Over this past fall, Solvay residents, and business, industry and village representatives have been working with the SUNY ESF Center for Community Design Research in a collaborative planning process that has resulted in a draft Vision Plan for the Village of Solvay. The community-created Vision Plan will serve as the foundation to guide future action.

In vision planning, community members have imagined the future of the village through a process that has identified assets and issues, considered opportunities and explored commonly held values. In a series of open workshops, community members shared information and ideas on village characteristics, including strengths, valued places, underutilized resources and desired changes. They evaluated and revised draft vision statements, developed goals and prioritized the critically important initial implementation strategies.

The Vision Plan presented in this report is composed of the Vision Statement and six major Goals. Listed under each goal are Action Strategies, which are steps the community can use to implement the vision plan. Additional action strategies will emerge as the community works towards achieving it’s vision.

The Solvay Vision:
The Village of Solvay celebrates its close-knit social structure, physical layout, and diverse population; values strong local services as well as convenient connections to regional resources; and strives to balance its industrial past, present and future with a rich variety of village based residential neighborhoods and commercial opportunities.

Goal 1. Develop a new vision for Milton Avenue.
Rethink the street’s traditional role and image in light of societal and village changes. Encourage reinvestment in the Milton Avenue corridor, improve its appearance and viability, and present a positive and progressive image of the village. Milton Avenue remains an important street but the evolving relationship between industry and the remainder of the village requires an exploration into the image and role of this corridor.

- Explore the relationship between the industrial land uses that line the north side of Milton Avenue and the commercial/public service/residential uses on the south side, through the preparation of alternative illustrative design strategies. Use these alternative strategies as the basis for community discussion and education regarding the changing relationship with industry. A landscape architecture graduate student is undertaking this project in Spring 2003. Additional action steps will develop from that study.

Goal 2. Support a range of housing choices and residential neighborhoods that are well maintained and stable.
The diverse residential areas should reflect the pride of ownership and a long-term commitment to the neighborhood and the community.

- Undertake a community-based research project to discover the extent and possible causes of poorly maintained properties, to determine the type of assistance needed and to develop and implement strategies for funding and assistance. Community members can do this study with help and advice from a community development organization.

- Enlist a knowledgeable individual with a planning and design background to determine the extent to which maintenance and appearance issues and concerns expressed in the vision planning process can be addressed by the revised zoning code. Workshop participants called for better code enforcement but zoning codes may not actually have the legal power to solve the problems perceived by residents. Illustrating what the code can and cannot do will clarify this and allow other approaches to be considered.

- Using the list begun in the vision workshops, develop several strategies to begin to address issues of appearance and maintenance, such as community service clean up and improvement projects, business adopt-a-street program, educational workshops, and grants and incentives for home improvement.

The Solvay Vision Planning Project was funded by Solvay Paperboard, Solvay Bank, ACMG Credit Union, and the Village of Solvay, with in-kind support from SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY-ESF).
Goal 3. Acknowledge and strengthen the Woods Road area as the village center and establish connections between this center and the wider community.

- Undertake a research design study to explore with community members the concept of strengthening the village center, with the goal of developing a common vision upon which planning and land use decisions can be based.
- Work with the CCDR and other public agencies or non-profit organizations to determine sources of funding for this design study. Write grant proposals, using the vision plan as the basis for the funding request.
- Engage a design research graduate student or professional to help organize and oversee the project.

Workshop participants identified civic and public buildings and spaces along Woods Road as central to their image of the village. Some ideas to consider for strengthening the center include: a) improved pedestrian connections, b) well-designed and cared for civic/public spaces and streets, and/or c) a well-defined mixed-use village center.

Goal 4. Improve the major gateway corridors along Bridge Street, West Genesee Street and Milton Avenue. This will promote a positive image of the village, stimulate economic development by attracting people into the village, and reinforce the convenience of connections to resources in downtown Syracuse and greater Onondaga County.

- Once a new vision for Milton Avenue has been developed, form a working group with adjacent municipalities to develop collaborative planning approaches that encourage appropriate land use, character, density, and structure at the transition areas between communities.
- Develop alternative design strategies that illustrate possible approaches to village gateways for review and discussion with community members. Having different, graphically clear approaches to consider allows people to compare the benefits and problems to help make appropriate decisions.

Nearly 100 people participated in the Solvay Vision Planning Workshops held throughout the Fall of 2002.

Goal 5. Identify and celebrate the village’s distinctive heritage and historic resources.

- Inventory and document existing historic resources. Determine their location and physical condition, explore new or continued uses, and research methods to bring them up to modern code standards.
- Document stories and narratives of village residents through which local history can be revealed and passed on.
- Develop strategies to celebrate village history and identify available resources to support implementation.

Although many historic industrial buildings have been removed, there are valued or unrecognized historic structures that do remain. Many may need to be brought up to modern code standards but their integrity should be maintained.

Goal 6. Use existing organizations to work together in support of the Vision Plan, establishing a renewed focus on participation in community activities.

- Develop strategies to organize and promote citizen working groups to advance and begin to implement the Vision Plan. Encourage broad community participation in the vision committees by providing a range of participation options and activities that allow for different levels of time commitment, interests and contributions.
- Develop methods to communicate with all community members about ongoing activities and the results of the vision process to date.
- Outreach to all civic organizations to inform them of the vision plan and discuss potential roles and partnerships. Enlist volunteers for the outreach from those who have attended the vision planning workshops.
- Sponsor events that promote interest and excitement in vision activities and projects.
- Initiate a community based study to determine the role that existing recreation and open space land and facilities play in the community and whether such facilities should be changed or improved, or additional facilities proposed, in response to community needs and vision.

Thank you to all the Solvay area residents who have participated in the Vision Planning process to date:

- Lubov Achman
- Henry Antonini
- Joan Avery
- Stephen S. Bagazio
- Peter Biach
- Anthony Bianchi
- Carole Bildstein
- Steve Bosco
- Dan Brostek
- Helen Brudzinski
- Cara Burton
- Michael Campolieta
- Luke A. Cardone
- John Chistolini
- Ben Contegni
- Michael Costello
- Lee DeCecco
- Albert R. Denti
- Ed DiFiorio
- Gloria DiFiorio
- Kevin Dwyer
- Sara Eirington
- Linda Esco
- John Faust
- Jim Foresti
- Marlene Fougner
- Joseph Fragno
- Sandra Ghezzi
- Tom Giannone
- Tony Gazzl
- Arnold Gozzi
- Carolyn Halton
- Thomas Helmer
- Susan Huber
- Kathleen Huffman
- Denis Hupman
- Colleen Kavanagh
- Rev. Jack Kissel
- Barbara Kubuszewski
- Kevin Kasowski
- Pavel Kozlantprim
- Eme Kurz
- Cheryl Libertone
- Al Liz
- Cindy Logan
- Jane Longo
- Tim Louise
- Thomas Mammorella
- Kathy Marinelli
- Sandy Markawicz
- Mary Maroney
- Anne Marie Masterpole
- Paul Melile
- Mayor Anthony Modafferi
- Maureen Needham
- Melanie O’Donnell
- Brianne O’Neill
- Patrick O’Neill
- Vickie O’Neill
- Anita Okazaki
- Greg Pacicca
- Jean Paticc
- Marlee Palerino
- Kathy Palerino
- Michael Pellizzari
- Henry J. Perry
- Kim Pomeroy
- James Porter
- Jody Pucello
- James Quick
- Muthuswami Raman
- Frank Rolince, Jr.
- Joseph Rotella
- Dan Rudy
- Lance Rudy
- Christa Salvagri
- Joe Sardaneri
- Tammy Sayre
- Tom Sayre
- Laura Sgoiure
- Christina Sikorski
- Drew Sikorski
- Addeo Silvia
- Carol Sinispol
- Karen Simiele
- Thomas Stigers
- Greg Stone
- Karen Szynsmerski
- Michael Tarsella
- Mary Valerio
- Linda Webb
- Wilbur Webb
- Cheryl Welles
- Laura Zalewski

For more information, or to become involved with the Solvay Vision Planning Process call Mary Valerio at 468-2101 or Jim Quick at 468-4425.
Strengthen the existing village center and establish strong and visible internal connections between this center and the wider community.
Develop a new vision for Milton Avenue, rethinking its traditional role and image in light of societal and village changes.

- Proposed action step: Explore alternative strategies for looking at the relationship with industry.

Explore a New Vision for Milton Avenue
Ruhr Valley in Germany
• Encourage and support a range of residential neighborhoods and housing opportunities

Encourage a range of residential neighborhoods
Improve the major Gateway corridors along Bridge Street, West Genesee Street and Milton Avenue.