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# **-TOWN OF ERIN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

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Planning for the community of tomorrow,  
today.



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Town of Erin has developed this Comprehensive Plan to assist in providing better services to the residents and landowners. It is intended to serve as a guide for the Planning Board in developing and implementing specific policies for the Town.

The Erin Comprehensive Plan Committee (ECPC) has worked closely with the Chemung County Planning Department and Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board in producing this Plan. The ECPC has also undertaken two surveys for input from the residents of Erin, with one early in the process and the other completed in July of 2009. Results from those surveys appear at the end of the document.

### Summary of Recommendations

The ECPC recommends that the Town adopt specific policies to guide future decision making. Where appropriate, the ECPC has also provided recommendations for the implementation of each policy. A brief summary of the recommendations is as follows:

#### **Forestry Policy**

**Encourage sound forest management practices** as beneficial to the woodlands and as an income generator for landowners.

##### **Recommendations**

*Timber Harvesting Registration*

*Bonding for Road Damage*

*Outreach to Residents*

#### **Water Resources Policy**

**Encourage sound stream and pond management practices** as necessary for maintaining water quality within the Town.

##### **Recommendation**

*Outreach to Residents*

#### **Flooding and Erosion Policy**

**Discourage development or grading** near streams, in floodplains, and on alluvial fans.

**Discourage private stream crossings.**

##### **Recommendations**

*Enforce existing environmental laws*

*Public Notification - Town disclaimer of responsibility added to site plans*

*Strictly enforce the town's floodplain protection law*

*Maintain a 50 Foot Setback from Streams*

*Require site plan review for private bridges*

### **Drainage and Sediment Control Policy**

**Maintain natural vegetation and existing drainage patterns**, to the extent possible, at development sites.

**Protect existing drainage structures** (bridges, culverts, ditches, etc.) from increased runoff resulting from development, timber harvesting, agriculture, or altered land use.

**Discourage development in wetlands and on poorly drained soils.**

#### **Recommendations**

*Minimize land disturbance*

*Control erosion along driveways*

*Control storm water on development sites*

*Minimize erosion from timber harvesting*

*Assure that soils will support development*

### **Gas Well Exploration Policy**

**Protect Town roads and bridges from anticipated heavy truck traffic.**

#### **Recommendation**

*Develop and/or improve local laws and regulations regarding possible bonding, etc.* for preserving, protecting and repairing Town of Erin roads and bridges that may be subject to damage during gas exploration activities in the Town; *along with consideration of shared service agreements* with other government entities that may make this process more efficient.

### **Wind Resources Policy**

**Support the development of wind resources in the Town** in accordance with reasonable standards and requirements.

#### **Recommendations**

*Adopt a local wind farm law*

*Encourage the development of residential / agricultural wind generation*

*Investigate the possibility of the Town creating a municipal power corporation*

### **Solar Resources and Green Buildings Policy**

**All Town buildings should be as energy efficient and environmentally friendly as possible.**

#### **Recommendation**

*Explore the feasibility, costs and savings associated with upgrading the existing Town buildings* using solar panels and other “green” improvements and technologies.

### **Housing Policy**

**Assure that all housing in the Town meets minimum requirements for health and safety.**

#### **Recommendation**

*Explore housing programs for rehabilitation and/or elderly housing* to see if the Town might benefit from those programs.

## **Public Health Policy**

**Assure that residents of the Town have access to clean drinking water.**

### **Recommendations**

*The Town should contact the Chemung County Health Department regarding water testing within the hamlet area.*

*If the water testing does not meet minimum standards, the Town should work with Chemung County Planning to explore the possibility of public water service for portions of the Town.*

## **Transportation Policy**

**Provide for and protect the public's interest and investment in the public right-of-way.**

**Provide adequate accessibility to all planned land uses.**

**Provide for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods while preserving and enhancing neighborhood and rural livability.**

### **Recommendations**

*Maintenance and improvement*

*On-street parking management*

*Pedestrian transportation and safety*

*Work with NYS DOT to establish one or more pedestrian crosswalks with signage across Route 223 within the hamlet.*

## **Youth Policy**

**Support the development of youth within the Town by providing recreational and community service opportunities.**

### **Recommendation**

*Regroup the Youth Services Board and incorporate Youth Services into the Parks and Recreation Committee to provide activities for residents of all ages.*

## **Recreation Policy**

**Continue to promote and expand support for youth and family recreation opportunities.**

### **Recommendation**

*Explore additional recreational opportunities within the Town.*

## **Agricultural Policy**

**Continue to promote and support agricultural activities within the Town.**

### **Recommendations**

*Identify owners of active farms within the Town*

*Invite those individuals to discuss how the Town may support their activities*

### **Business Policy**

**Actively promote the establishment of new businesses and support existing business activities within the Town.**

#### **Recommendations**

*Hold a workshop at the Town Hall to identify all current or potential businesses within the Town and discuss methods that the Town may employ to support those business activities*

*Explore potential new business opportunities suited to the Town*

*Actively encourage Erin residents to “buy local”*

### **Zoning Policy**

**Town Zoning should be reviewed periodically to assure that it accurately reflects the Town Comprehensive Plan, and amendments to that plan, with regard to planned economic growth and desired future land use.**

#### **Recommendations**

*Update the Town Zoning Map whenever zoning amendments are made*

*Identify areas where zoning for “cottage industries” and other entrepreneurial activities by town residents may be encouraged.*

### **Revenue Policy**

**The Town should take advantage of all revenue opportunities including grants and revolving loans.**

#### **Recommendations**

*The Erin Planning Board should explore all grant and revolving loan fund opportunities*

*The Town Board should continue to explore opportunities for shared services*

# INTRODUCTION

## The Comprehensive Plan

The comprehensive plan is intended to be a well-considered general guide for both public and private decision-makers regarding the future growth and development of the community. It is a document, which outlines the community as it exists today and provides a vision for the future of the Town of Erin. The plan will concentrate on the current, intermediate, and long-range needs and goals for the protection, enhancement, growth, and development of the community. The plan will address issues such as population, housing, agriculture, environmental and water quality protection, the use of natural resources such as wind and mineral resources, commercial services, parks and recreation, public facilities, utilities, transportation, traffic circulation, parking and pedestrian network, appearance and vitality of the hamlet, residential, and rural areas. There are many reasons for a community to have a fairly detailed and up to date comprehensive plan.

## Comprehensive Plan Purpose and Goals:

1. To guide the future growth and development of the Town in accordance with a comprehensive plan of land use and population density that represents and promotes beneficial and convenient relationships among residential, commercial, and public areas within the Town, considering the suitability of each area for such uses, as indicated by existing conditions, trends in population and mode of living.
2. To outline policies to provide adequate light, air, and privacy; to secure safety from fire, flood, and other danger, and to prevent overcrowding of the land and undue congestion of population.
3. To protect and conserve the rural character, the environment, and the stability and value of all parts of the Town; to encourage the orderly and beneficial development of all parts of the Town.
4. To bring about the gradual conformity of the uses of land and buildings throughout the Town to the Comprehensive zoning plan, and to minimize conflicts among the uses of land and buildings.
5. To promote the beneficial circulation of traffic throughout the Town, having particular regard to the avoidance of congestion in the streets and the provision of safe and convenient traffic movements.
6. To provide a guide for public policy and action in the efficient provisions of public facilities and services, and for private enterprises in building development, investment,

and other economic activity relating to uses of land and buildings throughout the Town.

7. To ensure that the legislative power of officials of the Town of Erin shall be ruled and governed by standards as clearly defined as possible; so they cannot operate in an arbitrary and discriminatory fashion and will be directed toward the safety, health and welfare of the people of the Town of Erin.
8. To ensure inclusion in the zoning plan of all the areas contained in the National Flood Insurance Program, as shown in maps effective August 13, 1982 numbered as follows: 361374 001 0030 panels 5-10-15-20-25-30, or as updated or corrected; and to ensure that construction or development proposed for floodplains is designed to limit flood damage and to protect the capacity of the floodplain to contain high water events.
9. To promote the preservation of agricultural land and forests
10. To guide the proper usage of the upland soils that have dense fragipans or till layers within one and one-half to four feet of the surface as the soils have a profound effect on subsurface water behavior, drainage, and erosion. Care must be exercised in developing these areas.
11. To suggest policies to protect stream corridors, drainage ways and related water courses so that the existing drainage patterns are maintained; and to encourage clean water infiltration into the aquifer, protecting public water supplies and wildlife habitat.
12. To ensure that conventional homes, mobile, manufactured and modular homes, agriculture, light industry, recreational areas, and natural resources shall be developed in an orderly fashion and that each is compatible with its surroundings.

The underlying purpose of this Master or Comprehensive Plan is to recommend policies that will maintain lands, buildings, and natural resources for the benefit of the whole of the Town of Erin, with due consideration to the Town's financial resources; and to ensure a uniform policy toward all residents of the Town of Erin.

## **Acknowledgements**

Chemung County Planning Department  
Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board  
Chemung County Environmental Management Council (Maps)  
Suzanne M. Murphy, Town of Erin Historian  
Town of Erin Comprehensive Plan Committee

# **HISTORY OF TOWN OF ERIN**

## **Foreward**

The following information has been gleaned from a number of sources regarding the history of the Town of Erin. We have been fortunate in having ancestors, who have taken the time and interest and pride in recording the rich history of this lovely town/hamlet of Erin, New York, nestled in the hills of this beautiful County of Chemung, State of New York. Fortunately, we have an active Historical Society here in Erin, a museum full of information and artifacts, and a historical society that is alive and well.

Since the Town of Erin Planning Board Committee is in the process of revising and updating the rules and regulations pertaining to the this town and its growth, I have attempted to put together a brief account of the history and events leading up to this time (April, 2004).

## **Early History of the Town of Erin**

The Town of Erin is closing in on its Bi-centennial Anniversary! On March 29<sup>th</sup>, 1822, the Legislature of the State of New York accepted this township, and it was called “Erin.” Erin was originally dubbed “Erin Go Bragh,” (which means, “Erin Forever”). An Irishman, Michael Robinson, gave the new settlement this name, though Irish folk were in the minority; most of the initial settlers were Scotch and Dutch. Erin was the third township formed in Chemung County, and the log cabin home of John Banfield was the sight of the first town meeting in May 1822. The County of Chemung has not always been within the boundaries that it is now. It has been incorporated in other sections/counties of New York State, and its lines of demarcation have changed several times, before becoming what they are now. The Town of Erin had several settlements within its boundaries, the first being settled in 1815 by Basil Sperry: this section called “Red Chalk” was so named because settlers and surveyors blazed trails by marking trees with red chalk, in order to find their way to and from various locations. The area was dense with forests of pine and hemlock, and one could easily become lost without some way to mark their trails; Austin Hill was named for Ardon Austin; Park Hill for Robert and Alexander Park; Tuthill Ridge for Col. John Tuthill. Folks of Scotch descent were among the early settlers, thus came Scotchtown; there was also South Erin, Erin Center, and Harrington Corners. More ethnic groups migrated to the Erin area; IE., the Finns, Austrians, Canadians, English, Germans, Italians, Czechoslovakians and other Slavic folks. Erin is rich in the history of the immigrants that settled within its boundaries; it has been a true melting pot of folks, contributing to the diversified community it has become today.

The logging industry grew in Erin, and sawmills were built; James Rodbourn moved to Erin and built a large steam powered sawmill in 1868. This was a going concern in Erin for nearly half a century. Railroads to transport products and people to their destinations were built. The Utica, Ithaca, and Elmira Railroad transported lumber, wood made products and hides. Later the railway serving this area was the Elmira, Cortland and Northern Railroad, which

was the last to serve this area. As the land became cleared, farms sprang up; grain, potatoes, apples, cider, and dairy products were now among the items shipped from Erin to markets. Other businesses such as chair makers, creameries, blacksmiths, a tannery, a basketry, and cabinet makers were among the shops that opened. Churches that developed were the Methodist Protestant, Methodist Episcopal, Presbyterian, and the Simpson Methodist Episcopal, which is the only remaining church in Erin.

As the settlers came and the population grew, so did the need for schools. In 1818 the first school was started in the area called Scotchtown. By 1890, there were 13 school districts in the Town of Erin. The history of the one and two room school houses could fill volumes all by itself. If you've had the opportunity to be a student in one of those schools, you are indeed fortunate. The teachers in these country schools were also the music and art teacher, nurse, confident, disciplinarian, substitute parent, sports and activity coach, and any other job that needed to be filled during the course of a school day. These teachers were a rare breed!

Of course, there was time for merry making! The Churches, Schools, village stores, mills and railway stations were pretty much the centers of activity for Erin Residents. We must not forget to mention the Beckwith Hotel; it was one of the most popular places for recreation, located at Park Station. There was a ball room in the hotel and a pavilion outside for enjoyment during the summer months. The popularity of this establishment was enriched by the U. I. & E. Railroad, which was built through the township. Ezra Cornell and the Rodbourns helped finance the U. I. & E railway. If the horse and buggy couldn't get you there, you could always go by rail.

Important to the history of any settlement in this wonderful nation of ours, is the United States Post Office. There were a number of post offices in Erin; one was in Erin Center; one on Route 223; another was in Herrington Corners to mention just a few. In the early 1920's, Alice Rodbourn was serving as Postmaster of the Erin Post Office. She often received requests for mail to be hand canceled on March 17<sup>th</sup>, St. Patrick's Day. Mrs. Rodbourn mentioned this to James L. Smith, who later became a Post Master of the Erin Post Office in 1938. Mr. Smith had an interest in cancellation stamps himself. In 1949, Mr. Smith engaged Russ Havens of Breesport to create a design for a cachet, appropriate for St. Patrick's Day, for his own personal use. As time went on, others became interested, such as the Chemung County American-Irish Society and the Elmira Stamp Club. In 1952, 11,000 cachets were canceled and mailed all over the United States and to some countries. In 1969 the Erin Firemen's Auxiliary saw the value of the tradition and sponsored the St. Patrick's Day cachets and cancellations. Then, in 2003, the Erin Historical Society took over the project once again. The cachets are created and hand canceled with pictorial stamps designed by Erin residents and authorized and made up by the U. S. Postal Department. These cachets can be purchased from the Erin Historical Society. The local postmaster hand cancels the mail with the special stamp on March 17<sup>th</sup>, as well as on the date of the Irish Festival in Erin. I would be remiss, if I did not mention as a part of the Erin History, the Erin Volunteer Fire Department, established in 1955, housed in a new fire station built in 1998. They have and are serving the community well.

In 1956 the Newtown Creek Watershed Project was established, by the Chemung Co. Bd. of Supervisors. District Officers, led by Robert D. Erway, Sr. of Erin, encouraged the improvement of soil and water resources. This project led to the Park Station Dam construction, where area folks can now camp, picnic, swim, hike and bicycle. Another dam, the Federal Rd. Dam has been completed; the Greenbush Rd. Dam was not. In 1972, Erin dedicated a new Town Hall on Rt. 223; it also serves as a community center. A landmark not to be forgotten, is a cross on the hillside in the Hamlet of Erin. The cross is made of evergreen trees planted by Benjamin Nichols and Milton Campbell; the evergreen saplings were acquired from the Future Farmers of America as a conservation project. The cross can be seen from Route 223 and the air, marking Erin for pilots who fly over the hamlet.

The Town of Erin continues to grow in population, homes, and business development. Still, it maintains its air of the small, country town. The rolling hills in the fall are brilliant in their splendorous color, and the sightseers are out in large number to view the beauty; the lush green in spring and summer makes you want to linger, as you drive the winding roads through the Erin countryside; and a hard winter in Erin can be a challenge for sure! The four seasons only serve to enhance Erin's charm. One can not begin to incorporate in a couple of pages, the wonderful history of the Town of Erin. Fortunately, there were folks like James L. Smith, who was born, raised, and lived his whole life in Erin.

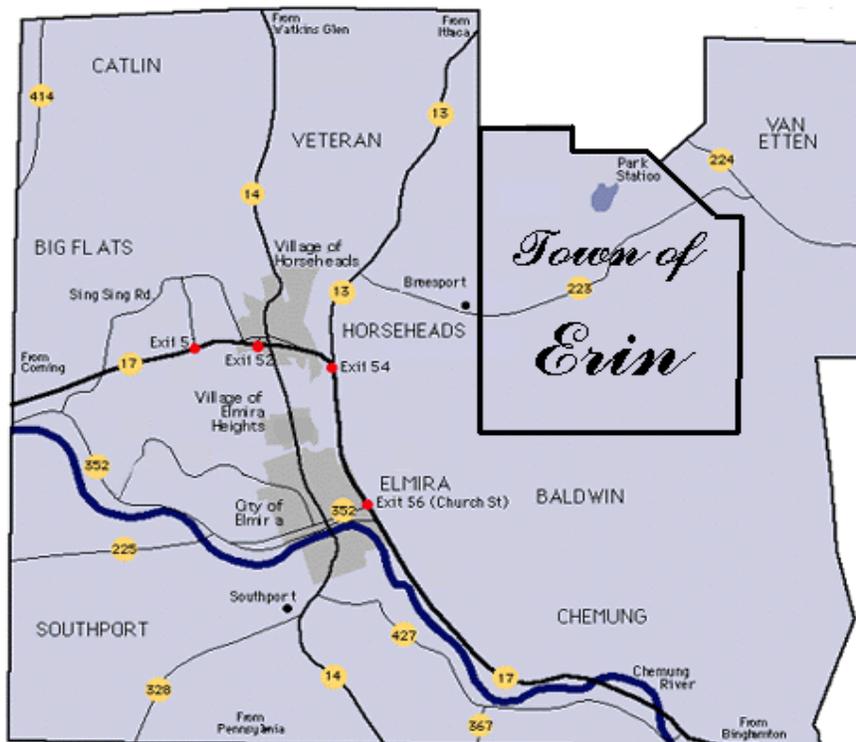
Mr. Smith wrote volumes of historical accounts of the beginning and growth of Erin; he was one of Erin's Town Historians and co-founder of the Erin Historical Society and Museum. Other folks who were diligent in recording the history of Erin were Alice Cornell McDowell, Town Historian in 1927; Mrs. Lucille Rounds, past President of the Erin Historical Society; Debba Cornell, Carol Vaughn, and another Past President of the Erin Historical Society, Mrs. Kathleen (Kitty) Schanbacher.

These are only a few of the men and women, who have made sure that the history of Erin would not be lost.

Suzanne M. Murphy  
Erin Town Historian - April 2004

# TOWN CHARACTERISTICS

## Location



## **Town Description**

The Town of Erin is located in the northeastern quadrant of Chemung County, New York, bordered on the north by the Town of Cayuta (Schuyler County, New York), the Town of Baldwin to the south, the Town of VanEtten to the east and the Town's of Horseheads and Veteran to the west. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census, the town occupies a total area of 44.7 square miles, of which, 44.5 square miles are land and the remaining 0.2 square miles is water. The highest population density of the town exists in the upper reaches of the Newtown Creek Valley traversed by State Route 223, extending westerly to the Town of Horseheads. The Hamlet of Erin is located near the center of the township.

## **Physical Characteristics**

### **Topography**

As with most of Chemung County, the Town of Erin is an eroded plateau, with most hilltops ranging between 1,600 and 2,000 feet above mean sea level (MSL). An abundance of streams have created many narrow valleys, with glacial activity contributing to the creation of the larger valleys. Elevations drop to about 1,100 feet MSL where the three major streams cross out of Erin to the south and east.

### **Geology and Soils**

The upland portions of the Town are covered by a continuous mantle of glacial till, ranging in thickness from thin on some of the shallow hilltops to thick on some of the lower slopes. It has a silty texture and contains many fragments of local rock including shale, siltstone, and fine-grained sandstone. Glacial till in valleys and adjacent lower slopes contains more erratic material, including limestone. The limestone deposits appear in the form of gravel and sand. This combination of materials is evident in the subsoil.

Exposed bedrock appearing in outcrops underlies the mantle of glacial till in Chemung County. The bedrock material, throughout the Town of Erin and Chemung County, consists of shale, siltstone, and fine-grained sandstone.

## **Natural Resources**

Situated in the heart of New York's Southern Tier, the Town of Erin contains a variety of important natural resources including forests, ponds, extensive wildlife habitat, gas and oil deposits, wind resources, abundant solar power and gravel mines. These features make up a large part of the enjoyment many residents derive from living in the town. If Erin's natural resources are well-managed, then the future of outdoor recreation, environmental quality, and wildlife will be good.

## **Forests**

Erin's forests are comprised of northern hardwoods, including maple, oak, black cherry, hickory, ash, beech, and walnut. Numerous soft wood plantations of pine and larch are located in blocks around the town. Most forests are easily accessible due to pre-existing forest roadways and gentle slopes. Erin's forests are well-stocked with somewhat mature saw timber.

Future forest management in the town of Erin should focus on encouraging private landowners to manage for quality timber and wildlife habitat over a long-term. Many local forests have been degraded by the process of high-grading, where loggers remove high value trees only, leaving inferior trees and poor forest health consequences. Forests in Erin owned by forest management companies like Cotton-Hanlon, Inc. have beneficial management plans that promote the production of quality timber on a sustainable basis. The town should encourage all forest owners to adopt effective long-range forest management plans.

### **➤ Forestry Policy**

**Encourage sound forest management practices** as beneficial to the woodlands and as an income generator for landowners.

### **Recommendations**

#### ***Timber Harvesting Registration***

Review the current logging ordinance and update, if necessary, including registration of new timber harvesting operations so that the Town can provide information about good harvesting practices and can notify adjacent property owners. Implement a plan to monitor and enforce these practices. Consider scheduling a review of the ordinance every five years.

#### ***Bonding for Road Damage***

The Town will implement a bonding procedure to ensure that timber harvesters reimburse the Town for any and all road damage incurred during the timber harvesting procedures.

#### ***Outreach to Residents***

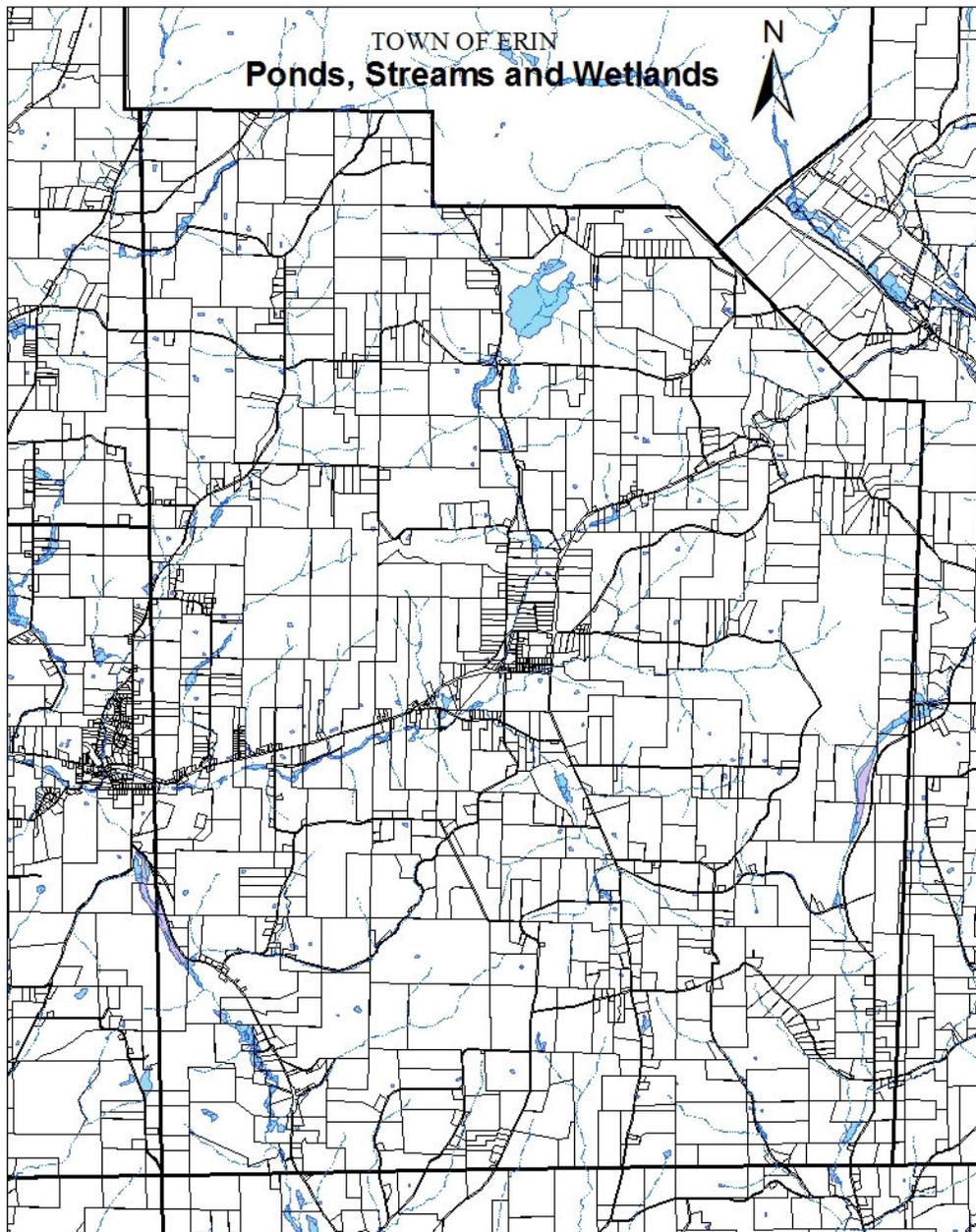
Hold a forest management workshop at the Erin Town Hall on two different dates to maximize participation. Distribute copies of forest management practices handbooks to new residents and upon request by current landowners.

## **Water Resources and Watersheds**

The Town of Erin generally drains to the Chemung River which drains to the Susquehanna River which drains to the Chesapeake Bay. Throughout the Town are small farm ponds, freshwater streams, and several larger dam reservoirs. The surface waters of Erin are in generally good health due to very little upstream sources of pollution. They are classified as "C" meaning they are of high enough quality to support fish. (See map) In fact, the Town of Erin contains headwaters for two regionally significant creeks - Newtown Creek and Cayuta Creek. Residents should become more aware of the special position of the town relative to

these waters and act responsibly to protect the quality of water in these important water bodies.

The regional dams at Jackson Creek, Marsh Road, and Park Station have been created out of concern for flood control and recreation, but they serve other valuable functions, including creation of wildlife habitat, recreation, sediment control, and groundwater recharge.



Local ponds provide many benefits to private landowners and the general public, including aesthetics, recreation, groundwater recharge, and sediment control. Though the ponds in Erin

are numerous and of varying sizes, they have the greatest risk of mismanagement. Pond owners tend to neglect ponds until a problem arises, such as algae growth, water depletion, dike erosion, or fish die-off. Pond owners should be encouraged to adopt a problem-prevention approach by monitoring pond health on a regular basis.

### ➤ **Water Resources Policy**

**Encourage sound stream and pond management practices** as necessary for maintaining water quality within the Town.

#### **Recommendations**

##### ***Outreach to Residents***

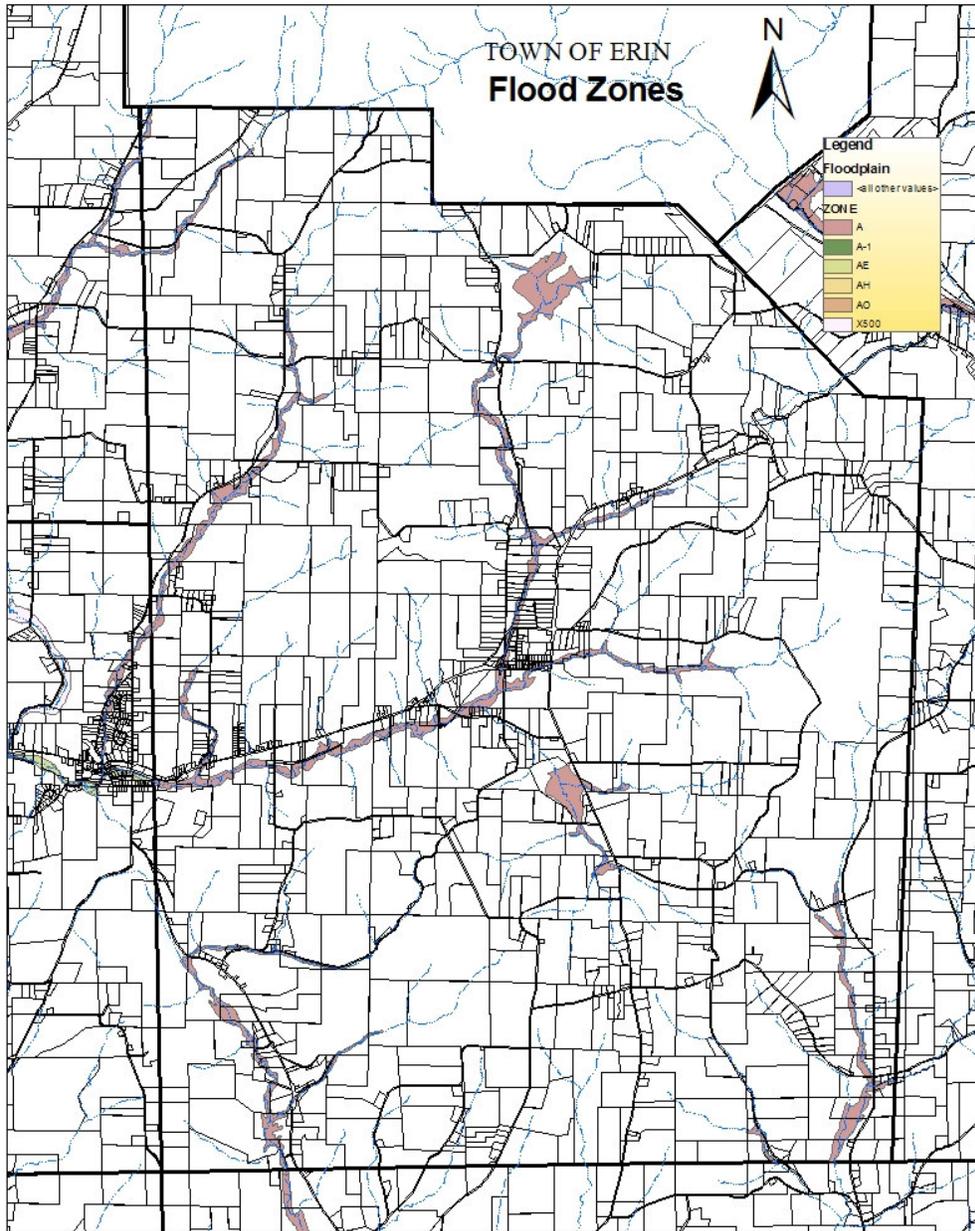
The Town should consider hosting a management workshop in conjunction with the Chemung County Soil and Water Conservation District covering both streams and ponds. The Town should also publicize current storm water management requirements.

##### **Wildlife**

The Town of Erin is home to many species of wildlife, including small and large mammals, songbirds, raptors, shorebirds, game birds, freshwater fish, and an abundance of insects, crustaceans, and amphibians. Erin's diverse habitats include forests, marshes, creeks, ponds, swamps, brush, grasslands, and the complex edges that connect these features. No one habitat stands out as particularly significant; however, special attention should be paid to the wetland areas in the Town. These wetland areas would include creek bottoms, the marshes along Maple Road and Wynkoop Creek Road, Beaver Pond, and the swamps perched on Red Chalk Hill in the most northern tract of the Town (see map). They absorb runoff and can act as an important natural storage area for water during heavy storms. Wetlands are excellent wildlife habitat providing a wide array of environments from open water to dry uplands for plants and animals. Wetlands larger than 12.4 acres and their 100 foot buffer area are protected by NYSDEC. Smaller wetlands are also important, and landowners are encouraged to leave them in their natural state as integral parts of the natural drainage system.

##### **Flooding and Stream Bank Erosion**

The narrow valleys of Erin are prone to flash flooding which affect homes, bridges, culverts and property on the roads in these hollows as well as downstream low lying areas. The streams erode their banks, changing their channels and depositing sediments in the valleys at the foot of stream. Many stream banks are forested which reduces these problems, but some have been plowed or graded so that they become unstable.



This map shows areas within the Town that are prone to flooding. Erosion occurs not only along streams, but also along driveway ditches or anywhere else that water is allowed to flow quickly downhill. Many of these situations can be addressed in a cooperative way between the landowner, the Town and the Chemung County Soil and Water Conservation District.

Flood insurance may cover water damage to buildings and contents, but generally does not cover damage caused by gradual or sudden storm erosion of stream banks.

## **Flood Mitigation Action Plan**

*A flood mitigation action plan was developed for the Town of Erin in 2001 by Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board and is incorporated in this Comprehensive Plan by reference.*

### **➤ Flooding and Erosion Policy**

**Discourage development or grading** near streams, in floodplains, and on alluvial fans.

Where such development is permitted, insure that the new development:

1. Is protected from flood damage,
2. Is protected from stream bank erosion damage,
3. Does not adversely impact water quality, and
4. Will not increase the risk of flooding or erosion damage on other properties

**Discourage private stream crossings.** When such crossings are necessary, insure that they are adequately designed and installed to provide a stable flow path during all water level conditions including low-flow, channel forming flow, and flood conditions. Maintain or replant native vegetation in *stream riparian areas* to provide water quality benefits and protect stream banks from erosion.

### **Recommendations**

#### ***Enforce existing environmental laws***

Stream banks shall be defined and protected as specified by NYS Department of Environmental Conservation laws.

#### ***Public Notification***

On all site plans within a floodplain, the Planning Board should add the following cautions:

1. Landowners must accept the fact that the protection of property is and will be their responsibility.
2. The Town is under no obligation to assist in stabilizing a stream that threatens private buildings or property.

#### ***Strictly enforce the town's floodplain protection law***

The Town should request a copy of NYSDEC Article 15 Stream Disturbance Permit for any disturbance within 50 feet of a stream having a state classification of C(t) or higher.

#### ***Maintain a 50 Foot Setback from Streams***

Require that any new buildings have a minimum setback of 50 feet from the bank of any perennial or intermittent stream indicated in blue on the above map. Require Site Plan Review for any other development within 50 feet of a streambank, such as roads, grading, shaping, or removal of vegetation.

### ***Private bridges***

Require site plan review by the Planning Board and Town approval of any bridge or culvert used for a private stream crossing on any perennial or intermittent stream as noted on the above map. If professional engineering and/or review is necessary, incurred costs are the responsibility of the property owner.

### **Drainage and Sediment Control**

The natural drainage patterns of interconnecting streams, ponds, wetlands are in a delicate balance which can easily be upset by uncontrolled development, poor farming practices and under-designed drainage structures.

#### **➤ Drainage and Sediment Control Policy**

**Maintain natural vegetation and existing drainage patterns**, to the extent possible, at development sites. Encourage management practices that minimize offsite drainage impacts, erosion, and sedimentation. Encourage compliance with state permit requirements for stormwater management and erosion control.

**Protect existing drainage structures** (bridges, culverts, ditches, etc.) from increased runoff resulting from development, timber harvesting, agriculture, or altered land use.

**Discourage development in wetlands and on poorly drained soils.** Where such development is permitted, insure that:

1. Any necessary wetland permits are obtained
2. The development is adequately protected from flooding and drainage problems

### **Recommendations**

#### ***Minimize Land Disturbance***

Limit the land areas that are disturbed during construction as part of the building permit process. Have the developer show these areas on the proposed plans and give a total acreage projected to be disturbed. Require that all disturbed areas be successfully seeded or stabilized with erosion control materials when the construction is complete.

#### ***Control Erosion along Driveways***

Require site plan review by the Planning Board of all driveway designs on all town, county, and state roads within the Town to insure that concentrated water runoff is not directed onto the road or into the roadside drainage system. If professional engineering and/or review is necessary, incurred costs will be the responsibility of the property owner. Amend the zoning and subdivision laws to require that residential and/or commercial driveways are no more than 10% slope and that the slope of the driveway shall provide satisfactory and safe access to the intersecting road.

#### ***Control Stormwater on Development Sites***

The Planning Board requires that a development proposal that is likely to increase runoff into the existing roadside drainage system will be referred to the Town or County Highway Department for review. Obtain training for the Code Enforcement Officer, Planning Board

members, Town Supervisor, and Town Councilmember in stormwater management and erosion and sediment control.

***Minimize Erosion from Timber Harvesting***

Enact a timber harvest registration ordinance to inform the landowner about good timber harvesting practices that minimize erosion, sediment, and runoff problems.

***Assure that Soils will Support Development***

The Code Enforcement Officer requires information on the soil type in areas that will be disturbed as part of the building permit application. The developer should indicate how the project would overcome any soil limitations applicable to the proposed development (as indicated on tables in the *Soil Survey of Chemung County, New York*). Technical assistance is available from the Chemung County Soil and Water Conservation District.

**Oil / Gas / Gravel**

The Town of Erin has attracted both gravel mining and natural gas exploration activities for many years. A significant increase in gas exploration has occurred over the last 10 years, raising several concerns including potential water quality deterioration and damage from heavy trucks to the Town road network. Both mining and gas wells are regulated by NYS DEC. DEC has a section of their website devoted to those issues and provides information on each mine and well. The data is updated daily and includes a map of mine and well locations. Within the Town, that map currently (March 2009) shows:

- 2 unconsolidated gravel mines
- 2 gravel mines that have been reclaimed
- 12 gas wells listed as dry holes that were drilled between 1938 and 2007
- 1 gas well (1954) designated as plugged
- 9 gas wells at some stage of current activity

➤ **Gas Well Exploration Policy**

**Protect Town roads and bridges from anticipated heavy truck traffic.**

**Recommendation**

***Develop and/or improve local laws and regulations regarding possible bonding, etc.*** for preserving, protecting and repairing Town of Erin roads and bridges that may be subject to damage during gas exploration activities in the Town; along with consideration of shared service agreements with other government entities that may make this process more efficient.

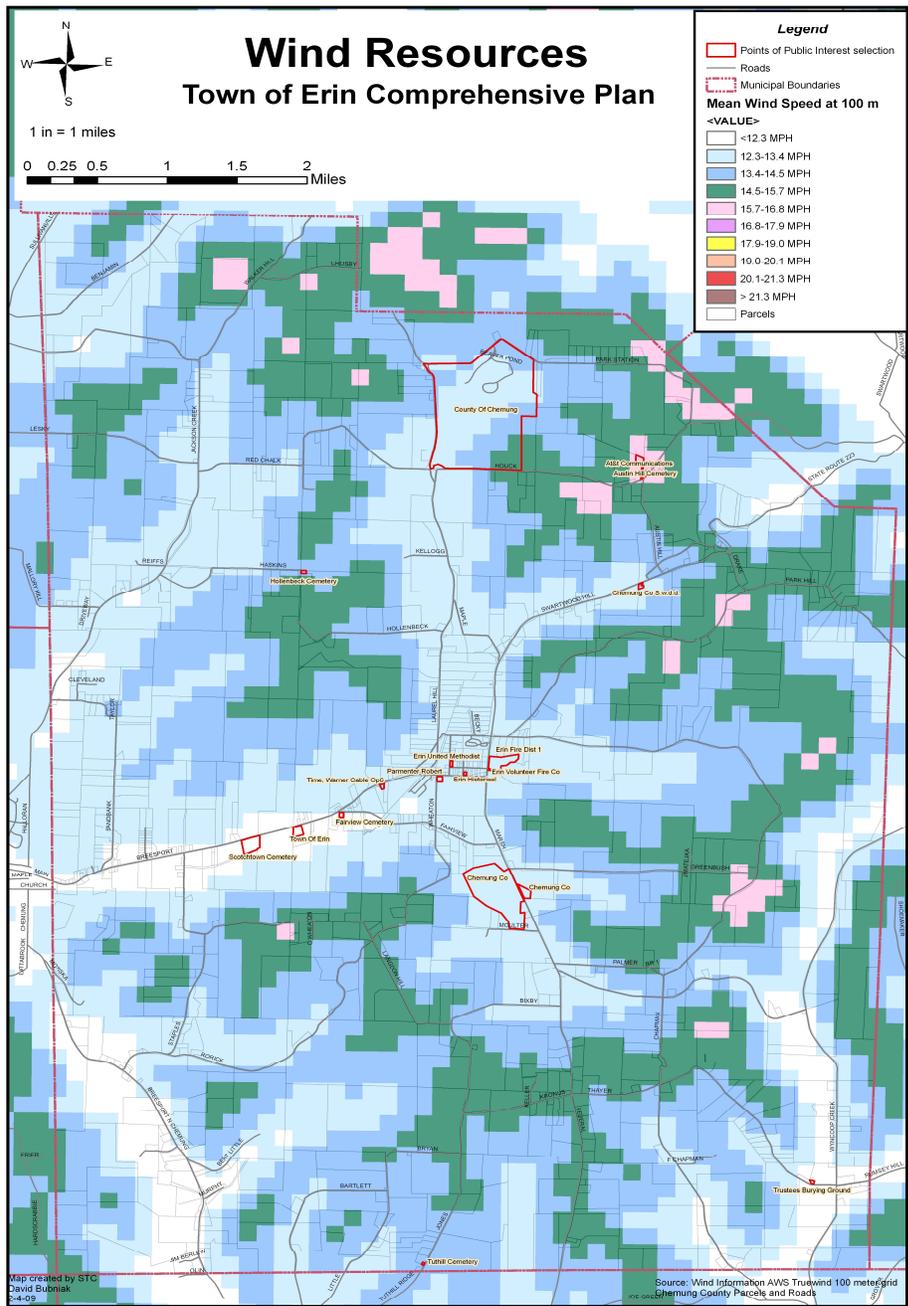
## **Wind Resources**

In 2004, the New York State Public Service Commission (PSC) issued the “Renewable Portfolio Standard” whose goals are to:

- Establish a viable, self-sustaining competitive renewable energy market
- Stimulate competition
- Encourage renewable energy development
- Increase the percentage of electricity generated in New York from renewable sources to 25% by 2013

With more renewable energy being developed, the State expects to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from coal, natural gas and oil. The use of renewable resources also reduces dependence on foreign oil. Wind is a clean, safe, and pollution-free source of electricity.

With this growing interest in alternative energy supplies such as wind, solar, geothermal and water power, residents and outsiders may begin assessing the hills of Erin to see whether they have enough wind to drive a residential or commercial wind generator. The following map shows the wind resources in the Town. According to the American Wind Energy Association larger wind generation systems need at least 15.7 mph sustained winds. Commercial power generating systems need more 16.8 mph and higher. According to the wind resources map, there are approximately 540 acres of Erin hilltops (the light and darker pink colors) that could be suitable for larger wind farms.



The AWES advises that small residential / agricultural wind turbines can operate if a site has sustained wind speeds averaging 9.8 – 11.5 mph {a class 2 on a scale of 1 (weakest) to 7 (strongest.)}. Most of the remaining landscape in Erin could support private wind turbines generating power for the individual home or farm. They suggest that “A good small wind turbine site is typically at least one acre in size. Turbines must be mounted at least 30 feet above any physical wind barriers (i.e., trees, buildings, or bluffs) within 300 feet to avoid air

turbulence. Winds are faster at higher elevations, and wind power increases by a factor of three as speed increases, so even a small boost in height greatly enhances a turbine's output. Most small wind turbine manufacturers recommend mounting turbines at least 65 feet high, but particular site conditions should be the primary factor when determining tower height. Towers from 80 to 140 feet tall may be optimal.”

Commercial wind farms are clusters of wind turbines that generate electricity on land owned or leased by a developer in areas with reliable, favorable wind speeds. The major components of the wind farm are the turbine, a substation and transmission lines. The turbine is made up of the tower, blade and nacelle which houses the equipment for capturing the energy from the turning blade. Tower heights are approximately 200 feet. When combined with the blade, total height may be 400 feet or more. The development of wind farms in a community often brings improvements to the local infrastructure such as upgrades to roads and bridges. It brings jobs as well as income for landowners and revenue to the municipality usually through a Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) agreement. One 2.5 megawatt (MW) wind turbine can produce enough power to supply 700 homes each year. It shows a community’s concern for global warming and national defense issues by supporting the use of “home-grown” clean energy. However, without proper planning and thorough project oversight, there can be negative effects. There may be:

- damage to roads (other than on-site access roads)
- local traffic disruption (ingress/egress of construction equipment/materials, sightseers and tourists)
- year-round maintenance/upkeep to new roads
- waste disposal requirements (construction debris, solid waste, hazardous waste)
- storm water runoff and erosion
- emergency response planning (for law enforcement, medical personnel & fire protection)
- vandalism and/or trespass issues
- disturbed view-shed/visual disruption of natural surrounding and visual contrasts (new roads, site clearing, plant buildings & substations, transmission feeder lines, paved or graveled parking and towers
- nighttime lighting on towers and buildings (FAA required lights and security lighting)
- shadow flicker and/or strobe effect and quality of life issues directly related thereto
- plant operating noise and/or turbine operation (blade sound, brake sound, maintenance related sound, vehicle traffic) and any health issues related to noise or ground vibrations
- temporary emissions from construction vehicles and equipment
- disturbance to wetlands (mammals, reptiles, amphibian species) and impacts to fauna
- clearing of natural vegetation/ground cover from land

- disruption to archeological sensitive sites
- bird kills & bat kills

### ➤ **Wind Resources Policy**

**Support the development of wind resources in the Town** in accordance with reasonable standards and requirements.

#### **Recommendations**

***Adopt a local wind farm law*** which will require the Planning Board to:

- investigate all components and phases of a project
- evaluate reports, assessments and studies
- consider public written and oral comment
- determine significance of all impacts (positive and negative)
- review the complete scope of a project
- make a final decision and ruling that balances all benefits and impacts.

***Encourage the development of residential / agricultural wind generation*** to help Erin residents combat high fuel costs. Provide information to residents on available tax incentive programs and rebates. Develop regulations that are easy to understand and streamlined while taking into consideration the impacts on neighboring properties.

***Investigate the possibility of the Town creating a municipal power corporation*** or participating in a partnership for generating electricity to the benefit of taxpayers in the Town.

### **Solar Resources and Green Buildings**

Constantly improving solar panel and other “green” building technology, along with significant subsidies from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, provide opportunities for municipal governments to reduce energy costs while also helping to improve the quality of our living environment. In addition to energy savings, simple changes can help the environment, such as painting a roof white. A white roof will make the building cooler in the summer and reflect solar energy back into the atmosphere, reducing surface absorption of solar heat and associated global warming.

### ➤ **Solar Resources and Green Buildings Policy**

**All Town buildings should be as energy efficient and environmentally friendly as possible.**

#### **Recommendation**

***Explore the feasibility, costs and savings associated with upgrading the existing Town buildings*** using solar panels and other “green” improvements and technologies.

## Population Trends and Projections

### Demographic and Population Trends

As indicated on the table below, from 1970 to 2000 the Town of Erin experienced population growth from 1,669 to 2,054 people as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau. For the thirty year time period the town population had increased over 23% or 385 people. Over the same time period comparable sized municipalities have experienced either moderate or a negative growth in population.

Town of Erin and surrounding municipalities.

Municipality		1970	1980	1990	2000	Numeric Change	Percent Change
						1970-2000	1970-2000
Town of Ashland		1,726	1,967	1,966	1,951	225	13.03%
Town of Baldwin		889	892	829	853	-36	-4.04%
Town of Catlin		2,461	2,719	2,626	2,649	188	7.63%
Town of Chemung		2,156	2,436	2,540	2,665	509	23.60%
Town of Erin		1,669	2,037	2,002	2,054	385	23.06%
Town of Van Etten		1,375	1,519	1,507	1,518	143	10.40%
Town of Veteran		3,543	3,651	3,468	3,271	-272	-7.67%
Chemung County		101,537	97,656	95,195	91,070	-10,467	-10.30%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000

## Town of Erin - Age Profile

Town of Erin - Total Population 2,054

Age	Male	Female	Total	Percent of Total Population	Total	Percent of Total Population
Under 5 years	72	59	131	6.37	615	30%
5 to 9 years	87	61	148	7.20		
10 to 14 years	84	72	156	7.59		
15 to 17 years	56	44	100	4.86		
18 and 19 years	28	28	56	2.72		
20 years	11	13	24	1.16		
21 years	10	6	16	0.77	518	25%
22 to 24 years	29	29	58	2.82		
25 to 29 years	63	69	132	6.42		
30 to 34 years	76	77	153	7.44		
35 to 39 years	79	80	159	7.74		
40 to 44 years	85	92	177	8.61	506	25%
45 to 49 years	92	94	186	9.05		
50 to 54 years	84	59	143	6.96		
55 to 59 years	65	67	132	6.42	225	11%
60 and 61 years	16	22	38	1.85		
62 to 64 years	31	24	55	2.67		
65 and 66 years	10	12	22	1.07	111	5%
67 to 69 years	21	16	37	1.8		
70 to 74 years	19	33	52	2.53		
75 to 79 years	21	18	39	1.89	79	4%
80 to 84 years	8	16	24	1.16		
85 years and older	9	7	16	0.77		

Source: U. S. Census Bureau, Census 2000

## Housing - Trends and Characteristics.

Housing within the Town of Erin is predominantly single family type, with the remaining housing units ranging from residential units with acreage and trailer units to multiple trailers and homes to seasonal residences. New housing units appearing in the town since the study are mostly single family.

**Town of Erin - Residential Land Use by Individual Property Classification Code**  
for Residential Properties

Property Classification and Code	Total	Total Acres	Percent of Land Use In Classification	Total Town
	Number of Parcels			Assessed Dollar Value
One Family Year- Round Residential (210)	348	994.20	8.88	21,780,608
Two Family Year-Round Residential (220)	2	24.72	0.22	187,500
Rural Residence with Acreage (240)	169	7,929.63	71.00	15,789,100
Primary Residential, also used in Agriculture Production (241)	2	133.91	1.20	218,920
Recreational Use (242)	1	10.62	0.17	204,000
Seasonal Residences (260)	8	282.79	2.53	215,000
Mobile Home (270)	175	1,352.14	12.08	6,849,090
Multi Mobile Homes (271)	5	119.8	1.07	345,200
Residential, Multi-Purpose Multi Structure (280)	6	318.84	2.85	705,500
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>716</b>	<b>11,190.37</b>	<b>100.00</b>	

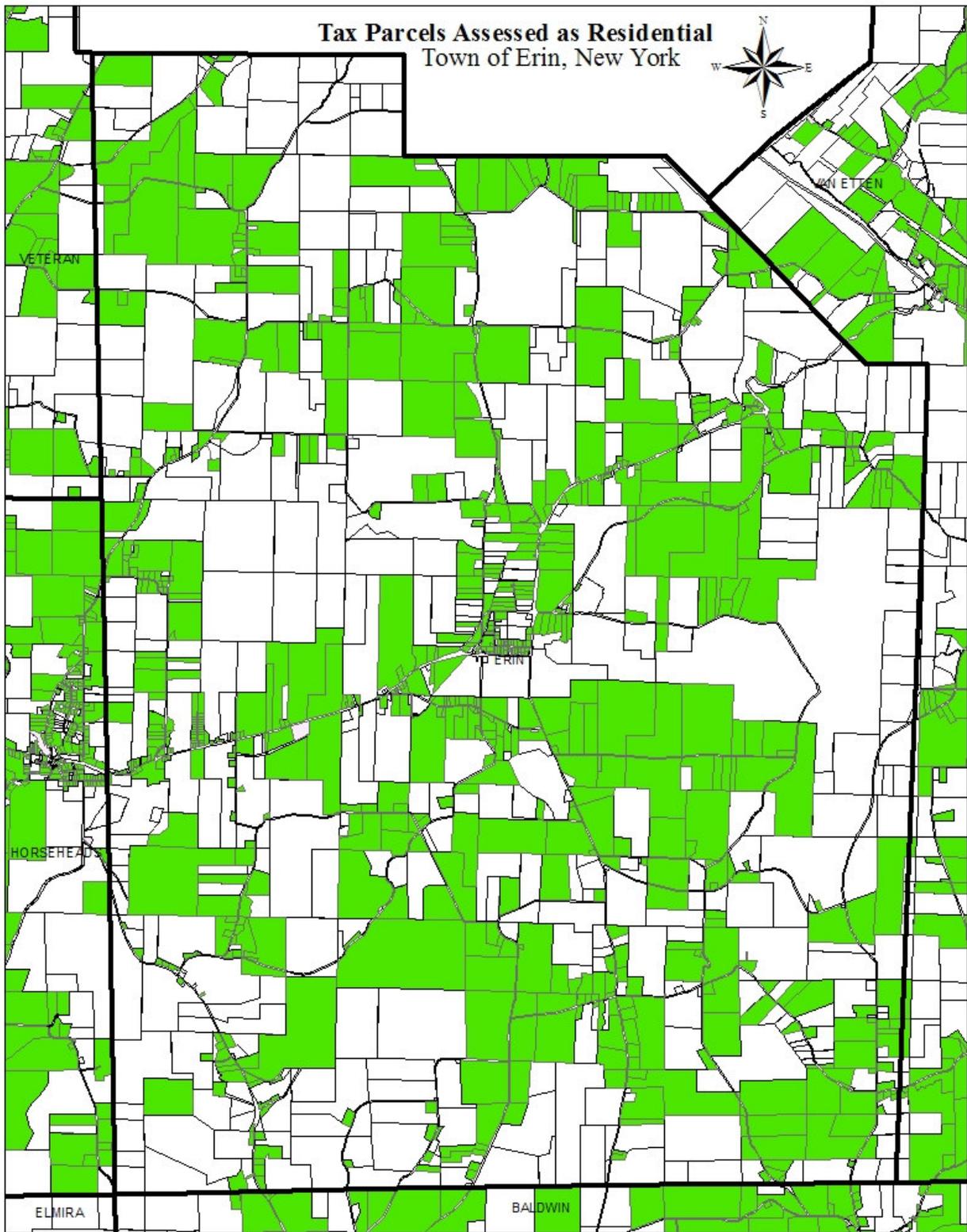
Source: New York State Office of Real Property Services

➤ **Housing Policy**

**Assure that all Housing in the Town meets minimum requirements for health and safety.**

**Recommendation**

***Explore Housing programs for rehabilitation and/or elderly housing*** to see if the Town might benefit from those programs.



## Utilities

### **Telephone and Electric Service Areas.**

Telephone and Electric Service is available through out the town. The New York Electric and Gas company owns the electric infrastructure while customers have the option of buying electric from other vendors. Currently, Verizon owns the local telephone infrastructure and provides local service. Long distance telephone service is available from a variety companies specializing in long distanced service. Broadband (DSL) Internet access through Verizon is available in some parts of the Town. Cellular telephone service has very limited coverage within the Town.

### **Natural Gas Service Areas**

The New York State Electric and Gas Company is the service provider for natural gas. Service is limited to the low lying areas and along the highway corridor within the town.

### **Cable Service Areas.**

Cable service in Erin is limited to the major roadways corridors, including Road Runner broadband Internet access.

#### ➤ **Cable and Cellular Telephone Policy**

**All residents should have cellular telephone coverage and access to broadband Internet** because of the widespread use of cellular telephones for emergency communications and the Internet for daily government, business and educational functions.

#### *Recommendation*

*The Town should actively support improved telephone service and the expansion of cable and cellular telephone coverage within the Town.*

### **Public Sewer and Water**

There is no public sewer or water service provided within the Town of Erin. All residential and commercial properties, other than the mobile home parks, have individual water wells and septic systems. When older septic systems are in close proximity to wells, there is a risk of drinking water becoming contaminated. This would be more likely to occur in the hamlet area.

#### ➤ **Public Health Policy**

**Assure that residents of the Town have access to clean drinking water.**

#### *Recommendations*

*The Town should contact the Chemung County Health Department to determine if any recent water testing has been done within the hamlet or other areas where houses are in close*

proximity to each other. If not, the Town should work with that Department to ascertain the water quality in those areas.

If the water testing does not meet minimum standards, ***the Town should work with Chemung County Planning to explore the possibility of public water service*** for portions of the Town.

## TRANSPORTATION

The town's transportation infrastructure has and will always continue to be a major impact on how residents live, it both influences and is influenced by land development. With approximately 82.96 miles of state and local roadway within the town, maintenance is a major expense in terms of the manpower, equipment, and materials needed to perform the yearly upkeep. This section of the comprehensive plan will take a look at the existing transportation infrastructure within the Town of Erin concerning vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

Being a small town, Erin's roadways do not experience many of the usual impacts that may be experienced by larger population centers, such as peak hour congestion, or insufficient parking facilities. The primary highway, New York State Route 223 receives the largest volume of both local and thru traffic within the town. Route 223 bi-sects the town running on an east-west path for a distance of approximately 7.3 miles and is owned and maintained by The New York State Dept. of Transportation. Secondary roadways within the town are dedicated county routes with a combined total distance of approximately 20.23 miles and are maintained by the Chemung County Department of Transportation. The Town of Erin Highway Department is responsible for approximately 55.43 miles of roadway, the majority of which is unpaved and serves sparsely populated rural areas.

In recent years the town's roads and the Highway Departments capabilities have shown much improvement, this trend remains a priority for the residents as well as the local officials. The hamlet of Erin where the population density is highest, maintenance remains adequate although few improvements have taken place concerning the roadways, storm drainage and pedestrian infrastructure, with the exception of sections along N.Y.S 223 which has seen recent improvements.

### ➤ **Transportation Policy**

**Provide for and protect the public's interest and investment** in the public right-of-way.

**Provide adequate accessibility** to all planned land uses.

**Provide for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods** while preserving and enhancing neighborhood and rural livability.

### **Recommendations**

#### ***Maintenance and Improvement***

- Maintain the existing infrastructure in good condition.
- Prioritize roadway improvement areas based upon funding requirements and residential density.
- Experiment with different methods of maintenance and repair which may be economically feasible over an extended period of time.
- Locate areas of prior accident occurrences and identify areas potentially favorable for accidents to determine short or long range feasibility for improvement.

- Establish minimum Town roadway specification for improvements and future development; Materials, widths, drainage, sight distances, slopes, signage, utility location, dead ends, turn and curve radii, etc.
- Identify mid and long range goals for capital improvements within densely populated areas; sidewalks, curbing, storm sewers street lighting, etc.
- Explore a range of funding options for pedestrian and roadway improvements to supplement reliance on general transportation revenues.

### ***On-Street Parking Management***

- Manage parking and loading in the public right-of-way to encourage pedestrian, traffic safety, and livability of residential neighborhoods.
- Parking in the right-of-way, in general, should serve land uses in the immediate area.

### ***Pedestrian Transportation and Safety***

- Increase pedestrian safety and convenience by identifying and analyzing high pedestrian locations; by making physical improvements, such as sidewalk construction, traffic calming and crossing improvements in areas of high pedestrian use, and by supporting changes to adopted statutes and codes that would enhance pedestrian safety.

***Work with NYS DOT to establish one or more pedestrian crosswalks*** with signage across Route 223 within the hamlet. Suggested locations include the intersections with Laurel Hill Road, Wheaton Road Extension and Church Street near the Erin Fire Station.

### **Public Transportation**

- County bus service is provided within the Town by the Chemung County Transit System with service to Elmira in the morning (currently 8:25) from the Harnas REDI Mart and returning in the afternoon (currently 3:25).

### **Intergovernmental Coordination**

- Coordinate long-range transportation planning activities with State and County.
- Continue to protect and enhance relationship with State and County transportation agencies.

### **Public Awareness**

- Reporting unsafe or destructive activities to the Highway department.

## Town of Erin Means of Transportation to Work

Workers 16 years of age and over

	1990		2000		Percent Change 1990 to 2000
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Commuting to Work					
16 years and over:	918	100	1,056	100	15% (increase)
Car, Truck, or Van:					
Drove alone	781	76.04	876	83.0	12 % (increase)
Carpooled	108	10.51	143	13.5	31% (increase)
Public Transportation:					
Bus or Trolley Bus	3	0.29	3	0.28	0%
Walked:	5	0.48	17	1.6	71% (increase)
Other Means:	6	0.58	2	0.2	67% (decrease)
Worked at Home:	15	1.5	15	1.4	0%

Source: U.S. Census, Census 2000

## Travel Time for Town of Erin Workers

16 years of Age and Older

	1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than 5 minutes	0	0	0	0
5 to 9 minutes	31	3.37	40	3.8
10 to 14 minutes	42	4.57	45	4.3
15 to 19 minutes	140	15.25	151	14.5
20 to 24 minutes	294	32.02	313	30.1
25 to 29 minutes	139	15.14	165	15.9
30 to 34 minutes	130	14.16	156	15
35 to 44 minutes	43	4.68	60	5.8
45 to 59 minutes	41	4.46	50	4.8
60 to 89 minutes	30	3.26	25	2.4
90 or more minutes	13	1.41	36	3.5
Worked at Home	15	1.63	15	1.42
Total Number	918	100%	1,056	100%

Source: U. S. Census Bureau, Census 2000

## **EMERGENCY SERVICES**

### **Police**

Police Services are delivered to the Town of Erin by the Chemung County Sheriff's Department and the New York State Police (Horseheads barracks). The Sheriff's Department maintains a sub-station in the Town Hall.

Both agencies are connected by radio to the Chemung County 911 Emergency Center. Response is based on the "Closest Car Concept." When police service is requested for Erin, the 911 dispatcher broadcasts the location and nature of the call. The patrol car nearest to the call is expected to voluntarily respond. If a second car is needed for backup, the "Closest Car Concept" is utilized for determining which car is the next closest. That car will respond for the backup. Under this system, responders from either or both agencies may respond to a call. However, the agency who responded first is in charge of the call or incident.

Specialized support for NYS Police investigations, such as accident re-construction or crime scene layout, is dispatched from the Troop E headquarters in Canandaigua.

### **Fire**

Fire services are provided by the Erin Fire District No. 1. The station is located on State Route 223, within the Hamlet of Erin. The Erin Fire District maintains a mutual aid relationship with the Breesport Fire District. For major incidents, both departments respond.

### **Ambulance**

Ambulance Service is provided to Erin by Erway Ambulance Service. When an ambulance is needed in Erin, it is usually dispatched from Erway's station on McCann's Boulevard in Horseheads. Patients/victims are transported to either the Arnot-Ogden or St. Joseph's hospital. Erway is a private company authorized to operate in the town by the Chemung County Health Department.

## EDUCATIONAL and SOCIAL PROGRAMS, SERVICES and ACTIVITIES.

### Education

Public school students, kindergarten through twelfth grade, attend either the Horseheads Central School District or the Spencer-Van Etten School District. Residents also have access to several private schools within Chemung County.

### Town of Erin Educational Attainment

	Town of Erin Number	Town of Erin Percent	Chemung County Percent
Population 25 years and over	1,370	100.0	100.0
Less than 9th grade	54	3.9	5.0
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	152	11.1	12.9
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	641	46.8	36.1
Some college, no degree	266	19.4	18.6
Associate degree	113	8.2	8.8
Bachelor's degree	93	6.8	10.4
Graduate or professional degree	51	3.7	8.1
Percent high school graduate or higher	85	(x)	(x)
Percent bachelor's degree or higher	10.5	(x)	(x)

Source: U.S. Census, Census 2000

### Services

Town of Erin Senior Services – The Town currently provides an area within the Town Hall for use by Senior Citizens of the Town and currently supports activities (such as bus trips) for the Erin Senior Citizens Group. The Erin Senior Citizens have an organization that meets monthly at the Town Hall or other facilities within the Town. This organization conducts activities for the Town of Erin Senior Citizens locally and at destinations of their choosing.

Town of Erin Youth Service – Erin Youth Services was founded in 1994 with the purpose of giving the youth of the Town of Erin a voice in activities for the youth in town. Activities were decided on and run by the youth, giving the Erin youth a great sense of pride in the town in which they live. When the Erin Youth Services was very active, most acts of vandalism ceased around town. Currently, the Youth Services needs new board members and youth to participate.

### ➤ **Youth Policy**

**Support the development of youth within the Town** by providing recreational and community service opportunities.

#### **Recommendation**

***Regroup the Youth Services Board*** and incorporate Youth Services into the Parks and Recreation Committee to provide activities for residents of all ages.

### **Existing Public Parks and Recreational Facilities**

The Town maintains a park for residents next to the Town Hall on Route 223. The Town also benefits from the Chemung County Park Station Recreational Facility which is located on Park Station Road, north of the hamlet.

### ➤ **Recreation Policy**

**Continue to promote and expand support for youth and family recreation opportunities.**

#### **Recommendations**

***Explore additional recreational opportunities within the Town*** such as development of a park at the fire station.

## **Historical Attractions**

### **Historical Museum (Erin Historical Society)**

#### **a.) The Erin Baptist Church**

*(Now being used as the Erin Historical Society Museum - May 5, 2009)*

On February 10, 1870, land was obtained from John S. and Monima B. (King) Davis, on which to build a Baptist Church in the Town of Erin, New York. Trustees of the Baptist Society of Erin, listed on the deed, were James Dibble, Melzar Kellogg, George W. Rumsey, William H. Blauvelt, and James H. Rodbourn. In 1871 the Baptist Church building was built for approximately \$2500; the seating was for three hundred people. The first pastor was a Reverend Whitney.

Unfortunately, the membership began to dwindle around 1890, and members joined other churches. In July 1902, a meeting was held, hoping to revive the Erin Baptist Church; a committee was formed to raise funds to make necessary repairs to the building. On September 7, 1902 services began once again in the church. Thirty-two years later in May 1934, the congregation united with the Breesport Baptist Church. In 1938, James L. Smith, who was postmaster in Erin at the time, purchased the church building, and moved the post office into it.

Later in the 1940's, Mr. Smith opened a grocery store in part of the building. The post office moved to the building on Church Street, where the Collson Grocery Store had operated. The Town of Erin purchased the building from the Smiths and used the front area of the building for the town hall. After the new Erin Town Hall was built in 1972, the town turned the building over to the Erin Historical Society, July 24, 1972, to be used as the Erin Historical Museum. The Historical society, until that time, had been using two rooms upstairs over the town hall (i.e. church). The building remains the museum to this date (May 5, 2009) located at 1407 Breesport Road, Erin, New York.

### **b.) List of Categories of Historical Interest in the Erin Historical Society Museum**

1407 Breesport Road (also known as State Route 223), Post Office Box 138, Erin, New York 14838:

Patricia Wainwright, Curator for the Erin Historical Museum, compiled this list April 23, 2009:

- Family Histories – 1970's and 80's; obituaries and marriages
- Town Clerk Minutes of early meetings
- Tax Records – 1800' and early 1900's
- Justice of the Peace Records – 1800's
- Cemetery Maps and Listing for each one.
- Rodbourn (stores) Employee Pay Records
- Rodbourn General Store Inventory
- Maps of Erin (for different years)
- Maps of several other Chemung Co. Towns
- Maps of Chemung County
- Scrapbooks of Erin and Van Etten, New York
- Railroad artifacts and notebooks
- Musical Instruments
- Textiles
- Handmade farm tools and other old/antique tools
- Cooper Tools
- Cobbler Tools
- Chair making information
- Wood Working Tools
- Model of Elmira Civil War Prison Camp
- Toys (old/antique)
- Children's Books
- Research Books

## **Cemeteries**

- Scotch Town (National Register of Historic Places)
- Red Chalk
- Fairview
- Austin Hill
- Mitchell Corners
- Tuthill Ridge
- Whitman

There are also several locations within the Town reputed to have private burial sites

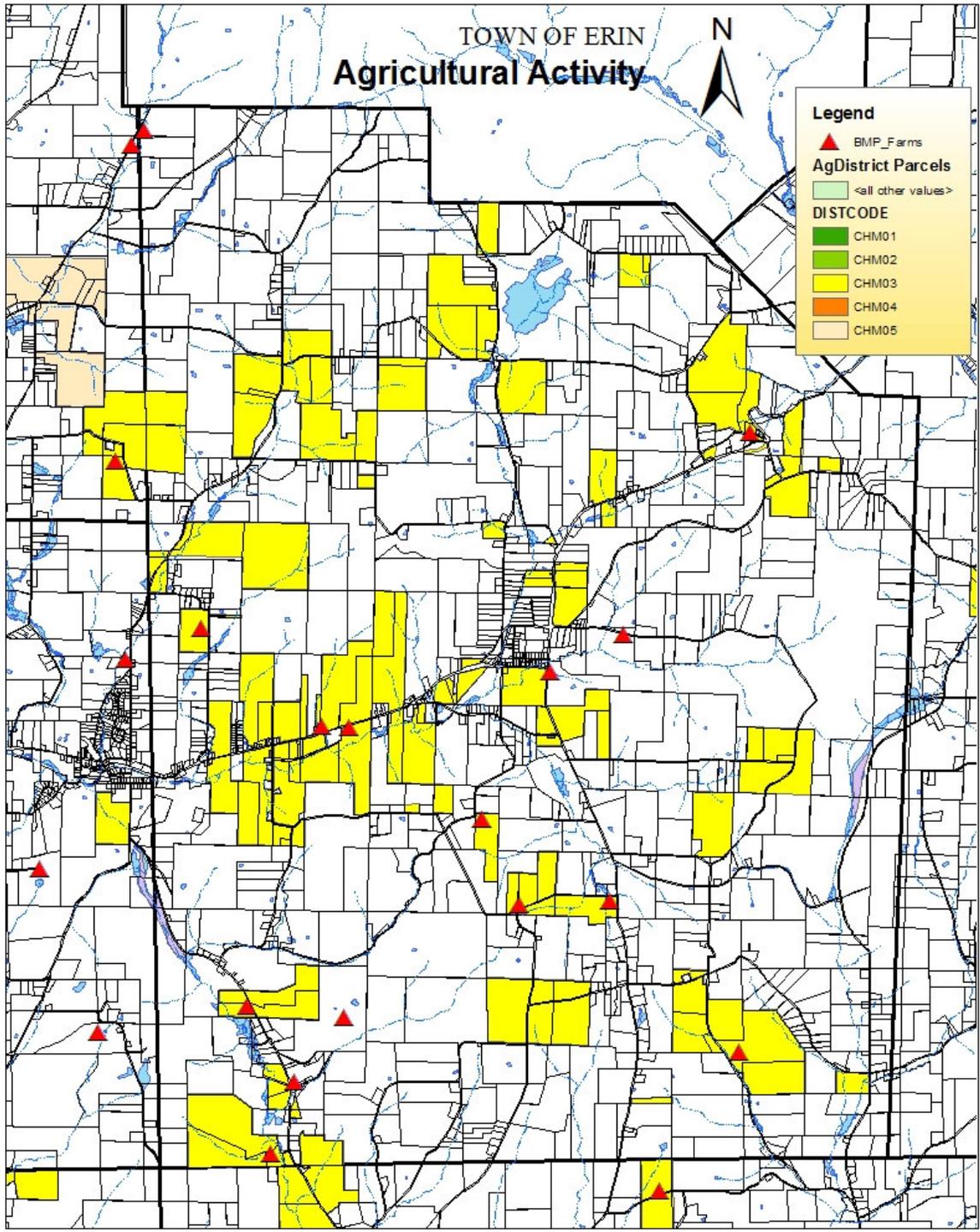
## **LAND USE**

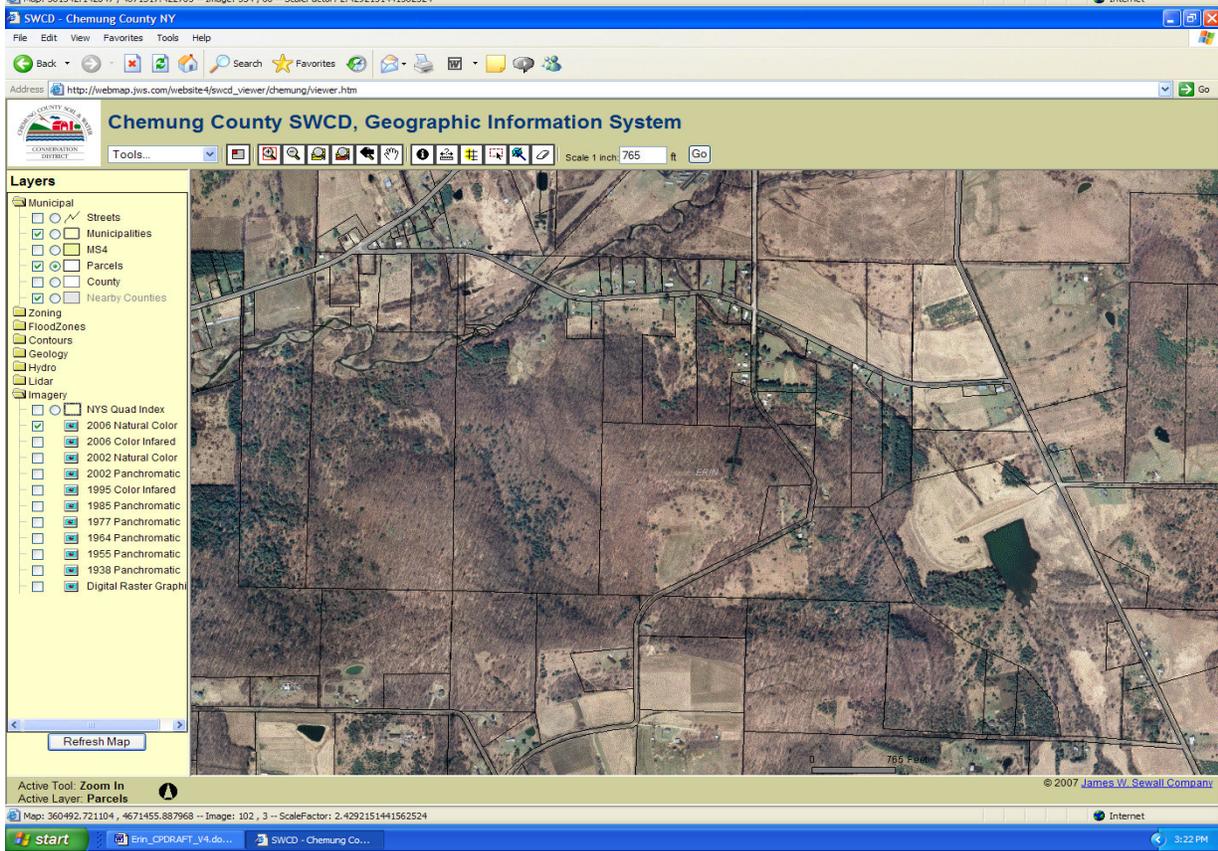
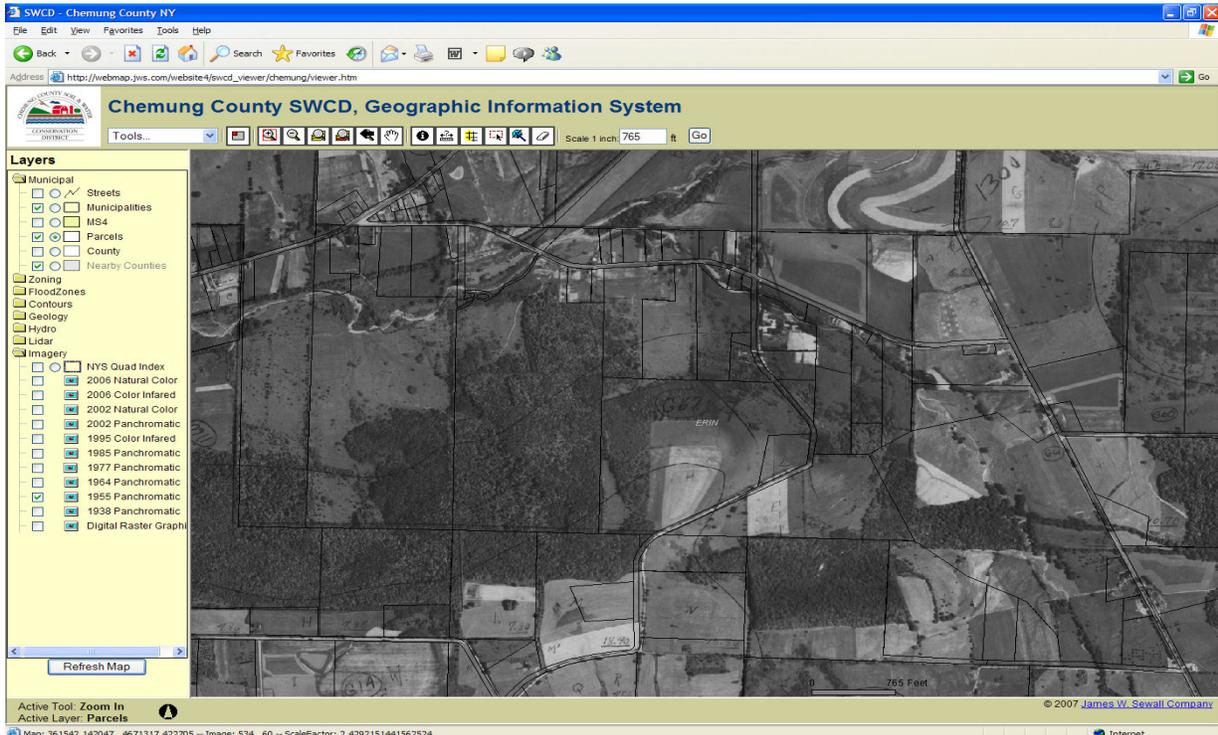
As with most of Chemung County, land use in the Town of Erin was predominantly agricultural 100 years ago. However, a variety of factors caused farms to be abandoned and the population of Erin to decline from 1,289 in 1890 to less than 800 by 1940. The population has gradually grown back to a historic high of 2,054 people in the year 2000, but land use has become primarily residential, rather than agricultural. The current balance of residential and agricultural land use can be seen by comparing the maps on pages 29 and 41. There is some overlap, but the trend is clearly visible.

### **Agricultural**

#### **Active Farms.**

There are currently about 105 tax parcels shown on the following map which are being assessed as active farmland. The yellow parcels represent farmland which is currently enrolled in the NYS agricultural district program. That program provides reduced property tax assessments for active farmland, but requires an 8 year commitment to continue farming. There are also about 20 farms shown with red triangles that participate in the Best Management Practices (BMP) program with the Chemung County Soil and Water Conservation District. That program is designed to improve water quality through reducing nutrients (animal waste, fertilizers, etc.) found in storm water run-off from active farms. It is probable that there are other farming activities occurring in the Town, but that the owners of the property do not participate in either of these programs. Much of the Town of Erin is forested, with many owners managing their forests as tree farms.





### **Transition Forests or “Old Fields”**

The screen shots on the previous page are of the same area in the Town, approximately centered on the trees forming “The Cross”. The top image was taken by the USDA in 1955, and the second by the State in 2006. The area around the cross in the 2006 photo is now hardwood forest, although not immediately obvious because the photograph was taken in April, before the leaves were out. One can identify several fields that were under cultivation in 1955, but have been abandoned since and are in varying stages of transitioning back to forest. The current technical term in the environmental management world is “old fields”. Old fields that have not progressed too far on that transition are considered opportunities for reclaiming that land to agriculture because of the current interest in biomass/biofuels. Although most of the old fields are probably on slopes that would not be ideal for traditional crop production, they would be ideal for grasses, such as switch grass, for use in bio-fuel production without contributing to erosion or other environmental concerns associated with hillside croplands.

#### **➤ Agricultural Policy**

**Continue to promote and support agricultural activities within the Town.**

#### **Recommendations**

*Identify owners of active farms within the Town* and other individuals who may be farming on a part-time or hobby basis.

*Invite those individuals to discuss how the Town may support their activities*, including the Town hosting workshops with Cornell Cooperative Extension, the Chemung County Farm Bureau, or other agencies.

### **Residential**

Of the 1,204 tax parcels within the Town in 2007, approximately 716 are being assessed as residential.

### **Business**

There has been limited commercial or industrial development within the Town, and that has occurred primarily along Route 223. It is also believed that there are several home-based or “cottage industries” existing in the Town.

#### **➤ Business Policy**

**Actively promote the establishment of new businesses and support existing business activities within the Town.**

### **Recommendations**

***Hold a workshop at the Town Hall*** to identify all current or potential businesses within the Town and discuss methods that the Town may employ to support those business activities, such as hosting a farmer’s market or promoting a cooperative marketing effort for Erin products and businesses.

***Explore potential new business opportunities suited to the Town***, such as bio-fuel production using local renewable resources, with Southern Tier Economic Growth (STEG), Cornell Cooperative Extension and other appropriate groups.

***Actively encourage Erin residents to “buy local”***, whenever possible. This will reduce the travel expense associated with shopping for residents, and reduce the need for Erin businesses to ship or wholesale their products.

### **Zoning**

The existing Town zoning map is outdated. The Town zoning ordinance and amendments may not reflect all business activities taking place within the Town.

#### ➤ **Zoning Policy**

**Town Zoning should be reviewed periodically to assure that it accurately reflects the Town Comprehensive Plan**, and amendments to that plan, with regard to planned economic growth and desired future land use.

### **Recommendations**

***Update the Town Zoning Map whenever zoning amendments are made***, so that the Planning Board has that as a reliable resource when new development opportunities arise.

In conjunction with the business recommendations, ***identify areas where zoning for “cottage industries” and other entrepreneurial activities by town residents may be encouraged*** without adversely affecting neighborhood quality.

## LOCAL REVENUES

The Town of Erin generates revenue from a tax on real property, along with fees charged for building permits and other regulated activities. The Town also receives a portion of the Chemung County sales tax revenue. The Town has applied for grants in the past for special purposes. Recent initiatives at the County and State level encourage shared services between governments as a way to manage operating expenses. State and Federal grant money is available through competitive grants and revolving loan funds. Recent economic stimulus programs may provide additional funding sources.

### ➤ Revenue Policy

**The Town should take advantage of all revenue opportunities including grants and revolving loans** to maintain and improve facilities, infrastructure and services within the Town.

### Recommendations

*The Erin Planning Board should explore all grant and revolving loan fund opportunities* that may assist the Town in reaching objectives described in this comprehensive plan.

*The Town Board should continue to explore opportunities for shared services* with other towns and the County of Chemung.



1 2 3 4 5 Number of nearby entertainment venues (movie theaters, sports centers, cultural facilities).

1 2 3 4 5 Distance to schools.

1 2 3 4 5 Distance to medical facilities.

1 2 3 4 5 Nearby living-wage employment.

1 2 3 4 5 Availability of public transportation.

1 2 3 4 5 Availability of public utilities (water, sewer, natural gas, cable tv).

1 2 3 4 5 Roadway maintenance. (patching potholes, snow removal, dust control)

**4. Over the next 25 years, would you like to see Erin:**

*[Check one item]*

\_\_\_\_\_ Retain its primarily rural/residential atmosphere.

\_\_\_\_\_ Develop into a residential/commercial community, (medium density housing with some businesses).

\_\_\_\_\_ Develop into a residential/commercial/industrial community, (some high density housing, businesses and some light industry).

**4. What do you think will be the most important issues facing the Town of Erin in the future?**

*[Rank items: 1 (for not important) thru 5 (being very important)].*

1 2 3 4 5 Zoning issues and a plan for controlled growth.

1 2 3 4 5 Affordable housing.

1 2 3 4 5 Senior Housing.

1 2 3 4 5 Protecting water quality.

1 2 3 4 5 Preservation of farm land (undeveloped open space).

1 2 3 4 5 Preservation of public open spaces (public recreation, trails).

1 2 3 4 5 Public services in the hamlet: (water system, sewer system, lighting, sidewalks, street improvements).

1 2 3 4 5 Community services (youth activities, senior activities, community recreation/center).

1 2 3 4 5 Economic development: attracting consumer businesses (shopping, tax base).

- 1 2 3 4 5 Economic development: attracting industry (jobs, tax base).
- 1 2 3 4 5 Natural gas drilling (potential for individual income; potential for loss of scenic natural beauty).
- 1 2 3 4 5 Timbering operations (potential for individual income; potential for loss of trees on large scale).
- 1 2 3 4 5 Roadway improvements. (Paving, oil and stone, widening, etc.).
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- 

**5. Would you support additional town services such as a semi-annual junk drop-off day if it meant a town tax increase?**

Yes                      No

**6. In your opinion do you feel that the local government should be more aggressive when creating and enforcing laws regarding: junk cars, abandoned structures, trash and debris on private property?**

Yes                      No

**7. Is there an issue that is important to you that has not been covered in this questionnaire, or something you would like to go into more detail about concerning the above topics?**

Thank you for your participation in the comprehensive planning process.

**Results from Resident Survey:**

There were seventy (68) responses to the questionnaire developed for the Erin Master Plan. Of the 68 responses, 65 were identified as property owners. The responders were instructed to select what they liked most about living in Erin, rank the services identified as most important, choose the type of community most desirable, and identify important issues that may impact the future of the town. Additionally, the questionnaire sought information regarding junk disposal and code enforcement.

In most of the questions the responders were instructed to select issues and rank them in order of importance. The results are presented as percentages based number of responses and the

number of times an issue appeared as one of the top three responses to the given question. The remaining questions were either direct or “yes, no” type questions.

Survey Results:

Rent	1
Own Property	65
No Response	2

What do you like MOST about living in Erin?

Peace and quiet	76%
Beauty of natural surroundings	66%
Low population density	40%
Lack of traffic	29%
Lack of commercial activity	28%
Low tax rate	25%
Water quality	22%
Low crime rate	21%
Outdoor activities	16%
Affordable land	13%
Good neighbors and community spirit	12%

How important are the following services to you?

Roadway maintenance	91%
Distance to medical facilities	60%
Nearby living-wage employment	53%
Number of nearby stores	50%
Availability of public utilities	46%
Community activities	46%
Distance to schools	38%
Nearby restaurants	32%
Public transportation	32%
Entertainment venues	26%

For the future of over the next 25 years, 81% of those who responded want the Erin to retain its primarily rural/residential atmosphere. Thirteen percent (13) of those responding want the Town of Erin to develop into a residential/commercial community with medium density housing and some businesses. One responder envisioned Erin as a residential, commercial and industrial community. The remaining 5% did not respond to the question.

What do you think will be the most important issues facing the Town of Erin in the future?

Preservation of farmland	96%
Water quality protection	93%
Roadway improvements	87%
Zoning	84%
Open space preservation	83%
Community services	65%
Affordable housing	65%
Public services	60%
Natural gas drilling	59%
Timbering operations	57%
Senior housing	51%
Economic development - consumer	31%
Economic development – industrial	28%

Would you support additional town services such as a semi-annual junk drop off-day if it meant a town tax increase?

Twenty six (26) percent responded “yes” and forty one (41) responded “no”.

Should the local government be more aggressive when creating and enforcing laws regarding junk cars, abandoned structures, and trash and debris on private property?

Seventy four (74) percent responded “yes” and twenty two (22) responded “no”.

**Evaluation and Assessment of Preferences of the Community.**

The survey results indicate that the largest percentage of residents in Erin live within the town because of the peace and quiet and beauty of the natural surroundings. Services ranked the highest in importance include roadway maintenance followed by distance to medical facilities. Future issues of greatest concern include preservation of farmland, water quality, roadway improvements, zoning, and open space preservation. Property appearance leading to the creation and enforcement of junk ordinances and property abandonment is important to Erin residents. However, a tax increase to cover a semi-annual “junk drop-off day” was not supported.

## Town of Erin Resident Questionnaire 2009

A second survey of residents was taken during July of 2009, using an Internet survey instrument and paper forms available at the Town Hall. A total of 134 persons participated in the survey, although not all participants answered all questions. The questions were grouped into categories covering demographics, development within the Town, environmental issues and community concerns. The last group asked specific questions about the respondent's willingness to pay additional property taxes for a variety of services. Several questions were open-ended, with most of those questions summarized at the end of this section. Complete copies of the questionnaire summary with all open-ended responses are available at the Erin Town Hall.

### Response Summary

#### *Demographic Questions*

1. Do you live in the Town of Erin?
  - a. Yes 96%
  - b. No 4%
2. Do you rent or own your own home?
  - a. Rent 3%
  - b. Own 97%
3. Do you own property in the Town that does not include your residence?
  - a. Yes 33%
  - b. No 67%
4. What age group do you fall into?
  - a. Under 25 1%
  - b. 26-40 12%
  - c. 41-54 25%
  - d. 55-69 48%
  - e. 70+ 14%
5. How many people live in your household?
  - a. There were 106 responses listing between 1 and 5 persons, with the majority being 2 persons.
6. If you live in the Town, are there children under the age of 19?
  - a. Yes 18%
  - b. No 82%
7. If so, please indicate the age ranges:
  - a. 0-5 8%
  - b. 6-12 67%
  - c. 13-18 25%
8. Do you have access to wired cable TV and/or Internet, such as Time Warner?
  - a. Yes 40%
  - b. No 60%

*Development Questions*

9. Would you support a seasonal market in Erin, with farm produce and other local products, by visiting regularly?
  - a. Yes 92%
  - b. No 8%
10. Would you be in favor of a manufacturing facility being located in Erin which uses local raw materials, such as wood pellet manufacturing?
  - a. Yes 59%
  - b. No 41%
11. Do you think that the Town should encourage residential growth by zoning specific areas for subdivisions?
  - a. Yes 46%
  - b. No 54%
12. Do you think that the Town should actively try to attract a senior housing project?
  - a. Yes 63%
  - b. No 37%
13. Do you think that telecommunications (cell phone towers, cable TV) should be expanded in the Town to improve service?
  - a. Yes 90%
  - b. No 10%
14. Would you support the Town in exploring municipal water service to assure water quality in the hamlet area, using grant funding where possible?
  - a. Yes 54%
  - b. No 46%
15. Do you think that the Town should explore infrastructure improvements (sewer and water) to attract commercial and residential development?
  - a. Yes 33%
  - b. No 67%
16. Do you think that manufacturing and industrial development should occur along the NYS Route 223 corridor through zoning by the Town?
  - a. Yes 48%
  - b. No 52%

*Environmental questions*

17. Would you support the Town exploring the feasibility of forming a municipal power corporation that would use wind power or other energy alternatives to reduce electric costs for residents within the Town?
  - a. Yes 79%
  - b. No 21%
18. Do you think the Town should protect woodlands, wetlands and wildlife by encouraging proper management of these areas through workshops and other informational methods?
  - a. Yes 88%
  - b. No 12%

19. Do you think that the preservation of farmland and open space in the Town is important?
- a. Yes 93%
  - b. No 7%
20. Do you support natural gas exploration within the Town?
- a. Yes 83%
  - b. No 17%
21. Are you concerned that activities associated with natural gas drilling will have a negative impact on water quality and roadways in the Town?
- a. Yes 47%
  - b. No 53%
22. (Duplicate Question)

*Community Questions*

23. How many times each year do you use the recreational facilities currently available in the Town, including Park Station?
- a. Never 26%
  - b. 1-5 54%
  - c. 6-20 10%
  - d. over 20 10%
24. Do you feel that there are any roads in the Town that should have lower speed limits?
- a. Yes 43%
  - b. No 57%
25. Do you think that the Town should facilitate sports programs for youth?
- a. Yes 82%
  - b. No 18%
26. Would you be in favor of the Town requesting bike/walkways and crosswalks along Rt. 223?
- a. Yes 59%
  - b. No 41%
27. Would you be willing to participate in a community watch program?
- a. Yes 65%
  - b. No 35%
28. Should the Town explore solar and wind power for reducing utility costs for municipal buildings?
- a. Yes 82%
  - b. No 18%
29. Do you currently have any “farm animals”, such as horses, cows, goats, chickens, etc.?
- a. Yes 27%
  - b. No 73%

***I would be willing to pay additional property taxes to support:***

- 30. The Town building or replacing sidewalks and storm drainage in the hamlet area
  - a. Yes 26%
  - b. No 74%
- 31. A new community park with outdoor recreation facilities
  - a. Yes 43%
  - b. No 57%
- 32. A community center that is open days and evenings
  - a. Yes 47%
  - b. No 53%
- 33. Improvements to Town roads, such as expanding paving or other surface treatments
  - a. Yes 67%
  - b. No 33%
- 34. Expanded code enforcement
  - a. Yes 49%
  - b. No 51%
- 35. Expanded animal control
  - a. Yes 45%
  - b. No 55%
- 36. A periodic newsletter to inform residents of local news including Town Board actions, upcoming events and other items of local interest
  - a. Yes 77%
  - b. No 23%
- 37. A Town constable or other increased law enforcement
  - a. Yes 39%
  - b. No 61%

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## Open-ended Questions

38. What sort of organizations, such as Girl Scouts or 4H, would you like to see in the Town? (66 responses)

4H – 22

Girl Scouts – 16

Boy Scouts – 10

Youth sports – 5

39. What type of community events would you like to see in the Town? (60 responses)

Farmers market – 10

Social events (carnivals, festivals, picnics, concerts, etc.) – 40

## Open-ended Questions

40. Would you be willing to volunteer to help at community events? (77 responses)

yes – 52

qualified yes or sometimes – 15

no – 10

41. What business or services, such as a Food Bank distribution center or Dollar Store, would you like to see closer to Erin? (77 responses)

Food Bank distribution - 21

Dollar Store – 17

No Dollar Store (specifically) – 9

None – 18

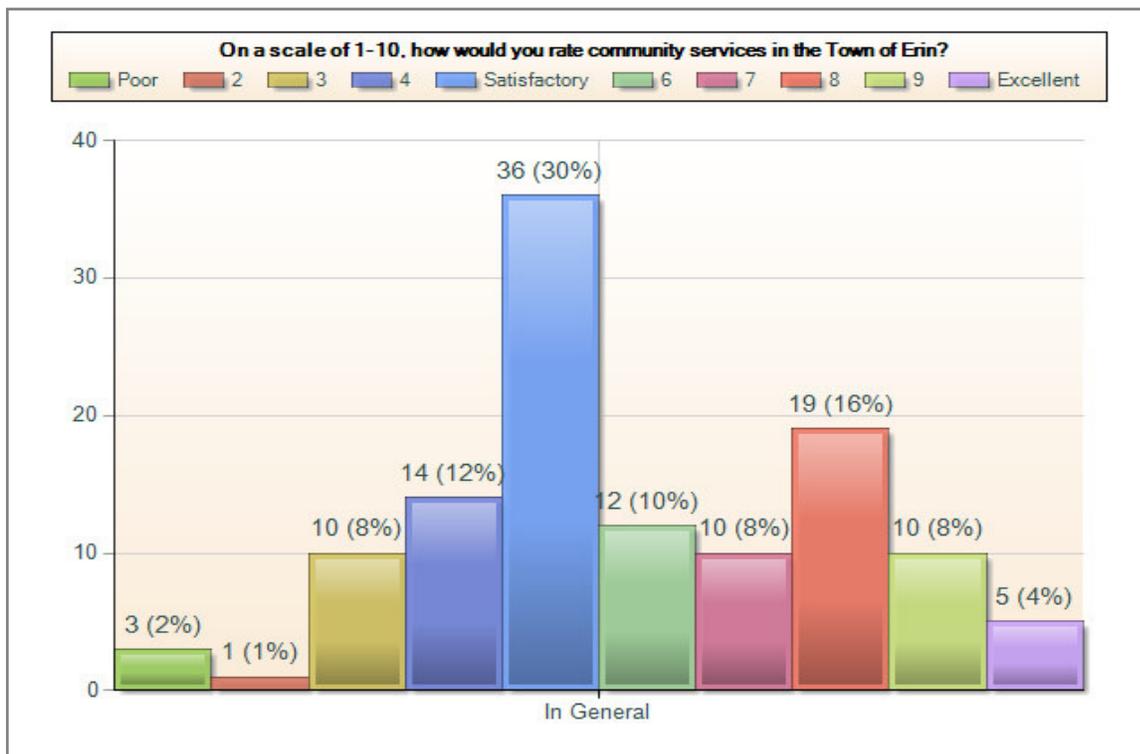
better grocery store - 12

Other suggestions (library, farmers market, casino, etc) – 19

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## Open-ended Questions

- 42. What do you like about living in Erin? (93 responses)
- 43. What do you dislike about living in Erin? (83 responses)
- 45. Where do you think that the Town needs to improve? (72 responses)
  - code issues – 13
  - better communications – 9
  - improved law enforcement, assessment, roads, environmental quality, etc.



## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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