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ODE TO CONQUEST

by Joni Lincoln, Town Historian

*Many millennia, a long time ago
Glaciers carved through the melting ice and snow
They left our streams, drumlins and a gorgeous little lake
All to preserve for goodness sake*

CHORUS

*Conquest, the finest in the state
Conquest, yes, we think it's mighty great
You'll always know your neighbor; You'll always have a pal
Not just another hamlet on the Erie Canal*

*The Cayugas and the Senecas they all roamed free
They hunted, trapped and fished and preserved the sanctity
Of the rolling hills, the pine and maple tree
A gift to remember, all without a fee.*

*The settlers came with axes, made cabins from the trees
Established homes and churches, used the forests, birds and bees
Settled in for the duration and slowly cleared the land
Grew corn, wheat, and tobacco, to feed their growing clan.*

*Soon laws, they were established to keep the gathered strong
The government, the people to support the right from wrong
The community cohesive to protect all in the throng
As commerce grew and prospered - the shadows they grew long.*

*As the wars continued, our menfolk volunteered
To preserve our land and liberty their bravery revealed
The women also nurtured and did brave deeds
All were fed and sheltered as against the flailing reeds.*

*As the town grew stronger we insisted we be free
Of Cato domination and perceived some tyranny
In March the men rode coldly on to Albany
The petition was successful and we had our colony*

*Conquest was chosen to preserved the Victory
We soon selected officers to hold our history
Of selflessness and sharing and determination, too
We still declared alligience to the famed red white and blue*

*As our small town prospered we discovered even more
How the race for fame and fortune, we mostly did ignore
To preserve the hometown feeling was an important touch
We treasured each one's dignity it surely added much.*

*The church divided o'er slavery issues as they grew
The Klan marched through with hatred for folks they hardly knew
We settled all the differences and embraced the different folks
Each added to our knowledge and all forgave the yokes.*

*There were milliners and blacksmiths the talents persevere
The doctors they made house calls there never was a fear
Of hunger or the homeless we took care that we were ready
To give and share and care for the community was steady.*

*Harboring a fugitive was a big concern
Doing what was right led the farmers to adjourn
Allowing for some literacy through all the unjust laws
Gave a former slave, a chance to take a pause.*

*We had a band, a baseball team its prowess was acclaimed
Our little town of Conquest became a common name
Our community identity achieved some winning fame
Howells, Toot Gilhully achieved a hitting game!*

*Our Robert Kidney murder was certainly a scandal
The poor old hermit left to die his fortune not to handle
The rumors they persisted throughout the fading years
But never was resolved, leading to the fears
That the murderer lived among us, His greed was legendary
The speedy cutter raced through town, the folklore sure was steady.*

*With the advent of the auto our town sure changed a lot
Folks who used to shop at home ventured on about
Centralizing schools. excellent as it seemed
Our town was soon divided, it became a saddened theme.*

*One hundred years soon passed another war loomed here
The height of our famed drumlins became a local cheer
Civil Defense came to the rescue, the enemy to spot
Our local folks were ready with first aid also on the dot.*

*We need to stay safe a few did proclaim
A fire department plan was our new game
The funding and the training was a welcome chore it's true
Soy beans and BBQs became our work for the few
More than 60 years we've given to keep our folks secure
The feeling of pride and history is a welcome allure.*

*Another 50 trips around the sun we made,
A celebration sesquicentennial was at hand
A huge parade, a banner too across our native land
As we came together we again hosted a band!*

*A new celebration is in our dear town
We will come together there will never be a frown
Antique apparatus, music, bicycles and more
As we celebrate Conquest on the great Erie shore.*

*Our most recent verse we do proclaim
The work of months and study was not in vain
Our Comprehensive Plan will reign anew
Conquest did progress to see it through.*

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**CONQUEST TOWN BOARD ADOPTION OF
TOWN OF CONQUEST COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

WHEREAS, the Town of Conquest Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee (“the Committee”), with assistance from the Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development (“CCPED”), developed a Comprehensive Plan (“the Plan”) for the Town of Conquest between October 2021 and January 2023; and

WHEREAS, the Committee held one Public Launch Event on December 14, 2021 and two Public Open Houses on the draft Plan on July 21, 2022 and November 17, 2022 to receive comments from the public; and

WHEREAS, the Committee at its meeting on January 19th, 2023 considered all comments received from the public and made changes to the Plan that they felt were necessary. The Committee submitted the Plan to the Conquest Planning Board for their review of the Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Board held a Special Meeting on February 2, 2023 and a Public Meeting on March 4, 2023 to review the Plan, consider all comments from the public, and make a recommendation that the Town Board adopt the Plan with comments; and

WHEREAS, the Town Board passed a resolution on April 17, 2023 to declare its intent to be Lead Agency and the only Involved Agency for the required State Environmental Quality Review of the Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Town Board held a Special Meeting on May 8, 2023 to review the Plan; and

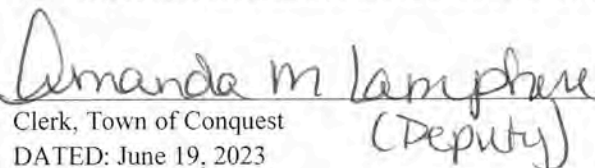
WHEREAS, the Cayuga County GML 239-l, m, & n Review Committee reviewed the Plan on May 19, 2023 and recommended that the Town Board approve the Plan without change; and

WHEREAS, the Town Board determined that the adoption of the Plan will result in no adverse impact on the environment, and issued a Negative Declaration; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Board adopts the Town of Conquest Comprehensive Plan as received from the Planning Board; and

RESOLVED, that this resolution shall take effect immediately.

I HEREBY CERTIFY, THAT I HAVE COMPARED THE FOREGOING COPY OF A RESOLUTION DULY PASSED AND ADOPTED BY THE TOWN OF CONQUEST TOWN BOARD AT A MEETING HELD ON THE 19th DAY OF JUNE, 2023 WITH THE ORIGINAL RESOLUTION, AND THAT THE SAME IS A TRUE AND CORRECT COPY AND TRANSCRIPT THEREOF, AND THE WHOLE THEREOF.


Clerk, Town of Conquest
DATED: June 19, 2023
(Deputy)

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The development of the Town of Conquest Comprehensive Plan would not have been possible without the support, input, and commitment from the following individuals:

Steering Committee

Shannon Bozeat
Corey Brown
Tallie Czajkowski
Aubrey Davis
Brenda Green, Planning Board
Lucas Ferrin
Cindy Lamphere, Town Board
Jack Lees, Town Board
Joni Lincoln, Town Historian
Sue Montana, Planning Board
Dale Powell
Nicholas Schmitt, Planning Board
Dorothy Slegle
Bob Vogel, Planning Board

Town Board

Charles Knapp, Town Supervisor
Patty Causey-Wilson
Cindy Lamphere
Jack Lees
Paul VanNorstrand

Planning Board

Brenda Green
Beth Kluczynski
Peggy Lillie
Tom Merrill
Sue Montana
Nicholas Schmitt
Bob Vogel

Town Clerk

Lisa Tortorello

Individuals, Groups, Business Owners

Who provided support and donations for public events

**And most importantly,
Residents & Property Owners
Thank you for your input!**

The development of the Comprehensive Plan was facilitated by:
Cayuga County Department of Planning & Economic Development
Greg Hutnik, Senior Planner/GIS Analyst, Lead Author
Greg Diebold, Planner
David Nelson, AICP, Senior Planner



Conquest Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

From left to right: Greg Hutnik, Greg Diebold, Jack Lees, Lucas Ferrin, Aubrey Davis, Tallie Czajkowski, Shannon Bozeat, Sue Montana, Joni Lincoln, Bob Vogel, Dorothy Slegle, Cindy Lamphere, and Nicholas Schmitt.

(Not pictured: Corey Brown, Brenda Green, and Dale Powell)

VISION STATEMENT

Conquest is a quaint agricultural town with a strong sense of community and town pride. As residents, we are committed to protecting the Town's character and our rural way of life. We welcome opportunities to connect residents with beneficial resources that will improve our safety, economic wellbeing, and overall quality of life. Through this plan, we will preserve the distinctive natural, social, and historical resources that residents cherish and rely on for our wellbeing. This includes protecting the natural environment, ecosystems, and water bodies of Conquest; supporting farmland protection, and sustainable and regenerative agricultural businesses; preserving the scenic quality of the Town; preserving historical landmarks and town history; and maintaining and strengthening community ties.

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INTRODUCTION

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A Comprehensive Plan is a foundational land use policy document that acts as a roadmap for local leaders to implement the vision and goals of a community. Comprehensive Plans are intended to guide short- and long-term land use decision making processes. Intended to be flexible and adaptive, the Comprehensive Plan may be updated or amended as a community's values or needs change.

“Town Comprehensive Plan means the materials, written and/or graphic, including but not limited to maps, charts, studies, resolutions, reports and other descriptive material that identify the goals, objectives, principles, guidelines, policies, standards, devices and instruments for the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development of the town located outside the limits of any incorporated village or city.” – NYS Town Law §272-a,2(a)

A Comprehensive Plan is NOT

- A zoning ordinance
- A regulatory document
- Rigid, unchanging policy
- Specific in scope
- The only planning tool available to the town

Why Develop a Comprehensive Plan?

Other than outlining a community's vision for its future, a purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide a municipality the justification for implementing its vision and goals through specific local measures such as adopting local laws related to the regulation of land use. Judicial courts have consistently upheld local land use decisions if they are rooted in the policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

“Among the most important powers and duties granted by the legislature to a town government is the authority and responsibility to undertake town comprehensive planning and to regulate land use for the purpose of protecting the general health, safety, and welfare of its citizens.”

-NYS Town Law 272-a,1(b)

Benefits of a Comprehensive Plan

- Provides a process for identifying:
 - community resources;
 - long-range community needs; and
 - commonly held goals
- Provides a process for developing community consensus
- Provides a blueprint for future governmental actions

Implementing the Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan cannot implement itself. After all the work that's put in to developing a vision for the community and goals that support that vision, action steps as outlined in the Implementation Matrix (see Implementation Strategy), should be taken after the plan is adopted to work towards those goals. Ultimately the responsibility of the plan's implementation will rest with the Town Board. This body of elected officials has sole authority to legislate action to be taken on goals of the plan. However, it will take an entire community to help accomplish the goals of the plan. Many of the goals will rely on efforts from town staff, appointed officials, and volunteer time of residents and property owners.

How to use the Plan

Town leaders should actively engage with the Comprehensive Plan, and especially the Implementation Matrix, in a proactive manner. The Town Board can use the Implementation Matrix when discussing routine agenda items (monthly, quarterly, annually) for the purpose of discussing past issues or forecasted issues. Also, the Planning Board should use the plan as a core Town document that provides ongoing reference to Planning Board activities. In addition, all Town department heads/leaders should reference the plan as it relates to their area(s) of responsibility.

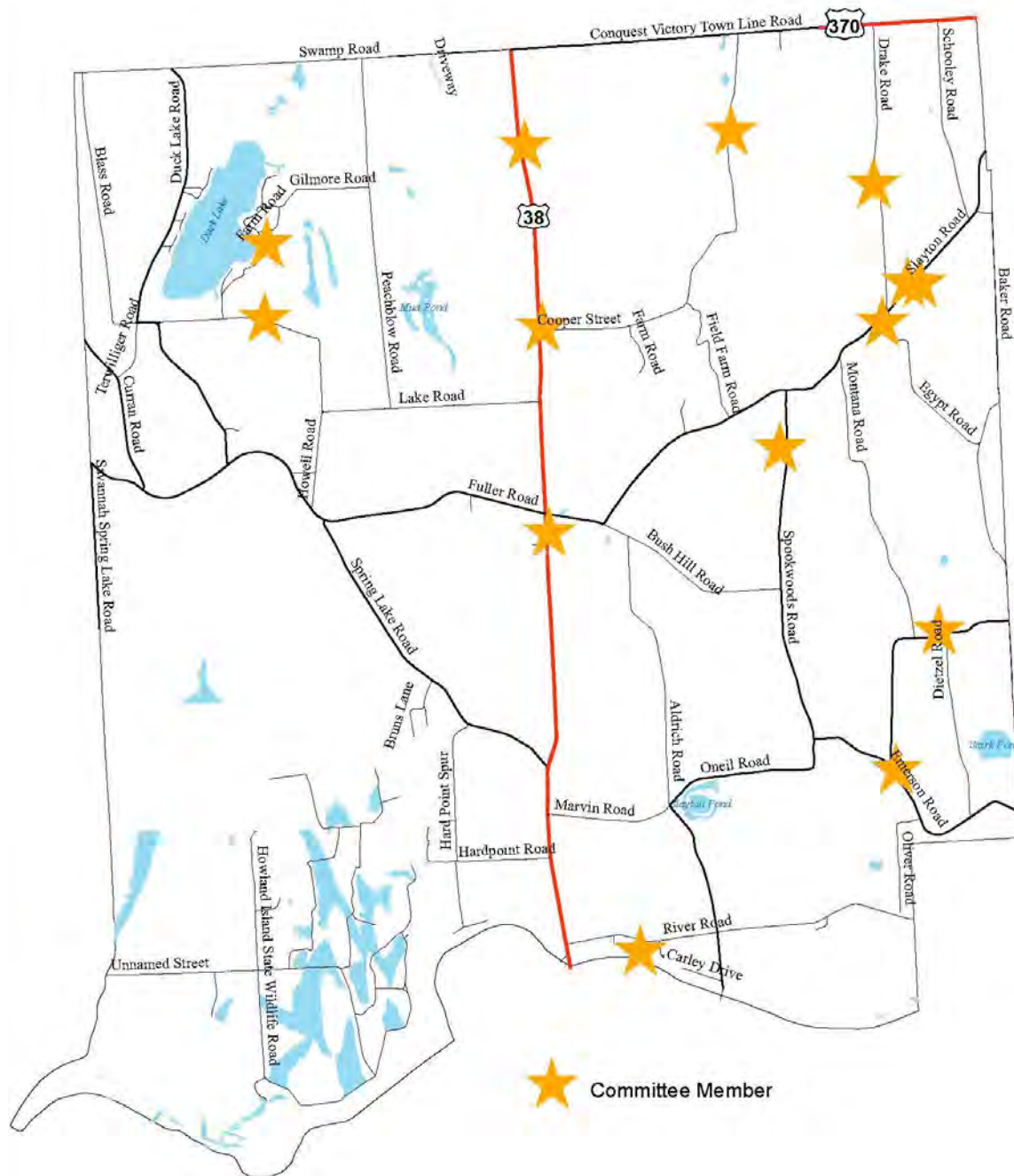
Updates to the Plan

Updates to Comprehensive Plans are undertaken roughly once every 10 years. As this is Conquest's first plan, the Town may want to assess it during the early years after adoption (1-5 years) to see if any updates and changes to the goals are warranted. Any amendment to the Comprehensive Plan must go through a public hearing process.

Conquest's Planning Process

The development of the Comprehensive Plan was initiated by the Town Board in September 2021. The Town partnered with the Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development to facilitate the process and prepare the Plan. A 14-member Steering Committee of Town residents, officials, and business owners was appointed to guide local input (see map below for the distribution of Steering Committee members across the Town). In total there were 11 Steering Committee meetings between October 2021 and January 2023. Additionally, three public meetings were held to keep residents and property owners informed and engaged in the development of the Comprehensive Plan.

- ***A Public Launch Event*** was held in December 2021 at the Fire Department to inform the public of the newly initiated Comprehensive Plan process, what it would entail, and how to be involved. Approximately 40 people were in attendance.
- ***Public Open House #1*** was held in July 2022 at the Large Pavilion of the recreation fields to present the findings of the Inventory and Analysis of Existing Conditions and the results of the Community Survey. Approximately 30 people attended.
- ***Public Open House #2*** was held in November 2022 at the Town Hall to present the Draft Future Land Use Map and the Draft Goals and Action Steps of the Comprehensive Plan. Approximately 40 people attended.



Input from the Community

The primary input from the Conquest community came in the form of responses to a town-wide survey that was available from December 2021 until April 2022. The survey was mailed to every property owner in Conquest (872 in December 2021) and paper copies were made available at the Town Hall. Some members of the Steering Committee even handed out surveys and stamped envelopes at the Town's waste transfer station on cold winter days!

In total, 174 completed surveys were received, which included over 400 written responses and comments. In addition to the survey, over 70 comments were received during the public events. The combination of survey questions answered, written comments received, and comments provided at public events accounted for over 1,000 individual items for the committee to consider during the development of the Comprehensive Plan. The results of the survey can be found in **Appendix A**.

Structure of the Plan

The Town of Conquest Comprehensive Plan is intended to be an easy-to-use land use decision-making guide for residents, property owners, and local leaders. The Plan is structured into the following sections:

1. Inventory & Analysis of Existing Conditions

All Comprehensive Plans provide a “benchmark” of existing conditions to inform the goals of the community. The analysis of existing conditions is broad, deep, and includes information on the Town’s historical and regional context; population and demographic trends; land use trends; agriculture; natural resources and environmental quality; hazard mitigation; cultural, recreational, and historic resources; community facilities, infrastructure, and transportation; and economic development trends. Following each sub-section of existing condition categories are the goals for each, which are also outlined in the Implementation Strategy.

2. Future Land Use

The Comprehensive Plan is a land use policy document. As such, future land use character areas that will satisfy the vision and goals of the Plan were crafted by the Town and are described here and shown on the Future Land Use Map (**Map 26**).

3. Implementation Strategy

The Implementation Strategy is designed to achieve the vision of the community. Each goal, which is described in the Inventory and Analysis of Existing Conditions Section, is identified on an Implementation Matrix. This matrix is intended to be used as a tool for Town decision makers to use when considering each goal, and includes action steps to accomplish each goal, the timeframe to completion, priority ranking, responsible party, and potential funding sources.

INVENTORY & ANALYSIS OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

This section covers a wide range of topics in Conquest to provide a “benchmark” of existing conditions of the Town. The analysis of these conditions will inform the selection of Goals that are described below each sub-section and in the Implementation Strategy further below in the Plan. The topics described include: the Town’s historical and regional context; population, housing, and other demographic trends; community facilities and infrastructure; cultural, recreational, and historic resources; land use trends; agriculture; economic development trends; natural resources and environmental quality; and hazard mitigation.

Historical Context of Conquest

From Joni Lincoln – Conquest Town Historian

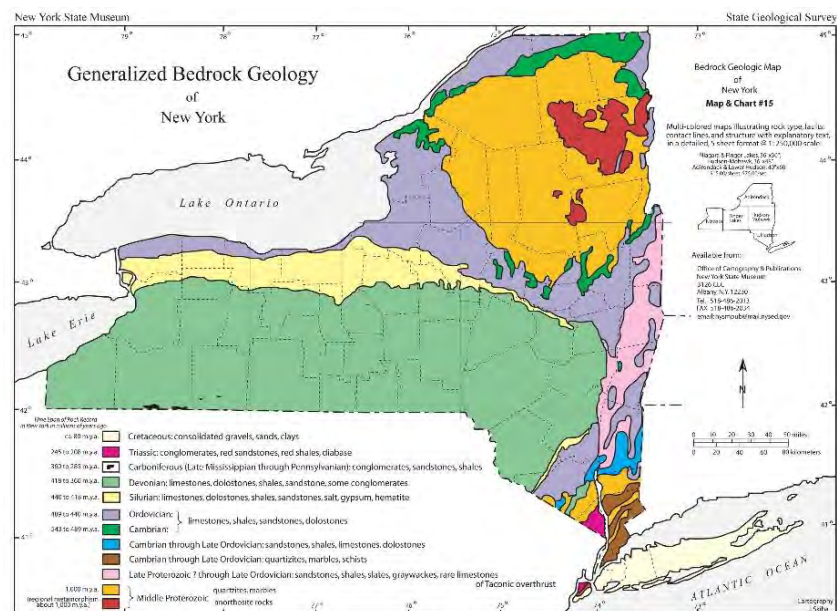
Thank you for asking me to be a part of this comprehensive plan for our Town of Conquest. Although I am not a native, I am proud to be married to one and the five generations of Lincolns that preceded us!

As I see it, the history of Conquest must involve the geology, climate, sociology, commercial, agricultural, governmental and political aspects of our small town. The growth, decline and changes are an integral part of who we were, how we evolved and yes, where we are going.



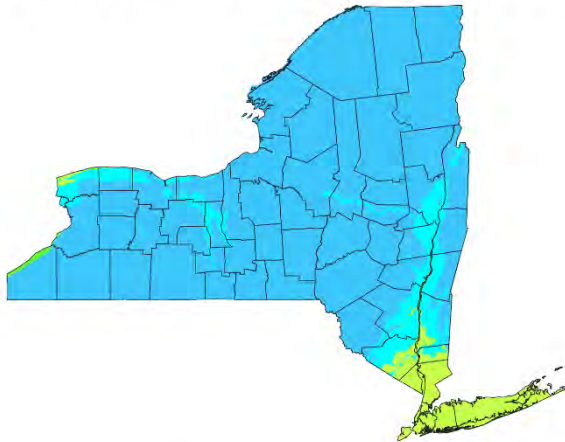
In my segment of our report I will strive to use all the resources I can muster. We have Storke’s History, well prepared documents by Barry and Perry Cook and historian Eleanor Cook, some church and school records and vast newspaper and archival resources. Please see the above for more detailed references.

The geology is the easiest and less liable to change. Conquest is under laid with red shale which from the depth of alluvium is exposed in a few places. A deposit of gypsum, four feet in thickness exists on Howland’s Island nearly forty feet below the Seneca River. The soil consists of sandy and gravelly loam, intermixed with clay, interspersed with tracts of rich and fertile arable and grasslands. The surface is gently rolling drumlins extending north and south. We have considerable ‘wasteland’ now considered ‘wetlands’ harboring significant wildlife and our noxious mosquitoes in the swamps and marshes which extend along the



river forming the southern boundary and along the course of a small stream (Crooked Brook) which runs through the town from north to south a little west of center. Mosquito Point was aptly named! Duck Lake, in the north-west part is about a mile in diameter. It is fed by springs within and upon its border having no inlet. We were formed by the northern movement of glaciers, part of the Onondaga Escarpment.

Köppen Climate Types of New York



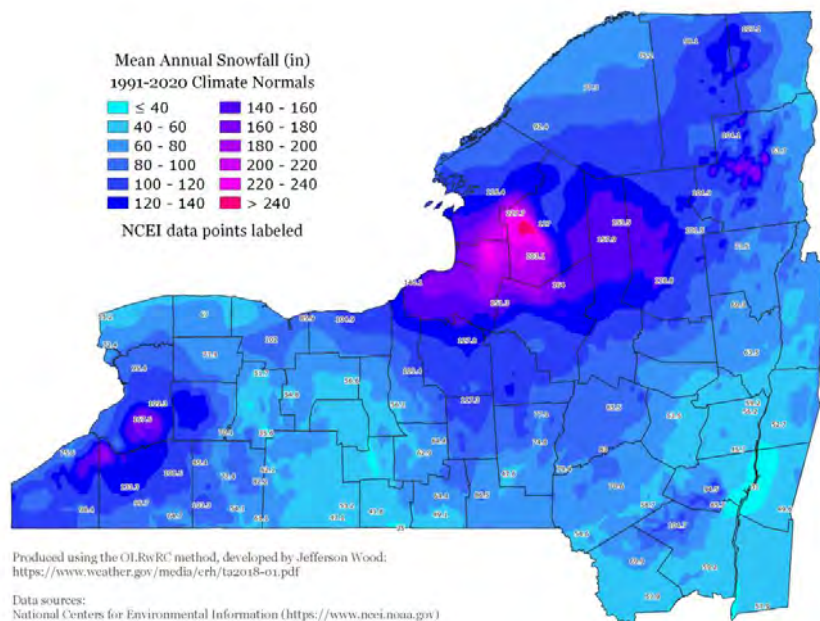
Köppen Climate Type

■ Cfa (Humid subtropical)	■ Dfa (Hot-summer humid continental)
■ Cfb (Oceanic)	■ Dfb (Warm-summer humid continental)

Data sources: 1991-2020 climate normals from PRISM Climate Group, Oregon State University, <https://prism.oregonstate.edu>; Outline map from US Census Bureau

Climate: We are in the temperate zone. Rain and snow have been generally adequate to keep the water table steady, although there have been a few years of drought in the last 200 years. The Oswego River/Finger Lakes watershed is one of the largest in New York State, and drains the basins of the Oswego, Oneida, Seneca, and Clyde Rivers. The 5,070 square miles of the basin is entirely within New York State, covering all of Seneca County and large portions of Onondaga, Cayuga, Tompkins, Schuyler, Yates, and Ontario Counties, as well as smaller portions of nine other counties before emptying into Lake Ontario. Our town primarily drains to the Lake Ontario watershed. The climate is classified as Humid Continental. Differences in latitude, character of topography, and proximity to large bodies of water all have an effect on the climate across New York State. We often experience 'lake effect' rain

and snow both from Lake Ontario and Lake Erie. Precipitation during the warm, growing season (April through September) is characterized by convective storms that generally form in advance of an eastward moving cold front or during periods of local atmospheric instability. The cool season (October through March) is characterized by large, low-pressure systems that move northeastward along the Atlantic coast or the western side of the Appalachian Mountains. Storms that form in these systems are characterized by long periods of steady precipitation in the form of rain, snow, or ice, and tend to produce less surface runoff and

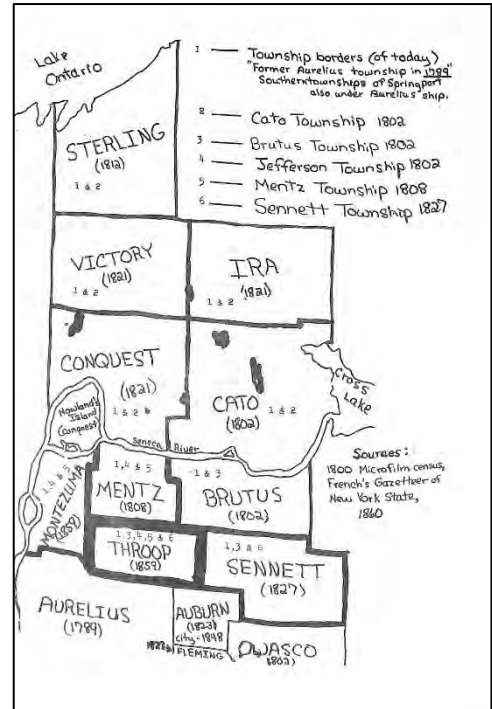


Produced using the OLRvRC method, developed by Jefferson Wood:
<https://www.weather.gov/media/erh/t2018-01.pdf>

Data sources:
National Centers for Environmental Information (<https://www.ncmi.noaa.gov/>)
Environment Canada (<https://climate.weather.gc.ca>)
PRISM Climate Group (<https://prism.oregonstate.edu>)
US Census Bureau

more recharge than the summer storms because they have a longer duration and occasionally result in snowmelt (Cornell, Date Unknown). Cayuga County generally experiences seasonable weather patterns. Summer temperatures typically range from about 69°F to 82°F (Fahrenheit). Winter high temperatures are usually in the middle 30s. F, with minimum temperatures of 15°F expected (The Weather Channel 2012). Photos and stories of our occasional blizzards lend to our lore.

Sociology is the interaction of folks in our town. Native settlers date back many thousands of years by evidence on Howland Island. It should be our mission to honor the land and environs as they did. We are also inspired by the pioneers who settled here following the Revolutionary War -- we have a streak of independence and ownership. The farmers and settlers who rode on horseback to Albany in March of 1822 to ascertain home governance exemplify this. Throughout our history, town residents have debated and decided to oppose the fugitive slave law, support and/or decry school centralization, oppose church higher governance and support local businesses. The Conquest Temperance Society was formed in 1831 – votes to retain alcohol consumption or go dry were debated fiercely. At one time each hamlet had a thriving store and there was a post office in Conquest. (CIVIC Heritage Center in Cato has



Maple Street, Conquest, c. 1900. This photograph looks east toward what is now Slayton Road. The hotel and post office are now the site of the Conquest Fire Department. (Courtesy Eleanor Aldrich Collection.)

the Post Office 'boxes' where folks got their mail at the on the corner pre 1903.) Everyone in the town came together to form a Fire Department in the early 1960s.



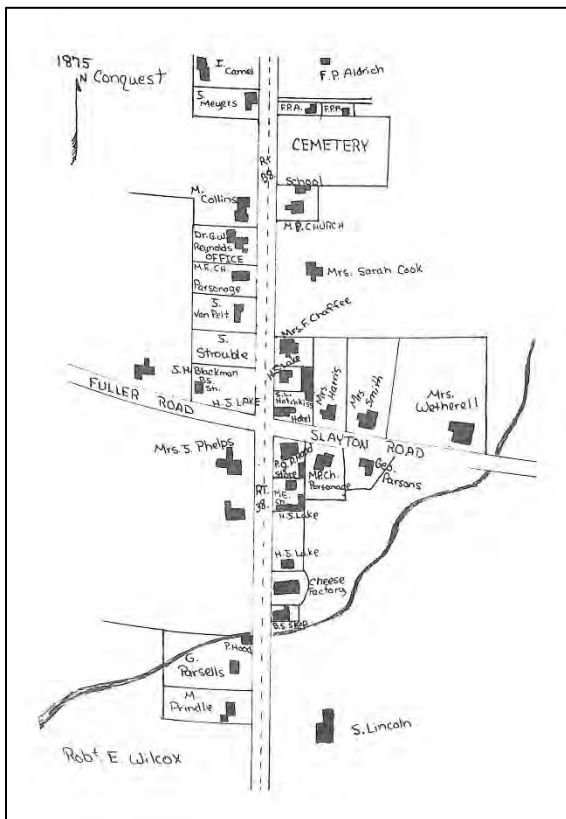
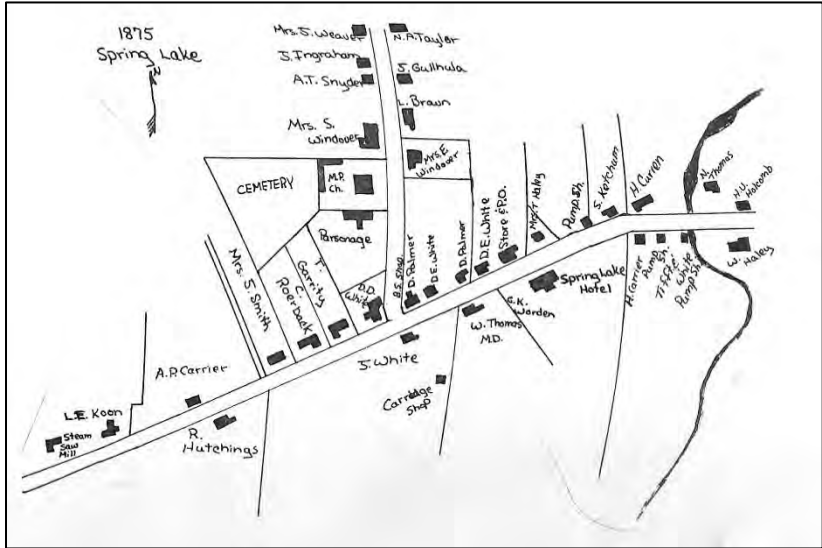
Main Street, Spring Lake, early 1900s. Judson Green was the owner of the general store, which also served as the post office. Through the economic changes of the last century, Spring Lake has shrunk in size and many of the homes and businesses are now gone. (Courtesy Eleanor Aldrich Collection.)

Historically associated with Port Byron or Cato our volunteers raise funds to purchase equipment along with being supported by taxpayer monies. Military service has been a strong tie to our freedoms. Each conflict has inspired our young men and women to serve. Our cemeteries are dotted with flags honoring that bravery. Recently a group of Conquest folks raised funds and sent over 100 goodie boxes to soldiers in Afghanistan. Over the past 20 years an influx of Mennonite folks have been drawn by the available prime agricultural resources. They have proved to be good neighbors in disasters, serve as members of our local volunteer fire department and keep immaculate farms.

Schools were and are the focus of a community. There are currently 4 school districts associated with our township: Port Byron, Cato-Meridian, Weedsport, and Red Creek. Before centralization there were 14 schools in the town, ensuring no child would have to walk more than 2 miles to the nearest school. Some still exist as private residences. Our Mennonite neighbors currently have two schools educating children from ages 5-13 (one in the town of Conquest and one in the town of Victory). Local control was a hotly debated issue upon centralization. At the time, the Port Byron District had a tacit understanding to have representation from each geographic location on the Board of Education. Henry Young and Frank Gilmore were the last Board members from Conquest.

Churches also played an important role in community settlement. At one time there were three Methodist Churches and one independent church in Conquest. Currently, Countryside United Methodist Church (formed by the merger of Conquest and Spring Lake churches) in Spring Lake has combined with Butler and Victory and the Emerson United Church both offer services to parishioners and the community.

Commercially, each hamlet was self sustaining in the 1800s. Grocery stores, milliners, creameries, blacksmiths, carriage and hostelry flourished. Doctors were in residence. Entrepreneurs such as Frank Garrity developed wooden pipes to transport our hard water from wells to homes and barns (an example can be seen at the CIVIC Heritage Center). With the advent of automobile availability much of that changed. Tractors replaced horsepower and small farms began to decline.

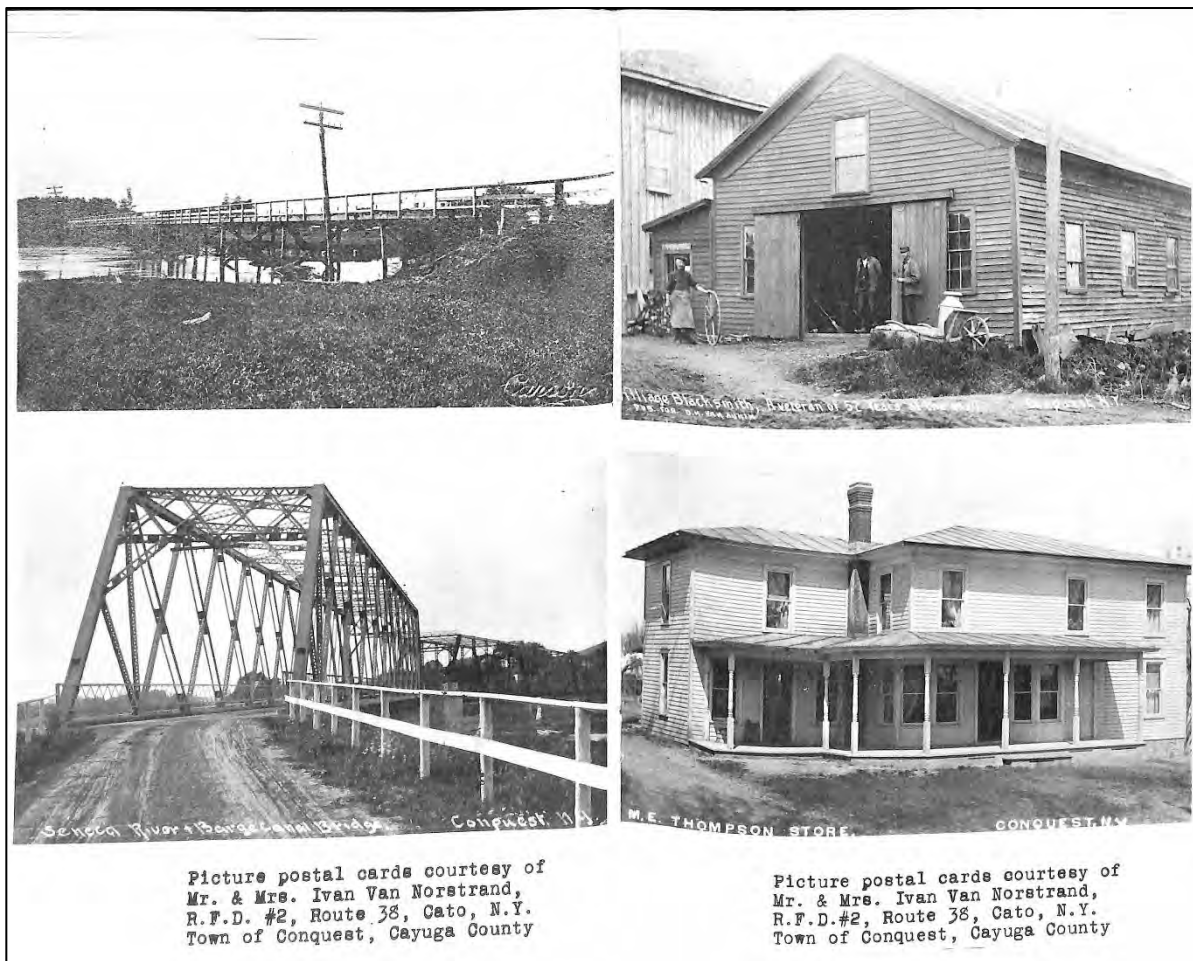


Howland's Island deserves a book by itself (and indeed there are some) as a rich man's playground, a CCC Camp a World War II prisoner of war camp, a Boy Scout camp and premier Wildlife Refuge. It is poised for commercial exploitation - bicycle rentals, kayak and canoe rentals etc.

We have had enthusiastic contests for Town offices. Politicians used to hand out tickets for the Election Day dinner at the local church -- winning office holders shared candy bars and cigars at the polls when totals were announced. Town meetings were occasionally heated but sometimes each motion was tabled! Our current town building is such a marvelous achievement -- previously there were tables set up around dripping snowplows or when one of the used trailers from the Elmira flood became available that is where meetings were held for several years. We are one of the only Towns to celebrate our Senior Citizens with a picnic and recognition on Grandparents Day in September. We have also sponsored an Easter Egg Hunt, summer fun bus trips for our youngsters and Christmas Caroling.

A time when all aspects of our town worked together were the magic years following our Sesquicentennial. Everyone had such a great time celebrating that we all joined forces to sponsor Conquest Rural Fair which ran for 11 years. The Conquest Fire Department, Countryside Church and the Conquest Sno Hawks Snowmobile Club were the primary sponsors. We had a parade, airplane rides, lots of food, contests (softest beard, log splitting, sewing, jelly making) carnival attractions, a community church service, bands and dances. Such a great time!

Famous folks from Conquest – we can all claim some! Educators, doctors, nurses, scientists, business folks, politicians, musicians, farmers, and missionaries. DeWitt Clinton stopped at “Musquitoe Point” on his way surveying the Erie Canal route, we have a soldier born in Conquest that earned a Medal of Honor and botanist Howard Clinton Abbott was born here. Every stone in our cemeteries carries a story!



Regional Context

The Town of Conquest is located in northwestern Cayuga County, bounded by Wayne County to the west, the town of Victory to the north, the town of Ira to the east, and the Seneca River (also the town of Mentz) to the south (**Figure 1**). The center of Conquest is 15 miles from Auburn, the seat of Cayuga County, and 15 miles from Lake Ontario. Syracuse is a little more than 30 miles to the east, and Rochester is less than 60 miles to the west. The landscape of Conquest is characterized by agriculture, sparse rural development, swaths of large forests and extensive wetlands, and the rolling topography of the glacier-formed drumlins.

Figure 1: Regional Context of the Town of Conquest

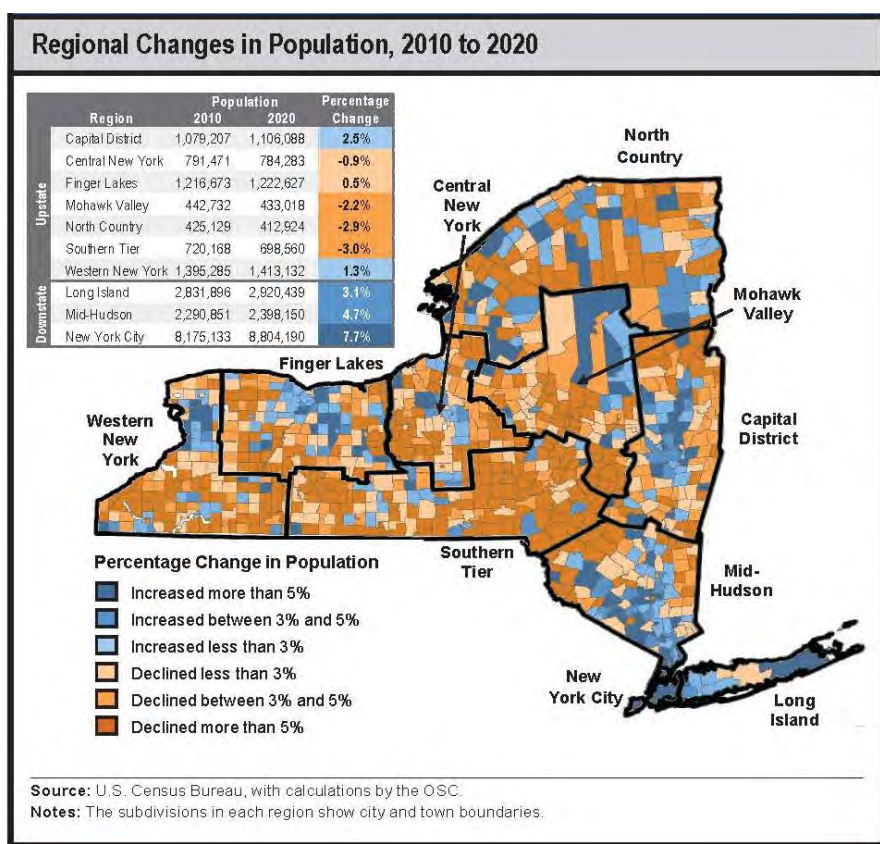


Population, Housing, and other Demographics

This section reports the demographic trends for Conquest using the 2020 decennial census and American Community Survey 5-year estimates from 2016-2020.^a

POPULATION

Following a similar trend as 21 other towns in Cayuga County (out of 23), the town of Conquest saw its population decrease since the 2010 census. At the time of the 2020 census, there were 1,791 people in Conquest, compared to 1,819 people in 2010 and 1,925 people in 2000. Statewide only 28% of towns had population gains since 2010 and overall towns had their slowest growth (1.7%) in 100 years.¹ Trends show that cities generally gained population and rural communities generally lost population. New York's Central Region, which includes Conquest, saw a 0.9% decrease since 2010. New York State's population declined by 365,336 people. The state's declining population was attributed to negative domestic migration, or, in other words, more people moved out of state, particularly from New York City, than moved in. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that the nation's population grew only 0.1% in 2021, which is the slowest rate of growth since the country was founded.² The slow rate of growth can be attributed to decreased net international migration, decreased birthrates, and increased mortality due in part to the COVID-19 pandemic.



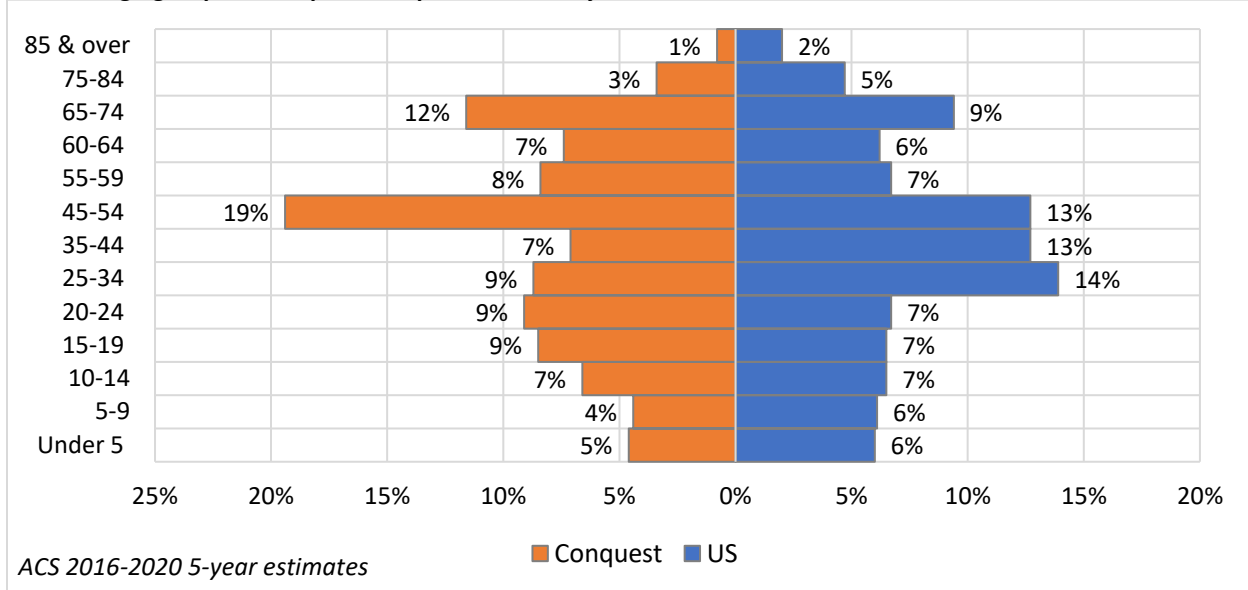
Changes in New York State population by town 2010 - 2020

^a The American Community Survey is a yearly nationwide survey that collects and produces information on social, economic, housing, and demographic characteristics about the nation's population. According to the ACS Information Guide, "The Census Bureau selects a random sample of addresses to be included in the ACS. Each address has about a 1-in-480 chance of being selected in a month, and no address should be selected more than once every 5 years. The Census Bureau mails questionnaires to approximately 295,000 addresses a month across the United States." (<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/about/information-guide.html>)

Age Cohorts

According to the American Community Survey, the largest age group in Conquest are residents aged 45 to 54, making up almost 20% of the town's population. Compared nationally, Conquest has more residents aged 45-74 and has fewer people aged 25-44 (**Chart 1**).³

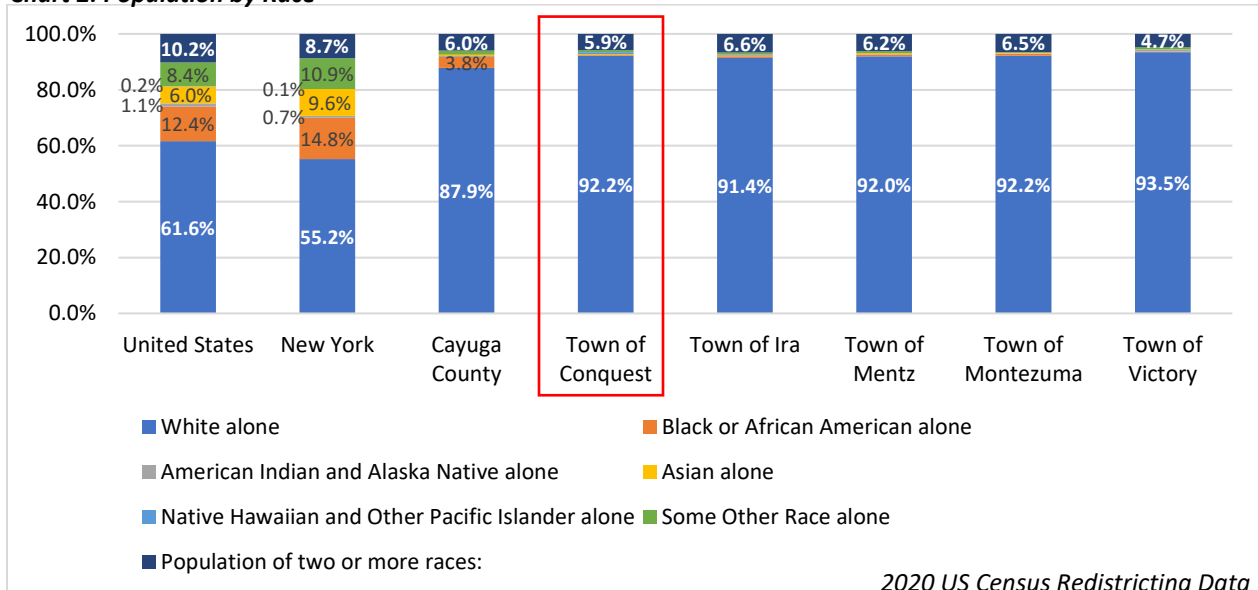
Chart 1: Age groups in Conquest compared nationally



RACE

Though Conquest is not as diverse as the US, New York, or Cayuga County as a whole, its racial makeup is similar to surrounding towns (**Chart 2**). Like its neighboring municipalities, over 90% of the population of Conquest identifies as being White alone, and every other race is represented by less than 1% of the town's population.⁴ 5.9% of Conquest identifies with two or more races, a higher percentage than the town of Victory, and a lower rate than the towns of Ira, Mentz, and Montezuma.

Chart 2: Population by Race



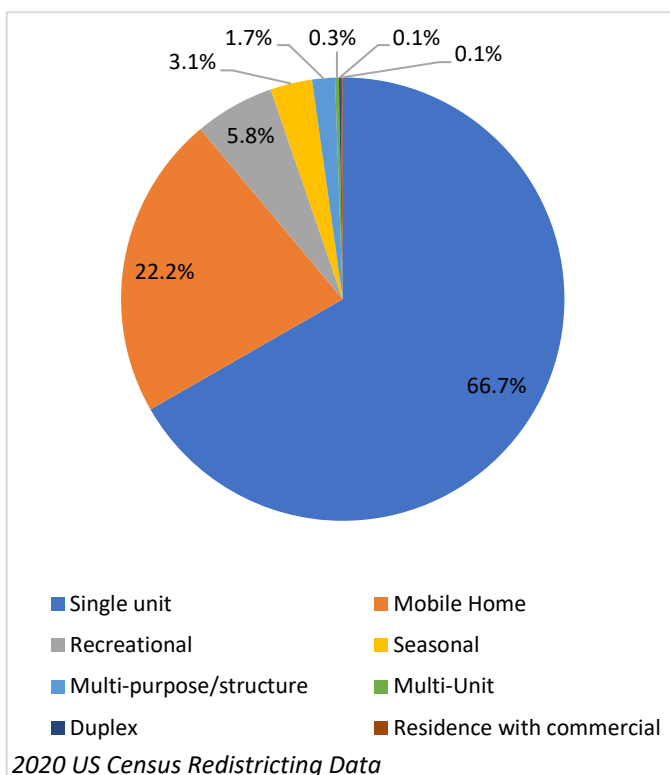
HOUSING

According to 2022 tax parcel assessment data, two-thirds of the town's housing stock is single-unit year-round residences (**Chart 3**). Mobile homes make up over a fifth of the town's housing stock, and recreational or seasonal housing accounts for just under 10% of the total. There is only one duplex and two multi-unit (3 or more) residences in the entire town. Conquest does not have any group quarters, such as correctional facilities, nursing homes, dormitories, or similar group living facilities. Though the population in Conquest has declined since 2000, there have been 23 new housing units added in the town since then (**Table 1**).

Table 1: Housing Occupancy in Conquest

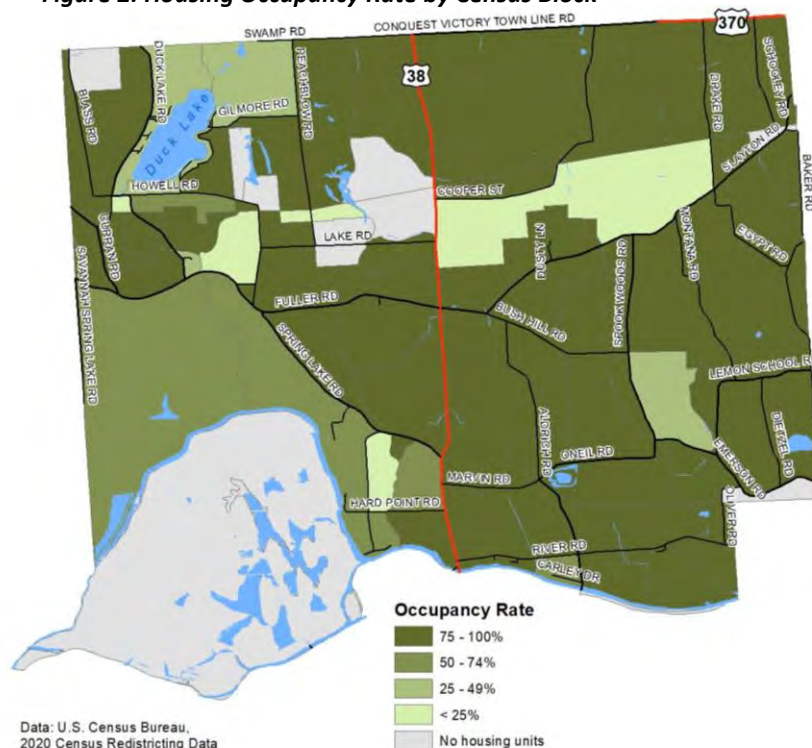
	2000	2010	2020
Housing Units Occupied	665	681	699
Housing Units Vacant	182	161	171
Total Housing Units	847	842	870

Chart 3: Housing Types in Conquest



The occupancy rate has been generally maintained around 80% since 2000. **Figure 2** shows the occupancy rate by census block. Lower occupancy rates near Duck Lake and just east of Route 38 are likely due to the seasonal or recreational nature of many of the properties. Average household size has decreased slightly in the Town between 2000 and 2020 from 2.98 people per owner occupied household to 2.71, which may relate to an increase in units occupied while population decreased. Some nearby towns have experienced similar housing

Figure 2: Housing Occupancy Rate by Census Block



trends. Between 2000 and 2020, Cato and Victory both decreased in population while also increasing their total housing supply by a couple dozen units. However, Mentz and Montezuma decreased in both population and total housing units during this time period. Countywide, from 2000 to 2020, total housing units increased by over a thousand units from 35,477 to 36,660 and occupied housing units also increased from 30,558 to 31,328. Meanwhile, population decreased countywide from 81,963 to 76,248 between 2000 and 2020.

EDUCATION

The U.S. Census Bureau's 2016-2020 American Community Survey (ACS) was used to assess educational attainment among Conquest residents. According to the ACS estimates, Conquest has a higher percentage of people ages 18-24 with less than a high school degree when compared to county, state, and national estimates, however this age cohort is also estimated at having a higher rate of people with bachelor's degrees or higher (**Chart 4**). People 25 years and older in Conquest are estimated to have more high school degrees than when compared to the county, state, and national estimates, despite having lower rates of some college, associate's, or bachelor's degrees. (**Chart 5**).⁵

Chart 4: Educational Attainment (18-24 years old)

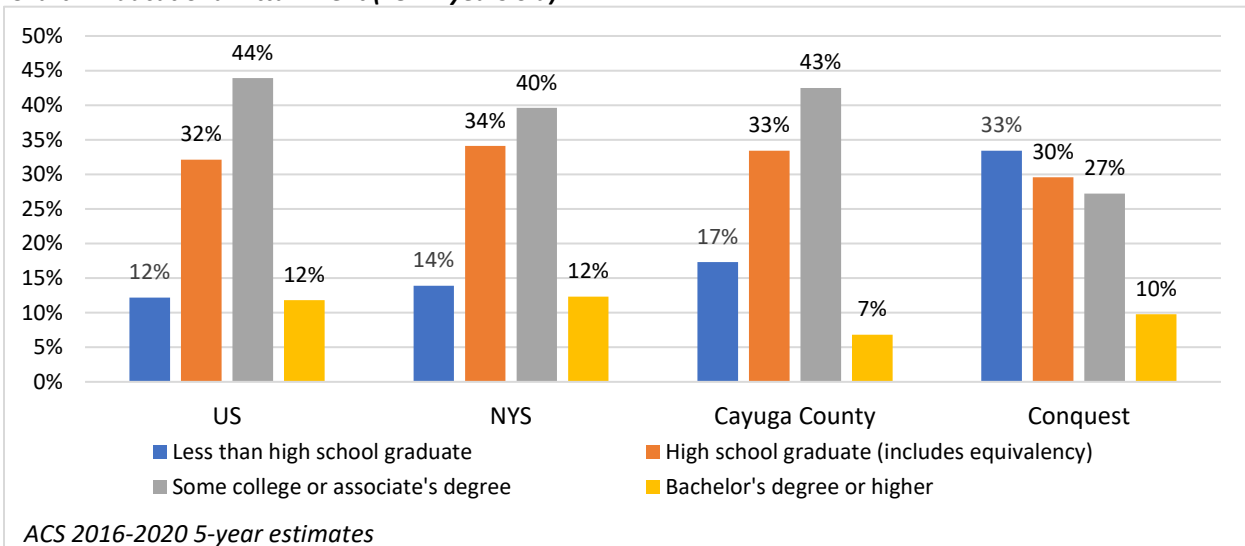
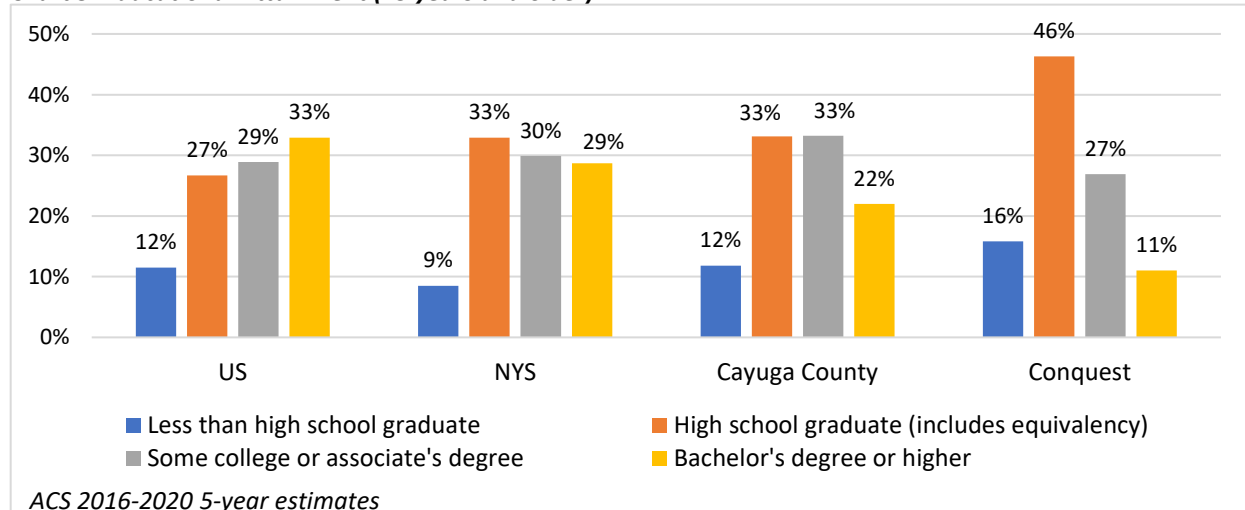


Chart 5: Educational Attainment (25 years and older)



INCOME

According to the 2016-2020 American Community Survey (ACS), Conquest has a lower median household income than New York State, but a higher median income than that of Cayuga County (**Chart 6**). Additionally, compared to the county and the state, Conquest has a lower percentage of its population with household incomes between \$20,000 and \$34,999 and a higher percentage of its population with household incomes between \$35,000 and \$99,999 (**Chart 7**), according to the 2016-2020 ACS.⁶

Chart 6: Median Household Income

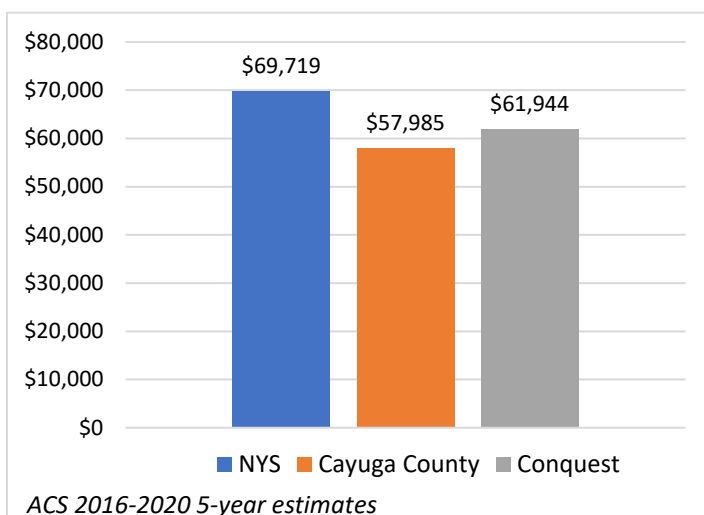
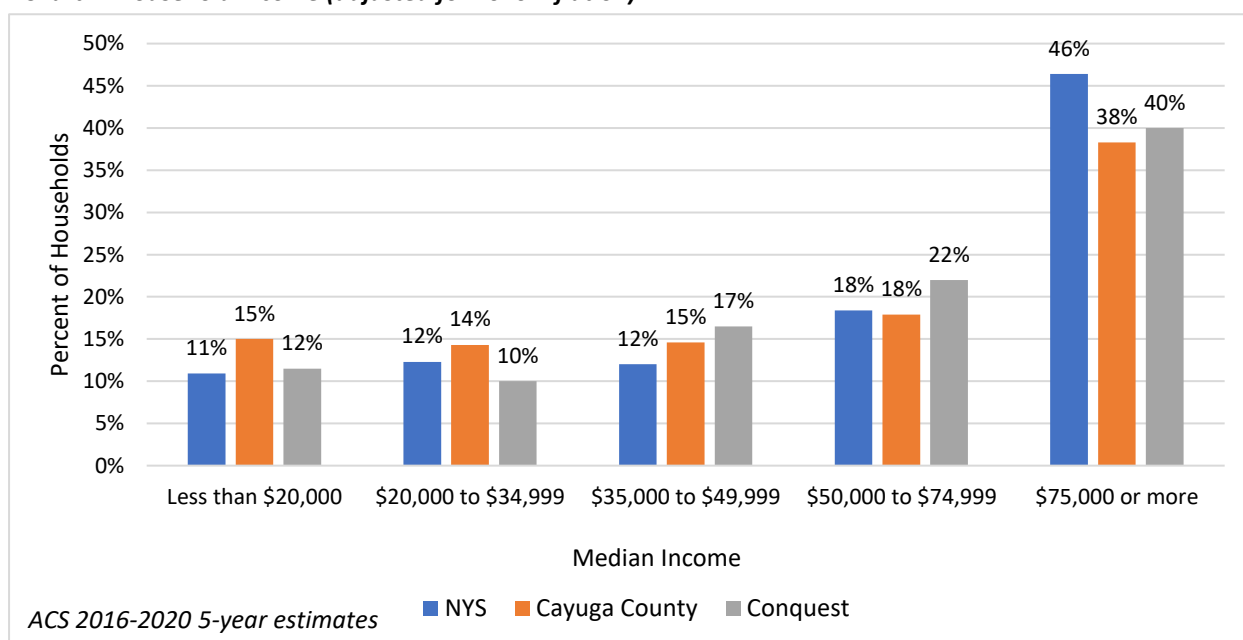


Chart 7: Household Income (adjusted for 2020 inflation)



Housing Costs

In addition to assessing median incomes and how Conquest's population compares to the county and state, it is also useful to understand housing costs. The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines affordable housing as that which the occupant is paying no more than 30% of their gross income for housing costs, including utilities.⁷ In other words, households that pay more than 30% of their income for housing are considered cost-burdened and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation, and medical care. According to the 2016-2020 American Community Survey, 18% of households in Conquest are cost-burdened, compared to 26% of Cayuga County and 23% of rural New York State.⁸ Higher wages or reduced housing costs (lower mortgages, lower rents, lower utility bills, etc.) could reduce the number of cost-burdened households.

Town Governance, Facilities, and Infrastructure

This section reports the Town's governance structure, publicly available facilities, and infrastructure.

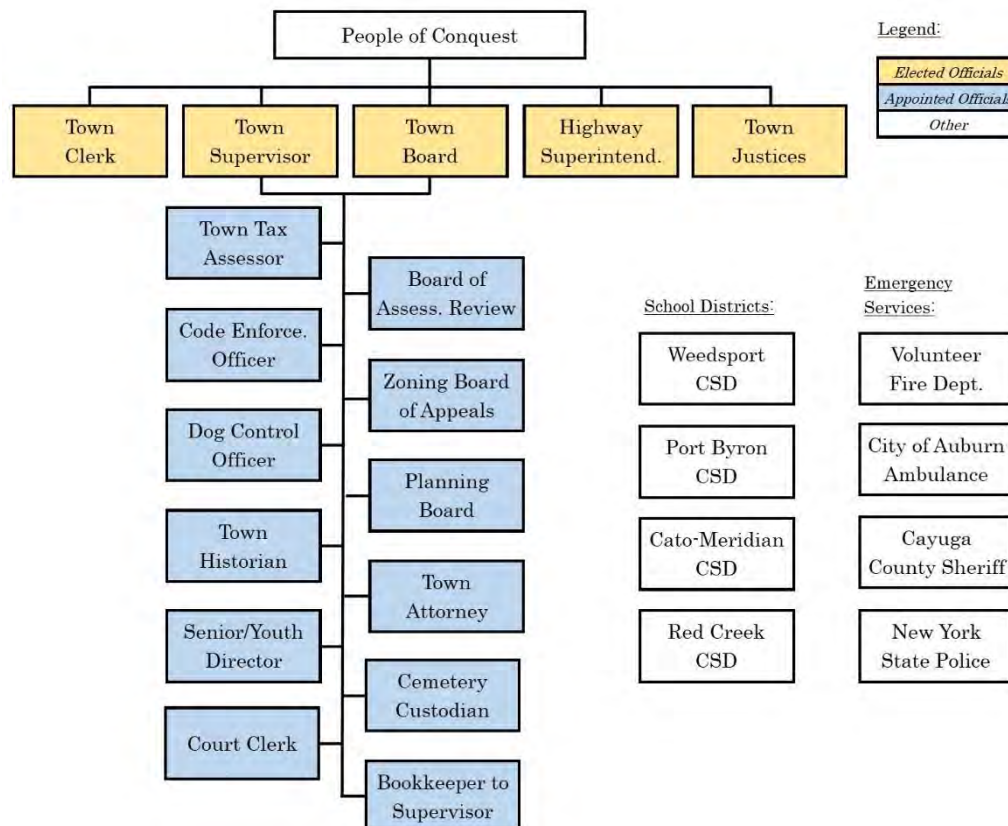
TOWN GOVERNANCE

*"Town government in New York can be traced to both New England and Dutch colonial government arrangements in the Hudson Valley. The state's towns encompass all territory within the state except territory within cities and Indian reservations...They possess authority to provide virtually the full complement of municipal services. By statutory and constitutional adjustments, towns are flexible units that can function as rural or as highly urbanized general purpose units of government, depending on local needs."*⁹

Conquest's Town Government

Like all towns in New York State, Conquest's main form of governance comes from its legislative branch, the Town Board. Conquest's Town Board consists of five members. Conquest's judicial branch is comprised of two elected Town Justices. NYS Town Law does not provide for a separate executive branch, though often the Town Supervisor is thought of as the executive for the Town. The Town Supervisor is simply another voting member of the Town Board with no veto or tie-breaking power. The Supervisor is more of an administrator than an executive, having certain duties granted by NYS Town Law that other Town Board members do not have, such as paying salaries and claims, and keeping an accurate account of all monies. The Town Clerk and Highway Superintendent are also elected Conquest officials (**Figure 3**).

Figure 3: Town of Conquest Organizational Structure



Town Operations, Services, and Administration

Town operations are generally either town-wide or for portions of the town, such as through improvement districts. NYS Town Law does not mandate departmental organization within a town, and thus departments are created and tailored to meet local needs. More information on departments and their roles in Conquest are described in the Facilities section. Fire protection, provided by the Conquest Fire Company and described in more detail below, is not a Town function, but a service provided by a district, which is a separate entity than the town government. Duties of the town's government include:

- Tax assessment, collection, and enforcement
- Facilitating elective processes
- Appointments of officials to positions or boards (see **Figure 3**), and
- General town administration

Challenges and Opportunities

The challenge facing Conquest, like other rural towns in New York State, is that most of their operating budget comes from real property tax assessments, and less in the form of other income streams, such as sales and use taxes, admissions, off-track betting, and income taxes. Providing municipal services, maintaining the quality of life for residents, and protecting the environment are challenged by ever-increasing costs. However, New York State offers encouragement: *“rising costs will probably compel town government to develop new patterns of working with other governments and new ways to deliver services. Town residents and government officials, who have had to respond to similar challenges in the past, will doubtless continue town government’s long tradition of responding to change.”*¹⁰

FACILITIES

Community facilities in the Town of Conquest include those owned by the Town, such as the town hall, highway department, the waste transfer station, and cemeteries, as well as contracted or county- and state-provided emergency services (**Map 1**).

Conquest Municipal Center

The Conquest Municipal Center (Town Hall) is where the Town's offices are located and where all Town boards and commissions meet. The Town Hall acts as the center of the Town, and where most community activity takes place. Residents report how proud they are of the Town Hall. The Town Hall was constructed in 1997, before which a construction trailer was utilized as the town hall. Outside the town hall is a veteran's memorial wall dedicated to residents who served and died in active duty, and behind the town hall is the recreation field.



Conquest Municipal Center (“Town Hall”) was constructed in 1997

Robert N. Howell Recreation Field

Dedicated to the late Robert N. Howell who was an active community member in the 1970s and 1980s, the Town's recreation field is a significant resource to the town. The site serves as an athletic sports park, a community gathering space, and a family play area. The site's recreational amenities include:

- Athletic sports fields and courts for baseball, basketball, tennis, soccer, and volleyball;
- The Debbie Caster Memorial Playground;
- A walking path around the perimeter of the soccer and baseball field;
- Pavilions available for daily rental; the large pavilion doubles as an ice skating rink in the winter; and
- Restroom facilities



The Robert N. Howell Recreation Field hosts a playground area, sports fields, a large pavilion, and restrooms

Funding for the park improvements came primarily through fundraising efforts and donations. In 2007, former State Representative Bob Oaks helped Conquest secure \$10,000 for the park.

Highway Department

The Town highway department, responsible for maintaining town-owned roads, culverts, recreation field, cemeteries, and other town-owned property, is located at 10373 Slayton Rd. The department's vehicles include three snow plows and two pickup trucks. Adequate equipment is important to the work of the highway department. Aging equipment can cause disruptions in services the town provides to its residents. The highway department's newest plow is from 2008 and the oldest is from 2000. Responses on the community survey were generally very positive about the services provided by the highway department.



The Highway Department

Solid Waste Management

The Town of Conquest operates a solid waste transfer station located on Bush Hill Road. Use of the station is for Conquest residents by permit only, which may be purchased from the Town Clerk Office. Hours of operation and guidelines for using the dump can be found on the town website or by visiting the Clerk's Office. One-quarter (25%) of the survey respondents said that waste management should be addressed in the comprehensive plan, and a few respondents specifically noted that cardboard recycling should be



The solid waste transfer station

made available. It is important to the Town that all aspects of safety and user-friendliness at the waste transfer station are maintained and improved upon.

Local Solid Waste Management Plan

New York State allows local governments to establish local solid waste management planning units,^b which then develop plans for their communities, in line with the goals set by the State's solid waste management plan. Cayuga County is the local solid waste management planning unit, within which Conquest's transfer station is included; however, the County's most recent Local Solid Waste Management Plan (LSWMP) was adopted in 1992 and expired in 2010. As of 2023, a Cayuga County LSWMP was in development. LSWMPs are an instrument to evaluate current solid waste and recycling practices within the planning unit in order to set forth implementation steps to reach waste reduction goals. One potential implementation step may suggest to "prescribe controls on the solid waste market in their regions, such as whether to accept waste from other communities, where and how specific types of waste must be disposed, and in certain circumstances, which facilities and haulers must be used."¹¹ These types of "flow controls" are typically found in populous places. Cayuga County is not considering flow controls for the LSWMP at this time.

Garnet Energy Center's Impact

There may be an impact on the transfer station associated with future construction debris and disposal of solar panels and its components. The town should have additional regulations in place to protect the Town's current waste management process and facilities. Future land development proposals should be subject to review so that projects do not adversely impact the transfer station's operations and are open for inspection by the code enforcement officer to comply with the project's on-site waste management plan. More information on the Garnet Energy Center and its impacts on Town resources are described on page 48.

Cemeteries

Conquest has in place a unique long-standing benefit that offers cemetery plots to town property owners free of charge. As of 2023 this benefit is 2 plots per property owner with details available by contacting town officials. There are three main cemeteries in Conquest – Springlake Cemetery, Emerson Cemetery, and Conquest Cemetery (on Route 38). There is also a small, family cemetery on Egypt Road. More information about these cemeteries and their cultural significance to the Town are discussed in the Cultural, Historical, and Recreational Resources section of this Plan.

Emergency Services

Emergency services include those for fire protection, ambulance services, and police protection. In a rural town such as Conquest availability of services is limited due to lack of resources and hard-to-retain

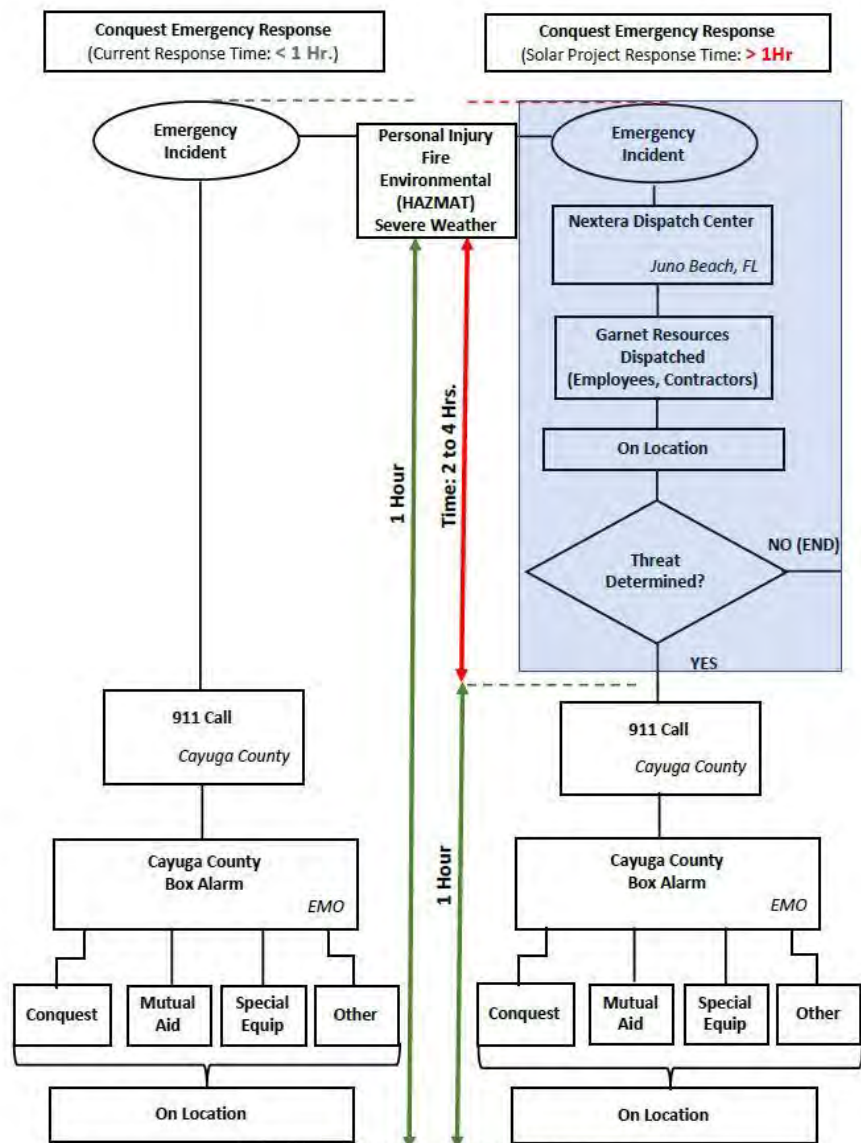
^b A planning unit, as defined in Environmental Conservation Law Section 27-0107, is a county, two or more counties acting jointly, a local government or authority established by State law for the purposes of managing solid waste, or two or more municipalities which DEC determines capable of implementing a regional solid waste program. Plans cover a period of at least ten years and are subject to approval by DEC.

volunteer first responders. On top of these challenges is the concern that emergencies in the Town will increase during the construction of the Garnet Energy Center.

Fire Department

Conquest Fire Company Inc., a privately-owned volunteer fire company, provides fire protection services in the town. The Company maintains several pond hydrants and underground tank hydrants in the town. The department is located centrally in the town at the intersection of Slayton Road and Route 38; the first fire house was located on Egypt Road. There are 25 active members. Emergencies can take up to an hour to respond to currently and concern has been raised by the Fire Department that emergency resources and emergency response times may be stressed from incidents on the Garnet Energy Center solar project development (**Figure 4**). According to the Fire Chief, the department “is already at minimum staffing levels for sustained emergency coverage even without the solar project. The project introduces new sources of potential emergency response just in the areas of power generation, electrical storage, and electrical distribution”¹² and that “the Fire Company is not aware and not ready for the various types of fire such as Electrical, Structural, Chemical, and for fires that could be flameless...the Fire Department knowledge of materials are imperative to fire responders to ensure the proper training occurs and equipment is in-hand to implement correct fire mitigation and suppression.”¹³ Different sources of funding have helped the Fire Department buy equipment over the years. In 2007, \$20,000 was awarded through Senator Mike Nozzolio’s office for the purchase of a generator.

Figure 4: A comparison of the current emergency response time in Conquest compared to a projected response time for an emergency at the Garnet Energy Center (credit: Conquest Fire Department)



Ambulance

Conquest does not have an ambulance service located within town. Instead, the town is served by Auburn City Ambulance. Due to the distance between Auburn and Conquest, ambulance wait times can be long. The Conquest Fire Company previously operated a volunteer ambulance service in the town, but due to the operation costs and labor involved in this service, it has become unsustainable like many other small municipalities to maintain this service. Town Supervisor Charles Knapp wrote an article in the Auburn Citizen in 2007 expressing concern about dwindling volunteer numbers for the Conquest ambulance service, saying “what happens is one or two people take the training and over time they get burned out...some fire departments have gone to paid medical personal [sic], but for a town the size of Conquest, it isn’t very cost effective for the amount of calls we receive...we must rely on volunteers to get it done. We are hoping this is a just a short-term problem and every fire department goes through it from time to time as they try and recruit new personal [sic].”¹⁴ At the time of that article,

“...the number of hours it takes to train (both firemen and EMT) and to keep up with the training is well over 200+ hours. EMTs also must have continual training annually, and ‘recertifying’ every 3 years with the state. They also must commit to time at their local ambulance, which involves not only patient care, but must write out a very detailed report on the patient care. Each ‘call’ an EMT can expect at least 2+ hours of their time, from patient care, preparing their report and restocking the ambulance - all as volunteers!”

-Sue Montana,
Conquest resident and former EMT for
Conquest & CIMVAC Ambulances

Conquest was paying \$75,000 annually for ambulance and fire protection. Now the Town is paying just over \$100,000/year. According to a former EMT for the Town of Conquest Ambulance, “the overall problem in all of NYS is that people are not willing to devote that kind of time and energy, on top of working full time and maybe raising families...CIMVAC [Cato, Ira, Meridian, Victory Ambulance Corps.] ambulance in Cato hires a medic, but that does not include a driver, which means they must rely on a volunteer to drive...More and more local fire departments are doing away with their ambulance given the costs involved. Local towns, including Conquest, are shocked at the costs necessary to keep an ambulance going.”¹⁵ Research into funding and innovative models for ambulance services in rural towns may be a necessary action for the town to consider.

Police

The Town of Conquest, like most towns in Cayuga County, is served by the Cayuga County Sheriff’s Office and New York State police. New York State Environmental Conservation Officers cover Howland’s Island and other DEC-owned land in the Town. The Town secured an agreement with the NYS police to use the space at the town hall to support their rural operations.

Schools

There are no primary or secondary public schools located within the Town of Conquest, but there is one private, parochial school serving the town’s Mennonite community. The town is split into four public school districts, three of which are within Cayuga County and one (Red Creek) that is in Wayne County (**Map 2**). Twenty-four percent (24%) of survey respondents chose to live in Conquest because of the school districts. All four districts are relatively similar in size, with each district comprised of two to three schools

serving primarily rural towns and small villages. The information for each district below is from the New York State Education Department.¹⁶

Port Byron Central School District serves the south, west, and central portions of town. The district operates two schools, A. A. Gates Elementary (Pre-K through 6th grade) and Dana L. West Jr.-Sr. High School (7th through 12th grade), both located in the Village of Port Byron. District enrollment for the 2020-2021 school year was 724 students, with 362 students attending each school.

Cato-Meridian Central School District, located in the Town of Ira, is attended by students living in northern and eastern Conquest. Similarly to Port Byron CSD, the district is comprised of two schools – Cato-Meridian Elementary School (Pre-K through 6th grade) and Cato-Meridian Jr.-Sr. High School (7th through 12th grade). In the 2020-2021 school year, the district’s total enrollment was 837, with 438 students attending the elementary school and 399 students attending the high school.

Weedsport Central School District serves a smaller portion of town, primarily in the southeast corner of Conquest. In the 2020-2021 school year, the district had 711 students, with 332 attending Weedsport Elementary (Pre-K through 6th grade) and 379 attending Weedsport Jr.-Sr. High School (7th through 12th grade).

Red Creek Central School District, located in the Town of Wolcott in Wayne County, serves the smallest portion of Conquest, attended by students living only in the immediate northwest corner of town. The district had a 2020-2021 enrollment of 790 students across three schools. Margaret W Cuyler Elementary School (Pre-K through 5th grade) had 335 students, Red Creek Middle School (6th through 8th grades) had 211 students, and Red Creek High School (9th through 12th grades) had 244 students.

Conquest Mennonite School is a private parochial school located on Fuller Road in Conquest that serves 50 students in first through eighth grades, according to the National Center for Education Statistics.¹⁷ There are five teachers at the school. There is another Mennonite School in the Town of Victory that also serves residents of Conquest.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The extent of infrastructure in the Town of Conquest includes utilities and transportation options available to residents and businesses.

Utilities

Information about known utility services for water, sewer, gas, electric, and internet is provided below. Impacts from increased build-out of these utilities as a result of the Garnet Energy Solar Project is also described.

Water and Sewer

There are currently no public water or sewer infrastructure in Conquest. All properties in the town receive their water from either private wells, water trucks, or underground water storage tanks. There are four

dry fire hydrants around the town and these are available to use by the fire department only. Sewage is handled by on-site septic systems.

Gas

While natural gas is not available to residents, propane and other gaseous energy sources are available through private companies.

Electric and transmission lines

Rochester Gas and Electric is the only electricity provider in Conquest and northern Cayuga County. Electric service lines in the town are mainly above ground. The community survey results indicated that outages due to storm events are a concern among residents. A large 345 kilovolt transmission line with a 150-foot right-of-way runs east/west through the north part of Conquest, and is part of the Niagara Project, generating hydroelectric power from Niagara Falls, transmitted to NY Power Authority in Marcy, NY and then distributed throughout the state. Proximity to this transmission line is a main reason for the location of the 200-megawatt Garnet Energy Center solar project development. As a result of the solar development, there will be more transmission lines buried.



A large 345kV transmission line runs east/west through Conquest

Landline Phone and Broadband

According to the New York Broadband Assessment Project, phone and highspeed internet services, commonly known as broadband, are available to 96% of households in Conquest. Broadband is provided mostly through DSL (Digital Subscriber Lines), which utilizes the same infrastructure as telephone services, and to some homes through fiber. TDS is the main internet provider, but other companies have been installing lines. Almost half of community survey respondents (47%) indicated that broadband is poor or very poor, while only 30% responded that it's good or very good. When compared to other topics, however, only 17% of community survey responses said that broadband availability is of the highest importance topic, indicating that while broadband may be poor or very poor, it's not the most important topic for the majority of the town.

Impact on Rights-of-Ways from Garnet Energy Solar Project

Increased underground cables and pipes from the solar project alone is going to complicate management of the Town's rights-of-way (ROW). Further complication is introduced by ongoing underground cabling for communication such as fiber optics. Collaboration between the solar project and interested telephone and internet providers, and other potential sources (e.g., future water supply) is non-existent. Concerns are with: high voltage power cables; residential power cables; telephone/DSL cables; fiber optics cables; public water supply pipe; culvert pipe; and others. The town is currently active in revising laws/permits for road usage type ROWs.

Transportation

Transportation infrastructure in Conquest includes roads, waterways, and snowmobile trails (**Map 3**). Snowmobile trails are discussed in the Cultural, Historical, and Recreational section of this plan. Public transportation, airports, and railroads, while not located in Conquest, are also discussed in this section.

Roads

Conquest's street network contains over 68 miles of roads, which includes 39 miles of local roads, 23 miles of county owned roads, and 7 miles of state-owned roads. There are also a few private roads in the Town, mostly around Duck Lake, including the seasonal Gilmore Road (see inset map of Duck Lake on Map 3). The major state route in Conquest is Route 38, which runs north/south through the center of town. A small section of Route 370 runs along the northeast border of town. Both state routes are Federal Aid Eligible Public Roadway Systems.¹⁸ All roads in Conquest have relatively low traffic volumes (**Table 2**).¹⁹

Table 2: Annual Average Daily Traffic on Roads in Conquest

Road	Segment Description	AADT
State Route 370	Portion along northern border of town	2,537
State Route 38	Southern town line to Fuller Road	2,198
State Route 38	Fuller Road to northern town line	798
Spring Lake Rd (County Route 23)	Fuller Road to Route 38	692
Conquest-Victory Town Line Rd (County Route 129)	Johnnycake Hill Road to Route 370	419
Curran Rd	Spring Lake Road to Wayne County	417

Some residents report that Slayton Road, Cooper Street Road, and Drake Road are used as short-cuts by heavy trucks to access Route 38 and Route 370, which causes safety issues for adjacent property owners. Additionally, residents report a lack of road safety signs. Safety and usage of roads is main priority of the Town and it is the intention of the Town to continually pursue remedies to address road concerns.

Waterways

The Seneca River, which is also utilized by the Erie Barge Canal, is an important regional water transportation route. The river runs along the southern edge of Town, forming Conquest's border with the Town of Mentz. The Seneca River originates at the outflow of Seneca Lake in Seneca County and flows 61 miles east to Three-Rivers in Onondaga County. There, it combines with the Oneida River to form the Oswego River eventually emptying into Lake Ontario. The Central Erie Canal division of the canal system operates along the river and is used by both commercial and recreational boaters. The New York State Canal System is open from May to November. There are no active canal locks or public boat docks located in the



The Seneca River / Barge Canal from the O'Neil Road bridge

Town of Conquest, however, just across the border in Mentz, there is a Department of Environmental

Conservation (DEC) boat launch, located along Route 38, to the west of the bridge. This boat launch is suitable for smaller recreational boats. While the Seneca River and Erie Barge Canal offer an aquatic form of transportation, they also make it challenging for emergency services to access Howland's Island Wildlife Management Area. There is currently no access from Conquest and the only automobile access is from Wayne County on Carncross Road. The access point from the Town of Mentz on Howland's Island Road restricts vehicular access.

Snowmobile Trails

Conquest has 15 miles of snowmobile trails. The only clubs with trails in Conquest are Port Byron and Cato. Both of these clubs groom their trails within Conquest. Port Byron has 11 miles and Cato has 4 miles of State Funding for Snowmobile Trails with-in the Town of Conquest. This money comes from only snowmobilers, when they register their sleds a portion of the "Registration Fee" is a "Trail Maintenance Fee" and is collected by DMV then funneled back to clubs through the *Snowmobile Trail Grant-in-Aid Program* which is administered by NYS Parks. Clubs must submit documentation of allowed expenses to receive this funding. *The NYS Snowmobile Trail Grant-in-Aid*



A state-funded snowmobile trail along Route 38

Program allocates funds to local governments to develop and maintain snowmobile trails. There are three miles of a local snowmobile trail in Conquest that are not state-funded. This trail branches off the state-funded trail just north of Spring Lake Road and Bruns Lane, and heads west to Wayne County. The snowmobile trails are an important resource to town residents and are one of the key reasons why people visit or pass through the Town. The trails are seen by residents as not only a source of recreation and leisure, but a resource to build on for business or tourism growth in the town. The Garnet Energy Center will significantly disrupt the current snowmobile trail network. As a condition of project approval, the trails will need to be rerouted. For the latest County Snowmobile Map, contact the County Parks Department.

Public transportation

There are no public transportation services in Conquest, however there are regional buses and airports.

Bus: The closest public bus routes are in the Auburn area and operated by Centro, including an Auburn to Syracuse bus. The William F. Walsh Regional Transportation Center in Syracuse, NY is the regional hub for bus and train service, providing access to intercity bus services and Amtrak train services.

Airports: The two closest passenger airports are Syracuse Hancock International Airport (SYR) and the Frederick Douglass Greater Rochester International Airport (ROC). Whitford Airport, a small airport used by private aircraft, is also nearby, located in the Town of Cato.

Railroads: There are no railroads located in the Town of Conquest. The closest active line passes to the south of Conquest in the Town of Mentz. This line is owned by CSX and carries both freight and passenger trains; however, no local service or passenger stations are available in Cayuga County.

Town Governance, Facilities, and Infrastructure

GOALS

1. Ensure that infrastructure is safe, well maintained, and accessible to all

The Town should have a plan in place to clearly identify how the town budgets, maintains, and resolves issues relating to assets and infrastructure. One priority project is updating aging highway department equipment to increase the safety and maintenance of roads. The town should also explore options for shuttle/transportation services for those unable to drive or for whom driving is cost prohibitive.

2. Ensure that the waste transfer station continues to be a high-quality town service, economically self-sustaining, and not over-burdened by unwanted refuse.

The Town should consider options for increasing revenue at the Town's waste transfer station in order to maintain the economic sustainability of this service. The transfer station is a service that could be expanded to neighboring towns, as a shared service, which could generate revenue and reduce the costs to operate the station. The Town should also pursue grant opportunities to improve and update the conditions of the site, for the comfort and safety of workers and visitors. The town should also have additional regulations in place to protect the Town's current waste management process and facilities.

3. Explore opportunities for extending public water service into the Town

The Town should develop a long-term strategy for addressing Conquest's water supply. Residents have a right to clean water and public water can contribute to economic development. However, public water can also lead to increased residential development at the expense of farmland protection.

4. Grow availability of broadband access

Grants are available to improve broadband infrastructure. The Town should work with the NYS ConnectAll Office and regional partners to encourage investment in broadband and pursue grant opportunities. The Town should also communicate to all town residents about state and federal affordable broadband programs that are available to them.

5. Strengthen enforcement of Town codes and laws

Ensure Town laws are being properly enforced. Update and codify the powers and duties of the code enforcement officer and other town officials/ boards so that responsibilities and authorities are clearly understood and delineated.

6. Improve communication in the Town

The Town currently has limited forms of communication to its residents and property owners, relying mostly on information being disseminated in hard copy format at the Town Hall and some information posted electronically on the County's website. The Town should create and maintain a website to provide a repository of official Town documents (laws, resolutions, meeting agendas, etc.) and a means to announce Town meetings, hearings, and general community news.

7. Ensure training opportunities for Town officials and maintain active communication with county representatives.

To foster greater understanding of County operations, the Town should develop a training and communication plan for the Town Board, which will include actions such as: sending a Town newsletter(s) to the County Legislative Representative for Conquest and the County Legislature Chair; scheduling the County Legislative Representative for Conquest to attend Town Board meetings twice per year; and scheduling town officials (on a rotating basis) to attend a County Legislature meeting.

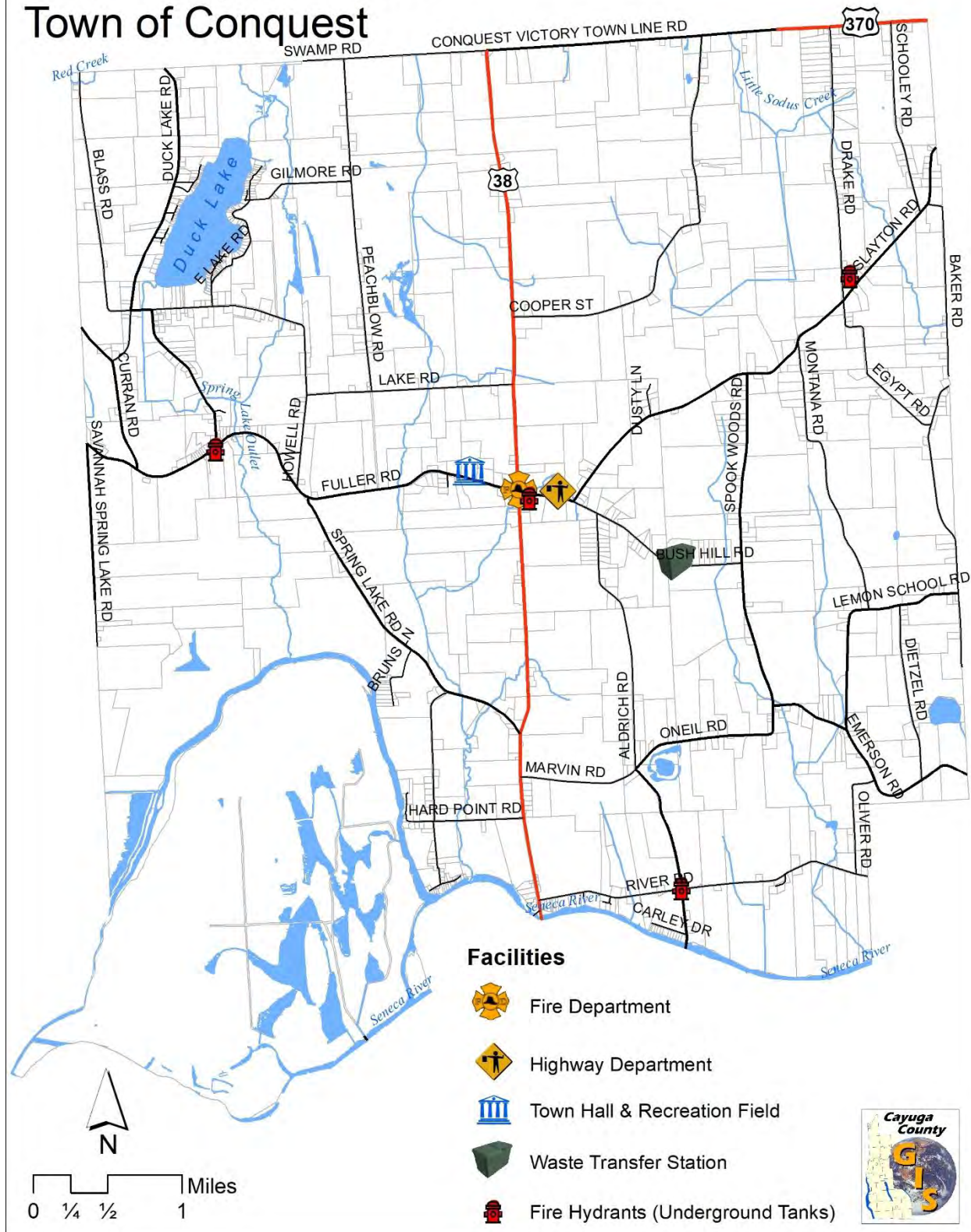
GOALS *(cont.)*

8. Maintain a consistent budget strategy that accounts for fixed costs, annual issues, and longer-term goals.

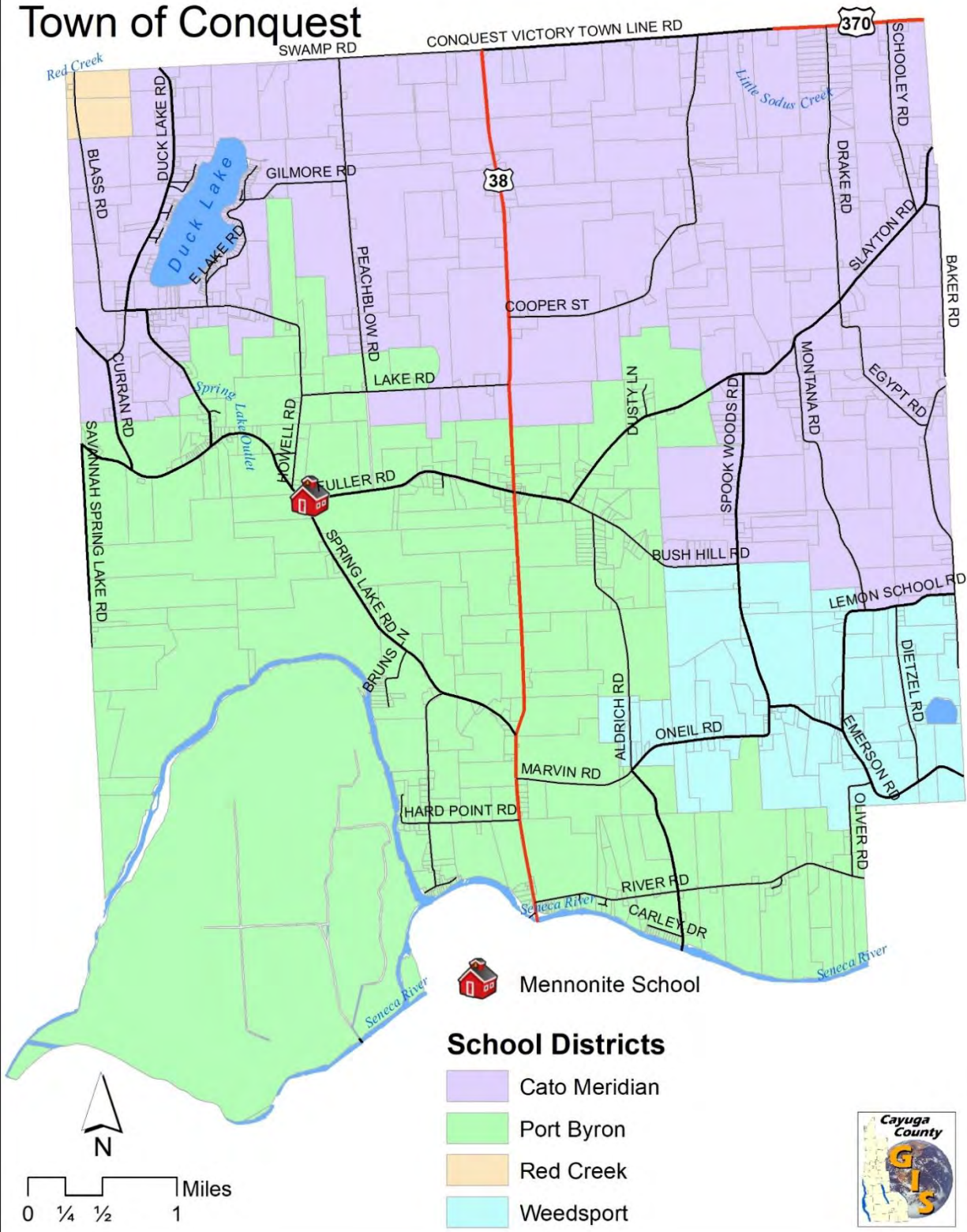
To account for the long-term goals in this Comprehensive Plan, the Town should plan their annual budget accordingly while also accounting for routine budgetary items.

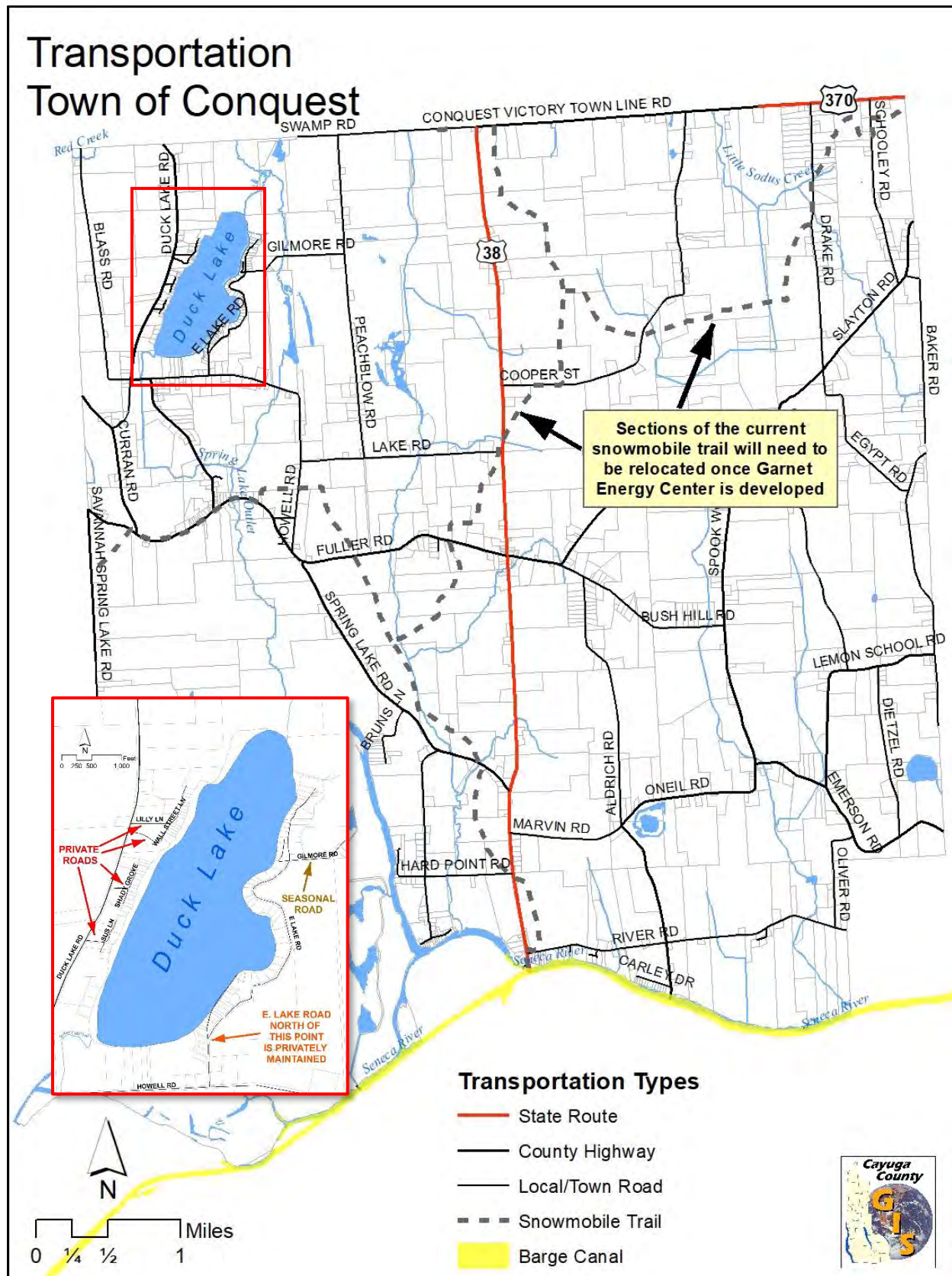
MAP 1

Community Facilities Town of Conquest



School Districts Town of Conquest





Cultural, Recreational, and Historical Resources

This section reports the cultural, historical, and recreational resources of Conquest. **Map 4** shows the locations of these resources in Conquest.

RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

The recreational amenities in Conquest include the Seneca River, Howland's Island, Duck Lake, and snowmobile trails. While a strong majority of community survey respondents (65%) indicated that the condition of outdoor recreation in Conquest is good or very good, there is limited public access to these areas. Currently residents have to leave town to access the Seneca River and Howland's Island from a public location, and Duck Lake requires a fee to launch a boat.

"more public accessibility to natural resources such as water for recreational fishing, boating, kayaking, and hiking."

-Survey response

Seneca River

The Seneca River is an exceptional recreational amenity in Conquest. Unfortunately, however, there is not a public boat launch to the river in Conquest. Boaters can use a NYSDEC launch site just south of the town's boundary on Route 38. This launch site can accommodate 15 cars and trailers. A unique feature of the Seneca River in Conquest is that as the river flows eastward, it splits around the higher land of Howland's Island and reconnects near Route 38. This creates a 10-mile "round river" encircling Howland's Island, making for a distinctive experience for boaters. The Seneca River in Conquest is a portion of the 450-mile NYS Canalway Water Trail.



DEC boat launch on the Seneca River provides access to the NYS Canalway Water Trail

Howland's Island

Providing over 17 miles of interconnected gravel roads for visitors to hike, bike, and ski, Howland's Island is a unique recreational amenity in Conquest. Owned entirely by the State of New York, this 3,500-acre wildlife management area (WMA) is part of the larger 7,700-acre Northern Montezuma WMA, which is part of the 50,000 acres of protected lands in the Montezuma Wildlife Complex. More information about the environmental aspects of this unique area is found in the Natural Resources & Environmental Quality section of this Comprehensive Plan. Howland's Island is a popular spot for bird watching and periods of peak migration will bring immense flocks to the Island's pond network. The WMA is also a popular spot for hunting in late fall. Unfortunately, there is not a public land-based access point to Howland's Island from Conquest. The nearest land-based access points are from Howland Island Road in the Town of Mentz (off Route 38) and Carncross Road in Wayne



The entrance to Howland's Island from the pedestrian-only bridge across Seneca River

County. Boaters can access Howland's Island from a boat launch near the bridge over the Seneca River off Howland's Island Road.

Duck Lake

Duck Lake, formerly called Duck Pond, is a 200-acre lake in the northwestern corner of the town. Residents who grew up in the 1960s and 70s remember the lake with only a few houses around it and a community pavilion on the west side. Now the shore is dotted with over 70 year-round residences, over a dozen seasonal and recreational properties, and a private campground. Duck Lake has the highest concentration of seasonal properties in the town (followed by those along Seneca River), as many of the residents "snowbird" elsewhere in the winter. There is no public access to the lake besides the boat launch at the campground for a fee. The lake is also used by emergency service personnel for water rescue trainings.



Duck Lake from the campground

Campground

The Duck Lake Campground is the only commercial enterprise on the lake. The campground operates seasonally (May – October). Cabins, tent sites, and RV hookups are available to rent on a monthly, weekly, or daily basis. Private showers and bathrooms are also provided for overnight guests. The campground's boat launch is available to use by anyone wishing to boat on the lake for a daily or seasonal fee.



A paddlecraft launch at Duck Lake Campground

Fishing

Duck Lake is known as a good fishing spot with Large Mouth Bass and Tiger Muskie being among the most common species. According to the Duck Lake Campground's website, the New York State record crappie was caught in Duck Lake and is mounted at the DEC building at the New York State Fair Grounds.

CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL RESOURCES

With over 200 years of history, the Town of Conquest has a variety of cultural and historic properties and areas. These resources include the Barge Canal Historic District on the Seneca River, churches, homes, cemeteries, and a former schoolhouse (**Map 4**).

Existing State or National Register of Historic Places

The following properties and areas are currently on the State or National Register of Historic Places.

*New York State Barge Canal Historic District*Ownership: New York StateLocation (in Conquest): Seneca RiverConstruction Year: 1905 - 1918

Summary: The New York State Barge Canal is a state-owned system of canals, canalized rivers, and lakes across upstate New York, built 1905-1918 to allow passage of large commercial vessels from the Atlantic Ocean and tidal Hudson River to the upper Great Lakes and American Midwest and to Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River, Lake Champlain, and Cayuga and Seneca Lakes. It is a direct, albeit much enlarged, successor to the original Erie Canal and three connecting canals, all completed during the 1820s, that opened the interior of North America to commercial agriculture, settlement and industrialization, established New York's role as the Empire State, and confirmed New York City's status as America's principal seaport and commercial center. The twentieth-century waterway was designed for barges towed by tugboats and self-propelled vessels and did not need towpaths, which freed engineers to incorporate lake crossings and "canalized" rivers. In the central part of the state, the route across Oneida Lake, down the Oneida River, and up the Seneca River put the Erie division of the Barge Canal alignment more than a dozen miles north of its nineteenth-century "towpath era" predecessors.²⁰

Significance: National Register of Historic Places

*The Barge Canal Historic District as seen from the bridge
from O'Neil Road*

*Bridge over Barge Canal (denoted "A" on Map 4)**Ownership: New York StateLocation: Howland Island RoadConstruction Year: 1913

Summary: Parker thru-truss over channel with double intersection Warren thru-trusses at either end, 410' long overall, 15' between curbs, no sidewalks. Erected 1913 by Lupfer & Remick under Contract 102.²¹ This bridge is closed to automobiles.

Significance: Contributing structure to the NYS Barge Canal Historic District; State Register of Historic Places; National Register of Historic Places Nomination



*The bridge extending from Howland Island Road
over the Seneca River*

*Bridge over Barge Canal (denoted “B” on Map 4)**Ownership: New York StateLocation: Route 38Construction Year: 1964

Summary: Parker thru-truss over channel with approach decks, 366 feet long overall, 28.1 feet between curbs, no sidewalks. Constructed 1964 on the site of former Mosquito Point Bridge that had been erected in 1908 under Contract 7.²² This bridge is not considered a “contributing” structure to the Barge Canal Historic District, unlike the other two truss bridges that cross over the Seneca River into Conquest.

Significance: State Register of Historic Places; National Register of Historic Places Nomination

*Route 38 bridge over the Seneca River**Bridge over Barge Canal (denoted “C” on Map 4)**Ownership: New York StateLocation: O’Neil RoadConstruction Year: 1910

Summary: Two Pratt thru-truss sections, 390 feet long overall, 15 feet between curbs, no sidewalks. This bridge is closed to automobiles.

Significance: Contributing structure to the NYS Barge Canal Historic District; State Register of Historic Places; National Register of Historic Places Nomination

*The bridge extending from O’Neil Road over the Seneca River*

**These bridges are owned by New York State Department of Transportation. The Route 38 bridge is the only one that was replaced and allows automobile traffic; the other two have not been replaced since they were first constructed over 100 years ago and have not been maintained adequately to allow automobiles to safely cross. It is the interest of the Town to have the bridges continue to be maintained in good and safe condition to allow for vehicular and pedestrian traffic, where allowed.*

Eligible for National Register of Historic Places

In 2021, a historic architectural survey was conducted as part of the permitting process for the Garnet Energy Center project. The survey area included the 2,000-acre project area and a 2-mile buffer around it, encompassing nearly all of Conquest, and portions of the Towns of Ira, Cato, and Mentz. A total of 46 architectural resources were evaluated in Conquest as part of the survey, six of which are now newly recommended buildings or properties to be added to the National Register of Historic Places because they embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction; or represents the work of a master; or possess high artistic values; or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose component may lack individual distinction.²³ Nomination to the Register occurs through a nomination proposal, which is initiated by a sponsor (often the property owner) by requesting and completing a State and National Registers Program Application Form. State and National Register proposals are both submitted through the New York State Historic Preservation Office.

Conquest Methodist Cemetery ("1" on Map 4)

Ownership: Town of Conquest

Location: State Route 38 (just north of 10442 Route 38)

Construction Year: 1860 -1869

Summary: The cemetery lot is located on State Route 38, on a lot north of the former Methodist Episcopal Church of Conquest. The cemetery features numerous burials in arranged rows generally oriented north-south. Some of the burial plots, however, are not situated in distinct rows. The cemetery plots are located in a cleared lot, with trees situated on north and west edges. The headstones are made of varying types of stone and feature varying sizes.²⁴

Significance: A collection of nineteenth century and twentieth century funerary monuments.



Conquest Methodist Cemetery

Emerson Cemetery ("2" on Map 4)

Ownership: Unknown

Location: O'Neil Road (south of 9967 O'Neil Road)

Construction Year: 1890 - 1919

Summary: The cemetery lot is located on O'Neil Road, on a lot south of Emerson United Church of Christ. The cemetery features numerous burials in arranged generally rows oriented north-south. Some of the burial plots, however, are not situated in distinct rows. The cemetery plots are located in a cleared lot, with trees situated on north and west edges. The headstones are made of varying types of stone and feature varying sizes. The headstones date from the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries.²⁵

Significance: A collection of nineteenth and twentieth century funerary monuments.



Cemetery on O'Neil Road

Emerson United Church of Christ ("3" on Map 4)

Ownership: Emerson United Church of Christ

Location: 9969 O'Neil Road

Construction Year: circa 1830

Summary: This is a one-story Greek Revival-style church. It is sheltered by a front-gable roof covered with standing-seam metal. The church rests on a stone foundation and is clad with vinyl siding. The front-gable mass that comprises the church is capped by a steeple at the peak of its roof. The steeple is composed of a square mass crowned by a cornice. Above this mass is a smaller gabled mass, which features a louvered vent in its gable end. The entire steeple is covered with vinyl siding. The church is illuminated by multi-light, triple-hung sash, wood windows. The front (east) elevation features two of such windows, flanking the front door. The two-leaf, paneled door is fitted with pilasters on either side. Above the door is a frieze that



Emerson United Church of Christ

includes a seven-light transom and a gabled cornice. A wood ramp accesses the front door. The church is decorated with signature Greek Revival features, including fluted pilasters that define the corners and a frieze and cornice just below the roofline.²⁶

Significance: An example of the Greek Revival style in church architecture. Despite the replacement of the spire with a gable roof and vinyl siding, the building retains a high degree of integrity.

Schoolhouse ("4" on Map 4)

Ownership: Aubrey Davis

Location: 1764 Lemon School Road

Construction Year: circa 1825

Summary: This one-story, Greek Revival-style schoolhouse was constructed circa 1825. The building rests on a stone foundation. The main block is sheltered by a front-gable roof, while a rear addition is covered with a shed roof. The building is clad with wood siding. Lighting the schoolhouse are a variety of windows, including six-over-six, double-hung sash, wood windows; one-over-one, double-hung sash, vinyl windows; and a vinyl, awning window. The three-bay front elevation features a symmetrical composition. The building is fitted with key Greek Revival-style features, including corners defined by pilasters, a cornice and frieze, and an ornamented door surround. The door surround features a cornice, frieze, pilasters, and thin sidelights. The opening for the front door is currently covered with a screen door.



Schoolhouse (c. 1825) on Lemon School Road

Significance: The resource is recommended eligible for NRHP listing because the resource employs notable features of Greek Revival architecture, including pilasters, symmetrical composition, a cornice and frieze, and an ornamented door surround. The main block remains largely as it was likely constructed, retaining a high degree of integrity in materials, workmanship, and design. The addition did not compromise the integrity of the original house. No evidence points to any resident of this house being noteworthy in local, state, or national events. The property is not recommended eligible for NRHP listing under any other NRHP criteria of significance (36 CFR 60.4 [a-c]). An assessment of NRHP eligibility cannot be made at this time as archaeological investigations have not been completed. The recommended NRHP boundary follows the current tax parcel (approximately 4.5 acres). Setting is not a contributing feature to the property. The property does not contribute to any nearby historic district.²⁷

House in Conquest Center ("5" on Map 4)

Ownership: Justin and Nicole Gilmore

Location: 10430 Route 38

Construction Year: circa 1850

Summary: This is a two-story Greek Revival-style house. It is comprised of a two-story main block, a one-story wing, and a one-story rear addition. The main block is sheltered by a front-gable roof, while the wing has a side-gable roof and the addition has a front-gable roof. The house rests on a stone foundation and is clad with wood siding. The wing is fronted by a shed porch, which is supported by squared columns that rest on a partial-height wall. The house is ornamented with



Greek revival style house in Conquest Center

Greek Revival-style features, including pilasters, frieze, and cornice. Lighting the house are variety of vinyl windows, which include double-hung sash with six-over-six and six-over-one and sliding windows. The windows are fitted with decorative lintels. The front door, located on the porch of the wing, features a decorative surround, which includes pilasters and a cornice. On the south façade is a brick, exterior chimney.

Significance: The resource is recommended eligible for NRHP listing because it employs notable features of Greek revival architecture, including pilasters, a cornice, a frieze, and an ornamented door surround. The house remains largely as it was likely constructed, retaining a high degree of integrity in materials, workmanship, and design. The addition did not compromise the integrity of the original house.²⁸

Countryside United Methodist Church ("6" on Map 4)

Ownership: Countryside United Methodist Church

Location: 10517 Duck Lake Road

Construction Year: circa 1880

Summary: This is a Second Empire-style church building. The building is composed of a front-gable mass fronted by gabled projection flanked by two towers. Both towers are capped by cornices. Above the cornice on the south tower is a Second Empire-style cupola covered by a mansard roof. The building rests on a stone foundation and is clad with vinyl siding. Fronting the church building is a shallow, shed porch, with an extended, gabled segment that projects in front. The porch is supported by squared, wood posts. The porch is accessed by tapering wood stairs and feature wood railings and a wood ramp. The tower's front (east) elevations are illuminated by paired, tall, narrow, one-over-one, double-hung sash, vinyl windows, above which are tall, arched, louvered vents that are the same width as the windows. The windows and vents are set within a decorative, wood surround on each tower. In the front elevation's center gable is set of three tall, narrow, arched, double-hung sash, wood windows filled with stained glass. Above each window are louvered vents. Similar to the arrangement on the towers, the windows and vents are set within a wood surround a wood surround, which is topped by a cornice. The side façades feature paired, tall, narrow, arched, double-hung sash, wood windows. Other features include a brick, exterior chimney on the south façade.

Significance: An example of late nineteenth century church architecture influenced by the Second Empire style. Despite altered exterior cladding and the construction of a new porch the church retains a high degree of integrity.²⁹

Other Notable Historic Features of Conquest

In addition to the properties included on or eligible for National and/or State Registers of Historic Places, there are other, lesser-known places in Conquest that are of local historical significance. These include cemeteries and former schoolhouses.



Countryside United Methodist Church



Spring Lake Cemetery ("8" on Map 4)

Located just behind (west of) the Countryside United Methodist Church, this cemetery includes funerary monuments dating back to the 19th and 20th centuries.



Emerson Schoolhouse ("9" on Map 4)

Located directly adjacent to the Emerson United Church of Christ, a schoolhouse was built around the same time as the church, circa 1855, that is now unoccupied.



Route 38 Schoolhouse ("10" on Map 4)

The Town Historian reports that this residential structure was once a schoolhouse.

A map of Cayuga County in 1911 shows 12 schools in Conquest.³⁰ Some are labeled with numbers, such as "School No. 7" while others are just labeled "School." There was even a school on Howland's Island!

Rooker Family Cemetery ("7" on Map 4)

Located on Egypt Road, this small unmaintained cemetery is the resting place of one (1) Civil War and two (2) War of 1812 Veterans. The 1812 Veterans, William L Rooker and Zadok Rooker, are the sons of Joseph Rooker, a Revolutionary War Soldier of Whitehall, NY. The cemetery is on a family farm once owned by William L Rooker. In his 1849 will, he reserved 4 rods square to be used as a family cemetery. This cemetery includes William L Rooker and his wife Lovina; his brother Zadok Rooker; his grand-daughter in-law Harriet Frances Rooker (wife of his Grandson Joseph L. Rooker); his daughter Hannah (Rooker) Southwick and her son John Wesley Southwick; another daughter Sabrina (Rooker) Prowty and her daughter Mariette Prowty; plus his adopted grandson Francis G Walker. At present, it is not known if there are any additional burials or unmarked graves located at this site.³¹

"The marker is a flag holder, which would have been placed on a veteran's grave to



*make it easier to locate on patriotic occasions like Memorial Day. There are many varieties of flag holders, and most were manufactured in bronze, iron, or a combination of the two. The star design is based on the badge worn by members of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), a veteran's organization that formed immediately after the Civil War to meet the post-war needs of those who served in the Union forces. The GAR championed Memorial Day, and many local chapters (posts) made concerted efforts to mark the graves of all known U.S. veterans in their community. Some posts made a point to place their flag holders on veterans of all wars, including those who served in the War of 1812 and American Revolution, so the presence of a flag holder might not necessarily reflect the grave location of a Civil War soldier. The flag holders were also often placed on the graves of Civil War veterans who were not GAR members, which causes all sorts of confusion. Marking practices varied a lot by community. The GAR badge was designed to look a lot like the Medal of Honor, and it was designed that way on purpose. Prior to the 20th Century, there were no service medals for veterans, so the GAR's design served as a recognition for service that the government didn't provide. The badges were privately manufactured, and in many states, laws were actually passed to make it illegal for those who were not GAR members to wear one. The center of the badge depicts figures that are described as follows: "In the center of the badge is the figure of the Goddess of Liberty, representing LOYALTY; on either side a soldier and a sailor clasping hands, representing FRATERNITY; and two children receiving benediction and assurance of protection from the comrades, representing CHARITY." Care for widows and orphans was a big deal after the Civil War. Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty were the watch-words of the GAR, still used by organizations such as the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War today. In the points of the star are symbols representing the branches of service during the Civil War: Bugle for infantry, crossed cannons for artillery, crossed sabers for cavalry, anchor for navy, and crossed muskets for marines. The wording encircling the central design reads, "Grand Army of the Republic" "Veteran 1861 (to) 1865." It does appear to be an original flag holder, although replicas are still manufactured. There was a GAR post based in Port Byron, which was probably the closest to this cemetery, but there were quite a few others that existed in Cayuga County at one time or another."*³²

Cultural, Recreational, and Historical Resources

GOALS

9. Consider establishing points of access for the public to waterbodies in the Town of Conquest

The Town of Conquest lacks public access to its two main recreational water resources: the Seneca River and Duck Lake. Establishing access and public boat launches, with the input of local emergency response services, are long term projects for the Town to consider.

10. Improve access, knowledge, and awareness of Howland's Island

Despite being located in the Town of Conquest, there is no public access to Howland's Island from the Town. Knowledge of the island and the history of this NYS Wildlife Management Area could be improved through better access and site information.

11. Preserve, maintain, and expand outdoor recreation

Outdoor recreation is highly regarded among Conquest residents, with 65% of community survey respondents indicating that the condition of outdoor recreation in Conquest is good or very good. Conquest should build on its excellent outdoor recreation options for the benefit of residents and to attract new visitors. The plan has identified the following actions for the town to take: maintain and update the Town Recreation Field, the state snowmobile trails, and pursue opportunities for new trail networks.

12. Encourage greater community kinship, collaboration, and stronger social ties in the town

Events and town celebrations can foster a sense of civic pride and improve people's quality of life and wellbeing. The town should form a committee to help foster community kinship through social events and gatherings.

13. Preserve historic places and their history

The Town of Conquest has several buildings that may be eligible for the National and State Historic Registers. Like many rural areas, Conquest has its share of old schoolhouses and the Town should consider actions to take in the future to designate their significance, either at the local, State, or National levels. The town can work with the State Historic Preservation Office to pursue historic preservation status for these structures. The town should also promote the history of the Town and Erie Canal for educational purposes and to promote tourism.

14. Maintain the beauty and quality of cemeteries in the Town

Conquest should maintain the high quality of its cemeteries, including the Conquest Methodist Cemetery, Spring Lake Cemetery, and the cemetery on O'Neil Road, which have headstones and monuments dating back to the nineteenth century. The Town may want to explore options for reserving land for a new cemetery behind the town hall.



Land Use

This section reports on how land is currently used in Conquest. Land use patterns were assessed using data from Cayuga County Real Property Services and the US Department of Agriculture's Cropland Data Layer (CDL). The CDL uses satellite imagery to assess land cover, and thus the coverage of each category may be different than what actually exists. The section will also discuss changing land use patterns, especially as they relate to the Garnet Energy Center.

LAND USE CATEGORIES

Land use categories are derived from property class codes, which are assigned by New York State to provide a statewide uniform classification system for assessment administration.³³ The Town Assessor assigns a property class code to each property on the assessment tax roll. **Table 3** shows all the land use categories and the number of acres and lots for each land use category. **Map 5** shows the geographic extent of each land use.

Table 3: Land Use in Conquest (2022)

Land Use	# of Lots	Acres	% of Town
Agricultural	176	11,735	52.70%
Parks & Protected Land	14	3,770	16.93%
Vacant	256	3,410	15.31%
Residential	711	3,273	14.70%
Community Services	11	42	0.19%
Public Services	2	18	0.08%
Recreation & Entertainment	1	10	0.05%
Commercial	4	9	0.04%
Industrial*	0	0	0.00%
Total	1,176	22,268	100.00%

**This use may increase once the Garnet Energy Center is developed.*

Agriculture

More than half of the land area of Conquest is assessed agriculturally. Agricultural properties are used primarily for production of crops and livestock, including field crops, orchards, dairy barns, horse farms, as well as temporarily vacant land that is part of an operating farm. Agricultural property by tax code does not include residential properties, even if the residential property does include acreage in agricultural production. More information about agriculture in Conquest is discussed in the Agriculture subsection of this Plan.



Farming operation in Conquest

Parks and Protected Land

The second largest land use by area in Conquest are parks and protected lands, which includes the State-owned 3,500-acre Howland's Island of the Montezuma Wildlife Refuge. Property in this category is protected for natural ecosystems or public recreation, including state, county, or town parks, as well as privately owned forest land or wetlands with specific restrictions on use. Also owned by New York State in this category is a 194-acre forested piece of land west of Route 38 north of Lake Road and a 44-acre forested property along the Spring Lake outlet.



An entrance sign to Howland's Island

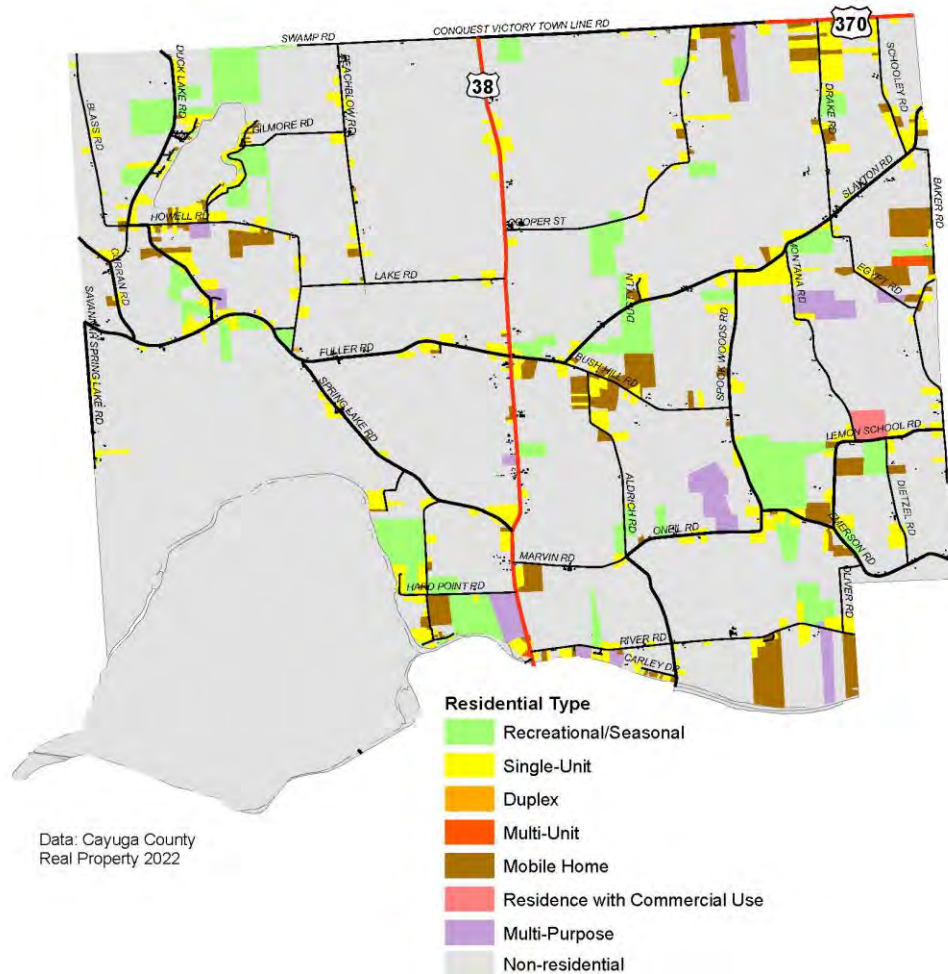
Vacant

Land assessed as vacant accounts for the third largest land area in Conquest, or 15.3% of the total land area of the town on over 250 parcels. Property in this category is not currently used for any permanent purpose or lacks any permanent building. Vacant property includes land that was developed for some purpose but is not currently used, such as vacant homes, empty commercial buildings, or abandoned agricultural fields. It also includes land that has not been developed for any particular purpose and may be forested or cleared, left wild or minimally maintained. More than one-third of the vacant land in Conquest is residential land of more than 10 acres, followed by land that has marshes, swamps, rocky areas, and woods and brush of noncommercial tree species not associated with forest lands.

Residential

Residential property are those used for long-term human habitation. Residential property includes single-family homes, two family homes, three-family homes, mobile home parks, as well as homes with some agricultural acreage or incidental commercial use on the property. There are over 700 parcels used solely for residential purposes in Conquest, which is about 60% of the total number of parcels in the town, but accounts for less than 15% of the total land area of the town. Two-thirds of these parcels are used for year-round single-unit residences, with the second largest cohort (20%) being used for mobile homes (**Figure 5**). Recreational use properties make up the third largest residential group (6%), followed by seasonal residences (3%), which are located along Duck Lake and Seneca River. The remaining residential properties are being used for duplexes (<1%), multi-unit (<1%), multi-purpose (2%), or a residence with an incidental commercial use (<1%).

**Figure 5:
Residential
Property
Types**



Public Services

Property assessed in this category is used in or as a necessary adjunct to the provision of public services. In Conquest, there are two parcels that are categorized as public services. One is a small (0.2 acre) parcel on State Route 38 used for electric service purposes, and the other public service is the 17-acre parcel used for the town's waste transfer station on Bush Hill Rd.



Town Waste Transfer Station

Community Services

Property in this category is used for government or other non-profit organizations to benefit the community, including schools, churches, hospitals, highway or public works garages, and local government offices. There are 11 properties used for community services in Conquest. These include three for religious institutions, three for cemeteries, two for police or fire protection, and one property each for a private Mennonite school, Town highway garage, and the Town hall. The total area of community services is 42 acres or about 0.2% of the town.



Countryside United Methodist Church is one of three religious institutions in Conquest

Recreation and Entertainment

Property in this category, other than public parks, are used by groups for recreation, amusement or entertainment, including such diverse uses as theaters, stadiums, fairgrounds, social clubs, bowling centers, workout gyms, athletic fields, golf courses, hunting lands, marinas, and campgrounds. There is only one property assessed for recreation and entertainment in Conquest, which is the 10-acre Duck Lake Campground on Duck Lake.



Kayak launch at Duck Lake

Commercial

Commercial property is used for the sale of goods or services, including restaurants, stores, dealerships, storage units, banks, offices, as well as multiple use buildings that contain primarily commercial uses. Commercial property includes living accommodations that are operated as commercial enterprises, such as mobile home parks and hotels, as well as apartment buildings with more than three units. In Conquest, there are four properties that are assessed as commercial, making up eight acres or 0.04% of Conquest. These properties are located near the intersection of State Route 38 and Fuller Rd. They include a diner or luncheonette, auto sales, and auto services.

Industrial

Property in this category is used for the production and fabrication of man-made goods, including manufacturing plants, quarries, gas or oil wells, and gas or oil pipelines. There are not any properties in

Conquest that are being used for industrial purposes, however it's possible that after the Garnet Energy Center is developed, those properties may be assessed as industrial.

Utility-scale Solar

In 2020, NextEra Energy Resources, a Florida-based renewable energy developer, submitted a proposal to the New York State Board on Electric Generation Siting and the Environment (Siting Board) to construct a 200-megawatt (MW) solar energy facility in Conquest. New York State's Article 10 process supersedes local land use review authority and allows the Siting Board to review energy generating facilities over 25 MW. The project, called the Garnet Energy Center, proposes 900 acres of solar panels over a total project area of 2,200 acres (**Map 6**). The project was approved with conditions by the Siting Board on October 27th, 2022. When constructed, the solar panels are likely to remain in place for at least 30 years, effecting a change of use for those properties for over a generation.



The project is proposed to disturb nearly 800 acres of agricultural land. Direct testimony submitted by the State's Department of Agriculture and Markets in March 2022 cautioned that "additional areas located outside the fenced areas might become fallow or orphaned as a result of screening requirements and setbacks," which "will eliminate crop production of nearly 1,000 acres of agricultural land."³⁴ Additional testimony by wildlife biologists at the Department of Environmental Conservation stated that the project as proposed does not do enough to avoid and/or mitigate the effects caused to wetlands in the area. The Siting Board approved the project with conditions, including a condition requiring the applicant to submit a Wetlands Restoration and Mitigation Plan to DEC for approval. The plan must include all wetlands onsite, including 'unmapped wetlands', or those not currently delineated on DEC's wetland maps.

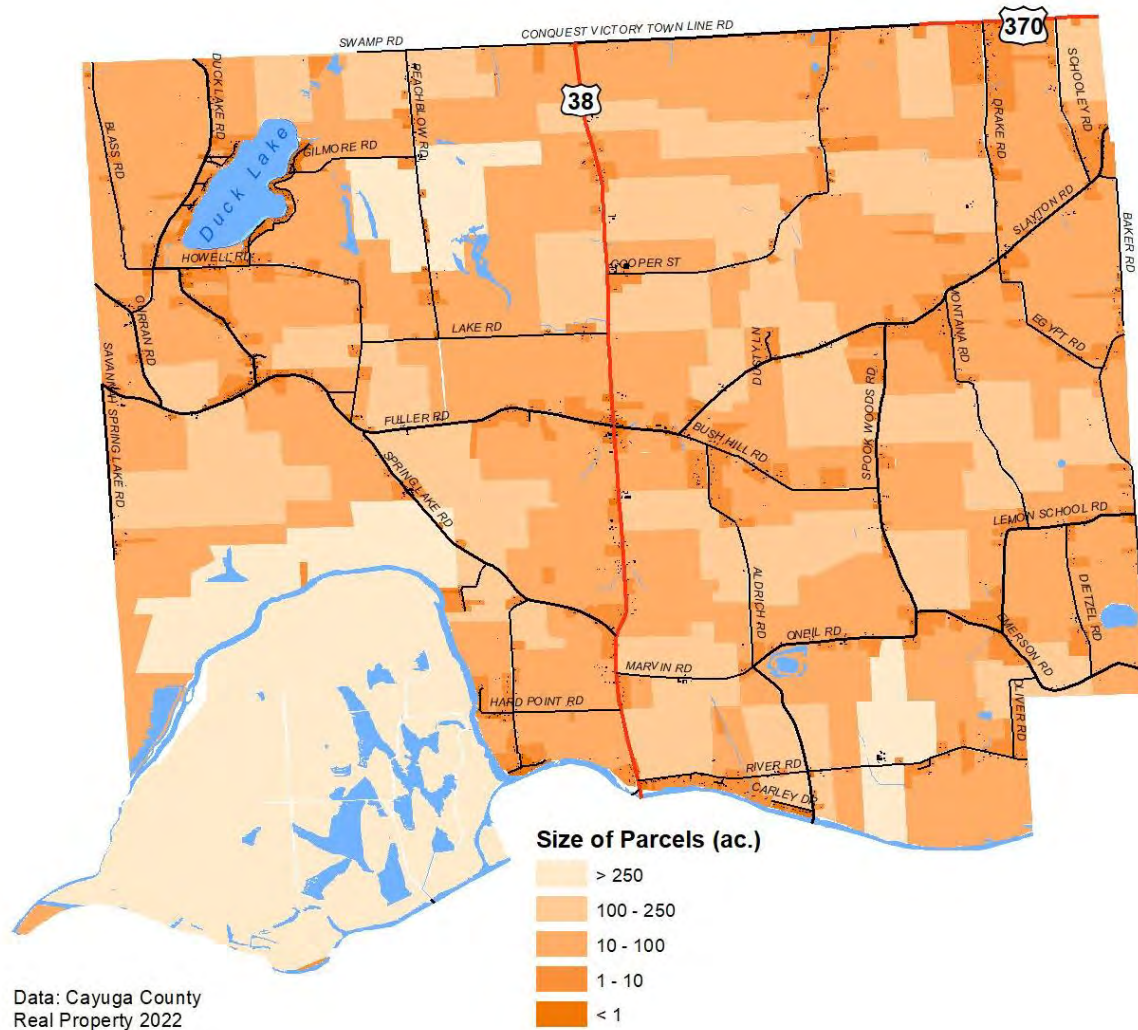
The community remains focused on conservation of agriculture and natural resource protection as its primary land use goals. When asked what issues the Town should address in its comprehensive planning process, these most common community survey responses were natural resource protection (67%) and conservation of agriculture (65%). These priorities were also evident in the public comments for the Garnet Energy project. Thus, with the Garnet Energy Center project approved to occupy 10% of Conquest's total land area, further utility-scale solar projects could significantly threaten the community's vision for farmland and rural preservation, as put forth in the Comprehensive Plan.

SIZE OF LOTS

The size of lots in Conquest ranges from less than a tenth of an acre to nearly 3,000 acres (Howland's Island). The smallest lots are along Duck Lake, which are mostly seasonal use, and the largest lots, besides

those that make up Howland's Island, are agricultural properties. Over time, larger agricultural properties have been subdivided for residential lot development, resulting in almost half of all lots, concentrated along roadways, ranging between 1 and 10 acres (**Figure 6**).

Figure 6: Size of Parcels in Conquest



LAND USE LAWS

Conquest has adopted three local laws that regulate certain aspects of land use development and enforcement. They are a junkyards law, a dwelling and structures law, and a solar development moratorium described in more detail below. Conquest does not have a zoning ordinance, which is a tool traditionally used to separate more intensive uses away from less intensive uses. Over one-quarter (26%) of community survey respondents indicated that land use management tools should be addressed in the

Comprehensive Plan. Additionally, 35% of community survey respondents said that solar and wind development should be addressed in the Comprehensive Plan, and the word “solar” appears 65 times in the written responses of the survey, mostly in opposition to this type of energy development. This indicates that solar development regulations should be something the Town addresses.

Junkyards (Local Law #1 of 1986)

The intent of the local law is “to license persons engaged in the business of operating junkyards; to regulate and control the location of such business; and to control and designate the places and areas where abandoned and junked automobiles may be kept or stored.”³⁵ The law requires a few dimensional requirements. All junkyards must be on a property 10 acres or more in size, they must be at least 200 feet from the road, and they must be at least 500 feet from a church, school, hospital, public building or private residence, unless the residence is occupied by the owner of the junkyard. All junkyard operators must have a license approved by the Town Board.

Dwelling and Structure Law (Local Law #2 of 2000)

Conquest’s Dwelling and Structure Law establishes minimum standards for the development of residential dwelling units and structures. Single-unit homes must be located on lots of at least one acre and 150 feet of lot width at the road. Multi-unit structures must be on at least two acres for the first unit and 25,000 square feet for each additional unit thereafter, and having a lot width of not less than 200 feet. There are 335 properties that are less than an acre in Conquest of which 250 are currently being used for single-unit dwellings. In other words, 35% of all residential properties do not conform to one-acre lot size requirement of the town’s Dwelling and Structures Law. These properties, however, would be considered legally nonconforming uses and may continue to be used as such. The law also regulates building setbacks, density of structures per lot, mobile home park development, special conditions (e.g. churches), nonconformities, and uninhabitable structures. Recent changes (2022) to this law clarify the definition of solar energy structure and implement a permit process for driveways to access town roads.

Permits

The town has permit applications in place to provide proper enforcement for building codes, setbacks, rights-of-way, and driveway access to town roads. For county roads, county laws and permits apply.

Moratoriums

Moratoriums are temporary prohibitions of specified developments. A moratorium must be enacted for a permissible purpose, such as to study and/or adopt a new plan or new regulations. Development of a Comprehensive Plan or developing land use regulations (e.g. zoning, special use permit, site plan, etc.) are all permissible reasons to enact a moratorium. Municipal capital improvements, such as for road systems and water or sewer infrastructure are also permissible reasons to enact a moratorium.

In response to the Garnet Energy Center proposal, the Town of Conquest enacted a solar facility development moratorium in December 2021 to be in place at least as long as the Town is working on its Comprehensive Plan. This moratorium applies to all forms of solar energy development.

15. Develop regulations for residential development that will encourage affordable housing opportunities

Land use and subdivision regulations should be adopted that address the need for affordable housing opportunities, while maintaining a low-density development pattern and prioritizing agriculture and natural resource protection. Cluster subdivisions are one tool that may allow for such type of development. These subdivisions allow for minimum lot sizes to be reduced, in order to cluster houses in one area of the subdivision, while prohibiting development at other areas of the site, particularly within sensitive environmental areas. By examining the housing needs of the community and developing land use tools that address the preservation of farmland, open space, and the environment, the Town can be prepared for new housing proposals and can pursue needed housing development opportunities.

16. Improve the condition and maintenance of homes

The town should examine methods for improving the condition of its housing supply, including new and updated land use regulations, capital improvements, tax incentives, Community Development Block Grants, and other opportunities.

17. Protect the natural environment and agricultural landscapes that give Conquest its rural character

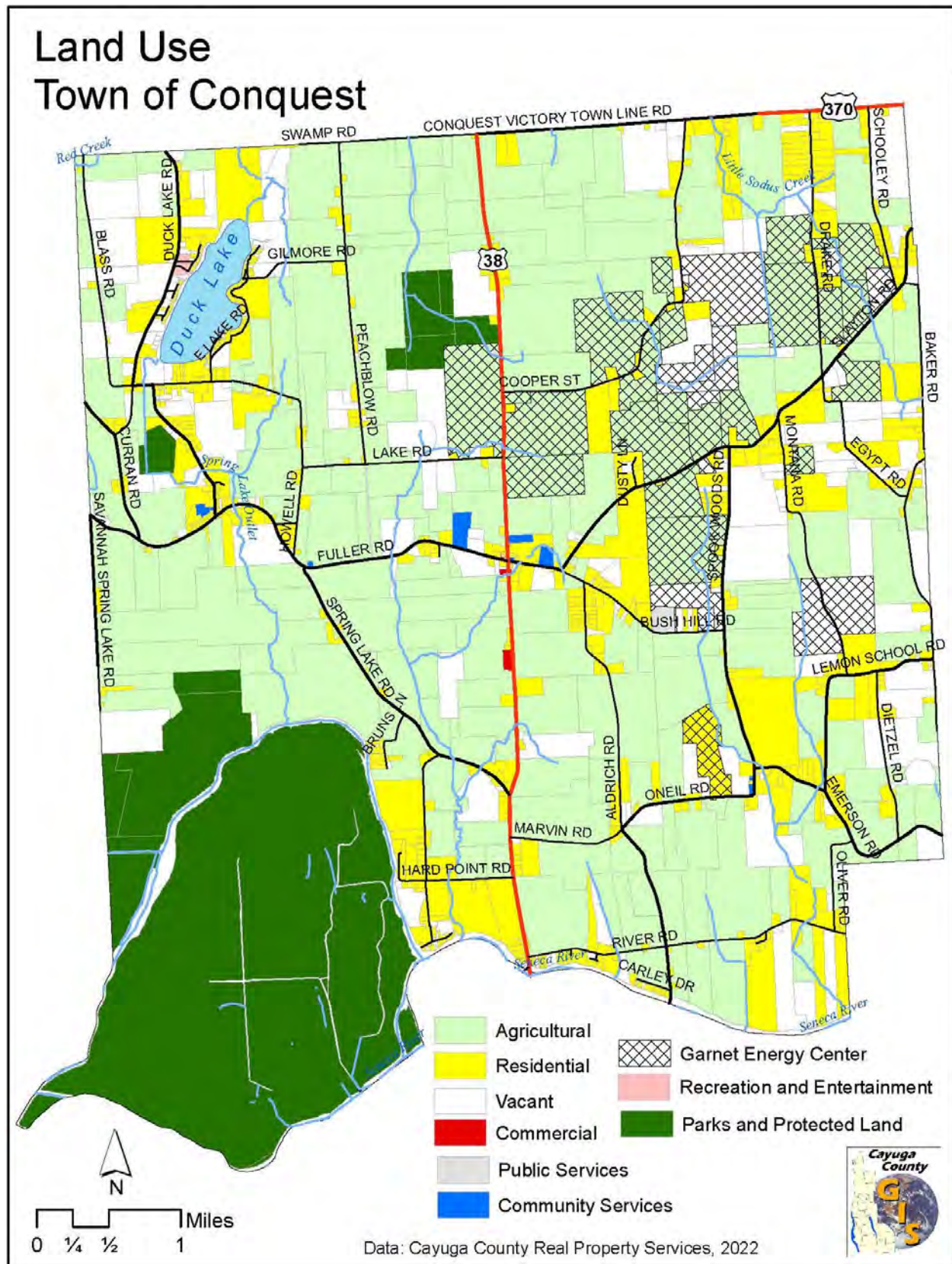
The town should pursue land use regulations that prohibit certain intensive land uses within the Farmland Protection Priority Areas and Conservation Priority Areas, as identified in the Future Land Use Section and on **Map 26**. Land use tools such as Subdivision Review, Special Use Permits, and Site Plan Review may be used to allow certain types of development only after careful review of the development proposal and once certain conditions have been met. By developing land use tools and regulations in line with the goals of the Future Land Use Map, the Town can help enforce the environmental and farmland protection priorities identified in this comprehensive plan, as they apply to new development proposals.

18. Ensure new development is compatible with surrounding uses and neighborhood character

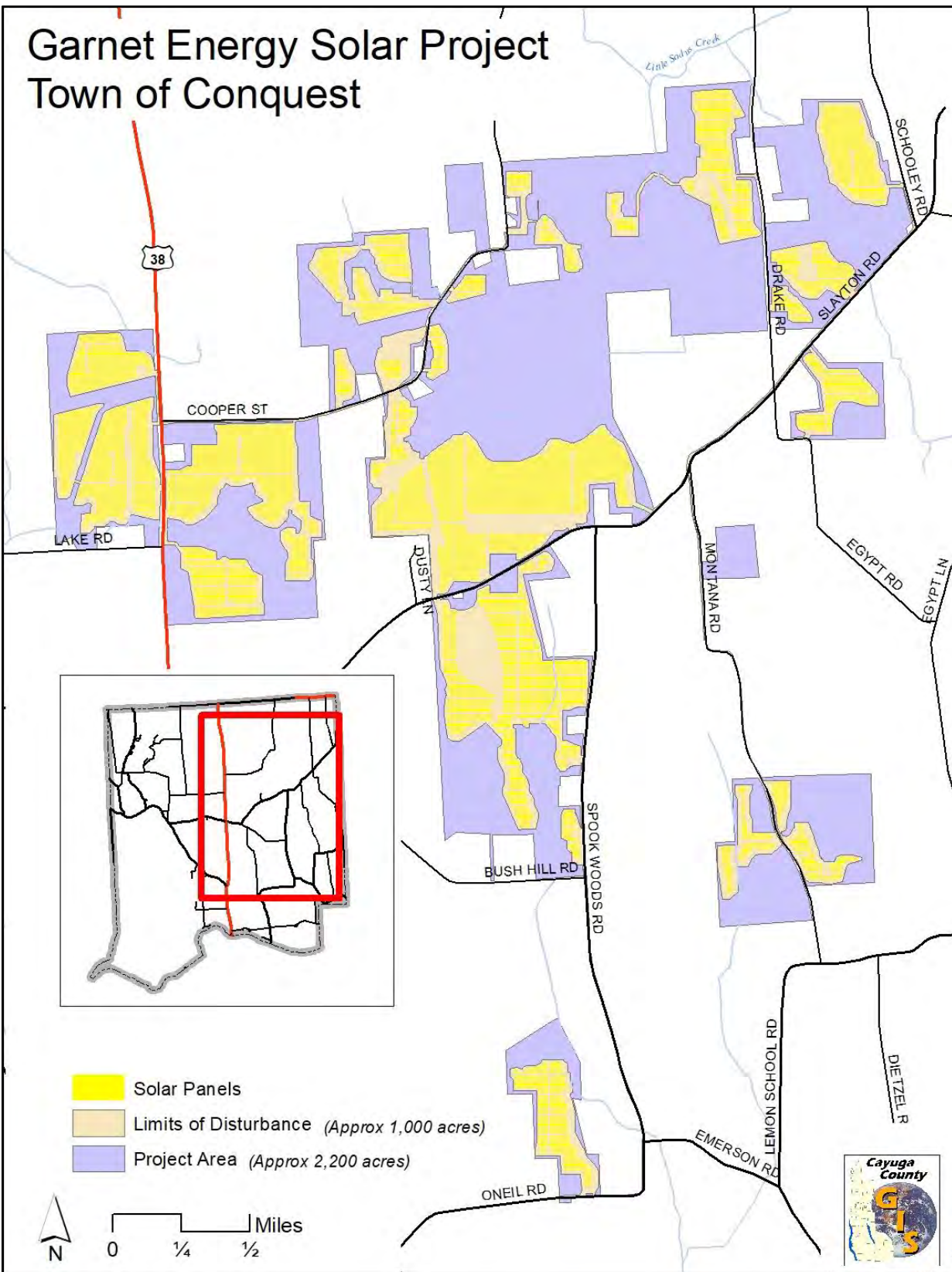
The Town should set up review procedures for development proposals to ensure that future development is compatible with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. Site Plan Review allows the Town Board or Planning Board to review the exact placement of existing conditions and proposed improvements, such as structures, landscaping, natural features, parking, and access ways. This allows the reviewing board to determine the potential impacts of the proposal and request modifications in order to minimize impacts. Special Use Permits allow the Town Board or Planning Board to request further studies and impose additional conditions of approval, and also require a public hearing prior to taking a final action on the proposal.

19. Balance the benefits of renewable energy source development and the protection of natural environment and agricultural resources

The town should develop regulations for solar and wind energy systems based on the results of this comprehensive plan. As noted in the Land Use section, the community has repeatedly voiced their opposition to additional large-scale solar projects, and this comprehensive plan has shown that additional solar development in the town could have a negative effect on natural resource protection and agriculture. The town should further study wind energy systems, and develop regulations for allowing farms, households, and businesses to utilize renewable energy sources for on-site usage.



MAP 6



Agriculture

This section highlights the predominant industry and way of life in Conquest – agriculture. Agriculture and farming are multi-faceted commercial enterprises and play an important role in defining the community. It not only provides the most basic of human needs (i.e., food for consumption), it defines the quality of life and rural character of the community. The section will discuss current agricultural practices at the county level and at the town level, followed by information on farmland protection and challenges and threats that farmers in the community face.

CAYUGA COUNTY

As of the 2017 Census of Agriculture, the market value of all agricultural products sold in Cayuga County was \$287 million, the second highest value per county in New York State. The County has the highest soybean production of any other New York county, and also ranks second to all other counties for the sales of: grains, oil seeds, dry beans, dry peas; cattle and calves; and milk from cows. The value of sales per farm varies widely between less than \$2,500 (29% of farms) to over \$100,000 (26% of farms) (**Table 4**). The County produced 5% of all state agriculture sales with 76% of those shares coming from livestock, poultry, and products, and the remaining 24% coming from sales of crops. There were 842 operating farms in the County at the time of the 2017 Census of Agriculture, with the majority of those farms between 10 and 179 acres (**Table 5**).

25%
of survey respondents said that
*agriculture is the most important
topic in the Town*

30%
of survey respondents said that
*agriculture is the reason they live
in Conquest*

65%
of survey respondents said that
*conservation of agricultural land
should be addressed by the
Comprehensive Plan.*

Table 4: Farms by Value of Sales

	Number	% of Total
Less than \$2,500	241	29%
\$2,500 to \$4,999	53	6%
\$5,000 to \$9,999	74	9%
\$10,000 to \$24,999	113	13%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	78	9%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	64	8%
\$100,000 or more	219	26%

Table 5: Farms by Size

	Number	% of Total
1 to 9 acres	117	14%
10 to 49 acres	209	25%
50 to 179 acres	260	31%
180 to 499 acres	153	18%
500 to 999 acres	47	6%
1,000 + acres	56	7%

AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT NO. 5

As of 2021, there were over 360,000 acres in the Cayuga County Agricultural District No. 5, of which over 240,000 acres are actively farmed (**Table 6**). An Agricultural District is a mechanism granted through New York's Agriculture and Markets Law to protect and promote the availability of agricultural land. The law requires coordination of local planning or land-use

Table 6: Cayuga County Agriculture

Total acres in Agricultural District 5	360,325
Total number of parcels	15,562
Total acres in farms	242,525
Total acres in active ag use	193,503
% of district in active ag use	54%

2021 Annual inclusion of Viable Ag Land Report

decision making with the agricultural districts program so that local laws, resolutions, policies, or ordinances do not unreasonably restrict or regulate farm practices. There is currently one NYS Agricultural District in Cayuga County, officially known as Cayuga County Agricultural District No. 5.

CONQUEST

There are 736 parcels in Conquest included in the Cayuga County Agricultural District, covering 17,952 acres, or 77% of the entire town (**Map 7**). Not all of this land is being assessed as agriculture or used as farmland. There are currently over 11,700 acres assessed as agriculture in Conquest, of which a little more than 8,500 acres are being actively farmed according to 2020 cropland data from the US Department of Agriculture (**Table 7**), which is approximately 4% of the total actively farmed land in the County.

Farms in Conquest are used mostly for dairy and field crops with some truck crops. The top two crops in Conquest are corn and soybeans, compared to those of the County, which are corn and alfalfa. As of 2014, there were 10 dairy farms, which also may include field crops; 12 field crop farms, which include silage, soybean, hay, feed grain, and other similar crops; eight specialty crop farms in 2014, which include vegetables, fruits, honey, maple syrup, Christmas trees, nurseries, and similar operations; four farm service or supply facilities, including grain elevators, equipment sales and repair, and specialty support; and four retailers of local agricultural goods.³⁶ According to the cropland data layer, other crop types that are not found in Conquest, but found elsewhere in the County include potatoes, barley, squash, hops, and cabbage. See **Map 8** for the extent of active agriculture in Conquest.

Table 7: Top five cropland types in Conquest as of 2020³⁷

Cropland	Acreage		% of County
	Conquest	County	
Corn	3,327	76,126	4.3%
Soybeans	2,387	34,860	6.8%
Alfalfa	1,129	45,288	2.4%
Grassland/Pasture	1,024	31,451	3.2%
Other Hay/Non-Alfalfa	550	17,908	3.0%
Other Crops ^c	239	8,596	2.8%
Total	8,534	219,632	4%

The current state of agriculture described in this section provides important baseline data that the Town can use for future planning and potential land use regulation. It is important that the Town establish acreage targets (e.g., range of acres, percent of total land) to maintain or increase agriculture acreage. With a baseline to begin with, the Town can monitor for how agriculture acreage targets are negatively impacted by both small increments over time (chronic) and by large impacts in a short period (acute). One example is the impact that a 2,200-acre solar project area will have on prime farmland in Conquest.

^c Other crops in Conquest include (from most to least acreage): winter wheat, onions, apples, oats, sorghum, dry beans, rye, clover/wildflowers, grapes, Christmas trees, triticale, cherries, pears, sod/grass seed, pumpkins, sunflowers, sweet corn, peas, and carrots. There are 5,403 acres of these crops throughout the County, plus an additional 3,193 acres of other crops not grown in Conquest that are grown elsewhere in the County.

Agricultural Land Suitability

Thirty percent (30%) of Conquest's total acreage is categorized as prime farmland with an additional fourteen percent (14%) as farmland of statewide importance according to the Natural Resource Conservation Service (**Table 8**). Conquest has approximately 4% of the County's prime farmland and 3% of the County's farmland of statewide importance. See **Map 9** for the extent of prime farmland and farmland of statewide importance in Conquest.

Table 8: Soils Classification³⁸

Prime Ag Soil Classification	Total Acres	% of Total Acreage in Conquest	% of Total Ag Soil Classification in County
All areas are prime farmland	7,039	30%	4%
Farmland of statewide importance	3,306	14%	3%

The prime farmland and farmland of statewide importance designations are defined by the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service as part of their inventory of land under agricultural production. Prime farmland refers to "land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and is available for these uses."³⁹ Prime farmland generally has dependable moisture supply, favorable temperature and growing season, and acceptable soil PH. It is not frequently flooded during the growing season and is not easily erodible. Farmland of statewide importance categorizes soils that are almost as productive as prime farmland but lack some of the land characteristics and soil attributes of prime farmland.

The loss of prime farmland can put pressure on other lands that are less productive and more susceptible to drought and erosion. With the development of the Garnet Energy Center, nearly 1,000 acres of prime farmland and farmland of statewide importance will be taken out of production for at least the life of the solar development. This is a nearly 10% reduction in prime farmland and farmland of statewide importance in the Town.

FARMLAND PROTECTION

Municipalities can play an active role in the protection of their community's farmland by using laws, policies and programs that foster a vibrant agricultural economy and seek to limit the conversion of land from agricultural uses to non-agricultural uses caused by development pressures and use conflicts. Examples of these tools include the Cayuga County Agricultural District, agricultural value assessments, local and state right-to-farm laws, infrastructure support, economic development, conservation easements and land use planning that is sensitive to the needs of farms and agriculturally based businesses. In 2014, Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development prepared a Suitability of Parcels for Farmland Protection Map for the Town of Conquest (**Map 10**). Information from this analysis can be used by the Town to develop a Farmland Protection Plan.

Purchase of Development Rights

Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) is a state-funded competitive program to protect highest quality farmland facing highest risk of conversion. Inclusion of a property in the PDR program places a deed restriction, known as a conservation easement, on productive farmland after the property owner voluntarily sells his or her right to develop that land for nonagricultural uses. Farmers who choose to participate in this type of program are financially compensated for their development rights and help ensure that their land will be available to future generations of farmers regardless of future ownership. There are no farms in Conquest included in the Purchase of Development Rights Program.

Right-to-farm

Right-to-farm laws are enacted to limit the circumstances under which farming may be deemed to be a nuisance and to allow agricultural practices inherent to and necessary for the business of farming to proceed and be undertaken free of unreasonable and unwarranted interference or restriction. In other words, right-to-farm laws generally protect farming operations from nuisance lawsuits. The State already has a right-to-farm law that protects farming in designated agricultural districts from nuisance claims, but local legislation can make the process of settling a nuisance claim easier and less costly. Conquest does not have a right-to-farm law.

RESOURCES FOR FARMERS

The Agricultural Non-point Source Abatement and Control Program awards water quality protection projects that focus on environmental planning and best management practice systems. Projects include conservation measures, such as nutrient management through manure storage, vegetative buffers along streams, and conservation cover crops. The program is a competitive grant program, with funds applied for and awarded through county Soil and Water Conservation Districts. State funds come from the New York State Environmental Protection Fund. Grants can cost-share up to 75% of project costs or more if farmers contribute in the following two areas:

1. Planning: funds awarded to conduct environmental planning
2. Implementation: funds awarded to construct or apply management practices

Farms in Conquest, and generally in northern Cayuga County, are underserved due to established priorities in relevant State grants. In contrast, farms further south in the Owasco Lake and Cayuga Lake watersheds are given higher priority for State funding opportunities, as both these lakes are drinking water sources. As a result, there's less involvement from the Department of Environmental Conservation in Conquest, which means less attention given to issues such as stormwater quality, which also means lack of understanding of the levels of sediments and nutrients in the water.

Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) is a cooperative interagency program that provides one-on-one help to farmers to identify environmental risks on their farms. Once these risks are identified, farmers receive help with solution planning and design and with obtaining financial assistance to address existing problems and prevent future ones. The Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District administers programs through staff and various groups associated with the interagency AEM Steering Committee. AEM is a voluntary, incentive-based program that helps farmers make common-sense, cost-effective, and science-based decisions to meet business objectives while protecting and conserving New York State's natural resources. By participating in AEM, farmers can document their environmental stewardship and further advance their positive contributions to their communities, our food systems, the economy, and the environment. Farmers work with local AEM resource professionals to develop comprehensive farm plans using a tiered process:

- Tier 1 – Inventory current activities, future plans, and potential environmental concerns.
- Tier 2 – Document current land stewardship; assess and prioritize areas of concern.
- Tier 3 – Develop conservation plans addressing concerns and opportunities tailored to farm goals.
- Tier 4 – Implement plans utilizing available financial, educational, and technical assistance.
- Tier 5 – Evaluate to ensure the protection of the environment and farm viability

20. Protect and preserve farmland and farming operations

Farmland protection is highly prioritized in the community's future land use vision. Land use regulations and policies should clearly serve the purpose of promoting farming and retaining high quality farmland for agricultural uses. The town should consider adopting local versions of state and county farmland protection measures, such as a Farmland Protection Plan and Right-to-Farm Law. It is in the interest of the town to maintain its highest quality soils, by monitoring farmland in production classified as either prime farmland or farmland of statewide importance and to prioritize no net loss of either classification.

21. Enhance and incentivize growth of the local agricultural economy

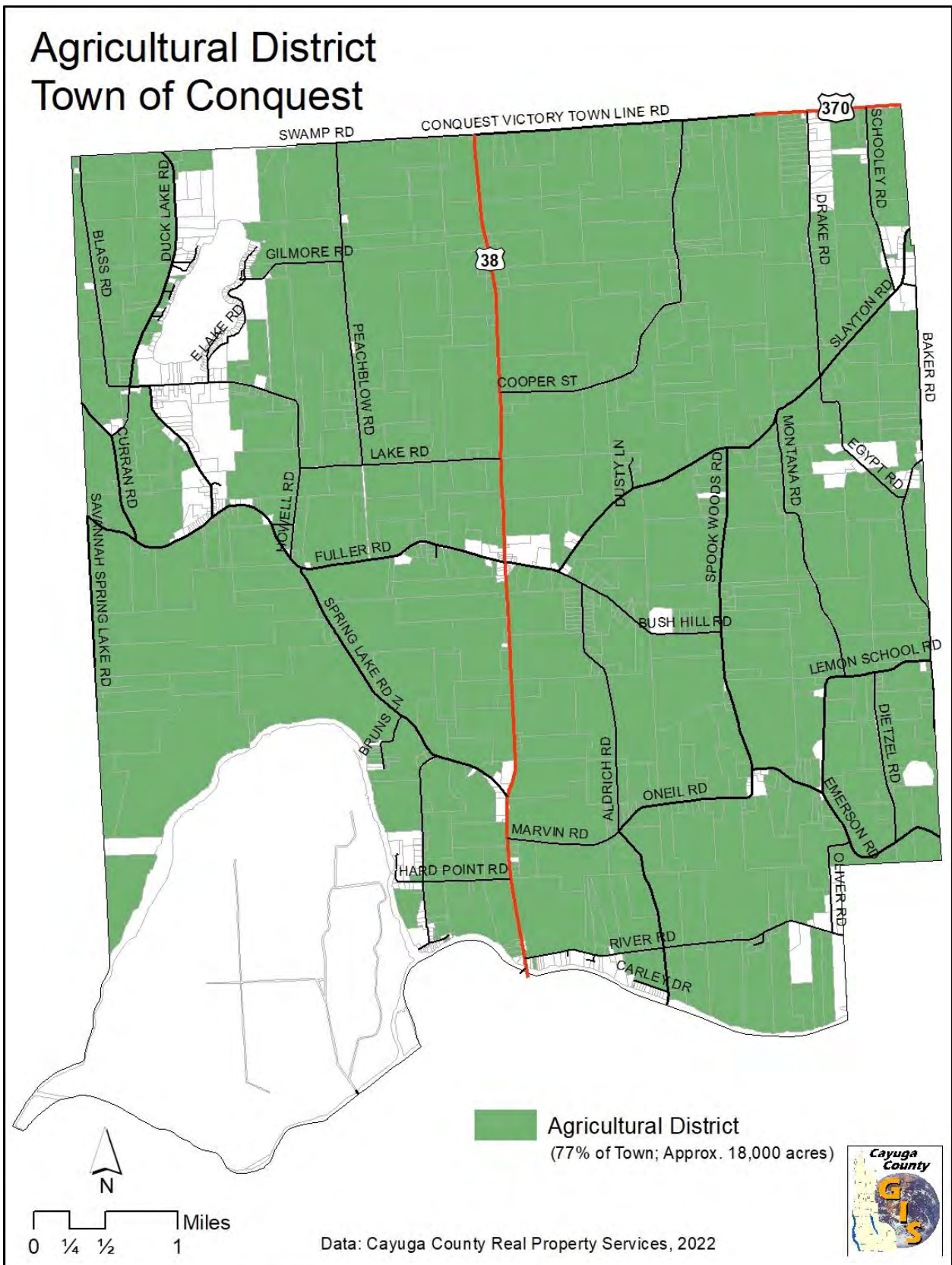
To sustain the Town's agricultural way of life into the future, the Town should encourage agribusiness growth within the Growth/Investment Area established in the Future Land Use Section through land use regulations and incentives. The Town should also ensure that farmers are aware of property tax relief programs available to them. Overall, future economic growth should be compatible with or actively support the Town's farming operations.

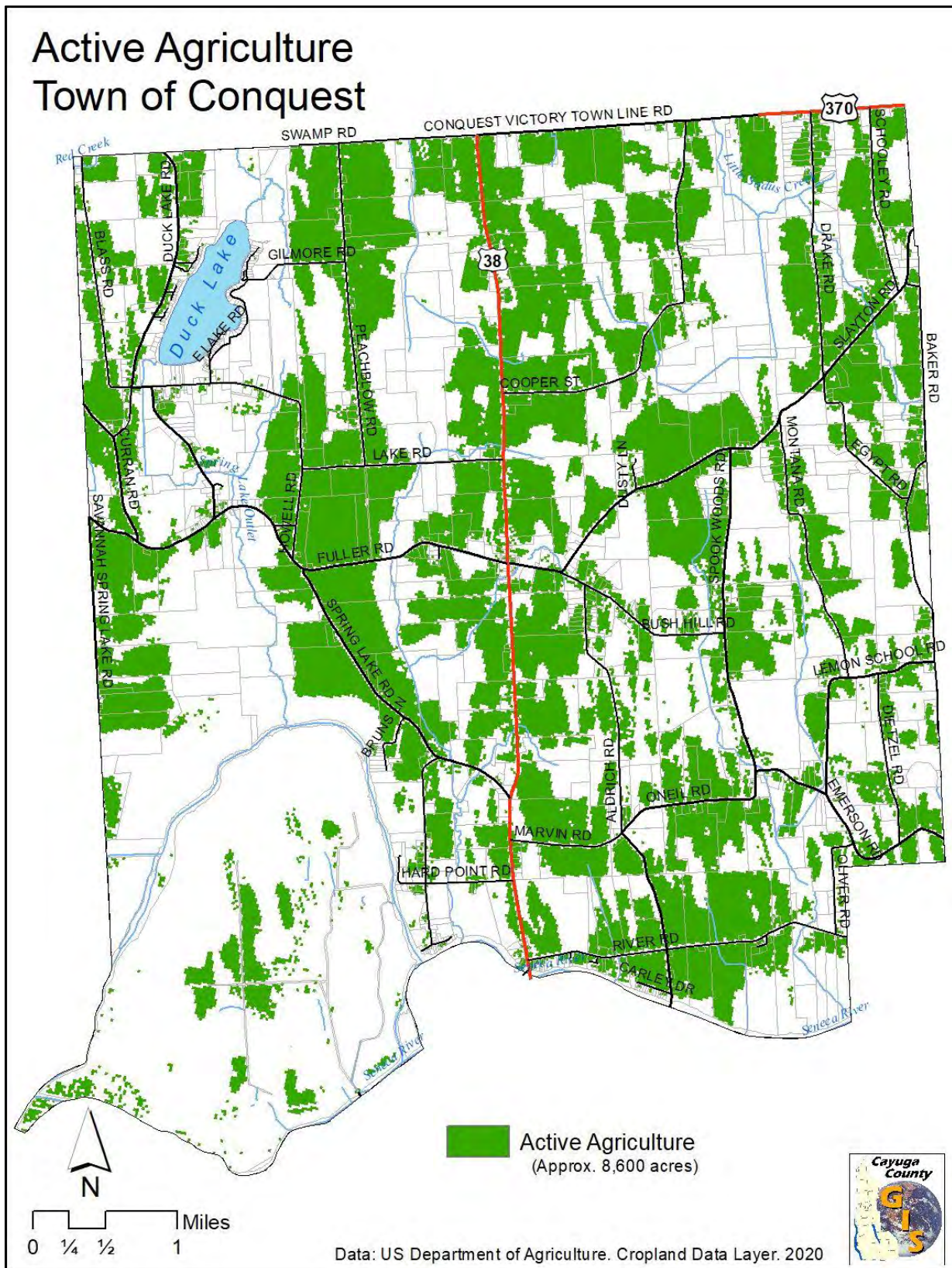
22. Increase education of agricultural practices for non-farmers and younger residents

Encourage a dialogue between farmers and non-farmers in the town to spread awareness and knowledge of the local agricultural economy and to ensure that farmers are represented in municipal decision-making processes. The Town should work with school districts to ensure that each school district has an active 'Agriculture in the Classroom' program as well.

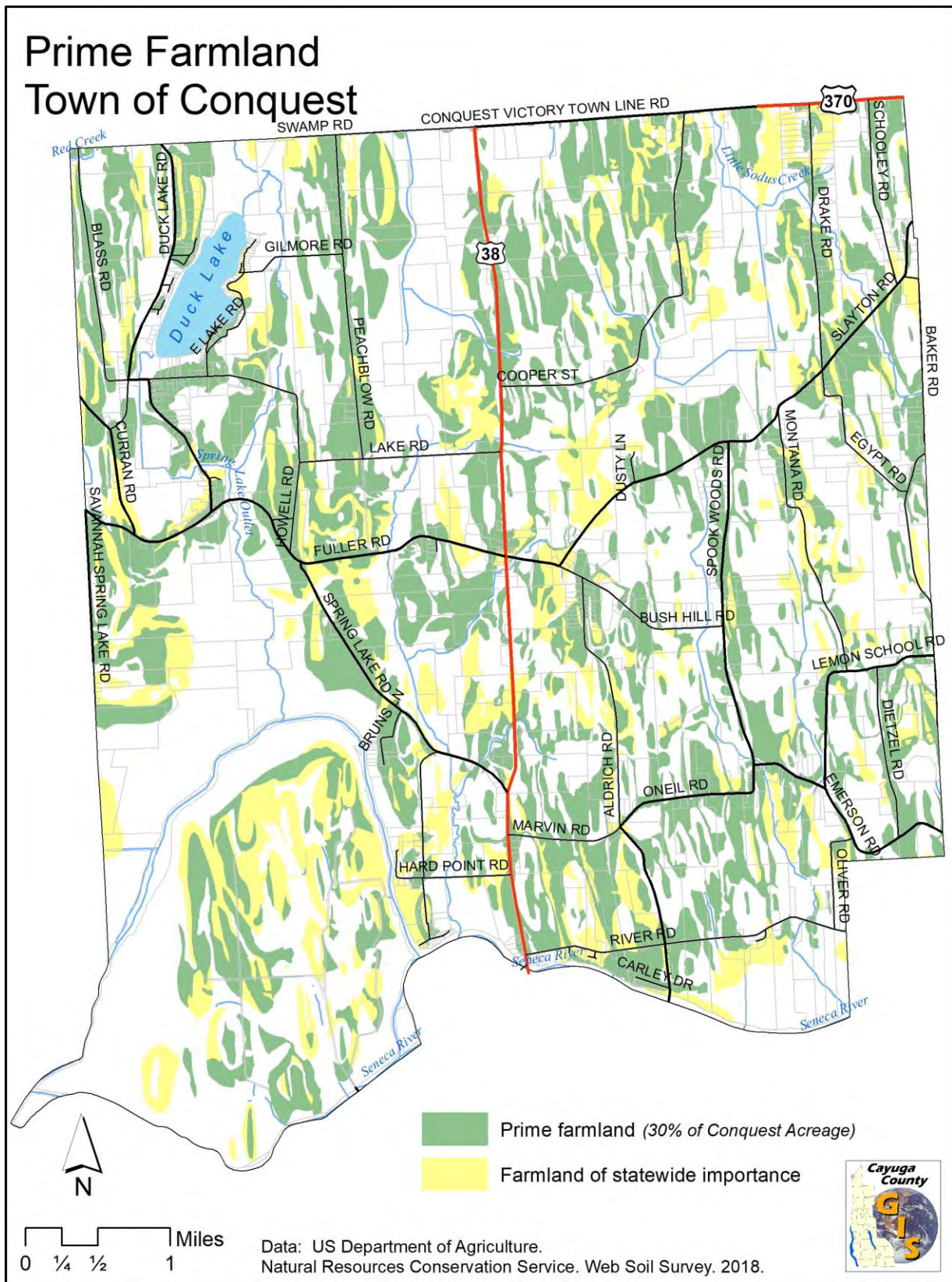
MAP 7

Agricultural District Town of Conquest





MAP 9



Suitability of Parcels for Farmland Protection Town of Conquest



Natural Resources and Environmental Quality

This chapter reports the natural resources and environmental quality of Conquest. Topics include topography, soils, water resources, significant natural communities, threatened and endangered species, lands under conservation, and invasive species. Natural resource protection ranked the highest among topics that the town should address in its Comprehensive Plan.

67%
of survey respondents said that
Natural Resource Protection
should be addressed in the
Comprehensive Plan

TOPOGRAPHY

The elevation change between the highest and lowest points in Conquest is only a little over 200 feet (**Map 11**). However, the topography is dramatic, revealing the power of continental glaciers. When the glaciers retreated 10,000 years ago, they left behind distinct teardrop shaped hills called drumlins in the area north of the Finger Lakes, which all rise steeply in the north and slope gently to the south. The drumlins are a defining characteristic of the landscape of Conquest. Between the steep hills are abundant water features, and the lowest points of Conquest are along the Seneca River, creating a large floodplain in much of the western half of the town, discussed in more detail below.



Drumlins form small islands in Howland's Island Wildlife Management Area (photo credit: Bill Hecht)

SLOPES

The steepness of land can have a significant effect on the environmental quality of an area, as developing on steep slopes can cause more erosion than developing on shallower slopes. Typically slopes of 15% or more are considered “steep” and undevelopable. **Map 12** shows the slope steepness in Conquest.

FORESTS

Forests in Conquest, made up of deciduous hardwoods, woody wetlands, and mixed forests, cover 12,564 acres in Conquest, or 56% of the entire Town (**Map 13**). Of this coverage, 3,086 acres or 25% of all forest coverage in Conquest is protected (by the State of New York Department of Environmental Conservation). There are not any federally-protected forests. Forests, especially large patches of forests, play a vital role in the health of the environment, providing ecosystem services such as wildlife habitat, sequestering carbon, and filtering pollutants before entering waterbodies.

SOILS

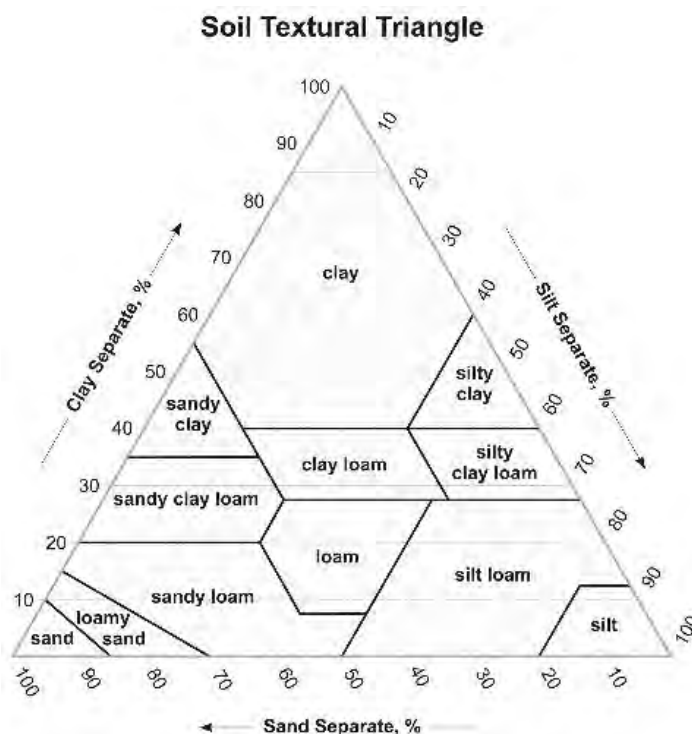
Soil quality and health are an important factor in Conquest due to the predominant agricultural use of land in the town. Soil texture and soil drainage class are two characteristics of soil type.

Soil texture

Soil texture refers to the proportion of sand, silt and clay sized particles that make up the mineral fraction of the soil. Soil texture is important because it influences the amount of water the soil can hold, the rate of water movement through the soil, and how workable and fertile the soil is.⁴⁰ The predominant two soil textures of Conquest are muck and loam, both very different qualities of soil. **Map 14** shows the variety of soil textures present, from muck and peat to cobbly loam.

Muck, or black dirt, refers to a specific type of soil that is created from drained swamplands. During the time when the Erie Canal was being constructed in the early 1800s, the water level of the Seneca River was lowered nearly 10 feet. As a result, a vast area north of Cayuga and Seneca Lakes that was once under water was exposed. The black color of the dirt comes from organic material (e.g. vegetation) that has decomposed over time, creating nutrient-rich soils. These types of soils support vegetable and fruit crop farms in Conquest.

Loam, or glacial till, is the outwash of material that was left behind when the glaciers retreated. It's defined by its even amounts of sand, silt, and clay, and creates suitable soil conditions for farming. The loam in Conquest ranges from silty to cobbly loam.



(credit: USDA Natural Resources
Conservation Service)

Drainage Class

The US Department of Agriculture defines soil drainage class as the frequency and duration of wet periods in conditions similar to those under which the soil formed.⁴¹ Alterations of the landscape by human activities, either through drainage or irrigation, are not a consideration unless they have significantly changed the morphology of the soil. The seven classes of natural soil drainage are excessively drained, somewhat excessively drained, well drained, moderately well drained, somewhat poorly drained, poorly drained, and very poorly drained. The majority of the soils in Conquest are moderately to well-drained (**Map 15**).

WATER RESOURCES

Water resources are a significant natural feature of Conquest. Thirty percent (30%) of community survey respondents indicated that water resources are the most important issue for the Town of Conquest to address. This subsection includes information on watersheds, aquifers, waterbodies (streams, rivers, lakes, and ponds), wetlands, and floodplains that are present in Conquest. Sixty percent (60%) of all properties in Conquest have either a waterbody, a wetland, a floodplain, or all three features (**Map 16**).

Watershed

Conquest is within the Great Lakes Basin and all water in the town eventually drains into Lake Ontario. The majority of the land area in Conquest is part of the Oswego River drainage basin, seen to the right, which is a subwatershed of the Great Lakes Basin. This subwatershed drains south to the Seneca River, flowing east to the Oswego River before emptying into Lake Ontario. The northeastern area of Conquest and far northwestern corner of the town are in the Sterling Creek subwatershed and drain north directly to Lake Ontario (**Map 17**).



Oswego River Drainage Basin
(credit: Karl Musser)

Sterling-Wolcott Creeks Integrated Watershed Action Plan

There has been much public feedback regarding the water availability and water quality in the town. It seems to be a longstanding issue and part of the overall characteristic of the area. The attention that is given to the Town's water quality is aligned with the classification of all Town waterbodies as "C" (suitable for contact). Therefore, it is normal practice that there is little incentive or mandates for residents and farmers to implement better land management practices regarding water protection. However, the Town believes that such efforts should not be a lost cause, but rather establish actions that encourage future planning and involvement with watershed issues. The Sterling-Wolcott Creeks Integrated Watershed Action Plan is currently in development,⁴² and this watershed includes portions of Conquest (shaded in brown on **Map 17**). This watershed plan is currently proposing goals that can be supported at the local level, such as:

- **Restore and preserve healthy wetlands** to support clean water, biodiversity, and opportunities for outdoor recreation;
- **Enhance functioning of floodplains, riparian corridors, and streams** to minimize infrastructure impacts from flood events, improve water quality, support quality aquatic habitat for fish and wildlife, and provide recreational access;
- **Promote healthy and connected forests and upland communities** to support clean air and water, biodiversity, opportunities for outdoor recreation, and sustainable use of natural resources
- **Improve and maintain high quality surface and ground water resources** to support aquatic habitat, drinking water supplies, and water dependent recreation; and
- **Promote, implement, and improve sustainable land uses** to provide future generations with the ability to use and prosper from natural resources.

Conquest has authority to regulate land uses for the protection of water resources, and the Town should consider helping to meet the goals of the Sterling-Wolcott Creeks Integrated Watershed Action Plan.

Aquifers

An aquifer is an underground layer of water-bearing permeable rock, rock fractures or unconsolidated materials (gravel, sand, or silt). The aquifers of Conquest represented in **Map 18** are unconsolidated aquifers, or those that consist of sand and gravel and yield large supplies of water to wells. Four types of unconsolidated aquifers are found in Conquest (**Table 9**).

Table 9: Aquifer Types in Conquest

Aquifer Type	Yield (gal/min.)	Characteristics
Unconfined aquifer, mid yield	10 – 100	Sand and gravel with saturated zone generally less than 10 ft thick. Thicker deposits with less permeable silty sand and gravel may also be included.
Unconfined aquifer, high yield	>100	Sand and gravel of high transmissivity with saturated thickness greater than 10 ft. Many such areas are associated with a surface water source that can provide pumping-induced recharge.
Confined, without overlying surficial aquifer	5 – >500	The underlying aquifer of sand and gravel is separated from the land surface by a layer of relatively impermeable till, very fine sand, silt or clay.
Aquifers of unknown potential	Unknown	These include areas of sand, or sand and gravel

Waterbodies

There are 44 miles of streams and rivers in Conquest and 720 acres of lakes and ponds (**Map 19**).

Streams and Rivers

All streams and rivers in Conquest are classified by the NYS Department of Conservation as Class C, fresh surface water. The best usage of Class C waters is fishing. These waters are suitable for fish, shellfish and wildlife propagation and survival. The water quality is suitable for primary and secondary contact recreation, although other factors may limit the use for these purposes. One stream segment just to the east of Duck Lake that drains into Spring Lake Outlet is classified C(T), which means that it may be suitable for trout habitat.⁴³ The Seneca River forms a portion of the southern boundary of Conquest, splitting to the north around Howland's Island with the southern branch as part of the Erie Canal. It is a large river that begins at the outflow of Seneca Lake and flows eastward for approximately 61 miles to Onondaga County where it combines with the Oneida and Oswego Rivers, then emptying into Lake Ontario. The Cayuga County section of the Seneca River is stocked annually with approximately 7,600 tiger musky and 24,000 walleye fingerlings, making it an important fishing and recreational resource in Conquest. Other named creeks in Conquest include Red Creek, Spring Lake Outlet, and Little Sodus Creek.

Lakes and Ponds

At 200 acres, Duck Lake is the largest lake in Conquest. Duck Lake is designated class C, suitable for general recreation use and aquatic life support, but not as a water supply or public bathing beach. Duck Lake is listed on the NYS Section 303(d) List of Impaired Waters as a waterbody with an impairment requiring development of a Total Maximum Daily Load for phosphorus. Other named ponds in Conquest that are not part of Howland's Island Wildlife Management Area are Mud Pond, Slayton Pond, and Stark Pond.

There are 18 named ponds in the Howland's Island Wildlife Management Area. Names and locations of these ponds can be found on **Map 20**.

Wetlands

Wetlands in Conquest cover over 7,500 acres, or one-third of the Town's area, affecting more than half of all properties. Wetlands are lands transitional between terrestrial and aquatic systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface or the land is covered by shallow water.⁴⁴

History of Wetlands of Conquest

Historically wetlands were considered swamps. The northern end of Cayuga Lake was once called the Great Swamp and the original people of the region were the Cayuga people, from the native word Gayogohó:nq' (pronounced guy-oh-cano), which means "people of the swamp."⁴⁵ The Great Swamp created a barrier for European settlers moving west and was eventually drained with the construction of the Erie Canal to help move people and goods faster through the swampy region. Today the extent of the wetlands in this region, though still vast, is only a fraction of what the Great Swamp once covered.

Type of Wetlands in Conquest

The majority of wetlands in Conquest are forested or shrub wetlands, followed by emergent wetlands.

Forested wetlands (also called forested swamps) are often inundated with floodwater from nearby rivers and streams. Sometimes, they are covered by many feet of very slowly moving or standing water. In very dry years they may represent the only shallow water for miles and their presence is critical to the survival of wetland-dependent species like Wood Ducks, River Otters, and Cottonmouth Snakes. If not totally flooded, the terrain is hummocky. The trees include, but are not limited to, American elm, red maple, silver maple, red ash, black ash, swamp white oak, and willows. Forested wetlands are relatively valuable because it is frequently used by nesting waterfowl and is also heavily used by songbirds and other wildlife.

Shrub wetlands (also called shrub swamps) are similar to forested wetlands except that shrubby vegetation such as Buttonbush, Willow, Dogwood, and Swamp Rose predominates. In fact, forested and shrub swamps are often found adjacent to one another. The soil is often water logged for much of the year and covered at times by as much as a few feet of water because this type of swamp is found along slow moving streams and in floodplains. Also, sphagnum moss in bog mats usually occurs in association with shrub species. The value of shrub swamp for fish and wildlife is variable, but shrub swamp can provide some of the values of emergent marsh or deciduous swamp: it is likely to have a structure different from surrounding areas and may supply significant nesting and other wildlife uses.

Emergent wetlands consist of such plants as cattails, purple loosestrife, swamp loosestrife, arrowheads, reeds, bur reeds, pickerelweed, wild rice, water plantain, bulrushes and arrow arum. These are herbaceous plants encroaching on water areas and flooded with standing water much of the year. Emergent marsh is generally the most valuable individual cover type. The emergent vegetation itself provides nesting habitat, food and cover. Frequently, emergent vegetation produces the largest annual increase in natural organic materials of any cover type, providing nonpolluting nutrients to food chains. An emergent wetland is usually different in physical structure from surrounding areas and therefore provides habitat diversity.

Regulations

In general, there are two types of regulated wetlands in New York State – those that are mapped and regulated by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, called the National Wetland Inventory, and those that are regulated by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (**Map 21**).

National Wetland Inventory (NWI) delineated wetland boundaries are manually transferred from interpreted photos to USGS 7.5 minute topographic quadrangle maps and then manually labelled. The wetland classification system of the NWI is hierarchical, with wetlands and deepwater habitats divided among five major systems at the broadest level. The five systems include Marine (open ocean and associated coastline), Estuarine (salt marshes and brackish tidal water), Riverine (rivers, creeks, and streams), Lacustrine (lakes and deep ponds), and Palustrine (shallow ponds, marshes, swamps, sloughs). Conquest has riverine, lacustrine, and palustrine wetlands (**Map 22**).

NYS Department of Conservation. In 1975, the New York State Legislature passed the Freshwater Wetlands Act, which protects wetlands of 12.4 acres in size or greater. Wetlands smaller than this may be protected if they are considered of unusual local importance. Around every wetland is a 100 foot buffer that is also regulated to provide protection for the wetland.

Floodplains

There are nearly 4,000 acres of floodplain in Conquest (17% of the Town's area) affecting nearly a quarter of all properties in the Town (**Map 23**). A floodplain is any land area susceptible to being inundated by floodwaters from any source. For Conquest, the main source of flooding comes from the Seneca River, which inundates an area that was originally under water before the area was drained for farming purposes in the 19th century. The Federal Emergency Management Agency delineates special flood hazard areas for the purpose of assessing risk and insurance premiums to homeowners. The two main hazard areas are those that have a 1% chance of flooding in any given year (100-year floodplain) and those that have a 0.2% chance of flooding in any given year (500-year floodplain). Residents also report other areas of the town, unmapped by FEMA, flooding occasionally near smaller waterbodies, such as Slayton Pond.

SIGNIFICANT NATURAL COMMUNITIES

Significant Natural Communities are locations of rare or high-quality wetlands, forests, grasslands, ponds, streams, and other types of habitats, ecosystems, and ecological areas. NY Natural Heritage calls these different types of habitats or ecosystems “natural ecological communities.” NY Natural Heritage documents only those locations of natural communities where the community type is rare in New York State; or, for more common community types, where the community at that location is a high-quality example and meets specific, documented criteria for state significance in terms of size, undisturbed and intact condition, and the quality of the surrounding landscape. There are three significant natural communities in Conquest – a rich graminoid fen, a floodplain forest, and an inland salt marsh – which are described below and shown on **Map 24**.

Rich Graminoid Fen

Location: Millers Bog Spring Lake

Significance: High Quality Occurrence of Rare Community Type

Size: 8 acres

Field Observations: The fen has about 50% cover of herbs and slightly less than 50% cover of low shrubs. Although diverse, this fen is small and has been disturbed by flooding, but otherwise is in very good

condition. A rich fen that is intermediate between rich graminoid and rich shrub fen, but has a slightly higher percent cover of graminoids. The fen is a small area at the southeast edge of a large silver maple-ash swamp. A portion of the swamp at the northwest edge has been drained for muck-farming, and a few ditches are visible in the swamp in air photos. To the east of the fen is a cemetery, and the swamp surrounds the rest of the fen. There is agricultural land bordering the swamp.⁴⁶

Floodplain forest

Location: Seneca River Montezuma

Significance: High Quality Occurrence of Rare Community Type

Size: 641 acres in Conquest (the total area of the community is over 1,800 acres)

Field Observations: The most abundant herbs are Sensitive Fern (20%) and Lizard's Tail (20%). This is an extremely large floodplain forest with several very mature (possible old-growth) patches. About half of the forest is degraded (i.e., invasive species present, illegal dumping, and altered hydrology). The greater landscape is mostly agricultural and rural residential with a combination of natural rivers and altered canals. A good portion of the floodplain forest, especially the northern segments of this forest, is surrounded by protected natural areas such as wildlife management areas. The floodplain of the Seneca River and Erie Canal is an extensive lowland occurring along the banks of the waterways, varying in width from a few hundred feet to over one mile in width. The floodplain forest extends for 12 miles in discontinuous patches from Howland Island Wildlife Management Area to the north to Cayuga Lake to the south. Much of the land is forested; most is degraded and some areas are described as successional floodplain forest dominated by *Populus deltoides* with weedy exotic species in the understory (about 692 acres). A few areas of mature, old-growth, diverse floodplain forest still exist.⁴⁷



*Floodplain forest in Conquest
(photo credit: Jim Eckler & Frank Morlock)*

Inland salt marsh

Location: Howland Island

Significance: Rare Community Type

Size: 11 acres

Field Observations: This is a fair quality inland salt marsh of average size, but it is surrounded by encroaching invasive plants. The hydrology of the surrounding marsh complex has been altered via ditching. This is a relatively small area of open area of saline mudflats with low growing vegetation. This area is apparently fed by saline springs/seepage that likely keep non-halophytes in check. The inland salt marsh is within an extensive *Phragmites* marsh, in a large wetland between the Seneca River and the Erie Canal.⁴⁸



*Inland salt marsh in Howland's Island
(photo credit: Gregory J Edinger)*

STATE LANDS UNDER CONSERVATION

There are over 3,700 acres of conserved and protected State land in Conquest. All of these lands are part of the Northern Montezuma Wildlife Management Area, which is an 8,000-acre protected area adjacent

to the larger Montezuma Wetlands Complex. The entire Montezuma Wetlands Complex is a globally significant Important Bird Area, as designated by Bird Life International and administered by Audubon NY.

Northern Montezuma Wildlife Management Area

The Northern Montezuma Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is also designated as a New York State Bird Conservation Area because of the high value for a diversity of wetland-dependent species, large concentrations of migrating species, and the presence of several declining and at-risk species. The WMA covers portions of Wayne and Cayuga Counties, with Howland's Island Wildlife Management Area in Conquest being the largest portion of the Northern Montezuma WMA in Cayuga County.

Howland's Island Wildlife Management Area

The first State-owned land of the Northern Montezuma Wildlife Management Area was Howland's Island in 1932. This 3,500-acre island is formed by the Seneca River splitting into a southern and northern branch on its eastward journey. The southern branch is also the Erie Canal. Howland's Island contains a rich mix of grasslands, woods, agricultural fields, and managed marshes. Types of animals range from mammals, such as deer, fox, and beaver, to over 220 species of birds. River otter have been spotted occasionally. Besides providing significant wildlife habitat, Howland's Island offers recreational uses, such as hiking, biking, boating, birding, and hunting. More on the recreation will be discussed in the Cultural, Recreational, and Historic Resources chapter of this plan.

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

The Northern Montezuma Wildlife Management Area, which includes Howland's Island in Conquest, is home to State-listed endangered bird species such as the bald eagle, cerulean warbler, Indiana bat, sedge wren, osprey, least bittern, pied-billed grebe, and northern harrier.⁴⁹ Black terns are another endangered species in New York and have been sighted nesting in Howland's Island with 18 pairs counted in 2007.⁵⁰

INVASIVE SPECIES

Since 1978, there have been 725 reported observations of invasive plant and animal species in Conquest (**Table 11**), though this number is likely a significant undercount. The vast majority of reported invasive species have been Water Chestnut found in the Seneca River and Erie Canal (**Map 25**). Water chestnut and other aquatic invasive plant species can clog waterways and reduce sunlight and oxygen in the water, depriving other species of vital energy sources. This leads to poor water quality and loss of biodiversity, ultimately threatening the animal, plant, and algae species that rely on waterbodies for survival.

Table 11: Invasive Species Observations in Conquest 1978 - 2020⁵¹

Invasive Species Name	Species Type	Observations
Black Locust	Plant	1
Common Buckthorn	Plant	2
Common Carp	Animal	6
Common reed grass, phragmites	Plant	9
Common Speedwell	Plant	1
Creeping Jenny, Moneywort	Plant	1
Curly Pondweed	Plant	15
Eurasian Water-milfoil	Plant	98
European Frogbit; Common Frogbit	Plant	6
Garlic Mustard	Plant	1
Glossy Buckthorn, European Buckthorn	Plant	1
Green Sunfish	Animal	1
Multiflora Rose	Plant	2
Norway Spruce	Plant	1
Purple Loosestrife	Plant	4
Reed Canarygrass	Plant	2
Starry Stonewort	Plant	3
Water Chestnut	Plant	571
Total		725

Mosquitos

Perhaps due to the vast coverage of water in Conquest, from the floodplains, wetlands, and waterbodies, mosquitoes are reported to be a concerning pest in town. There were 15 mentions of the word “mosquito” on the community survey, with some respondents indicating that they are the only thing to dislike about Conquest. Others called for more mosquito spraying. There’s even a location along the Seneca River in Conquest called “Mosquito Point,” named before the town was settled.

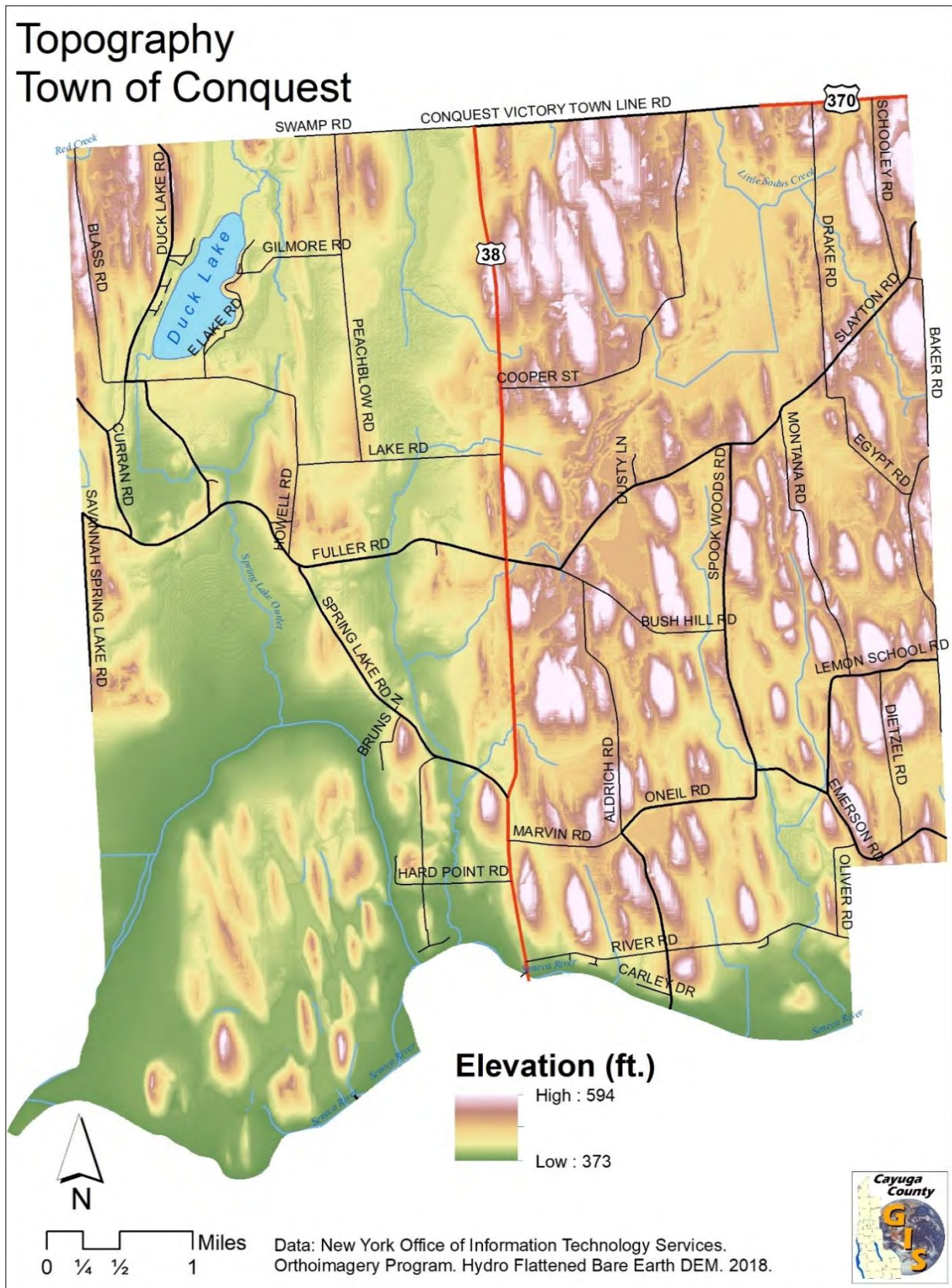
23. Preserve and protect the natural resources of the town

Future land use regulations and town policies should be guided by the Future Land Use section and map, which highlights areas of town for the protection of natural resources, including Conservation Priority Areas for wetlands, streams and river corridors, and large forest patches, and Farmland Protection Priority Areas for conserving agricultural soils. This protection should extend to areas officially recognized by state and national resource inventories, as well as those unmapped and unregulated at the state and federal level. To pursue this goal, the Town should use the natural resource inventory of the Comprehensive Plan to monitor these resources and help inform future decision making, including the development of land use regulations. Conquest could also establish and maintain a list of Critical Environmental Areas (CEAs) based off the Conservation Priority Area (see Future Land Use Map) and amend the Town's SEQRA Type 1 actions list to include any and all CEAs, thus allowing the Town a more robust and thorough review of projects in these areas.

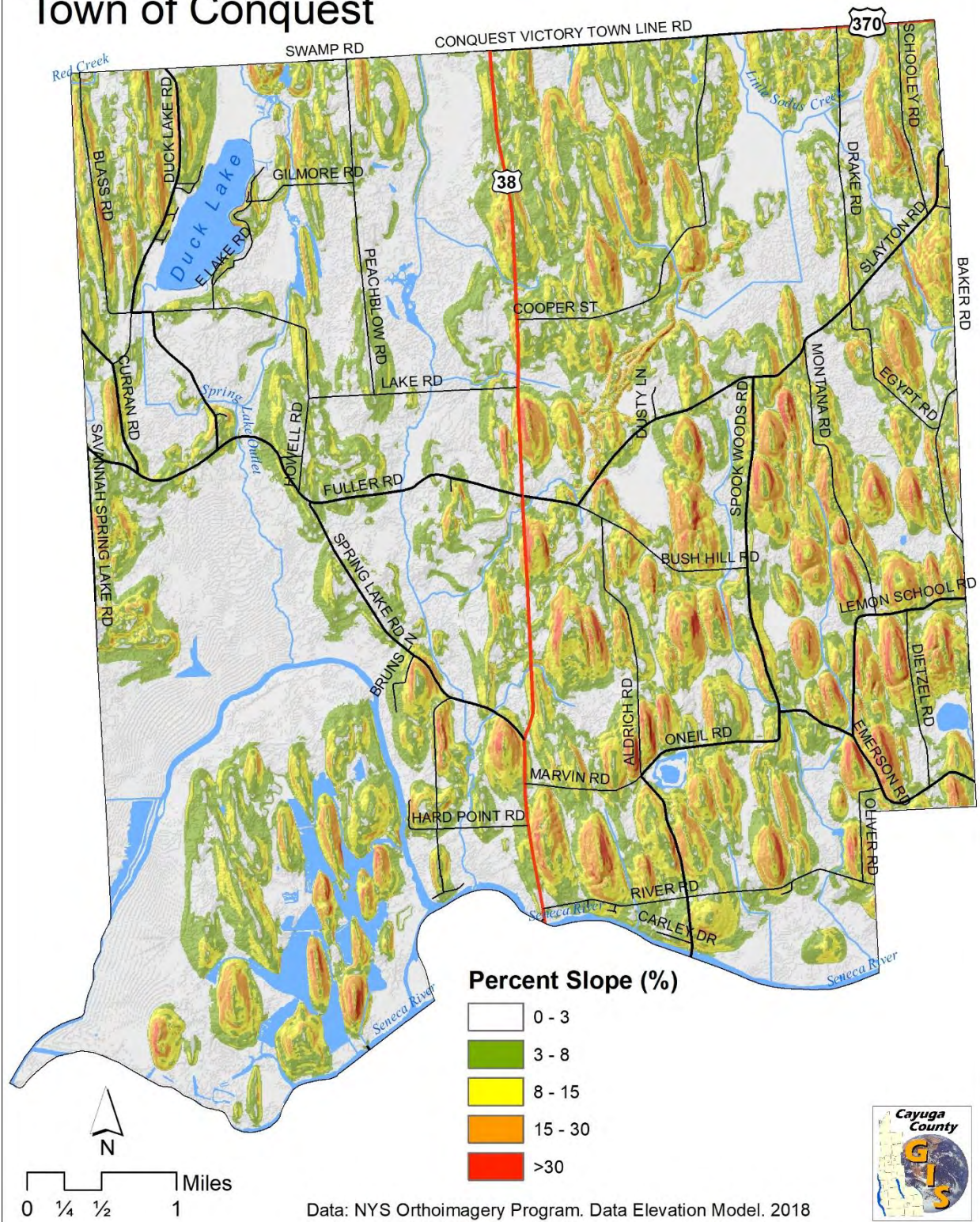
24. Protect air and water quality for the health and wellbeing of residents and local ecosystems

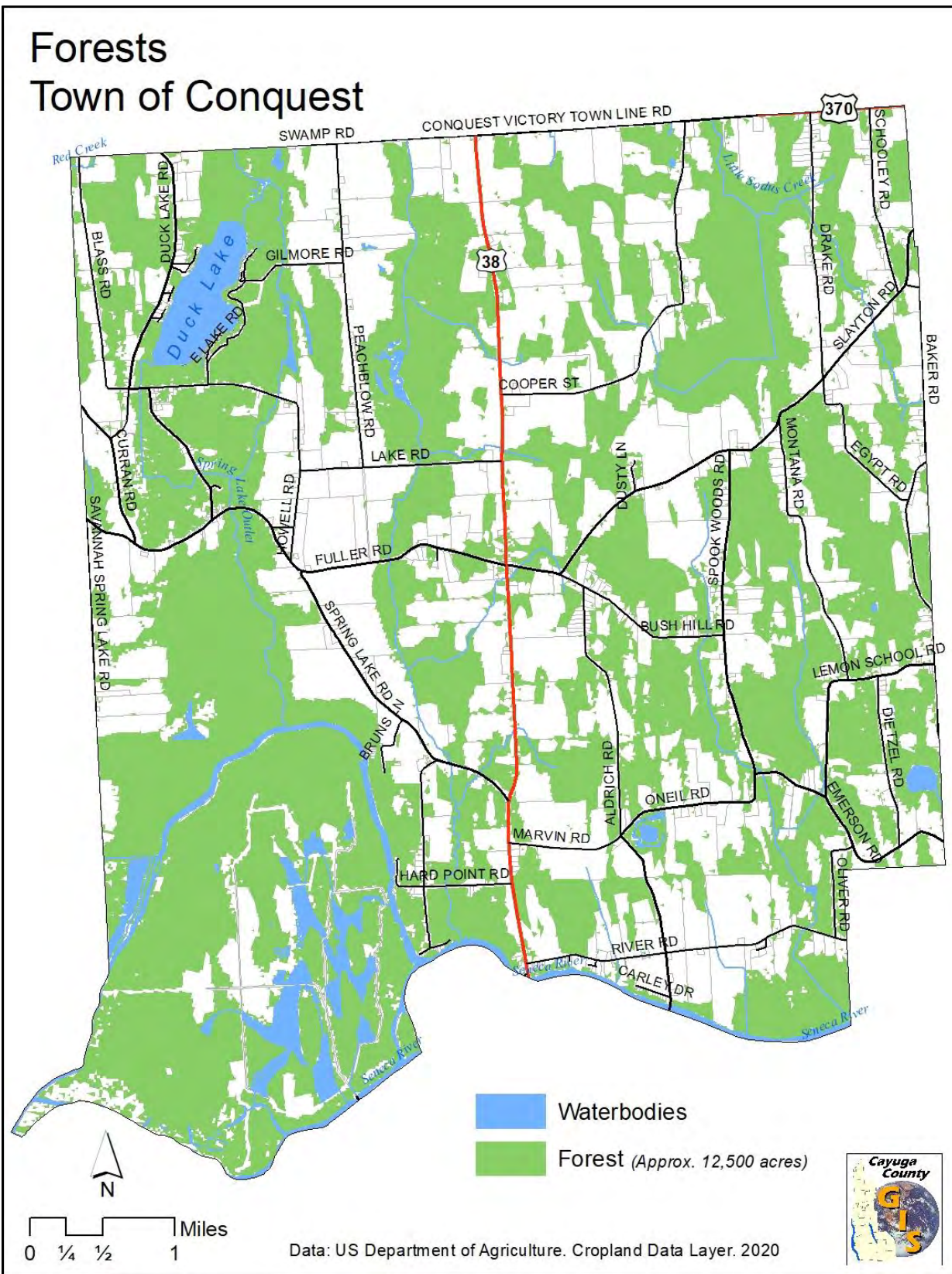
Protect wetlands and floodplains from development that would reduce the functionality of these natural water filtration systems. Ensure that the Town Board and Planning Board are properly complying with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) process which requires government agencies to examine environmental impacts prior to acting on certain development proposals and other local actions such as land use related laws.

Topography Town of Conquest

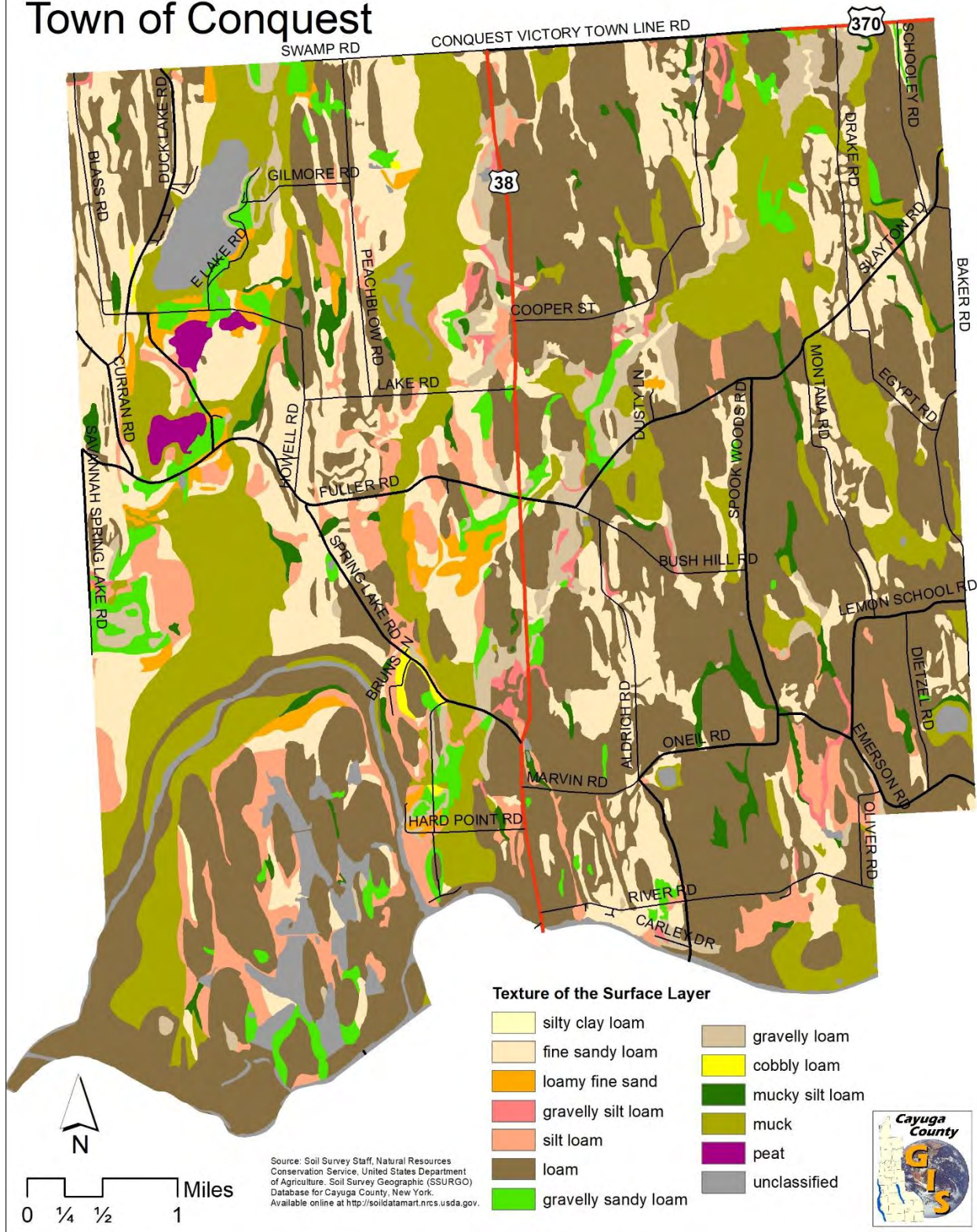


Slopes Town of Conquest

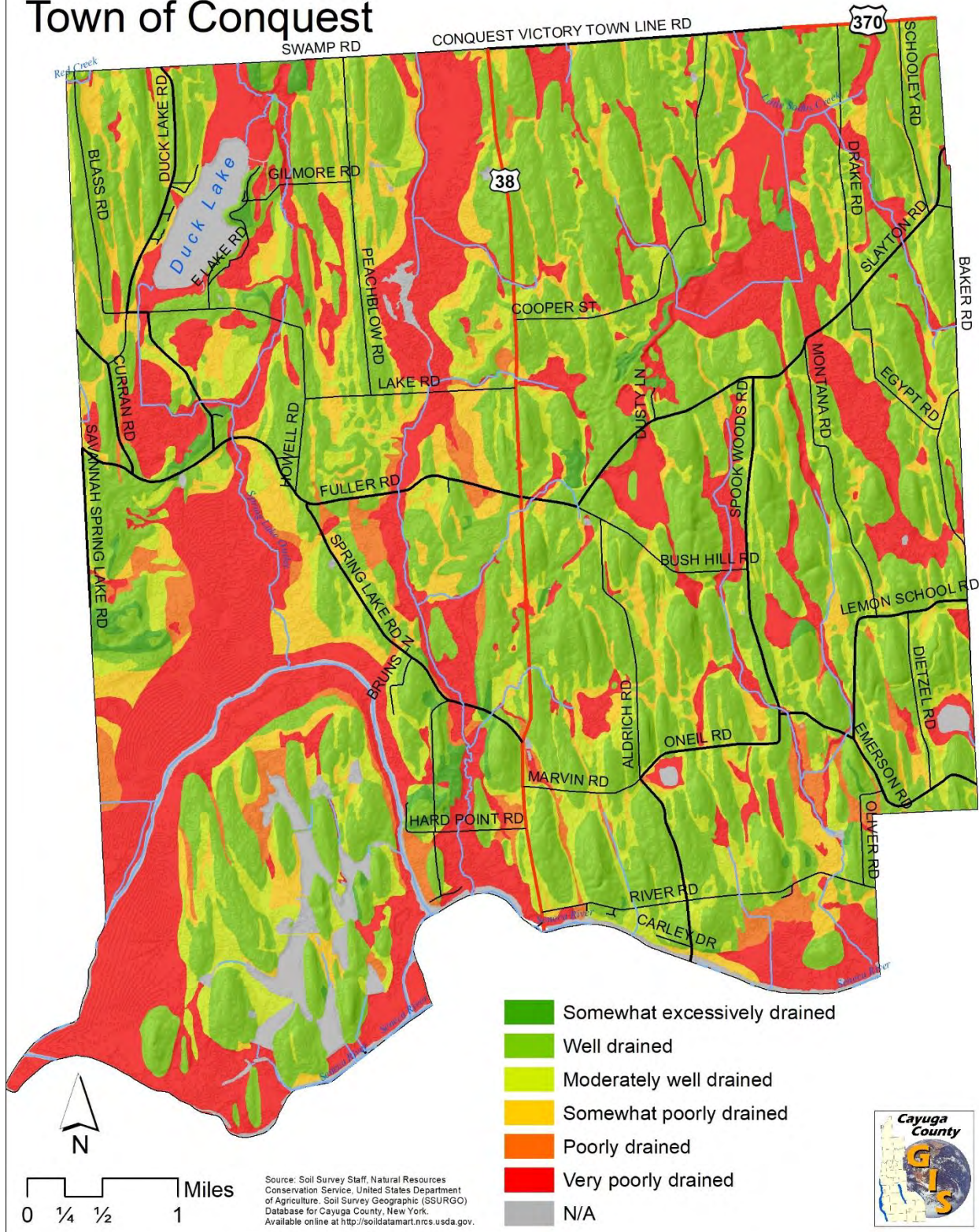




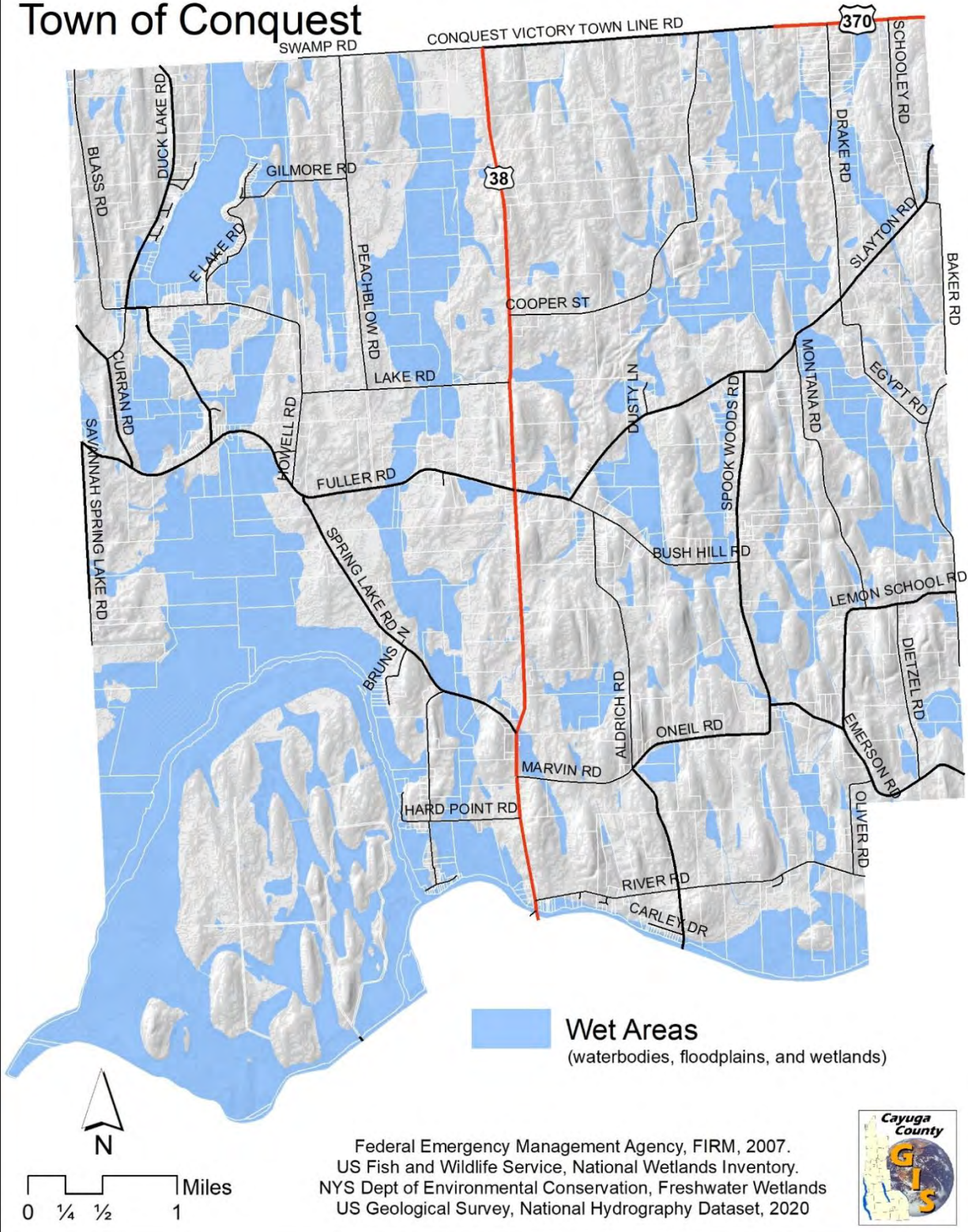
Soil Texture Town of Conquest



Soil Drain Class Town of Conquest

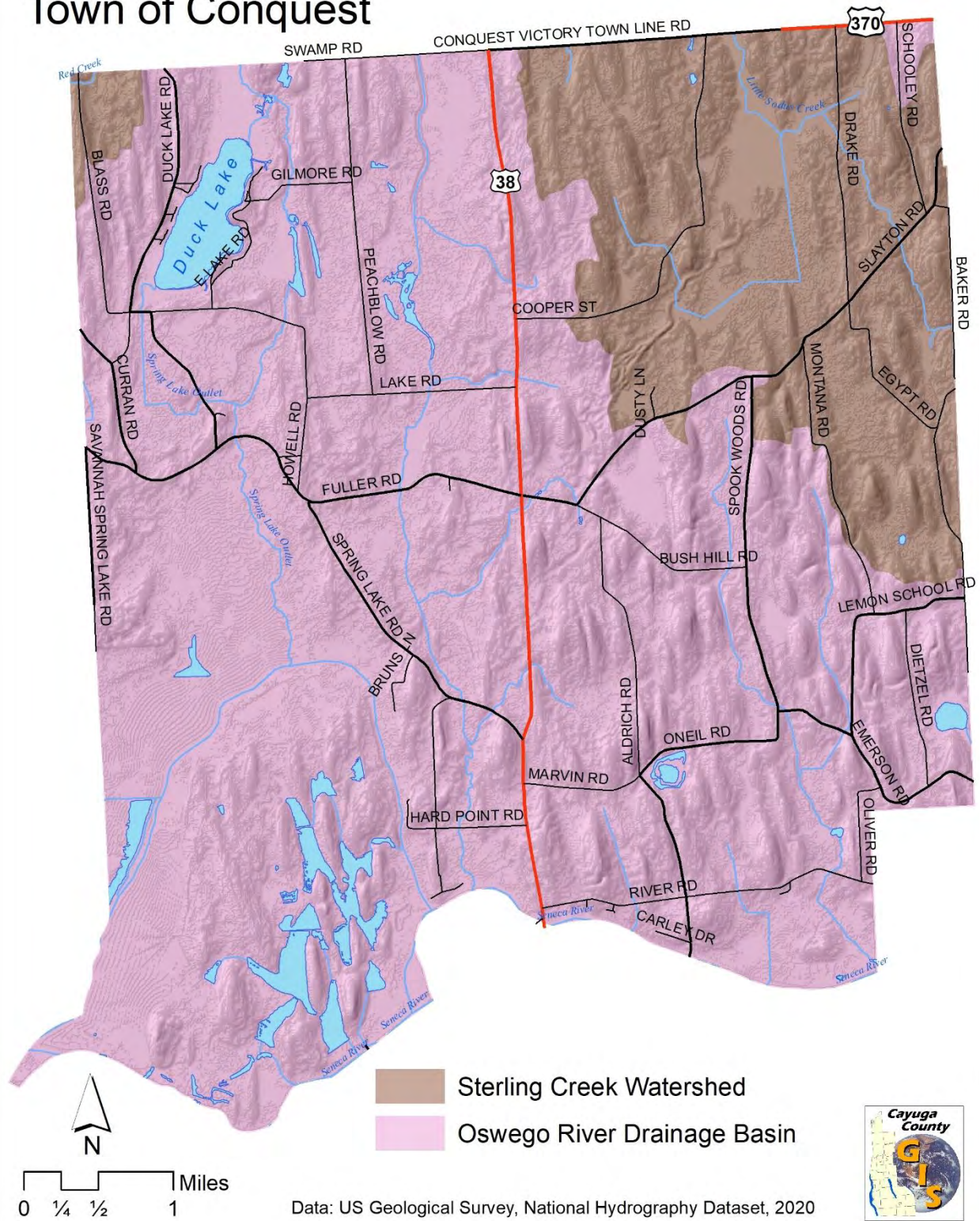


Wet Areas Town of Conquest

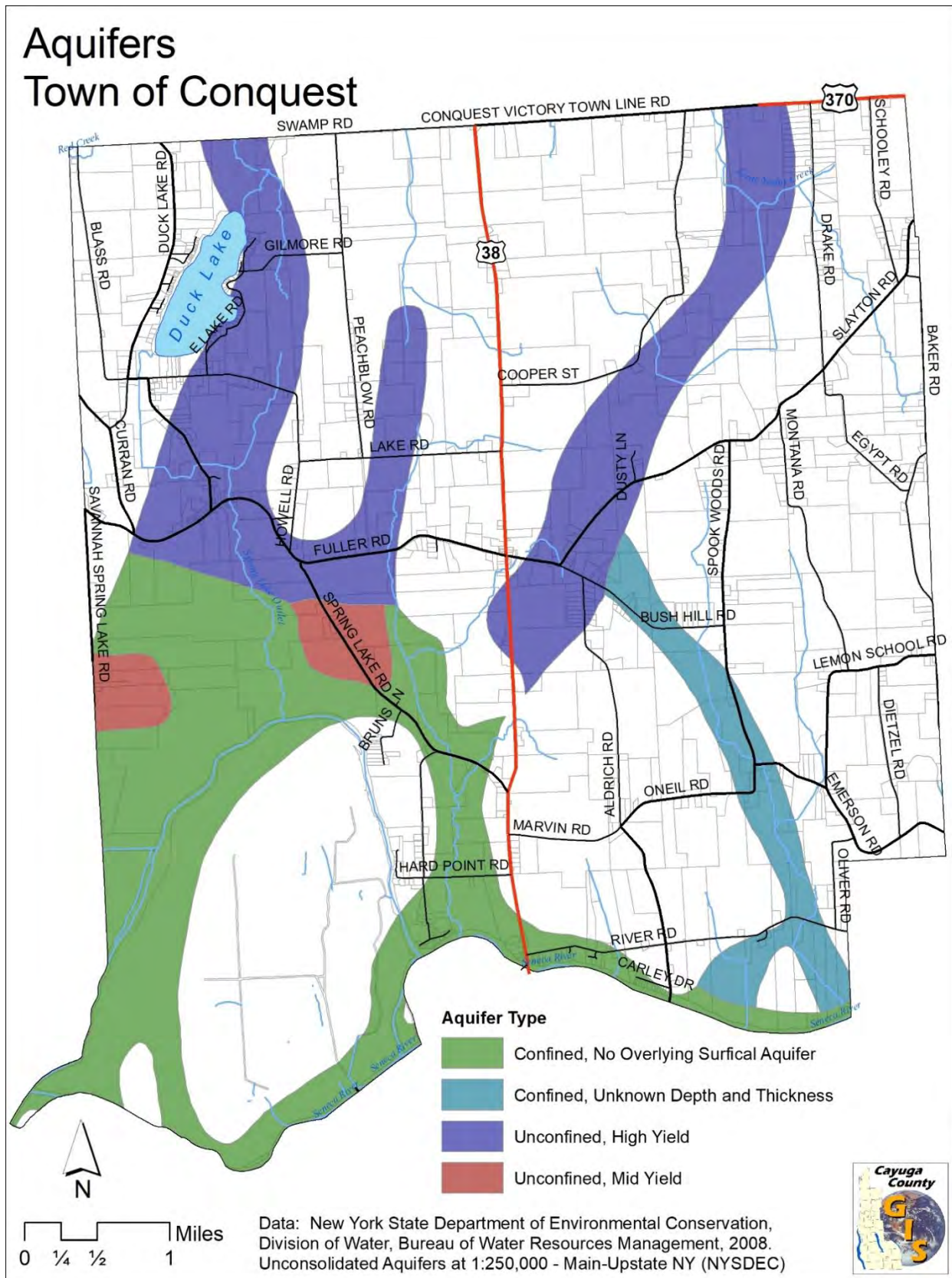


Watersheds

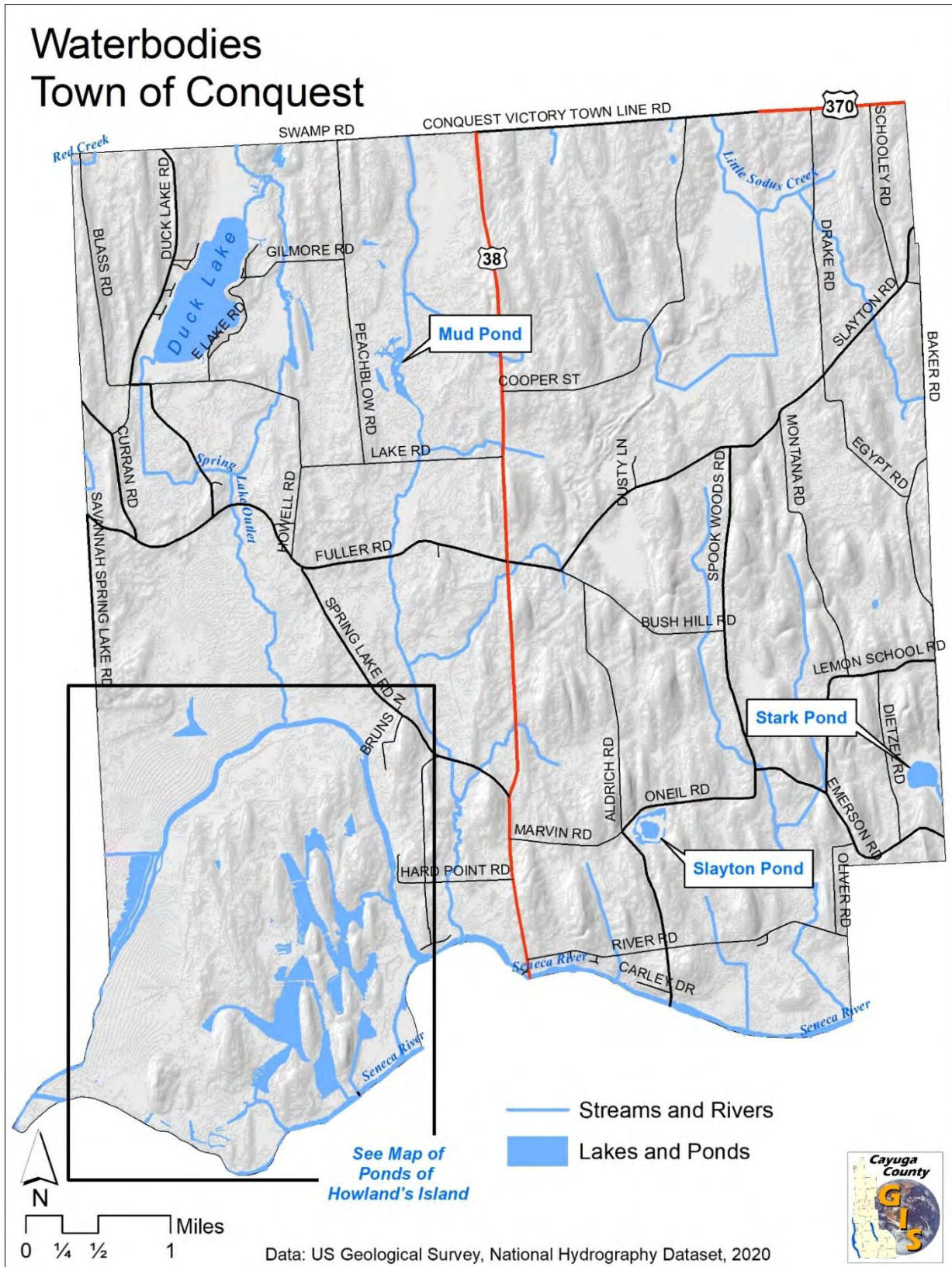
Town of Conquest



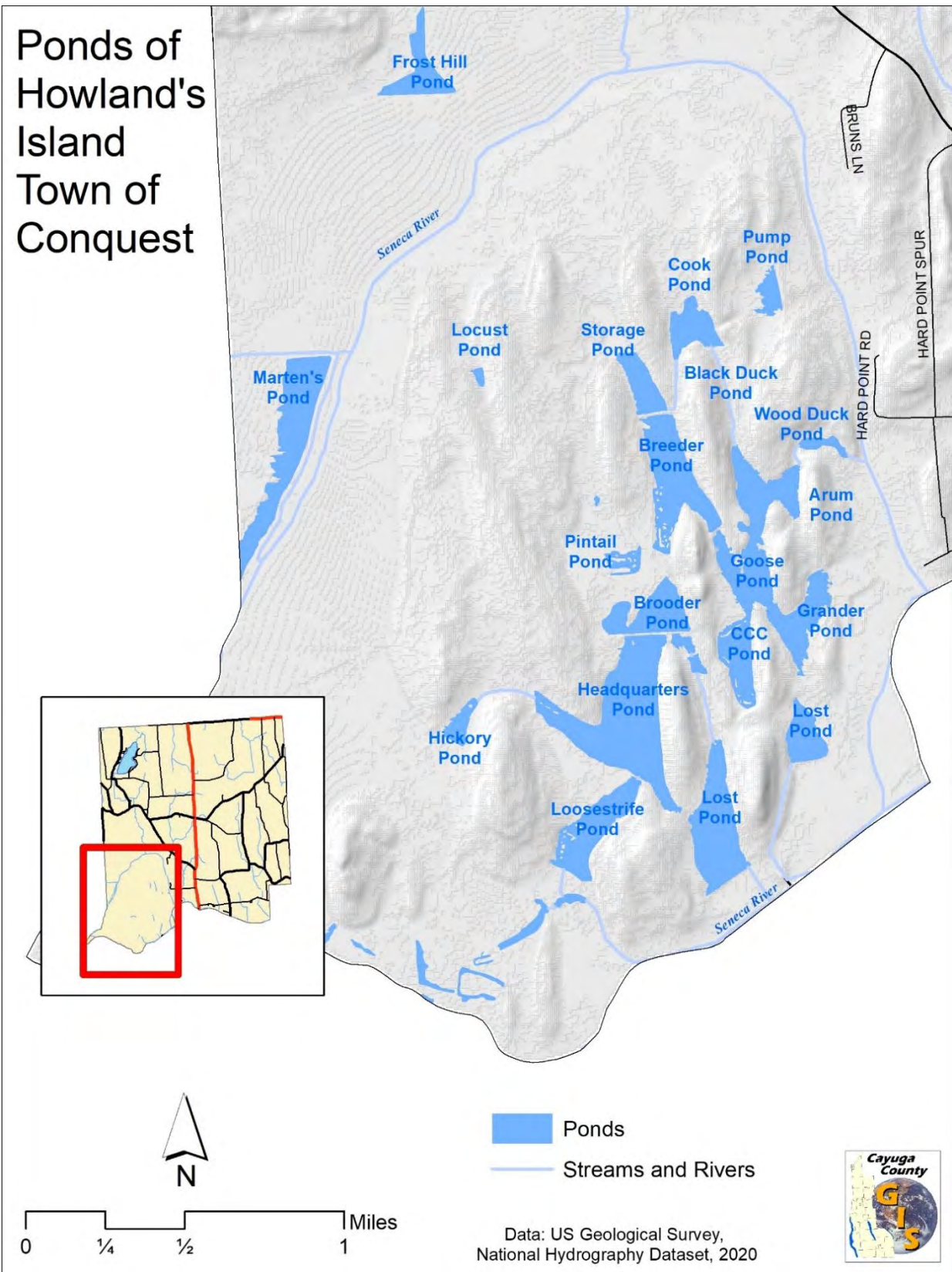
Aquifers Town of Conquest



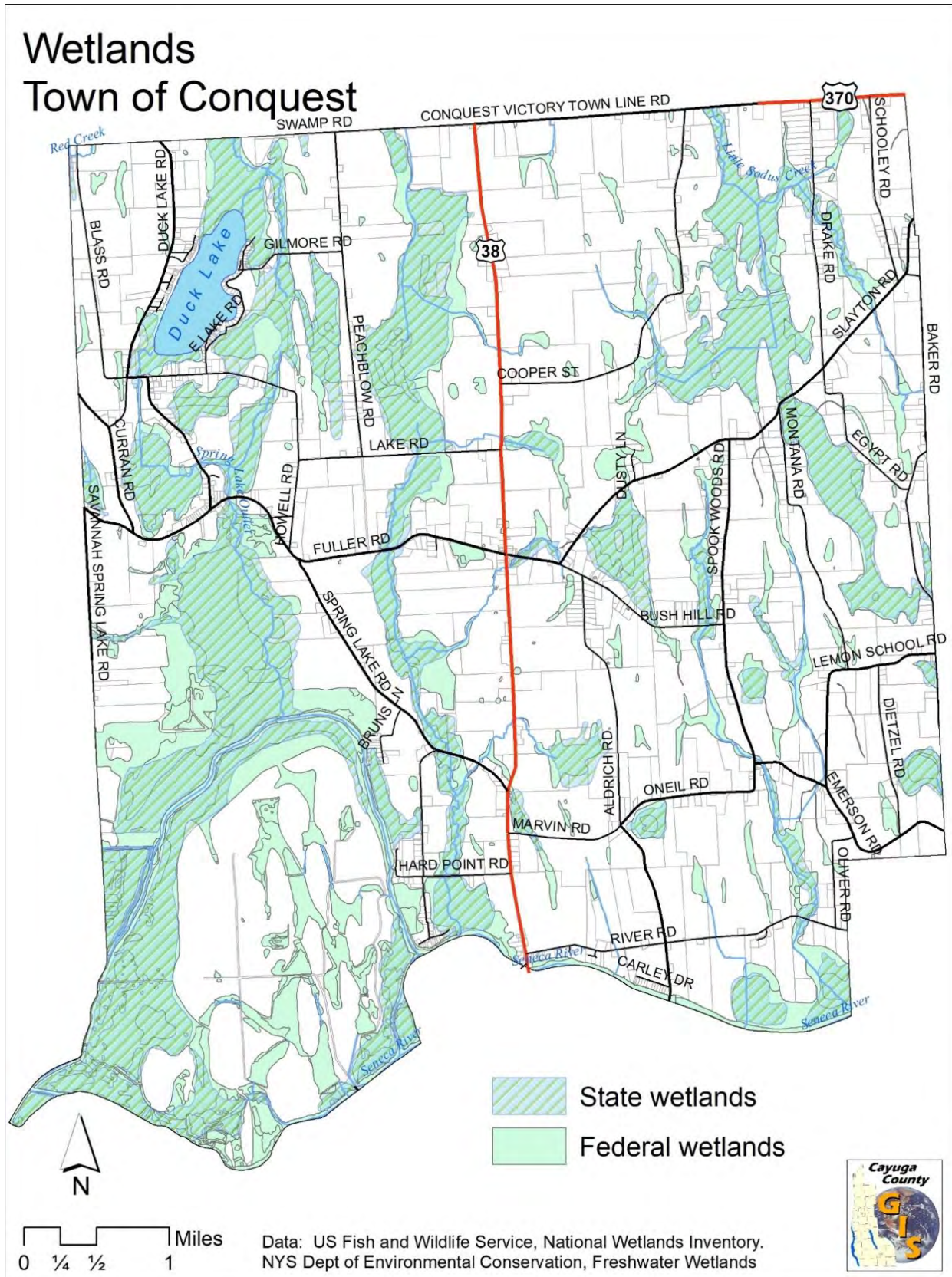
Waterbodies Town of Conquest

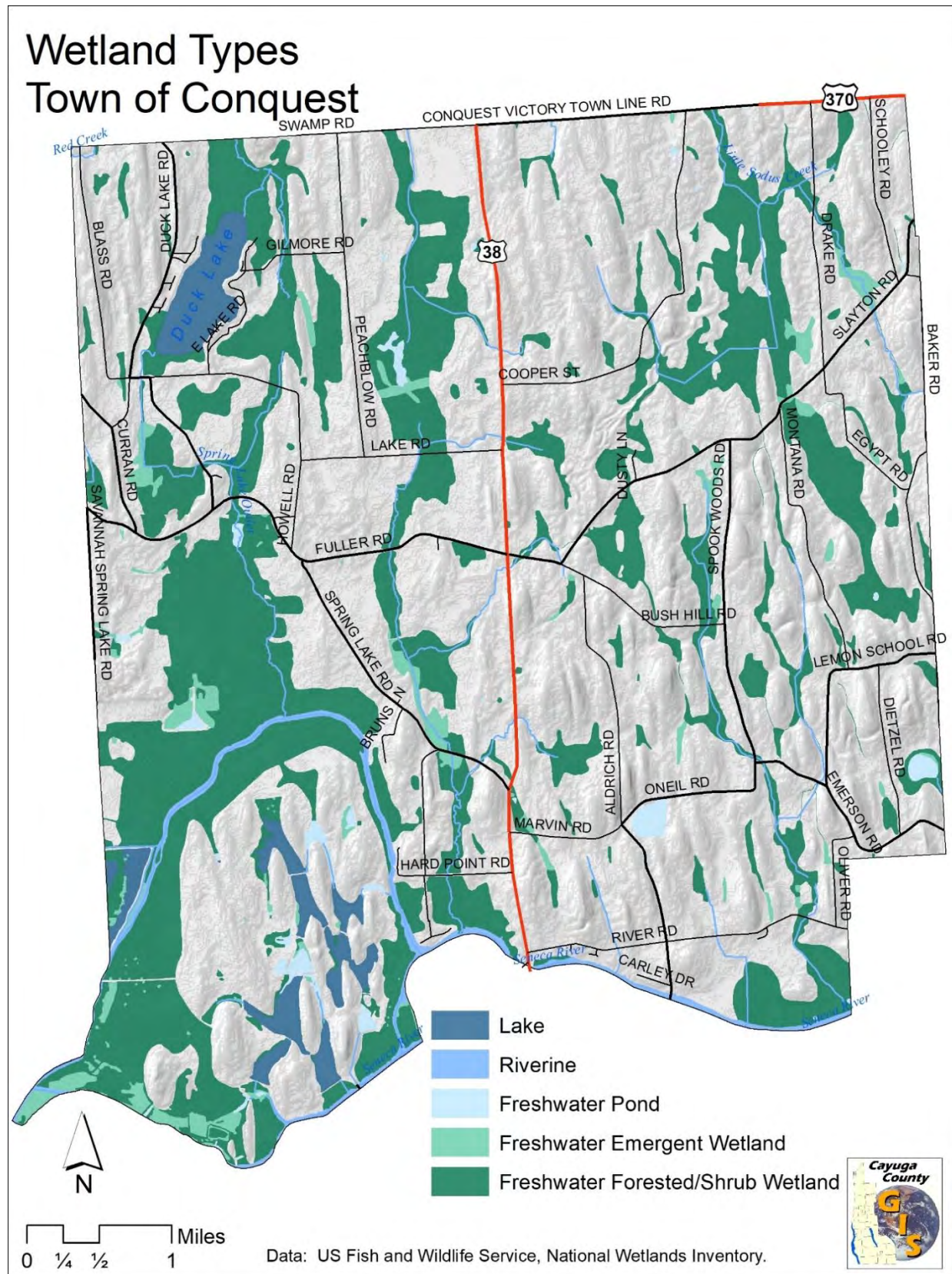


Ponds of Howland's Island Town of Conquest

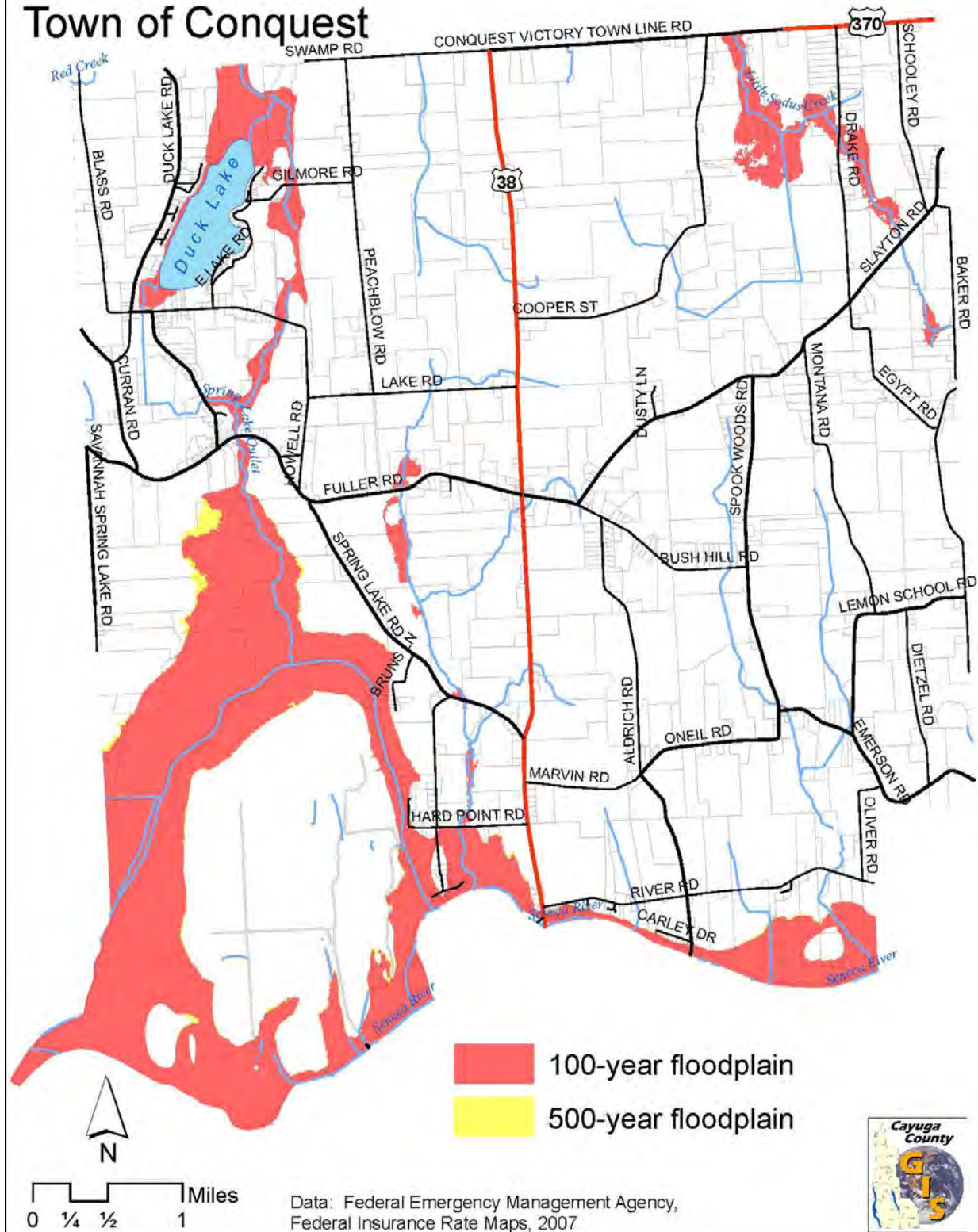


MAP 21

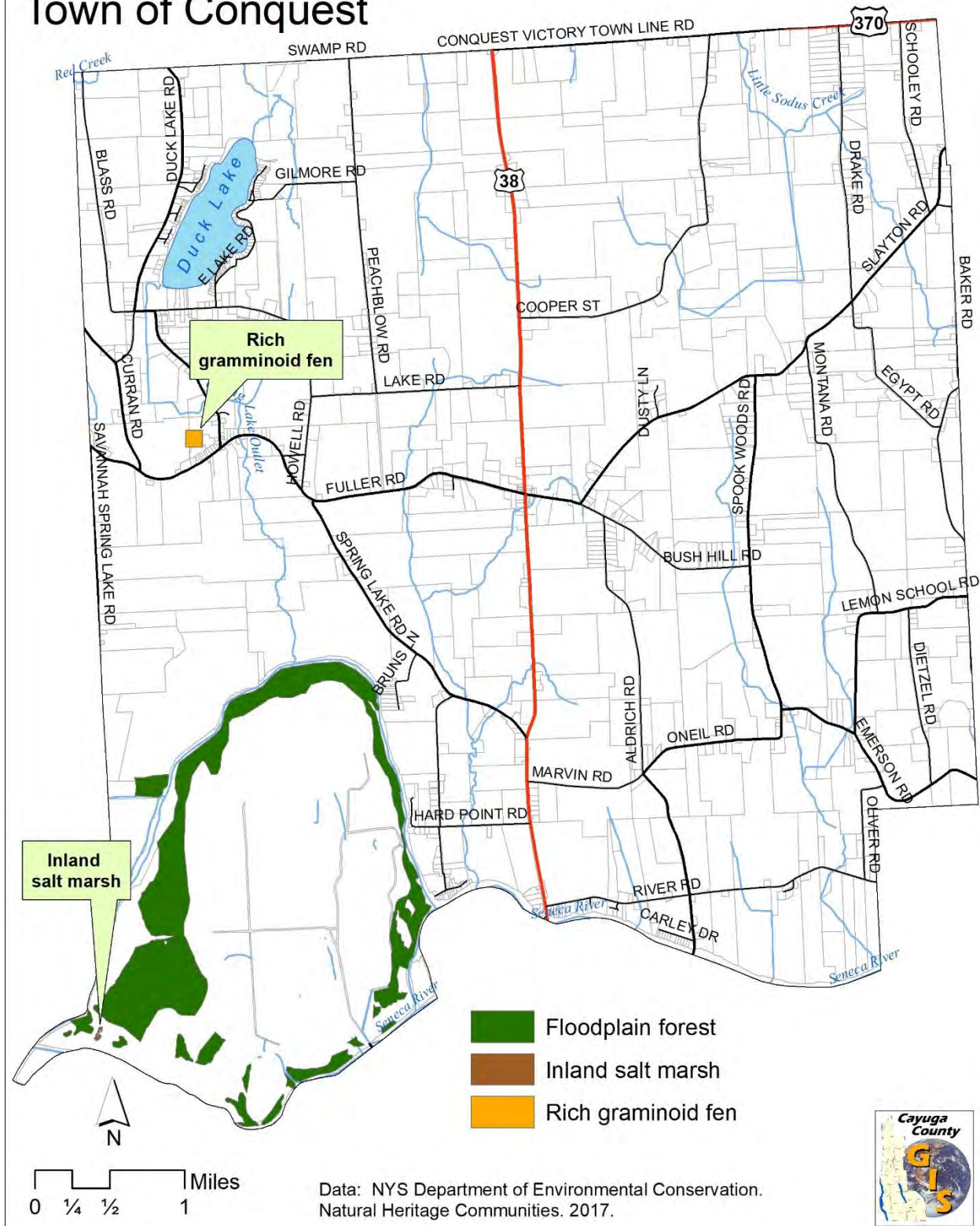




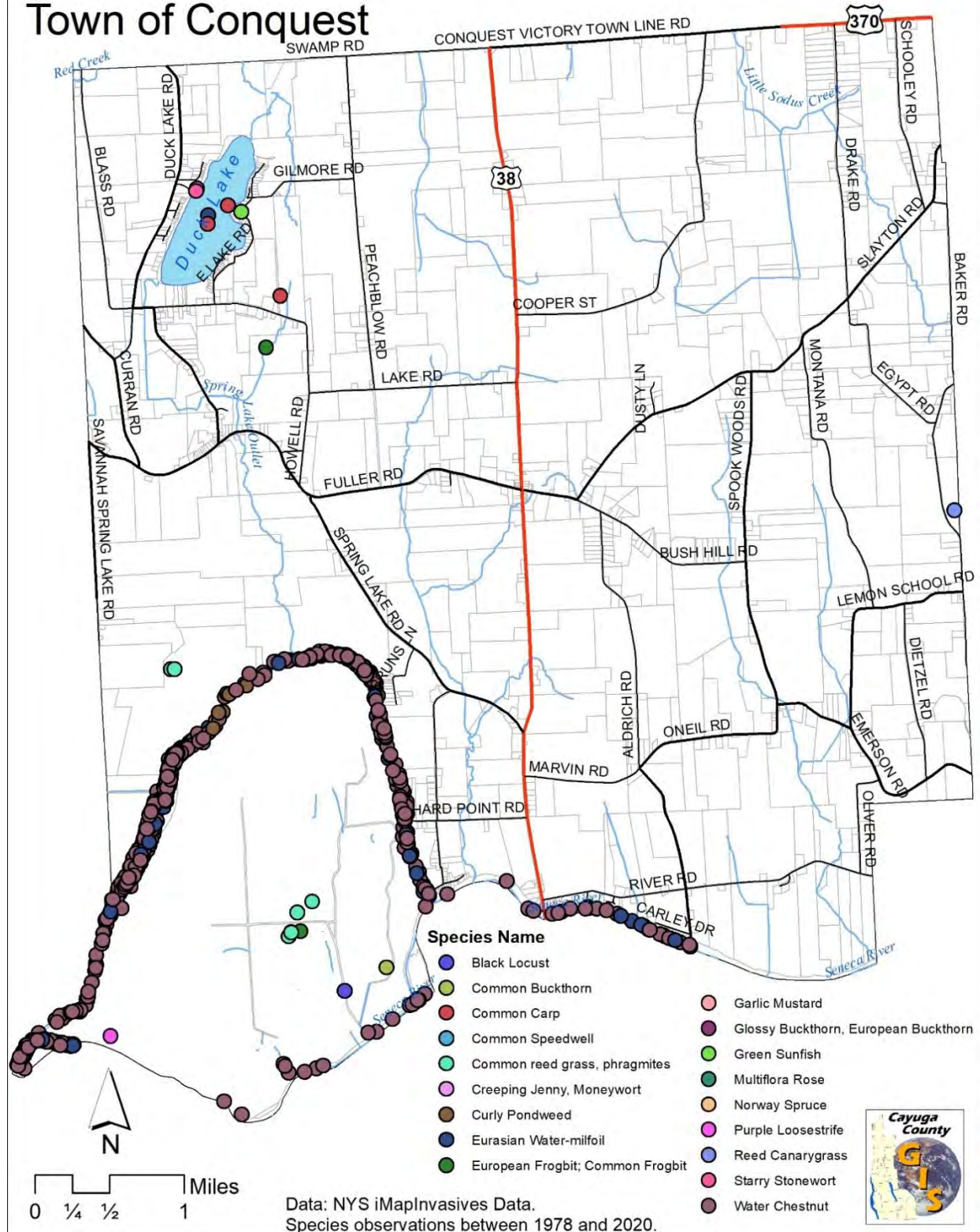
Floodplains Town of Conquest



Significant Natural Communities Town of Conquest



Invasive Species Town of Conquest



Hazard Mitigation

Hazard mitigation is an important aspect of comprehensive planning as hazards that may affect a place could have significant impacts on the quality of life in the town. Between 1996 and 2017, there were a reported \$35,000 worth of damages in Conquest from effects of flooding, wind, ice storm, snowstorm, hail, and/or tornados.⁵² This section details the types of hazards likely to affect Conquest, effects of climate change on the community, and the proposed initiatives identified in the Cayuga County 2021 Hazard Mitigation Plan to address hazards.

CAYUGA COUNTY 2021 HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

The Town of Conquest participated in the development of the Cayuga County Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) in 2021. Part of this effort was to identify past and potential future hazards or threats to public and private property, infrastructure and safety. By identifying these issues and the future plans/projects to mitigate them, the Town is now eligible to receive State and Federal funding when it is distributed in New York State after a natural disaster.

TYPES OF HAZARDS

According to the Cayuga County 2021 HMP, three types of disasters are most likely to occur in the Town of Conquest: flooding, severe storms, and drought. **Table 12** shows the risk levels of all hazards assessed for Conquest, and the adaptive capacity of the town for each.^d

Table 12: Hazard Risks and Adaptive Capacity

Hazard	Risk Level	Adaptive Capacity*
Disease Outbreak	Medium	Medium
Drought	High	Medium
Flood	High	Medium
HABs	Low	Medium
Severe Storm	High	Medium
Severe Winter Storm	Medium	High
Transportation	Low	Medium

*High - Capacity exists and is in use

Medium - Capacity may exist; but is not used or could use some improvement

Low - Capacity does not exist or could use substantial improvement

Flooding

Floods are one of the most common natural hazards in the U.S. They can develop slowly over a period of days or develop quickly, with disastrous effects that can be local (impacting a neighborhood or community) or regional (affecting entire river basins, coastlines and multiple counties or states). As defined in the NYS Hazard Mitigation Plan, flooding is a general and temporary condition of partial or complete inundation on normally dry land as a result of the following:

- Riverine overbank flooding

^d Adaptive capacity can be defined as the ability of systems, institutions, humans and other organisms to adjust to potential damage, to take advantage of opportunities, or respond to consequences. For this purpose, it describes a jurisdiction's current ability to adjust to, protect from, or withstand a hazardous event. This term is often discussed in reference to climate change; however, adaptive capacity also includes an understanding of local capacity for adapting to current and future risks and changing conditions.

- Flash floods
- Alluvial fan floods
- Mudflows or debris floods
- Dam- and levee-break floods
- Local draining or high groundwater levels
- Fluctuating lake levels
- Ice-jams
- Coastal flooding

For the purpose of the Cayuga County HMP, riverine/flash flood, lakeshore, shallow, ice jam, and dam and levee failure are the main topics addressed within the flooding profile. The types of floods that are likely to occur in Conquest are further discussed below.

Riverine (inland) and Flash Flooding

Riverine floods are the most common flood type. They occur along a channel and include overbank and flash flooding. Channels are defined, ground features that carry water through and out of a watershed. They may be called rivers, creeks, streams, or ditches. When a channel receives too much water, the excess water flows over its banks and inundates low-lying area.

Flash floods are defined by the National Weather Service as “A flood caused by heavy or excessive rainfall in a short period of time, generally less than 6 hours. Flash floods are usually characterized by raging torrents after heavy rains that rip through riverbeds, urban streets, or mountain canyons sweeping everything before them. They can occur within minutes or a few hours of excessive rainfall. They can also occur even if no rain has fallen, for instance after a levee or dam has failed, or after a sudden release of water by a debris or ice jam.”⁵³

Lakeshore Flooding

Lakeshore flooding is another type of hazard that can have significant impacts on communities and associated property damage. According to the New York State Hazard Mitigation Plan, while sea level rise is a primary concern in much of the downstate region, many rural communities in upstate New York are threatened by lakeshore flooding which is often caused by high water levels due to seasonal runoff and intense storms. This type of intense flooding can lead to beach erosion, flash flooding, and thus damage to coastal property and infrastructure. The shoreline of Duck Lake in Conquest is susceptible to lakeshore flooding.

Shallow Flooding

Stormwater flooding described below is due to local drainage issues and high groundwater levels. Locally, heavy precipitation may produce flooding in areas other than delineated floodplains or along recognizable channels. If local conditions cannot accommodate intense precipitation through a combination of infiltration and surface runoff, water may accumulate and cause flooding problems. During winter and spring, frozen ground and snow accumulations may contribute to inadequate drainage and localized ponding. Flooding issues of this nature generally occur in areas with flat gradients and generally increase with urbanization which speeds the accumulation of floodwaters because of impervious areas. Shallow street flooding can occur unless channels have been improved to account for increased flows. High groundwater levels can be a concern and cause problems even where there is no surface flooding. Basements are susceptible to high groundwater levels. Seasonally high groundwater is common in many areas, while elsewhere high groundwater occurs only after long periods of above-average precipitation. Drainage systems are designed to remove surface water from developed areas as quickly as possible to

prevent localized flooding on streets and other urban areas. They make use of a closed conveyance system that channels water away from an urban area to surrounding streams. This bypasses the natural processes of water filtration through the ground, containment, and evaporation of excess water. Since drainage systems reduce the amount of time the surface water takes to reach surrounding streams, flooding in those streams can occur more quickly and reach greater depths than prior to development in that area.⁵⁴

Ice Jam Flooding

An ice jam occurs when pieces of floating ice are carried with a stream's current and accumulate behind any obstruction to the stream flow. Obstructions may include river bends, mouths of tributaries, points where the river slope decreases, as well as dams and bridges. The water held back by this obstruction can cause flooding upstream, and if the obstruction suddenly breaks, flash flooding can occur as well. The formation of ice jams depends on the weather and physical condition of the river and stream channels. They are most likely to occur where the channel slope naturally decreases, in culverts, and along shallows where channels may freeze solid. Ice jams and resulting floods can occur at different times of the year: fall freeze-up from the formation of frazil ice; mid-winter periods when stream channels freeze solid, forming anchor ice; and spring breakup when rising water levels from snowmelt or rainfall break existing ice cover into pieces that accumulate at bridges or other types of obstructions. There are two main types of ice jams: freeze-up and breakup. Freeze-up jams occur when floating ice may slow or stop due to a change in water slope as it reaches an obstruction to movement. Breakup jams occur during periods of thaw, generally in late winter and early spring. The ice cover breakup is usually associated with a rapid increase in runoff and corresponding river discharge due to a heavy rainfall, snowmelt or warmer temperatures.⁵⁵

Dam Failure Flooding

According to the NYSDEC, there are nine dams in Conquest, eight of which are in Howland Island Wildlife Management Area. The dams on Howland's Island were constructed to reestablish wildlife habitat that was once common in the area before the area was drained for farming purposes in the 19th century. A dam or a levee is an artificial barrier that has the ability to impound water, wastewater, or any liquid-borne material for the purpose of storage or control of water. Dams are man-made structures built across a stream or river that impound water and reduce the flow downstream. They are built for the purpose of power production, agriculture, water supply, recreation, and flood protection. Dam failure is any malfunction or abnormality outside of the design that adversely affects a dam's primary function of impounding water. Dams and levees can fail for one or a combination of the following reasons:

- Overtopping caused by floods that exceed the capacity of the dam (inadequate spillway capacity due to uncontrolled release or exceedance of design);
- Prolonged periods of rainfall and flooding;
- Deliberate acts of sabotage (terrorism);
- Structural failure of materials used in dam construction;
- Movement and/or failure of the foundation supporting the dam;
- Settlement and cracking of concrete or embankment dams;
- Piping and internal erosion of soil in embankment dams;
- Inadequate or negligent operation, maintenance and upkeep;
- Failure of upstream dams on the same waterway; or
- Earthquake (liquefaction / landslides).⁵⁶

Flood Control Measures

According to the 2014 FEMA Flood Insurance Study for Cayuga County, multiple municipalities have flood control structures to mitigate flooding. All water levels in Cayuga Lake, Owasco Lake, New York State

Canal, Owasco Outlet, and Lake Ontario are regulated primarily for navigational purposes, but also to prevent flooding. Water level regulatory systems related to waterbodies in or adjacent to Conquest are summarized below:

- Cayuga-Seneca Canal Lock 1 (Mud Lock): This lock is located at the north end of Cayuga Lake and controls the water level in the lake and downstream of Seneca River from this point. The canal Corporation controls the level of the water.
- Erie Canal: approximately 25 miles of Erie Canal are located in the county, however there are no locks along this 25-mile portion of the Erie Canal. The closest upstream locks are Lock E-25 and E-26 located on Clyde River, and downstream Lock 24 located in Baldwinsville.

Severe Storms

The Town of Conquest is vulnerable to the impacts of severe storms. Severe storm hazards include thunderstorms, lightning, hail, tornadoes, high winds, winter storms, and hurricanes/tropical storms, which are defined below.

Thunderstorms

A thunderstorm is a local storm produced by a cumulonimbus cloud and accompanied by lightning and thunder. Although thunderstorms generally affect a small area when they occur, they have the potential to become dangerous due to their ability in generating tornadoes, hailstorms, strong winds, flash flooding, and lightning. The National Weather Service considers a thunderstorm severe only if it produces damaging wind gusts of 58 mph or higher or large hail one inch (quarter size) in diameter or larger or tornadoes.

Issues Identified

The Cayuga County 2021 Hazard Mitigation Plan identifies the following issues to be addressed in rural areas of the county, such as Conquest, to address the impacts of severe storms:

- Increasing resilience of electrical and utility grid system to mitigate future disconnection in all municipalities.
- Increase tree maintenance program to reduce clogging of streambeds, damage to above-ground utility lines, mitigation of transportation disruption and accidents, and protection of property.
- Increase emergency response in rural communities. While there is a relatively well-developed emergency response system in place around the City of Auburn, rural areas outside of the City have limited capacity to respond during emergency events.

Lightning

Lightning is a bright flash of electrical energy produced by a thunderstorm. The resulting clap of thunder is the result of a shock wave created by the rapid heating and cooling of the air in the lightning channel. All thunderstorms produce lightning and are very dangerous. Lightning ranks as one of the top weather killers in the United States, killing approximately 50 people and injuring hundreds each year. Lightning can occur anywhere there is a thunderstorm. Lightning can be cloud to air, cloud to cloud, and cloud to ground.

Hailstorms

Hail forms inside a thunderstorm where there are strong updrafts of warm air and downdrafts of cold water. If a water droplet is picked up by the updrafts, it can be carried well above the freezing level. Water droplets freeze when temperatures reach 32 °F or colder. As the frozen droplet begins to fall, it might thaw as it moves into warmer air toward the bottom of the thunderstorm, or the droplet might be picked

up again by another updraft and carried back into the cold air to re-freeze. With each trip above and below the freezing level, the frozen droplet adds another layer of ice. The frozen droplet, with many layers of ice, falls to the ground as hail.

High Winds

Wind begins with differences in air pressures. It is rough horizontal movement of air caused by uneven heating of the earth's surface. Wind occurs at all scales, from local breezes lasting a few minutes to global winds resulting from solar heating of the earth. High winds are often associated by other severe weather events such as thunderstorms, tornadoes, hurricanes, and tropical storms.

Tornadoes

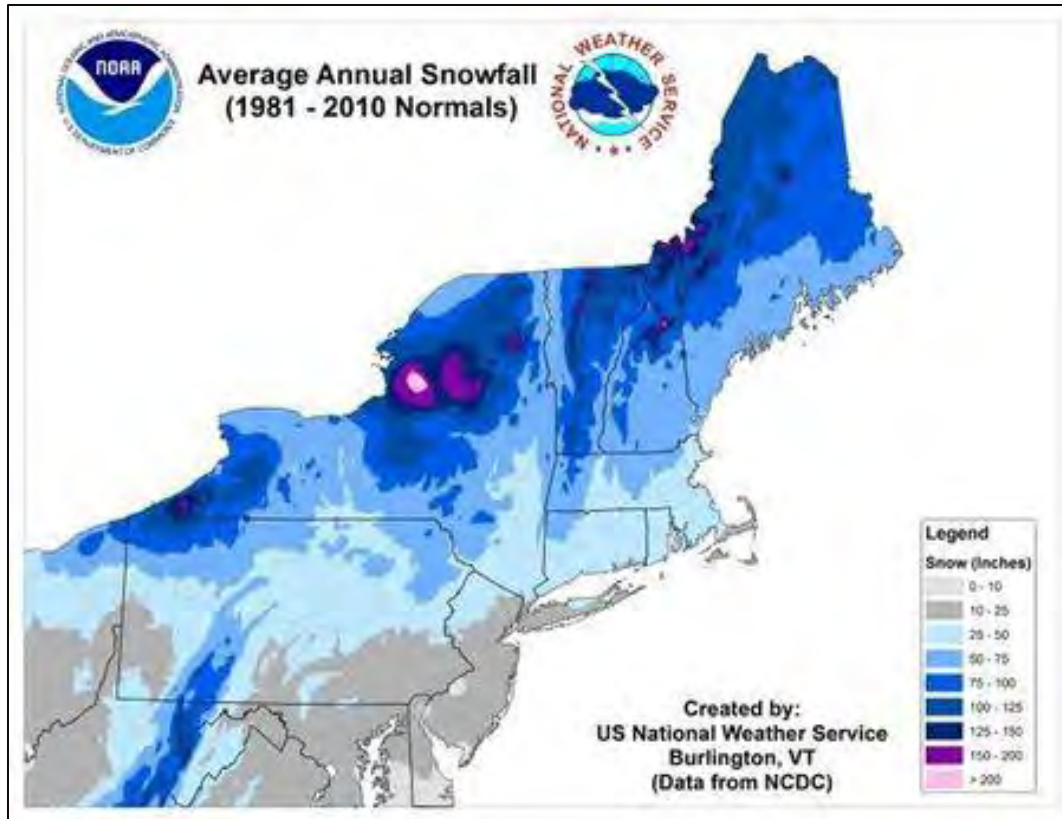
A tornado appears as a rotating, funnel-shaped cloud that extends from a thunderstorm to the ground with whirling winds that can reach 250 miles per hour (mph). Damage paths can be greater than 1 mile wide and 50 miles long. Tornadoes typically develop from either a severe thunderstorm or hurricane as cool air rapidly overrides a layer of warm air. Tornadoes typically move at speeds between 30 and 125 mph and can generate combined wind speeds (forward motion and speed of the whirling winds) exceeding 300 mph. The lifespan of a tornado rarely is longer than 30 minutes. Tornadoes can occur at any time of the year, with peak seasons at different times for different states.

Severe Winter Storms

Severe Winter Storms hazards can take the form of heavy snowfall, blizzards, sleet, freezing rain, or ice storms. The National Weather Service (NWS) defines heavy snowfall as accumulation of four inches or more within a 12 hour period, or accumulation of six inches or more within a 24 hour period. A snow squall is a type of heavy snowfall characterized by an intense, but limited duration, period of moderate to heavy snowfall accompanied by strong, gusty surface winds. Lake Effect Snow is a type of heavy snowfall unique to regions in Upstate New York. Named for the result from the air above the relatively warm waters of the Great Lakes interacting with a movement of cold air. The cold air passing over the open waters transfers warmth and moisture to the lowest portion of the atmosphere, which then rises to the overriding cold air above. This layer of trapped moisture ultimately turns into cloudiness and snow on the leeward side of the lakes. Lake Effect Snow often occurs in bands of intense snowfall and limited visibility. Blizzards are distinguished from heavy snowfall by the NWS as having low temperatures, wind gusts in excess of 35 mph, and falling and/or blowing snow that reduces visibility to a quarter mile or less for at least three hours.

Sleet is defined as pellets of ice composed of frozen or mostly frozen raindrops or snowflakes while freezing rain falls in liquid form but freezes into glaze upon contact with the ground. Significant accumulation of freezing rain is called an ice storm and the associated impacts can be severe. Ice storms can pull down trees and utility lines, resulting in widespread and lengthy power failure. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Cayuga County experiences between 15 and 21 hours of freezing rain each year.

Much of New York State experiences abundant snowfall. In fact, many communities in the State receive among the most snowfall totals throughout the nation. The easternmost and west-central portions of the State are more likely to suffer under winter storm occurrences than any other location. The average annual snowfall in Cayuga County is greater than 81 inches, compared to an average of 40 inches throughout New York State.



Annual Average Snowfall in the Northeast. Source: NOAA.

Hurricanes/Tropical Storms

A tropical storm system is characterized by a low-pressure center and numerous thunderstorms that produce strong winds of 39 to 73 mph and heavy rain. A hurricane is a tropical storm that attains hurricane status when its wind speed reaches 74 mph or higher. Tropical systems can develop in the Atlantic between the Lesser Antilles and the African coast or in the warm tropical waters of the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico. These storms can move up the Atlantic coast of the United States, impacting the eastern seaboard, or move into the United States through the states along the Gulf Coast, bringing wind and rain as far north as New England before moving eastward offshore. Cayuga County is not frequently impacted by hurricanes, tropical storms, or tropical depressions but has recently experienced the direct and indirect landward effects associated with Extratropical Storm Nate in 2017, which passed just south of Conquest.

Drought

Drought is a period characterized by long durations of below-normal precipitation levels. **Table 13** lists the drought events that have impacted Cayuga County between 2014 and 2020. Drought is different from aridity, which is a permanent feature of climate restricted to regions with typically low rainfall whereas drought is a temporary irregularity. Drought conditions can occur in virtually all climatic zones and vary significantly from one region to another. Droughts are relative to the normal precipitation in that region. Additionally, drought can enhance wildfire/brush fire risk, affecting plant life, agriculture, water supply, aquatic ecology, and wildlife. According to the 2019 NYS Hazard Mitigation Plan, there are four types of droughts:

- Meteorological Drought: a shortfall of precipitation that creates dry conditions.

- Hydrological Drought: changes in surface and subsurface water supplies. Impacts can extend for years beyond the incidence of drought due to factors such as waterbody levels, reduced stream flow, and decreased snow pack.
- Agricultural Drought: Droughts that share characteristics of both meteorological and hydrological droughts in the context of agriculture, including crops, livestock and forestry.
- Socioeconomic Drought – Population and socioeconomic impacts to drought, including supply, demand, and economic activity.

Impacts from Drought

Drought events impact the economy including loss of business function and damage and loss of inventory. Direct and indirect losses to agricultural producers, livestock producers, timber producers, fishery producers, and tourism may include:

- Damage to crop quality and crop losses
- Insect infestation leading to crop and tree losses
- Plant diseases leading to loss of agricultural crops and trees
- Reduced productivity of livestock due to unavailability of feed and mortality rates
- Reduction in tourism and outdoor activities such as hunting, fishing, and boating
- Increased risk of brush fires and wildfires due to dried crops, grasses, and dying trees

Table 13: Drought Events in Cayuga County between 2014 and 2020

Date of Event	Event Details
7/1/2016 – 10/1/2016	<p>A significant lack of rain since May of this year found many areas in the Finger Lakes and Southern Tier New York regions with as little as 25 percent of normal rainfall through the end of July.</p> <p>Drought persisted and became worse over parts of the Finger Lakes region and Central Southern Tier of New York during August. Rainfall since the late Spring was only recording up to 50 to 80 percent of normal. According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, portions of the area deteriorated from severe to extreme drought. Agricultural interests reported significant stress to non-irrigated crops.</p> <p>A weather pattern supporting dry conditions was prevalent across weather New York resulting in below normal precipitation. In addition, below normal snow pack from a mild winter left conditions drier than normal going into spring. The driest conditions were across the Buffalo metro area and Niagara Frontier where lake shadowing reduced the frequency of showers and thunderstorms. The USGS ground water level network showed that numerous wells are in the driest 10th percentile. The dry conditions are beginning to have an impact on crops.</p> <p>September rainfall amounts were again considerably below the average long term monthly trends. According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, drought conditions continued to deteriorate, and more of the region was classified in extreme drought. Agricultural interests reported significant stress to non-irrigated crops, with many areas reporting expected losses to corn, soybean and hay yields. More communities began to place voluntary and mandatory water restrictions on their residents.</p>

Sources: NCEI 2020, USDM 2020, NDMC 2020

Note: Many sources provide historical information regarding previous occurrences and losses associated with drought events throughout New York State and Cayuga County. Information about loss and impact resulting from each of many events can vary depending on the source.

CLIMATE CHANGE

As the 21st century progresses, increasing greenhouse gas concentrations are projected to lead to large increases in the frequency, intensity, and duration of both extreme heat events and flooding. According to the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), temperatures and precipitation have increased in New York each decade since the early 20th century.⁵⁷ The effects of a warmer and wetter climate will have significant implications for the residents of Conquest, especially for agricultural operations.

Temperature

According to NYSERDA, average annual temperatures are projected to increase across New York State by 2.0–3.4 °F by the 2020s, 4.1–6.8 °F by the 2050s, and 5.3–10.1 °F by the 2080s (compared to the baseline period of 1971 – 2000). The State’s growing season could lengthen by about a month, with summers becoming more intense and winters milder. The climate models suggest that each season will experience a similar amount of warming relative to the baseline period.

Precipitation

Regional precipitation across New York State is projected to increase by approximately 1-8 percent by the 2020s, 3-12 percent by the 2050s, and 4-15 percent by the 2080s. By the end of the century, the greatest increases in precipitation are projected to be in the northern parts of the State. Although seasonal projections are less certain than annual results, much of this additional precipitation is projected to occur during the winter months. During the late summer and early fall, in contrast, total precipitation is slightly reduced in many climate models. In general, the projected changes in annual precipitation in the global climate models associated with increasing greenhouse gases are small relative to year-to-year variability.⁵⁸

Impacts of Climate Change

Increased temperature and precipitation will impact quality of life and the environment in Conquest. It will challenge social, and economic systems, increasing the vulnerability of the town’s residents, especially for the most disadvantaged populations. Impacts of climate change in Conquest may include:

- increased frequency of severe storms
- increased chances for flooding
- increased chances for insects, such as mosquitos
- increased disease outbreaks
- Increased water temperatures , which will affect aquatic health and reduce the capacity of streams to assimilate nutrients

CONQUEST HAZARD MITIGATION INITIATIVES

In the 2021 Hazard Mitigation Plan, the Town of Conquest identified the following initiatives (**Table 14**) that could help alleviate impacts from significant hazard events, such as flooding and severe storms.

Table 14: Proposed Hazard Mitigation Initiatives⁵⁹

Project Name	Hazard to be Mitigated	Problem	Solution
Culvert Capacity Increasing Project on Hard Point Road	Flood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old culvert type (cement) is breaking up and is in need of replacement. • Water is eating away the foundation and eating away at the shoulder of the road. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs new culverts and road above and new guardrails. • Culvert needs to be increased in size and capacity to mitigate overflow of culvert. • Install a concrete wing-wall to mitigate future erosion of road and surrounding walls. • Needs to be addressed before further damage results from culvert.
Rebuild Road Shoulder alongside both sides of Town Line Road	Flood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to the muck and water in the trench, the road is in danger of caving in on both sides. • Possibly be a safety issue for cars and school buses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rebuilding shoulders on both sides of road. • Approximately 0.5 miles of work plus guard rails.
Dam Assessment	Flood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two dams are located in the 100-year flood zone and are at risk of potential flood damage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct an assessment of facilities to determine if any structural issues are of concern. • Work with stakeholders and consultant to develop strategy to repair the dam. • Precautionary measures should be taken to avoid any future problems.
Generator Installation	Severe Storms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Town Hall does not have adequate emergency backup power. • Without backup power, the town does not have the ability to operate during a hazard event which thus could result in interrupted critical services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install diesel generator at town hall. • The generator needs to accommodate for all the power needed for the town hall which also houses the DPW garage
Identify and develop evacuation routes and shelters	All Hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The town has not identified potential evacuation shelters and routes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with landowners and municipal officials to determine and designated evacuation routes, temporary housing, and shelter location.

25. Increase emergency response capacity and services

Work with local partners, such as the Cayuga County Sheriff's Office and Emergency Management Office, to pursue feasible opportunities for improving emergency services, through outreach, volunteer efforts, grant opportunities, equipment upgrades, and service expansion. Improving the availability and responsiveness of Conquest's currently limited emergency services will become even more important as the Town faces new stressors such as solar facilities, an aging community, and more frequent and severe natural emergencies.

26. Increase public safety during emergency events

Work with the Cayuga County Emergency Management Office to prepare Conquest for emergency events and ensure that the public is informed of all pertinent emergency information and resources.

Economic Development

To understand the economic development potential in Conquest, this section will assess current businesses or income-generating operations in town, employment and workforce trends, and the services that are available to residents, such as those for groceries or basic needs.

BUSINESSES IN CONQUEST

The business climate of Conquest can be described as entrepreneurial. While no major employers are based in Conquest, there are 48 known businesses or income-generating operations based on survey responses and business locations found on Google Maps (**Table 15**). More than half of these operations are agriculturally related. The non-agricultural businesses are small, mostly sole proprietorships, including several home businesses and other independent operations. These businesses range from auto services and sales, home improvement contracting, and personal services. There are other local businesses that residents have reported, such as those operated by the Mennonite community. The high number of local businesses or income-generating operations indicates that Conquest may offer the type of environment for entrepreneurs looking to start up a business in town.

Table 15: Businesses in Conquest

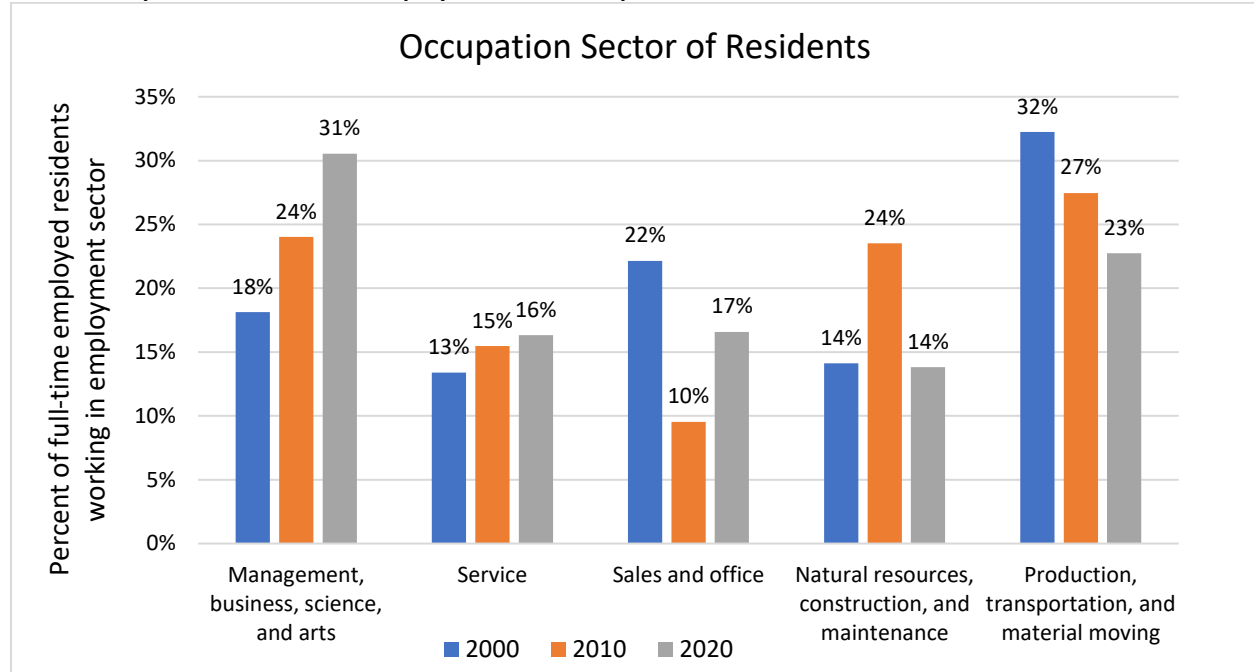
Category	Number of Businesses	Individual Business Operation
Agriculture	27	Own/operate farm; rent land; meat, dairy, crop, and feed production; farm supply
Auto repair and sales	4	Auto repair and sales
Construction / Contracting	5	Interior remodeling; clutter removal; landscaping; construction
Healthcare	1	Midwifery
Light manufacturing	1	Book binding/diecutting service
Nonprofit	1	Duck Lake Association
Personal services	7	Income tax consultant
		Photographer
		Weight loss consultant
		Licensed massage therapist
		Other (home office-based)
Retail/wholesale	1	Home equipment supplier
Trucking	1	Trucking company
Total	48	

EMPLOYMENT

Town of Conquest resident employment trends in the formal economy over the past twenty years are shown in **Chart 9**. According to US Census Bureau data, in 2020 the largest employment sector, accounting for 31% of all full-time employees, was “management, business, science, and arts.” Most “white collar” jobs fall under this category, which also includes healthcare and education occupations. Twenty-three percent (23%) of employees worked in production, transportation and material moving occupations. Sales and office occupations (including administrative support occupations) accounted for 17% of all employees, followed closely by service occupations (16%). The smallest sector was natural resources, construction, and maintenance (including farming), with approximately 14% of employees working in this sector. Notable employment trends between 2000 and 2020 included a steady increase in the proportion of the workforce employed in Management, business, science, and arts sector jobs, a trend that occurred

at a national level as well. There was also a consistent decrease in production, transportation, and material moving employment between 2000, 2010, and 2020. This trend did not occur nationally to the same extent, where there was only a slight (1%) decrease in this sector over this time period.

Chart 9: Proportion of residents employed in each occupation sector



US Census Bureau (2000 Decennial Census, 2010 5-Year ACS Estimates, 2020 5-Year ACS Estimates)

Despite the physical landscape of Conquest being predominantly agricultural, this Census Bureau data estimates that only around 22 residents of Conquest are full time farmers. It is important to note that in a small town like Conquest, there is a large margin of error for American Community Survey results due to the small sample size collected. Thus, the survey estimates that the real number of farmers may fall anywhere between 6 and 38 farmers. Similarly, the survey estimates that 47 people in Conquest work full time in the agriculture industry (with the margin of error putting the number between 16 and 78).

SERVICES

For routine shopping errands, Conquest's business sector does not meet the vast majority of resident's needs. Grocery stores, pharmacies, dollar stores, and some essential services can be found in nearby villages including Weedsport, Cato, Port Byron, Wolcott, and Clyde (**Table 16**). For more comprehensive business districts, including shopping centers and big box stores, residents must travel at least 25 minutes to the Auburn area or other larger population centers.

Table 16: Distance from Conquest Municipal Center to various businesses

Nearest Supermarket	Ed & Jeans Market, Port Byron, NY	6.5 mi / 9 min drive
Nearest Pharmacy	Herbst Pharmacy, Port Byron, NY	6.8 mi / 10 min drive
Auburn Area Shopping Centers	Grant Ave Plaza, Auburn Plaza, Fingerlakes Mall, Fingerlakes Crossing, Downtown Auburn	15-16 mi / 23-25 min drive
Fulton Area Shopping Centers	State Route 3 and Downtown Commercial Districts	23-24 mi/28-30 min drive

There may be an appetite in town to bring in more small business that meet these needs. Over a dozen responses to the survey expressed a desire for more businesses, especially for a restaurant, café, or a grocery store. “I do wish the vacant property on the corner of Fuller Road and Route 38 was still a grocery store,” wrote one survey respondent. “We need places to open up small stores and shops,” wrote another.

Over half of respondents to the survey (53%) indicated a neutral position on whether the town has opportunities for business growth. Twenty-eight percent (28%) said that Conquest has poor or very poor opportunities for business growth, and only 19% of respondents said that opportunities are good or very good. Additionally, business growth did not seem to be a relatively important concern among residents surveyed. Thirty-nine percent (39%) of respondents viewed business growth opportunities as the least or second to least important out of the eight community topics surveyed. This general consensus from residents’ feeds into the context of Conquest’s quiet, small-town rurality and for many choosing to live here for that reason, as opposed to living in a town or a city that advocates for large industries and business development.

Economic Development

GOALS

27. Encourage growth and expansion of local businesses that will improve the quality of life for residents, help maintain strong community ties, and attract visitors and tourists

The Town should actively pursue opportunities for compatible business growth within the Growth/Investment Opportunity Areas identified on the Future Land Use Map. Within these areas of Conquest, the Town should encourage economic development through land use regulation and property investment. The Town should establish a plan that identifies potential projects or investment opportunities and creates a long-term strategy to build financial equity to support these opportunities. Examples of long-term budget items could include matching funds for identified grant opportunities or funds for incentive promotions. This plan also identifies organizing a farmers' market and developing tourist information as actions for the Town to pursue. Future economic development should be compatible with the goals identified in the Future Land Use section and should help achieve the shared vision in this plan for protection of the Town's agricultural way of life, the Town's rural identity, and promoting community connection.

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FUTURE LAND USE

To guide future land use decisions that meet the vision of this Plan, Character Areas have been developed.

Character Areas

The Character Areas are the products of a year-long planning process to determine the community characteristics that Conquest values and reflect this vision in a geographic display. It is important to note that these Character Areas are not zoning districts, nor do they possess any authority to impose land use regulations. Instead, the areas are defined in general terms to provide context and act as a starting point for further conversation regarding land use decisions. The Character Areas are depicted on the Future Land Use Map (**Map 26**) with inexact bounds and may be altered by the Town in accordance with the Vision Statement and related goals set forth in this Comprehensive Plan.

CONSERVATION PRIORITY AREAS (CP)

Conquest's ecological landscape is comprised of a complex tapestry of forests, farmlands, and hydrologic resources. These resources are intertwined, both physically and functionally: what affects one will come to affect another, either directly or indirectly. The Town of Conquest acknowledges a similar relationship: an inseparable interdependence between our livelihood and our resources, as well the livelihood of our neighbors, and, therefore, places a priority on resource protection. Additionally, two-thirds of survey respondents identified natural resource protection as an important issue. Therefore, the Comprehensive Plan identifies the following ecological assets and places a priority on their protection in order to promote water quality, retain a rural landscape, and establish the community as a leader in land stewardship:

1. *Federal and State Regulated Wetlands;*
2. *Stream and river corridors; and*
3. *Forest patches greater than 100 acres.*

Location: Four main areas have been identified to fulfill the intent of this goal:

- **CPA-1:** A forested buffer of Spring Lake Outlet on the western side of Conquest, from the headwaters north of Duck Lake, flowing south to the northern branch of the Seneca River at Howland's Island, including Howland's Island (a DEC Wildlife Management Area).
- **CPA-2:** A forested buffer of Mud Lake outlet near the center of Conquest, from the headwaters north of Mud Lake, flowing south into the Seneca River;
- **CPA-3:** A forested buffer of the headwaters of the Sterling Creek, in the northeast corner of Conquest, flowing north.
- **CPA-4:** A forested buffer of two unnamed tributaries on the eastern side of Conquest, flowing south into Seneca River. A narrow forested buffer of Seneca River, flowing east along the town line, is also within this Conservation Priority Area.

Strategies: Land use regulations or decisions for the Conservation Priority Areas should focus on discouraging or limiting incompatible development. Development restrictions should not prevent accomplishing other goals, such as promoting outdoor recreation and waterfront access. Conquest could establish and maintain a list of Critical Environmental Areas (CEAs) based off the Conservation Priority Area (see Future Land Use Map), and amend the Town's SEQRA Type 1 actions list to include any and all CEAs, thus allowing the Town a more robust and thorough review of projects in these areas.

GROWTH/INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY AREA (GA)

Low-intensity land uses are predominant in Conquest with farmland, protected lands, and vacant lands occupying approximately 85% of total land area. Nearly all remaining land is considered residential, often situated on large, rural lots. Despite the rural nature of the town, the Town is served by two important highways – Route 38, a north-south transportation corridor through the town, and Route 370, an east-west corridor in the northeast corner of Conquest. These corridors present an opportunity for focused, low-intensity development along them, without interfering with the rural character that makes Conquest so special. The infrastructural and architectural remnants of a hamlet core, clustered around the NYS Route 38 intersection with Fuller/Bush Hill Roads, also known as Conquest Center, is an ideal location for reinvestment. Low-intensity commercial enterprises to serve the needs of residents and visitors to the area (e.g. snowmobilers, hunters, recreationalists) should be encouraged in this location. Additionally, this area contains the Town Offices, Highway Department, and the Fire Department, making it an area that has higher amounts of commerce. Further, the presence of Seneca River along the southern boundary of Conquest presents an opportunity to provide services to boaters. The area just north of the Seneca River along Route 38 would be an ideal location for commercial investment.

Location: Three locations are identified for the Growth/Investment Opportunity Area:

- **GA-1:** An area along Route 38 from Cooper Street southward approximately two miles. The area extends westward on Fuller Road to Dons Lane and eastward on Bush Hill Road to Aldrich Road.
- **GA-2:** An area along Route 38 from Hard Point Road south to River Road.
- **GA-3:** An area south of the Route 370 corridor.

Strategies: The Town may consider encouraging compatible low-intensity commercial and residential development in this area, taking advantage of the relatively high traffic volume and proximity of municipal services. Directing commercial uses and higher intensity residential uses to this corridor will also relieve development pressure elsewhere in the Town, supporting the protection efforts aimed at natural resources and high-quality farmland. Agricultural uses, however, should not be restricted in this area.

FARMLAND PROTECTION PRIORITY AREA (FP)

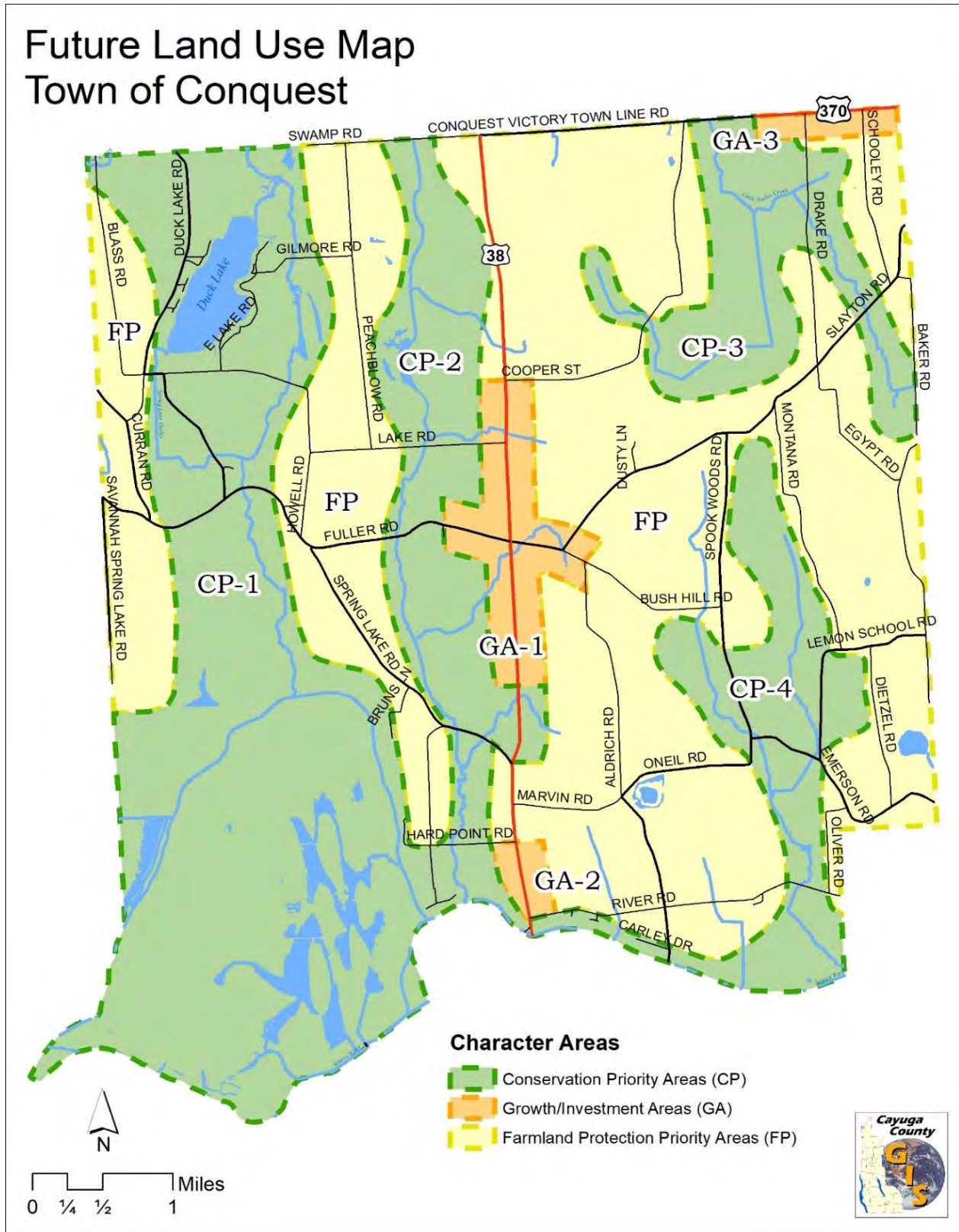
The Town of Conquest recognizes that agriculture is the backbone of its economy, as well as the defining element of its rural character and way of life. Identified by survey respondents as one of the most important issues to address, the Comprehensive Plan recommends taking measures to ensure the protection of the following agricultural assets:

1. *High-quality soils; and*
2. *Large contiguous properties actively farmed that are at risk of segmentation.*

Location: Because agriculture is the predominant land use in the Town, any areas not designated as a Conservation Priority Area or Growth/Investment Opportunity Area is considered to be part of the Farmland Protection Priority Area.

Strategies: Land use decisions in the Farmland Protection Priority Area should reflect the Town's overarching commitment to agriculture as the highest and best use. The Town may consider restricting land uses that are incongruent with agriculture, or those that substantially degrade or compromise soil quality or permanently alter topography.

Future Land Use Map Town of Conquest



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IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

This section presents the Goals that were identified in the Inventory and Analysis of Existing Conditions Section in a user-friendly **Implementation Matrix** to be used by Town officials to help achieve the vision of the Town (see below). The table has eight categories: housing and land use, agriculture, natural resources, hazard mitigation, recreation, culture, community facilities and governance, and economic development. The following table (**Table 17**) describes each column in the matrix. **Table 18** outlines the goal types and descriptions of each. **Table 19** provides some potential funding sources that could aid the Town in goal implementation. All types of funding should be pursued to help offset the financial burden to the Town. Due to limited staffing at the Town, Conquest may consider hiring outside help (e.g. a private planning firm or County Planning and Economic Development Department) to prepare a grant application, and, if awarded, facilitate the grant’s administration.

Table 17: Description of each column in the Implementation Matrix

Goal		Action Step		Type	Community Champion	Partners	Funding Opportunities	Time Frame (Years)	Priority	Date Started	Status
Goal Number	A relatively broad statement announcing a goal for the Town to pursue, based on community feedback and the data presented in the Inventory and Analysis of Existing Conditions.	Action Number	A specific, actionable task for the Town to act upon to achieve the corresponding goal.	Each action item is categorized as a specific goal type, (see Table 18)	The Town body, official, or employee designated to initiate and administrate each action item.	Any organization that can provide assistance to the Town in accomplishing an action item.	Sources of funding that may be available to assist the town in achieving goals of the plan (see Table 19)	The timeframe of each Action Step is measured from when the Town starts the Action Step.	The urgency for the Town to start working on the Action Step (Low, Medium, or High). This is up to the Town Board.	The date that the Action Step was started (to be filled in by Town)	The status of each Action Step to be completed by the Town as it's worked on (e.g. Started or Finished, to be filled in by Town)

Table 18: Goal Types and Descriptions

Goal Type	Description
Administration	Any task undertaken by Town staff as part of their roles and responsibilities. Administrative tasks can be ongoing or completed as a one-time or on an "as needed" basis. Administrative tasks should be low-cost and absorbed in the Town's operating budget.
Capital Improvement	Physical improvements to, and investments in, Town facilities, assets, and resources. Capital Improvements are often eligible for grant assistance.
Coordination	Involves partners such as the Conquest Fire Department that have a complementary role in providing services to Town residents.
Government Service / Program	Distinct from Administration, this type of goal involves expansion or new services to be provided by the Town. Government Service goals will typically include a funding mechanism in the form of a fee to ensure these services are sustainable and not overly burdensome to Town residents.
Land Use Regulation / Local Law	Any local law or zoning requirement designed to protect Town resources and assets, or ensure the health, safety, and welfare of Town residents.
Plan / Study	Any document drafted and adopted by the Town to serve as a guideline for future land use decisions and policy development.
Policy	A course or principle of action adopted by the Town to further direct land use, administrative, or operational decisions.

Table 19: Potential Funding Sources (*not an exhaustive list*)

Potential Funding Source	Description
Empire State Development	"Strategic Community Development Investment" can help an identified growth area develop the infrastructure necessary to attract businesses. "Economic Growth Investment" can help specific projects advance. The "Regional Tourism" program can help market and expand tourism destinations such as the Erie Canal.
Homes & Community Renewal	The "New York Main Street" program can assist areas that have sustained physical deterioration, neglect, or disinvestment. The Community Development Block Grant" program can assist with single or multi-family housing rehabilitation.
Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation (OPRHP)	The "Environmental Protection Fund Grants Program" and the "Recreational Trails Program" can help with expansion or new development of parks, trails, and preservation of historic sites.
New York State Department of State	The "Local Waterfront Revitalization Program" allows a municipality to develop a plan focused on the part of their community inextricably linked to a major water body (i.e. Seneca River). The "Brownfield Opportunity Area" provides assistance to areas suffering from economic and environmental blight. The "Local Government Efficiency Program" helps municipalities reduce the cost of operations.
NYS Canal Corporation	The "Canalway Grants Program" encourages tourism by improving public access and increasing visitation and recreational use of the canal system (including the Seneca River).
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)	The DEC offers several programs aimed at water quality, wastewater infrastructure, and greenhouse gas emissions reductions. Projects may take the form of capital improvements or planning and engineering studies.
Green Innovation Grant Program	Eligible projects will advance green practices, such as green stormwater efficiency (i.e. bioretention, permeable pavements), energy efficiency, water efficiency, or environmental innovation.
Agriculture & Markets	"Farmland Protection Planning Grants" are available to communities interested in developing policies and projects to maintain the economic viability of the local agricultural industry and land base.
USDA Community Facilities Loan & Grant Program	The USDA provides affordable funding to develop essential community facilities in rural areas.

Implementation Matrix

Town Governance, Facilities, & Infrastructure	Goal		Action Step		Type	Community Champion	Partners	Funding Opportunities	Time Frame (years)	Priority	Date Started	Status
	1	ENSURE THAT TOWN INFRASTRUCTURE IS SAFE, WELL MAINTAINED, AND ACCESSIBLE TO ALL	1	Update aging highway department equipment.	Government Service	Highway Superintendent		USDA Community Facilities Grant Program	2	Medium		
			2	Explore shuttle ride / transportation options for low income and senior residents	Study/Gov't Service	Town Board	Cayuga County Office of the Aging		5	Medium		
			3	Develop a plan that clearly identifies how the town budgets, maintains, and resolves issues relating to assets and infrastructure	Plan	Town Board			2	Medium		
			4	Identify the Town's infrastructure assets and their current state of Right of Ways that include above/below ground existing ground cable and pipe, and planned cable and pipe.	Study	Town Board				Medium		
			5	Implement laws, regulations, permit(s) to protect the Town's Right of Ways.	Local Law	Planning Board	Cayuga County Highway Department; Cayuga County Planning Department			Medium		
	2	ENSURE THAT THE WASTE TRANSFER STATION CONTINUES TO BE A HIGH-QUALITY TOWN SERVICE, ECONOMICALLY SELF-SUSTAINING, AND NOT OVER-BURDENED BY UNWANTED REFUSE	1	Create a town law for waste management requirements that identifies and regulates the types of waste materials that Conquest will allow/prohibit.	Local Law	Planning Board	Cayuga County Planning Department		1	Medium		
			2	Consider increasing cost of permits and/or expanding services to non-residents.	Government Service	Town Board			1	Medium		
			3	Consider expanding the types of materials accepted and recycled.	Government Service	Town Board			1	Medium		

Town Governance, Facilities, & Infrastructure	Goal		Action Step		Type	Community Champion	Partners	Funding Opportunities	Time Frame (years)	Priority	Date Started	Status
	2 <i>(Cont.)</i>	ENSURE THAT THE WASTE TRANSFER STATION CONTINUES TO BE A HIGH-QUALITY TOWN SERVICE, ECONOMICALLY SELF-SUSTAINING, AND NOT OVER-BURDENED BY UNWANTED REFUSE <i>(CONT.)</i>	4	Implement on-site renewable energy source to power transfer station operations.	Capital Improvement	Town Board			1	Medium		
			5	Identify and implement safety improvements to the site.	Capital Improvement	Town Board		USDA Community Facilities Grant Program	1	Medium		
			6	Replace the temporary office pod with a permanent structure with adequate ventilation, electric service, desk space, and electronic device storage (phone, video recording equipment).	Capital Improvement	Town Board		USDA Community Facilities Grant Program	2	Medium		
			7	Provide an adequate restroom facility and outdoor bench seating for employees.	Capital Improvement	Town Board		USDA Community Facilities Grant Program	2	Medium		
	3	EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXTENDING PUBLIC WATER SERVICE INTO THE TOWN	1	Protect street rights-of-way for future water supply routes.	Policy	Town Board			1	Medium		
			2	Develop a long-term water supply plan that addresses resident quality of life, public health, and economic development.	Plan	Town Board			2	Medium		
	4	STRENGTHEN ENFORCEMENT OF TOWN CODES AND LAWS	1	Amend local laws to strengthen the authority of the Code Enforcement Officer to issue and enforce violations.	Land Use Regulation	Town Board			1	Medium		

Town Governance, Facilities, & Infrastructure	Goal		Action Step		Type	Community Champion	Partners	Funding Opportunities	Time Frame (years)	Priority	Date Started	Status
	5	GROW AVAILABILITY OF BROADBAND ACCESS	1	Maximize the use of NYS ConnectAll Office to help identify improvements to broadband infrastructure in Conquest and to seek grant opportunities to fund the improvements	Administration	Town Board	NYS ConnectAll Office		2	Medium		
			2	Provide communication to town residents to promote the availability of state and federal affordable broadband connectivity programs	Administration	Town Board	NYS ConnectAll Office		1	Medium		
	6	IMPROVE COMMUNICATION IN THE TOWN	1	Create and maintain a website to provide a repository of official Town documents and a means to announce official (and unofficial) business in the Town	Administration	Town Board			1	Medium		
	7	ENSURE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR TOWN OFFICIALS AND MAINTAIN ACTIVE COMMUNICATION WITH COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES	1	Develop a training and communication plan for the Town Board	Administration	Town Board			1	Medium		
			2	Send Town newsletter(s) to County Legislator and County Chair	Coordination	Town Board	Cayuga County Legislature		Ongoing	High		
			3	Schedule County Legislator to attend a Town Board meeting twice per year	Coordination	Town Board	Cayuga County Legislature		Ongoing	High		
			4	Schedule town officials (on a rotating basis) to attend County Legislature meeting	Coordination	Town Board	Cayuga County Legislature		Ongoing	High		
	8	MAINTAIN A CONSISTENT BUDGET STRATEGY THAT ACCOUNTS FOR FIXED COSTS, ANNUAL ISSUES, AND LONGER-TERM GOALS	1	Ensure that the goals and action steps identified in this Plan are budgeted accordingly without compromising routine budgetary needs	Administration	Town Board	Planning Board		Ongoing	High		

Cultural, Recreational, and Historical Resources	Goal		Action Step		Type	Community Champion	Partners	Funding Opportunities	Time Frame (years)	Priority	Date Started	Status
	9	CONSIDER ESTABLISHING POINTS OF ACCESS FOR THE PUBLIC TO WATERBODIES IN THE TOWN OF CONQUEST	1	Set aside funds and pursue opportunities to establish public access to Duck Lake	Capital Improvement	Town Board	NYS OPRHP	NYS OPRHP Boating Infrastructure Grant Program (through NYS CFA Application)	10	Low		
			2	Set aside funds and pursue opportunities to establish public access to Seneca River	Capital Improvement	Town Board	NYS OPRHP; NYS Canal Corporation	NYS OPRHP Boating Infrastructure Grant Program; NYS Canalway Grant Program	10	Low		
	10	IMPROVE ACCESS, KNOWLEDGE, AND AWARENESS OF HOWLAND'S ISLAND	1	Establish access to Howland's Island from Conquest for emergency services and the public	Capital Improvement	Town Board	NYS DEC; NYS DOT; Friends of Northern Montezuma Wildlife Management Area	NYS DOT: Transportation Enhancement Program. (TEP); Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) (through NYS CFA Application)	5	Medium		
			2	Pursue funding opportunities to construct a pedestrian bridge and walkway providing access to the Island from the Town of Conquest	Capital Improvement	Town Board	NYS DEC; NYS OPRHP; NYS DOT; Cayuga County; Town of Montezuma; Friends of Northern Montezuma Wildlife Management Area	NYS OPRHP: Recreational Trails Program; NYS DOT: Transportation Enhancement Program. (TEP); Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) (through NYS CFA Application)	5	Medium		
			3	Work with the Town of Montezuma to establish parking on Howland Island Rd	Capital Improvement	Town Board	NYS DEC; NYS DOT; Cayuga County Highway Department; Town of Montezuma	NYS DOT: Transportation Enhancement Program. (TEP); Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) (through NYS CFA Application)	3	Medium		
			4	Improve the awareness of the history of Howland's Island with informational signs along pedestrian walkways and entrances to the Island.	Capital Improvement	Town Board	NYS DEC; NYS OPRHP; NYS DOT; Friends of Northern Montezuma Wildlife Management Area	NYS OPRHP: Recreational Trails Program; NYS DOT: Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP) (through NYS CFA Application)	5	Medium		

Cultural, Recreational, and Historical Resources	Goal		Action Step		Type	Community Champion	Partners	Funding Opportunities	Time Frame (years)	Priority	Date Started	Status
	11	PRESERVE, MAINTAIN, AND EXPAND OUTDOOR RECREATION	1	Preserve and maintain community snowmobile trails.	Capital Improvement	Town Board	NYS OPRHP; Cayuga County Snowmobile Association; Cayuga County Parks Department	NYS Snowmobile Trail Grant Program	3	Medium		
			2	Explore the feasibility of expanding recreational trails in the community, such as to and from Howland’s Island	Capital Improvement	Town Board	NYS OPRHP; Cayuga County Parks Department; neighboring towns	NYS OPRHP: Recreational Trails Program (through NYS CFA Application	3	Low		
			3	Pursue opportunities to develop a 'Winter Recreation Corridor' north from Howland's Island for skiers and snowshoers, separate from snowmobile trails.	Capital Improvement	Town Board	NYS OPRHP; Cayuga County Snowmobile Association	NYS OPRHP: Recreational Trails Program (through NYS CFA Application)	5	Low		
			4	Maintain and update town recreational fields as needed to keep equipment modern and useful for the community.	Capital Improvement	Town Board	NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation	NYS OPRHP through NYS CFA Application	Ongoing	High		
			5	Evaluate land use tools that will help protect existing recreation areas and help with planning future recreation areas	Land Use Regulation	Planning Board	Cayuga County Planning Department		2	Medium		
	12	ENCOURAGE GREATER COMMUNITY KINSHIP, COLLABORATION, AND STRONGER SOCIAL TIES IN THE TOWN	1	Organize an event planning committee for annual or sporadic community events and gatherings	Program	Town Board	Local businesses and organizations		1	Medium		
			2	Utilize the recreation field for hosting outdoor summer events, such as concerts, fireworks, field days, or food trucks.	Program	Event Planning Committee (established in action step above)	Town Board		Ongoing	Medium		
			3	Develop a town song to celebrate the local history and identity of Conquest.	Administration	Town Historian			1	Low		
			4	Develop a “welcome packet” to be distributed to new residents of Conquest	Administration	Committee						

Cultural, Recreational, and Historical Resources	Goal		Action Step		Type	Community Champion	Partners	Funding Opportunities	Time Frame (years)	Priority	Date Started	Status
	13	PRESERVE HISTORIC PLACES AND THEIR HISTORY	1	Promote the Erie Canal and its history as a tourist/educational stop in the Town.	Capital Improvement	Town Historian	NYS Canal Corporation; NYS OPRHP	NYS Canalway Grant Program (through NYS CFA Application)	3	Low		
			2	Complete an Historic Resources Survey to determine properties eligible for protection under the state and national registers.	Administration	Town Historian & Town Board	State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)	Contact SHPO representative for grant opportunities	3	Medium		
			3	Make historic preservation information available at the town office and assist property owners in applying for the national register by connecting them with SHPO representatives.	Administration	Town Historian & Town Clerk	State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)		1	Medium		
			4	Preserve historic structures by providing assistance to property owners through property tax incentives and other programs.	Program	Town Historian & Town Clerk	State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)	Contact SHPO representative for grant opportunities	Ongoing	Medium		
	14	MAINTAIN THE BEAUTY AND QUALITY OF CEMETERIES AND OTHER MEMORIAL SITES	1	Update and maintain the access, grounds, and signage for cemeteries, Veteran memorials, and other town assets that are dedicated to local resident or cause.	Capital Improvement	Town Historian & Town Board	Preservation League of NYS; local religious organizations	Preserve New York Grant, Preservation League of NYS	Ongoing	High		
			2	Explore the feasibility of providing a town cemetery behind the town hall.	Capital Improvement	Town Board			3	Low		

Land Use	Goal		Action Step		Type	Community Champion	Partners	Funding Opportunities	Time Frame (years)	Priority	Date Started	Status
	15	DEVELOP REGULATIONS FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT THAT WILL ENCOURAGE AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES	1	Prioritize unused or otherwise vacant land, not suitable for agricultural operations, for low density, low to middle income residential housing	Land Use Regulation	Planning Board	Cayuga County Planning Department		1	Low		
			2	Evaluate the use of Cluster Subdivisions as a land use tool for the community	Local Law	Planning Board	Cayuga County Planning Department		1	Medium		
	16	IMPROVE THE CONDITION AND MAINTENANCE OF HOMES	1	Redevelop vacant and dilapidated, unused buildings and properties to a beneficial use and purpose.	Capital Improvement	Town Board	NYS Homes and Community Renewal; Cayuga County Planning Department	Community Development Block Grant	3	Low		
			2	Review and update the town's mobile home regulations.	Land Use Regulation	Planning Board	Cayuga County Planning Department		1	Low		
			3	Develop regulations for temporary and seasonal housing, including RVs, trailers, and campgrounds.	Land Use Regulation	Planning Board	Cayuga County Planning Department		1	Low		
	17	PROTECT THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPES THAT GIVE CONQUEST ITS RURAL CHARACTER	1	Consider adopting an Agricultural Zoning District to protect large swaths of productive agricultural land	Land Use Regulation	Planning Board	Cayuga County Planning Department		1	High		
			2	Adopt subdivision regulations	Land Use/ Subdivision Regulation	Planning Board	Cayuga County Planning Department		1	High		
			3	Restrict development of large-scale residential, commercial, and industrial operations	Land Use Regulation	Planning Board	Cayuga County Planning Department		1	High		

Land Use	Goal		Action Step		Type	Community Champion	Partners	Funding Opportunities	Time Frame (years)	Priority	Date Started	Status
	17 <i>(Cont.)</i>	PROTECT THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPES THAT GIVE CONQUEST ITS RURAL CHARACTER <i>(CONT.)</i>	4	Evaluate land use tools that will help identify the nuisances that can be created by various types of land usage	Land Use Regulation	Planning Board	Cayuga County Planning Department		1	High		
			5	Identify land use tools available to the town to help regulate land uses for the protection of water resources	Land Use Regulation	Planning Board	Cayuga County Planning Department		1	High		
	18	ENSURE NEW DEVELOPMENT IS COMPATIBLE WITH SURROUNDING USES AND NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER	1	Develop a site plan review law.	Land Use Regulation	Planning Board	Cayuga County Planning Department		1	High		
			2	Develop a special use permit process for specific, more intense land use activities	Land Use Regulation	Planning Board	Cayuga County Planning Department		1	High		
	19	BALANCE THE BENEFITS OF RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND THE PROTECTION OF NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES	1	Develop a wind energy law	Land Use Regulation	Planning Board	Cayuga County Planning Department		1	High		
			2	Develop a solar energy law that allows for residential-scale solar and limits utility scale solar projects.								

Agriculture	Goal		Action Step		Type	Community Champion	Partners	Funding Opportunities	Time Frame (years)	Priority	Date Started	Status
	20	PROTECT AND PRESERVE FARMLAND AND FARMING OPERATIONS	1	Review and implement the Cayuga County Farmland Protection Plan	Study	Town Board & Planning Board	Cayuga County Planning Department; Cayuga County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board		2	Medium		
			2	Consider developing a Farmland Protection Plan for the town	Plan	Town Board & Planning Board	Cayuga County Planning Department	NYS Dept. of Agriculture and Markets	2	Medium		
			3	Adopt a Right-to-Farm Law	Local Law	Town Board & Planning Board	Cayuga County Planning Department		1	Medium		
			4	Prioritize agriculture as the highest and best use of land within the Farmland Protection Priority Area on the Future Land Use Map.	Land Use Regulation	Planning Board	Cayuga County Planning Department		1	High		
			5	Monitor the acreage of prime farmland and farmland of statewide importance in production, with the goal of no net loss of either classification.	Program	Planning Board	Cayuga County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board		Ongoing	High		
	21	ENHANCE AND INCENTIVIZE GROWTH OF THE LOCAL AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY	1	Distribute a brochure to agricultural landowners explaining property tax relief programs available to them, including agricultural assessment, farm building exemptions and Farmer's School Tax Credit	Administration	Town Board and Town Clerk	Cayuga County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board		1	Low		
			2	Encourage agribusiness to locate in the Growth/Investment Area on the Proposed Future Land Use Map.	Land Use Regulation	Planning Board	Cayuga County Planning Department		1	Low		
	22	INCREASE EDUCATION OF AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES FOR NON-FARMERS AND YOUNGER RESIDENTS	1	Work with local schools to support the development of 'Agriculture in the Classroom' programs	Program	Town Board	Cayuga County Cornell Cooperative Extension; Port Byron CSD; Cato-Meridiam CSD; Weedsport CSD; Red Creek CSD	NYS Dept. of Agriculture and Markets	Ongoing	Medium		
			2	Encourage continued cooperation and dialogue between farmers and local government to ensure farmers' interests are represented in municipal decision making processes.	Program	Town Board	Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District; Planning Board		Ongoing	Medium		

Natural Resources & Environmental Quality	Goal		Action Step		Type	Community Champion	Partners	Funding Opportunities	Time Frame (years)	Priority	Date Started	Status
	23	PRESERVE AND PROTECT THE NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE TOWN	1	Adopt a Conservation Overlay District to protect wetlands, stream and river corridors, and large forest patches in the town	Land Use Regulation	Planning Board	Cayuga County Planning Department; NYS DEC		1	Medium		
			2	Support the Sterling-Wolcott Creeks Integrated Watershed Action Plan	Policy	Town Board	Cayuga County Planning Department; NYS DEC		Ongoing	Medium		
			3	Protect Prime Agricultural Soils in the Town by implementing the strategies outlined in the Future Land Use Section for the Conservation Priority Areas and Farmland Protection Priority Area.	Land Use Regulation	Planning Board	Cayuga County Planning Department; NYS Ag and Markets		1	High		
			4	Maintain the natural resource inventory of the Comprehensive Plan to monitor the Town’s natural resources.	Program	Planning Board	Cayuga County Planning Department; County SWCD		Ongoing	Medium		
			5	Establish and maintain a list of Critical Environmental Areas (CEAs) based off the Conservation Priority Area and amend the Town’s SEQRA Type 1 actions list to include any and all CEAs, thus allowing the Town a more robust review of projects in these areas.	Local Law	Planning Board	Cayuga County Planning Department		1	Medium		
	24	PROTECT AIR AND WATER QUALITY FOR THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF RESIDENTS AND LOCAL ECOSYSTEMS	1	Discourage development in floodplains and protected wetlands by implementing the strategies outlined in the Future Land Use Section for the Conservation Priority Areas and Farmland Protection Priority Area.	Land Use Regulation	Planning Board	Cayuga County Planning Department; NYS DEC; Army CORPS		1	Medium		
			2	Ensure that all proposed projects are complying with SEQR (State Environmental Quality Review Act) requirements.	Administration	Town Board & Planning Board	Cayuga County Planning Department		Ongoing	Medium		

Hazard Mitigation	Goal		Action Step		Type	Community Champion	Partners	Funding Opportunities	Time Frame (years)	Priority	Date Started	Status
	25	INCREASE EMERGENCY RESPONSE CAPACITY AND SERVICES	1	Work with the Cayuga County Emergency Management Office to develop strategies for improving emergency services, lowering operating costs, and seeking grant opportunities.	Study	Town Board	Cayuga County Emergency Management Office; Conquest Fire Department	Cayuga County and Other Funds/Grants	2	High		
			2	Consider options for contracting a town ambulance service.	Government Service	Town Board	Conquest Fire Department	USDA Community Facilities Grant Program	1	High		
			3	Ensure that resources and equipment are available to the Town to help the community and government operations withstand power outages.	Study	Town Board	Conquest Fire Department	USDA Community Facilities Grant Program	2	Medium		
			4	Work with the Conquest Fire Department to see how the town can support the department and help recruit new volunteers.	Coordination	Town Board	Cayuga County Emergency Management Office; Conquest Fire Department		Ongoing	High		
			5	Maintain close communication with the Cayuga County Health Department regarding their efforts to address the Opioid crisis in Conquest.	Coordination	Town Board	Cayuga County Health Department		Ongoing	High		
			6	Provide or seek training of emergency management to Town officials	Administration	Town Board	Cayuga County Emergency Management Office		Ongoing	Medium		

Hazard Mitigation	Goal		Action Step		Type	Community Champion	Partners	Funding Opportunities	Time Frame (years)	Priority	Date Started	Status
	26	INCREASE PUBLIC SAFETY DURING EMERGENCY EVENTS	1	Work with the Cayuga County Emergency Management Office to develop an emergency action plan, including evacuation routes and an emergency warning system.	Plan	Town Board	Cayuga County Emergency Management Office; Conquest Fire Department		2	High		
			2	Work with the Cayuga County Emergency Management Office to update the Town's section of the Cayuga County Hazard Mitigation Plan.	Plan	Town Board	Cayuga County Emergency Management Office		1	Medium		
			3	Distribute information to the public regarding emergency services available in the town, including first responder, emergency evacuation, emergency shelters, and other pertinent information.	Administration	Town Board	Cayuga County Emergency Management Office; Conquest Fire Department		1	High		
			4	Develop 911 addresses for all utility scale solar tracts in the Town of Conquest.	Administration	Town Board	Cayuga County Real Property Department		1	High		

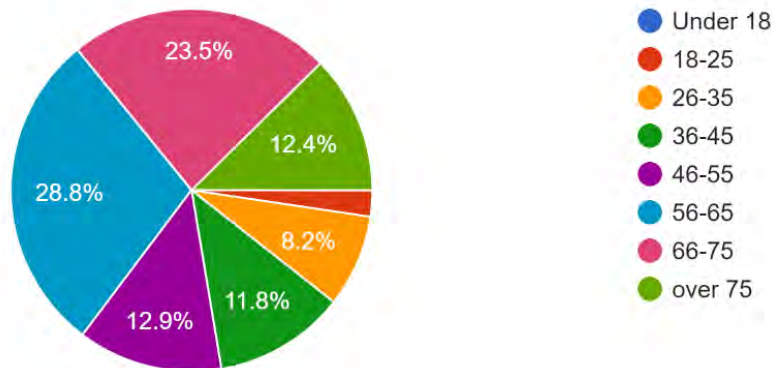
Economic Development	Goal		Action Step		Type	Community Champion	Partners	Funding Opportunities	Time Frame (years)	Priority	Date Started	Status
	27	ENCOURAGE GROWTH AND EXPANSION OF LOCAL BUSINESSES THAT WILL IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR RESIDENTS, HELP MAINTAIN STRONG COMMUNITY TIES, AND ATTRACT VISITORS AND TOURISTS	1	Develop an economic investment plan that identifies opportunities for investment in property/land and that sets forth a long-term budget strategy to build financial equity to support these projects.	Plan	Town Board and Planning Board	Cayuga County Economic Development Agency		2	Medium		
			2	Implement the goals of the Growth/Investment Area identified on the Proposed Future Land Use Map.	Land Use Regulation	Planning Board	Cayuga County Planning Department		1	Medium		
			3	Promote and organize a periodic farmer's market	Program	Town Board	NYS Dept of Ag and Markets		1	Low		
			4	Work with the Cayuga County Tourism Office to develop publicly accessible and visible tourist information about the community and region.	Coordination/ Administration	Town Historian and Town Board	Cayuga County Tourism Office		1	Low		

APPENDIX A

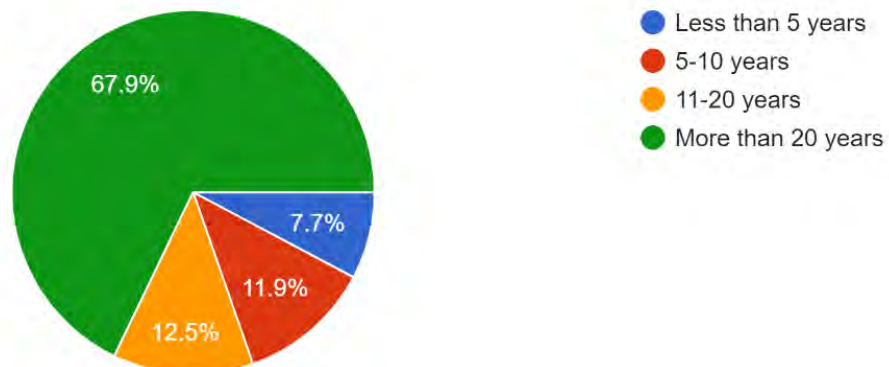
COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

The primary input from the Conquest community for this Comprehensive Plan came from responses to a town-wide survey that was available from December 2021 until April 2022. The survey was mailed to every private property owner in Conquest (872 as of December 2021) and paper copies were made available at the Town Hall. Some members of the Steering Committee even handed out surveys and stamped envelopes at the Town's waste transfer station on cold winter days! In total, 174 completed surveys were received.

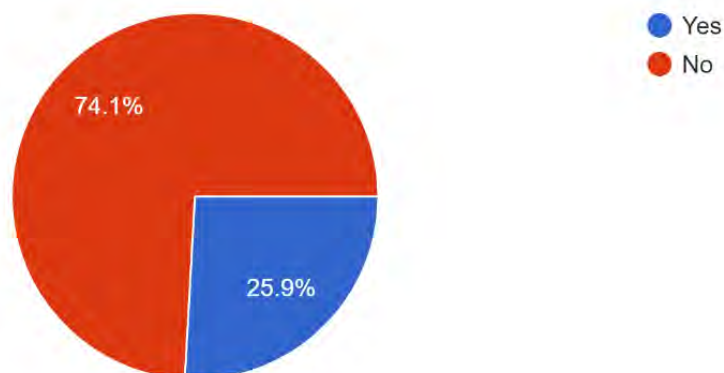
What is your age group?



How long have you lived (or owned property) in Conquest?



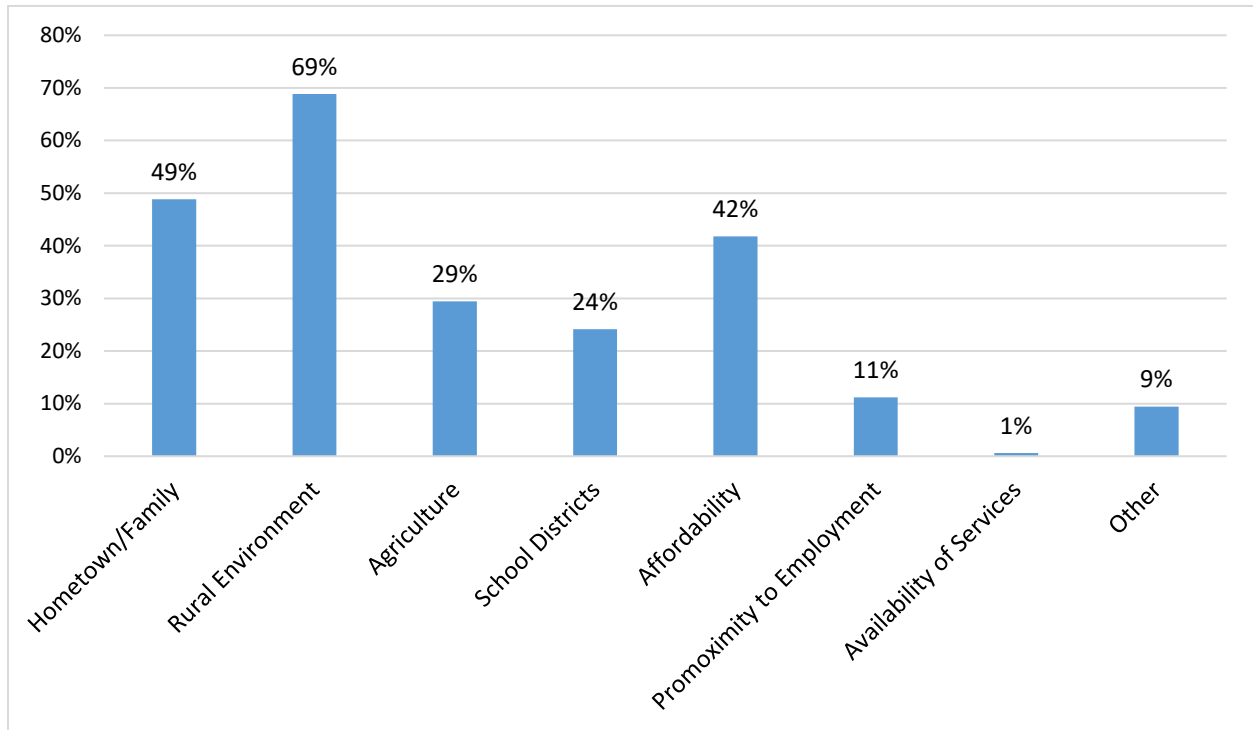
Do you own, operate, or work for a business in town (includes agriculture/farming)?



Types of businesses (43 respondents):

Beef Farm	Own, operate a farm
Ag	own farmland and operate seed and farm mach. supply facility
Agricultural	raise hobby poultry
agriculture	rent agricultural land
agriculture	rent out farm field Tom O'Neil and listed as a 30 acre farm on River Rd
Agriculture - crops	RST Renovation & Remodeling - construction
agriculture/farming	self-employed
auto repair	small farm
beef farm	small farm
Cartwright Construction	tax office, accounting, real estate notary public
CMCS School District - substitute	transfer station attendant
Deputy Town Clerk	woodworking
Duck Lake Association	xlvac technologies
farming	own
farming	own a farm
farming	own a farm
farming	own ag land
farming and drainage	i let my neighbor farm some land
goat and chicken farm	I Telework from Home.
have 120 acres of woodlot	Lease land to a Conquest farmer for agriculture .
Homebirth / midwifery assist	Logging/Wood-working
massage therapy	

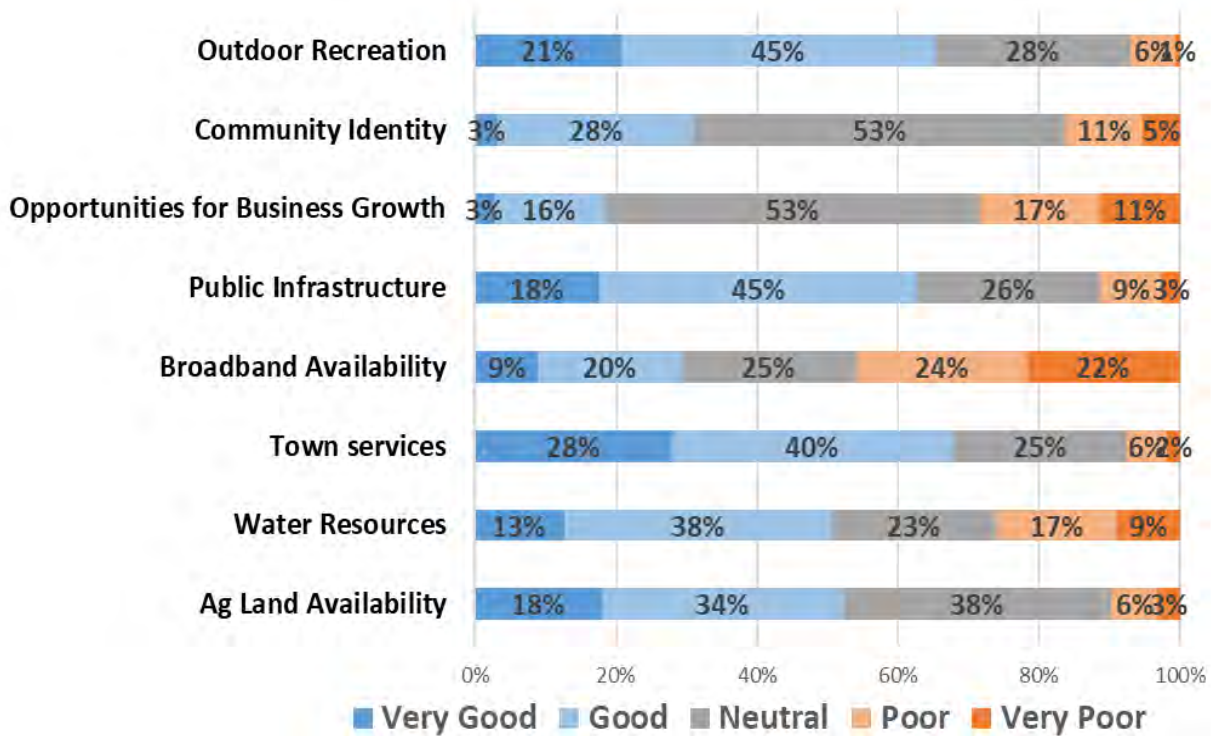
Why did you choose to live in Conquest?



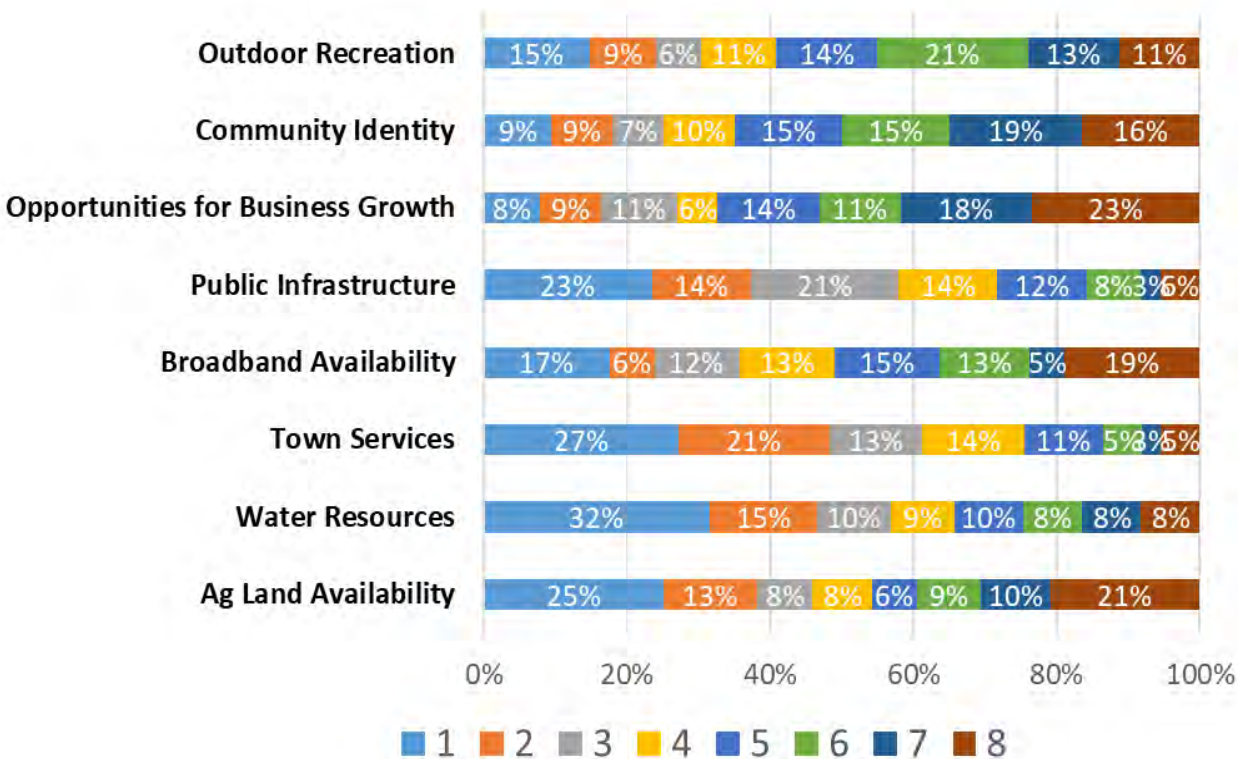
Other:

Away from "city"
because we like the river, didn't know it flooded so much
born and raised
born here
born here
bought property
Duck Lake
I like my home
inheritance seasonal
lake
privacy, hunting, quiet
private
quiet and peaceful
Seasonal home
Seasonal vacation property
small government

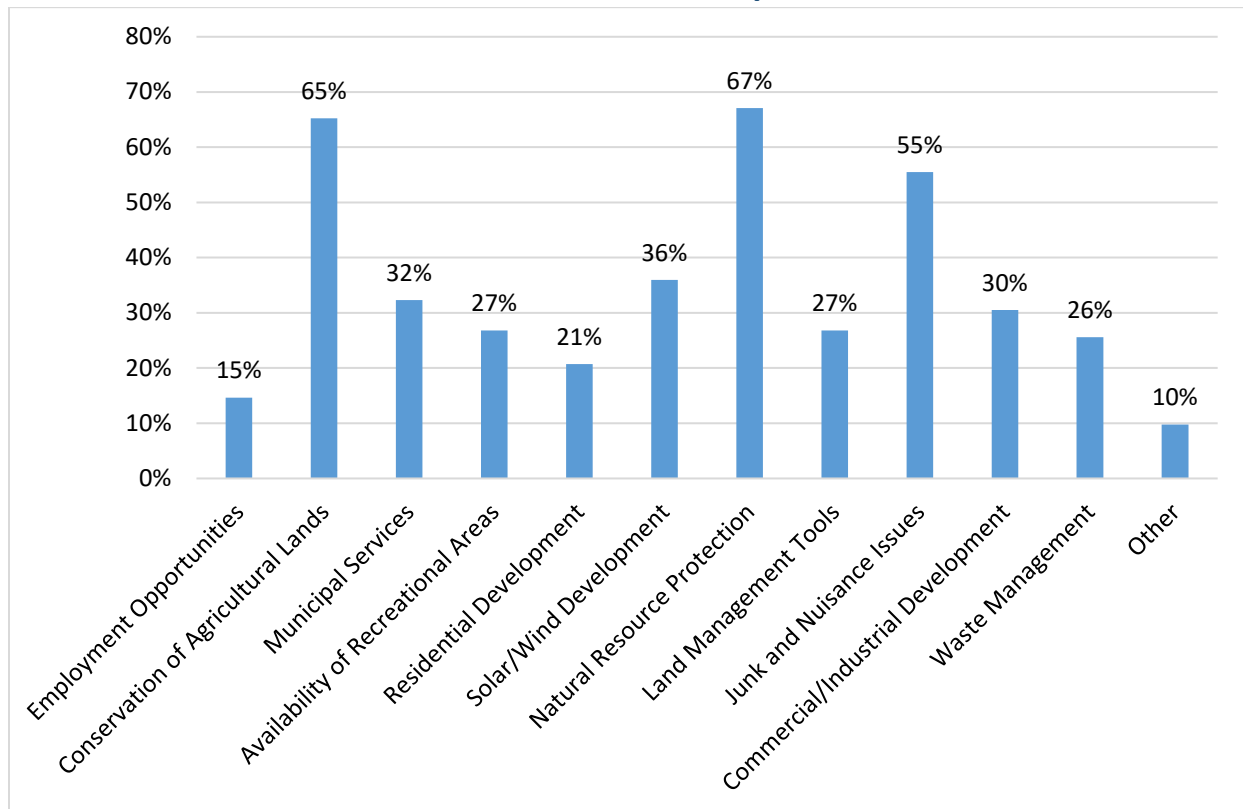
Condition of the following:



Importance of the following topics (1 is most important, 8 is least important):



Issues that the Town should Address in the Comprehensive Plan



Other:

ambulance service
cardboard to be recycled!
Emergency response, fire prevention, fire and ems rescue etc
everything
Fire department and department of transportation
high amount of traffic speeders
low cost broadband
Mosquitoes
no solar farm
protect Duck Lake; conserve and protect our wildlife most important
Protective ordinances so Township can control its own future and not be victim to detrimental outside forces
public water
Slayton Pond covert pipe flooding issue. Conquest or Ira????
Stricter zoning laws with enforcement regarding junk and nuisance issues.
they don't recycle cardboard
town governance/structure, land use impacts
water tower

Comprehensive Plan - Survey Question (How would you describe Conquest to a Person Who Does Not Live Here?)			
Category	Visualizing Conquest....	Survey Replies	Totals
Community Character	Rural/ small	83	
	Quaint Quiet	69	
	Friendly	28	
	Beautiful Outdoors Woods Plentiful Open Country Duck Lake Wildlife	20	
	Farming/AG Farming/Animals	16	
	Volunteers Neighborly	16	
	Home Feeling Family Place	9	
	Safe	5	
	Good Quality of life	1	
Services and Governance	Town Support	2	
	Fire Support	1	
	affordable low taxes	7	
	Good Schools	1	
	No Zoning Neglected Properties Impoverished areas	4	
	Recreation Field Kids Places	2	
	Lacks Community Activities	1	
		18	
Infrastructure	No Stores No industry	4	
	Not Modern	1	
	Under Developed	2	
	Lose Power Often	1	
	Far from Amenities	1	
	Close enough: To Amenities To Cities	7	
	Against Solar Concerns about industrial growth	5	
	Community in Flux	1	
		22	
Total - All Categories			287

What do you DISLIKE most about Conquest?

