in Danby to complement those currently available on State lands.

Strategies:

G2.4.1 Actively support the development of a Danby Community Park with active and passive recreational facilities that are needed in Danby and trail linkages to Jennings Pond as currently proposed for land east of the Bald Hill/Danby Road intersection.

G2.4.2 Establish a parks/recreation/open space improvement district and related funding mechanisms pursuant to New York State law.

G2.4.3 Promote Jennings Pond as a hub for year-round activities by negotiating with NY State to provide year-round use of restrooms, an improved boat launch, and food vending or concession services available to both winter and summer users.

G2.4.4 Work with the NY State Department of Transportation to enhance the utilitarian and esthetic qualities of the 96B parking area near Steam Mill Road.

Objective G2.5 Encourage local organizations, clubs and churches in their effort to meet community needs.

Strategies:

Strategy G2.5.1 Encourage churches and other local organizations to locate their facilities centrally in neighborhood-enhancing structures.

Strategy G2.5.2 Encourage participation in planning for meeting human service needs by representatives of organizations currently or prospectively involved in providing them.

H. Utilities and Communications

Approximately 90% of Danby's housing units obtain water from private wells. The only source of public water in the Town of Danby is the West Danby Water District, which services 110 dwelling units. The condition and capacity of this system may limit its growth to approximately 18 additional units. Water for the wells of Danby is drawn from aquifers about which the Town has very limited information. In 2002 the County Board funded a needs assessment for aquifer studies throughout the County. The resulting USGS proposals for full aquifer studies are now under consideration. The information to be gained from such studies would be invaluable, for planning future residential and business development in Danby. Thus considering ways to fund cost-sharing with Tompkins County for completion of these studies is a high priority. Essentially all of the sewage treatment systems in Danby are private septic systems. The collective effect of these systems on the water supply is unknown but also would be valuable information for Town planning. In 1998 the Town enacted a local law which requires issuance of a Special Permit for all telecommunications facilities.

Goal H1: Adequate utility and infrastructure systems are provided for present residents and are criteria for decisions on all development projects.

Objective H1.1: Ensure adequate private and public water supplies.

Strategies:

H1.1.1 Develop ways to fund USGS Aquifer studies through cost-sharing with Tompkins County so that the Town can identify problems; and opportunities related to water supply and quality.

H1.1.2 Create a map using data from the aquifer study, then available, that shows the areas within the hamlets most suitable and those that are unsuitable for future development in terms of water supply.

H1.1.3 Work with the West Danby Water District Board of Commissioners in planning for maintenance and periodic evaluation of the Water District system and in developing an overall land use plan for the -District and adjacent areas.

H1.1.4 Sponsor a "Clean Water Day," when Town residents bring water samples from private wells for testing. Utilize the information gathered, with permission of the residents, to assess the quality of well water in the Town.

Objective H1.2: Ensure that all sewage disposal systems are adequate to preserve water quality.

Strategies:

H1.2.1 Continue to involve the Tompkins County Division of Environmental Health in the review of development proposals.

H1.2.2 Investigate sewage disposal alternatives, including a cost/benefit analysis of small sewage disposal systems for clustered and village residential density housing, and enact enabling legislation for alternatives that are beneficial to the residents and the environment

Objective H1.3: Ensure that present and future needs for natural gas are met

Strategies:

H1.3.1 Consult with gas suppliers in land use planning.

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H1.3.2 Encourage NYSEG to extend natural gas service into areas of Danby adjacent to currently served areas of other towns.

H1.3.3 Work with NY State to minimize localized impacts related to gas drilling production, and distribution.

H1.3.4 Investigate the feasibility of enacting local legislation to supplement NY State regulation of gas drilling.

Objective H1.4: Ensure that present and future needs for electrical energy are met.

Strategies:

H1.4.1 Consult with electricity suppliers in land use planning.

H1.4.2 Investigate the opportunity for Danby residents to purchase electricity through an aggregate purchasing agreement.

H1.4.3 Investigate the feasibility and desirability of developing alternative energy sources for Danby, including wind turbines, while simultaneously considering safety and aesthetic issues.

Objective H1.5: Ensure that telecommunications coverage is adequate to meet community needs while minimizing adverse impacts.

Strategies:

H1.5.1 Consider studies of preferred locations for telecommunications facilities to complement the related Town Local Law.

H1.5.2 Ensure that use of the existing telecommunications tower is optimized for improving telecommunications of Danby residents.

Objective H1.6: Enhance the attractiveness and safety of hamlets as places to do business by improving infrastructure.

Strategies:

H1.6.1 Install street lighting where appropriate, referencing historic and cultural features of the Town in choice of fixtures.

H1.6.2 Work with the State DOT to enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety in the hamlets with such features as cross walks and designated pedestrian and bicycle routes.

III. LAND USE

The goals, objectives and strategies for Land Use in Danby are based on a vision of revitalized town centers with managed residential growth and protected open spaces. Forested and undeveloped lands, wetlands, and open water comprise 77% of Danby, or 26,568 acres. Active and inactive agricultural lands together comprise an additional 18%, or 6,060 acres. The remaining 5% of land in Danby is developed land. Agricultural land, wetlands, County Unique Natural Areas, State-owned lands, areas with historic or scenic value, and lands with slopes greater than 15% should be protected from extensive development. Respondents to the 1998 Comprehensive Plan Survey valued open space and recreation and believed in the importance of limiting business development, which many felt should be placed in the Central Danby hamlet. Half of the respondents also indicated that land use regulations should be increased along with development. The 2003 Danby Comprehensive Plan does not provide a specific, graphic land use plan, but provides data and identifies resources that lay the groundwork for land use planning. Preparing a Resource Conservation Plan for Danby would be a useful next step for the Town. This would entail designating areas that are to be conserved, such as Unique Natural Areas and conservation lands, State-owned lands, active agricultural areas, and historically important agricultural sites. The areas remaining available for growth and development are in the northernmost section of Danby, within the Central Danby hamlet, and along Route 96B. While the hamlet of West Danby may be somewhat less suitable for growth because of its proximity to wetlands, steep slopes and Unique Natural Areas, opportunities for development can also exist within and to the north of this hamlet. Protecting Danby's natural resources and rural character and focusing development in appropriate areas will require data collection and development of incentives and proper zoning provisions, all with community involvement.

Goal LU1: Land use practices of the Town seek to preserve natural, agricultural, and historic resources in Danby and the greater community.

Objective LU1. 1: Designate areas where development should be encouraged and areas where development should be discouraged

Strategies:

LU1.1.1 Maintain and enhance the traditional settlement patterns of the Central Danby and-West Danby hamlets by designating areas for high-density, clustered residential, business, and community oriented development in or near these hamlets.

LU1.1.2 Encourage the establishment of new Private Forests protected by forest conservation programs.

LU1.1.3 Encourage the preservation of Conservation Lands and Camps and the development of additional, similar resources.

LU1.1.4 Limit development in areas of Danby identified as wetlands, steep slopes, Natural Areas and State forests and parks.

LU1.1.5 Restrict development in areas of active agriculture, and in historically important agricultural lands through special agricultural zoning, site plan controls or clustered subdivisions.

LU1.1.6 Prevent sprawl by planning for residential development consistent with open space conservation, such as clustered housing or conservation subdivisions with adjacent protected open space.

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LU1.1.7 Document the amount and location of forested undeveloped acreage with frontage on existing year-round roads, and consider ways to protect these open spaces from urban sprawl

Objective LU1. 2: Provide incentives and appropriate regulations for clustered development and associated open-space conservation

Strategies:

LU1.2.1 Ensure that zoning regulations reflect desired development patterns by adding high density zones in and near the hamlets.

LU1.2.2 Discourage commercial strip development by locating businesses as close to the hamlet centers as possible and, where appropriate, by encouraging flexibility in lot dimensions and site design.

LU1.2.3 Explore possible enhancements and additions to water and sewer provision in areas where clustered development is desirable.

Objective LU1. 3: Develop a land use plan that is compatible with the principles of the greater community.

Strategies:

LU1.3.1 Coordinate planning with other municipalities in Tompkins County and adjoining counties, defining and working toward common goals.

LU1.3.2 Work with adjacent municipalities to conserve important intermunicipal resources.

LU1.3.3 Ensure that the Town's goals, objectives, and strategies and their implementation are in accordance with the Tompkins County Vital Communities Initiative.