

Success

6.0

achieving

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Achieving success

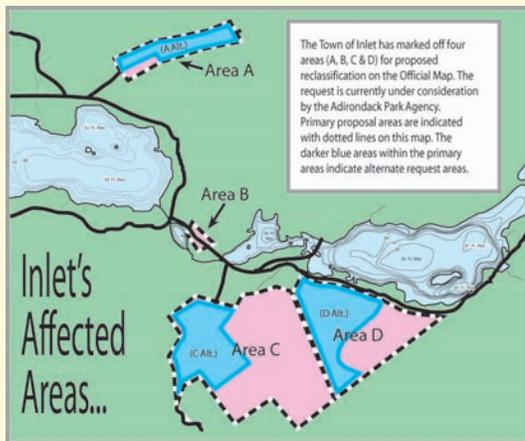
Success is a process involving the cooperation of many stakeholders, the pursuit of funding, the navigation of regulatory agencies, and the participation of willing developers and enthusiastic leadership. In the Adirondacks, success is not immediate but is achieved incrementally, sometimes over long periods of time.

The *Hamlets 3* expansion model can be employed in all Adirondack hamlets, with or without local zoning programs. APA regulations, permits, and project review can be used in communities without zoning to

achieve expansion, but implementing a hamlet expansion plan requires more than going through APA processes. A combination of actions, policies, regulations, and financing mechanisms are required for success. This section presents an assortment of implementation methods that can be mixed and matched to help communities achieve success in realizing smart growth projects.

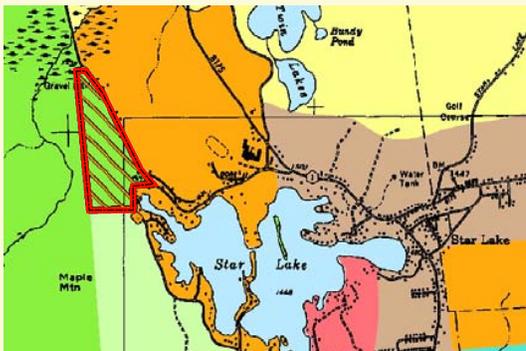
The Hamlet of Schroon Lake.





Town of Inlet map amendment application.

Town of Inlet submitted a map amendment application to the APA to change approximately 1,913 acres of three Low Intensity Use areas and a Rural Use area. The town cited a lack of developable private property and sought a change that would increase the housing supply. The request by Inlet was for large areas to be intensified to Moderate Use Intensity. Without proper planning, such a change could lead to sprawl. After public resistance, the public comment period was extended.



Star Lake map amendment application.

Star Lake received a map amendment for approximately 60 acres of land through the APA process to upgrade Resource Management land to Low Intensity Use. The amendment was initiated because the area was already developed beyond the intensity guidelines of its present classification. The area was adjacent to existing Low Intensity land and met the APA character description, purposes policies, and objectives of the Low Intensity Use classification.

IMPLEMENTATION

APA regulations

Within the regulatory structure of the Adirondack Park Agency are several methods to facilitate smart growth expansion. APA land use classifications (see page 22) have specific regulatory guidelines that projects must adhere to. For any given parcel, for example, the APA sets a maximum number of principal buildings for a specific number of acres. These structures can be clustered together, however, to support smart growth principles, while maintaining the allowed parcel density.

APA map amendments

It is possible to amend APA land use classifications. The amendment process can be initiated by a private landowner, a town, or as the result of a comprehensive planning process or APA-approved local land use program. Based on an inventory of natural constraints, including slopes, soils, wetlands, and other features, the Agency determines if the amended classification fits the land. The APA uses regionally identifiable boundaries such as roads or streams, not private property lines, as land use classification boundaries. When a request for a map amendment does not use regional boundaries, the Agency will adjust the map amendment area to be consistent with the Agency's boundary criteria.

Map amendments are best used to increase density in Rings A or B to support smart growth. Hamlet classification, probably the most desired map amendment, cuts two ways – though free of almost all APA jurisdiction, it potentially opens up a community to undesirable development unless local land use controls are in place.

Density transfers

Depending upon legal circumstances, a hamlet that desires additional density for an area may be able to use one of three kinds of density transfers.

First, a landowner has the ability to transfer density on a given parcel of land. This enables clustering development on the most appropriate areas while avoiding development on least.

Second, if density transfer is provided for in the local zoning law and is part of an APA-approved local land use program, two land owners can transfer density between them. If density transfer is not part of an approved local land use program, transfers are limited to adjacent properties. This limitation may be overcome by means of a complicated scheme of transferring density from one property to another in a kind of fireman's bucket brigade.

Third, a municipality may transfer density as part of an approved local land use program as an alternative to an APA map amendment. The Town of Westport-approved local land use program provides an example of this. A land conservation organization owns a mountaintop within a large APA Rural Use zone there. Westport transferred the building rights associated with the protected mountaintop to an area adjacent to the hamlet settlement in order to increase density in a Village Growth zoning district.

Zoning

Adopting local zoning laws may facilitate the implementation of the *Hamlets 3* expansion model. Hamlets with local zoning controls can translate overlay zone descriptions, prescriptions, and design strategies into regulatory codes, zoning laws, and ordinances. Form-based zoning assures

that a project's general shape, massing, height, and orientation positively contribute to the existing or desired hamlet context. Incentive zoning provides rewards for development, such as affordable housing or public space, that meets specified hamlet development goals. These codes, combined with zoning that allows for a proper mix of uses, are significant tools for implementing hamlet expansion.

Overlay districts

Overlay districts are drawn on a map over existing zoning to address the special needs of a particular area within a hamlet. Common examples include historic districts, road corridor standards, agricultural protection, watershed protection, and scenic view protection zones. These zones can preserve community character, promote mixed-use development or higher density development, encourage affordable housing, and achieve other community-desired results. *Hamlets 3* expansion overlay zones can be used or incorporated into regulatory overlay districts.

Subdivisions

When a landowner or developer wishes to subdivide an existing parcel it offers a community the opportunity to ensure this expansion reflects smart growth principles. A town board can empower a local planning board to do subdivision review and adopt regulations, such as requiring that a certain percentage of a site be conserved by clustering structures. A design review board can exist independent of zoning laws.

Official map

An official map is a powerful, yet often underutilized planning tool. Town boards are legally empowered to create an official map delineating streets,

THE HAMLETS 3 MODEL CAN BE EMPLOYED WITH OR WITHOUT ZONING.

highways, parks and drainage systems, built and unbuilt. A town can draw out streets and other elements that do not currently exist to create a compact hamlet form following smart growth principles and design strategies. When a developer or landowner develops a piece of land, their plans will be legally bound to the features on the official map.

Official maps are not straightjackets, though. They are a starting point for a rational layout of roads and other infrastructure and can be revised by a town board. If a land developer has a different idea that results in a logical and efficient layout of roads and other infrastructure, he/she can submit that idea to the town board for its action to revise the official map.

Attracting new development

Marketing can bring new investment into a community. A hamlet's marketing effort to attract outside investment depends on the specific characteristics and desires of the community. New development can create jobs, add housing, increase the tax base, and enhance the community's vitality. Marketing strategies should communicate a hamlet's strengths and assets to targeted outside interests including businesses, developers, and private investors. Cluster-based marketing strategies enable hamlets to pool resources and organize collectively.

Implementation resources guide

EPA.gov/smartgrowth: The EPA (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency) provides research, tools, partnerships, case studies, grants, and technical assistance. A variety of tools are available to encourage green building, fix zoning issues, and provide model codes and ordinances.

SmartGrowthNY.org: The site was designed to connect New Yorkers with state agency services that promote smart growth. The site provides case studies, lists of funding sources, data, and technical assistance opportunities, organized by smart growth category.

apa.state.ny.us: The official site of the Adirondack Park Agency has information on how to begin an approved local land use program, how to get base mapping materials, and how to navigate APA processes. The Agency can also assist in starting a local land use program and can conduct workshops, on-site reviews, visual assessments, project analysis, and other services.

Fordfoundation.org: The Ford Foundation's Asset Building and Community Development Program offers grants to programs that reduce poverty through means including home ownership initiatives and workforce training operations.

HUD.gov: The US Department of Housing and Urban Development offers expertise in housing related issues including affordable housing and development financing. HUD grants are also provided through grants.gov.

nysdhr.gov: The New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal administers grants for historic preservation, neighborhood revitalization, and affordable housing.

nyswaterfronts.com: The New York State Division of Coastal Resources offers free guidebooks on adaptive reuse of abandoned buildings, waterfront revitalization, and watershed planning. The division also administers a variety of grant programs.

preservenys.org: The Preservation League of New York State provides assistance to communities looking to protect their landscape, architectural, and cultural heritages. The league offers grants and loans along with expertise to municipalities and non-profit organizations.



Tahawus Lodge Center historic building reuse.

Enlightened entrepreneurs are transforming a former Masons lodge in Au Sable Forks into a multi-use building and activity center containing cultural, community, and commercial uses. The project is a superb example of historic building reuse.

FINANCING

Financing hamlet expansion

Funding to support smart growth expansion is available from a wide variety of national, state, and local sources. Hamlet clusters have a competitive advantage over individual hamlets in pursuing outside funds. Grant opportunities will change over time, reflecting macro-economic forces and shifting priorities. It is important to have an expansion plan formulated and ready for implementation when funding opportunities become available. The following sources of funds are current as of 2010. See smartgrowthny.org for a comprehensive and up to date list of funding sources.

Technical assistance:

Local Government Efficiency Program, NYS Division of Local Government Services. dos.state.ny.us. Provides technical assistance and grants to two or more units of local government to develop projects that will achieve savings and improve municipal efficiency.

Economic development:

Adirondack Economic Development Corp. aedconline.com. Provides entrepreneurial training and small business development, community development services, and some financing for Adirondack businesses.

Rural Development, USDA. rurdev.usda.gov. Provides business loans and grants for projects that preserve quality jobs and promote a clean rural environment. Grants and assistance are also given to support cooperative forms of agricultural businesses. Offers community and economic development programs.

Housing and neighborhoods:

Adirondack Community Housing Trust. adkhousing.org. State-supported program to reduce the cost of home purchases for income-qualified families in the Adirondacks.

Community Services Block Grant, NYS Department of State, dos.state.ny.us. Provides funding for programs and services that reduce poverty, revitalize low-income communities, and empower low-income families and individuals to become self-sufficient.

NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal. nysdohcr.gov. Provides grants that benefit low and moderate-income persons and communities and that strengthen traditional main streets and neighborhoods.

National Vacant Properties Campaign. vacantproperties.org. Provides resources, tools and assistance to support vacant property revitalization efforts.

Infrastructure:

NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. dec.ny.gov. Provides grants for solid and hazardous waste, water protection, environmental cleanup, wildlife protection, land and forest protection, and environmental justice projects.

Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS). NYS DOT. Provides grants for the construction, reconstruction, or improvement of local highways, bridges, and other local facilities.

NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation. nysefc.org. Provides funding and technical assistance for environmental projects. Revolving fund for clean water and drinking water. Financial and environmental assistance for businesses.

Rural Development, USDA. rurdev.usda.gov. Grants are provided for water, sewer, waste, environmental, community facility, electricity, and telecommunication projects.

Financing expansion

Policies and regulations go a long way towards implementing smart growth expansion, but funding sources and mechanisms are required to complete a hamlet expansion plan. Funds are used to hire planners, improve public spaces, finance public projects, and to add or improve infrastructure.

Outside financial sources

Lack of infrastructure – sewer, water, electricity, roads, and telecommunications – is a common constraint on development in the Adirondacks. Development in the park is often at such a small scale that a developer is unable to provide all the necessary infrastructure pieces for an individual project, in which case a variety of sources and strategies can be used to obtain the necessary resources. Funding should be targeted to specific areas to support compact patterns of growth in and near hamlet centers.

New York State offers grants for planning, infrastructure, public projects, and other smart growth actions through several different agencies. Some national level grants are available in special circumstances and there are also some Adirondack-specific sources. Special opportunities exist for unique situations such as brownfields, affordable housing, and open space preservation. Targeted funding sources should be sought on a project-by-project basis.

One way to get outside funding is to leverage existing funds, such as grants, to stimulate supplementary investment. Attracting private investment multiplies the impact of the public funds. In some cases leveraging may be a requirement.

Local financing

Different types of districts can be formed to support expansion beyond direct grants. Community improvement districts (CID) and business improvement districts (BID) are public-private partnerships in which businesses in a defined area agree to pay fees that are then pooled to market an area, to make capital improvements or to provide other services.

Tax increment financing (TIF) is a financing method that can be used to construct utilities, streets and other infrastructure necessary to make a development possible. A municipality issues a TIF bond when a private party alone cannot accomplish a development. The new tax revenue created by the TIF investment finances the bond. TIFs should be used cautiously as they rely on a speculated property tax increase.

Impact fees may be appropriate for some instances. They are levied against new development to pay for improvements made necessary by that development. Fee rates may increase with distance from a hamlet center to discourage sprawl.

The Adirondack Community Housing Trust (ACHT) is a state supported not-for-profit that uses a community land trust to offer “forever affordable” housing. ACHT retains ownership of the land but provides deeds to income-qualified households as a way to finance affordable housing in the Adirondacks.

Adding quality and value

Outside investment and new development are attracted to communities that have strong character and attractive public spaces that create a high quality of life. Hamlets that support and invest in these features

become more appealing to business owners and their employees and families as places to live, work, and play.

Adirondack hamlets can capitalize on the region's natural resources by attracting investors to land abutting waterfronts, parks, and open spaces. Limiting outward development and preserving land abutting settlement areas for recreation increases the value of the land. Investment in infrastructure

makes nearby sites, attractive to investors.

Public and private development undertaken by the community and a developer is an effective way to facilitate development on these sites. Examples include the public provision of infrastructure, land, and subsidies, and the private provision of public benefits such as affordable housing, public space, and jobs.

PARTICIPATION

Local participation and governance

A plan must reflect the voices of a community. Planning is an inclusive process requiring dialogue among residents, business owners, public officials, and other community stakeholders. Public meetings and workshops held at all stages of the process keep everyone informed of progress and offer a chance to gather feedback.

Building a vision

A community can devise an agreed-upon vision for their future by working together. A vision and a plan for how to get there are necessary for every Adirondack hamlet. The process of building a vision is a tool to engage residents in imagining an ideal future. This vision then acts as a guide for local policies and regulations.

Mobilizing clusters

Adirondack hamlets are generally small communities with limited resources that must compete at the state level for funding and assistance. Collaboration among hamlets in a cluster increases their chances of expansion success by improving their ability to acquire grants, lobby public officials, pool resources, share information, and

capitalize on each other's strengths. Hamlets can either mobilize informally for discussions or create a formal cluster entity. County level planning agencies can facilitate cluster collaboration.

Overcoming obstacles

There is no solution that will satisfy all community members. Negotiation, compromise, and patience are necessary for participatory planning, but strong leadership is often needed to prevent efforts from stalling. Reluctant stakeholders having a vested interest in a project or site should be dealt with carefully. Uncooperative property owners of strategic hamlet sites can threaten the character and vitality of an entire community. Buy-outs of landowners are an option if negotiations prove unsuccessful. Regular code enforcement throughout the hamlet will ensure properties are maintained and may encourage an otherwise reluctant owner to cooperate. In rare cases, eminent domain may be used, in accordance with the law, after all other options have been exhausted.



Vacant Elm Tree building.

The now vacant Elm Tree in Keene sits at the hamlet's key intersection and detracts from its character and vitality. Owners of such important sites should be encouraged to sell or redevelop their parcel during the expansion planning process. Offering assistance linked to incentives may help owners envision proper new uses and designs.



Clifton / Fine boundaries.

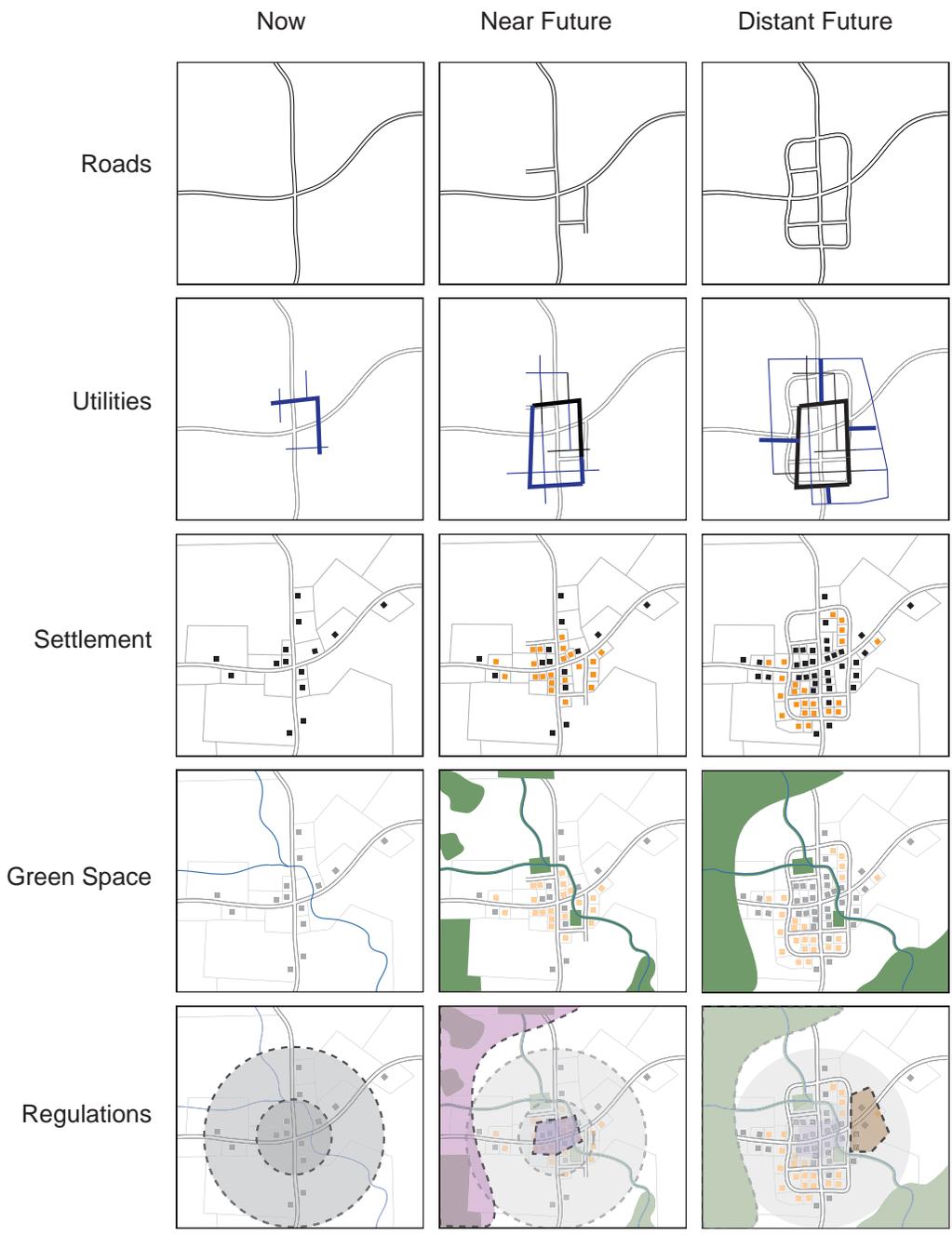
The towns of Clifton and Fine are literally intertwined and provide a model for hamlet collaboration. Their physical connectedness and even the sharing of the Star Lake hamlet has resulted in close cooperation between the towns. By sharing facilities, amenities, services and resources, the communities are able to achieve more than they could alone.



Keene affordable housing site.

The Keene Community Housing Committee, a voluntary community group, worked to implement this six-lot affordable housing subdivision off of Route 9N and 73 in the Town of Keene. The Adirondack Community Housing Trust (ACHT) financed a portion of the mortgage in exchange for title to the land. These homes would be "forever affordable," but the project stalled after efforts between ACHT, utility providers, the NYS DOT, and local residents reached an impasse.

INCREMENTAL GROWTH



Incremental Growth

Development in the Adirondacks is largely incremental. Because hamlets tend to build out slowly relative to less rural communities, planning over time, though difficult, is necessary. Plans should be updated and modified periodically to reflect changing hamlet conditions and trends. However, communities should be proactive in guiding growth. The following are general time-related principles that encourage incremental smart growth.

Communities should plan their road network via the official map to encourage compact patterns of development near an existing hamlet center. The community or a developer may finance and build these roads individually or in partnership.

Roads and utility placement within and near a hamlet center encourages infill development and the reconfiguration and densification of inner hamlet lots. Building utilities and utility districts first guides the location of new growth and prevents unplanned linear strip development. However, innovative ways to finance infrastructure are needed.

Existing natural features can be transformed into community amenities through protection and low impact interventions such as trails and beaches. Amenities such as parks increase land values and attract development. Open areas in the form of a greenbelt limit sprawl and promote appropriate use of the land.

Regulations, such as form-based zoning adhering to the Smart Growth Rings, should be implemented first whenever feasible. Special overlay districts, such as a business improvement district (BID), requiring a critical mass of businesses, may come subsequently. When a hamlet core is fully built out, it may be necessary to obtain a map amendment upgrade for suitable adjacent land.

Looking ahead

The most pressing need for Adirondack communities is to replace jobs lost over the years with the decline and disappearance of industrial, commercial, forestry, and agricultural businesses. These activities historically underpinned the development of Adirondack hamlets, which now must adjust to changing demands for resources and technology. Using smart growth strategies to develop attractive, user-friendly hamlets, rich in amenities, can create favorable conditions for emerging economic opportunities. Hamlets that position themselves with an eye to long-term sustainability will succeed in their quest for new investment.
