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Comprehensive Plan 2013

Village of Freeville
Tompkins County, New York

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INTRODUCTION

The basic purpose of this comprehensive plan is to identify goals that will benefit the Village of Freeville in the coming years, and to outline strategies to achieve those goals. Prepared with a view to ensuring that the Village will continue to be a desirable place to live, it seeks to both articulate a broad vision for the development of Freeville over the next five to ten years, and to respond to specific issues and concerns that may have a more immediate impact on the quality of life in the community.



The main responsibility for developing a new comprehensive plan for Freeville was given to the Planning Board by the Village Board of Trustees. From the outset, the Planning Board considered it critically important that the plan reflect the ideas, concerns and wishes of Freeville residents, and throughout the process we tried to remain sensitive to the values and aspirations of our neighbors in the Village as we understood them to be. In order to gather community input on various aspects of life in the Village, the board prepared a survey that in the fall of 2010 was mailed to all households and businesses in the Village (see appendices 2 and 3 for a copy of the survey and a summary of its results). The survey also served as a tool to recruit community members to serve on a committee to develop the comprehensive plan; several residents and one business owner subsequently joined the effort.

Not surprisingly, the survey revealed a relatively high level of satisfaction with the current state of the Village and a widespread desire to preserve Freeville's quiet village character. Nonetheless, survey respondents also made many suggestions for constructive change that helped guide the committee as it worked through the process of crafting a comprehensive plan. The ideas and opinions expressed through the survey are detailed in several of the plan's sections.

In accordance with New York State municipal statutes, this comprehensive plan is a binding document with regard to municipal land-use decision-making. As such, it will function as a blueprint for the updating of Village land-use regulations, and as a guide for planning- and zoning-board decisions related to those regulations. In developing the plan the committee was also aware that the objectives set forth here should be consistent with those of the comprehensive plans in place for Tompkins County and the Town of Dryden, within which the Village is contained.

This newly revised plan builds on two earlier comprehensive plans adopted by the Village. The first, a two-page document that served as a foreword to the current Village of Freeville Land Use and Development Code, was drafted in the mid-1980s. In 2001, a 12-page plan was completed by the Village of Freeville Planning Board. Like its predecessors, the present comprehensive plan addresses such areas as housing, commercial development, Village services, parks and recreational facilities, agriculture and natural resources. Its primary aims are to describe what Freeville is currently like and to make recommendations for its development. It begins with an overview of the Village's long and rich history, presented in the belief that a clear perspective on our community's past may well help us move toward a better future.

THE COMMUNITY

Location and History

The Village of Freeville is located between Ithaca and Cortland at a distance of approximately ten miles from each city. Contained within the Town of Dryden, the Village covers an area of one square mile and lies in a broad valley surrounded by open space to the east, wetlands to the south and west, and reforested farmland to the north. Less than half of the Village is currently developed.

Freeville's beginnings date to the turn of the 19th century, when settler Daniel White built a cabin and began clearing land near the Village's present-day western border. Within a few years White had built a dam near the site and established a gristmill that eventually attracted other settlers to the vicinity. In 1823, John C. Shaver bought some 25 acres of fertile land in the northeast corner of the present village, where he established a farm and prospered. A little more than a mile apart on Fall Creek, White's mill and Shaver's farm were the outposts of a village that was destined to grow up between them.



Freeville Railroad Station

How Freeville acquired its name is not certain. White's Mill and White's Corner were early designations, but legend has it that once the community had grown to include several families and was on the regular schedule of the circuit rider, Daniel White himself proposed that the settlement be called Freeville. Eventually it was written down as such in the circuit rider's record.



Freeville High School 1914

After a long period of relatively slow growth, Freeville saw its development accelerate with the coming of the railroads to the area soon after the Civil War. The geography of the Fall Creek valley favored Freeville over Dryden as a location for a railroad junction, and by the mid-1870s the Village was home to some 200 inhabitants and contained a church, two hotels and several stores and small shops.

The Village was incorporated on July 2, 1887, and although the boom period precipitated by the railroad had begun to wane, the 1890s saw Freeville thriving as a substantial village of more than 300 inhabitants, with

most of the building lots on Main Street and nearby side streets occupied. In 1898 a Union school was established on the site of the present Post Office.

In 1897, the Central New York Spiritualist Association purchased ten acres of land near the eastern edge of the Village, and within a few years families arrived to spend weekends and summers there, renting tents or staying in local hotels or residences. By 1911, a hotel had been built on the grounds; summer cottages, a dining hall, a chapel and other buildings were added later. This community still comes together in the summers. The church, known as the Temple of Truth, has Sunday services throughout the year.

Another noteworthy development of the period was the establishment of the George Junior Republic, a unique boarding school for under-privileged boys founded in 1895 by West Dryden native William “Daddy” George, who conceived the idea of a permanent farm school with a self-governing form of administration. Within a few years, George’s experimental project had become a nationally recognized institution, its original 18-acre farm southeast of Freeville eventually expanding to a sprawling, self-sufficient campus of nearly 400 acres. A true “junior republic,” the school operated as a model community whose young residents made their own laws, supported themselves by working and were penalized for their misdeeds by juries of their peers.

Freeville’s history includes a major fire in 1931, when several homes and businesses at the intersection of Main Street and Union Street were destroyed, and in 2000, when the Village lost the original Lyceum Hall, an impressive old opera house on Union Street that became the home of various businesses. The Village was also hit hard by the devastating flood that ravaged much of the region in July of 1935.

By the 1940s the railroad era in Freeville had essentially run its course, the once-vital rail lines having been displaced by the steady increase of automobile and truck traffic. In the 1950s Main Street’s landmark Shaver’s Hotel was purchased by George Junior Republic. Although the hotel was torn down in 1976, the site’s impressive pine trees remain.



Shaver Hotel

A weeklong celebration of the centennial of Freeville’s incorporation as a village took place in the summer of 1987. It included a parade, a band concert, fireworks and the burying of a time capsule, among other events.

Demographic Profile

Introduction

This demographic analysis outlines historical trends and projects future population characteristics of the Village of Freeville, and it examines the relationship of these projections to both current and anticipated service demands. Various aspects of the population’s evolving composition will be noted, along with overall patterns of population growth since the early 1900s.

The demographic profile is divided into three sections: "Historical Analysis" describes changes in population size over the past century and their impact on the community’s development. A snapshot of recent demographic trends reflected in data from the last two censuses is provided in "Contemporary Demographic Shifts." And estimates of future population levels and public service needs in the Village are presented in "Forecasts."

Historical Analysis

As shown in the table below, Freeville has undergone relatively modest population growth since the start of the 20th century, with a net increase of just 80 residents, or barely 18%, over 110 years. In contrast, Tompkins County’s population has increased some 300% since 1900, while New York State’s population has grown by more than 250%. And unlike the generally steady upward trends in the county and the state, Freeville’s growth has been non-linear and erratic: during four census periods since 1900, the Village population decreased, while in two other decades, it grew by more than 20%. The dramatic percentage swings in population size can be explained in part by the traditionally small size of the community, which

exceeded 500 residents for the first time in the 2000 census. In the early 1900s, the decline of the railroads and the closure of key industrial enterprises had significant negative impacts on Freeville’s population. A loss of just 122 residents in the first decade of the century translated into a nearly 28% decline in the population.

Year	Freeville Pop.	% Change	Tompkins Pop.	% Change	New York State Pop.	% Change
1900	440	N/A	33,830	2.8%	7,268,894	45.3%
1910	318	-27.7%	33,647	-0.5%	9,113,614	25.4%
1920	303	-4.7%	35,285	4.9%	10,385,227	14.0%
1930	374	23.4%	41,490	17.6%	12,588,066	21.2%
1940	379	1.3%	42,340	2.0%	13,479,142	7.1%
1950	373	-1.6%	59,122	39.6%	14,830,192	10.0%
1960	471	26.3%	66,164	11.9%	16,782,304	13.2%
1970	477*	1.3%	77,064	16.5%	18,236,967	8.7%
1980	449	-5.9%	87,085	13.0%	17,558,072	-3.7%
1990	437	2.7%	94,097	8.1%	17,990,455	2.5%
2000	505	15.6%	96,501	2.6%	18,976,457	5.5%
2010	520	3.0%	101,564	5.2%	19,378,102	2.1%

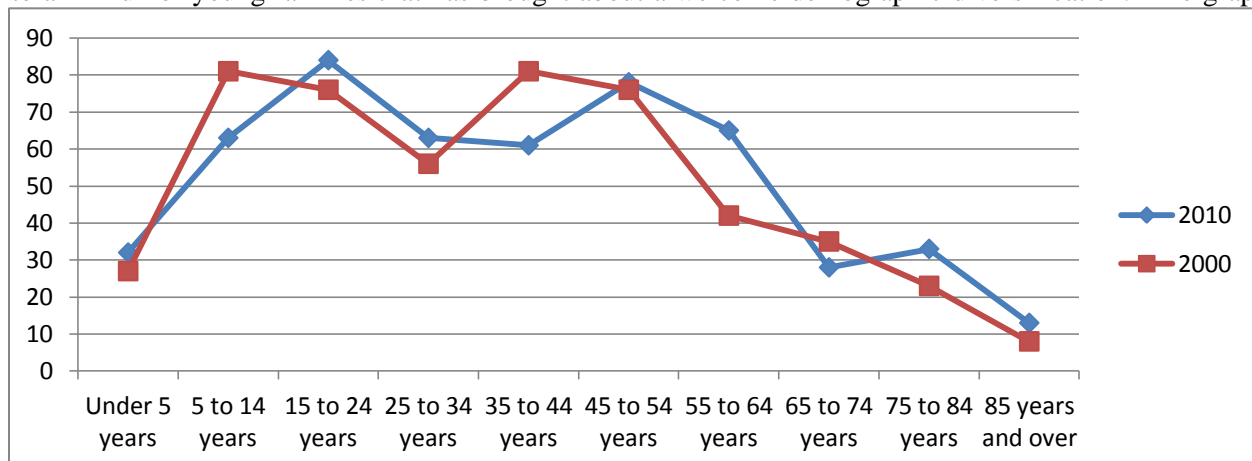
Source: US Census Data

*1970 Census population was 664. However, 187 were classified as Inmate in Group Quarters. In other years this classification was not included in official census population numbers. Thus, for comparison reasons this number was adjusted.

Contemporary Demographic Shifts

Throughout much of the second half of the 20th century, the number of housing units in the Village remained relatively stable. But between 1990 and 2000, the number of units increased from 168 to 210, an expansion of the housing stock that resulted in a population spike of more than 15%. Despite the fact that household size decreased slightly over the 10-year period, the number of residents increased by 68. (The drop in household size in the Village may be attributed to an aging population, with fewer dependent children living at home, as well as to an increase in single-person households.)

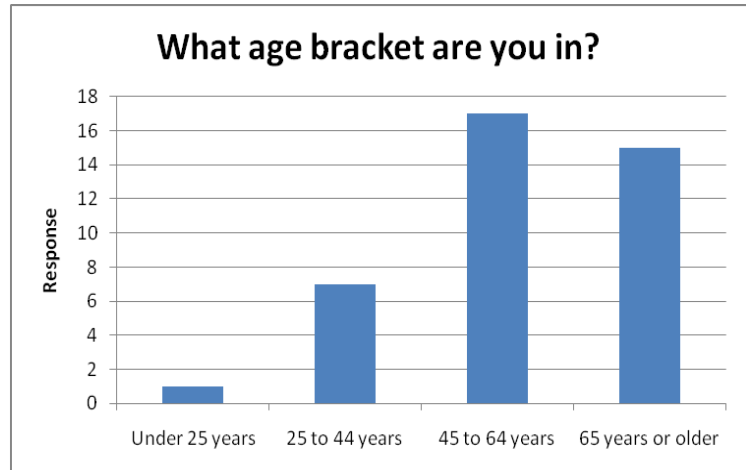
From 2000 to 2010, Freeville’s housing inventory was fairly stable, and the Village experienced very little population growth. The “graying” trend continued, with an increasing percentage of residents over the age of 65. However, the number of children and residents under 40 also increased over the past decade, thanks to an influx of young families that has brought about a welcome demographic diversification. The graph



above shows a slight increase in the median age of Freeville’s residents, from 36.6 years in 2000 to 38 years in 2010 (38 was also the median age in New York State, and it was slightly higher than the national median age of 37.2). The graph below shows the size of age groups in the Village in 2011.

Forecasts

The recent increase in households with children appears to be balanced by a corresponding increase in single-family households, a trend suggesting that Village population will remain stable unless there is an increase in housing inventory. Given the limited amount of developable land in the Village and the prevailing high occupancy rates, it seems unlikely that significant population growth will occur in the near term.



2011 Survey - Age Responses

A stable population will make few demands for increases in public services in the coming years. However, if the upward trend in the number of households with young children continues, the public parks will see more activity, and the rationale for preserving elementary-school education in the Village will be strengthened.

HOUSING

Character and Type of Housing Stock

Freeville's housing stock consists largely of two-story dwellings dating from the late 1800s and early 1900s; houses in neighborhoods in the northeast corner of the Village (Brooklyn Road) and near its western border (Cedar Avenue, Willow Avenue, Johnson Road and Tanbark Circle) were built from the 1950s onward. Lot sizes vary from approximately one-quarter acre to a full acre or more. Most of the houses in the Village are modestly sized. Properties are well-maintained, and pride of ownership is clear.



Most houses in the Village are single-family residences. A handful include two rental units, and several larger residential buildings on Railroad Street and elsewhere contain up to five rental units; some of these larger rental properties, which are generally owned by absentee landlords, are not as well-maintained as the average single-family Village residence.

The Lehigh Crossing Apartments on Cook Street, consisting of three 8-unit buildings, provide subsidized housing for senior citizens and the disabled. A paved walkway provides access to the apartments from Railroad Street.

Development Potential

Because much of the acreage adjacent to Freeville's residential districts is made up of wetlands, relatively little land in the Village is available for new housing. A large tract of open, privately owned land to the south of Tanbark Circle has been approved for development, and several properties on Main Street, Railroad Street and the side streets are large enough to be subdivided, should their owners desire to do so.



Sales Trends

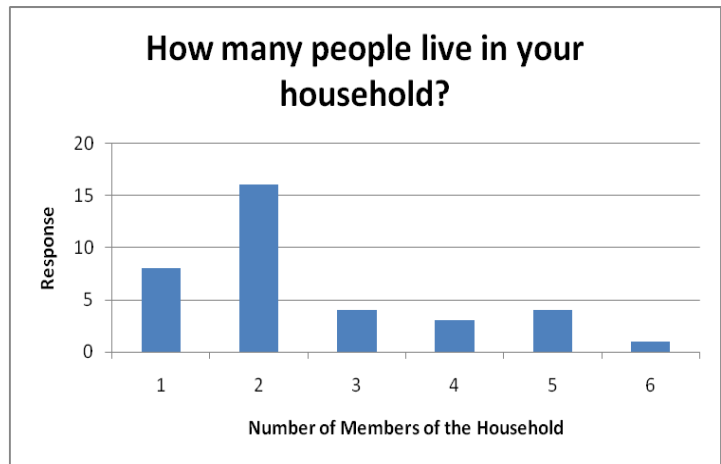
In the twelve years from 1999 through 2010, at least 48 houses in the Village were sold, an average of four per year. Activity ranged from eight houses sold in a single year (2009) to annual totals of just one (2010) or two (2005 and 2007). Sales prices varied considerably during the period, from a low of \$50,000 to a high of \$285,000, with a generally upward trend.

Survey Results

About a third of survey respondents favored the construction of more single-family houses in the Village, while nearly 60% were satisfied with the current number of such houses. Only about one in six respondents favored an increase in multiple-unit dwellings, with around 40% expressing satisfaction with the current level of development in that category, and an equal number wishing to see even fewer multi-family dwellings than currently exist.

Goals and Action Plan

Although the survey revealed a consensus for maintaining the status quo in terms of residential development, an increase in housing density in Freeville could benefit the Village by increasing the tax base and, through an increase in population, by providing greater support for local businesses. The Village's sewer system is currently operating at just half of its potential capacity, and could easily accommodate increased development. For these reasons, the Village should not discourage appropriate subdivision of properties and new residential development that complements and enhances the existing architectural and social character of the community.



2011 Household Size Survey Results

INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

Water and Sewer Service

A municipal water system does not exist in Freeville. Residents receive their water from private artesian wells, several of which serve two or more properties. An extensive underground aquifer with an impermeable stratum beneath it provides the artesian feature within the Village, with most well depths exceeding 200 feet.

Freeville provides municipal sewer service to most residents of the Village. The lagoon-based system was installed in 1987 in response to reported failures of private septic systems and the release of waste into Fall Creek. The municipal system currently serves about 150 households and operates at half capacity. Service is not provided to properties on Brooklyn Road, West Dryden Road and Johnson Road beyond Freeville Depot Road, areas where residents rely on septic tanks.



Streets and Roads *Maintenance*

Freeville is responsible for maintaining the several miles of Village streets that it owns. Main Street (Route 366), Railroad Street and Route 38 north of the four corners are state roads maintained by the state Department of Transportation (DoT). Street maintenance services provided by the Village include snow-plowing and salting, resurfacing and repaving, pothole repair and debris removal.

Parking

Public parking is permitted on the north side of Main Street. Parking on most other Village streets is not prohibited, but the narrow widths of most side streets make parking difficult. There are no Village-owned municipal parking lots, although off-street parking spaces exist in lots owned by the church, Finger Lakes Physical Therapy, the Post Office and the school.

The New York State DoT's Route 366 reconstruction project, which as of 2012 was still in the design phase and may be delayed for several more years before construction begins, may require that parking be prohibited at all times along all or most of Main Street.

Police and Fire Protection

Freeville had its own police department until 1997, and subsequently contracted for police protection with the Village of Dryden. Due to rising costs for Dryden's services, the contract was terminated in 2009, and the Village was brought under the protection of the Tompkins County Sheriff and the State Police.

The Freeville Volunteer Fire Department has a long history of providing fire protection for the Village. Originally operating only within the Village, the department is now under contract to provide fire protection and emergency services to the larger Dryden area, its more than 60 volunteers responding to more than 400 fire and emergency calls annually.



By state law, the Village is financially responsible for the fire department and currently assists with Workman’s Compensation. The department also receives financial support through its contract with the Town of Dryden.

Institutional Amenities

Clustered near the mid-point of Main Street are three buildings that play a key role in defining Freeville’s identity as a village.

The U.S. Post Office building, dating from the mid-1970s, sits on the site of the old Union school. Since many Village addresses do not receive home delivery of mail, stopping at the Post Office is a daily errand for



many residents, who often encounter their neighbors in the lobby.

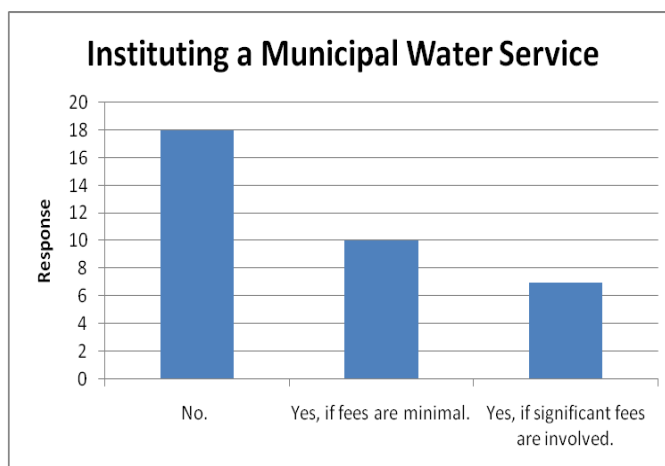


Directly across the street from the post office is the Freeville Elementary School. Housed in an elegant brick structure built in 1936, the school serves children in grades K-3. Events at the school include winter and spring concerts, ice cream socials, Thanksgiving feasts and Halloween parades. Adjacent to the school are a playground and its ample front lawn, the site of the annual Harvest Festival and community picnics. The Kiwanis Club plays baseball on the school’s ball field.

Next to the school is the Freeville United Methodist Church. Dating from 1891, the church has stood in its present location since 1936. Among its activities are the organizing of the Harvest Festival and the hosting of lectures, chicken barbeques and other community events.

Survey Results
Water Resources

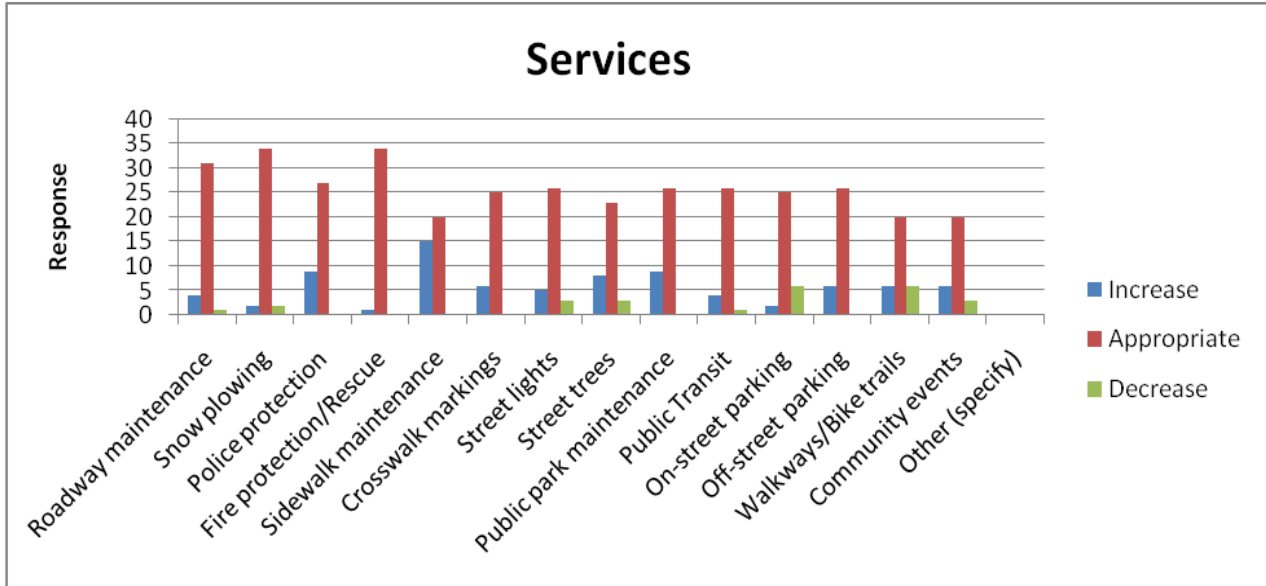
The survey included a question about the possibility of instituting municipal water service in the Village, providing three options for respondents. As the graph to the right shows, about half (51%) the respondents were satisfied with the existing system of artesian wells and were opposed to a municipal water system; 29% were in favor of municipal water, but only if fees for the installation and maintenance of the system would be minimal; and 20% were in favor of the service even if significant fees would be involved.



Village Services and Amenities

The survey revealed high levels of satisfaction with various Village services. The following percentages represent respondents who expressed a desire for a higher level of various services:

- 43%--Sidewalk maintenance 19%--Off-street parking 6%--On-street parking
- 26%--Public park maintenance 15%--Streetlights 3%--Fire-protection/rescue
- 25%--Police protection 11%--Roadway maintenance 5%--Snow plowing



Main Street Parking

A separate Village survey addressing the State DoT’s Route 366/Main Street reconstruction project was conducted in the summer of 2009. Among the questions asked of residents was whether they favored the widening of Main Street to accommodate prevailing roadway standards, and whether they would favor prohibiting parking on Main Street in order to preserve the existing road width.

The survey showed that just 10% of respondents favored widening the roadway from 30’ to 36’, while retaining parking along the full length of Main Street; 75% favored retaining the current 30’ width and prohibiting parking on Main Street; and 12% favored widening some parts of Main Street but not others, with parking permitted in the widened sections.

Goals and Action Plan

Municipal Water Service

Since the survey revealed a high level of satisfaction with the existing system of artesian wells, with few respondents expressing a willingness to pay significant fees for establishing and maintaining a municipal water service, the Village should not pursue such a service in the next few years. While municipal water may have advantages for homeowners, including possible increases in property values, its provision would clearly involve significant costs for Village residents and does not seem justified in the near term.

Parking

In light of the planned reconstruction of Route 366, which may require that parking be prohibited on Main Street, the need for additional parking in the Village will likely be an ongoing concern, particularly in the commercial area near the four corners. Although the timetable for the roadway project remains

indeterminant as of 2012, the Village should make every effort to maintain a close involvement with the planning of the project, with a view to protecting the interests of both homeowners and businesses throughout Freeville. And in accordance with the views expressed in the survey on the Route 366 project, which showed overwhelming support for maintaining the current width of Main Street, the state DoT should be apprised of the Village's wishes in that regard. The goal should be to preserve the current road width while retaining parking privileges on the north side of Main Street, especially in the area near the four corners.

Education

The school is a center for many Village activities and contributes to a sense of community in Freeville. Its small-school atmosphere provides an opportunity for kids to get individual attention and learn in a community where residents know their neighbors. In recent years, the continued existence of Freeville's elementary school has not been assured. In response to a proposed consolidation of the Dryden schools, the Freeville community mobilized to preserve elementary education in the Village, and going forward, every effort should be made to ensure that the school remains open.



COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Historical Overview

The grist mills and farms that formed the nucleus of the fledgling hamlet of Freeville in the early 1800s were joined by a wide variety of commercial enterprises as the century progressed. Among the many businesses that operated along Main Street in the years before the Village was incorporated in 1887 were blacksmith and wagon shops, a cobbler's shop, a sawmill and a "temperance house," which later housed the renowned hotel that was run by the Shaver family for nearly 100 years and which eventually became a destination for summer vacationers and other visitors from as far away as New York City.



Monroe's Garage (Current site of Whyte's) 1930s

With the coming of the railroad in the 1870s, the commercial hub of Freeville shifted "uptown" to the four corners area, which underwent intensive building to accommodate the businesses and families drawn to the Village by the opportunities created by the railroad junction. Commercial activity remained vigorous well into the 20th century, with such small-town staples as the grocery store, gas station, barber shop and bakery flourishing alongside larger businesses employing many Village and area residents, among them the coal yard on Fall Creek Road founded by W.B. Strong, Lionel Werninck's lumber company on Railroad Street and Ara Johnson's cinder block factory on the site of the present fire station complex.

Current Environment

Since Freeville's last comprehensive plan was prepared in 2001 the Village has seen an overall decline in high visibility commercial activity, the continuation of a trend that began decades ago. Emblematic of that decline was the closing nearly ten years ago of the Park-It Market, the last of our neighborhood grocery stores, and the 2008 removal of the gas tanks from Whyte's Auto Service, which left the Village without a gas station for the first time since the first one appeared on the same site in the 1920s.



The gradual disappearance of Village businesses that provide essential goods and services to residents is likely due in large part to greater mobility and increased commercial activity in nearby areas. The main commercial centers in the two-county region are Cortland and Ithaca, cities equidistant from Freeville and on traffic corridors dwarfing those that run through the Village.

Suburban-style commercial development in the area began in earnest in the Village of Lansing half a century ago and has continued unabated. The Village of Dryden's business districts have become increasingly active and diverse in the decades since Tompkins Cortland Community College established a campus in Dryden. Insofar as Freeville may be considered a "satellite" of Dryden, the current paucity of traditional "basic" businesses here can be considered a relatively benign phenomenon; residents are able to enjoy a quiet residential environment while having access to the many businesses in the larger village, barely three miles away.



The Freeville website listed some 20 businesses within the Village's borders as of the summer of 2012, among them at least half a dozen home-based enterprises. The varied mix included several professional offices (a dentist, a chiropractor, an architect and a veterinary clinic), two automotive garages, two restaurants, two wholesale bakeries, two wood-working businesses, a tile store, a physical therapy facility, a bed-and-breakfast, a hair cutting studio, a gift shop, a ceramics showroom and a recently opened farm store selling organic produce. Anchoring the cluster of businesses in the vicinity of the four corners is the weekly *Suburban Cortland-Ithaca Shopper*, which has operated on Main Street for more than 60 years.

Survey Results

The 2010 survey revealed widespread support for increased commercial activity, especially for businesses that would provide for the daily needs of Freeville residents. More than 80% of respondents indicated a desire for a grocery store, a farmer's market and/or a gas station/convenience store, although several questioned the long-term viability of such locally focused businesses in the Village (the failure of the once-thriving Park It Market to remain in business was cited in particular). Large majorities were also in favor of more home-based businesses and professional offices. Light industrial operations and retail stores received the least support but were still favored by more than 50% of respondents.

Goals and Action Plan

With a view to maintaining a modest level of economic self-sufficiency among Village residents and in response to the preferences reflected in the survey, the Village should encourage and support the establishment of new commercial ventures that are environmentally responsible and compatible with Freeville's rural residential character. The Planning Board and the Board of Trustees recognize the importance of protecting the natural integrity of lands bordering our creeks; the Village regulates development in flood-plain areas through its zoning ordinances. The Tompkins County Department of Planning recommends a buffer zone between any commercial or residential development and the banks of Fall Creek or its tributaries, and this concept should be considered during the evaluation of site-plan proposals for such development.

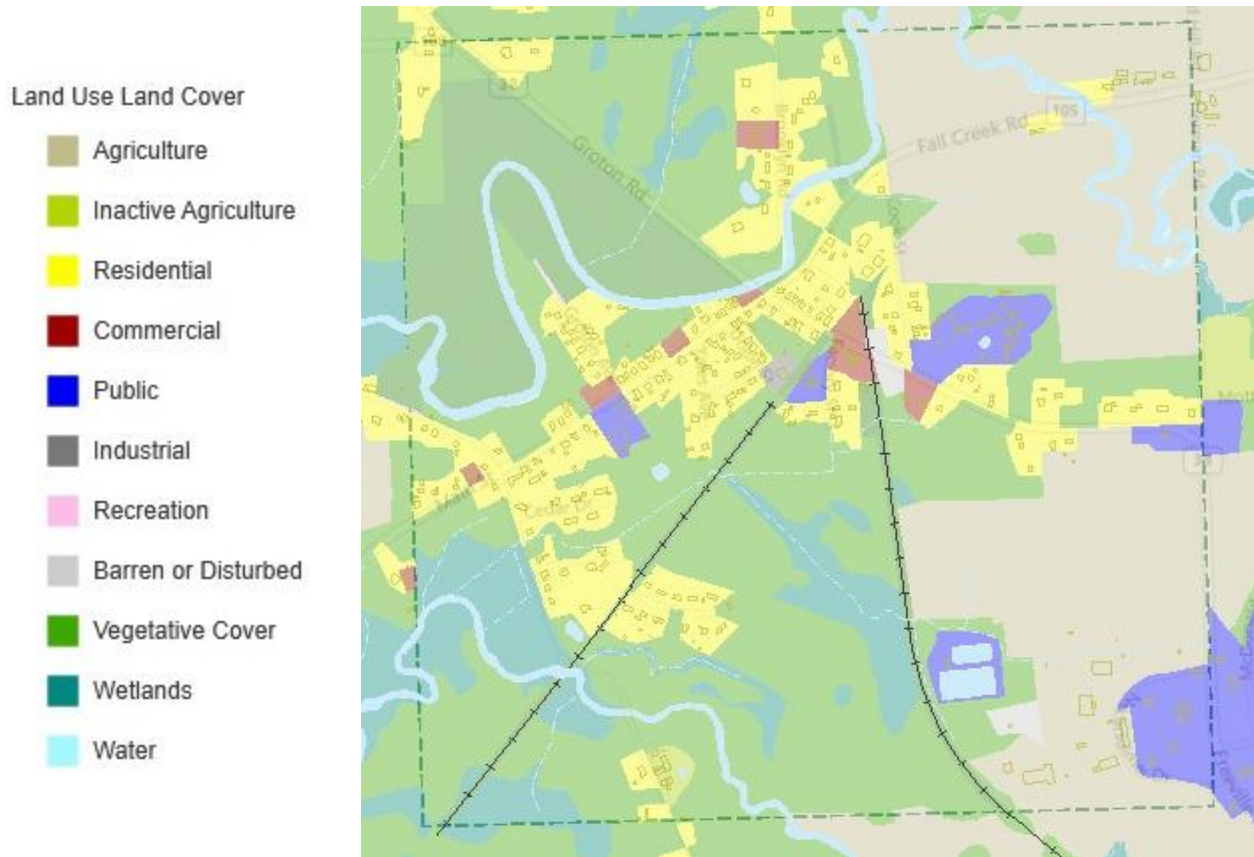
Efforts should be made to attract locally owned businesses that would supply essential goods and services to residents, but those that cater to the wider public—and that may have better long-term prospects for success—should be encouraged as well. Low-profile home-based businesses, on the upswing nationally with the advent of improved communication technologies, are particularly well-suited to Freeville, a primarily residential enclave with relatively few existing commercial buildings or open lots available for development.

The Planning Board should continue to conduct thorough site-plan reviews of new businesses to ensure that commercial development is appropriate and does not adversely affect the quality of life in the Village. Existing local laws that prohibit heavy industry within the Village, including extractive industries, should be upheld.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

Land Use Designation

Just one square mile in size, the Village of Freeville boasts many of the kinds of environmental and recreational resources that make the Finger Lakes region of New York a desirable place to visit and live, although these resources are sometimes overlooked or under-utilized by Village residents and others.



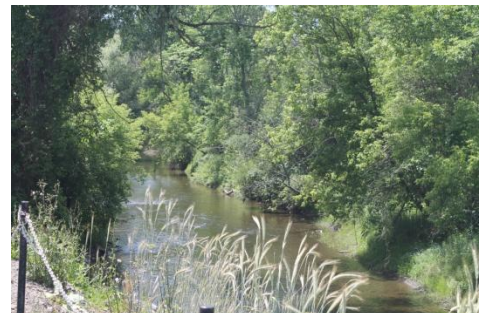
As shown in the Tompkins County Land Use/ Land Cover map above, Freeville contains a varied mix of land-use designations. They include natural vegetation, wetlands and agricultural areas. Natural vegetation is found mainly in forested areas in the northwestern and south-central areas of the Village, while areas bordering Fall Creek to the west and in the center of the Village are considered wetlands. Agriculture is present in the northeastern corner of the Village (the Sherman farm) and near its west-central border (Brookside Berry Farm, a seasonal producer of “u-pick” strawberries).

The Village’s two main thoroughfares and its several side streets contain a mix of residential and commercial properties.

Environmental Resources

Fall Creek

One of five major stream systems flowing into the southern end of Cayuga Lake, Fall Creek is perhaps Freeville’s most significant environmental resource. The Village is bisected by the creek, which enters near the northeast corner and exits near the midpoint of the western border, before being joined by Virgil Creek approximately one mile further downstream. Along its



entire length, Fall Creek offers opportunities for fishing, canoeing, bird-watching and hiking. Changes in agricultural patterns and practices in recent decades have improved the overall water quality of the creek by reducing the number of points where pollutants are allowed to enter the stream. As a result, the section that passes through the village now supports healthy populations of crawfish, darters, bass, sunfish and perch as well as many of the brook and brown trout that predominate over much of the stream's course.

Wetlands

The two creeks that flow through Freeville have created extensive wetland areas within the village, comprising a large, centrally located swath of land bounded by two rail trails (former sections of the Lehigh Valley Railroad right-of-way), and a smaller area along Fall Creek near the western edge of the village. This wetland area is part of a County-designated Unique Natural Area known as UNA-71 (Mill Dam Marsh). In addition, there are two other Unique Natural Areas within Village borders: UNA-72 (a DEC-mapped Wetland) and UNA-73 (Freeville Tree Swamp). These UNAs are designated as such by the County for their "outstanding environmental qualities," which "may contain plants and animals that are rare or scarce elsewhere in the county."



As is typically the case with wetlands, these resources have both advantages and disadvantages: while they contribute to a thriving mosquito population during the summer months, they provide ample opportunities to observe several species of aquatic birds and the evidence of impressive beaver activity near the northern rail trail.

Recreational Resources

Rail Trails

Owing to its legacy as a railroad junction, Freeville is fortunate to have two rail trails that are owned and



maintained by the Village and offer opportunities for walking, jogging, bicycling and sledding. One trail enters the village at its southwestern corner and passes through the center of the village before curving slightly to the east, entering private agricultural land (where it is not publicly accessible) and passing over an old wooden trestle before exiting the village near its northeastern corner. A second trail enters the village near the southeastern corner and crosses Route 38 as Public Works Drive before intersecting with the first trail behind Toad's Diner.

Genung Nature Preserve

Located along a looping section of Fall Creek in the northwest quadrant of the village, the Genung Nature Preserve is a unique recreational resource for area residents, its trails providing the opportunity to explore a variety of habitats in a quiet natural setting.

Dedicated in July, 2007, the preserve grew out of the generosity of Freeville native Mildred Sherwood, who in 2005 donated her 53-acre former family farm to the Finger Lakes Land Trust in memory of her parents, Albert and Mildred Genung. With her approval the Land Trust transferred the property to the Village, subject to a conservation easement held by the Land Trust that permits improvements benefiting public access. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provided financial help.

The main trail through the preserve starts at a small parking lot on Route 38 just northwest of the four corners, and wanders through shrubby areas and groves of ironwoods, oaks, maples, hawthorns and other trees along the banks of Fall Creek. Many species of birds find the preserve a welcome refuge, especially in the spring, among them Ovenbirds, Northern Waterthrushes, Chimney Swifts, Pine Warblers and Great Blue Herons.



Village-Owned Community Parks

Mill Dam Park



Mill Dam Park is a small, well-landscaped park bordering Fall Creek at the western edge of the Village, and it still contains evidence of the dam that was constructed in the 19th century to power the grist mill located on the site.

The park has a swing set, a playground structure and several picnic tables. Once heavily used throughout the year by Village residents (who would skate on a dammed-up Fall Creek in the winter), the park has been relatively under-utilized in recent decades.

Groton Avenue Park

Also bordered by Fall Creek, Groton Avenue Park is a larger park area and contains two baseball fields, a playground structure, a pavilion with picnic tables that were constructed by the local Cub Scout pack, a basketball court and barbecue grills.

The rear of the park is wooded with trails along a large bend in Fall Creek that forms the peninsula on which the park is located. The park gets moderate use during the spring when it hosts youth baseball games. The rest of the year it is visited by families and groups looking to make use of its open fields and scenic location on Fall Creek.



Survey Results

As was the case with more than a dozen other Village amenities and services, the survey revealed a relatively high level of satisfaction with the maintenance of public parks. Still, 26% of respondents who addressed the question thought the level of such maintenance should be increased, a proportion second only to the 43% who thought that sidewalk maintenance was inadequate. In a related question about development and land use in the Village, 30% of respondents advocated an increase in public green space, while 62% expressed satisfaction with the current amount.

On the question of walkways and bike trails, opinion was split, with 19% voting for an increase, and an equal percentage favoring a decrease. Several respondents expressed an interest in extending existing trails through the George Junior Republic property to the Village of Dryden, which appears not to be a viable option at this time.

Goals and Action Plan

Freeville's two public parks are among the Village's most important assets from a quality-of-life standpoint, and as the survey indicated, upgrading park maintenance is a priority for many residents. Despite our limited budgetary resources, efforts should be made to bring about improvements to the facilities at both parks, with a view to increasing park usage among all segments of the community. External sources of funding for such improvements should be explored in the coming years.

The Village should also look closely at recommendations that come out of a current Town of Dryden initiative intended to evaluate the state of area municipal parks and to make suggestions for their improvement. Among their preliminary recommendations are to expand the trails in the Genung Nature Preserve and to create connections between the Preserve and the public parks; they also suggest adding facilities and equipment to Mill Dam Park that will specifically benefit older park users.

CONCLUSION

The residents of Freeville clearly take great pride in their village. As indicated by their responses to the 2010 survey, they particularly value Freeville's location, its rural, small-town character, its affordable housing and its sense of community. They praised its "walkability," friendliness and stress-free environment, attributes that contribute to its desirability as a place to raise a family. And they are appreciative of the various services and amenities provided by the Village, citing our parks and nature preserve, our elementary school and our responsive public-works department as valuable assets.

While the survey revealed generally high levels of satisfaction with the way things are in Freeville, residents also expressed dissatisfaction with certain aspects of life in the Village, among them the presence of deteriorating properties, the loss in recent years of key long-term businesses, the failure of new businesses to remain viable and increased truck traffic on both Route 38 and Route 366.



In the coming years, as the Freeville Board of Trustees and the Planning Board work to ensure that the Village remains attractive and vital, board members should be mindful of the wishes and concerns of Village residents, and, whenever possible, responsive to their constructive suggestions for enhancing the quality of life here.

Broadly speaking, their suggestions envision changes that include appropriate new commercial activity, the upgrading of existing houses and properties, the cautious pursuit of compatible, modestly scaled new residential development, well-maintained roads and sidewalks, enforcement of Village ordinances and increased use of Freeville's public parks, trails and natural resources by young and old alike.

This comprehensive plan was prepared by the Village of Freeville Planning Board in consultation with the Village of Freeville Board of Trustees and was adopted by the Village in February, 2013.

Members of the Planning Board and Board of Trustees, 2010-2013:

Lotte Carpenter, Mayor
Penny Beebe
Tom Cavataio
Marco Cestaro
Jason Cuykendall
Rachel Dickinson
Diane Eaton
David Fogel
Jim Krebs
Miles McCarty
Diana Radford
Ron Szymanski

APPENDIX 1

SURVEY COVER LETTER

November 1, 2010

Dear Freeville Resident,

Over the next several months, the members of the Village of Freeville Planning Board will be working with other Freeville residents to develop a comprehensive plan for the village. Our last comprehensive plan was completed in 2001, and was intended to set goals for the near-term future of the village and to outline strategies to achieve those goals. At the start of a new decade we have much the same purpose in mind: to articulate a broad vision for the development of Freeville over the next five to ten years, and to propose appropriate ways to realize the village's goals. Among the areas to be addressed in the plan are housing, commercial development, zoning and land-use policies, the natural environment and cultural and recreational activities.

We believe it is critically important that the goals set forth in the comprehensive plan reflect the ideas, concerns and wishes of Freeville residents, and have prepared the enclosed survey in order to gather community input on various aspects of life in the village. We ask that you complete the survey at your earliest convenience, and mail or bring it to the Village Hall. If more than one person in your household would like to fill out the survey, please feel free to photocopy it or to request extra copies from the Village Clerk (freevilleclerk@frontiernet.net).

Thank you very much for your time and consideration. Your participation in the comprehensive plan process will help create a shared community vision and a viable future for the Village of Freeville.

Village of Freeville Planning Board

David Fogel, Chair
Tom Cavataio
Jason Cuykendall
Miles McCarty
Ron Szymanski

APPENDIX 2

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SURVEY

How long have you lived in the Village of Freeville? _____

Where do you work? (*Check one*)

- Village of Freeville
- Town or Village of Dryden
- Town or Village of Groton
- Town or Village of Lansing
- Town or City of Ithaca
- Elsewhere in Tompkins County
- Cortland County
- Other county or city (Name) _____
- Retired / Not employed

What mode of transportation do you normally use to get to work?

- Walk
- Motor Vehicle
- Ride or carpool with someone else
- Public Transit
- Other: _____
- NA (work at home / not employed / retired)

How many persons live in your household? _____

What age bracket are you in?

- Under 25 years
- 25 to 44 years
- 45 to 64 years
- 65 years or older

Do you own or rent your home?

- Own
- Rent

What type of structure is your dwelling?

- Single-family home
- Building with two dwelling units
- Building with three or four dwelling units
- Building with five or more dwelling units

For each of the services listed below, please indicate whether you think the existing level of service in the Village should be INCREASED (with a possible increase in taxes or charges), the level of service is APPROPRIATE, or the level of service should be DECREASED (with a possible decrease in taxes or charges). (*Check one for each*):

SERVICE	INCREASE	APPROPRIATE	DECREASE
Roadway maintenance			
Snow plowing			
Police protection			
Fire protection / Rescue			
Sidewalk maintenance			
Crosswalk markings			
Street lights			
Street trees			
Public park maintenance			
Public Transit			
On-street parking			
Off-street parking			
Walkways / Bike trails			
Community events			
Other (<i>Specify</i>)			

Please rank each of the following possible reasons why you live in Freeville (*Check one for each*):

	VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT APPLICABLE
Rural setting				
Public transportation				
Grew up here				
Housing cost				
Proximity to Ithaca/Cortland				
Village services				
Freeville Elementary School				
Dryden School District				
Walkability				
Businesses				
Sense of community				
Village size				
Other (<i>Specify</i>)				

Please indicate whether you would like to see MORE, LESS, or NO CHANGE for the following land uses in the Village (*Check one for each*):

	MORE	LESS	NO CHANGE
Residential development / Single-family homes			
Residential development / Multiple-unit dwellings			
Agricultural use			
Public green space			
Commercial development			
Other (<i>Specify</i>)			

What type of commercial development would you like to INCLUDE or AVOID in the village's future? (*Check one for each*):

	INCLUDE	AVOID
Gas station / Convenience store		
Retail stores		
Restaurants		
Light industrial and manufacturing		
Grocery store		
Farmers market		
Professional offices		
Service businesses		
Home-based businesses		
Other (<i>Specify</i>)		

Are you in favor of instituting municipal water service in the village to replace the system of artesian wells currently in use? (*Check one*)

- No. The wells are adequate for our needs.
 Yes, but only if fees for installation and maintenance of the service are minimal.
 Yes, even if significant fees are involved

Are you in favor of using the following energy-producing methods or processes in or around the village? (*Check one for each*):

	YES	NO	NOT SURE
Solar power			
Wind power			
Geothermal heat			
Conventional natural gas drilling			
Hydrofracture natural gas drilling			

On a scale of 1 to 5, do you believe the Village of Freeville is changing for the better or worse?
(Circle one):

BETTER		NOT CHANGING		WORSE
1	2	3	4	5

Why? _____

What do you like most about Freeville? What would you tell a friend about why they should move here?

What would you change in Freeville?

What no-longer-existing features or aspects of the village would you like to see restored?

Would you be interested in serving on a committee to help develop the Village of Freeville comprehensive plan?

Yes
 No

If Yes:

Name and Phone Number _____

This space is for any other comments you may wish to make. *(Please feel free to include additional sheets if more room is needed)*

APPENDIX 3

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SURVEY RESULTS

In order to gather community input on a range of issues to be addressed in the Freeville comprehensive plan, the Planning Board prepared a four-page survey that in early November, 2010, was sent to all households and business properties on the village tax rolls, a list comprising a total of some 160 residential and commercial addresses within village borders. By mid-December, 41 completed surveys had been sent back to the Village Hall, a return rate of about 25%. Almost all of the surveys were completed by a single respondent, although in several cases it was clear that two or more members of the same household had entered responses to some of the questions.

The completed surveys provided useful demographic information about the village and revealed much about the attitudes, wishes and concerns of Freeville residents. Following is a question-by-question summary of the survey results.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

The purpose of the survey's first seven questions was to compile selected demographic data about village households. Asking how long each respondent had lived in the Village of Freeville, **question 1** revealed a striking pattern of long-term residence in the village, at least among those who chose to complete the survey. As a group, the 41 respondents accounted for more than 1,000 years of residence, with an average length of residence of about 28 years, and a median length of 21 years. Eleven respondents reported having lived in the village 40 or more years; of those, seven reported between 52 and 84 years. Only seven respondents reported fewer than ten years in the village.

Question 2 asked where the respondent worked, with those who were retired or unemployed making up 30% of the total of those who responded to the question. Among those who were employed, responses to these options broke down as follows:

Town or City of Ithaca: 28%

Village of Freeville: 18%

Town or Village of Groton: 5%

Town or Village of Lansing: 5%

Town or Village of Dryden: 2%

Elsewhere in Tompkins County: 8%

Cortland County: 8%

Other county or city: 0%

Question 3: WHAT MODE OF TRANSPORTATION DO YOU NORMALLY USE TO GET TO WORK?

Not Applicable (work at home/unemployed/retired): 30%

Motor Vehicle: 58%

Walk: 8%

Public transit: 5%

Ride or carpool with someone else: 0%

Other: 0%

Question 4: HOW MANY PERSONS LIVE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD?

1: 22% 2: 44% 3: 11% 4: 8% 5: 11% 6: 3%

Question 5: WHAT AGE BRACKET ARE YOU IN?

Under 25 years: 2%
25 to 44 years: 18%
45 to 64 years: 43%
65 years or older: 38%

In response to **question 6 (DO YOU OWN OR RENT YOUR HOME?)**, only one respondent reported renting.

Similarly, **question 7 (WHAT TYPE OF STRUCTURE IS YOUR DWELLING?)** showed that all but one respondent lived in a single-family home (98%). One respondent lived in a building with two dwelling units, none in a building with three or more units.

VILLAGE SERVICES AND AMENITIES

Question 8 listed 14 Villages services and amenities, and respondents were asked to indicate in each case whether the level of service should be increased, decreased, or kept the same. The responses revealed a relatively high level of satisfaction with the existing levels of service, with the 14 options eliciting an overall average of “Appropriate level” responses of 77%.

Following is a list of the services in the order of options that received the most votes for an increase in level of service. Not all respondents indicated an opinion about every option; in each case, percentages indicate the proportion of those who thought that the level of service should be increased, in descending order:

Sidewalk maintenance: 43%
Public park maintenance: 26%
Police protection: 25%
Street trees: 24%
Community events: 21%
Off-street parking: 19%
Crosswalk markings: 19%
Walkways/Bike trails: 19%
Street lights: 15%
Public transit: 13%
Roadway maintenance: 11%
On-street parking: 6%
Snow plowing: 5%
Fire protection/rescue: 3%

There were relatively few votes for decreasing the level of any of these services or amenities. Among the eight services that did receive votes for a decrease, the percentages of those who responded to the option with that opinion were as follows:

Walkways/Bike trails: 19%
On-street parking: 18%
Community events: 10%

Street lights: 9%
Street trees: 9%
Snow plowing: 5%
Roadway maintenance: 3%
Public transit: 3%

DESIRABLE VILLAGE CHARACTERISTICS

Question 9 listed twelve possible reasons for living in Freeville, and respondents were asked to rank each as being very important, somewhat important, not very important or not applicable. Percentages of those who responded either Very Important or Somewhat Important to a given option were as follows (in descending order; in the case of ties, the first listed option got more Very Important votes):

Proximity to Ithaca/Cortland: 91%
Village size: 88%
Rural setting: 85%
Sense of community: 85%
Housing cost: 82%
Walkability: 76%
Village services: 76%
Freeville Elementary School: 54%
Dryden School District: 53%
Businesses: 53%
Public transportation: 43%
Grew up here: 22%

DEVELOPMENT AND LAND USE

Question 10 presented five commercial-development and land-use categories, and respondents were asked to indicate whether they would like to see more, less, or no change for each. Except in the case of commercial development, “No Change” was the most popular option for each category. In order of preference for an increase:

Commercial development: 53% (Less: 14%; No Change 33%)
Residential development/Single-family houses: 33% (Less: 8%; No Change: 58%)
Public green space: 30% (Less: 8%; No change: 62%)
Agricultural use: 27% (Less: 3%; No Change: 70%)
Residential development/Multiple-unit dwellings: 16% (Less: 41%; No Change: 43%)

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Question 11 listed nine types of commercial development, and respondents were asked to indicate whether they would like to include or avoid each type in the village’s future. Percentages of those who responded to each, in descending order of preference for inclusion:

Home-based businesses: 91%
Grocery store: 89%

Farmers market: 84%
Gas station/Convenience store: 82%
Professional offices: 75%
Restaurants: 70%
Service businesses: 68%
Light industrial and manufacturing: 57%
Retail stores: 55%

WATER SERVICE

Question 12 concerned the possibility of instituting municipal water service in the village to replace the system or artesian wells currently in use. Percentages of those responding to the three options provided:

No. The Wells are adequate for our needs: 51%
Yes, but only if fees for installation and maintenance of the service are minimal: 29%
Yes, even if significant fees are involved: 20%

ENERGY SOURCES

Question 13: ARE YOU IN FAVOR OF USING THE FOLLOWING ENERGY-PRODUCING METHODS OR PROCESSES IN OR AROUND THE VILLAGE?

In order of preference:

Solar power: YES–79%; NO–8%; NOT SURE–13%
Wind Power: YES–53%; NO–22%; NOT SURE–25%
Geothermal heat: YES–53%; NO–6%; NOT SURE–41%
Conventional natural gas drilling: YES–47%; NO–25%; NOT SURE–28%
Hydrofracture natural gas drilling: YES–17%; NO–56%; NOT SURE–28%

Question 14: DO YOU BELIEVE THE VILLAGE IS CHANGING FOR THE BETTER OR WORSE?

This question provided a 1-5 scale on which respondents could indicate whether they thought Freeville was changing for the better or worse (3 indicated that no change was occurring). The results produced a fairly regular bell curve with a peak of 36% responding that the village is not changing. The most positive and most negative options (1 and 5, respectively) each received 6% of the votes, while 28% marked 2 (between BETTER and NO CHANGE) and 25% marked 4 (between NO CHANGE and WORSE).

Asked why they made their judgment, respondents provided a broad range of reasons. Among those on the positive side:

1. A greater diversity of residents (including more young families)
2. A general upgrading of houses and properties
3. The opening of the Waterwheel Café and Casey's Diner
4. A better Code Enforcement Officer
5. Friendliness and optimism of residents
6. Greater awareness of village issues and participation in events

Among the more numerous negative comments:

1. Run-down houses and properties (particularly on Railroad St. near the four corners, although one respondent provided a house-by-house inventory of the worst offenders on Main St.)
2. Loss of the gas station
3. Failure of businesses to stay in business
4. Lack of speed limit enforcement/loss of local police
5. Too much truck traffic
5. Roads in disrepair
6. New homes are uninteresting, not an asset
7. Taxes are too high
8. Problems with drainage on Main St.
9. Failure to enforce village ordinances (unspecified)
10. Increase in crime (car burglaries noted)

Question 15: WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT FREEVILLE? WHAT WOULD YOU TELL A FRIEND ABOUT WHY THEY SHOULD MOVE HERE?

Friendliness and sense of community, and Freeville's quietly rural, small-town character were the most commonly cited reasons. Other general comments included that the village is well located, a great place to raise a family, a nice and safe place to walk, generally non-commercial, and that it provides a comfortable, stress-free environment. More specific attributes cited included the village's sidewalks, elementary school, community events, playgrounds, Genung preserve, low unemployment, natural-gas service and access to ice cream.

Question 16: WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE IN FREEVILLE?

There was some repetition of the complaints expressed in question 14, notably that the village in general and Railroad St. in particular (including the Toad's "complex") needs to be "fixed up." Specific recommendations included the following:

1. More participation in community events/more events
2. Control truck traffic on Route 38
3. Clean and dredge Mill Pond, fix the dam
4. Remove the Mill Park dam so that water flows freely (mosquito problem cited)
5. Open a walking/bike path through George Junior
6. Finish trail from Freeville to Dryden
7. Encourage more commercial activity
8. Install a stop light at the four corners
9. Improve sidewalks/provide better walking options
10. Encourage greater use of parks
11. Dissolve the village and merge/consolidate Freeville with the Town of Dryden (several respondents advocated this)

Question 17: WHAT NO-LONGER-EXISTING FEATURES OR ASPECTS OF THE VILLAGE WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE RESTORED?

The late lamented Park-It Market (along with the generic “grocery store”) was the runaway winner here, with a total of 13 votes. The gas station followed with six votes. Other things mentioned: Restore the dam, Freeville police, improve picnic tables in the park, library, water tank at Railroad and Factory, feeling safe to walk after dark and Honey Butter factory.

Question 18: WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN SERVING ON A COMMITTEE TO HELP DEVELOP THE VILLAGE OF FREEVILLE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

The following people expressed interest in being on a committee or serving more informally as an advisor, and attended one or more meetings of the Planning Board to discuss the comprehensive plan:

Carl Burgess (advisory)
Clayton Dans (advisory)
James and Diane Eaton
Jim Krebs [on Planning Board as of March 2012]
Kristi Walker (non-resident property and business owner)

Question 19: OTHER COMMENTS

Little was entered here, and several comments that were have already been noted above in questions 14-16. More general comments included that people should get to know their neighbors more and help each other, and should be more aware of village history. One respondent wondered whether a dedicated community center could be established. Several expressed appreciation of the work done by the village boards and of the opportunity to complete the survey.

APPENDIX 4

MAIN STREET PROJECT SURVEY AND RESULTS

Dear Freeville Resident:

As you may know, the New York State Department of Transportation (DoT) is planning to replace, and perhaps widen, Route 366/Main Street from the western village line (just beyond Whyte's Auto Service) to the intersection with Route 38/Railroad Street. In addition to the reconstruction of the roadway itself, the work will likely include improvements to the curbing, sidewalks, lighting and adjacent landscaping along the roughly half-mile length of that section of Main Street. The DoT has undertaken the project to address such issues as pavement condition, current and anticipated traffic volume, drainage requirements and safety.

While state budgetary cuts have delayed construction until 2014, the design phase of the project is already well underway. In meetings last year with village trustees and planning-board members, DoT officials encouraged us to let them know about the concerns and wishes of village residents as the project moves forward. With this very important opportunity in mind, we are asking you to answer a short questionnaire, the results of which will be compiled and sent to the DoT.

Please complete the survey at your earliest convenience. You can then fold it in thirds, tape it closed, and mail it to the address above (don't forget stamps!). You may also bring it to the Village Hall (there's a drop box to the left of the door), or e-mail your answers to the Village Clerk at FreevilleClerk@frontier.net

Thanks very much for your input on this project, which will potentially have a significant impact on the village.

Board of Trustees:

Lotte Carpenter, Mayor

Diana Radford, Deputy Mayor

Penny Beebe

Marco Cestaro

Rachel Dickinson

Planning Board:

Ron Szymanski, Chair

Tom Cavataio

Frank Combs

David Fogel

Miles McCarty

SURVEY RESULTS

In mid-July, 2009, copies of the Route 366 project survey were mailed to all Freeville residents on the tax rolls, representing some 150 addresses in the village. As of late August, 51 completed surveys had been returned, or about a third of the total.

Although quite a few people marked their preferences without comment, the survey elicited a broad range of detailed responses to issues related to the project, as well as a number of opinions about other village-related topics. Responses to the "Other" options in questions 3 and 4 are recorded in an appendix at the end of this compilation; two longer, general statements are recorded in a second appendix.

For questions 3-5, only positive ("yes") responses have been tabulated. Blank spaces were not counted as either positive or negative responses.

If the distinction between Main St. residents and others seemed relevant, that distinction has been noted.

MAIN STREET SURVEY

1. Were you already aware of this NYSDoT project? _____ yes _____ no

If yes, how did you hear about it?

Yes: 25 (49%), of whom 17 live on Main St.

No: 25 (49%), of whom 5 live on Main St.

Sources of the information included village meetings, and "the grapevine."

2. Do you live on Route 366/Main Street in the project area? _____ yes _____ no

Yes: 22 (43%)

No: 28 (55%)

3. Main Street is now a two-lane thoroughfare with parking on one side. It is 30 feet wide, from curb to curb. The DoT says that to have parking and meet current standards for roadway width, they might have to widen the roadway to 36 feet.

Problem: Widening the roadway would involve digging up the sidewalks and installing new ones closer to people's houses. Most of the homes on the street are already very close to the roadway, and some are extremely close. Widening the street and pushing the sidewalks back would bring traffic even closer to people's front steps. If a property has no more room for the sidewalk to be pushed back, we assume the increased street width would be taken from yards across the street.

If parking were prohibited on Main Street, the current roadway width, from curb to curb, might be acceptable to the DoT. In that case, the roadway would be rebuilt but not widened, and current sidewalks would remain where they are.

Which possible option would you prefer?

_____ Widening the roadway to 36 feet by moving the sidewalks closer to houses, to have room for parking.

5 votes (10%), all from residents of Main St.

_____ Keeping the roadway at its current 30-foot width, retaining the current sidewalks, and prohibiting parking on the street.

38 votes (75%), including 15 Main St. residents (68% of that total)

_____ Widening the roadway along some parts of Main Street but not others. Perhaps parking would be permitted in the widened sections.

6 votes (12%), including 2 Main St. residents (9% of that total)

_____ Other (explain)

3 votes (see appendix 1)

4. What safety feature(s) would you like to see incorporated into the project's plans?

_____ More painted crosswalks (Where?) 13 votes (3rd place); in order of preference: Four corners, Johnson St./Mill St. intersection, across Groton Ave., another in school area.

_____ Sharrows (markings painted on the roadway to remind motorists that they must share their lanes with cyclists) 16 votes (2nd place)

_____ New curbstones along the length of the project area 25 votes (1st place);
comment: make sure crosswalks and curbs are handicapped accessible.

_____ Wider sidewalks (Where?) 3 votes (7th place). comments: No need for this—would give the village a sterile, “city” look; Add walks from Whyte’s to Putnams (we didn’t get these when they put in the sewers); keep sidewalks above street level (2).

_____ Improved signage (Where and what type?) 5 votes (6th place). Suggestions:
Sign for Groton Ave. park; deer crossing on Rt. 38; electronic speed warnings; more/better signs all along Main St., especially in school zone; make limits of school zone clearer; reduce number of signs: “there are already 50 of them on Main St.”

_____ Increased street lighting (Where?) 8 votes (5th place). Suggestions: lower to ground and more of them; better and brighter; decorative lamps at 4 corners. Comment: plenty bright already—too much light in our bedrooms at night.

_____ Reduced speed limit (Where?) 11 votes (4th place). Suggestions: all along Main St. (several); throughout village; just enforce current limits; get rid of 15 mph, make 20-25 along Main St.; eliminate 15 mph and teach kids to safely cross the street; 30 mph fine along whole length, drop 15mph

_____ Others (What and where?) See appendix 1.

5. Which, if any, of the following landscaping features would you like to see along Main Street?

_____ More trees (Where?)
19 votes (1st place). Most common suggestion: all along Main St. Also, throughout village, in curbside brickwork.

_____ Other plantings such as shrubs and flowers (Where?)
9 votes (2nd place). Suggestions: all along Main St., post office area, school area

_____ Benches (Where?)
8 votes (3rd place). Suggestions: post office area, in Groton Ave. park, school area, outside Waterwheel cafe. Comment: good idea, considerate of our elderly residents.

_____ Brickwork between curbing and sidewalks (Where?)
6 votes (4th place). Suggestions: all along Main St., north side of street, near 4 corners

_____ Information kiosks (Where?)
5 votes (5th place). Suggestions: near post office or Groton Ave. Parking lot, at village hall or fire department. Comments: we already have one and it’s under-utilized; bulletin board in post office is sufficient

6. Please identify any safety or environmental concerns you have about traffic patterns (cars, trucks, bicycles, and pedestrians) along any village streets that the project planners should think about.

At least a half-dozen respondents mentioned truck traffic (on Rt. 366, Rt. 38, or both) as a concern, citing noise, fumes and speeding. Other concerns included speeding cars and motorcycles, speeding police cars, roadway runoff into Fall Creek and Virgil Creek, and insufficient commercial parking at the 4 corners. One respondent included a plea for the preservation of all mature trees.

7. If the village boards held a community meeting about this project, would you attend?
_____ yes (Would you prefer an evening or a weekend meeting?)

_____ no

Yes: 32; 24 preferred evenings, 4 weekends, 4 either

No: 8

8. Would you be interested in serving on a committee that would advocate for residents' needs and wishes as the DoT project moves forward?

_____ yes (Give contact info. here or contact a member of the Planning Board.)

11 people expressed interest in serving on a committee:

[NAMES SUPPRESSED]

9. Are you in favor of new commercial development . . .

This question should perhaps have been worded differently. Several respondents interpreted it to mean new construction of commercial buildings (to which they were generally opposed), rather than simply new businesses in either existing or new buildings.

... on Main Street? _____ yes (What types?) _____ no

Yes: 30 (including 11 Main St. residents);

No: 14 (6 Main St. residents)

In order of preference: grocery or convenience store (10); coffee shop (6); any type (5); gas station (4); Water Wheel Cafe (2). Other suggestions: natural food market, low-tech manufacturing, antique store, bakery/bistro, service business.

... on Railroad Street? _____ yes (What types?) _____ no

Yes: 27

No: 13

In order of preference: any type (6); grocery/convenience store (5); restaurant (4); gas station (2); retail business (2); light industrial (1), bakery (1).

... on village side streets? _____ yes (What types?) _____ no

Yes: 9

No: 30

Home-based business (4); residence for handicapped.

Comments: should be low impact—no manufacturing or storage; any type ok, as long as enough parking; small and quiet.

APPENDIX 1: MISCELLANEOUS RESPONSES TO "OTHER" OPTIONS IN QUESTIONS 3 AND 4 (numbers indicate individual respondents)

QUESTION 3:

1. If the roadway is widened, the village is doomed!
2. Provide lot for parking on Main St.
3. Without parking, street could actually be narrowed to 28 ft. (John Lampman, of Tompkins County Highway department).
4. Does parking have to be officially regulated? It isn't labeled on many streets and people seldom park on the roadways anyway.
5. I assume that even if parking is prohibited, the regulation will not be enforced.
6. Concerned about traffic increase on side roads during construction phase. The last construction sent traffic to Johnson St., where people walk on the roadway with strollers, children and dogs.
7. I will not be able to incur any additional expenses as a small business owner on Main St. (unsigned)
8. Widening Main St. Would encourage more truck traffic, and further undermine the foundations of houses on the street. We need to maintain and celebrate the character of the village and the qualities that make it a quintessential Upstate New York village.

QUESTION 4:

1. Keep costs down
2. Improve drainage along Main St. and throughout village (2)
3. Add traffic light at 4 corners/Re-route trucks off Railroad St./Limit number of animals per household/Clean up drugs
4. Install electronic speed monitors at each end of village on Rte. 366, like in Richford and Aurora.
5. Improve properties and clean up housing near 4 corners, to conform with overall charm of the village and to attract new business into existing buildings.
6. Restore old mill pond on Fall Creek at Mill Dam Park.
7. Avoid additional taxes
8. Add sidewalks to the dentist and on other village streets that don't now have them
9. At 4 corners, install bumpy pavement that slows down traffic
10. Clean up Railroad St.