

Town of Big Flats

Comprehensive Plan



May 2006

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Albany, New York 12205

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1. INTRODUCTION TO PLANNING

1.1 What is a Comprehensive Plan?

New York State law grants municipalities the authority to prepare and adopt comprehensive plans. As defined in the State legislation, a comprehensive plan is a document that identifies goals, objectives, principles, and policies for the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth, and development of a community. Also known as a master plan, a comprehensive plan provides guidance to municipal leaders, government agencies, community organizations, local businesses, and residents, and helps to ensure that the community's needs are met, both now and in the future.

Long-term in nature (with generally a 10-year outlook), comprehensive plans concentrate on drafting land use policy, developing regulatory measures, identifying zoning changes, and creating local laws that, over time, will foster the community's growth in a manner consistent with residents' preferred vision. A well-developed comprehensive plan is a community's blueprint for the future.

The comprehensive plan, as a tool of planning, is a means to promote the health, safety, and welfare of the people. An adopted comprehensive plan indicates that both community leaders and citizens accept the plan as the guide to future decision-making and development. New York State law requires that any new land use regulations or amendments or capital projects be done in accordance with the community's adopted comprehensive plan.

1.2 Comprehensive Planning in Big Flats, New York

The Town of Big Flats 2005 Comprehensive Plan includes a detailed inventory of existing conditions, including demographics and economic features, natural resources, municipal resources, recreational and community facilities, educational resources, transportation and land use. As part of the planning effort, an inclusive public outreach effort was conducted. This was done to solicit feedback from the community on what their concerns were and also to build consensus on a vision of the Town's future, including goals, objectives, and strategies related to future land use and development.



The 2005 Town of Big Flats Comprehensive Plan will serve as a guide to future public and private decisions. In order for the Town of Big Flats to continue to be socially and economically sustainable, it must respond to changing conditions. To retain its vitality, the Town needs to establish a strategic vision

that takes into consideration the realities associated with changing economic conditions, the importance and value of open space, and the needs and desires of a diverse population. As such, the Town of Big Flats has gone to great lengths to create a vision for the community that will set the tone for years to come.

1.3 Location of Big Flats, New York

The Town of Big Flats is located on the western border of Chemung County, nearly halfway between the City of Elmira and the City of Corning. The Town encompasses approximately 41 square miles, with the Town's southern border running along the New York -Pennsylvania border.

NYS Route 17/I-86 provides easy east-west access from New York City to Buffalo. Branching off NYS Route 17/I-86, I-390, located northwest of Big Flats, goes to Rochester, while I-81, located east of Big Flats, provides access to Syracuse and Washington, D.C. I-88, located northeast of Big Flats, connects the region to Albany and Montreal, and I-84, located southeast of Big Flats, provides access to New England.

1.4 Community Outreach

The foundation of a good Plan is the incorporation of public input early and often throughout Plan development. In order to develop an action plan built on a foundation of common goals and objectives, it was imperative to obtain feedback from the Town's elected and appointed leaders, business owners, and residents. There were several approaches initiated during the Big Flats Comprehensive Planning process to ensure the effort was well-informed and addressed community concerns.

A Citizen Advisory Committee was created to work with the plan consultants, providing feedback and reviewing draft documents when necessary. Time and consideration was given to conducting in-depth stakeholder interviews with individuals knowledgeable of the community and the changes wrought by recent growth. Finally, the public was invited to participate via workshops and a resident survey that was mailed out to community households.

1.4.1 Citizen Advisory Committee

In August 2004, the Town of Big Flats invited many residents involved in local community committees and organizations to participate in the development of the Comprehensive Plan as a member of the Citizens Advisory Committee, or CAC. The letters outlined the planning process schedule and the level of commitment needed to attend meetings, workshops, and public hearings. In addition, prospective CAC members were asked to complete questionnaires that posed the following questions:

- Why are a *Comprehensive Plan* and a *Town Center Plan* important?
- What are the most important issues facing the Town of Big Flats now and in the future?

- What groups, organizations, or individuals are the most important stakeholders in economic and/or community development planning?
- What do you like the most and the least about living or working in the Town of Big Flats?
- Where do you see the Town of Big Flats in the next five years?

Twenty responses were received. A summary of these responses is included in the Public Participation Appendix.

The CAC met for the first time on September 23, 2004. The intention behind this initial meeting was two-fold. Through a presentation and Q & A session, the meeting was designed to provide CAC members with a better understanding of the planning process. The second purpose of the meeting was to get committee members talking and discussing the issues currently confronting the Town. This provided the plan consultants with baseline information, as well as a better understanding of the community.



Through a “Getting to Know You” exercise, CAC members were asked to identify on five aerial maps different things about Big Flats only a resident would be likely to know. CAC members were encouraged to indicate on these maps anything of interest they felt significant or noteworthy about the community.

Through breakout groups, CAC members were asked to brainstorm specific focus topics and identify key issues related to each one. The focus topics included: Land Use/Zoning; Transportation/Infrastructure; Environment/Recreation/Natural Resources; Housing/Community; Economic Development/Airport; and Town Center. A brief summary of the issues discussed follows.

Land Use/Zoning: Committee members indicated that, while the Town’s zoning and other regulations were good in some respects, such as its timber law, more stringent regulations were needed in other areas. Maintaining strong floodplain regulations and strengthening the Town’s buffer requirements were identified as important. Members also felt that the Town should be more judicious in both promoting the re-use of vacant commercial buildings and in encouraging controlled development. Members indicated a need to identify the preferred development for specific areas, including Airport Corporate Park and the Airport Business Development. Determining how to maintain the Town’s unique identity was also identified as a priority.

Transportation/Infrastructure: This group identified a need for public water expansion north of I-86, and public sewer extension to the hamlet and Suburban Acres. The group felt that the County’s public transit service should be expanded within the Town, with more stops in the hamlet. This group indicated a need for more sidewalks throughout the hamlet, especially between Town Haven and the Town offices.

Road construction and/or traffic control improvements are needed for Maple Street, County Route 64, Sing Sing Road, and the NYS Route 352/CR 64 intersection.

Environment/Recreation/Natural Resources: This group focused on the Town's environmental resources and recreational facilities. Lowe Pond supports model boat racing, Sing Sing Creek is used for trout fishing, while the Chemung River has three State boat launches. Unique features include the Harris Hill Park Soaring Museum, the Palisades ridge, the Tanglewood Nature Center, two aquifers, and a bountiful supply of natural gas. Although few active farms remain, much of the Town's land is rich and fertile. Big Flats accommodates many recreational facilities, both passive and active, for residents of all ages, including numerous town parks, water recreation, and a Rail-to-Trail. Several areas, such as the Palisades, provide shelter to wildlife, including birds, deer, fish, small game, snakes, and eagles.

Housing/Community: The CAC members in this group identified a variety of housing related needs, including a need for more affordable housing, both rental and ownership units, more family "starter" homes, and smaller, more affordable homes for seniors. One type of affordable housing historically developed in the Town has been manufactured housing, including many homes in Retirement Estates. Land costs have resulted in the construction of very expensive housing in recent years. Many houses in the hamlet flooded in 1972 still need rehabilitation. This group also expressed concern that several of the Town's parks are not well maintained, while some areas have little in the way of youth services or programs.

Economic Development/Airport: This group indicated a disparity in the effort exerted to attract large businesses as compared to attracting small businesses. In contrast, they expressed an opinion that Big Flats is tough on small businesses. The group felt the Town should develop an attraction to draw people downtown and should do more to reuse vacant and underutilized commercial buildings. While the Town's industrial base is strong, the group expressed a need for more manufacturing and tourism. The high cost of flights from the Elmira-Corning Regional Airport was identified as an issue.

Town Center: This group discussed the importance of the assets located in the Town Center, including Minier's Plaza, the Library, the Pizzeria, the Post Office, the Town Hall, and the Fire Department. Adding streetlights and plantings, tree lights, a fountain, and a bandstand could enhance the Town Center's attractiveness. Problems to be addressed include poor or discontinuous sidewalks, insufficient parking, and a lack of diverse retail attractions. Suggestions for future uses include a café, a liquor store, a pharmacy, a gas station, and a gift/craft shop.

A copy of the presentation shown at the first committee meeting, as well as copies of the agendas and handouts distributed at subsequent meetings, are all included in the **Public Participation Appendix**.

1.4.2 Stakeholder Interviews

Over the course of two days, October 21 and 22, 2004, plan consultants conducted 30 in-person interviews with individuals identified as stakeholders. A stakeholder is any group or individual that has a

stake in or may be impacted by recommendations developed through the planning process. In general, stakeholders represent municipalities, local government departments, State and regional governments, residential communities, business associations, and other local organizations, such as nonprofits, volunteer committees, or special interest groups.

Stakeholder interviews included 45-minute to hour-long discussions with persons representing a variety of organizations, agencies, or business interests. The issues discussed with these individuals ran a gamut from environmental concerns to traffic issues to public parks and recreation resources. The information ascertained through these discussions was used to provide guidance to the CAC and the consultants on how to move forward in developing the comprehensive plan. Stakeholders interviewed included representatives from:

1. Town Planning Board.
2. Town Volunteer Fire Department.
3. Chemung County Legislature.
4. Elmira-Chemung Transportation Council.
5. Local Business Representatives.
6. Local Realtor.
7. Local Farmer.
8. Chemung County Soil and Water District.
9. Town Environmental Committee.
10. Town Parks Commission.
11. Town Public Works Department.
12. Town of Big Flats Youth Commission.
13. Tanglewood Nature Center.
14. Town Community Center.
15. Town Senior Citizens.
16. Town of Big Flats Historical Society.
17. Town Library Advocates.
18. Town Parent Teacher Organization.
19. Big Flats Elementary School.
20. Elmira Corning Regional Airport.
21. Chemung County Planning Department.
22. Southern Tier Economic Growth.
23. Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board.
24. Elmira Chemung Transportation Council
25. Town Youth Services and Recreation Department
26. Tri-County Housing Council

1.4.3 Business Roundtable

Thirty-five (35) representatives from the local business community attended a breakfast roundtable held in the Town's Community Center on October 22, 2004. To solicit opinions on the state of the local economy, several questions were posed:

- What, if any, stumbling blocks to growth do you



perceive?

- What potential business opportunities do you feel the Town could be pursuing?
- What future economic development would you like to see in the Town?

Problems identified included poor transportation signage and a choppy road network that provides limited accessibility to certain parts of the Town. The lack of sewers coupled with a high water table greatly prohibits the expansion of existing businesses and the establishment of new businesses in the Town Center. Rising sales taxes threaten to drive away the region's Pennsylvania shoppers. Traffic congestion and inadequate transportation infrastructure in several areas (such as CR 64 and NYS Route 352) are issues that must be addressed.

One idea to promote the town's businesses included developing a synergistic relationship between the two main retail centers, the Arnot Mall/Consumer Squa2re area and the Town Center. Conducting joint marketing and creating additional transportation linkages were suggested as ways to achieve this connection. Determining the appropriate mix of businesses was identified as a major concern: how much of Big Flats' commercial base should be destination-oriented versus neighborhood-oriented versus tourism-oriented? Attendees also felt that the Town has many resources that can be capitalized on, such as its parks, the library, the community center, bike trails, etc. However, there was an expressed need for the Town to establish a theme to promote its resources.

Participants identified specific ways the Town could assist local businesses. These included improved communication between the Town and the local business community, and enhanced cooperation between the Town and other County and State agencies (especially on infrastructure). One suggestion was to designate a Town-business liaison to advise businesses on local programs and services as well as provide assistance in coordinating with other governments, e.g., State and County agencies. Regulatory reform was another suggestion— including crafting easier signage regulations and a more straightforward site plan review fee structure. Developing guidelines to improve design continuity and providing financial assistance to entrepreneurs were additional suggestions.

Participants identified the desire for more medical and educational opportunities, restaurants, pharmacy, and a coffee shop.

1.4.4 Community Service Group Roundtable

Twenty-five (25) residents active in local community service groups attended a luncheon roundtable at the community center on October 22, 2004. The aim of this roundtable was to identify the issues local groups were concerned about, how their role in the community had changed over time, and how they could benefit from the Comprehensive Planning process.

Roundtable participants expressed a growing concern over younger residents' lack of involvement due to other time commitments and obligations. Participants also identified the area's lack of quality

employment coupled with a diminishing supply of affordable housing as a growing problem forcing the region's young people to move following graduation.

With the curtailing of State and Federal funding in so many areas, the Town's community service groups have taken on a larger role. For example, the senior group organizes nutritional programs while the Library Advocates provides assistance to the local library.

There is a perception that the flight of the Town's younger population might potentially threaten the community's resources. Some areas of the Town Center show blight, while the Arnot Mall has a number of vacant storefronts. There is a need for more trades people and masons in the region, but young people are not stepping in to take these positions. Likewise, the number of volunteer firefighters is down 30% over the past 12 years, prompting the Big Flats Fire Department to fund a fulltime firefighter.

Participants identified several methods to recruit new volunteers. One suggestion, to determine why residents are not volunteering, was to do a survey. Another idea was to share resources and engage in joint recruitment efforts. Other ways to promote the Town's community groups included using the Town's website or creating a Town newsletter and events calendar.

Participants identified the desire for more restaurants, a pharmacy, a Laundromat, a car wash, more stores, and a gas station in the hamlet. In addition to more affordable and more senior housing, securing the library, establishing a greater local police presence, and providing a late run school bus were identified as needs.

1.4.5 Asset and Liability Workshop

More than 130 people attended the first public workshop, held in the community center on November 18, 2004. This workshop was designed to solicit feedback from participants on the **assets and liabilities** associated with Big Flats. Following a presentation that illustrated the Town's existing demographic and economic profile, workshop attendees were asked to break into groups to discuss the Town's assets and liabilities. For the purposes of discussion, "assets" were defined as follows:



Factors or resources (people, places, organizations, events, strategies, businesses, infrastructure, location, regional setting, cultural resources etc.) that help make the community a success in terms of a place to live, work and raise a family.

"Liabilities" were defined as:

Factors or stumbling blocks that detract from the present or future success of the community.

To inspire brainstorming, workshop participants were asked to consider the following:

1. What are Big Flats' strengths? Weaknesses?
2. What does the community have to offer?
3. What attracts visitors or seasonal residents?
4. What is Big Flats known for?
5. What makes Big Flats a great place to live? To work? To play?
6. What are some of the biggest problems facing the Town?
7. What are the constraints for revitalization?
8. What would you like to change?

Workshop attendees had many positive things to say about Big Flats. A more detailed summary of the feedback received at the workshop is included in the Public Participation Appendix. An unranked listing of the major elements identified as assets follows:

1. Quality of Life/Intangibles.
2. Location/Convenience.
3. Community Services/Government.
4. Cultural Resources.
5. Retail Shopping.
6. Services/Resources.
7. Natural Resources.
8. Outdoor Recreation.
9. Housing Options.
10. Transportation Network.
11. Business Opportunities.
12. Community Development Patterns.

An unranked listing of the major categories identified as liabilities follows:

1. Transportation Related Issues.
2. Infrastructure Related Issues.
3. Aesthetics.
4. Taxation and New Development Costs.
5. Environmental Concerns.
6. Inadequate Municipal Resources/Services.
7. Housing Needs.
8. Zoning and Development Concerns.
9. Need for Community Character/Identity

1.4.6 Visioning Workshop

Approximately 60 people attended the January 31, 2005 public visioning workshop held at the community center. This workshop was designed to identify residents' vision of Big Flats. A presentation covering, among other things, the feedback at the previous Town-wide workshop, was shown. Workshop attendees were then asked to break into eight (8) groups to brainstorm the following topics:

1. Housing.
2. Cultural and Historic Resources.
3. Municipal Services.
4. Transportation.
5. Parks and Recreation.
6. Economic Development.
7. Local Government Regulations and Policies.
8. Environmental Resources.

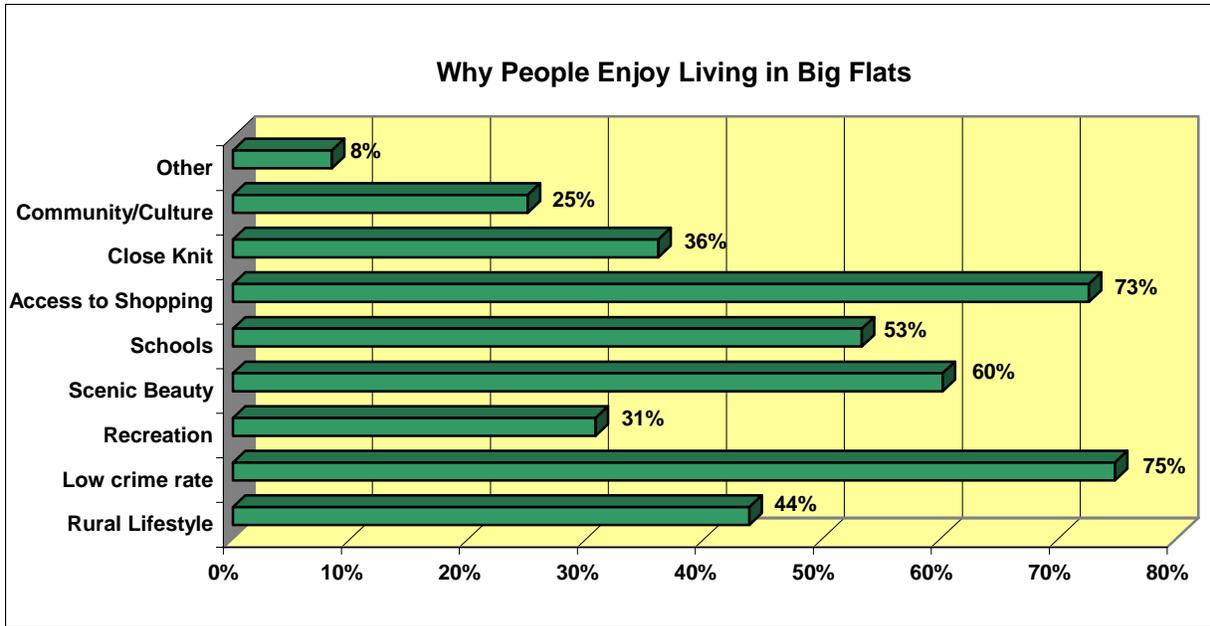
The public input received at this workshop, with the information garnered through stakeholder interviews, roundtable discussions, and CAC meetings, forms the foundation of this Comprehensive Plan's goals and objectives. A more detailed summary of the feedback received at the workshop is included in the Public Participation Appendix.

1.4.7 Community Survey

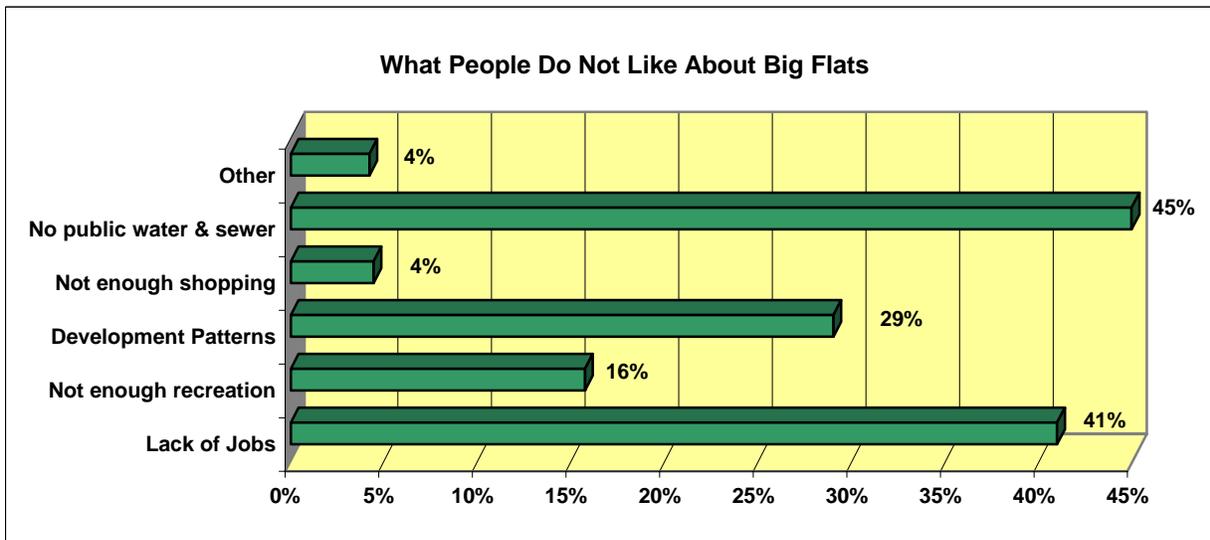
In February 2005, the Town mailed out a three-page confidential survey to Town households. Additional blank survey forms were made available at the Town Hall and the Community Center. All adults in the Town were invited to fill out a survey. Survey respondents were asked to send their completed responses to Town Hall. Drop boxes were also located at the Town Hall and at the Community Center.

A more detailed summary of the survey results can be found in the Survey Appendix. The following summarizes the questions most illustrative of resident sentiment regarding Big Flats and most relevant to the Town's current growth trends.

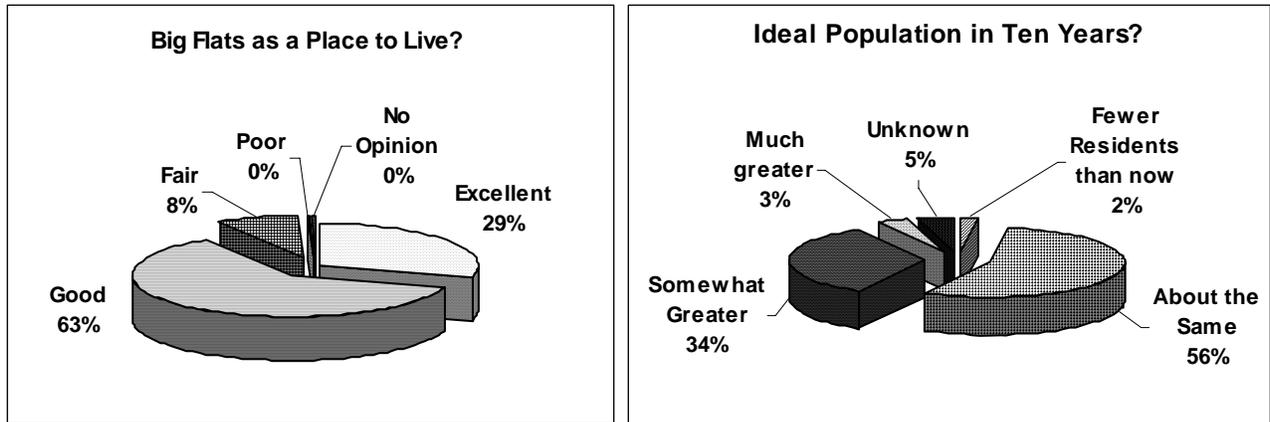
Respondents were asked to identify why they enjoy living in the Town, what they regard as Big Flats' positive attributes. Three-quarters of the survey respondents (75%) identified the community's low crime rate as a positive factor. Another 73% identified the Town's easy access to shopping as favorable. Other positive attributes included the Town's scenic beauty (60%), schools (53%), and rural lifestyle (44%).



Respondents were also asked to identify Big Flats’ least positive attributes. Unlike the response to the previous question, responses to this question were mixed. Nearly half the respondents (45%) indicated the Town’s lack of public water and sewer was a problem, while 41% identified lack of jobs as an issue. About 29% of respondents felt the Town’s development patterns was an issue, while 16% identified the Town’s inadequate recreational facilities as a concern.

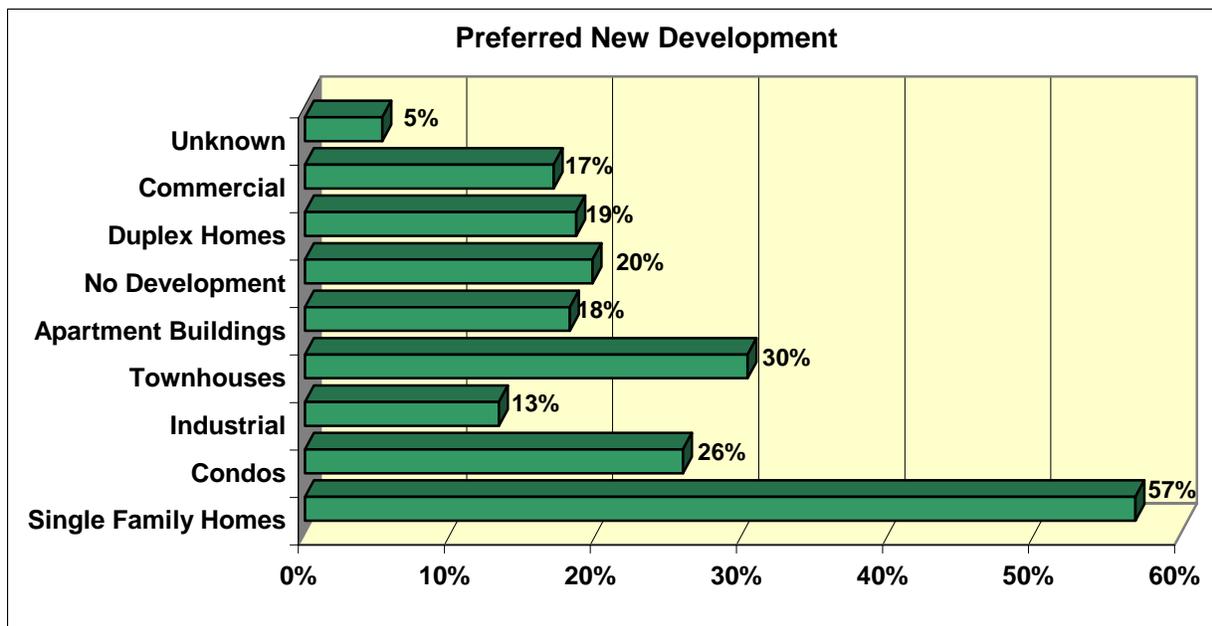


While a third (29%) of respondents indicated Big Flats was an “excellent” place to live, roughly two-thirds (63%) rated the Town as a “good” place to live. Another 8% identified the Town as “fair.” The number of respondents that felt the Town was a “poor” place to live or had no opinion on the question was negligible.



Respondents were asked to identify what they felt the “ideal population” of the Town would be in ten years. Most respondents indicated they would prefer to see little change from the current situation with 56% identifying ideal as “about the same size.” A third (34%) would like to see a “somewhat greater” population, while only 3% expressed a preference for a “much greater” population. About 2% said they would like to see “fewer residents” and 5% did not know.

Respondents were asked what type of development should be permitted on the Town’s remaining undeveloped lands. Residential development was the overwhelming favorite. Respondents identified their preferences as follows: single-family homes (57%); townhouses (30%); condominiums (26%); duplex homes (19%); and apartment buildings (18%). A fifth of respondents (20%) indicated “no



development” was desired, while 17% felt commercial was desirable and 13% preferred industrial development.

1.5 Previous Planning Efforts in the Town

1.5.1 Town of Big Flats Comprehensive Plan, January 1998

The *Town of Big Flats 1998 Comprehensive Plan* identified a number of planning goals for the Town. The following section includes a summary of the goals espoused in that Plan.

The Plan called for a development pattern that was environmentally sensitive to and consistent with preserving the Town's land, including encouraging compatible land uses and allowing for the continuance of agriculture. The Plan identified a desire to preserve and protect the quality of the Town's residential character, while also providing a variety of efficiently distributed housing types, balanced services, and recreational opportunities and facilities.

The Plan made several recommendations related to business uses in the Town, including promoting a diversified tax base through supporting and attracting a variety of businesses. It was also recommended that the Town develop a balance of services to meet the needs of all segments of the Town's population. Finally, to ensure quality development, it was recommended that the Town require high design and construction standards and establish an on-going planning process to accommodate change and promote intergovernmental cooperation.

Given the Town's hilly terrain and abundance of natural resources, many of the recommendations in the Plan focused on environmental protection. Requiring development that is consistent with resource limitation and natural terrain was one goal to protect both groundwater quality and the degradation of steep slopes (15% and greater). There were also goals to protect Town residents from periodic flooding and preserve and enhance the overall functions and benefits derived from wetlands.

The previous Plan recommended incorporating stormwater management into the Town's land use planning process in order to protect against adverse runoff impacts. It further recommended the use of natural measures to protect against runoff, including protecting the natural functions of the Town's watercourses and using vegetative and structural measures for runoff management.

The Plan called for providing for well-planned, environmentally sound, efficient and cost-effective sewage treatment in the Town. To ensure this, it was recommended that all new development connect to the Chemung County Sewer District #1 system and that property owners obtain permits from the Chemung County Health Department for private on-lot sewage treatment.

Water of adequate supply and quality should be available both for domestic use and for fire prevention throughout the Town. To support this effort, it was recommended that the Town Water District continue to be expanded in a sound manner and that new development, where feasible, be required to connect to the Town Water Districts. It was also recommended that the Town require all on-site wells be located, designed and constructed in a fashion consistent with Town and County standards.

The primary transportation goal called for the provision of a transportation network that would ensure the efficient movement of traffic throughout Town. In addition to vehicular transportation modes, there were goals related to pedestrians, cyclists, and public transit. The Plan called for the provision of an integrated system of sidewalks, trail and road crossings to accommodate pedestrians. One goal called for promoting and providing safe bicycle transportation. Lastly, the Plan called for the accommodation of mass transportation service in all major development proposals.

1.5.2 Hazard Mitigation Action Plan, October 2004.

In October 2004, the Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board completed the Town's *Hazard Mitigation Action Plan*. This Plan, which expanded on the Town's 1999 (and 2000 update) *Flood Mitigation Action Plan*, sought to identify means by which public and private sector entities could minimize losses from future hazard events. The plan identified actions designed to reduce property damage and potential loss of life.

The Plan's recommendations were based on a quantitative risk assessment of the Town's vulnerability to 28 potential hazards. The risk assessment was conducted using the HAZNY – Hazards NY computer program. Each potential hazard was evaluated and ranked based on the scope, frequency, impact, onset, and duration of a hazard event. The plan focused on ten hazards given a high priority or moderately high priority ranking. High priority hazards were evaluated to be petroleum spills and flood/flash flood events. Moderately high priority hazards were identified as severe storms, hazardous materials release, explosions, terrorism, utility failures, tornadoes, severe winter storms, and extreme temperatures.

Multi-hazard mitigation goals are those, which may be applicable to a variety of hazards. These include:

1. Raise public awareness about hazards and how to respond;
2. Provide timely and effective emergency response services;
3. Maintain the viability of all critical facilities and operations;
4. Maintain political support; and
5. Establish and maintain public and private partnerships.

The Plan identified 27 measures to be implemented through existing programs. These measures included: disseminating hazard information, supporting education efforts, updating the Comprehensive Plan, and providing hazard mitigation training.

The Plan identified other proposed actions to be implemented in the future, depending upon funding resource availability. Among these were the establishment of a community emergency training program; provision of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather radios at public facilities; financial assistance for radon mitigation; and public outreach to address stormwater management.

1.6 County and Regional Planning Efforts

There have been several County and Regional Plans completed in recent years. Some of these Plans make recommendations that may broadly impact not only the Town of Big Flats but the entire region as well. Brief summaries of two plans are given in the following section.

1.6.1 *Destination 2025: Transportation Planning for the Future*

The Elmira-Chemung Transportation Council (ECTC) was designated as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Elmira Urbanized Area in December 1974. MPOs were created in 1973 for urbanized areas with more than 50,000 in population. The mission of MPOs is to help build regional agreement on transportation investments and to better balance highway, mass transit and other needs, leading to more cost effective solutions to transportation problems. The ECTC is responsible for the planning and programming of any transportation project that includes Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) or Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding.

The MPO establishes its priorities through the development of a *Long Range Transportation Plan (LRP)*, which identifies the direction a region will take in making transportation system investments over the next twenty years. These projects are then implemented through the annual Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) which is the mechanism to coordinate the overall comprehensive transportation planning in the urban region, and the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), a three to five year program of transportation projects and strategies drawn from the metropolitan transportation plan.

In its evaluation of the previous LRP goals, the MPO determined that the prior goals were too project-specific, and to appropriately guide new development, the new goals had to be broad and visionary. To further guide planners and decision makers, each goal was accompanied by a set of objectives, or mission statements, and sample performance measures to evaluate the progress in meeting each goal. The seven 2004 LRP goals include the following:

1. Integrate transportation, economic development and land use planning to promote sustainable development.
2. Protect and enhance the natural environment, encourage conservation of energy and improve quality of life.
3. Maintain, operate, manage, and, where necessary, upgrade the existing infrastructure, using new technology where appropriate.
4. Enhance the role of multi-modal systems in meeting the region's mobility and accessibility needs.
5. Reinforce the City of Elmira's role as the center of the region's governmental service, institutional and transportation activities.
6. Ensure that an adequate transportation infrastructure is in place to accommodate and attract regional development.
7. Support regional and statewide corridors through investments and initiatives.

8. Address the safety and security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.

Additional information on specific transportation related goals and objectives as they relate to the Town of Big Flats are in the Transportation section of this Plan.

1.6.2 Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy - 2005

The Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board (STCRPDB) serves Chemung, Schuyler, and Steuben Counties. Since 1975, this agency has served as the area's designated Economic Development District (EDD) and since 1970, it has served as the Local Development District for the Appalachian Regional Commission. In its role as EDD, the STCRPDB is responsible for developing the area's *Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)* in accordance with the guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration. The 2005 CEDS Update was released in September 2004. Additional information on specific economic development related goals and objectives as they relate to the Town of Big Flats are in the Economic Development section of this Plan.

1.6.3 Quality Communities Integrated Task Force

In 2000, Governor Pataki initiated the Quality Communities Interagency Task Force with an aim to provide enhanced quality of life to a diverse array of communities throughout New York State. *Quality Communities is a process that promotes growth that is economically sound, environmentally friendly, and supportive of community values.*

The Quality Communities Initiative demonstrates New York State's commitment to working with local government leaders to find smart, innovative solutions to strengthen local economies, improve the quality of its natural environments and enhance overall livability. The Quality Community program promotes effective land development, preservation and rehabilitation programs at the local level. The program also fosters intermunicipal cooperation in responding to the needs and opportunities arising at the local level.

The program provides a set of principles that serve as guidelines for agencies to follow in the development and implementation of State policies and programs and in the allocation and administration of State resources. Currently, there are twenty-five State agencies serving on the Quality Communities Interagency Working Group. *Quality Communities Principles* are as follows:

1. Encourage Sustainable Economic Development.

New, sustainable development patterns can be promoted through planning, regulatory and incentive programs, and other processes governing community and regional development.

2. Help Create, Implement and Sustain the Vision of a Quality Community.

The success of a Quality Community lies in creating and implementing vision for the community. The State should identify programs that help communities create a comprehensive vision based on extensive public input. New York State should also focus on existing community development resources to implement short-term visions for the community and help build community's momentum for future long-term goals.

3. Revitalize Our Downtowns and Community Centers.

Downtowns can be a great asset as well as an opportunity for future growth. To achieve quality of life, it is vital to keep the existing developed areas economically vibrant and environmentally healthy and infuse new life into abandoned downtown areas.

4. Conserve Open Space and Other Critical Environmental Resources.

In addition to contributing to the health and well-being of residents, protecting and enhancing the State's air, land and water resources is important to the stability and diversity of ecological systems.

5. Promote Agriculture and Farmland Protection.

To achieve a quality community, it is important to promote an environment that attracts agribusiness investment and encourages the retention of State's landscapes and farm services.

6. Strengthen Intergovernmental and Community Partnerships.

Enhanced State technical assistance programs and greater interagency communication at all levels of government is needed to strengthen the relationship between State government and its diverse collection of municipalities.

7. Enhance Transportation Choices and Encourage More liveable Neighborhoods.

The coordination of community and government action should be enhanced to provide a better range of housing choices, transportation options, walkable neighborhoods and public amenities for aesthetics and recreation.

8. Enhance and Encourage the Use of Technology.

The State should promote the effective use of information and technology with each of the Quality Communities Principles and also promote their use in the private and public sectors.

2. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

This demographic profile provides an overview of Big Flats’ residents. The information contained herein includes data from the U.S. Census Bureau and is the most up to date available. Most data is from the 1990 and 2000 Decennial Census with population estimates released by the Census Bureau in July 2003 (These estimates did not include age cohort estimates). In addition to the Town data, comparisons to Chemung County and the State of New York have been made where appropriate.

2.1 Population

The Town of Big Flats, located in Chemung County, in New York’s Southern Tier Region, has experienced some interesting population trends in recent years. While the Town’s 2003 population estimate, according to the Census Bureau, is less than the Town’s estimated 1990 population, it is considerably higher than the Town’s 2000 population—showing an increase of 270 persons, or 3.7%. With development of the new Interstate 86 (previously NYS Route 17) and several new interchanges in

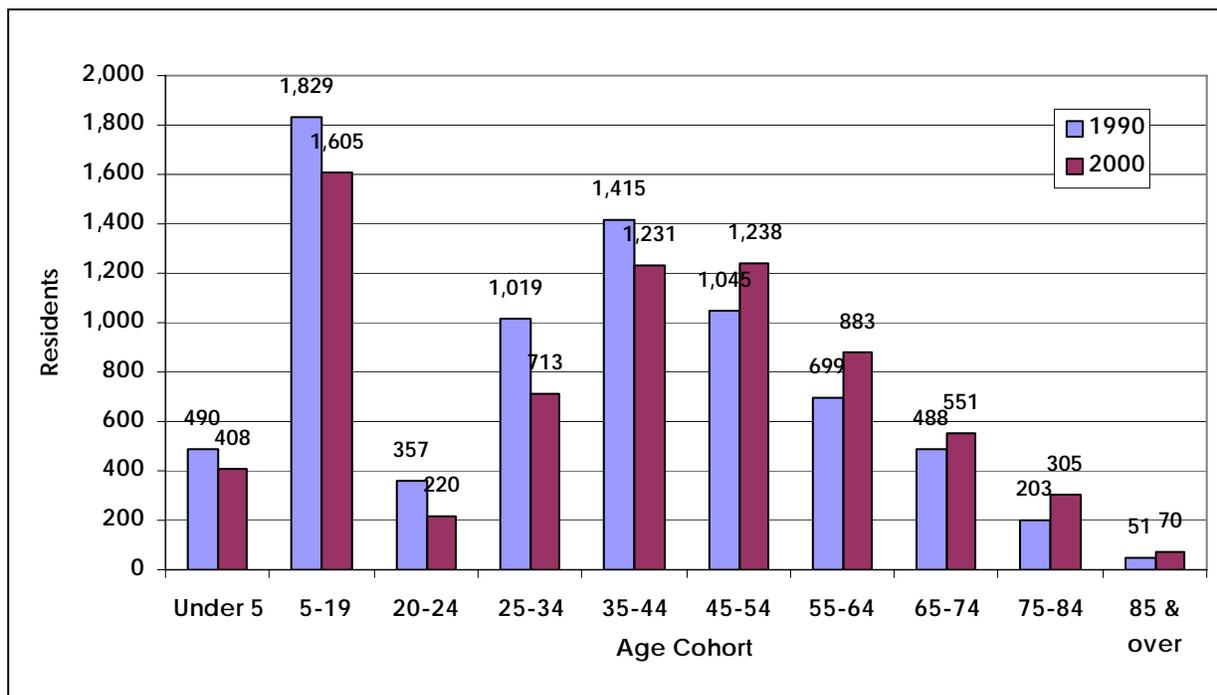


Chart 1: Comparison of Population Groups in Big Flats, 1990 and 2000

the Town, Big Flats is poised for additional growth. ESRI Business Information Solutions projected continuous population growth through 2009, however their forecasted 0.16% annual growth rate for the Town may prove too conservative as the Census Bureau estimates the annual growth rate from 2000 to

2003 to be about 1.2%. See **Table 1** for a comparison of growth trends in Big Flats, Chemung County, and New York State.

Table 1: Population Trends

Year	Town of Big Flats		Chemung County		New York State	
	Number	Growth	Number	Growth	Number	Growth
1990	7,596	-	95,195	-	17,990,455	-
2000	7,224	-4.9%	91,070	-4.3%	18,976,457	5.5%
2003	7,494	3.7%	90,413	-0.7%	19,190,115	1.1%
1990-03	-102	-1.3%	-4,782	-5.0%	1,199,660	6.7%

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 1990, 2000, and 2003 Estimates.

As indicated by the Census, the Town's racial composition changed little between 1990 and 2000. The Town's population, 96.7% white in 1990, was 96.3% white in 2000. However, several subpopulations experienced growth, including the African American population, which increased by 26.9%, and those of Hispanic descent, which increased by 33.3%. ESRI Business Information Solutions calculates a Diversity Index (DI) using data collected from the Census. Big Flats had a DI of 7.3 in 1990 and a DI of 8.4 in 2000. Chemung County overall appears to have a much more diverse population than the Town, with a 2000 DI of 19.8. See **Table 2**.

Table 2: Town of Big Flats Population by Race and Ethnicity

Total Population	1990		2000		1990-2000 % Change
	Total	%	Total	%	
White	7,347	96.7%	6,960	96.3%	-5.3%
Black/African American	67	0.9%	85	1.2%	26.9%
American Indian/Alaska Native	9	0.1%	1	0.0%	-88.9%
Asian	108	1.4%	110	1.5%	1.9%
Pacific Islander	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	NA
Some Other Race	7	0.1%	11	0.2%	NA
Two or More Races	58	0.8%	56	0.8%	NA
Total Population	7,596	100.0%	7,224	100.0%	-4.9%
Hispanic or Latino*	36	0.5%	48	0.7%	33.3%
Diversity Index- Big Flats	7.3		8.4		15.1%
Diversity Index- Chemung Co.	18.2		19.8		8.8%

*Excluded from total.

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 1990 and 2000; Source for Diversity Index: ESRI Business Information Solutions.

Chart 1 depicts the changing population characteristics in Big Flats between 1990 and 2000, while **Table 3** compares the Town age characteristics to Chemung County and NYS. As is evident in **Chart 1**, every age cohort under age 45 decreased in absolute numbers between 1990 and 2000, while every group over age 45 increased. The age cohort declining the most was the 25 – 34 group, which shrunk by 306 persons, or 30%. The age group that lost the greatest percentage was the 20 – 24 age group, which declined by 38.4%. (The comparative decline experienced by the County and the State was 18.7% and 11.7%,

respectively). The 75-to-84 and 85 and over age groups increased the most, growing by 50.4% and 37.3%, respectively.

Table 3 indicates a number of interesting characteristics about Big Flats' population. At present there appears to be a significant dearth of individuals aged 20 to 34 in the Town. This population, which comprises 18.3% of the County's total population and 21.1% of the State's total population, comprises *only* 12.9% of the Town's population. In contrast, nearly a third of the Town's residents are in the 45 – 64 age group: 29.3% of Town residents fall in this age group, as compared to 22.9% of Chemung County and 22.4% of NYS. For those aged 65 and over, the Town closely parallels the State, with this group comprising 12.8% of total population for both. Chemung County is slightly higher at 15.6%. See **Table 3** for additional information.



While the national trend calls for an aging population as the baby boomers approach retirement age and more people are living longer, Big Flats looks to experience more than its share of this trend. Alternatively, if the Town lacks the housing and facilities that these residents will need as they age, a large number of the Town's current residents may be forced to relocate in search of more appropriate housing. Aware of this growing need, resident senior groups in Big Flats facilitated the development of a 24-unit senior housing complex in July 2004.

Table 3: Comparison of Population by Age, 2000

Age	Big Flats		Chemung Co.		New York State	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Under 5	408	5.6%	5,448	6.0%	1,239,417	6.5%
5-19	1,605	22.2%	19,291	21.2%	3,971,834	20.9%
20-24	220	3.0%	5,469	6.0%	1,244,309	6.6%
25-34	713	9.9%	11,196	12.3%	2,757,324	14.5%
35-44	1,231	17.0%	14,549	16.0%	3,074,298	16.2%
45-54	1,238	17.1%	12,698	13.9%	2,552,936	13.5%
55-64	883	12.2%	8,197	9.0%	1,687,987	8.9%
65-74	551	7.6%	7,094	7.8%	1,276,046	6.7%
75-84	305	4.2%	5,410	5.9%	860,818	4.5%
85 and Over	70	1.0%	1,718	1.9%	311,488	1.6%
Total	7,224	100.0%	91,070	100.0%	18,976,457	100.0%
Median Age	40.7		37.9		35.9	

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 2000.

2.2 Educational Attainment

National trends have indicated that more and more individuals are attaining higher levels of education, while the number of individuals having a high school education or less has been steadily decreasing. Big Flats residents far exceed the State averages in educational attainment. In contrast, Chemung County averages in education fall considerably short of the State averages.

In NYS, the percentage of residents having a high school education or less dropped from 54.7% in 1990 to 48.7% in 2000. In Big Flats, this number dropped from 41.3% in 1990 to 33.1% in 2000. The portion of NYS residents obtaining a bachelor degree or achieving a higher education level increased from 23.1% in 1990 to 27.4% in 2000. In Big Flats, these figures were 28.0% in 1990 and 32.8% in 2000. Chemung County is behind in this trend, with the percentage of the population having a high school education or less decreasing from 59.5% in 1990 to 54.0% in 2000. At the same time, the portion of Chemung County residents obtaining a bachelor degree or higher increased from 15.4% in 1990 to 18.5% in 2000. See **Table 4** for a more detailed comparison of the 2000 education statistics for the Town, County, and State.

Table 4: Comparison of Educational Attainment, 2000

Attainment Level	Big Flats	% of Total	Chemung County	% of Total	New York State	% of Total
Less than 9th grade	52	1.0%	3,055	5.0%	1,005,805	8.0%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	270	5.4%	7,852	12.9%	1,620,519	12.9%
High school graduate	1,332	26.7%	21,930	36.1%	3,480,768	27.8%
Some college, no degree	1,004	20.1%	11,298	18.6%	2,103,404	16.8%
Associate degree	695	13.9%	5,364	8.8%	898,828	7.2%
Bachelor's degree	799	16.0%	6,346	10.4%	1,954,242	15.6%
Graduate/professional degree	837	16.8%	4,951	8.1%	1,478,970	11.8%
Total	4,989	100.0%	60,796	100.0%	12,542,536	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 2000.

2.3 Resident Income

Table 5 shows a breakdown of household income in the Town of Big Flats as compared to Chemung County and NYS. Big Flats households earn more, on average, than both Chemung County households and NYS households. More than half the Town's households earn \$50,000 or more (1,485 households, or 54.5%) as compared to 33.6% for the County and 44.3% for the State. The Town's 2000 median household income (\$53,435) was 46.7% higher than the County's (\$36,415) and 23.1% higher than the State's (\$32,965). The Town's 2000 median family income (\$59,500) was 35.2% higher than the County's (\$43,994) and 15.1% higher than the State's (\$51,691). **Chart 2** compares median household income in the Town to Chemung County and New York State, both in 1990 and 2000.

Table 5: Comparison of Household Income, 2000

Income in 1999	Big Flats	% of Total	Chemung County	% of Total	New York State	% of Total
Less than \$15,000	153	5.6%	6,523	18.6%	1,262,827	17.9%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	287	10.5%	5,131	14.6%	822,611	11.7%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	327	12.0%	5,151	14.7%	807,043	11.4%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	472	17.3%	6,495	18.5%	1,047,001	14.8%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	733	26.9%	6,621	18.9%	1,297,712	18.4%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	364	13.4%	2,850	8.1%	746,384	10.6%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	276	10.1%	1,578	4.5%	639,525	9.1%
\$150,000 or more	112	4.1%	727	2.1%	437,492	6.2%
Households	2,724	100.0%	35,076	100.0%	7,060,595	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 2000.

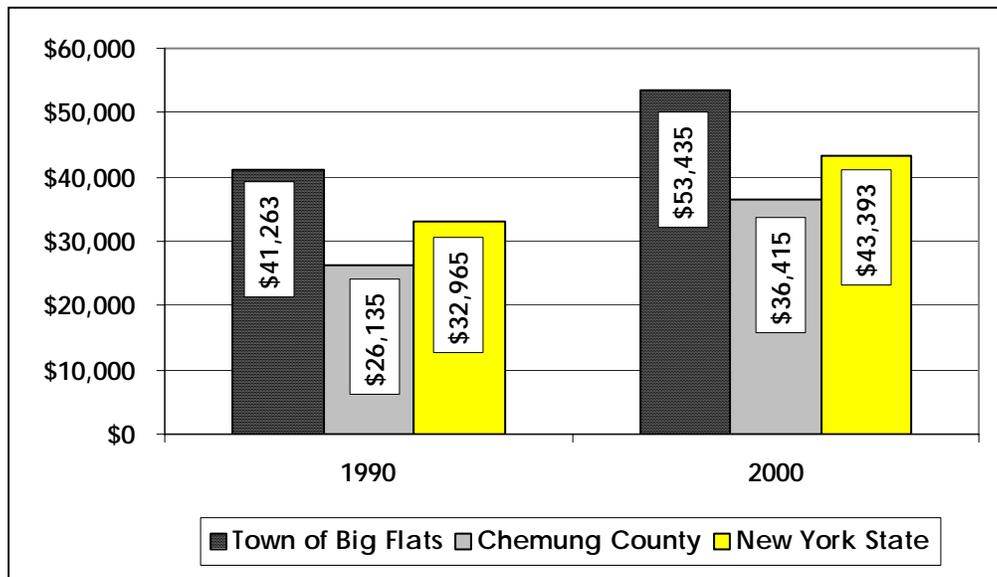


Chart 2: Comparison of Median Household Income, 1990 and 2000

2.4 Household Composition

Chart 3 depicts the changing characteristics of households in the Town, while **Table 6** compares the Town’s household composition to Chemung County and NYS. Consistent with national trends, as the Town’s population decreased between 1990 and 2000, the number of households increased. As a component of total households, the percentage of married couples without children increased from 37% to 40%, while the percentage of married couples with children dropped from 37% to 30%. Households

headed by a single parent, both with and without children increased slightly. The proportion of individuals living alone increased from 14% of all households in 1990 to 17% in 2000. Non-family households grew from 3% in 1990 to 4% in 2000.

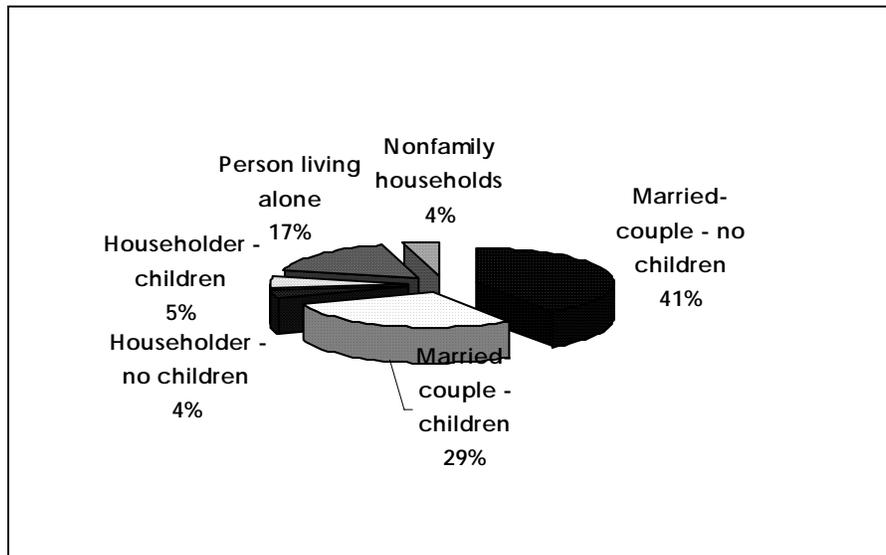
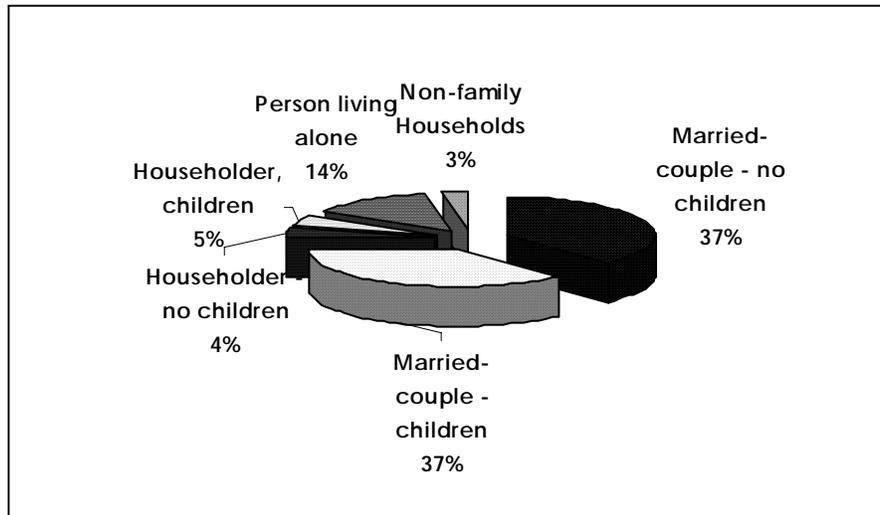


Chart 3: Comparison of Household Composition, 1990 and 2000

In reviewing **Table 6**, it becomes apparent that Big Flats differs from the County and the State in several aspects. First, Big Flats has a very traditional household breakdown. More of the Town’s households are family households –78.7% -- as compared to 66.4% in Chemung County and 65.7% in NYS. A large portion of the Town’s households is comprised of married couples – 69.5% as compared to 49.8% for the County and 46.6% for the State. Additionally, the Town has a high percentage of households with children under the age of 18 – 36.2% - as compared to 33.9% in the County and 35.0% in the State. Average household size in Big Flats, at 2.65 in 2000, was larger than in both the County (2.44) and the

State (2.61). Lastly, the Town has a very low portion of households living below the poverty level – estimated at just 3.2% in 2000.

Table 6: Comparison of Household Composition, 2000

Total Population	Big Flats		Chemung County		NYS
	Total	%	Total	%	%
Total households	2,725	100.0%	35,049	100.0%	100.0%
Family households	2,145	78.7%	23,280	66.4%	65.7%
Married-couple family	1,894	69.5%	17,466	49.8%	46.6%
With children < 18 years	792	29.1%	7,201	20.5%	21.6%
Other Family (No Spouse)	251	9.2%	5,814	16.6%	19.1%
With children < 18 years	146	5.4%	3,675	10.5%	10.0%
Nonfamily households	580	21.3%	11,769	33.6%	34.3%
Householder living alone	466	17.1%	9,776	27.9%	28.1%
Households W/children < 18 years	986	36.2%	11,880	33.9%	35.0%
Households below Poverty Level	86	3.2%	4531	12.9%	13.9%
Average household size	2.65		2.44		2.61
Average family size	2.99		2.97		3.22

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 2000.

3. LAND USE PATTERNS

In this section, the evolution of the Town’s development is discussed. Historically, development has depended on the land’s resources. Lands rich in soil were used for agriculture. As very little of the Town continues to be used for farming, today the type of land use found on-site depends greatly on the area’s zoning and other local regulations. This section also includes a detailed overview of the regulations currently in place to guide development in Big Flats.

3.1 Town History and Development

Big Flats has long been noted for its Indian history, scenic beauty and fertile soils. The Native Americans called the area atsingnetsing, which means “praise the scenic beauty and the fertility of the soil”. Early white settlers called the area “Great Flats” referring to the broadening of the Chemung Valley. Atsingnetsing eventually came to be Sing Sing to the early settlers.

A geologist theory to explain the area’s rich alluvial soils is that there was at one time a finger lake located in the Big Flats section of Chemung Valley. During the Ice Age, Chemung Valley was filled. This caused the Chemung River to change its course at Big Flats and cut a new channel to the south, completely draining the wide lake area around Big Flats, leaving rich soils.



Attracted by the fertile lands and abundant waterways, the area’s earliest settlers were the Algonquin Indians.

The Algonquins were a widely spread family of Native Americans, including many distinct tribes, which formerly occupied most of the northern and eastern part of North America. While the Chemung River and the Big Flats area remained practically unknown to the early European settlers long after the Hudson River and Mohawk Valleys had been settled, the area was well-known and used by the Native Americans. The Chemung Valley was a natural pathway between Niagara and the Great Lakes to the south, first by Native Americans and later by settlers. The beauty and fertility of the soil lead the soldiers of the Sullivan Expedition of 1779 back to the land six years later to make their homes at Chemung, Newton, Big Flats and Painted Post. Natives left the territory in 1791 when a treaty held with Col. Timothy Pickering extinguished the Indian Title to the territory.

The lands that were once inhabited by the Native Americans were sold to settlers at a rapid pace. Lumbering was one of the most easy and profitable sources of income to early Big Flats settlers. Initially, the Chemung River was used for transport and later the feeder canal to Horseheads. Big Flats became famous for its creamery products, hay, grain and tobacco.

In 1822, the Town of Big Flats was formed from the Town of Elmira with the seat of local government being the Hamlet of Big Flats. In 1936 Chemung County was formed.

Gliding and soaring is celebrated in the Town of Big Flats. In 1932 on the Tom Rhodes farm adjacent to what is now known as Harris Hill, the 3rd National Soaring Contest was held. Using funds from the Works Progress Administration (WPA), Chemung County in 1936-1937 developed the Harris Hill site to its present international prominence, effectiveness and beauty.

3.2 Existing Land Use

This section of the Comprehensive Plan provides a snapshot of the Town's current development and an analysis of the existing land use activity. The *Town of Big Flats Existing Land Use Map* was created using 2004 Geographic Information System (GIS) parcel-based Real Property Assessment data. Each individual land parcel was assigned a land use category based upon the New York State Real Property Type Classification Codes. Accuracy and completeness of this information is not guaranteed, as the information is only updated on an annual basis. The following land use categories were used for this study:

1. Agricultural – Property used as a part of an operating farm that does not have living accommodations and is used for the production of crops and/or raising of livestock.
2. Commercial – Property used for hotels, restaurants, automobile services, storage, retail, banks, offices, funeral homes, etc.
3. Community Services - Property used for schools, libraries, places of worship, cultural facilities, welfare services, hospitals, clinics, government, police, armed forces, correctional facilities, shelters, cemeteries, etc.
4. Industrial - Property used for the production and fabrication of durable and non-durable goods, mining, quarrying, etc.
5. Mobile Home/Mobile Home Park - Property used for one (1) individual mobile home or area where mobile homes are owner-occupied, but land/facilities are leased or rented.
6. Multi-Family Residential - Property used for apartments, and all types of residential dwellings that have more than two dwelling units.
7. Parks & Entertainment - Property used for parks, theaters, racetracks, bowling centers, health spas, beaches, campgrounds, etc.
8. Public Utilities and Facilities - Property used for electric or gas power generation or transmission, public drinking water and water treatment facilities, communications, train, plane, and bus terminals, canals, waste disposal sewer treatment, etc.
9. Rural Residential – Property of 10 or more acres of land that is used for up to three year-round dwelling units, sometimes associated with an agricultural use.

10. Single-Family Residential - Property used for one-family, year round residence.
11. Two-Family Residential - Property used for two-family, year round residence.
12. Vacant Lands - Property that is not in use, is in temporary use, or lacks permanent improvements.

Table 7, which presents data from the Town GIS system, identifies the number of parcels, amount and percentage of acreage, and total assessed value of each land use category. According to the 2004 GIS Real Property data, the Town contains 3,704 tax parcels comprising approximately 26,300 acres, or 41 square miles. These figures are taxable parcels only, and do not include land area covered by roads, rivers, and hydrologic features.

The Town's development patterns have been greatly influenced by the natural terrain, road network and availability of public water and sewer. Due to steep slopes and lack of public infrastructure, the majority of the Town's land area is either categorized as residential, agriculture, parks and entertainment or vacant. The total assessed value of land and structures within the Town is approximately \$455 million.

Table 7: Land Use Coverage in Big Flats

Land Use Category	# Parcels	# Acres	% of Total Acreage	Total Assessed Value
Agricultural	47	2,432	9.24	\$3,064,768.00
Commercial	134	630	2.39	\$109,542,541.00
Community Services	47	1,605	6.10	\$19,493,570.00
Industrial	24	364	1.38	\$14,228,228.00
Mobile Home	21	180	0.68	\$5,522,910.00
Multi-Family	23	98	0.37	\$13,615,000.00
Parks & Entertainment	39	2,417	9.18	\$4,978,450.00
Public Utilities	31	246	0.93	\$4,431,944.00
Rural Residential	102	4,512	17.14	\$14,033,910.00
Single-Family	2,404	4,696	17.84	\$247,020,188.00
Two-Family	42	212	0.81	\$3,442,100.00
Vacant Land	790	8,931	33.93	\$15,240,597.00
Total	3,704	26,323	100	\$454,614,206.00

Source: Town of Big Flats GIS System.

Residential Development: Big Flats contains residential development at moderate densities within the valley, and at lower densities throughout the hills. Single-family housing and rural residences are the dominant land use, comprising approximately 35% of the total acreage in the Town. About 4,700 acres house single-family homes while 4,500 acres house rural residential properties. Only 42 parcels are categorized as two-family, covering approximately 212 acres. Generally, residential areas are zoned as Rural (RU), Residential Moderate Density (R1), and Residential High Density (R2). Single-family housing is the highest valued land use category in the Town, at approximately \$247 million, and the total value assessment of rural residences is \$14 million.



Multi-family Housing: Multi-family housing makes up a negligible portion of the Town's land area, accounting for slightly more than 0.37% of the Town's total area and approximately 98 acres. Multi-family residences consist of two or more units in a building. The total value assessment of multi-family housing within Big Flats is approximately \$13 million. Mobile homes make up about 0.68% of the Town's total acreage, with 180 total acres and 21 parcels.

Vacant Land: The second most common land use category in the Town is vacant land. The Town has roughly 8,931 acres of vacant land equaling almost 34% of the Town's total acreage. This could be attributed to the large amount of land that is un-developable due to natural constraints such as floodplains, steep slopes or wetland areas. It should be noted that some of this property is either Town owned or is used for utility easements.

Agriculture: Agriculturally assessed parcels within the Town equal approximately 9.2% of the total land area, or about 2,400 acres. Most of the agricultural land lies within the Chemung River valley, with scattered parcels throughout the Town in other relatively flat areas.

Parks and Entertainment: Recreational opportunities within the Town include both public and private facilities, such as parks and golf courses, and indoor entertainment facilities such as bowling alleys. Approximately 2,400 acres, or about 9% of the Town area, is assessed for recreation or entertainment. These parcels include the Town parks such as Community Park, as well as Chemung County's Harris Hill Park and NYSDEC's Bottcher's Landing.

Commercial: Commercial parcels comprise approximately 2.4% of the Town's land area, or about 630 acres. As expected, the intense commercial development is occurring along the Interstate 86/NYS Route 17 corridor, surrounding the Elmira-Corning Airport, and within and around the hamlet, with only a few small commercial properties springing up along NYS Route 352. Generally, these areas are zoned as Town Center (TC), Business Neighborhood (BN) Business Non-Retail (BNR), Business Regional (BR), and Airport Business Development (ABD).

Community Services: Community services such as religious facilities, schools and school offices, community centers and the Town offices cover about 6% of the Town's land area, but are very valuable properties. Approximately 1,600 acres designated for community services is valued at over \$19 million. These facilities are scattered throughout the Town, with the largest parcels housing the Harris Hill Glider Port and the Mount Savior Monastery.

Public Utilities: Public utility uses in the Town include electric and communications utilities such as New York Electric and Gas transmission lines, substations, and cellular towers. Less than 1% of the Town's land area, or 246 acres, are used for public utilities.

Industrial: Considering the Town's size, a very small portion of the land area is categorized as Industrial. Only 24 parcels covering 364 acres, or about 1.4% of the Town's land, are considered industrial. Many of these properties are located adjacent to the railroad tracks.

3.3 Existing Zoning Districts

In addition to the terrain and infrastructure availability, the Town's Zoning Law and other land use regulations influence the way development occurs. The Town's Zoning Law, first established in 1958, has subsequently been amended several times. At present, the Town's Zoning includes twelve base districts, two floating districts, and two overlay districts.

3.3.1 Base Zoning Districts

Future economic growth, and neighborhood stability and preservation are directly impacted by the district boundaries, permitted uses, accessory uses, conditional uses, and prohibited uses, as well as the development requirements of the various districts. The Town has twelve delineated base districts, which are described in the following section.

Rural (RU) District: The Rural (RU) district is the Town's largest zoning district, covering much of the land characterized by steep slopes or other environmental limitations. This is appropriate as the district's intent is to identify existing undeveloped areas subject to development limitations, including steep slopes, exposed bedrock, and wetlands. The district serves to conserve these areas for less intense, low-density residential uses and certain general business uses.

According to the Use Requirement Table, the only uses permitted as-of-right are, one and two unit dwellings, seasonal dwellings or hunting cabins, government uses and private stables. Multi-unit dwellings are permitted with site plan approval and the approval of a Planned Multiple Residential District. The majority of all other uses are permitted with site plan approval, including, but not limited to, campgrounds, clubs, museums or libraries, nature centers, agricultural uses, golf or ski facilities, and veterinary hospitals. Uses requiring site plan approval and special use permit approval include, airports or heliports, feedlots, and flea markets or auction facilities. According to the Bulk and Density Control Schedule, the minimum lot area requirement depends on the principal use, and ranges from 8 acres for multi-unit dwellings to ½ acre for public utility buildings. Setback and side yard requirements and lot coverage are dependent upon the type of use.

Residential Moderate Density (R1) District: The Residential Moderate Density (R1) district delineates areas where predominantly single-unit dwellings and moderately dense residential development has occurred, or is likely to occur. According to the Use Requirement Table, the only uses that are permitted

as-of-right are one and two unit dwellings and government uses, although select other uses are permitted with site plan review. Multi unit dwellings are permitted with approval of a Planned Multiple Residential District. According to the Bulk and Density Control Schedule, the minimum lot area requirement depends on the principal use, and ranges from 25,000 sq. ft. for one-unit dwellings with public water or sewer to 2 acres for “other general uses”. Setback and side yard requirements and lot coverage are dependent upon the type of use.

Residential High Density (R2) District: The Residential High Density (R2) district delineates older residential areas characterized primarily by single unit dwellings and higher density residential development. According to the Use Requirement Table, this district permits single and two unit dwellings and government uses as-of-right. Site plan review is required for uses such as schools, places of worship, public utility buildings, and temporary accessory mobile homes. According to the Bulk and Density Control Schedule, the minimum lot area requirement depends on the principal use, and ranges from 15,000 sq. ft. for a one unit dwelling to 2 acres for “other general uses”. Setback and side yard requirements and lot coverage are dependent upon the type of use.

Town Center (TC) District: The Town Center (TC) district designated the “hamlet” area of the town as a district to support a variety of small businesses, services, and residential uses. This area is intended to be a small community center where a mix of compatible residential and business uses can co-exist. According to the Use Requirement Table, this district permits as-of-right one and two unit dwellings, and government uses. Multi unit dwellings are permitted with Site Plan Approval or with approval of a Planned Multiple Residential District. Other permitted uses requiring site plan approval include, but are not limited to antique shops, banks, bars, convenience marts, fitness centers, motor vehicle filling stations, offices, restaurants, retail establishments, and bed and breakfasts. According to the Bulk and Density Control Schedule, one-unit dwellings require a minimum lot area of 15,000 sq. ft. without public water or sewer, and 7,500 sq. ft. with public water and sewer. Two unit dwellings require a minimum lot area of 25,000 sq. ft. without public water or sewer and 12,500 sq. ft. with public water and sewer. Setback and side yard requirements and lot coverage are dependent upon the type of use.

Business Neighborhood (BN) District: The Business Neighborhood (BN) district designates areas where limited low profile business development is allowed. The district requires that permitted businesses meet certain objectives in order to limit adverse impacts on residential neighborhoods. According to the Use Requirement Table, only government uses are permitted as-of-right. Other uses that require site plan approval include, but are not limited to, cultural museums, libraries, day care centers, places of worship, antique and gift shops, banks, bars or night clubs, car wash establishments, fitness centers, lawn and garden retail centers, personal service establishments, restaurants, retail uses, veterinary hospitals, and warehouses. According to the Bulk and Density Control Schedule, all uses require a minimum lot size of 1 acre, a lot width of 100 feet, 25-foot front setback, 15-foot side setback, 25-foot rear setback, maximum lot coverage of 50%, and a maximum building height of 35 feet or 3 stories.

Business Neighborhood 2 (BN2) District: The Business Neighborhood 2 (BN2) district seeks to distinguish an area that is different in geographic setting and neighborhood surroundings from the BN.

The BN2 district abuts, extends upon, or is accessible to NYS Route 17/Interstate 86, a four-lane limited access highway. According to the Use Requirement Table, only government uses are allowed as-of-right, while other uses such as rod and gun clubs, day care centers, private schools, antique shops, banks, beauty shops, dry cleaners, funeral establishments, hotels, motels, offices, parking lots, pharmacies, and warehouses require site plan review. The Bulk and Density Schedule has the same requirements as the BN district.

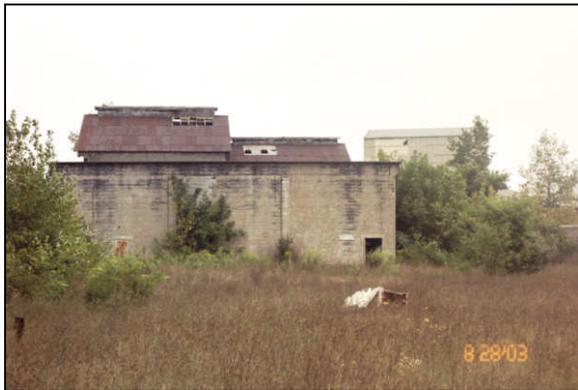
Business Non-Retail (BNR) District: The Business Non-Retail (BNR) district identifies areas situated between primary roads and active rail lines, within the major flight path for the regional airport, or separating incompatible uses. This district is intended to accommodate low density, non-retail business uses that are, by their nature, compatible with the lack of services. The district will also, where public water and sewer are available, and in areas outside the flight path, accommodate higher density residential development. According to the Use Requirement Table, only government uses are permitted as-of-right, while one and two unit dwellings are permitted via a Planned Multiple Residential District, and multi-unit dwellings are allowed via site plan and floating zone approval. Other uses permitted with site plan approval include assisted living facilities, cultural museums, libraries, day care centers, private schools, beauty shops, fitness centers, golf or ski facilities, medical clinics, offices, pharmacies, photographer studios, storage facilities and research facilities. The Bulk and Density Schedule requires a 5-acre minimum lot area for multi-unit dwellings, with a maximum density of 10 units per acre, and a 1-acre minimum lot area for “general business” and “industrial” uses. Setback and side yard requirements and lot coverage are dependent upon the type of use.

Business Regional (BR) District: The Business Regional (BR) district designates areas that have existing business development, available water and sewer services, and transportation access. This district is intended to accommodate major regional retail business development. According to the Use Requirement Table, only government uses are permitted as-of-right, while other uses, such as cultural museums, libraries, amusement centers, art galleries, banks, bars, convenience marts, hotels and motels, motor vehicle filling stations, fast food restaurants, multiplex theaters, and vehicle rentals, are permitted with site plan approval. Uses permitted by special use permit approval with site plan approval include vehicle repair, vehicle sales and leasing, and mining. The Bulk and Density Schedule requires a minimum lot size of 3 acres for any general business or industrial use. Setback and side yard requirements and lot coverage are dependent upon the type of use.

Airport Business Development (ABD) District: The Airport Business Development (ABD) district encompasses all of the Elmira-Corning Regional Airport lands and the majority of lands located within the flight paths. The district is reserved for industrial and business uses that support airport operations, provide traveler services and other uses that may be considered accessory to and compatible with the airport. The district also encompasses areas of prime agricultural soils. According to the Use Requirement Table, this district only permits as-of-right government uses. Uses permitted with site plan approval include but are not limited to, airport or heliport, day care center, place of worship, public utility, agricultural plants, bank or financial institution, fitness center, hotels and motels, general and professional offices, parking lots, wireless communication facilities, and manufacturing/fabrication assembly facilities.

Uses that require special use permit approval and site plan review include vehicle repair and extractive uses (mining). The Bulk and Density Schedule requires a minimum lot size of 3 acres for any general business or industrial use. Setback and side yard requirements and lot coverage depend upon the type of use.

Commercial Light Industrial (CL) District: The Commercial Light Industrial (CL) district designates areas for business uses catering to essential traveler services and certain industrial uses requiring direct transportation access. According to the Use Requirement Table, this district only permits government uses as-of-right. Uses permitted with site plan approval include but are not limited to, day care centers, nursery schools, places of worship, private schools, car washes, catering, dry cleaning, laundry, funeral



service, mini storage, motor vehicle filling station, general office, parking lots, vehicle rental, wireless communication facilities, truck terminals, and warehouses. Uses that require special use permit approval and site plan review include adult uses, flea markets and auction facilities, vehicle repairs, vehicle sales and lease, and heavy equipment repair. The Bulk and Density Schedule requires a minimum lot area of 1 acre for any general business or industrial use. Setback and side yard requirements and lot coverage depend upon the type of use.

Industrial (I) District: The Industrial (I) district delineates those areas within the Town that are appropriate for industrial uses and will not create a detrimental or adverse impact on the environment or public welfare. According to the Use Requirement Table, only government uses are permitted as-of-right. Uses permitted with site plan approval include but are not limited to day care centers, nursery schools, places of worship, public utilities, general offices, printing and publishing, wireless communication facilities, truck terminals, and warehouses. Uses that require special use permit approval and site plan review include adult uses, flea markets and auction facilities, heavy equipment repair, and fuel storage terminals. The Bulk and Density Schedule requires a minimum lot area of 1 acre for any general business or industrial use. Setback and side yard requirements and lot coverage depend upon the type of use.

Conservation (C) District: The Conservation (C) district delineates open, publicly-owned and environmentally sensitive land and water areas for less intensive and carefully considered development. According to the Use Requirement Table, this district only permits as-of-right government uses and private stables. Uses permitted with site plan approval include, seasonal dwellings or hunting cabins, campgrounds, nature centers, zoos, agricultural uses, golf and ski facilities, commercial stables, and wireless communications facilities. Uses that require special use permit approval and site plan review include feedlots. The Bulk and Density Schedule requires a minimum lot area of 3 acres for any general business use. Setback and side yard requirements and lot coverage are dependent upon the type of use.

Overlay Zoning Districts

Flood Damage Prevention Overlay District (FDPOD): The Flood Damage Prevention Overlay District (FDPOD) is intended to prevent destruction and loss of private and public property and loss of human life. This overlay district applies to special flood hazard areas identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency on the Flood Insurance Rate Maps. The Town's Flood Damage Prevention Code provides regulations for construction or disturbance within certain flood hazard areas and also includes standards and requirements for manufactured homes and conditions for variances.

Aquifer Protection Overlay District (APOD): The Aquifer Protection Overlay District (APOD) is intended to preserve the quality and quantity of the town's groundwater resources to ensure a safe drinking water supply. The district has three areas that are overlaying other districts, Area I, Area II, and Area III. Area I is described as the area of the aquifer that is highly permeable and primarily serves as a public water supply for a municipal water system. Area II is the area of the primary aquifer, which, although it may potentially be a productive water source, is not yet used intensively as a public water source. Area III is the upland area of the town tributary to the aquifer protection overlay district. The APOD provides a list of certain prohibited uses, and in addition gives the Planning Board, through the site plan review process, the authority to request additional information from professional hydro-geologists or other experts for certain potentially harmful commercial and industrial uses proposed within the APOD.

3.3.2 Floating Zoning Districts

Planned-Multiple Residential District (PMRD): The PMRD is a floating zone that is superimposed on the underlying district and is subject to site plan approval and a zoning amendment. This classification was established to provide flexible land use and design requirements through the use of performance criteria so that small-to-large neighborhoods or portions thereof may be developed to incorporate a variety of residential density and building types. This district may contain both individual dwelling unit building sites and common property planned and developed as a unit. The Zoning Ordinance lists a number of objectives that should be achieved in order to establish a PMRD.

There are two types of PMRD. The Senior Housing (SHPMRD), is composed of senior housing, and is permitted in the RU, R1, TC and BNR underlying districts. The Non-Senior Housing (NHPMRD) allows non-senior housing in the RU, R1 and TC underlying districts. The PMRD districts permits one-unit, two-unit and multi-unit dwellings and their accessory uses, subject to site plan approval, and have special requirements for density, lot area, access, buffer yards, public water and sewer service, and recreation requirements. The Zoning Ordinance also calls for a special application process for developers that are interested in building a NHPMRD or SHPMRD.

3.4 Existing Land Use Regulations

3.4.1 Site Plan Review

Site Plan Review and approval is intended to determine compliance with the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance, and to evaluate conditions and environmental impact that may cause conflict between existing and proposed uses or be in conflict with natural site conditions. The Planning Board has the authority to approve, approve with modifications and/or conditions, or disapprove a site plan. The Planning Board is responsible for reviewing site plans using the application process set forth in the Zoning Ordinance.

3.4.2 Residential Cluster Development

Residential Cluster Development is intended to encourage flexibility in land design and development to promote the most appropriate use of the land, facilitate adequate and economical provision of services, preserve areas suitable for agricultural use, protect and conserve open space, and environmentally sensitive features and preserve scenic qualities. All developments of one, two, and multi-unit dwellings proposed to occur on a minimum of four contiguous acres are eligible to be considered by the Planning Board for approval of a Residential Cluster Development. The Zoning Ordinance details the review process and special requirements of a Residential Cluster Development.

3.4.3 Subdivision Design Standards

The purpose of the Subdivision Code is to provide for the orderly growth and development of the town and to afford adequate facilities for the housing, transportation, distribution, comfort, convenience, health, safety and welfare of the town's residents. A subdivision is defined as the division of any parcel of land into two or more lots, plots, or sites with or without roads for the purpose of sale, transfer or ownership, or development. The code requires landowners to follow a specific application procedure and approval process prior to the transfer of title or the issuance of a building permit. The code contains design standards for access to lots, new roads, street trees, road names, street lighting, storm water management plans, utilities, parks and playgrounds, and driveways. The Subdivision Design Standards require that each lot in the final plat have an area of at least five thousand (5,000) square feet with an existing slope of less than twenty-five (25) percent.

3.4.4 Timber Harvesting

The purpose of the Timber Harvesting code is to promote the health and safety of Town residents by protecting the natural environment as affected by timber harvesting. The code is intended to regulate harvesting activities that most readily render environmental damage, such as stream crossings and the location of landings, haul roads and skid trails; to control soil erosion and sediment laden runoff; and to utilize professional forest management expertise in the preparation and evaluation of timber harvest planning. The code calls for any person desiring to remove timber in quantities greater than fifty (50)

standard cords of wood or four thousand (4,000) cubic feet of wood or twenty-five thousand (25,000) board feet of timber in any twelve (12) month period to obtain a timber harvest permit. Certain conditions, such as if the owner is a cooperator with the New York State Cooperative Forest Management Program, or if property is being prepared for development authorized by an approved site plan, or if timber is being cleared for utility line maintenance, do not warrant the need for a Timber Harvesting Permit.

3.4.5 Alternative Dwelling Parks

The purpose of the Alternative Dwelling Parks chapter in the Town's Zoning Code is to identify special requirements for trailers or mobile home parks. Among other aspects related to such developments, special requirements related to access, internal pedestrian and vehicular circulation, buffer provisions, fire protection equipment and design, solid waste storage and removal, parks, playgrounds, and open space provisions, and facility and utility maintenance are identified. The chapter also addresses installation and modification of existing mobile homes.

3.4.6 Signs

The Signs chapter of the zoning code addresses dimensional and locational requirements, as well as the number and timing restrictions (if applicable) that regulate the placement of signs within the Town. The breakdown of sign requirements is by sign type, not by zoning district. For example, a real estate sign is limited to 40 square feet in size, regardless of whether the sign is to be located in a residentially zoned area or a commercially zoned area.

3.5 Recent Development Activity

3.5.1 Proposed Projects

Although the Town's capacity to absorb additional development in the valley is nearing saturation, new development continues to be centered in this area. X-Gen is in the process of constructing a new research and development office building south of the Hibbard Road/Daniel Zenker Drive intersection. SYNTHES, a manufacturer of medical prosthetic equipment, has been developing new facilities north of the Sing Sing Road/Yawger Road intersection. Silicon Carbide Products is quadrupling the size of its ceramic manufacturing plant.



These three facilities are all located within Airport Corporate Park, a multi-use business park in the Airport Business Development Zoning District.

Recent retail development includes The Shops at Chambers, a 50,000-square foot, one-story development on Chambers Road, between Arnot Road and Colonial Drive. A Talbot's women's clothing store has already been developed at the site. A Raymour and Flanigan Furniture Store was developed recently. A



3-story hotel is being developed on Colonial Drive, between Arnot Road and the Town boundary. These developments are located within the Regional Business District. There are plans to widen Colonial Drive to better accommodate increasing traffic.

Finally, recent residential development, as indicated previously, has primarily consisted of larger, upper market single-family homes. The most recent development is the 23-lot Soaring Ridge, which will connect off Suburban Drive in the center of Town.

New development in Big Flats has been spurred in part by the expansion of public infrastructure and in part by the presence of the regional Empire Zone in the vicinity of the Elmira Chemung Regional Airport. Chemung County, via the Chemung County Industrial Development Authority and the Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board, actively support the development of new research and development manufacturing around the Airport. Recent infrastructure improvements have included sanitary sewer improvements to accommodate SYNTHES, water expansion to accommodate Airport Corporate Park South, and a sewer expansion to accommodate retail users on Colonial Drive (including The Shops at Chambers). These infrastructure expansions were funded in part by the Appalachian Regional Commission¹.

One of the major concerns associated with the increasing commercial and retail development in the Town is the growing stress on the Town's transportation infrastructure. Many roadways are County-owned and County-maintained. As development in the Town continues to increase, existing roadways may be forced to accommodate traffic volumes exceeding what they were designed to handle. One example of a roadway under such stress is Sing Sing Road.

More information on this topic is located in the Economic Development Section of this Plan.

3.5.2 Recent Variances

The Town issues both area and use variances. The Town Planning Board reviews the variance request and makes its recommendation to the Town Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA), which then renders a

¹ The Appalachian Regional Commission is a Federal-state partnership that works with the people of Appalachia to create opportunities for self-sustaining economic development and improved quality of life. Appalachia stretches over thirteen states and NYS counties within the designated area include, in addition to Chemung County, Allegany, Broome, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware, Otsego, Schoharie, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga, and Tompkins Counties.

decision on whether or not to approve the variance. Most variances in Big Flats are area-related, as opposed to use-related (about 90% as compared to 10%).

Between 1997 and 2005, 44 applicants requested a total of 48 variances. Of these, 50% (24 requests) were submitted by applicants seeking relief from inadequate area dimensions related to new development, additions or expansions of existing structures, or the construction of accessory buildings. A substantial proportion of variance requests are related to the size or placement of signs (10 requests or 21%). Three variances sought zoning relief for setback requirements for swimming pool placement. Structure height, fence height, noise level, and the number of parking spaces are other inconsistent issues for which applicants have sought variances. Finally, five use variances have been requested in Big Flats.

For the most part, the ZBA acts in accordance with the recommendations made by the Planning Board. Of the 48 variances sought during the identified time frame, only five ZBA decisions were not consistent with Planning Board recommendations. This represents approximately 10% of the total variances. Of these five variances, three were related to proposed signs, one was to allow gravel mining, and one was associated with the area of a proposed porch.

While it may be viewed as a positive that the Town has had to address a relatively small number of variances in recent years, there is some concern that lot coverage allowances under the Town's Zoning and Site Plan requirements are too generous and contributes the limited need for area variances in the Town. For general, business, and industrial uses in the Business Regional, Commercial Light Industrial, and Industrial Districts, developers are allowed to cover up to 70% of a project site. Allowing excessive lot coverage for new development can be especially problematic in Big Flats, as flooding and drainage has historically been and continues to be an ongoing issue within the Town.

3.6 Identified Land Use Concerns

Throughout the planning process, many Town residents and stakeholders identified a number of land use issues and concerns. Historically a small, agricultural community, the locational advantages of the Town began to draw notice in the latter half of the 20th century. Between 1975 and 1990, Big Flats experienced a development spurt. First constructed during the 1950s, Arnot Mall was expanded in the 1970s, followed by a number of chain restaurants. The late 1980s, in particular, brought a substantial amount of quick-paced development. To address concerns related to fast growth, the Town, at one point, enacted a moratorium. Areas developed for commercial uses during this time included: Daniel Zenker Road, Airport Corporate Park, Consumer Square, County Route 64, and the big box retail in the vicinity of Arnot Mall. Residential development included Quails Hollow and Eachers Hollow.



As so much of Big Flats' land area is characterized by steep hills, the amount of developable land remaining in the Town is limited to the valley and along NYS Route 352. There is growing concern about protecting residential areas from abutting commercial uses. While the Town requires buffer areas for non-residential uses abutting residential homes, these requirements are not always met to the satisfaction of those impacted by new development.

Several stakeholders expressed concerns related to aesthetics. One issue identified was the fact that several businesses store equipment in visible areas without any screening. There was also a need expressed for design and development standards to address particular aesthetic and site design issues.

Throughout the Town, there are several buildings that, originally developed for commercial uses, now lay vacant. Some expressed a desire to see these existing structures filled by new and/or relocating businesses before additional commercial buildings are constructed, especially on the Town's remaining green areas.

Some community members indicated a perception that the Town does not clearly identify where it would like to see development occur, instead relying on use variances to permit otherwise unfavorable uses. There are several areas where there is a distinct need to reassess existing zoning and how accurately it reflects the type of development the Town would like to see. One such area is the Airport Business Zone and Airport Corporate Park.

Several stakeholders also expressed concern that communication between the Town and the region's economic development agencies, including Chemung County, the Chemung County Industrial Development Authority, and Southern Tier Economic Growth (STEG), needed improvement. IDA/STEG, as the owner of the Airport Corporate Park and Airport Corporate Park South, is one of the largest landowners in Big Flats.

4. TRANSPORTATION

The general goal of transportation systems is to facilitate the efficient movement of people, goods and services. Surface transportation systems, including roads, bridges, transit, walkways, trails and rail lines, are often regarded as significant contributors to quality of life. A well-planned and appropriately designed surface transportation system should accommodate all modes of traffic, be safe to use, visually appealing and environmentally friendly.

4.1 Transportation System Assessment

4.1.1 Functional Classifications

Within Big Flats, the surface transportation system includes an interstate highway with three (3) full interchanges, several arterials, collector and a number of local roads. The functional classification of roadways is based upon the service they provide. The NYSDOT defines the roadway functional classifications as follows:

- **Interstate Highways** – generally an interregional multi-lane, high-speed, high volume, divided facility with complete control of access.
- **Principal and Rural Arterials** – varies from two-lane roadways to multi-lane, divided, controlled access facilities. They serve major areas of activity or are located between major destination points.
- **Urban and Rural Collectors** – typically two-lane roadways that collect and distribute traffic while providing access to abutting properties.
- **Local Roads** – typically low speed and low volume two-lane roadways that primarily provide access to abutting properties.

Critical elements that must be considered during the planning and design of a safe and efficient transportation system include road functionality, traffic volumes, operating speed, terrain, development density, and land use. Roadways classified as collectors, arterials and interstates are eligible for Federal and/or State funding.

4.1.2 Method of Transportation Analysis

As part of the Comprehensive Plan, several transportation corridors in Big Flats were inventoried. The corridors were selected based upon input from the public, Town officials, and Town staff. Transportation

engineers drove the corridors to identify the existing road character, adjacent land use, and potential areas of concern. No traffic counts or level of service assessments were conducted as part of this project. A summary of the Town's major roadways is included in the following sections.

4.2 Big Flats Transportation System

4.2.1 Interstate and State Roads

The following roadways are under the jurisdiction of the NYS Department of Transportation (NYSDOT).

I-86/NYS Route 17

The functional classification of this west-east route, also known as the Southern Tier Expressway, was recently upgraded to an interstate highway. I-86/NYS Route 17 is clearly the most significant transportation corridor in the Town, with respect to traffic volume. Within Big Flats, this route, owned by NYSDOT, includes three interchanges, at exits 49, 50 and 51, and one off-ramp only exit. The NYSDOT has invested a significant amount of resources on this route to improve access, safety and accommodate current and projected traffic volumes. Newly constructed, interchange 50 provides direct access from/to this interstate highway and Kahler Road. An inventory of this route was not included as part of this project.

NYS Route 352

This west-south route within Big Flats intersects with several roads, including South Corning Road (County Road 10), Main Street (County Road 64), Winters Road (County Road 82), Carpenter Road, Harris Hill Road (County Road 55), and Hendy Creek Road (NYS Route 225). The route is classified as a Minor Urban Arterial from the Town of Corning/Big Flats line to just south of its intersection with Winters Road (County Road 82). The route is then classified as a Minor Rural Arterial from Winters Road (County Road 82) to Hendy Creek Road (NYS Route 225) and further south. The route, owned by NYSDOT, provides local access and is a preferred route for motorists destined from/to the Towns of Corning and West Elmira.



An inventory was conducted from Main Street (County Road 64) to Harris Hill Road (County Road 55). In general, this route provides two-lane, two-way traffic, except at its intersections with Main Street (County Road 64) and Winters Road (County Road 82). At its intersection with Main Street (County Road 64), a dedicated left turn lane only is provided on NYS Route 352 for southbound motorists. At its intersection with Winters Road (County Road 82), a dedicated right turn only lane is provided on NYS Route 352 for westbound motorists. "STOP" signs on the minor approach typically control the intersections to NYS Route 352, except with Winters Road (County Road 82), where it is controlled by a

traffic signal system with stop bars at each approach. With respect to the intersection geometry at Main Street (County Road 64) and Curren Road, the minor approach alignments are significantly skewed and thus sight distance appears to be less than desirable.

The roadway section includes 11 to 12 foot wide travel lanes and variable width shoulders (up to 8 feet). The pavement appears to be in fair to good condition. Centerline and edge markings are provided for delineation, and the posted speed limit is 45 MPH, from Main Street (County Road 64) to Winters Road (County Road 82); 55 MPH from Winters Road (County Road 82) to Manor Drive; and 45 MPH from Manor Drive to Harris Hill Road (County Road 55). Parking is prohibited along the roadway.

Pedestrian and bicycle access is typically accommodated on the paved shoulders, and, although a separate facility does not exist, NYS Route 352 does accommodate NYS Bike Route 17. Driveways are present along the roadway and their configuration varies with respect to design and surface type. Utility poles are present along the roadway.

4.2.2 County Roads

Many of the roads in the Town of Big Flats are actually under the jurisdiction of Chemung County. The following section includes a brief description of the major County roadways.

Main Street/Big Flats Road (County Road 64)

This west-east roadway intersects with NYS Route 352 to the west and extends east beyond the Town of Big Flats/Horseheads line. Owned by the County, this road is classified as a Minor Urban Arterial. In addition to providing access to local roads and numerous commercial driveways, it is a preferred route for motorists traveling from/to the Towns of Corning and Horseheads.

An inventory was conducted from NYS Route 352 to Commerce Center Road/NYSEG intersecting driveways, located in the Town of Horseheads. In general, this road provides two-lane, two-way traffic, except at its intersections with NYS Route 352, Winters Road (County Road 82); commercial driveways at Corning Life Science Facility, Econo Lodge/Wendy's establishments and Lowes and Commerce Center Road/NYSEG; and Chambers Road (County Road 35). The lane configurations and type of control for the above noted intersections are as follows:

1. Main Street (County Road 64)/NYS Route 352: Dedicated lefts turns only and through lane are provided on the NYS Route 352 eastbound approach. A through/right turn lane is provided on the NYS Route 352 westbound approach. A left/right turn lane is provided on the Main Street (County Road 64) approach. A "STOP" sign controls the intersection with a stop bar on the Main Street (County Road 64) approach.
2. Main Street (County Road 64)/Winters Road (County Road 82): Dedicated left turn and through/right lanes are provided on both Main Street (County Road 64) approaches. No

dedicated turn lanes are provided on the Winters Road approaches. “ALL-WAY STOP” signs control the intersection with stop bars at each approach.

3. Big Flats Road (County Road 64)/Corning Life Science Facility driveway: Dedicated right and left turn lanes are provided on Life Science Facility driveway approach, with a “STOP” sign on the driveway controlling the intersection.
4. Big Flats Road (County Road 64)/Econo Lodge/Wendy’s driveways: Dedicated left, through and right turn lanes are provided on both Big Flats Road (County Road 64) approaches. Dedicated left turn and through/right turn lanes are provided on the Econo Lodge driveway approach. Dedicated through/left and right turn lanes are provided on Wendy’s driveway approach. The intersection is controlled by a traffic signal system.
5. Big Flats Road (County Road 64)/Chambers Road (County Road 35): Dedicated through/right, through/left and left turn only lanes are provided on the Big Flats Road (County Road 64) eastbound approach. Dedicated through, right and left turn lanes are provided on the Big Flats Road (County Road 64) westbound approach. Dedicated right turn and two-through lanes are provided on the Chambers Road (County Road 35) northbound approach, with prohibited left turn movement. Dedicated left and right turn lanes, along with two-through lanes are provided on Chambers Road (County Road 35) southbound approach. The intersection is controlled by a traffic signal system.
6. Big Flats Road (County Road 64)/Lowes Driveway: Dedicated through/right and left turn only lanes are provided on the Big Flats Road (County Road 64) eastbound approach. Through, right and left turn lanes are provided on Big Flats Road (County Road 64) westbound approach. Dedicated right turn and through/left lanes are provided on the driveway southbound approach. Dedicated through/left/right turn lane is provided on the northbound driveway approach. The intersection is controlled by a traffic signal system.



lanes are provided on Commerce Center Road driveway approach. Dedicated right turn/through and through/left lanes are provided on NYSEG Driveway approach. The intersection is controlled by a traffic signal system.

7. Big Flats Road (County Road 64)/Commerce Center Road/NYSEG Driveways: Dedicated through/right, through and left turn only lanes are provided on the Big Flats Road (County Road 64) eastbound approach. Through, right and left turn lanes are provided on the Big Flats Road (County Road 64) westbound approach. Dedicated left/through and right/through turn

8. All other intersections are controlled by a “STOP” sign on the minor approach, except for Fisherville Road (County Road 64C), which is controlled by a “Yield” sign.

The roadway section includes 11 to 12 foot wide travel lanes and variable width shoulders. In general, the pavement appears to be in fair to poor condition. Centerline and edge markings are provided for delineation, and the posted speed limit is 30 MPH from NYS Route 352 to Gross Road, 45 MPH for the remainder of the roadway segment. Parking is prohibited along the roadway.

There are several locations where sight distance appears to be less than desirable, including the Main Street (County Road 64)/NYS Route 352 intersection, due to the skew angle. In addition, there are several sharp horizontal curves and vertical crest curves that reduce sight distance. Numerous advisory signs are present where the horizontal curve geometry is less than desirable.

Pedestrian access is provided in the form of concrete sidewalks on the north side, near its intersection with NYS Route 352 and extending to the First Presbyterian Church, near Church Street. The sidewalks and adjacent curbing is generally in poor condition, and not in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines. Sidewalks or other types of walkways are not present for the remainder of the roadway segment.

Highway “cobra” style lighting mounted to the utility poles is present along various segments of the road. The poles in many locations are close to the road. There are several locations where drop-offs adjacent to the pavement appear steep and adequate recovery area is not provided.

Bicyclists typically utilize the shoulders or travel lanes for access. A separate facility does not exist. Driveways are present along the roadway and their configurations vary in design and surface type.

Sing Sing Road (County Road 17)

Maple Street, Hibbard Road, and Sing Sing Road are part of County Road 17. Sing Sing Road (County Road 17) intersects with Hibbard Road to the west and extends east to the Town of Big Flats/Horseheads line. This two-way, two-lane road is classified as an Urban Collector from Hibbard Road to its intersection with the north end of Chambers Road (County Road 35). From the north end of Chambers Road (County Road 35) to its intersection with south end of Chambers Road (County Road 35), the road is classified as Minor Urban Arterial. From the south end of Chambers Road (County Road 35) to Hickory Grove Road (County Road 57), the road is again classified as an Urban Collector. The road is owned by the County and in addition to providing access to local roads, it also provides access from/to the Towns of Horseheads and Big Flats and to the Elmira-Corning Regional Airport.

An inventory was conducted from Kahler Road (County Road 63) to Hickory Grove Road (County Road 57). This road provides two-lane, two-way traffic. Turning lanes are not provided at any of the intersections. Sing Sing Road’s intersections are typically controlled by “STOP” signs on the minor approaches, except at its intersection with County Road 35 (Chambers Road), where a “YIELD” sign on the Sing Sing approach provides control. With respect to the intersection with Yawker Road, the minor approach alignment is significantly skewed and thus sight distance is less than desirable.

The roadway section includes 11 to 12 foot wide travel lanes and variable width shoulders (approximately 4 feet wide). The posted speed limit is 45 MPH from County Road 63 (Kahler Road) to Aviation Drive, and 30 MPH from Aviation Drive to County Road 35 (Chambers Road). Parking is prohibited along the roadway via “No Parking” signs. Dispersed advisory signs warn drivers of sharp horizontal curves and of “blind” driveways.

Pedestrian and bicycle access is typically accommodated on the paved shoulders as a separate facility does not exist. Driveways are present along the roadway and their configuration varies in respect to design and surface type. Highway “cobra” style lighting mounted on utility poles is present along various segments of the road. The poles are generally too close to the shoulder.

Kahler Road (County Road 63)

This south-north road intersects with Big Flats Road (County Road 64) to the south and extends to Sing Sing Road (County Road 17) to the north. From I-86/NYS Route 17 to Sing Sing Road (County Road 17), Kahler Road is also County Road 63. The segment from Big Flats Road (County Road 64) to Interchange 50 is classified as Local and is owned by the Town. From Interchange 50 to Sing Sing Road (County Road 17), it is classified as an Urban Collector and is owned by Chemung County. This road provides direct access to/from I-86 (NYS Route 17).

An inventory was conducted from Lowe Road to Big Flats Road (County Road 64). This road provides two-lane, two-way traffic. Additional turning lanes are not provided at the intersections. A “STOP” sign on the Kahler Road approach with Big Flats Road (County Road 64) controls the intersection.

The roadway section generally includes 11 to 12 foot wide travel lanes and variable width shoulders, except where a narrow single lane bridge provides access over active railroad tracks. The bridge appears to be in poor condition and is posted for a “3-TON WEIGHT LIMIT” restriction. There is minimal sight distance due to the steep crested vertical curve on the approaches to the bridge. The posted speed limit prior to the bridge is 50 MPH.

Pedestrian and bicycle access is typically accommodated on the paved shoulders, except on the bridge. A separate facility does not exist. Driveways are present along the roadway and their configuration varies in respect to design and surface type. Utility poles are present along various segments of the road. The poles are generally too close to the shoulder.

Winters Road (County Road 82)

This north-south road intersects with NYS Route 352 and extends to Maple Street (County Road 17). Winters Road, from NYS Route 352 to Main Street (County Road 64) is also known as County Road 82. The road is classified as an Urban Collector. From NYS Route 352 to Main Street (County Road 64), it is owned by the County and from Main Street (County Road 64) to Maple Street (County Road 17), it is owned by the Town.

An inventory was only conducted from its intersection with Main Street (County Road 64) and Maple Street (County Road 17). Additional turning lanes are not provided at the intersections. Both intersections are controlled by a “STOP” sign on the minor approaches, which are Winters Road and Maple Street (County Road 17). The Winters Road/Maple Avenue intersection alignment is skewed and sight distance is less than desirable.

This road provides two-lane, two-way traffic. The roadway section includes 11 to 12 foot wide travel lanes and minimal to no shoulder width. The posted speed limit along this roadway segment is 30 MPH.

A railroad overpass spans over Winters Road. The vertical clearance is only 9’-0”. In addition, the horizontal alignment at the bridge includes reverse curves, which results in less than desirable sight distance.

Pedestrian and bicycle access is typically accommodated on the travel lanes, a separate pedestrian and facility does not exist. Driveways are present along the roadway and their configuration varies with respect to design and surface type. Utility poles are present along various segments of the road. The poles are generally too close to the pavement.

Chambers Road (CR 35): This north-south road connects Sing Sing Road (County Route 17) in the north and Big Flats Road (County Route 64) in the south. There are two travel lanes in the north end and 5-7 travel lanes to the south end by I-86 Exit 51. Classified as an Urban Minor Arterial, Chambers Road primarily serves a heavy commercial/business district in Town and the interchange with I-86 is draws a significant amount of traffic.

4.2.3 Local Roads

The Town of Big Flats owns approximately 73.7 miles of roadway, including more than 8 miles of dirt roads. The long-term goal of the Town is to gradually phase out all dirt roads and pave them as funding allows. Not all local roads are discussed in this section, only the roads that have functional classifications determined by ECTC. These roads are all under the jurisdiction of the Town and, unless otherwise noted, have one travel lane per direction.



Canal Street

This north-south two-lane, two-way road intersects with Main Street (County Road 64) and extends to Maple Street (County Road 17). The Town owns this Local road.

An inventory was conducted for the entire roadway segment. The intersection with Maple Street (County Road 17) is controlled by “ALL-WAY STOP” signs. At the intersection with Main Street (County Road

64), it is controlled by a “STOP” sign on the Canal Street approach. Sight distance is less than desirable at the intersection with Maple Street (County Road 17) due to vehicles parked in the retail establishment parking lot. The remainder of the roadway segment appears to have adequate sight distance. The posted speed limit is “30 MPH”. The roadway section includes 12’ travel lanes and variable width shoulder on the east side. Pavement in general is in fair to good condition. Parking is prohibited along both sides of the road. Two railroad overpasses span over Canal Street. The vertical clearances are only 9’-2”.

Pedestrian access is provided along the west side for the entire length of the road via a concrete sidewalk, which is approximately 4’ wide. The sidewalk is generally in good condition. A grassed utility/snow storage area of approximately 5’ wide is also provided adjacent to the sidewalk. On the east side, sidewalks are present from Main Street (County Road 17) to the Fountain of Life Church access driveway. Concrete curb and grassed utility/snow storage area of approximately 5’ wide is also provided within the limits of the sidewalk.

Bicycle access is typically accommodated on the travel lanes, a separate facility does not exist. Drainage structures are present along the roadway and the grates are not desirable for a cyclist as they are too wide. Driveways are present along the roadway and their configuration varies with respect to design and surface type. Utility poles are typically present along the east side of the road. The poles are generally too close to the pavement.

Hammond Street

This north-south two-lane, two-way road intersects with Main Street (County Road 64) and extends to Maple Street (County Road 17). The Town owns this Local road.

An inventory was conducted for the entire roadway segment. Both Main Street (County Road 64) and Maple Street (County Road 17) intersections are controlled by “STOP” signs on the minor approach, Hammond Street. Sight distance is less than desirable at the intersection with Maple Street (County Road 17) due to the crest vertical curve. The remainder of the roadway segment appears to have adequate sight distance. The posted speed limit is “30 MPH”. The roadway section includes 13’ travel lanes with minimal to no shoulders. Pavement in general is in fair to good condition. A railroad overpass exists and spans over Hammond Street. The vertical clearance is only 9’-0”. An at-grade railroad crossing also exists with automatic gates, pavement markings and advisory signs. However, sight distance is less than desirable due to the presence of a crest vertical curve. Two sharp horizontal curves, one just south of the railroad and the other further south, also restrict sight distance. There are several fixed objects (trees), which could be considered a hazard since they are located near the pavement edge.

Pedestrian and bicycle access is typically accommodated on the travel lanes, a separate pedestrian and facility does not exist. Driveways are present along the roadway and their configuration varies in both with respect to design and surface type. Utility poles with “Cobra” style lighting in selected areas are typically present along the west side of the road. The poles are generally near the edge of pavement.

Olcott Road South

This north-south two-lane, two-way road intersects with Main Street (County Road 64) and extends to Maple Street (County Road 17). The Town owns this Local road.

An inventory was conducted for the entire roadway segment. NYS Route 352 to County Road 17 (Maple Street). Both Main Street (County Road 64) and Maple Street (County Road 17) intersections are controlled by a “STOP” signs on the minor approach, which is Olcott Road South. There appears to be adequate sight distance at the intersections. However, the right turn radius from Olcott Road South to Main Street (County Road 64) is less than desirable. The posted speed limit is “30 MPH”.

The roadway section includes 10’ travel lanes with minimal width shoulders. Pavement is generally in fair to poor condition. Railroad overpasses span over Olcott Road South. The vertical clearance is only 10’-5”. Site distance is restricted by a sharp horizontal curve under the railroad bridges. It appears that a stream adjacent to the west side of the road has contributed to undermining of the road, and as a result, a concrete barrier was installed on the southbound travel lane. The barrier reduces the roadway width in this area.

Pedestrian and bicycle access is typically accommodated on the travel lanes, as a separate pedestrian and facility does not exist. Driveways are present along the roadway and their configuration varies with respect to design and surface type. Utility poles are typically present along the road. The poles are generally near the edge of pavement.

4.3 Road Maintenance

4.3.1 Highway Department

The Town of Big Flats Highway Department consists of a Highway Supervisor and eight Equipment Operators. The Highway Department is responsible for maintaining all roadways and bridges owned by the Town as well as maintaining the road right-of-ways. The Highway Department repairs potholes year round, but does patchwork during the winter months reserving permanent filling during the summer.

4.3.2 Chemung County Highway Department

Big Flats residents are encouraged to contact the Chemung County Highway Department with any concerns or questions regarding County roads.

4.4 Bridge Maintenance

According to NYSDOT’s Bridge Inventory and the *2004 Long Range Transportation Plan*, two hundred and sixty seven (267) bridges of at least 20-foot spans exist throughout Chemung County highway

network. Eighty-four (84) of the bridges are owned by NYSDOT and one hundred and eighty three (183) are owned by County, City and other local government agencies.

A deficient bridge is not necessarily an unsafe structure and weight restrictions can be imposed to limit the type of traffic (e.g. heavy trucks) that would cause further damage. However, closing a bridge or imposing weight restrictions can cause significant inconvenience, especially in areas where detours or alternate routes are not readily available.



According to the Town of Big Flats Hazard Mitigation Plan, there are nine bridges identified as deficient in Big Flats. Another 24 bridges in the Town are deemed satisfactory. Of the nine deficient bridges, the majority of these, five, provide access above railroad tracks in the Town Center. Of the remaining four bridges, one provides access along South Corning Road (CR 10) over the Chemung River in the western-central part of Town; one supports Schweizer Road above Sing Sing Creek east of the Chemung Elmira Airport; one supports NYS Route 352

over Sing Sing Creek, north of Curren Road; and the final one is located along NYS Route 225 above Hendy Creek in the southeastern tip of the Town.

4.5 Alternative Transportation Options

It should be noted that much of the information included in the following section has been excerpted from the Elmira Chemung Transportation Council's (ECTC) 2004 Long Range Transportation Plan, *Destination 2025: Transportation Planning for the Future*.

4.5.1 Elmira-Corning Regional Airport

The Elmira-Corning Regional Airport serves the Southern Tier of New York and Pennsylvania. The Elmira-Corning Regional Airport is owned and operated by Chemung County and is staffed by 15 County employees. General aviation accounts for about two-thirds of the Airport's operations activity.

Current commercial service providers, such as US Airways Express, Northwest AirlinK, and Continental Connection, provide 27 flights per day. Direct, non-stop, and regional jet service is available to the hubs of Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Detroit; and turbo-jet service is available to Philadelphia. These hubs can provide non-stop and/or one-stop service to most major domestic and international destinations.

The recent opening of the new I-86/Kahler Road Interchange at Exit 50 provides enhanced access to the airport and to Airport Corporate Park. The airport recently received \$200,000 from the Small Community Air Service Development Pilot Program of the Federal Aviation Administration. The funds will be to explore ways to improve commercial service from the airport.

4.5.2 Rail Service

Norfolk Southern, New York Susquehanna and Western, and Canadian Pacific (Delaware and Hudson) provide freight rail service in the region. Owego and Hartford provide trackage and service to all areas. There is no passenger service.

4.5.3 Chemung County Transit System Fixed Route Service

The Chemung County Transit System (CCTS) is the region's major public transit provider. With a service area covering 408 square miles and a population base of 91,070, CCTS was created by the Chemung County Legislature in 1969 beginning service in 1971. The fixed route bus system provides service along fourteen (14) local routes and three (3) regional routes. According to ECTC, following an evaluation of the system, the time between buses was increased from 30 minutes to 60 minutes. These routes run throughout the day, Monday through Friday, with several having limited Saturday and Sunday service. The fixed bus routes have specific bus stops, but will also stop anywhere along the bus route if properly flagged down.

The Chemung County Transit System fixed transit routes include the following:

- Southtown: EDTC*, Maple & Sly, Maple & Miller, Maple & Cedar, Southtown Plaza, Robert & Main, Erie Plaza, Water & Madison.
- St. Joseph's Hospital Loop: EDTC*, Wegmans, Mathews & Sullivan (Capabilities), Sullivan St. (ARC), Judson & Water (Family Services), John & Washington (Psych. Center), St. Joseph's, Lake & Gray.
- Bulkhead: EDTC*, Water & Main, Flannery Apts, Southport Plaza, Broadway & Spruce, Walnut & Mt. Zoar.
- Arnot Ogden Medical Loop: EDTC*, Park Place & Clinton, Clinton & Davis, 3rd & Walnut, Walnut & Clinton, Clinton & Hoffman, Elmira Free Academy, Arnot Ogden Medical Facility, Bancroft, Davis & 5th.
- Golden Glow: EDTC*, Church & Davis, Church & Wall, Church & Coleman, Golden Glow Drive, Water & York, Water & Wall, Water & Hoffman.
- Lake Road: EDTC*, Madison & Church, Lake & Washington, Lake & McCanns, Villa Serene, Grand Central Plaza, Water & Lake.
- College Avenue: EDTC*, College & Woodlawn, Oakwood & 14th, Bethany Village, Hanover Square, Grand Central Plaza, College & Thurston, College & Washington.
- Grand Central Plaza: EDTC*, St. Joseph's, Clemens Center Pkwy, Grand Central Plaza, Arnot Mall, Consumer Square.

- Mall Express - Southside Loop: EDTC*, College & Washington, Consumer Square, Arnot Mall, Grand Central Plaza, Southport Plaza.
- Wellsburg –Waverly: EDTC*, Maple & Cedar, Wellsburg, Lowman, Chemung, Waverly, Robert Packer, Tioga Nursing Home.
- Pine City: EDTC*, S. Main & Cedar, Cedar & Pennsylvania, Southport Prison, Dry Run Road, State Line.
- Corning – Bath: EDTC*, Consumer Square, Arnot Mall, Airport Corporate Park, Big Flats Post Office, Corning Transportation Center, P&C Plaza, Savona, Bath County Building, Big Flat's Minier's.
- Watkins Glen: Grand Central Plaza, Millport, Catherine Village Apts, Rural Urban Center, Schuyler Hospital, A-Plus, Jefferson Village, Clute Park, Glen Grocery, Montour Falls Laundromat.
- Spencer – Van Etten: EDTC*, Grand Central Plaza, Hanover Square, Breesport Post Office, Harnas Read Mart, Mini Mart (Van Etten), Big M (Spencer).

Since 1992, the local fixed-route service base fare has been \$1.00. Regional routes fares range from \$2.00 to \$4.00. Senior citizens are eligible for a 50% discount upon providing proof of senior citizen status. Fares can be paid either in cash, tokens, or with monthly passes. Passes are currently sold for \$36/month for local services and \$48/month for regional services. Children 5 years old or younger ride free when accompanied by a fare-paying adult (limit three children per adult).

CCTS operates a fleet of 36 vehicles. All vehicles are wheelchair lift equipped and may be used for either fixed-route or ADA compliant service. During peak hour service, vehicles typically provide fixed-route service. Twenty-one (21) new buses with improved ADA compliance and maintenance diagnostics were recently procured by CCTS and will replace older, outdated vehicles. All vehicles are handicap-accessible and, with the retirement of its remaining older vehicles, CCTS will have a fully ADA compliant fleet. Between 1996 and 2002, fixed route ridership declined 3.2% each year. However, much of this decline occurred between 1998 and 1999, when ridership dropped by 27.4%. Since that drop, ridership levels have stabilized to an annual average of approximately 620,000. According to a 2000 on-board passenger survey commissioned by ECTC, approximately two-thirds of transit riders do not own a vehicle. One-third stated that they own at least one vehicle, but 84% of passengers reported that they had no vehicle available to make their trip.

CCTS also maintains a website, www.chemungcountytransit.com, which provides service and contact information. In addition, CCTS operates a program, where by individuals can request a CCTS employee demonstrate how to use the transit system. Employees will ride out to the individual's home, explain the transit system, ride the system with the individual, demonstrate transfers, and answer questions until the individual feels comfortable riding the transit vehicles. This program is targeted at individuals with disabilities, but is available to anyone upon request.

4.5.4 Chemung County Transit System Dial-A-Ride

Chemung County Transportation System (CCTS) operates a curb-to-curb service, sometimes referred to as Dial-A-Ride, throughout the County. If an individual lives within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of a fixed route, and is unable to get to the bus stop due to a disability, he/she is eligible for curb-to-curb service. Curb-to-curb service is also provided for Medicaid and preschool transportation services. Requests for curb-to-curb service must be made at least 24 hours in advance. The curb-to-curb service has a base fare of \$2.00. Senior citizens are eligible for a 50% discount upon providing proof of senior citizen status. Medicaid participants are provided with tokens or vouchers to pay for their travel costs.

CCTS operates a fleet of 36 vehicles, all of which may be used for either fixed-route or demand-response service. During peak hour service, CCTS typically has 7 vehicles providing curb-to-curb service. These vehicles run Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. All vehicles are handicap-equipped. Reduced service is also available on Saturday and Sunday. CCTS's curb-to-curb service's annual ridership in 2002, the latest year that data was available, was 67,307 riders. Between 1996 and 2000, annual ridership for curb-to-curb service declined significantly. However, from 2000 to 2002, despite efforts to transfer more mobile individuals to fixed route service, curb-to-curb service ridership has increased by almost 10,000 riders. With the expected growth in the region's elderly population, curb-to-curb service's ridership will likely continue to increase.

4.5.5 Chemung County Office for the Aging

The county's Office for the Aging (OA) provides senior citizen transportation services through a contract with Totem Taxi, a local taxi company. Transportation is restricted to medical appointments and occasional trips to social agencies. On-going services are provided only for individuals who do not own a car and are not on Medicaid. In 2003, OA served 3,873 one-way trips and provided service for between 150 and 200 unduplicated passengers. OA and CCTS coordinate their transportation services on an ad-hoc, case-by-case basis, especially for individuals confined to wheelchairs and requiring mobility assistance.

4.5.6 Chemung County Retired and Senior Volunteer Program

Chemung County also has a Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), which is an organization that provides senior citizen transportation services by coordinating volunteer drivers. Services are available to senior citizen residents of Chemung County in need of transportation to medical or dental appointments. Program participants must not be currently provided transportation through Medicaid. Individuals in wheelchairs, on oxygen, or in need of hands-on care are also unable to receive transportation services through this program. Individuals must allow two days working notice when requesting transportation through RSVP. As with OA, RSVP coordinates its transportation services with CCTS on an ad-hoc, case-by-case basis.

4.5.7 Pedestrian and Bicycle Accommodations

Crosswalks, lighting, handicap accessibility, curb cuts, pedestrian crossing signals, signs, drainage, and traffic calming elements are all part of the provisions of a safe bicycle and pedestrian use transportation system.

Sidewalks

A field inspection of the pedestrian accommodations within the Big Flats Town Center was performed on January 11, 2005. Due to snowfall on the ground, sidewalk access within the Town Center was quite limited. This situation causes some problems with pedestrian circulation within the area, especially for children. Business owners and residents, for the most part, clear snow from the sidewalks on Main Street, Canal Street, and Hickory Street. Maple Street, the location of the Town Municipal Complex, lacks sidewalks.

Bicycle Routes and Trails

New York State Bike Route 17 is a designated on-street bicycle route on NYS Route 352. The route runs roughly in a north south direction, entering the easterly boundary of Chemung County, at the Town of Big Flats town line and traveling south through the Towns of Elmira, Asland, and Chemung, until it exits the western boundary of Chemung County in the southerly portion of the Town of Chemung. This bicycle route utilizes the shoulder and travel lanes along the NYS Route 352 corridor for access, and is therefore hazardous at times due to narrow right-of-ways, on-street parking, high-posted speed limits on rural roads, and the prevalence of truck traffic. Much of Bike Route 17 is not intended for the novice cyclist.

The Big Flats Trail, a multi-use trail, is located on an abandoned railroad bed originating east of Winters Road and continuing easterly to County Route 64. This trail originated from the installation of the Corning Glassworks sewer line. Corning improved the trail with crushed limestone. The trail is 8-10 feet wide and users walk, skate, bike, and horseback ride along the path, which traverses the Lowes Pond wetland area. The Elmira-Chemung Transportation Council 2004 Long Range Transportation Plan “Destination 2025: Transportation Planning for the Future”, has recommended that the Big Flats Trail be better connected to Consumer Square and the Town Center. ECTC recommends extending the trail to the Town of Horseheads and connecting it with the Catharine Valley Trail.

4.6 Existing Transportation Considerations

4.6.1 Big Flats-Horseheads Highway Network Evaluation Study (2000)

The ECTC, working with Chemung County, the Towns of Big Flats and Horseheads, and NYSDOT, completed a consultant study in 2000 that served on a two-fold purpose. On a macro level, the study evaluated current and future highway network needs in a high-growth area in the region. On a micro level, the study evaluated the accessibility of the Big Flats Town Center. The study also looked to identify preferred methods to upgrade NYS Route 17 to interstate standards, as well as to identify the impacts of such a designation.

While it was determined that the elimination of at-grade intersections in Big Flats and the designation of I-86 would result in significant economic benefits for Chemung County, there was concern about the progress of such improvements. Affected municipalities indicated a need to develop a funding mechanism to ensure necessary improvements were made in a timely fashion.

The report found traffic operations generally to be acceptable. However, it identified the potential for 7.7 million square feet of land to be developed between Sing Sing Road and Kahler Road by 2019, which might result in significant traffic congestion and delay. The report also identified approximately twenty (20) locations that could become problem areas over the twenty-year period. The study recommended solutions to address highway needs in the study area, including the installation of new traffic signals, intersection and roadway reconstructions, new roadway construction, roadway reconfiguration, and signal timing changes.

In addition, the study identified several measures to improve accessibility of the Big Flats Town Center. Alternatives discussed included improving the at-grade crossing at Hammond Street, either with or without a full reconstruction and realignment of Hammond Street, or improving the grade separated crossing on Winters Road. The fourth, and preferred, alternative included constructing a new road that would extend easterly from Maple Street/Winters Road intersection to Kahler Road South, and upgrading Kahler Road South.

One major recommendation, a new I-86 interchange at Kahler Road, has already been completed. The total cost of improvements was estimated as \$16.9 million.

4.6.2 Destination 2025: Transportation Planning for the Future

The Elmira-Chemung Transportation Council's most recent Long Range Plan, *Destination 2025: Transportation Planning for the Future*, was finalized in November 2004. As a hub for commercial development as well as the site of the regional airport, facilitating transportation in Big Flats has been a major consideration by the MPO in recent years. One of the seven goals identified in the previous LRP, adopted in 2001, was to “*Insure that an adequate transportation infrastructure is in place to meet the development needs of the Chambers Road/Regional Airport/Corporate Park area of the Town of Big Flats.*”

To this end, of the twenty “success stories” discussed in the 2004 LRP, five were located in the Town of Big Flats. These include the following:

1. Improved Exit 51A (Opened November 1998)
2. Improved Exit 51 (Opened 2001)
3. Airport Interchange (Construction 2002 – Opened 2004)
4. Daniel Zenker Road Extension (Opened December 1998)

5. Bike Route 17 (Opened May 1997)

Other ongoing projects included the development of new Exit 50 in Big Flats that would provide direct access to the Elmira-Corning Regional Airport, Airport Corporate Park, and Airport Corporate Park South.

4.7 Identified Transportation Needs

Many transportation related concerns have been voiced by both stakeholders and members of the public throughout the Comprehensive Plan's public outreach process. The majority of these issues are related to inadequate roadways and intersections. Kahler Road, and the inadequate sight distances afforded by the railroad bridge, is a major concern. Many of the Town's other railroad bridges, especially those located in the Town Center, were also identified as problematic as their exceptionally low vertical clearances result in most northbound commercial traffic being relegated to Hammond Street, a narrow and winding residential road.

Some residents identified a need for increased or improved accessibility. In addition to improved north/south access, many expressed a desire for eliminating the crosstown obstacles that currently hinder access to the Town Center. Two railroad tracks, one active and one inactive, currently bisect much of the Town Center. In addition, the configuration of the road network in the Town Center was identified as a challenge. Appropriate and clear signage, including signage at Exit 49 of I-86, was identified as one mechanism by which this situation could be ameliorated.

Many residents identified inadequate road design as a major concern. Specific issues residents would like to see rectified include insufficiently sized interchanges, blind spots, dangerous curves (such as the one on North Olcott Road), and inadequate road widths (such as Owen Hollow Road). NYS Route 352, especially where it meets with County Route 64 south of the Town Center, was identified as a particularly hazardous intersection. (Two accidents in February 2005 resulted in three fatalities along the Big Flats' segment of NYS Route 352.) There were concerns related to inadequate signage and some indicated a need for improved signage to alert drivers of abruptly changing speed limits, oncoming traffic, and dangerous situations. Excessive wear and tear on the Towns' roadways due to its role as a regional shopping mecca was also identified as a concern.

Public workshop participants expressed a desire for improved public transportation options for Town residents, especially for senior citizens and for young people. Residents also expressed a desire for more public transit stops and more sidewalks in the Town Center. Airport Corporate Park, as a major employment center in the Town, was identified as a potential location for public transit connections. Another idea to enhance pedestrian friendliness included the development of a walkway connecting the various phases of Consumer Square. Several stakeholders also indicated that connecting the Big Flats Trail to the Catharine Valley Trail in the neighboring Town of Horseheads would allow Big Flats residents direct access to a regional trail network.

5. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The Town of Big Flats is fortunate to have a number of natural areas that residents can enjoy for both aesthetic and recreational purposes. Areas such as Gleason Meadows, and Frenchmans's Bluff, Steege Hill Nature Preserve, Personius Woods, and Harris Hill, the beautiful Chemung River Valley and the surrounding Palisades are important features that contribute to the scenic and recreational value of the Town and the community's quality of life.

5.1 Land Attributes

The following section describes some of the Town's natural resources and land attributes.

5.1.1 Topography and Hills

Big Flats lies entirely within the southwestern plateau of New York State, which comprises the northern extension of a great upland region that lies along the western base of the Appalachian Mountains. The plateau has been so dissected and eroded over time that the unusually uniform elevations of the hilltops is the only remaining evidence that the land was once flat. The topography of Big Flats includes many steep slopes, primarily surrounding the Chemung River Valley. The Town's highest elevation point of 1,796 feet above sea level is located on Steege Hill, while its lowest elevation of 871 feet above sea level is located in the far southeast corner of the Town near Golden Glow. The Town benefits from its prominent, steep slopes that provide scenic views, aquifer recharge areas, and forestland.



5.1.2 Soils

Chemung County's soils, originating from underlying rocks and sediments laid down during the Devonian period, comprise alternate beds of shales and sandstones. The soils found in the valleys developed from recent alluvium, outwash material, and stratified deposits. These materials show the influence of more active glaciation, in that a large proportion of the drift has been brought in from regions far to the north. Most of these foreign materials are composed of crystalline and limestone gravel. All the soils are predominately low in organic matter.

According to the *Chemung County Soil Survey*, issued in 1973 by the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service, the soils within the Town of Big Flats are composed of five major Soil Associations; (1) Lordstown-Volusia-Mardin, (2) Volusia-Lordstown, (3) Lordstown-Arnot, (4) Howard-Chenango, and (5) Tioga-Unadilla-Howard Association. There is more detailed information on the Town's soil makeup in the Soils Appendix.

Table 8 lists all the individual soil types represented in Big Flats, their development limitations, and slope characteristics. Slope refers to the incline or relief of the soil area's surface. The amount of incline is commonly expressed in percent of slope, and reflects the amount of change of elevation over a given horizontal distance. There are generally fewer difficulties associated with the 0-8% level, but if the slope is less than 3%, drainage, flooding, and various other problems may be encountered, depending on the particular soil characteristics and settling. In general, the optimum conditions for construction and development is up to 15% slope. A steeper slope will make construction cost prohibitive, and more difficult, grading and material handling could be prohibitively expensive, sewer may not operate properly, and erosion could be a problem. Slopes of 15% and higher are generally unstable and are better left undeveloped or used for open space. Included in this plan are maps representing the *Soil Limitations to Development* and the *Soil Percent Slope* based upon the information presented in **Table 8**.

Table 8: Town of Big Flats Soil Characteristics

Type	Series Name	Limitations to Development	Slope
Ab	Alluvial Land	Severe - Flooding Seasonal High Water	Nearly Level
ArB	Arnot Channery Silt Loam	Severe - Shallow Depth to Bedrock	Gently Sloping
At	Artherton Mucky Silt Loam	Severe - Prolonged High Water, Ponding	Nearly Level
CeB	Chenango Channery Silt Loam	Slight	Gently Sloping
ChA	Chippewa Silt Loam	Severe - Prolonged High Water	Nearly Level
ChB	Chippewa Silt Loam	Severe - Prolonged High Water	Gently Sloping
ChC	Chippewa Silt Loam	Severe - Prolonged High Water	Moderately Sloping
CoA	Collamer Silt Loam	Moderate - Seasonal High Water	Nearly Level
CoB	Collamer Silt Loam	Moderate - Seasonal High Water	Gently Sloping
Hm	Homer Silt Loam	Severe -Seasonal High Water	Nearly Level
HoA	Howard Gravelly Silt Loam	Slight	Nearly Level
HoB	Howard Gravelly Silt Loam	Slight	Gently Sloping
HoC	Howard Gravelly Silt Loam	Moderate - Slope and pollution hazard	Moderately Sloping
HoD	Howard Gravelly Silt Loam	Severe - Slope and pollution hazard	Moderately Steep
HoE	Howard Gravelly Silt Loam	Severe - Slope and pollution hazard	Steep
HsB	Hudson Silt Loam	Moderate - Seasonal High Water	Gently Sloping
HtC3	Hudson Silt Clay Loam	Moderate - Slope and pollution hazard	Moderately Sloping
LbB	Lansing Gravelly Silt Loam	Moderate - Seasonal High Water	Gently Sloping
LbC	Lansing Gravelly Silt Loam	Moderate - Seasonal High Water, Slope	Moderately Sloping
LbD	Lansing Gravelly Silt Loam	Severe - Slope	Moderately Steep
LnB	Lordstown Channery Silt Loam	Severe - Depth to Bedrock	Gently Sloping
LnC	Lordstown Channery Silt Loam	Severe - Depth to Bedrock	Moderately Sloping
LnD	Lordstown Channery Silt Loam	Severe - Depth to Bedrock, Slope	Moderately Steep
LoE	Lordstown and Arnot Rocky	Severe - Slope and Rock Outcrops	Steep

Type	Series Name	Limitations to Development	Slope
LoF	Lordstown and Arnot Rocky	Severe - Slope and Rock Outcrops	Very Steep
Ma	Madalin	Severe - Prolonged High Water	Nearly Level
MdB	Mardin Channery Silt Loam	Moderate - Seasonal High Water	Gently Sloping
MdC	Mardin Channery Silt Loam	Moderate Seasonal High Water	Moderately Sloping
MdD	Mardin Channery Silt Loam	Severe -Slope	Moderately Steep
Me	Middlebury Silt Loam	Severe -Flooding	Nearly Level
Pg	Papakating Silt Loam	Severe - Flooding Prolonged High Water	Nearly Level
PhA	Phelps Gravelly Loam	Moderate - Seasonal High Water	Nearly Level
Tf	Tioga Sandy Silt Loam	Severe - Flooding	Nearly Level
Tg	Tioga Silt Loam	Severe - Flooding	Nearly Level
Th	Tioga Silt Loam, High Bottom	Severe - Flooding	Nearly Level
TuB	Tuller Channery Silt Loam	Severe - Seasonal High Water	Gently Sloping
UnA	Unadilla Silt Loam	Slight	Nearly Level
VaB	Valois Gravelly Loam	Slight - Rapid Permeability, Pollution Hazard	Gently Sloping
VaC	Valois Gravelly Loam	Moderate - Slope, Rapid Permeability, Pollution Hazard	Moderately Sloping
VaD	Valois Gravelly Loam	Severe - Slope	Moderately Steep
VaE	Valois Gravelly Loam	Severe - Slope	Steep
VoB	Volusia Channery Silt Loam	Severe - Seasonal High Water	Gently Sloping
VoC	Volusia Channery Silt Loam	Severe - Seasonal High Water, Slope	Moderately Sloping
VoD	Volusia Channery Silt Loam	Severe - Seasonal High Water, Slope	Moderately Steep
WaA	Wallington Silt Loam	Severe - Seasonal High Water, Slope, Slow Permeability	Nearly Level
WaB	Wallington Silt Loam	Severe - Seasonal High Water, Slope, Slow Permeability	Gently Sloping
WIA	Williamson Silt Loam/Gravelly Substrum	Moderate - Seasonal High Water, Slow Permeability	Nearly Level
WIB	Williamson Silt Loam/Gravelly Substrum	Moderate - Seasonal High Water, Slow Permeability	Gently Sloping

Source: USDA SCS Soil Survey of Chemung County New York, 1973

Notes: Soil limitations are based upon Table 7, "Limitations of soils for town and country planning" of the 1973, USDA SCS Soil Survey of Chemung County.

Nearly Level = 0 - 3 % slope

Gently Sloping = 3 - 8 % slope

Moderately Sloping = 8 - 15 % slope

Moderately Steep = 15 - 25 % slope

Steep = 25 - 45 % slope

Very Steep = 35 - 70 % slope

5.1.3 Surface Geology

Although it indirectly resulted from glaciers advancing and retreating, much of the valley's geological material was deposited by water. As a result, assorting and stratification characterize much of this geological material. While all of Chemung County has been glaciated, the mantel of till in the upland part is thin and composed almost entirely of local rock detritus.

The underlying rocks, which contributed most of the materials that form Chemung County's soils, were formed from sediments laid down during the Devonian period, and comprise alternate beds of shales and sandstones. The drift filling in the valleys is deeper and contains a sizable quantity of foreign materials, primarily crystalline and limestone gravels. The sandstone rocks are fine-grained and dense and have contributed greatly to the formation of the upland soils.

Soils developed from this weathered material are characteristically silty and contain many angular sandstone fragments. Where shales have contributed much to the soil-forming material, the resulting soils

are inclined to be heavier in texture and have a poorer physical condition. The shale exposures occur at lower elevations, and most of the soils developed from glacial till high in shale content are on the lower slopes. These shale and sandstone rocks are predominately acidic; consequently, soils derived from them are also acidic.

5.2 Water Resources

The Town of Big Flats has a number of surface water features that are both environmentally and recreationally valuable. In addition to the Chemung River, the Town houses many smaller creeks and streams.

5.2.1 Surface Waters

All surficial water bodies in the Town have been classified in accordance with the New York State Classifications for Surface Waters and Groundwaters, Part 701 of the NYCRR. Each water body has been given a letter category for water quality ratings ranging from class “A” to class “D”. The classification system relates to both the defined usage and the limitation of effluent wastewater discharges. Class “A” represents waters suitable for drinking, culinary or food processing purposes, primary and secondary contact recreation, and fish propagation and survival. Class “B” represent waters suitable for primary and secondary contact recreation, fishing, and fish propagation and survival. Class “C” waters are best suited for fish propagation and survival. While Class “D” waters are best suited for fishing, the survival of fish may be limited due to conditions of intermittency of flow and other water quality conditions.



Chemung River: The Chemung River is the most dominant natural water feature in the Town and is a major tributary of the Susquehanna River, which flows into the Chesapeake Bay. The Chemung River ranges in width from ½ mile to 3 miles and enters the west-central part of the County and flows southeast, to the extreme southeastern corner. The principal tributaries are Seely Creek, flowing north from Pennsylvania entering the Chemung a few miles below Elmira, and Newtown Creek, draining part of the northern section, entering the Chemung at Elmira. According to NYCRR § 701.8, New York State Department of Conservation (NYSDEC) classifies the Chemung River as a Class A water body. With filtration, treatment, and disinfection, this water would meet New York State Department of Health drinking water standards. At one time the River was contaminated with lead from Corning, Inc.

Sing Sing Creek: The Sing Sing Creek is a tributary of the Chemung River that begins about 9 miles north of the hamlet of Big Flats, flowing southerly to its confluence with the Chemung River. The creek is perennial in certain sections and intermittent in others. The NYSDEC stream classification of the Sing

Sing differs depending upon the segment location and includes Class C, C (T) and D. According to NYCRR § 701.8, “the best usage of a Class C (T) water is trout fishing” and the best usage of a Class D water body is also fishing, however it is unlikely that the waters support fish survival.

Cuthrie Run: Cuthrie Run is a major tributary of the Sing Sing Creek. This stream is also classified by NYSDEC as a Class C water body. The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) topographic map depicts Cuthrie Run as a perennial stream, but it is known to be intermittent at certain locations. The intermittent nature of the stream is due to the high permeability of the surficial geologic materials present. During certain times the stream loses water through its streambed, resulting in intermittent flow.

Low Pond: Low Pond is located just to the southwest of the intersection of Kahler Road South and Lowe Road. The pond was associated with the former Chemung Feeder Canal, perhaps functioning as a boat turning basin during the active days of the canal. The pond is primarily an open water habitat with some wetlands on the north and northeast sides of the fringe. Low Pond is regulated by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, subject to Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) regulations and is classified by NYSDEC as a Class C water body.

5.2.2 Wetlands

Wetlands may include areas that are commonly known as bogs, swamps, marshes, wet meadows, floodplains and areas of water logged soils. According to the *Chemung County Natural Resources Inventory*, wetlands serve various important environmental functions. They are natural flood control devices to retain excess water during storms or flooding. Wetlands also serve as a means for erosion control by slowing down the water and trapping silt and other nutrients. This function leads to a pollution control device by actually cleansing and filtering polluted waters as they pass through the wetland areas. Wetlands also protect surface and subsurface water resources, and support a great variety of wildlife for food, water, shelter and reproduction.

According to the *NYSDEC's Freshwater Wetlands Map*, the Town of Big Flats has only two State-regulated wetlands. Each wetland is classified as Class II, based on the criteria specified by the law, Part 664 Classification of Freshwater Wetlands, Statutory Environmental Conservation Law § 3-0301 (2) (m) and 24-1301 (3).

The largest wetland area (named BF-1 on the NYS Freshwater Wetlands Map) is located to the west of Low Pond, and the smaller one (BF-2) is located west of the Elmira-Corning Regional Airport off Sing Sing Road. According to the *Chemung County Freshwater Wetlands Inventory*, Wetland BF-1 covers about 75 acres, and is considered an Emergent Marsh, with some characteristics of Deciduous Swamp, Shrub Swamp and Open Water habitats. Wetland BF-2 covers about 14 acres and is mostly an Open Water habitat, with some flooded Deciduous Swamp and Shrub Swamp flooded characteristics.

In addition to the NY State regulated wetlands, the Town of Big Flats has approximately 42 smaller wetland areas that are identified on the National Wetland Inventory map. These wetlands are primarily

defined from analysis of high altitude aerial photography. These wetlands may require field verification and potential permit application prior or any work activity or disturbance.

5.2.3 Aquifer and Groundwater

Big Flats and its neighboring communities possess substantial groundwater resources supplied by surficial geologic deposits. A productive valley-fill aquifer system is located in the Elmira-Horseheads-Big Flats area of Chemung County. This aquifer has been designated a “Primary Water Supply Aquifer” by NYSDEC. As such, it is a “highly productive aquifer presently being utilized as a source of water supply by major municipal water systems.” The aquifer provides water to approximately 50,000 residents in the Elmira-Horseheads-Big Flats area.

The aquifer lies within the broad, generally flat valley of the Chemung River, and is bounded by steep bedrock-supported hills that rise as much as 8,000 feet above the valley floor. Moderately to highly permeable sand and gravel glacial outwash overlie much of the aquifer and, as a result the valley-fill system, is considered susceptible to contamination through its recharge zone. Potential contamination sources include chemical spills, stormwater runoff, highway deicers, faulty septic systems, wastewater treatment systems, and waste disposal lagoons.

5.3 Wildlife and Habitats

5.3.1 Wildlife

Although the Town has not conducted an inventory of its resident wildlife species, there is some documentation and anecdotal accounts of the creatures that make their home in Big Flats. Principally rural farmland at one point, additional residential development in Big Flats has pushed some common wildlife, such as deer, further out into adjacent undeveloped areas.

Much of the wildlife remaining in Big Flats reside in several sizable wildlife conservation areas. These include: Tanglewood Forest, which includes a 16-acre mature evergreen forest; Personius Woods, a 50-acre mixed woodland; Gleason Meadows, a 172-acre site characterized by meadows, deciduous woods, and ponds; and the Nature Conservancy’s 290-acre Frenchman’s Bluff, a mix of woods and steep riverfront slopes.

Personius Woods, which is leased from the Elmira Water Board, houses a variety of conifers ranging in age from 4 to 20 years. Pines, white spruce, firs and larch comprise the plantations. The woods include a tract of eastern hemlock interspersed with American beech, red maple, black birch and hop hornbeam. Another part of the woods contains an old sugar bush consisting primarily of mature sugar and red maples. Hoffman Creek flows through the length of the site.

According to the trail brochure for Gleason Meadows and Frenchman’s Creek, a variety of wildlife species are commonly sighted at the preserve. Ponds provide habitat and resting areas for ducks, mallards,

and other migrating waterfowl, as well as for a variety of amphibians including grass frogs and common toads. Fish living in the ponds include minnows, blue gills, and bass. Small mammals, such as rabbits, as well as rodents, are often spotted in Gleason Meadows. The preserve's steep bluffs attract raptors, ospreys, red-tailed hawks, wild turkey, blue jays, and gray squirrels. Bald eagles and golden eagles have also been spotted on occasion. Thirty different species of warblers have been sighted during the spring migration.

Timber rattlesnakes, a legally protected, threatened species in New York occasionally pass through Gleason Meadows. Steege Hill has also been identified as providing habitat for rattlesnakes.

Community Park Extension, the Town's largest park, provides habitat to a variety of wildlife. According to residents, the park is home to deer, bears, bobcats, and groundhogs. A sizable wetland area in the park provides swampland habitat. Lowe Pond also provides swampland habitat for small creatures.

5.3.2 Rare and Endangered Species and Habitats

According to the NYSDEC, Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources, Natural Heritage Program, the Town of Big Flats has a number of areas that are significant natural communities, or have recorded the presence of Threatened or Endangered species. An Endangered Species is any native in imminent danger of extirpation or extinction in New York, or any species listed as endangered by the US Department of the Interior. A Threatened Species is any species which are likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future in New York, or is listed as threatened by the US Department of the Interior.



The specific location where the species has been found is confidential, however the NYSDEC has recorded the presence of the threatened *Timber Rattlesnake*, threatened vascular plants known as the *Nodding Wild Onion*, and *Northern Blazing-star*, endangered vascular plants known as *Reflexed Sedge*, *Wild Hydrangea*, and *Michaux's Blue-eyes-grass*. Significant natural communities identified as being present in Big Flats include *Cliff Community*, *Appalachian Oak-hickory Forest*, *Appalachian Oak-pine Forest*, *Hemlock-northern Hardwood Forest*, and *Shale Talus Slope Woodland*. In addition, the National Heritage Program database also lists an unprotected reptile known as the *Coal Skink*, and an unprotected vascular plant known as *Porter's Reedgrass*.

5.4 Environmental Protections

The following paragraphs include information on local efforts to protect the Town's natural resources.

5.4.1 Town Environmental Committee

The Town established a 7-member Environmental Committee to act in an advisory role to the Planning Board. The committee's organizational structure was subsequently changed and the Environmental Committee currently reports to the Town Board. Several stakeholders indicated their opinion that the Environmental Committee was underutilized and that the Town, in evaluating the potential impacts of land use and development decisions on Big Flats' natural environment, was not benefiting from the group's resources and experience.

5.4.2 Agricultural Districts

Through Article 25AA of the NYS Agriculture and Markets Law, counties may establish Agricultural Districts. Agricultural Districts are a locally initiated farm protection tool designed to preserve, protect, and encourage the development and improvement of agricultural land. Chemung County is home to five certified agricultural districts. Each of these districts has been formally established by the Chemung County Legislature and certified by the State's Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets in accordance with the authorizing provisions of New York State's Agriculture and Markets Law (AML).

Under law, each Agricultural District must be reviewed by the County's governing body eight, twelve, or twenty years following its establishment to determine whether the district will be continued, terminated, or modified. In conducting such reviews, the County Legislature takes into consideration recommendations submitted by the County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board and the County Planning Board.

According to the Chemung County Planning Department website, District # 1 is located in the Town of Big Flats. This 5,644-acre Agricultural District was created in 1976.

5.4.3 Local Regulations

The Town has several local regulations in place to protect its natural resources. These include the Timber Harvesting Code, the Flood Damage Prevention Overlay District, and the Stormwater Management Guidelines for New Development. These local regulations are described in detail elsewhere in this Plan.

5.5 Identified Environmental Needs

5.5.1 Radon

The New York State Department of Health determined that Chemung County has the second highest levels of radon in New York State. The Federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommended acceptable level is 4 picocuries per liter (pCi/L) of air. Cornell Cooperative Extension has conducted over 1,000 tests that show the average radon level to be 19.9 pCi/L, with a high of 154.1. Radon is an

odorless, colorless, tasteless radioactive gas that comes from the breakdown of uranium. According to the EPA, radon exposure can cause lung cancer. As of March 1, 2002, NYS began requiring every home seller to sign a property condition disclosure statement that discloses this information.

5.5.2 Hazardous Waste Sites

There are two areas of concern regarding hazardous waste disposal documented by the NY State Department of Environmental Conservation in the study area. Fishersville has groundwater contaminated by chlorinated organic solvents.

5.5.3 Ridgeline Preservation

Much Big Flats' land area is covered by steeply sloped forest. While the Town has a Timber Harvesting Code that requires harvesters intending to clear sizable forest areas to obtain permits from the Town, it does not have a regulation in place to guide new ridgeline development. The Town has no identified requirements for potential developers to ensure that new development is designed and/or sited in a manner that preserves the Town's ridgeline, both for aesthetic as well as environmental considerations.

5.5.4 Flood Insurance

According to the Town's *Hazard Mitigation Action Plan*, Big Flats has been a member of the National Flood Insurance Program since 1984. Since then, development within the areas designated as the 100-year floodplain on the Town's Flood Insurance Rate Maps [FIRM] has been regulated by a local ordinance. These regulations specify that new development within the designated floodplain must comply with elevation requirements and construction standards designed to protect structures from the 100-year flood event. The floodplain development standards also protect neighboring properties from increased flood damage that might result from new development.

Flood insurance can be purchased for any building in the Town. According to the *Hazard Mitigation Action Plan*, as of February 28, 2003, there were 76 flood insurance policies in the Town, down from 85 in 1999. In 1991, the Town began participating in the Community Rating System of the National Flood Insurance Program. Through participation in this program, property owners are able to purchase flood insurance at reduced rates as a result of activities that reduce the flood risks within the Town. In 2004, the Town qualified for a 10% reduction in flood insurance premiums.

5.5.5 Flooding

Much of the information in the following section is excerpted from the October 2004 *Hazard Mitigation Action Plan* prepared by the Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board. The *Hazard Mitigation Action Plan* addressed the following flood hazards: riverine flooding, overland flooding and ponding, stormwater problems, groundwater flooding, and erosion of stream banks.

The Town's Flood Insurance Rate Maps and Flood Insurance Study include detailed analyses of the flood hazards from some of the principle waterways in the Town. Additional hazards due to flooding and bank erosion exist along every stream in the Town and many unmapped drainage ways. The hazard areas for overland flooding, ponding, and groundwater flooding are generally not recognized unless they contribute to flooding problems. Thus, there may be additional potential hazard areas that are not yet identified.

The most severe flood threat in the Town of Big Flats is from the Chemung River. Additional flood hazards occur along the Town's streams, which are subject to flash flooding, debris blockage, bank erosion, and backwater flooding. Additional water problems result from inadequacies of local drainage and shallow groundwater. Development in Big Flats is predominately located in the flat valley of the Chemung River, where it is highly prone to poor drainage patterns, a shallow water table, and flooding.

The most severe flooding in the Town in recent years occurred during the devastating Hurricane Agnes Flood in June 1972. Since that time, the Town has experienced flooding in February 1976, June 1976, March 1978, March 1982, February 1984, August 1994, January 1996, and November 1996. In addition to these flood events, many additional heavy rainfall events have caused localized drainage problems, ponding, stream bank erosion and other difficulties.

In response to its numerous significant flooding events, the Town has a long history of public involvement designed to actively engage residents and municipal officials in addressing and investigating potential solutions to its flooding problems. Some of the Town's major efforts have included:

- **Hydrologic Studies:** Hydrologic studies of the Town's watersheds have been conducted, and many of the resultant recommendations have been implemented. The Town has been pro-active in its efforts to prevent and protect against flood damage. The Town has acquired wetland areas and stream corridors, installed drainage systems, and replaced undersized bridges and culverts.
- **Timber Harvesting Ordinance:** The Town has required developers and timber harvesters to address stormwater management and erosion control. In 1977, in response to repeated flooding incidents as a result of timber debris in the Town's streams, Big Flats adopted the State's first timber harvesting ordinance. This ordinance was last updated in 1980.
- **Drainage Department and Planning:** Since the mid-1990s, the Town has had a Drainage Department housed in the Division of Public Works that is responsible for stream maintenance and stream restoration activities. In March 1996, the Town Board adopted the *Town of Big Flats Stormwater Drainage System Maintenance Plan*. The Town's *Stormwater Management Guidelines for New Developments* has been in place since 1997. The Town is currently in the process of developing a comprehensive stormwater management program and has obtained permit coverage for the Municipal Separate Stormwater Sewer System (MS-4) within the Big Flats urbanized area.

- **Control of Runoff Policy:** The Town Planning Board prohibits the channelizing of site runoff. Runoff should not adversely impact neighboring properties, nor should it result in an increase in the volume or rate of discharge.
- **Conservation District:** About seven percent (7%) of the Town, primarily in the floodplain and floodway areas, was designated as Conservation District. Development is restricted in these areas.
- **Sing Sing Creek Watershed Committee:** In 2003, a Sing Sing Creek Watershed citizen committee was formed to provide information and recommendations about watershed management, flood mitigation, drainage improvements, stormwater management, and other concerns. Unfortunately, this group never became fully established.

5.5.6 Riverine Flooding and Streambank Erosion

Riverine flooding occurs when streams and rivers overflow their banks and inundate adjacent valleys, often due to heavy rainfall or rapid snowmelt that result in runoff that exceeds the carrying capacity of the channel. Riverine flood damages can be triggered or exacerbated by constriction or obstruction of stream and river channels. This blockage can result from undersized drainage structures, debris dams, ice jams, or accumulation of sediment within the channel. Backwater flooding occurs when a stream is unable to flow into a larger stream or river due to high water in the downstream waterbody.

Chemung River: The Chemung River flows generally eastward through the Town of Big Flats, with about 7 miles of the river located within the Town. Flood protection along the Chemung River is provided by four upstream dam projects: Arkport Dam on the Canisteo River (Steuben County, N.Y.), Almond Dam on Canacadea Creek (Steuben County, N.Y.), the Tioga-Hammond Dam Project on the Tioga River and Crooked Creek (Tioga County, PA), and the Cowanesque Dam on the Cowanesque River (Tioga County, PA). These structures reduce peak flows during flood events and prolong the period in which the river bank is full following each event. There are no local levees or flood control structures along the Chemung River in Big Flats.

Sing-Sing Creek: Sing Sing Creek originates in the Town of Catlin and travels about 8 miles through Big Flats to its confluence with the Chemung River. Although much of Sing Sing Creek crosses undeveloped or agricultural land, it also passes through several densely developed areas. The Sing Sing Creek drainage basin encompasses the Elmira-Corning Regional Airport, Arnot Mall, and surrounding residential tracts. Flooding in the lower reaches of Sing Sing Creek can be caused by backwater from the Chemung River.

Guthrie's Run: Guthrie's Run (also called Cuthrie Run) is a major tributary of Sing Sing Creek that travels through the Towns of Catlin and Big Flats. In its upper reaches, Guthrie's Run is formed by streams from Eacher Hollow, Breed Hollow and one that parallels Hibbard Road. Guthrie's Run flows

generally south along Hibbard Road and Winters Road, then east along Goss Road, converging with Sing Sing Creek just south of the intersection of Goss Road and Carpenter Road.

Gardner Creek: Gardner Creek flows through the hamlet of Big Flats and into the Chemung River. The streams in the upper reaches of this watershed have been variously named. The stream flowing from Markle Hollow has been referred to as either the upper reach of Gardner Creek or a tributary called Markle Hollow Creek. It joins with the Chemung Feeder Canal in a marshy area north of I -86. The Chemung Feeder Canal is an old canal bed that once enabled barge traffic between Elmira and the Corning area. A section of this old canal conveys water from Winfield Creek in the Town of Corning to Gardner Creek in Big Flats. It flows across a relatively flat area at the northern edge of the Chemung River Valley.

5.5.7 Drainage Ponding

Overland flooding and ponding occurs when excess runoff is not carried in a defined channel. It leads to flood damages when structures are improperly sited and stormwater runoff is not properly managed at development sites. Because developed areas in Big Flats are predominantly located in the very flat river valley or alluvial fans, it is highly prone to poor drainage patterns.

Outside the Chemung River Valley, the Town contains many steep slopes prone to drainage and washout problems. Concentrated flow off of agricultural fields and access roads affects rural roads. The roadside drainage has been inadequate on many roads. Timber harvesting contributed to numerous drainage problems prior to adoption of a timber-harvesting ordinance in 1977.

Groundwater flooding results from water below the surface of the ground that seeps through basement walls or backs up through basement drains. The shallow water table contributes to basement flooding and septic system failure in several developed areas in the Town, particularly at the base of hills and on alluvial fans. Many of these problems are associated with surface ponding in poorly drained areas. Because groundwater levels are subject to natural fluctuations, these problems are not always apparent at the time a site is developed or when a home is purchased.

Other problem creeks include: Halderman Hollow Creek, Hoffman Brook, Hendy Creek, Harris Hill South Creek, Harris Hill North Creek, Yawger Creek, Own Hollow Creek, Reasor Hollow Creek, Markle Hollow Creek, Chemung Feeder Canal and Rodaha Creek.

The Town's most severe flood threat is from the Chemung River, with the most devastating event in recent history being the Hurricane Agnes Flood of June 1972. More recently, Sing Sing Creek has been the source of much flooding, with many events occurring in the hamlet of Big Flats. The hamlet, located in a valley, is often saturated as it receives all the water runoff from the Town's surrounding hills, houses a very high water table, and is also home to two stacked aquifers. The runoff from the hills eventually flows into the creeks and the River, but not before flooding many area homes. A common occurrence, many homes located in the hamlet have sump pumps in their basements.

5.5.8 Point and Non-point Source Pollution

Once subject to severe contamination from lead due to the heavy manufacturing in the area, including Corning, Inc., the Chemung River is much cleaner today than it was several decades ago. However, the conversion of one time seasonal homes in the Town's Golden Glow neighborhood in the southeast corner of Town has resulted in occasional septic discharge into the River.

In addition to flooding, the Town's high water table, stacked aquifers, and topography do little to lessen the potential impact of non-point source pollution. Runoff from the surrounding hills flow down to the hamlet. As the valley houses much of the Town's development, including regional retail centers, Airport Corporate Park, Consumer's Square and Arnot Mall, the area has a sizable amount of paved areas. In addition, many of the commercial developments store and use salt on their roads, driveways, and parking lots during the winter months. This can be particularly problematic for establishments located close to the Town's waterbodies. Sing Sing Creek is particularly vulnerable to non-point source pollution from the I-86 corridor's commercial development.

6. HOUSING RESOURCES

This section includes an overview on Big Flats’ housing inventory, including a discussion of the age, value, and occupancy of the housing units.

6.1 Housing Inventory

Most notably, while most of the housing in Chemung County and NYS was developed before 1960 (64.6% for the County and 59.5% for the State), Big Flats witnessed its housing development boom after 1960. Nearly a third of the Town’s housing, 29.3%, was constructed during the 1960s, while another 24.2% was built during the 1970s. Because of this, the Town’s housing stock is newer than the County’s or State’s. The median year structure built in Big Flats is 1967, as compared to 1951 for the County and 1954 for the State. **Chart 4** compares the age of the Town’s housing stock to the housing of Chemung County and NYS.

Chart 4: Comparison of Housing Inventory Age

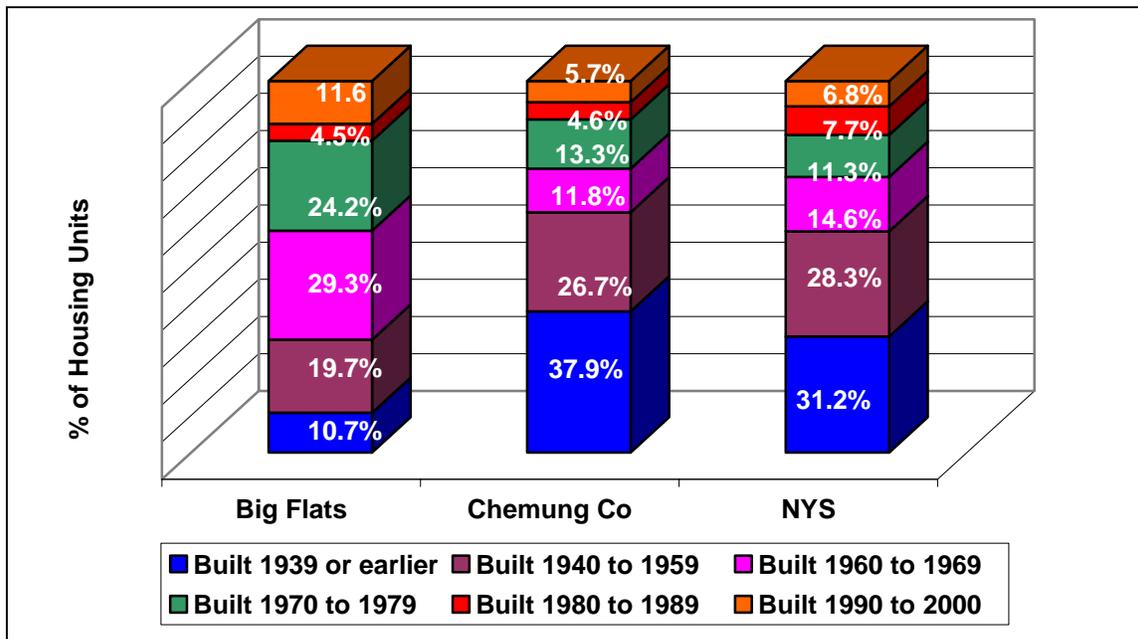


Table 9 compares the types of owner-occupied housing units in Big Flats in 1990 and 2000 and provides an overview of recent development trends. While the Town’s housing inventory is overwhelmingly

comprised of single-family detached units (87.3% in 2000), recent construction trends have included the development of a variety of housing types. Although the totals are still relatively negligible, the number of buildings having 5 or more units increased by 262.5% during the 1990s, while the number of single-family attached dwellings increased by 212.5%, and the number of units located in 3 or 4 family structures increased by 56.6%. In comparison, the number of two-family homes dropped by 27.5%. Anecdotal information suggests that since the 2000 Census, the Town's housing has continued to grow at a brisk rate.

Table 9: Type of Specified Owner-Occupied Units, 1990 and 2000

Type of Unit	1990		2000		% Change (1990-2000)
	Total	%	Total	%	
1 Family, detached	2,398	88.7%	2,477	87.3%	3.3%
1 Family, attached	8	0.3%	25	0.9%	212.5%
2 Family	69	2.6%	50	1.8%	-27.5%
3 or 4 Family	83	3.1%	130	4.6%	56.6%
5 to 9 Family	8	0.3%	29	1.0%	262.5%
10 to 19 Family	15	0.6%	0	0.0%	-100.0%
20 + Family	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	NA
Mobile home or other	122	4.5%	125	4.4%	2.5%
Total	2,703	100.0%	2,836	100.0%	4.9%

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 1990 and 2000.

Table 10 provides an overview of resident occupancy in the Town. The table indicates the number, and percentage of, owner occupied units as compared to renter occupied. It also includes a detailed breakdown of the types of vacant units within the Town, and how this breakdown changed during the 1990s. In 2000, the Town's housing inventory consisted primarily of owner-occupied housing units, 2,400 units, or 88.1%, as opposed to rental units, 325 units or 11.9%. As young people are more likely to rent, this lack of rental units possibly contributes to the Town's lack of residents aged 25-34.

The number and percentage of vacant units grew during the 1990s, from 82 units, or 3.0% in 1990 to 111 units, or 3.9% in 2000. Thirty-six units, or nearly a third of all vacant units in Big Flats, were rental units. In 1990, the majority of vacant units, 22 units or 26.8% of all vacant units, were rented or sold, but new residents had not yet moved in. In addition, the Town's number of units for seasonal or recreational use also increased during the 1990s, from 5 to 18 units.

Table 10: Housing Inventory, 1990 and 2000

Characteristics	1990		2000		% Change (1990- 2000)
	Number	%	Number	%	
Total housing units	2,703	100.0%	2,836	100.0%	4.9%
Occupied housing units	2,621	97.0%	2,725	96.1%	4.0%
Vacant housing units	82	3.0%	111	3.9%	35.4%
Occupied housing units	2,621	100.0%	2,725	100.0%	4.0%
Owner-occupied housing units	2,316	88.4%	2,400	88.1%	3.6%
Renter-occupied housing units	305	11.6%	325	11.9%	6.6%
Vacant housing units	82	100.0%	111	100.0%	35.4%
For rent	22	26.8%	36	32.4%	63.6%
For sale only	24	29.3%	19	17.1%	-20.8%
Rented or sold, not occupied	10	45.5%	16	14.4%	60.0%
Seasonal, recreation, or occasional	5	6.1%	18	16.2%	94.7%
Other vacant	21	25.6%	22	19.8%	4.8%

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 1990 and 2000.

Table 11 provides an overview of home values in the Town, the County, and NYS. In general, house value trends in Big Flats more closely follow Chemung County trends than those of the State. In 2000, it was estimated that nearly 60% of the Town's housing stock was valued less than \$100,000. This compares to 81% of the housing in Chemung County and 32% in NYS. The Town's inventory of housing valued between \$100,000 and \$150,000 was 26.0%, as compared to 12.0% for the County and 18.7% for NYS. Homes in Big Flats' valued at \$200,000 or more was estimated at 5.5% in 2000, while it was only 2.6% in Chemung County and 32.2% in NYS.

Table 11: Comparison of Value of Specified Owner-Occupied Units, 2000

Value	Big Flats		Chemung County		New York State	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Less than \$50,000	155	7.9%	5,083	26.4%	151,310	5.6%
\$50,000 - \$99,999	1,011	51.3%	10,645	55.3%	714,774	26.6%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	513	26.0%	2,302	12.0%	491,060	18.3%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	185	9.4%	716	3.7%	468,384	17.4%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	100	5.1%	307	1.6%	501,839	18.7%
\$300,000 or more	8	0.4%	184	1.0%	362,361	13.5%
Total	1,972	100.0%	19,237	100.0%	2,689,728	100.0%
Median House Value-1990	\$80,200		\$53,600		\$131,600	
Median House Value-2000	\$93,300		\$67,200		\$148,700	

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 1990 and 2000.

6.2 Trends in Residential Development

6.2.1 Recent Construction Trends

Since the late 1990s, national trends have witnessed a boom in housing development, especially larger, luxury single-family homes. Recent development in Big Flats has been consistent with this trend, with the construction of 2,000+ square foot homes in suburban style subdivisions.



Table 12 shows the estimated construction cost of new single-family homes and mobile homes developed in Big Flats since 2000. These figures do not include the cost of land. The average construction cost for homes in the Town in the past four years has been approximately \$142,152. During the first half of 2003, construction costs were skewed by the prevalence of mobile home units being developed at that time (8 units at an average of \$59,532.) During 2004, the average estimated home value was more than \$180,000. Between January and May 2005, a total of 13 housing units were issued permits. Of these, four were manufactured units. The average home value was \$176,429. However, when the figure is further broken down by manufactured versus traditional units, it is evident that manufactured units, with an average value of \$102,807, lower the average. The average value of traditional housing units being constructed in between January and May 2005 Big Flats was \$209,149.

Soaring Ridge, one residential subdivision recently reviewed by the Town, will result in new homes ranging in price from \$400,000 - \$600,000. Suburban Acres, a residential community that was first developed in the 1970s, is expanding by about 23 new lots. The development's original subdivision plan called for only 10 lots in the expansion area. Homes in the community originally sold for approximately - \$100,000. These new lots are selling for \$80,000, with one home under construction valued at more than \$400,000.

Table 12: New Home Construction, 2000 – 2005

Year	Number of Units	Total Value	Average Value
2000	53	\$6,282,260	\$118,533
2001	44	\$7,668,600	\$174,286
2002	24	\$3,058,037	\$127,418
Jan – May 2003	9	\$691,260	\$76,807
June – Dec. 2003	16	\$2,382,740	\$148,921
2004	22	\$3,968,300	\$180,377
Jan – May 2005	9	\$1,882,345	\$209,149
Jan – May 2005 (Manufactured)	4	\$411,227	\$102,807
Total	168	\$26,298,277	\$142,152

Source: Town of Big Flats, Department of Planning and Code Enforcement

6.2.2 Town Haven Senior Development

Town Haven is a 24-unit affordable senior housing development located at 50 Olcott Road, near Maple Street. Developed by Letchworth Development Corporation, the \$2.3 million project was funded in part by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development and the NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal. Construction of this new development will allow a number of local seniors to trade in their large homes, and downsize. Currently about a quarter of the units in the two-story apartment building are occupied by long-time Big Flats residents.

6.2.3 Recent Home Sales Activity

According to the Town Assessor, existing property values in Big Flats rose by about 10% between 2000 and 2004. As a “100% evaluation” community, assessment values in Big Flats should not vary greatly from actual market value. To get a better idea of the current cost of housing in the Town of Big Flats, a report breaking down recent home sales in the Town was acquired from the Town Assessor. The following table summarizes this information.



Table 13: Recent Home Sales in Big Flats

Neighborhood/Area	Lowest Price	Average Price	Highest Price	Number of Units Sold
Mixed Agricultural/Rural Residential	\$15,600	\$112,485	\$434,700	40
Hamlet of Big Flats	\$54,500	\$83,689	\$123,300	9
Golden Glow/Fisherville	\$18,100	\$62,758	\$149,600	19
Harris Hill Manor & similar	\$53,200	\$105,303	\$221,700	73
Other, scattered	\$74,600	\$121,213	\$250,500	72
More other, scattered	\$83,500	\$148,102	\$233,900	89
Steege Hill area and similar	\$69,800	\$167,195	\$249,900	21
Davenport Forest & similar	\$74,100	\$199,874	\$326,100	50
Thornbriar Estates & similar	\$197,600	\$303,367	\$397,800	9
Quail Hollow II & Prospect Ridge	\$239,900	\$413,870	\$826,700	10
Lowest/Average/Highest	\$15,600	\$142,904	\$826,700	413

Source: Town of Big Flats Town Assessor

The average home sale price in Big Flats during 2004 was \$142,904. The low-end sales price was \$15,600, while the high end home price was \$826,700. Not a median value, but a mean, it is estimated that the number of homes sold at a price greater than \$142,904 was considerably higher than the number of homes sold at a price less than \$142,904.

In 2004, the estimated average home value of all houses in the Town was identified as approximately \$120,000. This is considerably higher than the Chemung County estimate of \$80,000.

These figures do not include data on Retirement Estates, the Town's mobile home retirement community. Home sales within Retirement Estates are not incorporated into the assessments of residential properties in Big Flats because the community is identified as a single commercial parcel, with lots leased to mobile home owners. The development is estimated to house approximately 150 mobile homes, with space for about 50 more. The community has seen the addition of about 85 new lots since the late 1990s. Currently, existing homes in Retirement Estates are being resold for anywhere from \$50,000 to \$120,000. Since the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development instituted quality and safety requirements for mobile homes in 1974, mobile home design and construction has improved considerably. In addition to being hurricane proof and more weather-resistant, the higher quality construction is more conducive to design improvements and upgrades. As a result, many of Retirement Estates' mobile home units are more comparable to stick houses and buyers are not as concerned with depreciation as has historically been the case with mobile homes.

6.3 Housing Assistance Programs

The Tri-County Housing Council, founded in 1974, is a non-profit housing agency that serves residents of Chemung, Schuyler and Steuben Counties. For more than twenty-five years the organization has provided and/or coordinated housing services for very low to moderate income families in the Tri-County area. The

Department of Housing & Urban Development and the NYS Division of Housing & Community Renewal provide funding for their programs. The organization administers the following programs:

Section 8 Rental Assistance Program: The Section 8 Rental Assistance Program provides assistance to very low and low-income households in Chemung, Schuyler and Steuben Counties. The program is designed to assist renter households with securing decent, safe and sanitary rental housing at an affordable cost. Direct payments are made to participating landlords on behalf of qualified households. Applicants must meet specified income eligibility guidelines. The program currently administers vouchers for 1,300 families in the Tri- County region. The Chemung County waiting list is currently closed, with no applications being accepted. The range of qualifying household incomes in Chemung County is \$17,200 (gross) for a one-person household to \$32,400 for an 8 or more person household.

Family Self Sufficiency Program: A voluntary program offered to Section 8 Rental Assistance participants in Chemung and Steuben Counties. Volunteer case managers use existing resources to enable households to achieve economic independence. An escrow account can be established on behalf of participating households, which becomes available to them upon meeting the terms of their family self-sufficiency contract.

Federal Home Program Grants: Through this program grants are made available to first-time homebuyers in Chemung, Schuyler and Steuben Counties. Approved applicants can receive approximately \$12,000 Federal HOME grant monies for down payments, closing costs and minor repair assistance on existing homes. Applicants must meet specified income eligibility guidelines. The range of qualifying household incomes in Chemung County is \$25,800 (gross) for a one-person household to \$48,600 for an eight-person household.

FHLB Affordable Homes: Tri-County Housing Council has grant funds available from the Federal Home Loan Bank (FHLB) of New York to assist qualified first-time homebuyers in Chemung, Schuyler and Steuben Counties. Income eligible households may receive up to \$9,500 to purchase a single-family home. The grant may be used for down payment assistance, closing cost assistance or to buy down the interest rate. Applicants must meet additional program requirements and qualify based on specified income guidelines. Annual gross income from all sources for all household members must not exceed \$28,700 for one and two person households and \$33,005 for households of three or more.

Home Ownership Made Easy (H.O.M.E.): The Tri-County Housing Council provides instructional guidance to potential homebuyers through an eight-hour homebuyer education class. Topics covered in class include: readiness to buy a home; budgeting and credit; shopping for a home; getting a mortgage; and maintaining finances. There are no income restrictions and a nominal fee is charged.

The Tri County Housing Council offers the following one-on-one counseling services free of charge to the general public:

Financial Fitness: Designed to present the basics of personal finance, participants, with the assistance of a counselor, assess their financial capabilities and develop individualized written Financial Fitness Plans. All participants receive copies of their credit reports.

Credit Counseling: This program is designed to help participants establish good credit and/or repair bad credit. With the assistance of a counselor, participants' credit issues are identified and a plan is developed to resolve the issues. All participants receive copies of their credit reports.

Post Purchase Counseling: Designed to assist participants in making the transition from renter to homeowner, this program covers topics such as financial management, home maintenance/repair and protecting home investments.

Delinquency/Foreclosure Prevention: This program is designed to help participants resolve mortgage delinquency and/or prevent foreclosure. With the help of a counselor, possible solutions are discussed and a plan is developed to resolve the delinquency.



6.4 Identified Housing Needs

Many residents and stakeholders expressed the opinion that the Town needed more housing priced in the \$150,000 - \$200,000 range. Much of the more recent residential development that has occurred in Big Flats has been in the range of \$400,000 and more. This need for less costly housing is compounded by the fact that there is a land shortage, with much of the valley being built up.

According to the Tri-County Housing Council, there is a need for homes costing less than \$100,000. During 2004, the agency assisted several qualifying homebuyers buy homes in Big Flats. Two homes were purchased in the Kelley Drive neighborhood for under \$100,000, while one home was purchased on Barnes Hill Road for \$110,000. Potential homebuyers looking for homes costing around \$70,000 were forced to look elsewhere.

Tri-County Housing Council also indicated a need for rental properties in Big Flats. Much of the newer rental developments in the Town have been geared toward young professionals, not towards families. The HUD estimated Fair Market Value Rent for a three-person family in the area is between \$600 and \$700 per month. Apartments at Hickory Grove Apartments, a newly developed high-end rental development with clubhouse and pool, rent between \$750 and \$900. Bottchers Landing, by the Chemung River, rents 2-bedroom, 1 ½ bath townhouses for \$650 - \$700.

With Town Haven, Big Flats saw the construction of 24 units of affordable elderly housing. With many Town residents over the age of 65, there is a need for additional senior housing, both affordable and market-rate, to allow seniors to downsize without having to relocate from Big Flats.

7. MUNICIPAL SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

This section includes an overview of all the Town's municipal services and infrastructure. Also included is a discussion of the Town's public school system. The school district boundaries, as is the case in many NYS communities, do not run coterminous with the municipal boundaries. The majority of Big Flats falls within the Horseheads School District.

7.1 Local Government and Services

7.1.1 Town Hall and Department of Public Works Facility

The Big Flats Town Hall and Department of Public Works Facility is located at 476 Maple Street in the Town Center. Town departments that have their offices in the Town Hall and Department of Public Works Facility include the Town Supervisor's office, Building and Planning Department, Town Clerk, Tax Collector, Assessor, Town Court, Bookkeeper, and the Youth Services and Recreation Department.



7.1.2 Public Works Division

The Town's Public Works Division was created in January 2002 to encompass and coordinate the Highway, Parks, Water, and Drainage Departments. There are a total of 19 employees in the DPW including a full-time mechanic. The Highway Department is described in the Transportation Section, while the Parks Department is discussed in the Recreational and Cultural Resources section. This section will describe the Water and Drainage Departments only.

7.1.3 Water Department

The Town of Big Flats has a municipal water system that services over 1,400 homes and businesses. The Water Department is the section of the Public Works Division that is responsible for providing quality water, maintenance of water systems and installation and billing for water customers.

7.1.4 Drainage Department

The Drainage Department maintains storm drainage systems to minimize flooding. The flooding is controlled by vegetation on various drainage swales and retention areas as well as maintenance of creeks and streams. As the valley houses two aquifers, a high water table and much of the Town's development,

and also receives a fair amount of the water runoff from the surrounding hillsides, the Town must be very proactive about mitigating against flooding. The Town's most recently acquired park, Whitney Park, will house a detention pond.

7.1.5 Post Office

The Town of Big Flats is serviced by six different Post Offices in surrounding towns and has seven different zip codes. Many Big Flats residents and businesses have postal addresses for Elmira, Horseheads, or Corning. The Big Flats post office is located on Maple Street, near the Town Office complex.



7.2 Planning and Zoning Boards

This section includes brief descriptions of the Town's Planning and Zoning Boards.

7.2.1 Big Flats Planning Board

Under NYS law, the Town Board is authorized to create a Town Planning Board and appoint its members as well as a chairperson. Communities are given the option of creating a five-person board or a seven-person planning board. Big Flats' seven-person Planning Board meets every third Tuesday. The Planning Board reviews applications for subdivisions and site plans for residential, commercial, and industrial development within the Town. It is the responsibility of the Planning Board members to ensure that future growth and development is in accordance with Town zoning regulations and is responsive to preferences expressed by Town resident.

7.2.2 Big Flats Zoning Board of Appeals

NYS communities are given the option of creating a three-person Board or a five-person Zoning Board of Appeals. Big Flats Town Board appointed a five-person, Zoning Board of Appeals that meets on the third Monday of every month (when there is business pending). The Zoning Board of Appeals is directly given appellate jurisdiction by State law. Appellate jurisdiction is the power to hear and decide appeals from decision of those officials charged with the administration and enforcement of the zoning ordinance of local law. The primary function and purpose of the Zoning Board of Appeals is zoning administration, and encompasses the power to interpret the zoning ordinance or local law and to grant variances.

7.3 Water Supply

7.3.1 Public Water Districts

The Big Flats Municipal Water System consists of four water districts that serve approximately 1,400 homes and businesses. The maximum pumping capacity of the aquifer that supplies the Town's wells is 10 million gallons per day (mgd). The water yield indicates that the aquifer has more than adequate capacity to meet the Town's demand. Big Flats also has emergency water main interconnections with the Village and Town of Horseheads and the Village of Elmira to ensure access to several water sources during a fire, drought, or other water shortage emergency.

Three interconnected districts serve much of the developed valley. Water District #3 has no well of its own, but interconnection among Water Districts #1, #2, and #3 allows the Town to supply water from the Water District #2 wells to Water District #3. Three wells service these districts: Water District #1 Well (County Route 64 behind Consumer Square); and Water District #2 Wells #1 and #2 (Carpenter Road). The Town's three municipal supply wells are each 40 to 50 feet deep and are screened in outwash sand and gravel.

Water is pumped from all three wells utilizing off peak electric rates. Water District Well #1 connects to a twelve-inch water main tied directly to the water system and an 846,000-gallon (steel) storage tank. Water District #2, Wells #1 and #2 pumps directly into the system through a six-inch water main. There is an additional 1,000,000-gallon (steel) storage tank located in Water District #2 on Hibbard Road. Both storage tanks are constructed at the same elevation (1,127 feet).

Water District #1 services the Chambers Road and Colonial Drive area north of I-86, including Arnot Mall as well as many other retail commercial users. South of I-86, Water District #1 services Sam's Club, Wal-Mart, and Consumer Square. Most recently the district was expanded to include the new Raymour and Flanigan store.

Water District #2 is the largest water district and services the Town Center as well as the Elmira Corning Airport, Airport Corporate Park North and Airport Corporate Park South. This District also provides service to numerous residential developments off Carpenter Road, Harris Hill Road, and Suburban Drive south of I-86. North of I-86, this District provides water to residences off Hibbard Road, Sing Sing Road, and Kahler Road North. Water lines were extended recently to accommodate businesses at Airport Corporate Park South, with additional expansions scheduled for spring 2005. This expansion was funded in part by a \$150,000 grant received from the Appalachian Regional Council.

Water District #3 began as a private district. This district services Hickory Grove Apartments, and other residential development in the vicinity of Bellaire Drive, Ann Cox Lane and Bell Lane. Recent expansions have included Retirement Estates and Brookwood Estates.

Water District # 4 also began as a private system that was taken over by the Town in the early 1990s. This district meets State requirements and adequately services the neighborhood of Harris Hill Manor located off NYS Route 352 along the Chemung River. Expansions over time have tripled the service area of this district.

Table 14: Well Capacity

Well	Capacity
Water District #1 Well	770,400 gpd.
Water District #2 Well 1	619,200 gpd.
Water District #2 Well 2	504,000 gpd.
Total:	1,893,600 gpd.

While the three wells can supply up to 1.9 million gpd, the Town uses much less than this. During 2004 an average of 450,000 gpd was pumped from all three wells. It is estimated that Water District #2 Wells #1 and #2 have a yield high enough to sufficiently provide water service under normal conditions.

The system has not been without problems. After levels of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) were detected in 1989, Water District #1 Well #1 was taken off-line for seven years. It was put back online in 1996 after the installation of an air-stripping tower. After determining the contamination was no longer present, the air-stripping tower was taken out of service in 2000. Following additional testing, it was determined that the well had an elevated chloride level. The well was then put on “emergency standby” status. Following periodic flushing, in October of 2004 it was determined that chloride levels had dropped below the allowable limit and the well was returned to normal operation.

In anticipation of new development, the Town has been searching for a new wellhead location. In November 2004 Moodys Inc. was contracted to drill an exploratory well at the Whitney Park location. Water was found but the yield was not enough to support a municipal well.

Recently, there have been significant improvements to the system’s efficiency. Infrastructure repair has dramatically altered the impact of leakage into the ground due to breaks. Water District #1 Well #1 has a past history with volatile organic compounds and chlorides that warrants continued monitoring. Water District #2 Wells (#1 and #2) have experienced elevated nitrate levels on occasion. The Town Water Department continues to test for nitrates at these wells on a weekly basis, working with the Chemung County Environmental Health Department to monitor water quality.

7.4 Wastewater And Stormwater Management

7.4.1 Chemung County Sewer District #1

Chemung County Sewer District #1, formed in the early 1960s, serves the area north of the city of Elmira. This district, overseen by the Chemung County Sewer Authority, includes the Village of Elmira Heights,

most of the Village of Horseheads, and portions of the Towns of Elmira, Horseheads, Veteran and Big Flats. Areas in Big Flats served by the district include Airport Corporate Park, Arnot Mall area, Consumer Square, the Elmira-Corning Airport, the Wings of Eagles Museum, Hickory Grove Apartments, and residential areas north of Hickory Grove. The district consists of approximately 100 miles of mainline sewer that discharges to a trickling filter facility.

Approximately 80% of the County's 35,000 households and over 90% of County businesses are served by the Chemung County Sewer Districts. The districts process about 18 million gallons of wastewater per day and meet the Federal and discharge requirements.

Sanitary wastewater from Big Flats is transported to the Lake Street Sewage Treatment Plant. Portions of the Chemung Sewer District #1, extensions I & J, have adequate capacity to handle the existing developments but future expansion within extension J is limited due to the 10" sewer pipe. Commercial development within extension I is limited by 8" and 10" mains that currently operate at capacity during peak hours.

There have been several recent system expansions. To accommodate new commercial development at the Airport Corporate Park, the Appalachian Regional Council (ARC) provided funding of \$285,125 for improvements to the system. ARC is also funding a \$200,000 expansion along Colonial Drive to service retail users.

7.4.2 On-Site Septic Systems

Developed properties not served by public sanitary sewers rely on on-site sewage disposal systems. The valley soils and associated seasonal high groundwater are not conducive to on-site systems and can result in nuisance problems and system failures. In addition, there are numerous systems that have been developed on sub-standard lots, such as those in Golden Glow that were originally intended for seasonal occupancy and do not have adequate area to provide an effective system.

Two areas persistently plagued by septic problems include the north side of Daniel Zenker Drive and along NYS Route 352 between Main Street and Sing Sing Creek. The area west of the airport is not serviced by Chemung County Sewer District #1 and there are no plans to extend sewers in this area. The availability of public sewer is limited to the commercial development clustered along Chambers Road and the County Route 64/State Route 17 Interchange.

7.4.3 Town Center Sewer System Proposal

The Town Center is not currently served by a public sewer system. The reliance of on-site sewage disposal systems has had a deleterious effect on existing businesses in the Town Center, limiting their ability to expand. It has also discouraged the development of new business and residential development on remaining vacant land.

According to the Director of the Chemung County Health Department in a letter dated January 14, 2002, submitted in support of an application for funding a public sewer extension into the hamlet of Big Flats, “There are potential health and safety issues associated with sewage disposal in the hamlet.” Many of the on-site septic systems in the Town Center are aging, and were originally installed on inadequately sized lots, not suited for wastewater disposal. Individual on-site septic systems have failed in the past and caused elevated levels of fecal coliform in the public drinking water in the mid 1970s. Potential for contamination of the public water supply with fecal coliform, household chemicals and other toxic substances is a significant concern for the future. According to County records, between 1973 and 2000, ninety six (96) on-site septic systems failed and required replacement once, and sometime twice in this time period. More systems are expected to fail in the future, and the area is running out of room for further replacements.

The *2003 District Extension Report* was submitted to the Chemung County Pure Waters Agency. This report was a written proposal for the extension of Chemung County Sewer District #1 (CCSD#1) to the Town Center area, or the hamlet of Big Flats. The extension of CCSD #1 would be relatively simple due to the fact that in 2001, District Extension “Z” of the CCSD #1 was constructed to service Corning Inc.’s Big Flats’ plant located off County Route 64 and east of Winters Rd. This extension included a 320 gpm pump station near the west side of the Corning plant, and an 8” force main which flows north to hook up to the existing “I” Interceptor on County Route 64 near Consumer Square. The “Z” pump station and force main system was designed to serve the hamlet of Big Flats, making future extension of the sewer system to the hamlet possible.

The estimated cost of the project was \$2.8 million, or approximately \$400 per year for each homeowner. This proposal included the extension of sewer to all parcels on Maple St., Palmer Rd., Winters Rd., Erie St., Hammond St., Canal St., Hickory St., Longwell St., Church St., Miller St., Main St., Olcott Rd., and Kelly Rd. The extension qualified for a 20- year interest-free loan through the EFCS – Environmental Facilities Corporation Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CNSRF), and was awarded an additional \$150,000 grant through the Appalachian Regional Commission. These funding opportunities were ultimately lost because in spring 2003, residents voted strongly against the project because individual homeowner costs were too high.

7.4.4 Stormwater Management

To provide stormwater management guidance to developers, the Town has *Stormwater Management Guidelines for New Development*. All communities in NYS must comply with recent mandates by the NYS Department of Conservation to control stormwater runoff and address water quality through the MS4 Phase II Permit Requirements. The Town must have its updated stormwater management regulations



completed by January 2008 to comply with the State mandate. The Town has been working closely with the Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board on developing the plan.

7.5 Public Safety Services and Facilities

A five-person Board of Commissioners controls the Town fire protection and emergency services. There is no local police force in Big Flats. The Chemung County Sheriff Department and the New York State Police provide police protection jointly.

7.5.1 Fire Protection Services and Facilities

The Town of Big Flats has a total of five fire departments. The Big Flats Volunteer Fire Department, known as Fire District #1, is the largest of the Town's fire districts, covering more than half the Town, including the Town Center, the Elmira/Corning Regional Airport and a large area north and south of Interstate 86. Town residents pay a fire district fee that the Board of Commissioners allocates for appropriate expenditures.

The Big Flats Volunteer Fire Department is located on Maple Avenue across from the Town Municipal Complex. The Big Flats Volunteer Fire Company owns the Maple Avenue building and relies on an annual fundraising drive to fund its activities.

Emergencies are dispatched by a central Mutual Aid Enhanced 911 service, operated by the Chemung County Emergency Management Office. As is the case with the Town's other fire departments, the Big Flats Volunteer Fire Company is primarily a volunteer department. With about 40 members, less than half (between 12 and 15) are active responders. To supplement the volunteers, Big Flats Volunteer Fire Company uses a private ambulance corps, with one paid EMT/driver on duty 24 hours/day. In addition to responding to fire/rescue and medical emergencies, aircraft emergencies are responded to as a back up for the airports trucks. Fire District #1 receives, on average, 350 calls per year. Of these, about 70% are medical in nature, while the remaining calls are either small fires or false alarms.

The Big Flats Volunteer Fire Department has a variety of state-of-the-art equipment for combating fires and extracting the injured from automobile accidents, water and ice rescue and other emergency situations. Some of this equipment includes

- A 1989 Pierce TeleSquirt with a 55' pre-piped aerial ladder, 1500 GPM mid-mount pump, 500 gallons of water, generator, etc.
- A 2001 Saulsbury/E-One rescue pumper with 1500 GPM rear-mount pump, 725 gallons of water and 30 gallons of foam, two mounted Hurst power units plus a portable Hurst power unit, cutters, rams & spreaders, air bags, other assorted extrication equipment, AMPS generator and lights, including a 6,000 watt telescoping Night Scan. BLS EMS equipment including a Laerdal FR-2 AED.
- A Thermal Imaging Camera that is used for structure fire rescues.

- A 1994 E-One Engine with a 1500 GPM top-mount pump, 1000 gallons of water, Kinman extrication equipment, portable generator, etc.
- A 1983 Saulsbury tanker with a 550 GPM pump and holds 1500 gallons of water.
- A 1977 Pierce Mini-Pumper with a 300 GPM pump, 250 gal water, equipped for brush & woods fires. It was originally intended to be an initial attack pumper and has actually been used to supply water to attack lines at structure fires when they are unreachable, by the standard size pumpers.
- A 1996 Chevy Suburban outfitted by Odyssey, used primarily for EMS calls. It carries BLS equipment, including a Laerdal FR-2 AED and a Laerdal Heartstart 3000 AED, oxygen and trauma supplies.
- A 6-wheel Polaris ATV for woods rescue and shuttling of brush and woods fire equipment and personnel, which is also equipped with a small skid tank for use at brush/woods fires.

While the Big Flats Volunteer Fire Department services about half the Town, the remaining half is served by three other fire departments.

The Golden Glow Volunteer Fire Department services the Golden Glow neighborhood in the southeastern corner of the Town and Harris Hill Road north to Lew Storch Road. This district also services the southwest corner of Town, including Steege Hill Road, Fisher Hill Road, and Mount Savior Road.

The West Hill Volunteer Fire Department services the central eastern area of Big Flats. Its coverage area includes West Hill Avenue, Charles Storch Road, Lew Storch Road, Log Cabin Road, Coleman Avenue, and the northern segment of Harris Hill Road.

The Town and Country Volunteer Fire Department services a small area located at the northeast corner of Town. The district's northern boundary is the Catlin Town line, the eastern boundary is the Horseheads Town line, the southern boundary is I-86, and the western boundary is the Sing Sing Creek.

7.5.2 Police Services and Facilities

The Town, by all accounts, is a very safe community, with infrequent criminal activity. The most common criminal activity within Big Flats is shoplifting at the mall and the passing of bad checks. The mall has its own security staff.

The Chemung County Sheriff's Department, based in Elmira, and the New York State Police Troop E, based in Horseheads, both provide police service to Big Flats. The two police forces recently developed an inter-jurisdictional agreement by which their territories overlap, and the one closest to the scene will respond to a call.

There was a proposal for a Resident Deputy Program to ensure more of a police presence in Big Flats. Under this proposal, local Town taxes would be used to pay for the permanent placement of a Chemung County Sheriff Deputy within the Town. A deputy from the Chemung County Sheriff Department and squad car would be permanently stationed at the Big Flats Town Hall.

7.6 Big Flats Educational Resources

The Town of Big Flats provides a myriad of opportunities for students and residents of all levels of learning and of all ages. Well-regarded, the Horseheads Central School District includes four elementary schools, one intermediate school, one middle school, and one high school, and provides classroom instruction for grades kindergarten through 12.

It should be noted that more than 80% of the residents in the Town are located within the Horseheads School District and attend school at the Big Flats Elementary School, Horseheads Middle School, and Horseheads High School. The rest of the Town's students are enrolled in the Elmira City School District, the Corning City School District, or the Elmira Heights School District.

The school district recently underwent a substantial reorganization. A new intermediate school was created, with the grouping the 5th and 6th graders from five elementary schools into one school, and the elimination of one elementary school. The district's four elementary schools, including Big Flats Elementary with an enrollment of 350 students, now cover grades from kindergarten through fourth grade. The intent behind the move was to allow for improved communication between 5th and 6th grade instructors, provide a more uniform curriculum to those students, and better prepare them for middle school.

While it may be too soon to gauge the success of the district's reconfiguration, some parents have expressed concern regarding the reorganization. The move resulted in longer school commutes for some students, even requiring bus transfers for a few. Some expressed concern that the school district did not provide sufficient information about the reorganization prior to its occurrence. There have also been criticisms levied regarding the restructuring, in that the shift has eliminated previously existing opportunities for students that excel to be placed in advanced classes.

7.6.1 Horseheads Central School District

Education related statistics provided by the New York State Department of Education for school years 2001 to 2003 provided interesting comparisons between Horseheads Central School District, similar school districts, and total NYS public school averages, where available. According to the NYS Education Department, the Horseheads Central School District is a "District in Good Standing", in that it has not been identified as one that needs improvement.

A brief review of the information provided indicates that Horseheads students receive an above-average education while educational expenses fall below those of the County and the State.

Per 2002-2003 statistical data, the student enrollment was 4,462, up 1.2%, from 4,406 for the 2001-2002 school year. Of this number, 95% were non-minority. Approximately 5.0% of students enrolled in the district qualified for reduced-cost lunch in 2001-2002.

The high school, middle school and four of the elementary schools are located in the neighboring Town of Horseheads. Elementary, middle and high school classroom sizes range from 20 to 25 students; kindergarten classes average 20 students in number. Pre-elementary education and activities are available through the Big Flats Elementary Head Start. There are also two licensed daycare programs located in the Town.

Instruction expenditures per full-time equivalent student (FTE), for school year 2001-2002 was \$6,005 while the cost for a similar school district was estimated at \$6,649. The NYS average for the 2001-2002 school year was \$6,958. For the 2002-2003 school year, the Horseheads Central School District staffed 319 teachers, along with 109 professionals and paraprofessionals. During that school year, a total of fifteen instructors lacked certification. In fall 1997, the median salary for teachers in Horseheads Central School District was \$38,341. This was in comparison to a Chemung County average of \$38,940 and a NYS average of \$48,712.

Special education studies are designed for students requiring an alternative source of learning support. Emphasis is placed on providing students with the least restrictive environment while integrating studies at the level and of subject matter appropriate to the individual child. In 2001-2002, students with disabilities located in separate settings, the full time equivalent (FTE) enrollment was at 54 with an instructional expense per FTE at \$9,297. This was considerably lower than the average expenditures per pupil for a similar school district (\$15,575) and for the NYS average (\$15,712). The percentage of students with disabilities, at 9.5%, was higher than the NYS average of 6.6%.

Attendance rates for Horseheads Central School District has remained constant in recent years, 95.6% in 1999-2000, 96.1% in 2000-2001, and 96.1% in 2001-2002. The average rate of suspensions has similarly remained flat, 3.0% in 1999-2000, 3.5% in 2000 – 2001, and 3.3% in 2001 – 2002. Of those students graduating in 2001-2001, 71% received New York State Regents Diplomas. The non-completion rate for the school district was 3.7% in 2000-2001, 2.3% in 2001 – 2002, and 2.4% in 2002 – 2003.

7.6.2 Chemung Valley Montessori School, Elmira

The Chemung Valley Montessori School is located in Big Flats on Winters Road. Founded in 1974, the school offers a fully-certified Montessori program at the pre-primary, kindergarten, and elementary levels. In addition to operating five days a week, before and after school programs are offered for enrolled students. CVMS is provisionally chartered by the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York and is affiliated with the American Montessori Association.

7.6.3 Corning Community College

Corning Community College was founded in 1956 by the Corning-Painted Post School District, in several older buildings in the city of Corning. Today, the college encompasses a 550-acre main campus on Spencer Hill with a complex of eight buildings plus an observatory and planetarium. The college also provides services at a variety of off-campus sites throughout Steuben, Chemung and Schuyler counties. Of a dozen locations throughout Chemung County, there is one facility at Airport Corporate Park, Daniel Zenker Drive and one at 48 Colonial Drive.



7.7 Identified Municipal Services and Infrastructure Needs

As the Town has become more and more developed in recent years, there has been growing concern about water quality. In particular, the Town Center's high water table and reliance upon septic systems results in a potentially untenable situation. Many expressed a need for public water and/or sewers to protect the Town's groundwater and ensure residents clean and adequate drinking water. While there is no quantifiable data on how many homes have experienced well failures over the years, there is anecdotal information that during particularly dry periods, such as summer of 2003, some areas of the Town, such as Olcott Road, are left with dry wells.

There is also a concern about the declining number of volunteers for the Town's four fire departments. The Big Flats Fire Department, which services the largest and most populated areas of Town, experienced a 30% drop in membership since 1992 and has already had to employ a full-time firefighter. In addition, NYS regulations requiring extensive mandated training for all firefighters has added to the difficulties associated with recruiting volunteers. Continuing growth of the Town's residential and commercial areas may exacerbate this situation.

Finally, although crime is not a major concern in Big Flats, the Town does draw a regular influx of non-residents to its regional shopping attractions, the Arnot Mall and Consumers Square. With an increasing number of people visiting the Town, some stakeholders and residents expressed a desire to have an accessible public safety officer. Previous discussions about locally funding the placement of a Chemung County Sheriff Deputy at Town Hall did not come to fruition.

8. RECREATIONAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

The Town of Big Flats has many recreational and cultural resources within its boundaries. While many of these are aimed at local residents, such as the neighborhood pocket parks, others, such as the National Soaring Museum, attract tourists from all over.

8.1 Parks and Recreational Resources

8.1.1 Parks Department

The Parks Department maintains all local parks in Big Flats. These parks are for the use and enjoyment of the public during park hours, which run from 6:00 AM to 10:30 PM. Facilities are on a first-come first-serve basis but reservations can be made for special occasions.

There is a seven-member Parks Commission that advises the Public Works Division and the parks and recreation caretaker on maintenance and improvements necessary for the parks. Representatives from the community, the Commission encourages that existing natural resources such as trees and bushes be retained when new parks are being developed. The Town requires new developments provide land for new parks or payment in lieu of land. The Town also raises funds for parkland acquisition through its very successful Big Flats Community Days event.



The Town is currently juggling a variety of users at its parks. The Public Works Division issues park permits and handles scheduling for little league, softball, and soccer. The Town also rents out a concession stand and pavilion at Community Park for parties. The Town parks used for Little League and Softball primarily serves Town residents, while the local soccer leagues include residents from Corning and Elmira. When conflicts occur, the Public Works Division must arbitrate.

The Big Flats Community Park on River Street houses picnic areas, a pavilion, a playground, and ball fields. A variety of organized league sports are held at this park, including baseball. The Henry Minier Park on NYS Route 354 houses four soccer fields, and a softball field. Minier Park also houses volleyball and there is talk about establishing lacrosse. Community Park Extension houses four softball (Cinderella) league fields, two soccer fields, and a concession stand.

Although demand has increased, Big Flats has been pro-active about acquiring additional lands when needed, and does have some potential expansion land. Currently, the Town also leases a park from a

church on Hibbard Road that could, if necessary, house an additional ball field. A new field may also be developed at the recently acquired Whitney Park. Big Flats also has land that, while deeded to the Town, is not actively used for parkland.

8.1.2 Town Parks

Big Flats has 15 local parks that generally fall into one of two categories: large town-wide parks or neighborhood “pocket” parks. The Town has developed its inventory of neighborhood parks through its land dedication requirement.

Big Flats Community Park and Community Park Extension

The Town’s premier recreational park is Big Flats Community Park on River Street. Community Park, approximately 7 acres, houses a number of fields, a playground, pavilion and picnic area.

Several years ago, Big Flats acquired several undeveloped partial wetland parcels adjacent to Community Park’s southern border on NYS Route 352. Known as Community Park Extension, the two parks are separated by a creek and pedestrian access between the two is limited to a single, unengineered and unsecured pedestrian bridge.

About 95 acres in size, much of Community Park Extension is in the Floodway, limiting the land principally to conservation uses. As a good portion of Community Park Extension has been left in its natural state, the park houses a pond and swampland habitat, and is home to a number of wildlife including deer, bear, bobcat, and groundhogs. The park has a ¾ mile paved path, as well as a lengthier unpaved series of trails. Hikers and cross-country skiers are free to use these trails, but motorized vehicles are prohibited. Aside from the pedestrian bridge from Community Park, Community Park Extension is accessible only by car. Future plans for the park include a restroom facility (the park currently houses portable toilets) and a 40-foot pavilion.

Whitney Park

The recently acquired 19-acre Whitney Park will be designed to accommodate a detention pond for stormwater drainage. One idea to develop a new wellhead at Whitney Park fell through, as the land will not support it. Whitney Park also houses two belowground gas lines as well as above ground utility cables, which will have to be accommodated in any site design considerations. The Parks Commission is currently working with the Parks Department to identify community recreational resource needs that can be met through development of Whitney Park.

Lowe Pond

Lowe Pond is another publicly owned resource in Big Flats. Owned by the County, the pond is leased by the Town. It is used as a fishing hole and for ice-skating and houses a substantial amount of wildlife habitat.

Big Flats Trail

A “Rail-to-Trail” multi-use path is located near the intersection of Winters Road and Maple Street and runs parallel to Interstate 86 and County Route 64 for 1.7 miles. Eight to ten feet wide, trail users walk, skate, cycle, and horseback along the path, which is owned by Chemung County and leased by the Town. Crushed limestone was placed along the path, which traverses a sizeable Town-owned wetland parcel (about 61 acres). Unfortunately, there is no parking lot to accommodate trail users, and access is limited to Kahler Road.

Steege Hill Nature Preserve and the Palisades

The Town-owned Steege Hill Nature Preserve also provides hiking opportunities. Steege Hill houses a forest area with steep slopes that transitions into floodplain forest as it leads down to the Chemung River. The Palisades is a Town-owned parcel of approximately 50 acres. Forested with steep slopes, construction is prohibited in both areas.



8.1.3 Other Public Parks and Resources

The Town of Big Flats is home to a number of Chemung County public parks and resources. These include Harris Hill Park and the Bottchers Landing Boat Launch on South Corning Road. Some of these resources are highlighted in the following section.

Harris Hill Park

Harris Hill Park is a scenic, multi-purpose park located on County Route 55 (Harris Hill Road) and is operated by Chemung County. The 400-acre park has wooded trails for hiking and cross-country skiing, individual picnic tables with grills, a playground, three non-electric pavilions, swimming pools, two outdoor ice rinks, and the Outing Center.

The Harris Hill Pool sports a 25-meter pool with 1 and 3 meter diving boards, plus a wading pool. Swimming lessons are offered during the summer months.

The Outing Center includes a large picnic pavilion, a building with restrooms and a complete kitchen. A card room with tables and chairs can accommodate between 40 and 50 people. With a barbeque pit and a clam hut located outdoors, this center can accommodate 200 people.

The Harris Hill Golf Course is a free three-hole course that operates on a first-come, first serve basis and is opened from sunrise to sunset every day.

The Harris Hill Youth Camp, overlooking the pool, is comprised of a screened-in dining room with tables and chairs (seating 100), restroom facilities, complete kitchen and adjoining room with hardwood floor. A deck, barbeque pit and picnic tables are outside.

Chemung Basin River Trail

Part of the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network, the Chemung Basin River Trail encompasses 38 miles along the Chemung River and is conducive to many recreational activities such as kayaking and canoeing. The River Trail starts in Corning and includes all of the Towns, Villages and Cities located along the Basin past the Pennsylvania state line. A series of public launch sites provide easy access to the river, and a water trail map and guide is available. The Chemung Basin River Trail Partnership, a voluntary organization of agencies and residents dedicated to developing the river trail system and promoting watershed protection, supports trail maintenance, promotion and expansion. There are three boat launches along the River in Big Flats. These include Bottcher's Landing off CR 44 (South Corning Road), Minier's Field off SR 352, and Fitches Bridge off SR 352 near the Elmira Town line. The first two launches have parking, restrooms, ramps for trailer access, and services within one mile. The last launch has parking, a ramp, and services nearby but lacks restroom facilities. Unfortunately, there is little within the Town identifying either the existence or location of the boat launches and users would have to know where to look for them.

NYS Bike Route 17

NYS Route 352 through Big Flats is designated a NYS bike route. As identified on the "Take a Walk in Chemung County" map produced by the Chemung County Healthy Heart Coalition, the bike path continues along NYS Route 352 into neighboring West Elmira and on into the City of Elmira.

The **Finger Lakes Land Trust**, based in Ithaca, owns some open space lands in the Town. **The Nature Conservancy** owns many acres of open space land on the hill surrounding Tanglewood.

8.1.4 Other Recreational Facilities**Harris Hill Soaring Center**

The Harris Hill Soaring Corporation, a non-profit organization, operates the Harris Hill Soaring Center. The purpose of this organization and soaring center is the "appreciation, learning, and pursuit of safe, motorless flight." With a membership of more than 100, the organization's supporters range from national and world competitors to weekend soaring buffs. For members, the club offers year-round flying, hosts the regional and national soaring championships, fly-ins, winter soaring camps and vintage aircraft events. Non-members can also take seaplane rides from April through October depending on conditions. Harris Hill has played a prominent role in soaring and is known as the birthplace of American soaring.

Tags

Tags is located on NYS Route 352 in the Town of Big Flats. A restaurant/bar, Tags offers a summer concert series that brings in music entertainment such as classic rock groups, country music performers and comedians.

Gale's Equine Facility

Located on Sing Sing Road, the equine center has been in operation since 1988. The facility offers a horse-boarding program and professional riding lesson program. The indoor arena is one of the largest in the area, thus allowing a whole jump course inside for the winter. The stables hold 36 horses and a 62' round pen for training. In addition to the indoor facilities, there is an outdoor ring with a summer jump course and numerous trails.

Willowcreek Golf Course

The only private golf course in the area, Willowcreek is located on NYS Route 352. The course offers 27 holes, a driving range, two practice holes and a practice putting green, as well as a lounge.

8.2 Big Flats Cultural Resources

Big Flats is home to many cultural resources available to both Town residents and visitors. This section includes a brief summary of the better-known resources.

8.2.1 Big Flats Town Library

The Steele Memorial Library's Big Flats Branch is located on Canal Street in the Town Center and includes a wide assortment of adult and juvenile fiction and non-fiction, large print books, magazines, audio books, local newspapers, an online catalog and Internet access. The library also features programs such as pre-school and toddler story times, summer and winter reading clubs, mother/daughter book club, and holiday crafts. The library is open every day but Friday and Sunday and closed Tuesday and Thursday nights.



There is no local funding for the library, and recently, Chemung County has cut funding for library, from \$190,603.00 in 2004 to \$117,350.00 for 2005. Steele Memorial Library's Elmira Heights branch was closed within the past couple of years, and both the West Elmira and Big Flats branches were put on notice at that time. The main branch of the library system is located in the City of Elmira. The Big Flats Library Task Force was formed to investigate possible funding services to supplement the County's diminishing allocations and to develop a roster of volunteers to assist in maintaining the current level of services. Looking to establish a foundation, the Library Advocates recently completed paperwork for creating a 501C3 non-profit agency and is putting together an organization plan. The group has been also actively fund-raising and many residents have been generous with donations to save the library.

8.2.2 Community Center

The Big Flats Community Center is located on the Big Flats Municipal Campus on Maple Street next to the Town Hall. It is a handicapped accessible, multi-purpose facility intended for the use of Big Flats residents of all ages: youth, families, and senior citizens. The Community Center has several multi-purpose rooms, restroom facilities, a large catering kitchen, and a Great Room designed to accommodate up to 280 people. The Great Room is the largest room in the community center and was designed for large meetings or gatherings. Its vaulted ceiling, heated facilities, wood flooring, and many windows make it a comfortable and welcoming space. The building is available for public use from 8:00AM to 8:00PM weekdays at no cost to residents.

The Town and other local community groups sponsor numerous programs and activities at the Community Center. These programs include how-to classes on sewing and stitchwork, painting, and ornament crafting, as well as regularly scheduled card games including euchre, party bridge, and pinochle. Exercise classes held at the Center include pilates and yoga. The Center also houses nutrition lunches, gardening classes, and health screening clinics. Youth oriented activities include meetings for the Youth Organization and Teen Commission; kiddie bingo; and a Certified Red Cross babysitting course. More activities are described later in this section.

8.2.3 Museums and Other Educational Facilities

Tanglewood Nature Center and Museum

Since 1973, the Tanglewood Nature Center and Museum has been a premier resource in Big Flats. With a staff of five, the center and museum's focus is to promote heightened awareness, understanding, enjoyment and caring for the natural environment. Located on 35 acres, the facility offers two hiking trails, Gleason Meadows and Frenchman's Bluff, managed by the Nature Conservancy, and the 50-acre Personious Woods, which is leased from the Elmira Water Board. In total there are about 10 miles of trails that loop around the site. In addition to the trails, the facility houses a 125-seat presentation auditorium and indigenous animal displays. While the non-profit was once funded in part by Chemung County, the organization is now completely self-supported by fundraising.

During the summer, Tanglewood holds ecology workshops and other classes to involve children and adults in hands-on adventure-based learning. Tanglewood offers educational programs to all school aged children as well as a Senior Outreach Program that offers hour- long sessions with live animals and nature artifacts. Seniors can visit Tanglewood's handicapped accessible facility or Tanglewood staff travel to the seniors.

Tanglewood also sponsors a variety of special holiday events. Halloween Happenings occurs in October and activities include a Great Pumpkin toss (using catapults), a haunted house, and portrait painting. Tanglewood also hosts youth parties, costume parties, parades, Easter egg hunts, etc. These mostly attract younger children, aged 3 – 12. Prior to the construction of the Community Center, these events were held either in the basement of Town Hall with the space shared by the Youth Services and seniors or in the

American Legion. Other, more adult activities include the Brews and Bears Microbrew Festival and an on-going music and wine series.

Wings of Eagles Museum

The Wings of Eagles Museum is adjacent to the Elmira-Corning Regional Airport. Previously known as the National Warplane Museum, the museum recently changed its name to better reflect its resources. Honoring the men and women who made sacrifices in defense of their country and in the preservation of world freedom, the museum was founded to collect, preserve, interpret and exhibit military aviation memorabilia and to fly military aircraft. Interactive displays and exhibits allow visitors to look inside plane cockpits and gunner stations. The museum also houses a library, theater and gift shop, and a large multi-purpose room with a kitchen that can handle up to 500 people. The museum's longtime centerpiece is Fuddy Duddy, a flight-worthy, World War II-era Boeing B-17 bomber. The museum is open Monday thru Sunday and holds special events during the year.

Science and Discovery Center

The Science and Discovery Center, formerly located in the Arnot Mall, relocated to the Wings of Eagles Museum near the airport. The museum provides a hands-on learning experience through the fun interactive exhibits and programs. Programs are offered for pre-school groups, school groups (at either a specific site or at the museum), Girl and Boy Scouts, summer camp, birthday parties and the mobile science lab. The mobile science lab is for grades 4 to 7 with "H2O to Go" as the theme. The Science Lab bus travels to any destination in the area.

National Soaring Museum

The National Soaring Museum is the only comprehensive U.S. museum focused on soaring and motorless flight. The museum is located on the peak of Harris Hill and offers programs and exhibits dedicated to the history of aviation. The site of the first U.S. National Soaring Contest in 1930, the growing popularity of soaring contests during the 1950's inspired the development of a national soaring museum. As the location where the Soaring Society of America (SSA) began in 1932, the site today serves as not only a local history museum, but also the official repository of SSA archives and collections. This museum is an independent non-profit corporation. In addition to a weeklong summer day camp for those aged 9 – 14, the museum provides a variety of activities as part of its educational program.



8.3 Big Flats Historical Resources

8.3.1 Big Flats Historical Society

The Big Flats Historical Society maintains the history of the Town of Big Flats and the surrounding community. An 11-person Board of Directors is elected, while the Town Historian is appointed. The Big Flats Historical Society has a museum at 258 Hibbard Road. Housing many events and activities, as well as the repository of local historic artifacts, the building has been expanded three times in recent years. The museum is open Tuesdays, from 9:00AM to 12:00 PM. During the summer, the museum is open on Sundays, from 1:00PM to 4:00PM

While the Historical Society receives an annual line item from the Town in the amount of \$1,000, much of their funding comes from fundraising and donations. The initial purchase and expansion of the museum was funded by the proceeds from an annual antique show the Historical Society used to hold. Recent improvements to the museum include a pavilion, which was constructed at a cost of \$16,000.

Summer 2004 was a particularly busy time for the Historical Society, and there has been some discussion of expanding its programs. The Town-organized summer camp visited the museum, and the children were treated to a trolley ride along the museum grounds. Although a board committee was established for the purpose of working with the local schools to increase school visitation to the museum, school funding cuts currently present a difficulty. There has also been discussion of establishing a summer camp at the site. Adult activities held at the museum this year included an open house in June, and a Big Flats School reunion in August. The Historical Society also publishes a periodic events newsletter.

The Historical Society has a variety of exhibits that touch upon every aspect of Big Flats' history. There is a display on the Great Mammoth tusk discovered in Town; an exhibit on the community's Native American history; and an extensive tobacco exhibit. One exhibit, though recreated living areas, schoolrooms and agricultural tools, depicts life in turn-of-the-century America. There is also a railroad display, a collection of local artwork, a collection of cobweb paintings, and repository of old photographs.

8.3.2 Chemung County Historical Society

The Chemung County Historical Society, based at the Chemung Valley History Museum in downtown Elmira, maintains records and historical information about Chemung County and offers exhibits, educational programs, and publications. The Booth Research Library is available for researching topics of local historical and genealogical interest.

One of the Chemung Valley/Twin Tiers region's main claims to fame historically has been tobacco. Between 1850 and 1920 2,000 acres across Chemung County were dedicated to tobacco. The locally grown tobacco produced broad leaves that were used as cigar wrappers. Providing a cash crop for many small subsistence farmers, tobacco brought prosperity to many communities, including Big Flats and Elmira. Big Flats at one point, housed four tobacco-processing plants. The area became known for its

“Big Flats” tobacco, shipping the product out to big city markets throughout the Northeast. Today Chemung County Historical Society conducts tours of the area’s former tobacco fields.

8.3.3 Big Flats Historic and Prehistoric Resources

The Town has an interesting array of historic resources. In 1976, for the Town’s Bicentennial Celebration, the Historical Society published *The Heritage Trail*. Including a map, the booklet details 48 historic resources located within the Town. These resources included houses, stores, churches, schools, cemeteries, and the remains of the feeder canal. The booklet also included brief histories of the First Presbyterian Church, the Elmira-Corning Airport, Schweizer Aircraft Corporation, the Harris Hill Soaring Corporation, Harris Hill and the National Soaring Museum, the Stanley Woods Girl Scout Camp, the Mount Savior Monastery, and the Chemung Canal system. The only resource no longer standing from the inventory according to the Town Historian is the former Delaware Lackawanna and Western Railroad Station which was purchased by a local resident and dismantled.

Table 15: Historic Resources in Big Flats

Name	Location	Date
Charles M. Davenport House	155 Davenport Road	c. 1880-1890s
Henry B. Minier, Jr. House	Olcott and Valley Rds.	1869
Gardner Tavern	381 Main Street	1807
Old Minier House	391 Main Street	1878
Old Anna Manning House	397 Main Street	c. 1850s
Masonic Hall	Main Street	1871
The Minier Store	Main Street	c.1873
Voight Store	Main Street	c.1875
First Baptist Church (originally Episcopal)	Canal Street	1830
Methodist Church	Canal Street	1853
2858 Canal Street		c.1850
Purley Churcher House	2864 Canal Street	1893
Groom House	2884 Canal Street	1856
Delaware Lackawanna and Western RR Station	By tracks	1883
Big Flats Union School	Church and Hickory Sts.	1897
Bacon House	449 Main Street	1831
Old United Methodist Parsonage	Main Street	c. 1898
First Presbyterian Church	Church Street	1829
Wlm. Mapes Monument at Village Cemetery	Hamlet	
Tompkins Corners Cemetery	Chambers and Sing Sing	
Kahler Road Cemetery (also Pioneer Cemetery)	Kahler s. of Sing Sing Rd	
Minier Cemetery	Chemung River/NYS 352	
Hammond Farm	536 Main Street	c. 1840
Carpenter Farm	Carpenter and Goss Rds.	c. 1850
Henry Farr Farm	CR 64 by Kahler Rd.	1862
Farr O'Hanlon House "The Brick House"	CR 64 and Harris Hill Rd.	c. 1813
Owens House	CR 64	c. 1800
J. Sloat Welles Farm (original farmhouse)	CR 64	1792
Deo Mattoon House	3475 Sing Sing Road	1840
Rhinehart Farm	Sing Sing & Kahler Rds.	1878
Wheaton House	Sing Sing & Maple Shade	c. 1820s
Wolcott School	Sing Sing & Hibbard Rds.	1843
Breed Homestead	Breed Hollow Road.	1845
Keerymeade	SR 352	1840
Smithhome Farms	SR 352	1878
Fairview Manor	SR 352	1812
Frank Rhodes Farm	Harris Hill Road	1832

Source: The Heritage Trail, 1976.

The Town has several old cemeteries, including the Kahler Road or Pioneer Cemetery near the Elmira-Corning Airport. A family cemetery, the first minister of Chemung County, several Revolutionary War soldiers and members of the Minier family are buried here.

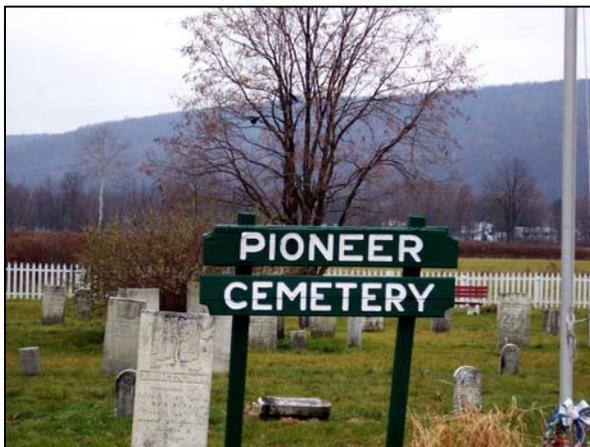
Big Flats also houses the remains of four former trolley bridges. The Historical Society is concerned that tree roots threaten the bridge remains. This trolley bridges were constructed for the Elmira, Waverly, and Corning Trolley Line which at one time provided inter-town trolley service.

Although not well-known, there is evidence that Big Flats played a role in the Underground Railroad during the early 1800s. Some of the Town's older homes have been discovered to have additional, hidden compartments.

Native Americans settled in the Chemung River Valley prior to white settlers. They inhabited several camps in Big Flats, the largest of which was called Runonvea and was located slightly southeast of the hamlet. Many archaeological relics have been found in this area. Other camps reportedly existed near the Big Flats-South Corning Bridge, along the Chemung River, and along the Sing Sing Creek, which was known to Native Americans as Atsingnetsing. Arrowheads and artifacts have been found throughout the valley. The corner of Sing Sing and Chambers Roads once housed a large encampment. Early artifacts identified as belonging to the very early Algonkin Indian period were found here.

In 1779, the Sullivan Expedition came through to destroy the villages and crops and drive the Native Americans from the land. Some Native Americans remained until 1791 when title to the land was extinguished by treaty. Along County Route 64, there was once a Native American village that had been destroyed by General Sullivan in 1779. The site lacked an historic marker for many years following one of the major floods, but the Historical Society replaced the sign around 2000 at a cost of \$750. Since the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation no longer funds these placement of historic markers, and the Town has been subjected to several sizable floods in recent years, many historic sites lack markers. The Town does not have a source of funding to finance the acquisition of historic markers.

Three pieces of Great Mammoth tusks were found in Big Flats. One was found at the Wolcott gravel pit, ten feet below ground, while two others were discovered on the former Rhodes farm, off Interstate 86.



8.3.4 Historic Resource Protection

According to the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation website, there are presently no designated State or National Register sites or buildings located within the Town of Big Flats. According to the Town Historian, there have been no recent attempts to pursue historic designations for any local sites or buildings.

Although there are a number of homes that date back to the late 19th century, and even a few that date back to the early 19th century, the Town does not have any formal review process to guide homeowners on maintaining or restoring historic facades or designing appropriate modifications. The Town's Historical Society does not receive inquiries from homeowners looking for advice on appropriate façade rehabilitation.

8.4 Special Programs

8.4.1 Chemung County Programs and Services for Seniors

The Chemung County Office for the Aging was established after the Agnes Flood of 1972. The office encourages and supports individual responsibility to plan for life's changes. In April 1996, the office expanded with the creation of the Care Access and Resource Exchange (CARE) Unit, to become the central access system for all long-term care services. The CARE unit provides comprehensive assessments and case management services for residents seeking community-based long term care services. The Office of the Aging is part of a national aging network that includes 670 local offices, 57 Territorial and State Units on aging, 217 tribe and native organizations and over 27,000 service providers.

Program funding is allocated to each State Agency on Aging based on the number of older persons in the State, to plan, develop, and coordinate systems in supportive income and community-based services. The County funds services such as advocacy, employment, energy assistance, free information and referral on available resources, legal aid in obtaining assistance, access to learning materials and self-help educational resources, entertainment and educational activities, limited transportation, and weatherization assistance.

Programs offered through the Chemung County Office for the Aging include the following: Alzheimer Services; Ombudsman Program; Senior Games; and Senior Notebook, a local television program providing information to seniors on a variety of topics. The County also funds a variety of meal services, including a congregate meal program; home delivered meals; nutrition counseling; nutrition and wellness bulletins; and nutrition education.

The Chemung County Triad Community focuses on law enforcement. This group meets with seniors to identify safety-related concerns. They sponsor peepholes, higher visibility house number signs (for EMS/public safety purposes), blinking light switches, and "file of life" computer files to provide information on an individual's medication needs.

8.4.2 Big Flats Seniors Organization Activities

The Big Flats senior citizen organization receives a budget of \$10,000 annually from Chemung County. To raise additional funds, they do 50/50 drawings and two for \$1 raffles. The group was integral in the development of the Community Center and still actively fundraises for center resources.

The Big Flats senior citizen organization arranges dinner theater day trips to other cities, such as Syracuse or Rome. Part of their funding allocation is used to pay for bus rental and driver services, however members pay for their own dinner and show tickets. Highly popular, the group often turns a slight profit on these trips.

Two to three years ago, the Big Flats senior group brought a nutrition program to the Presbyterian Church. Charging \$2/person, they initially fed up to six or eight people for lunch on Mondays and Wednesdays. With the development of the new Community Center, they are now able to feed about 50 people in the Great Room and have since expanded the lunch to Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. This is funded through Federal monies received through Chemung County.

Trust in the Lives of Older Women is another program the Big Flats seniors recently developed with the Chemung County Office of the Aging, the Elmira Senior Center, and the YWCA of Elmira and the Twin Tiers. The group provides a forum for support, sharing, and personal enrichment along with learning and discussion. After not attracting anyone to a downtown Elmira location, the group was relocated to Big Flats, and the fifteen people showed up the first day.

The group also holds *Senior Night Dances* at the Community Center. This activity fosters multi-generational interaction as teens act as chaperones for the seniors, and also arrange for the food, door prizes, and hall decorations.

8.4.3 Chemung County Youth Bureau

The Chemung County Youth Bureau was created in 1977 and administers approximately \$325,000 for the NYS Office of Children and Family Services to provide preventive and recreational services to children and families in Chemung County. The Bureau includes a representative from each town and from each of the different social agencies or organizations that cater to children and teens in the County. Functioning as a clearinghouse for government programs, the Youth Bureau funds 24 programs throughout the County. Big Flats applies to the Youth Bureau for youth employment services and community services funding, which is distributed based on population.

The main purpose of the County Youth Bureau is to research the needs of the County's youth and to plan, coordinate, foster and supplement the activities of public, private and religious agencies devoted to the welfare and protection of youth. Chemung County uses funds not allocated for municipalities to fund special programs. One such program is CASA – Court Appointed Special Advocates. This program ensures that children get fair representation in abuse cases.

The County Youth Bureau has 22 locations throughout the County, including offices on Harris Hill. These sites have both indoor and outdoor facilities, and most are located at schools.

Although the County Youth Bureau provides a six-week summer education recreational and cultural enrichment program, the Town does not participate in this program. The Bureau employs young adults for recreation training in the summer employment program. The Juvenile Assigned Work Service provides an opportunity for involvement in the justice system involvement through supervised community service projects. The Fire and Resource Exchange Program assists families in identifying a child's motivation to play with fire.

8.4.4 Big Flats Youth Program

The seven-member, appointed Big Flats Youth Commission was created to develop programs that foster skills, encourage personal growth, and prepare young people to make a contribution to the community. This links resources through educational institutions, agencies, and businesses to benefit both the youth and the community.

The Town also employs a Director of Youth Services to coordinate ongoing programs. The Town supplies all the arts and crafts supplies for the program. State funds (distributed by Chemung County) accounts for only a small portion of the Town's youth recreation budget, which has been stable at \$90,000/year for the past few years. Additional funding would be needed to expand any of the programs.



The Town sponsors a variety of programs for its young residents. Teen Counsel began in the mid-1990s. Young people in the 9th, 10th, and 11th grades meet once a month to plan for community service events and recreational events, such as daylong boating outings. During the winter, the Town sponsors bingo nights for grades kindergarten to fourth grade. There are several other after-school programs. The Town was initiating an after school program one day a week for fourth and fifth graders. Other ideas being contemplated include a structured Teen Open House night at the Community Center, likely including movies or dancing. Teens chaperone and help host Senior Night Dances, which are held periodically at the Community Center and Teen/Senior checkers and euchre tournaments have been held in the past. Youths of varying ages contribute to Tanglewood puppet shows.

The Youth Employment Services brings residents who need help in lawn maintenance, raking, babysitting, etc. together with young people looking for jobs. The Youth Services Director maintains a list of interested teens. Potential babysitters must get Red Cross Baby Sitting certification, which is available through the Community Center.

The Town sponsors a six-week summer TAFFY Program -- Teen Activities for Flats Youth -- that provides Town residents with free “drop-in” summer camp from 9 am to 2:45 pm, Monday to Friday. This program is for children aged 4 – 5 to about 12 years old. The Town hires 23 – 24 college students (must be at least 19) to be counselors. In 2004, although 420 children were registered for the program, normal attendance stood at about 200. Not a certified day-camp, children bring their own lunches, and there is no bus service. The intent behind having the locations at local neighborhood parks is to allow children to walk to the parks. Except for the indoor location, inclement weather forces the TAFFY sites to shut down as they have no indoor site provisions.

The Town works with the Red Cross to ensure that the counselors are trained to do Cardiac Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR). The camp is operated at five of the Town’s parks – Hillview Park, Community Park, Maple Shade Park, Pine Circle Park, and Reynolds Park. There is one indoor location that varies between the Big Flats Elementary School and the Wesleyan Church located adjacent to the school. Administered by the Town’s Director of Youth Services, day trips to the movies, the Glass Museum in Corning, the Science Center in Ithaca, and other local museums are arranged. The TAFFY program coordinates about five or six outings per summer. While there has been some discussion about extending the program to seven weeks, the college students they employ as counselors go back to school before the kids do.

8.5 Recreation and Cultural Resources Needs

There are a variety of concerns confronting Big Flats. Unfortunately, not all of them are under the Town’s jurisdiction to address.

The Town and its Parks Department have been particularly pro-active to acquiring new parkland and recreational resource areas for its residents. However, there is some concern that the number of small residential subdivision pocket parks is stretching Town resources thin. In addition, the Town has a number of larger-sized park areas, such as Community Park Extension and the 2004-acquisition Whitney Park, that need to be programmed and site planned. Although the Town has had ample space available to accommodate active recreational activities to date, continuing growth of the Town’s residential areas will intensify the demand for more space to house recreational activities. Some individuals expressed a need for greater promotion of the Town’s recreational resources.

Many stakeholders and residents indicated a desire for more developed hiking and biking trails throughout the Town. The provision of on-road bike right-of-ways could provide cyclists with additional options beyond Bike Route 17. Some expressed interest in extending the Big Flats Trail and connecting it to NYS Route 352 and Community Park and further out to the Town of Horseheads and the Catharine Valley Trail. To support the development of the Big Flats Trail, several pedestrian bridges and parking provisions would be needed.

One primary issue is the potential closure of the Big Flats Library. While some residents, particularly those involved in the Big Flats Library Advocates group, are working towards developing new resources

to preserve the library, additional Chemung County funding cuts could be potentially disastrous for the library.

Historic resource preservation and promotion is another area that the Town should look to develop. While Big Flats has a very long and interesting history and continues to house a number of historic sites and structures, the Town does not have any Listings on either the National or State Register of Historic Places. Nor does it have any mechanism by which historic homeowners are provided information on appropriate housing rehabilitation and maintenance. The Town's Historical Society is a wonderful resource that appears to be often overlooked. More should be done to promote the museum.

The Town could use additional resources to support its ongoing activities. In 2004, the Recreation Activities were supplemented in part by a 65%/35% grant received from New York State and Chemung County. The normal budget is comprised of 5% from the State and 95% from the Town. In order for Big Flats to maintain its current level of recreational services, it must increase its funding allocation as the New York State minimum wage increased to \$6.00 per hour as of January 1, 2005. The NYS minimum wage will further increase to \$6.75 per hour as of January 1, 2006 and to \$7.15 per hour as of January 1, 2007. These changes in the cost of minimum wage will have a significant impact on the Town's ability to meet local recreation needs.

The development of a playground at the Community Center would allow the Community Center to be used potentially as an alternative rainy day location for the summer TAFFY program. Many stakeholders and residents indicated a need for sidewalks to connect the Town Hall, the Elementary School, Community Center, and the Library, as this would improve accessibility for the Town's young people, and enhance the Town's ability to meet the recreational needs of its young TAFFY participants. A new gym/athletic facility would meet currently unmet needs. As the Town's population increases, and the existing programs expand, additional staffing will be needed to meet the needs of residents.

9. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In this section, an attempt is made to inventory the Town's economic development resources. This includes its commercial and business areas, as well as its industrial uses. A review of local residents' employment and occupation is also included.

9.1 Commercial Development in Big Flats

9.1.1 Commercial and Industrial Zoning Districts

The Town of Big Flats has a total of seven base commercial zoning districts and one mixed use district (the Town Center District). The Town Center District allows a mix of single family, two family, business, retail, and community uses. The intent behind the Business Neighborhood and Business Neighborhood 2 Districts is to provide for neighborhood uses to support residential development. The Business Neighborhood 2 District is adjacent to I-86, and thus can support more intensive uses. The Business Non-Retail District is intended to accommodate low-density, non-retail business uses compatible with the lack of services that characterize these areas. The Business Regional District is intended to accommodate major regional retail business development. The Airport Business Development District is reserved for businesses that support airport operations, provide traveler services, and are otherwise ancillary to the airport. The Commercial Light Industrial District is reserved to support traveler services and businesses requiring major transportation network access. Finally, the Industrial District allows for the development of non-detrimental industrial uses.

9.1.2 Major Retail Locations

Big Flats is home to the two largest regional shopping destinations in Chemung County: Arnot Mall and Consumer Square. In addition to major retailers, these two areas house dozens of restaurants, including many national chains. With the Airport located within the Town, Big Flats also houses a number of hotels and motels, including a Country Inn and Suites and a Hilton Garden Inn.

Arnot Mall

The Arnot Mall, located off Exit 51 from I-86, features more than 100 department and specialty stores, plus restaurants, service providers and a 10-screen Hoyts Movie Theatre complex. The one million square feet of retail space includes retail anchors Sears Store with an automotive center, a Kauffman's Department Store, JC Penney, and the Bon Ton. The mall draws from a 36-mile customer base around Big Flats, with 40% of its customers coming from nearby Pennsylvania. However, as Medicare has forced County taxes upward in recent years, there has been a noticeable drop in apparel sales, as Pennsylvania does not tax clothing. To diversify their holdings, Arnot Realty Corp. has been expanding

their inventory of big box, stand-alone retailers. Chambers Plaza is a 10,900 acre development scheduled to open in 2005.

Consumer Square

Consumer Square Complex, a line of strip plazas located across from the Arnot Mall at the intersection of Colonial Drive and County Route 64, first opened in July 1993. Subsequently expanded, Consumer Square boasts more than 2 million square feet of retail space developed since 1995. Major draws include Wal-Mart, Sam's Club, Staples, Michael's, Petco, Bed Bath and Beyond, and Lowes.

Minier's Plaza

Located in the hamlet of Big Flats on the corner of Canal Street and Maple Street, Minier's Plaza is a neighborhood shopping center. The plaza provides local residents and workers with an opportunity to meet basic needs (supermarket, credit union, video rental, etc.) without having to contend with the congestion surrounding the mall. The plaza is easily accessible by foot for many hamlet residents.

9.1.3 Airport Corporate Park and Corporate Park South Businesses

The Town of Big Flats houses the 280-acre Airport Corporate Park and 200-acre expansion Corporate Park South. Developed in the late 1990s, the Chemung County Industrial Development Authority/Southern Tier Economic Growth (STEG) owns the park. The two parks are located both north and south of Interstate 86 Exit 50 at Kahler Road. Zoned for general and professional offices, manufacturing, and ancillary uses, the park provides all necessary utilities, public water, sewer, telecommunications (DSL, cable, fiber), gas, electricity, and direct access to Interstate 86.

In 2005, the Chemung County IDA/STEG entered into a marketing agreement with NAI/Pyramid Brokerage Company to find tenants for Airport Corporate Park. Approximately 20 acres of the original park is currently available for development. Pyramid has an extensive upstate New York network, while New American International (NAI), an international affiliation of commercial real estate brokers, has access to more than 200 markets worldwide.

One longtime tenant is Corning, Inc.'s financial services, located off County Route 64. Other Airport Corporate Park tenants include Orthstar Software (an aerospace and utility software engineering firm), Provisions Modular Hardware, X-Gen Pharmaceuticals, Hunt Engineers Architects and Land Surveyors, PC (a land services firm), CeMeCon, and Imaging and Sensing Technology Corporation (a manufacturer of imaging and sensing devices for the worldwide nuclear and electro-optics markets). Corning Community College Automotive Technology Center and Silicon Carbide Products, Inc. (which manufactures ceramics at its Big Flats facility) are also located at the park.

The proximity of the Elmira-Corning Regional Airport as well as the Empire Zone within Big Flats has encouraged several major corporations to settle within the Town. Schweizer Aircraft, which produces soaring aircraft, propeller-driven, and helicopter aircraft for both military and civilian use as well as aviation parts and assemblies, employs an estimated 420 workers at its Big Flats facility. The company,

through its partnership with Northrop Grumman Corp., received part of a \$32.5 million contract in 2003 to assist in the development and production of a new unmanned helicopter for the Navy.

Located in Chemung County since 1939, Schweizer was the oldest privately owned aircraft maker in the United States until its 2004 acquisition by Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation. In October 2004, Schweizer received a \$150,000 grant from the Skilled Manufacturing Resource Training (SMART) 100 program. Designed to aid manufacturing firms with worker training initiatives, the funds are provided under the Federal Workforce Investment Act and are administered by the NYS Department of Labor. The grant was to be used to increase the company's efficiency and help the company integrate its manufacturing processes with those of its new parent company.



9.2 Big Flats Economic Profile

9.2.1 Big Flats Resident Employment and Occupation

Table 16 illustrates the employment industry of residents in Big Flats as compared to Chemung County residents. Nearly 50% of the Town's working population is employed in the manufacturing and health/education/social services sectors. The former employs 856 individuals, or 24.8%, while the latter employs 806 or 23.3%. Another 11.1% (383 persons) are employed in the retail field, while 7.1% (245 persons) are employed in the professional/scientific/management/administration field. The remaining sectors contribute minimally to the Town's employment base, ranging from 0.0% (agriculture and forestry) to 5.1% (public administration). See **Table 16**.

Table 17 shows the breakdown of occupations of Town residents as compared to the County and NYS from the 2000 Census. A larger portion of the Town's residents are in the labor force – 62.1%– as compared to 54.8% for Chemung County and 56.6% for NYS. Additionally, Big Flats had a very low unemployment rate: at 2.8%, the Town's rate was considerably lower than both the County's at 4.6% and the State's at 4.3%.

Nearly half the Town's employed residents held management or professional positions – 46.2%– as compared to 32.0% for Chemung County and 36.7% for the State. Another 23.3% of the Town's employed residents held positions as sales/office and administrative support. The percent of individuals employed in all other occupation types were lower than the County or State average, since the number of those holding management and professional positions was so high.

Table 16: Resident Employment, 2000

Classification	Big Flats		Chemung Co.		New York State
	#	%	#	%	%
Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing/Hunting/Mining	0	0.0%	252	0.6%	0.6%
Construction	163	4.7%	1,926	4.9%	5.2%
Manufacturing	856	24.8%	7,490	19.1%	10.0%
Wholesale trade	101	2.9%	1,275	3.3%	3.4%
Retail trade	383	11.1%	4,861	12.4%	10.5%
Transportation/Warehousing/Utilities	136	3.9%	1,654	4.2%	5.5%
Information	88	2.5%	846	2.2%	4.1%
FIRE, rental and leasing	160	4.6%	1,526	3.9%	8.8%
Professional/Scientific/Management/Admin/Waste	245	7.1%	1,986	5.1%	10.1%
Education/Health/Social Services	806	23.3%	10,251	26.1%	24.3%
Arts/Entertainment/Recreation/Accommodation	174	5.0%	2,719	6.9%	7.3%
Other Services	168	4.9%	1,821	4.6%	5.1%
Public Administration	177	5.1%	2,613	6.7%	5.2%
Total	3,457	100.0%	39,220	100.0%	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 2000.

Table 17: Resident Occupation, 2000

Occupation Type	Big Flats		Chemung County		NYS
	Total	%	Total	%	%
Management/Professional	1,598	46.2%	12,564	32.0%	36.7%
Service industry	435	12.6%	7,518	19.2%	16.6%
Sales/Office and Admin Support	806	23.3%	9,899	25.2%	27.1%
Farming/Fishing/Forestry	0	0.0%	110	0.3%	0.3%
Construction/Extraction/Maintenance	207	6.0%	2,908	7.4%	7.6%
Production/Transportation/Material	411	11.9%	6,221	15.9%	11.7%
Total	3,457	100.0%	39,220	100.0%	100.0%
Employed civilian population 16+	3,457	62.1%	39,220	54.8%	56.6%
Unemployed civilian population 16+	157	2.8%	3,324	4.6%	4.3%
Armed Forces	0	0.0%	6	0.0%	0.2%
Not in Labor Force	1,956	35.1%	29,019	40.5%	38.9%
Total Population 16 years +	5,570	100.0%	71,569	100.0%	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 2000.

9.2.2 Breakdown of Industrial Sectors

Table 18 presents ESRI Business Information Solutions, Inc. (ESRI BIS) forecasts for employment in Big Flats in 2004, breaking down the various business sectors by number of establishments and number of employees, as well as indicating the share each one comprises.²

The Town's 174 retail trade businesses contribute the largest share of jobs to the local economy, 2,979 jobs, representing 50.5% of all jobs. As Big Flats houses Arnot Mall and Consumer Square, two large regional retail draws, this is unsurprising. The Town's 35 Eating and Drinking Places contribute 881 jobs to the local economy, or 14.9% of all jobs. Miscellaneous Retail accounts for another 10.1% of all jobs (599 jobs), while General Merchandise stores provide an additional 7.5% (443 jobs).

Manufacturing continues to play a major role in the local economy, with the presence of approximately 15 manufacturing businesses located in the Town. It was estimated that 1,210 jobs located in Big Flats, or 20.5% of the Town's jobs, are manufacturing-related.

The third largest employment sector in Big Flats is the Services Sector, which accounts for 1,026 jobs, or 17.4% of all Town jobs. There are an estimated 134 services establishments in the Town, including hotels, automotive repairs facilities, movie and amusement businesses, health services, and education institutions and libraries.



² It should be noted that ESRI Business Information Solutions uses data from InfoUSA, a sales leads and mailing list company. As InfoUSA uses a variety of data sources, including: telephone directories; annual reports; 10K's and Securities and Exchange Commission information; Federal, State, and municipal government data; business magazines, newsletters, and newspapers; and U.S. Postal Service information. Although InfoUSA conducts telephone verification with each business annually to ensure accurate and complete information, their lists may not be comprehensive and may not reflect recent changes. In addition, reliance upon mailing addresses to identify a business location may result in location misidentification. If the accounting for an existing business is done elsewhere, such as a regional headquarters, or if an establishment is a franchise, economic data may be reflected in the data for the community housing the headquarters, instead of the local establishment.

Table 18: Town of Big Flats Business Forecast

Industrial Sector	Businesses		Employees	
	#	%	#	%
Agriculture & Mining	3	0.7	20	0.3
Construction	32	7.6	106	1.8
Manufacturing	15	3.6	1,210	20.5
Transportation	11	2.6	78	1.3
Communication	4	0.9	14	0.2
Wholesale Trade	16	3.8	122	2.1
Retail Trade Summary	174	41.2	2,979	50.5
Home Improvement	9	2.1	238	4.0
General Merchandise Stores	9	2.1	443	7.5
Food Stores	18	4.3	301	5.1
Auto Dealers, Gas Station, Aftermarket	17	4.0	135	2.3
Apparel & Accessory Stores	27	6.4	230	3.9
Furniture & Home Furnishings	18	4.3	152	2.6
Eating & Drinking Places	35	8.3	881	14.9
Miscellaneous Retail	41	9.7	599	10.1
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate Summary	16	3.8	92	1.6
Banks, Savings & Lending Institutions	6	1.4	28	0.5
Insurance Carriers and Agents	2	0.5	1	0.0
Real Estate, Holding, Other Investment	8	1.9	63	1.1
Services Summary	134	31.8	1,026	17.4
Hotels & Lodging	3	0.7	174	2.9
Automotive Services	9	2.1	21	0.4
Motion Pictures & Amusements	22	5.2	117	2.0
Health Services	14	3.3	113	1.9
Legal Services	1	0.2	2	0.0
Education Institutions & Libraries	8	1.9	274	4.6
Other Services	77	18.2	325	5.5
Government	11	2.6	242	4.1
Other	6	1.4	15	0.3
Totals	422	100.0	5,904	100.0

Source: ESRI Business Information Solutions, Inc.

Table 19 indicates the Town's Retail Market Place Profile. Using data from ESRI BIS, this table compares the supply of retail sales available in the Town and to the local demand, or demand for those retail goods and services from Town residents. Data for ESRI BIS' estimates of sales (supply) originated with the 1997 Census of Retail Trade from the U.S. Census Bureau. The base is updated via additional information from a variety of demographic and business databases, including InfoUSA business database, the Bureau of Economic Analysis, Current Population Survey, and NPA Data Services. Supply estimates also incorporate data from the Census Bureau's Nonemployer Statistics (NES) division. Consumer spending (demand) is estimated from the Bureau of Labor Statistic's annual Consumer Expenditure Surveys, which provides consumer spending information on households.

In comparing the supply with demand, a “Leakage/Surplus Factor” is identified. This is the difference between what a local area’s residents buy and what local area retailers sell. If residents are buying more than what is sold locally, they then must be traveling outside the area to shop. This is referred to as “Leakage” as it indicates a “Leakage” of local dollars outside the local area. If the amount area residents are purchasing is less than the amount actually being sold by local retailers, the difference is referred to as “Surplus”. This indicates Big Flats retailers are attracting shoppers from outside the Town to their stores.

According to **Table 19**, Big Flats retailers in 31 retail sectors are attracting shoppers from outside the Town, and are thus experiencing a “Surplus”. The percentage of these surplus amounts is indicated by the parentheses in the “Leakage/Surplus” column in **Table 19**. For five (5) of the 31 retail sectors, Town of Big Flats residents account for less than 10% of the total retail sales. These retail sectors are the following:

- Electronics and Appliances.
- Clothing Stores.
- Sports/Hobby/Musical Instrument Store.
- Books, Periodical, and Music Stores.
- Department Stores.

Given the fact that the Town houses the Arnot Mall and the Consumer Square Complex, it is unsurprising that it plays such a large role in the regional retail market. Despite this, there are several local retail sectors that are not fully meeting residents’ needs. For these retail sectors, the demand amount, or the amount Town residents are spending, is greater than the supply amount, the amount Big Flats retailers are selling. These retail sectors are:

- Specialty Food Stores.
- Beer, Wine, and Liquor Stores.
- Florists.
- Full-Service Restaurants.
- Special Food Services.
- Drinking Places (Alcoholic).

For these six (6) retail sectors, Town residents are spending money outside the Town. This indicates a “leakage” of local dollars outside the community.

Big Flats also lacks any “Nonstore Retailers” such as electronic shopping and mail order businesses, vending machine operators, or direct selling establishments. As these retail sectors are not present in Big Flats, there is a 100% leakage of money spent by Town residents on these types of purchases. See **Table 19.**

Table 19: Retail Marketplace Profile

Retail Marketplace Profile	Total Businesses	Town of Big Flats Residents		
		Supply (Retail Sales)	Demand (Retail Potential)	Leakage/ (Surplus) (%)
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	12	\$31,540,474	\$16,733,121	(30.7)
Automobile Dealers	7	\$26,028,883	\$14,130,498	(29.6)
Other Motor Vehicle Dealers	1	\$571,318	\$493,084	(7.4)
Auto Parts, Accessories, and Tire Stores	4	\$4,940,273	\$2,109,539	(40.2)
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	6	\$3,221,358	\$1,636,012	(32.6)
Furniture Stores	3	\$1,992,408	\$1,236,836	(23.4)
Home Furnishings Stores	3	\$1,228,950	\$399,176	(51.0)
Electronics & Appliances	12	\$11,110,874	\$1,183,469	(80.7)
Bldg Materials, Garden Equipment & Supplies	11	\$16,485,685	\$3,202,680	(67.5)
Building Material and Supplies Dealers	7	\$15,826,835	\$2,864,129	(69.4)
Lawn & Garden Equipment & Supplies	4	\$658,850	\$338,551	(32.1)
Food & Beverage Stores	10	\$28,746,916	\$14,095,701	(34.2)
Grocery Stores	7	\$28,343,777	\$12,995,463	(37.1)
Specialty Food Stores	2	\$238,648	\$275,363	7.1
Beer, Wine, and Liquor Stores	1	\$164,491	\$824,875	66.7
Health & Personal Care Stores	13	\$10,136,427	\$2,566,855	(59.6)
Gasoline Stations	5	\$15,587,288	\$5,781,640	(45.9)
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores	32	\$39,810,187	\$3,312,765	(84.6)
Clothing Stores	22	\$32,105,114	\$2,377,719	(86.2)
Shoe Stores	4	\$3,557,094	\$473,324	(76.5)
Jewelry, Luggage, Leather Goods Stores	6	\$4,147,979	\$461,722	(80.0)
Sports/Hobby/Musical and Books Store	19	\$31,634,261	\$1,721,377	(89.7)
Sports/Hobby/Musical Instrument Store	12	\$22,281,093	\$1,239,946	(89.5)
Books, Periodical, and Music Stores	7	\$9,353,168	\$481,431	(90.2)
General Merchandise Stores	9	\$154,795,551	\$14,735,396	(82.6)
Department Stores	6	\$94,584,099	\$8,609,961	(83.3)
Other General Merchandise Stores	3	\$60,211,452	\$6,125,435	(81.5)
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	22	\$11,763,883	\$2,352,525	(66.7)
Florists	1	\$80,882	\$154,751	31.3
Office Supplies, Stationary, Gift Stores	11	\$4,668,124	\$689,952	(74.2)
Used Merchandise Stores	4	\$1,441,627	\$342,004	(61.7)
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers	6	\$5,573,250	\$1,165,818	(65.4)
Nonstore Retailers	0	\$0	\$1,640,629	100.0
Electronic Shopping and Mail-Order	0	\$0	\$796,630	100.0
Vending Machine Operators	0	\$0	\$750,953	100.0
Direct Selling Establishments	0	\$0	\$93,046	100.0
Food Services & Drinking Places	35	\$18,491,506	\$12,541,371	(19.2)
Full-Service Restaurants	4	\$6,455,536	\$7,637,506	8.4
Limited Service Eating Places	29	\$11,466,672	\$3,483,718	(53.4)
Special Food Services	1	\$455,717	\$1,000,513	37.4
Drinking Places (Alcohol)	1	\$113,581	\$419,634	57.4

Source: ESRI Business Information Solutions, Inc.

9.3 Economic Development in Chemung County

The following section describes economic development in Chemung County. It should be noted that some of the information in this section was excerpted from the *Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy: Fiscal Year 2005 Annual Update* by the Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board, which serves the Chemung, Schuyler, and Steuben Counties.

9.3.1 Top Regional Employers

The Southern Tier Region, with its proximity to Alfred University, Cornell University, and Binghamton University, is home to Corning, Inc., a multi-faceted Fortune 500 company that produces a variety of both consumer and corporate products. Corning manufactures optical fiber and cable products for the telecommunications industry, as well as high-performance glass for computers, television screens, and other information display applications. **Table 20** lists the region's top employers and estimated 2005 employment levels.

Table 20: Top Employers in the Southern Tier Region

Firm Name	Employment Level
Anchor Glass Container	387
Arnot-Ogden Medical Center	1,000-1,499
Chemung Canal Trust Company	300-400
Corning Incorporated	500-550
Cutler-Hammer	250-300
Hardinge Inc.	500-750
Hilliard Corporation	250-400
IST (Imaging & Sensing Technology)	150-200
F.M. Howell & Company	250-400
Kennedy Valve (McWane Inc.)	350-499
Schweizer Aircraft Corporation	400-499
St. Joseph's Hospital	1,000-1,200
Star-Gazette	300-400
SYNTHES	100-200
Taylor Corporation	250-300
Thomas and Betts	500-750
Trayer Products	200-249
World Kitchen	150-200
Vulcraft of NY, Inc.	200-300

Source: Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board

Manufacturing remains an important sector of the region's economy. It accounts for one out of every four non-agricultural jobs (as compared to the entire State of New York, where manufacturing represents one out of every seven jobs).

Retail trade is an increasingly important element of the regional economy. Major downtown shopping districts in the region include Market Street in Corning and the Elmira Downtown Development District. As stated previously, the Arnot Mall and Consumer Square Complex, both located in Big Flats, are two of the largest regional shopping draws.

Other areas within the region that are working on developing their retail resources include the City of Hornell, which created a Downtown Business Improvement District (BID) and developed a 225,000 square foot shopping complex. The Town of Erwin has had recent retail growth in the Gang Mills area with the addition of a new Wal-Mart and a Home Depot. A new Wal-Mart store opened in Watkins Glen in March 2003.

Service businesses are an increasingly important element of the region's economic base. Two of the region's largest employers, Arnot-Ogden Hospital and St. Joseph's Hospital, are in the health care industry.

Additional service sector employment is associated with the region's tourism activities, which generates significant tax revenues in the three counties. Major tourist attractions include an extensive network of wineries, the Corning Museum of Glass, Watkins Glen International Speedway, National Soaring Museum, National Warplane Museum, the Rockwell Museum, the Glenn Curtis Museum, and the region's lakes, waterfalls and gorges. The Corning Museum of Glass includes an Orientation Center which showcases resources in the entire region.

9.3.2 Elmira Empire Zone/Southern Tier Economic Growth

In 1988, the New York State Department of Economic Development designated an economically distressed area within the City of Elmira as an Economic Development Zone (EDZ). The EDZ program was created to allow Zone communities to use private and public sector resources to attract business and industry, which, in turn, would provide employment opportunities for local residents and expand the local tax base. In December 1993 the Elmira EDZ expanded from one to two square miles, adding strategic commercial/industrial sites in the Towns of Elmira, Horseheads, and Southport, as well as in the Villages of Elmira Heights and Horseheads. Airport Corporate Park in Big Flats was added to the Zone in June 1996. In June 2000, the Elmira Zone was expanded to the Town of Chemung, allowing for the attraction of Vulcraft of NY, a major steel fabrication firm. The Zone was expanded again in 2002 to allow for the construction of a new manufacturing facility for SYNTHES, a medical device company based in Big Flats.

Southern Tier Economic Growth (STEG) administers the program. At the time of the release of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy: Fiscal Year 2005 Annual Update, there were approximately 215 Zone-certified businesses in the Elmira EZ. Since becoming certified, these businesses have invested over \$550 million, resulting in the creation of approximately 3,000 new full-time jobs.

As of April 2005, there was one available Empire Zone building in Big Flats located at Airport Corporate Park South. There were an additional nine (9) available Empire Zone buildings located throughout the Elmira Empire Zone. There were also a total of nine (9) available sites within the Elmira Empire Zone, with two of these located within Big Flats.

New or expanding businesses in the Empire Zone are eligible to receive Empire Zone benefits if they invest in the expansion of a facility and/or create new jobs or prevent the loss of existing jobs. Empire Zone benefits include the following:

Empire Zone Tax Reduction Tax Credit

Empire Zone Tax Reduction Tax Credit is applied against business corporate taxes, personal income taxes, banking corporation taxes or insurance corporation taxes. The credit is computed by formula based on the numbers of jobs created, the company's assets in the Empire Zone and in the State, and the income taxes owed by the company. The credit can eliminate the companies NYS Income Tax Liability. This credit is available for a 15-year period - 10 years at 100%, decreasing 20% each year thereafter.

Empire Zone Real Property Tax Credit

Empire Zone Real Property Tax Credit is applied against business corporate taxes, personal income taxes, banking corporation taxes or insurance corporation taxes. The credit is computed by formula based on the numbers of jobs created and the real property taxes paid on property in the Empire Zone. The credit is refundable once the company's NYS Tax Liability is eliminated. This credit is available for a 15-year period - 10 years at 100%, decreasing 20% each year thereafter.

Empire Zone Sales Tax Exemption

Empire Zone Sales Tax Exemption from 4.25% NYS sales and uses taxes for tangible personal property and services sold to a qualified business is available. A company must maintain or increase employment in the Empire Zone and in the State in the year they are claiming the credit. The company must also register with the NYS Department of Taxation & Finance and be issued an exemption certificate. The certificate is valid for a 10-year period as long as the business meets or exceeds its base year employment number.

Empire Zone Manufacturing

The following benefits are available to manufacturing businesses in the Elmira EZ:

- Wage Tax Credit for up to five years for hiring full-time employees in newly created jobs. For employees in targeted groups this credit equals \$3,000 a year, with a credit of \$1,500 a year for all other new hires. These credits were to double in 2001.
- Investment Tax Credit of up to 10% for the construction, acquisition and/or renovation of facilities and production equipment for manufacturing, industrial waste treatment and research & development operations.

- Employment Incentive Credit is directly related to the Investment Tax Credit (ITC), and allows an additional 3% in each of the three years following the year(s) in which an ITC is taken. To receive this credit the Empire Zone business must employ at least 101% of the average number of people employed during the previous year.
- Sales Tax Credit of the full 8.25% for purchases of building materials used in connection with industrial or commercial property.
- NYS Electric and Gas Discounts of up to 4 cents per Kwh on electricity and up to 6 cents per Therm on gas are available to Zone businesses.
- Verizon Discount: A 5% discount on intrastate calls is provided for Empire Zone businesses.

Empire Zone Service/Commercial

The following benefits are available to service or commercial businesses in the Elmira EZ:

- Wage Tax Credit for up to five years for hiring full-time employees in newly created jobs. For employees in targeted groups this credit equals \$3,000 a year, with a credit of \$1,500 a year for all other new hires. These credits will double as of 2001.
- Sales Tax Credit of the full 8.25% for purchases of building materials used in connection with industrial or commercial property.
- NYS Electric and Gas Discounts of up to 4 cents per Kwh on electricity and up to 6 cents per Therm on gas are available to Zone businesses.
- Verizon Discount: A 5% discount on intrastate calls is provided for Empire Zone businesses.

Empire Zone Retail

The following benefits are available to retailers in the Elmira EZ:

- Wage Tax Credit for up to five years for hiring full-time employees in newly created jobs. For employees in targeted groups this credit equals \$3,000 a year, with a credit of \$1,500 a year for all other new hires. These credits will double as of 2001.
- NYS Electric and Gas Discounts of up to 4 cents per Kwh on electricity and up to 6 cents per Therm on gas are available to Zone businesses.
- Verizon Discount: A 5% discount on intrastate calls is provided for Empire Zone businesses.

In addition to administering the Empire Zone, STEG also works to facilitate economic development in the Southern Tier Region Counties of Steuben, Schuyler, and Chemung. In July 2004, STEG received

funding from the Appalachian Regional Commission to support a Workforce Development Services Coordinator position. The Coordinator serves as a liaison between the business community and the workforce development providers in the region to help businesses access programs and funding to help train or retrain new and/or existing businesses, and make sure that local training efforts are appropriately designed to meet the needs of local businesses. As a result of coordination discussions to date, it was determined that there is a need in the community for machinist and related positions. In response to this need, both SCT BOCES and Corning Community College have reassessed their machine trades programs and have begun offering more flexible programs.

9.3.3 Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board

Chemung, Schuyler, and Steuben Counties are within the jurisdiction of the Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board. This agency develops the Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy annual updates. The most recent CEDS update, for fiscal year 2005, was released in September 2004. The strategy calls for the development and improvement of infrastructure to facilitate continued economic development. The CEDS 2004 Action Plan outlined a number of short and long-term activities and projects to be undertaken. Of the projects and activities considered for implementation during the 2004-2005 year, the following would impact the Town of Big Flats:

- Continue development of Airport Corporate Park South comprising 200 acres of land across from the Elmira-Corning Regional Airport
- Extend sewer system extension and improvements to serve new and expanding businesses including SYNTHES, Inc. near and in the Elmira-Corning Regional Airport and adjacent to NYS Route 17/I-86.
- The Chemung County IDA is to initiate construction of an Airport Park speculative commercial building at the regional airport.
- Begin expansion of Chemung County's Airport Corporate Park to include an additional 50 acres.
- Develop a sanitary sewer extension to serve the Hamlet of Big Flats.

9.3.4 Other Economic Development Resources

The following summarizes other economic development resources potentially available to Big Flats' businesses and entrepreneurs.

Town of Big Flats Revolving Loan Account

The Town has a Revolving Loan Fund from a Community Development Block Grant it was awarded. The Town uses this money to provide low-interest loans to Town businesses. Businesses that have received funds through this program in the past have included Silicon Carbide, Empire Moving, CJ's Country Kids, and SYNTHES.

Chemung County Industrial Development Authority

The Chemung County Industrial Development Authority assists municipalities and businesses in Chemung County. Providing a variety of services to assist in job creation and retention, the IDA administers various financing options (e.g. Industrial Revenue Bonds, Civic Facility Bonds, Tax Exempt Bonds) for economic development projects, as well as providing technical assistance to developers, industries, and other economic development entities. They facilitate investment decisions, make projects financially feasible, and expedite the expansion of operations. They also administer a revolving loan program for qualifying businesses.

Workforce New York Center

Chemung, Schuyler, and Steuben Counties house a joint NYS Department of Labor Workforce Development Center. This facility provides assistance to adults, dislocated workers, unemployed youth, and business owners. They provide local and statewide recruitment assistance, affirmative action information, employment related tax information, and unemployment insurance information. They provide a variety of job training and skills building programs including on-the-job training, apprenticeship program development, career counseling, referrals to customized training programs, and funding for workforce retraining program.

Corning Community College

Corning Community College houses a Small Business Development Center that provides assistance to existing or start-up businesses located in Chemung County. The Small Business Development Center provides community and public service programs, manages special partnerships, and administers work force, economic, and business development programs. They provide one-to-one counseling to business entrepreneurs, assisting to develop business plans, locate appropriate funding sources, and research target markets and management information.

Schuyler-Chemung-Tioga BOCES

Schuyler-Chemung-Tioga BOCES provides workforce training as well as instruction, workshops, and classes serving the needs of local businesses. This facility links student education and job training with careers in business and industry in the region.

Chemung County Department of Planning

The Chemung County Department of Planning provides demographic data, information on available community resources, as well as other types of technical assistance to prospective developers. Staff also provide planning and land use assistance to municipalities and act as a liaison with County government. They also provide assistance on State and Federal assistance programs.

Chemung County Chamber of Commerce

The Chemung County Chamber of Commerce promotes commercial-retail firms in Chemung County by acting as a voice for the business sector. The group produces a monthly newsletter that highlights member information and chamber activities. They also sponsor events to promote members and hold seminars throughout the year to keep their members current on relevant business topics.

Regional Economic Development and Energy Corporation

The Regional Economic Development and Energy Corporation (REDEC) was originally created to provide a loan fund to businesses looking to invest in energy efficiency improvements. They now provide financial assistance for business start-ups and expansions, which have job creation potential. This program is open to any business or start-up in Steuben, Schuyler, and Chemung Counties.

Alliance for Manufacturing Technology

The Alliance for Manufacturing Technology provides assistance to small to medium size manufacturers and technology-based start-up businesses in Broome, Tioga, Chenango, Tompkins, Otsego, Steuben, Schuyler, Delaware, and Chemung Counties. This organization works to improve the competitive position of manufacturing firms through process and product innovation such as lean manufacturing training and implementation, manufacturing operations assessments, quality system development, workforce training and waste assessments. They also provide a business incubation program that facilitates accelerated growth and success opportunities for early state technology ventures.

9.4 Recent Development Trends



9.4.1 Elmira-Chemung Regional Airport

The last completed Airport Master Plan Update prepared for the Elmira-Chemung Regional Airport was completed in August 1999. A new plan is scheduled for completion in 2006. Major concerns highlighted in the 1999 plan included the need to address conflicts between adjacent land uses, including the retail, business, and residential development occurring within close proximity to the Airport. In 1999, the Airport, although the only commercial airport located within Chemung, Steuben, and Schuyler Counties, was experiencing most of its growth in corporate and general aviation activity, not commercial activity.

Approximately 920 acres, with an airfield facility housing three runways and eight taxiways, the Elmira-Chemung Regional Airport's major tenants in 1999 included the National Warplane Museum, Corning Aviation, a division of Corning Glass, Schweizer Aircraft Corporation, and the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA). Cargo companies located at the Airport included FedEx and United Parcel Service (UPS). Schweizer has a plant at the Airport that is located on private land and occupies approximately 50 acres.

According to the CEDS update, US Airways Express, Northwest Airlines, and Continental service the Elmira-Corning Regional Airport. Continental service began in mid-March of 2003 and runs to Cleveland. Current destination hubs are Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Detroit, and Cleveland. The Airport has a 7,000-foot primary runway and a 5,200-foot non-precision crosswind runway. The Federal Aviation Administration operates the air traffic control tower from 6:00 am to 12:00 am daily. Operational activity for the airport is shown below:

Table 21: Elmira/Corning Regional Airport Operations, 2001 - 2004

Year	2001	2002	2003 Aug	July 2004
Passengers	212,244	123,607	177,005	200,873
Operations	59,790	38,730	48,959	50,147
Mail (Tons)	.03	.60	0	0
Cargo (Tons)	56.61	14.08	30	33.5

Source: Elmira/Corning Regional Airport, September 2004

In 2004, Piedmont Airlines took over management of US Airways Express. By July 2004, the number of scheduled arrivals and departures were reduced by 1 each, to a total of 9 per day. But there was an increase in the number of available seats because the number of regional jets per day was increased from 2 to 7. US Airways announced, however, that Elmira- Pittsburgh service will end November 7, leaving Philadelphia as the only direct destination.

Northwest Airlinck and Continental Express passenger loads have been steadily increasing. Northwest operates 2 regional jet and 2 turbo prop round trips to Detroit, and Continental operates 3 Beechcraft flights to Cleveland. There are a total of 28 air carrier operations at the airport daily.

The recent completion of Exit 50 off I-86 has made it much easier and quicker for the public to get to and from the airport. However, the Airport still must address a number of major infrastructure as well as airport access concerns. Subsequent to growing concern regarding the potential of terrorism activity at U.S. airports, the Airport is looking at ways to provide additional security.

The Airport is also considering future growth and has determined that to accommodate regional jets, its primary runway may require an extension. Runway Protection Zones (RPZs) are areas that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) requires be free of any objects that may interfere with aviation. The FAA strongly encourages that airport operators acquire land within the RPZs to protect against development

that would conflict with safe airport operations. This land must be maintained free of obstructions and is also to be accessible for any necessary rescue activities.

As the potential for the Airport to expand, the noise contours will expand temporarily as well. Noise from jet airplanes may negatively impact the quality of life of residential development abutting the Airport. Thus, there may be a need to limit future incompatible land uses near the airport, such as schools, residential housing, and nursing homes. However, existing nested noise contours generated by aircraft operating at the airport do not project off airport property. Therefore, all existing land uses adjacent the airport are currently compatible land uses.

The impact of existing and future noise levels is described through the use of the Day-Night Average Sound Level (DNL) methodology, an official system for quantifying cumulative aircraft noise. All land uses are considered compatible below the DNL 65 dB noise level. Since compatibility of existing and planned land uses near the airport is usually associated with the extent of noise impacts related to airports, incompatible land uses will be determined through modeling of future aircraft noise at the airport and findings published in the Airport Master Plan Update when completed in 2006.

Finally, the Airport has identified concerns related to stormwater management within a five-mile radius of the Airport. This is a concern due to the fact that open water attracts wildlife and fowl, such as geese.

9.4.2 Creation of I-86

During the summer of 2004, the Exit 50 (Kahler Road) interchange off Interstate 86 opened. This has resulted in two major impacts. It provides better access to the Elmira-Corning Regional Airport and the Airport Corporate Park. It also allows NYS Route 17 to be officially listed as Interstate Highway 86 out to NYS Route 14 in Horseheads. As access is a major consideration to businesses looking to develop new facilities, not having an interstate within the County has been viewed as a challenge. With the redesignation of Interstate 86, the viability of attracting relocating firms to Chemung County has been strengthened.

9.4.3 Recent Economic Development Projects

The following projects are recent activities that have resulted in new jobs and business investment in Big Flats.

Airport Corporate Park South

In early 2004, Airport Corporate Park South, a multi-use business and technology park in Big Flats, received a \$75,000 grant under the Build Now-NY program.

Chambers Plaza

Arnot Realty Corp., the developers of the Arnot Mall, is currently developing a new retail complex known as The Shops at Chambers. Located on an 11-acre parcel along Chambers Road between Arnot

Road and Colonial Drive, the new 50,900-square foot shopping complex could eventually include up to 14 retail stores.

Wal-Mart Relocation

A Wal-Mart Super Center is proposed for development at the former A & P Site off I-86 in the Town of Horseheads, located just east of Big Flats. Super Wal-Marts are normally considerably larger than regular Wal-marts (about 150,000 square feet) and also include super markets. With the development of this new supercenter, the existing 117,000 square foot Wal-Mart at Consumer Square will be vacated. The Town needs to explore avenues of encouraging re-use of vacant buildings.

General Revenue Corporation

In October 2004, it was announced that General Revenue Corporation (GRC), a subsidiary of Sallie Mae, was establishing a credit collection service center at the former World Kitchen building at Airport Corporate Park. The World Kitchen building had been vacant for several years, when World Kitchen, Inc., a subsidiary of Corning, Inc., closed. GRC will invest more than \$4.7 million to purchase and renovate the 60,000 square foot facility, purchase equipment, and train employees. Initially, 220 employees will be housed at the facility, but it is anticipated that this will grow in the future and the building can accommodate up to 400 workers. In addition to being eligible to receive Empire Zone benefits, the company is receiving a combined \$800,000 in grants from Empire State Development and the Governor's Office of Small Cities.

SYNTHES USA

SYNTHES, an existing tenant at the Airport Corporate Park, is constructing a new 75,000 square foot manufacturing facility in Big Flats. Already employing about 150, it is anticipated that its employment base will grow to 300 by 2006.

X-Gen Pharmaceuticals

X-Gen Pharmaceuticals, a manufacturer of anti-infective pharmaceuticals, is in the process of developing a new 80,000 square foot manufacturing plant at Airport Corporate Park. The two-phase project will initially create 30 new jobs.

Silicon Carbide Products

Silicon Carbide Products is quadrupling the size of its ceramic manufacturing plant. Sixteen new jobs will be created as a result of the expansion. REDEC, NYS Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), Empire State Development, the Chemung County IDA, and the Elmira Empire Zone provided financial assistance for the expansion.

10. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

This section provides a compendium of goals, objectives, and strategies that, once implemented, will guide the Town in its future development. The sections that follow correspond to the order of the chapters in the existing conditions portion of this Plan. To best understand the intent of this section, it might be helpful to know the differences that exist between goals, objectives, and strategies.

- A goal is a general statement of a future condition which is considered desirable for the community; it is an end towards which actions are aimed.
- An objective is a statement of a measurable activity to be accomplished in pursuit of the goal; it refers to some specific aspiration which is reasonably attainable.
- A strategy is a specific proposal to do something that relates directly to accomplishing the objective; it identifies the how, where, and amount to be done.

The goals, objectives and strategies developed in support of the Town of Big Flats' Comprehensive Plan were all developed as a result of working with the community members. Much effort was put into the public participation process conducted in support of the planning process. This involved several public workshops, stakeholder interviews, a series of committee meetings, and a 3-page residential survey.

Culling all the feedback from these efforts, an attempt was made to identify goals, objectives, and strategies that best reflect the community's concerns and desires. The Plan consultants met with the Comprehensive Plan steering committee in April 2005 to review a set of draft goals. With the feedback received through this meeting, the goals were finalized and further tailored to better reflect the Town's desired vision of the future. Objectives and strategies – many of which echo suggestions made by residents and other stakeholders throughout the planning process – were then developed. In August 2005, the Steering Committee reviewed a set of draft goals, objectives, and strategies. Final modifications were made to reflect feedback received at this meeting. The final "draft" Town of Big Flats Comprehensive Plan was presented to the public at a meeting in fall 2005.



10.1 Land Use and Development Goals

The concept of land use and development encompasses many aspects of a community's development. As a result, a community's character is intrinsically tied to the regulations that guide land use, such as zoning, and those that guide development form, such as site plan review, architectural design guidelines, and building code. About 29% of survey respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the Town's development pattern. In general, many indicated they felt Big Flats was growing too quickly, with scant attention being paid to maintaining community character, encouraging smart principles, or retaining adequate open space. Not surprisingly, the majority of survey respondents (56%) felt that the Town's current size was "ideal."

When asked what type of development should be permitted on the Town's remaining vacant lands, most respondents were favorable to residential development, especially single family homes (57%). A third (30%) approve of townhouse development, 26% support condominiums, 19% support duplexes, and 18% support apartment buildings. About 17% support commercial development while only 13% favored industrial development.

The following goals provide overarching principles the Comprehensive Plan steering committee would like to see guide future land use development in the Town.

Land Use and Development Goal 1: Preserve and enhance the existing rural character of Town while accommodating a balanced mix of recreational, residential, commercial and industrial uses.

Land Use and Development Goal 2: Encourage future development that is of quality design, will foster and preserve the character of the Town, and will meet the necessary long-term needs of the community.

Land Use and Development Goal 3: Encourage future development that minimizes negative impacts on natural resources, infrastructure, and neighboring uses in order to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the community.

10.1.1 Land Use and Development Objectives and Strategies

The following objectives present measurable “targets” to pursue, while the strategies are definitive actions designed to meet those objectives.

Objective 1: To foster development in a manner that is controlled, thoughtful, and consistent with Big Flats’ rural character.

1. Clarify the roles and missions of both the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals. The Department of State Division of Local Government provides training materials and workshops to local planning and zoning board members. These training sessions provide basic information about local government powers and duties. According to the Division of Local Government website, the course content is intended to familiarize local officials with mandatory procedures, applicable state statutes, general design concepts, and the context in which local decision making occurs.
2. Promote the reuse of vacant commercial buildings through maintaining an inventory of such facilities for potential reuse and redevelopment.
3. Identify preferred development for specific areas, including the Airport Corporate Park and the Airport Business Development, and promote the efficient use of such lands for business related uses consistent with “smart growth”³ principals.
4. Examine the Town’s existing land use regulations and strengthen them to protect the Town from sprawl and promote “smart growth.” One method to do this would be to require that “big box retail” structures –anything over 45,000 square feet—require a special permit. Upon sitting vacant for more than 18 months, the Town could then mandate the building be removed and the land restored.
5. Enforce local zoning and other land use policies that have been developed, such as Development Impact Fees, to promote optimal land use development. Through the adoption and enforcement of **Development Impact Fees**, the Town can compel developers to pay fees to offset the cost of new road development and other infrastructure costs. This will allow the Town to ensure that adequate infrastructure is in place prior to or concurrent with new business development or expansion.
6. Encourage residential and commercial infill development on vacant lands in developed areas having the infrastructure to accommodate them. Neighborhoods that may be expanded include

³ While the term “smart growth” has become increasingly popular in discussions related to community development patterns, definitions for the approach vary. In general, “smart growth” encourages new development in existing developed areas where infrastructure and resources are available, while simultaneously conserving farmland and open space, and other areas where infrastructure is not available.

Harris Hill, Hickory Grove, Barnes Hill, and in the Town Center. Areas off State Route 352 should be examined for housing development potential.

7. Coordinate more with other local, county, regional, and state agencies to ensure that the pace, location, and type of development is consistent with local desires.

Objective 2: To foster development that preserves the Town's natural and aesthetic resources.

1. Adopt a **Ridgeline Protection Overlay District** to guide new ridgeline development. Such a regulatory measure should require that new development be designed and sited in a manner that preserves the Town's ridgeline, both for aesthetic and viewshed preservation, as well as for environmental considerations.
2. Develop design and signage guidelines, especially for the Town Center, to foster new commercial, residential, and mixed-use development that retains Big Flats' small town character.
3. Strengthen and enforce the Town's **Site Plan Review** requirements to better protect against unsightly uses. Equipment should be screened from public right-of-ways, commercial vehicles should not be stored in residential neighborhoods, landscaping should be used to buffer adjacent uses from commercial and industrial developments.
4. Identify prime lands valued for agriculture, open space, environmental features, or scenic qualities that may be preserved via the Town's **Residential Cluster Developments** or RCDs. Although the Code does not define RCDs, it does indicate that the intent behind them is to promote the appropriate land use development, preserving agricultural lands, open space, environmentally sensitive features, and scenic qualities. It is presently permitted in the RU and RI zoning districts. To the extent the land's characteristics allow such a development pattern, consider making RCD development mandatory within these areas to ensure open space and resource conservation.
5. Strengthen and enforce the Town's existing **Noise Ordinance**. Noise laws are enacted to protect quality of life. Such laws limit excessive sound, measured in decibels, from property lines. The intent is usually to protect residential areas from potentially loud, non-residential uses and improve the "quality of place."



10.2 Transportation Goals

How well a community's transportation network works can have many far-reaching consequences on quality of life. Having a wealth of resources is of little value to residents and visitors, if those resources are inaccessible or dangerous to get to. With the recent upgrading of NYS Route 17 to Interstate 86, Big Flats has seen its east-west access through the center of Town enhanced dramatically. A valley surrounded by hills, north-south access through the Town is limited and there is no direct east-west access in either the northern part or the southern part of Town. Despite this and while most resident survey respondents felt that traffic in Big Flats is a problem, the majority (41%) regarded it as a "minor" one, while only 16% identified it as a "serious" problem. Approximately 40% indicated it was "not a problem."

Despite residents' general satisfaction with the Town's transportation network, there do exist opportunities for improvement. In particular, 28% of survey respondents indicated that road maintenance in Big Flats was "poor." It should be noted that many of the roadways are under the jurisdiction of either New York State or Chemung County. The Town has limited ability to improve roads or maintenance on roadways not under their own jurisdiction. Constant communication with the State and County with respect to improving their roadways should be included in the Town's transportation improvement plan.

To the extent that the survey accurately reflects community sentiment, the Town is split on the idea of additional sidewalks, with 44% wanting more and 44% not wanting more (12% had no opinion). However, it should be noted that most individuals involved with the Town Center planning process indicated a desire to see reconstructed and new sidewalks in the hamlet.

Transportation Goal 1:

Actively promote a safe and efficient Town of Big Flats transportation network.

Transportation Goal 2:

Improve mobility and accessibility Town wide through incorporating multimodal transportation opportunities, especially in design/construction of new roadways and reconstruction of existing roadways.

10.2.1 Transportation Objectives and Strategies

The following section identifies the objectives, and strategies identified for protecting and enhancing Big Flats' transportation network.

Objective 1: Increase the amount of public transportation options available within the Town of Big Flats.

1. Petition Chemung County Public Transit to expand transit service within the Town, especially in the Town Center area. For example, consider shuttle buses to transport shoppers between Arnot Mall, Consumer Square and the Town Center area or vice versa. In addition, densely developed residential areas, such as Retirement Estates, may present viable opportunities for encouraging transit usage.
2. Request Chemung County Public Transit and other agencies to expand senior transportation services in order to provide better access to local and regional attractions and resources.
3. Partner with Chemung County Public Transit to improve awareness of public transit options, through posting schedule information, brochures, and signs at bus stops. Consider visually enhancing bus stops to encourage ridership.
4. Partner with the School District to consider promoting the provision of late-run school buses for students involved in extra-curricular activities.

Objective 2: Increase the accessibility for travel throughout the region and beyond for both Town residents and visitors.

1. Partner with the Elmira-Corning Regional Airport to attract discount airlines (e.g., Southwest, Jet Blue) to provide affordable flights.

Objective 3: Improve accessibility and aesthetic quality of the Town's transportation network, for the benefit of the Town's residents, businesses, and visitors.

1. Site plan review requires developers on proposed projects to provide new roads that are consistent with Town goals regarding connectivity and accessibility. Consider through site plan review additional requirements to provide multi-modal facilities and connect to the existing system where achievable. As new development is phased in adjacent to existing development on infill parcels, require new roads to provide additional multi-modal connections between communities

and subdivisions. Consider evaluating and upgrading current roadway design standards with respect to structure and multi-modal access over the short to medium term planning horizon.

2. Petition NYSDOT to improve the aesthetic quality and design of the Town's I-86 exits, especially Exit 49. These are gateway entrances to the Town. Require developers to enhance the visual character of new roadways by providing low maintenance landscaping amenities such as street trees and plantings, positioned so that they do not impact sight distance or call for fixed object in roadway "clear zone".
3. As new projects are considered, stipulate that developers and other government agencies identify and pursue opportunities to improve internal circulation in the Town Center consistent with smart development principals and design standards.
4. Through site plan review; ensure that **Residential and Commercial Driveway Design Standards** provide consistent geometry and surface type. Existing driveways vary considerably in width and surface type. Identify standard minimum spacing between driveways and appropriate pavement thickness.

Objective 4: Improve and achieve vehicular safety within the Town of Big Flats' transportation system.

1. Conduct an **Intersection Study** to identify intersections that require improvements to existing traffic control measures, sight distance allowances, and turn movement provisions based on requested accident and traffic volume data from the Elmira Chemung Transportation Council/Metropolitan Planning Organization.
2. Investigate the need for modifications to the existing traffic flow to enhance accessibility and convenience, while protecting residential areas from cut-through traffic or unnecessary truck traffic.
3. Conduct an **Alternative Roadway Study** to examine the need for new roads or extensions to existing roads to provide additional access, convenience, and enhanced safety. The following possibilities were identified:
 - i. A new east-west limited access (controlled access management with limited driveways) alternative to I-86 to provide residents with access to the Arnot Mall and Consumer Square shopping areas.
 - ii. Olcott Rd South extension to NYS Route 352;
 - iii. Canal Street extension to NYS Route 352;
 - iv. Connection between Kahler Road and NYS Route 352 (this may alleviate some of the truck traffic on County Route 64);

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- v. Extending Lowe Road from Kahler Road to County Route 64. (see Horseheads Big Flats Study);
4. Investigate the need for road improvements within the Town to provide additional access, convenience, and enhanced safety.
 - i. Examine and address potential hazardous roads running along steep drop-offs and narrow widths;
 - ii. Examine and address areas with poor sight distances, blind spots, and sharp curves;
 - iii. To address local roads that are in poor condition and experiencing increasing traffic volumes, or roads requiring general improvement or upgrading, conduct a **Local Road Reconstruction Prioritization Study**. Several such roads identified through the planning process are Olcott Road South, Breed Hollow Road, Pine Street, Willow Street, and Post Street;
 - iv. To address County roads that are in poor condition and experiencing increasing traffic volumes, or roads requiring general improvement or upgrading, the Town must work with Chemung County and the Elmira Chemung Transportation Council. The Town must keep them informed of local needs and maintain a dialogue to ensure adequate road maintenance. County roads identified as needing upgrades or repaving include: Hickory Grove Road, Colonial Drive, Kahler Road, and Sing Sing Road;
 - v. The placement of utility poles and other fixed objects along some roadways at the pavement edge obstruct motorists' vision. Conduct a **Road Obstruction Study** to examine potential options to remedy this situation, including object removal.
 - vi. Routinely consider traffic calming devices for existing roads repeatedly traveled at excessive speeds and for new roads. In locations with high pedestrian activity, consider pedestrian scale lighting along with other street amenities such as benches, trees, high-visibility crosswalks and pedestrian refuge islands;
 - vii. Consider rumble strips on accident-prone rural roads with wide shoulders. Placed on the shoulders, the rumble strips are designed to make drivers pay attention;
 - viii. Evaluate pavement markings along various roadways and if in poor condition, re-stripe them. In addition, consider installing pavement markings at any sharp horizontal curves currently lacking them. The markings would assist in keeping

- motorists from crossing into the opposing lane and encourage reduced speeds while negotiating the curve;
- ix. Re-stripe pavement markings at railroad crossings to improve their visibility;
 - x. Improve roadway geometry at Olcott Road South under the railroad bridges to increase the sight distance.
5. Investigate the need for bridge improvements to enhance vehicular safety. The following were identified as bridges that, once improved, will alleviate a variety of traffic concerns, including limited sight distances, dangerous rises, limited vertical clearances, limited access, and heavy traffic through residential neighborhoods.
- i. The Kahler Road Bridge;
 - ii. Canal Street;
 - iii. Olcott Road; and
 - iv. Winters Road.
6. Conduct a **Signage Study** evaluating the adequacy of the existing signage within the Town and the need for additional signs so that motorists are given adequate warning of abruptly changing speed limits, oncoming traffic, and dangerous situations.

Objective 5: To maintain appropriate speed limits throughout the Town, support efficient operation of the local transportation network through promoting the protection and safety of both motorist and non-motorist network users.

1. Consult Chemung County on any County roads that have been identified as needing changes to existing speed limits. In particular, research the appropriateness of the following:
 - i. County Route 64; and
 - ii. Sing Sing Road.
2. Recruit and petition local law enforcement agencies to enforce speed limits and discourage speeding Town wide. Areas identified where speeding is a recurring problem include: Canal Street; Hibbard Road; County Route 64; Sing Sing Road; NYS Route 352; and Main Street.
3. Implement a local surcharge for speeding violations. This will potentially deter motorists from ignoring posted speed limits.
4. Establish a Traffic Safety Committee to include transportation professionals, public safety representatives, resident(s) and board member(s). The purpose of this committee would be to

address traffic complaints and prioritize future transportation projects based on need and available funding.

Objective 6: Develop new and innovative mechanisms to maintain the Town’s road infrastructure to strengthen the Town’s ability to maintain its highway infrastructure.

1. Collect **Developer Impact Fees** from developers on new commercial projects and major residential subdivisions that will result in measurable increases in traffic and/or will contribute to traffic to the extent that it meets a pre-determined threshold.
2. Implement a local surcharge for speeding violations. These monies can potentially be used transportation-related improvements.
3. Identify needs for capital projects and develop a budget mechanism to assist in the financing of capital programs.
4. Develop and adopt a **Capital Improvement Program (CIP)** to plan for funding allocations. A CIP is a management and fiscal planning tool communities can use for financing and constructing needed public improvements and facilities. Properly designed, a CIP enables a community to identify its capital needs, rank them by priority, coordinate their scheduling, and determine the best method of paying for them within the community's fiscal capacity.

Objective 7: To achieve distinction in designed transportation facilities that provide safe access to Town residents and visitors on existing arterial, collector, and local roads.

1. Kahler Road [Sing Sing to County Route 64]. Initially constructed as a local access road, re-classify Kahler Road as an Urban Collector Road through the Elmira-Chemung Transportation Council so that it becomes eligible to receive federal funds. Currently only a small segment reconstructed as part of the I-86 project meets Urban Collector design standards. Prepare a **Project Justification Package** to initiate consideration of the federal funds needed to upgrade the roadway segment.
2. Chambers Road [Sing Sing Road to County Route 64] Similar to Kahler Road, this road segment functions as a Collector Road. Conduct a **Chambers Road Functional Classification Study** to determine the improvements needed to upgrade its geometry to conform to current design standards.
3. County Route 64 [NYS Route 352 to the Town Line]. This road segment functions as a Principal Urban Arterial and is the primary access corridor through the Town, providing access to adjacent Horseheads. Given the road’s unrestricted access driveways, traffic delays are common and the potential for accidents is significant. Develop a **County Route 64 Corridor Management Plan**. This study will investigate: restricting access driveways to improve the level of service and safety; options to improve pedestrian and bicycle mobility; options to improve the level of service at intersections; options to improve the road’s visual character; ways to improve roadway

geometry at high accident locations; and the installation of traffic calming measures to reduce vehicular speed.

Objective 8: Provide residents and visitors with safe, non-vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle facilities throughout the Town, both for access and recreation, and to create sustainable transportation alternatives.

1. Investigate options to construct new sidewalks or improve existing sidewalks in densely developed areas of Town through the development of a **Pedestrian Access Facility Study**. Areas to be considered for sidewalks construction should have existing uses, development patterns, and traffic patterns supportive of sidewalks. Areas suggested for sidewalk construction or reconstruction includes but is not limited to: Main Street; Maple Street; Olcott Road North and South; Church Street; Canal Street; Winters Road; Hibbard Road; Hammond Street; Hillview Drive; and Chambers Road. Sidewalks with curbs are suggested for new residential developments and for existing neighborhoods in the R-1 and R-2 zoning districts. Pedestrian pathways or trails are also suggested north and south of I-86 and through the residential areas of County Route 64 [between NYS Route 352 and the Town Line].
2. Develop a **Recreational Trails Plan** to identify the best methods to connect existing trails and develop new trails and greenways to create a viable hiking/biking network.
3. Conduct a **Local Road Curb Study** to assess the feasibility of incorporating curbing along appropriate local roads within the Town.
4. Develop new **Road Development Standards** that incorporate designated, buffered trails for walkers and cyclists, or sidewalks, if appropriate.
5. Investigate opportunities to develop new or enhance existing bicycle access lanes through the development of a **Bicycle Mobility Study**. Perform the study in conjunction with the previously recommended **Pedestrian Access Facility Study**. Areas to be studied for further bicycle access potential include:
 - i. Sing Sing Road [Kahler Road to Chambers Road]. While bicyclists mainly use the road's travel lanes or shoulders, the addition of bicycle lanes should be considered. Additionally, consideration should be given to expanding the bridge over Sing Sing Creek so that it can accommodate bicycle lanes.
 - ii. Chambers Road [Sing Sing Road to County Route 64]. Improve bicycle access through the addition of dedicated bicycle lanes or a share the road program.
 - iii. County Route 64 [NYS Route 352 to the Town Line]. Within the zoned residential area, upgrade for bicycle access.

Objective 9: To provide parking where achievable.

1. Conduct a **Town Center Parking Study** to identify means to improve parking for all hamlet businesses.
2. Provide additional parking as outlined in the Town Center Strategic Plan (April 2005).
3. Modify the Town Center Zoning District to allow for surface parking.



10.3 Natural Environment Goals

Home to Harris Hill, the “Soaring Capital of the World,” Big Flats owes much to its valley in the hills topography, which allows it to have the best of both worlds: development in the valley and undisturbed hillsides on the outskirts. Town residents both appreciate and value these aspects of the community. A total of 95% of survey respondents felt that protecting the Town’s scenic nature was either “important” (33%) or “very important” (62%). About 60% identified the Town’s scenic beauty as one of the reasons they enjoy living in the Town, while 44% appreciated the rural lifestyle.

As residential development has been pushed into previously undeveloped areas, wildlife, especially deer, are increasingly being driven out of the hills into developed areas. As residential development expands, so do the demands for well water and the need for septic systems. Housing a high water table as well as several waterways (including the Chemung River and several smaller tributaries and creeks), the center of Town has been susceptible to periodic flooding. The Town’s developed hillsides have been vulnerable to erosion. These are the major environmental concerns expressed by residents during the planning process. Illustrative of their concern, an overwhelming 90% of survey respondents said they would support efforts to protect open space and scenic resources.

Natural Environment Goal 1:

Protect and enhance lands which are environmentally significant and/or sensitive, and act to minimize any adverse impacts man-made development may have on land, air, water quality, natural habitats, animal and plant species, unique land formations, and agricultural and scenic resources.

Natural Environment Goal 2:

Preserve and protect open space areas that serve as important recreational and leisure time resources within the Town.

Natural Environment Goal 3:

Preserve and protect areas of open space that provide important aesthetic value to the Town.

Natural Environment Goal 4:

Preserve and enhance the many scenic resources and vistas in Big Flats.

10.3.1 Natural Environment Objectives and Strategies

The following section identifies the objectives and strategies identified for protecting and enhancing Big Flats' natural environment.

Objective 1: Ensure the protection of the Town's natural resources through local regulations and policies.

1. Require cluster-style, open space development in environmentally sensitive or aesthetically valued areas including quality habitat areas, prime agricultural lands, wood lots, wetlands, and hillsides.
2. Examine and review the Town's existing regulations and measures to protect its environmental resources and assess the Town's success in enforcing those measures.
3. Develop a **Ridgeline Protection Overlay** as a means to restrict the height and extent of development along the hillsides to protect their scenic quality. Big Flats residents value the Town's ridgelines and hillsides for the role they play in the Town's rural beauty and ecological habitat. Prior to excessive hillside development occurring, the Town should provide standards for regulating the numbers, height, design, color, placement and impacts of any structures on the hillsides to minimize structural intrusions on the visual landscape and limit unnecessary tree removal.
4. Preserve and strengthen the Town's existing **Timber Harvesting Law**. The Town's existing law is applicable only to timber harvesting in quantities greater than 50 standard cords of wood in any twelve-month period. This limit can be lowered so that it is applicable to timber harvesting in quantities of 25 standard cords of wood or greater. The existing law also permits 200-foot haul roads with a 25% slope; this can and should be lowered to a 15% slope. In addition, while the current law requires buffer strips of 100 feet along public roads, the Town may want to increase this to 150 feet and add buffers to other areas such as surrounding water bodies. It may be appropriate to replace the current law's 50-foot stream buffers zones with "no harvest zones" to maintain the integrity of streambanks and shade streams. The Town may also want to increase the watercourse buffer zone. The current law allows landings to be located 50-feet from streams; this could be increased to 100-feet or 200-feet. Removal of trees from this area would be restricted and the stump and root system would have to be left in place to stabilize the bank area. While the local law requires applicants take "appropriate measures to divert running water... to minimize erosion," the law fails to identify appropriate measures, or direct applicants to an

appropriate resource, such as the NYS Department of Conservation's *Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality: BMP Field Guide*. Finally, the Town may want to consider implementation of buffer areas near residential homes.

5. Strengthen and enforce the Town's **Slash Law**. The Town's existing timber slash-law requires a fifty-foot buffer zone, protecting any tree, twelve inches or smaller, from harvest. To allow for clean up of highly visible buffer-zone areas; a change is desired to the existing law. Clean up would pertain to remaining brush or debris left in the buffer zone from harvesting, including trees damaged in the harvesting process. Debris may be removed or laid on the ground, to allow for a more aesthetic appearance. Applications should be reviewed on an individual basis by code enforcement, which would be familiar with what buffer zone areas falling into this category. The intention behind the law is to prohibit slash, or the branches, leaves, stems, unmerchantable logs, and stump debris left over from timber harvesting, from being left behind in close proximity to specific environmentally sensitive or highly visible areas (e.g., perennial waterways, cemeteries, ponds, public right-of-ways, and neighboring properties, among others).
6. Strengthen the Town's **Site Plan Review** regulations so that all topographic and physical geography and existing environmental conditions are taken into consideration when evaluating new development proposals. The existing Site Plan Review requires applicants provide information on "any potential environmental impact associated with the proposed development" and on the "mitigation offered or proposed" to offset these environmental impacts. However, the Site Plan Review requirements do not define what the Town regards as an "impact." Further, the Site Plan Review outlines the list of items desired from applicants, but it does not provide any guidance to developers.

To promote new development that is consistent with the Town's goals and to assist the Town in conveying its design and form preferences to potential applicants, the Site Plan Review requirements could provide information to applicants on how the Town wants new development to look and relate to existing development. Site Plan Review should require that proposed commercial projects be designed:

1. in an architectural manner and using materials consistent with Town intent;
2. to include pedestrian and bicycle facilities wherever appropriate;
3. with consideration given to secondary access roads and interconnection of parking lots;
4. to facilitate access management through coordinated access points and common parking areas; and
5. with new roads being extended from existing roads whenever possible to provide connective thoroughways.

Other potential environmental impacts, such as noise, lighting, and additional traffic volumes, should also be addressed.

7. Adopt a **Sand and Gravel Mining Excavation Regulation** to regulate mining activities that remove less than 1,000 tons or 750 cubic yards, over a twelve-month period (excavation greater than this is subject to NYS DEC regulations). The Town may also regulate mines that produce less than 100 cubic yards of materials and are located adjacent to waterbodies not subject to the jurisdiction of Environmental Conservation Law Article 15 (wetlands) or to the public lands law.

Objective 2: Improve and maintain the quality of the Town’s water bodies and watercourses through locally mandated and enforced policies and regulations.

1. Strengthen the Town’s existing **Flood Damage Prevention Overlay District**. Presently, residential development is permitted in Zones A1-A30, AE and AH and Zone A at elevations of three feet above base flood level when base flood elevation data is known. In Zone A, when base flood elevation data is not available, homes may be constructed at elevations of three feet above the highest adjacent grade. The Town may want to further limit residential development, especially manufactured homes and recreational vehicles, from these risk-prone areas. Other changes to strengthen the law might include requiring landscaping, screening, and/or buffering to minimize stormwater runoff.
2. Investigate developing a **Freshwater Wetlands, Watercourses, and Water Bodies Overlay District** to protect the Town’s wetlands and stream corridors, and to maintain water quality for those areas not located within the Conservation District through the creation of buffer zones. The intent of such an overlay would be to protect water bodies and water resources from development, encroachment, erosion, and water pollution. Special permits should be required for all activities within this area, including but not limited to, construction, filling, excavation, clearing of mature trees, grading or natural landscape alteration, and use or storage of fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, and salt. To properly designate these areas, a wetland specialist would have to examine and delineate the Town’s wetlands. Depositing chemical wastes or other materials that may cause a deleterious ecological effect should be prohibited.
3. Clarify and strengthen the Town’s existing **Aquifer Protection Overlay District**. This Overlay District regulates areas identified as “Area I District,” “Area II District,” and “Area III District,” in the Town’s zoning ordinance. However, these areas are not depicted on the Town’s zoning map. The Town must revisit the original law and properly delineate the districts on the Town’s zoning map and on any natural resources maps that are subsequently developed. There are several ways the Town could strengthen this District, including: (1) identifying a maximum impervious surface area (e.g., 15% or 20% of a site’s total lot area); (2) increasing the minimum lot size required for septic-dependent residences (currently 35,000 s.f. for single-family homes and 50,000 s.f. for two-family homes); and (3) prohibiting particularly deleterious land uses and

activities from the aquifer zones.⁴ A more thorough study of the characteristics of and specific issues impacting the Big Flats aquifer zone is needed.

4. Preserve and strengthen the Town's existing stormwater management policies and regulations to ensure adequate control of runoff and prevention of flooding. Polluted stormwater runoff is often transported to municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s) and ultimately discharged into local rivers and streams without treatment. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Storm Water Phase II Rule establishes an **MS4 Storm Water Management Program** intended to improve the nation's waterways by reducing the quantity of pollutants that flows into storm sewer systems during storm events. Common pollutants that can impair waterways and pollute drinking water include oil and grease from roadways, pesticides from lawns, sediment from construction sites, and trash. As Big Flats is classified as both an urbanized and a rural community, only the urbanized portion of the Town is required to comply with the MS4 requirements. Despite this, the Town may want to develop uniform stormwater management standards that are applicable to and cover all areas of the Town. Additionally, as Big Flats updates its stormwater management regulations to comply with the NYS Department of Conservation requirements, it may want to develop requirements that are more protective of its water resources.
5. Sponsor annual or seasonal Town clean up days to remove trash and debris from the Chemung River and its banks.
6. Work with the Golden Glow community to identify the extent of the community's problem with septic discharge into the Chemung River. If this continues to be a concern, the Town should look for funding opportunities to ameliorate this situation.

Objective 3: Actively advocate and promote adequate preservation of open space for the continued enjoyment of both existing and future Town residents as well as for wildlife preservation.

1. Conduct a Town-wide **Natural Resources Inventory**. While various organizations and government agencies have information about Big Flats' natural resources, a community-wide inventory of all the Town's natural resources has never been conducted. The Comprehensive Plan includes a preliminary inventory developed using existing data sources. A more thorough, hands-on evaluation should be conducted and results input into a GIS.

⁴ These uses and/or activities include landfills, trash burial and incineration; salvage yards and junkyards; underground storage tanks; storage or disposal of hazardous wastes in greater than household quantities; and road salt storage and snow disposal. Potentially hazardous retail and service uses and/or activities include: dry cleaners, commercial laundry establishments, and motor vehicle sales, service, repair and filling stations. Potentially hazardous manufacturing and industrial uses and/or activities include: vehicular terminals and stations; electronic component manufacturing; manufacturing using petroleum based materials; metal plating or finishing; commercial photo finishing; and commercial wood finishing using chemicals. Restriction of the following activities should also be investigated: on-site effluent disposal; activities that withdraw large volumes of groundwater and uses that generate large volumes of sewage; and any activity that would call for the removal of soil or groundwater within four (4) feet of maximum high groundwater.

2. Partner with existing and future nature conservation groups on establishing permanent protections of environmentally sensitive areas within Big Flats. This can include natural wetland areas, the Palisades along the river, and the Steege Hill nature area.
3. Develop and/or promote incentives, such as the **Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)**, to encourage the development of a wildlife refuge area or a bird sanctuary⁵.
4. Develop planning techniques and funding mechanisms by which the Town may acquire properties for open space preservation. Suggested techniques the community could investigate include: tax abatement easements, **Purchase of Development Rights (PDRs)**, or fee simple land purchase. The first program allows landowners to apply for tax abatement in exchange for placing temporary conservation easements on their land. Through PDRs, landowners are compensated for their development rights. Finally, fee simple is outright land purchase. To do this, the Town must develop a revolving funding mechanism and should look to acquire and preserve ecologically valuable lands that contribute both to natural resource and wildlife preservation. Areas for consideration include hillside forestlands, areas along Hillview and the north side of Daniel Zenker.
5. Develop an **Open Space and Recreation Plan**. This plan would identify all the Town's open space and recreation resources, including its natural habitat areas, forestlands, open space lands, and parklands. In addition to inventorying existing resources, the Plan would evaluate how well resources are meeting existing needs and how much additional open space and recreational lands will be needed to meet future needs.
6. Investigate the creation of an **Open Space Conservation Fund** utilizing the 0.75% transfer tax now allowed for NYS municipalities. These monies could then be used to pay for land outright via purchase or via purchase of development rights (PDRs).

Objective 4: Protect and preserve the Town's remaining agricultural lands.

1. Implement lower land evaluation rates for lands used for agricultural purposes to encourage the continuance of farming.
2. Enact zoning designed to preserve and protect agricultural lands. Many areas presently used for farming are zoned for residential uses. By requiring cluster zoning in these areas, the open farmlands can be preserved. A **Planned Development District** is another planning tool that might be instrumental in preserving farmlands.

⁵ **WHIP** is a voluntary program to develop and improve wildlife habitat primarily on private land. The United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service provides both technical assistance and up to 75% cost-share assistance to establish and improve fish and wildlife habitat. WHIP agreements between NRCS and participants generally last from 5 to 10 years from the agreement date.

3. Encourage the growth of the local equestrian and commercial horse industry and build upon these assets within the town by promoting access to and conservation of land for equestrian use. Equestrian enterprises as an allowable use on agricultural lands and open space are a way to preserve and enhance rural character.

Objective 5: Regularly inform Big Flats residents about relevant environmental concerns in order to ensure their safety.

1. Encourage affected residents to continue to carry flood insurance as needed.
2. Provide residents with information on the risks associated with radon and what they can do to protect their families.
3. Conduct a study to identify the location of any potentially contaminated sites within the Town. This may include any former farmlands that may have leaking underground petroleum tanks, or underground storage tanks (USTs), the Agway site, and the former railroad right-of-way, among others. If any brownfield sites are identified, the Town should pursue opportunities for funding to remediate the sites.



10.4 Housing

As of 2004, approximately 37% of the land area in Big Flats was developed for residential uses. In response to a question included in the resident survey, 92% of respondents identified Big Flats as a “good” or “excellent” place to live. Asked to rate the Town’s affordability, most—54%-- indicated it was “affordable,” or even “very affordable,” (7%). However, 22% stated it was “somewhat affordable,” while 8% said it was “too costly,” and 9% said they did not know. It should be noted that 95% of the survey respondents were homeowners, while only 5% were renters. As is the case in many communities across the nation at this time, many areas have experienced significant increases in the cost of housing. While this may not impact existing homeowners, it does impact younger people who may be looking to purchase their first home or renters who delayed making a home purchase.

The following goals exemplify the ideal housing situation in the Town, maintaining both the quality of the Town’s neighborhoods, and a healthy supply of diverse housing options.

Housing Goal 1: Preserve and enhance the Town’s existing residential neighborhoods.

Housing Goal 2: Preserve and provide a variety of safe housing options that are appropriately located, available to a range of income levels, and meet the needs of existing and future Town residents.

The following objectives are measurable aims to pursue, while the strategies are definitive actions to meet those objectives.

10.4.1 Housing Objectives and Strategies

Objective 1: Encourage the development of a wider range of affordable family housing in Big Flats.

1. Encourage or require developers to develop more “affordable” family housing. This is not low-income public housing, but rather private housing developed by either a for-profit or non-profit developer that is specifically designated to meet the economic range of those making 75% to 125% median household income. Developers can be persuaded via incentives (such as density bonuses) to develop a certain percentage of affordable units. Alternatively, through **Inclusionary Zoning**, developers can be required to develop a certain number of affordable units when developing market rate units.
2. Develop flexible zoning mechanisms that would allow for more affordable units (through higher density development). Such developments should only be developed where adequate infrastructure exists and with appropriate buffering and site plan review requirements.
3. Encourage modular housing developments (identified as **Alternative Dwelling Parks** in the Town’s zoning ordinance) in planned communities. Modular housing construction techniques are much safer now than in previous years and modular or manufactured housing is increasingly looked upon as an affordable housing option.
4. Promote the expansion of existing subdivisions as an incentive to developers. By allowing additional development in existing subdivisions, the Town can limit the amount of infrastructure costs associated with unit. Such savings may be passed on to an income-qualifying homebuyer via more affordable housing price. Additionally, promote homeowner associations where achievable, desirable and sustainable.
5. Secure funding to assist in providing affordable housing to qualifying households.

Objective 2: Ensure the development of a variety of housing options to house a diverse population, such as young families, college students, and senior citizens.

1. Modify zoning to allow a greater variety of housing throughout the Town. This would include apartments, townhouses, ranches, multi-level homes, and duplexes in addition to single-family

units. Focus more dense residential development in the hamlet and where infrastructure is adequate.

2. Develop and promote additional senior (55+) housing opportunities in the Town, primarily in the hamlet as it is where the Town's resources and services are located. This housing should include both affordable units as well as market-rate units, to allow existing Big Flats residents to downsize.
3. Encourage the development of mixed generation communities. Through **Planned Development Districts**, clustered mixed-housing developments can be developed, with a mix of duplex units, condominium units, and rental units.
4. Encourage developers to develop more "affordable" rental housing. Through incentives, such as density bonuses, developers can be encouraged to develop affordable rental housing within the community.
5. Investigate mixed-use developments with a mix of commercial and residential tenants. The rents from ground floor commercial uses can be used to offset more affordable residential rental rates (targeting those making 75% - 125% of median income).
6. Secure funding to assist First Time Homebuyers by providing qualifying households with down payment assistance.

Objective 3: Pursue residential development that makes the most of existing residential structures and nearby infrastructure and amenities.

1. Establish a **Housing Rehabilitation Program**. There have been several areas identified in the Town that have deteriorating housing stock. Big Flats should pursue funding opportunities to assist low-income property owners in making needed repairs and upgrades to bring their buildings up to code. This program could be available both to owner occupied units and mixed-use structures.
2. Encourage the development of new housing within convenient proximity to appropriate resources. Several examples include senior housing in the hamlet near the Town Center and services; infill development of single-family homes near transportation and amenities, such as the school; and all types of housing near to existing sidewalks and trails.
3. Adopt a **Residential Occupancy Permit (ROP)** regulation. A ROP regulation could require regular inspections of multiple family and two-family housing units. This regulation can also require that the property is current on all local taxes before an ROP can be issued. The intent of such legislation is to guard against unsafe living conditions while improving the quality of life.



10.5 Municipal Services and Infrastructure

Municipal services and infrastructure includes many aspects of community life that are either administered by the local government or provided through local districts. Services provided at the municipal level in Big Flats include road maintenance, snow removal, parks maintenance, stormwater management and drainage, and recycling and tree/branch removal. Fire protection and emergency medical services are provided by local (mostly) volunteer agencies, while police protection is provided by the NYS State Police and the Chemung County Sheriff's Office. Coordinating with other governmental agencies and advocating for local municipal needs is another service provided by Town departments and local elected officials.

Through the residential survey it was revealed that, for most services, including Fire Protection, EMS, Snow Removal General Tidiness, Parks, Recycling, and Tree/branch Removal, the majority of respondents rated the services as either "excellent" or "good." Drainage maintenance garnered a more mixed review.

In addition, Big Flats has a public sewer district that is administered by Chemung County. This district services the retail and commercial uses by the Arnot Mall and Consumer Square and Airport Corporate Park. There are four public water districts throughout Big Flats, covering approximately 20% of the Town's land area. The largest district is located in the center of Town and services the hamlet and much of the surrounding valley. The expansion of public water and public sewer infrastructure were two issues that came up frequently. More than half the survey respondents (56%) said they would support additional sewer infrastructure for residential development, while only a third (33%) said they would support it for commercial development and 27% said they would support it for industrial development.

The following include municipal services and infrastructure goals identified as important through the planning process.

Municipal Services and Infrastructure Goal 1: Join forces and take stronger initiative in the planning efforts of County, regional and NYS agencies to promote smart development.

Municipal Services and Infrastructure Goal 2: Provide public facilities based on smart development principals that are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and meet the needs of existing and future Town residents.

Municipal Services and Infrastructure Goal 3: Provide public infrastructure based on smart development principals that is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and meets the needs of existing and future Town residents.

10.5.1 Municipal Services and Infrastructure Objectives and Strategies

The following objectives identify specific targeted results, while the strategies are action items designed to achieve those results.

Objective 1: To provide public sewer infrastructure where needs have been identified consistent with smart development principals.

1. Investigate the need for sewers for existing development in the Town, especially where infill development could take place. This would include Town owned municipal service buildings and residential areas that may need it. Consider public sewer connections consistent with smart growth principals within the hamlet and Town Center (Main Street, Canal Street) and other areas targeted for strategic growth.
2. Identify areas of Town where sewers should be installed to facilitate new development that is consistent with the needs expressed in the Comprehensive Plan and smart development principals. This would include areas where on-site septic systems threaten water quality as well as areas which have other infrastructure and would be appropriate for additional development, especially development to meet existing housing needs.

Objective 2: To provide public water infrastructure where needs have been identified and protect water quality consistent with smart development principals.

1. Strengthen and enforce land use regulations to protect existing water supply from potential contamination.
2. Investigate the need for public water provision for existing development in the Town. Identify those areas that should be considered for public water connections, especially those areas that are targeted for strategic growth consistent with smart development principals.
3. Pursue opportunities to develop new water sources and wellheads and identify a suitable area to site a new Town well.
4. Monitor the quality and upgrade the Town's existing water system infrastructure whenever necessary.

5. Evaluate the existing Water Board and system of water districts (such as consolidation of water districts) to determine if changes in administration would enhance the Town's ability to provide the service.

Objective 3: To ensure that fire protection services in the Town of Big Flats are adequate and able to meet the needs of the Town's residents and workforce.

1. Partner with adjacent communities to explore the consolidation of services.
2. Lobby the State to expand the time allowances for new recruits to meet the extensive State mandates on training so it is less onerous to attracting new volunteer firefighters.
3. Develop new incentives to encourage more volunteer firefighter participation.
4. Pursue funding opportunities such as grants and develop additional mechanisms to provide financial support to the Town's mostly-volunteer fire departments.

Objective 4: To ensure that public safety and police services are adequate.

1. Explore options through the Chemung County Sheriffs Office and or the NYS Police to facilitate the full-time presence of public safety officials in the Town.
2. Partner with existing public safety officials to ensure enforcement of the Town's traffic laws. Specific issues raised include: Speeding on County Route 64 to Consumer Square and heavy truck traffic speeding on secondary and local roads.
3. Work with existing public safety officials to ensure enforcement of the Town's environmental protection laws, especially those prohibiting the illegal dumping of trash.

Objective 5: To provide municipal services that meets the needs of Town residents.

1. Identify needs for capital projects and develop a budget mechanism to assist in the financing of capital programs.
2. Develop and adopt a **Capital Improvements Program (CIP)**. A CIP is a management and fiscal planning tool communities can use for financing and constructing needed public improvements and facilities. Properly designed, a CIP enables a community to identify its capital needs, rank them by priority, coordinate their scheduling, and determine the best method of paying for them within the community's fiscal capacity.
3. Draw upon partnerships with County Legislative Representative(s) and Rural Association of Mayors and Supervisors (RAMS) to pursue amendments to the existing sales tax distribution that take into account the infrastructure and personnel impacts that result from Big Flats being the regional shopping mecca.

4. Organize and educate Town Residents on formulas for distribution of revenue from sales tax. In addition, educate the public on the assessment effects on state aid for local school districts.
5. Explore development of wireless antenna hub(s) or WiFi access hotspots within the Town to serve as a compelling technology or economic development tool for attracting the under 40-age group and industry to the Town.
6. Explore methods to better educate the Town's community on composting.
7. Continue the Town's proactive maintenance of the Town's roads, sidewalks, and trails through repair, snow removal, clean-up, and other appropriate activities.

Objective 6: To ensure Town residents are well-informed and educated on important Town matters.

1. Continue issuing a **Community Newsletter**. As there are six different zip codes mailing addresses in Big Flats, the Town suffers from a bit of an "identity crisis." A municipal newsletter sent out to all residents on the tax roll would ensure that residents are kept informed on community events.
2. Use the Town website to post timely information on local community happenings and/or events calendar as well as educating public on understanding their tax bills.
3. Use a Town bulletin board to inform residents of Town activities.

Objective 7: To ensure the Town's local community groups receive the support necessary to continue their activities and services.

1. Assist local community groups in developing joint recruitment and promotion through the Town-sponsored newsletter. This Town newsletter can be used to encourage membership in the Town's various local organizations.
2. Assist local community groups in developing joint recruitment and promotion through the Town website.
3. Assist in the formation of an inter-community services network to strengthen and enhance existing community groups. Establishing such a network can assist local recruitment efforts and also enable groups to better coordinate and schedule events so that there are few conflicts.
4. Promote and educate the community on the benefits of volunteerism at all age levels.
5. Promote business/industry sponsorship of these local community groups as well as target funding opportunities to partner with business/industry within the Town.



10.6 Recreational and Cultural Resources

Big Flats has a variety of recreational activities and programs administered at the local level, both by Town employees and by local volunteers. The opinion on these programs is pretty mixed. Survey respondents were asked if they were satisfied with the recreational programs provided for children aged 13 and under, adolescents aged 14 to 18, adults (18 – 64) and senior citizens (aged 65 and over.) One point became very clear from the responses: many respondents seemed to know very little about the Town’s recreational programs. For three of the four age groups identified, more than 50% of respondents indicated they “did not know” whether or not the programs were adequate. The only age group that a majority of respondents (47%) felt the programming was adequate for was children.

Through the survey, residents were also asked to identify what types of recreational resources they would like to see developed in Big Flats. About half the respondents liked the idea of trails and greenways (51%), bikeways (51%) and hiking trails (50%). Many respondents liked the idea of indoor recreational facilities (27%), picnic areas (26%), and a miniature golf range (17%).

Housing fertile soils, the Town of Big Flats grew as a significant tobacco farming area. Noticed for its rich soils, the Algonquin Native American tribe was among the area’s earliest residents, eventually followed by European settlers. A stop along the Underground Railroad of the nineteenth century, the Town has also played a large role in the evolution of soaring in America. Known by locals as “Dr. Smith’s baby,” the Tanglewood Nature Center and Museum has been a premier natural and cultural resource in Big Flats for more than 30 years.

Not willing to allow the Town to rest on its laurels, many residents would like to see more cultural resources in Big Flats. While 26% of survey respondents did not want additional arts and cultural programs, about 50% indicated a desire for more. About 24% of respondents were uncertain.

The following include goals related to recreational resources identified as important through the planning process. Goals, objectives, and strategies related to cultural resources follow.

Recreational Resources Goal 1: Continue to meet Town residents’ needs for recreational resources and community services.

Recreational Resources Goal 2: Maintain and enhance existing parks and recreational facilities and explore options for creating new ones.

Recreational Resources Goal 3: Develop trails throughout the Town to provide additional recreational opportunities, improved access, and connections to the regional trail network.

Recreational Resources Goal 4: Promote water-based recreational activities at the Town's various water bodies and waterways.

10.6.1 Recreational Resources Objectives and Strategies

The objectives identify specific targeted results, while the strategies are action item designed to achieve those results.

Objective 1: To promote safely accessible Town parks that meets the needs of all Town residents.

1. Develop a written Park Maintenance Program to ensure that the Town's existing parks are well-maintained, appropriately site designed, and landscaped. As part of this action, existing roads, driveways, and parking lots providing access to the Town's parks should be evaluated to determine how well they meet resident needs.
2. Improve visibility and awareness of the Town's existing community parks through appropriately placed wayfinding signage at park entrances and along roadways.
3. Improve access to the Town's community parks by continuing the ongoing development of safe bike and pedestrian trails for Town residents (particularly younger residents).

Objective 2: To ensure that the recently acquired Community Park Extension is developed in a manner consistent with the needs of Town residents.

1. Improve pedestrian access to the Park which is currently accessible only via a single pedestrian bridge over a creek at Community Park.
2. Develop an appropriate site design and landscaping plan for the Park.

Objective 3: Develop recreation resources that meet the needs of Town residents.

1. Conduct a **Parks and Recreation Survey** to gain better insight from park users of the types of resources and facilities they would like to see in Big Flats. Identify the recreational needs of the Town through this survey. Resident suggestions garnered through the planning process included more youth activities, cycling facilities, skateboard/inline skating parks, a Ski/snowboard slope on the north side of Harris Hill, cross-country skiing, snowmobile trails, better boating access,

and tennis facilities. Some residents indicated that resident needs were not equally being met throughout the various sections of Town.

2. Develop an **Open Space and Recreation Plan** to ensure that future parks are developed and programmed in a manner consistent with resident needs and desires. Conduct a community open space and recreation resource inventory and input into GIS.
3. Develop a **Recreational Trails Plan** to identify the best methods to connect existing trails and develop new trails and greenways to create a viable hiking/biking network.⁶ Big Flats has existing trails located at Community Park, Steege Hill Nature Preserve, Tanglewood, Harris Hill Park, and Personius Woods. The Big Flats Rail-to-Trail runs through the center of the hamlet, south of I-86, from Hibbard Road roughly up to Harris Hill Road. NYS Bike Route 17 also runs along NYS Route 352 through the Town into neighboring Elmira. New trails could be developed along the river banks and other water bodies; between the two Community Parks; at Whitney Park; along the former trolley trails; and along other abandoned rail tracks in Town. Additional on-road bicycle facilities could be developed on appropriate roads. Greenways could be established along power lines and utility easements. The Plan should also identify ways to improve existing trail resources. Suggestions included enhancing the Big Flats Trail, extending it to Horseheads and improving the trail's bridges and parking.
4. Conducts a **Level of Services Analysis (LOS)** to determine what recreational services needs are currently not being met within the Town. Several resources identified by residents and other stakeholders as desirable include a playground at the Community Center; a gym/athletic facility; an indoor hockey rink; a year-round youth athletic program; a toddler program; and expanding the TAFFY program.
5. Provide adequate funds to Town's recreation department for staffing and programming. With increases to the State minimum wage, the Town will have to allocate additional funds to meet the same level of service for a constant number of users. With continued residential development in the Town, it is likely that the number of users will increase as more families settle in Big Flats. The Town should routinely examine the funds allocated toward recreation, to ensure that the level of service does not deteriorate under additional fiscal strains.

Objective 4: To ensure that Town residents and visitors have access to a variety of water recreation activities and resources.

⁶ Chemung, Schuyler and Steuben Counties have been proactively promoting their connected network of off-road trails. The Finger Lakes Trail meanders from Schuyler County, and points north, to Seneca Lake, at Watkins Glen. The Catherine Valley Trail picks up at that point, continuing south to the Village of Horseheads in Chemung County, just east of Big Flats. Segments of this trail exist as trails through several large State Parks while other segments are planned but not yet constructed.

1. Investigate working with the Chemung Basin River Trail Partnership to improve the Town's three (3) public boat launches: Bottcher's Landing, Minier's Field, and Fitches Bridge. Identified improvements could include additional docks and parking.
2. Explore the idea of developing an aquatic center within Big Flats. Such a resource would also be a regional attraction.
3. Develop additional resources at the Town's various pond areas. Many residents currently use ponds such as Lowe Pond and Beverly's Pond, for birdwatching, ice fishing, ice-skating, and hiking. With public ownership or the establishment of easements, additional park settings and picnic areas can be developed at these ponds to enhance their recreational value.
4. Explore ideas aimed at further developing the Chemung River as a recreational asset.

Objective 5: To promote social and recreational programs meeting the needs of Town residents.

1. Review and identify ways to improve promotion of the Town's existing recreation programs to ensure Town residents are aware of available programs. The Town's active youth recreation programs are all listed on the Town's website, which is maintained by Chemung County. Despite this, some feel existing programs are not adequately promoted. Given considerable percentage of survey respondents that could not evaluate the adequacy of the Town's existing recreational programs, this assertion appears to be somewhat well-founded. Programming for children in the 5th, 6th, and 7th grades was identified specifically as needing additional promotion. Recreational programming information should be posted at the Big Flats Community Center and included in all regularly printed publications.
2. The Town should partner with existing Town organizations and non-profits, such as the Big Flats Historical Society and Tanglewood, on co-sponsoring special events and activities for Town residents, such as Family Fun Days.
3. Expand and actively promote youth activities and pursue funding opportunities such as grants or fundraising to support these activities.

Cultural Resources Goal 1: Preserve, enhance, and promote the Town's existing cultural and historic resources.

Cultural Resources Goal 2: Develop an identifiable and unique Town theme that celebrates the Town's history and culture, establishes a sense of community identity, and reconnects residents and visitors to the community's roots.

10.6.2 Cultural Resources Objectives and Strategies

The following section identifies the objectives and strategies identified for protecting and enhancing Big Flats' historic and cultural resources.

Objective 1: To protect and preserve Big Flats' many historic resources.

1. Become a **Certified Local Government** (CLG) under NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation program. Local governments strengthen their local historic preservation efforts by achieving CLG status from the National Park Service (NPS). NPS and State governments, through their State Historic Preservation Offices, provide technical assistance and small matching grants to communities whose local governments are actively involved in historic preservation. CLG historic preservation grant projects make up at least 10% of the State's annual Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) grant allocation. Grant funds are distributed through the HPF grant program, administered by NPS and the State Historic Preservation Offices. To participate in the CLG program, the Town would have to adopt a **Historic Preservation Law** designed to protect historic structures. This law would call for the creation of a **Historic Preservation Committee** to review proposed activities that might impact local historic resources.
2. Investigate and document historic artifacts and resources not previously inventoried through development of a Historic Resources Survey. Having a detailed, up-to-date **Historic Resources Survey** is an important first step in protecting the Town's historic resources.
3. Investigate designating a **Local Historic District** in any areas that house a concentration of historic resources. The Town can delineate special overlay districts to protect local historic structures and sites. A Local Historic District Overlay district would regulate against potential impacts, such as physical or use modifications, or demolition of all the historic resources within the delineated area. This overlay can be used to protect the district's resources from incompatible encroachment within an identified viewshed area (e.g., 500 feet from the resource). A **Local Historic District Committee** can be charged with the responsibility of reviewing site plans required for all renovations and additions occurring within the Local Historic District Overlay.
4. Encourage measures to preserve the Town's unique cultural and historic resources identified as threatened, either through decay or encroachment.
5. Investigate the option of adopting a **Demolition Delay** law. The intent of a Demolition Delay law is not to permanently prevent demolition, but to provide an opportunity to develop preservation solutions for threatened properties. Such a law is intended to encourage owners or other individuals interested in historic preservation to seek out persons who might be willing to purchase, preserve, rehabilitate or restore such buildings rather than demolish them, and to limit the detrimental effect of demolition on the community's historic architectural resources. They typically require a 60-day waiting period prior to any non-emergency building demolitions.

6. Enforce the building code to ensure the structural integrity of the Town's building infrastructure, especially its older, historic structures.
7. Develop architectural design guidelines and actively promote the reuse of buildings identified as historically significant within the Town, especially within the hamlet.
8. Provide technical assistance to Town residents looking to rehabilitate historic homes so that the structures may retain their historic integrity. The Town can maintain copies of the U.S. Historic Preservation Guidelines at Town Hall and at the Community Center for residents to review; offer educational seminars to homeowners; or develop more specific Town design guidelines that reflect local history and character of residential development in Big Flats.
9. Pursue grant opportunities to assist local residents in upgrading and improving historic structures that have come under disrepair.
10. Explore options to adopt a **Sliding Scale Tax Incentive** to encourage redevelopment and reinvestment in older residential structures. This could take the form of a zero tax increase or no assessment increase for three years after the improvement.

Objective 2: To promote Big Flats' existing historic and cultural resources.

1. Pursue local sponsorship and grants to fund signs and markers at historically significant buildings and sites. This should include sites that have lost their markers, such as the Runovia Native American village site, as well as those that have never had markers.
2. Inform residents via the local community newsletter and/or a seasonally published events calendar of the many resources and events housed by the Town Historical Society and Museum as well as other local organizations.
3. Identify appropriate historic resources to be nominated for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Sites. Listing a structure or site provides protection to that resource and also promotes both the resource and the Town for tourism. Suggestions include Tanglewood, Harris Hill, and Pioneer Cemetery.
4. Develop a visible and accessible tourism information booth/welcome center. Such a facility can be used to post flyers about events and activities as well as information about local resources.
5. Create a comprehensive and coordinated tourist attraction **Way-finding Signage Program**. This program should include coordinated signage for local tourist attractions, restaurants and retailers, visitor services, municipal buildings, public parking, waterfront resources, parks, trails, historic resources, etc.
6. Take advantage of group marketing to get the most of limited advertising funding. Work with local resources (such as Wings of Eagles, Harris Hill, Science and Discovery Center, National Soaring Museum) on joint marketing and cross-promotional efforts.

Objective 3: To support the Town’s existing cultural resources and ensure their continuance for existing and future Big Flats residents.

1. Examine cost effective ways by which Big Flats can promote the Town’s existing cultural resources (including Tanglewood, Big Flats Historical Society, etc.)
2. Promote the Town’s resources to foster a better understanding of the community’s unique character.
3. Develop an annual tour staffed by volunteers that tells the history of the Town of Big Flats, presenting the Town’s historic sites and buildings and other resources. One idea is to develop a CD recording and map brochure providing self-guided tours directing visitors to the unique areas of the Town.
4. Assemble a Cultural Resource/Tourism Development Task Group to implement these goals, objectives and strategies.



10.7 Economic Development Goals

As economic development has been a source of ongoing debate in Big Flats, the survey circulated in support of the Comprehensive Plan sought feedback on a number of diverse economic development-related issues. Throughout the planning process, many Big Flats residents indicated they would like the Town to take a more proactive approach in addressing new development. Many would like the Town to be more prudent about where it allows new development and the type of development it encourages.

Asked their opinion of the current “level of business activity,” most respondents (70%) said they felt the business activity was “about right.” Nine percent felt it was “too much” while 16% felt it was “not enough.” Most respondents (78%) indicated that they shopped in Town “often,” while 19% shop in Big Flats “occasionally.” The response was mixed as to whether the Town ought to pursue tourism (42% in favor as compared to 44% opposed), while most respondents (60%) were supportive of home-based businesses in residential neighborhoods.

Residents were asked to identify the types of businesses they would like to see in Big Flats. About half the respondents would like to see additional restaurants (48%), while nearly a third (29%) want specialty shops. About 18% identified the following businesses as desirable: industrial/manufacturing; professional services; entertainment; and bed and breakfasts.

10.7.1 Economic Development Objectives and Strategies

The following section identifies the objectives and strategies identified for enhancing and stabilizing Big Flats' economic development sector.

Economic Development Goal 1: Provide a supportive environment for small businesses and entrepreneurs.

Economic Development Goal 2: Develop a business-friendly environment to support appropriate business uses to ensure a stable tax base and provide quality employment opportunities for existing and future residents.

Objective 1: Foster development of a variety of economic sectors in Big Flats consistent with residents' vision of the community.

1. Strategically target areas consistent with smart growth principals where sewer capability can be expanded to act as an incentive for business development.
2. Recruit and actively involve local and regional colleges and universities in the promotion and development of strategically targeted growth areas for technology based research facilities.
3. Promote the development of light manufacturing employment opportunities to maintain a balanced local economy.
4. Promote the growth of additional medical industry facilities in Big Flats, including local dental services.
5. Take the lead in partnering with Chemung County, Chemung County Industrial Development Authority, and the Southern Tier Economic Growth (STEG) to improve communication and foster the type of economic development in the Town that is most consistent with the Town's vision. Develop a referral system among the agencies so that all are kept informed of potential projects.
6. Pursue funds through the Industrial Access Program for road construction at appropriate locations when businesses/tenants are identified.

Objective 2: Promote the development of businesses in the Town Center supportive of local shopping needs and establish a pedestrian-friendly shopping area.

1. Promote the development of more dining establishments, including a small family restaurant/diner/café/coffee-shop.
2. Promote the development of small specialty shops, such as an old-fashioned ice cream parlor, a gift shop, and crafts shop.
3. Promote the development of art and recreational uses throughout the Town Center.
4. Promote the development of businesses that cater to local shopping needs, including a pharmacy, a Laundromat, a car wash, a liquor store, and a gas station.
5. Develop a business directory of Town Center businesses.

Objective 3: Strengthen the role of tourism in Big Flats.

1. Develop a promotional theme for the Town, a brand that can be used to convey community identity to new residents and visitors.
2. Improve marketing efforts and coordinate with existing regional marketing efforts, including other Finger Lakes communities (Watkins Glen, Corning), “I Love NY” agencies, and the Chemung County Chamber of Commerce. Chemung County Chamber of Commerce puts out an annual brochure “Explore and Discover Chemung County.” The 2005 brochure identified a number of Big Flats resources but the discussion was limited. Additionally, few Big Flats resources were identified as being in Big Flats. For example, the National Soaring Museum is identified as being at Harris Hill, the Wings of Eagles Discovery Center is identified as being located at the Elmira-Corning Regional Airport, the Arnot Mall is identified as being in Horseheads, and Tanglewood is identified as being in Elmira. The Town will better ensure that marketing materials accurately reflect and identify the Town and its resources by regular involvement in developing these promotional materials.
3. Consider joining the Chemung County Chamber of Commerce as well as taking the lead in routinely communicating with the Chamber about promotions reflecting the Town’s resources and identity accurately.
4. Capitalize on developing and improving the Town’s existing resources to help promote tourism. These resources include the Town’s existing trail networks, parks, natural areas (Tanglewood, Gleason’s Meadows), and water access points (Chemung River).
5. Develop a program of activities (entertainment such as bands and children’s activities) at the community parks for the enjoyment of local residents and visitors alike.
6. Develop a Town of Big Flats Tourism brochure that identifies all the resources located in Big Flats. This can be distributed via the Town’s website, the county, regional tourism agencies, and the State tourism office.

Objective 4: To foster business friendly environment for businesses and entrepreneurs.

1. Develop proactive and innovative measures by which the Town can foster improved communication between the Town and local businesses. One way to achieve this would be to appoint a Town staff person to act as a Town-business liaison that could advise small businesses and local entrepreneurs on local programs and services as well as provide assistance on coordinating with state and county agencies.
2. Develop a brand identity that goes beyond tourism for the Town of Big Flats to serve as a unifying theme that could be promoted through uniform wayfinding signage along I-86 in coordination with the NYSDOT.
3. Provide local tax incentives to encourage redevelopment and reinvestment within the Town specifically geared toward local small businesses within the Town Center. **Section 485b** of the New York State Real Property Tax Law establishes a schedule for property tax abatements for new commercial, business, or industrial projects. This exemption is a local option.
4. Create a **Commercial Development Grant/Loan Program**. Such a program may include but is not limited to: a 50/50 grant/loan façade improvement program and/or a micro-enterprise low-interest loan pool. Funds can be awarded or given as incentives to businesses that improve the aesthetic appearance of the community. This can be used to encourage new acquisition of currently vacant structures. In addition to façade improvements, monies can be used for rehabilitation activities such as upgrades to a building's heating, electrical or structural systems. Develop additional methods by which the Town can assist small business owners.
5. Work with local business owners to create a merchant association that can work together on defining community aesthetics, and developing joint planning and promotional activities.
6. Develop Developer Guidelines and Design Guidelines for the Town Center that promote consistency with the character and architectural context of the Town Center.

Objective 5: To encourage more younger people to remain in Big Flats.

1. Promote increased utilization of the region's existing workforce development and training programs, to ensure local resident employment opportunities and local businesses a skilled labor force.
2. Provide young people with information about local firms and recruit them for existing job opportunities (trades, masons) in the area.
3. Work with local firms to develop internship and co-op/mentoring programs for students at local colleges.

Objective 6: Develop policies to foster the development of the Town's local businesses.

1. Provide public sewer infrastructure in the Town Center to foster the growth of local businesses.
2. Partner and coordinate with NYSDOT on improving the visibility and clarity of signs along I-86 promoting the retail and service opportunities available at Exit 49. Consider directional signage off Exit 49 to promote the business district in the Town Center.
3. Pursue and promote additional funding opportunities through grants and loans for hiring economically disadvantaged or unemployed within the hamlet, such as through the Town's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. Create an audit program to monitor and track the number of jobs created through these programs.
4. Consider hiring additional staff to promote economic development within the Town.
5. Create an entrepreneur/small business start up packet steering local residents toward local/regional/state and federal resources that assist in starting up small businesses.

11. IMPLEMENTATION

11.1 Implementation Timeline

This section includes a list of achievable goals. Each goal is supported by a number of implementation actions. In the Action Matrix that follows, the implementation actions have been identified by type of action and characterized as either “short-term,” “mid-term,” “long-term,” or “on-going.” These terms are defined as follows:

The recommended time frame is indicated by the following code:

S - Short (or near) term - Next twelve months - To the end of year 2007.

M – Midterm (or intermediate): To the end of year 2009.

L – Long term: three to five years – To the end of year 2011.

O – On-going.

The schedule of the proposed improvements was developed upon close review of the public feedback obtained through the survey, the stakeholder interviews and roundtables, and the public workshops. The expressed preferences of Big Flats residents influenced the priorities established in the Action Matrix that follows.

The following table gives the complete names of the agencies that are abbreviated on the Action Matrix.

Acronym	Full Name
ARC	Appalachian Regional Commission
A&BC-CTIG	Arts & Business Council – Cultural Tourism initiative Grant
CCE	Cornell Cooperative Extension
CDBG	Community Development Block Grant
CF	Conservation Fund
CW/CA	Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act
CREES	Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service
DHCR	Department of Housing & Community Renewal
DHCR-AHP	DHCR – Access Home Program
DHCR-LIHC	DHCR – Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program
DHCR-MIP	DHCR – Legislative Member Item Program
DHCR-MSNY	DHCR – Main Street New York Program
DHCR-SHI	DHCR – Senior Housing Initiative
EDI	Economic Development Initiative – HUD
EFC-CWSRF	Environmental Facilities Corporation – Clean Water State Revolving Fund

Acronym	Full Name
EFC-DWSRF	Environmental Facilities Corporation – Drinking Water State Revolving Fund
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EPA-EEP	EPA Environmental Education Program
ESDC	Empire State Development Corp
EZ	Empire Zone
GOSC	Governor’s Office for Small Cities
GROW-NY	Grow NY through NYS Agriculture and Markets
HHS CSBG	Health & Human Services – Community Service Block Grant
IMLS	Institute of Museum & Library Services
MANY	Museum Association of New York
NPS - LWCF	National Park Service – Land & Water Conservation Fund
NYSBC-WDG	NYS Business Council – Workforce Development Grant
NYSBD	NYS Banking Dept.
NYSBDC	NYS Business Development Corporation
NYSCA	NYS Council on the Arts
NYSCS	NYS Canal System
NYSDA	NYS Dept. of Aging
NYSDEC	NYS Dept of Environment Conservation
NYSDEC WQIP	NYSDEC Water Quality Improvement Projects
NYSEDD	NYS Economic Development Dept.
NYS DHCR	NYS Div. Of Housing & Community Renewal
NYSDOL	NYS Dept. of Labor
NYSDOS-BOA	NYS Dept of State Brownfields Opportunity Areas
NYSDOS-QC	NYS Dept. of State Quality Communities Program
NYS-SMSI	NYS Dept. of State Shared Municipal Services Initiative
NYSDOT	NYS Dept. of Transportation
NYSDOT IAP	NYSDOT Industrial Access Program
NYSDOT TEP	NYSDOT Transportation Enhancement Program
NYSDOT TIP	NYSDOT Transportation Improvement Program
NYSED	NYS Education Department
NYSERDA	New York State Energy Research and Development Authority
NYPF	NY Planning Federation
NYSHFA	New York State Housing Finance Agency
NYSOPRHP	NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation
NYSOPRHP- CLG	NYSOPRHP Certified Local Government Program
NYSOPRHP-ITCP	NYSOPRHP Investment Tax Credit Program
PF	Private Foundations
RUS	Rural Utility Service
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office (same as NYS OPRHP)
SBA	Small Business Administration

Acronym	Full Name
SBF	Scenic Byways Foundation
Section 457 RPTL	Section 457 Real Property Tax Law Tax Exemption First Time Homebuyers of Newly Constructed Homes
SNYM	State of New York Mortgage (Home of Your Own Program)
TEA-21	Transportation Equity Act for the 21 st Century
SAFETEA-LU	Federal Highway Administration
USDA	US Dept of Agriculture
USDA-WHIP	USDA Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program
USDA-CRP	USDA Conservation Reserve Program
USDOI- RICA	US Dept. of the Interior, Rivers Trails, & Conservation Assistance
USDOJ	US Department of Justice

11.2 Action Matrix

The Action Matrix was created so that elected officials, community residents, local business owners, and other stakeholders may easily review the goals, objectives, and strategies identified through the Town of Big Flats Comprehensive Planning process. Each strategy is identified according to its primary topic group (e.g., Land Use, Transportation, etc.) For each strategy, a timeframe has been established, as explained in Section 11.1. The Action Matrix also identifies a primary party responsible for implementation of each strategy as well as potential State or Federal funding sources.