

## **SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION**

### ***1.1 What is a Comprehensive Plan?***

The fundamental nature of a Comprehensive Plan is to guide future decision making in a town. It provides the overall framework for future public and private investment and policy development. Many forces influence a town: the regional economy, state and federal agencies and regulations, local laws, developers, and the actions of individual property owners. By clearly stating the Town's goals and following them, the town can help guide these influences and determine its own future. The Comprehensive Plan provides a broad outline for the basis of land use and development. It encompasses the aspects of Italy that make it truly unique: its history, geographic location, scenic beauty, and rural town character.

According to New York State Law, a Town can prepare a comprehensive plan which then is reviewed by the public and adopted by the Town Board. This approval process does not prevent future review and amendment. The visions and goals set forth in this document should be viewed as flexible. As the Town and the needs of its residents change, so should the Comprehensive Plan. This plan is intended to serve the Town of Italy over the next ten years. It should be updated every ten years or less as directed by the Town Board.

The Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Italy is intended to reflect a shared vision of the town's future. A clear sense of Italy's history and present state will help guide this vision for the future. One of the most significant inputs to the Town of Italy Comprehensive Plan is a survey that was developed, completed, and compiled in 2003 and 2004.

Again, the Town of Italy Comprehensive Plan is driven, first and foremost, by the voices of its residents and land owners. This document is meant to reflect those voices.

### ***1.2 The Planning Process***

In December of 2002, the Town of Italy Zoning Commission was formed because of pressing issues and concerns facing the community. From the onset, the Italy Town Board and members of the Zoning Commission emphasized the need for, and encouraged, public participation and input into the planning process. The goal of the Zoning Commission was to ensure that the Comprehensive Plan reflected the shared ideas, desires, and vision of the community. The Zoning Commission accomplished this by reaching out to the public and seeking input from the community and incorporating this information into the planning process. Input from town residents and landowners was solicited, welcomed, and received at every step in this process, from the initial Zoning Commission survey development (the "strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats" or S.W.O.T. process), to regular open meetings, to the mailed Comprehensive Plan Survey itself.

A list of Zoning Commission members is included in the acknowledgement section in the appendices.