

# TOWN OF HECTOR COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Photo Provided By: Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce

**ADOPTED SEPTEMBER 2015**

# **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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# TOWN OF HECTOR COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2015

## ***GUIDANCE FOR THE NEXT 10 YEARS***

### **DEDICATION**

*This plan was completed for the benefit of all residents and visitors of the Town of Hector.*

### **DISCLAIMER**

*The Town of Hector Comprehensive Plan is a future oriented guidance document that is intended to serve as a point of reference to attain the long-range vision of a community.*

The Town of Hector Comprehensive Plan provides background information and policies to assist with decision making in our community.

***The Town of Hector Comprehensive Plan is not law.***

The Town of Hector Comprehensive Plan is not law and therefore is unenforceable as regulation. However, a comprehensive plan does have legal standing and can support the actions of leaders and citizens.

***The Town of Hector Comprehensive Plan does not take away rights.***

Protecting and enhancing rights is a key element of the Town of Hector Comprehensive Plan. Adopting the Town of Hector Comprehensive Plan does not result in the loss of any control at the local level or the elimination of citizen rights.

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# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
What is a Comprehensive Plan?	2
Issues of Significance	2
The Town of Hector seeks to:	3
<b>Our Town's Vision</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>History</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Demographics</b>	<b>6</b>
Key Statistics	6
Historic Population Counts	6
Age Distribution	6
Educational Attainment	7
Distribution of Home Values	7
Current Housing Characteristics	7
<b>Village and Hamlet Description</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Hamlet Revitalization Policy</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Residential Living Policy</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Physical Characteristics</b>	<b>16</b>
Natural Resource Inventory	18
Water Resource Inventory	20
<b>Natural Resources and Sustainability Policy</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Community and Infrastructures Resources</b>	<b>24</b>
Emergency Services	24
Water	24
Solid Waste and Recycling	24
Natural Resource and Mineral Extraction	24
<b>Transportation</b>	<b>26</b>
Public Transportation	26
Commuting Characteristics	26
<b>Community/ Transportation Policy</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Land Use Planning</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Land Use Planning Policy</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Agriculture</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Agriculture &amp; Farmland Policy</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Economy</b>	<b>38</b>
Economic Trends	39
Economic Indicators County Wide	39
<b>Economic Opportunities Policy</b>	<b>40</b>

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# Introduction



Photo Credit: Richard Owlett

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The Town of Hector will face many important decisions as it enters the 21st century. This Comprehensive Plan is intended to provide guidance to those making decisions. It is also intended to be a resource those who seek to undertake new development within the town.

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This plan was developed over a period of four years. The information that forms the basis of this plan was obtained at numerous public and working committee meetings, and through the use of resident surveys. Additionally, information was sought from various local and state agencies and town departments.

The Town of Hector was established in 1802 and has traditionally been an agriculturally centered community. Recent trends indicate a decrease in farming activity and a shift toward a rural residential community along with a significant influx of tourism based industry.

The Town of Hector is situated in northeastern Schuyler County. The nearest sizable cities are Ithaca approximately 20 miles to the east with a population 30,500; Elmira approximately 25 miles to the south with a population of 29,000; and Corning approximately 25 miles to the southwest with a population of 11,000.

The Town of Hector is bordered to the west by Seneca Lake, to the north by Seneca County, to the east by Tompkins County and to the south by the Schuyler County towns of Catharine, Montour, and the Village of Watkins Glen which houses the county seat.

The Town of Hector has a total area of 112.5 square miles. Of this, 102.5 square miles is comprised of land and 10.0 square miles is water. Hector is the largest township in Schuyler County, containing 66,122 acres. The Village of Burdett is the only incorporated village within the town. Other community centers include the Hamlets of Bennettsburg, East Steamburg, Hector, Logan, Mecklenburg, Perry City, Reynoldsville, Searsburg, Valois and Smith Valley.

## WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

A comprehensive plan is the blueprint of a community. What does your community want to be in the future and how will your community get there? The comprehensive plan states this vision clearly and specifies the goals and strategies to make the vision a reality. A comprehensive plan is not law and therefore unenforceable as regulation. However, a comprehensive plan does have legal standing and serves as a general guidance document that can protect a community as well as help it reach its goals. It serves as the foundation upon which future planning and policy decisions are to be based. However, it does not prevent future decisions that may not align precisely with the stated vision and policies.

In other words, a Comprehensive Plan provides an overall framework for future public and private investment in our community. This investment can take many forms, including, but not limited to, our community's financial, civic, and creative resources. In the Town of Hector, this is a collective investment by our residents, businesses, churches, and our local government that will shape the physical, social, and economic character of our county.

## WHAT IS THE TOWN OF HECTOR COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

The Town of Hector Comprehensive Plan is a means to promote the health, safety and general welfare of the people of the town and to give due consideration to the broader regional impact of agriculture and tourism on the surrounding municipalities and New York State. The plan fosters coordination between the local government and the citizens of the Town of Hector to work together to preserve the identity and character of Hector.

According to New York State Town Law, Section 272-A a Town Comprehensive Plan may consist of general statements of goals, objectives, principles, policies, and standards upon which proposals for the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development of the town are based. The law goes on to state that a town comprehensive plan should take consideration of regional needs and the official plans of other governmental units and agencies within the county, consideration of agricultural uses, historic and cultural resources, natural resources and sensitive environmental areas, as well as existing and proposed location and intensity of land uses. This plan was developed and prepared by a committee appointed by the Town Board.

## ISSUES OF SIGNIFICANCE

In July of 2012 the Town of Hector conducted a community survey that addressed several topics including: community facilities, infrastructure, agriculture, natural resource and cultural resources, transportation, tourism, business and development, energy development, housing, land use, government and services, and social concerns. Approximately 15% of the population responded to the survey questions. Some primary issues of concern to the community were identified as a result of the community survey. These issues include:

- Agriculture
  - Agriculture is important to Hector and should be protected.
  - Land Use guidelines should be used to protect agriculture.
- Tourism
  - Should be part of local economy.
  - Town should invest in tourism.
  - Support for Bed and Breakfasts, Wineries, Restaurants, & Farmers Markets.
- Business Development
  - Encourage development of small business and professional services.
- Other Issues of importance
  - Access to open space.
  - Eldercare.
  - Broadband Internet.
  - Ensure future development activities protect and sustain our environment.

The full results of the community survey can be found in Appendix B.

# Our Town's Vision

## THE TOWN OF HECTOR SEEKS TO:

- Preserve, enhance and celebrate those characteristics of our Town and Village, including our unique composition of natural and scenic resources, fresh water, wineries, tourism and agriculture.
- To encourage sustainable economic growth in the areas we are strong - tourism, agriculture, wineries and local small business.
- To protect the health and sustainability of our environmental resources and rural agrarian landscape.



Photo Credit: Norrie Cornelius

## it will be a place known for its...

- I. Vast expanses of farmland and agricultural heritage;
- II. Attractive and safe residential living areas;
- III. Scenic natural resources;
- IV. Diverse economic opportunities;
- V. Thriving hamlet(s); and
- VI. Quality community resources.



Photo Provided By: Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce

... **T**he Town of Hector will strive to achieve this vision while managing future growth in a way that maintains its rural character and small town charm. The Town also recognizes that the hamlets are the social and cultural center of the Town of Hector, which enhances its overall appeal and the quality of life of its residents.

# History



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The Town of Hector has a long storied history dating back to 1779. After General Sullivan's 1779 campaign to eliminate the presence of the native Seneca Nation people the New York legislature allocated 28 military tracts in the land of the Iroquois to pay citizen soldiers who fought in the revolution. Assigned the task of naming them, Assistant Secretary of State Robert Harpur drew on his love of the classics honoring warriors, wise men and poets. Hector, then known as Township number 21, was given its name based on Hector of Troy. Others in the area include Ovid, Romulus, Homer, Virgil, and Marcellus.

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Virgin forests were rapidly cleared making way for farming. Streams and waterfalls gave birth to a variety of mills that encouraged the growth of population centers attracting general stores, tradesmen, schools, churches and post offices. By 1820 the recorded population of Hector over 4,012 made it the most populated of all towns in then Tompkins County. In 1854 the Town of Hector with a population of 5,500 became part of the newly created Schuyler County.

A north-south ridge, "Hector's backbone," divides the township. Western Hector, with a lake-moderated climate, supports a fruit farming area and has become famous for its vineyards, wineries and distilleries. Seneca Lakes' navigable waters linked to the New York State canal system and enabled farmers to connect with distant markets. By the late 1800's, the main line of the Lehigh Valley Railroad offered faster transportation, two of Lehigh's gorge spanning railroad trestles including the "twin tunnels" north of Burdett and the magnificent cut-stone arch near Valois which can still be seen today.

While railroads never expanded into to eastern Hector because of the hilly terrain, the 200-mile Catskill Turnpike and the well traveled Newtown Road passed through eastern Hector. Along their stretches, the landscape was dotted with taverns and stage stops. Local self-sufficient farmers marketed grains, hay, chickens, cattle and hogs creating a local economy that supported the streamside mills, general stores, blacksmiths and harness shops.

During the prosperous late 1800's, original log homes were replaced by gracious homes, typically built in the Greek Revival and Federal styles. By 1870, the importance of religious life in Hector was evident. 18 churches

served Baptists, Methodists, Episcopalians and Presbyterians. Perry City had the only Friends Meeting House in the county. Camp meetings were held along the lake shore near Valois. Farm families joined one of the several granges which provided social interaction.

Hector's population began decreasing during the times of post Civil War depression that coincided with the opening of the west. By 1930, during the Great Depression, only 2,904 people were living along the dirt roads in this still rural area.

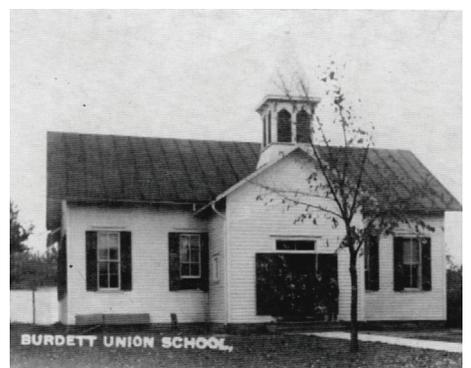
Several measures to counter the effects of the Great Depression had lasting impact on the Town of Hector. The 1935 Rural Electrification Bill which brought electricity to rural areas did not have a significant impact until the late 1940's when most hamlets and outlying areas had electricity.

In the early 1930's, the land comprising the Hector Land Utilization Area (HLUA) was purchased in connection with the Federal Agricultural Adjustment program by authority of the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933, and the Emergency Relief Act of 1935. In 1935 the HLUA was turned over to the Resettlement Program, and acquired lands in Hector on a willing seller/willing buyer basis and then turned them over to the US Soil Conservation Service for appropriate stewardship. Almost a half-century later these lands became part of the multiple use Finger Lakes National Forest. The Forest continues to work with the Hector Grazing Association which has been in existence since 1946, to maintain or improve range conditions and provide habitat for grassland dependent plants and animals.

During the last half of the 20th century, many parts of Hector were being transformed into "bedroom communities." Central schools replaced the little schoolhouses at crossroads and the only remaining general store was in the Hamlet of Hector. At the turn of the 21st century, Hector retains much of its natural beauty. The remaining farms continue to create the "rural atmosphere" that both residents and tourists find attractive.



Photo Provided By: Barb Kelley



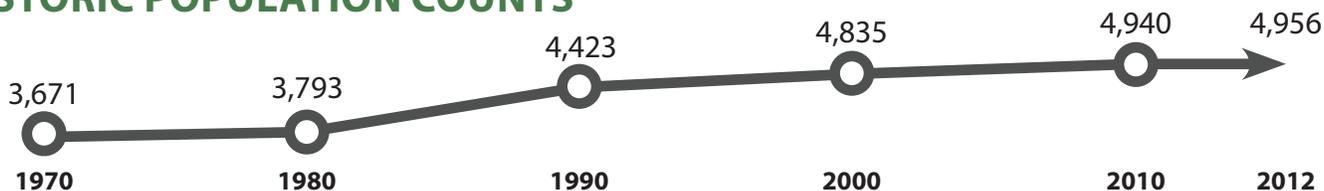
Photos Provided By: Schuyler County Historical Society

# Demographics

## KEY STATISTICS

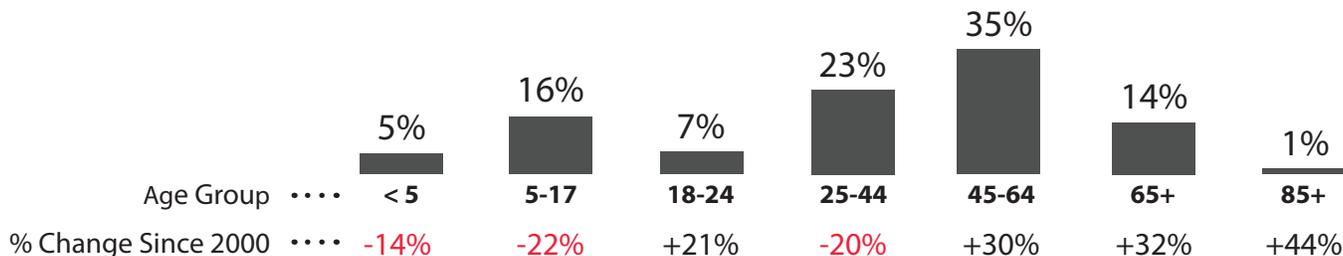


## HISTORIC POPULATION COUNTS



Town's population has been steadily rising for decades, which is a good indication for the Town of Hector as a stable or growing population helps maintain strong communities. Comprising nearly 27% of the County's population (which has been steady decreasing over the past 20 years), Hector holds a great deal of the region's human resource capital. This gives the Town an advantage when it comes to local economic growth strategies and community development.

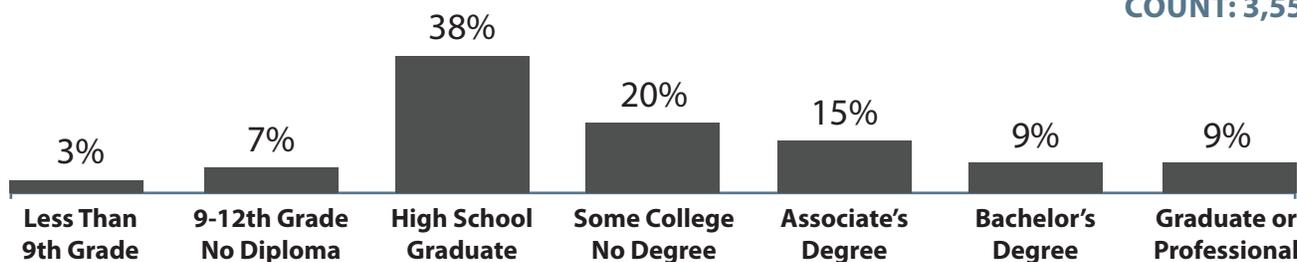
## AGE DISTRIBUTION (2010)



Hector's population is aging without the counter balance of growth in younger age population, similar to that of the overall County population. This lack of young professionals and new families is a concern for the Town, these are two population groups that positively contribute to the growth of a community and its tax base. In addition, pressures from the growing senior population stresses the community to provide more services and resources for elder care so older residents are able to age-in-place. In order to respond to these population pressures, Hector will need to focus on policies that address the needs of young and old alike.

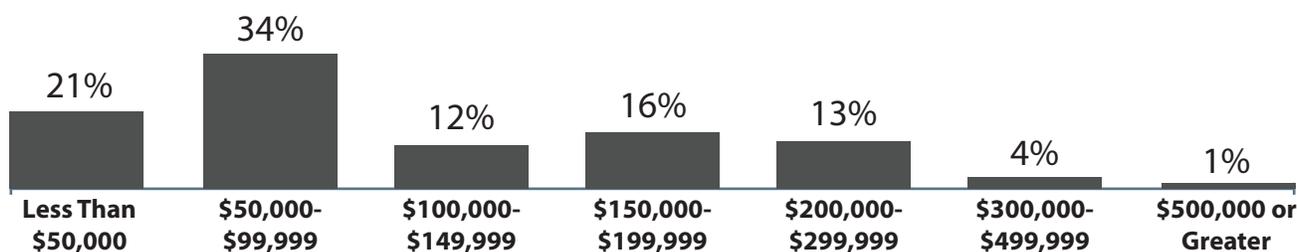
## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

COUNT: 3,553



A recent study by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce found that, by 2018, some 63% of all jobs in New York State will require post-secondary training beyond high school. Currently only 53% of Hector's population would be qualified for these positions. Not only is this data meaningful for guiding Countywide efforts to increase access to higher education, but also for the Town's future economic development efforts.

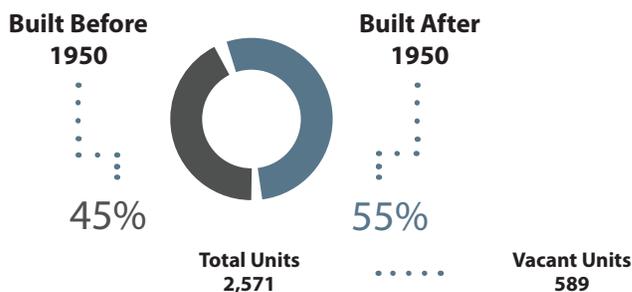
## DISTRIBUTION OF HOME VALUES



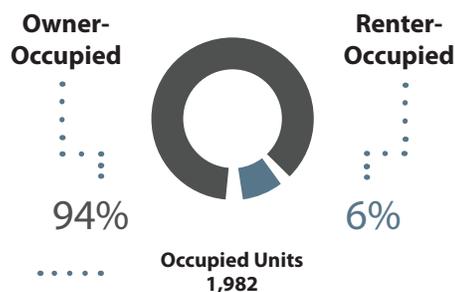
Home values provide a general gauge of the desirability of a community. Maintaining home values is important because of the contribution to a community's tax base in the form of property taxes. Hector has a number of high-end lakefront homes that skew its distribution of home values. Although 18% of the Town's homes are valued at \$200,000 or more, 55% are valued at less than \$100,000. Therefore, Hector should focus on efforts that help decrease the existing disparity in home values.

## CURRENT HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

### AGE OF UNITS



### OCCUPIED UNITS



Due to their age, houses built before 1950 typically require more repairs and costly updates. Homes that aren't repaired or well-maintained often result in a lower quality housing stock for the community. With 45% of its units built before 1950, Hector should explore strategies to update its existing housing stock and ensure that all units are compliant with the Building and Property Maintenance Codes of NYS.

High home-ownership rates are often considered an indication of community and neighborhood stability. Although Hector's ownership rate of 94% is well above the County rate, the Town should strive to maintain a balance of ownership options within the housing stock, which will meet a wider variety of their resident population's needs. The County's recent housing study is one tool the Town has to build upon.

# Village and Hamlet Description



Main Street Burdett  
Photo Credit: Village of Burdett Resident

## BURDETT

The Village of Burdett is located in the southwestern section of the Town of Hector. It is fully contained within Hector's borders and acts as a gateway to the eastern Seneca Wine Trail and Village of Watkins Glen via NYS Route 79.

The first settlers arrived in Burdett in 1795. Hector Falls Creek (originally named Cranberry Creek) meanders through the center of the village. This waterway was the source of water power and led to the establishment of several sawmills and brickyards. By 1860, the Village of Burdett boasted three churches, several mills, factories and a tannery. Twenty years later, the village had added two hotels, three schools, five dry good and grocery stores, a meat market and a variety of blacksmith, cooper and wagon and harness shops. The Lehigh Valley Railroad arrived in Burdett in early 1890. The village population peaked at around 500 in the early 1920's.

Today Burdett is a quiet village, home to approximately 350 residents and more than a dozen businesses. These businesses are predominately privately-owned or family-operated, and include two restaurants, a bar, pastry shop, stable, driving range, farm stand, two U-pick berries patches, post office, gas station and convenience store, saw works, and a warehouse distributor. The majority of the residents work in the nearby towns of Watkins Glen, Elmira, Corning and Ithaca.



Dandy Mart on Route 79 in Burdett  
Photo Credit: Village of Burdett Resident

## BENNETTSBURG

Bennettsburg is a hamlet along NY Route 79 in the southern part of town and was settled by Phinias Bennett. In 1809 a Baptist church, where James Reynolds once preached, was established. The structure is still standing although it is currently privately owned.

The hamlet of Bennettsburg today is a quiet community. The only existing store front is vacant and there is just one other business (an auto repair shop) located in Bennettsburg. Hector Union Cemetery one of the towns largest cemeteries is located within Bennettsburg, each year volunteers place over 280 flags in the memorial stones of local veterans buried in the cemetery. The community still holds an annual picnic each summer.



Residence along Main Street in Burdett  
Photo Credit: Village of Burdett Resident

## SMITH VALLEY

Smith Valley is a small hamlet along NY Route 228 in the southeastern part of town. The hamlet once housed a school which is now privately owned and a Quaker church which at one point in its history was a snack bar and a meat market.

## CAYUTAVILLE

Is a small hamlet in the Southeast corner of the town along County Road 6. Cayutaville was once known as Little Flats.

## MCINTYRE SETTLEMENT

McIntyre Settlement is a former hamlet along County Route 6 between Strong and Culver Roads and was the first settlement on the east side of Hector. It was located 2 miles south of Mecklenburg and is currently a part of Mecklenburg. It was once home to a church and a school and is still home to a cemetery that was started by William McIntyre.

## MECKLENBURG

Mecklenburg is a hamlet at the junction of County Route 6, NYS Route 79 and NYS Route 228 near the eastern town line. On the corner of Carmen Road and Buck Hill is the site of an early Iroquin Village. Henry Fish lived on his homestead on NYS Route 79 and was the 1st Assemblyman from Schuyler County. Mecklenburg was also home to a 2 room school house which was closed in 1962 and is now a private residence. The fire department was founded in 1946 and is still very active and routinely hosts breakfasts and dinners. The old Treman Mill still stands but is not used. A grindstone has been placed at the Mecklenburg Pond as well as a small playground. Mecklenburg United Methodist Church has opened the “Check it Out Shop”, a thrift shop of sorts offering items donated by area residents. Mecklenburg is also home to several auto repair shops and a new bakery as well as an old chicken barn which has been converted into artist studios.

## REYNOLDSVILLE

Reynoldsville is a hamlet along NYS Route 227 near the center of the town. The Hamlet was settled by the Reynolds family. Reynoldsville is home to a community center which was built in 1857 and home to school #11. A small church that was built in 1858 and is the only church still operating in Reynoldsville. The small Hamlet also once housed a poorhouse, a working farm, living quarters and a paupers cemetery located at the end of Mott Evans Road.

Reynoldsville today has much of its same character. The community center and Methodist Church are both active. The Town of Hector Town Hall and Highway Department are both located within Reynoldsville as well as a small manufacturing company.

## PERRY CITY

Perry City is a hamlet near the eastern town line by Route 227. It is home of the Ice Age Drumlins which are gravel deposits left as the glaciers disappeared. A diorama of the drumlins is featured in the Museum on Natural History in New York City. This diorama is known as the Cotton Tail Group. This is the site of archaeological finds, including human remains, fire pits and evidence of Native American ceremonies. This includes a village and burial site south of Perry City. In 1916, 3 fragments of a clay pot or jar were found. In 1922 several other items were also found. These items were donated to the Cornell Anthropology Collection. A Quaker cemetery located on the land is now privately owned.



Mecklenburg Church  
Photo Credit: Michele Griego



Reynoldsville Methodist Church  
Photo Credit: www.unyumc.org



Perry City Friends Meeting (Quakers)  
Photo Credit: Michele Griego



Perry City, Intersection of Route 227 and Route 228  
Photo Credit: Michele Griego



Searsburg Church  
Photo Credit: Michele Griego

### SEARSBURG

Searsburg is a Hamlet located in the northeast corner of town on County Road 1. Home to the Searsburg Grange, this building is in need of major repairs and residents are currently fund raising for a new roof, inside bathrooms and second floor repairs. The Grange is a polling place for the Town of Hector. The grange was initially established to promote and build the farming industry. It is hoped that this building can be revitalized and can provide opportunities for community events. Meetings are held on the second Saturday monthly during good weather, and at member’s home during the winter. Searsburg also features a church dating back to 1817. The church burned nearly 50 years ago, however the cross, woodwork and chandelier remain original.



Logan Community Center  
Photo Credit: Michele Griego

### STEAMBURG

Steamburg is a small Hamlet near the north end of County Route 1. Today Steamburg is home to Hector Grazing US Forest Service Field Headquarters. Starlite Speedway is located within Steamburg’s borders providing entertainment to the community. Residents continue working toward growth and development.

### LOGAN

Logan is a Hamlet at the junction of County Route 2 and 4 in Western Hector. The Logan Methodist Church was established in 1825 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The church is currently used as a community center.

### VALOIS

Valois is a Hamlet north of Hector on NY Route 414. There is currently one active church. The hamlet previously was home to the Valois Castle which was destroyed by a fire.



Rt 414 through Valois  
Photo Credit: Alvin White

### HECTOR

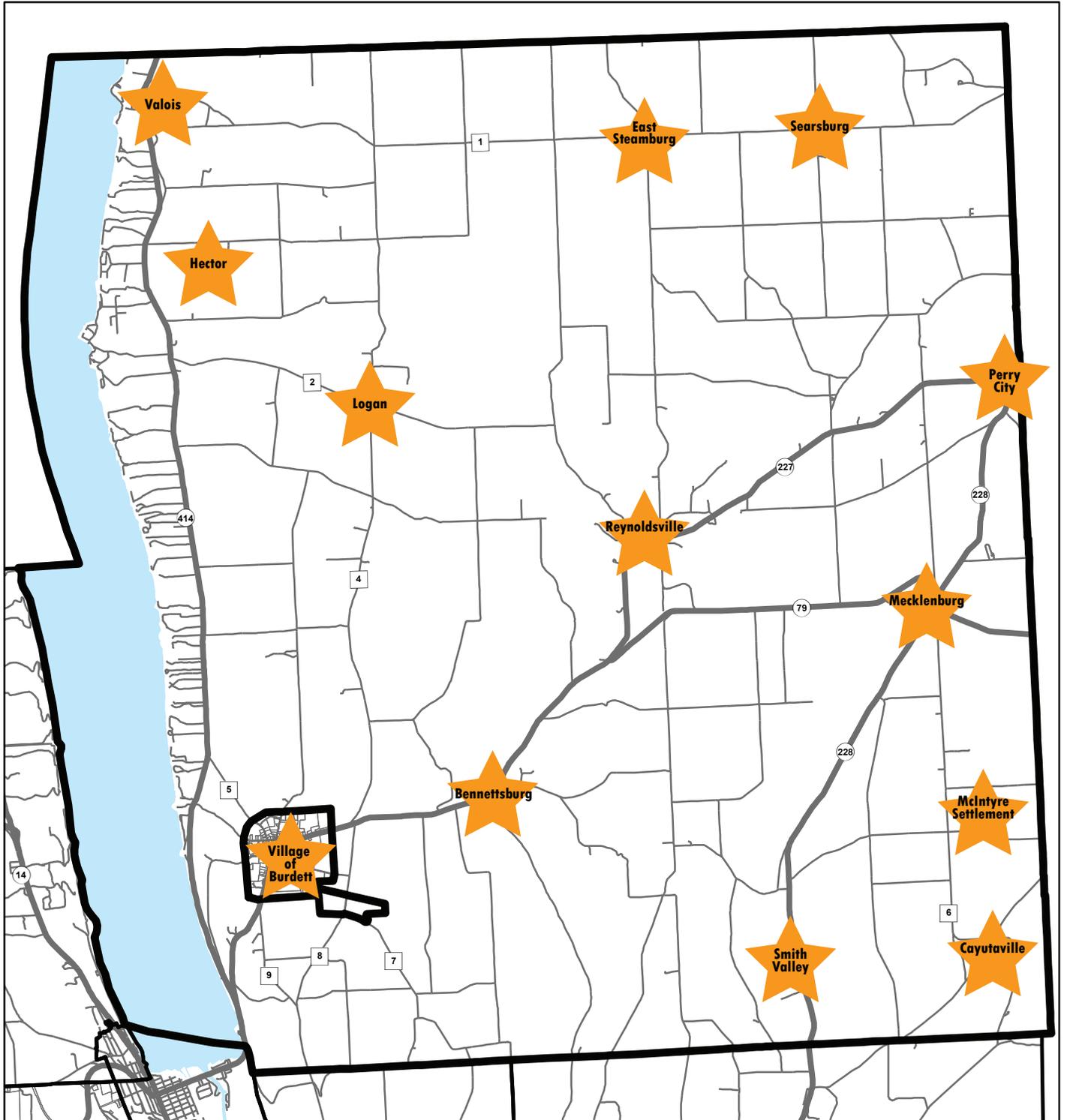
Hector is home to the popular Smith Park, a beautiful property on the lake donated by the Smith family. The first sawmill in the Town of Hector was built on the creek at Peach Orchard Point in 1795. Hector also housed a clothing mill established in 1801 at Hector Falls and a log grist mill in 1805 also at Hector Falls. Both establishments were destroyed by a fire in 1857. The First Presbyterian Church of Hector was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2001.



First Presbyterian Church of Hector  
Photo Credit: Wikipedia User: Dmadedo

Hector today is at the center of the growth along NYS Route 414. There are many new businesses within this area, including a small plaza with a gas station and convenience store. The office for the Finger Lakes National Forest is located along Route 414 as well as the new Hector Post Office. The Valois, Logan, Hector (VLH) Fire Department is a center for community activity including the Elizabeth Pert Memorial Library and a baseball field that is available for public use throughout the year. The Fire Department also hosts an annual carnival with fireworks and a parade each summer. Hector is now also part of the Scenic By-Way program and is located along the east side of the Seneca Lake Wine Trail.

**Figure 1** Village and Hamlet Location Map



Source: Schulyer County Planning Dept. March 2015

-  Village/ Hamlet
-  State Road
-  Secondary Road
-  Town of Hector Boundary



# Hamlet Revitalization Policy

## Introduction

Although New York State law does not define “hamlet,” the term is often used to refer to small communities within towns across the state. Hamlets are usually identifiable by boundary and name, but do not fall under Home Rule, as they are not officially incorporated places. Currently there are 12 recognized Hamlets within the Town of Hector, which function as the economic, social, and cultural centers to their respective populations.

In order to revitalize our Hamlets, the Town will need to concentrate future investment opportunities into the Hamlets. Efforts should be made through these investments to improve the aesthetics of the communities, and the availability of goods and services for both residents and visitors. This can be readily achieved due to the existing traditional character of the Hamlets, which provides a great foundation for development patterns offering a mix of uses.

As investment occurs within the Hamlets, the scale of the development will be an important consideration for our Town. Special attention should be paid to the appropriate size, height, setback and design of new development, as the traditional character of the Hamlets may be negatively impacted by improperly scaled developments. The town should also consider opportunities to enhance walkability and the pedestrian experience within the hamlets as they arise.

The following policy has been included to guide the Town of Hector in revitalizing its major existing Hamlets.



Searsburg Grange  
Photo Provided By: Michele Griego



Mecklenburg Post Office  
Photo Provided By: Michele Griego

# Hamlet Revitalization Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Town of Hector to **focus future public and private investments within the hamlets**. The hamlet should continue to serve as the economic, social, and cultural center of the community. Over the next decade, the Town will strive to improve the appeal of the hamlets in order to attract new services, shopping opportunities, civic uses, jobs, and unique housing options. The community recognizes that there may be some economic development opportunities that are best placed outside of the hamlets due to their particular needs or their potential to negatively impact the traditional character of the Hamlets.



## OBJECTIVES

- A.** Prioritize the location of civic and social uses within the major Hamlets.
- B.** Develop a more pedestrian friendly environment within the Hamlets.
- C.** Increase the number of people living in the Hamlets.
- D.** Preserve the historical and architectural value of key sites and structures.
- E.** Improve the overall appearance of the commercial and business operations located in the Hamlets.
- F.** Encourage reuse of existing buildings for redevelopment when available.

## MEASURES

- 1. Occupancy of commercial space.
- 2. Number of facade improvements completed.
- 3. Number of residents living within the hamlet(s).
- 4. Number of pedestrian enhancements placed within the hamlet(s).

## IMPLEMENTATION ITEMS

- 1. Continue the positive working relationship with the Schuyler County Partnership for Economic Development (SCOPED) to market and attract business development to the Town.

# Residential Living Policy

## *Introduction*

Accommodating future housing needs without compromising existing neighborhoods and homesteads should be a priority for Hector over the next decade. According to the public input received during this plan's development, some of the most pressing issues facing our town include the lack of housing choices, the ability of seniors to age-in-place, affordability of good housing, and the deterioration of older housing stock.

Currently the housing stock within the Town is mostly comprised of owner-occupied, single-family units. Although a high single-family home-ownership rate is often considered desirable among communities today, towns that provide a balance of housing choices do a better job of serving the various ages, incomes, and family structures of their residents. In order to provide increased options to current and future residents, the town will need to focus on diversifying their housing stock. By providing a variety of housing types residents will be more likely to find a home that meets their needs within the town instead of having to look elsewhere as their needs change.

Arguably the most pressing housing related concern for the Town of Hector will be providing increasing elderly populations with the ability to age-in-place. Across the nation, urban and rural areas are facing new demands from their rapidly aging populations, largely due to the expansive Baby Boomer Generation that began turning 65 at the start of 2011. This trend is no different in the Town of Hector, as we are already experiencing pressures to provide services for seniors, which make up on average 14% of our town populations. The Town will continue to see these pressures increase over the next two decades, due to the fact that approximately half of the town's current population is 45 years of age or older. In order to address the desire of seniors to age-in-place, both now and into the future, the Town should ensure that new housing options include units that meet the unique needs of seniors.

Preserving affordability in the housing market is also an important consideration for the Town of Hector, as new investments will likely bring quality housing units and increased property values. The American Community Survey estimates that median home value in Hector is \$89,400. Development that causes housing prices to increase at a rapid and unsustainable rate could potentially drive current residents out of their homes. The Town should remain focused on preserving affordability in both existing residential development and when new residential development opportunities arise. By including affordability considerations in residential policies, the Town ensures that residents of all income levels may benefit.

A little over half of the existing homes in the Town of Hector were built before 1950. These homes require more upkeep and maintenance than new construction and many of our residents cannot afford the necessary repairs. As a result, many homes deteriorate and become a blight on the neighborhood and the community at large. The Town will need to develop a long term approach to assist property owners in breaking this cycle and preserving its existing housing stock for future generations.

# Residential Living Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Town of Hector to have **neighborhoods and residential living opportunities that are safe, attractive and foster an active lifestyle**. In the hamlets, the Town will focus its efforts on preserving the character and improving the quality of existing neighborhoods while developing new neighborhoods that reflect a more traditional development pattern. Outside of the hamlets, future residential development will be located in a manner so it can be efficiently served by public infrastructure while minimizing the loss of high quality farmland and avoiding environmentally sensitive areas. Over the next decade, the Town will strive to have a combination of housing types available to residents of various ages, incomes, and family structures.



Photo Credit: www.realtor.com

## OBJECTIVES

- A. Explore ways in which the Town can preserve existing property values.
- B. Direct development to areas where municipal services are available or can be provided in the future.
- C. Increase the variety of living options available, with an emphasis on being able to “age-in-place”.
- D. Develop opportunities for non-motorized connections between residential areas, recreational facilities and commercial areas (ie. connection to the Finger Lakes Trail).
- E. Explore way to improve rundown housing units.

## MEASURES

- 1. Number of seniors (over 65) living in the community.
- 2. Change in residential property values.
- 3. Number of new housing lots by size (1/4 acre, 1/2 acre, etc) and location (in or adjacent to the hamlets, in an agricultural district, etc).
- 4. Number of property code violations or complaints filed for residential properties.

## IMPLEMENTATION ITEMS

- 1. Utilize the New York State Building and Property Maintenance Code to reduce the number of property violations in the Town.

# Physical Characteristics



Drumlin

Photo Credit: Michele Griego

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Ice age glaciers bestowed an enviable landscape upon what is now the Town of Hector including an 11 mile shoreline of a navigable lake, two major watersheds, both of which have adopted watershed protection plans and many streams and waterfalls which add to the inspiring scenic beauty that is appreciated by residents and thousands of tourists every year.

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Geologically speaking, Hector is in the "Finger Lakes Highlands", a subdivision of the Appalachian Plateau. The highest elevations (above sea level) of 1850' (Burnt Hill) and 1810' (South Hill) form part of a north-south ridge, known as the "Hector Backbone" which physically and often socially divides the Town. Streams flowing westward from this ridge empty into Seneca Lake where the shoreline drops off to approximately 445 feet.

Straddling Hector's "Backbone" are 11,083 acres of the Finger Lakes National Forest (68% of the total acreage of the Finger Lakes National Forest). On the west side of the "Backbone" many streams cut through the steep hillsides creating ravines and waterfalls as they descend into Seneca Lake. Because of the lake-moderating climate and desirable air drainage on these western slopes, many tree "fruit" farms, vineyards and wineries cover the landscape.

All streams on the eastern side of Hector's backbone eventually join Taughannock Creek, which flows into Cayuga Lake. The somewhat less rugged terrain east of the ridge has long supported dairy and field crop agriculture.

Figure 2 Topographic Map



Source: Schulyer County Planning Dept. March 2015

 Town of Hector Boundary



## NATURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY

### FINGER LAKES NATIONAL FOREST

Located between Seneca and Cayuga Lakes, the Forest occupies 11,083 acres in Schuyler County and is managed by the US Forest Service as a multiple use land area and enjoyed for a wide range of quality recreational opportunities, forest scenery, and an extensive trail network. The Forest provides over 30 miles of trails, three developed campgrounds, one specifically for horse users, and ponds that are stocked with fish on an annual basis.

A 4 mile segment of the Finger Lakes Trail (or North Country Scenic Trail) travels thru the Forest along with the 12 mile Interloken connector trail. Additional recreational opportunities include, horseback riding, bird watching, hunting, skiing and snowmobiling.



National Forest Sign for the Blueberry Patch Camping Area  
Photo Credit: Michele Griego



Finger Lakes National Forest - Potomac Group Campground  
Photo Credit: USDA - Forest Service ([www.fs.usda.gov](http://www.fs.usda.gov))



Potomac Road through the National Forest  
Photo Credit: Michele Griego



Smith Park Swimming Area  
Photo Credit: Richard Owlett

### TEXAS HOLLOW STATE FOREST

Located south of the hamlet of Bennettsburg between Texas Hollow, Newtown and Steam Mill Roads, the forest covers 850 acres in Hector. This unfragmented lowland corridor between high glacial ridges is dammed by both man-made and beaver structures. The habitat is important to many species of breeding birds, stopover migrant species and waterfowl. The forest is used for timber harvesting as well as hiking, hunting, fishing and trapping in season. A segment of the Finger Lakes/North Country Trail goes through this area.

### TEXAS HOLLOW NATURAL AREA (ONLY SPHAGNUM BOG IN COUNTY)

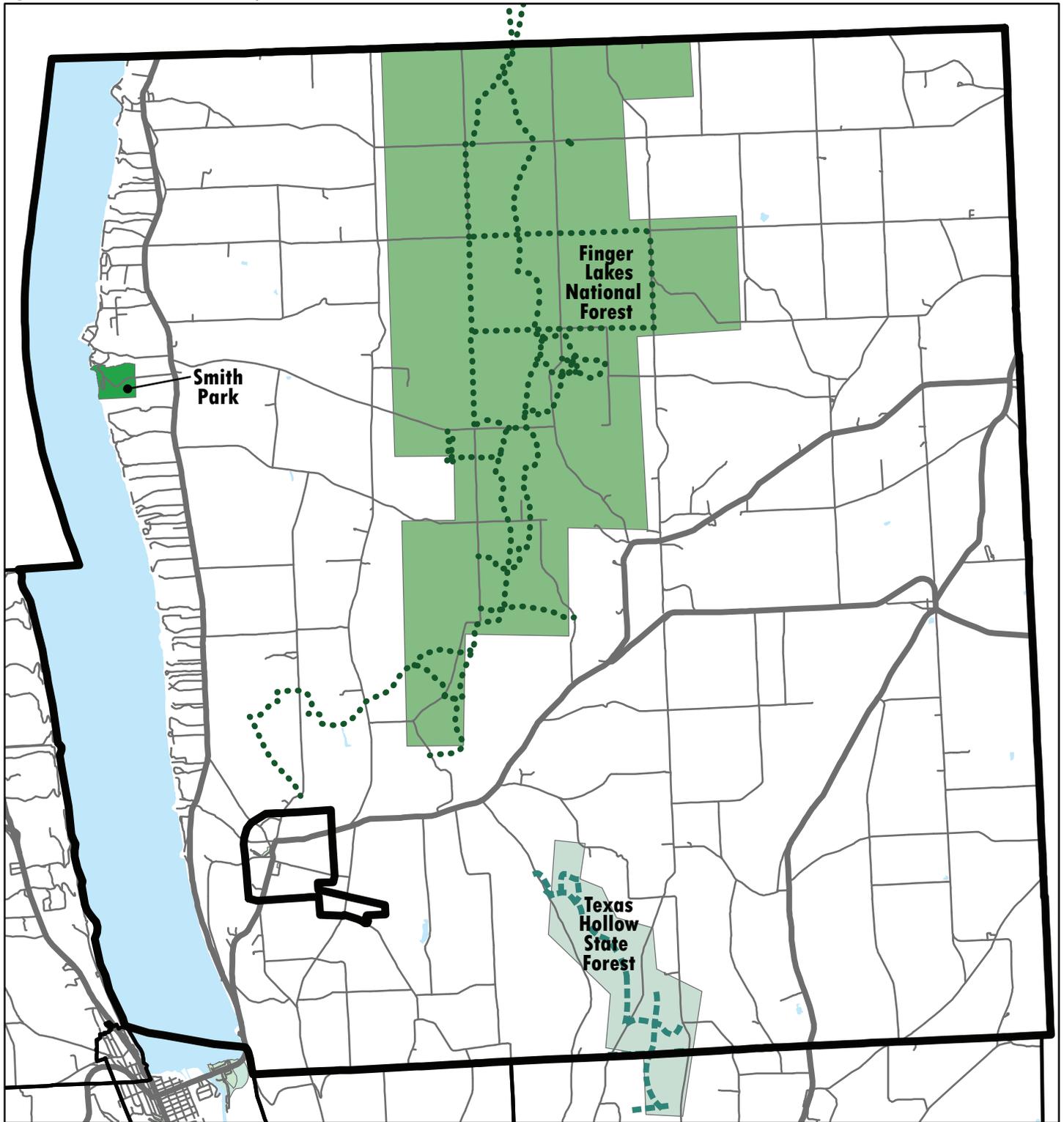
Adjoins the pond area of Texas Hollow State Forest and encompasses 88 acres of mature woods which shelter a ten acre sphagnum bog, the only one in Schuyler County. Only light impact activities are allowed within the natural area.

The floating mat of sphagnum moss provides habitat for well developed colonies of bog plants including Cranberry, Rattlesnake Plantain, carnivorous Sundew and Pitcher Plants. The upland areas boast unusually dense stands of Pink Lady's Slipper and other unusual wildflowers. All are protected plants and vulnerable to exploitation.

### SMITH PARK

Smith Memorial Park, on the eastern shoreline of Seneca Lake, is located off NYS Route 414 and is approximately eight miles north of Watkins Glen. One of the few public accesses to the Lake in Schuyler County, the Park is owned and managed by the Town of Hector and offers seasonal camping opportunities, picnic areas and hiking trails on 92 acres, including 2,000 feet of lakefront with a swimming area and boat launch. Smith Park is open to residents as well as non-residents from the beginning of May until the middle of October.

**Figure 3** Natural Resources Map



Source: Schulyer County Planning Dept. March 2015

- State Road
- Secondary Road
- Finger Lakes National Forest
- New York State Forest
- Town of Hector Park
- ..... Finger Lakes NF Trail
- - - - - DEC Trail
- Water Body
- Town of Hector Boundary



# WATER RESOURCE INVENTORY



Sailboats on Seneca Lake  
Photo Credit: Richard Owlett

## SENECA LAKE

Seneca Lake is largest of the Finger Lakes, approximately 10 miles of the lake lies within Schuyler County and the Town of Hector and averages 1-½ miles in width. Approximately 16% of the surface area of the lake is in Schuyler County. Seneca Lake provides clean drinking water to many lakefront properties via private wells and untreated water intakes. Seneca Lake is also the recipient body of most of the Schuyler County watershed. The lake provides wintering habitat for many species of waterfowl and is a prime tourist attraction and fishing destination throughout the year.

The Howard gravel and natural microclimate on the surrounding hillsides makes the area particularly suitable for grape growing. Extensive studies of the lake and its watershed have been completed under the aegis of Seneca Lake Pure Waters Association and the five county protection group termed SLAP-5.

## GORGES/ CREEKS

These biologic and geologic wonders of Schuyler County funnel the majority of our upland watershed to Seneca Lake. Most of the actual gorges and riparian lands are in private ownership. From south to north, the major gorges in Hector are:

- Excelsior Glen
- Hector Falls/ Hector Falls Creek
- Glen Eldridge/Tug Hollow Creek
- Bullhorn Creek
- Sawmill Creek
- Breakneck Creek



Kayakers at base of Hector Falls

Photo Provided By: Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce



Sawmill Creek

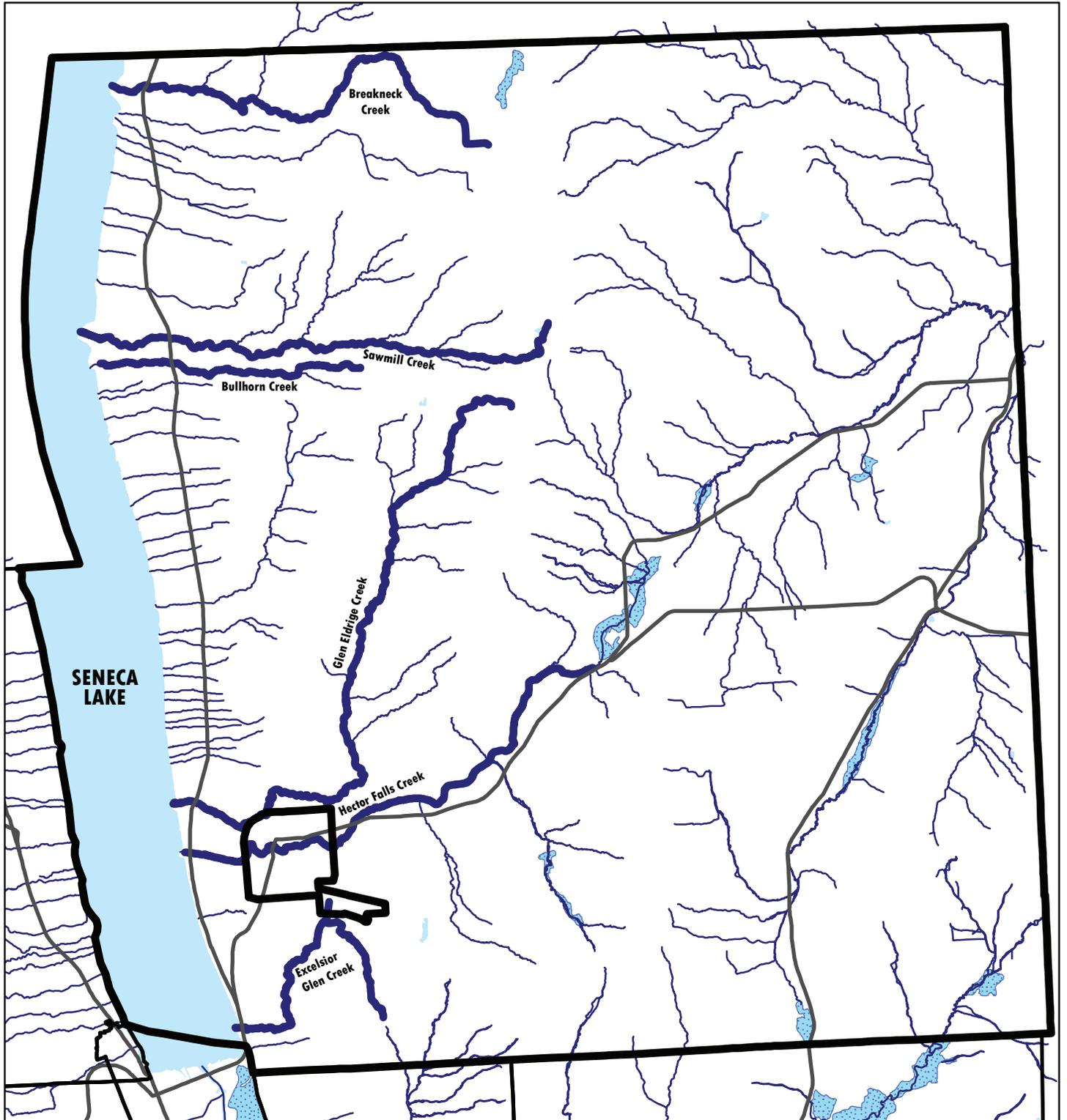
Photo Credit: George Kellogg



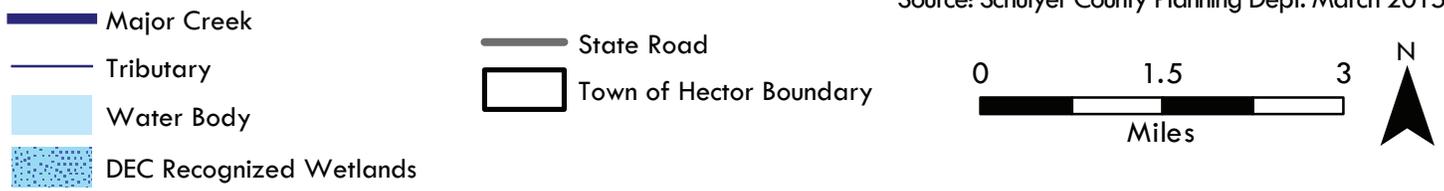
Mecklenburg Pond

Photo Credit: Michele Griego

**Figure 4** Water Resources Map



Source: Schulyer County Planning Dept. March 2015



# Natural Resources and Sustainability Policy

## Introduction



Sawmill Creek  
Photo Credit: George Kellogg III

Founded on the principle that the well-being of a population is dependent upon its region's natural resources and environment, the concept of sustainability is an important consideration for the Town of Hector. Although there is no simple way to define sustainability, sustainable practices are often identified as those that meet current economic, social, and environmental needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet such needs of their own. In other words, sustainability recognizes the finite nature of natural resources and commits to the use of them in a way that reserves their integrity for the long term.

One of the greatest assets that the Town of Hector has is its pastoral character and natural environments that flow within and across town boundaries. A majority of this environment is made up of forests, which remains the primary land use today. Areas of open space and green space provide great value to residents and businesses in many forms. We are proud of our better-known features such as Seneca Lake, the Finger Lakes National Forest, and Smith Park. Whether it is the public parks providing recreational and leisure activities, the cultivated land contributing to the local economy, or the natural open spaces preserving the region's aesthetic appeal, the diverse physical environment serves all who work in, live in, and visit the town. Approximately 11,628 acres of land within the Town of Hector is designated as "wild, forested, conservation lands or public parks". There are also 395 acres of wetlands.

Town residents also take great pride in our high level of environmental integrity. As the Town seeks to develop and grow, they will need to carefully consider a balance of development and conservation in order to maintain their present character and level of integrity. By emphasizing sustainable practices in new investment opportunities, the town ensures the protection of its natural resources from potential degradation.

The following Natural Resources and Sustainability policy is intended as a guide for the towns' approach to its physical environments and resources. When reviewing new and existing regulations or economic development opportunities, the decision makers should carefully consider the objectives within this policy. Specific steps for accomplishing these objectives have also been included as implementation items that can be realized through the efforts of various departments, committees, and stakeholders within each town.

# Natural Resources and Sustainability Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Town of Hector to be a community known for its **diverse natural resources and environmental stewardship**. The natural environment as well as the cultivated landscape shape our communities and add to the quality of our lives. Our natural environment is characterized by unique resources such as Seneca Lake, numerous waterfalls, forests and waterways. Our cultivated environment is the result of agricultural practices that have shaped the land over centuries. These practices include farming, forestry and grape growing. Over time, we will strive to invest in our town and village in a manner that protects our natural environment, our farmland and our vineyards for future generations. Sound development practices, appropriate regulations and community stewardship should be employed to reduce or eliminate the degradation of these resources.

## OBJECTIVES

- A. Pursue green technologies and energy conservation techniques to minimize the community's environmental footprint.
- B. Expand programs to encourage the reduction, reuse and recycling of appropriate materials.
- C. Ensure that natural, scenic and ecological resources are protected and enhanced, and/or impacts are mitigated.
- D. Investigate and utilize techniques that preserve open space (ie: Smith Park, and the Finger Lakes National Forest) within the Town.
- E. Protect the watersheds within the Town of Hector.
- F. Protect critical habitat for threatened and endangered plant and animal species by identifying where these habitats are and educating affected landowners about habitat preservation.
- G. Explore opportunities for collaboration in composting residual winery and brewery waste.
- H. Protect Seneca Lake water quality and other important environmental resources.



Finger Lakes National Forest, Trail  
Photo Credit: Michele Griego

## IMPLEMENTATION ITEMS

- 1. Ensure that local officials are well educated on the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act and the USEPA MS-4 Standards and how other communities have applied them to development proposals within their community.
- 2. Provide training to the community, elected officials and board members on environmental policies and practices.
- 3. Complete an inventory of important natural resources in the Town of Hector and make inventory available to all residents and elected officials.
- 4. Increase residents' direct access to the natural environment of the region for public recreation.

## MEASURES

- 1. Cubic yards or tonnage of recycled material collected.
- 2. Creek/Lake water testing results.
- 3. Acres of preserved open space, wetlands, and woodlands.
- 4. Quality of surface or ground water.
- 5. Annual Town Clean Up Day.



Foster Pond, Finger Lakes National Forest  
Photo Credit: Michele Griego

# Community and Infrastructure Resources

## EMERGENCY SERVICES

Fire protection services for Hector residents are provided by volunteer fire companies located in the Village of Burdett, the hamlet of Mecklenburg and by the Valois-Logan-Hector Volunteer Fire Company. Out-of-town fire companies from the nearby villages of Trumansburg and Odessa are also contracted for fire protection. The Hector and Trumansburg Fire companies have ambulance squad and the fire companies from Burdett, Mecklenburg and Odessa have rescue squads. Schuyler Ambulance Corporation in Watkins Glen, is also available to Hector residents. The Town does not have its own police department. Law enforcement services are provided by the Schuyler County Sheriff's Department and the New York State Police.

## WATER

In response to public need the Town of Hector established a water district in 1975. Two drilled wells (34 feet and 37 feet deep) supply water to more than 1283 people through 633 service connections along NYS Route 414 and the Village of Burdett. The many hydrants along the water main also help to reduce fire insurance rates. Supported solely by its users, the water district is operated by the Town of Hector. There is a Water Board however they are advisory only.

To ensure growth and draw additional businesses the water system should be extended throughout the Town. The Town should identify areas they wish to see growth and encourage public utility expansion within areas that have been deemed appropriate for new development first.

## SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING

Voluntary recycling of pre-sorted household wastes such as aluminum, steel, glass, plastic and paper is provided by the Town . However, the recyclables must be brought to the Town garage and collection is limited to a single day each week. The Town of Hector also arranges an annual "Dumpster Day" to provide residents with a place to dispose of additional trash and junk.

A potential way to reduce the overall costs associated with waste collection and recycling is through waste reduction. There should be a continued focus on waste reduction through ongoing public education programs on waste reduction opportunities, as well as the promotion of source reduction procurement policies in businesses and at the town and county level.

## NATURAL RESOURCE AND MINERAL EXTRACTION

In recent years, energy development has become a prominent topic in Hector, Schuyler County and in New York State. Natural gas extraction and its related developments are a contentious topic due to the potential impacts associated with this type of development.

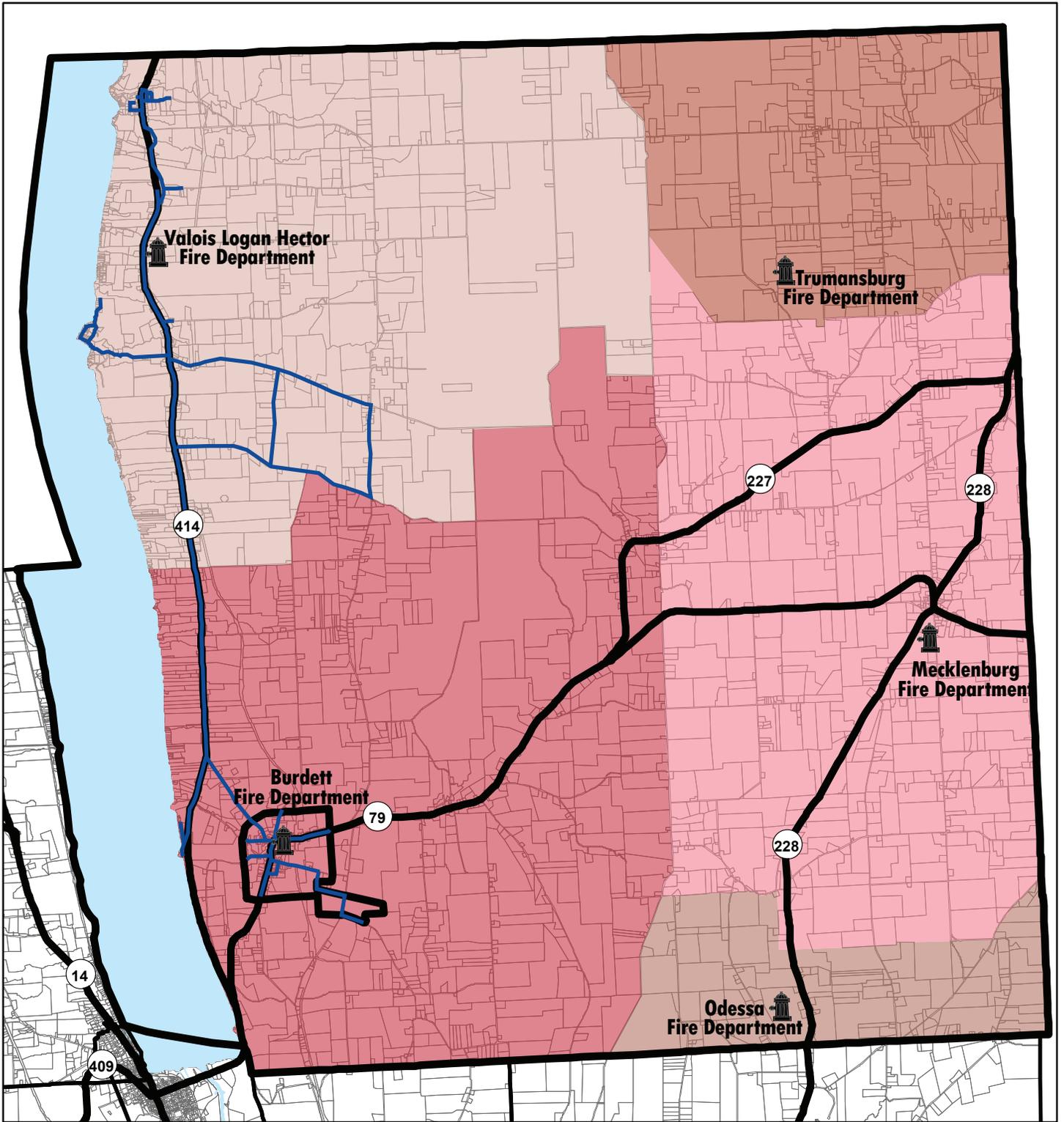
Hector's natural environment is its biggest asset and it is important to protect it in the best possible way. As such, it is best to err on the side of caution and put in place policies and procedures that will protect the community. As such , this plan will provide policies that can help the Town mitigate to the greatest extent possible, any negative impacts of natural resource extraction. By doing this the Town is preparing the community for whatever may come. The challenge is to ensure the continued protection of our natural resources (i.e. land, air and water), rural character and sense of place.

## RENEWABLE ENERGY

Recently the advancement of renewable energy technology particularly using wind and solar technology has sparked an increased interest in diversify the ways energy demands are met within the Town of Hector and Schuyler County. At the beginning of 2015 Solar Schuyler was formed by a group of citizens to increase the awareness, use, and availability of solar resources.

The Town should promote the use of renewable energy though the education of residents and farmers on the advantages and efficiency that can be accomplished in their homes and farming operations through the use of small scale wind in the production or solar energy. As well as inform residents and business of the tax incentives and potential funding sources available through various state and federal organizations.

**Figure 5** Fire District Map



Source: Schulyer County Planning Dept. March 2015

- Burdett Fire Department
- Valois, Logan, Hector Fire Department
- Mecklenburg Fire Department
- Odessa Fire Department
- Trumansburg Fire Department
- Hector Water System



# Transportation



Searsburg Road Photo Credit: Michele Griego

The Town of Hector maintains 151 miles of town roads, approximately 64 miles of these are currently paved. Additional paving is currently done as resources allow. There are four state roads within the Town of Hector including; NYS Routes 414, 79, 227, and 228. There are also nine county roads within the Town.

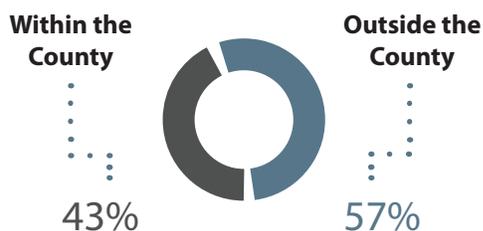
- Route 414 is the primary north-south route runs adjacent to Seneca Lake and in recent years 414 has seen an large increase in traffic as a result of the expanding wine/brewery industry located along 414 and truck traffic connection to the NYS Thruway and points north.
- Route 79 begins at the intersection with Route 414 in Town of Hector just outside of the Village of Watkins Glen and connects with Tompkins County and the City of Ithaca creating a primary commuter route for those going to work and school in Tompkins County.

## PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

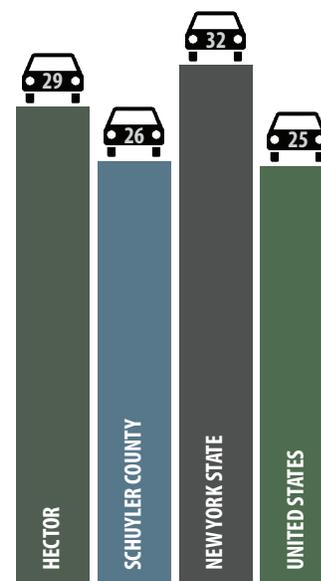
The Town offers no public transportation, however public transportation is available on a limited route basis by Schuyler County Transit. Schuyler County Transit operates three rural connection routes Monday - Friday. The routes connect Bennettsburg, Burdett, Hector, Reynoldsville and Valois to Watkins Glen. These routes have seen a steady ridership, and continued growth since their inception which is a positive sign and indicates that more residents are in need of additional transportation options.

## COMMUTING CHARACTERISTICS

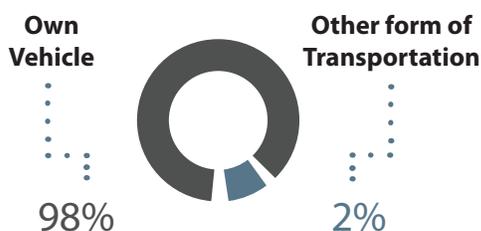
### WHERE ARE THEY GOING?



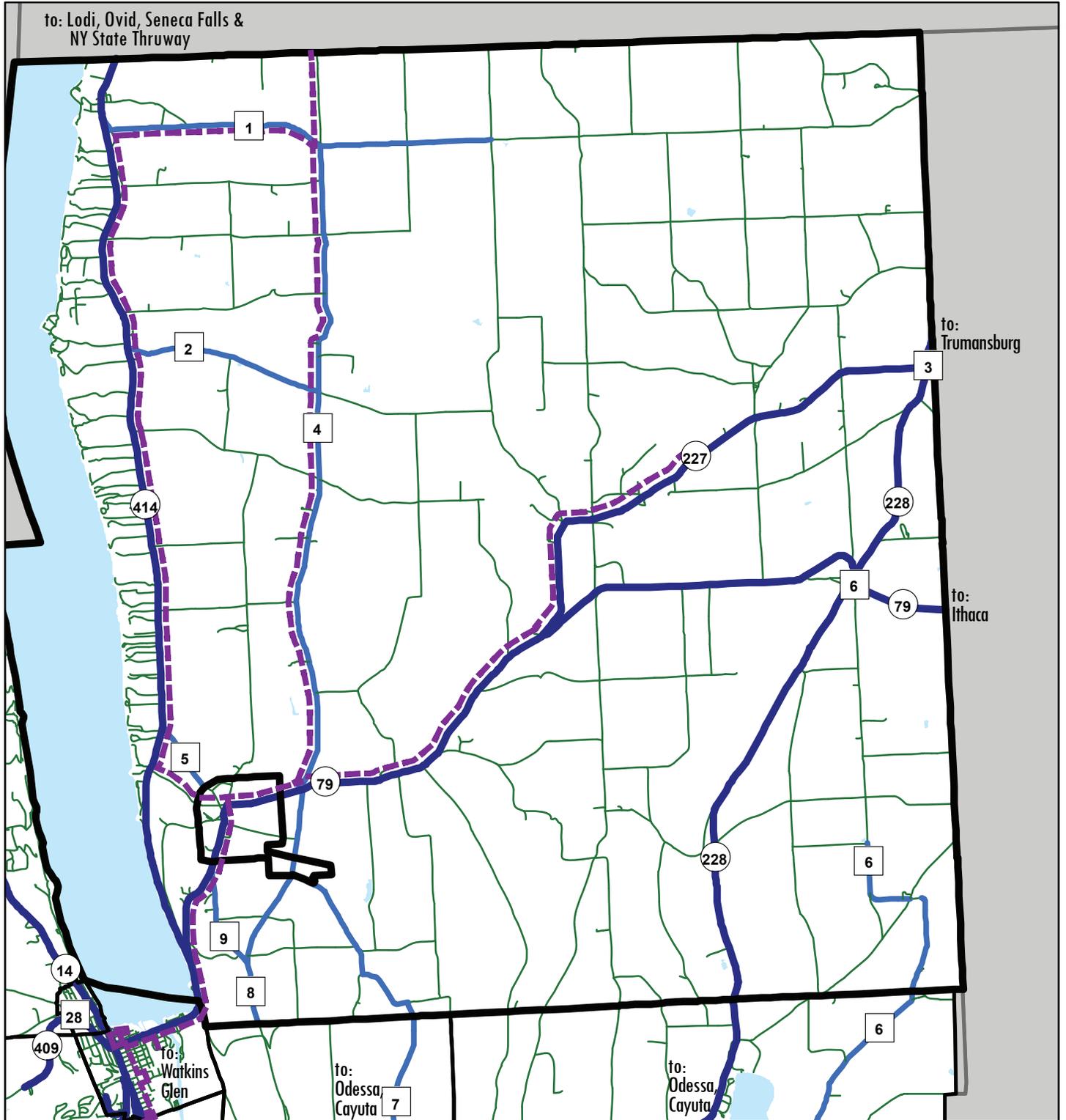
### MEDIAN TRAVEL TIME TO WORK (MINUTES)



### HOW DO THEY GET THERE?

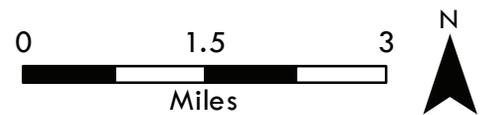


**Figure 6** Transportation Map



- Public Transportation Route
- State Road
- County Road
- Local Road
- Water Body
- Town of Hector Boundary

Source: Schulyer County Planning Dept. March 2015



# Community/ Transportation Policy

## Introduction

For the purposes of this plan, a community resource is broadly defined as any program, service, or infrastructure that positively contributes to a town’s quality of life. The importance of these resources to our town cannot be overstated. Community resources provide our residents and businesses with the infrastructure and services necessary for them to thrive. The following table identifies some of the most common community resources available within our town.



Emergency Services	Educational System	Faith Community	Gas & Electric Service
Highway Operation & Maintenance	Law Enforcement	Library	Local History
Open Space	Parks & Recreation	Public Transportation	Water Service

In New York State, local governments are typically responsible for only a portion of these activities. Quasi-governmental agencies, not-for-profit groups, or private entities play a key role in providing the remaining programs or services. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the entire town community to ensure that these resources are able to successfully meet the needs of local residents.

In general, the town should focus on two distinct efforts: The first includes an ongoing monitoring effort to ensure that the level of service provided by its community resources is adequate. The second includes an active implementation program to address any program or project related deficits that are identified. Achieving the goals of the implementation program will require involvement of other groups and outside funding sources. As a result, the town will need to engage in high levels of communication and coordination with the residents, community groups, public and private agencies, stakeholders, and other municipalities.

The following policy has been included to serve as a guide for the realization of the towns’ community resource objectives, including the desire for an enhanced quality of life.

# Community/ Transportation Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Town of Hector to have community resources that **provide a high level of service** to the local businesses and residents at a reasonable cost. The quality of life within the Town is positively impacted by the health and safety benefits provided by law enforcement and emergency service providers, as well as public water. The community's well being is ensured by the combined efforts of emergency services, the school districts, the faith community. As the populations characteristics change within the community, it is imperative that the community resources continue to meet the needs of Town residents.



Photo Provided By: Michele Griego

## OBJECTIVES

- A. Provide services or access to the services necessary to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of residents.
- B. Encourage improvements to existing properties to mitigate impacts on watershed.
- C. Enhance recreation and leisure activities within the Town of Hector particularly at Smith Park.
- D. Create opportunities for increased public involvement in building a better community.
- E. Locate future community facilities in areas accessible to town residents.
- F. Improve signage within the Town of Hector.
- G. Reduce speed limit on Scenic Byway (Route 414 corridor).
- H. Improve EMS services throughout the town.
- I. Encourage expansion of high-speed internet within the Town of Hector.

## MEASURES

- 1. Crime rate or number of calls for assistance.
- 2. Miles of road maintained each year.
- 3. Number of recreation programs (town, school, etc) that serve the local young people and senior populations.
- 4. Number of residents present at Town Meetings.

## IMPLEMENTATION ITEMS

- 1. Update various Town facilities to meet current needs and accessibility requirements.
- 2. Expand Recycling program to allow for greater opportunities as well as easier recycling practices.
- 3. Work with county watershed department to develop handout on potential septic issues/watershed.
- 4. Review annual police and fire department reports to ensure adequate service for town residents.

# Land Use Planning

The Town of Hector remains rural in character with abundant open space in the form of farms of various sizes, fields and recreational areas. Commercial business use of land has increased considerably as a result of an expanding tourism and winery/brewery industry developing along NYS Route 414.

EXISTING LAND USE	ACRES
Agriculture	15,834
Residential	26,080
Vacant Land	15,443
Commercial	450
Recreation and Entertainment	1
Community Services	270
Industrial	120
Public Service	5
Wild, Forested Conservation Lands, and Public Parks	11,628
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>70,034</b>

Source: 2014 Schuyler County Tax Parcel Data

## AGRICULTURE

The primary agricultural uses within the Town of Hector include field crops, dairy farming and the raising of livestock such as cattle, hogs and sheep. Productive vineyards and tree fruit farms have also been increasing significantly. In 2015 approximately 20,350 acres of land qualified to receive an agricultural exemption which is higher than the number of acres that have been given the primary classification of agriculture.

## RESIDENTIAL

Residential uses are the largest land use within the Town of Hector and includes a mix of single family, multiple family, seasonal residences and pre-manufactured (mobile) homes. This land use is scattered throughout the town with largest concentrations in the hamlets, along the major transportation corridors and along the lake. The parcels along the lake are primarily considered seasonal residences. While many parcels within Hector may have a primary designation of agriculture they may also have some agricultural functions on them.

## VACANT LAND

This land use consists of a mix of residential and abandoned agricultural land. The large amount of vacant land is reflective of the rural character of the town.

## COMMERCIAL

Primarily the commercial land uses within the Town are associated with the expanding tourism industry, and include the many wineries, breweries, Bed and Breakfast, and the Finger Lakes Distillery along Route 414. There are also several self-storage and small warehouse facilities located throughout Hector.

## RECREATION AND ENTERTAINMENT

The recreation and entertainment uses within the Town of Hector are the Reynoldsville Community Club located on Route 227 in the Hamlet of Reynoldsville, and a small dirt track (Star Lite Speedway) located in Steamburg.

## COMMUNITY SERVICES

The community services land use contains important services for the Town's residents. The biggest community area within Hector is Smith Park which provides camping areas, a public boat launch and swimming area that allows all of the Town's residents to access the lake. Included within this land use are the fire departments, town hall, the towns many churches which act as community gathering points within the town, cemeteries and highway garage.

## PUBLIC SERVICE

Within the Town of Hector, this land use consists mainly of telephone and electrical substations, as well as a small water treatment facility on Peach Orchard Road.

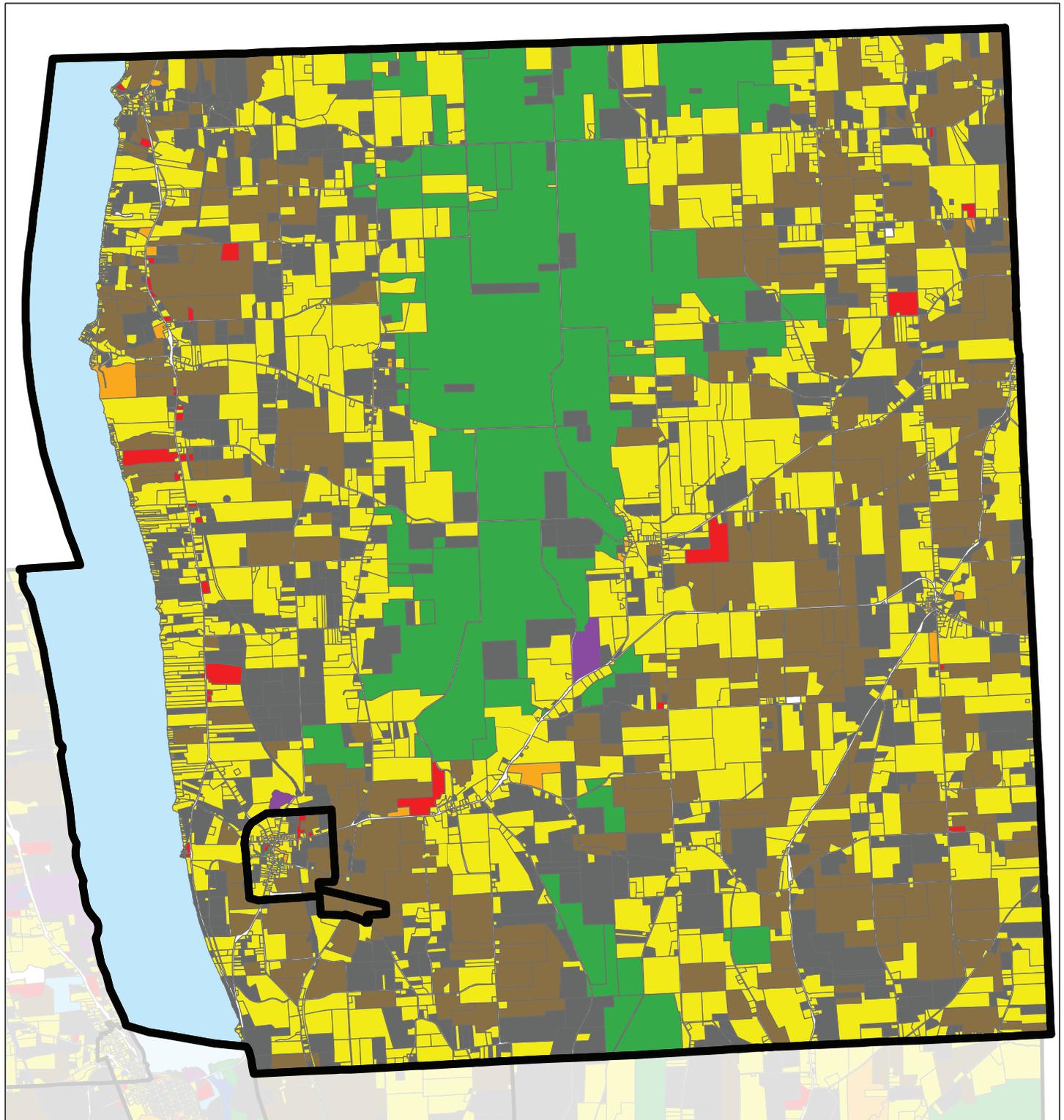
## WILD, FORESTED, CONSERVATION LANDS, AND PUBLIC PARKS

This land use is composed primarily of the Finger Lakes National Forest and Tug Hollow State Forest. There are a few small public parks within the Village of Burdett and the larger Hamlets such as Mecklenburg



Photo Provided By: Richard Owlett

**Figure 7 Existing Land Use Map**



- |   |   |
|---|---|
|  Unclassified             |  Recreation & Entertainment                          |
|  Agricultural             |  Community Services                                  |
|  Residential              |  Industrial  |
|  Vacant Land              |  Public Services                                     |
|  Commercial               |  Wild, Forested, Conservation Lands and Public Parks |
|  Town of Hector Boundary |   |

Source: Schulyer County Planning Dept. March 2015  
2014 Tax Parcel Data



\*\* It should be noted that a large number of parcels identified as residential may also have an agricultural component to them.

# Land Use Planning Policy

## Introduction

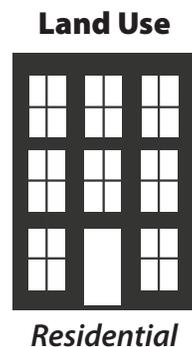
Land use defines the pattern, appearance, and form of a community. Every land use decision builds upon the decisions of the past. Poor planning and regulation can lead to undesirable development patterns that negatively impact the quality of life residents enjoy. Land use planning can have multiple positive impacts on the future development of a community including:

- **Land Use planning provides continuity.** A land use plan provides continuity across time, and gives a common framework for addressing land use issues.
- **Land Use planning is the means by which a community can balance competing private interests.** “Resident A” may want to have a junk yard on his property. “Resident B”, his neighbor, would like to open a restaurant on her property. Planning seeks to strike a balance among the many competing demands on land by creating development patterns that are orderly and rational, provide the greatest benefits for individuals and the community as a whole, and avoid nuisance conflicts between land uses.
- **Land Use planning allows communities to plan development in a way that protects valued resources.** Planning can identify environmental features like wetlands, agricultural lands, woods, and steep slopes and suggest strategies for preserving those resources from destruction or degradation by inappropriate development.
- **Land Use planning provides justification for decisions.** Plans provide a factual and objective basis to support planning board decisions.
- **Land Use planning increases communication.** It becomes a valuable tool of communication between citizens and the local government on matters concerning land use and development.

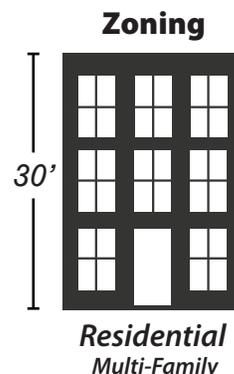
The Town of Hector should look at its current condition to determine what form future development should conform to, and further develop regulations that guide future development.

## The Difference Between Land Use & Zoning

Land use refers to the pattern of development occurring on the land or planned for an area. Land use plans are more general in scope, often referring to such generalities as industrial, residential, or mixed use. They are meant to guide regulations.



VS



Zoning is the regulatory tool to enforce land use plans and ensure land uses are compatible with one another. Zoning is more specific, often referring to such things as building heights, setbacks, and parking requirements for a specific land use.

# Land Use Planning Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Town of Hector to **contribute to the community's rural character and economic health** through the support of land use planning that will protect public values in designated areas. It is intended that this policy provides a flexible framework for decision making and enable different land uses to coexist productively within the community.



Photo Credit: Schuyler County Planning Department

## OBJECTIVES

- A.** Direct development to areas where water exists or can be easily extended.
- B.** Consider a junk storage regulation that limits the visual impacts to the surrounding properties, and safeguard property values.
- C.** Create a lake area “overlay” district with more stringent criteria for land within 1/2 mile of Seneca Lake or within 100 feet of designated major streams flowing into the lake to preserve the recreational and economic value to the community.
- D.** Adopt storm water and erosion control guidelines.
- E.** Protect existing natural resources and agricultural lands from future development.
- F.** Manage growth to ensure that it fits within the character of the town as well as the specific location in which the development is proposed.
- G.** Encourage the expansion of development within the tourism industry.

## MEASURES

- 1.** Acres of preserved open space and woodlands.
- 2.** Acres of prime farmland that is lost or preserved.
- 3.** Annual review of growth within the town.

## IMPLEMENTATION ITEMS

- 1.** Explore the creation of a Town Planning Board to facilitate site plan review, and ensure the health, safety, and welfare of residents and visitors.
- 2.** Consider applying for funding through NYS Agriculture and Markets for an Agricultural Protection plan, implementation of this plan may need to consider an Agriculture overlay district to better protect our agricultural resources.

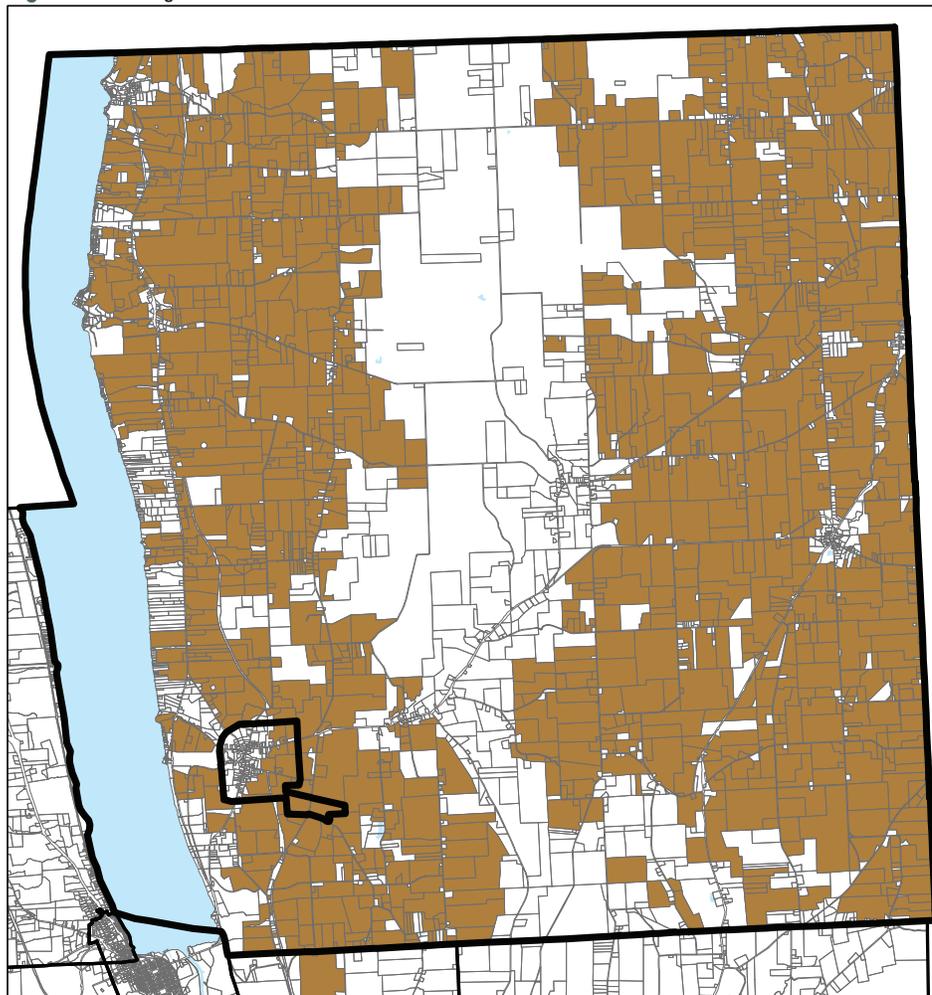
# Agriculture

Agriculture within the Town consists of three main components: farms (i.e. dairy, crops, and hay), forestry, and vineyards. Recently there has been a shift from large-scale farms to multiple small-scale farms. However, within the dairy industry, the opposite is occurring and land has become increasingly scarce and competitors are vying for land.

The Town of Hector falls entirely within Agricultural District #1 of the Schuyler County Ag District Program. Agricultural District #1 was created in 1995, and now encompasses about 90 farms totaling 44,430 acres. Landowners within the agricultural district are eligible for certain incentives and protections from the state and local governments. The districts are designed to promote agricultural activity within a district. Hector is also a Right-to-Farm municipality which provides additional protections to agricultural activity within the town.

Development poses the most significant challenge to agricultural areas within the town. Development can come in the form of residential development or large-scale industrial development. Residential development is a slower process where land is sold piece-by-piece, resulting in unfarmable discontinuous parcels of land. Large-scale development can convert a large amount of viable farmland in a single application.

**Figure 8** Agricultural District #1



Source: Schuyler County Planning Dept. March 2015

- Schuyler County Agricultural District #1
- Water Body
- Town of Hector Boundary



As the agricultural industry and businesses continue to expand and land becomes increasingly scarce, it will be imperative to not only protect farmland but also balance the need for additional farmland with the need for housing and community functions throughout the town to maintain a high quality of life for all of the towns residents and businesses. A balanced approach to development will be important to not negatively impact farmland

Capitalizing on Hector’s natural resources and climate, the wine industry is growing at a phenomenal pace.

## ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF AGRICULTURE

Agriculture has a significant impact on the tourism industry and economy of the Town of Hector and Schuyler County as well.

Although economic figures are not available specifically for the Town of Hector, the agriculture related industries have an evident impact on the economy of the town. Agriculture is a significant economic factor in Schuyler County. A Bureau of Economic Analysis study specific to Schuyler County indicates the direct effect multiplier for agricultural output is 1.63 which means every dollar of farm sales generates \$1.63 in output for the Schuyler County economy as a whole. Moreover, lumber and wood products manufacturing, another facet of agriculture in the County, generates \$1.71 per dollar of sales. These are the two highest multipliers for the County. The three components of agriculture in Schuyler County contribute over \$100 million to the local economy.

Between 2007 and 2012, agricultural sales grew from \$33 million to \$44 million and the average sales per farm increase from \$84,000 to \$113,000.

There are currently 15 wineries in the Town of Hector, an industry that is continuously growing at a steady rate. The wineries in Schuyler County bring in nearly a million visitors every year and contribute approximately \$20 million to the local economy (Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan 2008). There is also a distillery, one established brewery and several others in the planning stages.

Agriculture has helped shape the Town of the Hector and Schuyler County into what it has become today and is poised to continue to do so in the future.

## BY THE NUMBERS

### AG DISTRICT #1

86 Farms

Total Acres - 44,430 total

Farmed Acres 20, 268

Cropped Acres -15,255

Owned Acres 13,624

Rented Acres 6,644

### 2012 AG CENSUS SCHUYLER COUNTY

**Average Size of Farm**

176 acres

### Market Value of Products Sold

Total Vale - \$44,472,000

*Crop Sales (29%) \$12,962,000*

*Livestock Sales (71%) \$31,511,000*

Average per Farm - \$113,161

### Top Crops (acres)

Forage Land used for Hay  
- 16,973

Corn for grain - 5,812

Corn for Silage 5,638

Soybeans - 1,970

Grapes - 1,335



Photo Provided By: Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce

# Agriculture & Farmland Policy

## Introduction

Throughout the planning process, it has been made clear that the Town of Hector's residents are proud of their community's small-town charm and rural character. In addition, residents have expressed a strong connection to their agricultural heritage due to the ongoing presence of farming operations throughout Hector.

Originally founded as an agricultural community, our town continues to benefit from the presence of local farms and the work of our farmers. Over the last 200 years, our town has grown due in large part to the success of the agricultural sector. As we look forward, the town should continue to support its agricultural industries and look for ways they can help farmers capitalize on existing and future cultivation opportunities throughout the region.



Photo Credit: Village of Burdett Resident

Much of the existing development within the Town of Hector has been shaped by the presence of the agricultural sector. The Towns' economic prosperity is directly tied to farming and the financial benefits that it provides in the form of tax revenue and employment opportunities, as well as the aesthetic benefits in the form of open space. These benefits provide a significant contribution to our quality of life. Over the next decade, the Town of Hector should strive to maintain a healthy balance between new development and minimizing the loss of prime farmland.

The agricultural heritage of the Town of Hector also supports the region's economy by directly enhancing our thriving tourism industry. Agritourism defined as the practice of inviting visitors to experience agricultural life first hand, should remain a priority in the town. Tourism in the Finger Lakes Region is largely centered on the cultivation of grapes for use by area wineries. Because Hector is located in the heart of the Finger Lakes, it should continue to capitalize on the region's success by enhancing the visitor experience around their own existing agricultural assets.

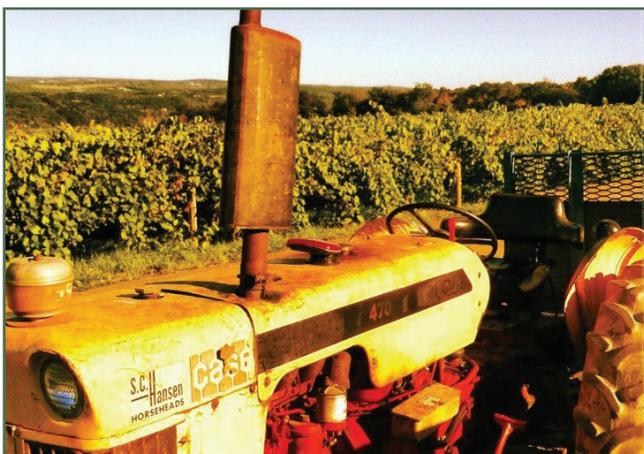


Photo Credit: Norrie Cornelius

The Town of Hector should utilize the following Agricultural and Farmland policy as a guide for achieving the greatest possible economic benefit from the agricultural sector, while still protecting their existing farmlands, open space and rural character. The town adopted a Right-to-Farm law to encourage and show support for the Agricultural Sector

# Agriculture & Farmland Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Town of Hector to be a rural community that **values its farmland and agricultural heritage**. In addition to agriculture's contribution to the community's rural character, the Town acknowledges that farming and farmland contribute to the local economic base and provide a public service in the form of open space. Agriculture provides fresh food and jobs to our residents, a tax base to help deliver services and is responsible for much of our tourism industry. The Town will support programs and strategies that protect prime agricultural land from conversion to other uses and will work to support the viability and success of agricultural businesses.



Photo Provided By: Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce



Photo Provided By: Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce

## OBJECTIVES

- A. Identify and protect prime soils for current and future agricultural use.
- B. Ensure that the infrastructure necessary for successful agricultural operations is in place and properly maintained.
- C. Support the agricultural economic development needs and opportunities of the local farming community.
- D. Increase the community's awareness of the significance that agriculture and farming have in their daily lives.
- E. Ensure that local regulations and permit procedures are supportive and protective of agricultural activities.
- F. Maintain positive relationships between the various levels of government, farming community and the local residential community.

## MEASURES

- 1. Number of farms.
- 2. Value of agricultural products sold.
- 3. Acres of active farmland.
- 4. Acres of prime farmland that is lost or preserved.
- 5. Number of nuisance complaints received by the Town.

# Economy

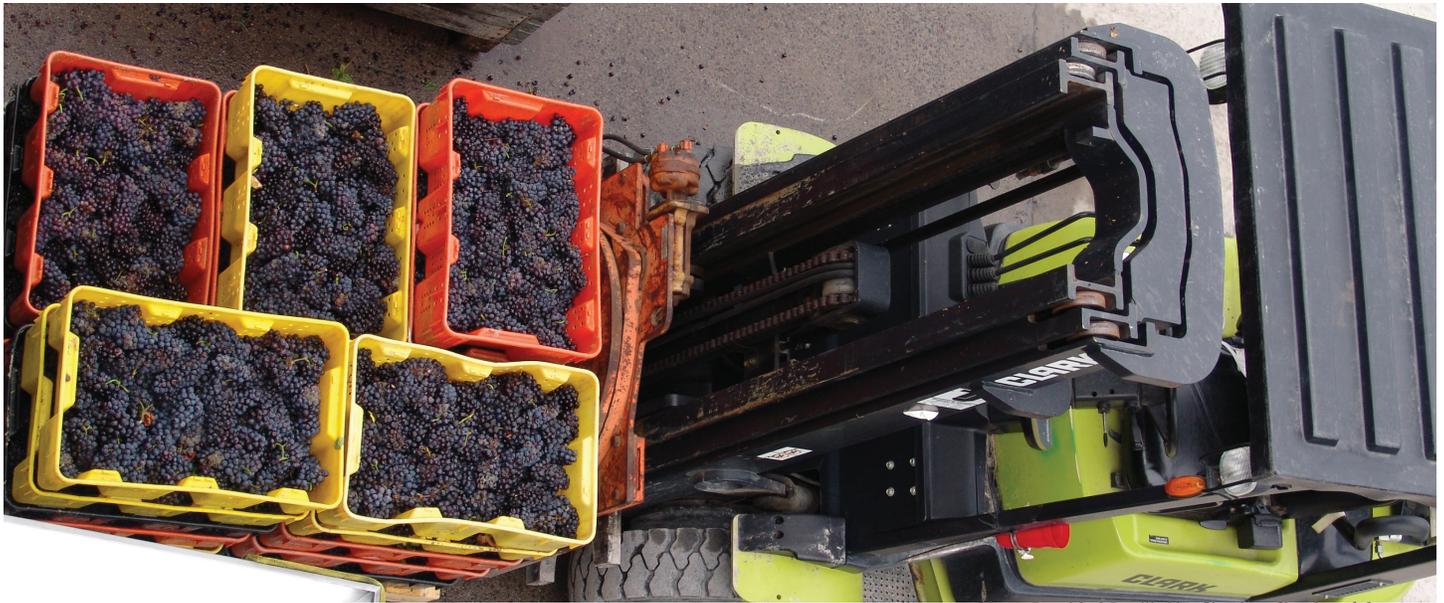
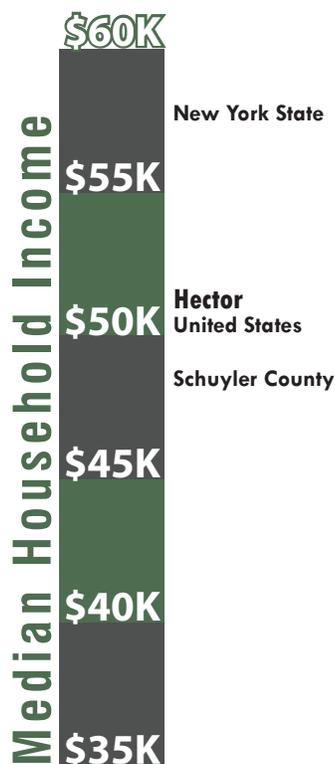


Photo Provided By: Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce

Despite the image of a “bedroom community,” Hector’s economic base also includes internal sources of economic support derived from agriculture, tourism, wineries and small enterprises. Although recent years have seen an increase of diverse small businesses in Hector, the town has very few major employers, and the majority of Hector’s workforce travels out of town for employment.



Driven by increasing tourism; farm wineries, distilleries and creameries, artisans, craftsmen, musicians, and Bed and Breakfast establishments have made an economic niche for themselves amongst the various construction, home maintenance, auto repair, logging, landscape and personal service businesses within the town. The median household income for the Town of Hector can be seen in the graphic to the left which compares the Town to Schuyler County, the New York State and the United States. The town’s median income of \$54,583 is higher than the both the United States (\$53,046) and Schuyler County’s (\$47,869) median household income.

## LONG-TERM JOB GROWTH.

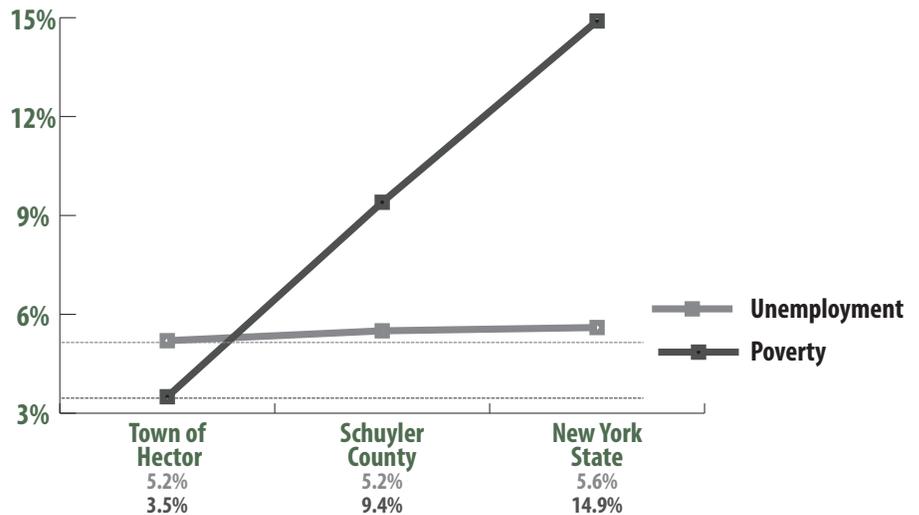
Job growth is a primary economic development goal of most small communities. In general more employment opportunities lead to more residents, more spending at local businesses, and more tax revenues for local governments. Sustained job growth stimulates improvements in the education and skills of the local labor force, making the community a more attractive location for businesses in the future. As new development occurs there should be a focus on attracting industries that will contribute to year round job growth within the Town of Hector.

## SEASONAL POPULATION IMPACT ON ECONOMY

The Town of Hector has a large seasonal population which has a significant impact not only on the towns economy, but also the physical environment and quality of life. However this portion of the population is not accounted for within the Census which has a negative impact on securing population-based funding at the town and county level such as spending for schools, roads, bridges, hospitals and other essential services, as well as on planning for local needs.

## ECONOMIC TRENDS

This graph compares the poverty rate and unemployment rate of the Town of Hector to Schuyler County, the State of New York and the United States. Trendlines for the Town's rates have been included for ease of reference. The poverty rate represents the percent of individuals within each area whose income in the past twelve months was below the federal poverty level. Whereas the unemployment rate indicates the percent of individuals who currently are without a job, but are actively seeking employment.



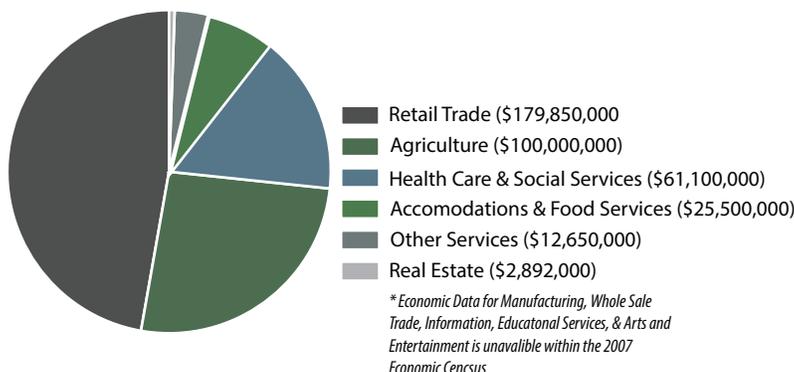
OCCUPATION	HECTOR		SCHUYLER COUNTY	
	Total	Median Earning	Total	Median Earning
Management, Business, Science, and Arts	783	\$47,072	2,560	\$42,432
Service	516	\$19,949	1,736	\$18,370
Sales and Office	480	\$26,429	1,930	\$28,341
Natural resources, Construction, and Maintenance	358	\$34,953	1,092	\$34,573
Production, Transportation, and Material Moving	267	\$34,759	1,115	\$32,869
<b>Total employed population over 16 years</b>	<b>2,404</b>	<b>\$33,810</b>	<b>8,433</b>	<b>\$31,569</b>

Source: American Community Survey 2008-2012

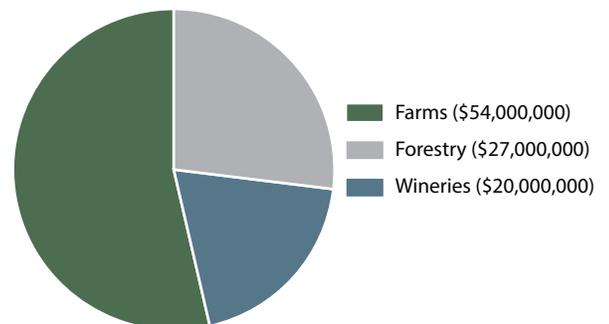
The primary occupation of residents in the Town of Hector revolves around the Management, Business, Science and Arts occupations. This includes management, legal, education, and healthcare professions. The limited number of these types of businesses within the Town of Hector and Schuyler County contributes to the large percentage of people who commute outside of the county for employment.

## ECONOMIC INDICATORS COUNTY WIDE

### INDUSTRY BY REVENUE



### AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY BY REVENUE



# Economic Opportunities Policy

## Introduction

According to “A Primer on Economic Development Strategies” published by the Washington State Department of Community Trade and Economic Development, “active citizens can directly shape the local economy, and the community will benefit in numerous ways:

- **Increased Tax Base:** Additional revenue to support, maintain, and improve local services such as roads, parks, libraries, and emergency medical services.
- **Job Development:** To provide better wages, benefits, and opportunities for advancement.
- **Business Retention:** Businesses that feel appreciated by the community and, in turn, feel as if they are contributing to the economy will stay in town.
- **Economic Diversification:** Helps expand the economy and reduces a community’s vulnerability to a single type of business.
- **Self-Sufficiency:** Public services would be less dependent on County, State, and Federal aid that may change with each election.
- **Quality of Life:** More local tax dollars and jobs raise the economic tide for the community, which generally increases the overall standard of living of the residents.
- **Recognition of Local Products:** Oftentimes, successful economic development will occur when locally produced goods are consumed to a greater degree in the local market.

Membership on local economic development boards or committees—indeed, their very existence—is testimony to the belief that people can and do make a difference when they actively participate in shaping local economies.”

For rural communities in particular, achieving economic growth and development can be difficult. They often do not have the human or financial resources necessary to effectively implement an economic development strategy. The Town of Hector will need to use its existing agricultural and tourism assets as leverage for potential business and commercial development that will positively contribute to the local tax base and employ local residents. Over the next decade, the Town will need to continue to partner with county, regional and state agencies to pursue various economic opportunities that may be too large to attract for a single municipality.

Economic development strategies that support the agricultural and tourism industries allow the Town of Hector to reinvest in one of our greatest economic drivers. By expanding the towns’ business operations, especially those related to current agricultural practices, the local economy is rejuvenated with new jobs and an increased tax base.

The region’s thriving tourism industry continues to be a strong economic driver for the Town of Hector. Visitors come to our town to indulge in the pastoral atmosphere, agricultural experience, wine industry and recreational activities they offer. By enhancing the visitor experience with the addition of commercial activity centers within the Town, residents and visitors will be drawn to the small clusters of commercial development. It is in these centers that the town has an opportunity to create a complete visitor experience.

The town should utilize the following Economic Opportunities policy as a guide for efforts to enhance their local communities for both residents and visitors alike.

# Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Town of Hector to have **rewarding economic development opportunities within the community**. Priority will be placed upon fostering commercial activity in a manner that provides convenient access to goods and services by local residents. This is to be accomplished by capitalizing on the steady influx of tourists that visit our region and locating new investment in or adjacent to our existing activity centers (Village and Hamlets). The Town also recognizes the contributions that agricultural and business activity make to the local economy in the form of jobs, tax base, and charitable contributions. As a result, the Town will seek to expand the size and number of business operations while protecting existing farming activity and our rural character.



Photo Credit: Grist Iron Brewery, Facebook Page

## OBJECTIVES

- A.** Promote and support the viability of agricultural operations within the Town of Hector.
- B.** Ensure that there is adequate infrastructure in place to accommodate new commercial and business operations.
- C.** Maintain or increase the commercial and business tax base within the Town.
- D.** Ensure there is a balance of residential, commercial and small business development to ensure future growth does not negatively impact the overall tax base.
- E.** Continue to work with local business groups to promote existing businesses and solicit new businesses that are consistent with our community objectives.
- F.** Ensure that commercial and tourism developments are compatible with adjacent land uses and preserve the visual quality of the Town.
- G.** Encourage concentrated development along the Route 414 corridor.

## MEASURES

- 1.** Percentage of occupied commercial or business space.
- 2.** Per Capita Income or Median Family Income.
- 3.** Number of retail and service establishments located within the Town.
- 4.** Poverty Rate and Unemployment Rate.

## IMPLEMENTATION ITEMS

- 1.** Continue the positive working relationship with the Schuyler County Partnership for Economic Development (SCOPED) to market and attract business developers to the Town.
- 2.** Complete Town of Hector Business Directory with annual updates and promotion within the community.

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