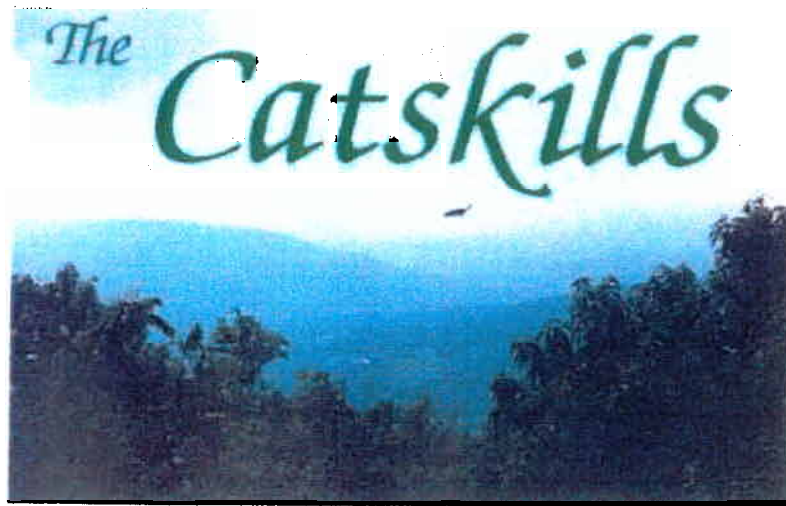


Town of Liberty

Sullivan County, New York



Comprehensive Plan

Prepared by:

**Sullivan County Division of Planning
& Community Development
Alan Sorensen, Commissioner**

**Shepstone Management Company
100 Fourth Street Honesdale, PA 18431
570-251-9550 FAX 251-9551
smc@ezaccess.net
honesdale.com/smc**

Town of Liberty, Sullivan County, New York Comprehensive Plan - 2000

Foreword

This Comprehensive Plan is intended to offer a concise description of the Town of Liberty and its needs as of 2000. It also, of course, looks forward to the twenty-first century and is designed to provide a policy framework for the Town as it faces that future. This project represents a joint effort by the Town of Liberty Planning Board, Town of Liberty Town Board, Sullivan County Division of Planning and Community Development and Shepstone Management Company.

Town of Liberty Town Board

Town of Liberty, Sullivan County, New York Comprehensive Plan - 2000

Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
<i>Foreword</i>	<i>i</i>
<i>Table of Contents</i>	<i>ii</i>
1.0 Background Studies	1-1
1.1 Regional Location and History	1-1
1.2 Natural Features	1-2
1.3 Existing Land Use	1-5
1.4 Population and Economic Base	1-7
2.0 Goals and Objectives	2-1
3.0 Plans	3-1
3.1 Land Use	3-1
3.2 Community Facilities and Recreation	3-8
3.3 Transportation	3-12
3.4 Housing	3-21
4.0 Implementation	4-1
5.0 Relationships to Adjoining Communities, the County and the Region	5-1
6.0 Appendices	6-1
A - Recommended General Land Use Regulation Revisions and Zoning Map	
B - Recommended Watershed Protection Provisions	

Town of Liberty, Sullivan County, New York

Comprehensive Plan - 2000

1.0 Background Studies

1.1 Regional Location and History

1.1.1 Regional Setting.

The Town of Liberty is located in the north-central section of Sullivan County. Surrounding towns within Sullivan County are Callicoon to the West; Liberty to the North; Bethel and Thompson to the South; and Fallsburg and Neversink to the East. It is also boarded by the Catskill Park region to the North and a very small portion of the Town extends into the new York City Water Supply Watershed.

The Town is an agricultural-residential-resort community located approximately 100 miles northwest of the New York City metropolitan area. It has a total land area of over 80 square miles. Major highways include New York State Routes 52 and 55 and Route 17, the "Quickway," which is soon to become I-86.

1.1.2 History

The Town of Liberty was officially founded in the year 1807 and originally comprised what now constitutes the Towns of Fremont, and Callicoon as well as the present Liberty.

It was settled principally by emigres from Connecticut and other eastern states who soon developed the land's natural resources. Grist mills, tanneries, and sawmills were the main industrial enterprises while beef and dairy farming were the chief agricultural pursuits.

The only route from Liberty to Monticello (and the closest connection with the Newburg-Cochecton Turnpike) was via Hurleyville until 1808, when a more direct road was established. This improvement notwithstanding, the early roads could only be characterized as poor at best.

So it was a great boon to the town when the New York and Oswego Midland Railroad decided to build its railway through Liberty in the late 1860's. Finally completed in 1872 and changing its name to the familiar New York Ontario and Western Railway, the O & W soon began promoting the attractiveness of Sullivan County as a summer resort.

The 1896 noted banker J. Pierpont Morgan built the Loomis Sanitarium as a memorial to his good friend Dr. Alfred Loomis, a noted New York specialist in lung diseases. At first the Town was happy to have the healthfulness of the area promoted, but the promotion was overdone and soon many of the boarding houses were catering to a burgeoning tuberculosis population. These patients tended to scare away steady summer guests and by 1905 a genuine crisis had developed.

Town of Liberty, Sullivan County, New York

Comprehensive Plan - 2000

The issue was partially solved when the City of New York opened its own sanitarium in Orange County. Other areas of the U.S. also began promoting their own "healthfulness" but much of the damage had been done and the resort trade was in a steady decline.

This, however, opened the door for others who soon remedied the situation. The Jewish population increased dramatically and many were, fortunately, able to buy up some of the resorts and farms and so establish the beginning of the "Borscht Belt."

In 1913, the Grossinger Family expanded its boarding house to include the old Nichols Farm in Ferndale and so began its rise as the most famous of the Catskill resorts. While the advent of the automobile meant the demise of railroads in general and the O&W in particular, it helped the tourist industry in Sullivan County and Liberty. Because of its better highways and closer proximity to New York than many of the resorts of the upper Catskills, the Sullivan County resort areas soon had the lion's share of the vacation trade.

In 1932 the O&W gave in to the mobility advantage of the trucking industry and established its main Catskills freight transfer station in Liberty with Killian Transfer Co. the local trucker. When the railway finally ceased operations altogether in 1957, work was already well underway on the four-lane Route 17 Quickway. The section bypassing Liberty was completed in 1958, considerably easing traffic congestion through the village, but also taking business away from the downtown district.

In 1926 the Maimonides Hospital was opened off Lake Street in Liberty to be joined by the old Loomis Sanitarium facility in 1951. Both hospitals were "retired" in 1978 when the Community General Hospital was built in Harris. The Sullivan County Infirmary was constructed within the Town of Liberty, in 1956 and is now part of a Family Services Complex.

A large poultry industry was established within the Town over the years, joining the already substantial dairy business and producing a three-part local economy based on agriculture, tourism and public employment. Some of that poultry industry remains but it has shifted to broilers, ducks raised for livers and other specialty products. Newspapers in the Town have included the Liberty Gazette and the Liberty Register. These are now gone but WVO, a radio station serving Sullivan County and surrounding areas, is headquartered in the Town.¹

¹ Sources: (1) Alf Evers - The Catskills - From Wilderness to Woodstock, (2) Maneville Wakefield - To the Mountains by Rail, (3) James Quinlan - History of Sullivan County and (4) William F. Hellmer - O&W.

Town of Liberty, Sullivan County, New York

Comprehensive Plan - 2000

1.2 Natural Features

1.2.1 Geology.

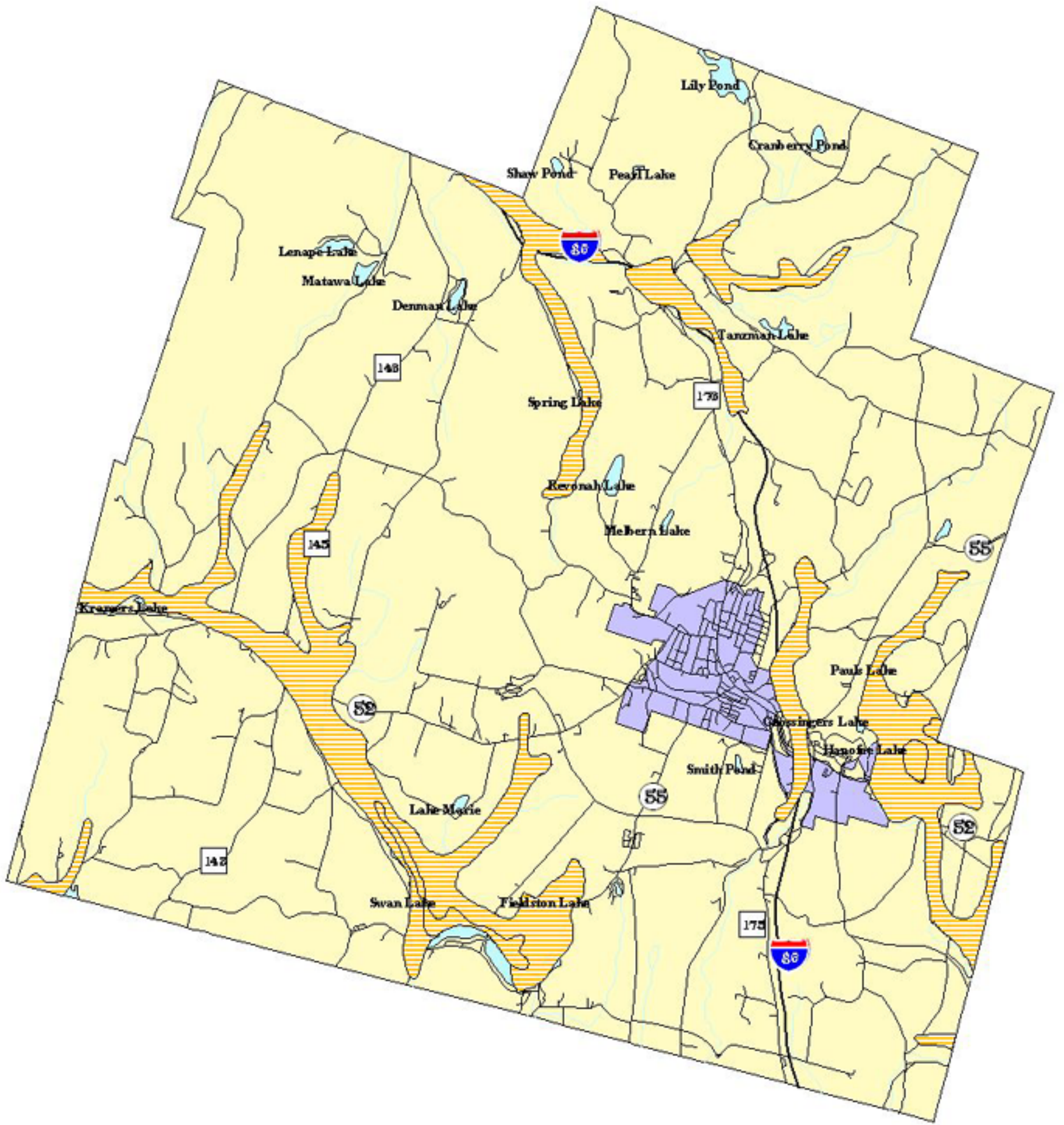
The Town of Liberty's geologic history began some 450 millions years ago. The lands of this region were beneath the sea at various times over the next two hundred million years. Then about 225 million years ago, the sediments that accumulated in this sea were folded, faulted and uplifted. They are now known as the Catskill formations and are actually the eastern edge of the Allegheny Plateau.

The present mountainous relief of the Town of Liberty, as in much of the County, is due to geologic erosion and deep dissection of this elevated mass by the action of numerous streams. A Pleistocene ice age glacier that moved through the area 20,000 years ago accentuated this effect. These mountains are referred to as erosion mountains.

The extensive glaciation in this area removed existing soil cover and exposed bedrock in many places. The melting and retreating of the ice pack resulted in the deposition of stratified gravel, sands and silts in the stream valleys as well as the claying of lake beds. These are depicted on the **Distribution of Principle Unconsolidated Deposits Map** that follows. Glacial till deposits typically range in thickness from less than one foot on some hills to several hundred feet in the valleys.

All the rocks of the Catskills and of the Town of Liberty are referred to as being of the Devonian age and they consist almost entirely of sandstones, shales and conglomerates. The area's geology has given it several economic resources in sand and gravel pits and in quarry operations although few are found within the Town of Liberty itself. Materials produced from the quarries include aggregate, paving stone and ballast used in highway/roadway construction. Utilization of these resources is generally related to development within the area, as these materials are not usually transported more than 20 miles.

Natural gas has been found in some of the towns in Sullivan County and so increasing interest in the area has been exhibited by major energy companies.

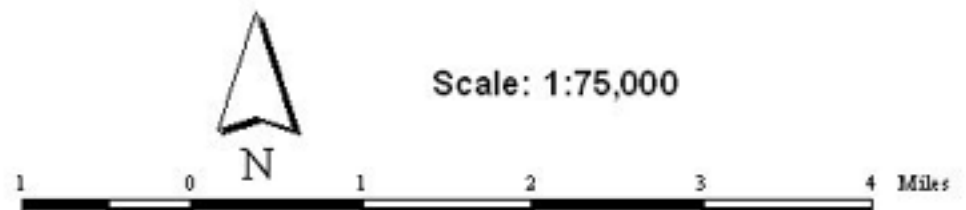


Town and Village of Liberty Distribution of Principle Unconsolidated Deposits

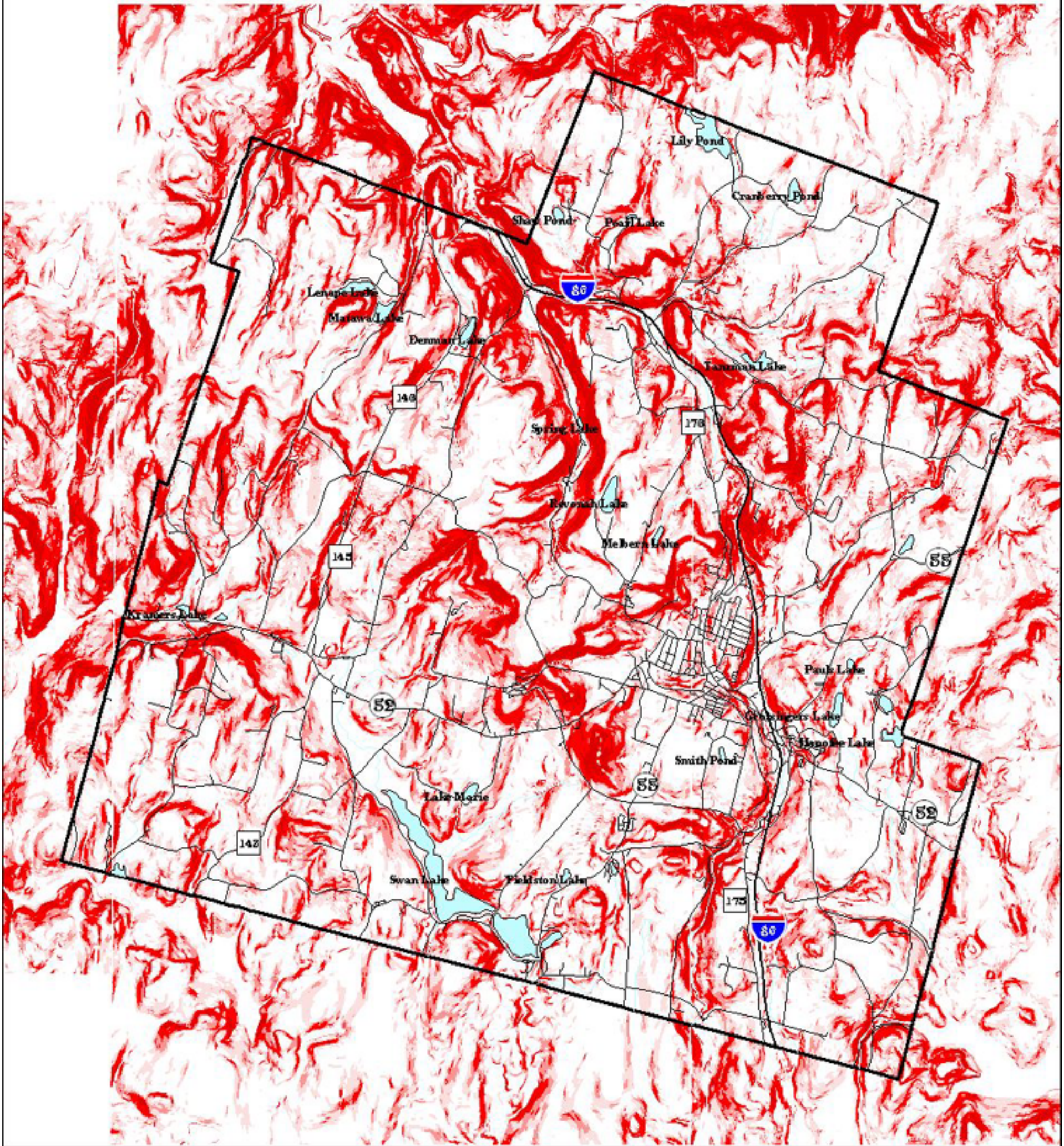
Sullivan County
New York



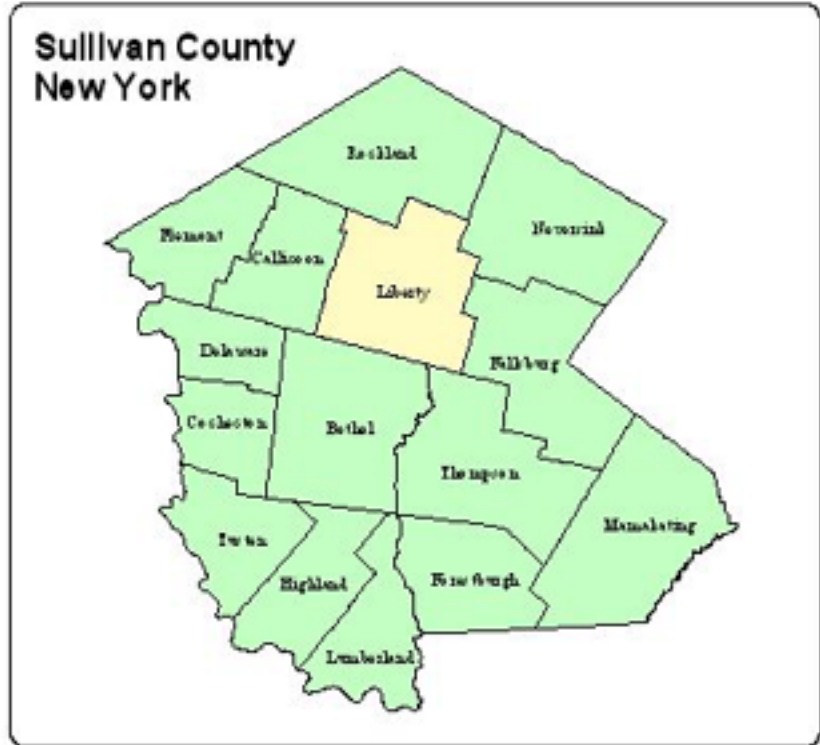
- | | |
|---|--|
|  Stratified Deposits |  Interstates |
|  Lakes and Ponds |  US and State Roads |
|  Rivers and Streams |  County Roads |
|  Town of Liberty |  Town and Other |
|  Village of Liberty | |



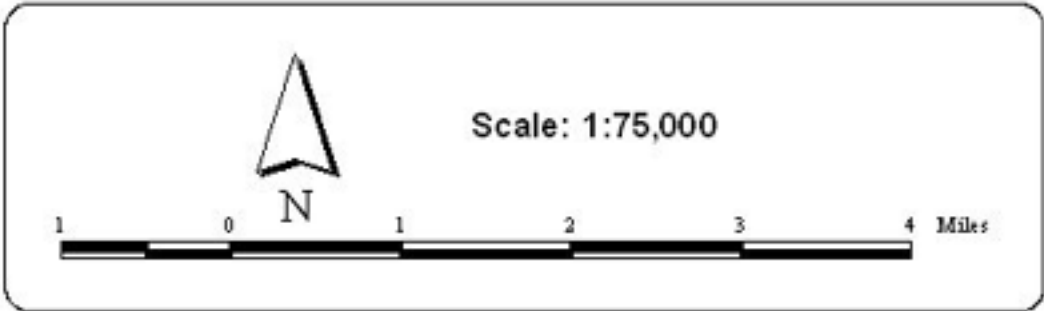
Prepared by the Sullivan County
Division of Planning and Community Development
January 2000



Town and Village of Liberty Slopes



Slope Percentage		Roadways	
	0 - 4.99		US and State Roads
	5 - 7.49		Town and County Roads
	7.5 - 9.99		Lakes and Ponds
	10 - 14.99		Rivers and Streams
	15+		Town Boundary
	No Data		



Prepared by the Sullivan County
 Division of Planning and Community Development
 January 2000

Town of Liberty, Sullivan County, New York

Comprehensive Plan - 2000

1.2.2 Terrain.

There are several areas of high elevation in the Town and steep slopes are common. Topography is, of course, critical in determining suitability for construction and on-site sewage disposal. The terrain of the area being fairly rugged has, in Liberty's case, limited development in many areas of the Town. This is a problem common to much of Sullivan County. The high elevations predominate in the area have, nonetheless, created some spectacular scenery that has long been a tourism resource. The preceding **Slopes Map** illustrates the patterns.

1.2.3 Water Resources.

Hydrology was closely examined in conjunction with the preparation of the Town's Section 201 Wastewater Facilities Plan in 1981. Relevant information from that Plan is excerpted or paraphrased below:

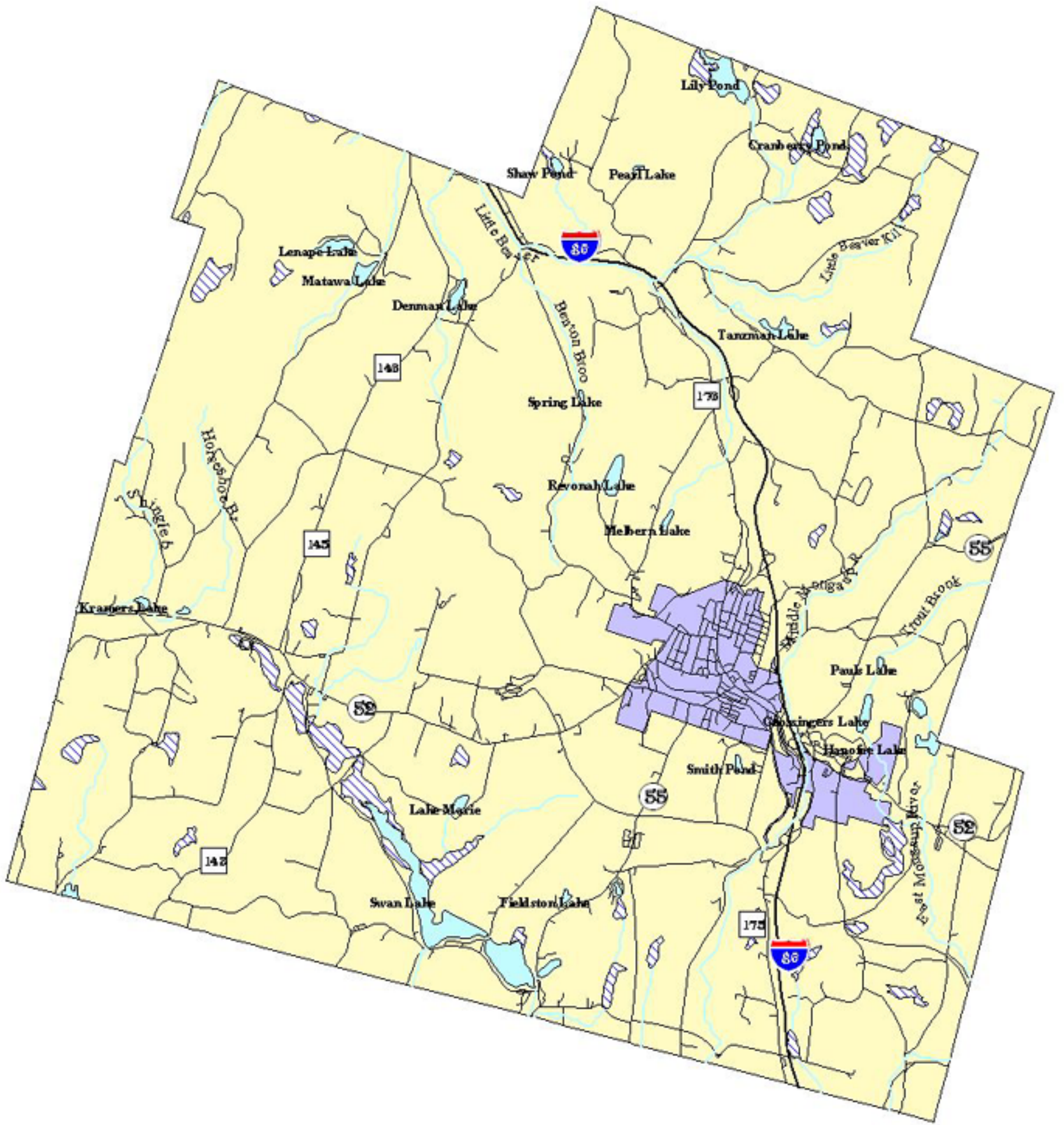
- Groundwater

Groundwater sources in the Town of Liberty are located in both the unconsolidated stratified deposits (see **Distribution of Principle Unconsolidated Deposits Map**) and the bedrock. Unconsolidated stratified deposits are located mainly along the stream valleys of The Little Beaver Kill and the West Branch of the Mongaup River. These deposits recharge by stream runoff caused by precipitation. Information from the United States Geological Survey (USGS) states that wells in the stratified deposits yield an average 175 gallons per minute (gpm) per well (10" to 12" size). The average yield for a rock well varies from 5 to 30 gpm, depending on the size of the well.

- Surface Water

Liberty has several natural and manmade lakes scattered throughout the Town. The largest of these lakes is Swan Lake.

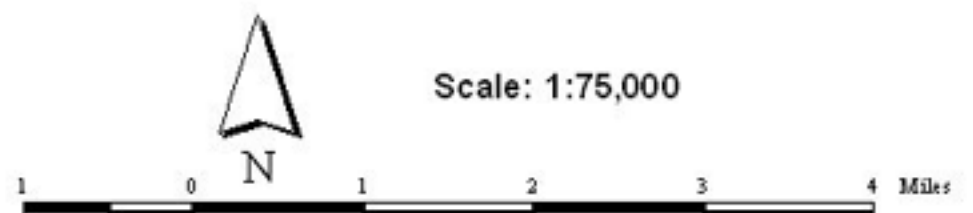
Streams and rivers in the area have generally been designed as Class B or B(T) in accordance with the State's fresh water quality standards. Class B designation refers to stream water suitable for "Primary Contact Recreation (bathing)." The (T) designates the stream a trout stream. The major portion of The Little Beaver Kill is classified as a B(T) stream. Portions of the East, West and Middle Mongaup River are also classified as a B(T) streams. The primary recreational use of these streams is fishing. A **Water Bodies and Wetlands Map** follows to indicate the nature of the Town's surface water system.



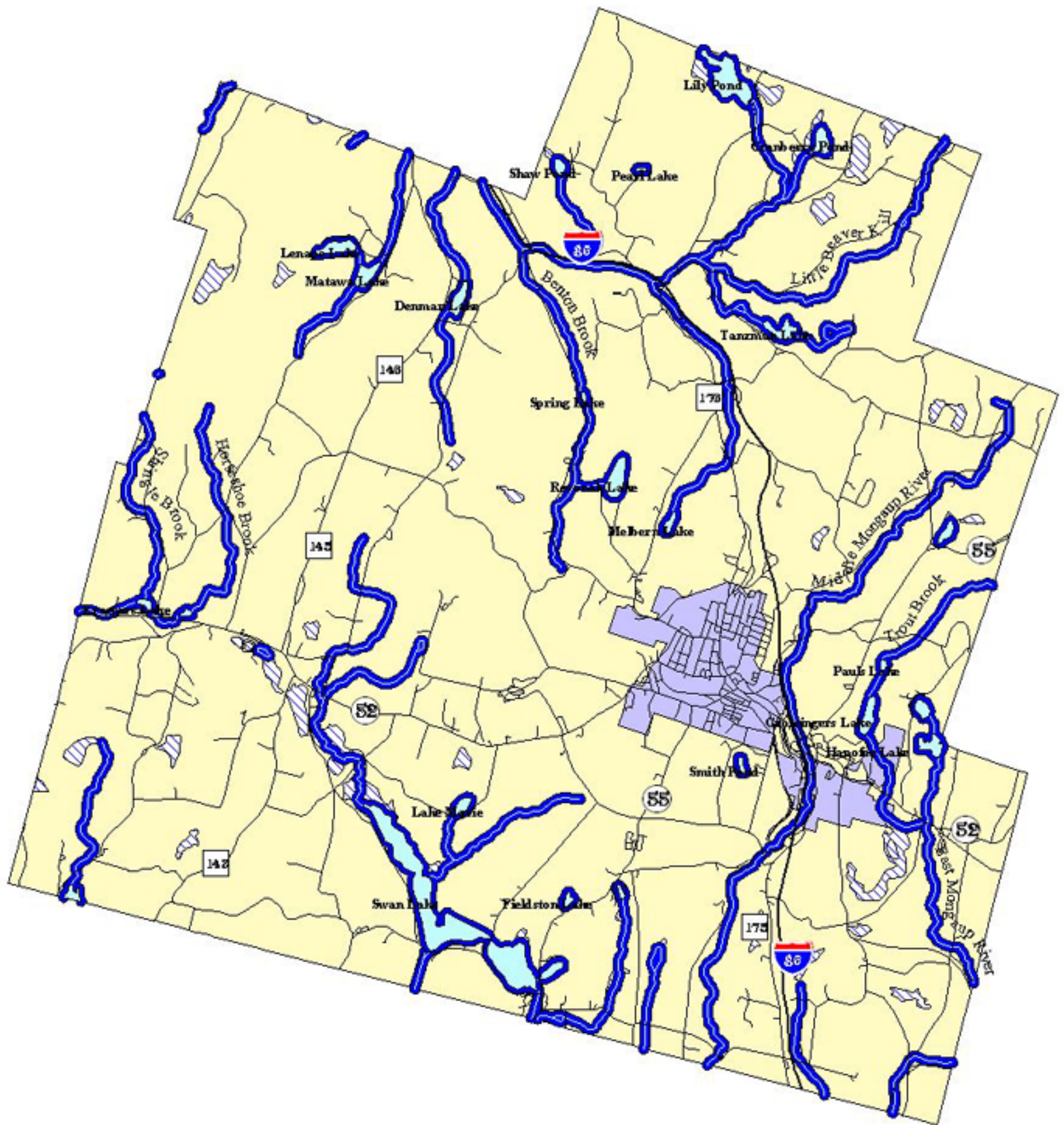
Town and Village of Liberty Water Bodies and Wetlands

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| NYSDEC Wetlands | Roadways |
| Lakes and Ponds | Interstates |
| Rivers and Streams | US and State Roads |
| Town of Liberty | County Roads |
| Village of Liberty | Town and Other |

Sullivan County New York



Prepared by the Sullivan County
Division of Planning and Community Development
January 2000



Town and Village of Liberty FEMA Flood Zones

Sullivan County
New York



FEMA Flood Zone Designations

Areas of 100 Year Flood

Lakes and Ponds

Rivers and Streams

NYSDEC Wetlands

Town of Liberty

Village of Liberty

Roadways

Interstates

US and State Roads

County Roads

Town and Other



Scale: 1:75,000



Prepared by the Sullivan County
Division of Planning and Community Development
January 2000

Town of Liberty, Sullivan County, New York

Comprehensive Plan - 2000

The Town of Liberty is in the Delaware River drainage basin. All surface water courses drain into the tributaries of the Delaware River. The major portion of the Town drains into the Mongaup River, while the Little Beaver Kill drains the smaller northern portion of the Town. Very small portions of the Town drain into the Neversink Reservoir, which is part of the New York City Water Supply watershed. From there much of the water is directed to the Rondout Reservoir via an aqueduct. It then goes to New York City through the Delaware Aqueduct. This reservoir and aqueduct system is one of the largest in the world and a true engineering marvel.

- Flood Hazard Areas

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has identified potential flood hazard areas along the Middle Mongaup River, East Branch Mongaup River, Little Beaver Kill and Swan Lake. Very small portions of these flood hazard areas fall within developed areas. Based on a 100 year flood, the flood prone areas are not extensive because of the steep ridges paralleling the rivers. Physical constraints make development in these areas unlikely. The preceding **FEMA Flood Zones Map** illustrates location of flood susceptible areas of the Town.

- Wetlands

Wetland areas were mapped by DEC as part of the State's Freshwater Wetlands Act. Chapter 614, Article 24 regulates activities on or within 100 feet of state-designated freshwater wetlands whose surface area is at least 12.4 acres (5 hectares). These are depicted on the preceding **Water Bodies and Wetlands Map**. A number of small scattered wetland areas, generally less than 12.4 acres in size, also exist within the Parksville, Swan Lake and White Sulphur Springs Areas. Many of these have been identified in Federal Wetlands mapping by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Corps of Engineers. These areas are at least partially covered with water throughout the year, flooding deciduous trees, shrubs, and conifers.

Depending on vegetation characteristics and drainage patterns, wetlands act as natural flood storage facilities during periods of heavy rainfall and runoff, while providing food and shelter for wildlife and aquatic habitats. The Town enacted Code provisions in 1976 calling for the exercise of regulatory authority within 100 feet of the boundaries of all Freshwater Wetlands mapped by the New York Department of Environmental Conservation so as to protect such areas and ensure the continuation of their benefits.

Town of Liberty, Sullivan County, New York

Comprehensive Plan - 2000

- Public Water Supply

There are, in addition to the New York City water supply system that exports water from the Town, three separate public water supply systems and various additional service districts that exist to serve the needs of the Town of Liberty itself. These include water supplies in White Sulphur Springs, Swan Lake and Loomis. The Town needs to enact new regulations providing for the protection of all these water supplies, setting standards for development near the supplies and prohibiting the disposal or storage of hazardous materials in the vicinity of them.

1.2.4 Soils.

The Town of Liberty is located in the Catskill section of the Northeastern Appalachian Plateau which is deeply eroded and slopes gently to the south and southwest. Extensive glaciation has, in fact, removed existing soil cover and exposed the bedrock in many areas. The melting and retreating of the ice pack resulted in the depositing of stratified gravel, sands and silts in the stream valleys and the claying of creek beds. (See **Distribution of Principle Unconsolidated Deposits Map**). The glacial till deposits range in depth from less than a foot on some hills to several hundred feet in the valleys.

These glacial deposits form the basis for the Town of Liberty's soils and determine the limitations of those soils for agriculture and development purposes. The Town of Liberty's soils can be classified in four broad categories as follows:

- Silt Loams - These soils tend to be characterized by flooding, unsatisfactory permeability and seasonal high water tables. They represent approximately 64% of the Town of Liberty.
- Stony Loams - These soils have various limitations but all tend to be characterized by inadequate permeability. They are also generally more difficult to work with because of their stoniness. Apparently 20% of the Town of Liberty is made of of these soils.
- Gravelly Loams - These soils are subject to a variety of limitations including flooding, slopes and seasonal high water tables, but some soils are usable for subsurface sewage disposal. About 10% of the Town of Liberty is characterized by such soils.
- Sandy Loams - These soils are generally subject to flooding and, in some case, too rapid permeability. Generally found in the valley areas, they constitute about 6% of the Town of Liberty.

Town of Liberty, Sullivan County, New York

Comprehensive Plan - 2000

These soil groupings are subdivided by the Soil Conservation Service into many different individual soil types and the Soil Survey of Sullivan County further clarifies soil characteristics for the area. The NRCS also classifies the soils by their suitability for various agricultural and development purposes. A **Generalized Agriculture Soils Suitability Map** follows. It indicates that the southern section of the Town, that is largely mapped as Agricultural District, is in considered good for agriculture. The northern portion is considered fair.

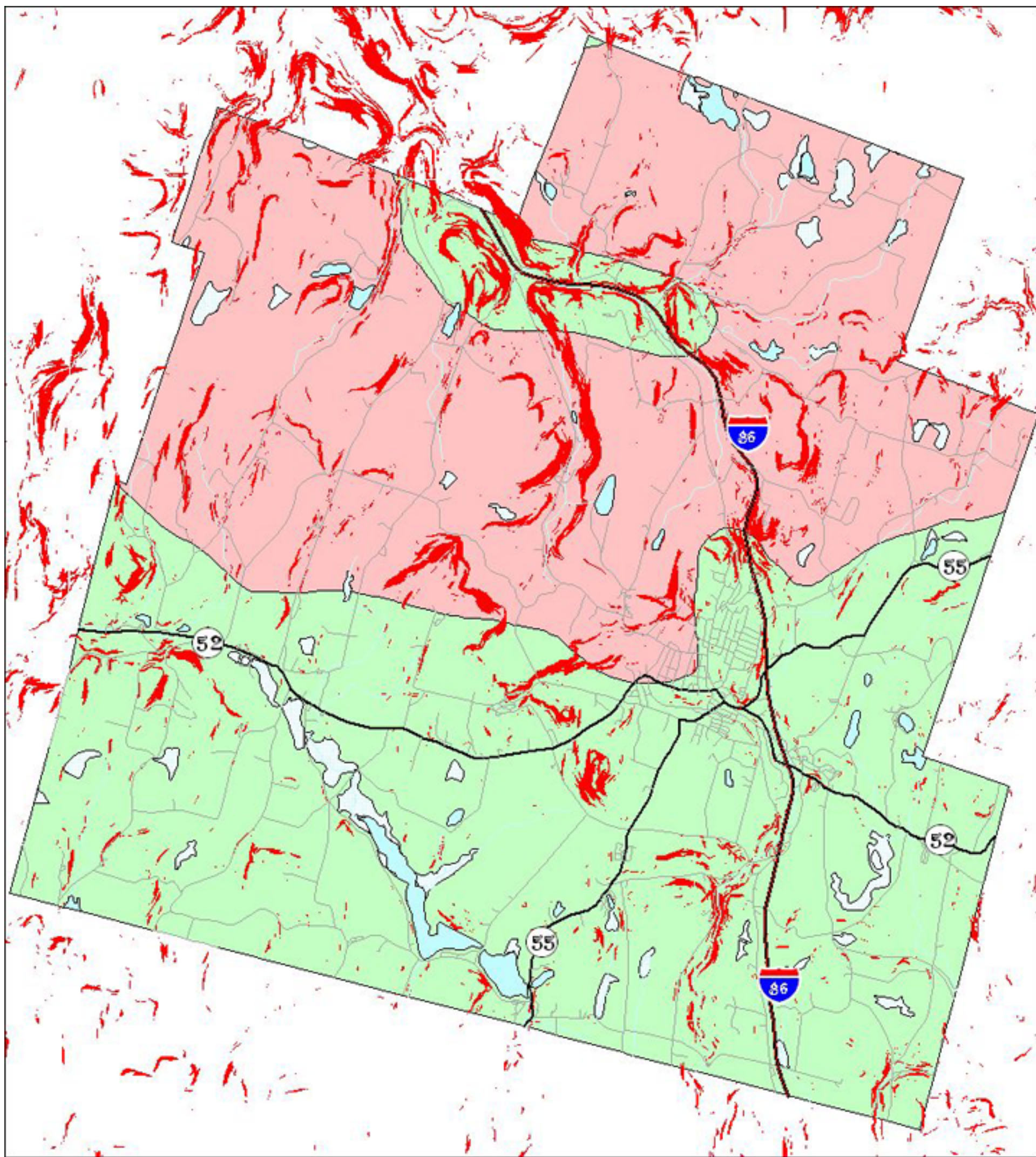
The most significant soil characteristic for a rural area such as the Town of Liberty is, of course, suitability for subsurface sewage disposal systems. Because most of the Town must be served by such systems, this is the primary factor in assessing appropriate land use patterns for the Town.

The NRCS's own classification of soils insofar as sewage capabilities, however, was not written with New York State soils in mind and, therefore, tends to reject soils that are relatively "good" for sewage disposal by comparison to other Northeast soils. Also, the system is not tailored to New York State Department of Health standards, that are the actual criteria by which soils must be judged in the final analysis.

Accordingly, as part of this Comprehensive Plan project, a "Soil Suitability Map" of the Town of Liberty soils has been produced in a large wall size version. This map is based on the Soil Survey and keyed to the Department of Health criteria for subsurface disposal systems. These criteria generally suggest soils with the following characteristics be excluded from consideration for subsurface systems;

- Bedrock within 48" of the ground surface
- Seasonal high water tables within 48" of the ground surface
- Slopes over 15% in grade
- Low areas likely to be flooded
- Poor drainage within 48" of the ground surface as evidenced by mottling or percolation rates slower than 60 minutes per inch

Using the recent soil survey information and soil descriptions and interpretations supplied by the NRCS, the following classification system was derived and is employed on the large **Soil Suitability Map**:



Town and Village of Liberty Generalized Agriculture Soils Suitability Map

Soil Rating

- Fair
- Good

Slope

- >15%

- Lakes and Ponds

Rivers and Streams

- Wetlands

Roadway Classifications

- Interstates
- US and State Roads
- County, Town and Other Roads

Sullivan County
New York



Scale 1:75,000

1 0 1 2 3 4 Miles

Sullivan County Division of Planning
and Community Development
July 1999

Town of Liberty, Sullivan County, New York

Comprehensive Plan - 2000

- Soils with Depth to Seasonal High Water Table <48"

These soils are very common in the Town of Liberty and limit the use of large amounts of land. Included are Pompton, Red Hook, Swartswood, Scriba, Neversink, Morris, Wurtsboro, Mardin, Willowemoc, Wallington, Scio, Raynham, Alden, Suny, Onteora, Greenwood and Ossipee soils.

- Soils with Depth to Bedrock <48"

These soils are not as common as some others but are found in high elevation areas and other vicinities where glaciation and subsequent erosion had had the greatest impacts. Included are Arnot, Lordstown, Manlius, Mongaup and Oquaga soils.

- Floodplain Soils

These are the alluvial soils with possibilities of frequent flooding. They tend to be "low bottom" soils found on the first terrace above the stream bank and include Suncock, Pope and Fluvaquents soils.

- Soils with Seasonal High Water Tables <48" and Slopes >15%

These soils are characterized by two serious limitations and, consequently, are that much more dangerous and difficult to develop. They include some steep Swartswood, Lackawanna and Lewbeach soils generally found on the major hillsides. They are moderately permeable but water tends to run off rapidly increasing the threat of downstream surface water pollution during rainy spring and fall seasons.

1.2.5 Vegetation and Wildlife.

The following are brief descriptions of the Town of Liberty's vegetation and wildlife resources:

- Vegetation

The Town is, for the most part, heavily wooded not unlike it was during the time the region was first settled. Approximately 65% of the Town of Liberty is in natural woodland. A **Wooded Land Map** follows to indicate where these areas are located. Predominant trees in the Town are sugar maple, beech, yellow birch, hemlock and white pine. The wide variety of deciduous hardwood trees is both an economical and recreational asset and part of what makes the area special. Hunting and fishing are very popular due to the abundance of fish and game and the wooded environment has

Town of Liberty, Sullivan County, New York

Comprehensive Plan - 2000

attracted a large number of second homes as a result. This is likely to continue and be even more of an economic resource in the future.

Timbering, too, is an economic activity that needs to be promoted and protected, provided best management practices are applied. There is a strong need to create economic incentives for land to remain under sustained forestry management programs. The New York State § 480-a program offers landowners forestry tax benefits but, because the remaining taxpayers have to pick up the costs of any tax benefits given to woodlot owners, the burden of this program is squarely upon municipalities, and this does not allow the Town to promote the program. Amendments to this legislation are needed to spread the burden Statewide in the manner of the Farmer's School Tax Refund so that all taxpayers who benefit from the open space preserved can help to pay the costs. Then the Town can safely promote the program without fear of weakening its tax base.

Vegetation also protects soils from wind and erosion and provides a screen for incompatible land uses and noise intrusion. Along with the natural wooded areas already mentioned, the Town of Liberty includes many developed areas where natural vegetation has been removed and managed forms of vegetation have been introduced. These include agricultural fields, lawns, ornamental shrubs and tree plantations.

- Wildlife

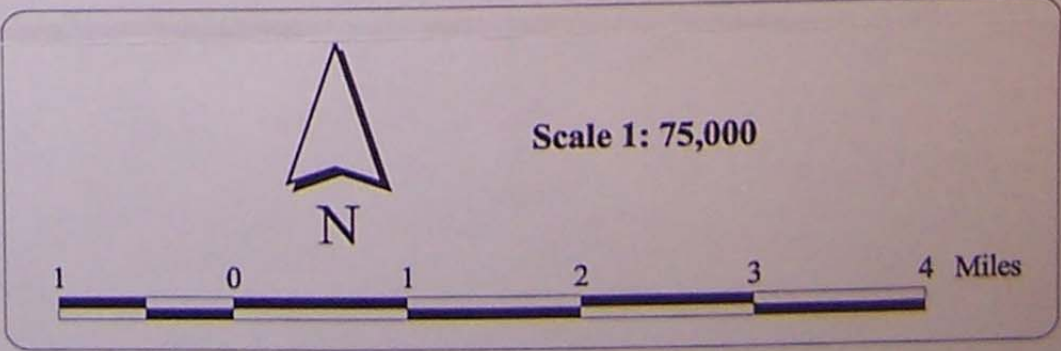
The streams and rivers in this area are very well known for their excellent fishing. The report, "Fish and Wildlife of the Catskill Region," by the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry, lists a wide variety of fish found in the Mongaup River and its tributaries. None of these are listed as *endangered*, but the diversity of species is an indicator of high water quality and supports a very important tourism industry for the Town.

The rolling undeveloped terrain of the Town of Liberty also offers excellent cover for birds and wildlife of all sizes. Some of the most commonly known animals in the area include the black bear, white tailed deer, ruffed grouse, gray squirrel, cottontail rabbit, ringneck pheasant, raccoon, skunk, red and gray fox, woodchuck, and chipmunk. Common birds include red-winged blackbirds, black ducks, mallards, green herons, great blue herons, kingfishers, tree swallows, sparrows, cardinals, robins, morning doves, starlings, blue jays and rock doves. The abundant wooded areas, lakes and streams serve as attractions of these birds.



Town and Village of Liberty Wooded Land

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------|--|--------------------|
| | Wooded Areas | | Roadways |
| | Cleared Areas | | Interstates |
| | Lakes and Ponds | | US and State Roads |
| | Rivers and Streams | | County Roads |
| | Town of Liberty | | Town and Other |
| | Village of Liberty | | |



Sullivan County Division of Planning
and Community Development
July 1999

Town of Liberty, Sullivan County, New York

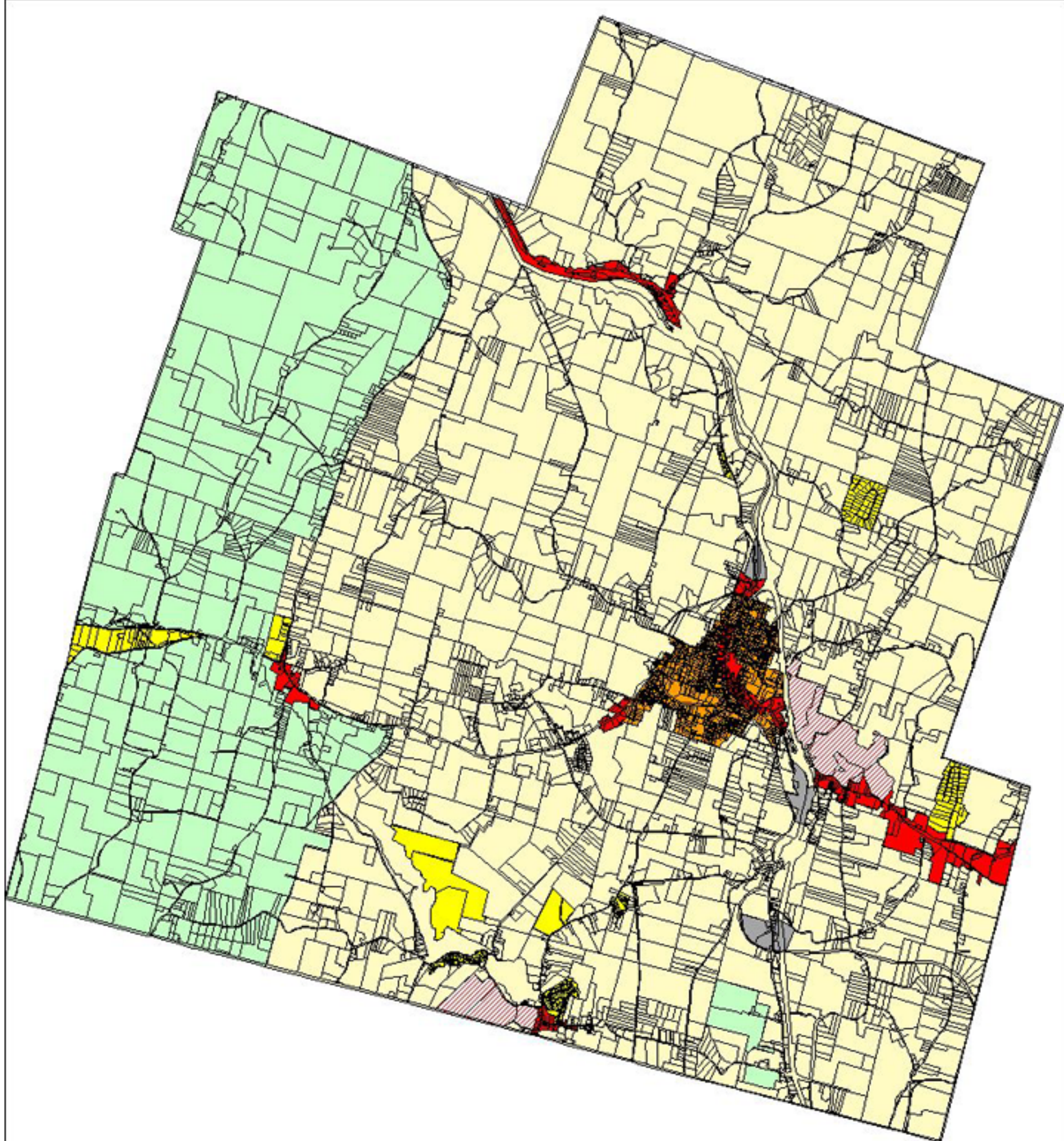
Comprehensive Plan - 2000

1.3 Existing Land Use

A generalized **Land Use Classifications Map** of the Town of Liberty follows. It is assembled from assessment information gathered by the Office of Real Property Services for Sullivan County and is largely self-explanatory. However, one must use the data cautiously. A single house on a 100 acre parcel that is not being used for any other particular purpose results, for example, in the entire tract being classified as residential when only a small fraction, perhaps one acre, is actually in that use and the remainder is vacant or in some passive agricultural or forestry use.




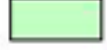



Nevertheless, the pattern is clear. Most of Liberty is in either agricultural/forestry or low-density residential type uses. There are, too, concentrations of commercial and higher density residential or resort activity in Liberty, White Sulfur Springs, Swan Lake, Ferndale, Parksville and east of Youngsville, scattered houses on large lots throughout the Town and commercial development along Route 52 toward the Town of Fallsburg. There are also some institutional land uses in the Town, including the County Family Services Complex and Adult Care Center on Infirmiry Road.

The New York State Land Use and Natural Resource (LUNR) study also provides a basic data source regarding existing land use within the Town of Liberty. Patterns change very slowly within rural areas, because of the vast areas devoted to agricultural, forestry and open space uses. There is, of course, a certain amount of transition among these uses and fairly constant increase in residential acreage to accommodate the growing population, but the overall framework remains pretty much the same. The following table provides a breakdown of Town of Liberty land use based on the LUNR data:



Town and Village of Liberty Land Use Classifications

Land Use Classifications

	Low Density Residential		Resort
	Medium Density Residential		Agricultural
	High Density Residential		Commercial
			Industrial

Sullivan County
New York



Scale 1:75,000

1 0 1 2 3 4 Miles

Sullivan County Division of Planning
and Community Development
July 1999

Town of Liberty, Sullivan County, New York

Comprehensive Plan - 2000

Town of Liberty Existing Land Use

<u>Type of Usage</u>	<u>Square Miles</u>	<u>% of Town</u>
Active Agriculture	7.79	9.7
Woodlands		
Forest	38.39	49.9
Brushland	19.54	24.4
Wetlands	1.93	2.4
Water	1.34	1.7
Residential		
High Density	0.04	0.0
Medium Density	0.43	0.5
Low Density	1.10	1.4
Other	0.32	0.4
Commercial	2.26	2.8
Industrial	0.01	0.0
Extractive	0.06	0.1
Public & Semi-Public	0.55	0.7
Outdoor Recreation	1.40	1.7
Transportation	0.48	0.6
Nonproductive	4.48	5.6

Source: New York State Land Use and Natural Resource Study

The largest portion, almost 75 percent of the Town of Liberty, is mature forest and brush. Another 10 percent is devoted to various agricultural uses. Most of the agricultural concentration is in the gently rolling hills of the southwest quarter of the Town with smaller areas in the west and north. The 2.5 percent residentially developed land is primarily low-density residential and is dispersed widely throughout the Town, especially new development.

Population concentrations, however, are primarily within the town centers of Swan Lake, White Sulphur Springs, Ferndale and the like. Commercial development comprises about 2.8 percent of the land use, with stores, offices and restaurants in the hamlets and commercial areas generally related to the recreation industry. The patterns are quite evident on the USGS topographic maps for the Town of Liberty and these were utilized to develop the base map which accompanies this Plan.

Town of Liberty, Sullivan County, New York

Comprehensive Plan - 2000

Major impacts on land use patterns over the years have included the economic vitality of agricultural enterprises, the construction of Route 17 (which initially killed off Parksville as a commercial center but helped revive it later and develop Ferndale) and changing tourism patterns. Similar factors will affect future land use.

The dairy industry is currently suffering from poor markets and this may well cause some farms to shift to other uses as it did with the egg layer farms. Relatively recent developments in raising broiler chickens and ducks for Foie Gras livers, however, led to reuse of some of the Town's abandoned poultry buildings and today the poultry industry is actually stronger than before in terms of sales.

A reorientation of the Catskills vacation industry has also occurred over the years, with many of the old boarding houses and cottage colonies shifting to other uses. The large hotels are gone now except for the recently revitalized Swan Lake Resort Hotel. Legalized gambling for the Catskills would, undoubtedly, cause a significant expansion of the hotel industry and associated commercial activities. The likelihood of that development is difficult to predict, of course, but it is being actively discussed (as it was 10 and 20 years ago). Clearly, the Town cannot rebuild on its promise and needs to establish a broader tourism base.

No new highways are anticipated but Route 17 is designated for upgrading to I-86 and this could have a significant positive impact on the growth and development of both the Town and Village.

Town of Liberty, Sullivan County, New York Comprehensive Plan - 2000

1.4 Population and Economic Base

1.4.1 Population Trends.

The Town of Liberty has not grown since 1980. One of 21 municipalities in Sullivan County, it represents 13.9% of the County's population, a slight drop from the 15.2% it accounted for in 1980. According to the 1990 census it was home to 9,825 persons, a 0.5% decline from the 1980 figure and the 1998 Census estimate is that population has continued to decline to 9,636 persons.

The Village of Liberty population in 1990 was 4,128 or 42.0% of the Town's total. This is down from the 1980 count of 4,293 which represented 43.5% of that year's population.

As can be seen from the table below, the remainder of the Town has been growing at rates fairly comparable to those of neighboring towns and Sullivan County as a whole, although Bethel and Fallsburg did exhibit much greater growth in the 1980's.

Population Patterns Town of Liberty and Selected Municipalities

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>%</u>		<u>%</u>		<u>%</u>		<u>%</u>		<u>1998</u>
	<u>1960</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>Change</u>	
Village of Liberty	4,704	(4.0)	4,514	(4.9)	4,293	(3.8)	4,128	N/A	N/A
Town of Liberty outside Village	<u>3,972</u>	<u>21.2</u>	<u>4,815</u>	<u>16.0</u>	<u>5,586</u>	<u>2.0</u>	<u>5,697</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>
Town of Liberty	8,676	7.5	9,329	5.9	9,879	(0.5)	9,825	9,636	(1.9)
Bethel	2,366	16.8	2,763	20.7	3,355	10.7	3,693	3,710	0.5
Callicoon	2,176	10.2	2,398	25.0	2,998	0.9	3,024	3,082	1.9
Fallsburg	6,748	17.9	7,959	23.9	9,862	16.1	11,445	11,409	(0.3)
Neversink	1,565	31.3	2,055	38.2	2,840	3.9	2,951	3,026	2.5
Liberty	4,216	(7.0)	3,919	7.3	4,207	(2.6)	4,096	4,043	(1.3)
Thompson	8,792	29.9	11,418	18.7	13,550	1.7	13,711	13,533	(1.3)
Sullivan County	45,272	16.1	52,580	23.9	65,155	6.3	69,277	69,111	(0.2)

The institutional population of the entire Town in 1990 was 317 persons. Persons living in other group quarters numbered 346.

1.4.2 Age of Household Members.

Town of Liberty, Sullivan County, New York

Comprehensive Plan - 2000

The Town of Liberty is somewhat older than Sullivan County as a whole, with 17.1% of the people over 65 years of age. The County proportion, by contrast, was 14.7%. Both numbers are relatively high compared to national averages. However, the Liberty number is skewed by the presence of the Adult Care Center within its borders. The largest age cohort, the 25-44 year age group, accounted for 30.1% of Liberty residents but 31.8% of the County, indicating the Town represents a slightly more dependent population, with fewer persons of working age and more retirees. The proportion of children is about the same in both cases.

Town of Liberty Population by Age, 1990

		<u>Liberty</u> <u>Town</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Sullivan</u> <u>County</u>	<u>%</u>
0-4	Years	745	7.6%	4,967	7.2%
5-17	Years	1,702	17.3%	12,168	17.6%
18-24	Years	900	9.2%	6,363	9.2%
25-44	Years	2,953	30.1%	21,999	31.8%
45-54	Years	953	9.7%	7,210	10.4%
55-64	Years	892	9.1%	6,384	9.2%
65-74	Years	875	8.9%	5,943	8.6%
75+	Years	805	8.2%	4,243	6.1%
Totals		9,825	100.0%	69,277	100.0%

1.4.3 Population by Race and Sex.

The Town population was composed of 8,598 white persons (87.5%) and 1,227 members of minority races (12.5%). There were 643 persons of Hispanic origin (6.5%). The female gender makes up a slight majority of the population in the Town of Liberty with 49.2% (4,832 persons) in 1990 as compared to 51.8% (4,993 persons) for the males.

1.4.4 Years of Education.

The 1990 Census indicated 71.2% of the population aged 25 years or more had a high school diploma. Some 22.5% possessed a college degree (Associate or higher). The drop-out rate for the Town was 28.8% as of 1990, a relatively high number indicating the need for economic development.

Town of Liberty, Sullivan County, New York Comprehensive Plan - 2000

Town of Liberty Education Levels, 1990

Persons 25+ Years	6,478
% Under 12 Years Education	28.8%
% 12 Years or more	71.2%
% 2+ Years College	22.5%
% 4+ Years College	16.6%

1.4.5 Incomes.

Census data gathered during the 1990 Census indicates per capita income for the Town of Liberty was \$11,629 compared to \$12,567 for the County as a whole. Median household income in the Town, moreover, was \$25,919 compared to \$27,582 Countywide. Per capita income Statewide was \$22,129, once again indicating the need for economic development within the Town, County and Catskill/Sullivan region as a whole.

Town of Liberty Incomes, 1990

	<u>Liberty Town</u>	<u>Sullivan County</u>
Per Capita	\$11,629	\$12,567
Median Household	\$25,919	\$27,582
Median Family	\$33,147	\$33,884

Information gathered by the Catskill Watershed Corporation supports the conclusion that real wages in the region have been declining for several years. Indeed, for the period 1990-1997, real wages have declined by up to 25.8% in every economic sector other than finance, insurance and real estate. Average New York State wages for 1997 were typically 24% to 70% above those for the watershed counties (including Sullivan), with some sectors as much 213% higher.²

1.4.6 Employment Status.

The Town of Liberty had 4,574 employed persons over 16 years of age in 1990 and 1,824 or 39.9% of these persons were females. The unemployment rate as a whole was 6.5% in 1989 but for females it was only 2.5%. The following is a breakdown by class of worker:

² Source: West of Hudson Economic Development Study for the Catskill Watershed Corporation, "Baseline Economic Analysis & Community Assessment, 1998.

Town of Liberty, Sullivan County, New York Comprehensive Plan - 2000

Town of Liberty Employed Persons by Class, 1990

Private for profit wage & salary workers	2,584
Private not-for-profit wage & salary workers	518
Self-employed workers	200
Unpaid family workers	20
Sub-total (private industry workers)	3,322
Local government workers	486
State government workers	362
Federal government workers	105
Sub-total (government workers)	953
Total (all employed persons)	4,275

Government represents approximately 22% of all employment for Liberty workers. However, this is to be expected considering the Family Services Complex and BOCES facilities.

There were 1,176 individuals over 16 years of age with work disabilities.

1.4.7 Employment by Industry and Occupation.

The tables below provide a breakdown of the employed Town population aged 16 years or more in 1990 by industry and occupation.

Town of Liberty Employment by Occupation, 1990

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>% of Employed Persons 16+</u>
Managerial	25.9%
Sales and Support	26.2%
Service Occupation	22.9%
Farming/Forestry	1.1%
Precision/Craft/Repair	9.5%
Operator/Laborer	14.4%

Town of Liberty, Sullivan County, New York Comprehensive Plan - 2000

Town of Liberty Employment by Industry, 1990

<u>Industry</u>	<u>% of Employed Persons 16+</u>
Agriculture/Forestry	0.7%
Mining	0.0%
Construction	7.2%
Manufacturing	5.2%
Transportation/Utilities	9.0%
Trade	19.3%
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	3.5%
Business/Personal/Entertainment Services	14.8%
Health Services	13.1%
Educational Services	10.6%
Professional Services	8.5%
Public Administration	8.0%

There are relatively high numbers of persons in lower paying service industry occupations within the Town and this accounts for its low per capita incomes. Nevertheless, there are also large numbers of managers and professionals.

1.4.8 Place of Employment

Some 1,856 persons or 43.4% of employed persons worked outside the Town in 1990 and 374 persons worked outside the County. The average travel time to work was 17 minutes.

Town of Liberty, Sullivan County, New York

Comprehensive Plan - 2000

2.0 Goals and Objectives

The Town of Liberty Planning Board and Town Board, in preparing this Comprehensive Plan, thoroughly analyzed the Town of Liberty's needs in light of its own experience and the foregoing background studies. The following goals and objectives resulted from its discussions and they serve as the basis of the individual plans contained in Section 3.0 following:

2.1 **Protect and promote agriculture as a desirable use of land and a major contributor to the local economy.**

- 2.1.1 Relate zoning and other local land use regulations directly to the provisions of the New York State Agricultural District Law so that the measures complement one another in strengthening the protections afforded agricultural industries from intrusions.
- 2.1.2 Work cooperatively with Cornell Cooperative Extension and other farm representatives to resolve agricultural conflicts with other land uses and identify positive measures which will improve the economic climate for farming within the Town.
- 2.1.3 Establish a policy of avoiding the placement of sewer and water facilities (or other improvements likely to stimulate incompatible development) through principal farmland areas.

2.2 **Provide for a variety of housing types and densities to accommodate the needs of persons of all income levels.**

- 2.2.1 Encourage the rehabilitation of existing older homes, and structures including adaptive reuse projects wherever appropriate.
- 2.2.2 Encourage higher density living areas at locations which are physically suitable, accessible and close to community facilities.
- 2.2.3 Establish high standards for site design tailored for each of several different housing types including single as well as multi-family projects and mobile home parks.
- 2.2.4 Provide generous areas within the Town where each of the various housing types can be readily accommodated with maximum flexibility as to location and without sacrificing health and safety standards.
- 2.2.5 Establish performance criteria for the mixing of residential uses of different intensities and the mixing, where appropriate, of residential and non-residential uses.

Town of Liberty, Sullivan County, New York

Comprehensive Plan - 2000

2.2.6 Assure that all housing projects involving a responsibility for maintenance of common facilities adequately provide for homeowners associations and management procedures.

2.3 Ensure proper use of natural resources.

2.3.1 Establish performance standards in zoning, and other local laws, for development on steep slopes and poor soils, relating densities to capabilities to support buildings and improvements, including on-lot sewage systems.

2.3.2 Preserve floodplains in open space.

2.3.3 Require developers to address stormwater as well as erosion/sedimentation concerns with all new major projects.

2.3.4 Designate "conservation areas" to protect particularly sensitive resources or valuable open spaces from over-development, particularly within public water supply watershed areas.

2.3.5 Provide controls or incentives for the preservation of woodlands to the maximum extent possible.

2.3.6 Re-evaluate all subdivision and zoning regulations to be sure that standards employed are having the intended effect of encouraging development that meets generally accepted planning principles and ensures economies in provision of community services to projects.

2.4 Maintain, to the maximum degree possible while encouraging growth, the rural character and those open spaces that have made the Town an attractive living environment and popular recreational area.

2.4.1 Establish standards that provide for the satisfactory completion of all projects in a manner that meets generally accepted health and safety standards and achieves, in the interest of the general welfare, the improvement or protection of community appearances.

2.4.2 Develop a set of local laws and performance criteria within zoning regulations, to control common-law nuisances attributable to noise, odors and unsightly uses.

2.4.3 Establish use densities and encourage practices, such as conservation subdivisions (clustering) and Planned Residential Development, that will preserve as much open space as possible without unreasonable excluding individuals from the housing market.

Town of Liberty, Sullivan County, New York

Comprehensive Plan - 2000

- 2.4.4 Use the Town Zoning Law to identify and protect special natural resources, scenic areas and historical sites.
- 2.4.5 Avoid the location of growth-inducing community facilities in areas desirable for low-density development or as open space.
- 2.4.6 Establish setbacks and other proximity and performance standards for major impact developments; such as hotels, bungalow colonies, condominium projects and the like that will ensure that sufficient open space is present to buffer such uses from adjacent uses and preserve rural character attributes.
- 2.4.7 Develop regulations to control the proliferation of signs and billboards and establish minimum design criteria.

2.5 Provide for the development of a safe and efficient circulation system to move people and good through the Town.

- 2.5.1 Develop a highway capital improvements program to be coordinated with the County and State Highway Departments, establishing priorities for bringing certain highways up to the functional classifications recommended in this Plan.
- 2.5.2 Maintain an up-to-date Road Ordinance setting standards for new road construction as well as highways to be dedicated to the Town.
- 2.5.3 Use zoning classifications and/or performance standards to limit high density development to highways with adequate capacity to safely handle the anticipated traffic.
- 2.5.4 Identify accident-prone areas and measures which will remedy the problems.
- 2.5.5 Control the creation of new driving hazards by developing access, parking, and street standards which can be used to evaluate and condition new subdivisions and commercial developments as well as other projects.

2.6 Assure that community facilities and services are or will be adequate to serve existing plus expected new growth, the former being the higher priority.

- 2.6.1 Utilize Zoning to designate specific areas for the expansion of existing development centers.

Town of Liberty, Sullivan County, New York

Comprehensive Plan - 2000

- 2.6.2 Use flexible zoning techniques, based on conditional use review procedures, to accommodate as wide a range of uses as possible, while retaining the ability to protect the health and safety of the public.
- 2.6.3 Periodically update the Zoning Map to complement and reinforce positive aspects of existing development patterns.
- 2.6.4 Require evidence of potable water supply and adequate sewage capabilities with all major subdivisions.
- 2.6.5 Continue to implement programs of providing sewer and water facilities to those densely populated areas with health problems stemming from inadequate facilities using, whenever possible, alternatives that allow the service of relatively small areas.
- 2.6.6 Encourage and promote volunteer-supported ambulance, fire and other public service associations or companies.
- 2.6.7 Work with the County Sheriff to identify means of improving police protection.
- 2.6.8 Develop a capital improvements program for financing community facilities.
- 2.7 Provide for commercial and industrial development to meet local and regional needs, and encourage other business compatible with the agricultural/recreational economy of the Town.**
- 2.7.1 Incorporate specific provisions in the Town Zoning Ordinance to permit the establishment and expansion of recreational or agricultural-related industries.
- 2.7.2 Provide reasonably broad flexibility for new commercial and industrial uses to locate and new commercial centers to develop subject to performance standards to protect public health and safety.
- 2.7.3 Identify prime sites for commercial and industrial development and assure, through zoning, that this land remains available for such uses.
- 2.7.4 Establish commercial and industrial building and site development standards (including landscaping) to ensure that such projects are safe and contribute to an improved community appearance.

Town of Liberty, Sullivan County, New York

Comprehensive Plan - 2000

2.7.5 Provide economic incentives and eliminate any regulatory or tax disincentives to expanded business development. Also, develop special programs or secure grants to upgrade or redevelop blighted areas.

2.7.6 Encourage planned unit commercial or industrial projects as alternatives to strip development.

2.8 Promote the availability of recreational activities, attractions, and facilities of both a public and private nature to complement the tourist industry and contribute toward a healthful living environment.

2.8.1 Continue the program of recreational activities and maintain the park facilities now offered by the Town.

2.8.2 Provide, in zoning, for the development of recreational enterprises that will broaden and enhance the Town's existing tourism base, particularly for family-based tourism.

2.8.3 Work with the Sullivan County Division of Planning and Community Development to identify historic sites and secure their designation as "official sites" along with developing them as recreational and/or tourist attractions.

2.8.4 Require new major subdivisions and other residential developments to provide areas for recreation and open space within those developments.

2.9 Cooperate with adjoining municipalities, particularly the Village of Liberty, in implementing this Plan.

The above goals and objectives are not intended to be all-inclusive. Additional details are provided in Plan recommendations and the items listed here reflect priority considerations of the Town Planning Board and Town Board.

Town of Liberty, Sullivan County, New York

Comprehensive Plan - 2000

3.0 Plans

3.1 Land Use

3.1.1 Land Use Development Trends.

The following significant changes in the Town of Liberty's land use patterns have taken place over the last several years:

- The hamlet of Parksville has experience somewhat of a revitalization as new businesses have located near the Route 17 interchange.
- New development has spread out along Route 52 toward the Town of Fallsburg even as the Sullivan's Department Store closed and the redevelopment of Grossingers failed to materialize. Recent highway and landscape improvements in this area suggest further improvements.
- The Village of Liberty has made several efforts at revitalization, with modest success. The new Museum is an excellent example of a volunteer effort and some stores have also been renovated. The downtown still tends to suffer from economic stagnation, however. New activity at Grossingers and a new exit of Route 17 should help.
- The fairly substantial rate of new housing development in the early 1980's with new townhouse, mobile home park, bungalow and single-family activity throughout the Town, disappeared in the 1990's.
- The County has invested heavily in upgrading its Family Services Complex on Infirmary Road and this has created new jobs and related economic activity.
- The Stevensville Hotel closed but reopened after a period of years, following a major investment in renovations. The property is, once again, functioning as the Swan Lake Resort Hotel in combination with its well known golf course.
- Poultry farming has undergone an evolution into specialty poultry products and experienced substantial growth in sales although fewer farmers are involved.

New commercial growth seems to be headed in Liberty's direction, particularly in the Ferndale area and near Grossingers.. There is also good potential for a comprehensive project that will finally make effective use of this former resort property. Generally, though, it does not appear

Town of Liberty, Sullivan County, New York

Comprehensive Plan - 2000

the Town will face any substantial development pressure outside these areas in the foreseeable future unless legalized gaming is brought to the Town. Those prospects remain as unclear as they were some 30 years ago.

3.1.2. Existing Land Use Controls and Recommendations.

The Town of Liberty has a comprehensive set of land use regulations that serves to guide development. This legislation, a mixture of Town laws and other regulations, includes the following:

- **Flood Damage Prevention Law (1987)**

This Law is based on the State and Federal models and is quite adequate as written. It addresses any development that takes place within designated flood hazard areas.

- **Junkyard Law (1987)**

The Town Board, pursuant to § 130 of the Town Law, enacted a local law regulating junkyards. The law is a very simple one, much like the provisions of the General Municipal Law pertaining to junkyards. The regulations are quite basic in nature and not too effective. They need updating with greater attention to enforcement language.

- **Mobile Home Law (1987)**

This Ordinance derives its authority from § 130(21) of the New York State Town Law. It establishes procedures and standards for permitting of mobile home parks as well as individual mobile homes. Mobile home parks are subject to review and approval procedures similar to those for land subdivisions and integrated with those for Special Uses under the Town Zoning Law. The Ordinance standards are somewhat weak insofar as density, allowing 7 mobile homes per acre with only minimal open space required. Other standards are based on those recommended by the industry and are generally appropriate. Requirements applicable to individual mobile homes need updating to address non-residential uses. Overall, the Ordinance provides good basis for mobile home regulation but needs revisions to reflect changes in SEQRA law and address the matters of density, open space and non-residential use.

- **Recreational Vehicle Park Law (1987)**

This law establishes basic procedures and standards with respect to campgrounds and recreational vehicle park developments, distinguishing between those applicable to

Town of Liberty, Sullivan County, New York

Comprehensive Plan - 2000

transient and non-transient use. This Law is much like the Mobile Home Law insofar as application is concerned and only needs updating with respect to the latest industry standards.

- **Road Law (1993)**

The Town Board enacted local law in 1993 establishing construction and dedication requirements for new roads. It includes requirements that all such roads meet specific construction standards and provides procedures for approval of plans and dedication of roads to the Town. A separate section also establishes standards for highway occupancies and street encroachments. It is fairly up to date and cross-referenced with State requirements and land subdivision procedures. Its only weakness is that it effectively encourages all new roads be turned over to the Town by requiring that all roads, private or public, meet the same standards, thereby eliminating any incentive for maintaining them privately without cost to the Town.

- **Subdivision Regulations (1997)**

The Town Planning Board adopted updated comprehensive Subdivision Regulations, pursuant to § 268 of the Town Law, in 1997. These Regulations, adopted as a Local Law, are straightforward and have been generally effective. They address all aspects of land subdivision and cover all such activity.

- **Noise Abatement Law (1998)**

This is a very specific law targeted at noise problems. It is largely structured as a nuisance regulation and defines intrusive noises, sets standards, provides for certain prohibitions and establishes penalties relating to violations. It requires no updating but needs to be cross-referenced in other regulations.

- **Zoning Law (1987)**

This Law was enacted in 1987 to replace an earlier Zoning Ordinance and has been amended on various occasions since then. It provides for six major categories of land use; Agricultural/Conservation, Resort Hotel, Residential Settlement, Service Commercial, Industrial Commercial and Rural Development. The purposes of each follow:

Agricultural Conservation

This area is intended to encompass those sections of the Town where it is appropriate to

Town of Liberty, Sullivan County, New York

Comprehensive Plan - 2000

protect agricultural activities from incompatible uses and complement the New York Agricultural District program by encouraging only those forms of development which will complement agricultural uses. It is also intended to preserve sensitive natural areas and ensure they are used in ways which adapt to those limitations and do not threaten the health and safety of adjacent landowners.

Resort Hotel

This portion of the Town is intended to provide areas for the normal development and expansion of existing resort hotel facilities along with related recreational enterprises, which facilities are typically characterized by a variety of building types, activities and densities of a substantially different nature than the surrounding area, including a mixture of recreational, commercial and residential uses.

Residential Settlement

This area is intended to provide land to meet the anticipated housing needs of the Town accommodating both low and medium density residential development as well as other compatible uses, while preserving the residential character of these areas.

Service Commercial

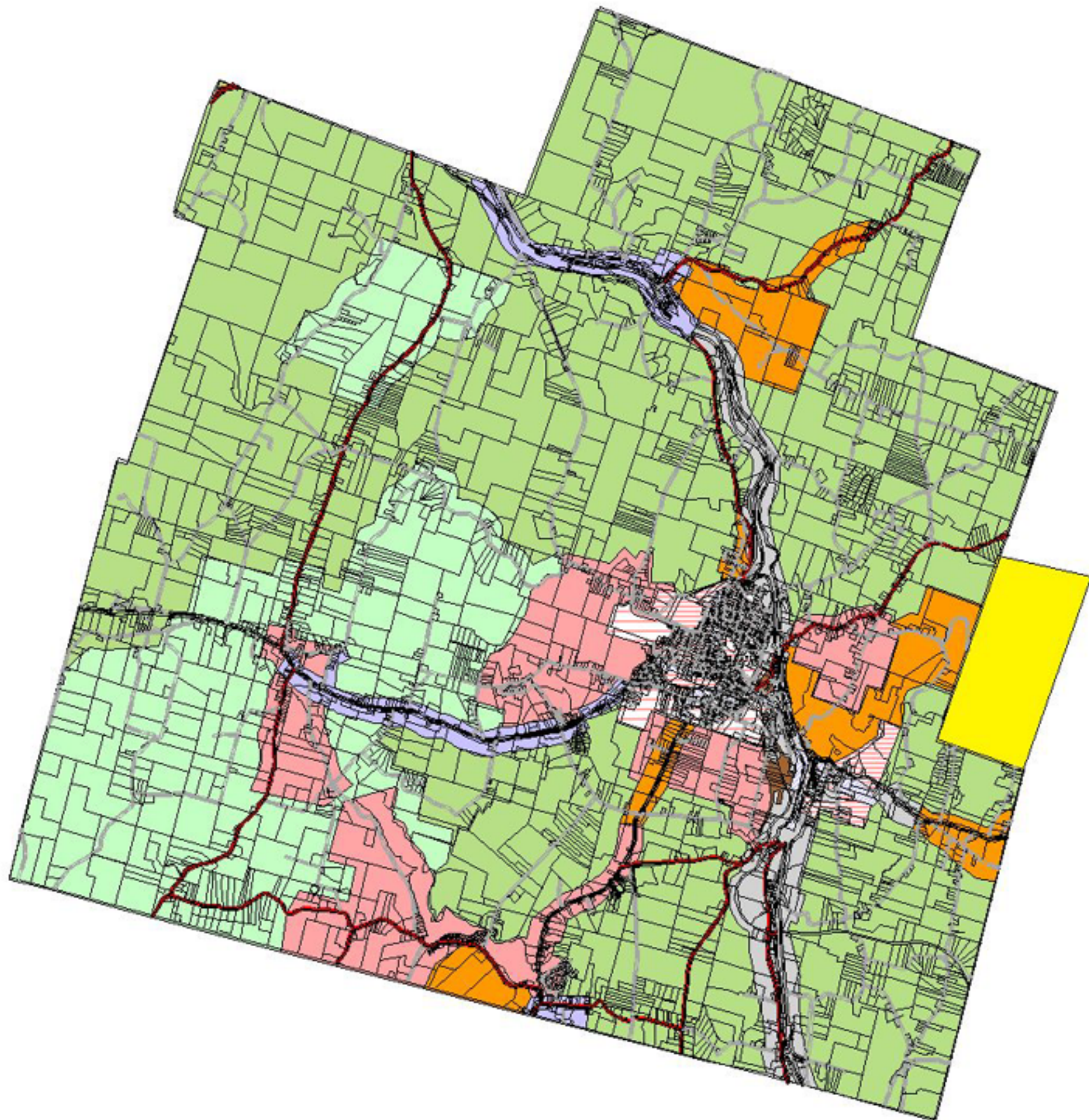
This section is intended to provide areas within the Town for the expansion of existing retail and service establishments and the development of new commercial areas to serve the needs of the area as growth continues.

Industrial Commercial

This area is intended to accommodate industrial and heavy commercial enterprises and service establishments designed to meet regional needs.

Rural Development

This remaining portion of the Town is intended to allow the Town to grow while providing a reasonable measure of protection for sensitive areas and encouraging the preservation of open space. It is designed to accommodate growth and a wide range of uses but under carefully controlled conditions protecting the public and safety.



Town and Village of Liberty General Zoning Map

Sullivan County
New York



- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Zoning District | Liberty Tax Parcel |
| Agricultural Conservation | County Road |
| Rural Development | Parcel |
| Recreation (Mobile Home) | State Road |
| Resort Hotel | Town Line |
| Low Density Residential | Town Road |
| Medium Density Residential | |
| Residential Settlement | |
| Commercial Zone | |
| Commercial Zone | |
| Service Commercial | |
| Manufacturing | |
| Industrial Commercial | |



Scale: 1:75,000

1 0 1 2 3 4 Miles

Prepared by the Sullivan County
Division of Planning and Community Development
January 2000

Town of Liberty, Sullivan County, New York

Comprehensive Plan - 2000

These Zoning regulations make very effective use of Special Use and Site Plan Review authorities as provided in the Town Law. They are designed to provide flexibility but with effective controls to protect public health, safety and welfare. Circumstances have changed somewhat since 1987, of course, and this Law needs updating in several respects. Changes in Town Law and SEQRA need to be addressed, for instance. The zoning map also needs updating to tie-in better to property lines and take advantage of GIS technology. The existing districting, depicted in the **General Zoning Map** preceding, tends to encourage strip development and needs to be reconsidered. There are also changes needed to address bed & breakfasts, minor impact uses, communications structures, landscaping, parking, traffic impacts, junkyards and adult uses and to eliminate the unnecessary Resort Hotel District. A recommended set of general land use regulation revisions and proposed new Zoning Map are attached as **Appendix A**.

Finally, reference to the New York City Water Supply Watershed Regulations and protection of other water supplies as a basis for the review of site plans would improve the Zoning Law. The applicable New York City regulations include the following:

- 1) New petroleum storage facilities (including those used for home heating fuel storage) must be located at least 100 feet from a stream and 500 feet from a reservoir.
- 2) All new subsurface sewage disposal systems must be approved by the City's Department of Environmental Protection and be located at least 100 feet from a stream or wetland and 300 feet from a reservoir (increased to 250' and 500', respectively, for "raised systems").
- 3) Impervious surfaces constructed in connection with new commercial uses are prohibited within 100 feet of a stream or wetland or 300 feet of a reservoir.
- 4) New residences are generally prohibited within 100 feet of a stream or wetland or 300 feet of a reservoir.
- 5) Stormwater pollution prevention plans for review by the City are required in connection with new subdivisions, earth disturbances of 5+ acres and creation of impervious surfaces of 40,000 sq. ft. or more or located within commercial zones.

Specific regulations along this line are attached as **Appendix B** for consideration. If enacted, these will put the Town in more of a leadership role with respect to land use regulation within the watershed portion of the Town. These same standards should work well to help protect the Town's own water supplies

Town of Liberty, Sullivan County, New York

Comprehensive Plan - 2000

3.2 Community Facilities and Recreation

Although the the Town as a whole has not grown recently, there are some reasons to expect it again particularly within that portion outside the Village. Sullivan County is experiencing some economic revitalization and the benefits of I-86 new development around the Grossingers area should produce some growth. Providing present and future residents with essential public services and facilities to accommodate growth in both visitation and residency is much the responsibility of the Town.

3.2.1 Parks and Recreation.

The Town has excellent recreation facilities and programs. There are also several private camps, lakes and other recreational facilities. These are depicted on the **Open Space and Recreation Map** that follows this page. The Town should continue to support this recreation program but consider publicizing it better to the non-resident community by using the County GIS mapping resources to produce a Town Recreation Map brochure for use in marketing privately run facilities such as campgrounds and golf courses to the visiting public.

3.2.2 Town Hall.

The Town of Liberty Town Hall complex is an older facility that serves well for offices but not for public meetings. Access and parking are both difficult and long-term the Town needs to be capital budgeting for a new more modern facility more conveniently located for use by the general public. It should include public meeting space and the Town should consider designing it to also serve as a neighborhood meeting facility for youth and seniors. Combination with emergency service needs should also be considered.

3.2.3 Fire and Ambulance.

Emergency needs, including capital requirements, are being adequately addressed by private companies and fire districts, although the Town needs to continue to act in a supportive role. It does not appear there are any serious needs in this regard at the present time that are not already being adequately addressed by these volunteers through their own planning. Some special attention, however, may be appropriate for the northern and western sections of the Town -- those areas most distant from protection services.

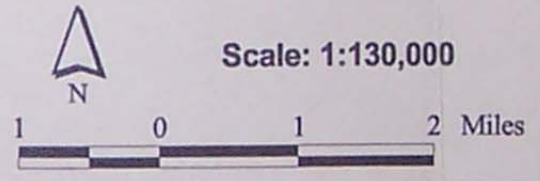
3.2.4 Water and Sewage Facilities.

A **Municipal Services Map** generally depicting water and sewer districts within the Town and Village follows:

Town of Liberty Open Space and Recreation

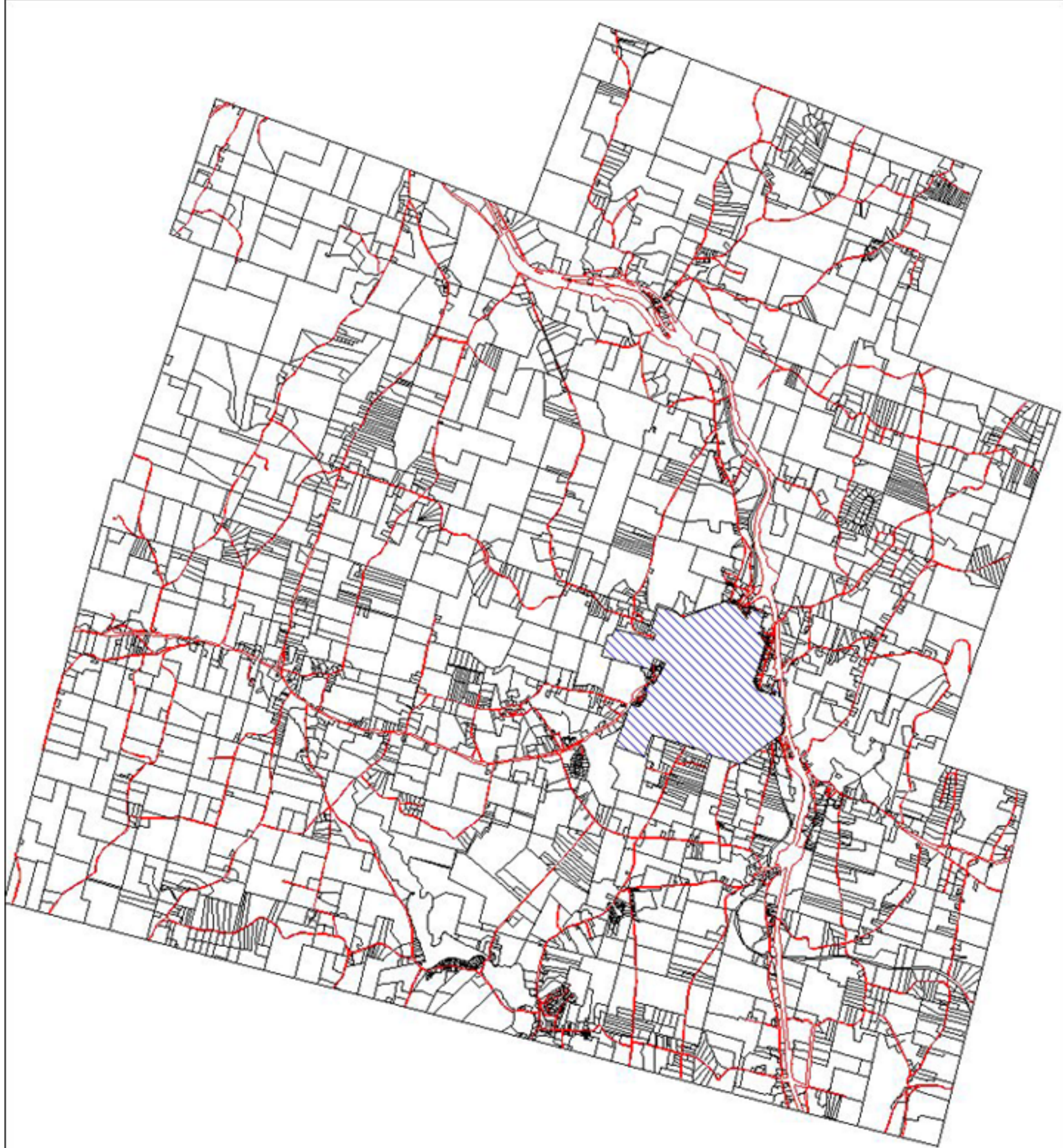


Sullivan County
New York

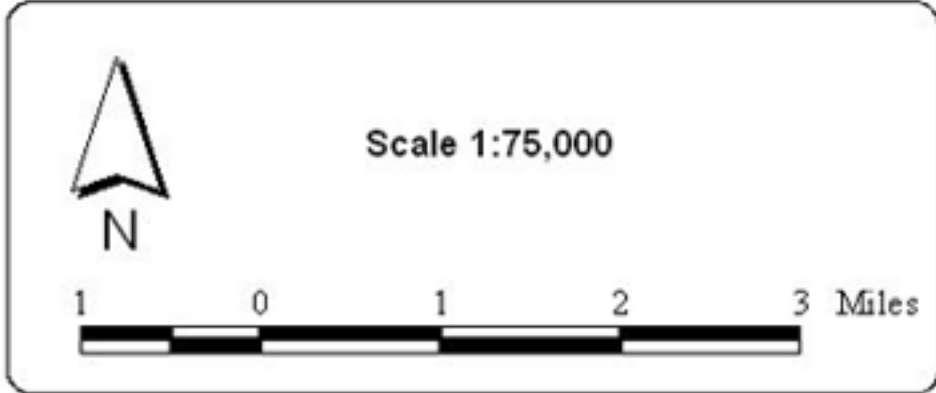
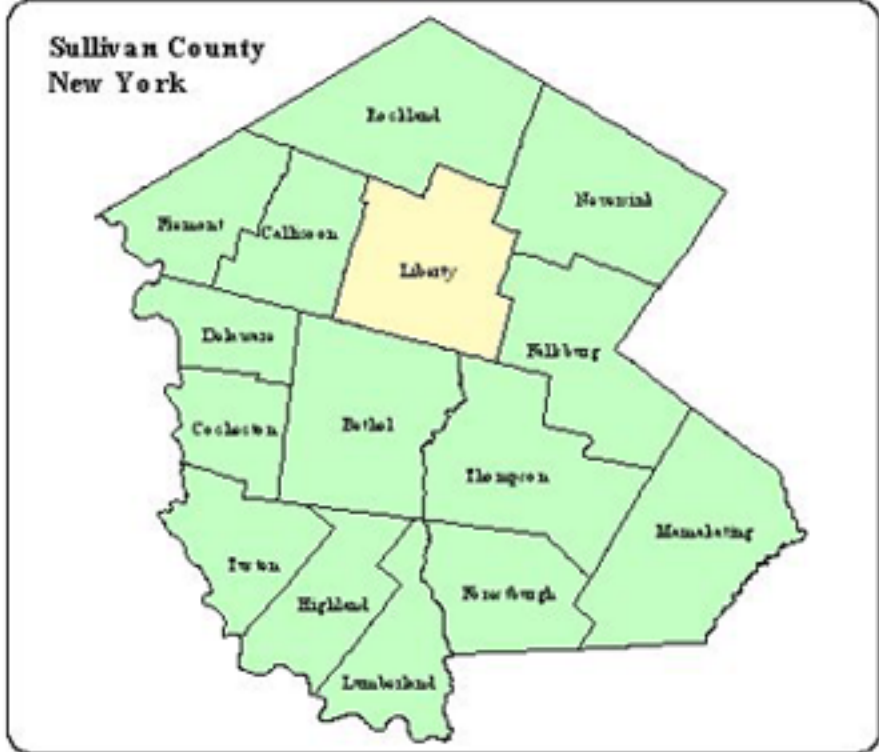
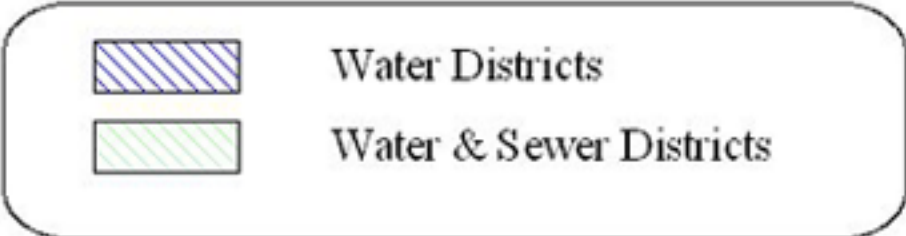


- Legend**
- Golf Courses
 - Fishing Access With Parking
 - Rails to Trails Pathways**
 - Completed Pathways
 - Pathways Near Completion
 - Open Space Categories**
 - County & Municipal Public Parks
 - State Lands & Parks
 - Camping Facilities
 - Private Forest Lands
 - Active Recreation
 - Cemeteries
 - NYC Water Supply Lands
 - Reservoir Lands
 - Institutional Facilities
 - Air Transportation
 - Agricultural Lands
 - Lakes and Ponds
 - Rivers and Streams
 - Wetlands
 - Roadway Classifications**
 - Interstates
 - US and State Roads
 - Interchanges
 - County Roads
 - Town and Other Roads
 - Political Boundaries**
 - State Boundary
 - County Boundary
 - Town Boundaries
 - Hamlets
 - Villages

Prepared by the Sullivan County
Division of Planning and
Community Development
January 2000



**Town and Village of Liberty
Municipal Services**



Sullivan County Division of Planning
and Community Development
July 1999

Town of Liberty, Sullivan County, New York

Comprehensive Plan - 2000

Water supply systems appear adequate but sewage disposal systems were rapidly being used to capacity during the 1980's.. A study by the Town Engineers addresses this situation by recommending some improvements and requiring all development proposals be accompanied by individual analyses of the capability of Town systems to accommodate those projects. Nevertheless, subsequent slowdowns in growth and closure of hotels and certain other users actually resulted in some systems lacking sufficient flows to comfortably meet their needs. The reopening of the Swan Lake Resort Hotel, for example, helped the Swan Lake sewer system tremendously. Continued monitoring of individual projects for their sewage capacity impacts, followed by negotiations with developers to fund those improvements required, appears to be the best approach to addressing any major needs. The lack of ordinary growth suggests other major capacity expansions are not warranted at this time. Where Town sewers are unavailable it is recommended increased attention be given to soils evaluations when reviewing development projects that will rely upon on-site sewage disposal systems. Department of Health standards and procedures alone do not always provide adequate protection of water supplies and water quality generally.

3.2.5 Solid Wastes.

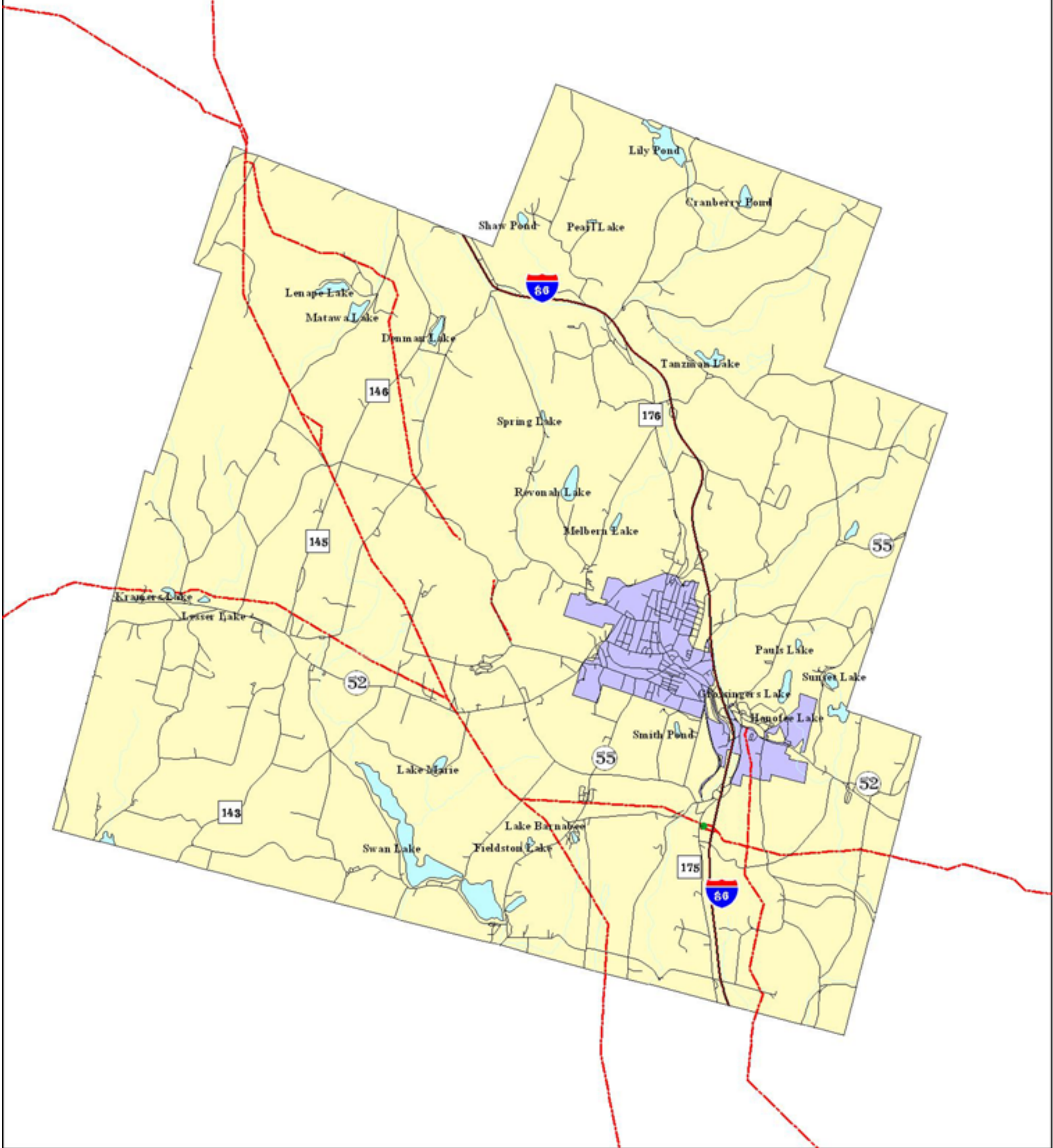
The Town is served by private haulers who take the solid wastes to the County landfill facilities located outside the Town. The landfill has several years of capacity remaining. There are no current unmet needs in this regard.

3.3 Transportation

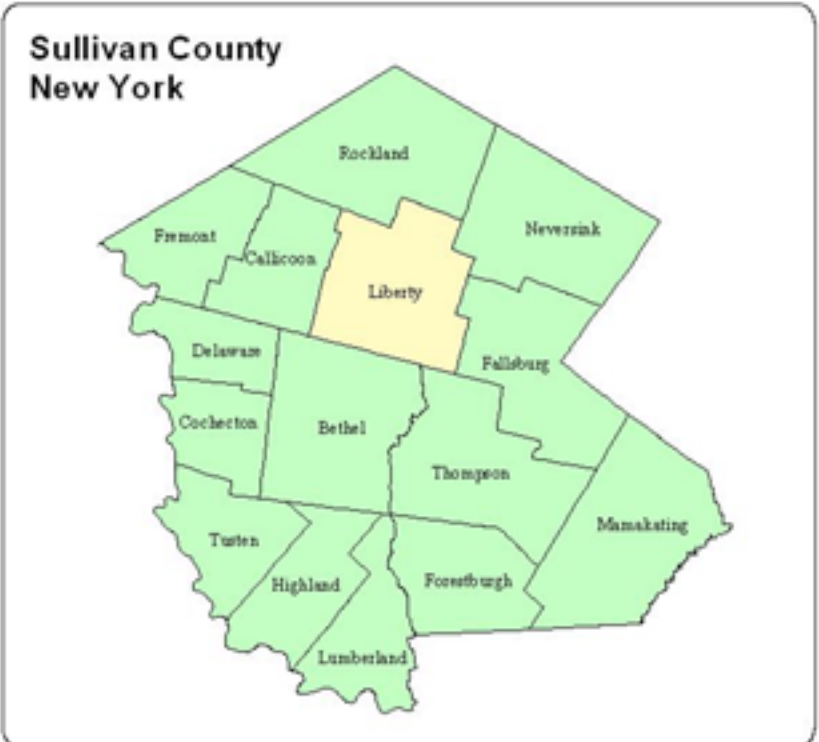
Highways influence the direction of overall growth as well as the location of specific commercial, industrial and residential developments. This plan addresses the needs of this highway system, as well as other modes of transportation to the extent they exist.

3.3.1 Functional Road Classifications.


Every road and highway in Town of Liberty plays a part in moving people and goods within and through the Town. Some roads are more important than others and, therefore, it is necessary to assess the future role and function of each road as the Town continues to develop. The following **Functional Roadway Classification Map** and table identifies Town roads by the functions which they must play in the future (as opposed to present use) to achieve an efficient flow of traffic in the Town.




Town and Village of Liberty Electric Lines



Electric Lines		Roadways	
	High tension Transmission Lines		Interstates
	Electric 3-Phase Lines		US and State Roads
	Stations		County Roads
	Lakes and Ponds		Town and Other
	Rivers and Streams		Village of Liberty
	Town of Liberty		


Scale: 1:75,000


1 0 N 1 2 3 4 Miles

Prepared by the Sullivan County
 Division of Planning and Community Development
 January 2000

Town of Liberty, Sullivan County, New York

Comprehensive Plan - 2000

<u>CLASSIFICATION</u>	<u>FUNCTION</u>	<u>ROADS</u>
ARTERIAL	Carries medium-to-heavy volumes of traffic at moderate to high speeds and provides access to major traffic generators.	Route 17 (I-86) Route 52 Route 55 County Roads 143/145/146 County Roads 175/176
COLLECTOR	Provides connections between Arterials and Local Roads at comparatively slower speeds and carries moderate volumes of traffic.	See Map
LOCAL	Provides direct access to abutting properties and channels Local traffic to Collector Roads.	All other existing roads

All of these highways are already functioning adequately in the above capacities although some additional efforts are warranted to bring about a more functional system. They include the upgrading of the Route 17 to meet Interstate Highway standards. The Town should work with the County and NYS-DOT to further this as rapidly as possible.

3.3.2 Other Recommendations.

- A. Highway maintenance should be directed towards reducing traffic hazards, cutting back the long term cost of highway improvements and increasing highway capacity.
- B. Accident-prone areas should be continually documented for justification of improvement projects, working cooperatively with NYS-DOT.
- C. Public transportation depends largely upon high population density and state and federal support for financing. The expectation of providing extensive public transportation in a rural, sparsely populated area is unrealistic. However, the Town should continue to cooperate with the County and the Shortline Bus Company to implement the County's Rural Public Transportation Plan, adopted in 1997. That Plan, which is quite comprehensive in nature, provides for several public transportation service improvements within the Town of Liberty, adding a number of trips and increasing the frequency of service generally.

Town of Liberty, Sullivan County, New York

Comprehensive Plan - 2000

- D. Railroad freight service is available in nearby Callicoon and the reasonable accessibility of the Sullivan County Airport suggests the Town has no further needs in either of these categories. Commuter rail service between New York City and Binghamton is also being discussed. This would come into Sullivan County through Narrowsburg and Callicoon. A study of high speed rail service from New York City is also being pursued.

3.4 Housing

3.4.1 Number of Persons Per Household.

The number of people living in each household was 2.55 persons in 1990. This was slightly lower than the County average of 2.60 persons.

3.4.2 Housing Stock.

The 1990 U.S. Census indicated Town of Liberty had 4,966 housing units. There were 3,594 occupied units. Some 2,165 were owner occupied and 1,429 were renter occupied. There were also 1,372 vacant units in the Town, some 825 or 16.7% of the total housing stock, of which were utilized for seasonal, recreational or occasional occupancies.

3.4.3 Housing Values.

The 1990 Census revealed a median housing value of \$88,200 for the Town. Countywide, the median value was \$93,400 - significantly higher than the Town.

3.4.4 Housing Type and Ownership.

Single family homes in 1990 accounted for 2,856 units and comprised 57.5% of the housing stock in Town of Liberty with 2,812 of those being detached and 44 attached units. This was followed by two-family and multi-family units at 362 and 1,010 units, respectively, or a combined 27.6% of the stock. Mobile homes totaled 669 units or 13.5% of all housing in Liberty.

3.4.5 Contract Rents.

Rents within the Town were relatively moderate in 1990, the median rent being \$382. The median rent Countywide in 1990 was a similar \$390. Liberty, like much of the developed area of Sullivan County, includes a number of subsidized rent public housing projects and other lower cost housing occupied by seniors and other smaller households.

Town of Liberty, Sullivan County, New York

Comprehensive Plan - 2000

3.4.6 Recommendations.

The Town needs to ensure that its land use regulations do not unnecessarily raise the cost of moderate income housing by requiring excessive lot sizes or adding too many regulatory oversight costs. The Town also needs to maintain effective mobile home standards and encourage cluster development.

Town of Liberty, Sullivan County, New York

Comprehensive Plan - 2000

4.0 Implementation

This Comprehensive Plan should be applied consistently in decisions pertaining to land use, transportation, community facilities, economic development and housing. Each proposal and action should conform with the goals laid out herein and it should be standard practice to refer to these in the consideration of public policy decisions.

This Plan should also be reviewed periodically and updated to reflect new problems and concerns. It would also be beneficial to the Town of Liberty to develop a close working relationship with adjoining municipalities on planning and development matters, particularly the Village of Liberty and the Towns of Fallsburg and Thompson, with whom it shares many issues. The Town will also be well-served by a close working relationship with the Sullivan County Division of Planning and Community Development.

The Plan is itself an implementation tool. It provides policies for guiding the future development and preservation of the Town of Liberty and provides a legal foundation for the Town's Zoning Law under the provisions of the New York State Town Law and General Municipal Law. This Law and the Town's Subdivision Regulations are the major legal tools recommended for regulating the use of land in the Town. They need to be regularly reviewed and updated. The recommendations amendments at this time are found in Appendices A and B hereof.

Town of Liberty, Sullivan County, New York

Comprehensive Plan - 2000

5.0 Relationships to Adjoining Communities, the County and the Region and Environmental Impacts

This Comprehensive Plan has been funded with assistance provided in conjunction with the New York City Watershed Agreement. The provisions of that Agreement and the regulations applicable to the watershed were examined as this Plan was assembled. The impacts on adjoining communities and the County as a whole were also considered. Finally, the environmental impacts attendant to the recommendations contained herein were reviewed. Findings with respect to environmental impacts are as follows:

5.1 Impacts

Many of the recommended measures contained herein are designed specifically to address environmental concerns (e.g. reducing the sprawl impacts of the existing zoning districting). If implemented, these should help to guide growth and development.

5.2 Impacts That Cannot Be Mitigated

There are no environmental impacts that cannot be mitigated by good site plan review procedures and the Town's Zoning Law provides a proper vehicle for this. Those procedures will be enhanced by referral to the goals and objectives as outlined in this Plan.

5.3 Irreversible Commitments of Environmental Resources

There are no recommendations contained in this Plan for actions that would constitute an irreversible commitment of environmental resources. Indeed, many of the recommendations relate to protection of those resources. Moreover, it is anticipated all actions would be subject to individual review under SEQRA.

5.4 Alternatives

The various alternatives for development of the Town have been considered in the context of the land use discussions contained herein. There are no development alternatives available to the Town that are not environmentally sound. The Town could, of course, attempt to resist new commercial, industrial and residential development, but that course of action will do nothing to improve the environment, whereas carefully planned development subject to site plan review can actually incorporate environmental improvements to deal with some of the aesthetic problems the Town has faced. The ability of growth and development to positively reshape the face of Liberty is evidenced by the combination of new private and public investments along Route 52

Town of Liberty, Sullivan County, New York

Comprehensive Plan - 2000

from Route 17 east. Landscaping at the corner gas station, an attractive new commercial mini-mall, tree plantings along the highway and numerous other improvements have dramatically improved the appearance of this section of Town. It is excellent demonstration of what is possible.

5.5 Conclusion

This Plan, if implemented, will cause no significant adverse effects on the environment that could be classified as important. Rather, the Plan will significantly improve the environment by upgrading infrastructure and providing specific goals and objectives, relating to environmental protection, that can be employed in site plan review. It also provides for a low impact forms of development that are consistent with protection of the environment.

Town of Liberty, Sullivan County, New York Comprehensive Plan - 2000

6.0 Appendices

**A - Recommended General Land Use Regulation Revisions and
Zoning Map**

B - Recommended Watershed Protection Provisions