

TOWN OF MIDDLEFIELD NEW YORK COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2024

Part Two: Town Profile and Inventory 2024





INTRODUCTION

The Town of Middlefield developed this Comprehensive Plan, first, to determine a vision for the future of the Town, and second, to identify concerns and opportunities to help maintain and foster that vision. Once adopted, this Comprehensive Plan will replace and update the Town's previous Master Plan (1989/2011), which was deemed inadequate to meet the Town's needs after an extensive review by the Middlefield Planning Board in 2021. This updated Comprehensive Plan serves as a guidance document representing a consensus among the Town's administration, residents, and stakeholders that were involved in its development. The Plan is presented in two parts:

Part One contains the Planning Process, Goals, and Actions to achieve those Goals.

Supporting documentation can be found in Part Two: Town Profile and Inventory 2024, which updates the 2011 Town Profile and Inventory.

(when the plan is final, we'll link the titles Part One and Part Two to documents on the website)

According to New York State Town Law Section 272-a, all town land use regulations must be in accordance with a comprehensive plan adopted pursuant to that section of law. The Plan provides the Town of Middlefield with appropriate guidance, essential background information, and justification for creating and/or amending Town land use laws and ordinances. This Plan also provides guidance to various boards, agencies, developers, and project sponsors regarding the Town's vision on where and how projects should be developed and to identify potential conflicts with stated community goals and objectives.

In the most general sense, this Plan addresses these basic questions:

- What resources do we have?
- Where do we want to be in the future?
- How do we get there?

In addressing "What resources do we have?" the Plan looks at:

- Population Characteristics
- Natural Resources
- Historic, Cultural, and Recreational Resources
- Housing, Neighborhoods, and Community Makeup
- Business and Economic Development
- Land Usage and Agricultural Outlook
- Infrastructure and Transportation
- Emergency Services

The 2024 Comprehensive Plan Committee used the 2011 Town of Middlefield Profile and

Inventory as a primary document and updated all sections using available sources from the US, NY State, Otsego County, and various public and trusted private sources. Using this updated Inventory and the public's input, the CPC created a Vision for the Town of Middlefield, along with Goals, Objectives, Actions, and an Action Plan for each.

draft

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SECTION I: TOWN DESCRIPTION

SETTING

HISTORY

DEMOGRAPHICS

SETTING

The Town of Middlefield, with an area of 37,456 acres, is the largest township in the county of Otsego and runs along the east side of Otsego Lake, the beautiful "Glimmerglass" of James Fenimore Cooper's Leatherstocking Tales. It is a gently hilly area, with summits rising 400 to 500 feet above the valleys, and is divided by the meandering Cherry Valley Creek and Red Creek, both of which flow to the Susquehanna River. Middlefield is surrounded by the Towns of Hartwick and Otsego in the west, Springfield and Cherry Valley in the north, Roseboom and Westford in the east, and Milford in the south. It contains the hamlets of Middlefield, Middlefield Center, Phoenix Mills, Bowerstown, Westville, and Whigs Corners, and a slice of the Village of Cooperstown along the eastern shore of the Susquehanna River and Lake Otsego. Middlefield's hamlets represent historical residential areas that now may range from a cluster of a few houses around a crossroad, to larger neighborhoods such as Bowerstown and the hamlet of Middlefield, where houses are closer together and the population is denser.

Traditionally agricultural, Middlefield now is a mix of agricultural and rural residential neighborhoods and houses, small hamlets and lakeshore houses. The Town's slopes provide beautiful views of Otsego Lake, Cherry and Red Creek valleys and the surrounding country, while the valleys provide views of wooded hillsides and long green vistas. Open spaces consist of worked and vacant agricultural lands, forest land, wetlands, streams, and meadows. As a means of conservation, significant lands have been put into the Otsego Land Trust.

[See Appendix 1. Otsego Land Trust Map](#)

The area is rich in history, along with many local events, cultural, and outdoor recreational opportunities. Small commercial businesses and home occupations are located throughout the town. According to the 2023 survey, people in Middlefield value their rural surroundings and way of life, and seek to preserve both while welcoming new businesses that fit with their quiet lifestyle and vision for the area.

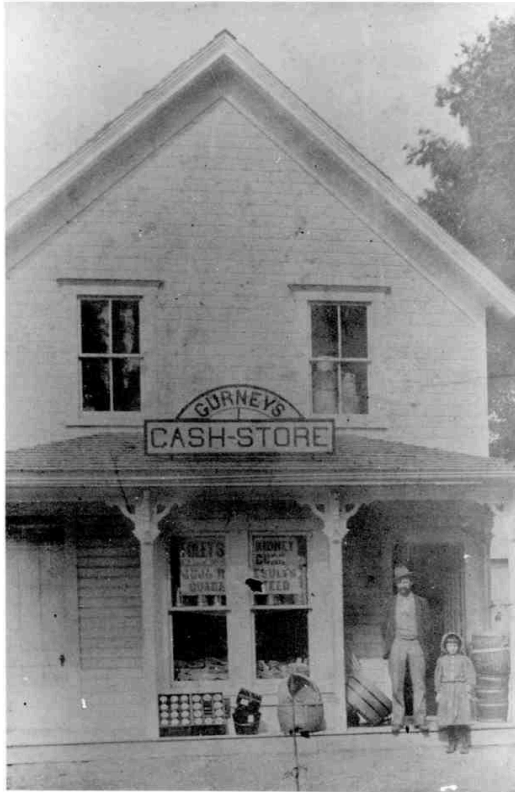


HISTORY

The indigenous people of New York, part of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, inhabited the Middlefield area when the first European settlers came. The Town of Middlefield was set apart from the Town of Cherry Valley on March 3, 1797, establishing a tract of land containing the hamlets Newtown-Martin, Clarksville, Waterville, and Westville. Town government was established with the election of a supervisor and school commissioners. The first school house was established on White Farm (Middlefield Center) c. 1800.

Historically, early principal crops were wheat, corn, oats and barley. Maple sugar, potash, butter and cheese were also important commodities. Whigville (named originally for a supposed meeting place of a group of Whigs), known today as Whigs Corners, was often called "Whey Corners" from its good-sized cheese factory. The Red Creek supported many saw mills. Hop production was important to the development of the Town, reducing the production of other crops. A population peak of 3323 was reached in 1830, largely due to the hop industry. As soil exhaustion and blight took its toll on the land, farmers returned to dairying as the century ran its course.

In 1815 the Phoenix cotton mill was established, a new stone building rising from its ashes after a disastrous fire in 1835. It became a woolen mill about 1866. Middlefield Center became home to a shoe last (form) factory which was one of the largest in New York State. Also, in 1828, the Otsego County Farm, or Poor House, was set up on a bluff along the Susquehanna River about 4 miles south of Cooperstown.



By the time of the Civil War, every business and service necessary to area residents was available in Middlefield hamlet, including many nonessential, luxury goods. With the lack of need to travel, strong social, marital, and family ties grew creating self sufficient, interconnected communities. With the coming of the Civil War, many men from Middlefield were mustered and saw action at Antietam, Bull Run, Fredericksburg, Wilderness and Salem Chapel.

Although population has dropped and businesses have left the area, Middlefield remains both picturesque and vibrant. Aware of its importance to the history of New York State and the forming of America, residents of Middlefield have worked to retain their history through chronicles of local life, preservation of properties and buildings.

Information has been gathered from the following and edited by Les Rathbun:

Middlefield Historical Society <https://www.middlefieldhistorical.org>

National Registry of Historic Places

Otsego County New York: Geographical and Historical by Edwin F Bacon, Ph D. 1902 Oneonta

Images of America: Middlefield, Otsego Lake's Eastern Shore by Dominick J. Reisen, Acadia Publishing, 2003

Town of Middlefield, Otsego County, New York: Some History Notes – Gathered Here and There, (1961) A Few Omitted Items (1964) Middlefield NY, Town Board, Reprint 1991

Middlefield and the Settling of the New York Frontier: A Case Study of Development in Central New York, 1790-1865 by Dominick J Reisen, Square Circle Press, 2009

Behind the Glimmerglass by Hugh Macdougall

Otsego County: The Early Years, Part III – a printing of a lecture by Hugh MacDougall

Otsego County, NY: The Historical Archive “Preserving History Digitally” CD, Copyright 2011, THA New Media LLC

[See: Appendix 2. Map of the Five Nations 1718](#)

[See: Appendix 3. Middlefield Map Newtown Martin](#)

[See: Appendix 19. Map of Town of Middlefield, 1868](#)

DEMOGRAPHICS (ACS 2021)

Census data from the 2020 national census and relevant sources:

Demographic Historical Trend per Census year:

Year	Pop.	%± Change
1830	3,323	28.8%
1840	3,319	-0.1%
1850	3,131	-5.7%
1860	2,825	-9.8%
1870	2,868	1.5%
1880	2,726	-5.0%
1890	2,200	-19.3%
1900	2,100	-4.5%
1910	1,949	-7.2%
1920	1,547	-20.6%
1930	1,504	-2.8%
1940	1,592	5.9%
1950	1,481	-7.0%
1960	1,376	-7.1%
1970	1,457	5.9%
1980	1,870	28.3%
1990	2,231	19.3%
2000	2,249	0.8%
2010	2,114	-6.0%
2021	1,897	-10.27%

- Population: Middlefield has a population of 1,882 as per 2020 Census, (1,897 2021 estimate) with a density of 30 people per square mile. There are 775 Households with an average of 2.3 Persons per Household. The Median Age is 52.8 (25% higher than Otsego County: 42.2) +/- 10% margin of error.
- Age: 52.8 Median Age, 24% are over the age of 65, 10% under 18
- Sex: 56% Male, 44% Female
- Race: 89% White, 2.0% Black, 3% Asian, 3% Mixed, 2% Hispanic, 10% margin of error.
- Veteran Status: 9.1%

- Per Capita Income: \$34,987 (Otsego County: \$32,226)
- Median Household Income: \$66,563 (Otsego County: \$60,523, NYS: \$75,157)

- Poverty: 4.5% (Otsego County: 12.4%, NYS: 13.5%) 3% of Middlefield's children and 3% of Middlefield's seniors live in poverty. Households receiving food stamp/SNAP in last year: 18
- Health: 4.9% without healthcare
- Education Attainment: 93.9% High school graduate or higher, 40.4% Bachelor's degree or higher.
- Education: Middlefield students attend 3 different school districts: Cooperstown Central School, Cherry Valley-Springfield School District and Milford School District. Approximately 40% Cooperstown, 40% CVS, 20% Milford.
- [See Appendix 4. School Districts Map](#)
- Housing: 1,168 Housing Units with 70% occupied and of those 85% owner occupied, 15% renter occupied. Approximately 80 short term rentals as reported by County Codes.
- Estimated median house or condo value in 2019: \$234,126 (it was \$110,200 in 2000).
- Employment:
 - Rate: 54.1% (Otsego County: 53.6%)
 - Type: 34.7% private company workers, 6.4% self-employed, 11.5% government workers, 30.4% private not-for-profit salary or wage workers, 17.1% self-employed in own, not incorporated business and unpaid family workers.
 - Industry: Educational services, health care and social assistance: 41.1%, Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services: 14.6%, Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining: 10.0%, Construction: 9%, Retail Trade: 7.9%, Manufacturing: 4.2%, Professional, scientific, management and administration: 3%, Finance: 2.7%, Transportation, warehousing and utilities: 1.3%, Public Administration: 1.4%, Information: 1.5%, Other: 3.4%.
- Work travel time: 19.1 Minutes to work mean time.
- Broadband: Has a computer: 1782, broadband subscription: 1,613, no internet 79, no computer 90 (2020).

Source: censusreporter.org, data.census.gov, city-data.com

Demographic Trend 2020 v. 2010: There continues to be a decline in population in the Town of Middlefield. The population is generally older. There are fewer families with school age children. School districts are experiencing smaller class sizes. The per capita and median household income have both increased, the poverty level has remained the same. Property values have gone up. Population density has gone down, and there are approximately a dozen less households in the town.

For more detailed information on Middlefield's population, see the 2020 US census page: https://data.census.gov/profile/Middlefield_town,_Otsego_County,_New_York?q=060XX00US3607746910

SECTION II: EXISTING LAND USE & RESOURCES

Open Spaces

Cultural and Historical Resources

Recreational Resources

Water Resources

Geology, Soils, & Slope, Mining

Vegetative Cover

Forestry

Wind Resources

Wildlife & Habitats

Visual Resources

Agriculture

Economic Development

Land Use Trends

OPEN SPACES

New York State defines open space as: land or water that is undeveloped (free from residential, commercial, industrial, or institutional use). Open space can be either privately or publicly owned and includes areas such as forest, agricultural fields, public parks and preserves, and coastal lands. Preservation of open spaces and farmland is one of the main concerns of the residents of Middlefield who responded to the 2023 survey.

The Town of Middlefield is geographically the largest township in Otsego County. With the use of its zoning laws, the Town has been a longstanding advocate for practices that guide development and conservation in a manner which protects and maintains a sense of place that is appealing to its residents and visitors. The 2024 Middlefield Comprehensive Plan inventories a range of items which typify a community's open space needs:

- Scenic roads, views and vista
- Rivers, lakes, ponds, and streams
- Wetlands
- Wildlife habitat
- Existing public lands, parks, trails, and recreational area
- Working landscapes such as farms and forests
- Unique geologic formations
- Trails, bikeways, railroads and important rights-of-way
- Historic landscapes
- Flood plains, erosion hazards areas and steep slopes

Using this list and the GEIS inventory originally taken in 2002, and updated where necessary, the Town of Middlefield hopes to continue to work towards preservation of open space while encouraging smart growth that fits within the Town's character. One way of managing open space is to identify areas where commercial or residential growth may be encouraged, as well as identifying worthy preservation areas that are vulnerable to development. This information should be used to guide zoning and other land use laws. Middlefield government has available to it a large network of national, state, county and local expertise, such as the Otsego Land Trust, the Otsego County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board, the NYS Open Space Conservation Plan, OCCA and other conservation departments, organizations, and agencies to help guide the use of best practices as it faces pressures of commercial development, population growth or decline, and climate change.

[\(See Appendix 5. Land Use Map\)](#)

CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL RESOURCES

In an area rich in cultural opportunities, Middlefield has a wide variety of resources of its own: vibrant church communities, historical sites, venues for concerts, the National Baseball Hall of Fame Induction weekend, and the bookmobile that visits the town hall parking lot to name only a few. For those interested in history, the Old District No. 1 Schoolhouse is now the headquarters for the Middlefield Historical Association which hosts a variety of activities in the summer, as well as a bluebird project on its grounds. The hamlet of Middlefield is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, as is the Benjamin D. North House, the Middlefield District Schoolhouse, and the entire Glimmerglass Historic District which encircles Lake Otsego and includes the western reaches of Middlefield. Other spots of historic interest include but are not limited to: Clark Tower, Kingfisher Tower, Lakewood Cemetery (which hosts history walks), Westville Cemetery and Grange, Woodside Hall, the Brick House, the Pinney House, the Masonic Lodge, Council Rock in Otsego Lake, the Burial Mound in the Village of Cooperstown, and many referenced landmarks from the writings of James Fenimore Cooper. Markers of early Middlefield remain- tiny private cemeteries, stones of old factories, the shells of grand farm houses- in plain view or tucked away on private lands, each telling a story of Middlefield's history. Though areas of Middlefield have had archeological surveys, no areas of archeological sensitivity have been established. Cultural events abound. Ommegang Brewery and Origins host summer concerts and Ommegang and RedShed are on the Brewery Tour of local breweries, the Clark Sports Center hosts numerous cultural events, senior activities, and is the venue for the National Baseball Hall of Fame Induction. The Charlotte Valley Railroad runs along the Susquehanna and offers tours of interest. Middlefield is home to the Junior Livestock Show and the Sheepdog Trials (occasionally). Though not in the town of Middlefield, a wealth of cultural and historical sites in the outlying area draws tourists to the region and provides income to Middlefield through tourist rentals and to its own venues.

[See Appendix 6 Cultural Sites Map](#)

[See Appendix 3. Middlefield Newtown Martin Map](#)

RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

Recreational opportunities abound in Middlefield. Hunting, trapping, fishing, boating, golfing, swimming, biking, hiking, snowshoeing, x-country skiing, and snowmobiling are all easily accessible. Examples of resources are, but not limited to: Fairy Springs Park <https://www.thisiscooperstown.com/single-listing?id=409> provides access to Otsego Lake and there are various portages along the Susquehanna where a canoe or kayak can be put in and excellent fishing can be had. The Roseboom State Forest <https://www.thisiscooperstown.com/single-listing?id=397> and the Forest of the Dozen Dads <https://otsegooutdoors.org/listing/beaver-pond-trail/> offer hiking and picnicking opportunities. The Middlefield School House has a ballfield and small playground. The Clark Sports Center <https://www.clarksportscenter.com> provides year round opportunities for all ages, including exercise classes, 3 pools, a basketball floor, afterschool, summer sports, and adventure programs for children, a senior citizens' program, as well as "mommy and me" activities for toddlers. Though there are State registered snowmobile trails, most hiking, snowshoeing, and x-country skiing trails are on private land and proper use is expected. Mountain biking shares the hiking trails to Star Field and at the Clark Tower (both on private land). Although there are no dedicated road bike trails or lanes in Middlefield, the Town has 220 miles of public roads and many of the country roads provide beautiful views and challenging rides. Rail Explorers <https://www.railexplorers.net/locations> provides train rail biking from Milford to Cooperstown along the Susquehanna and parts of the route run on the Middlefield side of the river. Aviation lessons are available at the Westville Airport. Trap shooting is available at the Milford Fish and Game Club <http://www.milfordfishandgame.com>. Survey respondents stressed the importance of preservation of open spaces, a vital aspect of continuing access to outdoor recreational opportunities.

[See Appendix 7, Recreational Sites Map](#)

See: <https://otsegooutdoors.org/>

See: www.alltrails.com

See: Crank from Cooperstown: 50 Bike Rides in Upstate New York by Dennis Savoie
–Tourmaster, April 20, 1998

See: Running The Leatherstocking Trails by Raddatz, C. ; Mc Chesney, P. ; Bordley, C., 1983

WATER RESOURCES



Water resources can be separated into surface water and groundwater.

Surface Water: Middlefield is broadly divided into 3 long valleys / watersheds--the westernmost includes Otsego lake, the Susquehanna River, and the streams that feed them, the next one to the east is the Red Creek valley, and the easternmost is the Cherry Valley Creek watershed. All of these ultimately drain into the Susquehanna River.

Otsego Lake / Susquehanna River: Otsego Lake is a glacial lake similar in topology to the Finger Lakes; long and narrow, running roughly North-South. The lake is about a mile wide and nine miles long, and is fed by five tributary streams at its northern end, as well as several smaller creeks around its perimeter. For more detailed information on the lake, See the SUNY-Oneonta BFS web page.

<https://suny.oneonta.edu/biological-field-station/otsego-lake>

Middlefield shares the boundaries of Otsego Lake with the towns of Springfield and Otsego and the Village of Cooperstown. Middlefield borders about 80% of the lake's eastern shore. A large portion of that shoreline is owned by a private foundation that limits development on its lands.

The Otsego Lake and Susquehanna River shorelines within Middlefield are partially protected by development restrictions in the town's zoning law. This protection is important not only for the town itself, but because Otsego Lake is the municipal water supply for the Village of Cooperstown. Treated sewage from the Village is eventually discharged into the river, and many other communities downstream depend on the health of both river and lake.

The lake is an important scenic and recreational resource for the surrounding area and attracts tourists from many states in the Northeast.

As with most recreational lakes, there are concerns for potential harm to Otsego Lake from possible excessive development and use. These are addressed by several private non-profit groups, and much environmental research on the health of Otsego Lake and the Susquehanna River is done at the Biological Field Station of the State University College at Oneonta.

<https://suny.oneonta.edu/biological-field-station>

Red Creek : The headwaters of Red Creek originate at the north end of Middlefield, and all of its watershed is within the Town. Red Creek joins the Susquehanna River just south of the Village of Cooperstown. The Red Creek watershed consists mainly of forest lands, with some agricultural land and residential development. The creek runs roughly parallel to County Highway 33.

Red Creek and its watershed are rich in wetland habitat, and the majority of the creek's boundaries lie within federal wetlands areas.

Cherry Valley Creek: The Cherry Valley Creek originates in the Town of Cherry Valley and runs for about 20 miles to join the Susquehanna River in the Town of Milford. Over half of this distance is within Middlefield. The lands bordering the creek are primarily agricultural, with some forest. The creek is slow-running and relatively flat in overall slope, so there are many large oxbow bends. Spring flooding is common, and the resulting vernal pools provide significant wildlife habitat. The creek and surrounding valley floor contain thousands of acres of wetland.

[\(see Appendix 8 Wetlands Map\)](#)

Groundwater: Groundwater in Middlefield is held in two types of deposits; consolidated and unconsolidated aquifers.

Consolidated aquifers exist mainly in the spaces in bedrock layers, and tend to be stable and slow-moving. Wells drilled into these layers typically have low flow rates and high mineral content. Bedrock layers in the Town are mainly shale, with some limestone outcrops.

The water in unconsolidated aquifers is held in the spaces within gravel, sand and clay subsoils. As the local geology contains many large gravel and sand beds, with some connections to surface waters, this groundwater moves and is recharged on a relatively short

time frame of months to years, rather than the decades or centuries needed for large consolidated aquifers. Wells drilled into these layers tend to have high flow rates compared with wells in bedrock.

([see Appendix 9 Aquifers Map](#))

USGS interactive map of NY state unconsolidated aquifers:

<https://ny.water.usgs.gov/maps/aquifer/>

Potential for farming and irrigation: Field crop irrigation is rarely needed in the region due to generally adequate rainfall, but occasional drought years make supplementary water useful to maintain production. In agricultural uses where irrigation is always necessary, such as greenhouse and nursery operations, either groundwater wells or surface water can be used. The topography of the area with its many small streams and springs makes surface water plentiful. Gravity systems for irrigation are used in some places but could be more widespread, and would reduce dependence on pumped wells. Surface water from the small streams in steep topography also has the potential to be used in micro-hydro power installations to generate electricity, and is currently an underutilized resource.

Flooding potential: Most of the land near Cherry Valley Creek and the Susquehanna River is in the FEMA 100 year floodplain. In 2017 the town adopted a flood damage law based on the FEMA template, regulating construction and subdivisions within the flood plain.

See Flood Damage Prevention Law 2017:

https://www.middlefieldny.org/uploads/1/1/7/6/117681638/fema_local_law_from_dec_5.pdf

Seasonal flooding of some low-lying fields limits agricultural potential in these areas; however the minimal acreage affected makes this a minor concern for farm productivity.

The focused topic meeting on Water Quality and Otsego Lake Quality provided an opportunity for the public to voice their ideas and concerns. Members of the Watershed Supervisory Committee and their Scientific Advisor, Dr. Kiyoko Yokota attended to speak and explain the WSC's function. At the time of the meeting (2023), the members present of the WSC stated that the Middlefield side of Otsego Lake was in relatively pristine condition. Middlefield has relatively low numbers of houses, mostly on large parcels and only two developments, Peggs Bay and the Lippitt Development. Suggestions by the WSC that might enhance and secure water quality for the future were largely zoning related: large lot size, additional safeguards against runoff for remodels and new construction, the addition of language addressing short-term rentals and the size of their septic systems in relation to the number of guests per unit. Members of the public expressed concern about development, both around the lake and "south of the dam" affecting water quality. Another concern was that slopes which though steep could now be developed with the right equipment, road runoff, invasive species, and the "obligation to the commons" which stresses land use practices that recognize the impact of actions reach well beyond the boundaries of a particular parcel. Some suggestions were: growth boundaries, limiting development in floodplains, and expanding public lands ownership. To incorporate storm water runoff, wastewater treatment, conservation of water, and groundwater protection into the comprehensive plan was also stressed by members of the public during the meeting.

GEOLOGY

Bedrock Geology: According to the Geologic Map of New York State, shale/sandstone/siltstone bedrock underlies Middlefield township. **Surficial Geology:** According to the Surficial Geology Map of New York State, till deposits are found on hillsides and along steeper terrains throughout the area and have variable thicknesses ranging from one to fifty meters. The finer grained clay and silt matrix of till deposits make it resistant to weathering. Bedrock outcrops can be found in some of the steepest and highest terrain. Lacustrine, alluvial, and outwash sand and gravel deposits are found throughout the area as valley floor deposits and range in thickness from one to twenty feet. ([see Appendix 10 Geology Map](#))

Soils: Soils of the area were mapped by the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Soils of the area are mostly loam. Loam is defined as soil that is at least half fine-grained material, a combination of clay, silt, and to a smaller degree sand. Loams in the area include mucky silt loam (dark, well-decomposed, organic material such as swamp and peat marsh), and alluvium deposits such as channery loam (deposited or reworked by a stream or river and contains fine pieces of bedrock), gravelly silt loam, and silt loam. Soil characteristics affect soil behavior, and are very important in determining potential land uses, such as building construction, septic system suitability, road construction, housing, agricultural, pasture, recreation, wildlife habitats, woodlands, landscaping, water management, and mining. The best agricultural soils are classified as Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance, and should be protected from excessive development. In 2017, Middlefield had 7157 acres of Prime Farmland and 14,898 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance.

([see Appendix 14 A Prime Farmland Map](#))

Slope: Bedrock features described control the topography of Middlefield. The entire Cooperstown region exhibits moderate relief with elevations ranging from 1150 to approximately 2000 feet above mean sea level. Though glaciers caused much of the shaping of the area, the rate at which rock types can be eroded controls, in part, the steepness (relief) of the topography. Middlefield has extensive areas with steep slope conditions. Steep slopes tend to form where there are shale layers that crumble and wear easily, giving overlaying rock little support. Less steep, rolling topography occurs where bedrock is more uniform and/or more resistant, because water cannot easily erode the rock. These conditions exist along the tops of ridges in Middlefield and along valley floors. Middlefield has only a few spots of near vertical cliffs. ([see Appendix 12 Slope Map](#))

Mining: According to the NYSDEC, no bedrock mines of any kind are located within the Cooperstown area. There is no history of profitable oil and gas or mineral exploration in the area and there is no geologic evidence for development of these resources. Mining of unconsolidated deposits, specifically outwash sand and gravel, is presently, and has historically been occurring in Middlefield. Potentially mineable sand and gravel deposits are located in the valley floor along stream and river channels. Potential uses of sand and gravel include building foundation, road and sidewalk construction when mixed with cement to form

concrete; filtering and drainage for septic systems, storm drains, and surface runoff; and walkways and trails. Gravel can also be used for road and railroad bed fill and slope stabilization. Additional uses for sand include playground surfaces, man-made beaches, temporary flood protection walls, and glass manufacturing. Middlefield has an existing sand and gravel excavating business and the town itself owns a parcel with a gravel bank (now decommissioned). The State regulates and monitors sand and gravel mining. Middlefield zoning exempts gravel & sand mining from heavy industry for that reason-state law preempts ours. ([see Appendix 11 Mining Resources Map](#))



VEGETATIVE COVER

Open spaces and preservation of farm and wild land are among Middlefield residents' primary concerns as exhibited by the 2023 Comprehensive Plan Survey.

The predominant vegetative cover types in Middlefield are agricultural, northern hardwood forest, and evergreen forest. Valley floors contain grasslands and wetland and marsh vegetation such as sedge and cattail along stream beds. Planting of food crops and vegetables is most common on the valley floor where gentle slopes and higher quality soils are located. Livestock is often grazed on the shoulders of the valley where the floor transitions to moderate slopes. These areas are less suited for planting and harvesting crops, but are ideal for forage. Some agriculture areas are located on the hill tops where soils are generally thinner, with outcroppings of bedrock. . Many of these areas are reverting to natural cover types as farming becomes less active in the Town. Corn, hay and soy are the most common farm crops. Middlefield had (in 2017) 7157 acres of prime farmland and 14,898 acres of "farmland of statewide importance".

THREATENED PLANTS observed in or very near to Middlefield and their class (inaturalist.org):

- Narrowleaf Wild Leek - Critical
- Violet Coral Fungus - Vulnerable
- Black Ash - Critical
- White Ash - Critical
- Butternut - Endangered
- Purple Pitcher Plant - Vulnerable
- Common Snowdrop - Near Threatened
- Eastern Hemlock - Near Threatened

The list of threatened plants and their classifications changes and is updated regularly on government and scientific sites.

See: Natural Resources and Environment Protection Maps at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/pubs/103459.html>

See: Otsego County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan at <https://cms2.revize.com/revize/otsegocountyny/Document%20Center/N-R/Planning/AGRICULTURE%20DISTRICT%20REVIEW/7.FINALAGFARMLANDPROTECTIONPLAN.pdf>

[See Appendix 14; Agricultural Classification Map](#)

[See Appendix 14-A; Prime Farmland Map](#)

FORESTRY



Middlefield has significant forest coverage, though slope must be considered in the viability of commercial harvesting. Private saw timber and pulpwood plantations, many at or past maturity, exist throughout the Town containing a variety of hardwoods and softwoods. Harvesting exists on both public and private land and can be profitable. Many locals also sell firewood from their property for camping and heating purposes to both locals and tourists. Otsego County manages a number of forest acres in Middlefield including the Forest of the Dozen Dads, and is working on maintenance, reclamation, preservation, and pest reduction.

The northern hardwood forests in the region are sometimes referred to as Maple-Beech-Birch forests. The predominant tree types provide many social and economic benefits including timber products, maple syrup production, and recreation such as hiking and hunting. Forests promote high water quality because runoff rates are low, causing precipitation to soak into the ground limiting erosion and water contamination.

Both ash and hemlock are threatened by pests associated with the warming climate. (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/invasive-species>).

Local woodlands are also home and haven to numerous native plant species included on New York's lists of protected plants, including Bloodroot, Trillium, Dutchman's Breeches, Pinkster Flowers, and Lady Slippers, to name a few. These native plants should be considered in any open space preservation plan.

See: <https://www.otsegoilandwater.com> for forest map and attendant information

Carbon offset: A program to take a property tax benefit through management of the forests on that property.

<https://dec.ny.gov/nature/forests-trees/private-forest-management/480a-forest-tax-law>

This program aims to "encourage the long-term management of woodlands to produce forest crops and thereby increase the likelihood of a more stable forest economy."

A description (of many available on the internet) of the options for landowners to create carbon credits that can be sold on the forest carbon market:

<https://dec.ny.gov/nature/forests-trees/climate-change/forest-carbon-markets>

WIND RESOURCES

According to the NYS NYSEERDA Small Wind Explorer website, some hilltop ridges in the town have wind speeds that are suitable for wind turbine placement; however, according to the survey, residents are ambivalent about the installation of wind turbines and the current power grid would need to be updated to handle the load of commercial wind farms.

Otsego County has a relatively minor wind risk based on the projected likelihood and speed of hurricane, tornado, or severe storm winds impacting it. The area is most at risk from severe storms. Average maximum wind speeds in Otsego County are higher now than they were 30 years ago, and 89% of homes in Otsego County have at least some risk.

In addition to damaging properties, severe wind events can down trees or scatter debris that can cause harm to anyone outside during an event, or cut off access to utilities, emergency services, transportation, and may impact the overall economic well-being of an area. See: www.riskfactor.com

VISUAL RESOURCES



[Middlefield](#) has many visually beautiful and significant areas: hamlets with historical character, landscapes with active farm fields, wooded and undeveloped areas, vistas along valleys of streams, marshland and open grasslands. Middlefield's section of the Otsego Lake watershed contains great natural beauty with scenic views of the lake and the western shores and seasonal waterfalls along the East Lake Road (City Rt 31). According to the 2011 Draft of the Town of Middlefield Master Plan Profile and the 2002 Generic Environmental Impact Statement, "areas identified as being scenic, having great natural beauty, or being important viewsheds should be considered sensitive locations due to the value placed on these resources by area residents. Development done out of context to the character of the area, or in locations that damage such resources should be carefully reviewed and mitigated to prevent future negative impacts." Middlefield residents have voiced strong approval of preservation of farmland, hamlets and their historical character, open spaces and natural resources, all of which are aspects of the town's viewshed.

Survey results provided the following information: A majority 62.6% of respondents feel the

town should pursue farmland and rural preservation. Protection of scenic viewsheds was very important to 55.6%, and important to 32%. 49.2% of respondents did not support development of mega-farm/industrial growth, and 16.4% were in favor of it. 25% of respondents were in favor of commercial wind farms, and 34.7 % were not in favor. 31.7% responded “it depends”.

Viewshed: Many of Middlefield’s roads, such as Rezen, Beaver Meadow, Cty Rt 33 and State Hwy 166 to name a few, have beautiful vistas of valleys, wetlands, streams and rising hills along their paths. Though the 2002 GEIS identified only one area (View of Otsego Lake, Town of Middlefield, and surrounding areas from Middlefield), the following specific sites are among those that have historically been considered scenic points of importance:

- “Hell Hill” - Eggleston Hill Road - scenic views of Susquehanna River valley and western hills
- ”Murphy Hill” - scenic views of Red Creek valley and hills from the top of County Route 52
- Hade Hollow - scenic views of Cherry Valley Creek and surrounding hills
- Fairy Springs - scenic view of Lake Otsego, Cooperstown and western hills
- Prospect Rock - scenic view of Lake Otsego
- Star Field - scenic view of Lake Otsego, Cooperstown and western hills
- Blencoe Round Top - scenic view of surrounding area
- Mosquito Road - northern section scenic view of Lake and surrounding area
- Stoney Lonesome - scenic views of Lake and surrounding areas
- Prospect Hill - scenic views of surround areas

Two Historic Districts are located in Middlefield:

[Glimmerglass Historic District](#) is a national historic district located near Cooperstown in Otsego County, New York. The 15,000-acre district encompasses parts of three towns, Otsego, Springfield, and Middlefield and the village of Cooperstown. It encompasses the physical and social sphere of Otsego Lake and its immediate environs. It includes 1,475 contributing features, some of which were previously listed including the Cooperstown Historic District, U.S. Post Office (Cooperstown, New York), and [Hyde Hall](#) in Glimmerglass State Park. It was listed on the [National Register of Historic Places](#) in 1999.

Middlefield Hamlet Historic District is a national historic district located at Middlefield in Otsego County, New York. It encompasses 24 contributing principal buildings and eight contributing dependencies. All but one of the buildings are residences. It also includes a Greek Revival style frame store building.

It was listed on the [National Register of Historic Places](#) in 1985.

See: [Appendix 3 - Newtown-Martin Map](#) for points of interest

WILDLIFE RESOURCES

Respondents to the town's Comprehensive Plan resident survey expressed the importance of maintaining open spaces and farmland, both of which support habitat for wildlife. Clean air, clean streams, ponds, rivers and lakes are also a main concern for survey respondents.

Middlefield is a rural township, with most of its land area covered by forests, fields, and wetlands. The recent trend away from large dairy farming operations has allowed many fields and hedgerows to become succession growth areas of shrubs and small trees. This makes the town rich in natural habitats for birds and mammals.

Some common wild mammals in this region include:

- White-tailed deer
- Black bear
- Bobcat
- Eastern cottontail rabbits
- Weasels, fisher, and mink.
- Eastern gray squirrels
- Raccoons
- Opossums
- Skunks
- Red foxes
- Coyotes
- Eastern chipmunks
- Eastern moles
- Woodchucks (groundhogs)
- American beavers, muskrats
- Various species of mice and voles



These mammals are well adapted to the local environment and can be found throughout the year. Deer populations are considered “over abundant” and there are increasing numbers of tick-borne diseases and deer-related driving accidents. Hunting seasons are State regulated, with licenses issued by the state. For more information see

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/hunting.html>

For an extensive list of natural wildlife in Middlefield, check inaturalist.org for Middlefield, Otsego County and <https://www.nynhp.org/> the New York Natural Heritage Program, which includes extensive information about the area’s natural habitat. The NY state DEC provides a statewide list of endangered, threatened and special concern wild life.

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7181.html>

Middlefield is a birder’s paradise. eBird lists approximately 250 species of birds that either call Otsego County their year-round home, their summer home, or are on their migratory path during spring and fall. Middlefield’s farms, fields, scrub, forests, lakes and ponds, and backyards provide inviting and important habitats.

The organizations ebird.org, inaturalist.org, ny.dec.gov, and nymph.org all provide lists of local

birds, rare birds, endangered, threatened and special concern wildlife.

In addition to Otsego Lake, Middlefield has many smaller lakes, ponds, and streams, making it a great location for fishing enthusiasts. Some common fish species found in the area include:

- Largemouth bass
- Smallmouth bass
- Northern pike
- Walleye
- Yellow perch
- Chain pickerel
- Black crappie
- Bluegill
- Pumpkinseed sunfish
- Rock bass
- Brown trout
- Rainbow trout
- Brook trout
- Lake trout (in larger, deeper lakes)
- Carp
- Common bullhead catfish
- White sucker
- Golden shiner (used as baitfish)

Regulations and fishing seasons may vary, so it's important to check with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) for the most up-to-date fishing rules and licenses. <https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/fishing.html>

According to NYS DEC, Otsego County has no listed Critical Environmental Areas.

According to the 2018 Hazard Mitigation Plan for Middlefield, the town does not have an Open Spaces Plan to protect habitat.

NYS DEC references inaturalist.org to list vulnerable, near threatened and endangered species whose ranges include Middlefield. The current list of endangered and threatened species in NY state may be found at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7494.html>

Although ranges may include Middlefield, not all these species are found within the Town.

AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

The Town has 156 parcels designated as agricultural according to the Otsego County Planning Department. The property tax classifications are continually updated to indicate current actual uses, but the trend has been steadily away from dairy which predominated in the region for many decades, to smaller scale, usually part-time enterprises. In the 1980's Middlefield had close to twenty active dairy farms; presently three remain, although a large regional dairy does rent cropland from several landowners.

There are many ways individuals living in our rural environment manage their properties. Enjoyment through personal maintenance and actual agricultural ventures is commonplace, but making agricultural land available for lease to other full-time farm operations is a significant utilization, as well. Financial realities guide decisions. Eligibility for the NYS Agricultural Assessment Tax Advantage is often a motivating factor to either gross \$10,000 from personal agriculture activity or by the land being part of a separate larger operation.

The Town has benefited from creative efforts to develop non-traditional agricultural ventures as dairy herds have been reduced. At this writing in 2023, the Town has a new variety of agricultural enterprise. Online marketing has allowed expanded marketing opportunities. We are seeing producers develop small livestock, various horticultural (fruit, vegetable, and flowers), and beef operations. In the Middlefield region, beef production has become the most prevalent activity. This varies from raising and selling feeder calves to other producers to finishing and marketing "freezer beef" for direct sale to consumers. Beef production allows pastures and hay land to be maintained while landowners remain relatively free to be engaged in other work or retirement, and thus qualify for agricultural value assessment.

Middlefield had (in 2017) 7157 acres of prime farmland and 14,898 acres of "farmland of statewide importance".

[See Appendix 13 Agricultural Parcels Map](#)

[See Appendix 14 Agricultural Classification Map](#)

[See Appendix 14-A Prime Farmland Map](#)

Carbon Offset: For farmers and landowners with significant open space, there could be financial benefits to developing "offset" projects that could be sold into the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), in which New York state participates and which for now is the primary and only carbon market operating at scale in New York State. RGGI is a program that uses the cap-and-trade carbon market model to reduce greenhouse gasses emitted from fossil fuel burning.

For RGGI information overall: <https://www.rggi.org/program-overview-and-design/elements>
and for a description of offsets: <https://www.rggi.org/allowance-tracking/offsets>

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Primarily rural residential, Middlefield has a scattering of commercial businesses: an internationally-owned brewery, a local brewery, a farm to table restaurant and garden center, a solar installation business, a preschool, a senior home, an auto recycling and parts shop, a sand and gravel excavation business, a number of B&Bs and vacation rentals, an art gallery, a gym, an airport, a veterinary hospital, and a growing number of family owned farm stands and agricultural businesses that sell meats, dairy, grains, maple syrup and orchard products. The Town has no zoned commercial districts, so any commercial uses occur within its five Planned Development Districts and a variety of home occupations. Residents of Middlefield have voiced support for the expansion of small business in the Town and for the retention of local farms as viable businesses, while also registering a dislike of large scale “agri-business” that would take control of land usage away from local farm and land owners.

[See Appendix 15: Town Zoning Map](#)

Economic Development and Cannabis: After a public meeting on the issue, Middlefield opted into the sales and growth of Cannabis as a potential option for local business growth in the form of micro businesses, dispensaries in the appropriate zoned districts, potential tax revenues for the town, and as a viable income crop for struggling local farms.

Economic Development and Infrastructure: It is unclear how many residents work remotely from their homes in Middlefield. Though broadband buildout continues in the town, it is still an issue for the expansion of economic development as well as personal use, and a common topic of concern among residents. Broadband companies have stated that once buildout is complete, there will still be a few remote pockets of the Town which they cannot cover. Efficient and speedy buildout in our area is hampered by the short season, and by the lack of accommodations to house crews during the tourist season which coincides with the window of fair weather needed to complete fiber optic lines. Though Middlefield has cell towers, cell service is spotty or weak in isolated areas and this also presents a problem for development and work and has been cited as a topic of concern among businesses and stakeholders. Electric power infrastructure is another aspect of economic development. Middlefield’s electric power grid has not as yet been upgraded to allow commercial large scale solar or community solar projects. According to the survey, residents have voiced an interest in community solar but are evenly divided on the issue of commercial large scale solar development in the town.

Economic Development and Tourism: With breweries, the National Baseball Hall of Fame and its yearly Induction Ceremony, farm stands, a popular farm to table restaurant, historical, cultural, and recreational sites of interest, Middlefield and the surrounding area draw year-round tourism. There are currently approximately 80 legally registered vacation rentals. Short term rentals provide significant income to those locals who own and provide this service, but remain a concern to residents as a whole in terms of empty houses for most of the year, lack of oversight of renters, and diminished hamlet neighborhoods. Another concern is the lack of long-term affordable rental housing for those who seek to move to our area for jobs. Middlefield seeks to balance the benefits of tourist participation in our economy with the need for permanent housing.

Economic Development and Open Spaces: According to the survey, Middlefield residents hope to encourage economic growth while preserving the Town's rural character and beautiful open spaces. Ways of balancing commercial growth, housing growth, and preservation of open spaces, farmland and wildlife habitat were discussed at the focused topic public meeting on Open Spaces. Analysis of the Town with an eye towards identifying areas for potential commercial growth and housing development which would not impact open spaces was among the ideas presented by both residents and the Otsego Land Trust. The potential of the Town's hamlets as possible areas of commercial and residential growth, as well as the use of cluster housing to minimize impact on natural habitat, were suggested by residents. The use of the Planned Development District (PDD) process in Zoning Law allows for commercial and or residential development while retaining Town and public oversight on a case by case basis.

Infrastructure Laws: See the Middlefield website for current laws:

<https://www.middlefieldny.org/documents--forms.html>

Zoning Law

Subdivision regulations

Zoning Law changes re cannabis

Solar Law

Cell Tower Law

Flood Damage Prevention Act, 2017

Road Use & Preservation Law of 2013

LAND USE TRENDS

Agricultural: The trend in agricultural land is away from medium sized family dairy farms. There are fewer working farms overall, with more fallow and non-cultivated land. Some dairy operations have changed to beef cattle, either for wholesale or local retail sale --so called "freezer farms". Many of the farms that are still economically viable have transitioned to more diverse operations that include value added processing and direct-to-consumer sales. A fruit orchard that is primarily Pick Your Own has expanded its operations and season.

Residential: Some of the agricultural land has been subdivided for rural residential homes. There are fewer year-round homes, as the changing population requires more temporary rental and seasonal uses. Especially in the hamlet districts, many existing homes have been converted to short-term rental units to take advantage of the robust summer rental economy. The local hospital has expanded significantly, and rental units are in high demand by nursing staff and other employees.

Business: Since the town has no fixed commercial districts, most business development comes through the Planned Development District (PDD) process. In the past 20 years, the existing brewery PDD has expanded a great deal, adding a restaurant and seasonal outdoor concerts. Another existing PDD has expanded to include a solar installation contractor and a farm brewery pub / restaurant. There are several new businesses, two of them in newly created PDDs, including a farm-to-table restaurant and a veterinary clinic.

SECTION III: COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

GOVERNMENT

TOWN FACILITIES

TRANSPORTATION

EMERGENCY SERVICE

HAZARD MITIGATION

CLIMATE CHANGE AND RESPONSE

TOWN ADMINISTRATION AND DUTIES

Town Officers

The Town Board is composed of the Supervisor and the Town Council members. There are two classes of towns in New York State – first and second. Middlefield is classified as a town of the Second Class: The administration of the town government is performed by:

- 1 County Representative - elected, 4 year term
- 1 Supervisor - elected, 2 year term
- 4 Council Members - elected, staggered, 4 year term
- Town Attorney - appointed
- Town Clerk - elected, 2 year term
- Town Superintendent of Highways - elected, 2 year term
- 1 Town Justice - elected, 2 year term
- 1 Assessor - appointed
- 1 Bookkeeper – contractor to the town
- 1 Public Health Officer - appointed
- 1 Information Technology (IT) Officer–appointed
- 1 Zoning Enforcement Officer–appointed
- 1 Animal Control Officer–appointed

For a summary of the powers and duties of each Town Officer, see the Town website, Documents and Forms page: <https://www.middlefieldny.org/documents--forms.html>

Governance Policies:

Middlefield has the following NYS required and suggested policies and laws.

- Town Code of Ethics
- Workplace Violence Policy
- Sexual Harassment Policy
- Operational Norms
- Procurement Policy
- Guidelines for Financial Management
- Health Emergency Plan
- Data Breach Response Policy

These policies are reviewed yearly and updated as needed:

To read these policies, see Town of Middlefield website:

<https://www.middlefieldny.org/documents--forms.html>

Zoning Districts:

Middlefield's primary zoning designation is Residential / Agricultural (R-80), supplemented by 6 Residential Hamlet districts and 5 Planned Development Districts (PDDs). There are no commercial districts within Middlefield, as commercial uses are allowed on a case-by-case basis within PDDs.

[See Appendix 15: Town Zoning Districts Map](#)

Town residents have voiced an interest in allowing Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in the Zoning Law during open meetings and through surveys. Concurrently, some concerns have also been expressed regarding short-term rentals within the community.

Zoning Law:

The Zoning Law is established with the primary objective of safeguarding and advancing the public health, safety, comfort, convenience, economy, aesthetics, and overall well-being of the Town of Middlefield and its residents. It further serves the following essential purposes:

- Preservation and enhancement of Middlefield's physical and visual environment.
- Alleviation of street congestion.
- Assurance of safety against fire, flood, and other potential hazards.
- Promotion of community health and general welfare.
- Prevention of land overcrowding.
- Mitigation of excessive population concentration.
- Safeguarding the environment, including the protection of surface and groundwater resources, and the sustainability of farmland.
- Facilitation of adequate provisions for transportation, water supply, sewerage, schools, parks, and other public necessities.

This Local Law has been written to take into account the unique characteristics of various districts within the town and their suitability for specific uses. It aims to preserve the value of both land and buildings, while encouraging the most appropriate land utilization practices across the entirety of the Town of Middlefield.

For a copy of zoning law, see town website,

https://www.middlefieldny.org/uploads/1/1/7/6/117681638/zoning_law_2016_final.pdf

Middlefield Climate Smart Community Committee:

Middlefield has joined the Climate Smart Communities (CSC) program in New York State, which is designed to empower local governments to take the lead in reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), adapting to the impacts of climate change, and fostering sustainable economic growth. The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) are guiding the Committee's efforts.

As of 2023 the CSC committee is diligently pursuing various initiatives to achieve a good standing within the New York State Climate Smart Communities program. The committee comprises a planning board member, a town board member, and community members.

Highway Department Overview:

The Town garage is located within the hamlet of Middlefield. The position of Highway Superintendent is an elected role with a 2-year term. While the Town Board allocates funds for

road maintenance, the Superintendent has sole responsibility for road maintenance operations and strategy. The Superintendent is responsible for establishing a maintenance schedule, overseeing crew operations, managing equipment, handling its procurement and maintenance, securing State CHIPS and Pave NY funding, coordinating with FEMA for storm damage recovery, and addressing service requests and road-related complaints from town residents.

[See Appendix 16 Transportation Map](#)

[See Appendix 17 List of Middlefield Roads and Maintenance](#)

Road Maintenance Strategy:

As part of the New York State CHIPS payment program, our roads undergo a comprehensive maintenance cycle. This includes repaving on a 10-year rotation, chip sealing on a 10-year rotation, and ensuring that each piece of equipment remains in service for a minimum of 10 years before replacement using CHIPS funding. The Highway Superintendent is entrusted with maintaining accurate records to adhere to these guidelines.

Highway Department Team:

As of 2023, the Highway Department is staffed by 5 individuals, all under the direct leadership of the Highway Superintendent. This team includes a shop supervisor and a deputy superintendent. The Highway Department employees are members of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, which represents them in employment contract negotiations with the Town.

Fleet Management Team:

The Town owns and maintains all the vehicles and equipment necessary for road maintenance. Periodically, we may rent additional equipment to expedite project completion. Our vehicles and equipment are on a replacement schedule based on their expected longevity. The Highway Superintendent oversees the maintenance, upgrades, and disposal of equipment and the fleet, with decisions ratified by the Town Board through motion and vote. The Town employees perform necessary repairs to the fleet when feasible.

Community Engagement:

The Highway Department actively engages with the community through initiatives like white goods recycling days and tire recycling days for Town residents. We are also proud to participate in the Shared Services Program for Otsego County, collaborating with other townships on various road projects.

Financial Commitment:

In the 2023 tax year, approximately 80.5% of our tax revenues were allocated towards highway-related expenses, underlining our commitment to maintaining safe and efficient road infrastructure.

Transportation Legislation:

Middlefield strictly adheres to all State and County transportation laws. In addition, we have established local transportation-related laws, including the Road Use & Preservation Local Law 1 of 2013 and a Winter Roads Use Policy, to ensure the effective management and preservation of our road network.

https://www.middlefieldny.org/uploads/1/2/6/8/12682437/ll_1_2013_road_use_final.pdf
https://www.middlefieldny.org/uploads/1/1/7/6/117681638/town_of_middlefield_winter_hwy_procedures.pdf

draft

TOWN FACILITIES

Town-owned buildings are Town Garage and Barn, Vehicle Garage, Town Offices, Salt Barn, and Fuel Storage shed. Properties include the lots on County Route 35 upon which the above buildings reside (133.03-1-61.00,133.03-1-60.00), and (133.03-1-59.00), Middlefield School House Historical Association Building and grounds (133.03-1-5.00), the Gravel Bank (now decommissioned) lot on State Route 166 (117.00-1-27.05), stone quarry on Pete Hendricks Road (116.00-1-66.02), and a cemetery on County Route 33 in Middlefield Center (86.01-1-19.00)

The Highway Department keeps and maintains on its premises an extensive list of vehicles and equipment for the upkeep of the town roads. Within the town garage is a shop facility for maintenance work on vehicles.

The Offices in the Town Hall include the Court, Justice's office, Town Clerk's and Supervisor's offices, and a secure record-keeping room. In addition to court proceedings, the courtroom is used by the Town Board, Planning Board, and Zoning Board of Appeals for monthly meetings and any special meetings as required. The bookkeeper and assessor work offsite. The Highway Department's offices are in the Town Garage.

TRANSPORTATION

The Town of Middlefield contains State, County, Town and private roads. Town roads are paved, unpaved, or in some cases a combination of both. Middlefield has 73.69 centerline miles of Town roads, either maintained year round or seasonally May through November. A list of Middlefield's roads and their status is included in [Appendix 17](#).

Typical yearly jobs are: snow removal, patching, mowing, ditching, grading, graveling, and honing unpaved roads. Paved roads are on a 10 year repavement schedule in accordance with NYS CHIPS reimbursement. Because of the number of miles of road under the care of the Highway Department, the length and harshness of winter, the limited personnel, and the limited time when upkeep can be done, Middlefield is challenged to fully maintain all roads in all years. Typically, the Highway Department's workload is to maintain those roads in good shape while working to upgrade the backlog of roads that are suffering from winter degradation. Roads are always a high priority with residents and the Comprehensive Plan survey continued to stress this importance.

A study of area roads was done in 2011 for the Town of Middlefield Master Plan Profile. Since that time, an increase in traffic to Middlefield businesses, tourist traffic, and particularly daily summer traffic on Middlefield roads. In addition, the use of GPS apps has routed more trucks and visitors over Middlefield roads, with the attendant road degradation. Specific roads that have seen an increase in traffic are County Highway 33 (Middlefield Center Road), County Highway 52 (Murphy Hill), County Highway 33 (River Road), Highway 31 (East Lake Road), State Route 166, Cornish Hill Road, Beaver Meadow Road and Estli Road and Susquehanna Avenue into the Village of Cooperstown. Town of Middlefield residents who travel for work travel an average of 20 minutes (see Census data).

Public transportation in the Town is provided by the OPT (Oneonta Public Transit) bus, which stops at the Meadows complex on River Road (County Route 33) Monday through Friday and has additional stops throughout Cooperstown.

See their website at: <http://www.optrides.com/>

Otsego County also operates Otsego Express, ("Gus the Bus") which runs scheduled routes through several towns, including a portion of Middlefield:

https://www.otsegocounty.com/departments/otsego_express/about_us.php

Middlefield has no dedicated bike lanes on its roads. The local railroad now serves as a cultural and recreational venue. Cooperstown-Westville Airport is private but hosts events, provides storage and a runway for airplanes. Private transportation is available through taxi service. Non-emergency medical transportation is available to and from pre-scheduled medical appointments through the Office for the Aging. Transportation is also available for prescription pick up . To see if transportation is available call the Office for the Aging, Otsego County. https://www.otsegocounty.com/departments/n-r/office_for_the_aging/transportation.php

Middlefield residents have voiced some interest in electric vehicle chargers. Chargers are currently installed at Ommegang Brewery for customers. At the time of writing (2023), the Westville Airport is considering an expansion that would include charging stations.

State Highway 166 bisects the Town and is a corridor for north-south transportation. County highways and routes run throughout Middlefield. The Middlefield Highway Department maintains only Town roads. State, County and private roads are maintained by their own entities. The Town no longer does snow removal for State or County roads. The Village does snow removal for any Middlefield roads within the Village limits, but the Town maintains or shares maintenance for their upkeep.

Transportation, Storm Damage, Natural Hazards, and Climate Change: Trees and limbs in roads from excess wind, rain and snow, road washouts, erosion, and occasional flooding of roads due to storms are all constants for Middlefield roads. Storms that cause damage have increased both in frequency and strength due to climate change. Middlefield has a number of seasonal roads with steep slopes and sides that may be closed due to excessive storm damage, repair costs and time. Beaver dams can clog culverts and flood roads and threaten properties downstream. The Town Highway Department garage is itself in a 100 year floodplain and has been flooded a few times. In accordance with the Middlefield Hazard Mitigation Plan, the Highway Department continues to enlarge pre-existing culverts to better handle storm drainage.

TOWN OF MIDDLEFIELD EMERGENCY RESPONSE SERVICES



The Town of Middlefield receives its fire protection and EMS services from four different volunteer services. The Town of Middlefield is broken up into four separate coverage areas by separate Fire and EMS contracts. [See Appendix 18: Emergency Services Map](#) The Northern section of the town is covered by the Cherry Valley Fire Department and First Aid Squad with County Ambulance Service providing patient transport. The southern and one-third of the western section is covered by the Milford Fire Department and Emergency Squad. The other two thirds of the western and central sections are covered by the Cooperstown Fire Department and Emergency Squad. Lastly, the eastern and central sections are covered by the Middlefield Fire Department and First Response with the Cooperstown Emergency Squad for patient transport. The Otsego County ambulance service as of November 2021 provides supplemental EMS to the entire town.

Although there are five separate entities involved in Fire and EMS coverage, all work collaboratively with mutual aid agreements and use resources to best serve the Town of Middlefield. Through this collaborative work the town has up to 150 combined volunteer members serving the Town of Middlefield. Emergency 911 calls are handled by the [Otsego County Communication Center](#) which then dispatches the necessary resources to the scene. Each company is equipped and trained to respond to any call when the need arises. Middlefield Fire Department has 10 volunteer firemen (2023).

The Town of Middlefield does not have its own constabulary. Village of Cooperstown Police respond to direct and 911 calls within the Village sections of Middlefield. The County Sheriff's office and the New York State Police respond to direct and 911 calls outside the Village.

Otsego County Sheriff's Department/NYS Police/Village Coverage for Middlefield:

The [Otsego County Sheriff's Department](#) (based on County Rt 33W) provides police services for all of Otsego County and therefore Middlefield. However, the Sheriff's Office does not patrol the section of Middlefield within the Village of Cooperstown except in backup situations. When needed, the sheriff's department receives backup from the NYS Police out of Oneonta and Richfield Springs; the "closest car" responds. During the daytime, there are typically 2 County Sheriff vehicles patrolling roads in the county, with 2 during the night (2023 numbers). Early morning hours can have fewer patrol cars on the roads. "Given the amount of terrain they have to cover, County deputies are trained to handle most events on their own and are expected to function largely independently. Due to this fact, deputies receive extensive training and annual refreshers, in order to stay current with specialized equipment and certified in specialized skills. Outside of specialized schools, all deputies receive over 21 hours of in-service training per year. All deputies are trained and equipped with Automated Defibrillators." – from Otsego County Sheriff's Department website

The [Village of Cooperstown Police](#) have 3 full time officers and 3 part time officers (2023). Hours are 7:30 a.m. to 1:30 a.m. The Village of Cooperstown Police patrol ONLY the Village section of Middlefield with backup from the county and state when needed. The Village police will respond to 911 emergency calls to contiguous property and cooperate with all law enforcement agencies. Sources: Representative from MFD, Village of Cooperstown Police, County Sheriff's Office.

HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

Middlefield participates in the county-wide hazard mitigation plan. The plan includes information on hazards and response and mitigation actions that are common throughout the county as well as individual plans that are specific to the unique hazards and mitigation actions of the municipalities that participated in the plan. Information is updated every 4 years under the supervision of the county and with the expertise of an outside company. Many mitigation preparedness and response aspects of the plan are overseen by the County, not by the individual townships, as is the case with Middlefield. The Town of Middlefield's HMP is available on the Town website and outlines specific areas of mitigation that are needed and that are currently in work.

As stormwater damage is among the highest ranked hazards, the following provides an overview of Middlefield's response capabilities:

- Stream Corridor Management: While the town does not have a stream corridor management plan, they have programs in place to provide ongoing management and maintenance of streambanks to mitigate and reduce damage.
- Stormwater: The Highway Superintendent for the town, along with Otsego County Soil and Water Conservation District, performs stormwater management functions for the town.

The Town maintains a list of organizations with which it works in case of natural hazard disruptions. This includes the Otsego County Department of Emergency Response, Otsego County Highway Department, Otsego County Emergency Planning Committee, and the Otsego County Solid Waste Management Program. The closest approved shelter is the Clark Sports Center. At this time, Middlefield's HMP states that sheltering in place is the safest course for residents in the event of an emergency. However, protocols have been established by the Otsego County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) which analyze and provide steps for response to specific emergencies. Generally, local emergency services would be provided by the "authority having jurisdiction," assessing conditions and working with the Supervisor and if necessary, the Otsego County Office of Emergency Management to make a collective decision according to the event. Evacuation is analyzed and assisted by first responders with support of the County Emergency Management Office. In the event that the incident expands outside of what local municipalities can provide, the County Board chair can execute a "State of Emergency." Means of communication with residents and emergency services is perhaps the most important tool in response to an event. Better cell service and widespread broadband buildout are needed to reach isolated residents.

The Town does not have any separate boards that include functions with respect to management of natural hazard risk; however, the Highway Department, in conjunction with the Town Board, identifies and mitigates potential risks. Additionally, the Town works with Otsego County and NY State Highway Departments on road maintenance and with County Soil and Water on stream management.

In 2017 at the directions of FEMA, the Town of Middlefield enacted a Flood Damage Prevention

Act “to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare, and to minimize public and private losses due to flood conditions.” This law helps to direct land use in flood prone areas.

For more, see the Hazard Mitigation Plan:

<https://www.otsegocounty.com/Document%20Center/N-R/Planning/Hazard%20Mitigation%20Plan/48%20Section%209.15%20-%20Middlefield%20T%20Apr21.pdf>

And the Town’s Flood Damage Law:

https://www.middlefieldny.org/uploads/1/1/7/6/117681638/fema_local_law_from_dec_5.pdf

CLIMATE CHANGE AND RESPONSES



From New York’s Local Governments Adapting to Climate Change: Challenges, Solution and Costs, a survey and report on the stressors of climate change and the responses taken by NYS’s local governments: “Climate change poses an existential threat to virtually every aspect of the living, built and natural world. Temperatures are rising at alarming rates, extending droughts. Shifting seasonal patterns are disrupting growing seasons and agricultural practices. More frequent and increasingly powerful and destructive storms, flooding and stormwater runoff are increasingly threatening communities, impacting lives, property, wildlife, natural resources and more. All are expected to accelerate in the years ahead. Adapting to these changes can take two major forms: increased maintenance or replacement of infrastructure and goods damaged by climate change-related events, or proactively changing the design of infrastructure to make it less susceptible to those events (including, in some cases, moving development to less susceptible areas). Both cost money, and it can be particularly difficult to find the funding for the latter type of spending.”

In the survey, heat, drought, and particularly weather damage and flooding were identified as the greatest challenges facing upstate communities such as Middlefield. A number of actions were identified as solutions.

Middlefield's actions are as of 2023:

Forming and/or participating in a committee meant to guide efforts to address climate change—Middlefield has a Climate Smart Community Committee, Middlefield has a Hazard Mitigation Plan, Middlefield works with Otsego County Department of Emergency Management for emergency response and with FEMA for reclamation from extreme weather damage, Middlefield has a Shared Services agreement for road work.

Identifying emergency shelters in the event of extreme weather—Clark Sports Center is Middlefield's closest shelter.

Retrofit, Raise or Rebuild municipal buildings—Middlefield's CSC is working on assessing and updating infrastructure to lower carbon footprint, increase sustainability and adaptability. Middlefield's highway department is in a 100 year floodplain and has flooded—no action has been taken as yet due to cost, Middlefield's fire department, a private corporation, has installed a generator. Middlefield properties who use Village of Cooperstown water and sewer are under the supervision of the Village.

Address Increased Pavement Deterioration of Roads—Middlefield is working on increasing culvert size to handle increased water loads, Middlefield works with the county and FEMA on projects related to extreme weather damage, Middlefield upgrades and replaces bridges as required by the state inspector, stream bed stabilization is undertaken in and around culverts and bridges as needed.

Other action that could be considered: green roofing or solarization projects for municipal buildings and communities, converting fleets to electric vehicles, installing EV charging stations, generators for municipal buildings, plantings or stabilization of stream beds, tree planting to combat heat, flood buyout studies, buffers for storm runoff or construction to help maintain water quality and protect surface waters, curtailing growth in flood-prone areas Middlefield has a Flood Damage Prevention Law, and conservation easements.

Funding: The NY State study showed that the largest burden of addressing and adapting to climate change was shouldered by local governments (52-69%), especially those projects which addressed critical infrastructure, planting trees and building protective structures.

See: New York's Local Governments Adapting to Climate Change: Challenges, Solutions and Costs

<https://www.osc.state.ny.us/files/local-government/publications/pdf/climate-change-2023.pdf>

See Hazard Mitigation, above

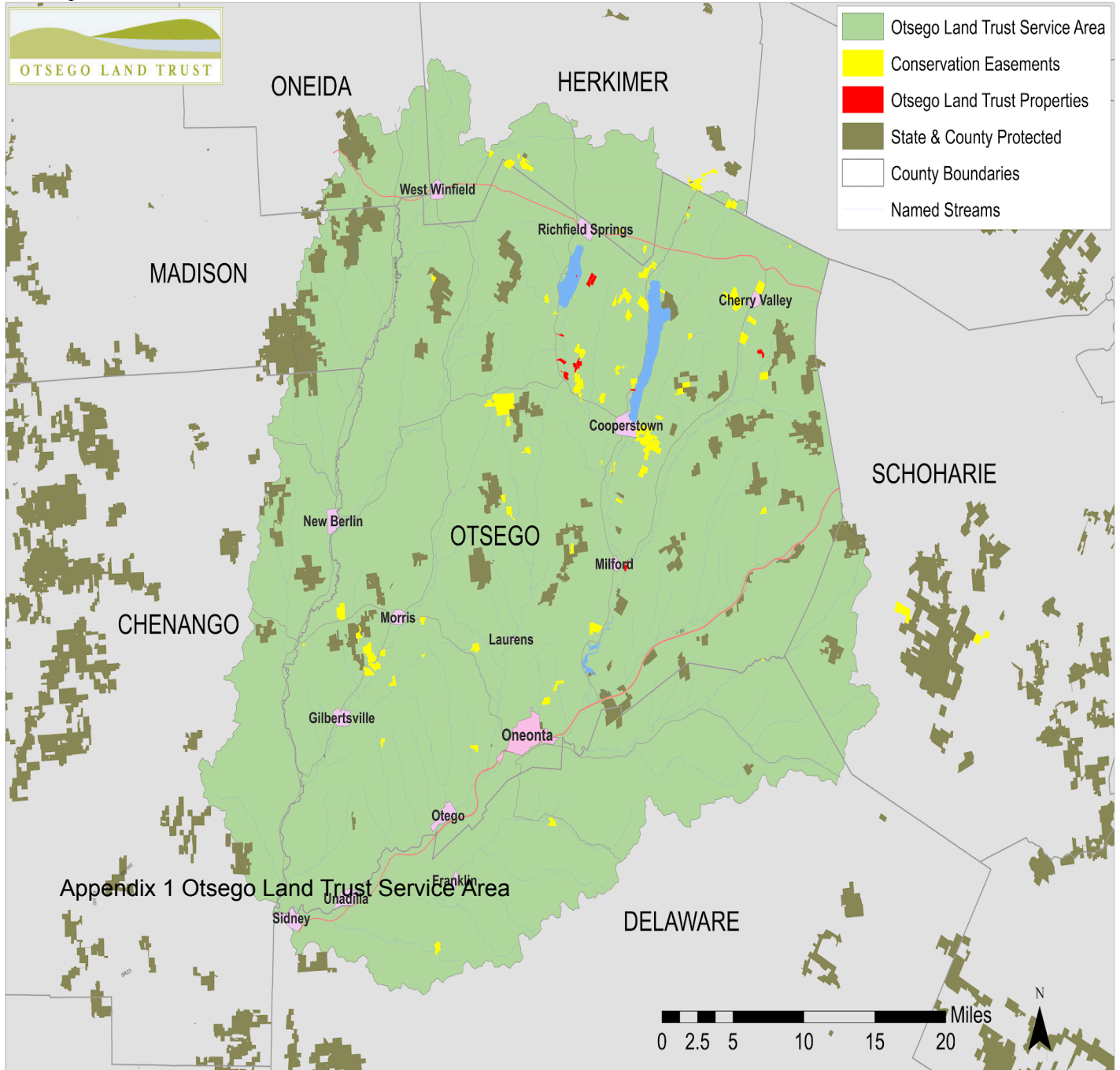
APPENDIX

MAPS

PHOTO CREDITS



Otsego Land Trust Service Area



Appendix 1 Otsego Land Trust Service Area

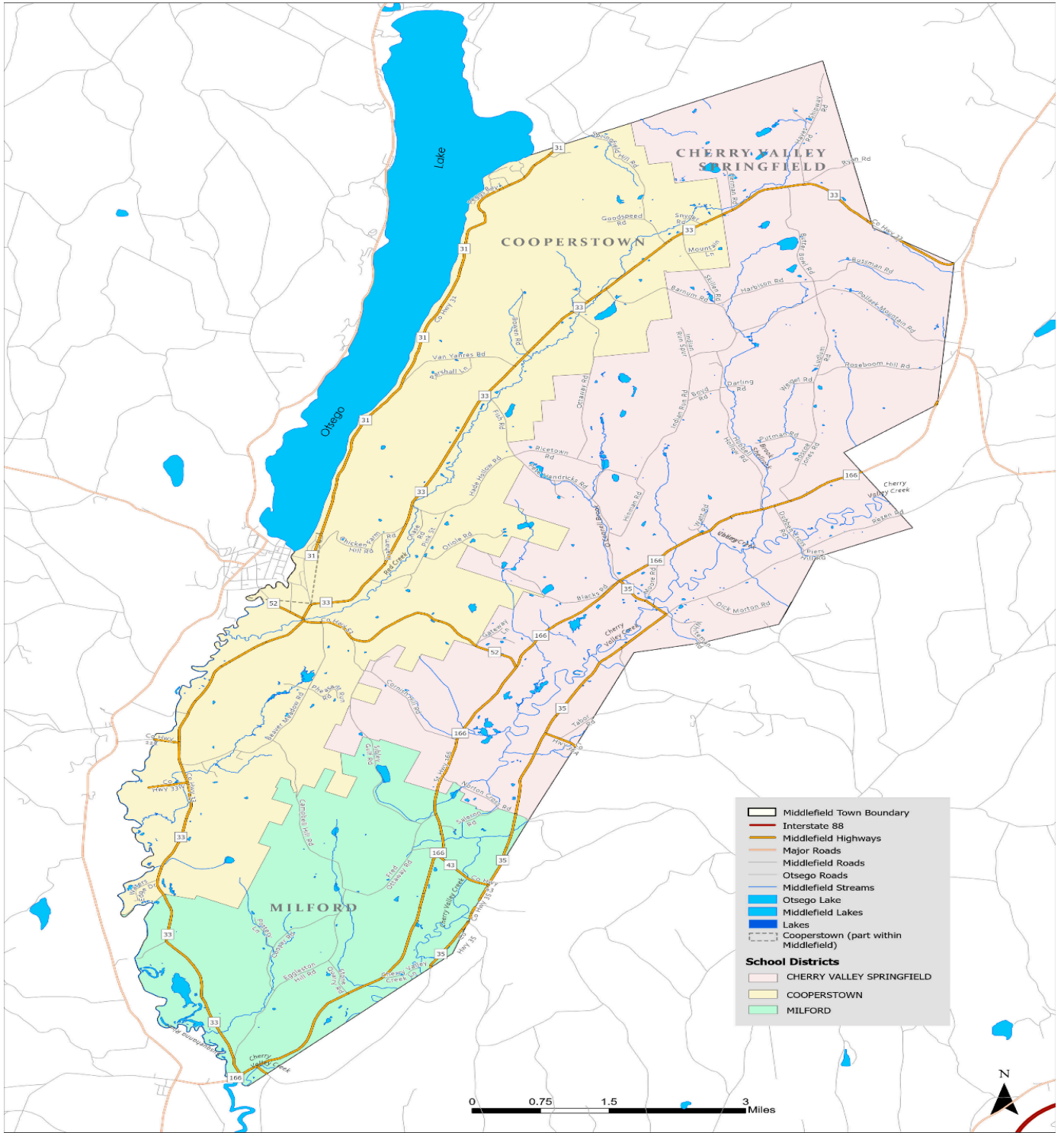
Otsego Land Trust 6/21/2022

Appendix 3 Place Names Map Middlefield Newtown Martin

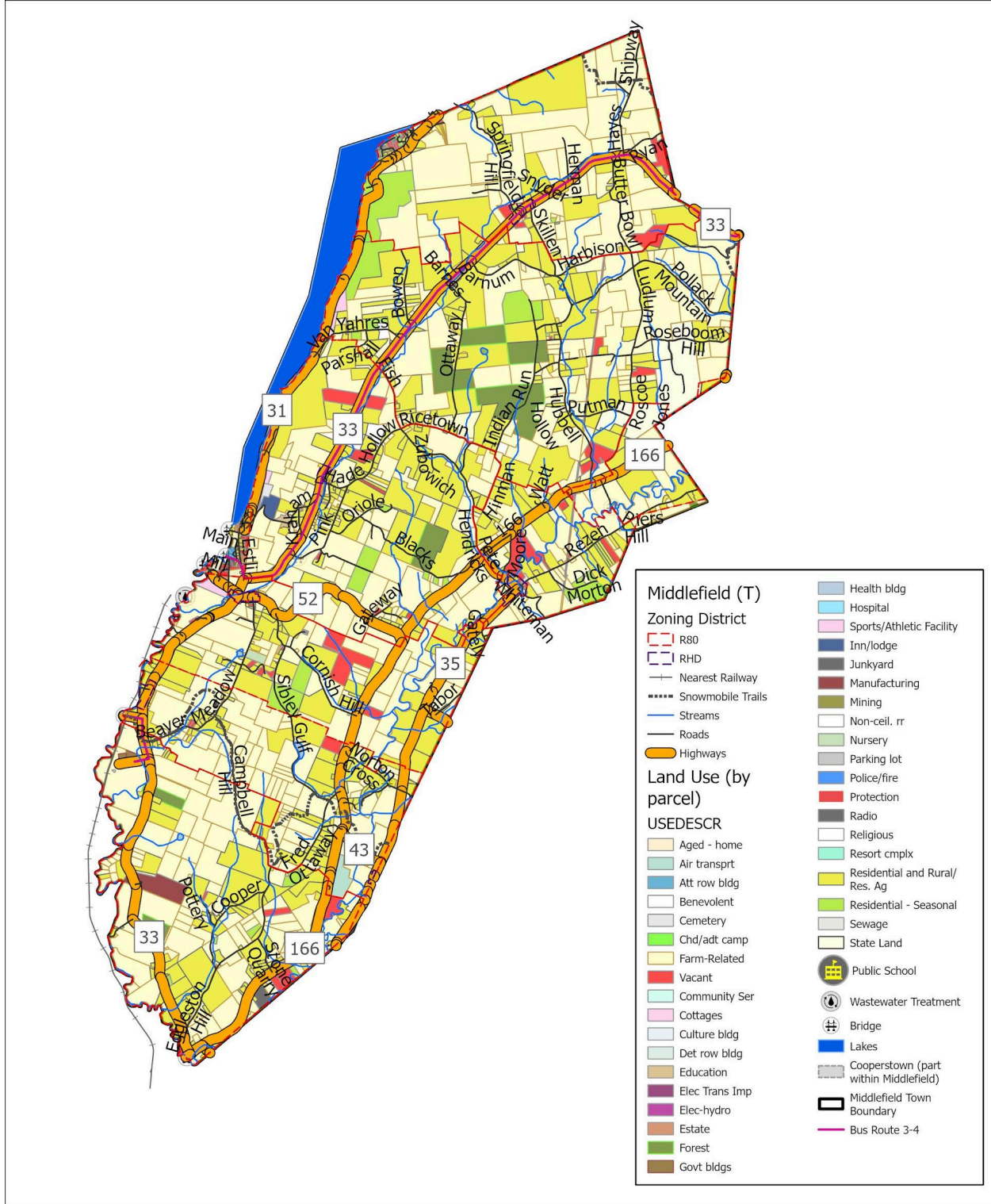




School Districts Town of Middlefield



Appendix 5 Middlefield Land Use Map



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 State Plane
 New York East FIPS 3101 Feet
 Projection: Transverse Mercator
 Datum: North American 1983

Town of Middlefield
 Land Use Map

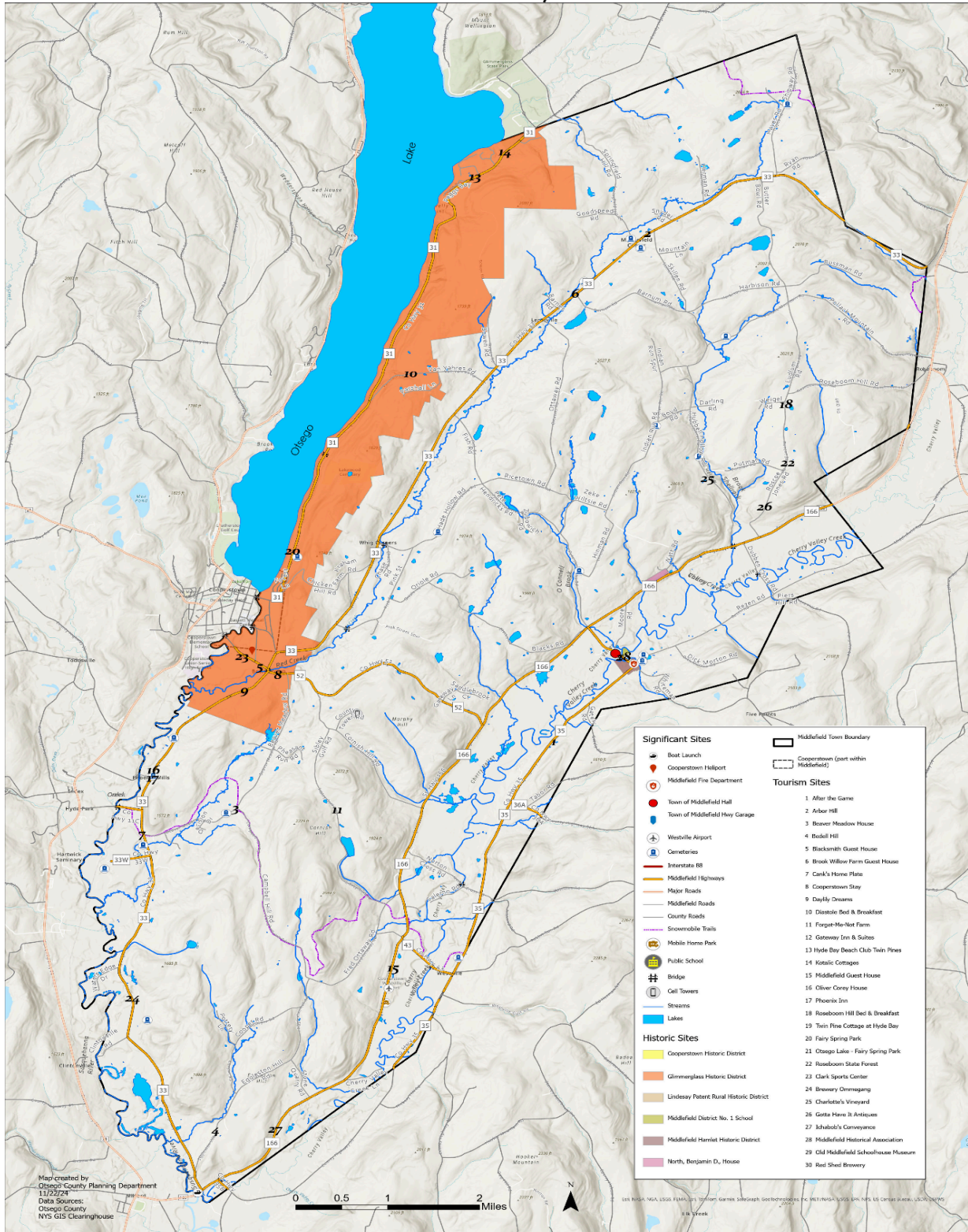
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Map update by Trevor Fuller,
 Otsego County Planning
 Department
 Data: USDA and USGS.
 3/20/2023

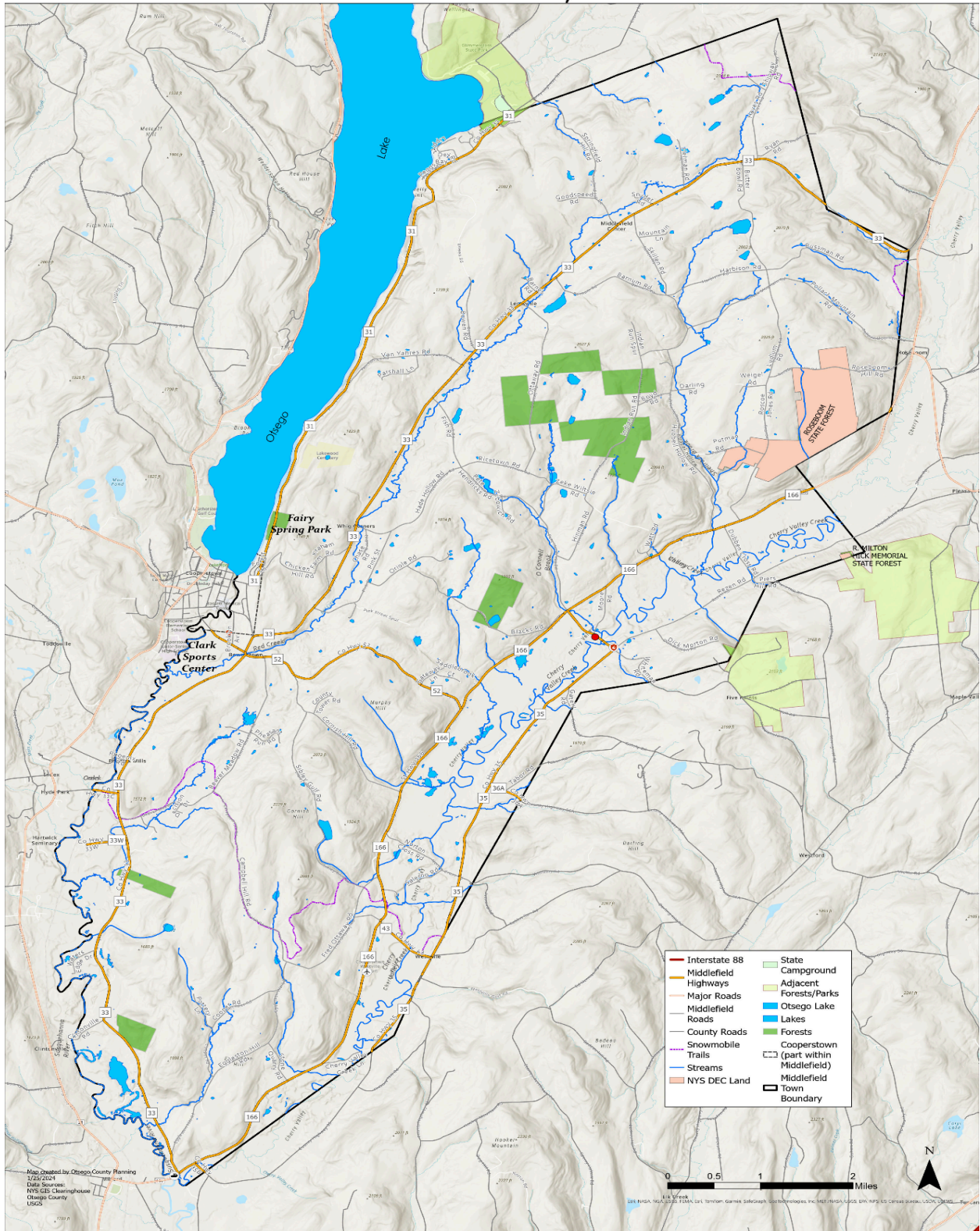


Cultural and Historic Sites Town of Middlefield, New York

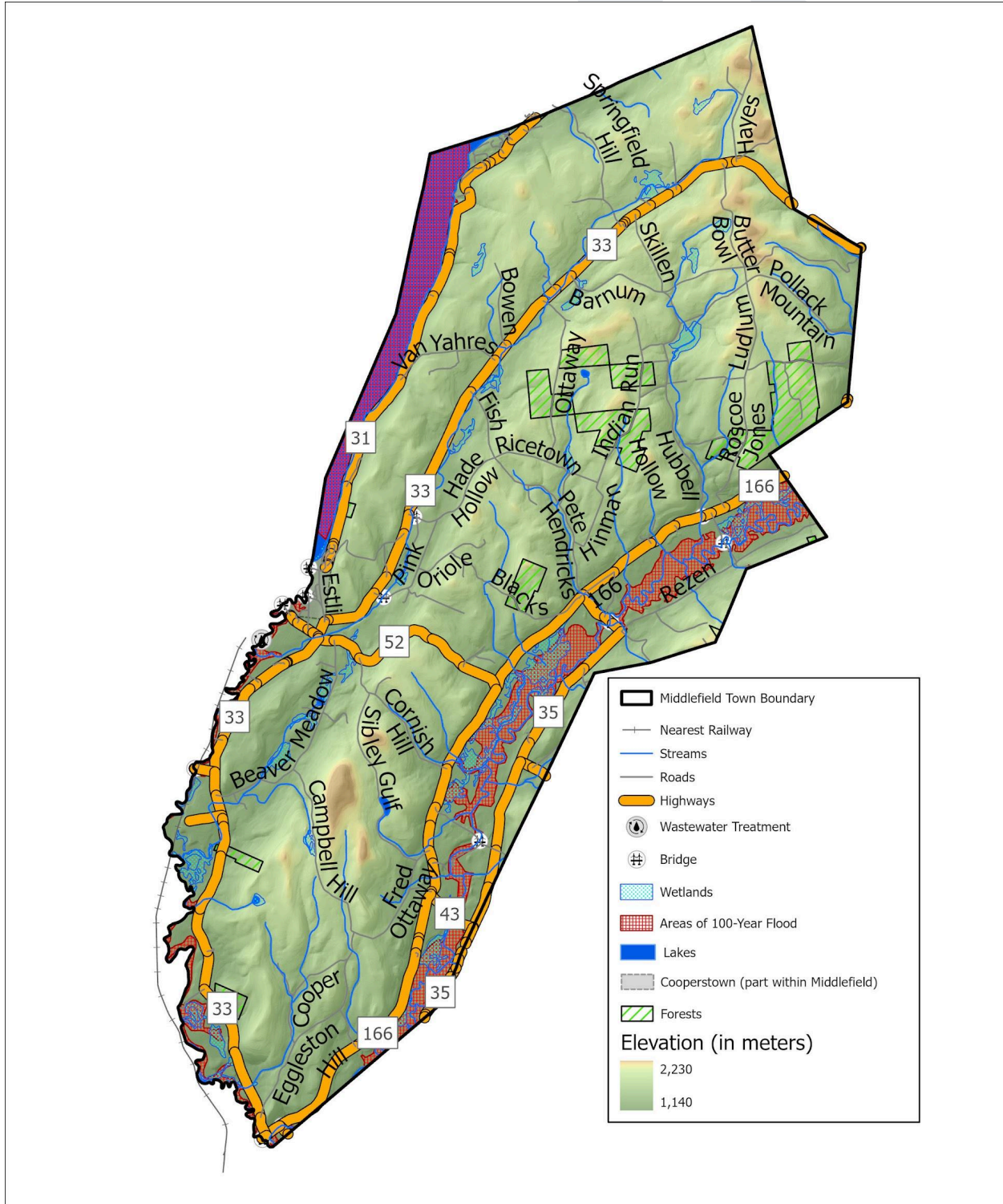




Recreational Sites Town of Middlefield, New York



Appendix 8 Wetlands and Elevation Map



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 State Plane
 New York East FIPS 3101 Feet
 Projection: Transverse Mercator
 Datum: North American 1983

Town of Middlefield
 Wetlands and Elevation Map

0 0.5 1
 Mile



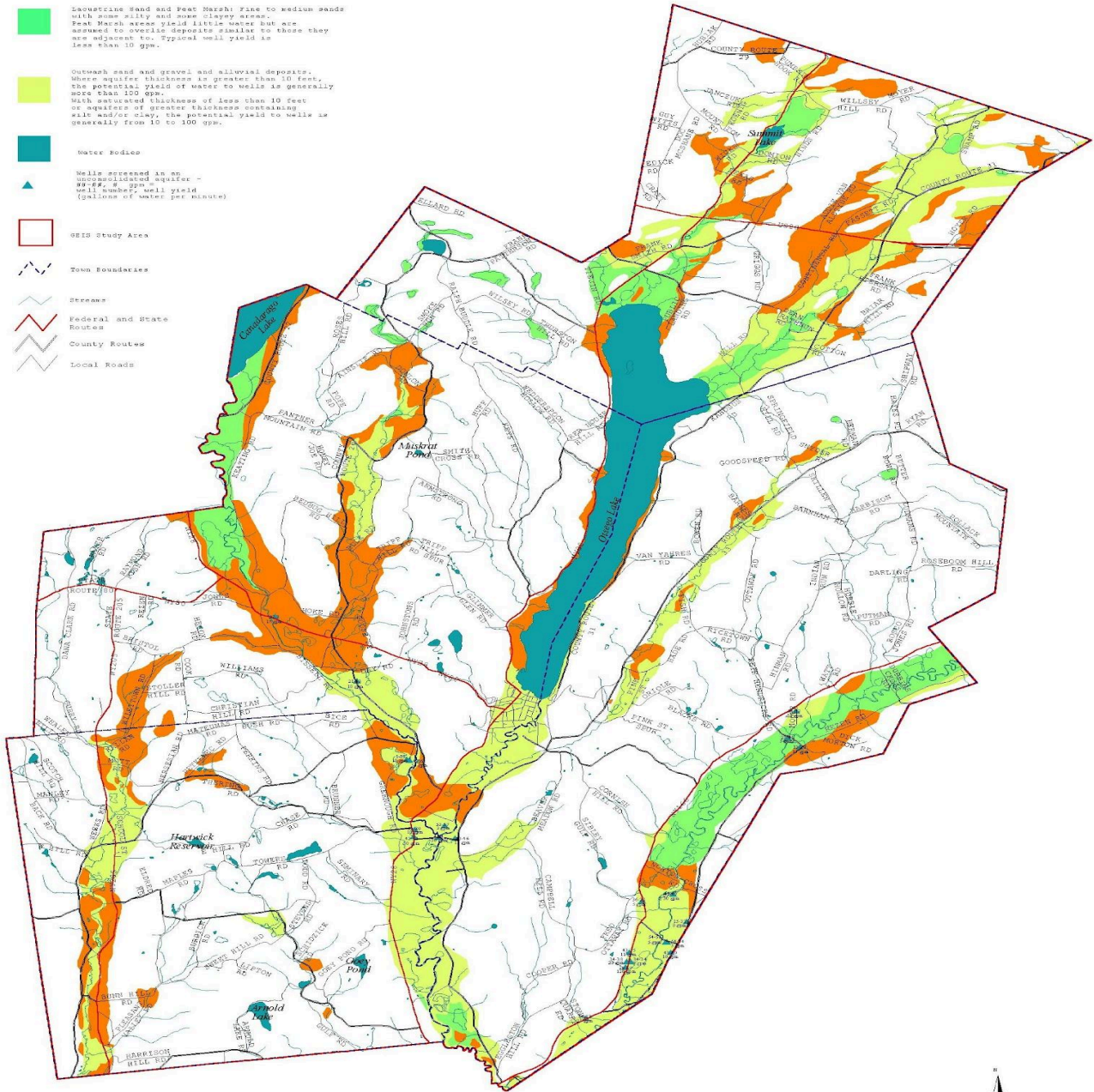
Map update by Trevor Fuller,
 Otsego County Planning Dept
 Data: USDA and USGS
 3/20/2023



Appendix 9 Unconsolidated Aquifers

Map 5: Unconsolidated Aquifers

- Kame, Kame Terrace, and Kame Moraine deposits. There is little published information about yield potential in these deposits. Typical yields would likely be less than 10 gpm. Higher yields could be expected where streams or other water bodies are present.
- Till and bedrock outcrop areas; unconsolidated material yields minimal water (well yields generally less than 3 gpm).
- Sandstone Sand and Peat Marsh: fine to medium sands with some silty and some clayey areas. Peat Marsh areas yield little water but are assumed to overlie deposits similar to those they are adjacent to. Typical well yield is less than 10 gpm.
- Outwash sand and gravel and alluvial deposits. Where aquifer thickness is greater than 10 feet, the potential yield of water to wells is generally more than 100 gpm. With saturated thickness of less than 10 feet or aquifers of greater thickness containing silt and/or clay, the potential yield to wells is generally from 10 to 100 gpm.
- Water Bodies
- Wells screened as an unconsolidated aquifer - #, # of #, # (well number, well yield (gallons of water per minute))
- GIS Study Area
- Town Boundaries
- Streams
- Federal and State Routes
- County Routes
- Local Roads

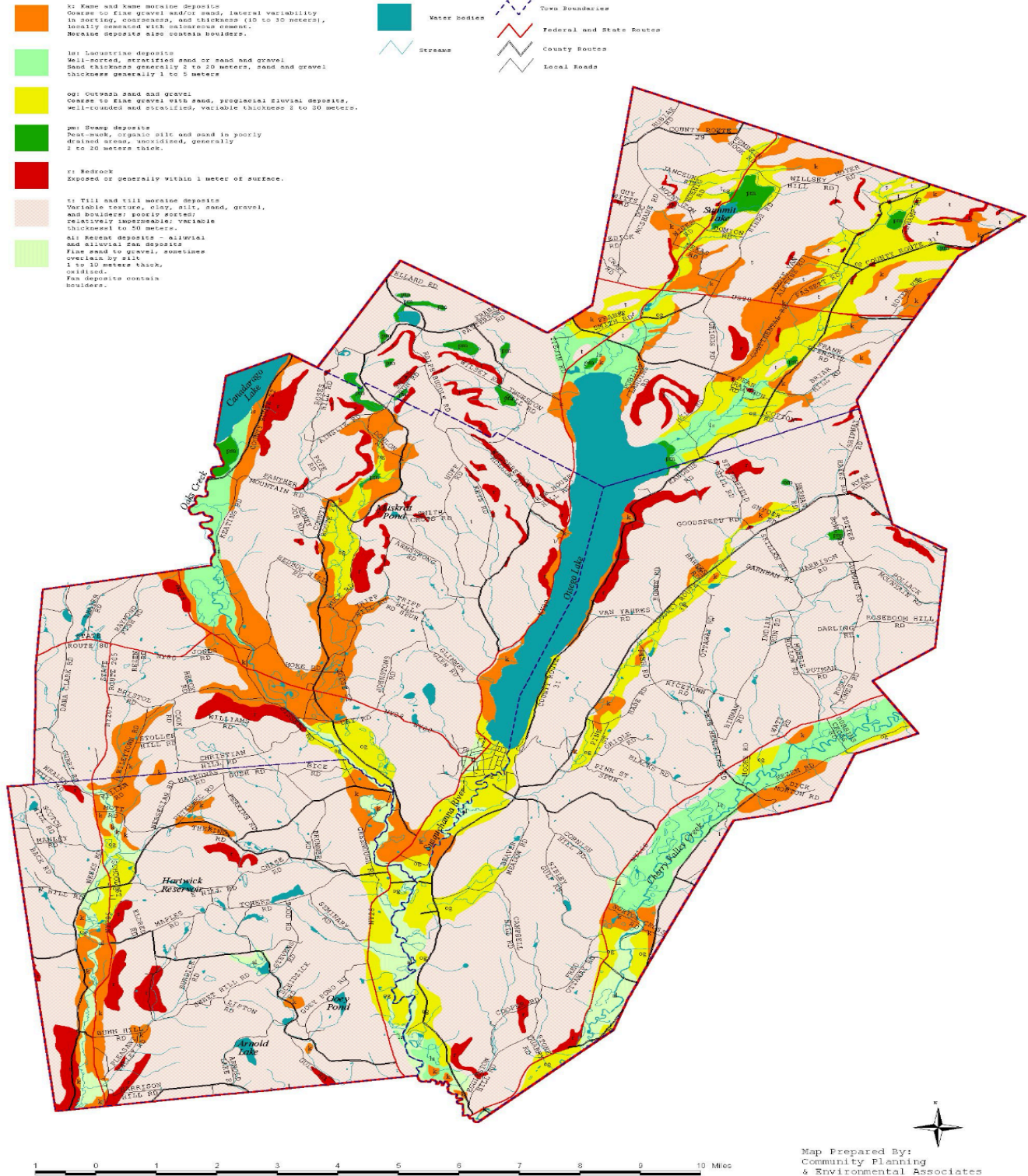


Map Prepared By:
 Community Planning
 & Environmental Associates
 Fall 2002

Appendix 10 Surficial Geology



Map 1: Surficial Geology



Appendix 11 Potential Mining Resources



Map 3: Potentially Mineable Resources

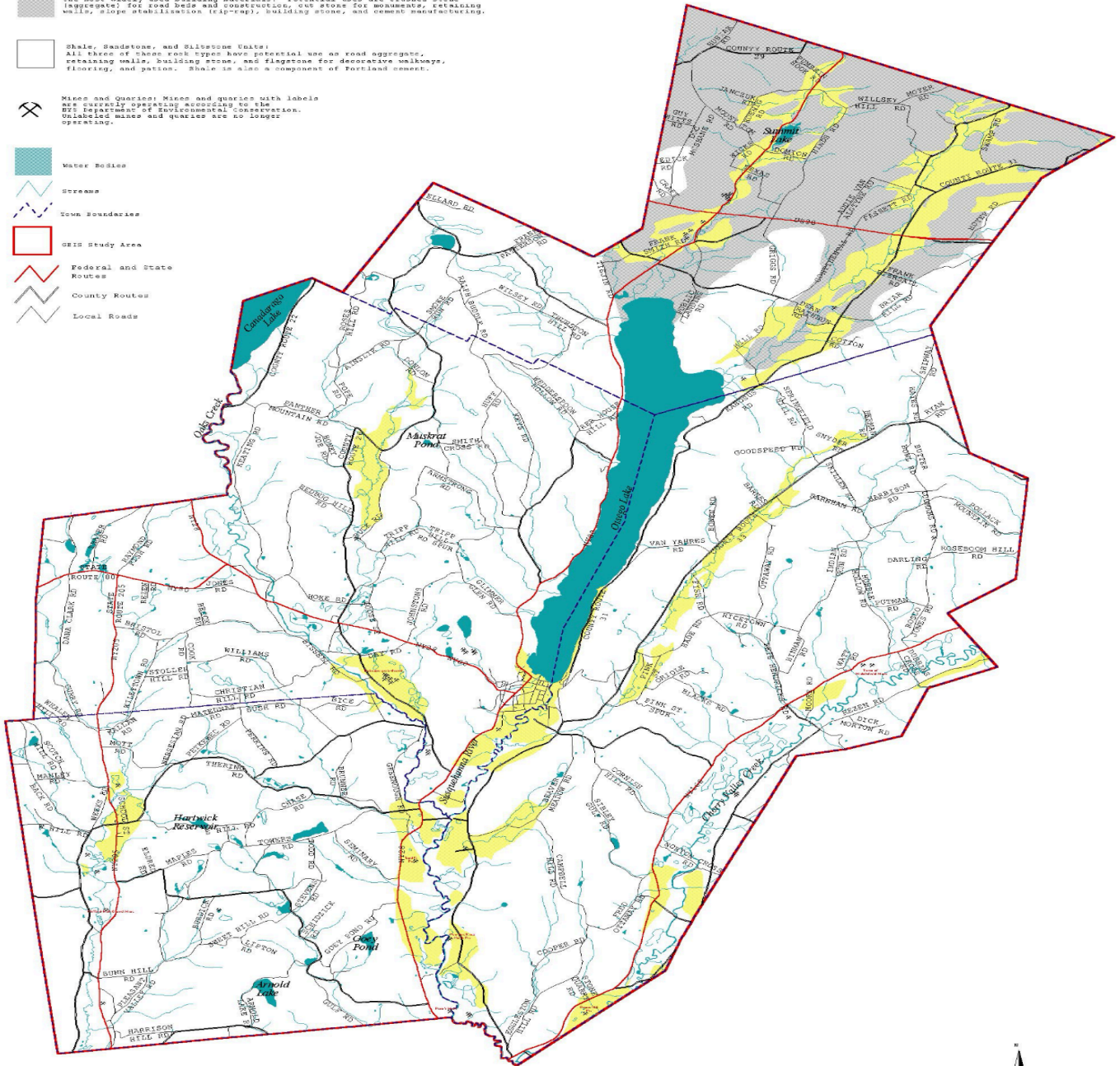
Outwash Sand and Gravel: Potential uses of sand and gravel include building foundation, road, and sidewalk construction when mixed with cement to form concrete; filtering and drainage for septic systems, storm drains, and surface runoff; and walkways and trails. Gravel can also be used for road and railroad bed fill and slope stabilization. Additional uses for sand include playground surfaces, man-made beaches, temporary flood protection walls, and glass manufacturing.

Limestone and Dolomitic Units: Limestone and dolomite are the most widely used building materials. Potential uses are crushed stone (aggregate) for road beds and construction, cut stone for monuments, retaining walls, slope stabilization (rip-rap), building stone, and cement manufacturing.

Shale, Sandstone, and Siltsstone Units: All three of these rock types have potential use as road aggregate, retaining walls, building stone, and flagstone for decorative walkways, flooring, and patios. Shale is also a component of Portland cement.

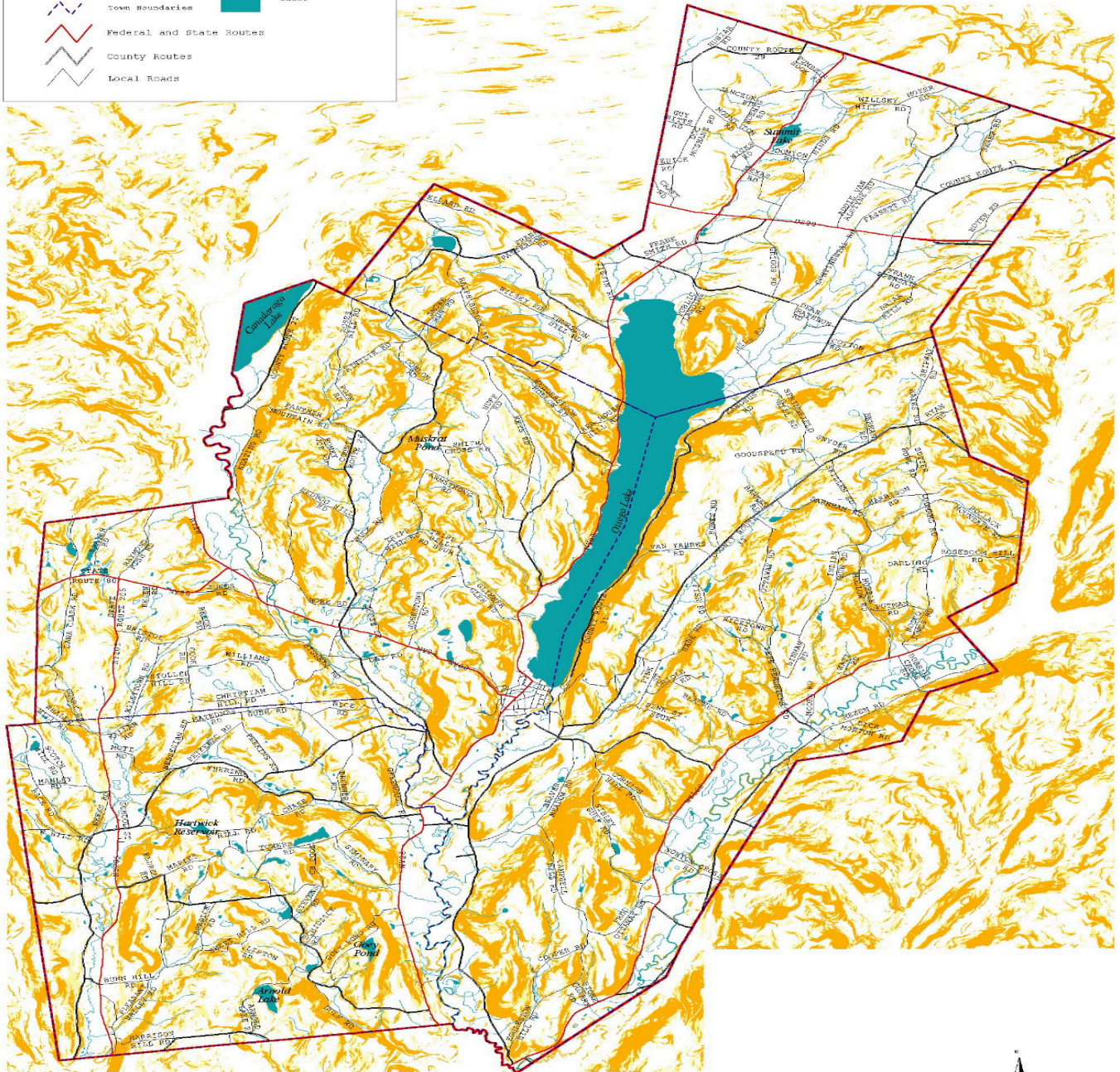
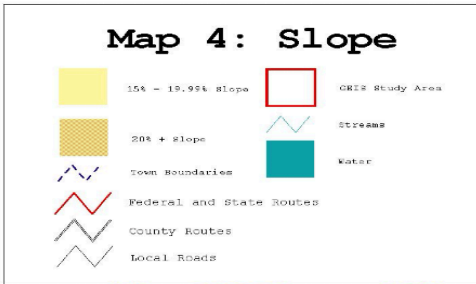
Mines and Quarries: Mines and quarries with labels are currently operating according to the DEQ Department of Environmental Conservation. Unlabeled mines and quarries are no longer operating.

- Water Bodies
- Streams
- Town Boundaries
- GIS Study Area
- Federal and State Routes
- County Routes
- Local Roads



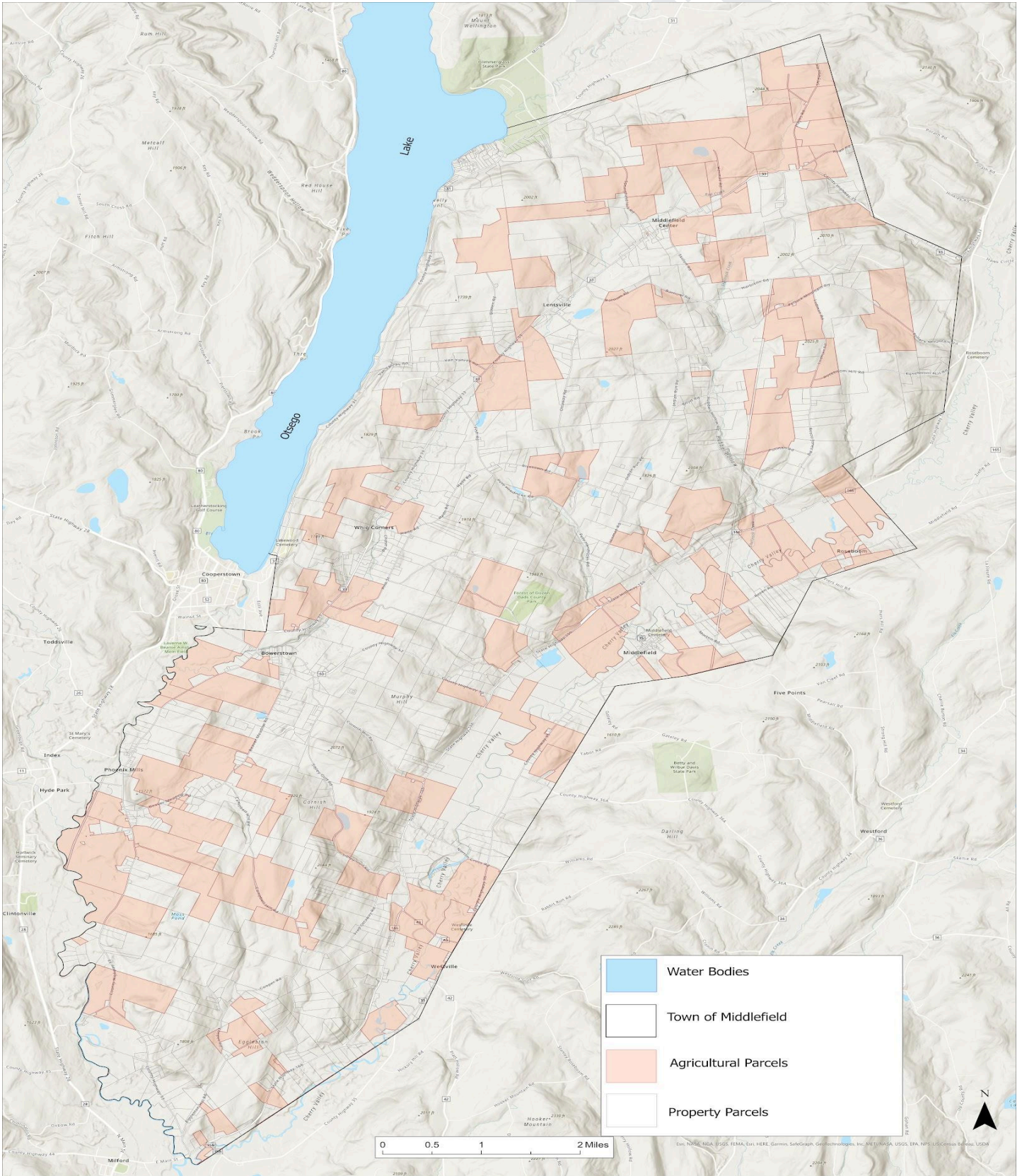
Map Prepared By:
Community Planning
& Environmental Associates
Fall 2002

Appendix 12 Slope



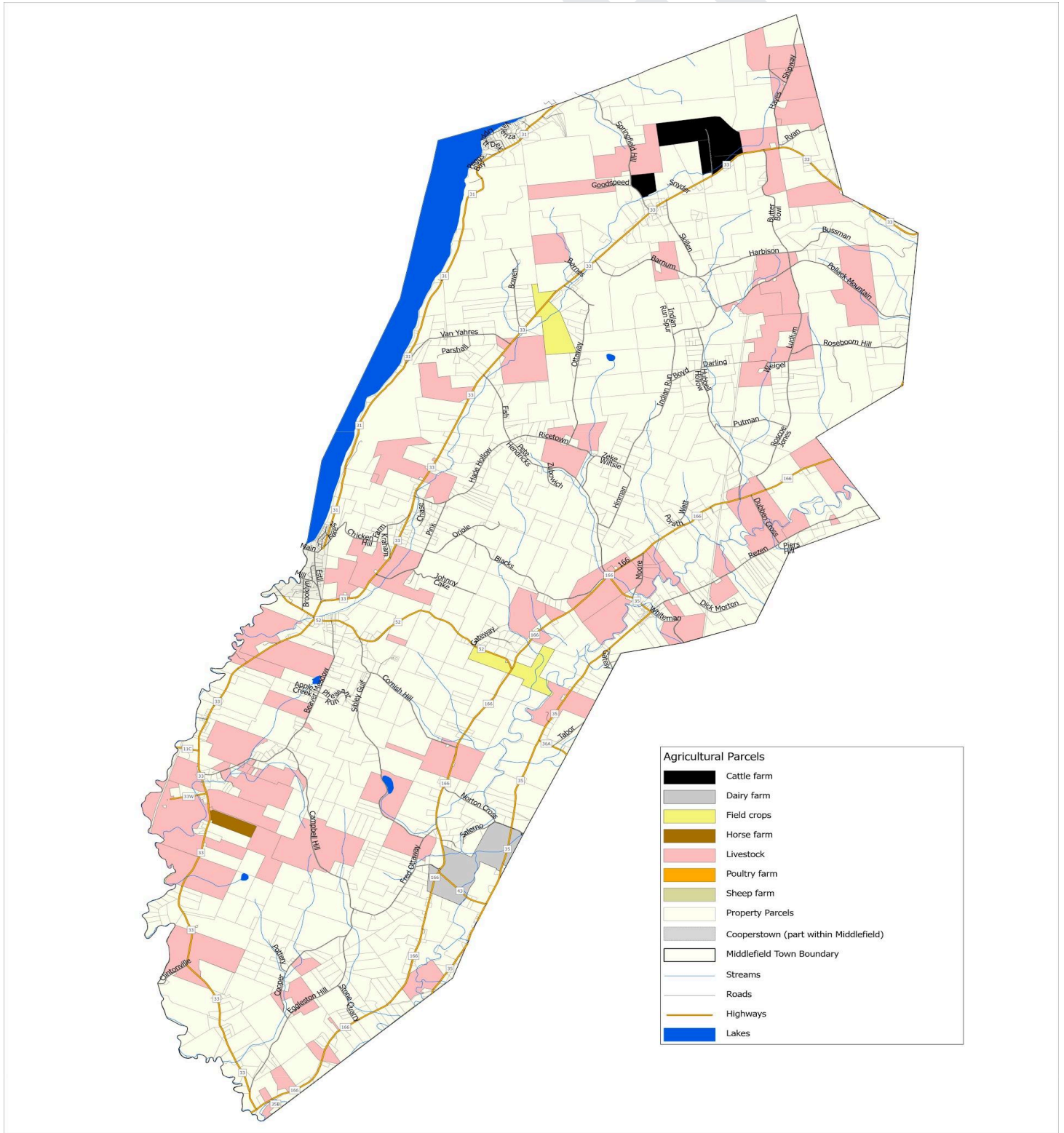
Map Prepared By:
Community Planning
& Environmental Associates
Fall 2002

Appendix 13 Agricultural Parcels



Created by Otsego County Planning Department (06/23)
 ESRI Basemap
 Otsego County Boundary Files
 NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N

Appendix 14 Agricultural Land by Class



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 State Plane
 New York East FTM 1816 Feet
 Projection: Transverse Mercator
 Datum: North American 1983

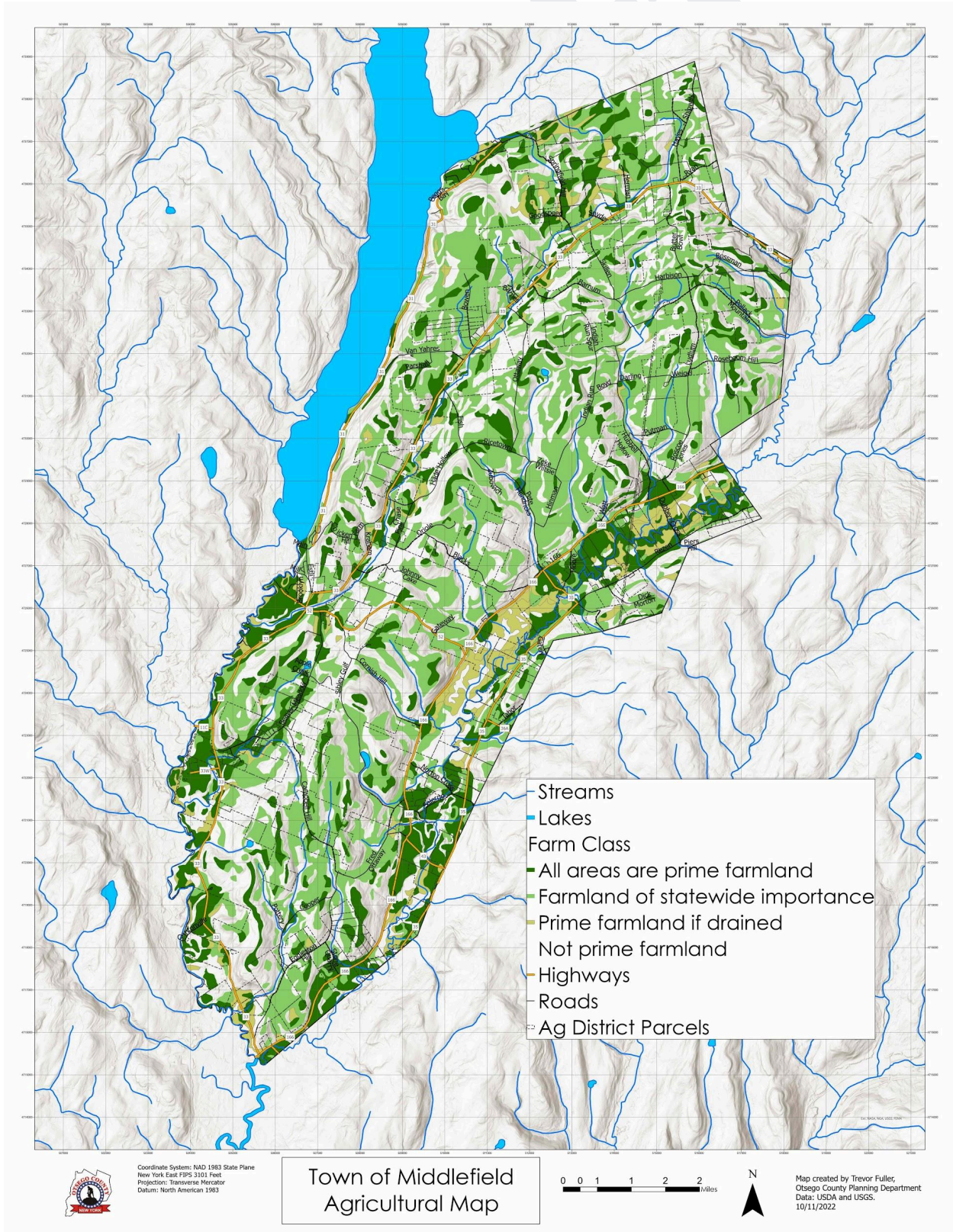
Town of Middlefield
 Agricultural Map

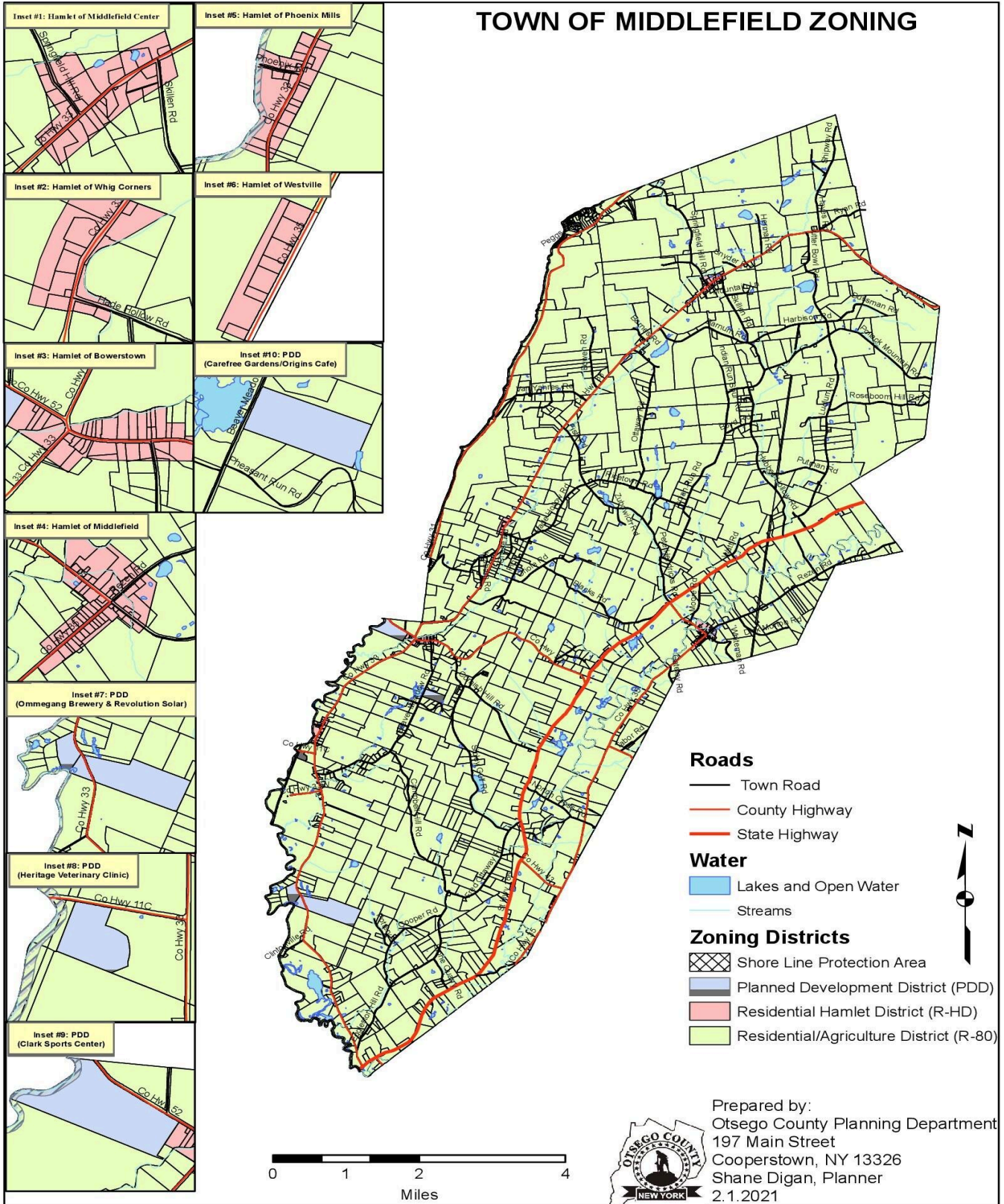
0 0.3 0.5 1 Mile



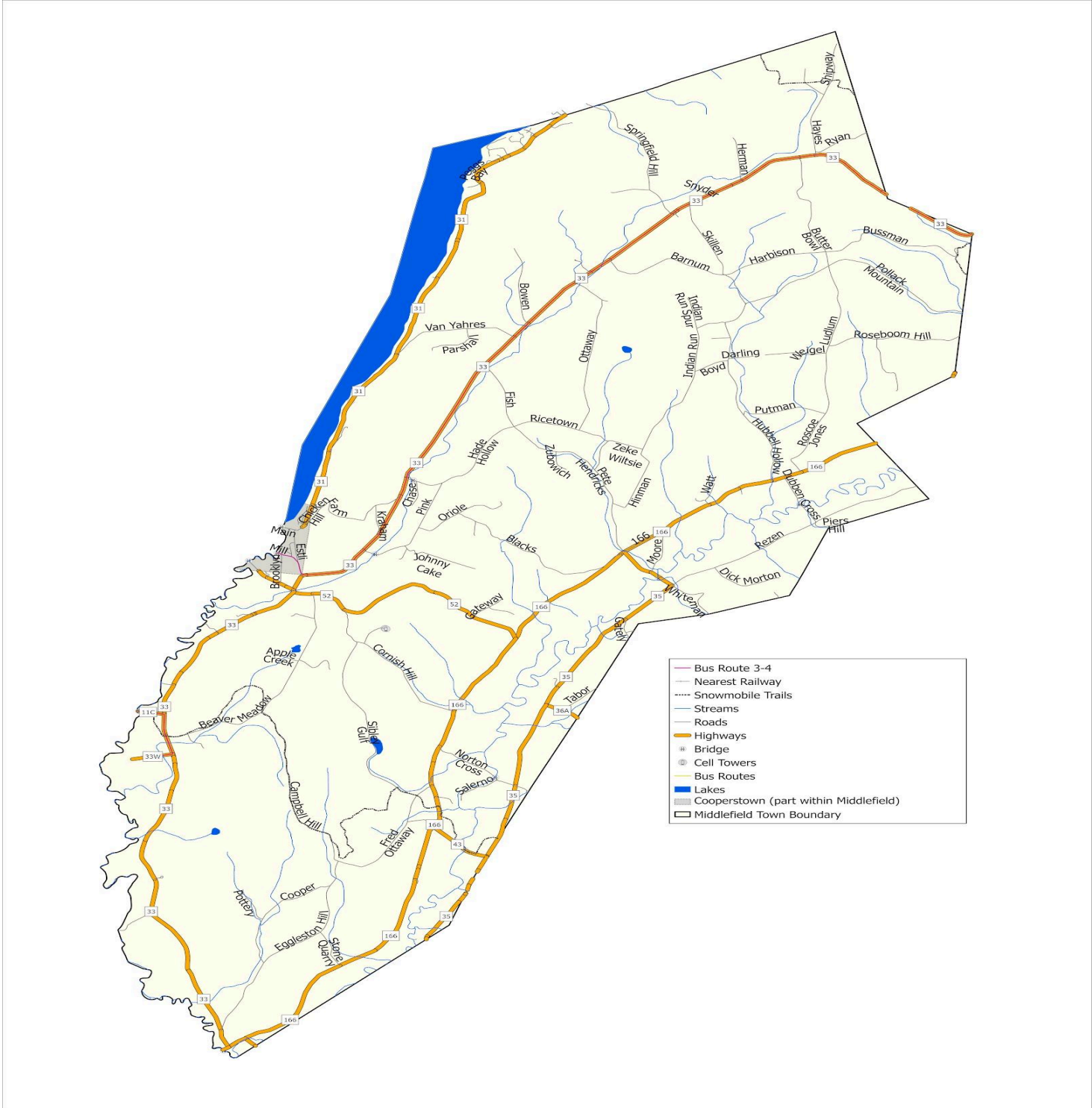
Map updated by Thomas F. Kelly,
 Otsego County Planning Dept.
 Date: 10/28/2014 and 05/28/
 2015/2013

Appendix 14-A Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance



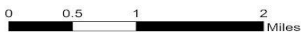


Appendix 16 Transportation Map



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 State Plane
 New York East FIPS 3101 Feet
 Projection: Transverse Mercator
 Datum: North American 1983

Town of Middlefield Transportation Map



Appendix 17 Middlefield Roads by Maintenance



Middlefield Roads by Maintenance

Maintained by Village of Cooperstown

Main Street	Estli
Mill St	

Maintained by Town (Snow Removal by Village)

Lakeshore Drives	Brooklyn
Forest Lane	

Maintained by Town Year-round

Cornish Hill	Pollack Mountain	Pheonix
Springfield Hill	Ludlum	Clintonville
Goodspeed	Weigel	Eggleston Hill
Snyder	Darling	Pottery Lane
Herman	Fish	Beaver Meadow
Ryan	Zeke Wiltsie	Norton Cross
Bussman	Rosco Jones	Provost Place
Skillen	Hubbell Hollow	Harry Roseboom
Putman	Dubben Cross	Stone Quarry
Moore	Rezen	Cooper Lane
Barnum	Watt	Fred Ottaway
Barnes	Hinman	Salerno
Bowen	Pete Hendricks	Whiteman
Ottaway	Zubowich	Kraham
Indian Run	Hade Hollow	Gately
Indian Run Spur	Chase	Oriole
Williams (Westford plows)	Lippitt Dev. (Partial Private)	Pink
Tabor (plowed by Westford)	Piers Town Hill (only a section)	
Dick Morton (only a section)		

Maintained by State/County

Highway 166	Ct Highway 11C
Ct Highway 35	Ct Highway 52
Ct Highway 36A	Ct Highway 31
Ct Highway 33	Ct Highway 33W

Private Roads - No Town Maintenance

Peggs Bay	Parshall
Apple Creek	Water's Edge

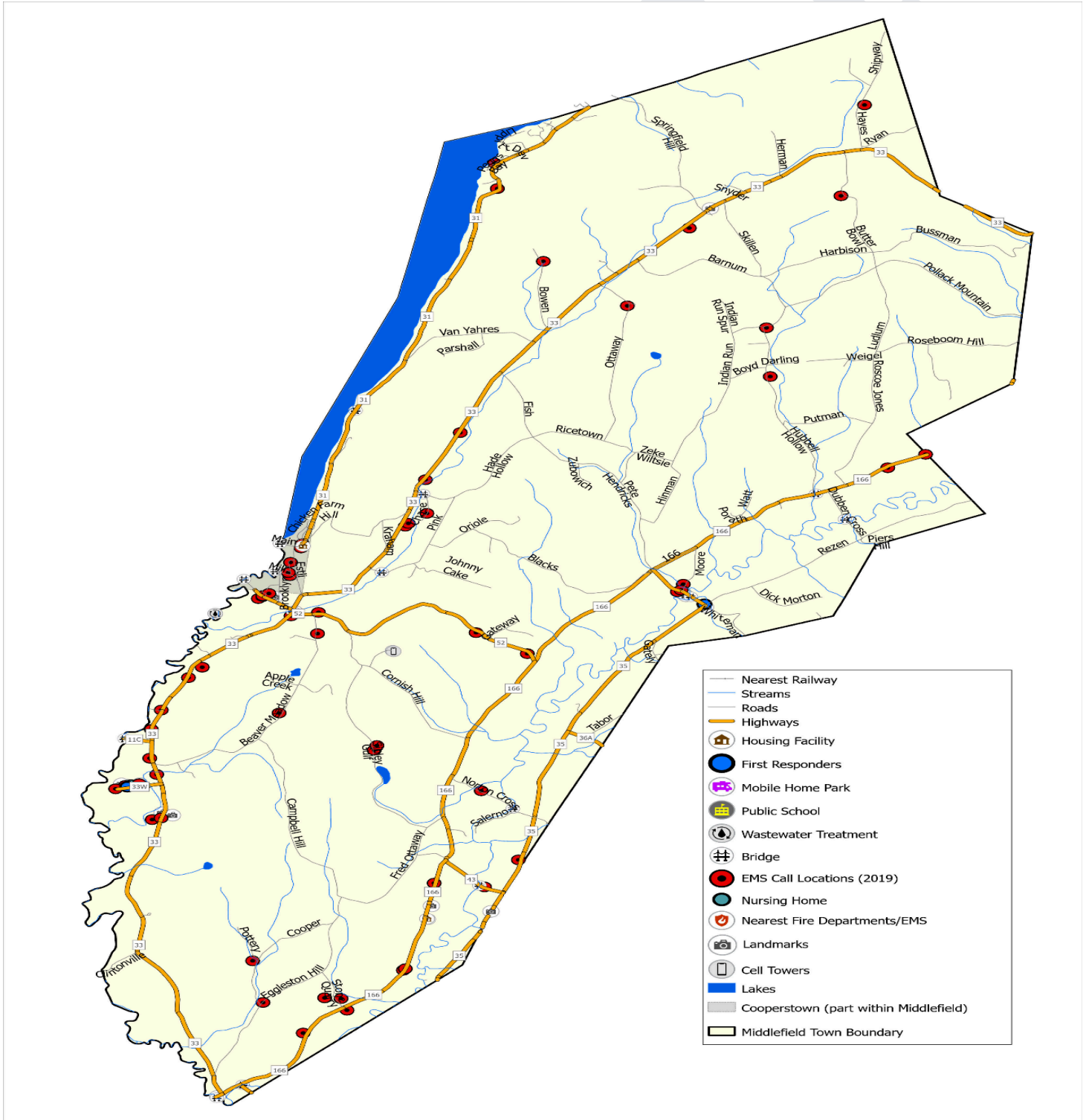
Partial Seasonal Roads - Some Sections Maintained Year-round

Hayes	Butter Bowl
Harbison	Van Yahres
Roseboom Hill	Ricetown
Blacks	Johnny Cake
Chicken Farm Hill	Sibley Gulf
Campbell Hill	

Seasonal Roads

Shipway
Boyd

Appendix 18 General Sites Map - Emergency Services



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 State Plane
 New York, East FIPS 3103 Feet
 Projection: Transverse Mercator
 Datum: North American 1983

Town of Middlefield General Sites Map

0 0.3 0.5 1 Mile



Map created by Francis P. DeB...

Appendix 19 Town of Middlefield Map 1868

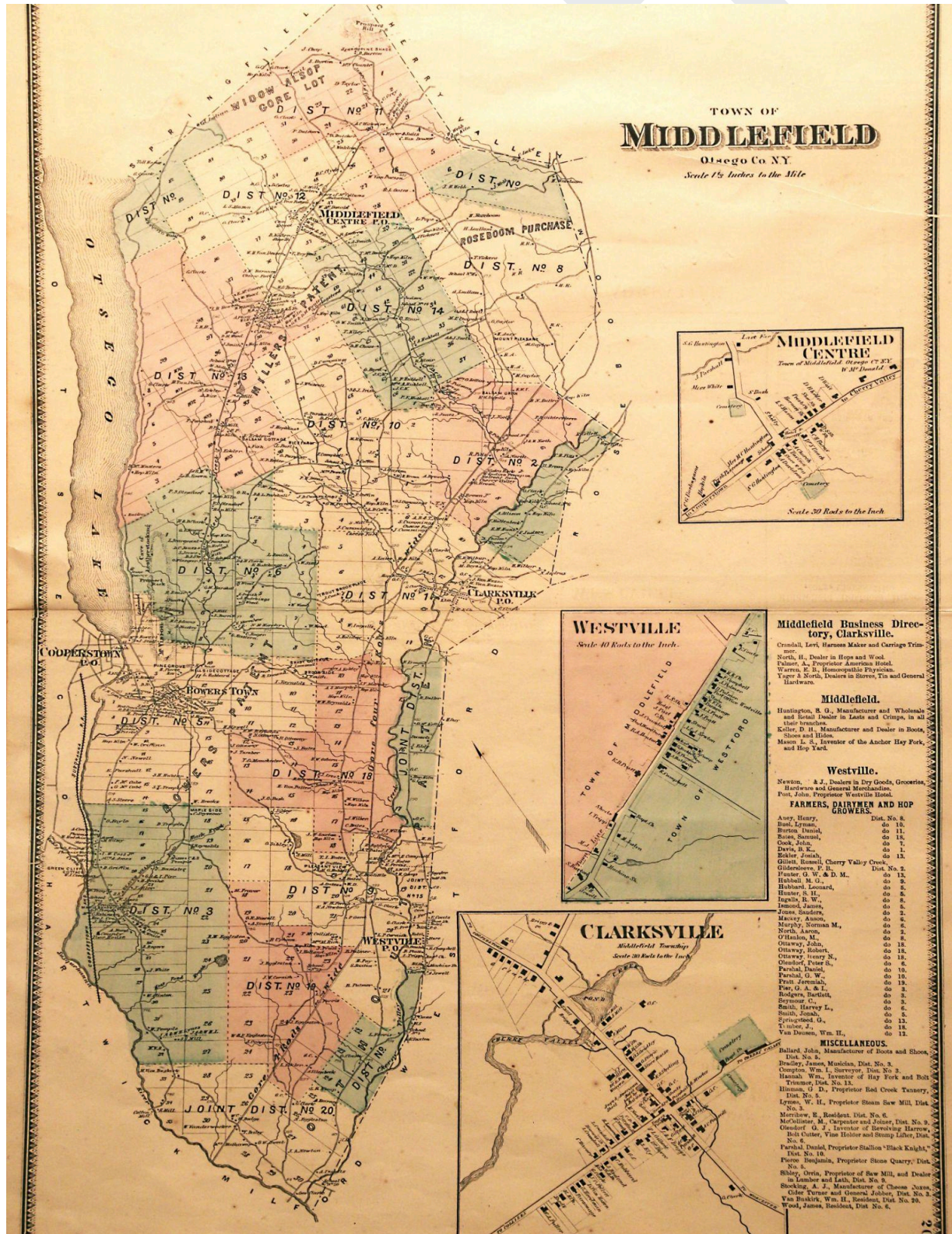


PHOTO CREDITS

Clark Bridge over Susquehanna, Title Page, Middlefield Website
Gurney's Cash Store, Town of Middlefield Historical Association Photo Gallery
Otsego Lake from the Susquehanna headwaters, Peggy Leon
Natty Bumpo's Cave
Clark Tower Forest
Middlefield Long View, Winter, Neal Newman
Spring Deer, Abby Rodd
Middlefield Fire Truck, Middlefield Fire Department
Sky, Neal Newman

MAP CREDITS

Otsego Land Trust Map, Otsego Land Trust
Map of the Five Nations, 1718, New York Public Library Map Room
Place Names Map Middlefield Newtown-Martin, Bud Tabor
Town of Middlefield, 1868, Doug Willies

Other maps provided by Otsego County Planning Department and the 2002/2011 GEIS Study

The Town of Middlefield would like to thank all those who aided in this process:

- The Middlefield Planning Board
- Trevor Fuller, Assistant Director, and the Otsego County Planning Department
- Bud Tabor
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- Danny Lapin, Revitalization Specialist, NY Department of State, NY State Planning Federation Board Member, MS Environmental Policy
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- Otsego County Sheriff's Department

draft