

Village Edge South Planning and Zoning Analysis - Aug 2012 Report

Compiled by the Economic Health and Heritage Committee per 5 March 2012 Resolution

Background

On 5 March 2012, the Cazenovia Village Board of Trustees passed the following Resolution:

Whereas the Village of Cazenovia desires to strike an effective balance between preserving its rural heritage and historic character while also fostering an environment that promotes economic health for the community, and

Whereas the Village Edge South Zone is central to that effective balance given its proximity to one of the Village's primary commercial zones and its importance in maintaining a pleasing gateway to the community and "hard edge" between character zones as called for in the Comprehensive Plan, and

Whereas the possibility exists that modifications to the zoning regulations now in place could create a win-win situation which would more effectively maintain and enhance the community's aesthetic character while also creating more opportunities for desirable economic development, therefore,

It is hereby resolved that the Village of Cazenovia establish a committee to study this issue to determine if it is feasible to achieve both goals outlined above. If the committee finds that such an outcome is feasible, they are further tasked to develop specific recommendations for consideration by the Village Board of Trustees concerning potential modifications to the Comprehensive Plan.

The following members were appointed to the committee:

Kurt Wheeler – Village Board of Trustees
William Hall – Planning Board
Phil Byrnes – Zoning Board of Appeals
Ted Bartlett – Historic Preservation Committee
Karen Eldridge – Historic Cazenovia Business District
Bill Zupan – Cazenovia Town Board
Don Ferlow – Cazenovia Advisory Conservation Commission
Dave Connor – Village Economic Development Committee

The Committee first met on 19 March 2012 and refined its approach with the series of points noted below:

General discussion – What questions should we be asking to accomplish the goals above? What are the desired outcomes and what pitfalls must be avoided?

A. Questions:

1. What will this area look like if built out based on current zoning?
2. What is the overall objective for this zone? What does the community want here?
3. Could potential changes positively impact demographic challenges facing community? (What housing, goods, services do younger families seek?)

4. Could there be commercial/retail uses that could be complementary and not detrimental to our historic downtown?

B. Goals:

1. Aquifer must be protected. Any engineering/stormwater design standards must ensure groundwater is equal/better than pre-existing state.
2. Maintain “hard edge” called for in overall Comprehensive Plan.
3. Preserve an aesthetically pleasing gateway to community.
4. End up with a plan/zoning that clearly articulates what the community wants (so potential investors/builders know in advance what will be acceptable).
5. Explore more explicit design standards (eg: Randall Arendt approach used by Town of Cazenovia in its new zoning, form over function concept).

C. Pitfalls to be avoided:

1. “Hollowing out” historic downtown.
2. New construction with negative character that detracts from community.

Based on this framework the committee met monthly during the months of March, April, May, June and July 2012 with each member conducting independent research and analysis between meetings to share with the group and advance the discussion.

During the 22 May 2012 meeting, Don Ferlow presented hypothetical build-outs of the VES zone based on the current planning and zoning in place. This step was similar to that conducted by EDR during the 2006-2007 planning process using the R-20 and R-30 zoning for the area that existed at that time. Based on that analysis and extensive discussion of each of the other factors noted above, strong consensus emerged that adjustments and enhancements to a few areas of the existing planning/zoning regulations were strongly in the public interest. The following themes were developed during May, adopted during June and revised in July to summarize the overall recommendations of the EHH Committee:

Village Edge South Planning and Zoning Review Themes *7/25/2012 Revision*

- 1) Current guidelines limiting maximum building size to 3500 square feet are likely to inhibit potential for economic development options while also allowing potential for unintended consequences that undermine goals for village edge character and aesthetics.
- 2) Applying a similar ratio (approximately 3500 square feet per acre) but allowing the option of expanding the dimensions upward (7000 sq ft per two acres, etc.) are likely to produce improved site designs while also increasing options. (Need for maximum TBD)

- 3) Clear site design parameters modeled on the principles of Randall Arendt and similar practitioners should be established for the zone. Traits such as preservation of green space, requirement of side and rear parking areas and vegetative buffering should be included.
- 4) Architectural building design standards and site restoration/landscape standards should be developed for use in the zone to provide clear exemplars for potential developers to follow when designing structures for the zone. Experimentation with this approach on the limited scale of the Village Edge South Zone may produce a model for later incorporation on a village-wide scale.
- 5) “Form over function” is a guiding principle to maximize economic development options while preserving character and village gateway aesthetics.
- 6) Areas bordering Route 20 East are the primary focus of this review but long-term compatibility and connectivity to areas to the south should be considered.
- 7) Protection of the aquifer is a paramount concern but engineered solutions which increase options while maintaining or enhancing current conditions and safeguards should be evaluated as a possible alternative.
- 8) Conservation review of site should be conducted early in the process.

Comprehensive Plan Analysis

During the months of June and July, the current comprehensive plan was carefully reviewed to determine the extent of modifications that would be required. This analysis revealed that the nearly all of the EHH Committee findings and recommendations were consistent with the overall themes and goals of the 2007 plan and would likely enhance achievement of the broad goals of the plan. The following are direct excerpts from both the analysis and recommendations sections of the 2007 plan. As readers will note, very few changes would be warranted. Elements that would require review/potential alteration are underlined. Areas that may require additions are noted in **{bold brackets}**.

PART II – INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES:

p35 - Land Use and Zoning:

Three concerns have been identified with respect to the effectiveness of the Village zoning regulations. The most dominant concern is with the undeveloped lands that exist primarily along its northeastern and southeastern edge. An analysis of how the current zoning districts and regulations impact this particular Village gateway along Route 20 is set forth in Chapter II.9 “U.S. Route 20.” In summary, the current zoning districts allow for a development pattern that does not fit the character of either the Village or Town.

p51-52- Natural and Scenic Resources:

9. View from Route 20 East looking into Cazenovia: This is a significant gateway

to the community. It is the point where the major road traversing the rural (and some suburban) development narrows and enters the “Village”. This point is elevated above the Village center and offers a broad pastoral view to the southwest across the rural rolling hills south of the Village. (The Knapp/CPF properties can be seen in the distance.) This pastoral view is in dramatic contrast to the strip shopping center on the north side of the road.

See pages 96-105 (Chapter II.9: US Route 20 East) in their entirety esp. p101-102: From a land use perspective the management of economic growth translates into distribution of commercial retail land uses. Currently commercial retail is allowed in the Village Business District and along the north side of U.S. Route 20 at the Town and Country Plaza. The commercial land uses on the corridor are more auto-centric than the businesses in the Village. The Town and Country Plaza provides ample parking with minimal emphasis on pedestrian movement whereas the Village Business District is pedestrian friendly with limited convenient parking options. The community supports both venues and the objective is to encourage synergistic economic growth in both venues. That is to encourage growth in both venues so neither venue overwhelms the other. The solution is multifaceted and includes attention to land use, marketing, and economic development. The Plan recommendations regarding economic development are set forth in Chapter III.6. With specific reference to retail land uses along U.S. Route 20 specific land uses are included in each proposed zoning district (See Chapter 111.2 & 111.9).

PART III: COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS:

p113 - Land Use and Zoning:

It is also recommended that the Village adopt new zoning districts and regulations to better regulate development along U.S. Route 20 (see Chapter III.9). The proposed zoning districts are:

- Village Edge North: To allow single family, two-family, and multigenerational residential, retail commercial, and professional offices while protecting the Village’s, scenic, natural, and historic resources. The location for Village Edge North is illustrated on Figure III.2.2 and Figure III.2.3
- Village Edge South: To allow single family residential, restaurants, hotel/motel, and professional offices {**additional uses, “form over function”**} while protecting the Village’s, scenic, natural, and historic resources. The location for Village Edge South is illustrated on Figure III.2.2 and Figure III.2.3

p115 - Conservation Subdivision recommendations:

It is recommended that these subdivision regulations be revised to incorporate conservation analysis into the process. The subdivision of land should be approached from the perspective of analyzing the land to be developed with the goal of preserving or protecting natural, scenic, historic, or cultural resources determined to be of value to the community.

p144 – Community Economy:

Within the Village there are great opportunities for economic growth, which, if realized, would bring a new vibrancy to the Village's Business District. There is potential for infill and new development along Albany Street between Lincklaen Street and Chittenango Creek. There is also strong potential for mixed-use commercial/professional/residential development, along Chittenango Creek at Albany Street south to Riverside Drive. The eastern edge of the Village along U.S. Route 20 and Fenner Street provides more acreage for commercial, mixed uses, and light industrial development, which may call for larger building footprints than what is physically possible in the Historic Business District.

P145- 2. *Fiscal economic growth*

Currently, the Cazenovia tax base is heavily dependent on tax revenue from residential property owners. Future fiscal stability will rely upon maintaining or reducing the property taxes for residential property owners. This can be achieved by encouraging a better mix or distribution of land uses to offset the real property tax obligation of residential owners.

Goal 1: Promote and support a sustainable economy with a healthy mixture of commercial retail, professional business, agribusiness, agricultural practices and hospitality or educational services.

Action Steps: 1. Encourage location of retail businesses in the Village Business District. 3. Identify desired locations of new businesses, open space, and recreational facilities to enable long-range planning and evaluation of development proposals.

Goal 3: Maintain and enhance the historic character of the Village Business District. Action

Step: 3. Encourage the development/redevelopment of the entire Village Business District in such a manner so that it will be compatible with and complement the existing Historic Cazenovia Business District.

p159 – 166 in their entirety – Chapter III.9: US Route 20 East, especially:

A. Introduction

The following recommendations for zoning and land uses along U.S. Route 20 East should be taken into consideration with all other recommendations set forth in this *Comprehensive Plan*. A complete discussion of the Plan recommendations for land uses and zoning is located in Chapter III.2. The community goals regarding future growth and development along U.S. Route 20 East are as follows:

1. Identify and encourage a distinctive character edge between the Village and Town.
2. Protect the Cazenovia aquifer in terms of the supply and quality of groundwater allowed to recharge the aquifer.
3. Promote the preservation of cultural, historic, natural, and scenic resources and open space.
4. Encourage sustainable economic growth for the Village and Town.
5. Support and promote the protection of sustainable farmland.

To achieve these goals the Village and Town must revise their respective zoning and land use regulations to effectively and proactively manage future development and encourage a continuation of the established community character cherished by this community. The following recommendations specifically address lands adjacent to the U.S. Route 20 East corridor.

i. Village Edge North & South

With focus on preserving the community character and charm, it was agreed that a distinctive edge between the Village and Town would best protect the character of both communities and be compatible with U. S. Route 20 East Scenic Byway Strategies. To accomplish this distinctive edge, the Village and Town should establish a regulatory framework for land development that would encourage the continuation of the Village character east along U.S. Route 20 East to the eastern side of the Stowell, property on the north and the eastern side of the Cazenovia Motel on the south (see Figure III.9.1). From the eastern edge of the Cazenovia Motel property to the Town's eastern border the Town should rezone the land to promote the rural agrarian characteristics that currently exist.

p161: The proposed zoning district boundary for Village Edge South should extend from the western edge of the Lucas property, and then to continue east along the southern side of U.S. Route 20 East to the eastern edge of the Cazenovia Motel property, then south along the property line back west and north to the western edge of the Lucas Property at the beginning point along U.S. Route 20 East. Currently the Village portion of this area is zoned for residential use with one dwelling unit per 20,000sf or ½ acre and one dwelling unit per 30,000sf or approximately ¾ of an acre. The Town portion of this area is zoned A-Residential which allows for one dwelling unit per acre. The existing density is too low for Village character and not low enough to effectively complement the rural character and may simply lead to a suburban sprawl-type character.

The preferred character or form for this area is Village residential. **{Modify this statement}**

This can be accomplished through the use of specific dimensional regulations and design standards. However, this area is included in the zone of contribution and consequently a lower impervious coverage, between 10% and 15% is recommended (see Appendix B, *Wellhead Protection Plan*). The proposed density combined with the maximum impervious coverage and minimum open space requirement will not only encourage clustered development that will be in keeping with the Village character but will also encourage adequate pervious coverage to protect the aquifer recharge opportunities. The proposed land uses for this zone include those uses that are considered acceptable in this sensitive area and in keeping with the goals for the Village and Town (see Appendix A). **{Modify Addendix A, correct errors, adjust level of specificity}**

p163 – Setback “Bonuses”

Goal 1: Ensure that growth and development at the village edge is compatible with the existing village character: Action Step 3. Consider adopting zoning with clear form-based architectural & development standards to guide Village & Town Planning Boards

Goal 2: Protect the distinct character edge between the village and town on US Rte 20 East.

Action Steps 1. Encourage a distinctive character edge between the Village and Town along U.S. Route 20 East. 2. Consider adopting new zoning districts with specific dimensional regulations and design standards that complement the two distinct characters. 3. Consider adopting new zoning districts for land along U.S. Route 20 East similar to the proposed zoning districts, Village Edge North and Village Edge South (See Appendix A, Table III.2.1 & III.2.2).

Goal 3: Protect, preserve and enhance all natural, scenic, cultural and historic resources along US Route 20 East. Action Steps: 1. Consider incorporating scenic resource assessment and mitigation standards to protect

the scenic views along U.S. Route 20 East. 2. Consider increasing the required minimum amount of open space in the proposed new zoning districts along U.S. Route 20 East.

Appendix A: Table III.2.1 – Proposed Dimensional Requirements for Village Edge Zoning Districts

Findings:

As revealed by the small number of passages requiring underlining or brackets, the vast majority of the current plan would remain unchanged. The only substantive areas for revision in the narrative portion of the plan relate to residential being the preferred form for the VES zone (there was extensive discussion as to whether this may have been a typographical error in the plan) and limits on uses in VES versus VEN. “Form over function,” which was the guiding principle early in the 2006-2007 process would open the area to a wider variety of uses and enhance economic opportunities. It is the committee’s finding that additional retail and commercial opportunities are more likely to enhance overall economic activity in the community and improve the climate for existing businesses as opposed to creating harmful competition.

In addition, several elements in Appendix A were found to be problematic, notably building footprint and maximum height of 1-2 stories (versus 3 in VEN). Expanded building footprints with proportionally expanded lot size would be recommended. Building height (to a maximum of three stories) would be determined by a combination of factors including setback, design and buffering. In general, Appendix A is considerably more detailed than the content typically included in comprehensive plans. Typographical errors and elements requiring revision were discovered during the detailed process of rewriting Chapter 180 of the Village Code during 2008-2010.

Finally, a number of areas would be strengthened to better achieve the broad goals of enhanced site design and architectural design. The details of this component would be developed by the committee if so tasked by the village board. Draft language relating to conservation planning prepared by committee member Don Ferlow is included below as an example of the potential improvements.

--DRAFT VERSION--

PURPOSE AND APPLICABILITY OF CONSERVATION PLANNING

The purpose of these regulations is to achieve a balance between well-designed commercial or residential development, meaningful open space conservation, natural resource protection, and maintaining cultural and local scenic values. The implementation of the regulations is intended to protect tracts of environmentally sensitive and scenically significant undeveloped land, including road corridors and buffer areas, in order to maintain the historic land use patterns and implement the “Comprehensive Plan - Village and Town of Cazenovia” (the “Comprehensive Plan”). Conservation planning results in the protection and preservation of contiguous open space and important scenic and environmental resources.

DENSITY CALCULATION:

The maximum density allowed on a site is calculated by a formula based upon the acreage of “unconstrained land” on the property. To determine unconstrained acreage, subtract from the total

(gross) acreage of the proposed development parcel the acreage of “constrained land.” Constrained land includes DEC and Army Corps of Engineers wetlands, intermittent and perennial watercourses, FEMA designated 100-year floodplains, public and private road rights-of-way, utility easements and steep slopes (containing an average grade of 15% or more, and which slopes are 5,000 square feet or more of contiguous sloped area).

To determine the “base” number for a building on the site, divide the unconstrained acreage by the allowable footprint size per acre of a proposed building within the zoning district. (Round down fractional acres of 0.5 or less and round up fractional acres greater than 0.5). The resulting number is the “base density” allowed processed on the site.

As part of a Site Plan submission, an applicant shall prepare a Preliminary Site Plan displaying a conservation analysis for the property. This plan shall contain site specific inventory maps, description of the land, and an analysis of the conservation value of various site features. The conservation analysis shall show lands with conservation value, including but not limited to the following:

- “Constrained land” as defined above
- Vegetative Buffer areas necessary for screening and framing new development
- Land exhibiting present or potential, historic, ecological, agricultural, forest, water resource, scenic, or other natural resource value.
- Farmland, USDA prime soils and soils of agricultural significance, existing trail corridors, stream corridors, ponds, lakes, local scenic view sheds, public water supply watersheds, wellhead zones, park and recreation land, unfragmented forest land, and historic and archaeological sites. (Guidance for these resources may be found in, among other plans, the Comprehensive Plan or published adopted open space or farmland protection plan.)
- Stone walls
- Trees 12 inches diameter at breast height (dbh) or larger (which may be shown as individual or in groupings).
- Other land exhibiting present or potential future historic, ecological, agricultural, water resource, scenic or other natural resource value, as determined by the Planning Board.

The Applicant is strongly advised to meet with the Cazenovia Area Conservation Commission (CACC) for site review and assistance in preparation of its site plan and conservation analysis

The preliminary Site Plan shall be submitted to the Planning Board for review of the applicant’s identification of valuable natural and manmade resources on the property. The conservation analysis shall describe the importance and the current and potential conservation value of all land on the site. In the course of its Site Plan review, the Planning Board shall indicate to the applicant which of the lands identified as being of conservation value are most important to preserve.

The outcome of the conservation analysis and the Planning Board’s determination shall be incorporated as an integral part of the Final Site Plan. The Final Site Plan shall show land to be permanently preserved by a conservation easement, as well as recommended conservation uses, ownership, and management guidelines for such land.

The final determination as to which land has the most conservation value and should be protected from development shall be made by the Planning Board. The Planning Board shall make written findings identifying the specific conservation values protected and the reasons for protecting such land (“conservation findings”). The Planning Board shall deny an application that does not include a complete conservation analysis sufficient for the Board to make its conservation findings. The Planning Board may waive any submission requirements that it, in its sole discretion, deems unnecessary for a complete conservation analysis.

Overview/Next Steps

The community has been fortunate to have a group of eight local residents with a diverse set of backgrounds and experiences in the areas of planning, zoning, engineering, architecture, business and local government participate in this process over the course of the past five months. The process has been rigorous and thoughtful and yielded a surprisingly strong consensus among the diverse membership of the group that improvements could be made in the VES portion of the comprehensive plan which would be beneficial to the greater Cazenovia area.

The next step in the process would be for the Village Board to formally task the EHH Committee to develop specific recommendations for changes and additions to the comprehensive plan. If so tasked, the committee would flesh out its themes and findings to date in a manner that would be specifically formatted to amend the VES portion of the existing comprehensive plan. The proposed language would be prepared for review by the Village Board and public at subsequent meetings.