

OUTLOOK

An Overview of Planning Issues in Herkimer and Oneida Counties

Spring ♦ 1998

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Oneida County Preparing Farmland Protection Plan

The Oneida County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board is preparing the county's first Farmland Protection Plan. The plan is being developed by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida County in cooperation with the County Soil and Water Conservation District, and the Farmland Protection Board is providing policy guidance. The Farmland Protection Board is an 11-member board made up of farmers, farm organizations, agri-business representatives, representatives from the County Board of Legislators and the Soil and Water Conservation District Board, and staff from Cooperative Extension, County Real Property, and the Planning Department.

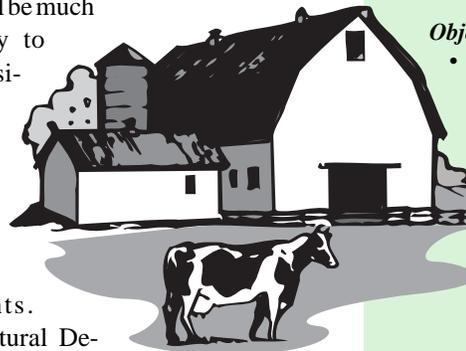
Three goals have been developed for the plan relating to agricultural economic development, promotion of the agricultural industry, and protection of existing farmland. The goals and objectives were presented at public meetings held in New Hartford, Trenton, and Verona during January. Each goal, along with its supporting objectives, is listed in the side table.

The Farmland Protection Board recognizes that agricultural economic development will be a particularly important component of the farmland protection plan. Farmers will be much more likely to stay in business if they are getting a reasonable return for their work and investments.

An Agricultural Development Advisory Task Force was formed by the County Executive last year. The Task Force developed a list of agricultural economic development strategies to help improve the farm economy in Oneida County. The Task Force recommendations were forwarded to the County Executive and the Farmland Protection Board in February.

Task Force recommendations include attracting food processing plants to Oneida County to bolster the local economy, establishing a revolving loan fund for agricultural purposes, preparing a promotional video, and working with realtors to assist farmers wishing to relocate to the area.

A full-time Agricultural Economic Development Specialist, with major funding from Oneida County, was hired by Cooperative Extension in March to spearhead implementation of the county's agricultural economic development initiatives. The specialist will work closely with county government, the Farmland Protection Board, Cooperative Extension, the newly-formed EDGE Agriculture Subcommittee, and other economic development agencies and organizations. Efforts during this year will focus



Goal #1: To foster an economic climate that supports and promotes the expansion of agricultural businesses within the county.

Objectives:

- Create a position to support agricultural economic development and network with various groups.
- Work with local and regional economic development agencies to promote a positive climate for agricultural development and expansion.
- Work with interested groups to foster and promote agricultural manufacturing and processing opportunities of mutual benefit.
- Continue to train and upgrade the skills of the workforce seeking employment in the agricultural sector.
- Encourage the establishment of a system or network to assist in the relocation of farmers to Oneida County.
- Develop promotional materials to highlight the value of agriculture to the county.
- Promote a revolving fund for retention, attraction, and expansion of farms.

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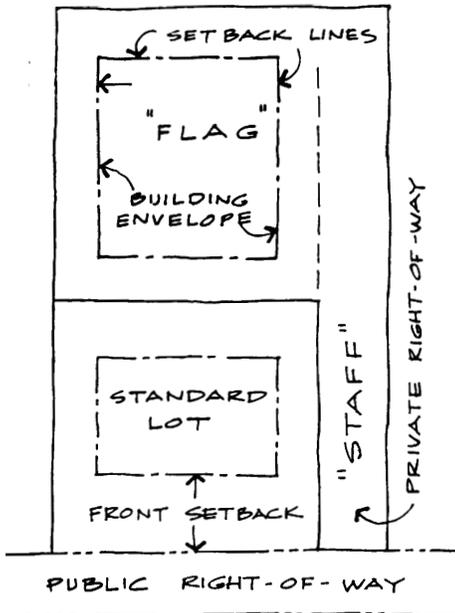
on working with local banks to develop financing packages for farmers upgrading or improving their facilities, identifying and developing new markets for Oneida County farms up for sale, and attracting agribusinesses and searching for new markets for Oneida County farm products.

Other county initiatives to strengthen the agricultural economy include adoption

"Farmland Plan" continued on page 3

Flag Lots are Becoming a Common Alternative

In the past, flag lots were frowned upon. This was due to their association with overcrowded urban areas with two or more residences on a single lot and with subdivision developers who used flag lots to avoid constructing a complete street system. Re-



FLAG LOT

Requirements that should be included in an ordinance regulating flag lots are:

- Minimum lot size (typically larger than standard lots), exclusive of the driveway;
- Minimum front, side, and rear yard requirements, exclusive of the driveway;
- Limitations on the number of flag lots using a common driveway (no more than four);
- Maximum length and minimum width of the driveway, as well as construction specifications, particularly if the driveway is to be shared;
- Ownership of the driveway (easement opposed to fee simple title);
- Maintenance of the driveway (the municipality should not be responsible for maintenance);
- Location of utilities;
- Screening of lot and driveway; and
- Provision for emergency vehicle access and turnaround area.

cently, however, municipalities have been allowing them in more and more situations. This is partly due to a decrease in available road frontage. Municipalities are also finding, when used properly, they are a means of preserving natural resources and a tool to access unused landlocked areas that are not suitable for agricultural use.

Flag lots have many other names, i.e. “flagpole lots,” “key hole lots,” and “pan-handle lots” to name a few. For simplification, they will be referred to as flag lots for this article. The term comes from the shape of the lot, which can be described as a lot which does not meet the required minimum road frontage requirements set forth within a community’s zoning regulations but generally has an area that exceeds the required minimum lot size and a narrow access (pole) connecting the major portion of the lot (flag) to the road. See the side illustration for a graphic explanation.

Regardless of the term used, they are a type of development that municipalities will need to become familiar with. Unfortunately, many communities do not have regulations in place that address this issue. A sample of the zoning regulations on file at this office revealed that the Town of Trenton is the only community within the two-county region that has regulations for “flag lots.” This article will provide some examples of flag lot definitions and include a discussion of issues that should be addressed when a community develops regulations for flag lots.

Definition

While there are various definitions for flag lot, a recommended definition comes from *The New Illustrated Book of Development Definitions* which is published by the Center for Urban Policy Research. This definition is as follows: “A large lot not meeting minimum road frontage requirements and where access to the public road is by a narrow, private right-of-way or driveway.”

Regulating Flag Lots

If not properly regulated, flag lots can have a serious impact on land development, drainage, traffic, aesthetics, emergency access, fire protection, and the overall character of a neighborhood. Because of these potential negative impacts, flag lots should be consid-

ered a “remedial” action, to be approved only when there is no other option for providing access to a parcel. Local governments should try to avoid the creation of large interior “landlocked” parcels, and the need to use flag lots to access them, by asking applicants to prepare conceptual plans for their entire parcel whenever an application to subdivide a portion of a larger lot is submitted.

Perhaps the biggest concern with flag lots is the potential increase in the number and density of driveways. If these driveways provide access to an arterial highway they will interfere with the safe and efficient operation of the highway. To avoid this problem, municipalities should require shared driveways wherever possible. Another option would be to prohibit flag lots along arterial highways.

Based on examples provided by the New York State Department of State, the width of the staff or pole ranges between 20 and 60 feet. Some communities have set a range in their regulations, such as 20-50 feet or 24-60 feet. The maximum length of the staff or pole ranges from 200-1000 feet. Whatever minimum width the municipality settles on, they should at least ensure that it is adequate to accommodate emergency vehicles.

Only a few municipalities set standards regarding the number of flag lots that can be created within a subdivision. The numbers range from 1 to 5. One municipality bases the number of flag lots allowed within a subdivision on the number of lots within the subdivision. For example, if the subdivision is between 1 and 6 lots, one flag lot is allowed; if the subdivision is between 7 and 18 lots, two flag lots are allowed; if the subdivision is between 19 and 30 lots, three flag lots are allowed; and if the subdivision exceeds 30 lots, four flag lots are allowed. Maintenance of a driveway located in the “staff” or “pole” should not be the municipality’s responsibility. Several communities clearly set forth within their regulations that it is the responsibility of the owners of the lots served to maintain the driveway.

In terms of minimum lot size, most municipalities require flag lots to meet the

“Flag Lots” *continued on page 3*

"Farmland Plan" *continued from page 1*

of a county board resolution urging state approval of a proposal to join a regional dairy compact and adoption of a county right-to-farm law. This law would seek to protect farmers from nuisance suits if a farmer is engaging in a sound agricultural practice. Under the law, the Farmland Protection Board is responsible for hearing grievances and determining whether a particular agricultural practice is sound or reasonable as to the time, place, and way it is conducted. The primary goal of the new law is to resolve disputes between farmers and non-farming neighbors before such disputes escalate into a lawsuit.

The Farmland Protection Board is also in the initial stages of developing a Land

Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) system for the county. The LESA system was designed by the U. S. Department of Agriculture and consists of two parts. The first part evaluates and classifies soils by their suitability for agricultural use. Data for this evaluation is based on the soil survey. The second part of LESA considers factors that influence decisions on agricultural land conversion, such as zoning, adjacent land uses, and availability of public sewer and water services. Specific factors to be considered in Oneida County, and the weight to be given each, are to be determined by the Farmland Protection Board.

A draft of the farmland protection plan is expected to be released in late spring. The Farmland Protection Board and the County

"Oneida County ranks eighth in agricultural production in New York State. Dairy products are the leading commodity. Other important commodities include field crops, vegetables, and greenhouse and nursery products."



"Flag Lots" *continued from page 2*

requirements of the zoning district in which it is located. The "staff" or "pole" is excluded when determining the size of the flag lot. Some municipalities require the flag lot to have an area twice the size of conventional lots.

A few municipalities do establish screening or buffering requirements. For example, one community requires a 25 foot wide buffer area along the flag lot's property lines and prohibits construction within this buffer area. It is probably most important to provide screening along the driveway and the front yard of the flag lot, which generally about the side and rear lot line, respectively, of a standard lot.

Only one municipality addresses utilities within their flag lot regulations. This municipality requires all utilities to be located underground.

Although flag lots may be allowed as-of-right or at the discretion of the planning board, it is recommended that they be sub-

ject to planning board approval. They can be regulated through zoning, and may also be reviewed through subdivision regulations.

Conclusion

Flag lots can allow the efficient use of otherwise landlocked areas, while maintaining rural character, keeping development costs down, and limiting the creation of additional streets. They can also have negative impacts on a community, particularly if there are too many driveways along busy highways. For these reasons, proposals to create flag lots should be regulated and carefully reviewed.

Municipalities wishing to develop regulations for flag lots should be aware that the Herkimer-Oneida Counties Comprehensive Planning Program has sample regulations on file which have been provided by the New York State Department of State. ♦

Board of Legislators will then hold public hearings on the plan. Contact Cooperative Extension or the Planning Department for more information. ♦

"Farmland Protection Goals" *continued*

Goal #2: To educate consumers as to the importance of agriculture in today's society and encourage agricultural producers to explore more direct marketing methods and alternative enterprises.

Objectives:

- Collaborate with tourism groups to promote the positive sides of agriculture and agricultural land.
- Work with farm organizations to inform the general public as to the concerns facing agriculture and the benefits of a strong local agricultural economy.
- Actively promote and develop alternative means of marketing that help bring farmers and consumers together (including Farmers Markets, Community Supported Agriculture, Pick-Your-Own, and Local Identification of Products).
- Work to promote the intergenerational transfer of farms.

Goal #3: To make government, primarily at the town and county levels, more sensitive to the needs of agriculture.

Objectives:

- Adopt right-to-farm laws at both the town and county level.
- Encourage the placement of at least one agricultural producer or agribusiness on the town planning board.
- Provide more training for town assessors on assessment of agricultural land and the use of agricultural value assessment.
- Create a local system whereby valuable agricultural land could be protected from future development (conservation easements, transfer or purchase of development rights).
- Explore alternatives to single lot zoning as a means of reducing the amount of land needed for development.
- Work with the Board of Realtors on disclosure notices for agricultural land.
- Work with the Sheriff's Department to provide an escort for farmers or agricultural machinery dealers moving over-width machinery over heavily travelled roads.

Herkimer County and Oneida County Population Projections 1990-2030

The Herkimer-Oneida Counties Comprehensive Planning Program (HOCCPP) and other members of the New York State Association of Regional Councils (NYSARC) receive frequent requests for population projections at the county, city and town level. The last "official state" projection of population was prepared in 1985. The present projection for Herkimer and Oneida Counties and their cities and towns was prepared by HOCCPP as part of an Association of Regional Councils statewide project funded by the Economic Development Administration of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Within the limited scope of its mission, the New York State Association of Regional Councils has used a population projection model developed by the Capital District Planning Commission in 1996. This is a "log-linear" model, so called because of its straight line form when plotted on a graph with logarithmic x-axis.

Log linear models, when used for forecasts, will project the historic rate of change of reported data into the future at a steadily declining rate. Log linear models are a basis for population forecasts because they project average historic rates of change into the future in a manner consistent with the average change in natural populations. While short term population data will often exhibit some variety of saw-toothed pattern when charted, long term data usually follows a log-linear trend.

The NYSARC model requires input of historic (and optionally Census estimated) population data for a defined area (typically a county) and its subdivisions. The initial data was presented for New York State and its 62 counties (including the 5 counties of New York City). The sum of historic populations of subdivisions must equal the referenced area total population. (e.g. _ minor civil divisions = county, or _ counties = state). This methodology may be extended

below the city-town level if desired, however, small area projections are always hazardous because of the ability of small developments or company layoffs to drastically influence short term growth.

The Herkimer-Oneida Counties Comprehensive Planning Program (HOCCPP) was responsible for the preparation of county, city and town population projections for the two counties in its planning area. HOCCPP used the NYSARC model and made adjustments to reflect the impact of Griffiss Air Force Base and Lockheed Martin closing, the migration of refugees to the region and regional urban growth patterns. The following notes specify the factors considered in the preparation of these projections. The two tables represent HOCCPP's best judgment as of November 1, 1997, with the recognition that projections should be adjusted periodically to reflect new local information, and federal and state population estimates.

NYSARC POPULATION PROJECTIONS for HERKIMER COUNTY and ITS MINOR CIVIL DIVISIONS

Herkimer-Oneida Counties Comprehensive Planning Program
1990 to 2030

Minor Civil Division	Reported		Estimated		Projections				
	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
HERKIMER COUNTY	65,809	66,233	66,679	67,181	67,747	68,357	68,966	69,572	70,176
COLUMBIA	1,587	1,631	1,646	1,661	1,676	1,691	1,706	1,721	1,734
DANUBE	1,077	1,083	1,096	1,107	1,120	1,133	1,146	1,159	1,177
FAIRFIELD	1,442	1,461	1,472	1,483	1,494	1,505	1,516	1,527	1,538
FRANKFORT	7,494	7,681	7,702	7,722	7,743	7,818	7,893	7,968	8,044
GERMAN FLATTS	14,345	14,209	14,090	14,150	14,271	14,392	14,513	14,634	14,753
HERKIMER	10,401	10,284	10,399	10,514	10,629	10,744	10,859	10,974	11,089
LITCHFIELD	1,414	1,491	1,507	1,523	1,539	1,555	1,571	1,587	1,602
LITTLE FALLS CITY	5,829	5,596	5,551	5,566	5,581	5,586	5,590	5,594	5,598
LITTLE FALLS TOWN	1,635	1,724	1,738	1,752	1,766	1,780	1,794	1,807	1,819
MANHEIM	3,527	3,498	3,517	3,536	3,555	3,574	3,593	3,612	3,629
NEWPORT	2,160	2,178	2,201	2,224	2,247	2,270	2,293	2,315	2,336
NORWAY	663	696	704	712	720	728	736	744	751
OHIO	880	892	908	924	940	956	972	988	1,004
RUSSIA	2,294	2,381	2,434	2,487	2,540	2,593	2,646	2,699	2,752
SALISBURY	1,934	2,032	2,046	2,060	2,074	2,088	2,102	2,116	2,128
SCHUYLER	3,508	3,648	3,688	3,728	3,768	3,808	3,848	3,888	3,930
STARK	759	753	763	773	783	793	803	812	821
WARREN	1,077	1,095	1,106	1,117	1,128	1,139	1,150	1,161	1,173
WEBB	1,637	1,743	1,764	1,785	1,806	1,827	1,848	1,869	1,891
WINFIELD	2,146	2,337	2,347	2,357	2,367	2,377	2,387	2,397	2,407

- Reviewed other projections and estimates including: federal-state estimates through July 1, 1996; Capital District (NYSARC) Model preliminary projections to 2030; Woods & Poole projections; and NYSDOT Consultant draft population, employment, establishments, 1997-2002 (draft).
- Reviewed Utica Refugee Center current and anticipated number of refugees entering the Utica area.
- Allocated 1995 estimated county population to towns and cities based upon 1995 federal-state-county and Minor Civil Division Estimates.
- Noted 1996 federal-state estimates, especially the significant reductions from 1995

estimates, and then determined to continue use of 1995 estimates as the base, but comparing 1996 estimates with projected 1996-2000 change to make sure change is reasonable.

- The Utica Refugee Center projected refugee immigration to Oneida County, expecting 1,300 in 1997 and an additional 1,000 per year through 2001. This level was reduced to 80% for the period 2002 through 2015, and to zero after 2015. The Refugee Center considers their numbers to be conservative. The refugees handled by the Utica Refugee Center are largely expected to reside in Utica, but it is likely that an unknown number will reside elsewhere.

"Population" *continued on page 6*

In March 1998, the Census Bureau released estimates of 1997 county totals and 1996 city-town-village figures. The bureau also revised its estimates for 1991 through 1996. An adjustment to the 2000 projected total may be made in December 1998 after the 1997 city-town-village estimates are released.

HERKIMER COUNTY

	1995	1996	1997
Previous est.	66,233	65,968	-
Revised est.	66,312	66,174	65,691

ONEIDA COUNTY

	1995	1996	1997
Previous est.	242,024	236,437	-
Revised est.	241,529	235,545	233,187

**NYSARC POPULATION PROJECTIONS for
ONEIDA COUNTY and ITS MINOR CIVIL DIVISIONS**
Herkimer-Oneida Counties Comprehensive Planning Program
1990 to 2030

Minor Civil Division	Reported		Estimated		Projections				
	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
ONEIDA COUNTY	250,836	242,024	244,158	247,809	250,180	252,222	254,279	256,377	258,385
ANNSVILLE	2,786	2,649	2,657	2,666	2,696	2,726	2,756	2,786	2,819
AUGUSTA	2,070	2,009	2,070	2,130	2,155	2,161	2,172	2,182	2,191
AVA	792	861	875	890	095	894	897	903	907
BOONVILLE	4,246	4,084	4,200	4,350	4,469	4,480	4,498	4,515	4,530
BRIDGEWATER	1,591	1,812	1,835	1,860	1,886	1,893	1,899	1,906	1,913
CAMDEN	5,134	4,985	5,090	5,150	5,200	5,220	5,243	5,265	5,286
DEERFIELD	3,942	3,954	3,950	4,000	4,068	4,127	4,186	4,245	4,304
FLORENCE	852	861	855	865	875	885	895	905	915
FLOYD	3,856	3,647	3,660	3,684	3,728	3,773	3,817	3,860	3,902
FORESTPORT	1,556	1,548	1,564	1,580	1,595	1,610	1,625	1,640	1,656
KIRKLAND	10,153	10,017	10,143	10,268	10,395	10,521	10,647	10,774	10,901
LEE	7,115	7,013	7,101	7,189	7,277	7,365	7,453	7,541	7,630
MARCY	8,685	9,112	9,203	9,294	9,385	9,476	9,567	9,650	9,750
MARSHALL	2,125	2,121	2,145	2,170	2,194	2,218	2,242	2,266	2,291
NEW HARTFORD	21,640	21,395	21,393	21,636	21,899	22,162	22,425	22,688	22,950
PARIS	4,414	4,381	4,660	4,701	4,742	4,783	4,824	4,865	4,906
REMSEN	1,739	1,735	1,770	1,800	1,830	1,860	1,890	1,920	1,948
ROME CITY	44,350	42,037	41,799	42,122	42,445	42,767	43,089	43,411	43,734
SANGERFIELD	2,460	2,427	2,440	2,461	2,482	2,496	2,508	2,519	2,529
SHERRILL CITY	2,864	3,134	3,150	3,171	3,192	3,213	3,234	3,255	3,276
STEBEN	1,006	1,055	1,080	1,100	1,120	1,140	1,156	1,172	1,188
TRENTON	4,682	4,596	4,700	4,810	4,920	5,030	5,140	5,250	5,358
UTICA CITY	68,637	63,144	63,359	64,251	64,572	64,895	65,219	65,545	65,873
VERNON	5,338	5,216	5,300	5,390	5,440	5,462	5,489	5,514	5,536
VERONA	6,460	6,504	6,610	6,702	6,725	6,749	6,783	6,814	6,841
VIENNA	5,564	5,566	5,700	5,890	6,000	6,031	6,061	6,088	6,112
WESTERN	2,057	2,034	2,050	2,070	2,090	2,106	2,117	2,127	2,136
WESTMORELAND	5,737	5,838	5,950	6,000	6,089	6,158	6,227	6,296	6,366
WHITESTOWN	18,985	18,289	18,849	19,609	19,816	20,021	20,220	20,475	20,637

One Step at a Time for Transit

Annual reductions in federal funds and budget shortfalls have caused area public and private operators to limit service, increase fares, and strain local budgets. In Herkimer and Oneida Counties, over 3.4 million passenger trips were provided by the major public transit systems. The recently released "Financial Analysis of Transit Service Consolidation and Coordination" noted that additional local government funding of about \$1.7 million per year in operating assistance will be needed for the next five years just to maintain current levels of service. In addition, nearly \$2.5 million will be needed each year for capital equipment.

The study offered two options: 1) creation of a new Unified Transit Agency which combines existing separate services into a single operation that would save about \$1.2

million annually, or 2) create a Transit Brokerage Office to provide coordinated telephone taking, scheduling, and dispatching which would provide 114,600 additional passenger trips per year at a cost of \$200,000 annually above the \$7.7 million operating expenses for 1998.

In January, findings of the study were presented at public meetings in Herkimer, Rome, and Utica. Comments from the general public and local representatives in attendance focused on: 1) the need to maintain current levels of transit service, human service transportation, to provide for the special needs of those with disabilities, and to assist in Welfare to Work programs, 2) there is a need for additional transit services, particularly in rural areas, and 3) equal representation and control of services would be

necessary in any coordination effort. Reactions from the operators focused on the organizational details of coordination and consolidation and meeting the various transportation needs of the public.

The Herkimer-Oneida Counties Transportation Study staff will continue their efforts by: identifying specific savings per operators and costs to the participating municipalities; conducting an asset analysis of capital equipment, maintenance facilities, and debt service; identifying an idealized level of service including routes and scheduling coordination; and addressing the issues outlined in the study and noted at the public meetings. Staff anticipates the additional information will be developed by the end of this year. ♦



"Population" *continued from page 5*

- Used 1995 federal-state estimate for each county as the base for projections for Herkimer and Oneida Counties and for town and city projections.
- Herkimer County population has been historically very flat with a 0.7% decline in 1985-90 and an estimated 0.6% increase in 1990-95. The projections show a slight increase in growth for the 1995-2030 projection period, with a growth of just under 6% expected for the 35 year period.
- The Oneida County population declined from its 1970 of 273,070 to an estimated low of 236,437 in 1996. The 1995 estimate, in contrast, provided a base of 242,024 which represented a recent growth rate of 6.75% for the next 35 years.
- The preliminary city-town projections to 2030 were modified on the basis of staff knowledge of current development proposals and probable extension of past trends in each community. The county totals are the sum of city and town figures. ♦



GP&L Endorses Unified Planning Work Program

The Herkimer-Oneida Counties Governmental Policy and Liaison Committee (GP&L) endorsed the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) at its February meeting. The UPWP of the Herkimer-Oneida Counties Transportation Study (HOCTS) outlines transportation planning activities for the State Fiscal Year April 1, 1998 - through March 31, 1999.

Highlights of the Work Program include an update to the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), development of a new Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), continuation of the two-county transit study as implementation stages are developed, and regional and sub-area traffic simulation and forecast modeling.

- The LRTP update will include the status of the existing LRTP projects and address any new issues or proposed projects for possible inclusion. The update including public review is to be completed by December 1999.

- The new TIP will include studies, available funding and transportation projects scheduled for implementation over the next 5 years based on the LRTP.
- The two-county transit study will continue with the help of a consultant. This transition plan will work towards accomplishing the recommendations of the study "Financial Analysis of Transit Services Consolidation and Coordination for Herkimer and Oneida Counties" that was prepared by CGA Consulting Service in 1997.

The New York State Department of Transportation submits the application to the Federal Transit Administration and the Federal Highway Administration in behalf of the GP&L. The modeling and forecasting activity involves traffic simulations and forecasting in support of transportation studies and alternative highway designs. ♦

Cross-State Canal Cruise and Trail Trek to Celebrate Tourism

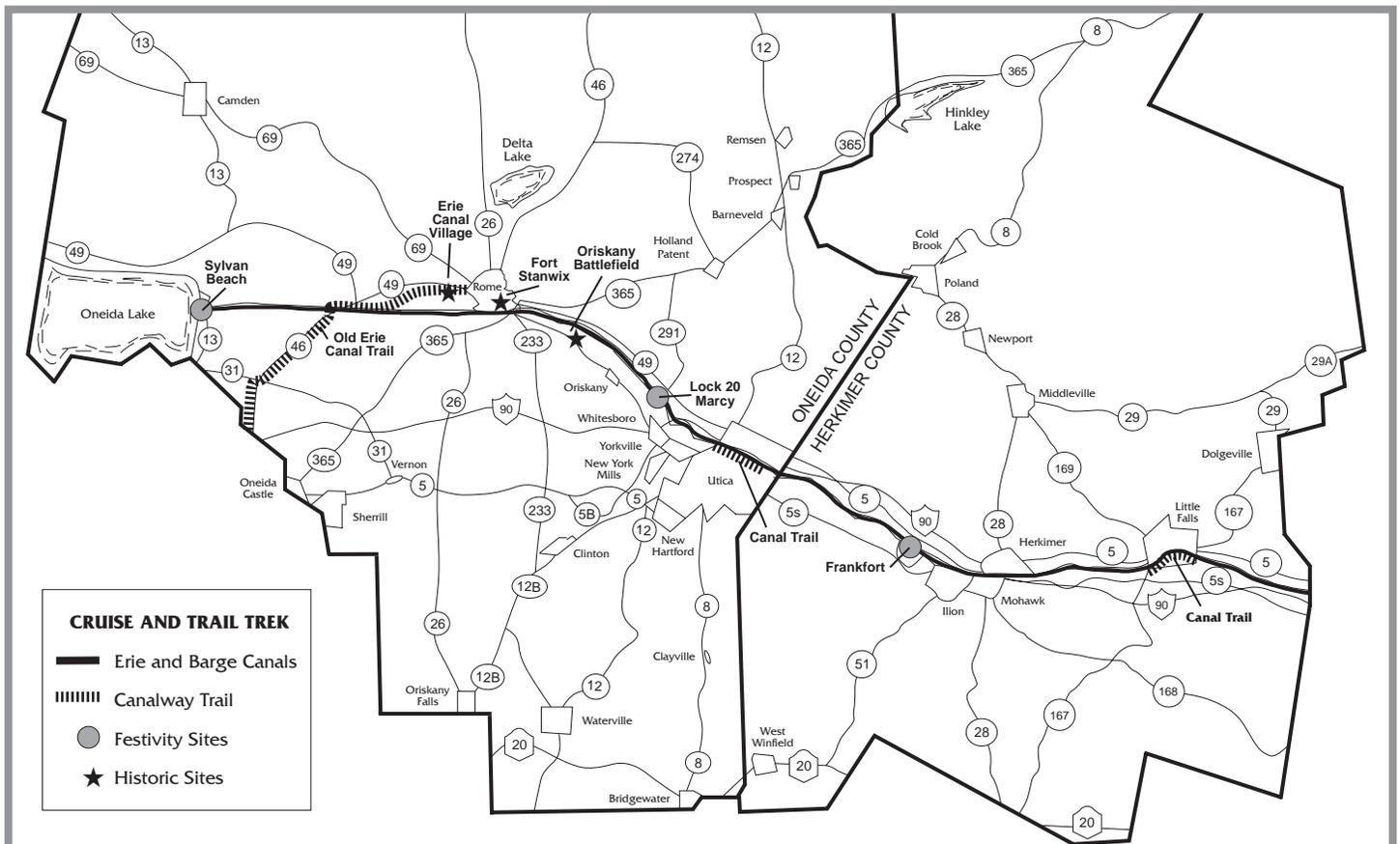
A group of boaters and bicyclists will begin on June 10 to make a 10-day, 350-mile trip from Tonawanda to Waterford along the New York State Canal System. The trip will promote tourism along the Canal System and the completion of the Canalway Trail. The Cruise and Trek will travel together whenever possible, led by an historic canal vessel. Along the way, local boaters, bicyclists, and walkers will join the Cruise and Trek for part of the distance.

The Canalway Trail, when completed, will interconnect more than 500 miles of recreational trails, mainly following the four historic canal waterways of the state: the Erie, the Champlain, the Oswego, and the

Cayuga-Seneca Canals. However, important sections of the Canalway Trail, including some sections through Herkimer and Oneida Counties, remain undeveloped. Completion of these sections will enhance the New York State Canal System as a major tourism destination in this area. The Herkimer-Oneida Counties Transportation Study in cooperation with the New York State Department of Transportation is working to define the Canalway Trail route through this region.

The Canal Cruise and Trek will travel through Herkimer and Oneida Counties between June 16th and 18th, with stopovers tentatively scheduled in Sylvan Beach and

Frankfort. A welcoming event is also being planned on the June 17th at the Lock 20 Park on Route 49 in Marcy. You are invited to boat, bike, run, paddle, or walk along with the Cruise and Trek as it passes through our area. For information on the schedule and route for the Cruise and Trek, contact Ms. Pat Greenfield of the New York State Canal Corporation at (518) 471-5010, or for information on the Canal and the Canalway Trail call 1-800-4CANAL4. For information on local events contact the Oneida County Convention and Visitors Bureau at (315) 724-7221, or Leatherstocking Country at (315) 866-1500 for events in Herkimer County. ♦



◆◆◆ 1998 CANAL CRUISE and TRAIL TREK SCHEDULE ◆◆◆

June 16th, Tuesday	Begins at Syracuse, passes through Brewerton and ends at Sylvan Beach	30 miles
June 17th, Wednesday	Begins at Sylvan Beach, passes through Rome and Utica, and ends at Frankfort	35 miles
June 18th, Thursday	Begins at Frankfort, passes through Little Falls, St. Johnsville, and Fort Plain, and ends at Canajoharie ..	30 miles

New Yorkers Support Rail Service Improvements

The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion recently conducted a telephone poll of 644 contacts which found that 97% of New York State voters support “improved and modernized” long distance trains. In addition, the poll found that 82% believe that improved train service is as important as good highways and airports. A strong 87% supported funding to improve intercity rail passenger service.

There was also support for increased state spending on intercity rail service throughout the state regardless of the region in which they live or their political party. As for funding rail improvements, a majority (57%) favored a bond issue over raising the gas tax by 1¢, or using existing highway or other transportation funding sources.

The poll found that 27% of those who

travel more than 75 miles each year used the trains for at least one of the trips. In addition, 73% of the respondents would consider taking the train on their next long distance trip.

When asked what improvements would influence their decision to take the train for long distance trips; cleaner and better maintained stations topped the list with 91%, followed by lower fares (86%) and better on time performance (84%). In addition, 69% of the respondents wanted faster trains. Additional concerns include extended service to new destinations, better schedules, better access to and from station, and more service and comfort.

The Marist survey was jointly commissioned by the Empire State Passenger Association, and the Empire Corridor Rail Task Force.

E.S.P.A. is a volunteer network of people working to improve and expand Amtrak, mass transit, and bus service in New York State. The Empire Corridor Rail Task Force is a group of bi-partisan county legislature chairs from across the corridor and includes Gerald Fiorini, Chairman, Oneida County Board of Legislators, and Domiano Contino, Chairman, Herkimer County Legislature. The Task Force along with ESPA are in agreement that New York State needs to make annual appropriations of up to \$50 million for rail system improvements in order to upgrade and enhance freight and rail passenger service. The Task Force is seeking to promote economic development and employment in New York State through improvements to the rail system. ♦

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