

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

TOWN OF ELBA

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UPDATED: May 2004

REVISED: May 2007

Town of Elba

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## **ELBA TOWN BOARD**

### **1999**

**Anthony Fasano, Town Supervisor**  
**Wade Chamberlain, Town Board**  
    **Lois Petote, Town Board**  
    **Paul Reak, Town Board**  
    **Earl Roth, Town Board**  
**Debra Mosier, Town Clerk**

### **2004**

**Anthony Fasano, Town Supervisor**  
**Wade Chamberlain, Town Board**  
    **Kelly Schuler, Town Board**  
    **Deborah Bell, Town Board**  
    **Joseph Bridge, Town Board**  
**Debra Mosier, Town Clerk**

### **2007**

**Lucine Kauffman, Town Supervisor**  
**Wade Chamberlain, Town Board**  
    **Deborah Bell, Town Board**  
    **Joseph Bridge, Town Board**  
**Andrew J. Wormuth, Town Board**  
    **Debra Mosier, Town Clerk**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|---------|
| Introduction | Page 4 |
| Part 1 - Current Status and Trends In The Community | Page 7 |
| Part 2 - Implications for the Town | Page 11 |
| Part 3 - General Directions From the Residents | Page 14 |
| Part 4 - Specific Recommendations | Page 20 |
| Appendices | Page 22 |

INTRODUCTION

This comprehensive plan is intended to serve Town of Elba officials as a guide for future decision making. It describes a vision of the people of the Elba community regarding development within the Town. The general guidelines and specific recommendations identified in this plan provide direction for governmental bodies in both establishing general policy and acting on individual cases. Knowledge of these guidelines and recommendations also provides guidance to individual citizens of the Town as they make decisions in the planning of their private affairs. Using this comprehensive plan, both governmental bodies and individual citizens stand to realize outcomes within our community which include effective use of Town resources and produces a high level of resident satisfaction.

Prior to the adoption of this document, there has never been a comprehensive master plan for the Elba community. This comprehensive plan is a product of several actions. One of the first actions was to seek representation from various municipal groups from both the Village and the Town. Other actions included a review of plans used in other similar nearby communities. Census and other statistical data regarding the current status of matters within the Town was also collected, reviewed and summarized. Much of that data is reported on the following pages in the appendices. The most significant action taken was the surveying of residents of the Town of Elba. This survey sought to obtain citizen input regarding their wishes for the future character and development of Elba. A detailed account of the responses to the survey also appears in the appendices of this document. In 2004 the Update Committee updated the data in Appendix 2 through 7 with 2000 Census Data. A review of that data was also used to update Part 1 of the Comprehensive Plan. In 2006 another citizen survey was conducted to see if there were changes to how people feel about the character and development of Elba.

The original review of citizen input yielded several themes. These included a notable preference for maintaining the rural character of the community. Most persons desired modest growth at most. On the other hand, there was a two to one interest in encouraging some light industry with an equal number of people looking to increase employment opportunities and to increase tax revenue. Similarly, some commercial retail development was desired, most notably more businesses selling groceries or hardware. A number of residents also indicated a desire for additional recreational space or facilities. Water and gas services outside the Village also ranked high in unmet needs cited by the survey of citizens.

The 2006 survey reaffirmed the results of the original survey. There is still a strong preference for the Town of Elba to preserve its rural character and for Town zoning regulations to protect and preserve the agricultural resources in the Town. Respondents were also generally in favor of commercial wind towers and for the Town to adopt incentive zoning provisions that would allow the community as a whole to benefit if certain zoning requirements were waived. Municipal water was again ranked very high as a service residents desired in addition to sewer, natural gas, high speed Internet and cable TV. Numerous comments about Elba's water and the need for high quality municipal water were received on the survey. Since the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, many Town officials have also received comments from residents about the water situation in the Town.

The Elba Planning Board endorses the vision suggested by the citizen input. It is the Board's judgment that the Town of Elba should seek to preserve its rural nature and agricultural base. The Planning Board believes there is room for limited compatible residential and light industrial development; but the current character of the community is what has attracted and is what keeps residents of the Town here. That character should not be radically altered. The general guidelines and specific recommendations of this comprehensive plan reflect this vision.

The remaining pages of this document are divided into four sections. Each part, and a description of its content, is listed below:

Part 1 - Current Status and Trends In The Community. This section presents information which portrays the Town as it now exists. This section also describes how the Town has changed between 1970 and now.

Part 2 - Implications for the Town. This section lists implications for the future of Elba which follow from the analysis of the data in Part 1.

Part 3 - General Directions From the Residents. Given the data and implications identified in Part 1 and Part 2, plus the input from the citizen survey, this section cites the general directions in which the Town ought to proceed.

Part 4 - Specific Recommendations. This section lists specific recommendations for action which follow from the general guidelines cited in Part 3.

Full implementation of the Part 4 recommendations will require alignment of the Town's zoning and zoning regulations. It will also require other significant actions by the Town such as seeking State and Federal grants, revision of the property tax structure, and undertaking some capital improvements.

Implementation of this comprehensive plan should be envisioned as a process which will require many years to complete

The first steps in implementing the recommendations should begin soon. In some instances, action should proceed soon simply because so much time is required to achieve the outcome. In other instances, failure to act on recommendations in a timely manner may result in undesirable changes that are irreversible. This danger is particularly the case in three important areas: preservation of prime agricultural land, appropriate siting of business and industry, and the types of housing which are allowed and encouraged.

As with any plan, it is essential that the comprehensive plan be a "living" document. It is essential that this plan actually inform and direct the day-to-day business of the Town. To insure this outcome, several steps are recommended:

- 1) The Planning Board should annually review progress toward achieving the goals set out in the comprehensive plan. The results of this review should be communicated in writing to the Town Council.
- 2) All Town officials should be provided with a copy of the comprehensive plan and be directed by the Town Council to align their actions on behalf of the Town of Elba with this plan.
- 3) Copies of the comprehensive plan should be made available to residents. Availability of this document should be periodically publicized to the community. The Comprehensive Plan should be available from the Town's website at www.elbanewyork.com.
- 4) The Town Board should designate an official to serve as an advocate for the comprehensive plan. This official should assume the responsibility of reviewing each proposed action of the Town in terms of whether such action would be consistent with the comprehensive plan.
- 5) The Town Planning Board should annually update a list of businesses operating within the Town of Elba. This listing should be the basis for an encouraged growth of business and industry and provide a basis for any control of development within a certain sector.
- 6) The Town Council should annually review with the Village Board the kinds, locations and status of Special Use Permits and Zoning Variances issued within the Town and Village.

PART 1 - Data Pertaining to the Town of Elba Current Status and Trends (1999)

This section presents information which portrays the Town as it now exists. This section also describes how the Town has changed between 1970 and now.

TOTAL POPULATION. (See Appendix 2.)

1. The 2000 population of 2,439 is a slight increase in the Town population.
2. The 1990 population was 2,407. This was a slight decrease from 1980 which was 2,487.
3. This growth is less than the growth experienced by neighboring communities of Byron, Batavia, and Albion.
4. This increase is less than the 3.7% growth for Genesee County as a whole.
5. Elba's population over the last 30 years has fluctuated slightly.

1970 - 2,312

1980 - 2,487

1990 - 2,407

2000 – 2,439

2004 Review:

- The population continues to fluctuate only slightly with a net gain of only 25 people in 10 years.
- Elba had a +.3% increase in population, similar to the +.5% increase in Genesee County.
- Byron showed a +6.3% increase, Batavia a -2.5 decrease, and Oakfield a -4% decrease in population.

AGE DISTRIBUTION. (See Appendix 3)

1. The median age has increased from 29.1 years to 33.3 years in the last 10 years.
2. This change is primarily the result of three changes:
 - a. Among persons under 20, a drop from 39% of the total population to 32%.
 - b. Among persons 21 to 54, an increase from 46% of the total population to 47%.
 - c. Among persons 55 and over, an increase from 16% of the total population to 21%.

2004 Review:

- The median age continues to increase in the Town of Elba, +3.3 years.

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND. (See Appendix 4)

1. Approximately 46.8% of the adults have attained high school diplomas. This is more than 30% less than those with at least a high school diploma in Genesee County and 28% less than New York State.
2. Approximately 9.1% of the residents have at least a Bachelor's degree. Genesee County averages nearly 5% more people and New York State averages 14% more people with this level of education.
3. It is interesting to note that although the educational background of Elba residents is 30% lower than either Genesee County or the State, as whole, the average income is higher.

2004 Review:

- There has been an increase in the percentage of persons with a high school education.
- There has been an increase in the percentage of persons with higher education backgrounds.
- The high school graduation rate is higher.

FAMILY INCOME. (See Appendix 5)

1. The median family income in 1990 was \$39,596, which is \$4,000 higher than the Genesee County average.
2. In 1990 about 5.4% of Elba residents lived below the poverty line. That figure is almost 3% lower than in Genesee County as a whole.
3. In the last 20 years, the median family income has grown at an average rate equal to over 4% per year.
4. The median family income has increased from slightly below that of the Genesee County figure in 1970 to well above in 1990.
5. In the last 20 years, the percentage of Elba residents living below the poverty level has increased slightly.

2004 Review:

- The median family income in the Town of Elba continues to be higher than that of Genesee County.
- Elba residents below the poverty line is smaller than that of Genesee County.

OCCUPATIONAL BACKGROUND OF THE POPULATION. (See Appendix 6)

1. The Elba civilian labor force continues to increase, however, there has been a decreased rate of growth. There were about half as many workers added to the total civilian labor force from 1980 to 1990, as there were from 1970 to 1980.
2. There was a significant decrease (40%) in the number of persons listing farming as their occupation from 1980 to 1990.
3. Over 20% of the persons in Elba list their occupations as managerial or professional from 1980 to 1990.

2004 Review:

- The workforce in Elba appears to be relatively stable.
- The number of residents describing their work as either managerial or professional has increased.

HOUSEHOLDS AND RESIDENCES. (See Appendix 7)

1. The number of households has increased over the past ten years.
2. The number of residences in Elba continues to increase. The number of residences added in from 1980 to 1990 is half the number added from 1970 to 1980.
3. The average value of a home in Elba has nearly doubled every ten years through 1990.

2004 Review:

- From 1990 to 2000, 45 new houses were built in the Town of Elba.

BUSINESSES OPERATING IN ELBA. (See Appendix 8)

1. There are approximately 75 businesses operating in the Town of Elba.
2. Of the businesses listed 70% have been operating for 10 years or longer in Elba.
3. The large majority of businesses operating in Elba are service oriented.
4. 33% of the businesses in Elba are agricultural related.

BUSINESSES OPERATING IN ELBA. (Continued)

2004 Review:

- There are approximately 106 businesses in the Town of Elba.
- Many of the businesses are service or agriculture related.
- A number of businesses listed in 1999 are no longer in business. The increase from 1999 may be more due to a more thorough listing than the addition of new businesses.

Part 2 - Data Implications for the Town

This section lists implications for the future of Elba which are derived from the data in Part 1.

POPULATION: If the past 30 years serve as a guide, it appears that Elba is likely to continue only slight growth in population, probably at a rate much less than for Genesee County as a whole. Any real growth would probably be stimulated by new streets being opened up within the Village of Elba or if present farmland is sold as building lots within the Town.

AGE DISTRIBUTION: Data collected indicates that there will be an aging of the population within the Town. This and the survey results suggests that attention should be given to the needs of older residents which may include housing designed to accommodate them. There is a slight increase in all age groups.

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND: The latest census information shows that 85% of the residents have attained a high school diploma, which is higher than that of Genesee County. Building additions and renovations at Elba Central School and attainment of the New York State standards should continue to show improvement in educational levels in the community.

INCOME DISTRIBUTION: The latest statistics indicate that the median family income in the Town of Elba is about \$3,500 higher than the average of Genesee County. The average rate of growth of family income has exceeded the cost of living over the past thirty years. This apparent wealth may account for the continued concentration by families seeking and living in conventional middle class single-family housing. Some of the increase in household income may also be due to multiple income earners in families.

OCCUPATIONAL BACKGROUND: The census data is somewhat misleading when it comes to agriculture in the community. Some respondents may have listed themselves as laborers, managers, or even professionals. The total workforce in agriculture has increased on most farms in the Town of Elba. There are fewer farms, but they are larger. There is about the same amount of acreage in farming now as in the past. The role of agriculture in the economic life of the community and the importance of its influence on the character of the community is paramount.

HOUSING UNITS AND HOUSEHOLDS: Although the population has remained fairly flat in the Town, there has been an increase in the number of households. Between 1970 and 1990 the average value of homes in Elba have doubled every ten years; this, however, slowed in 2000. A lack of available building lots may be factors contributing to the slower pace of construction in the Village.

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES: Within the Town there are considerable land and limited water resources. Some of this property, which has the potential for recreational development, is public land and the rest is privately owned; the public property is in the Village. The school district has a playground and a number of playing fields which are used by the students and residents alike. The Village has refurbished the tennis courts and made a skateboarding/in-line

Part 2 - Data Implications for the Town, Continued

skating area. The Village Park also has a playground, playing fields and three covered pavilions. There is also an old railroad bed, which is now privately owned, which runs through the Town which could be used for hiking and biking if it were developed; it is being used for snowmobiling. There are very few water-related recreational areas, other than hunting within the swamps and wetlands. The school serves as a facility for children and adult recreation programs, including a walking program, during the winter months. There is also a fitness center and weight room at the school, but it is not adequately equipped for public use.

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES: The educational facilities in the Town include Elba Central School a small public school that serves children from Kindergarten through Twelfth Grades in one building. The school also provides athletic and other extra curricular activities for students and the school is a large part of Elba's community identity. New York State has initiated programs raising student performance standards and has provided additional building aid to districts which need to do capital improvement projects to build their capacity to provide the educational program which is necessary. The 2002 building project included the construction of an auditorium, music rooms, connected the old bus garage (Annex) to the main building, added classrooms and added the fitness center. An ongoing community input group studies the suggestions of faculty, staff, administration and the community to determine the facility needs of the district. In addition to any construction which may be required, there is an identified need for significant repair and renovation to the existing 1938 building. The school and Town are closely linked and maintaining the school is tied to both the population and tax base in the Town to support the cost of having a small school district.

MUNICIPAL SERVICES: The absence of municipal water and sewer services beyond the Village of Elba diminishes the likelihood that any type of major housing developments or the construction of industries requiring large amounts of good water will occur within the Town. Should the Town develop or Village extend municipal water services, a change in the pattern of development may occur. The scattered nature of housing outside the Village, however makes water and sewer work expensive and would likely exceed the capacity of the existing facilities. The County water project leaves the option for future water and sewer development in the Village and Town.

TRANSPORTATION: There is no access to rail transportation within the Town. Route 98 and 262 are major North-South and East-West commercial trucking routes and provide easy access to major highways. Elba is approximately 5 miles from the Batavia exit of the New York State Thruway. The Genesee County Airport is about 4 miles to the South of Elba. The present airport has undergone a renovation to extend the runway to accommodate larger airplanes. Rochester International Airport and Buffalo International Airport are both approximately 45 minutes from Elba.

TOPOGRAPHY AND SOIL: The topography and soil of most of the land in Elba is suitable for housing, industry, commercial development and agriculture. 57% (14,594 acres) of the land can be classified with a High Yield Potential, 32% (8,203 acres) as Medium Potential and 11% (2,920 acres) as Low Yield Potential. A color coded map of the soil resources in the Town was developed based on soil type, yield potential and slope and is included as part of this

Comprehensive Plan. The suitability of Elba's land resources poses a potential for conflict as all four uses impact on the others. These conflicts must be addressed and monitored through zoning and zoning enforcement. The most valuable agricultural land should be zoned in a manner that assures its protection from non-farm uses.

AGRICULTURE: Agriculture is the predominant industry in the Town and is a key component of the rural character resident's desire. Farms in Elba are a combination of large vegetable, dairy and row crop operations. There are also smaller roadside vegetable stands, organic farms and greenhouses and nurseries. Many residents are employed on farming operations and numerous businesses that serve and support farms can be found in the Town. The abundance of farmland and crops combined with the implementation of various conservation practices protects the environment and provides excellent habitat for wildlife. Agriculture provides quality hunting and other outdoor recreational activities that are enjoyed by residents. Elba is home to the "Elba Muck" and is known as the "Onion Capital of the World". Two farm businesses located in the Town have been listed in the Top 100 Farms in the Nation by a leading Agricultural Magazine and they are known as very progressive and innovative businesses. The production, processing and sale of products from Elba farms generates employment, economic activity, income and tax revenue that benefits the Town and residents while farmland requires a lower level of public services. Zoning regulations that continue to support the Town's agricultural resources and businesses should be adopted as a way to preserve the rural character of the Town and to ensure the continued economic contributions that farms make to the community.

Part 3 - General Directions From the Residents

Given the data and implications identified in Part 1 and Part 2, plus the input from the citizen survey, this section cites the general directions in which the Town ought to proceed over the next 20 years.

RESIDENT SURVEY SUMMARY (1999)

[NOTE (2004): No new survey has been taken.]

Over one quarter of the surveys mailed out were returned, which represents an over 40% response rate from residents. This is a very significant sample.

1. Most respondents live in a conventional home on a private lot. Only about 6% of the surveys received are from residents living in either an apartment or mobile home.

Implication: The residents responding to the survey reflect the general proportion of persons living in the various types of housing found in the community.

2. The respondents returning surveys are in proportion to the populations of people living in the Town or Village. The survey is, therefore, considered representative of the people living in each.

Implication: People in both the Village and Town have an equal interest in the community and recognize that circumstances in one part of the community affect the other.

3. Nearly three quarters of the respondents have lived in the Town of Elba for over 10 years. Residents living in the community from 0-5 years or 6-10 years are nearly equally distributed between the two ranges. Based on the number of surveys returned and the responses to the questions, it appears that both long term and more recent residents have an interest in the future of the Town.

Implication: It can be postulated that these voices have been expressed because they came to Elba and/or continue to live in Elba because they like the nature of the community and want the community to stay as close to the way it is as possible.

Recommendation: Town and Village government should continue to take input from members of the community as they have an interest in the affairs which impact on their way of life. While listening to individuals is important, government must be representative, keeping the welfare of the entire community in the forefront.

RESIDENT SURVEY SUMMARY, Continued

4. All but 3 1/2 % of the respondents think that at least some importance must be placed on the rural character of the community.

Implication: A large majority think that the rural character of Elba is very important.

Recommendation: Zoning regulations and governmental actions should reflect this primary directive from the community at large.

5. More than half of the respondents thought that there is some degree of importance to having more housing built in the Town. Less than half thought that the need for more housing was an important issue.

Implication: This information, taken with responses to other parts of the survey, indicate support for modest addition of housing which keeps the population growth of Elba on a relatively slow pace.

Recommendation: The Town Board should review annually the building permits, land separations, and special use permits issued as a basis for determining the need to revise zoning laws. This review should be shared with the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Town Planning Board in a summary format.

6. 82% of the respondents felt that the preservation of the rural character of the community is more important than housing issues.

Implication: The majority of community members wish to maintain the rural character of the Town above all else.

Recommendation: The Town Board should insure that the types of housing constructed are compatible with the rural nature of the community.

7. In selecting housing preferences to be added in Elba, some of the respondents selected multiple options. The large majority favored conventional homes. Other options in order of preferences were mobile homes on private lots, mobile homes in mobile home parks, low income housing and more apartments. 28% of the respondents favored senior citizen housing.

Implications: Most respondents to the survey live in conventional homes on private lots and want to maintain that feel within the community.

As the citizenry of Elba become older the desire for senior citizen housing increases. The rural character makes Elba attractive to senior citizens because the community is quiet, relatively crime-free, and a place they have called home for years. The rural nature of Elba,

RESIDENT 1999 SURVEY SUMMARY, Continued

however, presents problems for any senior citizen who is not mobile; the community has very few services.

Recommendation: Planners of such a senior citizen housing project should consider a low maintenance, single level facility which provides for social interaction, access to the limited services in the community, access to larger nearby communities and one which would be compatible with the rural character of the community.

8. In setting a priority for the housing needed to be added in Elba, again all options offered received some favorable response. The largest number of respondents agreed with the results in survey question #7: highest priority to conventional homes, followed by senior citizen housing. The other options received scant support.

Implication: There is minimal support for housing other than conventional homes on private lots, with the exception of senior citizen housing.

Recommendation: Restrict the creation of any new mobile home park, housing subdivision, or apartment complex authorizations.

9. There were 276 households responding to the survey. Responses from those who do not have, but would like to have utility services indicates a strong desire for residential natural gas service (48%), followed by municipal water (43%), and sewer lines (34%). A significant number of residents were also interested in cable television.

Implication: A substantial number of respondents are interested in additional utility services.

Recommendation: The Town Board should complete a cost of services study for the provision of services within the Town of Elba and present it to the residents for consideration.

10. The respondents to the survey expressed an interest in having more retail and service oriented businesses.

Implication: A number of respondents are interested in convenience of services, however, past history of the businesses in the community indicates that it is tough to compete and continue to operate on such a low volume of customers.

Recommendation: The Town Board should complete a study of past and present businesses in the community and work with the Genesee County Chamber of Commerce and GEDC (Genesee Economic Development Center) to develop a plan to entice compatible retail business.

RESIDENT SURVEY SUMMARY, Continued

into the community.

11. Light industry is favored by about two thirds of the respondents.

Implication: The level of response was not consistent with the overwhelming support of the preservation of the rural character of the Town. The postulation is, therefore, that the industry should be of a type and nature to fit into the rural character of the community.

Recommendation: The Town Planning Board should review any requests to establish light industrial operations in the community and insure that such a business is compatible with the character of the area in which it is being placed. Further, the Town Board should study the types of light industry presently in the community and identify any benefits, problems, etc. for the Town.

12. Equal numbers of those favoring light industry think that light industry should be in the Town to provide employment opportunities and to support the tax revenue of the Town.

Implication: Residents in favor of light industry do not have a clear agreement as to why it should be located in the Town. The respondents in favor of employment opportunities could easily reach light industry operated outside the Town of Elba.

Recommendation: Same as #11.

13. An overwhelming majority (92%) of respondents are opposed to the introduction of moderate or heavy industry in the community.

Implication: The community feels that any type of heavy or moderate industry is not desirable or compatible with the Town.

Recommendation: Local government officials should avoid encouraging any development of moderate or heavy industry in the Town of Elba.

14. About two thirds of the respondents oppose the creation of an industrial park to encourage industries to locate in the Town.

Implication: It may be surmised that those in favor of an industrial park view it as the most tolerable situation, if it were to happen, because it would have the least impact on the rural character of the community.

Recommendation: There is no overwhelming support for an industrial park, therefore, even light industry should be scattered throughout the community and not concentrated in one location.

RESIDENT SURVEY SUMMARY, Continued

15. About one third of the respondents favored the Town providing hiking trails. About one quarter favored Town support for biking trails, picnic areas and playing fields for organized sports.

Implication: Respondents expressed a notable interest for more recreational activities in the community.

Recommendation: The Town Board should create a cost and feasibility study for creating and maintaining hiking trails, biking trails, picnic areas and playing fields.

16. Approximately two thirds of the respondents favor population growth as in the past thirty years. Slightly over one quarter of those answering the question would favor no further change in population. Only about 7% of the respondents favor an increase in population for the community.

Implication: A vast majority of residents do not favor any trend change in the population of the community. Increased population has a direct effect on the "small" school which many favor.

Recommendation: Same as #5 and #8.

17. The idea of setting aside "forever green" areas of land, to be owned and operated by the Town, was favored to some degree (moderate to strong support) by 81% of the respondents.

Implication: Respondents associate the rural character of the Town with the green open areas of land. Much of the land in the Town is agricultural. The residents would be willing to have the Town purchase and operate a forever green space.

Recommendation: The Town Board should create a feasibility study for such an endeavor.

2006 SURVEY SUMMARY

The 2006 Survey was sent to obtain an update on how the citizens felt about the importance of maintaining Elba's rural character and agricultural resources. Since those were significant findings of the first survey and those desires heavily influence this Comprehensive Plan, it was necessary to make sure that they were still applicable today.

Implication: Results from the survey indicate that Elba's rural character and agricultural resources are still important to the citizens.

Recommendation: The Town should adopt zoning regulations to protect and preserve the Town's agricultural resources.

Interest in commercial wind farms within the County has become a topic that has required town's to address possible sighting of commercial wind towers with new zoning regulations. In order to determine how residents feel about commercial wind towers being located in the Town, questions relating to commercial wind towers were asked.

Implication: Most people feel that commercial wind towers would not affect the rural character of the Town and they would support a commercial wind energy project if one was proposed in the Town.

Recommendation: The Town should adopt zoning regulations that allow land owners to place commercial wind towers on their property.

The prospect of a project such as commercial wind towers raises the situation of whether a project that could benefit an individual(s) but also impact the community at large is an acceptable practice. Incentive zoning is an option that towns can adopt where the town as a whole could benefit from waiving certain zoning requirements on a case by case basis.

Implication: Residents would prefer the Town to have the option of waiving certain zoning recommendations on a case-by-case basis if the community as a whole could benefit from doing so.

Recommendation: The Town should adopt Incentive Zoning Regulations.

Part 4 - Specific Recommendations

This section lists specific recommendations for action which follow from the general guidelines cited in Part 3.

DEVELOPMENT OF MUNICIPAL SERVICES.

1) Recommendation: Town and Village government should take input from members of the community regarding eliminating duplication of municipal services. It would seem prudent for the Town and Village officials to consider a survey of citizens on this topic and complete a study of similar size communities which have experienced mergers.

2) Recommendation: The Town Board should continually evaluate the feasibility and availability of providing the following services that residents have identified as being important: natural gas, municipal water, sewer, high speed Internet and cable TV within the Town of Elba. When appropriate, the Town should work to bring these services to Town residents.

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT.

1) Recommendation: Zoning regulations and governmental actions should reflect the primary directive from the community at large which desires to maintain the rural character of the community above all else.

2) Recommendation: The Town Board should establish a meeting date, at least yearly, to review the building permits issued for new construction as a basis for determining the need for controls in the types and number of new houses added in the community.

3) Recommendation: Planners of any senior citizen housing project should consider a low maintenance, single level facility which provides for social interaction, access to the limited services in the community, access or transportation to larger nearby communities and one which would be compatible with the rural character of the community. There currently are no senior citizen housing facilities in the town but there appears to be a need and desire for it.

4) Recommendation: Any future high density population development plans would have to be reviewed in light of the desire of the community to retain its present rural character,; the lack of municipal water and sewer services; and the limited availability of natural gas throughout the town.

INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT.

1) Recommendation: The Town Board should complete a study of past and present businesses in the community and work with the Genesee County Chamber of Commerce and GEDC to develop a plan to entice compatible retail and service

business into the community.

2) Recommendation: The Town Planning Board should review any requests to establish light industrial operations in the community and insure that such a business is compatible with the character of the area in which it is being placed and consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

3) Recommendation: The Town Board should study the types of light industry presently in the community and identify any benefits, problems, etc. for the Town.

AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION.

1) Recommendation: Agricultural preservation, a primary directive from the community, must drive zoning regulations and governmental actions. The issue of forever green areas and amount of housing construction and industrial development seem to be at odds with each other. Agriculture is directly related, however, to the rural character of Town.

2) Recommendation: The section from the zoning laws regarding agricultural priority should be made available to persons building residences in the agricultural-residential zoning areas.

3) Recommendation: Development of farms and other agricultural businesses (including farm stands, greenhouses, nurseries, trucking & distribution operations, etc.), agritourism businesses, and support businesses should be encouraged as another form of economic development for the Town in addition to light industry and commercial development.

4) Recommendation: The Town should continue to support the New York State Certified Agricultural Districts within the Town, The Genesee County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan, integration of Town actions with Genesee County's Smart Growth Plan, adoption of a Right to Farm Law or other actions deemed appropriate to support local farms and agricultural businesses. The Town should continue to support and market Elba's agricultural heritage and agricultural businesses in the Genesee County Chamber of Commerce Visitors Guide, other marketing publications and on the Town website.

5) Recommendation: To preserve farm land and open space, new housing and other development should be encouraged within the development zone identified in the Genesee County's Smart Growth Plan, or on land that could be served by existing municipal services.

RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

- 1) Recommendation:** The Town Board should create a cost and feasibility study for creating and maintaining hiking trails, biking trails, picnic areas and playing fields.
- 2) Recommendation:** Agreements should be made between the school district and the Town and Village regarding the upgrading and construction of recreational facilities as well as ways to utilize school facilities to provide recreational opportunities to the community.
- 3) Recommendation:** The Town should work with the Village, school and other youth sports and development organizations to ensure that programs for youth are available, accessible and have the resources and facilities necessary to provide high quality recreational opportunities.
- 4) Recommendation:** Any consideration to allow construction of an apartment building, mobile home park or multiple family dwelling should be reviewed for its potential impact on the recreational areas of the community.

APPENDIX 1

1999 RESIDENT SURVEY **TOWN OF ELBA** Citizen Response Summary

Total Number of Surveys Mailed: 1,045

Total Number of Surveys Returned: 276

Total Number of Respondents (from surveys): 438

1. What kind of housing do you live in?

258 A conventional house on a private lot. _5_ An apartment house or duplex.

13 A mobile home on a private lot.

2. Where do you live?

192 In the countryside. _84_ In the village of Elba.

3. For how many years have you lived in the Town of Elba?

224 21 or more years. _76_ 11 - 20 years.

53 6 - 10 years. _57_ 0 - 5 years.

4. How important is it that the Town of Elba preserve its rural character?

246 Extremely important. _84_ Quite important.

54 Somewhat important. _14_ Unimportant.

5. How important is it that more housing be built in the Town of Elba?

45 Extremely important. _60_ Quite important.

140 Somewhat important. _188_ Unimportant.

APPENDIX 1, Continued

6. Given the choice between more housing and keeping the rural character of Elba, which do you feel is more important?

321 Rural character. _70_ Housing.

7. If Elba is to have more housing, which of the following would you like to see?

252 More conventional homes on private lots. _122_ Senior citizen housing.

57 Conventional homes in a subdivision. _21_ More mobile homes on private lots.

19 More mobile homes in mobile home parks. _16_ More apartment housing.

17 Low income housing.

Other:

8. If you favor more housing, which one type of housing listed above do you think is most needed in the Town of Elba?

163 More conventional homes on private lots. _99_ Senior citizen housing.

37 Conventional homes in a subdivision. _16_ More mobile homes on private lots.

15 More mobile homes in mobile home parks. _11_ More apartment housing.

18 Low income housing.

Other:

APPENDIX 1, Continued

9. If you do not have these services, which of the following would you like to see made available to your residence?

120 Municipal water. _94_ Sewer lines. _133_ Natural gas.

Other:

10. Which of the following would you like to see in the Town of Elba?

107 More grocery stores. _55_ More places to eat.

107 More hardware and other retail stores. _65_ More service stations.

60 More personal services, e.g., barber shops or beauty parlors.

Other:

11. Light industry is the processing, fabrication, assembly or packaging of previously prepared or refined materials. Would you like to see more light industry in the Town of Elba?

293 Yes. _130_ No.

12. If "yes" to question 11, which do you feel is more important?

151 Industry which significantly increases employment opportunities in the Town.

OR

152 Industry which significantly increases the tax revenue in the Town.

APPENDIX 1, Continued

13. Moderate or heavy industry is processing or manufacturing of materials or products from extracted or raw materials and may involve storage of hazardous or commonly recognized offensive conditions or processes involving flammable or explosive materials. Would you like to see moderate or heavy industry brought into the Town of Elba.

33 Yes. _378_ No.

14. Would you favor creating an industrial park? This would be in an area of the Town set aside and developed specifically for the purpose of encouraging industries to locate in the Town.

146 Yes. _238_ No.

15. Which of the following would you like to see provided in the Town?

112 Biking trails. _128_ Hiking trails. _106_ More picnic areas.

102 More playing fields for organized sports.

Other recreation areas:

16. The population of the Town (including the Village) of Elba increased from 2,312 in 1970 to 2,407 in 1990. Which of the following outcomes would you like to see between now and 2010?

262 A continuing increase in the population at the same rate as the last 20 years.

110 No further change in the population.

27 A much more rapid increase in the population.

6 A decrease in the population.

APPENDIX 1, Continued

17. "Forever green" areas are areas of land which are forever preserved as woodlands and open space. No development is permitted on such land. How do you feel about setting aside forever green areas within the Town which are owned and operated by the Town of Elba?

174 Strongly support the idea. _163_ Moderately support the idea.

50 Moderately oppose the idea. _29_ Strongly oppose the idea.

18. From the standpoint of planning for the Town's future, what do you see as the most important issue over the next 20 years?

Summary of the Comment(s):

There were 201 comments made for this question of the survey. The comments fell into one of five different categories dealing with the quality of life within the community: character of the community, growth and development of business and industry, services available in the community, population of Elba, taxes and education.

Character of the Town- 82 specific comments were made which pertained to the character of the community. These reinforced the summary from survey question number 4.

Housing- 34 comments were made which parallel the results of survey questions 5 through 8.

Services- 50 additional comments were made about services available in the community. See the summary of questions 9 and 10.

Taxes- 38 specific comments pertained to taxes. Of these comments, the general feeling was that taxes need to be kept in check.

Growth- 31 comments were made and are summarized in survey questions 11 through 14.

APPENDIX 1, Continued

Education- 10 comments were made about the school district. Comments ranged from very satisfied to consider a merger with another district.

Miscellaneous- A few comments were made along the lines that the Town and Village governments should consider a merger.

APPENDIX 1A

2006 RESIDENT SURVEY

TOWN OF ELBA

Citizen Response Summary

Available at www.elbanewyork.com

Total Number of Surveys Mailed: 750

Total Number of Surveys Returned: 352 (47%)

| | Outside
the Village | In the
Village | TOTAL |
|---|--------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| 1.) Where do you Live? | 255 | 97 | 352 |
| 2.) How Important is it that the Town of Elba preserves its rural character? | | | |
| Extremely Important | 128 | 51 | 179 |
| Somewhat Important | 111 | 35 | 146 |
| Unimportant | 12 | 10 | 22 |
| 3.) Should the Town of Elba adopt zoning regulations that protect and preserve our Agricultural resources? | | | |
| Yes | 199 | 76 | 275 |
| No | 37 | 18 | 55 |
| 4.) To preserve the rural character of the Town of Elba, should the Town create an industrial park to encourage business development in a concentrated area? | | | |
| Yes | 162 | 58 | 220 |
| No | 80 | 37 | 117 |
| 5.) Do you think commercial wind towers in the Town of Elba would affect its rural character? | | | |
| Yes | 81 | 34 | 115 |
| No | 157 | 60 | 217 |
| 6.) If a commercial wind energy project was proposed in the Town of Elba, would you? | | | |
| Support the project | 59 | 19 | 78 |

| | | | |
|---|-----|----|------------|
| Support the project if the Town could benefit financially | 111 | 42 | 153 |
| Support the project if it was located in the right area | 93 | 41 | 134 |
| Strongly oppose the project no matter the benefit or location | 28 | 14 | 42 |
| No Opinion | 14 | 4 | 18 |

7.) Would you be in favor of the Town of Elba having the ability to waive certain zoning requirements, on a case-by-case basis, if the community as a whole could benefit from doing so? (examples: water, sewer, park, library, etc.)

| | | | |
|-----|-----|----|------------|
| Yes | 200 | 73 | 273 |
| No | 41 | 21 | 62 |

8.) Which of the following services are important to have available in the Town of Elba? (Check all that apply)

| | | | |
|---------------------|-----|----|------------|
| Municipal water | 187 | 77 | 264 |
| Sewer Lines | 118 | 68 | 186 |
| Natural Gas | 141 | 70 | 211 |
| High Speed Internet | 99 | 45 | 144 |
| Cable TV | 90 | 50 | 140 |
| Other | | | |

Elba Town Survey 2006

The following residents' comments from the completed, returned surveys appear exactly as written; no spelling, punctuation, or content editing was done, with the exception of deleted profanity:

Twenty-six surveys from people living in the village and 28 from people living outside the village contained additional comments.

Question Two:

*[Somewhat Important checked] "but still must consider progress in the future for growth if Elba is to remain a viable community into the 21st century."

* "You must mean the backwoods, hillbilly, redneck us vs. them mentality."

Question Three:

* "Yes—with considerations of a more vibrant Main St. What can agruland [sic] do for Main St office farmer friendly businesses."

* "Yes—your Comprehensive Plan and zoning for the town should take into consideration what you have to offer. Agriculture is probably still number one with the land use available."

* "Yes—but not at the expense of growth."

* "Yes—but not to the detriment of normal growth."

* "Property owners dictate by owning land and they get tax breaks and help during good and bad years, while others lose jobs and they do not get the same help."

- * “Such as? Most of the available land is in Ag District.”
- * “At the expense of real & meaningful stepping toward the 20th century growth? Like real jobs for our kids instead of hoping that they will have a bright future driving manure around?”
- * “If only it serves the greater good.”
- *[No checked] “Not just for one family!”

Question Four:

- * “No—In order to plan for this, you would need the infrastructure to accompany an industrial park i.e. water supply, roads, cheap electricity, tax incentives. What usually occurs is the taxpayer up-fronts the initial cost to develop and rarely ever sees the tax rate go down again due to the cost of incentives.”
- * “Must have infrastructure (water and sewer).”
- * “Yes—but in doing so, do not ‘give away the store’ where the business is exempt from school and other property taxes.”
- * “It’s in Batavia”
- * “We DO NOT NEED ONE AT ALL – They already exist in Batavia, Pembroke and Bergen, LeRoy.”
- * “Business development would be good anywhere.”
- * “The “rural character” has nothing to do with it, we should be encouraging business development.”
- * “Elba does not need an industrial park anywhere.”
- *[No checked] “Unless utilities/water/sewer for new business is easier to supply to 1 dedicated area”
- * “No Industrial Park.”
- * “Definitely bring in jobs & increase the tax base!”

Commercial Wind Towers/Commercial Wind Energy Project:

- *(Questions five and six) “Not sure—don’t have enough information.”
- * (Questions five and six) “I am opposed to wind energy projects. Besides being unsightly, they are too expensive. It is unclear how long it will take to recover investment capital. The environmental impact will have a disastrous effect on any property near the site. Migratory flyway etc. Go nuclear—concentrated....local. More efficient and reliable in the long run, even more cost efficient. Wind energy will never meet the growing needs in terms of population, residential or industrial development. Once the wind farms are scattered all over the countryside maintenance will be much too expensive. The developers are going to make millions the land owners mostly farmers profit and neither care how it will effect individuals, community or environmental habitat.”

Question five

- * “Depends on Where the Power Goes. We would prefer to keep the benefits.”
- * “No—Great idea—Could the school district use this idea to help with energy costs?”
- * “Yes—the wind companies will tell you where they want the towers based on wind direction and velocity, not where you think they should be and potentially damage the rural setting.”
- * “Go to Lowville – It helped!”
- * “Yes – Negative.”
- * “But it would give cause for our rural characters to generate more wind.”
- * “In favor as long as it does not bring more immigrants (Mexicans) to Elba!! We have more than enough already!!!”

Question six

- * “2500 ft setback all around. \$/KW not just PILOT”
- * “Setbacks from residential should be half mile or more.”
- * “Commercial support – No. Private use – Yes”
- * “If it includes a benefit to all Elban’s including those outside the village.”
- * “All the people – as in lower electric rates. Not just the “town” or a chosen few!”

Question Seven:

- * “Yes—subject to referendum”
- * “Yes—without voter referendum”
- * “No—may be a dangerous precedent”
- * “No—unclear question”

- * "No—You have a comprehensive plan and zoning regulations that should be reviewed frequently with changes made at the time of review. Your case by case analogy becomes very subjective and can erode the attempt of the original plan. If you want the examples cited, they should be in planning cycle to obtain, not on a case by case basis."
- * "No—spot zoning doesn't work."
- * "These privileges always get abused. You can not go case by case. Make a rule and stick to it."
- * "I found it difficult to answer as the zoning board does not ever enforce the laws it has. i.e. example – Trailers where there not supposed to be – and talk about injuring the landscape! What about old unregistered vehicles – all over the place!!!"
- * "Vote?"
- * "As long as the majority of residents benefit, not just a few."

Question Eight: Other services desired:

- *Ambulance/Fire Department
- *Electric generators for emergency power outage for rescue squad emergency
- *Low income apartment complex
- *Senior apartment complex
- *Senior housing complex should include apartments, condos, assisted living, with limited medical facilities, "a complete complex"
- *Water not from Lake Ontario
- *Monroe County water
- *Digital phone service
- *Digital phone
- *Garbage/Trash pickup
- *Garbage disposal services home pickup
- *Good grocery store
- *Library
- *Farm land
- *Supervised summer rec. program for our children"
- *WiFi
- *Enforcement of property owners to clean up their properties & keep them cleaned up.
- *Sidewalks in more populated area just outside the village.
- *Low cost electric
- *Municipal electric
- *Garbage pickup for everyone
- *Burger King
- *Low Taxes
- *Economical gas
- *Cheap Electricity
- *Lower School Taxes
- *Updated telephone exchange
- *Increase in tax base that is thoughtful and well planned
- *Casino
- *Lower school taxes
- *Lower utility prices

Miscellaneous Comments Regarding Question Eight:

- * "No—too expensive to taxpayers as a whole." (No services checked.)
- * "The larger question is, how does the town pay for them? Again, comprehensive planning with the citizens on services or service delivery will determine if a water district takes precedent over an expansion of the sewer district."
- * "In favor of those checked [all] but only if the entire town as a whole would benefit, and if the rural character of the town would not be damaged."
- * [Checked & circled Municipal Water] "PLEASE! ASAP! Elba's water is horrible!"
- * "A lot of areas in the Town of Elba are not wired for cable tv or internet access. This should be addressed when new agreements are due with the cable company."

- * "Preserve the rural/agricultural community. We have a gem – why do you want to carve it up into bunch of subdivisions & business parks?"
- *[All choices marked] "All of the foregoing would significantly improve the quality of life here and would enhance property values. At a minimum, we need cable/internet access. This should be a priority. ALL TOWN RESIDENTS SHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO HIGH SPEED INTERNET."
- * "If available to some, should be available to all!"
- *[Municipal Water checked multiple times] "Too much cow xxxx!"
- * "No written for all choices] "So we can all suffer with the same crappy water? Why are we so concerned about where the waste goes – I see it being spread all over the place without real environmental concerns why can't we just all take dumps on each others lawns? What's the big difference?"
- * "Outside the village, water is horrible!"
- * "We strongly urge the Town of Elba to consider installing municipal water. Our wells are in danger of contamination from underground streams in this agricultural area. Would like a Town meeting regarding this."
- * "Continue excellent highway care."
- * "As I check above [question 7] on a case by case basis need to notify public for meetings on these issues please! "
- * "Need water in town! Village should not be allowed to stop this."
- * "Water because of all the rural spreading of agricultural waste."
- * "Why do we not join the Monroe County Water Authority, as have the rest of the towns in the county?"
- * "What about housing for elderly? We definitely need to help young & old residents. Create new jobs (not minimum wage) to encourage younger residents to stay or move in!"

Miscellaneous Comments:

- * "Rerouting of eighteen-wheel trucks and farm machinery on Main Street and Mechanic Street. These vehicles could use Drake Street and Weatherwax, avoiding the village, with minimal cost involved."
- * "I would like to see a limit on the number of dogs allowed in a single home within the village limits. Also preemptive ban on dangerous breeds such as pit bulls. Other towns have had these guidelines in place for years for public safety."
- * "Elba desperately needs growth. Taxes are hurting a lot of residents."
- * "Please publish the results of this survey."
- * "Anything to encourage growth would improve tax base."
- * "If we don't allow Elba to open itself to more housing/business, we will lose our school—no one wants that."
- * "We suggest you look carefully at laws re: agriculture. We don't feel this falls under "normal farming procedures" and should be addressed. Possibly it could be damaging the environment. It's annoying to find on personal property such as cars, houses + laundry. And I'm sure it's unhealthy on children's play equipment, picnic tables, etc.. We need and want family homes in our town. Property is no longer appealing or as valuable when the spreading of this manure reaches our property. And we certainly don't want to curb "agriculture – crops" but PLEASE keep this subject in mind when you consider zoning regulations."
- * "I understand the need for development & growth but within a logical and conservative manner and not to increase the tax base for the citizens. The town of Elba voted down the increase in school taxes and the board found a loophole to raise them anyway. Why vote? The towns people want to be more involved in decisions."
- * "Forget the Windmills. Strongly support Gasohol plant. Farmers would have a market for corn, millions of dollars tax base. USDA, Government would not have to spend 300 billion dollars to protect crude oil. Spend the money in Elba."

APPENDIX 2

TOTAL POPULATION TOWN OF ELBA

Source: U.S. Census

| <u>YEAR</u> | <u>POPULATION</u> |
|-------------|-----------------------------|
| 1970 | 2,312 |
| 1980 | 2,487 |
| 1990 | 2,407 |
| 2000 | 2,439 |
| 2010 | 2,453 (projected estimate)* |

*based on BUSINESS FIRST projections 11/24/97

APPENDIX 3

AGE DISTRIBUTION TOWN OF ELBA

Source: U.S. Census

| <u>AGE</u> | <u>1970</u> | <u>1980</u> | <u>1990</u> | <u>2000</u> | <u>2010*</u> |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| Under 18 | 934 | 905 | 667 | 675 | 680 |
| 18 to 64 | 1,157 | 1,389 | 1,471 | 1,492 | 1,500 |
| 65 and Over | 221 | 193 | 269 | 272 | 310 |
| Median Age | --- | 29.1 | 33.3 | 36.6 | 39.0 |

*projected estimate

APPENDIX 4

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF PERSONS 25 AND OLDER TOWN OF ELBA

Source: U.S. Census

H.S. GRADUATION OR HIGHER 1970 1980 1990 2000 2010*

| | | | | | |
|----------------|----|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Elba | -- | 50.0% | 76.9% | 85.7% | 92% |
| Genesee County | | 55.8% | 69.2% | 77.4% | 84.4% |
| New York State | | 52.7% | 66.3% | 74.8% | 79.1% |

BACHELOR'S OR HIGHER DEGREE 1970 1980 1990 2000 2010*

| | | | | | |
|----------------|----|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Elba | -- | 7.0% | 14.6% | 17.6% | 22% |
| Genesee County | | 8.0% | 11.5% | 14.0% | 16.3% |
| New York State | | 11.9% | 17.9% | 23.1% | 27.4% |

*projected estimate

APPENDIX 5

INCOME TOWN OF ELBA

Source: U.S. Census

MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME 1969 1979 1989 1999 2009*

| | | | | | |
|----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Elba | \$9,376 | \$21,729 | \$39,596 | \$51,058 | \$60,000 |
| Genesee County | \$10,005 | \$21,318 | \$35,482 | \$47,771 | \$58,000 |
| New York State | | | | \$51,691 | \$60,000 |

BELOW POVERTY LEVEL 1969 1979 1989 1999 2009*

| | | | | | |
|----------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Elba | -- | 4.0% | 3.0% | 5.9% | 7.0% |
| Genesee County | 7.3% | 6.0% | 7.3% | 7.6% | 8.5% |
| New York State | | | | | |

APPENDIX 6

OCCUPATIONS PERSONS 16 AND OVER TOWN OF ELBA

Source: U.S. Census

| | <u>1970</u> | <u>1980</u> | <u>1990</u> | <u>2000</u> |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Managerial & Professional Workers | 127 | 175 | 275 | 366 |
| Technical, Sales, Support Workers | 151 | 193 | 295 | 278 |
| Service Occupations | 143 | 146 | 151 | 162 |
| Farming, Forestry, Fishing | 120 | 134 | 83 | 38 |
| Precision Production, Craft, Repair | 291 | 150 | 169 | 242 |
| Operators, Fabricators, Laborers | 163 | 146 | 210 | 164 |
| Total Civilian Labor Force | 995 | 1,144 | 1,255 | 1,307 |

APPENDIX 7

HOUSEHOLDS TOWN OF ELBA

Source: U.S. Census

| <u>YEAR</u> | <u>HOUSEHOLDS</u> | <u>RESIDENCES</u> | <u>MEAN VALUE</u> | <u>MEDIAN VALUE</u> |
|-------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1970 | 644 | 861 | \$17,016 | -- |
| 1980 | 759 | 1,008 | \$36,600 | -- |
| 1990 | 822 | 881 | -- | \$65,400 |
| 2000 | 853 | 910 | \$74,500 (est.) | \$82,500 |