

Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement for Adoption of the Town of New Hartford Comprehensive Plan Update

Name of Action: Adoption of the Town of New Hartford Comprehensive Plan Update by the Town of New Hartford Town Board

Location: Town of New Hartford; Oneida County, New York

Lead Agency: Town of New Hartford Town Board

Contact: Earle C. Reed
Town Supervisor
111 New Hartford Street
New Hartford, NY 13413

Date: March 2007

Description of the Action:

This notice is issued pursuant to Part 617 of the implementing regulations pertaining to Article 8 (State Environmental Quality Review Act - SEQRA) of the Environmental Conservation Law. The action involves an update of the Town of New Hartford Comprehensive Plan to identify Goals, Policies and Actions that will guide future decision-making in the Town of New Hartford. The action involves the adoption of the Town of New Hartford Comprehensive Plan Update by the Town Board. This action is pursuant to Town Law sections Section 272-a. The Comprehensive Plan includes the following:

- ❑ An overview of the plan and of the Town, including the purpose of the plan and how it can be used.
- ❑ Discussion of recent changes in population, including projections and trends, as well as characteristics such as age, ethnicity and education.
- ❑ Description of the Town's housing stock, including its age, value, ownership and construction trends.
- ❑ Discussion of education, emergency services, health care, recreation and historic and cultural resources.
- ❑ Analysis of the economic base, including agriculture, major employers, commercial and industrial institutions.
- ❑ Discussion of the existing land uses and zoning, including a future land use plan and build out projections.
- ❑ Description of physical geography, soils and hydrology.
- ❑ Analysis of transportation, sewer and water services and utilities.
- ❑ Development of goals and policies.
- ❑ A record of public input, including results of a community survey, focus groups, meetings and public hearings.

The Comprehensive Plan evaluates existing conditions, looks at trends, assess community opinion and presents policies that can be implemented by the Town to preserve and enhance the quality of the community and life in the Town of New Hartford for current and future residents.

Potential Environmental Impacts:

The Town Board has identified the following impacts as small to moderate as the Comprehensive Plan Update is adopted. The Town Board has determined that the environmental impacts may be significant; as such, they have made a positive determination for significance. The Town Board intends to complete a Generic Environmental Impact Statement as part of the SEQRA process.

- Impact on Growth and Character of Community or Neighborhood – The Comprehensive Plan sets out a vision for the Town of New Hartford. This could, ultimately, impact the type and location of development in the Town. The chapters in the Comprehensive Plan, including land use, economy, transportation/infrastructure, environment, community facilities, etc., inventory the existing characteristics in the Town. Goals, Objectives and Policies outline the future direction the Town will take on various decisions. In particular, the following could be impacted:
 - ❑ Proposed action could affect the character of the existing community
 - ❑ Proposed action will cause a change in the density of land use – The future land use plan will classify the entire Town and direct future growth in the Town
 - ❑ Proposed action will set an important precedent for future projects – The comprehensive plan will set the precedent for all new development in the Town. Development must follow the requirements set forth in the new plan

The sole action of adopting the Comprehensive Plan will not in itself directly affect the environment in the Town. The Plan will not result in the approval of any specific development proposals. The Plan will direct and guide growth in the community in a cohesive and desired orderly manner. Specific development projects will still require the review and approval of the appropriate board before development can occur. There are potential environmental impacts that may result if the actions recommended in the Comprehensive Plan are fully implemented. This Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) identifies and addresses those impacts.

A copy of this GEIS may be obtained from:

Earle C. Reed
Town Supervisor
111 New Hartford Street
New Hartford, NY 13413
315-724-4300

A copy of this notice and the GEIS were distributed to:

Involved Agencies

New Hartford Town Board
New Hartford Planning Board
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
NYS Department of Transportation

Interested Agencies

Sauquoit Creek Basin Intermunicipal Commission
City of Utica
Village of New Hartford
Village of New York Mills
Town of Frankfort
Town of Kirkland
Town of Paris
Town of Whitestown
Oneida County Planning Department

Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement
For the Adoption of the Town of New Hartford
Comprehensive Plan Update
Oneida County, New York

Lead Agency:

Town of New Hartford Town Board

Contact Person:

Earle C. Reed
Butler Memorial Hall
48 Genesee Street
New Hartford, NY 13413

Prepared By:

peter j. smith & company, inc.
1896 Niagara Street
Buffalo, NY 14207
(716) 447-0505

Date of Acceptance:

March 14, 2007

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1.0 Introduction

This Draft Generic Impact Statement (DGEIS) provides an environmental analysis of the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan Update for the Town of New Hartford (referred to as the Comprehensive Plan or the Plan) to meet the requirements of the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA).

The Comprehensive Plan has been prepared by peter j. smith & company, inc. for adoption by the Town of New Hartford. The Town of New Hartford is located in Oneida County, New York. Since the Plan includes a future land use plan, its adoption is a Type I Action pursuant to SEQRA (6 NYCRR 617.12(b)(1)).

The New Hartford Town Board requested Lead Agency status under SEQRA provisions. This Lead Agency request was sent to all involved agencies, and no objections to this designation were received. On June 27, 2006, the Town Board passed a resolution declaring that it will serve as Lead Agency, that the action could have a significant impact on the environment and that a Draft GEIS will be prepared.

Although the action of adopting the Comprehensive Plan in itself will not adversely impact the environment, there could be environmental impacts incurred if the actions recommended in the Plan are implemented. Using information obtained for the Comprehensive Plan, this Draft GEIS (DGEIS) identifies potential adverse impacts and benefits of Plan adoption as well as possible mitigation measures.

2.0 Proposed Action

2.1 Description & Purpose

The Town of New Hartford is a stable and prominent town in New York's Mohawk Valley. It is the largest of the suburbs of the City of Utica in Oneida County, New York. It offers a distinct mix of development from rural to urban, from agricultural land and open space with sweeping and dramatic views to compact and clustered hamlets and villages. It offers a range of residential choices from urban to rural. Its rural areas comprise more than 50 percent of the Town's area. Residential development comprises roughly one-third of the Town. The Town has also evolved into a retail and commercial center serving the Mohawk Valley.

Preserving and enhancing the Town's special character is important to its future as one of the residential areas of choice for the region. At the same time, additional opportunities for economic development need to be identified and accommodated within the Town. Achieving a balance between conservation and development will be a continuing challenge for the future. The role of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide a framework to guide decision-making in the future as Town leaders strive to strike the balance they seek.

The Comprehensive Plan is a policy document that lays out a vision of the future with specific recommendations, a recommended Future Land Use Plan and recommendations for changes to zoning and land use regulations to implement the Future Land Use Plan. It is a guide to land use decision-making in the Town. An equally important function of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide a framework for assessing proposals that come before the Town. This is the role of the Goals, Objectives and Policies.

The Comprehensive Plan includes 5 sections:

1. The Introduction – Includes an overview of the Town's history, a summary of the plan and an overview of the planning process.
2. The Plan-Foundation of Our Future – Includes the plan rationale, policy framework, goals, objectives and policies, outline of future design of the town, build out analysis, recommendations and implementation policies.
3. The People and the Place – Includes an overview of the demographic, housing, economic, land use, natural resources, transportation, infrastructure, community facilities and recreation characteristics of the Town of New Hartford.
4. Tools – Includes a list of potential funding sources.
5. Appendix – Includes a description of the public input process including committee meetings, focus group sessions, community survey, and public meetings.

2.2 Adopting the Plan

Regulations regarding the adoption of a comprehensive plan are found in Town Law Section 272-a. Specific steps to be followed for adoption are:

- Referral of the draft Comprehensive Plan to the Oneida County Department of Planning in accordance with General Municipal Law Section 239-l and -m;
- One or more public hearings held by the Town Planning Board;
- One or more public hearings held by the Town Board;
- Adoption of the plan by resolution of the Town Board.

Town Law Section 272-a-10 provides for periodic review of the comprehensive plan, as follows:

"The Town Board shall provide, as a component of such proposed comprehensive plan, the maximum intervals at which the adopted plan shall be reviewed."

The Plan should be reviewed every five (5) years to make sure it reflects current conditions and the direction the communities wish to follow. For amending the Comprehensive Plan, the procedures are the same as those required for initial adoption of the Plan.

2.3 Preparation of the Plan

The Plan represents the collaborative effort of Town officials, Oneida County Department of Planning, the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee and residents. The Plan is a collection of inventory and policies prepared to guide the Town over the next 10 to 20 years. This section outlines the tasks completed in preparation of the Comprehensive Plan.

Steering Committee Meetings

A series of meetings were held with the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. The Committee consisted of elected and appointed Town officials, citizens and a representative of the Oneida County Planning Department. The Committee met periodically with the consultant to discuss and direct the preparation of the plan. The Committee reviewed documentation and mapping, provided contacts and helped determine representatives to participate in a series of focus group sessions. There was a visioning session held with the Committee to develop initial goals and objectives and to help define the future of the Town of New Hartford.

Inventory

A data collection process was completed for the Plan. The information contained in the Plan was supplemented by data from various governmental and private agencies, to help ensure the accuracy of the document. With the help of the various agencies, information was obtained regarding local laws and ordinances, land use, the environment, population, community services, housing, municipal services and economic development. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data was provided by Oneida County to create maps and illustrate land uses, environmental conditions and the location of community services and transportation corridors.

Focus Group Sessions, Pubic Meetings & Telephone Interviews

Many public and private sector individuals and organizations contributed data and assisted in updating the Comprehensive Plan. Two focus groups held: one on circulation and business and the other on economic development. Two interactive public meetings were also conducted. The public meetings were held during late fall 2005 and spring 2006. These sessions helped provide the consultant and elected officials with valuable feedback on the plan and future of the Town. Additionally, a series of telephone interviews were conducted to obtain additional information.

Community Survey

A random survey was distributed to both homeowners and renters in the Town. The survey was designed to determine the opinions of residents on a variety of topics, including community image, recreation, transportation, housing and community services.

Implementation

Goals, policies and actions were developed for the Town of New Hartford to help guide decisions over the next 20 years. The goals, policies and actions were developed based upon the visioning session, the results of the community survey and public and community input. These goals, objectives and policies are intended to lead to the overall improvement of the community and a better quality of life for all residents.

3.0 Environmental Setting

3.1 Location

The Town of New Hartford is the largest of the suburbs of the City of Utica in Oneida County, New York. The Town is bordered by the Town of Kirkland to the west, the Town of Whitestown to the north, the City of Utica and the Town of Frankfort, in Herkimer County to the east and the Town of Paris to the south. The Village of New Hartford and a portion of the Village of New York Mills are located within the Town of New Hartford.

3.2 Major Environmental Features

Major environment features of the Town of New Hartford include:

- ❑ Two significant water bodies – Sauquoit Creek and Mud Creek.
- ❑ Seven New York State recognized wetlands and several federally regulated wetlands (approximately 1.5% of the land area)
- ❑ A flood zone that generally follows Sauquoit and Mud Creeks and their tributaries (approximately 2.5% of the land area)
- ❑ The Town is an attainment area for all criteria air pollutants
- ❑ Approximately 52% of the Town’s land area is classified as national prime farmland and additional 13% of the land area is classified as farmland of statewide significance
- ❑ Four parks that provide 244 acres of developed parkland
- ❑ Steep hills to the south and more level ground to the north. Approximately 3% of the land area in the Town has slopes greater than 20%, which require careful site planning and attention to erosion and landslide potentials in order to be developed

3.3 Current Land Uses

The Town of New Hartford consists of 22.4 square miles or 14,316 acres of land area exclusive of the villages within the Town’s borders. The primary land uses in the Town are low density residential and agriculture. A breakdown of the total acreage dedicated to each category of use is provided below.

Table 3-1 Summary of Land Use
Town of New Hartford

Land Use	Acres	Percent
Agriculture	3,857	26.9%
Low Density Residential	4,362	30.5%
High Density Residential	401	2.8%
Commercial	680	4.7%
Industrial	187	1.3%
Community Service	644	4.5%
Public Service	278	1.9%
Open Space	508	3.5%
Vacant	3,398	23.7%

Source: Town of New Hartford and peter j. smith & company, inc.

4.0 Environmental Impacts & Mitigating Measures

The Comprehensive Plan sets forth policies and proposed projects to guide the future management and development of the Town of New Hartford. While approval of the Comprehensive Plan will have no direct impacts on the environment, there are potential impacts that could result if the projects or activities recommended in the Plan are implemented.¹

This section outlines the **short term, long term and cumulative impacts** that may be incurred as a result of full implementation of the actions included in the Comprehensive Plan. Opportunities for **mitigating** negative environmental impacts immediately follow each section. Many of the mitigating actions are also recommendations included in the Comprehensive Plan.

4.1 Land Use

The Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Plan directs high-density residential development and light industrial and commercial uses to the northern portion of the Town; discouraging the conversion of current agricultural and open space resources. The rest of the Town's land use is defined by the Greenway, which is the boundary of the single-family residential Neighborhood Areas with their small-scale commercial uses on the inside of the Greenway and the agricultural and low-density residential uses on the outside. Specific recommendations that may adversely impact land uses include:

- ❑ Direct commercial development to vacant and under-utilized parcels
- ❑ Encourage the development of nodes of residential development in multi-use/mixed-use settings
- ❑ Participate in regional economic and job development efforts
- ❑ Engage a consultant to perform cluster analyses to identify business groups and types most suited for and ways to attract them to New Hartford

The adverse impacts of the above actions may be mitigated by:

- ❑ Requiring municipal water and sewer service for new development
- ❑ Developing land use regulations and design guidelines that protect and preserve the character of the neighborhoods and minimize conflicts between land uses
- ❑ Providing opportunities for municipal and public review of all regulatory changes and development projects
- ❑ Adopting access standards for residential development
- ❑ Implementing circulation and parking solutions in commercial areas
- ❑ Ensuring the adequate provision and maintenance of sidewalks
- ❑ Assessing potential for improving access and usability of mass transit
- ❑ Implementing a storm water pollution quantity and quality plan

¹ As specific development actions are proposed or new municipal regulations are formed, additional SEQRA review will be undertaken to assess the specific environmental issues surrounding each action.

- ❑ Ensuring that public safety impacts are considered before new developments are permitted
- ❑ Ensuring adequate training is provided for both volunteer and professional responders
- ❑ Ensuring new residential development does not encroach on significant views
- ❑ Issuing a findings under Town Law §277 requiring residential subdividers to set aside land for parks and open space or pay a fee in lieu for acquisition of parks and open space
- ❑ Adopting and enforcing of ground water and water quality protection regulations
- ❑ Maintaining sufficient buffers between agricultural uses and residential uses
- ❑ Actively exchanging information on new development with neighboring communities to identify opportunities for collaboration and potential problems
- ❑ Encouraging housing unit clustering and conservation development design to preserve open space, reduce land disturbance and minimize infrastructure requirements

4.2 Water

While most of the developed areas in the Town of New Hartford are serviced by municipal water and sewage disposal, some properties still rely on septic tanks for sewage disposal and private wells for their water supply. The rural, southern section of the Town in particular relies on groundwater for water supply. On-going protection of aquifer and recharge areas is required to ensure that ground water supplies are protected from contamination. Comprehensive Plan recommendations that might affect the Town's water supply and quality include:

- ❑ Direct commercial development to vacant and under-utilized parcels
- ❑ Encourage the development of nodes of residential development in multi-use/mixed-use settings
- ❑ Participate in regional economic and job development efforts
- ❑ Engage a consultant to perform cluster analyses to identify business groups and types most suited for and ways to attract them to New Hartford

The adverse impacts of the above actions may be mitigated by:

- ❑ Adopting and enforcing of ground water and water quality protection regulations
- ❑ Encouraging environmentally "green" building systems
- ❑ Using the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) to identify and prevent negative impacts of proposed developments on the environment

4.3 Air

As of December 2005, the Town of New Hartford is an attainment area for all criteria air pollutants. The Comprehensive Plan recommends the promotion of the Town as a community of residential choice and the support of economic and job development efforts. These actions could generate additional automobile traffic which could in term affect air quality. However, the Plan also recommends taking necessary measures to alleviate traffic congestion, which could be used to minimize potential effects to air quality. Comprehensive Plan recommendations that might affect the Town's air quality include:

- ❑ Direct commercial development to vacant and under-utilized parcels
- ❑ Promote the town as a diverse and welcoming community of residential choice
- ❑ Encourage the development of nodes of residential development in multi-use/mixed-use settings
- ❑ Participate in regional economic and job development efforts
- ❑ Engage a consultant to perform cluster analyses to identify business groups and types most suited for and ways to attract them to New Hartford

The adverse impacts of the above actions may be mitigated by:

- ❑ Taking necessary measures to alleviate traffic congestion in areas of the town
- ❑ Assessing the potential for improving access and usability of mass transit
- ❑ Implementing circulation and parking solutions in commercial areas
- ❑ Adopting access management standards for residential development
- ❑ Ensuring the adequate provision and maintenance of sidewalks
- ❑ Encouraging environmentally "green" building systems

4.4 Plants and Animals

The Comprehensive Plan recognizes the impact of human development on local vegetation and animal life. Comprehensive Plan recommendations that will impact local flora and fauna include:

- ❑ Direct commercial development to vacant and under-utilized parcels
- ❑ Encourage the development of nodes of residential development in multi-use/mixed-use settings
- ❑ Participate in regional economic and job development efforts
- ❑ Engage a consultant to perform cluster analyses to identify business groups and types most suited for and ways to attract them to New Hartford

The adverse impacts of the above actions may be mitigated by:

- ❑ Building and expanding trail system for various users including walkers, runners, bicyclists and commuters
- ❑ Promoting the use of walking and cycling trails
- ❑ Educating the public regarding the negative effects of pesticide use and the financial and ecological benefits of integrated pest management.
- ❑ Encouraging environmentally "green" building systems

4.5 Historic and Archaeological Resources

There are no significant impacts on historic or archeological resources that will be realized as a result of the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. There are numerous structures that have local significance within the Town. The Comprehensive Plan supports the establishment and maintenance of a complete inventory of locally significant structures to ensure that these valuable resources are preserved.

4.6 Community Services

The Comprehensive Plan recommends that development be supported. Increases in development places additional demands on local emergency services, public facilities and roadways. However, the Plan does not encourage indiscriminant development. Rather, it seeks to focus development in areas where it can be supported by existing infrastructure. Additionally, through the development of inter-municipal relationships, as proposed by the Plan, the financial and intellectual resources of diverse agencies can be used to seek out creative solutions to issues that may arise. Actions with potentially adverse Community Services impacts include:

- ❑ Direct commercial development to vacant and under-utilized parcels
- ❑ Encourage the development of nodes of residential development in multi-use/mixed-use settings
- ❑ Participate in regional economic and job development efforts
- ❑ Engage a consultant to perform cluster analyses to identify business groups and types most suited for and ways to attract them to New Hartford

The adverse impacts of the above actions may be mitigated by:

- ❑ Ensuring that public safety impacts are considered before new developments are permitted
- ❑ Ensuring adequate training is provided for both volunteer and professional responders
- ❑ Targeting development to areas where it can be accommodated by existing infrastructure
- ❑ Working with surrounding communities to ensure adequate emergency services and other public facilities are available to accommodate development
- ❑ Working with surrounding communities to assess how shared service agreements could be used to maintain quality and lower cost of providing community services

4.7 Transportation

Roadway congestion is an existing issue within areas of the Town. Given this, any increase in the number of residents or businesses places additional demands on roadways. However, the Plan also recommends taking necessary measures to alleviate traffic congestion. The following Comprehensive Plan recommendations may adversely affect transportation resources in the Town of New Hartford:

- ❑ Direct commercial development to vacant and under-utilized parcels
- ❑ Encourage the development of nodes of residential development in multi-use/mixed-use settings
- ❑ Participate in regional economic and job development efforts
- ❑ Engage a consultant to perform cluster analyses to identify business groups and types most suited for and ways to attract them to New Hartford

The adverse impacts of the above actions may be mitigated by:

- ❑ Taking necessary measures to alleviate traffic congestion in areas of the town
- ❑ Adopt standards requiring roads in residential subdivisions be built to town standards
- ❑ Linking parking facilities in commercial areas by providing access roads and pedestrian and/or bicycle access facilities
- ❑ Encouraging alternative means of transportation
- ❑ Assessing potential for improving access and usability of mass transit
- ❑ Implementing circulation and parking solutions in commercial areas
- ❑ Adopting access management standards for residential development
- ❑ Ensuring the adequate provision and maintenance of sidewalks
- ❑ Conducting public meetings to obtain feedback and support for transportation changes
- ❑ Using development mitigation fees or traffic impact fees to provide a revenue source for future transportation improvements
- ❑ Linking bicycle and pedestrian paths with those in neighboring communities

4.8 Noise and Odor

The Comprehensive Plan seeks to limit the impacts of noise and odor generated by industry, agriculture and transportation facilities. Specific recommendations that may adversely affect noise and odor generation in the Town of New Hartford include:

- ❑ Direct commercial development to vacant and under-utilized parcels
- ❑ Encourage the development of nodes of residential development in multi-use/mixed-use settings
- ❑ Participate in regional economic and job development efforts
- ❑ Engage a consultant to perform cluster analyses to identify business groups and types most suited for and ways to attract them to New Hartford

The adverse impacts of the above actions may be mitigated by:

- ❑ Working with local industries to reduce the noise local facilities generate
- ❑ Including noise limits in land use regulations
- ❑ Taking necessary measures to alleviate traffic congestion in areas of the town
- ❑ Assessing potential for improving access and usability of mass transit

4.9 Community Character

Elements such as open spaces, agricultural lands and/or recreation resources all contribute to creating a unique living environment. The presence or absence of these resources helps to define a community and contribute to a high quality of life for residents and visitors. The availability of adequate and affordable housing may also impact the makeup and character of a community. Community character can be protected, celebrated and sustained through implementation of land use controls, public and private design and performance standards, and other means. These tools can help to attract investment and economic development, provide benefits for everyone and mitigate negative impacts overall. Recommendations with potentially adverse community character impacts include:

- ❑ Direct commercial development to vacant and under-utilized parcels
- ❑ Encourage the development of nodes of residential development in multi-use/mixed-use settings
- ❑ Participate in regional economic and job development efforts
- ❑ Engage a consultant to perform cluster analyses to identify business groups and types most suited for and ways to attract them to New Hartford

The adverse impacts of the above actions may be mitigated by:

- ❑ Developing land use regulations and design guidelines that protect and preserve the character of the neighborhoods and minimize conflicts between land uses
- ❑ Issuing a findings under Town Law §277 requiring residential subdividers to set aside land for parks and open space or pay a fee in lieu for acquisition of parks and open space
- ❑ Working with New York State Department of Transportation, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and other regional agencies on trail system development
- ❑ Providing opportunities for municipal and public comment on proposed park developments
- ❑ Promoting the community's historic and cultural resources
- ❑ Ensure new residential development does not encroach on significant views
- ❑ Maintaining sufficient buffers between agricultural uses and residential uses

4.10 Economics

The Comprehensive Plan promotes residential, economic and job development in selected areas. Through appropriate land use regulation and the implementation of sustainable development approaches the potential negative impacts of new development can be minimized. Concerns have been raised regarding the impact of new businesses on existing businesses.

The adverse impacts of the above actions may be mitigated by:

- ❑ Rehabilitating and occupying existing structures rather than razing and replacing
- ❑ Employing land use regulations, planning and economic incentives to drive sustainable approaches to development
- ❑ Collaborating on a regional approach to identifying appropriate sites for necessary but less desirable land uses and industries
- ❑ Ensure new residential development does not encroach on significant views
- ❑ Monitoring pending permit applications and site plan reviews and encouraging sustainable development practices
- ❑ Using the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) to prevent negative impacts of proposed developments on the environment
- ❑ Encouraging participation in the "Pride of New York Program" to support the sale of locally grown agricultural products
- ❑ Encouraging the use of alternative transportation options to move people and goods and to maintain the transportation infrastructure necessary to support economic growth

4.11 Energy

Implementing the Comprehensive Plan could adversely impact energy resources through:

- ❑ Increasing residential demand for natural gas, electricity and petroleum for household and transportation uses.
- ❑ Increasing commercial and agricultural demand for energy resources to serve production and transportation needs.

The adverse impacts of the above actions may be mitigated by:

- ❑ Working with local developers to promote high-energy efficiency building and site design, construction and landscaping
- ❑ Promoting the use of alternative energy sources, including renewable sources
- ❑ Developing and adopting energy conserving design standards for local zoning ordinances
- ❑ Promoting low energy transportation modes such as walking and bicycling
- ❑ Encouraging developers, businesses and local agencies to be part of an energy audit program such as the program administered by the New York State Energy Research and development Authority (NYSERDA)

4.12 Solid Waste Management

Increases in the number of residences, commercial uses and industrial uses in the Town of New Hartford could occur over time with full implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. These changes would then result in the generation of more solid waste. Adverse impacts may be mitigated by ensuring that adequate solid waste collection and disposal services are provided in the community.

5.0 Adverse Environmental Impacts that Cannot be Avoided

While adverse environmental impacts may be incurred if the Comprehensive Plan is fully implemented, most of these impacts can be adequately mitigated. There are some impacts, however, that cannot be avoided. The adverse impacts that cannot be avoided include:

- Impact on land – The Town continues to be an attractive place for development, both commercial and residential. Although new uses could involve demolition of existing uses, each new use could consume land that is currently vacant or underutilized. Some uses could also occur on land that is currently in agricultural production. The Comprehensive Plan recommends several measures that the community can take to minimize the overall impacts of growth because once land is developed it is likely to remain that way.
- Impact on transportation – With the residential and commercial development that is recommended there will be impacts on the existing transportation network that cannot be avoided. New development, especially residential and commercial growth, brings subsequent increases in traffic utilizing the road system. Additional traffic requires both upgrading the existing roads and the potential construction of new roads.

6.0 Irreversible and Irretrievable Resource Commitments

The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to guide the future growth in the Town so that it occurs in an orderly, well-planned fashion. The Plan identifies those areas that can best accommodate future residential, commercial and industrial growth. The Plan also encourages the protection of the various resources that exist in the Town of New Hartford. However, new development will irreversibly and irretrievably commit the following resources:

- ❑ Land – Although new residential, commercial or industrial uses could involve demolition of existing structures and the use of land that is already developed, each new use is likely to consume land that is currently vacant, underutilized or used for agricultural production. Developed land, particularly land that has water and sewer infrastructure serving it, is not likely to revert back to an undeveloped state.
- ❑ Construction Materials – Resources such as gravel, asphalt and other materials will be used for new building, road and infrastructure construction or renovation. There could also be a commitment of energy resources to power construction equipment over the course of development.
- ❑ Electricity and Gas – Future building development will require electricity, gas or other fossil fuels for heating and lighting
- ❑ Petroleum – New residential, commercial and industrial development will require additional automobile trips, and petroleum consumption, as employees, patrons and residents travel. Similarly, if commercial and industrial producers are not located near their target markets, products will require truck, train or air shipment.

7.0 Alternatives

Preparation of the GEIS requires that an evaluation of reasonable alternatives to the Comprehensive Plan be included. This section describes the alternatives considered.

7.1 Alternative 1 – Proposed Plan

Preserving and enhancing the Town's special character is important to its future as one of the residential areas of choice for the region. At the same time, additional opportunities for economic development need to be identified and accommodated within the Town. The Comprehensive Plan provides a framework to guide decision-making in the future as Town leaders strive to strike a balance between conservation and development.

The Comprehensive Plan paints an image of the Town, as it desires to be in the future. The Goals and Objectives are the standard against which the accomplishments of implementation of the Plan are measured. The Goals support the overall vision of the future of the Town of New Hartford. The Objectives serve the Goals of the Plan and are milestones along the way to Plan implementation. The Policies for the New Hartford Comprehensive Plan guide decisions regarding population, housing, the economy, land use, natural resources, transportation, infrastructure and utilities, community services and facilities, parks and recreation, town finances and implementation. They are tools for evaluation of proposals, projects and programs for New Hartford.

The Future Land Use Plan within the Comprehensive Plan provides illustrations of the future character of the Town of New Hartford. Concepts were developed to respond to the changing needs of the community and to address the vision of the future as it emerged during consultations with the steering committee, Town Board members, public input process and Focus Group sessions. The vision of the future embraces environmental sustainability for New Hartford, addresses the limitations of the land including the persistent storm water issues, traffic problems and other issues. The vision includes a greenway through the Town, which acts as a transportation and revitalization spine, incorporates trails and protects the vital Sauquoit Creek Corridor. Four neighborhood areas would serve as local anchors alongside a Green Corridor that runs from the southern to the northern borders of the Town: one builds on the existing Village of New Hartford and the other three address solutions for the Hamlet of Chadwicks, the Hamlet of Washington Mills and the Commercial Drive area.

The various elements of the Comprehensive Plan serves to define a character for the Town of New Hartford, better organizing it to prevent the proliferation of sprawl and preserving neighborhoods. Better organized, the Town will function more efficiently and effectively, which would improve the experiences of the residents and visitors to the Town and create an atmosphere in which the Town is sustained and thrives.

7.2 Alternative 2 – No Action

The last comprehensive plan update was prepared in 1995. The lack of a Comprehensive Plan Update for the Town of New Hartford would result in no comprehensive long-range guide for the development of the community. The proposed Comprehensive Plan is a policy document that lays out a vision of the future with specific recommendations, a recommended Future Land Use Plan and recommendations for changes to zoning and land use regulations to implement the Future Land Use Plan. It is a guide to land use decision-making in the Town. An equally important function of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide a framework for assessing proposals that come before the Town, which is the role of the Goals, Objectives and Policies.

The Town continues to be an attractive place for development, both commercial and residential. As a result, the impacts on the environment, physical, ecological and aesthetic, continue to impact the Town. In order to sustain New Hartford environmentally and as a place of residential and commercial choice in the Mohawk Valley, the Town needs to plan for its future. The No Action Alternative would leave the Town of New Hartford without the above tools that are necessary to better organize itself, preserve neighborhoods and prevent the proliferation of sprawl.