

**Section 5**  
Findings and Recommendations

## SECTION 5.0 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Introduction

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

### 5.2 Findings/Opportunities/Constraints

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

#### 5.2.1 Town of Alabama

##### Existing Land Use

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

Agriculture and Farmland

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

Natural Environment and Constraints

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

Demographics and Social-Economic Characteristics

- The Town population has remained relatively stable for over 40 years with modest decreases in population shown over the last ten years.



- Population projections indicate that the Town's population will likely decline over the next 25 years.
- Household size has decreased from 2.84 to 2.59 persons per household. At the same time both the number of households and number of occupied housing units have remained stable.
- Unemployment is higher in the study area (6.0 percent) than in the County as a whole (4.3 percent).
- A majority of respondents believe that commercial and industrial growth is needed in Alabama.

#### Transportation

- State Routes 63 and 77 are the major transportation routes through the Town.
- Bloomingdale Road and Ledge Road provide access from the Tonawanda Indian reservation to State Route 77, in the western portion of the Town.
- No major capacity or operational deficiencies were identified on state or local highways.
- An abandoned railroad corridor runs west to east, through the Indian reservation to the Village of Oakfield, continuing to the east and out of the study area. It is currently being utilized by snowmobilers and ATV riders.
- Some problematic intersections were noted along State Route 77, at Ledge and Bloomingdale Roads.

#### Utilities

- There currently is no public water service in the Town.
- The Genesee County Smart Growth Plan identifies Alabama, South Alabama and Basom hamlet areas as "future development areas," where public water could be extended.
- Public water supply could be made available through Darien, Pembroke or Newstead from the west or Oakfield to the east.
- Most residents responding to the public opinion survey indicated that public water should be provided Town-wide.
- There currently is no public sewer service in the Town. The closest sewer system is located in the Village of Oakfield.

#### Community and Government Facilities

- Besides the wildlife and conservation areas, there are limited public facilities in the Town.
- Town facilities include the Town Hall, Fire Hall and Town Highway Garage.
- The majority of students in the Town of Alabama are part of the Alabama-Oakfield Central school district. Other areas are served by Akron Central, Royalton-Hartland or Medina Central school districts.

- Residents believe additional recreational facilities are needed, such as playgrounds, sports facilities and picnic areas.
- Residents indicate that shared services and inter-governmental cooperation should be expanded for highway, recreation, garbage/solid waste disposal, youth services and seniors services.

#### Zoning

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

### **5.2.2 Town of Oakfield**

#### Existing Land Use

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

#### Agriculture and Farmland

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

#### Natural Environment and Constraints



- Local relief is generally flat and, with localized exceptions, steep slopes do not present a development constraint.
- Hydric soils are most widespread in the northern portion of Town within the Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management Areas, along stream corridors, and within a large wetland area north of the Village.
- Floodplains were identified along Oak Orchard Creek, in the northern portion of Town.
- Most of wetlands and floodplains are located in the Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management Area.
- The wildlife conservation area provides important open space, wildlife habitat, and a location passive recreation.
- Agricultural lands and the open wetlands of the wildlife conservation area provide valuable scenic vistas and add to the unique character of the Town.
- Almost the entire Town of Oakfield lies within the Oak Orchard watershed.
- Small creeks and streams generally flow northward combining with the major streams, which flow out of the study area.
- The abandoned U.S. Gypsum mines noted on Map 10 could potentially cause ground subsidence, which could result in damage to aboveground structures or personal injury. The location of the former mines should be noted in future land use decisions in affected areas.

#### Demographics and Social-Economic Characteristics

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

#### Transportation

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

- An abandoned railroad line runs from west to east through the Town and Village and is currently being utilized by snowmobilers and ATV riders.
- The intersection of State Route 63, at the school entrance, has been identified as a location of safety concerns. This intersection will be part of a planned NYSDOT reconstruction project on State Route 63 through the Village.

#### Utilities

- Only limited areas along State Route 63, South Pearl Road and North Pearl Road, currently receive public water.
- In the Town of Oakfield, the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan limits future development to areas immediately adjacent to the Village. These areas are located along State Route 63-Lewiston Road, North Pearl Road, South Pearl Road and State Route 262.
- The Smart Growth Plan promotes future water line extensions along State Route 63 to the west and State Route 262 to the east, but discourages non-agricultural development.
- Public sewers extend to a very small area of the Town from the Village of Oakfield. The remainder of the Town utilizes on-site septic systems for sanitary waste disposal.

#### Zoning

- Similar to the ordinance in Alabama, the R&A – Residential Agriculture zoning district is very similar in nature to the R – General Residential classification and does not promote significantly different uses in either district.
- The R district does not limit (or encourage) particular uses in the hamlets.
- Because sewer service can be extended from the Village, and the capacity exists, higher residential densities for residential development with sewers could be accommodated in areas outside the Village.
- There are no design standards or guidelines to control random development to ensure that it is in keeping with the character of the Town.
- The possibility of the redevelopment of the U.S. Gypsum site should be acknowledged and planned for, with consideration given to the routing of truck traffic and other potential impacts to Village and surrounding area.

### **5.2.3 Village of Oakfield**

#### Existing Land Use

- The Village is the commercial center of the study area.
- The Village is comprised of mixed-use development.
- The Village has higher residential densities.



- Land use on Main Street consists of a mix of commercial and residential uses, government offices and some institutional uses.
- Residential land use accounts for 46 percent of the total land area in the Village.
- Almost all multi-family and multiple residences that exist in the study area are located in the Village.
- The Village's primary method for land use regulation is zoning.
- There are a number of large commercial and industrial uses in the southwestern section of the Village.
- The Village is essentially built-out, with future development coming in the form of redevelopment.
- The southeastern portion of the Village is underlain by former gypsum mines (see Map 10).

#### Agriculture and Farmland

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

#### Natural Environment and Constraints

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

#### Demographics and Social-Economic Characteristics

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



- A majority of residents believe that commercial and industrial growth is needed in the Village of Oakfield.

#### Transportation

- State Routes 63 and 262 are the major highways serving the Village.
- No major capacity or operational deficiencies were identified on state or local highways.
- Only limited public bus service is available and requires a 24-hour advanced request.
- The abandoned railroad corridor is currently being utilized by snowmobilers and ATV riders.

#### Utilities

- The entire Village is serviced by public water.
- The Village has identified the need for a new water tower and associated improvements to the water distribution system. A new tower could be designed to service areas in the Towns of Oakfield and Alabama.
- The Genesee County Smart Growth Plan includes the entire Village and some of the surrounding area in the Town of Oakfield within its recommended development area.
- The Village Wastewater Treatment Plant currently operates at approximately half of its 0.5 million gallon per day capacity leaving sufficient opportunity for connections with new development in the Village and the immediately adjacent area in the Town.

#### Zoning

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

### **5.3 Recommendations**

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

### 5.3.1 Town of Alabama

**Goal: Protect, promote and preserve agriculture**

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

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

In addition, the Town should enforce the newly adopted wind energy regulations. The use of wind power can reduce energy costs for individual farmers. The decision to build individual wind turbines and, more importantly, larger wind farms requires a comprehensive study to identify wind speed and consistency, costs and benefits and impacts to local ecology.

***Recommendations:***

- Consider the adoption of an agricultural zoning classification that would limit non-agricultural development. This district would incorporate large farms and areas of good farm soils and focus on development density as a means of protecting agricultural uses. This zoning category could be used in combination with conservation easements or a purchase of agricultural conservation easement (PACE) program to ensure that potential rezoning actions would not result in the development of prime farmland.



- Review and expand the Town zoning to include innovative non-traditional development standards, such as open development areas, overlay districts and rural cluster development regulations.
- Adopt and enforce rural development guidelines, to control growth, manage sprawl and preserve farmland (which do not take away the right to develop, but enable development to occur in a more managed fashion to achieve particular goals). Unlike some other communities, the limited level of development pressure and low growth rate in Alabama reduces the need for utilizing these guidelines. Therefore, the tools should be used as follows:
  - Establish subdivision regulations, with a particular emphasis on minor subdivision.
  - Utilizing (permitting) open development areas could be helpful along State Routes 77 and 63, and in areas that have important views or environmental resources that should be preserved. The use of open development areas provides a more creative approach for allow minor subdivisions, helping to avoid the standard creation of roadway frontage lots which result in long "bacon strip" parcels.
  - Overlay zoning could be used in areas that require more creativity in residential design and along major roadway corridors to establish more appropriate setback standards. They can also be used for the incorporation of aesthetic standards, such as landscaping, architectural design or signage, in certain areas (such as the hamlets).
  - Rural development guidelines may be the most important tool to guide potential developers with site designs that are in concert with the surrounding community. These guidelines could be inserted into the zoning code or subdivision regulations for easy reference and utilization. The Town could begin the preparation of rural development guidelines by researching what they like and dislike in terms of subdivision design.

It should be noted that none of these tools and land use measures eliminate the right to develop land. Rather, they provide flexibility and guidance to enables land to be developed in a manner that achieves the goals and objectives of this Plan.

- Institute programs to preserve important areas of farmland and prime farm soils, such as a purchase of development rights (PDR) program, conservation easements and other similar mechanisms. The Town should work with the County to ensure that such efforts are consistent with the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan and the Smart Growth Plan. Agricultural conservation easements may be the first step, to be followed at a later date with a PDR program as required. The Town should also evaluate the economic impacts of a purchase of agricultural conservation easement (PACE) program. It is suggested that this type of planning be done in conjunction with the Town of Oakfield (a joint agricultural protection plan). Because of the low level of development pressure, programs such as PACE or PDR are considered long-term actions and should be considered as feasible actions when the time is right.



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

**Goal: Maintain and enhance community character**

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

***Recommendations:***

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



- Require the use of non-traditional development techniques, such as open development area, cluster development and planned unit development to control future growth, manage sprawl and preserve farmland.
- Focus attention on addressing traffic problems along State Route 77 at Ledge and Bloomingdale Roads, which are impacting the character of the community.
- Adopt and enforce rural development guidelines.
- Adopt and enforce hamlet development guidelines in the hamlets, and assess the zoning in these areas to support increased development densities in these areas ( $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$ -acre lots are the smallest that can be approved in non-sewered areas).
- Consider zoning overlay districts for the hamlets, with architectural and historic preservation standards, to protect and enhance the character of development in these areas.
- Zoning overlays could also be used to control develop along the two major road corridors, limiting commercial development to the hamlets (particularly Basom), and preventing commercial strip development. This is especially important in those areas that receive public water.
- Adopt zoning classifications, or strengthen existing zoning, to protect existing agricultural uses and prevent residential sprawl.
- Review and update permitted uses, and uses allowed by Special Use Permit in the AR Zone. Any revisions to the schedule of land uses should specify those existing land uses conforming to today's zoning would be able to continue as pre-existing uses.
- Identify and protect important scenic vistas that add to the character of the Town and include their consideration in new subdivision regulations.

**Goal: Provide public water to appropriate areas of the Town**

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

***Recommendations:***

- Support and encourage the extension of public water along the major state highways, thus connecting the hamlet areas through a looped system of water line extensions along State Route 77, north to Alabama hamlet; east along Lewiston Road, with a northerly extension along Knowleville Road to Wheatville hamlet; south along Knowlesville Road to South

Alabama; and west along State Route 63, back to State Route 77 (hydraulically efficient, servicing the most densely populated areas).

- Utilize lateral restrictions along the roadways between the hamlets to control growth and protect agricultural uses from development pressures. This would also apply to any future extension along State Route 63, between South Alabama and Oakfield, where development pressures are expected to increase. Other controls such as the overlays can help control development in areas where water is primarily run to loop the water system.
- Focus the provision of public water to hamlet locations that have urgent need due to health and safety issues.
- Ensure the extension of public water for targeted commercial and industrial growth.
- Protect groundwater resources from contamination. Sponsor educational opportunities in groundwater protection for households and farms.
- The looped water system will provide a backbone for the potential development of future water extensions (a very long-term consideration).

**Goal: Protect the environmental features and resources of the Town**

The wildlife and conservation areas comprise approximately 26 percent of the land area in the Town of Alabama. The Town contains a variety of other important environmental features including wetlands, large expanses of mature woodlands, tributary stream corridors and floodplains. Groundwater is also an important environmental resource since the population of the Town relies on this resource for potable water. The former U.S. Gypsum mines shafts extend through the southeastern and south central portions of Alabama (Map 10). Any proposals for future development activity in this area of the Town must take this into consideration.

***Recommendations:***

- Groundwater quality must be protected. Efforts should be undertaken to ensure that on-site sanitary waste disposal systems are properly maintained, and that failing systems are detected and properly mitigated. The communities should work with the appropriate County and State agencies to address this problem through public education programs and the provision of technical assistance to help residents understand and address this important issue. Monies may be made available through Rural Development programs supported by the federal government.
- In identified groundwater problem areas, the Town should require larger lot sizes.
- In order to mitigate the impacts from aging and deteriorating on-site septic systems, communal septic systems or "package" wastewater treatment systems should be investigated for the hamlet areas.



- In those areas not receiving public water, consideration should be given to subdivision regulations that require soil testing as part of the application procedure. If poor or problematic soils are identified, stricter standards could be imposed, such as larger minimum lot size requirements, or limitations on the number of subdivisions.
- To protect important environmental features, proposed development actions should avoid identified wetlands, floodplains and prime farm soils. (Depending upon the structure of the wetland, avoiding wetlands has the additional benefit of protecting the groundwater resource.) Mandate usage of cluster development or open development areas to help avoid these environmentally sensitive features.
- Wetlands protection should include both State and Federal wetland areas including the required 100-foot setback areas required by the State. A local law could be utilized to help protect these important areas.
- Support farming practices that recognize environmental resources and the importance of avoiding or minimizing point and non-point source contaminant threats to groundwater, surface water and the environment as a whole. This can be accomplished by working with organizations such as Cooperative Extension and County Soil and Water District.
- Assess the zoning in the vicinity of the wildlife and conservation areas to reduce potential impacts from development.
- Develop a more formalized trail system along the abandoned railroad corridor and encourage the State to establish official bike routes along State Routes 63 and 77.
- With respect to the former underground gypsum mines, the Town should investigate the need to institute zoning revisions or additional regulations to address the risk to future property owners in underground mining areas. Assistance from the State should be sought for this effort. In addition, consideration should be given to adopting minor subdivision regulations to allow the Town to further evaluate the risks of subdividing and developing properties in these areas.

**Goal: Provide for economic development in the Town**

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

***Recommendations:***

- New commercial uses should be limited to the hamlets, in particular, Basom and Alabama and to a lesser extent South Alabama. Focus should be placed on how State Route 77

should be developed, particularly in the vicinity of the Basom hamlet. Avoid zoning or zoning changes that would allow areas of commercial strip development to build up in the Town (outside the hamlet long-term growth areas identified on the Vision Maps) which would adversely impact the character of the community. This is especially important with retail uses that should only be allowed in certain hamlets or the village. Farm related businesses or some "nuisance business" should continue to be allowed in the rural areas by special use permit.

- The Basom Hamlet could allow auto dependant uses in response to the traffic to the reservation. It must be done in such a way not to destroy the rural atmosphere of this area.
- The South Alabama Hamlet is the community center but should not have a focus on business or retail development, but is a residential hamlet. The Town Hall may or may not continue at this location.
- Efforts should be centered on revitalizing the hamlets through redevelopment and in-fill activities.
- Support farming as the primary industry in the Town and consider a separate zoning classification, or strengthening existing zoning, to protect and enhance this industry. Non-agricultural uses should be highly restricted on prime farm soils. However, secondary commercial or home occupations related to agriculture should be encouraged.
- Target locations for future commercial and industrial development along State Route 77 and Ledge Road. The Ledge Road area (near the existing quarry) should be restricted for residential development and only allow agriculture or other uses not impacted by the quarry operations.
- Recreation-oriented economic activity should be supported, such as campgrounds, riding stables, etc. Support services for the recreational sector should also be encouraged. Again, these uses could be allowed in the more rural areas outside the hamlets. The Alabama Hamlet could have a focus on tourism support uses.
- Promote visitation to the wildlife and conservation areas and find ways to capitalize on this environmental tourism. Include specific regulations in the zoning codes for bed and breakfast establishments in the hamlets and surrounding areas.
- Coordinate activities with the State, and cross market these recreational – tourism related activities. Help in marketing the attributes of the region.

**Goal: Maintain and promote efficiency of government**

The Town of Alabama, in cooperation with the surrounding Town and Village of Oakfield, must strive to offer the highest quality and most cost-effective services to the community.

***Recommendations:***



- Cooperation between the communities will be essential for infrastructure expansion. Consider joint or regional funding grant applications.
- Utilize this Comprehensive Plan to promote continued cooperative approaches and plans with the Town of Oakfield, and where feasible, the Village of Oakfield. The three-community committee should be continued and should meet yearly to review the plan.
- Continue to work with the Town of Oakfield to develop ways to share essential services, equipment and personnel.
- Implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan to establish appropriate and alternative development standards and regulations to manage growth.
- Utilize and enforce land use regulations to properly manage growth and encourage the development of a mix of uses to balance the tax base and control the costs of public services.
- Keep working with the surrounding communities of Village of Oakfield and Town of Alabama to develop ways to share recreational opportunities.
- Continue and strengthen the relationship with the Oakfield-Alabama School District to sharing services and improving relations between the Towns and Village.
- Many of the recommendations for the Town of Alabama are the same for the Town of Oakfield, and therefore these communities could work together in implementing these recommendations. This could keep costs down and ensure that regulations are similar in these adjoining communities.

**Goal: Encourage diversity of housing types in the Town**

As the population of the Town changes over time, and the economic conditions vary, a variety of housing options should be available to accommodate the changing lifestyles, incomes and needs of the community. Presently, the Town's zoning regulations allows for diversity in housing stock. However, single-family detached homes are the primary form of residential development in Alabama. The lack of sewers severely limits the types of construction that can take place in the town. Higher density housing types should be expected in the Village of Oakfield, where sewer is available.

***Recommendations:***

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

**5.3.2 Town of Oakfield**

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

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

***Recommendations:***

- The Town currently has public water in the areas adjoining the Village. A primary opportunity for additional public water in the Town of Oakfield is to selectively extend water along certain main roads directly outside of the Village to enable a limited amount of new develop over the long term. This plan is also being coordinated to help in providing water to the Town of Alabama.
- Support and encourage the extension of public water along the major roadways, thus connecting the Five Corners and East Oakfield hamlets with the Village through a system that extends water along State Route 63, out Drake Road and northwest on Lewiston to Maltby Road. Consider future long-term extensions along Maple and Hutton Roads.
- Consider providing public water to the Birdseye property and other suitable locations for commercial and industrial development.
- Utilize lateral restrictions along the roadways between the hamlets to control growth and protect agricultural uses from development pressures. This would also apply to any future extension of water along State Route 63, between Oakfield and the South Alabama hamlet where development pressures could increase in the future.
- Over the long term, focus the provision of public water to locations that are identified as having an urgent need due to health and safety issues.
- Protect private wells from contamination. Sponsor educational opportunities in groundwater protection for households and farms.
- Based upon the existing land use pattern, anticipated growth, and lands available for development (or re-development), it is recommended that the future development area surrounding the Village continue to expand outward from the Village (there are several opportunities).
- The area along State Route 63 between the Village and South Alabama should receive public water in order to bring water to appropriate areas in Alabama. An overlay zone of enhanced land use controls should be established in order to control the type and density of new development that may wish to benefit from public water.
- A looped water extension should continue east on State Route 262 to Fisher Road and south to State Route 63 to provide a more hydraulically efficient system. This area would be a long-term growth area and should not be considered for near term development.



**Goal: Provide for economic development**

The expansion of industrial and commercial growth, and other economic development activities, helps provide jobs and a stronger tax base for the community. A vibrant Town also provides opportunities for Village businesses as long as they don't compete.

***Recommendations:***

- Commercial uses should be limited to the Five Corners hamlet or the Village of Oakfield. Avoid zoning or zoning changes that would allow commercial retail strip development in the Town.
- Support and promote the retention and expansion of existing industrial uses through zoning and capital improvements. Non-retail businesses surrounding the Village will help the Village by providing customers for the Downtown.
- Target areas along State Route 63 and South Pearl for commercial and industrial development.
- Develop a redevelopment strategy for the U.S. Gypsum property. Work with the property owner, county and state officials to appropriately locate new uses on this site.
- Identify new target industries that could be compatible with the existing infrastructure, land use patterns and community objectives (in the U.S. Gypsum area and off the southwest corner of the Village).
- Support farming as the primary industry in the Town and consider a separate zoning classification, or strengthening existing zoning, to protect and enhance this industry. Non-agricultural uses should be highly restricted on prime farm soils.
- Recreation-oriented economic activity should be supported, such as campgrounds, riding stables, etc. Support services for the recreational sector should also be encouraged.
- Work with the village in targeting areas for sewer extensions.

**Goal: Protect and preserve agricultural land uses**

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

Preserving farmland and good farm soils would address public concerns for protecting agricultural resources in the community. To better manage future growth, non-traditional development techniques should be implemented. Rural development guidelines should also be considered to avoid sprawl and the inefficient development of agricultural lands. In addition, guidelines should be established to manage the development of wind turbines in the Town. The use of wind power can reduce energy costs for individual farmers. The decision to

build individual wind turbines and, more importantly, larger wind farms requires a comprehensive study to identify wind speed and consistency, costs and benefits and impacts to local ecology.

***Recommendations:***

- Consider the adoption of an agricultural zoning classification that would limit non-agricultural development. This district would incorporate large farms and areas of good farm soils and focus on development density as a means of protecting agricultural uses. This zoning category could be used in combination with conservation easements or a purchase of agricultural conservation easement (PACE) program to ensure that potential rezoning actions would not result in the development of prime farmland.
- Review and expand the Town zoning to include innovative non-traditional development standards, such as open development areas, overlay districts and rural cluster development regulations.
- Adopt and enforce rural development guidelines, to control growth, manage sprawl and preserve farmland (which do not take away the right to develop, but enable development to occur in a more managed fashion to achieve particular goals). Unlike some other communities, the limited level of development pressure and low growth rate in Oakfield reduces the need for utilizing these guidelines.
- Rural development guidelines may be the most important tool to guide potential developers with site designs that are in concert with the surrounding community. These guidelines could be inserted into the zoning code or subdivision regulations for easy reference and utilization. The Town could begin the preparation of rural development guidelines by researching what they like and dislike in terms of subdivision design.
- Zoning overlays and cluster regulations should be carefully designed to help preserve features in the community and to not allow the proliferation of long narrow "bacon strip" farm lots.
- Institute programs to preserve important areas of farmland and prime farm soils, such as a purchase of development rights (PDR) program, conservation easements and other similar mechanisms. The Town should work with the County to ensure that such efforts are consistent with the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan and the Smart Growth Plan. Agricultural conservation easements may be the first step, to be followed at a later date with a PDR program as required. The Town should also evaluate the economic impacts of a purchase of agricultural conservation easement (PACE) program. It is suggested that this type of planning be done in conjunction with the Town of Alabama (a joint agricultural protection plan). Because of the low level of development pressure, programs such as PACE or PDR are considered long-term actions and should be considered as feasible actions when the time is right.
- Keep denser development activity centered in the areas around the village and in one hamlet area, consistent with the policies of the County's Smart Growth Plan, to prevent sprawl and protect agricultural land.



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

**Goal: Maintain and enhance community character**

The Town of Oakfield is a rural farming community, with vast tracts of farmland, open space and wildlife and conservation area. Residential development in Oakfield is very low density, with denser development in the vicinity of the Village of Oakfield. Residential use outside the Village is typically frontage development, particularly in the Five Corners and East Oakfield hamlets and along Pearl Street, south of the Village. No major residential subdivisions have occurred in the Town. Every planning effort undertaken in the Town should take the preservation of rural character into consideration.

***Recommendations:***

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

**Goal: Protect the environmental features and resources of the community**

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

***Recommendations:***

- Groundwater quality must be protected. Efforts should be undertaken to ensure that on-site sanitary waste disposal systems are properly maintained, and that failing systems are detected and properly mitigated. The communities should work with the appropriate County and State agencies to address this problem through public education programs and the provision of technical assistance to help residents understand and address this important issue.
- In those areas not receiving public water, consideration should be given to subdivision regulations that require soil testing as part of the application procedure. If poor or problematic soils are identified, stricter standards could be imposed, such as larger minimum lot size requirements.



- To protect important environmental features, proposed development actions should avoid identified wetlands, floodplains and prime farm soils.
- Support farming practices that recognize environmental resources and the importance of avoiding or minimizing point and non-point source contaminant threats to groundwater, surface water and the environment as a whole.
- Assess the zoning in the vicinity of the wildlife and conservation areas to reduce potential impacts from development.
- Promote public education programs for the maintenance of septic systems to protect groundwater quality.
- Protect the Old Indian Woods area as a cultural and historic resource of local significance. This area is part of the Iroquois Nation and includes woodlands and a stream corridor that warrants protection.
- With respect to the former underground gypsum mines, the Town should investigate the need to institute zoning revisions or additional regulations to address the risk to future property owners in underground mining areas. Assistance from the State should be sought for this effort. In addition, consideration should be given to adopting minor subdivision regulations to allow the Town to further evaluate the risks of subdividing and developing properties in these areas.

**Goal: Encourage a diversity of housing types in the Town**

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

***Recommendations:***

- Denser development should occur in and around the Village in the Town. The area around the Village has easier access to water and sewer services, which are needed to support denser development.
- The zoning around the Village and in the hamlets should be assessed to ensure that a variety of housing types are permitted. Provisions should be made to expand the R Residential district to accommodate more properties available for multi-family development.
- Promote alternative housing types to satisfy the needs of single individuals, seniors and other non-traditional households that are affordable in nature, such as multi-family units (apartments), in-law (accessory) apartments, and attached single-family dwellings.

**Goal: Maintain and promote efficiency in government**

The Town of Oakfield, in conjunction with the Town of Alabama and Village, must strive to offer the highest quality and most cost-effective services to the community.

***Recommendations:***

- Utilize this Comprehensive Plan to promote continued cooperative approaches and plans with the Village of Oakfield and Town of Alabama.
- Continue to work with the Village of Oakfield to develop ways to share essential services, equipment and personnel.
- Implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan to establish appropriate and alternative development standards and regulations to manage growth.
- Utilize and enforce land use regulations to properly manage growth and encourage the development of a mix of uses to balance the tax base and control the costs of public services.
- Keep working with the surrounding communities of Village of Oakfield and Town of Alabama to develop ways to share recreational opportunities.
- Continue and strengthen the relationship with the Oakfield-Alabama School District to sharing services and improving relations between the Towns and Village.

**5.3.3 Village of Oakfield**

**Goal: Promote and encourage investment and economic development in the Village**

The Village of Oakfield is the commercial service center in the community. It serves as a community center and is an important component of the community's character. There is potential for the re-use of existing structures and for some in-fill development. There are also some opportunities for new development. The challenge is to maintain the unique identity of the Village and provide a distinct business experience that can offer essential services to the surrounding community and compete, as required, with other districts in the region.

***Recommendations:***

- Develop an economic revitalization strategy to promote business in the downtown, including an assessment of the public's desire for services and amenities in the area.
- Support and preserve the vitality of the Main Street corridor.
- Develop a clear identity for the Village that is useful in the promotion of the area.
- Implement a streetscape project to improve the economic prosperity of the Village, as well as the visual quality of the area. The streetscape project should focus on the central business district (CBD), but provide other types of aesthetic improvements in the areas north and south of the CBD.



- Projects and policies should be designed to encourage walking and biking in the Village and to manage traffic congestion, which can have a negative impact on the Village center.
- Adopt the proposed zoning revisions that provide design guidance for signs and awnings.
- Improve the availability, appearance and visibility of parking in the Village center.
- Plan appropriately for vacant land in and around the Village. Ensure that any new development or redevelopment is compatible with existing development in terms of size, scale, setbacks and historic/architectural characteristics.
- Develop a strategy to capitalize on tourism associated with both the wildlife and conservation resources (which draw visitors to the surrounding area) and agricultural uses in the community. Consider adopting bed and breakfast regulations or allowing this use by special permit.
- Take advantage of the Small Cities and Community Development Block Grant programs to revitalize the Village.
- Support growth around the Village by working with the Town in extending water and sewer service to appropriate areas. This growth will benefit the Village business district and the overall vitality of the Village. Redevelopment of the US Gypsum site would provide needed jobs, activity and people to the area.
- To assist with redevelopment in the central business district, utilize the 485(b) tax incentive program.
- Explore use of a Business Improvement District (BID) or a Business Enhancement district for the downtown area.
- Identify grant or low-interest loan programs (county, state or federal programs) to help fund a façade improvement program in the CBD.

**Goal: Preserve the traditional neighborhood character of the Village**

The Village of Oakfield is a charming community that possesses a rural appeal, with a small-town atmosphere. There are few agricultural uses in the Village and limited areas of undeveloped land. Residential development in the Village consists of one and two-family dwellings on small lots. Many structures in the commercial district have second-story residential or office space. Most of the housing stock is older, enhancing the character of the community.

The commercial district functions as the rural service center for the surrounding area and contains a number of public uses, as well as historic structures. The area is pedestrian friendly, which adds to its appeal.

Village population has been essentially stable over the past decade, but modest growth is projected for the next 15 years. Increases in the number of households in the Village are also expected to continue, but at a pace that the Village can absorb. While the Village will continue to have a large proportion of family households, it is expected that there may be an increasing

number of empty nester (parents without children) and senior households in the future, whose housing needs will change. There are areas in the vicinity of the Village center that can accommodate in-fill development. Emphasis should be placed on accommodating changing lifestyles and further diversifying the existing housing stock.

The former U.S. Gypsum mines shafts extend through the southeastern portion of Oakfield Village (Map 10). Any proposals for future development activity in this area of the Village must take this into consideration.

***Recommendations:***

- Complete the Village streetscape plan for incorporation into a NYSDOT reconstruction project that is proposed for State Route 63 prior. Request the NYSDOT to assist with streetscape and/or landscape improvements as a part of this project.
- Promote walking and the preservation of the pedestrian friendly atmosphere throughout the Village. This issue is closely linked with the community character of the area.
- Adopt architectural standards or guidelines, possibly in conjunction with hamlet development guidelines, to preserve and protect important structures and ensure that new development and redevelopment is designed in harmony with the character of the Village. Architectural standards could be accomplished through the creation of a zoning overlay district for the Village (or tied to a Village sponsored façade improvement program).
- Implement rural and hamlet development guidelines.
- Adopt landscaping standards or guidelines to help improve the visual quality of commercial and industrial development and redevelopment in the Village. These landscaping standards could be linked with a zoning overlay (noted above).
- Consider developing community gateways at the major entry points to the Village.
- Secure land within the Village for the establishment of a Village park.
- Ensure protection of important historic structures in the Village. Consider adopting standards or guidelines for protecting and enhancing historic character, which could be linked with a zoning overlay district (noted above).
- Continue and maintain the diversity of housing types in the Village.
- Future revisions to zoning requirements and procedures should anticipate and facilitate redevelopment proposals rather than the development of vacant open space.
- Make sure 485b programs are well advertised and utilized by the existing businesses in the community.
- The school, although not within the Village, is an integral part of the character of the community. Connections to the school property should be encouraged. The streetscape project should extend out to the school.
- With respect to the former underground gypsum mines, the Village should investigate the need to institute zoning revisions or additional regulations to address the risk to future



property owners within underground mining areas. Assistance from the State should be sought for this effort. In addition, consideration should be given to adopting minor subdivision regulations to allow the Village to further evaluate the risks of subdividing and developing properties in these areas.

**Goal: Maintain and promote efficiency of government**

The Village, in conjunction with the two surrounding Towns, must strive to offer the highest quality and most cost-effective public services to the community.

***Recommendations:***

- As the Village is considering replacing its water tower, initial planning and design should include future expansion into the Towns of Alabama and Oakfield as per the recommended areas in the Vision Map.
- Utilize this Comprehensive Plan to promote continued cooperative approaches and plans with the Town of Oakfield, and where feasible, the Town of Alabama.
- Continue to work with the Town of Oakfield to develop ways to share essential services, equipment and personnel.
- Implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan to establish appropriate and alternative development standards and regulations to manage growth.
- Utilize and enforce land use regulations to properly manage growth and encourage the development of a mix of uses to balance the tax base and control the costs of public services.
- Keep working with the surrounding communities of Town of Oakfield and Town of Alabama to develop ways to share recreational opportunities.
- Continue and strengthen the relationship with the Oakfield-Alabama School District to sharing services and improving relations between the Towns and Village.

## **5.4 Vision Plan**

### **5.4.1 Introduction**

The Vision Plan for the three communities is represented as Map 14 and Map 15 for the Village of Oakfield. The Vision Plans are based on the findings and recommendations outlined in the previous sub-section and were developed to more specifically illustrate the vision concepts for the area. These plans do not directly correlate to zoning or land use (not future land use or zoning maps. These maps are overall guidance tools that represent the overall vision for the communities and can help with the recommendations outlined in the Plan.

The vision represented on Map 14 is useful in illustrating the synergy between the three communities. The Vision Map for the Village (Map 15) is provided for ease in viewing more detail in this area and should be used along with the overall Vision Map.

#### **5.4.2 Overall Regional Perspective**

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

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

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

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

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

#### **5.4.3 Town of Alabama Vision Map**

In the Town of Alabama, the key issue for the Town is controlled growth, primarily in the areas surrounding the hamlets of Alabama, Basom, South Alabama and Wheatville. As shown on the Vision Map, the majority of the Town outside these hamlet areas is devoted to agricultural and conservation uses. The Town would like to see future commercial and residential development located in and around the hamlet areas rather than having such uses sprawl



throughout the Town in the form of residential frontage lots or commercial development that requires a special use permit. The hamlets are the areas where the Town would like to provide public water and this is where future, long-term growth should occur, particularly in Basom, Alabama and South Alabama.

The Town of Alabama's largest land use features include the Indian reservation and major wildlife areas. The reservation isolates a small area in the southwestern corner of the Town, which is a mixed-use area. This area has a potential for receiving water through the Town of Newstead, which could enable future development and redevelopment in this area.

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

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

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

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

Throughout the Goals and Recommendations, the plan calls for increased development controls in the agricultural areas outside the hamlet areas. With the exception of the hamlet of Wheatville, the long-term planning areas identified on the Vision Map are generally in keeping with the proposed "development areas" as mapped in the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan. The major difference between the Town's plan and the County's is that this plan calls for larger long-term planning areas, while providing controls to manage future growth. Expanding the boundaries of the hamlet areas will enable the Town to better focus growth in these areas and eases the expansion of water to these areas. It will also help to achieve the goal of preserving the surrounding agricultural land by concentrating long-term development in the hamlets.

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

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

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

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



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

#### 5.4.4 Town of Oakfield Vision Map

The major features in the Town of Oakfield include the Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management area, the Village of Oakfield and the U.S. Gypsum facility. The Village by far is the most important feature and provides the focal point of the community. In support of the Village, the Town's long-term planning area surrounds the Village. This area is considered suitable for future, long-term residential and industrial development. It includes the U.S. Gypsum area and the area abutting Birdseye and is non-competitive with the Village. The reuse/redevelopment of the U.S. Gypsum site will not only benefit the Town, it could provide much-needed jobs for residents in the Village and in the region. Long-term residential growth should occur around the Village, where services are available, rather than sprawling throughout the Town in the form of frontage lot development (which is already occurring along Drake, Fisher, Albion, Lewiston and Maltby Roads.

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

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

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

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

Oakfield to the Village of Oakfield. Non-automotive transportation access (bike lanes) should be added to State Route 63 on both sides of the Village and connecting to the hamlet to the north. The residential growth areas immediately surrounding the Village should also be tied with sidewalks to the Village, and some areas considered for sewer extensions.

#### 5.4.5 Village of Oakfield Vision Map

The Village of Oakfield is an integral component of the region. This three-community map depicts how the communities fit together and how their visions can be completed together. Due to the scale of this map, the vision for the Village is also depicted on Map 15.

The key features of the Village are the Main Street corridor and central business district, the industrial area, the school (which is actually outside the Village in the Town), and the residential streets. Like many rural villages, Oakfield is struggling to keep its central business district (CBD) a vibrant center of the community. The vision map illustrates the village's CBD as the area along Main Street from Forest/Maple to Pearl including the Library and Park. Main Street to the north of this is mainly residential with a small mix of businesses. Similarly, the area to the south is mainly residential with a few businesses. These areas should be the focus for development and redevelopment, and the investment of Village, County and State monies. Another area for attention and investment is the industrial (Birdseye) area, in the southern portion of the Village. This area provides vital jobs and supports downtown businesses. This area is especially important since the closure of the U.S. Gypsum site. This area also has the potential for the expansion of industrial uses.

Areas of focus for the CBD include parking improvements, a future passive park, streetscape improvements and economic incentive programs. The vision map illustrates gateway features at each end of Main Street, as you enter the Village. To a lesser extent, gateways are also featured at the southern end of the Village on South Pearl and at the eastern end on Drake Street.

The southern end of Main Street also includes a large vacant parcel that is envisioned for multi-family housing. Surrounding this area and around much of the Village are agrarian lands, that the Town is utilizing for potential long-term residential development. This growth would provide residential support to the Village downtown.

It is important that major features in the community be tied together by sidewalks, walkways and trails. The vision map depicts a potential for a greenspace/trail between the Old Indian Woods and the school, which could be linked to the sidewalk system that leads to the central business district.



*See Map #14 & 15*