

**TOWN OF ALDEN
CRITICAL THEMES/ISSUES
FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY
JUNE 24, 2008 KICK-OFF MEETING**

- A. Regional Issues
 - 1. Surrounding Communities (Lancaster, others)
 - 2. Regional Framework for Growth

- B. Interrelationship with the Village of Alden

- C. Land Use Issues
 - 1. Big Box Retail
 - 2. Walden Avenue
 - 3. Road frontage strip residential development

- D. Agricultural, Farmland Protection, other land protection
 - 1. PACE, PDR's, etc.

- E. State and County Facilities
 - 1. Economic Impact
 - 2. Other Impacts

- F. Demographic Trends

**TOWN OF ALDEN
CRITICAL THEMES/ISSUES (cont.)
FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY
JUNE 24, 2008 KICK-OFF MEETING**

- G. Infrastructure
 - 1. Sewer
 - 2. Water
 - 3. Roads / Transportation

- H. Community Character

- I. Recreation and Parkland

- J. Emergency Services

- K. Housing Needs (Affordable)

TOWN OF ALDEN
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OVERVIEW
JUNE 24, 2008 KICK-OFF MEETING

- A. The Comprehensive Plan
1. Authorized by New York State Law (272-a)
 2. Required to zone
 3. Is much more than just zoning
- B. Components of a Comprehensive Plan
1. Where you are now and where you have been
 - Statistical data
 - Mapping
 - Trends
 2. Where you want to be
 - Goals and Objectives
 - Vision
 - Public Input
 3. How do you get there
 - Recommendations / Ideas
 - Plan to achieve (Implementation)
- C. How do we build a Plan?
1. Establish general issues of concern – Focus the Comprehensive Plan.
 2. Collect data and information about these areas of concern and related topics.
 - Early on, after some data collection and with issues established, have a Public Meeting to receive early input.
 3. Concurrently during data collection, also create more specific Goals and Objectives of the community.
 4. Analyze the data against the Goals and Objectives of the community (SWOT and other techniques).
 - Go back to the public to see if we heard them correctly and get more specific input.
 5. Generate Conclusions concerning the information and analysis performed and begin to come up with ideas for directing the Town towards its desired future.
 - Return to the Public with these draft ideas and allow them to build upon these ideas through a hands-on type meeting (charrette).
 6. Finalize the Recommendations of the Plan and create the Implementation Section of the Plan.
 7. Complete the Comprehensive Plan document and the Approval and SEQOR process.

*Throughout the entire process the Comprehensive Committee is providing direction on the completion of the Plan.

TOWN OF ALDEN
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
PROJECT SCHEDULE

TASKS	months	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June
Task 1: Project Initiation (Committee Meeting #1)		* ■												
Task 3: Inventory & Analysis/ Mapping			*											
Public Information Meeting				*										
Committee Meeting #2														
Task 4: Goals & Objectives				*										
Committee Meeting #3														
Task 5: Findings & Recommendations														
Public Focus Meeting														
Committee Meeting #4														
Charrette														
Task 6: Implementation Strategy														
Task 7: Draft Plan: Preliminary Draft														
Committee Meeting #5														
Task 7 cont.: revisions to Draft Plan														
Committee Meeting #6 (with Town Board)														
Final Revisions to Draft Plan														
Task 8: SEQOR and Adoption:														
Committee Meeting #7														
Public Hearing														
Final Plan (revised per comments at Hearing)														
Town Board Adopts Plan														

NOTE:

Task 2: Citizen Participation (Meetings) occurs throughout the process

LEGEND	
*	Steering Committee Meetings
*	Public Meetings/ Public Hearing



Section 2 Scope of Services

*July 24, Tues -
6:30 p.m.*

The following section provides a detailed description of the professional planning services we propose to provide to the Town of Alden for the development of your Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan will be prepared to meet established professional standards. All work will comply with relevant statutes, including Section 272A of the New York State Town Law; New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR); and New York State Agriculture and Markets Law Article 25AA and 25AAA.

TASK 1 Project Initiation

WENDEL will attend an initial start-up meeting with the Town of Alden Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee to initiate work on the project. It is our understanding that the Town of Alden will be establishing the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. We anticipate membership will include officials from the Town of Alden, representatives from the Village and representation from various interests in the Town (e.g. agriculture, business, schools, residents, etc.) The Steering Committee will facilitate information gathering/sharing, and also help build broader support for the Plan during its preparation. The Committee will be responsible for overseeing the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan and providing guidance on the direction of the Plan so that it represents the priorities of your community.

This first meeting with the Committee will accomplish the following:

- Obtain agreement on the duties and expectations of the Steering Committee
- Confirm the scope of services
- Provide WENDEL with up-to-date copies of all relevant reports, data and studies
- Establish a tentative schedule for the project, including future Committee meetings
- Select a date and location for the first public information session
- Establish a preliminary list of issues and concerns facing the Town.

TASK 2 Citizen Participation Plan

Public Participation will be an on-going and integral part of the project, both as a means of obtaining valuable input from the Town's residents, and as a means for fostering support for the plan. It is also an effective way of building momentum towards future implementation actions. Public participation will help ensure that the Comprehensive Plan addresses the issues and concerns that are important to the citizens of your community. This effort will occur throughout the entire process of developing the Comprehensive Plan, as illustrated in the attached schedule. Due to the importance of public engagement, this task summarizes our intended public participation plan. We will solicit public input through the following means:



Section 2 Scope of Services

Public Information Meeting

WENDEL will conduct an initial public input meeting in the early stages of the project. This meeting will be aimed at providing information to the public about the planning process and the purpose of a Comprehensive Plan, and brainstorming to obtain initial input on issues and opportunities and preliminary ideas about the Town's future. The meeting provides the public with the opportunity to voice ideas, comments and concerns that they feel should be addressed in the Comprehensive Plan early in the process. The information gathered at the meeting will help us formulate goals and objectives for the Comprehensive Plan that reflect public preferences for the future of the Town.

For all public input meetings, WENDEL will assist the town with materials to publicize the meeting, such as press releases to the media, posters, notices for the Town website, etc. In addition, we will draft invitations for the Town to send to representatives from a variety of stakeholder interest groups to ensure input from a broad spectrum in the community, such as the school district, emergency service providers, merchants' organizations and senior citizens groups. WENDEL will provide all handouts and display graphics for all public information meetings.

Public Focus Meeting

The second public meeting will be held after initial data analysis has been completed and preliminary goals and objectives developed. This meeting, which will focus more specifically on important issues and opportunities in the Town, will be a hands-on working meeting to present the findings of the inventory and analysis and the preliminary list of goals and objectives. This meeting will answer the question "Did we hear you correctly?" The primary purpose of the meeting is to confirm we are headed in the right direction. We will also further develop preferences regarding goals and objectives for the Town. This public meeting will offer Town residents the opportunity to discuss specific issues.

Charrette

The third public meeting will be a charrette, or a highly interactive meeting that allows citizens to actively participate in the construction of the plan in small group settings. The preliminary recommendations and concepts will be presented for comment and critique, and citizens will be divided into smaller groups to discuss specific subjects in greater detail, facilitated by specialists in that field. We anticipate these break-out groups will be "topic stations" on major substantive issues such as transportation, economic development, agriculture and/or geographically based, focusing on specific areas of the Town.

Steering Committee Meetings

WENDEL will participate in scheduled meetings with the Steering Committee in order to review the progress of work on the Plan, and to discuss issues relevant to current and ongoing work tasks. We will attend a total of seven (7) meetings with the Steering Committee, including the project initiation meeting.



Section 2 Scope of Services

These meetings will occur approximately every 6 weeks. WENDEL will provide the Committee with meeting summaries as progress reports, as a record of issues discussed at each meeting, and to identify follow up action items. As sections of the report are completed at each stage of Plan development, the Steering Committee will be provided draft sections for review and comment.

Town Board Presentation (with Steering Committee)

After review of the preliminary Draft Plan by the Steering Committee, WENDEL, with the assistance of the Steering Committee, will make a formal presentation to the Town Board. Town Board input and comments will be used to formulate the final Draft of the Comprehensive Plan.

Public Hearing

Following the acceptance of Draft Plan by the Steering committee and Agreement by the Town Board, a public hearing on the Plan will be held as part of the adoption process.

Other Public Outreach

Throughout the Comprehensive Planning process, the public can be kept up to date through the use of a website, news releases and/or mailings to groups and organizations. WENDEL can also prepare materials, or "outreach kits." These materials provide "talking points" that Committee members can use in attending meetings with various organizations (seniors organization, service clubs, merchants' groups, etc.) to increase awareness of Comprehensive Planning efforts.

TASK 3 Inventory and Analysis

The Inventory and Analysis Task will provide the Town with a comprehensive database that describes existing conditions in the Town. The following elements will be included in the inventory:

A. Data Collection

Under this task, WENDEL will gather existing data, studies and information concerning the Town of Alden. We will work closely with Erie County to ensure that all existing data is utilized and that we do not duplicate previous efforts. We already have standard Erie County GIS layers in-house and will use those data sets as our starting point. Based on the amount of information currently available, we will determine what new data will be required to supplement the existing data so we can make informed decisions based on the needs and issues to be addressed in the Comprehensive Plan. The complete list of data to be included in the Comprehensive Plan will be determined with the Steering Committee. All the inventory information will be consolidated into the plan and organized into the most useful format for presentation and analysis (maps, tables, text). The basic data areas that will be covered in inventory include the following:



Section 2 Scope of Services

Land Use, Agriculture and Zoning

Location and intensity of land use; agricultural lands, agricultural districts and farms; location of retail, commercial and industrial facilities; zoning map and zoning text review, rezoning history, and zoning/land use conflict areas; subdivision laws, special districts, land use procedures, and other applicable laws.

Environmental Resources/ Sensitive Environmental Areas

We will identify and map significant environmental resources and constraints, including wetlands (mapped Federal and State), soils, significant wildlife habitats (if any), flood zones, streams and creeks, watersheds and water quality, aquifers, open space/greenspace, brownfields, and scenic vistas.

Historic and Cultural Resources

Historic and cultural resources, including sites on the National or State Register of Historic Sites; locally significant historic sites; archaeologically significant areas; and cultural facilities such as the library, Alden Historical Society museum, historic cemeteries; community character, hamlet areas, cultural amenities, educational facilities, health care facilities, emergency services (fire and rescue), and public safety.

Governmental Facilities

We will inventory governmental facilities (Town, Village, County and State) located in the Town of Alden, including information on employment for major County and State facilities (e.g. prisons, Erie County Home).

Demographics

Present and projected socio-economic data, such as population trends, demographic profile (age, household structure, etc.), median family income, trends in building permits, school district enrollment, and other relevant data.

Transportation

Existing road system conditions, average annual daily traffic (AADT) volumes for major roadways, bike paths (existing and proposed), regional transportation improvement projects, problem intersections or roadways, and rail service.

Infrastructure

Water and sewer districts, any available existing water studies; extent of unsewered areas; and generalized information on private utilities; available information on capacity of infrastructure systems, known problem areas and/or the need for infrastructure refurbishment or expansion.



Section 2 Scope of Services

Recreation and Parks

We will develop a map of recreational facilities, parks, trails and major publicly accessible open spaces areas in the Town. We will assess opportunities for adding strategic parcels to the Town's parks and/or open space inventory, as well as opportunities for providing connectivity between recreational assets.

Housing

Assessment of existing housing stock; including housing type (single-family, two-family, multi-family); value, age, tenure (owner vs. renter), vacancy rates and a comparison of income and housing value as an indicator of affordability.

B. Data Analysis

As material is compiled as part of the inventory section of the Comprehensive Plan, WENDEL will draw preliminary conclusions regarding issues and concerns in the Town of Alden. Our analysis will incorporate factual information from the inventory, the results of the public information meetings and input provided through the Steering Committee. This analysis will raise the questions and issues that face the community, which will be addressed in more detail in the Findings and Recommendations section of the report (Task 5). Much of this analysis will be done in the format of Strength/Opportunities and Weakness/Constraints (i.e. does the data/information show an opportunity or constraint that affects the Town's ability to achieve its Goals and Objectives.)

We will look at how the Town is developing now, compare that to the vision of the community and look for methodologies to help guide development. Land use patterns will be analyzed based on infrastructure issues, environmental issues, economics, public needs, cultural issues, etc. in order to assess an appropriate balance between community character and development patterns, and how this relates to a healthy local economy.

It is important that the analysis does not "operate in a vacuum", and our assessment will extend to regional patterns, as well as a more detailed look at how the Town of Alden interrelates with the Village and with surrounding communities. Based on this analysis, we will identify opportunities (collaboration, capitalize on other's assets, etc.) and constraints/threats (conflict points, different visions, etc.).

WENDEL will identify any problems that exist with the current zoning code, such as community character issues, architectural and design qualities, bulk regulations (setbacks, lot size, etc.), land use conflicts, environmental protection and agricultural/farmland protection, as well as any other issues our research may uncover. Based on our experience in other rural Towns and current planning practice, we may recommend new provisions, regulations or standards that may help the Town of Alden achieve your vision for your community.



Section 2 Scope of Services

TASK 4 Community Goals and Objectives

The Goals and Objectives section of the plan articulates the vision and priorities of the community. The goals and objectives provide guidance and a standard that any proposed plans or actions can be measured against. We will provide the goals and objectives in a separate section of the comprehensive plan so that its vision can be utilized to evaluate future projects and planning endeavors.

Utilizing the guidance of the Steering Committee, the public participation process, existing information and WENDEL's planning experience, a preliminary list of goals and objectives will be established early in the planning process. This list will provide the general direction of the Town of Alden Comprehensive Plan. These goals will be refined, as needed, throughout the process. The final set of goals and objectives will be used to guide the development of recommendations and implementation items.

TASK 5 Findings and Recommendations

WENDEL will analyze the data compiled in the earlier tasks, assess opportunities and constraints, and provide a professional evaluation of the community. Applying general planning principles, we will summarize our findings and make recommendations designed to help the Town of Alden achieve your stated goals and objectives. WENDEL will address any specific actions or recommendations that were brought up by the public or by others during the planning process.

WENDEL will generate many ideas for accomplishing the goals and objectives of the communities. Therefore, in this section of the plan, we will list all the viable options for achieving specific objectives, essentially creating a "toolbox" of actions and activities that the community can choose from as you go forward with implementing the Town of Alden Comprehensive Plan.

These "findings of fact" will be provided to the Steering Committee for their review and comments. Based on input from the public and Committee, combined with our professional expertise, we will use these findings to develop a list of recommendations.

WENDEL will also create a Vision Map that will depict the general future vision of the Town of Alden. Although the Vision Map may be used to help guide future zoning decisions, it will not be a zoning map. Instead, the Vision Map will be designed to provide general guidance on the character and type of development that is desired in different areas of the Town, based upon the goals and objectives and the findings and recommendations. It will be utilized in conjunction with the Findings and Recommendations Section of the Plan.

TASK 6 Implementation Strategy (Action Items)

The Implementation Strategy section of the Comprehensive Plan represents the "nuts and bolts" of the Plan and outlines how to implement the action items identified in the Findings and Recommendations Section (Task 5 above).



Section 2 Scope of Services

The adoption of a Comprehensive Plan document is a Type 1 Action under SEQRA, which requires a Coordinated Review. In cooperation with the Steering Committee, WENDEL will prepare the Environmental Assessment Form (EAF) and manage the Coordinated Review process on behalf of the Town. We will assist the Town in making the mandatory referrals to the County and all Involved and Interested Agencies and in preparing required postings to the Environmental Notice Bulletin (ENB).

A properly prepared Comprehensive Plan will balance environmental, social and economic concerns and result in positive benefits to the Town. It is our approach, therefore, that the municipality can move toward a Negative Declaration under SEQRA. The Plan will include an Environmental Review section that will serve as the Part 3 section of the EAF, evaluating potential impacts. The result is the Town of Alden, with the assistance of WENDEL, can perform a proper SEQRA review without the need for separate GEIS (Generic Environmental Impact Statement) documents and procedures. Under this approach, the SEQRA action is the adoption of the plan document itself. Specific action items in the document will be subject to future SEQRA control, which provides the Town closer control over future actions that cannot be predicted at this time. The Environmental Review section of the report will provide information that will help facilitate future SEQRA reviews.

In order to complete the SEQRA and adoption process, WENDEL will provide the following services:

- WENDEL will draft an Environmental Review section of the Comprehensive Plan that includes components of a draft GEIS (in essence a Part III SEQRA analysis).
- Copies of the Environmental Review section will be submitted to each member of the Steering Committee for their review and comments, and amended as required based on their input.
- Part I of the long environmental assessment form (EAF) will be completed.
- As the adoption of a Comprehensive Plan is an automatic SEQRA Type 1 action, Lead Agency notification must be undertaken and a coordinated review commenced.
- Copies of the Part I EAF and the final Draft Comprehensive Plan, which includes the SEQRA Review Section, will be mailed to the County and other involved agencies. The mailing to the County will be for both the required 239-m referral and the SEQRA review.
- Copies of the final Draft Comprehensive Plan will be made available for public review at the Town Hall, the public library and at other locations as directed by the Town (as required in the RFP, 20 copies of the Draft Plan will be given to the Town, along with 10 CD's).
- WENDEL will make a presentation at a Town Board Public Hearing for the adoption of the final Draft Comprehensive Plan (SEQRA information will also be presented).



Section 2 Scope of Services

WENDEL will first prioritize the actions to be taken into "immediate", "short-term" and "long-term" categories. The long-term category will include actions that may be needed for specific problems in the future, or alternatives for actions that are not achieving their goal. The actions will be put into a logical order, with a suggested methodology for accomplishing each action step. As appropriate, WENDEL will provide an estimated cost of the action, and where possible, potential funding sources.

One of the most important components of the Implementation Strategy is the establishment of a process to evaluate the community's progress toward implementing the recommendations of the plan, and ensuring that the Comprehensive Plan remains up-to-date and relevant. We include a recommendation for the formation of an internal Comprehensive Plan implementation Committee, whose duty will be to monitor the implementation of the Plan, report to community leaders annually on its progress, and identify implementation items to be pursued for the coming year at budget time. Every two to five years there should be a more formal and thorough review of the implementation process to assess the progress of achieving the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan and to propose any changes to the Plan or any reprioritization of the implementation strategy.

TASK 7 Draft and Final Comprehensive Plan

As each task, above, is completed, WENDEL will provide draft chapters of the plan document, along with relevant graphics and mapping, to the Steering Committee for their review and comment. These sections will include Inventory and Analysis, Goals and Objectives, Findings and Recommendations and Implementation, as well as an Environmental Review Section, which is discussed below under Task 8. Information will be provided in maps, graphs, tables and/or text, as appropriate. These sections will be discussed at the Steering Committee meetings being held throughout the process.

These previously reviewed sections will be compiled into a preliminary Draft Plan document. WENDEL will provide copies of the preliminary Draft Plan to the Steering Committee for their input and comments. Following their acceptance of the preliminary draft document, we will make a presentation of the Plan to the Town Board. We will incorporate any changes as requested by the Town Board, and prepare the final Draft Comprehensive Plan document.

TASK 8 SEQRA and Adoption Process

Upon completion of the final Draft Plan document, with the authorization of the Steering Committee, the formal environmental review process will begin (environmental review and balancing occurs throughout the process). WENDEL will conduct a seamless, coordinated effort between required processes under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and the completion and adoption of the Town of Alden Comprehensive Plan.



Section 2 Scope of Services

- Part II of the EAF will be completed and if necessary, additions to the Environmental Review section will be prepared (Part III analysis) to assess any specific substantive issues of concern as identified by the public or involved agencies.
- The final Draft Plan will be amended, as required, to reflect the substantive comments received from the public and involved and interested agencies.
- If there are extensive comments from the public and Interested and Involved Agencies that result in substantive changes to the document, WENDEL will make the required revisions. Typically, required changes are minor and this step is not required. If changes are substantive enough to require a second Public Hearing, WENDEL will provide 10 hard copies and 10 CD's of the revised Comprehensive Plan to the Town for public review prior to the 2nd Public Hearing.
- WENDEL will prepare a SEQR Negative Determination of Significance and appropriate resolutions for the Alden Town Board, so they can move to adopt the final Town of Alden Comprehensive Plan.
- Upon completion of SEQR, WENDEL will make any final necessary revisions to the document and produce 20 hard copies of the Final Town of Alden Comprehensive Plan document. We will also provide 10 copies of the Final Plan in electronic format on CD. We will also provide a Master CD copy which the Town can use to produce additional copies of the document, either in house or at a commercial copy center. Typically, a Comprehensive Plan document costs \$30-\$50 per copy, depending on the length of the document and the number and format of the maps.