

**ON TARRANT**  
**COUNTY**  
**NEW YORK**  
 FROM ACTUAL SURVEYS  
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# Two Genevas: City and Town

Visitors are often confused by the City and Town of Geneva. Why are there two names and what do they mean? Geneva seems pretty small – why is it a city?

Local government may not be an exciting topic but decisions by elected officials affect us for decades. The city and town have both shared and competing interests but often act separately. *Two Genevas: City and Town* is a simple guide to the past, present, and future of Geneva.



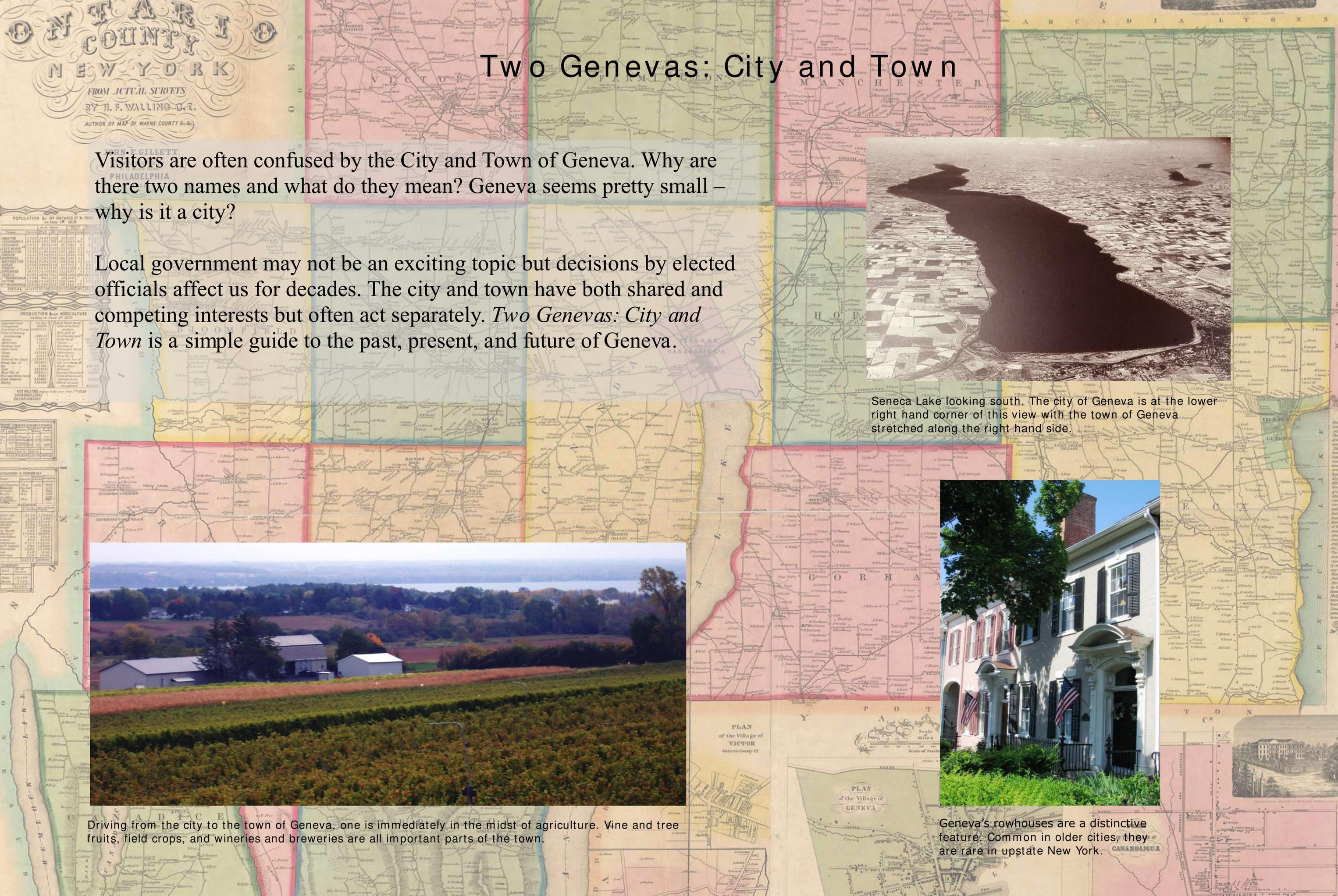
Seneca Lake looking south. The city of Geneva is at the lower right hand corner of this view with the town of Geneva stretched along the right hand side.



Driving from the city to the town of Geneva, one is immediately in the midst of agriculture. Vine and tree fruits, field crops, and wineries and breweries are all important parts of the town.



Geneva's rowhouses are a distinctive feature. Common in older cities, they are rare in upstate New York.



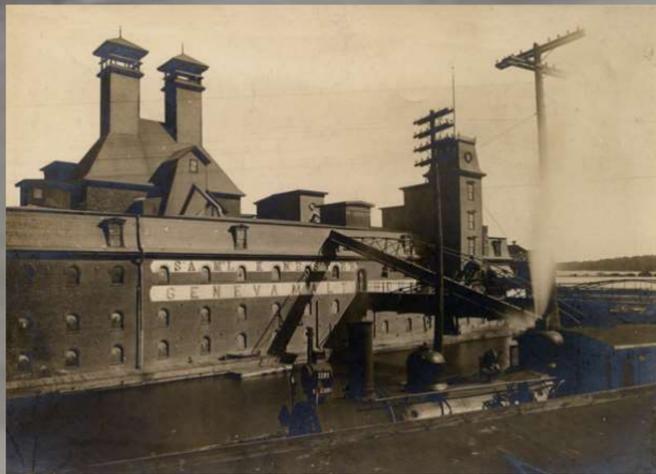
# "Not Only An Elegant, But A Salubrious Village": Geneva

Geneva benefited from location and settlers. In 1796 Geneva was on the east-west stagecoach road across the state which brought many people through town. Charles Williamson recruited wealthy landowners to the village who had the education and money to support schools, churches, and newspapers. Fertile soil attracted farmers and horticulturists; the area became famous for grains, fruits, and nursery stock. In 1825 the Erie Canal, connected locally by the Seneca-Cayuga Canal, provided transportation for local crops. Industries began locating here in the 1850s to take advantage of new railroad lines.

1791: "[Geneva is] a small, unhealthy village."

1818: "[Geneva is] now not only an elegant, but a salubrious [favorable to or promoting health or well-being] village, and distinguished for the refinement and elevated character of its society."

- Elkanah Watson



The area's abundant crops and transportation systems attracted processing companies. Nester Malthouse was one of the first, wetting and roasting grains to create malt.



In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Geneva Hygienic Institute on the village square (now Pulteney Park) combined health fads, mineral water, and a lake view to bring patients to town.



In 1822 Geneva College was granted a provisional charter that was made permanent in 1825. It was renamed in 1852 to honor its founder Bishop John Henry Hobart.

# Town of Geneva

New York is one of 19 states that divides counties into townships. This area was part of the Town of Seneca until 1872 when a portion became the Town of Geneva. Only about three miles wide, the town limits were Kashong Point to the south and Packwood Road north of the village. When the city was chartered in 1898, it was no longer part of the town and Geneva became the smallest town in the county.

The town is governed by a supervisor, who represents the town on the county legislature, and four board members. There are committees and officers to consider planning, zoning, tax assessments, and other functions of government. Legislative decisions are enacted in the town code.



COTTAGES AT KASHONG, ON SENECA LAKE, NEAR GENEVA, N. Y.

At the end of the 19th century, Kashong Point had a steamboat landing and two hotels. Private cottages were built in the early 1900s and some have evolved into year-round homes.



For the first half of the 20th century White Springs Farm was a major producer of milk, fruit, and vegetables. Over 400 acres of fruit trees required hundreds of workers at harvest time.



In 1810 the first manufactory in the area was built on Glass Factory Bay south of the village. A community developed around the glasshouse and 1,500 acres of woods that fueled the factory.

# The Times They Are A-Changin'

Geneva experienced an economic and population boom during World War II and the Korean War, due to nearby military installations. The 1950s and 60s were unsettling times for the city.

Industries began closing or moving away due to ownership changes. Retailers felt the effects of Sampson Air Force Base closing in 1956 and the loss of those shoppers.

Meanwhile, the town saw sharp population increases as homeowners sought room for growth and newer housing stock. There was 23% growth between 1940-50, and an additional 47% in 1950-60. Industries that moved to the area, such as Seneca Foods and International Paper, built plants in the town rather than the city.



New factories needed space not available within city limits. In 1965 Libby's (now Seneca Foods) built a processing plant on 123 acres on Gambee Road.



In 1956 U.S. Radiator on South Exchange Street merged with National Radiator. Six years later the Crane Company purchased and closed the factory.



In the 1960s and 70s commercial development spread west on Routes 5 & 20. Pyramid Mall, above, joined several car dealerships and was followed by Walmart. Retail businesses' sales tax support the town of Geneva and eliminate the need for property tax.

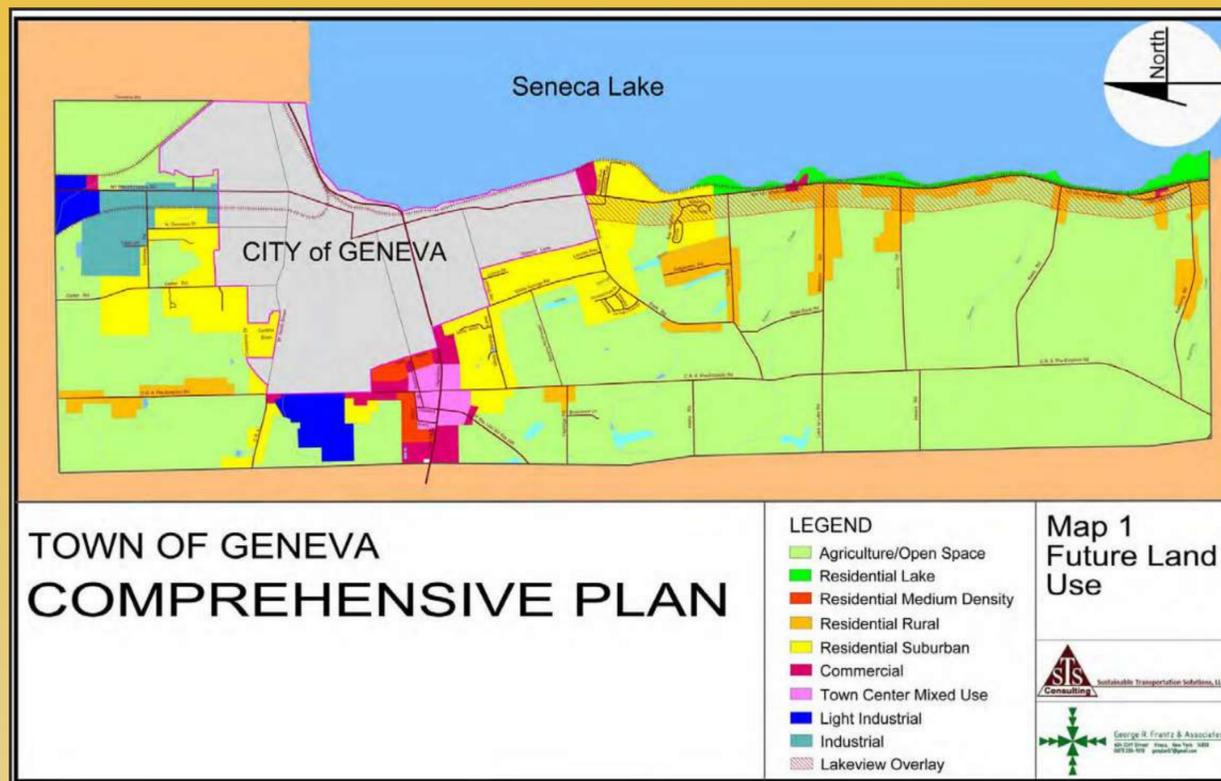
# Side by Side: What Does the Future Hold?

The city and town face the same challenges. New York State is losing businesses and people to other states with more favorable economies. The environment may be impacted by two nearby landfills - Ontario County and Seneca Meadows, Inc. – and the proposed underground storage of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) near Watkins Glen.

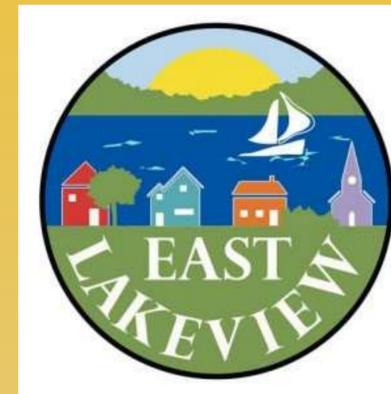
Tourism and agricultural-related businesses are receiving a boost from interest in food and beverage industries. However, both governments are aware of the need to manage resources to retain the features that make Geneva attractive.



Five miles west of here the Ontario County Landfill accepts waste from all over New York State. Even after closing it will always produce leachate ("garbage juice") that will require management and treating.



"Future growth should occur in a compact, sustainable form within existing developed areas close to the City of Geneva, which is a commercial and cultural center. The landscape will continue to be predominantly agrarian, accentuated by woodlands, a varied terrain, historic homes and farmsteads, and vistas of Seneca Lake."  
 - from Town of Geneva Comprehensive Plan, Vision Statement, October 2015



Neighborhood associations in the city encourage communication and cooperation as a means of improving housing stock and amenities.



Real estate sign on Route 14 in the town of Geneva

**Applying Geneva's Values**

**We are stewards of our special natural setting.**  
*It should be celebrated and protected.*

**Our "uniquely urban" character and sense of community are at the core of who we are.**  
*We know one another, we worship together, and we attend school and play ball, sail, and run together and see each other at the grocery store. We take citizenship seriously and we take action together.*

**Our multi-cultural heritage is a point of pride.**  
*We are a community rich in diverse identities, traditions, customs, and histories that warrant celebration.*

**Our arts, architectural and recreational assets are important to us.**  
*Our small city on a pristine lakeshore with established institutions, a beautiful downtown, and historic homes in equally historic and livable neighborhoods sets us apart in the region.*

**It is important to us that our economy is strong.**  
*If we are not economically prosperous, we cannot maintain our city.*

Geneva's Values statement from City of Geneva Draft Comprehensive Plan, May 2016