

## Managing Growth in Northumberland

The Town of Northumberland faces the challenge of how to manage growth, provide services to its 4,600 residents, maintain and protect its infrastructure, and strengthen its tax base — even as it preserves its rural character, promotes active farming, and protects its open space and clean water. This is a task that many agricultural communities are undertaking with new urgency in the first decade of the 21st century.

The 2003 Comprehensive Land Use Plan for the Town of Northumberland is an important tool in our efforts to meet that challenge. It expresses a strong intent to preserve the agricultural character of the town, foster a strong farm economy, and preserve open space and view sheds [yet allowing for sound solid waste disposal in a landfill district](#).

**Northumberland's Unique Characteristics:** The rural, agricultural nature of Northumberland gives the town a special quality of life and sense of community. These unique characteristics need to be protected through the use of various planning tools, including planning design, zoning laws, enforcement, tax abatement, incentives and other choices that are available to Northumberland's town boards and residents.

By carefully using these tools, the Town of Northumberland can manage growth, address specific goals identified by its citizenry, and still maintain the beauty and other characteristics of a small, rural community.

One of Northumberland's most outstanding features is its location on a plateau bordered by the Southern Adirondack Mountains to the north and the Hudson River, one of the nation's great waterways, on the east. Farming, our main industry, and one from which many residents still make their living today, preserves this pleasant setting.

It is this bucolic environment that has led to an interest in development in our town. Should we falter in the wise preservation of our open space, we would lose not only our main industry — agriculture — but also the very appeal that has attracted many new and welcome residents to Northumberland.

**Now This Plan Was Developed:** The Town of Northumberland developed its first Comprehensive Land Use Plan in 1991. At that time, specific goals were identified through a survey of town residents. With the availability of new data from the federal government's 2000 Census, the town began a review of that plan in the fall of 2001. Once again, residents identified specific needs and desires for the town in a survey carried out during the winter of 2001/02 (See Appendix). Many town residents' goals remain the same as they were over 12 years ago, but there is a new concern for the preservation of not just our agriculture, but our open space and beautiful view sheds.

**A Working Document:** This plan is a philosophical guide for the review of development projects, as well as for efforts to preserve open space and agricultural lands. It should be viewed as a working document. It is intended to be implemented through the town's zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations.

We recommend that the plan be reviewed and updated every five years, or as the needs of the town change. The Northumberland Town Board, Planning Board, and Zoning Board of Appeals should actively use it as a guide to ensure that the decisions they make are consistent with the goals of the town.

*Town of Northumberland Comprehensive Land Use*



## Northumberland Today

The Town of Northumberland lies in northeastern Saratoga County, bordered on the east by the Hudson River, on the north by the Town of Moreau, on the west by the Town of Wilton and on the south by the Town of Saratoga. Northumberland was created early in the history of Saratoga County. It was taken from the Town of Saratoga in 1798 and originally included, in addition to its current boundaries, Wilton, Moreau, and parts of Hadley and Corinth.

Early settlers in the late 18th century found much to admire in Northumberland. There were plentiful farmlands, forests for logging and streams to power mills. Ferries were established across various points of the Hudson to facilitate trade and transportation, Hotels and taverns characterized settlement clusters that were surprisingly well populated before the Revolution.

The agricultural economy of the post-revolutionary war times resulted in many more hamlets in the town than exist today. Hamlets at that time had 20 to 30 families and also had a mix of industry, retail and public facilities. The hamlets of Gansevoort, Bacon Hill and Northumberland are still in existence today. The opening of the Champlain Canal in 1823 made the hamlet of Northumberland an important shipping point for goods.

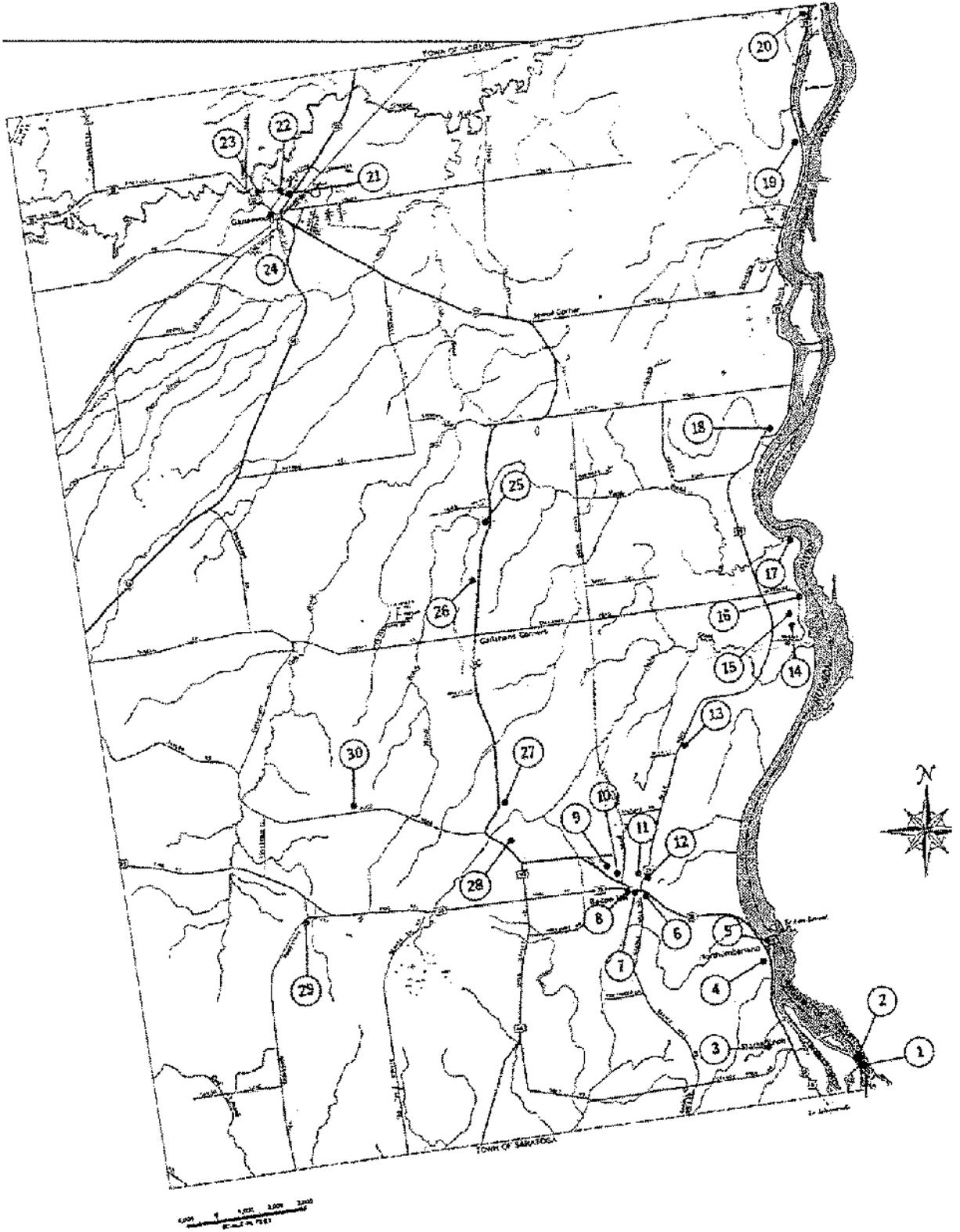
The town features a number of Revolutionary War-era sites and structures. The list that follows highlights significant sites and is accompanied by a location map.

*The Gansevoort  
Mansion, circa 1800.*



Open Space and a Rural Lifestyle

**Historic Sites**  
**Town of Northumberland**

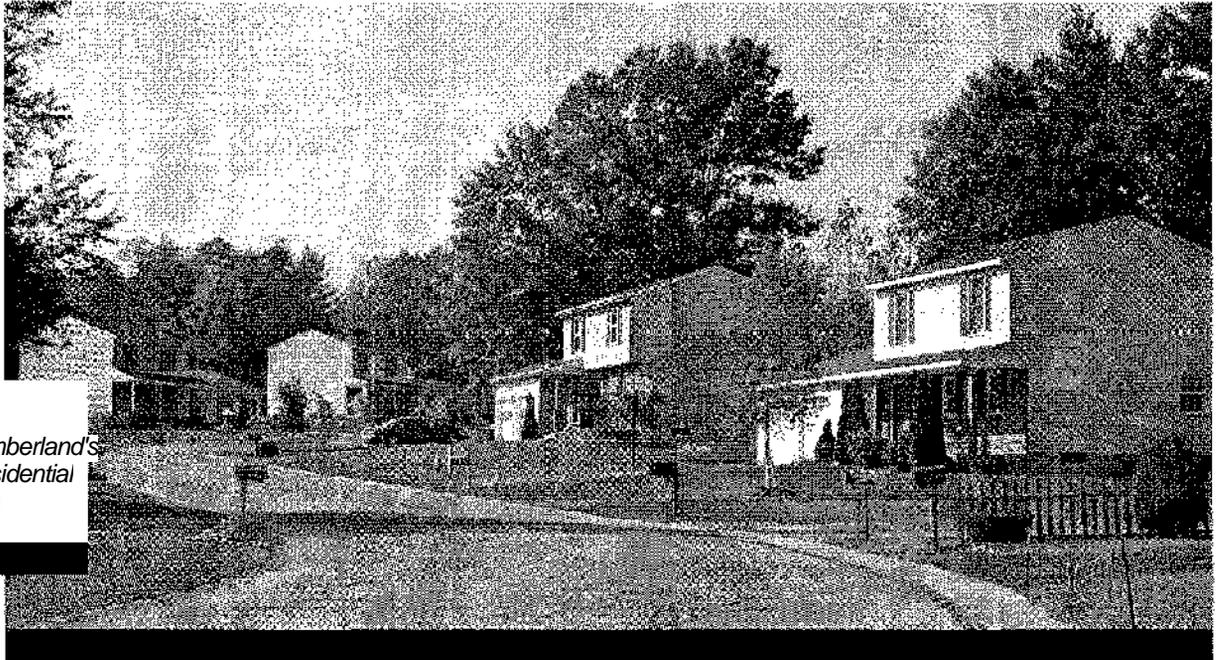


and

1. **Clarks Mill Bridge**, 1899, built by R.F Hawkins Iron Works, three-span, through-truss iron bridge
2. **Site of Burgoyne's Bridge of Boats**, 1777
- 3 **Stark's Knob**, hill of volcanic pillow basalt, one of only two examples in the U.S. The lookout was occupied by troops under American General John Stark during the Revolutionary War to prevent retreat of British troops after the Battle of Saratoga, 1777. A "pocket park" scenic walkway has recently been added to this location.
4. **Jesse Billings Bank**, 1875, built by local boat builder, first floor office contained built in vault, second floor used as living quarters
5. **Northumberland Bridge**, iron structure built in 1906, replaced wooden bridges of 1803 built by Theodore Burr known as Fort Miller Bridge and other wooden replacements in 1845, 1859 and c. 1890. Toll bridge for many years
6. **Captain Martin J. Burke Home**, c. 1820.30, national military figure, West Point graduate 1836, hero of Mexican War, where he was killed in 1847
7. **Bacon Hill Grange**, 1905, Grange #828, organized by County Deputy Wood of Milton Grange at home of George Slocum, 1897
8. **Site of Ebenezer Bacon Home**, 1794, built first frame tavern in Pope's Corners 1794, renamed Bacon Hill c. 1832 in his honor
9. **Bacon Hill Schoolhouse**, prior to 1866 part of District 4*t*. Moved from original location just north of Bacon Hill
10. **Bacon Hill Dutch Reformed Church**, c. 1820, now known as Bacon Hill Church
11. **Site of Fake Tavern**, early site where town, state and general elections and town meetings held
12. **Site of Fake Home**, front constructed from parts of Fake tavern, c. 1868 **13, Peck Home**, prior 1836, former tavern owned by William Harris, later additions 1849
14. **John Harris home and tavern**, c. 1830, located in farming and mercantile settlement of several houses, saw and grist mill, store. Harris family cemetery can be seen from West River Road.
15. **Site of outhouse of Harris home**, constructed similar to Greek Revival Harris home with plastered and papered walls, columns, pediment, and six holes — three for men and three for women
16. **Site of John Harris grist and saw mill**, 1832, first used as mill site 1772, became farm trading center for miles around. A corner stone of the original mill remains at the site
17. **Site of Fort Miller**, 1755, fort built by English Col, Miller in angle of river bend on flat protected on three sides by the river and cove at entrance of small creek, further defended by small parapet of timber covered with earth and with a ditch in front, for use against possible French and Indian Attack
- 18 **Site of British Bake Ovens**, 1777, for preparation of army bread, on property of early resident Samuel Lewis
19. **Site of John McCrae home**, prior 1777, McCrae was a Revolutionary soldier and brother of Jane McCrae, whose slaughter by Burgoyne's Indians is famous among Revolutionary legends
20. **Col, Sidney Berry home**, c. 1800, early settler, Revolutionary soldier and first supervisor of Northumberland, 1798-1800, first president of the Temperance Society of Moreau
21. **Gansevoort Methodist Church, c**, 1838, land donated by Herman Gansevoort \***22. Site of Dutch Reformed Church**, 1839-41, erected by Herman Gansevoort, restored **1891-99**
- 23, **"Little Yellow House" of General Peter Gansevoort**, 1797, who received title to the land in 1783 when it was confiscated from Troy Hugh Munro. There is also a tenant house behind the house
- \***24, Gansevoort Mansion**, c. 1800, home of Herman Gansevoort. Son of General Peter Gansevoort, renovation and porch addition, c. 1835, Herman Melville, nephew of Peter Gansevoort, spent time here.
25. **James Carrigan House**, c, 1830, one-time tavern on stage coach route; originally built by Vanderwerker family, known recently as the Hodgson residence
26. **Vanderwerker Farm**, c. 1840 Greek Revival farmhouse, pioneer family settled before the Revolution
- 27, **Abraham Marshall home**, purchased by Marshall from James McCready, 1838
28. **Jesse Billings farm and schoolhouse**, prior to 1866 brick home containing vault which Billings used as private bank, He was a prosperous farmer, boat builder and entrepreneur.
29. **Site of Laurie West Schoolhouse**, late 1850s, home of Laurie and William West located next to school
30. **Rugg Tavern**, 1802. Logs and produce going to river for shipping hauled past tavern, later home of Augustus G. Deyoe

*Source: Saratoga County Communities, a Historic Perspective, Prepared by Saratoga County Planning Board, 1980. Uncierscorej numbers indicate State Marker at site. indicates National Register site.*

As time passed, the hamlets became less industrialized, but agriculture remained strong. The town has maintained its rural, agricultural character to this day. The town has a number of historic sites and structures, many of them associated with the Revolutionary War Saratoga Campaign, which concluded just to the south of Northumberland in present-day Stillwater. These sites include General Burgoyne's "Bridge of Boats" across the Hudson River and Stark's Knob, used as an observation point by American troops.



*Terre!  
Northumberland's  
largest residential  
subdivision*

### ***We've Grown Rapidly***

The Town of Northumberland has experienced incredible growth over the last 20 years, increasing in population from 2,732 in 1980 to 4,603 in 2000, for an increase of 68.5 percent. Most of that growth has occurred at the southern end of the town, which is served by the Schuylerville Central School District. Until the 1960s and 1970s, population growth within the town lagged behind most neighboring towns in Saratoga County, but that has now changed.

Table 1 illustrates Northumberland's growth in population over the last 40 years. Northumberland's population growth in the last 10 years is double the growth rate for the entire county, according to statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau. Northumberland's growth rate during the last decade is also much higher than its neighbors, the towns of Moreau, Wilton and Saratoga.

As a regional comparison, Northumberland has the 4th-highest growth rate in Saratoga County, behind the towns of Providence, Edinburgh and Halfmoon. In the 1980s, Northumberland surpassed its neighboring towns of Moreau and Saratoga in rate of growth.

**Population Change for Northumberland and its Neighbors, 1960-2000**

Town	1960		1970		1980		1990		2000	
	Population	Increase								
Northumberland	1,353	7.1	1,779	31.5	2,732	35	3,645	26	4,603	
Moreau	8,406	39.5	10,411	23.9	11,188	7	13,022	6	13,826	
Wilton	1,902	35.2	2,984	56.9	7,221	59	10,626	18	12,511	
Saratoga	3,515	9	4,206	19.7	4,595	8.4	5,069	1.4	5,141	
Saratoga County	89,096	19	121,764	36.7	153,759	21	181,276	10.6	200,635	

Source: Capital District Regional Planning Commission

According to the 2000 Census, the median age of Northumberland's population is 33. That young median age suggests that even more growth can be expected due to growth of families. The table below illustrates the expected growth in the town over the next 37 years.

**2**

**Population Projection for Northumberland and its Neighbors, 1990-2040**

Town	1990		2000		2010		2020		2030		2040	
	Population	Increase										
Northumberland	3,645	26	4,603	6	4,867	5	5,131	5	5,395	4	5,632	
Moreau*	16,528	2	16,917	5	17,802	5	18,616	3	19,210	2.6	19,722	
Wilton	10,623	18	12,541	19	14,961	7.3	16,060	5	16,970	3.6	17,590	
Saratoga*	7,014	2	6,855	3	7,094	3.4	7,336	2	7,535	2.8	7,741	
Saratoga County	181,276	11	200,635	8.8	218,373	6	231,855	5	244,279	4.4	254,934	

\*Villages included

Source: Capital District Regional Planning Commission

Northumberland is projected to continue growing at a rate of 6 percent between 2000 and 2010, which is a significantly slower rate than in the past. The number of households has almost doubled since 1980 from 841 to 1,593. The average household size is 2.89, a decrease since 1980.

In 1991, Northumberland's population was slated to grow rapidly until 2000 and then even off, surpassing even Wilton's growth. That has not happened, but the development dynamics that have played a role in Wilton's growth could not have been projected. Northumberland's population is projected to be 5,395 in the year 2030, compared with its 2000 population of 4,603.

Northumberland is served by two school districts, South Glens Falls and Schuylerville. Both districts showed a decline in enrollment during the 1980s - a trend that occurred

throughout Saratoga County — even though housing starts had generally increased. Development has been accompanied by a demand for greater school service. The South Glens Falls District, which encompasses the northern portion of the town, including the NY 50 corridor, and the Schuylerville Central School District, which encompasses the southern portion of the town, have both seen significant increases in enrollment since 1990 as illustrated by Table 4 below.

**School District Enrollment**

	1990-1991	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01
Schuylerville	1426	1421	1467	1549	1568	1608	1616	1624	1649	1672	1619
S. Glens Falls	2707	2787	2890	2876	2922	2975	2966	3120	3162	3164	3164

Source: Capital District Regional Planning Commission

During the 1990s, enrollments for both Schuylerville and South Glens Falls school districts have grown steadily. Towards the late '90s, as indicated by Table 3, Schuylerville had leveled off, but South Glens Falls continued to increase at a steady rate until the 2000-01 school year, when enrollment was unchanged.

**Farming Predominates**

The Town of Northumberland consists of 20,738 acres or 32.4 square miles. Farming is our predominant land use, accounting for roughly two-thirds of the town's land. Agriculture has been encouraged and protected through the Saratoga County Consolidated Agricultural District No. 1, which encompasses the eastern and northern portions of the town.

Saratoga County also has an Agricultural Farmland Protection Board, which has developed an Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan for Saratoga County with the assistance of the County's Planning Department.

Three hamlets within the Town of Northumberland support a higher intensity of land use. In descending order of size they are Gansevoort, Northumberland and Bacon Hill. Several other clusters of residences on US 4 and NY 50 display some of the characteristics of hamlets, but they lack significant commercial or other non-residential components.

**Residential Development**

Northumberland experienced an increase in the number of subdivisions and housing developments during the 1990s. This increase was most noticeable in the western portion of the town. The town's 1991 Comprehensive Plan noted only five subdivisions that were either developed or filed with the county to be developed.



*Agriculture is the most important industry in Northumberland.*

A number of major housing developments have been initiated within Northumberland since 1991:

- \* Homestead Estates, on Homestead Road off NY 29, an open-space, duster subdivision whose design retained open space, has 25 building lots
- \* Schuyler Heights, off NY 32, is approved for 23 total lots.
- Rimbrave Estates, off NY 50 and Duncan Road, is approved for 49 lots.
- Beaver Ridge, off Duncan Road, is approved for nine lots,
- \* Castlewood and Queens Court developments, adjoining one another on King Road, each have 46 building lots,
- \* Tanager Woods is a subdivision mentioned in the 1991 plan as having 47 single- and multi-family lots. To date this development has changed hands several times and is now named Woodland Manor.

As Table 4 shows, the town issued an average of 47 building permits annually during the 1990s, almost exclusively for single-family homes.

**Town of Northumberland Building Permits 1991-2002**

Year	Residential	Single Family	Multi-Family
1991	52	48	4
1992	43	43	0
1993	39	38	1
1994	53	53	0
1995	31	30	1
1996	58	58	0
1997	51	51	0
1998	47	47	0
1999	50	50	0
2000	22	22	0
2001	13	13	0
2002	16	16	0

Source: Capital District Regional Planning Commission

There are also approximately 118 mobile-home units in the Town of Northumberland, mainly located in four separate mobile-home parks. Under the town's zoning regulations, new mobile homes are allowed only in parks.

Mobile home parks in the town are located at the intersection of County Routes 31 and 32, on Putnam Road, at the intersection of Colebrook Road and Duncan Road, and on County Route 32. Mobile homes are primarily found in the northwestern corner of the town. The Shelley Mobile Home Park has had the most recent development activity, with a projected maximum build-out of 200 mobile home sites. As of 2003, the Town Planning Board had granted the owner approval of 56 mobile home sites, contingent upon favorable review by the New York State Department of Health.

The NY 50 corridor, which transects the northwestern portion of the town, is a mixture of uses, including commercial, residential, mobile homes and light industrial. This corridor is currently zoned Residential Office under the 1991 Plan as an incentive to develop a mixed-use corridor. Most of the commercial uses in the town remain in the hamlets and are limited to convenience stores. Home occupations, which are allowed by special use permit, are a growing trend in the town.

There are few industrial uses in the town. The largest facility is Stone Bridge Iron and Steel Co., Inc., which is located at NY 32 and Stone Bridge Road. It is currently undergoing expansion. West Side iron Works, a metal-fabrication firm, is located just south of Gansevoort on Pettis Road. Fane Concrete, which is not currently operating, and Amerigas propane sales are both located in the hamlet of Northumberland, in the southeastern part of the town along US 4. The other industrially zoned property within the town is located in the northwestern portion of the town contiguous to a rail line and is currently undeveloped. The Saratoga County Landfill, Finch Landfill (and any joining or consolidation of landfills) are also in the town.

Existing residential zones in the town are one-acre and three-acre zones. The zoning revisions that followed the 1991 Master Plan used soils and topography to create these residential zoning boundaries. The function of the R-3 district was to serve as a transition zone between residential and agricultural lands, creating a buffer of at least three acres around agricultural lands so that houses would not be visible from them. A zoning map of the town is found in the pocket appendix of this document.

Approximately 433 acres in the town are zoned industrial. Many of the lands along Pettis Road are zoned industrial, but have residential uses on them. Stone Bridge Iron and Steel is a heavy industrial use on NY 32 in the Agricultural District in the center of town. West Side Iron Works, a metal-fabrication firm, is located just south of Gansevoort on Pettis Road. Amerigas Propane Sales and pane Concrete are both located north of Schuylerville on US 4. (Fane is not currently in operation.)



Northumberland's hamlets have the town's highest density housing. These areas are also located along major roadways and serve as the service centers for Northumberland. These areas do not have public utilities other than streetlights. The Gansevoort hamlet in particular offers a mixed-use area with residential homes and public services such as town facilities, post offices, ball fields, retail shops and even a small theater. The town also has four parcels of designated Empire Zones, which are designed to create jobs.

The NY 50 corridor is currently zoned Residential Office to promote development of residential and professional office space. The goal of this district was to discourage strip commercial uses on NY 50 and to encourage that development into the hamlet areas that are already commercial in nature. This area has not seen an increase in office growth, but residential uses have increased.

Northumberland's Hudson River Overlay District is a 500-foot zone that was placed along the river to preserve and protect the waterways natural characteristics. A similar overlay district may be considered to protect the integrity of the Colebrook, a classified trout stream according to New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Using special setbacks for development in addition to DEC wetland buffers could protect and enhance the quality of the waterway.

Saratoga County also has forestlands within the town that provide open space and passive recreation opportunities for town residents. The county maintains these lands, and it is expected that they will remain forested.

The town historian lists 14 cemeteries within the Town of Northumberland. Northumberland also has three churches: St. Therese Roman Catholic Chapel and the Maranatha Bible Church, both located in the hamlet of Gansevoort, and the Dutch Reformed Church, in the hamlet of Bacon Hill. The town hall, highway garage, post office and fire house are all located in Gansevoort.