

TOWN OF MARATHON

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted: October 13th, 2015

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TOWN OF MARATHON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A. PREFACE

This Comprehensive Plan is designed to provide guidance for land use decisions in the Town of Marathon. This plan and the accompanying map are not intended to define precise boundaries for proposed land uses. Rather, they are intended to indicate general areas of land use recommendations. Additionally, certain areas may be appropriate for mixed use development. The more specific aspects of land use classification are appropriately handled through existing Town regulations (i. e. zoning and subdivision regulations).

B. OBJECTIVE

The objective of this plan is to preserve and enhance the present desirable features within the Town while allowing for development by providing guidance for agricultural, residential, recreational and commercial/industrial growth, yet maintaining a conscientious concern for the environment.

The Town followed a four step process to assure that the objective of this plan is attained:

- a. identify the direction in which the residents of the Town desire its future growth to take place;
- b. define the objectives needed to accomplish this growth;
- c. identify issues related to the objectives for each land use category (agricultural, residential, recreational, etc.); and
- d. provide guidance for the achievement of these objectives.

C. SUMMARY OF GOALS

Strict adherence to land uses that are compatible with the different environmental restraints found in Marathon should be followed in order to protect present and future residents.

Seven major land use categories are defined in the plan. They are: Recreation, Conservation, Residential, Community Services, Agricultural, Commercial/Industrial, and the Aquifer Protection Area.

The Plan has established the following goals and guidelines for development within the Town:

1. Preserve water quality - both groundwater and surface water.
2. Maintain the country setting and physical characteristics of the Town.
3. Encourage agricultural land uses.
4. Determine areas of the Town where development should be encouraged to take place.
5. Continue to encourage a healthy and safe environment.
6. Maintain proper zoning and development controls.
7. Encourage commercial and light industrial development that is compatible with the rural character of the Town.
8. Develop and encourage recreational opportunities and protect existing ones.

D. INTRODUCTION

Allowing compatible development, while maintaining the rural character of the Town of Marathon, along with the protection of its groundwater and other natural resources is the purpose of this Comprehensive Plan.

The Town's Zoning Law and Subdivision Regulations must be enforced and **updated** in order to follow this plan and obtain the goals and objectives set forth. The adherence of the Town's people and outside interests who intend to build homes and businesses within the Town will be needed to follow the Comprehensive Plan and make it effective.

Listed within this Plan are seven land use categories along with their individual goals and objectives. They are Agricultural, Commercial/Industrial, Community Services, Conservation, Recreation, Residential, and the Aquifer Protection Area.

These categories were located on the accompanying Comprehensive Plan Map based on existing land uses, environmental restraints as well as future projections of growth in any of these areas.

Protection of the aquifer should be a priority. Its location is shown as an overlay zone on the Comprehensive Plan Map. Guidelines for future growth and continuation of existing homes, farms and businesses over this aquifer should be developed to protect and preserve this precious natural resource.

E. LAND USE ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE

1. Agriculture Areas

The preservation of agriculture is a key to retaining the Town's present economy and rural character. Continuing to enhance the agricultural sector will help sustain present and future investments, expand the economic potential of farming and maintain the quality of life in Marathon.

The Town desires to discourage large tract residential development in agricultural areas, since adjoining agricultural operations tend to conflict with residential land-use.

The Town also supports initiatives which would shift agricultural land to more profitable agricultural uses.

Preservation of Agricultural land-uses supports the protection of the aquifer. The cumulative effects of development in the aquifer area pose a serious threat to a safe and adequate water supply serving Marathon and other areas to the south.

2. Commercial/Light Industrial Areas

Commercial and Light Industrial development has had minimal impact on the rural character of the Town. There are existing viable commercial operations within the Town particularly along US Route 11 and NYS Route 221. Additionally, secondary commercial/light industrial enterprises can be spawned from existing operations with low environmental impact through proper planning. By designating areas for commercial/light industrial uses, such as the properties along US Route 11 south of the Village of Marathon, there is potential for increasing the economic viability of Marathon while protecting against conflict with the agricultural/residential areas of the Town.

3. Community Services

Community Services are a vital component in maintaining the quality of life of a rural community. Community services at the Town level include the Town Hall/Courts and the Town Highway Garage. Other services available to the community are under the jurisdiction of the Village, County or State (such as the civic center, public transportation and police protection). The Town will continue to support the maintenance of these services for current and future residents.

4. Conservation Areas - Uplands, Wetlands, & State Forest Lands

Certain areas of the Town have severe limitations for development due to environmental restraints such as steep slopes (15+%) or low lying wetlands. Preserving these areas helps maintain the Town's ecological balance. The conservation areas include those critical lands and waters which are vital to the life-giving food chains providing continuity for relatively wild natural areas. These areas replenish and provide stability for the aquifer, forests, steep slopes and natural drainage ways that combine to produce the unique quality and character of the landscape in Marathon. These conservation areas require careful consideration to prevent permanent damage or loss to future generations (mudslide in Lafayette Valley (1993) points to steep slope instability caused by removal of natural cover).

5. Recreation Areas

There are no public parks within the Town of Marathon outside of the Village limits; however ample recreational opportunities exist. The Village of Marathon Recreation Program provides numerous recreational opportunities for both children and adults. The Town will continue to support the Village's recreational programs.

The Cortland County Snowmobile Trail traverses the Town, as does a network of designated secondary trails. Other recreational opportunities exist in the Town including fishing along the Tioughnioga River, and hunting through permission from private landowners.

6. Residential Areas

Residential development and farming both require soils of high quality to be successful. Since prime agricultural lands are to be conserved, new residential development should be directed to areas that already have some development. Encouraging infill and fringe residential development is an extension of this policy. Strip housing development is undesirable because of its creeping destruction of the community's rural landscape character. Some of this loss of character results from the incompatibility between farm operations and strip housing.

7. Aquifer Protection Area

Without adequate controls, future development can infringe heavily on aquifer. In order to protect the Town's fragile and unique natural water resources and ultimately the aquifer, the concept of an "overlay zone" is developed herein.

F. DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The land use categories discussed above provide a rationale for the arrangement of land use areas shown on the Comprehensive Plan Map. When developments are proposed in any of these areas, review by the Planning Board should include reference to the goals and policies given below prior to taking action.

AGRICULTURAL

The practice of agriculture is vital to the quality of life enjoyed and desired by residents of the Town of Marathon. As shown on the Town's land use map, agricultural lands comprise the majority of parcels in the Town.

GOAL: To protect and maintain the rural atmosphere of our community and economy generated by farming by encouraging agricultural land uses within the Town.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Attempt to preserve agricultural land in the largest tracts possible -- especially prime farmland.
2. Strive to promote land uses that are compatible with agricultural practices in areas largely devoted to farming or designated as agricultural districts.
3. Promote individual undertakings and private enterprises such as home businesses. These are low impact activities that can serve to preserve the rural atmosphere of the Town and bolster the economy without impact on farmland or farm operations.
4. Discourage strip housing development along roadways because of its creeping destruction of the Town's rural landscape and open space character.
5. Careful review of non-agricultural uses for their long term compatibility with farming.

6. Make use of the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board, Cortland County Soil and Water Conservation District, Cortland County Planning Department, Cortland County Health Department, Cornell Cooperative Extension or any other agency that can help maintain and preserve agricultural land and promote agricultural uses in the future for land in the Town of Marathon.

COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL

GOAL: To provide for commercial/industrial areas and uses that maximizes economic benefits while minimizing environmental impact.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Designated commercial/industrial areas should be an expansion of or adjacent to already existing enterprises and should be in close proximity to State Routes.
2. Commercial/industrial development should conform to aesthetic standards established by the Town and should compliment the existing rural character of the Town.
3. Sufficient yards, wooded areas, fences or other buffering should be provided to separate commercial/industrial or mixed use development from any residential structure or farming operation.
4. Industrial development proposals for high intensity operations which obviously conflict with the rural character of the Town will not be encouraged.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Police (Public Safety)

GOAL: To protect the citizens and enforce the laws governing the people and their property in the Town of Marathon.

OBJECTIVES: Consideration should be given to:

1. The increase in traffic on most roads in the Town needs strict enforcement of speed limits.
2. Support the current level of law enforcement services of the County Sheriff's Department and NYS Police.

Courts

GOAL: To maintain local jurisdiction and a judication of the laws which govern the people.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To provide adequate facilities.
2. To provide funding for the local justice system.

Beautification

GOALS: To enhance the beauty and aesthetic quality of the Town.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Preservation and maintenance of existing structures.
2. Elimination of illegal junk yards and unsightly clutter.

Historical

GOAL: To maintain, improve, and protect historic sites and structures as well as adaptive reuse of structures where appropriate.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To support the Historical Society as an organization for the protection and enhancement of sites with historical significance within the Town.
2. Continuation of the Historical Marker Program
3. To preserve and maintain the cemeteries of historical significance within the Town including but not limited to the following:
 - A. Gerard Cemetery – east side of US Route 11, near Lapeer town line.
 - B. Sherwood or Fralick Cemetery – west side of Merrill Creek Road.
 - C. Texas Valley Cemetery – south of East Freetown Texas Valley and west of Texas Valley Road.

4. To preserve and maintain the structures of historical significance within the Town.

Senior Citizens

GOAL: To create an atmosphere compatible with the desires of the senior citizen population within the community.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Development of programs/activities which meet the needs and interest of the senior citizens of the Town, including continued support of the Maple Leaf Senior Center.
2. Encourage the provisions for senior citizen services such as meals on wheels, publications, senior housing, etc.

Public Transportation

GOAL: To support a public transportation system that is affordable, safe, efficient, and convenient.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Encourage the continued availability of adequate public transportation.
2. Periodic update of the Town's official highway map.

Youth Commission

GOAL: To provide a wide variety of year round activities for the youth population under the direction of a volunteer board.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Support year round activities for youth.
2. Promote awareness of the variety of activities offered.

Education The school serves as a community center and thus provides an essential sense of community as well as socialization for youth and adults, brings neighbors together, and provides an excellent education for students.

GOAL: To support school sponsored activities of the Marathon Central School District

Medical Centers The Town contracts with MAVAC for ambulance service. Marathon Health Center and regional medical centers provide medical resources in close proximity to the Town.

GOAL: To continue to provide emergency medical and rescue services.

Town Facilities Town Hall & Justice Court, Code Office & Records Retention, and Highway Department Facilities.

GOAL: To provide an adequate & code compliant space for these Town activities and functions.

Fire Department

GOAL: To continue to provide fire protection and emergency services by a dedicated volunteer fire department.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Provide adequate facilities and equipment.
2. Encourage active volunteerism.

CONSERVATION

As increasing amounts of farmland are being converted to residential use, Marathon must work to protect the values which have drawn residents to this Town. The rural character of the Town is attractive to many residents. Residents utilize Marathon's open spaces for a variety of outdoor activities, such as hiking, snowmobiling, cross country skiing, bird-watching, and hunting. The value of these activities remains high only as long as the quality of the resource base remains high.

Areas which are inappropriate for development due to topography, shallow water table, or other environmental limiting factors need to be identified. Demand for retaining open space is high among Marathon residents; any areas which are marginal for development should be maintained as open space. In some cases, improvements in terms of litter control, etc., may open additional areas for recreational use or scenic enjoyment.

Additionally, it would be valuable to identify areas within wetlands and forest lands which may harbor endangered species, so that these areas can be protected. Areas set aside for conservation would benefit local students, hikers, bird watchers, as well as the general

public, in terms of preserving the natural, rural, and scenic values of the Town.

GOAL: To safeguard against the wrongful use and abuse of high-risk ecological areas in Marathon and to provide for the most appropriate use of land based on its environmental restraints.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Only appropriately designed residential development should be permitted on lands with slopes in excess of 15%. Land uses on steep slopes should be those that aid in the control of erosion and floods. Practices compatible with this function would be primarily forestry and recreation, with only occasional low-density housing being permitted.
2. Land owners and developers shall bear the responsibility of assuring proper analysis and planning, in advance of development, for the adequate control of surface water through the use of storm drains, ditches, and other means.
3. Development should be discouraged within areas with a high water table, at a depth of 1 and 1/2 feet or less from the surface. The land use most consistent with areas of the Town having a water table of 1 and 1/2 feet or less is open space.
4. Floodways, floodplains and streamways should be preserved in their natural state or reserved for low-intensity land uses.
5. Proposed extraction of earth materials should be presented with an accompanying reclamation plan.

RECREATION

GOAL: To provide sufficient space and facilities for leisure pursuits for people of all ages and for all seasons. These recreational activities may include, but are not limited to, hunting, camping, fishing, horseback riding, winter sports, active and passive games and cultural activities.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Recognize and protect areas of land having exceptional recreational, educational or unique natural value to the public.
2. Work cooperatively with commercial entities to encourage continuing recreational opportunities for Town residents.

3. Provide recreational information at the Town Clerk's office which outlines recreational areas and opportunities, both public and private, which exist in the Town.
4. Promote outside interest in the recreational opportunities available in the Town, recognizing that it is beneficial for the Town's economy.
5. Consider a policy, which sets aside open space within future subdivisions which shall be designated as "common land" to be preserved for the leisure pursuits of the residents of the subdivision.
6. Pursuit of State, Federal and private funding sources should be considered in order to meet the above stated objectives.
7. Continue the partnership with the school district to take advantage of the recreational opportunities available at or from the school.

RESIDENTIAL

GOAL: To recognize and encourage planned growth and development within the Town of Marathon. Planned growth will help maintain and expand the Town's tax base, while continuing to support the Town's attractive rural character.

OBJECTIVES:

1. The most dense future residential development should be encouraged along local roads, feeding off from main arterials and collector roads within the Town. These main arterials, being mostly state and county maintained, offer the best access for a growing population of commuting residents.
2. Priority shall be given to alternative methods of residential development, including conservation, cluster type and/or planned unit development. However, conventional development on larger lots would not be out of character with the remainder of the Town, especially within the Aquifer Protection District.
3. Consideration shall be given to the compatibility of development with existing agricultural and residential use.
4. Residential development shall take into account the fragile environmental features located within the Town such as wetlands, floodplains, and the sole source aquifer.

5. The Planning Board shall encourage the use of deed restrictions on the part of the developer to help determine the overall character of the development.
6. Sufficient yards, wooded areas, fences or other buffering should be provided to separate any planned residential or mixed use development from neighboring farming operations.

AQUIFER PROTECTION/STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

The sand and gravel aquifers in the Town of Marathon provide water to many people in the Town as well as to many businesses and community services. If this resource were to become contaminated and no longer potable, securing an alternative source of water for the people in the populated centers of the Town and Village would be a great financial burden.

GOAL: To protect the various aquifers in the Town from contamination or excessive withdrawals in order to ensure the availability of this valuable resource for future generations.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Support efforts to study the aquifers within the Town. Additional hydrogeologic information about the aquifers will enable the Town to better understand these resources in order to use them and protect them efficiently and effectively.
2. Promote existing public education programs of the County Health Department and Soil and Water Conservation District to inform people about the local aquifers, their importance, and ways to protect them. An informed educated public will help promote aquifer protection.
3. Adopt an Aquifer Protection District Local Law or Ordinance to:
 - a. Create an “overlay zone” of the aquifer areas to which aquifer protection regulations would apply.
 - b. Prohibit land uses or activities that pose an elevated risk of contaminating the aquifers such as landfills, mining activities, or facilities that use, store, process, dispose of, or treat hazardous materials or waste material.

- c. Require additional protective measures to be installed or constructed to protect the aquifers from potential hazards of contamination.
 - d. Require a larger minimum lot size for properties with on-site sewage treatment (septic) systems within the Aquifer Protection District overlay zone.
 - e. Require a permit from the Town for excessive withdrawal of water from an aquifer.
4. Adopt a Stormwater Management and Erosion and Sediment Control Local Law or Ordinance in order to:
 - a. Manage stormwater runoff due to development in such a way as to prevent infiltration of contaminated runoff into the aquifer.
 - b. Protect surface water quality and prevent increased flooding in the Town due to development in addition to protecting the outlying roads and culverts.
 5. Make a commitment to using the local laws or ordinances to prevent contamination of the aquifers. Enforcement of local regulations is critical to efforts to protect the aquifer.

G. ROAD SYSTEM FOR THE TOWN OF MARATHON

The road system in the Town of Marathon has been vital for the businesses and residences alike for many years. Local land use regulation should recognize the traffic-carrying functions of major roads and should help to preserve this function in every practical way. If an efficient, safe and workable road system is to be achieved three goals should be sought.

1. A highway system in and through the Town will facilitate traffic movement and minimize points of conflict and delay.
2. A local road network that provides efficient access to all parts of the Town, and promotes convenient vehicular movement from one part of the Town to another.
3. The establishment of guidelines and standards for a lower cost road for low volume applications.

TYPES OF ROADS

The following outline of the existing road system is provided as a guideline for

future development.

I. LIMITED ACCESS – Interstate Route 81

II. MAIN ARTERIALS (NYS ROUTES)

There are (2) two main arterials that are primary traffic carriers within and through the Town. Their main purpose is to carry traffic relatively quickly from one destination in the region to another, plus access to adjacent lands, county and town roads. NYS Route 221 and US Route 11 make up the main arteries for the Town. Traffic movement on main arteries is essential, especially in the winter time.

III. COLLECTORS (CORTLAND COUNTY ROADS)

There are (8) eight collectors (county roads) that are secondary traffic carriers within the Town. Efficient traffic movement and access to adjacent lands and town roads are equally important functions of the collectors.

Bloody Pond Road, Carter Slocum Road, Divers Crossing, Tannery Street Extension, Highland Road, McGraw-Marathon Road, Merrill Creek Road, and Texas Valley Road make up the collectors of the Town. Efficient traffic movement on the collectors is essential for the commuters as well as the local residents.

IV. LOCAL ROADS (TOWN ROAD)

There are (25) twenty five local roads whose primary function is to provide access to adjacent lands, residential, farm, and state land. Local roads are not intended for fast, heavy or through traffic carriers but, none-the-less, traffic movement should be relatively fluent.

The Town should take into consideration classifying their local roads with fewer than 400 vehicles per day as low-volume rural roads. Set forth by the Guidelines for Rural Town and County Roads. {Cornell Roads Program}

These local road classifications are:

1. LOW-VOLUME COLLECTOR

Collects traffic from any of the other classifications and channels it to higher level roads, such as arterials, Interstate, etc.

2. RESIDENTIAL ACCESS

Provides access to residences. The traffic volume generated depends on the number of residences. Year round access for fire trucks, ambulances, and school buses must be provided.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE ACCESS

Provides access to large tracts of land used primarily for agriculture, recreation, or logging.

4. MINIMUM MAINTENANCE ROAD

A minimum maintenance road is a low-volume road or road segment primarily providing agricultural or recreational land access, having an average traffic volume of 50 or less vehicles per day, and with no year round residences or businesses. Minimum maintenance is not “no maintenance,” and a road or road segment which has been so designated shall be maintained at a level which allows the road to remain passable and functional in accordance with the Guidelines for Rural Town and County Roads. The minimum maintenance road concept provides an alternative to abandonment or to designation as a seasonal limited use road. Abandonment is a difficult process to complete, and a seasonal limited use road must be upgraded if and when a year round residence is built along the road.

5. PRIVATE ROAD

Provides access to residential, agricultural, or woodlands as a privately owned road/driveway which is not Town owned or maintained.

<u>ROAD NAMES</u>	<u>MILES</u>	<u>PROPOSED CLASSIFICATIONS</u>
1. Albro Rd.	1.01	#1
2. Cold Springs Rd.	1.73	#2
3. Conrad Rd.	2.08	#1
4. Deans Pond Rd.	1.2	#2
5. Fish Hill Rd.	0.08	#2
6. Front Street Ext.	0.3	#2
7. Glover Rd.	0.3	#3
8. Irish Hill Rd.	1.59	#1, #2
9. Jason Hill Rd. (Private)		#5
10. Jennings Rd.	0.36	#2, #3
11. Krill Road	0.89	#2
12. Lovell Hill Rd.	0.65	#2, #3
13. McMahon Rd.	0.33	#2, #3
14. Mill Street Ext.	0.2	#2, #3
15. Muster Rd	0.32	#2, #3
16. Newlon Rd.	0.18	#3
17. Phalan Rd.	0.15	#2
18. Phillips Rd.	0.33	#2, #3
19. Piety Ridge Rd.	1.97	#1, #2

Note: The abandoned roads of Newlon and Reed were removed from the Comprehensive Plan before adoption.

20.Pine Hill Rd.	1.31	#2
21.Reed Rd.	0.16	#3
22.Salt Road	0.72	#2
23.Tim Hill Rd.	1.96	#2
24.Turner Hill Rd.	2.16	#1, #2
25.Zelsnack Rd.	0.75	#2

H. PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (PUD)

Planned Unit Development is a land use design technique which groups or concentrates buildings on lots smaller than permitted by existing land use controls in order to preserve open space without increasing the allowable density (units per acre) of development. A PUD may involve a variety of land uses: residential, commercial and light industrial while the open space provides areas for recreational opportunities. It usually involves substantial tracts of land and has a mixture of housing types: single –family dwellings, townhouses, apartments, etc.

I. IMPLEMENTATION

The basic objective of this Plan is to preserve and enhance the present desirable features within the Town while allowing for development by providing guidance for agricultural, residential, recreational, and commercial/industrial growth, yet maintaining a conscientious concern for the environment. Within this Plan, there are also goals and objectives for each classification of land use existing in the Town of Marathon. These goals and objectives can be attained through development and/or amendment of the following implementation mechanisms.

1. Town Zoning

Zoning carries out the planning program with respect to the use of private property. With adoption of the Town Comprehensive Plan, attention should be given to reviewing the relationship of the existing Zoning Law to the Plan.

Such a review will indicate that changes or amendments to the Zoning Law should be made to bring the zoning into closer alignment with the Adopted Comprehensive Plan and Map. These changes/amendment to the Zoning Law/Map should include the following:

- a. Stricter penalties for violation of the Zoning Law.
- b. Revision of guidelines for site plan review, particularly for areas of conflicting land use.

- c. Revision of existing guidelines for special permits to include additional requirements for certain commercial and industrial uses which may be of concern to the Town but are not currently listed within the Zoning Law.
- d. An Aquifer Protection District to:
 - 1. Create an "overlay zone" of the aquifer areas to which aquifer protection regulations would apply.
 - 2. Prohibit land uses or activities that pose an elevated risk of contaminating the aquifers such as landfills, mining activities, or facilities other than agricultural uses that use, store, process, dispose of, or treat hazardous or waste material.
 - 3. Require additional protective measures to be installed or constructed to protect the aquifers from potential hazards of contamination.
 - 4. Require a permit from the Town for excessive withdrawal of water from an aquifer.
- e. Guidelines for Stormwater Management and Erosion and Sediment Control in order to:
 - 1. Manage stormwater runoff due to development in such a way as to prevent infiltration of contaminated runoff into the aquifer.
 - 2. Protect surface water quality and prevent increased flooding due to development, in addition to protecting the aquifer.
- f. Revision of the Town of Marathon Zoning Map to reflect areas designated as certain land use categories on the Comprehensive Plan Map.

2. Subdivision Regulations

Marathon can be expected to develop slowly, for example by one subdivision at a time. Unless each major subdivision is planned to fit into a satisfactory pattern of streets and related facilities, the Town can become an unattractive collection of poorly designed housing developments with associated traffic, drainage and sanitation problems.

In 1970, the Town Board approved the establishment of subdivision

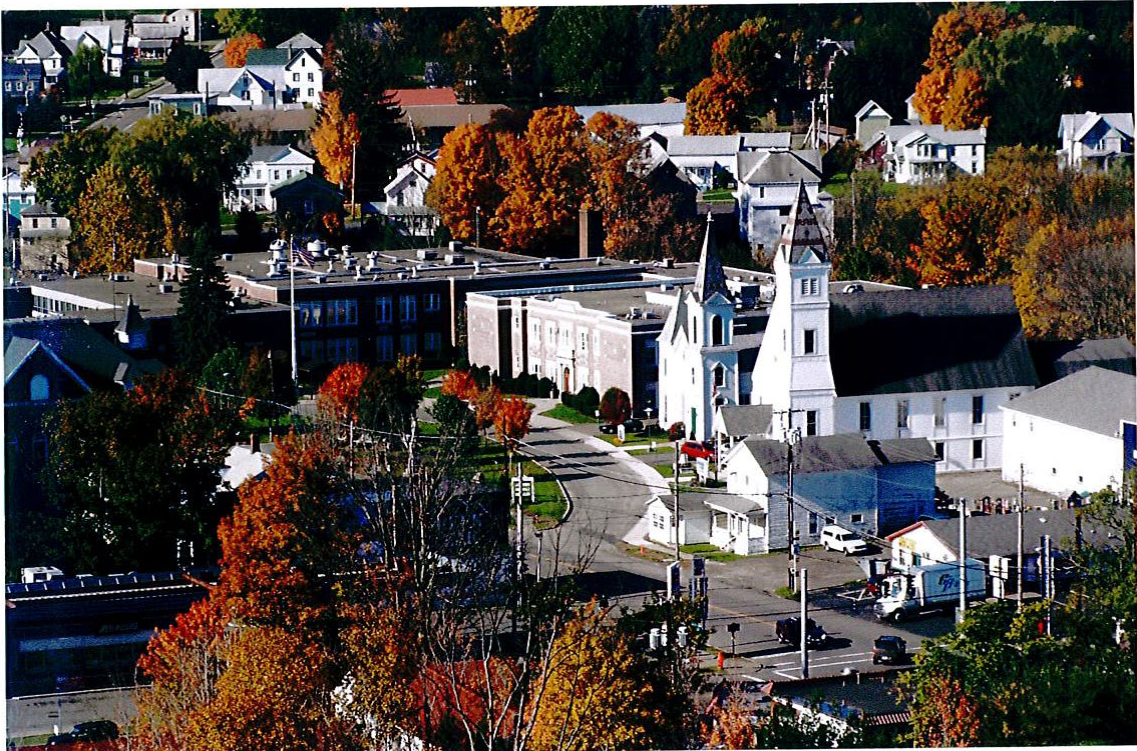
regulations which were authorized by Town Law. These regulations set the standards and requirements that must be followed in creating new land subdivision and related road and street access. As provided by the Town Law, the regulations are administered by the Town Planning Board. Each new land subdivision must be approved by the Planning Board before the subdivision may be advertised for sale or recorded in the County Land Records and before any development may proceed.

The subdivision regulations of the Town are as important to the development of Marathon as is the Zoning Law. It is therefore recommended that the Town's subdivision regulations are also reviewed periodically and updated as necessary. While zoning regulates the use of land, the subdivision regulations control the layout and design of streets and roads and establish the improvements required in all new land developments. For example, this plan discourages strip housing development along roadways. The subdivision regulations can combat the development of strip housing by specifying a maximum depth to width ratio for all newly created lots.

3. Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan

The Town should consider legislation to preserve and protect this valuable resource. One way to accomplish this is through development of an Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan. The purpose of an Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan is to develop programs using local initiatives that are intended to maintain the economic viability of the Town's agricultural industry and its supporting land base and to protect the environmental and landscape preservation values associated with agriculture.

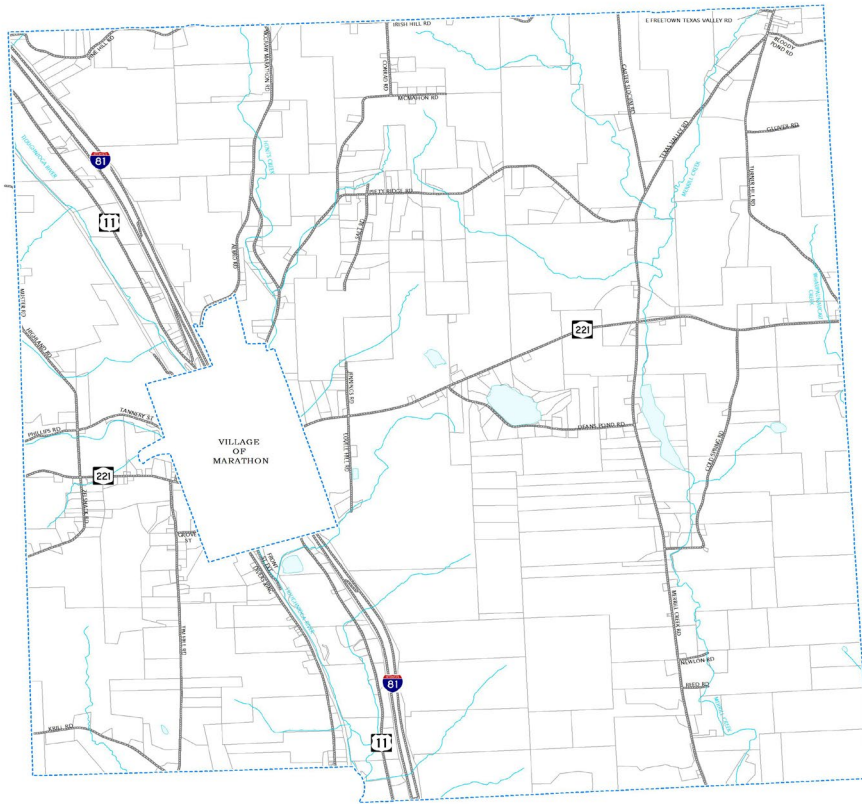
PROFILE



TOWN OF MARATHON

Profile of the Town

The Town of Marathon is located in the southeastern part of Cortland County, approximately 12 miles south of the City of Cortland, and 30 miles north of the City of Binghamton. The Town has a total area of 25.1 square miles, and is an agricultural community that is comprised primarily of agricultural and residential land uses. According to the 2010 census the Town of Marathon had a total population of 1,967 inhabitants. The Town shares a southern border with Broome County, and borders the Towns of Virgil, Freetown, Cincinnatus, Lapeer and Willet. The Tioughnioga River flows north to south on the western part of the Town, and provides many recreational opportunities for residents, such as fishing, canoeing, kayaking, walking, etc. The Town's lowest elevation is 992 feet, and has a rolling topography with hills in the area reaching up to 1,604 feet in elevation.



Map of the Town of Marathon

The Town of Marathon is centrally located on US-11, and on the I-81 corridor, providing easy access to metropolitan areas such as Syracuse, Binghamton, Ithaca and major regional airports. There is also easy access to major universities in the region that include Syracuse University, SUNY-College of Environmental Science and Forestry, Cornell University, SUNY-Cortland, Ithaca College, Binghamton University, Broome Community College, and Tompkins Cortland Community College. These universities not only provide great educational opportunities for the residents of the Town, but are also a major source of employment for many residents of the Town.

History of the Town

Marathon is within the bounds of the former Central New York Military Tract, which were founded by veterans of the Revolutionary War, and each tract was divided into plots 100 square miles in size. The first settlers, Dr. Japath Hunt , an army surgeon from New England who served in the Revolutionary War, arrived in the town with his family by canoe in 1794. Other families followed Dr. Hunt's lead in the following years with the Brink family in 1798, the Carley family in 1800, the Squire family in 1801, the Church family in 1805, and the Burgess family in 1817. These families were the pioneers of the town, as there were no roads at the time, the only means of travel was by river, and the nearest settlement for supplies was Binghamton.

The first road was surveyed near the Hunt's property which was located "on the east side of the river, about a mile south of the present village of Marathon, since known as the Comstock farm and now owned by Edward Moore." This road was "partially cut through the wilderness from the south, near the river, until passing their land, when, diverging from the stream, it crossed the south line of lot number 72, about three-fourths of a mile east of the village of Marathon, and continuing in a northerly direction, intersected the State road at the farm recently owned by Mr. Charles Richardson, of Freetown, and extending north to its terminus at the salt works, which gave it the name of the "salt road."

Another road was also constructed around this time period and was "surveyed and partially opened as a State road, by the way of Oxford westerly through the center of the town subsequently organized as Cincinnatus, and consequently on the north line of the

present town of Marathon, and crossing the river at Chaplin's ford, now known as State Bridge, and thence westerly through the county by Virgil Corners."

The stage line from Syracuse to Binghamton ran through the valley along the Tioughnioga River. Later the building of the Syracuse to Binghamton railroad in 1854 helped to spur the growth and prosperity of Marathon.

According to H.P. Smith "The first school in Marathon was taught by Miss Miriam Cowdry, a portion of the time in a log barn, and subsequently in a log school-house which stood near where the new barn of Wm. Squires is located. This school-house was a very primitive and rude affair, the windows being covered with oiled paper instead of glass; but as early as the close of the war of 1812 the log houses in this and adjoining towns began to gradually give way to the first small framed houses; school districts were organized and school-houses built and provisions made for the support of the common schools. Some of the older residents of Marathon village will remember that a small framed school-house was built some sixty years ago or more, near the bank of the creek, as it then ran, where Hazen's store now stands; and that a heavy freshet so undermined the north side of the building that the structure assumed an angle of about twenty degrees. The school was, however, continued several days before the structure was repaired, during which time one-half of the pupils must have been compelled to look down somewhat on the other half. "

According to Smith the first school house that was of "respectable pretensions" was built by "Esquire" Burgess about the year 1818. Mr. Burgess furnished the lumber and all the materials and painted it for the moderate sum of \$100, receiving his pay in rye and corn, which were, more often than money, the medium of exchange at the time.

The Marathon Academy was chartered by the Regents of the University in February, 1866. The building in the condition it then was had been occupied by a high school kept by E. S. Weld, who owned the building. Mr. Weld enlisted in the 185th regiment in 1864 to go to the defense of the Union, and the building was sold to the Catholic Society about the year 1872, who have since used it as a church. The school was then given its present beautiful location and surroundings. M. L. Hawley, who subsequently edited the *Binghamton Standard*, was principal of the academy during the first two years of its existence. (all content from Smith's History)

The town as it exists today was formed from the southwest quarter of the Town of Cincinnatus military tract as the "Town of Harrison" on April 21st, 1818. The name was changed to "Marathon" in 1829 because another town in New York was named Harrison. The Village of Marathon set itself off from the town in 1861 by incorporation.

Population

Over time the population of the Town of Marathon has not experienced a substantial amount of growth. The first official census taken of the town in 1820 listed the population of the town as having 807 inhabitants. An increase in population occurred between 1850 and 1890. After 1890, population decreased until 1930, but steadily increased up until the year 2000. The town has experienced periods of population growth and decline, with population reaching its peak in the year 2000 with 2,189 inhabitants. (See Figure 1) According to the 2010 census the population of Marathon was 1,967.

According to the 2010 census the vast majority of Marathon's citizens were identified as white, with only 42 citizens listed as races other than white. The town has a fairly even population of male (995) and female (972) inhabitants, but has a considerable age gap in the population with 56% being classified as 35 years of age or older (1,105), 26% as being 20 years or younger (518), and only 17% of the population is 20-34 years of age (344). (See Figure 2)

New York State, according to a 2010 study, also has the fastest growing Amish population in the country. According to town officials, the Town of Marathon has seen a significant increase in the Amish population since 2010, and has noticed an increase in Amish schools and structures within the community. There is no proper documentation in regards to actual population numbers, and the actual numeric increase in the Amish population in the Town cannot be clearly identified.

The age and growth trends of the population is important in knowing what services will be needed for the future of the community. By documenting and understanding these elements one can assess if more services are needed for an aging population such as retirement homes, nursing homes, and hospitals. It can also highlight the need to bring in a younger population to the Town which may bring in more revenue and increase business.

Agriculture (Cortland County)

According to the 2012 Agricultural Census, there were 518 farms in Cortland County, with a total acreage of 115,024. The average size of a farm was 222 acres, slightly larger than the average New York State farm (202 acres). The estimated market

value of land and buildings per acre in 2012 was \$1,906, while the market value of agricultural products sold was \$121,422 per farm, which is less than NYS at \$152,380 per farm. Thirty percent of farms in Cortland County have less than \$2,500 in sales, while 16% of farms have over \$100,000 in sales. The total farm production expenses for Cortland County per farm, \$97,751, were lower than NYS, \$127,617.

In 2007, the Agricultural Census painted a slightly different picture. There were 587 farms in Cortland County, with an average size of 213 acres. NYS had an average farm size of 197 acres. The 587 farms had a total acreage of 124,824. The estimated value of land and buildings was \$1,557 per acre. The market value of agricultural products sold in Cortland County was \$93,500 per farm, while NYS was \$121,551. In 2007, 42% of farms had a value of sales of less than \$2,500 per farm; while 17% had a value of sales in excess \$100,000. Total farm production expenses, per farm, was \$78,086, while NYS's total farm production expenses were \$96,372 (*See Figure 3*).

The number of farms and the number of acres in farms in Cortland County decreased from 2007 to 2012 while the average size of farms increased over the same time period. While there were fewer farms in 2012, the largest farms in the County experienced an increase in the value of sales of agricultural products. This is evidenced by the fact that while there are only 81 farms in Cortland County that have \$100,000 or more value of agricultural products sales per year, the average value of agricultural products sales per farm in the County is \$121,422.

The average age of persons in the farming community is increasing. The average age of a farm operator is 57 years. The average amount of time that a farm operator has

spent on their present farm is 22 years. Many farmers are retiring and with that comes the selling of their farm property. However, there are less and less young people interested in the farming business and therefore younger people are not buying farms. Many farmers have to sell their property to neighboring farms or sell it to outsiders who will use it for other purposes.

Out of the 518 farm operators in Cortland County, 248 listed their principal occupation as other than farming, meaning that many of these people have other jobs. Farming does not support their lifestyle because it is not as profitable as it once was. One cause is the decline in the prices of the goods that many farms produce.

Access to high speed internet is a vital component to remaining competitive in the global market. However, approximately only 43% of all farms in Cortland County have access to high speed internet. The lack of access to high speed internet is a factor in the decline in profits for these farms, which lowers the overall value of the property. (*See Figure 3*)

Farmland occupies slightly over half of the total town area, and The Town of Marathon, in 2013, had 56 parcels of agricultural, dairy and field crops.

Employment

The U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey provides five year (2008-2012) estimates for income and employment information. According to this survey Marathon has an unemployment rate of 8.3%, and 63.5% of the total population 16 years and over were in the workforce during this time period (2008-2012). According to this data the top three occupations in the Town of Marathon are:

1. Management, business, science, and arts occupations
2. Sales and office occupations
3. Production, transportation, and material moving occupations

Although agriculture is a major land use in the town, only 4.3% of the work force was employed in the Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining category.

The median household income was \$51,313, with a per capita income at \$24,590. The data for poverty level estimates was not conclusive, but it did estimate that 8.8% of Marathon's total population was living below poverty level during this time period (2008-2012).

Economic (Cortland County)

The 2010 U.S. Economic Census indicated that there were 1,014 business establishments in the County. That number is up from the 2007 census by nearly 17%, which is a great indicator that more business establishments are opening in the County. Health care and social assistance had the highest number of paid employees (22.6%), with Manufacturing second (16.3%). There were 174 businesses listed as Retail Trade establishments, 126 health care and social assistance establishments, and there were 122 establishments of both accommodation and food services and other services (except public administration).

The major employers for the Town of Marathon are:

- Marathon Boat Group
- E.L. Wood Braiding Company
- Square Deal Machining, Inc.

- Marathon Central School District
- Kurtz Truck Equipment

Housing

Approximately 47.7% of the houses in the Town of Marathon were built in 1939 or earlier while only 7% of the houses were built in 2000 or later. Thirty four percent of the houses in the Town of Marathon had an estimated value between \$50,000-\$99,999. The median value of an owner-occupied housing unit was \$104,600.

Education

The Town of Marathon has three main schools, Marathon Central School, Marathon Christian Academy, and Appleby Elementary School. Marathon Central School, Grades 7-12, has a total of 349 students and 38 teachers, and Appleby Elementary School, Grades K-6, has a total of 392 students and 35 teachers. Marathon Christian Academy has a total of 55 students and 9 teachers.

The U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey also provides five year (2008-2012) estimates for educational attainment for the population of the Town of Marathon 25 years of age or older. The most common educational attainment is a high school diploma. The American Community Survey also indicates that there were 411 students enrolled in grades K-12 and 175 students enrolled in college or graduate school.

(See Figure 4)

Educational Attainment Population (25+ years of age)	Number of Persons

Elementary (0-8 years)	11
High School w/out diploma	57
High School w/diploma	633
Some College w/no Degree	206
Associate's Degree	178
Bachelor's Degree	194
Graduate/Professional Degree	95

Land Use

The two primary land uses within the Town of Marathon are residential and agricultural uses. Currently 38.7% of the land within the Town of Marathon is used for Residential purposes, and 34.9% is used for Agricultural purposes. The other major land use in the town is Vacant Land at 25%, while Industrial and Commercial account for less than 1% of the total land use in the Town of Marathon. *(See Figure 5)*

Population Trend 1800-2010

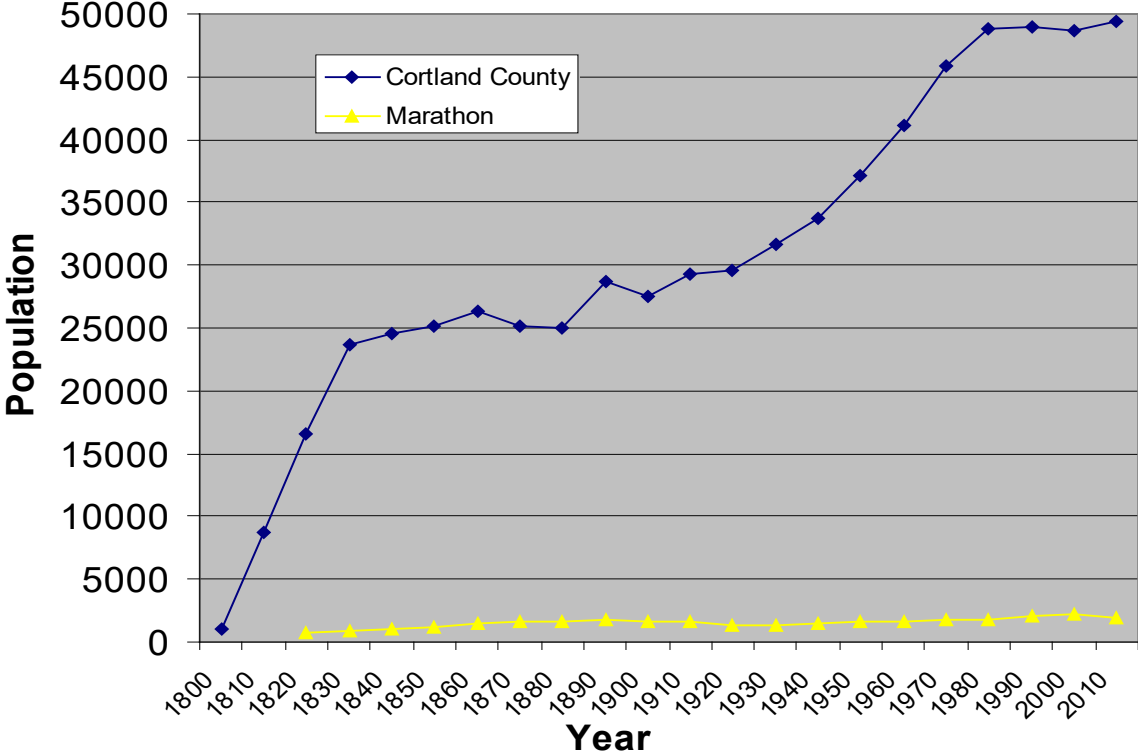


Figure 1

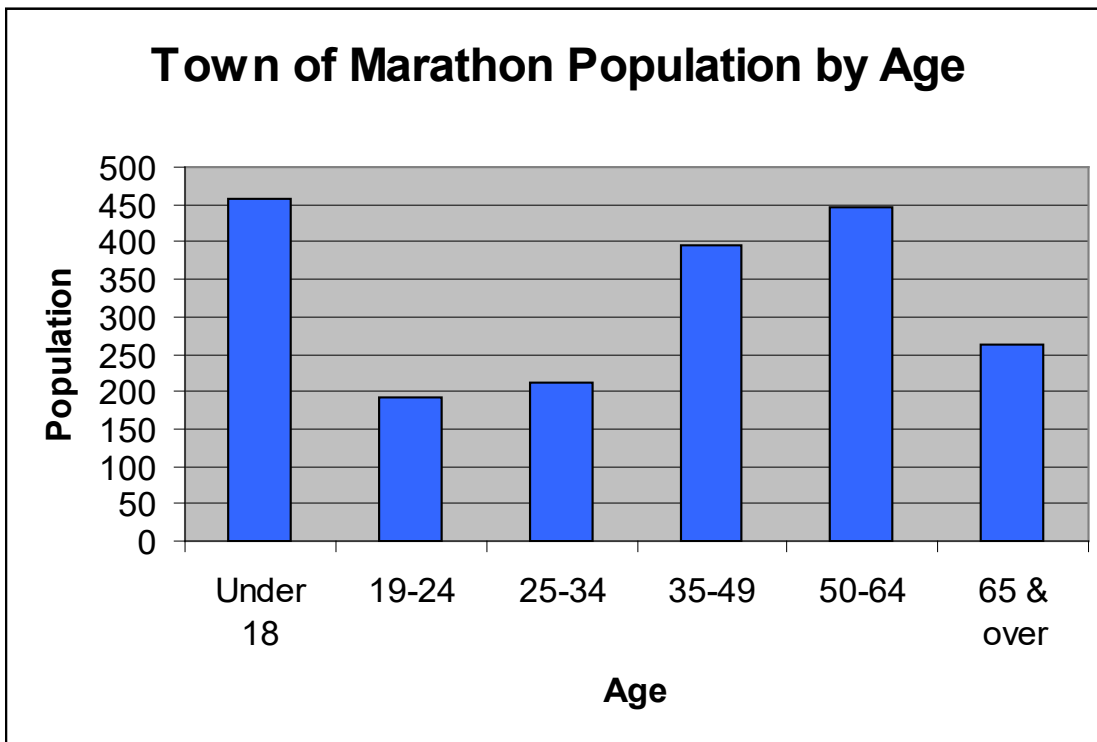


Figure 2

Agricultural Statistics		
	Cortland County 2012	Cortland County 2007
Number of Farms	<i>518</i>	<i>587</i>
Average Size of Farm in acres	<i>222</i>	<i>213</i>
Est. Value of Land & Bldgs per acre	<i>1,906</i>	<i>1,557</i>
Market Value of Ag Products Sold (average per farm)	<i>121,422</i>	<i>93,500</i>
Total Farm Production Expenses (average per farm)	<i>97,751</i>	<i>78,086</i>
New York State 2012 vs 2007		
	New York State 2012	New York State 2007
Number of Farms	<i>35,537</i>	<i>36,352</i>
Average Size of Farm in acres	<i>202</i>	<i>197</i>
Est. Value of Land & Bldgs per acre	<i>2,600</i>	<i>2,275</i>
Market Value of Ag Products Sold (average per farm)	<i>152,380</i>	<i>121,551</i>
Total Farm Production Expenses (average per farm)	<i>127,716</i>	<i>96,372</i>
* Based on data from the 2012 and 2007 Agricultural Census		

Figure 3

Town of Marathon Educational Statistics

Educational Attainment (Population 25+ Years of Age)

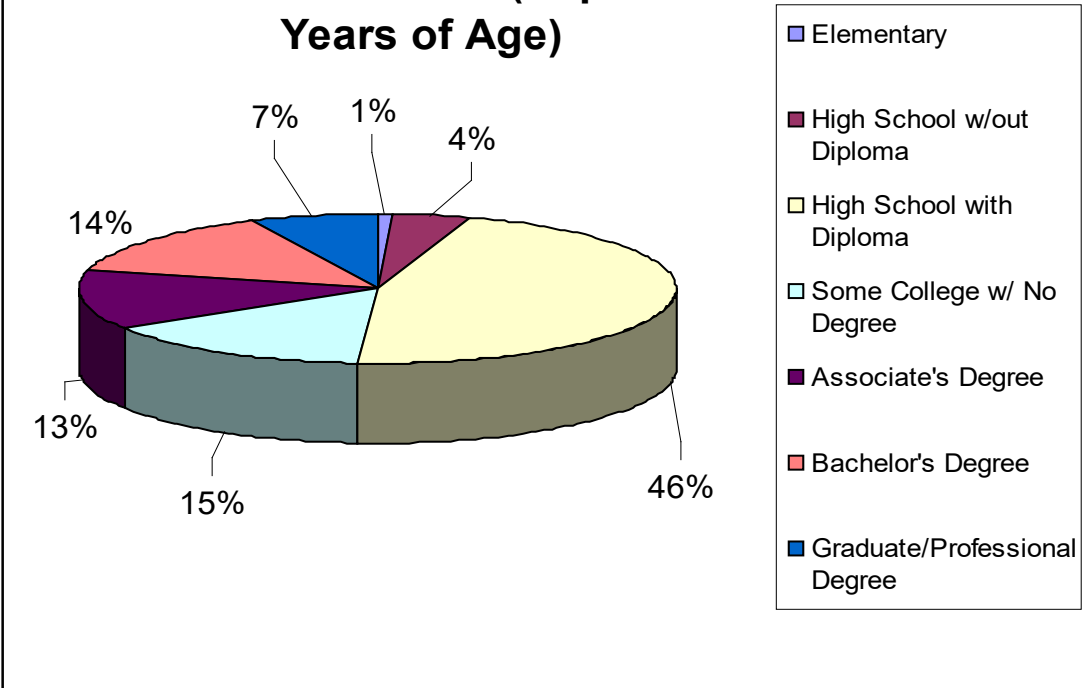


Figure 4

Town of Marathon Land Use Percentages

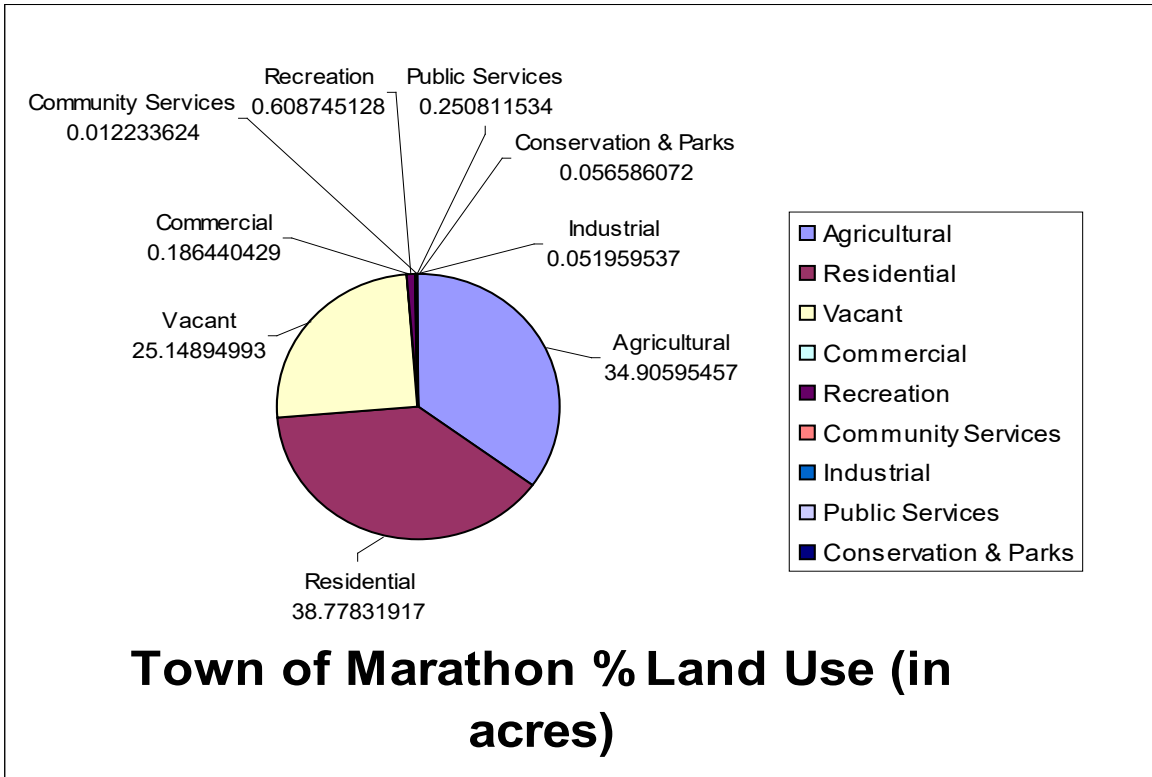


Figure 5