

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

TOWN *of* RIPLEY

NEW YORK





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NEW YORK

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OUR COMMUNITY PROFILE

SECTION I

1. TOWN HISTORY & INTRODUCTION

Section Will Cover

- Brief History for the Town of Ripley
- Municipal Jurisdictions and Boundaries

Data Sources Utilized

- Ripley Comprehensive Plan-2016
- Chautauqua County Property Information File and Associated GIS data

1.0 A BRIEF HISTORY OF RIPLEY

The earliest settlers came during and after 1803 to what was then part of the Town of Batavia in Genesee County. Hamlets known as Forsythe, Quincy and Northville developed along the Buffalo Erie Road in the Town of Chautauqua.

The opening of the Erie Canal during 1825 marked the period when the hamlet of Quincy developed into the main village, its name being changed to Ripley Village during the 1870's, in honor of General Eleazar Wheelock Ripley, under whom many of our pioneers fought in the War of 1812. Other major factors of change have included the coming of railroad service during 1952, locally drilled natural gas during the 1880s and 1890s, telephone and public water supply during 1896, electricity by 1914, radio during the 1920s, television during the 1940s, commercial natural gas lines in 1964, and cable TV access in the 1990s.

Ripley lays claim to a number of interesting firsts. The year was 1897 when the first automobile appeared in Chautauqua County and it appeared first in Ripley, having entered from Pennsylvania on a trip from Cleveland to New York City. Charles Mann Hamilton, a lifetime resident of Ripley, was first in the county to own an automobile, a Winton. So, naturally, the first "gasoline" station between Cleveland and Buffalo was located in Ripley. Hamilton, an avid racing fan, set a World Record for automobile racing on September, 28, 1901 at Fort Erie, Canada: 15 miles in 29.44 minutes!

1.1 MUNICIPAL JURISDICTIONS AND BOUNDARIES

The boundaries of the County were defined in 1808 by an act of the State Legislature, and in 1811 Chautauqua County, (Chautauqua since 1869) was formally incorporated (*Ripley, 2016*). In 1813, the Ripley area was part of the Town of Portland. On March 1, 1816, the number of settled freeman grew large enough to warrant a township and Ripley was incorporated.

It was at this time the Town's present boundaries were established: Lake Erie on the north; Town of Mina on the south; Town of Westfield on the east; and the Pennsylvania state line on the west. At that time, Ripley included the area that we now know as Westfield, which would later be incorporated as a separate town in 1829.

SMART GROWTH PRINCIPLES

1.0 Smart Growth Approach

Smart Growth is an approach to community planning and development that integrates the "4 Es." These 4 Es are Economy, Equity, Environment and Energy. The table of smart growth planning principles below reflect the 4 Es and are meant to help Ripley create a livable, sustainable and equitable community.

Each of the 14 principles are identified with a number and symbol. These numbers and symbols were utilized throughout the remainder of the comprehensive plan to indicate where principles were considered for analysis, recommendations and implementation.

Smart Growth Grant Program

The New York Department of State administers a portion of the State's Smart Growth grant program. This program is funded through the Environmental Protection Fund.

KEY FOR SMART GROWTH PRINCIPLES



1. Walkable and bikeable design with a focus on revitalization areas (complete streets) and a Town-wide integrated transportation system.



2. Compact development in focus areas appropriate for higher densities, such as municipal centers or downtowns.



3. Infill development in previously developed areas with reliable existing infrastructure.



4. Transit-friendly development.



5. Downtown revitalization in municipal centers.



6. Historic preservation and adaptive re-use.



7. Environmental justice.



8. A mix of housing options to accommodate all households, ages, backgrounds and incomes.



9. Green infrastructure/nature-based stormwater management.



10. Public art including but not limited to way-finding signage, kiosks and installments sharing the Town's story.



11. Storm resiliency.



12. Safe, accessible and well-planned public spaces.



13. Inclusive, community-based, collaborative outreach and engagement in the planning process.



14. Green buildings, energy efficiency and renewable energy.

2. AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTED LANDS

Section Will Cover

- Agriculture and Forested Lands
- SSURGO Prime farmland locations
- Agriculture Districts
- Assessment of major crops (e.g., vineyards)/value of farm products on/to local economy
 - Major farms/assessment of farm size/change/spin off/supplemental businesses
 - Impact on agriculture from development pressure/climate change
- Change in forested lands over time
- Economic impact from forested lands

Data Sources Utilized

- Ripley Comprehensive Plan-2016
- Westfield/Ripley – Waterfront Opp Plan - 2008
- Chautauqua County Agricultural District data
- Most current USDA Census of Agriculture
- Farmland Protection Plan/Prime farmland districts
 - USDA National Agriculture Statistics Service data
 - National Conservation Easement Database
 - Profile of Ag in NYS – 2019 or latest
 - New York Natural Heritage Program: "New York State Natural Land Patches"

As shown in the inset map on page 1-5, the Town of Ripley is part of the Lake Erie Concord Grape Belt Agricultural Heritage Area, which is covered by the 2008 Lake Erie Concord Grape Belt Heritage Area Management Plan. The mission of the Plan is “to develop a strategy that preserves, interprets, and celebrates the region’s unique grape heritage, cultural, and natural resources.”

As shown in **Table 2-1 and Figure 2-1**, there are approximately 8,847.2 acres of land within the Town of Ripley designated as active agricultural land uses, which makes up 28.3% of the Town’s total area. This includes all areas that are defined as prime farmland and farmland of Statewide importance. Both of these are further detailed and mapped in the Town’s Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan.

The NYS Agricultural District Law, Article 25-AA of the New York State Agricultural & Markets Law, provides a locally-initiated mechanism to protect and enhance New York’s agricultural land as a viable segment of the local and state economies and as an economic and environmental resource of major importance. Counties designate Agricultural Districts by resolution, which are then certified and approved by the Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets. As depicted in **Figure 2-1**, 57.7% of the Town of Ripley is covered by 98 Agriculture Districts totaling 18,034 acres (Cornell & NYS Dept. of Agriculture & Markets, 2022).

Vineyards make up the largest proportion of agricultural land use, followed by productive agricultural land; dairy production; field crops; and cattle, calves, and hogs. All of these uses fall under a specific subset of agricultural land, defined by the State as “land used to produce crops, livestock, or livestock products.”

The Town of Ripley is currently developing an Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan that is expected to be finalized in late 2023 or early 2024. The intent is for this Comprehensive Plan to complement and coordinate with the Farmland Protection Plan.

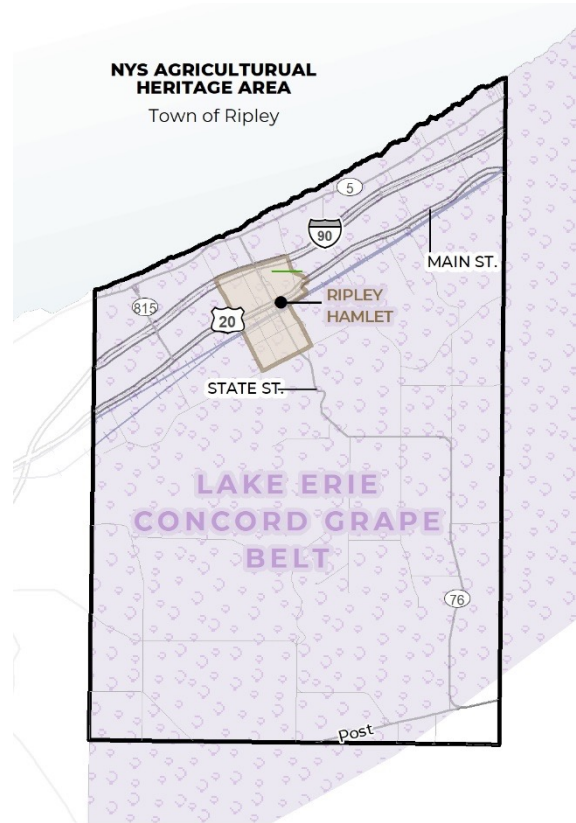
2.0 AGRICULTURAL LAND

Farming continues to be an important component of Ripley’s economy and culture. Town of Ripley farmers initially grew grain, while the planting of the first grapevine in 1869 began an era of viticulture focused on concord grapes. Although the acreage has decreased over time, viticulture is still an important industry. Other important crops include apple, cherry, and peach, as well as berries and sweet corn. Dairy, beef, hog, and poultry farming used to support many families in the southern part of the Town of Ripley, but these industries have declined in profitability and number in recent years (*Town of Ripley, 2016*).

2.1 FORESTED LAND

As shown in **Figure 2-2**, there are a few large areas of forested and State-protected conservation land. There are approximately 921 acres (2.95 %) within the Town of Ripley that are designated by the New York Department of Taxation and Finance's Parcel Property Code as "wild, forested, conservation lands, or public parks." Within this Property Code designation, 368.7 acres are County-owned reforested land, 58.3 acres are designated forest land under Section 480(a) of the Real Property Tax Law, 256.9 acres are private hunting and fishing clubs, and 236 acres are private wild and forest lands that are not private hunting and fishing clubs. There are no forested public parks or public access to forested land within the Town of Ripley.

The New York Department of Environmental Conservation (NYDEC) "keeps track of locations of significant natural communities because they serve as habitat for a wide range of plants and animals, both rare and common; and because natural communities in good condition provide ecological value and services" (NYDEC, 2022a). As depicted in **Figure 2-2**, NYDEC has designated a 1512-acre area surrounding the Twenty-mile Creek watershed within the Town of Ripley as a Significant Natural Community because it is a Hemlock-northern hardwood forest. This community is significant because it is a "high quality occurrence of an uncommon community type" (NYDEC, 2022b). This was considered during future land use analysis, included on pages 3-4 and 3-5 of this plan. A conservation buffer was included around Twenty-mile Creek which combined with agricultural land based on prime farmland mapped and analyzed in the Town's Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan.



Source: NYS OPRHP 2010; ESRI 2022; NYSGIS 2022

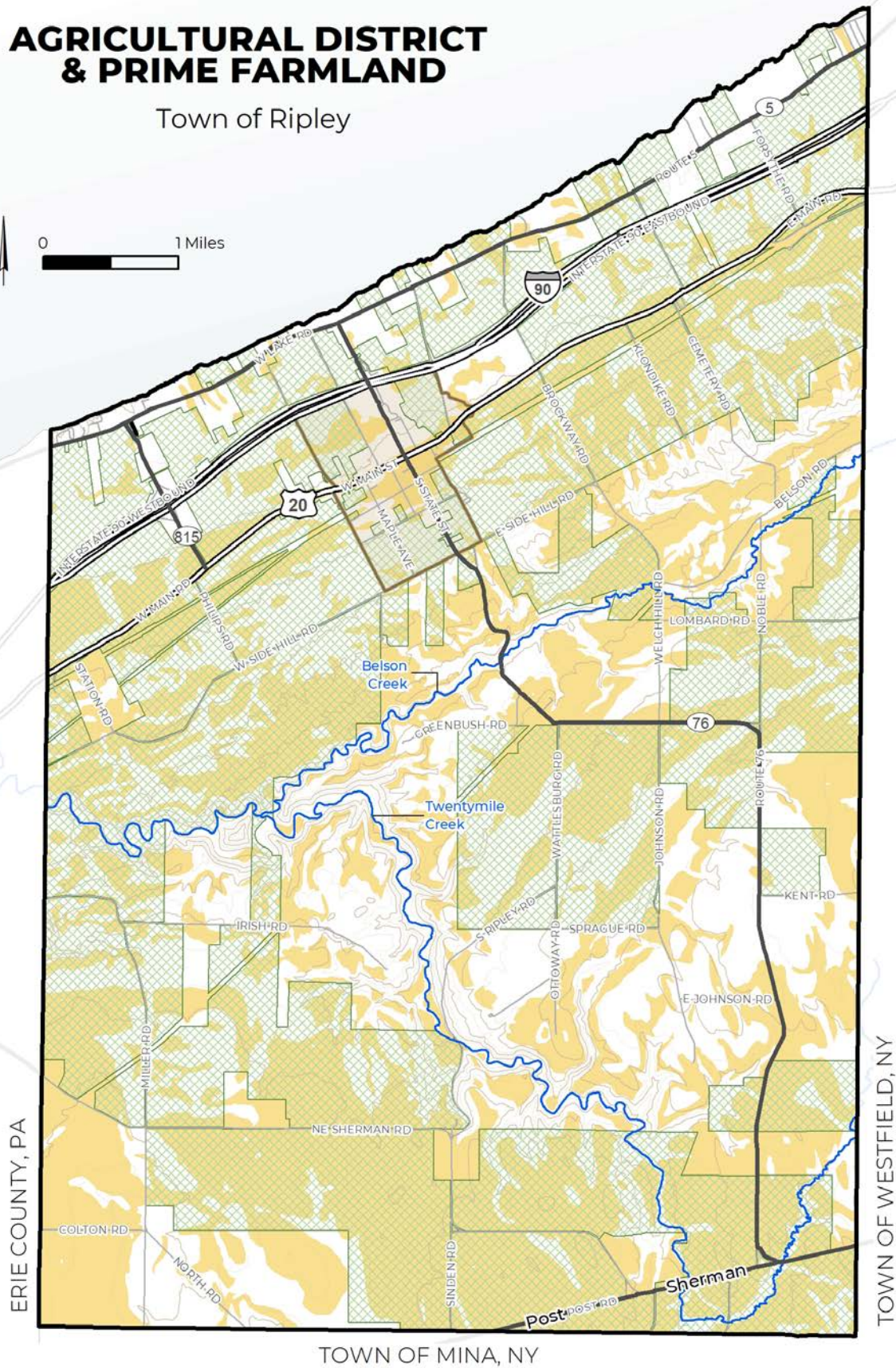
TABLE 2-1 AGRICULTURAL LAND USE, TOWN OF RIPLEY, NY

AGRICULTURAL LAND TYPE	AREA (ACRES)	AREA (% OF TOWN)
Vacant, Productive	1,2079	3.86%
Apples, Pears, Peaches, Cherries	132.4	0.42%
Cattle, Calves, Hogs	700.0	2.24%
Dairy Production	849.2	2.72%
Field Crops	802.4	2.57%
Horse Farms	60.1	0.19%
Nursery/Greenhouse	1.5	0.00%
Other Fruits	70.7	0.23%
Vineyards	5,023.0	16.07%
TOTAL	8,847.2	28.3%

Source: New York Department of Taxation and Finance, 2022. Property Type Classification Codes. Accessed November 28, 2022. <http://www.tax.ny.gov/research/property/assess/manuals/prclas.htm>.

AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT & PRIME FARMLAND

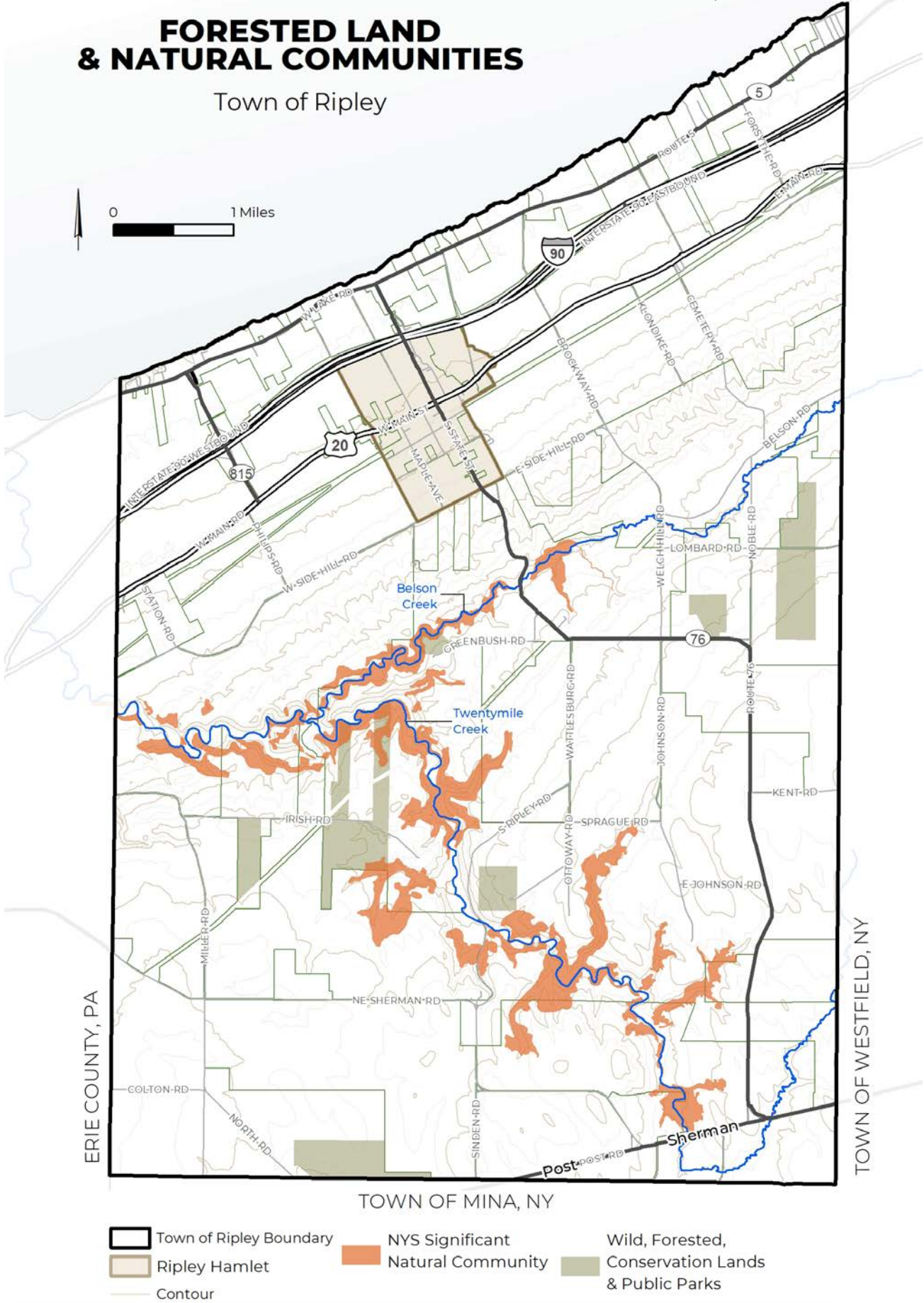
Town of Ripley



- Town of Ripley Boundary
- Ripley Hamlet
- Contour
- Agricultural District
- Prime Farmland / Farmland of Statewide Importance

Source: ; Chautauqua County 2021; CUGIR and NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets 2022; USDA 2021; ESRI 2022; USDA SSURGO Soils 2019; NYSDEC New York Natural Heritage Program 2022

Figure 2-1 Agricultural District & Prime Farmland, Town of Ripley, NY



Source: ; Chautauqua County 2021; CUGIR and NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets 2022; USDA 2021; ESRI 2022; USDA SSURGO Soils 2019; NYSDEC New York Natural Heritage Program 2022

Figure 2-2 Forested Land, Town of Ripley, NY

3. EXISTING LAND USE

Section Will Cover

- Smart Growth Focus Areas
- Hamlet & Main Street
- Shortman Road & the Gateway to New York
- Rural Character, Open Space & the Lake

Data Sources Utilized

- Ripley Comprehensive Plan-2016
- Chautauqua County Property Information File and Associated GIS data
- New York State Smart Growth Land Use Planning Principles

3.0 SMART GROWTH FOCUS AREAS

After initial analysis of existing land use in the Ripley, the two main focus areas to apply smart growth principles are the Town's Main Street and along Shortman Road near the I-90 expressway. Concentrating future development in these two locations will contribute to a Main Street and Hamlet district that is walkable and bikeable, contains a mix of uses and preserves important open space in other areas of the Town. The 'Ripley Hamlet' that is referenced on the maps in this plan is based on the boundaries drawn by the US Census which indicate the Hamlet as a Census Designated Place (CDP).

3.1 FOUR CORNERS FOCUS AREA

Improvements to Ripley's Hamlet and the Town's Main Street have long been a priority. In addition to the land use discussion in this sub-section, there is analysis regarding the Hamlet's streetscape, infrastructure, and parks and public space in later sections.

Existing land use in the Hamlet area and along Main Street can be largely divided into three broad categories including residential land uses, public or community service land uses and commercial land uses. Residential properties in the Hamlet area are largely comprised of single-unit homes although this area of the Town also contains two-unit and multi-unit housing, particularly along Main Street.

There are a few significant parcels in the Ripley Hamlet and Main Street area that belong to public or community services including Ripley Central School, the Ripley Public Library and a US Post Office. Additionally there is a small pocket park with a gazebo on the southeast corner of the intersection of State Street and Main Street. The library has undergone recent interior updates and improvements and is considered by many in the community to be a significant and important Town asset. The school also includes space for the Town's offices and space for public meetings and engagement.

There are few existing commercial land uses in the Hamlet and along Main Street in Ripley including three restaurants/eateries. Many of the vacant and former commercial buildings are in varied states of disrepair. There has not been much recent investment or development along Main Street in the Town, although some streetscape improvements have been pursued and completed in recent years. The Hamlet and Main Street continue to be a priority for the Town and community members. While future economic development on Main Street depends largely on market realities and factors outside of the Town's control, Ripley will seek to address needed land use and zoning changes that will align with future needs and potential future economic needs.

Additionally, the Town will seek to identify and promote resources that will help mixed-use development along Shortman Road and in the Hamlet of Ripley. Funding and technical assistance can be pursued through a variety of existing State programs, which are further detailed later in the plan. The Town will seek to promote these resources to business owners and property owners who would benefit from additional assistance. The Office of Homes and Community Renewal have provided funding in the past to several small Towns and Villages to help them renovate and develop mixed-use properties in their downtowns. This is a program that Ripley will look to for future funding opportunities.

3.2 SHORTMAN ROAD FOCUS AREA

Ripley is uniquely positioned near both the New York State border with Pennsylvania and the I-90 corridor. These are two distinct advantages that have helped lead to recent development along Shortman Road in Ripley. A new Love's travel stop opened early in 2022, spurring new development on Shortman Road for the first time in many years. This area of the Town has frequently been cited as a high priority for redevelopment by many community members. The timing is right for Ripley to identify and implement land use and regulatory actions that will further encourage redevelopment in an area of Ripley which has long been neglected.

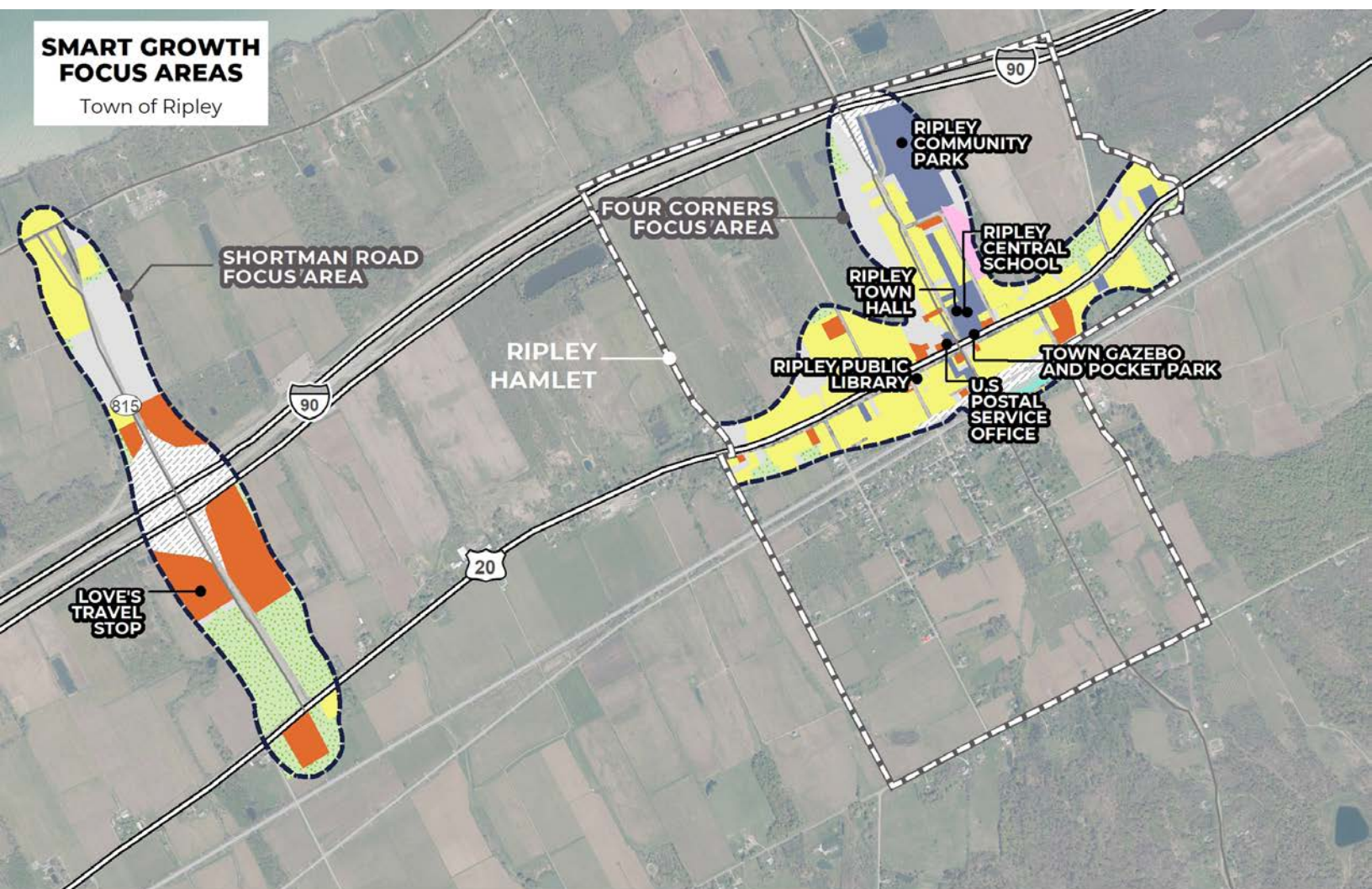
Much of the existing land on Shortman Road is vacant highway-commercial land, particularly land that is nearer the I-90 access ramps. The existing land uses in this area are highway business and commercial uses including the Love's travel stop, an adult use store, and a trucking terminal. Some of the vacant parcels are formerly commercial and could be re-developed as similar or compatible uses to the Love's travel stop. The future land use analysis in this plan will inform future zoning changes to the Shortman Road area. This analysis was informed by public engagement with community members and the project steering committee. Some of the parcels that have frontage on both Shortman Road and US Route 20 are current agricultural land. While this is currently active farmland, some of these parcels along Shortman Road could be re-imagined as a mix of commercial and residential uses.

3.3 RURAL CHARACTER, OPEN SPACE AND THE LAKE

Most of the land in the Town of Ripley is either current or vacant/abandoned agricultural land. For additional analysis regarding agricultural land, farmland and forested land, refer to Chapter 2 of this plan. There is only one existing physical access site, Ripley Beach Town Park, to Lake Erie. Beyond that location, there are several locations near Lake Erie that provide visual access and scenic views to Lake Erie.

In recent years, a commercial rural event venue developed on a site immediately adjacent to the lake with scenic views of the waterfront. While this is only one new location, it could present an opportunity for similar land uses and redevelopment of locations with visual and/or physical access to the waterfront. This should be considered during future land use and zoning decisions by the Town.

Several corridors in the Town provide views of active farmland, vineyards, and other open space and forested land important to the rural character and landscapes in Ripley. Existing open space is included on the Existing Land Use map as Conservation Lands and Public Parks - although it is likely that there is additional open space that is currently classified as vacant land. The Town is currently developing an Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan that will analyze and preserve existing farmland. Ripley has a few existing open space regulations or requirements to protect and/or enhance existing forested land, open space and green space. Most of these existing requirements relate to considerations during site plan review and measurable requirements for specific land uses such as home occupations. There are also open space requirements for any planned unit development (PUD). Bolstering open space requirements and regulations could help Ripley better protect existing open space, forested lands, land with steep slopes, and vegetative buffers along streams and creeks.



Source: ESRI 2022; NYSGIS 2022



Figure 3-2 Smart Growth Focus Areas, Town of Ripley, NY

4. EXISTING ZONING

Section Will Cover

- Zoning Districts & Regulations
- Development & Design
- Site Plan Review & Subdivision
- Solar Energy Regulations

Data Sources Utilized

- Ripley Comprehensive Plan 2016
- Chautauqua County Property Information File and Associated GIS data

4.0 ZONING DISTRICTS & REGULATIONS

Ripley has 7 zoning districts regulating land use in the Town. There are 2 residential districts, 2 commercial districts, 1 agricultural district, 1 industrial district and 1 conservation district, which are abbreviated as follows:

- **R-1** Residential or Hamlet
- **R-2** Residential/Lakefront
- **RURAL** Rural & Agricultural Areas
- **CON** Recreation/Conservation
- **C-1** Commercial (Hamlet)
- **C-2** Commercial (Other)
- **M/I** Manufacturing and Industry

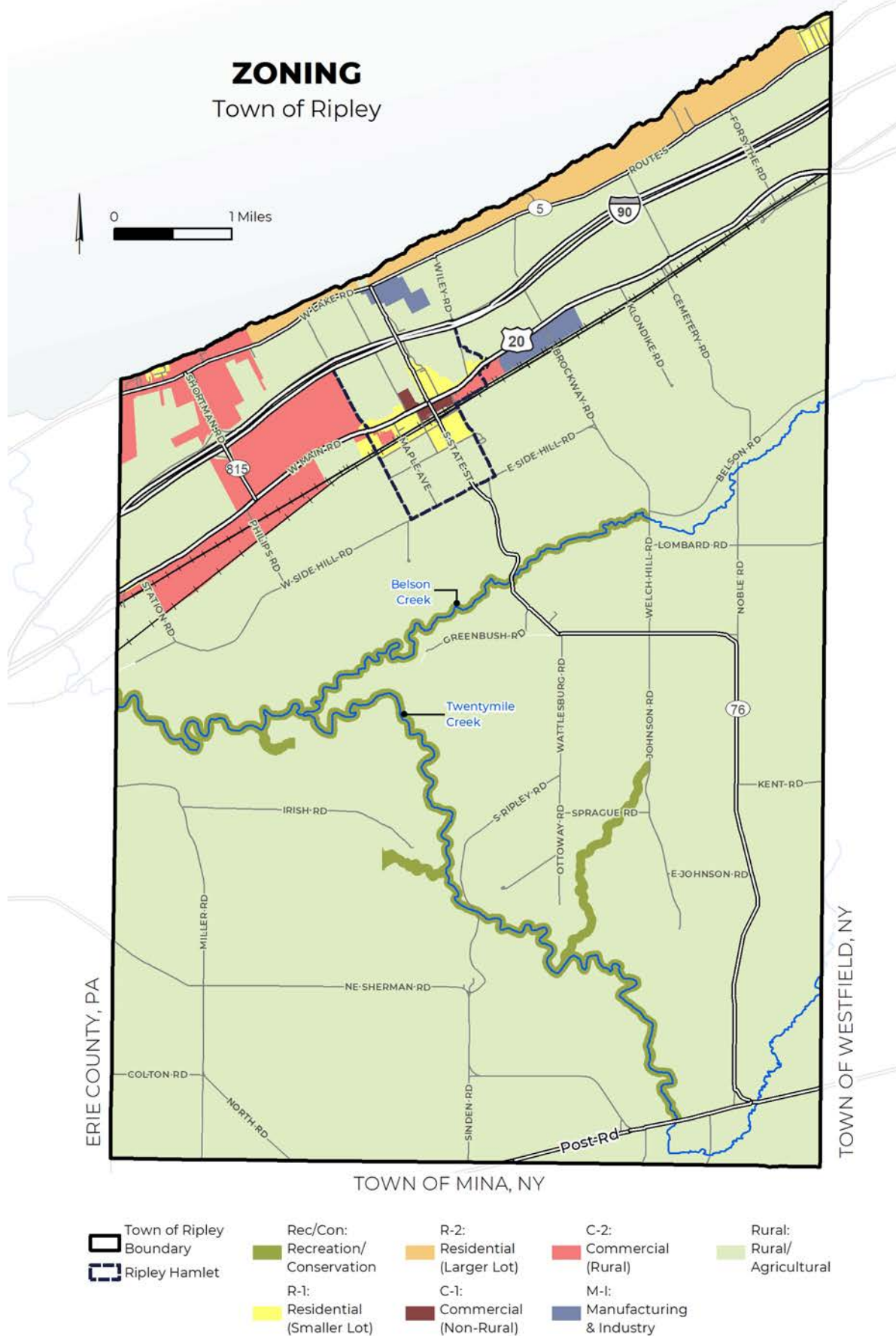
Most of the existing zoning districts align with the existing land use in the Town, but there are some significant areas in Ripley where this is not the case. One striking example of this misalignment is near the Town's western boundary with Pennsylvania along NYS Route 5. Many parcels in this area, including several larger ones, are included in the C-2 commercial district. While there is one winery and a lake-adjacent private campground in this district, there are few other existing land uses that are non-residential, let alone commercial uses. Future zoning for these parcels should be re-considered in an effort to blend land uses that are more well-utilized and successful in this area. Some of the existing districts will likely need to be re-imagined to better correspond to both community feedback informing future land uses and existing conditions in the Town, including local economic conditions. Initial qualitative data from steering committee and community members have centered on prioritizing revitalization and flexibility for future development on Shortman Road and Main Street in the Hamlet.

Particularly absent is the provision for mixed uses. The purpose statements for both commercial districts employ language that specifically separates commercial land uses from others. In the C-1 District, for example, the purpose is explained as "setting apart areas that have provided the community with the commercial services and business complexes." In a similar vein, the C-2 District exists with "the intent to promote and protect commercial development" with no regard to a mixing of uses, although residential uses are not strictly prohibited in this district.

Permitted land uses in Ripley also do not include mixed uses. Each permitted land use is singularly residential, agricultural, commercial or industrial. This indicates that a building or structure with multiple different uses, such as a two-story building with residential on the upper floor and commercial on the ground floor, would not be permitted in the Town. This is likely acceptable for most existing locations and districts in Ripley, but mixed use development should be considered for land along Main Street and in the Hamlet of Ripley to align with community and Town goals.

4.1 DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

There are few existing regulations in Ripley's zoning code that directly address specific design or development requirements. Most of the existing development regulations relate to commonly applied dimensional standards including minimum lot size, maximum lot coverage, setbacks and height requirements. These are included in tables in an appendix to the zoning code. They only apply to residential land uses that are permitted within each district.



Source: ; Chautauqua County 2021; CUGIR and NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets 2022; USDA 2021; ESRI 2022; USDA SSURGO Soils 2019; NYSDEC New York Natural Heritage Program 2022

Figure 4-1 Zoning, Town of Ripley, NY

5. INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC UTILITIES

Section Will Cover

- Capacity and Condition of Core Infrastructure:
 - Waste, Drinking Water, Sewer and Stormwater System, Green Infrastructure, Broadband Internet —General Condition and Capacity Analysis

Data And Mapping Needs/ Sources Utilized

- Ripley Comprehensive Plan 2016
- Chautauqua County Utility Data Sets—Electric Power Transmission Lines, Ripley Sewer District, Ripley Water District
- Conversations and discussions with project steering committee and key stakeholders

The Chautauqua County Multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (MHMP) lists the following as critical infrastructure within the Town of Ripley, which are shown in [Figure 5-1](#) on page 15.

- Ripley Fire Department and Fire Halls
- Ripley Central School
- Hoag Pond Dam
- Ripley Reservoir Dam
- Town Highway Building and Equipment
- Ripley Water Pollution Control Facility
- Town Offices
- Ripley Library
- Ripley Water Filtration Plant

Two additional dams that are not named in the Chautauqua County MHMP, the Chautauqua County Wildlife Pond Dam and the Ripley Diversion Dam, are included in [Figure 5-1](#). In addition to the critical infrastructure hot spots listed above, public utilities in the Town of Ripley include drinking water, sewer and stormwater, green infrastructure, waste, and Internet, which are described in more detail below.

5.0 BACKGROUND

Infrastructure affects growth through several supply and demand-side channels. Investments in energy, telecommunications, and transportation directly impact growth, as all types of infrastructure represent an essential input in any production of goods and services. In addition, infrastructure can also reduce the cost of delivered goods, facilitate the physical mobility of people and products, remove productivity constraints, and increase competitiveness. Utilities provide basic needs that significantly improve a community's quality of life, spurring social and economic growth. Improper planning and maintenance of utilities, however, can limit the economic viability of an area.

The need for comprehensive planning is exemplified in green infrastructure, an increasingly common approach to managing stormwater and natural resources to foster healthier environments. Effective technologies and lighting can help improve the usage and perception of streets, mitigating user conflicts and providing a sense of safety. As the Town plans for its future, is important to develop and maintain reliable infrastructure and public utilities that support residents where they live, work, and play.

5.1 WASTE

A solid waste disposal company under contract to the Town of Ripley transports recyclables and garbage from a central collection site, located at 50 Ross Street, twice a month. There is a solid waste transfer station located in the Town of Ripley on Ross Street. Some residents contract with private companies to pick up their trash. The Town of Ripley organizes large garbage pickup events: three in the spring and one in the fall. These pick-up events have been effective, and have reduced overall waste each year (Conversation with Mike Rowe, Town of Ripley, 2022).

5.2 DRINKING WATER

Most of the Town of Ripley's residents depend on private wells tapping into the ground water supply. The Chautauqua County Environmental Health Division offers technical assistance and water quality testing for property owners who rely on private wells for their water supply. The New York Department of Environmental Conservation (NYDEC) regulates water well drillers throughout the state.

The Town of Ripley provides public drinking water to downtown Ripley via a system that is sourced from the 20 million-gallon Alford Reservoir near Belson Creek, located east of State Route 76 and south of Ripley Side Hill Road, and filtered at the Ripley Water Treatment Plant (WTP) (Town of Ripley, 2016). The WTP was built in 1990 with a design capacity of 350,000 gallons per day (gdp). Water flows via gravity within the plant and is treated with manual chlorine injection and sand filtration. Finished water is stored in a 170,000-gallon clear well where it enters a storage tank via gravity. This glass-lined storage tank was installed in 2004 and provides 2.7 days of storage. The water distribution system is gravity fed and 60% of the water mains consist of old, deteriorating asbestos cement pipes. More details about the Town of Ripley's water supply system, including an evaluation of the current system and description of potential improvements, can be found in the 2018 Town of Ripley Water System Planning Study. The study recommends a number of improvements to the intake at Belson Creek, the Alford Reservoir, the WTP, and the distribution system.

As of November 2022, Ripley Municipal Water District One has 483 service connections, Water District Two has 50 service connections, and Water District Five has 46 connections. The expansion of Water District Two along Route 5 in 2012 has spurred lakeshore housing development (Conversation with Mike Rowe, Town of Ripley, 2022). Construction of Water District Five has put water and sewer in from the Pennsylvania line to Shortman Road and then down Route 20 to connect with the original Water District One (Conversation with Mike Rowe, Town of Ripley, 2022). The development of Water District Five in tandem with Sewer District Two provided

the capacity and opportunity to develop Love's Travel Stop along Shortman Road, which will hopefully spur additional development in the future (Conversation with Douglas Bowen, August 2023).

The Town of Ripley is making and implementing water district expansion plans because it can be difficult for current residents to sell their homes that rely on private water supply wells alone. When a property on private well water supply in Chautauqua County is sold or otherwise transferred, the Chautauqua County Environmental Health Division must evaluate the water supply and if it does not meet NY Department of Health (NYDOH) or County Sanitary Code requirements, corrective measures must be taken by the seller..

Although not online at the time of this Plan's publication, upcoming Water Districts Three and Four will provide water the rest of the way East along Route 5 to the Town of Westfield, where the line will attach to the Westfield system and provide redundant supply capacity for the two towns (Conversation with Mike Rowe, Town of Ripley, 2022). Construction of Water Districts Three and Four were planned to be completed in Summer 2022, but due to supply chain issues, the projects are still incomplete as of Summer 2023.

The demand for these expanded water districts may necessitate future expansion to the Town's drinking water source at the Ripley Reservoir. Ripley should consider a future engineering study to determine if expansion to the existing reservoir is needed and feasible.

INFRASTRUCTURE & PUBLIC UTILITIES

Town of Ripley

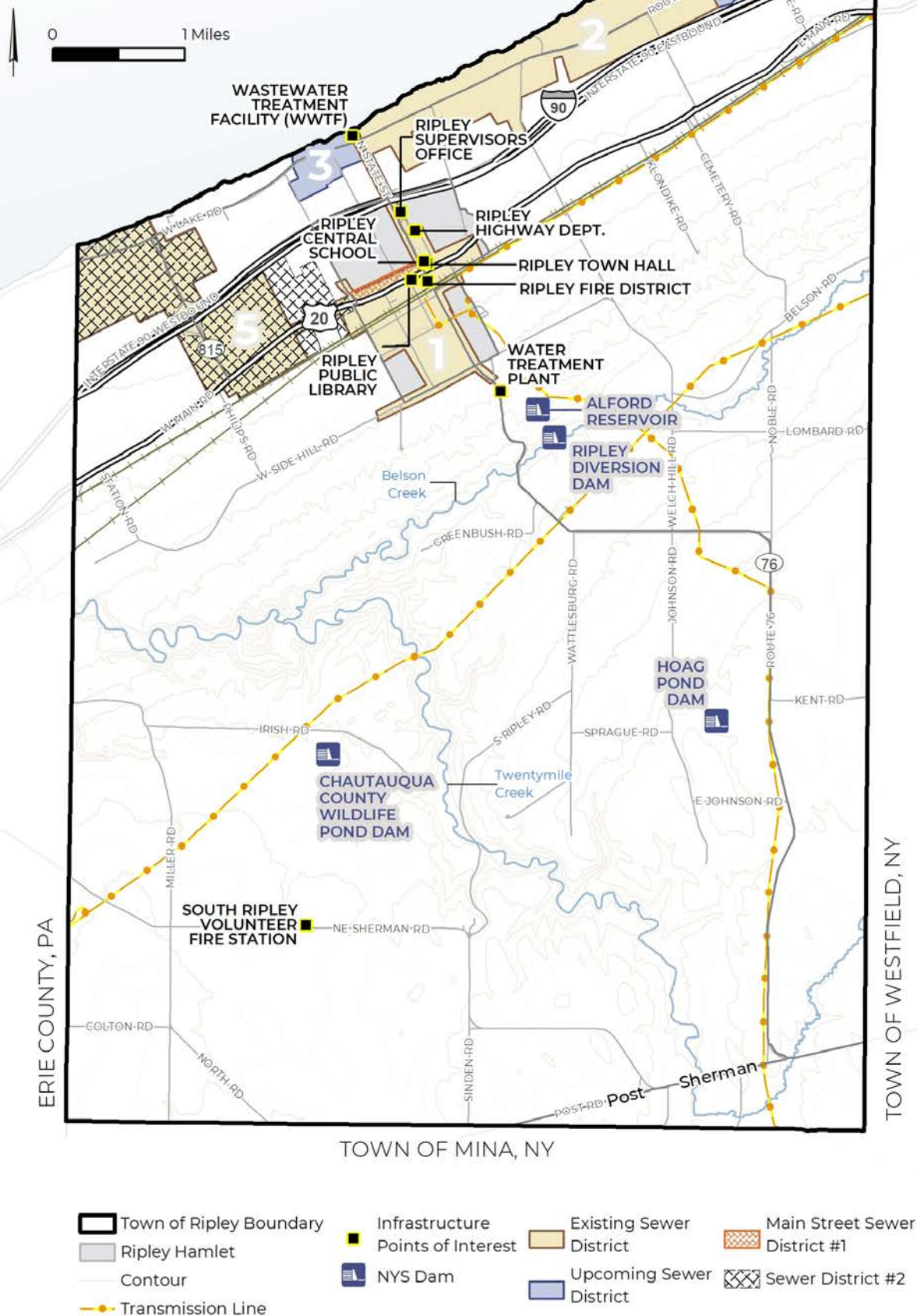


Figure 5-1 Infrastructure, Town of Ripley, NY

5.3 SEWER, STORMWATER & GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

The Town of Ripley Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) is located on the north side of State Route 5 at its intersection with State Route 76 and discharges treated effluent into a receiving creek that flows into Lake Erie (SPDES Permit #NY0025381). The WWTF is an extended aeration facility with activated sludge that recently switched from using a chlorine to an ultraviolet light system (Conversation with Mike Rowe, Town of Ripley, 2022). The WWTF was originally constructed in the 1970s with major improvements completed in the 1980s. The Town's sanitary sewer system was constructed in the mid-1960s with major repairs in the 1980s. The WWTF treats an average daily influent flow of .280 mgd, while the permitted capacity is .400 mgd. There have been high levels of inflow and infiltration (I/I) for many years, which stresses the WWTF, impacts residents directly through overflows, and reduces available treatment capacity at the WWTF.

In December 2022, Ripley's Town Board passed a resolution to enter into an inter-municipal water and wastewater treatment pilot project through Chautauqua County, although the project is on hold at the time of this Plan's publication. This project is funded, in part, through the NY Department of State and functions to help communities develop shared services for water and wastewater systems to improve efficiencies and save costs on supplies, testing, and sewer plant operators. Unfortunately, not every plant in the area uses the same system, but hopefully the study will clarify potential ways for municipalities to coordinate with one another (Conversation with Douglas Bowen, August 2023).

The Town continues to address needed sewer system repairs, including completing a Sewer System Evaluation Survey, Phase 2 in July 2023. The aging sewer line along Main Street and elsewhere throughout the Town needs replacement to address I/I issues and a good portion of the Main Street sewer line between Barnes Road and North State Street was replaced in 2022. The Town is actively applying for funding and organizing construction projects to locate leaks in the sewer line system and make repairs

in order of greatest need, with a focus on the sewer lines along Maple Avenue, West Main Street (Route 20), Boswell Street, Shaver Street, and Goodrich Street. Sewer District Two, which covers Route 20 West to Shortman Road and Route 5 west to the border with Pennsylvania, was completed using USDA grant funds in 2022 (Conversation with Mike Rowe, Town of Ripley, 2022). The 2020 Engineering Report for the Town of Ripley WWTF and Wastewater Collection System also provides information about recent and recommended repairs and improvements to the WWTF, sewer districts, and the sewer line collection system throughout the Town.

Stormwater is contained throughout the Town of Ripley by roadside ditches, but a large amount of water enters the WWTF following large precipitation events due to I/I. Although the Town is actively working to repair its sewer lines that are taking in additional water following large precipitation events because of I/I, it would also benefit from strategic green infrastructure installations to reduce the amount of water entering its sewer system. There are no present or planned infrastructure green infrastructure projects within the Town of Ripley.

Many homes in the Town of Ripley rely on onsite wastewater treatment systems (OWTS), also known as septic systems. The Chautauqua County Environmental Health Division regulates the private sewage/wastewater system program. When a property in Chautauqua County, served by an OWTS, is sold or otherwise transferred, the Environmental Health Division must evaluate the OWTS. If the OTWS system components do not meet NYSDOH regulations or the Sanitary Code of the Chautauqua County Health District, the seller must upgrade the septic system before the sale is finalized, which is often cost-prohibitive (Town of Ripley, 2023). Furthermore, the Environmental Health Unit is required by the Sanitary Code to inspect all properties with a home within 250 feet of Lake Erie that also meet one of the following criteria:

1. The OWTS is un-permitted OR a permitted OWTS is 30 years or older.
2. An OWTS is suspected to be in significant non-compliance with the Sanitary Code.

5.4 BROADBAND INTERNET

The Town of Ripley has Internet service through Spectrum. The inset map shows internet speeds within the Town, ranging from 25 megabits per second (Mbps) to greater than 100 Mbps.

Broadband Level of Service for Town of Ripley:

- Served: 1,248 (98.5%)
- Under-served: 5 (0.39%)
- Unserved: 14 (1.1%)

Broadband Level of Service for Ripley School District (northern part of the Town):

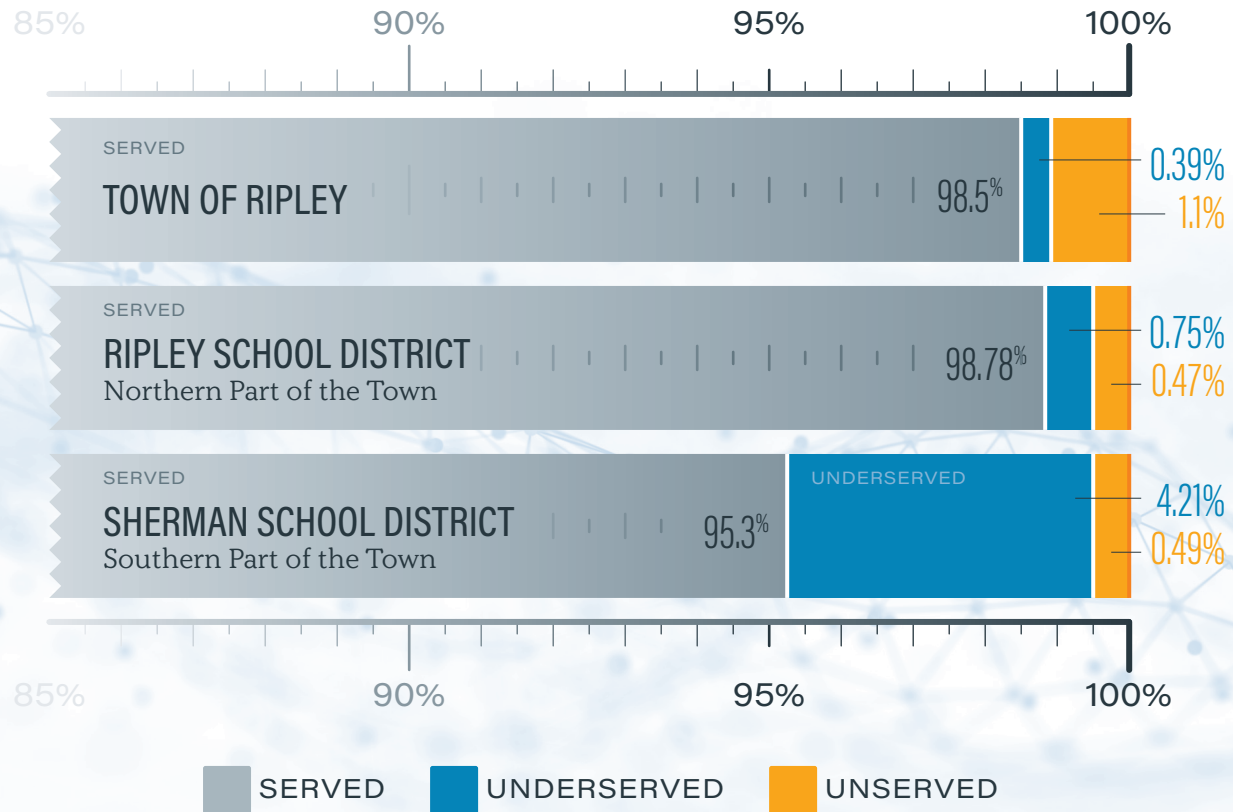
- Served: 1,053 (98.78%)
- Under-served: 5 (0.47%)
- Unserved: 8 (0.75%)

Broadband Level of Service for Sherman School District (southern part of the Town):

- Served: 1,176 (95.3%)
- Under-served: 6 (0.49%)
- Unserved: 52 (4.21%)

Most of the Town is capable of 100 Mbps, which is adequate speed for most internet uses. Ripley considers improvement to our broadband systems to be a necessary ingredient to their future growth and success. Ripley will be prepared to pursue physical improvements to broadband infrastructure to both increase total coverage and increase average internet speeds in the Town. Improving broadband speed and access provide an incentive to new businesses and residents who need fast internet services for their businesses and homes.

BROADBAND INTERNET



6. TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS, MOBILITY AND CIRCULATION

Section Will Cover

Transportation

- A Description of The Town's Road Networks – Condition and Capacity
 - A Description of Any Major Transportation Investments /Projects Planned
- Commuting (Circulation) Patterns
- A Discussion of Walkability

GHG

- General Air Quality Conditions In The Region
- Emission Sources
- Activities To Curb Any Major Ghg Emissions

Data and Mapping Needs/ Sources Utilized

- Ripley Comprehensive Plan-2016
- Annual Average Daily Traffic (Aadt) Counts
- National Walkability Index Scores
- Travel Time To Work Data
- Air Quality Data
- American Road and Transportation Builders Association – Bridge Conditions Report
- Supporting Rural Communities Through Clean Transportation Investments
- Promising Practices For Increasing Access To Transportation In Rural Communities

Streets not owned by the State or County are maintained by the Town of Ripley. The existing streetscape along Ripley's Main Street, which is a walkable central business district, contains sections of sidewalk with healthy trees and several attractive building facades from some of the town's older buildings. The trees and sidewalks are not continuous, but the area is walkable with little traffic and plenty of space for pedestrians (*Town of Ripley, 2018*).

Wayfinding signage to the Town of Ripley for interstate drivers guides them to US Route 20 and into the heart of Ripley's Hamlet and Main Street.

The corridors into the Town are both easy to navigate and close to the I-90 exit ramps, roughly 2 miles from the intersection of Main Street and State Street. Drivers using State Route 5 can reach Main Street via State Street, which leads drivers into the heart of Ripley's Hamlet and Main Street. US Route 20 is a New York State highway that carries westbound and eastbound traffic through the Town of Ripley via Main Street. State Street carries northbound and southbound traffic through the four corners of Main Street and State Street and brings drivers from State Route 5 south into the Town (*Town of Ripley, 2018*).

In 2019, the Town of Ripley had access to asphalt millings, which can be recycled and used as the base material for new asphalt pavement. In Summer 2022, the Highway Department patched up many rough roads throughout the Town (Conversation with Mike Rowe, Town of Ripley, 2022).

State Route 5 is part of the Great Lakes Seaway Trail, which was designated as a national byway in 1996 by the Federal Highway Administration. Ripley community members and Town staff cite frequent bicyclists traveling via the Seaway Trail. Capitalizing on the tourism from this captive group of cyclists is a priority for Ripley, moving forward. Future land use and zoning decisions should include land uses that are amenable to passing cyclists including ones that emphasize visual and/or physical access to the lake. This 518-mile byway parallels the St. Lawrence Seaway and Great Lakes in New York and Pennsylvania (FHWA, 2022).

6.0 VEHICLES

The Town of Ripley is the first New York State exit on I-90 east as you enter the state from Pennsylvania, which is the reason it is referred to as the "Gateway to New York." Drivers from Pennsylvania, Ohio, and beyond who use the widely traveled I-90 interstate first see New York State in Ripley.

In 2022, Love's Travel Stops constructed and opened a truck and travel service facility and Hardee's restaurant at the address 6201 Shortman Road. This travel stop offers many amenities to travelers along the I-90 Interstate, including private showers, 24-hour road service, fuel, copy and fax service, a dog park, check cashing, laundry, and more.



6.1 PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Limited public transportation is available through the Chautauqua Area Regional Transit System (CARTS), which maintains a website with updated schedules and the ability to schedule rides on a demand-response basis online (*Chautauqua County, 2022*).

Trains

CSX and Norfolk and Southern railroad lines span the Town of Ripley and are located south of the shoreline portion of the WOA. The two parallel but separate railroad lines are located south of Route 20. There is limited Amtrak passenger rail service along these lines with nearby stations at Depew, New York, Buffalo, New York, and Erie, Pennsylvania.

Airplanes

There are no airports located within the Town of Ripley. Nearby airports serving the Town of Ripley residents include:

- Chautauqua County Airport at Jamestown (JHW) is located approximately 35 driving miles south of Westfield. It is a small commercial service facility providing commuter service by US Airways between Jamestown and Pittsburgh PA.
- Erie International Airport in Erie, Pennsylvania is approximately 40 miles southwest of the Village of Westfield and is served by 3 major airlines and charters.
- Greater Buffalo International Airport is located approximately 85 miles northeast of the Town of Ripley. It is a medium hub facility served by several major commercial airlines and regional commuter lines.

Walkability

Although the Town of Ripley has a Main Street downtown area that is intended to be walkable for pedestrians, the lack of open businesses coupled with uneven, deteriorating sidewalks forces residents and visitors to rely on personal vehicles and other forms of transportation to get around town.

The inset map on page 21 depicts the New York Department of Transportation's Walkability Index throughout the Town of Ripley. The majority of the Town is "least walkable," while the Ripley Hamlet area is rated "below average walkable."

6.2 LOCAL GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

There are no greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions calculations for the Town of Ripley or Chautauqua County. In 2021, the NYDEC published a "Statewide GHG Emissions Report" that calculates all GHG emissions statewide by sector. When comparing economic sectors within New York State, the largest sources are Buildings (32%) and Transportation (28%) (*NYDEC, 2021*).

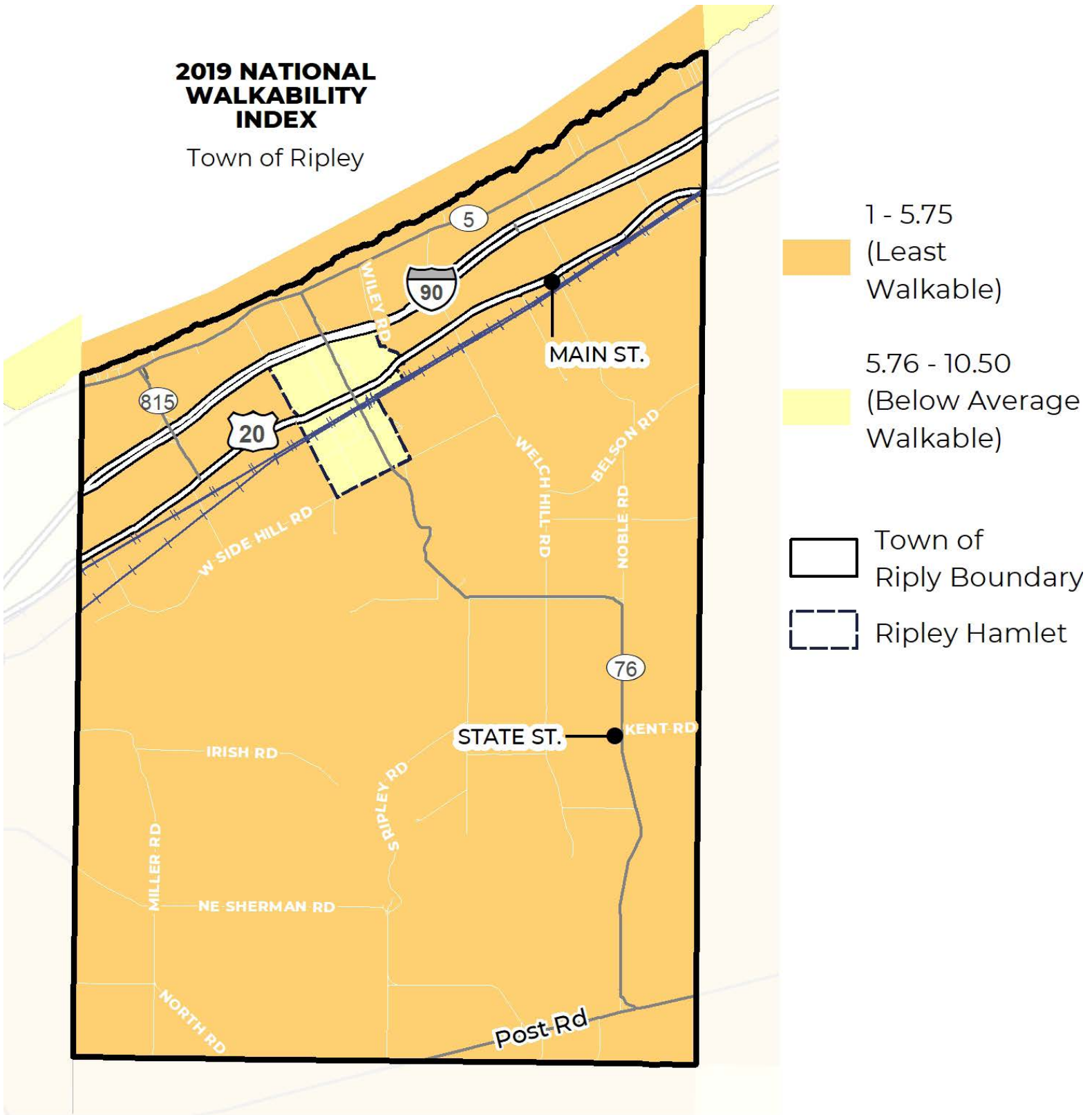
Renewable energy projects have the potential to reduce GHG emissions generated by the Town of Ripley. Planned renewable energy projects located within the Town of Ripley include:

- South Ripley Solar Project - ConnectGen is moving forward on its 270 MW solar project with 20 MW of battery storage, which will power more than 55,000 average New York homes each year while also storing some of the energy for times when the sun is not shining so that a steady stream of energy can still be delivered to the grid. The energy generated by this project will be used in the Town of Ripley, which may result in a slight reduction in electric rates for town residents. The target commercial operation date is Q4 2023.
- 5 MW solar project off Route 76. Martin NY CSG, LLC is proposing a 5-megawatt solar project on 29 acres of land at 5346 Route 76 in the Town of Ripley. The Town approved a host community agreement in Summer 2023 and company officials hope to start construction before the end of 2023.

All solar and/or wind energy projects must satisfy and adhere to Ripley's Solar and Wind System regulations included in the Town's Zoning Law under Supplemental Regulations. These regulations include design and development requirements including but not limited to setbacks, minimum lot size, fences and walls, height, aesthetics, operation and maintenance. Solar and wind systems also require special permit approval from the Town Board.

2019 NATIONAL WALKABILITY INDEX

Town of Ripley



Source: NYSDOT 2013-2019; ESRI 2022; NYSGIS 2022

Service Layer Credits: EPA Office of Community Revitalization with Urban Design
4 Health and EPA National Geospatial Support Team

Figure 6-1 2019 National Walkability Index, Town of Ripley, NY

7. NATURAL RESOURCES

Section Will Cover

- Natural Resources and Climate
- Water Resources and Wetlands
- Designated Forests
- Wind Resources
- Significant Fish and Wildlife Habitats
- Topography

Data Sources Utilized

- Ripley Comprehensive Plan - 2016
- Chautauqua County LWRP - 2015
- Westfield/Ripley – Waterfront Opp Plan - 2008
- County Comprehensive Plan - 2011
- NYDEC Nature Explorer
- NYDEC Significant Natural Community Data
- US Geological Survey National Hydrology Dataset
- USFWS National Wetland Inventory and NYDEC
- Freshwater Designated Wetlands

7.1 NATURAL RESOURCES & CLIMATE

Water Resources

The Town of Ripley is situated in western Chautauqua County on the shores of Lake Erie, which is one of the five Great Lakes. There are eight miles of Lake Erie frontage along the Town's northern border. Tall fifteen-to-thirty-foot-high bluffs separate the Lake Erie shoreline from the rest of the land. From the lakeshore, the land is relatively flat along the lake plain and gently rolls into the glacial moraine foothills of the Allegheny Mountains. The soil on the lake plain is of varied consistency containing pockets of sand, clay, and loam. **Figure 7-1** depicts notable natural resource features and the topography in the Town of Ripley.

NYDEC monitors the water quality of each watershed in the state on a five-year schedule as a part of its Rotating Integrated Basin Studies (RIBS) program and that water quality information is accessible online through the NYDEC Environmental Resource Mapper. **Table 7-1** lists the NYDEC stream and lake segments located within the Town of Ripley, their NYDEC water quality status, potential pollutants, and years

tested. As shown in Table 7-1, the waterbody segments in the Town of Ripley (Lake Erie Main Lake South, Minor Tribs to Lake Erie, Twentymile Creek and Minor Tribs, and Upper Belson Creek/Gage Gulf and Tribs) have not been tested since at least 2010, and some not at all. The Upper Belson Creek/Gage Gulf segment is listed as “threatened water supply suspected” due to “possible pathogens from agriculture” pollutants.

NYDEC's Great Lakes Action Agenda 2023 explains that within the Great Lakes basin, “sediments, nutrients, and pathogens are some of the most common point and nonpoint pollutants that originate from a variety of sources including land runoff, precipitation, atmospheric deposition, sewage treatment plant outfalls, combined sewer overflows, waste sites, on-site septic systems, and groundwater discharge from urban and agricultural areas.” The Town of Ripley does not currently have any requirements for vegetated stream buffers or other water quality ordinances within its Code, while the Chautauqua County Environmental Health Division regulates and inspects private septic tanks within the Town.

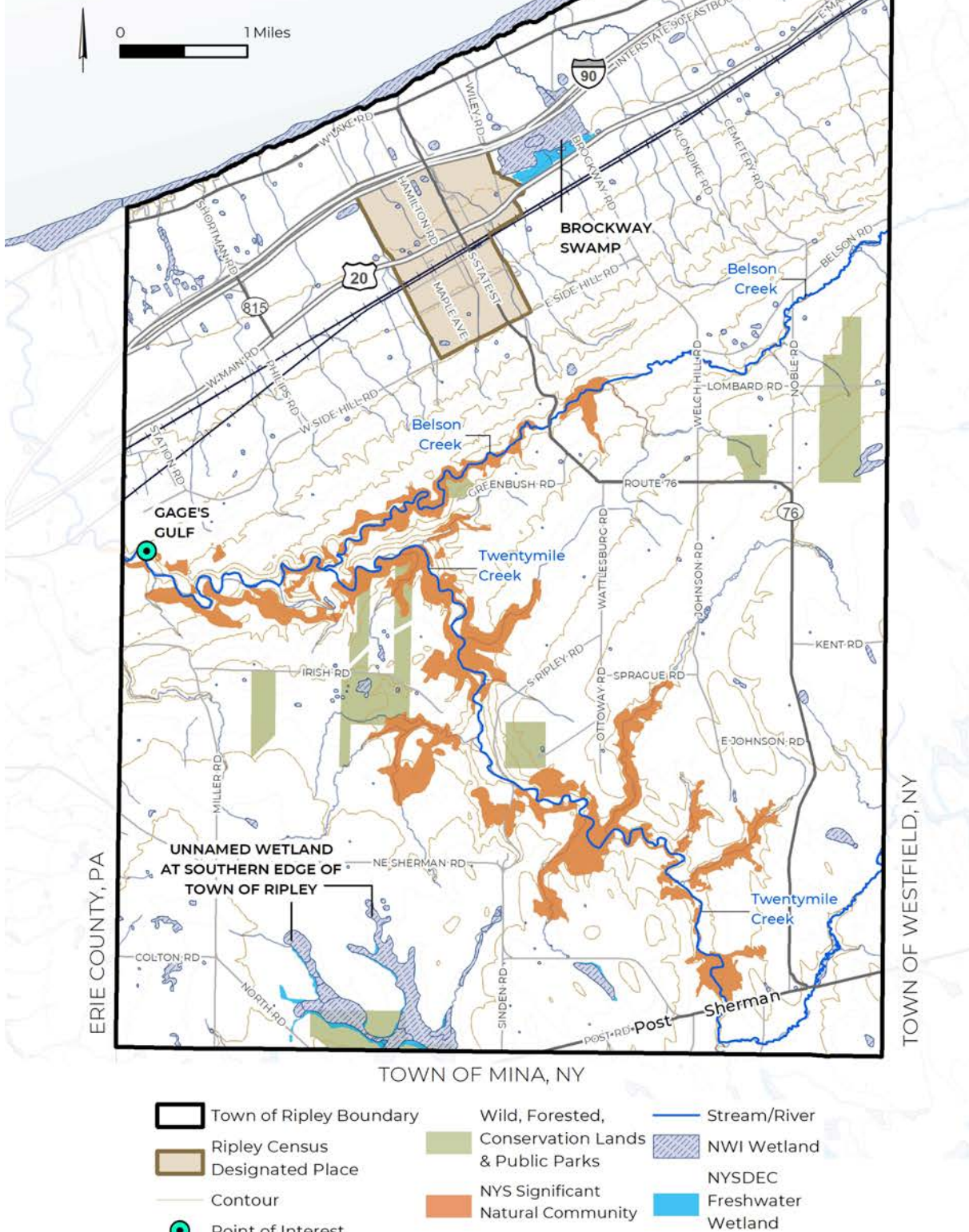
Wetlands

Wetlands provide important ecosystem services such as water storage, filtration of stormwater runoff (including fertilizer runoff from agricultural and farmlands), and habitat for specialized plant and wildlife species. The NYDEC Freshwater Wetlands Program and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) National Wetland Inventory (NWI) categorize and monitor wetlands within their jurisdictions. Within the Town of Ripley, there are 321 acres of NYDEC Freshwater Wetlands and 994.44 acres of USFWS NWI wetlands.

Although there are small wetland areas scattered throughout the Town of Ripley, there are two large wetland areas of note, which are labeled in **Figure 7-1**. One is an unnamed major wetland at the southern edge of town that crosses into the boundaries of Ripley's southern neighbor, the Town of Mina. The second wetland, known as Brockway Swamp, lies between Route 20 and the

NATURAL RESOURCES

Town of Ripley



Source: Chautauqua County 2021; ESRI 2022; NYSDEC New York Natural Heritage Program 2022; NYSDOT 2019; Google Earth 2022; NYSDEC Freshwater Wetlands 2018; USFWS NWI Wetlands 2014

Figure 7-1 Natural Resources, Town of Ripley, NY

I-90 right-of-way just outside the eastern edge of the hamlet. No area of the Town of Ripley is designated as a federal flood plain area. The Town does not have a separate local law for wetland protection, but it is specifically provided for in its Zoning Law's site plan review regulations.

Fish & Wildlife

Twentymile Creek and Belson Creek are reported to have significant fish and wildlife value with plentiful fish such as steelhead, largemouth bass, and rainbow trout (Ripley and Westfield, 2008). Because Twenty Mile Creek drains into Lake Erie on the Pennsylvania side of the line and there is little public water access to fish within the Town, fishing is not as popular here compared to other municipalities with Lake and creek access. North East Marina is located two miles away from the Town in North East, Pennsylvania, which is where most people in the area access the lake to fish. People with a boat can also fish from Pines Campground.

Spring brings thousands of hawks, eagles, vultures, and other migrating birds over the Ripley Hawk Watch (RHW), a small, privately-owned ridge near the shore of Lake Erie within the Town of Ripley. Between March 15th and May 15th, the daily observations at the RHW are recorded and reported to hawk count websites and the journal Hawk Migration Studies. Since 1985, 21 species of raptors and vultures, including bald eagles, golden eagles, ospreys, and peregrine falcons, have been recorded (Ripley and Westfield, 2008).

Natural Communities

As shown in [Figure 7-1](#) and described in more detail in the Forest Lands subsection above, NYDEC maps a 1512-acre area surrounding the Twenty-mile Creek watershed within the Town of Ripley as a Significant Natural Community for being a Hemlock-northern hardwood forest that is a "high quality occurrence of an uncommon community type" (NYDEC, 2022). As explained by Cornell University's New York State Hemlock Initiative, the eastern hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*) is a foundational forest species because:

- It creates the ecosystem in which it resides;
- The shallow, branching root systems of hemlock forests help filter agricultural runoff and keep water clean along stream corridors and other water bodies;
- It provides ideal water conditions for cold-water fishes like native trout species to reproduce and thrive; and
- It keeps snow from melting until later in the spring, which keeps water temperatures lower later in the season and slows the recharge of streams for cleaner, cooler water."

TABLE 7-1 NYDEC WATER QUALITY FOR THE TOWN OF RIPLEY, NY

SEGMENT NAME	ID NUMBER	STATUS	POLLUTANT(S)	YEAR TESTED
Lake Erie (Main Lake, South)	0105-0033	Impaired for fishing, secondary contact recreation, and primary contact recreation. Un-assessed as a source of water supply.	Fecal coliform; PCBs. The primary source of contamination is the open lake rather than near-shore waters.	Tested in 2002 and 2010 for fishing and recreation uses. Un-assessed as a source of water supply.
Minor Tribs to Lake Erie	0105-0030	Needs verification. Assessed as "stressed" for fishing based on dissolved oxygen levels.	Dissolved oxygen.	Un-assessed.
Twentymile Creek and Minor Tribs	0105-0003	Needs verification. Assessed as "stressed" for fishing based on dissolved oxygen levels.	Dissolved oxygen.	Un-assessed.
Upper Belson Creek/Gage Gulf and Tribs	0105-0031	Threatened water supply suspected.	Possible pathogens from agriculture.	2005 source water assessment with the NY Dept. of Health.

Source: NYDEC Environmental Resource Mapper, Waterbody Inventory and Classifications Datasets.

Climate & Climate Change

The moderate climate of the Town of Ripley rotates through four distinct seasons every year. Lake Erie protects the lake plain from some of the temperature extremes of inland areas. It is warm during summer when temperatures tend to be between 70 to 80 degrees Fahrenheit and very cold during winter with average temperatures between 20 and 30 degrees Fahrenheit. The warmest month of the year is July with an average maximum temperature of 81 degrees Fahrenheit, while the coldest month of the year is January with an average minimum temperature of 19 degrees Fahrenheit. The daily temperature variation is typically between 16 to 18 degrees Fahrenheit (*Town of Ripley and Westfield, 2008*). The lowest record temperature in Chautauqua County was -30°F, while the highest recorded temperature reached 100°F, indicating that the county can be prone to extreme weather (*Chautauqua County, 2016*).

The average annual precipitation in the Town of Ripley is around 45 inches evenly distributed throughout the year, although September tends to be the wettest month. Lake Erie moderates cold temperatures and frosts along the Lake Erie shoreline. If the lake has ice cover over the winter, spring thaw can be delayed as much as two weeks compared to the upland areas of the Town. In the fall, the warm lake waters delay heavy frosts. When cold temperatures occur while Lake Erie is free of ice, it can generate significant lake effect snowfall throughout the area (*Town of Ripley and Westfield, 2008*).

The Town of Ripley has and will continue experiencing the impacts of global climate change, which are projected to increase over time. The Great Lakes region has seen an overall increase of 1.4 degrees Fahrenheit in the average annual temperature for the period 1985-2016 relative to 1901-1960 (*ELPC 2020*). The New York Department of Environmental Conservation (NYDEC) reports that the average annual temperature statewide has risen about 2.4 degrees Fahrenheit since 1970.

In recent decades, a number of indicators of a changing climate throughout the Great Lakes region have been documented that impact the Town of Ripley, including:

- A significant temperature warming trend;
- An increase in growing season length, which has created an opportunity to grow warmer-weather crops. Spring begins a week earlier than it did a few decades ago;
- An increase in extreme precipitation and other weather events;
- Changing trends in lake-effect snow;
- Winter snow cover is decreasing;
- The distribution of precipitation is changing across seasons, with future increases predicted to be concentrated in the winter and spring months;
- Pollinating bees in the northeastern United States arrive about 10 days earlier than they did in the 1880s. (NYDEC 2021).

The Town of Ripley must face and adapt to the indicators of a changing climate because they will continue to impact the Town's infrastructure, economy, and daily life.

Extreme Weather Events, Flooding, Erosion Hazards & Local Resiliency

The Town of Ripley has and will continue to experience extreme weather events, flooding, erosion, and other natural phenomena at various times of the year regardless of climate change predictions. In 2016, Chautauqua County conducted a hazard risk assessment process and issued a Multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (MHMP) that includes the Town of Ripley. The MHMP identified possible hazards that occur throughout Chautauqua County. Communities agreed that the following hazards are significant throughout the County:

- Hazardous Materials (in transit). According to the NYDEC, accidental releases of petroleum, toxic chemicals, gases, and other hazardous materials occurs frequently throughout New York State. The MHMP specifically lists the NYS Thruway, Route 5, and Route 20 from Ripley to Erie County, Pennsylvania as areas where hazardous material incidents are most likely to occur in the County. It also states that in March 2016, a Norfolk-Southern trail derailment spilled between 10,000 and 15,000 gallons of ethanol near Shaver Street and State Street within the Town of Ripley. Approximately 45 homes were evacuated and schools were closed.
- Hazardous Materials (fixed site). This hazard refers to a fixed site or facility which may have an uncontrolled release of hazardous material.
- Floods. Floods may result from a variety of sources, including natural causes such as high intensity or long duration of rain or snow, rapid spring snow melt, or ice jams inhibiting a river's flow. Man-made hazards such as dam failures are also a flooding concern.
- Water supply contamination. Contamination of water bodies or failure of water treatment plants could result in a critical shortage of water supply in this region. Most contamination problems in the county have been associated with human sources. The most prevalent contaminants include nitrates, chloride salts, volatile organic chemicals (petroleum by-products, degreaser, etc.) and microbes (bacteria). Although the Chautauqua County Environmental Health Division provides technical assistance and well water testing, there are no requirements to test well water quality until a property is sold or otherwise transferred (See Section 5.3 for additional details).

While drought was not identified as one of the six most pressing hazards in the County, the continuing decrease in snow cover and the changing distribution of precipitation may exacerbate any increases in demand to Ripley's reservoir and drinking water. This should be further studied and considered during any engineering report or feasibility study to expand or improve the Town's water supply at the reservoir.

The 2016 MHMP includes the following Town of Ripley mitigation projects the Town of Ripley Community Profile's Mitigation Strategy:

- Repair dam structure that was significantly damaged during the April 2005 winter storm, which created a combination of ice and foreign material.
- Along 2 ½ miles of County Road #64, silt and gravel is deposited into the road due to slope failures during rainstorms. Plans to remove gravel and channel fragment deposits that choke drainage structures and cause roadway flooding and shoulder erosion, as well as stabilize banks to alleviate landslides involving the roadway section.

Heavy precipitation events and flooding have caused damage to buildings, properties, and infrastructure within the Town of Ripley in the past. The Town is in the process of working with the US Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to digitize floodplain maps. According to the FEMA data portal, "FEMA has not completed a study to determine flood hazard for the selected location; therefore, a flood map has not been published at this time" (FEMA, 2022). The Town of Ripley's National Flood Insurance Program is overseen by the Code Enforcement Officer. The Town also maintains a Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance (Chautauqua County, 2016).

Coordination of emergency evacuation operations is the responsibility of local law enforcement and guided by Chautauqua County's evacuation protocols. New York State and Chautauqua County have implemented snow and storm detour routes. Ripley Central School may be opened as needed for short-term shelter, and has emergency power and food supplies (Chautauqua County, 2016).



8. HEALTH AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Section Will Cover

- Health, Emergency Services & Facilities

Data Sources Utilized

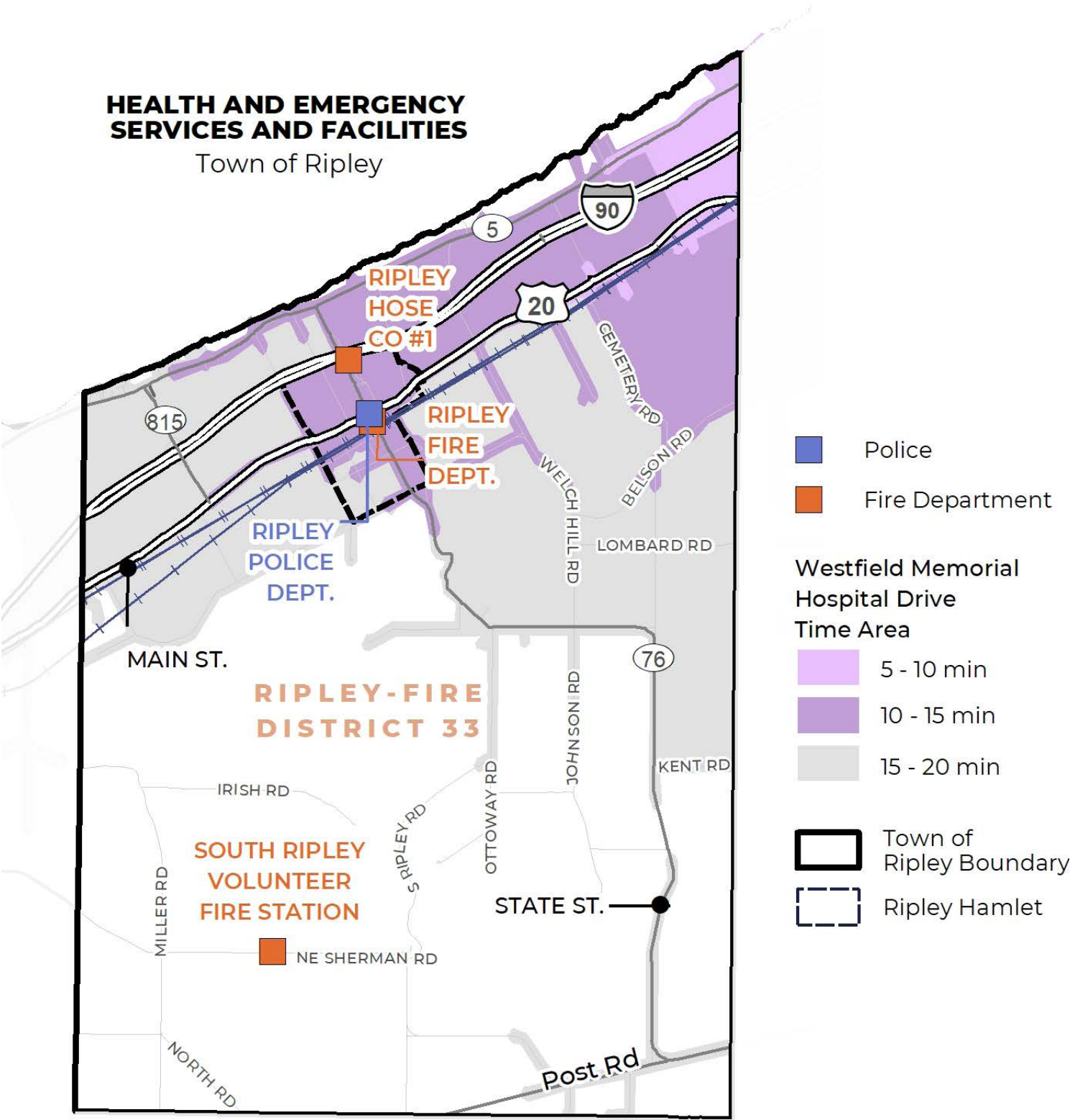
- Ripley Comprehensive Plan - 2016
- Chautauqua County LWRP - 2015
- County Comprehensive Plan - 2011

8.0 HEALTH AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Town of Ripley firefighting and rescue squad services are provided entirely by volunteers. As depicted in the inset map, there are two fire stations, one towards the center of Town at 11 South State Street and the other in South Ripley at 10268 NE Sherman Road. The entire town is covered by RIPLEY-FIRE DISTRICT 33. According to the State's Department of Health, Ripley's Fire District is currently certified to provide emergency medical technician (EMT) care through February 2025.

The only other medical services within the Town of Ripley are offered by one family practice physician on Goodrich Street. The nearest hospital is the Westfield Memorial Hospital, which is located about 15 minutes away in Westfield, NY. Other hospitals serving the area are the Brooks Memorial Hospital in Dunkirk and multiple hospitals and other medical facilities in Buffalo, NY, and Erie, PA.

The Town of Ripley has a small administrative police office for services provided by the Chautauqua County Sheriff's Department.



Source: NYSDOT 2013-2019; ESRI 2022; NYSGIS 2022; Chautauqua County 2022

Figure 3-2 Health and Emergency Services and Facilities, Town of Ripley, NY

9. PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Section Will Cover

- Parks and Public Spaces, Recreation Facilities, Passive/Active Recreation

Data Sources Utilized

- Assessment of The Condition of Resources
- A Discussion of Any Park Improvement Plans/Upgrades To Existing Parks
- Gaps/Needs In System /Access and Linkage Challenges Opportunities (E.g., Ripley Beach and Trailhead)
- Data and Mapping Needs/Sources Utilized:
 - Ripley Comprehensive Plan - 2016
 - Chautauqua County LWRP -2015
 - Westfield/Ripley – Waterfront Opp Plan - 2008
 - County Comprehensive Plan
 - NYS Open Space Conservation Plan
 - Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

9.0 PARKS AND PUBLIC SPACES, RECREATION FACILITIES, PASSIVE/ACTIVE RECREATION

Ripley Community Park is located north of Main Street along Park Avenue, a small road adjacent to North State Street. The 20.5-acre park is roughly a ten-minute walk away from the four-corner intersection of State Street and Main Street, with good pedestrian and vehicle access. There is also a small gazebo and park on the property across from the hardware store at the four corners in the middle of town (Town of Ripley, 2018).

Ripley Beach is the only designated public access point to recreate on Lake Erie within the Town of Ripley, while the rest of the shoreline is privately owned. The public can access Ripley Beach and a hiking trailhead by driving down Ripley Beach Road and parking at the road's end. As shown in the photos below, the Town installed aluminum stairs so residents can access the beach safely without scaling the bluffs.

The stairs are removed in late fall so they are not damaged by the winter wind and ice. Local residents continue to request additional and improved access to Lake Erie and the Town has applied for funding to improve Ripley Beach in the past, but there have been no projects implemented yet.

Additional private recreation opportunities within the Town or Ripley include golfing at the Lakeside Golf Course, camping at the Lakeside Campground, horseback riding at Double D.A.B. Riding Stable, hunting, fishing, and biking. Hiking is limited due to a lack of public land, parks, or trails.

The National Recreation and Park Association's (NRPA) 2023 Agency Performance Review summarizes key findings from the NRPA's Parks Metrics benchmarking study. These findings assist park and recreation professionals in effective management and planning of their operating resources and capital facilities (NRPA, 2023).

According to this review, proximity to high-quality parks and recreation opportunities is consistently identified as an important factor in people's decision regarding where to live. In fact, nine in ten U.S. adults agree that parks and recreation is an important service provided by their local government.

Some relevant and key metrics from the NRPA review reveal the following:

- The typical park and recreation agency offers one park for every 2,287 residents served
- The typical park and recreation agency has 10.8 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents.
- An overwhelming majority of park and recreation agencies have playgrounds (95 percent) and basketball courts (86 percent) in their portfolio of outdoor assets.
- The typical park and recreation agency manages or maintains 15 - miles of trails for walking, hiking, running and/or biking.
- A majority of agencies offer community centers and recreation centers;
- Two in five agencies offer senior centers.

If we compare the available parks and recreation opportunities within the Town of Ripley with these nationwide benchmarking metrics, it shows that the Town, from the standpoint of availability and size of parkland, meets or exceeds typical parks and recreation system levels.

The Ripley Community Park serves the Town (population of 2,323 residents) and is 20 acres in size which exceeds the typical 10 – acre park size identified in the NRPA findings. The Ripley Community Park also possesses some amenities that the vast majority of park and recreation agencies indicate they possess – play equipment, however there are no athletic field amenities. The Town is lacking, however, when it comes to availability of land utilized as public trails for walking, hiking, and biking.

In addition, there are no community/recreation/senior centers available to Town residents. Feedback from the public during the Comprehensive Planning process also indicated residents feel there are gaps in the existing park and recreation amenities as well as trail facilities. In additional, during the November 2022 public meeting, multiple residents requested access to pickleball facilities.

In summary, because communities have unique needs, desires and challenges, there is not one single set of standards that prescribes what an adequate number of parks and recreation resources are appropriate for a community is. However, given the documented importance of parks and recreation resources in a community,

it is clear these resources play a key role in maintaining and enhancing quality of life benefits for residents. As a result, the Town of Ripley would benefit greatly from identifying opportunities to enhance the volume, quality, and diversity of its public park, trail, and recreation resources.



10. KEY DEMOGRAPHICS & TRENDS

Section Will Cover

- Total Town Population
- Median Age and Trends in Aging
- Poverty Rate
- Median Income
- Educational Attainment

Data Sources Utilized

- US Decennial Census - 2020
- American Community Survey Estimates - 2021

Planning for a community that isn't growing can be difficult and bring a far different set of challenges than planning for one which is experiencing an increase in population. The Town's priorities may be better served planning for existing and known challenges regarding infrastructure, zoning, natural resources, farmland, and other topics rather than pursuing projects and actions that would better serve Ripley if the Town were growing. Projects that tend to be more conducive to growing communities include large-scale projects aimed at targeting significant redevelopment. Sweeping master plans, expansions to roadways and significant regulatory and policy changes may not be needed in Ripley. However, strategic and thoughtful improvements to many areas with known challenges will help Ripley provide a higher quality-of-life for their existing population, regardless of its growth rate.

10.0 TOTAL TOWN POPULATION

The total population in Ripley has changed very little in the last decade or so. Ripley's 2010 population recorded in the US Decennial Census for that year was 2,415 people. The population decreased slightly to 2,323 according to the 2020 US Decennial Census for a decrease of less than 4%. This indicates that while Ripley is certainly not a growing community, it is not declining as rapidly as it was in previous decades.



POPULATION



Source: US Decennial Census



MEDIAN AGE



Source: American Community Survey

10.1 MEDIAN AGE AND TRENDS IN AGING

While Ripley's population is not growing, which is consistent with many communities in Chautauqua County and the region in general, it is also not aging at a rapid rate. In fact, recent census data indicates that the Town's median age is decreasing. This is generally inconsistent with similar rural Towns and communities across the State and it is even unusual compared to Chautauqua County.

Ripley's median age in 2020 was 37.7 years, which is a significant decrease from the same number in 2015, which was recorded as 41.8 years according to American Community Survey estimates. The same numbers for the County, however, were 41.7 in 2015 and 42.8 in 2020.

Additionally the population of younger people aged 25-24 in Ripley has increased from 8.7% of the total population in 2010 to 13.7% of the total population in 2020.

Coupled with this trend is a similarly unusual trend for rural communities in New York. Ripley's population of senior citizens - aged 65 and older - is stagnant. The share of senior adults in 2020 is the same as it was in 2015, both at 15.8% of the total population.

Taken together - albeit an oversimplification - Ripley is becoming a younger community and is no longer aging unlike many rural communities in New York State.

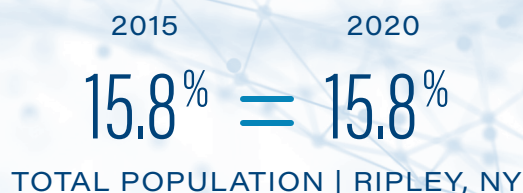
Moving forward, Ripley should be considering better ways to plan for and accommodate a younger population. This could include Town programming and events geared more toward younger individuals and young families. It could also include expanding or improving existing parks, recreation, trails, and access points to Lake Erie.



YOUTH (AGE 25-34)



SENIOR ADULTS





POVERTY RATE



10.2 POVERTY RATE

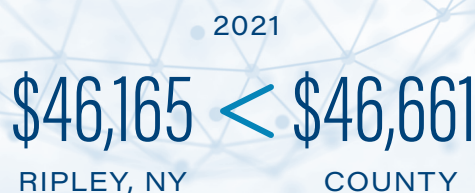
The Town's poverty rate is low in comparison with Chautauqua County's poverty rate. Ripley's poverty rate - for its population for whom poverty status is determined - was 14.1% in 2021. Chautauqua County's rate for the same year was 17.4%. Poverty in Ripley has remained largely unchanged for the last decade or so.

According to data collected from American Community Survey estimates, the poverty rate in Ripley has fluctuated between 14.1% and 14.9% since 2015. Interestingly, poverty within the Hamlet of Ripley is roughly halved at 7.3%. This indicates that much of Ripley's poverty occurs for people living on larger rural parcels outside the dense Hamlet area.

The WNY Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) reports that there are more than 27,000 individuals in Western New York who are unemployed and actively seeking employment. Most of these job-seekers indicate that "lack of experience" is the biggest factor preventing their employment. The Town should collaborate with the WNY REDC to identify workforce development programs that will help Ripley residents more ably compete for employment. This could likely include digital skills training, including programs aimed to improve proficiency in Microsoft Office programs and other Information Technology (IT) skills needed to compete for jobs in 2023 and beyond.



MEDIAN INCOME



10.3 MEDIAN INCOME

The median income in Ripley is very similar to the County's median income. The Town's median income was estimated to be \$46,165 in 2021, while the County's median income was estimated at \$46,661 in 2021. This income level, when combined with the census data on recent home values indicates that Ripley is still a community that is more affordable than other similar communities. This notion, however, does not take into account the rapidly changing housing market in 2022-2023. This is discussed further in the forthcoming Section 11.



GRADUATION RATE

THOSE OLDER THAN 25

88.6%

RIPLEY, NY



POPULATION BY RACE

WHITE

94%

RIPLEY, NY

Source: 2020 Decennial Census

11. HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

Section Will Cover

- Age of Housing
- Housing Tenure
- Median Home Value
- Vacancy Rate

Data Sources Utilized

- US Decennial Census - 2020
- American Community Survey Estimates - 2021
- Chautauqua County Realtors
- Chautauqua County Property Information Data

11.0 AGE OF HOUSING

Like many New York communities, Ripley suffers from an aging housing stock. The majority, 47%, of Ripley homes date back to pre-WWII years of 1938 or earlier.

A small percentage, 1.4%, of homes have been built within the last 10 years in the Town. An older housing stock can have many far-reaching implications and challenges.

They quickly become more expensive to regularly maintain as more significant improvements are needed to update older homes. This can have far-reaching implications on property maintenance in the Town as it may be difficult for some to afford needed improvements. Additionally, it can be harder to attract of new people into Ripley without some newer housing available.

11.1 HOUSING TENURE

The vast majority of Ripley's housing stock are classified as owner-occupied housing units. Nearly 80% of the residential structures in Ripley are owner-occupied units, according to the 2021 American Community Survey estimates. These estimates are consistent with the estimates from recent years.

This is indicative of a community with high homeownership, as these owner-occupied units are those where a person or group owns and occupies the building. With these estimates being mostly stable year-over-year, it also is indicative of a community where renter-occupied housing is not necessarily increasing.

11.2 MEDIAN HOME VALUE

Home values have changed significantly since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Home values have increased dramatically in most communities in the US in 2021-2023. Data in this section are intended to reflect an accurate depiction of housing in Ripley while also recognizing that the housing market is currently volatile in 2023.

Census estimates indicate that home values in Ripley still are reflective of an affordable community. However, the most recent sale data provided by the Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Board of Realtors indicate that housing is not nearly as affordable in Ripley as it has been in past years.

Sale price for homes in Ripley increased by nearly 40% in 2023 from the same period in 2022. The median sale price is now more than \$130,000, which is a significant increase from \$95,000 in 2022 and an even greater increase from the most recent Census estimates in the American Community Survey. Combining the most recent median sales price with median income for the Town provides a metric, known as a value-to-income ratio, for housing affordability

for owner-occupied housing. Ripley's is 2.86. Generally, any value-to-income ratio that is lower than 3.00 is considered to be affordable. The figure for Ripley, however, is reflective of a more volatile housing market identified by unpredictable short-term price changes or rapidly changing home prices in some regions. So, while the Town may be affordable in 2023, if the housing market continues in the same way, Ripley will soon be unaffordable for some prospective home-buyers.

Ripley should consider the existing market conditions as they pursue projects and policies related to housing and affordable housing in the Town. The Town will also consider the local and large-scale impact of climate change and how this should help shape housing policies and strategies for the Town in the future. Ripley should further consider exploring these housing challenges and opportunities in a local housing needs analysis or study that could clarify specific needs and goals for the Town.

TABLE 11-1 MEDIAN HOME VALUES IN RIPLEY NY

DATASET	MEDIAN HOME VALUE	MEDIAN SALE PRICE	PERCENT CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS YEAR
2010 ACS Estimates	\$78,400	N/A	N/A
2021 ACS Estimates	\$86,700	N/A	N/A
2022 Parcel Information	\$95,000	N/A	N/A
YTD 2023 CCBR	N/A	\$132,450	+39.4%

Sources: US Census - 2021 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates; Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Board of Realtors (CCBR) - Sold Home Data



HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING RATIO



RIPLEY, NY

Any Value-to-Income Ratio that is Lower than 3.00 is Considered to be Affordable.



VACANCY RATE

2010 2020

18% < 23%

RIPLEY, NY





The background image shows a rustic wooden building under construction. Two men are visible in the lower-left foreground, looking towards the building. The building has a complex wooden frame with many beams and supports. The scene is dimly lit, with a blueish tint. The text 'OUR DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK' is overlaid in large, bold, yellow capital letters on the right side of the image.

OUR DECISION- MAKING FRAMEWORK

SECTION II

1. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Section Will Cover

- Community Engagement Process
- Community Open Houses
- Online Survey

Data Sources Utilized

- Qualitative Community Feedback
- Feedback from Project Steering Committee

1.0 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The importance of community involvement in the comprehensive planning process cannot be overstated. A vision for the future of Ripley must be developed and desired by its community members.

The community vision, values and planning principles contained in this section set the stage for the remainder of the comprehensive plan including important Town priorities and associated actions to achieve desired outcomes.

1.1 FIRST COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE

The first round of community engagement was held at Quincy Cellars in November 2022. The meeting was held as an informal community open house without a formal presentation.

This format allowed community members to 'drop in' at any time between a 2-hour window and engage in several activities across several stations with assistance from consultants and project steering committee members.

More than 30 community residents came to the open house to provide their feedback at three different stations.

The following stations were included at the open house:

- Postcard to Aunt Sally - Community Visioning
- Who We Are and Who We Want to Be - Community Values

- One Big Thing - One Thing You'd Like to See Happen From this Plan

Each station provided an opportunity for community members to give feedback.

Postcard to Aunt Sally

At the open house's visioning station, community members were asked to write a postcard to a fictional 'Aunt Sally' to tell her how much the Town of Ripley had changed. This activity garnered detailed written responses that informed the vision, values, and principles. The Vision Statement on pg. 46 was crafted using words and phrases provided in the postcard responses.

The community visioning activity was integral to helping the project team develop the community vision (pg. 46) for Ripley. Some of the most popular and repeated topics discussed during that exercise included:

- Locally-sourced food
- Friendly people
- Thriving agriculture
- Beautiful rural character
- Successful shops and businesses
- Planters, street trees, sidewalks
- Showcasing local talent, including local artists who could contribute to public art

Who We Are & Who We Want to Be

The values station served two purposes. The first was to help identify existing *core* values that were important in Ripley. The second purpose was to identify *aspirational* values that should be an emphasis for the Town's future.

Community members in attendance selected up to 3 core values and up to 3 aspirational values from a list of 25 possible values. The most-selected options were included in this section and further elaborated to provide guidance for future Town decisions.



One Big Thing

The third station was comprised of a large printed map of the Town. Community members were asked to identify 'one big thing' that they would like to see included and addressed in the comprehensive plan.

If a community member identified a 'big thing' that could be applied geographically to the map, a sticker was applied to the map with a corresponding comment describing the big thing.

1.2 SECOND COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE

A second community open house was held in March 2023. This open house included draft materials for the comprehensive plan ranging from draft priorities with associated actions for each of the priorities. Feedback was also provided for the draft vision, values and planning principles. This feedback - combined with the visioning data collected at the first open house - helped ensure that Ripley's decision-making framework is community-based.

Nearly 40 community members attended the open house to provide their feedback on the draft materials. Their insights provided invaluable information that helped crystallize and finalize the latter section of the comprehensive plan.



The images above were taken at the March 2023 public open house. The open house was well-attended with nearly 40 community members attending to provide support and/or feedback on draft materials for the plan.

1.3 ONLINE COMMUNITY SURVEY

The Town held an online community survey in the winter of 2023. This 10-question survey was created to gauge perspective and understanding on a few specific topic areas. The survey and its results are included in Appendix A of this plan.

Questions were included to gain public thoughts and perspective on streets, sidewalks, Main Street, housing and property maintenance. Some of the key takeaways from the survey responses informed the development of the priorities and actions in the following section of the plan.

Some of the most prevalent takeaways from the survey included:

- A desire to encourage mixed use development on Main Street and Shortman Road;
- A need to pursue policies and actions to address property maintenance in the Hamlet;
- Increased housing variety is needed for the Hamlet area including senior housing and rental housing options;
- Pedestrian facilities including sidewalks and crosswalks still need improving in the Hamlet; and
- Broadband internet should be addressed in the future.

We Are

2010-today



Who We Want to Be

2022-beyond



2. VISION, VALUES & PRINCIPLES

Section Will Cover

- A Vision for the Future of Ripley
- Core and Aspirational Values
- Planning Principles

Data Sources Utilized

- Qualitative Community Feedback
- Feedback from Project Steering Committee

2.0 A VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF RIPLEY

Why a Vision?

Looking toward the future is a complex but necessary exercise for our communities. The planning process requires us to think about the direction we want our communities to go. The visioning process is a participatory one for which the goal is to identify a long-term desired outcome for the community.

The visioning process works best when it is inclusive and open to all community members and when creative methods are used to cultivate a vision that is not only desired but also achievable. A community vision does not need to shy away from existing challenges, but it should primarily paint a positive outlook for the future.

What Makes a Good Vision?

Visioning is a beneficial activity during the development of a long-range comprehensive plan. All too often, however, vision statements are crafted in ways that lack specificity, avoid existing challenges and cloak the message in vague phrasing.

A vision should have an appropriate level of specificity that allows for an authentic statement that resonates with community members. Vague words and phrasing such as 'creating a vibrant and healthy community' should be avoided not because they are undesirable but because they are not specific enough to help guide decision-making.

Communities should also be mindful of existing challenges to further ground the vision, although it's imperative to avoid handcuffing a future vision to the problems of today.

Above all, vision statements require community feedback from residents thinking about the future that they want for their communities. A vision began to take shape during the first round of community engagement. Discussions and comments at the first public open house helped to solidify certain words and phrases that were commonly voiced and submitted at open house stations. The community vision for the future for Ripley is on the next page.

2.1 CORE VALUES

What Are Core Values?

Core values are what we believe in - the things that define who we are. They inform and shape the vision for what we want our communities to become. These values reflect the community's most deeply held beliefs. They are the foundation and starting point for our vision and typically don't change much over time.

The project team included a question and activity about core values at the first public open house. The activity asked community members to select values that they thought were existing values in Ripley. We refer to these as legacy values. The project team also asked about future values or aspirational values. Together, the legacy values - the existing values that should be retained - and the aspirational values - the values that Ripley strives to have - provide the foundation of Ripley's vision and its decision-making framework.

Most of the core values selected have positive connotations and could be important core values for Ripley to retain into the future. Some of the selected values had negative implications - 'Wasteful' and 'Judgmental.' While Ripley should not seek to become more wasteful or judgmental, it's important to note that multiple community members felt strongly enough to select those as existing values they see in the Town.

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF RIPLEY

Ripley invests in its future through a variety of projects that bolster strengths, resolve issues, and capitalize on opportunities. The Town's clean drinking water, sewer connections, improved sidewalks and streets all contribute to high-quality infrastructure in Ripley. Main Street has a variety of small shops and businesses in the Hamlet center. Development along Shortman Road provides dining, lodging, and housing opportunities near the interstate and serves as a gateway into Ripley. New and improved Town parkland contributes an element of outdoor recreation that capitalizes on the Town's ample rural character and green space. Ripley is as beautiful as ever with policies and projects that enhance scenic corridors, encourage local public art, and promote thriving agriculture.

Ripley's Legacy Values

Of the most-selected core values from the open house, the following were included as important to retain for Ripley's future.

- **We are hard-working.** Ripley is a community of hard-working people. The Town of Ripley will pursue and apply appropriate solutions to existing and future challenges regardless of their complexity or difficulty.
- **We are family-oriented.** The Town strives to provide parks, recreation, events, and activities that cater to people of all ages. Ripley will continue to pursue and expand programming and recreation options that appeal to young people and families.
- **We are friendly.** Those who live in or visit Ripley see it as a community of friendly people. The Town will continue to provide a friendly and welcoming atmosphere to new and old residents, visitors and tourists, and those who are just passing through.
- **We are unique.** The community of Ripley includes artists, creatives, farmers, agri-tourism, vineyards, and people of all ages. The Town will highlight and leverage the unique aspects of Ripley's community and populace to benefit future projects and endeavors.

2.2 ASPIRATIONAL VALUES

What Are Aspirational Values?

If legacy values are the things that define present-day Ripley, aspirational values are the things that express what these two communities should value in the future. They should complement or update core values to help achieve aspects of the community vision that are not reflected in existing policy or practice. They help to implement the vision and should be actively considered during decision-making.

The project team included a question about aspirational values in the community survey. The question asked community members to select values to which Ripley should aspire. These informed the aspirational values for the comprehensive plan.

Ripley's Aspirational Values

Of the most-selected core values from the open house, the following were included as important ones to retain for Ripley's future.

- **We will be self-reliant.** Future projects and endeavors should be planned strategically, budgeted properly and pursued diligently by the Town. In this way, Ripley can be confident that their own efforts will lead to positive projects and development for the Town
- **We will be innovative.** The Town will pursue and encourage projects that are modern and cutting-edge such as energy-efficient infrastructure and new and emerging industry and agriculture practices and programs
- **We will be prepared.** Ripley will improve their readiness for needed upgrades and improvements to Town infrastructure, facilities, parkland, streets and sidewalks. This will include attention to infrastructure and facilities that will make Ripley more resilient to extreme weather events
- **We will be entrepreneurial.** The Town will accommodate economic development in strategic locations in Ripley and will seek to cultivate an atmosphere that encourages a wide variety of businesses.

2.3 PLANNING PRINCIPLES

What Are Planning Principles?

The planning principles will further help to guide decision-making for Ripley. The Town should use these principles to evaluate future challenges - both the ones that the Town anticipates and ones that are unforeseeable - and assist them in making progress toward the community vision on page 2-7.

The core and aspirational values are also rooted in the planning principles, which were developed to reflect both the values and the Town's vision. Decision-makers should consider the planning principles when making policy-related decisions and when reviewing projects for the Town.

The planning principles for Ripley are:

- 1. We will provide efficient services to community members.** Ripley will work to improve the quality of life for all residents, and part of this objective involves improving and maintaining existing infrastructure and services. This should be a continuing priority for the Town.
- 2. We will have streets that comfortably accommodate all users.** Streets should provide safe and comfortable access to all users. While all streets should consider pedestrian and bicycle facilities, the Town should emphasize projects and policies that improve pedestrian and bicycle access in the Hamlet and other denser areas in the Town.
- 3. We will enhance and preserve our open space and rural character.** Ripley has significant open space, active farmland, and rural viewsheds and character that should be preserved and protected. Projects that emphasize these rural qualities should be prioritized.
- 4. We will protect our active farmland.** Ripley is a community of active farms and agriculture. Active farmland is still a dominant land use in the Town and will continue to be important to Ripley's economy and industry. The Town should seek actions and outcomes that will protect active farmland and improve conditions for future farming and agricultural uses.
- 5. We will protect our natural resources.** Natural resources in Ripley include its creeks, the Lake Erie shoreline, forested lands, wetlands, and more. Preserving and protecting these natural resources will be a point of emphasis for the Town.
- 6. We will increase and improve our parks and recreation options.** Ripley will prioritize future projects that include new parkland and amenities as well as improvements to existing parks and trails. This could include consideration for increased pedestrian connectivity and sidewalks, bicycle parking, and expanded or improved vehicle parking.
- 7. We will pursue activities and events for people of all ages.** The comprehensive planning process revealed a desire and need for more activities and events that cater to people of all ages. This principle should serve as a reminder that projects and policies that are amenable and popular with all age groups will be looked at more favorably by the Town of Ripley.



OUR PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

SECTION III

1. PRIORITIES

Section Will Cover

- Developing Priorities
- Ripley's Priorities

Data Sources Utilized

- Qualitative Community Feedback
- Feedback from Project Steering Committee
- Data and Inventory from Section I: Our Community Profile

1.0 DEVELOPING PRIORITIES

Why Prioritize?

Communities are constantly changing as new issues emerge and opportunities present themselves. However, it is important to manage that change and to take a proactive approach in addressing the things that are known and ones that should be planned for in the present day. Some existing issues and opportunities are more pressing than others and require more immediate attention.

These issues and opportunities comprise the basis for Ripley's priorities. After thorough analysis of qualitative and quantitative data, five distinct priorities were developed to assist the Town in organizing work programs and actions that address key issues, capitalize on existing opportunities, and leverage important assets in a manner consistent with the Town's vision, values and planning principles.

How Were The Priorities Chosen?

The project team and steering committee considered all collected data to draft the pressing priorities on which Ripley needs to act. Initially, a list of 10 possible priorities was compiled based on the data and - more significantly - feedback from the first community workshop, community survey, and insights from the project steering committee. Once the list was compiled, the project steering committee members ranked

them in order of importance from 1 to 10 with 1 being the most important priority and 10 being the least important. The 5 most highly-ranked priorities - shown on the right side of this poster - were selected for inclusion in the comprehensive plan. Actions for each priority were then developed for each of these priorities.

Are These the Only Priorities?

These are not - and should not - be the only priority areas or topics that matter for the future of Ripley. However, they are the ones that should be considered the most pressing and, thus, that is why they are being included and addressed most distinctly in the comprehensive plan. There are several additional actions in the comprehensive plan that are not associated with the 5 selected priorities. Nevertheless, these actions should be viewed as important and should be similarly pursued by Ripley for future implementation.

1.1 RIPLEY'S PRIORITIES

1 Infrastructure

The project team and steering committee have identified several important Town infrastructure systems that need improvement. This includes sewer, drinking water, broadband internet, sidewalks and pedestrian facilities and others.

2 Shortman Road

Momentum on Shortman Road is something the project team and steering committee have determined to be of great significance. Capitalizing on this momentum and preparing this area for potential future growth and development is an important undertaking for the Town of Ripley.



3 Ripley Hamlet & Main Street

Improving the Hamlet and Main Street is an important priority for the Town. Pedestrian connectivity, quality design, and permitting and encouraging housing growth in and in and around the Hamlet will be key pursuits that reflect community values and help reinforce the Town's planning principles.

4 Property Maintenance

Improving property maintenance practices is a priority for the Town and should include a varied approach that utilizes both carrot and stick. The actions included in this plan will help Ripley identify key strategies and resources to improve property maintenance for private property in the Town.

5 Housing & Neighborhoods

Providing and permitting a variety of housing types and options to existing and future residents is a high priority for Ripley. The aging population in the Town will eventually require more housing flexibility to age in place or remain in the community. Pursuing cluster residential development will also conserve important open space and allow for efficient use of infrastructure.

2. FUTURE LAND USE

Section Will Cover

- Future Land Use Categories & Map

Data Sources Utilized

- Feedback from Community, Stakeholders and Project Steering Committee
- Data and Inventory from Section I: Our Community Profile

2.0 FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES

Unlike a community's zoning map, the future land use map does not adhere to property/parcel lines and it does not illustrate clear regulatory boundaries. Future land use maps will be used to inform zoning changes and an overall update to the Town's zoning code, but they do not offer any regulatory power on their own.

Ripley's future land use categories were developed through the planning process, which yielded feedback from project steering committee members, key community stakeholders and input from community members during the first round of public engagement.

Agricultural Land

Agriculture continues to be a dominant land use in Ripley. Knowing this, the Town is prepared to protect active farmland and consider the implications and possibilities of future agricultural needs and emerging agricultural uses and practices.

Cluster Residential

Ripley determined housing to be a priority for this comprehensive plan, particularly increasing the variety of housing type in strategic locations in the Town. Cluster residential development will provide the Town with the legal framework that would encourage the development of residences that efficiently use existing land.

Hamlet Residential

This designation would encourage and allow for residential uses beyond single-unit or single-family homes and could include two-unit homes, three-unit homes, townhomes and other mixed residential uses.

Lakeside Residential

The Lakeside Residential designation would apply to existing land that is used residentially along the lake.

Mixed-Use

The Mixed Use designation would encourage a variety of mixed uses that reinforce quality design and a character of development that is engaging and friendly to pedestrians, motorists, and bicyclists. A mixed-use overlay or floating zone could also be a potential tool to provide more flexibility to mixed-use development in the Town.

Light Industrial

Land in this area is conducive to future light industrial uses. This land will likely be the most desirable area in the Town for industry and other compatible businesses and uses.

Conservation

Land in this area is neither suitable for or likely to attract future development. Additionally, this land includes important wetlands and creeks that should be conserved or used for passive recreation.

FUTURE LAND USE

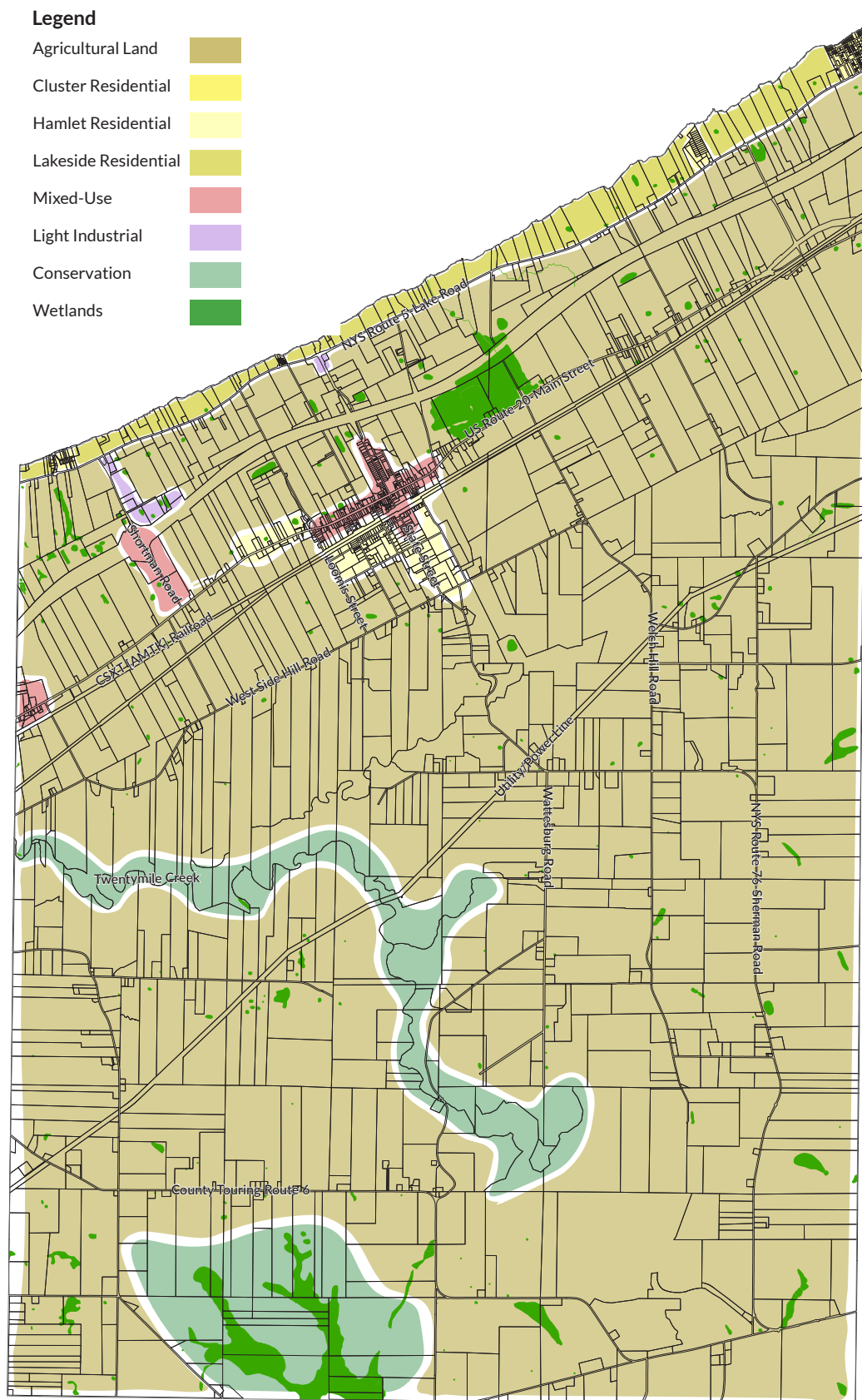


Figure 2-1 Future Land Use, Town of Ripley, NY

3. ACTION PLANS

Section Will Cover

- Action Plans for each of Ripley's Priorities

Data Sources Utilized

- Feedback from Project Steering Committee
- Data and Inventory from Section I: Our Community Profile

3.0 INFRASTRUCTURE ACTION PLAN

1 Expand Drinking Water Districts and Improve Facilities



Ripley should continue expanding water districts that supply public drinking water so fewer homes rely on private wells tapped into the ground water supply. This should also help improve quality of life for all residents through improved water quality which will help improve public health.

2 Expand and Improve Sewer System and Facilities



The Town should continue expanding the public wastewater septic system throughout the Town so fewer homes rely on individual septic systems, which are often cost prohibitive to improve or replace, but are also often necessary for people to be able to sell and buy homes in the community. Community and steering committee feedback indicated that the most immediate needs for sewer expansion are along Shortman Road. This will help the Town capitalize on any development momentum in this area.

Additionally, the Town's Sewer Treatment Plant needs upgrades and improvements. This should be studied further to determine needed improvements. If appropriate, the Town should utilize the recent Chautauqua Water & Wastewater Cooperative Pilot project to help fund any improvements identified through a feasibility study or engineering report for the sewer treatment plant.

3 Install Green Infrastructure in the Hamlet and on Main Street



Ripley should plan, install, and maintain green infrastructure projects at strategic locations throughout the Town so stormwater is absorbed by the green infrastructure rather than entering the sewer system, which has overwhelmed the wastewater treatment plant in the past. Green infrastructure systems must be maintained in order to retain their effectiveness over time, so this project requires a plan for future maintenance. Green infrastructure installations should be prioritized in the denser areas of the Town including along Main Street, Shortman Road and in the Hamlet of Ripley.

Who is Involved	Timeline	Funding Sources	Cost Estimates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ripley Town Board ■ Ripley Planning Board ■ Chautauqua County Planning ■ Ripley Water/Sewer ■ NYDEC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1-3 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Town of Ripley General Fund ■ WIIA Program ■ WQIP Program ■ IMG Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cost will be dependent on a variety of factors including: potential new water lines, connections to existing water districts, repairs to existing infrastructure, etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ripley Town Board ■ Ripley Planning Board ■ Chautauqua County Planning ■ Ripley Water/Sewer ■ NYDEC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1-3 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Town of Ripley General Fund ■ WIIA Program ■ WQIP Program ■ IMG Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cost will be dependent on a variety of factors including: location for new sewer systems, connections to existing sewer infrastructure, repairs to existing infrastructure, etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ripley Town Board ■ Ripley Planning Board ■ Ripley Highway Superintendent ■ Chautauqua County Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 3-5 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Town of Ripley General Fund ■ Private Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Costs will vary depending on combination with redevelopment and streetscape projects.

4 Determine the Feasibility of Developing a Second Reservoir for Drinking Water



The Town should work with an accredited engineering firm to conduct a feasibility study on developing a second reservoir for drinking water. Any feasibility study carried out should include a determination of the capacity of the existing reservoir, suitability analysis to determine optimal location for a new reservoir, cost estimates for engineering and construction, among other factors.

The New York Department of Health has a Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) that provides financial incentives for public water systems to undertake needed drinking water infrastructure improvements. New York's Water Infrastructure Improvement (WIIA) program provides grants to help municipalities fund critical wastewater and drinking water infrastructure projects. NYDEC offers grants to local governments and soil and water conservation districts to help pay for the initial planning of non-agricultural nonpoint source water quality improvement projects. The NYDEC Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP) program funds projects that protect drinking water sources.

5 Improve Sidewalks and Pedestrian Facilities in the Hamlet and on Main Street



Conduct and implement a sidewalk improvement plan within the Town's Main Street central business district to fix deteriorating sidewalks and improve walkability. There are several significant gaps in the sidewalk that must be addressed to improve connections for Hamlet residents. The sidewalk along Main Street, particularly west of State Street, has some challenging areas in need of maintenance and replacement. The sidewalk and access to the former Stop 'n Shop property is dated and in some disrepair. In addition to replacing sidewalk along this stretch, the Town should also consider planting a new tree lawn to match the character on either side of this property.

6 Implement a Public Education Program for Renewable Energy



Plan and implement a public education program around current and future renewable energy projects in the Town: how they work, how much energy they generate, revenue details, etc. In this way, residents can have a better understanding of how solar projects are being developed in the Town and how they can benefit taxpayers now and in the future. NYSERDA's Clean Energy Communities grant program and Clean Energy Fund supports New York communities with tools and resources to bring energy savings and economic opportunities. NYSERDA's Clean Energy Hubs support communities throughout New York State with their specific clean energy needs. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development program offers loans and grants that support renewable energy systems and energy efficiency improvements.

7 Improve and Invest in Broadband Infrastructure



Technology infrastructure can be an important part of municipal government and should be considered by Ripley in the future. The Town should invest in broadband infrastructure, including 5G fiber-optic cable and should tap into existing resources and grant programs.

Who is Involved	Timeline	Funding Sources	Cost Estimates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ripley Town Board ■ Chautauqua County Planning ■ NYDEC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1-3 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ WIIA Program ■ WQIP Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The cost for a feasibility study/ engineering report for a second reservoir could range between \$40,000-\$65,000. ■ Costs for an additional reservoir could vary and would be dependent on the results of the feasibility study.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ripley Town Board ■ Ripley Planning Board ■ Ripley Highway Superintendent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1-3 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ HCR - CDBG ■ TAP ■ CHIPS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The cost for all sidewalk repairs and improvements in the Hamlet could range between \$200,000-\$300,000.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ripley Town Staff ■ Ripley Town Board ■ Ripley Planning Board ■ NYSERDA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1-5 years and ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ NYSERDA Clean Energy Communities ■ USDA Rural Development Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Much of this cost will be represented by staff time and initiative.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ripley Planning Board ■ Ripley Town Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 3-5 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ NYSERDA ■ New NY Broadband Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Costs will vary depending on needs and available funding.

3.1 SHORTMAN ROAD ACTION PLAN

8 Amend Town Zoning to Allow Mixed Use Development



This should align with future land uses identified during comprehensive plan development and identified on the map on page 57. Possible re-zoning should consider suburban transition/mixed use, highway commercial uses, and multi-unit housing closer to US Route 20. Promoting mixed use development in this area could capitalize on a wider variety and mix of land uses beyond highway commercial uses. This new zoning could also be combined with design and development regulations that encourage walkability, cross-site access, bikeability, landscaping and screening.

9 Adopt Regulations that Encourage Quality Design and Development



Development regulations for a mixed use district in this area should consider a variety of site and design components including interior parking lot design, building placement, building orientation, signage, pedestrian connectivity, and others. Design or development standards should encourage walkability and promote a more compact mixed-commercial area along Shortman Road.

10 Identify Appropriate Gateway Features and Signage on Shortman Road



Gateway features should include welcome signage and landscaping and consideration should also be given to public art, community space (seating, pedestrian connections, etc.) depending on the context of the location. This action should draw on previous planning efforts and should engage a variety of stakeholders.

Who is Involved	Timeline	Funding Sources	Cost Estimates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ripley Town Board ■ Ripley Planning Board ■ Ripley Building/Zoning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1-3 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ NYS Climate Smart Communities ■ Town of Ripley General Fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ \$65,000-\$80,000 for a complete update to the Town Zoning Code. ■ Funding for this project would be integrated into an overall update to the Town's Zoning Code.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ripley Town Board ■ Ripley Planning Board ■ Ripley Building/Zoning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1-3 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ NYS Climate Smart Communities ■ Town of Ripley General Fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ \$65,000-\$80,000 for a complete update to the Town Zoning Code. ■ Funding for this project would be integrated into an overall update to the Town's Zoning Code.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ripley Town Board ■ Ripley Planning Board ■ Chautauqua County Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 3-5 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ NYS Environmental Protection Fund: Parks, Preservation and Heritage Grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Funding for this project will depend on desired and needed signage, wayfinding, landscaping and/or other amenities at important gateways. ■ Funding could range between \$200,000-\$300,000.

3.2 RIPLEY HAMLET & MAIN STREET ACTION PLAN

11 Establish a Hamlet Zoning District



Ripley should establish a new zoning district in the Town that applies to land in and around the Hamlet center. This district should permit and encourage mixed use development that focuses more on quality design for future development with less focus on specific land uses. Retail and commercial uses should be defined and permitted in a flexible way, and a wide variety of residential uses should be permitted. Encouraging a wider variety of uses - combined with an improved streetscape - will be a more welcoming environment for future developers, which could lead to redevelopment of some tired properties that have experienced significant disinvestment in recent years. Ripley should also consider either a floating or an overlay zone as a possible tool to encourage flexibility and mixed-use development in the Hamlet and along Main Street.

12 Establish Development Regulations for the Hamlet



In addition to a zoning district for the Hamlet area, Ripley should establish design and development regulations that ensure the Ripley Hamlet will require development that reflects a traditional Hamlet Main Street. This should include, among others, regulations, and standards for:

- Building Placement – Where is the building situated on a lot?
- Building Orientation – Where does the front of the building faces?
- Front Entrances – Do they connect to existing sidewalk?
- Façade Composition – Are there breaks in the façade/front wall?
- Transparency – Are ground floor windows required and to what percentage?
- Pedestrian Circulation and Access
- Landscaping and Screening
- Off-Street Parking

13 Improve and Increase Bicycle and Pedestrian Connections to the Hamlet



Possible connections and facilities should be considered for Main Street, State Street and NYS Route 5. Additionally, the Town should consider improving pedestrian connections over the CSX railroad line from the southern portion of the Hamlet. This will require coordination and collaboration with CSX, but the sidewalk on both sides of the railroad line should be improved and maintained.

Who is Involved	Timeline	Funding Sources	Cost Estimates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ripley Town Board ■ Chautauqua County Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1-3 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ NYS Climate Smart Communities ■ Town of Ripley General Fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ \$65,000-\$80,000 for a complete update to the Town Zoning Code. ■ Funding for this project would be integrated into an overall update to the Town's Zoning Code.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ripley Town Board ■ Ripley Planning Board ■ Ripley Building/Zoning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1-3 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ NYS Climate Smart Communities ■ Town of Ripley General Fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ \$65,000-\$80,000 for a complete update to the Town Zoning Code. ■ Funding for this project would be integrated into an overall update to the Town's Zoning Code.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ripley Town Board ■ Ripley Planning Board ■ Ripley Highway Superintendent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 5-10 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ HCR - CDBG ■ TAP ■ CHIPS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cost for sidewalk and pedestrian facility improvements should be combined with Action Item #5 (\$200,000-\$300,000) ■ Cost for bicycle facilities will be dependent on type and length of facility.

3.3 PROPERTY MAINTENANCE ACTION PLAN

14 Pursue Best Practice Improvements to the Property Maintenance Code



Ripley should establish a new zoning district in the Town that applies to land in and around the Hamlet center. This district should permit and encourage mixed use development that focuses more on quality design for future development with less focus on specific land uses. Retail and commercial uses should be defined and permitted in a flexible way, and a wide variety of residential uses should be permitted.

15 Explore and Promote Opportunities for Property Owners to Pursue Improvements



The Town should begin the process of documenting, promoting, and determining any needed match for appropriate funding programs that are focused on property improvement projects. This could include grants and opportunities through the State including ReStore NY, Empire State Development, CDBG, etc.

16 Consider Low-Interest Loan Programs to Help Property Owners Fund Improvements



Applicable improvements should be limited to exterior projects that are smaller-scaled and more easily and readily funded. These could include front porch and entranceway improvements, front walkways, yard and weed removal, etc.

17 Consider a Town-led Initiative for a Day to Discard Junk



The Town should consider providing time, materials, space and other necessary components for property owners and renters to be able to discard unwanted items. This could include a central location for dropping off items to discard. The Town should coordinate with other public and private entities to determine appropriate transportation and locations to recycle or junk unwanted items.

18 Identify and Encourage Programs that Help Existing Commercial Properties



This could include grants and opportunities at both the State and Federal levels. An ideal funding resource or program would be one that helps thriving businesses improve their properties and contribute to sustained economic growth in the Town.

Who is Involved	Timeline	Funding Sources	Cost Estimates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ripley Town Board Ripley Building/Zoning Chautauqua County Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-3 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town of Ripley General Fund NYS Climate Smart Communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cost to develop a new property maintenance chapter could range between \$25,000-\$35,000.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ripley Town Staff Ripley Town Board Ripley Building/Zoning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3-5 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ReStore NY ESD HCR -CDBG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Much of this cost will be represented by staff time and initiative.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ripley Town Staff Ripley Town Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3-10 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town of Ripley General Fund. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Much of this cost will be represented by staff time and initiative.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ripley Town Staff Ripley Town Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-3 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town of Ripley General Fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Much of this cost will be represented by staff time, volunteer time, and initiative.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ripley Town Staff Ripley Town Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-3 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ESD HCR - CDBG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Much of this cost will be represented by staff time, volunteer time, and initiative.

3.4 HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS ACTION PLAN

19 Permit and Encourage Mixed Housing Types in and Near the Hamlet



Ripley should permit a wider range of housing types in the Hamlet. This could include house-scale residential types such as townhomes, two-unit homes and three-unit homes. These housing options should be permitted in the Hamlet District. This should align with the future land use map. Encouraging a wider variety of permitted housing types will provide a more flexible environment for future residential development.

20 Permit and Encourage Multi-Unit Residential Development Near Shortman Road



The Town should permit a wider range of housing types along Shortman Road as well. This could include townhomes, condominiums, apartments and other multi-unit housing options. This should align with the future land use map.

21 Evaluate and Consider Improvements to Cluster Development Regulations



Cluster regulations should be permitted and encouraged in areas where this type of development would be desirable. Areas with capable connections to existing infrastructure systems including sewer, water, streets, sidewalks and others should be considered. Additionally, these areas should have ample open space on which to both develop and preserve. Cluster residential regulations should include provisions for the layout and configuration of residential lots, buildings, roads, utilities, parks, landscaping and other features to preserve and complement natural landscapes and existing open space.

Ripley will evaluate existing cluster residential regulations to ensure minimum acreage, minimum lot sizes for each subdivided parcel, minimum habitable floor area, minimum yard setbacks, and minimum open space. Supplemental regulations could include a measurable metric to discern desirable density for a single cluster residential development.

Cluster residential uses should be limited to existing residential and mixed-use districts and to areas where infrastructure challenges would be fewer and farther between. This should also align with areas identified on the Future Land Use map.

Who is Involved	Timeline	Funding Sources	Cost Estimates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ripley Town Board ■ Ripley Planning Board ■ Ripley Building/Zoning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1-3 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ NYS Climate Smart Communities ■ Town of Ripley General Fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ \$65,000-\$80,000 for a complete update to the Town Zoning Code. ■ Funding for this project would be integrated into an overall update to the Town's Zoning Code.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ripley Town Board ■ Ripley Planning Board ■ Ripley Building/Zoning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1-3 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ NYS Climate Smart Communities ■ Town of Ripley General Fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ \$65,000-\$80,000 for a complete update to the Town Zoning Code. ■ Funding for this project would be integrated into an overall update to the Town's Zoning Code.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ripley Town Board ■ Ripley Planning Board ■ Ripley Building/Zoning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1-3 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ NYS Climate Smart Communities ■ Town of Ripley General Fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ \$65,000-\$80,000 for a complete update to the Town Zoning Code. ■ Funding for this project would be integrated into an overall update to the Town's Zoning Code.

3.5 ACTION PLAN FOR MISCELLANEOUS ACTION ITEMS

22 Integrate Future Agricultural Land Use and Policy with the Farmland Protection Plan



The Town will look to integrate and coordinate the implementation of this Comprehensive Plan with the Farmland Protection Plan, which is expected to be finalized in 2024. The New York Department of Agriculture and Markets' Farmland Protection Planning Grants program helps local governments create farmland protection plans that recommend policies and projects to maintain the economic viability of the agricultural industry. New York also has a Farmland Protection Implementation Grants program to support communities, on a competitive basis, to implement their farmland protection plans and purchase development rights, which is another funding source that the Town of Ripley can utilize in the future.

23 Increase Food Access



The Town of Ripley does not currently have a grocery store and residents must travel outside of Town to obtain food. Encourage economic development projects related to food and beverage-related businesses, such as year-round farmers' market, community supported agriculture share programs, a grocery store, a food pantry system, and more. This project will be dependent on market realities and a possible market and economic development study for the Town. Ripley should also seek to collaborate with neighboring communities. Collaboration with Chautauqua County will also be a key component to advancing this action item.

Who is Involved	Timeline	Funding Sources	Cost Estimates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ripley Town Board ■ Ripley Planning Board ■ Chautauqua County Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1-3 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Town of Ripley General Fund ■ Farmland Protection Implementation Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Much of this cost will be represented by staff time and initiative.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ripley Town Board ■ Ripley Planning Board ■ Chautauqua County Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1-10 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ NYS Agriculture & Markets ■ Cornell College of Agriculture and Life Sciences ■ NYS ESD ■ USDA Food Aid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Much of this cost will be represented by staff time and initiative.

3.5 ACTION PLAN FOR MISCELLANEOUS ACTION ITEMS

25 Increase Public Access to Lake Erie



Improve public access to the shore of Lake Erie by adding improvements to Ripley Beach, specifically improving the parking lot and increasing the connectivity of hiking trails. The draft 2016 Chautauqua County LWRP Ripley Beach Project envisioned a boardwalk connecting a nature center with a scenic overlook, more hiking trails, and a fire pit made of boulders located beside the water. Ripley will be developing an LWRP starting in the fall of 2023, and this project should be further detailed and considered during this update.

26 Identify Locations for Increased Access to Twentymile and Belson Creeks

Twenty Mile Creek and Belson Creek are both carved into the escarpment creating tremendous gorges which meet at Gage Gulf. The area provides great scenery, fishing opportunities, and surrounding woodlands. As proposed in the 2017 draft LWRP for the Town of Ripley, this area should be acquired and developed into a town, county or state park and recreation area that could also include cabins, gorge trails, and overlooks. NYDEC offers an Environmental Protection Fund Grant Program for Parks, Preservation, and Heritage for the acquisition, planning, development, and improvement of parks, historic properties, and heritage areas within New York State. NYDEC also runs a Community Forest Conservation Grant Program that funds municipal land acquisition for community forests.

27 Conserve and Protect Hemlock Forest



Ripley should conserve and protect the Hemlock-northern hardwood forests in the Twenty-mile Creek watershed within the Town, currently designated by NYDEC as a Significant Natural Community. The already-established eastern hemlock forests filter agricultural runoff, keep water clean along stream corridors, provide ideal water conditions for cold-water fishes to thrive, and more. NYS Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation offers an Environmental Protection Fund Grant Program for Parks, Preservation, and Heritage for the acquisition, planning, development, and improvement of parks, historic properties, and heritage areas within New York State. The NYDEC Trees for Tribes program works to create streamside buffers and reforest New York's tributaries by planting trees and shrubs along these waterways. NYDEC also runs a Community Forest Conservation Grant Program that funds municipal land acquisition for community forests.

Who is Involved	Timeline	Funding Sources	Cost Estimates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ripley Town Board ■ Ripley Planning Board ■ Chautauqua County Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1-3 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ EPF LWRP ■ Town of Ripley General Fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Eventual costs for improvements will be further detailed in the upcoming Ripley LWRP.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ripley Town Board ■ Ripley Planning Board ■ Chautauqua County Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 5-10 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Environmental Protection Fund ■ Town of Ripley General Fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Costs for this action will depend on identified locations and selected amenities for sites - e.g. parking, access to the creek, seating areas, etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ripley Town Board ■ Ripley Planning Board ■ Chautauqua County Planning ■ NYDEC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 5-10 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Environmental Protection Fund ■ Trees for Tribes Program ■ Community Forest Conservation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cost for the conservation program for Hemlock Forest could range from \$100,000-\$250,000 depending on the need for landscape and planting improvements.



An aerial photograph of a golf course. In the bottom left, a green fairway with a circular green is visible. A path or road runs horizontally across the middle of the image, separating the golf course from a dense, dark green forest that fills the upper and right portions of the frame. The overall tone is dark and moody.

SECTION IV REFERENCES

Abbreviations

CHIPS - Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program

EPF - Environmental Protection Fund

ESD - Empire State Development

HCR-CDBG - Homes and Community Renewal-Community Development Block Grant

IMG - Inter-municipal Grants

LWRP - Local Waterfront Revitalization Program

NYDEC - New York Department of Environmental Conservation

NYSERDA - New York State Energy Research and Development Authority

TAP - Transportation Alternative Program

WIIA - Water Infrastructure Improvement Program

WQIP - Water Quality Improvement Project

USDA - United States Department of Agriculture

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