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**Town of**  
**PINCKNEY**  
**Plan**

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ADOPTED BY TOWN BOARD RESOLUTION OCTOBER 10, 2023

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## Introduction

### **PURPOSE** of the Plan

The purpose of the plan is to provide guidance for the physical development of the Town of Pinckney for the future. It is based on and reflects the planning ideals laid out in the Planning Accord for Tug Hill and the Tug Hill Reserve Act. The plan is intended to provide a framework for land development and land subdivision controls. It will also help assure that the growth of the area will be in concert with plans for infrastructure and road development, and will not negatively impact natural resources and rural character. Finally, it is hoped that other governments (state, county, and other local governments) will find the plan useful in shaping their future development activities. It is the purpose of this plan to create a vision for the community's future that is a shared vision of the citizens of Town of Pinckney.

### **PERIODIC REVIEW** and Update of the Plan

It is recommended that this plan be reviewed and updated every five to eight years by the Town Board and others, as designated by the Town Board. A periodic review will refresh the Board's perspective on the longer range issues affecting Pinckney, and help to reinforce the link between day-to-day development decisions and longer range town policies. In addition, a periodic update will keep the plan current with the ever-changing conditions of the town without the need for large-scale planning efforts.

## Town of Pinckney History

The Township of Pinckney in Lewis County, New York was formed on February 12, 1808. It was the second town formed, Denmark being the first, after Lewis County was erected. (At the time of its formation, Lewis County consisted of only 5 towns, namely: Leyden, Harrisburg, Lowville, Pinckney, and Turin.) Pinckney was formed from tracts of land taken from the Towns of Harrisburg and Harrison (now the Town of Rodman) and named by the state legislature in honor of Revolutionary War General and statesman, Thomas Pinckney of South Carolina.

Settlement was mainly by Americans, from the New England states, and began several years before the township was formed. The first known settlers were Samuel and Joseph Clear, who located in the southwest part of the town in about 1803. They soon left, however, and the next known to settle in were Ethan Russel and J. Greene of Rhode Island in 1804. Then in 1805 Levi and Elisha Barnes, from Middleton, Connecticut settled in what we now know as Barnes Corners, which was named for Elisha. They also later left the area, either just before or after the War of 1812, sources differ. When Elisha left, he apparently sold his property to Eber Lucas, also from Middleton, who had arrived in 1806.

By 1809, John W. Lucas, James and Stephen Hart, James Armstrong, Phineas Woolworth, Joel Webb, Silas Slater, David Canfield and several Stoddard families had come into the town. Mr. Canfield made the first real improvement in the town when he cleared a large area of land in what is now known as New Boston, erected a sawmill and built a bridge over Deer River. Other early settlers were Richard Dye, Asa Cooley, Elijah Yarrington, Henry Warner, Noah and Jesse Merwin, Reuben Waite, Ira Pollack, Amos Barrett, Mr. Needum, Daniel Hall, Orasmus Streeter, and Ira Odell, who built the first saw mill in Barnes Corners.

As the town grew and changed, so did the families. The first birth occurred in the family of James Hunt or John Stoddard and the first death was Mrs. Elisha Moody. Schools and churches were built and a Grange Hall were erected. Town government was formed, post offices assigned and businesses created.

The first school in Pinckney was the Dye Schoolhouse which was built near the Richard Dye home. The first church services were also held in this schoolhouse. The first school in Barnes Corners was held in the log cabin built by Elisha Barnes, where the Barnes Corners Hotel now stands. As the years progressed schools were located in several areas of the town. There were schools at New Boston, Cronks Corners, on the 7x9 Road (White School District), Pinckney Corners, the Hardscrabble School located about two miles down the Copenhagen Road from Barnes Corners, the River Road School and one at Barnes Corners.

There were several churches in the town at different times. The First Methodist Episcopal Society formed and erected a meeting house at Boynton's Corners on August 8, 1831. The Pinckney Corners Methodist Episcopal Church was built in 1851. The First Baptist Church of Barnes Corners was built in 1856 and a Methodist church was built in Barnes Corners in 1857. Also started in 1856 and finished in 1860 was the Roman Catholic Church at New Boston. The first building for the Catholic Church was originally 1½ miles from New Boston. At present, only the Methodist and Catholic churches survive to conduct services.

When the town government was formed in 1808, the first town meeting was held at the home of Stephen Hart, where Ethan Green was elected the first supervisor. An interesting note; although there had been a town clerk for many years, the first marriage license wasn't issued until 1908. It was issued by Charles D. Lucas for the marriage of Hattie Edwards to Harry Larkin.

Post offices were first located at Boynton's Corners, Cronks Corners and Barnes Corners, which was the last to close; the residents now receiving their mail rural route from Copenhagen. As in any period of history, the first settlers in an area are often farmers. So it was in Pinckney. The economy was agriculturally based (as much of it is also today) and most everything for a family's use was produced at home. Before businesses were developed and built within the town, most people had to travel to Watertown, Copenhagen or Lowville for the things they couldn't provide for themselves. By 1840, though, businesses had started to spring up.

The first Tavern and Hotel was built by Horace Lucas in 1846. It was located in Barnes Corners on South Main St. (7x9 Road) just south of Elisha Barnes' log cabin on the corner. The first building used as a store in Barnes Corners was built in the 1840's by a Mr. Delano. It was located where the cheese factory now stands, but was bought, moved and turned into a store by Joseph Davis. William Mahar built and conducted, for many years, a store at New Boston and Amos Stoddard was engaged for many years in the mercantile business in a store located about 3 1/2 miles from Barnes Corners on the Copenhagen Road.

Many more stores, shops and businesses opened and closed over the years. There were general mercantile stores, feed stores, harness shops, blacksmith shops, a carriage shop, two more hotels (the Savell House, built in 1887, and later called the Hotel Curtis, now Barnes Corner's Hotel, and the Central House built in New Boston in 1888, which operated as a hotel until September 1, 1917 when it was turned into a store.) Also there were a drug store, barber shops, weavers, dressmakers, milliners (hat makers), grocery stores, a meat store, cheese factories, a creamery (where the Grange Hall in Barnes Corners now stands), saw mills, a manufactory of agricultural implements, a furniture factory (made and repaired furniture, also made sleighs and skis), a hoop factory, a printing press, a shingle mill, a grist mill (the grist mill was later changed into a potash and cooper factory), a gun shop, an opera house and poolroom, and even a 10 Cent store. At different times, there were four doctors who practiced in the town, a watch repair shop, and (for when the doctors could do no more and your time had run out) undertakers.

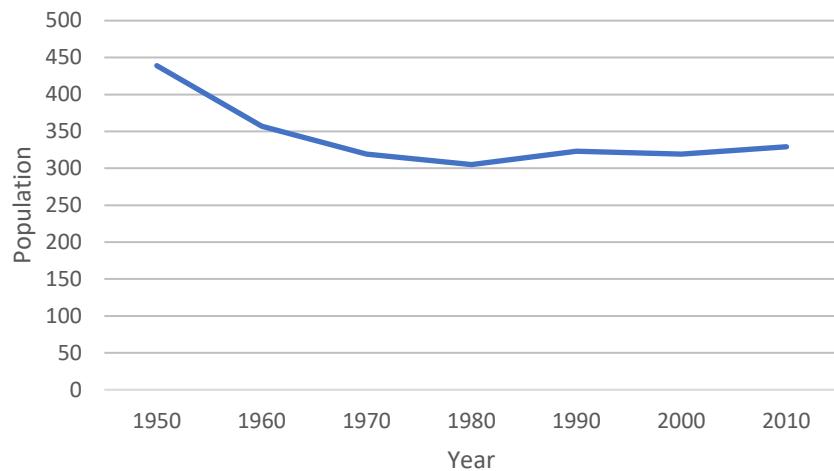
The residents of Pinckney were not without amusements and pleasures. The Grange at one time had a ball club that played at several surrounding communities. Plays, dances and programs of interest were put on by the Grange. The Churches and Ladies Aid Society held dinners, socials and bazaars. The schools held field days and dances were held at nearly all the hotels in town on a weekly basis. Then, for ten years, 1933-1943, Barnes Corners held a community Old Home Days that was sponsored by both the Grange and the Methodist Church.

History, they say, repeats itself. The Town of Pinckney was settled and then nearly abandoned. Many businesses that prospered no longer exist. Today there are few commercial businesses in the town outside of Barnes Corners. Although these businesses are concentrated in a small area, they serve all the residents and also a fluctuating but growing population of campers, hunters and tourists. Perhaps Pinckney is again being slowly settled; for oft times they come for the weekend and stay a lifetime.

*By Susan C. Townsend*

## Town of Pinckney Demographics Profile

### POPULATION TREND



### POPULATION characteristics

Pinckney's population declined steadily between 1950 and 1980, but then levelled off and began to rise very slowly. Between 2000 and 2010, there was an increase of ten people (+3.1%), a little better proportionally than the county and state saw. The number of households increased by a larger proportion than in the county, while the average household size fell significantly.

In the same time period, the median age of residents increased by a larger amount than the county and state. Twenty-nine new housing units were added, proportionally outstripping both state and county.

	2000	2010	Change	Change in Lewis Cty.	Change in NYS
<b>Population</b>	319	329	+3.1%	+0.5%	+2.1%
<b>Number of Households</b>	120	137	+14.2%	+4.7%	+3.7%
<b>Average Household Size</b>	2.66	2.39	-10.2%	-4.1%	-1.5%
<b>Median Age</b>	37.9	43.3	+5.4 years	+3.4 years	+0.4 years
<b>Housing Units</b>	219	248	+13.2%	-0.1%	+5.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (Full Census)

## EMPLOYMENT/INCOME

### characteristics

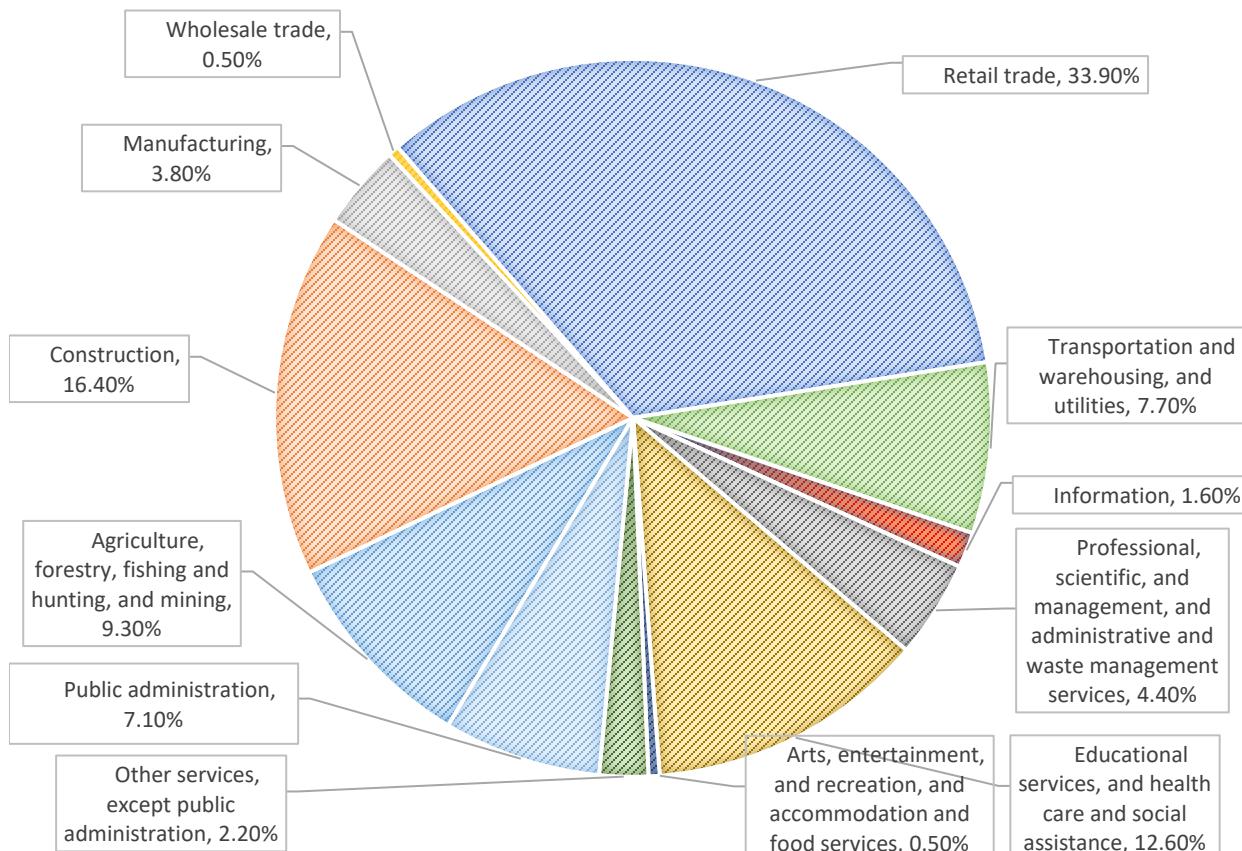
Pinckney's median income was far under half its median housing value in 2015, which means housing affordability may be an issue. Over a quarter of the population is below the poverty line, a somewhat high proportion.

<b>2015 Median Household Income</b>	\$35,938
<b>2015 % of Population Below Poverty Line</b>	26.3%
<b>2015 Median Housing Value</b>	\$118,500
<b>2015 Mean Travel Time to Work</b>	25.5 min.

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau (American Community Survey)*

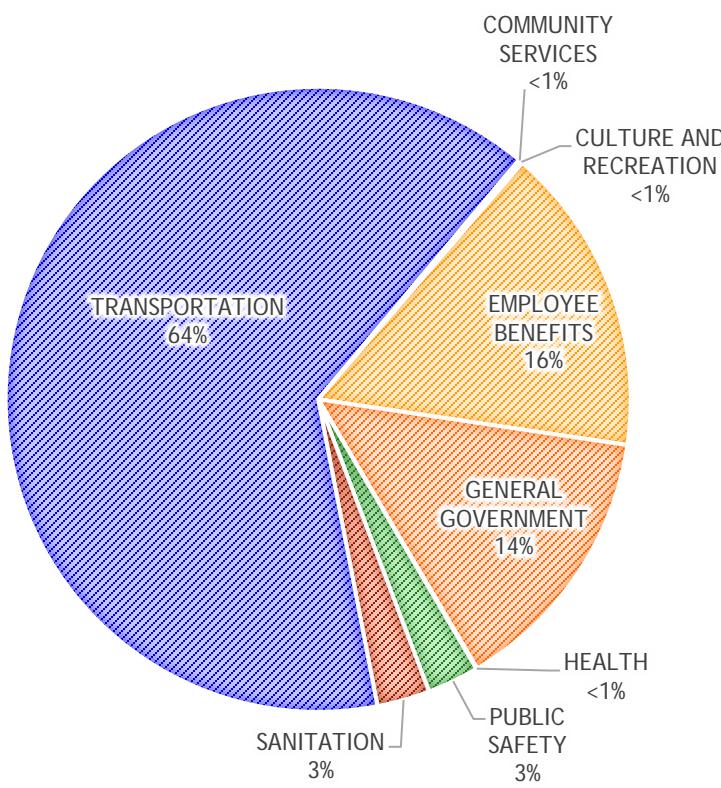
The average travel time to work in 2015 was estimated to be about 26 minutes. About 42.5% of residents worked outside Lewis County (Pinckney borders three towns in Jefferson County). Residents of Pinckney were employed in a variety of fields, primarily retail trade (33.9%) and construction (16.4%).

## EMPLOYMENT



*Source: U.S. Census Bureau (American Community Survey)*

## EXPENDITURES



*Note: Data from the American Community Survey is subject to a variable margin of error, and is not exact.*

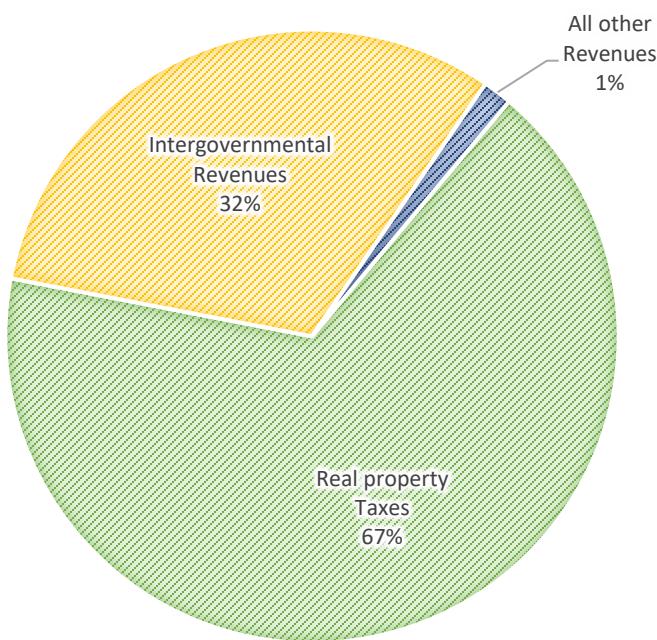
Expenditures (\$)	Pinckney
Community Services	453
Culture and Recreation	684
Debt Service	0
Economic Developments	0
Employee Benefits	78671
General Government	69687
Health	249
Public Safety	13134
Sanitation	13437
Transportation	315507
Utilities	0
<b>Total by Town</b>	<b>491822</b>

## REVENUES

### TOWN BUDGET characteristics

In 2015, Pinckney's total revenue (\$472,317) did not meet total expenditures with a gap of \$19,505. Most revenues came from property taxes, accounting for \$316,071. Intergovernmental revenues (\$149,047) also contributed.

The greatest expenditures were Transportation (\$315,507), Employee Benefits (\$78,671) and General Government (\$69,687), together accounting for 94% of total expenditures.



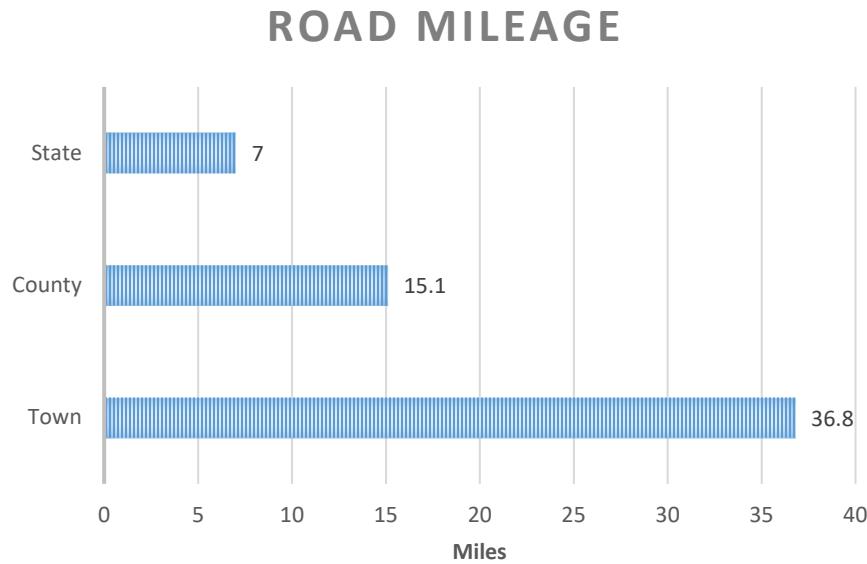
## **LAND USE**

### **characteristics**

As of 2017, 62.5% of Pinckney's roads are owned by the Town, 25.6% by Lewis County, and 11.9% by New York State. Pinckney has a total of 58.9 miles of roadway.

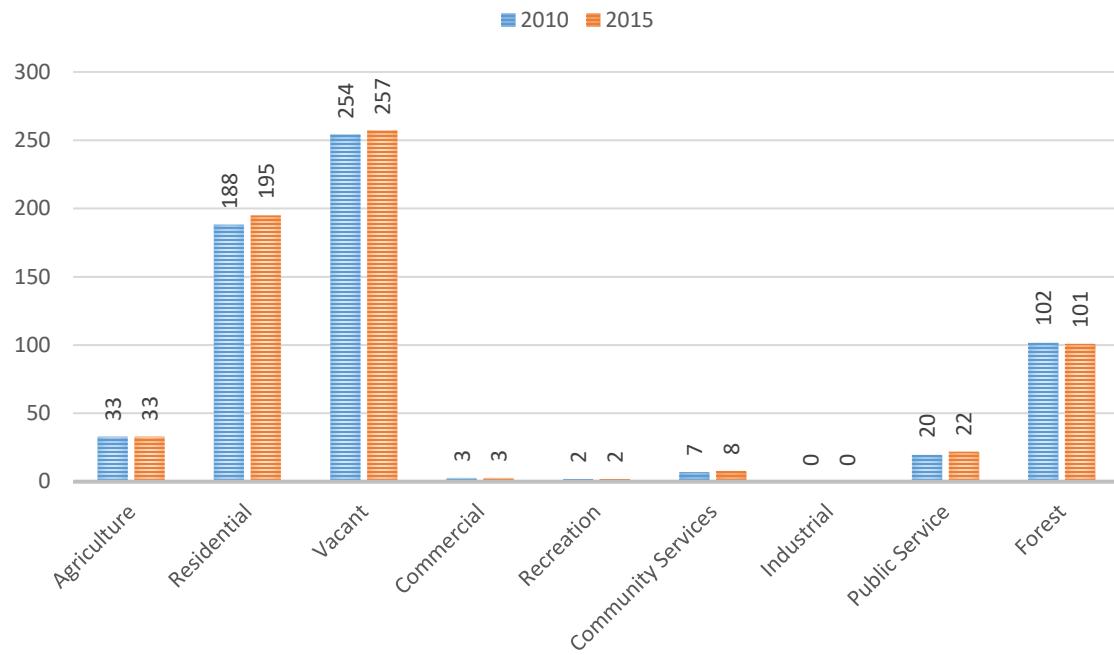
Overall, Pinckney's properties are mostly vacant (41.4%), residential (31.4%), or forest (16.3%).

During the five years from 2010 and 2015, there was an increase of seven residential (+4%), three vacant, one community service and two public service properties. At the same time Pinckney only lost one forest property. Bear in mind that this data only captures the number of tax parcels in Pinckney, not the acreage.



*Source: NYS Dept. of Transportation, 2017*

## TAX PARCELS BY PROPERTY CLASS



Source: NYS Office of Real Property Tax Svcs.

## Town of Pinckney Community Resources Profile

Pinckney is on the western side of Lewis County, bordered by the towns of Rutland and Denmark to the north, Harrisburg to the east, Montague and Worth to the south, and Rodman to the west. State Route 177 that connects the Town of Adams to Lowville is the most heavily travelled road, and passes through the hamlet of Barnes Corners in Pinckney. The busiest segment is between Barnes Corners and the western town boundary, with an average daily traffic of 1,679 vehicles in 2015. The town contains portions of Lewis County Agricultural District #212.08-04-13.100.

The Town of Pinckney has a website: [www.townofpinckney.org](http://www.townofpinckney.org)

## **COMMUNITY BUILDINGS**

Pinckney Town Hall/Barn      About 3,000 sq ft.

307 NY-177, Copenhagen, NY 13626



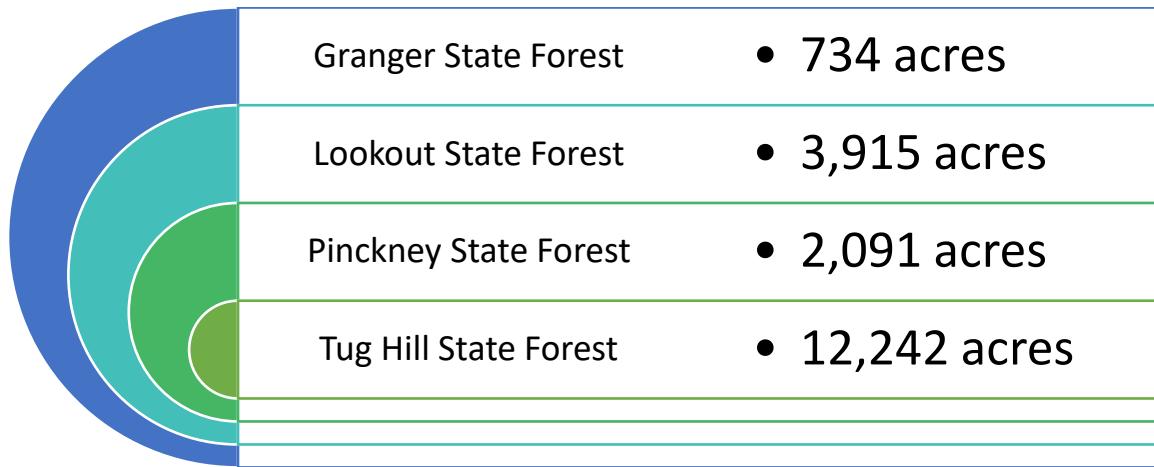
Pinckney Corners Cemetery      On National Register of Historic Places

Located east end of Pinckney Road



Pinckney's primary municipal building is the Town Hall/Barn (about 3,000 sq. ft.), a two-story building located on State Rt. 177 in the hamlet of Barnes Corners facing south. The Pinckney Corners Cemetery is a small half-acre plot with several historic graves as old as 1810, including those of two Revolutionary War veterans. It is not a working cemetery, the latest headstone is from 1901.

## PUBLIC LANDS



Granger State Forest (County Rt. 194) is entirely within Pinckney, and allows hunting and snowmobiling. The majority of Lookout State Forest (County Rt. 194) is in Pinckney, named for an old fire tower on the property. Pinckney State Forest (Pinckney Road) on the northern edge of Pinckney has a single track bike trail that begins and ends in a parking area. Tug Hill State Forest (State Rt. 177) offers extensive skiing, snowmobiling and snowshoeing trails, and has land in three towns.

Note that not the entire acreage of each park is within the town of Pinckney (unless otherwise stated).

## Goals for the Future

**1.0 Retain the quality of our area's surface and groundwater. These waters are essential to providing individual and municipal water supplies. They are essential to many industries of our area. They are important to the retention of fishing opportunities and wildlife habitat.**

- 1.1 Discourage adverse development near major wetlands and concentrations of wetlands.
- 1.2 Discourage adverse development near major stream corridors.
- 1.3 Discourage adverse development near significant springs, wellhead areas of water supply systems, and aquifers.
- 1.4 Continue to identify and map major wetlands, concentrations of wetlands, major stream corridors, significant springs, water supply well head areas, and aquifers.
- 1.5 Raise awareness of the importance of Tug Hill waters.

**2.0 Retain major forested areas most important to forest industry, hunting, fishing, and other types of recreation. Major blocks of forest land on Tug Hill are not only important for retaining the area's economy and recreation opportunities, they are also important in providing wildlife habitat and the very character of the area. In addition, Tug Hill's vast reaches of forest are key to maintaining the purity of its waters and to controlling rates of runoff.**

2.0 Continue to identify major forested areas.

2.1 Discourage subdivision and development that would take major forested lands out of productive use for forest industry, hunting, fishing and other types of recreation.

2.2 Discourage unreasonable restrictions on forestry activities that adversely affect businesses.

2.3 Encourage forestry-related businesses as a means of maintaining a healthy economy, and as a means of retaining large parcels of forestland.

2.4 Encourage educational programs that show the importance of forested lands to the area's environment, economy and recreational opportunities.

2.5 Promote sound forestry practices for all commercial and private harvesting through the establishment of minimum forest management standards.

**3.0 Retain the area's most important wildlife habitat and unique areas to conserve hunting, fishing, and recreational opportunities, and to help retain the character and biological richness of our area. Important wildlife habitat areas and unique areas such as our gulfs are a significant part of the character of our heritage, and can provide important recreational opportunities. They also are of great importance to our economy because of the economic contributions hunting and fishing make to the area, and the economic benefit that comes from the viewing of wildlife and scenery by snowmobilers, skiers, hikers, motorists, and others.**

3.1 Discourage adverse development in important wildlife and plant habitat areas, and in and near gulfs.

3.2 Support town-by-town identification of important wildlife habitat and unique areas. Encourage further research to identify such areas.

3.3 Encourage educational programs regarding the importance and benefit of habitat and unique areas for use in schools and with civic and adult groups.

**4.0 Retain area's existing farms and best farm soils for farm production. Local action alone cannot retain our farms. This depends on the individual actions of our farmers, the natural economy and state and national farm policy. Locally, we can take actions that help keep good farm land from inappropriate development and help farm diversification.**

- 4.1 Support identification of important farm lands, and updates of existing farm land inventories.
- 4.2 Update land use controls that would limit farm lands being taken out of production.
- 4.3 Support voluntary actions taken by individual farmers to keep their farms in production, through tools such as ag districts, and ag land assessments.
- 4.4 Support programs to help strengthen dairy farming and to help farmers that wish to diversify their operations.
- 4.5 Encourage educational programs that demonstrate to school students and adults the importance of farming to our area.
- 4.6 Discourage development which would tend to disrupt agricultural practices.
- 4.7 Encourage only those land uses which lend support to the agricultural industry.

**5.0 Retain private and public hunting and fishing opportunities, and other outdoor recreational activities, in our area.**

- 5.1 Support voluntary actions, of private landowners to improve hunting, fishing and other recreational access to public lands designated for these uses, such as the sale of access easements, or involvement in fish and wildlife cooperator programs.
- 5.2 Discourage actions that would lead to the subdivision of lands important to hunting, fishing and other recreation where that subdivision would remove lands from such use.
- 5.3 Identify areas important to recreation. These might include designated public motorized and nonmotorized recreation trails, public roads opened for recreational trail use, and parking areas.
- 5.4 Encourage educational programs that demonstrate the importance of hunting, fishing and recreation to our way of life and our area's economy. Also encourage educational programs and appropriate law enforcement to protect private property rights and to provide safe hunting, fishing and other recreational opportunities.
- 5.5 Direct the development of active recreation facilities and programs to areas near population concentrations where services can be provided more economically.
- 5.6 Encourage the proper design and management of passive recreation activities in the more remote areas in order to conserve the water and forest resources and to minimize change to the area's character.

**6.0 Retain historic sites and structures that are important to the character of our area.**

6.1 Identify historic sites and structures.

6.2 Discourage development that would diminish the quality of historic sites and structures through town planning and land use controls.

**7.0 Control the costs of public road maintenance.**

7.1 Discourage new public roads into or across remote areas not now served by public roads, especially in the core forest of our area, in areas that would lead to the breakup of lands important to forest management, wildlife, farming, hunting, fishing and other recreation.

7.2 Identify portions of roads that might be appropriate for some form of abandonment, minimum maintenance designation, or seasonal use designation.

7.3 Support state legislation that would limit town responsibilities for maintenance on designated remote roads.

7.4 Discourage development of year-round residences along seasonal roads.

**8.0 Help keep villages and hamlets good places to live.**

8.1 Plan for village and hamlet improvement projects, and apply for grants to assist in such work.

8.2 Direct development, through regulation and other means, into and around already existing hamlets and communities away from those portions of the region where significant physical and economic limitations to growth exist.

## Town of Pinckney Development Laws

The Town of Pinckney Zoning Law was adopted as “Local Law No. 4 of 1987.” This was amended by local laws in 1998 and 2011. The town has a subdivision law also adopted in 1987.

The town has also adopted the “Town of Pinckney Local Law for Administration and Enforcement of the New York State Fire Prevention Code” (1982) and the “Town of Pinckney Road Standards” (1986).

### **LAND USE & ZONING** laws

The Town of Pinckney Zoning Law establishes three districts:

- **Hamlet** – Developed to some extent and includes low or medium density residential uses with some commercial and industrial uses.
- **Rural Residential** – Sparsely settled, but generally accessible by highway. Some forest and agricultural use may be present.
- **Forest Resources** – Predominantly covered by dense vegetation and contains many wet areas and stream courses. Relatively inaccessible by automobile and contains few permanent residences and some seasonal residences.

The law defines general regulations for all districts (and district-specific regulations), such as uses permitted, lot sizes, height, setbacks from roads, and waste disposal standards. The law outlines processes and procedures and provides rules for amending the law, changing districts, and applying for land use permits.

Agricultural parcels in Pinckney are additionally subject to New York State laws such as Article 25AA.

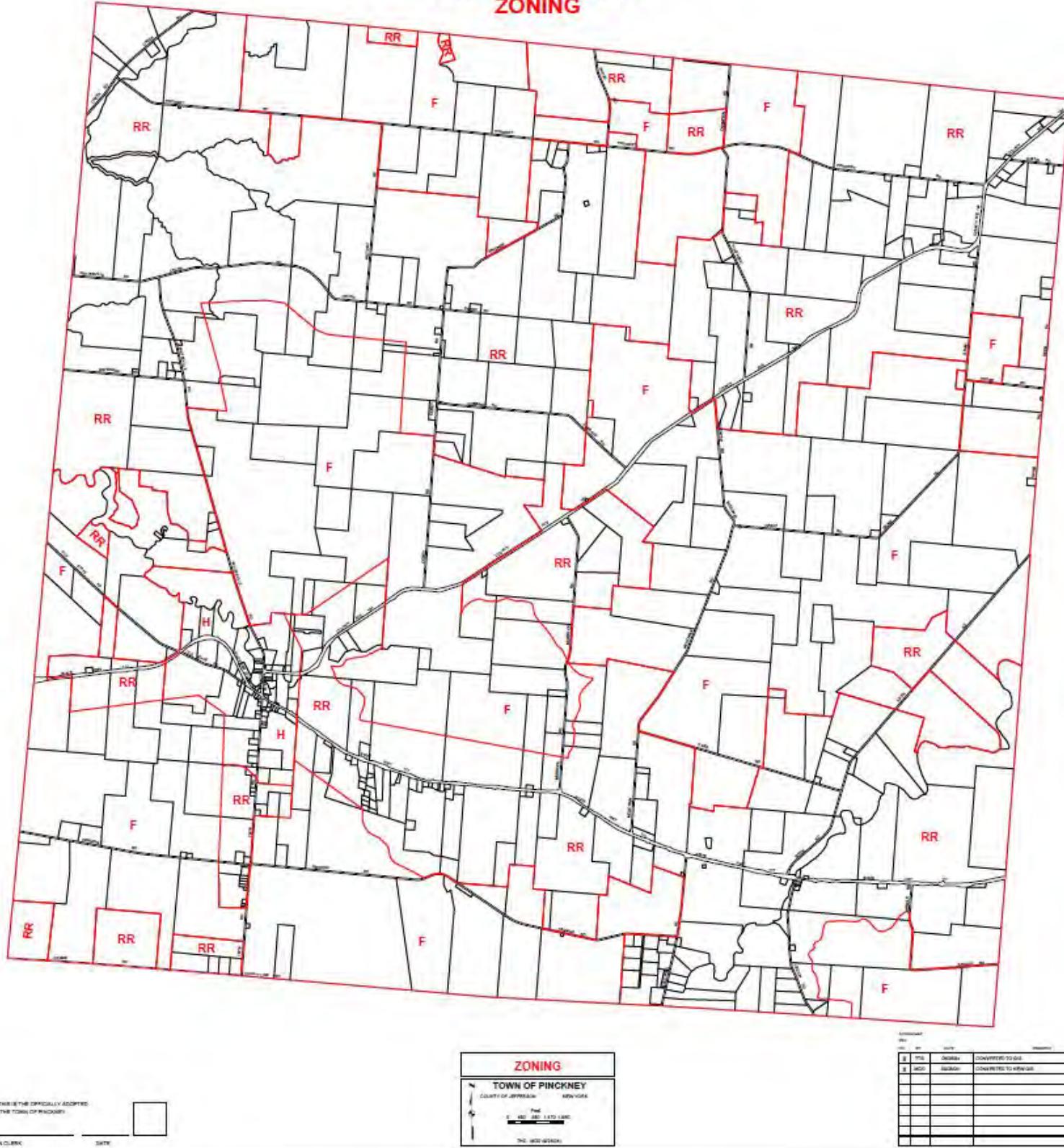
“Special Areas” in Pinckney are subject to the provisions of the Tug Hill Reserve Act, Chapter 486 of the New York State Laws of 1992. The town board must be consulted before development by public entities in these areas.

The town has established a specific “Open Development Area” on tax parcel 206.00-02-07.100.

### **SUBDIVISION** laws

The Town of Pinckney Subdivision Control Law regulates the process for creating subdivisions. It provides general design standards and road standards. The Town of Pinckney’s authority to maintain development standards and outline development procedures is further protected by this law.

**TOWN OF PINCKNEY  
ZONING**



I CERTIFY THAT THIS IS THE OFFICIALLY ADOPTED  
ZONING MAP OF THE TOWN OF PINCKNEY

TOWN CLERK \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

