

Town of Cicero
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
Community Profile
DRAFT Nov 2023




**VISION
CICERO**

Setting Our
Expectations
Higher



COMMUNITY PROFILE





Understanding the current demographics and physical characteristics of Cicero are critical components of the comprehensive planning process, providing insights into trends, opportunities and issues facing the Town.

REGIONAL & HISTORIC CONTEXT

Overview

Located approximately 15 miles northeast of the City of Syracuse in the northern end of Onondaga County, the Town of Cicero is a suburban community of approximately 48.5 square miles. The hamlet of Brewerton is located within the Town boundary. Routes I-81, 11, 31, and 298 run through town.

Nearby Geographic Markers

The Town of Cicero is bordered by Oneida Lake and the Oneida River to the north, which also serve as the borders to Oswego County. To the east, the Town of Cicero borders Madison County, marked by Chittenango Creek. The 5,000-acre Cicero Swamp Wildlife Management Area is located in the southeastern area of Town.

Historic Context

The land that Cicero sits on was the land of the Onondaga Nation of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. Here, the Onondaga established a fishing village called Techiroguen prior to the arrival of western settlers. Important trails passed through the area and crossed the Oneida River at the foot of the lake, a spot known for being an important source of fish.

Named after Roman orator Marcus Tullius Cicero, the Town of Cicero was plotted in 1790 as a Central New York Military Tract, and the land was set aside as bounty for New Yorkers who served in the American Revolution. When Onondaga County formed four years later, the Town was included as part of the Town of Lysander.

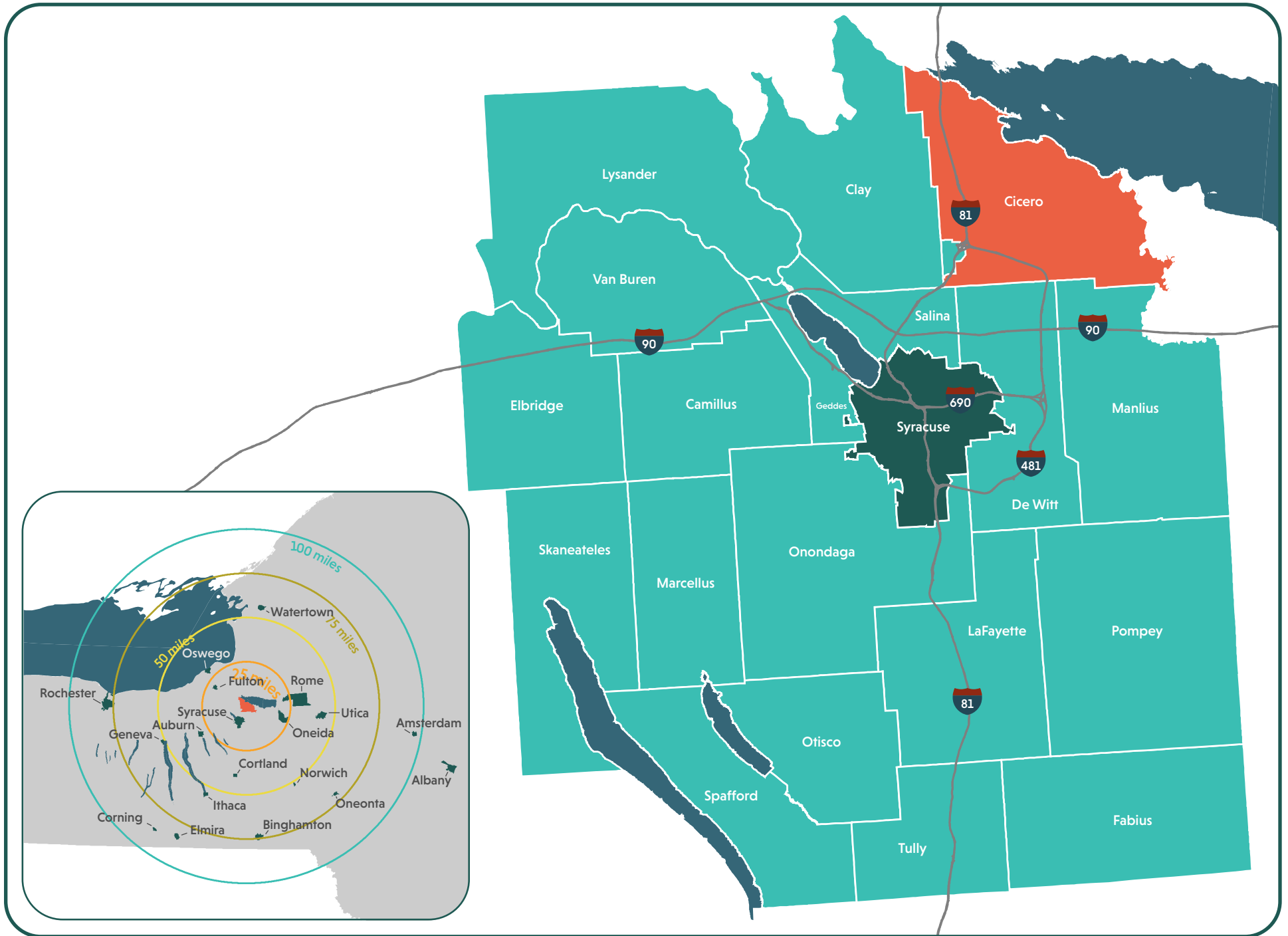
In 1807 the Town of Cicero became its own entity and included part of what is now Clay, New York. That year, the first town meeting was held at the house of Patrick McGee at Three River Point, and Thomas Pool was elected Town Supervisor. The town continued to grow; in 1817 the first doctor set up practice, in 1818 the first store was constructed at Cicero Corners, and by 1820 Cicero got its first post office at Cicero Corners.

The Town of Cicero was divided in half in 1887, with the western portion becoming the Town of Clay and the east remaining as Cicero with a population of 1,808. Cicero enjoyed gradual growth for the next sixty years until the population skyrocketed from 5,956 in 1950 to 14,725 in 1960 -- a 147.2% increase -- as people left city centers for their suburban counterparts. Cicero established itself as a bedroom community of the City of Syracuse, and today has a population of 29,302.



Route 11 at Route 31, circa 1930s

Location + Regional Context



DEMOGRAPHICS

The existing socioeconomic conditions and trends in Cicero will inform future decisionmaking.

Trends indicate that Cicero is a stable community with good jobs, high median household incomes, high housing occupancy rates, and well-educated residents. Data also reveals that Cicero is aging -- a reality that brings with it specific needs such as preferred housing types, changing expectations for parks and open space, and impacts on local schools.

This data helps inform policy decisions and land use development, and will help guide the recommendations included throughout this Plan.

Population

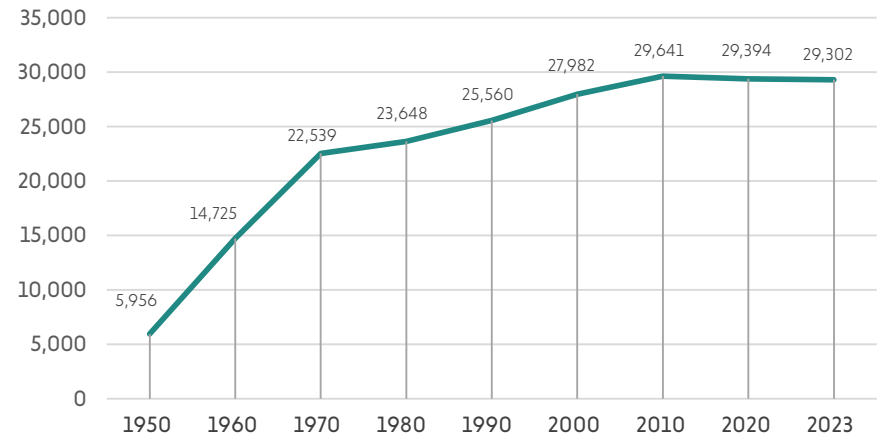
As of 2023, the population of Cicero is **29,302**, which fell from 31,682 in 2010 (-0.83%) according to ESRI. Meanwhile, the population of Onondaga County as a whole rose from 467,026 in 2010 to 474,638 in 2023 (1.6%), though peaking in 2020 (475,653). Roughly 89% of the population is white (2023), compared to 95.2% in 2010, indicating that the town's population is becoming more diverse. This diversification is also evident in Onondaga County.

The median age in Cicero is 42.1, slightly higher than 2010's median age of 39.8; Onondaga County has a median age of 40.5, compared to 38.5 in 2010.

Age Distribution

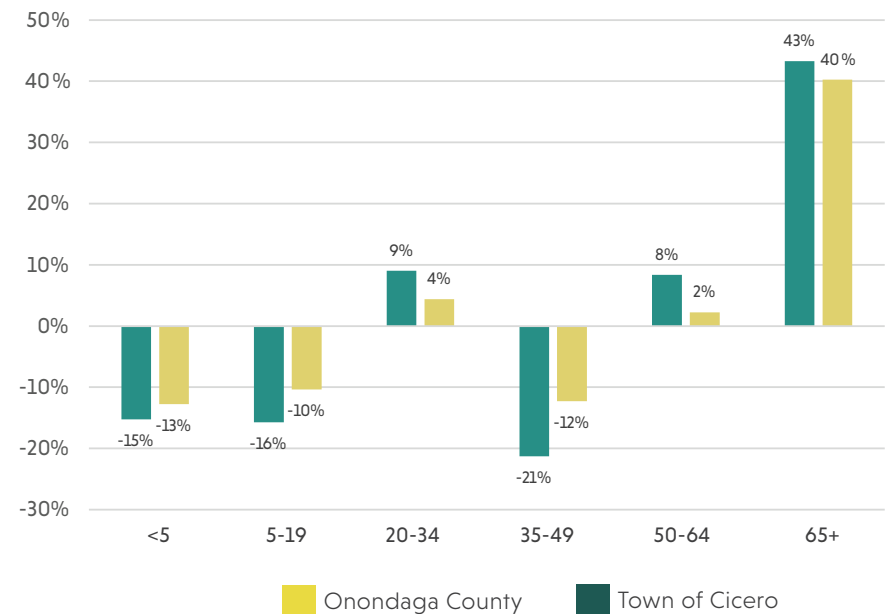
From 2010-2023, the Town has seen an increase the percentage of the population aged 65 or older as well as a decrease in prevalence of younger residents, consistent with regional and national trends.

Change in Population, 1950-2023



Source: ESRI, U.S. Census Bureau

Change in Age Distribution, 2010-2023



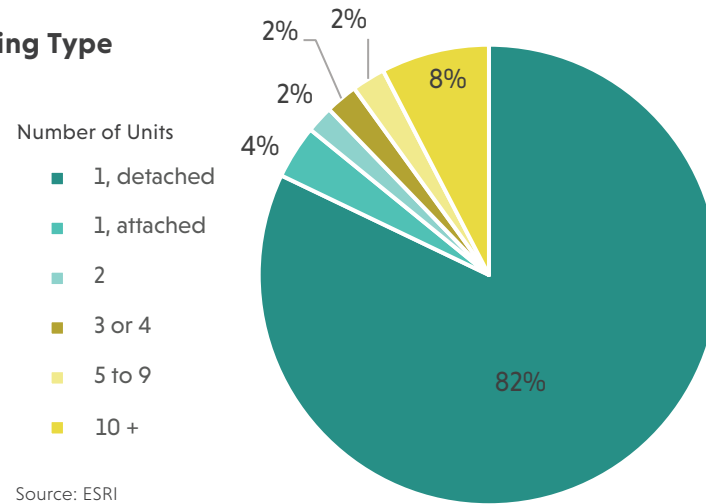
Source: ESRI

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Housing Tenure

Of Cicero's 12,610 housing units, 679 (5.4%) are vacant, signaling high housing demand in the Town. 77.2% of housing units in Cicero are owner occupied, and 17.4% are renter occupied. This signals a fairly diverse and healthy tenure of housing in the community. Since 2010, owner occupancy decreased by 1.6%, renter occupancy increased by 0.5%, and the vacancy rate increased by 1.2%. The high rate of single-family homes indicates the need to diversify types of housing.

Housing Type

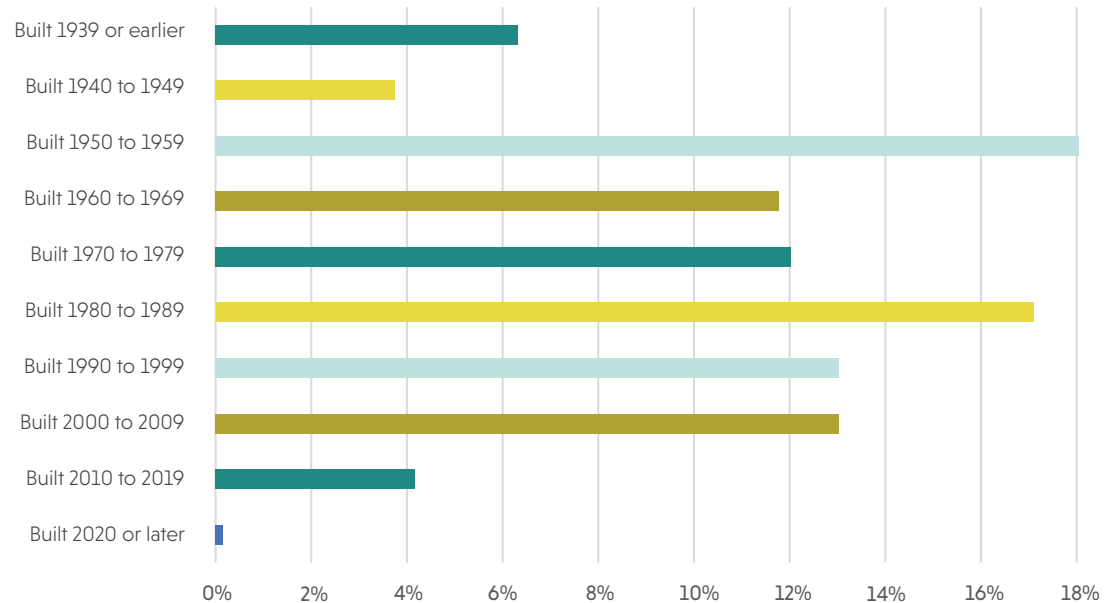


Source: ESRI

Housing Age

53% of homes in Cicero were constructed prior to 1980, with the majority built between 1950 to 1959. 4.2% was constructed between 2010-2019. Only 0.2%, or 20 units have been built since 2020.

Housing Age



Source: ESRI

Distribution of Housing Typologies

Approximately 86% of housing in Cicero is single-family (attached and detached), which is higher than the County as a whole (69%).

SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Income, education, and employment data positions Cicero well. Each of these data sets demonstrates the ability of residents to own property, contribute to the local economy, and limit potential taxpayer burdens.

Income

Cicero is financially well-off compared to its neighbors with a median household income of \$88,836, compared to Onondaga County at \$65,916, and New York State at \$75,157.

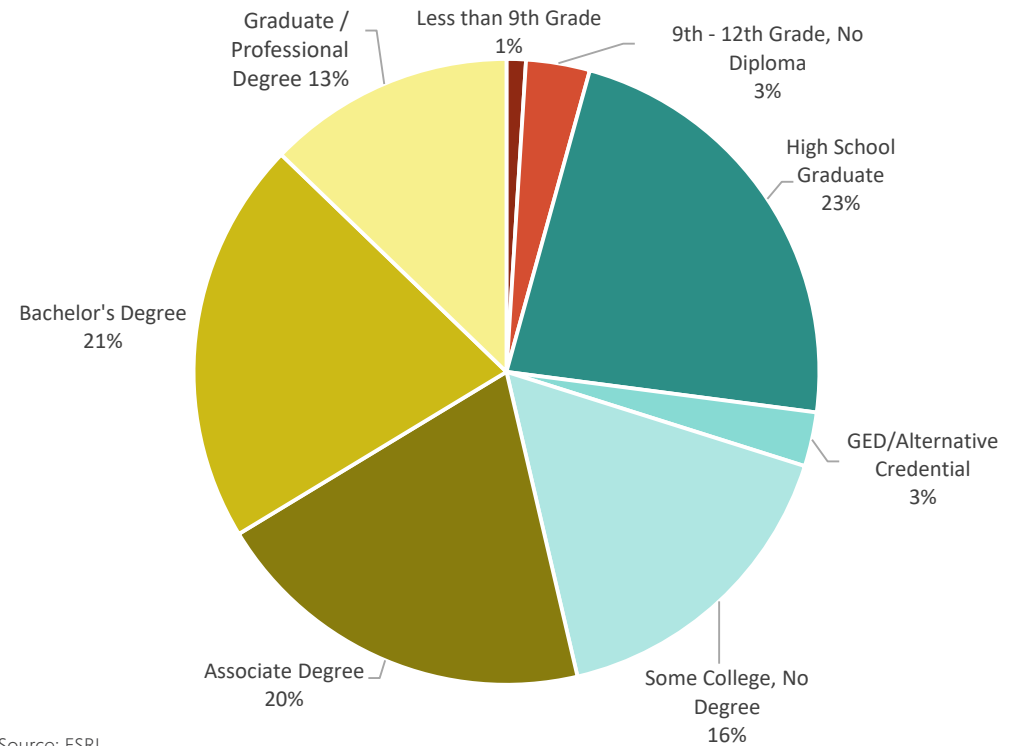
Education

Cicero is a well-educated community, with 53.7% of the population aged 25+ holding an associate degree or higher, similar to Onondaga County with 52.5%. Over 95% of Cicero's population holds a high school diploma, GED equivalent, or higher.

Employment

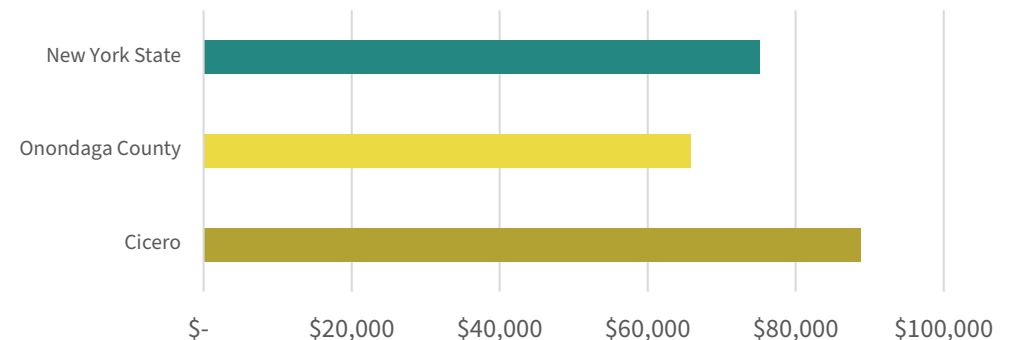
In 2023, 97.4% of Cicero's working-age population (aged 16+) is employed, with an unemployment rate of 2.6%, below the County's rate of 4.3%. The majority of Cicero's working population are employed in the services sector (49.2%), which includes medical, professional, and education jobs, followed by the manufacturing sector (9.9%), and retail trades (9.6%).

Population (25+) by Educational Attainment



Source: ESRI

Median Household Income



Source: ESRI

LOCAL INDUSTRY

Local Industry

Based on 2020 data (the most recent available), 11,089 people commute into Cicero for work, 1,643 both live and work in Cicero, and 13,180 people live in Cicero but commute out of the Town for work. These numbers help illustrate if a community is an employment center or bedroom community. Interestingly, Cicero has roughly the same number of non-residents commuting into Town for work as it has residents leaving Town to work elsewhere.

Jobs concentrated outside of Cicero:

- Public Administration
- Health Care And Social Assistance
- Education
- Finance And Insurance

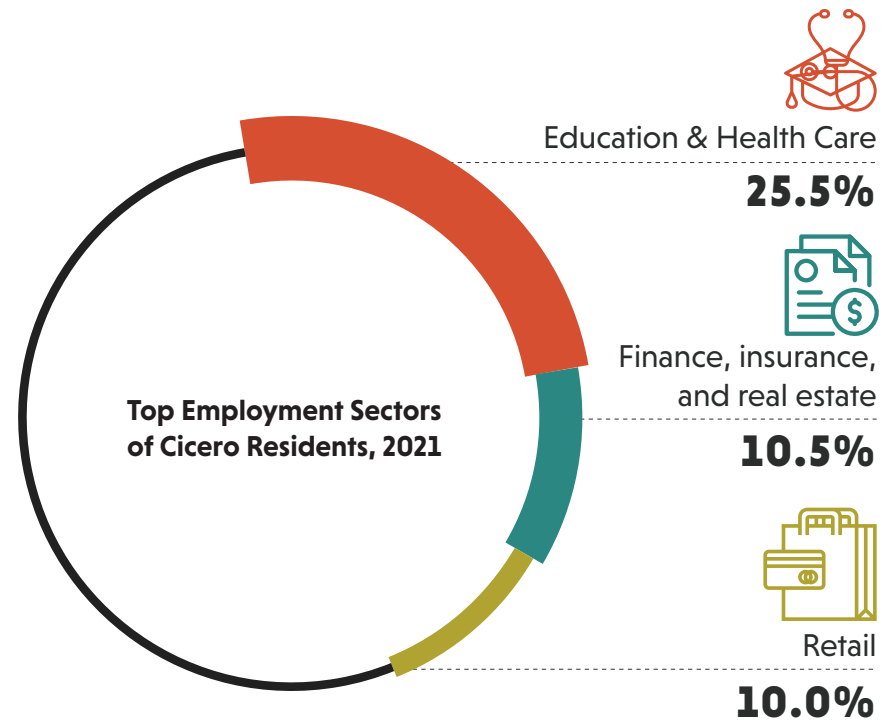
Jobs concentrated in Cicero:

- Retail Trade
- Accommodation and Food Service,
- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Service
- Transportation and Warehousing
- Manufacturing

Commuting Patterns, 2020



Source: Census Bureau On The Map



Source: 2021 American Community Survey, 5 Year Estimates

COMMUNITY RESOURCES & FACILITIES

Parks & Open Spaces

Parks and Open Spaces contribute greatly to the character of a community as well as the health and wellness of its residents. Local opportunities to explore nature, take in scenic views, recreate, and enjoy community spaces are keystones to community satisfaction.

The Town of Cicero has approximately 5,923 acres of open space and park land throughout the town. The County owns and operates Oneida Shore County Park. Town parks include:

- Central Park
- Gateway Community Park
- Plank Road Park
- Riverfront Park
- Sheldon Memorial Park
- Skyway Park
- Sleeth Park
- William Park

Cicero's Youth Bureau and Parks and Recreation Department maintains the Town's park facilities, while providing a variety of activities and programs for residents of all ages, including the Can-Teen located at 6046 Route 31 and the Senior Center located at 5924 Lathrop Drive.

The Department is also responsible for the maintenance at the Stone Arabia School, Cicero Cemetery, Cicero Center Cemetery, Riverside Cemetery, Shepard's Cemetery, Taft Settlement Cemetery and Terpenney Cemetery, and the three Park & Rides owned by the Town."

In addition to formal park space, there are six nature preserves managed by the Central New York Land Trust (CNYLT), accounting for 280 acres of open space. 5,123, or 86% of the open space in Town is restricted wetlands - a large portion of which is encapsulated in the Cicero Swamp WMA.

Emergency Services

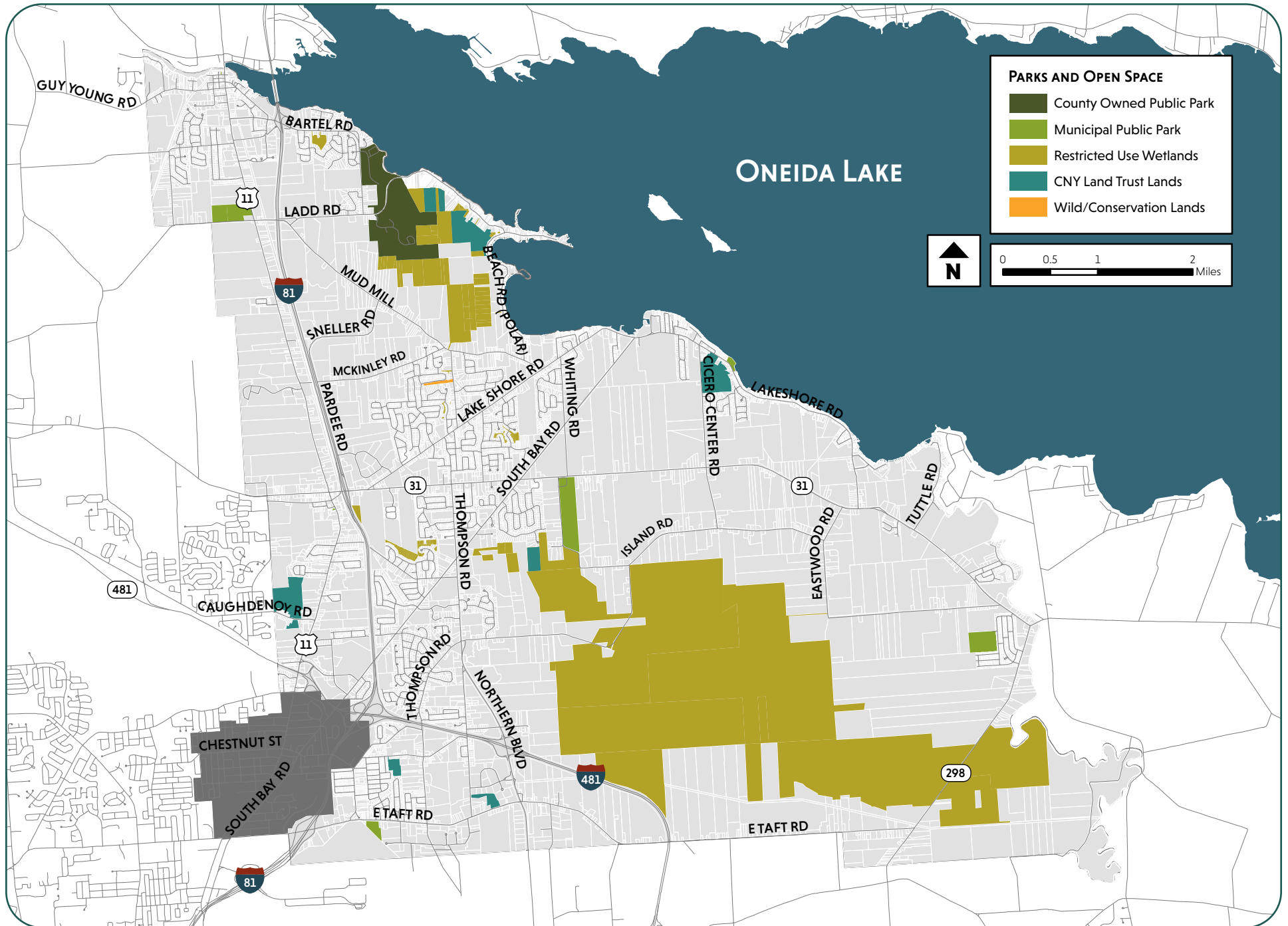
The Town of Cicero is served by five fire departments: Brewerton Fire Department, Bridgeport Fire Company, Cicero Fire Department, North Syracuse Fire Department, and the South Bay Fire Department.

The Town of Cicero Police Department serves the Town of Cicero and Hamlet of Brewerton with 11 full-time officers, 3 part-time officers, 1 chief, 1 lieutenant and 3 sergeants. The Cicero Police Department responded to 19,000 calls for service in 2022, down slightly from 2021.

Schools

Cicero, along with neighboring communities, is served by North Syracuse Central School District which has 11 schools and over 7,000 students. The 11 schools include Cicero North Syracuse High School, North Syracuse Junior High School, two middle schools, six elementary schools, and one-early education program.

Parks & Open Space



Source: ESRI, SOCPA

COMMUNITY RESOURCES & FACILITIES

Community Facilities

The Cicero Town Clerk is located at 8236 Brewerton Rd. The Town's Highway Department is located at 6658 Route 31. The Northern Onondaga Public Library (NOPL) serves residents with a Cicero library branch, located at 8686 Knowledge Lane.

Historic Resources

Historic character creates a sense of local pride and connection with others in the community.

The Town of Cicero is home to the Stone Arabia School (School Number 6), listed on the National Register of Historic Places (nominated in 2007), and the New York State Barge Canal Historic District (nominated in 2014).

The Town of Cicero is served by the Cicero Historical Society (501(c)(3)), which was established on March 13, 1978, and received its Absolute Charter from the New York State Board of Regents on January 24, 1979. The Historical Society is a volunteer-run organization missioned to collect and preserve buildings, artifacts and documents pertinent to the Town of Cicero's history. The Historical Society also maintains three buildings, including the Stone Arabia school, a one-room log house built in the 1800s, and a Museum & Resource Center.

STONE ARABIA SCHOOL



The Stone Arabia School is a one-room schoolhouse located at 6453 NY Route 31, Cicero, NY 13039, constructed in 1854 for grades 1-8. As the population grew, older students were moved to other buildings. By 1948, the school served grades 1-5. By 1951, the North Syracuse School District built larger elementary schools across the school district, and the Stone Arabia school closed. The structure was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2007. The building and property are currently maintained by the Cicero Historical Society.

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

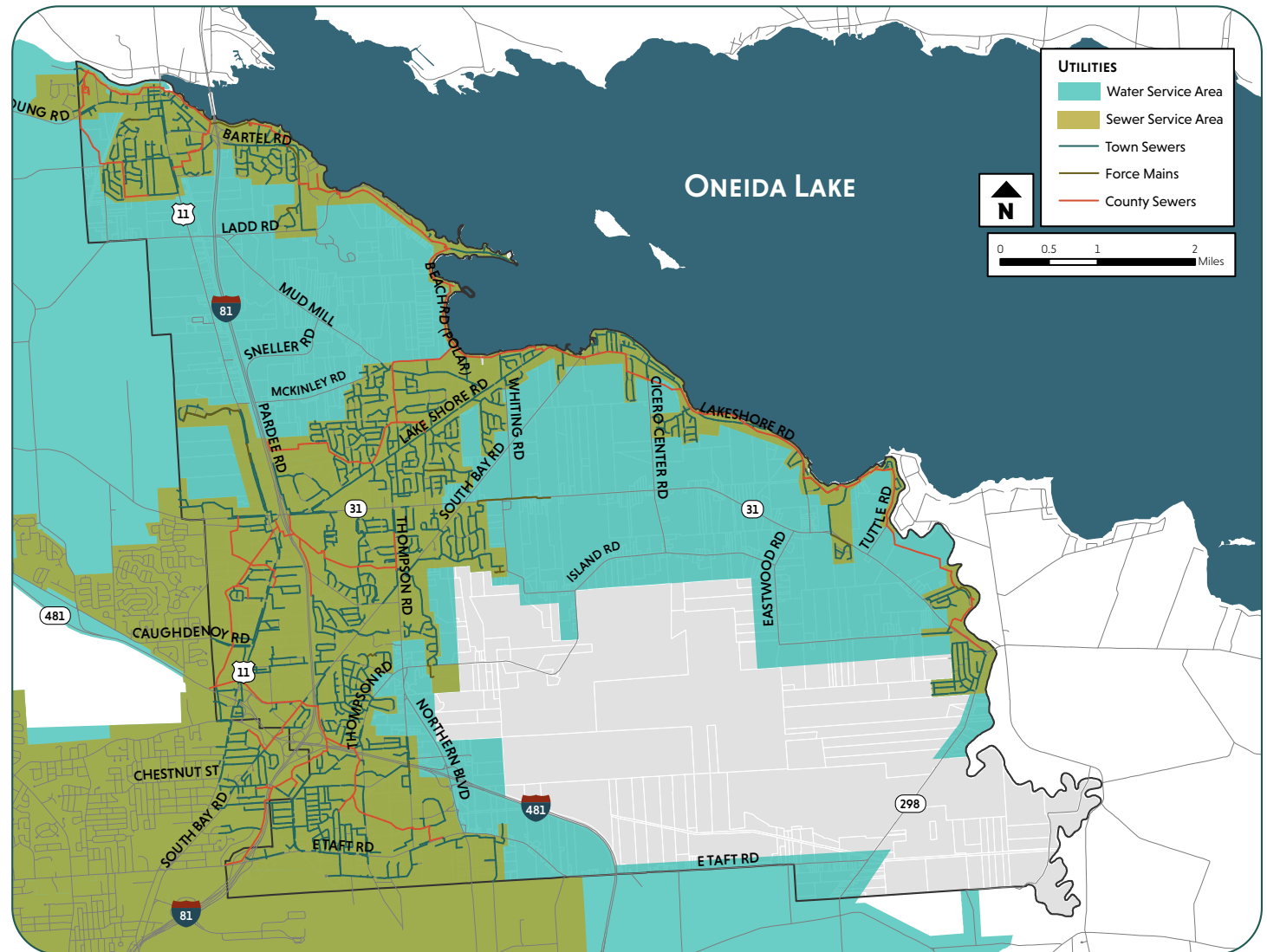
Sewer

The west side of the Town is well served by public sewer service, with Town sewers primarily serving local residential streets, and County sewers servicing development off of the larger arterial roads. Sewer service is more limited on the east side of Town, due to the lower density of development as well as the presence of the Cicero Swamp.

Water

The majority of the Town is serviced by public water. As shown on the map at right, only the south west area of Town does not have access to public water, which is primarily occupied by the Cicero Swamp Wildlife Management Area.

Sewer & Water Infrastructure



Source: Onondaga Co. Dept. of Water Environment Protection, Onondaga County Dept. of Planning

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Accessibility to and through a community is important, as it affects the ability of out-of-towners to visit, of residents to perform their day-to-day tasks with ease, and businesses to attract customers. Vehicular transportation, freight movement, mass transit, and bike/pedestrian safety are all considerations.

Transportation

The Town of Cicero is served by a robust transportation network with convenient access to major routes like I-81, the New York State Thruway, and Route 481, all of which are part of the state freight network.

Cicero is conveniently located just north of the Syracuse Hancock International Airport.

Road Network

The primary north-south routes serving vehicular movement in town are NYS Route I-81 and NYS Route 11. This corridor is highly developed with residential, commercial, and industrial uses. The northern section of I-81 sees between 44,700 and 53,000 vehicles daily. Lakeshore Road, which bisects Cicero from the southwest to the northeast, ranges significantly in vehicle traffic from 2,000 to 12,000 vehicles daily. Route 31, the major east-west road connection, sees about 8,000 to 13,000 vehicles daily. Route 481 to the south sees approximately 40,000 vehicles daily.

Public Transportation

The Town of Cicero is served by the Sy 88 Bus Route via the Central New York Regional Transportation Authority (Centro). Sy 88 offers service to Cicero Commons, connecting Cicero to Centro's central transit hub in downtown Syracuse. The Sy 88 bus route does not run on weekends.

Bike and Pedestrian Facilities

There are limited bike and pedestrian facilities within the Town. Continuous sidewalks segments are present on the west side of Route 11 between the Village of North Syracuse and Caughdenoy Road. There are intermittent segments of sidewalks on the east side of Route 11, as well. The Hamlet of Brewerton has some sidewalks along Route 11, although some are in poor condition and many gaps exist. Route 31 has sidewalks on both side of the street between Route 11 and Lakeshore Road, which continue on the south side up to Faith Lutheran Church. There are limited sidewalks within the Hamlet of Bridgeport as well. There are no dedicated on-road bike facilities within the Town at this point in time.

What is AADT?

Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) measures traffic volume, or how busy a roadway is. It measures how many vehicles per day travel on a road.

Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)



ENVIRONMENT

A community's natural environment sets a tone for the characteristics and personality of that place. These conditions may dictate land use and development actions, impact park locations, and often represent beloved landmarks.

Wetlands

The Town of Cicero has abundant acreage that is encumbered as federal and state wetlands, primarily in the southern, central, and southeastern portions of town. The largest wetland area is Cicero Swamp Wildlife Management Area (WMA), the county's largest WMA at 5,000 acres. This area is regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. Town of Cicero code (Chapter 206) both protects wetlands and prohibits their expansion or creation.

While the volume of wetlands in the Town of Cicero may pose as an obstacle for future development, as a protected feature they may likewise serve as ideal contributions to future parks and open space amenities.

Floodplains

Like wetlands, significant land area in the Town falls in the 100-year flood zone, often overlapping with wetland areas. Approximately 6% of the town's 15,500+ buildings fall within the regulatory floodplain.

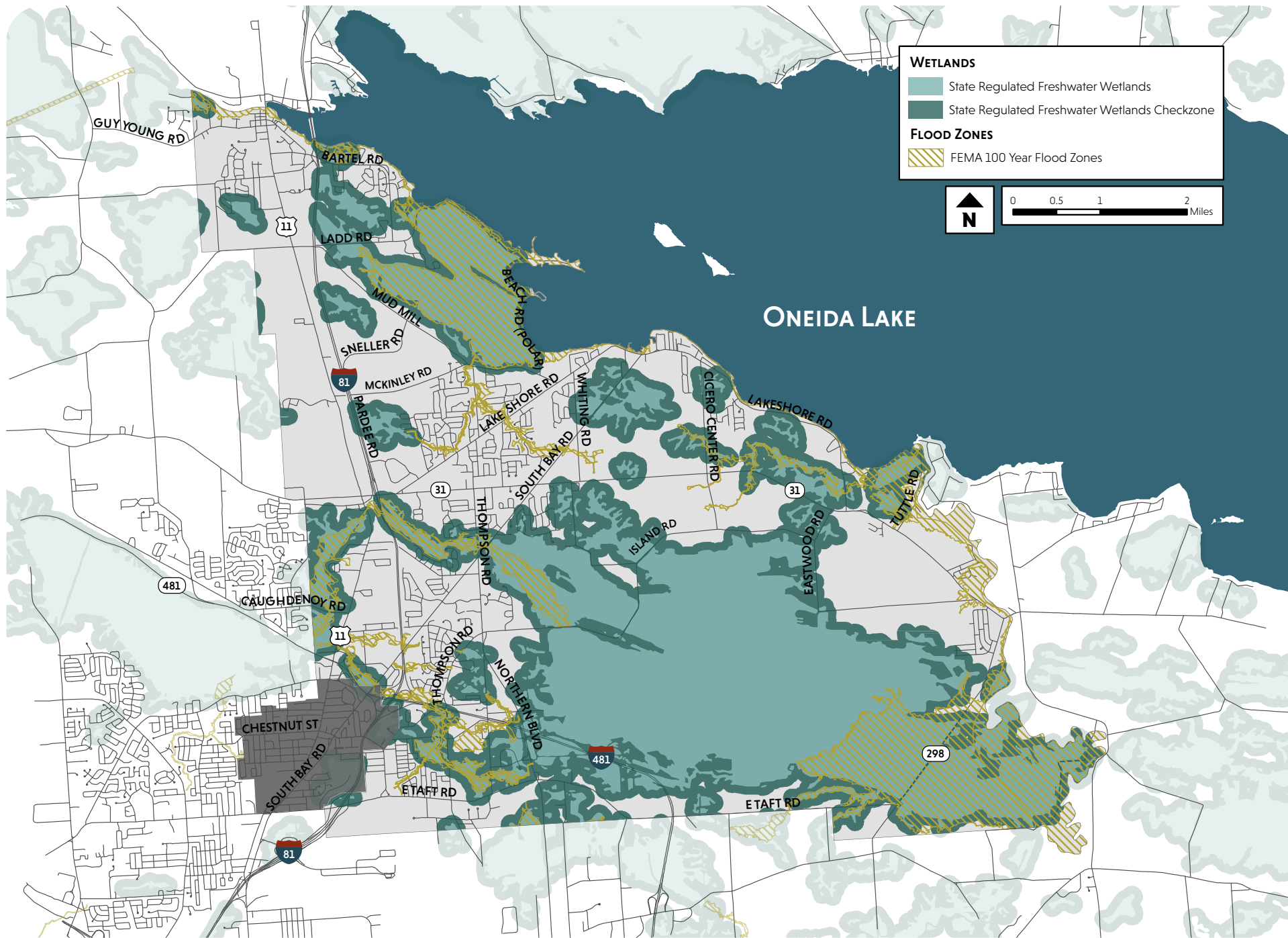
The Town of Cicero is a participant in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), which requires regulation and monitoring of development within the flood zone. There are 292 NFIP policies in the town, 61% of which are located in the

regulatory floodplain, and 23 repetitive loss (RL) properties. While the Town participates in the NFIP, the town is not a participant of the NFIP Community Rating System (CRS), which offers discounts on flood insurance rates for policy holders in participating communities.

CICERO SWAMP WMA



The Cicero Swamp Wildlife Management Area, managed by the DEC's Division of Fish and Wildlife, provides a significant wildlife habitat and is identified as a Statwide Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society.



LAND USE & ZONING

Land Use

The Town of Cicero is a largely residential community, with residential development found throughout the town. Agricultural and vacant land is concentrated toward the central and southern areas of town, suggesting that Cicero has spatial capacity for additional development. Over the years, commercial and industrial development have occurred within the southern and western areas of the Town, benefitting from proximity to Routes I-81 and 481.

Residential

Residential developments can be found throughout town, especially along the I-81 corridor and along Route 31. Nearly half (44%) of parcels in Cicero are residential, totaling 15,836 acres.

Vacant

The Town of Cicero has 8,136 acres of vacant land, equivalent to 22% of land area. Much of the vacant land in Cicero is located in the central and southern areas of the Town.

Parks & Open Space

The Town of Cicero contains 6,102 acres of Parks and Open Space land area (17%), distributed throughout the Town.

Recreation & Entertainment

1,137 acres, or 3% of the land area in Cicero is dedicated towards recreation and entertainment uses.

Commercial

Approximately 7% of land, or 2,426 acres, is commercial. This land use is heavily clustered along the I-81 corridor, along Route 31, and south of Route 481.

Agriculture

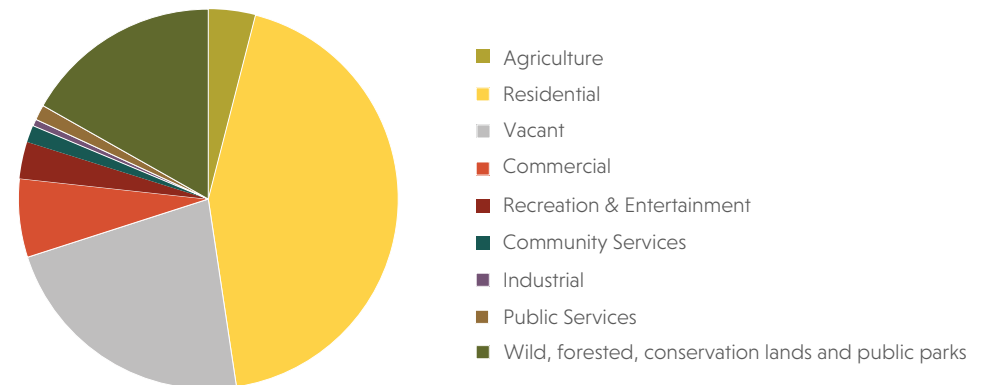
The Town of Cicero has 1,453 acres of agricultural land area (4%). Much of this land is distributed towards the southern parts of Town.

Industrial

Approximately 1%, or 472 acres of Cicero's land area is industrial. The industrial areas can be found to the west, along the I-81 corridor, and north and south of Route 481 where truck routes provide easy access.

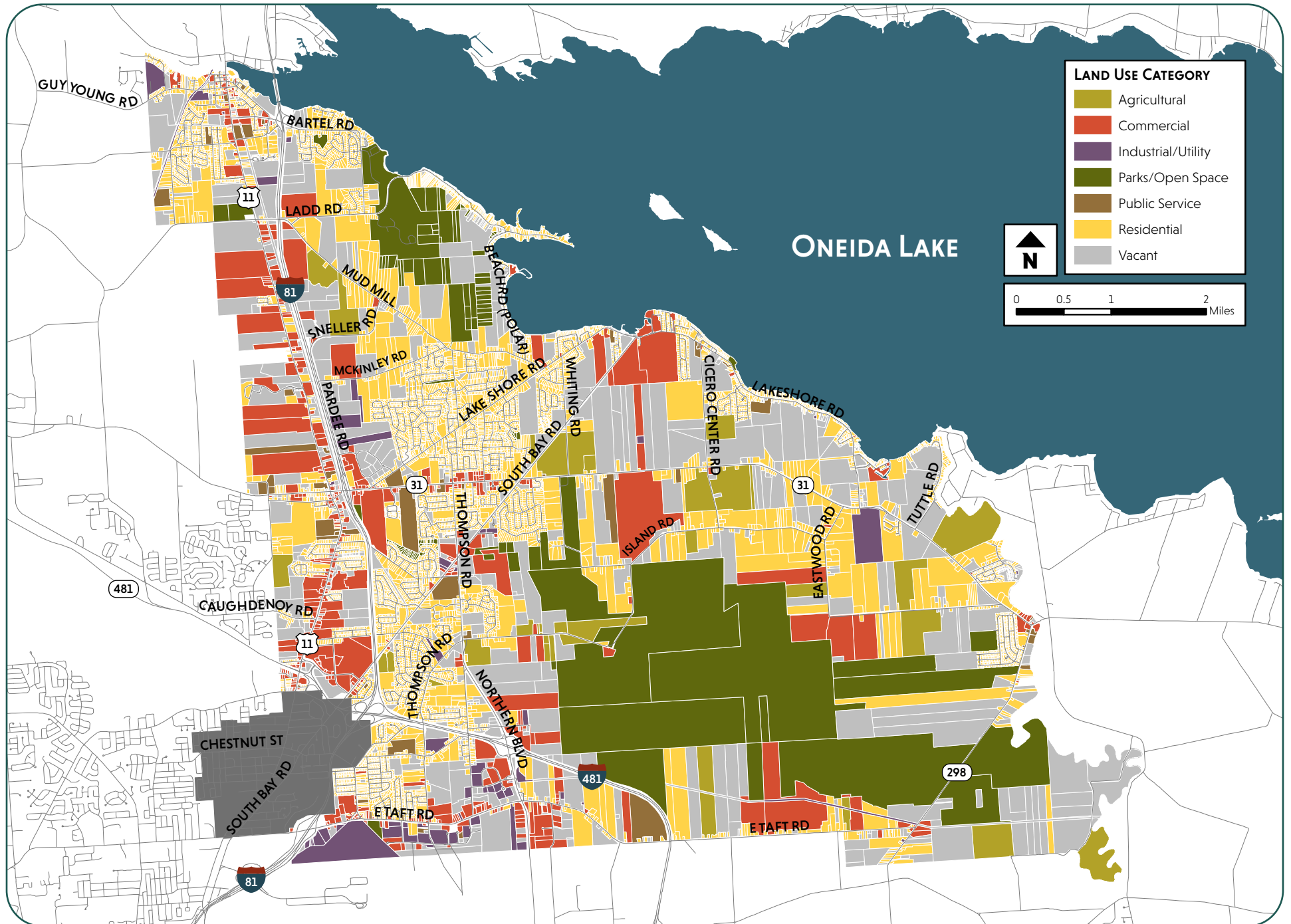
Public & Community Services

Public services make up 2% of Cicero's land area, or 998 acres.



Land Use Distribution by Acreage

Existing Land Use



LAND USE & ZONING

Zoning

The Town of Cicero's existing zoning laws have allowed for a range of uses throughout the town.

Agricultural (AG)

Agricultural districts allow for agricultural use, single-family dwellings, and private garages not exceeding 1,300 square feet. Site plan approval is required for additional uses, included bed-and-breakfasts, veterinary clinics, parking (for special events), quarries, schools, outdoor recreation, cemeteries, accessory use, etc. Agricultural districts can be found to the east of the I-81 corridor, stretching towards the eastern border of the town.

Residential Districts (R-20, R-15, R-10, R-M)

All residential districts allow for one of the following uses per lot: one-family residence; enclosed accessory building use, two-family dwellings (R-M only), private garages not exceeding 1,300 square feet. Additional uses (site plan approval required) include home occupation, golf courses, public utilities, clinics, schools, religious institutions, and community centers. Residential districts can be found throughout the town of Cicero.

Commercial (NC, GC, GCP, RC)

All commercial districts require site plan approval for all uses. The following uses are permitted across all commercial districts: retail sales and services; offices, community centers, religious institutions, public utilities, and uses accessories (including parking). Additional commercial uses may be permitted if the proposed use is of the same general character, scale, and size.

Neighborhood Commercial District (NC)

Neighborhood Commercial Districts (NC) provide guidance for small, stand-alone commercial uses that generate limited traffic and serve an immediate neighborhood. Permitted uses include the previously listed commercial uses.

General Commercial District (GC)

General commercial districts (GC) provide for medium-sized commercial uses that serve the entire town. Uses include all previously listed commercial uses, plus shopping centers, hotels/motels, gas stations, restaurants, health-related facilities, light assembly, auto sales, and veterinary clinics (without animal boarding).

Regional Commercial District (RC)

Regional commercial districts (RC) provide for large-scale commercial uses that draw customers from the larger region, or county-wide. These uses must be located on or near county, state or federal highways, and are easily accessible from nearby interstates. These uses have high traffic and should be no smaller than 10,000 square feet. Permitted uses include similar uses to GC, plus parking lots.

General Commercial Plus District

General Commercial Plus districts (GCP) are meant to complement commercial and light industrial uses. Permitted uses include all previously listed commercial uses, in addition to parking garages, parking lots, warehousing and distribution facilities, manufacturing and assembly, automotive repair, and additional uses that fit the general character, size and scale of the area, as permitted by the Planning Board.

Industrial District (IN)

Industrial districts provide for uses characterized by heavy truck traffic and noise, and are typically located on major county, state or federal routes, away from residential uses. Permitted uses include manufacturing, warehousing and distribution, contractor’s storage, trucking terminals, heavy equipment sales and/or service, public storage, or other uses as permitted by the Planning Board. Industrial zones in Cicero are located largely to the west of the I-81 corridor, and south of I-481.

Planned Unit Development District

Planned Unit Development Districts provide for the fact that not all reasonable land uses are outlined in the zoning code. This district allows for a mix of uses that may not traditionally be considered but would promote the general welfare of the Town of Cicero. Creation of this district requires heavy involvement and review by the Planning Board, and recommendation by the Planning Board to the Town Board. There are a handful of Planned Unit Development Districts scattered throughout the Town.

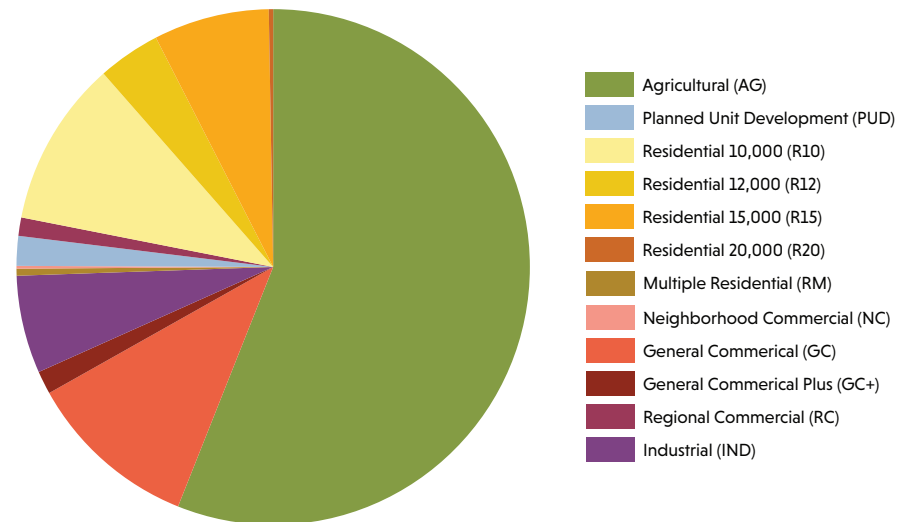
Floodplain Zone

A floodplain zone has been established to allow Oneida Lake and any streams and tributaries to flow unobstructed, and to carry abnormal flows of water during times of high waters and floods. Floodplain zones help prevent excessive damage during times of high waters and floods and protect the health and wellbeing of the residents and properties. The Floodplain Zone is not restricted to any specific zoning districts

(as previously outlined), but is designed to overlay any district that lays within the Town’s floodplains, as designated by the FEMA floodplain map. Any building permit within a floodplain zone must be approved by the Code Enforcement Officer.

Downtown Core (DC) and Hamlet Gateway (HC) Districts

Two overlay districts, the DC and HC Districts, were developed for the Brewerton Hamlet with the intent of implementing the goals of the Brewerton Strategic Revitalization Plan. The overlay districts provide design standards to help foster a more pedestrian oriented environment that celebrates the Hamlet’s historic character and promotes a vibrant activity center in the Town.



Zoning District Distribution by Acreage

Existing Zoning

