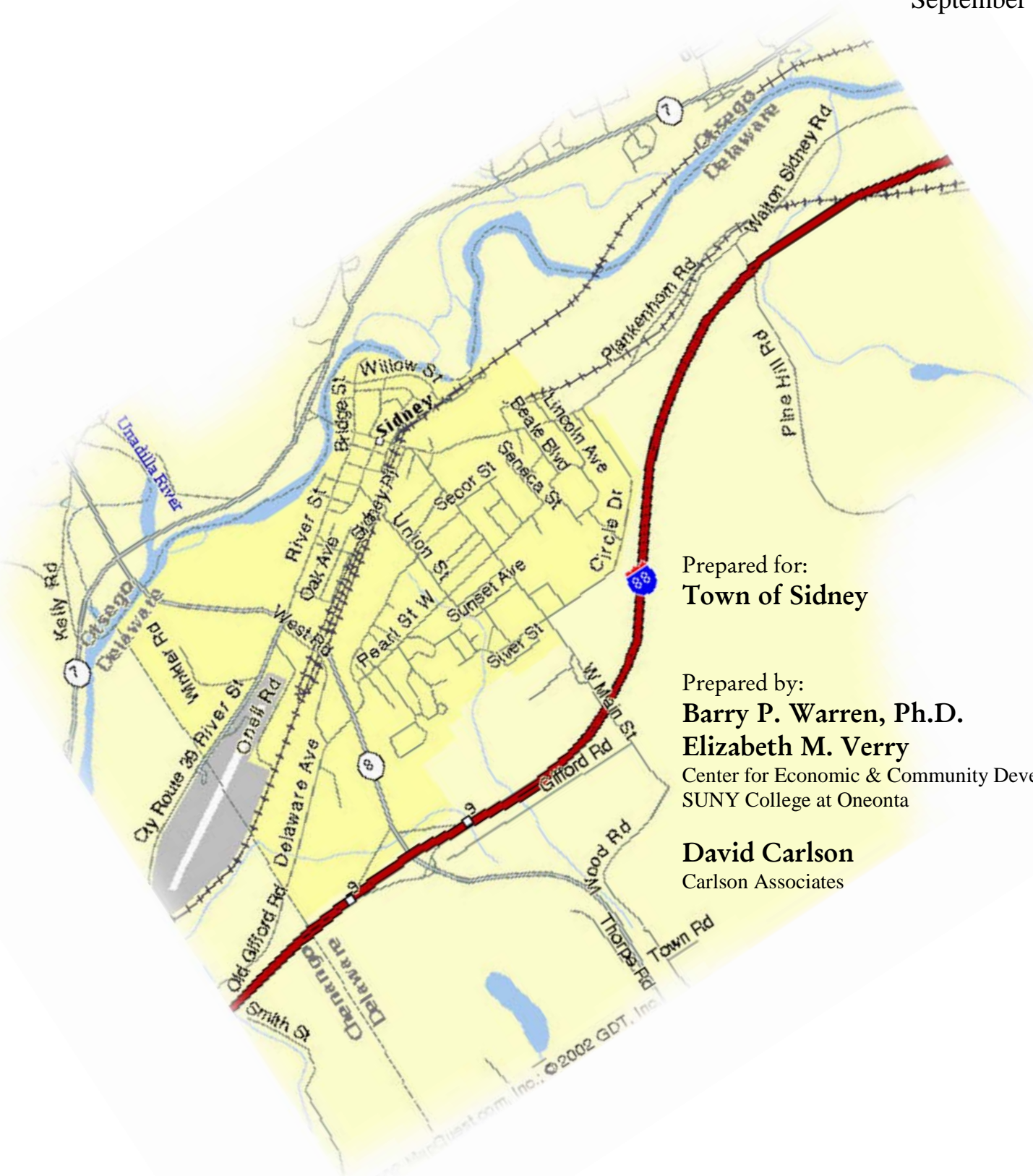


Town of Sidney Comprehensive Action Plan



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The Town of Sidney Comprehensive Action Plan Executive Summary

The Comprehensive Action Plan for the Town of Sidney provides Town officials, community leaders, and residents with an action plan to enhance the economic development and quality of life of the Town in the future. The plan provides an overview of the current conditions, assets and future challenges to the Town in terms of demographics, quality of life, government services, educational resources, parks and recreation, housing, community services and facilities, economic development, utilities, telecommunications, transportation, and land use. This assessment is based on interviews with government officials and community leaders, a survey of Village merchants, and a survey of residents.

Based on the community assessment, the plan identifies six visions and associated projects for the Town to strive to implement in the next 3 years. The numbering of projects does not indicate priority status. The visions are as follows:

A. Community Development Vision

The Town will strive to promote a sense of identity; to encourage feelings of community pride and willingness to invest in the community; and will encourage this spirit to be expressed in terms of community service and philanthropy.

B. Culture and Recreation Vision

To attract new residents and to engage as many people as possible in the social life of the community, the Town will strive to improve its parks and playgrounds; develop recreational programs for youth, teenagers, and the elderly; acquire access to more indoor athletic and recreational facilities; and increase the number of community celebrations and events.

C. Economic Development Vision

The Town is committed to the development of its economy and the prosperity of residents through the development of good paying jobs, the expansion of local businesses, the recruitment of new small scale light manufacturing and commercial businesses, and by investing in infrastructure improvements throughout the Town.

D. Government Vision

The Town of Sidney is committed to the efficient and cost-effective delivery of quality government services. The Town will collaborate with the Village of Sidney, the business community, and community organizations to sustain a high quality of life, while promoting economic growth and prosperity. Finally, the Town will improve both the frequency and quality of its communication with the public at-large.

E. Housing and Neighborhood Quality Vision

The Town will strive to create safe and healthy living conditions Town-wide and particularly in Sidney Center, promote the rehabilitation of existing housing, and encourage the construction of housing for senior citizens and mid to high income households.

F. Land Use and Zoning Vision

The Town will strive to plan for the orderly development of its land as suitable for commercial, residential, agricultural, recreational, and open space uses; insure that land development is conducted in a manner that will protect natural and physical resources and the environment; and will promote land use that furthers the quality of life and economic prosperity of the Sidney area.

Based on the visions identified for the Town, the action plan includes priority projects that are necessary to implement to fulfill these visions. These priority projects are listed below:

A and C. Community and Economic Development Strategies and Projects

1. Organize a Leadership Training Program for Sidney residents.
2. Develop a Town Government Quarterly Newsletter.
3. Create the “Sidney Community Leadership Forum.”
4. Promote community service among young people in the Town.
5. Establish a “Properties of Merit” Award Program.
6. Collaborate with Village to develop a community slogan for the Sidney area.
7. Collaborate with Village to create a professionally managed and proactive economic development delivery system for the Sidney area.
8. Create a “Susquehanna River Valley Agricultural Development Authority” for the purpose of promoting agriculture in the Towns of Sidney, Bainbridge and Unadilla.

9. Explore feasibility of converting the Jennison Station into a Tri-Town municipally owned Utility Corporation.
10. Encourage the growth of home-based businesses by conducting a conference of home-based businesses in the greater Sidney area.
11. Convene a “Future of Sidney Center Forum” for the purpose of creating a long-term Plan for improving the economic and living conditions of residents of Sidney Center.
12. Promote the development of assisted living or small scale retirement communities.

B. Culture and Recreation Strategies and Projects

1. Create a Town/School District partnership to promote resident access to recreational and athletic facilities
2. Conduct a survey of young people in the Town to determine their recreational and life-long sports interests.
3. Conduct a survey of elderly people in the Town to determine the recreational and physical exercise programs that interest them.
4. Plan and conduct more community events in collaboration with the Village.

C. Included with Strategies and Projects Section A

D. Government Strategies and Projects

1. Conduct a feasibility study regarding the consolidation of the Town and Village.
2. Establish annual performance programs for Town employees in accordance with the priority goals and projects of the Comprehensive Action Plan.
3. Establish the position of Town Code Enforcement Officer on a half-time basis.
4. Enhance the capacity of the Town of Sidney Planning Board to assume a proactive role in planning.
5. Utilize the Internet to improve the frequency and quality of communication with Town residents.
6. Develop a long-range plan for The Hospital to insure the fiscal and service delivery viability of the The Hospital in the future.
7. Review the long-range police services needs of the Town.
8. Enhance the capacity of the Sidney Center Fire Department to fulfill its mission.

E. Housing and Neighborhood Quality Strategies and Projects

1. Conduct a feasibility study to determine if a market exists for the construction housing options to meet the needs of the elderly in the region.
2. Develop a “targeted” Housing Rehabilitation Program for implementation in the Hamlet of Sidney Center (single purpose or comprehensive).
3. Develop and implement a Town-wide Housing Rehabilitation Program funded through a CDBG Small Cities Program and/or HOME grant program.

F. Land Use and Zoning Projects

1. Re-examine and update the Town Zoning Ordinance.
2. Adopt design review standards for the construction of commercial and industrial building projects.
3. Make every effort to protect agricultural land in the Town from the intrusion of commercial and residential development.

Town of Sidney Comprehensive Action Plan

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Appendix I: *Town of Sidney Community Survey Report*

Appendix II: *2002 Sidney Merchants Survey Report*

Appendix III: *Telecommunications Capacity Assessment Study for the Village and Town of Sidney*

Town of Sidney Comprehensive Action Plan

I. Introduction

A. What is a Comprehensive Action Plan?

The purpose of a Comprehensive Action Plan is to develop new ideas and establish goals and strategies to guide the future of a community. As a result, these plans can be designed to promote or limit change. In either case, comprehensive planning is done with the recognition that all communities experience change and it is necessary to be proactive in influencing the pace and direction of change.

B. Basis for the Town of Sidney Comprehensive Action Plan

The Comprehensive Action Plan for the Town of Sidney is based on a variety of information sources including census data, economic data, interviews with public and private sector leaders, and a survey of community residents. This information has been analyzed to understand the Town's demographic trends, status of government services, identify future community needs, and develop a set of goals and strategies for the future.

C. Usage of the Comprehensive Action Plan

The Town of Sidney Comprehensive Action Plan (Action Plan) will hopefully serve as a useful community tool for both planning and action. As a result, the following guidelines are important in making the best use of this Action Plan:

- ❑ The Action Plan or information from the plan should be shared with residents because the plan contains information about the community that many residents may not be aware of.
- ❑ The Supervisor and other Town government officials should use the Action Plan to keep the community focused on the future goals of the Town. This document should not be viewed as binding criteria for which all decisions are made, only a guideline.
- ❑ Community leaders and persons interested in serving the Town community should examine the Action Plan and consider how they can help to achieve the goals set forth in the Action Plan.
- ❑ The Action Plan should be distributed to all Town government department heads and they should use the Action Plan to guide the development of their annual work plan and if applicable, their annual report to the Town.
- ❑ The Action Plan should be reviewed, evaluated, and updated periodically. If this is not done, then the updating process will become very difficult and before long the Action Plan will not be used.

II. History

A. Introduction

The Town of Sidney is located in south central New York in the northwest most corner of Delaware County, abutting both Chenango and Otsego Counties. The Town is considered to be at the center of what is commonly known as the Tri-Town area. It is bordered on the northwest by the Susquehanna River, on the northeast by the Town of Franklin, and on the south by the Town of Masonville. Given this strategic geographic location, residents have convenient access to the cities of Oneonta and Binghamton by means of Interstate 88, and to Utica and Route 17 leading to New York City by means of State Route 8.

Given its geographical location, the Town easily evolved into a center for farming and commerce. It is a beautiful land of rolling hills, lush farmland, and deep valleys, which provide some of the most scenic views in the region. The beauty and contours of the land drew the interest of early settlers and continues to do so today, as new residents purchase vacation and retirement homes. In many ways, these new residents will help to shape the future of the Town.

The Town's early history was to serve as a foundation for the evolution of a strong commercial and industrial future which basically emerged within the Village of Sidney limits. Beginning in the early 1900s, the Village developed as an industrial center of a region dominated by dairy farms located in small Towns and Villages. As the Town of Sidney grew, it became a source of non-farm employment for the Tri-County area. Ultimately, a number of the Village's largest industries grew to point where they can claim national and international recognition for the quality products they produce.

B. Early Development and Entrepreneurial Efforts

The locality now known as Sidney, N.Y., began its history at the junction of the Susquehanna and Unadilla Rivers. Over the centuries, the Oneida and Iroquois tribes used the area because of the convergence of the trails along the rivers, which they used for transportation. At least two, and probably more, Native American tribes made their home in the Sidney area. Evidence of this early history is often revealed in the discovery of Indian artifacts found in the process of construction projects in the Village.

Recorded history of Sidney began in the early 1770s when Reverend William Johnston built his home at the current site of the Sidney Airport. The area was referred to as the Johnston Settlement or Sidney Plains and was geographically part of Otsego County and the Town of Unadilla.

In 1796 the State Legislature subdivided Otsego County and Delaware County was created from this subdivision. Later, the Town of Sidney was subdivided to create the Town of Masonville. The Town was incorporated in 1801 and the Village in 1888. During its formative years, the Town's economic base consisted of farming, timber harvesting, potash harvest, and business services for farmers. However, the Hamlet of Sidney Center was especially well known

throughout the United States for its two New York Ontario & Western (O&W) Railroad trestles that formed a giant horseshoe curve around the Hamlet. The original long wood and steel trestle was 1400 ft. long and 100 ft. high. This trestle was replaced in 1895 with an all-steel trestle 1220 ft. long and 96 ft. high. The original short trestle was an all-wood trestle 800 ft. long and 80 ft. high. This trestle was replaced in 1905 with a steel structure.

By 1866, the Albany and Susquehanna Railroad began service to Sidney. The Albany & Susquehanna was later purchased by the Delaware & Hudson Railroad. In 1873, the Ontario & Western Railroad connected a rail line running north to the D & H rail line and Sidney Center became a railroad hub. In fact, the Town's railroad facilities represented an important economic link to New York City, since creameries in Sidney Center and many other Villages along the railroad route supplied milk, butter, cheese, and condensed milk for shipment by the D&O Railroad to the metropolitan New York area. This business declined as roads made it cheaper to ship these products by truck directly to customers. Eventually, the D&O turned to the shipping of coal from local mines in the region. Eventually, this business also declined as heating oil came to replace coal as the primary method of heating homes.

By the early 1900s Sidney was home to a variety of interesting and innovative businesses, as Sidney businessmen had constructed three hotels, the population had doubled, and industrial development was beginning to occur. For example, the French Cheese Company was established in 1901 and was the only French-run facility in the country to make Brie and Camembert cheeses. It became the Phoenix Cheese Factory in 1906. Also, the Sidney Silk Mill was established in 1893 and soon after cigar factories developed, a glass works, a paper mill, a sash and blind company, and bluestone quarries. However, by 1920, as a result of bad luck and bad business, which included a series of fires and labor strikes, most of these businesses closed or left the area.

One interesting business that operated during this time was the Cortland Cart and Carriage Company, and its operation marked the beginning of Sidney's industrial future. The company did not last long because technology revolutionized the transportation industry and car companies began to emerge across the nation. In Sidney the Hatfield Automobile Company was established and took over use of the carriage company factory building.

The Hatfield Automobile Company grew to become the largest employer in Sidney in the early 1900s. Unfortunately, the company was forced to close because it could not compete with the growing automobile industry in Detroit. However, a former Hatfield official, Winfield Sherwood, volunteered without pay to search for a new industry for the Village. Sherwood was successful in 1924, when he invited officers of the Scintilla Magneto Corporation to Sidney. In 1925 the Scintilla Magneto Company, a Swiss firm with headquarters in New York City, bought the old Hatfield factory building and began manufacturing magnetos in Sidney.

The early history of Sidney reveals a community which sustained, supported, and recruited business and commerce. It was an economy represented by a wide diversity of businesses, particularly those that benefited from the agricultural products, work ethic, and natural resources of the Sidney area. The Sidney community's attitude toward its economy in this period of development and entrepreneurial effort is no doubt best represented by the proactive and community minded efforts of Winfield Sherwood.

C. Modern Industrial Growth and Development

By 1928, the Scintilla Magneto Company constructed a new factory, but was purchased in 1929 by the Bendix Aviation Corporation. Over the years, Bendix gained a world-class reputation for the development and production of aerospace products. The company survived the Great Depression and went on to fill orders for airplane magnetos for the Allies in Europe. After some ownership changes, the corporation, now called Amphenol Aerospace, is a division of the Amphenol Corporation which is the leading manufacturer of cylindrical connectors in the world. The Amphenol plant consists of producing products that require a high degree of engineering sophistication and state-of-the-art precision manufacturing. The Sidney facility is both ISO9001 certified and qualified to MIL-STD-790 requirements.

The industrial history of Sidney was also enhanced in 1946 when Keith Clark Incorporated moved to Sidney from New York City. Because of spiraling rental costs and the need for additional space, Keith Clark found it necessary to consider moving his business in 1946. After Keith Clark, Sr. looked through New England and South Carolina, Sidney, New York was chosen for the company's new home. Greater land availability, empty manufacturing space formerly used by Bendix to support their war production efforts, and the fact that the entire manufacturing operation could be housed on the same floor, enticed Keith Clark to establish its production facility on Union and Division Street in Sidney. From 1946 to the present, the corporation grew through the development of innovative products and buyouts of other companies. In 1999, Keith Clark Inc. was acquired by the Mead Corporation and became Mead Westvaco. Having steadily expanded their calendar business, the company reached the point in 2002 when the company's total employment exceeded a thousand people. In addition to calendars, the Sidney site manufactures all varieties of time management products, which they ship throughout the world.

In the early 1960s, Una-Lam, a division of the Unadilla Silo Company, moved to Sidney from Unadilla. Unadilla originally started as a lumber company in 1892. In 1906 the first wood silo was manufactured by the firm and in 1909 the Unadilla Silo Company was founded. In 1928, in conjunction with the Borden Chemical Company, Unadilla Silo manufactured what is believed to be the first laminated rafters in America. In 1962 Unadilla Laminated Products was formed as a subsidiary of the Unadilla Silo Company. In 1963 the company erected a modern facility on West Road in Sidney on a 33 acre site. Today, Una-Lam manufactures fire-resistant, laminated-wood arches, beams, storage sheds, swimming pools, hot tubs, and other wood products. Many of these products are incorporated into construction projects located world-wide.

D. Future Implications

What does this brief history of the Town and Village of Sidney reveal? It shows that for most of its history, the Town of Sidney depended primarily on the Village as a source of employment for its residents. Also, it reveals that the success of the Town depended on an agrarian culture that created generations of workers from rural towns, villages, and hamlets throughout the Tri-Town area that could be recruited for Village businesses. In many respects, the economies of the Town and Village of Sidney are very interdependent.

This brief summary of the history of the Town and Village of Sidney raises some important questions: Can the Town make creative use of its access to its excellent transportation network including Interstate 88, Route 7 and Route 8? Can the community's ideal geographic location and quality of life attributes be used to revitalize its economy and reclaim its status as an economic engine for jobs in the Tri-Town area? Can the community generate risk taking and entrepreneurship sufficient to encourage investment by local residents? Can the Town utilize its beautiful natural resources to promote recreational and retirement living facilities to attract tourists and new residents? Can the Town not only preserve its agricultural base, but build on it by encouraging agricultural entrepreneurship through alternative agricultural development. Do government and business leaders in the Town and Village have the will to take proactive steps to collaborate in creating a vibrant local economy? Also, how committed are Town officials to collaborating with Village officials for the purpose of revitalizing the Village – a commercial and retail center that is conveniently located to serve the residents of both communities? Can the Town target the New York City area corporate establishment to locate sister operations safely out of the metropolitan area in the post 9/11 era given our easy access off the Route 17 and Route 8 connection? The answers to these questions are important because the recent economic and demographic experience of the Village has been troubling and threatens the future economic and quality of life viability of the Town and area communities.

III. Demographics

A. Introduction

The following analysis of the Town includes 2000 Census information that is applicable only to the Town. Information pertaining to residents of the Village is excluded.

The Town of Sidney has experienced two significant demographic trends that will greatly influence the future economic condition and quality of life of the community. During the 1990s the population of the Town grew, but so did the proportion of elderly people. This pattern of growth will create a demand on local government for services including access to medical care, assisted living facilities, nursing homes, and retail stores with appropriate products. In addition, a growing elderly population will also place additional demands on local government in the form of well maintained roads, adequate public safety and emergency services, and low taxes.

Another important demographic feature of the Town is that its residents are highly dependent on the Village for employment. This factor indicates that as the economic fortunes of the Village change, so do those of the Town. Looking to the future, it would seem that a strong partnership between the Town and the Village to recruit and retain both businesses and workers will be essential.

B. Population

Table 1 below shows a number of population trends that have changed the size and composition of the Town's population. From 1980 to 1990, the population of the Town decreased 2.4% with most of the decline among the age group 18 and under. However, from 1990 to 2000, the population increased 5.0% or 94 people, with most growth in older age groups (35 and older). Over the entire period of 1980 to 2000, the Town's population remained relatively constant, increasing only 2.3%. However a major feature of this growth was an increase in the number of elderly people (e.g., age 65+). Consider that in 1980 the proportion of people 65+ to the total population was 11.8%. Yet, by 1990 it had increased to 14.5% and by 2000 the proportion had reached 17.8%. This trend represents a significant degree of compositional change in the Town's population. It would appear that this increase has been due to some extent by an in-migration of retired people.

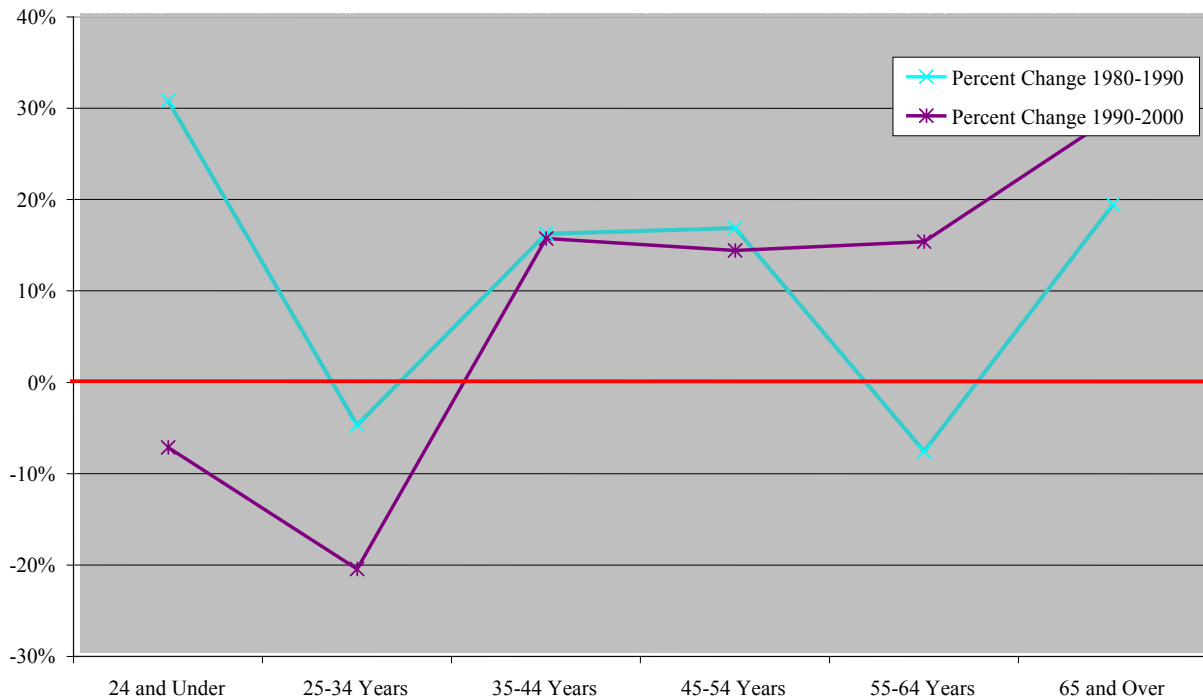
Table 1 Trends in Population, Gender, and Age, 1980-2000					
Population Groups	1980	1990	2000	Percent Change 1980-1990	Percent Change 1990-2000
Total Population	1,995	1,947	2,041	-2.4%	5.0%
Male	1,002	978	1,018	-2.4%	3.9%
Female	993	969	1,023	-2.5%	5.3%
Age of Population					
Under 5 Years	140	131	119	-6.4%	-10.1%
Under 18 Years	607	486	505	-19.9%	3.8%
18 and Over	1,388	1,461	1,536	5.3%	4.9%
24 and Under	503	658	611	30.8%	-7.7%
25-34 Years	277	264	210	-4.7%	-25.7%
35-44 Years	246	286	331	16.3%	13.6%
45-54 Years	213	249	285	16.9%	12.6%
55-64 Years	225	208	240	-7.6%	13.3%
65 and Over	236	282	364	19.5%	22.5%
85 and Over	23	19	24	-17.4%	20.8%
Median Age	n/a	37.1	41.4	n/a	+4.3 years

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 1980: DP-1; 1990: DP-1; 2000: DP-1

Another important population trend has been the significant decline in the size of the 25-34 age cohort which has declined from 277 persons in 1980 to 210 in 2000. This age cohort is important because it constitutes primary working age adults. In order to foster future business growth, the Sidney area needs to experience growth in the age groups spanning 25-54. If this age group does not expand, then future business growth can only occur if workers from outside the Sidney area can be recruited. Of course, if such workers can be encouraged to live in the Sidney area, then the advantage of recruiting workers is obvious; however, in the event they reside elsewhere the advantages are limited. The ultimate implication of these population trends, if they continue into the future, is to suggest that the Town will not be a ready source of labor supply for new businesses or future business expansions in the Tri-Town area.

Graph 1 below shows the significant growth in the elderly population in the last decade when compared with the 1980s and a slight decrease in the working age population. These trends indicate that enrollments in the Sidney School District that emanate from the Town of Sidney will likely decrease over the next decade. Since the Town depends somewhat on the Village for parks and recreation services, the utilization of these municipal services will likely decline somewhat as well. Finally, as noted previously, reductions in the working age population have served to decrease the future size of the labor pool that is necessary to support business development in the Village and the Town.

Graph 1
Percent Change in Population



Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 1980-2000

Table 2 below shows that there has been modest growth in the minority population with positive growth rates among Asians and Hispanics. From 1980 to 2000, the minority population grew from a total of 14 to 57 persons. Overall, the minority population of the Town constitutes approximately 3% of the population. As with many other upstate New York communities, the Town will likely see continued growth in the Asian and Hispanic population during the current decade.

Table 2 Trends in Race of Population, 1980-2000					
Racial Groups	1980	1990	2000	Percent Change 1980-1990	Percent Change 1990-2000
White	1,982	1,913	1,981	-3.6%	3.4%
Minority	14	42	57	66.7%	26.3%
Black	11	20	15	45.0%	-33.3%
American Indian	1	7	3	+6 persons	-3 persons
Asian	1	4	9	+3 persons	+5 persons
Hispanic	1	12	26	+11 persons	+14 persons
Other	0	3	4	+3 persons	+1 person

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 1980: DP-1; 1990: DP-1; 2000: DP-1

C. Household Characteristics

Table 3 below provides a summary of the trends in household status in the Town from 1980 to 2000. These trends are similar to those of other communities throughout New York State and the nation. Most of these changes reflect dramatic transformations in the structure and size of the American family. For example, while the Town has experienced an 8.9% rate of growth in the number of households, the number of family households has declined (-3.1%). In addition, the percentage of married couple families remained constant (1.4%), while the percentage of female householders with no husband present grew by 7.1%. It is interesting to note that the proportion of married couple families of all households decreased from 64.3% in 1980 to 59.7% in 2000. Finally, over the last decade, the percentage of non-family households grew by nearly 24%.

Table 3 Household Status of Population, 1980-2000					
Type of Household	1980	1990	2000	Percent Change 1980-1990	Percent Change 1990-2000
Total Households	680	744	817	8.6%	8.9%
Family Households	545	605	587	9.9%	-3.1%
Married Couple Family	437	481	488	9.5%	1.4%
Female Householder with no husband present	45	52	56	13.5%	7.1%
Non-Family Households	275	175	230	-57.4%	23.9%
Householder Living Alone	112	146	186	23.9%	21.5%
Householder 65 and Older	80	70	98	-14.9%	28.6%
Average Household Size	n/a	2.66	2.49	n/a	-.17 persons

Source: U. S. Bureau of Census, 1980: DP-1; 1990: DP-1; 2000: DP-1

Reflecting the Town's aging population is the significant growth over the last decade in householders living alone (21.5%) and the growth in the percentage of householders age 65 and older (28.6%). The continued growth in the elderly population together with declines in the number of young people, have served to reduce the average household size over the last decade. This is a trend that is common to both New York State and the nation at-large as families have grown smaller due to cultural, social, and economic factors.

D. Education

The educational attainment of Town residents increased over the period 1980 to 2000 as shown below in Table 4. Unfortunately, many education categories published by the U.S. Census are not comparable because they are segmented for residents aged 18 or 25. The discrepancies found in Table 4 below regarding reductions in the number of people with less than a high school education in the 1980s to increases in the 1990s is due to changes in the composition of the Town's population over this period. The declines in the 1980s are due to the increased attainment of education by the resident population. However, in the decade of the 1990s, these categories increased primarily because of a growth in the older age groups (i.e., 55 and older).

Table 4 Education Attainment, 1980-2000					
Level of Educational Attainment	1980	1990	2000	Percent Change 1980-1980	Percent Change 1990-2000
Less than 9 th Grade*	161	85	111	-89.4%	23.4%
9 th -12 th Grade (no diploma)*	213	172	212	-23.8%	18.9%
High School Graduate**	625	517	*574	-20.9%	--
Associates Degree**	n/a	105	*64	--	--
Bachelor's Degree**	42	148	*152	71.6%	--
Percent High School Graduate or Higher*	71.7	77.7	80.3	7.7%	3.2%

Source: U. S. Bureau of Census, 1980: DP-2; 1990: DP-2; 2000: DP-2

*Note: Among persons age 25+

**Note: Among persons age 18+

Typically, elderly persons do not have educational attainment at levels comparable with people of younger age groups (i.e., ages 25 to 45). As a result, because of the compositional change experienced by the Town in the 1990s, the statistical pattern shown in Table 4 appears to be somewhat of an anomaly.

E. Labor Force

The Town of Sidney Community Survey showed that 52% of respondents work in the Village or Town, and of this percentage, 80% are employed by businesses in the Village and 20% in the Town. A copy of the report of findings of the Town of Sidney Community Survey is provided in Appendix I, which is titled the Town of Sidney Community Survey Report, which is referred to in the Comprehensive Action Plan as the “*ST Community Survey Report.*” The second most important employment location for respondents was Oneonta (13.6%). (See *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 27.) Thus, the survey showed that the Town is very dependent on the Village for employment. Generally, employment trends have been somewhat stable for the past 30 years; however, women entered the workforce in significant numbers in the 1980s, at a rate of nearly 26%. In the 1990s the rate decreased somewhat (-6.2%). Given available data it is not clear what the causes of this decline could be.

Table 5 Labor Force by Gender, 1980-2000					
Persons Age 16 and Over	1980	1990	2000	Percent Change 1980-1990	Percent Change 1990-2000
Males in Labor Force	523	516	536	-1.3%	3.9%
Civilian	523	516	536	-1.3%	3.9%
Employed	493	477	500	-3.3%	4.8%
Unemployed	30	39	29	+ 9 persons	- 10 persons
Armed Forces	0	0	0	--	--
Not in Labor Force	164	201	n/a	22.6%	n/a
Females in Labor Force	345	434	407	25.8%	-6.2%
Civilian	345	434	407	25.8%	-6.2%
Employed	293	409	400	39.6%	-2.2%
Unemployed	52	25	7	- 27 persons	-18 persons
Armed Forces	0	0	0	--	--
Not in Labor Force	356	311	n/a	-12.6%	n/a

Source: U. S. Bureau of Census, 1980: DP-3; 1990: DP-3; 2000: DP-3

With the exception of farming, fishing and forestry occupations, which have very few workers to begin with, three occupational areas (construction, professional and sales) have grown the most in the last decade (see Table 6 below). Perhaps the most significant decline has occurred among production employment, which has declined 39% since 1980. This decline no doubt reflects long-term reductions in employment at Amphenol and small production businesses due to automation, outsourcing, and general employment downsizing. The loss of production jobs is problematic, since these jobs are typically the better paying jobs in the region. This employment shift from blue collar to service sector and office-based management jobs is a pattern common to most of the nation in the past 30 years.

Table 6
Employment Profile of Town Residents by Occupation 1980-2000

Occupations	1980	1990	2000	Percent Change 1980-1990	Percent Change 1990-2000	Percent Change 1980-2000
Management, professional, and related occupations	142	182	320	28%	76%	125%
Service	69	100	121	45%	21%	75%
Sales and Office	131	179	137	37%	-23%	5%
Farming, fishing, and forestry	92	60	6	-35%	-90%	-93%
Construction, extraction, and maintenance	19	21	105	11%	400%	453%
Production, transportation, material moving	333	344	211	3%	-39%	-37%

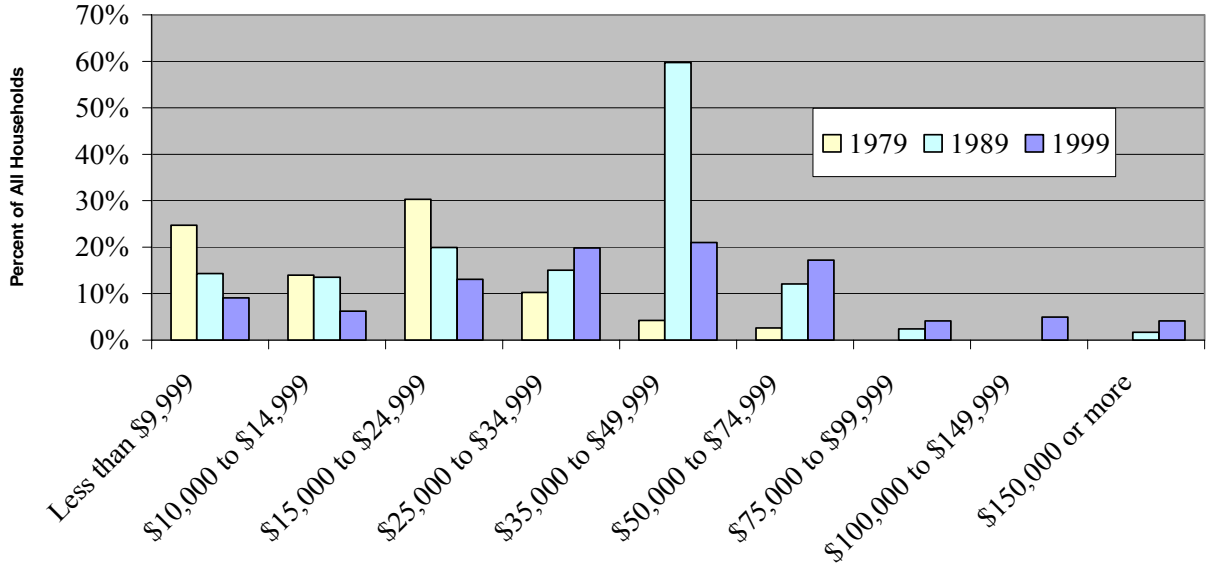
Source: U. S. Bureau of Census, 1980: DP-3; 1990: DP-3; 2000: DP-3

The 2000 Census also reports the labor force profile from another perspective, in terms of industry classification. In this regard, the industries that employ the most residents include manufacturing (26.0%), education, health and social services (23.9%), and retail trade (11.1). These three industries employ approximately 61% of the working population. However, it is interesting to note that nearly one in four workers are employed in manufacturing, this is a relatively large proportion of the population. This situation is positive since manufacturing jobs often pay higher wages on average than other jobs; however, manufacturing is also a less stable industrial sector and is very sensitive to economic downturns.

F. Income

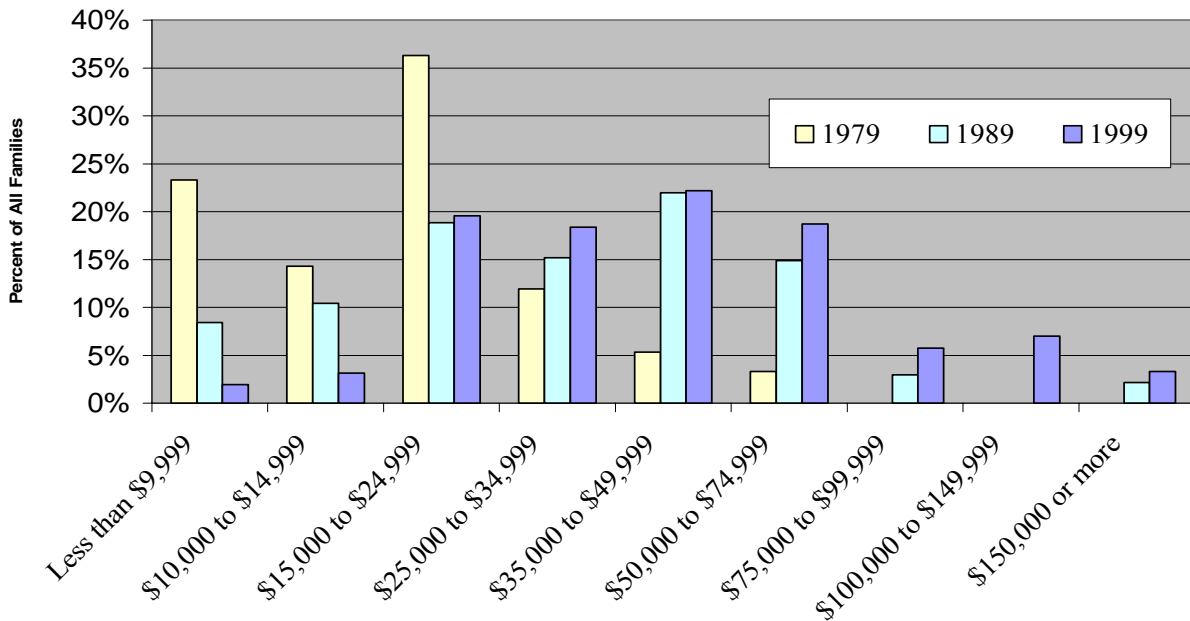
Graphs 2 and 3 below provide profiles of the household and family income distribution of all Town residents for years 1979 to 1999. In general, both graphs show that there has been some modest growth in the household and family income profiles of the Town. However, the indicated income growth is likely due to a few factors. First, in the 1990s many residents may have taken on a second job to meet family expenses. Second, there may have been some employer responses to inflation and thus wages have been raised to some degree. Finally, the decade was somewhat odd in that it began with a recession and ended with a dramatic economic upswing.

Graph 2
Household Income 1979 - 1999



Source: U. S. Bureau of Census, 1980: DP-4; 1990: DP-4; 2000: DP-4

Graph 3
Family Income, 1979 - 1999



Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 1980: DP-4; 1990: DP-4; 2000: DP-4

In order to consider the impact of these factors on wages, a comparison of incomes in 1989 and 1999, controlling for the effects of inflation, was conducted. The results of this comparison are presented in Table 7 below. In all the municipalities compared in Table 7, actual household income increased to varying degrees over the decade 1989 to 1999. However, when the effects of inflation are taken into account by applying a constant dollar comparison, the analysis shows that incomes actually declined. The incomes of Town residents did decrease at a rate less than that of Village residents, but more than residents of Delaware County.

Table 7 Changes in Median Household Income, 1989-1999				
Municipality	1989 Median Household Income	1989 Median Household Income- in 1999 Constant Dollars*	1999 Actual Median Household Income	Percent Difference 1989 to 1999
Village of Sidney	\$23,710	\$31,988	\$27,411	-14.3%
Town of Sidney	\$26,544	\$35,812	\$35,929	.3%
Delaware County	\$24,132	\$32,558	\$32,461	-.3%
New York State	\$32,965	\$44,475	\$43,393	-2.5%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 1980: DP-4; 1990: DP-4; 2000: DP-4

*Note: Constant dollar adjustments are based on CPI index and calculated by SUNY CECD.

Finally, the median household income of Town residents, while greater than that of residents of the Village of Sidney and Delaware County at-large, still lags behind that of the New York State median income of \$43,393. The income gap amounts to a significant \$7,464.

G. Poverty

The 2000 Census information for the Town of Sidney (again, excluding the Village) over the past decade, shows that the rate of poverty (for all persons) declined 3.8%, declining from 10.1% in 1990 to 6.3% in 2000 (see Table 8 below). Over the entire period 1980 to 2000, the rate of poverty declined 1.6%, declining from 7.9% in 1980 to 6.3% in 2000. The rate of poverty for persons over the age of 18 and among persons 65+ declined slightly as well. However, among families with a female householder without husband present, especially those with children under the age of 18, the poverty rate has increased since 1989. In 1999, the poverty rate for these families was 17.0%. This rate is very high, but is still far below the County rate for such families which was 39.9%. One of the major factors contributing to this situation is the impact of divorce. Since the median household income for the Town is approximately \$36,000 (which includes Village residents), then the incidence of divorce can suddenly result in economic deprivation for both spouses.

In terms of comparing poverty in the Town of Sidney with other towns and villages in Delaware County, the Town has one of the lowest poverty rates when measured with respect to families, families with female householders, and individuals.

Table 8 Poverty Status, 1979 - 1999					
Poverty Status by Age	1979	1989	1999	Percent Change 1979-1989	Percent Change 1989 - 1999
Persons for Whom Poverty Status is Determined	1,890	1,921	2,059		
<i>Below Poverty Level</i>	149	193	129		
Percent below Poverty level	7.9	10.1	6.3	2.2	-3.8
Individuals for Whom Poverty Status is Determined					
Persons 18 years and Over	n/a	1,374	1,511		
<i>Below Poverty Level</i>	n/a	136	96		
Percent below Poverty Level	n/a	9.9	6.4		-3.5
Persons 65 years and Over	494	245	320		
<i>Below Poverty Level</i>	21	34	12		
Percent below Poverty Level	4.3	13.9	3.7	9.6	-10.1
Related Children Under 18 Years	580	547	528		
<i>Below Poverty Level</i>	65	57	31		
Percent below Poverty Level	11.2	10.4	5.9	-0.8	-4.6
Related Children 5 to 17 Years	442	403	421		
<i>Below Poverty Level</i>	23	49	20		
Percent below Poverty Level	5.2	12.2	4.8	7.0	-7.4
Families for Whom Poverty Status is Determined	718	574	571		
<i>Below poverty level</i>	86	52	17		
Percent below Poverty Level	12.0	9.1	3.0	-2.9	-6.1
With Related Children Under 18 Years	295	317	293		
<i>Below Poverty Level</i>	84	30	17		
Percent below Poverty Level	28.5	9.5	5.8	-19.0	-3.7
Female Householder, no husband present for Whom Poverty Status is Determined	45	14	59		
<i>Below Poverty Level</i>	20	0	6		
Percent below Poverty Level	44.4	0	10.2	44.4	10.2
With Related Children Under 18 years	61	14	35		
<i>Below Poverty Level</i>	14	0	6		
Percent below Poverty Level	23.0	0	17.0	-23.0	17.0

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 1980: DP-4; 1990: DP-4; 2000: DP-4

Compared to other municipalities, the rate of poverty in the Town has declined. It is difficult to determine why this has been the case, but it may be that welfare reform has caused some residents to leave the area to find jobs. Consider that a great deal of the poverty in the Town is centered in and around the Sidney Center area and job opportunities, as well as transportation to jobs, is difficult to obtain. Thus, some residents who were once on welfare assistance, but had to move off such assistance, may have opted to move closer to areas where they could find jobs. Another factor contributing to the decline perhaps may be due to the influx of residents relocating from downstate, building homes and hiring locally for services.

The Sidney Center area seems to be a “poverty pocket” in the Town. In fact, the Delaware County Department of Social Services reports that 45 households are eligible and receiving one or more benefits from the programs administered by DSS. An examination of these 45 households reveals that 3 are public assistance cases, 11 Food Stamp cases, 12 HEAP cases and 19 Medicaid cases.¹

Table 9 Population Below Poverty Level, 1980-2000					
Municipality	Population below Poverty Level			Percent Change	
	1980	1990	2000	1980-1990	1990-2000
Village of Sidney	10.0	10.6	18.5	.6	7.9
Town of Sidney	7.9	10.1	6.3	2.2	-3.8
Delaware County	13.0	12.8	12.9	-.2	.1
New York State	13.6	12.8	14.6	-.8	1.8

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 1980: DP-4; 1990: DP-4; 2000: DP-4

H. Current Assets and Future Challenges

Current Assets

- During the last decade, the population of the Town increased by 5% or 94 persons.
- The median household income of the Town as of 1999 was \$35,929, which was higher than that of the Village of Sidney and Delaware County at-large.
- Since 1989, the Town median income has grown by .3%, when controlling for inflation. While this resulted in little real income growth, it compares well with the negative income growth that characterized the Village (-14.3%), County (-.3%) and State (-2.5%) over the same period.
- The poverty rate in the Town declined from 10.1% in 1989 to 6.3% in 1999.

¹ Report by the Delaware County Department of Social Services, September 4, 2002.

Future Challenges

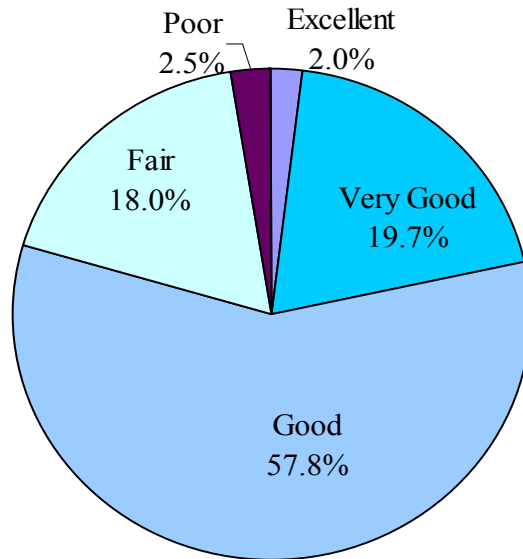
- ❑ The population of the Town increased at a moderate rate over the course of the last decade; however, this growth was primarily among persons age 35 and older. In particular, the age group 65+ has grown at a rate of 22.5% over the last decade. The growth in this population will place additional burdens on the Town in the future in terms of the need for community services, EMS services, medical care, assisted living, and nursing home facilities.
- ❑ Historically, the Town has provided labor to the Village's growing industries and to the expansion of smaller industries. However, in the last decade an important population trend has been the significant decline in the size of the 25-34 age cohorts which has declined from 277 persons in 1980 to 210 in 2000. This age cohort is important because it constitutes primary working age adults. In order to foster future business growth, the Sidney area needs to experience growth in the age groups spanning 25-54. If this age group does not expand, then future business growth can only occur if workers from outside the Sidney area can be recruited. This latter development will also be a significant challenge.
- ❑ The Hamlet of Sidney Center is a "poverty pocket" in the Town as confirmed by DSS statistics and visual observation. If this situation is to be resolved, the Town will need to develop a more comprehensive solution for addressing the living conditions of the residents.

IV. Quality of Life

Based on interviews with government officials, business leaders, and community leaders, as well as a survey of a random sample of Town residents, the quality of life in the Town is considered "good" to "very good."

Respondents to the Town of Sidney Community Survey rated the quality of life in the Town positively as depicted in Graph 4 below (see *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 3).

Graph 4
Quality of Life in the Village



Source: SUNY CECD ST Community Survey, 2002

A majority of respondents rated their quality of life as “good” (57.8%) or “very good” (19.7%). At the same time, it should be noted that one in five respondents evaluated the quality of life in the Town as “fair” or “poor.” Another important measure of the quality of life in the Town is the degree to which people are willing to remain in the community when they retire. The Town of Sidney Community Survey revealed that only 14.6% of respondents did not plan to retire in the Town, while 38.5% will probably do so, and 9.3% will definitely do so (see *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 4). Also, about 82% of respondents “agree” or “strongly agree” that the “Town is a wonderful place to raise a family” and nearly 90% “feel safe and secure” (see *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 7).

Finally, if people feel a strong sense of community they often feel very positive about their life in their community. In this regard, 58% of respondents “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement “there is a strong sense of community spirit” in our Town; however, nearly one in three (30.1%) respondents “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with this statement (see *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 7). Thus, it would seem that respondents would like to feel a stronger sense of community and may desire efforts to develop more community events and celebrations.

V. Government Services

A. Introduction

Based on interviews with government officials, business leaders, and a random survey of Town residents, Town government is viewed somewhat positively. The Town of Sidney Community Survey revealed that approximately 60% of respondents “agree” or “strongly agree” that “Town government is responsive and competent.” However, approximately 23% of respondents “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with this statement and 17.3% had no opinion (see *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 8). These responses indicate some concerns with Town government or a lack of understanding about what Town government does. Perhaps these views stem from the large size of the Town which makes it difficult to relate to a Town government, and can affect the quality of communication between Town government and residents.

In terms of the evaluation of 16 community services, Town government received the following evaluation rankings: “Town Clerk” (1st), “Fire Protection” (4th), “Roadway Maintenance” (7th), “Outdoor Recreational Facilities” (8th), “Code Enforcement” (13th), “Indoor Recreation Facilities” (14th), and “Teen Recreation” (15th). Thus, a few Town services received low evaluations including “Outdoor Recreation Facilities,” “Code Enforcement,” “Indoor Recreation Facilities,” and “Teen Recreation.” Also, it should be noted that “Town Government” was ranked 11th (see *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 10).

With regard to the most serious issues facing the community that impact Town government, most respondents to the Town of Sidney Community Survey selected the following: “Local tax burden,” “Better paying jobs,” “Access to healthcare services,” “More effective code enforcement,” “Traffic management and safety,” and “Need for more effective zoning.” These issues were cited respectively as the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 9th, 10th, and 11th most important issues out of a list of 11 (see *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 18).

In summary, the Town of Sidney government is small and provides only a limited number of services and as a result, it may be more difficult for residents to relate to their local government. Most important may be the fact that the Town is very large with few concentrations of people, and this may make it difficult for government and community leaders to build working relationships with its citizens. However, in this regard it may be helpful for Town and Village officials to collaborate in developing joint community events and celebrations.

B. Town Government

Staffing and Operations

As of 2002, the Town of Sidney had a total budget of \$1,198,166, which represents the combined total for the General Fund, General Outside Village, Highway Town-Wide, Highway Outside Village, and Special District Funds. The total number of Town employees is 47 (both full and part-time). A number of seasonal workers are hired by various departments (e.g., Highway Department). A few elected and/or appointed officials provide public service to the community without monetary compensation or for minimal fees when necessary.



Current Assets

- ❑ Approximately 60% of respondents to the Town of Sidney Community Survey “agree” or “strongly agree” that “Town government is responsive and competent” (see *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 8).
- ❑ The Town of Sidney collaborates with the Village of Sidney in many areas, making government operations more cost effective and efficient. Sharing a municipal building (Civic Center) and Court facility, as well as cost of utilities and maintenance has provided both governments with adequate office space and public amenities (e.g., senior meals, indoor recreation, meeting rooms etc.). In addition, a shared recreation program (Joint Youth Program) and Office of the Assessor are excellent examples of inter-municipal cooperation.

Future Challenges

- ❑ When provided with a list of 11 serious issues facing the Town, respondents of the Town of Sidney Community Survey selected “Local tax burden” as the number 1 most serious issue. This issue was selected despite the fact that tax rates (per \$1,000 of assessed value) have remained relatively “flat” since 1995 as it pertains to all taxes (e.g., General, Highway and Special District taxes).² As a result, it may be difficult for the Town to raise taxes in the future to proactively address problems facing the Town.
- ❑ The Hamlet of Sidney Center faces serious water, sewer, and structural safety problems with residences that will need to be resolved within the next 3-5 years. The solutions may include such high expenditure projects as extending a water system from a nearby community, construction of a sewer plant, and funds to support the rehabilitation of housing.

² *Town of Sidney, Office of the Town Clerk, Report on Tax Rates 1995-2002.*

- ❑ The Town needs to collaborate closely with the Village to support future housing projects that can be sited within convenient access to Village services. This collaboration will benefit the Village by providing middle and high income housing and benefit the Town by generating taxable property.

C. Highway Department

Staffing and Equipment



The Department of Public Works is managed in the spring, summer, and fall months by one full-time elected Highway Superintendent and 7 full-time employees. During the winter months the staffing includes 9 full-time employees and 1 part-time. Current staffing levels are adequate to manage the responsibilities of the department.

Operations

The department manages a total of 60 miles of road ranging from the Otego Truck Stop to the Sidney Dam near the Town of Franklin line, to the Town of Walton line and over to Route 8 on the Town of Masonville line. In the winter months, the department plows approximately 90 miles of road, because it manages an additional 30 miles of County roads. The Town is reimbursed for all labor time required for this purpose.

Much of the work of the department is seasonal in nature. For example, in the spring the focus is on brush cutting (to right of way), upgrading of dirt roads, changing pipes, and replacing culverts. In the summer the focus is on black topping and placing stone and oil on dirt roads. In the fall, the department prepares for winter by stockpiling sand and getting the plowing equipment ready for use.

The department cooperates with the Village of Sidney in terms of equipment exchange and assistance, but normally it has little interaction with the Village.

The department's budget (approximately \$250,000) has been at the same level for nearly 3 years and this has meant that road repairs have been limited and uncompleted projects are regularly rolled over into the following year.

Current Assets

- ❑ The department and the Town Board have a very cooperative relationship and the Town Board is supportive of the equipment needs of the department.
- ❑ The department assists in providing both equipment and services to The Hospital and East Sidney Dam.
- ❑ Department staffing is adequate to meet its current responsibilities.

- ❑ Most department equipment and vehicles are in good condition.

Future Challenges

- ❑ While most department equipment is in good working condition, the inventory is aging and it is important that a 10 year equipment replacement plan be instituted.
- ❑ In the past, the Town procured most of its road cinder from the Jennison Plant in Bainbridge. However, since it closed, the Town has had to purchase this product from Pennsylvania and local haulers. As a result, the cost for grit is expensive.
- ❑ Sidney Center remains a serious challenge to the department because of its drainage problems, sewerage problems, and playgrounds that require mowing and upkeep.
- ❑ The railroad crossing on Parker Hollow Road was turned into a road and is now deteriorating. An engineering study of this problem will be required in the near future.

D. Public Safety

Staffing

The Town of Sidney (excluding the Village) relies on police services from the Troop C headquarters of the New York State Police located on Route 7 in Unadilla and the Delaware County Sheriff's Department.



Troop C has a total of 15 officers that are assigned to the three-County region that Troop C is responsible for patrolling. This is an enormous area encompassing nearly 1,000 square miles and part of Interstate 88. The region is covered by 2 day shifts, 2 night shifts, and 1 flexible shift. Often coverage is reduced to less than 5 officers due to vacations, special assignments, and sickness; however, the State Police Headquarters in Oneonta and Norwich also provide necessary coverage for this region.

The Delaware County Sheriff's Department has a staff of 6 full-time officers, 2 criminal investigators, part-time officers that are on call, and the use of fraud investigators of the Delaware County Department of Social Services (DSS), through a unique staff-sharing relationship between the Sheriff's Department and DSS.

Operations

State Police Officers that operate out of the Troop C Headquarters are responsible for covering a number of quadrants in a three-County area that covers an area of about 1,000 square miles. In addition, Troop C patrols part of Interstate 88 in conjunction with the police barracks in Oneonta. The officers respond to calls from the Sidney area by means of the 911 system.

The Sheriff's Department has no set patrol in the Town of Sidney and calls emanating from the Town are handled by a Department sub-station located in the Town of Franklin. A deputy officer assigned to the sub-station patrols a 1,400 square mile area that includes the Town of Sidney.

Current Assets

- ❑ Approximately 87% of respondents to the Town of Sidney Community Survey “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement that “I am satisfied with the efforts and priorities of the State Police and the Delaware County Sheriff's Department to protect our Town” and 89% “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement that “I feel safe and secure in our Town” (see *ST Community Report*, Tables 7 and 8).
- ❑ Troop C State Police Headquarters is conveniently located near the Town of Sidney and is located just off of Route 7.
- ❑ The 911 System enables the State Police to efficiently dispatch, improving officer response time.
- ❑ The Sheriff's Department is the back-up communications center for Delaware County and works closely with State Police to respond to calls from the Town of Sidney.
- ❑ In a highly innovative arrangement, DSS fraud investigators have been deputized by the Delaware County Sheriff and are used to help the Department investigate criminal cases. This arrangement has made it possible for the Sheriff's Department to effectively respond to an increase in criminal investigations, despite limited budgetary resources.

Future Challenges

- ❑ The number of officers that are assigned to the Town of Sidney area varies with day and time, but because Troop C State Police officers have such a large service area to patrol, they can only provide limited coverage for the Town. Looking to the future, this limited coverage may not be adequate. Particularly, when it is considered that incidents of illegal drug use, vehicular accidents, and DWI's have been on the rise in recent years.
- ❑ Given the rural nature of life in the Town of Sidney and the various cultural and social values that encourage drinking, the incidence of DWI situations is high with arrests for this violation being among the highest in the Troop C service area.

- ❑ The incidence of vehicular accidents is also high in the Town of Sidney, as in other rural areas of the Troop C service area. This situation is somewhat due to the increased number of motor vehicles on the roads and the tendency for people to drive fast on rural roads which were designed many years ago to accommodate much slower speeds.
- ❑ The Sheriff's Department has seen a significant increase in criminal cases and spends more time on these cases than on vehicular violations and accidents.
- ❑ There has been a significant rise in the incidence of suspicious fires and thus the Sheriff's Department has had to allocate more manpower to arson investigations.
- ❑ In the future, the Sheriff's Department will be under increased pressure to allocate more resources for professional development for its staff for the purpose of anti-terrorism training and DWI enforcement. These pressures will impact on the ability of the Department to provide public safety coverage to Towns and Villages.

E. Office of the Town Clerk

Staffing

The Office of the Town Clerk is managed by one full-time elected official and per diem help as required. The Town Clerk's office is located in the Town Hall of the Sidney Civic Center in the Village of Sidney.

Operations

The Town Clerk provides a number of services to Town government officials and residents. The Town Clerk's responsibilities include the following:

1. Registrar of Vital Records for both Town and Village.
2. Records Management Officer for the Town.
3. Maintains records of adopted minutes from the meetings of the Town Board and Planning Board.
4. Oversees the budget process.
5. Maintains records and information pertaining to Town codes.
6. Processes all formal complaints lodged against Town government.
7. Records and collects fees for building permits.
8. Processes all Freedom of Information requests.
9. Processes all tax collections for the Town and County.
10. Coordinates meetings of the Zoning Board of Appeals.
11. Manages correspondence for the Board of Assessment Reviews.
12. Processes all dog and conservation licensing.
13. Processes all handicapped parking permits.
14. Processes all marriage licenses.
15. Serves as a notary public.

Current Assets

- ❑ The Town Clerk received the highest evaluation from respondents of the Town of Sidney Community Survey – the Town Clerk ranked 1st out of a total of 16 community services (see *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 10).

Future Challenges

- ❑ State mandates will continue to place greater monitoring, implementation and reporting requirements on local government and many responsibilities associated with these mandates will be assigned to the Town Clerk's Office. As a result, additional staff support and computer equipment needs are expected to grow in the future.
- ❑ The professional development and training needs of the Town Clerk's Office will grow as the responsibilities and workload of this office increase in the future.
- ❑ Maintaining Town records on electronic file system.

F. Healthcare Services



Staffing and Operations

The healthcare needs of the Town of Sidney are served by a network of providers within the Sidney area and the region. Most important, the Town is very fortunate to have a major hospital with emergency services and both inpatient and outpatient services.

The Hospital in Sidney is a non-profit municipally owned health care facility which was established in 1943. As a municipal facility, the Town of Sidney operates The Hospital by means of its appointment of members to the Hospital Board of Directors and through joint meetings of the Town Board and The Hospital Board on a quarterly basis. In addition, The Hospital receives \$1,200 a month from the general fund of the Town budget. This allocation has remained at the same level for over a decade. However, the Town also provides many in-kind services (e.g., plowing) and also pays for a portion of the utility costs for the operation of the facility. The day-to-day management of hospital operations rests with The Hospital Board of Directors and Administrator. The Hospital employs approximately 300 people and provides services to people who live in Towns and Villages within a 15 mile radius of the facility. The Hospital provides many services including emergency and acute care, long-term convalescent care through skilled nursing services, as well as laboratory, surgical, and radiology diagnostic support.

In terms of special facilities, the “Labor of Love” birthing center is available with limited neonatal training and facilities. The Center offers 6 private rooms for labor, delivery, recovery and post-partum care. Also, a Cardiac Rehabilitation Center was developed with the support of Cardiology Associates of Binghamton to provide diverse healthcare programming for patients

undergoing cardiac recovery including exercise, education, and nutritional programs. The Hospital also provides complete in-patient services for medical, surgical, pediatric and intensive care needs. The Hospital has a newly remodeled ICU and surgical recovery room. In terms of surgery, The Hospital offers same day and inpatient surgical services including general, Orthopedic, Gynecology, GI Suite, and Urological procedures.

Also, The Hospital provides a wide variety of diagnostic imaging services including X-ray, Mammography, Ultra-sound, CT scan, Bone Densitometry, and Nuclear services. The Hospital also provides primary care services through The Sidney Health & Wellness Center now located in the basement of the Gelder Medical building located across the street from The Hospital. Recently, the satellite clinic for the Veterans Administration Healthcare Network was moved to the Route 8 medical office building located in Bainbridge, NY. This clinic is funded through the Veterans Administration and is highly utilized by individuals of veteran and military status. It provides patients with primary care and minimal specialized services (e.g., laboratory, pharmacology etc.).

Finally, The Hospital manages a 40 bed skilled nursing care facility located in their main building. This facility provides rehabilitation and personal health care for people who require convalescent care.

Many healthcare facilities, both inpatient and outpatient, located outside the community, are highly utilized by local residents. The Gelder Medical Group and Bassett Clinic, also located in Sidney, offer a wide range of healthcare services that are viable options for Sidney residents. With pediatric, psychiatric, obstetrics/gynecology, and general practitioners certified to practice at The Hospital, residents can receive comprehensive healthcare with some specialized services. There are numerous private medical offices within the region that have privileges at The Hospital that can be accessed by Sidney residents.

Also, the Sidney Health Center, managed by Planned Parenthood, has an office in the Village which provides such medical services as birth control, cancer screening, gynecological exams, HIV/AIDS testing, prenatal care, and STD testing and treatment.

Major healthcare centers within the region that serve the Town of Sidney include: Chenango Memorial Hospital of Norwich, A.O. Fox Hospital of Oneonta, Community Hospital in Hamilton, and Mary Imogene Bassett Hospital of Oneonta and Cooperstown, of which The Hospital is affiliated. Outside the region, the healthcare centers include: Albany Medical Center, Lourdes Hospital of Binghamton and Wilson Memorial Hospital of Johnson City. Some residents even travel as far away as Albany and Syracuse to receive specialized and inpatient care. This is sometimes necessary since most area hospitals have affiliations with urban based hospitals. For example, A.O. Fox Hospital in Oneonta is affiliated with Albany Medical Center in Albany, N.Y.

Current Assets

- ❑ Respondents to the Town of Sidney Community Survey give an overall positive evaluation of “The Hospital.” About 66% of those who utilize The Hospital either “frequently” or “sometimes” believe the services are “very good” or “excellent.” Interestingly, approximately 67% of respondents who reported that they have “rarely” or “never” used The Hospital believe the services are “very good” or “excellent.” (See *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 14.) Thus, The Hospital has a very good reputation among respondents. Additionally, respondents ranked “The Hospital” 9th out of 16 community services in terms of evaluation of services (see *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 10). The personal value of access to health care is important as well. According to respondents, “Access to medical care,” as a community value, was ranked very high – it ranked 5th out of a total of 15 Town characteristics (see *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 19).
- ❑ While transportation to and from health care services can range from as little as 10 miles to as much as 50 miles, the region is rich in medical facilities and health care professionals. Some of the most frequently used facilities include The Hospital, Gelder Medical Group, Bassett Clinic of Sidney, A.O. Fox Hospital in Oneonta (affiliated with Albany Medical Center), Mary Imogene Bassett Hospital of Oneonta and Cooperstown, and Chenango Memorial Hospital in Norwich.
- ❑ The availability of excellent healthcare facilities within the region is an important quality of life asset that should be used in efforts to market the community to new residents and business prospects.
- ❑ The Hospital recently established an affiliation with Mary Imogene Basset Hospital in Cooperstown, N.Y. This arrangement has provided The Hospital with a general surgeon serving in Sidney.
- ❑ The Hospital, which was constructed in the 1940s, is undergoing renovations to upgrade its facility and operations. To guide these efforts, the administration developed and implemented a long range facility plan to assist in identifying and completing a series of capital projects.

Future Challenges

- ❑ Most healthcare providers in the region accept a wide range of insurance and compensation programs. However, the aging population and high rate of poverty within the Sidney area directly affect compensation levels for healthcare providers. The greatest percentage of healthcare reimbursements for The Hospital and independent providers is derived from federally funded Medicare and Medicaid entitlement programs. These benefits provide healthcare compensation to the service provider at a reduced rate and delayed remittance. As a result, hospitals and providers experience lost revenue and minimal profit for services. In addition, individuals of the working class that do not qualify for public services often are either underinsured or have no healthcare coverage to

defray costs. The increasing cost of medical care is making it difficult for providers to collect payment from self-pay patients because of inability to pay. The commercial insurance industry also affects the profitability of The Hospital. With new regulations empowering insurance carriers to review and authorize treatment, many healthcare providers and facilities have been limited as to what types of treatments can be rendered. This practice often causes a loss in revenue for the healthcare provider as a result of missed authorizations and the payment responsibility falling back on the patient who most likely can not afford the direct out-of-pocket expense for such treatments and care. These conditions limit the ability of rural, under-funded healthcare facilities to expand operations and healthcare coverage for the region and often require patients to travel outside of the region for specialized healthcare services, further compounding the fiscal situation of The Hospital.

- ❑ The bad debt expense of 2001 for The Hospital was \$464,000. This figure constitutes the revenue loss from unpaid medical bills for services provided and the cost of collection activity. Also included is the total lack of reimbursement due to bankruptcies and other forms of consumer financial protections.
- ❑ The Town has indebted itself 2.7 million dollars in loans for The Hospital with no significant reduction in the loan principle over the last five years.
- ❑ In the Town of Sidney Community Survey, residents were asked to indicate what health care services are not currently available to them. About 11% of respondents cited “Access and affordability of health care services,” 37% cited a “Need for more doctors,” and 52% mentioned a “Need for more specialists” (see *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 16).
- ❑ Respondents to the Town of Sidney Community Survey also indicated a bi-modal travel pattern to access the region’s health care services with respect to both inpatient and outpatient care. Respondents indicated that they are either traveling less than 10 miles for services or that they travel more than 30 miles (see *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 17).
- ❑ Reflecting the aging nature of the Town’s population, approximately 38% of respondent’s travel 30 miles or more to acquire long-term care (see *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 17).

G. Code Enforcement

Staffing

The Town Code Enforcement Office is staffed by one part-time person on an “as needed” basis. The Code Enforcement Officer enforces all Town ordinances, zoning codes, and serves as the Uniform Fire Code Officer.

Operations

The Code Enforcement Officer is engaged in enforcement activities primarily on the basis of responses to written complaints by residents. Approximately 80% of the code enforcement work emanates from complaints from residents of the Hamlet of Sidney Center. Most of these complaints focus on the presence of junk cars, structural maintenance due to the conversion of many single family homes to two-family dwellings, and concerns about the public safety of buildings.

The Code Enforcement Officer also issues building permits and most of the activity in the Town at the present time is for the construction of single family homes.

Current Assets

- ❑ Large areas of the Town are zoned agriculture, which provides protection for the agricultural industry in the Town. This is important, since over 90% of respondents to the Town of Sidney Community Survey believe that it is either “somewhat important” or “very important” to protect agricultural land (see *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 21).
- ❑ The Town established zoning in the mid-1960s and in this regard was many years ahead of other rural communities in the region in recognizing the value of zoning for the wise stewardship of its natural resources.

Future Challenges

- ❑ 60% of respondents to the Town of Sidney Community Survey believe that the Town should not “relax its zoning and housing code regulations.” About 29.4% believe that the regulations should be relaxed and 11% are not sure (see *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 6). Thus, respondents are somewhat divided as to how they view the enforcement of regulations. This finding may be related to how enforcement is currently implemented or may reflect a need to educate the public on the value of zoning and housing codes.
- ❑ 63% of respondents to the Town of Sidney Community Survey answered affirmatively to the statement: “When you think about the need to protect residential areas from business development, should the Town exercise its authority to do this?” However, 25% of respondents responded that they were “not sure” (see *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 22). Again, this finding suggests the need for Town government to share additional information about code enforcement and zoning with the general public.
- ❑ The Office of Code Enforcement received an evaluation ranking of 13th out of a list of 16 community services by respondents to the Town of Sidney Community Survey. Only “Indoor Recreational Facilities” and “Teen Recreation” ranked lower (see *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 10).

- ❑ Approximately 80% of the Code Enforcement Officer’s time is devoted to addressing complaints that arise in the Hamlet of Sidney Center. These problems will persist until the Town is able to address the water, sewer, and structural problems facing the Hamlet. This is a high priority problem that the Town needs to develop a future plan for.
- ❑ Currently, the Code Enforcement Officer’s mode of operation is reactive as opposed to proactive. In nearly all instances, enforcement action is taken in response to written complaints by residents. Given the multitude of problems plaguing the Hamlet of Sidney Center, a more proactive approach to code enforcement may be needed in the future.
- ❑ Given the emergent land use and housing development challenges facing the Town, together with the growing water, sewer, and structural problems facing the Hamlet of Sidney Center, it may be necessary to increase the Code Enforcement position to half-time.
- ❑ The Code Enforcement Officer and the Town Planning Board rarely meet to discuss issues pertaining to zoning and housing codes. Given the recent growth in housing development in the Town and persistent problems with Sidney Center, regular meetings of these officials would be of great benefit. It may even be possible for these officials to begin a process of planning for the future of land use in the Town. Officials of the Delaware County Planning Department can provide valuable technical assistance and should be invited to participate in these meetings.

H. Planning Board

Staffing

The Town of Sidney Planning Board consists of five members who are appointed by the Town Board of Trustees and serve terms of 5 years.

Operations

The Town Planning Board was created by the Town of Sidney Board of Trustees for the purpose of controlling land use. The Planning Board decides on all matters associated with applications for rezoning, variances, and special use permits. The Board also serves in an advisory capacity to the Board of Trustees in the preparation and amending of zoning regulations, official maps, special purpose controls and compliance with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). Also, the Planning Board is responsible for creating and administering subdivision regulations, reviewing site plan laws, issuing special permits and assisting with studies as directed by the Board of Trustees.

Current Assets

- ❑ The Planning Board is pro-business development and recognizes the need to collaborate with the Village of Sidney to accommodate economic development and the construction of new single family housing in the Sidney area.
- ❑ The Planning Board recognizes the need to avoid “spot zoning” and the importance of reviewing the current status of zoning in the Town.
- ❑ The Planning Board would like to engage in long-range planning to guide future economic and residential development in the Town.

Future Challenges

- ❑ The Town has never operated on the basis of a Master (or Comprehensive) Plan. As the economic and residential development needs of the Sidney area have grown in recent years, the Town will need to use planning to guide this development. The use of a Comprehensive Action Plan will help the Town be proactive in managing and influencing the location and scope of future development.
- ❑ In terms of commercial development, the zoning configuration of the Town needs to be reevaluated by the Planning Board. Some areas of the Town that could be considered for re-zoning include:
 - The eastern part of the Town by Plankenhorn Road where Village water and sewer facilities could be extended.
 - Along Route 23, toward the Hamlet of Sidney Center.
 - Along Back River Road, the part which borders the Town of Otego, near Exit 12, off of I-88.
 - Other areas along Route 23, which already accommodates tractor trailer traffic, would also be suitable for commercial development.

I. Dog Control

Staffing

The Town employs a part-time (on-call) Dog Control Officer who provides services within the jurisdiction of the Town.

Operations

The Dog Control Officer investigates and takes corrective action on all complaints received relating to unlicensed dogs; cruelty to dogs; dogs running at large; and dogs that are behaving in such a way as to threaten public safety. In response to a complaint, the Officer impounds and delivers the dog to the Delaware Valley Humane Society shelter located in the Town of Sidney. The shelter then has procedures for boarding the seized dog for 5-7 days until the owner is located. If the owner is not located, then the dog is evaluated and placed up for adoption. The Officer may also issue a summons of violation to owners of animals in violation of New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets Regulations and/or municipal codes and regulations.

Current Assets

- ❑ The Town of Sidney currently has a contract with the Delaware Valley Humane Society shelter and the Town assumes all costs involved in the seizure, boarding, and care incurred at the shelter.
- ❑ The Animal Control Office is currently able to manage all resident calls for the control of animals (approximately 10-15 per month) and has good working relations with the Delaware Valley Humane Society.

Future Challenges

- ❑ None

VI. Educational Resources

A. Library Services

The Town of Sidney receives library services from the Sidney Memorial Public Library located on River Street in the Village. The Library is chartered to serve the Sidney School District which encompasses the Village of Sidney, Town of Sidney, and portions of the Towns of Guilford, Franklin, Masonville, and Unadilla. The Library also manages branch libraries in the Town of Masonville and Sidney Center.



The mission of the Sidney Memorial Public Library is to provide people of all ages with current information on topics related to work, school, and personal life; encourage self-directed growth and development; address the need for reading and enhancing daily life through the use of library services and community interaction.

Staffing and Collections

The Library has 7 full-time and 7 part-time employees, as well as 12 volunteers. As of 2002, the Library housed a total of 133,000 books and periodicals and has 1,790 reference materials that do not circulate. The Library also has access to a wide variety of Internet information and research databases which can be accessed by the public using in-house computer terminals.

Operations

The Library is open 66 hours per week and every day of the week. Since the Library is chartered to serve the Sidney School District, its operating budget is voted on by the public at the same time as the school district budget. The revenue generated from the public is based on property tax assessments. For the 2001-2002 fiscal year the Library budget totaled \$443,830. It serves a total of 7,347 card holders of which 3,606 (or 49.1%) are residents of the school district and 3,741 (or 50.9%) are not members of the school district. As a result, the Library is essentially a regional library.

Also, Town residents located in the Sidney Center area have access to a branch library. The library is staffed by volunteers and is open most days of the week.

Current Assets

- ❑ Respondents to the Town of Sidney Community Survey gave the Library the number 2 ranking when compared to a list of 20 community services. This ranking indicates that residents highly value the services provided by the Library (see *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 10).
- ❑ Town residents in the Sidney Center area have access to a branch library that has computer Internet access with two terminals.
- ❑ The Library has an excellent building which includes an expansion, additional parking, and refurbishment that was completed in 2002.
- ❑ Library patrons have access to 9 computers and many computerized information directories for learning and research.
- ❑ The staff of the Library is well trained and is able to deliver a wide variety of informational programs for people of all ages.
- ❑ A very active schedule of programs and workshops makes the Library an integral part of the community and brings together people of all ages.
- ❑ The Library has an ideal location with easy access from a variety of directions. The library building itself provides an attractive gateway to the Village.

- ❑ The Library has an excellent Internet page that is ideally suited to meet the growing use of the Internet by Town residents (see *ST Community Survey Report*, Tables 28 and 29).

Future Challenges

- ❑ Given dramatic changes in information technology, the Library staff must keep pace with these changes and this is placing greater burdens on the limited staff.
- ❑ The Library needs to better market its programs and services to the public and is currently conducting a strategic planning process to improve this capacity.
- ❑ The Library would like to establish a collaborative relationship working with Literacy Volunteers of America, which is now based in Oneonta.
- ❑ The Library needs additional staff trained in using Internet research to help clients find information as it pertains to medicine/healthcare and reference work.
- ❑ The Library would like to establish a collaborative relationship with the Sidney School District Library. The Sidney library has numerous resources that could benefit public school students (e.g., electronic database sharing, provide speakers, training students in library research).
- ❑ To facilitate learning opportunities for residents, the Library would like to collaborate with a local college to provide a distance learning facility with credit and non-credit bearing courses. This idea is feasible given that the Sidney Literacy Training Office was closed in 2002 and its operations were centralized in Oneonta. In addition, the Library is the pivotal point of community interaction and is ideally located in the Tri-Town Area.
- ❑ Increasing the patronage of the branch libraries, specifically, Sidney Center through outreach activities and special programming.
- ❑ The Sidney Center branch facility needs to be upgraded, or if possible, relocated. A possible relocation site could be the Sidney Center Elementary School. This site would provide additional space, convenient access, and public amenities (e.g., restrooms).

B. Sidney Central Schools

Operations and Facilities

The Sidney Central School District is comprised of the Village and Town of Sidney, Sidney Center and the Town of Masonville. Serving approximately 1,450 students and employing nearly 275 faculty members and staff persons, the district educational programming is comprehensive, providing instruction for grades K-12. Four separate school facilities house the students and the current configuration is as follows:



- Sidney Center Elementary School (for residents of Sidney Center)
Serves grades K-5
Amenities: gym; cafeteria; library; playground; and a softball/baseball field.
2002-2004 Capital Projects: new playground; library; gymnasium; computer center; and in-classroom computers.
- Masonville Elementary School (for residents of the Town of Masonville)
Serves grades K-5
Amenities: gym; cafeteria; library; playground.
2002-2004 Capital Projects: new playground; library; gymnasium; computer center; and in-classroom computers.
- Sidney Elementary/Middle School (for residents of the Village and Town of Sidney, Sidney Center and Town of Masonville)
Serves grades K-8
Amenities: gym (elementary); 2 gyms (middle); cafeteria (shared); library; playground; art room; and technology room.
2002-2004 Capital Projects: new playground; library; gymnasium; computer center; in-classroom computers; “Project Adventure Challenge Course” (proposed).
- Sidney High School (for residents of the entire School District)
Serves grades 9-12
Amenities: gym (divides into two); special rooms for agriculture, building and construction (woodworking), art, and technology; cafeteria; library; observatory; football field; softball/baseball fields; tennis courts; health office; auditorium; and a mobile high tech chemistry lab.
2002-2004 Capital Projects: new gymnasium; library; health office; six lane indoor swimming pool; lighted football stadium with eight lane running track; softball/baseball fields; and upgraded tennis courts.

In addition to the upgrade of school facilities, a new transportation center, complete with classroom and wash-bay, was recently erected to maintain the 35 school buses used throughout the district.

The current school district budget of \$17,827,570 allows for various types of educational programming. In addition to the basic components of education, the Sidney Central School District offers independent and innovative programs for its students.

Resource rooms are utilized for remedial instruction and each grade has a special education teacher that provides services to the developmentally and physically disabled as well as the behaviorally challenged. Capability for this service is limited however; in severe cases the student is transported to the Delaware-Chenango-Madison-Otsego Board of Cooperative Educational Services (DCMO BOCES) site for adaptive education.

Technology courses are offered to Junior and Senior students interested in learning a specialized skill or trade. The district transports these students to the DCMO BOCES campus for instruction. In addition, the New Visions curriculum is available to students interested in healthcare. Currently, The Hospital helps to educate and train students through hands-on learning and observation. Expansion of this program into the legal profession will occur in the near future. Along with these curriculum options, students can participate in the School to Work Internship Program that gives students on the job experience while attending school. A Pre-engineering Program is currently being developed for interested students, although it is presently in its initial stages.

For students of academic excellence, Advanced Placement Instruction is provided as well as the opportunity to complete college level coursework through SUNY Delhi, Syracuse University Project Advance Program (SUPA).

Transitional schooling is provided to students who are working their way back into society but are not yet able to fully integrate into the traditional classroom setting. Classes within this curriculum are held after school hours between 3-5pm in the afternoon. Along with this program is the alternative school for students who do not attend a full day of coursework for various reasons.

At this time, before and/or after school child care programming is not provided by the Sidney School District.

Each school facility has a cafeteria with complete food service. Students can enjoy both breakfast and lunch at school with limited cost. Free and reduced lunch programming is available to families who qualify. This service is highly utilized by students in every grade.

The healthcare needs of the students are managed by a team of two Registered Nurses (RN's), and two Licensed Practicing Nurses (LPN's). The Registered Nurses instruct and supervise the LPN's in the care of the students. However, healthcare is limited to preventative (physicals) and crisis care management (e.g., injury, illness etc.) and does not include formal diagnosis and prescriptive treatment.

Many in-school and extra-curricular programs are available within the district for student participation. Music, art, sports, and clubs are very popular and events are well attended. The high school students operate Sidney Television (STV) directly from its facility. This is a community bulletin board that broadcasts special local programming, announcements, and the Rider of the Month notices that acknowledge the students who demonstrate exemplary behavior while in transport to and from school. Student government and the Odyssey of the Mind program are also popular student activities.

The general public has limited access to School District facilities. A hallway walking program with a progressive 3-story circuit is provided to residents before and after school hours until 11:00pm. Gymnasium facilities are also available for registration on a limited basis for a small user fee. The District is anticipating weekend pool access for the general public following its completion. Additionally, the high school auditorium is made available to the Tri-Town Theatre

group for many types of productions that involve both students and adults within the local community and surrounding region.

C. Higher Education Resources

Residents of the Town of Sidney have access to a wide variety of post-secondary educational institutions. The region boasts three residential colleges of technology including: SUNY Cobleskill; SUNY Delhi; and SUNY Morrisville which has its main campus in Morrisville and a branch campus in Norwich. Also, there are two residential liberal arts colleges in the area including SUNY College at Oneonta and Hartwick College in Oneonta. The Utica School of Commerce in Oneonta and Empire State College of SUNY are also available for skills training and/or degree programs in business and liberal arts. Also, undergraduate and graduate degree programs are available from Binghamton University and Broome Community College. Finally, adult education courses are offered by the DCMO BOCES and SUNY Delhi at the Sidney High School.

D. Current Assets and Future Challenges

Current Assets

- ❑ The education provided through Sidney Central Schools is comprehensive and offers students various types of innovative programming that enhance the educational experience of students. Programs like New Visions, Odyssey of the Mind, and Advanced Placement capture the academic component, while music, drama, student government and the Section IV Midstate Athletic Conference encompass much of the extra-curricular realm of education.
- ❑ The “Business Education Community Partnership” (B.E.C.P.) facilitates continuous dialogue between the school, the community, and local businesses. Comprised of three committees with student, faculty/staff, business persons, and community members, this organization serves a multitude of purposes. The *Volunteer/Career Exploration Committee* is host to the annual career fair for students and members of the community. This group also supports school and community events through volunteer coordination. The *Student Involvement Committee* is responsible for the annual student leadership day and the freshmen day of community service. The *Public Relations/Student Advocate Committee* manages the local programs on STV and provides college bound students with educational information to assist in their college planning.
- ❑ Community support for the School District is relatively strong and there is a high level of collaboration between the District and the community. The Town of Sidney Community Survey revealed that 64% of respondents “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement that they are “satisfied with the quality of the local school system.” In addition, respondents give the “school system” an evaluation rank of 11 out of 16 community services (see *ST Community Survey Report*, Tables 7 and 10).

- ❑ The School District has both indoor and outdoor recreational facilities that it currently shares, on a limited basis, with the public.
- ❑ The Sidney Central School District publishes a monthly newsletter and also has a special brochure that targets potential residents of the Sidney area. In addition, an interactive web site was developed and is used as a means of communicating with the general public (go to www.sidney.k12.ny.us).

Future Challenges

- ❑ The recruitment and retention of quality educators and staff persons is a common problem facing many schools, including the Sidney School District.
- ❑ The aging of the population within the district is causing an overall decrease in the enrollment of school age students. Consider that from 1997 to 2001 the District enrollment decreased from 1,525 students to 1,406 students, a decrease of 7.8%. This rate of decline will likely continue throughout the current decade. This scenario, along with the overall decrease in the adult population in general, will create very significant funding challenges for the School District in the future.
- ❑ As the School District undergoes a nearly \$41 million capital improvement project, scheduling and accommodations adjustments are becoming an issue at times. The final completion date for the project is estimated to be during the 2003-04 academic year.
- ❑ Upon completion of the capital improvement project, serious consideration should be given to the expansion of public access to these facilities. For example, organized programming like adult basketball leagues, volleyball, and aerobics could use school facilities. In addition, recreational and educational programs could be organized for elderly people, possibly involving young people as well.

Although building projects will improve school facilities and enhance instruction, student enrollment is anticipated to decline in the next 8 years and this will create a serious challenge to the school district to maintain public budgetary support. In fact, the NYS Education Department has issued enrollment projections for Delaware County indicates a dramatic decline in K-12 enrollment until the 2009-2010 school year.³

- ❑ New York State funding for education is not predictable and is often impacted by political and economic decisions that result in the School District not receiving its anticipated funding. Given the budgetary conditions of New York State in 2002, it is likely that the School District funding will be unpredictable through 2005.
- ❑ Underutilization of recreation and athletic facilities on District campuses could result due to declining enrollment. However, this trend suggests an opportunity for greater community utilization of School District facilities.

³ NYS Department of Education, *Information, Reporting & Technology Services, 2002-2010*

- ❑ Information in the district newsletter, brochure, and interactive web site should be used in collaboration with Town publications or documents that are used to recruit business. In particular, the completion of the 2002-2004 capital improvement programs will result in state-of-the-art learning and athletic facilities that will be important in recruiting new residents and businesses.

VII. Parks and Recreation

Staffing and Operations

As of 2002, the Town of Sidney has a total recreation budget of \$79,000 that includes a \$5,000 fee to the Village of Sidney for the Joint Youth Project which provides year-round recreational programming for Village and Town youth. The remainder of the budget supports the operations and maintenance of East Sidney Lake and Sidney Center Park.



In 1950, the U.S Army Corps of Engineers constructed a man-made lake and dam in the Town of Sidney known as East Sidney Lake. Located on Route 357 on Ouleout Creek, the area is approximately 592 acres with a moderate size lake, a large dam for flood control, and approximately 7 land acres for seasonal recreation.

The Recreation Area is operated and maintained by the Town of Sidney through a management lease agreement with the Baltimore District U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. A seasonal facility with operations beginning on Memorial Day and concluding in mid-September, the park employs nine seasonal full-time and five part-time staff persons that includes 1 full-time (F/T) director (off season employed F/T with the Town Highway Department), 4 F/T lifeguards, 5 part-time (P/T) admission booth attendants, 3 F/T maintenance personnel, and 2 F/T custodians. Payroll for this seasonal staffing is appropriated from the recreation budget. Visitors to the park are charged admission/camping fees that become general fund revenue for the Town of Sidney.

The recreational amenities include:

- ❑ Camping (85 electric and water hook-up sites), 15 non-electric
- ❑ Swimming and Beach Area
- ❑ Picnic Pavilion
- ❑ Bathhouse
- ❑ Boat Launch
- ❑ Playground
- ❑ Basketball Court
- ❑ Volleyball Pit
- ❑ Concession Stand
- ❑ Fishing Access

In addition, the Town and Village of Unadilla, NY utilize this facility for their Summer Recreation Program. Youth from these communities spend three hours a day, Monday-Friday enjoying the recreation, swimming lessons and organized activities offered at East Sidney Lake.

Sidney Center Park, a small recreation area surrounded by housing, contains a fenced in ball park and a small scale basketball court. Privately owned, but available for public use is a roller skating/skateboard rink as well as a golf a country club.

Current Assets

- ❑ Respondents to the Town of Sidney Community Survey give “Parks and Recreation” a personal value of “Low” to “Medium” (86.5%); however, when ranked out of a total of 15 community services, “Parks” received an evaluation of 6th with a high utilization rate of 5th and “Outdoor Recreation” received a ranking of 8th with a low utilization rate of 11th. (See *ST Community Survey Report*, Tables 10 and 19.)
- ❑ The Recreation Area is highly utilized by local residents and tourists. As of 1996, the average visitor hours per season were 206,600. Tourists visiting this site may also visit communities in the region, purchasing supplies, eating at local establishments, and enjoying local entertainment while contributing to the local economy.
- ❑ The natural beauty of East Sidney Lake gives residents a nice local area that can easily be accessed for recreation and leisure and the cost is reasonable.

Future Challenges

- ❑ Drought conditions over the last couple of years have fostered a large growth of various types of algae in the lake. Because the Department of Health requires the regular testing of freshwater lakes where recreational activities take place, the park has experienced sporadic periods in which swimming, fishing, and boating are not permitted, as a result of an overgrowth of algae. This situation limits recreation, and therefore, also reduces tourism and visitation to East Sidney Lake.
- ❑ Sidney Center Park is not sufficient in meeting the recreational needs of the community. Poor maintenance, lack of acreage, a public playground, and a swimming facility diminish the quality of life for families within the rural hamlet.

VIII. Housing

A. Census Data

The Town of Sidney, exclusive of the portion of the Town within the Village of Sidney, has 1,036 housing units according to the 2000 Census. Of the 1,036 total units, 708 are owner occupied, 109 are renter occupied, and 219 are vacant. Of the vacant units, 158 are considered seasonal. The majority of the housing stock is not particularly old when compared to rural upstate communities. Only 31% of the units were constructed before 1940, and only 67% were constructed prior to 1970. Less than 2% of the housing units in the Town are lacking complete plumbing or kitchen facilities. Over 90% of the owner occupied units have a value of less than \$100,000 according to the Census. The median value of homes in the Town is \$59,900.



An overwhelming majority (94%) of the housing units in the Town are one family structures. These structures include 263 mobile homes.

Census data for 1990 indicates 35 percent of the population is low income (have incomes less than 80% of the County median income). This percentage ranks the Town fourth highest of the 30 communities in Delaware County. By comparison, the County as a whole has 41 percent low income persons and the Village of Sidney has 45 percent low income persons.

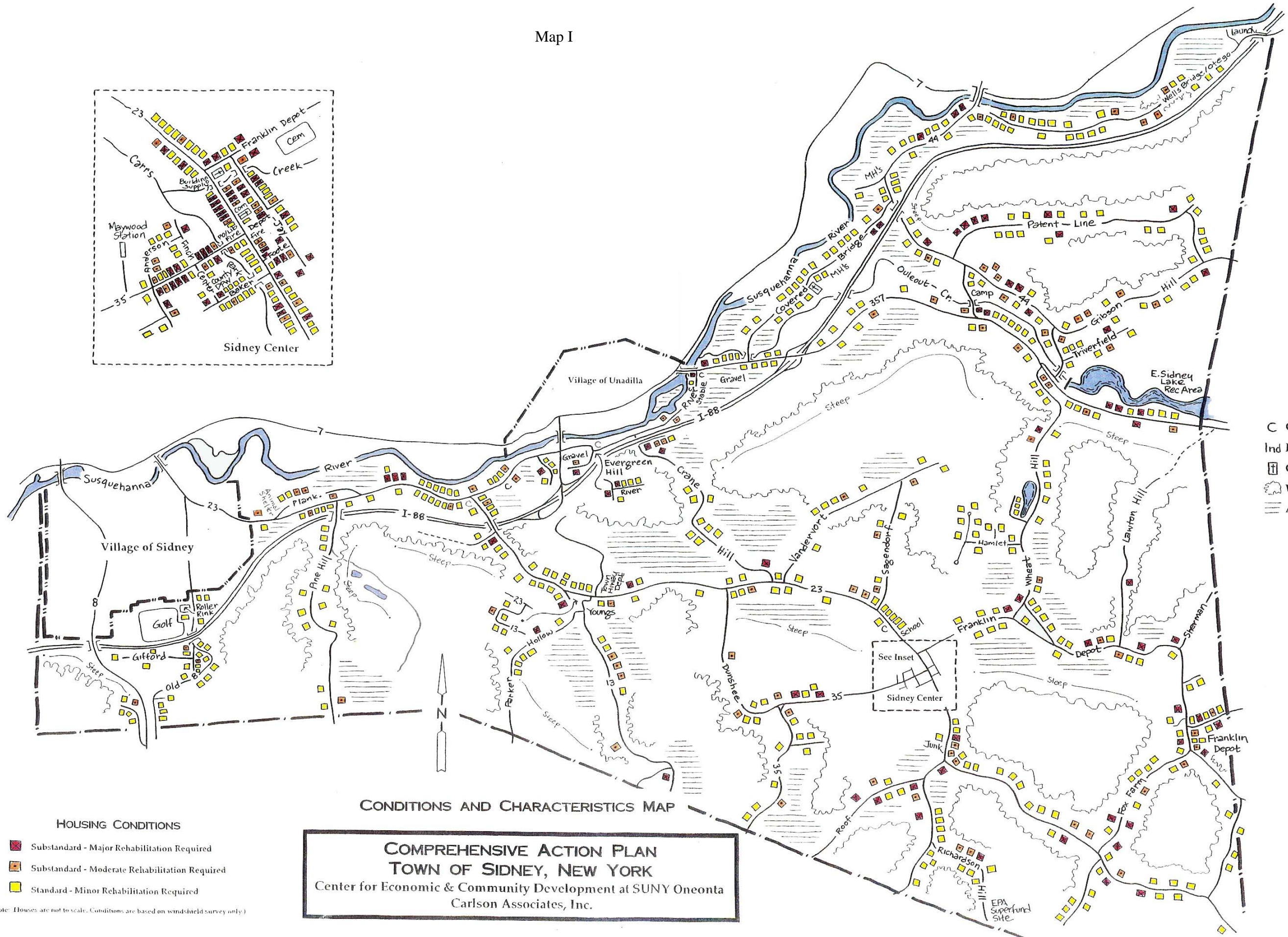
B. Housing Conditions and Rehabilitation Needs

The condition of the Town's housing stock was analyzed as part of this Comprehensive Action Plan by windshield survey. The survey was limited to 1-4 family structures and did not include mobile home parks. The windshield survey covered 676 structures and, of the structures surveyed, 455 or 67% were rated in standard condition requiring only minor rehabilitation. A total of 109 structures (16%) required moderate (under \$10,000) rehabilitation, and 112 structures (17%) required major (over \$10,000) rehabilitation. The survey, however, was limited to exterior conditions only, and it is very likely the survey understates actual rehabilitation needs.

The highest concentration of poor housing conditions can be found in the hamlet of Sidney Center, where over 50% of 137 housing structures require moderate rehabilitation (20%) or major rehabilitation (32%). Other than Sidney Center, the Town does not have any areas where there are very high concentrations of substandard housing conditions. Substandard conditions are generally scattered throughout the Town. Housing conditions in the Town are illustrated on the Conditions and Characteristics Map (see Map I).

A town-wide Housing Rehabilitation Program funded through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Small Cities Program has already been utilized and in addition, the HOME Program could be justified if it can be demonstrated that homes requiring rehabilitation are occupied by low income households, which is very likely. A "target area" housing rehabilitation program in Sidney Center is critically needed. This program could be undertaken as an

Map I



- C Commercial
- Ind Industrial
- ⊕ Church
- ☁ Wooded
- ≡ Agricultural

HOUSING CONDITIONS

- ⊠ Substandard - Major Rehabilitation Required
- ⊡ Substandard - Moderate Rehabilitation Required
- Standard - Minor Rehabilitation Required

(Note: Houses are not to scale. Conditions are based on windshield survey only.)

COMPREHENSIVE ACTION PLAN
TOWN OF SIDNEY, NEW YORK
 Center for Economic & Community Development at SUNY Oneonta
 Carlson Associates, Inc.

independent project or as part of a “Comprehensive Program” of housing and public improvement activities.

A CDBG Small Cities Program generally focuses on critical needs and major rehabilitation. HOME programs focus on more moderate needs of the very low income.

The Town of Sidney does not have any senior citizen or assisted living housing, and such facilities would serve a need in the community. Such housing, however, should be located in or near the Village, where access to community facilities will better serve residents.

C. Current Assets and Future Challenges

Current Assets

- ❑ The overall housing stock in the Town is in generally good condition and contributes significantly to the quality of life.
- ❑ Although mobile homes comprise over 20% of the housing stock, the problem of mobile homes in the Town is not as severe as other rural communities.
- ❑ The Town has excellent access to and from Interstate 88, and the demand for housing in the Town will likely increase in the years ahead. More developments like Hamlet Estates will likely be proposed in the future.

Future Challenges

- ❑ Except for Sidney Center, the Town has a generally good housing stock. A town-wide housing rehabilitation program, however, would help low income homeowners complete needed housing improvements and eliminate substandard conditions on a spot basis. A targeted housing rehabilitation program is critically needed in Sidney Center. Such a program could be undertaken as an individual project or in conjunction with coordinated public improvements, including water, sewer, street, and recreation.
- ❑ Housing for senior citizens is lacking in both the Village and Town. Developing this type of housing would benefit the elderly residents of both municipalities.
- ❑ In support of economic development in the Village and Town, the Town is in an ideal position to provide land for the construction of mid-high income, one family housing.

IX. Community Services and Facilities

A. Daycare

Parents of young children located in the Sidney area have several child care options to choose from. Many registered and/or licensed facilities, serving infants, toddlers, and children ages 5-12, are accessible for parents and include early childhood education programming. Please note that the following inventory description does not include unlicensed facilities or homes, as well as relatives that care for children within their family.



Group family day care homes have a maximum capacity of 10 children, aged infant through pre-school and 2 school age slots. Licensed group home facilities also require a staff/child ratio of 6:1, necessitating the staffing of an additional licensed child care provider. Currently, Sidney has three licensed group family daycare homes with a combined service capacity of 36 children.

Registered family day care homes have a maximum capacity of 5 children 0-5 years (or 6, if there is no child under two years of age), and 2 school aged children. Each provider must be registered by New York State and meet all criteria for providing this service. Unlike the group certified facilities, registered providers, through state regulations that limit the number of children per provider, need not employ additional certified providers. Currently, there are five registered family day care facilities in Sidney with a combined service capacity of 35 children, or maximum 40 children.

Also, Sidney has three licensed day care facilities with capacities that vary from center to center. The *Rainbow Day Care Center* can provide care for up to 30 children ages 6 weeks to 5 years (not enrolled in school). This facility also has a *Rainbow School Age Program* with 30 slots available for after-school, vacation, and summertime child care for children that are enrolled in school and are between the ages of 5-12. Similar to the Rainbow Day Care Center is *Kids Kollege*. This facility has a capacity of 30 children, however excludes infant and toddler care. This center targets children 3-12 years of age for full or part-time care. In addition, the Mead Corporation has the Cullman Center, on-site day care that is utilized by both employees and the general public.

As in many communities, *Head Start* is also available for children ages 3-5 whose families meet New York State eligibility requirements. A total of 36 slots are available with a daily program from 8:30am-1:30pm.

The *Tri-Town Nursery School* is another early childhood education resource for families with children between the ages of 2-5. This program operates daily from 9:00am-11:30am.

The cost of child care in Sidney varies between care providers and facilities, however, for purposes of the New York State Day Care Subsidy Program; a fair standard compensation practice is adhered to. In order to qualify for subsidized daycare, a family's income level can not exceed 200% of the poverty rate in New York State. Compensation to providers who care for the qualified children of the subsidies program, can receive the standard fee established by the program. The fees differ for day care types and the number of hours a child is cared for as well as the age of the child. As per the Day Care Subsidy Program, the average compensation for Delaware County full-time weekly child care ranges from \$75-\$131 per child, however, each provider, as a private business owner sets his/her fees accordingly.

Current Assets

- ❑ Respondents to the Town of Sidney Community Survey gave “Daycare” a very positive evaluation ranking of 5 out of 16 services. However, utilization of this service ranks 16th out of 16 community services. There may be several factors contributing to these results. First, the daycare facilities in Sidney are highly visible and the properties are well kept. Therefore, individuals who do not have a need for the service may be aware of the locations and conditions of the daycare facilities and consider them quality as a result of visual perceptions. Another possibility may be that respondents utilized these services in the past, but no longer have pre-school aged children. This could account for the high evaluation (based on previous experience with these services) and lack of utilization. (See *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 10.)
- ❑ The New York State Child Care Coordinating Council is a statewide agency that offers regions throughout the state Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies that assist in the licensing and registration of providers. In addition, the council teaches parents about child care and the importance of quality childhood education, provides support services to day care providers, gives referrals to parents in need of quality child care, as well as helping families tap in to financial resources available to help offset child care expenditures. Sidney is served by the Delaware County Child Care Resource and Referral agency managed by Delaware Opportunities Inc. as part of their Child and Family Development Division.
- ❑ The Delaware County Child Care Resource and Referral agency covers a wide range of services and as stated above, helps families identify financial resources for the care of their children. The Day Care Subsidy Program is offered through the Department of Social Services although facilitated by the Child Care Resource and Referral agency. This entitlement program is based on New York State poverty levels and does not provide full compensation for child care services. The program requires parents to pay a portion of their child's tuition based on their rate of poverty, reside in Delaware County, and have a licensed day care provider.

- ❑ Delaware Opportunities Inc. and their Division of Child and Family Development, is an excellent resource for parents that reside and/or are employed in Sidney and require child care services for their family. The operations of this agency are comprehensive and assist both parents and providers in enhancing the quality and affordability of child care in Sidney.
- ❑ Sidney currently has a total combined child care capacity of 316 children. This includes licensed providers, registered homes and center facilities.

Future Challenges

- ❑ An increasing number of school districts throughout New York State have developed formal after school programming for children ages 5-12. Because the Sidney school district lacks this opportunity for parents, many potential residents may select an alternative community like Bainbridge for their place of residence over Sidney, as a result of needing dependable and affordable child care for their school age children.
- ❑ A detailed assessment of child care service demand and opportunity needs to be conducted in order to analyze the types of child care needs within the community. Such a study could be initiated by the Child Care Resource and Referral agency of Delaware Opportunities, Inc. or the New York State Child Care Coordinating Council. Educational after school programs in school districts, libraries, churches, and community centers are growing in popularity. National organizations like the YMCA sponsor programs in schools and are extremely affordable for families. Sidney needs to take a serious look as to whether or not it is meeting the needs of families through its current child care programs, and consider an in-depth study of the issue.

B. Community Organizations

Civic and Membership Organizations

A wide variety of civic and non-profit organizations serve the residents of the Town of Sidney by providing many important social, recreational, and community service benefits. These organizations include the Rotary Club of Sidney Community Foundation, American Legion Post 183, Moose Lodge 277, Sidney Lodge 1529, Tri-Town Boys & Girls Club, Sidney Dollars for Scholar's Program, Tri-County Kiwanis Club of Sidney, Rotary Club of Sidney (District 7170, Club No. 4498), Sidney Elks Lodge No. 2175, Sidney Masonic Lodge 801, and the United Way of Sidney.

Current Assets

- ❑ The Rotary Club of Sidney Community Foundation was created in 1993 with the sponsorship and assistance of the Rotary Club of Sidney. The Foundation is a legally separate entity with its own 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt designation and has an 11 member board of directors. The directors represent public and private sector organizations. In general, the commonly used name for the Foundation is the Sidney Community Foundation. The mission of the Foundation is to promote community development within the geographic area defined as the Sidney School District. Thus, it is restricted from dispersing funds outside of the school district. The Foundation has a small endowment and conducts fund-raising activities to promote its projects. The Foundation was successful in creating the Sidney Community Foundation Walk and Nature Trail and is very committed to developing park facilities in the Village of Sidney. Recent projects include the effort to purchase Fireman’s field, which when purchased, will be given to the Village of Sidney. This project is designed to give the Village a larger park area to develop in the future. Also, the Foundation is seeking to construct a new children’s playground in Keith Clark Park. In the future, the Foundation would like to purchase additional acreage adjacent to Village Park as a means of developing additional park facilities for Town and Village residents.
- ❑ Community organizations are very active in the Town and are an important source of leaders and volunteers for many community events and celebrations held in the Sidney area.
- ❑ Since many of these organizations serve residents of both the Village and Town of Sidney, they are an excellent bridge for the purpose of building collaborative relationships between the two municipalities.

Future Challenges

Social clubs and organizations in Sidney can play a key role in promoting important community values such as pride in community, civic responsibility and leadership, pride in public and private property, and supporting events that celebrate community. They can even play a leadership role in undertaking community improvement projects. It will take strong leadership from the leaders of these community organizations to realize this important role – especially in the future as the Town and Village of Sidney seek to implement their Comprehensive Action Plans.

- ❑ Social clubs and community organizations are an important source of business and professional networking. As such, the future of the Town and Village will depend on these clubs and organizations increasing their efforts to promote entrepreneurship, business leadership, and greater local investment. This will require attracting presenters who can share innovative ideas about how to stimulate economic and community development in the local community. Again, this will require a strong leadership role from the leaders of these organizations. They will have to remain focused on these

objectives despite the logistical and planning burden that bringing in experts and inspiring speakers requires.

- ❑ A significant role played by social clubs is helping people to “think globally and act locally.” Sidney area social clubs in particular promote social values that seek to make people aware of the “big” issues and how to address them to make life better. In the future, Sidney social clubs need to expand their efforts to educate, excite, and inspire their memberships about quality of life issues. This effort will help to overcome feelings of social isolation, frustration, and cynicism that are often a threat to small rural communities like Sidney.
- ❑ The Sidney Community Foundation and the United Way of Sidney should jointly assume a leadership role in bringing the social clubs and community organizations of Sidney together to promote collaborative efforts that will celebrate community, enhance community relations, identify community development projects, and encourage residents to invest in their community. This investment can take the form of philanthropy, entrepreneurship, and volunteerism. Currently, organizations are acting on their own to promote civic enhancements and to support the community. However, collaboration among these organizations could result in many creative, well-funded, and fully staffed community-wide improvement efforts. These efforts are important, especially considering that approximately 55% of respondents to the Town of Sidney Community Survey indicated that they would like “more community events and celebrations” (see *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 7).
- ❑ Community organizations in Sidney should explore the feasibility of creating a YMCA.

C. Fire and Emergency Medical Services



The Town of Sidney receives fire and emergency medical services assistance based on a system whereby fire departments and EMS units are dispatched based on the 911 system. The Town is basically divided into geographic areas including: (1) the Village area, which is assigned to the Village of Sidney Fire Department; (2) the Sidney Center Fire District (30 square mile area), which is assigned to the Sidney Center Fire Department, and (3) the Town

Fire Protection District, which is assigned based on property location system to the Village of Sidney Fire Department, the Fire Department of Wells Bridge, and the Village of Unadilla Fire Department.

All fire and EMS services to the residents of the Town of Sidney (excluding the Fire District of Sidney Center with elected Board of Commissioners) are based on negotiated contracts for a Fire Protection District.

Current Assets

- ❑ Respondents to the Town of Sidney Community Survey give both fire and EMS protection services high evaluations, ranking “Ambulance Services” 3rd and “Fire Protection” 4th out of 16 community services (see *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 10). In addition, when respondents to the survey were asked to place a personal value on fire & EMS protection, these services were selected as the first priority out of 15 Town characteristics (see *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 19).
- ❑ Volunteer membership of the Sidney Center Fire Department is strong and as of 2002 had 38 volunteers including one volunteer Chief, 28 firefighters, and 9 EMS personnel.
- ❑ Local employers have been very generous in providing release time to volunteers that serve Fire Departments that provide fire protection and EMS services to the Town of Sidney.

Future Challenges

- ❑ The Sidney Center Fire Department is housed in a building that was constructed in the 1940s and does not meet current Town building codes. The station does not have running water. Building improvements would require an investment of approximately \$400,000.
- ❑ The Sidney Center Fire Department has very limited supplies of water. The department relies on dry hydrants inserted in creeks. However, these creeks have often been dry due to drought conditions in recent years and the well system in the Hamlet has been polluted due to industrial contamination.
- ❑ Concerning the Sidney Center Fire Department, fire and EMS training is becoming very comprehensive and requires an extraordinary commitment of time and effort by volunteers. This is an important factor that often hinders the recruitment of volunteers.
- ❑ The Sidney Center Fire Department needs to replace one of its 1500 gallon capacity water tankers. The tanker was built in 1967. As of 2002, efforts were underway to obtain funding (e.g., FEMA) to purchase a new tanker.

X. Agriculture



As in most areas of upstate New York, the agriculture industry has declined in terms of total employment. In the Town of Sidney, the 1990 Census reported that approximately 60 persons were engaged in the fields of farming, fishing and forestry. This figure only includes employees of agricultural facilities and not farm owners or members of their families who work on farms. This figure had declined to only 6 as of the 2000 Census as some dairy farms went out of business in the decade of the 1990s. The demand for local farm labor has to some extent been reduced due to the continued centralization of agricultural industries, automation, and improvement in technology.

The land area north of the Susquehanna River in the Town of Unadilla, the land area west of the river in the Town of Bainbridge, and the land south of the river in the Town of Sidney represents a “core agricultural area” of the Tri-Town area. As such, it contains the basic infrastructure necessary for supporting a viable and potentially larger agriculture industry. Consider that the soil along the Susquehanna River represents some of the most fertile land in New York State. This area has deep rich soil



characterized by large amounts of Tanic soil and Chenango loam. In addition, lands extending out from the river are relatively flat or characterized by rolling hills and have ready access to state roads and I- 88 for the transportation access to markets in Albany, Binghamton, and ultimately the New York City Metropolitan area. The area also has a number of feed companies including Blue Seal (Bainbridge), McDowell & Walker (Sidney), and Lutz (Oneonta). The presence of these companies provides local farmers with a local source of vendors that are essential to their operations. Finally, the area has a widely recognized auction barn operated by D.R. Chambers & Sons, Inc. of Unadilla. This auction attracts the interest of buyers and sellers from the entire Northeast. It includes horses as well as veal and beef calves that attract the interest of local and regional horse owners, stables, and farmers from a 200 mile radius. This facility is a critical component of the local agricultural industry and also serves as a key trading business for buyers and sellers throughout eastern New York and other eastern states.

The portion of the “core agricultural area” in the Town of Sidney has approximately 7 operating farms, with an average milking herd of about 125 cows. One major dairy farm, which was recently purchased by another farm based in Windsor, NY is one of the largest with approximately 1,100 cows. The area also has 2 major vegetable farms including the Bishop and Johnson farms and a number of other small scale farms. These vegetable farms produce sweet corn, cabbage, garlic, potatoes and a wide variety of vine crops (e.g., squashes and pumpkins). These products are sold to markets in the region, Albany, Binghamton, and the New York City metropolitan area. A number of small poultry operators are located in the region, with the Earl farm in Unadilla being the largest.

The area also has one major beef operator, a joint venture of the Bishop & Edwards Farms, which buys and sells beef, as well as 3 or 4 other farms that operate on a smaller scale. Approximately 4 farms operate heifer facilities, but most of these conduct breeding to support their milking operations.

Current Assets

- ❑ Public support for the preservation of farmland is very high in the Town of Sidney. The Town of Sidney Community survey revealed that over 90% of respondents believe it is “somewhat important” or “very important” to protect agricultural land (see *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 21).
- ❑ The Susquehanna River provides excellent soils that foster agriculture and it provides water for irrigation of farm lands and golf courses.
- ❑ The major infrastructure components necessary to sustain a “core agricultural area” are present in the geographical area that encompasses part of the Towns of Sidney, Bainbridge, and Unadilla. The presence of this infrastructure makes it possible to further develop the agricultural economy of the area.
- ❑ The impact of 9/11 is greatly impacting agricultural production in the Hudson River Valley such that many farms are being subdivided and used for residential development as people seek to live in areas of greater personal safety. As a result, the demand for agricultural products in the New York City area will need to be met by more producers located outside the Hudson River Valley. This may open up additional market opportunities for Sidney area farmers.
- ❑ The market for good quality vegetables is strong – both at the retail and wholesale levels. The Susquehanna River area could support additional vegetable farms.

Future Challenges

- ❑ The farm labor market is extremely tight because many young people are not interested in doing manual farm work. As a result, most farmers rely on family members and good friends. However, this labor base is not ideal and the lack of a reliable labor force disrupts the operation and productive efficiency of the farms.
- ❑ Milk prices continue to remain low and will lead to continued pressure on dairy farms to increase herds and production. Some farmers cannot exercise this option and thus will go out of business.

- The Susquehanna River Basin Commission was created to control all drainage sources into the Susquehanna River. The long-term goal is to protect the quality of water as it relates to how the river feeds Town wells, supports recreational facilities, and sustains wildlife and fisheries areas. Currently, agriculture has been given an exemption for irrigating farm lands using the river; however, given recent drought conditions in the last few years the Authority could rescind the exemption at any time in the future. This action would be very detrimental to farms in the area.

- The potential growth in the agricultural economy in the Sidney area will greatly depend on insuring the preservation of agricultural land and the economic viability of farms and agriculture-related industries. In this regard, a special task force should be created including Cornell Cooperative Extension, farmers, NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets, and local government officials to explore ways to promote entrepreneurship and investment in agriculture in the area. The task force should consider opportunities for: (1) developing alternative agriculture operations (e.g., cheese products, organic products, and specialty vegetables), (2) providing low interest loans and grants for capital investment and marketing efforts, and (3) insuring the long-term protection of agriculture land. Also, consideration should be given to promoting products from the area using some type of name branding, for example, “Susquehanna River Products.”

XI. Economic Development Resources

A. Introduction

The Town of Sidney has direct access to 9 major economic development based organizations and agencies and a number of educational institutions that offer specialized services to support the economic development efforts of municipalities. Of the 9 organizations and agencies, 7 are based within Delaware County and 2 are based in the Sidney area. In addition, the Town can access the economic development services of New York State, particularly the Southern Tier Regional Office of the Empire State Development Corporation (ESD) in Binghamton, which provides a wide range of financial services, training, and technical support to municipalities and businesses.

B. Delaware County Business Resource Center

The Business Resource Center is designed to assist entrepreneurs and business owners with technical and planning services including small business education, business plan development, business plan consultation, and business support counseling. The Business Resource Center has two locations in Delaware County, with the most convenient location for Town of Sidney residents being 9 River Street in the Village. The Resource Center is part of the Delaware County Business Growth Task Force which is a one-stop center for business and industry assistance in Delaware County.

C. Sidney Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber of Commerce is a membership organization of local businesses in the Sidney area that strives to promote business and community development of the Greater Sidney Area by providing valued services, information, resources, support, and education to its members. The Chamber is located in the Basille Building which is located on River Street in the Village of Sidney. The office space is subsidized through the Department of Social Services on behalf of the Better Employment Skills and Training (BEST) program; a program sponsored by the Chamber. The Chamber presently employs a part-time secretary to manage its affairs. As of 2002, the Chamber had a total of 150 members and 25 reciprocal affiliates.

The Chamber provides a variety of services to its members including information for visitors and new residents about the Sidney area. Some of the services provided by the Chamber include (1) provision of health, disability and life insurance; (2) referrals to business services; (3) professional development seminars; (4) Chamber After Hours program; (5) scholarship program; (6) support of the BEST program; (7) support for downtown beautification and retail development; and (8) data and information collection about local government, the community, and economy.

In particular, the Chamber serves as the originator and sponsor of the BEST program, a model program that has been implemented throughout New York State. The Chamber is also a strong supporter of the TCA Vision 21 initiative. The Chamber has formed several committees that help to fulfill its mission and include the following: Beautification, Budget, By-Laws, Executive, Government Relations, Membership and Ambassadors, Merchants, Professional and Retail Development, Public Relations, and Special Projects.

The Chamber uses several different fund-raising events throughout the year to raise revenue for the Chamber and its operations, and for the purpose of generating economic activity in the community. The events begin in summer with the Ed Wessels Canoe Regatta and Alumni Weekend, then proceeds with the Annual Dinner for Chamber Members. Following in August are the annual Golf Tournament and Arts and Music Festival. The final event of the year is the Jolly Holidays promotion that extends throughout the holiday season.

D. Delaware County Industrial Development Authority (IDA)

The mission of the County Industrial Development Authority (IDA) is to support business and industry through the development and financing of business related infrastructure and expansion projects.

The IDA works through the Delaware County Department of Economic Development to offer two low-interest loan programs. The Agri-Business Loan Fund is designed to assist agriculturally related businesses through direct financial assistance for start-up and expansion costs. The second program is the Micro-Enterprise Loan Fund which provides low cost financing to small businesses. In addition, the IDA also provides Industrial Revenue Bond financing for large and medium sized business construction projects. Payment in lieu of tax (PILOT) agreements are also available to manufacturing related businesses to help offset

construction costs through property tax reductions, as well as sales and mortgage recording tax exemptions.

E. Delaware County Local Development Corporation (LDC)

The mission of the Local Development Corporation (LDC) is to promote Delaware County as a business location and provide existing businesses with the financial assistance necessary to achieve long-term success. The LDC works through the Delaware County Department of Economic Development to provide two low-interest loan programs to businesses. First, the USDA Rural Business Enterprise Loan Program provides low-cost financing alternatives to both small and medium sized businesses. The maximum loan size is \$50,000. Second, the Main Street Revitalization Pilot Program provides grants and low-interest loan financing to businesses interested in renovating or locating a business in a Main Street building. The maximum loan size is \$25,000. The LDC is part of the Delaware County Business Growth Task Force which is a one-stop center for business and industry assistance in Delaware County.

F. Delaware County Department of Planning & Development

The Delaware County Department of Planning and Development provides a host of technical assistance services to towns and villages that focus on three major areas including municipal and environmental planning, and geographic information systems (GIS). The Department provides municipalities with a variety of technical assistance services through the Town Planning Advisory Service. This service makes it possible for towns and villages in Delaware County to access a wide variety of specialized technical assistance services. Some of the technical services that can be utilized by the Town of Sidney include the review of subdivision and zoning regulations, community surveys, grant writing, creating historic districts, development of informational brochures, local law development (e.g., cell tower, windmill, and mobile home regulations), GIS services, training for planning boards, development of site plan review laws, state environmental quality review (SEQR) training, development and updating of legal forms (e.g., building codes), and training for Zoning Board of Appeals members.

G. Delaware County Chamber of Commerce

The Delaware County Chamber of Commerce is committed to advancing the general welfare and prosperity of Delaware County. Its mission is to promote private enterprise and mutually beneficial relationships among its members and between businesses and the community through government relations, member services, education relations, and community and economic development.

The Chamber provides a variety of member services including legislative advocacy, health insurance, networking opportunities, tourism promotion, professional seminars and conferences, member-to-member savings, relocation information, certificate of origin, regional representation, and energy savings. Also, the Chamber sponsors the BEST Program, a free-of-charge four week training and work experience program to help people obtain gainful employment. The BEST Program provides training in employment strategies, building career goals, developing job skills, and learning about community resources. The Chamber is part of the Delaware County Business

Growth Task Force which is a one-stop center for business and industry assistance in Delaware County

H. Delaware County Office of Employment and Training

The Office of Employment and Training (OET) is conveniently located for Town of Sidney residents at 21 Liberty Street. The Office provides a wide range of services including skills assessment, case management (counseling), on-the-job training, classroom training (vocational study), re-employment services (job search assistance), youth employment (ages 16 to 21), and mature workers assistance (age 55 and over). The Office of Employment and Training also collaborates with DCMO BOCES, Delaware Opportunities, and the Delaware County Department of Social Services to provide the BEST program. This program is co-sponsored by the Walton and Sidney Chambers of Commerce and provides clients with a four week training and work experience program.

I. Sidney Municipal Airport

The Thomas Z. Fagan Municipal Airport is a key economic development resource to the Town of Sidney and the Tri-Town Area. A brief description of this facility is included under Transportation, Section XV-G.

J. Greater Sidney Development Corporation

The Greater Sidney Development Corporation is a local development corporation with the mission of promoting the industrial, community, and residential development of the Tri-Town Area (Bainbridge, Sidney, and Unadilla). The Corporation's Board of Directors consists of 12 volunteers who are associated with businesses located in the Tri-Town Area. The Corporation has been instrumental in launching a number of projects by means of collaborations with both public and private sector organizations. Examples of projects which have engaged the Corporation in recent years include the development of a HUD Consolidated Plan, development of the Chenango Housing Improvement Program (CHIP), and a project to redevelop the Sherwood Heights housing site. In recent years, the Corporation has focused on efforts to promote mid to high income, one family housing.

K. Delaware County Economic Development Department

The Economic Development Department is the umbrella agency that administers the Delaware County Industrial Development Authority (IDA) and low interest loans through the Revolving Loan Fund. In addition, the Department assists municipalities with planning and development administers federal and state program grants and packages loans and grants for businesses and municipal projects. In particular, the Department administers the Agri-Business Micro-enterprise Program, Main Street Revitalization Pilot Program, and provides funding for business training.

L. Other Specialized Resources

In addition to the in-County organizations cited above, the Town can also access specialized economic development services from other organizations located in the region. These organizations include the Economic Development Department of the New York State Electric and Gas (NYSEG) Corporation, the Southern Tier East Regional Planning Board, the Telecenter of Hartwick College, the Center for Economic & Community Development at SUNY Oneonta, the Office of Continuing Education and Corporate Services at SUNY Delhi, and the Empire State Development Southern Tier Region Office.

M. Current Assets and Future Challenges

The Town of Sidney currently has 9 in-County economic development agencies or organizations that can be used to promote economic development and a variety of other specialized, education based organizations that can be used as well. Of the 9 primary organizations, 2 have local offices conveniently located in the Village including the Greater Sidney Development Corporation (GSDC), the Delaware County Office of Employment and Training, Delaware County Business Resource Center and the Sidney Chamber of Commerce. The remaining organizations are County based with offices in Delhi.

Current Assets

- ❑ About 70% of respondents to the Town of Sidney Community Survey want to see the population of the Town grow. In fact, 31% want to see “moderate” population growth, while another 5% seek “significant” population growth. This finding indicates that respondents would likely support efforts to (1) attract new residents, (2) increase the amount and quality of housing stock, and (3) promote business growth (see *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 5).
- ❑ The Town is recognized by 72% of respondents as having a reasonable cost of living. This finding is an important asset for the Town since it can be used in future efforts to promote the community to new residents and business prospects (see *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 9).
- ❑ Over 60% of respondents want to protect residential areas from business development. This finding is important for three reasons. First, it suggests that Town residents want some type of overall plan for orderly economic development. Second, it represents support for land use planning, which will enable the Town to more effectively recruit business and industry. Third, it demonstrates community support for the role of government in land use management (i.e., zoning). (See *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 22.)
- ❑ Businesses in the Town have excellent access to ground and air transportation. In particular, I-88 provides businesses with easy access to markets and commercial airports in Albany and Binghamton. These are also excellent resources to use in promotional materials used for recruiting new businesses.

- ❑ A number of successful manufacturing businesses reside in the Village and provide good paying, quality jobs to Town residents. The cyclical impact of national economic conditions has significantly affected employment in these businesses over their history. However, their presence has contributed to a diverse local employment base which is an important asset in an era when retail and service sectors have come to monopolize local economies in many communities. The Town will need to collaborate with the Village to help maintain this economic base and to build upon it in the future.
- ❑ Agricultural land along the Susquehanna River in the Town of Sidney and the Town of Unadilla constitute a “core agricultural area” that has potential for growth. Given additional resources for marketing, product development, and equipment, more agricultural businesses could be developed in this area. These businesses would be of enormous value to the Town and surrounding communities because they maximize the use of natural resources, utilize local labor, general local tax dollars, utilize local supplier networks, and export products, while importing wealth. Given these factors, agricultural businesses have a very significant economic multiplier impact on rural areas.
- ❑ Given the magnitude of development in the Village of Sidney, the Town has the opportunity to provide land area to support future economic development and the construction of greatly needed mid to high income, one family housing.
- ❑ Given the safe, quiet and reasonable cost of living in the Town, combined with proximity to Village healthcare, business, and personal services, the Town is an ideal location for development of senior housing and assisted living facilities.

Future Challenges

- ❑ Only 5% of respondents to the Town of Sidney Community Survey are willing to pay additional taxes for roads, sewers, and other improvements in support of economic development. Another 39% of respondents indicated that “maybe” they would be willing, while nearly 20% were simply “not sure.” It is also important to note that 35% of respondents are not willing to pay additional taxes to support economic development. This finding could reflect a concern that government should not facilitate economic development if it will increase the local tax burden. Thus, as noted above, Town government will need to be very clear about explaining the anticipated benefits of supporting economic development, if public support is to be obtained.

These findings provide local government officials and community leaders with an extraordinary opportunity to build public support for economic development. Yet, they also suggest the need to develop effective ways to communicate about economic development to the public. The process of communication should include: (1) identification of priority improvement projects, (2) a clear explanation of how the projects will promote economic development to the benefit of the community (i.e., larger tax base and better jobs), and (3) a clear explanation of the budgetary implications to tax payers. In short, communication will be essential to future public support, particularly

with respect to the 59% of respondents who answered “maybe” or “not sure.” (See *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 15.)

- ❑ The issue ranked by respondents as the most serious facing the community is “Local tax burden” (46.9% of respondents who selected this issue ranked it the number 1 issue). Given the tax situation in New York State, where the combined burden of property, school, and income taxes is significantly higher than in other states, this finding is to be expected. However, the second most serious issue selected by respondents was “Better paying jobs.” This issue received number 1 ranking by 42.4% of all respondents who selected it. These two issues are directly related and may be a source of tension, since government efforts to attract quality jobs will (at least initially) place greater financial demands on tax payers. (See *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 18.)
- ❑ The high ranking of “local tax burden” as a community concern also poses another problem. Invariably, public investment may facilitate economic development, particularly in areas where economic growth has been slow for many years and the investment risk to businesses and entrepreneurs is high. In particular, since the Town lacks the infrastructure necessary to promote economic development, this is a highly relevant concern. Thus, Town government will need to employ a process of communication that helps the public to understand: (1) the priority improvement projects that are needed (especially infrastructure), (2) how these projects will promote economic development to the benefit of the community, and (3) how these projects will impact the tax payers. This approach will not reduce disagreement about specific economic development projects because this is a feature of modern community life; however, it will help residents to understand how critical economic development is to the future economic viability and quality of life in the Town. In short, successful communication will be essential to acquiring strong public support for public investment in economic development.
- ❑ The issue that was ranked overall as the 2nd most serious issue by respondents to the Town of Sidney Community Survey was “Better paying jobs.” This issue received a number 1 ranking by approximately 42% of all respondents and a number 2 ranking by 25% of respondents who selected this issue. The challenge suggested in this priority is not simply for jobs, but better paying jobs (see *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 18). This issue will require the maximum use of both public and private sectors and will require extraordinary collaboration between the two. In particular, the Town and Village governments must work collaboratively to achieve this goal, since alone they lack the resources necessary to make progress.
- ❑ Respondents to the Town of Sidney Community Survey prefer the recruitment of moderate sized businesses with a range of 100-249 jobs and large industry with a range of 250-1,000 jobs (see *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 23). This finding suggests that respondents see the future somewhat in terms of their past experience. In the past, the Sidney area has benefited from having a few very large businesses and these businesses paid good salaries. This preference seems to ignore the difficulty of recruiting

such businesses today and the dependence that can result from reliance on a big business economy.

- ❑ Budgetary restrictions due to lack of funding and increased operating costs are making it difficult for the Chamber of Commerce to manage an office and expand its programming. Although the Chamber employs a part-time secretary, future demands will require a full-time office manager and the necessary expense of upgrading office equipment and purchasing supplies. This funding challenge will require that the Chamber develop future fundraising methods that generate revenue.
- ❑ Land in the Sidney Industrial Park is nearly filled with approximately two lots and 12 acres remaining for development. However, the Park was recently expanded to incorporate approximately 31 additional acres. In this area, 7 acres have frontage on River Street which will give future subdivided lots access to power and infrastructure. Other parts of the 31 acre addition will have access to power which is derived from wiring that extends about the circumference of the current park. However, it will be necessary to bring in water and sewer lines, road improvements, and curbing. The challenge now is to find clients so that Federal, State and local grants can be accessed to accommodate the needs of potential clients for the expanded Sidney Industrial Park. The Town and Village governments need to collaborate for the purpose of recruiting new tenants.
- ❑ The Village needs to explore additional land area for development in the Town that can be used to create another industrial park area. Despite the currently available acreage in the Sidney Industrial Park, the Village and Town need to collaborate to plan for future economic development. The identification of land for a second industrial park will help to guide future development in the Town, in anticipation of the Village exhausting its land resources. This effort will insure that development occurs in the appropriate location and will enable the Town and Village to collaborate on preparing a future site for development (i.e., preparing infrastructure).
- ❑ Land in the Town that can be used for economic development, but currently lacks infrastructure should be converted into “turnkey” development sites where possible – particularly areas close to Village sewer and water facilities. Provision should be made on these sites to insure infrastructure is adequate, zoning is established, appropriate environmental impacts studies have been completed, and that the Town has a general idea of the type of business it would like to site in that location. This “turnkey” effort will greatly minimize the obstacles and frustrations that many entrepreneurs and businessmen face when seeking to locate a site for business start-up or expansion.
- ❑ The Town lacks a proactive business recruitment effort, one that involves one or more representatives of the Town traveling to other communities in New York State and throughout the Northeast to meet with business prospects. This strategy should be used in combination with other methods of business recruitment on the local level. Such representatives need not be Town government employees but could be members of the Chamber of Commerce who have occasion to travel to various parts of New York State

and the nation. However, a list of business prospects should be developed, beginning with suppliers who interact with businesses located in the Tri-Town area. This is not a strategy that yields high returns, but it should not be totally neglected as is currently the case. This effort would greatly benefit from collaboration between Town and Village officials.

- ❑ In terms of employment, the Town is very dependent on the Village. This dependence suggests that the Town should work very closely with the Village to identify areas for future development, recruit businesses, retain businesses, and support the airport.
- ❑ Any effort by the Town and Village to recruit new businesses and residents will have to accommodate the child care needs of the community. As after school programs in school districts increase in popularity, the recruitment of new residents, especially those with young children, becomes highly competitive between communities. The Town would benefit in the area of economic development if it had an after school program that it could market to prospective businesses and families.
- ❑ Future efforts to recruit business and new residents to the Town will greatly depend on efforts to revitalize the Main Street area of the Village of Sidney. Some of the possible actions to achieve this revitalization are cited in the *2002 Sidney Merchants Survey Report* which is included in Appendix II.
- ❑ A number of environmentally hazardous SuperFund sites exist in the Town of Sidney and along an area bordering the Town of Masonville. Remediation of these highly toxic areas will take a number of years.
- ❑ The incidence of poverty in the Sidney Center area is very high and given the isolated location of the Hamlet, access to transportation for people seeking jobs and/or education is poor. As a result, under present conditions, it will be very difficult to improve economic conditions of people living in the Hamlet unless a very concerted effort is initiated by Town officials.

XII. Utilities

There are a number of public utilities that serve the Town of Sidney. The New York State Electric & Gas Corporation (NYSEG) provides electric power to the Town. General telephone services are provided by Frontier, a division of Citizen's Communications. (A detailed description of phone service as it relates to cell phones and other forms of telecommunications are provided in Section XIII on Telecommunications.)

Current Assets

- ❑ Electric power and telephone equipment and repair services are very dependable.
- ❑ The Jennison Station of Bainbridge is a large facility with an operating permit that remains in effect. Applied Energy Services (AES) currently owns this facility and discussions between AES officials, State, Town, and Village officials about the future operating options of this facility would be very beneficial to the Tri-Town area. So long as this facility remains idle or the property site is not redeveloped, no one will benefit.

Future Challenges

- ❑ Current rates for the use of electricity are high in the Town when compared to other communities that acquire their power from generating facilities owned by municipalities and competing rates in bordering states. This expense represents a high fixed cost which makes it difficult to retain and recruit businesses.
- ❑ Jennison Station, located south of Bainbridge, may provide a beneficial energy source for the Town of Sidney if it can be converted to a municipally owned facility that provides energy to the Tri-Town area. In order to determine the economic feasibility of this idea it would be necessary to conduct an in-depth study.

XIII. Telecommunications

The disparity between technologies available in urban areas relative to rural areas has been dubbed by many observers as constituting the “Digital Divide.” Today, rural communities across the nation are searching for ways to bridge this so-called "digital divide" because technology provides wide-ranging benefits for rural communities. Technology can help communities like the Town of Sidney to sell products to broader markets, promote tourism, create opportunities for training, and improve communications. It can also spark new economic opportunities in rural communities. With access to technology and a workforce skilled in capitalizing on technology, a community can achieve significant levels of economic growth.

The Sidney area has access to the Internet typical of other rural areas. The current cost of Internet access in the region is consistent with industry averages. An increase in the number of Internet Service Providers (ISP’s) might benefit the community, but the various types of communications services currently available are adequate.

A study titled: *Telecommunications Capacity Assessment Study for the Village and Town of Sidney* is included in Appendix III of this Town of Sidney Comprehensive Action Plan and should be read to understand the technical capacity, current assets, and future challenges facing the Town of Sidney.

XIV. Media

As in most rural areas, media coverage of the Town of Sidney is somewhat limited to newspapers and radio. In rare instances, television stations from Binghamton will cover a story in the Sidney area.

Current Assets

- ❑ Residents of the Town of Sidney rely on a number of newspapers for coverage of area news and events. In particular, the Tri-Town News is distributed once a week and covers news and events in Sidney, Bainbridge, and Unadilla. A number of other newspapers also cover news and events specific to the Sidney area including The Daily Star, The Evening Sun, The Press & Sun Bulletin, and the Pennysaver.
- ❑ Sidney has one radio station, WCDO FM 100.9 and AM 1490 Tri-County with offices at 75 Main Street, Sidney, NY. Residents of Sidney can also tune into other local radio stations including WDOS AM 730, WSRK FM 103.9, WRHO FM 89.7, WDLA/WDHI/WIYN FM 92.1, WCHN AM 970, and WKXZ FM 94.
- ❑ Residents of Sidney also rely on television stations based in Binghamton, NY. These stations include WBGH-TV (ABC 34), WBNG-TV (CBS 12), WICZ-TV (FOX 40), and WSKG-TV (PBS 46).
- ❑ SidneyOnline.com is an excellent source of news for the Tri-Town area. This web site has daily information on community and sporting events, children's programs, performing arts, church services, a business services directory, and many other issues of interest about communities in the area.

Future Challenges

- ❑ Respondents to the Town of Sidney Community Survey reported that they rely primarily on "Newspapers," "Radio," and "Word of mouth," as their major sources of information about Town events and activities (see *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 24). These information sources provide information about the community; however, their impact is limited. Given that about 63% of respondents have access to the Internet and that 43% use the Internet daily, it would be of great benefit if Town government, businesses and community organizations would begin to create an active Internet homepage for the Town. This effort would significantly enhance intra-community communication and serve to build community awareness, community involvement, volunteerism, and sense of community. It may even be possible for the Town to collaborate with the Village to create a joint Internet homepage,

XV. Transportation

A. Introduction

The Town of Sidney is located in south central New York in the northwest most corner of Delaware County, abutting both Chenango and Otsego Counties. The Town is considered to be at the center of what is commonly known as the Tri-Town area. It is bordered on the northwest by the Susquehanna River, on the northeast by the Town of Franklin, and on the south by the Town of Masonville. Given this strategic geographic location, residents have convenient access to the cities of Oneonta, Binghamton by means of Interstate 88. Access to Utica via Route 8 and New York City via the Route 8 and Route 17 connection are also available.

B. Highway and Road Network

Interstate 88, which is located on the eastern most border of the community, allows convenient access to and from the Town and accommodates a high volume of automobile and commercial traffic. It is a major highway for the movement of goods and people from Pennsylvania to the Canadian border. Route 8 also provides for convenient access to Route 17 East in Binghamton, which provides direct access to the New York Metropolitan area. Another major roadway constructed parallel to the Susquehanna River is Route 7 which connects the Town of Sidney with Unadilla (north-west) and serves as both a main and/or alternate route to I-88 and is a major commuter link. Route 8 runs north and south through the Town providing a transportation connection to Utica and Deposit. This roadway is highly utilized as well for it intersects with Route 7 and I-88.



C. Railroad System



In the mid 1800s, Sidney became part of the Albany and Susquehanna Railroad and tracks were laid on the easternmost part of the Town. Soon after, the railroad was assumed by the Delaware & Hudson Canal Company, now known as the Delaware & Hudson Railroad Company (D & H). The Ontario and Western Railroad Company (O & W) then connected a rail line to the D & H tracks north of the Town, in Sidney Center. A depot was constructed and soon Sidney Center became an important economic link in the transport of agricultural products to New York City. The export of local coal was also facilitated by the presence of this railroad. The O & W tracks of Sidney Center are now overgrown and no longer in use, and the depot presently serves as a museum. The remains of the trestle can still be seen and adds historic charm to the Town. Although the tracks of the D & H Railroad are still in use today, serving as a means of industrial transportation from the Canadian border to Pennsylvania, the rail spurs in Sidney are no longer used. All railroad traffic in the Town is pass-through only.

D. Susquehanna River

The Susquehanna River is located in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. With Otsego Lake as its headwaters in upstate New York, the river flows through Pennsylvania and Maryland, and empties into the Chesapeake Bay.

Historically, the Susquehanna River has never been an ideal route for the transportation of goods and people due to its lack of depth. However, the river does provide the opportunity for recreational and athletic use via canoe or small row boat as well as the fishing of herring, American Eel and Blueback.

The river also provides rich, fertile soil for many farmlands along its journey. As a result of its importance to the quality of life throughout many regions and states, the Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC), a governmental organization, was created in 1972 to help preserve the river through centralized intergovernmental authority. Providing regulatory protection for the Chesapeake Bay Watershed and the Susquehanna River Basin, the SRBC retains powers to complete studies, make recommendations to the state and federal legislatures, and resolve interstate waterway disputes between parties through Administrative hearings.



In addition to the SRBC, the Susquehanna River Trail Association (SRTA) is responsible for promoting environmentally friendly recreation and conservation along the banks of the river. This organization contributed the first water trail project of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed which protects the Susquehanna and its islands while providing resource awareness, stewardship, and conservation.

The Susquehanna still provides excellent conditions on its acreage for farmers to cultivate. With a rich agricultural history, the Town of Sidney has been served well by the fortifying presence of the river. Many farms continue to operate along its embankments along Route 7 between Sidney and Afton.

Sidney utilizes the recreational potential of the river through sponsoring a small-scale canoe regatta named after its founder and accomplished canoeist Mr. Ed Wessels. In addition, Keith Clark Park, located on the banks of the Susquehanna, provides a nice, landscaped walking trail along the path of the Susquehanna River that is enjoyed by many Town residents.

E. Public Transportation

The Town of Sidney is served by the Chenango County Public Transit Company, a bus service that covers all of Chenango County and Sidney, NY. The covered bus stop, located in the parking lot of the Great American plaza, is served daily at various intervals. Most of the persons utilizing this service are contracted through Broome Developmental Services (BDS) to be transported to and from various types of day programming. The average number of persons transported to and from Sidney daily is 30 (15 inbound, 15 outbound), including BDS participants. Additional persons may be picked up through “flag stops” in which persons located anywhere within the transit district can wave to the bus driver for pick up.

F. Taxi Service

The Town of Sidney is served by one local taxi cab company that provides transportation to and from areas as per customer request. The company currently operates five cars and one van that are made available to customers any time of day or night on a daily basis.

Residents of the Town, when utilizing this service, have the option of purchasing a “trip” for a set fee or compensate the company at the rate of \$1.25/mile. Use of this service is high with a large proportion of elderly residents securing transportation for the purpose of local medical appointments and for physician visits outside of the region.

Although public service programs like Medicaid and Medicare pay for the cost of transportation to and from medical facilities for recipients, Town residents of these programs are currently reimbursed by the Delaware County Department of Social Services (DSS) for out-of-pocket expenditure. The local cab company does not have the capability of doing Medicaid/Medicare billing at this time; however, it is in the process of trying to provide this service.

G. Air Transportation

The Town of Sidney has access to the Village of Sidney municipal airport which provides charter flight service and aircraft rental through Delaware Enterprises. Charter service is provided via an FAA certified, twin engine, 7 passenger Piper Navajo to points throughout the northeastern United States. Air Service to other sections of the nation can be arranged as well.

H. Current Assets and Future Challenges

Current Assets

- ❑ Accessibility to and from Interstate Route I-88 is a highly marketable feature of the community in attracting tourists, new residents, and businesses.
- ❑ The Sidney area has access to a well maintained network of State and County roads.
- ❑ Residents of the Town and surrounding communities have access to the Sidney Municipal Airport which provides charter service throughout its service area of the northeastern United States.

Future Challenges

- ❑ As Sidney experiences an aging population, dependency on public transportation services will increase, especially since many residents travel outside the Sidney area for specialized healthcare services.

- ❑ While I-88 is close to the Town of Sidney, visitors exiting off the Interstate do not have the benefit of signs that direct them to the Village. In fact, the entire entrance ramp from the Interstate to the Village limits evokes the look of a superhighway that is simply designed to move the visitor as quickly as possible from the Interstate. With the downtown area far removed from the Interstate entranceway and industries lining the roadway into the community along with franchise businesses located directly off the Interstate, there is no sense that one is entering a community. The lack of locator signs for the downtown business district is a problem that is explained in detail in the *2002 Sidney Merchants Survey Report*, which is provided in Appendix II.
- ❑ The Sidney Municipal Airport provides transportation services to businesses in the region; however, the airport is underutilized and operates at a deficit. This deficit is primarily absorbed by the Village of Sidney. The Village and local businesses will need to consider solutions to these problems or the option of closing the airport must be seriously considered. Since such actions will have an impact on the Town’s efforts to promote economic development as well, the Town should collaborate with the Village to identify future options for funding the operation of the airport.

XVI. The Main Street Connection

The Main Street area of the Village is a public space that represents the political, cultural, social, and economic center of the Town and Village of Sidney. The initial impression of the Town by visitors will, to a great extent, be influenced by the overall appearance of the Main Street area. As in communities across New York and the nation, efforts to improve this area will positively impact the appearance, economy, and quality of life enjoyed by residents of the Town. The Main Street of Sidney is the largest in the Tri-Town Area and given its central location, it serves the needs of many area consumers. Thus, the appearance and economic viability of the Main Street area is very important both locally and regionally.



A special in-depth survey of merchants in the Main Street area was conducted as part of the “Village of Sidney Comprehensive Action Plan” and the report of the results (with recommendations) are presented in Appendix II (see *2002 Sidney Merchant’s Survey Report*). The report includes specific action steps that can be implemented to improve the Main Street area and is provided as an important source of information in considering the future of the Town. The Town is highly dependent on the Village for employment, business services, and personal services and the future appearance and economic viability of the Main Street area is a key reason for a high degree of collaboration among the Town and Village.

XVII. Land Use and Zoning

A. Land Use

The Town of Sidney is a predominately rural community, with low density development along State highways and County and local roadways. Sidney Center is a densely developed hamlet area in the southeastern portion of the Town. This predominately residential hamlet includes 137 residential structures, a building supply operation, Post Office, Library, County Highway facility, as well as a small park and playground.

Predominate land uses in the Town are residential and agricultural. There is no industry in the Town, and commercial uses are very limited. Several gravel operations and a large horse stable operate along River Road near the Susquehanna River, and several commercial uses are scattered along Route 23. Other uses in the Town include a golf course, roller rink, and animal shelter, which are located just outside of the Village of Sidney municipal boundary. An EPA Superfund site is located on Richardson Hill Road in the extreme southern and very rural portion of the Town.

The Town is zoned predominately Residential-Agricultural. This zoning reflects and protects the rural character of the community. Agricultural uses encompass much of the land along the Susquehanna River and valley areas of the Town. The Town does contain a number of wooded hills that offer panoramic views of the countryside. Newer housing, such as Hamlet Estates, has taken advantage of the Town's scenic qualities. Residential zones are located along Route 8 south of the Village, and in and around Sidney Center. Small commercial zones are located in the Sidney Center, Youngs, and Evergreen Hill hamlet areas; at the intersection of Route 357 and River Road; at the intersection of Route 23 and River Road; and along the Wells Bridge-Otego Road near the State boat launch site. Although there is a Manufacturing zoning classification on the Town's Zoning Map, there are no such zones designated. (See Map II.)

Current Assets

- ❑ The Town of Sidney has very convenient access to I-88, which will encourage future development.
- ❑ The Town is blessed with a number of scenic qualities - with rolling terrain, agricultural lands, and forested hillsides that make for an attractive living environment. Low density residential development can be accommodated in most areas of the Town without significantly impacting the environment. Farmlands along Plankenhorn Road, Route 357, and Covered Bridge Road have development potential for housing, including assisted living development.
- ❑ The housing stock in the Town is generally well maintained, and can be preserved with active code enforcement.
- ❑ Approximately 60% of respondents agreed that it's very important that agricultural land in the Town be protected. This is a key finding since the rural character of the Town is a

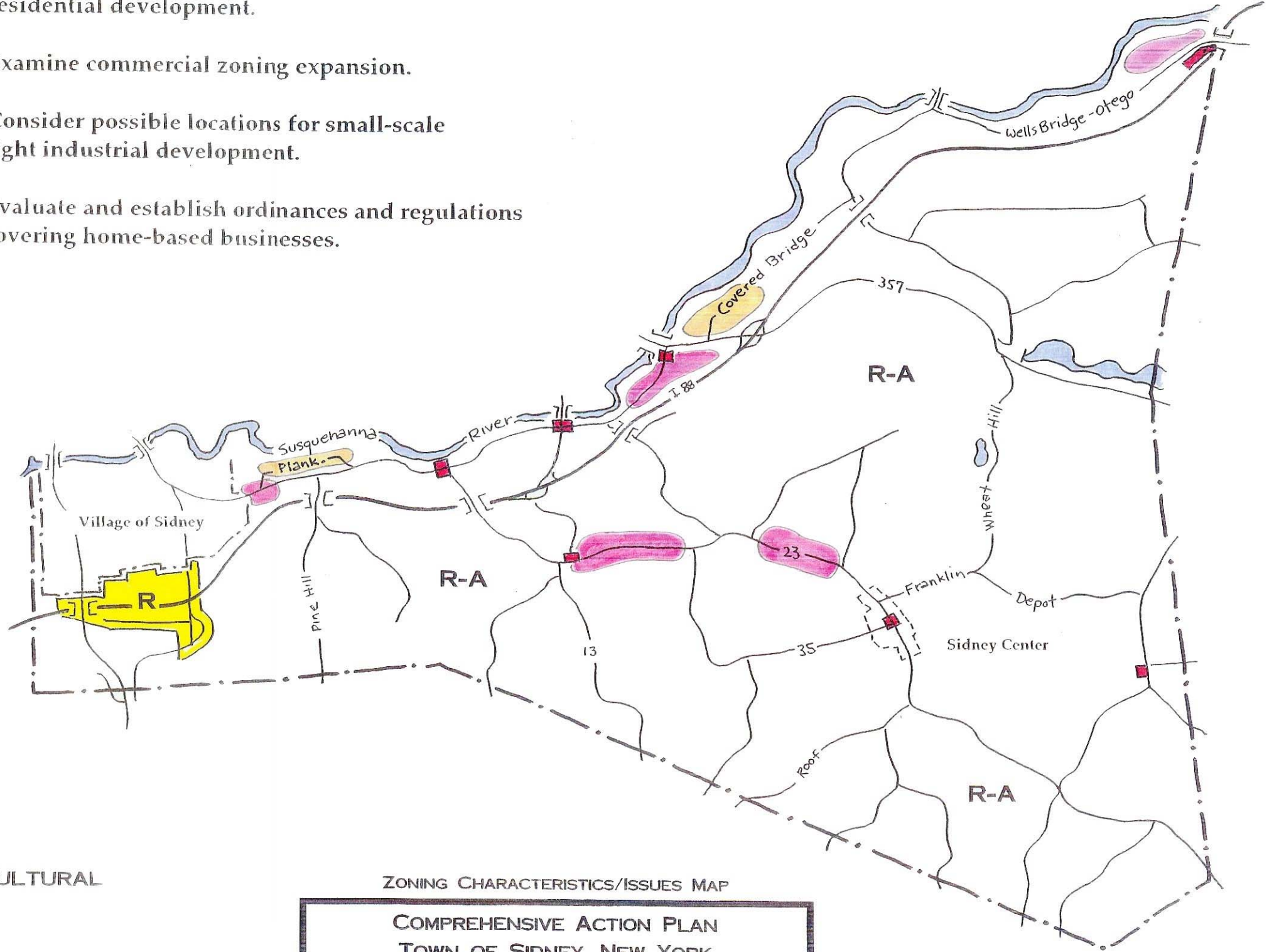
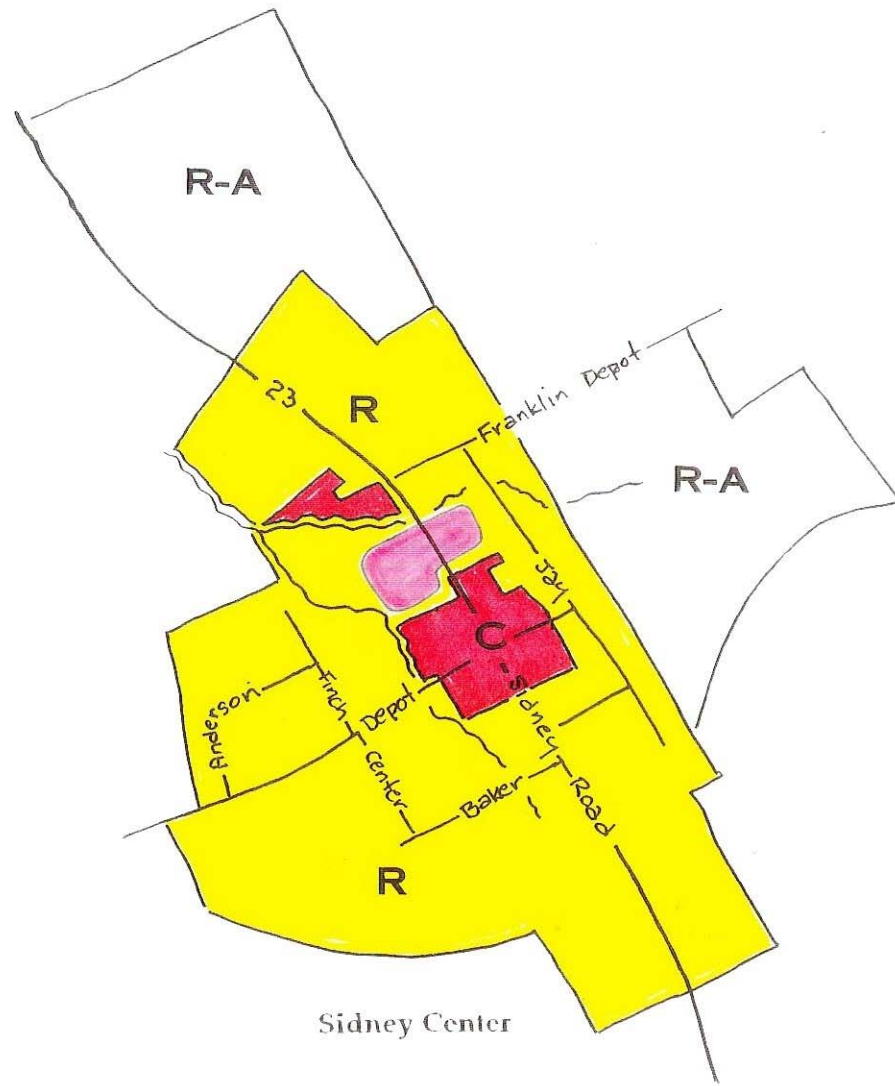
Map II

 Consider rezoning for higher density residential development.

 Examine commercial zoning expansion.

Consider possible locations for small-scale light industrial development.

Evaluate and establish ordinances and regulations covering home-based businesses.



-  R-A RESIDENTIAL-AGRICULTURAL
-  R RESIDENTIAL
-  C COMMERCIAL
-  M MANUFACTURING

ZONING CHARACTERISTICS/ISSUES MAP

COMPREHENSIVE ACTION PLAN
TOWN OF SIDNEY, NEW YORK
 Center for Economic & Community Development at SUNY Oneonta
 Carlson Associates, Inc.

significant factor contributing to its appearance and quality of life (see *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 22).

Future Challenges

- ❑ The improvement and revitalization of Sidney Center is a major community development challenge in the Town. This hamlet has a high concentration of substandard conditions, water and sewer problems, and inadequate recreation facilities. A comprehensive program of improvements and a focused effort to address critical needs should be a Town priority.
- ❑ Although housing quality in the Town is generally good, a town-wide housing rehabilitation program is needed to improve deteriorated residential properties, assist low income homeowners, and preserve the Town's quality of life.
- ❑ The development of additional high quality housing, including assisted living housing, should be encouraged in areas close to community services and where environmental impacts will not be significant. Plankenhorn Road, Covered Bridge Road, and Route 357 are appropriate for such development.
- ❑ The Town of Sidney (excluding Village) has a total of 1,443 land parcels of which 396 or 27.4% are owned by non-residents. For this purpose, a non-resident is considered to be an owner with a residential address outside of Delaware County. This ownership pattern suggests that non-residents will play an important role in determining the future land use patterns in the Town.
- ❑ Respondents are divided over the idea that neighbors should have something to say about how private property is used, with 63% answering "sometimes" and 35% answering "always." Respondents are equally divided on the question of the community having a say about the use of private property, with 65% answering "sometimes" and 34% answering "never." Yet, overall, respondents seem to favor some type of community standards for the use of private property. However, concerning the statement that "individual property rights should be more important than Town concerns," 22% of respondents answered "always" and 71% answered "sometimes." It would seem that respondents are most skeptical about conceding control over individual property rights to the Town (see *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 20).
- ❑ As noted in the section on economic development findings, about 60% of respondents agree with the idea that the "Town should exercise its authority to protect residential areas from business development." This finding relates to land use because it demonstrates that in certain situations respondents recognize the need for Town government to exercise its authority on behalf of land use management. This issue will likely grow in importance in the future as more people use their residences to develop home-based businesses. Unless some guidelines or restrictions are established by local government, home-based businesses can develop in a manner that can threaten the property values of others. (See *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 22.)

XVIII. Visions, Goals, and Strategies

A. Community Development Vision

The Town will strive to promote a sense of identity; to encourage feelings of community pride and willingness to invest in the community; and will encourage this spirit to be expressed in terms of community service and philanthropy.

Community Development Goal 1.0: Provide leadership training opportunities for Town residents as a means of promoting community leadership and service.

Strategy 1.01: Delaware County is one of the few counties in south Central New York that does not have a leadership program. Despite this situation, the Town should partner with the Village of Sidney and take the initiative to create a leadership program that will create a new generation of leaders for both the Town and the Village. Consideration should also be given to incorporating a Tri-Town perspective and in this way the Town could create a collaborative effort among the three towns to eventually organize a Tri-Town leadership program. The leadership program should be managed by the Sidney Chamber of Commerce with funding support derived from tuition and contributions by local governments, community organizations, and local businesses. A number of local leadership organizations can assist in the development of this program including Leadership Chenango based in Norwich and Leadership Otsego at SUNY Oneonta.

Community Development Goal 1.1: Improve communication about government and community affairs between Town government and residents.

Strategy 1.11: The results of the Town of Sidney Community Survey indicate that respondents rely primarily on newspapers, radio, and “word of mouth” for information about local happenings. However, if Town government is going to take a proactive, leadership role in revitalizing the Town, then it must develop more direct, frequent, and effective methods of communicating with residents, community organizations and the business community. It is often noted that one of the virtues of living in a small rural community is the ability to get to know people and directly communicate with them. However, this is often a virtue that is taken for granted. Town government must develop a more diverse set of communication methods and not rely solely on traditional town meetings. In fact, the agenda of most Town meetings is less informational in content and more designed to complete short-term government business. Yet, in today’s busy world, the latter method is no longer a practical method for local government to rely upon. Most people do not have the time to attend such meetings. Thus, it is necessary to use a variety of methods including newsletters, Sidney Television, informational town meetings (meetings without a specific agenda so that residents can raise questions and concerns), and the Internet.

It may also be helpful for Town government to hold special community events to engage residents and community leaders to discuss various topics of concern. Some of the recommendations in this Comprehensive Action Plan would be ideally suited for this purpose.

In particular, Town government needs to convey to the public the need to invest taxpayer dollars in enhancing the infrastructure of the Town. This will require communicating the benefits of this investment as it yields economic and residential development. In addition, it would be helpful if the Town were to use a quarterly newsletter to explain the purposes for which taxpayer dollars are expended. Very few local governments provide this information in easy to understand terms and yet residents receive detailed explanations about other personal expenditures (e.g., automobile price stickers, supermarket receipts, etc.). The use of graphics can be very helpful as well. This manner of communication can be very useful when helping the public to understand the significant ways that their taxes benefit them and their community.

Finally, it would be helpful if the Town were to communicate the many challenges that the Town faces in the future including responding to Federal and State mandates, road improvements, sewer and water problems in Sidney Center, improving the appearance and quality of housing, meeting the public service needs of elderly citizens, insuring adequate health care facilities (e.g., The Hospital), and many others. Keeping residents informed about these issues can help to encourage them to accept responsibility for helping to resolve them and to better understand the budgetary pressures facing Town government. Without such a perspective, the public focus will strictly be on the fact of rising taxes and local officials will be reluctant to be proactive toward problems that require public expenditures.

Community Development Goal 1.2: *Improve collaboration among civic and community organizations for the purpose of promoting community pride, civic responsibility, and leadership.*

Strategy 1.21: The civic and community organizations in Sidney are active, but given their limited resources and lack of participation by residents, their individual impact on the community is modest. As a means of enhancing the impact of these organizations and to inspire greater resident participation in community affairs, the Sidney Community Foundation and the United Way of Sidney should take a leadership role in creating a “Sidney Community Leadership Forum.” The Forum should include the leaders of as many civic and community organizations as possible. The purpose of the Forum is to encourage face-to-face communication among these leaders and to coordinate event planning and fundraising. The Town and Village have many needs that the Forum could address including more events that celebrate community, improvement of the parks and playgrounds, improvement of the appearance of the entrance ways to the Town and Village, development of more youth and elderly recreational programming, recognition for people and organizations who demonstrate good stewardship of their property, and more activities for young people, especially teenagers – to cite just a few.

The state of the economy and community in the Sidney area is such that future collaboration among civic and community groups is essential. Under normal economic and community conditions, it would be appropriate for each organization to “do its own thing,” but the current situation requires a high level of collaboration and focus, where resources can be combined and marshaled to yield strong results. Hopefully, this collaboration will help leaders to “think big,” generate innovative or “out of the box” thinking, and inspire unprecedented collaborative action on behalf of the community. The point is that “business as usual” is no longer an option in for the Sidney area.

Community Development Goal 1.3: *Develop a strong sense of community service and pride among young people in the Town.*

Strategy 1.31: The Sidney Community Leadership Forum (see suggestion in Strategy 1.21 above) and Sidney School District should collaborate on developing a program to encourage young people to participate in a wide range of volunteer service programs. For example, young people can become involved in projects that range from flower planting to litter pick-up days. It may even be possible to engage teenagers in doing minor home care and repair projects for elderly people (e.g., lawn mowing). Such projects will require volunteers from across the community and their efforts will need to be organized and planned. Many national models for volunteerism already exist to spawn this type of community activity and participation in these annual events could be a catalyst for year-round community service. National initiatives like “Make A Difference Day” in October, “Into The Streets” in the fall and/or spring, Arbor Day for tree planting, and Earth Day for environmental awareness are several very successful events in communities across the nation. In addition, the “Freshman Community Service Day” of the local school district could be expanded to include the entire high school student population to further the annual impact on the community, and also to allow the students to experience volunteerism and its benefits for several school years, rather than just one.

Community Development Goal 1.4: *Encourage pride in the appearance of private property among residents and business owners within the Town.*

Strategy 1.41: The Sidney Chamber of Commerce and Sidney Community Leadership Forum should develop a “Properties of Merit” award program which on an annual basis selects outstanding commercial and/or residential properties for recognition. A good model program is the one used in the City of Oneonta. Such an award will help to develop pride in property and provide the public with examples of buildings that have been improved using good judgment and appropriate design. The Village of Cooperstown annually recognizes homes and businesses that create attractive landscape and storefront treatments and, in the winter, holiday decorations. This type of program will also afford the Town the opportunity to recognize historic residences and farms that have been well maintained and preserved.

Community Development Goal 1.5: *Improve the appearance of the entrance ways to the Town.*

Strategy 1.51: The location and quality of signs found at the various entrance ways to the Town are currently inadequate. Many of the signs are in poor condition or fail to attract the attention of visitors and tourists. This lack of stewardship and presentation detracts from the purpose of signs which are to invite people and celebrate the existence of community. In this regard, efforts are needed to develop a creative “branding” of the community through the use of a slogan. The Town should consider a slogan that reflects the community’s rich history, perhaps one that celebrates the Town’s noteworthy agricultural and railroad history. The slogan could also reflect the beautiful geographic location of the Town along the banks of the Susquehanna River. Or the Town could adopt the same slogan as the Village of Sidney. The Village of Sidney Comprehensive Action Plan includes a suggestion that it consider the slogan: “Sidney: Producer of the Magnetos that Helped Win WWII.” The Town could even have a contest where school

children and residents could suggest appropriate slogans for adoption by the Town. Whatever slogan is adopted, attractive signs should be constructed using high quality products and then sited at all entranceways to the Town.

B. Culture and Recreation Vision

To attract new residents and to engage as many people as possible in the social life of the community, the Town will strive to improve its parks and playgrounds; develop recreational programs for youth, teenagers, and the elderly; acquire access to more indoor athletic and recreational facilities; and increase the number of community celebrations and events

***Culture and Recreation Goal 2.0:** Create a partnership between Town government and the Sidney School District to give residents greater opportunity to use the District's athletic and recreational facilities.*

Strategy 2.01: The Sidney School District will soon complete a major renovation of its facilities. Some aspects of this renovation project could greatly enhance the opportunities of Town residents, especially elderly residents, to use indoor and outdoor recreational facilities. In particular, given the long winter months and the rural nature of the Town, it becomes very difficult for Town residents to exercise and participate in recreational/cultural programs. Some of the facilities that would meet this need include renovated gymnasiums, a swimming pool, and running track. The Town of Sidney Community Survey revealed that respondents evaluated "indoor recreational facilities" 14th out of a total of 16 community services, which indicated a lack of satisfaction with such services. This evaluation was no doubt low because the Town has only a few limited indoor facilities available to them in the Village. In addition, a partnership between the Town and Sidney School District that would result in a sharing of services might generate additional support from residents for the school district. It would also give residents the opportunity to see and experience the facilities that they are paying for and this could generate greater understanding and pride among residents.

***Culture and Recreation Goal 2.1:** In collaboration with the Village of Sidney, develop recreational programs and life-long sports programs to meet the needs of youth, teenagers, and the elderly.*

Strategy 2.11: Currently, the Town contributes funds to the Village of Sidney Recreation Department to develop and implement recreational programs. However, at present, the ratio of athletic to recreation programs is approximately 90% athletic to 10% recreational and most of this programming is for children in younger grades. As a means of engaging more young people, especially teenagers, into athletic and recreational programs, consideration should be given to introducing life-time sports such as tennis, golf, handball, and hiking. These types of programs provide long-term benefits to young people, particularly in terms of introducing social skills, improving their ability to interact with adults, and helping them to socially mature. In terms of recreation, programs could be developed in the areas of art, dancing, camping, and radio controlled airplane flying/modeling, to cite just a few possible programs.

As a result, the Town of Sidney should collaborate with the Village of Sidney Recreation Department and the Sidney School District, to conduct a survey of students to determine their recreational and life-long sports interests. This survey may help to determine participation rates of teenagers for various activities and help to develop the future content of recreational programming. This type of strategy or one that is similar is necessary recognizing the concern that people have regarding the needs of teenagers. For example, in the Town of Sidney Community Survey, respondents gave “teen recreation” the lowest possible evaluation, rating it 16 among 16 community services (see *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 10).

In addition, the Village Recreation Department, the Delaware County Office for the Aging, and The Hospital should collaborate to survey elderly people to determine the types of physical exercise and recreation programs they desire. This is a growing population within the Town and Village of Sidney and there is a need to address their needs. In particular, it may be possible to develop programs that are appealing to both young people and the elderly, which would socially benefit both groups.

Culture and Recreation Goal 2.2: *Collaborate with the Village of Sidney to create more community events that will engage citizens of all ages and utilize the recreational resources of both municipalities.*

Strategy 2.21: Community events make it possible for citizens to celebrate together and enjoy the fellowship of their neighbors. Such events also give citizens a sense of pride in their community and inspire them to make contributions in the form of volunteerism, financial gifts, and willingness to invest in the betterment of the community. Currently, there are very few scheduled community events that are Town based and even the Village lacks events. The Town of Sidney Community Survey revealed that 55% of respondents want more community events and celebrations (see *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 7), while the Village of Sidney Community survey showed that 61% of respondents wanted more as well. It is likely that residents of both the Town and the Village do not care where the events occur – they just want them.

This situation could be easily addressed by the proposed Sidney Community Leadership Forum. In fact, in the process of developing a schedule of events it will be important to identify one premier event that could help the Town and Village bolster its regional identity and draw tourists. One possibility would be to use the airport to create an event. For example, an annual “Sidney Air Show” could be developed that would include tours of interesting or vintage planes, pilot performances, a parachute demonstration or contest, airplane rides, an on-site aviation simulator, and equipment or photographic displays of aviation history. It may even be possible to host a “Radio Controlled Air Show,” one that would engage enthusiasts of all ages from across the region. Actually, the possibilities are endless. Or even two major events could be scheduled including an airport show in the fall and a “Sidney Days” event in the summer at East Sidney Lake. Such events would be a wonderful source of local entertainment, but more importantly, it would foster a sense of community among the people of the Sidney area.

C. Economic Development Vision

The Town is committed to the development of its economy and the prosperity of residents through the development of good paying jobs, the expansion of local businesses, the recruitment of new small scale light manufacturing and commercial businesses, and by investing in infrastructure improvements throughout the Town.

Economic Development Goal 3.1: Collaborate with the Village of Sidney to create a professionally managed and proactive economic development delivery system for the recruitment and retention of business.

Strategy 3.11: Currently, the Town and Village have a number of organizations playing a role in economic development including Town Government, Village government, Sidney Industrial Development Authority, Sidney Chamber of Commerce, and the Greater Sidney Development Corporation. All of these organizations have made significant contributions; however, there is a need to better coordinate the leaders and physical resources that they possess. With the exception of the Town and Village governments, these organizations function with the help of volunteers, have chosen specific areas of involvement in the economic arena, and do not have a physical location with 7 day/24 hour communications capacity. In other words, the current economic delivery system consists of volunteer-led organizations that are generally reactive in posture and possess limited resources. If economic development is truly considered a priority of the community, and both the Town and Village of Sidney Community Surveys indicated that this was the case, then it is essential that a full-time professional organization exist to meet this need.

As a result, Town and Village governments should assume a leadership role in encouraging these entities to create a one-stop, centralized economic development organization with the goal of promoting the economic growth of Sidney. This organization could be called the “Business Development Authority of Sidney” and should include the following components: (1) by-laws which establish it as a nonprofit organization; (2) a small staff of one professional and one office manager; (3) an advisory board consisting of the Town Supervisor, Mayor, leaders of the Sidney Industrial Development Authority, Sidney Chamber of Commerce, and the Greater Sidney Development Corporation; (4) a budget provided by public and private sector funds; and (5) an office with full phone, fax, and Internet connections. The purpose of this office would be to coordinate all available political, governmental, private sector, and public resources for the purpose of promoting economic development.

In particular, staff of the Development Authority’s responsibilities would be as follows:

- ❑ Insuring that all economic development organizations communicate with each other and share information about projects.
- ❑ Engage in planning by meeting regularly with local business leaders to discuss opportunities for expansion, identify business prospects, contact and meet with potential businesses, and manage all site visits by business prospects.

- ❑ Cultivate and advocate for political (i.e., elected officials) support for Sidney based projects.
- ❑ Prepare appropriate brochures and videos that promote the quality of life attributes and economic development incentives of the Sidney area (e.g., industrial park).
- ❑ Work with local government to reduce barriers to business start-ups and expansions, and manage a Sidney area web site that will serve to promote the area.
- ❑ The Development Authority would also be responsible for recruiting businesses for the Main Street area.
- ❑ Promote close collaboration between the Town and Village.

Clearly, the creation of this organization may entail that current groups cede authority and be willing to change their focus to accommodate changing priorities, but ultimately it is important to establish a system where goals, roles, and actions are well planned and implemented.

Economic Development Goal 3.2: Promote and support the development of more agricultural enterprises in the Town.

Strategy 3.21: The area encompassing the Susquehanna River in the Towns of Sidney, Bainbridge, and Unadilla contains a strong infrastructure or “core agricultural area” to support expansion of the agricultural industry. In order to assess and possibly capitalize on this economic opportunity, a special task force should be created including representatives of the Towns of Sidney, Bainbridge, and Unadilla, Cornell Cooperative Extension of each Town, farmers, the Delaware County Department of Economic Development, and the NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets to explore ways to promote entrepreneurship and investment in agriculture in the area. The task force should consider opportunities for: (1) developing alternative agriculture operations (e.g., cheese products, organic products, and specialty vegetables), (2) providing low interest loans and grants for capital investment and marketing efforts for all forms of agricultural development, (3) insuring the long-term protection of agriculture land, and (4) to advocate on behalf of farmers with the Susquehanna River Basin Commission. Also, consideration should be given to promoting products from the area using some type of name branding, for example, “Susquehanna River Products.”

A possible outcome could be the creation of a Susquehanna River Valley Agricultural Development Authority (SRVADA). The SRVADA could be created based on the Industrial Development Authority model that is used to promote commercial and industrial development in the region. The SRVADA could provide low interest loans to support infrastructure improvements in the area, capital projects by agricultural enterprises, promote joint marketing efforts, establish a “brand name” for products from the region, and attract alternative entrepreneurial start-up businesses. The SRVADA could be a joint authority with local government officials showing leadership in politically and financially supporting this initiative. Without this type of concerted effort it is unlikely that the Tri-Town area can maintain, let alone expand the potential of this industry.

Economic Development Goal 3.3: *Recruit and encourage the development of small scale commercial and light manufacturing businesses in close proximity to the Village and along major transportation routes in the Town.*

Strategy 3.31: Respondents to the Town of Sidney Community Survey prefer the recruitment of moderate sized businesses with a range of 100-249 jobs and large industry with a range of 250-1,000 jobs (see *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 23). This finding suggests that respondents see the future somewhat in terms of their past experience. In the past, the Sidney area has benefited from having a few very large businesses and these businesses paid good salaries. This preference seems to ignore the difficulty of recruiting such businesses and the dependence that can result from reliance on a big business economy. Consider that the Town lacks sites with adequate infrastructure necessary to construct large commercial or production facilities and the Village has only limited land area for development. In addition, the workforce in the Sidney area is very “tight” with employers having to recruit workers from communities in a wide geographic area.

Despite these challenges, the Town could develop a strong collaborative relationship with the Village to develop land sites in close proximity to the Village. These sites could be made into “turn key” development sites, that is, sites with power, sewer and water infrastructure extended from the Village. In addition, the Town could develop small scale commercial and light industry on sites located along the major transportation routes in the Town.

As noted previously, future business development in the Town will require a reevaluation of the zoning configuration of the Town. Some areas of the Town that should be considered for re-zoning to promote business development include the following:

- The eastern part of the Village by Plankenhorn Road where Village water and sewer facilities could be extended.
- Along Route 23, toward the Hamlet of Sidney Center.
- Along Back River Road, the part which borders the Town of Otego, near Exit 12 off of Route 88.
- Other areas along Route 23, which already accommodates tractor trailer traffic.

A strategy of promoting business growth close to the Village and encouraging small scale commercial and light industry in specific areas of the Town will help to keep the business base of the Sidney area diversified and better able to survive periodic swings of the economy. Thus, the Town should work closely with the Village to educate the public regarding the best long term strategy for business recruitment – one that is sensitive to diversity, the value of recruiting small and mid-size businesses, and the nature of business growth in today’s economy (i.e., growth of financial, information, and technology based businesses). Finally, in terms of recruiting small businesses, the focus should be on those businesses that can develop, at a minimum, a regional or Tri-Town market for their products. Given the demographic trends impacting the area (e.g., slow

or declining population rates and modest household incomes) businesses must have a broad geographically based market to support them.

Economic Development Goal 3.4: *In conjunction with the Towns of Bainbridge and Unadilla, explore the feasibility of developing a Tri-Town municipal utility corporation using the Jennison Station in Bainbridge.*

Strategy 3.41: Although the Jennison Station of Bainbridge is an old facility, Applied Energy Services (AES) currently owns this facility and has retained an operating permit for the station. Officials of the Town of Sidney should collaborate with officials of the Town of Bainbridge, Town of Unadilla and Vision 21 to consider a study regarding the feasibility of using the Jennison station to create a municipal utility corporation.

Economic Development Goal 3.5: *Encourage the growth of home-based businesses.*

Strategy 3.51: Despite the preferences of respondents to the Town of Sidney Community Survey for the recruitment of mid-size and large businesses, the Town has a more realistic opportunity to develop small, locally based businesses.

The Town has a considerable number of home-based businesses and should be making efforts to support and develop these businesses. Studies have shown that while home-based businesses are small (57% earn less than \$25,000 gross income), most provide valuable supplementary income and are a key economic component of rural communities. The Town should work with the Bainbridge Development Corporation to support the growth of home-based businesses because (1) they allow families to remain in the community rather than leave to find better wages, (2) they provide flexibility and choice of work style for owners while making it possible to remain home, and (3) they provide services and products that would otherwise not be available. In fact, in some cases, such businesses can evolve into larger businesses. As the authors of a recent book, Cities Back from the Edge: New Life for Downtown, point out, “every community now is filled with small entrepreneurs, each a potential downtown business, now operating out of a home, a garage, a single roadside building, or a strip mall. This *is* the local economy, once represented in downtowns but now often floating dispersed, un-centered, disconnected in an uprooted, un-rooted, amorphous state.” The key then is to develop methods and services that can help these businesses move from the home-based stage to a location on along Town highways or in areas where the Town seeks to cite businesses.

Also, Town government should establish ordinances that would set guidelines for the establishment of home-based industries, while not creating bureaucratic hurdles that will prohibit the growth of these businesses. These ordinances should be directed at insuring the proper usage, safety and appearance of property. Finally, the Town should work with the Greater Sidney Development Corporation, the Delaware County Industrial Development Authority and the Sidney Chamber of Commerce to find funds to provide technical assistance, mentoring, and access to capital to support the growth of these businesses. In particular, the Town should try to obtain the Cornell Cooperative Extension program, “Cas\$hing in on Business Opportunities,” a curriculum designed by the National Home-Based and Micro Business Design Team to help develop home-based businesses.

Economic Development Goal 3.6: *Conduct a Conference of Home-Based Business Owners in the greater Sidney area.*

Strategy 3.61: The Town should collaborate with the Village of Sidney, the Greater Sidney Development Corporation, the Sidney Industrial Development Authority, the Delaware County Economic Development Department, the Sidney Chamber of Commerce and other economic development organizations in the region to hold a conference to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing home-based businesses. The conference would be an ideal forum to: (1) provide presentations by experts, (2) discuss issues of concern (e.g. codes), (3) promote networking, and (4) develop additional opportunities for business development in the Sidney area.

This type of effort might succeed in identifying some profitable home-based businesses that could expand, but lack the financial support and management expertise to move to the next level of growth. Such “home grown” businesses might be assisted by this type of conference and could expand in a way that would make them ideal future prospects for an industrial park or other site identified by the Town.

Economic Development Goal 3.7: *Convene a “Future of Sidney Center Forum” to discuss a long term plan for improving the economic and living conditions of residents of Sidney Center.*

Strategy 3.71: Sidney Center persists as a “poverty pocket” that is characterized by deplorable economic and living conditions for residents. As long as this situation is allowed to continue without appropriate intervention, it is likely that conditions will reach crisis proportions. In particular, the incremental deterioration in the quality of drinking water due to the contamination of wells, the decline in the quality of the housing stock, and the presence of raw sewage, are situations that need to be addressed as soon as possible. In addition, the Delaware County Department of Social Services (DSS) confirms that 45 households are eligible and receiving benefits from programs provided by DSS. Clearly, part of the problem is the fact that Sidney Center is rather isolated from a geographic standpoint and transportation to jobs and education is difficult. However, due to the fact that rental properties are available in the Hamlet, some at rates that are more reasonable than in other areas of the Town, a clustering of poor families has occurred. In 2002, Delaware Opportunities conducted a housing study of Sidney Center and documented in photographic detail the substandard living conditions of many persons in the Hamlet. Delaware Opportunities used this information in support of a HUD funding grant for housing rehabilitation. This effort yielded a grant from HUD; however, some of the funds will be used to address other substandard housing conditions in the Town of Sidney. However, what is needed in a focused infusion of grant funds to address the water, sewer, and housing needs of the residents of the hamlet.

Other issues that could be addressed by the forum would be enhancing the condition and recreational amenities of the Sidney Center Park, the location and services of the Sidney Center branch library, and meeting the transportation needs of Sidney Center residents.

Recognizing that the problems facing the residents of Sidney Center include economic, environmental, recreational, and housing quality issues, a “Future of Sidney Center Forum” should be convened by the Town of Sidney. The Forum should include representatives of DSS, Delaware County Public Health Department, the Delaware County Economic Development Department, the Delaware County Planning Department, Delaware Opportunities, NYS Environmental Conservation Department, Town officials, Senate and Assembly representatives, and other experts as appropriate. The purpose of the Forum would be (1) fact finding, to determine the priority problems that need to be addressed, (2) develop strategies to address the priority problems, and (3) identify funding sources to resolve these problems. This type of approach could build commitment by all concerned to address the Hamlet’s needs and result in a practical plan with funding support.

***Economic Development Goal 3.8:** Promote and support the development of assisted living or small scale retirement communities in the Town.*

Strategy 3.81: The Town has a number of excellent sites located near the Village of Sidney that could be developed to accommodate retirement living. Throughout the Tri-Town region and beyond, demographic trends show a significant growth in the elderly population. Many of these people demonstrate a life-cycle experience typified by a working period, followed by retirement in their local residence, sometimes followed by a travel period of wintering in the south and summer at home, followed by a return to the local residence, and finally, a desire to live in a retirement facility with few responsibilities. The sustained link to the Tri-Town area has much to do with personal history and family, but equally important is the areas low cost of living, low crime, good transportation, and excellent access to health care. These are factors that the Tri-Town region needs to promote and utilize in encouraging investors and developers to build retirement facilities.

D. Government Vision

The Town of Sidney is committed to the efficient and cost-effective delivery of quality government services. The Town will collaborate with the Village of Sidney, the business community, and community organizations to sustain a high quality of life, while promoting economic growth and prosperity. Finally, the Town will improve both the frequency and quality of its communication with the public at-large.

***Government Goal 4.0:** Determine if consolidation of the Village and Town governments will result in improved service delivery, a reduction in the cost of government, and a more simplified government structure.*

Strategy 4.01: The Town of Sidney collaborates with the Village of Sidney in many areas, making government operations more cost effective and efficient. The sharing of a municipal building (Civic Center) and Court facility, as well as cost of utilities and maintenance has provided both governments with adequate office space and public amenities (e.g., senior meals, indoor recreation, meeting rooms etc.) In addition, a shared recreation program (Joint Youth Program) and Office of the Assessor are excellent examples of inter-municipal cooperation.

Approximately 28% of the respondents to the Town of Sidney Community Survey agreed that the Village and Town should merge, 54% disagreed, while about 18% were not sure (see *ST Community Survey Report*, Table 8). The issue of consolidation is a very complex one and the fact that 18% of respondents were not sure indicates that many residents need additional information about this issue. However, a major factor to consider in regard to this issue is the high degree of economic interdependence between the Town and the Village. For example, consider that future economic and residential development will require the identification of sites in the Town that are close to the Village. This proximity will make it possible to conveniently extend Village water and sewer systems. Close collaboration and cost-sharing will be required if business recruitment and retention efforts in the Sidney area are to be successful. At present, many Town residents work in Village businesses and the future growth and diversification of the Village economy will greatly benefit Town residents. Recognizing these economic realities, this may be an appropriate time to explore ways to reduce the financial burdens of government on the citizenry of both communities. As a result, a study of consolidation should be initiated with special emphasis on the possible economic development benefits and anticipated cost savings and improved service delivery that could result. There are also additional reasons to explore the issue of consolidation.

First, the potential of creating a larger municipality with a simplified government structure could make it easier to foster economic development. New business owners, investors, and entrepreneurs prefer working with municipalities that have minimal bureaucratic procedures and regulations. A singular government managing the entire Sidney area would provide greater flexibility in planning and implementing economic development strategies. Second, State government mandates, social change, and public expectations for government, have placed increased financial burdens on local governments. These governments continue to grow despite the best efforts of prudent local officials to resist these pressures. Ultimately, the question is: how many governments can residents afford? Third, local governments have been “squeezed” by the dual pressures of having to limit tax increases but provide additional services. The result has been to delay or postpone addressing many pressing infrastructure and service needs of the community. In the short run, this financial austerity strategy keeps tax increases at a minimum, but sets the stage for significant “catch up” expenditures in the future.

To help determine the feasibility of consolidation, the Mayor and Village Board, along with the Supervisor and Town Board, should jointly discuss the opportunities and challenges of the dissolution of the Village and the consolidation of these municipalities. By examining the possibilities through dialogue and a formal consolidation study, officials of both municipalities will have a better sense of how they can best help their communities and the region as a whole.

If a consolidation study is not an approach that is deemed necessary, then Town officials should make every effort to meet with Village officials to explore ways to achieve a high level of collaboration in the future.

***Government Goal 4.2:** Manage the administrative operations of the Town in accordance with the goals and objectives of the Town of Sidney Comprehensive Action Plan.*

Strategy 4.21: The Town of Sidney Comprehensive Action Plan includes many recommendations that will require strong, proactive management of Town government. In this regard, the Town can stay focused on the Action Plan by instituting a policy of annual performance programs for all department heads, Board Chairpersons, and other Town officials as appropriate. In addition, the Town Board can require all Town department heads and Board Chairpersons to submit an annual report which summarizes the performance of their department/Board and the anticipated challenges facing their department/Board in the coming year.

***Government Goal 4.3:** Establish the position of Town Code Enforcement Officer on a half-time basis.*

Strategy 4.31: Currently, the Town Code Enforcement Officer is a part-time (as needed) employee. Given the size of the Town and the many problems that exist in and around the Hamlet of Sidney Center, the Code Enforcement Officer's mode of operation has been primarily reactive as opposed to proactive. In nearly all instances, enforcement action is taken in response to written complaints by residents. Given the current code enforcement challenges facing the Town and in anticipation of future development in the Town, a more proactive approach to code enforcement is needed. As a result, the Town should consider establishing this position as half-time.

***Government Goal 4.4:** Enhance the capacity of the Town of Sidney Planning Board to assume a proactive role in planning.*

Strategy 4.41: In anticipation of future economic and residential development pressures on the Town, the code enforcement problems plaguing the Hamlet of Sidney Center, and the need to reevaluate the zoning configuration of the Town, the Planning Board should assume a leadership role in planning. In this role, the Planning Board would also be active in working on implementing aspects of the Town Comprehensive Action Plan. In order to assume these roles, the Town should arrange for the Delaware County Department of Planning and Development to work with members of the Town Planning Board to receive information and training about community planning.

In addition, the Town Planning Board should meet on a regular basis with the Code Enforcement Officer to discuss planning issues. This collaborative approach to planning will greatly enhance the capacity of the Town to develop highly effective land use policies and code enforcement procedures.

Finally, the Town Planning Board should initiate joint meetings with the Village Planning Board as a means of developing a mutual understanding of the challenges facing each community and coordinating future planning efforts .

Government Goal 4.5: *Embrace the technology of the Internet as a means of greatly improving the frequency and quality of communication between Town government and its citizens.*

Strategy 4.51: The Internet is a promising communication tool that is grossly underutilized by the Town and the community at-large to greatly improve the frequency and quality of communication. The Town of Sidney Community Survey revealed that approximately 63% of respondents reported having access to the Internet and 44% use it daily. These access and utilization rates will no doubt grow in the future and Town government must begin to take this technology seriously. Furthermore, the Town should consider ways to use the Internet to accommodate on-line completion of Town forms, notification of Town actions (e.g., roadwork), and procedures for obtaining government services and approvals – to cite just a few potential uses. This effort could potentially reduce the paperwork workload of the Town Clerk’s office, speed up the processing of forms, and make government services more convenient to access by residents. The use of Internet technology will greatly challenge the traditional norms of conducting local government business. Yet, this type of technology is one that has greatly impacted all facets of business and society and local government can no longer afford to ignore its benefits.

Finally, the Town should consider collaborating with the Village to create a joint web page for use by both governments and residents of the Town and Village. This collaboration would greatly reduce the development and maintenance costs of a Municipal Internet homepage.

Government Goal 4.6: *Insure the long-term financial and operational viability of The Hospital through long-range planning.*

Strategy 4.61: The presence of a municipal hospital in the Town of Sidney is of enormous benefit to the long term economic and quality of life future of the Town and Village. Few communities the size of Sidney are blessed with a medical facility and related healthcare services. However, given the unpredictable economic conditions characterizing the healthcare industry and hospitals, it is imperative that planning for the future occur. As a result, Town officials, Village officials, The Hospital’s management consultants and administrators, and selected business leaders should collaborate on developing a long-range financial and healthcare services plan for the hospital.

Government Goal 4.7: *Insure the continued delivery of high quality police services to Town residents in the future.*

Strategy 4.71: Since a low crime rate and appreciation for personal safety are highly rated quality of life values of rural residents in the Sidney area, insuring the continued delivery of these services is important. In this regard, the Town should consider being somewhat proactive regarding the level of quality of these services in the future.

It should be noted that based on interviews with Public Officials and responses to the Town of Sidney Community Survey, there is a high degree of satisfaction with police protection; however, interviews with representatives of New York State Police Troop C and the Delaware County Sheriff's Department, revealed manpower and geographic challenges resulting in limited coverage of the Town. Given this discrepancy between the perception and reality of law enforcement coverage in the Town, it would be beneficial for Town officials to meet with Troop C officials and the Delaware County Sheriff to insure that law enforcement coverage in the Town is adequate in the future. This discussion could focus on the future (3-5 years) manpower and equipment challenges to these agencies, trends in crime for the area (e.g., rise in motor vehicle accidents), response times, and many other factors that will affect the quality and efficiency of police protection.

Government Goal 4.8: *Improve the capacity of the Sidney Center Fire Department to meet the fire protection needs of the Fire District.*

Strategy 4.81: The fire department facility should receive the following improvements: (1) conformity with Town building codes, (2) installation of running water, and (3) replacement of one of its 1500 gallon capacity water tankers.

E. Housing and Neighborhood Quality

The Town will strive to create safe and healthy living conditions Town-wide and particularly in Sidney Center, promote the rehabilitation of existing housing, and encourage the construction of housing for senior citizens and mid to high income households.

Housing and Neighborhood Quality Goal 5.0: *Maintain housing conditions that provide a safe and healthy living environment on a Town-wide basis.*

Strategy 5.01: Vigorously enforce local codes and property maintenance regulations and develop more stringent codes as they pertain to the handling of junk. In order to achieve this goal, as well as others associated with code enforcement, the Town needs to consider establishing a half-time Code Enforcement Officer position. In addition, the office should be more proactive in terms of enforcement than it has in the past (see *Government Goal 4.3*).

Housing and Neighborhood Quality Goal 5.1: *Eliminate substandard housing conditions that impact the health and safety of residents and blight the housing environment.*

Strategy 5.11: Vigorously enforce local codes and property maintenance regulations and develop more stringent codes as they pertain to the handling of substandard housing conditions. This effort is especially important as it pertains to the substandard housing conditions that currently exist in the Hamlet of Sidney Center.

Strategy 5.12: Develop and implement a Town-wide Housing Rehabilitation Program funded through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Small Cities Program and/or HOME Program.

Strategy 5.13: Develop a “targeted” Housing Rehabilitation Program for implementation in the Sidney Center hamlet either as a CDBG single purpose project or part of a “comprehensive” program of improvement activities.

Strategy 5.14: Develop a “comprehensive” program of improvement activities to revitalize and upgrade Sidney Center, including housing rehabilitation and water, sewer, street and recreation improvements. This effort should be preceded by the convening of the “Future of Sidney Center Forum” (see *Economic Development Goal 3.7*).

Housing and Neighborhood Quality Goal 5.2: *Pursue the development of housing options that would meet the life cycle needs of the regions aging population.*

Strategy 5.21: The Town, in collaboration with the Greater Sidney Development Corporation and the Sidney Chamber of Commerce should examine the feasibility of developing housing options for the regions elderly that could include the construction of retirement communities, assisted living facilities, and nursing homes within the community. Each of these housing options represents a progression of need that many elderly people experience; however, access to these options is very limited throughout the region. As a result, many elderly residents retreat to southern retirement communities, utilize in-home care, or cohabitate with relatives. It is possible that many residents would rather take advantage of local housing options, many of which could be far more affordable than those located in other places. Given the significant growth in the elderly population of many communities, in south central New York, the Town of Sidney could capture a large and growing market.

As an example, one potential site for a retirement community is Plankenhorn Road, which is in close proximity to community services available in the Village of Sidney. There are others which could easily be identified through the use of a feasibility study.

Housing and Neighborhood Quality Goal 5.3: *Facilitate the development of major residential subdivisions and individual homes.*

Strategy 5.31: The Town, in collaboration with the Greater Sidney Development Corporation, and the Sidney Chamber of Commerce, and local corporations should initiate and effort to interest developers in creating residential subdivisions consisting of mid to high income, one family housing.

F. Land Use Vision

The Town will strive to plan for the orderly development of its land as suitable for commercial, residential, agricultural, recreational, and open space uses; insure that land development is conducted in a manner that will protect natural and physical resources and the environment; and will promote land use that furthers the quality of life and economic prosperity of the Sidney area.

Land Use Goal 6.0: *The Town should reexamine zoning within its jurisdiction.*

Strategy 6.01: Zoning is a valuable development tool that, when used in combination with comprehensive planning, site plan review, and subdivision regulations, can insure the orderly development and wise stewardship of land and natural resources. Zoning should be used with site plan review to achieve a number of objectives, including the following: (1) attracting appropriate business development; (2) facilitating an adequate supply of quality housing; (3) protecting important environmental or aesthetic features of the community; (4) maintaining and increasing property values; and (5) preserving and protecting residential areas from harmful development.

Although the Town has adopted a Zoning Ordinance, this ordinance has not been updated since 1989. The Town should reevaluate and reexamine the existing ordinance to identify locations appropriate for new commercial and housing development.

Strategy 6.02: As part of the Town's update of its zoning ordinance, the Town Planning Board should consider rezoning the following areas for commercial development:

- The eastern part of the Town by Plankenhorn Road where Village water and sewer facilities could be extended.
- Along Route 23, toward the Hamlet of Sidney Center.
- Along Back River Road, the part which borders the Town of Otego, near Exit 12, off of Route 88.
- Other areas along Route 23, which already accommodates tractor trailer traffic, would also be suitable for commercial development.

Strategy 6.03: The Town should adopt design review standards for the construction of commercial and industrial projects. These standards should be used to insure the construction of buildings that are compatible with the historic style and architecture of buildings in the Town and Village. The Town Planning Board could designate an "advisor" who could review projects according to these design standards.

Goal 7.0: *The Town should make every effort to protect agricultural lands, particularly those located in the proximity of the Susquehanna River.*

Strategy 7.01: The Town of Sidney is located within a "core agriculture" area that has the potential for additional development, particularly non-traditional farming (e.g., specialty vegetables). Given the present state of agriculture in this area, and the potential for future growth, the Town should make every effort to protect the natural resources essential to this industry (see *Economic Development Goal 3.2*).

XIX. Recommended Action Projects

A. Introduction

The action projects listed below reflect projects that are cited in the text of the Comprehensive Action Plan, particularly in Section XVIII “Visions, Goals and Strategies.” These projects should be prioritized and then implemented in accordance with the Comprehensive Action Plan (see Map III).

B. Community and Economic Development Strategies and Projects

1. Organize a Leadership Training Program for Sidney residents.
2. Develop a Town Government Quarterly Newsletter.
3. Create the “Sidney Community Leadership Forum.”
4. Promote community service among young people in the Town.
5. Establish a “Properties of Merit” Aware Program.
6. Collaborate with Village to develop a community slogan for the Sidney area.
7. Collaborate with Village to create a professionally managed and proactive economic development delivery system for the Sidney area.
8. Create a “Susquehanna River Valley Agricultural Development Authority” for the purpose of promoting agriculture in the Towns of Sidney, Bainbridge and Unadilla.
9. Explore feasibility of converting the Jennison Station into a Tri-Town municipally owned utility corporation.
10. Encourage the growth of home-based businesses by conducting a conference of home-based businesses in the greater Sidney area.
11. Convene a “Future of Sidney Center Forum” for the purpose of creating a long-term Plan for improving the economic and living conditions of residents of Sidney Center.
12. Promote the development of assisted living or small scale retirement communities.

C. Culture and Recreation Strategies and Projects

1. Create a Town/School District partnership to promote resident access to recreational and athletic facilities
2. Conduct a survey of young people in the Town to determine their recreational and life-long sports interests.
3. Conduct a survey of elderly people to in the Town to determine the recreational and physical exercise programs that interest them.
4. Plan and conduct more community events in collaboration with the Village.

D. Government Strategies and Projects

1. Conduct a feasibility study regarding the consolidation of the Town and Village.
2. Establish annual performance programs for Town employees in accordance with the priority goals and projects of the Comprehensive Action Plan.
3. Establish the position of Town Code Enforcement Officer on a half-time basis.
4. Enhance the capacity of the Town of Sidney Planning Board to assume a proactive role in planning.
5. Utilize the Internet to improve the frequency and quality of communication with Town residents.
6. Develop a long-range plan for The Hospital to insure the fiscal and service delivery viability of the The Hospital in the future.
7. Review the long-range police services needs of the Town.
8. Enhance the capacity of the Sidney Center Fire Department to fulfill its mission.

E. Housing and Neighborhood Quality Priority Strategies and Projects

1. Conduct an updated feasibility study to determine if a market exists for the construction housing options to meet the needs of the elderly in the region.
2. Develop and long-term “targeted” Housing Rehabilitation Program for implementation in the Hamlet of Sidney Center (single purpose or comprehensive).
3. Develop and implement a Town-wide Housing Rehabilitation Program funded through a CDBG Small Cities Program and/or HOME grant program.

F. Land Use Priority Strategies and Projects

1. Re-examine and update the Town Zoning Ordinance.
2. Adopt design review standards for the construction of commercial and industrial building projects.
3. Make every effort to protect agricultural land in the Town from the intrusion of commercial and residential development.

GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS

- Organize a Leadership Training Program for Sidney residents.
- Develop a Town Government Quarterly Newsletter.
- Create the "Sidney Community Leadership Forum".
- Promote community service among young people in the Town.
- Establish a "Properties of Merit" Award Program.
- Collaborate with Village to develop a community slogan for the Sidney area.
- G** Improve entranceways to the Town.
- Collaborate with Village to create a professionally managed and proactive economic development delivery system for the Sidney area.
- Create a "Susquehanna River Valley Agricultural Development Authority" for the purpose of promoting agriculture in the Towns of Sidney, Bainbridge and Unadilla.
- Explore feasibility of converting the Jennison Station into a Tri-Town municipally owned utility corporation.
- Encourage the growth of home-based businesses by conducting a conference of home-based businesses in the greater Sidney area.
- Convene a "Future of Sidney Center Forum" for the purpose of creating a long term Plan for improving the economic and living conditions of residents of Sidney Center.
- Promote the development of assisted living or small scale retirement communities.

- Conduct a feasibility study regarding the consolidation of the Town and Village.
- Establish annual performance programs for Town employees in accordance with the priority goals and projects of the Comprehensive Action Plan.
- Establish the position of Town Code Enforcement Officer on a half-time basis.
- Enhance the capacity of the Town of Sidney Planning Board to assume a proactive role in planning.
- Utilize the Internet to improve the frequency and quality of communication with Town residents.
- Develop a long range plan for The Hospital to insure the fiscal and service delivery viability of The Hospital in the future.
- Review the long range police services needs of the Town.
- Enhance the capacity of the Sidney Center Fire Department to fulfill its mission.

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITY PRIORITY STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS

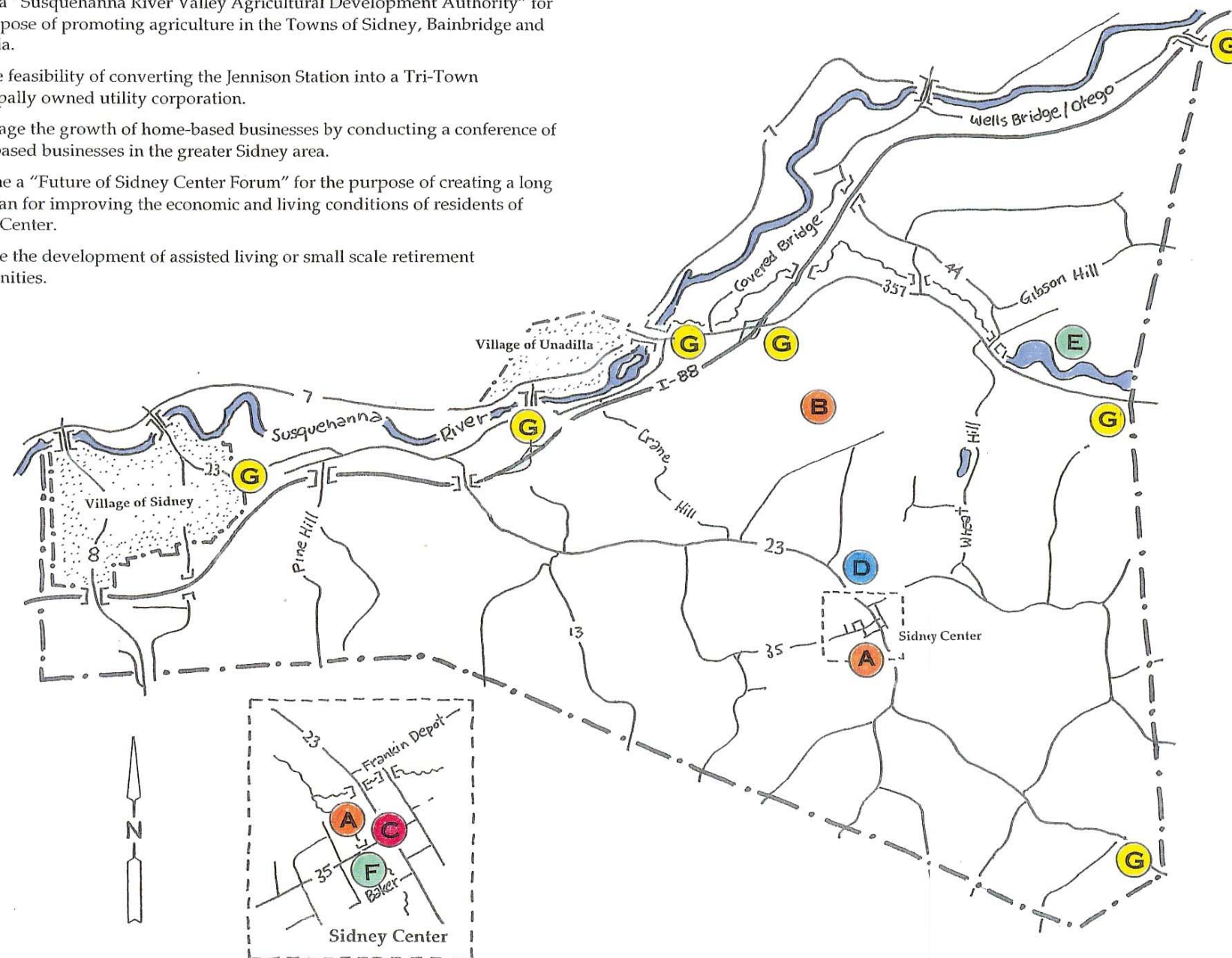
- Conduct a feasibility study to determine if a market exists for the construction of housing to meet the needs of the elderly in the Town and region.
- A** Develop a "targeted" CDBG Small Cities Housing Rehabilitation Program for implementation in Sidney Center as stand alone, single purpose, or as part of a comprehensive program.
- B** Develop and implement a "non-targeted" Town-wide CDBG Small Cities and/or HOME Housing Rehabilitation Program.
- C** Comprehensively upgrade water, sewer, and street infrastructure in Sidney Center.

CULTURE AND RECREATION STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS

- D** Create a Town/School District partnership to promote resident access to recreational and athletic facilities.
- Conduct a survey of young people in the Town to determine their recreational and life long sports interests.
- Conduct a survey of elderly people in the Town to determine the recreational and physical exercise programs that interest them.
- Plan and conduct more community events in collaboration with the Village.
- E** Maintain and upgrade the East Sidney Recreation Area.
- F** Improve park and recreation facilities in Sidney Center.

LAND USE PRIORITY STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS

- Reexamine and update Town Zoning Ordinance.
- Adopt design review standards for the construction of commercial and industrial building projects.
- Make every effort to protect agricultural land in the Town from the inappropriate intrusion of commercial and residential development.



PROPOSED STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS MAP

COMPREHENSIVE ACTION PLAN
TOWN OF SIDNEY, NEW YORK
 Center for Economic & Community Development at SUNY Oneonta
 Carlson Associates, Inc.

For references to Appendices
please refer to

[http://www.oneonta.edu/advancement/
cecd/Vision_21.asp](http://www.oneonta.edu/advancement/cecd/Vision_21.asp)



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