

**CHAPTER 1**  
**INTRODUCTION**

TOWN OF PITTSFORD



## 1. PITTSFORD TODAY

The Pittsford of today is a dynamic community that offers a uniquely high quality of life to its residents. Conveniently located within metropolitan Rochester, the town has easy access to shopping, employment centers and big city amenities. A nationally recognized school district makes the town attractive to families, while two institutions of higher learning bring unique cultural and educational opportunities to the doorstep of residents. The historic and thriving Village of Pittsford and Erie Canal anchor the town and provide a focus for community life that is lacking in many suburbs. Pittsford residents can also easily access the selection and conveniences of a modern retail environment without leaving town. Monroe Avenue, the town's premier commercial corridor has experienced a rebirth in recent years, becoming not only a place to shop, but a destination and center for community life in its own right. Meanwhile, the town's agricultural roots live on in over 1,200 acres of permanently protected, working farms. Such farms confer a rural character on large areas of the town -- a complement to the town's developed areas.



*One of several working farms preserved as part of Pittsford's Greenprint.*



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The town's roots are also evident in the many historic structures that dot its landscape. Pittsford's emergence as a suburban community, for example, can be traced in the stately homes gracing East Avenue, and in the unique and eclectic Long Meadow neighborhood, the county's first streetcar suburb. Such historic structures and neighborhoods greatly contribute to Pittsford's ambiance. Woven through it all is an impressive network of trails and sidewalks for walking and biking that function not only as a recreational resource but as a truly viable means of getting from Point A to Point B. And one cannot forget the residents themselves. Time and again, throughout the course of this comprehensive plan project, town residents have pointed to each other, to the tight-knit sense of community and neighborliness, as the single most valued town quality.



As demonstrated above, it is hard to sum up what makes the Town of Pittsford a special and unique place in a simple catch phrase or slogan. Perhaps this is because the Town of Pittsford has been more than 200 years in the making. Over this time period, each generation of Pittsford residents has left its signature on the town before handing it off to the next. The legacy of this process is the multi-faceted town that residents know and love today – a community that offers something for just about everyone. The town has much to be proud of; past decisions and planning have paid off. The 2009 Comprehensive Plan Update provides the current generation of Pittsford residents with an opportunity to guide the town through the next page in its ever unfolding history.

A community's future is about choices – and while the answers are not always black and white, this plan provides guidance and flexibility for the town to meet the challenges and opportunities of tomorrow within a well considered framework. At the heart of this framework is a clearly articulated vision for the future of the community, seasoned with a healthy respect for the past. This sentiment is perhaps best expressed in the town's official vision statement: **"A community working together to preserve the past and pioneer the future."**



## 2. PROJECT BACKGROUND & PROCESS

### A. PROJECT BACKGROUND

Municipal planning is a process by which a community acts to take charge of its future. The key purpose of municipal planning is to provide community decision makers a frame of reference for their actions. Thus, the process is a continuing one that fosters rational decision-making by the Town Board, Planning Board and Zoning Board.

A comprehensive plan establishes a clear vision of the kind of place a community wants to be in the future, and provides a course of action to create this shared vision. The Town of Pittsford 2009 Comprehensive Plan Update, created by community residents, property owners and business owners, with the assistance of the staff and volunteers of the Town of Pittsford, serves as a policy guide on how the town is to develop over time.

The Town of Pittsford has a long history of proactively planning for its future. The foundation of the town's planning rests on a series of comprehensive plans beginning in 1975, and updated in 1986 and again in 1995. By staying ahead of the curve, the town has been able to maintain a high quality of life, while meeting new and evolving needs and aspirations of its residents.

Today, the town faces a new set of challenges and, more importantly, opportunities. In one sense, the town is a victim of its own success. Because past planning efforts have paid off, the town continues to be a premier location to call home and in which to do business. Therefore, even as the town matures and the amount of land available for subdivisions and new development dwindles, growth pressures will continue to exert themselves on the town and on a landscape that is increasingly "already developed." As an example of this dynamic, the town's housing stock – much of which dates from the 1960s and 1970s – will likely be subject to increasing pressures for additions and expansions, as homeowners seek to update them to fit modern lifestyles.



Looking ahead, the challenge for the town will be to reasonably accommodate and manage a new generation of growth pressures and resident needs, while ensuring that the town's quality of life, character and fiscal health are not only protected and maintained, but strengthened. Such has been the challenge to the town in the past, and will be for the foreseeable future. This plan provides an opportunity to explore the current set of issues and opportunities facing the town, within this context.

## B. THE POWER OF A PLAN

A comprehensive plan functions at many levels. At its broadest level, it sets forth a shared vision for the future of the community. The primary purpose of the plan is to establish broad community consensus that will serve to guide future decision-making. Town staff, the public, and public and

private entities will all benefit from the clear vision for the town's future that is set forth in this plan. Having a plan in place can also qualify the town for public dollars and support to implement town projects and goals.

### WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

- A "Visioning Document"
- Identifies Issues and Opportunities
- Sets Goals, Strategies and Priorities
- A Tool for Meeting Change Proactively

The strength of a comprehensive plan rests in the broad vision and goals it sets forth for a community.

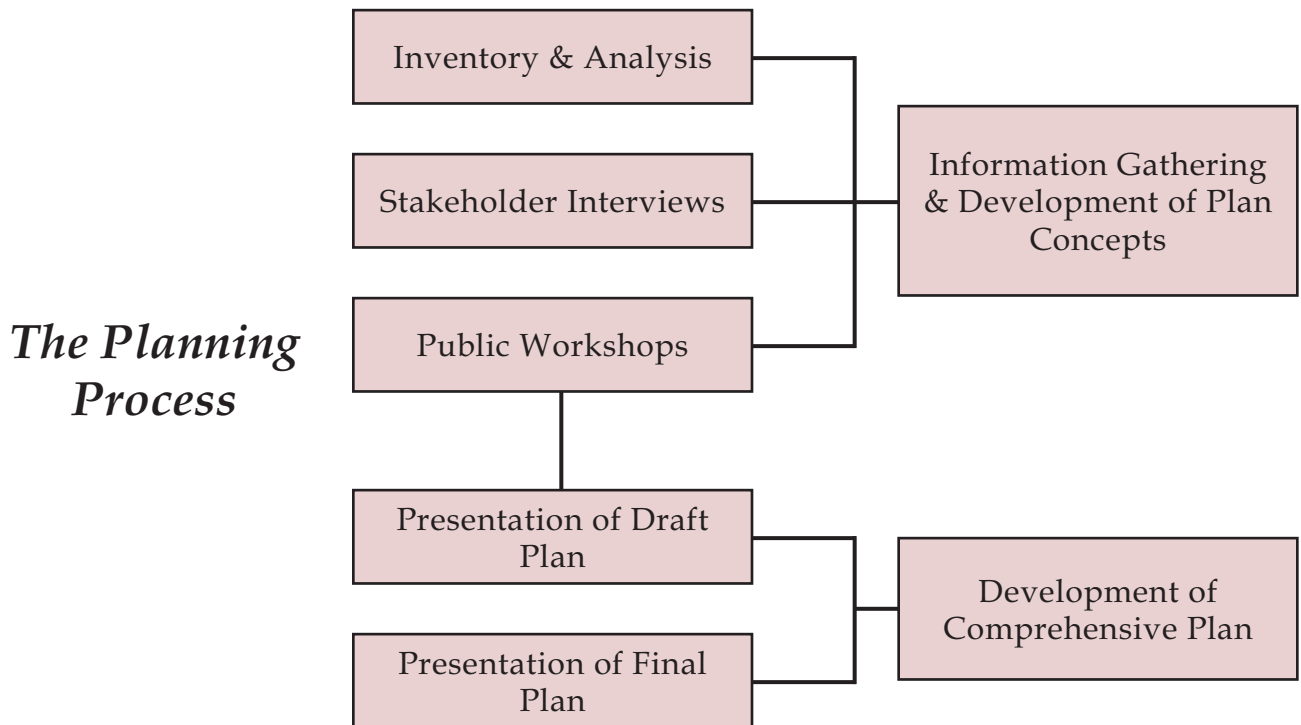
Developing consensus around big picture concepts provides a solid foundation for the implementation stage that comes after adoption of the plan. The Pittsford "Greenprint" is an example of this approach. The 1995 Comprehensive Plan established consensus around the broad goal of protecting significant areas of open space and farmland in the town, with some preliminary ideas of how to achieve this goal. However, it was through the "Greenprint," an implementation project undertaken after adoption of the 1995 Comprehensive Plan, that the details of "how" were addressed, including an ongoing dialogue with town residents from the start of the project to the finish. In short, developing consensus for resource protection in the 1995 plan provided the solid foundation needed to carry the Greenprint through to fruition, the legacy of which are the rural vistas and working farms that grace the town today.

In the end, the plan's success will be reflected in tangible outcomes that town residents can see and experience. By establishing a clear vision with this plan, the Town of Pittsford will be prepared to meet change and proactively shape the future of the town for years to come.

## C. THE PLANNING PROCESS

The Town of Pittsford 2009 Comprehensive Plan, first and foremost, is a community document. To this end, public input was a central element of the planning process. Gaining public support and understanding of the plan's ideas helps to ensure that they will be implemented after the plan is adopted. The relationship between the public outreach process and the development of plan ideas and concepts contained in the comprehensive plan is illustrated in The Planning Process diagram. As shown in the diagram, each phase of the planning process was defined by public input that helped to shape plan ideas and subsequent public outreach activities as the project unfolded. A brief summary of the public meetings and outreach activities held in the course of the 2009 Comprehensive Plan Project Update is provided in the following section.

# 2009 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE



## D. PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

The centerpiece of the public outreach effort consisted of a series of public workshops, the highlights of which are summarized below. A record of public comments from all of the public workshops is included in *Appendix A*.

### *Project Kick-Off Meeting*

The kick-off public workshop for the town's 2009 Comprehensive Plan Update took place on the evening of January 26, 2009 at the Pittsford Community Library. The workshop provided an opportunity to both review accomplishments from the town's previous comprehensive plan (1995) and to begin to identify the issues and opportunities that should be explored in the 2009 Comprehensive Plan Update. Approximately 100 individuals participated in the workshop, bringing to the table a range of knowledge, viewpoints, and interests. The workshop included a presentation as well as smaller break-out groups for discussion and brainstorming at a more intimate level. All comments were welcomed and recorded with markers on large note pads. The meeting concluded with the groups reporting back to each other and workshop participants affixing sticker dots to those ideas or comments they felt were most important to address in the comprehensive plan.

### *February Scoping Meetings*

A series of three "scoping meetings" were held in the month of February, at the Pittsford Town Hall meeting room, to continue the brainstorming initiated at the January kick-off meeting. Each of the scoping meetings



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was devoted to one of the following three topic areas:

- Land Use and Zoning;
- Transportation; and
- Parks, Recreation, Trails and Sidewalks.

The scoping meetings enabled workshop participants to explore each of the above topics in more detail. Each workshop began with a presentation recapping the results of the January kick-off meeting and a summary of existing conditions with respect to the topic area under discussion.

The presentation was followed by an open discussion forum during which workshop participants volunteered comments and ideas. Workshop facilitators were on hand to record comments on large white note pads at the front of the room. Attendance at the February scoping meetings ranged from 50 to 75 people.



*Pittsford residents provide input at a recreation scoping meeting.*



*Residents brainstorm issues and opportunities at the February “transportation” scoping meeting.*

## ***Presentation of Preliminary Goals and Strategies***

A public workshop to present draft goals and strategies for the 2009 Comprehensive Plan Update took place on March 30, 2009 at the Pittsford Community Library. The draft goals and strategies presented at the workshop were synthesized from the public input gathered in the series of information-gathering public workshops held in January and February – as well as from public input received by the town via email and letters. The workshop provided an important opportunity to check in with town residents on the direction of the plan.



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After a summary presentation, workshop participants were asked to provide feedback. In a number of cases, comments came in the form of questions, which provided an opportunity for dialogue and discussion, and the exploration of plan concepts in more detail. All comments received at the meeting were recorded on large note pads at the front of the room. Feedback received helped to guide the development of the draft version of the 2009 Comprehensive Plan Update. Approximately 75 individuals participated in the workshop.

## *Presentation of Draft Plan*

A public meeting to present the draft Town of Pittsford 2009 Comprehensive Plan Update was held on Wednesday, June 17, 2009 at the Pittsford Community Library. The meeting capped off the series of public meetings and workshops held throughout the course of the comprehensive plan project, starting with the kick-off meeting in January 2009. Copies of the draft plan were made available to the public at the Town Hall, Pittsford Community Library and on the



*Pittsford residents at the Comprehensive Plan Update presentation in June.*

town's website in advance of the meeting. The feedback received at the meeting informed the preparation of the final plan draft. Approximately 40 individuals participated in the workshop.

## **E. STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH**

In addition to the town-wide public meetings series, a number of outreach activities were held to engage stakeholder groups. These activities enabled the town to gather information at the ground level with entities and individuals most closely connected to a particular issue or opportunity. For instance, a meeting was held with recreation stakeholders early on in the project, after it became clear from input received at town-wide public meetings that recreation was an important topic for a significant number of town residents. The recreation stakeholder meeting involved town staff and those involved in the numerous recreation programs offered in the town, including representatives from baseball, soccer, lacrosse and swimming clubs/leagues. Additional stakeholder meetings included a meeting with town staff and members of town boards in addition to a meeting with local and regional transportation agencies.

### 3. PAST PLANNING ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Before looking ahead to the future, a backward glance to the past is always beneficial. The 2009 Comprehensive Plan Update builds on the town’s numerous past planning efforts. These include several comprehensive plan updates, as well as numerous plans and studies that have been implemented through the years. It should also be noted that the town has been blessed with active and involved residents, many of whom have served on town boards and committees to help implement the town’s long-term vision and goals.

An overview of 1995 and 1986 Comprehensive Plans follows, as well as a summary of several recent and/or ongoing town planning efforts.

#### A. 1986 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

The town’s 1986 comprehensive plan, like the 1995 plan that followed it, covered a wide array of topics. Perhaps the biggest legacy of the 1986 comprehensive plan are the recommendations it set forth for an open space requirement for development in the town. These open space requirements, commonly referred to as “50-50” zoning, continue to ensure that open space, and the rural character it confers on the town, will be preserved, even as the remaining sizable properties in the southern areas of town are developed for residential uses.

#### B. 1995 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

The town last updated its comprehensive plan in 1995. The 1995 plan covered a wide range of topics. Open space protection was most on town residents’ minds at this time and is therefore prominently featured. Specifically, the plan called for the protection of 2,000 acres of farmland and open space and identified steps for accomplishing this, including the establishment of a resource protection committee and



*In the 1990s, the town’s open space and farmland protection efforts garnered both national and international attention.*



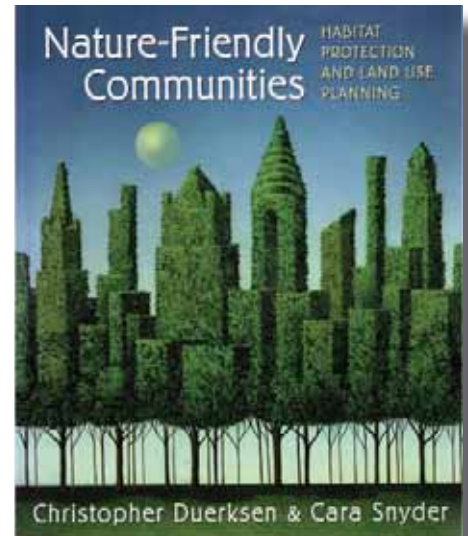
*Protected farms and open space – a legacy of the 1995 Comprehensive Plan and the Greenprint that followed it.*



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the preliminary identification of priority areas for protection. The 1995 Comprehensive Plan set the stage for the implementation of open space protection via the Greenprint plan and process. However, even with a good plan in place, at the end of the day, full realization of the Greenprint and open space protection goals took the hard work and elbow grease of town residents, staff, landowners and farmers. Today, over 1,200 acres of land are permanently protected farmland. In addition to protected farmland, another 1,200+ acres of environmentally sensitive land and open spaces will be protected. Thus, the town has far exceeded its goal of 2,000 acres.

Other major thrusts of the 1995 plan included transportation and economic development. With respect to transportation, the 1995 plan identified key intersections in town to improve for safety and efficiency, the majority of which have been implemented. Perhaps the biggest legacy of the economic development discussion in the 1995 comprehensive plan is a commitment to the revitalization of the Monroe Avenue/Pittsford Plaza commercial corridor. By the early 1990s, Pittsford Plaza and surrounding commercial properties were in decline. High vacancy rates coupled with competition from new shopping malls and plazas, raised doubts about the future of the corridor. Residents were asked, as part of the public discussion for the 1995 plan, whether the town should consider re-zoning an additional 15% of town lands for the next generation of retail growth. The answer to this question was



*Pittsford's success at preserving open space and farmland was featured in this 2005 book and serves as inspiration for other communities.*

*From Nature Friendly Communities, by Christopher Duerksen & Cara Snyder. Copyright © 2005 Island Press. Reproduced by permission of Island Press, Washington, D.C.*



*The Greenprint for Pittsford's future was acknowledged for its success with a national award from the American Planning Association in 1998.*



*Left: The Veterans Monument in the Village of Pittsford pays tribute to the heroes of Pittsford who gave their lives to serve our country.*

*Right: Today, the Pittsford Plaza commercial corridor is thriving – a far cry from the early 1990s when high vacancy rates raised doubts about its future. To many, Pittsford Plaza, more than just another place to shop, is a destination in its own right.*

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a resounding “no.” The 1995 plan reflects this decision, and the revitalized, prosperous Pittsford Plaza of today owes much to it. The 1995 plan also expresses a commitment to the Village of Pittsford as a center of community life. This commitment has expressed itself in numerous ways over the ensuing years, such as the town’s decision to build the new town library and Veterans Monument in the heart of the village.

In short, the 1995 Comprehensive Plan set forth a number of clearly communicated and implementable goals and objectives, the lion’s share of which were implemented and contribute to the character and quality of the Town of Pittsford today.

## C. PITTSFORD 2007 RESIDENT SURVEY

In 2007 the Town of Pittsford conducted a survey to gauge town resident satisfaction with respect to a host of town services. Overall, nearly 80% of respondents indicated satisfaction with the town government’s performance. Areas for improvement identified by residents included:

- Property Taxes;
- Community Center;
- Recreation Programs; and
- The Town’s Trail System.

The results of the 2007 Town Resident Survey helped to inform the early direction and focus of the 2009 Comprehensive Plan Update. It is worth mentioning that the feedback received by participants in the series of public meetings and workshops conducted for this plan largely mirrored the results of the survey.

## D. TOWN OF PITTSFORD STRATEGIC PLAN

Every year since 1997, the Town of Pittsford has issued a strategic plan to identify town priorities and actions for the coming year. In so doing, the strategic plan becomes a driving force for the town and for the town staff and elected officials charged with delivering town services and meeting residents’ expectations. The philosophy behind the strategic plan is the “ongoing cycle of improvement,” which relies on constant evaluation and feedback on the town government’s performance and progress on meeting town goals. In fact, the 2009 Comprehensive Plan Update is a direct outgrowth of the 2009 Strategic Plan, which identifies an update to the town’s comprehensive plan “to address the conditions of a built-out community” as a priority for 2009.



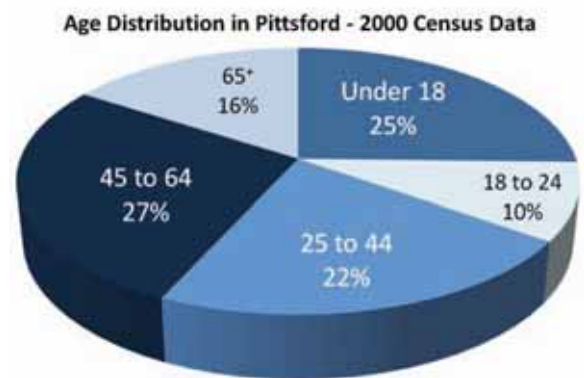
## 4. BASIC INVENTORY & TRENDS

### A. DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC TRENDS

The Town of Pittsford's 1995 Comprehensive Plan Update included a detailed inventory of demographic and economic data. Many of the trends that were identified at that time continue today in Pittsford. A summary of some of the relevant conclusions of the demographic and economic analysis follows. A more detailed account of the analysis is included in *Appendix B*.

- While for many years the town of Pittsford experienced average or above average population growth, the **town's population growth is now beginning to stabilize**.
- Pittsford retains its status as the "premier address" in Monroe County, with the **highest median home value in the region**. These values reflect the higher-than-average incomes of town residents, as well as the benefits of the town's long-term planning efforts which have no doubt helped to bolster property values. Pittsford's quality schools also continue to be a driving force in making the town an attractive, desirable place to live.
- According to 2000 data, **the number of households in Pittsford is growing while household size is declining**. This decrease in household size may be attributed to several factors, including the town's aging population. This figure highlights the need to ensure that a diversity of housing is possible in the Town of Pittsford to serve large families, as well as smaller families and individuals.

- **Youth and seniors are growing components of Pittsford's population**. The three largest age groups to make up the Town of Pittsford's population are those under 18, between 25-44, and between 45-64. The under 18 and 45-64 groups both grew between 1990 and 2000, as well as substantial growth in the 65 and over age group. These trends illustrate the important need to provide services for youth and seniors both presently and in the future.



- **Construction of new homes in Pittsford is decreasing while alterations and additions to existing homes are gradually increasing**, and they are expected to rise as the town reaches full build-out and the housing stock continues to age.
- The **industrial sectors of the Greater Rochester Area have reduced their influence** while the **health and service sectors have increased their influence** on employment.

## B. LAND USE TRENDS

Pittsford's existing land use patterns – the distribution of the various land use types (residential, commercial, industrial, etc.) are illustrated in Map 1. As shown in the map, residential uses (on lots less than 5 acres in size) predominate – over 5,700 acres of land in the town are devoted to residential uses. By way of contrast, only 430 acres of land in the town are devoted to commercial, industrial and office uses.

Over the past 20 years, the supply of large tracts of undeveloped land in the town has dwindled as new subdivisions have been built. Moreover, the town's Greenprint and open space and farmland protection efforts have resulted in more than 2,000 acres of open space and permanently protected farms. Today, the majority of remaining "undeveloped" land in the town lies in the southern portion of the town, in an area largely subject to the "50-50 zoning," which requires a 50% open space set-aside for lots proposed for development that are greater than 10 acres in size.

Map 2 depicts the remaining large tracts of land (lots greater than 5 acres in size) with subdivision potential under current zoning regulations. All told, there are approximately 1,400 acres of such land in the town. Of these 1,400 acres, approximately 800 acres are subject to the town's 50-50 zoning requirements, which will secure an additional 400 acres of open space land for the town as this land develops.

Map 3 shows the already developed lots (2 to 5 acres) with subdivision potential. Even as the supply of land with subdivision potential is decreasing, the town's popularity as a place to call home continues to increase. The challenge this poses is that the town will continue to experience the growth pressures associated with being a desirable community, even though the land available to accommodate such growth pressures is dwindling. Without available land for new subdivisions to meet demand, growth pressures will likely increasingly exert themselves on the "already developed" portions of town, as described in more detail beginning on page 16 (following the maps).



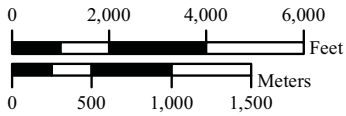
From the Albert R. Stone Negative Collection  
Rochester Museum & Science Center, Rochester, N.Y.

*Looking east along Monroe Avenue, at the intersection of Monroe and French (ca. 1920). Note trolley tracks.*

## Map 1 Land Use Patterns



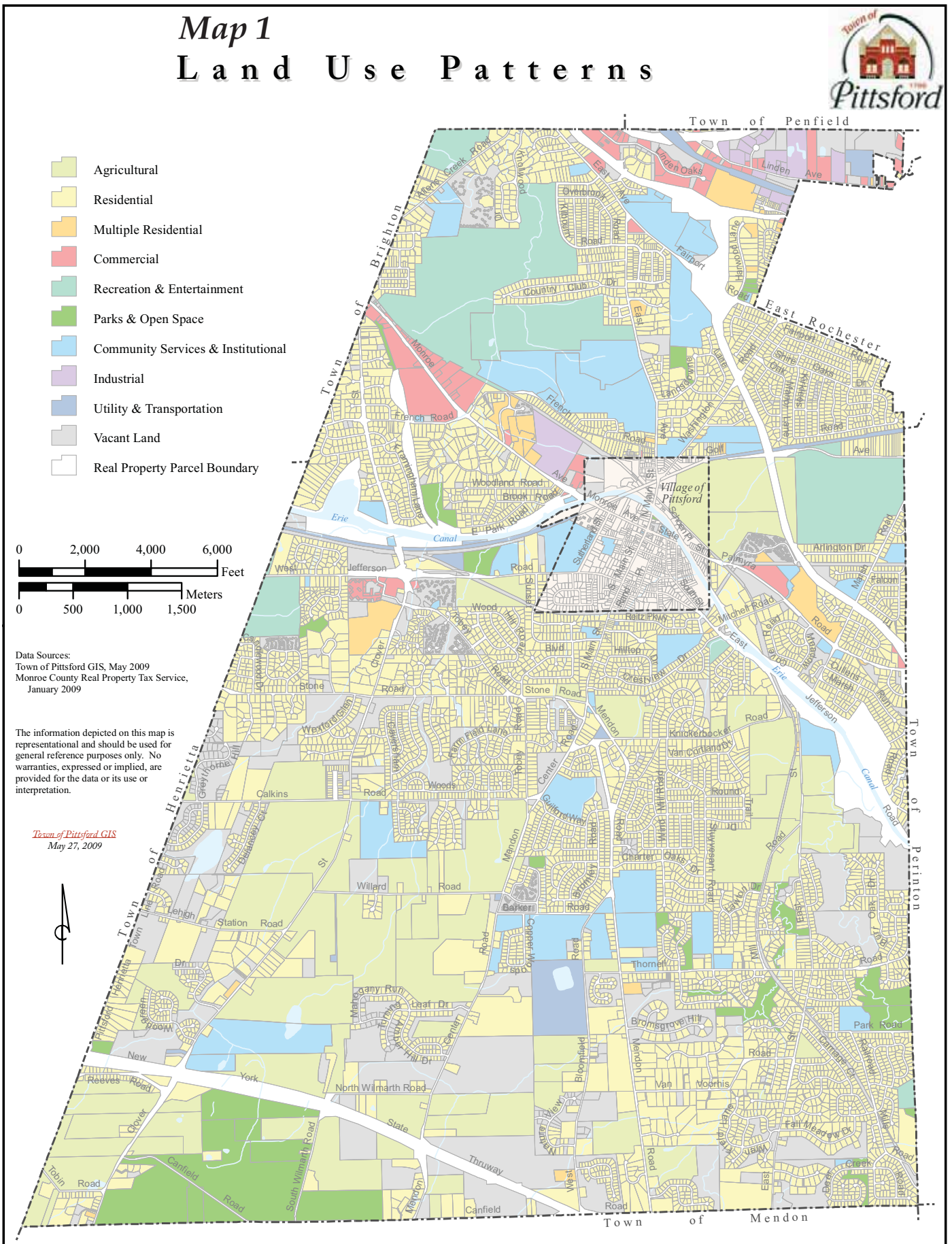
- Agricultural
- Residential
- Multiple Residential
- Commercial
- Recreation & Entertainment
- Parks & Open Space
- Community Services & Institutional
- Industrial
- Utility & Transportation
- Vacant Land
- Real Property Parcel Boundary



Data Sources:  
Town of Pittsford GIS, May 2009  
Monroe County Real Property Tax Service,  
January 2009

The information depicted on this map is  
representational and should be used for  
general reference purposes only. No  
warranties, expressed or implied, are  
provided for the data or its use or  
interpretation.

Town of Pittsford GIS  
May 27, 2009

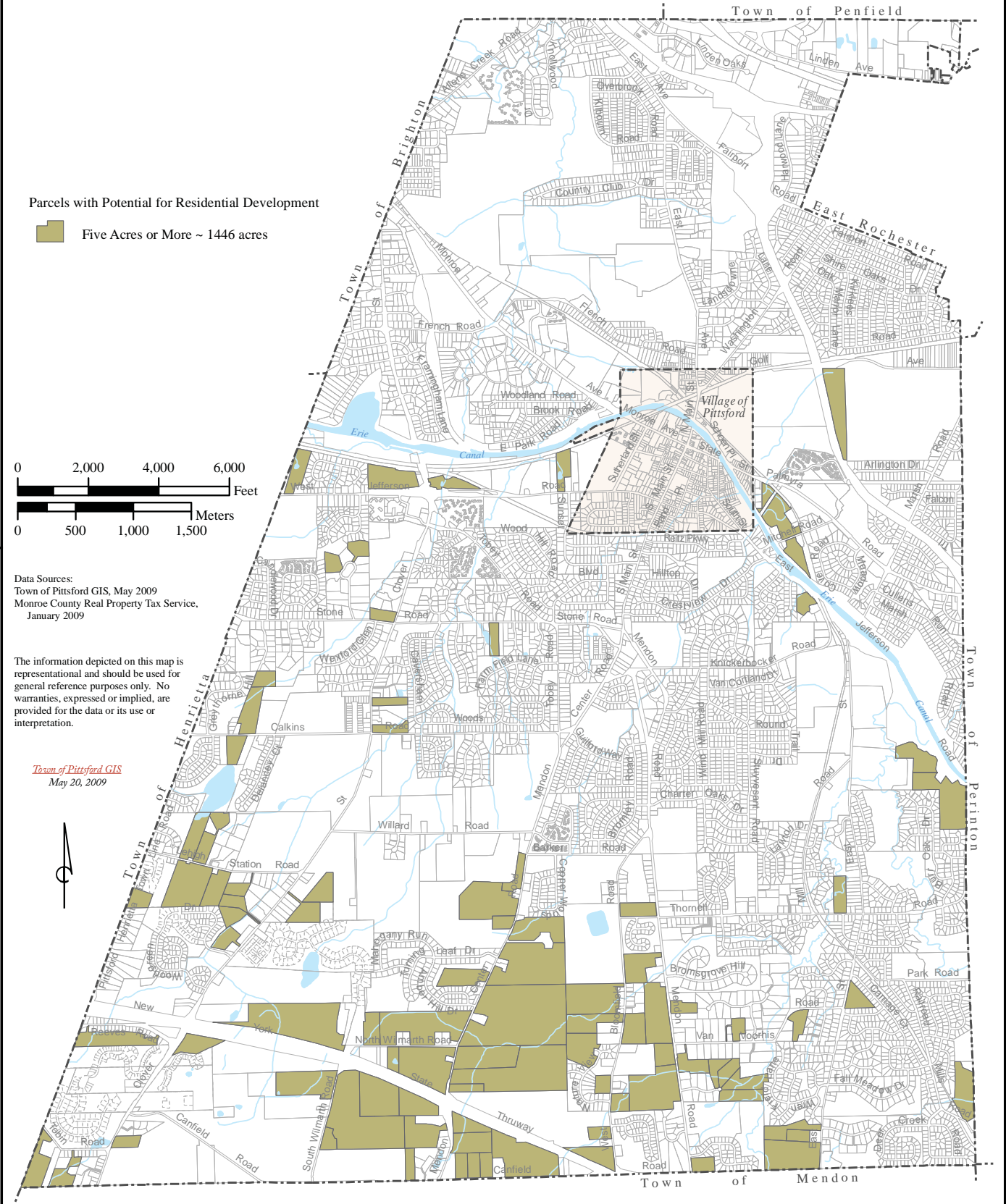




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## Map 2

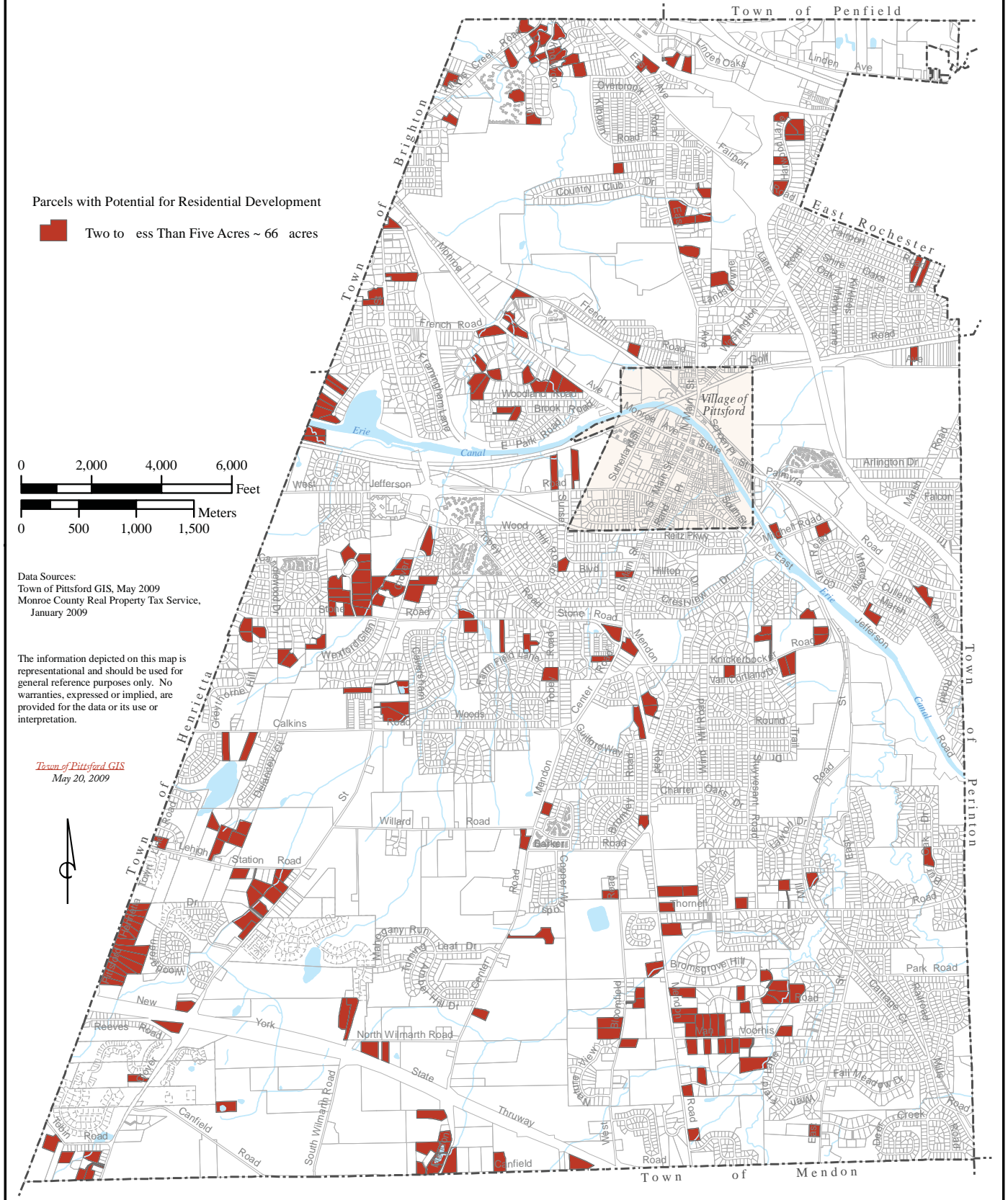
### Parcels of Five Acres or More with Residential Development Potential





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## Map 3 Parcels of Two to Five Acres with Residential Development Potential



## *Renovations to Existing Homes*

Approximately 55% of the town's housing stock is 40 years old or greater (as shown in Chart 2 - *Appendix B*). The largest share of the town's housing stock dates from the 1960s – approximately 26%. These older homes will likely be subject to increasing pressures for additions and expansions, as homeowners seek to update them to fit modern lifestyles – particularly in light of the fact that land available for new subdivisions and homes is dwindling. This trend appears to be corroborated by town building permit data. Since the late 1980s, the number of building permits filed each year for new homes has been declining (as shown in Chart 3 - *Appendix B*). However, beginning in the mid-1990s, even as building permits for new homes continued to decline, building permits for additions and renovations to existing homes have been on the rise.

The continual upgrade and reinvestment in a maturing community's older housing stock helps to renew the community and keep it healthy and prosperous. Without the ability to modernize older homes, homeowners are compelled to look elsewhere to meet their housing needs, more often than not in a newly developing community where new homes are readily available. However, significant home additions and improvements are sometimes perceived as out of scale with surrounding homes and the existing character of a neighborhood. This can also be the case when the original home is completely demolished and rebuilt along much larger proportions. Over time, the cumulative impacts of such expansions and modifications can alter the character of a neighborhood – particularly those neighborhoods that have a concentration of older homes.

The challenge for the town will be to allow homeowners to upgrade and add to existing homes, while maintaining the character of such homes and neighborhoods. Many maturing suburbs across the nation have faced similar pressures and have successfully dealt with them through a combination of design guidelines and/or land use tools that allow for a reasonable amount of expansion or redevelopment of existing homes, while maintaining the desired character of the community. These tools are discussed in more detail in subsequent chapters of this plan.



***Examples showing how attractive, well-intentioned homes can be out of place in a neighborhood:***  
*Left: the scale of renovated home is in keeping with the character of the surrounding neighborhood, but the lack of details and basic elements such as windows, is not. Right: the building materials, design and landscaping of the new home are of a high quality, but scale and placement of the home are out of context with the surrounding neighborhood.*





**Examples showing how new homes can fit right in to an existing neighborhood:**

Left: the new “infill” home is in keeping with both the scale and character of the neighborhood – so much so that it is difficult to discern the new home from the adjacent historic home. Right: shows how a new home that replaced a pre-existing house while maintaining the scale and character of the neighborhood.

## *Re-Subdivisions of Existing “Developed” Lots*

Just as growth pressures will increasingly exert themselves on the town’s existing housing stock, so too on the town’s existing residential lots. Re-subdivision pressure will likely be felt most strongly in older developed sections of town, where homes tend to be placed on lots larger than the minimum lot sizes allowed by zoning. Map 3 shows smaller lots (2 to 5 acres) in the town with future subdivision potential, most of which currently have a home located upon them and are perceived as already “developed.”

Ensuring that future re-subdivisions do not negatively impact the character of existing homes and neighborhoods will be a challenge that the town will increasingly face. Negative impacts can include awkwardly placed homes, proliferation of individual driveways, and over-clearing of vegetation. Re-subdivisions may have particular implications for areas of the town that derive their character from homes set on larger lots. Ideas for successfully addressing re-subdivisions are set forth in Chapter 3.



*Long Meadow, the first suburban subdivision in Monroe County, derives its character not only from its eclectic mix of homes (such as this art deco “international style” residence), but from the way such homes are situated on their lots.*

## *Land Use Projection and Build-Out*

A simple build-out analysis has been undertaken as part of the 2009 Comprehensive Plan Update to project the number of additional residential units that could be expected to be built in the town, and the length of time it would take for all such units to be built. Factors considered in the analysis included:

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- the amount of land available for development;
- existing zoning and subdivision regulations;
- the presence of environmental features, such as wetlands;
- recent trends in lot yields on properties;
- recent trends in annual new home construction; and
- informal interviews with several real estate experts.

The results of the land use projection and build-out indicate that approximately 800 to 900 additional residential units could be anticipated in the Town of Pittsford, before all available land is developed. Based on annual housing permit trends, it is projected that it would take approximately 18 years for all of these homes to be built. It must be noted, however, that this projection is conceptual in nature, based on currently available data and an evaluation of recent and likely future trends.

## ***Build-Out***

The term “build-out” – used throughout this plan – denotes a stage in the growth of a community when the supply of “raw” land for new development runs out. In a metropolitan area, build-out generally occurs first in the central city and then radiates outward, starting with the suburbs immediately adjoining the central city (“inner ring” suburbs) and then beyond. Metropolitan Rochester has been no exception to this rule. The City of Rochester and inner ring suburbs – such as Irondequoit and Brighton – have by-and-large already reached build-out. In these communities, there is little undeveloped land remaining for new development.

The Town of Pittsford is now approaching build-out itself. However, this does not mean that every last acre of land in Pittsford will be developed. Pittsford has planned ahead to ensure that even in full build-out, the town’s open space resources and character are preserved. The town’s efforts in recent decades to protect open space (“50-50” zoning) and active farmland (the “Greenprint”) help to preserve important resources, as a counterpoint to the town’s more developed areas. Today, less than 10% of land in the town has the potential to be further subdivided and developed. Moreover, more than half of this land is subject to the town’s 50-50 zoning, which will ensure the preservation of additional open space as such lands develop.

There are many advantages to being a build-out community. For instance, build-out communities like Pittsford often contain some of the most attractive, established neighborhoods within a metropolitan area. And because they are older, such communities often possess historic character and pedestrian friendly environments – qualities that are difficult to reproduce in newer communities. Build-out communities are also more likely to be centrally and conveniently located to shopping, services and centers of employment. The Town of Pittsford, through its proactive planning efforts over the years, has laid a strong foundation for maintaining its high quality of life as it approaches build out. Even without new land available for development, residents will continue to be attracted to the town’s quality of life and its nationally recognized public school system. By retaining and leveraging its unique assets and strengths, while allowing for renewal and re-investment, Pittsford can stay healthy, strong, and relevant for generations to come.

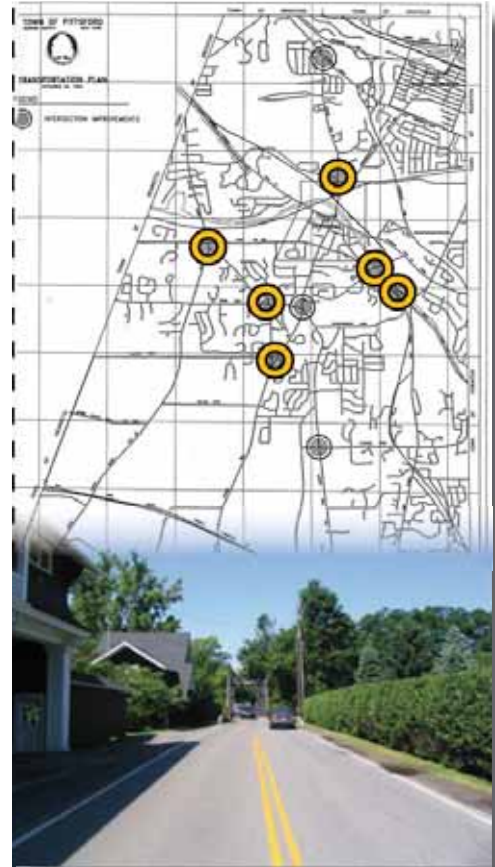


C. TRANSPORTATION

Section V of the 1995 Comprehensive Plan Update describes the Town of Pittsford’s transportation system. This system has not changed significantly since completion of that plan update, except that most of the transportation recommendations in the 1995 plan have been implemented. For example, six of the nine intersection improvements recommended in the plan were completed, including the one-lane Mitchell Road Bridge which was re-opened to traffic. Monroe Avenue, especially through the town’s primary commercial district, has also received significant enhancements.

The town maintains an inventory of its transportation infrastructure, which includes federal, state, county, local, and private roads, trails and sidewalks, the Erie Canal, and public transportation. For example, Table 1 below shows the number of miles in the town of roads by jurisdiction. Such information is also available in mapped form using the town’s Geographic Information System (GIS).

Though the town’s transportation system has not changed significantly, traffic in some parts of the town has increased. This is due, in part, to the continued build-out of the town, as well as increased development in adjoining towns, particularly to the south and east of Pittsford. Such development generates new traffic travelling to and through Pittsford for work, shopping, entertainment, or other purposes. Still, compared to similarly located communities in most other metro areas, traffic in Pittsford is relatively modest and the daily peaks are confined to short durations of time (approximately 15 minutes to ½ hour) in the morning and the evening.



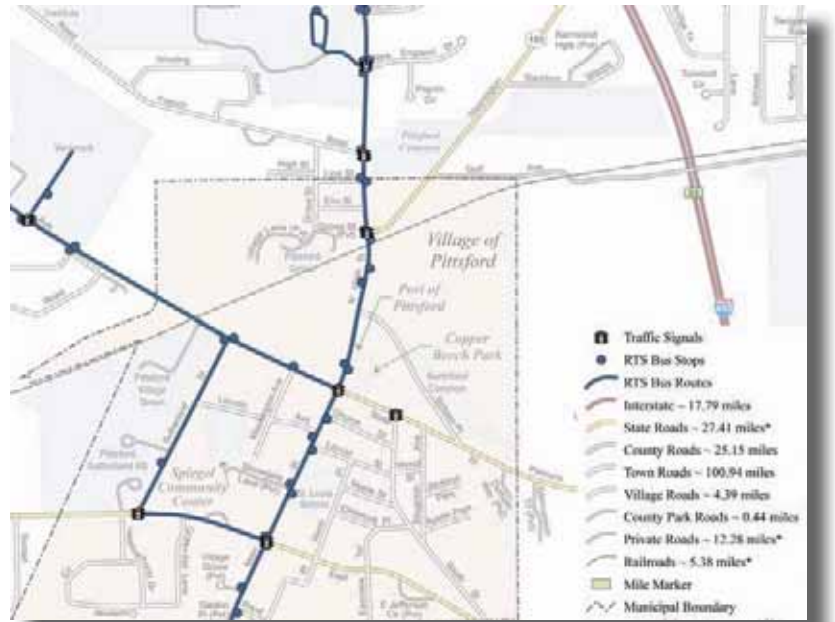
Transportation projects completed since 1995. Top: intersections that have been improved. Bottom: the Mitchell Road Bridge - reconstructed and reopened.

Table 1: Miles of Road in the Town of Pittsford by Type

Roadway Jurisdiction	Examples	Miles
Interstate Highways	I-490 and NYS Thruway	18
State Highways	Monroe Ave, East Ave, Clover St, etc.	27
County Highways	Tobey Rd, Thornell Rd, Marsh Rd, East St, Golf Ave, etc.	25
Local (Town) Roads	Most “residential” streets	101
Local (Village) Roads		4
Local (Private) Roads		12

# TOWN OF PITTSFORD

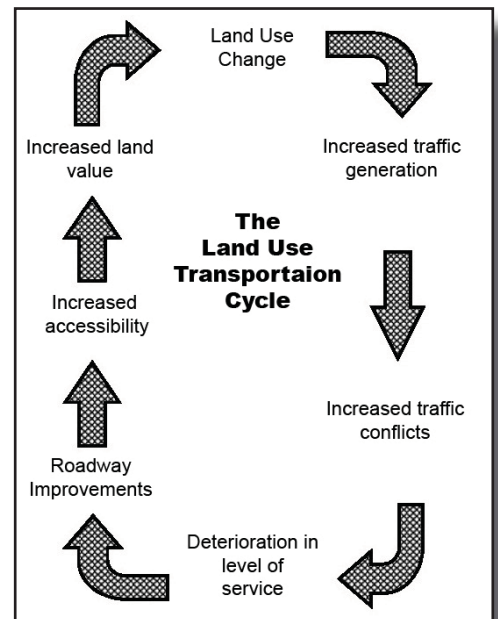
As the town approaches build-out in the coming years, the quantity of additional traffic generated locally will level off, but additional traffic may still be generated by development elsewhere in the region. In the past, the typical traffic engineering response to traffic congestion was to add capacity to the road system through road and intersection widening and/or the addition of new highways. But more recent study has indicated that this approach does not tend to improve congestion in the long-term. Instead, research has shown that increased road capacity is part of a cycle that leads to changes in land use, increased traffic volumes and deteriorated traffic flow, which in turn leads to the need for additional roadway “improvements” (see graphic below).



*This section of map illustrates how information about road jurisdiction can be combined with other data – in this case bus routes, bus stops, and traffic signals – and displayed to facilitate understanding.*

With this understanding of the transportation and land use connection, the town should carefully consider what an appropriate response to congestion in Pittsford should be. Solutions that are based primarily on expanding the capacity of the town’s existing road network may hold short-term promise, but they are unlikely to provide long-term relief. Furthermore, such solutions can diminish community character and the safety and attractiveness of the transportation system for non-vehicular users. These outcomes would be contrary to the community’s other goals for the future.

At this stage in the town’s development into a mature, inner-suburban community, transportation solutions should instead focus on minimizing the impact of traffic and reducing the demand for additional vehicular trips. Maximizing the efficiency and safety of the existing transportation system, and increasing emphasis on walkability, multi-modal transportation options, and traffic calming in key locations, are the new direction for transportation in Pittsford.



*Source: “How to...Link Land Use and Transportation Planning” (2003), Strafford Regional Planning Commission, Dover, New Hampshire*

## D. RECENT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORTS IN PITTSFORD

Section III of the 1995 Comprehensive Plan Update discusses the environmental features of the Town of Pittsford in depth. The plan discussed the following topics: wetlands, surface waters, terrestrial ecology, geology, soils, farmland and open spaces. Many of the primary concepts and data included in the 1995 Comprehensive Plan have not changed substantially and the same information is relevant today.

However, in the years since the 1995 plan, the town has undertaken several initiatives to protect and preserve the key environmental features in Pittsford and beyond. These initiatives include the following:

### *Stormwater Management*

Over the years, the Town of Pittsford has worked with other local entities to create facilities to address regional stormwater needs. An example of this is the construction of the stormwater pond at Kings Bend Park. The pond was created through a joint effort between the town, Oak Hill Country Club, and the Irondequoit Country Club. In addition to addressing stormwater concerns along Irondequoit Creek, the pond serves as a recreation amenity and attraction within King's Bend Park, which is open and accessible to the public.



*A stormwater pond at King's Bend Park also doubles as a water feature in the park.*

### *Recycling*

In conjunction with other communities in Monroe County, the Town of Pittsford has instituted a home recycling program for its residents and businesses. This program, instituted in 1992, provides for the collection and recycling of a variety of plastic, paper, and glass products. Additionally, at various times of the year, the town provides recycling of electronic devices such as computers, televisions, and cell phones; and household hazardous waste materials such as paint, batteries, and cleaning supplies. The town is also exploring the possibility of collecting and safely disposing of other items, including pharmaceuticals and oil and petroleum products.

### *Yard Waste Program*

The town provides weekly collection of yard wastes such as tree branches, grass and weed cuttings, leaves and thatch. One hundred percent of the yard waste collected as part of this program is converted into mulch and wood chips that are made available to Pittsford residents to use in their yards and gardens. This limits the necessity for residents to use fertilizers that could have an adverse impact on area watersheds and groundwater.

## *Zoning and Land Use Regulations*

The town protects vital environmental resources through land use regulations such as the 50/50 zoning that was originally introduced as part of the 1986 Comprehensive Plan, and through farmland preservation. This was done, in large part, as the result of the 1995 Comprehensive Plan and subsequent creation of the Town of Pittsford Greenprint for the Future. These efforts have resulted in the protection of over 2,000 acres of agricultural and key open space areas in the town, including over 1,200 acres of working farmland. The preservation efforts have allowed farming to continue to be a viable occupation for a number of the town's residents; protected key habitat areas and corridors for wildlife in the town; and allowed the town to retain much of its rural charm, particularly in areas south of the Village of Pittsford.

## *Site Plan and Subdivision Review*

The town's site plan and subdivision review process takes a detailed and formal consideration of all environmental issues that could occur as the result of the development of an individual property, above and beyond those regulations required as part of the State Environmental Quality Review process. Through this process, the town's planning board and project applicants are able to identify important environmental features and ensure that their plans avoid and/or address any potential impacts.

## *Dark Sky Lighting*

The town has recently begun to work with developers of properties to ensure that new development utilizes lighting that complies with standards set forth by the International Dark Sky Association. Dark Sky lighting lessens light pollution, lowers the usage of electricity for lighting, and helps to preserve and enhance the viability of wildlife.

## *"Pittsford. Keeping It Green" Committee*

In July 2008, the Pittsford Town Board invited town residents to form a committee to explore ways to make the town a more environmentally friendly community. The result of that is the town's "Pittsford. Keeping It Green" committee. The committee's mission statement is to:

*Strive to reduce Pittsford's impact on the local and global environment by recommending to the Town Board innovative policies, practices, and technologies and continue to support, encourage, and educate the community of Pittsford in going green.*

At the time of writing of the 2009 Comprehensive Plan Update, the "Pittsford. Keeping It Green" committee had presented their recommendations to the Town Board.



## E. PARKS AND RECREATION

Pittsford residents enjoy one of the most diverse park and recreation systems in New York State. In fact, the Town of Pittsford is a model community that has received many awards and praises for its open space, trails and recreation amenities. Over the years, the town has expanded its system, incorporating opportunities for exercise and recreation within neighborhoods and developed areas. Following is a discussion of the four main components of the town's park and recreation system:

1. Town and School Fields
2. Parks and Open Spaces
3. Recreation Programs
4. Trails and Sidewalks

Parks and recreation elements are also documented in the *Town of Pittsford's Parks and Recreation Plan Update* (1993).

### *Town and School Fields*

Athletic fields are generally referred to as diamonds or rectangles. Diamonds are used for softball and baseball. Rectangles are used for football, lacrosse, field hockey, and soccer and similar sports. There are a total of 19 diamonds and 32 rectangles distributed throughout town, primarily owned by the Town of Pittsford and Pittsford Central Schools. Pittsford Little League owns two baseball diamonds. There are also 32 tennis courts within the town, owned primarily by the Pittsford Central Schools. The town and school district cooperate with many different youth and sports groups to meet the various field sports needs within the community. Even with this abundance of fields in the town, some Pittsford residents have raised concerns about the growing demands for field space, especially at peak times in the season. A more thorough assessment of the current and future needs for field space would help to identify deficiencies to be filled.



*Pittsford youth soccer.*

### *Parks and Open Space*

Approximately 12% of the Town of Pittsford's land area, or 1,742 acres, consists of public parks and open space lands. Parks and open space include 218 acres of town-owned parks, 1,066 acres of town-owned open space, and 458 acres of county and state parks (see Table 2). Town parks and open spaces are distributed throughout Pittsford and vary in size and experience from passive recreation and wildlife viewing at the Isaac Gordon Nature Park to active recreation and athletic fields at Thornell Farm Park. Great Embankment Park has a canoe/small boat launch for people to access the Erie Canal.

# TOWN OF PITTSFORD

Powder Mills Park, owned and managed by Monroe County, is located in the southeastern portion of Pittsford and extends east into the Town of Perinton. The Irondequoit Creek meanders through Powder Mills Park, offering opportunities for fishing and passive recreation. Monroe County also owns and manages Mendon Ponds Park, the largest of the county parks. Mendon Ponds offers a naturalized park setting for hiking and passive recreation. Lock 32 State Canal Park is a state-owned and managed park along the Erie Canal.

The town's park system is generally well distributed and serves Pittsford's residents well. As the town continues to mature, the park system will feel more pressure from users. Future needs and opportunities for the town's parks and recreation system should be explored comprehensively. For example, there may be more demand from residents for new types of uses within parks, as well as expanded use for winter activities. A needs assessment would also help to identify if there are any geographic areas of the town that are underserved. Increasing pedestrian connectivity to, and between, town parks would also allow residents to access parks by foot and reduce the need for additional parking and traffic access to parks.

Pittsford's parks and open space parcels are illustrated on Map 4.

## Recreation Programs

The Town of Pittsford offers many recreational programs for residents. The town's main recreational facility is the Recreation Center on Lincoln Avenue in the Village of Pittsford. The town also uses pools, cafeterias and gymnasiums located in Pittsford schools for recreational programs such as aquatics, camps and the Summer Fun Program.

Between public usage and the town's recreational programs, the Recreation Center is fully utilized. In 2008, the community center's rooms were used by 122 community groups for a total of 5,758 hours. They were also used for a total of 4,606 hours for recreational programs.

*Table 2: Parks and Open Space in the Town of Pittsford*

Park Type	Acres
Town Park	218
County & State Park	458
Town-Owned Open Space	1,066
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,742</b>

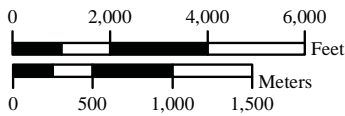


*King's Bend Park is the town's most recently-developed park. It includes two lodges which are available for Pittsford residents and groups for rental. The north lodge holds 100 people and was booked 200 times in 2008. The south lodge holds 50 people and was booked 188 times in 2008. The park's pond doubles as a creative solution to storm water management.*

## Map 4 Parks and Open Space



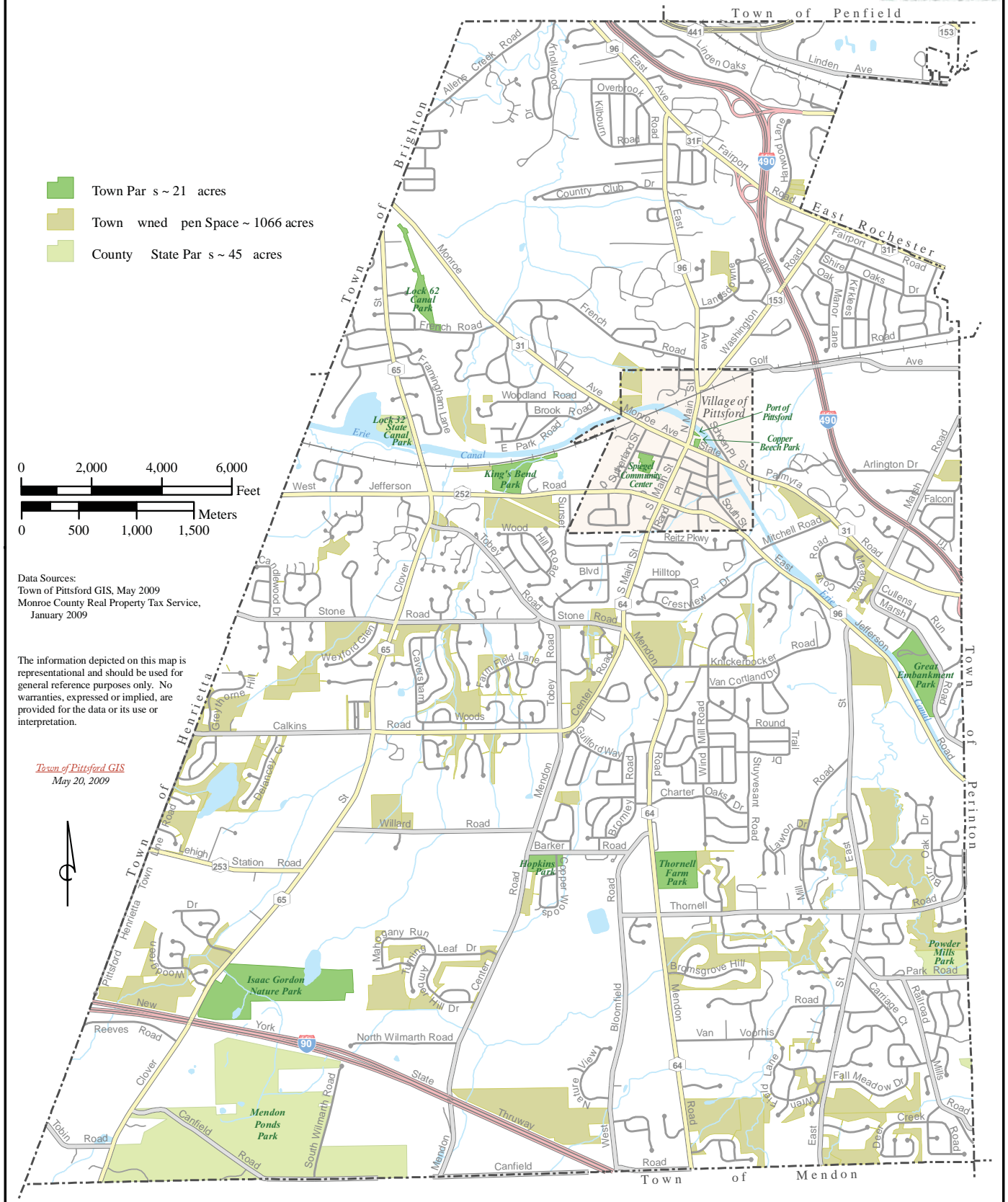
- Town Parks ~ 21 acres
- Town owned Open Space ~ 1066 acres
- County State Parks ~ 45 acres



Data Sources:  
Town of Pittsford GIS, May 2009  
Monroe County Real Property Tax Service,  
January 2009

The information depicted on this map is representational and should be used for general reference purposes only. No warranties, expressed or implied, are provided for the data or its use or interpretation.

Town of Pittsford GIS  
May 20, 2009



# TOWN OF PITTSFORD

In 2008, Pittsford Recreation offered 1,016 classes, in which 6,575 people participated. The recreational programs offered by the town are diverse and aim to serve a variety of age groups and needs. The town also offers child care at the Recreation Center, for children between the ages of 10 months and 3 years. Residents can drop children off for a maximum of 3 hours. 4,651 child care slots were utilized in 2008.

## *Recreation Programs in Pittsford*

- Athletic: leagues, aquatics, clinics, etc – 443 classes in 2008
- Wellness: martial arts, aerobics, dance, etc – 297 classes in 2008
- Family & Youth: summer fun, after school, etc – 184 classes in 2008
- Enrichment – Education, financial planning, car care – 92 classes in 2008
- Senior Citizen – 55 Alive, line dancing – 62 classes in 2008 + nutrition program and tax preparation services

In addition to recreational programs, the town sponsors a variety of community events including the Memorial Day Parade (10,000 people); Positively Pittsford (3,500 people); Pittsford Celebrates (4,000 people); Summer Concerts (7 Concerts and 3,075 people); the Triathlon (312 participants); Family Halloween Fest (4,000 people) and Movie Night (300 people).

## *Community Center*

In the years since the town's 1995 Comprehensive Plan was adopted, town residents and recreation stakeholders and providers have on numerous occasions cited the need to improve and/or replace the town's existing community center. In the same time period, several town committees have also issued recommendations for a new community center, namely the Spiegel Center Citizens Advisory Group in a 2002 report and the Pittsford Community Forum in a 2007 report. Additionally, and as noted above, a 2007 Resident Survey demonstrated resident interest in a new and/or improved community center. The public outreach process conducted for the 2009 Comprehensive Plan Update has confirmed that many residents view recreational amenities and programs as an important component to the town's quality of life, and that a new and/or improved community center is central to this equation. As the town explores community center options, it will be important to fully understand the needs and gaps in recreational programs, both presently and in the future. If there is indeed a gap in the recreational needs of town residents, the town should consider the costs of various options for filling the need, including renovating and expanding the existing community center, developing "satellite" recreation areas in town, or developing a new recreation center.

## *Trails and Sidewalks*

Pittsford has an extensive system of trails and sidewalks in place. Accessing this system, Pittsford residents can reach important destinations, including Main Street in the Village, the Recreation Center, town schools and parks, and the Erie Canal.



## 2009 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

There are over 15 miles of sidewalks existing in the Town of Pittsford. Sidewalks along Monroe Avenue, Palmyra Road, South Main Street, Mendon Road, Knickerbocker Road, and Washington Road connect various neighborhoods in Pittsford to the village. Additional sidewalk connections are proposed as part of streetscape improvements to be implemented in 2009. There are also some sidewalks located within private developments in the town (about 7 miles). The Town of Pittsford is one of the most trail-friendly communities in the state. Two major regional trails traverse Pittsford: the Auburn Trail and the Erie Canal Trail. There are also numerous trail systems within town parks such as the Isaac Gordon Nature Preserve and Great Embankment Park.



The town has been incorporating trails into development projects for many years, resulting in many neighborhood trails that provide opportunities for exercise and recreation. As part of the town's planning process, access ways have also been established within developments to connect people to trails, sidewalks, open spaces, and other neighborhoods.

Using the town's system of trails, sidewalks, and lesser-traveled roads, most Pittsford residents can travel on-foot or by bicycle to the village center, parks, schools, and other major destinations. This system is a major amenity in Pittsford which contributes to the well being and quality of life of town residents. Map 5 illustrates the existing sidewalks, trails and accessways in Pittsford.

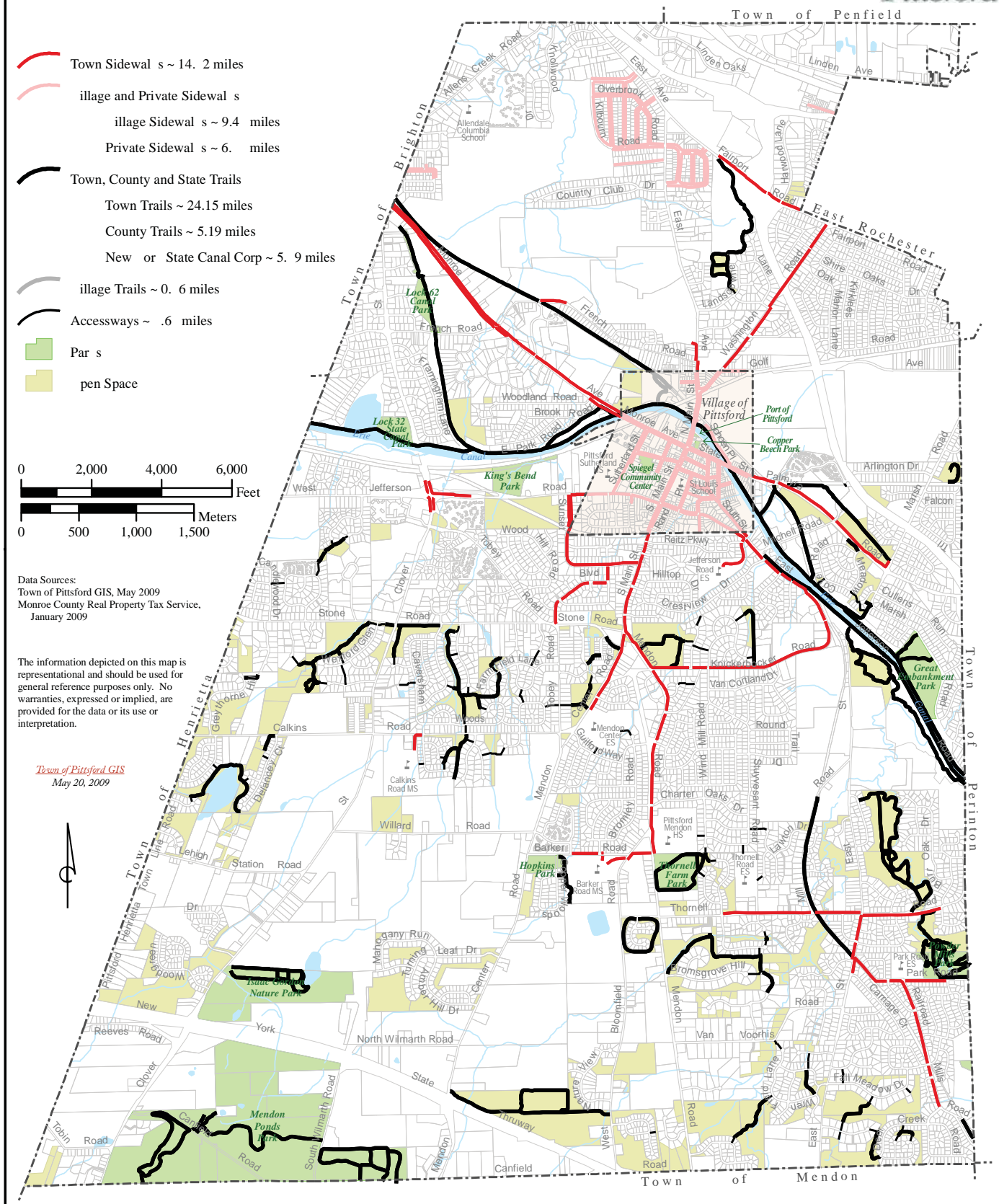


*At Great Embankment Park visitors can walk, bike, fish and boat along the one-mile "great embankment" of the Erie Canal, which traverses the Irondequoit Valley.*

# TOWN OF PITTSFORD

Map 5

## Existing Sidewalks, Trails and Accessways



## F. SURVEY OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT IN ADJACENT COMMUNITIES

While the Town of Pittsford and adjoining municipalities are independent political entities, many issues and opportunities cross municipal lines. Traffic patterns are one example of an issue that affects the town, but that is greatly influenced by factors beyond the town borders. Such issues can certainly be addressed on an individual community-by-community basis, but longer term solutions often benefit from inter-municipal cooperation. The Town of Pittsford is no stranger to cooperating with its neighbors, the partnership between the Town and Village of Pittsford being the most obvious example.

As the Town of Pittsford reaches “build out” – the point at which all available land is either developed or permanently protected open space and farmland – issues and opportunities faced by the town will increasingly be influenced by what takes place in nearby municipalities. Moreover, an awareness of what its neighbors are doing can help the Town of Pittsford when it comes to formulating its own planning goals and strategies. To this end, as part of this comprehensive plan project, the planning and development issues, and comprehensive plans where available, were reviewed for the following nearby communities:

- 1) Village of Pittsford
- 2) Town of Brighton
- 3) Town/Village of East Rochester;
- 4) Town of Henrietta;
- 5) Town of Macedon.
- 6) Town of Mendon;
- 7) Town of Penfield;
- 8) Town of Perinton; and
- 9) Town of Victor.

Below is a summary of this research.

### *Common Ground*

Although the communities surrounding the Town of Pittsford differ substantially with respect to their location within the metropolitan area and the particular issues they face, they share many big picture planning and development goals. For instance, a review of comprehensive plans shows that many issues important to Pittsford residents are also important to residents of other towns. Addressing traffic congestion, protection of open space and community character, access to parks and trails, supporting the vitality of existing village and hamlet locations, and focusing commercial growth in existing commercial areas, are some of the themes that cut across municipal lines. While these themes may express themselves differently from community-to-community, they do provide a foundation for inter-municipal cooperation.



# TOWN OF PITTSFORD

## *Growth and Development Dynamics*

As Pittsford moves toward a build-out state, new commercial and residential growth will likely continue to migrate to communities located at the periphery of the metropolitan area. Growth in the NYS Route 31 corridor, particularly in Wayne County, has picked up in recent years. In the Town of Macedon, significant recent retail development has included a Lowes and Wal-Mart, and according to the town’s comprehensive plan, the potential exists for approximately 4,200 new homes to be built. A number of communities have taken steps in recent years to manage growth. For instance, the Town of Henrietta’s Rural Residential Zoning districts, created in 2005, reduce density and protect open space character. As newer communities continue to grow and develop, the Town of Pittsford can seek areas of mutual cooperation over shared goals that are not only beneficial to respective communities, but the region as a whole. The town can also potentially partner with other neighboring “build out” communities, such as the Town of Brighton, to address issues and opportunities presented by build-out.

Ultimately, individual communities have jurisdiction over their policies and land use and planning decisions. However, where possible, the Town of Pittsford can continue to reach out to adjacent communities to partner on matters of shared interest. This may become increasingly important for the town, if metropolitan development trends continue and additional residential and commercial projects continue to be built at the periphery of the metropolitan area.



*The Town of Pittsford is not an island – it is surrounded by numerous communities, many of which share similar challenges and goals. Moreover, many issues facing the Town of Pittsford are influenced by actions and decisions taking place beyond the town’s borders. Therefore, the regional context should be considered when making decisions about the future of the town.*

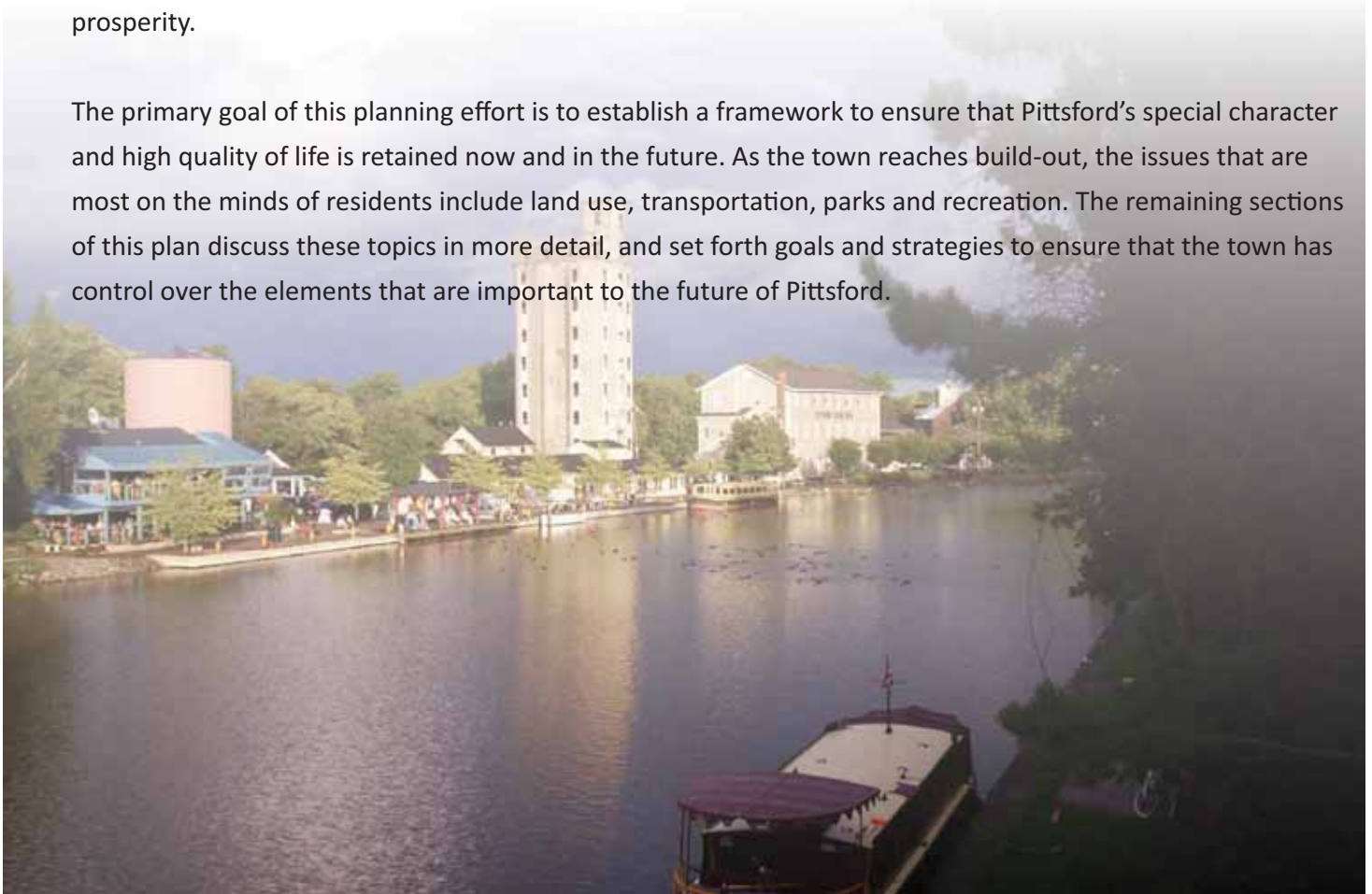


## 5. CONCLUSION

The Town of Pittsford is a maturing community that is reaching build-out. The amount of undeveloped land for new subdivisions is limited and decreasing. However, the Town of Pittsford continues to be a desirable place in which to live and do business. Future growth pressures, therefore, are likely to exert themselves on an already “built-up” town landscape. The challenge facing Pittsford as it moves forward will be to manage such future growth pressures in ways that allow the town to grow and prosper, without compromising the quality-of-life and town character that residents have come to treasure and expect.

As the town reaches build-out, and more importantly as surrounding towns continue to grow and develop, the town will need to address transportation issues in a manner that balances community character with improvements to intersections and roads. Smart, targeted improvements to the town’s transportation system that maximize the performance of existing roads and intersections can help to reduce the need for road and intersection widening. The town will also need to continue to provide for the types of amenities and services that residents have come to expect and that contribute to Pittsford’s high quality of life, including recreational amenities and facilities. Lastly, as the town moves forward, especially in light of current economic conditions, it will continue to be important to make decisions in the context of the town’s long-term fiscal health and prosperity.

The primary goal of this planning effort is to establish a framework to ensure that Pittsford’s special character and high quality of life is retained now and in the future. As the town reaches build-out, the issues that are most on the minds of residents include land use, transportation, parks and recreation. The remaining sections of this plan discuss these topics in more detail, and set forth goals and strategies to ensure that the town has control over the elements that are important to the future of Pittsford.



*TOWN OF PITTSFORD*

