

# TOWN OF LEICESTER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER



August 2022



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to all the committee members and the community for all your time and effort on the development of the comprehensive plan. The following committee members and Town staff were instrumental in the development of the plan for the future of the Town of Leicester.

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# INTRODUCTION

## Why do Comprehensive Plans matter?

Comprehensive planning helps communities understand a broad range of issues and topics. The result is a single resource that should be used to progress toward desirable outcomes for these important issues and topics. A comprehensive plan utilizes a collaborative community-wide approach that includes a broad cross-section of stakeholders and residents. The primary purpose of this plan is to provide guidance to those in both the private and public sectors when making decisions that affect the future. It is not a detailed plan but rather a conceptual road map stating Town outcomes with necessary actions to reach these outcomes.

## Who should be using the Comprehensive Plan?

Under New York State Town Law, the Town Board is responsible for adopting or accepting and maintaining the Comprehensive Plan as a guide to the community's development. It serves as a basis for the control of land uses and accountability of decisions by the various boards and agencies and for directing public improvements to help achieve a desired pattern of land uses as well as making decisions regarding public investment.

The adoption of this Comprehensive Plan exemplifies the commitment by the Town to maintain and improve the quality of life for its residents. Leicester's various boards and committees should use this Plan to help make informed decisions regarding development and zoning applications and how they relate to various aspects of the Plan including the vision, values, principles, and priorities. Citizens should also use this plan to better understand their community and evaluate the effectiveness of local government.

## What was the process for this plan?

A project steering committee comprised of Town officials, residents, and other key stakeholders oversaw the development of this Comprehensive Plan. Their decisions informed key components and helped contribute to a vision for Leicester. The committee also provided several rounds of community engagement to get at the heart of key issues, opportunities, and assets. Qualitative feedback from community members was an invaluable ingredient to this plan and provided important groundwork that eventually led to Leicester's community vision, values, principles, priorities, and actions.

## When should we do this again?

The comprehensive plan should guide development in a community, but it should neither be the only tool for development nor should it exist in perpetuity without update or review. Demographics, priorities, and economic trends all shift over time and a regular update to the comprehensive plan is necessary to account and plan for these community changes. Communities should undergo a minor update to their comprehensive plan at least once every 5 years and a full update should take place every 10 years. The extent of these regular updates may vary but maintaining a regular timeframe will help Leicester adjust priorities as circumstances change.



# PLANNING CONTEXT

## Previous Plans & Studies

There are a wide range of plans and studies that were reviewed to support and inform this comprehensive plan. This includes plans and studies at regional, county, and municipal levels.

### Genesee-Finger Lakes Regional Trails Initiative (2002)

The purpose of this initiative was to develop a comprehensive and achievable action plan for community leaders. This action plan would help create and maintain a safe, accessible, and highly functional regional trail system that would be integrated with the existing transportation system while providing a nationally recognized and distinguished feature of the Genesee-Finger Lakes region. The geographic focus of the trails initiative was the Rochester Transportation Management Area (TMA). This included developed areas of Livingston County including the Genesee Valley Greenway within the Town and Village of Leicester.

### Livingston County Housing Needs Assessment and Market Analysis (2019)

Livingston County completed a housing assessment and market analysis in 2019 that evaluated various real estate trends in the County including the number of homes sold between 2012-2018, median home sale prices from 2008-2018, and the length of time homes remained on the market.

The study identified the O'Connell Organization as a group that has been actively renovating properties in the Village of Mount Morris, leading to a range of second story apartments near and in the Village center. These represent the most significant residential growth in the study area, and could indicate potential for demand in similar housing developments.

The Town of Leicester was identified as one of few municipalities with a high number of vacant rental units. Leicester has few existing multi-family properties with many available to rent, and the Town has expressed interest in continuing to better pursue and provide housing.

The study concluded that the housing market in Livingston County is relatively tight with a low inventory, fast sales, and low apartment vacancy rates. While interest rates are starting to rise, demand for housing continues to be high across most of New York State. Low inventory and the absence of new housing developments will continue to pose challenges to the County moving forward.

### Mount Morris-Leicester Route 36 Corridor Study (2021)

The Town of Leicester joined with three other communities to conduct a corridor study for New York State Route 36.

The Route 36 corridor is a heavily used regional transportation link serving tourism and movement of goods as well as access to residential, commercial, recreational and agricultural properties. The corridor's importance to the region is multi-faceted and this required a wide range of objectives. This study addressed the following important objectives:

- Identified vehicular traffic safety and calming measures along the corridor;
- Identified pedestrian and bicyclist safety improvements, especially within the Villages of Mount Morris and Leicester;
- Identified infrastructure enhancements that help create a sense of place that respects and promotes the history of the communities for local residents and visitors alike;
- Identified potential transportation infrastructure improvements, such as intersection enhancements and access management strategies, along with associated land use policies, that encourage business growth based on locally defined community development objectives and livability goals; and
- Identified multi-use trail improvements and strategic links to leverage active transportation (pedestrian and bicycle) connectivity for the communities.

One of the study's most significant recommendations for the Town of Leicester included various alternatives and treatments to improve the intersection of Perry Road and NYS Route 36. The implementation of this recommendation remains a top priority for the Town.

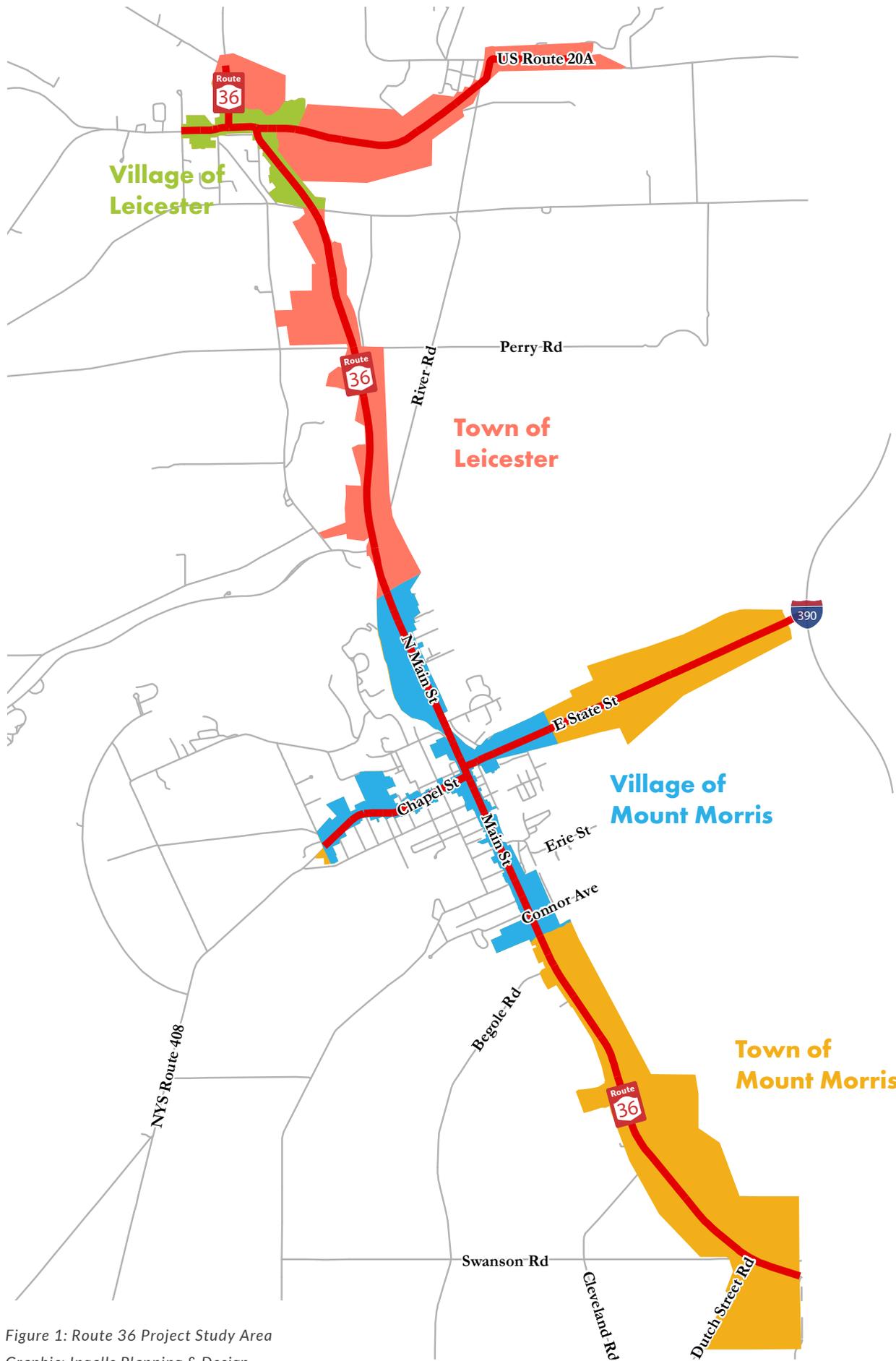


Figure 1: Route 36 Project Study Area  
 Graphic: Ingalls Planning & Design

## Historic Context

The Town of Leicester originated in 1802 as a part of Genesee County. When Livingston County was formed in 1821, Leicester was included as part of the new county. Within the Town of Leicester, the Village of Moscow was established in 1814 and the Village of Cuylerville was incorporated in 1848. The Village of Moscow was renamed Leicester in 1917. Cuylerville was once the site of one of the largest and most significant villages of the Seneca Indians. Known as Little Beards Town, it was destroyed by the Continental Army of General Sullivan during the American Revolution.

In 1841 the remains of Lt. Boyd & Sgt. Parker were exhumed and taken to Rochester. The Civil War Soldier's monument was placed in the Village of Leicester in 1911. This ceremony featured one of the first airplane demonstrations in the country. A crowd of nearly 4,000 people attended the dedication.

### Effects of COVID-19

The COVID-19 Pandemic has affected nearly every aspect of private and public life. In March, restrictions on large gatherings and social distancing resulted in the cancellation of both private and public Leicester events.

The Kiwanis Chicken Barbecue, the Boy Scouts Pancake Breakfast and the Boy Scouts Bottle Drive were canceled. The Village Park Concert Series, the Memorial Day Parade and Ceremony as well as the York-Leicester Field Days were not held this year. Graduation ceremonies and parties were postponed. Social Clubs and organizations did not meet. Church services were held by ZOOM if possible and restaurants were closed for "in-person" dining. The pandemic has continued to limit activities in 2021 and 2022 as well.

## Key Demographics

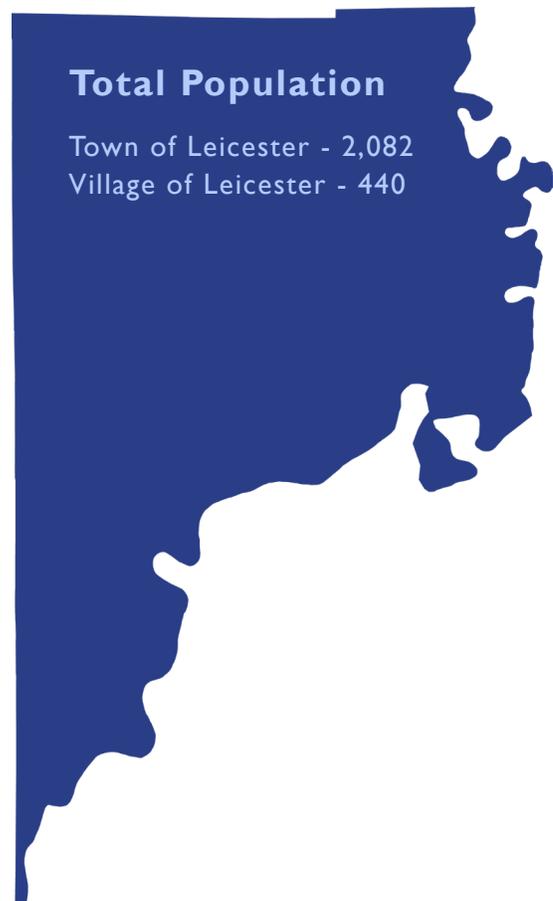
Included on the next page are important demographics for the Town of Leicester based on recent data from the 2020 US Decennial Census and from the 2020 American Community Survey Estimates.

### Total Population

The Town's population is stable, but not growing. There has been less than a 3% change in the total population of the Town of Leicester from 2010-2020. The Village population is similarly stable, albeit smaller in total number.



*The Boyd-Parker Memorial Park is an important historic site and park in the Town of Leicester. Two American soldiers were buried at this site after being killed at the hands of British soldiers, making this a significant site from the American Revolution.*



## An Aging Population

Many communities in the United States are aging rapidly. Median age for both the Town of Leicester and Livingston County have increased over the last decade. More than 40% of Leicester's population is 65 years or older.

As older community members pass away or retire to other locations, total population will continue to decrease without new residents or births. This could cause Leicester to struggle to maintain services and a stable tax base.

The Town should consider focusing on strengthening important existing infrastructure and encouraging compact residential development that can accommodate an aging population with a wider variety of permitted housing types.

In addition to providing a wider variety of housing types, the Town should consider optimal locations to provide senior housing. Leicester should consult existing State and County resources to help determine a good way forward to providing needed senior housing options.

## Housing in Leicester

Residential land in Leicester is largely comprised of single-unit housing on larger lots. Smaller lot residential units are concentrated in and around the Hamlet of Cuylerville.

Housing in Leicester does not currently follow a typical trend in housing tenure across the Northeast United States. Rather than experiencing an increase in rental housing units, Leicester has maintained a steady share of owner-occupied units. The percentage of owner-occupied units has fluctuated between 83% and 85% from 2010 to 2020, according to the most recent American Community Survey (ACS) estimates.

Leicester is a very affordable community in which to live. Median home values have steadily grown over from \$107,700 in 2010 to \$121,900 in 2020. This yields a value-to-income ratio of 1.83 - using 2020 ACS estimates. Housing experts generally consider any value-to-income ratio under 3.00 to be indicative of an affordable housing market.

## Steady Household Income

Leicester has a relatively high median income compared to the County and other communities in Livingston County. According to the 2020 American Community Survey, the Town's median income of \$66,370 is higher than the median income of \$60,248 for Livingston County.

A higher median income combined with affordable median home values may indicate that there is an untapped market for lower-income families and individuals for whom housing is not currently provided. Expanding housing options through a wider variety of housing types may help Leicester tap into a different market.

### Leicester Median Age

2010 - 41.5

2020 - 42.7



## Existing Land Use

Leicester contains a large amount of existing farmland, conserved and protected land and open space. Most of the remaining land in the Town is comprised of large-lot residential land. The Hamlet of Cuylerville provides some smaller-lot development including a few commercial properties and more compact residential land.

### Genesee Valley Conservancy Land

There are many agricultural and large-lot residential properties in the Town of Leicester. Many of these large parcels are identified as vacant in the County's property information file, including some vacant agricultural land.

It's important to note that the A.R. Christiano Farm partnered with the Genesee Valley Conservancy to permanently protect a total of 732 acres of farmland in the Town of Leicester as part of a Conservancy Project to protect important rural land. So, while some of these large parcels may be underutilized or vacant, they may also be land that can no longer be developed.

### Past and Present Agricultural Land

Recent trends in agriculture in New York State communities show a decline in existing active farmland. Leicester still maintains a high acreage of active farmland and agricultural uses, although the amount of vacant farmland is increasing. In 2012, the Town of Leicester had 9,896 acres of vacant or abandoned agricultural land. This number grew to 10,585 acres in 2019, an increase of about 7%.

Some of these vacant or unused agricultural parcels could be better utilized as a different land use in the future, particularly if that land use is complementary to agricultural land. This could include protected open space, parkland or cluster residential land.

### Industrial Land

There is one significant industrial property, Seneca Foods Corporation, that falls within the Town of Leicester located near the Town's boundary with the Village of Mount Morris. Some of the land in this area that falls within the Town's industrial district is currently undeveloped and potentially under-utilized. There may be an opportunity to re-think some of this land for light industrial or mixed industrial use.



*Rural character is an important consideration for the Town of Leicester. The Town has coordinated with the Genesee Land Conservancy to permanently preserve 732 acres of farmland. Continuing to preserve open space and abandoned agricultural land is a priority for Leicester.*



*Existing industrial land, including Seneca Foods, is located near the Genesee Valley Greenway Trail and the entrance to Letchworth State Park in Leicester.*



*Existing active rural land. The Town has a lot of agricultural land that is used for both the growing of crops and other compatible rural land uses, such as the harvesting of lumber shown above.*

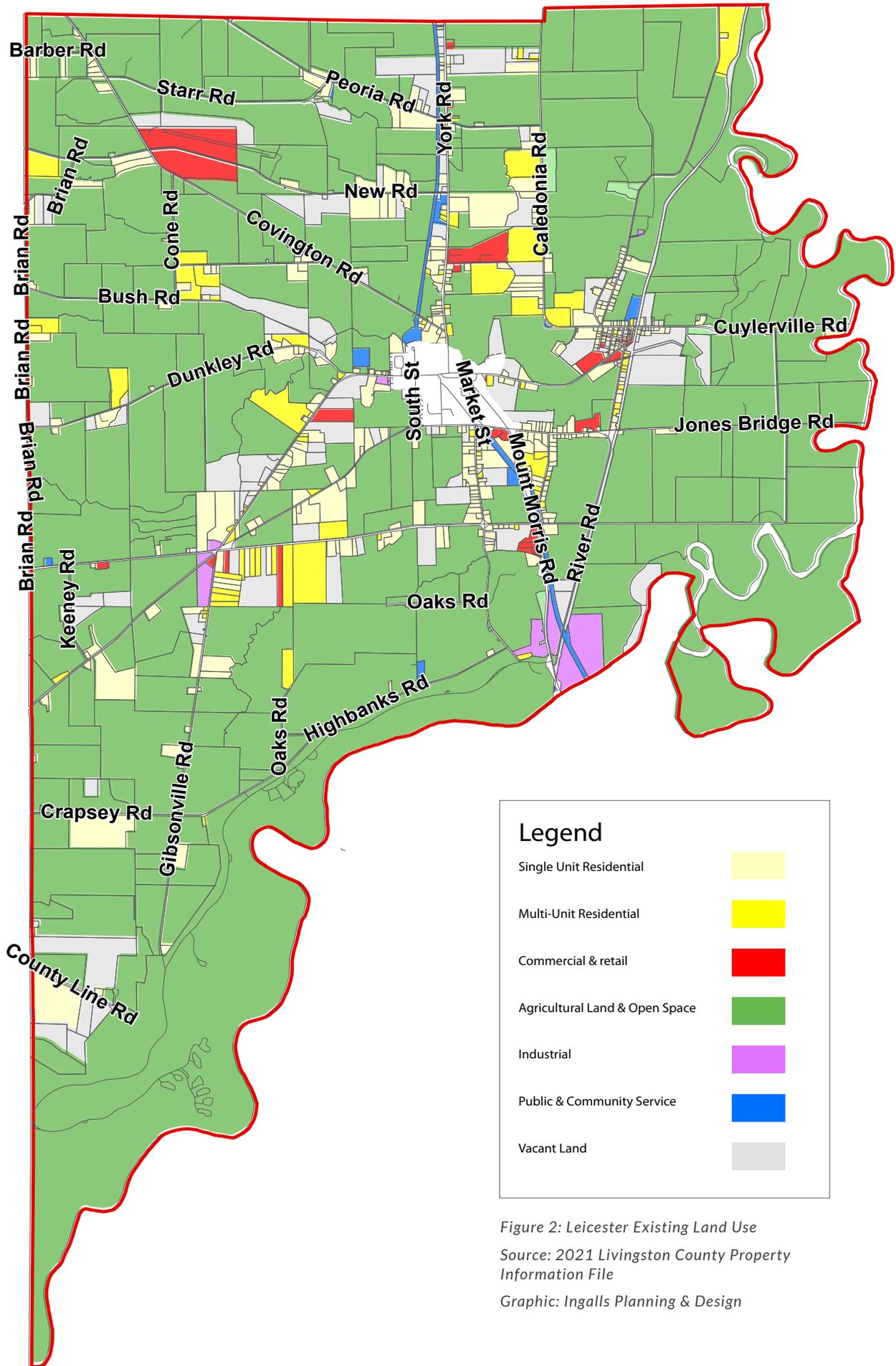


Figure 2: Leicester Existing Land Use  
 Source: 2021 Livingston County Property Information File  
 Graphic: Ingalls Planning & Design

## Vacant Land

Vacant and underutilized land can present an opportunity for communities to plan for different future land uses and development areas for land that is currently under-performing. Depending on the location, some vacant land in the Town of Leicester should be considered for different future land uses including mixed use, open space and/or a variety of different residential designations.

More than 1,400 acres of Town land are currently classified as vacant, according to the 2021 property information file provided by Livingston County. Some of these parcels are former agricultural land that could be appropriate for future farmland or open space protection. Many of these larger parcels are easily seen on the existing land use map on the prior page.

There are groupings of vacant parcels that are adjacent to the more developed areas in the Town including land adjacent to both the Village of Leicester and the Hamlet of Cuylerville. These areas should be considered for different future land uses, particularly mixed use and cluster residential development. The map below includes approximately 240 acres of vacant land near the Village and Hamlet that are further detailed in Section 2 of this plan.



Figure 3: Vacant Land Near the Village and Hamlet

Source: 2021 Livingston County Property Information File

Graphic: Ingalls Planning & Design

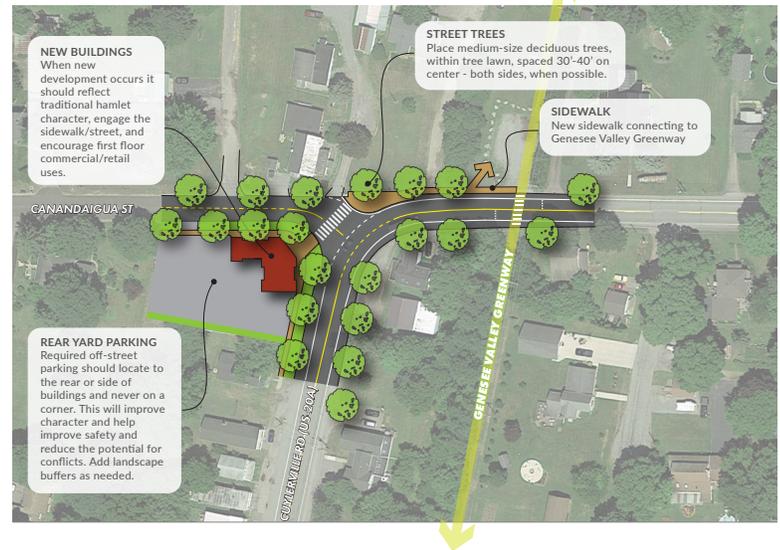
# Hamlet of Cuylerville

Commercial land in the Town of Leicester is mostly clustered in and around the Hamlet of Cuylerville. The Town should consider encouraging mixed use development in the Hamlet, particularly given its proximity to the Genesee Valley Greenway Trail and to Boyd Parker Memorial Park.

Community members and the project steering committee have both recognized the opportunity to re-imagine the Hamlet area, particularly in light of the recently vacant property at the corner of US Route 20A/ Cuylerville Road and Canandaigua Street. Redevelopment of this property should happen in a way that reflects a unified community vision and Town values.

The graphic to the right was developed during the Mount Morris-Leicester Route 36 Corridor Study. This graphic provides a loose guide to future redevelopment in the Hamlet area. The study encouraged the Town to prioritize compact development closer to the street that engaged the pedestrian realm.

## CUYLERVILLE INTERSECTION STREETScape CONCEPT



# Cluster Residential

There were several discussions during meetings with both community members and the steering committee regarding housing in the Town. One of the most pressing housing issues in the Town centers on a need to expand permitted housing types to better both accommodate an aging population and appeal to a wider range of people. There are several areas in the Town where additional housing would be beneficial, including land near the Village of Leicester and the Hamlet of Cuylerville. These locations have existing infrastructure and residential development that make future residential development more likely.

Any future residential development should occur in a way that protects and embraces the Town's rural character and natural features. Cluster residential development is an opportunity to provide denser residential development without negatively affecting existing agricultural land, protected open space and important natural resources in the Town. The graphic below shows the advantages to providing cluster residential development rather than traditional subdivision development.

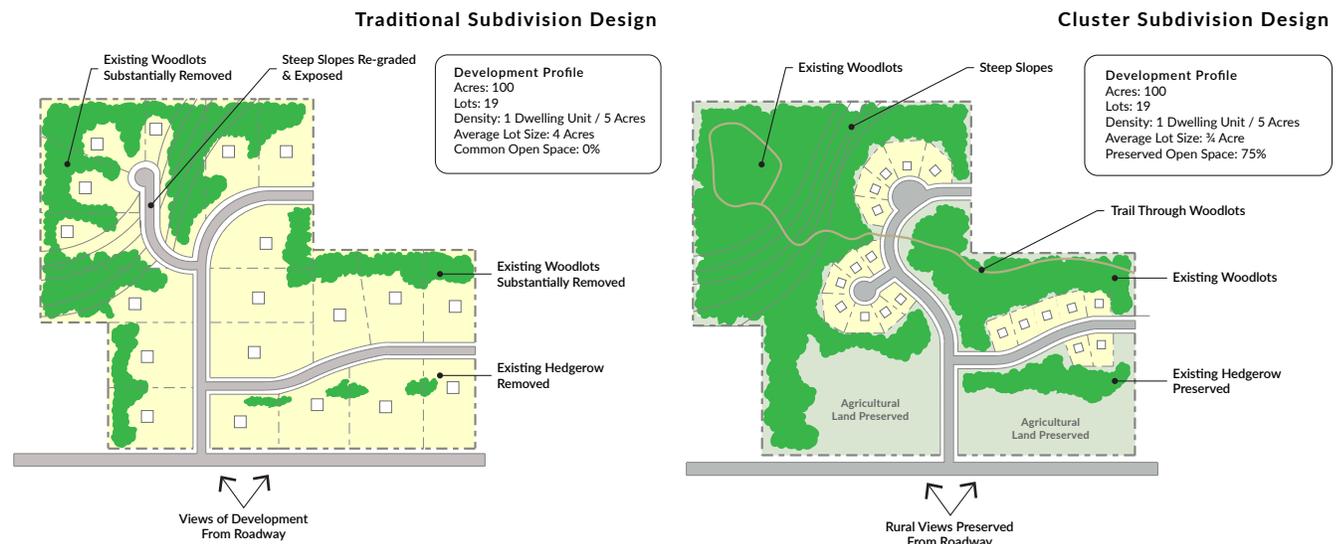


Figure 4: Cluster Residential Development and Traditional Subdivision  
 Graphic: Ingalls Planning & Design

## Existing Zoning

The Town undertook some minor updates to the zoning code in 2020, although it is anticipated that additional zoning amendments will follow the completion of this comprehensive plan.

### Organization of Zoning Code

The Town's Zoning Ordinance is organized into 7 articles including district and use regulations with accompanying dimensional regulations, and additional regulations for certain uses and districts.

The Town of Leicester's Zoning Ordinance is organized in a confusing way, including many sections. Article VI includes regulations for each individual zoning district as well as general regulations that are applicable to all districts. While this alone is not confusing, the lack of tables and/or other methods to condense information could make it difficult for an applicant to discern all of the regulations and requirements needed to upgrade or redevelop their property.

### District Framework

The following districts are within the Town of Leicester study area:

- Agricultural District (A);
- Residential District (R);
- Recreational-Commercial District (R-C);
- Business Use District (B); and
- Industrial Use District (I).

These districts may have been slightly altered during amendments to the zoning code in 2020 and, currently, they do not correlate to the Town's official zoning map. Both the code and the zoning map appear to show that the Residential District and Agricultural District permit the same uses and apply to the same land. This confusion should be rectified after the completion of this comprehensive plan.

### Dimensional Regulations

The dimensional regulations for each district are included under the same section that details use regulations for each district. Agricultural uses are largely unregulated and do not need to adhere to any height, lot, or setback requirements. The Town has actively sought to protect and preserve existing agricultural land, and thus these limited dimensional requirements may be appropriate.

Residential uses have excessive lot size requirements including 40,000 square feet for single-family homes and 62,000 square feet for two-family homes. Front yard setbacks for residential uses are also excessive at 60 feet.

Commercial uses have a high maximum lot coverage, some excessive setbacks, and no minimum lot sizes. The front yard setback in the B-2 District should be reduced to encourage development closer to the street. This is particularly important for land nearer the Village of Leicester.

Industrial uses have minimal setback requirements. The Town should consider greater front yard setback requirements for industrial land uses, particularly those that do not have prominent frontage along the corridor. There are no lot or building coverage requirements for industrial uses in the Zoning code. This may not hinder future industrial uses, but development regulations and dimensional requirements for industrial land uses should be reconsidered to ensure that future industrial activity aligns with the Town's vision, values and principles.

### Future Considerations and Updates

The Town's Zoning Ordinance would benefit from a comprehensive table detailing the dimensional requirements for all districts. There should also be more consistency. For instance, some districts have no lot area requirements while others do have them, and some districts have lot coverage limits while others do not. Lastly, and as indicated earlier, some of the regulations are excessive for land nearer the Villages of Leicester and Mount Morris and the Hamlet of Cuylerville.

Two land uses that are not currently permitted were identified as desirable during development of the comprehensive plan. These land uses are cluster residential development and mixed use development. These are further detailed on the future land use map later in this plan. The Town should consider developing zoning districts that accommodate these uses including a Hamlet district and a residential district that permits and regulates cluster development.

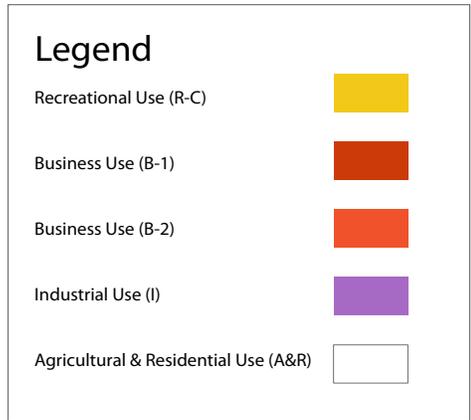
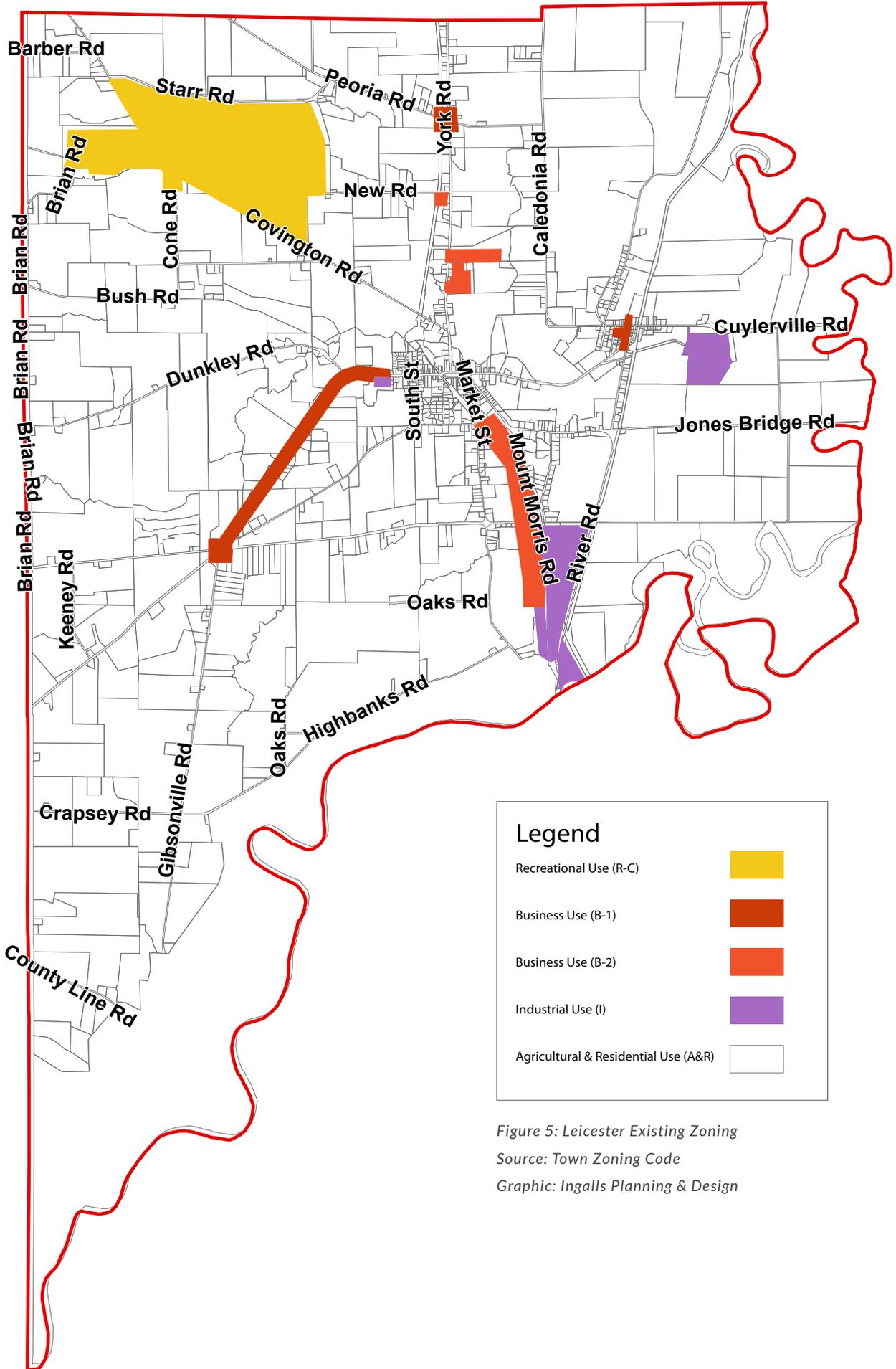


Figure 5: Leicester Existing Zoning  
 Source: Town Zoning Code  
 Graphic: Ingalls Planning & Design

# Infrastructure

The quality of a community’s infrastructure sends a message. A low level of maintenance and areas and/or services in disrepair conveys to residents and visitors that basic and necessary services are being neglected. This can indicate a community that does not value a high quality-of-life. On the other hand, infrastructure that is properly maintained and regularly upgraded is indicative of a community that is well-cared for and conscientious of the importance of a high quality-of-life for its people.

## Funding For Infrastructure

Like many communities in the United States, Leicester received additional funding through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. This funding should be considered and used to address a variety of needed upgrades to Town infrastructure and services. The funding does not need to be used immediately, but must be spent before the end of 2024. Eligible uses for these funds include all investments in water, sewer and broadband infrastructure, all of which the Town should consider for repairs and upgrades.

## Sewer and Water

The majority of the Town’s sewer and water connections are concentrated near the Village of Leicester and the Hamlet of Cuylerville. The Town relies on existing Village lines for both septic and sewer infrastructure and water connections to many areas of the Town. Some of the existing Town sewer and water infrastructure need maintenance or replacement. This will require collaboration with the Village of Leicester to ensure that water lines that stem from Village land are replaced in a way that provides relief to all properties served by these connections.

Community and steering committee members indicated the need to install sewer lines and connections around the Hamlet of Cuylerville, particularly heading west from the Hamlet toward residential areas along Caledonia Road. Additionally, this will be needed for any future residential development outside the Hamlet. Most of the sewer infrastructure in the Town of Leicester is comprised of septic tanks, many of which are on raised septic beds. A fair amount of septic infrastructure has failed in recent years, particularly in areas near and along Caledonia Road in the northern portion of the Town. New and expanded sewer lines in and around the Hamlet of Cuylerville could relieve some of these failing and aging septic systems.

In the past, the Town has considered a broader project for sewer line expansion south into Mount Morris. This project would provide connections to property owners and residents in the southern part of Town. These connections would link to the Village of Mount Morris waste water plant.

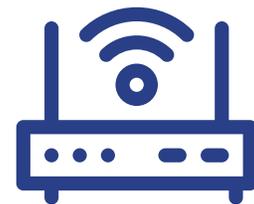
The Town has considered several locations to expand or improve existing drinking water lines. One of the areas targeted for potential future development (see Future Land Use map on page 20 for more details) is along New Road in the northern portion of the Town.

In general, the Town should consider sewer and water improvements for more populous areas of the Town as well as areas that are identified as potential future growth areas, which are further detailed in Section 2 this plan. There are existing State funding opportunities for septic improvements, sewer line improvements and water line improvements that the Town should consider when pursuing these important infrastructure projects.

## Broadband Infrastructure

Just a few years ago broadband was looked at by many as a convenience. However, with the proliferation of streaming services and the number of devices that require a quality internet connection, broadband is now commonplace - professionally, personally, and socially. It was proven to be even more important during the COVID-19 pandemic when people have had to stay at home for extended periods of time.

The term broadband commonly refers to high-speed internet access that is always on and faster than the traditional dial-up access. It includes high-speed transmission technologies including cable, fiber optic, and digital subscriber line (DSL). Just over 87% of Leicester households have a broadband internet subscription, according to American Community Survey estimates. This leaves around 13% of households without current access to broadband internet. This is similar to the percentage of households - 14% - without broadband in Livingston County.



Just over 87% of Town households have access to broadband internet.

The Town is fortunate to be able to provide broadband access to the vast majority of its residents. Access to broadband internet, however, does not indicate the overall quality of the broadband connection. As we continue to move into a future that requires reliable and fast broadband internet, Leicester should pursue fifth generation (5G) technology. Providing 5G technology often becomes a “last-mile” challenge for communities like Leicester. The physical infrastructure that connects fiber-optic cable is often the most difficult to physically and financially provide in rural communities. Leicester should consider pursuing State and/or Federal funding to support long-term broadband infrastructure investments to offset some of these “last-mile” costs.

### **Potential Consolidation**

The Town and Village share some services, but there is potential for additional consolidation of some services that will provide the same benefits to community members while saving costs. One such consolidation that has been discussed several times in the past is the consolidating of the Cuylerville Fire Department into the Village Fire Department. The Town should continue to consider alternatives like this one that will involve more collaboration with the Village to provide efficient services to the Leicester community.

### **Future Community Center Opportunities**

There were animated discussions about the potential for a future community center during the first public meeting for the development of this comprehensive plan. This community center would ideally be used by members of both the Town and Village. A variety of factors should be considered for a community center including location, parcel size, property ownership, cost of acquisition, and environmental concerns.



*The Village Fire Department serves the Leicester community and could provide the same level of service in the event of consolidation.*

## **Community Engagement**

### **First Public Open House**

The project steering committee carried out the first public open house in January of 2022. As this took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, attendees were encouraged to wear face coverings during the open house.

Three stations were set up to solicit feedback from community members. The first station was a visioning activity, which is detailed further in the next section. The second station asked community members to identify issues, opportunities and assets in Leicester and identify these on a map of the Town. The third station centered around identifying core and aspirational values, the results of which are also further explained in the next section.

### **Second Public Open House**

A second public open house was held after a complete draft of the comprehensive plan was developed. Community members were asked to respond to draft materials including the vision, values, planning principles, future land use, priorities and actions.

# DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK

## What is Visioning?

Looking toward the future is a complicated exercise. It can be incredibly difficult for community members to think to the future with the unsolved challenges of today on their minds. Visioning is a participatory process for which the goal is to identify a long-term desired outcome for the community. This process works best when it is inclusive and open to all community members and when creative methods are used to cultivate a vision that is not only desired but also achievable. A community vision does not need to shy away from existing challenges, but it should primarily paint a positive outlook for the future.

## What Makes a Good Vision?

Visioning can be a very beneficial activity, particularly during the development of a long-range comprehensive plan. All too often, however, vision statements are crafted in ways that lack specificity, avoid existing challenges, and cloak the message in vague phrasing.

A vision should have an appropriate level of specificity that allows for an authentic statement that resonates with community members. Vague words and phrasing such as ‘creating a vibrant and healthy community’ should be avoided not because they are undesirable terms but because they aren’t specific enough to help guide decision-making. Communities should also be mindful of existing challenges when developing a vision to further ground the vision, although it’s imperative to avoid getting bogged down in the problems of today.

Above all, vision statements require community feedback from residents thinking about what they want to see in the future of their community. A vision began to take shape once community members unfettered their thoughts from existing issues and answered a simple question: What do you want for the future of Leicester?

### Postcard to Aunt Sally

At the first community workshop, community members were asked to write a postcard to a fictional ‘Aunt Sally’ to tell her how much the Town of Leicester had changed. This activity garnered detailed written responses that informed the vision, values, and principles. The Vision Statement below was crafted using words and phrases provided in the postcard responses, as well as from discussions with the steering committee, and other local stakeholders.

## Our Community Vision

*“The Town of Leicester invests in itself. New sidewalk, streetlights and trails connect residential neighborhoods to the Hamlet of Cuylerville, the Genesee Valley Greenway and the Village of Leicester. The Town has prioritized a wide range of infrastructure improvements. Leicester’s rural character is as beautiful as ever with open space and recreation provisions and projects that reflect the Town’s significant natural resources and assets.”*

# What are Core Values?

Core values are what we believe in – the things that define who we are. They inform and shape the vision for what we want the Town to become. These values reflect the community’s most deeply held beliefs. They are the foundation and starting point for our vision and typically don’t change much over time.

# What are Aspirational Values?

If core values are the things that define who Leicester is, then aspirational values are the things that express what Leicester should be in the future. They should complement or update core values to help achieve aspects of the community vision that are not reflected in existing policy or practice. They help to implement the vision and should be actively considered during decision making.

# How were the Values Developed?

The values detailed below were developed during the comprehensive planning process through an activity that was carried out first with the project steering committee before being conducted with community members during a public meeting. This activity asked committee and community members to select three words - representing values - from a list of 26 different words that best reflected Leicester’s core values. Next, they were asked to choose 3 words that represented values for which they wanted Leicester to aspire.

Core Values

## We are ..... family-friendly.

Leicester strives to provide parks, recreation, events, and activities that cater to people of all ages. The Town will continue to cater to families to visit and live in Leicester.

## We are ..... hard-working.

The Town is a community of hard-working people. Rather than shying away from difficult tasks, the Town will continue to pursue appropriate solutions to problems to ensure that they are done correctly regardless of the level of difficulty.

## We are ..... dependable.

Community members in Leicester are dependable. The Town will continue to provide efficient services that reflect that dependability.

Aspirational Values

## We will be ..... united.

The Town will seek to be united with its decision-making, particularly with decisions that are shared with the Village of Leicester.

## We will be ..... prepared.

Leicester will strive to improve their readiness for upgrades and improvements to Town infrastructure, parks, and facilities.

## We will be ..... collaborative.

The Town will establish and maintain close working relationships with the Village of Leicester, Livingston County and neighboring communities.

## What are Planning Principles?

The planning principles will help guide the Town’s decision-making. Leicester should use these to evaluate future challenges - both the ones the Town anticipates and the ones that are unforeseeable - and assist them in making progress toward the community vision. Leicester’s values are rooted in the planning principles. Decision-makers should consider the planning principles when making policy-related decisions and when reviewing projects for the Town.

## How Do the Principles Advance Our Values?

Planning principles should ideally hearken back to the core community values. The core values on their own are not directive. The principles were crafted with actionable language to best inform future decisions. The vision and core values are necessary steps that lead to the principles, but the principles will yield the most concrete guidance for Town decision-making.

## The Vision, Values and Principles Provide a Decision-Making Framework

Municipalities are faced with decisions every day. Many are anticipated, straight-forward and easy to make. However, some are neither anticipated nor straight-forward. How do these decisions get made? On what basis? This is the perfect time to engage the community vision, values and principles. Whether it is a proposed development project where the applicant is asking for a re-zoning or a new Town policy for on-street parking - the vision, values and principles can help provide a rational basis for decisions.

The graphic on the following page should serve as a good quick guide for considering the vision, values and principles. The examples used are not exhaustive, but the three questions in the lower portion of the graphic ensure that the vision, values and principles are considered during difficult Town decisions.

### Planning Principles

#### We will .....enhance and improve our connections to parks and trails.

The Town will prioritize projects and decisions that include new or improved connections to existing parks and trails. This includes pedestrian connectivity, bicycle facilities, and expanded or improved parking.

#### We will ..... have streets that comfortably accommodate all users.

Leicester has included the Hamlet of Cuylerville as a priority area for this plan. While all streets should similarly consider pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists, the Town will emphasize projects and policies that improve pedestrian and bicycle access in the Hamlet.

#### We will .....prioritize commercial and mixed use development in Cuylerville.

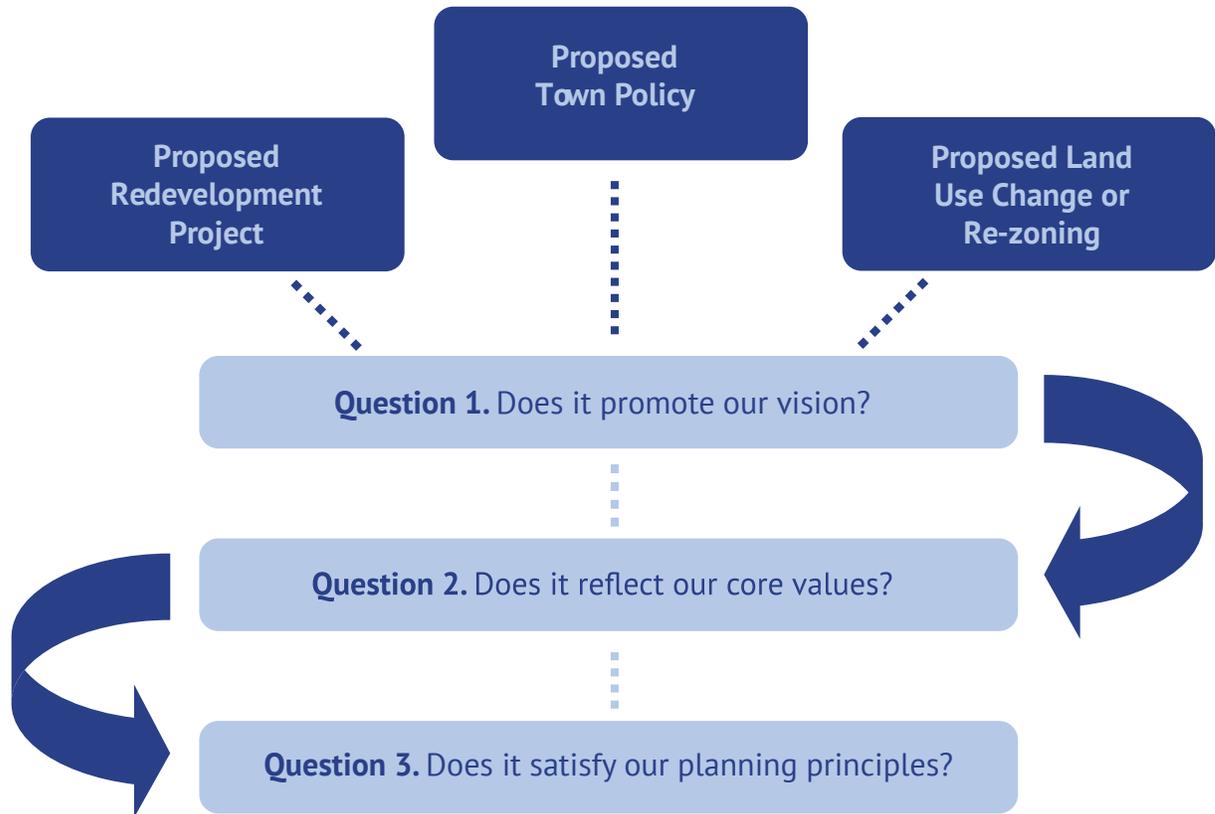
The Town will pursue and prioritize projects that lead to mixed use development in the Hamlet, particularly along US 20A.

#### We will .....preserve open space and protect our rural character.

The Town will emphasize projects that will preserve or protect existing rural land and open space.

#### We will .....work with the Village of Leicester to provide efficient services.

The Town will continue to work and collaborate with the Village of Leicester to improve the quality-of-life for all Leicester residents.



# FUTURE LAND USE

One of the primary functions of a comprehensive plan is to provide communities a foundation for zoning and development. The Future Land Use map to the right should be used to aid in land use and development decisions and to update the zoning code.

Unlike the Town's Zoning Map, the Future Land Use map does not adhere to parcel lines nor does it illustrate clear regulatory boundaries. This is intentional. This map functions as a generalized vision of the community's land use over the next decade. Future land use requirements should be implemented in an update to Leicester's zoning code, but the land use map offers no regulatory power on its own.

The locations of these land uses were based on analysis of existing conditions and future needs, priorities and actions identified and developed by the steering committee, and input from community members during the community open house. Parks are not specifically identified on the map, but it should be noted that parks are an appropriate land use under most of the designations.

The following land use designations were determined by the project steering committee:

## **Cluster Residential**

Leicester determined housing to be a priority for this comprehensive plan, particularly increasing the variety of housing type in strategic locations in the Town. As expressed earlier in this plan, cluster residential development could provide the Town with new residences that efficiently use existing land without creating a significant demand on Town infrastructure. Additionally, cluster residential development will allow Leicester to better preserve existing open space and rural land.

The three areas on the future land use map that are designated as cluster residential were chosen for their proximity to the Village, existing infrastructure capabilities, and adjacency to significant open space and preserved land.

## **Rural Residential**

Land on the future land use map that is designated as rural residential includes a swath of existing homes that are on larger lots and are a bit farther out from the Village of Leicester and Hamlet of Cuylerville. The Town does not anticipate this area to change too much in the future and it will remain rural residential.

## **Hamlet Mixed Use**

The Hamlet of Cuylerville is the most compact developed area in the Town. Leicester envisions a more defined Hamlet district that encourages future development that is pedestrian-friendly and contains high-quality design characteristics that reflect traditional Hamlet development.

The Hamlet Mixed Use district would also encourage a variety of mixed uses, including commercial and residential uses, that reinforce the notion that design and character of development are more important in this area than land use.

## **Highway Commercial**

There are three areas that contain some existing commercial uses. These are all located along major corridors or near the Village or Hamlet. Commercial uses should continue to be encouraged in these areas, but emphasis should be placed on quality design features that either preserve or complement existing rural character, rural viewsheds and open space.

## **Industrial**

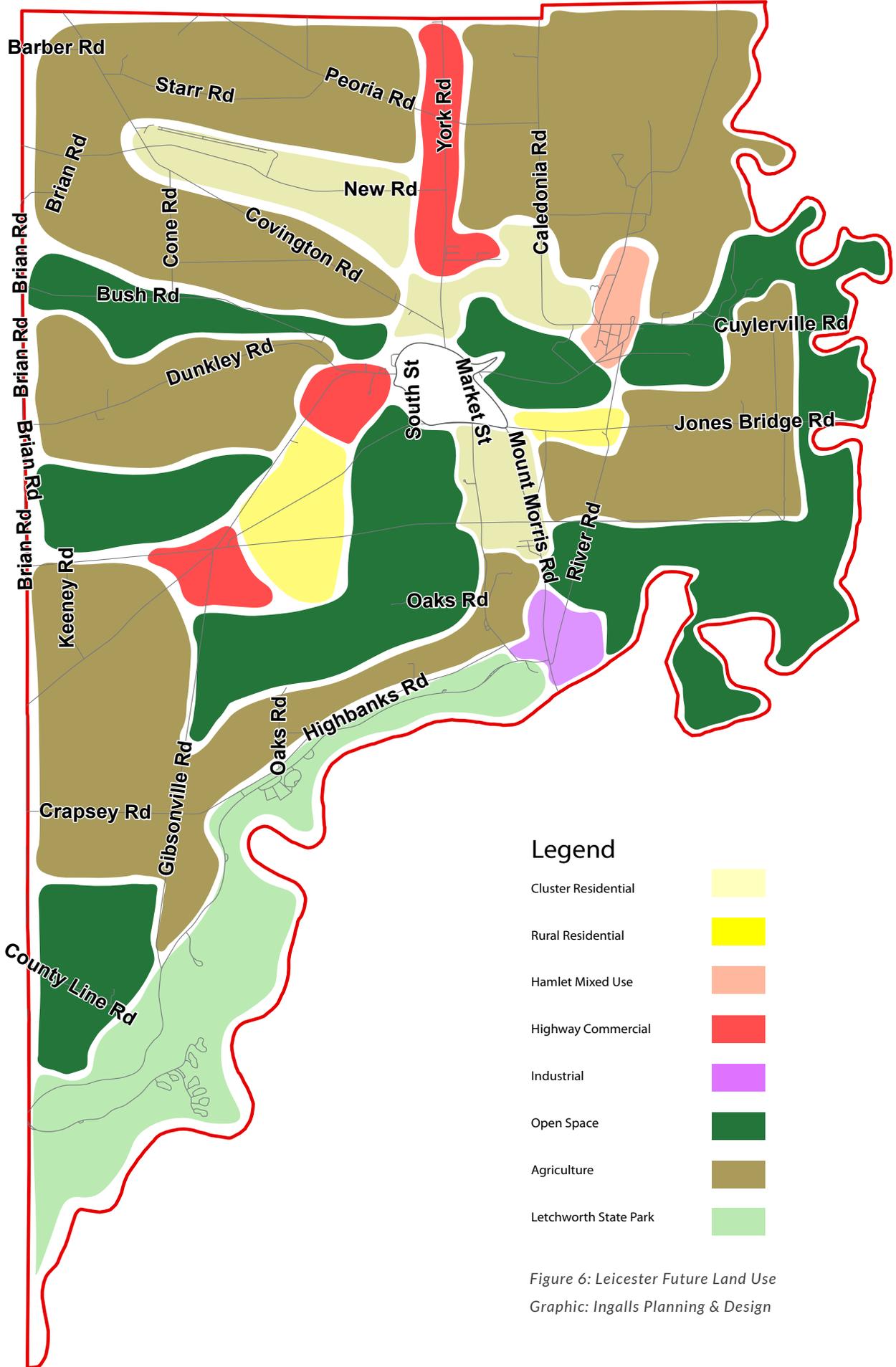
Land in this area is currently industrial, mostly due to the presence of Seneca Foods. This land will continue to be the most desirable area in the Town for industry. The Town should review their existing industrial district to ensure that this land is well-positioned to cater to future and emerging industries.

## **Open Space**

Leicester has coordinated with the Genesee Valley Conservancy to preserve large swaths of farmland and open space in the Town. As vacant and underutilized agricultural land increase, the Town should consider protecting some of this land to maintain a high quality of rural character in Leicester. Passive recreational uses should be encouraged in these areas as well including formalized river access at the end of Jones Bridge Road.

## **Agriculture**

The values and identity of the Town of Leicester are inextricably tied to rural land and farmland. While agricultural practices are changing, agriculture continues to be a dominant land use in Leicester. Knowing this, the Town should be prepared to protect active farmland and consider the implications and possibilities of future agricultural needs and emerging agricultural uses and practices.



# PRIORITIES & ACTION PLANS

## Why Did We Identify Priorities?

Communities are constantly changing as new issues emerge and opportunities present themselves. However, it is important to manage that change and to take a proactive approach in addressing the things that are known and ones that should be planned for in the present day. Some existing issues and opportunities are more pressing than others and require more immediate attention.

These issues and opportunities comprise the basis for Leicester's priorities, which are detailed on the next page. The four distinct priorities were developed to assist the Town in organizing work programs that address key issues, capitalize on existing opportunities, and leverage important assets in a manner that is consistent with the Town's vision, values and planning principles.

## How Did We Choose These Priorities?

The steering committee considered all collected data to draft the pressing priorities on which Leicester needs to act. Feedback from the community workshop, and insights from the project steering committee were invaluable in determining Leicester's priorities. Each identified priority has a set of actions for the Village to pursue to help realize the Town's vision.

## Collaboration, Communication and Cooperation

Our communities all benefit from partnerships with adjacent municipalities, County and State agencies, and other local organizations and institutions. The Town of Leicester understands the importance of building and maintaining relationships with Livingston County, New York State and other communities and organizations in the region.

The most important inter-municipal relationship that the Town of Leicester has is with the Village of Leicester. The two municipalities share some services and have distinct connections to one another via infrastructure, community members and community events. The Town should consider the Village when pursuing all of the actions on the pages that follow. Some of these actions will require direct partnership or collaboration with the Village. The remaining actions should consider input and insights from Village community members, officials and staff.

Working together can be a difficult process, particularly during the pursuit of nuanced and expensive community improvements. Improving the quality-of-life for all who call Leicester home should be the ultimate goal that encourages continued collaboration, communication and cooperation between the Town and Village of Leicester.

# 1 Hamlet of Cuylerville

Improving the Hamlet of Cuylerville is an important priority for the Town of Leicester. Pedestrian connectivity, quality design, and permitting and encouraging housing growth in and around the Hamlet will be key pursuits that reflect community values and help reinforce the Town’s planning principles.

# 2 Housing & Neighborhoods

Providing and permitting a variety of housing types and options to existing and future residents is a high priority for Leicester. The aging population in the Town will eventually require more housing flexibility to age in place or remain in the community. Pursuing cluster residential development will also conserve important open space and allow for efficient use of infrastructure.

# 3 Infrastructure & Services

The Town of Leicester has identified a few important services that currently need improvement. Leicester’s sewer infrastructure requires maintenance upgrades. Broadband infrastructure in the Town should be modernized. Community members helped to identify additional service and infrastructure needs including the need for more public space in the Town.





# ENCOURAGE DEVELOPMENT & HAMLET OF CUYLerville

## Action Item

### 1 Establish a Hamlet District in the Town

Leicester has carried out some recent amendments to the Town's Zoning Code. This action would establish a new zoning district that covers land in and around the Hamlet of Cuylerville. This district should permit and encourage mixed use development that focuses more on quality design for future development with less focus on specific land uses. Retail and commercial uses should be defined and permitted in a flexible way, and a wide variety of residential uses should be permitted.

### 2 Develop Design Standards for the Hamlet District

In addition to a zoning district for the Hamlet area, the Town should also establish design standards to ensure Cuylerville continues to pursue and encourage development that reflects a traditional Hamlet Main Street. These should include, among others, standards for:

- Building Placement
- Building Orientation
- Front Entrances Onto the Street
- Facade Composition
- Pedestrian Circulation and Access
- Landscaping and Screening
- Off-Street Parking

# GROWTH IN THE



## Who?

- Town Board
- Town Planning Board
- Town Code Enforcement

## When?

- Short-Term
- 1-2 years
- Should be carried out alongside #2, #5 and #6

## Resources?

- Town Budget
- New York State CFA - Smart Growth Comprehensive Planning Grant Program

## Cost?

- Time from Town Staff, Board Members, Code Enforcement
- \$15,000-\$25,000 for Consultant Services\*

- Town Board
- Town Planning Board
- Town Code Enforcement

- Short-Term
- 1-2 years
- Should be carried out alongside #1, #5 and #6

- Town Budget
- Livingston County Planning
- New York State CFA - Smart Growth Comprehensive Planning Grant Program

- Time from Town Staff, Board Members, Code Enforcement
- \$15,000-\$25,000 for Consultant Services\*

*\*This cost estimate is intended to be a single lump sum estimate for #1, #2, #5 and #6*



# ENCOURAGE DEVELOPMENT & HAMLET OF CUYLerville

## Action Item

### 3 Improve Pedestrian and Bicycle Connectivity from Hamlet to Boyd-Parker Memorial Park

This should incorporate several different initiatives and/or facilities that will connect the Hamlet and Genesee Valley Greenway Trail to Boyd-Parker Memorial Park. Boyd-Parker Memorial Park is likely the most significant historic site in the Town and Leicester should prioritize connecting both pedestrians and bicyclists from the Hamlet neighborhoods to the park. Improvements should include an extended sidewalk to the park entrance along the south side of US Route 20A as well as a widened shoulder to accommodate bicyclists.

### 4 Develop Public Amenities That Tie Hamlet to Genesee Valley Greenway Trail

The Town has the opportunity to re-imagine a site at the corner of US Route 20A and Canandaigua Street. Though the site is privately-owned, the Town should seek to work with the property owner to determine the best use of this current site. Community members and steering committee members have both expressed the need for additional amenities and connections to the Genesee Valley Greenway Trail.

This site should include pedestrian access across Canandaigua Street - as it was conceived in the Mount Morris-Leicester Route 36 Corridor Study. This would require coordinating with the Town's Department of Public Works. Consideration should also be given to providing additional public space here including additional parking, seating or park space.

# GROWTH IN THE



### Who?

- Town Board
- Town Planning Board
- Department of Public Works

### When?

- Mid-Term
- 3-5 years

### Resources?

- Town Budget
- CHIPS
- TAP

### Cost?

- \$15,000-\$30,000
- Cost does not include potential shoulder widening

- Town Board
- Town Planning Board
- Department of Public Works

- Mid-Term
- 3-5 years

- Town Budget
- CHIPS
- TAP

- \$100,000-\$150,000
- Cost for this project includes any ADA-accessibility needs including curb ramps, crosswalk striping, and any additional sidewalk repair or installation





# ESTABLISH PRACTICES & POLICIES FOR HOUSING VARIETY

## Action Item

### 5 Establish a Zoning District and Supplemental Regulations for Cluster Residential Development

Cluster residential development requires the layout and configuration of residential lots, buildings, roads, utilities, parks, landscaping and other features to preserve and complement natural landscapes and existing open space.

The Town should develop supplemental regulations that ensure optimal cluster residential development including minimum acreage for a cluster development; minimum lot sizes for each subdivided parcel; minimum habitable floor area; minimum yard setbacks; and minimum open space. Supplemental regulations should also include a measurable metric to discern desirable density for a single cluster residential development.

### 6 Permit and Encourage Alternative Multi-unit Housing Options

The Town should amend the Zoning Code to permit a wider range of housing types in both a Hamlet mixed use district and in any cluster residential district. This could include house-scale residential types such as townhomes, 2-unit homes and 3-unit homes. These housing options should be located in districts that are near the Village of Leicester or near or within the Hamlet of Cuylerville.

### 7 Collaborate with the Village of Leicester to Utilize the School Property for Housing

The former school property is located on the southeast corner of the intersection of Route 36 and US 20A/Main Street in the Village of Leicester. This location is currently Village-owned, but the Town should work with the Village to develop this building into housing and should strongly consider providing senior housing at this location. New York State has two model laws that provide insights into how best to provide and regulate senior housing in New York communities. This action should be carefully considered. The Town and Village may also wish to consider developing a request for proposals (RFP) from developers to re-develop the property into housing. An RFP can establish a fair market price for the property and also require developers to fulfill appropriate needs for senior housing.



## Who?

- Town Board
- Town Planning Board
- Town Code Enforcement

## When?

- Short-Term
- 1-2 years
- Should be carried out alongside #1, #2 and #6

## Resources?

- Town Budget
- Livingston County Planning
- New York State CFA - Smart Growth Comprehensive Planning Grant Program

## Cost?

- Time from Town Staff, Board Members, Code Enforcement
- \$15,000-\$25,000 for Consultant Services\*

- Town Board
- Town Planning Board
- Town Code Enforcement

- Short-Term
- 1-2 years
- Should be carried out alongside #1, #2 and #6

- Town Budget
- New York State CFA - Smart Growth Comprehensive Planning Grant Program

- Time from Town Staff, Board Members, Code Enforcement
- \$15,000-\$25,000 for Consultant Services\*

- Town Board
- Town Planning Board
- Town Code Enforcement

- Mid-Term
- 3-5 years

- Town Budget
- New York State Senior Housing Model Laws

- Time from Town Staff, Board Members, Code Enforcement
- Cost is dependent on a variety of factors

*\*This cost estimate is intended to be a single lump sum estimate for #1, #2, #5 and #6*



# MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE TOWN SERVICES & FACILITIES

## Action Item

### 8 Improve and Invest in Broadband Infrastructure

Technology infrastructure can be an important part of municipal government and should be considered by Leicester in the future. The Town should invest in broadband infrastructure, including 5G fiber-optic cable and should tap into existing resources and grant programs. Existing funds from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 can be used to pay for broadband projects.

### 9 Improve Sewer Infrastructure in the Town

Leicester should prioritize improving sewer infrastructure beginning with the most populated areas in the Town. The first priority should be developing sewer repairs and replacements inside and beyond the Hamlet of Cuylerville, particularly west toward Caledonia Road. Existing funds from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 can be used to pay for sewer improvement projects.

Repairs and replacements should begin with areas where property owners have known issues, concerns or emergency events. These stretches of the sewer main line in Cuylerville and near the Village of Leicester should be evaluated for potential breaks and failures and replacement of those sections should be pursued first. Additionally, roads and locations with known septic issues and failing septic systems should be prioritized. New York State has a septic replacement fund that will reimburse costs to property owners for 50% of total costs (up to \$10,000). These funds are available to all participating Counties, which includes Livingston County.

# INFRASTRUCTURE,



Who?	When?	Resources?	Cost?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Town Board</li> <li>Town Planning Board</li> <li>Town Department of Public Works</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mid-Term or Long-Term Depending on Available Funding</li> <li>3-10 years</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ARPA Funds</li> <li>USDA ReConnect Loan and Grant Program</li> <li>NTIA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time from Town Staff, Board Members, Town DPW</li> <li>US DOT has estimated \$27,000 per mile for laying 5G cable</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Town Board</li> <li>Town Planning Board</li> <li>Town Department of Public Works</li> <li>Livingston County Planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mid-Term or Long-Term Depending on Available Funding</li> <li>3-10 years</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ARPA Funds</li> <li>USDA Rural Development</li> <li>Water &amp; Waste Disposal Loan &amp; Grant Program in New York</li> <li>New York State Septic System Replacement Fund</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time from Town Staff, Board Members, Town DPW</li> <li>\$100-\$300 per linear foot of sewer main line replacement</li> </ul>



# MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE TOWN SERVICES & FACILITIES

## Action Item

### 10 Consolidate Cuylerville Fire Department With Village Fire

This project should continue to be prioritized in order to provide cost savings to all Leicester residents as well as to still ensure that efficient and reliable fire service can be provided to both Town and Village residents. This may require establishing an inter-municipal agreement with the Village in order to ensure that the cost of fire service can be met by the Village Fire Department.

The Town should pursue a variety of resources to help determine the best possible option to share fire services with the Village. The State has many such resources through the Office of the Comptroller and the Shared Services Initiative. Academic resources could also prove fruitful, as there are professors and other academics who have experience with communities in New York who have established and developed shared services through inter-municipal agreements.

### 11 Establish a Community Center for Leicester

The Town has long discussed the need for a community center located somewhere in Leicester. This project will likely need to be a longer-term project that could involve multiple steps or phases. The first step of this process should be to determine several potential locations and which of these is optimal. Consideration should be given to property ownership (e.g. public vs private ownership), location within the Town or Village, size of parcel, environmental concerns, and other factors.

Privately-owned parcels should be considered, particularly if an agreement can be reached or if acquisition by the Town is possible. Larger parcels may be more desirable depending on the size and amenities Leicester would like to include in a community center. Parcels that are located adjacent to wetlands or protected farmland may be less desirable than locations in or near the Hamlet or Village. Once several properties have been identified, the Town should determine which location is the most desirable based on all factors considered.

#### List of Acronyms Used in this Section

ARPA - American Rescue Plan Act

CHIPS - Consolidated Local Streets and Highway Improvement Program

DPW - Department of Public Works

NTIA - National Telecommunication and Information Administration

# INFRASTRUCTURE,



## Who?

- Town Board
- Village Board
- Town Department of Public Works

## When?

- Mid-Term
- 3-5 years

## Resources?

- New York Shared Services Initiative
- NYS OSC

## Cost?

- Time from Town and Village Staff and Board Members, Town DPW

- Town Board
- Village Board

- Long-Term
- 5-10 years

- Livingston County Planning

- Time from Town and Village Staff and Board Members
- The first phase of this project may not have monetary costs
- Potential property acquisition costs could be required once a site is identified

### List of Acronyms Used in this Section

OSC - Office of the New York State Comptroller

TAP - Transportation Alternative Program

USDA - United States Department of Agriculture