

# **TOWN OF VIRGIL**

~

# **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**Adopted: August 8, 2002**

## INDEX

	<u>PAGE #</u>
A. Preface	1
B. Objectives	1
C. Summary of Goal	1
D. Introduction	2
E. Land Use Analysis & Rationale	3
1. Agriculture Areas	3
2. Commercial/Light Industrial Areas	3
3. Community Services	4
4. Conservation Areas - Uplands, Wetlands & State Forest Lands	4
5. Recreation Areas	4
6. Residential Areas	5
7. Aquifer Protection Areas	5
F. Solar Energy System Regulations	
G. Developmental Goals	
Agricultural	6
Commercial/Industrial	6
Community Services	7
Police (Public Safety)	7
Courts	7
Beautification	7
Historical	8
Senior Citizens	9
Public Transportation	9
Youth Commission	9
Education	10
Medical Centers	10
Town Facilities	10
Fire Department	10
Transfer Site	10
Conservation	10
Recreation	12
Residential	12
Aquifer Protection	13

## INDEX

	<u>PAGE #</u>
H. Road System for the Town of Virgil	15
I. Limited Access	15
II. Main Arterials (NYS Routes)	15
III. Collectors (Cortland County Roads)	15
IV. Local Roads (Town Roads)	16
Low Volume Collector	16
Residential Access	16
Environmental Resource Access	16
Minimum Maintenance Road	16
I. Planned Unit Development (PUD)	19
J. Implementation	19
1. Town Zoning	19
2. Subdivision Regulations	20
3. Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan	21
4. Recreational Plan	21
Profile of Virgil	22
See Table of Contents	23

# TOWN OF VIRGIL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

## A. PREFACE

This Comprehensive Plan is designed to provide guidance for land use decisions in the Town of Virgil. This plan and the accompanying map are not intended to define precise boundaries for proposed land uses. Rather, they are intended to indicate general areas of land use recommendations. Additionally, certain areas (such as the hamlet which is shown as residential on the accompanying map) may be appropriate for mixed use development. The more specific aspects of land use classification are appropriately handled through existing Town regulations (i. e. zoning and subdivision regulations).

## B. OBJECTIVE

The objective of this plan is to preserve and enhance the present desirable features within the Town while allowing for development by providing guidance for agricultural, residential, recreational and commercial/industrial growth, yet maintaining a conscientious concern for the environment.

The Town followed a four step process to assure that the objective of this plan is attained:

- a. identify the direction in which the residents of the Town desire its future growth to take place;
- b. define the objectives needed to accomplish this growth;
- c. identify issues related to the objectives for each land use category (agricultural, residential, recreational, etc.); and
- d. provide guidance for the achievement of these objectives.

## C. SUMMARY OF GOALS

Strict adherence to land uses that are compatible with the different environmental restraints found in Virgil should be followed in order to protect present and future residents.

Seven major land use categories are defined in the plan. They are: Recreation, Conservation, Residential, Community Services, Agricultural and Commercial/Industrial and the Aquifer Protection Area.

The Plan has established the following goals and guidelines for development within the Town:

1. Preserve water quality - both groundwater and surface water.
2. Maintain the country setting and rural character of the Town.
3. Encourage agricultural land uses.
4. Determine areas of the Town where development should be encouraged to take place.
5. Maintain a secure environment.
6. Maintain proper zoning and development controls.
7. Encourage the continuation of the elementary school in Virgil for its educational and community benefits.
8. Develop and encourage recreational opportunities and protect existing ones.
9. Conserve the physical characteristics and uniqueness of the Town.

#### **D. INTRODUCTION**

Allowing compatible development, while maintaining the rural character of the Town of Virgil, along with the protection of its groundwater and other natural resources is the purpose of this Comprehensive Plan.

The Town's Zoning Law and Subdivision Regulations must be enforced and **updated** in order to follow this plan and obtain the goals and objectives set forth. The cooperation of the Town's people and outside interests who intend to build homes and businesses within the Town will be needed to follow the Comprehensive Plan and make it effective.

Listed within this Plan are 7 land use categories along with their individual goals and objectives. They are Agricultural, Commercial/Industrial, Community Services, Conservation, Recreation, Residential, and the Aquifer Protection Area.

These categories were located on the accompanying Comprehensive Plan Map based on existing land uses, environmental restraints as well as future projections of growth in any of these areas.

Protection of the aquifer should be a priority. Its location is shown as an overlay zone on the Comprehensive Plan Map. Guidelines for of future growth and continuation of existing homes, farms and businesses over this aquifer should be developed to protect and preserve this precious natural resource.

## **E. LAND USE ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE**

### **1. Agriculture Areas**

The preservation of agriculture is a key to retaining the Town's present economy and rural character. Continuing to enhance the agricultural sector will help sustain present and future investments, expand the economic potential of farming and maintain the quality of life in Virgil.

The Town desires to discourage large tract residential development in agricultural areas, since adjoining agricultural operations tend to conflict with residential land-use.

The Town also supports initiatives which would shift agricultural land to more profitable agricultural uses.

Preservation of Agricultural land-uses supports the protection of the aquifer. The cumulative effects of development in the aquifer area pose a serious threat to a safe and adequate water supply serving Virgil and other areas of the County.

### **2. Commercial/Light Industrial Areas**

Commercial and Light Industrial development has had minimal impact on the rural character of the Town. There are existing viable commercial and recreational/commercial operations within the Town particularly along NYS Routes 13 and 392. However, secondary commercial/light industrial enterprises can be spawned from existing operations with low environmental impact through proper planning. By designating areas for commercial/light industrial uses, such as the

NYS Route 392 corridor between the Virgil Hamlet and Greek Peak, there is potential for increasing the economic viability of Virgil while protecting against conflict with the agricultural/residential areas of the Town.

### 3. Community Services

Community Services are a vital component in maintaining the quality of life of a rural community. These services and areas of historical significance should be maintained and enhanced for future generations to enjoy.

### 4. Conservation Areas - Uplands, Wetlands, & State Forest Lands

Certain areas of the Town have severe limitations for development due to environmental restraints such as steep slopes (15+%) or low lying wetlands. Preserving these areas helps maintain the Town's ecological balance. The conservation areas include those critical lands and waters which are vital to the life-giving food chains providing continuity for relatively wild natural areas. These areas replenish and provide stability for the aquifer, forests, steep slopes and natural drainage ways that combine to produce the unique quality and character of the landscape in Virgil. These conservation areas require careful consideration to prevent permanent damage or loss to future generations (mudslide in Lafayette Valley (1993) points to steep slope instability caused by removal of natural cover).

### 5. Recreation Areas

Land for organized outdoor recreational activities exists throughout the Town. Recreational land uses, in some cases, provide a buffer for residential and agricultural land uses.

A Tioughnioga River Trail is currently in the planning stages which would begin at Little York Lake in Homer and extend through Virgil to the Village of Marathon. This trail will provide designated fishing access locations, picnic areas, and recreational opportunities for walkers, hikers, and non-motorized bikers. This trail will also provide links between recreational opportunities in the Town of Virgil and a state-wide and national trail network including the Fingerlakes Trail and the North Country Trail.

The Town should work to provide accessibility of the existing recreational areas and the proposed Tioughnioga River Trail by interconnecting trails, as well as providing long-range financial planning for expansion and acquisition of additional park acreage, particularly where the potential loss of private recreational land use to development would threaten environmentally sensitive areas.

6. Residential Areas

Residential development and farming both require soils of high quality to be successful. Since prime agricultural lands are to be conserved, new residential development should be directed to areas that already have some development. Encouraging infill and fringe residential development is an extension of this policy. Strip housing development is undesirable because of its creeping destruction of the community's rural landscape character. Some of this loss of character results from the incompatibility between farm operations and strip housing.

7. Aquifer Protection Area

Without adequate controls, future development can infringe heavily on the highly-vulnerable Cortland Valley and Virgil Creek Aquifers. In order to protect the Town's fragile and unique natural water resources, and ultimately the Aquifer, the concept of an "overlay zone" is developed herein.

F. Solar Energy System Regulations

There is an increasing demand for solar energy projects. Renewable energy is considered to be desirable by the state and local governments, as well as the public. The Town should allow solar energy projects in any zoning district, consistent with sound land use planning.

Solar energy projects should be subject to site plan review to insure that adequate setbacks are achieved, glare onto adjoining properties is avoided, and visual impacts are mitigated. Solar energy projects should not be constructed on prime farmland if other alternatives are feasible. Removal of trees and other vegetation should be minimized or offset by other plantings. The solar energy regulations should also address the decommissioning and removal of the equipment when it is no longer in operation.

G. **DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

The land use categories discussed above provide a rationale for the arrangement of land use areas shown on the Comprehensive Plan Map. When developments are proposed in any of these areas, review by the Planning Board should include reference to the goals and policies given below prior to taking action.

**AGRICULTURAL**



The practice of agriculture is vital to the quality of life enjoyed and desired by residents of the Town of Virgil. As shown on the Town's land use map, agricultural lands comprise the majority of parcels in the Town.

**GOAL:** To protect and maintain the rural atmosphere of our community and economy generated by farming by encouraging agricultural land uses within the Town.

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. Attempt to preserve agricultural land in the largest tracts possible -- especially prime farmland.
2. Strive to promote land uses that are compatible with agricultural practices in areas largely devoted to farming or designated as agricultural districts.
3. Promote individual undertakings and private enterprises such as home businesses. These are low impact activities that can serve to preserve the rural atmosphere of the Town and bolster the economy without impact on farmland or farm operations.
4. Discourage strip housing development along roadways because of its creeping destruction of the Town's rural landscape and open space character.
5. Careful review of non-agricultural uses for their long term compatibility with farming.
6. Make use of the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board, Cortland County Soil and Water Conservation District, Cortland County Planning Department, Cortland County Health Department, Cornell Cooperative Extension or any other agency that can help maintain and preserve agricultural land and promote agricultural uses in the future for land in the Town of Virgil.

**COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL**

**GOAL:** To provide for commercial/industrial areas and uses that maximize economic benefits while minimizing environmental impact.

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. Designated commercial/industrial areas should be an expansion of or adjacent to already existing enterprises and should be in close proximity to State Routes.

2. Commercial/Industrial development should conform to aesthetic standards established by the Town and should compliment the existing rural character of the Town.
3. Sufficient yards, wooded areas, fences or other buffering should be provided to separate commercial/industrial or mixed use development from any residential structure or farming operation.
4. Industrial development proposals for high intensity operations which obviously conflict with the rural character of the Town will not be encouraged.

## **COMMUNITY SERVICES**

### **Police (Public Safety)**

**GOAL:** To protect the citizens and enforce the laws governing the people and their property in the Town of Virgil.

**OBJECTIVES:** Consideration should be given to:

1. Revitalizing the neighborhood watch program and the Safe Home Program.
2. The Town having a Town constable and off-duty policeman for supplemental patrols.
3. The increase in traffic on most roads in the Town needs strict enforcement of speed limits.

### **Courts**

**GOAL:** To maintain local jurisdiction and a judication of the laws which govern the people.

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. To provide adequate facilities.
2. To provide funding for the local justice system.

### **Beautification**

**GOALS:** To enhance the beauty and aesthetic quality of the Town.

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. Preservation and maintenance of existing structures.
2. Elimination of illegal junk yards and unsightly clutter.
3. The establishment of a Beautification Committee to promote community involvement for different types of beautification projects.

**Historical**

**GOAL:** To maintain, improve, and protect historic sites and structures as well as adaptive reuse of structures where appropriate.

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. To support the Historical Society as an organization for the protection and enhancement of sites with historical significance within the Town.
2. Continuation of the Historical Marker Program
3. To preserve and maintain the cemeteries of historical significance within the Town including but not limited to the following:
  - A. The "Old Cemetery" at 1806 Church St.
  - B. Seager Cemetery - south side of NYS Route 392 between NYS Route 215 and Page Green Road
  - C. Snyder Hill Cemetery - East Virgil - Snyder Hill Road.
  - D. Virgil Rural Cemetery - NYS Route 392.
4. To preserve and maintain the structures of historical significance within the Town including but not limited to the following:
  - A. Old Virgil Hotel - at the four corners - built in 1820
  - B. Old Wesley Snover residence built in 1808
  - C. The Robert Jewett Home - corner of NYS Route 392, Kohne Road and

West Meetinghouse Road - built in 1850

- D. Nathan Bouton Home - NYS Route 392 (Freedom Trail Home - this home was a station for the underground railroad prior to the Civil War)
  - E. Virgil Methodist Church
5. The "Greens" at the four corners which includes the school, church, and surrounding residences should maintain a favorable impression.

### **Senior Citizens**

**GOAL:** To create an atmosphere compatible with the desires of the senior citizen population within the community.

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. Development of programs/activities which meet the needs and interest of the senior citizens of the Town, including continued support of the Senior Citizen Club.
2. Recognition of the need for an accessible meeting space.
3. Encourage the provisions for senior citizen services such as meals on wheels, publications, senior housing, etc.

### **Public Transportation**

**GOAL:** To make available an adequate public transportation system that is affordable, safe, efficient, and convenient.

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. Encourage the availability of adequate public transportation.
2. Periodic update of the Town's official highway map.

### **Youth Commission**

**GOAL:** To provide a wide variety of year round activities for the youth population under the direction of a volunteer board.

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. Provide week-end activities for youth.
2. Increase the variety of activities offered.

**Education:** The school serves as a community center and thus provides an essential sense of community as well as socialization for youth and adults, brings neighbors together, and provides an excellent education for students.

**GOAL:** To maintain the elementary school housing grades K through 6 as part of the Cortland City School District.

**Medical Centers:** The Town contracts with TLC and Dryden Ambulance for ambulance service. Cortland Memorial Hospital and Cayuga Medical Center provide medical resources in close proximity to the Town.

**GOAL:** To continue to provide emergency medical and rescue services.

**Town Facilities:** Town Hall & Justice Court, Code Office & Records Retention, Highway Department Facilities, Fire Department Facilities, Old Fire Station.

**GOAL:** To provide an adequate & code compliant space for these Town activities and functions.

### **Fire Department**

**GOAL:** To continue to provide fire protection and emergency services by a dedicated volunteer fire department.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. Provide adequate facilities and equipment.
2. Encourage active volunteerism.
3. Consider the possibility of on call paid volunteer fire & rescue members.

### **Transfer Site**

**GOAL:** To continue providing a transfer site for household waste products and to provide adequate facilities for recycling.

## **CONSERVATION**

As increasing amounts of farmland are being converted to residential use, Virgil must work to protect the values which have drawn residents to this Town. The rural character of the Town, combined with access to state forest and other open lands for recreation, is attractive to many residents. Residents utilize Virgil's open spaces for a variety of outdoor activities, such as hiking, skiing, bird-watching, and hunting. The value of these activities remains high only as long as the quality of the resource base remains high.

Areas which are inappropriate for development due to topography, shallow water table, or other environmental limiting factors need to be identified. Demand for retaining open space is high among Virgil residents; any areas which are marginal for development should be maintained as open space. In some cases, improvements in terms of litter control, etc., may open additional areas for recreational use or scenic enjoyment.

Additionally, it would be valuable to identify areas within wetlands and forest lands which may harbor endangered species, so that these areas can be protected. Areas set aside for conservation would benefit local students, hikers, bird watchers, as well as the general public, in terms of preserving the natural, rural, and scenic values of the Town.

**GOAL:** To safeguard against the wrongful use and abuse of high-risk ecological areas in Virgil and to provide for the most appropriate use of land based on its environmental restraints.

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. Only appropriately designed residential development should be permitted on lands with slopes in excess of 15%. Land uses on steep slopes should be those that aid in the control of erosion and floods. Practices compatible with this function would be primarily forestry and recreation, with only occasional low-density housing being permitted.
2. Land owners and developers shall bear the responsibility of assuring proper analysis and planning, in advance of development, for the adequate control of surface water through the use of storm drains, ditches, and other means.
3. Development should be discouraged within areas with a high water table, at a depth of 1 and 1/2 feet or less from the surface. The land use most consistent with areas of the Town having a water table of 1 and 1/2 feet or less is open space.
4. Floodways, floodplains and streamways should be preserved in their natural state or reserved for low-intensity land uses.
5. Proposed extraction of earth materials should be presented with an

accompanying reclamation plan.

## **RECREATION**

**GOAL:** To provide sufficient space and facilities for leisure pursuits for people of all ages and for all seasons. These recreational activities may include, but are not limited to, hunting, camping, fishing, horseback riding, winter sports, active and passive games and cultural activities.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. Recognize and protect areas of land having exceptional recreational, educational or unique natural value to the public.
2. Work cooperatively with commercial entities to encourage continuing recreational opportunities for Town residents.
3. Provide recreational information at the Town Clerk's office which outlines recreational areas and opportunities, both public and private, which exist in the Town.
4. Promote outside interest in the recreational opportunities available in the Town, recognizing that it is beneficial for the Town's economy.
5. Consider a policy, which sets aside open space within future subdivisions which shall be designated as "common land" to be preserved for the leisure pursuits of the residents of the subdivision.
6. Assess and develop plans to create hiking and biking trails which complement the proposed Tioughnioga River Trail.
7. Pursuit of State, Federal and private funding sources should be considered in order to meet the above stated objectives.

## **RESIDENTIAL**

**GOAL:** To recognize and encourage planned growth and development within the Town of Virgil. Planned growth will help maintain and expand the Town's tax base, while continuing to support the Town's attractive rural character.

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. The most dense future residential development should be encouraged along local roads, feeding off from main arterials and collector roads within the Town. These main arterials, being mostly state and county maintained, offer the best access for a growing population of commuting residents.
2. Priority shall be given to alternative methods of residential development, including conservation, cluster type and/or planned unit development. However, conventional development on larger lots would not be out of character with the remainder of the Town, especially within the Aquifer Protection District.
3. Consideration shall be given to the compatibility of development with existing agricultural and residential use.
4. Residential development shall take into account the fragile environmental features located within the Town such as wetlands, floodplains, and the sole source aquifer.
5. Any future manufactured housing within the Town shall be maintained in a designated area. The locations and restrictions on such an area shall be incorporated within the Zoning Law.
6. The Planning Board shall consider the use of deed restrictions on the part of the developer to help determine the overall character of the development.
7. Sufficient yards, wooded areas, fences or other buffering should be provided to separate any planned residential or mixed use development from neighboring farming operations.

**AQUIFER PROTECTION**

The sand and gravel aquifers in the Town of Virgil provide water to many people in the Town as well as to many businesses and community services. If this resource were to become contaminated and no longer potable, securing an alternative source of water for the people in the populated centers of the Town would be a great financial burden.



**GOAL:** To protect the various aquifers in the Town from contamination or excessive withdrawals in order to ensure the availability of this valuable resource for future generations.

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. Support efforts to study the aquifers within the Town. Additional hydrogeologic information about the aquifers will enable the Town to better understand these resources in order to use them and protect them efficiently and effectively.
2. Initiate public education programs to inform people about the local aquifers, their importance, and ways to protect them. An informed educated public will help promote aquifer protection.
3. Adopt an Aquifer Protection District Local Law or Ordinance to:
  - a. Create an “overlay zone” of the aquifer areas to which aquifer protection regulations would apply.
  - b. Prohibit land uses or activities that pose an elevated risk of contaminating the aquifers such as landfills, mining activities, or facilities that use, store, process, dispose of, or treat hazardous materials or waste material.
  - c. Require additional protective measures to be installed or constructed to protect the aquifers from potential hazards of contamination.
  - d. Require a larger minimum lot size for properties with on-site sewage treatment (septic) systems within the Aquifer Protection District overlay zone.
  - e. Require a permit from the Town for excessive withdrawal of water from an aquifer.
4. Adopt a Stormwater Management and Erosion and Sediment Control Local Law or Ordinance in order to:
  - a. Manage stormwater runoff due to development in such a way as to prevent infiltration of contaminated runoff into the aquifer.
  - b. Protect surface water quality and prevent increased flooding due to development in addition to protecting the aquifer.

5. Make a commitment to using the local laws or ordinances to prevent contamination of the aquifers. Enforcement of local regulations is critical to efforts to protect the aquifer.

## **H. ROAD SYSTEM FOR THE TOWN OF VIRGIL**

The road system in the Town of Virgil has been vital for the businesses and residences alike for many years. Local land use regulations should recognize the traffic-carrying functions of major roads and should help to preserve this function in every practical way. If an efficient, safe and workable road system is to be achieved three goals should be sought.

1. A highway system in and through the Town will facilitate traffic movement and minimize points of conflict and delay.
2. A local road network that provides efficient access to all parts of the Town, and promote convenient vehicular movement from one part of the Town to another.
3. The establishment of guidelines and standards for a lower cost road for low volume applications.

### **TYPES OF ROADS**

The following outline of the existing road system is provided as a guideline for future development.

#### **I. LIMITED ACCESS - Interstate Route 81**

#### **II. MAIN ARTERIALS (NYS ROUTES)**

There are (4) four main arterials that are primary traffic carriers within and through the Town. Their main purpose is to carry traffic relatively quick from one destination in the region to another, plus access to adjacent lands, county and town roads.

NYS Routes 392, 215, 13 and US Route 11 make up the main arteries for the Town. Traffic movement on main arteries are essential, especially in the winter time.

#### **III. COLLECTORS (CORTLAND COUNTY ROADS)**

There are (10) ten collectors (county roads) that are secondary traffic carriers within the Town. Efficient traffic movement and access to adjacent lands & town roads are equally important functions of the collectors.

Page Green Road, Parker Street, South Cortland-Virgil Road, West State Road, Webb Road, Gee Hill Road, Owego Hill Road, Daisy Hollow Road, Babcock Hollow Road, and West Meetinghouse Road make up the collectors for the Town. Efficient traffic movement on the collectors is essential for the commuters as well as the local residents.

#### IV. LOCAL ROADS (TOWN ROAD)

There are (56) fifty six local roads whose primary function is to provide access to adjacent lands, residential, farm and state land. Local roads are not intended for fast, heavy or through traffic carriers but, none-the-less, traffic movement should be relatively fluent.

The Town should take into consideration classifying their local roads with fewer than 400 vehicles per day as low-volume rural roads. Set forth by the Guidelines for Rural Town and County Roads. {Cornell Roads Program}.

These local road classifications are:

##### 1. LOW-VOLUME COLLECTOR

Collects traffic from any of the other classifications and channels it to higher level roads, such as arterials, Interstate, etc.

##### 2. RESIDENTIAL ACCESS

Provides access to residences. The traffic volume generated depends on the number of residences. Year around access for fire trucks, ambulances, and school buses must be provided.

##### 3. ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE ACCESS

Provides access to large tracts of land used primarily for agriculture, recreation, or logging.

##### 4. MINIMUM MAINTENANCE ROAD

A is a low-volume road or road segment primarily providing agricultural or

recreational land access, having an average traffic volume of 50 or less vehicles per day, and with no year around residences or businesses. Minimum maintenance is not "no maintenance," and a road or road segment which has been so designated shall be maintained at a level which allows the road to remain passable and functional in accordance with the Guidelines for Rural Town and County Roads. The minimum maintenance road concept provides an alternative to abandonment or to designation as a seasonal limited - use road. Abandonment is a difficult process to complete, and a seasonal limited - use road must be upgraded if and when a year around residence is built along the road.

	<u>ROAD NAMES</u>	<u>MILES</u>	<u>PROPOSED CLASSIFICATIONS</u>
1	Alberts Road	.5	#2, #3
2	Alpha Circle	.26	#2
3	Arcadia Road	.15	#1
4	Artemis Road	.24	#2
5	Baldwin Road	1.15	#2, #4
6	Beta Drive	.05	#2
7	Bleck Road	1.45	#2
8	Budzinski Road	.57	#2
9	Carson Road	2.25	#1, #3
10	Cherry Lane	.13	#2
11	Church Street	1.19	#1, #3
12	Clute Road	3.62	#1, #3
13	Congdon Lane	.76	#2
14	Curtis Road	.9	#2, #3
15	Darius Drive	.13	#2
16	Douglas Road	.19	#2
18	Edsall Road	.8	#2, #3
18	Francis Road	.28	#2, #3
19	Givens Lane	.14	#2, #3
20	Hartley Road	.07	#2
21	Hauck Hill Road	1.96	#2, #4
22	Holler Road	2.44	#1, #3
23	Jenkins Road	.12	#2
24	Kimmich Road	.04	#2
25	Kohne Road	2.70	#2, #3

26	Kypriotis Road	.35	#2
27	Lash Road	1.29	#2, #3
28	Meadow Park	.06	#2
29	Muckey Road	.55	#2, #3
30	Nye Road	1.08	#2, #3
31	Odell Road	1.20	#2, #4
32	Owego Hill Road	.84	#2, #4
33	Palmer Road	.67	#2
34	Pine Hill Road	.20	#4
35	Puderbaugh Road	.30	#2, #3
36	Reagan Road	.28	#2, #3
37	Russell Road	.52	#4
38	South Hill Road	.61	#1
39	Sherman Road	1.54	#2
40	Snow Road	.22	#2
41	Stafford Road	1.36	#2
42	Sugarbush Lane	.26	#2
43	Sweetland Road	.12	#1
44	Snyder Hill Road	5.05	#1, #2, #3, #4
45	Teeter Road	.38	#2, #3
46	Thermopala Road	.08	#2
47	Timmerman Hill Road	.61	#2, #3
48	Tone Road	.87	#2, #3
49	Tower Road	1.33	#2, #3
50	Traverse Road	.45	#2
51	VanDonsel Road	2.66	#1, #2, #3, #4
52	Vinnedge Road	1.70	#4
53	Virgil Creek Road	.99	#2, #3
54	Walker Road	1.01	#2, #3
55	West River Road	5.50	#2, #3, #4
56	Woodchuck Hill Road	.34	#2

TOWN ROADS - 56  
TOTAL MILES - 54.51  
LOW MAINTENANCE MILES (APPROX.) - 8.33

## **I. PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (PUD)**

Planned Unit Development is a land use design technique which groups or concentrates buildings on lots smaller than permitted by existing land use controls in order to preserve open space without increasing the allowable density (units per acre) of development. A PUD may involve a variety of land uses: residential, commercial and light industrial while the open space provides areas for recreational opportunities. It usually involves substantial tracts of land and has a mixture of housing types: single –family dwellings, townhouses, apartments, etc. There is an existing PUD within Virgil which conforms with the stated goals and objectives of this Plan.

## **J. IMPLEMENTATION**

The basic objective of this plan is to preserve and enhance the present desirable features within the Town while allowing for development by providing guidance for agricultural, residential, recreational, and commercial/industrial growth, yet maintaining a conscientious concern for the environment. Within this Plan, there are also goals and objectives for each classification of land use existing in the Town of Virgil. These goals and objectives can be attained through development and/or amendment of the following implementation mechanisms.

### **1. Town Zoning**

Zoning carries out the planning program with respect to the use of private property. With adoption of the Town Comprehensive Plan, attention should be given to reviewing the relationship of the existing Zoning Law to the Plan.

Such a review will indicate that changes or amendments to the Zoning Law should be made to bring the zoning into closer alignment with the Adopted Comprehensive Plan and Map. These changes/amendment to the Zoning Law/Map should include the following:

- a. Stricter penalties for violation of the Zoning Law.
- b. Revision of guidelines for site plan review, particularly for areas of conflicting land use.
- c. Revision of existing guidelines for special permits to include additional requirements for certain commercial and industrial uses which may be of concern to the Town but are not currently listed within the Zoning Law.

- d. An Aquifer Protection District to:
    - 1. Create an "overlay zone" of the aquifer areas to which aquifer protection regulations would apply.
    - 2. Prohibit land uses or activities that pose an elevated risk of contaminating the aquifers such as landfills, mining activities, or facilities that use, store, process, dispose of, or treat hazardous or waste material.
    - 3. Require additional protective measures to be installed or constructed to protect the aquifers from potential hazards of contamination.
    - 4. Require a larger minimum lot size for properties with on-site sewage treatment (septic) systems within the Aquifer Protection District overlay zone.
    - 5. Require a permit from the Town for excessive withdrawal of water from an aquifer.
  
  - e. Guidelines for Stormwater Management and Erosion and Sediment Control in order to:
    - 1. Manage stormwater runoff due to development in such a way as to prevent infiltration of contaminated runoff into the aquifer.
    - 2. Protect surface water quality and prevent increased flooding due to development, in addition to protecting the aquifer.
  
  - f. Revision of the Town of Virgil Zoning Map to reflect areas designated as certain land use categories on the Comprehensive Plan Map.
2. Subdivision Regulations

Virgil can be expected to develop slowly, for example by one subdivision at a time. Unless each major subdivision is planned to fit into a satisfactory pattern of streets and related facilities, the Town can become an unattractive collection of poorly designed housing developments with associated traffic, drainage and sanitation problems.

In 1972, the Town Board approved the establishment of subdivision regulations which were authorized by Town Law. These regulations

set the standards and requirements that must be followed in creating new land subdivision and related road and street access. As provided by the Town Law, the regulations are administered by the Town Planning Board. Each new land subdivision must be approved by the Planning Board before the subdivision may be advertised for sale or recorded in the County Land Records and before any development may proceed.

The subdivision regulations of the Town are as important to the development of Virgil as is the Zoning Law. While zoning regulates the use of land, the subdivision regulations control the layout and design of streets and roads and establish the improvements required in all new land developments. For example, this plan discourages strip housing development along roadways. The subdivision regulations can combat the development of strip housing by specifying a maximum depth to width ratio for all newly created lots.

#### 4. Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan

In addition to the Right to Farm Law adopted by the Town of Virgil in 1995, the Town should consider additional legislation to preserve and protect this valuable resource. One way to accomplish this is through development of an Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan. The purpose of an Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan is to develop programs using local initiatives that are intended to maintain the economic viability of the Town's agricultural industry and its supporting land base and to protect the environmental and landscape preservation values associated with agriculture.

#### 4. Recreational Plan

Recreational opportunities and access to recreational facilities will increase significantly with the development of the Tioughnioga River Trail project. The Town should consider the impacts of this project on recreation in the Town through the development of a Recreation Plan. This plan would look into recreational opportunities compatible with the River Trail project, such as the possible development of a Town recreation area/park easily accessible from the Tioughnioga River Trail.



**Profile**  
**of the**  
**Town of Virgil**

Revised March 22, 2017

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE #</u>	
History	24	
Population	25	
Population Density	26	
Land Development	26	
Aquifers in the Town of Virgil	26	
Soil Survey	27	
Topography	27	
Lordstown-Volusia-Mardin (LVM)	27	
Valois-Howard-Langford (VHL)	27	
Erie-Volusia-Langford (EVL)	27	
Volusia-Mardin-Lordstown (VML)	37	
Housing	28	
Virgil Housing Summary 2000	28	
Specified Value	28	
Owner Occupied Units	28	
Units in Structure	28	
Year Structure Built	28	
Housing Heating Fuel	28	
Employment	29	
Employed Civilian Population 16+	29	
Persons Employed by Industry	29	
Occupation	30	
Economic	30	
Education	30	
School Enrollment and Type of School	30	
Education Attainment by Persons 25+	31	
Agriculture	31	
Maps	35	(Didn't Get this Section?)
Town of Virgil Population Trend	35	
Population Breakdown	36	
Land Use	37	
Agricultural Statistics	38	
1997 Economic Job Breakdown	39	

## HISTORY

Virgil, named in honor of the Roman poet, was part of the Military Tract in Central New York State. Lots in the Tract were granted to the Revolutionary War soldiers in payment for their services.

To open up this wildness area to the soldiers and other settlers, Joseph Chaplin, a surveyor was hired to cut a road connecting Oxford with Cayuga Lake. Passing through Virgil from east to west, this was the first State road built in what became Cortland County. Chaplin built a cabin in the part of the town known later as Messengerville. He was the first settler and was followed by John M. Frank, John Gee and John E. Roe between 1794-1797. Settlement was rapid from that time into the 1800's.

In 1805, having been part of Homer, Virgil set up its own government. Postal service, mills, schools, stores and other conveniences soon became numerous, with a growing population, recorded in 1840 as 4502. However, between 1840 and 1850, the Towns of Harford and Lapeer were formed from the southern half of Virgil. This caused a large decrease in the population to 2410 in 1850. Improved roads and the automobile led people to distant places for more opportunities as the population continued to decrease through the early 1900's to a low of 1,069 in 1920. Today, settlement is rising, due to the desire for quiet living and recreational advantages. The 2000 census lists a figure of 2287.

The main occupation for much of the 19th century and early 20th was agriculture. Railroad service, started in 1854, was discontinued in 1929. This, plus the loss of three post offices by 1934, and the "lure of the big city" brought about the decline of agriculture and other means of livelihood. There are very few farms in existence today.

In recent years, Cortland factories and other businesses shut their doors causing many town residents employed there to go into business for themselves. Welding operations, auto sales and repair shops, horse farms, Bed and Breakfasts, and an auction barn are a few resident-owned ventures. Hollenbeck's Cider mill, in existence for over 70 years, still produces good cider. A bakery has been added to the operation.

The success of a single ski trail at Snow Crest on Page Green Road led the owners to develop a multi-trail operation on Rt. 392 at Virgil mountain, the highest elevation in Cortland County. Opened in 1958, the Greek Peak Ski Resort has expanded further with town houses, condominiums, A-Frames and other structures. Expansions plans to develop a Four Seasons Restaurant, Greek Peak include a hotel/convention center, indoor waterpark, and 18 hole golf course overlooking the recently developed man-made Hope Lake and Town of Virgil Recreational Area.

The first schools started in 1799, followed by twenty-two one-room district schools. A central school erected at the Four Corners in 1930 brought in these schools and served grades K-12 until 1965. A merger with Cortland City School system at the time resulted in grades 7-12 transported to Cortland Jr.-Sr. High School and K-6 remaining in Virgil.

An 1885 picture shows three church steeples: Congregational, Baptist, and

Methodist. Due to waning membership and support, only the Methodist has survived. To date, this church shows a strong membership and program.

In 1805, the first town officers were elected. They included supervisor, town clerk, highway commissioner, collector, as today. Over the years, poor-masters and fence viewers have been eliminated. Appointed positions today are attorney, historian, justice court officer and vital statistics officer. Various community boards work in cooperation with the Town Board.

Following a disastrous fire at the "Four Corners" in 1926, fire department was organized and one fire truck was housed in the present historical building. The old Grange Hall was renovated in 1960 to provide larger space for better equipment. Now in its 76th year, emergency medical service is offered, also.

Virgil celebrated its history at its Bicentennial Celebration in 1992, marking events from settlement days of 1792 through 200 years.

## **POPULATION**

Population analysis can be used to build a portrait of a community. Census data can explain a great deal about the local area. The community can use this information for planning and projective growth development.

Population trends are determined and can effect the decision-making process that is concerned with the overall growth of a community. The population trends for Virgil are relatively similar to the patterns of other communities in Central New York.

In 1810, the first reported census of Virgil was 913 people, which was approximately 10.4 percent of the county's total population of 8,793. The most recent census (2000) population count for Virgil was reported at 2,287 which has dropped to approximately 4.7 percent of the county's total population of 48,599. From 1810 to present day, there was a net gain of 1374 people. In 1810, the population density was slightly higher than the county's population density.

## **POPULATION DENSITY**

<b>Area</b>	<b>1810</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b><u>Sq.mi.</u></b>	<b><u>Person/Sq.mi.</u></b>	<b><u>Person/Sq.mi.</u></b>	<b><u>Person/Sq.</u></b>

<b>Virgil</b>	47.1	19.4	46.1	48.6
<b>Cortland</b>	502.5	17.5	97.4	96.7

Along with a general population shift from rural to urban area, the Population Trend chart reflects the population shift in Virgil. There was a sharp decline in population between 1840 and 1850 as the Towns of Harford and Lapeer were created from the southern half of Virgil. From the period between 1850 to 1920, Virgil's population had declined steadily. Beginning 1930 to 2000, Virgil's population has gradually increased except between 1940 to 1950 where the numbers remained the same. Cortland County and the Town of Virgil populations have a similar the pattern (*See Population Breakdown Chart*).

### **LAND DEVELOPMENT**

The Town of Virgil is located in the southern portion of Cortland County. Farmland and residential land surround Virgil. This area has an agricultural atmosphere, however, there are few operating farms left in the township. In recent years, there has been a noticeable shift in patterns of land use from farming to residential purposes.

Agriculture is a major use of land with 42.7% in the Town of Virgil. There are 61 farms in the Town of Virgil encompassing a total of 13,123 acres. Residential, State/Park/Forest and Vacant Land being the next highest, respectively. Commercial only makes up .23%, while Industrial makes up .01% (*See Land Use Chart*).

### **AQUIFERS IN THE TOWN OF VIRGIL**

There are four distinctly different aquifer areas in the Town of Virgil. The area located in the northwestern part of the Town is part of the Principal Aquifer Area of the Dry/Otter Creek Aquifer of Cortland. The water in this area flows to the north. The aquifer area along the eastern edge of the Town follows the Tioughnioga River Valley, flowing toward the River and in the southerly direction. The Gridley Creek Aquifer and the Virgil Creek Aquifer, although connected, are located along a major river basin divide. Groundwater in the Virgil Creek Aquifer flows toward Virgil Creek, which drains to Cayuga Lake and eventually to Lake Ontario. Groundwater in the Gridley Creek Aquifer flows toward Gridley Creek, which drains into the Tioughnioga River, and eventually to the Chesapeake Bay. The groundwater divide is located between the two

creeks near the area of highest elevation, just west of Holler Road. The glacial geology of these two aquifers is very different. A portion of the Virgil Creek Aquifer was once a

preglacial lake and therefore more silt and clay may be found in those areas. The Gridley Creek Aquifer consists of a more permeable glacial outwash material. During the late 1970's, the USGS studied the Gridley Creek Aquifer. Limited information is available about the Virgil Creek Aquifer.

## Soil Survey

This section is designed to give an overall layout of the soil in Virgil. The information it provides will assist in planning general or broad programs of agriculture and determining locations for roads and structural development.

A general soil area, called a soil association, consists of the soils that occur in a characteristic pattern on the landscape. Commonly, a general area is made up mainly of the soils of two or three series. Virgil consists of four soil associations with Lordstown-Volusia-Mardin (LVM) occupies a larger portion of Virgil.

### Topography Physical Characteristics:

Elevation - 2132 feet. Virgil Mountain is located in the south central area of Virgil. Soil Description - Cortland County is in the northern part of the Appalachian Plateau Province, known in New York State as the Allegheny Plateau. The plateau consists of layers of acid sandstone, siltstone, and coarse-textured shale. Most of Virgil's bedrock consists of Ithaca formations: mostly tough, coarse, blocky shale and thin-bedded, flaggy sandstone; olive to dark olive gray color. The four soil associations found in Virgil are:

**Lordstown-Volusia-Mardin (LVM)** occupies a good portion of the eastern area of Virgil. It is made up mostly of shallow or moderately deep soils over bedrock and somewhat poorly drained to moderately well drained, gently sloping. A typical landscape consists of a series of ridges partly dissected by tributary drainage ways.

**Valois-Howard-Langford (VHL)** is seen in only 2% of the county; the Village of Virgil is in the portion. This is very well drained soil and very deep soil.

**Erie-Volusia-Langford (EVL)** is located in the area of western Virgil and is only 5% of the county's soil. This particular type of soil is a somewhat poorly drained soil, but is slightly better for agriculture than **LVM**. Erie/Langford contains more lime and most of the soils in this area are used for dairy farming.

**Volusia-Mardin-Lordstown (VML)** is a sloping, strongly acid and low in fertility soil. Volusia soils are poorly drained, Mardin soils are moderately well drained, and Lordstown soils are shallow, moderately deep, and well drained.

## HOUSING

From 1970 to present day, there has been a dramatic increase with the number of structures built in the township of Virgil (see page 6). There was a surge in the number of

homes built in the Town between 1970 and 1980 as 275 new homes were built during this period. The number of new homes built in the Town has decreased slightly over the next two decades as 185 were built between 1980 and 1990 and 176 were built between 1990 and 2000. There were 681 single family detached homes, 29 single attached homes, 41 structures with two families, 111 structures with 3 or more families, and 119 mobile homes in the Town of Virgil in 2000.

As Shown on the Virgil house status chart, approximately 84 percent of housing units are owner occupied. The number of structures renter occupied has decreased over the past ten years as has the number of structures categorized as occasional use (seasonal). This data is a good indicator of the strengthening of the community's tax base.

### **Virgil Housing Summary 2000**

<u>Specified Value</u>	<u>Owner-Occupied Units</u>	<u>Units in Structure</u>	
Less than \$50,000	65	1, Detached	681
\$ 50,000 to \$ 99,999	206	1, Attached	29
\$100,000 to \$149,999	94	2	41
\$150,000 to \$199,999	7	3 or 4	59
\$200,000 to \$299,999	4	5 to 9	20
\$300,000 or more	0	10 to 19	32
MEDIAN \$74,600		20 or more	0
		Mobile Homes	
		or Trailers	119
		Boat, RV, Van, etc.	4

<u>Year Structure Built</u>		<u>House Heating Fuel</u>	
1990 to March 2000	46	Utility Gas	11
1995 to 1998	64	Bottled, Tank or LP Gas	178
1990 to 1994	66	Electricity	71
1980 to 1989	145	Fuel Oil, Kerosene	441
1970 to 1979	253	Coal or Coke	16
1960 to 1969	92	Wood	108
1940 to 1959	60	Solar Energy	0
1939 or Earlier	259	Other Fuel	8
		No Fuel Used	0

### **EMPLOYMENT**

Between 1990 and 2000 there was an increase of 46 percent in the number of managerial and professional positions and a 63 percent jump in service occupations.

Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations in Virgil had declined by 63 percent in the same period of time. The largest percentage drop in persons employed by industry occurred in finance, insurance and real estate. However, this was more than offset by the increase in persons employed by the arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food service industries. The number of persons employed in these areas decreased by 63 percent and increased by 101 percent respectively. Overall, the town had 10 percent more employed individuals in 2000 than in 1990.

In addition, some major businesses and employers in the town are:

- Greek Peak - ski resort
- Empire Welding - metal fabricating
- Agriculture - dairy
- Skyline Raceway - recreation
- Town of Virgil - town services
- Elm Tree Golf Course - recreation
- Hollenbeck Cider Mill - food service
- Virgil Elementary School – education

**Employed Civilian  
Population 16+**

<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>% Change</u>
1,096	1,203	9.8

**Persons Employed by Industry**

	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, & mining	67	59	-11.9
Construction	66	88	33.3
Manufacturing	283	179	-36.7
Wholesale Trade	23	40	73.9
Retail Trade	147	122	-17.0
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	55	39	-29.1
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate	45	17	-62.2
Public Administration	52	44	-15.4
Education, Health, and Social Services	231	365	58.0
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, And Waste Management Services	57	34	-40.4
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and			



Food Services	70	141	101.4
---------------	----	-----	-------

**Occupation**

	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Management, professional, and Related occupations	325	474	45.8
Service	102	166	62.7
Sales and office occupations	270	266	- 1.5
Farming, fishing, and forestry	68	25	-63.
Construction, extraction, and Maintenance occupations	151	117	-22.5
Production, transportation, and Material moving occupations	180	155	-13.9

**ECONOMIC (Cortland County)**

In 1997, there were 711 business establishments in the County. Manufacturing had the highest number of paid employees, 36.5% with retail trade in second with 21.5%. There were 200 businesses listed as Retail Trade, including 23 gas stations, 17 automobile dealers, and 26 food and beverage establishments. There were 82 healthcare facilities, which included eight nursing homes. There were 42 wholesale trade companies, with 11 being machinery, equipment, and supply wholesalers. There were 70 manufacturing enterprises, including 12 that were listed as fabricated metal product manufacturing (*See 1997 Economic Job Breakdown Chart*).

**EDUCATION**

In the last decade, educational attainment among residents in the Town of Virgil has increased. There was a 45 percent increase over the decade of persons who have some college education. The percentage of Virgil residents over 25 years of age with a college degree is approximately 37 percent. This indicates an increased emphasis on higher education among Town residents. Across the board, more people are seeking or require a higher level of education in the 1990's than in the 1980's.

<b>School Enrollment and Type of School</b>	<b>(Persons 3+)</b>	
	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>
Enrolled in Preprimary School	29	34
Enrolled in Elementary or High School	482	476
Enrolled in College	87	72

**Educational Attainment  
by Persons 25+**

**2000**

Elementary (0 to 8 years)	49
High School (1 to 4 years)	
No Diploma	164
High School Diploma	410
Some College, No Degree	332
Associate Degree	182
Bachelors Degree	216
Graduate or Professional Degree	160

**AGRICULTURE (Cortland County)**

According to the 1997 Agricultural Census, there were 452 farms in Cortland County, with a total acreage of 120,838. The average size of a farm was 267 acres, slightly larger than the average New York State (NYS) farm of just 228 acres. The estimated market value of land and buildings per acre in 1997 was \$977, while the market value of agricultural products sold was \$82,848 per farm. Twenty-six percent of farms in Cortland County have less than \$2,500 in sales, while the upper 26% have over \$100,000 in sales. The total farm production expenses for Cortland County per farm, \$65,235, was lower than NYS, \$68,906.

There were 242 farms with over \$10,000 in sales; the average size of these farms was 407 acres. The estimated market value of land and buildings was \$966 for these farms. The average age of an operator of these farms was 53 years old, with 23 years spent on their present farm.

In 1992, the Agricultural Census painted a slightly different picture. There were 478 farms in Cortland County, with an average size of 290 acres. NYS had an average farm size of 231 acres. The 478 farms had a total acreage of 138,620. The estimated value of land and buildings was \$999 per acre. The market value of agricultural products sold for Cortland County was \$90,386 per farm, while NYS was \$81,161. In 1992, 23% of farms had a value of sales of less than \$2,500 per farm; while 31% had a value of sales in excess of \$100,000. Total farm production costs, per farm, was \$74,441, while NYS's total farm production costs were \$66,294 (*See Agricultural Statistics – page 13*).

