

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

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Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

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Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COMMUNITY VISION AND GOALS	1
INTRODUCTION	2
What is a Comprehensive Plan?	3
Scope of the Plan	4
Organization of the Plan	4
Past and Current Planning Initiatives	4
COMMUNITY PROFILE	
A. Overview: Regional Context and Development History	7
The Village of Hamilton	7
The Village of Earlville	7
Hubbardsville	8
Poolville	8
East Hamilton	8
South Hamilton	8
Historical Background	8
B. Population	11
Issues, Opportunities, and Constraints	13
C. The Local Economy	14
Economic Trends in Hamilton	14
Retail Sales	16
Income Levels	17
Current Local and Regional Economic Development Initiatives	18
Resident Perspectives	20
Issues, Opportunities, and Constraints	20
D. Housing	23
Resident Perspectives	24
Issues, Opportunities, and Constraints	24
E. Land Use Patterns	26
Colgate Land Use	26
Resident Perspectives	27
Issues, Opportunities, and Constraints	27

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

F.	Agriculture	30
	Madison County	30
	Town of Hamilton	31
	Resident Perspectives	35
	Issues, Opportunities, and Constraints	35
G.	Natural Resources and Environment	37
	Open Space	37
	Gravel Deposits	37
	Forests	38
	Water Resources and Wetlands	38
	Resident Perspectives	40
	Issues, Opportunities, and Constraints	40
H.	Historic Resources	42
	National Register of Historic Places Listings	42
	The Chenango Canal	42
	Agricultural Lands and Structures	43
	Native American Sites	43
	Resident Perspectives	44
	Issues, Opportunities, and Constraints	44
I.	Recreational Resources	46
	Outdoor Recreation	46
	Chenango Canal and Railroad Bed	46
	Athletics	46
	Parks and Playgrounds	47
	Resident Perspectives	47
	Issues, Opportunities, and Constraints	48
J.	Infrastructure	50
	Transportation	50
	Water and Sewer	51
	Energy and Communications	53
	Telecommunications Towers	55
	Resident Perspectives	56
	Issues, Opportunities, and Constraints	56

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

K.	Local Government Administration	58
	Government Structure	58
	Financial Information	59
	Fiscal Trends	59
	Public Safety	60
	Educational Services	63
	Resident Perspectives	64
	Issues, Opportunities, and Constraints	64
	ACTION PLAN	66
	What is the Town of Hamilton's Action Plan?	66
	Community Input	66
	Project Implementation	67
	Periodic Review	68
	Proposed Actions	69
	Other Community Projects	83
	APPENDIX	
	Maps	A-1
	Tables 1 - 10	A-7
	Businesses in the Town of Hamilton	A-16
	Summary of the 1972 Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan	A-21
	Summary of the 1992 Village of Hamilton Master Plan	A-23
	The Chenango Canal - Historical Background	A-25
	Township of Hamilton Community Survey - Analysis of Results	A-26
	Farmland Owner Survey - Results	A-36
	High-Speed Data Transmission Options	A-41
	Colgate Student Research Papers	A-42
	Action Plan Goals Schedule	A-43

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

TOWN OF HAMILTON COMMUNITY VISION AND GOALS

A community vision statement is an expression of a possibility, an ideal future state that the community hopes to attain. The purpose of a community vision statement is to provide direction regarding the community's development, serving as a foundation underlying the development of goals and strategies. Focusing on what is unique about a place, it sets the stage for where the community wants to go in the broadest sense.

Residents and leaders of the Town of Hamilton have established the following vision statement for the Town:

In the coming decades, the Town of Hamilton will preserve and promote its assets: rural character, natural beauty, strong community, family farms, and locally owned businesses. It will work actively with other area communities to create and support sustainable economic opportunities which strengthen the vitality of the Town and the region.

To fulfill the Town's vision and maintain a strong quality of life for residents of the township, the Town has established seven goals, listed in order of priority:

1. To develop economic initiatives which provide good jobs, support the social fabric of the community, and preserve the environment.
2. To actively support and promote sustainable agriculture as a vital component of the local and regional economy through cooperative initiatives between neighboring communities, Town and County governments, and area educational institutions.
3. To strengthen the Town's villages as commercial, retail, and entertainment centers.
4. To identify and promote year-round recreational opportunities throughout the Town.
5. To improve housing conditions throughout the Town.
6. To identify and protect the Town's vital groundwater aquifers.
7. To maintain the Town's position as an efficient provider of municipal services, and prepare for future technological, economic and population changes.

These goals guided the comprehensive planning process and allowed for the development of the initiatives and projects recommended in the Comprehensive Plan.

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

INTRODUCTION

The Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan is the result of over two years of work by the Town of Hamilton Long Range Planning Committee (the "LRPC"). The LRPC was formed in 1996 by a group of Hamilton residents, many affiliated with the Town's Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Town Board, who felt that the Town needed a unified vision which provides for long-term prosperity by enhancing the Town's considerable assets and protecting its natural resources. The LRPC wanted to build upon the efforts of the Town residents who developed the 1972 Comprehensive Plan by closely examining the state of the Town today, determining which issues are most likely to affect the Town's future, and by establishing goals and an action plan which anticipates, rather than reacts to, future changes. An important component of the plan is to provide a framework for residents to actively develop and implement solutions to the priority issues identified by the community-at-large.

To accomplish this mission, the LRPC contracted with EastWest Planning & Development, Inc.¹, a consulting firm, in February 1997 to prepare a Comprehensive Plan outlining community needs and providing recommendations to guide the future development of the Town over the next twenty years. The LRPC, in conjunction with EastWest and Colgate University, conducted research on social, economic, and physical data relevant to the Town utilizing Census data, local and regional data sources, and interviews with various local officials and representatives of public and private agencies. Background papers prepared by Colgate University geography and sociology professors and students provided additional information and analysis on specific issues of importance to the Town including zoning, sustainable agriculture, and trail development. The University was also responsible for the production of Geographic Information System (GIS) maps illustrating a variety of natural and physical characteristics of the Town of Hamilton.

A key goal of the LRPC was to ensure that the plan incorporated a wide range of opinion. To that end, the LRPC and EastWest held focus groups and met individually with key local and County stakeholders. In addition, an extensive community survey was conducted in May 1997. Designed to assess residents' opinions and priorities about various issues affecting the Town's future, the survey was published in the *Mid-York Weekly* and distributed at various public places within the Town. More than 200 residents from the villages, hamlets, and outlying areas of the Town responded to the survey, and their input is incorporated in many sections of the Comprehensive Plan. A full analysis of the survey results is included in the appendix to this plan.

In June 1998, copies of the draft Comprehensive Plan were released to the public and made available at several locations within the Town. On June 16th, with assistance from project consultants River Street Planning & Development, the LRPC facilitated a Town Meeting in the Village of Hamilton. The meeting, which was designed to increase the level of community participation in the planning process, attracted approximately 115 residents. Following a brief overview of the draft plan, participants formed into small groups on topics such as economic development, agriculture, recreation, and local government to discuss action items proposed in the draft plan. Through a series of exercises, residents brainstormed additional action items to meet

¹ River Street Planning & Development LLC is the successor company to EastWest.

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

community goals and provide tools for the implementation of the plan. Many of these small groups have continued to meet on a voluntary basis to develop and implement projects beneficial to the Town.

The LRPC conducted additional Town Meetings in the Village of Earlville on July 1st and in Hubbardsville on August 11th to provide opportunities for residents from other parts of the township to discuss the draft plan. These meetings generated significant public response and allowed the LRPC and its consultant to identify the areas of greatest consensus in the community. Significant revisions were then made to the draft Comprehensive Plan to reflect the many comments received from the public.

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

Under New York State Town Law §272-a, towns are granted the authority and responsibility to prepare and adopt comprehensive plans. As defined in the state legislation, a comprehensive plan is a document which presents goals, objectives, guidelines, and policies for the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth, and development of the community. Also known as a master plan or land use plan, a comprehensive plan provides guidance to Town leaders and helps to ensure that the needs of the community will be met. There is no set formula for the content of a comprehensive plan, but the state statute suggests such elements as goal statements, strategies for improving the local economy, and the consideration of population trends, regional needs, agricultural uses, historic and natural resources, transportation facilities, infrastructure, housing resources and needs, recreational and educational facilities, and the plans of other agencies and communities.

State law requires towns to provide opportunities for citizen participation in the preparation of the comprehensive plan by holding one or more public hearings and other meetings as appropriate. In addition, town boards must hold at least one public hearing prior to the adoption of a proposed comprehensive plan, providing notice of the hearing ten days in advance and making a copy of the proposed comprehensive plan available for public review and comment. The Town Board may adopt the comprehensive plan by resolution pursuant to Town law.

While it is strongly recommended, New York State does not *require* communities to have a comprehensive plan. However, there are many reasons why a comprehensive plan is important. Among the benefits of having an updated comprehensive plan are to establish consensus about the community's future, prepare for future demographic and economic changes, protect natural and agricultural resources, provide direction to other governmental agencies, and improve access to funding resources. The comprehensive plan also forms the basis for future land use regulations. According to New York State law, zoning and other land use regulations must be in accordance with a comprehensive plan. A comprehensive plan in itself is not a regulation; however, zoning ordinances and other local laws are often used as tools to help implement the goals stated in the comprehensive plan.

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

Scope of the Plan

This Comprehensive Plan is intended to substantially revise the existing 1972 Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan. While the Villages of Hamilton and Earlville lie within the borders of the township, each village has its own authority to legislate land use practices. Nevertheless, in the interest of intermunicipal cooperation, the Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan examines issues pertinent to both villages.

Organization of the Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is made up of two sections: the Community Profile and the Action Plan. Based on the information-gathering process described above, the Community Profile describes existing conditions, identifies needs, and discusses the opportunities and challenges faced by the Town at this time. The Community Profile provides a comprehensive source of information to assist in obtaining an adequate understanding of the Town, its residents, and its resources, and is designed to serve as a basis for developing community goals, objectives, strategies, and policies.

The Action Plan begins with a vision statement and a list of goals (also listed on page 1) which will serve as the overall framework for addressing future needs and changes in the Town. Specific actions are proposed to address these goals and the priority issues which arose during the planning and public participation process. A timeframe for implementation, the stakeholders and partners to be involved, and where appropriate, a list of funding sources are provided for each action plan element. It should be noted that the action items identified in the plan are recommendations rather than requirements, and may evolve over time as Town leaders, organizations, and residents move forward to implement various projects.

Past and Current Planning Initiatives

As part of the comprehensive planning process, a review was conducted of the Town's previous comprehensive plan and of recent planning documents from neighboring municipalities, including the Village of Hamilton and the Town of Sherburne. The review focused on issues and initiatives with a potential impact on the Town of Hamilton.

Several common themes arose in all of these plans, highlighting similarities between individual communities in the area with regard to needs and goals for the future. These themes included maintaining the area's natural resources and rural character; increasing jobs and income through greater diversification of the local economy; strengthening existing commercial centers; retaining young people; encouraging community involvement in planning; working with neighboring communities on areas of mutual interest; and expanding recreational resources. A brief description of each plan reviewed follows; in depth-summaries of the Town of Hamilton and Village of Hamilton plans can be found in the appendix.

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan, 1972

The Town of Hamilton's 1972 Comprehensive Plan recommended retaining prime agricultural land for farming; since then, the creation of several Agricultural Districts within the Town has provided

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

a mechanism to encourage the protection of farmland. Many other recommendations were made in the context of the plan and remain pertinent today. Some initiatives have moved beyond the planning stage, while others remain ideas on paper. Economic development strategies recommended in the plan included developing the airport, encouraging local merchants to strengthen their marketing and services to address increasing competition, and promoting light manufacturing, including food processing. Preserving Poolville Pond for public use, restoring the feeder canal system for use as a trail system, and developing Town parks on land not suitable for residential development were strategies recommended to improve recreation within the township.

Village of Hamilton Master Plan

The Village of Hamilton completed an update of its 1972 Master Plan in 1992. The plan provided policy goals and actions to guide future changes in the Village. It also contained a review of the Village zoning law and suggested modifications based on the updated Master Plan. Key findings included support for some increase in population growth while protecting the Village's "small town, low density, single family college community qualities"; strengthening the commercial center; attracting new and expanding businesses consistent with the educational-medical-agricultural character of the community; annexation of adjacent land if it fits in with the Village's development goals; extending municipal utilities only to annexed areas when cost-effective; controlling erosion of steep slopes and preserving wetlands and flood plains; use of traffic control mechanisms to improve public safety; expanding recreational resources; and retaining the existing housing mix, with an emphasis on moderate density, single family detached housing.

Town of Sherburne Land Use and Development Study

The Town of Sherburne, located just south of the Town of Hamilton, completed a Land Use and Development Study during the 1980s under the sponsorship of the Town of Sherburne Planning Board and the Chenango County Department of Planning and Development. The purpose of the study was to compile and analyze the Town's natural and development capabilities, determine the community's attitudes about land use issues, establish Town goals for the future, review existing regulations and recommend Town actions. The area covered by the study included the Village of Earlville, which is split between the Towns of Hamilton and Sherburne.

Four community goals were listed in the study:

- ▶ To create incentives that will help farmers keep prime agricultural land in production and maintain the open and rural character of Sherburne;
- ▶ To provide an attractive business environment that will encourage the relocation of a more diversified local economy;
- ▶ To preserve the quality of the environment and natural resources within the Town;
- ▶ To promote decent housing for all Sherburne residents which is environmentally sound.

Hamilton Municipal Airport Economic Development Feasibility Study

In 1995, the Village of Hamilton acquired a municipal airport located within the Towns of Madison and Eaton. The property was annexed by the Village of Hamilton in 1997. To identify the potential

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

economic benefit of the site, the Village commissioned the Hamilton Municipal Airport Economic Development Feasibility Study, completed in 1997. The study, which is described in more detail in the Economic Development section of this plan, analyzed characteristics of the airport site and identified opportunities for development. As part of the study, the Village Trustees established the following goals for economic development plans for the airport, stating that plans for the airport should:

- Be comprehensive and long range;
- Recommend self-sufficient, environmentally clean, aesthetically pleasing development opportunities, in keeping with the surrounding area's character;
- Maximize utilization of the airport's facilities within market constraints;
- Attract and promote new business and industry for the purposes of job creation, tax revenue generation, and utilization of the facilities, personnel, and service resources of existing educational, medical, and agricultural institutions;
- Contribute to the growth of existing business, industry, and institutions of higher education; and
- Promote cooperation and goodwill with surrounding Town and County governments.

These goals were based upon economic development needs identified and articulated by the Village, including an increase in the number of jobs available in the community in order to provide employment for current residents and to attract new residents to the area.

A. OVERVIEW: REGIONAL CONTEXT AND DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

The Town of Hamilton is located in the southern portion of Madison County. It is bordered by the towns of Brookfield to the east, Madison to the north, Lebanon to the west, and Sherburne, in Chenango County, directly to the south (see map in appendix). Hamilton's land area covers 41.4 square miles. With 6,267 persons, Hamilton is the fifth most populated town in Madison County and has an average density of approximately 150 persons per square mile.

While much of the Town of Hamilton is rural and sparsely populated, concentrations of population and building structures exist in the two incorporated villages and four hamlets that lie within the borders of the Town, as described below.

The Village of Hamilton

The Village of Hamilton, located in the northwestern portion of the Town of Hamilton, is the most densely populated area of the township and accounts for nearly two-thirds of its population. Home to the sprawling Colgate University campus and a regional community hospital, the Village serves as the primary commercial center for southern Madison County. Despite increasing strip development along Route 12B to the north, the business district dominates the center of the Village. Colgate University and a variety of well-kept residential neighborhoods, surrounded by open spaces such as the Seven Oaks Golf Course, the public school complex, and two village cemeteries, make up the remainder of the Village.

The Village of Hamilton covers an area of approximately 1.3 miles. According to the Village's Master Plan, drafted in 1992, steep slopes on adjacent land have been a major limitation to the direction and extent of development. Nevertheless, residential development has increased just north and east of the Village borders, in the Towns of Hamilton and Madison. Additionally, the purchase and annexation of the Hamilton Airport by the Village may provide opportunities for economic development impacting Hamilton Township.

The Village of Earlville

Located in the extreme southwestern corner of the Town of Hamilton, the Village of Earlville is divided between the Town of Hamilton in Madison County and the Town of Sherburne in Chenango County. The community has a mix of older residential structures on tree-lined streets; a small industrial area in the vicinity of Bentley and Clyde Streets which includes Earlville Paper Box and several vacated farm machinery businesses; and a commercial section with small shops and service businesses, a museum, the Village library, and the Earlville Opera House and Art Gallery at the intersection of East Main Street and Route 12B.

There has been little new construction in the Village of Earlville for many years. However, the Village has a historic district that reflects a full range of nineteenth and twentieth century architecture. The Earlville Elementary School, now closed, has been turned into a community center which includes a thrift shop, a Christian school, a privately-owned woodworking shop, and facilities for "open gym" for residents.

Hubbardsville

Perhaps the largest of the Town's four hamlets, Hubbardsville is located near the "four corners" of Poolville Road (Route 89) and Green Road in the northeastern quadrant of the Town. A post office with a general store and gas station serves as the center of the hamlet, which sits in an attractive valley surrounded by hills.

Hubbardsville is mostly residential, and has a number of Victorian-style homes. Several years ago, a housing rehabilitation program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development provided homeowners with grants to make necessary repairs. Hubbardsville Manor, a home for the aged, is operated in the hamlet. Other businesses located in the vicinity include a nursery/greenhouse and a campground with facilities for miniature golf. A volunteer fire department and Graham Cemetery are also located in Hubbardsville.

Poolville

The well-defined hamlet of Poolville is located in the south-central portion of the Town. There is one operating farm in the hamlet as well as a community center owned by a private not-for-profit organization connected to a small volunteer fire department. Also in the hamlet are the Poolville Country Store, the Poolville Rural Cemetery, and an old railroad station. Most of the fifty or so homes in Poolville are in very good condition; there is little turnover among owners.

On the outskirts of the hamlet are a gravel mine, some small farms, and a few recently-constructed houses. To the east, Poolville Lake Road leads to Poolville Pond, which is privately owned and occupied by homes and camps.

East Hamilton

The small hamlet of East Hamilton is situated in the east-central portion of the township in the vicinity of Route 12 and Humphrey Road. Surrounded by active and inactive dairy farms, the hamlet has a church and a few small but well-maintained single family homes, most occupied by long-term residents of the Town.

South Hamilton

South Hamilton, another small hamlet, is located in the southeastern quadrant of the Town of Hamilton. It includes a handful of homes and trailers in mixed condition. A Christmas tree farm and other lands used for agricultural purposes are in the vicinity.

Historical Background

Much of the historical development of the Town of Hamilton was based on farming, with commercial activity occurring as transportation routes, the Chenango Canal, and rail lines were developed, linking the Town to other parts of the region. The Town of Hamilton was one of the Chenango Twenty Towns, a tract that was opened to settlers and land companies by the Clinton Treaty of 1788. This region had been a favorite with the Oneida and Stockbridge Indian tribes. Originally,

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Hamilton embraced four townships, but its final boundaries were drawn when the Towns of Eaton, Lebanon, and Madison were split off in 1807.

Among the early settlers in the Town were Isaac Pool and Calvin Hubbard, who made Poolville and Hubbardsville into flourishing commercial centers. East Hamilton was settled in 1795 and was first known as Colchester Settlement. The Village of Earlville, known as The Forks until about 1833, became a small trade and farming community. The Village of Hamilton was founded by Elisha Payne in 1796 and was known as Payne's Settlement until it was incorporated as Hamilton in 1816.

The growth of the Town of Hamilton (and of Madison County as a whole) was stimulated by several main roads which crossed from east to west. Among them was the Hamilton and Skaneateles Turnpike, which ran from Plainfield, Otsego County, through the Madison County communities of Brookfield, Hamilton and East Hamilton, Eaton, Erieville, and New Woodstock.

In 1836-37, the building of the Chenango Canal opened the area to the metropolitan markets of the east. The Village of Hamilton became the leading community of southern Madison County and boasted a grist mill and tannery. Later industries included the manufacture of cabinets and household furniture, wooden sashes, doors and blinds, snowplows, perfumes, lowslung wagons, and wire cloth. By 1898 the Village had 1,782 residents.

In 1816 the Hamilton Academy became the first school in the area. It was discontinued in the 1850s with the beginnings of the Union School (1853) and the Hamilton Female Seminary. In 1819, the Hamilton Literary and Theological Seminary was founded and in 1827 its first building was erected on land provided by Samuel Payne and his wife Betsey. The institution became Madison University in 1846 and was renamed Colgate University in 1890.

The first village fire company was formed in Hamilton in 1832. When much of the village's business district was destroyed by a fire in February 1895, companies from as far away as Utica came to the aid of the local volunteers. Following the devastating fire, merchants set up shop in the park in what became known as Shantytown as new buildings were hastily erected. The village park was planted by Ferdinand Walker in 1835. The swampy area had been filled in when the canal was dug.

Outside the Village of Hamilton, most of the Town of Hamilton was agricultural through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Hop growing was a thriving industry in the Town until Prohibition, and peas and beans were a major cash crop. Eventually the dairy industry replaced most other forms of agricultural production.

Some industry developed in the hamlet areas. Poolville, established in 1825, had a woolen factory, a tannery and ashery, and manufactured boots and shoes. Part of Poolville Lake was made available to the public by the owner for swimming and fishing. Household furniture, desks, lowslung wagons, and perfume were manufactured in Earlville.

The Town of Hamilton entered the twentieth century with the advent of electricity and the development of a village waterworks and electric light system in 1894. The first automobiles appeared in the Town about 1915, radios about 1925, and refrigerators ten years later.

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Hamilton High School, which stood on the site of the Oneida Savings Bank on Broad Street, was built in 1901 and the adjacent grade school was added in 1930. Both gave way to the new West Kendrick Avenue school in the 1950s. The Hamilton Public Library was founded in 1903 and the Earlville Free Library was established in 1927. The Chenango Valley Nursery School, a cooperative effort, was established after World War II.

During World War II Colgate's civilian student body was down to 100 but soon the campus swarmed with Navy and Marine personnel with the advent of V-5, V-7, and V-12 programs. These were officer training programs which led to several thousand young men arriving on campus to receive training during the war. The new president of Colgate, concerned that the student population had dwindled so severely, had apparently gone to Washington to see if he could tap into these training programs as a way to bring enrollments up. Existing faculty taught military-oriented courses far from their fields of expertise. Following the war, as married veterans began enrolling at the University, housing which became known as Vetville was built for them on College Street. In 1970, Colgate enrolled women as first-year students for the first time.

Throughout the Town's history, community groups and church organizations have played a vital role in the social and cultural life of the Town. Collectively and individually, they have provided and continue to provide a variety of social services.

Today, the Town of Hamilton remains a small, primarily rural community whose future development is likely to be influenced by demographic changes, environmental constraints, and the continued role of the agricultural and educational industries. As indicated by the results of the public participation process for this plan, there is strong consensus among Town residents about what kind of community they would like Hamilton to be in twenty years' time. This community vision must be addressed through the comprehensive planning process and the development of an action plan to guide the future direction of the Town of Hamilton as it moves into the next century.

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

COMMUNITY PROFILE

B. POPULATION

The majority of Hamilton's population is concentrated in the Village of Hamilton, with 3,784 residents. Located in the northwest corner of the Town, the Village has represented the largest settlement in the Town for perhaps the last 75 years.

The Village of Earlville, which is split between the Town of Hamilton in Madison County and the Town of Sherburne in Chenango County, has a total population of 911 residents, 548 of which are located on the Hamilton side, according to the 1990 Census.

Other concentrations of population within the Town of Hamilton can be found in the hamlet communities of Poolville, Hubbardsville, and East Hamilton. A map in the Town's 1972 Comprehensive Plan shows the Town's population patterns, with ribbons of settlement located along the valley floor roads radiating from the chief settled places. The map characterized the Town as one which is sparsely populated outside its hamlets and villages. For the most part, this pattern continues today, although there has been some residential development in the northern half of the Town, just outside the Village of Hamilton.

Town of Hamilton Population, 1920 - 1990

Year	Population
1920	3,354
1930	3,684
1940	3,618
1950	5,455
1960	5,438
1970	5,906
1980	6,027
1990	6,267 ²

Source: 1990 Census

Over the last seventy years, Hamilton has experienced modest growth, with the most dramatic increase in population occurring between 1940 and 1950. At least some of the growth can be attributed to the enrollment of veterans in Colgate University educational programs after World War II. Hamilton's population increased 2.0% between 1970 and 1980 and 4.0% during the subsequent decennial period. Changes in enrollment levels at Colgate University have undoubtedly had some impact on the population change. According to Colgate records, student enrollment reached 2,000 in 1968 and 2,500 in 1972. Current enrollment as of fall 1997 was 2,901.

² In the 1990 Census, the Town challenged the original count of 6,193 based on the fact that Colgate students, who are considered residents for the purpose of the Census, were not adequately included in the count. The challenge was accepted by the Census Bureau and the new Town number of 6,267 was adopted. It should be noted that while the revised population statistic is cited throughout the plan, the demographic analyses in the Comprehensive Plan are based on the original count of 6,193, because the Census Bureau did not update the demographic statistics (e.g., age, race breakdowns).

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

COMMUNITY PROFILE

As shown in Table 1, communities such as Nelson, Madison, Georgetown, and Cazenovia have experienced much higher rates of growth than Hamilton over the last decade. Recent estimates of population indicate that Hamilton is likely to experience minimal, if any, population growth by the year 2000. Colgate University does not anticipate significant growth in enrollment; in fact, in 1995, the University's Planning Task Force recommended to the Board of Trustees that the size of the student body should be targeted in a range below 2,700 after the graduation of the class of 1998.

No information is available on the longevity of residency in the Town. The presence of the university with a large number of students would suggest a population that is somewhat transient. However, statistics from the 1990 Census on the year a householder moved into his or her current residence indicate that the Town of Hamilton has many long-term residents. More than one-fifth of all households moved into their current residence before 1970; 37.2% have lived in their current home since 1980 or earlier.

The vast majority of residents in the Town of Hamilton are white (5,770, or 93.2%); 214 residents (3.5%) report an Asian/Pacific Islander descent. Black and Hispanic individuals each account for 1.6% of the Town's population.

Many aspects of Hamilton's population base reflect the strong influence of Colgate University. The 1990 Census indicates that 1,668 persons in the Town reside in college dormitories, an increase of less than 5% compared to 1980³. Overall, 2,041 individuals in the Town of Hamilton are recorded as being "enrolled in college" in 1990, although it should be noted that this may include Hamilton residents who are enrolled in other colleges. Hamilton residents also tend to be younger than those in Madison County overall. As shown in Table 2, 34.7% of the Town population is comprised of young adults between the ages of 18 and 24. This proportion is more than twice that of Madison County.

Despite the relative youthfulness of Hamilton's population, however, children under age 18 account for just 16.2% of Town residents, compared with 25.2% of County residents. Approximately 5% (290) of Town residents are under 5 years old and 11.5% (714) are ages 5 through 17. Adults between the ages of 25 and 44 represent slightly under a quarter of the population (1,512) and 11.8% (729) of the Town's population is comprised of seniors aged 65 and over. Between 1980 and 1990, the school-aged population (5-17) declined 14.9%, while the number of senior citizens increased 15.9%. More recent data from local schools suggests that the number of children in the township may be growing, at least in the short term, as both school districts in the Town of Hamilton report increased enrollments.

According to the Census Bureau, a household includes all the persons who occupy a housing unit. The occupants may be a single family, one person living alone, two or more families living together, or any other group of related or unrelated individuals who share living arrangements. As shown in Table 3, there are 1,775 households in the Town of Hamilton, representing an increase of 213 from the 1980 figure of 1,562. In 1990, 25.7% (456) of the households were comprised of one person,

³ The number of students residing in college dormitories has probably increased since the 1990 Census due to changes in the University's residential life policies.

31.7% (563) of two people, and 17.7% (315) of three people. The average number of persons per household is 3.49 and has been steadily decreasing, paralleling trends nationwide. In fact, virtually all of the increase in the number of households in Hamilton can be attributed to growth in the one- and two-person household categories. This may affect the overall demand for housing in the Town.

Issues, Opportunities, and Constraints

The demographic analysis indicates a number of trends which may impact the future of the Town of Hamilton. First, significant population growth in the Town is not expected within the next decade. While this trend may minimize development pressures, the aging trend in the Town's population raises other issues. For example, additional services, such as transportation, health care, and housing, may be required to meet the needs of a growing number of elderly residents.

It is not immediately clear whether the number of children in the community will remain at current levels or change significantly over the next twenty years. The Census of Population and school enrollments for the Hamilton and Sherburne-Earlville Central Schools show conflicting trends in the school-aged population. The 2000 Census may provide additional insights valuable to planners and school administrators.

The population count of the Town determines its representation in the County's weighted voting system. Accordingly, the Town should take steps to make sure that the 2000 Census figures are accurate, particularly with respect to the Colgate student population.

C. THE LOCAL ECONOMY

The economy of Madison County has been traditionally based on agriculture and a number of small- to medium-sized businesses. In 1994, there were 15,844 employed persons in Madison County. Reflecting the national trend, the service sector is the County's largest category, employing 39.0% of the total, or 6,185 persons. Nearly two-thirds of the service sector employment in Madison County is attributable to health services (predominantly hospitals) and education. The retail trade accounts for 28.5%, or 4,521 jobs, while manufacturing represents 16.9% of the total employment in Madison County. According to 1994 data from *County Business Patterns*, Madison County's 2,674 manufacturing jobs were concentrated primarily in rubber and miscellaneous plastics products (604), primary metal industries (544), and electronic equipment (232).

Madison County's largest employers include Colgate University (Hamilton), Oneida City Hospital (Oneida), Cazenovia College (Cazenovia), SUNY Morrisville (Eaton), Oneida Ltd. (Oneida), Dielectric Laboratories (Cazenovia), Diemolding Corp. (Canastota), Gray Syracuse (Chittenango), Marquardt Switches (Cazenovia), Oneida Molded Plastics Corp. (Oneida), Owl Wire and Cable Corp. (Canastota), Pelco Group (Cazenovia), Stearns and Wheler Engineers (Cazenovia), and Thermal Plastics (Canastota).

Agriculture remains an integral part of the Madison County economy. In 1992, the County had 699 farms covering 195,626 acres -- 46.6% of the total land area in Madison County. Dairy products make up the largest component of the County's agricultural industry. The vast majority of farms in the County are family owned and operated. (Additional information on the County's agricultural sector can be found in section F.)

Like many rural communities, Madison County's workforce has had to rely increasingly on commuting to employment outside the County. According to the 1990 Census, almost 65% of individuals in the Madison County labor force commute to positions outside of their local municipality of residence.

Economic Trends in Hamilton

The major elements of the economy of the Town of Hamilton include Colgate University, Community Memorial Hospital, and agriculture. While some light manufacturing businesses, such as Hamilton Pharmaceutical at the corner of Payne and Spring Street, are located in the Town, these businesses are very small.

The University has been a steady growth employer for the past two decades. As of fall 1997, Colgate had a total of 805 permanent employees. Approximately 45% of these workers (364) live within the Town or Village of Hamilton, receiving \$18 million in payroll. In addition to direct employment, Colgate University has provided and continues to provide substantial contributions to the local economy. For example, it owns and operates the Barge Canal Coffee Company in the Village of Hamilton and the Seven Oaks Golf Course on Payne Street. Additionally, it owns and operates the Colgate Inn, and makes payments in lieu of taxes on this property.

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Colgate University makes yearly, voluntary contributions, which amounted to nearly \$400,000 in 1997-98, to support Town, Village and school services. Portions of its annual contributions go to Community Memorial Hospital, Chenango Nursery School, and various area non-profit organizations providing services to Colgate. Taken together, the employment opportunities and contributions provided by the University offset the fact that much of Colgate's land is exempt from property taxes.

Community Memorial Hospital, located on Route 12B, is Hamilton's second largest employer with approximately 300 workers. The facility operates five family health centers in the surrounding communities and two nursing homes, including one in the Village of Hamilton. Cited as a model rural hospital by New York State, the hospital provides services to a wide region. The hospital recently added a new wing and has plans for continued growth, especially in services to the aging.

An inventory of businesses with a Hamilton, Earlville, or Hubbardsville mailing address, provided by the Southern Madison Chamber of Commerce and other sources, is included in the appendix⁴. These businesses include the following:

Type of Business	# of Establishments
Agriculture/forestry products	6
Automotive sales and service	11
Contracting	8
Farms - dairy and other	24
Finance, legal, and insurance	9
Education	4
Dining, lodging, and taverns	23
Fuel and energy services	6
Health care and medical	11
Manufacturers	4
Realtors	4
Services and other businesses	34
Shopping	22

The majority of these businesses are located in the Villages of Hamilton and Earlville. Town assessment records list a handful of non-farm businesses in outlying areas of the Town, including a restaurant, trailer park/miniature golf, a home for the aged, three nurseries, a warehouse, a lumber business, and a manufacturing business.

As shown in Table 4, education is the primary employer of Hamilton residents, a trend that is virtually unchanged since 1980. It should be noted that the data in the table, which is collected from households when the census is taken, refer to the jobs held by local residents. Because some residents commute out of the Town and residents from other municipalities commute in, the table does not reflect the distribution of jobs in the community. Information on industry relates to the kind

⁴ The list is meant to be representative of the range of businesses in the Town and some may have been inadvertently excluded.

of business conducted by the resident's employer.

Approximately 13% of Town residents work in retail trade and 7.4% work in the area's manufacturing industries. Changes in the economy of Madison County and the surrounding area, however, have meant fewer opportunities for employment in the manufacturing sector and greater opportunities in various service fields. During the 1980s, the civilian labor force in Hamilton increased 22.4%, but the number of residents employed in manufacturing declined 20.5%. Agriculture and forestry have also declined as a source of employment for Hamilton residents; nearly half as many residents worked in these industries in 1990 as they did in 1980, accounting for 6.9% of resident employment in 1980 and 2.9% in 1990.

There has been considerable growth with regard to resident employment in the service sector, including educational services (+24.9%); personal, entertainment, and recreation services (+81.3%); and other professional and related services (+222.2%), a catch-all category that includes legal services, engineering and architectural services, accounting, management consulting, and commercial research. Although the number of residents employed in wholesale trade, finance, insurance, and real estate, and public administration also increased significantly during the 1980s, these industries account for a relatively small proportion of resident employment overall.

With a growing service sector to pick up the slack, the unemployment rate in Hamilton was a low 2.5%, according to the 1990 Census. Nearly half of all Hamilton residents (49.2%) work within the township; an additional 32.3% work outside the Town, but within Madison County. Fewer than one in five Town residents are employed outside Madison County. The 1990 Census indicates that nearly one-third of Town residents who hold a job walk to work or work at home.

Reflecting the community's service base, the labor force in the Town of Hamilton is predominantly white collar. Compared to the County as a whole, occupations among employed Town residents are much more heavily oriented toward professional, managerial, and service occupations. This may be attributable to the high educational attainment levels of Town residents. As indicated in Table 5, 85.1% of Town residents age 25 and over have a high school diploma and 35.1% have a college degree.

Retail Sales

Retail activity in the Town of Hamilton is concentrated in the Villages of Hamilton and Earlville. Retail businesses in these areas serve residents, the local workforce, and college students in the Town of Hamilton and the surrounding rural towns of southern Madison County. Although the Ames Department Store, Grand Union, and Pizza Hut on Route 12B represent large national chains, most of the retail outlets in Hamilton are small. They include florists, drug stores, liquor stores, restaurants, jewelry stores, and other retail businesses.

According to the Census of Retail Trade, retail sales in Hamilton increased more than 25% between 1987 and 1992, the latest year for which Census figures are available, reaching \$43 million. Fourteen retail establishments were added to the community's inventory, bringing the total to 52, as shown in Table 7.

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Madison County's retail sales also increased during this period, by 27.1%. Hamilton's share of total Madison County sales was unchanged. However, Hamilton's share of retail establishments increased from 9.6% to 13.1%. Data from the 1992 Census of Retail indicate that with the exception of the City of Oneida, Hamilton has one of the largest concentrations of retail businesses in Madison County.

Estimated Retail Sales Per Household, 1992

New York State	\$17,906
Madison County	\$15,705
Town of Hamilton	\$24,351

To gain additional insights into the spending patterns of customers, estimated per-household retail sales figures were calculated for Madison County and the Town of Hamilton and compared with the data for New York State. The figures were derived by dividing total retail sales from the 1992 Census of Retail Trade by the number of households in the area based on the 1990 Census. Used in retail market analysis, the calculation of the retail sales per household helps put local retail sales in perspective. As indicated by the table above, overall sales per household in Madison County are lower than the state average. However, the sales per household in Hamilton are considerably higher than the state, confirming the strength of the retail sector in the Town.

The Downtown Merchants Association (DMA) is a year-old organization whose purpose is to enhance, improve, and promote the Village of Hamilton business district. The DMA serves as a vehicle for dialogue between local merchants, the University, and the Village and develops special events and activities designed to make the Village more inviting. Recent activities include planning an event to coincide with the arrival of "Santa Night" and purchasing geraniums in hanging planters for storefronts along Broad Street. Among the longer-term goals of the DMA are to educate residents about what the Village of Hamilton has to offer, expand the number of merchants downtown, and develop a market "niche" to attract shoppers from a wider area.

Income Levels

Personal income is one of the most important indicators of the economy. Understanding the income characteristics of the community is also important in determining the community's wealth as well as the ability of residents to maintain their housing, contribute to the local tax base, and participate in the economy.

The household income data in Table 6 suggests that Hamilton is composed largely of moderate to middle income families. In incomes greater than \$50,000 the Town of Hamilton exceeds Madison County as a whole but at the same time, the Town has a greater percentage of persons below the poverty level than Madison County (16.9% vs. 9.2%). Although college students residing in the Village of Hamilton may skew figures for the Town overall, this should not obscure the economic diversity which exists in the Town of Hamilton; there are, in fact, many rural poor and working class households within the township.

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Both median household income and per capita income levels in the Town of Hamilton are somewhat lower than the levels for Madison County as a whole. The median household income is defined as the median income received by all household members aged 15 years old and over. A median divides the income distribution into two equal parts, one having incomes above the median and the other having incomes below it. Hamilton's median household income was \$14,984 in 1980 and \$28,594 in 1990. Thus, in 1990, half of all residents had incomes below \$28,594 and half had incomes above it. In comparison, residents of Madison County posted a median household income of \$16,091 in 1980 and \$29,547 in 1990.

The per capita income is the mean (average) income computed for every man, woman, and child. It is derived by dividing the total income of a particular group by the total population in that group. Census statistics indicate that the per capita income in the Town of Hamilton in 1980 was \$4,931, rising to \$11,359 in 1990. Madison County had per capita incomes of \$5,961 in 1980 and \$12,334 in 1990.

Current Local and Regional Economic Development Initiatives

Madison County Industrial Development Agency

Established in 1969, the Madison County Industrial Development Agency (IDA) is a public benefit corporation which provides economic development services throughout the County. The agency is located in Canastota and has been staffed half-time since 1976. Among the responsibilities of the IDA are assisting already established businesses (which provide 80% of the new jobs in Madison County), helping new business start-ups, and recruiting businesses to locate in Madison County. The IDA has established a web page on the Internet to let businesses know what the County has to offer. The agency also provides businesses with information on public and private sources of financing, including industrial revenue bonds.

The Madison County IDA is currently involved in several initiatives which impact or potentially impact economic development in the Town of Hamilton, including the "Hamlets of Madison County" initiative (see below). The director of the IDA is also participating in a five-county agricultural forum which encourages the development of value-added agriculture.

The Hamlets of Madison County Initiative

The "Hamlets of Madison County" (HMC) Initiative is a partnership between Colgate University, the Madison County Industrial Development Agency, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The project is designed to enhance rural hamlets in central New York by generating increased amounts of entrepreneurial activity through the development and implementation of community controlled economic development plans. These plans address the variety of challenges that face the hamlets, including achieving economic strength, reviving social stability, and maintaining ecological sustainability.

The centerpiece of the HMC project is a service learning course in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Colgate University. Service learning is a pedagogical technique that connects meaningful community service with academic learning. A professor and teams of students work

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

COMMUNITY PROFILE

closely with the hamlets to put together economic development plans. In the second phase of the process, community-led project teams implement parts of these plans. The professor and his students serve as outside consultants and researchers for the project teams. The IDA works with the project teams to recruit desired types of firms and to locate funding for new businesses; the USDA works with the project teams to locate state and federal programs which are applicable to the team's initiatives.

Under this initiative, students have worked in four communities, including Earlville, Hamilton, Eaton, and Stockbridge. Accomplishments include producing a survey of dairy farmers for the Town of Hamilton's Comprehensive Plan and developing a Colgate University Community Outreach resource guide for the Earlville Community Center. Most recently, students conducted a retail survey of student spending habits to assist the Hamilton Downtown Merchants Association in selecting and targeting new customer bases. Students are also working to plan and facilitate a series of public forums in Hamilton. Additional opportunities to participate in the hamlets program may be available in Poolville and Hubbardsville.

Hamilton Airport

During the development of the Village of Hamilton's Master Plan in 1992, the Village identified the Hamilton Municipal Airport as potentially important to its economic development. Located in the Towns of Madison and Eaton, the airport property was annexed by the Village of Hamilton in 1997.

Because the site has long been viewed as a potentially valuable local and regional economic asset, the Village commissioned an economic development feasibility study focusing on the development of the airport property. While the study was underway, the Village purchased the airport with funding assistance from the FAA. The feasibility study and a related master plan for the airport were completed in early 1997. Based on an analysis of site characteristics and the local and regional market, the feasibility study identified light manufacturing, the expansion of local businesses (e.g., in the health services field), and entrepreneurial development as the primary commercial and industrial opportunities for the site. Additionally, the master plan found that the airport has the potential for the development of aviation related facilities on the site.

The Village of Hamilton is currently facilitating the process of developing the airport property as outlined in the master plan. The Village Mayor has appointed a committee with representation from local businesses and institutions to carry out development activities related to the site. Current plans include linking the airport to Village utilities (which has its own municipal power) and marketing.

In April 1998, the Village submitted an application to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for Small Cities Community Development Block Grant funding to develop a 50-acre industrial park on the airport site. The CDBG funds are to be used to extend public infrastructure systems and construct on-site access roads, water, sewer, and electrical service. The Federal Aviation Administration is expected to provide additional funds for a new access road to the airport from Route 12B, providing primary access to the east side of the industrial park.

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

COMMUNITY PROFILE

When fully built out, the Village of Hamilton anticipates that the airport industrial park will accommodate between 10 and 15 new light manufacturing/assembly/production facilities and similar zero-emissions businesses. It is estimated that new business occupants of the park will create a projected 100-200 new jobs.

It should be noted that the airport development initiative has the potential to impact the feasibility of developing a trail system along the Chenango Canal for recreational use in the Town of Hamilton (see Recreation section), as sections of the old canal cross the site.

Resident Perspectives

The results of the Town of Hamilton Community Survey indicate strong consensus among residents regarding the need to improve the economic vitality of the Town, particularly in its commercial centers. Providing jobs for the younger generation, improving the Town's appearance, attracting retail businesses, reopening the Hamilton movie theater, improving building conditions, and promoting alternative agricultural and forestry production all ranked as high priorities. Although respondents indicated that they would like the Town to commit more resources to enhancing the revenue base through economic development, possible avenues for economic development -- including attracting tourism, industrial development, and the Hamilton airport redevelopment plan -- ranked relatively low in importance or lacked consensus, suggesting a need for additional education and public involvement around the issue of rural economic development. Responses to the survey also seem to indicate that while residents would like to have greater economic opportunities, they do not want to sacrifice the small-town character and natural resources of the community.

Both in the survey and in community meetings, there have been numerous expressions of concern about urban sprawl and strip development. The comments tend to focus on a segment of Route 12B north of the Village of Hamilton. This area is for the most part outside the township. However, Town officials should approach the neighboring municipalities involved and explore the possibility of a cooperative planning initiative.

Issues, Opportunities, and Constraints

The development of an economic development strategy that preserves rural character while diversifying the economy and providing additional employment opportunities is critical for the Town of Hamilton. Overall, there appears to be consensus among residents and stakeholders in the Town that concentrating future economic development in existing commercial areas, especially in the Villages of Hamilton and Earlville, will help to preserve natural resources, open space, and farmlands and address the critical need to further strengthen the appearance and vitality of the Town's downtown areas.

Key assets for economic development in the Town include a well-educated and productive labor force, excellent quality of life, scenic beauty, good transportation access to metropolitan markets, and the availability of inexpensive municipal power and infrastructure in the Village of Hamilton. Discussions between Town officials, the Village, Colgate University, and gas suppliers regarding the installation of gas lines have been ongoing. This represents a unique opportunity for the Town (see discussion in Infrastructure section).

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Another important asset to the Town of Hamilton is its agricultural base. While often overlooked, agribusiness currently provides an important economic benefit to the Town which can be expanded and enhanced. There are numerous opportunities available to businesses which support the region's agricultural sector: feed companies, equipment sales and repair, large animal veterinarians, farming supplies, and so on. The diversification of farming operations and value-added activities such as food processing may present additional opportunities for economic development in the Town.

These assets -- along with the opportunities presented by the historic role of the Village of Hamilton as a commercial center, the Hamlets of Madison County initiative, the interest and involvement of Colgate University in working with the community, and the development of the Hamilton Airport -- should serve as the basis for a strategy to stimulate growth and development, while maintaining the sense of community that residents value. The involvement of organizations such as the Southern Madison County Chamber of Commerce and the Madison County Industrial Development Agency, and the development of intermunicipal partnerships, could help Hamilton pursue economic development within a larger regional context.

Special consideration will be given to businesses that would benefit from the Town's economic base, particularly agriculture and agribusiness, as well as small start-up businesses. Such businesses could benefit from the development of telecommunications technology which allows people to work out of their homes. The Town will work cooperatively with the Villages of Hamilton and Earlville to help identify potential entrepreneurs living in the Town who might move into vacant spaces in the Village centers. Possible avenues include the establishment of a telecommuting center with shared clerical support and office equipment, assistance to start-up or existing businesses, promoting retail or service businesses which are not dependent on foot traffic (e.g., mail order and catalog sales), and development of the airport for commercial/industrial use. The Town will also concentrate on retaining and expanding existing businesses in the hamlet and village areas.

The retail sector will be a part of the Town's economic development strategy as well. Issues that face the Town and its villages include the closing of the Hamilton movie theater, vacancies in commercial buildings in Earlville, and the rapid turnover of new businesses in "downtown" Hamilton. While the Downtown Merchants Association offers an appropriate forum for the overall marketing and promotion of the Village of Hamilton, local merchants need the continued support of municipal leaders and community institutions. Efforts are also needed to encourage and assist the development and expansion of Earlville's retail district. Establishing and assertively marketing additional community-wide activities such as festivals centered around specific themes (e.g., the Chenango Canal, winter sports, the fall harvest) and siting such events throughout the Town is one of many avenues to consider. In addition, strategies are needed to expand existing retail markets and tap into the community's student base. If students can be encouraged to shop locally, opportunities exist for increased retail sales and business growth in the villages.

Several factors could inhibit economic development in the Town. For example, outside the villages, the Town of Hamilton does not currently offer municipal water and sewer systems. Additionally, many areas of the Town are inappropriate for light manufacturing or intensive commercial development due to poor soil conditions or steep slopes which limit use of septic tanks. For these

reasons, economic development most suitable to areas outside the village centers is likely to focus on strengthening or expanding the existing agricultural/forestry base. Town land use regulations should protect these areas while encouraging development on properties identified as better suited for commercial or industrial development.

D. HOUSING

The Town of Hamilton has a total of 1,800 housing units, of which 62.2% are owner-occupied, 32.4% are renter-occupied, and 5.4% are vacant (1990 data). No statistics are available on the condition of housing in the Town. However, as shown in Table 8, 57.0% of the housing in Hamilton was constructed prior to 1940, and older houses generally need much more maintenance and rehabilitation than newer homes. In general, poor housing conditions appear to be most prevalent around the hamlets of Hubbardsville and South Hamilton, although Poolville and the Village of Earlville seem to have their share of substandard housing units.

The Town has experienced modest amounts of new construction with 11.4% of total housing units built during the 1980s. Building permit information obtained from the Town suggests that the pace of residential development has increased slightly during the 1990s: between 1990 and 1997, 90 permits were issued for the construction of new homes or installation of trailers and double-wide mobile homes in the Town of Hamilton (these figures *do not* include the Villages of Hamilton and Earlville, where little new construction has taken place in recent years⁵). Most of this development occurred in the northern section of the Town, especially east of the Village of Hamilton. In contrast, there has been relatively little new housing developed in the hamlet areas or in Earlville.

Table 9 provides a snapshot of the types of housing units in Madison County, the Town of Hamilton, and neighboring communities based on the 1990 Census. The data indicate a range of housing types available to accommodate residents and attract new families or individuals to the Town. Although most housing is single family (65.8%), 27.1% of housing units are in multi-family structures with two or more units. Only 7.1% of the housing stock in Hamilton is mobile homes. This is a much lower proportion than in the surrounding towns or Madison County as a whole.

The presence of Colgate University in Hamilton has had a significant impact on the local housing market. In general, the cost of housing tends to be higher in Town of Hamilton relative to other areas. A similar trend can be observed in Eaton, Hamilton's northwestern neighbor, due to the presence of SUNY Morrisville. The relatively high cost of housing in the Town does not extend to all areas, however. According to the 1990 Census, the median value of an owner-occupied home in 1990 was \$88,000 in the Village of Hamilton but nearly half that in the Village of Earlville.

Area realtors note that housing prices, and the demand for and desirability of housing, in the township are also affected by such factors as local schools, infrastructure, utility costs, and amenities. Traditionally, housing has been more affordable in the hamlet areas, which are not served by public infrastructure. Prices also tend to be lower in Earlville because the community has had problems with water system. In contrast, prices in and around the Village of Hamilton have been driven by the desirability of the Hamilton School District, which has a reputation as a progressive district with many amenities, and by the low utility costs enjoyed by residents.

⁵ According to the Village of Hamilton's code enforcement officer, only 3 permits for new construction were issued between 1990 and 1997.

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Another example of Colgate University's influence on the local housing market is that Hamilton has a higher proportion of rental units than most communities in the area. This impact is felt most strongly in the Village of Hamilton, which has a renter-occupancy rate of 50%. In fact, 1990 Census figures show that the Village accounts for nearly three-quarters of all rental housing units in the Town. According to area realtors, apartments rent for about \$450-550 per month, while houses for rent cost about \$600-700 per month.

The number of students living off campus in the Town of Hamilton, however, has been reduced since the 1990 Census. During the 1980s, roughly a third of all Colgate University students resided off-campus, in the Hamilton area or in fraternity and sorority houses. This amounted to 800-900 students not living on campus. In 1990, the Colgate University Board of Trustees approved a plan to limit the number of students living in private homes and apartments off campus to 250; the limit only applies to students not living in fraternity or sorority houses. The Board also approved a policy to require first- and second-year students to live in university housing. To reduce the number of students residing in the Village of Hamilton and outlying areas and to relieve overcrowding in first-year residences, Colgate has implemented an aggressive program to improve the quality and quantity of on-campus residential space. The demand for rental housing units has also been affected by the development of the Madison Lane Senior Apartments, a subsidized senior citizen housing complex located in the Village of Hamilton.

To some extent, the reduction in the number of students and seniors in the rental market in Hamilton has been balanced by an increase in the number of families seeking rental housing. Families who cannot afford to purchase a home may rent a house in the township so they can get their children into the Hamilton School District. A change in hiring patterns at Colgate University has also influenced the rental housing market: as Colgate has hired more faculty for one- or two-year periods rather than for tenured positions, families have decided to rent rather than buy, according to local realtors.

Resident Perspectives

The results of the Town of Hamilton Community Survey indicate that most residents do not perceive housing as a priority at this time. Asked whether they feel there is a need for more housing in Hamilton, nearly two-thirds of all respondents said no. Analyzing responses by place of residence, however, it was found that the majority of Earlville residents *do* perceive a need for additional housing, primarily for single family dwellings and senior housing. The survey did not explicitly ask residents for their opinions on the *condition* of housing in the Town.

Of the 76 residents of the Town of Hamilton who feel additional housing units are needed, a large margin indicated that senior housing (55.3%) would best meet the demand, followed by single family dwellings (40.8%), townhouses or condominiums (26.3%), and subsidized housing (26.3%).

Issues, Opportunities, and Constraints

Some parts of the Town have experienced very little new housing construction over the past decade, although a number of new housing units have been developed in outlying areas or near the Village of Hamilton. Many owners of older homes, faced with the prospect of costly repairs,

would welcome assistance in repairing or renovating aging buildings. The Town should explore the possibility of obtaining additional resources, such as grants and loans available from state and federal agencies, to help low-income homeowners with rehabilitation projects.

Discussions with local realtors indicate that the housing market in Hamilton has slowed considerably since the 1980s. Although regional economic trends and interest rates certainly contribute to the local housing market, realtors note that housing sales have also been impacted by the fact that Colgate University is making fewer hires on a tenure track basis. Moreover, Colgate employees are increasingly commuting to Hamilton from other areas because there is a lack of economic opportunities for spouses and other family members. The "mid-range" -- homes priced at \$80,000 to \$120,000 -- have been hit particularly hard, and there is currently an abundance of homes for sale in the Town. The problem is apparently compounded by the fact that increased demand in the 1980s drove up local property values; now, those who purchased homes in the Town of Hamilton ten years ago are unable to sell for what they paid. Some houses, on the market for long periods of time, are instead being rented out.

Housing affordability, senior housing, and the availability of small lots may also be issues in the Town. An increase in the number of double-wide, manufactured homes in the township suggests an acceleration in the demand for moderately-priced housing and small lots, with mortgage payments or rents in the \$300-\$400 range. Additional analysis is needed to assess the market for affordable housing of all types in the Town. Survey respondents noted, for example, the need for senior housing in Earlville. The Smith Block and the old Earlville Elementary School may be appropriate sites for the development of additional senior housing in the Town, especially since the school, now a community center, houses the local senior citizen center. Currently, senior citizens requesting a one-bedroom unit at Madison Lane Apartments in the Village of Hamilton can be accommodated within one year, but there is a three- to four-year wait for two-bedroom units. Unsubsidized senior rental housing has also been suggested as a need within the Town.

Despite current housing market trends, construction activity continues in certain areas of the Town, including Bonney Hill, Gorton Road, Preston Hill, and Trapper's Pond, and east of the Village of Hamilton, spilling over into the Town of Madison. These latter areas, all located in the Hamilton School District, are likely to remain the focus of future residential development. A review of the Town's existing land use policies may be needed to evaluate this development trend and determine whether residential development might be appropriate in other areas of the Town as well. The Horton and Preston Hill areas, for example, may be good targets for residential development if the Town can work with the Village to extend utilities.

E. LAND USE PATTERNS

The land use pattern of the southeastern Madison County region, in which the Town of Hamilton is located, is dominated by active and inactive agricultural land. In the late 1700s, farmers began settling in the hilly areas of what is today the Town of Hamilton. Later waves of settlement took advantage of the better quality soils in the valleys. Then, as now, the Town was sparsely populated, due in part to its hilly terrain and relative distance from the regional urban centers of Binghamton, Syracuse, and Utica/Rome.

The early emphasis on farming, limited population growth, and quality soils in the valleys have had a lasting effect on the physical development of the Town. Today, the Town's landscape is still quite rural, with large tracts of open farmland and forests dotted with single-family homes and farm structures situated some distance from each other. Despite recent declines in active farming, the lack of development pressure outside the Village of Hamilton has left abandoned farms (many located in the hills) and adjacent lands relatively intact.

Outside the Villages of Hamilton and Earlville, the Town's key concentrations of population and housing structures are found in the hamlets of Poolville, Hubbardsville, East Hamilton, and South Hamilton. These hamlets are all located near significant water bodies. Hubbardsville, East Hamilton, and Poolville lie adjacent to the Sangerfield River, while South Hamilton is located near Pleasant Brook.

The Villages of Hamilton and Earlville have been, and continue to be, the traditional commercial and residential centers of the Town of Hamilton. The level terrain and proximity to early transportation routes, including the Hamilton and Skaneateles Turnpike, the Chenango Canal, and the railroad spurred more concentrated settlements, and dense land use patterns which remain visible today. While there are approximately 150 persons per square mile in the Town overall, there are 1,991.6 persons per square mile in the Village of Hamilton and 828.2 per square mile in the Village of Earlville (or 1,096 persons per square mile in the Madison County side).

Over the last few decades, the Town has experienced some new residential development. The bulk of this has occurred on large lots east of the Village of Hamilton along Spring Hill Road, the Bonney Hill area, Horton Road, and Gorton Road. Newer homes are also scattered in outlying areas of the Town.

Colgate Land Use

Colgate University owns a significant amount of land in the Town of Hamilton and surrounding communities, adding up to roughly 1,500 acres. Lands outside the main campus facility are largely undeveloped and possess great scenic, environmental, and recreational value. These lands are quite diverse and include farmlands, wetlands and swamps, forests, and grassy flatlands. The majority of this land is received through individual donations. Acquisition of land is not a top priority of the University at this time, except for areas close to the campus borders (e.g., Hamilton Street and "frat row").

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Portions of Colgate's undeveloped lands, particularly the extensive and well-maintained trail system behind the University, have been utilized for recreational use. These trails are suitable for running, hiking, and biking, as well as cross-country skiing. No hunting is allowed and no water resources exist for fishing in these areas. However, the Beattie Reserve on Bonney Hill Road, used for outdoor education purposes, contains a well-maintained trap range.

Some of the land owned by the University is suitable and/or leased for farming or grazing purposes. Land suitable for agriculture includes Parker's Farm located just north of Randallsville and east of the Chenango River, and the Bewkes Property, a natural area with a pond situated near the Lebanon Reservoir in the Town of Lebanon.

Colgate University has been involved with the development of a Forest Management Plan for approximately 860 acres of its undeveloped land. The project is being spearheaded by a Forest Management Committee, which hired a consultant to develop the plan. The consultants are classifying land tracts and developing a management strategy to protect these forested areas so that they remain ecologically healthy, allow for new growth, and preserve valuable wildlife habitats. Selective harvest and timber sales will likely cover the cost of managing the lands. The management plan is near completion.

Resident Perspectives

Most respondents to the Town of Hamilton Community Survey feel that existing zoning and land use regulations are adequate guidelines for the Town's growth and development, although a large proportion indicated they lack knowledge in this area or did not answer the question pertaining to land use regulations, indicating a need for education and outreach about zoning issues. It should also be noted that residents may not have made a distinction between *Town* and *Village* land use ordinances.

The desire to maintain the Town's rural character is reflected in the types of development respondents listed as objectionable (mining, industrial uses, prisons, microwave towers, etc.) and in the kind of land use practices they would like to see (clustering development in already-developed areas and preserving natural resources). There was strong support for limiting further strip development and urban sprawl along Route 12B north of "downtown" Hamilton (technically in the Town of Madison), and concern about poor road and sidewalk conditions and increased noise and traffic. Town regulations may be needed to address some of these issues.

Issues, Opportunities, and Constraints

The Town of Hamilton, located some distance from an urban center, does not face the kind of rapid growth and development pressures which commonly affect small rural towns near metropolitan areas. While the Town's economy is relatively diverse and stable compared to many other rural communities, the Town's existing economic base, size, and distance to urban centers poses certain limits on current economic growth and development.

Nonetheless, some development will occur in the Town in the future. The task for the Town is to develop land use policies which address both short and long term land use issues and which are

responsive to the goals residents support: improving the economic vitality of the Town, supporting local agriculture, and preserving natural resources and open space. An overall land use strategy which encourages agriculture, and which maintains the traditional patterns and concentrations of development (i.e., encouraging residential and commercial development in areas *already* developed) in the hamlets and villages, would allow the Town to maintain its character without limiting the overall growth of the community.

One of the key issues affecting the Town's land use in the near term is the decline in farming. With the loss in recent decades of many small farms, and the significance of agriculture in the historical prosperity and character of the Town and region, residents of the Town of Hamilton are concerned about prime agricultural land falling out of production. According to a survey of farmers conducted by the Long Range Planning Committee and Colgate sociology students in November 1997, four of 22 identified farmers in the township indicate they plan on going out of business within five years; two additional farmers intend to retire. This could mean large tracts of land in the Town will no longer be actively farmed.

As is often the case, land which is most suitable for agriculture in the Town is also most desirable for residential and commercial development because of such assets as level terrain and good soil quality. However, many residents and community leaders would like to see such land remain under cultivation or perhaps "banked" for future agricultural use. The Town will explore land use strategies, economic incentives, or other mechanisms which encourage continued production on prime agricultural land.

Another immediate issue facing the Villages of Hamilton and Earlville is the need to restore the building conditions of commercial properties and older homes in the business and historic districts. Each of the Villages possesses a core of profitable businesses. However, vacant storefronts and buildings, escalating rents, and deteriorating properties deter needed economic development and erode the historic village character which is important part of the Town's identity and attractiveness. The Town will need to work in tandem with the Villages to address this issue.

Even as the Town of Hamilton addresses short-term land use issues and explores developing a strategy which maintains the traditional patterns and concentrations of development, community leaders and residents need to identify areas which are appropriate for future development should potentially beneficial development opportunities become available.

Some residents have suggested that the Town develop a prioritized list of sites suitable for "environmentally-friendly" commercial or light industrial development to expand employment and economic opportunities in the community. Particular areas include the Hamilton Airport site, land along Route 12, and the areas surrounding Hubbardsville and Earlville, although infrastructure and community opposition are potential constraints to development. While identification of suitable areas will help address the need for economic development, the form this development takes will be important to the future of the Town. Concern over the appearance of commercial development, particularly along Route 12B into the Towns of Madison and Eaton, is likely to grow without appropriate land use policies, design guidelines, and intermunicipal cooperation.

The issue of future residential development in the Towns of Hamilton and Madison is examined in the 1992 Village of Hamilton Master Plan. With some exceptions, future development of lands located east, south, and west of the Village of Hamilton is restricted due to poor soil, the presence of Colgate, and abrupt changes in topography. The plan predicts that while poor soils and slopes affect areas north of the Village, there is also ample land suitable for development, with south-facing hillsides and an attractive lake.

In the 1992 Village of Hamilton Master Plan, several areas are designated as having development potential based on an assessment of suitability, attractiveness, community interest, and future use. The plan indicates the Village might consider annexation of such lands in the future "to maintain positive control of land use and density." However, the Village may not initiate the annexation process. Legally it is up to residents of the area in question to decide whether or not they wish to be annexed. If they do wish it, they may initiate the annexation process by petitioning the Village.

Annexation to the Village would normally bring access to low-cost village electric power, village police protection, and village water and sewer facilities. Town property owners do not necessarily favor annexation, however. If annexed they are subject to village property tax rates, which are higher than town rates, and to assessments for extension of water and sewer lines. Many of them cherish their rural status, either for philosophical reasons or for practical reasons such as economy and protection of hunting and fishing rights.

The Town of Hamilton recognizes, however, that annexation is a complicated issue; careful analysis of the fiscal and other potential impacts of annexation would need to be conducted before the Town would consider allowing annexation of specific areas into the Village of Hamilton.

F. AGRICULTURE

The following description is based on in-depth interviews with individuals employed by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Madison County and the Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District, 1990 Census data, the Census of Agriculture, and a targeted survey of farmers in the Town of Hamilton conducted during fall 1997 by the Long Range Planning Committee and Colgate University sociology students.

Madison County

Farming has played a key role in the economy of Madison County for over a century. In 1900, 90% of the total land in the County was cultivated⁶. Today, almost half of the County's land area remains dedicated to farming. Dairy farming predominates; in fact, Madison County ranks fourth in the state in milk production. According to 1994 data compiled by the New York Agricultural Statistics Service, 87% of the County's gross agricultural marketings are directly attributed to milk sales (80%) and dairy livestock (cull and replacement sales; 7%), for a total value of more than \$62 million.

Other agricultural enterprises in Madison County include raising dairy livestock (\$4.8 million), vegetable crops (\$4.0 million), field crops and fruit (\$3.0 million), beef, sheep, and other livestock (\$1.8 million), and greenhouse and nursery (\$0.6 million). The total value of agricultural marketings in Madison County during 1994 was \$71.5 million. Additionally, field crops harvested and fed "on-farm," rather than sold at market, were valued at \$16.8 million.

While agriculture continues to have a significant impact on the economy and land use of Madison County, recent trends reveal a steady decline in the number of farms and people employed in agriculture. In 1949, the County had 2,360 farms, and nearly 20% were employed in agriculture. Just ten years later, there were nearly 700 fewer farms in Madison County, a decline of 28.3%. The 1992 Census of Agriculture shows an accelerating rate of decline in the number of farms, land in farming, and the size of the County's milk herd. Between 1987 and 1992, the number of farms declined 11.0% (a net loss of 86 farms), the proportion of land in farming dropped from 50.7% to 46.6% (a loss of 17,178 acres), and the size of the County's milk herd fell 13.2%. The decline in the number of active farms has averaged almost 12 per year.

During the 1987-1992 period in which the Consumer Price Index rose 23.5%, the market value of agricultural products sold within Madison County increased a mere 3.3%. Additionally, the market value of dairy products, which represent more than 80% of the commodity sales in the County, rose just 4.1%.

According to the local Cornell Cooperative Extension, farming in Madison County is currently in a very stressful period. Although milk prices were within a few cents of an all-time high during the fall of 1996 (\$16.00 per 100 pounds), milk prices have declined significantly this year. The price farmers received for milk sold in July 1997, for example, was about \$11.90 per 100 pounds. Milk

⁶ *Country Roads Revisited*, Madison County Historical Society, Oneida, NY, 1994.

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

COMMUNITY PROFILE

price volatility will continue as the federal government's price support program is phased out. The global milk price, currently at \$9.00 per 100 pounds, will also greatly affect the price received locally. At the same time, production costs, including labor costs, liability insurance, electricity, feed, machinery, and property taxes, have been increasing over the past two decades.

Additionally, the Cooperative Extension notes that during the last two years, the beef market has been at an all-time low. Dairy farmers depend on the beef market for sale of cull cows and bob veal calves. Beef sales of this type are the second largest income generator for dairy farms. Today, some farmers who consign calves to local auction outlets have received bills to cover the cost of trucking and commission, whereas in the past they could expect to net close to \$100 per calf, depending on the market.

Also contributing to the decline in the number of Madison County farms are the increasing age of many farmers and the lack of heirs to take over the business when older farmers retire. Between 1987 and 1992, the proportion of farmers aged 60 or older increased from 23.9% to 25.8%. The idea that the farm is a farmer's retirement "nest egg" is eroding, as the values for real property, machinery, and equipment outstrip the ability of young farmers to provide the necessary equity for farm transfers. Many farmers close to retirement do not want to "give away" the business they have spent years building, further reducing the chances of finding a buyer who will keep the farm in production. Many young people in farm families are discouraged from entering the business by their parents and relatives, who have labored under tough economic conditions for some time.

Town of Hamilton

The Town of Hamilton is considered a good place to farm. Despite limitations due to topography and elevation, the Town possesses relatively good soil resources (see below). Other key assets include proximity to large metropolitan areas and major transportation networks, and access to strong agribusiness infrastructure, such as machinery dealerships and repair shops, banking services for farmers, fertilizer distributors, and feed companies, all generally within a half-hour drive.

According to the Town of Hamilton Assessor's office, 9,555 acres of land in the Town are assessed for agricultural purposes. This comprises approximately 35.7% of the Town's total land area. The chart on the following page provides additional characteristics and value of land assessed agricultural in the Town of Hamilton.

A Madison County dairy farm survey conducted by Cornell Cooperative Extension in 1994 revealed that the agricultural industry in the Town of Hamilton is even more concentrated in dairy than the County overall. Today, approximately 16 dairy farms exist within the Town's border (some include areas outside the Town line). These farms average 86 cows with 370 acres of cropland. Woodlots, agricultural lands which have reverted to forest, are in addition to this acreage. The majority of dairy operations are operated as sole proprietorships.

Cornell Cooperative Extension notes that several additional agricultural enterprises exist within the Town, including four beef operations, one sheep operation, and two horse farms. A few farms have developed a special "niche," including custom raising of dairy heifers, beef production for the freezer trade, the sale of Scottish Highlander beef cattle as breeding stock, and a cheese

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

COMMUNITY PROFILE

wholesale/retail facility.

Assessed Agricultural Land in the Town of Hamilton, 1997				
Classification*	Acres	# of Parcels	Assessed Value (without buildings)	Assessed Value (with buildings)
105	4,967.44	83	\$1,987,700	\$2,025,300
110	1,008.98	8	\$482,700	\$1,159,700
112	2,701.31	24	\$1,382,200	\$3,466,900
120	877.70	9	\$466,000	\$1,051,400
Total	9,555.43	124	\$4,318,600	\$7,703,300

Source: Town Assessor's office

* Classifications are defined as follows: 105 - Vacant agricultural land; 110 - Land for livestock, buildings, and products; 112 - Dairy farm; 120 - Field crops.

There are four state-certified Agricultural Districts in the Town of Hamilton: Districts 4, 5, 8, and 10. Hamilton's Agricultural Districts were created as a result of the Agricultural Districts Law enacted by New York State in 1971. This law was passed to encourage the protection of farmland by providing incentives to farmers to keep their land in production. A key benefit for farms within an Agricultural District is a tax benefit for owners of ten or more acres which generate at least \$10,000 in gross sales during the preceding two years. Such owners may make an annual application for an agricultural use-value assessment which recognizes the value of the land for farming as opposed to speculative or development purposes. Other features of the Agricultural Districts Law include the following:

- Within agricultural districts, local governments cannot enact ordinances which would restrict agricultural practices other than those necessary to protect health and safety.
- Enacting benefit assessments or special *ad valorem* levies is limited.
- State agencies are encouraged to modify regulations to enhance commercial agriculture.
- The right of public agencies to advance funds for facilities that would encourage non-farm development is discouraged.
- The right of public agencies to acquire farmland through eminent domain is discouraged.

The Madison County Board of Supervisors is responsible for the creation, modification, and continuance of agricultural districts in Madison County. The County has established an Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board to advise the Board of Supervisors on farming issues, including the creation and modification of Agricultural Districts. Although no formal Agricultural or Farmland Protection Plan is in place in Madison County, the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board has the authority to develop such plans.

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

COMMUNITY PROFILE

The value of agricultural land and activities to the local economy is significant. According to the Town Assessor's office, the assessed value of all agricultural property, including buildings, was \$7,703,300 in 1997. To further understand the economic value of farming in Madison County, Cornell Cooperative Extension extrapolated the findings of a 1994 Minnesota study of small dairy farms which have a similar structure and operation mode as those in Madison County. This exercise revealed that each dairy operation in Madison County contributes approximately \$270,000 to the local economy. These contributions include milk and cattle sales, property taxes, utilities, feed, fertilizer, machinery, services, and insurance. There are apparently no current studies which examine the *direct* economic value of farming to Madison County or the Town of Hamilton. However, information available indicates that agriculture continues to function as an important component of Madison County's economy, and Hamilton's diverse economy of service, health and education-related industries.

Farmer Survey

To develop a "snapshot" of farming in Hamilton, the Town's Long Range Planning Committee adapted a farming survey recently used in Chenango County and enlisted the assistance of Colgate University sociology students to survey farm owners in the township. The survey yielded 14 responses from the 22 farms contacted. Responding farms are located in the Village of Hamilton and in the hamlets of Poolville, Hubbardsville, and East Hamilton; most are dairy farms (see appendix for results).

The survey revealed that the typical dairy farm in Hamilton has operated for 37 years, but some have existed for just a few years and others for more than a century. The average age of a farmer is 52, although ages ranged fairly evenly from 34 to 67. Most farmers farm full-time and employ only family members.

The majority of those surveyed anticipate continuing to farm over the next twenty years. Most respondents, however, do not anticipate a family member will continue farming after their retirement, nor do they expect the sale of farmland to finance retirement.

Most farms in Hamilton report increasing sales but decreasing profits. Over half have made investments over the past five years to improve efficiency or expand, including physically upgrading farms, barns, milk houses, and silos; allowing for boarding; and purchasing equipment. The survey indicated there is a growing interest in pursuing alternative agricultural practices and diversifying. Specific interests include producing better crops, fish farming, deer farming, and raising natural beef and goats. The main obstacle to improving their business is access to capital.

Many of the respondents anticipate making significant changes in the next five years; others anticipate few or no changes. Areas cited included:

- acquiring more livestock (6)
- diversifying products/services (5)
- acquiring more land (4)
- making no changes (4)
- selling the whole farm (4)

- major capital improvements (3)
- reducing livestock (2)
- selling some land (2)
- retiring (2)
- taking an off-farm job (1)

Most of the farmers surveyed feel that good farmland should be protected for ongoing agricultural use and that their land should be farmed after they retire. The majority are interested in exploring a Town policy that would protect agricultural uses of farmland. Most respondents were unfamiliar with the details of specific farmland protection preservation techniques (e.g., Purchase of Development Rights, conservation easements, and non-restrictive agricultural zoning), although there appears to be some support for the purchase of development rights. Creating a land trust was mentioned by one respondent.

Soil Quality

Soil quality is an essential consideration when assessing the potential viability and productivity of agricultural practices. One must consider the locations of the most agriculturally productive soils when forming land use strategies that promote agriculture. Soils vary in terms of drainage, fertility, texture, tillage, elevation, depth, and slope. Knowledge of these features can help farmers, foresters, planners, and engineers determine the most practical uses of the land.

Slope is an important consideration when determining the suitability of certain soil types for agricultural uses. Erosion, a principal source of sediment pollution, often occurs on steep slopes. Cultivation of crops on these slopes increases the risk of erosion, often because the vegetation that would normally inhibit the erosion is removed. It is difficult, and often dangerous, to operate heavy farming equipment along steep slopes.

The soils in the northwest portion of the Town, those just outside the Village of Hamilton, are mostly limited by slope. The most common soils in this area are Bath-Lordstown-Mardin, Mardin-Volusia, and Lordstown. These soils are used for some cultivated crops. The most popular uses for these lands are pasture, woodland, and hay. Slopes in this region are moderate to steep. Elevations are generally high, making short season crop varieties desirable.

In the southwest portion of the Town, the area surrounding the Village of Earlville, slope is less of a concern. In fact, this area has the largest acreage of active farmland in the Town of Hamilton. The valley in this area is generally covered with Howard-Chenango, and Palmyra-Phelps undulating soils. These soils are used mainly for cultivated crops. They are well-suited to early planted and deep-rooted crops. Bath-Lordstown-Mardin and Mardin-Volusia are common at the higher elevations.

A number of active farms also operate in the northeast corner of the Town, near Hubbardsville. The common soils in the valley are Howard-Chenango, Wayland, and Carlisle-Palms. As mentioned previously, Howard-Chenango soils are commonly used for cultivated crops. Carlisle-Palms soils can be used for high value specialty crops if the proper drainage is provided. It is extremely difficult to provide the proper drainage for Wayland soils, and they are often left covered with native wetland

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

COMMUNITY PROFILE

vegetation or used as pasture. Bath-Lordstown-Mardin and Mardin-Volusia are found on the hillsides in this area.

Forestland is the dominant feature in the southeast portion of the Town. Soils in the higher elevations of this region, such as Mardin-Volusia and Lordstown, are best suited for short season crop varieties, hay, pasture, and woodland. Steep slopes are more prevalent here than in other areas of the Town, making cultivated crops more difficult to farm. The soils in the low-lying lands are Stockbridge. These generally lend themselves to dairy farming, hay, and pasture.

The Sangerfield River and Poolville Pond are two major water bodies located in the central portion of the Town. This area also has an abundance of Howard-Chenango soils, possibly the best-suited soils for cultivated crops present in the Town. Other soils common to this area are Wayland and Palmyra-Howard. The Palmyra-Howard soils present a challenge for cultivated crops because they generally lie on hills and steep slopes.

Resident Perspectives

The results of the Town of Hamilton Community Survey indicate strong consensus among residents regarding the need to support and expand the Town's agricultural sector. Supporting local agriculture and promoting alternative agricultural and forestry production both ranked as high priorities in the survey, regardless of place of residency. The protection and enhancement of farmlands was also seen as very important by Town residents. During a focus group held in the spring of 1997, agriculture was cited as important in preserving the Town's rural character and providing economic benefits.

Issues, Opportunities, and Constraints

The long-term outlook for agriculture in the Town of Hamilton is similar to the outlook for Madison County farming overall. While dairy farming is expected to continue as the leading agricultural activity in the Town, economic pressures, including depressed milk prices and rising production costs, will undoubtedly force many existing family farmers out of business. The results of the Town's farmer survey confirm this trend. All farmers responding to the survey have experienced declining profits in the last five years. Four out of the 14 responding farmers anticipate selling their farms in the next five years. Most significantly, even though a majority of the farmers surveyed expect to farm for the next twenty years, most do not expect their farms to be taken over by family members.

If the Town does nothing to modify this trend, agriculture's contribution to the economic and tax base will continue to decline, and the rural character of the Town will be threatened. Recognizing the importance of agriculture to the Town's economy, the Town's planning strategy should focus on ways to strengthen the health of the local farm economy. If the farms remain viable, the rural character and the open space in the community will be protected.

Positive factors which support efforts to reverse the trend include a high level of support for the preservation of agriculture by non-farm residents of the Town, a solid base of agriculturally suitable land (35% of the Town's acreage), the existence of agriculture-related businesses within close

proximity of the Town's farms, a lack of development pressure, and existing Agricultural District and Right to Farm Laws.

Because the Town does not control milk prices or the cost of farm inputs, it can do little to directly affect the profitability of agriculture. Even on the issue of burdensome property taxes on agricultural land, the Town's own tax rate is insignificant compared to the cost of school and county taxes. Finally, the Town cannot directly affect the negative feelings that the Town's farm families have about the future of agriculture.

The Town will need to educate local residents and county and state leaders about the importance of agriculture to the character and economy of the community. It will need to find ways to support the transfer of farms to a new generation of farmers, work with state and local government to lighten the burden of property taxes on agricultural land, and support the work of state and federal agencies that provide information and technical assistance to farmers interested in adopting more sustainable and cost effective systems of production, distribution, and marketing.

The Town should develop local land use policies that recognize the significance of prime agricultural land and direct future development towards less productive land. It should work with existing farmers and community members to diversify farm products and develop new links to local and institutional consumers. In addition, the Town should explore the possibility of creating agricultural empowerment zones that would provide technical and capital assistance for existing farms and attract new farmers to the community.

G. NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

The natural features of the Town of Hamilton can best be explained by the region's glacial history. As ice sheets moved southward through the Appalachian region, small lakes were extended into streams and valleys were deepened and widened. One such valley extends along the Sangerfield River, bisecting the Town diagonally from northeast to southwest. Prior to habitation of the area, bare saturated soils eroded and slumped to lower valley benches and terraces along the Sangerfield valley, where most agriculture in the Town is focused today.

It is no surprise then, due to easier access to the fertile fields, that the hamlets and villages developed at or near the rivers, streams and marshy areas in this region. Also, it is usually more expensive and time-consuming to build on the steeper slopes of some of the hillside areas in the Town. Thus it is more common, even today, to see new structures on the hilltops or in the valleys rather than on a steeply sloping hillside. These natural limitations to development, continued agricultural uses, and the Town's distance from sprawling metropolitan areas have resulted in a scenic landscape of rolling pastures and forests.

Open Space

The most abundant natural resource in the Town of Hamilton is its rural landscape and scenic views. The agricultural history of the Town, coupled with a lack of development pressures, has resulted in the preservation of the beautiful rural countryside. Exceptional views include the valley from Hubbardsville and into the hills from the Nine Mile Swamp area and the view from Preston Hill Road south over the east branch of the Sangerfield River. Farms continue to operate on much of the prime agricultural land, enhancing the beauty and productivity of the region. With the exception of the Town's population centers, open space dominates the landscape.

Gravel Deposits

Of the most favorable soils for gravel extraction, only the Howard varieties are prevalent in the Town of Hamilton. These are largely located around the Sangerfield River. Gravel pits have traditionally operated near the Sangerfield, particularly in the Poolville area. While extensive engineering studies would be necessary to determine the extractive value of individual sites, this area of the Town appears to be the most conducive to mining.

Mining is a high-intensity land use which may have an impact on the physical environment of a community. While sand and gravel mines serve as a source of employment and provide resources needed in the construction industry, inappropriate extraction and/or reclamation can be detrimental to a rural landscape. Mines are also potential sources of dust, excessive noise, and erosion. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation regulates mines in response to these environmental concerns. Municipalities may control the future location of mines through zoning laws, although mines that were operating at the time of a zoning change must be allowed to continue operations.

Forests

Forests have become more prevalent over the past twenty years in central New York State, and the Town of Hamilton is no exception. Approximately sixty percent of the Town's land area is covered by forest. As agricultural activity has declined over the years, farms have been abandoned and forests have gradually emerged in their place. As one might expect, there is more forest land in the southeast and north-central portions of the Town, where slopes are steeper and the soils are least conducive to agricultural use.

The presence of this forest land contributes to the beauty of the Town, provides a home for many species, and reduces erosion and groundwater contamination. The forests are a significant part of the identity of the region. Recognizing their value, New York State has taken measures to conserve these forests; active timber management including substantial cutting occurs on most state forest land. The Town of Brookfield has large areas of state-owned forest land, part of which extend into the extreme southeast corner of The Town of Hamilton.

Some of the forests in Madison County and the Town of Hamilton have potential commercial value. A 1993 inventory of Madison County forest lands by the U.S. Forestry Service found that the most profitable trees in the area are the hardwood species, of which sugar maple, black cherry, and white ash are the most valuable. There are two large mills in Madison County that saw the timber. Lumber from Madison County is exported to Europe.

With the decline of small farms in the Town of Hamilton, some landowners in search of income have turned to logging, which has been practiced in this region for centuries, as a way of extracting resources from their land. The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) offers and administers a number of programs to encourage the implementation of forest management plans, including the 488 forest tax law. Under this program, landowners who elect to coordinate with the DEC can reduce their property taxes by as much as 80%.

Many landowners, however, do not utilize these programs for two reasons. Funding for the state administered forest management plans has been cut significantly over the past five years. Without the financial incentives from the state and federal government, many landowners have chosen not to use these plans. Also, the DEC requires that those who do participate in the programs lock their land into a plan for a twenty year period. Many landowners are hesitant to commit their lands for this length of time.

Because forested lands in the Town of Hamilton are not in danger, a town-wide forestry management strategy is not necessary at this time. Abandoned farmland will continue to be reclaimed by forests. Reclamation of idle land is expected to offset any losses through logging. However, the Town needs a strategy for monitoring the impact of land use changes on all natural resources.

Water Resources and Wetlands

The water bodies of the Town are also an important natural asset. Various brooks and streams run throughout the Town of Hamilton, in addition to some major water bodies of note. These surface

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

COMMUNITY PROFILE

water bodies not only provide beautiful places for scenic and recreational enjoyment, they also reduce flood damage by storing and channelling run off.

The Sangerfield River runs diagonally from the northeast to the southwest corner of the Town. It begins in Oneida County and eventually feeds into the Chenango River. The river is mostly surrounded by farms and open space, and these serve flood absorption purposes. The land surrounding the Sangerfield River is well-suited for agriculture, as well as residential uses.

Payne Brook lies in the northwest corner of the Town near the Village of Hamilton. The flood hazard zone associated with it is adjacent to the abandoned canal west of Route 12B and south of the Village line.

Poolville Pond is another important natural feature. It is the largest self-contained body of water in the Town, and is located directly east of the Hamlet of Poolville. As with most ponds and lakes, its size and natural beauty have made it attractive for residential development. It lies in close proximity to the Sangerfield River and inside its floodplain.

Nine Mile Swamp is located in the extreme northeast corner of the Town. The swamp extends around the Sangerfield River as it flows through the Town of Brookfield and into the Town of Hamilton. It provides a unique environment where a diverse number of species flourish. The swamp also helps to reduce flooding downstream along the Sangerfield River. The Nine Mile Swamp is considered a Class A wetland under New York State water quality standards. This means that the New York State DEC holds it to the highest standards of water quality and views all forms of discharge with extreme scrutiny.

All usual New York State laws apply to the wetlands of the Town of Hamilton. The DEC has assumed a number of responsibilities in terms of the protection of these resources, including the regulation of filling, the most serious environmental threat to wetlands. Other potential threats to wetlands in the Town include sediment deposition and nonpoint source pollutants. Sediment deposition can occur when soil erodes into a water body. Major sources of sediment include surface mines, poorly managed croplands, construction sites, and logging roads. Excess sediment in a wetland or stream can inhibit oxygen intake by fish, cover aquatic insects necessary in the food chain, reduce light penetration into the water, and result in siltation or increased pollution via harmful chemicals contained in the sediment. The results of excess sediment can have a negative impact on both aquatic animals and habitat, as well as on overall water quality.

Nonpoint sources, as opposed to point sources, are diffuse, scattered over an area. The discharge normally involves run-off from natural or man-made slopes. Common nonpoint sources include mines, landfills, underground storage tanks, highways, agricultural fields, and barn yards. Many of the contaminants can find their way into the groundwater without proper management techniques. There are two closed landfills in the Town, one on Cranston Road and the other located west of Route 12B and south of the Village of Hamilton line, that are near water resources. The Town may need to develop regulations to control nonpoint pollution and protect wetlands and groundwater supplies. New York State provides support for locally-based nonpoint source implementation projects.

The 100-year floodplain extends from the Village of Earlville and northeast through the hamlets of Poolville and Hubbardsville. Development has generally not proliferated in hazard areas. The Town's zoning laws address a number of concerns to prevent flood damage and unsuitable development within federally designated Special Flood Hazard Areas. Several areas in central and western New York State have suffered from the effects of floods in past decades; approximately 75% of all Americans who live in flood plains do not have flood insurance. The Town will continue to discourage building within the flood hazard areas and require flood-proofing measures where appropriate.

Resident Perspectives

The results of the Town of Hamilton Community Survey indicate that the protection and enhancement of the Town's natural and agricultural resources has strong support among residents. One of the questions on the survey asked residents to rate on a scale of 1-5 how important it is to protect or enhance a variety of features. On average, all of the items listed, including water bodies, wildlife habitats, historic buildings, farmlands, forests, and scenic areas, ranked between 1 and 2, with 1 defined as "very important" and 5 as "not at all important." This generally applied across the board, by both place and length of residency, although residents of two years or less were somewhat less likely to view the protection of farmlands as very important.

Issues, Opportunities, and Constraints

To preserve its natural resources, the Town of Hamilton needs a strategy to manage future growth. With increasing development in the region, many residents of the Town of Hamilton are concerned about the loss of prime agricultural land and open space. A variety of mechanisms are available to support agricultural preservation, including Agricultural Districts, conservation easements, and farmland protection programs. Working with local farmers and residents, The Town will examine these techniques to determine which, if any, are appropriate. The Town may consider using various incentives to help keep development out of prime agricultural and open land areas. Where development occurs, however, developers may be required to conserve open space resources through the Town's subdivision regulations and site plan review process.

The Town of Hamilton also needs a strategy to control the future development of gravel mines. The Town requires special use permits for mines, but state law places certain limits on the types of restrictions a local government can attach to special use permits. Many communities use zoning laws to balance the location of mines with other land uses and assure that mines do not create potential problems for nearby residential, commercial, and agricultural areas.

Another issue related to the Town's natural resources and environment includes the need to identify, preserve, and promote certain natural assets in the Town. A comprehensive environmental assessment would provide important educational and environmental benefits and help address recreational needs. To protect natural resources, the Town will also consider identifying and designating key environmentally sensitive areas where development may need to be limited, including steep slopes and wetland areas.

Watershed protection is an increasingly important issue for the Town. The Town will investigate a variety of strategies for wetland and watershed preservation, including the adoption of a locally-based nonpoint source implementation project.

H. HISTORIC RESOURCES

The Town of Hamilton possesses many historic resources: remnants of the Chenango Canal, acres of farmland dotted with old barns and farmhouses, hamlet churches and houses, Native American archaeological sites, several architecturally significant buildings on the Colgate University campus, and federally-designated historic properties and districts in the Villages of Hamilton and Earlville.

National Register of Historic Places Listings

The Town of Hamilton has two significant historic districts. The Hamilton Village Historic District was listed on the National Register in September 1984. Located at the historic core of the village and roughly comprised of Kendrick Avenue and Broad, Payne, Hamilton, Madison, Pleasant, and Lebanon Streets, the district contains approximately 150 properties, including early nineteenth-century residences of village founders, a turn-of-the-century commercial district of brick buildings, several nineteenth-century churches, and the village park. Notable buildings include the Greek Revival Baptist Church (1843), the Gothic Revival St. Thomas Church (1846), the Adon Smith House (individually listed), and the Dutch Colonial Colgate Inn (1925).

Several historic properties in the Village are listed on the National Register. These include:

- Old Biology Hall. Listed in September 1973, this building on the Colgate University campus is a Richardsonian Romanesque building built in 1884 with a 1906 addition.
- Adon Smith House. Located at 3 Broad Street in the Hamilton Village Historic District, this Italianate brick residence constructed in 1850 was designated in May 1974.
- U.S. Post Office. Hamilton's Colonial Revival brick post office, located at 32 Broad Street, was designated in May 1989. The building was constructed 1936-37 and contains an interior sculptural relief (1938) by Humbert Albrisizio.

The Village of Earlville, which is split between the Towns of Hamilton and Sherburne, also has a historic district. Designated in October 1982, the Earlville Historic District reflects a full range of nineteenth and twentieth century architecture. The district contains approximately 165 properties, mostly commercial and residential buildings constructed between 1880 and 1920 and located along Fayette, North, South, East, and West Main Streets. Among the more notable buildings is the Earlville Opera House, a three-story Queen Anne brick commercial building constructed in 1890. The Opera House, located at 12-20 East Main Street, was listed on the National Register in January 1973.

The Chenango Canal

The Chenango Canal is a unique historic resource in the Town of Hamilton. In 1997, Colgate University students compiled a report on the Chenango Canal for the Town of Hamilton's Long Range Planning Committee. The report included a survey of historical literature about the canal, a field assessment of the current physical condition of the portion of the canal which curves on

either side of the Town's border, and possible avenues for restoring the canal for recreational use. (See appendix for historic information on the canal. A copy of the full-length report, *Potential Development of the Nine Mile Swamp and the Chenango Canal*, is available for review in the Town of Hamilton offices.)

The Colgate University student team assessed the canal from Woodman Pond, north of the Village of Hamilton in the Town of Madison, to the Village of Earlville in the south. Roughly half of the canal is still intact, with varying degrees of trail development. According to the report, the best section is north of the Village, where the canal has been restored for fishing and sightseeing by the Chenango Canal Association (see Recreational Resources section) and was cited as "an excellent model for future canal development by the Town of Hamilton." The portion of the canal running through the Village of Hamilton has been filled in and taken over by residential construction, except for a 100-foot section directly behind the Community Memorial Hospital. A portion just south of the Village, looping into the Town of Lebanon, is intact, if overgrown, as is a section north of Earlville to the junction of Craine Lake Road and Route 12B. Sections between these two and in the Village of Earlville have been eradicated by other uses.

Several issues affect the feasibility of developing trails along the canal system in Hamilton: for example, several portions of the canal have been filled in and are no longer visible, while others are very overgrown, and much of the canal runs through private lands. On the other hand, many sections of the Chenango Canal and trail are still intact. It may be possible to restore the intact sections and create a "ghost trail" along the filled-in sections of the original canal, utilizing historic markers, plaques, and maps.

Agricultural Lands and Structures

As noted in the Agriculture section of this plan, most of the land outside the Villages of Hamilton and Earlville is agricultural. In 1900, over 90% of the land was farmed. There are many historic farmhouses and barns in the Town, dating back to the 1800s. *Country Roads Revisited*, a publication produced by the Madison County Historical Society, lists several structures as historically significant for representing a particular type of building and time period. More work needs to be done to identify agricultural structures worth preserving in the Town.

Native American Sites

Sites frequented by Native Americans, both in prehistoric times and in recent centuries, are found throughout the Town. The majority of such sites, often linked to wetlands, waterways, lakes, or ponds, were probably hunting camps. A systematic investigation of potential sites throughout the Town has not been conducted, and it is likely that many undiscovered sites exist. Most known sites are not made public because of the danger of vandalism and looting. Researchers from the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Colgate University and local individuals, many affiliated with the Chenango Chapter of the New York State Archaeological Association, continue to explore this unique aspect of the local past.

Resident Perspectives

The protection and enhancement of the Town's natural, agricultural, and historic resources has strong support among Town residents. Residents were asked to rate on scale of 1-5 how important it is to protect or enhance a variety of features. On average, all of the items listed, which included historic buildings, farmlands, and scenic areas, rated between 1 and 2, with 1 being "very important" and 5 as "not at all important." Related comments include a strong desire to improve the Town's physical appearance, to preserve its rural character, and to discourage development which sacrifices that character (e.g., subdivisions, expansion of strip malls, Wal-Mart, etc.).

Approximately half of all survey respondents ranked the restoration of the Chenango Canal for use as a mixed use trail and recreational site as 1 or 2, utilizing the above definitions; relative to 14 emerging issues, preserving the canal ranked #7. Support for trail development generally applied across the board, by place and residency, although newer residents appeared more likely to favor trail development. Community leaders also expressed strong support for trail development. Additionally, the Village of Hamilton's 1992 Master Plan recommends developing three miles of trail within the Village which connect between the rail and canal at the northern boundary, south of the airport, and the Village Recreation Committee has begun work on implementing this recommendation.

Issues, Opportunities, and Constraints

Historic preservation is often used as a tool for enhancing a community's visible assets, promoting tourism, boosting the local economy, and maintaining older houses and buildings. Preservation alone will not ensure community vitality. But allowing important structures to deteriorate, or striking landscapes and environmentally sensitive areas to become cluttered by insensitive siting of development, can seriously erode the unique physical attributes which make residents feel connected and proud of their community. Over time, failure to preserve its physical assets can negatively impact a community's social and economic fabric.

The Town of Hamilton possesses a strikingly rural landscape anchored by many old homes, barns, and churches. Within the township, the Villages of Hamilton and Earlville possess historic districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Buildings listed on the National Register are eligible for a 20% tax credit for rehabilitation work; buildings that are more than 50 years old, but not eligible for listing on the National Register, are eligible for a 10% tax credit for rehabilitation. In addition, the Village of Hamilton has in place a Design Review Board which works to retain and promote the Village's historic attributes in both new and rehab building construction.

Outside the Villages of Hamilton and Earlville, however, the Town does not possess any formal mechanism to promote the identification and preservation of historic and archaeological resources. The Town's cultural heritage includes historic places such as early homes and churches, traces of the Chenango Canal, examples of regional architecture (e.g., cobblestone buildings) and industry (e.g., mills, hop barns) and sites or structures associated with the anti-slavery and temperance movements. In addition, significant archaeological sites in the Town reveal evidence of prehistoric as well as historic-era Native American cultures. Almost without exception, these assets are fragile and non-renewable.

The Town will need to consider whether its existing land use regulations adequately address the issue of historic preservation and, if not, what sort of mechanisms should be put into place. An inventory and set of land use regulations pertaining to archaeological sites and historic places could help ensure that future development does not visibly detract from the Town's historic character, particularly in its rural hamlets and scenic landscapes. Guidelines which address siting and design compatibility of new development projects may be considered by the Town in the future.

I. RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

Outdoor Recreation

Abundant open space, forests, rivers, and ponds offer many types of outdoor recreation to residents of the Town of Hamilton. Camping and picnic facilities on the Sangerfield River are available to the public at the Canaan Campground, Green Road, Hubbardsville. Other access to the Sangerfield River/Nine Mile Swamp area is available by arrangement with private landowners. Trails located behind Colgate University, in the Brookfield State Forest in the southeast corner of the Town, and along portions of the Chenango Canal towpath provide opportunities for hiking, jogging, and cross-country skiing. Trails for mountain biking are available in the reforestation area of the Brookfield State Forest. Tour biking and jogging also occur on local roads.

Outdoor recreational pursuits within the Town include hunting, trapping, and fishing. Hunting and trapping occur primarily on private lands. Squirrels, turkeys, ducks, ruffed grouse, and deer are typical game sought by hunters; turkeys are particularly abundant due to the increase in forest land in the County and the Town. Payne Creek, the Chenango River, and the Sangerfield River are cold water fisheries which provide brown and rainbow trout through annual stocking programs.

Snowmobiling is popular with many local and area residents. Farmland in the Town provides ideal locations for snowmobiling, and a local organization, the Waterville Area Snowmobile Trail Association (WASTA), promotes and coordinates the development of snowmobile trails.

Chenango Canal and Railroad Bed

An undeveloped asset in the Town of Hamilton is the abandoned Chenango Canal and the adjacent towpath. The old canal runs north from Binghamton to Utica where it hooks into the Erie Canal. The portion in the Town of Hamilton extends along the west side of Route 12B from the Village of Earlville to the Hamilton Municipal Airport. Several portions, particularly within the Village of Hamilton, have been eradicated, while others remain intact (see Historic Resources section).

The Chenango Canal Association, with the support of the Madison County Department of Tourism, began to revitalize the canal in the Town of Madison in 1993. This section is an example of what additional restoration and trail development could look like. Additional restoration, however, is currently impeded by a requirement by the New York State Thruway Authority, which owns the canal, that the organization purchase liability insurance.

The Village of Hamilton Recreation Commission is currently examining the feasibility of developing an abandoned railroad bed as a multi-use trail. The trail would extend from the Village to Woodman Pond, one of the sources for the Village's municipal water system. The Commission is also considering developing paved sections of the trail for rollerblading.

Athletics

Residents of the Town of Hamilton enjoy an unusual number of opportunities to observe or actively participate in team sports. Volunteers, the Village of Hamilton Recreation Committee, Colgate

University, and the local school districts provide resources and facilities for organized athletics. Among the key assets is an extensive youth recreation league, including a summer program coordinated between the Village Recreation Committee and the University. Youth soccer, hockey, basketball, football, and little league baseball are quite popular. The University is currently working with the committee to organize a youth bowling program. Hamilton Central School and the Sherburne-Earlville Central School provide facilities for various youth recreation activities as well. The recently opened Earlville Community Center provides several recreational outlets, including basketball several nights a week.

A welcome benefit of residing in a college town is access to excellent facilities and events. Colgate University, with its extensive and highly competitive athletics program, provides ongoing opportunities for Town residents to attending sporting events. At the same time, the University provides the use of its athletics facilities for various organized sports programs (e.g., the summer youth recreation and basketball programs, swim club, hockey club). Town residents who reside within the Hamilton School District enjoy access to Colgate's tennis courts, swimming pool, and fitness center for fees well below what comparable private facilities would cost to users in other areas. In addition, many residents take advantage of Seven Oaks Golf Course, a facility owned and operated by the University which is open to the public.

Parks and Playgrounds

The Town of Hamilton possesses three public areas suitable for outdoor gatherings, concerts, passive recreation, and the farmer's market: The Village of Hamilton Green, the Eaton Street Park, and the corner park in Earlville. Additionally, some outdoor concerts and festivities (e.g., the Fourth of July fireworks) are held on the grounds of the Colgate University campus and are open to the public.

The main playground serving Town residents is located adjacent to the Hamilton Central School. Funding, design and labor were all donated by local people resulting in a much-loved playground for children. It is most appropriate for children over the age of 3 and is only accessible outside school hours. Aside from private day care facilities, no "tot lot" exists within the Town.

In its 1992 Master Plan, the Village of Hamilton expressed its commitment to meeting the recreational needs of all age groups and income levels. This was to be accomplished through the expansion of existing facilities and the provision of additional facilities as needed. Among the actions recommended in the Village plan were to secure neighborhood park sites in the northeast quadrant of the Village on West Hill above the Chenango Canal through the subdivision process as these areas develop; establish a capital reserve fund to acquire park land and conservation easements to tie public open spaces together; expand the Eaton Street Community Park; and incorporate recreation impact fees or land donation requirements as part of the subdivision approval process.

Resident Perspectives

Residents at the community meetings have shown a strong interest in the identification and promotion of recreational opportunities, including outdoor swimming, and in the development of

of multi-use trails linking together hamlets and towns. In addition, several survey respondents noted that the absence of a public "tot lot" is a significant gap in the Town's recreational resources.

Issues, Opportunities, and Constraints

The main constraint to improving the Town's recreational resources is a lack of comprehensive information about the Town's recreational facilities and activities and related issues of access, use, and demand. A number of residents at the community meetings said that it was difficult to find out what activities and facilities are available, and indicated that an inventory or listing would be helpful.

Hamilton residents have access to a unique array of recreational resources through school and municipal facilities, Colgate University, and scenic and historical sites within the Town. Creatively promoting these assets could help bolster the local economy by attracting visitors, as well as enhancing the quality of life for local residents.

Among several specific issues raised during the planning process is a concern that demand exceeds available access to facilities for organized sports, particularly among youth sports leagues. This may be due to a recent increase in school-age population. The Town will work with the Village of Hamilton Recreation Committee and the Village of Earlville in developing additional parks, tot-lots, and playing fields.

The Town has no public outdoor swimming area. It possesses some quality fishing areas along the Chenango and Sangerfield Rivers and other water bodies, but public access to many of these sites is limited. In addition, with the exception of a small corner of the Brookfield State Forest that falls within Town boundaries, the township has no public land for hunting. As a result, people must get permission from landowners to fish and hunt. Since fishing, hunting, and other outdoor recreational pursuits are among the activities the Town could promote to attract tourism and increase the flow of visitor expenditures within the local economy, the Town may need to explore ways to increase access to these areas.

Some community leaders have expressed the need to develop a more extensive, mixed-use trail system within the Town. Such a trail would address safety concerns relating to resident and college students' use of busy arterials for biking and running. As previously noted, the Village of Hamilton has begun work on converting the old railroad bed to a mixed-use trail. Colgate University possesses an extensive trail network behind the campus, as well as walking paths throughout the campus. Sections of the old towpath along the Chenango Canal are accessible. A small portion of the Brookfield State Forest, with its extensive trails, exists within the Town borders. The Town will determine the feasibility of linking these discrete trail systems into a larger, more contiguous trail network. Exploration of linkages to nearby communities will also be explored.

Access to Colgate University's private athletic facilities by Town residents for reasonable fees, in conjunction with the University's periodic review of use and demand, is a valuable asset to the Town. Currently, however, access to indoor swimming is restricted to residents within the Hamilton school district, and is not provided to residents within the Sherburne-Earlville district. Opening access to all Town residents, regardless of location within a school district, should be explored. The Town will gather specific numbers on how this policy change might impact demand for and

usage of Colgate facilities. At the same time, some residents have expressed concern on the over-reliance on Colgate for athletic facilities. Exploration of how non-Colgate facilities could be better utilized or expanded to meet particular needs (e.g., access/hours for particular youth leagues) is recommended.

J. INFRASTRUCTURE

Transportation

The Town of Hamilton has the advantage of two north-south state highways running through the community. Route 12 connects Utica to the north with Norwich and Binghamton to the south. Route 12B connects with Route 12 just north of Sherburne, and serves to transport vehicles from the Syracuse area to the Southern Tier. The number of vehicles on these highways, particularly on Route 12B, has been increasing, although the traffic is at acceptable levels according to traditional standards for two-lane rural highways.

Route 12 runs down the Sangerfield River valley along Nine Mile Swamp. Route 12B runs along the Town's western border down the Chenango River valley between the Villages of Hamilton and Earlville. To the north, both 12 and 12B join Route 20, the second major east-west highway in the state. While the Town is accessible in the state's transportation network, the distance from the major highways has helped preserve its rural atmosphere and reduced development pressures.

The transportation network in the Town adequately serves the needs of its residents. According to the 1990 Census, 49.2% of all employed residents work within the Town of Hamilton. This cuts down on the amount of time one would spend commuting to and from work, which means less time and fewer cars clogging the roads. Also, unlike sprawling metropolitan areas, development and employment are largely concentrated in the village centers. Under these conditions, and with a relatively small population base, cars are on Town streets for shorter periods of time.

Studies indicate that the majority of all vehicle trips in the United States are household-related. Household-related trips include dropping children at school or the practice field, shopping, and other errands. Again, due to the concentration of development, the destination of these trips is normally the villages, where most of the businesses and the schools are found. Traffic congestion and delays are known to occur inside the Village of Hamilton. Were development dispersed throughout the Town, however, this kind of congestion would occur in other areas as well. From a traffic standpoint, concentration of development around the traditional centers is preferred over a sprawl development pattern.

Survey respondents in the Town have expressed concern about increased traffic, road conditions, and noise. With the exception of a perceived increase in truck traffic generated by mining operations in Poolville, the increase in traffic on Routes 12 and 12B is not the result of increased development in the Town of Hamilton, however, but rather of an increasing number of vehicles travelling to and from Syracuse, Utica, Binghamton, and Norwich. Clearly the commercial truck traffic contributes to poor road conditions and noise. Unfortunately for Town residents, there are no practical options for limiting traffic along state highways, which provide regional access to major cities and villages. There has been discussion about re-routing truck traffic away from the center of the Village of Hamilton, but such efforts are likely to be problematic due to the dense residential uses in the Village.

Nationally, the growth in vehicle miles of travel and automobile ownership have outpaced population growth over the last twenty years. Although the next twenty years cannot be predicted

with certainty, the only reversal of this trend occurred during the energy crisis of the 1970s. In addition, the types of low density, dispersed residential development found in the Town of Hamilton generate more vehicle trips than higher-density concentrated land use patterns. Therefore, barring a mass exodus from the region, the Town of Hamilton is likely to experience traffic increases in the future. Only the rate of residential and commercial growth in the region will determine the degree to which this occurs.

The Town is responsible for maintaining all local roads. Road maintenance tends to be costly due to the large distances that must be covered; in the last few years, transportation has accounted for more than 60% of total Town budget appropriations. The highway superintendent prepares a plan each spring for the roads that will be resurfaced. The Town has developed a set of specifications for road construction, and hopes to eventually resurface all roads to meet these requirements. The Department of Public Works currently recycles and reuses road construction materials. The department estimates that these materials save between \$20,000 and \$25,000 per mile of road.

Outside of the Villages of Hamilton and Earlville, there are no publicly maintained sidewalks within the township. Although the Town Planning Board may require developers to provide sidewalks, the board has not exercised this option.

Water and Sewer

With the exception of the Village of Hamilton, which provides public water and sewer, and Earlville, which provides public water only, the Town of Hamilton does not currently have public water or sewer service. Some homes in the Town are serviced by the Village of Hamilton, but these are isolated, mostly located along Spring Street. All residents and businesses outside of the village service areas use wells, septic systems, or other means for water and waste disposal. According to the 1990 Census, only 15%, or 106, of Town of Hamilton housing units outside of the villages obtain their water from public or private systems. Only 19, or 2.7%, of these units have public sewer service.

The Town currently requires that landowners hire an engineer to design and test new septic systems. New homeowners must test their well water and submit the findings to the Code Enforcement Officer. Under the Town's subdivision regulations, the Planning Board may require a sewer or water system for particular subdivisions. The subdivider is responsible for the necessary costs of such a system. To date, no developers have applied for subdivision.

The soils most favorable to septic tank absorption in the Town of Hamilton are Palmyra and Howard. The large amounts of Howard soils in the northeast, central, and southwest areas of the Town make these areas desirable for development. However, the potential for groundwater contamination exists even in Palmyra and Howard soils, due to excessive permeability or depth to fractured bedrock.

Barring construction of a public sewer system, limitations of soil and terrain in the township are likely to continue to serve as natural deterrents to the development of medium- or high-density neighborhoods. The table below lists the most common soils in the Town of Hamilton, the degree of limitation for septic tank absorption, the depth to bedrock, depth to high water table, and the

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

COMMUNITY PROFILE

location of these soils. Over fifty percent of the Town's acreage is covered with soils classified as "severely" limited for septic tank absorption fields. Soils with low depth to bedrock often do not provide enough space for adequate absorption. High clay content in the soil can prevent proper percolation. Fissures in the bedrock can cause waste to flow directly into the groundwater.

The steep slopes in the northwest and southeast can result in inadequate filtration of waste and incomplete absorption. Steep slopes and their effects on septic system absorption have historically been a significant consideration in the Town of Hamilton. Septic tanks and leach fields can pollute both underground and surface water if they are placed on a steep slope. For this reason, development in such areas will be discouraged.

Town of Hamilton Soils and Limitations

Soil Series	Septic Tank Absorption	Depth to bedrock (in.)	Depth to high water table (ft.)	Locations in the Town
Bath	Severe	>60	2.0 - 4.0	North-central, Poolville, South Hamilton
Howard*	Slight	>96	>6.0	Sangerfield River valley
Lordstown	Severe	20-40	>6.0	Loomis Corners, Albrow Road
Mardin	Severe	>60	1.5 - 2.0	Shores Corners, Hubbardsville, west of Poolville, Earlville Reservoir
Palmyra*	Slight-Severe	>96	>6.0	Earlville
Stockbridge	Severe	>60	3.0 - 6.0	Brooks Corners, west of Poolville, Excell Corners

* Septic tank absorption limitations will increase with increased slope. Excessive permeability or depth to fractured bedrock may permit groundwater pollution.

Limitations for the provision of potable water largely revolve around the quality of the groundwater and the depth to the water table. The depth to the water table largely determines the depth to which one must drill to establish an on-site well. High depth to water table is not a common problem for soils in the Town.

Several factors influence the quality of groundwater in the watershed. As stormwater flows over land it can become contaminated from a variety of land uses. The contamination effects the groundwater when the stormwater is absorbed into the soil or runs off into rivers and streams. Common sources of groundwater contamination include landfills, malfunctioning septic systems, household or industrial dumping of waste, improper use of fertilizers and pesticides, manure, and runoff from roads and urban areas. The Town of Hamilton will work with landowners to minimize contamination from these sources.

Madison County does not currently have a program for inspection of conventional on-site wells or conventional residential septic systems. County health officials inspect wells for businesses and public water systems. They inspect alternative septic systems such as raised beds and sand filters. The County would like to see the individual municipalities adopt a uniform permit oversight process for the construction of residential wells. At this time, the code enforcement officer reviews the

findings of the engineer and the results of on-site tests.

The Madison County Health Department is developing a plan for a County-wide inspection process of residential septic systems which will improve groundwater protection, protect individual municipalities from the potential liability costs of failed or failing systems, and provide a cost effective alternative for homeowners and builders.

Light utilization of the available ground and surface water has resulted in an ample water supply for the Town of Hamilton. Any concerns related to the potable water supply will likely arise out of the quality of the groundwater. Only a significant degradation of the water quality would necessitate the provision of public water service.

The accepted density standard for a public water system is approximately 1,000 persons per square mile, an average lot size of 1.5 acres, or 0.6 dwellings per acre; for a public sewer system, the accepted density standard is normally 2,500 to 3,000 persons per square mile, an average lot size of 0.5 acres, or two dwellings per acre. With approximately 150 persons per square mile and average lot sizes of 1 acre or more in the Town of Hamilton, the use of wells and septic systems in most areas of the township is cost-effective and environmentally safe, provided that soils and topography are adequate, and there is no contamination of the water supply. However, if the Town amends its zoning to permit smaller lot sizes and encourage higher density development near the hamlets and villages, the need for public water and sewer may need to be considered.

Public water and sewer infrastructure offers a number of benefits: it saves landowners time and money during construction, provides a more controlled delivery of water and sewer service that is regularly monitored, and often increases the value of land with access to it. The development of infrastructure in population centers, such as villages and hamlets, can also protect open space in the countryside by concentrating development in limited areas. On the negative side, water and sewer systems can be expensive to build, although assistance is available from the federal government.

Energy and Communications

Expanded energy options and communications capability are not generally seen as urgent needs by Town residents. However, the need to expand economic opportunities was a consistent theme in the Town survey. Meeting this need will require action in the areas of energy and communications infrastructure.

Energy

Extensive deregulation of utilities is currently underway in New York State. The process is expected to bring about significant regional changes in rate structures and in the way energy is marketed and delivered. Changes that enhance competition may benefit energy users, especially in rural parts of the Town.

Electric power is currently the only energy option available in the township. Within the Village of Hamilton, the Municipal Utilities Commission provides electric power -- predominantly hydroelectric

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

COMMUNITY PROFILE

-- at very favorable rates. Low cost power is a significant economic advantage in the Village. A monthly residential bill for 500 kilowatt-hours from the MUD would be \$16.80. However, when usage increases sharply (e.g., at peak hours, in cold weather), additional power is brought in from outside the municipal system. Much of this additional power comes from nuclear or fossil fuels; rates for it are higher, and the added cost appears on customers' bills as a separate item. Nevertheless, overall cost remains remarkably low. The Village does not accept new customers outside its limits, since to do so would mean using more high-cost power and raising bills.

Outside the Village of Hamilton, New York State Electric & Gas (NYSEG) is the Town's supplier of electric power. NYSEG's rates are significantly higher than Village rates. A monthly residential bill for 500 kilowatt-hours is \$72.36 from NYSEG, according to Public Service Commission figures. With deregulation and rate restructuring, other electric power providers may compete for this market in the future.

Proposals currently under discussion would extend a natural gas pipeline into the area. Under one proposal, the line would enter at the Village of Hamilton and cross the township from north to south. The Village of Hamilton is evaluating this option, as are other potential large users. Natural gas could be marketed directly in the Village by the regional supplier or through the MUC. The Town of Hamilton is likewise considering whether adding this new energy source would enhance its economic position. Natural gas would not only reduce local heating costs, it would also provide the Town with an energy source perceived as environmentally friendly.

Communications

Bell Atlantic and Citizens Communications are the local telephone service providers in the township. Cellular service is also available through Frontier and Cellular One.

Increasingly, high-speed data transmission capability is a practical necessity for businesses and institutions that use computers to connect to the Internet. Small businesses might locate in rural settings like Hamilton Township if connection for this type of service were in place, because with it they can enjoy the advantages of small town or country life and still compete with their urban counterparts. Potential customers include local merchants, mail-order marketers, take-out food services, telecommuters, tax preparers, software businesses, small publishers -- in short, a wide range of small enterprises that could benefit the local economy. Given the possible economic impact in terms of business opportunities and increased tax base, a committee involving local government representatives, entrepreneurs, potential users and other interested parties should jointly explore ways to make this service available.

Already local schools, libraries, businesses and municipal offices are seeking access to rapid data transmission technology. Internet access is available within the Town through providers such as America Online and Dreamscape, but a significantly faster flow of information is required for many business and professional applications. Rapid transmission connections can be achieved in several ways (see appendix). Generally speaking, these are prohibitively costly for small users in the Town or simply not available.

The investment for preparing to offer high-speed connections is high, and competition is unpredictable. This technology could greatly benefit the area if small businesses and individuals could get access to it at a reasonable price, either by means of a cooperatively leased line or by encouraging local businesses to offer connections.

Telecommunications Towers

The Town of Hamilton currently has one wireless communications tower on Mason Road. While the increasing popularity of cellular telephones has compelled telecommunications companies to build towers to expand coverage and reception, the proliferation of these towers has become a source of concern for many communities, particularly those in close proximity to major highways and interstates.

Under the Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996, local and state governments may regulate the "placement, location, and modification of wireless service facilities." Municipalities may not, however, ban the towers, effectively prohibiting the availability of service, or discriminate among providers. Moreover, federal and state courts have determined that cellular telephone companies are public utilities and must be granted the same privileges as a power company within the context of a zoning ordinance.

Since the Telecommunications Act was passed, many communities have enacted legislation to regulate the location of telecommunications towers (also known as "microwave towers"). In some cases, communities have adopted limited moratoriums on tower construction to give them time to revise their zoning ordinances. Municipal laws typically restrict telecommunications towers from certain zones and impose height, setback, and lot size requirements in the zones where the towers are allowed. Visual impact assessment studies are sometimes required as well. Communities are also urging companies to co-locate their wireless service facilities in conjunction with existing towers or other tall structures such as church steeples and water towers. Essentially, new towers are allowed only if all efforts to co-locate have been exhausted by the applicant.

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation must review the siting and visual impact of any telecommunications tower located near a designated or eligible historic site or state park and recreation area. As discussed in section H, there are several historic properties in the Villages of Hamilton and Earlville. Telecommunications companies are therefore likely to prefer constructing towers in outlying areas of the Town.

The Town of Hamilton has not been flooded by applications for telecommunications towers. However, as communications companies attract additional customers and offer such services as cellular voice mail, call waiting, conference calling, faxing, and cellular personal computer access, additional towers will be needed. Given the Town's proximity to the New York State Thruway, State Route 20, and several metropolitan areas and the potential demand for telecommunications services within the Town, the towers could become an issue for the Town in the near future. A proactive approach incorporating the development of telecommunications tower regulations would assure that the Town can accommodate the demand while maintaining the visual quality of the landscape.

Resident Perspectives

Asked what areas of the Town's infrastructure need improvement, the majority of residents responding to the Town of Hamilton Community Survey selected roads (56.1%) and sidewalks (53.7%). There was some variation in the responses to this question by place of residency, however. Sidewalks are the biggest priority in the Village of Hamilton; two out of three Village residents responding to the survey indicated that sidewalks are in need of improvement. It is suggested that safety as well as recreational opportunities could be enhanced by more sidewalks, wider shoulders for roads, or paths in some parts of the Town. In Earlville, more than half of residents feel that roads, sidewalks, and the drinking water treatment system need work; although the Village installed two new wells in 1988, new water lines are needed to replace old iron pipes. In the hamlets of Hubbardsville, Poolville, and South Hamilton, roads are by far the greatest area of need, according to respondents.

Issues, Opportunities, and Constraints

Clearly, the physical limitations of the soils and the topography of the land in the Town limit the choices that landowners have with regard to residential density, the location of wells and waste disposal systems, and areas for potential development. The degree to which the Town limits development in areas with severe physical limitations will likely determine the extent to which groundwater quality is preserved. Few homeowners in the Town have reported problems with water quality. However, groundwater contamination problems can be associated with poorly maintained septic systems, excessive applications of pesticides and fertilizers, and development in environmentally sensitive areas. The Town will need to monitor water quality and take steps to minimize the potential for groundwater pollution throughout the community.

The Village of Earlville has had repeated difficulties with its drinking water and distribution system over the past decade. Due to the age of the distribution system, replacement of aging water lines will be necessary in the future. The Village has also had problems with the quality of its water supply. The community's primary well is located in the Town of Hamilton at the edge of an active sand and gravel operation; other nearby land uses include open space, forested land, single family residences, agricultural cropland, an automotive service business, and a garbage disposal business. Of particular concern are petroleum bulk storage tanks and the use of pesticides in proximity to the well. Land use policies that address the potential for nonpoint pollution of the watershed will help the Town and the Village avoid such problems in the future.

At this time, water supplies and sewage disposal systems in most areas of the township are safe and effective, and population densities do not meet the standards required for the development of public water and sewer systems. Such systems may be needed, however, to support future residential development adjacent to existing population centers rather than on large lots throughout the countryside. A water and sewer system limited to the hamlet areas would allow higher density development, leaving outlying sections of the township as open space. To attract new development while maintaining the rural character of the community, the possibility of constructing municipal infrastructure will be considered by the Town.

The Town will also consider alternatives for energy and communications infrastructure. Reduced energy costs, the availability of natural gas, and access to new, sophisticated telecommunications technology would allow the Town of Hamilton to compete more favorably in the economic development arena, which has traditionally focused on urban and suburban areas. High-speed data transmission technology, for example, could result in the creation of new, locally-based economic opportunities by linking the community into the global marketplace.

The Town recognizes, however, that the demand for telecommunications services also has the potential to impact community character. With the growing use of cellular telephones and the advent of High Definition TV (HDTV), telecommunications towers are likely to proliferate in the coming years, and the Town will probably experience an increase in applications for these towers. The Town should develop guidelines regarding the placement of such towers to mitigate their impact on the Town's rural landscape.

K. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION

Government Structure

Like other Towns in New York State, the Town of Hamilton is governed by a Town Supervisor and a four-member Town Board. The Town provides many of the municipal services typical of rural towns in central New York. These include general government support services such as tax assessment and collection, administrative services of the Town Clerk, issuing of hunting, dog, and marriage licenses, etc.; fire protection, primarily through special districts; and a highway department responsible for snow removal, road improvements and maintenance. There are also two small special districts in Poolville and Hubbardsville to provide street lighting.

There are two incorporated villages within the Town of Hamilton: the Village of Hamilton and the Village of Earlville. The Village of Hamilton is governed by a four-member Board of Trustees headed by a mayor. The Board appoints the village administrator and oversees an annual budget, \$4.2 million in 1998. Commissions and committees named by the Board deal with zoning, design review, planning and utilities. Principal responsibilities specified in the Village Code include assessments and taxation; regulation of commerce; public safety and maintenance of peace and order; administration of municipal electric, water, and sewage systems; streets and sidewalks; health and sanitation; refuse disposal; and land use regulation.

The Village of Earlville is also governed by a Village Board headed by a mayor. Among the responsibilities of the Board is operating and maintaining the community water supply system. The Village of Earlville is divided between the Town of Hamilton in Madison County and the Town of Sherburne in Chenango County. This division poses some administrative difficulties, according to the Earlville mayor.

Town Planning and Zoning Functions

Among the most important powers and duties granted by the State of New York to town and other municipal governments is the authority and responsibility to undertake comprehensive planning and to regulate land use for the purpose of protecting the public health, safety, and general welfare of their citizens. New York State law authorizes Town (and Village) Boards to enact and enforce land use regulations to regulate any aspect of land use and community resource protection. A local land use ordinance may include zoning, subdivision, special permit or site plan regulations or any other regulations which prescribe the appropriate use of property or the scale, location, and intensity of development.

The Town of Hamilton's zoning ordinance, which applies only to those areas of the Town outside of the Villages of Hamilton and Earlville, was enacted in June 1975 and amended in 1980, 1987, 1988, and 1989; subdivision regulations were adopted by the Town in October 1988. Within the township, zoning regulations are enforced by the code enforcement officer. As allowed under state law, the Village of Hamilton has its own zoning laws and enforcement mechanisms. The Village of Earlville does not have any zoning or a formal mechanism for enforcement.

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

COMMUNITY PROFILE

To assist in the administration and enforcement of land use regulations, state law authorizes Town Boards to create and appoint a zoning board of appeals and a planning board. Provisions of this law address such issues as the appointment of members, ineligibility, terms of office, chairperson duties, appropriation of expenses, board of appeals procedure and permitted actions, and the powers of the planning board. Under the Town of Hamilton Zoning Law, the Board of Appeals is responsible for deciding questions involving interpretation of any provision of the local law, upon appeals from a decision, and granting area and use variances upon application, if justified. The Town of Hamilton Zoning Board of Appeals, which meets as needed, consists of five members. The Town Planning Board, which is authorized by the local zoning law to issue special permits, conduct subdivision reviews, and conduct site plan reviews, meets monthly and has seven members, as allowed by New York State law.

Financial Information

The Town of Hamilton's total tax assessment value is \$292,048,232. This figure includes the Villages of Earlville and Hamilton. The taxable value, which excludes tax exempt properties, is \$141,932,024. Thus, 51.4% of property in the Town -- including the villages -- is tax exempt. Tax exempt properties include the Colgate University campus, local schools, and churches.

Town Assessment Data, 1997

	Assessed Value	Taxable Value	Tax-Exempt (%)
Town of Hamilton, <i>excluding</i> the Villages	\$64,539,645	\$59,567,539	7.7%
Village of Earlville	\$14,927,354	\$10,951,030	26.6%
Village of Hamilton	\$212,581,233	\$71,413,455	66.4%
Town of Hamilton total, <i>including</i> Villages	\$292,048,232	\$141,932,024	51.4%

Source: Town Assessor's Office

Most of the tax exempt property, however, is in the Village of Hamilton. In the Town *outside* the Villages of Earlville and Hamilton, the assessed value is \$64,539,645 and 7.7% of property is tax exempt.

Fiscal Trends

The Town's budget is comprised of four primary funds and five special districts, each fund and district with its individual budget appropriation and revenues (see Table 10 in the appendix). The overall budget appears stable, increasing by 6.2% between 1995 and 1997, or an annual increase of approximately 3%. Highway Department functions represent the lion's share of the budget appropriations, accounting for more than 60% of total expenditures in each of the last three fiscal years. Other major expenditure categories include General Government Support (18.3% in 1997)

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

COMMUNITY PROFILE

and Public Safety (10.3% in 1997). Public safety expenditures are primarily derived from the three special fire districts in the Town: Earlville, Hamilton, and Hubbardsville. All other functional categories combined make up less than 11% of total budget expenditures.

Revenue trends have also been fairly constant and stable over the past three fiscal years. Property taxes provide for a little more than half of the Town's overall budget revenues. State Aid accounted for 10.7% of revenues in 1997, up slightly from previous years due to the distribution of \$20,000 in per capita state aid. Intergovernmental revenues accounted for 10.9% of the 1997 budget and nonproperty taxes 8.6%. Intergovernmental revenues are derived from road plowing services provided by the Town Highway Department to New York State and Madison County under a formal contract which is negotiated annually. Nonproperty tax revenues are the result of Payments In Lieu of Taxes (PILOTs) from the Colgate Inn. The Town has also used approximately \$100,000 from its unexpended fund balance in each of the past three fiscal years. The Town's total unexpended fund balance has increased from \$343,100 in 1995 to \$397,224 in 1997.

Each year, the Town of Hamilton receives some revenue from the County-wide sales tax. Madison County apportions 57.5% of all sales tax revenues collected outside the City of Oneida to the townships according to the relative value of assessed property in each town. Towns with high real property values receive a greater portion of the sales tax revenues. The revenues are used to directly reduce the County tax being assessed in each township.

In addition, any surplus of sales tax revenues that is received each year by Madison County above the amount annually budgeted is again proportionally distributed to each town in the next fiscal year's budget, but this time it is used to directly reduce the Town's own tax rate. For example, in 1997, the Town of Hamilton received \$164,595 to reduce its share of County taxes. The Town received an additional \$76,164 to reduce its own 1997 Town tax rate. This money was "surplus" 1996 sales tax revenue. Some villages, including the Village of Hamilton, have opted to receive their sales tax revenues directly as a funding source for their own budget. In 1997, the Village received \$198,420 directly from Madison County.

Public Safety

All calls for emergency assistance in Madison County are routed to a central 911 communications center in Wampsville, which coordinates police, fire, and ambulance service.

Law Enforcement

The Town of Hamilton is serviced by the New York State Police, the Madison County Sheriff's Department, and local police departments in the Villages of Hamilton and Earlville. In addition, Colgate University has its own security force which works with area law enforcement.

The State Police patrol state highways within the Town (Routes 12 and 12B). They assist local officers with special investigations upon request, and they handle calls from hamlets and rural areas from midnight to 7 am. State police response in the township is somewhat limited at night, as they have only one car for southern Madison County.

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Hamlets and rural areas are covered from 7 am to 1 am by the Madison County Sheriff's Department, which is headed by an elected Sheriff and an appointed Undersheriff. There are also 21 deputy sheriffs and 25 part-time officers employed by the department. In addition to traffic control, sheriffs handle a wide variety of duties including criminal, narcotics, and welfare investigations and domestic violence calls. They operate snowmobile patrols in the winter and navigation patrols on lakes during the summer. The Sheriff's Department has applied for three new positions in order to staff a night shift. If approved, the addition will take effect in 1998.

The Village of Hamilton has 4 full-time officers, including a Chief of Police who reports to the Village Board. The force handles most law enforcement activities and calls on state or County agencies for assistance in special situations. Currently the department employs 3 part-time officers, but this number varies. In general, the Village Police Department acts within Village limits, but under an informal arrangement, officers respond to calls from Spring Street if an officer is free and if deputy sheriffs or State Police are not available. A plan to formalize the Spring Street jurisdiction has been discussed but no action has yet been taken.

The Village of Earlville has two part-time officers, including the Police Chief, who reports to the Village Board. These two officers carry out night patrol in the Village. Daytime coverage is provided by the State Police and either the Madison County or Chenango County sheriffs. Earlville lies on the border between two counties; if assistance is needed, the location determines who is summoned. The division is often cited as problematic.

The Colgate University campus lies partly within the Village of Hamilton and partly within the Town. It has its own security force of 8 full-time and 10 part-time patrol officers. Campus Safety is the first to respond to campus emergency calls, which are referred to the County coordinator if necessary. Campus officers assist volunteer fire departments and medical emergency crews, and work with area police on vehicle and traffic enforcement and criminal investigations. Campus Safety covers the University campus as well as outlying Colgate-owned properties, including the downtown Barge Canal Coffee House and the University Boathouse on Lake Moraine. Campus safety officers are unarmed.

Fire Protection and Ambulance Service

Fire protection in the Town of Hamilton is provided by a network of volunteer fire departments which cooperate through regional mutual aid arrangements. The Town has four volunteer fire departments: Hubbardsville, Hamilton, Earlville, and Poolville. All four conduct fund drives and benefit activities to support their programs. Hubbardsville, Hamilton, and Earlville are designated fire districts, receiving part of their funding directly from local property taxes in the municipalities they serve.

Hamlets and rural areas in the township are served by the Hubbardsville and Poolville departments. Hubbardsville has 46 volunteer members, while Poolville has 15. Because there is no municipal water system with hydrants outside the Villages of Hamilton and Earlville, firefighters use special equipment to transport water to the scene of a fire in outlying areas of the Town. Other area companies answer mutual aid calls as needed. The Earlville Fire District, which has 38 members,

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

COMMUNITY PROFILE

serves the entire Village of Earlville and participates in mutual aid for Madison and Chenango Counties.

The Village of Hamilton contracts for fire protection with the Hamilton Fire Department and with the Eaton, Madison, and Lebanon Fire Departments. Hamilton has the largest fire department in the Town, with 72 members. The district is currently in the process of purchasing a new aerial platform apparatus whose maximum height equals that of a seven-story building. The \$560,000 cost will be paid for by contributions and a bond issue. Colgate University is a major contributor to this and other purchases of heavy equipment by the fire department.

Currently the Town's four fire departments total about 170 volunteer members; there are no paid firefighters. The number of volunteers varies seasonally, as some members are college students. It also includes many members who are retired from active status. Volunteers receive at least 40 hours of training followed by testing before they go on active duty, and it is common for volunteers to undertake 150 - 200 hours or more of additional training.

Local fire chiefs have been concerned about the dwindling pool of volunteers for fighting fires. Factors cited in the decline include the increasing number of local people who work outside the area, limiting the number of firefighters on hand to answer calls, and a lower commitment to community service than in the past. Some say it may be necessary to hire paid employees within the next decade, while others feel this would be too costly. Reorganization or consolidation of fire districts has been suggested as a possible approach.

The Southern Madison Volunteer Ambulance Corps (SOMAC) is a private not-for-profit organization with some 60 members, about 40 of them year-round. SOMAC is based in the Village of Hamilton and provides the township with ambulance service to local treatment centers. Helicopter service for transporting trauma cases to metropolitan treatment centers is available through a regional clearinghouse.

SOMAC's principal source of support is reimbursements from insurance, Medicare/Medicaid, and payments from private individuals. It receives some funds from service contracts with the Towns of Lebanon and Hamilton and the Village of Hamilton. The organization also counts on pledges and donations to help make ends meet.

Members take 110 hours of training to be certified as Emergency Medical Technicians. Continuing medical and technical education is required to maintain certification. The corps recently acquired defibrillators and carries out ongoing equipment upgrades.

SOMAC often works in conjunction with fire department rescue services. Ambulance calls are coordinated from the County communications center in Wampsville.

Educational Services

Public Schools

The Town of Hamilton is served by two school districts: The Hamilton Central School District, on West Kendrick Avenue in the Village of Hamilton, and the Sherburne-Earlville Central School District on School Street in the Town of Sherburne, Chenango County. Both schools report recent increases in enrollments.

The majority of students in the township are in the Hamilton Central School District, which covers roughly the northern two-thirds of the Town and its most populous areas. The district includes the hamlets of Hubbardsville and East Hamilton and the Village of Hamilton, along with the hamlet of Randallsville in the Town of Lebanon, rural areas in the Towns of Eaton and Madison, and a small corner of the Town of Brookfield.

HCS enrollment figures currently show a bulge at the secondary level. Total enrollment for grades K through 12 in 1996-97 was 846 students; this year, it is 835. Long range projections indicate that the bulge will level out over the next five years. Construction is underway to accommodate the increase.

HCS offers extracurricular athletic activities for students in grades 7 through 12. The Village Recreation Program is held at the school in the summer. The district has developed a long range technology plan for acquisition of hardware and software in support of the instructional program. To prepare for new graduation requirements proposed by the State Education Department, the district is currently developing programs emphasizing the acquisition of basic skills.

The remaining one-third of the Town of Hamilton lies in the Sherburne-Earlville Central School District. The part of the district that lies in Hamilton Township is largely rural, although it includes the hamlets of Poolville and South Hamilton and the Village of Earlville.

The 1996-97 S-ECS enrollment was 1,795 in grades K through 12. In 1997, the number of students increased to 1,875. The Earlville Elementary School, which is on the Hamilton side of the county line, closed recently. Students from this area are now bused to Sherburne. A referendum for a \$7.9 million building project in Sherburne is planned to accommodate increased numbers and to repair or replace obsolete facilities.

The closing of the Earlville School caused serious concern in the community. The Village of Earlville now owns the vacated school building. Volunteers have renovated it and turned into a community facility housing municipal offices, a senior citizen center, a small private school, and small businesses.

Private Schools

Private schools in the Town of Hamilton include the Chenango Nursery School, Montessori Children's House, and Christian Victory Academy.

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

COMMUNITY PROFILE

The Chenango Nursery School, located next to the HCS school property, is a not-for-profit parent cooperative nursery school and day care center for children aged 18 months through 12 years. It offers an after school program for students from kindergarten through fifth grade, and serves some 80 families.

Montessori Children's House, located on Utica Street, is a private nursery school. It currently has 18 students from age 3 through kindergarten.

Christian Victory Academy is housed in the former Earlville Elementary School building. It has 27 students from kindergarten through twelfth grade.

Higher Education

Within the borders of the Town is Colgate University, a liberal arts college with approximately 2,900 undergraduate students and over 250 faculty. Colgate is the largest employer in the township. Founded in 1817 as the Hamilton Literary and Theological Seminary, Colgate occupies a campus in the Village of Hamilton.

Resident Perspectives

Results of the Town of Hamilton Community Survey suggest that seeking changes in Town government is not a high priority for most residents. From a list of ten priorities to which the Town could commit additional resources, this issue ranked seventh. Survey comments and residents' statements in community meetings reflect satisfaction with Town government. According to one resident: "We have a very efficient town government and a very nice rural community...why not leave it alone?" Another feels the current Town government is in "good shape -- no indebtedness, an excellent highway department and good employees."

While there is overall satisfaction, one resident said that "Town government doesn't always seem to have the clout it needs to regulate or promote change." High taxes were cited as a problem. Specific suggestions included more enforcement of codes and zoning to improve the physical appearance of the community, along with a need to preserve open space and discourage strip mall, "big box," and industrial development. It was noted that the Town needs new computer systems to handle increasing office work loads and to publish reports of Town government activities.

Issues, Opportunities, and Constraints

There is general satisfaction with the way the Town government functions. The comprehensive planning process has provided residents and the members of the Town of Hamilton government with the opportunity to focus on identifying key priorities for the Town's future and to work together to implement tangible strategies and solutions.

Many of the issues facing Hamilton township -- including the increasing cost of municipal services and the need for economic development -- face all communities in this area. One way for the Town to address and solve these common issues is to work with neighboring communities to solve them. For example, the Town could explore the concept of sharing more services with the Villages of

Hamilton and Earlville and other nearby towns and villages to reduce costs and increase coverage. Specific services which might be suitable for formal intermunicipal cooperation include garbage collection, police protection, road construction and maintenance, snow removal, accounting and bookkeeping, and physical facilities. Fire protection is already shared through cooperative arrangements between fire districts. The possibility of reorganization or consolidation should be explored.

The Town should also coordinate with other local communities in developing strategies for economic development. Non-governmental entities such as businesses, hospitals, churches, and universities are often good sources of additional support and ideas and should be brought into such efforts as appropriate.

Although residents in general express satisfaction with current record-keeping and information distribution in the Town, a need for more extensive information technology will certainly arise in the not-too-distant future. It should be noted that a number of key procedures in use in the Town Office are dictated by the county and state, and while these may change, it is expected that they will continue to be specified to maintain uniformity. Town officers and staff should begin to assess their needs and prepare to take advantage of computer systems that will help handle growing work loads and permit faster public access to data and reports. The Town should also investigate possibilities for accessing the Geographic Information System (GIS) used by Colgate University and the Madison County Planning Department for computerized mapping. This system would provide helpful tools for Town planning and administration.

An important outcome of the comprehensive planning process will be the development of a community consensus regarding land use policies. This consensus will aid the Town Board and the Town Planning Board in a projected review and revision of zoning and subdivision codes. Application and enforcement of the codes could be improved by encouraging members of the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals to undertake individual study and training sessions on land use issues.

ACTION PLAN

What is the Town of Hamilton's Action Plan?

The Town of Hamilton's Action Plan is intended to provide municipal leaders and stakeholders with a collective vision of the kind of place residents would like Hamilton to be in the future, a broad set of goals for achieving that future vision, and a flexible menu of feasible actions prioritized by the community which will help facilitate the implementation of each goal. While various action items will and should change over time, as some efforts are attempted and abandoned or new issues arise, the vision and goals are intended to remain fairly stable and provide a basis for consensus and common direction to Town residents and leaders as they make short and long-term decisions about their community.

Vision Statement and Goals

In the coming decades, the Town of Hamilton will preserve and promote its assets: rural character, natural beauty, strong community, family farms, and locally owned businesses. It will work actively with other area communities to create and support sustainable economic opportunities which strengthen the vitality of the Town and the region.

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|---------|---|
| Goal 1: | To develop economic initiatives which provide good jobs, support the social fabric of the community, and preserve the environment. |
| Goal 2: | To actively support and promote sustainable agriculture as a vital component of the local and regional economy through cooperative initiatives between neighboring communities, Town and County governments, and area educational institutions. |
| Goal 3: | To strengthen the Town's villages as commercial, retail and entertainment centers. |
| Goal 4: | To identify and promote year-round recreational opportunities throughout the Town. |
| Goal 5: | To improve housing conditions throughout the Town. |
| Goal 6: | To identify and protect the Town's vital groundwater aquifers. |
| Goal 7: | To maintain the Town's position as an efficient provider of municipal services, and prepare for future technological, economic and population changes. |
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Community Input

The Action Plan was created with an unusually high degree of public input. Prior to a series of well-publicized community forums, the Long Range Planning Committee, in conjunction with River Street Planning & Development LLC, prepared an initial "menu" of over thirty (30) action-oriented ideas intended to address the needs and issues identified in the Community Profile. The Action Plan was distributed as part of the Comprehensive Plan in several locations throughout the Town, along with a chart of the Action Plan and an Executive Summary

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

ACTION PLAN

At a series of town meetings and small group meetings during the summer of 1998, community residents and community leaders identified which action items appeared to have the greatest support in an effort to tailor the final action plan around that consensus. Community residents refined existing action items, added new suggestions and lobbied for the elimination of others. The outcome of this process resulted in an Action Plan which identifies short-term, medium-term, and long-term projects. A chart summarizing the action items can be found in the appendix.

It is important to understand that the action items identified in the plan are not requirements. Rather, they are recommendations designed to provide focus and direction as the community moves ahead to reach its preferred future. It will be up to the community to decide on an ongoing basis which initiatives they wish to implement and how they wish to proceed. Although land use regulations must be in accordance with the principles of the Comprehensive Plan, there is no legally binding requirement that the Town implement each of the action items proposed in the plan. The Town Board should carefully examine proposed zoning changes to minimize the cost to residents and protect private property rights.

Project Implementation

Many communities become frustrated with planning efforts that do not lead to concrete results. Too often, a laundry list of recommendations is filed away, and communities lose the momentum generated in the planning phase, missing out on valuable funding opportunities to launch the initiatives on which they worked so hard to reach consensus. To avoid this dilemma, a number of strategies are proposed to implement the comprehensive plan.

Establishing a clear organizational framework for implementation of the Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan will be important. Some actions will be appropriate for implementation by the Town Planning Board; others will call for the formation of a committee with diverse representation. Most communities combine a number of different approaches, as outlined below.

Town Governing Bodies

Municipal leaders and Town governing bodies including the Town Board, Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals often take on a variety of implementation tasks, particularly those having to do with potential changes to land use regulations and formal amendments and review of the comprehensive plan.

Special Task Forces or Committees

Many communities choose to form a special task force, steering committee, public/private partnership or coordinating council comprised of broad representation (e.g., Town elected officials, elected officials from neighboring municipalities, local business and finance leaders, representatives of key local educational institutions, community residents and leaders, youth representatives) which serves to benchmark and monitor the process of plan implementation. Present and future action committees should report directly to the Town Board.

Not-For-Profit Organizations

An existing not-for-profit organization is often the appropriate vehicle for certain action items which fit in with an organization's mission, such as those related to economic development. As an alternative, a local development corporation may be formed to help plan, fundraise and implement initiatives in this area.

Action Teams

An Action Team is made up of interested and committed residents who want to volunteer their energy and time to make sure a good idea actually comes to fruition. Typically, Action Teams focus on non-regulatory tools and techniques to implement the recommendations of a comprehensive plan. Action Teams can work with various sources of technical assistance to provide research, project development, grant-writing and organizational capacity building to help implement a project successfully. Present and future Action Teams should report directly to the Town Board.

To capture the groundswell of interest in the Comprehensive Plan, the Town of Hamilton Long Range Planning Committee and River Street Planning & Development facilitated the creation of several Action Teams at the June 1998 Community Vision Forum in the areas of economic development, village revitalization, agriculture, and open space/recreation. These groups are working to further assess the feasibility of various actions and to select a handful of short and medium term projects for implementation. Priority actions selected for evaluation and implementation by the community Action Teams are listed in the appendix.

The Hamlets of Madison County Initiative, a service-based learning program with Colgate students, the Madison County IDA and the USDA, has offered to provide research and project development support to each of the Action Teams over the coming year. Additional technical assistance may be sought in the area of grant-writing and organizational capacity building to help fund and implement the selected projects.

Periodic Review

The Town of Hamilton should arrange for review and update of its Comprehensive Plan at least every 10 years. Recommendations regarding emerging issues can then be incorporated. However, a community may amend a plan at any time.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

Goal 1: To develop economic initiatives which provide good jobs, support the social fabric of the community, and preserve the environment.

Actions

- 1-1. Provide support for the retention and expansion of existing businesses within the Town and initiate a study to determine what kinds of new businesses would be likely to succeed.*

Retaining and expanding local enterprises is vital to building new jobs and is important for the long term economic health of the Town. It is also a cost-effective strategy which can help preserve the rural character of the community while enhancing the business climate and making the Town more attractive to prospective businesses.

To encourage business retention and expansion, the Town of Hamilton will pursue support of, and potentially assistance to, existing businesses within the Town. Elements of this strategy may include establishing a revolving loan fund to provide financing to start-up businesses and expand existing businesses; facilitating access to sources of capital and technical support available in the region; working with Colgate University to identify purchasing and service needs which could be met by local businesses; establishing a business incubator and microenterprise assistance program; and providing ongoing outreach to companies in the Town to solicit information on their needs.

Residents are concerned about the number of empty storefronts in the villages and rapid turnover of existing enterprises. The Town will undertake a study of the local business environment in an effort to discover how businesses can best succeed here. The study will include discussions with owners of past and present business operations.

Time frame:	Short term
Stakeholders/partners:	Town Board, Village Boards, Madison County IDA, Southern Madison County Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Merchants Association, Colgate University, Madison County
Potential funding sources:	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; Empire State Development Corporation; Madison County IDA

- 1-2. Assess the feasibility of developing a telecommuting center and investigate possibilities for obtaining rapid data transmission service in the Town of Hamilton.*

Nationwide, more workers are "telecommuting," working from home on a part- or full-time basis. The growth of telecommuting is due to the proliferation of electronic communications, personal desires to regain control over stress and time, corporate interest in improving productivity, and community desires to reduce traffic congestion and air pollution. Many planners believe that as telecommuting becomes more established, telecommuters will move away from cities and into rural areas, like the Town of Hamilton, for the high quality of life. However, to benefit from the

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

ACTION PLAN

telecommuting trend, rural communities will need to provide a high quality communications infrastructure and shared services to enable telecommuters to work from home.

As an economic development tool, the Town will work with area businesses, institutions, municipal representatives and interested individuals to assess the feasibility of developing a telecommuting center, perhaps in the Village of Hamilton. In addition to Internet access with e-mail and World Wide Web service, the center could offer computers, copiers, and other equipment. It could serve as a resource for residents working from home as well as for prospective entrepreneurs and small businesses, providing opportunities for local business development and expansion.

The group will study possibilities for upgrading telecommunications infrastructure to permit area-wide rapid data transmission. It will contact regional cable TV and telephone service providers and will explore options for shared services.

Time frame:	Short term
Stakeholders/partners:	Town Board, Village of Hamilton Board of Trustees, Madison County IDA, Colgate University, local businesses
Potential funding sources:	Private sources of capital; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; other sources to be determined

1-3. *Enhance the economic and social impact of local and regional special events for the Town of Hamilton through improved marketing and coordination assistance.*

The villages, hamlets, Colgate University, and many community groups provide a range of special events unique to a town the size of Hamilton throughout the year. However, many residents and businesses would like to see more community-wide events like the farmer's market to address the lack of things to do and loss of foot traffic, particularly during times when Colgate is not in session. Expanding special events and marketing to outside visitors, with an eye to those which mitigate the decrease in population during the summer and other slow times, would have a significant beneficial social and economic effect. In addition, there are a number of regional events such as the Bouckville Antiques Fair which offer untapped economic opportunities for the Town of Hamilton (e.g., providing marketing materials and/or offering a complementary event which would draw visitor traffic to the Villages of Hamilton and Earlville).

The Town will establish a committee to inventory all existing community-wide events, assist with the coordination of these events to maximize their potential economic impact, coordinate events which other groups can no longer support, and identify ways for Hamilton to tap into identified regional events. The committee will also consider developing new events which draw upon existing assets in the Town (e.g., outdoor recreation, winter sports, fine and performing arts, music at Colgate and Earlville Opera House, active farming community) and which might form the basis of such events as a four- to six-week summer arts festival, a regional Winter Olympics, Fall Harvest celebration, Children's Summer Solstice Parade, etc.

Time frame:	Short term
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Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

ACTION PLAN

Stakeholders/partners: Local government officials, Town Gown Committee, local arts, history, and recreation organizations, interested residents and youth, Madison County Tourism Board, Downtown Merchants Association, Southern Madison County Chamber of Commerce

Potential funding sources: New York State Council for the Arts, New York Main Street Alliance (technical assistance only), private funding, other sources to be determined

1-4. Support establishment of a Chenango Valley crafts and farm products store.

A critical component to the diversification and expansion of a local economy is identifying and linking existing and start-up businesses to new customers and markets. Yet most small business owners, farmers, contractors, consultants, etc. lack the time and resources to undertake a systematic marketing effort. Recently, the Hamlets of Madison County Initiative, a partnership between Colgate University, Madison County IDA, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, has begun to work with businesses to provide this service.

The Chenango Valley crafts and farm products store would expand upon this effort, creating an inviting storefront retail center by displaying the work of local and regional craftspeople and finished food products from area farms (e.g., cheeses, jams). It could also offer a web site, on-line catalog and attractive printed catalog listing local and regional products; provide marketing research to identify potential new market niches for existing or start-up businesses; and help link existing or potential entrepreneurs to other area resources such as microenterprise assistance programs, training seminars, and the U.S. Small Business Administration. The store could be run as a non-profit that receives a small percentage of product sales to defray the costs of labor and overhead, and would have a professional marketing staff to locate national distribution networks for the products.

Time frame: Medium term

Stakeholders/partners: Hamlets of Madison County Initiative, Downtown Merchants Association, Southern Madison County Chamber of Commerce, Town Board, Village Boards of Trustees, Farmers Market craftspeople, local business people, farmers, artists, residents

Potential funding sources: Empire State Development Corporation, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development - Community Development Block Grant program

1-5. Identify parcels and sites appropriate for light manufacturing or intensive commercial development within the Town of Hamilton to encourage economic development.

The Town is committed to the idea that opportunities for economic development should be provided without significantly altering the Town's rural character or threatening natural and agricultural resources. To create opportunities for increased local employment and economic activity in the Town, efforts are needed to determine where the development of new businesses would be most appropriate and desired, consistent with the scale and character of the Town.

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

ACTION PLAN

The Town will identify specific areas of the community which are most suited for commercial, light industrial, or mixed use development. To guide development while preserving rural character, the Town will also review its zoning ordinance. The information on available space or land for development can be provided to the Madison County IDA for its business attraction and marketing efforts and will serve as a resource by the Town in its own economic development efforts.

Time frame: Medium term
Stakeholders/partners: Town Board, Town Planning Board, Village Boards of Trustees, Madison County, Madison County IDA, residents, farmers, business leaders

- 1-6. *Work with the Village of Hamilton to facilitate the development of the Hamilton Airport as a business incubator and park.*

The Hamilton Municipal Airport has long been viewed as a potentially valuable economic asset to the Town and the region, and efforts to develop an industrial park on the site are already underway. Based on the Village's low electric rates and the human and institutional resources of the area, target uses for the industrial park are expected to include light manufacturing (e.g., electronics, plastics), office/laboratory, and the expansion of existing local businesses. The development of new businesses related to the area's medical and educational resources may also provide commercial opportunities for the site.

Recognizing that the development of the Hamilton airport may be able to provide additional employment opportunities for local residents while preserving the Town's rural character, the Town of Hamilton is committed to working with the Village of Hamilton and the Airport Advisory Committee as needed to ensure that the airport project comes to fruition.

Time frame: Medium term
Stakeholders/partners: Town Board, Village of Hamilton Board of Trustees, Airport Advisory Committee, Madison County IDA, Colgate University, Cornell University Center for Work and Environment

Goal 2: To actively support and promote sustainable agriculture as a vital component of the local and regional economy through cooperative initiatives between neighboring communities, Town and County governments, and area educational institutions.

Actions

- 2-1. *Gain political support for agriculture and raise awareness of its vital role in our community's character and economy.*

The Town of Hamilton will work with other Towns and groups, including the recently-established Madison County Agricultural Working Group, to build legislative support for agriculture and educate state leaders on the importance of farming to Madison County.

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

ACTION PLAN

The Town will also encourage consumer support for local farmers through education and awareness activities, such as a community gardening project and school and church presentations. The Town will take a leadership role in establishing an Agricultural Development Council, which will bring together all relevant partners needed to strengthen agriculture and agriculture-related business in the County.

Time frame: Short term
Stakeholders/partners: Town Board, County Board of Supervisors, farm organizations, Madison County IDA/Planning Board, Future Farmers of America, SUNY Morrisville, Cooperative Extension and 4-H, local farmers and agriculture-related businesses

2-2. Support development of a program that encourages sustainable owner-operator farming in the Town.

The Town will develop a program to help local farmers move towards economically and environmentally sustainable agriculture. The Town will work with federal, state and local entities to obtain increased technical assistance and capital support, and it will encourage cooperative efforts to locate new markets and other forms of alternative agricultural enterprise. The program will recruit innovative owner-operators who want to be part of a thriving sustainable agricultural system in the Town.

The program should tie local agriculture into the broader economy. This could be done in a number of ways, including 1) helping local entrepreneurs to develop processing systems that would add value to local agricultural products, and 2) creating a community-supported agricultural system that would link local farmers and consumers in creative joint ventures.

Time frame: Medium term
Stakeholders/partners: Town Board, farmers, residents, Cornell Cooperative Extension, USDA, Madison County, representatives from nearby communities, the Hamlets of Madison County Initiative, Five-County Agricultural Forum
Potential funding sources: USDA, Madison County, American Farmland Trust, Madison County IDA, NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets

2-3. Work with Madison County to establish a Farmland Protection Plan.

Under Article 25-AAA of New York State's Agricultural Protection Act, County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Boards may develop plans to sustain the local farm economy and the land base associated with it. Although Madison County has an Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board in place to advise the Board of Supervisors on farming issues, no formal Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan is currently in place. The Town of Hamilton supports establishment of such a plan, which would provide a series of options at the County level to address concerns facing farmers and agriculture throughout Madison County.

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

ACTION PLAN

As part of this process, the Town should consider creating its own inventory of areas that could benefit from protective measures. The inventory would include a natural resources map that shows soil suitability for agricultural purposes, and identifies farmland that is currently out of production.. The Town should also investigate possible strategies that are intended to help preserve farmland.

Time frame:	Medium term
Stakeholders/partners:	Town Board, Town Planning Board, Madison County Planning Department, Madison County Soil Conservation District, Madison County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, local farmers and property owners
Potential funding sources:	NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, New York Planning Federation, USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service

2-4. Create an Agricultural Empowerment Zone in the Town of Hamilton as a pilot project.

To complement existing Agricultural Districts and address the pending loss of productive farms in the future, the Town will develop an incentive program which offers access to capital, technical assistance, and other incentives to encourage farmers to remain in business and attract new farmers to the Town. The objective of the program would be to provide forms of assistance traditionally provided to manufacturing businesses, such as low interest loans, reduced electric rates, and business planning and marketing assistance, to increase the economic viability of local farms. The pilot project could become part of a regionally-based strategy to retain and expand agriculturally-based businesses.

As part of this strategy, the Town will work directly with local farmers to determine specific needs and concerns. The Agricultural Empowerment Zone, which would modeled after industrial development models currently in use in inner cities, could be used as a marketing tool to prospective farmers, investors and buyers and would show that the Town of Hamilton values its agricultural economy.

Time frame:	Long term
Stakeholders/partners:	Town Board, County Board of Supervisors, farm organizations, Madison County Cooperative Extension, utility companies, NYS Department of Economic Development, local farmers
Potential funding sources:	NYS Department of Economic Development, NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, others to be determined

Goal 3: To strengthen the Town's villages as commercial, retail and entertainment centers.

Actions

3-1. Develop arts and cultural activities and promote historic resources in the Village areas as a tool for economic development and tourism.

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

ACTION PLAN

Residents at the community meetings held in connection with the Comprehensive Plan expressed strong support for promoting the Village areas as a destination for arts and cultural attractions, highlighting and improving the historic building stock which gives the Villages their unique character. Not only would this create jobs and potentially attract tourism to the Town, it would also improve the quality of life for local residents. Strategies to consider might include facade restoration and streetscape improvements; developing and attracting specialty retail shops and restaurants to diversify the mix of businesses in the Villages; promoting the Earlville Opera House and expanding business development activities that support it; creating a calendar of arts-related events in conjunction with Colgate students and local arts and cultural organizations; establishing walking tours of the Village historic districts; and working with Madison County Tourism to promote the Village commercial districts.

Time frame:	Short term
Stakeholders/partners:	Town Board, Village Boards of Trustees, Downtown Merchants Association, Colgate University, Madison County Tourism Board, local businesses and residents
Potential funding sources:	New York State Council for the Arts, Rural New York Grant Program (historic preservation), National Main Street Center (technical assistance only), private funding, volunteer labor, other sources to be determined

3-2. Support efforts by the Villages of Hamilton and Earlville to enhance and expand their downtown retail sectors.

The Villages of Hamilton and Earlville, the Downtown Merchants Association (DMA), and local businesses and property owners have been working together to enhance the attractiveness of the downtown commercial districts. Activities which have taken place include improvements to sidewalks, street lighting, and building facades and the development of special events to bring more people into the village areas to shop.

Strengthening the downtown business districts is beneficial to the Town of Hamilton because it provides jobs, services, and tax revenue to the township as well as opportunities for shopping, recreation, and entertainment. Thus, it is in the Town's interests to support the efforts of the Villages to improve and promote their downtowns. Strategies to consider include working with the Village of Earlville to restore and redevelop the Smith Block; and collaborating with the Villages of Hamilton and Earlville and property owners to attract additional businesses and shoppers to the downtown areas, determine what local residents buy out of the area and encourage them to "shop locally," and explore the feasibility of a retail/service incubator in one of the villages.

Time frame:	Short term
Stakeholders/partners:	Town Board, Village Boards of Trustees, Downtown Merchants Association, Colgate University, local businesses and residents

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

ACTION PLAN

3-3. *Support efforts to develop the Earlville Community Center located in the former Elementary School.*

Interested Earlville residents working with the village government have created a community center in the building formerly occupied by the elementary school. Ongoing community activities in the building include youth recreation and fitness programs and a senior citizen center. Space is rented to a school, a woodworking business, and a thrift shop. The building, owned by the Village, could accommodate a variety of other uses. Some residents have suggested attracting more businesses to the building; noting the presence of the senior center, others have suggested creating senior housing at the site. The Town could assist in ongoing efforts to find further uses. Assistance could include volunteer activities as well as support for such projects as professional consulting and structural improvements.

Time frame:	Medium term
Stakeholders/partners:	Town Board, Village of Earlville Board of Trustees, others to be determined
Potential funding sources:	Will depend on use identified

3-4. *Support efforts by the Village of Earlville to replace its aging water system infrastructure.*

The Village of Earlville public water system provides service to approximately 900 residents and several small commercial establishments. Although the demand for new connections has not been high over the last several years, the age of the distribution system suggests that replacement of existing water lines will be necessary in the future.

In the interest of intermunicipal cooperation, the Town of Hamilton will support Village efforts to address the problem, which impacts on Town residents. The Village may be eligible for loans or grants available from federal or state sources. Accordingly, the Town will support a Village effort to make a formal assessment of the condition of the water lines and develop specifications and cost estimates. Since the Earlville well is located in the Town of Hamilton, the Town will also provide support to the Village by incorporating groundwater protection provisions into its land use regulations (see Goal 6).

Time frame:	Medium term
Stakeholders/partners:	Town Board, Village of Earlville Board of Trustees
Potential funding sources:	Appalachian Regional Commission; U.S. Department of Agriculture; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; NYS Department of Health - Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

ACTION PLAN

Goal 4: **To identify and promote year-round recreational opportunities throughout the Town.**

Actions

4-1. Support a study of the Town's recreational needs and create an inventory of recreational facilities.

The Town of Hamilton is committed to seeking ways to meet the recreational needs of residents. In addition to indoor activities, these needs include such outdoor activities as hiking, biking, swimming, fishing and hunting, canoeing, and snowmobiling. However, it is not clear whether existing recreational facilities in the Town of Hamilton are adequate to meet the current and future needs of residents. There is no comprehensive source of information about the public and private recreational facilities within the township, nor have surveys been conducted to determine residents' recreational needs and preferences.

To address this issue, the Town will conduct a study of recreational opportunities in the community. Elements of the research will include an inventory of recreational facilities and activities in the Town; information on the use of, and access to, such facilities; and an analysis of the recreational needs of both adults and children. The study will allow the Town to identify gaps in services, assess the need to improve or expand recreational resources, and make informed decisions in the future.

Time frame:	Short term
Stakeholders/partners:	Town Board, Colgate University Recreation Committee, Villages of Hamilton and Earlville Boards of Trustees, residents
Potential funding sources:	Volunteer labor (high school and college students); others to be determined

4-2. Support development of a trail system in the Town of Hamilton with voluntary easements where needed.

Local residents have expressed an interest in developing trails in the Town for hiking, jogging, bicycling, and cross-country skiing. The Village of Hamilton has already started work on converting the old railroad bed to a mixed use trail; other locations such as the abandoned Chenango Canal towpath, land behind the Earlville Community Center, the Nine Mile Swamp, and existing trails in the Brookfield State Forest may present opportunities for a multi-use trail network which could enhance the quality of life for residents and attract outdoor recreation enthusiasts to the Town.

The Town of Hamilton will compile a descriptive list of organizations and funding sources that support the development of trails and greenways. It will determine where trails could be located, and recruit volunteers to build and maintain the trail(s). A brochure with a map of trails, bike paths, and greenways in the area will be created to build awareness of the trails and encourage recreational use by residents and visitors.

Time frame:	Medium term
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Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

ACTION PLAN

Stakeholders/partners: Town Board, Village of Hamilton Recreation Commission, Chenango Canal Association, NYS Departments of Transportation and Environmental Conservation, NYS Thruway Authority, National Park Service - Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program, property owners, residents

Potential funding sources: Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), donated labor and materials

- 4-3. *Encourage development of a community center for teens or young adults that combines human services, recreational activities, entertainment, and other opportunities for local youth.*

Like most communities, the Town of Hamilton has many recreational and leisure activities geared towards adults and children, but relatively few that meet the needs of the 13- to 20-year old age group, and there is no central facility available for local teens. The number of persons in this age group appears to be growing. The Town of Hamilton will therefore seek funding to develop a youth facility that encompasses a variety of activities to meet the needs of these young adults.

Whether such a structure is developed through new construction or adaptive reuse, it will need to be large enough to support diverse activities, such as concerts, recreational programs, video games, social interaction, a snack bar, and human services. A central and convenient location and appropriate monitoring of activities will also be important. Although the development effort should be spearheaded by a not-for-profit organization so that the project is eligible for grant funding, commercial sponsorship of community center events may be possible.

Time frame: Long term

Stakeholders/partners: Town Board, neighboring communities, Madison County Youth Bureau, local school districts, young people and volunteers

Potential funding sources: To be determined

- 4-4. *Develop an inventory of valuable natural, environmental and historic resources in the Town.*

A Town-appointed committee will undertake an inventory of natural, environmental, and historic resources in the Town. Participation and listing in the inventory will be voluntary. Such an inventory could help with development of recreational programs and provide information for future town decision-making and planning by property owners.

Time frame: Short term

Stakeholders/partners: Town Board, Town Planning Board, local landowners, U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Madison County Soil Conservation District, Colgate University

Potential funding sources: Environmental Protection Fund, New York Planning Federation

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

ACTION PLAN

Goal 5: To improve housing conditions throughout the Town.

5-1. Continue to assist residents to plan and fund housing improvements where needed.

While the Town's housing stock is diverse, with many new homes, more than half of all housing units in the Town of Hamilton were constructed before 1940. Many homeowners would welcome help in planning and financing new electrical systems, replacing leaky roofs, and undertaking other maintenance and repair projects necessary for older homes. The Town should identify areas where it could assist with such projects, and seek funds through state and federal agencies for rehabilitation of housing occupied by low and moderate income households.

Time frame:	Medium term
Stakeholders/partners:	Town Board, Planning Board, codes enforcement officer
Potential funding sources:	U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development - Community Development Block Grant program; NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal - HOME program

5-2. Work with the Village of Earlville and senior citizen organizations to assess the need for senior housing in Earlville.

The increasing number of residents aged 65 and older and the waiting list for two-bedroom units for seniors at Madison Lane Apartments suggest that there may be a need for additional senior housing within the Town of Hamilton. The Village of Earlville, in particular, has been proposed as a potential location for senior housing development since the local senior citizen center is located in the Earlville Community Center.

A formal market evaluation should be conducted to determine the probable existing and future demand for such a project. Market assessments typically analyze information on a defined market area including population, household income, rent levels, existing housing options and the availability of services for the target population, resulting in an estimate of the need for additional housing. If a sufficient market for senior housing is found to exist, the Town of Hamilton and Village of Earlville will work with an appropriate organization to identify potential development sites in the Village and seek funding.

Time frame:	Medium term
Stakeholders/partners:	Town Board, Village of Earlville Board of Trustees, Madison County Office of the Aging, Earlville Senior Center
Potential funding sources:	U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development; NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal

Goal 6: To identify and protect the Town's vital groundwater aquifers.

Actions

6-1. Implement measures to protect local watersheds located in the Town of Hamilton.

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

ACTION PLAN

The watershed for the Village of Earlville lies partly within Town of Hamilton borders; thus, the Town shares responsibility for Earlville's well and groundwater. The Town should develop groundwater protection provisions for the area and cooperate with Village efforts to protect the aquifer.

The Town may consider designating the watershed area as an environmentally sensitive one. It should review plans for development within the watershed to prevent nonpoint pollution, and Town representatives should meet with landowners within the watershed to discuss ways to help protect it. The Town should also consult with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation about watershed preservation techniques.

Time frame:	Short term
Stakeholders/partners:	Town Board, Town Planning Board, Village of Earlville Board of Trustees, Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District
Potential funding sources:	Environmental Protection Fund, Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency - Safe Drinking Water Act programs

6-2. Define and identify areas susceptible to groundwater contamination in the Town.

The Town will work with local, state, and federal agencies and local citizens to develop a plan to identify and protect environmentally significant areas. The plan will include recommendations on how to protect these areas through appropriate regulation.

Time frame:	Medium term
Stakeholders/partners:	Town Board, Town Planning Board, Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District, residents

6-3. Establish Town policies related to watershed protection.

In conjunction with other stakeholders/partners, the Town will develop policies related to watershed protection. The policies will be expected to lead to regulations which will provide for groundwater protection and storm water control in and adjacent to important watersheds and other environmentally significant areas. Although all uses will be examined, particular attention will be paid to activities which are most likely to lead to potential contamination, including but not limited to industrial and agricultural activities.

The Town will consult with local farmers prior to the development of regulations to assess the feasibility of implementing such best management practices. Town officials will also consult with the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to learn what regulations have proven most effective in other communities.

Time frame:	Medium term
Stakeholders/partners:	Town Board, Town Planning Board, Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District, local farmers

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

ACTION PLAN

Potential funding sources: Environmental Protection Fund, Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency - Safe Drinking Water Act programs

6-4. *Continue to address drinking water quality and the construction of septic tanks and wells.*

The Town has responsibility for regulating placement and construction of wells and septic systems and for inspection of these facilities. The Town should develop its own ordinance for this purpose, with regulations to be enforced by the Town codes enforcement officer. The ordinance will include a provision for the construction of alternative waste disposal systems where environmental and land use conditions permit. Regulations must be consistent with those of New York State and Madison County, but the Town may incorporate its own guidelines for certain situations, notably in environmentally sensitive areas.

Time frame: Long term

Stakeholders/partners: Town Planning Board, codes enforcement officer, Madison County Health Department, Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District, New York State Department of Health

Potential funding sources: New York Planning Federation

Goal 7: To maintain the Town's position as an efficient provider of municipal services, and to prepare for future technological, economic, and population changes.

Actions

7-1. *Continue to explore opportunities for consolidating certain Town government functions with those of other local governments to reduce the costs of municipal services.*

The rising cost of municipal services is an issue facing all communities in the area. The Town will explore the concept of sharing more services with the Villages of Hamilton and Earlville and other nearby communities to reduce costs and increase coverage.

Time frame: Medium term

Stakeholders/partners: Town Board, Madison County Planning Department, Villages of Hamilton and Earlville, adjacent towns and communities

7-2. *Continue to consult with Town officers and staff to assess future needs for technological resources.*

The Town of Hamilton will work with its municipal staff to explore how administrative systems could be enhanced through the use of computers, software programs, access to the Internet, or other "state-of-the-art" technology-based tools. New systems could provide the public with on-line information about local government actions and events, and help Town officials with increasing work loads.

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

ACTION PLAN

The Town should seek access to the Geographic Information System (GIS) utilized by the Colgate University Geography Department and by Madison County. The GIS system has mapping capabilities and an extensive data base for Madison County, and it could help the Town deal with such issues as housing, resource protection, land use, economic development, and infrastructure repair and maintenance.

Time frame: Medium term
Stakeholders/partners: Town Supervisor, Town Clerk, Town Assessor, Town Planning Board, Colgate University Geography Department, Madison County Planning Department, Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District
Potential funding sources: Municipal resources; others to be determined

7-3. *Work with the U.S. Census Bureau to more accurately reflect the student population in its population count in the 2000 Census.*

In the 1990 Census, the Town of Hamilton challenged the original population count of 6,193 based on the fact that Colgate University students, who are considered residents for the purpose of the census, were not adequately included in the count. The challenge was accepted by the Census Bureau and the new Town population figure of 6,267 was adopted. It is important that the Town, Village of Hamilton, and Colgate University work closely with 2000 Census-takers to ensure that the student population is accurately reflected. A higher population count can increase the Town's representation in the weighted voting system at the County level, impacting County and regional decisions which directly affect the Town.

Time frame: Short term (must be by April 1999, when census is taken)
Stakeholders/partners: Town Board, Village of Hamilton Board of Trustees, Colgate University

7-4. *Review and update the Town's land use policies to prepare for future economic, demographic, and technological changes.*

- a. To preserve rural character and natural resources while encouraging economic initiatives, the Town Board and Town Planning Board should work with Village Boards of Trustees and residents to identify land suitable for development in or adjacent to the hamlets and villages and direct growth toward these areas.
- b. The Town Planning Board should work with the Village of Hamilton and the Towns of Madison, Lebanon, and Eaton to see if consensus can be reached on land use and design guidelines for development along the Route 12B corridor. The Planning Board should initiate a dialogue with representatives of the municipalities involved, together with the Madison County Planning Department.
- c. Recognizing the level of public concern within the township over the location of mines, Town officials will examine existing zoning ordinances from other municipalities throughout the state that have successfully regulated the location of

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

ACTION PLAN

mines. Town officials will determine whether implementation of similar legislation would promote the welfare of the community. The Town recognizes that the regulation of mining activities and reclamation plans is the responsibility of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and the Town will seek to regulate only the location of future mines within the township.

- d. The Town should develop regulations to address the proliferation and placement of telecommunications towers. Communication through the use of microwave technology has increased exponentially over the past decade, and telecommunications companies are continually searching for additional locations for towers. An indefinite period of growth in the number of towers is expected. By law, these towers cannot be prohibited. However, many communities have successfully adopted legislation that encourages companies to share towers and site them on or adjacent to existing tall structures, and to keep towers out of visually sensitive areas. Measures that have worked well elsewhere should be reviewed to see if similar ones would be advisable here.
- e. The Town zoning ordinance contains some language that is ambiguous and some that is not relevant to land use decisions in the Town. These passages should be clarified or eliminated.

Time frame: Medium term
Stakeholders/partners: Town of Hamilton officials, Town and Village Planning Boards, Village Boards of Trustees, Madison County Planning Department, Eaton and Madison Planning Boards (item b. only), NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (item c. only), residents
Potential funding sources: Municipal resources; others to be determined

7-5. *Continue to support education and training for the Town Board, members of the Town's Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals.*

The Town should actively encourage members of these boards to attend regional and state-sponsored training sessions, and to educate themselves about state and federal laws that impact on local decision-making. The Town should also provide technical support where needed.

Time frame: Medium term
Stakeholders/partners: Town Board, Town Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals, Madison County Planning Department, New York Planning Federation
Potential funding sources: Municipal resources; others to be determined

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

OTHER COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Listed below are many other ideas for community projects, initiatives, and strategies which were mentioned by community residents during the Town Meetings. These projects, as written, did not receive a high showing of support relative to others. While not a high priority for the Town of Hamilton at this time, the ideas listed may merit consideration in the future as the implementation process continues.

Goal 1 (Economic Development)

- Tap retired Colgate faculty for short courses; create economic development group; use retired business people as mentors.
- Centralize marketing information with regard to existing businesses and services in the Town.
- Provide access to capital for crafts businesses.
- Create an identity for Hamilton as a market center through radio advertising.
- Provide technical assistance for the development of manufacturing businesses.
- Make government more responsive and open.
- Attract telemarketing businesses.

Goal 2 (Agriculture)

- Identify important farmland and farms likely to continue in production.
- Develop demonstration sites for wildlife and forestry management.
- Develop a "farmers only" market.
- Inventory farmers' interest in a co-op, particularly for dairy.
- Research grants for cost-share nutrient management as it relates to water quality.
- Purchase development rights for farming; purchase development rights of sensitive environmental areas and unique forests.
- Explore land trust options as Chenango County has done.
- Educate forest land owners about best management practices.

Goal 3 (Village Centers)

- Attract factory outlet stores - they provide employment and are a tourism draw.
- Develop tourism infrastructure: hotels, inns.
- Fix the roof on the turret of the Main Moon restaurant building.
- Address Town-Gown issues: e.g., competition, the Barge, Colgate's perception that there are not enough "student-friendly destinations."
- Diversify the mix of products, stores, and destinations.
- Improve parking in the Villages; utilize Bakerfield parking lot for special events (Earlville).

Goal 4 (Recreation)

- Provide a place for ice skating; freeze the tennis court at the sewage plant to make a rink.
- Bring in a YMCA or YWCA.

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

- Develop a tot playground (already in progress).
- Re-open the ski hill at Colgate.
- Work more with the White Eagle Conference Center; promote outdoor swimming at White Eagle.
- Improve access to the Nine Mile Swamp and educate people on its history and natural features.
- Promote birding as a recreational activity.
- Develop a brochure on recreation for the schools.
- Conduct a recreational tour of facilities in the Town.
- Seek recreational resources outside the Village of Hamilton.
- Create year-round recreational activities.
- Open a year-round bowling alley.
- Study the way in which farms, traffic, and development affect wildlife and wetlands.
- Identify historic resources; maintain historic buildings and homes in the Village of Hamilton and Madison County; provide funding to preserve and protect barns and old homes.
- Explore the possibility of acquiring public access to Poolville Lake or Crane Lake (also known as Lake Earlville, but in the Town of Lebanon).
- Earmark funds to preserve the Nine Mile Swamp.
- Support the donation of easements for access to trails.

Goal 5 (Housing)

- Allow property owners to make improvements without being penalized by higher assessments and taxes.
- Develop senior housing and services marketed to the senior population; develop a retirement community.
- Support zero population growth in Madison County.

Goal 6 (Aquifers)

- Assess the feasibility of and secure funding for the development of municipal water and sewer infrastructure in hamlet areas.
- Provide access to waterways for recreation.
- Regulate the application of fertilizers on lawns.
- Develop educational programs to teach children and the public about the need to protect natural resources.
- Protect streams from farm/nonpoint pollution.
- Protect important riparian areas for fishing and canoe access.
- Engage businesses and institutions in the process of open space and natural resource protection.

Goal 7 (Local Government)

- Annex South Earlville into the Town of Hamilton and Madison County.
- Promote better communication between towns.

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

- Study the environmental impact of NYS Department of Transportation projects on town roadways.
- Become more involved in development of the airport.
- Discuss dissolution of the Town as an overlapping municipality (Earlville).
- Identify resources to revise the zoning law.
- Provide adequate buffering of junk yards in the Town's zoning ordinance.
- For safety and recreational purposes, seek funding to widen shoulders on some town roads and/or put in sidewalks or paths for pedestrians and bicycles.

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

APPENDIX

Maps:

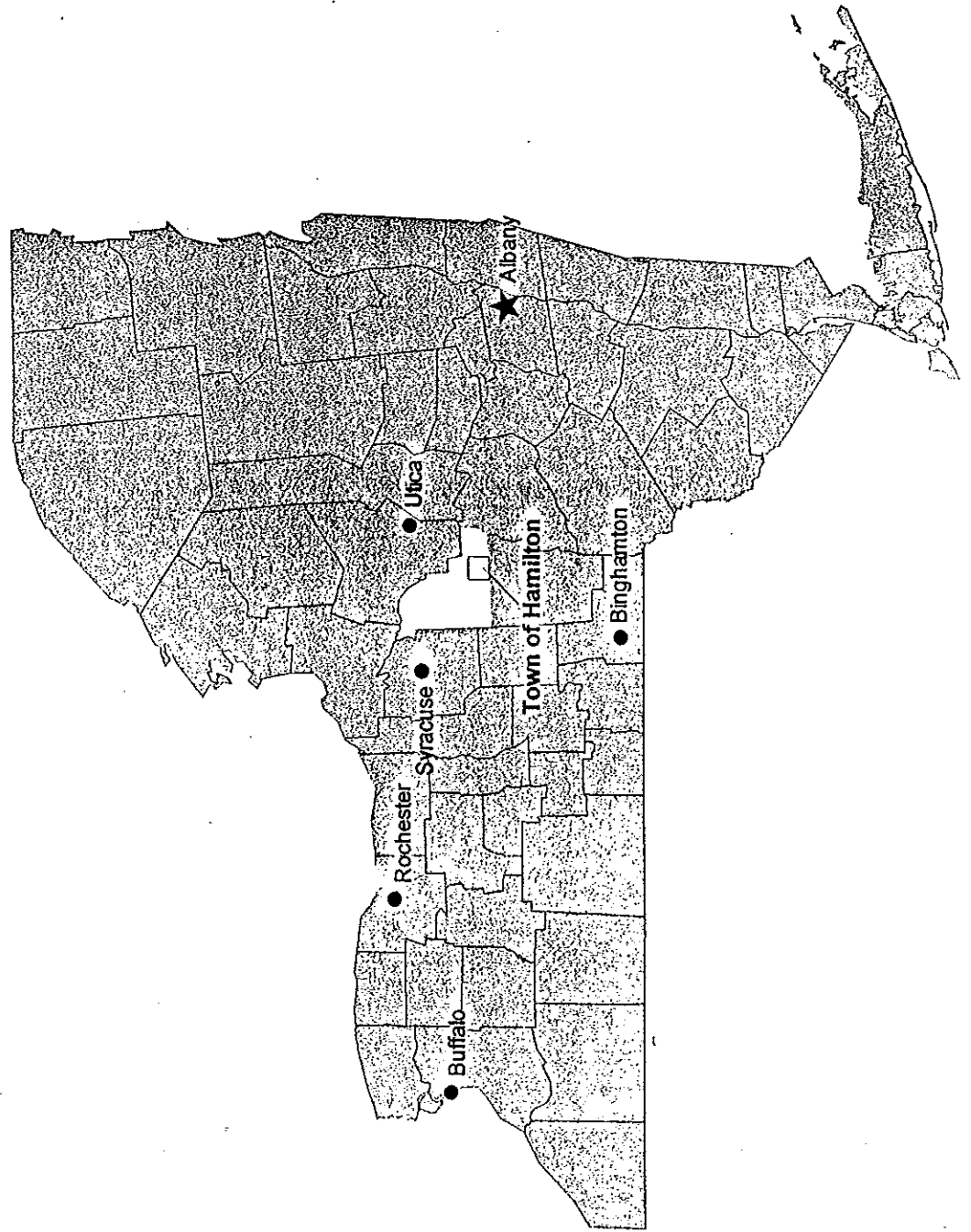
Town of Hamilton - Location in New York State
Regional Context
Villages, Hamlets, and Roads
Zoning Map (1988)*
Flood Hazard Zones*
Steep Slope Areas*

Tables 1 - 10

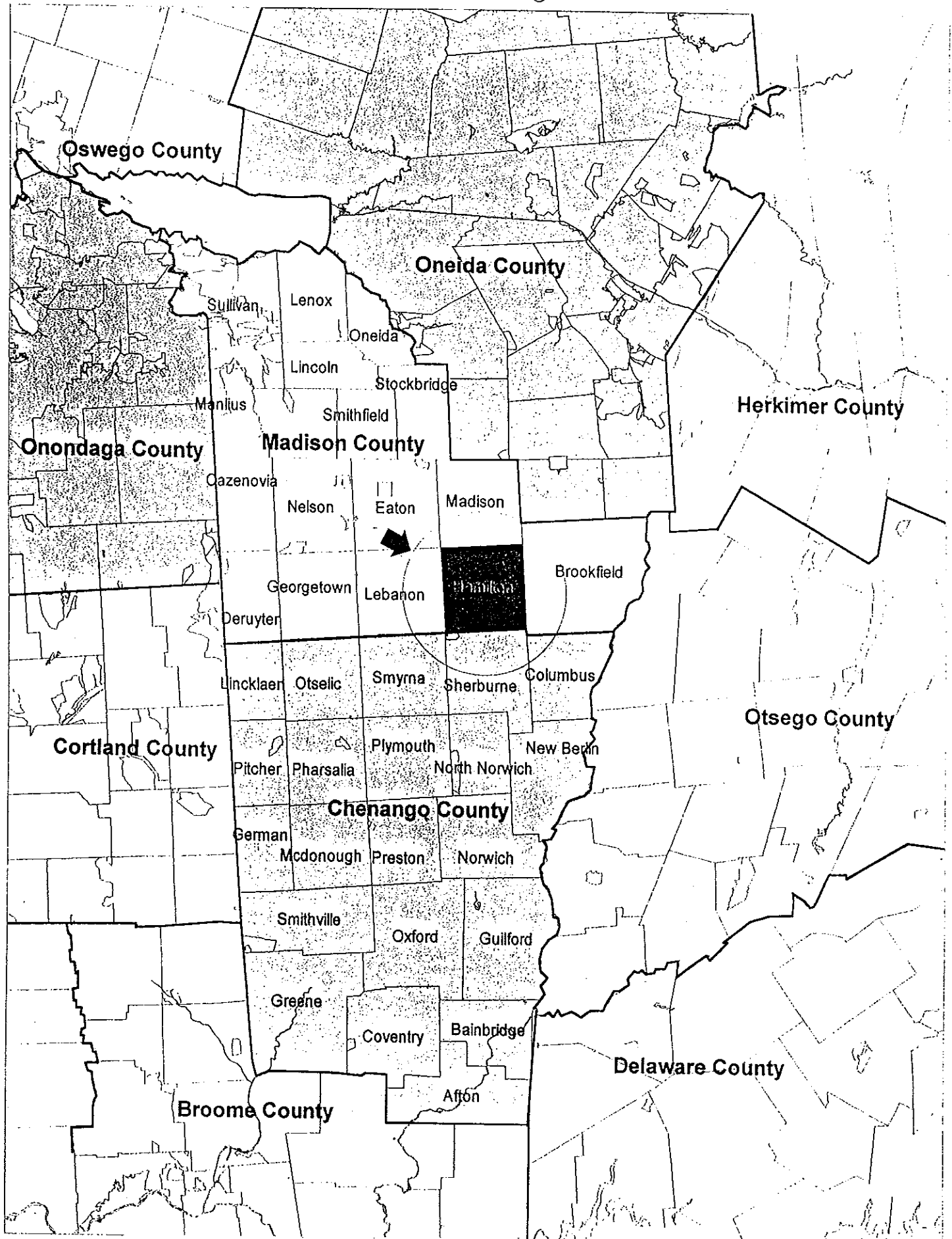
Businesses in the Town of Hamilton
Summary of the 1972 Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan
Summary of the 1992 Village of Hamilton Master Plan
The Chenango Canal - Historical Background
Township of Hamilton Community Survey - Analysis of Results
Farmland Owner Survey - Results
High-Speed Data Transmission Options
Colgate Student Research Papers
Action Plan Goals Schedule

* prepared by the Colgate University Geography Department

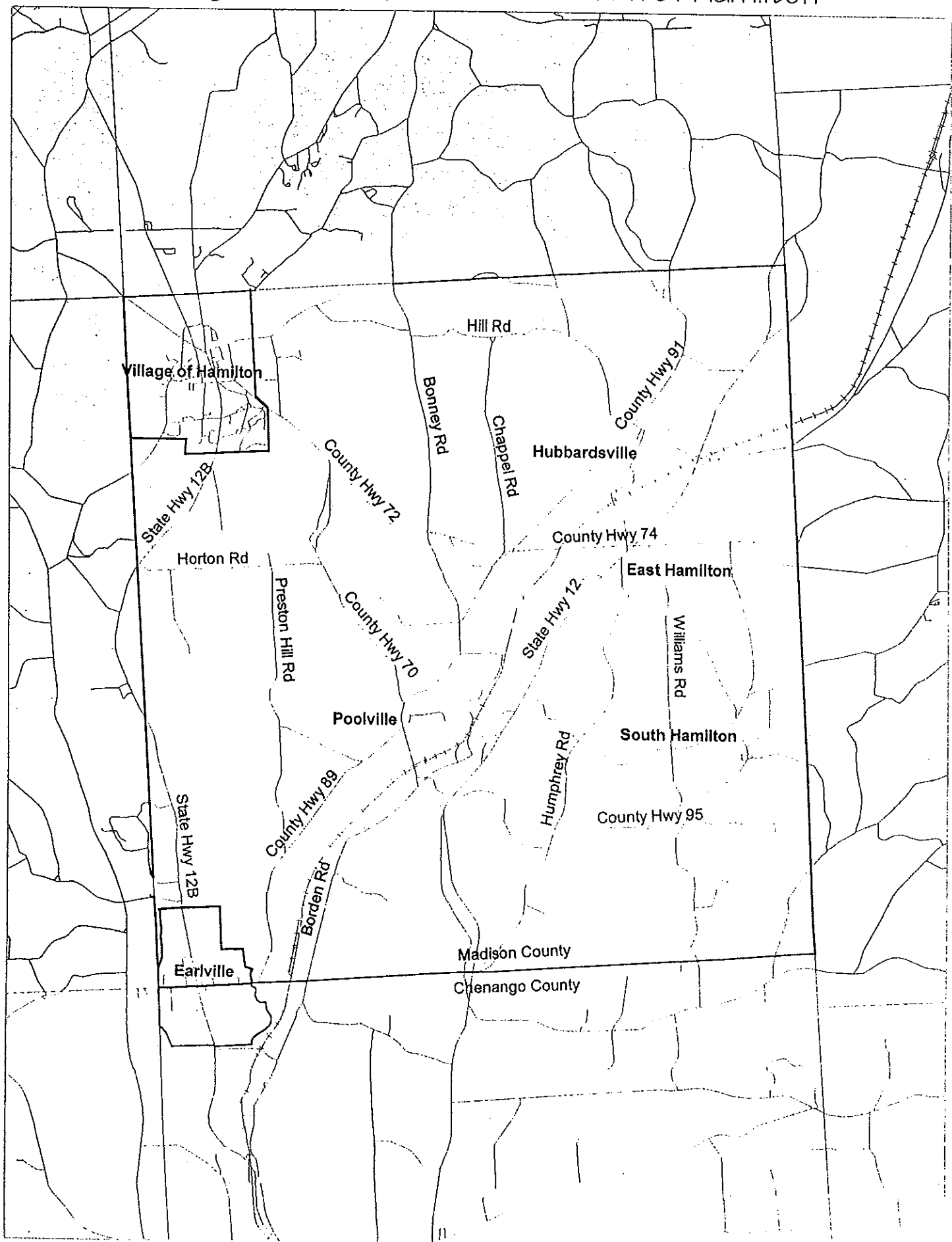
Town of Hamilton - Location in New York State



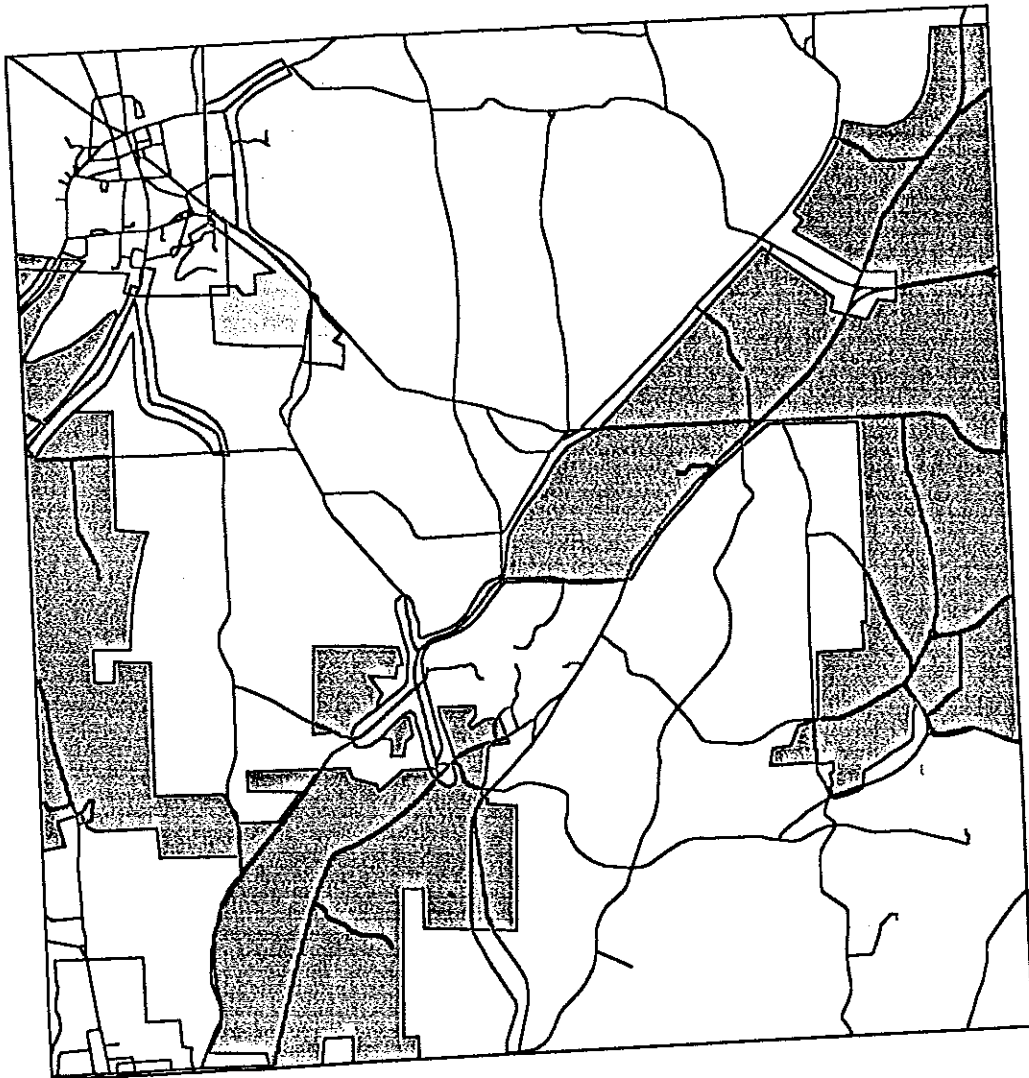
Town of Hamilton - Regional Context



Villages, Hamlets, and Roads - Town of Hamilton



Zoning for the Town of Hamilton, NY: 1988

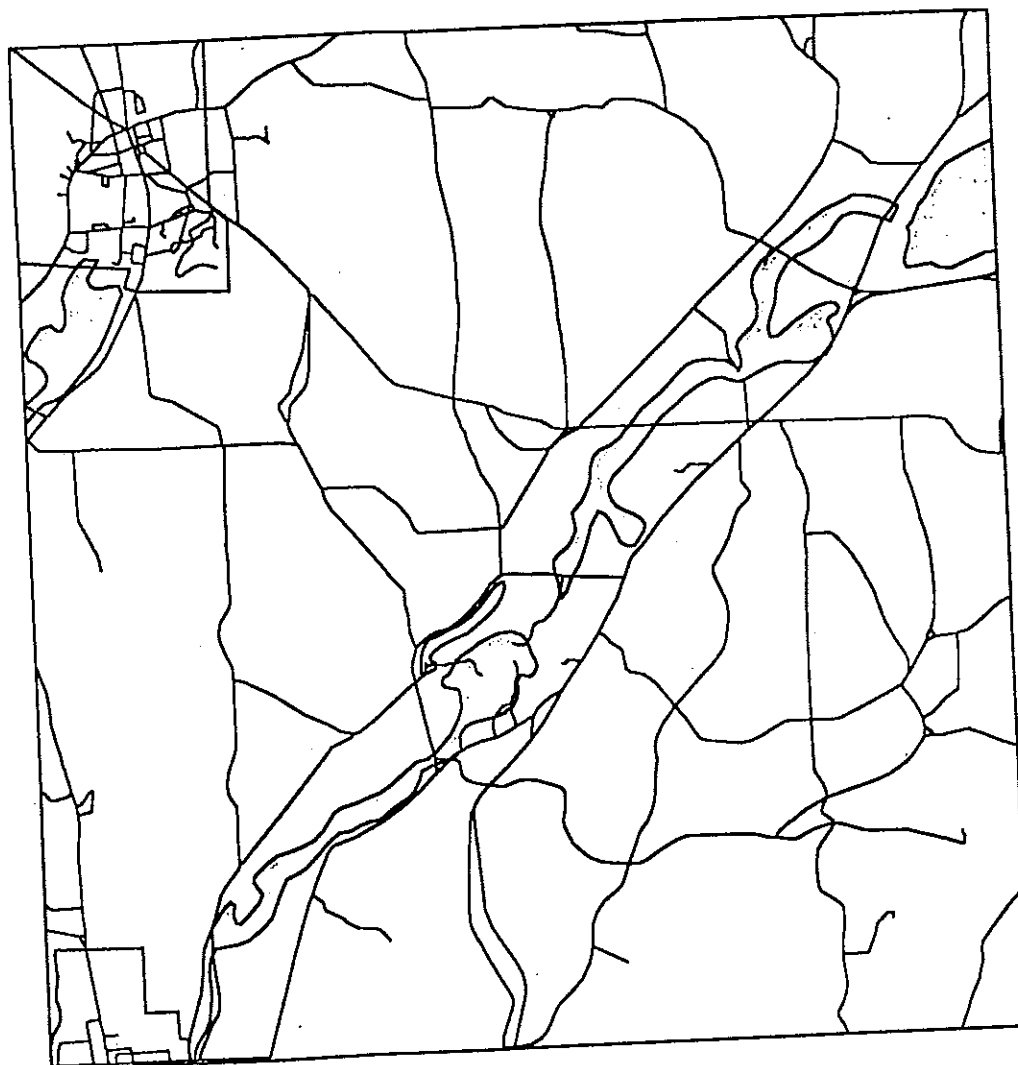


Zoning

-  State Certified Agricultural District
-  Agricultural-Residential
-  Residential District

 Roads

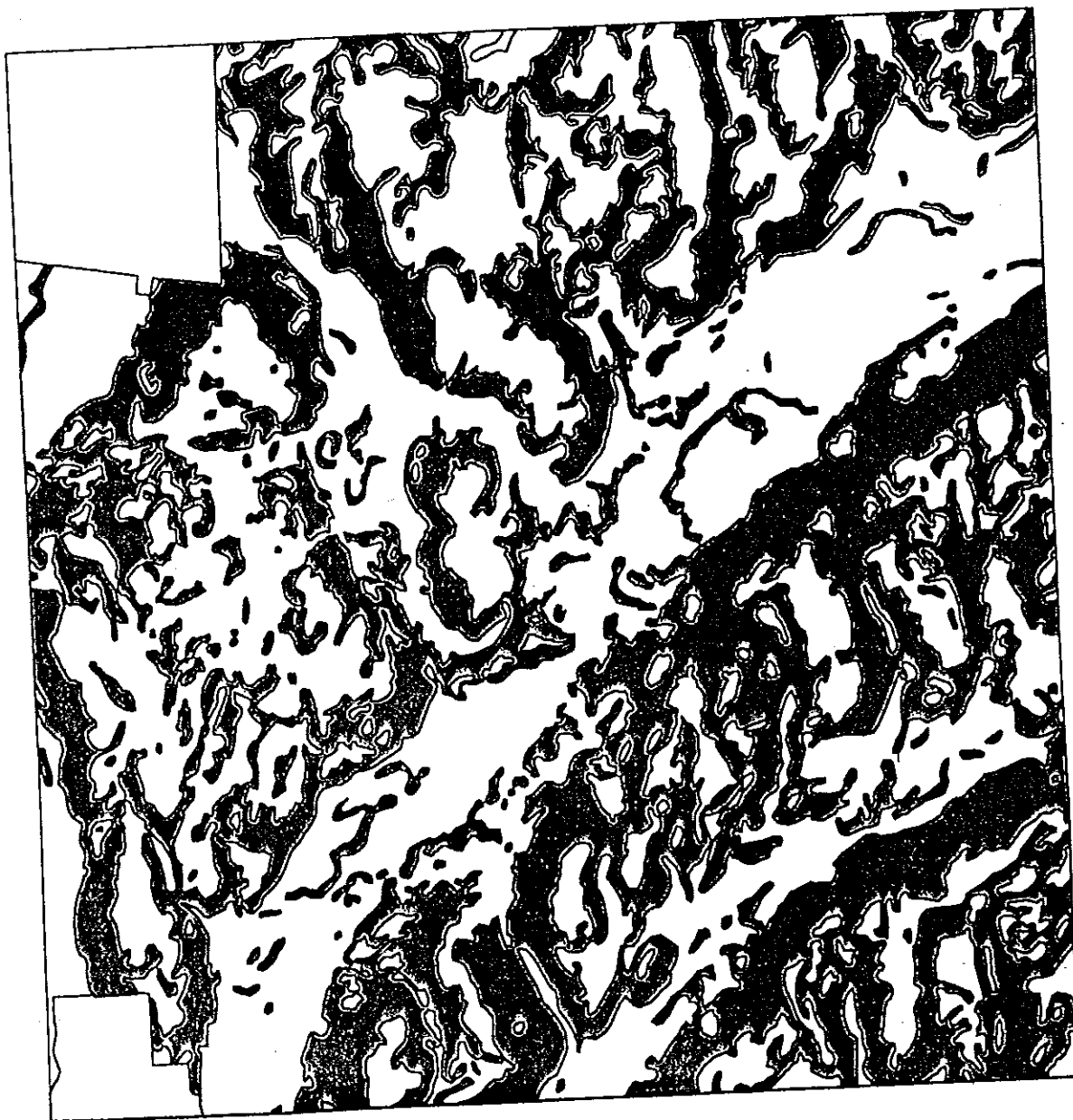
Flood Hazard Zones for the Town of Hamilton, NY



Special Flood Hazard Area

Roads

Steep Slope Areas, Hamilton, New York



- ☐ Non-Slope Areas
- ☒ Steep Slopes (>15 degrees)

Table 1: Population Trends, Madison County Towns, 1950-1990

	1950	1960	% Change 1950-60	1970	% Change 1960-70	1980	% Change 1970-80	1990	% Change 1980-90
Brookfield	1,841	1,990	8.1%	2,064	3.7%	2,037	-1.3%	2,225	9.2%
Cazenovia	3,969	4,968	25.2%	6,092	22.6%	5,880	-3.5%	6,514	10.8%
DeRuyter	1,165	1,290	10.7%	1,366	5.9%	1,349	-1.2%	1,469	8.9%
Eaton	2,854	3,196	12.0%	4,458	39.5%	5,182	16.2%	5,376	3.7%
Fenner	852	900	5.6%	1,321	46.8%	1,580	19.6%	1,694	7.2%
Georgetown	616	633	2.8%	816	28.9%	779	-4.5%	921	18.2%
Hamilton	5,455	5,438	-0.3%	5,906	8.6%	6,027	2.0%	6,267	4.0%
Lebanon	890	880	-1.1%	969	10.1%	1,117	15.3%	1,265	13.2%
Lanox	6,515	7,729	18.6%	8,871	14.8%	8,539	-3.7%	8,621	1.0%
Lincoln	924	1,102	19.3%	1,168	6.0%	1,722	47.4%	1,669	-3.1%
Madison	1,615	1,915	18.6%	2,221	16.0%	2,314	4.2%	2,802	21.1%
Nelson	993	1,170	17.8%	1,410	20.5%	1,495	6.0%	1,893	26.6%
Oneida (city)	11,325	11,677	3.1%	11,658	-0.2%	10,815	-7.2%	10,850	0.3%
Smithfield	758	804	6.1%	864	7.5%	1,001	15.9%	1,053	5.2%
Stockbridge	1,537	1,574	2.4%	1,711	8.7%	1,947	13.8%	1,968	1.1%
Sullivan	4,905	9,369	91.0%	11,969	27.8%	13,371	11.7%	14,607	9.2%
Madison County	46,214	54,635	18.2%	62,864	15.1%	65,155	3.6%	69,120	6.1%

Source: Bureau of the Census

Note: In the 1990 Census, the Town of Hamilton challenged the original population count of 6,193.

A new Town population figure of 6,267 was adopted by the Census Bureau; however, the

Bureau did not update demographic breakdowns such as age or race. Therefore, other tables

in this appendix are based on the 6,193 total.

**Table 2: Comparative Age Composition
Hamilton and Madison County, 1990**

	Hamilton		Madison County	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Pre-school (0 - 4)	290	4.7%	4,884	7.1%
School-age (5 - 17)	714	11.5%	12,508	18.1%
Young adult (18 - 24)	2,148	34.7%	10,647	15.4%
Adult (25 - 44)	1,512	24.4%	20,848	30.2%
Middle age (45 - 64)	800	12.9%	12,299	17.8%
Seniors (65+)	729	11.8%	7,934	11.5%
Total	6,193	100.0%	69,120	100.0%

Source: Bureau of the Census

**Table 3: Household Size
Town of Hamilton, 1990**

Household Size	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1 Person	456	25.7%
2 Persons	563	31.7%
3 Persons	315	17.7%
4 Persons	272	15.3%
5 Persons	118	6.6%
6 Persons	44	2.5%
7 Persons	7	0.4%
Total households	1,775	100.0%
Persons per household	3.49	

Source: Bureau of the Census

Table 4: Resident Employment by Industry
Town of Hamilton, 1980-1990

	1980		1990		Change, 1980-1990	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and mining	157	6.9%	83	2.9%	-74	-47.1%
Construction	54	2.4%	63	2.2%	9	16.7%
Manufacturing, total	264	11.6%	210	7.4%	-54	-20.5%
Nondurable goods	134	5.9%	91	3.2%	-43	-32.1%
Durable goods	130	5.7%	119	4.2%	-11	-8.5%
Transportation	40	1.8%	75	2.6%	35	87.5%
Communications and other public utilities	45	2.0%	33	1.2%	-12	-26.7%
Wholesale trade	34	1.5%	84	3.0%	50	147.1%
Retail trade	362	15.9%	366	12.9%	4	1.1%
Finance, insurance, and real estate	54	2.4%	152	5.4%	98	181.5%
Services, total	1,227	54.0%	1,700	59.9%	473	38.5%
Business and repair services	71	3.1%	86	3.0%	15	21.1%
Personal, entertainment, and recreation services	91	4.0%	165	5.8%	74	81.3%
Health services	126	5.5%	134	4.7%	8	6.3%
Educational services	867	38.2%	1,083	38.2%	216	24.9%
Other professional and related services	72	3.2%	232	8.2%	160	222.2%
Public administration	34	1.5%	70	2.5%	36	105.9%
Total, employed persons 16 years and over	2,271	100.0%	2,836	100.0%	565	24.9%

Source: Bureau of the Census

Note: "Resident employment" refers to the jobs held by residents, NOT the number of jobs in the community. Information on industry relates to the kind of business conducted by the person's employer. Residents' place of work may be within or outside the Town.

**Table 5: Educational Attainment 25 and Over
Hamilton and Madison County, 1990**

	Hamilton		Madison County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than 9th grade	139	4.6%	2,493	6.1%
9th - 12th, no diploma	315	10.4%	6,045	14.7%
High school graduate	939	30.9%	15,086	36.7%
College, no degree	326	10.7%	5,975	14.5%
Associates degree	256	8.4%	3,997	9.7%
Bachelor's degree	439	14.4%	4,339	10.6%
Graduate or professional degree	627	20.6%	3,146	7.7%
% high school graduate or higher		85.1%		79.2%
% bachelor's degree or higher		35.1%		18.2%
Total, age 25 and over	3,041	100.0%	41,081	100.0%

Source: Bureau of the Census

**Table 6: Income Statistics
Hamilton and Madison County, 1990**

	Hamilton		Madison County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Household Income				
Less than \$5,000	79	4.5%	785	3.3%
\$5,000 - \$9,999	165	9.3%	2,377	10.0%
\$10,000 - \$14,999	197	11.1%	2,060	8.7%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	333	18.8%	4,604	19.4%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	316	17.8%	4,320	18.2%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	279	15.7%	4,609	19.5%
\$50,000 and up	406	22.9%	4,920	20.8%
 Median household income	\$28,594		\$29,547	
Total households	1,775		23,675	
 Per capita income	\$11,359		\$12,334	
Persons below poverty level	752	16.9%	5,872	9.2%

Source: Bureau of the Census

Table 7: Retail Industry Data
Hamilton and Madison County, 1987-1992

	Hamilton		Change		Madison County		Change	
	1992	1987	Number	Percent	1992	1987	Number	Percent
Total Sales (000s)	\$43,223	\$34,532	\$8,691	25.2%	\$371,821	\$292,489	\$79,332	27.1%
As a % of County Establishments	11.6%	11.8%	14	36.8%	398	397	1	0.3%
As a % of County Paid Workers	13.1%	9.6%	-108	-19.2%	4,137	3,751	386	10.3%
As a % of County	454	562						
	11.0%	15.0%						

Source: Census of Retail Trade

Table 8: Age of Housing
Town of Hamilton, 1990

Year Built	Number	Percent
1989 - 1990	33	1.8%
1985 - 1988	135	7.5%
1980 - 1984	38	2.1%
1970 - 1979	328	18.2%
1960 - 1969	70	3.9%
1950 - 1959	69	3.8%
1940 - 1949	101	5.6%
1939 or earlier	1,026	57.0%
Total housing units	1,800	100.0%

Source: Bureau of the Census

Table 9: General Housing Characteristics
Hamilton, Neighboring Towns, and Madison County, 1990

	% Single Family	% Multiple Family	% Mobile Homes	% Owner Occupied	% Renter Occupied	Vacancy Rate	Median Value	Median Gross Rent
Madison County	69.0%	20.5%	10.5%	65.7%	22.7%	11.5%	\$68,900	\$398
<i>Hamilton</i>	<i>65.8%</i>	<i>27.1%</i>	<i>7.1%</i>	<i>62.2%</i>	<i>32.4%</i>	<i>5.4%</i>	<i>\$69,800</i>	<i>\$441</i>
Brookfield	68.5%	8.3%	23.1%	70.7%	15.3%	14.0%	\$39,000	\$336
Dolumbus	61.6%	4.3%	34.0%	57.8%	11.2%	31.1%	\$43,800	\$382
Eaton	65.3%	19.2%	15.5%	54.8%	23.9%	21.3%	\$52,300	\$416
Lebanon	68.0%	7.6%	24.4%	63.9%	13.3%	22.9%	\$49,600	\$363
Madison	69.5%	12.4%	18.1%	62.6%	17.7%	19.7%	\$65,200	\$383
Sangerfield	60.7%	31.2%	8.1%	60.9%	31.7%	7.3%	\$60,700	\$327
Sherburne	53.0%	25.0%	22.0%	65.4%	28.6%	6.0%	\$57,200	\$297
Smyrna	70.9%	4.4%	24.6%	73.9%	14.1%	12.0%	\$33,800	\$384

Source: Bureau of the Census

Table 10A: Town of Hamilton Budget, 1997

Budget Appropriations - 1997	General		Highway		Special Districts	Total	
	General	Outside Village	Highway Townwide	Outside Village		Number	Percent
General Government Support	\$143,393	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$143,393	18.3%
Public Safety	\$6,426	\$7,958	\$0	\$0	\$66,320	\$80,704	10.3%
Health	\$3,400	\$3,600	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$7,000	0.9%
Transportation	\$38,688	\$0	\$262,895	\$173,701	\$0	\$475,284	60.7%
Utilities	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,800	\$4,800	0.6%
Economic Assistance	\$300	\$1,100	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,400	0.2%
Culture and Recreation	\$1,990	\$3,600	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,590	0.7%
Home and Community Services	\$1,000	\$8,400	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$9,400	1.2%
Undistributed	\$43,075	\$572	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$43,647	5.6%
Debt Service	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0%
Interfund transfers	\$0	\$12,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$12,000	1.5%
Total	\$238,272	\$37,230	\$262,895	\$173,701	\$71,120	\$783,218	100.0%

Estimated Revenues - 1997	General		Highway		Special Districts	Total	
	General	Outside Village	Highway Townwide	Outside Village		Number	Percent
Property Tax	\$66,472	\$24,880	\$135,095	\$107,077	\$70,120	\$403,644	51.5%
Sales Tax	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0%
Nonproperty Tax	\$66,500	\$600	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$67,100	8.6%
State Aid	\$32,000	\$1,000	\$0	\$50,624	\$0	\$83,624	10.7%
Federal Aid	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0%
Intergovernmental	\$0	\$0	\$85,000	\$0	\$0	\$85,000	10.9%
Investment interest	\$7,000	\$0	\$2,800	\$4,000	\$0	\$13,800	1.8%
Other local fees	\$6,300	\$3,250	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$9,550	1.2%
Interfund transfers	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$12,000	\$0	\$12,000	1.5%
Unexpended balance	\$60,000	\$7,500	\$40,000	\$0	\$1,000	\$108,500	13.9%
Total	\$238,272	\$37,230	\$262,895	\$173,701	\$71,120	\$783,218	100.0%

Table 10B: Town of Hamilton Budget, 1996

Budget Appropriations - 1996	General		Highway		Special Districts	Total	
	General	Outside Village	Highway Townwide	Outside Village		Number	Percent
General Government Support	\$146,677	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$146,677	19.8%
Public Safety	\$6,559	\$7,170	\$0	\$0	\$53,604	\$67,333	9.1%
Health	\$3,400	\$3,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$6,400	0.9%
Transportation	\$36,557	\$0	\$254,161	\$166,398	\$0	\$457,116	61.6%
Utilities	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,800	\$4,800	0.6%
Economic Assistance	\$300	\$1,100	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,400	0.2%
Culture and Recreation	\$1,490	\$3,600	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,090	0.7%
Home and Community Services	\$1,000	\$1,400	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,400	0.3%
Undistributed	\$40,840	\$550	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$41,390	5.6%
Debt Service	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0%
Interfund transfers	\$0	\$10,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$10,000	1.3%
Total	\$236,823	\$26,820	\$254,161	\$166,398	\$58,404	\$742,606	100.0%

Estimated Revenues - 1996	General		Highway		Special Districts	Total	
	General	Outside Village	Highway Townwide	Outside Village		Number	Percent
Property Tax	\$87,063	\$22,870	\$126,161	\$106,798	\$57,404	\$400,296	53.9%
Sales Tax	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0%
Nonproperty Tax	\$67,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$67,000	9.0%
State Aid	\$10,000	\$1,000	\$0	\$45,600	\$0	\$56,600	7.6%
Federal Aid	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0%
Intergovernmental	\$0	\$0	\$85,000	\$0	\$0	\$85,000	11.4%
Investment interest	\$6,000	\$0	\$3,000	\$4,000	\$0	\$13,000	1.8%
Other local fees	\$6,760	\$2,950	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$9,710	1.3%
Interfund transfers	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$10,000	\$0	\$10,000	1.3%
Unexpended balance	\$60,000	\$0	\$40,000	\$0	\$1,000	\$101,000	13.6%
Total	\$236,823	\$26,820	\$254,161	\$166,398	\$58,404	\$742,606	100.0%

Table 10C: Town of Hamilton Budget, 1995

Budget Appropriations - 1995	General		Highway		Special Districts	Total	
	General	Outside Village	Highway Townwide	Outside Village		Number	Percent
General Government Support	\$146,224	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$146,224	19.8%
Public Safety	\$6,660	\$7,170	\$0	\$0	\$49,140	\$62,970	8.5%
Health	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,000	0.7%
Transportation	\$35,400	\$0	\$250,658	\$168,027	\$0	\$454,085	61.6%
Utilities	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,800	\$4,800	0.7%
Economic Assistance	\$300	\$1,800	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,100	0.3%
Culture and Recreation	\$2,090	\$3,200	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,290	0.7%
Home and Community Services	\$1,000	\$1,400	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,400	0.3%
Undistributed	\$42,175	\$550	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$42,725	5.8%
Debt Service	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0%
Interfund transfers	\$0	\$12,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$12,000	1.6%
Total	\$236,349	\$28,620	\$250,658	\$168,027	\$53,940	\$737,594	100.0%

Estimated Revenues - 1995	General		Highway		Special Districts	Total	
	General	Outside Village	Highway Townwide	Outside Village		Number	Percent
Property Tax	\$89,139	\$22,820	\$112,658	\$106,043	\$52,805	\$383,465	52.0%
Sales Tax	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0%
Nonproperty Tax	\$57,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$57,000	7.7%
State Aid	\$15,000	\$2,000	\$0	\$47,984	\$0	\$64,984	8.8%
Federal Aid	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0%
Intergovernmental	\$7,610	\$0	\$85,000	\$0	\$0	\$92,610	12.6%
Investment interest	\$2,600	\$0	\$3,000	\$2,000	\$0	\$7,600	1.0%
Other local fees	\$0	\$3,800	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,800	0.5%
Interfund transfers	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$12,000	\$0	\$12,000	1.6%
Unexpended balance	\$65,000	\$0	\$50,000	\$0	\$1,135	\$116,135	15.7%
Total	\$236,349	\$28,620	\$250,658	\$168,027	\$53,940	\$737,594	100.0%

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

Businesses in the Town of Hamilton and Surrounding Area

Based on a directory of member businesses provided by the Southern Madison Chamber of Commerce and other information, below is a list of many of the various businesses in and around the Town of Hamilton:

Agriculture & Forestry-Related (6)

Chenango Forest Products	57 E. Main Street, Earlville
Enchanted Gardens	Hubbardsville
Hamilton Farmer's Market	Hamilton
Jaquay Feed Co., Inc.	Lebanon Street, Hamilton
Jewett's Cheese House	Earlville Road, Earlville
Palmer Farm Supply	Hamilton

Automotive Sales & Service (11)

D's Auto	Route 12B, Hamilton
Dan Kelly Chevrolet	Route 12B, Hamilton
Earlville Collision	48 S. Main Street, Earlville
Ellinwood Auto Supply, Inc.	Route 12B, Hamilton
Hamilton Auto Clinic	56 Montgomery Street, Hamilton
Nilles Ford Mercury	Route 12B, Hamilton
Prestige Auto Body Repair	37 W. Main Street, Earlville
Riggall's Towing Service	Bonney Road, Hamilton
TW Pro-Towing & Repair Service	Clyde Street, Earlville
Von Bank Collision	Route 12B, Earlville
W & W Auto Repair	Bailey Road, Hubbardsville

Contracting (8)

American Home & Building Inspection	Smith Road, Hamilton
Bindner Layout	Smith Road, Hamilton
Cedar Homes of Distinction	Johnnycake Hill Road, Hamilton
Darwin Baker Excavating	East Lake Road, Hamilton
Joerger Builders	Route 12B, Hamilton
Park City Builders	P.O. Box 356, Hamilton
Terrific Tub & Tile	Mason Road, Hamilton
Upstate Construx, Inc.	Rambling Brook Road, Hamilton

Farms - Dairy and Other (24)

Patricia and Michael Antzak	Hamilton
Carl Bailey	Hubbardsville
Carl Carroccio	Hamilton
Joe and Lorrie Clark	Earlville
Dominick Chang	Hamilton
Alan R. Crumb	Hamilton
Darryl Crumb	Earlville
Frank Crumb, Jr.	Hubbardsville

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

Thomas Furner	Hamilton
Harmon Hoff and Eve Ann Shwartz	Earlville
Richard and Elaine Hughes	Earlville
Dale Klein, Jr.	Hamilton
Kenneth Lamb	Hamilton
William and Jean McCracken	Hamilton
Freeman Masker	Hamilton
Keith and Jody Palmer	Hubbardsville
Marian and Leon Palmer	Hubbardsville
Craig Risley	Hamilton
John E. Schell	Earlville
Robert and Maureen Tackabury	Poolville
Ted Unger	Earlville
Jack Van Auken	Hamilton
Mike Welchko	Hamilton
Harry J. Wyman	Earlville

Finance, Legal, and Insurance (9)

Warren Ashmead, Attorney	13 Payne Street, Hamilton
Cignet Securities	35 Lebanon Street, Hamilton
Corey's Real Estate	P.O. Box 89, Earlville
First Investors Corp.	7 Wylie Street, Hamilton
Hamilton Investment Services	27 Payne Street, Hamilton
Mang, Craine, and Mirabito Insurance	50 Utica Street, Hamilton
NBT Bank N.A. of Earlville	2 South Main Street, Earlville
Oneida Savings Bank	35 Broad Street, Hamilton
Oneida Valley National Bank	Madison Street, Hamilton

Education (4)

Chenango Nursery School	W. Kendrick Avenue, Hamilton
Colgate University	13 Oak Drive, Hamilton
Christian Victory Academy	Earlville
Montessori Children's House	Hamilton

Dining, Lodging, and Taverns (23)

Calico Kitchen	20 Utica Street, Hamilton
Canaan Campgrounds	Green Road, Hubbardsville
Claridge B & B	Route 12B, Hamilton
Colgate Inn	1-5 Payne Street, Hamilton
Country Inn	Route 12B, Hamilton
The Food Cupboard	1 Mill Street, Hamilton
Hamilton Inn	East Lake Road, Hamilton
Hamilton Whole Foods	28 Broad Street, Hamilton
Hubbardsville Manor	P.O. Box 740, Hubbardsville
Lebanon Reservoir Campgrounds	Reservoir Road, Hamilton
McDonald's of Hamilton	Route 12B, Hamilton

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

Main Moon Restaurant

Mister Ed's

New York Pizzeria

Old Stone Jug

Peabody's

Pizza Hut

Pizza Plus

Reflections

Roger's Market & Deli

Seven Oaks Clubhouse

The Corner Cafe

Ye Olde Pizza Pub

8 Utica Street, Hamilton

169 Utica Road, Hamilton

39 Lebanon Street, Hamilton

30 Utica Street, Hamilton

Lebanon Street, Hamilton

107 Utica Street, Hamilton

7 S. Main Street, Earlville

14 Utica Street, Hamilton

41 Lebanon Street, Hamilton

East Lake Road & Payne Street, Hamilton

5 E. Main Street, Earlville

Route 12B, Hamilton

Fuel & Energy Services (6)

Blueox Corporation

Jerry's Service Station

Mobil Express Mart

Paul Oil of Hamilton

Strasser Electric

Wilson's Service Station

Utica Road, Hamilton

47 Utica Street, Hamilton

59 Utica Street, Hamilton

36 Utica Street, Hamilton

Briggs Road, Hamilton

S. Main Street, Earlville

Health Care and Medical (11)

Nancy Adamy, A.C.S.W.

Chenango Eye Associates

Community Memorial Hospital

Family Home Care

Hamilton Animal Hospital

Hamilton Family Practice

Hamilton Obstetrics & Gynecology

Hamilton Orthopaedic Group

Dr. Robert C. Jackson II DDS

Dan Helvoight, DVM

Mid-York Family Health Center

21 W. Pleasant Street, Hamilton

103 Utica Street, Hamilton

150 Broad Street, Hamilton

P.O. Box 358, Earlville

Route 12B, Hamilton

60 Utica Street, Hamilton

150 Broad Street, Hamilton

85 College Street, Hamilton

22 Taylor Avenue, Earlville

South Lebanon Road, Earlville

160 Broad Street, Hamilton

Manufacturers (4)

Cossitt Concrete Products, Inc.

Earlville Paper Box Co.

Hamilton Pharmacal Co., Inc.

West Argo Chemical, Inc.

P.O. Box 56, Hamilton

19 Clyde Street, Earlville

Spring Street, Hamilton

Spring Street, Hamilton

Realtors (4)

Century 21 Countryside Realty

Susie Gufstafson

Hamilton Village Real Estate

Suzanne L. Martin Real Estate

11 E. Main Street, Earlville

University Street, Hamilton

7 Payne Street, Hamilton

Bonney Hill Road, Hamilton

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

Services & Other Businesses (34)

A & S Appliance Repair	RD 1, Box 165, Hubbardsville
Ambassador Travel Services	20 Utica Street, Hamilton
Bob's Small Engine Repair	5 Maple Avenue, Hamilton
Burgess Funeral Homes, Inc.	25 Broad Street, Hamilton
Central New York Tree Experts	Hamilton
Colletti Group Architects & Planners	59 Hamilton Street, Hamilton
Computel Consultants	18 E. Main Street, Earlville
Cow Chip Consulting	Wiley Road, Earlville
Earlville Little M	8 E. Main Street, Earlville
Earlville TV	72 S. Main Street, Earlville
Earlville Opera House	16 E. Main Street, Earlville
Katheryne Gail Graphic Design	West Lake Moraine Road, Hamilton
Hair's Desire	2 W. Main Street, Earlville
Hamilton Tribune	P.O. Box 326, Hamilton
Happauge Equipment Leasing	Mill Street, Hamilton
Hi-Skor Bowling Lanes, Inc.	21 Clyde Street, Earlville
Hill's Woodworking	Hamilton
J-J's Hair & Tanning Salon	10 Lebanon Street
Julia's Shear Perfection	17 Lebanon Street, Hamilton
M & M Press	37 Milford Street, Hamilton
Mar's Hair-E Business	4 Eaton Street, Hamilton
Mid-York Weekly	55 Utica Street, Hamilton
Middleport Rental	Route 12B, Hamilton
Thomas Myers, Freelance Computers	56 Payne Street, Hamilton
Red Barn Roller Rink	53 S. Main Street, Earlville
Simcoe Advertising Service	RD 2, Box 265, Hamilton
Skip's Pro-Clean Co.	Airport Road, Hamilton
Steve's Satellite TV	169A Hill Road, Hamilton
Time Warner Cable	38 Milford Street, Hamilton
Town & Gown Travel, Inc.	Route 12B, Hamilton
Tri-County Implement Co.	Clyde Street, Earlville
Vantine Studios	3 Utica Street, Hamilton
Video Express	Lebanon Street, Hamilton
White Eagle Conference Center	West Lake Moraine Road, Hamilton

Shopping (22)

Ames Department Store	Route 12B, Hamilton
Bennett's Lumber	Earlville
Big M	Eaton Street, Hamilton
CG Imports - Rosita's	12 Broad Street, Hamilton
Colgate University Bookstore	O'Connor Campus Center, Hamilton
College Pharmacy	22 Utica Street, Hamilton
Cook's Liquor Store	53 Utica Street, Hamilton
Crowe's Drug Store	Lebanon Street, Hamilton
The Gin Mill Antiques Center	Route 12 South, Hamilton

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

Grand Union
Hamilton Flower Shop
Hamilton Lumber & Hardware
John's Shoe Shop
Joy's Jewelry Werks
Occasional Expressions
Parry's
Ray's Wayside
Reed's Florist
S & S Appliances
Sunflower Florist
Village Wine & Spirits
Yarn et al

Route 12B, Hamilton
24 Lebanon Street, Hamilton
Route 12B, Hamilton
Lebanon Street, Hamilton
8 Lebanon Street, Hamilton
Earlville
20 Utica Street, Hamilton
Lebanon Street, Hamilton
38 Broad Street, Hamilton
18 Utica Street, Hamilton
3 N. Main Street, Earlville
Lebanon Street, Hamilton
Broad Street, Hamilton

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

Summary of the 1972 Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

The Town of Hamilton's first Comprehensive Plan was adopted in March 1972. Designed to guide the development of the Town through the year 2000, the plan listed six general goals for the Town:

- To maintain the area's physical health and attractiveness;
- To increase local income through providing more job opportunities;
- To hold and/or attract young people;
- To provide opportunities for community service;
- To promote community interest and cooperation;
- To work with neighboring communities on problems of mutual interest.

According to one of the architects of the plan, there were three initial motivations for the project: a desire to establish land use policies that would maintain the area's beauty and productivity; a need for sanitation standards; and concern for social equity, notably in the area of low income housing.

The plan assessed the Town's assets and liabilities, including population and land resources. While acknowledging that Hamilton was not changing as rapidly as the northern part of Madison County, the 1972 Comprehensive Plan asserted that some control of future changes would be needed to protect the quality of life over the next few decades.

Among the significant findings, predictions, and recommendations made in the 1972 plan were the following:

- *Population growth.* The plan predicted that by the year 2000, there would be 1,000 additional residents in the Town, or a total of 6,906. With the exception of more school facilities, the estimated population increase was not likely to require the expansion of churches, libraries, parks, fire and police service, or government buildings in the Town.
- *Development patterns.* The patterns of population in the Town would remain generally unchanged over the next 30-40 years, with most growth occurring in the northwest corner, around and outside the Village of Hamilton.
- *Agriculture.* While noting that farming was "still an important part of the economy of the Town," the plan predicted that the number of farms and farmers would continue to decline. However, farmers would concentrate their investments on the best soils, so production per acre would increase. The plan recommended that the best farmland be preserved for farming where possible.
- *Economic development.* The plan stated that the "prospects for a new commercial center in the Town are not strong," but a small shopping plaza could develop just north of the Village of Hamilton in the Town of Madison. Local merchants were advised to improve their shopping facilities to compete. Light manufacturing, such as food processing, was seen as a potential use for the Villages of Hamilton and Earlville. The AMA airstrip in the Town of Eaton was singled out as "an important regional asset."

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

- *Recreation.* Based on the findings of a 1969 study by the Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District, the plan predicted that major demand for recreation would probably come from non-residents and that providing "well-managed rural recreation in an attractive open landscape" could be a source of income in the decade ahead. Several recommendations were presented, including preserving Poolville Pond for public use, developing additional lakes for recreation, and designating the old feeder canal system as a public trail.
- *Capital improvements.* Recommended capital improvements within the Town, some of which would be paid for in part by the Town, included a public water supply for Hubbardsville; low-cost housing, both improved and new; maintenance of Poolville Pond for public use; and the construction of Town parks on lands not suitable for residential development.

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

Summary of the 1992 Village of Hamilton Master Plan

The Village of Hamilton completed an update of its 1972 Master Plan in 1992. The plan provided policy goals and actions to guide future changes in the Village. It also contained a review of the Village zoning law and suggested modifications based on the updated Master Plan. Below is a summary of all policy statements and issues regarding future land use outside the Village.

- *Long range growth and development.* The Village supports some increase in the rate of growth of permanent population and seeks growth which protects the existing low density, rural-village character.
- *Intermunicipal cooperation.* The Village seeks to work with the surrounding towns to establish consistent land use regulations to preserve the valley setting and views of and from surrounding hills.
- *Economic and commercial development.* The Village seeks to work with surrounding towns and agencies to attract new and expanding businesses that complement the educational-medical-agricultural character of the community. The Village also intends to develop programs that strengthen downtown, including a marketing and joint capital investment campaign. Proposals to provide shopping and services outside the Village core will be supported if they supplement rather than detract from downtown.
- *Utility extensions.* Community water, sewer, and electric utilities will be extended to areas annexed when cost effective. Areas not annexed to the Village will not be provided with utilities or other services.
- *Annexation.* The Village favors annexation of adjacent land to maintain positive control of land use and density and will support and explore annexation proposals which fit in with the Village's development goals.
- *Natural resources and environment.* The Village seeks to control erosion on steep slopes, preserving wetlands and flood plains. Development proposals in these areas will be expected to retain large trees and vegetation, respond to soil and topographical limitations, and require site plan approvals.
- *Traffic.* The Village supports limited modification of existing streets and will investigate the use of traffic control mechanisms to improve vehicular movement and traffic safety.
- *Recreation.* The Village is committed to meeting the recreational needs of all residents through expanding existing or providing new facilities, including trails, neighborhood parks, and improved playing fields. The plan recommends that recreational contributions be incorporated into Village approval procedures for development projects.
- *Residential development.* The plan recommends maintaining the existing housing mix, with moderate density, single family detached housing most appropriate. Additional housing needs exist for older residents, young families, and low and moderate income individuals.

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

New development must not seriously impact traffic, noise, etc.

- *Community character.* The Village seeks to preserve small town, low density, single family, college community qualities and retain existing neighborhood character. Development should embody the traditional aesthetic, but the Village recognizes the need for new development to strike a balance between the traditional and contemporary when dictated by economic necessity and market demands.

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

The Chenango Canal - Historical Background

The creation of the canal was spurred by a local group called the Committee of the Chenango Canal in the early nineteenth century. Its goal was to spur economic development in this rural area by linking to the commercially successful Erie Canal. The committee lobbied for several years for a bill authorizing the construction of a canal system connecting the Erie Canal at Utica to the Pennsylvania canal system via the Chenango Valley. In 1833, a bill authorizing its construction was passed and after several delays, the Chenango Canal was completed on May 6, 1837. The canal never did link the Erie Canal to the Pennsylvania system, but it spanned 97 miles between Binghamton and Utica, carrying freight from southern counties north to the Erie Canal.

The Chenango Canal was considered the best canal built in New York State. It had 116 locks, 76 of which lay between Utica and Bouckville. The canal was only four feet deep and had sloping sides. At its surface, it was 42 feet wide, but at its base, it was only 26 feet wide. On one bank of the canal was the towpath used by the pack animals that pulled the freight barges and packet boats. Several local reservoirs were constructed to supply the canal with water, including the Madison Reservoir (Lake Moraine), Hatch Lake, Bradley Brook Reservoir, and Leland's Pond.

Many new industries arose as a result of the Chenango Canal. Coal, iron ore, hay, food, and dairy products were the most prominent articles of trade. The canal enabled local farmers to sell their products to larger markets like New York City and made it possible for local residents to purchase goods made in these cities at affordable prices:

The development of the canal had a direct impact on both the Town and the Village of Hamilton. It spurred the creation of many stores, shops, and storehouses and the impetus to create a village green out of what was essentially a swamp. (The recently opened Barge Canal Coffee Company is aptly named, as a loading door from the canal was discovered when Colgate began renovations for the new cafe.) Grain was often carried to Hamilton, where it was used to make whiskey.

The canal, however, never achieved the estimates made by canal promoters. With the advent of the railroad, the canal was obsolete by the 1870s. The state's attempt to sell the canal to a private company proved futile and in 1880, the Villages of Hamilton, Sherburne, and Norwich were given parts of the canal within their municipal limits.

(Source: *Potential Development of The Nine Mile Swamp and the Chenango Canal*, prepared by Colgate University students enrolled in Professor David Lighthall's Geography Class, 1997. Historic information is taken from Barry K. Beyer, *The Chenango Canal*, 1973.)

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

Township of Hamilton Community Survey Analysis of Results

The Township of Hamilton Community Survey was initiated by the Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) as the first step in revising the Town of Hamilton's Comprehensive Plan. By soliciting the opinions of residents, the LRPC hopes that the Comprehensive Plan will reflect a wide range of ideas and highlight areas of consensus about the future direction of the Town. And, as part of a larger public participation process, the survey was intended to foster resident involvement in the planning and implementation of specific projects to positively shape the Town's future.

Drafting the survey was a highly collaborative process. To ensure that the survey addressed issues of specific concern to Town residents, the LRPC invited twelve residents of varied backgrounds to participate in two focus groups in March 1997. Each group was asked to discuss their views about current and future issues affecting the Town of Hamilton. Focus group comments were utilized by Colgate University students working with Assistant Professor David Lighthall to draft the first version of the survey, which was finalized with the assistance of the LRPC and EastWest Planning & Development, Inc. in April and May 1997.

Focus Group Comments

As in the survey results, several consistent themes arose from the often freewheeling discussions of the two focus groups, centered around what participants most like about living in Hamilton, what they want to preserve, and what they would like to change.

For most participants, the key benefit of living in the Town of Hamilton is the opportunity to belong to an active and connected community where "everyone can play a part." The natural beauty, sense of safety, and a lack of commercialism were cited as key assets. Most participants want to preserve and enhance the quality of life they experience living in a small, rural town shared by a liberal arts college. One resident said he seeks "not drastic change, just improve [the] quality" of life; another said she wants to "keep the sense of community." Preserving open land and increasing recreational opportunities that take advantage of the Town's natural setting ranked high in importance among the focus group members.

To preserve these assets, participants stated their desire to halt the loss of countryside, farms, and open space to housing and commercial development, the increase of traffic and noise, and the growing visual clutter of commercial development: signs, fast food restaurants, convenience stores, and mall development. Participants cited other areas nearby, including Route 5 near Oneida and Route 20 towards Manlius, as examples of what they don't want to see happen in Hamilton.

Key concerns identified by the focus group participants were to diversify the local economy, to provide white collar job opportunities for young people, and to strengthen the Town's commercial centers. While most feel that the presence of Colgate is of great value, participants said that they would like additional local sources of employment. One person noted that Hamilton's location and size pose challenges to economic development, while another said that the desire for economic expansion, with the attendant increase in population and housing needs, must be balanced with maintaining the quality of life residents value. Nonetheless, participants had many ideas including

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

attracting "high tech" and "eco-friendly" businesses, promoting family-owned businesses, and examining the economic development strategies of other rural college towns such as Cazenovia, Middlebury, VT, and Ithaca.

Agriculture was cited by focus group participants as important in preserving open space, rural ambiance, and jobs, although participants were discouraged about the possibility that anything substantial could be done to reverse the decline in farming. Suggestions, however, included improving "tax friendly" policies for farmers, purchasing development rights, and promoting alternative agriculture and "value added" production. Participants indicated large-scale farming operations should be subject to environmental controls and agreements to hire/buy supplies locally to maximize the benefit to the community.

Other topics discussed at the focus group meetings to a lesser extent included specific environmental concerns (the development of Poolville Pond, wetland protection, water quality); the need for a better understanding of the role and powers of Town government; better use of tax dollars; supporting quality education and day care; improving housing conditions in the villages; and concerns specific to Earlville residents (re-use of the elementary school, consolidation of Earlville into Madison County, and better septic and water). These and the other issues discussed by the focus groups were incorporated into the survey to allow for input by residents throughout the Town of Hamilton.

Survey Methodology

The Township of Hamilton Community Survey was designed to assess the opinions and priorities about various issues affecting the Town's future. The survey included a mix of close-ended and open-ended questions to encourage broad participation.

On May 8th, the survey was published in the Mid-York Weekly, a local newspaper with a circulation of approximately 7,000. Additional surveys were distributed by members of the Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) at the Farmer's Market, the Town transfer station, community centers, and local supermarkets during the month of May. Respondents were instructed to return completed surveys to the Town Clerk's office. Collection boxes were also placed at various points around town.

A total of 212 surveys was received. This is approximately 71% of the Town's initial goal of 300 completed surveys, which would have represented about 5% of Hamilton's overall population based on the 1990 Census.

Respondent Profile

As shown in the attached summary, adults between the ages of 35 and 54 comprise 41.5% of the survey respondents. The 65-74 and 55-64 age groups comprise 16.9% and 13.5%, respectively. In comparing the age distribution of the survey respondents with that of the Town's 1990 population, it appears that residents age 34 and younger (especially the 18-24 age group) are underrepresented in the sample, while the 35-54 and 55-64 age groups are considerably overrepresented.

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

Overall, the survey respondents are long-time residents of the township: 36.6% of respondents have lived in Hamilton for 25 years or more and 27.2% have lived here for 10-25 years. Just 5.6% of respondents have resided in the Town for two years or less. Along with the data on the age of the respondents, these statistics suggest that the opinions and priorities of Colgate University students, who accounted for most of the 18-24 age group in the 1990 Census, are probably not represented by the survey results, as the majority of students had already left for summer vacation.

Data from the 1990 Census indicates that the distribution of survey respondents by place of residency is remarkably similar to the distribution of year-round, permanent residents in the Town of Hamilton. Nearly one-fifth of respondents identified themselves as living in outlying areas of the Town (i.e., outside hamlets or villages). The remainder reside in the hamlets of Hubbardsville (8.9%), Poolville (8.9%), and South Hamilton (4.2%); in the Village of Hamilton (46.3%); and in the Village of Earlville (12.1%).

What Do You Like Most About Living in the Town of Hamilton?

Narrative responses to this question show strong consensus among residents about what the Town of Hamilton has to offer. The small-town character, natural landscape, Colgate University, and the sense of safety are key reasons why residents like living in Hamilton. In general, the responses can be categorized into several broad but often overlapping areas, as the following examples indicate:

Character/ambiance

- "Peaceful and quiet"
- "The character of the downtown area"
- "Small town atmosphere"
- "The rural character of the area"
- "Scenic, quiet, peaceful, friendly"

Location/access to village amenities

- "Proximity to services (I can walk to things)"
- "The stores - you can get most anything nearby"
- "Easy to get around"
- "That you can walk to everything"
- "Close walk to work"

People/family

- "The Town of Hamilton is an ideal place in which to raise a family"
- "The close knit community feeling"
- "Friendly, concerned, well cared for place"
- "Small town, friendly people"
- "Sense of community - small town atmosphere. People know each other"
- "The friendliness and spirit of the people and having a college here"

Natural landscape and resources

- "The clean air, the beautiful landscape, and the slower pace"

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

"Very pretty and scenic"
"The beautiful countryside"
"Countryside - beautiful hills and lakes"
"Pastoral setting"
"Rural setting - wildlife (deer, coyotes, turkeys, etc.)"

Colgate University

"Access to Colgate facilities"
"The small town accessibility to schools, work, etc. plus advantages of University life"
"Colgate University classes, special programs of Colgate"

Safety/security

"Quiet and safe, minimum traffic"
"Quiet, rural environment - relatively crime free"
"Being away from the hub-bub"

Value

"Solid property values"
"Town tax is reasonable"

What Do You Dislike Most About Living in the Town of Hamilton?

In general, the majority of responses to this question reflect the negative side of living in a small, rural community: isolation, limited cultural and retail amenities, lack of job opportunities, etc. A significant number of responses, however, focus on more specific areas, such as the noise caused by trucks passing through Town, student behavior, the condition of roads, urban sprawl, and taxes. Interestingly, seven residents said that there is nothing they dislike about living in the township, while a few others mentioned only the harsh winters.

Overall, the narrative responses can be divided into the following categories, with examples provided below:

Cultural, social, and recreational amenities

"Too few social amenities - no mid-priced restaurants, no movie theater"
"There isn't a park for children to play at besides the one at the elementary school"
"Need more recreation areas"
"Not much to do at night. Need more activities"
"No movie house"

Retail

"Too many expensive stores in main part of village...Need more competition and lower prices mainly on drugs and clothing"
"Distance to retail (larger)"
"Limited shopping"
"Lack of a good bookstore"
"Lack of restaurant options, e.g., 4 pizza places, no deli"

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

"It seems I must drive to Utica or Syracuse when I want to go shopping"

Community services/infrastructure

"The roads and streets don't get repaired right"

"Uncertainty of police protection in Hubbardsville"

"The roads in Hubbardsville are awful"

"Snowplowing on outer streets such as East and West Lake Road"

"Roads are not always well-marked. Country roads need more supervision for speeders"

Traffic and noise

"The huge trucks that come right through the Village of Hamilton"

"A lot of noise"

"Heavy truck routes on Hamilton Street. Extraneous noise and dust created by the trucks and heavy vehicles"

"The noise during the school year"

"Noise from mine and the truck traffic through Poolville"

Sprawl

"Growing urban sprawl, area needs to be more forward looking"

"The deterioration of the Town's appearance"

"Sprawl on Route 12B North (Grand Union, Ames)"

"Strip developing out on 12B North, buildings around the green mostly look like they belong here. Most of the recent additions further out are awful (doctors office, Mobil Mart, etc.)"

Economic opportunities

"Poor - very limited economic opportunities"

"Lack of real employment - it's either Colgate or Grand Union, not many options"

"I sometimes think that without Colgate University, Hamilton would not be much. Should we be so dependent".

People

"The know-it-all reformers, if they don't like our slow pace they can leave soon"

"Destruction from Colgate students"

"Students [have] noisy parties late at night. Landlords need to make rules for students and see that they are kept"

"Barking dogs (neighbors), speeding adolescents on our street (in cars and on skateboards all day and night)..."

Taxes/cost of living

"What seems to me to be uneven taxation"

"Property and school taxes and Colgate University. Almost everything in this town is priced for Colgate, the rest of us can't afford it"

"Inflated housing prices"

"High taxes"

"Assessments too high = homes not selling"

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

Town government and regulations

"Town government doesn't always seem to have the clout it needs to regulate or promote change"
"People who are in control of running the community. Never consider what the voter really wants"
"Zoning laws, building codes"
"Would like stricter zoning, encourage better upkeep of houses outside the village"
"The fact that the village I live in [Earlville] is so divided by county and township lines. It makes accessing county services more confusing"

Setting Priorities for the Town

Question #5 asked residents how important it is for the Town to commit more resources to a variety of initiatives and priorities. Responses were to be based on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being "very important" and 5 defined as "not at all important." On average, respondents placed the highest degree of importance on supporting local agriculture (1.72), preserving rural character (1.75), and improving the Town's appearance (1.91). Interestingly, these priorities remained consistent across the board, although respondents from the Village of Earlville rated initiatives such as economic development, attracting retail businesses, and improving government effectiveness as also very important, and individuals living in the Town for two years or less placed greater importance, on average, on enriching cultural opportunities.

Relatively speaking, attracting industrial development (3.01), attracting tourism (2.64), and increasing recreational opportunities (2.37) were ranked as least important by the respondents, although it should be pointed out that none of the priorities listed received an average in the 4-5 range (with 5 being "not at all important") of the scale.

A second measurement looked at the degree of consensus among the total responses to this question by calculating the percentage of responses ranked as either 1 or 2, with 1 defined as "very important." There was a relatively high degree of consensus among the respondents regarding supporting local agriculture, preserving rural character, and improving the Town's appearance; for each of these, more than two-thirds of respondents selected a rating of 1 or 2. On the other hand, there was far less consensus around attracting industrial development or attracting tourism; in fact, the number of respondents who considered industrial development *very* or *somewhat* important was approximately equal to the number who thought it was *not at all* important.

Land Use Regulations and Development

On question #6, residents were asked for their opinion of the Town's current land use regulations, based on a scale of 1-5, with 1 defined as "too restrictive," 3 as "adequate," and 5 as "not restrictive enough." Perhaps because they are not familiar with the land use regulations, a significant number of residents either did not respond or circled "N/A" for items #6a - #6f; for example, nearly a third of the 212 respondents did not indicate whether they think residential zoning (#6a) is too restrictive, adequate, or not restrictive enough.

On average, those that did respond believe that most of the Town's current land use regulations are adequate, with most of the items rated between 3.0 and 3.5. In general, respondents feel that agricultural zoning (2.89) and building codes (2.83) in the Town are somewhat restrictive.

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

Residents living outside the Village of Hamilton were more likely than other respondents to view agricultural zoning as somewhat restrictive.

A follow-up open-ended question asked residents if there were certain types of development or locations for development that they considered objectionable. Twenty-one respondents cited the new medical building on Eaton Street next to the Byrne Dairy. "I object to allowing the ugly medical building to be built on that site," wrote one resident. "It's too big and extremely un-Hamilton-like in appearance." Another resident asked: "Who approved this?" A respondent from the Village of Hamilton echoed the sentiments of the group, writing that it is "too late to do anything about the office building by Byrne Dairy, but such things shouldn't be allowed."

Respondents were equally critical of strip malls and urban sprawl. "Strip development of commercial facilities should not increase north of the village on 12B," wrote a 66-year old respondent. Many residents said that development should stick to already-developed areas of the Town. "I'm in favor of enhancing the downtown buildings and use as opposed to adding strip mega stores on the edges of the town," wrote a resident of the Village of Hamilton. "We should encourage development of existing commercial areas - renovate existing buildings," said another.

Other types of development to which the respondents objected included mining, trailer parks and mobile homes, industrial uses, prisons, factory farms, and microwave towers. Several residents also commented on the need to preserve forests, wetlands, and agricultural lands, clustering development in already developed areas instead. However, there was no real consensus on this topic, and many residents did not respond to the question.

Infrastructure

Asked what areas of the Town's infrastructure need improvement, the majority of respondents selected roads (56.1%) and sidewalks (53.7%). One-quarter of residents believe that the drinking water treatment system should be improved.

There was some variation in the responses to this question by place of residency. Sidewalks are the biggest priority in the Village of Hamilton; two out of three Village residents responding to the survey indicated that sidewalks are in need of improvement. In Earlville, more than half of residents feel that roads, sidewalks, and the drinking water treatment system all need work. In the hamlets of Hubbardsville, Poolville, and South Hamilton, roads are by far the greatest area of need.

Housing Needs

Questions #9a and #9b related to the housing needs of the Town. Residents were asked whether they feel there is a need for more housing in Hamilton and, if so, what type of housing would best meet the demand. Nearly two-thirds of all respondents do not believe there is a need for more housing, although the majority of Earlville residents do perceive a need for additional housing, primarily for single family dwellings and senior housing.

Of the 76 residents of the Town of Hamilton who feel additional housing units are needed, a large margin indicated that senior housing (55.3%) would best meet the demand, followed by single

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

family dwellings (40.8%), townhouses or condominiums (26.3%), and subsidized housing (26.3%).

Protection and Enhancement of Resources

The protection and enhancement of the Town's natural, agricultural, and historical resources seems to have strong support among Town residents. On question #10, respondents were asked to rate on a scale of 1-5 how important it is to protect or enhance a variety of features. On average, all of the items listed, including water bodies, wildlife habitats, historic buildings, farmlands, forests, and scenic areas, rated between 1 and 2, with 1 being "very important" and 5 as "not at all important." This generally applied across the board, by both place and length of residency, although residents of two years or less were somewhat less likely to view the protection of farmlands as very important.

Community Services and Facilities

Question #11 asked residents to indicate their level of satisfaction with community services and facilities in the Town on a scale of 1-5, with 1 defined as "very satisfied" and 5 as "very dissatisfied." Responses suggest that on average, Town residents are most satisfied with emergency services (1.98) and library facilities (1.99). There was considerable variation in all other categories which can probably be attributed to the degree of use of community services depending on age and access to appropriate facilities.

Emerging Issues

The final question on the survey listed a number of issues which have been mentioned in informal discussions as being of potential importance to the Town and asked residents to indicate, on a scale of 1-5, how important these issues are to them. On average, respondents are most interested in providing jobs and other opportunities for the younger generation (1.63), reopening the movie theater in the Village of Hamilton (1.68), and improving building conditions in existing business districts (2.02). Although none of the average ratings fell into the 3-5 range, residents placed lesser importance, relatively speaking, on the development of the Poolville Pond area (2.98), the Hamilton airport redevelopment plan (2.93), and the consolidation of Earlville into Madison County (2.86). These issues may be ones which residents do not see as having a direct impact on their daily lives.

In terms of place of residence, responses from residents of the Village of Hamilton and Hubbardsville are perhaps most similar to responses from residents of the Town as a whole. However, on average, Earlville respondents feel that providing jobs for the younger generation (1.43), re-use of the Earlville school building (1.52), consolidating Earlville into Madison County (1.63), and promoting alternative agricultural/forestry production (1.67) are most important. The regulation of mining and noise regulation are also priorities for Poolville residents.

In terms of length of residence, individuals who have lived in the Town of Hamilton for ten years or less are more likely than other respondents to perceive preserving the Chenango Canal as a tourist/recreational site, developing multi-use trails, and promoting alternative agricultural/forestry production as most important.

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

The individual responses to question #12 were also examined to determine the extent of consensus among respondents regarding specific issues. Overall, reopening the Hamilton theater and providing jobs to the younger generation had the highest degree of consensus, with nearly three-quarters of respondents rating these issues as *very* or *somewhat* important (indicated by ratings of 1 or 2). The importance of building conditions in the business districts and discouraging roadside strip development also had generally high levels of agreement among residents. There was relatively little consensus, however, around the importance of such issues as the Hamilton airport, the development of the Poolville pond area, and the consolidation of Earlville into Madison County. The lack of consensus on these issues may reflect the differing priorities among residents from different parts of the Town.

Additional Comments

At the bottom of the survey form, residents were given the opportunity to provide additional comments on a separate sheet of paper and attach them to the survey. The comments received address a variety of topics, including bringing back the movie theater, the condition of rental properties in the Village of Hamilton, junkyards, the need to improve the aesthetics of "downtown" Hamilton, and other issues.

Conclusion

Overall, the results of the focus groups and the community survey indicate several areas of consensus about what kind of Town residents would like Hamilton to be in twenty years. It is clear from the survey responses that most residents seek to preserve the qualities they value most about living in Hamilton: its close-knit community, rural character, and small-town ambiance; access to Village amenities; the natural landscape and resources; the benefits of Colgate; and a feeling of safety.

In keeping with this vision, respondents indicated that they would most like the Town to commit more resources to the support of local agriculture and preserving the Town's rural character. Regardless of place of residence, respondents were nearly unanimous in their high ranking of preserving the Town's natural resources.

Another area of consensus among respondents is the need to improve the economic vitality of the Town, particularly in its commercial centers. Providing jobs for the younger generation, improving the Town's appearance, attracting retail, reopening the Hamilton movie theater, improving building conditions, and promoting alternative agricultural and forestry production all ranked as high priorities. Although respondents indicated that they would like the Town to commit more resources to enhancing the revenue base through economic development, possible avenues for economic development – including attracting tourism, industrial development, and the Hamilton airport redevelopment plan – ranked relatively low in importance or lacked consensus, suggesting a need for additional education and public involvement around the issue of rural economic development. Responses to the survey also seem to indicate that while residents would like to have greater economic opportunities, they do not want to sacrifice the small-town character and natural resources of the community.

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

Most respondents feel existing zoning and land use regulations are adequate, although a large portion indicated they lack knowledge in this area or did not answer question pertaining to land use regulations, indicating a need for education and outreach about zoning issues. The desire to maintain the Town's rural character is reflected in the types of development respondents listed as objectionable (mining, industrial uses, prisons, microwave towers, etc.) and in the kinds of land use practices they would like to see (clustering development in already-developed areas and preserving natural resources). There was strong support for limiting further strip development along Route 12B north of "downtown" Hamilton and concern about poor road and sidewalk conditions and increased noise and traffic. Residents were also quite negative about the design and siting of the medical building near Byrne Dairy. It is interesting to note that while residents generally find current regulations adequate, the types of development that respondents cited as objectionable, such as strip development, occurred under these regulations.

Several issues were important depending on the respondent's place of residence. In Earlville, for example, re-use of the Earlville school building and consolidating Earlville into Madison County are high priorities, and unlike residents of other areas of the Town, Earlville residents indicated a need for additional housing. Residents of hamlet areas are also more concerned than residents of the Town as a whole about the condition of roads, and in the case of Poolville, the regulation of mining and noise.

While not cited as the highest priorities, expanding cultural opportunities, preserving the Chenango Canal, and the development of multi-use trails linking together hamlets and towns, were indicated as important by respondents, consistent with the vision of building on the existing assets of the Town. Of relatively low importance to respondents as a whole were increasing recreational opportunities, attracting tourism, attracting industrial development, regulation of telecommunications towers, and noise regulation. While housing was generally not perceived as a need, there is some support for developing senior housing.

In conclusion, the results of the survey were invaluable in identifying what residents most value about living in the Town of Hamilton, what aspects of life they would like to see preserved for the future, and what issues need to be addressed or improved. As part of a larger public participation process, the survey results will help ensure that the Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan reflects the community's vision of the future. And rather than gathering dust on a shelf, the survey results will help provide an action plan, rooted in consensus, for use by residents and town officials alike to develop initiatives which foster long-term vitality for the Town of Hamilton.

FARMLAND OWNER SURVEY

Long Range Planning Committee for the Town of Hamilton

THE LAND

1. Where is your farm located:
- | | | | |
|---------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| Village of Hamilton | _5_ | Village of Earlville | ___ |
| Poolville | _4_ | Hubbardsville | _3_ |
| East Hamilton | _2_ | South Hamilton | ___ |

2. How many acres do you own or rent (from others) for farming?
- | | Own | Rent | <i>(Close estimates okay)</i> |
|----------|---------------|------|-------------------------------|
| Crops | 245 | 255 | Of those reporting |
| Pasture | 105 | 29 | -- Of those reporting |
| Woodland | Data Not Good | | |
| Other | 50 | | |
| Totals: | 535 | 211 | |

*** DISTRIBUTION OF ANSWERS:

Crops Own: 105, 250, 120, 115, 163, 210, 25, 70, 45, 566, 400, 20, 1100
 Crops Rent: 150, 70, 350, 300, 255
 Pasture Own: 70, 60, 30, 150, 40, 65, 30, 25, 60, 276, 225, 40, 300
 Pasture Rent: 150, 70, 350, 300, 18
 Woodland Own: 70, 190, 20, 127, 60, 30, 60
 Woodland Rent: 20, 50
 Other Own: 44, 56
 Totals Own: 265, 700, 500, 170, 290, 422, 355, 55, 125, 165, 1194, 700, 1480
 Totals Rent: 170, 70, 300, 410, 300, 21

3. Do you consider your farmland soils are mostly: *(Check one)*
- | | 25% | 50% | 75% | 100% | <i>(% of land that is of this quality)</i> |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|------|--|
| High quality | | 3 | | 1 | (acres) |
| Moderate quality | 2 | 2 | | 6 | (acres) |
| Poor quality | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | (acres) |

4. Has farmland been sold near you that has led to problems for your operations? _____ (y/n)
 If "yes", state the nature of the problem(s)
 0 yes
 13 no

5. Have you sold farmland in the past five years? _____ (y/n). If "yes", how many acres? _____
 If "yes", what is the land now used for? *(check whatever applies)*
 Yes 3
 No 13
 1 Sold as residential, 1 Sold as farm, 1 Sold as non-reported

6. Have you bought farmland in the past five years? _____ (y/n) If "yes", how many acres: _____ What do you use it for now?
 Yes 4, No 10
 Average 160 acres as farmland
7. Are there any barns, buildings or other physical features on your property which have historic value to you and your family? (e.g. Hop farms) _____ (y/n). If "yes", please describe:
 Yes 5
 No 9
 People reported barns and house structures

THE PEOPLE

8. How many years has your family been operating a farm in the Town of Hamilton?
 30, 60, 1.5, 137, 22, 25, 4, 15, 31, 43.5, 56, 76, 10, 10 = Average 37
9. How many people in your family work on the farm (daily, weekly, part or full-time)?
 1, 3, 2, 0, 2, 2, 5, 3, 2, 1, 4, 1, 1, 1 = Average 2
10. How many people in your family have employment *off the farm*? _____ What type? (optional)
 0, 0, 1, 2, 1, 0, 0, 2, 1, 1, 0, 1, 0, 0 = Average 1
11. How many non-family employees work on the farm (daily, weekly, part or full time)?
 1, 0, 0, 10, 5, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 1, 0 = Average 1
12. How much of your work week do you spend on farming activities?
 (check one) Less than 1/3 2 1/3 to 2/3 2 more than 2/3 10
13. Age of the principal farm operator:
 60, 65, 34, 61, 67, 38, 43, 47, 66, 44, 46, 52, 48 = Average 52

THE BUSINESS

14. Over the *past five years*, how have your sales and profits changed? (check whatever applies)

	<u>Sales</u>	<u>Profits</u>
increasing	<u>5</u>	<u> </u>
staying same	<u>1</u>	<u> </u>
declining	<u>8</u>	<u>13</u>

15. What are the main products produced for sale on your farm? Can you provide a rough estimate of goods produced for these products?

Primarily the answer was milk with a few people mentioning hay, corn, heifers, and crops
People were not able to provide an estimate.

16. Do you sell other products or farm-related services (e.g., logging, fruit and vegetable stands, specialty livestock, maple syrup, tourist activities, etc.)? ____ (y/n). If "yes", please describe the nature of these products and services, and an estimate of how much these additional products and services add to profits (e.g. 2%).

Yes 4

No 10

*Timber, boarded heifers, livestock

17. Have you made investments in your farm in the past five years to improve efficiency, to expand operations and/or to diversify? ____ (y/n) If "yes", what types of investments have you made? If "no", what barriers are present?

Yes 7

No 6

Improvements were to improve farms, barns, milk houses, silos, allow for boarding, equipment
Barriers was access to capital

18. Would you consider diversifying into other product or activities if you had technical and financial support? ____ (y/n) If "yes", what other production or activity interests you?

Yes 6

No 7

Undecided 1

People were interested growing better crops, fish farming, deer farming, natural beef, and goats

19. Have you had complaints from neighbors about farm practices? ____ (y/n) If "yes", what was the nature of their complaint and were the complaints resolved to mutual satisfaction?

Yes 0

No 14

THE OUTLOOK FOR FARMING

20. Do you think that good farmland in the Town of Hamilton is plentiful and affordable for farmers who want to expand?
 (check one) [Plentiful] Yes 6 Undecided 3 No 5
 (check one) [Affordable] Yes 4 Undecided 2 No 7
21. Might you eventually sell some or all your farmland for non-agricultural use? (y/n)
 Yes 5, No 9
22. Will a family member likely continue operating your farm after your retirement? (y/n)
 Yes 4, No 7, Undecided 3
23. Do you expect the possible sale of your farmland for development to be a source of retirement funds? (y/n)
 Yes 3, No 10, Undecided 1
24. How many more years do you expect to farming?
 5 years 2 10 years 1 15 years 1 20 years 8 Done 2
25. How many more years to you expect members of your family will be working the farm?
 5 years 0 10 years 1 15 years 0 20 years 6 Done 3, Undecided 4
26. What changes do you anticipate making with the farm in the next five years?
 (check all that apply)
- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <u>6</u> more livestock | <u>1</u> take off-farm job |
| <u>3</u> major capital improvements | <u>2</u> less livestock |
| <u>4</u> buy more land | <u>2</u> sell some land |
| <u>5</u> diversify products | <u>4</u> sell whole farm |
| or services | <u>2</u> retire |
| <u>4</u> no change | <u>0</u> Other <u> </u> |

* Please note that people either tended to have multiple responses to this question or no responses.

VIEWS ABOUT FARMLAND USE

27. How important to you is the protection of good farmland for ongoing agricultural use?
Undecided 1 Low importance 1 Somewhat important 1 Very important 11
28. How important to you is the continuation of your land for farming beyond your retirement?
Undecided 1 Low importance 1 Somewhat important 5 Very important 7
29. How would you feel about a Town policy that would protect agricultural uses of farmland and allow for certain other uses only by permit?
Undecided 4 Oppose 1 Might support 5 Definitely support 4
30. Indicate how much familiarity you have with these concepts:
- | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) | None <u>7</u> | Minimal <u>4</u> | Moderate <u>2</u> | Considerable <u>1</u> |
| Conservation Easements | None <u>7</u> | Minimal <u>4</u> | Moderate <u>2</u> | Considerable <u>1</u> |
| Non-restrictive agricultural zoning | None <u>9</u> | Minimal <u>3</u> | Moderate <u>2</u> | Considerable <u>0</u> |
31. Would you consider selling the development rights of your farmland if given an attractive offer and could keep on farming as usual? (*check one*)
Yes 5 No 1 Not sure 7

Why would you support or object selling the development rights?

Support: The people who supported this want to be ensured that the land would stay in farming and that someone would not tell them what they can and cannot do.

Oppose: They stated issues of economic and that farming is not a good way to make a living.

One good idea for a land-trust.

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

High-Speed Data Transmission Options

High-speed data transmission can be achieved in several ways. Current options include:

1. Connection to a fiber-optic cable system via a dedicated high-speed telephone line. A version of this technology (T-1 line: 1.5 megabits/sec) is in use at Colgate University at a cost of \$18,000 per year plus a service charge of similar magnitude. A local business is considering installing a T-1 line for local Internet service. A faster line (T-3: ~ 55 megabits/sec) is available at about \$160,000 per year plus service charges.
2. Connection through existing telephone systems. This can be done in two ways:

Integrated Services Data Network (ISDN), a digital telephone service. It is costly to install (\$3,100), and calls are re-routed through long-distance carriers, making it expensive to use outside urban locations. ISDN is available locally through Bell Atlantic; calls go through Rome, NY. Citizens Communications only offers ISDN in major cities.

Analog Data Subscriber Loop (ADSL), a "last mile" connection involving a high-speed link between a customer's phone and the telephone system. ADSL can speed up data transmission, but neither telephone company proposes to offer it in Hamilton anytime soon.
3. Connection via cable TV modems. This requires reworking cable TV infrastructure, and cable companies are slow to offer it outside of population centers. Cable modem service is not available in Hamilton, but it is offered in Norwich and Sherburne. Even if the cable company that serves the Hamilton area (TimeWarner) were to add high-speed capability, the service would not be available in rural parts of the Town that do not have cable TV.
4. Satellite hook-up. One-way satellite transmission (direct PC service) is currently available for incoming information. Systems now under development may offer two-way transmission in areas like ours in the future.

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

Colgate Student Research Papers

Research papers prepared by Colgate University geography and sociology students in 1997 and 1998 provided information and analysis on various issues discussed in the comprehensive plan. These papers, which are available for review in the Town of Hamilton offices, include:

Environmental Resources and Cultural Amenities in the Town of Hamilton (April 1997)

Natural Resource Development: Agriculture and Forestry (April 1997)

Potential Development of the Nine Mile Swamp and the Chenango Canal (April 1997)

Preserving Agriculture in the Town of Hamilton (May 1998)

Summary of Land Use and Zoning Law in Hamilton, NY (April 1997)

Survey of Agriculture and Forestry Data for the Town of Hamilton, NY (April 1997)

Survey of the Recreational Resources and Related Issues for the Town of Hamilton (April 1997)

Town of Hamilton, New York Geographic Information System Data Catalog (Spring 1997)

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan

Action Plan Goals Schedule

Goal 1: To develop economic initiatives which provide good jobs, support the social fabric of the community, and preserve the environment.

Actions	Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
1-1 Provide support for the retention and expansion of existing businesses within the Town and initiate a study to determine what kinds of new businesses would be likely to succeed.	✓		
1-2 Assess the feasibility of developing a telecommuting center and investigate possibilities for obtaining rapid data transmission service in the Town of Hamilton.	✓		
1-3 Enhance the economic and social impact of local and regional special events for the Town of Hamilton through improved marketing and coordination assistance.	✓		
1-4 Support establishment of a Chenango Valley crafts and farm products store.		✓	
1-5 Identify parcels and sites appropriate for light manufacturing or intensive commercial development within the Town of Hamilton to encourage economic development.		✓	
1-6 Work with the Village of Hamilton to facilitate the development of the Hamilton Airport as a business incubator and park.		✓	

Goal 2: To actively support and promote sustainable agriculture as a vital component of the local and regional economy through cooperative initiatives between neighboring communities, Town and County governments, and area educational institutions.

2-1 Gain political support for agriculture and raise awareness of its vital role in our community's character and economy.	✓		
2-2 Support development of a program that encourages sustainable owner-operator farming in the Town.		✓	
2-3 Work with Madison County to establish a Farmland Protection Plan.		✓	
2-4 Create an Agricultural Empowerment Zone in the Town of Hamilton as a pilot project.			✓

Goal 3: To strengthen the Town's villages as commercial, retail and entertainment centers.

Actions		Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
3-1	Develop arts and cultural activities and promote historic resources in the Village areas as a tool for economic development and tourism.	✓		
3-2	Support efforts by the Villages of Hamilton and Earlville to enhance and expand their downtown retail sectors.	✓		
3-3	Support efforts to develop the Earlville Community Center located in the former Elementary School.		✓	
3-4	Support efforts by the Village of Earlville to replace its aging water system infrastructure.		✓	

Goal 4: To identify and promote year-round recreational opportunities throughout the Town.

4-1	Support a study of the Town's recreational needs and create an inventory of recreational facilities.	✓		
4-2	Support development of a trail system in the Town of Hamilton with voluntary easements where needed.		✓	
4-3	Encourage development of a community center for teens or young adults that combines human services, recreational activities, entertainment, and other opportunities for local youth.			✓
4-4	Develop an inventory of valuable natural, environmental and historic resources.	✓		

Goal 5: To improve housing conditions throughout the Town.

5-1	Continue to assist residents to plan and fund housing improvements where needed.		✓	
5-2	Work with the Village of Earlville and senior citizen organizations to assess the need for senior housing in Earlville.		✓	

Goal 6: To identify and protect the Town's vital groundwater aquifers.

Actions	Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
6-1 Implement measures to protect local watersheds located in the Town of Hamilton.	✓		
6-2 Define and identify areas susceptible to groundwater contamination in the Town.		✓	
6-3 Establish Town policies related to watershed protection.		✓	
6-4 Continue to address drinking water quality and the construction of septic tanks and wells.			✓

Goal 7: To maintain the Town's position as an efficient provider of municipal services, and prepare for future technological, economic and population changes.

7-1 Continue to explore opportunities for consolidating certain Town government functions with those of other local governments to reduce the costs of municipal services.		✓	
7-2 Continue to consult with Town officers and staff to assess future needs for technological resources.		✓	
7-3 Work with the U.S. Census Bureau to more accurately reflect the student population in its population count in the 2000 Census.	✓		
7-4 Review and update the Town's land use policies to prepare for future economic, demographic, and technological changes.		✓	
7-5 Continue to support education and training for the Town Board, members of the Town's Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals.		✓	