

TOWN OF ALDEN

PURPOSE

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND UPDATE

The Comprehensive Master Plan is both a written and graphic statement of policy designed to guide future growth. It includes goals and objectives and offers a means for their attainment. The Plan should be flexible and be kept current, adapting to changing conditions and demands, if it is to remain viable.

Alden's original Master Plan was completed in 1973. An update was prepared in 1983 which was limited to the hamlet of Millgrove, leading up to this present townwide update of 1992.

It should be noted that this Plan Update is not intended to replace previous Plans, but rather to update and expand them. As before, the Comprehensive Master Plan includes three Plans: Land Use, Transportation, and Community Facilities.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

An essential part of the planning process is the formulation of goals and objectives for the purpose of shaping Town policy toward future development. In general, the Plan's overall goal is to ensure a prosperous community advancing both the environmental quality and the quality of life in the Town of Alden. This update incorporates the goals and objectives of the 1973 and 1983 Plans with special emphasis on the following:

- Construction of new roads and extensions to open up the northwestern sector of Alden.
- Elimination or re-design of dangerous traffic intersections.
- Expansion of tax base with provisions for commercial and industrial development.
- Provision for water service extensions in developing areas with the ultimate goal of servicing the entire Town.
- Provision for expanded park and recreation facilities.
- Provision for improved facilities for Town offices.

PLAN

COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN

As before, the Plan is comprehensive inasmuch as it is composed of three plans in one: a land use plan, a transportation plan, and a community facilities plan. These three collectively form the Comprehensive Master Plan.

The following text describes the Plan, followed by a map reproduced in full color.

LAND USE PLAN

- **Rural Agricultural.** The yellow hatch portions on the Plan indicate areas due in part to soil conditions, existing land use patterns and County agricultural districting, to be preserved primarily for agriculture and for rural or "country" residential uses. The



constant pressure of urbanization makes preservation of agricultural land of some concern. This Plan takes the position that Alden can successfully offer both life styles - rural and urban - so long as the principles of good planning are observed. Consequently, the Plan proposes that urban development be channeled into appropriate districts and that suitable rural areas be preserved for agricultural and rural residential uses. Under such concept a family may locate in Alden with a choice of life styles - rural or urban - and be reasonably assured of the neighborhood retaining that general character.

- Residential.** Two basic types of residential areas are proposed: low density shown in yellow and limited to single-family residences on lots of a minimum of 20,000 square feet, and medium density shown in the yellow ochre color and limited to two-family and multi-family residential development at densities not to exceed a maximum of 4,000 square feet per unit. Medium density residential, whenever possible, is utilized to serve as a buffer or transitional area between low density residential and non-residential areas. It should be recognized that multi-family development, unlike single-family development, assists in balancing the tax base. Conversely, single-family development typically demands more in municipal services than it returns in taxes.

- Commercial.** Broadway is the major commercial corridor through Alden and, typical with other commercial corridors, strip development is the natural development pattern which requires careful planning to be controlled. Examples of strip development are obvious along most major streets, with Niagara Falls Blvd. being a prime example and Transit Road not far behind.

Alden has used foresight in attempting to avoid this pattern by allowing generous commercial development in suitable areas and discouraging it in between, thus avoiding the continuous commercial strip which creates severe traffic problems and eventually lowers property values.

Some commercial growth has occurred in the northwestern sector of Alden, caused in part by such developments as Alden Industrial Park, the County correctional facility, the County home and infirmary, the State prison and, of course, Water District #2. Several key factors influencing Millgrove's future development are the proposed North Millgrove interchange with the Thruway and the realignment of the Wende Road/Genesee intersection - both described below under "Transportation Plan". Although some improvement has occurred since the previous Master Plan, the hamlet of Millgrove's physical appearance is still in need of a major facelift to bring it up to par. Citizen concern over appearances was documented by a recent questionnaire-- the "junkyard" appearance of the Town was the number one comment.

This update also recognizes recent commercial activity in the Genesee/Crittenden neighborhood and anticipates further growth in the near future in the vicinity of the intersection of these two major roads.

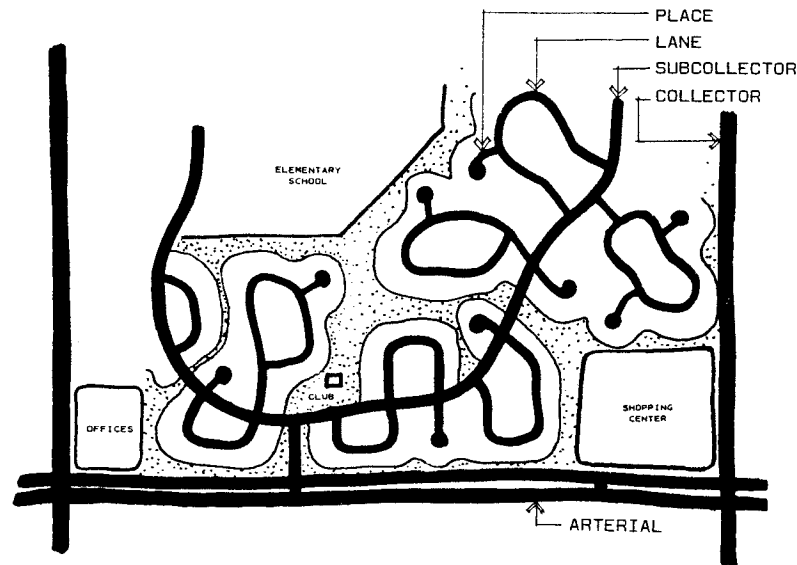
- Industrial.** Both existing and planned industrial land use is essentially confined to the northwestern sector of the Town and is dominated by Alden Industrial Park.

The area enjoys a strategic location: it is in the Walden Industrial Corridor; it has access to an active (Conrail) railroad; it is in close proximity to the Greater Buffalo International Airport and the New York State Thruway; it has a complete infrastructure including sewer and water; room for expansion is virtually unlimited. Another plus, Alden's industrial development is governed by specific Industrial Performance Standards which are part of the Town's zoning regulations.

CIRCULATION PLAN

Alden's street pattern is shown on the Plan with State and Federal highways shown in bold, solid lines, County and local streets in narrow, double lines, and proposed streets in dashed lines.

- Street Hierarchy.** In the planning of a development all streets must **not** be considered the same. Streets in larger developments, for instance, should be carefully planned according to function - each street type or classification responsive to the amount and kind of traffic it must carry. The well-planned community will



TYPICAL STREET HIERARCHY

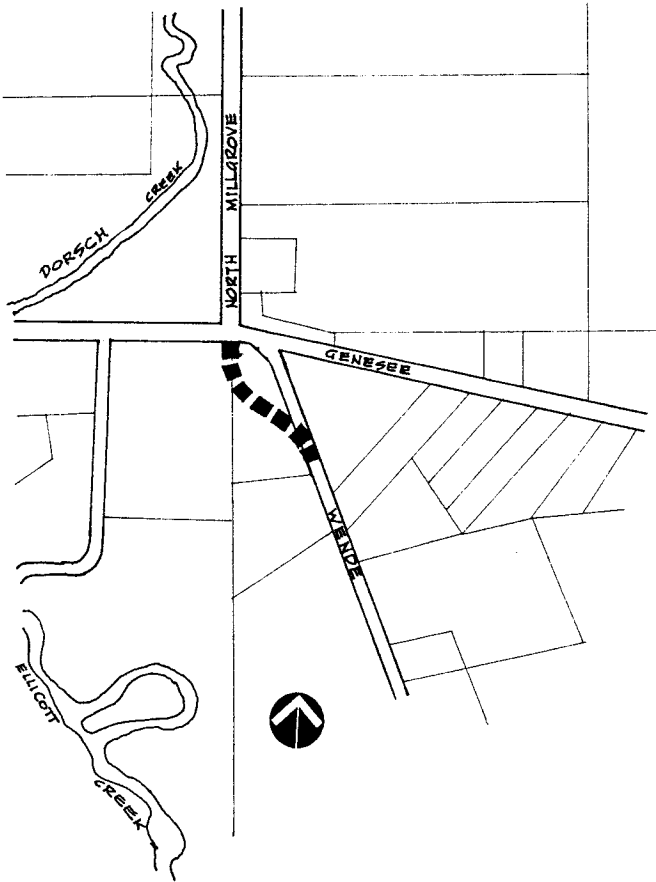
have a hierarchy of streets, serving the particular land uses as depicted in the illustration. Residential driveways, for example, would be limited to intersecting places and lanes instead of being allowed to intersect subcollectors, collectors or arterials. Also subcollectors, connecting the minor streets, provide easy, direct circulation through the neighborhood.

- Lehigh Valley Right of Way.** The Town of Alden is presently in the process of negotiating the purchase of the abandoned Lehigh Valley Railroad right of way. As is shown on the Master Plan, this corridor is planned for a proposed road connecting Town Line and Wende Roads, which would open up approximately a thousand acres to industrial and commercial development.

- Two Rod Road Extension.** The Plan shows the logical extension of Two Rod Road to the north, intersecting with the above - described Lehigh Valley right of way. This would provide a north-south connector between Broadway and the Millgrove area, opening up the land in between to residential development.



- **Genesee/Wende Road Intersection.** Poor visibility and a faulty angle make this intersection a dangerous one, and one which should be corrected before the area becomes more built up. There are several alternatives, the one shown here being the simplest and the least disruptive of the neighborhood. It will allow a connection of Wende Road with North Millgrove Road via an "S" curve, the path of which is not yet blocked by any buildings. An obviously needed traffic signal at the new intersection would complete the project.



- **Drainage.** Drainage problems are becoming more acute as the Town develops and are further aggravated by a flat topography. Alden's 1966 Townwide Drainage Study is in need of updating, including aerial mapping, in order to contain present drainage problems and to avoid future ones.

- **Fire Protection.** The Town of Alden, a fire protection district, is composed of four fire companies, all part of the HASMAT team. Two companies, Alden and Millgrove provide townwide ambulance service. Fire protection in Alden is excellent, which is evidenced by residents giving it the highest performance rating of all items in a recent survey.

- **Schools.** Elementary enrollments in the Alden Central School District have been increasing since 1985, with middle and high school enrollments decreasing. However, there has been an overall increase during the past two years, with expectations of increased elementary enrollments eventually moving up to the middle and high school levels. Any future expansion plans are expected to involve the expansion of existing buildings (Townline School has been designed for expansion). A \$4.2 million renovation program is currently in progress designed to increase efficiency of existing space.

- **Public Buildings.** The need for Town administrative space has grown to a point where it exceeds present facilities. When considering factors of cost and accessibility to the handicapped, a new building on the present site would appear a logical choice. The present site can easily accommodate another building and has the added advantage of an ideal central location.

- **Appearance.** Although the Town rated high in overall quality according to a recent survey, the appearance of junkyards and collision shops, primarily along Broadway, was a major concern of Town residents. Such concern is healthy and is welcomed by Town officials who are in the process of responding. New regulations including those requiring installation of visual barriers or buffers are forthcoming to cope with this situation.

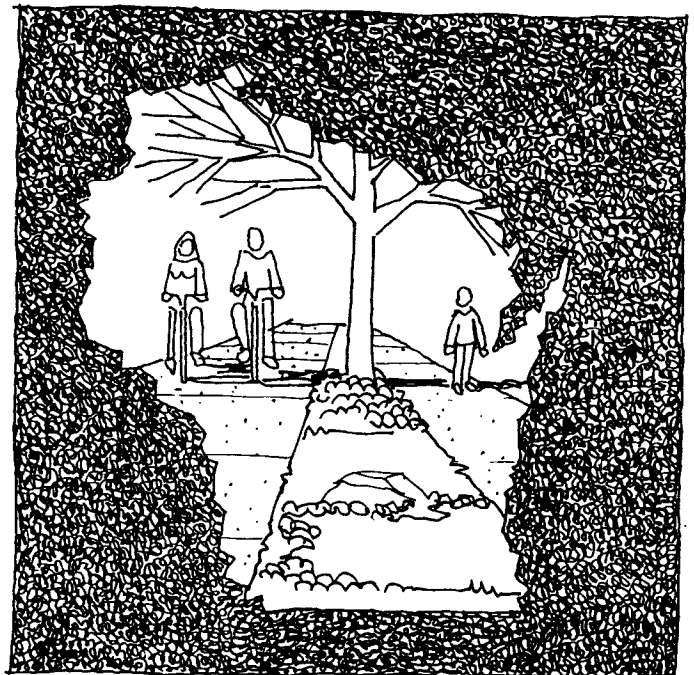
- **Recreation.** To satisfy its need for additional active recreational facilities Alden's strategy is to focus on large, centralized recreational facilities as opposed to developing scattered small units. Some sixty acres has been acquired in the vicinity of the Highway Department which nearly doubles the Town Park area. The newly acquired parkland will strategically connect with the existing Town Park via a linear park along Ellicott Creek, offering such activities as hike and bike trails and picnic areas.

- **Proposed Thruway Interchange.** A proposed interchange between exits 48-A and 49 has been discussed in the past, but put aside due to scarcity of funds. Now, with the passage of the Surface Transportation Act, this project may take on new meaning. Briefly, benefits from a thruway interchange at North Millgrove Road include the following:

1. Provides commercial and industrial development improved access to regional markets and supply centers. The Walden industrial corridor would be a prime beneficiary.
2. The State and County correctional facilities and the County Home would all benefit from improved movement of visitors, prison transfers, services and supplies.
3. Thruway exits 48-A and 49 are 16 miles apart. The proposed interchange is exactly midway between the two, in an area predominantly vacant.

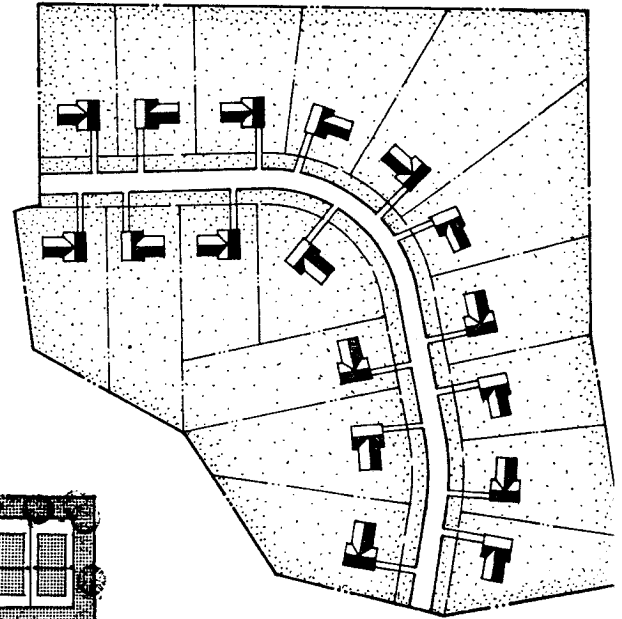
COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN

- **Utilities.** With regard to sanitary sewers, there are no immediate plans for future extensions. Water quality and quantity, however, are growing concerns in Alden. The Town has made some progress in constructing new waterlines and in extensive investigation of serious water needs and public opinion. Future waterline extensions will be based in part on this research and on the area's planned growth status as expressed by the Master Plan.

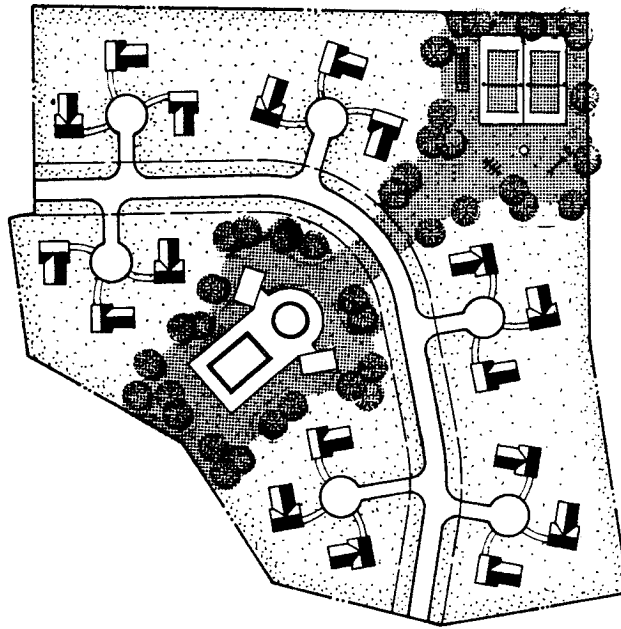


• **Cluster.** A recent development in site planning is the 'cluster design or, as it is sometimes called, the open space subdivision. Basically, clustering is the juxtaposition of homes and streets in an efficient manner that frees parcels of land for conservation in their natural state or to be developed along community recreational needs. The environment is not violated by either course and generally the monetary expenditure for development is substantially reduced. One cluster concept is illustrated in the following sketch.

Clustering often makes more efficient use of the land than the traditional subdivision, benefiting both community and individual homeowner. The community benefits through increased open space, reduced street and utility maintenance, and impoundment of land intolerant to development. Clustering is also an excellent alternative to strip development. The homeowner benefits in a variety of ways. Road patterns allow smooth through-traffic flow while keeping local streets safe and quiet. Smaller individual lots permit large areas of usable open space for recreation and for preservation of significant natural features. The smaller individual lots require less maintenance. Clustering allows interesting and flexible design, producing a more well rounded sense of community.

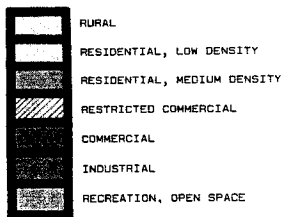
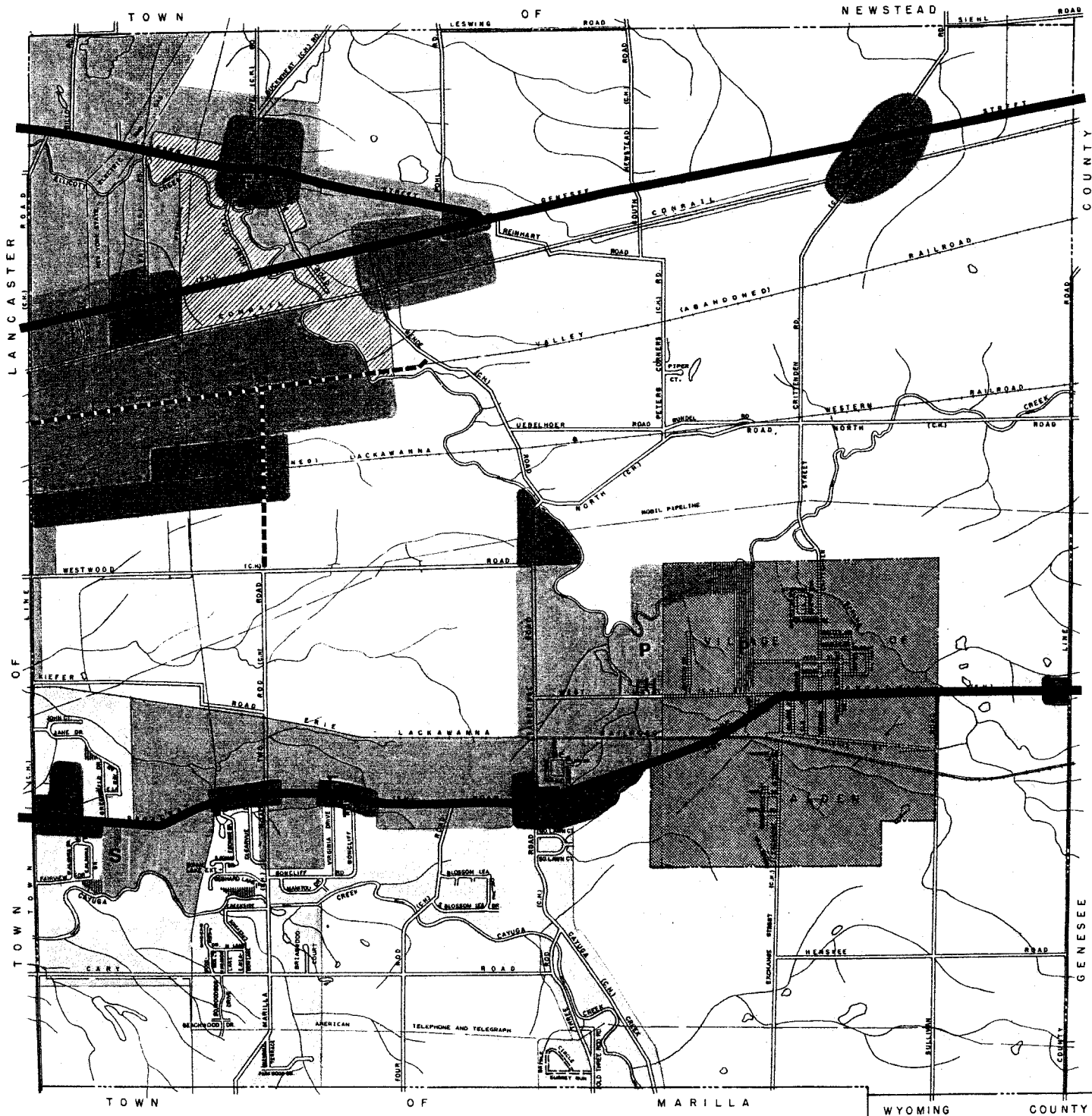


a



b

| | number of homes | common open space | recreational facilities |
|----------|-----------------|-------------------|--|
| a | 17 | - | - |
| b | 18 | 3.5 acres | swimming, wading tennis horseshoes swings, slides, etc. |



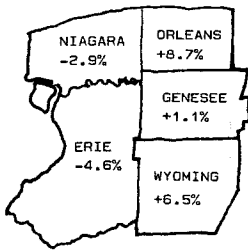
- STATE and FEDERAL HIGHWAYS
- LOCAL and COUNTY STREETS
- PROPOSED STREETS



MASTER PLAN 1992

town of **ALDEN**, erie county, new york

POPULATION COMPARISONS



POPULATION CHANGES
1980 - 1990

| | Town of Alden (incl. Village) | | | County of Erie | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|--------|----------|----------------|-----------|----------|
| | 1970 | 1980 | % change | 1970 | 1980 | % change |
| Total Population | 9,787 | 10,093 | +3.1 | 1,113,491 | 1,015,472 | -8.8 |
| Number of Households | 2,323 | 2,866 | +23.4 | 346,374 | 365,217 | +5.4 |
| Persons per Household | 3.7 | 3.2 | -13.5 | 3.15 | 2.72 | -13.7 |
| Persons Age 65+ | 1,297 | 1,221 | -5.9 | 112,656 | 126,176 | +12.0 |
| Proportion | 13.3% | 12.1% | -9.0 | 10.1% | 12.4% | +22.8 |
| Householders Age 65+ | NA | 477 | NA | 67,535 | 79,998 | +18.5 |
| Proportion | NA | 16.6% | NA | 19.5% | 21.9% | +12.3 |
| Median Age | 30.4 | 31.3 | +3.0 | 29.2 | 31.8 | +8.9 |

Source: U.S. Census, Summary Tape File #3
N.Y.S. Dept. of Commerce (Economic Development)

POPULATION

National. Nationally, our population reached 226,545,005 in 1980 (a gain of some 23 million, or 11.4% over 1970). Latest estimates from the U.S. Census indicate a population of over 250,000,000.

Very briefly: our population is aging, is better educated, and is migrating south and west. Our families are smaller, we are getting married later, and half of all women are in the work force.

Regional. According to latest census estimates, the population decline of the Buffalo-Niagara Falls Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA, Erie and Niagara Counties) appears to have stabilized. Since 1980 the area suffered a population loss of 4.9% but, according to the U.S. Census' most recent estimates, only .28% of that loss occurred during the past 12 months.

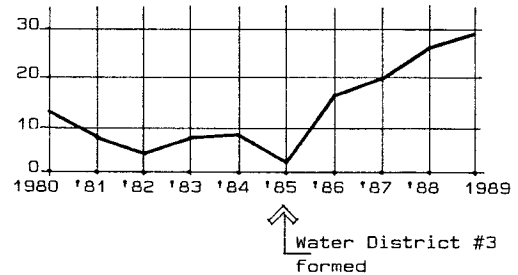
Considering recent population trends, the current resurgence of economic development and the region's considerable natural (and developed) resources, a sustained growth appears imminent. This is discussed in more detail under DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL.

Local. Although nearly ten years old, the table, POPULATION COMPARISONS, does assist in revealing certain trends. It also reveals some distinct differences between Alden and Erie County. Alden's total population and number of households show a marked increase. Also, Alden's younger population, its sharp drop in elderly, and its higher population per household all indicate larger and younger families moving to Alden.

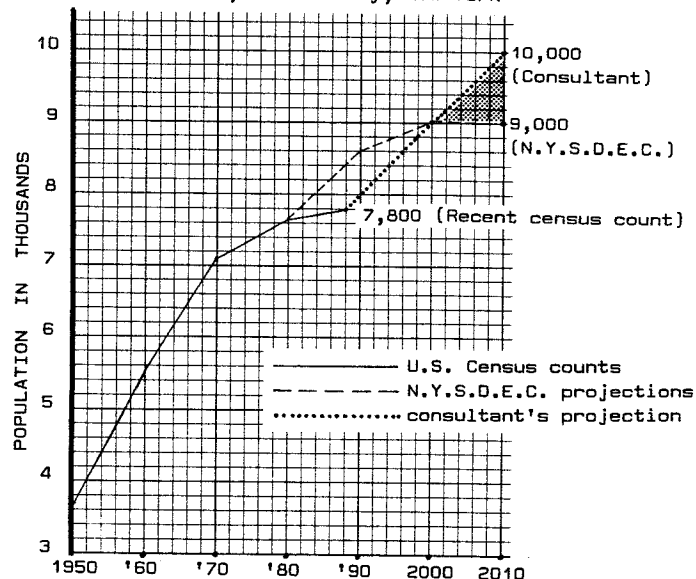
Forecast. Our only official population projections are those prepared by the New York State Department of Commerce* (Sept. 30, 1985). This report adopts a different curve, based on different calculations and on the availability of public water in the Town--a growth factor not included in the State's projections. Applying vacancy rates, demolitions and household size to residential building permits (occurring between 1980 and 1989) yields an additional Town (estimated) population of 435 persons. This, added to the 1980 census figure of 7,605, results in a 1989 estimate of 8,040 persons, which is consistent with the latest (1988) census count of 7,800. A straight line projection between 7,800 and N.Y.S.D.E.C.'s year 2000 estimate results in a year 2010 projection of 10,000 persons. This report estimates the Town's 2010 population to range between a high of 10,000 and a low of 9,000 persons.

* Currently called the Department of Economic Development

NEW DWELLING UNITS PER YEAR BY BUILDING PERMITS
TOWN OF ALDEN
1980-1989



POPULATION PROJECTIONS
Town of ALDEN, Erie County, New York



source:
N.Y.S. Department of Environmental Conservation
N.Y.S. Department of Commerce*
U.S. Census
projections by consultant