

2002 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

FINAL DRAFT

**TOWN AND VILLAGE
OF
WELLSVILLE**

ALLEGANY COUNTY, NEW YORK

Village of Wellsville

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**This Joint Comprehensive Plan was prepared in part by cooperation with Southern Tier
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Introduction

Drafting of a joint comprehensive plan for the Town and Village of Wellsville was initiated in August 2000 in an effort to more closely align the efforts of the two municipalities in planning for the future of the community of Wellsville as a whole. The first step was bringing the two planning boards together to function as a single unit for purposes of drafting the plan. The forum has been successful in increasing communication and eliminating unnecessary duplication of effort between the two planning boards and the two municipalities.

Issue Identification

Effective Comprehensive Plans build on strengths and take advantage of opportunities while minimizing or overcoming weaknesses and threats.

Identifying strategic issues – those that require a fundamental policy choice affecting a community's mandates, missions, values, service level(s) and mix, clients and users, cost, financing or management – is a vital step in creating a comprehensive plan's agenda. These issues also help focus planning. Defining the community's response(s) to these issues can define the elements of the comprehensive plan.

Vision

This joint comprehensive plan for the Town and Village of Wellsville is designed to realize a vision for the community's future. This vision is for a prosperous community built upon a diverse, growing economy. It is a vision where we capitalize on our rich, natural resources; the strengths of our basic institutions; and the energy and talents of our residents. It is a vision that draws upon our history and heritage while simultaneously embracing change. This vision includes a quality of life that is attractive to our youth, young families, professionals and executive, general workforce, and our most mature residents.

Mission

This joint planning committee for the Town and Village of Wellsville, New York has created a comprehensive planning guide for use immediately and in the future. This committee shall review the action steps achieved and amend the plan annually. The committee shall be the overseer of joint efforts between the town and village in achieving the presented goals.

History

Nestled in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, with the Genesee River flowing through it, Wellsville has much natural beauty. Forested hillsides are interspersed with picturesque farms. From North Hill, Norton Summit, Niles Hill and other peaks, it is possible to see sweeping vistas of the surrounding countryside.

Entering the town from the north, a visitor sees stately homes, many of them built during the area's oil boom in the early 20th century. A visitor also passes the Wellsville Country Club, one of the finest in Western New York. The Genesee River travels from south to north through the community, and offers the potential for development for recreational use. Where the Genesee River and Dyke's Creek converge is Island Park and its related recreational facilities. The park is an enhancement to the cultural and recreational offerings of the community.

Throughout the community are many fine examples of various types of architecture, including The Pink House (Italianate Victorian) and the David A. Howe Public Library (Georgian).

The area's economy was first based on the lumber industry, and, from that, the tanning industry. Some vestiges remain, such as the former Wellsville, Addison and Galeton right-of-way that is being converted for recreational use. The former Erie-Lackawanna Railroad, taken over by Conrail, was acquired by a regional rail authority in 2001 and a short-line operator has been retained to restore at least limited rail service on the east-west line sometime beginning in 2002.

The former Erie-Lackawanna Railroad Depot still stands in downtown Wellsville and is listed on the National Historic Register. Its condition is deteriorating, however, and prompt action is needed to save it.

As the lumber industry waned, the oil industry boomed; its legacy is seen in many beautiful public buildings and private residences that remain. Many of the houses have been maintained, and some restored beautifully. Others are in need of repair. The Sinclair Refinery, one of the largest refineries in the Pennsylvania oil fields, operated in Wellsville until the late 1950s. Many of the buildings once belonging to the refinery still stand on South Brooklyn Avenue. Some are vacant, some are converted to other uses, including the campus of the School of Vocational Studies, Alfred State College.

An inventory of notable public structures includes: the David A. Howe Public Library, the Municipal Building, the Lin-Ray Twin Cinema, which is one of the few large-screen downtown theaters still operating in a small town. The downtown itself is characterized by a turn-of-the-century business district, with most of the buildings in fair condition. Among the businesses are the Texas Hot Restaurant, founded in 1921, and known throughout New York State for its sauce-covered hot dogs.

Throughout the community are churches, many of which are architecturally interesting. The Immaculate Conception Church, with its classic Gothic architecture, is the largest house of worship. It is built of Warsaw Blue Stone, quarried from Warsaw in nearby Wyoming County. Stone for the foundation and the interior walls came from area farms.

A concerted effort to restore older homes would both improve the community's historic stock and enhance its tourism potential. Older houses on several streets, such as Riverside Drive, North Main Street and West State Street, have been well maintained, and serve as a model for what could be developed elsewhere if resources were available.

Futuristic Outlooks

Goals

1. Continue to provide the residents of Wellsville with a high-quality of life, one that is safe, pleasant and affordable.
2. Diversify and expand our economic base to provide a choice of jobs for residents.
3. Expand and diversify our property tax base to ease the cost of providing municipal services to residents.
4. Enhance the educational system.
5. Safeguard our downtown so that it continues to be both a quality-of-life and an economic asset to the community.
6. Improved transportation to and from area. ie: airport and accessibility to Interstate 86.
7. Encourage more tourism.
8. Develop a **LAND USE PLAN** that sets aside **Districts** that include: commercial/industrial/retail specific sites. These should include, but not be limited to: 417 East, 417 West, the Airport and related Industrial Park, South Brooklyn Street/Back River Road, and Route 19 South.
9. Encourage further development of the railroad and associated “sidings” which will hopefully lower shipping costs and thereby reduce costs and allow for more competitive businesses.

Infrastructure Assessment

Sewage: A recent upgrade of the wastewater treatment plant increased its capacity to 2.25 million gallons a day (current SPEDES permit is for 1.5 million gallons a day, to be updated by the state). Under normal conditions the plant operates at between 60-65 percent of capacity. Efforts are being made by the Village of Wellsville to reduce infiltration and inflow to lessen the burden on the WWTP and to therefore further increase its ability to handle greater loads created by growth.

Water: The Village’s water treatment plant, built in 1990, currently treats just under one million gallons of water daily; its capacity is more than two million gallons a day if the plant were operated on a round-the-clock basis. The Village in 2001 replaced its nearly century-old open reservoir with two closed concrete tanks, each holding two million gallons, allowing for increased storage capacity. The Village therefore has sufficient water to not only meet the needs of current industrial, commercial and residential users, but to also allow for substantial expansion of the distribution system. The Village is in the process of replacing many existing two-inch lines with larger lines to increase flow to affected areas.

In late 2001, the Village hired a contractor to bore under the railroad right-of-way at the eastern edge of the Village along Route 417 so that water and sewer lines could be extended to serve that area. The immediate goal is to provide water and sewer to a mobile home park currently within the Village limits that has not been previously served, but the extension will also allow for creation of a water and sewer district to serve the Ames Plaza, Northern Lights, Air Preheater and other properties included in the newly designated Empire Zone sub zones. Along 417 West, a sewer line has been extended to the Wellsville Municipal Airport and is available for

other residential, commercial and industrial customers who wish to connect to it. Water lines have not yet been extended, but efforts are under way to secure funding that will make it possible.

The Village has more than 200 hydrants, which it replaces and upgrades when water lines are replaced and upgraded. In addition, it has an ongoing program to replace 10 hydrants a year.

The Village of Wellsville and the Town of Scio have already connected their water lines along Route 19 north of the Village.

Electric: Niagara Mohawk holds the electricity franchise for the Town of Wellsville.

The Village owns its own electric system, purchasing hydroelectric power from the New York Power Authority and supplemental power through joint purchasing agency rates created by the municipal systems in the state. As a result, the Village is able to offer electric rates that are among the lowest in the nation. The Village has an ongoing plan for maintaining and upgrading its electrical distribution system.

The Village's contract for hydroelectric power is due to expire, and it is anticipated that rates could begin to increase as early as 2007. Critical to maintaining low rates is continued preferential customer status (for hydroelectric power) for the state's municipal systems. While the municipal systems were successful in retaining preferential status when contracts were last negotiated, there is no certainty that such status can be maintained in future contract negotiations with the state and federal governments, particularly with increased pressure from other municipalities within the state to obtain a share of the cheap power.

Expansion of the Village's franchise area is not likely, given the current Niagara Mohawk method of assessing exit fees to cover stranded costs when properties are annexed to the Village to obtain municipal power. Pending lawsuits elsewhere in the state, e.g., Lakeville, are challenging NiMo's method of computing exit fees. If the appellate courts find in Lakeville's favor, the lower court has already, then subsequent adjustments in how exit fees are computed may make expansion of the Village's franchise area feasible once again.

Village Streets: The Village currently maintains 26 miles of streets. It has a five-year plan for street maintenance, but historical records are incomplete or missing, so it is difficult to determine when some streets were last paved. To correct this problem, the Village is using its Geographic Information System to map streets and link them to a database that will provide information about condition, when maintenance or replacement was done, traffic counts, etc. The Village is also in the process of implementing the Cornell Roads Program's street management program that will allow for a better assessment of condition; that information will be included in the database and used to develop maintenance plans. While an effort is made to keep the main thoroughfares in good condition, perhaps as much as 50 percent of the Village's side streets could be classified as being in fair to poor condition. With local tax dollars and funds through the Comprehensive Highway Improvement Program from the State, the Village undertakes about \$250,000 worth of repairs and upgrades annually, but those are not sufficient resources to keep the streets in good repair, given both the environment and the traffic loads many of the streets bear.

Town Roads are maintained on a 5-year plan for paving. Both the Town and the Village have newer equipment that is capable of handling larger tasks and thereby allows for more efficient maintenance. The Town is also purchasing equipment to be shared with the Village, thereby reducing overall equipment costs.

Access to major highways: State Route 19, a two-lane highway through predominantly residential areas and agricultural land connects Wellsville with Interstate Route 86 north of Belmont. Industries in Wellsville have found access difficult for that reason. There is a study getting under way in 2002 to explore the feasibility of what is being called Route 386, a four-lane, limited access highway from Route 86 through Alfred and into Wellsville. If this is economically feasible, it should be supported. Dresser-Rand faces extreme challenges in getting large trucks out of its facility on Coats Street to Route 19, and then to Route 86. Effort must be made to address this situation. Route 390, major north-south road from Rochester, now connects to Interstate 86. Explore scenario's to extend it to Wellsville, and/or Interstate 86.

Airport: The Town of Wellsville maintains the only General Aviation airport in Allegany County; the facility is superior to any others within a 50-mile radius. The existing runway is 5,300 feet long and 100 feet wide. This airport is staffed 365 days a year from 7:00 A.M to 7:00 P.M. Runway lights can be turned on by the plane's radio if the airport is not staffed. There are 2,500 operations (1 takeoff and 1 landing) per year. The airport staff can support additional operations should usage increase. A Master Plan is currently being updated for the airport. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reimburses the airport 90% of all project costs. Adelphia Communications and Wellsville Flying Service are the primary users of the airport; however there are several private airplane owners at the airport.

They have a need for a GPS (Global Positioning System), which would allow for a precision landing versus instrument landing.

The runway is too short for larger planes, extending the runway another 1000 feet would accommodate larger aircraft, opening the the door for possible commuter service to and from Buffalo or Rochester Airports. Adelphia would also utilize the longer runway.

Cable/high-speed Internet access: Adelphia Communications holds the cable television franchise for both the Town and Village of Wellsville. An 870 MHz upgrade was completed in 2001, making digital cable and "Powerlink," Adelphia's high-speed cable Internet access, available to customers in the Town and Village of Wellsville. Other Internet Service Providers are available to offer dial-up Internet access. One, Information Boulevard, intends to bring high-speed wireless to the area in 2002.

Telephone: Verizon holds the telephone service franchise in the Town and Village of Wellsville. Cell phone franchises are held by Cellular One, Verizon and in the near future, Adelphia.

Natural Gas: National Fuel Gas provides natural gas to the Village and most parts of the Town of Wellsville. The existing system can handle additional customer growth. Major system upgrades occur simultaneously to road construction.

Land: Availability is not an issue in the Town outside the Village, however within the Village limits it is at a premium. Land outside the Village is relatively inexpensive and in great quantity. However, land that is “development –ready” or has utilities to it is in short supply. An industrial park at the Wellsville Municipal Airport has a sewer line connecting it to the Village’s system, however, at present any developer would have to rely on well water because the municipal system from the Village has not been run that far. To extend the line to the airport would be costly, because of its elevation, but necessary if there were going to be 25 or more people employed at a site. The airport industrial park is included in the Empire Zone subzone.

Municipal facilities: The Village’s Police station is inadequate for current needs, particularly the courtroom. The Town of Wellsville, which shares the court facility, has purchased land adjacent to the police station, and intends to build a court facility that will serve both the Town and the Village courts. Once the courtroom is moved, the police station should be renovated to better meet the needs of the department, e.g., providing space with a separate entrance for juveniles.

Also high on the priority list are new highway facilities for the Town of Wellsville. The present facility is in poor condition and inadequate for current needs; the West Hanover Street site is too small for expansion, however. The Town has purchased land on Trapping Brook Road for construction of a new highway facility and possible recreational facilities. The Community Building on North Main Street is also in need of repair and is not adequate for current needs. Parking is a particular problem for the senior citizens who use the facility for the Office for the Aging lunch site.

The Municipal Building, owned by the Village, which leases space to the Town, is in need of an elevator and handicapped accessible restroom facilities. It is also in need of major system (heat, electric) replacement, all of which the Village is looking to do through a proposed renovation plan. Preliminary architectural plans have been drawn, and money set aside in a capital improvement account to begin to pay for the work, estimated to be \$500,000 to 1.25 million, depending upon the scope the Board of Trustees agrees to undertake.

OPPORTUNITIES

The extension of Village water and sewer to areas of the Town without services would allow for increased development of housing, commercial and industrial properties. This expansion would thereby increase choice of developable land, would increase property tax town wide by increased assessment, and provide services, which would increase the “livability” of the property. The addition of these services/infrastructure assumes a higher cost per unit of housing or commercial development. Higher end costs/sales denote a higher wage earner. Additionally, this expansion of developable land encourages the diversity of land use (i.e. farming, industrial, commercial, and residential).

THREATS

The sparse development of land outside the Village limits, coupled with the relatively low assessed valuations, makes extension of services cost-prohibitive in many instances, particularly if there is no source of grants or low-cost loans to help defray the costs given the

requirement in town law that prohibits cost of expanding water and sewer districts from being a town-wide charge unless there is a town-wide benefit, e.g., a municipal facility.

Recent changes in state Department of Health regulations requiring a water treatment plant operator to be on call 24 hours a day for water systems that supply more than 25 people is increasing the pressure to extend municipal water to areas of the town. This is particularly critical for industrial properties outside the Village limits, and for areas where there are several residences on a common water supply, e.g. mobile home parks on Route 19 south.

There is a threat of “Not in My Backyard” reactions when land is sold for what could be considered “non-conforming use,” (although there is NO ZONING in the Town of Wellsville.) While the fact there is no zoning in the Town of Wellsville is an opportunity in that it allows for “creative use and reuse” of land/property/buildings, it is also a threat in that there are no limits or restrictions to the use and reuse of the land/property/buildings. Therefore, no control through zoning could allow for extreme mixed use of properties in areas that are totally unsuitable for each use. (e.g. heavy industrial use in a residential area, junkyard in a “tourism nature area.”)

Infrastructure Recommendations

The Joint Town and Village Planning Boards therefore make the following recommendations:

- The Town and Village should continue to explore cooperative use of facilities to reduce unnecessary duplication, e.g., continue to explore the creation of shared highway/DPW facilities, court facilities, office space. No new facilities should be built, and no facilities expanded or renovated without a plan in place for cooperation and sharing between the two municipalities.

- Working together to assure that the Town’s demands for expanded water and sewer does not outpace the Village’s ability to provide those services, the municipalities should develop a long-range plan for expansion to serve areas of the Town where such services can be extended most cost-effectively. The plan should not only outline proposed sources of funding, but also anticipated usage. While the Village has a great deal of capacity to supply more water, its ability to handle additional sewage is more limited.

Priority expansion areas:

- 1.) Morningside: water and sewer
- 2.) Route 417 west to L.C. Whitford property: water
- 3.) Route 417 west to airport and industrial park: water.
- 4.) Route 417 east to Duffy Hollow Road: water and sewer
- 5.) Route 19 south to mobile home parks: water

Quality of Life

Several families that have recently relocated to Wellsville, as well as families who have remained in Wellsville were interviewed by this joint planning board. The purpose being to find out what attracted them to Wellsville and why they remained in Wellsville. Their responses were very similar: the quality of life, a friendly community with a slower pace of life, family in the area, safety for those with children, the library, hospital and a movie theater which most small towns do not have, small town values, the outdoors-hunting and fishing, service clubs and even seeing the stars at night.

Some of the detractions noted in the area were: absence of a recreation facility, lack of jobs for spouses of new residents, limited choice of restaurants and shopping. All seemed to agree that we need to accentuate the positives Wellsville has to offer.

Housing

Sixteen percent of Allegany County's very poorest households are in the Town of Wellsville. Of all the residents in the Town of Wellsville, approximately 15% are living below (and well below) poverty level. Allegany County has the second-lowest median income in the State of New York. (\$24,400) There are 2,119 persons in poverty in the Town of Wellsville according to the 2000 Census.

Over 80% of housing in the Town of Wellsville was constructed before 1960. Over 55% of all housing in the Village of Wellsville was constructed before 1939. In 2001, there were 35 building permits issued in the Town of Wellsville and 69 in the Village.

Of the over 120 homes rehabilitated through funding obtained by the Alfred Housing Committee, 100% were constructed before 1960. Rehabilitation of these homes to Housing Quality Standards usually is accomplished by funding from \$10,000 to \$18,000. Major systems such as heating, foundations, roofs, electric service and wiring are typical projects. Almost 80% of the homes rehabilitated by the Alfred Housing Committee have involved roof replacements /repairs. We surmise this is a result of the high cost of roof replacements. While homeowners can replace one window at a time for \$350, there is an average roof replacement cost of \$3,000 to \$7,000 that must be performed all at once.

Most rehabilitation work undertaken through the Alfred Housing Committee is a replacement or repair of existing systems. However, ground-floor level bathrooms for elderly persons and ramps and handrails for handicapped individuals are also frequent, indicating a need to renovate to allow elderly homeowners to remain in their own homes. Most repairs are necessary as a result of "deferred maintenance" because the homeowner just did not have the funds to perform the work.

In the Town and Village of Wellsville, safe and affordable housing is the first need as well as an identified priority. HOME and NYS Affordable Housing funds secured by the Alfred Housing Committee, Inc. will be a direct response to these. A lien attached to the improved properties, to prevent an immediate resale, will ensure their affordability of the home for a minimum of five years.

Historically, the homes rehabilitated through housing funds obtained by the Alfred Housing Committee fall into two main groups. Primarily, the rehabilitated homes belong to elderly or elderly/handicapped homeowners. These homeowners tend to be widowed women. The second largest group is low income working families, often referred to as “the working poor.” Both groups are residing in homes that are an average of 60 years old. Most major systems are inefficient and outdated. Existing systems have been inadequately maintained and as inexpensively repaired as possible. Most homes contain some lead paint, meaning that approximately \$2,000 of the \$10,000 of the subsidy will go toward lead paint abatement.

Since housing availability or housing choice is not the primary issue regarding housing in the Town and Village of Wellsville, rehabilitation of existing housing stock is our major concern. To that end, the Alfred Housing Committee, the Rural Preservation Company serving the Town and Village of Wellsville, has instituted a long-standing program of granting low-income homeowners funds for improvements to their owner-occupied homes. This program is funded through grants from the New York State Affordable Housing Corporation.

Through this program, the Alfred Housing Committee Inc. will make an outright grant of 60% of the total project costs (up to \$10,000) to income eligible homeowners to repair or replace major systems in their homes. The remaining 40% “match” must be provided by the homeowner. The Alfred Housing Committee will assist the homeowner in obtaining these funds when necessary. Part of this required match can be work the homeowner(s) does. The homeowner must agree to live in the rehabilitated home for a prescribed number of years.

The Alfred Housing Committee, Inc. is committed to maintain this program as an on-going community resource. It is anticipated there will always be an Affordable Housing Program actively running for residents of the Town and Village of Wellsville. It is anticipated that approximately 20 low-income, owner-occupied homes will be rehabilitated annually.

The Alfred Housing Committee has also been a partner in construction of 48 units of low-to-moderate-income housing for the elderly and disabled. These housing units, which have federal Section 8 rent subsidies or New York State Rental Assistance, have waiting lists of over 50 people, who generally must wait anywhere from 12 months to as long as 48 months for a unit, indicating a continuing need for additional units for the elderly. Every subsidized apartment complex in Allegany County is 100% occupied and all have associated waiting lists.

There is also a continuing need for safe, affordable housing units for low to moderate-income families. The efforts of the volunteers for Habitat for Humanity are greatly appreciated by the community and are a vital part of affordable housing in the area.

Alfred State College Building and Construction Trades Program has been instrumental in bringing quality housing at affordable prices to our community. This program is a great benefit to the Wellsville area.

Stifling the housing market, particularly in the Village of Wellsville, is the fact that more than 70 percent of the residential property units are valued at \$40,000 or less, and fewer than 5 percent are valued at \$100,000 or more. As a result, the property tax burden (village, town, county and school combined) is in excess of \$50 per \$1,000 assessed valuation. For the 70 percent of properties valued at \$40,000 or less, the property taxes are \$2,000 a year or less, but for those who are in the higher-priced residential properties, the tax burden is \$5,000 and up. People are reluctant to invest in their properties or to build new because of the prohibitive tax burden. Unless and until the Village of Wellsville can expand its tax base and reduce the

property tax burden, it is unlikely that there will be substantial investment in residential development in the Village of Wellsville.

Threats

The continuing deterioration of housing units within the Town and Village of Wellsville is a health and safety threat to residents. While there are some grant/loan programs available to assist residents, often times, the required homeowner match is difficult or impossible for them to afford.

The lack of new, higher-end housing units makes it difficult to attract professionals, who may not be interested in fixing up older houses.

Particularly in the Village, the tax structure is a disincentive for people to invest in houses.

A lack of land use regulations in the Town of Wellsville may be a deterrent to investing in a higher-end house. There are no safeguards against a nearby resident or property owner using his/her property for an undesirable use that may detract from the value of surrounding properties.

Even in the Village, where there has been zoning for more than 60 years, uneven enforcement over decades has created an undesirable mix of uses in some neighborhoods.

The lack of infrastructure outside the Village makes land development costs for other than single-family homes prohibitive. Within the Village, there are subdivision regulations that require a developer to spend a considerable amount for infrastructure, adding to the purchase price of properties.

Flood plain designation makes development of otherwise attractive parcels very expensive.

Opportunities

With more than 70 percent of the housing stock in the Village of Wellsville valued at \$40,000 or less, houses are affordable. It is still possible to buy a good, safe house at an affordable price, if a buyer is willing to purchase an older home.

The relative low value of property and the large amounts of vacant land outside the Village limits, but still in proximity to the Village make development costs for single-family residences fairly inexpensive.

Creative reuse of developed properties within the Village could make affordable building lots available. The reuse of residential housing as modified for office space would answer the extreme need for this type of space and eliminate vacant housing, simultaneously.

The lack of land use regulations in the Town of Wellsville makes it possible for some innovative approaches to development.

Recommendations

The Joint Town and Village Planning Boards therefore make the following recommendations regarding housing:

- 1.) Town Houses (non-subsidized) retirement/starter housing (market-rate)
- 2.) Senior/Handicapped Apartment (subsidized)

Economic Development

Designation of properties in the Town and Village of Wellsville as sub zones of the Friendship Empire Zone, effective in December 2001, should stimulate economic development in the Town and Village of Wellsville by making substantial benefits available to those who locate or expand within the sub zones.

It is important for the continued growth of the community that the tax base is expanded and additional employment opportunities be created.

The continued health and well being of the retail base in the Town and Village of Wellsville is critical not only to Wellsville, but to the surrounding area. The 1997 Census of Retail Trade indicates that 70 percent of the sales tax revenues raised in Allegany County are raised in the Town and Village of Wellsville. The 2001 Allegany County budget was predicated on \$12.8 million in sales tax revenues, and just over \$13 million in property tax revenues, meaning that sales tax revenues account for 49 percent of the local tax revenues county-wide.

The Village of Wellsville should be judicious about extending water and sewer to additional commercial properties outside the Village. Main Street is fragile, needs careful attention and thought, if it is not to be devastated. New commercial areas are inevitable, but we need to find niches for downtown businesses and work with property owners on creative re-use of existing buildings. Otherwise, this proliferation in the Town outside the Village will cause further deterioration of the existing central business district.

Inclusion of the Fassett-State Street block of North Main Street in the Empire Zone should stimulate investment and development in that area. Location of the Adelphia offices on the corner of South Main Street and State Street, coupled with the construction of Microtel at the corner of South Main and West Dyke Street should increase the attractiveness and viability of those areas; due to the fact that these properties are also in the Empire Zone.

The Village's low-cost power, among the cheapest in the nation, could be a powerful tool for economic development, if there were additional sites within the Village for industrial development.

Threats

Our rural location makes us fall below the scope of many industrial developers.

Our sparse population makes attraction of new businesses difficult.

Lack of employment opportunities for spouses handicaps our ability to attract professionals.

Lack of investment money.

High cost of infrastructure development.

Opportunities

Availability of Empire Zone benefits for new and expanding businesses.

Available work force, with a good work ethic and affordable labor rates.

Proximity to institutions of higher education provides the area with a pool of skilled and professional employees who are already in the area and might remain if there were employment opportunities available to them.

Village has the capacity to handle additional users of water and sewer; low-cost power is still available, and an attractive inducement for industrial users.

Recommendations:

The joint town-village planning board makes the following recommendations regarding economic development:

- Implement an aggressive marketing program, in conjunction with Allegany County's Office of Economic Development, the Friendship Empire Zone and the State for properties within the Empire Zone.
- Identify property within the Town of Wellsville (or property that could be easily annexed to the Village of Wellsville such as land adjacent to Dresser-Rand) for industrial sites, and install necessary infrastructure so that the property is development-ready.
- Work with the short-line railroad operator to develop properties adjacent to the railroad.
- Identify sources of venture capital for expansion of current industries and development of new. Working with the local Industrial Development Agency or a creative Bondsperson, to create other less conventional sources of funds is an option.
- Airport: The Town of Wellsville should negotiate with the county to use a portion of the sales tax revenue generated in the Town and Village of Wellsville for the runway extension and GPS (Global Positioning System) equipment to enhance economic development related to the airport.
- Retail development: Survey to determine what goods and services are needed in the area.

Target downtown properties for adaptive re-use, e.g., smart buildings wired for high-speed Internet; develop rehab program for second and third stories to create office space, housing units. Identify parcels elsewhere in the village and in the town where commercial development is both feasible and desirable.

Education

Wellsville Central School District encompasses the Town of Wellsville, as well as portions of the Towns of Scio, Andover, Willing and Alma. Its current student population is ~1700 students, with 127 faculty and 100 support staff, located on two campuses. The elementary student's campus (K-5, plus preschool) is on School Street. Originally two buildings, one built in 1960 and the other in 1970, the two were connected in a 1994-95 construction project that saw the addition of several new classrooms and a gymnasium.

The middle school-high school campus is on West State Street. A planned renovation/construction project approved by voters in 2000 will see a new middle school wing added to the high school, with the present middle school, built in the 1930s, torn down. The high school, built in 1926, will undergo substantial renovation; there was strong sentiment in the community that the structure should be preserved, rather than adapted for another use, torn down or abandoned. The construction project will also include a new pool and offices at the elementary campus. With the completion of the project, anticipated in 2004-2005, the Wellsville Central School District facilities should be able to accommodate the district's needs for 20-25 years, barring any major growth in the area that would place additional demands on the school system.

The Immaculate Conception School enrolls students pre-kindergarten through 8th grade, with 180 Wellsville students and 23 faculty. The building, a three-story brick structure, was built in 1913.

Students from Wellsville are also enrolled in Houghton Academy, which has an elementary campus about 15 miles from Wellsville at the intersection of Routes 86 and 19, and an elementary-high school in Houghton, about 35 miles from Wellsville on Route 19 in Houghton.

Through the Cattaraugus-Allegany Board of Cooperative Educational Services, Wellsville students may enroll in a range of vocational programs offered at BOCES three campuses in Belmont, Olean and Ellicottville. BOCES also provides programs for handicapped students, either at its facility in Belmont or in area schools.

Threats

Wellsville has a high reliance on state aid, with approximately 74 percent of its revenues coming from the state. A flat state allocation, or worse, cuts in state aid, will jeopardize programs.

The Wellsville Central School District is relatively poor, with approximately 50 percent of students eligible for federally funded free and/or reduced price lunch programs.

Even with 74 percent state aid ratio, local taxes are perceived to be high.

The size of the district makes it possible to provide a greater diversity of offerings than many of the smaller districts in the surrounding areas, but Wellsville students are still at a disadvantage compared to those in large suburban districts.

Opportunities

Wellsville's size makes it possible to offer a range of programs, from resource rooms to advanced placement courses, but still maintain a small class size.

Proximity to institutions of higher education makes it possible for Wellsville students to take college-level courses if they have access to transportation.

Higher Education

Wellsville is fortunate to be located in a county where there are three institutions of higher education to meet the educational and training needs of its residents.

The main campus of the State University of New York College of Technology (Alfred State College) is located in Alfred, about 15 miles from Wellsville. On its main campus, Alfred State offers two- and four-year programs in a variety of curricula, with an emphasis on technologically based programs through its Schools of Arts and Science, and Management and Engineering Technology. Alfred State College maintains its School of Applied Technology in Wellsville, located on South Brooklyn with about 800 students enrolled in two-year vocational programs in such areas as culinary arts, automotive trades (including truck and diesel); building trades (construction, masonry, plumbing and heating); electrical/electronic services, and computerized design and manufacturing (including welding and machine tool). The senior-level courses of machine tool and welding programs are located at Dresser-Rand on Coats Street.

Alfred State College offers assistance and consultation to businesses and industries through its Small Business/Entrepreneurial and engineering programs.

The privately endowed Colleges of Liberal Arts and Sciences; Business and Engineering and Professional Studies, as well as the state-supported Schools of Art and Design and Ceramic Engineering and Materials Science comprise Alfred University. The University offers baccalaureate degrees, master's degrees in engineering, materials science, business, education, fine arts, community services administration and school psychology, and doctoral programs in ceramic engineering, glass science and school psychology. AU is also home to nationally recognized research centers in glass, advanced ceramic technology and whitewares, and is developing programs in photonics, biomedical materials engineering and energy and environmental research. The Division of School Psychology and the Division of Education provide counseling to area children and their families. The College of Business, through its Center for Family Business and Entrepreneurship, conducts research that may be of benefit to area industries and businesses. Through its engineering programs, the University offers both research and consulting services for industry.

The University is partners with Corning Incorporated and Allegany and Steuben counties in the Ceramic Corridor Innovation Centers, located in Alfred and near Corning, which are designed to assist start-up ceramics, glass and materials businesses, with the hope that the fledgling businesses will remain in Allegany or Steuben counties once they leave the incubators. The availability of Empire Zone status for properties in Wellsville, Alfred, Friendship and Cuba strengthens the potential for attracting and retaining the start-up businesses.

Houghton College, located about 35 miles north of Wellsville on Route 19, is a Christian liberal arts institution.

Within a 50-mile radius of Wellsville are St. Bonaventure University (Allegany); Jamestown Community College and Olean Business Institute (Olean); St. James School of Radiology (technicians training) and Corning Community College (Corning).

Opportunities

Access to educational and training programs for the workforce

Employment opportunities at the institutions for area residents

Possibility of attracting industries drawn to the area by the expertise available through the institutions of higher education, or graduating from the incubator in Alfred

Health Care

Wellsville has the only full-service, fully accredited hospital in Allegany County. This hospital serves all of Allegany County and parts of adjacent northwestern Pennsylvania, as well. It maintains 70 acute care beds and a seven-bed (7) ob/gyn unit. Jones Memorial Hospital, operated by a not-for-profit corporation, offers a wide range of health care services including laboratory, physical therapy and rehabilitation services, pain management, and radiology services; including state-of-the-art spinal CT and MRI scanning. The hospital sees 12,000-13,000 patients in it's' emergency room per year.

A \$16 million construction/renovation project, completed in the mid-1990s, gives Jones Memorial updated, attractive and functional facilities for today's health care needs. This project

included new operating room facilities, gift shop, medical imaging rooms, emergency and waiting rooms to meet today's health care needs.

There are 30 active full-time physicians on staff. Through a partnership with Strong Memorial Hospital in Rochester, specialists in cardiology, oncology, orthopedics, etc., augment the local medical staff. Strong Memorial Hospital opened a clinic downtown in 2000 and actively recruits physicians and dentists to staff it.

The hospital staffs and operates primary care and VA clinics in the county. The newly built clinic is located at the intersection of Interstate 86 and Route 19. The other clinic is located on Loder Street in the Village of Wellsville. 9,000 to 11,000 patients a year use these clinics.

There are two for-profit nursing homes in Wellsville. The Wellsville Highland Health Care Center and the Wellsville Manor are both skilled nursing homes that employ between 100 and 150 people from the area. Highland Health Care Center is located on the corner of Seneca Street and Highland Avenue, has 68 beds for long-term care, and 12 subsequent beds for short-term care. The Wellsville Manor Nursing Home, located just outside the Village limits off Route 417 West, has 120 beds for long term care. Manor Hills, a separate facility, has 115 beds for level two home adult care and 32 beds for dementia patients.

Both Nursing Homes maintain occupational, physical and speech therapy departments, as well as dietary therapy and 24 hour RN coverage.

Highland Health Care Center operates an Adult Day Care Center for patients needing therapy, but not requiring 24-hour supervision or care. Many area residents are able to remain in their own homes as a result of this service.

There are times when there are no beds available in these facilities and patients must be referred for care in other facilities located out of town.

Threats

Rural hospitals are among the most vulnerable when it comes to state and federal reimbursement.

Rural hospitals are in difficult straits in negotiating reimbursement rates with insurance providers because of their relative low volume of patients.

Difficult to recruit physicians and nurses; more lucrative to be in urban areas. Small staff size means specialists are on call more often than they would be at a larger facility.

A number of the primary care physicians are 50 years of age or older, therefore they will be retiring in a few years.

Emergency Services

Fire: Fire protection in the Town and Village of Wellsville is provided by the Wellsville Volunteer Fire Department, which is part of the Village of Wellsville and provides services to town residents through a three-party contract among the village, the town and the fire department. The Village of Wellsville provides \$110,821 in support to the department through tax revenues. The Town of Wellsville's contract provides another \$64,630 in funding which the Village of Wellsville passes in its entirety to the six (6) fire departments through the Village budget. The town purchases and maintains the tanker and brush buggy. All town funds are raised through special district taxes levied on property owners outside the Village limits.

Three of the five companies, as well as the brush buggy and tanker crews are based at the South Main Street headquarters, owned and maintained by the Village of Wellsville. The Duke Hose Co. and the Dyke Street Hose Co. own and maintain their own buildings.

Each of the five companies owns its own truck; the brush buggy and the tanker are purchased with town funds.

Ambulance: The Wellsville Volunteer Ambulance Corps provides ambulance services in the town of Wellsville, as well as the towns of Willing, Alma, Scio and Ward. Because the ambulance corps is an independent not-for-profit corporation, rather than being part of a fire department, state law permits the ambulance corps to submit for reimbursement from insurance companies. That has lessened the corps' need for tax support from the municipalities, and given it the ability to purchase needed equipment. The corps' headquarters is located on South Main Street, across from the fire headquarters and police station. There 120 members, 60 of which are active members, including 7 with Advanced Emergency Medical Technician status and 23 with EMT status. The corps was a leader among rural volunteer squads in providing emergency medical care through its fly car concept. In the mid-1990s, when Allegany County decided to divest itself of its rescue squad, the unit became part of the Wellsville Volunteer Ambulance Corps.

Police: Police protection within the Village limits is provided by a 12-member department, consisting of one chief, one lieutenant, two sergeants, one youth officer and five patrol officers, along with four full-time dispatchers.

The Wellsville police station is integrated with the Allegany County E-911 dispatch center and provides back up on a countywide basis for that facility, as well as handling all emergency calls generated within the Town of Wellsville.

Outside the Village limits, police protection is provided by the State Police, and, to a more limited extent, the Allegany County Sheriff's Department, although the Sheriff's Department does not provide regular road patrols. The State Police barracks is now located on Route 417 west of the Village limits, but there are indications that it may be moving to Belvidere, at the intersection of Routes 86 and 19 so that it is closer to the Southern Tier Expressway.

Threats

The authorized strength of the fire department is 250 members, 50 in each company. Currently there are 140 members, but for most structure fires only 35 respond. Internal firefighters, those who are trained and equipped to enter burning structures number only 43. Of the 140 active members, 54 are over the age of 50. Because of the training requirements, the lack of financial incentives, the dangerousness of the job, and the demands on everyone's time, recruiting new volunteers is difficult, not only in Wellsville, but nationwide.

Companies purchase their own trucks, which are increasingly expensive, costing anywhere from \$225,000 to \$750,000 for a hook and ladder truck. At the same time the cost of equipment is rising, the number of volunteers to participate in fund-raising activities is declining.

Bingo used to provide as much as \$25,000 annually, divided among the five companies. There are more and more not-for-profits conducting bingo games, however, and high-stakes bingo is available within 50 miles of Wellsville, both contributing to a drain of players away from the bingo games sponsored by the Wellsville fire department. Revenues have dropped to about

\$10,000 a year, but the amount of effort to run the games remains the same. Because of the lack of return and the demands on volunteers' time, only two of the five companies now participate in bingo.

The ambulance corps' ability to obtain reimbursement from health insurers for services provided eases the burden on taxpayers, and on members for fund-raising efforts, but the corps faces the same manpower issues as other volunteer squads. The level of training required and the duty hours members put in to provide coverage, coupled with the number of calls the corps makes annually and the stress involved in the provision of emergency medical services makes it difficult to recruit and retain sufficient members to meet all shifts. Wellsville is again more fortunate than other rural squads because a substantial number of its members work in the community and can be called upon to respond in emergency situations. A paid medical transport service organized in the 1980s relieves the ambulance corps of the requirement to provide routine transfers, but changes in reimbursement for that service jeopardize its continuation. If the paid service goes out, the burden will once again fall on the ambulance corps, which does not have sufficient manpower available to handle the routine calls. The ambulance bay is no longer adequate to meet the corps' needs, but expansion at its present site is difficult.

The cost of providing 24-hour a day police protection places a burden on Village taxpayers, but the only real savings would be gained by a reduction in manpower, something that would be very difficult to do given the department's caseload, which is increasing in both numbers and the seriousness of the crimes committed. The police station is also badly in need of renovation and expansion.

Four of the departments 12 full-time officers have more than 20 years' service, and could retire at any time. Another 6 of the officers have between 15 and 20 years' service, meaning they are approaching the time when they could opt to retire.

Opportunities

The Wellsville Fire Department, with four pumpers, a hook and ladder truck, a brush buggy and a tanker, is better equipped than many other departments, paid and volunteer.

Even though membership has declined, the presence of major employers in Wellsville means that many of the members are available to respond, unlike other rural fire departments where the majority of members work out of town.

The ambulance corps is also very well equipped and well trained for a rural squad.

The police department was the first small rural department in New York State to gain accreditation, and it has been able to maintain that accreditation through two periodic reviews. Having an accredited department saves the Village substantial money on its liability insurance, and provides an affirmative defense should the department face a lawsuit as a result of the handling of a police matter.

The police department has sponsored a number of area residents' attendance at the municipal police academy, training they undertake at their own expense. By sponsoring the potential police officers, the Village has been able to retain many of them as part-time officers, overcoming a problem experienced by other rural departments in finding sufficient part-time officers. The department has also been able to tap into that pool of trained part-time officers to fill full-time vacancies when necessary to do so.

Recreation and Tourism

The region offers countless opportunities for hunting and fishing, hiking, running, biking, boating, snowmobiling and camping.

Wellsville has excellent facilities at Island Park and the Lagoon Recreational Area, including softball and soccer fields, a Little League diamond, pavilions and picnic areas, and horseshoe pits.

The Wellsville Community Center on North Main Street provides lunches and programming for senior citizens. Some youth recreational programs are also offered at the Community Center, and the Wellsville Recreation Department uses school facilities, e.g., pool and athletic fields, for additional programs for residents of all ages.

For more than 25 years, the Wellsville area has hosted the Great Wellsville Balloon Rally that draws 35-40 balloons and their crews from the Northeast, Pennsylvania and Ohio and Canada. It also brings as many as 50,000 visitors to the community during the third weekend in July. Volunteers organize the balloon rally each year. In conjunction with the Balloon Rally, the Wellsville Chamber of Commerce brings a variety of vendors and entertainers to join local merchants for downtown sales and events that provide mid-day activities for the rally attendees. In recent years, the balloon rally sales have provided a substantial boost in sales to merchants.

The Ridgewalk and Run, sponsored by the Wellsville Chamber of Commerce, is growing in popularity. In recent years, the Chamber has had to cut off registration at 900 participants. A pre-event dinner is also growing in popularity.

Each spring, the Wellsville Lions Club sponsors its annual fishing derby that draws substantial numbers of fishermen to the community for a weekend in April.

Music on the Lawn, organized by volunteers, is a series of concerts and musical performances staged on the lawn of the David A. Howe Public Library on Thursday evenings from June through August. Donations and modest grant funds have made the program possible.

The Wellsville Chamber of Commerce sponsors many other events, such as the Christmas open houses, that draw people to the community. The Riverwalk Merchants Association is also planning events there, e.g., the Thursday night "cruise nights" during the summer months, to draw visitors.

Threats

Events such as the balloon rally and the fishing derby are sponsored by volunteer organizations, and there is a risk of burnout. Even events sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce rely heavily on volunteers, with the same risk.

The community has identified a number of recreational facilities, such as an outdoor pool, an ice rink, a youth center, and a skateboard park, as desirable, but lack of resources limits the community's ability to provide those facilities affordably.

The lay-out of the Wellsville Community Building is inappropriate for many recreational programs.

A lack of easily accessible parking spaces makes it difficult for senior citizens to attend events at the Community Building.

The building suffers structural problems; a collapsed wall on the north side of the building was costly to repair.

The Town owns only the first floor of the building; private investors own the upper two stories.

Opportunities

The existing Community Building could be sold to private investors, allowing the Town to build or purchase new facilities. The building's location makes it attractive for retail or office space.

The Town has purchased land off Baldwin Road for a new recreational complex; a citizens' committee is working on securing funds to build a pool, an ice rink and a community building on the site.