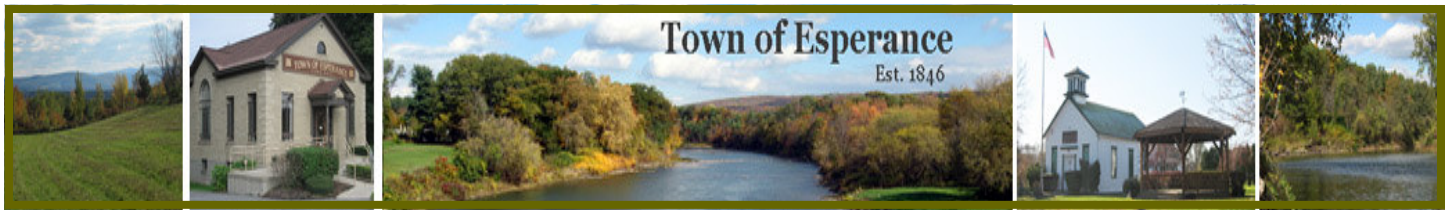
Town of Esperance Comprehensive Plan



A Plan to Enhance a Community

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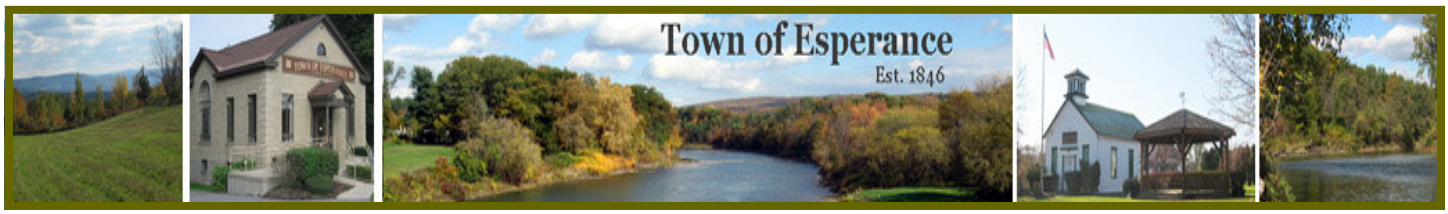


Introduction and History of Esperance

Chapter One: Introduction and History

Why create a new Comprehensive Plan?

The Town of Esperance adopted a Comprehensive Plan in the 1970s. That document evaluated the demographic and community characteristics of that time. However, changes such as the completion of Interstate 88 and the large amount of time that had past since community issues were discussed prompted local officials to update the Town's Comprehensive Plan. In 2007, the Town Board of Esperance decided to establish a Comprehensive Plan Committee to draft a document that would provide an overall framework for the future of Esperance.

The Town of Esperance's Comprehensive Planning Process

The Town of Esperance started this comprehensive planning process in 2007 by appointing a special committee that would represent various people of the town. Work started in early 2007 and continued with monthly meetings until late 2008. The public had numerous opportunities to become involved in the planning process. Public participation included involving elected and appointed officials, one written survey that was mailed to every town resident (extra copies were available at the town hall), and two public hearings. Information and survey results were available at the town clerk's office and also on the Town website. Comprehensive Plan Committee monthly meetings were always open to the public.

The 2008 Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Esperance was developed from issues residents identified as critical. This plan describes existing conditions, identifies strengths and weaknesses, and outlines strategies that can inform decision-makers at all levels of government, as well as, individuals, businesses, educational institutions, and not-for-profit organizations to create a tangible representation of what the Town of Esperance desires to become in the future.

Highlights of the 2007 Town of Esperance Survey

The survey undertaken in the Fall of 2007 was successful with a 31% return rate. The surveys are an integral part of what the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan will be. Here are some highlights from the survey results:

- ⇒ 31.0% of the surveys sent out were returned (269 of 861) in this successful survey, which gives the Town boards a good basis for decision-making. Highlights of the summary can be found below – see the survey results for more information.

- ⇒ 82.0% of respondents are full-time, property owning residents; 4.5% are renting residents; 7.1% are non-resident landowners

- ⇒ 56.5% of people live in the "remainder of town," compared to 26.2% in Sloansville and 17.3% in Central Bridge

- ⇒ 60.8% of respondents describe their property as "residential;" 19.3% describe it as a hobby or active farm (top two answers)

- ⇒ 32.6% of people say that Esperance has become a more desirable place to live in the time they have been there; 58.2% say that it has either not changed or become less desirable

Chapter One: Introduction and History

⇒ 61.1% of respondents say that the current lot size is adequate; 31.0% say that it is too small (61.2% say adequate in Sloansville; 73.3% in Central Bridge; 52.4% in the remainder of town)

⇒ Landis Arboretum, Schoharie Creek, wetlands, other creeks, and agricultural districts are the sites that should be most protected and conserved

⇒ 63.2% of respondents support measures to protect scenic views; 24.9% do not

⇒ The following land uses should be encouraged:

- Commercial
- Farming
- Home-based business
- Light industrial
- Small retail
- Professional offices
- Restaurants
- Open space
- Recreational facilities
- Single-family residential
- Two-family residential
- Affordable housing
- Senior housing

⇒ The following land uses should be discouraged:

- Heavy industrial
- Large retail
- Apartments
- Condominiums
- Town houses
- Mobile home parks

⇒ Preferred locations of development are along major routes (20, 30A) and in villages

⇒ Respondents want to see land around them develop as rural residential/agricultural, agricultural, rural residential, conservation/preservation and mixed – residential, small business (in order by number of responses, starting with the highest)

⇒ Strengths of the area are:

- Scenery/rural character/working farms/open space
- Access to capital district
- Freedom to homeowner/property rights
- Low crime

⇒ Opportunities in the area are:
- Access to capital district
- Open space/undeveloped land
- Tourism/scenic byway/hunting and fishing
- Major highways

⇒ Weaknesses for the area:
- Junk
- Taxes
- Lack of economic opportunity (low pay)
- Lack of public sewer and water

⇒ Threats to the area:
- Higher taxes
- Loss of farms

⇒ 51.2% of respondents say that land use evaluations be made based on their impacts; 35.9% say they should be based on a list of allowed and prohibited uses

⇒ Junk (169) should be more enforced (63% of respondents), as well as dog control (50), apartments (51), burn barrels (54), location of commercial uses (55), and cell towers (56)

⇒ "Nothing" was the most common answer for what should be less enforced (91); second most common was wind towers (53 – 19% of respondents)

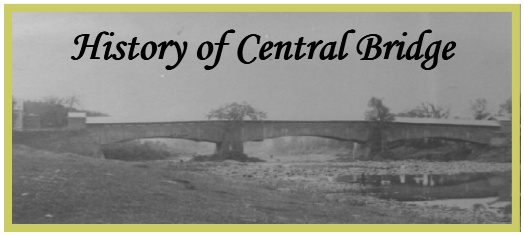
⇒ Ambulance (56) and fire services (54) were rated the most outstanding services in Esperance, followed by snow removal (46) and road conditions (27)

⇒ Sewage (87), activities for youth (63), water (58), and cable (53) were the most unsatisfactory services

⇒ 47.9% of respondents say land use laws are just fine (16.3% say too stringent; 14.0% say not stringent enough)

See entire survey results at end of document.

Chapter One: Introduction and History



The early settlement of Kniskern's Dorf was largely located in Central Bridge. Central Bridge, as it's name implies, grew out of the placement of a bridge which spanned across the Schoharie Creek. *The Gazetteer* of the State of New York by Thomas F. Gordon published in 1836 states; "Smithville, is a small village lately founded, on the Schoharie Creek , 4 miles north of the court house, where the stream is crossed by a new bridge; containing a store, 2 taverns and 15 dwellings." The name of Smithville came from an early innkeeper named Sam Smith who had built an Inn in 1824 near the new bridge. Smith's hotel burned and was rebuilt in 1831 and still stands. The same building has been home to the late attorney, Wallace H. Sidney. By 1837, a post office has been established here under the name "Central Bridge"

While this early settlement was mainly in the Town of Schoharie, after the Town of Esperance was formed in 1846, the Railroad brought about the emergence of a new village referred to as "New" Central Bridge. By 1863, trains were running from Albany to Central Bridge and with the railroad came hotels, stores and residences to make a neat appearing village along the railroad. Due to the location of the tracks, many started to build around them. Kniskern's Dorf began to disappear as the communities grew around and within it. While most of the "New" Village is in the Town of Schoharie, a significant part is in Esperance, including the large Schoolhouse District #5 and some businesses along North Main Street and the Central Bridge Industrial Complex located on the old Parson's Ford property on Route 30A. Pine Hill Road and parts of Grovernors Corners Road are also within the Town of Esperance.

The first settler at Sloansville, was John Joseph Van Valkenburg, a Dutchman in 1750 or 1760. It is likely that John settled around 1765, when he married, Magdalena Brown. During the time of the Revolutionary War, John saw destruction done and in 1780 joined the patriot cause. His half brother, Jochum was killed in 1781, at a battle near Summit Lake. John lived in Sharon after the war and was buried there in 1815.

The road from Schoharie into Montgomery County had long been used as a footpath by the Native Americans created by them and was also used by the Palatines to visit relatives who settled in the Mohawk Valley. A map in the State Archives drawn up around 1819 shows a settlement called "Sloan's Village," with one road called the *Charleston Canajoharie Road* leading northwest out of the village, probably where Sparker's Road is today. This early thoroughfare probably lead to the building of stores and inns by the Brown Brothers' George, John, and James who purchased the Stone Heap Patent.

Chapter One: Introduction and History

The building of the Great Western Turnpike, (a turnpike which had a series of toll roads that crossed parts of New York State from east to west), in the early 1800's lead the settlers to build along it instead of the old roads that had been where traffic flowed. John Brown built an inn closer to the turnpike and was appointed toll gate keeper. To avoid the toll gate another trail was started that shunned the pike, thereby getting the name, Shunpike Road. James Brown ran an inn near the present Baptist Church and sold property to Captain William and John Sloan around 1800. The Great Western Turnpike brought New England Yankees to the area and the place began to grow. John R. Sloan, a son of William received the appointment of Postmaster in 1818 and the settlement became known as Sloansville. Sloansville grew quickly until the Erie Canal opened and the westward migration began. Many people left in groups either friends, religious affiliation, or in the case of the Sloan's in a family group. After the town was formed, many of the town meetings were held in the Sloansville Hotels, they were called the "Town House."

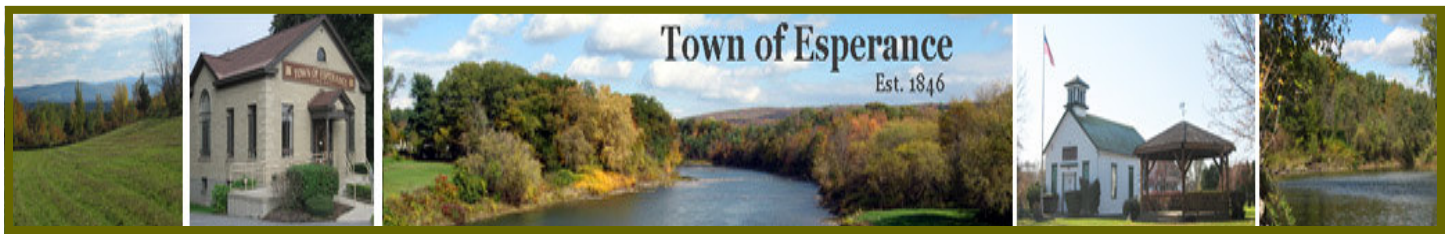
Most of the early businesses dealt in trade of farm produce or labor for the items purchased. Industries of Sloansville, included a grist mill on the Vly/Fly Creek. Remnants of the small saw mills can be seen on Regan Road. A large saw mill was located where Smith Collision Clinic is today. The Phelps family moved here from Enfield, Connecticut around 1806 and David Phelps did ornamental paintings, sold and made paint, and apparently made guns and sold them wholesale, while raising sheep on his farm. When the militia was training it meant good times for the hotel's barrooms and Phelps made sure plenty of guns were for sale in the months preceding the annual drill in September.

The mills eventually closed and the blacksmith shops converted into the automobile garage business. Sloansville was still a busy intersection and by 1960, had a major gas station on three of it's four corners.

Unfortunately, the hotels and stores suffered from fires, which left vacant land on the south west corner of the village. Johnson's Garage built a more modern facility and sold Chrysler automobiles, while Baxter's Garage on the north west corner sold Chevrolets. Today, the businesses include Smith Collisions Clinic where A.D. Johnson had a garage, Country Side Food Mart, a gas station and convenient store where Baxter's Garage had been, a used car dealership, Provost Brothers Well Drillers, an ice cream parlor, and a Post Office.

This article contains information from the Esperance Museum and Roscoe's "History of Schoharie County".

Chapter Two



Existing Conditions

Chapter Two: Existing Conditions

Local Government:

The Town of Esperance is governed by a four-member Town Council. The Town Council is presided over by a Supervisor. The Town has a Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals. The Town of Esperance has zoning regulations, subdivision regulations, Flood Damage Prevention Law, Right to Farm Law, and other regulations in place.

Population Characteristics:

According to the 2000 United States Census Bureau figures, the Town of Esperance's population is 2,043 which has decreased from the 1990 Census (2,101 residents). Census Bureau estimates from 2007 show additional decreases to 2,028. Schoharie County's population has also decreased from 31,859 residents (1990) to 31,582 residents (2000), but estimates indicate a small increase in County population in 2007.

Age:

According to the 2000 Census, approximately 21% of the residents were under the age of 15 years of age. On the other end of the scale 11.6% of residents are 65 years and older. The 2000 Census also indicates that 54.3% of the Town of Esperance residents were between 24 to 65 years of age. This data shows that if these residents continue to reside in Esperance, future services will need to be examined for this aging population.

Education:

The 2000 Census indicated that 46.2% of the Town of Esperance's population aged 25 years or more had at least a high school diploma. This is noticeably higher than the 37.7% for Schoharie County or the 28% for the State of New York. However, fewer individuals have gone on to obtain a college degree in the Town of Esperance. In 2000, some 7.9% of residents possessed at least an Associate's degree. Those residents with a Bachelor degree comprised 8.0% of the town's population over 25 years of age. Within the town, 2.4% of the residents had obtained a Graduate degree where as, only 0.3% of the population has acquired a Doctorate degree.

Esperance's Workforce:

Income

The Town of Esperance's per capita income of $17,574 for 2000 was slightly lower than both Schoharie County and New York State averages. Because capita personal income is an average, it does not reflect income distribution. Increased per capita income, for example, might only mean that the individual incomes of new residents moving to the town are higher than those of current residents, causing the average to climb even though incomes of current residents stay the same or even decline. Median family income provides a better measure of personal income relative to other areas, because it relates to the needs of families rather than individuals and automatically adjusts for the movement of higher-income households into the area by

Geographic Area	Median Family Income	Per Capita Income
New York State	**$51,691**	**$23,389**
Schoharie County	**$43,118**	**$17,778**
Esperance Town	**$46,940**	**$17,574**

discounting for the impact of a few very wealthy households on the total.

Census data gathered during the 2000 Census indicates that the median family income for the Town of Esperance was $46,940 compared to $43,118 for Schoharie County as a whole. By comparison, New York State's average was considerably higher at $51,691.

Employment and Occupation:

The Town of Esperance had 1,594 residents over the age of 16 in 2000 in which 1,032 were in the labor force. The unemployment rate in the area is at 4.3% which is consistent with New York State's unemployment rate which is also 4.3%.

Class	Number	%
Private for profit Wage &salary Workers	586	60.8%
Self-employed Workers	113	11.7%
Government Workers	202	21%

The percentage of Esperance workers in the various classes compared similarly with those in Schoharie County, as a whole. However, Esperance has a larger percentage (11.7%) that are self-employed compared to Schoharie County (8.7%). This is not unusual for rural areas where self-employment in farming, trades, and the like are common.

Housing:

The average cost of a home in the Town of Esperance is $77,600, which is lower than Schoharie County's average of $82,500 and much lower than that of New York State at $148,700.

Chapter Two: Existing Conditions

Esperance's Characteristics:

Town of Esperance is made up of approximately 12,459 acres of land. The Town of Esperance is located west of the capital district area in the northeastern most center of Schoharie County. Esperance is 25 miles from the cities of Albany and Schenectady, 40 miles west of Utica and 21 miles south of Amsterdam. The Town has one incorporated village, Esperance and two small hamlets, Central Bridge and Sloansville.

The geographic character of the Town of Esperance is much more identifiable with the Mohawk Valley, than it is of the Catskill Mountain region, which lies south of the Town. As is true of most of the northern towns of Schoharie County, the Mohawk Valley is characterized by low, flat and rolling terrain as opposed to the high, rough mountainous terrain of the lower Catskill Mountains. Esperance's highest elevation is 1,320 feet above sea level and the lowest point is 540 feet above sea level. Esperance is generally flat and rolling with only 7% of the land area considered steep. A slope map is included in this plan.

The agricultural economy of the Town is dependent on the continuance and enhancement of agriculture in the Town. Efforts should be made to continue the Agricultural Districts in the Town. The Soil Survey for Schoharie County should be consulted when reviewing projects to determine the appropriateness of the development with the soil type of the site. A soils and agricultural district map are included in this plan.

Water bodies and Flood Plains:

The Schoharie Creek is the dominant water body in the Town and is relatively slow moving from the Central Bridge area to the Village of Esperance. North of US Route 20, the Schoharie Creek is fast moving and contains some small rapids. The flood plain of the Schoharie Creek is quite large and impacts several properties in the Town. New development should be discouraged in the flood plain and mitigation methods such as elevation, acquisition, and flood proofing should continue to be pursued by the Town. Riparian forests are not predominantly present along the Schoharie Creek which negatively impacts the water quality. Consideration of a riparian buffer may help improve this situation. Cripple Bush Creek and Fly Creek are the main tributaries of the Schoharie in the Town and contribute to some flooding problems. The Fly Creek has a tendency to be fast moving during heavy rain. Several small ponds exist throughout the town. No State wetlands are identified in the Town. A general flood plain map is included in this plan. The Town of Esperance has updated Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) and a Flood Damage Prevention Law adopted in April 2004

Recreational Activities:

The Landis Arboretum located in the Town of Esperance, is a public garden situated on 548 acres and including six miles of hiking trails overlooking the Schoharie Valley. Forty acres are developed with trees, shrubs, and herbaceous perennials from around the world. The remainder of the property consists of natural areas, woodlands, and open fields reminiscent of the former farm on the site. A section of old growth forest is located on a steep hillside on the property.

Chapter Two: Existing Conditions

The Esperance Historical Museum is devoted to the presentation of items, exhibits, and displays intended to illustrate the history of the Esperance School, the history of the Esperance area, and the historical past of rural upstate New York.

The Cripplebush Creek Fishing Access site is located on the banks of the Schoharie Creek, approximately 1.5 miles south of the hamlet of Sloansville on NYS Route 30A. The site was donated to the town by the Iroquois Gas Pipeline Company and is administered by the Town of Esperance and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Users may access the Schoharie Creek for fishing or launching small boats or canoes on the Schoharie. The site is parking accessible and there is no charge to use the facility.

Sewerage and Water:

A majority of residences and businesses in the Town of Esperance are supplied with water via individual wells. There is one public water supply system in Esperance, the Central Bridge Water District. Special development regulations to protect the health of the watershed for the District are in place and enforced by the County Health Department and local boards. According to district engineers, the District serves approximately 173 parcels. The majority of the water mains in the Central Bridge Water District consist of 4" and 6" cast iron water mains, which are greater than 60 years old. The existing mains are undersized by today's standards and there are many leaks in the system, which requires the District to treat more water than necessary. Based on the District population water use should be about 50,000 gallons per day, however, the water filtration plant routinely treats about 90,000 gallons per day.

The source of supply for the Water District is an upper and lower reservoir with adequate capacity to serve the long-term needs of the Central Bridge Water District. The water system consists of transmission mains, slow sand filtration plant, and 4" and 6" cast iron distribution mains throughout the service area. Enders Drive and Chase Drive were upgraded to 8" D.I.P. in the late 1990's.

Proposed future improvements include installation of ultraviolet (UV) disinfection equipment as well as other equipment and possible chemical treatments. These improvements are related to the reduction of the precursors associated with disinfection byproducts in order to bring the District in compliance with present and future code requirements. Other improvements are related to reduction of iron and magnesium during certain times of the year to levels that are below the maximum contaminant levels required by code.

A Central Bridge Sewer District is being developed. Extension of the sewer district, perhaps with connections to Sloansville and the Village of Esperance should continue to be explored. The collection system has been laid out to use gravity flow to the maximum extent. The system flows from the higher elevations of Route 30A, North Main Street and Enders Drive in an easterly direction to the low area near the Central Bridge playground. The collection system consists of approximately 8,500 LF of 8" PVC sewer main, 1,400 LF of force main, 2,300 feet of 6-inch sewer laterals to serve the properties, one main sewage pump station, and 34 pre cast concrete manholes, which are spaced at intervals not to exceed 400 feet or at intersections.

The wastewater treatment facility is a dual train packaged extended aeration plant, which receives all of the wastewater generated from the collection system, and provide treatment so that the effluent discharged into the receiving system is in full compliance with NYSDEC permitted discharge limits. The packaged wastewater

treatment plant consists of preliminary treatment, flow equalization, extended aeration, clarification, and disinfection. The wastewater treatment plant is situated easterly of and generally lower than the collection system. The plant has a design capacity of 60,000 gallons per day and will discharge treated effluent into the Cobleskill Creek. The treatment plant parcel has space for additional treatment units for future expansion.

Storm water Management:

A Storm water Pollution Prevention Plan is a "plan for controlling storm water runoff and pollutants from a site during and after construction activities" Developed by the applicant, the plan is required by New York State Department of Conservation when "land development activity" or a "larger plan of development or sale" of one acre of land or greater is disturbed. The terms "land development activity" and "larger plan of development or sale" are defined as:
Land Development Activity: Construction activity including clearing, grading, excavating, soil disturbance or placement of fill results in land disturbance of equal to or greater than one acre, or activities disturbing less than one acre of total land area that is part of a larger common plan of development or sale, even though multiple separate and distinct land development activities may take place at different times on different schedules.
Larger Plan of Development or Sale: A situation in which multiple construction activities are occurring, or will occur, on a contiguous area. Permit coverage is needed if disturbance of one or more acres is occurring or is anticipated to occur in conjunction with the initial disturbance. For discrete construction projects that are located within a larger common plan of development or sale provided any interconnecting road, pipeline or utility project that is part of the same "common plan" is not concurrently disturbed.

The Town of Esperance could inform applicants for building permits and zoning permits of the applicable requirements for the State Storm water Pollution Prevention Plan.

Transportation and Route 20 Scenic Byway:

US Highway 20 is the main east-west route through the Town of Esperance. It is a two lane road until becoming a four lane divided highway west of Sloansville. Average daily traffic has decreased on this route since the opening of I-88, significantly diminishing the commercial attractiveness of the route. U.S. Highway 20 is a New York State

Chapter Two: Existing Conditions

Scenic Byway and the Town should work to get and take advantage of increased travelers attracted to the route as an alternative to interstate travel. A theme of business (e.g. antiques) seems to be spreading along the route anchored by the Madsion-Bouckville annual show and other antique shops. Other service oriented business can be supported if traffic counts increase.

NYS Route 30A is the main north-south route through Esperance. It is a two lane road from Central Bridge to the Montgomery County line. The road intersects US Route 20 in Sloansville creating the busiest intersection in the Town of Esperance with approximately 4,000 vehicles per day.

Road maintenance is handled by New York State and Schoharie County. Esperance has under 15 miles of Town roads maintained under agreement with Schoharie County. Such low mileage of roads and the agreement with the County negates the need for Town highway equipment.

Utilities:

Increased access to high speed internet in rural areas is an issue Schoharie County is working on and high speed access is needed in the Town of Esperance. Home based businesses need adequate access to the internet. Cable is not available on some more rural back roads. Cellular coverage varies and properly sited telecommunications facilities (Town has regulations in current zoning) can help improve cell coverage in the Town. The Iroquois Pipeline Company has a high pressure natural gas pipeline that lies in a northwest to southeast configuration through the Town.

Existing Town Zoning:

The Town of Esperance is currently divided into the following zoning districts:

Residential 1 (R1)
Residential 2 (R2)
Residential 3 (R3)
Commercial (C)
Mobile Home Park (MP)
Industrial (I)

District	Minimum Lot Area	Minimum Width	Minimum Depth	Minimum Front Yard	Minimum Side	Minimum Back Yard	Maximum Feet/Stories
R1	66,000 sq ft	200 Feet	200 Feet	50 Feet	30 Feet	50 Feet	35/2.5
R2	66,000 sq ft	200 Feet	200 Feet	50 Feet	30 Feet	50 Feet	35/2.5
R3	40,000 sq ft	150 Feet	150 Feet	40 Feet	30 Feet	40 Feet	35/2.5
C	40,000 sq ft	150 Feet	200 Feet	70 Feet	30 Feet	50 Feet	35/2.5
MP	10 acres	400 Feet	400 Feet	50 Feet			
I	100,000 sq .ft	200 Feet	200 Feet	80 Feet	40 Feet	80 Feet	42/3

A Planned development District (PDD) shall be determined by the submission of plans to the Planning Board and approval by the Town Board. Survey results indicated that a majority of people in the Town are satisfied with the existing zoning. Some flexibility for uses is expressed in this plan. No major zone changes are proposed, but some additional overlay districts (riparian and scenic) are suggested.

Chapter Three

Goals and Objectives

Chapter Three: Goals and Objectives

Before proceeding with these goals statement themselves, a brief definitional statement with respect to what goals are, their purposes in the planning process and the prospective of the Comprehensive Plan Committee in arriving at the goals statements, may assist in understanding them.

Goals are a concise statement defining a generally desired direction. They express a course of action as opposed to a specific accomplishable task and are relatively permanent in nature.

The purpose of goals are to serve as a guide, particularly in the decision making process as it relates to basic choices. In aggregate form, goals provide a broad framework for action, forming the basis upon which more detailed decisions are made. Goals provide the connective link between general direction and specific recommendations for action.

Since goals are statements of general policy and policy is the prerogative of policy making bodies, namely the Planning Board, the perspective from which these goals were developed is that of a staff person trying to identify major questions of policy concern as they preserve it. Most often these policies are implicit with goals that very seldom have been or are articulated. To have utility, goals should span the range of policy concerns and areas of major import to the policy body.

Chapter Three: Goals and Objectives

Goals/Objectives/Actions:

Goal 1: Protect the rural character of the Town while promoting appropriate economic development.

Objective 1-1: The Town Subdivision and Zoning Laws will comply with New York State Law, be easier to understand, more easily and fairly enforced, more flexible, and better utilize/conserve resources.

Action 1-1A: Update/revise the Town Subdivision and Zoning Laws to comply with New York State Law and make changes in compliance with this plan. Consult with the Schoharie County Economic Development Agency to consider expansion of commercial zones to include light industrial uses near the NYS Route 7 and NYS Route 30 intersection. Explore creating a railroad zoning district that encompasses existing railroad property in the Town. Consider expansion of existing commercial zones to follow property lines and consider hamlet zoning for Sloansville and Central Bridge to allow mixed housing/commercial uses and small lot sizes where sewer/water infrastructure exists.

Action 1-1B: To limit financial burden on the owner, allow existing development that violates any new zoning law *use* requirement to come into compliance gradually. Complete elimination of a legal nonconforming use is not the intent of zoning law changes. Existing development that violates any new zoning law square footage/acreage area requirement can expand without the need of an area variance for lot size.

Action 1-1C: Allow residents more freedom and flexibility to use their land by encouraging more uses Town wide that meet certain performance standards (physical, visual, and social impact to area) rather than adherence to only use categories. Such uses might include, but are not limited to, country inns, craft workshops, professional offices, antique shops, landscape nurseries, home-based businesses, and repair shops. Allow more flexibility for appropriate commercial and residential uses on parcels 30 acres or more in size (or 30 or more contiguous acres if under the same ownership) if detailed performance standards are met and property owners agree to keep such lot size or larger as long as the use is present.

Action 1-1D: Develop written applications and instructions for all types of permits, including forms for violations of local codes.

Action 1-1E: Encourage code enforcement officer to investigate anonymous written notices of suspected zoning violations as long as the alleged violation is visible to a code enforcement officer from a public road or public property.

Action 1-1F: Research, develop, and adopt better enforcement guidelines and penalties for violations.

Action 1-1G: With public input, research and consider adopting wind energy regulations suitable for the Town of Esperance. A County model is available and can be used as a starting point.

Action 1-1H: At the sketch plan phase and upon intent to receive a building permit, all subdividers, builders, and property owners should be given educational materials to consider general principals basic to good lot design/development and regulations for storm water, floodplain, and wetlands. Such principals briefly include:

Avoid building in the center of a meadow.
Reduce visual prominence by building into woodland edges.
Maintain irregular field edges when they occur.
Avoid large setbacks from the road if the lot is small or near a village/hamlet.
Open up views through limb pruning and selective tree removal, as opposed to clear-cutting.
Avoid critical wildlife areas and steep slopes.
Preserve significant site features such as stone walls and large tree stands.
Provide for road and trail linkages to future subdivisions.
Consider using a landscape architect to help prepare subdivision plans.

Regulations could be amended to provide such guidance and to encourage identification of building envelopes on lots, without invoking mandatory regulations.

Action 1-1 time: Zoning Rewrite Committee formed and draft zoning law and subdivision regulation presented to Town Board within first 2 years after plan adoption.

Responsibility: Town Board/Zoning Rewrite Committee/Advisory Committee

Objective 1-2: Attractive signs welcome people into the Town.

Action 1-2A: Design and procure Town welcoming signage on NYS Route 7, NYS Route 30A and US Highway 20.

Action 1-2 time: Town Board action within first 5 years after plan adoption.

Objective 1-3: Housing stock improves and reflects the rural nature of Esperance.

Action 1-3A: Pursue grant funds to improve housing conditions wherever needed.

Action 1-3 time: Ongoing. Annual sources of funds can be researched and applications completed.

Responsibility: Advisory Committee/Town Board. Schoharie County Rural Preservation Office should be contacted for help.

Objective 1-4: Town boards and services function to their greatest potential and efficiently serve the needs of residents/landowners.

Action 1-4A: Require appropriate training for Planning and ZBA members.

Action 1-4B: Encourage the development of a capital improvement plan for transportation.

Action 1-4C: Explore consolidating Town/Village Planning Boards and other services.

Action 1-4D: Pursue tax incentives for open space preservation and small businesses. Open space incentive could be similar to agricultural property tax exemption.

Action 1-4 time: 1-4A within first year after plan adoption. 1-4B-D within first decade after plan adoption.

Responsibility: Town Board/Advisory Committee/Highway Superintendent

Objective 1-5: Promote the Esperance area as a great place to live/do business.

Action 1-5A: Prepare a brochure to highlight safety, area character, value, school district, empire zone, and easy commute times for distribution around the region (especially to real estate agents).

Action 1-5B: Improve and maintain independent Town web page and Town web page on County web site for community promotion. Web sites should be linked to each other.

Action 1-5C: Support Tech Valley initiative and encourage such businesses in appropriate locations in Esperance.

Action 1-5D: Promote use of the U.S. Route 20 scenic byway for funding opportunities and to advertise Esperance businesses/themes.

Action 1-5 time: Ongoing, within first five years after plan adoption.

Responsibility: Advisory Committee/Planning Boards/Municipal Boards

GOAL 2: Improve pedestrian and traffic safety.

Objective 2-1: Dangerous/high accident areas in the transportation system are identified and eliminated.

Action 2-1A: Work with NYSDOT to biennially identify high accident prone areas.

GOAL 3: Protect the quality of surface and groundwater supplies, protect the integrity of mapped floodplains, preserve the integrity of unique physical environments and preserve wildlife habitats.

Objective 3-1: Town regulations reflect the importance of the environment to the community.

Action 3-1A: Revise and enforce trash/junk regulations to clean up existing violations.

Action 3-1B: Incorporate storm water management and erosion control techniques in subdivision reviews.

Action 3-1C: Consider a riparian habitat overlay zone for the Schoharie Creek and tributaries to establish buffers that protect water quality and help reduce flood hazards.

Action 3-1D: Consider adopting overlay districts that add protection for important environmental, visual, and historic resources (Such items might include, but are not limited to, ridgelines, wetlands (including wetlands

other than State regulated), stream corridors, floodplains, farmland, open space, large forested areas, steep slopes, historic structures and land areas). Protection of such resources may include height limitations (single to 1 ½ stories for buildings), restrictions on clear-cutting of forests, larger lot sizes in the flood plain, restrictions on extent of outside lighting, development requirements to blend new construction with surrounding area. Encourage the use of methods (such as sustainable development, conservation easements, purchase of development rights) as a means for permanent preservation of these resources.

Action 3-1E: Encourage residential development in appropriate areas following traditional patterns of rural development by discouraging "sprawl" subdivisions containing lots that are uniform in size, shape, and building design and by requiring new building lots to follow existing waterways, hedgerows, stone walls, and other distinguishable features whenever possible.

Action 3-1F: Working with County Health Department, distribute educational materials to residents without public sewerage in regard to proper septic system maintenance and private well maintenance. Pursue placing such information in a regular mailing (i.e. tax bill).

Action 3-1 time: Within two years after plan adoption.

Responsibility: Zoning Rewrite Committee/Advisory Committee/Town Board

Objective 3-2: Municipal water and sewer systems are explored to ensure adequacy and integrity of the systems.

Action 3-2A: Investigate water/sewer infrastructure in more densely populated areas, especially near the Village of Esperance, Central Bridge, and Sloansville.

Action 3-2 time: Within one to five years after plan adoption

Responsibility: Advisory Committee/Municipal Boards

GOAL 4: Secure safety from all hazards in Esperance

Objective 4-1: Esperance and Central Bridge Volunteer Rescue Squad and Esperance and Central Bridge Volunteer Fire Department are consulted/supported to help best protect Esperance.

Action 4-1A: Maintain firefighting equipment and institute volunteer recruitment incentives.

Action 4-1 time: Ongoing

Responsibility: Volunteer Departments/Advisory Committee/Town Board

Objective 4-2: Existing and new development are protected from all hazards.

Action 4-2A: Require boards to consult with fire department when reviewing large development projects to ensure fire services can adequately respond if development is established.

Action 4-2B: Comply and implement applicable actions in the Schoharie County All-Hazards Mitigation Plan.

Action 4-2C: At a minimum, development in special flood hazard areas complies with Esperance Flood Damage Prevention Laws.

Action 4-2D: Make sure new buildings comply with New York State Building Code.

Action 4-2E: Steer new development away from areas needed to help mitigate flooding and incorporate hazard reduction techniques into new buildings.

Action 4-2 time: Ongoing

Responsibility: Town Board/Planning Board/Code Enforcement Officer/Flood Plain Administrator

Chapter Three: Goals and Objectives

Plan Implementation

Implementation of the actions in this plan will be the responsibility of the Town Board, Town Planning Board, and any special board (Zoning Rewrite/Advisory Committee) that may be appointed. Help with new zoning maps and land use regulations can be obtained from the Schoharie County Planning and Development Agency or private consultants. The Town Board could consider appointing two new committees upon the adoption of this plan - a Zoning Rewrite Committee and a Town Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (may be the Planning Board). The Advisory Committee would:

1. Work towards implementing most actions of the plan not associated with land use regulations.
2. Research and apply (upon approval of appropriate municipal board) for funding sources.
3. Undertake any other requests of the municipal boards.

The Comprehensive Plan should be regularly reviewed/updated. Therefore, the Advisory Committee (with the appointment of additional members), or other designated body by the Town would be responsible for reviewing this plan every five years from the date of adoption or last review.

If a separate Advisory Committee is appointed, it is recommended that terms of Advisory Committee members be limited to no more than three years and no more than four consecutive terms.

Maps/Attachments

Town of Esperance Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats Analysis
Town of Esperance Demographics
Town of Esperance Survey Summary
Town of Esperance Resident/Landowner Survey Results

Map 1—Aerial Photo
Map 2—Agricultural Districts
Map 3—Floodplain
Map 4—Central Bridge Sewer District
Map 5—Soil Component
Map 6—Topographic
Map 7—Slope
Map 8—Current Zoning