

# INTRODUCTION

Over a period of almost 170 years the Town of Dryden has undergone a slow transition from a vast unpopulated wilderness to the substantial community we know today. Two villages have been carved from its expanse and a broad skeleton of roads now ties together, and provides easy access to, almost all of its far-flung areas.

Like other communities in Tompkins County, Dryden has been affected by a long period of prosperity stimulated largely by the unprecedented growth of higher education since the end of World War II. With a key location between two growing urban centers - the educationally oriented Ithaca area on the west and the industrially oriented Cortland area on the east - there can be little doubt about accelerated growth and continued change in Dryden in the future.

Recognizing that change is inevitable, the most important issue then becomes how this change can be directed toward the accomplishment of a pleasant and efficient physical environment. To this end the Town of Dryden and its villages have prepared a General Plan as the first step in what will be a continuous effort to review choices, establish goals and set up guidelines for the three communities to follow as they evolve and develop in the years to come.

Obviously, Dryden will not be able to completely control its future physical form nor should it attempt to do so. Much can be done, however, to protect that which is worth protecting, to conserve that which is worth conserving, to improve that which needs improvement and to provide the leadership and guidance that will be required if the area is to capitalize on its potential and develop over the years in an orderly, efficient and attractive manner.

The success of this or any planning program depends on the degree to which its principles are honored and its objectives accomplished. Great pressures to ignore these principles and objectives can be expected; tempting proposals which directly oppose accepted policy will materialize as development intensifies. If the planning concept is to survive and be meaningful, Dryden's community leaders must respond to these pressures and proposals, changing the plan when it can be improved but upholding its underlying integrity when this is endangered.

In last analysis, the value of this document depends upon how its guiding principles are used and the extent to which its proposals are ignored or supported. The choice, of course, rests with the community itself.