

Town of Brighton Smart Growth Plan

Funded by the
Adirondack Park Community Smart Growth Grant Program



July 9, 2009

Prepared for:
Town of Brighton
Franklin County, NY

Prepared by:
F. X. Browne, Inc.
Saranac Lake, NY

Town of Brighton Smart Growth Plan

July 9, 2009



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Acknowledgements

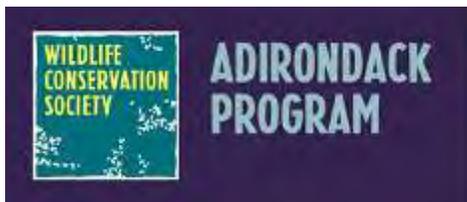
This project would not have been possible without the help of many dedicated project partners, town board members, committee members, and community members, including the following:



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Executive Summary

In 2008, the Town of Brighton received an Adirondack Park Community Smart Growth Grant from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation for a sustainable economic development project. The project was designed to investigate solutions for some of the biggest issues facing Brighton residents: the closure of Camp Gabriels, high energy costs, poor telecommunications access, lack of affordable housing, lack of public transportation, and poor visibility for local businesses. The project included the following activities:

- Review of existing documents
- Key stakeholder interviews
- Community survey
- Brighton Connections tourism brochure
- Brighton business social
- Energy efficiency workshop
- Telecommunications planning
- Land use evaluation
- Smart Growth Plan
- Public Meetings



Community Survey

Approximately 25 percent of the households in Brighton that were mailed the survey responded. Of the respondents, the vast majority (72 percent) feel that Brighton’s primary “identity” should be “a place to live and work.” The type of economic development that community members listed as most desirable was re-use of existing buildings (51 percent), followed by Camp Gabriels replacement (48 percent), recreation businesses (46 percent), and home-based businesses (44 percent). More information about the community survey is provided in section 1.7 and Appendix B.

Land Use Analysis

Very little land is available for development within the Town of Brighton. Of the available land, much of it is “land-locked” behind properties along roads, making it inaccessible. However, six key areas have been identified as locations close to existing development centers or prominent intersections with potential for the type of commercial or light industrial development that will bring jobs and economic development to the town. The Town of Brighton should consider implementing town planning to designate these areas as economic development centers. In addition, the town should promote reuse and redevelopment of existing buildings for commercial use. The land use analysis is provided in section 2.0.

Environmental Assessment

The Town of Brighton has a wealth of environmental assets that attract visitors, scientists, birders, students, and local residents. For example, the town has high-value wetland complexes, an extensive underlying aquifer, quality forest resources, habitat for rare and threatened species, and spectacular rivers, lakes, and mountains for recreational opportunities. Although the town’s environmental resources are largely in good condition, the Town of Brighton should consider

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environmental planning initiatives to protect the town's greatest assets in terms of economic development potential: natural and recreational resources. In particular, the town should pass a conservation subdivision (cluster development) ordinance to ensure that future development protects open space and focuses development in key areas. The environmental assessment is discussed in section 2.3 and maps are provided in Appendix D.

Business Development/Brighton Connections Brochure

The Town of Brighton has an active business community, the vast majority of which are small businesses. In order to highlight and capitalize upon the town's economic development potential, a tourist brochure, "Brighton Connections" was developed. The goal of the brochure is to attract visitors to the Town of Brighton from the greater Adirondack region, as well as to provide information to visitors that may keep them in the town for additional recreational opportunities, shopping, accommodations, etc. Three thousand full-color copies of the brochure have been printed and are being distributed to local and regional venues such as the Visitor's Interpretive Center, chambers of commerce, museums, hotels, and other locations. More information about the brochure is provided in section 3.4 and a copy of the brochure is provided in Appendix F.

Telecommunications

A major impediment to economic development in the Town of Brighton is a lack of high-speed Internet and cell phone access in parts of the town. For many residents, the cost of installing high-speed Internet access from the main road to their homes (so-called "last mile" access) is prohibitive. The Town of Brighton should partner with CBN Connect and/or other area telecommunications interests to improve high-speed Internet and cell phone access to town residents, possibly via supporting the installation of a wireless transmitter in a strategic location such as the Adirondack Airport. Telecommunications issues in the Town of Brighton are discussed in Section 4.0.

Town Planning

Currently, the Town of Brighton has no comprehensive, zoning, or site review plan to guide future development and ensure that development practices within the town are compatible with the town's character and identity. At a minimum, the town should re-establish its site review board and pass a Site Review Plan to allow for review of major developments within the town. The town should also consider implementing a Comprehensive Plan, Land Use Plan or Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, and Conservation Subdivision Ordinance. Information on planning issues in the Town of Brighton is provided in section 6.0.

Organizational Capacity

The Town of Brighton has no full-time employees other than Highway Department personnel. The Town Supervisor and the Town Board members are part-time elected officials, and all have other jobs that keep them very busy. The town would benefit greatly from having a full-time Town Manager to keep up with grant opportunities, regional collaborations, and economic development initiatives. At least part of the Town Manager's salary could be paid with grant money, which would provide an incentive to apply for grants.

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Action Plan

The following Action Plan summary highlights the most pressing needs in the Town of Brighton in terms of economic development. The Action Plan, timeline, and potential funding opportunities are discussed in section 7.0.

1. Distribute the Brighton Connections brochure widely in the Tri-lakes region.
2. Hire a town manager or town planner to seek grants and advocate for the town's interests within the Adirondack region.
3. Support efforts to find a year-round business to replace Camp Gabriels.
4. Hold monthly Brighton business socials, rotating locations between town businesses, in order to foster connections and collaboration between area businesses.
5. Periodically hold energy efficiency workshops and additional opportunities to provide information to residents about how they can improve their homes and reduce the cost of home ownership.
6. Develop and implement a Site Review Plan.
7. Develop and implement a conservation subdivision ordinance.
8. Apply for a technology grant or stimulus funding in conjunction with CBN Connect and other area towns to build a wireless high-speed Internet transmitter at the Adirondack Airport.
9. Partner with neighboring towns to share services and engage in cooperative purchasing to save money.
10. Encourage year-round economic development in the town, including support for "green jobs."
11. Whenever possible, maintain existing buildings and support historic preservation projects such as the Town Hall renovation. This includes promoting historic preservation easements on public and private properties in the town.
12. Encourage smart economic growth in existing centers such as Gabriels village and other identified potential growth areas.



1.0 Introduction

The Brighton Smart Growth Project was funded by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC) Adirondack Park Community Smart Growth Grant. This grant program (funded by the Environmental Protection Fund) provided funds for eighteen projects in Adirondack Park communities that need financial or technical assistance to plan successfully for the future.

We need to capitalize on our rich history, ample and unique recreational opportunities, supportive community spirit, and diverse economic potential to keep our town viable long into the future.

1.1 Purpose of Smart Growth Plan

The Brighton Smart Growth Plan is intended to inform decision-making in the Town of Brighton with respect to economically and environmentally sustainable growth practices. It is not a town governing document, but rather serves as a springboard for future planning efforts in the town. The Plan documents the desires and goals of town residents, and provides information about how to guide growth within the town so that our community and recreational character can be preserved, while creating jobs and small business opportunities for our residents. The Town of Brighton is seen by our residents and visitors as a recreation haven and a place to live and work. We need to capitalize on our rich history, ample and unique recreational opportunities, supportive community spirit, community and natural assets, and diverse economic potential to keep our town viable long into the future. A glossary of planning terms designed to assist readers of this Plan is provided in Appendix G.

1.2 Demographics and Background

The Town of Brighton is located in south-central Franklin County, one of the northernmost counties in New York State. The town occupies an area of about 78 square miles. Most of the land is forested. According to the Brighton 2000 Report (Willis 2002), the State of New York owns about 47% of the land in the town, most of it wild forest. Lands of Paul Smith's College account for an additional 20% of town acreage. Figure 1 is a location map of the Town of Brighton.

Modern-day development in Brighton is primarily centered along the few roads in town. Two state highways intersect in Brighton; Route 30 runs north to Malone and south to Tupper Lake, and Route 86 runs east to Saranac Lake and ends at Paul Smith's College at its western terminus. Approximately 8 miles of county and town roads also exist in the town. Several developed areas, or neighborhoods, are located within the town, including McColloms, Paul Smiths (including Keese Mill Road), Gabriels, Rainbow Lake, and Split Rock Road.

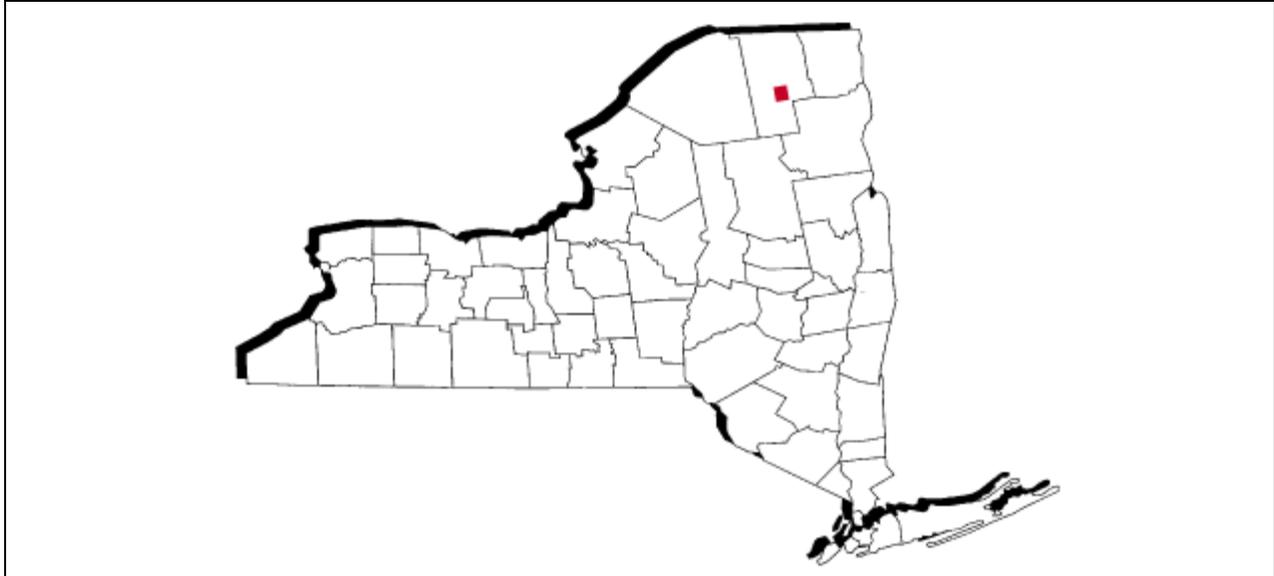


Figure 1 - Town of Brighton Location Map
Source: Brighton 2000 Report (Willis 2002)



Photo Credit: Pat Willis

Historical information about the Town of Brighton is provided in Appendix A.

According to the US Census Bureau there were 1,682 residents in the Town of Brighton in the year 2000. That total included 363 inmates of Camp Gabriels and 535 Paul Smith's College students, leaving 784 people not resident in either institution. The 1999 per capita income in the town was \$11,995, which is about half the national average of \$21,587.

Of the town's population over age 16, 86 percent were in the labor force. The total assessment for the Town in 2009 was \$247,296,840, with approximately 1,097 tax parcels on the tax rolls. The Total Warrant for the town and county in 2009 was \$1,319,109; the school tax re-levy (unpaid school taxes are added on to town and county) was \$64,589.

Figure 2 is a topographic map of the Town of Brighton.

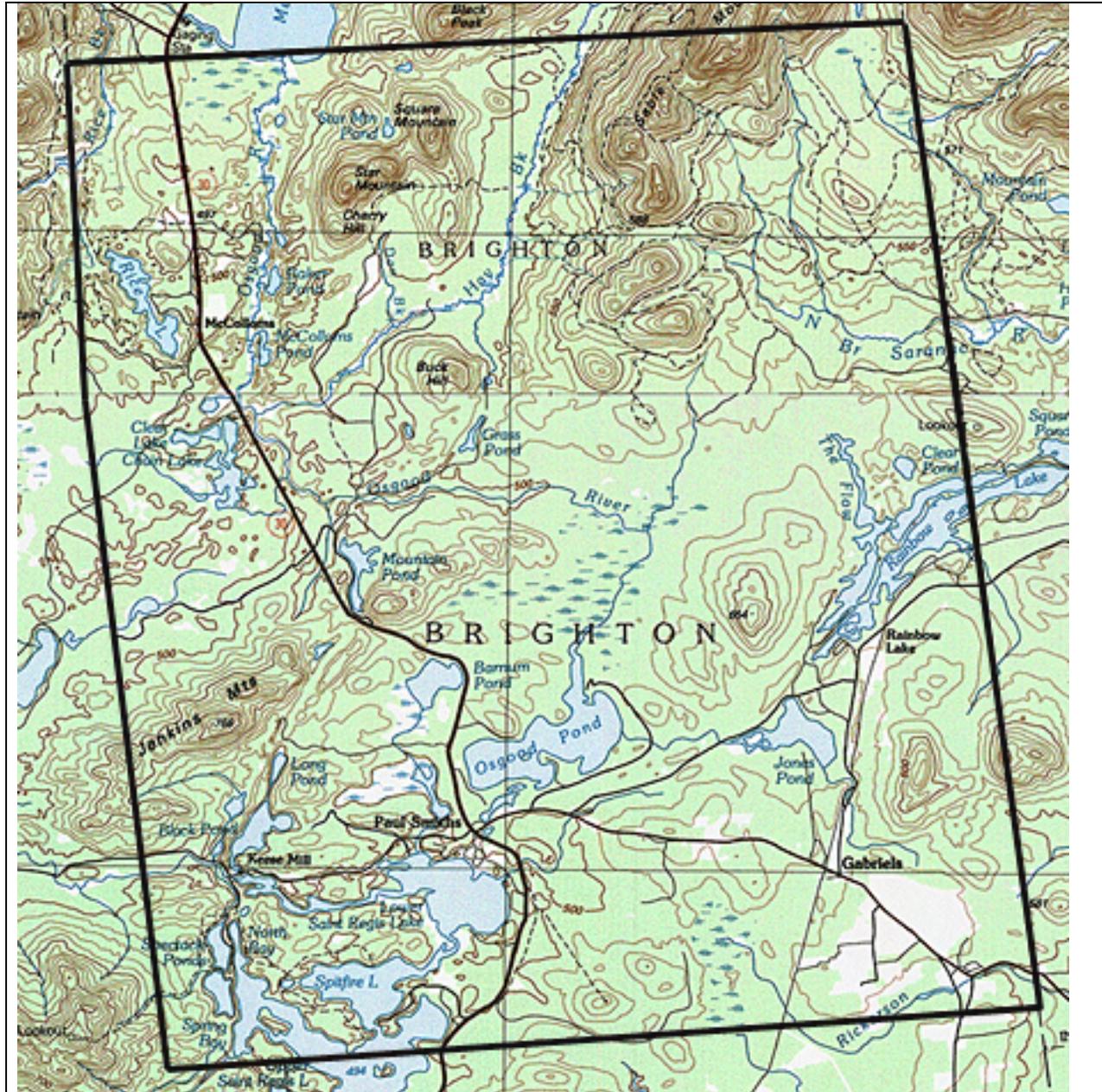


Figure 2 - Town of Brighton Map
Source: Brighton 2000 Report (Willis 2002)

1.3 Community Assets

Brighton has a wealth of economic, cultural, historical, and recreational opportunities existing within the town. However, many of these opportunities are under-utilized or not recognized by tourists passing through the town on their way to the Visitor's Interpretive Center or other recreational opportunities. Brighton is a wonderful place to live and work, as well as a recreation haven. Brighton has many assets to offer our visitors, including hiking trails, numerous lakes and

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rivers for paddling, wetland bird watching sites, historical sites, crafters' studios, working farms, a nature center, and an award-winning college. Brighton contains a broad mix of land use, including a small town center in Gabriels, three larger institutions (Paul Smith's College, the Adirondack Park Visitor Interpretive Center, and the Camp Gabriels Correctional Facility, although the latter recently closed), several large recreational lakes with many second homes, two multigenerational working family farms, and several small forestry operations and tree farms.

Brighton has a strong community volunteer base, supporting the following organizations: Brighton Architectural Heritage Committee, Brighton Seniors, Osgood Lake Association, Paul Smiths-Gabriels Volunteer Fire Department, Rainbow Lake Association, St. Paul's/Assumption Church Food Pantry, St. Regis Lakes Association, and the Volunteer Ride-to-Town Program. The citizens of the Brighton community are a major asset; a culture of neighborliness and a willingness to help others abounds.

A more detailed listing of the Town of Brighton's assets is included in Appendix A.

1.4 Town Government and Local Laws

The Town of Brighton is governed by a supervisor and four town council members. Decisions regarding town business are made by majority rule of the town council and supervisor, consisting of at least three of the five members. The town supervisor is the chief financial officer of the town and presides over town council meetings. Town council meetings are held at the town hall on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm, and are open to the public. Periodically, special town meetings are held to address interim issues, which are announced in the local newspaper.

The town does not have any full time staff other than the highway department personnel. The town clerk, town supervisor, and town council members are elected officials, and all work part-time for the town (most of them have other full-time jobs). The town clerk has office hours two afternoons a week, and the town has no planning department. Other elected part-time personnel include a tax collector and a town justice. Part-time personnel that are appointed by the town board or town supervisor include the code enforcement officer, town assessor, bookkeeper, park attendant, dog control officer, board of assessment review, and custodian. The highway department is supervised by the highway superintendent (elected), and consists of three other full-time department personnel.

The Town of Brighton has no existing approved zoning, comprehensive plan, or other land use planning documents. All town planning is currently governed by the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) Act. While the APA Act does protect some environmentally sensitive areas from development and manages some land use, it does not necessarily take into account the community character and land use impacts on surrounding businesses, nor is it intended to take the place of local municipal planning. The APA acts within its jurisdiction only.

The following local laws govern the Town of Brighton (Town of Brighton):

- Liability concerning town highways
- Avoidable Alarms
- Veterans Exemption Increase
- Dog control
- Repair and removal of unsafe buildings
- Four-year terms for Town Clerk and Tax Collector
- Establish Grievance Day as the first Thursday in June
- Residency requirements for Code Enforcement Officer
- Administration and enforcement of the Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code
- Prohibition of litter, clutter and debris
- Personal Watercraft Regulation Zone

1.5 What is Smart Growth?

According to the American Planning Association (2002), Smart Growth is the process of using various community planning techniques to develop and revitalize communities. “Smart Growth is critically important in rural and small town economic development initiatives because the limited availability of public funding means each dollar must accomplish more” (American Planning Association 2002). The Smart Growth Network developed a set of ten basic principles for Smart Growth (2001):

1. Mix land uses
2. Take advantage of compact building design
3. Create a range of housing opportunities and choices
4. Create walkable neighborhoods
5. Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place
6. Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas
7. Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities
8. Provide a variety of transportation choices
9. Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective
10. Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions

Smart Growth does not mean 'No Growth.' Planning for economically and environmentally sustainable growth is a responsible way to ensure that community growth takes into account community character and the needs and preferences of community members.

Even though the Town of Brighton is rural in character, Smart Growth issues are just as relevant. The Common Ground Alliance has developed a *Blueprint for the Blue Line* that addresses many Smart Growth issues within the Adirondack Park; for example, main street revitalization, infrastructure, sustainable economic development, high-speed telecommunications, community housing, transportation, and land use planning (2008). The Blueprint cites a lack of municipal planning as a major concern for Adirondack communities, leaving them unprepared for

unwanted or poorly-planned development and unable to protect vulnerable natural areas and critical habitat. The Adirondack Council's report, *Climate Change and Future Land Use in the Adirondack Park* (n.d.), recommends that Adirondack communities "strengthen comprehensive planning from the local community level and extend across the entire Park to address climate change and also to 'brand' the Park's unique natural, cultural and historic assets for its future sustainable development."

Smart Growth does not mean 'No Growth.' Planning for economically and environmentally sustainable growth is a responsible way to ensure that community growth takes into account community character and the needs and preferences of community members.

1.6 Brighton Smart Growth Initiative

In 2008, the Town of Brighton received an Adirondack Park Community Smart Growth Grant through the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation for a sustainable economic development project. The project was designed to investigate solutions for some of the biggest issues facing Brighton residents: the closure of Camp Gabriels, high energy costs, poor telecommunications access, lack of affordable housing, lack of public transportation, and poor visibility for local businesses. This project includes the following activities:

- Review of Existing Documents – reviewed and summarized past town planning documents and historical documents.
- Key Stakeholder Interviews – interviewed representatives of key stakeholder groups in the town, including the Adirondack Visitor Interpretive Center, Camp Gabriels Correctional Facility, Paul Smith's College, local churches, the Brighton Seniors, area farmers, and local businesspeople).
- Community Survey – mailed a survey to all community taxpayers to assess their priorities in terms of the town's identity, development priorities, Internet access, and businesses.
- Brochure – designed a town of Brighton tourist brochure to highlight local businesses and attractions for visitors to the town as well as services for residents.
- Business Social – held the first ever Brighton Business Social at the town hall to bring local business people together in hopes of forging partnerships and shared services.
- Energy Efficiency Workshop – held a workshop at the VIC to inform residents about opportunities to save money by making their homes and businesses more energy efficient.
- Telecommunications Planning – the Town began coordination with other area telecommunications planning teams in efforts to bring high-speed Internet into more areas of the town without high-speed access.
- Land Use Evaluation – conducted an environmental risk assessment, GIS land use mapping project, and build-out analysis to determine areas of the town that are open for development as well as to highlight unique and marketable natural features in the town.
- Smart Growth Plan – compiled and evaluated the results of the economic and land use assessments in order to determine economic development alternatives that will improve the economy of the town of Brighton while at the same time protecting the town's vital

environmental, cultural, and historical resources. The alternatives have been prioritized in this Smart Growth Plan.

- Public Meetings – Held two public meetings as part of this project, one at the beginning and one at the end, to allow local residents to voice their opinions about smart growth topics in the Town of Brighton.

1.7 Brighton Smart Growth Community Survey

As part of the Brighton Smart Growth project, the Town of Brighton solicited information from town residents and business owners via a community survey regarding community issues, businesses, energy efficiency needs, and the town's overall identity. The goal was not a scientific survey of resident perceptions, but rather a method for soliciting interest and facilitating connections between residents and businesses within the town. In order to reach all of the interested small business owners and residents within

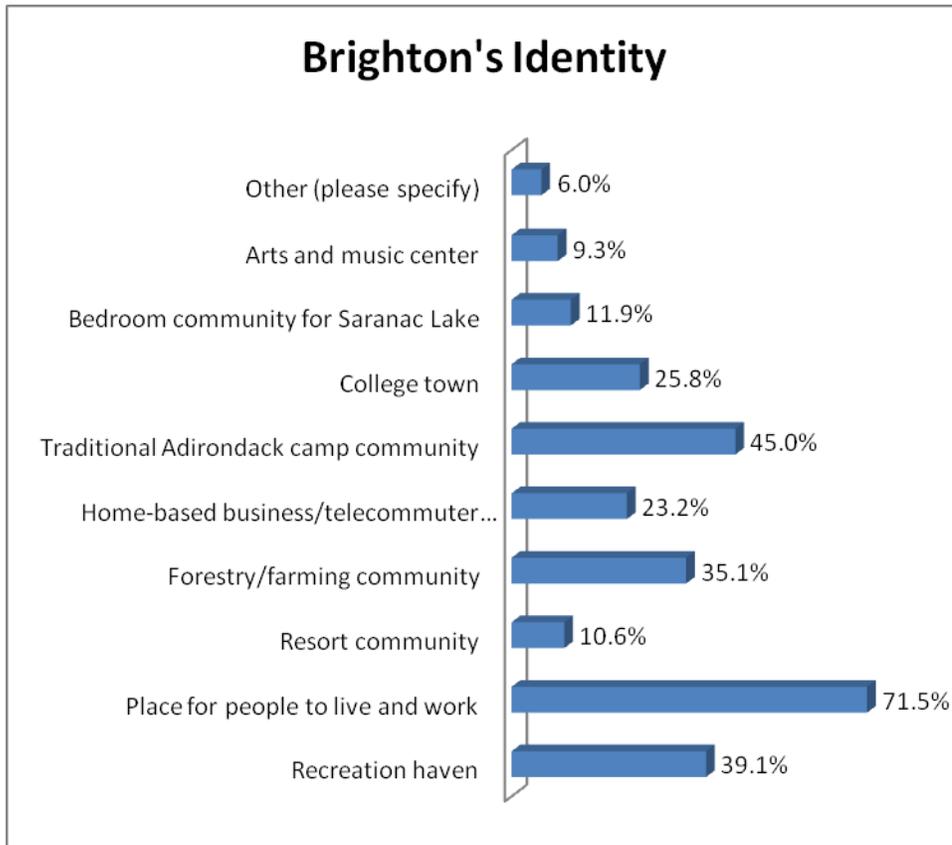


the town to gather information about green building, small businesses cooperatives, high-speed internet access, and other issues related to smart growth, a paper survey was mailed to every household in the town using a fire department mailing list. The survey was also advertised to residents via ads in the newspaper, announcements on the radio, flyers at the stores and post offices in town, email lists, and word of mouth. The survey was posted online using SurveyMonkey.com, and all responses, both paper and online, were entered and compiled using the online service.

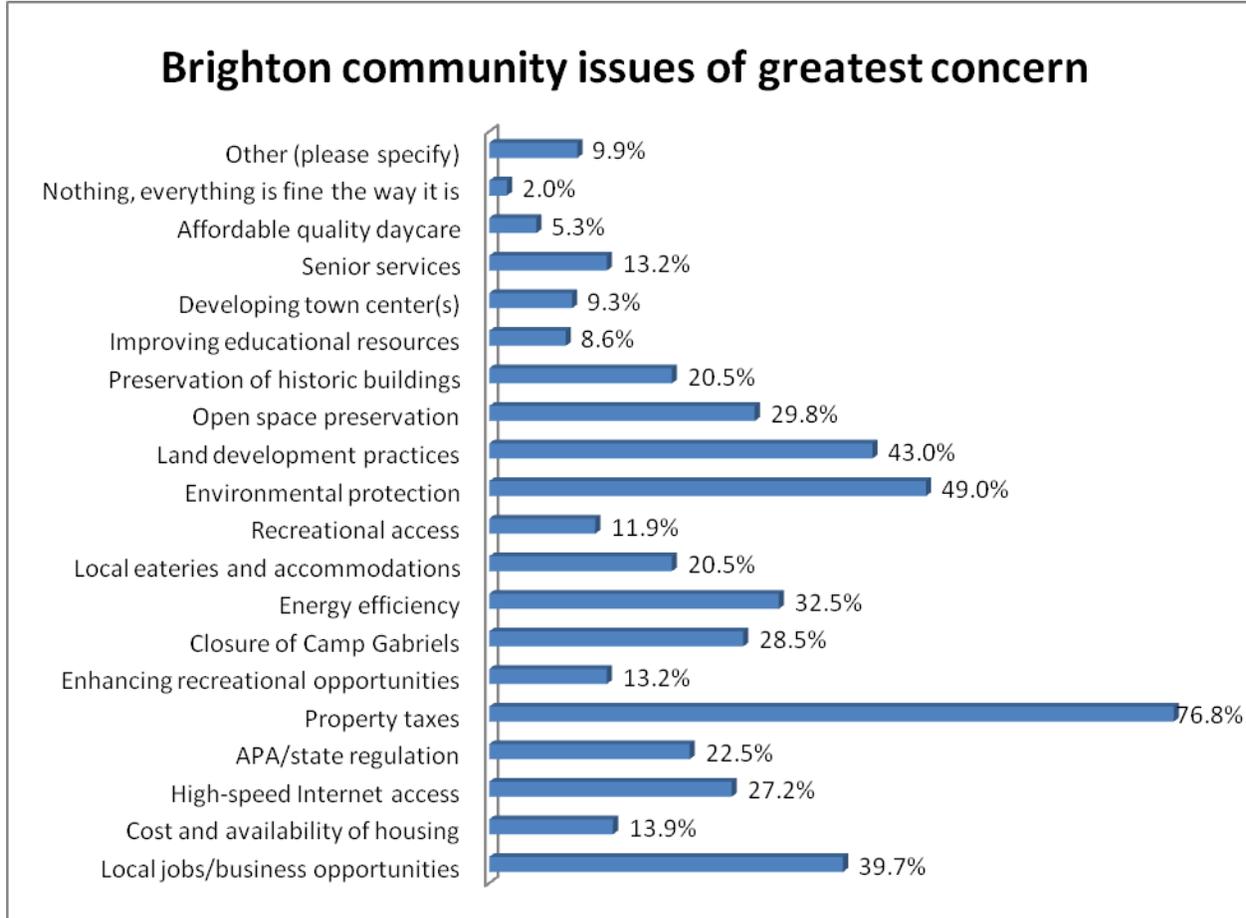
A total of 151 surveys were returned, with a return rate of approximately 25 percent. The survey results are discussed throughout this plan. A summary of the survey data is included in Appendix B.

Some of the most interesting survey general results include the following:

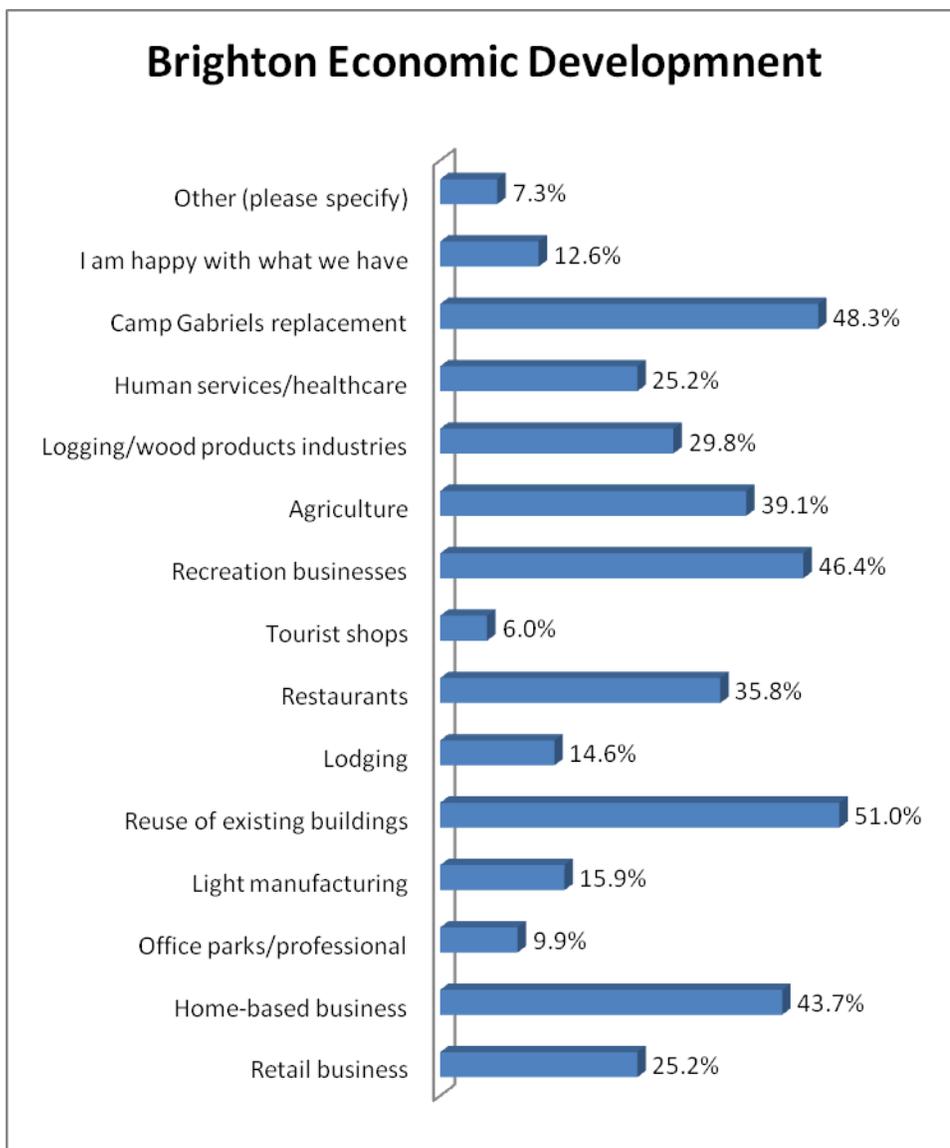
- The vast majority (72 percent) of respondents feel that Brighton’s primary “identity” should be “a place to live and work.” The second most popular category for Brighton’s identity was “traditional Adirondack camp community” with 45 percent.



- The community issue of greatest concern was property taxes (77 percent), followed by environmental protection (49 percent) and land development practices (43 percent) and local jobs/business opportunities (40 percent).



- The type of economic development that community members listed as most desirable was re-use of existing buildings (51 percent), followed by Camp Gabriels replacement (48 percent), recreation businesses (46 percent), and home-based businesses (44 percent).



1.8 Public meetings

Two public meetings were held as part of the Brighton Smart Growth Initiative. The first was held at the beginning of the project, on September 4, 2008. The purpose of the initial meeting was to solicit input from town residents about what types of growth they wanted to see in the town, as to obtain feedback on the project goals and activities.

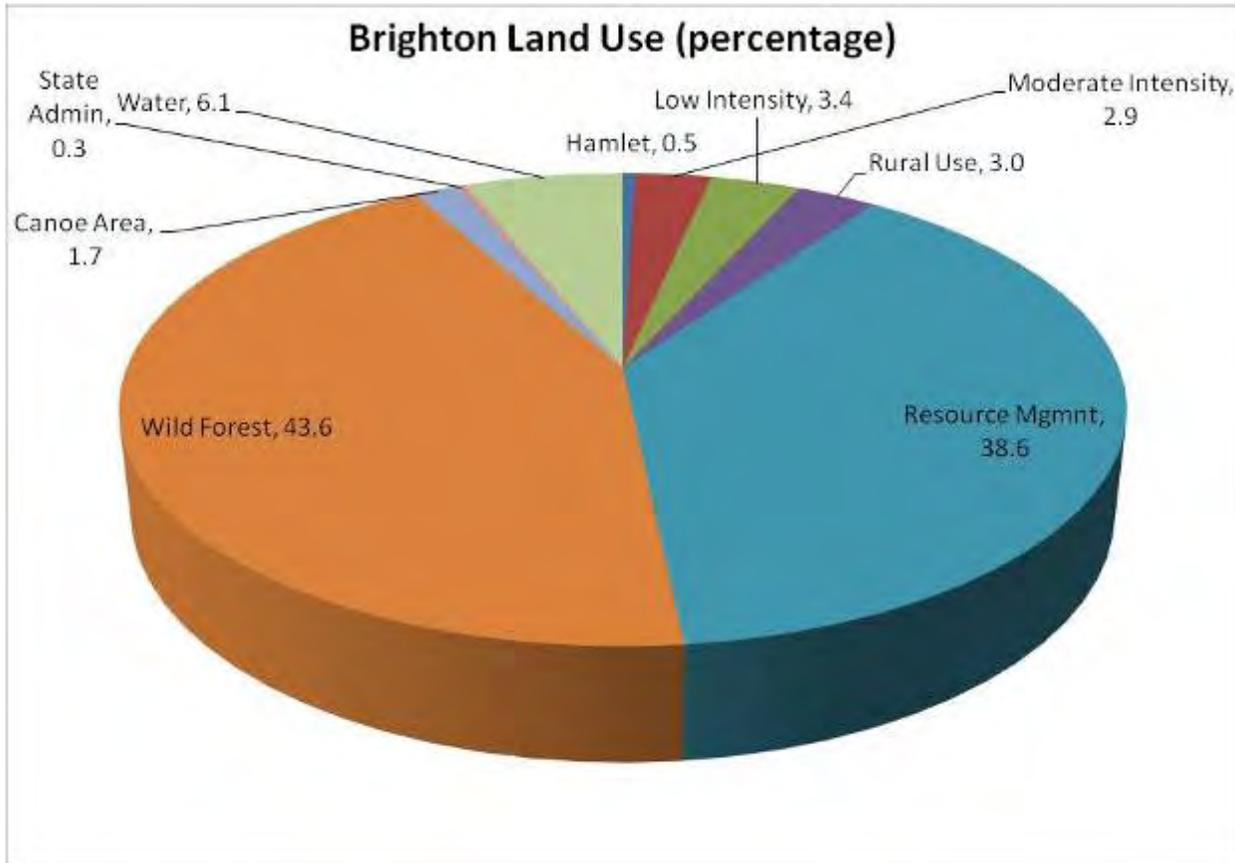
The second public meeting was held on July 23, at the end of the project, to present the draft Smart Growth Plan to residents.

2.0 Land Use

A land use assessment and build-out analysis for the Town of Brighton was conducted by Michael R. Martin, CLM, of Cedar Eden Environmental LLC using a geographic information system (GIS) and a wide variety of available data layers. The primary layers used were APA Land Classification and APA Wetlands. In addition, GIS layers containing an estimation of existing structures within the Town of Brighton were created by digitizing structures visible on USGS Topographic Quadrangles and 2004 High-Resolution Infrared Aerial Photography.

2.1 Existing Land Use

Approximately 26 percent (13,850 acres) of the town's lands are wetlands. Approximately 19 percent (9,908 acres) of the land within the town is potentially developable. The remaining lands are either wetlands, lakes and ponds, or public lands. In terms of APA land use classifications, the majority of land use in the town is either Wild Forest (44 percent) or Resource Management (39 percent).



It is not known how many dwellings are presently within the town. Buildings digitized from the topographic maps and aerial photographs do not distinguish between dwellings and other structures, such as garages, barns, and sheds. However, the digital analysis and US Census data indicate that there may be as many as 550 dwellings presently within the town. These structures

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are clustered in certain areas, including along Rainbow Lake, the St. Regis Lakes, and several areas along Route 86, as shown in the Dwelling Density map, which is provided in Appendix C. Below is a table showing the number of parcels per NYS ORPS Property Type Classifications in the Town of Brighton (LA Group 2009).

Tax Code Type Number	NYS ORPS Property Type Classifications	# of Parcels*
100	Agricultural - property used for the production of crops or livestock	23
200	Residential - property used for human habitation	505
300	Vacant Land - property that is not in use, is in temporary use, or lacks permanent improvement	283
400	Commercial - property used for the sale of goods and/or services	14
500	Recreation & Entertainment - property used by groups for recreation, amusement, or entertainment	5
600	Community Services - property used for the well being of the community.	15
700	Industrial - property used for the production and fabrication of durable and nondurable man-made goods	0
800	Public Services - property used to provide services to the general public.	26
900	Wild, Forested, Conservation Lands & Public Parks - reforested lands, preserves, and private hunting and fishing clubs	193

* parcel data from the Franklin County Real Property Tax Service and NYS Office of Real Property Services, 2007

2.2 Build-Out Analysis

The build-out analysis (potential for development, if everything in the town that could be developed was developed) within the Town of Brighton was based upon the acreage of land within each APA land classification, since this sets the present allowable maximum dwelling density. Since development cannot take place within wetlands or on lands with conservation easements, these areas were removed from this analysis. Approximately 46 percent (24,354 acres) of the town's lands are protected by easements or are wetlands. Approximately 19 percent (9,908 acres) of the land within the town is potentially developable. The remaining lands are either protected by easement, wetlands, lakes and ponds, or public lands.

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Based upon these analyses, the Town of Brighton could potentially produce a total of 1,874 principal dwellings under current APA Land Classification. These dwellings would be located in the various Land Classifications as such:

Hamlet	205 – 410 dwellings
Moderate Intensity	783 dwellings
Low Intensity	383 dwellings
Rural Use	154 dwellings
Resource Management	145 dwellings

At the present time the only lands classified by the APA as Hamlet in the town are located around the southern shore of Rainbow Lake. The lands surrounding Rainbow Lake contain many wetlands and some steep slopes which might inhibit future development. There are 282.4 acres of Moderate Intensity lands along Route 86 in Gabriels which includes commercial uses, Camp Gabriels and the Gabriels Post Office. If these lands were reclassified as Hamlet, an additional 62 – 344 dwellings could potentially be built within the town.

This analysis demonstrates that technically, a considerable number of dwellings could be constructed within the town under full build-out conditions. Assuming that all of the approximately 1,874 or more potential dwellings that could be constructed were constructed, and assuming there are approximately 550 existing dwellings within the town, an additional 1,324 dwellings could be constructed under full build-out. However, it is unknown how many principal building rights exist in the town under APA regulations, so this number is likely an overestimate. The actual number of dwellings that could be constructed in the Town of Brighton would be affected by on-the-ground wetland delineations, soil conditions, topography (steep slopes), and other factors, including APA principal building rights. Roads would need to be constructed in many areas, and in some cases, road access to interior land parcels is not possible. Also, although public water and sewer are not required for building in the town unless reclassification is desired, the lack of public sewer or water may be an impediment to additional building construction in the town. Without public sewers, septic systems will need to be constructed on new building sites, Septic systems need to be properly sited with respect to soil and site conditions, so this could be an issue on certain parcels with soil conditions that are incompatible with septic system construction.

This analysis demonstrates that there is the potential for considerable uncontrolled change within the town. When one considers the growing population in our nation and the desire for retirement and second homes within the Adirondack Park, there can be considerable pressure to develop, at least during good economic times. The Town of Brighton should act now to guide growth in the best interest of the Town and in accordance with sustainable economic and environmental development practices. This smart growth initiative has helped the community describe what it wants its identity to be, which may be incompatible with unplanned development.

Potential Growth Areas

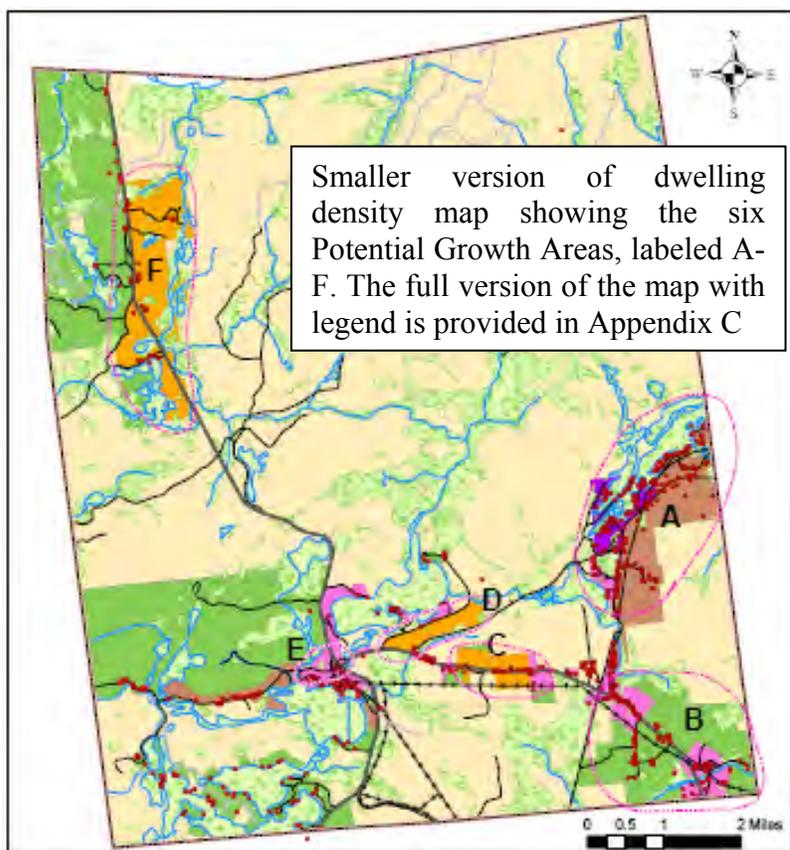
As shown on the dwelling density map in Appendix C, several specific areas of the town have been identified as potential growth areas. The individual characteristics of each area should guide

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the type of development that is most suitable in each location. Whenever possible and applicable, the Town of Brighton should consider recommending conservation subdivision design for any major subdivisions or developments in the town. Conservation subdivisions involve clustered or concentrated building sites in one area of the development while leaving the remainder of the development site as open space. This would allow as much wildlife habitat, forestry resources, and recreational opportunities to be preserved as possible within each development. Conservation subdivisions have small lot sizes but allow for greater open space preservation in the overall project. Conservation subdivisions are often cheaper for developers to construct and retain resale value very well. This type of development design may require APA approval in certain areas due to the small lot sizes, but the APA endorses conservation design when designed correctly.

Each potential development area is discussed individually below. Refer to the dwelling density map in Appendix C for locations of each area. A smaller version of the map is shown below for ease of reference.

Potential Growth Area A: County Route 60 in Rainbow Lake (Rainbow Lake Road). This area includes the only part of the town that is designated Hamlet by the APA, although it is nearly all residential land use and there is no public water or sewer. Much of this area is already highly developed, especially around the southern tip of Rainbow Lake, which includes areas within riparian buffer zones (around lake and stream shorelines). This area is best suited for carefully planned, cluster development to protect and preserve open space and environmentally sensitive buffer areas. These buffer areas help protect the water quality of Rainbow Lake.



Potential Growth Area B: Gabriels Center, including the corner of Route 86 and County Route 55 (Bloomingdale Road). This area is currently classified as Moderate Use by the APA; however, it is the primary center of commercial development in the town. This area should be the major focus of town center revitalization, and the target area for commercial development, the creation of walkable neighborhoods, and potential future reclassification as a Hamlet. This area has good visibility for businesses as it is a well traveled corridor. This area is also the location of

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the Camp Gabriels Correctional Facility which has recently been closed by the State and is in need of a re-use plan.

Potential Growth Area C: Route 86 in Gabriels/Paul Smiths (Easy Street). This area is currently a town center of sorts, and is nearly all residential development, with some farm and forestry resources. The area is designated as Rural Use, and while land is available for development, much of it is landlocked behind houses built along the road. This growth area would be a good possible location for a forestry resource industry or cluster development, although access roads would be needed.

Potential Growth Area D: Strip of land between White Pine Camp Road and County Route 31 (Jones Pond Road). This area is currently designated as Rural Use by the APA. Care should be taken to avoid development patterns such as those in Growth Area C, in which houses are built along the road and interior sections are landlocked. This growth area is close enough to Paul Smith's College to warrant some commercial land use. If the land is developed as residential land use, conservation subdivision design should be employed for any larger subdivisions.

Potential Growth Area E: Corner of Keese Mill Road and Route 30. This area is designated as Moderate Intensity by the APA. Its close proximity to Paul Smith's College provides good potential for commercial development. Ideally, the development focus of this area should be commercial businesses that cater to the college students and visitors such as restaurants, a laundromat, entertainment venues, a gas station, and/or stores. These businesses would not only service the college population, they would also bring in jobs for local residents, encourage/enable visitors to the town to stay longer, and encourage additional business growth.

Potential Growth Area F: Route 30 and Route 458 in McColloms. This area is a large tract that is designated as Rural Use. It does have good development potential, but since this area is far away from the existing town center or the college, it is not an attractive development option at this time. Growth in this area, under current circumstances, would be considered sprawl rather than smart growth; however, the potential development of this growth area should be revisited in the future as the town grows and changes.

Even within the above potential growth areas, it will be important to think carefully about how best to develop the areas, taking into consideration factors such as wildlife habitat, forestry resources, water quality impacts, and recreational opportunities in addition to more traditional factors such as infrastructure needs. In most cases, new development and subdivisions should be reasonably dense and clustered in the most appropriate locations within the growth areas, allowing for preservation of open space. Guiding growth in each of the above potential growth areas would entail comprehensive planning, zoning, site review or other planning ordinances. In the past, none of these measures have been implemented in the town, but it is important to consider and encourage sustainable economic growth at this time. Brighton should take control over its future through planning in order to preserve the existing character and resources.

2.3 Environmental Assessment

The Town of Brighton benefits from rich environmental resources. These include abundant forests, lakes, streams, fields, pastures and wetlands. These resources provide varied benefits to the community: hunting and fishing opportunities, wildlife habitat for game and non-game species, rich water resources and high water quality, air quality, carbon sequestration, and local economic opportunities (through direct land uses such as agriculture and forestry, as well as indirect opportunities such as guiding and nature-based businesses). In addition, it is largely these characteristics and the natural beauty which they confer which provide Brighton with its identity and its rural and wild character; these features make Brighton a beautiful place to live and to visit. Some of the economic opportunities afforded by the town's environmental qualities are being capitalized upon; others represent untapped opportunities.

Brighton has abundant environmental resources, and is in a good position to protect them. However, past development patterns have not been carefully planned, and this needs to change.

Brighton is in a good position to protect its environmental quality. Many of the town's environmental resources are in good condition and have not been severely impacted by human uses or pollution. Therefore, the town is in an excellent position to think carefully about its natural resources and its environmental quality now, rather than needing to try to restore a tarnished landscape.

Although the town's environmental resources are largely in good condition, past development patterns have not been carefully planned. Existing development in the town is strung along roadways and clustered around lakes. Some camps and structures that were initially meant for seasonal use are being converted to year-round use, in the absence of any coordinated planning. These incremental decisions are not necessarily conducive to protecting environmentally-sensitive features. Lakefront development presents obvious challenges to maintaining water quality and access; this is compounded by older septic systems that are not necessarily well-situated or properly maintained. Future planning efforts will need to consider, and look beyond, this historical legacy if they are to successfully protect environmental features.

Mapping

A set of maps were created as part of this project, and are provided in Appendix D. Map notes explaining map sources and descriptions are also included in Appendix D. The maps include land ownership and management, water resources, water resources showing ecological buffers, land cover, Brighton area lakes: aquatic invasive status, core wildlife habitat, modeled and observed wildlife data.

The mapping exercises and environmental analysis components of this Smart Growth Plan are intended to inform future development choices. The town has an opportunity to utilize tools that would plan for growth and development while protecting important resources and avoiding environmentally-sensitive features on the landscape. In this Smart Growth Plan, the goal of this analysis is somewhat limited, and is focused on recognizing environmental benefits and natural features that serve as “green infrastructure” in the town, and to illustrate the town landscape in a new way. Opportunities for future environmental analyses include the following:

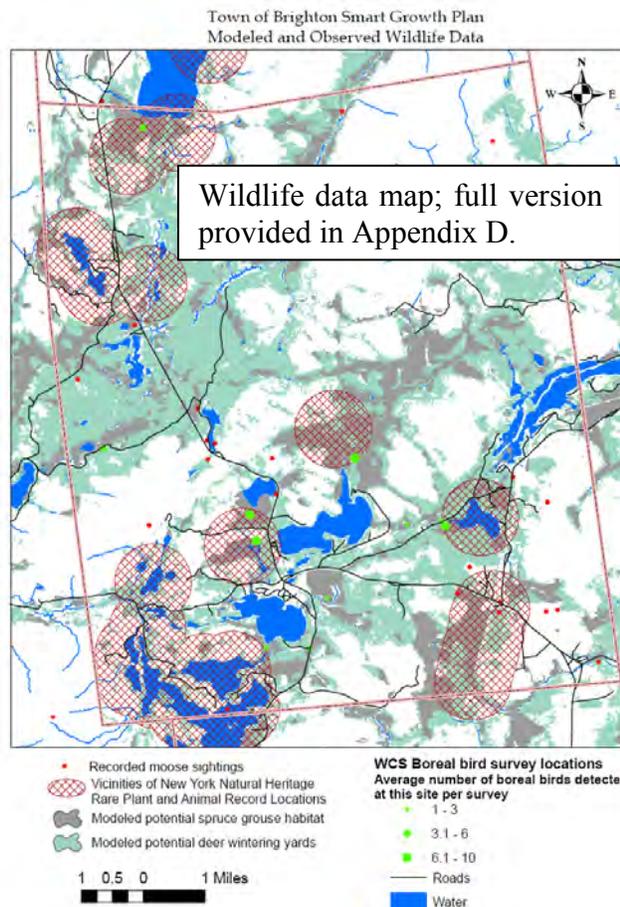
Field surveys: The town-scale mapping using existing ecological data is just a starting point for a serious effort to understand, locate, and determine protection measures for habitats and natural features in the Town of Brighton.

This is not a substitute for on-the-ground site surveys, which would yield tremendous information, including locating sign of wildlife, wildlife’s use of habitats or potential conflict areas, such as road crossings, and high value habitats such as vernal pools or old-growth forests. The existing data used in the current analysis is not sufficiently scaled to be used for site-based determinations or detailed local land use planning.

Conservation priorities: This environmental analysis has not attempted to make value judgments about which habitats and natural features are important to protect. As the Town of Brighton makes decisions about the future, it will have to weigh how to prioritize environmental benefits. Some options for how to approach this include: identifying important community values as a filter for prioritization (e.g. is wildlife habitat important to the community? What about scenic resources and viewsheds?); using the uniqueness of features as key criteria; and using the quality of features as key criteria.

2.4 Land Use Recommendations

Many tools exist that can help Brighton protect features that are important to the community. Some of these are dependent upon engaging in local land use planning; others are not. Some steps that would help in protecting environmental features include:



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- Being explicit about identifying and listing community values in town planning efforts. For example, if biodiversity protection is a goal that is important to the town, it should be explicitly mentioned.
- Learning about planning tools that are available to enhance natural resource protection, such as conservation subdivisions, Transfer of Development Rights, and conservation overlay zones.
- Continuing to collect information about the town's environmental resources, potentially including the use of field surveys, as mentioned above.
- Advancing the concept of the potential growth areas presented in this plan to identify specific locations (such as Gabriels) as places where intensified development might be appropriate, as a way to achieve Smart Growth and steer development away from less-suitable locations. This consideration should be based on an analysis of the locations in the community that are best able to sustain development (Klemens et al, 2006).
- Emphasizing opportunities to cluster development in suitable locations rather than dispersing development across the landscape, as outlined in Section 2.2 above.
- Talking with other local municipalities about planning beyond town boundaries to achieve regional-level thinking.
- Taking advantage of regional organizations and resources to help with natural resource protection (e.g. the Wildlife Conservation Society, Paul Smith's College, state agencies, etc.)
- Thinking broadly about natural resources that should be protected. For example, Brighton includes many large, intact forest blocks that provide habitat for interior forest species, and that help provide connectivity for wildlife needing to travel across the landscape. A narrow view of natural resources that only accounts for features like wetlands would overlook the importance of this upland habitat.

3.0 Brighton Businesses

3.1 Existing Businesses

A list of businesses operating within the Town of Brighton had been compiled by community members as part of the Brighton 2000 project, and this list was updated as part of this project. The list was posted at all area post offices and stores for community members to update. Questions about area businesses were also included in the Community Survey. Approximately 70 businesses were identified in the town (although it is likely that there are more out there).



The majority of the businesses are rental cottages, artisans, and single-proprietor service businesses. Examples include daycares, contractors, stores, restaurant/bars, automotive care, and farming. The major employers in the Town of Brighton other than these small businesses include Paul Smith's College and the Adirondack Park Visitor Interpretive Center. Camp Gabriels Correctional Facility was the largest employer in the town, but it was closed on June 30, 2009. A copy of the business directory spreadsheet is provided in Appendix E.

3.2 Business Social

As a focus group meeting of interested Brighton business owners, the Smart Growth Grant Committee held a town business social event at the town hall on Friday, March 6, from 5-7 pm. The goal of the social was to encourage interaction and shared services between local businesses, and to foster a sense of community. The event was advertised with flyers and press releases, and light refreshments were served. The social was attended by approximately 10-20 artisans and business owners, all of whom appreciated the networking opportunity, and some of whom vowed to hold future socials at their places of business.

3.3 Survey Results

Of the 151 community survey respondents, 30 (20 percent) stated that they owned or operated a business in Brighton. About half of these are year-round businesses, and the other half are seasonal, mostly summer.

3.4 Brochure

As part of this project, a brochure, called Brighton Connections, was developed to advertise the various wonderful businesses, services, artists and artisans, attractions, history, annual events, and recreational opportunities in the Town of Brighton. The brochure is being distributed throughout the Tri-Lakes at local chambers of commerce, hotels, and tourist venues such as the Visitor's Interpretive Center, the Corn Maze, and the Wild Center. Over 3,000 four-color

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production high quality pieces were printed, in a 4 x 11” glossy booklet-style with photographs from Mark Kurtz and other area photographers.

Advertisements were sponsored in the brochure by local businesses to cover printing costs. The goal of the brochure is to not only attract visitors to our town, but also to provide information about services and additional activities for visitors to patronize while they are here. The title of the brochure is Brighton Connections, which represents the connection between Brighton businesses and residents with each other and with businesses in the surrounding region. A copy of the brochure is provided in Appendix F.

3.5 Brighton Website

The committee meeting minutes from the Smart Growth Grant project have been posted on the Town of Brighton Web site. This final Smart Growth Plan will also be posted on the Web site, as well as information from the Brighton Connections brochure and Brighton Business Directory. Currently, although the Town of Brighton Web site is attractive and well-organized, the information on individual pages should be updated, including contact information (for example, church pastors, organization contacts, etc). Updates should happen on a regular basis, so that the Web site can serve as a tourist and business information center.

3.6 Camp Gabriels

Despite the efforts of many local supporters, the Camp Gabriels Correctional Facility in Gabriels was closed on June 30, 2009. The town and community sincerely hope that the facility is re-developed into some sort of entity that provides year-round employment for local residents. Having this facility fall into disrepair by disuse could be disastrous and seriously hamper future development. The New York State Department of Corrections is required to prepare an adaptive re-use plan for the facility by October 1, 2009. Some of the facility re-use options that have been floated by Camp Gabriels employees and community members include:

- Drug and alcohol rehabilitation center similar to or affiliated with St. Joseph’s in Saranac Lake
- VA clinic
- School or facility for youth at risk
- Forest Rangers training school
- Teaching and/or research facility for green living (e.g. small space farming, eco-friendly technologies, composting, etc.)
- Light manufacturing facility such as a pellet plant
- Resort

A resort may not be the best option for sustainable economic development because it would be unlikely to be a year-round facility. Other than that, any of the above options are worth pursuing. The Town of Brighton should form (or join) a task force to investigate and guide re-use of the facility. The task force should include community members, elected officials from Brighton,

Franklin County, neighboring municipalities, and the State, as well as representatives from the former correctional facility.

At one of the Smart Growth Grant Committee meetings, the possibility of developing a wood pellet plant in the Town of Brighton, in particular as an alternative to Camp Gabriels, was discussed with some representatives from Paul Smith's College. Paul Smith's College is working on developing their own biomass facility and is not interested in collaborating on building a pellet plant in Brighton. Although the APA would most likely approve a pellet plant in the town since it would be compatible with forestry-based land uses, a small pellet plant would have a hard time competing with planned and existing plants in Massena and elsewhere. The most effective means of developing a pellet plant in Brighton would be for an interested entrepreneur to pursue working with Finch Pruyn or some other larger established forestry product business to develop a plant.

4.0 Telecommunications

Telecommunications refers to the transmission of electromagnetic signals, including Internet and cell phone signals. High-speed Internet access, also known as broadband access, is necessary for economic development, since high-speed access is required for transmitting large documents or photos, streaming video, or many other forms of online communication. Transfer of documents and information of all kinds is necessary for most modern-day business operations.

Telecommunication speeds of the most common forms of Internet access are listed below (as discussed at the November 14, 2008 APA conference on telecommunications):

- Broadband as defined by the FCC: 750 kb/sec
- Regular Roadrunner Cable (broadband): 3-10 MB/sec, depending on number of users
- Time Warner Turbo: 15 MB/sec, depending on number of users
- DSL: 750 kb/sec upload, 1.5 MB/sec download
- Satellite: 1.5 MB/sec
- Dialup: 56 kb/sec
- Wireless: 1.0 MB/sec



Telecommunications is a smart growth issue since access to high-speed Internet attracts business growth as well as visitors. New businesses may choose not to located in Brighton if they cannot get high-speed Internet access. Visitors coming to Brighton on vacation who are used to having high-speed Internet access might be frustrated and not return for future vacations if they cannot

check email or keep in touch with their businesses while they are here. And small businesses in Brighton without high-speed Internet access are at a disadvantage if they can't transfer large files, upload pictures or videos to their website, or access certain Web applications like their competitors in other areas. According to the Adirondack Park Regional Assessment Project report (2009), only seven out of 103 communities in the Adirondack Park have full cell phone coverage (and Brighton is not one of the seven), and only five percent of Adirondack communities report that broadband service is available everywhere.

4.1 Existing Telecommunications in Brighton

According to the Brighton community survey, the majority of Brighton residents who have Internet access have cable high-speed Internet access (51 percent). However, a significant percentage of respondents have only dial-up Internet access or no access at all. Of these, a number of respondents said they would use the Internet for business purposes if they had it. This is a concern, as it indicates that the lack of high-speed Internet access is negatively impacting business growth in the town.

Also, the cell phone tower at Paul Smith's College is planned to be operational by this summer. Although it will not provide cell service to the entire town, it will improve cell phone access for many, and will be an important safety feature for the college students. Improved cell phone coverage will allow residents the option to use a mobile broadband device for Internet access, even if they do not have access to cable broadband.

4.2 Regional Telecommunications Planning

Two groups, the Development Authority of the North Country (DANC) and CBN Connect, are wholesale "carrier's carriers" with the goal of installing and managing broadband infrastructure in the North Country. DANC is located in central New York and CBN Connect is in the process of creating infrastructure throughout the Clinton, Essex and Franklin tri-county region. CBN Connect will be seeking providers to service the area, hoping to encourage multiple providers and therefore better pricing through competition.

CBN Connect will be constructing broadband infrastructure down the Route 86 corridor through Brighton by the end of 2009 and possibly up Route 30 in the future. However, this will not help many of the Brighton residents that need connection for the "last mile" from the main road to their houses. According to Howard Lowe of CBN Connect, last mile services could be provided by individual wireless transmitters (personal communication, October 14, 2008). Wireless subscribers would have an antenna receiver at their house (inside or outside, depending on proximity to the transmitter), which would transmit signal via a secure link to their router. Each antenna receiver would have its own IP address, only enabling subscribers to utilize the wireless service.

The Saranac Lake Chamber of Commerce is in the process of developing a coalition to look into wireless networks, and a Franklin County pilot project is being planned by CBN Connect. The pilot project, located in Chateaugay, is working with Primelink and Westelcom, and it is possible that those two companies would be interested in expanding their business base, in

addition to Time Warner Cable (personal communication, Julie West, CBN Connect, November 2009). In addition, CBN Connect is in the process of conducting a survey of all potential wireless antennae sites in the Adirondack Park.

The Common Ground Alliance is a coalition of local leaders seeking to identify and improve key issues for the park. The three core issues identified during the summer 2008 conference were property taxes, energy, and telecommunications/high speed internet. The Town of Brighton should participate in the Common Ground Alliance and work together with CBN Connect to install last-mile connections in the Town of Brighton via a wireless transmitter or other means in the town.

4.3 Telecommunications Recommendations

CBN Connect is making concerted efforts to bring broadband access to the Adirondacks, and the Town of Brighton should partner with them if at all possible. The Town of Brighton should pursue the possibility of collaborating with CBN Connect and area towns to install a wireless transmitter at the Adirondack Regional Airport in Lake Clear or other suitable location. A united effort to pursue access for the residents of multiple towns is more likely to succeed than any one town's efforts alone. Funding sources for such a project could include a NYS Office of Technology grant or federal stimulus funds. If a wireless antenna were to be installed at the Adirondack Regional Airport, the radius of transmission would be approximately five miles as the crow flies, so it would probably cover most if not all of the town (Julie West, personal communication, November 2008).

5.0 Evaluation of Smart Growth Alternatives

5.1 Affordable Housing

As in many areas of the Adirondacks, many homeowners, including seniors and working families, are being priced out of their homes in the Town of Brighton. According to the Saranac Lake and Harrietstown Draft Comprehensive Plan, although personal income has grown only 2 percent per year in the Saranac Lake area, home sale prices have increased 20 percent per year since 2000 (2009). As a result, middle-income families earning approximately \$50,000 cannot expect to find a decent home within their budget. This housing gap is reaching crisis proportions in Brighton as well, where few affordable rental properties



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exist and those that do exist are often quickly snapped up by Paul Smith's College students (Village of Saranac Lake and Town of Harrietstown Comprehensive Planning Committee, 2009).

Affordable housing, as defined by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, is housing for which the occupant is paying no more than 30 percent of his or her income for gross housing costs, including utilities. The 2007 median income in Franklin County was \$ 39,199. Affordable housing concerns were frequently mentioned in the Town of Brighton community survey. The issue of affordable housing in the Town of Brighton should be addressed by finding ways to improve existing homes and make them more affordable for residents to own, rather than focusing on constructing new low-income affordable housing in the town, due to the lack of available building lots for large developments and a lack of funding for such projects.

The Town of Brighton has been working to provide affordable housing for its residents for over a decade. The town applied for and received two separate Small Cities Community Development Block Grants from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). In 1992, 28 different projects were funded in the Gabriels area, for a total cost of \$394,000. In 1994, the second HUD grant funded 30 projects in Gabriels and Rainbow Lake, for a total of \$400,000. The town applied for a third HUD grant in 1996 but was turned down. Now that it has been several years, the town should apply for additional HUD funding to pay for much-needed home repairs in the town, making it more affordable for low-income families and seniors to stay in their own homes.

Additional funding options for affordable housing in Franklin County include housing grant assistance from Friends of the North Country, Inc. (518-834-9696 or 800-355-3662 and <http://www.friendsofthenorthcountry.org/>), or senior heating assistance programs through the New York State Office of Temporary or Disability Assistance Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), which can be contacted at 1-800-342-3009, or <http://www.otda.state.ny.us/main/heap/>.

The Adirondack Community Housing Trust (ACHT) was created to keep some homes in the Adirondack Park affordable for middle income families to purchase. Thanks to Senator Betty Little, the State last year budgeted \$1 Million to be used by the ACHT to reduce the cost of home purchases for families making up to 120% of area median income. The initiative requires that resale limitations be placed on the property so that in the future, the sale of these homes will be managed by ACHT so they will be passed on to other income-qualified families at affordable prices. More information on this program can be found at <http://www.adkhousing.org/> or 518-873-6888.

The APA is attempting to increase affordable housing opportunities within the Adirondack Park on land best suited to sustain a higher density of development through proposed changes in legislation (S.3367). The bill would encourage community housing projects within a three mile radius of APA classified Hamlet land use areas through special treatment under the "overall intensity guidelines" of the Adirondack Park Agency Act (APA) Act, Executive Law (EL) Article 27. If this bill passes, and if the construction of additional affordable housing units is desired in the future within the Town of Brighton, the town should consider constructing any new units within Potential Growth Area A, as outlined in Section 2.2 of this Plan.

5.2 Town center revitalization and reclassification

The Town of Brighton consists of several developed areas, including Rainbow Lake, Paul Smiths, Gabriels and McColloms. The only area within Brighton that could be considered a “town center” is Gabriels, which has a community park with field house, two small stores, two small restaurants, several other small businesses, and a small concentration of houses. Clustering growth into areas that are already developed can help protect open space in other areas. In addition, revitalizing a town center into an attractive, inviting mix of commercial and residential land use and walkable neighborhoods invites not only tourists but also greater use by local residents. Encouraging attractive infill growth in Gabriels would benefit the local economy in Brighton. The bill on community housing mentioned in the previous section might also provide funding for additional development in Gabriels as the area is within a 3-mile radius of the existing Hamlet in Rainbow Lake and currently classified as Moderate Intensity. Adding well-lit sidewalks between the park and the stores would be an excellent first step toward town center revitalization, followed by the addition of more restaurants and stores and attractive landscaping.

Currently, Gabriels is classified as Moderate Intensity land use by the Adirondack Park Agency. If the Town of Brighton was granted a map amendment to reclassify Gabriels as a Hamlet, more businesses and economic growth could be encouraged in that area. The major benefit of reclassification in Gabriels is that it loosens the density restrictions for building in the area. If the town wishes to pursue reclassification, it would need to apply for a Map Amendment, which entails mapping soils, slopes, wetlands, and natural resources. Because Gabriels is not serviced by central sewer and water, the map amendment is less likely to be approved. However, if the central sewage facility at Camp Gabriels were modified to service the entire Gabriels area this would improve chances of the map amendment being approved. Public sewer and water is an important consideration to increased density, since as lot sizes get smaller, the potential for appropriate well and on-site septic locations are greatly decreased. The proximity of wetlands may also be an issue in the area. In addition, if the town could implement a local land use plan, which transfers jurisdiction of land use planning to the town from the APA, the town could shift around the development densities so that they are concentrated in Gabriels center. This process often calls for detailed comprehensive planning and at this time, it is not likely to be financially beneficial or feasible. Discussion with the APA on the process and requirements for this map amendment may still be useful and should be pursued if so desired by the town.

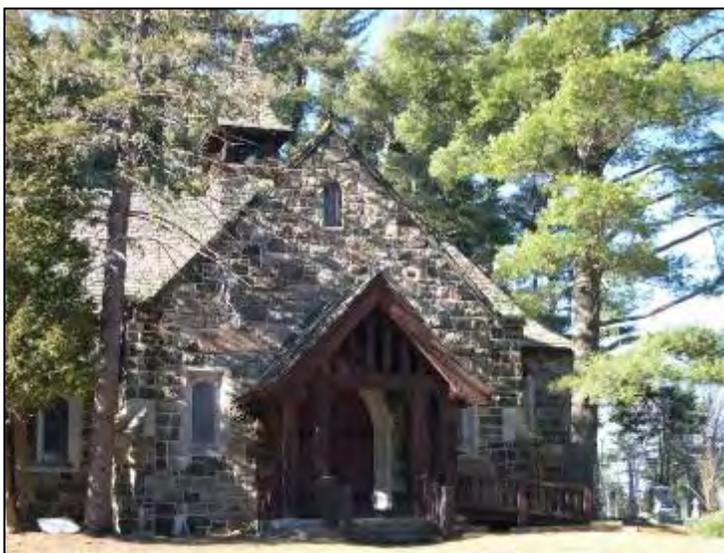
5.3 Craft/Heritage trails

The Town of Brighton has a vibrant art community, with a number of well-known artists making their studios here. In addition, the town’s rich heritage is celebrated around kitchen tables and on an annual basis at events such as Brighton History Days. Craft studios, Adirondack Great Camps, historic hotels and canoe routes, churches, and one-room schoolhouses, all are of potential interest to visitors to our town. The town should consider developing craft and/or heritage “trails” in order to lure visitors to the area. Future grants should be sought to develop these trails, potentially even including pre-recorded local history tours that can be followed using GPS coordinates and mp3 or CD recordings tied to specific historical or heritage sites around the town. The local history tours could be coordinated in conjunction with the Visitor Interpretive Center and Paul Smith’s College.

Efforts are currently underway by the Adirondack North Country Association to develop 13 Scenic Byway Trails throughout the Adirondacks, one of which (the Adirondack Trail) passes through the western edge of the Town of Brighton down Route 30. The Town of Brighton should capitalize on the Scenic Byway program in order to promote local businesses and artisans along the route to draw tourists and visitors to the region.

5.4 Historic Resources

The Adirondack Architectural Heritage (AARCH) is the nonprofit historic preservation organization for the Adirondack Park. AARCH has been involved in a number of historical preservation initiatives within the Town of Brighton, including a historic building inventory (which was started but never fully completed), and the renovation of the historic Brighton Town Hall. The Town Hall renovation was recently approved for a \$400,000 State Historic Preservation Office grant; this worthwhile project should be supported.



Historic, or heritage preservation is a smart growth issue, because such preservation leads to economic and environmental sustainability. Renovation and re-use of existing buildings using local labor and original local materials creates local jobs, saves on fossil fuels, reduces landfill waste, and provides affordable housing (Rypkema 2005). Preservation of historic buildings in the Town of Brighton should be a priority. In fact, over 50 percent of respondents to the Brighton Community Survey rated “re-use of existing buildings” as one of the five types of economic development on which the community should focus. Clearly this is an important issue to local residents.

As more and more private land is developed in the Adirondacks, land owners and builders are becoming creative in finding shoreline properties upon which to build. The practice of tearing down historic camps and buildings in order to construct new ‘mcmansions’ in their shoreline footprints is becoming more and more common. In order to avoid this happening to beloved family and historic properties, property owners can place historic preservation easements on their homes. Such easements serve to protect the property in perpetuity against future alteration or intentional damage. In exchange for the preservation easement, property owners can receive a substantial tax credit. For more information, visit the National Park Service’s Historical Preservation Tax Credit website at <http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/tax/easement.htm>.

5.5 Energy Efficiency/Green building

Brighton Energy Efficiency Workshop

The Town of Brighton held an informational energy efficiency workshop at the Paul Smiths Visitor Interpretive Center on Saturday, March 21. The event was publicized in the newspaper, via flyers, and via the community survey. This free workshop was presented by Ann Heidenreich from North Country Energy Smart Communities. Ms. Heidenreich is a recognized expert on the subject and speaks to many organizations on this topic. Information about programs and funding opportunities for home energy improvements were discussed, as well as the energy audit process and examples of energy efficiency improvements that local residents had implemented in their own homes. More information can be found at <http://www.getenergysmart.org>. Funding is also available for residential homeowners that meet low income guidelines for weatherization and appliance replacement. NYSERDA's energy audits are available for commercial, institutional, non-profit and local government buildings, as well as individual residences.

Regional Energy Initiatives

Energy represents a major municipal and household expense within Brighton, and the community survey demonstrated that over 32 percent of Brighton residents feel that energy efficiency and renewable energy opportunities are issues of greatest concern. Regional initiatives such as the Adirondack Climate Action Plan, Regional Greenhouse Gas and Energy Audit, and Energy Smart Park Initiative, offer opportunities for Adirondack communities such as Brighton to receive assistance and support in identifying and implementing municipal and local energy projects. These include such ideas as improving community energy efficiency by adopting an enhanced energy code; working with other municipalities to implement the concept of Community Energy Efficiency Managers (a person who would identify and implement energy-saving opportunities); and communities working with regional groups to identify opportunities for converting municipal energy sources to renewables such as biomass. As part of implementing this Smart Growth Plan, Brighton should take advantage of opportunities to learn more about, and potentially participate in, energy conservation initiatives.

Green Building

Green building practices are growing in popularity nationwide; no less in Brighton. These practices include energy efficient appliances, alternative energy sources (solar, geothermal, etc), use of locally-available building materials, and energy efficient design, among others. Over 22 percent of respondents to the community survey indicated their interest in learning more about green building practices and energy efficiency, as well as shared services between businesses. In the future, homeowners and business owners in the Town of Brighton should work together for cooperative purchasing of green building materials and supplies.

5.6 Multi-use/Walkable Neighborhoods

Designing and incorporating more traditional, multi-use, walkable neighborhoods is a central tenet of smart growth planning initiatives nationwide. The idea is that neighborhoods with a mixture of businesses, services, and housing all within a walkable distance reduce sprawl, decrease the consumption of fossil fuels, generate business growth, improve the health of residents, and are generally more environmentally-friendly. Opportunities for multi-use,

walkable neighborhoods are minimal within the Town of Brighton, but some potential exists within the Gabriels center area. Indeed, stores, businesses, a church, a park, restaurants and dwellings already exist within a small area, and many people do walk within this radius. To the greatest extent possible, future business and affordable housing growth should be concentrated within walking distance of Gabriels in order to continue to develop the walkable community. If needed, sidewalks, bike paths, or walking paths could be established in order to increase walking safety and greater town center use.

6.0 Municipal Planning

6.1 Past Town Planning Efforts

The Town of Brighton has attempted to develop and implement planning and zoning regulations several times in the past, although none has ever passed the public hearing process or the Town Board vote. In the 1980s, a Comprehensive Plan and a Zoning Plan were developed by hired consultants, but neither was ever passed. In the 1990s, a site review planning board was established, which met regularly for a year. A Site Review Plan was developed, undergoing multiple revisions, and a public hearing was held. The Site Review Plan stipulated that the Planning Board would review and approve new construction and development above a specified size and scope in the town. A Town Planner was hired on a part time basis (shared with the Town of Santa Clara) to assist with developing the Site Review Plan and to help with any planning issues. The Site Review Board was made up of informed group of town citizens representing diverse interests as well as each of the major “neighborhoods” in Brighton. Despite concerted efforts by then-town board members and despite numerous revisions to the Site Review Plan, the Plan was never passed and the Site Review Board was eventually disbanded. One of the main reasons why people were opposed to the Site Review Plan was that they felt that the APA already put enough restrictions on private land. Another reason was questions about the qualifications of the individuals on the Planning Board; although the hiring of the Town Planner was intended to address that issue.



6.2 Regional Planning

Quite a number of regional planning initiatives are currently underway in the Tri-Lakes and Adirondack regions. Each of these planning initiatives are mentioned briefly below. The Brighton Town Board should make every effort to keep apprised of the progress of these initiatives and participate in the initiatives when possible.

Transition Town

Transition Town is a group of concerned Saranac Lake citizens formed to address economic and climatic concerns. The group is looking at ways to reduce local reliance on fossil fuels, and to establish a more sustainable future. More information about the parent organization can be found at <http://www.transitiontowns.org/>.

Hamlets 3 – Smart Hamlets

The Adirondack Hamlets is a project through the Adirondack Community Housing Trust to create opportunities for economic development and physical improvement of the Adirondack region through smart expansion. This can be achieved through the use of mapping, analysis, and interaction with the public community. The types of growth advocated by this project are in line with our recommendations in this Smart Growth Plan. More information can be found at <http://www.adkhousing.org/hamlets.asp>, or by calling (518) 873-6888.

Adirondack North Country Association (ANCA) Common Ground Alliance

The Common Ground Alliance is a coalition of community leaders from towns throughout the Adirondacks come together on a semi-annual basis in a forum for public-private collaboration on Adirondack issues. The Alliance consists of representatives from state and local governments, nonprofit organizations, and residents of the Park working as equals to recognize the common good of the communities, residents, and resources of the Adirondack Park. More information can be found in the Blueprint for the Blue Line at <http://www.adirondack.org/news/blueprint.php>.

Adirondack Association of Towns and Villages (AATV)

The Adirondack Association of Towns and Villages is made up of representatives from the towns and villages within the Adirondack park. The Association was formed to address issues unique to local government and residents within the Park. More information is available at <http://aatvny.org/content>, or (518) 661-7622.

Adirondack Park Regional Assessment Report (AATV and ANCA)

The APRAP report provides a descriptive analysis of the towns and villages in the Adirondack Park, including government, social, and economic data and trends. The report found that school enrollment is dramatically dropping in the Adirondacks, even compared to other rural areas of New York State. Young families are moving out of the Park and older retirees are moving in. Approximately 40 percent of Adirondack homes are owned by people whose primary residence is outside of the Blue Line. Broadband telecommunications infrastructure lags behind other areas of the state. To obtain a copy of the report, visit <http://aatvny.org/> or call (518) 661-7622.

Adirondack Park Local Government Review Board

The Adirondack Park Local Government Review Board is made up of members appointed by the governing bodies of the twelve counties wholly or partly in the Adirondack Park. The Review Board represents the interests of Adirondack communities, in collaboration with the Adirondack Park Agency. More information can be found at <http://www.adkreviewboard.com/>, or (518) 494-3607.

Adirondack North Country Association (ANCA) Scenic Byway Program

The Scenic Byway Program outlines thirteen interconnected routes in the Adirondacks that visitors can travel to enjoy local history, artist studios, outdoor adventure locales, and farmer's

markets. The goal of the program is to increase state, national, and international exposure for the towns along the scenic byways. More information about this organization can be found at <http://www.adirondack.org/introscenicbywaycurrent.php>, or 891-6200.

Adirondack Climate Action Plan (ADKCAP)

ADKCAP is working to help the economy of the Adirondacks by helping local residents reduce energy use, decrease our dependence on foreign oil, and improve the long-term economic health of the Adirondack region. The Adirondack Park Greenhouse Gas Inventory was prepared in April 2009 as part of the Adirondack Energy Smart Park Initiative (ESPI). More information and a copy of the report can be found at <http://www.adkcap.org/>.

Saranac Lake Community Garden

A community garden is being planned in Saranac Lake beginning in the summer of 2009. Tucker Farms, Inc. in Gabriels has offered “spillover” garden space for local residents desiring garden plots.

6.3 Planning Recommendations

The Town of Brighton currently lacks any planning tools, beyond those which are exercised by the Adirondack Park Agency as part of their jurisdiction. The APA Act was passed primarily for the purpose of protecting the natural resources in the Park, and preserving the Park’s “forever wild” status for future generations. The APA Act, however, is not intended to supplant local planning efforts, which take into account local character and the needs of local stakeholders. For this reason, the following local planning initiatives should be considered for the Town of Brighton.

Site Review Plan

A Site Review Plan has already been developed for the Town of Brighton during the 1990s, as described in Section 6.1. The Plan establishes a Site Review Board and a process for reviewing all new development sites in the town, including single family homes. Although the Site Review Plan was never passed, the time may be right for the Town of Brighton to revisit the regulation and attempt to pass it with possible revisions. Concerns expressed by residents in the past included doubts over the qualifications of the review board members, and disapproval of the fact that even small development sites must be reviewed.

A Site Review Plan provides the opportunity for the town to examine new development proposals for their applicability to the town’s character. The Site Review Board should consist of community members representing the different “neighborhoods” of Brighton (Gabriels, Rainbow Lake, Paul Smiths, McColloms, and Split Rock Road. Many towns have planning boards consisting of local citizens without planning experience or qualifications. Often if expert knowledge is required in review of a plan, towns have required the applicant to pay for such services. In addition, the inclusion on the board of a professional town planner (optimally shared with a neighboring town, as has been done in the past) will provide sufficient professional expertise. Alternatively, rather than (or in addition to) implementing a Site Review Plan, the town may choose to implement a Subdivision Review Plan, which may have a greater likelihood of being passed if it pertained only to larger developments and subdivisions rather than every

new dwelling or development. At the very least, even if no additional ordinances or plans are desired in the Town of Brighton, a Site or Subdivision Review Plan and planning board is recommended. Unbridled development can destroy a Town's character and Hamlet areas can be particularly vulnerable as there is little APA jurisdiction. The environmentally-sensitive area around the southern end of Rainbow Lake is of particular concern as much of the area is designated as a Hamlet.

Comprehensive Planning

A Comprehensive Plan is a road map for determining what a particular municipality desires for its future, and how it intends to get there. The term "comprehensive" refers to the planning method that looks at the past development patterns of the municipality and examines future planning from all angles, and across all stakeholders. Typically, a Comprehensive Plan provides a long range view of how the town should develop or redevelop, usually over ten to twenty-five



years. The community survey conducted as part of this Smart Growth Plan showed strong consensus as to the town's "identity" as a place to live and work; this is evidence that comprehensive planning may be successful and constructive for the Town of Brighton.

Zoning/Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances

Many municipalities have both Zoning Ordinances and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances (SALDOs). Zoning Ordinances shape the overall development trends in a municipality by targeting different areas within the municipality for different types of growth (e.g. commercially developed areas vs. residentially developed areas). The SALDO outlines specific, detailed requirements for development standards within each zoning district. The two types of regulations work hand-in-hand. Although the Town of Brighton has historically developed slowly, and although the APA Act provides regulation for many types of development in the town, the Town of Brighton may wish to designate certain areas in which to concentrate growth, or to concentrate certain types of growth (i.e. commercial or industrial) in order to increase the economic viability of the town. The potential growth areas outlined in Section 2.3 may be a place to start. The Town may find that without local control, unwanted developments or businesses could potentially be established without any legal recourse to stop them.

Other Municipal Ordinances

Other municipal ordinances may be warranted for the Town of Brighton, depending on the types of growth desired. In particular, an open space ordinance, cluster/conservation development ordinance, would serve to guide development in potential growth areas of the town to incorporate smart growth principles such as preservation of open space, mixed land use, and walkable neighborhoods.

Conservation Easements

Conservation Easements help preserve open space, protect critical areas from development, and concentrate development in areas that are already disturbed. A conservation easement is a voluntary agreement that allows a landowner to limit the type or amount of development on their property while retaining private ownership of the land. The easement is signed by the landowner, who is the easement donor, and a land trust or conservancy, who is the party receiving the easement. The easement applies to all future owners of the land. By granting a conservation easement, a landowner can assure that the property will be protected from unwanted development forever, while maintaining ownership of the land. An additional benefit of granting a conservation easement is that the donation of an easement may provide financial advantage to the donor. Town of Brighton land owners should be aware of the option to protect their land via conservation easements.

In April 2009, Governor Paterson and the New York State legislature approved funding for the Conservation Partnership Program, which is a land trust capacity-building program administered by the Land Trust Alliance in coordination with the NYS DEC. This legislation and funding will provide additional opportunities for land trust funding, and therefore conservation easements.

7.0 Smart Growth Action Plan

Although the State-funded smart growth study in the Town of Brighton is complete, the town should continue to pursue and implement the smart growth recommendations outlined in this Plan. The Action Plan and some recommended funding sources are provided below.

7.1 Action Plan

The following Action Plan summary highlights the most pressing needs in the Town of Brighton in terms of economic development.

1. Distribute the Brighton Connections brochure widely in the Tri-lakes region
2. Hire a town manager or town planner to seek grants and advocate for the town's interests within the Adirondack region.
3. Support efforts to find a year-round business(es) to replace Camp Gabriels.
4. Hold monthly Brighton business socials, rotating locations between town businesses, in order to foster connections and collaboration between area businesses.
5. Periodically hold energy efficiency workshops and additional opportunities to provide information to residents about how they can improve their homes and reduce the cost of home ownership.

6. Develop and implement a Site Review Plan.
7. Develop and implement a conservation subdivision ordinance.
8. Apply for a technology grant or stimulus funding in conjunction with CBN Connect and other area towns to build a wireless high-speed Internet transmitter at the Adirondack Airport.
9. Partner with neighboring towns to share services and engage in cooperative purchasing to save money.
10. Encourage year-round economic development in the town, including support for “green jobs.”
11. Whenever possible, maintain existing buildings and support historic preservation projects such as the Town Hall renovation. This includes promoting historic preservation easements on public and private properties in the town.
12. Encourage smart economic growth in existing centers such as Gabriels village and other identified potential growth areas.

7.2 Timeline, Organizational Capacity and Funding

It is difficult to place the above recommendations onto a timeline, as many of them are contingent upon funding and/or public approval. An important step in implementing the recommendations is to determine who will carry out the Plan. The Town of Brighton has no full-time employees other than the highway department personnel, and all of the town board members (including the supervisor) have other jobs or run their own businesses. It is recommended that the town pursue hiring either a community planner or a town manager, at least part-time but preferably full-time. The planner or manager could represent the town in regional planning efforts, apply for grants, and attend to all the issues that will further the Town of Brighton’s interests. The town needs someone to continue the momentum initiated by this project, whose job it is to keep on top of opportunities that arise, and to move the town forward as an economically viable place to live and work.

In addition, the Brighton Town Supervisor should be in communication with the supervisors of the neighboring towns and villages (Franklin, Santa Clara, Harrietstown, Saranac Lake, and St. Armand) to let them know about this project, and to discuss interest in any cooperative planning efforts. In this, and the other ways outlined in the Action Plan, the recommendations outlined in the Brighton Smart Growth Plan can move forward.



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