

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The authority and responsibility to conduct comprehensive planning, regulate land use for the purpose of protecting the public health, safety and general welfare of its citizens and adopt a comprehensive plan is granted by the New York State Legislature under Village Law Section 7-722 entitled Village Comprehensive Plan. Adoption of a comprehensive plan by the Village Board of Trustees requires that all Village land use be in accordance with the comprehensive plan. Furthermore, other government agencies must take the plan into consideration whenever their capital projects occur on land identified in the Village Comprehensive Plan.

A village comprehensive plan and any amendment thereto are subject to the provisions of the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) under Article Eight (8) of the Environmental Conservation Law and its implementing regulations. A village comprehensive plan may be designed to also serve as, or be accompanied by, a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) pursuant to SEQRA statute and regulations. The adoption by the Village Board of the Comprehensive Plan is a Type 1 action subject to review under 6 NYCRR 617. No further compliance with such law is required for subsequent site specific actions that are in conformance with the conditions and thresholds established for such actions in this GEIS and its findings. The Village of Liverpool Comprehensive Plan 2025 has been prepared in GEIS format to comply with SEQRA requirements.

The Village of Liverpool has undertaken an extensive public and stakeholder participation process in preparing this Comprehensive Plan. The participation process, which was led by the Village Planning Board, included the establishment of a Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC). CPAC members attended, on average, monthly meetings throughout 2003 and 2004 in guiding the preparation of this Plan. Public participation opportunities also included public and stakeholder informational meetings, focus group discussions and public hearings during the entire 2003 to 2005 timeframe. Notes of meetings are provided in the Appendix to the Plan.

During the comprehensive planning process, the Village also developed and maintained an interactive website. This website was linked to the Village website to disseminate information during the comprehensive planning process. The Comprehensive Plan website provided meeting information, including agendas and meeting minutes, as well as sections of the Plan itself as they became available for public comment and review.

The Village began working on its Comprehensive Plan in early 2002. During this time Village residents and public officials participated in a series of meetings to identify community strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, otherwise known as a SWOT process. Residents and officials also participated in a series of related meetings as part of the development of the Onondaga County Settlement Plan.

The Onondaga County Settlement Plan, completed in 2001, identified the Village as a Pilot Planning project. “Pilot Project #4: Liverpool Village Retrofit” was one of eight such pilot projects undertaken by Onondaga County and its planning consultants, Duany-Plater-Zyberk & Company and Environmental Design and Research, as part of the County’s regional Settlement Plan. The Settlement Plan is based on New Urbanism planning principles. The Settlement Plan’s recommendations for Liverpool were used in guiding the development of this Comprehensive Plan. The Village of Liverpool Comprehensive Plan is consistent with the County’ Settlement Plan and the 2010 Development Plan which focus on directing growth and development towards existing communities and developed areas.

The Settlement Plan recommends returning to the traditional street pattern of the Village and removal of the high-speed traffic patterns that presently exist in the Village. It also presented ideas for infill development and redevelopment with the placement of new buildings in the downtown area consistent with the principles of New Urbanism which among other things emphasizes a pedestrian-friendly environment.

The Village of Liverpool, NY is located within the Town of Salina, Onondaga County, in the heart of Central New York. Liverpool is approximately four miles northwest of Downtown Syracuse along the northern shore of Onondaga Lake. The Village is approximately 0.8 of a

square mile in size and is home to about 2,500 people. Settled in 1794 and incorporated in 1830, the Village still retains much of its 19<sup>th</sup> Century charm and character.

### ***OUR OVERALL VISION of the FUTURE***

*“The Village of Liverpool is a vibrant community with a unique mix of quiet, inviting neighborhoods, attractive parks and successful business areas all set in a traditional village environment. Ours is a visually interesting and walkable community like none other in the region. Our local heritage is celebrated throughout the community. It is expressed in our architecture, parks and public places. We are a community on the move and we look with great anticipation to all of the opportunities the future has to offer us as a revitalized and rediscovered waterfront community.”*

The Comprehensive Plan recommends the adoption and implementation of the following Principles of Smart Growth as a means towards achieving our vision. These principles are expressed throughout the Comprehensive Plan and are the basis for many of the action items in implementing the Plan. These principles are:

1. Creating a Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices,
2. Creating “Walkable” Neighborhoods,
3. Encouraging Community and Stakeholder Collaboration,
4. Fostering Distinctive, Attractive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place,
5. Making Development Decisions Predictable, Fair and Cost Effective,
6. Mixing Land Uses,
7. Preserving Open Space, Natural Beauty and Sensitive Environmental Areas,
8. Providing a Variety of Transportation Choices,
9. Strengthening and Directing Development Towards Existing Communities, &
10. Taking Advantage of Compact Building Design

A key and significant issue that faces community leaders and residents in the Village is the challenge of dealing with ever-increasing volumes of vehicular traffic which pass through on a daily basis. These high volumes of mostly non-local commuter traffic have encouraged auto-oriented and automobile-dominated land use development and traffic patterns over the years. High volumes of traffic have increasingly had significant adverse effects on quality of

life issues in the Village including, but not limited to, community character and identity as well as contributing to community blight through the loss of businesses and the creation of vacant properties.

Traffic has changed the character of the community from what was once a unique village environment into a more suburban, highway-oriented community. Traffic has also resulted in an increasingly unfriendly pedestrian atmosphere that hinders pedestrian activity. A reduction in pedestrian activity has resulted in negative impacts on business activity that relies on sidewalk patrons and walk-in clients. Most important of all, however, are the many safety issues associated with these high traffic volumes including vehicular accidents and car-pedestrian accidents.

The ability to move vehicles through the Village smoothly has necessitated the widening of streets and alteration of traffic patterns, often to the detriment of residents and businesses. This highway orientation has generally degraded overall community aesthetics as highway features, such as overhead directional signs, are put in place to facilitate traffic movement.

The issue of traffic flow and traffic safety in Liverpool has been an ongoing concern of the community for decades with little, if any, favorable resolution of the problem over the years. However, community input throughout the planning process of this Comprehensive Plan invariably cited traffic as the most significant issue facing the community today.

Contingent on resolution of the traffic issues there are opportunities for pedestrian activity between civic spaces in the Village, the central business district downtown, the Onondaga Lake lakefront and the residential neighborhoods located north of Oswego Street. There is a tremendous opportunity to better delineate pedestrian corridors through enhanced streetscapes, pedestrian lighting and increased landscaping with trees, shrubs and flowers.

The Village Post Office located just north of Oswego Street east of Cypress Street has also surfaced as a redevelopment opportunity. The Post Office has been considering relocating to

a new location in the Village, specifically to a parcel on First Street and South Willow Street. The new site would house a somewhat larger mail distribution facility.

The proposed Post Office relocation site on First Street presents several issues, including concerns over truck traffic, vehicle and pedestrian circulation, and aesthetic concerns with views of the facility from South Willow Street, Onondaga Lake Parkway and Onondaga Lake Park. By relocating the Post Office to First Street, additional traffic from delivery trucks and postal patrons may further discourage pedestrian use and likely encourage more auto-oriented development along First Street. In accordance with this Plan, a more appropriate use of this area would be some type of mixed-use residential/business/commercial district. This use would add to the downtown resident population and encourage greater pedestrian activity between Onondaga Lake and the Village.

The area around Onondaga Lake Parkway, including the area encompassed by the convergence of Oswego Street, Old Liverpool Road, First Street and Second Street holds significant opportunity for redevelopment. Onondaga Lake Parkway is a potentially beautiful gateway into the Village from the City of Syracuse and points south of the Village. This gateway could be greatly enhanced with walking and biking trails as well as public gardens that would be more fitting with the historic context and proximity to Onondaga Lake Park.

Although Onondaga Lake Parkway is an important gateway into the Village, it presently contributes to the high volumes of traffic through the Village as people commute to and from the City of Syracuse. In its present configuration and use, the Parkway does not provide much opportunity to act as a significant gateway to the Village for pedestrian and non-motorized uses, such as bicyclists and others recreating at Onondaga Lake Park.

This is an area of high visibility to and from Onondaga Lake Park. It is also an area with great visibility for commuters who travel surrounding roadways on a daily basis. This visibility provides significant opportunity for enhancing local business development and for providing higher-end mixed use residential development in the downtown area. Through

proper site design and building orientation, improved linkages to Onondaga Lake Park, including pedestrian greenways, desirable forms of redevelopment can be achieved.

As the water quality of Onondaga Lake continues to improve, areas in proximity to its waterfront will grow in value for residential uses and business purposes. Over the long-term, properties along First Street and along the eastern portion of Brow Street may attract redevelopment interest by the private sector as the community re-establishes itself to its waterfront. If such redevelopment interest occurs, the Village should encourage mixed-use development in the form of combined residential and business uses.

The Village is very fortunate that it has maintained many of its traditionally styled residential neighborhoods, particularly those areas that front major roadways such as Oswego Street (Route 57), Second Street (Route 370), and Tulip Street. However, there is a continuing trend towards conversion of single-family homes to two/three family units or for non-residential use. The pressure to convert single family homes to multi-family and non-residential uses is likely to continue particularly with many of the larger, older homes, which are located along major streets into the Village that may no longer meet single family residential needs and tastes as development encroaches from outside the Village.

It must also be recognized that there is, at the same time, a successful local effort that is contrary to this trend. There is recent redevelopment activity converting some multi-family residential units back to single-family use. The municipality needs to facilitate this re-conversion activity back to single family homes by finding and instituting local incentives. The Village must continue to maintain public infrastructure in these neighborhoods as part of its capital improvement programs.

The traditional residential neighborhoods of the Village of Liverpool remain one of the community's greatest assets and best kept secrets. The quality of life in Liverpool is and should be judged to a great degree by the appearance and upkeep of its homes and neighborhoods. The majority of residential areas in the Village exhibit this highly desirable quality of life which must be maintained. It is this high quality of life exhibited through its

neighborhoods that may play a very important role in the revitalization of the downtown business district and help re-establish the Village as a waterfront community.

The Village should actively pursue establishing design and development guidelines and standards to enhance community character and identity. Developing design and development guidelines and standards will enable the Village to achieve several community planning objectives including protecting and maintaining a high quality of life and aesthetic appeal. These objectives include:

- Promoting new mixed-use development and redevelopment within the Village that enhances the economic vitality of the area, thereby protecting property values and preventing the creation of visual blight.
- Encouraging development and redevelopment that is sensitive to residents and property owners by creating an identifiable character for Liverpool that fosters a sense of community among neighbors, merchants, businesses and property owners.
- Creating a safe and attractive physical environment for both motorized and non-motorized uses, including encouraging increased pedestrian activity.
- Encouraging high quality design for all new development and redevelopment projects that protects and enhances community character.

The Village is presented with an opportunity through this planning process to solve some very complex issues as a result of many of the initiatives identified in the Comprehensive Plan. This Plan has created a dialogue in the community that must be maintained. This dialogue is based upon an extensive stakeholder and public involvement process which includes Village officials, public agency officials and agency staff, elected officials from outside the Village, residents, merchants and property owners. In developing this Plan meetings and discussions were held with the Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency (SOCPA), the New York State Department of Transportation, the Onondaga County Department of Transportation, the New York Thruway Authority, the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council, the U.S. Postal Service and the Onondaga County Parks Department among others.

The comprehensive planning process included an updated inventory and analysis of existing conditions within the Village which included current land use, transportation, infrastructure, and community facilities. This Plan also establishes Liverpool's planning goals, objectives, policies and strategies as action items to be implemented over time by the Village.

An obvious alternative for the Village would have been to continue on its present course and not proceed with undertaking the preparation of this Comprehensive Plan. The result of this no-action alternative would be a possible and probable worsening of some of the key challenges and issues facing the Village or, at the very least, stagnation and lack of action to resolve many significant issues.

Alternative land use, transportation, and development scenarios in the Village were considered throughout the planning process as part of refining the community's vision for the future. Preferred visions and development scenarios were identified for five planning sub-areas (Focus Area # 1- Our Civic Center, Focus Area #2 - Our Business & Industrial Park Area, Focus Area #3 - Our Lakeside Business Area, Focus Area #4 - Our Waterfront Community, and Focus Area #5 - Our Traditional Village Neighborhoods) in the Village and illustrated on the accompanying Downtown Redevelopment Plan. These preferred development scenarios are seen as practical, realistic and achievable over the short-term (0-2 years), intermediate period (2-5 years) and the long-term timeframe (5+ years).

Economic market forces, and the challenges and opportunities they afford, were the focus of a separate, but interrelated, *Commercial Market and Retail Analysis* by Basile, Baumann, Prost & Associates, Inc. (BBP and Associates). BBP and Associates was hired as an economic development consultant to Liverpool funded by the New York State Department of Transportation which encouraged the Village to establish a vision for its future.

*The Commercial Market and Retail Analysis* and the follow-up *Traffic and Transportation Analysis* by BBP and Associates were conducted simultaneously with preparation of this Comprehensive Plan. Those studies are incorporated into the Plan in their entirety as an Appendix. As stated throughout this Plan, redevelopment of some of the business areas of the

Village is seen as key to achieving the overall vision of a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly waterfront community.

The purpose of this Plan is to present recommended courses of action to improve existing conditions by protecting the Village’s residential neighborhoods, enhancing business areas, re-establishing a true Village Center with a distinct identity, revitalizing waterfront opportunities, resolving significant traffic and pedestrian issues, and strengthening the economic base of the community.

Significant adverse changes in land use development patterns in the Village resulting from this Plan are not anticipated. However, this Plan does recommend modifications to present zoning to create a better mix of land uses in existing business areas and changes to the present street network, ultimately affecting vehicular traffic flow patterns and reducing through traffic volumes and capacities. The accompanying Downtown Redevelopment Plan illustrates the vision for the future of the Village of Liverpool in conceptual form.

Key locations for redevelopment and traffic modifications include Oswego Street with connecting side streets and Onondaga Lake Parkway (NYS 370) where it enters the Village from the south. Other locations such as Second Street (NYS 370) where it enters the Village from the west and Oswego Street (Route 57) from the north need to maintain their residential character.

Zoning and roadway modifications will encourage desirable forms of land use and pedestrian activity particularly in surrounding business areas. These modifications are both necessary and warranted in order for the Village to achieve its vision for the future as a premier pedestrian-oriented, totally “walkable” waterfront community in Central New York.

Any significant increase in commuter (through) traffic volumes into the Village over existing levels, particularly along key routes and at key intersections in the Village as identified in this Plan, is undesirable and detrimental to community character, local businesses, and the pedestrian environment. This Plan aims to achieve just the opposite by reducing traffic

volumes and enhancing both the business and pedestrian environments. Key locations that may be adversely affected by any further increase in traffic from current levels include Oswego Street, Second Street (NYS 370), Tulip Street, Vine Street, Old Liverpool Road and Onondaga Lake Parkway (NYS 370).

Increasing volumes of commuter traffic from outside the Village continues to impede the ability of the community to achieve desirable forms of land use that are not highway-oriented, but rather more pedestrian-oriented business and residential uses consistent with the objectives of this Plan. The ability to strengthen the economic base of the community through enhanced business development to maintain a healthy balance between residential and business uses will be significantly hindered by any further increase in commuter traffic through the Village.

It is a primary goal of the Village to work with local transportation agencies to reverse the trend from increasing commuter traffic to the more desirable trend that would increase destination traffic and decrease through traffic into the Village to benefit local businesses. *The Traffic and Transportation Analysis* by BBP and Associates concluded that traffic could be reduced by up to 40% on Oswego Street without adversely impacting the local business community due to the fact that so much of the existing traffic is not “destined” to the Village, but rather passing through to somewhere else. This reduction would also result in potential increases of destination traffic on First and Second streets to the benefit of local businesses, assuming proper traffic flow modifications are made so the Oswego Street through traffic does not just relocate elsewhere in the Village.

The Village is supportive of efforts to significantly reduce through traffic up to 40% or greater to achieve the visions, goals and objectives of this Plan without adversely affecting the local business community. The Village must work with the State and County DOT to determine the amount of reduction needed to benefit local businesses and property owners by facilitating turning movements onto First Street and access to properties elsewhere, particularly along Oswego Street and allowing redevelopment to occur along the First Street and Oswego Street corridors. To increase destination traffic in the Village there must be a

decrease in through traffic. It is the composition of local traffic that must be adjusted from through traffic to destination traffic in order to benefit businesses and pedestrian activity.

Through the recommendations of this Comprehensive Plan, the Village is considering amending its present Zoning Ordinance in several ways. The Village may establish a Downtown Overlay District that would place additional criteria on site development beyond present zoning requirements. These criteria would be part of design and development guidelines and standards established by the Village and would include site design, building orientation, building design, construction materials, parking lot design, landscaping, streetscaping, public amenities, lighting and signage. The establishment of design and development criteria will have a net positive effect on community character and aesthetics.

The Village should amend its zoning to encourage mixed-use types of development that allow commercial, office and residential uses within the same structure or same parcel in the Downtown area. This mix of uses may result in greater redevelopment and build-out potential in the Village then would otherwise be possible through conventional zoning that does not accommodate mixed-use development. This change in zoning has many benefits to the community including increased density of development and compact design which are consistent with Smart Growth principles.

The increased build-out potential in the Village may result in increased local destination (non-commuter) traffic, additional parking needs and increased municipal services such as police, fire, sewer and water. However, this is considered an acceptable cost of redevelopment within the Village which is needed to increase its tax base and residential population in the downtown area. Projects that may be proposed in the Village that would meet the criteria for Type I or Unlisted Actions under SEQRA, but otherwise consistent with the objectives of this Plan would need to address potential impacts on the environment and community at the time such actions are undertaken by a private developer.

The Village will amend its present Zoning Map to be consistent with the Future Land Use Map provided in this Plan. The Future Land Use Map illustrates a shift from present zoning

in some neighborhoods from multiple family uses to single-family and to mixed use in the Downtown area. This emphasis on single-family residential use and mixed use is consistent with the desire of the Village to protect and stabilize its single-family neighborhoods from non-single family, non-residential uses and at the same time increase residential use in the Downtown area.

There are several key factors necessary for the successful implementation of the recommendations of this Plan. These factors include effective and consistent dialogue to build consensus within the community on achieving Liverpool's vision of itself in the future. This may require adjusting that vision and expectations as situations change and opportunities arise. Additionally, building partnerships by involving local officials, residents, merchants, institutions (such as banks and schools), property owners and adjacent municipalities in an on-going planning process that consistently refers back to the goals and objectives of this Comprehensive Plan in decision-making is of paramount importance.

Developing sustainable funding mechanisms to facilitate private and public investment in the community is also key to successfully implement this Plan. These mechanisms include:

- prioritization of capital improvement programs,
- establishment of private investment incentives such as low interest loans or revolving loan funds through local lending institutions,
- utilization of available grant programs to their fullest potential and “piggybacking” complementary grant funds to undertake and fund projects, and
- consideration of tax increment financing opportunities, business improvement districts, and special assessment districts as potential sources of revenue.

The value of this Comprehensive Plan is more than just the document itself. The process that began years ago has resulted in a dialogue in the community where people have discovered a common vision for the future and are willing to work together to achieve it. The dialogue must continue and this Plan must be revisited often and allowed to evolve as the community faces new challenges and opportunities.