

**2005 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
TOWN OF MINA  
CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY, NEW YORK**

**DRAFT PROPOSAL FOR REVIEW  
SEPTEMBER 2005**

**Town Board:**

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Randy Boerst, Councilman  
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## A. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1. As adopted by the Town Board in the 2000 Comprehensive Plan, the Planning Board was chartered with the responsibility of updating that Plan in five years as well as reviewing and recommending changes in the zoning laws.

2. The 2000 Comprehensive Plan be reviewed for consistency with community direction and evaluate status of recommended action items.
3. A 2005 Comprehensive Plan be completed with updated community direction and guideline recommendations for the Town Board based on those results.
4. Zoning Laws will be reviewed and recommendations with any changes based on the results of the updated Comprehensive Plan.

## **B. METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS**

1. The Planning Board used three methods of analysis to update the Comprehensive Plan, gain current taxpayer and community input, and prioritize the recommendations.
  - a. A SWOT analysis was completed May 4, 2004 by the Planning Board and community representation. This set the groundwork to determine the Town of Mina's Strengths and Weaknesses, as well as any Opportunities or Threats the community held.
  - b. Based on the results of the SWOT analysis, four (4) Comprehensive Planning Focus Groups were completed August 13, 14, and 16, 2004. These were conducted by the Southern Tier West Regional Planning and Development Board with fifty-five (55) community residents participating.
  - c. The final method used for taxpayer input was a community survey distributed to all property owners in the Town of Mina, which netted 199 participants. These results were summarized by the Business class students at Clymer Central School.
2. The process for updating the Comprehensive Plan
  - a. Complete research and analysis by Planning Board
  - b. Prepare Draft Comprehensive Plan
  - c. Hold Public Meeting to Solicit Input
  - d. Revise Draft Comprehensive Plan
  - e. Refer Proposed Plan to County Planning Department
  - f. Present Draft Comprehensive Plan to Town Board
  - g. Town Board Hold Public Hearing Prior to Adoption
  - h. Town Board Prepare Revisions and Adopt the Plan
  - i. File Adopted Comprehensive Plan in Town Clerk's Office and in County Planning Department

## **C. COMMUNICATION**

1. All Planning Board meetings were open to the public and published in the local Tapestry newsletter as well as communicated through the Jamestown Post Journal.

2. An update of the progress and draft survey was presented to the Town Board on July 14, 2004.
3. Comprehensive Planning Focus Groups were announced in the Tapestry, Jamestown Post Journal as well as notices mailed to taxpayers.
4. The community survey was mailed to all taxpayers.

**D. BACKGROUND**

1. GENERAL

The Town of Mina is located in rural western New York’s Chautauqua-Allegany Region on the New York-Pennsylvania border. The town is the entry point into New York State heading east on the Southern Tier Expressway (Interstate 86). With a lake of 307 acres, the community enjoys a busy boating, fishing, and tourist spot during the summer season. The location on the plateau above Lake Erie positions the town squarely in the “Lake Effect” snow belt of Western New York maximizing the winter recreations and thus benefits from a four season climate and economic advantage.

2. EXISTING LAND USE REGULATIONS

The current zoning law of the town identifies five (5) districts with one additional flood plain overlap district. These districts provide adequate owner protection and a harmonious rural lifestyle that suits the vast majority of the population. The municipality is divided into the following types of districts:

Residential	R1
Lakeside Residential	R2
Business	B1
Agriculture	A1
Agriculture-Residential	AR

3. LAND USE LOCATION AND INTENSITY

The land use intensity is around the water. Most of the five miles of shoreline is developed and that real estate (R2) is of the highest value. The R1 classification covers the other area where homes are built close together in the hamlet and around, but not directly on the lake. The business districts, as defined, have been adequate with variances as requested reviewed by the Zoning Board of Appeals and rules made. Zones A1 and AR cover the properties in agricultural areas which continue to decline in the number of operational dairy farms, but has not seen land development for subdivisions.

4. DEMOGRAPHICS AND SOCIAL-ECONOMIC TRENDS

Full time resident density is 32.6 people per square mile. The 2000 census, shows a population of 1175. Most residents are employed outside the town, but tourism and recreation contribute to the economic base. Peek ‘N Peak Resort and

Conference Center as well as the numerous specialty shops, marina, camp grounds, restaurants, and service businesses, support the tourist industry and resident needs. These businesses continue to renovate, develop, and improve the downtown and surrounding areas of the community.

## 5. ORGANIZATIONS

The community is largely supported by numerous volunteer, not-for-profit organizations. These organizations play major roles in the ongoing development and success of this community. Included in this support are: Findley Lake & Mina Historical Society, Findley Lake Volunteer Fire Department and Auxiliary, Quality Findley Fund, Young at Heart Senior Citizens Group, Findley Lake Area Chamber of Commerce, Alexander Findley Community Library, Findley Lake Property Owners Association, The Findley Lake Nature Center, the local youth groups of Girl and Boy Scouts, the Local Churches, Camp Findley United Methodist Church Camp, and the bi-weekly Tapestry news.

## 6. TRANSPORTATION

The Southern Tier Expressway (Interstate 86, formerly Route 17) crosses the town with an exit on state highway Route 426 one mile north of the hamlet of Findley Lake. Interstate 90, within 10 miles of the town, also provides ready access to the area. The county CART service is also available for those residents in need of transportation. Air service is available in either Jamestown, NY or Erie, PA approximately 30 miles from Findley Lake, as well as bus service in Erie, PA.

## 7. ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

The State Environmental Quality Review Act provides for protection of the environment by requiring plan review on projects with potential detrimental impact. Per 6 NYCRR Part 617, implementation of a comprehensive plan is a listed Type I action and requires a full EAF (Environmental Assessment Form) be used to determine the significance of such actions. This Comprehensive Plan was reviewed using the Full Environmental Assessment Form to determine in an orderly manner whether the plan should be considered to have significant environmental impact. The result of the assessment is a negative declaration relative to any significant environmental impact. The full report is attached to this document.

## **E. REVIEW OF 2000 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

There were six main recommended actions concluded from the 2000 Comprehensive Plan.

1. Adopt a mission statement. The following was adopted January 11, 2000:
  - . enhancing the quality of life
  - . preserving the rural environment
  - . recognizing the diverse interests of the community, and
  - . approaching issues in an atmosphere of mutual respect and cooperation.
2. Review and update zoning laws. This was revised, updated and approved June 1, 2001.
3. Address health, safety and water quality issues. The Town Board has updated the Disaster Management Plan and Countywide Hazard Mitigation Plan. The Findley Lake Property Owners, Inc, in conjunction with community members prepared a Lake Management plan in 2002. The Town continues to be supportive of efforts to maintain and improve water quality and recently allocated funds for the purchase of a weed harvester. Quality Findley Fund continues to function as the philanthropic branch of the community to financially support this effort. Several meetings and discussions have transpired to recruit physician services for the community, which still continues.
4. Resurveyed the community specifically for Senior and affordable housing. An appointed committee completed this survey in July of 2002. A meeting with representatives from the Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc. was completed in 2004 with several ideas to pursue. A research firm was engaged and currently three areas are being reviewed; 1) subsidized housing for seniors, 2) affordable family housing, and 3) senior apartments.
5. Enhance the downtown area through grants and other fund raising. The Marion Labar Walford Water Wheel Overlook Building opened in May 2004 with public restrooms. Display panels will feature the history of the community as well as an environmental education of the watershed and the beginning of the west branch of French Creek. An overlook bridge to connect the building to the gazebo is complete.
6. Update Comprehensive Plan every 5 years. Starting in early 2004 by the Town Planning Board, this will be completed on schedule.

In addition to the six recommended actions and with special focus on the mission statement, the following accomplishments have also been realized:

1. Substantial contributions of photos, items and artifacts are now available in the resource room of the Historical Society.

2. Video taped interviews of seniors to preserve an oral history of the community.
3. Publication of the book, "Images of America Around Findley Lake", by Randy Boerst published in 2003.
4. Reprinting and indexing of the Sesquicentennial History Book in 1997.
5. The acquisition of The Log Cabin representing our oldest and most historic building will now be reconstructed within the community.
6. Publication of the Findley Lake Library Cookbook in 2003.
7. Through the Findley Lake Nature Center the completion of a Bio-diversity Study by Gannon University including 19 professors from three colleges to study native birds, flora, fauna, small and large insects, fish, reptiles and other wetland inhabitants on nine (9) acres of the Center's wetland preservation land. This research will eventually lead to a walking trail through the wetland preservation to observe and identify this life in its natural habitat.
8. Horse and walking trails for both winter and summer developed at the Camp Findley United Methodist Church Camp.
9. Extensive events were presented by the Chamber of Commerce
10. Peek 'N Peak changing their address to Findley Lake with television and billboard advertising. Also hosting the Nationwide Golf Classic locally.
11. The opening of the Holiday Inn Express on the I-86 Findley Lake exit, also by Peek 'N Peak, with shuttle service to the Peek.
12. Senior meal site in Findley Lake for meals-on-wheels developed by the Young at Heart.
13. Seven years of documented current history through the Tapestry news.
14. Several new businesses began as well as existing business expanded.

Additionally, since 2000 the Community Center has developed into a community asset for all residents and visitors of the Town of Mina. The Alexander Findley Community Library and the Findley Lake Nature Center have both expanded into two classrooms after only two years of existence. The History Room for the Findley Lake and Mina Historical Society has greatly expanded with scheduled hours of operation. All three of these rooms are open to the public and have received hundreds of visitors each year. The Community Center also houses a room for the Young at Heart senior group, the Town offices, which were relocated to this site in 1997, and the Findley Lake Early Childhood Center. A trip to the library can multi-task with a trip to the Town Clerk or Assessor offices or the hair salon, Snappy Snippers. A lovely pavilion was built in 2003 at the North end of the Center and is used for family reunions, summer recreation programs and other gatherings during our warm weather. The cafeteria and gymnasium are scheduled by local citizens 70% or more of the weekends during the calendar year.

## **F. OVERVIEW OF SWOT ANALYSIS**

Top ranked strengths of community concluded:

1. Sense of Community
2. Volunteerism
3. Non-profit organizations
4. Sense of pride
5. Diverse population
6. Good reputation
7. Friendly
8. Infusion of new ideas

Top ranked Weaknesses of community were:

1. Rural versus village
2. Space for growth
3. Lack of employment opportunities
4. Dwindling customer base
5. Too much activity on the lake and in town
6. Jet skis on the lake
7. No banking
8. No pharmacy

Top ranked Opportunities

1. Economic development through Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc.
2. Philanthropy
3. Infrastructure through development with Chautauqua Opportunities
4. Garbage pickup

Top ranked Threats

1. Noise Pollution
2. Canada Geese population
3. Lake Pollution – weeds, septic
4. Farm run-off – fertilizer
5. Air quality
6. New York State Taxes

The conclusion and recommendation from the SWOT analysis were to gather more community opinions and input through open public focus groups followed by an in-depth community survey.

## **G. OVERVIEW OF COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING FOCUS GROUPS**

The following priorities were expressed by the groups and summarized by the facilitator from the Southern Tier West Regional Planning and Development Board

upon completion of each session. Additionally, two recommendations resulted from the focus groups. (These priorities are not in any special order.)

Priorities:

1. Continue with the planning process and focus groups.
2. Maintain the quality of the lake.
3. Balance rights of property owners with needs of community.
4. Consolidation of services with adjacent towns.
5. Come together as a community to protect/enhance lake quality.
6. Preservation of rural atmosphere and rural assets.
7. Improve and maintain the lake's water quality.
8. An opportunity to do more to control development and growth so as to support local businesses.
9. Limited liquor license for restaurants.

Recommendations:

1. Town Board should institutionalize a process whereby community groups, organizations, businesses, etc. as well as interested residents can dialogue on local issues.
2. The community (through the Findley Lake Property Owners Association) should implement the recommendations of the Lake Management Plan.

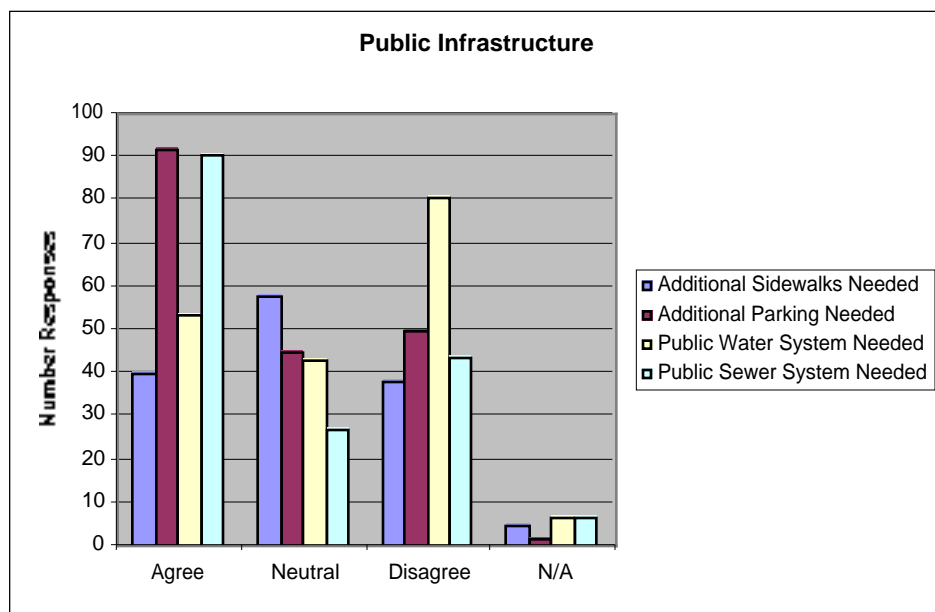
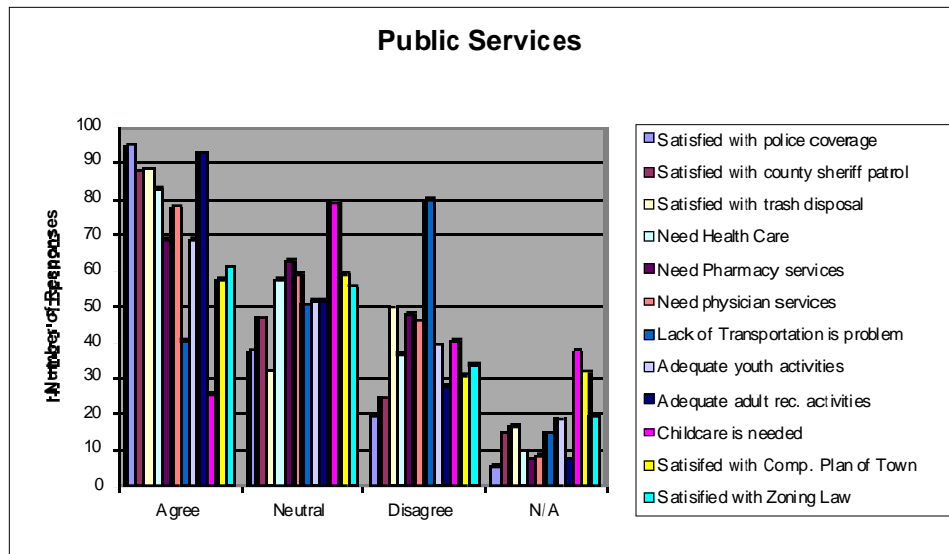
## H. SUMMARY OF THE COMMUNITY SURVEY

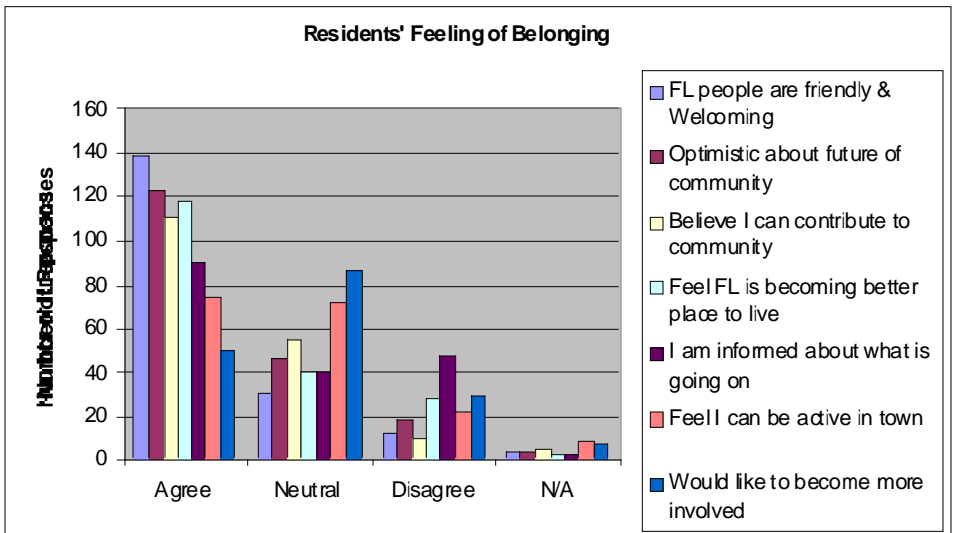
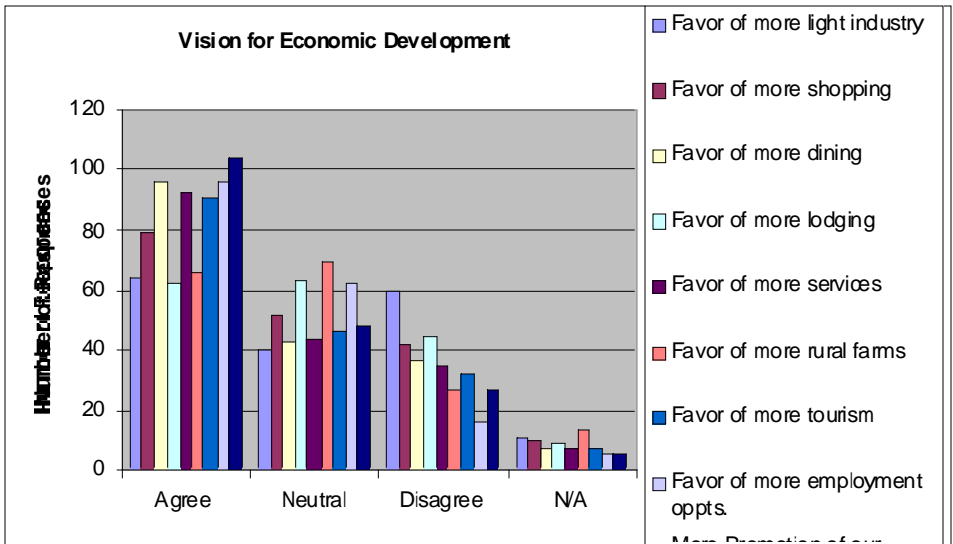
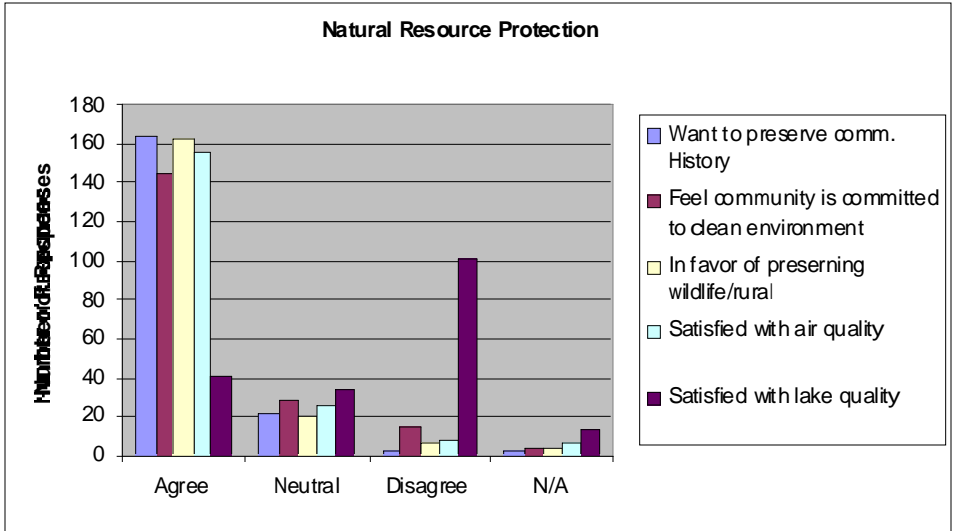
**Demographics:**

<b>Total surveys completed</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>Owners</b>	<b>179</b>
<b>Permanent Residents</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>Renters</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Seasonal Residents</b>	<b>40</b>		
<b>Weekend Residents</b>	<b>34</b>		

1. There were six areas rated the highest that the community agreed or strongly agreed on:
  - a. Preserving the community's history.
  - b. Committed to keeping our environment clean.
  - c. Preserving rural areas and wildlife.
  - d. More advertising, promotion and tourism of our Community.
  - e. An overall feeling of belonging.
  - f. Need for public sewer and parking.
  
2. The next areas ranked highest for agreed or strongly agreed were:
  - a. The needs for some type of health care services.

- b. Would like more development for dining, services (ex. photo lab, laundromat, banking, dry-cleaning), and local employment opportunities.
  - c. Were satisfied with police coverage, sheriff department's lake patrol, trash pickup times, transportation and adult recreation.
  - d. Not satisfied with the Lake quality.
3. The last conclusions that surfaced from the survey were:
- a. No additional sidewalks are needed.
  - b. Public water system is not needed.
  - c. The non-profit services all had a strong awareness and usage.





## I. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Although the concern for rising property taxes surfaced in all areas of the research, the Town carries little to no responsibility or authority in this area. Therefore, that issue continues to be that of the County and State of New York, and not applicable for the Town's Comprehensive Plan.

1. Add to the Mission statement: *and history*.
  - .enhancing the quality of life
  - .preserving the rural environment *and history*
  - .recognizing the diverse interests of the community, and
  - .approaching issues in an atmosphere of mutual respect and cooperation.
2. With the strong support for maintaining our environment and history, continue to support the development of programs and projects through the Historical Society, Nature Center, Waterwheel Overlook, reconstruction of The Log Cabin, trails through the wetland preservation, and all areas focused on environment, history, and natural resources.
3. Emphasis should be given to working with the Findley Lake Property Owners, Inc. to continue the ongoing Lake Management Plan. The lake quality remains a priority for the residents.
4. From the focus group sessions, a desire among residents for a format for open discussions as it relates to on-going communication and dialog regarding issues occurring in the community. This opportunity could be developed.
5. Continued promotion and advertising of the community particularly as it relates to our natural resources, history, and awareness of our community.
6. Continue research and possible development for Senior and affordable housing and other opportunities that could evolve with this in conjunction with the Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc.
7. Continued awareness of growing interest in public sewer systems.

## C. References

A full report of the documentation for this Plan is on file with the Town of Mina.

1. Report of Environmental Assessment.
2. SWOT Analysis
3. Focus Group Report
4. Survey Results with comments