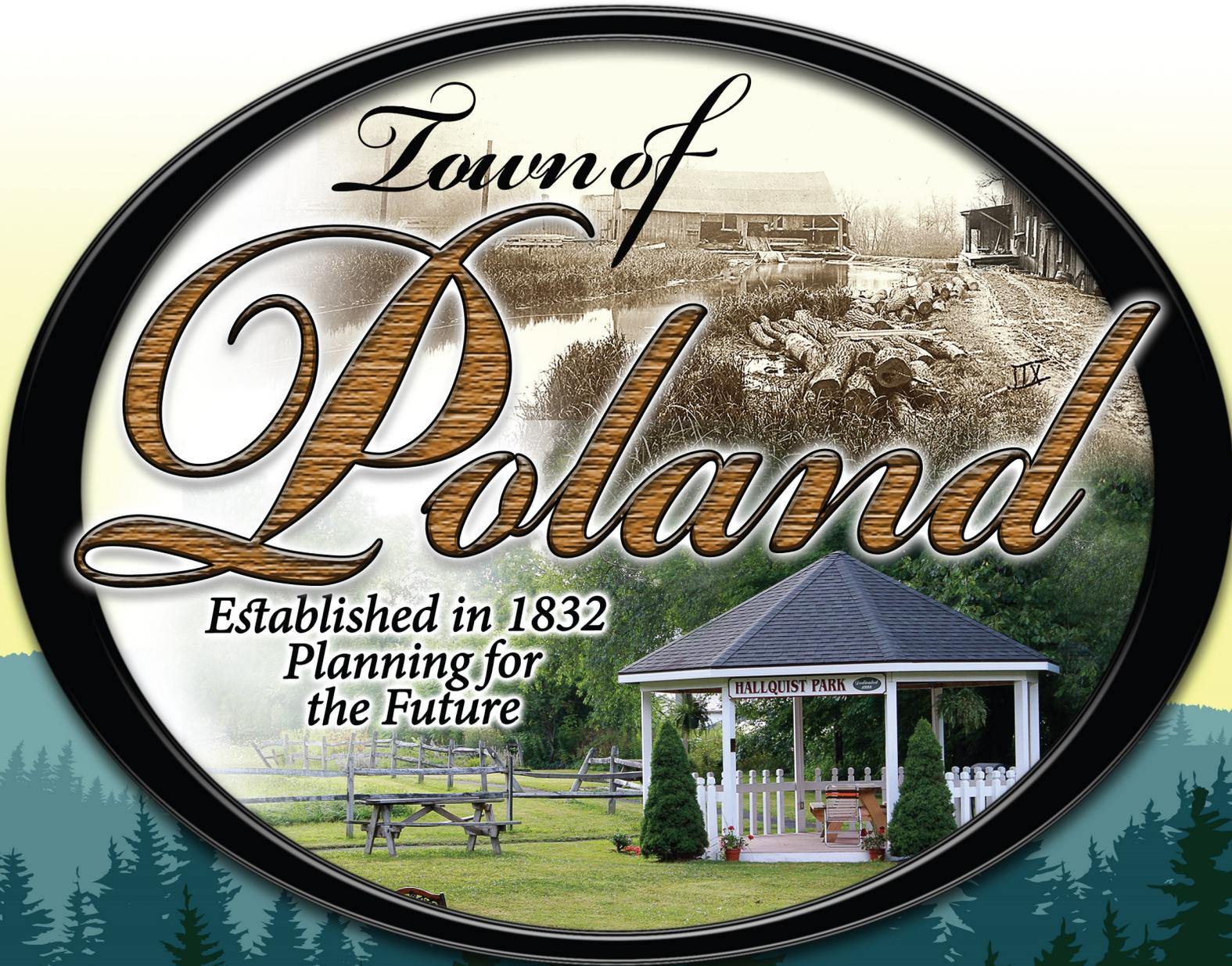


A Strategic Action Plan for the Town of Poland, New York



Town of

Poland

*Established in 1832
Planning for
the Future*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. WHO WE ARE - Our History - Poland Today	1
II. OUR SHARED VISION	5
III. HOW WE GET THERE - The Planning Process	6
IV. VISION THEMES & OUR GOALS	10
V. CHARTING OUR COURSE - Actions	16
VI. COMPLETING THE JOURNEY - Implementation	23



PRESERVING POLAND

A Letter to Town Residents

In 2005, the Town of Poland entered its third century. The generations who preceded us came to Poland for the land, location and natural resources. Poland's settlers had a vision of what Poland could be and the role that they played in the formation of the community. For many years the natural resources that the Town held provided the basis for people to pursue new ventures and create the fabric we treasure today as our community's heritage.

While natural resources still play a role in our economy, they are not the draw they once were for many new residents to our community. The Town of Poland has gradually changed from a community solely driven by agriculture and natural resources to a community which is largely populated by retirees, professionals and part-time residents seeking recreation. Change is a natural progression in the life of every community, and the Town of Poland has experienced change many times since the first settlement occurred at Kennedy Mills. As the latest generation of citizens to inhabit Poland, the question for us simply becomes "What is our vision for Poland?"

What should the Town of Poland do to make sure we preserve the qualities of the community that are so important to us, while taking advantage of future opportunities? The Town of Poland Strategic Action Plan is our map to the future. The Strategic Action Plan provides a framework to help us preserve what is important; improve on who we are as a community; and help guide us to what we want our Town to be in the future.

This Strategic Action Plan is our report to you. It summarizes the findings of the survey and workshops, describes a vision for the future, and advances an action agenda to achieve the vision. Poland is a special place for each of us, whether lifelong residents or new arrivals. As your Strategic Action Plan Committee we invite all members of our community to participate in the Town activities and join us in helping to put the Town of Poland's Strategic Action Plan into practice.



WHO WE ARE

Poland is a quiet, friendly, small town on the eastern border of Chautauqua County, New York and contains the Hamlet of Kennedy. As residents of the Town we are proud of our sense of community, supportive neighbors, good roads, schools and the Town we call home.

While we are a small community, we are ideally located within an easy drive to Falconer and Jamestown. We prefer to support and encourage small businesses that fit into our way of life and provide our daily necessities and local jobs. We recognize that we can utilize nearby urban centers for movie theaters, shopping centers and other larger needs.

Poland's rolling hills and meandering valleys provide picturesque views of farms and fields and the foothills of the Allegheny Mountains. The landscape enhances our peaceful community and is a local asset that attracts new residents seeking to escape the busier urban setting.

As residents we love to congregate for community events to see neighbors and talk with each other. Whether a school function, at church, the Memorial Day Parade or on Flag Day, a small town's community culture always needs opportunities to come together.

Our local organizations are an extension of that small town feel. Kennedy Pride, the Fire Department, the Highway Department, the Library, and the Town Hall staff all are friendly hard working individuals and groups that make us feel welcome in Poland.



OUR HISTORY

The first inhabitants of what is now Poland date back about 10,000 years. By the time of European arrivals, several groups of people, characterized as Iroquoian lived in the region but were pushed out by the settlers.

In 1798, the Holland Land Co. surveyors noted the value and extent of the pine timber. Dr. Thomas R. Kennedy purchased 3,000 acres of unbroken forest in 1803 and built the first mill in 1805. Other settlers came and built sawmills throughout the area using the available water to power the mills. Later mill owners,

Richard and Erastus Marvin, intended to build the settlement into a city but were thwarted by malaria carried by mosquitoes breeding in the backwater of the mill dam. Malaria has long since been eradicated and the mills are no longer active.

The Town of Poland was incorporated in 1832. The first church, First Baptist, organized in 1836 and built its current building in 1868. The first school was constructed in 1838 and rebuilt in 1916 as the building that is now the Town Hall. Because of the mill men's wild reputation, the name of the original community was changed from Kennedy Mills to Kennedyville in 1840 in hopes of attracting families to the area. Families did come, establishing farms that resulted in an economic transition to agriculture that endures today. In 1860, the name of the settlement was switched back to Kennedy with the arrival of the railroads that replaced the river rafts as the primary transport of lumber. Other products shipped out by train included maple syrup, apples, butter, hops, beef, furniture, and baskets, reflecting a growth in agriculture as well as transformation of wood products. Complementary businesses flourished in support of these endeavors. Roads replaced railroads and the train depot closed in 1957, ultimately becoming Poland's post office. Today, an increasing number of residents commute to jobs in nearby Falconer and Jamestown turning Poland into a bedroom community for many.



POLAND TODAY

OUR POPULATION

As of the 2010 United States Census, a total of 2,356 people call Poland home. Like many communities in Western New York, the population has declined from its 1980 peak of 2,639 inhabitants.

OUR PEOPLE

Poland is home to people of all ages but the population is aging. According to the US Census, the median age increased from 33.6 in 1990 to 39.2 in 2000 to 43.9 in 2010. Poland's median age is older than that of Chautauqua County (40.9), New York State (38.0) and our country (37.2). The age cohort with the most people in 2010 were those aged 45 to 54 years old, representing 18% of Poland's population. Fifteen percent of the population were between 55 and 64 years old. Of the 2,356 residents, 15% of the population is 65 or older while nationwide, people aged 65 and older make up just 13% of the total population. Poland's population remains almost exclusively white at 98%.

In 2012, according to the American Community Survey's five-year estimate, a high percentage of Poland's population 25 years and over had graduated from high school (92%) compared with Chautauqua County (86%), New York State (84%), and the nation (85%). This percentage is an increase over the US 2000 Census figures of 83%. However, relatively few of Poland's residents have obtained a Bachelor's degree (17%) compared with Chautauqua County (20%), New York State (32%) and the nation (28%).

OUR HOUSEHOLDS

According to the 2010 US Census, the average household size was three people. Between 2000 and 2010, the number of family households declined by 5% while the number of non-family households increased by 16%. However, family households still predominate (72%), with four out of five families headed by a married couple.

OUR HOUSING

In 2010, the Town of Poland was comprised of 1,041 housing units. Even though the number of households increased by only 3, the number of housing units increased by 51 (5%) between 2000 and 2010. This increase in the number of vacant homes is in part due to a growth in the number of homes dedicated for recreational or seasonal use; there were 12 homes in seasonal use in 2000 and 37 in 2010.

According to data from the 2000 US Census and the 2012 American Community Survey five-year estimate, median household income in Poland increased from \$37,195 to \$47,308. During that same period, the median house price increased from \$60,800 to \$72,600. Relatively speaking, household income increased more than house prices, so home ownership became more affordable. However, median gross monthly rent increased from \$420 in 2000 to \$636 in 2012 increasing the percentage of median income required for housing expenses from 14% to 16%. Eighty-four percent of Poland's households own their own homes.

OUR JOBS

About two-thirds of the population 16 years and over are in the labor force per the American Community Survey five-year estimate. Twenty-seven percent of those people with jobs work in educational services, health care, or social assistance which is about the same percentage as for Chautauqua County and New York workers. Twenty-four percent of the jobs held by Poland residents are in manufacturing which is a high percentage compared with Chautauqua County (17%) and New York State (7%). However, with the decline of manufacturing in the Jamestown metro region, the number of people in Poland working in manufacturing decreased from 422 in 2000 to 279 in 2012. Poland residents generally fare better economically than many of their neighbors. About 11% of people in Poland had incomes below the poverty level in 2012 compared with 19% for Chautauqua County. Poland's median household income was \$47,308 compared with \$41,975 for the County.

OUR SHARED VISION

In ten years the Town of Poland will:

- *Be a place that attracts residents and visitors to its family-friendly community and small-town feel, nestled in a scenic natural environment.*
- *Be home to a variety of successful small businesses such as agricultural, retail, restaurant, recreational, service, or other enterprises.*
- *Have a vibrant and attractive Main Street that celebrates the community by providing opportunities and places for people to gather such as farmer's markets, events, and a local breakfast/lunch diner.*



HOW WE GET THERE

Ralph Waldo Emerson said “Life is a journey, not a destination.” As we reflect on life it is easy to see how true this statement is. Many of us have had a vision of where life would take us in our career or personal life. However, life’s journey, and the many experiences that are part of that journey, may or may not have brought us to the destination we had originally envisioned. What is more important is that we had a “vision” of where we wanted life to take us; we set out on the path to go there; we worked through obstacles as they arose and made adjustments as necessary; we grew and learned as we traveled; and we arrived at a destination, hopefully better for having taken the journey.

So too is the life of our community and the residents who call Poland home. Our community has been on a journey that started over 200 years ago. We have the privilege and duty of taking stock of where we are on that journey, assessing where we would like to go as a community; and charting the course to take Poland to its future destination.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

In order to chart a course for Poland’s future, community leaders collected a variety of information from the people who live and work here. The three basic questions that community leaders worked to answer were: “Where is our community today?”, “What do we want our community to be like in the future?” and, “What decisions can we make now, based on this vision of the future, to effectively move forward?”

It is this series of questions that allowed goals and objectives to be developed for key issue areas of the “shared vision” and the creation of strategic actions that must be accomplished in order for the community to reach its destination.

Creating a strategic action plan and addressing these important questions cannot cure all of a community’s ills. However, it does focus attention on key critical issues that need to be addressed. Implementation of the plan will result in improved coordination and efficient use of scarce resources. This focus is crucial for the success of a small community, such as Poland, with limited resources.

WHERE IS OUR COMMUNITY TODAY?

In January of 2014, Small Town Planning Services, a local community planning consulting team, was brought in to design a planning process that would result in a new community plan. Small Town Planning Services recommended a strategic action plan approach due to the limited size of the community.

In March 2014, a SWOT exercise was conducted with members from the Town's Board, Planning Board, and Zoning Board of Appeals. This exercise collected local input to help assess the community's internal Strengths and Weaknesses in relation to external Opportunities and Threats. The Steering Committee then used the SWOT results, and other collected data, to assess where the community is today and what the key critical issues are that need to be addressed.

In May of 2014, focus groups were convened to further examine the community's Strengths and Weaknesses and to assess how accurate the conclusions reached were. Armed with this information, the Steering Committee designed a community survey.

In July 2014, in an attempt to gauge the full community's sentiments on current and future issues facing the community, the Steering Committee distributed a community survey. 87 residents responded to the community survey formed, which formed the basis for the next steps of the planning process.

WHAT DO WE WANT OUR COMMUNITY TO BE IN THE FUTURE?

In August of 2014, the board assessed the input gathered from these various planning exercises. The following key critical issue areas emerged: 1. Community 2. Government and 3. Economic Development.

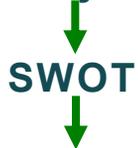
Incorporating the key critical issue areas, and the community's vision from the survey results, the Steering Committee created a draft vision statement for the community. This draft was reviewed by community members at large at a public workshop in October 2014.

WHAT CAN WE DO TO MOVE TOWARDS THAT FUTURE?

The Steering Committee spent several months thinking about how principles, policies, and actions should be implemented to effect positive change throughout the community. The Committee worked to balance the social, economic and environmental needs of the various community stakeholders. In the end, by following the step-by-step process described below, the Board successfully incorporated community input regarding needs, preferences for growth, and priorities into a Strategic Action Plan. It is this plan that will move Poland towards its future.

PLANNING PROCESS

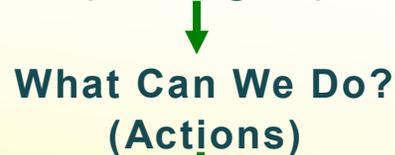
Community Priorities



Key Issue Areas



Where Do We Want to Be?
(Shared Vision)



INVENTORY

Population
Demographics
Land Use

BOARD WORKSHOP

March 2014

FOCUS GROUPS

May 2014

SURVEY

July 2014

VISION

October 2014

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

January to April 2015

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

April to July 2015

PUBLIC HEARING

April 2016

A DAY IN OUR LIFE

Images of people
and places that
make Poland a
great place to live.



OUR GOALS – COMMUNITY

Residents value the friendly, small-town feel, but would like to see more activity on Main Street and more involvement by community members. Most would like to see more businesses in the Town, while maintaining the rural nature of the community. Residents are concerned that the somewhat tired appearance of Main Street detracts from the area's natural beauty and value, and want a downtown area of which they can be proud. Poland has been slowly but steadily losing population over the past few decades, and the Town's population is aging rapidly. Still, residents identified a strong desire to provide more activities for the area's youth to attract more families to the Town.

Goal C1: To have a welcoming and safe Main Street that attracts people and businesses to our community.

An attractive Main Street not only benefits existing business, it has potential to encourage new retail, restaurant or services to consider locating in Kennedy. In this sense, Main Street improvements may be considered an important part of economic development, but the benefits of improving Main Street first accrue to current residents and business owners. Kennedy Pride's work over the past several years sets the stage for more Main Street improvements. Investing in a development plan for Main Street will provide guidance to community groups, developers, and the Town to ensure that changes, upgrades, renovations, and siting of new buildings are consistent with the community's vision for its Main Street.

Goal C2: To maintain the small town and rural character of our community that Poland residents and visitors value.

Ask Poland residents what they like about living in the Town, and they are quick to respond with comments such as: "Outstanding rural country feel," "sense [of] community - people care, know each other," and "best Memorial Day parade around." Residents highly value the fact that they live in a safe, friendly, and scenic rural environment, yet are close to the conveniences of larger neighboring towns. New residents come to appreciate the strong sense of community after moving to a place, but it's the rural landscape, the quiet, and the scenic surroundings which draw them to places like Poland. Maintaining these assets are critical both to keeping current residents and drawing new families to the Town.

OUR GOALS – COMMUNITY (CONTINUED)

Goal C3: To have a community that is attractive, well-kept and appealing.

Poland is a mostly well-kept Town, and residents value that. Buildings in poor repair, excessive junk, and overgrown yards and landscaping are not only eyesores, but also devalue neighboring properties and affect the tax base of the Town. Residents ranked property condition as the second-highest ranked issue facing the town, right after the need for business development. Consistent use of code enforcement, incentive, support for property maintenance, and even community-building activities can work together to achieve the Town's vision for itself as an attractive, family-friendly place.

Goal C4: To provide adequate activities for the youth of our community to attract new families.

Like many towns in the region, Poland is experiencing both population loss and a fairly rapid aging of their population. Residents have spoken out about the need to attract younger families to the Town. The Town has a recreation committee and currently runs a summer program, as well as holiday-themed parties. Kennedy Free Library offers children's programming, and computer access there draws a range of users from youth to seniors. The community is well-positioned to expand on its recreational offerings.



Goal C5: To have a Town Hall that respects the long history of Poland while portraying an image of a community that has invested in itself.

The property on which the Town Hall sits had been deeded for use as a school in 1838, and was home to a number of school buildings through the next several decades and into the early 20th century. The most recent school building was then purchased by the American Legion, who eventually donated it to the Town to be used as the Town Hall in 1977. Important upgrades to the Town Hall are currently being finalized, and the offices are now fully accessible. With no pressing demand for commercial or residential use for the property, the building will remain the Town Hall into the foreseeable future. As one of the Town's main public buildings, the Town Hall's appearance, maintenance, energy efficiency, and accessibility sets a standard for the entire Town.

Goal C6: To utilize Poland's natural assets as four-season recreational opportunities serving both residents and visitors.

With the Conewango Creek, wooded hillsides, and wide-open spaces, the Town of Poland is rich in potential for outdoor recreation all year long. Residents consider the Creek an iconic feature of the Town, yet there is currently limited public access to the Creek in Kennedy. The Chautauqua County Greenways Plan identified the maintenance and upgrading of the paddle trail on the Conewango, which is part of the Marden Cobb Waterway Trail, as an "Exceptional Priority" project. The Town is home to two Department of Environmental Conservation Wildlife Management Areas totaling 280 acres: Clay Pond and Hartson Swamp, available for hiking, snowshoeing, hunting, birding, and other activities. Snowmobile trails run mainly from Kennedy north and east toward Gerry, Ellington, and Randolph, but are lacking in parts of the Town south and west of Kennedy. Residents have also expressed a desire for a multi-use trail in Poland.

OUR GOALS – GOVERNMENT

Town of Poland residents, as do citizens everywhere, desire and deserve effective, efficient, transparent, and accessible government. With few exceptions, Poland residents are highly satisfied with Town government and its services and functions. Town officials strive to meet the Town's basic needs and maintain a good quality of life in the face of budgetary constraints. Getting more residents informed and engaged in the decision-making and governing process can increase understanding of these challenges, limit the amount of misinformation that gets shared in a small-town setting, and strengthen the governing process with more community input.

Goal G1: To operate a local government that is easily accessible by citizens of the Town.

The need for accessibility refers to both the physical and informational. The Town Buildings and services should physically be available and reachable as needed to all residents, regardless of ability. Information about the Town needs to be readily available to all citizens, especially if Town leaders desire to have engaged and satisfied residents. The Town Highway Department already encourages the community to contact them regarding the need for repairs to street lighting or to local roads. Similar methods for the public to be able to bring issues of concern to the Town's attention can be utilized to improve customer service, provide valuable community input, and

resolve issues more quickly.

Goal G2: To always strive to administer the laws of the Town and the State in a fair and consistent manner.

Town officials, in particular code enforcement and zoning officers, must work hard to achieve the Town's goals for a safe, clean, and well-kept community. Balancing individual property rights with the public interest is a challenge faced by communities large and small, but nowhere is finding this balance more difficult than in rural communities. A municipal code that is rooted in community safety and the community's vision for itself, and is consistently enforced, will maximize property values, safety, and quality of life for citizens.

OUR GOALS – ECONOMIC

Forestry and agriculture are the foundation of Poland's heritage. Both enterprises have long served as pillars of the community's growth. However, most community members now work outside of the community in sectors other than forestry or farming. Poland's remaining farmers deal with weather, rising costs, changing markets for their goods, and the viability of continuing to farm, but remain an important part of Poland's identity and economy. Rural communities across the country are clamoring for development strategies that create jobs, businesses and community wealth. As agriculture employs fewer people and plays a smaller role in the local economy, Poland must find other ways to fill the void. Further diversifying the local economy with small businesses, tourism, agri-tourism, and events is a smart strategy for any community.

Goal G3: *To meet the community's future needs for water infrastructure by working to obtain a water system for the Hamlet and nearby areas.*

Goal E1: *To support and grow new small businesses in the Hamlet.*

The Kennedy's businesses offering basic shopping and services for daily necessities for area residents are a niche market. What other types of businesses have the potential to be successful on the community's Main Street, and how can the Town attract and support them?

Customers drive the success of businesses, and getting customers to Main Street relies on an attractive and walkable environment with amenities such as public restrooms and food. Even with those amenities, Kennedy will also require events, attractions, or a mix of unique

businesses to attract residents and visitors to Kennedy or other portions of Poland to support business growth.

Goal E2: *Develop a local agricultural economy that supports farm families.*

As the farmers in Poland work to survive in a challenging agricultural economy, diversifying their operations can supplement agricultural income. Agri-tourism provides an opportunity to increase margins through activities such as on-farm sales of value-added products, farm vacations, rental cabins, cross-country skiing, farm weddings, corn mazes, or pick your own operations. To take advantage of agri-tourism, farmers must be capable of expanding their revenue opportunities on the farm. Eliminating barriers to the establishment of value-added product development,

OUR GOALS – ECONOMIC (CONTINUED)

Goal E3: *To be a Town that is home to small low-impact industries and home-based businesses which require limited infrastructure.*

Limited resources and low historical demand have constrained the development of water and wastewater infrastructure in Poland. Fortunately, not every enterprise related to industry and manufacturing requires significant infrastructure. Warehousing, small assembly operations, and some farm-related enterprises only require systems that can be provided onsite. Another growth opportunity may be home-based businesses such as telecommuting, small-scale services, and cottage industries, that can offer additional opportunities for diversifying the local economy, and expanding the Town's tax base as the business grows. Making provisions for such low-impact businesses in portions of the rural area of the Town, and in other areas along major corridors, will further help to diversify Poland's economy.

Goal E4: *To promote and develop new attractions or events that will draw people to Poland.*

Events and attractions can help to increase a community's visibility while providing a boost for local businesses and organizations, whether for a day, a season, or throughout the year. Attractions that take advantage of Poland's assets, such as snowmobiling, hiking, biking, or birding trails are good examples because they are enjoyable for residents while have potential to draw visitors. Unique natural features, areas of particular beauty, compelling history, and activities centered on the agricultural nature of the Town might be promoted as attractions. Events and festivals are important, too, because they give the community a reason to polish itself up and an opportunity to show off the attributes of the Town and the people who call the Town of Poland "home."

CHARTING OUR COURSE—STRATEGIC ACTIONS

COMMUNITY

Goal # 1C:

To have a safe and attractive Main Street that attracts people and businesses to our community.

Action A: Seek funding for a detailed Main Street development plan to guide the Town Board, Planning Board and future developers in meeting the community's vision for Main Street when proposing new development or public investments.

Action B: Seek funding for technical design and implementation of the Active Community Enhancements project (ACE) Main Street improvements and the Main Street Plan (see page 17).

Action C: Address drainage issues along Main Street, and in the uplands, to minimize flooding risk by utilizing retention ponds or other infrastructure improvement measures.

Action D: Annually budget for capital improvements along Main Street and in the Hamlet area that can be used to maintain the Hamlet or as a match for grant funding.

Goal # 2C:

To maintain the small town and rural character of our community that Poland residents and visitors value.

Action A: Promote and support existing and new community events as opportunities for residents to gather.

Action B: Create or adopt rural siting guidelines to maintain the rural and small-town character of the community.

Goal # 3C:

To have a community that is attractive, well-kept and appealing.

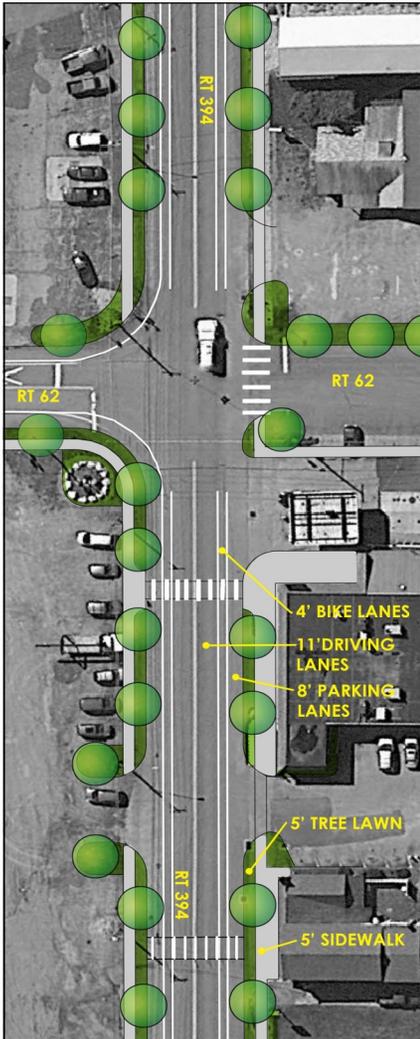
Action A: Consistently enforce the Town's zoning and property maintenance codes.

Action B: Apply for additional grant funding for façade or home improvements through organizations such as Chautauqua Home Rehabilitation & Improvement Corp. (CHRIC).

Action C: Continue to address the issue of vacant buildings in the Town by working with banks who hold the mortgages, the County Land Bank, or other potential partners to reduce the number of vacant "problem" properties.

Action D: Hold an annual landscaping or property improvement contest to incentivize property maintenance.





Proposed Improvements



Existing Condition



Clark Patterson Lee
DESIGN PROFESSIONALS

Streetscape Improvements - Poland, New York

Chautauqua County Department of Health & Human Services
Community Transformation Grant - Active Community Enhancements Project



CHARTING OUR COURSE—STRATEGIC ACTIONS *COMMUNITY (CONT.)*

Goal # 4C:

To make the Town attractive to new families and to serve our current families by expanding youth-oriented activities.

Action A: Maintain a Town Recreation Committee and the Summer Recreation program.

Action B: Encourage local churches to continue to reach out to youth of community, and explore shared use agreements between the Town and the churches.

Action C: Maintain and possibly expand the Library's programming.

Action D: Include playground equipment appropriate for a broad age-range in future development at Town Park

Action E: Maintain a list of youth and other community activities on the Town's website.

Goal # 5C:

To utilize Poland's natural assets as four-season recreational opportunities serving both residents and visitors.

Action A: Identify existing recreational opportunities such as snowmobile trails and DEC Wildlife Management Areas on the Town Website.

Action B: Develop and maintain public access point(s) to the Conewango Creek.

Action C: Partner with the County Planning and Economic Development and CCWA to seek funding for development of

the Conewango Paddle Trail identified in the County Greenways Plan.

Action D: Seek funding, possibly with adjacent municipalities, for other recreational trail planning within and/or through the Town.

Action E: Create a walking trail in the Kennedy Hamlet that upgrades and loops existing foot trails.

Goal # 6C:

To have a Town Hall that respects the long history of Poland while portraying an image of a community has invested in itself.

Action A: Continue to invest in exterior upgrades such as painting, paving and the installation of a bulletin board for posting notices.

Action B: Investigate NYSERDA or other grant programs for energy upgrades to improve efficiency and reduce energy costs.

Action C: Consider historical preservation opportunities to restore the upper floor of the building to its original condition and appearance.

CHARTING OUR COURSE—STRATEGIC ACTIONS

GOVERNMENT

Goal # 1G:

To operate a local government operation that is easily accessible by citizens of the Town.

Action A: Develop a “How do I” page on the Town website with links/forms/contact information for common issues or requests.

Action B: Provide feedback form, telephone, or text # for road repairs or other issues (similar to lighting repairs currently on site).

Action C: Request and then maintain dedicated posting space in store, library, fire hall.

Action D: Maintain list of regular board meeting times on website, populate calendar with board and community meetings.

Action E: Develop/enhance a pedestrian connection to the Town Hall entrance from the Fire Hall and Store parking lots for convenience; ensure that main parking lot surfaces are well-maintained to be accessible and free of trip-hazards.

Goal # 2G:

To always strive to administer the laws of the Town and the State in a fair and consistent manner.

Action A: Evaluate need for additional code enforcement hours on an annual basis.

Action B: Improve transparency of code enforcement and other Town enforcement actions (by requiring monthly updates to Town Board regarding status of properties and cases, would become part of minutes, public record—do this by address, not name)

Action C: Provide residents with visual examples of possible code violations, and/or a summary of Town code addressing the most common violations on the Town website or in a newsletter, along with information on the process and timeline for resolution of violations.

Goal # 3G:

To meet the community’s future needs for water infrastructure by working to obtain a water system for the Hamlet and nearby areas.

Action A: Identify the need to comply with state and local health codes in regards to new offset requirements.

Action B: Investigate funding for preliminary engineering to estimate costs.

Action C: Create a water district.

Action D: Apply for funding through sources such as United States Rural Development.

CHARTING OUR COURSE—STRATEGIC ACTIONS

ECONOMIC

Goal # 1E:

To support and grow new small businesses in the Hamlet.



Goal # 2E:

To develop a local agricultural economy that supports farm families.



Action A: Upgrade Main Street to improve appearance, safety, and traffic flow in accordance with more specific recommendations under the Community Goals section of this plan. These include improvements to sidewalks, street lighting, landscaping, and pedestrian crossings.

Action B: Seek façade improvement opportunities through CHRIC or other funding sources.

Action C: Develop a one-stop information packet for anyone considering starting a business in the Town, including Town contacts, zoning and permitting information, Small Business Development Center and other agency contacts for agencies that support establishment and development of small businesses.

Action D: Continue to support efforts of Kennedy Price and community members to improve the Hamlet area. (Example: Community clean-up days).

Action E: Maintain and promote an inventory of available properties in the Hamlet, identifying ownership contact information and their suitability for various types of businesses.

Action A: Review and update zoning code and develop revisions/additions that allow opportunities for farm-related uses in all zoning districts and ensure farm friendly zoning that help increase the viability of agriculture.

Action B: Work with Cornell Cooperative Extension to facilitate agri-entrepreneurship and start-up programs that are relevant to the Poland community.

Action C: Reach out to local agricultural and Amish community members to assess interest in pursuing supplemental or complementary agri-tourism endeavors, and work with Cornell Cooperative or other providers to bring training for such enterprises to the community.

Action D: Advocate for continued efforts of 4-H and local schools to develop youth agri-business internship/shadowing programs.

CHARTING OUR COURSE—STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Economic (Cont.)

Goal # 3E:

To be a Town that is home to small low-impact and home-based businesses which require limited infrastructure.

Goal # 4E:

To promote and develop new attractions or events that will draw people to Poland.

Action A: Identify areas of Poland where low-impact businesses can be placed without negative effects on the community's character.

Action B: Create development guidelines to protect the character of the Town.

Action C: Work with Southern Tier West to promote adequate broadband service to the Town.

Action D: Revise existing zoning as necessary to accommodate small business and home-based businesses, by listing these as allowable uses and identifying specific exceptions such as noise or nuisance.

Action E: Inventory the Town for parcels with potential for desired types of development.

Action A: Identify locations for potential recreational trail development, river access, or other recreational opportunities within the Town, and seek funding for necessary feasibility studies or design plans.

Action B: Assess interest among community members to re-establish a community festival or event, possibly engaging the services of a professional event manager, or allowing an outside vendor to produce an event within the Town.

Action C: Identify what in-kind support the Town might be able to provide for attraction and event development.

Action D: Encourage owners of businesses located in and near the Town of Poland to explore opportunities for jointly promoting businesses within the Town, for example, sharing the cost of signage on I-86, which has an average of over 12,000 vehicles per day passing by.

OUR COMMUNITY . . . OUR FUTURE



COMPLETING THE JOURNEY – IMPLEMENTATION

The Strategic Action Plan provides a framework that preserves and enhances the best features of Poland while recognizing opportunities for improvements that can be made immediately and into the future.

While ultimate responsibility for the implementation of the Strategic Plan rests with the Town Board, volunteer efforts and community groups will play a critical role in implementing the Plan. Community groups and volunteers will have the interest and energy to take this Plan and help make it a reality. This partnership between the Town Board and the citizens of Poland can make it possible to take the incremental steps necessary to realize the community's vision.

The following pages are designed to provide a framework for organizing the community around the implementation effort. It is not expected that Poland will attempt the actions all at once. But, each year as actions are completed, Poland will be that much closer to “completing the journey”.

ORGANIZING THE EFFORT

Step 1. Strategic Plan Oversight Committee

While the Town Board has the ultimate responsibility for assuring the implementation of the Strategic Plan, the Board is often busy conducting the day-to-day operations of the Town. Without assistance, such administrative, time-sensitive duties may delay the efficient implementation of the Plan.

To guide the implementation effort, it is recommended that the Town Board form a Strategic Planning Oversight Committee (SPOC). The membership of the Committee should consist of representatives from various community groups and citizen volunteers. For example, it could include committee members from the Planning and Zoning Boards, Kennedy Pride, the

Fire Department, the Library, and the various churches. It is important to include people on the Oversight Committee who have the interest and connections necessary to carry out the range of actions included in the Strategic Plan.

The SPOC would have the following duties:

Promote the Strategic Action Plan to the community by conducting outreach to citizens, community organizations, businesses and part-time residents.

Solicit assistance from community groups and volunteers to work on specific actions.

Select which actions will be completed in the short-term given the level of interest and resources available.

Communicate with the Town Board.

Report on accomplishments through an annual “Progress Report” for the community.

Step 2. Outreach

Completing the Strategic Action Plan is a major milestone for the community. Such hard work should be celebrated and communicated to the members of the community. A community can do this in a number of creative and fun ways. For example, the Town Board could hold a Town party as part of the adoption process. The SPOC could put together a newsletter or flyer that highlights the community’s vision and solicits volunteers to “adopt” an action. Or, the SPOC could hold a pot luck dinner with a “Chinese auction” in which people donate dollar bills to “vote” for their favorite “actions”. SPOC could leverage the donations to jump-start implementation of the priority actions.

Step 3. Enlist Assistance

The list of proposed actions ranges touch on government, the economy, and the community. Actions may involve capital projects or require new regulations or involve partnerships. Such a broad range of actions will require the involvement of many different people and community groups. The SPOC could reach out to the following groups to undertake actions from the Plan. Each Action selected should have a Responsible Party, an “Action Group” who will take the lead in making sure the Action is accomplished. That “Action Group” may seek support as needed from others along the way.

Town Board – The Town Board has the final say in approving the recommended actions. It also controls public resources including staff time, Town equipment (copiers, computers, tools, vehicles), and monetary funds. Some actions may require that the Town Board allocate funds for the project in the annual budget.

Planning & Zoning Boards – The Planning & Zoning Boards are the key groups to developing new land-use regulations that are consistent with the Goals in the Strategic Action Plan.

Kennedy Pride – Although not a government committee, Kennedy Pride is well-positioned to take a leadership role in completing some of the actions. For example, it could help plan events, partner with community development organizations, and organize volunteer work parties.

Library – Some community actions could involve library programming.

Fire Department – The Fire Department could be involved in dealing with the actions that address building safety concerns.

Churches – Poland’s churches play an important role in the community and could provide key volunteer support for some of the Community Actions, particularly those involving young people.

Step 4. Organizational Flow

The framework for action relies on communication between the Town Board, the SPOC, and the “Action Groups”. This check-in and report system keeps the community on course but allows for course corrections to address unexpected impediments or to take advantage of fortuitous opportunities.



TAKING ACTION

Step 5. Develop Project Action Plans

To efficiently implement the actions, the Action Group should develop a project action plan. An action plan will investigate the action in detail and determine the people/organizations that should be involved, resources, funding ideas, and a timeline with target dates for interim steps.

SAMPLE PROJECT ACTION PLAN

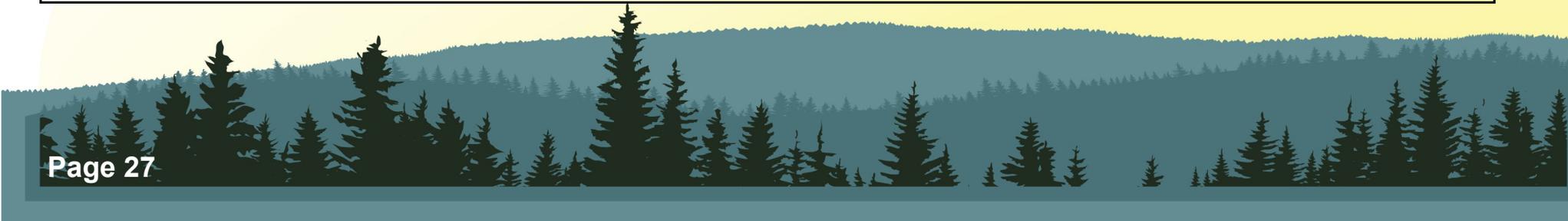
Project Action Plan –2C-A Action Group

Description:

Action: Promote and support existing and new community events as opportunities for residents to gather.

Specific Actions in Sequence	Responsible Parties	Resources	Time
1. List current community events including locations and dates.	Action Group	Volunteers	January
2. Determine how to further promote these events.	Action Group	Volunteers	January
3. Brainstorm other potential events.	Action Group	Volunteers	January – February
4. Select the best idea(s) for a new event and set a target date.	Action Group in consultation w/ Town Board		March
5. Find or form a community group to organize this new event.	Action Group	Community Groups and/or Volunteers	March-April
6. Promote the community events based on Task 2 (above).	Action Group & Others Identified in Task 2	\$400, Town Staff, and Volunteers	All year
7. After each community event, evaluate the effectiveness of the promotional efforts and success of the event.	Action Group	Volunteers	After each event

Notes:



Step 6. Monitor Progress

The Project Action Plan can act as a project schedule and checklist. As progress is recorded, it should be shared with the SPOC on at least a quarterly basis. This reporting contributes to the open dialogue between the various groups working toward implementation of the Strategic Plan while developing a sense of accountability.

Step 7. Adjust As Needed

As mentioned previously, not all the actions can be accomplished at once. If major funding or helping hands are not available, choose a smaller project. A project accomplished today can provide the momentum to carry out additional projects. Do not forget to share “Progress Reports” and celebrate success to keep citizens informed and enthused about the positive changes in their home town.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

TOWN OF POLAND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN—KENDREE SHEPHERD

POLAND COMMUNITY SURVEY

2010 U.S. CENSUS RESULTS

WANT TO PARTICIPATE? - TOWN CONTACT INFORMATION

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