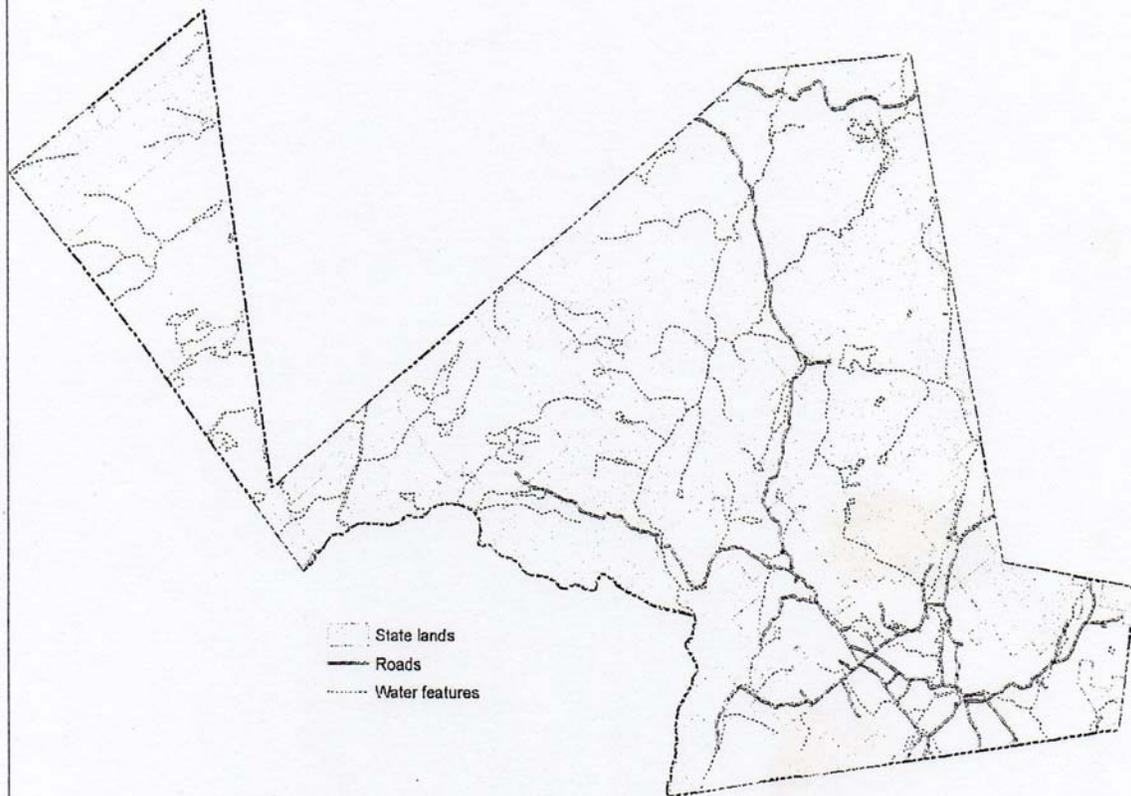


# Town of Minerva Comprehensive Plan



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For and with:  
the Town of Minerva Zoning Commission

November 2004

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## **Large Format Maps**

The following large format maps were prepared for this plan.

Entire Town (1 inch = 4000 feet)

Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan, Land Use Areas  
Town of Minerva (base map with contours and wetlands)

Southeastern Section of Town (1 inch = 2000 feet)

Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan, Land Use Areas  
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Density Analysis  
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Proposed Amendments to the Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan Map  
Proposed Land Use Districts  
Soil Suitability for Development  
Town of Minerva (base map with contours and wetlands)

Southeast Section of Town (1 inch = 1000 feet)

APA Land Use Districts and Existing Land Use

## **Acknowledgements**

The following students enrolled in the Environmental Science Curriculum at the State University of Plattsburgh assisted in the preparation of digital data files used in the preparation of maps for this report. Their assistance is hereby gratefully acknowledged, especially those who prepared the soils data, a detailed and time-consuming task.

Steven Benway  
Aaron Falzarano  
Candace Gates  
Kenneth Newkirk  
Dominick Piaquadio

## **INTRODUCTION**

This comprehensive plan is intended to serve as a guide for future growth and development in the Town of Minerva. It describes the environmental and other resources of the Town, examines current land use patterns, analyses growth trends, discusses future needs, establishes goals, and sets forth policies and a plan to achieve the goals.

In addition to the direct value of such a plan to the Town, New York State zoning statutes require that a zoning ordinance or law be based upon a comprehensive plan. Accordingly, this plan establishes the rationale for proposed changes in the town's existing land use regulations. It is intended that existing "Town of Minerva Site Plan and Land Division Review Law" be superseded by a new zoning law and subdivision control law based upon the plan presented herein.

This plan is also intended to serve as the basis for requests to amend the Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan Map pursuant to Section 805, part 2, c, (3) of the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) Act. Specifically, it is meant to serve as the "comprehensive inventory and analysis of the natural resource, public, economic and other land use factors as may reflect the relative development amenability and limitations of the lands within the entire jurisdiction," as well as the formally adopted comprehensive master plan cited in the aforementioned section and part of the APA Act. Thus, the plan provides rationale and supporting data for map amendment requests to be submitted to the APA by the Town of Minerva.

The Town has no intention at the current time to seek status as an approved local land use program under the APA Act. Policies and land use controls recommended by this plan are designed to compliment, rather than replace, the APA regulations.

Preparation of the plan has been a joint responsibility of the Town of Minerva Zoning Commission, composed of Town residents, and Dr. Richard Lamb of the State University of New York at Plattsburgh, a planning consultant retained by the town to assist the Commission in their task. The consultant wrote this document, prepared all maps, and served as an advisor and facilitator in the Commission's deliberations. The Zoning Commission met over the course of several months to review relevant information, determine goals and objectives, and establish the plans and regulatory changes proposed herein.

An opinion survey was mailed to all property owners in the town early in the planning process to provide citizen input on the general vision for the town's future as well as specific land use regulatory issues. Results of the survey are contained in this document.

### **Plan History**

The first town "comprehensive plan" was written by members of the Planning Board and Zoning Commission in September 1973. It is a short document that contains general discussion of some of the key resources in the town and sets forth some goals. The plan does

not contain any maps or a land use plan, nor does make any specific recommendations or propose any specific land use regulations.

A considerable amount of information was collected as part of a town planning effort in 1976. A series of draft reports containing various elements of a town plan were prepared, as were as a series of large format maps at a scale of 1 inch = 2000 feet. In addition, a 1976 report titled “Natural & Community Resources, Town of Minerva Planning Program” was produced jointly by the Adirondack Park Agency, the Essex County Planning Office, and the Lake Champlain-Lake George Regional Planning Board. However, the plan was not completed. Much of the environmental data and many maps from these reports are still relevant and have been incorporated into the present plan. Students from SUNY Plattsburgh digitized information from the 1976 paper maps to prepare some of the computer generated maps in this plan document.

Later, the town adopted a “Town of Minerva Site Plan and Land Subdivision Review Law,” and updated it in 1991.

In 1995 a questionnaire survey containing questions related to a variety of economic, community development and growth issues was mailed to 200 randomly selected residents of the Town of Minerva as part of a program sponsored by the Cornell Local Government Program. Survey results are contained in a report titled “Central Adirondacks Economic Renewal Project, Public Opinion Results – Town of Minerva,” and are summarized in this plan.

In February 2003, a 9 page document titled “Town of Minerva, a Comprehensive Plan” was prepared by the town Zoning Commission. The document contains some tables, graphs, and discussion of the town’s characteristics and resources, but does not contain any recommendations, goals and objectives, or a land use plan.

During 2003 the zoning commission met with staff of the Essex County Office of Community Development and Planning and began a town planning process by discussing a variety of community development and growth issues. As a result of these discussions the committee developed a list of concerns to be addressed in the town plan. Subsequent to these meetings, the consultant from SUNY Plattsburgh was retained to assist the town in preparing the plan presented herein.

In order to deal with immediate concerns, the town passed a “Junk Storage Law” in 2003, and a “Mobile Home Law” in 2004.

# **PART 1**

## **INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS**

## **REGIONAL LOCATION AND GENERAL SETTING<sup>[11]</sup>**

The Town of Minerva is located in the southwest corner of Essex County in a transition area between the southern Adirondacks and the “High Peaks” region that contains 42 of the 46 mountain peaks over 4000 feet in elevation. The town is noted for its scenic mountains and valleys, fishing, hunting, camping, and historic churches.”

The nearest urban area is Glens Falls approximately 40 miles to the southeast. (See “Regional Location” map.) The Adirondack Northway (I-87) is 5 to 10 miles distant and is accessible by County Route 30, known as the A.P. Morse Memorial Highway. State Route 28N runs through the town, and is relatively lightly traveled.

Throughout much of its history the town has been “off the beaten path,” situated in a relatively remote location, not being located along a major travel corridor such as State Route 9 to the east or State Route 28 to the south, and not being the home of any major industry or employer. As a result change has come slowly enabling the town to retain “the quality of an Adirondack Community of the turn of the (20th) century.” In the modern era, however, its relative proximity to the Adirondack Northway and its scenic rural environment coupled with a small town Adirondack flavor has made the town increasingly more attractive as a residential location, both for year around and seasonal use.

Most of the population and settled area is centered around the small hamlets of Olmstedville and Minerva in the southeast quarter of town. Roger Trancik, in his booklet, "Hamlets of the Adirondacks," identified these places as "Hudson Plateau Hamlets," located in "some of the most rugged terrain of the south central Adirondacks" where "deep forests mantle the hillsides which are periodically broken by many lakes and ponds found throughout the area." Trancik further described Olmstedville as a “charming crossroad community that has retained its early charm and character”, and Minerva as "a small, peaceful community with the quality of being from another time." “Olmstedville is a crossroad hamlet, Minerva a well maintained strip community. Both received the highest rating for buildings, landscape quality, view and vistas, and appearance in Trancik's analysis of Adirondack hamlets.”

A large portion of the town’s land – about 62 percent -- is owned by the State of New York, and is part of “Forest Preserve” which is protected from development or removal of forests by the “forever wild” clause of the New York State constitution. In addition, the Finch Pruyn pulp and paper company, a private landholder, owns large areas of land in the western section of town.

Because the settled area of the Town of Minerva lies almost entirely in its southeast quarter, with the remainder consisting of state lands or inaccessible private lands, most of the maps in this document show only the southeast portion of town.

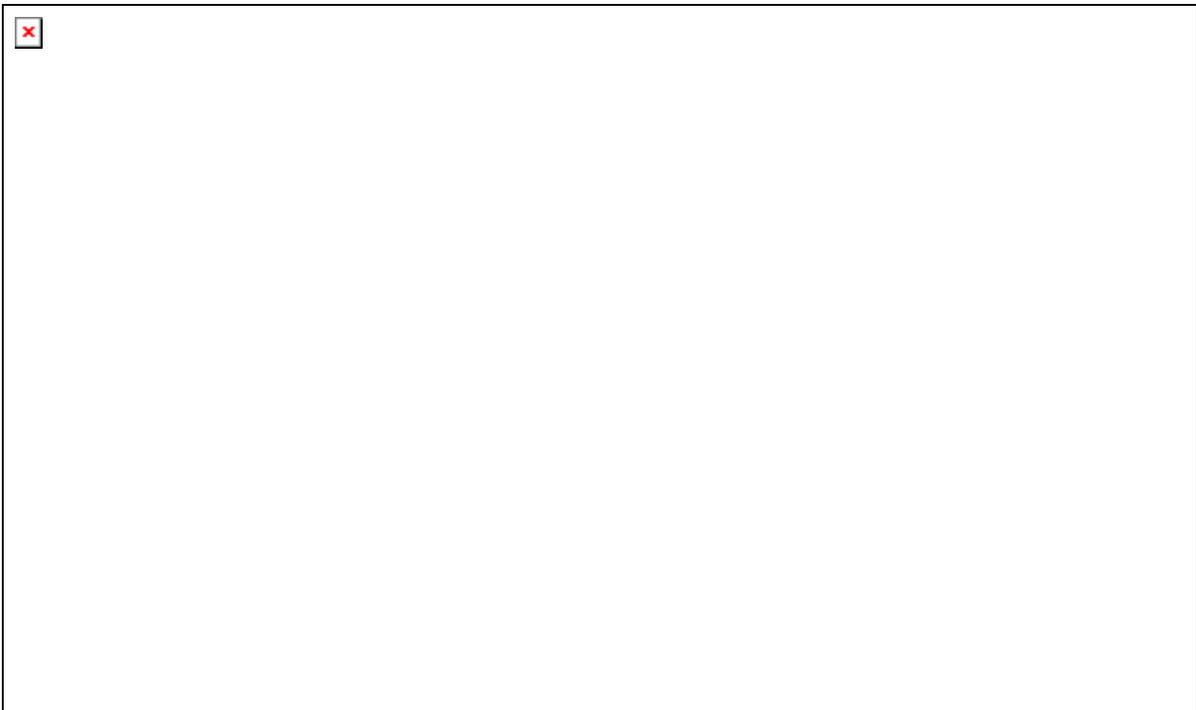
## **SETTLEMENT HISTORY<sup>[21]</sup>**

“In 1786 Francis Dominick received a patent from New York State for 12,000 acres of land which would later become the primary settlements of Minerva. The first permanent white settler arrived in the region around 1800 when Ebenezer West established a homestead with

his wife, five sons and a settlement called Pendleton. Minerva became a separate township by an Act of the New York State Legislature on March 17, 1817. Two settlements, known together as the Dominick Settlement, were separated from Schroon to form the Town of Minerva.”

“Three boundary changes occurred since the establishment of Minerva. In 1828, land was taken from Minerva and Moriah to form the Township of Newcomb. In 1858, Leonardsville was removed from Schroon and annexed to Minerva. Finally, in 1915, the Hudson River was established as the new boundary in the southwest portion of town and the lands in the northeast corner of town were added from the Town of Indian Lake to compensate for potential lost tax revenues.”

### TOWN BOUNDARY CHANGES



The early economy of the town depended upon its natural resources: forests, tillable land, and to some extent minerals. Logging was a major activity during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The virgin forests contained much valuable timber, including white pine “of immense size,” which was either used locally or harvested and floated downstream on the Boreas River, Schroon River, and/or Hudson River to Glens Falls and other locations. There were also local sawmills in operation. For a brief period of time (about 20 years) in the town’s early history, a tannery was operated near Minerva Stream in Olmstedville. With the eventual depletion of much of the forest resource and the creation of the Adirondack Forest Preserve in the late 1800’s, the role of logging and tree harvesting in the local economy greatly diminished.

In 1875 there reportedly existed 130 farms in the Town of Minerva. Major crops included barley, oats, buckwheat, corn, potatoes, as well as maple syrup. These were the days of

family farms on small plots of land. Because of the relatively inhospitable climate of the Adirondacks, small field size and rugged terrain, modern commercial farming is not competitive in the town, and commercial farming has long since disappeared.

Mining was a boost to the town's economy at various points in its history. The Irishtown ironworks provided some employment for a time during the 1800's. Later the nearby Tahawus mines were a source of jobs.

The current economy of the town also depends upon natural resources, but the key resource in the modern era is the quality of the natural and man-made environment. The scenic beauty of the town together with its rural small town, Adirondack, charm is what attracts tourists, seasonal residents, and permanent residents alike, which in turn supports local businesses.

Maps from an 1876 atlas show a sparsely settled town with the hamlet of Olmstedville being the largest settlement. (See maps of "Minerva-Olmstedville Area, circa 1876" and "Olmstedville Hamlet, circa 1876.") Olmstedville contained churches, stores, a hotel, and a school, while Minerva hamlet was smaller containing a church, store and school. Irishtown was a tiny hamlet with a church and school.

The current road pattern evolved from earlier unimproved roadways that were forged to provide access through the hilly, wooded terrain of the town. A map illustrating roads used in the town during the 1915 – 1930 period shows the pattern. (See "Early Roads, circa 1915-1930" map.) Several of the roadways shown on the map were never improved to modern standards, and are no longer in use. Others still follow their original winding and twisting route designed for pre-automobile travel.

## **TOPOGRAPHY AND SLOPE**

Typical of Adirondack communities, the Town of Minerva is characterized by predominantly rugged terrain with patches of more level land in valleys and on plateaus. (See "Topography" map.)

Steeper slopes pose limitations for development. Slopes of 15 percent or greater are generally considered poor for development because of erosion problems, cost of construction, inability of septic systems to function properly, and if roads are involved, traffic safety and cost of road maintenance. Flat land may also pose problems due to poor drainage. The ideal slope for development is considered to be 3 to 8 percent in order to provide good drainage while minimizing erosion and runoff problems. As shown on the "Slope Suitability for Development" map<sup>[3]</sup>, the most favorable slopes are found in and around the hamlet of Minerva and to the south and west of Olmstedville in the vicinity of Church Road. Much of the land along existing public roads is rated as "suitable" for development being characterized by slopes less than 15% but not close to 0%.

## **SOILS**

Soil information is based upon Order 2 soils mapping, and was obtained from the Essex County Soil and Water Conservation District. (Computer scans of the soils maps were obtained that were then digitized by students at SUNY Plattsburgh in order to produce the maps shown in this document.)

Order 2 soil mapping is done on a detailed level and is quite accurate. In the detailed mapping a soil sample is taken about every four acres, on the average. Even so, there is some variability within the soil areas shown on the soils maps, so that for example, where the map may indicate that soils are poor for septic leach fields, it may be possible to find spots within the mapped area that are in fact satisfactory for a leach field. This mapping therefore is good information for community planning purposes, but should be supplemented by on site testing for any particular parcel of land.

### **Soils and Septic Systems**

Many of the soils in the Town of Minerva are rated as having severe limitations for septic effluent fields (leach fields), as shown on the "Soil Limitations for Septic Effluent Fields" map. These ratings are those supplied by the Soil Conservation Service and are based upon such factors as the soil percolation rate, slope, depth to seasonal high water table, and depth to bedrock. However, a severe rating does not preclude the use of individual on-lot septic systems on such soils. Rather, it means that care must be taken to insure that systems are carefully sited and adequately designed for the soil conditions and/or that alternatives to conventional leach fields should be used. In many cases a larger and more costly leach field may be required (more footage of pipes). On soils where more restrictive characteristics prevail, an alternative system may be used. Alternatives include fill or mound systems, and evaporation-absorption (also named "leach bed") systems.

The N.Y.S. Department of Health (DOH) recommends a lot size of at least 20,000 square feet for conventional leach field systems in areas underlain by good soils. This space is necessary in order to provide enough room on the lot to place an adequately designed system and meet minimum distance requirements from wells, the house, and property lines.

On poor soils, a lot larger than 20,000 square feet is needed for conventional systems for several reasons. First, the average duration for a septic leach field is about 15 to 20 years, at which time it reaches capacity and requires replacement. Fill systems are especially prone to reaching a saturation point after which they will not function properly. When a system fails, either a new location on the property must be found to install a new one, or the old leach field and the earth surrounding it must be removed in order to provide adequate space. The latter alternative is very costly. Therefore, a 20,000 square feet lot may not be sufficient in the long run considering that there may be a need for more than one space for a leach field on a property. Second, many failing septic systems are never replaced. Thus, in areas of severe limitations larger lots are necessary to provide property owners with some protection from septic system failure on neighboring properties. Third, the minimum 20,000 square feet lot recommended by DOH assumes that there are no limiting factors due to terrain or shape of the parcel. On oddly shaped lots, and where limiting factors such as wetlands, streams, rock outcrops and other such natural features exist, the minimum lot size should be larger. Finally,

the minimum 20,000 square feet lot assumes that the entire site plan for the buildings, driveways, water supply and sewerage system have all been carefully planned in advance of dividing a property into building lots in order to insure that the required setbacks for leach fields can be met. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. In summary, an adequate septic disposal system may be placed upon a 20,000 square feet lot, but only if it is properly planned, including the use of alternative systems, and is situated on a well shaped parcel of land free from environmental restrictions, is properly maintained, and is replaced when needed.

In the Town of Minerva it is recommended that a minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet be established in the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) designated hamlets (Minerva and Olmstedville) in order to provide for proper disposal of septic wastes. Outside of hamlets disposal systems should be designed with the less than favorable soils in mind, either by creating larger lots or by otherwise providing for proper sewerage treatment.

### **Soil Suitability for Buildings without Basements**

The map showing “Soil Limitations for Dwellings without Basements” is based upon data supplied by the Soil Conservation Service, and utilizes somewhat different criteria than that used for septic systems. Soils shown as having moderate or severe limitations on the map may be characterized by one or more limiting conditions, including steep slope, flood hazard, wetness, or bedrock close to the surface. There are fewer areas of severe restrictions on this map than on the septic limitations map because soil permeability (the rate at which water can percolate downward through the soil layer) is not taken into account as a building limitation, but is taken into account as a significant limitation for septic leach fields.

Severe limitations on the map do not necessarily preclude development. A severe limitation rating is intended to indicate that there are problems with development, some of which may be overcome with added cost, such as earth grading or drainage improvements. Also, smaller areas for good building sites may be found within the broader areas portrayed on the map as severe. However, areas of severe limitations are generally not good for intensive development.

In the Town of Minerva some of the best soils for buildings are found in the hamlet of Minerva, in Irishtown, and along Church Road south of Olmstedville. Most of the land along existing public roads is rated as “moderate” for buildings.

### **Soil Suitability For Development**

An overall development suitability rating taking into account limitations for both buildings and septic systems, as well as other factors, is shown on the “Soil Suitability for Development” map. The criteria for preparing the map were as follows.

Most Suitable Soils	Slight or moderate limitations for both septic effluent fields and for dwellings without basements. These soils pose few restrictions for development, and are suitable for high or moderate density housing on
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	smaller lots.
Suitable Soils	Slight or moderate limitations for dwelling without basements, but severe limitations for septic effluent fields. These soils are suitable for development provided that septic systems are designed to function properly.
Somewhat Suitable Soils	Severe limitations for both septic effluent fields and for dwellings without basements. These soils are suitable for low density development on large lots if buildings and septic systems are properly sited and designed for the soil conditions.
Least Suitable Sols	Soils characterized by one or more of the following conditions: frequent or occasional flooding, slopes 25% or greater, wetness (depth to seasonal high ground water table less than 1 foot, or depth to seasonal low ground water table less than 2 feet). These soils are generally unsuitable for development.

Some of the best soils for development are found in the hamlet of Olmstedville. Other patches of “most suitable” soils are found in scattered locations throughout the southeast portion of town. Large areas of “suitable soils” are found along public roads, including lands within the hamlet of Minerva.

## **GEOLOGY<sup>[4]</sup>**

### **Bedrock**

“The rocks of Minerva are representative of some of the oldest rocks of the United States. There are called the Grenville series and include several types of metamorphic (or changed) rocks. These vary from the coarse-grained marbles of the town to the multi-mineral granites and gneisses that occur north of Minerva. These rocks are not of the same hardness for we find the marbles worn down to a low elevation with respect to the harder rocks of the hills and mountains of the area.” Fault lines in the rock, as a result of shifts in the earth’s crust, tend to run in the north-northeast to south-southwest direction in the Town of Minerva. “...these faults are lines of weakness on the earth’s surface and the processes of erosion by water and glacial ice have etched these lines into relief. Schroon Lake, northern Trout Brook, Minerva Stream, Balfour Lake, and part of the Boreas River all occupy of flow in depressions that coincide with faults that have this compass direction.”

Metamorphic bedrock, the type of rock that underlies the town, is not a good source of groundwater supply, and generally does not contain aquifers of sufficient pumping capacity to support the withdrawal of large volumes of water needed for a public water system.

### **Surficial Geology**

Surficial geology refers to the geologic material lying close to the surface of the earth. (See “Surficial Geology map.) It is composed of unconsolidated deposits of various types and depths, including those laid down during the last glaciation. In some places bedrock is close to the surface.

The last glacial age occurred approximately 10,000 years ago. “As the ice retreated ... it left a land of bare-rocked hills with rounded profiles that have been preserved to this day. In places, such as at Olmsteadville, the glacier left behind bouldery material (called moraines) and elsewhere glacial meltwater laid down sandy beds like the ones near Moxham Pond,.” The last ice age pushed up moraines at Olmsteadville and in the pass below Moxham Mountain, and when it retreated, a large lake (Lake Minerva) developed behind these earthen dams.” Today Moxham Pond and the Minerva Lake basin are remnants of this once large lake.

Much of the southeastern portion of the Town of Minerva is underlain by glacial till which was deposited in a sheet as the glacier retreated. Till is generally a relatively thin layer of material of clay or clay-loam consistency, and is not very porous. (Porosity refers to the rate at which water percolates downward through the soil.) However, there may be substantial variation in the thickness of the layer and its porosity from place to place.

Kame deposits typically consist of a relatively deep layer of sand or gravel. These were often formed from beaches of glacial lakes, or otherwise deposited by glacial waters. Kame deposits are often a prime source of sand and gravel, and in many communities are used for commercial mining. Olmstedville is underlain by kame, and smaller deposits are found elsewhere. Lucustrine sand is another material characterized by high porosity. There is an extensive area of lucustrine sand running in a north-south corridor along Big Flats Road and Irishtown Road.

Bedrock is at the surface on the more rugged terrain.

## **WATER FEATURES**

Minerva contains 58 natural ponds and lakes and 190.5 miles of rivers and streams that lie within three major watersheds. (See “Watershed” map.)

### **Watersheds**

The eastern section of the town, including the hamlets of Minerva and Olmstedville, is part of the Schroon River watershed. Almost all the remainder of the town, including vast acreage of state owned land, lies within the Upper Hudson River watershed. A small area in the extreme northwestern corner is in the Raquette River watershed that flows into the St. Lawrence River.

### **Wild, Scenic & Recreational Rivers**

The Hudson, Boreas, Cedar, and Indian Rivers are significant natural features and are included in the N.Y.S. Wild, Scenic and Recreational River System due to their exceptional natural characteristics. Areas within ¼ mile of these water courses are subject to special Adirondack Park Agency regulations designed to protect their natural character.

## **Streams**

In addition to the rivers, the Town of Minerva contains several smaller mountain streams that are trout habitat. (See “Water Features” map.) These include Minerva Stream, Trout Brook, Deer Creek, Jones Brook and Kelso Brook, among others. Water courses designated with a T on the map are considered to be trout spawning waters. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation classifies water bodies as AA, A, B, or C for the purposes of establishing standards for water quality. Class AA and A waters are regulated to standards suitable for water supply, swimming and fishing. Class B waters are regulated to standards suitable for swimming and fishing. Class C waters, including most of the small streams in Minerva, are regulated to standards suitable for fishing.

The water quality and aquatic habitat value of streams can be adversely impacted by development on or near the shoreline that can increase surface runoff, decrease shade, and remove the vegetation that stabilizes shorelines. Surface runoff creates erosion and contains soil particles that increase turbidity and lower water quality. It can have an especially adverse impact when heavy rainfall occurs on barren ground during the construction phase of land development projects. Excessive turbidity in streams can destroy trout spawning beds and reduce the supply of aquatic insects, a major food source for trout. Removing trees that line a stream create higher water temperatures due to the sun, thus raising water temperature and decreasing oxygen supply required by cold water species such as trout. Removing trees and other plants that stabilize soils on the banks of streams can result in bank erosion, and add to turbidity. For these reasons it is desirable to establish stream buffers where building and vegetation removal are limited. Adirondack Park Agency regulations protect all lakes, ponds, rivers and streams navigable by canoe by requiring minimum building setbacks from shorelines and restricting the removal of vegetation. These provisions, however, do not protect the smaller streams where the water system begins.

## **Ponds and Lakes**

Minerva contains several lakes and ponds, but three of the most important due to their accessibility, size, and use are Minerva Lake, Balfour Lake and Hewitt Pond.<sup>[5]</sup>

Minerva Lake is about 40 acres in area and has a maximum depth of 16 feet. Its water quality classification is B, the best use of which is for primary contact recreation (swimming). A large portion of its shoreline is developed with seasonal cottages. Its swimming beach is the center of much of the summer recreation activities. The warm water pan fish in the lake also offers summer visitors an important recreational activity. Minerva Lake can be classified as an naturally eutrophic lake due to its shallow depth and slow movement of water into and out of it. Naturally eutrophic lakes already contain high nutrient levels and are therefore particularly sensitive to additional nutrients that can accelerate plant and algae growth, and lower water clarity. This is especially so because most of the watershed for the lake is within private land and is, therefore, subject to alteration. The sources of such nutrients typically are: (1) storm water runoff from developed areas, roads and driveways, and (2) inadequate

septic systems. Controlling storm water runoff by properly designing new development, if it occurs, and insuring that septic systems are functioning properly are thus two keys to preserving water quality.

Balfour Lake has an area of 73 acres and a maximum depth of 46 feet. Its water quality classification is AA(t). Being a deeper lake it can be expected to be somewhat less sensitive to the introduction of man-induced nutrients as a result of storm water runoff and faulty septic systems than shallower water bodies. Two camps (Camp Boca and Camp Che-nawah) and state owned land occupy much of its shoreline. Residential development is very limited at the present time.

Hewitt Pond has an area of 160 acres and a maximum depth of 50 feet. Its classification is B for primary contact recreation (swimming). Considering the small percentage of its watershed which is private and subject to development, there is limited potential for degradation of the water quality by residential development.

## **WETLANDS**

The Adirondack Park Agency (APA) regulates wetlands in the Town of Minerva. A permit from the APA is required for any activity that includes the draining, filling, dredging, the placing of structures, or the subdivision of land on any regulated wetland. All wetlands of one acre or more in size are regulated, as well as smaller wetlands which are adjacent to a body of water.

The Town of Minerva contains numerous wetlands. (See "Wetlands" map.) Many are located within stream corridors, and many are smaller wetlands scattered in various locations.

Wetlands serve several beneficial functions in the natural ecosystem. First, they are important in flood control because they act as storm water retention basins, holding water and releasing it slowly downstream. Eliminating wetlands raises peak flood levels downstream during periods of heavy rain. Second, wetlands recharge groundwater by allowing surface water to slowly settle into the ground. Wetlands are often a significant source of water for aquifers. Third, water leaving a wetland may be considerably more pure than the water entering it. Silt, sediments, nutrients and sewerage, when entering a wetland through a feeder stream, become assimilated into the wetland. Silt and sediments settle out, and nutrients are used by plant life. Fourth, wetlands are rich habitat for numerous wildlife species, including waterfowl and fur bearing animals such as muskrats, beaver and others. Wetlands adjoining open surface water are especially important habitat. Finally, wetlands have aesthetic value by providing visual open space.

Wetlands are fragile environments that can be destroyed by direct dredging and filling, as well as by soil erosion in the surrounding area that can create silt that can fill the wetland over a period of time. Wetlands are unsuitable for development because a seasonal high water table causes wet basements and non-functioning septic systems. Also, wetland soils

have a low bearing strength due to their high organic content, and are thereby unsuited for supporting heavy structures.

## **FLOOD HAZARD AREAS**

Lands along many of the larger streams in the Town of Minerva are classified as a flood hazard areas pursuant to the National Flood Insurance program.. (See “Flood Hazard” map.) It should be noted that the official flood hazard maps are frequently not accurate in their detail<sup>[6]</sup>, and that field investigation is necessary to determine actual flood hazard elevations. The Town of Minerva administers the flood hazard program.

A permit is needed to build in designated flood hazard areas. Most of the land within such areas is classified as flood hazard “fringe,” as opposed to a “floodway.” Development is permitted in fringe areas, but must be “flood proofed” by constructing the main floor of dwellings above the flood level, as well as insuring that septic leach fields are also above the flood level.

## **GROUNDWATER**

### **Aquifers**

Aquifers are sources of groundwater found in bedrock or in surficial geologic material such as sand or gravel, that are capable of yielding sufficient quantities of water for public water supply.

No accurate information exists as to the exact location of groundwater aquifers in the Town of Minerva. The only aquifer shown on the “Aquifers and Aquifer Recharge Areas” map is near the eastern border of the town along Trout Brook. This information is derived from a highly generalized statewide map of possible aquifers available from the NYS Department of Health. Accordingly, this aquifer data is neither accurate in detail nor is it necessarily complete. However, it suggests generally that large quantities of groundwater do not underlie the town.

### **Aquifer Recharge Areas**

Aquifer recharge areas are the surface lands where water percolates into the ground and recharges the groundwater supply. A recharge area may be directly above an aquifer, or it may be a considerable distance from it. Groundwater flows slowly, and water percolating into the ground in one area will flow into another. The best recharge areas tend to be flat lands underlain by porous soils such as sand or gravel, and with bedrock not close to the surface. Areas with these characteristics in the Town of Minerva are shown on the map as probable aquifer recharge areas. These areas almost certainly represent important recharge zones.

Wetlands are also important aquifer recharge areas. Many of the wetlands shown on the “Regulated Wetlands” map undoubtedly also serve this function.

## **WILDLIFE HABITAT**<sup>[7]</sup>

Significant wildlife habitats were mapped in 1974 in conjunction with an earlier planning effort in the Town of Minerva. (See “Important Habitats and Geologic Features” map.)

### **Deer Wintering Areas**

Deer wintering yards are areas with a distinctive combination of vegetation, topography and hydrology that deer need for survival during the deep snows of winter. Deep snow greatly hampers their ability to move and to find food. Deer wintering areas provide cover from deep snow, sometimes in the form of large evergreens, as well as having a source of browse nearby. Deer return to these areas during severe winter conditions for survival. Because such areas are limited, their degradation would lead to a decline of the deer population.

Deer wintering areas in the Adirondacks have been identified by Department of Conservation Personnel as a result of long term observation over a period of several years. As shown on the map, there are several important wintering areas located near Minvera Stream and Kelso Brook. Because habitat conditions may change, for example as agricultural land is abandoned, the location of deer wintering areas may change somewhat over time.

### **Diverse Ecosystems**

Diverse ecosystems are especially productive wildlife areas characterized by the presence of a wide variety of distinctive vegetation communities in one area, e.g., bogs, marshes, floodplains, deciduous forests and coniferous forests. “Ecotones” are boundaries or edges that form a transition between vegetation types, i.e. between marsh and coniferous forest. Areas having a variety of vegetation types, together with the ecotones separating them, are often rich in wildlife.

Diverse ecosystems in the Town of Minvera were mapped in 1974 as part of the earlier planning effort. Among the important diverse habitats identified in town are those located near Trout Brook and south of 14<sup>th</sup> Road.

### **Bogs**

In Minerva, several bog plant communities can be found, including one located on the west side of Moxham Pond and some smaller ones (see Important Habitats and Geologic Features” map). Bogs are interesting natural features found in coniferous forests of northern United States and Canada. The geological origin, ecological processes and unique plants which characterize bogs makes this type of wetland of special biologic, aesthetic and educational value. Bogs are lowland areas encircled by higher ground blocking surface water outflow. The lack of drainage results in low oxygen in the water which is necessary for bacteria to decay dead plant and animal materials and produces an offensive gas odor. As

plants and animals die, their remains accumulate on the bottom and the available nutrients are locked up in layers of peat deposits. Because the decay processes are very slow or lacking, many bones of extinct pre-historic animals and plant parts and pollen have been preserved in peat. The characteristic infertility, humic acid waters, and slow decay within this ecosystem creates a harsh but unique plant community. The most widely known and important plant is the Sphagnum, or peat moss, which forms the living, floating green carpet in which many other plants grow. The dead material from this plant is what is used in gardening. Trees around the periphery may include tamarack and black spruce with some red maple, black ash and white pine. The growth is so slow, a 4 inch diameter, black spruce 20 feet tall may be over 100 years old.

### **Rare Habitat**

A wetland area between 14th road and the Hudson River is habitat for a plant species classified rare in the Adirondacks and New York State.<sup>[8]</sup> A "rare" species is one that, although not presently threatened with extinction, it is in such small number throughout its range that it may be endangered if its environment worsens. This was identified by APA staff and classified by the NYS Museum and Science Services staff. This habitat deserves protection due to its special biological, scientific, aesthetic and educational values. The small watershed and immediate surrounding vegetation should be protected from disturbance by any land use changes.

### **Boreas Mature Forest**

The Boreas Mature Forest is a significant mature natural hardwood hemlock forest located just east of the Boreas River near the North Woods Club Road. It has easy access from the road and is a fine example of an old hardwood forest.

### **NATURAL FEATURES<sup>[9]</sup>**

The Moxham Point exfoliating dome, located near the Minerva-Chestertown line, is an impressive geologic feature readily seen from Route 28N. Exfoliation is a geologic weathering process whereby water interacts with exposed rock causing it to swell and eventually shell or flake off.

The Boreas River Mineral Site is located along the railroad Right of Way cut into the west bank paralleling the west side of the Boreas River. This site reportedly contains dropside, blue apatite, blue calcite, and sphere minerals in Grenville limestone.

The Falls Brook Iron Mine located near the named stream is an abandoned mine site.

Vanderwacker Mountain, at 3386 feet, is accessible by a public foot trail and offers views of the high peak region to the north, and of the Hudson River to the south.

The Hudson River Gorge from the Gooley Club property to the Hudson-Boreas confluence, is perhaps the most wild and beautiful sections of this river. It is most widely known for the geologic features and one of the first and finest white-water canoe routes in the East.

The Boreas River Gorge, from Stillwater to the North Woods Club Road crossing, is another magnificent natural area and treacherous white water section of the river.

## **VISUAL RESOURCES**

Visual quality is a major factor in an area's desirability as a permanent or seasonal residence. It is also of obvious importance for tourism and tourism related business that is the foundation of the local economy in the Town of Minerva. Being a town whose major role is that of a rural residential area, for both year round and seasonal residents and as a tourist destination, maintenance of visual quality is especially important in Minerva.

### **Scenic Vistas and Viewsheds**

Due to the extensive forest cover, there are a limited number of good panoramic views of the mountains and valleys of Minerva. Some of the best views are shown on the "Scenic Vistas and Viewsheds" map. Scenic vistas can be defined as points along a public roadway where long distance views of distinctive features such as mountains, lakes, or river valleys can be seen. The term viewshed means the area that can be seen from a vista point.

Viewsheds shown on the "Scenic Vistas and Viewsheds" map have been classified in two categories.<sup>[10]</sup> Extremely sensitive areas are those that are most visible and could be most impacted by land development. Moderately sensitive viewsheds, due to their distance from the viewpoint and forest land cover, would be less impacted by land development.

Because the available vistas are in limited supply, new land uses should be carefully planned so as to preserve views. Preservation of vistas as open land would be most desirable from the standpoint of preserving views. If this is not possible, development should be carefully designed.

### **Scenic Travel Corridor**

State Route 28N from North Creek to Long Lake has been designated as a "Scenic By-way" by the N.Y.S. Department of Transportation. Scenic By-ways are transportation corridors of particular statewide interest that are "representative of a region's scenic, recreational, cultural, natural, historical or archeological significance." Route 28N is known as the "Roosevelt-Marcy Trail," commemorating Vice President Theodore Roosevelt's midnight stagecoach ride to the North Creek train station where he took the oath of office to become president of the United States. It is notable for its Adirondack beauty.

Because it is heavily traveled by tourists, maintenance of visual quality along State Route 28N is of special importance.

## **Policies to Preserve Visual Quality**

Any development within visually sensitive areas should be carefully planned in order to preserve aesthetics. The Planning Board can use the power of site plan review to insure that new structures or uses of land are compatible with the scenic rural environment. Among the site plan considerations important for preserving aesthetics are:

- (a) Avoiding placing structures in the middle of scenic vistas.
- (b) Requiring additional setbacks from highways, and siting buildings so as to be less visible from roadways.
- (c) Using vegetation to screen or partially screen the view of buildings without blocking scenic views.
- (d) Limiting building height to one story.
- (e) Using visually compatible color schemes and building materials.
- (f) Controlling signage.
- (g) Controlling night-time lighting.

It is also important to control eyesores, and to enforce the recently adopted Junk Storage Law.

## **HISTORIC RESOURCES**

The Town of Minerva has a rich historical heritage that gives it a unique identity and “sense of place.” Much of town’s history is still visible in the form of early structures which were part of everyday life in earlier times. Buildings such as churches, early homes, and seasonal structures in the “great camps” tradition provide a record of its history as a rural Adirondack town, and are a tangible link to the past.

In 1979 an extensive inventory of the town’s historic resources was completed by architect E. Gilbert Barker.<sup>[11]</sup> The study identified 161 historical, architectural, and archeological resources. Many of the sites are early homes built during the mid to late 1800’s, and represent examples of Greek Revival and Victorian era architecture. There are also log cabins, churches, Adirondack camps, hotels and guest houses, and archeological sites included in the inventory. The study identified six major groups or themes represented by the historical properties:

- Pioneer and mid-Victorian log cabins.
- Greek Revival, 1835-1860.
- Architectural complexes.
- Adirondack clubs and camps.
- Hotels and guest houses.
- Archeological sites.
- Hamlet Centers.

## **Notable Features**

Some of the more notable resources included in the inventory are:

St. Mary's Church in Irishtown, the first Catholic church in the Adirondack Proper, is dated 1848. It was in use until 1876, when St. Joseph's Church in Olmstedville was completed. William Byrne, who was one of the soldiers sent to capture John Wilkes Booth after President Lincoln's assassination, is buried there.

Irishtown School was built in 1850 and was originally used as a one-room school house. One of seven in the Town of Minerva, it serviced the small settlement of Irishtown. Irishtown School and St. Mary's Church next to it establish the corner of Irishtown Road and O'Neil Road as an area of historical significance.

Minerva Baptist Church was erected in 1848 to serve a community of Baptists which had grown substantially since its organization in 1807. The belfry was built in 1885 and a new sanctuary was built in 1933. Its location at the intersection of State Route 28N and County Route 30 provides a lovely view of the hamlet of Minerva and surrounding valley and hills.

The Methodist-Episcopal Church in Olmstedville, originally constructed in 1848, was rebuilt after a fire in 1893. Its classic Victorian styling is complemented by gray trim on white. The church structure is now the home of the Minerva Historical Society.

St. Joseph's Catholic Church of Olmstedville was dedicated in 1872. Its stained glass windows and setting in a rural hamlet are its essential characteristics.

Aiden Lair. Lot 87 in Township 26 on which AIDEN LAIR is located has a history of being a convenient stopping off place for travelers and sportsmen. The original Aiden Lair hotel was operated for a number of years in a structure on the opposite side of the road from the present. When it burned in 1910, it was rebuilt in its present location. An exceptional view of the northwestern mountains can be seen from Aiden Lair. The site is historically significant as it is where Theodore Roosevelt and his driver, the owner of Aiden Lair, Michael Cronin, stopped to change horses on his momentous night ride. (The 1973 comprehensive plan for the Town of Minerva suggested that Aiden Lair become a museum.)

Roosevelt/Marcy Memorial Highway. A marker in the northern portion of the town on Route 28N commemorates the approximate spot at which Theodore Roosevelt learned that President McKinley had died. It was at this point that he learned the shot had been fatal. Another sign in the hamlet of Minerva marks the eventful ride of September 14, 1901. Through the efforts of the Minerva Town Board and the Adirondack Park Association, Route 28N in Minerva has been renamed the Roosevelt/Marcy Highway.

### **Archeological Sites**

Sites of potential archeological value identified in the inventory include the following:

- Alpine Tannery, in Olmstedville, c1847-1867. Manufacturing site.
- Hill Grist Mill in Olmstedville, c1804. Manufacturing site.
- Dougherty Sawmill in Irishtown, pre-1864. Manufacturing site.

- Falls Brook Iron Mines (MI Co.) near Irishtown, c1869. Resource extraction.
- Land Office – Post Office site in Minerva hamlet.

### **Recreation and Great Camps**

Sites representing early recreational structures and/or camps or buildings in the Adirondack “great camps” tradition include the following.

- Kauser House, Camp Boco, c 1920, located near Balfour Lake.
- Nathan-Zabrieski House, Camp Cha-Na-Wha, pre-1900, located near Balfour Lake.
- Hewitt Lake Club, c1896, 13 structures.
- Moose Pond Club, c1890.
- Gooley Club, c1890, 3 structures.
- North Woods Club, c1880, 26 structures.

### **Hamlet Clusters**

Olmstedville and Minerva contain clusters of historic structures that give them their unique “sense of place” or identity as rural Adirondack hamlets. Due to the lack of commercial growth in the town, these hamlets lack new buildings and franchise businesses such as convenience store chains that utilize more modern building designs. As a consequence, the hamlet centers retain much of the flavor of their past. They have not been “suburbanized” with new generic architecture, which is part of their charm.

### **Alternatives for Preserving Historic Resources**

The historic flavor of its buildings together with its setting in an “out-of-the-way” scenic rural Adirondack location are among the amenities of the Town of Minerva that make it a desirable place to live, both year round, and seasonally as an escape from urban and suburban environments. It follows that preservation of its historic resources is essential in retaining the existing character of the town as it undergoes future development. There are several alternatives that could be pursued.

### **Placement on the National or State Registers of Historic Places**

The 1979 historic inventory study suggested that the sites identified within the Town of Minerva be nominated for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Sites can be individual properties or be part of an historic “district.” However, to be eligible for such inclusion sites or buildings must be of national or statewide significance, not merely of local importance. Historic sites should be connected with some significant event or person, and/or be representative of some special architectural style. Buildings should retain their original architectural integrity and their exterior should not be modified. Most of the historic properties identified in the 1979 inventory would not meet these criteria. However, some might. In Irishtown, for example, the early church and school building form a small cluster that might constitute a small historic district. Aiden Lair is associated with the ride of Theodore Roosevelt from Marcy to North Creek to be sworn in as President of the United States.

Listing on the national register, however, is essentially a recognition program, and does not protect properties so listed from being demolished or modified in such manner that diminishes their historical and architectural value. Neither does such listing, in itself, protect historical properties from adverse impacts of neighboring development. However, should changes on neighboring properties require site plan approval under the town land use regulation law, the town Planning Board in their review of such project has authority under the State Environmental Quality Review to require mitigation measures that minimize adverse impacts on properties of historical importance, including those properties listed on the National Register.

### **Local Historic Preservation Law**

It is possible for municipalities in New York State to adopt an historic preservation law that would prevent the demolition of historic properties, and would control prevent any change in the exterior appearance of such buildings not in keeping with their historic character. To enact such a law, an historic district must first be defined on a map. The law would only apply within the district. An “architectural review board” would be appointed that would be given the responsibility of approving any external changes to structures, or demolitions, within the district.

Such a law is not recommended for the Town of Minerva for several reasons. First, although numerous historical structures exist, newer buildings are mixed in, and no clearly defined historical district of sufficient size is apparent. Second, the law imposes a high degree of control on private property, and would not be welcomed by many. Third, architectural expertise is required for membership on the review board – a qualification that is lacking in most rural municipalities.

### **Local Historic Notification and Recognition Program**

In such a program each owner of an identified property is made aware of the significance their site and why it deserves recognition and protection as part of the Town historic preservation effort. Owners may be willing to take extra steps to preserve their properties once they learn of their significance. Along with this it is possible to develop a map and brochure listing local historical sites, and to provide some sort of small local historical markers that landowners can place on their properties.

It is recommended that the town pursue such a program through volunteer efforts.

### **Local Site Plan Review and Zoning**

It is recommended that the size of new buildings be limited within hamlet centers. Large modernistic buildings as well as parking lots are incompatible with the existing mix of smaller historic buildings and shops.

Second, provisions to minimize adverse impacts of new development on historical buildings and sites should be incorporated into land use regulations. This should include Planning Board site plan review of development to insure compatibility with adjacent historic sites by requiring green space buffers, vegetative screening and other measures. The Planning Board should take into account signage, color schemes, and building materials in order to achieve compatibility with surrounding historic properties to the extent practicable.

## **POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS**

Examination of the age structure of the Town of Minerva population reveals that it has a demographic profile characteristic of slowly growing rural towns and retirement areas. (See Table 1 and Figure 1.)

There is a much lower percentage of young adults in the 20 to 24 year old age group than in the New York State population as a whole. Only 3.5% of persons in the Town of Minerva are in this age bracket compared to 4.8% in Essex County and 6.6% in New York State. This pattern is typical of rural areas where young people leaving high school migrate out of town in search of jobs, higher education, and/or affordable housing. Cities and villages, where more jobs and rental housing are available, tend to have higher proportions of young adults. The exodus of young persons from the Town of Minerva after graduation from High School is readily apparent in these numbers.

TABLE XXX  
 POPULATION CHANGE IN ESSEX  
 COUNTY TOWNS  
 1990 to 2000  
 Ranked by Percent Change

<u>Town</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Keene town	155	17.1
Lewis town	143	13.5
Wilmington town	111	10.9
North Elba town	791	10.1
Willsboro town	167	9.6
Crown Point town	156	7.9
Chesterfield town	142	6.3
<b>Minerva town</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>5.0</b>
<b>Essex County</b>	<b>1,699</b>	<b>4.6</b>
Essex town	26	3.8
Jay town	62	2.8
Schroon town	38	2.2
Ticonderoga town	18	0.3
St. Armand town	3	0.2
Elizabethtown town	1	0.1
North Hudson town	0	0.0
Moriah town	-5	-0.1
Westport town	-84	-5.8
Newcomb town	-63	-11.6

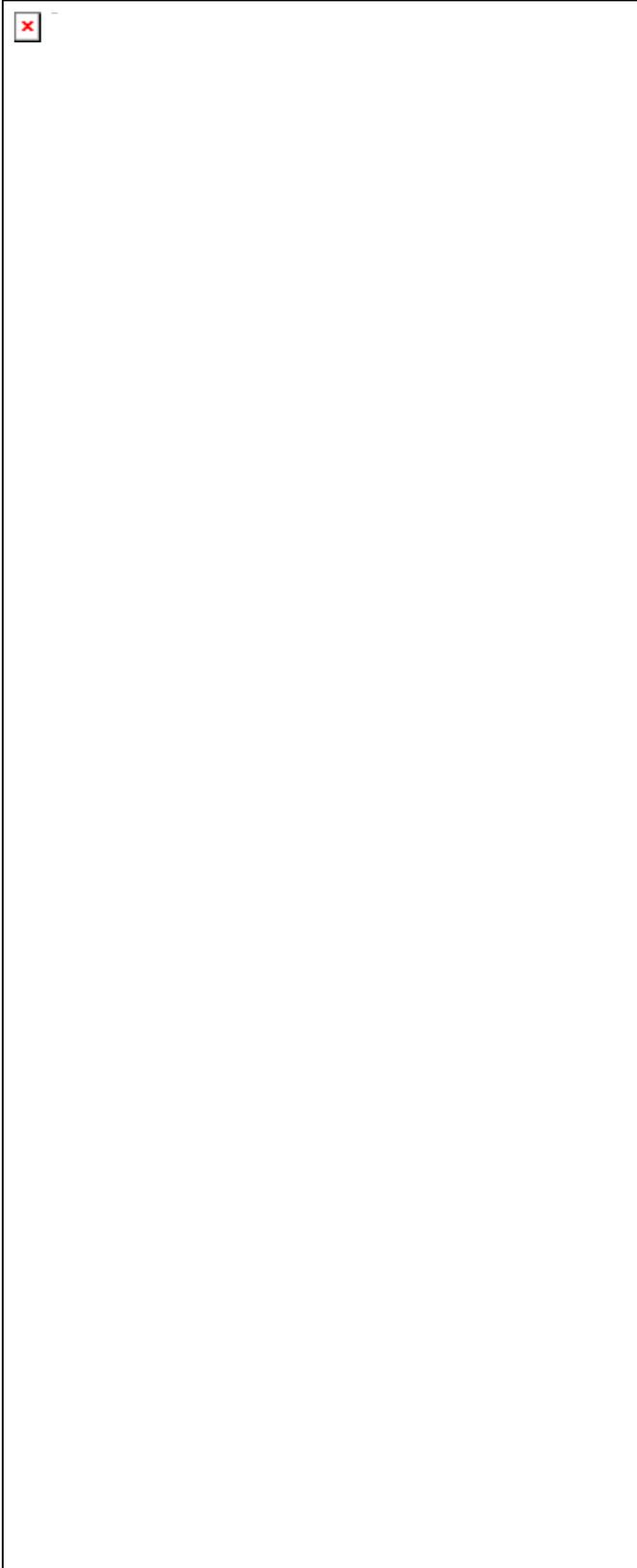
TABLE 1  
 POPULATION DATA FROM THE YEAR 2000 CENSUS

	Town of Minerva	Comparison with Essex County and New York State		
		Minerva	Essex County	NY State
<b>TOTAL POPULATION</b>	796			
Male	418	52.5 %	51.8 %	48.2 %
Female	378	47.5 %	48.2 %	51.8 %

**AGE**

Under 5 years	31	<b>3.9 %</b>	5 %	6.5 %
5 to 9 years	47	5.9 %	6.1 %	7.1 %
10 to 14 years	70	8.8 %	7.3 %	7.0 %
15 to 19 years	54	6.8 %	6.4 %	6.8 %
20 to 24 years	28	<b>3.5 %</b>	4.8 %	6.6 %
25 to 34 years	85	<b>10.7 %</b>	13.1 %	14.5 %
35 to 44 years	120	15.1 %	16.7 %	16.2 %
45 to 54 years	116	14.6 %	14.4 %	13.5 %
55 to 59 years	57	<b>7.2 %</b>	5.5 %	4.9 %
60 to 64 years	43	<b>5.4 %</b>	4.6 %	4.0 %
65 to 74 years	86	<b>10.8 %</b>	8.5 %	6.7 %
75 to 84 years	49	<b>6.2 %</b>	5.5 %	4.5 %
85 years and over	10	1.3 %	2 %	1.6 %
Percent 65 years and over		<b>18.2 %</b>	16.0 %	12.9
Median age (years)	41.6	<b>41.6</b>	39.4	35.9

**FIGURE 1**  
**POPULATION AGE STRUCTURE COMPARISONS**



The proportion of middle aged persons aged 35 to 55 years in Minerva is approximately the same as in Essex County and the state as a whole. During this period of life families are generally in their prime earning years and have accumulated enough capital to purchase a single family home. These numbers suggest that there has been an average in-migration of middle-class, middle-aged, families into town to purchase homes.

The proportion of older persons in the Town of Minerva is significantly higher than in New York State, and somewhat higher than in Essex County as a whole. About 18% of Minerva's population in the year 2000 was aged over 65 years, compared to about 13% in the state and 16% in Essex County. This suggests that there has been a in-migration of retirees into the town seeking its rural, scenic, small town environment.

One of the statewide demographic trends that will impact the Town of Minerva in the future is a large increase in the number of senior citizens. There is a "bulge" in the town's population age graph currently centered on persons aged in their mid-40's. This group will be in their mid-60's by the year 2020, and will constitute a rather sizeable increase in the proportion of older persons in the Town. As this cohort ages beyond working years, the income of many will significantly decline thereby creating an increasing need for affordable housing.

It is therefore suggested that the Town of Minerva address the need for affordable senior citizen housing and other needs of the older population in its comprehensive plan polices and land use regulations. This includes providing for assisted living facilities and nursing homes as well as for housing in the form of apartments and senior citizen units.

## **SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS**

Table 2 shows some of the social characteristic data available from the year 2000 census of population.

As shown in the table, the proportion of young persons enrolled in school is very similar to that of Essex County as a whole, with the exception of pre-school. Educational attainment of the town's population also mirrors Essex County, with a significant percentage of persons having attended college and received degrees. Ancestry is dominantly Irish, reflecting the town's early settlement history. The proportion of other national groups is similar to that of Essex County as a whole.

## **HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS**

The year 2000 Census of Housing (see Table 3) reveals some significant differences between the Town of Minerva compared to both Essex County and the State of New York.

**TABLE 2  
SOCIAL DATA FROM THE YEAR 2000 CENSUS**

	Town of Minerva	Comparison with Essex County and New York State		
		Minerva	Essex County	NY State
<b>SCHOOL ENROLLMENT</b>				
Population 3 years and over enrolled in school	200			
Nursery school, preschool	4	2 %	5 %	6.4 %
Kindergarten	15	7.5 %	5.8 %	5.2 %
Elementary school (grades 1-8)	98	49 %	48.8 %	42.3 %
High school (grades 9-12)	53	26.5 %	26.8 %	21.1 %
College or graduate school	30	15 %	13.5 %	24.9 %
<b>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</b>				
Less than 9th grade	29	5.2 %	5.7 %	8 %
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	61	10.9 %	13.9 %	12.9 %
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	219	39 %	38.1 %	27.8 %
Some college, no degree	105	18.7 %	15.7 %	16.8 %
Associate degree	49	8.7 %	8.3 %	7.2 %
Bachelor's degree	58	10.3 %	10.2 %	15.6 %
Graduate or professional degree	40	7.1 %	8.1 %	11.8 %
TOTAL	561			
Percent high school graduate or higher	84 %	84 %	80.4 %	79.1 %
Percent bachelor's degree or higher	17.5 %	17.5 %	18.3 %	27.4 %
<b>ANCESTRY (single or multiple)</b>				
Irish	287	<b>36.4 %</b>	20.1 %	12.9 %
French	171	<b>21.7 %</b>	23.1 %	2.5 %
English	127	<b>16.1 %</b>	16.0 %	6.0 %
German	93	11.8 %	10.4 %	11.2 %
United States or American	61	7.7 %	5.7 %	3.8 %
Dutch	43	5.4 %	2.6 %	1.4 %
Polish	36	4.6 %	3.6 %	5.2 %
Italian	30	3.8 %	6.4 %	14.4 %
Scottish	26	3.3 %	3.8 %	1.1 %
Scotch-Irish	24	3.0 %	1.8 %	0.7 %
Other	176	22.5 %	22.2 %	47.9 %

**TABLE 3**  
**HOUSING DATA FROM THE YEAR 2000 CENSUS**

	Town of Minerva	Comparison with Essex County and New York State		
		Minerva	Essex County	NY State
<b>TOTAL HOUSING UNITS</b>	648			
Owner-occupied	276	42.6 %	48.0 %	48.7 %
Renter-occupied	45	6.9 %	17.0 %	43.2 %
Seasonal or recreational use	287	<b>44.3 %</b>	26.5 %	5.0 %
Vacant	40	6.2 %	8.5 %	3.1 %
<b>UNITS IN STRUCTURE</b>				
1 unit	533	<b>83.0 %</b>	75.0 %	46.6 %
2 units	12	1.9 %	4.9 %	10.9 %
3 or more units	7	1.1 %	9.5 %	39.8 %
Mobile home	79	<b>12.3 %</b>	8.7 %	2.7 %
Boat, RV, van, etc.	11	1.7 %	0.3 %	0.1 %
<b>YEAR STRUCTURE BUILT</b>				
1999 to March 2000	9	1.4 %	1.4 %	0.9 %
1995 to 1998	26	4.0 %	4.4 %	2.6 %
1990 to 1994	30	4.7 %	5.6 %	3.4 %
1980 to 1989	74	11.5 %	12.4 %	7.7 %
1970 to 1979	97	<b>15.1 %</b>	13.1 %	11.3 %
1960 to 1969	88	<b>13.7 %</b>	8.5 %	14.6 %
1940 to 1959	155	24.1 %	15.9 %	28.3 %
1939 or earlier	163	25.4 %	38.6 %	31.2 %
<b>HOUSEHOLD SIZE</b>				
Average household size	2.48	2.48	2.39	2.6
<b>VALUE, RENT</b>				
Median value, owner occupied units	\$78,200	\$78,200	\$77,100	\$148,700
Median gross rent, renter occupied units	\$443	\$443	\$452	\$672

First, the percentage of seasonal housing units accounted for about 44 % of the total housing units in the town, compared to 27% and 5% in the Essex County and the state, respectively.

Second, the percentage of rental units in the Town of Minerva is much lower than in either the county or the state, with only about 7 percent of the units in Minerva being rentals, compared with 17% and 43%. This statistic supports the conclusion that more affordable housing units are needed in the town.

The mix of building ages in Minerva is similar to both Essex County and the state, with the exception of their being a smaller percentage of structures built 1939 or earlier in Minerva.

## **POPULATION GROWTH TRENDS**

The earliest year for which total population was recorded for Town of Minerva in its present geographic configuration, i.e. after boundary changes, is the year 1830. In that year population totaled 368. (See Figure 2 and Table 4.) In ensuing decades the town grew rapidly as it was settled, reaching a peak near the turn of the century. A population of 934 was recorded in 1892. Soon after population began a rather precipitous decline, bottoming out with 505 persons in 1940, the great depression era. This decline can undoubtedly be attributed to fewer jobs in forestry, mining and agriculture as farms were abandoned and the forest resource became exhausted. After World War II population began a rather steady increase culminating in 796 persons recorded in the year 2000 census. During the most recent decade of the 1990's population grew by about 5 percent, reversing a slight decline during the 1980's.

During the 1990's the Town of Minerva grew at 5%, the same rate as Essex County as a whole. (Table 5) The most rapid growth within the county occurred in or near the "high peaks" region.

It should be noted that population trends are not the same as housing growth trends. During the early part of the last century family sizes were much larger than they are today, and historically there has been a steady decline in the number of persons per household. As a consequence many towns that had experienced slight population loss during the past decade or two had nonetheless grown in terms of numbers of housing units. In addition, seasonal population is not counted in the U.S. Census, and in many Adirondack towns population swells during times when seasonal homes and tourist accommodations are occupied. Thus, population change numbers are not necessarily representative of the real growth that is occurring in terms of numbers of structures being built and their impact upon communities.

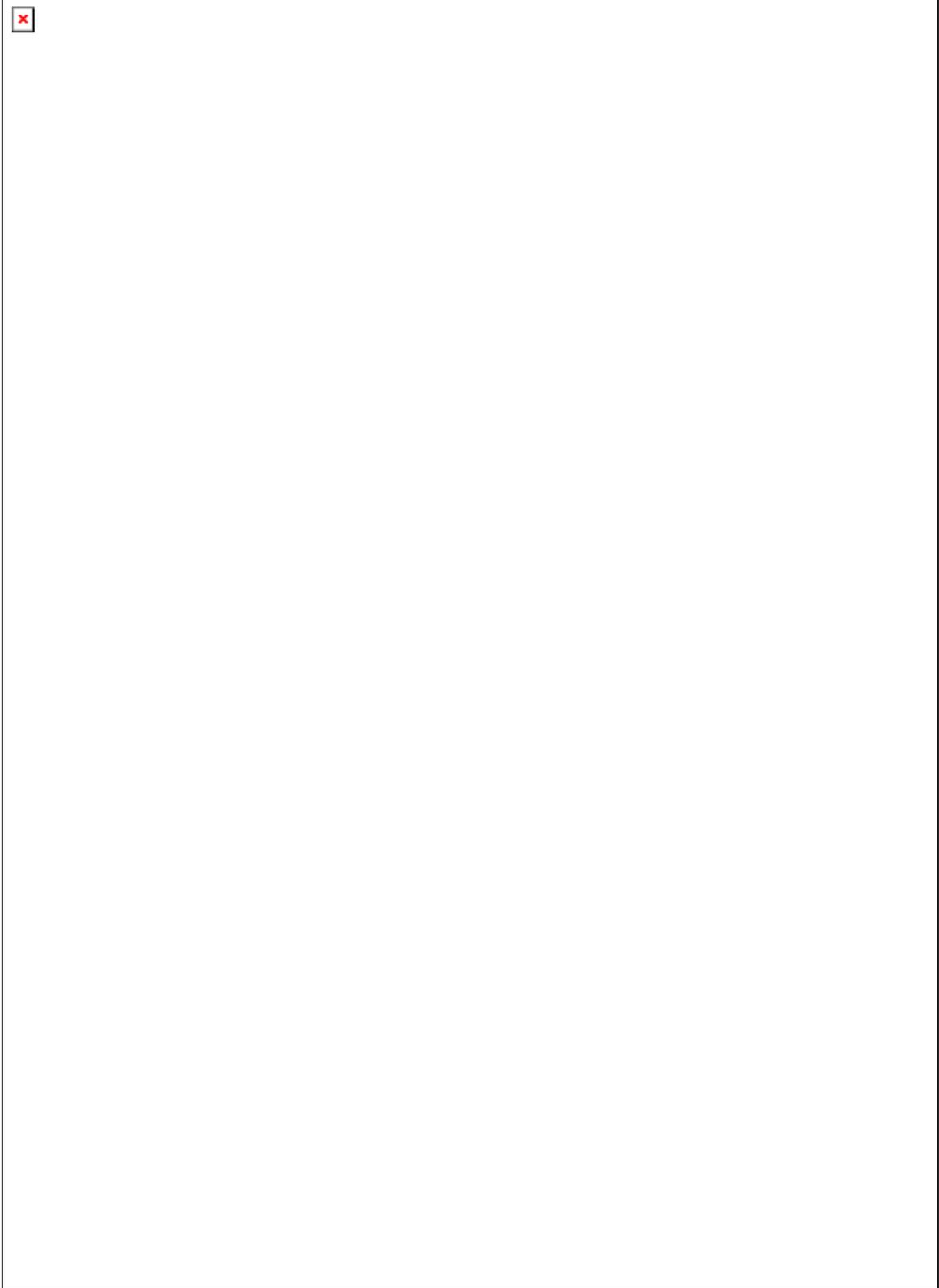
## **HOUSING GROWTH TRENDS**

There are several sources of housing data available, and together they indicate that the Town of Minerva had experienced a generally steady, moderate, growth rate in year round housing during past decades, and that this growth had continued during the most recent decade of the 1990's.

### **Year 2000 Census Data**

The year 2000 census counted 648 total housing units in the Town of Minerva, including 321 year round occupied units, and 327 seasonal or vacant units. Thus, about one-half of the dwellings in town are year round, and about one-half are seasonal (Table 6).

**FIGURE 2**





**TABLE 6  
HOUSING CHANGE, 1990 TO 2000**

	<u>2000</u>	<u>1990</u>	<b>CHANGE 1990 TO 2000</b>	
			<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
<b>NUMBER OF UNITS BY STATUS</b>				
TOTAL units	648	681	-33	-4.8%
Owner-occupied	276	248	28	11.3%
Renter-occupied	45	47	-2	-4.3%
TOTAL occupied	321	295	26	8.8%
Seasonal or recreational use	287	328	-41	-12.5%
Vacant	40	58	-18	-31.0%
TOTAL vacant	327	386	-59	-15.3%
<b>NUMBER OF UNITS BY TYPE OF STRUCTURE</b>				
1 unit	533	518	15	2.9%
2 units	12	12	0	0.0%
3 or more units	7	15	-8	-53.3%
Mobile home	79	88	-9	-10.2%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	11	48	-37	-77.1%

Source: US Census of Population and Housing

According to the census tabulation the number of year round housing units (“occupied” units in the table) increased by 26 during the 1990’s, representing a rate of increase of about 9%, while the number of seasonal and vacant units declined by 59, or a 15% decrease.

The number of mobile homes enumerated in the census decreased from 88 to 79 during the decade. This may reflect an actual decline in mobile home units, but it may also reflect building additions being constructed onto existing mobile homes. Such structures might no longer be enumerated as mobile homes, but as conventional 1 family dwellings.

As recorded in the census, the total number of housing units declined during the 1990’s, which would seem to suggest that there had been no net growth in the Town of Minerva during the past decade. However, this would be an erroneous conclusion. A closer look at the data reveals that 48 RV’s had been counted as seasonal dwellings in 1990, whereas only 11 RV’s were counted as seasonal dwellings in the year 2000, thus distorting the housing change figures. The seasonal home count is one that is not always consistent from one decade to the next, and such data cannot always be accurately compared from one census to the next. (For example, in addition to decisions regarding whether or not to count RV’s as dwelling units, local census enumerators must also decide whether or not to count each

individual cabin or shelter in a resort accommodation complex as a seasonal dwelling unit. Such decisions are sometimes made differently from one census to the next.)

### **Building Permit Data**

A recently published study, “Growth Trends in the Adirondack Park: Analysis of Rates and Patterns of Development,” collected building permit data from all municipalities within the Adirondack Park for a 10 year period 1990 to 1999 in order to study growth trends. <sup>[12]</sup> Data from this study is shown on Tables 7 and 8.

According to the building permit data 65 new structures were built in the Town of Minerva from 1990 to 1999, an average of 6.5 per year. This represents an increase of 12.8 percent, the same percentage increase as for Essex County as a whole.

Of the 731 total building permits issued in the Town of Minerva during this period, only 29 required a permit from the Adirondack Park Agency, and only 1 was for a commercial use.

### **Real Property Service Data Base**

The real property service data base contains information pertaining to each parcel of land in the Town of Minerva. This computerized data base is recorded by local property assessors and is maintained for the basic purpose of levying property taxes, but also contains much information useful for land use planning. Among the items recorded is “year structure built.” If known to the assessor, the date of construction is listed for buildings on the property. It should be cautioned that this information is not complete and is not necessarily a totally accurate reflection of growth rates in town. First, the year of construction is sometimes blank in the data base where such date is unknown. Second, it does not include mobile homes because they are constructed elsewhere. This data is therefore helpful, but incomplete.

Figure 3 and its accompanying table shows the real property information. According to these records, the number of structures built in town has varied a great deal from year to year. There are large spikes in the data for some years, and almost no development in other years. The rate of development, however, has remained generally constant when averaged out over 10 year periods, with the exception of a decline in the number of new structures built during the 1990’s as compared to earlier decades.

The location of new buildings constructed during the most recent 20 year period is portrayed on the “20 Year Growth Trend Map.” As can be seen from the map, growth has been scattered rather evenly throughout the town, and was not concentrated within the Adirondack Park Agency designated hamlets of Minerva and Olmstedville. Most of the new development has been in the form of year round dwellings. There were 85 such year round houses recorded on the real property records, as compared with only 7 seasonal dwellings during the same 20 year period.

**TABLE 7**  
**BUILDING PERMIT DATA, TOWN OF MINERVA, 1990 TO 1999**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Building Permits Issued</u>	<u>Building Permits for New Structures</u>	<u>APA Permits Issued</u>	<u>APA Permits for Commercial Uses</u>
1990	75	8	4	0
1991	148	5	1	0
1992	56	4	2	0
1993	77	5	5	0
1994	77	8	5	0
1995	68	7	1	0
1996	54	5	1	0
1997	59	7	4	1
1998	54	4	2	0
1999	63	12	4	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>731</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>1</b>

Source: "Growth in the Adirondack Park: Analysis of Rates and Patterns of Development," The Residents Committee to Protect the Adirondacks, 2001.

**TABLE 8**  
**BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED FOR NEW STRUCTURES**  
**ESSEX COUNTY TOWNS**  
**1990 through 1999, Ranked by Percent Change**

<b>TOWN</b>	<b><u>Number</u></b>	<b><u>AS PERCENT OF Total Residential Parcels, 1999</u></b>
North Elba town	161	29.6
North Hudson town	45	18.6
Chesterfield town	133	17.2
Wilmington town	91	16.7
Lewis town	80	16.3
Keene town	131	15.8
Jay town	190	15.5
Crown Point town	128	15.3
Willsboro town	176	14.1
Newcomb town	74	13.3
St. Armand town	55	12.8
<b>Average, all towns</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>12.8</b>
<b>Minerva town</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>12.8</b>
Westport town	77	10.9
Elizabethtown town	64	10.4
Ticonderoga town	196	10.0
Schroon town	126	7.7
Moriah town	98	6.8
Essex town	23	5.9

Source: "Growth Trends in the Adirondack Park: Analysis of Rates and Patterns of Development," Resident's Committee to Protect the Adirondacks

**FIGURE 3  
REAL PROPERTY DATA**



**NUMBER OF STRUCTURES  
BUILT PER DECADE**

<u>Decade</u>	<u>Number per Year</u>
1991 to 2000	3.2
1981 to 1990	5.8
1971 to 1980	4.9
1961 to 1970	5.1

Source: Real Property Service Data Base,  
Town of Minerva, 2002

## Seasonal Homes

Seasonal home data is shown on Table 9. As can be seen from this table, there is a vast difference between the number of seasonal dwellings recorded in the U.S. Census and in the number of seasonal properties recorded in the real property data base. For the year 2000 the census records 287 seasonal dwelling units, whereas the real property data for 2001 lists only 61 properties as seasonal. It is apparent from this data that most of the second homes are in clusters or groups located on a few properties, or “clubs.”

As illustrated on the “20 Year Growth Trend” map, development within the southeastern portion of town has been almost exclusively in the form of year round dwellings rather than seasonal dwellings.

**TABLE 9  
SEASONAL HOUSING DATA**

<b>REAL PROPERTY DATA BASE, YEAR STRUCTURE BUILT</b>	
Number of units built 1990 to 1999	3
Number of units built 1980 to 1989	6
Number of units built 1970 to 1979	5
<b>REAL PROPERTY DATA BASE</b>	
Total number of seasonal residential properties, Year 2001	61
<b>US CENSUS, NUMBER OF UNITS, SEASONAL OR</b>	

<b>RECREATIONAL USE</b>	
Year 2000	287
Year 1990	328
Change 1990 to 2000	-41

## **POPULATION AND HOUSING PROJECTIONS**

### **Regional Planning Board Projections**

In 1997 the Lake Champlain – Lake George Regional Planning Board prepared population projections for municipalities within its service area, including Essex County and the Town of Minerva (see Table 10). These projections underestimated the 2000 population in both the county and the Town of Minerva. The projected town increase during the decade of the 1990's was 15 persons, compared to an actual increase of 38 persons. Similarly, the projected county increase was 699 persons, compared to an actual increase of 1122 persons. It can therefore be concluded that the regional planning board population projections for future years is also too low.

### **Consultant's Population and Housing Projections**

Population and housing projections are merely projections of past trends that may or may not hold true in the future. They are not predictions, but estimates based upon certain assumptions. The assumptions used to derive the projections for this plan are based upon the generally steady slow to moderate growth rate that has been characteristic of the Town of Minerva during past years. Three estimates are shown, a high, mid, and low projection. (See Table 11 and Figures 4 and 5.) It was not feasible to project the number of seasonal dwellings due to inconsistencies in the data from one decade to the next.

**TABLE 10  
POPULATION PROJECTIONS PREPARED BY  
THE REGIONAL PLANNING BOARD IN 1997**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Actual or Projected Population</u>	<u>Number Of Persons</u>	
		<u>Minerva</u>	<u>Essex County</u>
1960	Actual	700	35,300
1970	Actual	733	34,631
1980	Actual	781	36,176
1990	Actual	758	37,152
2000	Projected	773	37,729
2005	Projected	776	37,799
2010	Projected	779	37,862
2015	Projected	781	37,919
2020	Projected	783	37,971
2025	Projected	785	38,019
2030	Projected	786	38,063
(2000)	(Actual)	(796)	(38,851)

Source: Lake Champlain – Lake George Regional Planning Board

High Estimate. The high estimate assumes that both population and year round housing units will increase by the same numerical amount during future decades as they did from 1990 to 2000. However, real growth may prove to be lower than this for a number of reasons. First, state and national population projections foresee an overall slowing of population growth as a result of changing birth and death rates, and migration. Second, growth rates tend to slow in towns as the supply of available building lots decreases. The slowdown in housing starts in the town during the 1990’s as revealed by real property service data suggests that this could be the case for Minerva. Third, family size may continue to decline resulting in fewer persons per dwelling unit.

Mid-Estimate. The mid-estimate takes into account the factors that could slow growth rates as stated above. Specifically it is assumed that the numerical increase in both population and housing will decline by 25 percent per decade.

Low Estimate. This estimate assumes that numerical increase will decline by 50 percent per decade and that persons per household will decrease by 25 percent per decade. Even these estimates are higher than those published by the Lake Champlain – Lake George Regional Planning Board in 1997.

Should the mid-estimates be accurate, the town’s population would experience low to moderate growth from 796 persons in the year 2000, to 839 persons in 2020 and 859 persons in the year 2040. Year round housing units would increase from 321 units, to 355 units and 374 units respectively.

Should the high estimates be accurate, the number of housing units and corresponding impact upon the landscape would increase significantly. The town's 321 year round dwelling units in the year 2000 could increase by 52 units by the year 2020, and by 104 units by the year 2040.

**TABLE 11  
POPULATION AND OCCUPIED HOUSING PROJECTIONS**

	Actual:	Projected:				
	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2030</u>	<u>2040</u>
Population						
High Estimate	758	796	834	872	910	948
Mid Estimate	758	796	821	839	851	859
Low Estimate		796	806	804	799	793
Change per decade, high estimate		38	38	38	38	38
Change per decade, mid estimate		38	25	17	12	8
Change per decade, low estimate						
Occupied housing units						
High Estimate	295	321	347	373	399	425
Mid Estimate	295	321	341	355	366	374
Low Estimate		321	334	341	344	345
Change per decade, high estimate		26	26	26	26	26
Change per decade, mid estimate		26	20	15	11	8
Change per decade, low estimate		26	13	7	3	2
Persons per housing unit						
High Estimate	2.57	2.48	2.48	2.48	2.48	2.48
Mid Estimate	2.57	2.48	2.41	2.36	2.32	2.30
Low Estimate		2.48	2.41	2.36	2.32	2.30
Change per decade, high estimate		-0.09	0	0	0	0
Change per decade, mid estimate		-0.09	-0.07	-0.05	-0.04	-0.03
Change per decade, low estimate		-0.09	-0.07	-0.05	-0.04	-0.03

Assumptions:

High estimate: Population and housing will continue at the same numerical increase as 1990 to 2000.

Mid estimate: Numerical increase in occupied housing will slow by 25% per decade. Persons per household will decrease by 25% per decade.

Low estimate: Numerical increase in occupied housing will slow by 50% per decade. Persons per household will decrease by 25% per decade.



## **ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS**

Some of the key characteristics of the town's economy are shown on Table 12.

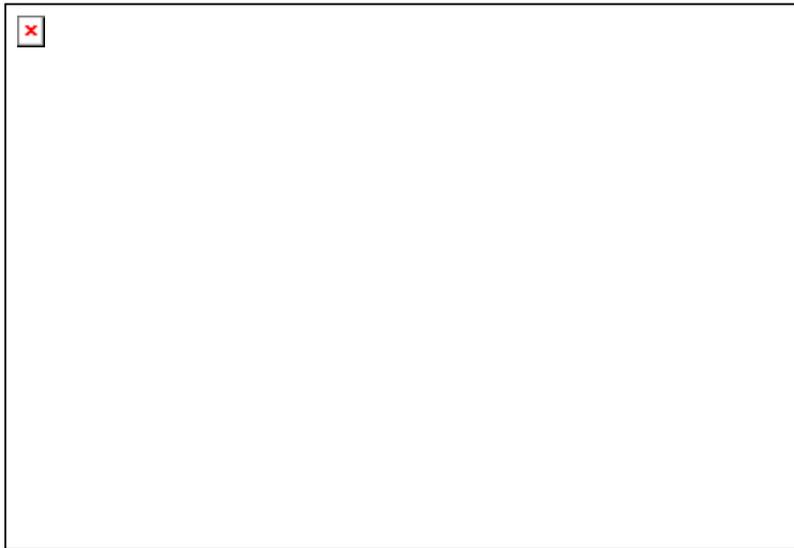
Historically, the primary industries of agriculture, forestry and mining were the mainstay of the town's economy. Today only about 5% of the workforce is employed in these business sectors. Most persons commute to job destinations outside the town to find employment, as reflected in the high percentage of the population who drive to work. Local employment opportunities are primarily in service businesses that provide goods and services to year round residents, seasonal residents, or tourists, as reflected in the comparatively high percentage of persons employed in retail trade for a town without a major commercial center. Another local employer is the public service sector, which includes schools.

Income levels are somewhat lower than in Essex County as a whole, and are significantly lower than the statewide average. Percent of families below the poverty level is higher than for Essex County.

## TAX BASE

The total assessed value of properties in the Town of Minerva in the year 2001 was about 163 million dollars. (See Figure 6 and Table 13.) State lands accounted for about 60 percent of the total. Of the remainder, single family residential use was the largest single category, representing 18.5 percent of the total tax base. Vacant land was the third largest category, contributing 6.5 percent.

Seasonal homes (2.7%), mobile homes (1.6%), seasonal lodging (0.3%), camps (0.7%), and commercial (0.4%), and other uses contributed relatively little to the tax base.



**TABLE 12  
ECONOMIC DATA FROM THE YEAR 2000 CENSUS**

	Town of Minerva	Comparison with Essex County and New York State		
		Minerva	Essex County	NY State
<b>COMMUTING TO WORK</b>				
Car, truck, or van -- drove alone	279	<b>86.4 %</b>	75.2 %	56.3 %
Car, truck, or van -- carpooled	32	9.9 %	14.2 %	9.2 %
Public transportation (including taxicab)	0	0 %	0.6 %	24.4 %
Walked	3	0.9 %	4.6 %	6.2 %
Other means	0	0 %	0.7 %	0.8 %
Worked at home	9	2.8 %	4.8 %	3 %
TOTAL	323			
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	25.6	25.6	20.7	31.7
<b>INDUSTRY</b>				
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting,	16	<b>4.8 %</b>	2.4 %	0.6 %

and mining				
Construction	41	<b>12.2 %</b>	9.1 %	5.2 %
Manufacturing	28	8.3 %	10.4 %	10 %
Wholesale trade	0	0 %	1.8 %	3.4 %
Retail trade	32	9.5 %	10.9 %	10.5 %
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	14	4.2 %	3.1 %	5.5 %
Information	4	1.2 %	1.7 %	4.1 %
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	16	4.8 %	3.1 %	8.8 %
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	12	3.6 %	4.3 %	10.1 %
Educational, health and social services	81	24.1 %	25 %	24.3 %
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	49	<b>14.6 %</b>	13.2 %	7.3 %
Other services (except public administration)	18	5.4 %	5.9 %	5.1 %
Public administration	25	7.4 %	9.1 %	5.2 %
TOTAL	336			
<b>INCOME</b>				
Median household income (dollars)	\$30,903	<b>\$30,903</b>	\$34,823	\$43,393
Median family income (dollars)	\$37,500	<b>\$37,500</b>	\$41,927	\$51,691
Per capita income (dollars)	\$15,531	<b>\$15,531</b>	\$18,194	\$23,389
Percent below poverty level, Families	11.3 %	<b>11.3 %</b>	7.8 %	11.5 %
Percent below poverty level, Individuals	13.6 %	<b>13.6 %</b>	11.6 %	14.6 %

**TABLE 13  
ASSESSED VALUE OF PROPERTIES, 2001**

<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Total Assessed Value (\$)</b>	<b>Percent of Town Total</b>	<b>Number of Parcels</b>	<b>Average Assessed Value per Parcel (\$)</b>
Other state land assessments (a)	53,976,150	33.1%		NA
Forest Land, State	42,948,550	26.3%	323	132,968
Single family residential	30,194,500	18.5%	374	80,734
Vacant land	10,558,650	6.5%	455	23,206
Forest Land, Private	7,245,728	4.4%	33	219,568
Community Services	5,553,000	3.4%	27	205,667
Seasonal homes	4,324,100	2.7%	61	70,887
Mobile homes	2,666,100	1.6%	81	32,915
Utilities	1,840,244	1.1%	7	262,892
Camps	1,117,900	0.7%	2	558,950
Nonceiling Railroad	717,700	0.4%	26	27,604
Commercial	575,100	0.4%	10	57,510
Seasonal lodging	545,300	0.3%	5	109,060
Two family residential	420,400	0.3%	4	105,100
Forest Land, County	237,600	0.1%	4	59,400
Apartments	142,300	0.1%	2	71,150
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>163,063,322</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1,414</b>	<b>115,321</b>

(a) Adirondack Park Aggregate RP, Tax Law 315; and Transition Assessments for Taxable State Owned, Tax Law 545

Source: Real Property Service data base, dated 2002 (contains data through 2001)

## LOTTING PATTERN

Many of the older housing lots in the Town of Minerva are smaller than one acre in size, and are located in or near the hamlets. (See "Lotting Pattern" map and Table 14.) The town also contains many large lots greater than 20 acres in size. Lot sizes generally tend to increase with distance from hamlets and public roads.

**Table 14  
Lot Sizes, Privately Owned Land**

<u>Size (acres)</u>	<u>Number of Properties</u>
Less than 1	217
1 to less than 2	178
2 to less than 5	170
5 to less than 20	202
20 or more	246
(Excludes state, county and town properties.)	

## **RESIDENTIAL LAND USE**

Year round single family homes are the predominant form of residential development in the Town of Minerva. They are concentrated in the hamlets, a result of the historical development pattern. (See Residential Land Use map.) There are also a number of mobile homes which tend to be located along outskirts of the hamlets, including along County Roads 29 and 30 near Olmstedville, and along 14<sup>th</sup> Road and McGee Road near the hamlet of Minerva.

Most of the seasonal dwellings are located in “clubs,” “camps” or in otherwise relatively isolated locations in the northern or western portions of town (not shown on the Residential Land Use map which includes only the southeastern portion of town).

### **Housing Values**

Relatively higher value housing is found in the hamlets of Olmstedville and Minerva where there exist a number of larger older homes. (See “Housing Value, 2002 “map.) Other areas characterized by relatively high housing values are those where newer homes have been constructed in rural areas removed from population centers, such as along sections of 14<sup>th</sup> Road, Northwoods Club Road, and County Road 24B. Lower value housing on the map generally represents mobile homes and smaller conventionally constructed homes.

## **COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL USE**

There is little commercial development in the Town of Minerva, and no major commercial center. (See Non-Residential Land Use map.) The hamlet of Olmstedville contains a small cluster of shops, café’s and a convenience store. There is a general store in the hamlet of Minerva, but little else. One lot in Olmstedville is used for equipment storage. There is an equipment sales and service business located on County Route 30 between Olmstedville and Minerva. There commercial accommodations and lodging located near Minerva Lake and along State Route 28N. There are also smaller businesses not listed as such on the real property tax data base because they are located on a residential lots.

There are no industrial uses in the Town of Minerva listed on the real property data base, although home based manufacturing, such as boat making, may exist as a secondary use on one or more residential properties.

## **PUBLIC AND SEMI-PUBLIC USES**

Town owned facilities include the Town Hall located on County Route 30, the fire station located along State Route 28N, the town highway garage located along County Route 24A, the solid waste transfer station located off O’Neil Road, a public water supply well located near the intersection of Northwoods Club with State Route 28N, and water storage tanks on Northwoods Club Road and Church Road. (See Non-Residential Land Use map.)

The Minerva Central School and the U.S. Post Office in Olmstedville and Minerva are other public uses.

The term semi-public use refers to land uses that are patronized by the general public, but are neither commercial in nature nor owned and operated by a government. Churches and cemeteries are included in this category, as are non-for-profit organizations such as the Minerva Historical Society. The hamlets of Olmstedville and Minerva each contain a church. The Minerva Historical Society occupies a former church in Olmstedville. A number of cemeteries also exist, as shown on the Historic Resources map.

## **PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE**

### **Town Parks**

The town owns and operates the Minerva Town Park and a 56 unit campground on the shores of Minerva Lake. Donnelly Beach, on the lake, is a social gathering place for residents in the summer. Minerva Lake was created in the 1930's and the town has operated the campground ever since. There are tennis courts, a basketball court, two miles of hiking trails and sailing available through a local youth program.

There is a town sports field in Irishtown. In addition, there is a picnic spot and canoe launch located on Minerva Stream where it crosses County Route 30 in the vicinity Irish Flats Road. (This is the site of a town well that cannot be used for a water supply. A picnic table and hand launch for canoes is now located on the site.) There is also a scenic pullover and gazebo where Minerva Stream crosses County Route 30 near Olmstedville.

### **Clubs and Camps**

There are four sportsman clubs in Minerva: North Woods Club, Moose Pond Club, Gooley Club, and Hewitt Lake Club. Camp Che-Na-Wa and Baco are local summer camps for children.

### **Trails**

Trails are shown on the "Trail System" map.

There are two designated snowmobile trails. One begins near Cheney Pond on County Route 2B in the northern reaches of town, and runs southward to meet Irishtown Road. A second trail runs through the Town of Newcomb into the Town of Minerva, and connects with an unimproved road on state land that provides access to Vanderwacker Mountain. These trails also serve as hiking paths.

The "foot trails" shown on the map run, for the most part, through state land. The Vanderwacker Mountain trail is a popular one, with access from an unimproved road connecting to State Route 28N. Another trail listed in the "Adirondack Great Walks and Hikes" guide is the Blue Ledge trail that runs from the Northwoods Club road down to a

scenic overlook of the Hudson River gorge.<sup>[13]</sup> The other foot trails are those included on a data base provided by the Adirondack Park Agency.

There are still other possible trails shown by symbols on the New York State Department of Transportation (DOT) planimetric map sheets published during the 1970's. It is unknown whether these trails are still useable by the public.

Unimproved roads shown on the map provide access to some of the "clubs" and land otherwise inaccessible by public highways.

## Open Space

The Town of Minerva contains vast acreage of open space, most of which is owned by the State of New York and is part of the State Forest Preserve. (See Table 15 and "Open Space Resources" map.) Forest Preserve lands are protected by the "forever wild" clause of the state constitution. They are accessible to the public and are permanently protected open space. By state law these lands must not be sold or leased to any entity, and trees cannot be cut or removed on them.

Adding private forestry lands and Essex County reforestation areas, total open space in the town exceeds 80% of its land area.

**TABLE 15**  
**Open Space Acreage**

	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
State Forest Preserve	66,980	65.3%
Private Forest Lands	16,145	15.7%
County Reforestation Lands	384	0.4%
Total Open Space	83,509	81.4%
Total Town Acreage, all lands	102,576	100.0%

## STATE LAND UNIT MANAGEMENT AREAS

Use of state lands within the Adirondack Park is governed by both the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).<sup>[14]</sup> The Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan categorizes state property into seven types of regulatory categories, three of which are found in the Town of Minerva: wilderness, primitive, and wild forest. (See "State Lands Unit Management Areas" map.) In addition, state lands have been divided into a series of individual geographic areas, or unit management areas. The DEC, in consultation with the APA, is charged with preparing and periodically reviewing and revising a "unit management plan" that regulates recreational usage for each of these areas.

### Wilderness Areas

A wilderness area is defined as one “having primeval character, without significant improvement or permanent habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve, enhance and restore where necessary, its natural conditions...” In wilderness areas only scattered lean-tos and tent sites are permitted in generally non-visible areas. Motorized vehicles such as ATVs and snowmobiles are prohibited. Tent platforms, clusters of lean-tos, electric or telephone wires, roads, and buildings are prohibited.

A small portion of the “Hoffman Notch” Wilderness Area is found in the Town of Minerva. This mountainous 36,231 acre unit, lying mostly in the neighboring towns of Schroon and North Hudson, contains Hoffman Mountain and Hoffman Notch.

### **Primitive Areas**

A primitive area is defined as one that is “Essentially wilderness in character,” but may have pre-existing man-made structures present, or “contains, or is contiguous to, private lands that are of a size and influence to prevent wilderness designation.” Also included in this category are lands “of a size and character not meeting wilderness standards, but where the fragility of the resource or other factors require wilderness management.” Regulations are similar to those for wilderness areas, except that some roads and trails may be utilized by motorized vehicles at the discretion of DEC.

A large portion of the “Hudson Gorge” primitive area is found in the Town of Minerva. This unit “encompasses the wildest and most remote section of the Hudson River, as well as a spectacular white water gorge.” This area is recommended to be upgraded to wilderness designation as soon as the substantial private land holdings in the area can be acquired, or their use limited by conservation easements.

### **Wild Forest**

A wild forest area is “an area where the resources permit a somewhat higher degree of human use than in wilderness, primitive or canoe areas, while retaining an essentially wild character.” A wild forest frequently lacks a sense of remoteness, and permits a wide variety of outdoor recreation. Groupings of tent sites, picnic tables, lean-tos, trailheads are permitted in wild forest areas. Motorized vehicles are permitted on designated roads and trails.

The largest state land area in the Town of Minerva is the “Vanderwhacker” Wild Forest. This area not only contains Vanderwhacker Mountain, but also the Boreas River and a number of ponds and streams. A number of trails exist in this unit. A small portion of the “Blue Mountain” Wild Forest is found in the westernmost reaches of town.

### **HIGHWAY SYSTEM**

The Town of Minerva is served by a network of state, county and town highways as shown on the “Highway System” map. Route 28N is the major traffic artery through the town, and its only state highway. This highway serves both long distance and local traffic, and is

constructed to design standards to serve heavier traffic volumes than county or town roads, and is suitable for truck traffic.

There are also several County owned highways in the Town of Minerva. These roadways vary a great deal in their design characteristics and ability to carry larger volumes of traffic. Most of the through roads, as opposed to local dead end streets, are county highways.

The remaining public highways are owned and maintained by the Town of Minerva. Many of these roads are dead ends serving local traffic only. These roads also vary considerably in their design characteristics.

## **SUITABILITY OF ROADS TO SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT**

In order to better assess the ability of public highways to support development, all state, county and local roads were given a rating by the consultant, shown on the “Suitability of Roads to Support Development” map.

Most Suitable highways are roadways constructed with base materials that can withstand heavy vehicle weights and larger traffic volumes, and are sufficiently wide with adequate shoulders. They are characterized by adequate site distance for their design speed. State Route 28N fits this category, as well as the portion County Route 29 that connects Olmstedville with Route 28N and provides access to the Minerva Central School.

These highways are suitable for land uses that generate truck traffic, or larger volumes of automobile traffic such as retail businesses or larger residential developments.

Suitable highways are those adequate for some truck traffic and moderate rural traffic volumes. They include roads surfaced with plant mix with at least 20 feet of driving pavement. Some of these roads may lack shoulders, or may not be constructed with adequate base materials to withstand heavier vehicle weights and/or higher traffic volumes, or to withstand annual freeze and thaw cycles and maintain a smooth driving surface. Many of the County routes have been classed in this category, including the relatively frequently traveled “Morse Memorial Highway” (County Route 30 between the hamlets of Minerva and Olmstedville), and the “Olmstedville – Warren County Road” (Route 29 between Olmstedville and the Warren County line).

These routes are suitable for residential subdivisions of small to moderate size, and for businesses that generate smaller amounts of automobile traffic and truck traffic.

Somewhat Suitable roadways are those that do not meet the criteria for being classified as “most suitable” or “suitable,” nor can they be classed as “least suitable.” They are generally highways that may have between 18 and 20 feet of driving pavement, and/or a stone and oil pavement (road mix) surface, and/or a winding or hilly alignment. These routes are not suitable for anything but occasional truck traffic and relatively low automobile traffic volumes due to safety considerations.

Walking or bicycling along country roads is becoming an increasingly popular leisure pastime. Biking, especially, is hazardous on narrow, winding roads without shoulders. For this reason as well as automobile safety, traffic generating businesses should be discouraged from locating along roadways designated as “somewhat suitable.” This is particularly true for trucking businesses. The most compatible development along such routes is low density residential.

Least Suitable roadways are either those with a gravel or dirt surface, and/or with pavement width less than 18 feet. Most of these roads are dead ends leading to a few residences or one of the seasonal use “clubs.”

Recommended future land use along these roadways is low density residential, or seasonal use for residential or recreation.

## **WATER SUPPLY**

The Town of Minerva is served by a public water system established to provide water to the hamlets of Minerva and Olmstedville and their surrounding areas. (See “Town of Minerva Water District Service Area” map.) The current well is located on Ridge Street near Calahan Pond. There are two storage tanks, one near the well and one off Church Road south of Olmstedville.

The town is presently in the process of upgrading the water system by drilling a new well and upgrading its distribution lines. When the upgrades are complete, there will be the potential for serving new development within the existing service area. Assuming that a new well can be found with sufficient pumping capacity, the service area could be expanded in the future to serve surrounding areas contiguous to the existing water district.

The remainder of the town relies upon private wells. There is no data available to provide an accurate assessment of the quality and quantity of the groundwater supply for individual wells as it may vary throughout the town. However, it is general knowledge that the water supply is not good, as attested to by the need for a public water supply system. Also, the environmental information cited previously in this document provides evidence that bedrock and surficial geology characteristics are not favorable for aquifers.

Due to water supply constraints, it is recommended that more concentrated future development be confined to areas presently served by the public water system, or to areas into which the system could be expanded. Areas beyond the reach of the public water system should continue to be very low density.

## **SEWERAGE DISPOSAL**

On-lot septic systems are used for sewerage disposal throughout the Town of Minerva. Such systems require suitable soils for proper performance of septic leach fields, or the use of alternative systems that will function properly on said soils. It is therefore recommended that state building code requirements relating to the design of septic systems be rigorously

enforced and the town adopt land use regulations that will insure adequate separation between neighboring dwellings and septic systems.

There is no public sewerage collection and disposal system in the Town of Minerva. Because of the high cost and high density of development necessary to support such a system, the town has no plans to establish one in the future. Rather, proper sewerage disposal on individual lots, as stated above, should be relied upon.

## **ELECTRIC SERVICE**

Electrical service is provided from the Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation. One of the “current” issues affecting the town is the frequency and duration of power outages, which could have especially serious impacts during frigid winter months. Mitigation of this problem is being pursued.

One of the factors influencing some commercial and industrial location decisions is the presence of 3-phase power. Industries generally require a three-phase power supply for their operations. The present distribution system for such is shown on the “3 Phase Power Lines” map. Extension of these lines, however, is not excessively costly.

## **PUBLIC SERVICES**

Fire, Emergency. The Minerva Volunteer Fire Department, located in Olmstedville and Minerva hamlets, serves the town’s fire and emergency calls. The Department maintains their equipment and additionally operates the Minerva Rescue Squad and associated vehicles.

Police. The New York State Police provide protection and respond to calls in Minerva.

Health Care. A full range of health care services, including dental and pharmacy, is available in North Creek, a nearby hamlet. Also available in North Creek is the Hudson Headwater Health Center. Extensive care is provided by the Glens Falls Hospital.

## **HAMLETS**

**Minerva** (see Minerva Hamlet maps)

The hamlet of Minerva is located along State Route 28N and the Morse Memorial Highway (County Route 30). It consists of widely spaced buildings along the through routes, plus a residential area along 14<sup>th</sup> street. It is primarily residential. Commercial uses are very limited, with a convenience store (general store), auto repair business, office space and a new commercial use under construction on the former Mountain View Hotel property. The hamlet is also a center for public and semi-public uses, including the Town Hall, Fire Station, and a church.

The APA designated hamlet area is relatively flat, and is underlain by soils rated as “suitable” for development. (See Soils section of this document.) There is space within the

hamlet that is physically suitable for residential in-fill development should property owners choose to subdivide their lots. Vacant land along State Route 28N or in the rear of large lots within the hamlet are among the best sites in the Town of Minerva for future commercial and/or light industrial use. To be in keeping with the character of the hamlet, new commercial or industrial structures should be housed in small to medium size buildings, somewhat widely spaced, that are designed and landscaped to blend with existing buildings. Color schemes and building materials should be in keeping with “Adirondack character.”

### **Olmstedville** (see Olmstedville maps)

The small hamlet of Olmstedville was the first concentrated settlement in the Town of Minerva. It was situated at the junction of early roads, and where Minerva Stream was available for water power. Early industries included a tannery and gristmill. Many of the buildings in Olmstedville have historic value, including the Methodist-Episcopal Church, now occupied by the Minerva Historical Society.

Buildings are rather closely spaced, particularly near the main corner at the junction of County Route 29 and County Route 30 where there is a cluster of small shops and cafes. There is little vacant land or room for in-fill within the currently APA defined hamlet boundary. Land uses are generally mixed along the main roads. Donnelly Road is a residential street.

Physically, the soils along the main roads in Olmstedville where the buildings are located are among the best in town, being well drained due to a favorable percolation rate. There are, however, some wetlands interspersed with the areas of good soils. Suitable areas for hamlet expansion are to the southeast along County Route 29, and to the south along County Route 30 (Church Street).

Any new development, or redevelopment, within Olmstedville should be in keeping with the existing scale of the buildings, and should be compatible with its historic character.

## **ANALYSIS OF POTENTIALS FOR DEVELOPMENT**

### **Residential**

The Town of Minerva has good potential for residential development provided that building lots become available. Past trends of housing growth, and future projections, suggest that a steady moderate increase in residential construction will take place. The town is attractive due to its small town, rural, scenic, Adirondack qualities, and yet has relatively convenient automobile access to the Adirondack Northway and points south. The entire region north of Albany through Glens Falls and Lake George has experienced significant growth during recent decades, and Minerva is now on the northward fringe of this growth area. As a result, demand for residential land in Minerva is likely to increase.

Housing change data seems to suggest that the bulk of future residential growth will be in the form of year round, rather than seasonal, housing.

The pattern of future residential growth can be anticipated to mirror trends of the past two decades, i.e. it can be expected to be scattered throughout town and not concentrated in any particular area or areas. (See discussion of residential land uses previously in this document.)

### **Commercial Development**

The Town of Minerva is not well situated to attract commercial or development other than businesses related to tourism and seasonal occupancy, and small businesses of a local service nature.

Potential for retail commercial growth is very limited due to the low traffic volumes on highways through town. There is some potential for growth of businesses related to tourism and seasonal residency, including small shops, restaurants, convenience or general stores, and bed and breakfast establishments. Commercial campgrounds may be a possibility, as well as dude ranches and other seasonal recreation and/or resort type facilities.

The town can also anticipate the establishment of a some small businesses of a service nature, such as auto repair or body shops, independent contractors, and other businesses that are often conducted from a garage or other building on an existing residential property.

The most feasible locations for new commercial development that depend upon traffic flow are along State Route 28N, both inside and to the south of Minerva hamlet. (See “Industrial and Commercial Location Factors” map.) However, campgrounds, resort and recreation type businesses and local service businesses are not necessarily limited to main roads, and may choose to locate at various sites within the town.

### **Industrial Development**

The Town of Minerva lacks the basic attributes that attract industrial development. It is not readily accessible to the interstate system, and the size of the labor force is limited. Therefore, the prospects for new industrial development in the near future are not favorable. However, it does have some suitable lands for industrial buildings should a firm decide to locate in the town.

The best sites for industrial development in the Town of Minerva possess the following characteristics:

- (a) Location along a heavy duty highway (State Route 28N) suitable for truck traffic.
- (b) Access to the public water system.
- (c) Access to 3-phase power.
- (d) Relatively level land with satisfactory soils and drainage.
- (e) Vacant land not adjacent to residential areas.

There are some sites possessing these characteristics along State Route 28N, both within and to the south of Minerva hamlet. (See “Industrial and Commercial Location Factors” map.) Other locations are possible, but far from ideal. Overall, the number of potential sites is very limited due to lack of suitable highways.

## **LOCAL LAND USE REGULATIONS**

Private lands within the Town of Minerva are regulated both by the town and by the Adirondack Park Agency. At present, the town administers the following regulations:

### **Site Plan and Land Division Law**

This local law, last amended in 1991, requires that the Planning Board review and approve a site plan for land subdivisions and some types of new development. It does not apply to the construction of one-family or two-family dwellings, being intended primarily to deal with non-residential land uses. It lacks specific standards relating to setback and buffer requirements, and design standards. Nor does it prohibit any land uses from locating in any zones. For example, adult entertainment, a current issue in many New York State municipalities, is not addressed in the site plan law. Also, the review procedures contained in the law need updating in order to comply with changes that have occurred in the state planning and zoning enabling legislation.

Most municipalities have two separate laws that regulate land development: a zoning law and a subdivision law. The Town of Minerva Site Plan and Land Division Law was an attempt to combine the two into one package, and to deal with a limited number of concerns. It is recommended that the town now adopt a more standard set of land use regulations in order to deal with future growth issues and to preserve its existing character.

### **Other Local Laws and Regulations**

State Building Code. The town enforces the state building code, which among other items includes standards for septic systems and for mobile home stands.

Junk Storage Law. The town adopted a junk storage law in May 2003. It requires that no junk be stored so as to be visible from public highways, and that junkyards be licensed and properly sited and designed.

Mobile Home Law. A law establishing standards for the placement of mobile homes has been recently enacted.

Road Standards. The town has established a set of design standards governing the take-over of roads by the Town of Minerva Highway Department.

## **ADIRONDACK PARK AGENCY REGULATIONS**

New land uses within the Town of Minerva must comply with the Adirondack Park Agency regulations. The town is divided into 5 types of districts, or land use areas, shown on the following table. (See also map titled “Private Land Classification, Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan.”)

**TABLE 16  
APA PRIVATE LAND CLASSIFICATION**

<u>Area</u>	Acres (approx.)	Percent of <u>Total</u>	Overall Intensity <u>Guidelines</u>	
			# Buildings <u>psm</u>	Average lot <u>size (acres)</u>
Hamlet	583	1.7	no limit	none
Moderate Intensity Use	457	1.3	500	1.3
Low Intensity Use	9,633	27.7	200	3.2
Rural Use	7,561	21.8	75	8.5
Resource Management	16,525	47.5	15	42.7
Total private lands =	34,760	100.0		

A maximum density of development, or average lot size, is established for each land use district except hamlets. Hamlet areas occupy only about 1.7 percent of the private land area. Moderate intensity use areas, for which the average lot size requirement is 1.3 acres per principal structure, are also very limited, accounting for only 1.3 percent of total private lands. Much of the accessible, developable land in the town is classified as low intensity use, at 3.2 acres per principal structure. This category also includes substantial acreage of land that is not likely to be developed due to its lack of road access and environmental characteristics. Rural use lands, at 8.5 acres per principal structure are located in less accessible locations, and occupy about 21.8 percent of the private land area. There are large parcels of land classified as resource management, where the least density of development is allowed, in the western portions of town. Many of these lands are managed for their forestry resource or used by clubs.

In addition to regulating density of development, state regulations require that certain developments, including commercial uses and larger land subdivisions, be reviewed and approved by the Adirondack Park Agency. APA regulations, however, do not establish lot dimension and building setback requirements for single family dwellings, the type of development expected to comprise the bulk of future growth within the Town of Minerva.

The APA also regulates shoreline development and wetlands. Minimum setbacks for buildings and septic systems, as well as vegetative cutting restrictions, are established for shorelines.

## 1995 PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

In 1995 the Cornell University Local Government Program sponsored a questionnaire survey that dealt with a variety of economic, community development, and growth issues. The survey was mailed to 200 randomly selected households, and 110 responses were received. Complete results of the survey are contained in a document titled “Central Adirondacks Economic Renewal Project, Public Opinion Results – Town of Minerva.” Results are summarized below.

Community Satisfaction. Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with a number of items. Results were generally as follows.

### *Moderately to Strongly Satisfied*

- . Number of stores and services
- . Distance to stores and services
- . Sense of community
- . Education and day care facilities
- . Recreational facilities, in general
- . Public works (including condition of roads, water supply)
- . Public services (including fire, ambulance, snowplowing, police)
- . Town recreation facilities
- . Local government

### *Neutral to Moderately Satisfied*

- . Existing land use regulations

### *Mixed results*

- . Economic strength of tourism
- . Medical services

### *Dissatisfied*

- . Economic strength of industries

Community Vision. Respondents were asked whether they would like to see more of certain types of activities in the next 5 to 10 years. Results were generally as follows.

### *Strongly Approve*

- . Retain existing community character
- . Revitalize hamlet areas
- . One-family housing
- . Seasonal homes

### *Moderately Approve*

- . Commercial businesses, especially those catering to tourism and recreation
- . Logging
- . Service/telecommunications industry

*Mixed results*

- . Light manufacturing
- . Mining
- . Duplex housing

*Disapprove*

- . Heavy industry
- . Correctional facilities
- . Apartment houses

## **2003 PROPERTY OWNER SURVEY**

In order to solicit public input at an early stage in the planning process the Zoning Commission, in the autumn of 2003, mailed a questionnaire survey to all property owners asking opinions on specific planning and land use regulatory issues. A total 771 questionnaires were mailed; 212 were returned and tabulated representing a 27 percent rate of return.

Results indicated that property owners desired the town to remain as a rural residential community with small businesses serving the local population, and but should seek to attract more tourism and seasonal based businesses. Very strong support was shown for the goals of preserving the scenic beauty, natural environment, and historic resources of the town. A total of 89 percent of respondents supported or strongly supported the goal of protecting private property from adverse impacts of neighboring land uses, while only 7 percent opposed or strongly opposed this goal, with the remainder being neutral.

Strong support was also voiced for “revising the local town land use regulations to create land use zones within the town, and to prohibit certain land uses from locating in certain zones.” A total 68% supported this proposal, with only 20% opposed. The remainder, 13%, were neutral.

Among the most objectionable land uses were adult entertainment, junk yards, vehicular race tracks and waste disposal areas.

A complete tabulation of results follows.

**SURVEY RESULTS  
2003 PROPERTY OWNERS QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Total Tabulated Returns: 212**

**Total Sent = 771**

**Percent Return = 27%**

All results are in percent of total responses to the question.

1. Which of the following best summarizes your general views toward future growth within the Town of Minerva?

<b>15</b>	a. Growth should be encouraged.
<b>4</b>	b. Growth should be discouraged.
<b>19</b>	c. Growth should neither be encouraged nor discouraged.
<b>35</b>	d. Growth should be encouraged, but should be guided and controlled.
<b>27</b>	e. Growth should neither be encouraged nor discouraged, but should be guided and controlled.
(203)	(Total Responses)

2. Which of the following best summarizes your goals for the future for the Town of Minerva.

<b>32</b>	a. The Town should remain as a large lot, rural residential community with some small businesses serving local residents and tourists.
<b>17</b>	b. The Town should remain as a rural residential community with some small businesses serving local residents and tourists, but should have more smaller lots available for housing.
<b>19</b>	c. The Town should remain primarily a rural residential community, but should seek to attract commercial, light industrial, and business development.
<b>32</b>	d. The Town should remain primarily a rural residential community, but should seek to attract more tourism, seasonal based businesses, and second homes.
<b>1</b>	e. Other
(193)	(Total Responses)

3. Which of the following do you favor for the future for the hamlets of Minerva and Olmstedville?

<b>56</b>	a. The hamlets should remain as mixed use areas consisting of a both of homes and small businesses.
<b>44</b>	b. There should be some portions of the hamlets designated for residential use only, and other portions designated for both commercial and residential use.
(198)	(Total Responses)

4. The current town land use regulations allow almost any land use in almost any area of town. The revised regulations will not permit certain land uses in certain zones. Which of the following land uses do you feel should be permitted or not permitted in: (a) hamlets of Minerva and Olmstedville, and (b) areas outside of hamlets.

	WITHIN HAMLETS			OUTSIDE OF HAMLETS		
	Permit	Do not Permit	Neutral	Permit	Do not Permit	Neutral
<b>RESIDENTIAL USES</b>						
a. Single family housing on very large lots (8.5 acres or more in size)	62	16	22	85	2	13
b. Single family housing of medium size lots (3.2 plus acres in size)	77	12	11	71	20	9
c. Single family housing on smaller lots (about 1 acre in size)	73	21	7	51	39	10
d. Two family dwellings	54	37	9	52	39	9
e. Individually sited mobile homes (not in parks)	30	59	11	40	50	11
f. Travel trailer used as seasonal residence	22	66	11	42	46	13
g. Mobile home park	21	69	11	34	56	9
h. Senior citizen housing development	74	15	12	63	22	15
i. Assisted living facility for seniors	78	9	13	68	18	14
<b>NON-RESIDENTIAL USES</b>						
j. Adult entertainment establishment	16	73	11	17	73	11
k. Agriculture, including horse farms	52	33	15	82	6	12
l. Auto repair shop	71	20	9	69	22	9
m. Automobile sales	50	42	8	43	48	9
n. Bed and Breakfast establishment	91	4	6	90	7	4
o. Business office	85	8	7	70	17	13
p. Commercial riding stables	51	37	12	82	11	8
q. Fuel distribution business	48	44	7	55	33	13
r. Golf course, golf driving range	44	45	12	66	20	12
s. Home occupations (businesses conducted in one's home or garage.)	82	8	11	85	7	8
t. Junk yard	11	84	4	34	55	11
u. Kennel	38	49	13	60	24	16
v. Lawn or garden equipment sales, ATV or snowmobile sales	63	24	13	65	25	10
w. Light industry	49	38	13	60	30	10
x. Logging, timber harvesting	48	41	11	77	13	10
y. Motels, tourist accommodations	78	13	8	77	16	7
z. Nursery, florist, greenhouse	86	8	6	83	9	8
aa. Recreational vehicle park, campground	46	45	9	69	20	11
bb. Restaurant	92	5	3	86	10	3
cc. Sawmill	41	49	10	76	13	11
dd. Small stores serving the local population	92	4	4	77	15	7
ee. Small stores serving tourists, seasonal patrons (antiques, crafts, etc.)	93	2	4	75	16	8
ff. Tavern, bar, night club	53	38	10	50	38	12
gg. Trucking, warehousing business	27	65	8	44	45	11
hh. Vehicular race track (auto, motorcycle)	8	85	7	23	69	7
ii. Waste disposal area	20	73	7	44	47	9



5. Please rate the adequacy of the following in Town of Minerva:  
(Total Responses = 208)

	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion
a. Road maintenance	59	29	9	3
b. Snow removal	56	21	15	7
c. Police protection	18	26	28	28
d. Public water supply	46	16	4	34
e. Town administration	59	19	6	15
f. Parks	68	16	3	13
g. Trails and other public recreation facilities	49	22	8	22

6. Do you support or oppose including the following possible goals in the town comprehensive plan?  
(Total Responses = 208)

	Strongly Support	Support	Neutral	Oppose	Strongly Oppose
a. The rural residential character of the town should be retained.	67	27	4	2	0
b. The scenic beauty of the town should be protected.	81	15	4	0	0
c. The natural environment of the town (lakes, streams, aquifers, valuable habitats, etc.) should be preserved and protected.	84	13	2	0	0
d. Historic resources should be preserved and protected.	75	18	6	1	0
e. Tourism development should be encouraged.	39	38	14	7	1
f. Small neighborhood businesses should be encouraged.	49	40	9	2	0
g. General commercial development should be encouraged.	16	27	29	20	8
h. Light industrial development should be encouraged.	13	31	24	22	10
i. More affordable housing should be available.	22	36	24	12	5
j. Senior citizen housing and/or assisted living facilities should be available.	36	39	14	6	4
k. More trail systems should be established (hiking, ATV, snowmobile).	28	24	26	13	8
l. Private property should be protected from adverse impacts of neighboring land uses.	67	22	4	4	4

7. Do you support or oppose revising the local town land use regulations to create land use zones within the town, and to prohibit certain land uses from locating in certain zones?

<b>35</b>	a. Strongly support.
<b>33</b>	b. Support.
<b>13</b>	c. Neutral.
<b>9</b>	d. Oppose.
<b>11</b>	e. Strongly oppose.
<b>(208)</b>	<b>(Total Responses)</b>

8. Are you a:

<b>59</b>	a. Year-round resident.
<b>41</b>	b. Seasonal resident.

9. Please indicate the area of Town in which you live:

<b>30</b>	a. Hamlet of Minerva
<b>18</b>	b. Hamlet of Olmstedville
<b>52</b>	c. Outside of either hamlet

## **PART 2**

# **EVALUATION OF APA LAND USE AREA CLASSIFICATIONS**

## PURPOSE

This section evaluates the appropriateness of the current land use area classifications as shown on current Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan map for the Town of Minerva. There are a number of reasons for this analysis.

First, the town intends to amend the Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan Map pursuant to Section 805, part 2, c, (3) of the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) Act which requires that amendments be based upon a “comprehensive inventory and analysis of the natural resource, public, economic and other land use factors as may reflect the relative development amenability and limitations of the lands within the entire jurisdiction.” Part 1 of this plan presents the inventory information. This part provides the analysis that synthesizes the relevant environmental and developmental factors.

Second, the current APA land use classifications were prepared just prior to 1973 when the Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan was adopted, and require updating based upon new and more detailed information as well as new development infrastructure. New and updated information includes, but is not limited to, the following.

- Order 2 soils mapping is now available, which is much more detailed than the meso-intensity mapping used for the original classifications. Also, there are revised soil interpretations for septic systems and for home sites. Soil information is a significant factor in the land use area classifications.
- Detailed wetlands maps are now available.
- Flood hazard maps are now available.
- A town water system has been established.
- Information regarding the suitability of roads to support development has been taken into account in this analysis.
- Current land use information is available.

Third, the original Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan map was prepared at a much smaller scale than is used in this analysis. The original plan was prepared using maps of scale 1:62:500 and employed a methodology whereby overlays that were hand drawn on transparent paper.<sup>[15]</sup> The minimum size area depicted in the overlays “was approximately 300 acres.”<sup>[16]</sup> Most of the information used in the present analysis was originally prepared at a scale of 1:24,000 or larger, and thus is much more detailed than the original data upon which the current classifications area based.

Fourth, one of the important goals of this plan is to increase the supply of affordable building lots in appropriate locations, i.e. in the vicinity of hamlets and accessible to services. Like other Adirondack communities in the general region, local people are being priced out of the housing market as the demand for seasonal and year round housing lots rises. The scarcity of affordable lots could be alleviated by reclassifying physically suitable lands near hamlets into categories that permit smaller average lot sizes. Conversely, there appears to be significant undeveloped acreage in more distant locations, and/or which is physically not well suited for development, that might be reclassified into categories that require larger average lot sizes.

## METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed in this analysis is very similar to that used in the original planning process by the APA which resulted in the current land use classifications. <sup>[17]</sup> It uses a similar set of environmental inventory information (albeit more detailed and up to date), and employs a map overlay process to create a similar environmental limitations composite map. <sup>[18]</sup> It takes into account traditional factors affecting development by creating a composite “development opportunities map” based upon such criteria as distance to hamlets, proximity to highways, and the presence or absence of water or sewer infrastructure. <sup>[19]</sup> The two composites are then combined into a single map that shows the intensity of development that each area of town could appropriately support based upon a synthesis all the relevant factors.

### Environmental limitations composite

The “Composite Environmental Limitations for Development” map was derived using the criteria shown on the “Environmental Limitations Chart.” A “most limiting factor” assumption was used in the analysis, i.e. the suitability for development of any given area of land is determined by the most limiting environmental factor.

Notes on the rationale for some of the ratings:

- Explanation of the soils limitations ratings are contained in part 1 of this plan.
- Flooding was taken into account by two sets of data. Soils data was used to identify lands where flooding is relatively common, and where development of any type should be avoided. These areas were rated as “least suitable.” Maps prepared for the National Flood Insurance program were used to identify areas that could possibly be inundated during a 100 year flood. However, as stated earlier in this plan, the areas shown on the map are often inaccurate, and building within such flood hazard areas is often acceptable using appropriate flood proofing practices. For this reason, such lands were given a “somewhat suitable” rating.

Areas in the “least suitable” category include wetlands; wetland and muck soils; slopes exceeding 35 percent; frequently, commonly or occasionally flooded lands; critical wildlife habitats; elevations above 2500 feet; county reforestation areas; and private managed forest lands.

Areas in the “most suitable” and “suitable” categories are generally characterized by soils and slopes that are suitable for residential development provided that adequate septic systems are installed.

### ENVIRONMENTAL LIMITATIONS CHART

	Most Suitable	Suitable	Somewhat Suitable	Least Suitable
<b>Soils</b>				
Most suitable	x			
Suitable		x		

Somewhat suitable			x	
Least suitable				x
<b>Slope</b>				
3 to 8%	x			
0 to 3%, 3 to 15%, 8 to 15%		x		
0 to 2%, 15 to 35%			x	
35 to 60%				x
<b>Flooding</b>				
Frequent, common, or occasional flooded soils				x
Regulated flood hazard area			x	
<b>Wetlands</b>				
Regulated wetlands				x
<b>Habitats</b>				
Deer wintering areas			x	
Severe deer wintering areas				x
Diverse ecosystem				x
Bog species				x
Rare or endangered species habitat				x
Boreas mature forest				x
<b>Aquifer recharge areas</b>				
Soils with highest potential			x	
Other soils with significant potential		x		
<b>High elevations</b>				
2500 feet or more				x
<b>Visually sensitive areas</b>				
Viewsheds of vistas within ¼ mile of roads			x	
RU or RM areas within ¼ mile of state highways		x		
<b>Wild and Scenic Rivers</b>				
Within ¼ mile of designated rivers			x	
<b>Managed Forests</b>				
Essex County Reforestation areas				x
Finch and Pruyn lands				x

## Development Opportunities Map

The “Development Opportunities” map is based upon traditional development considerations. Areas with the better opportunities are served by the town water system, are in or near hamlets, and are accessible by highways suitable to support development. Areas with least opportunities are remote from existing population centers and/or are not accessible by roads suitable to support development.

### DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES CHART

<b>Best</b>	Areas currently served by the Town of Minerva public water system.
<b>Good</b>	Areas within 2 miles of an APA designated hamlet <u>and</u> within ¼ mile of a public highway rated as “most suitable,” “suitable,” or “somewhat suitable” for development.
<b>Fair</b>	Areas within 2 miles of an APA designated hamlet <u>or</u> within ½ mile of any public road.
<b>Poor</b>	Areas further than 2 miles from an APA designated hamlet <u>and</u> further than ½ mile from

## Density Analysis Map

The “Density Analysis” map was prepared by combining the two aforementioned maps by use of a matrix, resulting in the categories of densities shown on the chart below. Areas that could appropriately support the highest intensity of development score a 7, and areas that could support the least development score a 1 on this rating system.

### LAND USE DENSITY CLASSIFICATION CHART

Development Opportunities	Environmental Suitability			
	Most suitable	Suitable	Somewhat Suitable	Least Suitable
Best	7	6	5	1
Good	6	5	4	1
Fair	5	4	3	1
Poor	4	3	2	1

Areas scoring the lowest on the chart (value of 1) are unsuited for development regardless of other factors. These include muck soils, wetland soils, wetlands, flooded soils, very steep slopes, valuable wildlife habitats, high elevations, managed forest lands, and county reforestation areas.

Areas scoring relatively high are generally those within or near hamlets that possess favorable soil and slope conditions. The highest scores are within the public water system service area.

Areas scoring in intermediate categories tend to be those that are not ideally suited for development due to somewhat unfavorable soil and slope conditions and/or somewhat unfavorable development opportunities.

## PROPOSED APA MAP AMENDMENTS

In order to evaluate the appropriateness of the current land classifications the “Density Analysis” was compared to the existing APA land use designations. When this was done, fifteen areas were identified where the current classification is not consistent with the environmental characteristics and development opportunity factors taken into account in this analysis. These initial areas were discussed by the Town of Minerva Zoning Commission for further refinement, resulting in the following list and map of proposed amendments to the Adirondack Land Use and Development Plan Map. These proposed amendments are preliminary, and may be modified as a result of further discussion and public input prior to the submittal of formal map amendment applications to the Adirondack Park Agency.

The number of acres in each proposed amendment area as shown in the chart was estimated by use of a GIS. The maximum number of principal structures permitted in each area, before

and after the amendments, was also calculated and is shown in the change column. The resulting increases in possible principal structures are almost evenly balanced by the decreases. The net change is plus 44 principal structures were all the amendments to be enacted.

## **Conclusions**

It is concluded that the fifteen map amendments identified in this analysis would be justified using the criteria established by the Adirondack Park Agency, and are in keeping with the spirit and intent of the Adirondack Park Agency Act and the Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan. Were these amendments to be adopted, the net number of new principal structures allowable within the town would remain much the same. However, new growth would be more concentrated in and around the existing hamlets, and less total development would be allowed in the outlying areas now characterized by large tracts of open space.

Second, adopting these amendments would help achieve the goal of providing more affordable housing for local residents. Were the amendments to be adopted, the supply of smaller, more affordable building lots would increase in already developing neighborhoods, and in-fill within existing community areas would be promoted.

Put Chart for  
Candidate Areas for APA Map Amendments  
on this page

## **PART 3**

### **THE PLAN**

## **GOALS AND PLANNING POLICIES**

The Town of Minerva Zoning Commission has established the following goals for this plan. Following each goal are listed planning policies that should be pursued to achieve the stated goal.

The general philosophy for dealing with growth issues, as determined by the zoning commission, is to neither encourage nor discourage growth, but to guide it and control it.

### **Residential Growth**

Goal: Provide for both higher value housing and affordable housing.

Policy: Provide for a mix of single family dwellings and affordable housing in all residential zones.

### **Affordable Housing**

Goal: Provide for affordable housing choices and senior citizen housing needs.

#### Policies:

- a. Seek amendments to the Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan Map that would permit development on lots smaller than are currently allowed by the Adirondack Park Agency. Locate such zone or zones in appropriate locations in proximity to the hamlets of Minerva and Olmstedville.
- b. Permit individually sited mobile homes in all areas of town, provided they comply with siting and appearance standards designed to promote compatibility with conventionally constructed houses.
- c. Allow two-family homes in all areas of town.
- d. Allow senior citizen housing developments in all areas of town except for remote areas and areas served by roads of inadequate design and width for carrying significant traffic volumes.
- e. Permit multi-family dwellings (three or more housing units) in all areas of town except for remote areas and areas served by roads of inadequate design and width for carrying significant traffic volumes, and insure that an adequate vegetative buffer is retained between the development and public highways.
- f. Allow development on smaller than normal lot sizes as part of a “cluster development” subdivision in all areas of town, provided that the design and layout of such cluster

subdivisions are approved by the Planning Board and that all dwelling units front upon an access road constructed to serve the development.

- g. Permit townhouse developments, consisting of groups of attached housing, in all areas of town as a cluster development provided that an adequate vegetative buffer is retained between the development and public highways.

### **Commercial and Industrial Development**

Goal: Encourage business development in appropriate locations.

Policies:

- a. Encourage tourism related businesses and smaller retail stores and business in appropriate locations.
- b. Encourage light industry in appropriate locations, provided that it does not create adverse impacts upon residential areas and that buildings are limited in size.
- c. Allow general commercial development in the form of stores, retail sales establishments, offices and services in appropriate locations, provided that they do not create adverse impacts upon residential areas and that buildings are limited in size.
- d. Permit home based businesses in all areas provided they do not create adverse impacts upon residential areas.

### **Rural and Scenic Character**

Goal : Preserve the rural and scenic character that makes the Town of Minerva a desirable place to live.

Policies:

- a. Insure that natural features such as lakes, streams, woodlands, wildlife habitats, scenic vistas and areas, wetlands, unique geologic features, as well as buildings or sites of historical significance, are protected either by Adirondack Park Agency regulations or by local regulations. Take such considerations into account in the review of site plans and land subdivisions by the Town of Minerva Planning Board.
- b. Establish minimum lot width requirements for new development that would apply in addition to the overall intensity guidelines of the Adirondack Park Agency in order to prevent the clustering of housing in locations that would detract from the rural and scenic character (such as strings of closely spaced dwellings along main roads).
- c. Establish building setback requirements from property lines and roadways, and lot width requirements, that are consistent with rural residential environments.

## **Rural Residential Neighborhoods**

Goal: Preserve the quality of life and tranquility of rural residential neighborhoods.

Policies:

- a. Discourage truck traffic on residential roads.
- b. Where desired by local residents, maintain a gravel surface on rural roads in order to reduce traffic speed.
- c. When revising town land subdivision regulations, use road design standards appropriate for rural Adirondack towns, not for suburban municipalities.

Goal: Allow for traditional rural and open space uses of properties.

Policy: Permit such uses as home occupations, home based manufacturing (ceramics, wood products, etc.), timber harvesting, agriculture, and the keeping of horses in rural residential zones.

## **Housing Value**

Goal: Protect the value of existing and future housing.

Policies:

- a. Prohibit land uses that would detract from the value of residential properties within residential zones.
- b. Require a green space buffer between non-residential development and neighboring residential lots in rural mixed use zones.

## **Incompatible Land Uses**

Goal: Prohibit land uses that are inconsistent with the vision of the town as a rural residential community and the environmental protection goals expressed herein all areas of town.

Policy:

Prohibit such uses as vehicular race tracks and waste disposal areas throughout the town, and prohibit adult entertainment establishments to the extent allowed by law.

## **Visual Environment**

Goal: Protect the visual environment and aesthetics.

### Policies:

- a. Establish local sign regulations that are consistent with existing state sign regulations established by the Adirondack Park Agency Act.
- b. Enforce the Town of Minerva Junk Storage Law.
- c. Require that a landscaping plan be approved by the town Planning Board for certain types of non-residential development as part of the site plan review process.
- d. Take aesthetics into consideration in all local site plan reviews for new development, and in subdivision reviews.
- e. Establish regulations for telecommunication towers.

### **Highways**

Goal: Maintain State Route 28N as an arterial through route.

Policy: Discourage concentrated strings of housing along the more rural portions of State Route 28N by establishing a minimum road frontage requirement for new development.

Goal: Maintain a safe highway system.

Policy: Insure that all new development and new land subdivisions are designed with adequate site distance at entrances to any public highway. This is especially important on winding and twisting roadways.

### **Water Supply**

Goal: Provide an adequate supply of good quality water.

Policy: Extend the existing public water system to service new development in and around the hamlets of Minerva and Olmstedville as needed. Rely upon private wells to serve other areas.

### **Sewage Disposal**

Goal: Provide for environmentally sound sewage disposal.

### Policies:

- a. Establish minimum lot sizes for new development large enough accommodate adequate individual septic systems for the soils found in the town.

- b. Rely upon private on-lot septic systems. Creation of a public sewerage system is not anticipated.

### **Water Resources**

Goal: Protect groundwater supplies.

Policy: Protect the source of water for the existing public water supply system, and groundwater recharge areas.

Goal: Protect the water quality of streams, rivers, ponds and lakes.

Policy: Insure that site plan reviews for new land developments and land subdivisions take into consideration protection of water quality.

### **Recreation**

Goal: Develop additional recreation facilities within the town to serve both the year around and seasonal populations, and tourists.

Policies:

- a. Continue work to create a nature trail at the town park.
- b. Encourage the development of additional snowmobile, hiking and biking trails.

### **Historic Resources**

Goal: Preserve Historic Resources

Policies:

- a. Develop a map and brochure describing historic resources in the town.
- b. Develop a notification and recognition program for locally important historic structures.

### **Tourism**

Goal: Promote tourism in order to improve local businesses and provide employment.

Policies:

- a. Preserve the scenic and rural environment that makes the town attractive to tourists.
- b. Provide for the establishment of tourism related businesses and attractions.

- c. Work with existing organizations to promote tourism.

## **FUTURE VISION**

The following vision statement was adopted by the zoning commission, and was supported by results of the property owners questionnaire survey:

“The Town should remain as a rural residential community with some small businesses serving local residents, and should seek to attract more tourism, seasonal based businesses, and second homes.”

Accordingly, the plan envisions the future Town of Minerva to remain much the same as it is today: a rural, small town, residential environment in a scenic Adirondack setting. It is recognized that the town’s growth will be predominantly in the form of residential development, and that limited prospects for new commercial or industrial development exist. The local economy will be continue to be supported, in part, by seasonal businesses and residents.

## **TOWN LAND USE PLAN**

The land use plan consists of the following land use districts, and is shown on the “Land Use Plan” map. The districts are intended to coincide with the land use areas of the Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan map, and to incorporate the amendments as shown on the “Candidate Areas for APA Map Amendments” maps. Within APA designated hamlets the town land use plan establishes two types of districts: a residential district and a mixed use district. Otherwise, the town districts are intended to be identical with the proposed APA land use areas.

### **Hamlet Mixed-Use (HX) Districts**

Location: Portions of Olmstedville and Minerva hamlets.

Character Description: Hamlet centers consisting of a mix of public and semi-public, commercial, and residential uses. A number of locally significant historic structures are present.

Vision: Continued mixed use, with preservation of historical structures and existing small town character. In-fill growth consistent with the scale and architecture of existing buildings.

Allowable Uses: All forms of residential development. Public and semi-public uses. Retail stores and services typically found in small rural hamlets.

### **Hamlet Residential (HR) Districts**

Location: Portions of Olmstedville and Minerva hamlets.

Character Description: Residential areas within hamlets. Relatively closely spaced housing.

Vision: Much the same as at present, with some in-fill housing possible.

Allowable Uses: All forms of residential development. Commercial uses that would not be disruptive of residential environments.

Minimum lot size for new development: 20,000 square feet

### **Moderate Intensity Use (MI) Districts**

Location: Areas close to hamlets, the public water system, and roads suitable to support development, and that are located on soils and slopes favorable for development. Coincidental with proposed APA Moderate Intensity Use land use districts.

Character Description: Areas where the capability of the natural resources and the anticipated need for future development indicate that relatively intense development, primarily residential in character, is possible, desirable, and suitable.

Vision: Residential development on relatively small lots, with the possibility of some commercial development.

Allowable uses: All forms of residential development. Commercial uses that would not be disruptive of residential environments.

Average lot size for new development: 1.3 acres per principal structure

### **Low Intensity Use (LI) Districts**

Location: Areas somewhat close to hamlets and roads suitable to support development, and that are located on soils and slopes generally favorable for development. Coincidental with proposed APA Low Intensity Use land use districts.

Character Description: Areas where the capability of the natural resources and the anticipated need for future development indicate that low intensity development, primarily residential in character, is possible and suitable.

Vision: Scattered future residential development on lots 3 to 5 acres in size, with the possibility of some commercial development.

Allowable uses: All forms of residential development. Commercial and industrial uses that would not be disruptive of rural residential environments.

Average lot size for new development: 3.2 acres per principal structure

## **Rural Use (RU) Districts**

Location: Areas farther removed from hamlets and from roads suitable to support development, and/or characterized by soils and slopes with some development limitations. Coincidental with proposed APA Rural Use land use districts.

Character Description: Rural areas characterized by scattered large lot residential development. Also includes “camps” such as the Moose Pond Club property.

Vision: Scattered future residential development on larger lots, with the possibility of some commercial uses related to seasonal occupancy or recreation.

Allowable uses: All forms of residential development. Commercial and industrial uses that would not be disruptive of rural residential environments.

Average lot size for new development: 8.5 acres per principal structure

## **Resource Management (RM) Districts**

Location: Areas characterized by resource restrictions such as wetlands, steep slopes, or flood hazards; and/or forested areas or other open space in relatively remote locations. Coincidental with APA Resource Management land use districts.

Character Description: Predominantly open space, with occasional scattered, widely spaced, residential usage on very large lots, often for seasonal use.

Vision: Forested open space with occasional residential or recreation usage that is consistent with the scenic character of the district..

Allowable uses: Residential and recreational uses on large lots.

Average lot size for new development: 42.7 acres per principal structure

## **ZONING PLAN**

It is the recommendation of this plan that a zoning law be adopted by the Town of Minerva that incorporates the above described land use districts and establishes land use regulations to deal with future growth concerns. Specifically, it is recommended that such zoning law contain the following provisions designed to compliment, and be consistent with, existing Adirondack Park Agency regulations.

## **Residential development**

- The zoning law should provide for all forms of housing in all zones.
- Site plan review and approval should be required for all forms of multi-family housing, townhouse developments, or cluster style developments.
- Mobile homes should be subject to design standards to promote compatibility with conventionally constructed dwellings.
- There should *not* be minimum lot sizes established for land use districts where the APA has established a maximum density requirement (i.e. all APA zones except Hamlet). This will give developers maximum flexibility in designing residential subdivisions using some form of clustering or “density averaging.”
- There should be a minimum road frontage requirement for all lots established along all public highways in order to prevent the proliferation of long narrow properties resulting in closely spaced homes. The frontage requirement should vary in proportion to the average lot size established by APA regulations.
- All forms of multi-family housing, townhouse developments, or cluster style development should be set back at least 300 feet from any existing public road, should be screened from the highway by topography or vegetation, and all dwellings within such developments should front upon an internal access road rather than upon a public highway.

## **Commercial and Industrial Development**

- Commercial uses should not be restricted to small commercial zones, but should be allowed in many areas within the town after site plan review and approval by the Planning Board. Because there are no prime areas for commercial development within the Town of Minerva, no exclusive commercial zone should be established. Rather, it is likely that small businesses of a service nature, or those related to tourism and recreation, will seek to become established in scattered locations. It is not possible to anticipate where the demand for these types of establishments will occur. For these reasons, the town should permit several types of commercial uses in several zones, provided that possible adverse impacts upon residential neighbors are minimized.
- “Clean industries” should also not be restricted to small zones, for the same reasons .
- “Problem” uses should either be excluded from the town entirely, or located within the most rural zones in order to minimize adverse impacts.

## **ACTION PLAN**

The following actions should be taken to implement this plan.

### **Land Use Regulations**

- Replace the existing “Town of Minerva Site Plan and Land Division Review Law” with a conventional Zoning Law and Land Subdivision Law. The zoning and subdivision laws should follow the policies and recommendations of this plan.
- Make application to the Adirondack Park Agency to amend the Adirondack Land Use and Development Plan Map according to the recommendations of this plan.

### **Historic Preservation**

- Establish a committee to pursue the idea of creating some sort of notification and recognition program for locally significant historic buildings, and solicit assistance from government agencies or universities.
- Develop a map and brochure describing the historic resources of the town.

### **Business Development**

- Refer businesses that may be eligible for Empire Zone status to the Essex County Office of Community Development and Planning.

### **Recreation**

- Continue work to create a nature trail at the town park.
- Coordinate with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation to encourage the development of additional snowmobile, hiking and biking trails.

### **Tourism**

- Work with existing organizations to promote tourism.
-

<sup>[1]</sup> Quotes and some of the information contained in this section are derived from the “Town of Minerva Comprehensive Plan” document prepared in 2003 by the Town of Minerva Zoning Commission.

<sup>[2]</sup> Quotes and some of the information contained in this section are derived from the “Town of Minerva Comprehensive Plan” document prepared in 2003 by the Town of Minerva Zoning Commission, and from “Minerva, 1817-1967, a history of a town in Essex Co., N.Y.” prepared by the Minerva Historical Society.

<sup>[3]</sup> Slope data is derived from Order 2 soil mapping data supplied by the Essex Co. Soil and Water Conservation District.

<sup>[4]</sup> Quotations in this section are taken from “Minerva, 1817-1967, A History of a Town in Essex Co. NY,” pp. 1-2, written by John C. Stewart, Assistant Professor at Brooklyn College.

<sup>[5]</sup> Much of the information in this section is derived from a draft report prepared for the 1976 Town of Minerva planning program.

<sup>[6]</sup> Conversation with NYS DEC staff.

<sup>[7]</sup> Much of the information in this section is derived from a draft report prepared for the 1976 Town of Minerva planning program.

<sup>[8]</sup> Information from the 1976 planning program.

<sup>[9]</sup> Much of the information in this section is derived from a draft report prepared for the 1976 Town of Minerva planning program.

<sup>[10]</sup> Information from the 1976 planning program.

<sup>[11]</sup> The study contains an inventory sheet for each property describing the resource and its condition. It also contains a town-wide map showing the location of each property.

<sup>[12]</sup> “Growth Trends in the Adirondack Park: Analysis of Rates and Patterns of Development,” Residents Committee to Protect the Adirondacks, 2001.

<sup>[13]</sup> “Adirondack Great Walks and Hikes,” Adirondack Regional Tourism Council, p. 15.

<sup>[14]</sup> Reference for this section is the “State of New York Adirondack Park Master Plan,” NYS APA and NYS DEC, updated in 2001.

<sup>[15]</sup> “Private Land Resource Capability, Inventory Report 1,” report prepared by the Adirondack Park Agency, August 1972, 16 plus pages, and “A Planning Methods and Results Overview of the Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan,” report prepared by Roger Wells, August 1977, 13 plus pages.

<sup>[16]</sup> “Private Land Resource Capability Inventory Report 1,” p. 4.

<sup>[17]</sup> “Private Land Resource Capability Inventory Report 1,” and “A Planning Methods and Results Overview of the Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan,” report prepared by Roger Wells, August 1977, 13 plus pages.

<sup>[18]</sup> The original plan was prepared by hand. The current analysis was prepared using Arcview 8.x software and computerized data files.

<sup>[19]</sup> The work plan for consultants, formerly distributed by the APA to consultants using state funds to prepare local plans within the Adirondack Park, required the completion of both an environmental limitations composite map and a development opportunities map, the same methodology used in the present analysis.