



# **Town of Sardinia**

## **Comprehensive Plan Update**

**December 2023**



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**TOWN OF SARDINIA  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE**

***ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS***

The Town of Sardinia Comprehensive Plan Update was made possible through the efforts of the following people:

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**A PORTION OF THE 2021 PLAN WAS MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH A GRANT  
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# **1. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND**

In 2021, an interim update to the Town of Sardinia’s 2003 Comprehensive Plan was completed with a grant from Erie County. The Town of Sardinia wanted to finalize a new Comprehensive Plan based on the interim Plan and began this process in 2021. The interim update had a primary focus on addressing large-scale renewables proposed in the Town, agricultural impacts, and to a lesser degree, changes in regional planning initiatives.

The 2023 Update fully addresses additional planning initiatives and opportunities for the community to achieve its Vision. This full update also gave the Town the opportunity to receive input from a greater portion of the community.

A comprehensive plan carefully assesses strengths and opportunities inherent in a community to develop a rational basis for proposed policies, codes, and other activities. In New York State, the right to zone land is premised on having a comprehensive plan for the community. Land development is strongly influenced by zoning, public investment, and availability of infrastructure and transportation access. A comprehensive plan typically addresses these issues, targeting those most important to the community.

Over the past two decades (and especially after the COVID-19 pandemic), the Town, County, region, State, and country have seen tremendous change. This Plan will help in understanding these changes, re-evaluate the Town’s Vision, and develop recommendations and actions to address those issues of concern to the Town. The goal of this Plan is to address those issues where these changes have had the greatest impact on the Town.

To develop a meaningful and useful comprehensive plan, many sources of background information must be provided. This plan’s strong basis in data helps local legislative and administrative boards determine how and where growth is taking place, where it may take place, the types of development that could take place, and how it may happen. These background elements comprise an updated inventory of planning data and mapping of various features, followed by careful analysis of trends and issues. Based upon the findings of these basic elements, and the use of the Town’s goals and objectives which were updated using community and stakeholder input, the recommendations of the 2021 Plan were re-evaluated and revised to guide future development. Additional specific recommendations were then made, which were intended to help the Town make progress toward achieving those goals and to help with the advent of large-scale projects that were not previously anticipated.

This plan considers, and is designed to be consistent with, other regional planning documents including, but not limited to: One Region Forward: Regional Framework for Growth, A New Way to Plan for Buffalo-Niagara (2014); Western New York Regional Sustainability Plan (2012), REDC: A Strategy for Prosperity in Western New York (2011) and subsequent updates, Erie-Niagara Framework for Regional Growth (2006), Erie County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (2022), Cattaraugus Creek Integrated Watershed Action Plan (an active project), and the Erie County Parks Master Plan (2019).

### Legal Authority

In accordance with Section 272-a of Town Law, Towns have the power to undertake comprehensive planning and to adopt a plan to help promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the Town and to give due consideration to the needs of the people of the region of which the Town is a part.

By law (Section 272-a), the adoption of a comprehensive plan has the following effect:

- a. All Town land use regulations must be in accordance with a comprehensive plan adopted pursuant to Section 272-a.11. (a); and
- b. All plans for capital projects of another government agency on land included in the Town comprehensive plan, adopted pursuant to Section 272-a, shall take such plan into consideration.

### How will the Plan be used?

Once adopted, the Town will begin to implement the plan by amending its land use regulations to conform to the comprehensive plan and will consider the plan in its land use decisions (site plans, subdivisions, and re-zonings). Yearly, the community (or assigned committee) will utilize the plan in determining its capital project plan and in helping to determine what projects and other implementation actions should be undertaken in the following year. The Plan also provides direction to County and State agencies, who must consider the Town's adopted comprehensive plan in planning projects or undertaking actions that could affect the community.

This Comprehensive Plan is the community's message to its residents, to developers, to industry, and to other levels of government, that the Town of Sardinia has considered its environs and has proposed a program of development based upon sound planning principles and direction, with public input and support. It is important for the Town to have such a statement of policy, with supporting documentation that led to that policy. This ensures that the Town's interests are clearly stated and provides guidance for the Town in evaluating proposals that come before it. Adoption of a Comprehensive Plan also lends weight to the Town's position when conflicts arise, because this position is based on sound planning and has public consensus behind its findings.

Policies, plans, and capital improvement programs instituted by higher levels of government — at the national, state, regional and county levels—often play a significant role in shaping the future of local communities. The Town's Comprehensive Plan clearly communicates the Town's consensus regarding its preferred future. This Plan has been prepared with an understanding of regional and State trends and policies. Where appropriate, it is consistent with these higher government programs; where there are variations, it explains the rational basis for any differences.

The recommendations and policies in this comprehensive plan grew out of an understanding of existing land use patterns, the Town's strategic location in the greater Buffalo metropolitan area, future vision generated by its citizens, and practical considerations of access to infrastructure

and transportation, with an eye to preservation of important natural features. Business owners and, to some extent, individual homeowners are all engaged in looking into the future from time to time to provide some direction to their day-to-day activities. Most businesses, for instance, project their anticipated needs and goals for at least a five-year period.

A community likewise must have some direction to its day-to-day activities. In fact, it is even more important for a community to think ahead, due to its size and complexity; the environmental importance of its assets; and the enduring and long-reaching nature of its decisions, particularly regarding land use. A comprehensive plan can provide insight and direction for the future of the community, protect its resources, plan for prosperity, and provide improved local quality of life.

### *What are the benefits of a Comprehensive Plan?*

A comprehensive plan provides several benefits:

- Addressing minor problems early so that they do not become major problems in the future.
- Limiting the impact of changes which can be foreseen, and which will occur in the future.
- Shaping new development to the community's needs and preferences, consistent with the vision for the region.
- Guiding both public and private action to save money, time, and effort.
- Improving coordination between municipalities.
- Providing a unifying focal point for the efforts of all community interests.

### *Why prepare a Plan update now?*

In 2020 Erie County offered a grant to help communities such as Sardinia update their Comprehensive Plans to address issues such as large green energy projects and agricultural impacts (Map 1). That same year, the Town was faced with a large-scale solar project, therefore, they applied for the Erie County grant. The Town received the grant and hired Wendel Companies to update the Plan based upon the grant and the Town Board's direction.

The 2021 update was led by the Town Board to address this immediate need. The update was not intended to change the vision of the Town, but to look at what has happened over the last 17 years and evaluate and make changes to the recommendations of the Plan. It is a supplement, with many of the 2003 Plan concepts, ideas, and mapping included in the update. It was designed to address immediate concerns not addressed in the earlier document. Specifically, the pending large-scale, green energy project currently under consideration in the Town was a motivating factor. The Town was concerned that it should take an appropriate and reasoned response to the proposed development, in a manner that maintains local character while accommodating community needs. Green energy projects of this scale were not previously envisioned in the Town. These projects were aided by the recent passage of New York State laws aimed at incentivizing and accelerating the permitting process for renewable energy projects.



This 2023 Plan Update builds upon the work completed for the 2021 Plan, includes additional public input, considers State legislative changes that have occurred over the last 5 years, adds additional detail to the 2022 Plan, and will completely replace the 2003 Plan.

### *The Town of Sardinia Background*

The Town of Sardinia is in the southeastern corner of Erie County, New York and is just over 50 square miles in size (see Map 1: Regional Setting). It is considered one of the “Southtowns.” The Town is bordered by the Towns of Holland and Colden to the north and by the Town of Concord to the west. The southern boundary of the Town is Cattaraugus Creek, which is also the southern boundary of Erie County. The Towns of Yorkshire and Ashford in Cattaraugus County border the Town to the south. The Town of Arcade in Wyoming County borders the Town to the east.

The Town of Sardinia was first settled in 1809 and was incorporated as a Town in 1821 when it separated from the Town of Concord. A year later, the boundary of the Town was changed to exclude Springville and a portion of present-day Concord. From its early days, agriculture was the foundation of the Town, later supplemented by trade via the multiple railroads that intersected it. The Buffalo, New York, and Philadelphia Railroad (better known as the Pennsylvania Railroad) was completed in 1871 and passed through the eastern part of the Town. The main “export” was milk from the many dairy farms in Sardinia. In addition to transporting goods, the Pennsylvania Railroad provided passenger service to and from Buffalo multiple times per day.

A second railroad, the Springville, and Sardinia Railroad, was completed in 1878, which connected the Pennsylvania Railroad to Springville. This area surrounding this connection point was first known as “Sardinia Junction,” but was renamed Chaffee, in honor of the president of the railroad, Bertrand Chaffee. It grew quickly enough to warrant the establishment of a post office in 1881. In the early 1880s, a third railroad, the Buffalo, Rochester, and Pittsburgh Railroad, was built, which made the Springville and Sardinia Railroad obsolete.

The last railroad to be built was the Buffalo and Susquehanna, which connected Buffalo and Wellsville and passed through the southern part of Town. It opened in 1906 but closed a little more than ten years later due to financial difficulties. Railroad use in general declined as better highways were developed, and the Chaffee depot was torn down in the early 1950s. Today, the Pennsylvania Railroad is the only railroad still operating in the Town, exclusively for freight trains.

By 1950, approximately 1,800 people lived in the Town. The Town continued to grow steadily throughout the latter half of the 20th century, and by the 2000, the population had grown to 2,700. Since then, the town’s population has remained relatively stable.

## **2. EXISTING CONDITIONS**

This section provides an overview and assessment of existing conditions in the Town of Sardinia. Minor updates have been made to address any changes since the 2022 Plan. It addresses environmental resources, transportation, utilities, agriculture, existing land use, zoning, and demographics.

### **Environmental Resources**

Environmental resources in the Town of Sardinia include watercourses, floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes, and forests. These features influence the land use pattern of the Town, provide recreational and tourism benefits, and are significant to the natural ecology of the area. Since these resources have not changed since the 2003 Comprehensive Plan, only a brief description will be provided below. For additional information, see Map 2.

#### ***Watercourses***



Cattaraugus Creek forms the southern boundary of the Town and separates Erie and Cattaraugus Counties. From Sardinia, the creek flows southwest until it drains into Lake Erie. An Integrated Watershed Action Plan (IWAP) is underway to protect and restore the Cattaraugus Creek watershed.

Other watercourses in the Town include Hosmer Brook, Dresser Creek, Hylar Creek, Otis Creek, and Richmond Gulf. Hosmer Brook was the subject of a study by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in January 1996 that resulted in revised flood plain boundaries. Pursuant to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), these watercourses are protected, and stream bank alterations must be permitted. Map 2 depicts the watercourses in the Town.

#### ***Wetlands***

There are areas of State and Federal wetlands in the Town. The State wetlands are predominantly located in the northeast of the Town, surrounding Hosmer Brook and several unnamed tributaries. Mapped Federal wetlands are located throughout the Town but impact only a very small portion of the Town. Only a portion of the potential Federal Wetlands in the Town are mapped. Map 2 depicts the mapped wetlands in the Town. A recent Supreme Court decision may have an impact on the number of Federal Wetlands in the Town, as the US Army Corps of Engineers is working to update their regulations. The Town should monitor this effort.

### *Floodplains*

The Town's southern border, along Cattaraugus Creek, is located in a 100-year floodplain as are several other stream corridors throughout the Town. Due to the topography of the Town, floodplains are not expansive and tend to be located right along the particular stream/creek corridor. Map 2 depicts the floodplains in the Town. Note that these floodplains are periodically updated by FEMA, and the map represents the current floodplain boundaries. A recent update to the floodplain maps in Sardinia did not result in major changes to the boundaries.

### *Forests*

There are five County-owned forestry lots in the Town totaling 1,575 acres. Two of these lots are located along Genesee Road, one along Wagner Road, and the last south of Sprague Brook Park at the northwest corner of the Town. These lots provide recreation and tourism services to the Town. The *Erie County Parks Master Plan (and ongoing efforts to update)* and *Erie County Forest Management Plan* recommend keeping the forestry lots in their primarily undeveloped state with maintenance of existing buildings and trails as the primary goal. Map 3 depicts the forestry lots in the Town. Other forested areas exist in the Town, but these mapped forests are the specific forests controlled and maintained by Erie County.



### *Steep Slopes*

Another natural feature of the Town are the steep slopes present in its southern, northeast, and western areas. These steep slopes are a scenic resource in the Town but also require protections to ensure development minimizes erosion and sedimentation. Map 4 illustrates the steep slopes located within the Town.

### *Transportation*

The existing networks of roads and bridges has not seen much change since the 2003 Comprehensive Plan and service remains adequate for the residents of the Town, with some problem areas, such as the intersection of Genesee and Route 16. There are also issues with truck traffic causing crashes, particularly near the landfill. The Town's main connections to the surrounding region are Route 16 and Route 39.

Public transportation remains very limited in the Town with Rural Transit Service providing the only service in the Town. Eligibility for Rural Transit Service services requires riders to pay property taxes in Sardinia and be a senior citizen, disabled, or low-moderate income. The Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) has no bus routes in the Town and has no plans to extend service.

There are limited sidewalks in the Town, mostly in the hamlets. There are not any bike routes in the Town, although the proposed Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail will pass through Concord and Springville, to the west of Sardinia.

## Utilities

### *Water*

A private community water system serves approximately 200 residents in Chaffee. Outside of the hamlet, most Town residents receive their potable water from private wells. Future expansion of the Town's water system to targeted areas is a future possibility. The Erie County Department of Health periodically tests the water quality of the residents' private wells. In 2008, testing performed by advocacy group Environmental Working Group indicated one contaminant, Radium-228, at levels above health guidelines but within legal limits. Since then, no abnormal results have been found. Map 5 of the 2003 Plan illustrates the location of water infrastructure in the Town.

### *Sewer*

There is no public sewer infrastructure in the Town and all residences and businesses in the town depend on private, on-site sewage disposal systems. There have been some requests by businesses for possible provision of public sewer service.

### *Electric*

The electric utility serving Sardinia is NYSEG. Residents reported frequent blackouts, which may be resolved through planned improvements to the electric lines along Genesee Road, Savage Road, Hand Road, Allen Road, and Warner Gulf Road. This work is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2023.

### *Cell Service*

Residents reported cell service being spotty, especially in certain areas of the Town.

### *Broadband*

Broadband internet is available in the Town, but providers are limited, and upload/download speeds may be insufficient to meet user needs. The Erie County Broadband Feasibility Study, ErieNet, proposes that 360 miles of fiber optic cable be installed, focusing on rural communities suffering from unreliable access to high-speed internet. If funded and implemented, ErieNet would benefit the Town by enabling residents and businesses to utilize reliable broadband.

## Existing Land Use Patterns

The Town's land uses are primarily agricultural and rural residential, along with areas of woodlands and undeveloped lands. There are several hamlets within the Town where commercial uses are generally concentrated. There is a landfill within the Town, and gravel mines. There are several parks, fishing access sites, and Erie County forests. In general, the land use pattern of the Town has not changed significantly over the last twenty years. However, residents have reported that recently, farmers have been selling lot frontage for new residential development. Existing land use in the Town can be viewed on Map 6 (this map was generated using RPS data, and only reflects general land uses based on assessment data).

### *Agricultural*

Agriculture is the most common land use type in the Town and features both crop cultivation and livestock production. Sardinia's Agricultural District was incorporated into Erie County Consolidated Agricultural District Southeast #15 in 2017. Lands within the Agricultural District encompass a significant portion of the Town's approximately 50 square miles. A significant proportion (more than 50%) of the Town's lands are in active agricultural usage, although not all lands within the Agricultural District are farmed. The Town is committed to promoting and protecting its agricultural economy and lands.

While Sardinia does not have an Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan, Erie County has a County-wide plan from 2012 that addresses agriculture in the Town and provides extensive mapping. The entirety of Erie County's Agriculture and Farmland Protection maps as they relate to Sardinia are included in Appendix B. Of note, to Sardinia, is Map 7 which depicts agricultural parcels, along with cropland coverage in the Town, and Map 8 which illustrates the lands that fall within the County-certified Agricultural District. Clusters of parcels in the Town with a high agricultural soils value, per the County Plan. Also note that the County's Plan is being updated beginning in 2023. As discussed later in this Plan, the Town has created a Prime Farmland Overlay district which identifies important farmland soil groups.

### *Residential*

The second most common land use in the Town is residential. Most houses are located on large, rural lots, both in part due to septic system requirements and the rural nature of the town. Higher concentrations of single-family detached homes are found in the Town's hamlets. Frequently, larger residential parcels include land that is farmed. The typical development pattern is road frontage lots along the major roadways. In the past 15 years, the Town has only seen 22 homes built and there have been no multi-family developments. In addition, there have been no major subdivisions, defined as five or more lots, since 2003.

### *Commercial*

There are limited amounts of commercial and industrial property within the Town of Sardinia. Commercial uses are generally concentrated around the hamlets of Chaffee and Sardinia. Commercial uses along Route 39 have seen a reduction over the last decade, and most of the businesses in the Town are now located along Route 16, but many residents reported traveling to nearby Arcade or Yorkshire to shop and take care of other daily needs.

### *Landfill/Gravel Mines*

There is a landfill located in the Chaffee hamlet. Approximately 240 acres of the 500-acre site are used as an active landfill. The site has been operated as a landfill since 1958 and is currently operated by Waste Management of New York LLC ("WMNY") pursuant to permits issued by the NYSDEC and a Special Use Permit issued by the Town. The most recent expansion, involving the construction of an additional 19.1 acre footprint contiguous with the existing landfill, construction of a 9.5 acre area over the southern side slope of the closed portion of the Landfill, an increase in the maximum height of the Landfill by 30 feet, and the utilization of certain areas

adjacent to the current landfill as borrow areas (“Area 7/8 Development”) was approved in 2023 by both the NYSDEC and the Town. Waste Management was granted approval to expand operations by the NYSDEC in the past and was also required to apply to the Town to rezone the property where the expansion occurred.

Prior approvals for expansion include expansion to the west (approved in 2006), the Valley Fill expansion at the northwest of the site (permit received in 2013), and Area 7/8 Development to the south (permits received in 2023).

In May 2023, the NYSDEC issued permits for Area 7/8 Development, subject to necessary Town approvals. In August 2023, the Town rezoned certain areas adjacent to the current Landfill footprint for use as borrow areas and granted a Special Use Permit and Site Plan Approval for the Area 7/8 Development. Work has begun on the first phase of Area 7/8 Development, which is expected to be completed by December 2025. Although many years off, landfills are required to have closure plans, and these plans are on file with the NYSDEC.

There are several active and inactive gravel mines within the Town, mostly located in the southern portion of the Town. To propose a gravel mine within the Town, the mine must be located in the Gravel Mining Overlay District (see Map 11). Many of the gravel mines (active and inactive) are shown as “Industrial” on the land use map and are also shown on the Town “Asset” map.

### *Community Services and Parks*

The Town’s administrative offices are located in the Sardinia hamlet. The Town of Sardinia Veteran’s Park is located at 13169 Genesee Road in Chaffee hamlet, and Manion Park is off Allen Road. Erie County Forests located within the Town include: #1, #2, #3, #11, and #12. In total, there are 1,575 acres of County Forest land in the Town.

In addition, Erie County’s Sprague Brook Park straddles the border of the Town of Concord and the Town of Sardinia in the northwestern corner of the Town. Sprague Brook County Park is a 974-acre park owned by Erie County, which offers a wide variety of year-round recreational opportunities, including camping, fishing, picnic sites, baseball diamonds, and tennis courts. An extensive trail system is available for hiking and mountain biking and for sledding, cross country skiing and snowshoeing in the winter. There are also designated snowmobile trails. In the “Erie County Parks Master Plan Update” completed in 2019, Sprague Brook Park is identified



as a “Special Use Park” that “should meet the mandate of the County Parks system, for the protection of natural and cultural heritage resources, and provision of recreation activities in

natural settings.” The Plan specifically calls for the preservation and enhancement of the natural tree stands along Cattaraugus Creek. NYSDEC fishing access sites are located on Hosmer Brook (West Schutt Road/State Route 39) and Cattaraugus Creek (Olean Road/State Route 16). Map 3 illustrates the locations of parks and County Forest lands in the Town.

### *Existing Land Use Patterns - Observations*

- The Town of Sardinia is predominately rural and agricultural. Agriculture, although the largest single land use, does not represent much more than 50% of the community. The rural nature of the Town is also due to the large open space areas/vacant lands and the low-density residential development pattern. Maintaining that rural character is a priority.
- Erie County forested lands make up 1,575 acres and contribute to the Town’s rural character.
- Denser development is concentrated in the three small hamlets: Sardinia, Chaffee, and Protection. Most public services, local parks, and community uses fall within one of the hamlet areas. There is a large County Park in the northwest corner of the Town. The central areas of the Town and the steep slope areas are the most rural areas of the Town.
- The Town’s land use patterns are consistent with the planning areas from the Framework for Regional Growth, which identifies most of the Town as a rural area but recognizes the Sardinia hamlet as a rural center where limited growth is appropriate (mistakenly identified as the Chaffee hamlet in the Erie Niagara County Framework document).
- Mining and the landfill are existing uses within the Town that are regulated by the NYS DEC and do have impact on the Town’s rural nature (and its economy).
- The Town’s existing land use patterns and rural character could be affected by large scale green energy projects, especially if not located correctly. They typically are located on “vacant” or agricultural lands.
- The importance of agriculture is supported by the County’s Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan, which has identified two areas in the Town as having high clusters of agricultural soils values. This plan is currently being updated.
- The Land Use Regulations Section of the Plan discusses how the community regulates these uses and how they help to protect the rural and agrarian nature of the Town (see that section for further observations and recommendations).
- When identifying prime or important areas of agriculture or agricultural soils, there are several different sources of information. The maps included in this Plan illustrate those identified in the County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan and the Town’s previous Plan.
- Some of the recreational assets in Town, such as the County Parks, and seasonal events such as the Maple Fest, have spin-off effects on local businesses, but many of the Town’s businesses are struggling and some storefronts have been vacant since the COVID-19 pandemic, which had significant economic effects on the region, especially small businesses.

- The Town has not seen land use patterns change significantly over the last few decades. Residential and commercial development is very minimal (see demographics).



## Land Use Regulations

### *Subdivision Regulations*

Pursuant to NYS Town Law, the Town has the authority to develop subdivision regulations and is authorized and empowered to approve plats pursuant to the policies outlined therein. Unlike zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations need not be in accordance with a comprehensive plan and can be enacted as general legislation. Currently, the Town does not have any subdivision regulations in effect.

### *Zoning*

The primary means of regulating land use in Sardinia is zoning. Under NYS Town Law, municipalities are granted the power of zoning “for the purposes of promoting the health, safety, morals, or general welfare of the community.” The Town’s zoning regulates the type of uses that are allowed and establishes dimensional standards such as building heights, yard sizes, and density. They are intended to prevent land use conflicts and to guide how development occurs in the Town. The Town of Sardinia Zoning Code establishes ten zoning districts, including three overlay districts (see Maps 10, 11, 12, and 13).

There have been few significant changes to the zoning districts since the last Plan, although a Solar Energy Systems Law was adopted in 2017, and zoning amendments were made for the landfill area in 2023. Based on the work completed for this plan, a new/updated Solar Energy Systems Law and Battery Energy Storage Law were adopted in 2021. In addition, in August 2023, two areas adjacent to the current landfill area and approved for use as borrow areas were rezoned from AR to BL. Other changes to the code since 2003 have largely been clarifications and improved definitions.

The zoning districts of the Town include (with a summary of their purpose):

#### ***Agricultural-Residential District (AR)***

The purpose of the AR district (§115-19) “is to encourage the use of land that for agrarian purposes and to limit the density and location of residential development within the district to preserve existing agrarian practices and to protect prime farmland soils for future agrarian purposes.” Large-scale solar systems are permitted in the AR district. The AR district allows mining through an overlay district (see below).

#### ***Mined Land Overlay District (ML)***

The purpose of the ML district (§115-19(k)) is to permit sand, clay, and gravel mines, provided that the property owner obtains a New York State Department of Environmental Conservation mining permit requiring concurrent reclamation and mitigation for the loss of prime farmland. Map 11 depicts the ML district.

#### ***Hamlet Residential District (HR)***

The purpose of the HR district (§115-20) “is to provide for land areas devoted for infill residential development within the Town’s two established hamlets, encouraging residential development

around the Town's centers away from agrarian practices and prime farmland soils with a maximum density of one dwelling unit per 20,000 square feet of land area.”

***Hamlet Business District (HB)***

The purpose of the HB district (§115-21) “is to provide land area for mixed-use commercial and residential development consistent with traditional neighborhood design. Development which is pedestrian in scale and consistent with the historic and visual character of the Town's two hamlets.”

***Limited Commercial District (LC)***

The purpose of the LC district (§115-22) “is to provide for land areas devoted to commercial use, adjacent to those portions of the Town's regional arterial highways which can accommodate commercial development on sites that do not pose constraints due to steep slopes or sites, which do not pose potential traffic safety hazards to vehicular users of the regional arterial highways.

***Business-Light Industrial District (BL)***

The purpose of the BL district (§115-23) “is to provide for land areas which allow for the mix of commercial and light manufacturing uses along the Town's regional arterial highways, where existing commercial and light manufacturing land uses are currently concentrated, and which benefit from adjacent regional transportation corridor.”

***Government-Community Facilities District (GCF)***

The purpose of the GCF district (§115-24) “is to designate land areas for public and semipublic facilities, including governmental, religious, educational, protective and other civic facilities, in order to ensure the proper location of such facilities in relation to transportation and other land uses within the Town, compatibility of such facilities with adjacent development and proper site design and land development.”

***Parks, Recreation, and Conservation District (PR)***

The purpose of the PR district (§115-25) “is to provide for land areas within the Town that are devoted to public and private recreational open space for passive/active recreational purposes and the conservation of natural resources.”

***Prime Farmland Overlay District (PFO)***

The PFO district (§115-26) was established because “farming and agricultural uses are further recognized by the Town as the preferred land use, and which contribute to the Town’s character and identity as a rural community. Therefore, consistent with the Town’s Comprehensive Plan goal of promoting the continued viability of agriculture and retention of farmland” the Town created the PFO district, with the goal of balancing “the demand to convert lands which have prime farmland soils to more intensive land uses, with the community’s goal of promoting the retention of farmland for future generations. Map 12 depicts the PFO district.

***Conservation Protection Overlay District (CPO)***

The LC district (§115-30) was established because “the Town of Sardinia recognizes that natural features such as steep slopes, wetlands, streams and floodplains, if not safeguarded from physical alteration and development, such alteration and development can create cumulative negative impacts to the health, safety and general welfare of the community. Construction on steep slopes can contribute to erosion and soil destabilization; the placement of habitable or occupied structures within floodplains can place persons and property in physical danger; and the destruction of wetlands can cause water quality degradation, destroy natural habitat for wildlife, disrupt wildlife ecosystems and cause increases in flooding. Therefore, the Town hereby establishes a Conservation Protection Overlay District (CPO) consistent with the natural resource and environmental protection goals adopted in the Town's Comprehensive Plan.” Map 13 depicts the CPO district.

### ***Manufactured Housing Park District (MHP)***

The purpose of the LC district (§115-31) was established because “The Town recognizes the importance of providing affordable housing opportunities to individuals and recognizes that alternative housing types, such as manufactured homes, allow home ownership possible to those individuals that cannot otherwise afford traditional stick-built housing. The purpose of these regulations is to provide standards for the location of manufactured housing developments which recognize the Town's aesthetic value of maintaining its rural character; limit densities of units to protect and conserve prime farmland soils; promote public health, safety and general welfare of the community and govern the installation and occupancy of manufactured homes.

### ***Land Use Regulations (Zoning) - Observations***

- The Town of Sardinia’s Land Use/Zoning Regulations are a fairly standard zoning code with five general use districts that represent Agricultural, Residential, Business and Light Industrial uses. It also includes specialty districts: Government Community Facilities, Parks/Recreation/Conservation, and Manufactured Housing Park. These reflect a more up-to-date approach to regulating these uses. These zoning districts, based on small development pressures, represent adequate protections and regulations for current development patterns. The Town may want to make some changes to these regulations (see recommendations) to adapt to the changing economy and other issues that may arise.
- The unique parts of the regulations, which reflect some of the community’s specific goals, are the overlay districts: Prime Farmland, Conservation Protection, and Mined Land. Each provides tools for protecting important community features which promote the Town’s rural character.
- The Town also allows “Municipal Solid Waste Landfills” by Special Use Permit in the BL district. It restricts the types of landfills that can be put in the Town and establishes standards for their potential approval. This allows the Town the power of controlling where these facilities are located (once zoned correctly, approvals come through the NYSDEC).
- The Town also controls new mining facilities or expansions of existing mining facilities through the “Mined Land Overlay District” which serves to protect the community’s natural resources and community character. This Comprehensive Plan also will help with any future mining proposals.

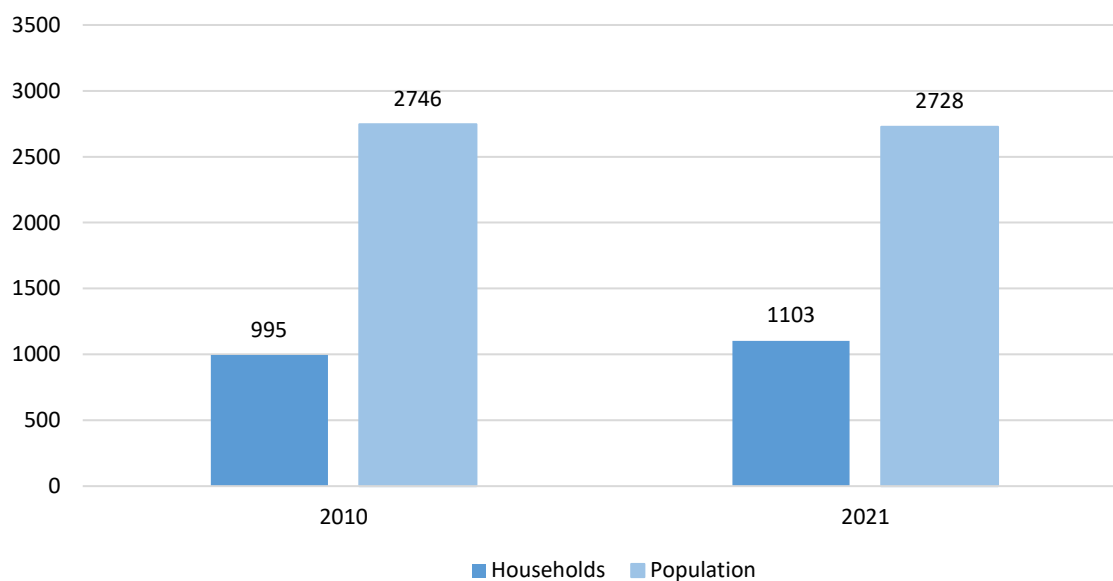
- A consolidated/GIS zoning map illustrating all the districts and overlays would help in better managing the Town’s zoning.

### Demographic Trends

The Town has experienced some demographic changes since the completion of its last Comprehensive Plan in 2003. The primary source of data for the information presented below comes from the U.S. Census Bureau. Two primary datasets are used when aggregating data: the Decennial Census and the American Community Survey (ACS). The 2021 ACS data (which is an average of five years of data from 2017 to 2021) is the most up-to-date information available on the community.

The Town’s population has decreased slightly from 2,746 in 2010 to 2,728 in 2021, a 0.7% decrease (less than two people per year, over the 11-year period). From 2010 to 2021, the number of households in the Town increased from 995 to 1,103, a 10.9% increase (approximately 10 households per year, over the 11-year period). Household growth exceeds population growth due to a trend toward smaller household size, particularly growth in the number of one-person households. The average owner-occupied household size in the Town was 2.82 in 2010. This number has decreased to 2.42 in 2021. Renter-occupied households tend to be slightly larger, at 2.52 people per household.

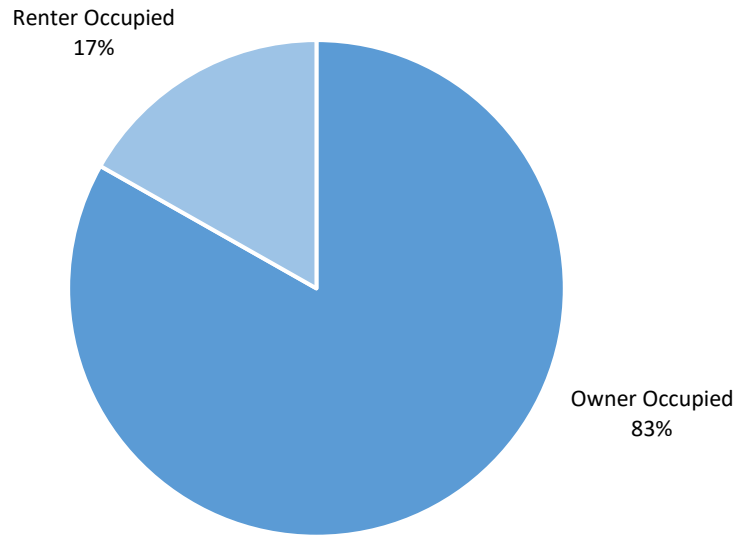
**Figure 1. Population and Household Trends**



*Source: 2010 Census, 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*

Sardinia’s housing stock is characterized by single-family homes (93%), duplexes (3%), small (3-4 unit) apartment buildings (2%), and mobile homes (2%). 83% of the housing units in the Sardinia’s housing stock are owner-occupied. Approximately 7.6% of housing units in the Town are vacant. A vacancy rate of approximately 5% is considered normal and considers the natural mobility in the market related to turnover involving home sales and apartment transitions.

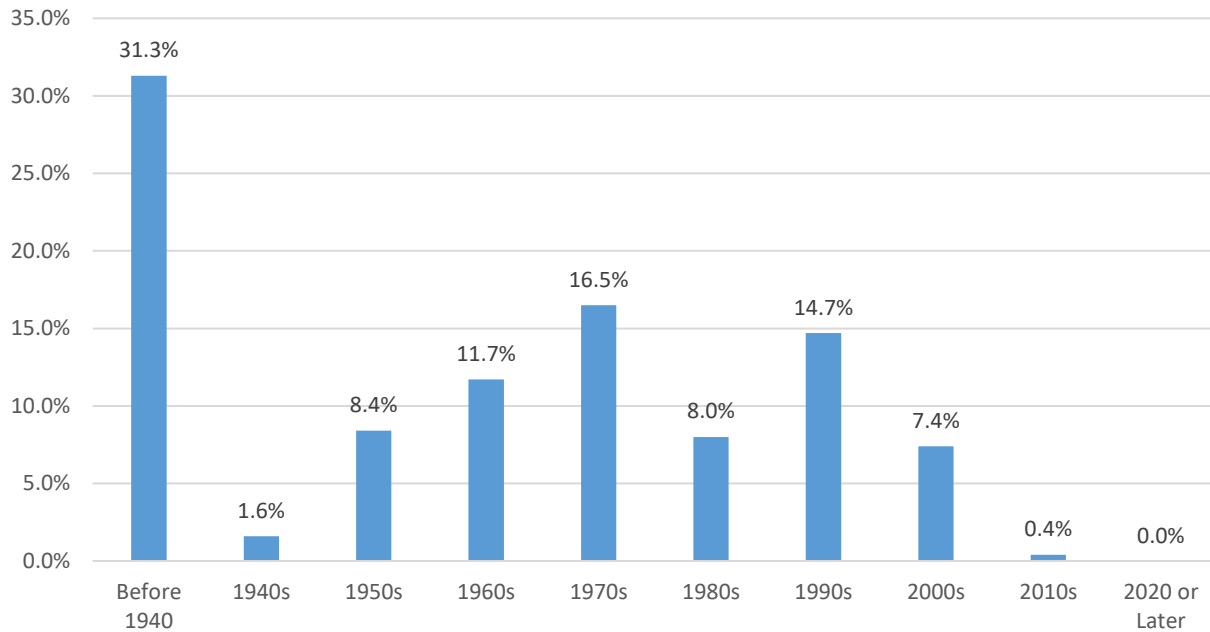
**Figure 2. Housing Tenure**



*Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*

Most (92%) of the housing units in Sardinia were constructed prior to 2000, with 31% being constructed prior to 1940. Housing construction peaked in the 1970s, though a large percentage of units were also built in the 1990s, with 16.5% and 14.7% of units built in those decades, respectively. Housing units constructed between 2000 and 2020 account for about 8% of the Town's housing units.

**Figure 3. Housing Units: Year Built**

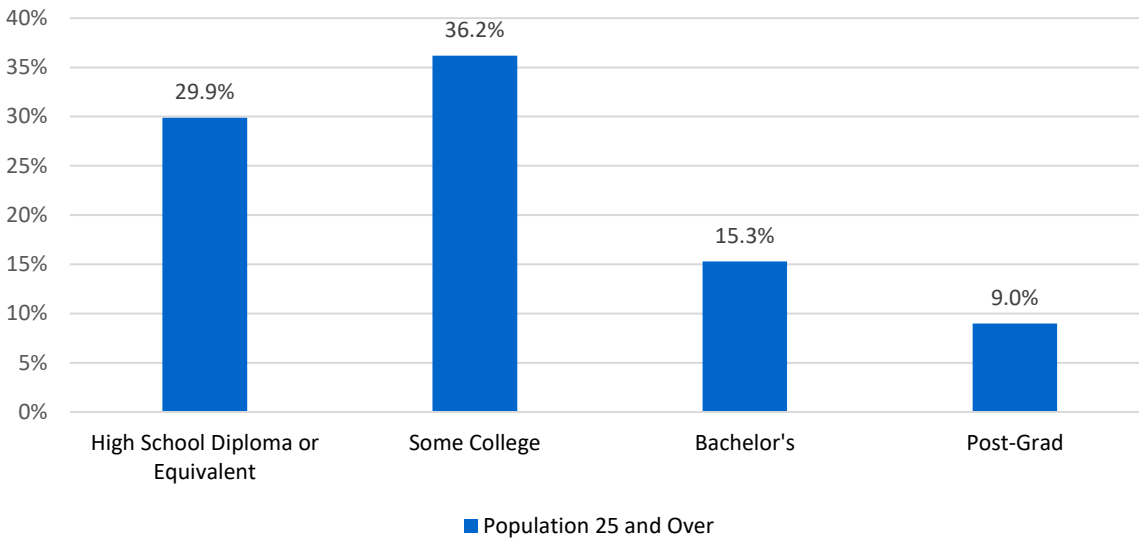


*Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*

Consistent with regional trends, the Town of Sardinia is trending older. In 2010, 12% of the population was aged 65 years or older, compared to 17% in 2021. The percentage of the population under age 18 has remained relatively unchanged (23.5% in 2010 compared to 23.4% in 2021).

Most residents 25 years or older have at least a high school diploma or equivalent. Only 10% have not graduated high school or earned their GED. Only 15% have their bachelor's degree, which indicates that most residents that went to college after high school either received an associate's degree, dropped out of college, or are still pursuing their bachelor's degree.

**Figure 4. Educational Attainment**



Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

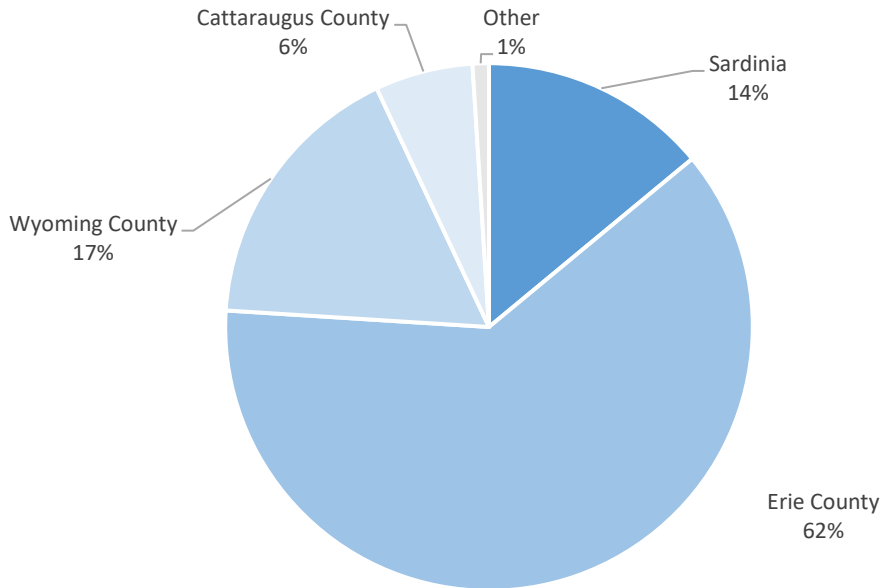
Only 1.2% of the Town’s workforce is unemployed, much lower than the County overall (3.2%). 19% of the Town’s workforce is employed in manufacturing. Other strong employment sectors include health care and social assistance, retail, and construction, with each employing more than 10% of the workforce. Only 1% of the Town’s workforce makes their living from agriculture. Even fewer residents work in the mining and quarrying industry, despite the number of quarries and the gravel pit that are still open in the Town.

Occupation:	Employed in 2021	% Employed in 2021
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	14	0.8%
Mining, Quarrying & Oil & Gas Extraction	5	0.7%
Construction	155	7.5%
Manufacturing	252	19.7%
Wholesale Trade	8	0.8%
Retail Trade	182	16.5%
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	33	1.7%
Information	6	0.6%
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	39	4.2%
Professional, Management & Administrative	129	12.4%
Educational Services	128	8.7%
Health Care & Social Assistance	204	14.1%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	16	2.6%
Accommodation & Food Services	53	4.6%
Public Administration	49	2.1%
Other Services	63	3.0%

Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

According to census data from 2012-2016, approximately 14% of employed workers aged 16 or older in the Town of Sardinia work in the Town. Another 62% worked at businesses elsewhere in Erie County, primarily in Holland, Springville, Aurora, Elma, and Buffalo, many of which are easily accessible via Routes 16 and 400. Another 17% work in Wyoming County, primarily in Arcade.

**Figure 5. Place of Work**



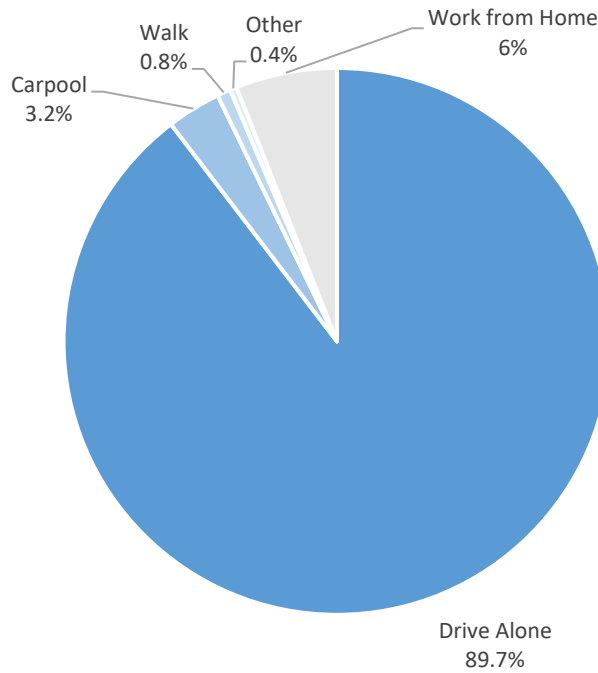
*Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*

Given that most workers in Sardinia work outside the Town, it is not surprising that 93% of them commute via a personal vehicle. 6% work at home, and 1.2% walk to work.

27% of Sardinia workers who do not work from home have a commute that is less than 15 minutes. Another 21% of workers have a 15- to 30-minute commute, about 25% commute 30 to 45 minutes, about 18% commute 45 to 60 minutes, and almost 10% have a commute that is more than an hour each way.



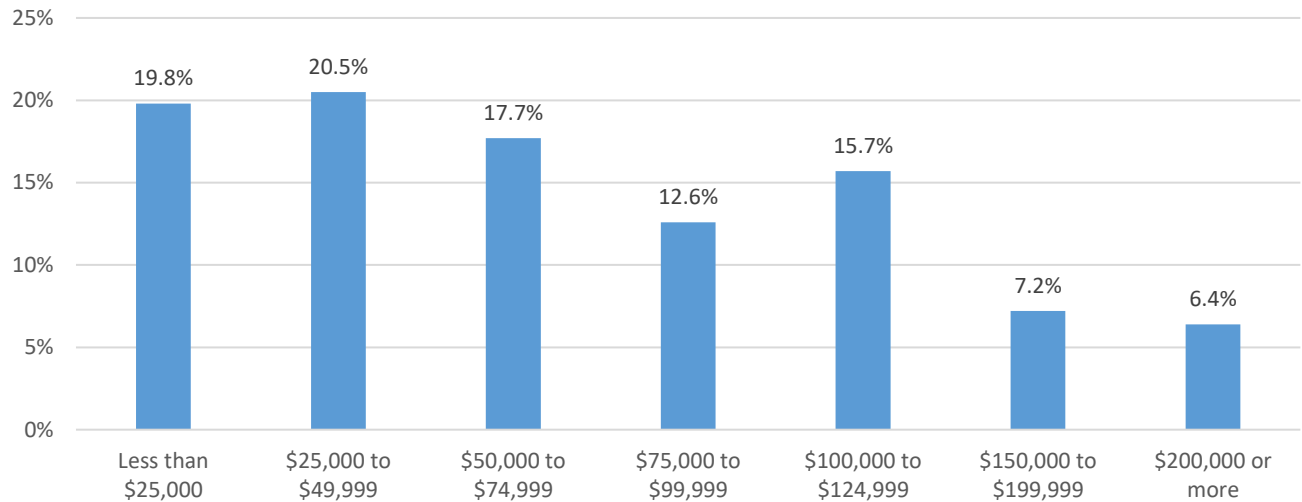
**Figure 6. Commuting Patterns**



*Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*

The median household income in the Town increased from \$56,901 in 2010 to \$76,328 in 2021. Adjusting for inflation, this represents a modest increase of about 11%. About 20% of households earned less than \$25,000, another 20% earned between \$25,000 and \$50,000, and 18% earned between \$50,000 and \$75,000. Besides income from employment, other common sources of income include Social Security payments (32%) and retirement income, including pensions (24%).

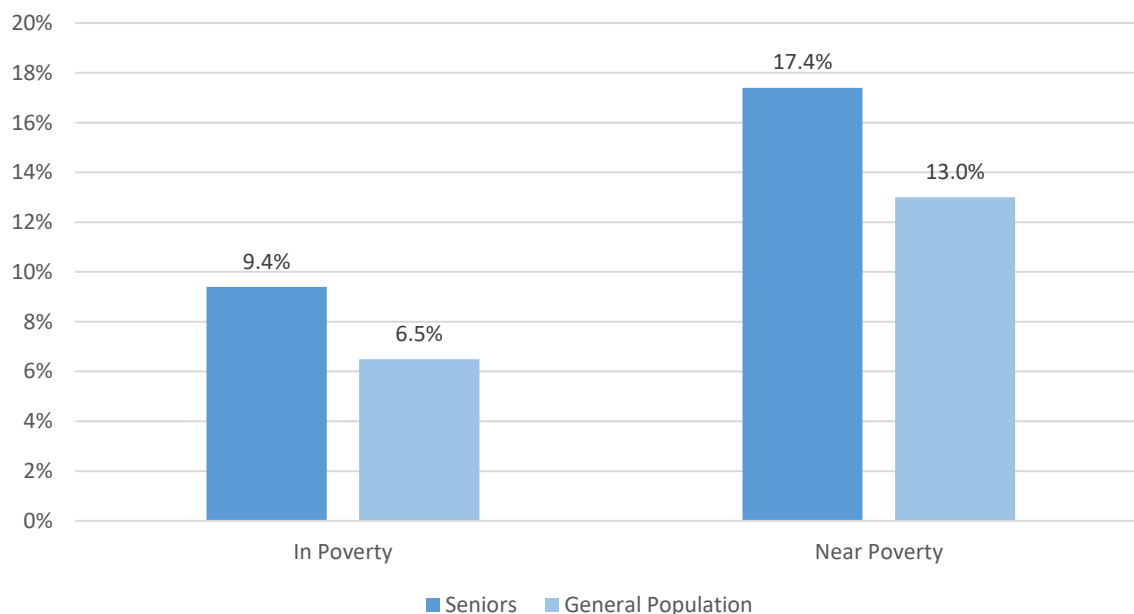
**Figure 7. Household Income Distribution**



Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

While the overall poverty rate is rather low (6.5%), another 13% of the population lives near the poverty line (on incomes between 100% and 200% of the poverty line). Seniors (65 and over) are more likely than the general population to live in or near poverty. 9% of seniors have incomes below the poverty line, and another 17% live near the poverty line. Furthermore, only 5.5% of households receive food stamps, but 12% of households with one or more people in the household aged 60 or older receive food stamps.

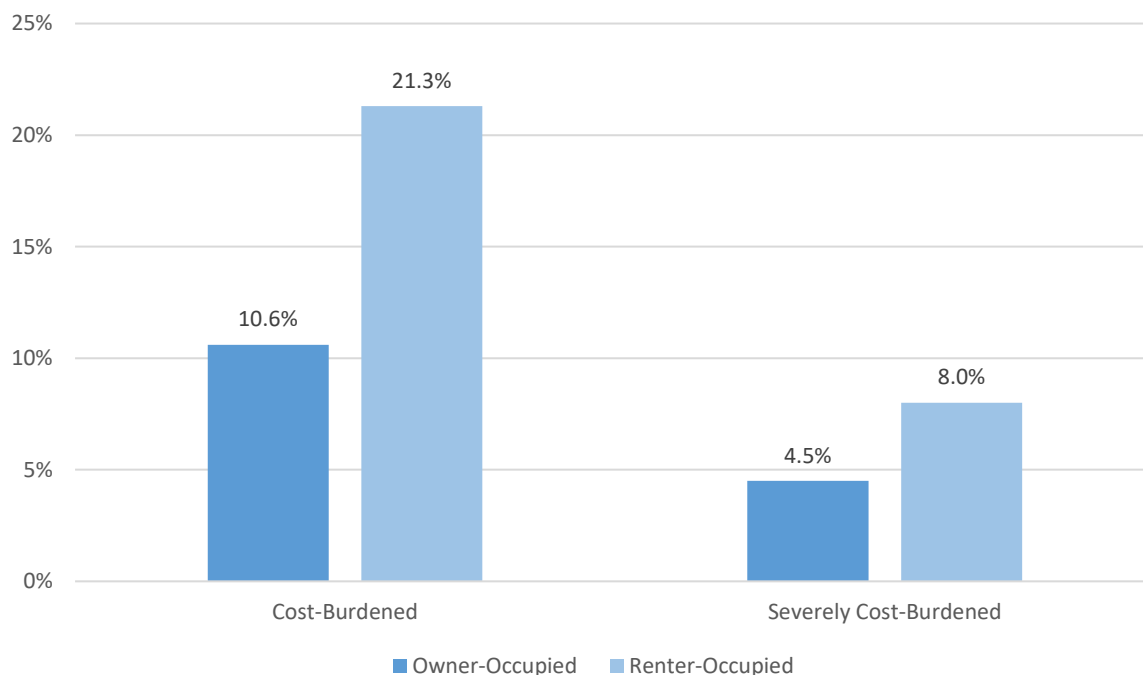
**Figure 8. Poverty Status**



Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

One of the largest costs for households is housing. Ideally, a household should spend no more than 30% of their household income on housing. However, in Sardinia, 10.6% of owner-occupied households and 21.3% of renter-occupied households spend more than 30% of their household income on housing. These households are referred to as cost-burdened (owner-occupied) or rent-burdened (renter-occupied). A smaller percentage of households are severely cost-burdened (4.5%) or rent-burdened (8%), which means that they spend more than 50% of their household income on housing.

**Figure 9. Housing Cost Burden**



Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

**Demographic Trends - Observations**

The Town’s trend of population decline differs from the population growth that the County has been experiencing. From 2010 to 2021, Erie County gained approximately 31,643 residents. Sardinia on the other hand, lost 18 residents during this same time frame. The number of households in Sardinia continued to grow from 2010 to 2021, but the size of these households reduced. Although the Town population and household size are decreasing, the size of the decrease is very small. At present, the growth rate in the Town is very sustainable, with only a few new houses being built each year.

The vacancy rate is a slightly high and efforts could be made to encourage the filling of these vacancies or the removal of houses that cannot be re-used.

The Town's population continues to trend older, in line with regional, state-wide, and national trends. These older residents are usually on fixed incomes, which makes them more likely to live in or near poverty and receive food stamps than the general population, and speaks to the need for affordable, senior housing in the Town. There is also a need for affordable rentals in general. Low-income homeowners might also need assistance with housing costs.

Still, the median household income in the Town (\$76,328) was over the County median (\$62,578), and significantly more than neighboring municipalities such as Concord (\$56,789), Holland (\$57,476), Arcade (\$53,793), and Yorkshire (\$45,313). Most Town residents have college experience (60.5% of the population 25 years and over reports some college, associate degree, bachelor's degree, and or graduate degree).

### **3. PUBLIC INPUT**

At the public meeting in March 2023, residents shared several concerns. First and foremost, residents worried that the Town is losing its rural character and growing too fast. They were also concerned about the proposed Genesee Road solar project and the impact it may have on agricultural land and the character of the community.

Residents also had concerns about the aging population and the need for affordable housing for seniors to downsize into, as well as housing for young people and families so they can move to/stay in the area. Other issues included code enforcement/property maintenance, traffic safety, fire safety, flooding, and blackouts.

In addition, residents shared their desire for more recreational opportunities and for better walkability in the Town.

At the public meeting, a community survey was shared. Most of the survey respondents were longtime residents (88% have lived in the Town for over ten years) and when asked what they like about living in Sardinia, they overwhelmingly answered the rural atmosphere, small town feel, quietness, peace, and beauty of the community. When asked what they don't like about living in Sardinia, proposed renewable energy development was top of mind, with a third of respondents expressing concerns about possible solar and wind farms. Other answers included small businesses moving out and lack of new business growth, limited housing and services for seniors and young adults, and new growth threatening their way of life.

Respondents were split on whether the Town should encourage more residential growth, with 46% in favor, 46% opposed, and 8% in favor of limited new residential growth. Most wanted to see the existing development pattern continue on large single-family lots (58%), while 29% were in favor of small single-family lots and 21% were in favor of multi-family development, specifically a senior complex (apartments or patio homes).

Respondents were similarly split on whether the Town should encourage more commercial and industrial growth, with 55% in favor, 36% opposed, and 9% in favor of limited commercial and industrial growth. Some of the businesses respondents wanted to see developed are youth-focused businesses (entertainment), retail (small, non-chain), health/emergency care facilities, coffee shops and restaurants, and hospitality businesses. A few residents wanted light industrial facilities and more mining operations.

Respondents also differed in where they wanted new development to occur in the Town. Some (38%) wanted development throughout the Town while preserving open space and agricultural land, whereas others wanted new development to be limited to the hamlet areas (21%) or along Route 16 and 39 (17%).

The survey asked respondents to rate various Town services or aspects of the Town. Fire protection and emergency services, trash pick-up, and access to stores and services were rated highly. Communication between the Town and residents, youth programming, and broadband internet access were rated poorly and could be improved.

In April 2023, a stakeholder meeting with members of the business community was held. Business owners had many of the same concerns as residents, including traffic, poor cell service, and protection of the Cattaraugus Creek watershed. They also mentioned the need for improvements to water infrastructure for fire protection to reduce insurance costs, as well as the need for sewer in targeted areas to encourage development. Other concerns included limited availability of land zoned/suitable for commercial uses and the deterioration of some plazas in the Town.

#### **4. ANALYSIS AND DIRECTION OF THE PLAN (RECOMMENDATIONS)**

This section of the Comprehensive Plan updates the targeted areas identified in the Town of Sardinia’s 2022 Plan. This plan builds upon and, where necessary, clarifies the goals and amends the recommendations outlined in the 2022 Comprehensive Plan to reflect current conditions or issues in the Town, through input from the Comprehensive Plan Committee. This Plan was also designed to expand upon the 2022 goals, by ensuring consistency with Regional Planning documents. Including, but not limited to: *One Region Forward: A New Way to Plan for Buffalo Niagara* (2014), the *Framework for Regional Growth: Erie & Niagara Counties*, New York (2006), the *Western New York Regional Sustainability Plan* (2012), the *Regional Economic Development Council: A Strategy for Prosperity in Western New York* (2011), and the *Erie County Broadband Feasibility Study* (2017).

The goals of a Comprehensive Plan establish what is most important to a community. They represent local values and priorities and provide insight into what the community will focus on for its future. This plan seeks to further clarify the 2022 goals through extensive community and stakeholder input and provide more detail to what the community is trying to accomplish. As such, these new goals will be used to help guide future decisions about growth, development, budgets, etc. in the Town so that individual decisions are made with an understanding about how they relate to the community’s preferred future. The goals and the Plan itself also provide guidance for decision makers at the County, Regional and State levels. The goals are general in nature, so they can remain relevant over the long-term. These goals also form the foundation for the specific actions – the recommendations of the Plan – that the Town will undertake achieve the vision. In general, goals and actions are developed with a horizon of approximately **5 to 10-years**.

##### **Land Use Goals:**

- ◆ Preserve and protect the rural and small-town character of the Town of Sardinia.
- ◆ Balance residential and business development with the protection of natural resources, agricultural land, and rural character.
- ◆ Manage growth to ensure high quality development.
- ◆ Encourage the re-use of outdated and vacant structures.
- ◆ Focus growth and the type of growth in the targeted areas identified in this plan.

##### **Recommended Actions**

1. Continue to enact zoning regulations and a zoning map that balances the competing needs of the various land uses in the Town, as represented in the Vision Map (included at the end of this Section). This Vision map illustrates the generalized land use pattern of the Town and how those uses fit together. The Vision Map includes important agricultural areas, major forest and recreational areas, conservation areas/creek protection areas, recreation/conservation areas, hamlet areas (growth areas), the landfill area, and the rural

area of the Town that is not part of any other of these areas. This map is not a future land use map, but it allows the reader of this Plan to understand how these land uses come together and what is needed in these areas.

2. Develop simple subdivision regulations to provide for the orderly division of parcels of land.
3. Continue to develop regulations and guidance documents that help to reflect the agrarian nature of the Town and protect these “businesses” from adverse impacts that could lead to changing the character of the community. See the recommendations in the Agriculture and Farmland section.
4. Consider creation of other zoning overlay districts for the hamlet areas and other areas denoted in the Vision map or create hamlet design guidelines.
5. New zoning regulations (and other regulations) should encourage the re-use of vacant structures.
6. Economic tools may be needed to encourage this reuse of structures (see Economic and Business Development section).

#### *Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Goals:*

- ◆ Protect natural resources such as streams, wetlands, and wildlife habitats.
- ◆ Maintain the water quality of streams.
- ◆ Protect land from erosion along Cattaraugus Creek and other natural drainageways.
- ◆ Protect the quantity and quality of groundwater.
- ◆ Continue to identify and evaluate the potential hazards of the landfill and gravel pits.
- ◆ Encourage cooperative, mutually beneficial policies for use in dealing with existing landfill and gravel pit issues.

#### *Recommended Actions*

##### Groundwater protection

1. Continue the Town’s well testing program. Continue to monitor wells near the landfill as well as private wells throughout the Town.
2. Provide information to residents regarding groundwater protection. Include information on the proper disposal of automotive and household chemicals, septic system maintenance, and the application of lawn care chemicals.
3. Provide information regarding agricultural environmental management practices used by farmers to protect groundwater (see Agriculture and Farmland section). Assist farmers with applying for grants to help with these management practices (see need for local Agricultural Protection Plan in later section).
4. Ensure that Town zoning actions do not result in the contamination of groundwater by toxic substances, by requiring in the Town’s site plan regulations the submittal of information concerning all potentially hazardous substances to be used or stored on site.
5. Review the Conservation Overlay periodically to consider other important natural features and expand the Overlay area, as necessary.



6. Continue to properly regulate and control the expansion of mining and landfilling in the Town.
7. Participate and provide comments on the Erie County Forest Management Plan update and help enact actions that will support this plan.

#### Stream Corridor Protection

1. Establish zoning regulations that limit the removal of vegetation in erodible areas along Cattaraugus Creek.
2. Seek funding to help landowners construct proper improvements to prevent further erosion.
3. Work with the County and other regional organizations to develop programs for the protection of these important stream corridors.
4. Participate in the Cattaraugus Creek Watershed planning.

#### Landfill

1. Following receipt of an application to the NYS Department of Environmental Protection for a waste disposal permit, the Town Board should work closely with the NYS DEC under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) and provide for a thorough environmental review of the application. DEC should be required to address the regional need for additional landfill capacity, and to provide complete documentation of test well sampling. DEC should also hold a public hearing prior to making a decision on the application.
2. The Town should continue to work with Waste Management and the NYSDEC on the Closure Plan for the landfill, especially as it relates to the “end use” for the landfill (“post closure period”).

#### Gravel Mining

1. Continue to work with NYS DEC in the review and monitoring of existing mines and reclamation plans.
2. The Town should utilize this Plan, other Plans, and the information submitted about any future gravel mining sites, to make decisions on allowing any future gravel mining sites (it is a zoning decision that requires reference to the Comprehensive Plan).

#### Agriculture and Farmland Goals:

- ◆ Promote the continued viability of agriculture and the retention of farmland.
- ◆ Help to promote and implement the policies and recommendations of the County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan.
- ◆ Working with the farming community, adopt Town regulations that allow farmers to thrive and continue their important businesses and create new agriculturally related ones.

*Recommended Actions:*

1. Provide information to landowners to encourage the protection of agricultural land through private conservation easements. Distribute information about programs operated by the Western New York Land Conservancy and literature published by the American Farmland Trust.
2. Provide information to residents about the value of agriculture to the Town and about customary agricultural practices.
3. Continue to establish zoning regulations (expand upon the PFO) that discourage intensive development in high quality agricultural areas and reevaluate the PFO boundaries, considering the County's plan and information concerning prime and statewide important soils.
4. Establish subdivision regulations to enable the Planning Board to review new residential development and to encourage designs and buffers that minimize conflicts with neighboring agricultural uses.
5. Consider applying for an agricultural grant to help complete a Town Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan.
6. Refer to the County's Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan when considering actions that could affect agriculture. During the County's Plan update, the Town should actively participate in this process.
7. Consider the utilization of monies generated from large-scale renewable energy system projects in the Town to help protect other farmlands in the Town or to help farmers continue to farm.
8. Use the Town's renewable energy laws to minimize impacts to agricultural lands.
9. Consider new zoning language/laws for agricultural areas/lands to allow for more creative uses of the land that allows farmers the opportunity to create other income generation (ultimately allowing the farmer more options to stay in business).

*Housing & Residential development Goals:*

- ◆ Encourage housing development within the Chaffee and Sardinia hamlet areas.
- ◆ Balance residential development in the countryside with the protection of prime farmland, natural resources, and rural character.
- ◆ Encourage the development of affordable housing in the Town by permitting the construction of a variety of types and sizes of dwellings, such as accessory dwelling units (ADUs).
- ◆ Encourage property owners to better maintain their residences and property.
- ◆ Encourage responsible housing rehabilitation which includes the safe and proper abatement of hazards such as lead paint, asbestos, radon, etc.

*Recommended Actions:*

1. Periodically disseminate information to residents about the Erie County and Southtowns Rural Preservation Company housing assistance programs, including the Home Energy Assistance Program, by distributing program literature at the Town Hall and to banks, senior citizens, churches; sponsoring seminars; making announcements at Town Board meetings.
2. Revise zoning regulations to encourage well-designed residential development that is consistent with the natural and agricultural features of the Town.
3. Revise Town zoning regulations to encourage higher density residential development in appropriate areas of the Town, such as in the Sardinia and Chaffee hamlets.
4. Retain provisions in the Town zoning regulations that permit a wide range of housing types and sizes to accommodate affordable housing needs in the community.
5. Develop subdivision regulations to provide for the orderly division of parcels of land for residential development.
6. Consider developing a public-private partnership to build affordable senior housing in the Chaffee or Sardinia hamlet.
7. Pursue funding for housing improvements in targeted areas within the hamlets and elsewhere where needed.
8. Consider the use of tax breaks (485 programs) to help encourage residents to invest in their properties. Work with the County and school districts, as there are no Town taxes.
9. Consider developing a grant program for low-income homeowners to make improvements to their properties.
10. Research and develop appropriate tools to encourage the re-use or demolition of existing vacant structures (waive some requirements, make processes easier for reuse, waive fees, allow creativity, etc.).

*Economic and Business Development Goals:*

- ◆ Maintain a supportive business environment to retain existing businesses and to attract new business development.
- ◆ Encourage commercial and industrial expansion and new commercial and industrial development in appropriate areas of the Town. In particular:
  - Encourage the clustering of businesses in specific areas along Routes 16 and 39 and East Schutt Road.
  - Encourage limited business development in and around the Hamlets of Chaffee and Sardinia of the type and scale that is harmonious with the residential neighborhoods of the Hamlets.
  - Encourage tourism, eco-tourism and Agri-tourism, and related business development in appropriate areas.
- ◆ Encourage the reuse of existing underutilized commercial structures.

### *Recommended Actions:*

1. Revise zoning regulations and review procedures to be more business friendly. In particular:
  - a. Allow agritourism in the appropriate areas of the Town.
  - b. Designate business districts to allow both commercial and industrial uses in appropriate areas.
  - c. Increase the depth of commercial and industrial districts to 1,000 feet, where appropriate.
  - d. Continue to permit hybrid industrial–retail businesses in the industrial-use districts.
  - e. Permit small-scale business development within the Sardinia and Chaffee hamlets that would be compatible with nearby residential neighborhoods (for example, neighborhood or traditional business district).
  - f. Permit the establishment and operation of farm markets that sell farm products and goods that are not grown or produced on the property on which the market is located.
  - g. Continue to permit the establishment and operation of bed and breakfast inns, trailer camps, and outdoor recreational businesses in the Town.
2. Develop and utilize design standards to ensure that buildings that are constructed or modified in the Hamlets of Chaffee and Sardinia for commercial use have a scale and appearance that is in harmony with the residential neighborhoods.
3. Continue to provide property tax incentives for commercial development and redevelopment through Section 485-b of the NYS Real Property Tax Law. Also consider Enhanced Section 485-b in targeted areas. Work with the County and school districts, as there are no Town taxes.
4. Make Section 108 financing available to local businesses that need low-cost financing, and for which RDC, ILDC and ECIDA financing is not suitable and/or not available.
5. Encourage commercial developers to donate cross-access easements for use for internal roadways and shared access driveways with adjoining commercial parcels.
6. Improve tourism by working with the County on promoting the important forestry lands and Sprague Brook Park.
7. Help to promote existing agritourism efforts by the County.
8. Consider the use of Host Community Agreement monies generated from large scale energy projects to promote and improve economic opportunities in the Town.

### *Hamlets Goals*

- ◆ Encourage improvements and development within the hamlets that reinforce the small town, neighborly, and pedestrian-friendly atmosphere.
- ◆ Encourage additional business development, of appropriate scale and with appropriate buffers, within the Sardinia and Chaffee hamlets.
- ◆ Encourage additional housing development within the Sardinia and Chaffee hamlets. For example, accessory dwelling units (ADUs) can provide an affordable housing option for

young people or older adults in appropriate places.

- ◆ Improve pedestrian circulation, safety, and accessibility within the hamlets.
- ◆ Consider the development of trails/sidewalks in appropriate areas to link the hamlets with their respective Town Parks.
- ◆ Develop a focal point within the Sardinia hamlet that is consistent with its historic character.
- ◆ Ensure a continued and reliable supply of high-quality water to customers in the Chaffee hamlet.

#### *Recommended Actions*

1. Enact zoning regulations that acknowledge the unique characteristics of the residential and business areas within the hamlets (for example, create a Hamlet Business district that would allow mixed uses).
2. Pursue funding for housing improvements within target areas in the hamlets of Sardinia and Chaffee.
3. Continue to work with the U.S. Postal Service to retain the post offices in Chaffee and Sardinia.
4. Implement a tree planting program in the hamlets of Chaffee and Sardinia to provide for the replacement of dead and diseased trees as they are removed.
5. Seek grant funding for sidewalk improvements and multi-modal connections to important features of the Town.
6. Develop and install wayfinding signage at gateways to the Town to direct visitors to the hamlets.
7. Create gateway features to mark the transition to the hamlets.

#### *Historic Resources Goal:*

- ◆ Encourage the protection of historic buildings and landscapes.

#### *Recommended Actions*

1. Establish a recognition program for privately-owned historic buildings.
2. Provide information to owners of historic buildings and properties regarding grant programs.
3. Distribute pamphlets and sponsor workshops that provide suggestions for appropriate exterior treatments of historical buildings and appropriate landscaping.

#### *Parks and Recreation Goals:*

- ◆ Maintain and improve the existing Town Parks.
- ◆ Improve recreational opportunities for youth and other Town residents.

### *Recommended Actions*

1. Develop a master plan for each of the Town parks, including a landscaping component, to guide future park development. The master plan should address the feasibility of the following recommended improvements:
  - a. Develop an ice/roller skating rink in the Chaffee-Sardinia Park.
  - b. Install lighting to illuminate the tennis courts in the Chaffee-Sardinia Park.
  - c. Install a basketball goals/basketball court behind the Town Community Center and additional lighting to illuminate the goals/court.
  - d. Consider walking paths in Veteran's Park.
2. Consider the development of an indoor athletic facility. The school districts may be a potential partner to work with on this action.
3. Work with the County to plan and maintain County Forest trails.
4. Encourage community organizations to continue to provide recreational programs and opportunities.

### *Transportation and Infrastructure Goals*

- ◆ Maintain and improve the quality of roads and highways in the Town.
- ◆ Encourage the development of pedestrian and cycling infrastructure throughout the Town, in line with Complete Streets principles and the Bike Buffalo Niagara Regional Bicycle Master Plan.
- ◆ Consider the development of trails and walking paths in appropriate areas to improve access to recreational facilities.
- ◆ Ensure a continued and reliable supply of high-quality water to water customers in the Chaffee hamlet.
- ◆ Extend public utility services (water and wastewater infrastructure) along Route 16 to serve business and economic development.
- ◆ Encourage/support the improvement of cable and internet services in the Town.

### *Recommended Actions*

1. Enter preliminary discussions with Village of Arcade/ Wyoming County to determine feasibility of extending water and wastewater infrastructure along Route 16 to Chaffee.
2. Work with Erie County and NYS to improve roads that are not owned by the Town.
3. Work with Erie County and NYS in continuing the push for improvements to internet services.
4. Consider encouraging/allowing the use of alternative energy systems for generating electricity as a special use in the Agriculture/Residential district and to promote the use of anaerobic digesters to produce methane gas from livestock manure.
5. Pursue an expansion of the cable television service area to the extent feasible at the time a successor franchise agreement with the cable television service provider is being negotiated.
6. Apply for grants to help expand water services.

7. Should planned NYSEG improvements not resolve the blackouts the Town is experiencing, consider the possibility of battery energy storage.

**Governmental and Community Service Goals:**

- ◆ Continue to maintain Town facilities and roadways in good condition.
- ◆ Continue to provide existing Town services and programs.
- ◆ Improve communication between the Town and residents.
- ◆ Improve fire protection in the Chaffee and Sardinia hamlets.
- ◆ Retain existing services provided in the Town of Sardinia by Erie County and U.S. Postal Service.
- ◆ Reduce energy costs from Town facilities.

**Recommended Actions:**

1. Implement a mass notification system that residents opt into to receive emails and texts from the Town (could also be used as an emergency alert system).
2. Evaluate whether improvements to the Town's website are needed.
3. Consider developing a quarterly eNewsletter.
4. Develop additional sources of water in the Chaffee and Sardinia hamlets, and in the commercial district of the Town for firefighting purposes.
5. Encourage Town residents to become volunteer firefighters in the Chaffee-Sardinia Memorial Fire Company.
6. Pursue funding for energy auditing of Town facilities.
7. Pursue funding for energy efficiency improvements based on results of energy auditing, such as:
  - a. Upgrading lighting to LED technology.
  - b. Upgrading HVAC equipment.

### *Vision Map*

The Vision Map (Map 16) was developed as a result of input from the Comprehensive Planning Committee and the feedback received from the public and through analyzing the data/mapping for the Town. To assist with this visioning and analysis, a map was generated to identify community assets and their spatial relationship in the Town (see Map 15). The Vision Map illustrates the Town of Sardinia's general vision for its future as it relates to the different areas of the Town. It is not a future land use map or zoning map and can only be utilized in conjunction with the entire Plan. It supplements the recommendations by adding a spatial concept to them.

### *Gateways*

There are a few areas where a majority of motorists enter the Town. These "gateways" serve as the first impression of the Town and should utilize signage, landscaping, and other improvements to make a good first impression on visitors. These areas can also help with wayfinding to important features in the Town and hamlets. These efforts should be coordinated with Erie County and others to provide wayfinding to the County forestry lands and fishing access locations.

These gateways are illustrated on the Vision Map and are locations (Route 39, Genesee Road, and Route 16), that connect the community to adjacent communities and business centers, as well as major transportation routes such as Route 219, Route 400 and ultimately the New York State Thruway.

### *Hamlets*

There are two major hamlet areas in the Town of Sardinia: the Sardinia hamlet and Chaffee hamlet. The Erie Niagara County Framework for Regional Growth identifies Chaffee as a regional center, but it must be noted that "Chaffee" on their mapping is shown in the location of the Sardinia hamlet. We are considering this as an error and the regional center is the Sardinia hamlet, which includes the characteristics and assets of a regional center (Town Hall, recreation facilities, the Post Office and other community assets). With these assets and the density of residential development and some commercial businesses, this Plan recognizes the Sardinia hamlet as its primary hamlet and community center (should fix the mistake in the Regional Framework for Growth document). This hamlet represents an important asset to the community and its future success. It provides economic benefits and contributes significantly to the character of the community and its culture.

The Sardinia hamlet is also shown in greater detail on the Vision Map to get a better understanding of its features and needs. One of the largest needs is better pedestrian infrastructure and amenities. There is currently a sidewalk on the east side of Savage Road between Route 39 and Genesee Road. However, this sidewalk is too narrow and not ADA-compliant. Residents at the public meeting also expressed a desire to extend this sidewalk from Savage Road to the Town Veteran's Park, as there are a lot of children who walk from the hamlet to the park for activities. Widening the sidewalk on the east side of Savage Road, adding a sidewalk on the west side of Savage Road and on both sides of Genesee Road between Savage



Road and Veteran’s Park, and making other improvements such as adding crosswalks, signage, etc. will make significant progress towards improving pedestrian circulation, safety, and accessibility in the Sardinia hamlet. As Genesee Road and Savage Road are both County-owned, this will require coordination with Erie County DPW. Eventually, these sidewalks could be extended further east along Genesee Road and Route 39 to Route 16 and the Hamlet Growth/Business Corridor Area.



**New sidewalks and crosswalks installed in the hamlet of Stone Ridge, NY**

(Source: Town of Marbletown Hamlet Strategic Plan, 2011)

There are also several vacant properties in the Sardinia hamlet, which present an opportunity for infill residential, mixed-use, and commercial development. Commercial businesses in the hamlet are currently located along Route 39, including the Shamrock Bar and Grill, Crosby’s gas station, and mini storage facility. Small, mixed-use businesses that should be encouraged in other areas of the Sardinia hamlet include doctor’s offices, other health, and wellness businesses (massage therapists, chiropractors, yoga studios, etc.), hair/nail salons, barber’s shops, daycares, and other service-oriented businesses. The potential extension of water and wastewater infrastructure from Route 16 can help support this infill development.

The addition of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) is another opportunity to provide a more affordable housing option in the Town, promote aging-in-place and multi-generational living, and increase density in the hamlet to preserve the rural, agricultural character of the rest of the Town. ADUs, also known as in-law suites, granny flats, or “casitas,” can be built above an existing garage or barn, built as an addition to an existing house, or built on its own foundation (i.e. a tiny house). Hamlet design guidelines can help ensure new residential and commercial development, including ADUs, fit into the existing character of the hamlet.



**Accessory dwelling unit built above a three-car garage**

(Source: Lapp Structures)

The Chaffee hamlet, although smaller than the Sardinia hamlet, is also an important asset to the community. It includes a Town Park, some businesses, a denser residential development area and is located near one of the largest businesses in the Town, the Chaffee Landfill. This hamlet lies along the Route 16 corridor that connects the Town to communities to the north including the Town of Holland and the Village of East Aurora, and to the south to Cattaraugus and Wyoming Counties. See the below discussion on the Hamlet Growth area and how this connects these two hamlets.

*Hamlet Growth/Business Corridor Area*

The Sardinia and Chaffee hamlets are located in the southeastern section of the Town and are connected by the major transportation routes in the Town—Route 39 and Route 16—and the Genesee Road corridor.

This area includes numerous businesses, a fishing access location, and is adjacent to the Yorkshire business district and to the Village of Arcade.

Due to these conditions, this “connecting area” provides long-term growth potential for the Town. This area is not a hamlet but represents a minor growth corridor (not a major growth corridor as identified in the Regional Framework for Growth). Its strategic location between the Sardinia and Chaffee hamlets, proximity to the Yorkshire business area and the Village of Arcade, its existing businesses, and major connective features of Routes 39 and 16, make it a strategic growth and revitalization area. As discussed in the Recommendations section, this area will require some investments (infrastructure) to achieve its long-term growth and revitalization potential.

This targeted Smart Growth area will meet the community's long-term needs and focus development to allow for the protection of the rural and agrarian character found in most of the Town.

#### *Conservation/Cattaraugus Creek Corridor*

The Town's southern boundary is Cattaraugus Creek. This creek is a locally and regionally significant asset. It has been identified in most of the Regional Plans as a significant natural and cultural asset and as such it should be protected and utilized by the residents of the region. The Vision Map and the Town's previous Comprehensive Plans illustrate and acknowledge this important asset and the area around it.

#### *Recreation/Conservation Areas*

The Vision Map illustrates the parks and recreation areas within the Town, but there are two large areas called out as Recreation/Conservation areas. These areas are located in the northwest and northeast corners of the Town. The northwest corner includes the regionally significant Sprague Brook Park. The Vision Map also includes an area around the Sprague Brook Park due to its important visual/viewshed resources.

The northeast corner of the Town is also denoted as it includes many recreation/conservation features such as large campground areas, the Erie County Conservation Society property, more Erie County forestry lands, a golf course, and other open space features.

#### *Designated Forestry Lands*

The Town includes some of the County's most important attributes; the Erie County Forestry lots. These lands are located as illustrated on the Vision Map and are a very important component of the Town. They contribute to its rural character, protection of the environment, and the economy of the Town (providing tourism visitors and passive recreation for the Town and region).

#### *Important Agricultural Areas*

Although there are important agricultural lands spread throughout the Town, there are two areas in the Town denoted as "Important Agricultural Lands." These areas were determined by Erie County in their Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan.

These areas have good farm soils and a concentration of farms. These areas are very important to the farmers in the Town, the economy, and the community character of the Town and should be protected.

#### *Important Viewshed/Tourism/Connection Areas*

This area of the Town abuts Sprague Brook Park and WNY Land Conservancy lands and includes some beautiful vistas and Sprague Brook itself. These important attributes should be protected, enhanced, and built upon. With the Park's trails and campgrounds and nearby Kissing Bridge Ski

Resort, this area offers opportunities for connections and wayfinding to other important features within the Town of Sardinia.

### *Landfill Areas*

The landfill area is illustrated on the Vision map as it is an important component of the Town, and it provides employment and revenues to Sardinia. The Town will continue to work with the landfill owners/operators and the NYSDEC to ensure that the negative impacts/aspects of the landfill are minimized, while the economic benefits are preserved. The Town should also continue to work with these entities on the end-use plan for the landfill. This will be important to the future generations of the residents of the Town. This end-use plan will impact the long-term plans for this area and its sustainability.

## 5. IMPLEMENTATION

This chapter of the Plan outlines an implementation strategy for achieving some of the goals and recommendations set forth in Chapter 3. This chapter does not include all the recommendations outlined in the Plan (see Chapter 3 for all discussions), just those recommendations that must occur in a planned order or are strongly prioritized. The following implementation strategy includes a step-by-step approach with established priorities.

An effective Comprehensive Plan will reflect the changing circumstances and conditions in the Town, the region, the State, and the Country. The Town should reassess the Plan and its recommendations on an annual basis, updating recommendations and prioritization as circumstances dictate. Approximately every five years, the Town should undertake a more thorough assessment of the Comprehensive Plan and determine if an update is warranted.

### Highest Priority Actions: Immediate Actions

- After the Plan is adopted, the Town should form a Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee (CPIC). This committee will take responsibility for overseeing implementation of the Plan. The committee's duties include identifying projects that will help the Town with implementing its vision and reviewing actions for their consistency with the Town's vision. The CPIC can also provide assistance to other boards, departments, and committees on how to use the Comprehensive Plan as a basis for decision-making.
- An electronic copy of the Comprehensive Plan should be made available on the Town's website. Hard copies of the Comprehensive Plan can be provided to appropriate Town departments, committees, and boards. The Planning Board and Zoning Board should use the plan as a reference when they evaluate development projects.
- A copy of the Plan (hard copy and/or electronic) should be provided to Erie County. The Town should consider making copies available to Regional and State agencies. The County and State must refer to the Town's Comprehensive Plan when considering actions or projects that will impact the Town.
- It should be clearly stated policy that the Town Board and Planning Board refer to the Comprehensive Plan when evaluating potential re-zonings. If the proposed rezoning conflicts with the Plan, the Town can refuse to entertain it. In cases where the Plan is not clear whether the proposed rezoning is in conformance or not, the Town should use the information in the plan to formulate and document the Town's decision.

### High Priority Actions: Near Term Implementation (First Year)

- The Town should evaluate the Town's zoning ordinance for conformance with the Plan and the Town's stated vision and goals. It is likely there will be conflicts or incongruities, or areas where amendments can make the zoning better support the Town's goals. The

Town should identify zoning problem areas and prioritize them to be implemented over time.

- Town Department heads should refer to the Plan to help in determining specific projects and developing their annual capital requests.
- The Town should investigate whether there are available grant programs to help fund projects that will help implement the Plan's recommendations.
- The Implementation Committee should review the recommendations section and identify projects and activities to sponsor.
- The Implementation Committee should meet with the Town Board at budget time to discuss actions and projects for the coming year and determine the budgets necessary to accomplish those actions.

#### Priority Actions: Ongoing Implementation

- The Town should continue to make progress toward ensuring the zoning code best reflects the goals of the community, by making amendments to the zoning code as needed.
- The Town should also review other Town laws, such as subdivision regulations, to assess their effectiveness in supporting the Town's goals, and amend these laws as needed.
- The Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee should make an annual report to the Town Board that summarizes the following:
  - I. A summary of the implementation actions accomplished in the preceding year, by the Committee and by the town and its departments.
  - II. A summary of new private and public development projects within the Town over the past year.
  - III. Major county, regional and State actions or projects that have occurred during the past year that may affect the Town of Sardinia.
  - IV. Studies and reports completed by the Town, County, and State that relate to the goals and objectives of the Town Plan.
  - V. A proposed work plan for the upcoming year for implementation activities.
  - VI. Recommendations, if any, for revisions, amendments, or additions to the Comprehensive Plan document.
- The Town Board should seek to keep the Plan up to date by making recommended additions or revisions on a regular basis. The changes can be as simple as appending new data or studies by reference. More extensive changes could entail revisions to the Recommendations or Implementation sections of the document.

- Official amendments to the document would require a public hearing on the proposed changes, conducting SEQR and then officially adopting the changes by resolution or motion at a Town Board meeting.

*Implementation: Long-Term*

- Approximately every five years, the Town should undertake a more thorough assessment of the Comprehensive Plan and determine if an update is warranted. This process would entail a more rigorous update to the inventory, expanded public outreach (surveys, public meetings) and a careful look at the goals and objectives for the Town.

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## **6. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (SEQR)**

A Comprehensive Plan is categorized as a Type 1 action under the State’s Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) Act. As such, the Town, as Lead Agency, is required to examine the potential environmental impacts of the plan. To facilitate this requirement, the comprehensive plan itself can be set up to represent the typical components of a GEIS (see §272-a.8 of Town Law). This format enables the reviewers, the Lead Agency, all involved and interested agencies, and the public to review one comprehensive document that outlines future plans and the potential environmental implications of these plans. The inclusion of this chapter is intended to help in the environmental evaluation. This evaluation also helped to ensure that the Comprehensive Plan and its recommendations would not result in significant environmental impacts. A good Comprehensive Plan is respectful of the environment and meets the needs of the community and its citizens.

### ***Potential Significant Adverse Environmental Impacts***

The underlying purpose and a major goal of a Comprehensive Plan is to promote appropriate land use and avoid significant adverse environment impacts in the community that it covers. The Part 2 of the FEAF does not identify any potentially moderate to large impacts and no significant environmental impacts. However, it is important here to acknowledge and discuss potential adverse impacts.

### ***Short Term/Long Term and Cumulative Impacts***

Based on the environmental setting of the Town of Sardinia, the following potentially significant adverse environmental impacts could occur if the community does not plan adequately and provide the proper tools for the management of growth and development. The comprehensive plan is designed to properly guide growth in the Town to lessen the negative impacts of land use and development decisions.

#### ***A. Impacts on Land (see Environmental Features and land use Maps)***

- The Town of Sardinia is rural in nature, a characteristic that is valued by area residents. Inappropriate planning and development actions could negatively impact the land resources of the Town.
- The Town of Sardinia has areas of hydric soils, and some wetlands and floodplains. There are also some areas in the Town with slopes greater than 15 percent. Improper development of these areas could result in drainage, flooding, and/or erosion problems within the Town and in downstream areas.
- There are some areas in Sardinia where the soils are categorized as prime farmland, or prime farmland when drained. There are extensive areas covered under Southeast Agricultural District 17, including many farms. Development of these areas could result in the loss of irreplaceable resources.

- Some locations in the Town of Sardinia contain significant areas of mature woodland. Inappropriate development of these areas could have a negative impact on the rural character of the Town and important open space.

*B. Impacts on Water (See Map 1: Environmental Features)*

- Hosmer Brook, Cattaraugus Creek, and other waterways run through the Town of Sardinia. Floodplains surround some portions of these waterways. Inappropriate development could lead to flooding or drainage problems, and hazards to public safety. These creeks are also important for environmental protection, open space preservation, drainage, wildlife habitat, and aesthetics.
- Most residences in the Town use groundwater for the discharge of sanitary waste (septic systems).
- There are areas of wetlands and hydric soils. Inappropriate development in these areas could lead to flooding and drainage problems, and adversely impact groundwater resources.

*C. Impacts on Flora and Fauna*

- The Town’s expansive areas of non-developed lands, fields and woodlands, steep slope areas, as well as the wetlands and creek corridors, support many non-threatened and non-endangered plant, avian and animal species. These areas provide important habitat for many resident species and are an important element of the rural character of the Town. Over-development and poor site planning decisions could adversely impact these resources.

*D. Impacts on Agricultural Land Resources (See Maps - Appendix B)*

- Portions of the Town are located in a County designated, State certified agricultural district. One of the important land uses and economic activity in the Town is agricultural.

*E. Impacts on Aesthetic Resources*

The aesthetic resources of the Town of Sardinia include significant views (especially in areas around the creek corridors), open spaces, parks, and historic buildings. These resources contribute to the atmosphere and character of the Town and could be negatively affected by inappropriate development.

*F. Impact on Open Space, Parks, and Recreation*

- Town and County Parks, County Forests, and NYSDEC fishing access sites are invaluable assets to the Town, drawing use from both residents and visitors.
- The Town also has important open space resources, with large portions of the Town including undeveloped woodlands and meadows.

- Inappropriate development, including increased demands caused by population increases, could have an adverse effect upon these resources.

### *G. Impact on Critical Environmental Area*

There are no official critical environmental areas within the Town of Sardinia.

### *H. Impact on Transportation*

- The transportation system in the Town of Sardinia is heavily based upon roadways and automobiles. Public transportation for the general public does not exist, although Rural Transit Service operates in Sardinia to provide transportation needs to eligible senior, low- to moderate-income and disabled residents.
- The rail line is used for very limited commercial, and freight uses only. No passenger rail is available.
- Travel for pedestrians and bicyclists can be difficult in the Town.
- Poorly planned development in the Town has the potential to adversely impact the transportation network. Although the roads are mostly level of Service A, localized problems could occur if development is not planned and designed properly. Development in the surrounding communities may also have impacts on the Town's transportation system.
- Additional development may also increase potential conflicts between automotive and non-automotive modes of transportation.

### *I. Impact on Growth and Character of Community or Neighborhood*

- The population of the Town of Sardinia has been increasing slightly since 2010.
- The rate of new households has been outpacing new residents slightly since 2010.
- The Comprehensive Plan supports limited residential growth.
- The Town supports commercial and industrial growth in targeted designated areas of the Town in order to support tax base and employment opportunities.
- With targeted, well-planned growth, the Town's character should not be adversely affected.

### *Adverse Environmental Impacts that Cannot be Avoided*

With or without the adoption and implementation of a Comprehensive Plan, the region will continue to have new development that will impact the environment. The adoption of this plan and implementation of the suggested actions will allow the Town to better manage growth and development and reduce potential environmental impacts. All development actions taking place after the completion of this study will still be subject to the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) process on a site-specific basis. This plan can assist with the review of those future development actions.

### *Growth Inducing Aspects of the Plan*

Most of the implementation actions outlined in this study will help to control and moderate growth within the Town and encourage growth in specific areas where it can be best supported. The Plan does not include any recommendations to encourage additional growth.

### *Mitigation Measures*

It is the objective of any comprehensive plan to help to reduce the potential impacts that could be caused by the present development trends in the planning community. This can be accomplished by providing techniques for changing the development trends of a community, such as amending zoning or other development regulations, or by providing tools to help mitigate the possible impacts of those development trends, such as providing for improved infrastructure, increased/improved standards for development, etc. A good comprehensive plan will supply techniques for modifying or clarifying the direction of the community, and the tools for reducing the impacts of development that themselves do not create other adverse environmental impacts. The following section discusses the study's recommendations and the logic as to why and how they help mitigate the potential impacts of future growth.

#### *A. Impacts on Land*

- The plan recommends a number of measures to protect the land and environmental resources of the community.
- The plan strongly supports the protection of agricultural lands in the Town. Techniques include completing an Agricultural Protection Plan strengthening the economic viability of farms, encouraging agricultural support services,

#### *B. Impacts on Surface Water*

- The plan supports directing development away from the designated stream corridors and recommends updating the Conservation Protection Overlay district.
- The plan supports increased drainage standards and avoidance of poor soil areas to further reduce impacts to surface waters from development. It also supports the implementation of recommendations from the watershed management plan.
- New requirements, when necessary, will also help to protect these resources.
- Directing growth to areas with public infrastructure will help in the protection of groundwater resources in the Town of Sardinia. Current laws provide excellent protection.

#### *C. Impacts on Plants and Animals*

- As discussed previously, the Sardinia community will be taking efforts to protect and preserve the stream corridors and open spaces in the community. By targeting these important habitats for protection, the Town is minimizing impacts to the flora and fauna of the region.

- The plan also identifies important features like floodplains, wetlands, and unique environmental features, so that they can be incorporated into designs and/or preserved.

#### *D. Impacts on Agricultural Land Resources.*

- As previously discussed, the Town will be coordinating activities to protect and preserve agricultural land and agricultural operations.
- Other programs and ideas will be attempted as needed to try and assist farmers to stay in business. If the economics of farming (related to Agriculture) can be helped, farming may continue which will assist with the agricultural land preservation.

#### *E. Impacts on Aesthetic Resource*

- The preservation of community character is one of the major goals of this Plan. Community character includes the aesthetic resources of the community such as significant views, open spaces, farmland, historic resources, and the Town's overall rural character. The community has identified these resources, and the plan identifies actions to be taken by the community to protect these features.
- Development guidelines will help to maintain the rural character of this community.

#### *F. Impacts on Open Space, Parks, and Recreation*

- The plan identifies these resources and provides methodologies to protect and preserve them during development.
- Major features are identified in the Plan, and some are incorporated into the vision map and are considered an integral part of the Town's future.

#### *H. Impacts on Transportation*

- Transportation in the community is heavily based on roadways and automobiles. Generally, traffic counts are low and there is not significant congestion, although there can be localized problems along major routes.
- One of the other issues of transportation relates to the region's accommodation of pedestrians and bicycles.
- Public transportation in the region is minimal.
- The railroad running through Sardinia is an important asset to the region. The community has planned around this feature (continuing access to industrial areas and preventing encroachment of incompatible uses) and is strongly interested in the railroad being improved and remaining active.

#### *I. Impact on Growth and Character of Community or Neighborhood*

- Population trends suggest that the growth rate in the Town of Sardinia will remain modest or flat. The Town's population, like Erie County's on the whole, is aging.

- Economic development and local jobs have become a larger issue, and the plan attempts to proactively support additional locations for job supporting development.

### Evaluation of Alternatives

Throughout the planning process, alternatives for helping the Town achieve its goals and objectives were evaluated. These recommendations and implementation alternatives were evaluated for not only their desired results, but also their impact to the environment, the needs of local residents, private property rights, and the vitality of the community. It must be noted that long term recommendations were not thoroughly evaluated in this section since these actions are only to be considered in extenuating circumstances where the Town is seeing greater levels of growth pressure or where short-term recommendations are not achieving the desired results. Under the present growth conditions in the Town, the "No Action" alternative was considered. However, to enable the Town to properly plan for its chosen future, to prepare for potential development activity over the next 15 years, and to better direct and manage such growth and development, this alternative was deemed inappropriate. Furthermore, the chosen action plan will provide greater protection to the environment than the present course of action.



# Town of Sardinia Maps

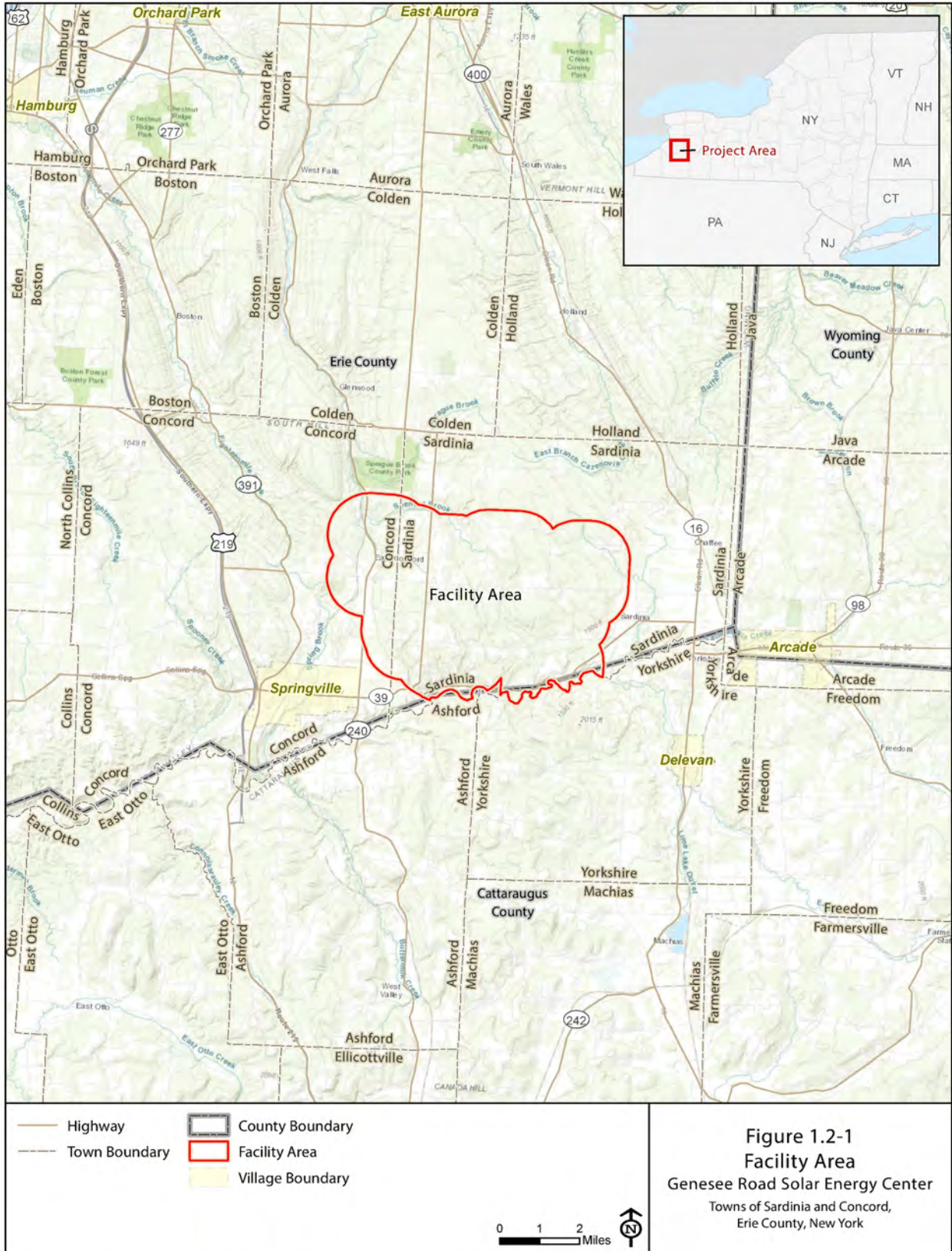


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# Map 1

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Source: E&E 2019; ESRI 2017; NYS Office of Information Technology Services GIS Program Office (GPO) 2018, 2019.

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# Town of Sardinia Comprehensive Plan Environmental Features



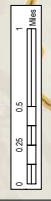
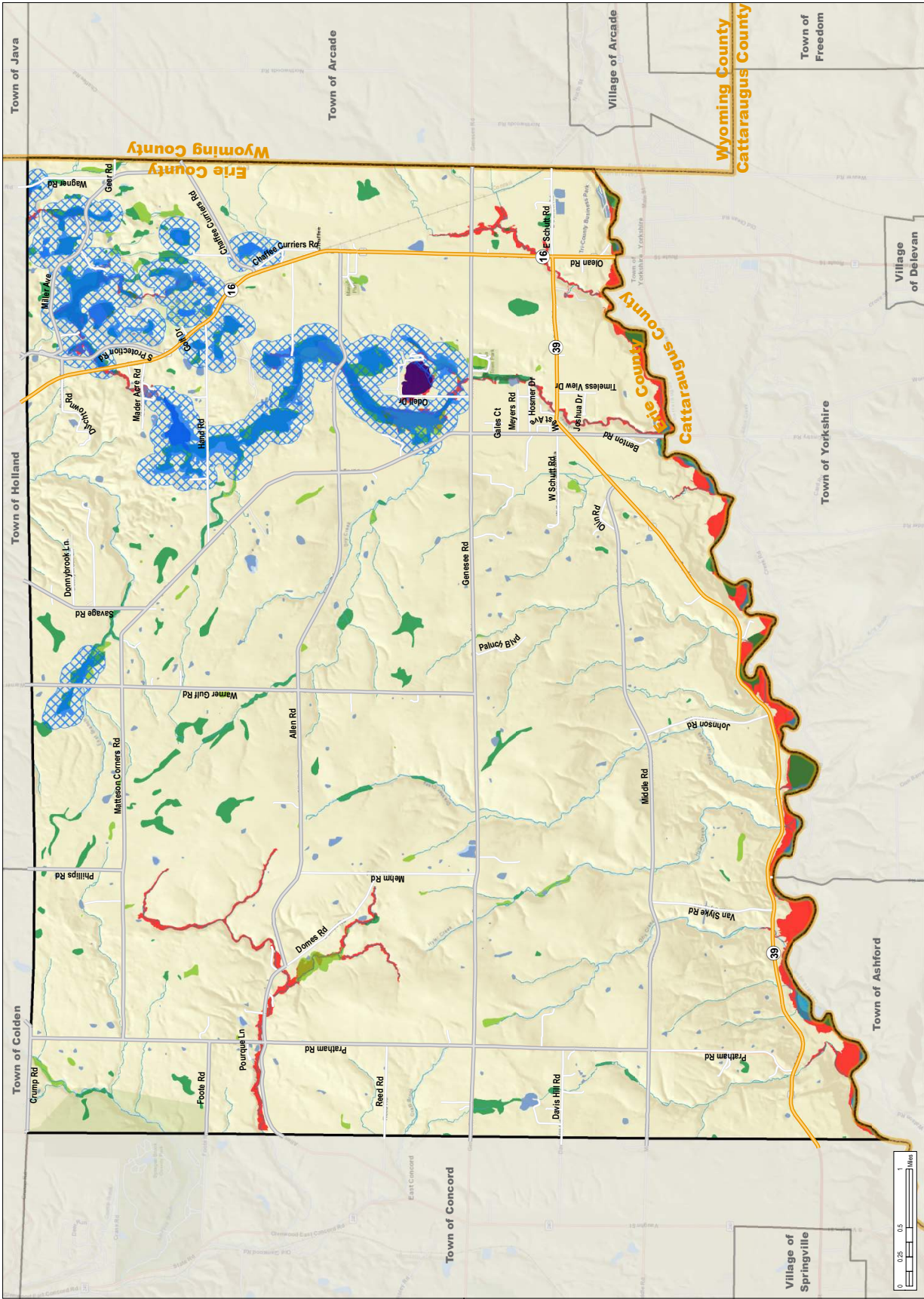
**LEGEND**

- █ FEMA 100 Year Floodzone
- █ State Wetlands
- █ Wetland
- ▨ Checkzone
- █ Federal Wetlands
- █ Freshwater Emergent Wetland
- █ Freshwater
- █ Forested/Shrub Wetland
- █ Freshwater Pond
- █ Lake
- █ Riverine



WD Project # 605702 | Map Created August 2021

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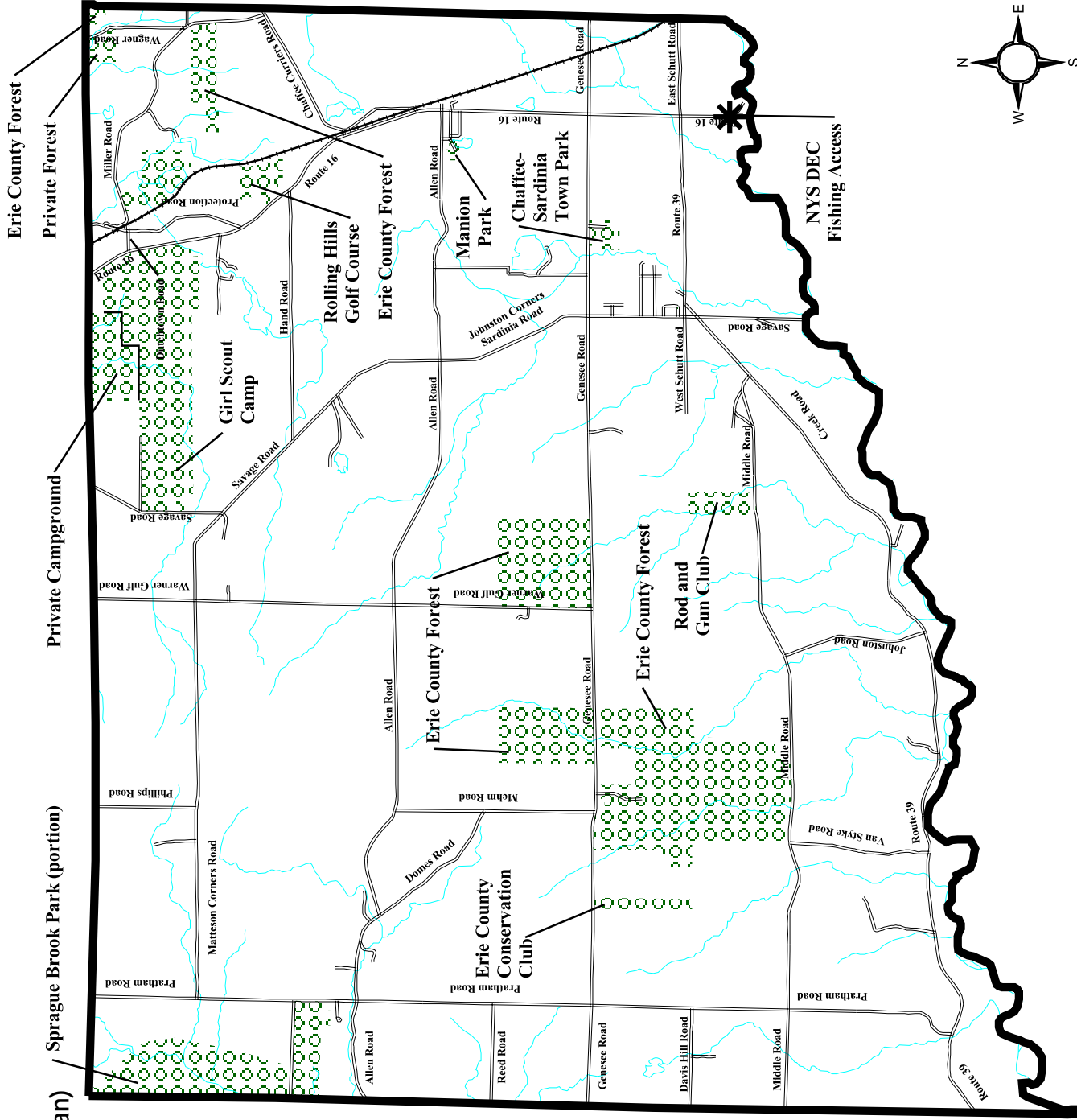


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# Map 3

(Map 15 from 2003 Comprehensive Plan)

## Parks and Recreation Areas Town of Sardinia Comprehensive Plan



### General Map Features

- Town Boundary
- Roadways
- Railroads
- Streams

### Parks/ Recreation/ Conservation Features

- Parks/ Recreation/ Conservation



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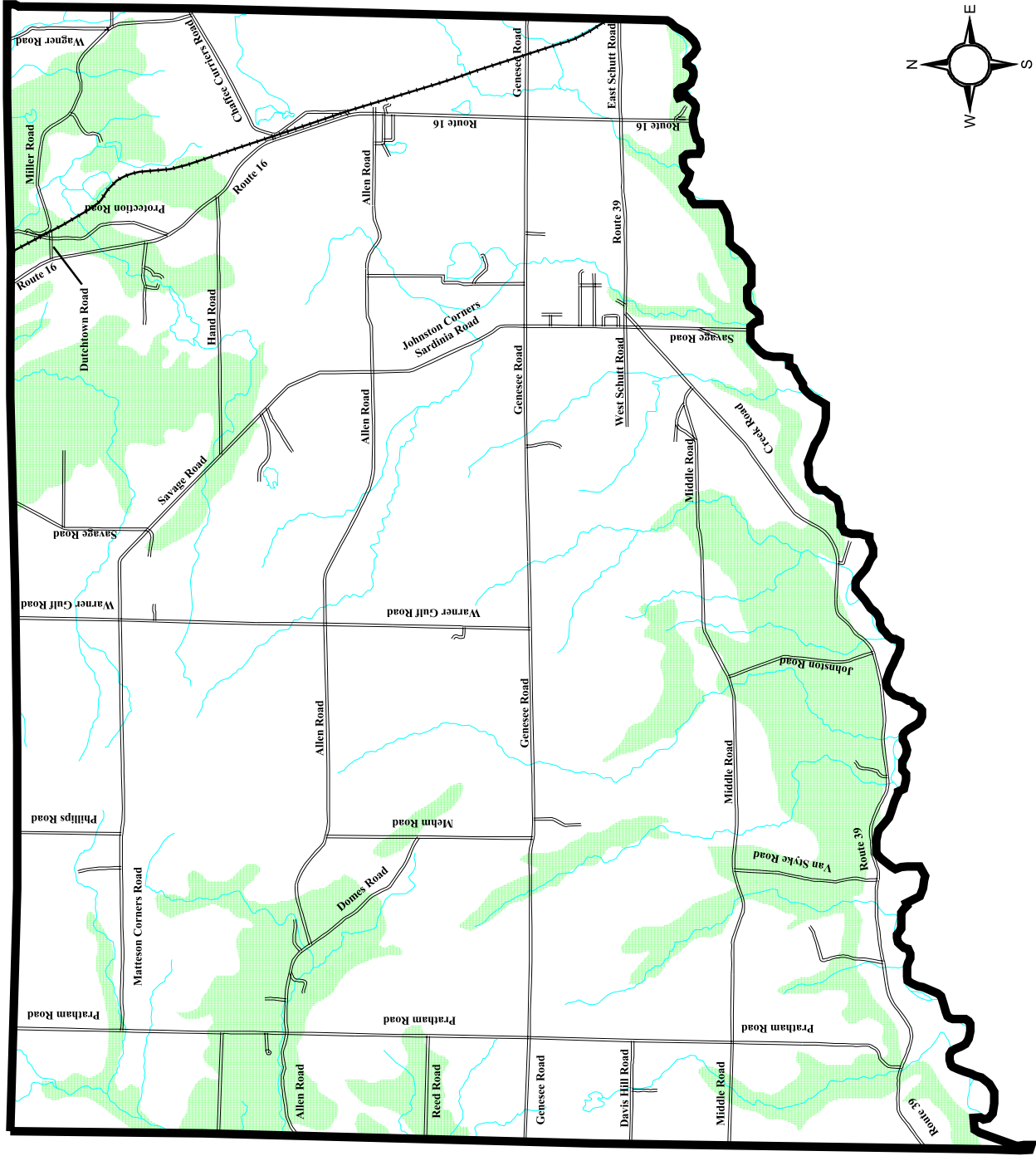
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# Map 4

(Map 11 from 2003 Comprehensive Plan)


## Steep Slopes Town of Sardinia Comprehensive Plan



### General Map Feature

-  Town Boundary
-  Railroads
-  Roadways
-  Streams

### Steep Slope Features

-  Areas of Steepest Slope



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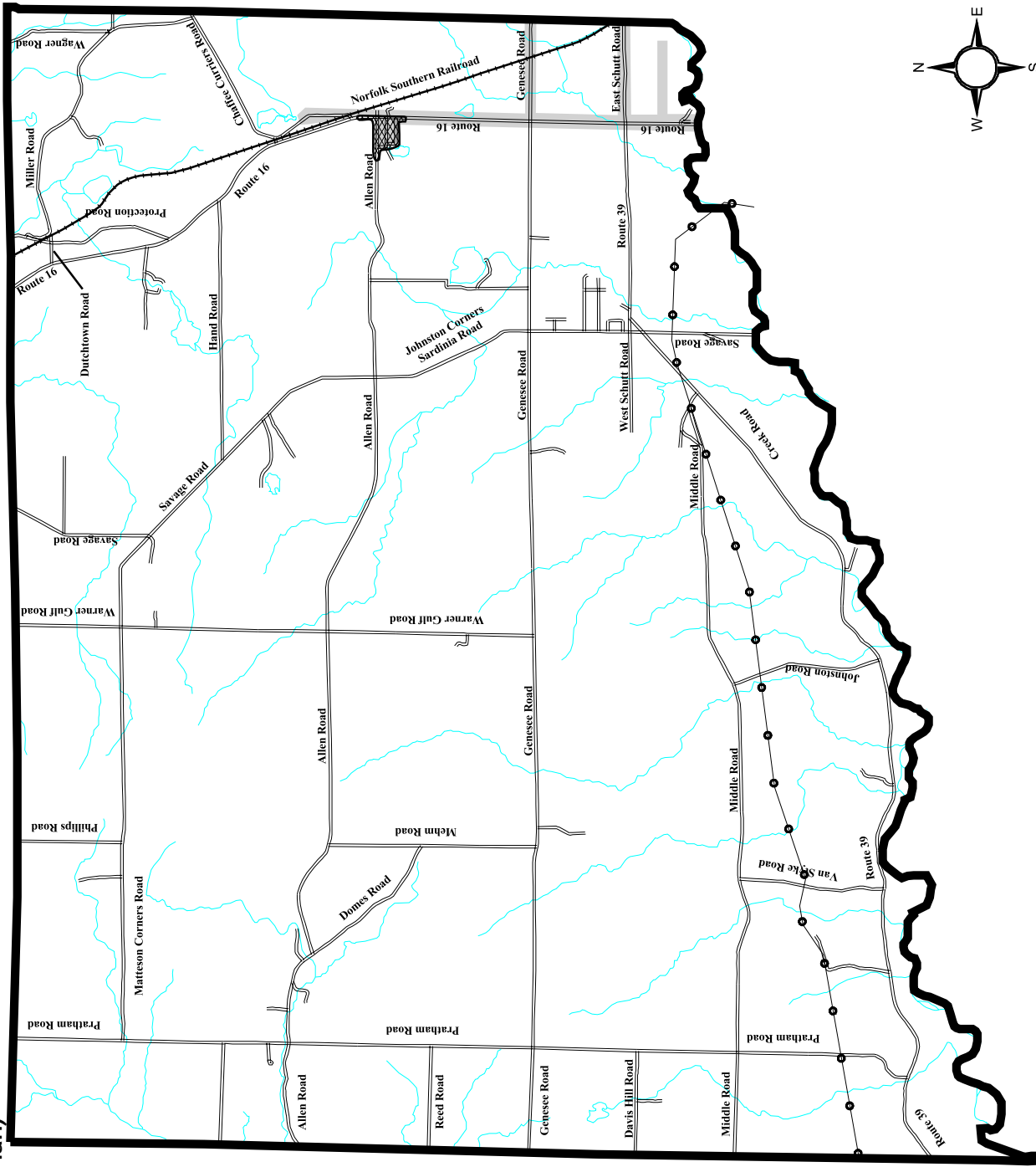
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# Map 5

(Map 18 from 2003 Comprehensive Plan)




## Utilities Town of Sardinia Comprehensive Plan



### General Map Features

-  Town Boundary
-  Roadways
-  Railroads

### Utility Features

-  Community Water Supply
-  NMPC Transmission Line
-  Arcade Electric



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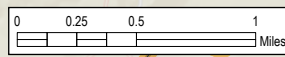
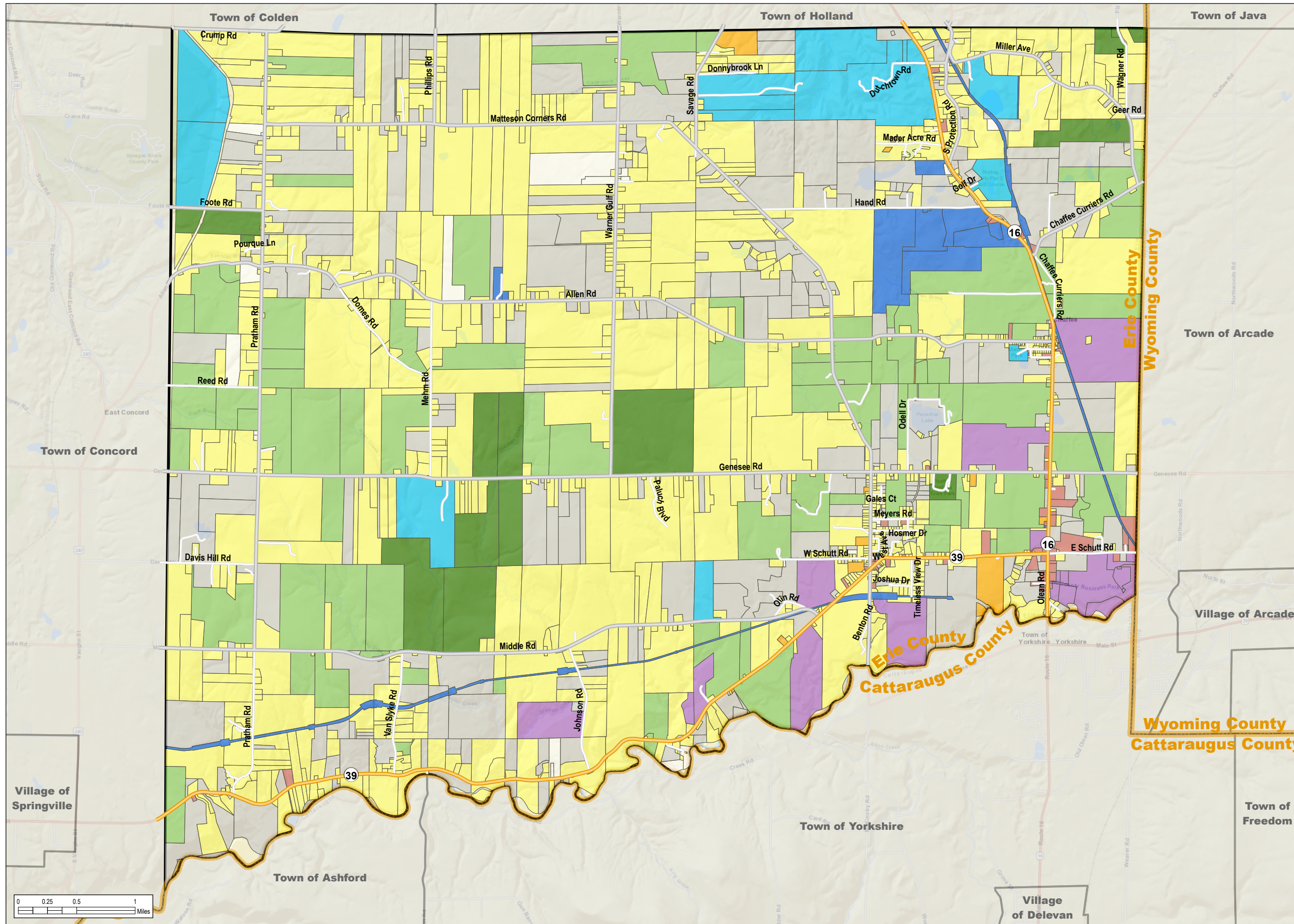
# Town of Sardinia Comprehensive Plan

## Land Use



### LEGEND

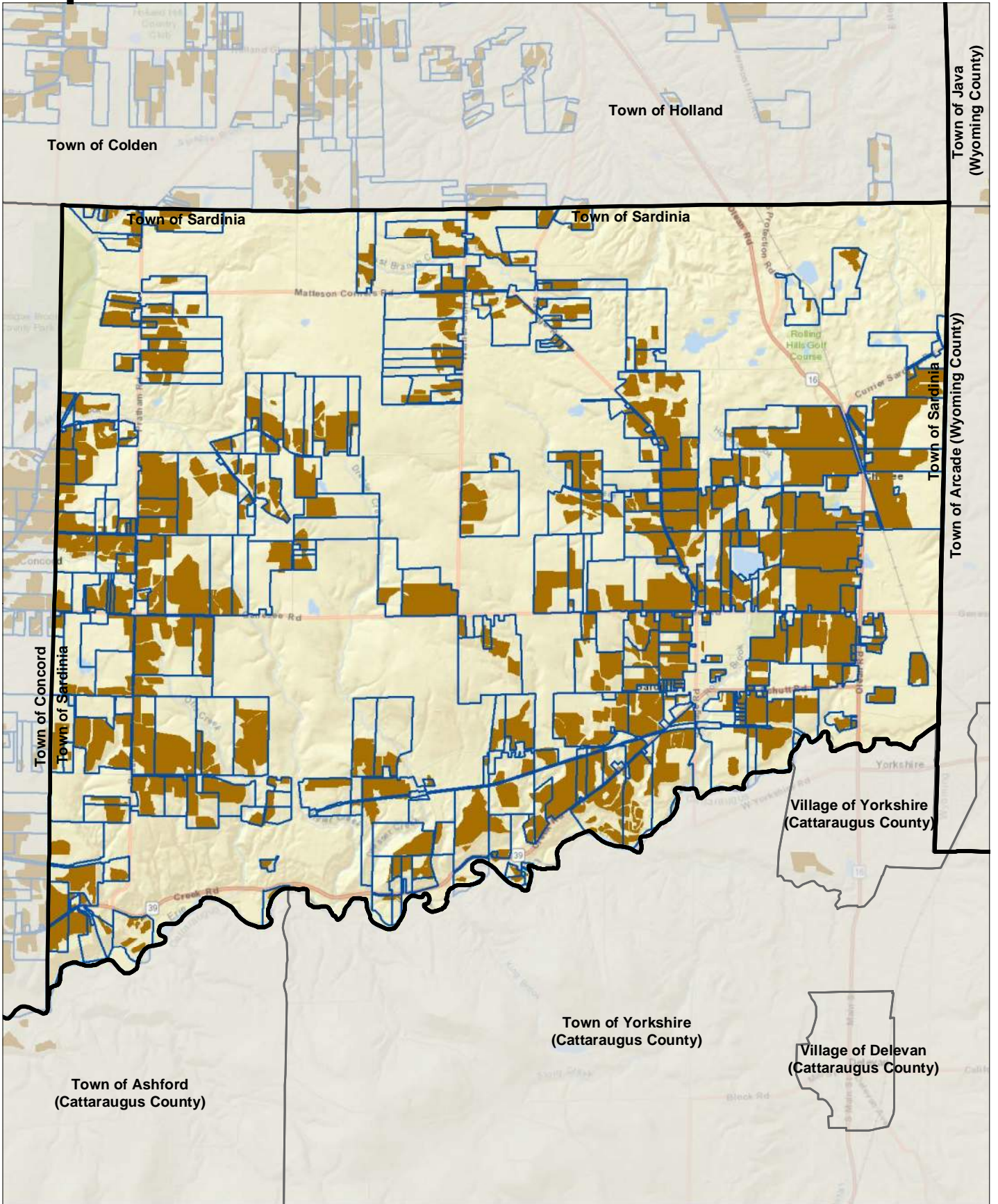
Land Use (2020 Parcels)	
	No Data
	Agricultural
	Residential
	Vacant Land
	Commercial
	Recreation and Entertainment
	Community Services
	Industrial
	Public Services
	Wild, Forested, Conservation Lands and Public Parks



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 1. Any errors, omissions, or inaccuracies in the information provided regardless of how caused or;  
 2. Any decision or action taken or not taken by the reader in reliance upon any information or data furnished hereunder.  
 Data Sources: NYS GIS Program Office, Erie County GIS, Esri, HERE, Garmin, USGS, Intermap, INCREMENT P, NRCan, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri Korea, Esri (Thailand), NGCC, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

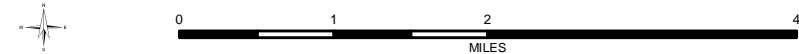
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# Map 7



- Counties
- Municipalities
- Agricultural Parcels
- Cropland

SOURCE: ERIE COUNTY AGRICULTURE AND FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN, 2012



## AGRICULTURAL PARCELS AND CROPLAND COVERAGE SARDINIA, NY

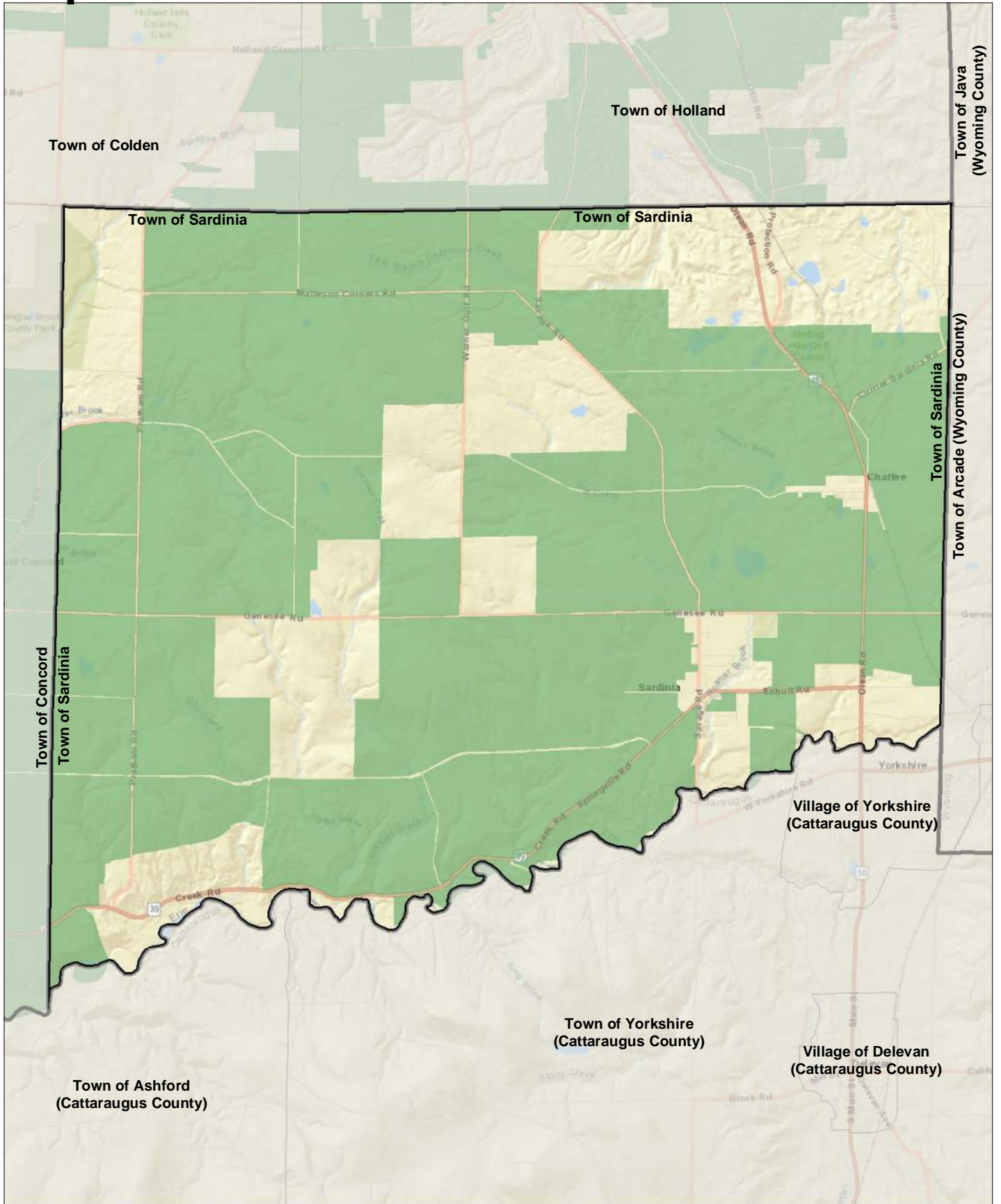
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE



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# Map 8



Southeast Agricultural District #15
  WNY Counties
  Municipalities

SOURCE: ERIE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING, 2021

## AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS

SARDINIA, NY

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

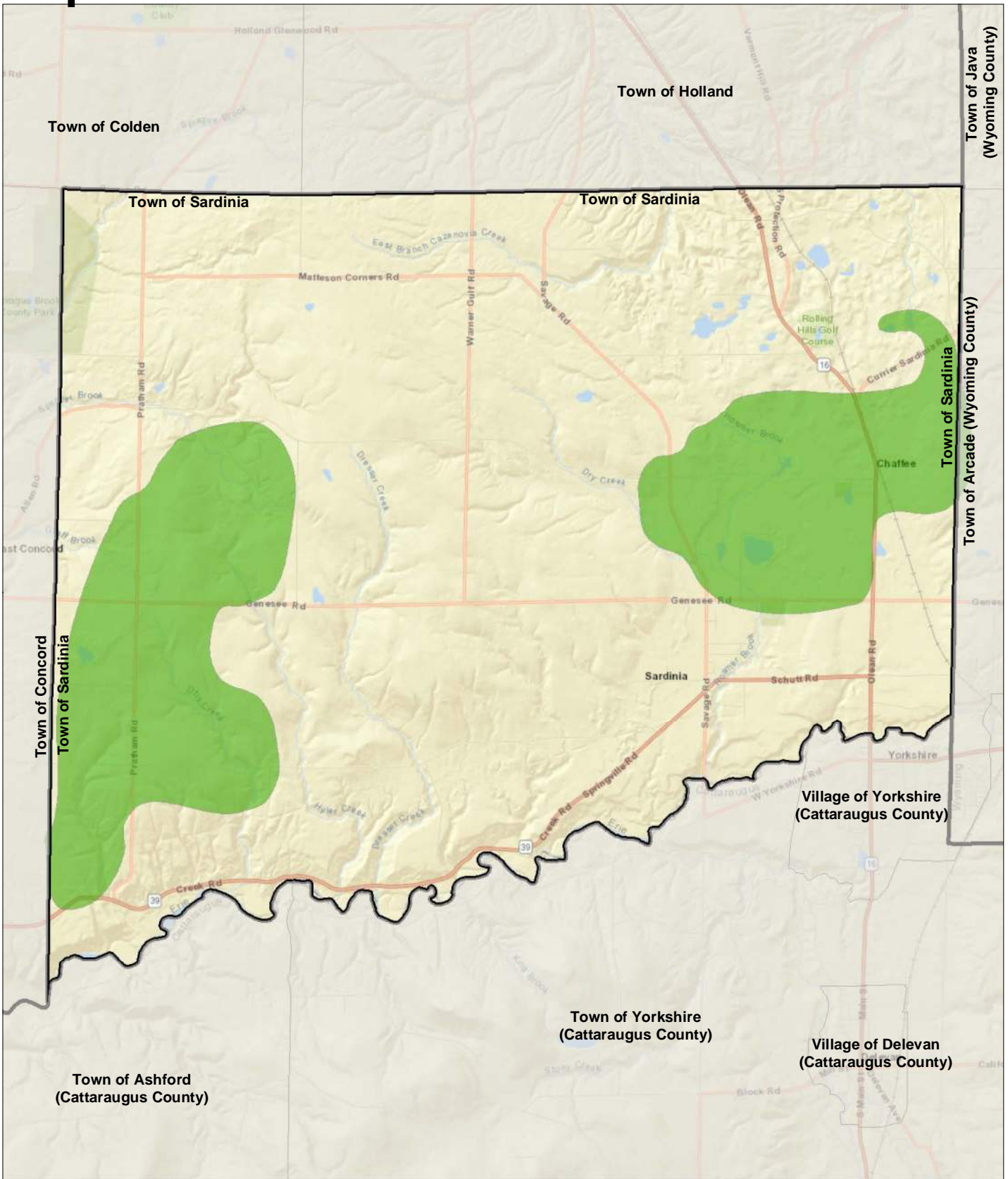
MAP PREPARED BY THE ERIE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT & PLANNING BY GATTIS2, 2/5/2021




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# Map 9



 Areas with Clusters of High Agricultural Soils Values

SOURCE: ERIE County agriculture and farmland protection plan, 2012

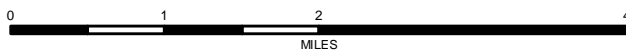
## CLUSTERS OF PARCELS WITH HIGH AGRICULTURAL SOILS VALUE

SARDINIA, NY

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE



MAP PREPARED BY THE ERIE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT & PLANNING BY GATTIS2, 2/5/2021



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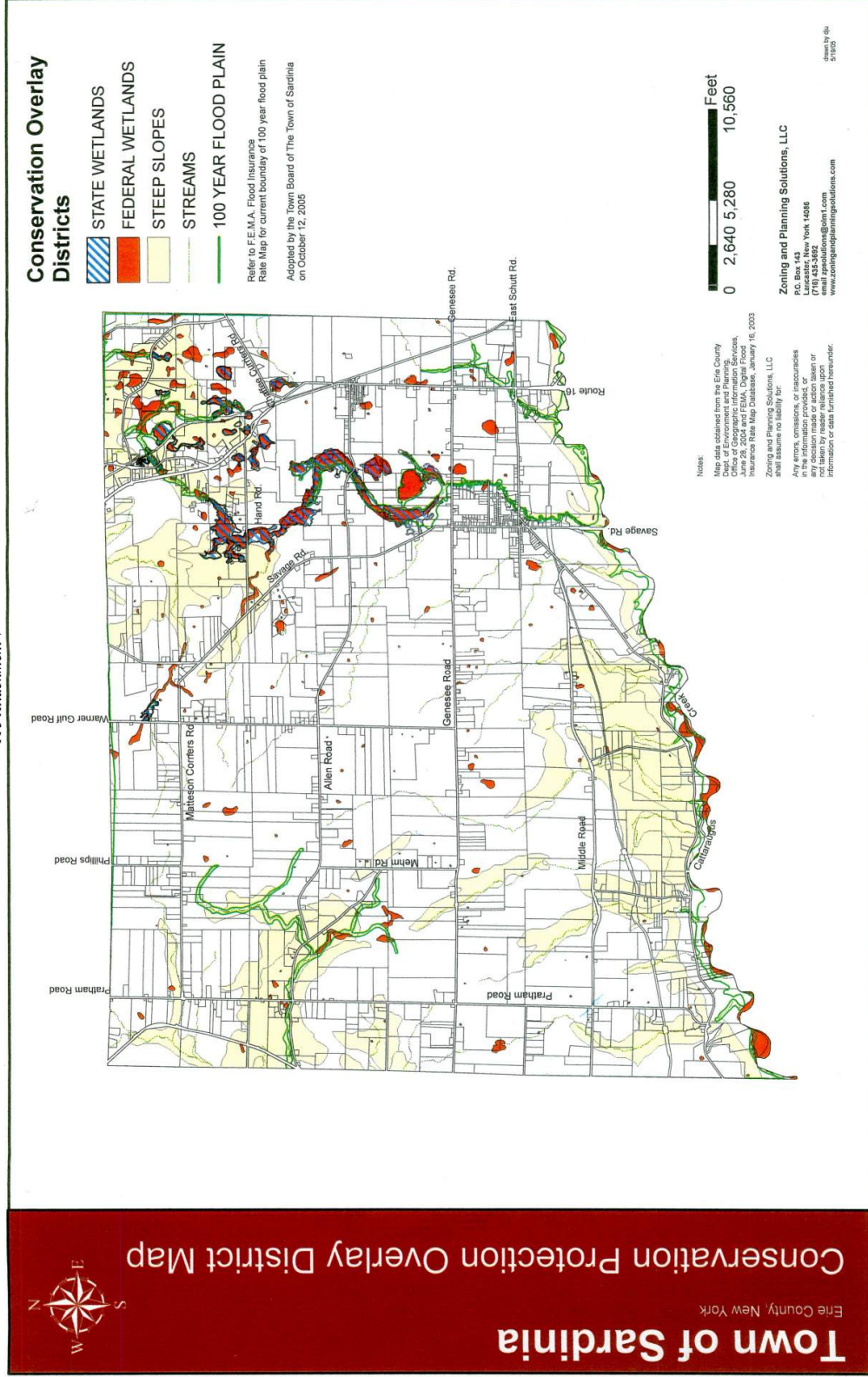


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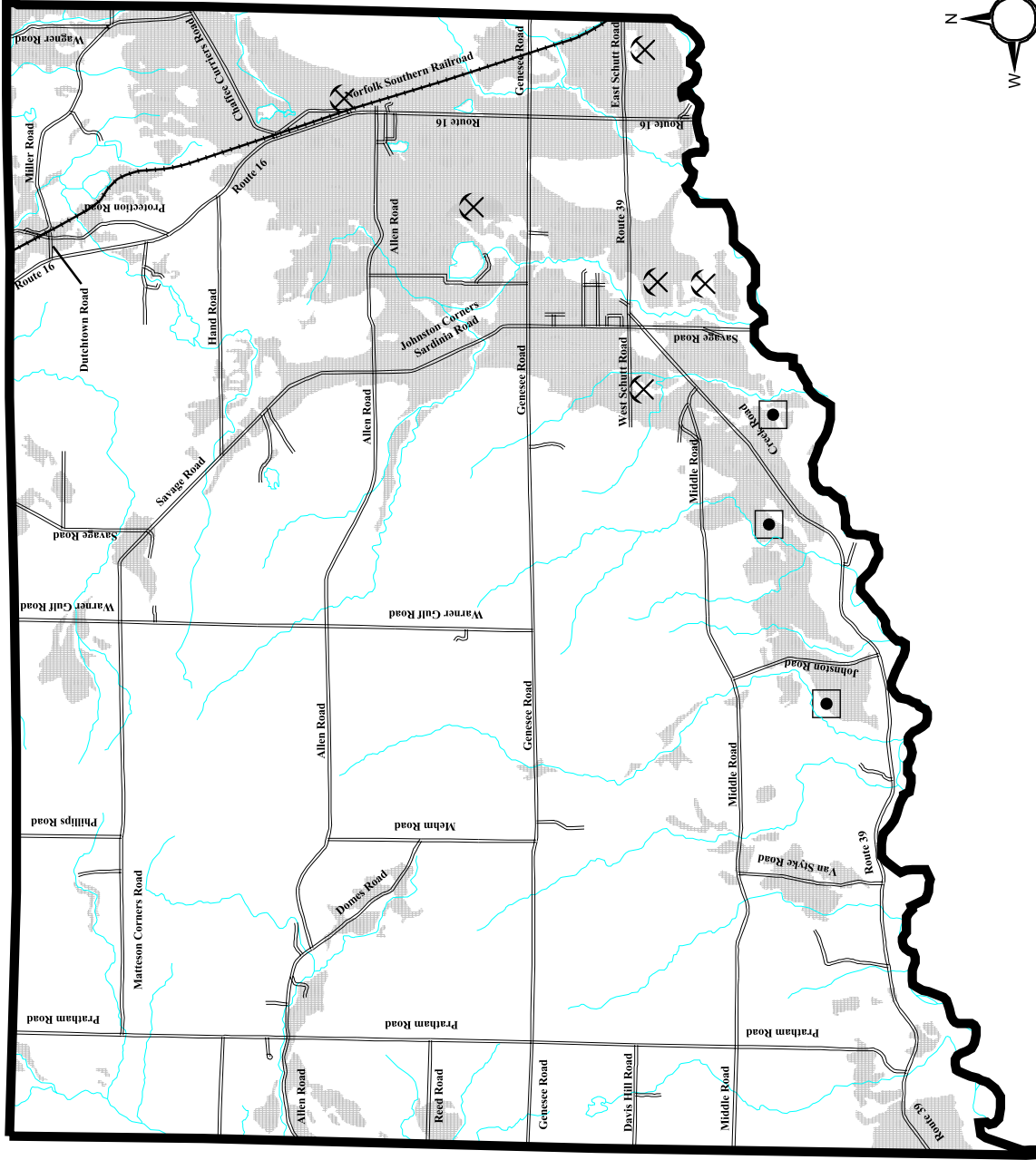


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# Map 14

(Map 10 from 2003 Comprehensive Plan)

## Gravel Deposits/ Gravel Mines Town of Sardinia Comprehensive Plan



### General Map Features

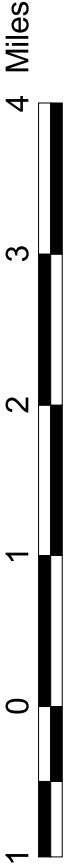
- Town Boundary
- Roadways
- Railroads
- Streams

### Gravel Deposit/ Mine Features

- Active Mines
- Inactive Mines
- Gravel Deposits



**Stuart J. Brown Associates, Inc.**  
Planning and Management Consultants



*Adopted December 2003*

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# Town of Sardinia Comprehensive Plan

Community Assets  
Working Map

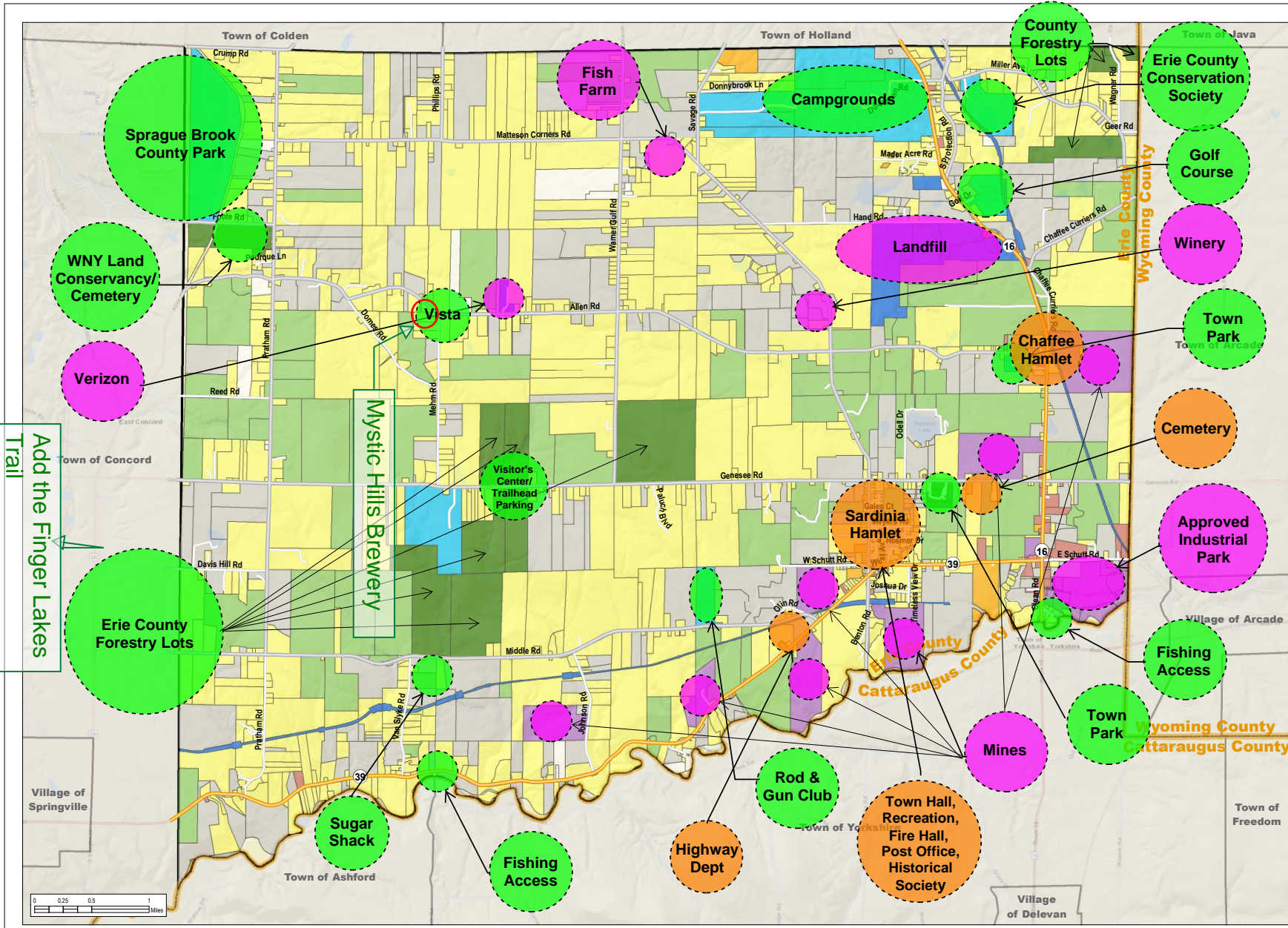


### LEGEND

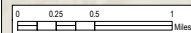
Land Use (2020)	
[White Box]	No Data
[Light Green Box]	Agricultural
[Yellow Box]	Residential
[Light Grey Box]	Vacant Land
[Red Box]	Commercial
[Blue Box]	Recreation and Entertainment
[Orange Box]	Community Services
[Purple Box]	Industrial
[Dark Blue Box]	Public Services
[Dark Green Box]	Wild, Forested, Conservation Lands and Public Parks



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Add the Finger Lakes Trail



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# Town of Sardinia

## Appendices



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# Planning Policy Areas

## Developed Areas

The region's Developed Areas extend outward from cities of Buffalo, Niagara Falls and Lockport and include developed lands served by public sewer, water, and transportation infrastructure.

## Developing Areas

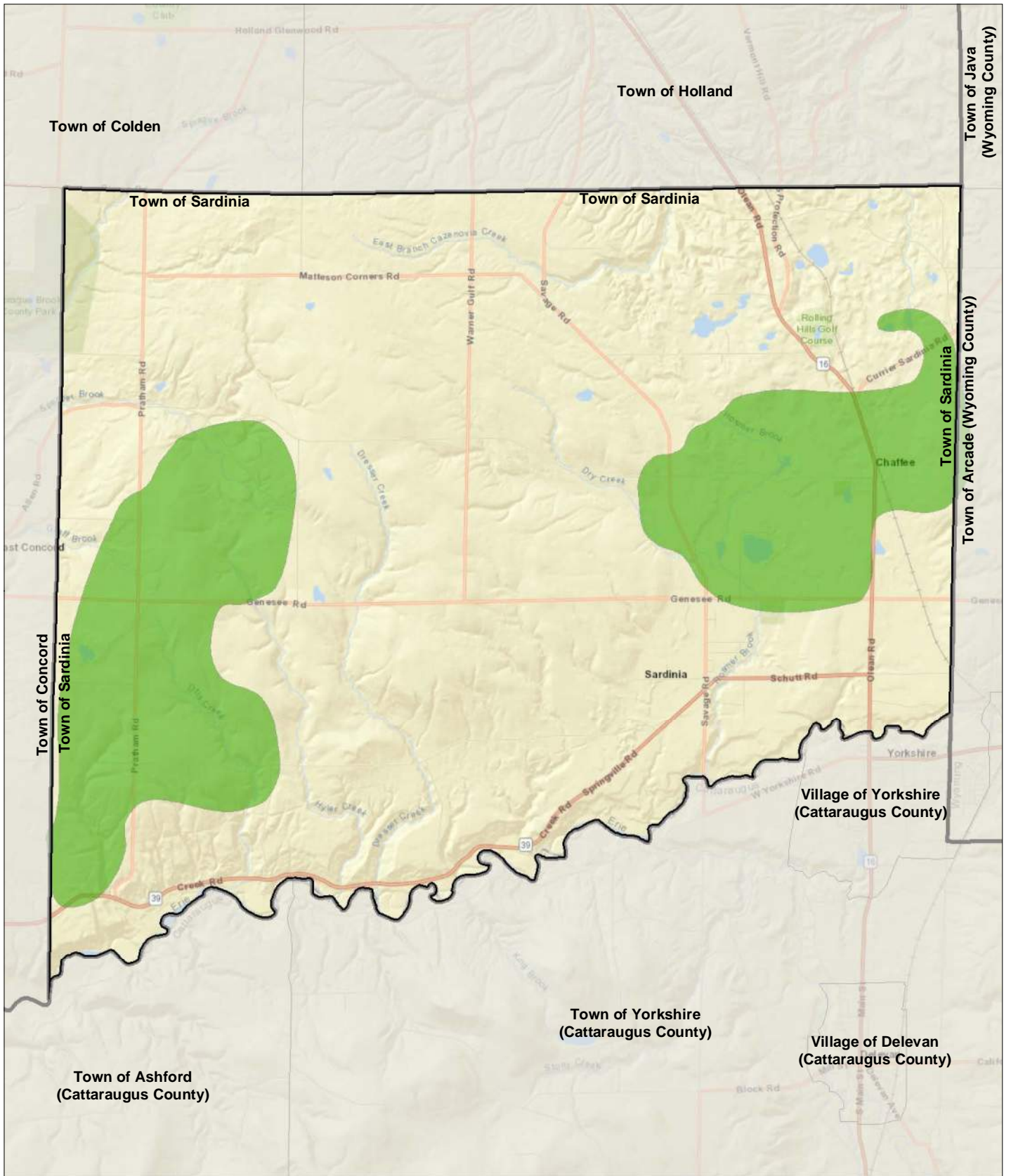
The region's Developing Areas include rural and sparsely settled areas experiencing development pressure and demand for extensions of public sewer, water, and transportation infrastructure.


## Rural Areas

The region's Rural Areas are the least intensely developed and include large tracts of forest and farm lands. In these areas, commercial services are clustered in incorporated villages and unincorporated hamlets.



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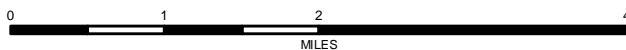
 Areas with Clusters of High Agricultural Soils Values

SOURCE: ERIE County agriculture and farmland protection plan, 2012

**CLUSTERS OF PARCELS  
WITH HIGH AGRICULTURAL  
SOILS VALUE**

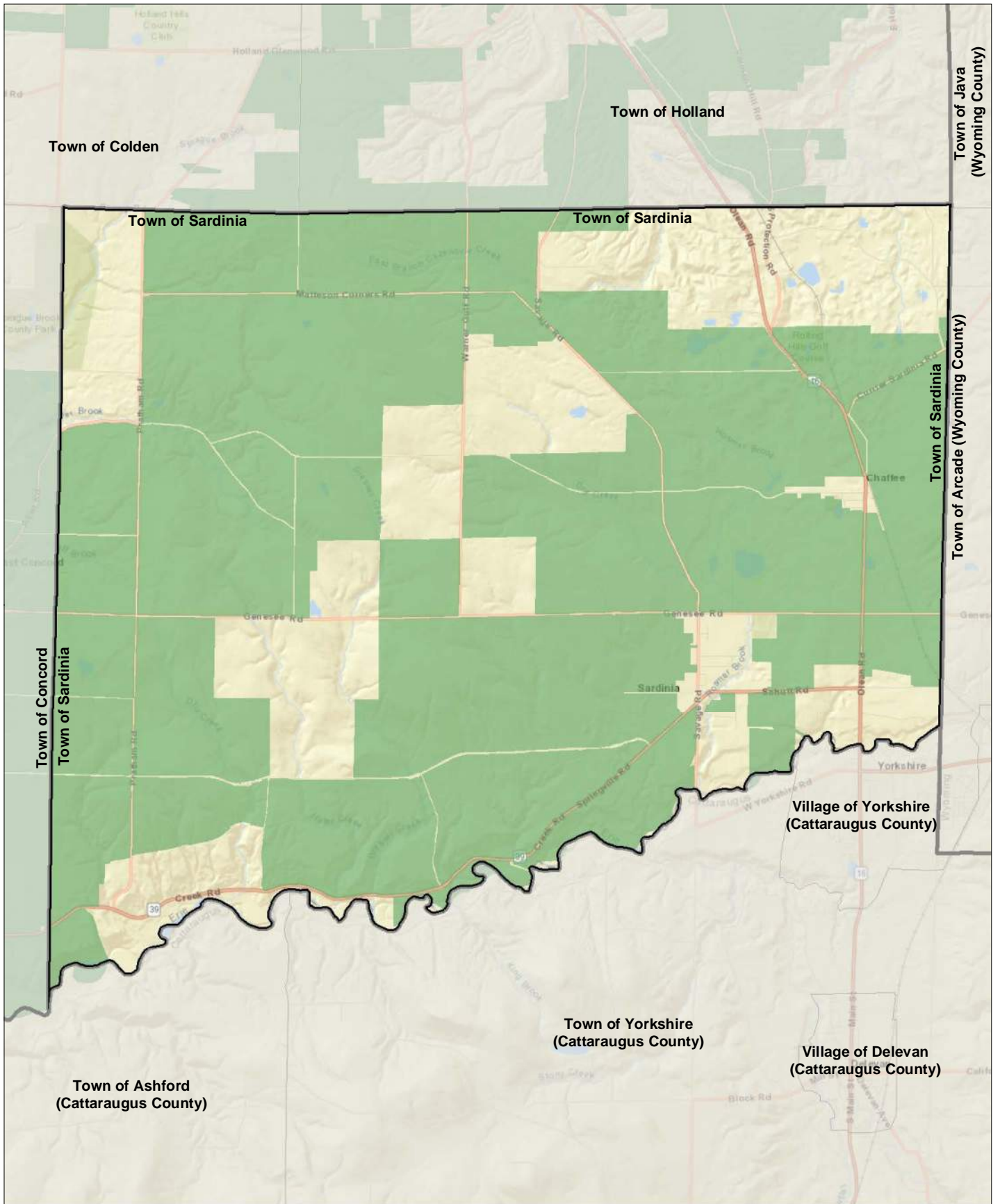
SARDINIA, NY

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SOURCE: ERIE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING, 2021



**AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS**

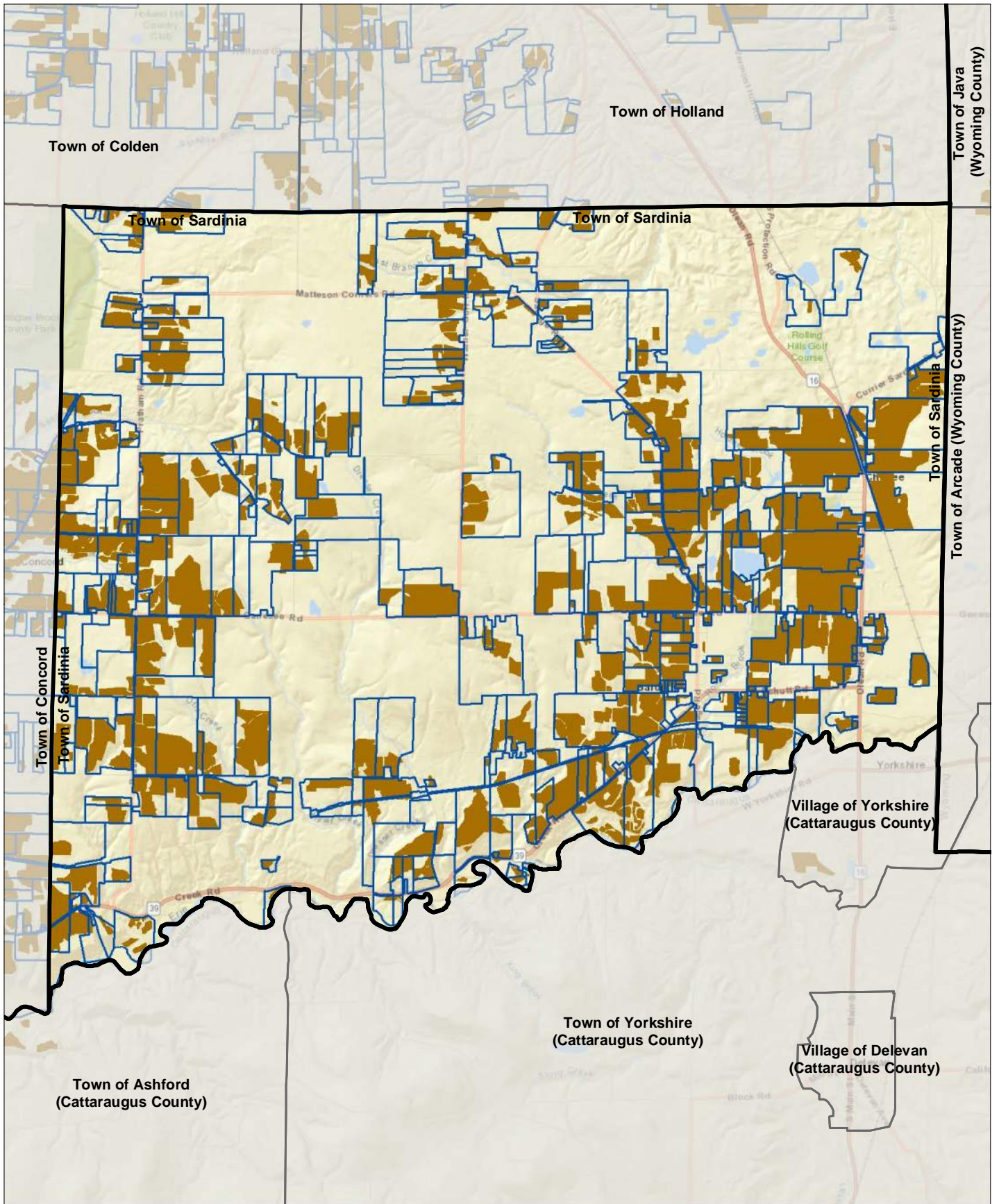
SARDINIA, NY

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

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Counties
  Municipalities
  Agricultural Parcels
  Cropland

SOURCE: ERIE COUNTY AGRICULTURE AND FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN, 2012



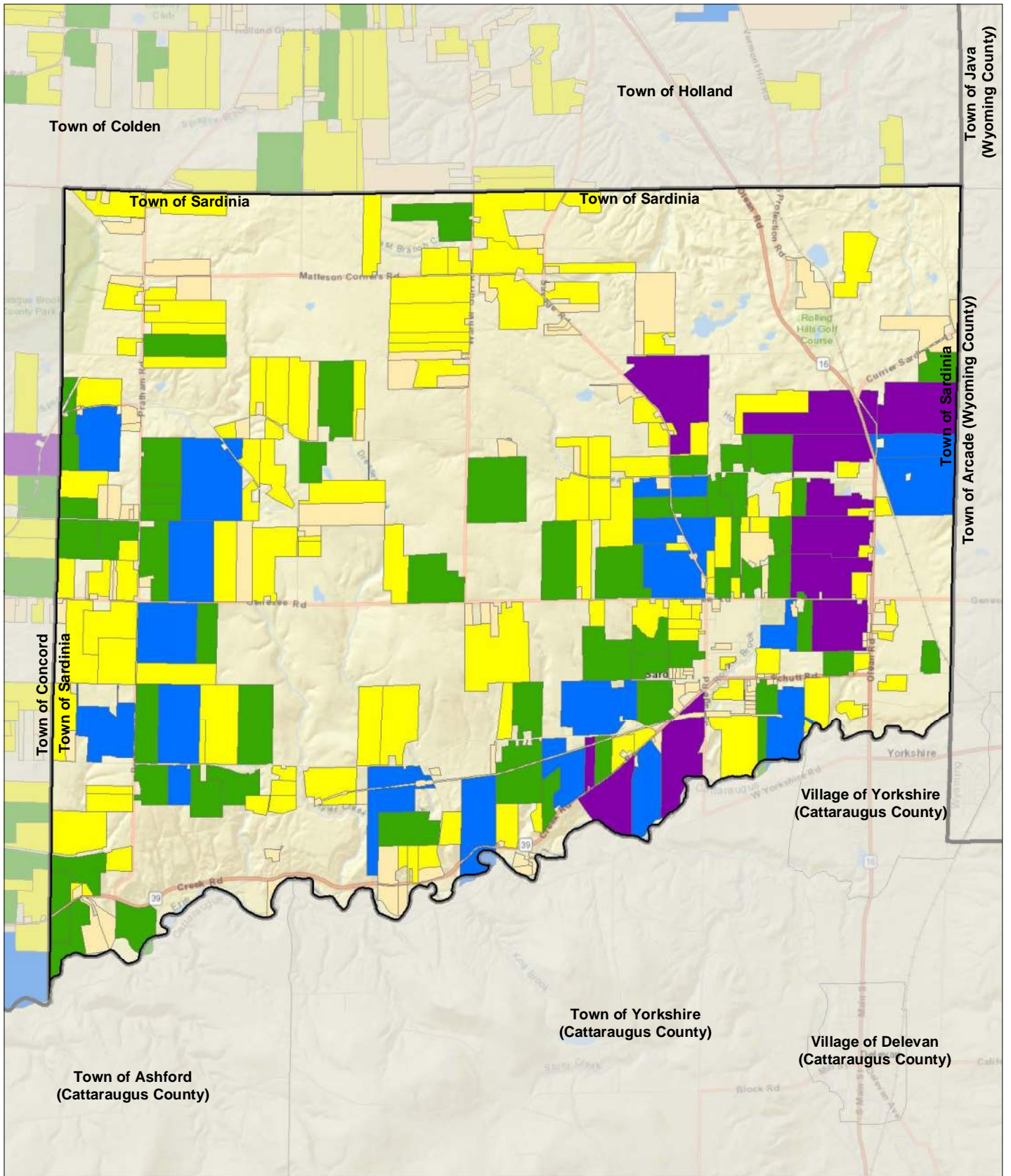
**AGRICULTURAL PARCELS AND CROPLAND COVERAGE**  
SARDINIA, NY

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE



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**Agricultural Parcels Soils Ratings (from low to high)**

0.00 - 10.00	40.01 - 100.00	160.01 - 400.00
10.01 - 40.00	100.01 - 160.00	

\* Based on the total acreage within the parcel of cropland in each soils category multiplied by weighing factors (i.e., prime farmland, prime if drained, soils of statewide importance)

SOURCE: ERIE COUNTY AGRICULTURE AND FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN, 2012



## AGRICULTURAL SOILS RATINGS

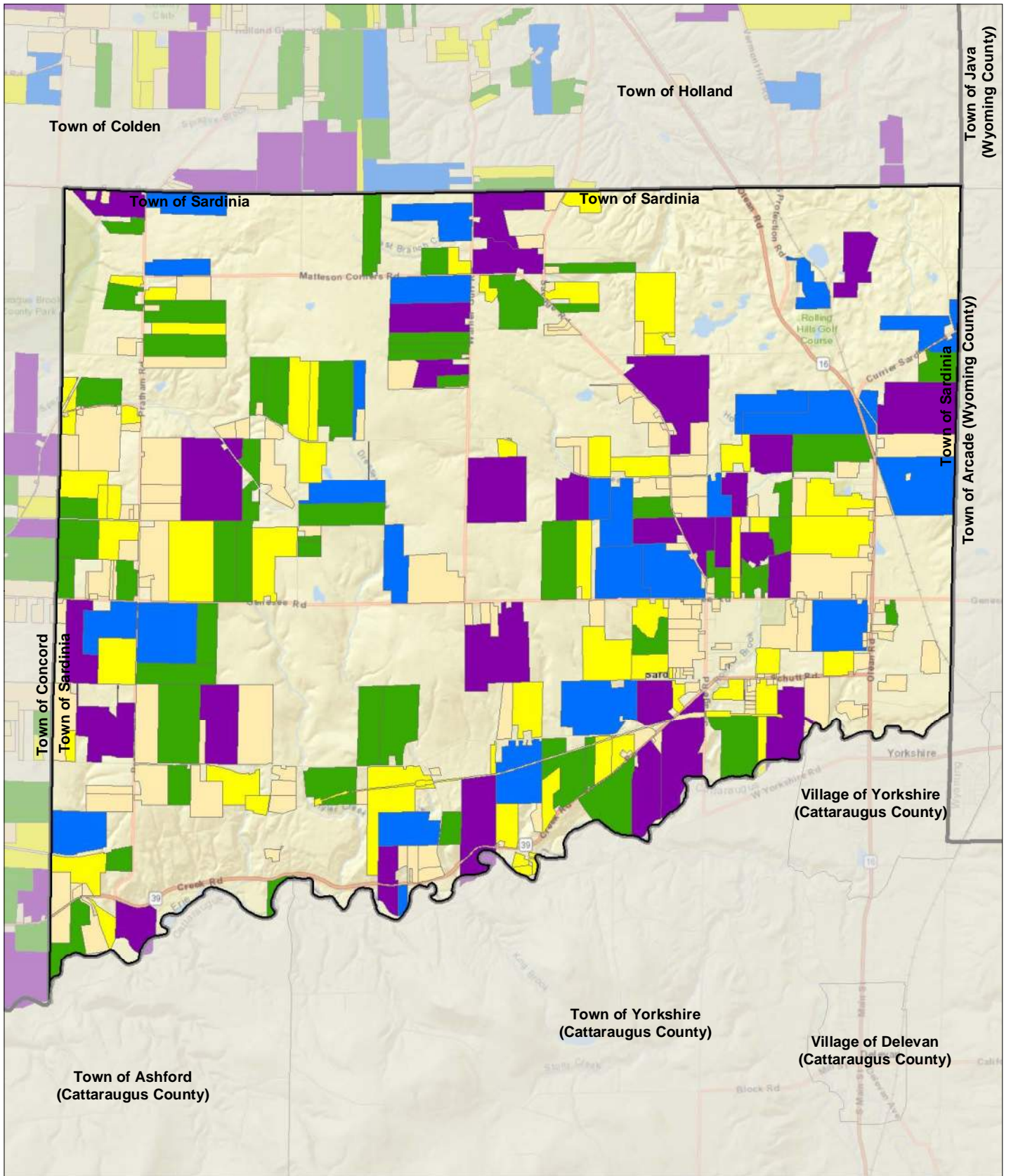
SARDINIA, NY

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**Natural Resources Value\***

- < 1 acre
- 4 - 10
- > 15 acres
- 1 - 4
- 10 - 15

\* Based on acres within 75 feet of a mapped stream; acres of federal or NYS wetlands, including 100 feet buffer from NYS wetlands.

SOURCE: ERIE COUNTY AGRICULTURE AND FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN, 2012

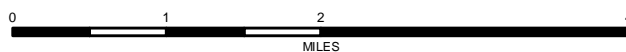
**NATURAL RESOURCES RATING**

SARDINIA, NY

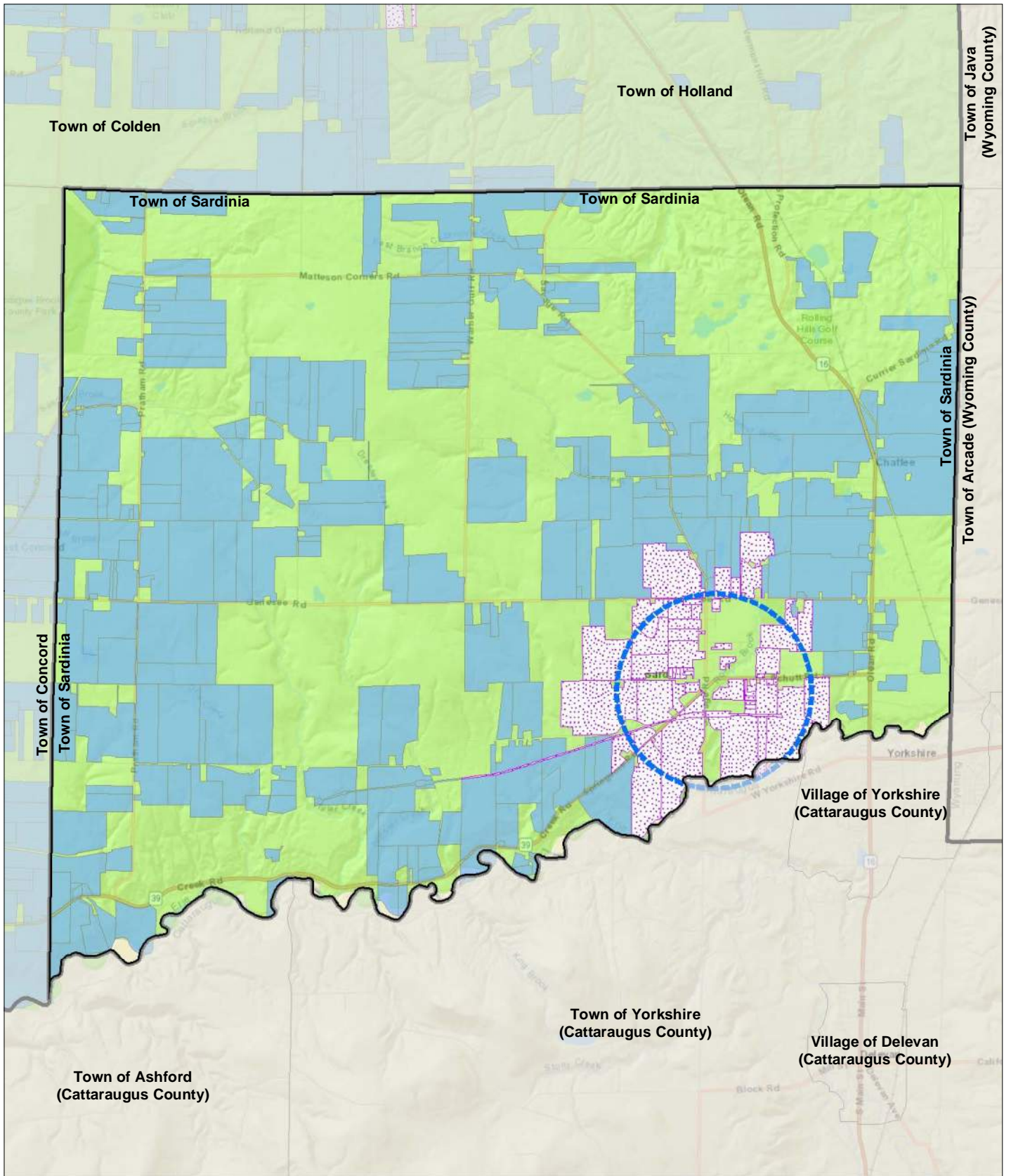
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**Regional Growth Policy Area**

- Rural Areas
- Centers

**Agricultural Parcels in Relation to Policy Areas**

- Within Center
- Within Rural Areas

**FRAMEWORK FOR REGIONAL GROWTH POLICY AREAS**

SARDINIA, NY

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

SOURCE: ERIE NIAGARA FRAMEWORK FOR REGIONAL GROWTH, 2006



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