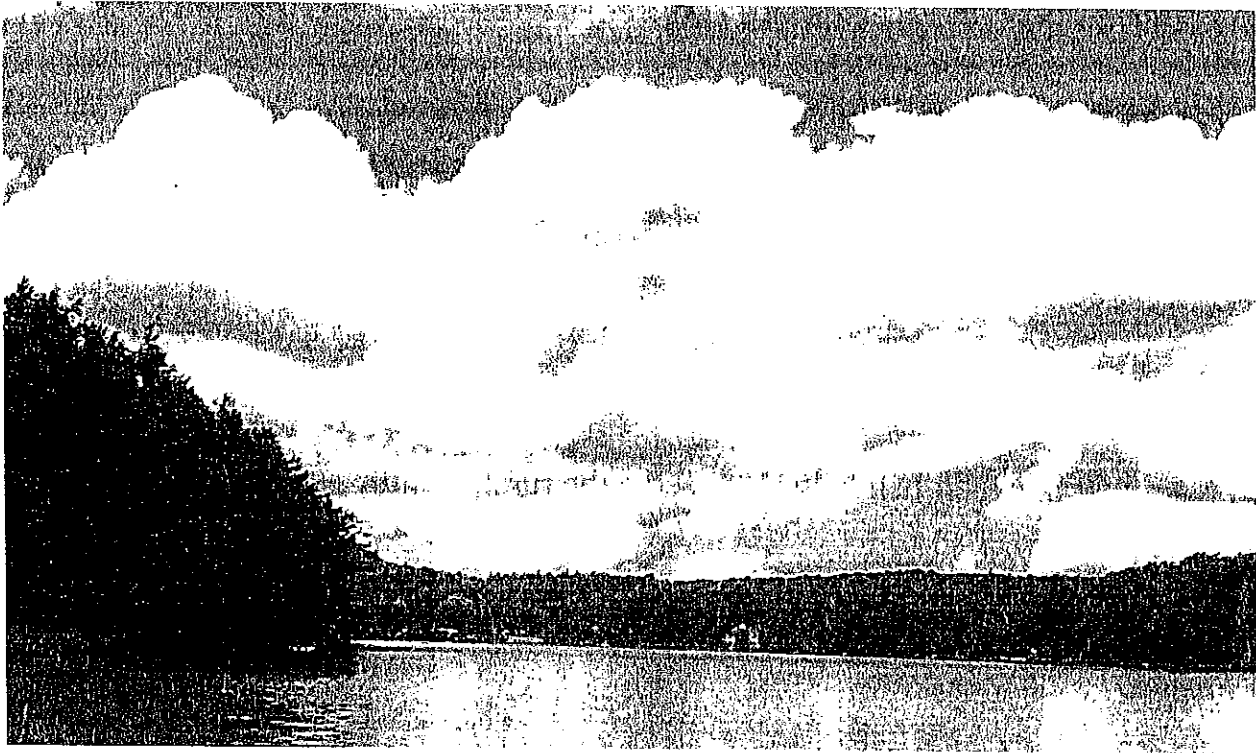


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Comprehensive Plan TOWN of SUMMIT



2007

Dear Neighbors:

The members of the Comprehensive Plan Committee have been working many long hours trying to create a plan that reflects your primary concerns as expressed in your responses to the survey taken in 2005. [See Appendix D.]

Our thanks to all of you who responded and gave your ideas and opinions. They formed the basis for our work.

We hope that this plan will help to preserve the rural, healthy atmosphere of our Town of Summit for years to come.

Town of Summit Comprehensive Plan Committee

July, 2004 through September, 2007

Jennifer Anderson, Chair

Judith E. Kramer, Secretary

Edward Foote

Walter M. Kramer

John Meaney

Cynthia A. Osterweil

Nancy Pettibone

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**COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN
TOWN OF SUMMIT, NEW YORK
2007**

INTRODUCTION

One of the questions in the survey of residents of the Town of Summit taken in 2005 was, "What areas would you like to see the Town of Summit focus on in the next 10 – 20 years?" Two of the choices received the most answers. They were, "conserve rural land and atmosphere" and "natural and healthy environment". Over 90% of those who responded thought these were "important" or "very important".

It is interesting to note that the Comprehensive Master Plan adopted by the Town 20 years ago also stressed this. It mentioned the Town's

"....many attributes, particularly its natural beauty and resources. It is equally evident, however, that inaction and inattention to trends and conflicting demands will jeopardize the 'quality of life' enjoyed by residents and that measures must be considered to protect the qualities of the township."

This, then, is the basic foundation behind the Committee's proposals keeping in mind: (1) the primary concerns shown in the recent survey; and (2) the rapid development in rural areas all over New York State, including Summit.

OVERVIEW

2005 SURVEY

There were 586 responses to the "Town of Summit Planning Survey". If this is compared to the population over the age of 19 (2000 Census), the response amounts to 64.5%. Those that perform surveys of this nature would categorize this as a phenomenal response.

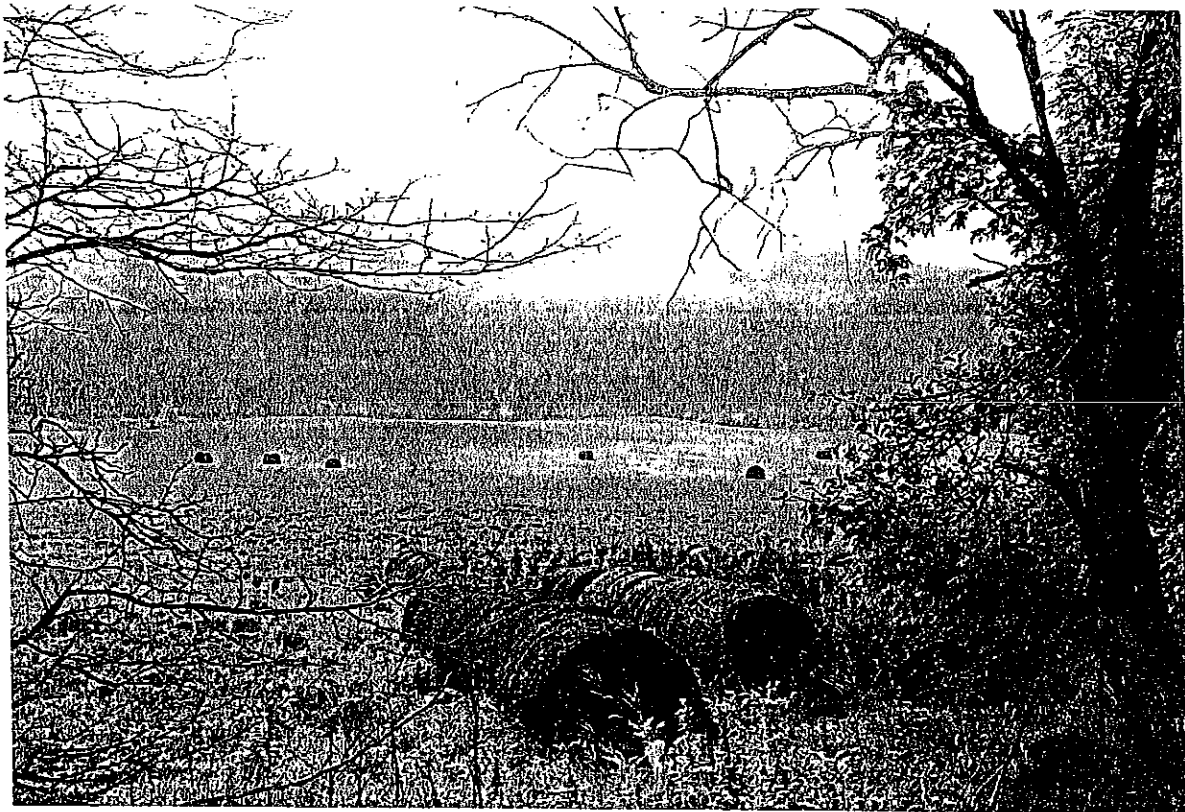
Referring to Question No. 8, "How important is it for the Town of Summit to review and regulate EACH of the following aspects of future development?", the overall responses clearly expressed concern for quality of life issues. A full 80% considered "preserving natural environment" to be "very important" to "important".

Referring to Question No. 26, "What areas would you like to see the Town of Summit focus on in the next 10 – 20 years?", again, quality of life was the overwhelming concern. "Natural and healthy environment", 93%, and "conserve rural land and atmosphere", 91%, were considered to be "very important" to "important". In terms of "very important" to "important", "development of commercial/industrial areas" showed that only 25% were interested.

Some other responses showed that 71.8% consider the current 5-acre regulation to be adequate (Question No. 18); that (Question No. 24) 70% felt Summit should have more options to preserve its farmlands, woodlands, and recreational opportunities; and that 73% favored setting aside areas for forest use (Question No. 23).

Vision for the Town of Summit

Preservation of Rural Character for future generations.



Preservation of Farmland and Open Space.

Preservation of Air and Water Quality.

To preserve a place where people want to live.

TOWN of SUMMIT Survey Results

Question #26 What areas would you like to see the Town of Summit focus on in the next 10-20 years?

Conserve Rural Land and Atmosphere 64%

A Natural and Healthy Environment 68%



Question #7 Please indicate the importance of each of the following aspects of the Towns Environment.

Air Quality 78%

Drinking Water Quality 79%

Results from 586 Surveys received

A History of Summit

In 1882 the **History of Schoharie County**, by William E. Roscoe, was published by D. Mason and Company of Syracuse, New York. What follows are excerpts from Chapter 11 of that history. An attempt to make limited corrections in spelling and grammatical errors, whether attributable to the author or the publisher, has been made to render the text more readable while preserving the integrity of that text.

* * * * *

In reaching a point on the road from Richmondville to Summit village, the traveler may form an idea of the origin of the name given to the town by looking down upon the surrounding country that stretches a panorama of beauty and grandeur before the eye, scarcely equaled. And when he ascends Mount Wharton, a little to the west, and gains the height of twenty-two hundred feet above sea level, the hills in the distance, that seemed of prodigious heights and precipitous sides, as traversed, appear to be miniature ones, of easy ascent, placed where they stand as obstacles to vary the scene. Even the peak of Karker Mountain of Carlisle, from which, it was thought by the early settlers, nearly half of the hemisphere could be seen, vainly rears itself, like a small cone far below. The state surveying party under Horatio Seymour Jun, in the summer of 1880, placed a Stan Helio signal upon this mountain, and gave it the name of Mount Wharton, after the owner of the land—J. B. Wharton.

Here, the clouds, which today seem to be at as great a height above us as when we stand in the valley below, often rest upon this mountain as a hazy veil, shutting from view its venerable peak to those in the valleys below, who often catch a glimpse of it to prophesy the future weather. In the absence perhaps of a barometer or Webster's Almanac, as tradition has told them, the appearance of the peak will tell with as much accuracy as that renowned pamphlet [the future weather]. Upon the very check of this mountain, in a little furrow is found one of those sheets of water, whose beauty makes it a libel to call a pond and which is too small in acreage to claim that of lake.

Pleasure and health seekers have found rare sport here in fishing and rowing seasons, as the water is kept lively by the finny tribe, and pleasure boats have been placed upon the silvery sheet, which add much to the attraction of the place; as to "dip the oar" has a peculiar fascination by which but very few refuse to be allured...

Tradition of the Lake.---In turning our thoughts to the lake, which seems characteristic of all visitors at this place, an old legend is recalled that refers to the name of the body of water. It is indeed not only a "thrice told tale" but a thousand, and in giving its substance we exceedingly regret that we do not possess that romance which gives color and effect to the tale to make it interesting and impressive. It is said that Utsyantho was the name given to the miniature sheet, after an unfortunate Indian maiden "whose untutored mind" was suddenly surprised at the disappearance of her "family cares." At a time anterior to the advent of the whites, that maiden with stalwart frame and uncombed hair, through indiscretion, became a mother, upon the bank of the lake. A consultation of the several chiefs was held and the little innocent was thrown into the lake, which received the mother's name by the order of the godly chiefs.

Such is the simple narrative. The lake upon the southern border of the County, and head of the west branch of the Delaware river, is spoken of in old maps and documents as Utsyantha, while this one is not referred to, at least not by the name of Utsyantho. Whether, in the Indian tongue the two words are the same, we are unable to say. For a long time it was called "Jack's lake", but owing to its elevation and the town to which it belongs, it is well for the plain to give it the appropriate name of "Summit Lake;" while our modern "esthetes" now call it "Utsyantho" for the benefit of romance, and imagine Utsyantho, or the Jefferson lake, was named after the maiden's treacherous lover. Its outlet flows to the south and empties into the "West Kill," in the town of Jefferson. An Indian path from the Charlotte, led to the lake and followed its outlet to the Schoharie creek, along which the Indian traversed for time unknown. Upon the banks of the Summit Lake, tradition tells us, Johnson and Brant halted in their march in 1780 to devastate the Schoharie valley...

As the country became more thickly settled and business more brisk, the times demanded better accommodations, and from time to time the old log houses have disappeared and others at greater cost and convenience have taken their places. About the year 1840 a tavern was built upon the hills, in the west part of the village by _____ Warner, and afterwards purchased by Wm. T. Moak, of Sharon, who continued until the year 1854, when the property changed hands and was soon transformed into a private residence, and at a later date, divided and partly removed.

The Charlotte Valley.---A short distance to the west of the village of Summit is a spring from which the Charlotte river proper takes its rise. Along its course several rivulets unite and form one of the main tributaries of the noble Susquehanna. The ancient Indian path to the Susquehanna from the Hudson and Schoharie rivers followed this stream, and during the Revolution many hundred hearts, laden with the deepest sorrow, were forced to follow it as captives, on their journey to Niagara and Canada, not knowing but each moment

they would fall victims to the savages' cupidity or Tories' vengeance and knowing that each step was drawing them nearer and nearer the dreaded gauntlet and confinements...

Nothing of importance occurred in this part until the year 1850, when the New York Methodist Conference erected by subscription a donations a large building for school purposes, to accommodate nearly three hundred boarding students, under Rev. Alonzo Flack, as Principal, and Miss Helen Flack, Preceptress, with eleven assistants.

After two years of unparalleled success, an examining committee reported to the Conference that "the institution has had a career of unexampled prosperity." "Though it was opened only two years since, it had during the past term more than three hundred and fifty students in actual attendance." "The number would have been still greater if accommodations could have been furnished." "As a new building has just been erected, more than five hundred can be provided for next term."...Additions were built upon each end in 1852, running back, and were no sooner furnished than occupied by five hundred students.

Being over-crowded and extremely prosperous, in the season 1855 a building four hundred and eight feet in length, four stores in height, with basement, was erected upon the south side of the creek, upon the hillside. The new structure was intended for a college, and at one time eight hundred students were in attendance in both buildings.

The faculty in 1852 was increased to seventeen teachers beside the principal and preceptress. An incendiary laid the north building in ashes in 1856, and in the year 1867, the south structure also was reduced to ashes. Not being daunted by misfortune, a large hotel was purchased and fitted conveniently for a school, under the management of Professor Solomon Sias and six associates. The school closed some time in 1875 and was not revived. Dr. William Lamont during the last years of school was the principal.

The question will naturally be asked years hence, as is frequently done now, "Why were structures for such purposes built in back places away from public thoroughfares?" The idea was prevalent that vice, such as lures away the youth, only existed along the thoroughfares; and their catalogues and other advertisements made a special point to that effect, assuring parents that their "children would be free from the evils that clustered along them."...

For many years the farmers of this town have been engaged extensively in dairying, and have supplied the markets with butter that will cope with any other. Upon the lofty hills, the most succulent grasses grow and from their sides are springs of the purest water that add materially to the quality of the dairy products, while the dairymen spare neither pains nor

expense to produce a choice article. For many years Elisha Brown of this town was a large dealer in such products, and gained the reputation in the New York market of furnishing the best quality of butter the year through of any buyer in the State. Its keeping qualities were highly spoken of and it is said to improve through the use of modern conveniences upon scientific principles. Mr. Brown was long known as "Butter Brown" and was considered one of the most expert judges of the article to be found. He removed from Connecticut to the town of Jefferson, and from thence to this place. Mr. Brown was Supervisor of the town in 1862, and held the office of Justice of the Peace for several years. He died highly respected as a Christian and business man...

Churches.---The oldest organization in the Town is the First Baptist Church, situated a short distance from Charlotteville. Through the kindness of Mr. W. C. Hicks, whose father was long an officer of this church, we were furnished with the following sketch, taken from the published "minutes of the forty-ninth anniversary of the Worcester Baptist Association", held on the 11th and 12th of June, 1879. "The Baptist Church of Jefferson and the First Baptist Church of Summit occupied the same field and used the same church book from 1805 until 1827". When it ceased to be called Jefferson and took the name of Summit the records do not say. "A council was called at the house of Elam Northrup in Jefferson by Baptist brethren of South Hill and Charlotte River to advise and counsel them in matters of importance, September 26, 1805"...

The Second Baptist Church was located at Summit village and was organized in 1839 with twenty members, principally resident members of the Jefferson, or, parent church...

The Reformed Church of Eminence.---This society was organized by the classes of Schoharie in 1831...The church edifice was commenced in 1833 by the Reformed Society, and for its completion and interest on the debt incurred, it was sold to the Methodists, by whom it was finished, and occupied by both societies until 1854. At that time the Methodists built a new one across the street in Blenheim, and the Presbyterians repaired the old building and have occupied it since...

The Methodist Episcopal church of Summit is a spirited organization, but we have been unable to procure a historical sketch of the same, from the fact that upon each visit the records were not accessible, owing to absence of the official in whose keeping they were placed, and the forgetfulness of those who were entrusted with the task of giving the points of history...

The Free Methodist Church of Charlotteville.---This society has the honor of being the first organization of the kind in the County. The first meeting for the election of trustees was held March 16, 1878...

The edifice was built the same year of the organization, and is a neat structure that adds much to the appearance of the place. It is to be hoped that the societies of this order will exert such an influence over other denominations as to cause their church seats to become free, that all the poor and well as the rich, may enter the house of God and sit to worship without paying "tribute to Caesar," inasmuch as that Christian idea is the ground-work of their organization.

EMINENCE

The early settlers of this locality were of Dutch descent, and their Yankee neighbors distinguished it as "Dutch Hill," by which it was known until the post office was established in 1851, when it was named "Eminence." Peter Harder was one of the first settlers and was the father of the present Harders of the County, whose enterprise as successful businessmen places them in the front rank. Reuben and Minard Harder commenced the mercantile business here when they were young men...

First Town Meeting.---The first town meeting was held at the house of Martin Hoffman in March, 1820.

It was resolved, "That sheep shall not be free commoners and if rams are allowed to ramble at large between the first of September and the first of December, they shall be forfeited." A bounty was voted for the killing of bears and wolves, ranging from five to ten dollars per head. By the vote of the people, we find upon a schedule of the town's indebtedness bearing date 1821, the sum of twenty dollars was raised for the support of the poor. Fence viewers and school inspectors received twenty-five cents day for actual service, and we suppose were then docked for time wasted...

* * * * *

If the history of Summit could be summarized in just one sentence, that sentence would read,

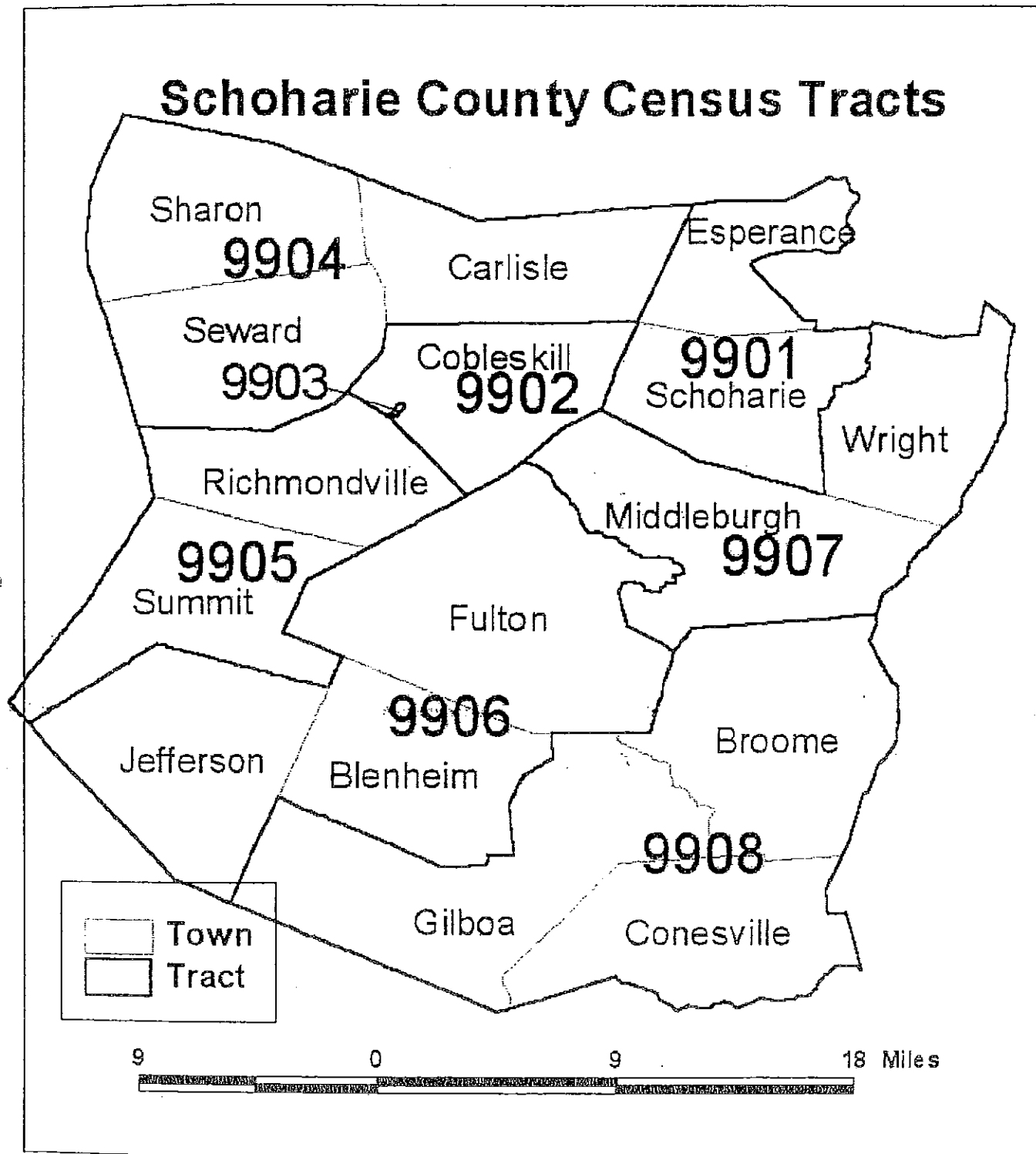
From the arrival of the first peoples and throughout the influx of settlers from other continents, the natural resources in this area were utilized for food, clothing, income, the needs basic to the sustenance of life.

The native Americans fished and hunted in order to feed and clothe their families; they grew maize in the surrounding areas. As other settlers arrived in this area, they, too, looked to the land and other natural resources to build a new life. They, too, hunted, fished, and farmed. Logging became a major industry in this area.

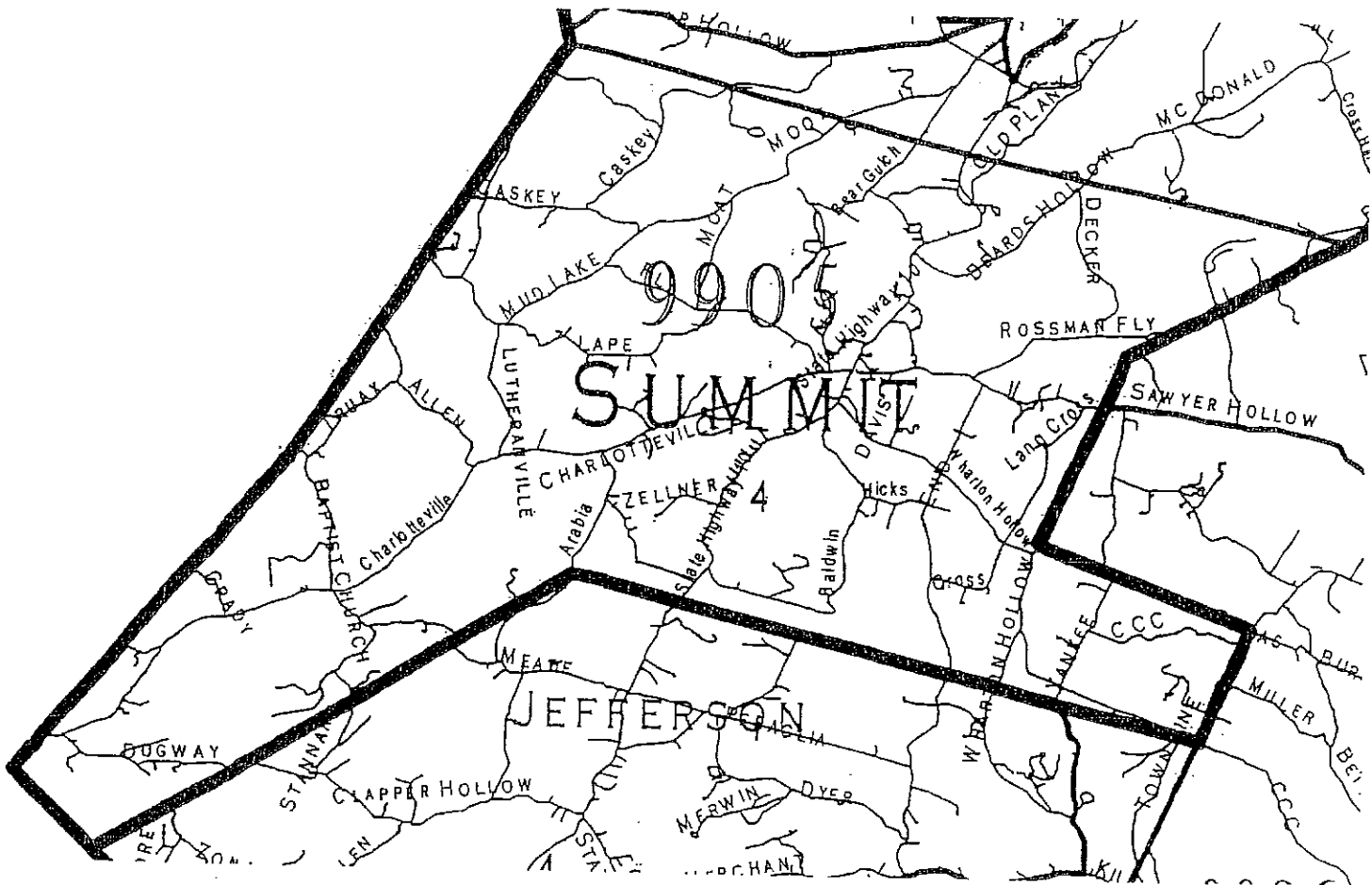
Today, hunting and fishing mainly represent a source of sport and recreation. Logging as a major contributor to the local economy has disappeared. There are far fewer working farms than there were just a generation ago. There are more part-time residents who enjoy the natural beauty of this area and the year-round outdoor activities such as snowmobiling, hunting, fishing, boating, and the like. New homes are being built. Major roads and modern motor vehicles make travel to Summit from other areas a convenient and relatively short trip.

Because use of our land and other natural resources no longer represents the key to survival, new questions now face the Town of Summit today: Just how important is it to those who live here in this new era to protect the natural resources of this area? What steps are we ready to take? What sacrifices are we willing to make?

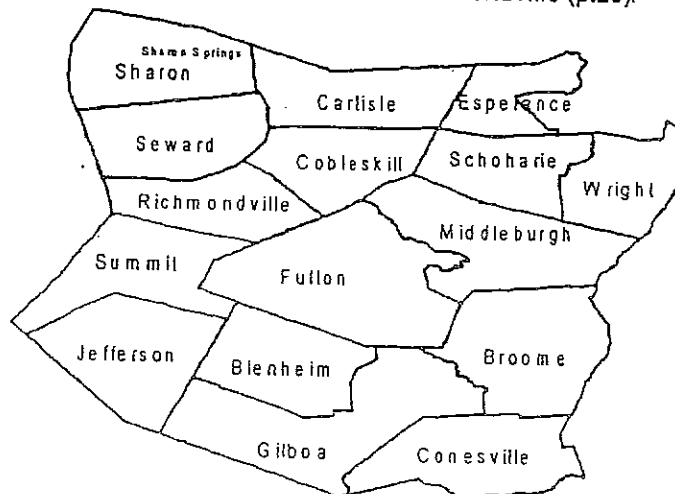
For the 2000 Census, Schoharie County was divided into eight Census Tracts, depicted on the map below. Except for Cobleskill and Middleburgh, each of which had its own tract, Census Tracts in Schoharie County typically encompassed two or three full towns. The map also shows that in the 2000 Census, tract boundaries followed town borders.



TOWN OF SUMMIT



Tract 9905 continues in the Town of Richmondville (p.20).



TOWN OF SUMMIT

DEMOGRAPHICS

	1980		2000		2000 vs. 1980
	<u>Census</u>	<u>% Total</u>	<u>Census</u>	<u>% Total</u>	
Population (a)	905		1,123		24.1%
Male	473	52.3%	576	51.3%	21.8%
Female	432	47.7%	547	48.7%	26.6%
Ages:					
0 - 9	116	12.8%	144	12.8%	24.1%
10 - 19	177	19.6%	131	11.7%	-26.0%
20 - 34	168	18.6%	162	14.4%	-3.6%
35 - 44	119	13.1%	153	13.6%	28.6%
45 - 54	105	11.6%	199	17.7%	89.5%
55 - 64	94	10.4%	157	14.0%	67.0%
64 -	126	13.9%	177	15.8%	40.5%
Households	317		459		44.8%
House Units:	646		879		36.1%
Year Round	377	58.4%	459	52.2%	21.8%
Secondary	269	41.6%	381	43.3%	41.6%
Vacant	?		41		
Family Income (b)	\$12,375		\$40,139		224.4%

Footnotes:

(a) 973 in 1990.

(b) Year 2000: \$43,118 - Schoharie County; and \$51,691 - NYS.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

	<u>2005</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2030</u>
2000 Census (County)	31,161	30,617	30,020	29,336	28,527	27,592
NYSARC (County)	34,468	35,217	35,933	36,662	37,288	37,934
NYSARC (Summit)	1,076	1,087	1,097	1,107	1,115	1,123

NYSARC - New York State Association of Regional Councils - 1997 Study

PARCELS

<u>2005</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>1999</u>
1,385	1,388	1,376	1,360	1,350	1,339	1,340

Economic Base

The economic base of Summit has not changed appreciably since the 1986 Comprehensive Master Plan termed it "static, with minimal industry and commerce." Today, the Town remains predominately residential, with prospects for significant commercial development minimal.

Historically, Summit hosted a modest resort industry, as well as significant agricultural and related industries. All have declined over the decades as times have changed. Family farms, in line with the national trend, are almost extinct. A number have been subdivided for residential development, and others no longer provide a living for their owners, who pursue other occupations outside the Town. Only a few working farms remain within the area, and there are no related industries.

There is some retail trade within the Town, with general stores both in Summit and in the hamlet of Charlotteville. There are also several restaurants and taverns, as well as several bed and breakfast-type inns. A substantial number of home-based service businesses exist within the Town, many of which operate in various fields of the construction industry, with a few in the logging industry. There are also many craft businesses, as well as local artists.

A New York State minimum security prison facility is operated on the eastern boundary of the Town, and employs a few residents, although most of its employees are from other places.

Residents of Summit have traditionally traveled outside the Town, often to Cobleskill, Oneonta, or the Albany/Schenectady/Troy Capital District for employment and major shopping. All those locations are easily accessible from Interstate 88 that passes near the Town. The recent survey confirmed that this is still the case, and also showed that about one third of the Town's residents are retired. Existing local retail and service businesses cater primarily to seasonal residents, visitors and sports participants, as well as to permanent residents from a convenience standpoint.

In the many years since the decline of farming and related industries, it appears that the primary basis for the Town's economy have been its lakes, open spaces, woodlands, wildlife habitats and varied outdoor recreational opportunities. A major factor has also been the close proximity of several New York State

owned forests, which are open to the public and accessible from Summit. In particular, hunting season and winter snowmobiling bring large numbers of visitors and part-time residents to the Town. Seasonal homes have proliferated, especially around Summit Lake and Bear Gulch Lake.

However, as lake fronts, woods and fields are developed for new homes, the very qualities that drew people to Summit are diminished. Outdoor recreational areas have become fewer, smaller and more difficult to access. Whether outdoor recreation will continue to contribute as much to the Town's economic base remains to be seen.

Summit has not, in the past, attracted attention from significant businesses or industries, possibly due to its location distant from populations and large markets, as well as its long winters, heavy snow and rural road system.

Very importantly, large businesses or industries may not be suitable for the Town or even be welcome by its population. Such commercial activities could well conflict with the natural beauty and rural qualities of Summit that has drawn its residents to the Town and kept them here. The recent survey showed that the majority of respondents were most influenced to live in Summit by its natural beauty and rural atmosphere. The majority of respondents also indicated that they continue to live in the Town because of those qualities.

There also exists a real question as to whether large businesses or industries would provide much economic benefit to the Town. Such businesses do not necessarily even hire locally. Also, local wages paid by businesses in outlying rural areas such as Summit are typically much lower than wages paid by other businesses within commuting distance. Moreover, commercial enterprises pay no more in local taxes than do equivalent residences, even though businesses frequently demand more in services from the Town, which should continue to practice good fiscal management.

The 1986 Comprehensive Plan concluded that Summit showed minimal prospects for commercial growth, and determined that the planning process should emphasize preserving the Town's qualities as a residential community. As then, it remains clear now that Summit's real treasure is its natural beauty, rural character and quality of life that makes it a unique place to live. With that continuing theme, it is again recommended that the planning process focus on preserving

those qualities. The Town's recent survey clearly showed the preservation of those qualities as the primary concern of the vast majority of its citizens. Also, on the survey, most indicated that commercial development and the creation of jobs are not important or less important.

Therefore, more specifically, it is recommended that the Town only encourage home-based businesses that fit in with the community and do not alter its rural character or undermine the quality of life of its residents. A number of existing home-based businesses fit in so well that it is often difficult to tell whether someone is conducting a business out of their home.

In furtherance of that goal, it is further recommended that the Town enact a local law, which has been the subject of previous discussions, that makes it clear that residents may conduct a business out of their home or outbuilding, as long as such business is clearly secondary to the residential use of the property. It is also recommended that the Town enact local laws which place reasonable restrictions on the height of new structures and the maximum size of footprints, both for safety reasons and in order to discourage the construction of large commercial enterprises that are out of character with the community. (Refer to Appendix B.)

Finally, it is further recommended that the Town take major steps to minimize the loss of farmlands, woodlands and wildlife habitats by requiring major subdivisions to include more significant amounts of acreage in each lot. Also, that the Town encourage cluster housing as an additional method of preserving open space and the rural character of the community. In this way, it may be possible for Summit's full and part-time residents, as well as visitors, to continue to enjoy the rural lifestyle that brought them here and to benefit from the traditional outdoor recreational activities for which Summit is known and valued.

TOWN OF SUMMIT

BUDGET

<u>Expense</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>5 Year Increase</u>
General	160,350	170,223	187,432	195,791	203,829	27%
Highway	295,250	323,281	352,580	382,018	402,125	36%
Charlotteville Fire Dept.	58,591	64,050	66,100	68,320	69,455	19%
Summit Fire Dept.	106,895	106,800	105,300	102,700	118,400	11%
Total	621,086	664,354	711,412	748,829	793,809	28%
<u>Income</u>						
Tax	435,401	455,829	489,312	522,454	561,544	29%
Other *	<u>185,685</u>	<u>208,525</u>	<u>222,100</u>	<u>226,375</u>	<u>232,265</u>	25%
Total	621,086	664,354	711,412	748,829	793,809	28%

* Other – Revenue and unexpended previous balance

TAX RATE PER \$1,000 OF ASSESSED VALUE

	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>
General	1.94	1.94	1.93	1.94	1.88
Highway	3.62	3.89	4.48	4.88	4.85
Charlotteville Fire Dept.	3.36	3.74	3.86	3.85	3.61
Summit Fire Dept.	2.74	2.69	2.66	2.54	2.71

911 Information

Schoharie County is part of the 911 emergency assistance system. Always dial 9-1-1 for emergency assistance, and the dispatcher will send the proper assistance to you. Be sure your house number is clearly posted so that emergency teams can find you.

The Summit Fire Department provides protection for the eastern portion of the Township, and the Charlotteville Fire Department serves the western portion.

For medical emergencies, the Charlotteville First Responders give immediate aid in the Charlotteville area. The Summit Rescue Squad, with its ambulance, serves the entire Township.

All of these entities are comprised totally of volunteers.

Healthcare Services

The Township is served by the following hospitals:

Cobleskill Regional Hospital
Bassett Healthcare in Cooperstown
Fox Memorial Hospital in Oneonta
Albany Medical Center
St. Peter's Hospital in Albany

as well as other hospitals in the Albany area.

Summit's Road System

Summit is serviced by a conglomeration of State, County, Town and private roads. Having those roads cleared of snow during winter is a major concern of residents since Summit, with the highest elevation in Schoharie County at 2400 feet, experiences long winters and heavy snowfalls.

State Route 10, once a major thoroughfare, runs north-south through the Town. It is maintained by New York State, which also plows the road in winter.

Some other major roads in the Town are owned by Schoharie County. They include Charlotte Valley Road, Baptist Church Road, Meade Road, Lutheranville Road, Wharton Hollow Road, Sawyer Hollow Road and Beards Hollow Road, as well as other lesser roads. Those roads are maintained by the County, which is also responsible for plowing them. However, in practice, the County plows some roads, while the Town plows others for the County under a cooperative agreement.

Most of the other roads in Summit are owned, maintained and plowed by the Town. Many have been paved by the Town over the years, but miles of unpaved roads still remain. In a continuing effort, the Town Highway Department paves as much additional road each year as the budget permits. However, some residents resist having their roads paved because they feel that dirt roads discourage speeding traffic and is more consistent with the rural atmosphere.

A number of subdivisions and individual homes have also been built in the Town on private roads, which were constructed and are owned by either individuals, developers or associations. Those owners remain responsible for both maintaining and plowing their own roads.

Private roads have sometimes been a source of conflict in the Town, particularly when those roads have not been kept up or kept passable in the winter. People living on such private roads have then demanded that the Town take over the roads and maintain and plow them. The Town has found this a difficult and expensive burden, particularly when private roads were poorly constructed and not up to normal Town standards. The Town now requires that any new private road be constructed to full Town road specifications, and the Town resists requests to

take over private roads. Residents who choose to build or buy on private roads must look to the owner for proper maintenance and snow clearing or accomplish it themselves.

Summit also includes a number of seasonal dirt roads, particularly on State owned land, which are minimally maintained and not plowed in the winter.

It appears that Summit's existing road system is marginally adequate to service current needs, but may not be adequate to accommodate increasing populations. Many roads are hemmed in with homes and structures that were built prior to any setback requirements. Numerous roads are not even paved. Summit's road system is clearly a rural one that is not very susceptible to being upgraded to handle increased traffic.

Public Transportation

Schoharie County has set up bus routes for residents. Eight routes are in place, and transportation is provided from the surrounding towns, as well as from towns as far away as Albany and the Tri-City area.

Information on the various routes and bus schedules are available at all Post Offices and in the Town Hall. For more information as well as for current fares, you can contact **Schoharie County Public Transportation** at :

(518) 234-0952.

Recreational Facilities

Residents enjoy swimming, boating, fishing, hunting, walking, and biking along the country roads, amidst the natural beauty of this area. Winter sports are also very popular. The Summit Sno Riders, Inc. members maintain approximately 175 miles of trail system on public and private lands. They try to make snowmobiling a family-oriented sport and provide safety instruction along with many Club activities. For all information the Club has a web site, www.summitsnoriders.com.

Land Use Planning

A major concern which was clearly and repeatedly expressed in Summit's 1986 Comprehensive Master Plan was that continuing and accelerating subdivisions and housing construction would undermine the rural nature of the Town, along with its quality of life.

In response to the 1986 Comprehensive Plan, the Town enacted local laws which included a 5-acre minimum building site requirement that was intended, in part, to deal with these concerns. Nevertheless, continuing and accelerating subdivisions and construction remain a primary concern today, while, according to the recent survey, preserving the rural nature of the Town and its quality of life remain primary goals of its current residents.

In fact, many correlate an even greater migration to Summit following the 9-11 terrorist attack on New York City's World Trade Center. Whether or not such migration is actually related to that event, few dispute that Summit has experienced an increased growth rate in recent years.

As more people move to Summit, and as part-time residents more frequently become full-time residents, the rural nature and accompanying quality of life that the Town's vast majority so greatly value has been affected.

Areas of the Town where, just a few years ago, people used to hike, ride horses, hunt, fish, ski, snowshoe, snowmobile and engage in other outdoor activities are now broken up and "POSTED," with fellow townspeople often viewed as trespassers, rather than neighbors.

In order to mitigate, or at least slow down, the current trend in which Summit is fast becoming a suburb of 5-acre parcels, several remedies are proposed.

1. That the current 5-acre minimum lot size be retained only for Minor Subdivisions, which would be redefined to mean the division of any parcel of land into two or three lots within a five-year period, not involving any new street or road.

2. That each parcel included in a Major Subdivision be required to contain 15 acres of land or more. Major Subdivision would be redefined to mean the division of any parcel of land into four or more lots within a five-year period, or any subdivision requiring any new street or road.

This rule would impose no actual hardship on landowners who wish to sell or develop part or all of large tracts of land. Small parcels (5 acres or less) proliferate in the Town and surrounding areas, and larger sites, much harder to find, may well command premium prices, netting greater profit per acre for the seller or developer. This would be particularly true if prospective purchasers viewed the larger lot requirement as an indication that Summit is serious about saving its rural nature and quality of life.

3. That Cluster Development be authorized and encouraged by the Town by adopting local laws which would allow the construction of cluster housing on major subdivisions that allocate 10 acres or more per residence to the project.

Cluster development is a land use planning tool that was designed to balance growth with the preservation of community character and environment. It provides an attractive alternative to traditional development in which subdivisions consume all the land on which they are built. In rural areas, cluster development can help to retain the rural nature by maintaining open spaces, while still allowing for new housing.

A cluster development usually places new houses on smaller parcels of land than is normally required for a home site, while the additional land that would ordinarily have been allocated to the individual lots is instead dedicated to common open space for the subdivision residents. The actual size and layout of the individual sites, as well as the location of the dedicated open space, is usually worked out by the developer and the town's Planning Board, taking into consideration the natural features of the particular tract of land.

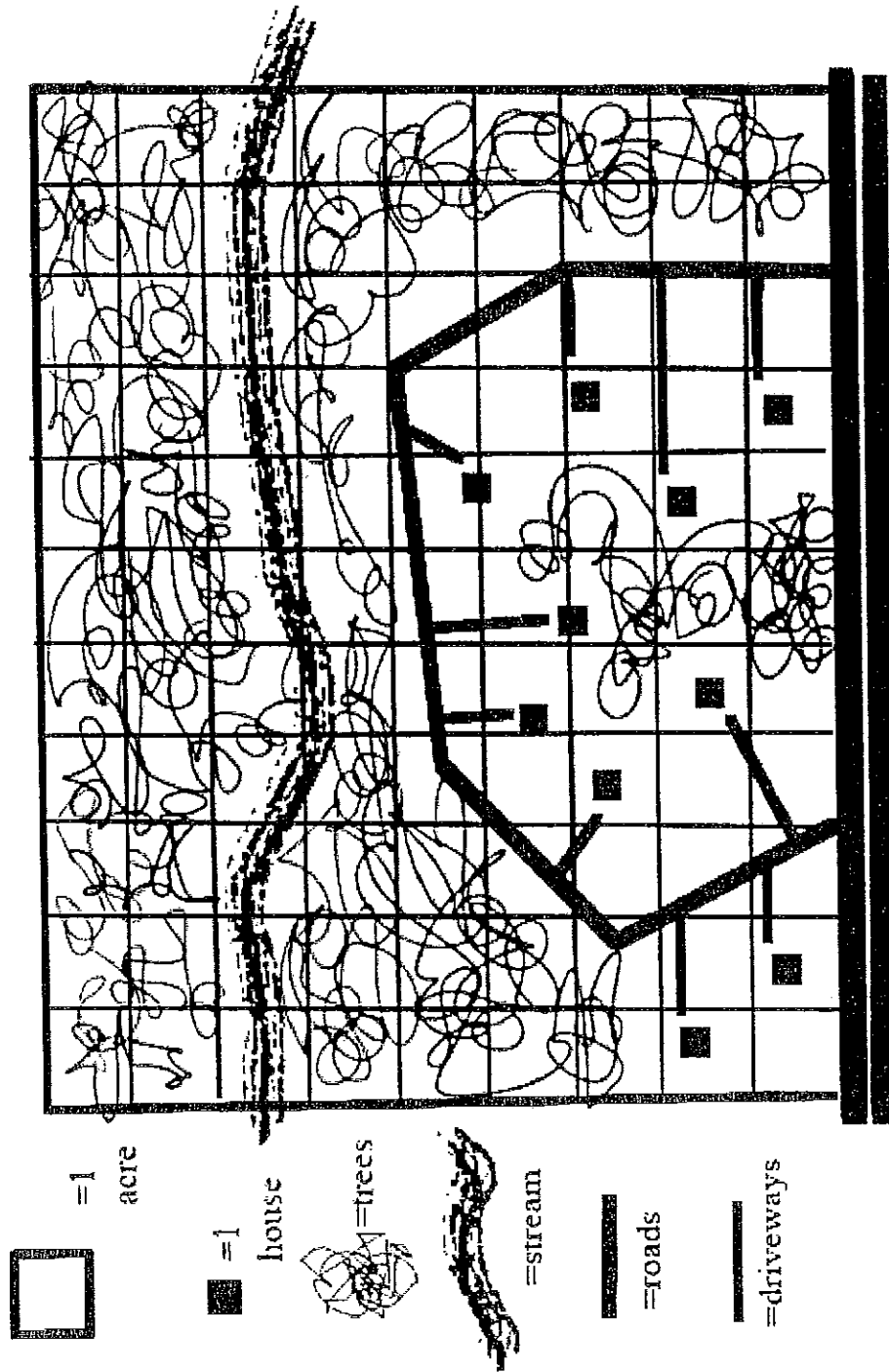
Cluster development is universally viewed as a win/win proposition. It allows developers to build the same number of units (or more) than they could with a traditional subdivision, but at a lower cost per unit, particularly since clustering homes frequently negates or minimizes the need for private roads. Home buyers gain a rural home with the assurance that the immediate surrounding area will remain natural and accessible to them forever. The Town gains the

benefit of more open space, that is, vacant land without structures, often including wildlife habitats, while accommodating growth with the least amount of increased costs due to more roads and other infrastructure.

While it is expected that the adoption of the foregoing recommendations will help slow the loss of Summit's much valued rural character and quality of life, nothing proposed will solve the problem completely. Continued growth, particularly at the current rate, will inexorably diminish Summit's unique character and lifestyle. Summit's history has already proven that. More significant steps may well have to be taken in the future if the current trend continues.

In that event, the Town should not hesitate to take stronger steps. If Summit does not take its future into its own hands, that future will be dictated by the financial and personal goals of others from outside the Town, without regard to the welfare of Summit or its citizens.

CLUSTER HOUSING on 100 ACRES



Over 60 acres of this parcel cannot be used for building, and will be preserved forever as open space.

VISUAL QUALITY PLANNING

Many factors go into the protection of the heritage that this area provides. One of those factors is the control and/or elimination of unrestrained, visible accumulation of junk. Such accumulation not only mars the land Summit residents cherish so much, and the right of citizens to unwarranted visual intrusion, but also may present a health threat. Indeed, the results of the 2005 Survey indicate that most Summit residents are also concerned about this issue.

For these reasons, the Comprehensive Plan Committee felt that the current Local Law governing junk should be updated to include more comprehensive and definitive limitations upon the accumulation of junk as well as provisions dealing with junk removal. Also addressed in this proposed update are provisions dealing with junkyards. For instance, the Committee has included more comprehensive definitions of just what is “junk” and what is not. With regard to junkyards, visual barriers on existing junk yards are explicitly defined to avoid the use by junkyard owners of unsightly barriers. New requirements ensuring full access by Fire Department vehicles have been established. Moreover, the proposed law would phase out current junkyard facilities and prevent new yards from being established.

This update is based on a model law provided by the State as well as provisions contained in local area laws. In addition, to a local law dealing with junk accumulation and removal, the Committee recommends that when the case load warrants it, the Town enforcement officer be provided with additional personnel on a per diem basis. Also, based upon feedback from Summit residents, to facilitate registration of complaints, the Planning Committee recommends the allowance of complaints to the enforcement officer to be registered anonymously.

Laws don’t necessarily “fix” situations—people do, along with laws. The Committee believes the suggested Junk Storage Law will aid in this direction (Refer to Appendix A).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As the Comprehensive Plan Committee has considered the results from the Town survey, current and future issues within our community, and the changing times since the last plan, we have outlined an updated Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Summit. The plan includes our conclusions and recommendations to preserve the rural nature and atmosphere of the community that we all enjoy. The Comprehensive Plan Committee strongly recommends that the following proposals be considered for adoption:

- Reduce junk and junk cars by adopting a new junk law as proposed by the committee which is intended to regulate the deposit, accumulation and maintenance of junk on personal property and on junk yards, salvage yards, storage/disposal yards, and dismantling yards within the Town of Summit. Additional recommendations include the use of anonymous complaints, utilization of an additional person, on a per diem basis, to aid the primary code enforcer, and prohibiting any new junk yards (Refer to Appendix A).
- Extend the white metal/goods pickup to twice a year, once in the spring and once in the fall, to promote a cleaner, more rural, natural and attractive environment in the Town.
- Amend the current home site law (Town of Summit Local Law No. 1-2002) to include a maximum building height and a maximum footprint size. Both limitations are recommended due to safety concerns and to maintain the rural character of the Town (Refer to Appendix B).
- Adopt the zoning enabling law in order to facilitate recommended amendments to the current home site law, as well as authorization for cluster housing developments.
- Because it is essential to maintain the rural nature of the Town and the quality of life valued by its residents, the subdivision and re-subdivision of land into small parcels must be reduced. In order to do so, revise the current subdivision regulations (Town of Summit Land Subdivision Regulations) to permit only minor subdivisions to utilize the current 5-acre minimum lot size. Minor subdivisions should also be redefined as the division of a parcel of land into two or three lots within a five year period, not involving any

new road. Major subdivisions should be redefined to mean the division of any parcel of land into four or more lots within a five year period, or any subdivision requiring any new road, and should be permitted to break up into lots no smaller than 15 acres each unless dedicated to an approved cluster housing development. (Refer to Land Use Planning section.)

- Authorize and encourage cluster housing development as an additional method of preserving open spaces and the rural nature of the community. Do so by allowing such development on major subdivisions that allocate 10 acres or more for each clustered home site. (Refer to Land Use Planning Section.)
- Appoint a separate, independent committee to research and provide guidance on the development and use of wind power within the Town (Refer to Appendix C).