

# **TOWN OF HALFMOON**

## *A Lifelong Community*

### **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN & Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement**

Town of Halfmoon  
Saratoga County, New York

**LEAD AGENCY:**

**Town of Halfmoon Town Board**

Town Hall

111 Route 236

Halfmoon, New York 12065

**Contact Person:**

**Ken DeCerce, Supervisor**

(518) 371-7410

**PREPARED BY:**

**Town of Halfmoon Comprehensive Plan  
Committee**

Town Hall

111 Route 236

Halfmoon, New York 12065

**Contact Person:**

**Walt Polak, Chairperson**

(518) 371-7410

**And**

**Clough, Harbour & Associates LLP**

III Winners Circle

P.O. Box 5269

Albany, New York 12205

**Contact Person:**

**Christopher R. Einstein, A.I.C.P.**

(518) 453-4505

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## **Town Board**

**Kenneth DeCerco, Supervisor**

**Walter Polak, Jr.**

**James Bold**

**Regina Parker**

**Melinda Wormuth**

## **The Comprehensive Plan Committee:**

Walter Polak, Chair

John D'Allesandro, Land Use Subcommittee Chair

Michael Hurtt, Public Utilities Subcommittee Chair

Thomas Murray, Land Preservation Subcommittee Chair

Hennrietta O'Grady, Cultural and Recreational Resources Subcommittee Chair

## **Sub-committee members:**

William Betts

Larry Gniewek

Frank Hartley

Lucy Healey

Ellen Kennedy

Spruce Krier

Lois Smith Law

Michael Miller

Barbara Oswald

Brad Oswald

George Oswald

Tom Ruchlicki

Mathew Shea

Diane Stiles

Mike Stiles

Glenn Swatling

Loueen Whalen

Rosemarie Wysocki

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Ed Faulkner, Town Assessor (Retired)

Ed Pearson, Town Assessor

Mary Pearson, Town Clerk



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- B. *Town-Wide Survey Results*
- C. *Response to Comments (Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement)*

# Plan Summary

Comprehensive planning is the process by which data and community values are synthesized into a vision for the future of a community. The vision and associated goals and objectives provide the framework for developing recommendations and a plan of action. A comprehensive plan is a guidance document. It is not meant to be rigid, dictating how and when the plan is implemented. Rather, it should provide enough guidance to allow a community to make reasonable, informed decisions on how to address the issues and concerns they are faced with. Few communities have the resources to accomplish all the actions necessary to address all the problems. However, with a plan in place, a proactive mindset, and community consensus on the issues and actions, the Town can begin to realize beneficial change.

Success is ultimately measured by the ability to address the issues and pursue the ultimate vision for a better community. Support for the plan recommendations from the residents and business owners of the community are essential in the process for change. There is no better way to gain this support than to involve as many people as possible in the formulation of the plan.

The Town of Halfmoon has developed a comprehensive plan with all the components necessary to achieve their vision; and they have done so with direct and frequent input from the community.

## **A. Community Outreach**

The Town's community outreach program for the development of the comprehensive plan included public input at each step of the planning process to provide the greatest opportunity for community consensus and a community derived vision and plan. Outreach began with a town-wide survey and neighborhood meetings. This essential component of the planning process provides planners with information on key issues of concern as well as the positive aspects of the community. The town-wide survey also has the dual role informing everyone in the community that a process is underway to direct and perhaps redirect the future of the town and they should get involved.

The results of the survey provided a few very interesting perspectives. Although about half of the survey respondents felt that the type and pace of development over the past 10 years was acceptable, there seems to be

reluctance towards further growth. Respondents were amenable to some type of town center, which correlates well with their desire to have commercial development centralized. Large developments such as industrial facilities and “big box” commercial appear to be undesirable to the majority of respondents. This may be related to the contrast in land use between new, large-scale development and existing smaller business and residential neighborhood. Clearly, the majority of respondents like where they are living and would like to maintain their quality of life.

The neighborhood meetings provided a more personal opportunity for residents to express their concerns and desires, as well as an opportunity to meet the folks that would help direct the process.

Other opportunities for public input include utilization of the Town’s web site to post draft plan components for public review, public informational meetings and workshops, and public hearings. “Halfmoon Days,” a yearly celebration of life in the Town, was used as an opportunity to provide residents with copies of the draft plan recommendations and to speak with committee members and the planning consultants.

## **B. Inventory & Analysis**

Prior to determining the vision for the Town, an inventory of its natural and cultural resources was compiled to identify opportunities and constraints for future land use. These resources include:

- ◆ Topography
- ◆ Geology & soils
- ◆ Water resources
- ◆ Floodplains and drainage
- ◆ Ecology
- ◆ Land use & zoning
- ◆ Agriculture
- ◆ Open space and recreational resources
- ◆ Community services
- ◆ Utilities
- ◆ Transportation system
- ◆ Socioeconomic resources
- ◆ Historic & cultural resources

The above information is contained within Appendix A and provides the community with a data resource and a basis for many of the plan recommendations.

## **C. Community Vision, Goals and Objectives**

The Community Outreach Program supplemented by an Inventory & Analysis of the Town's resources, provided the Comprehensive Plan Committee and its consultant with the information and direction necessary to create a vision statement and prepare goals and objectives that would guide the preparation of the Plan. The Town's vision of the future is perhaps the single most important guiding principle used throughout the planning process. The vision states:

The Town of Halfmoon envisions itself as a "lifelong" community, providing a quality of life that promotes small town values and social, recreational and economic opportunities, enabling residents to make Halfmoon their home for this and future generations; a growing community that values and celebrates its natural, historic, cultural, and agricultural resources and is progressive in its efforts to manage growth, to conserve community resources and achieve fiscal balance.

The associated goals and objectives include the following topics: growth management; fiscal & economic health; utilities; transportation and mobility; community facilities and services; housing; town character; agriculture, natural resources, and open space; cultural resources; recreation; civic duty; and implementation.

## **D. Plan Recommendations**

The plan recommendations chapter of the Comprehensive Plan is divided into town-wide recommendations and more specific recommendations for planning areas. The town was divided into five planning areas based on existing land use and other commonalities.

The plan recommendations begin with a discussion of growth management tools, offering an introduction to the planning concepts and terms used in this plan.

### **Town-Wide Recommendations**

#### ***Growth Management***

Growth management is a process by which a community develops the methods and means (tools) to control the type, location and amount of land development (growth) in the community. The most common growth

management tool is zoning. This is a regulatory tool. Regulatory tools are essential to ensure orderly growth; however, other measures that rely on incentives and voluntary involvement by landowners are also available and can be very effective. Some of these tools include term easements and tax abatements, purchase of development rights, transfer of development rights, and development guidelines in conjunction with community supported plans.

Growth management was divided into three topic areas that include land management, fiscal management and economic development, and community development. The principle town-wide recommendations for growth management include the following:

Land Management

- Zoning and Subdivision amendments to provide for some changes in land use but primarily changes in density and project review process.
- Adoption of incentive zoning.
- Adoption of conservation plan review process and development and architectural guidelines.
- Preparation of a farmland and open space conservation plan.
- Preparation of a utility plan.

Fiscal Management and Economic Development

- Preparation of a fiscal impact model.
- Identification and pre-approval of suitable land for economic development.
- Reinvestment and redevelopment of older commercial areas to increase viability and value.

Community Development

- Reinvestment in older neighborhoods.
- Identification of housing needs.
- Preparation of a recreation master plan.

***Transportation***

The primary recommendations for improving the transportation network in the town focus on the development of corridor plans for Route 9, Route 236, Route 146, Grooms Road, Vischer Ferry Road, and Sitterly Road; limitations on residential frontage development along the town's collector roads; linkages between neighborhoods; and establishment of a balance between the vehicular and pedestrian environments. This includes the potential for several new and improved links within the area identified as Halfmoon Center.

### ***Resource Conservation***

The town-wide recommendations for resource conservation seek to recognize, respect and conserve the town's natural features and resources. The primary recommendations include advanced stormwater management practices to address both quantity and quality of runoff; a 30-foot buffer on mapped stream corridors; stronger consideration of wetlands, steep slopes, and ecological communities in the site design process; distinct recognition and preservation of historic resources; and closer coordination between the town's site plan review process and the permitting process of other regulatory agencies.

### **Planning Area Recommendations**

#### ***Crescent***

This neighborhood is linked to the Mohawk River both physically and historically. The following recommendations are intended to highlight and strengthen that relationship:

- ▶ The Town should adopt and implement the Master Plan for the Historic Erie Canal Towpath Trail.
- ▶ Access to the river and canal should develop at a scale in keeping with the residential feel of this neighborhood and appropriate for fishing and the launching of small watercraft.
- ▶ The boat dock located adjacent to the Crescent Bridge on the northeast side should be redeveloped to provide a gateway to Halfmoon.
- ▶ The Crescent-Church Hill Road Historic District should continue to be protected, preserved and expanded if adjacent areas are deemed connected to the historical significance of the Area.
- ▶ Conduct a corridor study for Vischer Ferry Road to address land use, access management, traffic flow, pedestrian access and streetscaping.
- ▶ Development and redevelopment throughout the planning area should remain low to medium density. The recommended density for this area is one residential unit per buildable acre<sup>1</sup> if sewer is available. If sewer is not available, density should be based on a minimum 2-acre lot size (zoning currently allows 30,000-40,000 square foot lots depending on the availability of public water). The area should not be a candidate for sewer as a means to increase development density.

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<sup>1</sup> The term "buildable acre" refers to land identified by the Town and applicant through the conservation subdivision process as suitable for development. Typically, wetlands, water courses, and steep slopes are not considered buildable. Other features may also warrant protection.

### ***Halfmoon Center***

This area of Halfmoon is the most highly developed area in the Town and is characterized by a development pattern that includes a variety of residential and commercial uses.

#### **Core Area**

- ▶ Redevelopment and infill development should be the theme in the area of Route 9, Route 236, and Guideboard Road.
- ▶ Prepare a master plan for the areas identified as Hamlet Commercial Center (between Route 9 and Plant Road) and Mixed Use, as shown on Figure III-1.
- ▶ The hamlet commercial center and the redeveloped area at Route 9, Guideboard Road and Route 236 would be linked by infill office retail development along Route 9.
- ▶ Prepare a master plan for a Municipal Center.
- ▶ Encourage senior housing and housing for people who may not have access to private vehicle transportation within the core area.
- ▶ Development should be contingent on the availability of the appropriate services (utilities, roadway capacity and other amenities).
- ▶ Prepare a transportation plan for the Core Area.
- ▶ Architectural standards for commercial development should be established for the core area.
- ▶ The Town should seek public/private partnerships to encourage the development and redevelopment of the core area as envisioned.

#### **Transition Area**

- ▶ Residential land uses, similar in scale, character and density should continue in the area west of the Core area.
- ▶ The recommended density for this area is 2 units per buildable acre.
- ▶ Reinvest in older neighborhoods to help maintain pride, appearance and the functionality of these neighborhoods.
- ▶ Provide linkages between existing and new neighborhoods as well as to business through the use of pathways and sidewalks.
- ▶ Prepare and implement a corridor study of Routes 9 & 146 to address current and future traffic loads, access management, aesthetics, streetscape and the pedestrian environment.
- ▶ Encourage business development at Exit 8. Further east, Crescent Road will continue to be identified for professional office/residential uses.

### ***Newtown***

This area of Halfmoon bounded generally by Northern Halfmoon to the north and Harris Road and Route 236 to the west is characterized by undeveloped lands; either vacant or in agricultural use. The area south of

the Upper Newtown Road corridor (not including those parcels associated with the corridor) is primarily recommended for low density and conservation residential subdivisions. The recommendation for low density is one unit per buildable acre, assuming sewer is available. If sewer is not available, then density should be based on a 5-acre minimum lot size. The subdivision should provide a minimum of 50% quality open space. Lands along the Upper Newtown Road corridor and north to the Business Park designation in the Northern Halfmoon Planning Area, land uses will transition to medium density residential. Maximum density should not exceed 2 units per buildable acre if sewer is available. The subdivision should also provide 20 percent quality open space. If no sewer is available, density should be based on a 2-acre minimum lot size.

- ▶ The focus of the area south of the Upper Newtown Road corridor should be land conservation. The extension of utilities, for the purpose of increasing density, is not appropriate for this planning district. The exception would be to accommodate hamlet style/conservation subdivisions that include smaller lot sizes and are designed to maintain the rural feel of the existing roadway corridors and to maintain open space.
- ▶ The road system in this area is limited, consisting primarily of collector roads with scattered residential structures. No frontage lots on these roads should be allowed for major subdivisions. Minor subdivisions should be required to develop as flag lots with a common access drive.
- ▶ Views to and from the river should be considered when reviewing projects in this district.
- ▶ The Upper Newtown Road corridor and remaining lands to the north are candidates for medium density development, although conservation style development is still encouraged.

### ***Hudson River Corridor***

The Hudson River Corridor or Riverfront Planning District is a long, narrow strip bounded by the River and the Champlain Canal. A mixed-use waterfront-oriented community is envisioned in the area north of Upper Newtown Road. In order to accomplish this, an inventory to identify candidate parcels should be conducted followed by a site master plan or GEIS to address such issues as traffic, sewer and water and visual impacts. Incentive zoning would be very effective in the development of the public amenities (marina, launching facilities, gathering areas).

- The potential for a sewer force main along routes 4 & 32 will enhance the opportunity to develop the water-oriented uses described above.
- Rezone the appropriate areas to support the type of land use identified above.

- Lands to the south of Brookwood Road on Routes 4 & 32 should continue to be zoned M-1.
- Hudson River access at a scale in keeping with the neighborhood should be developed including links between the River and the historic Champlain Canal along the entire Canal/River corridor. These links should be included as part of a trails master plan.
- Land use between Upper Newtown Road and Button Road should continue to develop as medium density water oriented residential.
- Development within this entire corridor should protect and enhance both the Hudson River and the Champlain Canal.
- Site access and traffic management on Routes 4 & 32 as it relates to the entire neighborhood are critical to the success of the vision for this area.

### ***Northern Halfmoon***

The Northern Halfmoon Planning Area can generally be divided into three land use categories. The majority of the land area is currently and will continue to be developed for residential uses. Areas along Route 9 are recommended for commercial, office and light industrial uses. Route 146 has been identified for business park and mixed commercial/office uses. Land use recommendations are as follows for this area:

- To protect and enhance agricultural and open space lands; conservation subdivisions should be required as recommended in the Northern Halfmoon GEIS. The GEIS recommends a minimum 20% quality open space and the provision of incentives to encourage additional open space.
- Maximum density should not exceed 2 units per buildable acre, if sewer is available. The Northern Halfmoon GEIS provides guidelines for a density bonus if additional quality open space (must come out of buildable land, not constrained lands) is provided. The maximum density is then relaxed to allow 2 units per gross acre.<sup>2</sup> Although this may be sufficient for the interim, incentives should be defined in greater detail and with public involvement through the establishment of incentive zoning.
- Conservation subdivisions should be designed not only to protect open space but should also target important resources as identified in the Inventory and Analysis (wetlands, stream corridors, agriculture and important views).
- A network of trails and parks as identified on the future land use map should be developed in order to serve the growing residential population both in this area and the entire Town.

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<sup>2</sup> The term “gross acre” refers to both constrained and unconstrained lands.

- Business Park and commercial office uses are appropriate along Route 146. Access to Route 146 from adjacent lands should be limited to reduce future traffic congestion. An access management plan should be developed as part of the Route 146 Corridor Study.
- The Route 9 corridor including Ushers Road has been identified as an appropriate location for the development of mixed commercial and office uses as well as light industrial uses. An exception to this use is the Tabor Road area which has developed into a residential neighborhood and should remain so, with appropriate consideration given to potential future uses of lands directly adjacent to the rail road tracks.
- Develop a Corridor Plan for the Route 9 and 146 corridors to address traffic and land use issues in this corridor.
- Site plans for business uses should include appropriate set backs and buffers to protect adjacent residential uses.

## **E. Summary of Potential Adverse & Beneficial Impacts**

The plan recommendations and specific actions outlined in the Action Plan clearly establish a new course for the management of growth in the town. For years the town has relied upon zoning and subdivision regulations as their primary means of addressing growth and protecting the health, safety and welfare of the community. Town officials have done a good job with the tools that have been available to them. Nevertheless, increased development both within and adjacent to the town has resulted in impacts to the community such that the very character of the town is in jeopardy. It is also fair to recognize that the town was once rural in character and although certain areas may be preserved as rural, the town is growing and can not longer be defined as rural.

The recommendations of this plan attempt to provide the community with more planning tools and a different approach to growth management, which is necessary to deal with the complexities of a rapidly growing community. The town has no intent to shut its doors to development; however, it cannot allow itself to continue growing in the current pattern as this will only lead to discontinuity, sprawl, and the associated impacts of traffic congestion, noise, poor air quality, and a lack of community identity. These are not the attributes of a “Lifelong Community.” Recognizing that the recommendations that will help the community achieve its vision and mitigate the impacts are benefits, the following beneficial impacts are provided:

- Establishment of a conservation subdivision/development process to provide greater flexibility in design and conserve important community resources, particularly open space.
- Creation of development and architectural guidelines to assist in the above process and to address community aesthetics.
- Stronger recognition of community resources (such as ecology, visual resources, and history) and measures to protect them.
- The designation of important open space and the preservation of agriculture as a viable land use.
- Reduction in the allowable density of development in currently rural areas and the encouragement of land conservation design (hamlet style development).
- Reinvestment and redevelopment of older commercial and residential neighborhoods to provide amenities necessary to retain residents, improve aesthetics and economic viability, and maintain if not increase property value.
- Concentration of development within the Halfmoon Center planning area and improvement of infrastructure, amenities, and community services coincidental with development.
- Provision of housing stock that meets the needs of all residents at various stages of life.
- Preservation and utilization of the community's extensive waterfront.
- Provision of adequate recreational uses.
- Improvement of the pedestrian environment and the transportation network.
- Reinforcement of the sense of community and pride.

With these beneficial impacts come changes. Some of these changes may have impacts both to the environment and individual landowners. Not everything that benefits the community benefits the individual. Although the idea of a comprehensive plan is to achieve consensus with the majority of residents, it is important not to ignore some of the potential implications. The following potential adverse impacts are recognized:

- A decrease in the allowable density of development in some areas of town (particularly the Crescent and Newtown planning areas) may be perceived by some landowners as a loss of development potential and therefore a loss of property value. Current zoning allows minimum 20,000 square foot lots anywhere within the residential and ag/residential zoned areas of the town. However, the real limiting factor is sewer. The minimum lot size and for that matter the marketability of the land can only be achieved if sewer is available. There are areas of the town that probably will never receive sewer service due to topographic conditions and the expense. Yet, the entire

town is within the Saratoga County Sewer District. Therefore, it is not surprising that some landowners hold out hope that some day their property will be marketable for development. Although not completely mitigated, the plan provides recommendations to purchase development rights, transfer development rights through incentive zoning, and allow for hamlet-style development if sewer becomes available.

- An increase in development potential within Halfmoon Center is a potential significant adverse impact if the issues of utility service, traffic congestion, pedestrian facilities, and incompatible uses are not addressed. The plan provides mitigation for this impact by clearly stating that current impacts should be resolved and sufficient levels of service provided prior to the approval of any significant development and infill in this area.
- Since the plan does not preclude future development, there will continue to be a loss of wildlife habitat, an increase in runoff and pollutants, and potential impact to important resources such as viewsheds, wetlands, threatened and endangered species, historic features, aesthetics, and other community resources. To mitigate these potential impacts, the plan calls for much greater recognition and conservation of these resources during site plan review than currently practiced. This would be accomplished through the conservation subdivision/development process and the establishment of community derived development and architectural guidelines.
- The character of the northern portion of the town will change from mostly rural to mostly suburban residential under the plan recommendations. It is important to note that the loss of this character would be much more pronounced if current zoning remains unchanged.

Some of the potential impacts previously stated will be unavoidable. This will include the following:

- Potential individual impacts as a result of density and other land use changes.
- Loss of natural and cultural resources but at a lesser extent than under current conditions and perhaps much less impact to significant resources.
- Potential for increased density and activity in Halfmoon Center but partially, if not fully mitigated by the provision of adequate services, amenities, and infrastructure.
- Loss of rural character in northern portion of town.

## **F. Other Plan Components**

The Plan also addresses alternatives and an action plan. The alternatives were developed based on different land use scenarios evaluated or considered during the comprehensive planning process, including a no growth scenario and agricultural zoning. The No Action alternative is also considered which would continue development in the Town under the current land use guidance and regulations.

The Action Plan identifies the key tasks that lay ahead of the town in order to implement the plan recommendations. These tasks are then prioritized primarily based on the urgency of the issue. The most urgent tasks have been identified as the zoning and subdivision amendments that will become the foundation for the growth management strategy.

# Chapter I: Introduction

The Town of Halfmoon last updated its “Master Plan” in 1992. Since that time the Town has undergone considerable growth and therefore some unanticipated changes. Development pressure is continuing despite the downturn in the economy since the events of 9/11. The current demand for housing in the Capital District and incentives by the State that have resulted in an increasing number of hi-tech, light industrial jobs in the region, suggest that future development pressure will remain strong. The pace of development has had an impact on community infrastructure and character. Without action, further development is likely to exacerbate the situation. As a result, the Town determined that it was time once again to update its comprehensive plan (“Master Plan”); to take a broad look at the issues affecting the community and to devise an action program to address these issues in a timely manner.

A comprehensive plan or master plan as defined by Town Law (§272-a.2(a)), is the

*“...materials, written and/or graphic, including but not limited to maps, charts, studies, resolutions, reports and other descriptive materials that identify goals, objectives, principles, guidelines, policies, standards, devices and instruments for the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development of the town located outside the limits of any incorporated village or city.”*

Comprehensive planning provides a community with the opportunity to guide land use/development to meet the current and future needs, goals, and objectives of its residents with respect to the public health, safety and general welfare. A comprehensive plan is the framework for land use regulation, providing a picture of what the Town is and what it wants to become in the future. The implementation of this plan, starting with the adoption and proceeding with recommendations such as amendments to the zoning ordinance, will provide the legal authority to control development in a prescribed manner.

A comprehensive plan is a guidance document. It is not meant to be rigid, dictating how and when actions are to be taken. Rather, it should provide

enough guidance to allow a community to make reasonable, informed decisions on how to address the issues and concerns they are faced with. Few communities have the resources to accomplish all the actions proposed to address all the problems. However, with a plan in place, a proactive mindset, and community consensus on the issues and actions, the Town can begin to realize beneficial change and progress toward the vision.

## **A. Legislative Authority**

The authority to conduct comprehensive planning and to adopt a comprehensive plan is granted to towns by the State Legislature. Adoption of a comprehensive plan by the town board requires that all town land use be in accordance with the plan. Furthermore, other governmental agencies must take the plan into consideration whenever capital projects occur on land included in the town comprehensive plan. This provides a town with the appropriate guidance to review future projects and provides the essential background information and justification for amending or creating a zoning ordinance. This plan also provides developers/project sponsors with up-front guidance on where and how their projects can be developed, facilitating the site plan review process and providing early detection of potential land use conflicts.

## **B. SEQR Compliance**

In accordance with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and Town Law (§272-a), adoption of the Town of Halfmoon Comprehensive Plan by the Town Board is a Type 1 action subject to review under 6 NYCRR 617. Pursuant to Town Law § 272-a.8, this Plan also serves as a final generic environmental impact statement.

The components of a generic environmental impact statement (GEIS) as outlined in 6 NYCRR 617.10 are included in this Plan as follows:

- Executive Summary – Plan Summary
- Project Description – Chapter I Introduction, Chapter II Community Vision, Chapter III Plan Recommendations, and Section V Action Plan
- Environmental Setting – Appendix \_\_ Inventory & Analysis
- Environmental Impact – Chapter III
- Mitigation – Chapter III
- Unavoidable Adverse Impacts – Chapter III
- Alternatives – Chapter IV Alternatives
- Recommendations/Thresholds – Chapter III and Chapter V

- Growth Inducing Aspects – Chapter III
- Final GEIS Response to Comments – Appendix C

Since this is the Final Comprehensive Plan and Final GEIS, this document contains all the components of the draft GEIS as well as responses to comments generated during the SEQR comment period that began March 18, 2003 and ended May 27, 2003. A public hearing was held on April 29, 2003. The transcript from the hearing is available for public review in the Town Clerk's office, Town Hall, 111 Route 236, Halfmoon, New York 12065.

The evaluation of impacts and mitigation of a comprehensive plan is somewhat different than the typical environmental impact statement. This is because the plan and implementation recommendations of a comprehensive plan are typically beneficial in response to the problems identified through the inventory and analysis and community outreach programs. The primary issue facing Halfmoon is the fact that the Town is zoned for significant growth and development in a manner that would promote sprawl and would have a detrimental impact on the character of the community, including the character and uniqueness of residential neighborhoods and the character and success of commercial development and other business enterprises. Uncontrolled growth would significantly impact the health of the natural environment, the ability to provide sufficient infrastructure, and the ability to pay for it all without creating a significant tax burden.

Mitigation in the form of growth management and good planning, including the many programs and studies recommended in the Action Plan, will help the town to direct growth in a beneficial manner that promotes the health, safety and welfare of the community and retains the qualities that residents have identified as important.

Growth inducing aspects are discussed throughout the plan. Plan recommendations call for continued growth but in a much more controlled manner. Both current development pressure and future projections based on anticipated regional hi-tech job creation suggest that growth will be a major issue for the town and surrounding communities over the 10-20 year life span of this plan.

Future actions listed in Chapter V Action Plan that meet the criteria for SEQR are likely to be consistent with the plan recommendations and therefore consistent with the findings of this SEQR process. However, each action must be evaluated for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan in order to determine whether or not further SEQR action is required. For example, if proposed rezoning and related amendments are consistent

with the land use plan and recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan, then the rezoning action is compliant with SEQR for this Comprehensive Plan and no further review is necessary. However, should there be discrepancies, then further review will be necessary to determine the significance of the changes and any associated environmental impacts. This could result in a Negative Declaration (determination of no significant impact) or a Positive Declaration and the preparation of an environmental impact statement.

Some actions identified in the Plan Recommendations and the Action Plan will require further land use decisions, the implications of which have not been evaluated in this GEIS. These actions have been identified as being likely to require further SEQR action. An example is the master plan for waterfront development in the Hudson River Corridor planning area.

# Chapter II: Community Vision

Establishing a vision for the future of the Town of Halfmoon is a very important component of the Comprehensive Plan and an essential first step. It requires the input of community leaders and residents and the knowledge of Town resources that provide opportunities and constraints on land use and services.

Combined with the results of the inventory and analysis (Appendix A), the various components of the community outreach program allowed the future picture of the Town to materialize. This was further refined into a vision statement that dictated the goals and objectives and the elements of the Comprehensive Plan. The following describes the results of this process.

## A. Community Outreach

A good visioning process begins with community outreach. The Town of Halfmoon developed a community outreach program that has provided residents with the opportunity to express their opinions from beginning to end. The process was initiated with a Town-wide survey and neighborhood meetings. At each critical juncture in the planning process, a public informational meeting was held to keep residents informed of the progress and to solicit comments. The community was also able to review draft documents on the Town's web site. Draft plan recommendations were unveiled to the public at Halfmoon Days, a yearly celebration of life in the community.

### Town-Wide Survey

In order to assess the community's viewpoint on growth and development issues, the Town mailed 7,500 survey forms to Town residents. Of these, 1449 were returned, providing a response rate of nearly 20% (a response rate of 5% is generally considered statistically valid). The survey form had 20 questions, 13 of which concerned current conditions and preferences for future growth in the Town. The other 7 questions asked for information about the responder. Respondents were instructed to indicate

how they felt about issues by choosing their response from a range of values such as “very important, somewhat important, and not important.”

Using a combination of mechanized scoring and manual examination, the technical staff calculated the responses in terms of the percentage of responders favoring or disfavoring the issues. The survey results are summarized below; the entire survey analysis is included in Appendix B.

Rural lifestyle and the setting of the area were ranked as very important by about two-thirds of the respondents. Related to this issue, the development of passive and active recreational areas was also deemed very important by more than two-thirds of respondents. A little under two-thirds of respondents indicated that they would be willing to pay higher taxes to preserve open space.

Taxes were a very important reason for living in Halfmoon for a little over two-thirds of respondents. The importance of taxes was the issue receiving the highest percentage of positive responses (70%) followed closely by setting and landscape of area (67%). The issue of taxes was ranked as being “most important” for the Town of Halfmoon second only to “adequate drinking water and extension of water lines.” Of those responding to question #12, a minimum of 50% indicated that they would be willing to pay more taxes for improving each of the following services: fire protection, ambulance service, water service, sewer service, repairing roads, building sidewalks, recreational opportunities and preservation of open space. Services were generally rated as adequate or excellent. However, over 20% rated water and sewer services as poor and recreational opportunities were also rated as poor by 35% of respondents.

Single family housing on single lots was the overwhelming housing choice (88%). All housing types with the exception of apartments and condos/townhouses appeared to be acceptable to residents. A little less than half of respondents felt that residential development over the last 10 years was excessive while a little over half felt that it was about right.

The development of passive recreational facilities was the type of development favored by most of the respondents (91%). Active recreation facilities were favored by more than two-thirds of respondents, while educational facilities and a Town library was favored by a little less than two-thirds of respondents. Business, professional and corporate offices were favored by about a half of respondents. The types of development least favored were fast food restaurants (14% yes, 79% no), light industrial uses and large retailers (30% yes, 58 & 62% respectively no). Distinct centers in commercial zones was chosen by about half the respondents as the most desirable type of commercial development, while scattered

commercial development throughout the Town was chosen by only a small percentage. One out of five respondents felt that there should be no further commercial development.

As a group, the respondents were well educated and appeared committed to the Town. Most of the respondents had an education level of high school or higher and felt that the Town is a good or very good place to live.

The results of the survey provide a few very interesting perspectives. Although about half of the respondents felt that the type and pace of development over the past 10 years was acceptable, there seems to be a reluctance towards further growth. There are probably several factors that resulted in this type of response. Respondents may be taking the attitude that the past is the past and there is little that can be done about it, but the future can be controlled. They may also be reacting negatively to newer types of uses entering the Town. It is also possible that respondents are beginning to experience the impacts of growth such as increased traffic and loss of surrounding open space.

Respondents were amenable to some type of town center. This correlates well with their desire to have commercial development centralized. Large developments such as industrial facilities and “big box” commercial appear to be undesirable to the majority of respondents. This may be related to the contrast between new, large-scale development and existing smaller business and residential neighborhood.

Clearly, the majority of respondents like where they are living and would like to maintain their quality of life.

### **Neighborhood Meetings**

Three neighborhood meetings were held early in the Comprehensive Plan Process. These meetings were conducted to provide residents throughout the Town an opportunity to voice their opinions and suggestions for the future of Halfmoon in their own neighborhoods. It also gave residents an opportunity to hear the concerns/suggestions of their neighbors and to voice ideas about the future of Halfmoon. Meetings were held on the following dates: Hillcrest Fire House on January 15, 2001, West Crescent Fire House on January 18, 2001 and Town Hall on February 1, 2001. All meetings were held at 7:00 p.m. At each meeting residents were asked what they liked and disliked about their Town and how they see the Town in 20 years. They were also asked to identify their primary or most critical concerns and what changes they would like to see in Halfmoon. The main issues raised at these meetings are outlined below:

### **Overall Concerns:**

- ◆ Come out of shadows of adjoining/neighborhood towns.
- ◆ Protect rural character
- ◆ A Halfmoon Post Office and zip code
- ◆ Balance growth between residential, commercial, and large industries
- ◆ Manage the pace of development so that services can keep up
- ◆ Improve communication between Town government and residents/business owners.
- ◆ Create/plan a Town center – with a variety of services/uses and gathering areas.

### **Mobility Issues**

- ◆ Traffic congestion at the following locations
  - ◆ Guideboard Road– Route 236
  - ◆ Route 9 – North and South
  - ◆ Exit 8
  - ◆ Grooms & Woodin Roads
  - ◆ Harris Road & Route 236
  - ◆ Woodin & Stone Quarry Roads
  - ◆ Grooms Road – Exit 8A
- ◆ Make road system safer and easier to navigate by non-motorized uses
- ◆ Scenic by-ways and trails – interconnect

### **Utilities**

- ◆ Address availability of water and water restrictions
- ◆ Address availability of public sewer
- ◆ Interconnections of water with adjoining towns

### **Natural Resources/Open Space**

- ◆ Use buffers to protect slopes, streams, hydric soils, and wetlands.
- ◆ Address/manage storm water runoff – drainage.
- ◆ Preserve existing vegetation
- ◆ Identify ways to assist farmers to keep land in agricultural production or as open space.
- ◆ Identify ways to help large landowners maintain their land as open space.

### **Recreation**

- ◆ Improve the waterfront
- ◆ Promote tourism -Attract boaters into area riverfront
- ◆ Provide/improve water based recreational opportunities
- ◆ Improve trail system and link to neighboring communities

### **Cultural Resources**

- ◆ Maintain and preserve historic areas including land, water and structures. (Ex. Church Hill Road)
- ◆ Revise zoning along Routes 4 & 32 to be more consistent with history of the area.

### **Housing**

- ◆ Reduce number of apartments and multi-family developments
- ◆ Larger lots in certain areas and clusters
- ◆ Protect residential land uses from incompatible land uses
- ◆ Affordable housing for seniors intermixed throughout the Town
- ◆ Allow partially independent living unit in single family or in-law apartments

### **Commercial Development**

- ◆ Revisit development on Route 9. Look at the character and size of structures and sites.
- ◆ Improve and reuse existing vacant buildings
- ◆ Develop architectural standards for commercial uses to improve the look of commercial areas.

There were a number of concerns that were repeated in each of the meetings particularly as they relate to managing the pace of growth, traffic issues and protecting rural character and open space. These concerns are consistent with concerns identified in the survey. The more developed areas of Halfmoon face issues related to traffic and maintaining the quality of existing development (both in function and appearance). Many residents were very clear that they value the open space that exists in Halfmoon and would like to maintain it. The issue of utilities (the extension of water and/or sewer) is an important issue to those who are not currently part of these systems.

## **B. Community Vision Statement**

Prior to the establishment of specific goals and objectives, a community must have an idea or concept of how it wants to look and function now and in the future. This concept is referred to as a community's "Vision" and is expressed in the Vision Statement. The Vision Statement generally describes a community's direction over the next 10-20 years: i.e., how it will guide development and manage its resources. The Comprehensive Plan is the foundation the Town uses to achieve its vision.

Based on input from community outreach (survey and public meetings) and the results of the inventory and analysis, the Town of Halfmoon

envisions itself becoming a “Lifelong Community.” This is described in greater detail as follows:

**The Town of Halfmoon envisions itself as a “lifelong” community, providing a quality of life that promotes small town values and social, recreational and economic opportunities, enabling residents to make Halfmoon their home for this and future generations; a growing community that values and celebrates its natural, historic, cultural, and agricultural resources and is progressive in its efforts to manage growth, to conserve community resources and achieve fiscal balance.**

The Town wishes to maintain and enhance its quality of life by providing housing, employment, educational and recreational opportunities as well as appropriate levels of service to its residents and businesses. With careful planning the Town can succeed in its goal to balance growth and open space issues and maintain its small town values.

## **C. Goals and Objectives**

### **What are Goals and Objectives?**

A goal is the desired condition; a state of being or a physical state that we ultimately desire to achieve. Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary defines “goal” as: “the end toward which effort is directed.” We typically set goals to better ourselves or improve the conditions of our surroundings. Therefore, the goals of this comprehensive planning process are provided to give focus to our efforts and to maintain and/or improve various components of the community.

Objectives are the means by which goals are achieved. They are more specific and provide an outline for developing the plan recommendations.

One way of discerning the difference between a goal and an objective is to use the “To-By” rule. The goal “**To** reduce traffic congestion”...The objective: “**By** riding horses to work.”

### **Goal - Growth Management**

Create a land use management system that mitigates the adverse impacts of sprawl, discourages further sprawl, addresses concerns of conflicting

land uses, responds to community needs, and protects and enhances Halfmoon's resources, unique features and quality of life.

Objectives:

1. Adopt a future land use plan that will provide a balance between preservation and development - one that promotes ongoing fiscal health without compromising the Town's diverse neighborhoods.
2. Develop regulations and incentives to guide future development in conformance with the future land use plan.
3. Develop policy on infrastructure improvements that reflects the future land use plan.
4. Identify the tools, financing and administrative structure to implement an ongoing growth management program.
5. Recognize the link between transportation and land use and utilize both local and regional planning to address current and future land use and quality of life impacts.
6. Recognize the investment and stewardship of land by landowners, respect property rights, and provide support for the responsible use of land by private landowners.
7. Identify areas of the Town for both development and open space preservation to achieve a desired balance. Implement through the use of both regulatory and incentive-based growth management tools.

### **Goal – Fiscal & Economic Health**

Promote diverse economic development that provides goods and services, employment opportunities, and tax revenues in well located commercial, office and industrial districts, compatible with the community character and vision for the future.

Objectives:

1. Consider the fiscal impact of various Town growth scenarios as part of the Town's ongoing planning process.
2. Identify partnerships and incentives available through federal, state, county and local organizations that support both the existing and future business community.
3. Identify the desired mix and scale of businesses in the commercial districts in a manner that recognizes, and is sensitive to, the neighborhood setting, historic significance and desired character of the Town.
4. Support home-based businesses to help residents expand their economic opportunities, without compromising the character of Halfmoon's neighborhoods.

5. Identify existing and potential centers for economic and community development, and establish mechanisms and partnerships to encourage appropriate development in these locations.
6. Focus marketing efforts, investments in infrastructure and transportation systems, and economic development incentives, on the areas identified as centers for economic and community development.
7. Streamline the project review process for those projects that meet the Town's identified economic development objectives, are located in planned centers for economic and community development, and which meet design and impact criteria that address community character.
8. Attract employers who offer stable, well-paying jobs that have the potential to create additional employment opportunities for Halfmoon's residents.
9. Support the efforts of local businesses to thrive in Halfmoon.
10. Support the continuation of agriculture as an economic activity in Halfmoon and as part of a larger entity. Work with the State, Saratoga Economic Development Corporation (SEDC), the County, the agricultural industry and farmers who wish to continue farming, identify ways in which the Town can help make this possible.

### **Goal - Utilities**

Provide a utility infrastructure system that meets the demands of current residents and business and that will support future development in carefully planned areas of Town.

Objectives:

#### *Water*

1. Assure an adequate supply, treatment, distribution, and fire-fighting capacity of potable water to meet current and planned future needs.
2. Establish Town policies for any proposed service area extensions that consider and address cost, revenue, and potential impacts on the future land use of the three designated water districts.

#### *Storm Water Management*

3. Develop storm water management requirements that protect downstream areas both within and outside the community.

*Sewer*

4. Work with the Saratoga County Sewer District, to strive to provide adequate collection and treatment capacity of wastewater to meet current and planned future needs and to accommodate future growth to ensure that development and capacity, conveyance, and treatment keep pace.
5. Establish Town policies for any proposed sewer service extensions that consider and address cost, revenue, and potential impacts on the future land use plan, emphasizing the allocation of resources to designated development areas and precluding extensions to designated rural areas or open space.

*Communications, Electricity, and Natural Gas*

6. Support coordinated infrastructure development with public and private utility providers to continue to serve existing developed areas and adjacent areas as well as expand service to areas identified for future development.

**Goal - Transportation and Mobility**

Provide safe, convenient, and efficient transportation options for people and goods within, through and around the Town of Halfmoon, which minimize the impact of traffic on the Town's character and quality of life.

Objectives:

1. Promote a safe, attractive and efficient transportation network that integrates pedestrians, bicycles, automobiles and public transit.
2. Promote interconnected street networks and reestablish connections between developed parts of Town.
3. Maintain the integrity and capacity of state, county, and local roads through coordination with the NYS Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) and Saratoga County Department of Public Works, through growth management and land use controls, and through access and corridor management.
4. Support planning efforts with adjoining municipalities and regional entities such as: Saratoga County, the Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC), the Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA), the Capital District Regional Planning Commission (CDRPC), and NYSDOT.
5. Enhance the pedestrian environment in all areas of Town by addressing safety and aesthetic issues such as adding or widening shoulders to Town roads as appropriate.

6. Create a multi-use trail system linking community centers, shopping and employment areas, recreation areas, and neighborhoods.
7. Identify programs and incentives for reducing traffic and, in particular, single-occupancy vehicle use (for example, park-and-ride lots, ride-sharing programs, etc.).
8. Participate in discussions and feasibility studies for a regional rapid transit system.
9. Reduce the impact of truck traffic on the community through careful siting of any future truck generating enterprises and promoting enhanced rapid transit options.
10. Carefully locate any future large traffic generators (neighborhood, community and regional destinations) to reduce trip lengths through the Town.
11. Study methods for traffic calming and pedestrian safety such as crosswalks, sidewalks, landscaped medians and shared driveways, particularly along developed portions of busy roads. Identify and require appropriate traffic calming and safety measures and implement them on a systematic basis.

### **Goal - Community Facilities and Services**

Continue to provide and/or support adequate community facilities and services - including fire protection, police protection, emergency services, solid waste collection, education facilities, healthcare services, libraries, services for youths through seniors, and social services - that are responsive to the community's expected level of service and safety and that continue to enhance the quality of life.

#### Objectives:

1. Determine a preferred level of service for existing and future community facilities and services.
2. Formalize a dialogue and process with service providers to ensure preferred levels of service.
3. Support, encourage, and provide incentives to continue and enhance volunteer services.
4. Provide adequate fire and emergency services to meet the needs of the current and future Town population and monitor these services to prepare for the potential need for paid professionals to supplement volunteers.
5. Provide adequate social, youth, adult and senior services.
6. Create a process by which the Town and the schools share information and coordinate planning efforts.
7. Work with the school districts to support continuing educational opportunities for all Town residents.

8. Work with community leaders and service providers to ensure that community services keep pace with planned levels of development.
9. Provide for community spring and fall clean up days when yard waste may be brought to the transfer station.
10. Provide for community hazardous waste collection days.
11. Develop a Public Health Advisory System to disseminate important health information to the community (e.g. information regarding West Niles Virus, Lyme disease).
12. Continue to work to establish a post office and separate zip code for the Town.

### **Goal - Housing**

Provide a balanced blend of quality housing opportunities, including price ranges that are affordable for all income levels and housing types that consider the needs of older residents, young families (first time homeowners) and those with disabilities. Properly plan for and locate housing based on density and purpose to take full advantage of existing and future community services, alternative transportation opportunities, and recreational facilities.

#### Objectives:

1. Develop policies and programs that help maintain and strengthen the character, value and enjoyment of existing housing in the established neighborhoods of Halfmoon.
2. Create incentives and appropriate regulations that guide the location and pattern of new housing in a manner that protects the character and resources of the community.
3. Ensure that the Town's zoning accommodates the need for housing diversity.
4. Encourage housing opportunities for the elderly, those on limited incomes and those with disabilities that will allow residents to remain in the Town despite their changing housing and care requirements.
5. Identify appropriate sites and incentives for the creation of housing options that are needed but not adequately provided by the marketplace.
6. Protect existing and future residential developments from the impacts of incompatible uses.

## **Goal - Town Character**

Preserve and enhance Halfmoon’s identity, image, and quality of life in accordance with the vision for the future.

### Objectives:

1. Promote community identity through the placement of appropriate signs and landscaping at key entry points to the Town (Northway exits, Ushers Road, Route 4 & 32 and Mechanicville City boundary). The creation of a “gateway” entrance at the Town’s southern boundary at the Crescent Bridge should be considered.
2. Establish guidelines to ensure that future residential and commercial development is of a scale and design that is appropriate from both a neighborhood and Townwide perspective.
3. Provide incentives for infill development first and discourage “leapfrog” development into previously undeveloped areas or areas identified for less intensive (or no) uses.
4. Encourage the creation of development centers or hamlets for both residential and commercial/office/industrial development to avoid impacts to community character and to provide more efficient use of infrastructure and energy.
5. Support continued use of viable agricultural lands and incorporate more natural open space in project design.
6. Improve the quality of site design, including harmonious signage, lighting, planting, and building facade design in commercial and industrial districts
7. Ensure that new development does not result in adverse impacts such as excessive noise, odor, vibration, and pollutants.
8. Encourage street tree planting and other aesthetic improvements in all developed areas of the Town (residential, commercial, industrial).
9. Protect and enhance natural buffers throughout the Town in order to help maintain the Town’s aesthetic character and minimize land use conflicts.
10. Identify potential public and private partnerships to implement needed improvements.
11. Preserve important viewsheds within the Town.
12. Preserve the topography of the Town and thus its aesthetic character by requiring design with nature.

13. Seek opportunities for public access to the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers and the old Erie and Champlain Canals through easements and land purchase.
14. Develop design and architectural guidelines for industrial and commercial development.

### **Goal - Agriculture, Natural Resources and Open Spaces**

Maintain the viability of existing agricultural operations and preserve important natural and open space resources that contribute to the diversity, character, aesthetics, economy, and general health, safety and welfare of the community. Resources such as the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers and their watersheds, viable farmland, mineral resources, ravines, woodlots, streams, aquifers, wetlands, floodplains, the escarpment and viewsheds are recognized for their role in drainage, water supply, agriculture, aesthetics, recreation, and wildlife habitat.

#### Objectives:

1. Identify existing active agricultural operations and determine the future viability of these operations through discussions with the owners and the farming community.
2. Create incentives for property owners to protect important agricultural, natural and open space resources including financial, regulatory, and other tools available for this purpose.
3. Establish clear policy on the right of a farmer to conduct business under current and future best management practices.
4. Avoid potential land use conflicts and nuisance suits through proper land use planning.
5. Encourage community participation in Saratoga County's agricultural and farmland protection program.
6. Identify and map important resources such as steep slopes, gravel resources, stream corridors, wellhead protection areas, wetlands, significant habitat/open space, and viewsheds. Important stream corridors include but are not limited to Meyers Brook, McDonald Creek, Anthony Kill, Dwass Kill, the Hudson River and the Mohawk River. Limit impact to these sensitive resources through site plan, subdivision, zoning and other applicable regulations.
7. Create an action plan for the identification, voluntary acquisition and management of properties that comprise a comprehensive open space and natural resource preservation program.

## **Goal - Cultural Resources**

Recognize, protect, and celebrate Halfmoon's historic and other cultural resources.

### Objectives:

1. Support the work of interested community residents and organizations such as the Halfmoon Historical Society that are already working on protecting and enhancing the Town's historic and cultural resources.
2. Identify and map the locations of important historic sites, structures and features of the Town. Based on this map, identify areas that should be preserved through a historic overlay district or other forms of protection.
3. Establish an advisory committee to make recommendations to the Town regarding historic preservation issues as well as deposition of historic structures.
4. Develop land use regulations and incentives to protect historic and archaeologically sensitive areas and/or resources through techniques such as overlay districts or incentive zoning.
5. Enhance the opportunities for residents and visitors to experience the Town's historic and cultural sites.
6. Encourage the rehabilitation of historically significant privately owned structures through community recognition, historic walks or tours featuring restored structures, assistance with the identification of potential funding sources.
7. Cultivate public awareness of the Town's historical and cultural resources through the schools and local youth programs.
8. Evaluate the adequacy of existing facilities to support programs for youth, adult and senior populations, small-scale performances, recitals, concerts and other public events.
9. Create strategies for the sustained financial support of the Town's historical and cultural sites and programs.
10. Preserve the areas along the old canal systems located in the Town including the old Erie Canal running parallel to the Mohawk river and the old Champlain Canal from the Waterford Town line to the rear of the Saratoga County Sewer Treatment Plant. Retain open space adjacent to these old canal systems to provide adequate buffers and limit interference or encroachment from industry or commercial uses.

## **Goal - Recreation**

Provide sufficient, well-located, and fully accessible, active and passive recreational opportunities for all Halfmoon residents.

### Objectives:

1. Continually evaluate the Town's recreational facilities and programs to ensure responsiveness to the Town's changing recreational desires.
2. Conduct a recreational survey to determine the adequacy of current recreational opportunities and the desired level of service.
3. Work with other municipalities, the school districts, the YMCA, and private recreation providers to maximize year-round recreational opportunities for Town residents, especially youth.
4. Maintain and upgrade the Town's existing recreational programs and facilities.
5. Develop a Trails Master Plan that will identify an overall plan of trail locations and trail standards. Use this to develop a network of multi-use trails that link neighborhoods with schools, commercial and entertainment centers, town service facilities, potential future public transit system, and public open spaces; taking full consideration of the rights of individual property owners.
6. Encourage the construction of a community center to include year round indoor recreational facilities for all age groups.
7. Develop a plan to rehabilitate the old Erie and Champlain canals and promote public use.
8. Identify potential public access points to the Hudson and Mohawk rivers and develop a plan to provide recreational as well as other desirable waterfront uses. Work with Saratoga County and the state to seek or provide funding to acquire property and implement the plan.
9. Work with the County and state to create and manage additional recreational trails and resources.

## **Goal – Civic Duty**

Nurture and support the civic environment so that input from Town residents is considered a customary and integral component of the Town’s ongoing planning and implementation process.

### Objectives:

1. Establish and implement a community involvement component to the Action Plan(s) that will involve broad-based participation of private citizens and a “grass roots” approach to all future planning efforts.
2. Evaluate the resources, level of expertise, and Town government structure to determine which review boards are best suited to effectively implement various components of the Action Plan.
3. Encourage, and in some cases require, members of the Town’s review boards to take advantage of opportunities to update their knowledge of planning and zoning techniques and laws on a continuing basis. Provide access to continuing education and professional development opportunities for Town employees.
4. Establish an ongoing dialogue with adjacent municipalities and regional governmental agencies, send official representatives to appropriate meetings and forums to keep abreast of intermunicipal planning issues that may impact the Town of Halfmoon, share the Town’s plans with these municipalities and agencies, and promote a regional approach to solving land use, transportation, infrastructure and economic development issues.
5. Continue to maintain the Town’s website to include information from Town meetings, upcoming events and other important information related to the Town and its government. Prepare an annual or semi-annual newsletter to be mailed to all residents.

## **Goal - Implementation**

Develop a viable action plan to implement the efforts of the community, which have culminated in a vision and plan for the future of the Town of Halfmoon.

### Objectives:

1. Identify and support specific actions, financial and administrative requirements, and follow-up planning work that will be necessary to achieve the goals and objectives of this plan.
2. Prioritize proposed actions and set general time frames so that the community can focus attention and energy toward completing a manageable number of tasks at one time.
3. Assign responsibility for advancing particular actions described in this plan to appropriate entities within the Town's government (for example, departments, committees, etc.) and the community.
4. Review and update the adopted comprehensive plan on a regular basis.
5. Encourage the pursuit of various grants and/or funding offered by the State of New York and the federal government.

# Chapter III: Plan Recommendations

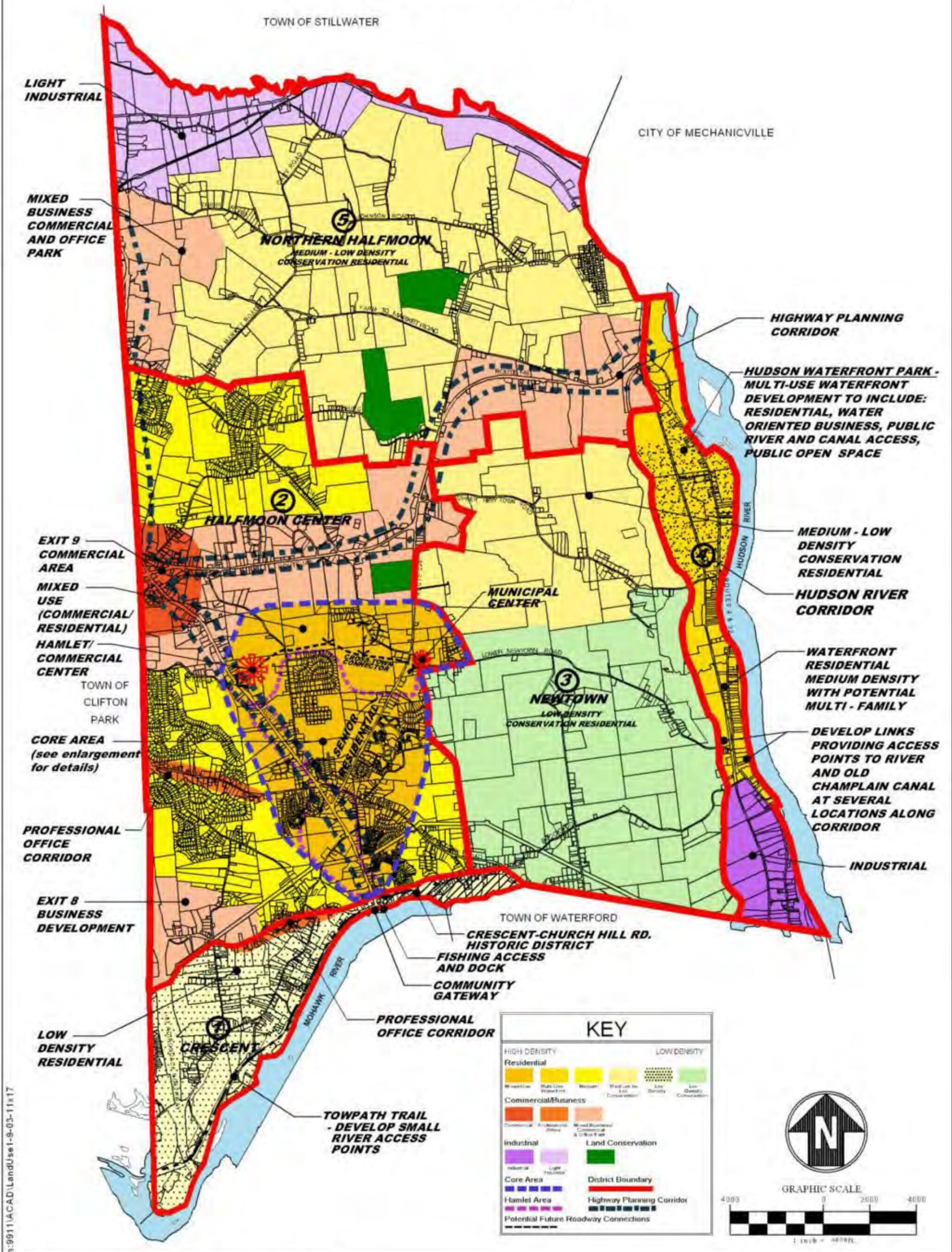
The purpose of preparing a comprehensive plan is to capture a broad picture of current and anticipated future issues facing the community and to develop a program to address the issues based on a vision and associated goals and objectives. The creation of a vision for the future is an essential first step towards recommendations and actions. This process begins to pull the community focus away from the day to day issues, forcing a comprehensive or cumulative analysis of the impact of a multitude of community actions (both public and private) on the overall community character. Based on public input and the Inventory & Analysis the vision for Halfmoon is as follows:

*The Town of Halfmoon envisions itself as a “lifelong” community, providing a quality of life that promotes small town values and social, recreational and economic opportunities, enabling residents to make Halfmoon their home for this and future generations; a growing community that values and celebrates its natural, historic, cultural, and agricultural resources and is progressive in its efforts to manage growth, to conserve community resources and achieve fiscal balance.*

In order to develop Plan Recommendations that reflect the Town’s vision for the future, the Comprehensive Plan Committee evaluated and studied numerous planning tools and concepts in the area of Growth Management, Economic Development and Community Development. Many of the draft recommendations have broad, Town-wide applications. These are discussed in Chapter IV.B ***Town Wide Recommendations***.

In order to address issues that are specific to geographic areas, the Town has been divided into five planning areas based on common land uses and/or physical features. With the Town’s vision and goals & objectives in mind, future land use and land use policies were developed for each planning area. This discussion is provided in Chapter IV.D ***Planning Areas***. Future land use is illustrated on Figure III-1.

# TOWN OF HALFMOON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN LAND USE PLAN



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**CHA** CLOUGH, HARBOUR & ASSOCIATES LLP  
 ENGINEERS, SURVEYORS, PLANNERS & LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS  
 III WINNERS CIRCLE ALBANY, NEW YORK 12205  
 518-453-4500

CHA # 9911      DATE: 3/18/03

FIGURE III-1  
 TOWN OF HALFMOON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
 LAND USE PLAN



## **A. Growth Management Tools**

Growth Management is a process by which a community develops the methods and means (tools) to control the type, location and amount of land development (growth) in the community. The most common growth management tool is zoning. Zoning identifies distinct districts within which land use parameters are established for the type of use, density, and layout (setbacks) of development. Zoning can be an effective growth management tool when based on a community's comprehensive plan. Zoning is just one of the tools available to local municipalities. Other tools falling into the regulatory category include subdivision regulations and various ordinances dealing with signs, landscaping, open space, noise, odors, and others depending on the needs of a particular community.

Regulatory tools are essential to ensure orderly growth in a community. However, other growth management tools that rely on incentives and voluntary involvement by landowners are also available. Some of these tools include easements, purchase of development rights, transfer of development rights, voluntary land acquisition, and development guidelines in conjunction with community supported plans.

The following describes various growth management tools and techniques, which have been divided into three topic areas: land management, fiscal management, and community character. This information is provided solely as an introduction to the topic of growth management. Specific recommendations are provided in subsequent sections.

### **Land Management**

Land management tools address the designation and organization of land use both at a community and site specific level.

#### ***Clustering***

The general concept behind clustering is that density is separated from lot size. In this way, the number of homes in a conventional and cluster subdivision are the same but there is more flexibility in where the homes are located. Currently the town regulates density by having a minimum lot size for each zoning district. The minimum lot size in a particular zoning district, for example, might be 1 acre. Under this regulation, each home must be placed in the middle of a one acre "box". Another way to express this density is that a person can build 1 dwelling unit (du) per acre - so on 10 acres the person can build 10 homes. However, by expressing the density in this way, the person is no longer confined to dividing the

land into one-acre lots. Smaller lots, as the capacity of the land can support, could be clustered on a portion of the site while the remainder remains open. In this way, the entire site is not divided into building lots and the homes can be sited in the most suitable locations.

There are many options for the remaining open lands derived from clustering. In all cases the open land should be restricted from further development. One method is through a conservation easement, held by the town, a land trust, or both. There are several options in terms of ownership of the open land under easement. For example, if a farmer owned the original parcel, the farmer could retain ownership of the remaining lands. In this case the farmer would continue to farm the land and would retain all the rights of ownership (including the right to transfer title) except for the property's development rights, which would already have been used. Or the large remaining open parcel could be sold for a large "estate" farm (as one of the housing units allowed based on the original lot count). In both cases, the open space would be managed by a private landowner and would be unavailable for future development.

Clustering can be included in the town's land use regulations as an option or as a requirement. If presented as an option, developers due to their unfamiliarity with the concept often ignore it. As a mandate, the town could simply regulate density in terms of dwelling units per acre, as described above, and require some minimum percentage of open space for any subdivision. The minimum percentage of open space should be significant - at least 50% to make a real impact in terms of protecting resources and rural character. It is important to reiterate that the overall allowed density with clustering would not exceed what is possible with a conventional subdivision.

***Conservation Subdivision*** - An approach for clustering is to utilize a resource based process for subdivision design. The Town could encourage or require the design of conservation subdivisions instead of conventional subdivisions. The conservation design approach involves collaboration between the planning board and the applicant at the earliest stage of design - the concept or sketch plan phase. To determine the yield, or possible lot count for a site, subtract the lands that contain severe constraints to development (defined in the subdivision regulations - wetlands, floodplains, very steep slopes, etc.). The maximum number of housing units would then be based on the number of acres remaining and the maximum allowable density in the zoning district (for example, 1du/acre).

Once the number of housing units is established, the design process is initiated. Site resources are identified (agricultural land, historic or scenic

views, significant tree stands, etc.). Illustrated residential design guidelines could assist in this process. Once the resource analysis is completed, lands where development is most appropriate are identified. Locate homes in these development areas, design road alignments to connect these homes, and then draw the lot lines. Because the area and bulk regulations used for conventional subdivisions are not applicable, the process is creative and not driven strictly by regulations. Randall G. Arendt, in his book *Conservation Design for Subdivisions: A Practical Guide to Creating Open Space Networks* (1996) provides excellent guidance in the use of this approach to subdivision design.

### ***Incentive Zoning***

An incentive zoning program establishes a framework that links community benefits and development activity. The incentive program would generally function as follows: in return for the provision of specified (in advance by legislation) public benefits, the town could permit an increase in allowed density (also specified by legislation). An example of a public benefit that the Town might desire would be public access through open lands set aside as part of a conservation subdivision. This access might be used for the development of walking, bicycle, or horse riding trail systems linking different parts of the community. Examples of other public benefits might be the donation of public open space for a park, the donation of public lake access, or the provision of low and moderate-income housing. The amenities are given to the town at no financial cost in exchange for the density bonus incentive. The town would ensure that the amenities gained are equitable with the incentives provided during the incentive zoning review process.

A specific example of the potential use of incentive zoning in the Town would apply to the protection of important viewsheds and environmental features. Incentive zoning would permit waiving of formal dimensional requirements provided that a conservation design is employed. This would allow flexibility in site design in pursuance of the goals of the incentive program. This growth management tool could be effective to protect farmland, stream corridors, ravines, wetlands, viewsheds and viewpoints, and other ecologically sensitive areas.

### ***Conservation Easements***

One way for the Town of Halfmoon to protect scenic resources, open farmlands, and other resources of value to the community would be to encourage the use of conservation easements to protect open land. A conservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement between the landowner and the town, or a third party such as a land trust, to protect land from development by permanently restricting the use and development of the property, thereby preserving its natural or manmade

features. The legally binding agreement is filed in the County Clerk's office in the same manner as a deed. The landowner retains ownership of the land, and all of the rights of ownership except the ability to develop the land. The specific restrictions are detailed in the easement agreement.

A landowner can choose to donate a conservation easement on all or part of his/her land. There are often income and estate tax benefits for the landowner associated with the donation of a conservation easement. As part of land development proposals, conservation easements can also be used to permanently protect open space set aside as part of a conservation (clustered) subdivision.

There are additional uses of conservation easements that can be promoted by the town. The town could consider taking a more pro-active approach to keeping specific parcels of land undeveloped. These are further described in the following three sections.

#### ***Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program***

One method a conservation easement can be implemented is through the purchase of development rights (PDR). In this program, the development value of a specific parcel of land is purchased by the town or a land trust. Conservation easements are the legally binding document that ensures that once the development rights are purchased, the land remains undeveloped in perpetuity. The cost of the PDR depends on the specific parcel. It is calculated by determining the current appraised value of the property and its appraised value as open or agricultural land without development potential. The difference between these two numbers is the value of the development rights.

Generally speaking, PDR programs are regarded as fair to landowners because the landowners are compensated directly for their contribution to something the public desires. The land remains on the tax rolls and is taxed at an assessed value that reflects its restricted use. These programs are also popular with residents because they achieve permanent land protection.

In order to implement a PDR program, the town would need to make a commitment to funding this activity. Initially this would require a commitment of dollars by the town. However, through careful analysis, some communities like Pittsford, New York have found that their investment will actually cost less in the long term than it would cost to provide services for new residences that might instead be built on that land. Communities have paid for these programs in various ways including bonding for the money to spread the cost over a period of years. There are also sources of state and federal grant funding available to assist

communities in permanently protecting farmland and open space in this manner.

There are several important steps to establishing an effective PDR program that meets community objectives. They are:

1. Establish protection goals for the community. It could be recommended that Halfmoon start by determining an acreage goal (x # of acres) of permanently protected lands.
2. Identify and prioritize specific parcels for protection and develop protection strategies for each. Typically, there are a few key parcels of land that have the potential to significantly alter the Town's character and fiscal condition in the future. The owners of these large, priority parcels should be included in the process at the earliest stages.
3. Use a fiscal model to determine the cost of protecting significant parcels through the purchase of development rights and compare it to the cost of the provision of necessary community services to future residences. Residents and elected officials will want a clear idea of the costs and benefits of a PDR approach. A detailed analysis helps build support from members of the community who will ultimately be paying the bills.

In Pittsford, a PDR program was created to protect approximately 1,200 acres on seven farms. The average cost to a homeowner is estimated to be about \$50 per year. A fiscal model of the town developed prior to implementing the program estimated that the average cost to a homeowner would be \$250 per year if the PDR program were not implemented. Tax increases would be needed to pay for additional services for new residents in that fast growing community. The savings from avoiding these tax costs total \$5,000 for the average homeowner over the life of the town's 20 year PDR bond.

4. Establish a funding mechanism to implement the program including the identification of outside funding sources. Sources of state grant funding exist from the Environmental Protection Fund and the Clean Water/Clean Air Environmental Bond Act, and from the federal government through the Farm Bill and other sources.

A Purchase of Development Rights program requires up-front planning to implement. Communities with well-defined programs have a higher likelihood of receiving grants due to their competitive nature. The return on this investment in planning can be substantial in terms of both the community's fiscal situation and community character.

### ***Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program***

Transfer of Development Rights programs use real estate market activity to focus development in suitable locations while protecting open spaces. To establish such a program, the town designates specific areas as “sending zones”. Sending zones are places that the community seeks to preserve. The town also establishes “receiving zones”. These are areas that are suitable for fairly high-density development. Through the TDR program, development rights are sent from the sending zone to the receiving zone. Land in the sending zone will therefore be protected while land in the receiving zone will be more densely developed.

Landowners in sending zones are allowed to sell “development rights” to land developers at a price that they negotiate with the developer. Land developers who seek to build in the “receiving zones” can purchase those development rights in order to develop their land more densely. Development in the sending zones is tightly regulated to ensure natural resource and open space protection. When the landowner in the sending zone sells development rights to the developer, the landowner is required to place his/her land under a permanent conservation easement. (Note: TDR can also be accomplished through incentive zoning.)

A TDR program also requires up-front planning. Sending and receiving zones must be carefully designated. In some cases it may be necessary to consider the development of public water and sewer infrastructure to accommodate the higher density development. In addition, the town must set up the administrative mechanisms to make the program work efficiently.

### ***Term Easements and Tax Abatement Program***

This type of program, used by several communities in New York State, provides tax abatements for term easements on particular parcels of open space or farmland. As the name implies, a term easement is a voluntary legal agreement between a landowner and the town, is written to last for a period of years, most commonly for 5 to 20 years. Tax abatements are usually calculated on a sliding scale with larger tax abatement for a longer-term easement. If these protected lands are converted to development prior to the expiration of the term, the tax benefit must be returned and a penalty paid. While these programs are effective in addressing the loss of open space and farmland in the short term, they simply place these lands on hold. Long-term solutions must still be developed for the future of these spaces.

### ***Residential Development Design Guidelines***

The town could consider creating illustrated design guidelines for new development. These are particularly useful when used in conjunction with

conservation (clustered) subdivisions. Illustrated design guidelines allow the community to provide guidance to designers and developers by describing what it values and what it seeks to protect. No longer restricted to maximizing the number of X-acre boxes allowed by zoning's minimum lot size requirements, the designer of a subdivision can be more conscious of the natural features of the parcel(s) and the surrounding landscape. All types of items can be incorporated into a community's design guidelines depending upon community values. Design guidelines could include specific requirements that:

- ❖ Development along and/or projecting above ridgelines be prohibited, and that development at other visually prominent locations be discouraged.
- ❖ The builder maintains existing trees to the maximum extent possible during the construction of homes (as opposed to clearing the entire site).
- ❖ Homes be located away from rural highways and collectors, or that they be visually buffered from these roads in order to maintain their rural character. Frontage lots should be discouraged.
- ❖ Low volume local roads (including subdivision streets) be designed to an alternative rural road standard more in context with their setting. Examples of rural road standards are available from several sources including the Cornell Local Roads Program and the Dutchess County Department of Planning.
- ❖ Natural drainage ways, wildlife habitat areas, contours and landforms are respected and disturbance to these areas minimized.
- ❖ Cut and fill activity is minimized and all disturbed areas are restored with vegetation.

A pre-application conference or sketch plan workshop between the applicant and the Planning Board becomes extremely important to creatively deal with design issues early in the process.

Design guidelines are generally informational and collaborative in nature. The applicant has an opportunity to review the guidelines prior to designing a project in order to understand what the community and the Planning Board desires. The sketch plan workshop with the Planning Board is another opportunity to discuss initial design options before more thorough and expensive design work begins. The workshop should focus on creativity and not confrontation. Achieving consensus at the start can significantly reduce the time and cost of the review process for the applicant.

### ***Commercial Design Standards***

The town should create commercial design standards for new development. Illustrated design guidelines will provide the developer with

a clear picture of the type and style of commercial development that Halfmoon wishes to encourage. These standards should address the following:

- ❖ Size, and scale of all components of the site design
- ❖ Site layout
- ❖ Architectural style and materials
- ❖ Parking and access with an emphasis on shared driveways, parking to the side and rear of buildings
- ❖ Quality landscaping particularly along road frontage with buildings set closer to the roadway and accommodations for pedestrians

These requirements could be addressed as an overlay district in all commercial zones, through incentive zoning or also be incorporated into Site Plan Regulations.

#### ***Utility Master Plan Linked to Land Use Plan***

A utility master plan should be created consistent with the recommendations of a comprehensive plan. Density should be determined by land use goals; not be driven by presence of utilities alone.

### **Fiscal Management**

There are numerous steps the Town can take to ensure fiscal balance. Many of the land use programs described above can be part of a strong fiscal management program.

#### ***Fiscal Impact Model***

A fiscal impact model allows a community to compare the relative impact of various land use scenarios on future taxes. Base information is collected and used as the current condition scenario. Depending on how the model is developed, this information can be treated as input data rather than set parameters. This allows the user to change basic information, such as the number of school-age children per household, to meet current trends in the community.

The model has been used as a means of identifying the impact of land preservation in conjunction with open space plans. However, its uses are much broader. For example, a community might want to know what the optimum mix of uses would be to achieve no increase or even a decrease in property taxes. It might also be important to know the fiscal impact of a community reinvestment program.

#### ***Economic Development Zones***

Another method to ensure financial stability is for a community to create economic development zones by identifying and preparing selected sites

for development (i.e. shovel-ready status). Sites that are identified as shovel-ready have essentially been cleared for development, which is very attractive to the developer for obvious reasons. Typically, this means that environmental issues have been addressed through SEQR. Some additional work may be necessary to obtain federal, state, and local permits, which are based on detailed design.

Obtaining shovel ready status will require community funds but may also be supplemented by grants and assistance from county industrial development agencies (IDAs). Shovel ready sites usually include a set of performance standards derived from the environmental review process. Such standards could also be pre-determined through adopted development guidelines to further ensure high quality development.

### ***Community Reinvestment Initiatives***

Public reinvestment in existing residential and commercial areas of a community is key to maintaining private investment and desirable neighborhoods. The impacts of dis-investment result in a pattern of decreasing property values and an outward (toward rural areas) migration of first residents and then businesses.

This pattern is common across the U.S. and is evident by the so-called suburban “rings.” The first area to suffer is the urban neighborhood. This has been a long-occurring and well-documented phenomenon known as suburbanization. The interesting irony is that the suburban communities that prospered by the popularity of suburban life and the increase in commercial tax base are now experiencing disinvestment in their older first and second ring suburban neighborhoods. In some areas, whole communities have been built-out and are no longer the desirable place to live. Consider also that many of these communities have built out as “bedroom communities” with a huge residential tax base, magnifying the impact of falling property values.

The identification and inventory of conditions in older neighborhoods and commercial areas should be undertaken to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each. A plan should be created to improve conditions in the areas of aesthetics (structures, layout, landscaping), access (vehicular and pedestrian), infrastructure, parking, open space, resource conservation, and recreation. Improvements require resources and cooperation between town, state and county agencies as well as landowners. Both incentive zoning (bonuses) and financial incentives can be created for business owners to improve their properties. A change in use or ownership could be used as an impetus to require certain improvements in the above areas.

The benefits of this type of program are many. Redevelopment and infill development reduces utility and service costs and avoids the costs and disjointed land use patterns associated with sprawl development. Although public investment will be necessary to improve older areas of town, it is really a shift in emphasis from the suburban fringe and new development to a program of enrichment of developed areas. A community spends resources in the repair and maintenance of infrastructure and the provision of community services. The more these services and utilities are spread out, the more costly it is to maintain the level service.

It is important to note that adoption of this philosophy by no means precludes growth. Infill and redevelopment can be a major component of community growth and can have significant beneficial fiscal impacts. Development of outlying areas should be done with the issues and concerns of the developed areas in mind. That is, the need for amenities that promote quality, stable neighborhoods and the assimilation of new development into the overall community structure.

#### ***Public/Private Partnerships***

The development of public-private partnerships within a town can allow land use and development goals to be accomplished that would normally be difficult for either entity to accomplish on its own. These can be very effective tools in the successful implementation of community reinvestment initiatives as described above. An example of such a partnership would be the establishment of a vision and design standards for a given area of town for economic development. With this vision in place, the town can then market developers who would take the vision to the design level and actually develop the project or some component. The incentive for a developer might be as simple as providing shovel-ready status for the site or it may also take grants and tax incentives. The benefits to the community include a development based on a publicly derived vision, quality design and economic development, and increased tax base. An incentive zoning program could provide even more public and private benefits.

#### ***Support "community minded" Businesses***

Sustainable development requires businesses that are committed to the community. Unfortunately there are always risks associated with owning and operating a business however providing support and incentives to locally owned businesses and businesses with a track record of being a strong community partner will strengthen the business community and attract like-minded businesses.

## **Community Character**

### ***Neighborhood Reinvestment Programs***

Neighborhood reinvestment was discussed under “Fiscal Management” in terms of its impact on property values and the retention of businesses that depend on the local population. Maintaining and improving upon existing neighborhoods also has the beneficial impact of retaining residents. This is the heart of the Town’s “lifelong community” theme.

Common issues for older neighborhoods include aging infrastructure, traffic, lack of conveniences, and lack of recreational opportunity. The first step in a program for neighborhood revitalization is the identification of the issues. This can be accomplished through neighborhood meetings and some inventory work. Next, the community should identify solutions to the issues and the costs of improvements. The work can then be prioritized and funding can be sought through grants and budgeting.

### ***Housing Diversity - Lifelong Community***

Housing diversity is the key to attracting individuals and families to Halfmoon as lifelong residents. The needs of young singles, young families, retirees, senior citizens and those with disabilities vary significantly in terms of home size, lot size and arrangement and amenities within the home. The Town should undertake a review of existing housing stock to identify price ranges and housing types. This will assist the Town in determining the types of residential development that should be encouraged to help Halfmoon reach the goal of a "Lifelong Community".

### ***Land Use Compatibility***

Residential neighborhoods both old and new should be protected from incompatible land uses particularly those that rely heavily on vehicular transportation. Commercial development in residential neighborhoods should be limited to a corner store type of business that could be linked to a sidewalk or trail system. If land use conflicts are unavoidable, potential impacts should be mitigated to the maximum extent possible through the use of buffers and other safeguards. Buffers should include the use of existing vegetation and topography whenever possible and be supplemented as necessary with additional plantings. This buffer area should address visual concerns and protect adjacent residential areas from light and noise impacts. Access and site layout is critical to this process. Site plan requirements should be reviewed and adjusted as necessary to achieve this goal.

## **B. Town Wide Recommendations**

### **Growth Management Tools**

#### ***Land Management***

Although any of the tools described in Section A can be utilized as part of a growth management program, it is recommended that the Town focus on the following:

- Code revisions may be the appropriate starting point for the Town. As noted in each of the Planning Areas, recommendations have been made for changes in land use and density. Rezoning will be necessary to implement these changes. Also, there is a number of other revisions that have town-wide implications. These include residential site development guidelines and commercial development standards, incentive zoning, and conservation subdivision procedures. The Town's zoning code and subdivision regulations should be evaluated to properly incorporate the changes. Other sections of these documents may require amendments to be consistent with the changes.
- The Town should identify maximum density for development within each of the planning areas. The maximum density recommendations provided in this document for the planning areas are not based on the provision of developer incentives and community benefits. They provide guidance on a project by project basis to encourage more control on growth than currently provided by zoning. They are an interim measure. It would benefit the Town to understand the carrying capacity of the planning areas, community consensus on open space conservation, and the fiscal implications of development. The tools to accomplish this are buildout analysis, open space planning, and the fiscal model.
- Incentive zoning could be used on a Town-wide basis to accomplish any number of goals. For example, incentive zoning could be used to encourage specialized housing (i.e. senior housing) or to create a community amenity such as a community center or trail connection.
- Conservation subdivisions and illustrated residential development guidelines should be considered for all new development projects to conserve resources and promote quality design.
- Prepare a farmland and open space conservation plan. The plan would identify appropriate, long-term land protection strategies that manage

future growth in rural areas of the Town. The plan should establish a goal for open space protection in terms of both acres of protected land and the types of open space resources that the Town seeks to protect. The plan should also establish the principles and techniques for how these lands should be protected (for example: incentive based techniques such as acquisition or Purchase of Development Rights). A fiscal model could be developed to determine the potential fiscal implications (i.e. impact on taxes) of this program once the Town's protection goals and techniques are refined.

A primary focus of this work should be the identification and preservation of appropriate parcels in the Town for open space or agricultural use. The plan would establish a completely voluntary program for land conservation. The most successful approaches to land conservation are incentive based, whereby the landowner is compensated for the lost development potential of the property while retaining the right to own and work the land. Farmers and other large landowners would have the opportunity to apply for these incentives. Consideration for judging applications to this program should be based on a set of criteria designed to evaluate the importance of a parcel to the community. For the purposes of granting funding, the State uses the following criteria that emphasizes agricultural use. This may or may not be the emphasis for the Town of Halfmoon.

- ♦ Viability of farmland (soil type, productivity)
- ♦ Development pressure
- ♦ Buffer for significant natural public resource containing important ecosystem or habitat characteristics. Examples include: viewsheds, Town parks and other public recreation facilities and open space, potential future townwide trail system, and important habitat such as wetlands
- ♦ Size of parcel
- ♦ Percentage of total farm acreage available for agricultural production
- ♦ Proximity to other farms which are already protected by a conservation easement or which might reasonably be expected to enter into a farmland preservation agreement in the future.
- ♦ Level of farm management demonstrated by current landowner, and
- ♦ Likelihood of property's succession as a farm if ownership changes.

Of these criteria, the State gives priority to parcels that preserve viable agricultural land, are located in areas facing significant development pressure, and serve as buffers for natural public resources.

- Develop a utility master plan that is linked to the recommendations of this comprehensive plan. The provision of utilities, especially sewer, typically creates an increase in development pressure. Sometimes utilities are placed through areas that are not intended for development. Under these circumstances, it is necessary for the Town to have clear policy on development. Sewer can present opportunities for clustering that can result in the preservation of significant open space. Again, however, clear policy must be in place so as not to result in over development and a departure from the Town's vision for a given area. Clearly, the Town has control over its own land use, even when utilities are controlled by other entities. Although it is certainly possible for the Saratoga County Sewer District to deny sewer in an area of Town where development is envisioned (for any number of important reasons), they have no authority to approve development in areas where the Town does not want development.
- The Town should develop Commercial Development & Architectural Standards for all commercial zones. These design standards will enhance the quality of proposed projects as well as help protect the existing commercial development. Design standards will serve to protect adjacent structures and land uses particularly in transition areas where land use conflicts are more likely to occur.

### ***Fiscal Management & Economic Development***

- The Town should consider developing a fiscal impact model to address the impact of land use decisions on the tax base. The model can be used to assist the Town in the identification of the costs and benefits of various types of development versus maintaining certain lands as open space. Once town officials and residents understand the costs associated with both scenarios (open space preservation versus development of an area), they can balance open space preservation and fiscal responsibility. The model is also useful in comparing the impact of a variety of land use scenarios and programs. For instance, it would be valuable to know how much residential development the Town can support in light of the current amount of land designated for commercial and industrial uses. Or what type of amenities program can the community support. Fiscal impact is not the sole factor in decision-making. Suburban life is changing and in order to maintain or improve the quality of residential and commercial areas, communities must invest in them. As previously noted, the long-term benefits to tax base from reinvestment and enhancement of developed areas are likely to be beneficial. The fiscal model can also be used to identify these time frames, which is important for budgeting purposes.

- The Town should identify and prepare selected sites for development (i.e. shovel-ready status). The Town has a large area of well-located industrially zoned land. Clearly defined development areas (commercial, industrial) identified as shovel-ready will allow the Town to proactively direct the location and type of development. Development guidelines are critical to ensure high quality development on these sites. Contact should be made with the SEDC to begin to develop such a program.
- In order to strengthen established commercial areas, the Town should conduct an inventory of conditions in these areas. Based on this information, a plan should be created for each area to improve deteriorated conditions and apply new principles to promote economic development. Areas of improvement might include aesthetics (structures, layout, landscaping), access (vehicular and pedestrian), infrastructure and parking. The plan should include an incentives program to facilitate private investment.
- Develop public-private partnerships where possible to implement redevelopment and reinvestment programs/plans. This type of relationship can be quite successful as both groups have a stake in the outcome of a particular project. This "ownership" usually results in high quality projects that will benefit a broad cross section of the community.
- Provide support and incentives to locally owned businesses and businesses with a track record of being a strong community partner to strengthen the business community and attract additional like-minded businesses.

### ***Community Development***

- Reinvest in existing neighborhoods to provide the amenities and maintenance necessary to strengthen and rejuvenate these areas. The primary goal should be to retain residents and maintain or increase property values. The Town should identify these older neighborhoods, survey existing conditions and use this information to create an action plan.
- Community pride should be encouraged through the active engagement of business and professional associations, neighborhood and service associations. Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Garden Clubs, the Elks, Lions etc are all excellent sources of volunteers and community pride.

- The Town should undertake a review of existing housing stock to identify price ranges and housing types. This will assist the Town in determining the types of residential development that should be encouraged to help Halfmoon reach the goal of a "Lifelong Community".
- Residential neighborhoods both old and new should be protected from incompatible land uses particularly those that rely heavily on vehicular transportation. Existing land use conflicts should be addressed to the maximum extent possible through the use of buffers and other safeguards. Potential future land use conflicts should be addressed by updating the Town's zoning, subdivision regulations and the site plan regulations.
- Prepare a recreation master plan in accordance with procedures established by the National Recreation and Park Association. The plan should include a survey of recreational needs.

#### ***Potential Adverse & Beneficial Impacts of Recommendations***

The recommendations outlined above and the corresponding action plan tasks derived from the recommendations would generally result in beneficial impacts to the community and environment. The Town is currently zoned for development. There are no significant protections or incentives in place to control growth both in terms of development patterns and density.

If sewer and water is available, development can occur almost anywhere at relatively high density. For example, residential development is permitted with minimum 20,000 square foot lots. By incorporating multifamily housing through the Planned Development District, density can increase significantly (up to 10 units per acre). The loss of active farming and the subsequent availability of a number of large lots creates a significant potential for sprawling development that will consume land resources, natural resources, and community services. The byproduct will be increased traffic, noise and pollution (air and water).

The goals of the growth management tools are to focus development in appropriate locations (ideally where existing infrastructure can support growth or where infrastructure expansion is economically and environmentally feasible), conserve community resources (land, nature, and services), and base growth potential on carrying capacity and community values.

Regulatory growth management tools, such as zoning, may have economic implications (adverse and beneficial) on existing landowners. A decrease in allowable density for residential development is proposed for rural areas. Conversely, there are opportunities for increased density and higher value uses in the core area of the Town. It is important to note that approximately two-thirds of the Town does not have access to municipal water and sewer. Although there are perceived opportunities for sewer infrastructure throughout the Town because the entire Town is within the Saratoga County Sewer District, providing the infrastructure is expensive. Many areas of the Town may not receive sewer service for decades, if at all.

It is equally important to note that the provision of utilities is not precluded from any area of the Town. Should utilities become available to rural areas recommended for land conservation, opportunities arise for clustering and the transfer of development rights through incentive zoning. Maximum development potential would be less than in areas such as Halfmoon Center, but greater than that achievable without utilities.

Some growth management programs, such as the purchase of development rights (PDR) and community reinvestment including the provision of amenities such as sidewalks, trails, and recreational facilities, will require Town-wide investment. At least initially, taxpayers will spend more to have these programs in place. This is usually decided through a referendum and therefore the community will have a say on what it is willing to pay. This is where the fiscal model becomes an important tool. It will help the community predict what the impact might be over a period of time. In some other communities, the model has shown that the cost savings on school taxes as a result of preserving land rather than developing it with residences are greater than the costs of purchasing the land in the long term, a beneficial fiscal impact.

The community has two important decisions to make. Are we willing to spend money (at least initially) to maintain or improve the quality of life in town and how much are we willing to spend? The fiscal model can help with these decisions. The answer may be yes we are willing to spend some money, but not a lot. However, the community really wants lots of open space, sidewalks, trails, parks, etc. Using the fiscal model, the Town can look at ways of appropriating larger sums by setting goals for economic development to offset costs. The Town might also look towards actively promoting incentive zoning as a way of providing amenities at lower cost to the community.

## **Transportation**

Traffic congestion is a growing concern for residents of the Town. Although pass-thru traffic constitutes some of the concern, the overriding problem is development in the Town itself. Development increases the number of conflicts (curb cuts, intersections) along arterial and collector roads that result in congestion. Another important issue of concern is pedestrian movement. The Town's focus on transportation is primarily vehicle oriented. This is a common issue in most suburban communities, resulting in increased traffic, noise, air pollution, and water pollution. The following provides some Town-wide solutions to reduce the impacts of travel. Some of these solutions are illustrated on Figure III-2.

- Corridor studies should be conducted for Route 9, Route 146, and Route 236. Continuing development along Vischer Ferry Road and Grooms Road, coupled with their connection to Exits 8 and 8A of the Northway warrant their consideration for future study. A corridor study addresses the road and adjacent land use along a given corridor to provide solutions for traffic congestion, pedestrian access, aesthetics (streetscape), public transportation, economic development and related land use issues. Details of this recommendation include the following:
  - ❖ Prepare an access management plan for each corridor. The plan should include the evaluation of existing access and related problems and the development of specific solutions to provide shared access, shared parking, new access roads, and possibly parallel service roads. This analysis will require parcel level planning.
  - ❖ Prepare a streetscape beautification plan for each corridor. The plan will identify the character of the area through discussions with residents and businesses and will provide design guidelines for facade treatments, lighting, signage, landscaping, street furniture, and other decorations that will make the corridor a desirable place to visit and patronize.
  - ❖ Integral to the beautification plan is the provision of a continuous sidewalk system in the developed portions of the Town.
  - ❖ Provide buffers to reduce land use conflicts between business uses and the residential neighborhoods. This does not mean that the neighborhoods should be completely isolated from the corridor.
  - ❖ Provide pedestrian linkages to integrate the corridor with adjoining neighborhoods. These linkages will complement the streetscape beautification plan and provision of sidewalks. Begin discussions with the Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) and NYSDOT on the potential for extended bus service and, if

# TOWN OF HALFMOON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TRANSPORTATION CONCEPTS



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 518-453-4500

CHA # 9911 DATE: 9/12/02

FIGURE III-2  
 TOWN OF HALFMOON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
 TRANSPORTATION CONCEPTS



applicable, to determine the appropriate locations for bus stops, shelters and other amenities that will promote ridership.

- The purpose of the Route 9 study would be to generate a vision for commercial redevelopment in the corridor, and to identify ways that this development can interface with adjoining residential neighborhoods. Additionally, opportunities for neotraditional housing (e.g., apartments above store fronts), senior housing and other higher density residential development/infill that is complimentary to the commercial and office activity along Route 9 and which would benefit from the proximity of goods and services and public transportation should be considered. By working out the details in advance of future proposals, and stating clearly what constitutes "a desirable project" (in terms of scale, design, impact, etc.), a more predictable, "shovel-ready" economic development environment can be created.
  
- Place a setback and access management overlay zone on all of the Town's collector roads. The purpose of this overlay will be to preserve the integrity of the collector and its primary function that is to safely and efficiently accommodate traffic. Regulations for the overlay district should address the following:
  - ❖ Require common access drives for minor residential subdivisions. Subdivision regulations should be amended to require a flag lot subdivision for up to four lots (minor subdivision). A single access drive would serve all four lots. Sufficient ROW should also be required along the access road corridor so as to allow the drive to be widened to serve as a Town road, should the interior of the subject parcel be developed.
  - ❖ Lots that front on existing roads should not be permitted in future major subdivisions. All lots in the subdivision should front on the internal subdivision road system. If, as a result of the layout, side or back yards are adjacent to existing roads the home should be set back a minimum of 100 feet from the existing road right-of-way (ROW). This will provide ample land area to account for potential future road improvements (e.g., upgrade from a rural road to a collector) and future trail development.
  - ❖ Require the dedication of lands for ROW where future road widening is anticipated.
  - ❖ Development of a trail or sidewalk in accordance with a pathways plan or the provision of sufficient ROW for a trail or sidewalk if no plan has been established.
  
- Review existing zoning and subdivision regulations pertaining to roadway access and amend to reflect access management concepts. An example might include the current provision in the subdivision

regulations that requires two points of access when internal project roadway exceeds 800 feet or when there are more than 18 lots. In certain circumstances, this provision may unnecessarily increase curb cuts.

- New neighborhoods should be linked via subdivision road systems when possible. This will relieve some of the traffic volume on the collector roads. Many subdivisions have stub roads that are intended to link with future development off site. These stubs should be incorporated into project plans for future development and should be clearly disclosed to buyers.
- Develop a detailed Pathways Master Plan that includes primary and secondary corridors, design standards, and a financing program. Pathways are identified in more detail within the discussion of Planning Areas.
- Coordinate implementation of trail projects with State, County, and local improvement projects.

### ***Potential Adverse & Beneficial Impacts of Recommendations***

The measures identified to address traffic in the Town are either beneficial impacts or mitigation for the current impact on the community. In most cases, the implications of the recommendations are beneficial to businesses, residents, and the general health, safety and welfare of the community. Opportunities to improve traffic flow along major corridors and increase pedestrian movement and safety should have a beneficial impact on businesses and provide additional opportunity for increased economic development that may not be achievable under current development patterns.

The collector road overlay district provisions may impact some landowners who desire to subdivide frontage lots from their land. Under this provision frontage lots are limited to protect the integrity of the road corridor and to protect residents from future impacts of increased traffic.

Similar to the impacts identified for the growth management tools, roadway improvements will cost the community money to both study and implement, which may have a short term fiscal impact. There is funding available from the State for corridor studies and improvements but they are often matching funds. In the long run, the economic benefits of improving the streetscape and addressing pedestrian and vehicular movement may benefit the Town through increased property value and sales tax.

## **Resource Conservation**

As noted in the Inventory and Analysis (Appendix A), the Town contains several environmental resources that include two major rivers of historic, commercial, and recreational value; the old Erie Canal, old Champlain Canal; numerous stream corridors, many with steep ravines; federal and State wetland; threatened and endangered species; and significant views. Additionally, some agricultural resources remain. Although limited, some lands in the northern portion of Town have prime agricultural soils.

The following recommendations address several of the available methods of conserving the community's natural resources and limiting environmental impacts.

- Stormwater management plans should comply with the NYSDEC State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) permit guidelines.
- Additionally, post developed peak discharge rates should not exceed pre-developed peak discharge rates for the 25-year storm event.
- Stormwater management plan shall incorporate methods of treating the Water Quality Volume, as defined in the SPDES regulations.
- Preserve stream corridors and associated wetland to maintain and improve water quality and habitat and to preserve natural buffers between incompatible land uses. As a preliminary measure, a minimum setback of 30 feet from the top of bank should be required. The first 10 feet of the buffer from the top of bank or ordinary high water mark should be natural buffer. The remaining 20 feet may be lawn or landscaped area but should not contain permanent structures (with the possible exception of a residential pool), impervious area (such as parking areas, roads, etc.), or septic systems including leach fields. In situations where the top of bank is not well defined (where slopes are gradual) the mean high water mark can be used.
- Consideration should be given to the quality of the stream corridor, steepness of slopes, erodibility, habitat, and other factors to determine appropriate setbacks. As identified in the Northern Halfmoon GEIS, the Meyers Brook is a cold water fishery and a minimum 100-foot buffer should be placed on this stream. Other streams may warrant such protection to preserve existing quality or to re-establish lost functions and values.
- Impacts to streams, wetlands, and other important environmental features should be avoided.
- If wetland and stream impacts are permitted, project sponsors should be required to limit impacts to less significant portions of the wetland and avoid fragmentation (splitting wetland into parts, isolating the

parts through impervious areas and other barriers). This is consistent with the requirements of federal and State regulations to avoid and minimize impacts.

- Require wetland delineations pursuant to State and federal regulations, as appropriate. Project sponsors should be required to confirm the wetland boundaries with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) prior to site plan approval.
- The Karner blue butterfly and frosted elfin habitats and their buffers should be avoided without exception.
- Strong consideration should be given to habitat value for all new development and where opportunity exists to reclaim habitat in developed areas. All projects should provide open space that is interconnected within and outside of the project boundaries. To maintain a healthy environment, wildlife should be able to pass unencumbered from habitat to habitat. Stream corridors provide excellent opportunities to provide linkages.
- Culverts for road crossings of stream and wetland corridors should be sized to allow wildlife passage. In general, the culvert should support natural streambed and banks. If the existing streambed is gravel then the gravel bottom should be carried through the culvert. If the stream is silt and it is necessary to protect the culvert from erosion, then washed stone/gravel should be used for the bed and banks. Riprap should not be used since it is unnatural and tends to create barriers to some species.
- Create a commission to identify important historic resources and advise the Town Board and Planning Board regarding proposals that may impact historic sites or resources both those on the National Historic Register and those of local significance.
- Create an incentive program to encourage owners of historic structures and sites to maintain/improve their properties.

### ***Potential Adverse & Beneficial Impacts of Recommendations***

The provisions outlined in this section will benefit natural communities if properly implemented. Many of the provisions simply strengthen existing regulations and encourage cooperation between federal, State and local agencies. The Stream buffer provision may have some land use implications and may potentially reduce the availability of developable land. However, this provision is important to protect and potentially enhance the quality of surface water. Stream buffers are commonly used by communities throughout New York State, typically ranging from 50 to 100 feet from the banks.

Benefits to the environment are benefits to Town residents. Healthy, diverse natural systems make our environment healthy. Natural systems are important in the production of oxygen, recycling of nutrients, purification of air, cleansing of groundwater and surface water, and the reduction of nuisance species. As an example, wetlands that are periodically or permanently flooded provide breeding grounds for mosquitoes. Yet the same healthy, diverse wetland system also produces many species of birds, mammals, and insects that feed on mosquitoes and their larvae. Couple this with good site planning (don't put your home right next to the wetland) and you are swatting fewer mosquitoes.

## C. Planning Areas

### Crescent

This planning area is a compact area bounded by the Mohawk River, Crescent Road and the Town's boundary with Clifton Park (Figure III-1). Development in this neighborhood is primarily low to medium density residential located along existing roadways. The Mohawk River and Erie Canal, as well as the Crescent Historic District, are major features of this area.

#### *Plan Recommendations*

This neighborhood is linked to the Mohawk River both physically and historically. The following recommendations are intended to highlight and strengthen that relationship:

- ▶ The Town should adopt and implement the study entitled “Join Us, A Master Plan for the Historic Erie Canal Towpath Trail prepared jointly by the Clifton Park Trails Advisory Committee and the Halfmoon Historical Society Trails Committee.
- ▶ Access to the river and canal should be developed at a scale in keeping with the residential feel of this neighborhood and appropriate for fishing and the launching of small watercraft (Figure III-2). The Town should support the work of the Halfmoon Historical Society Trails Committee to improve the Towpath in Halfmoon from the Crescent Bridge to the Town boundary with Clifton Park for public use. Additionally the Town should foster the continued cooperation and work of the Clifton Park Trails Advisory Committee and the Halfmoon Historical Society Trails Committee to improve the Towpath at their respective municipal boundaries. There is a +/- 60-acre state owned parcel located along the Mohawk River and the Towpath in this area that could be developed for river and towpath access and as a passive recreational area. The development of the towpath on this parcel would provide an important link to the segment of the towpath in Clifton Park and as part of the overall development of the Erie Barge Canal Towpath.
- ▶ The boat dock located adjacent to the Crescent Bridge on the northeast side should be redeveloped to provide a gateway to Halfmoon. This gateway would serve as a welcome and introduction to the Town of Halfmoon. Landscaping and signage highlighting the historical significance of the River and the Crescent Historic district would be

included. Improved fishing and parking facilities would be developed at the Crescent Bridge providing high profile, attractive river access. The Gateway would ultimately include a boulevard style Route 9 from the Crescent Bridge extending to the Route 236 intersection. The intent of the boulevard is to provide identity and recognition to Halfmoon, as well as to improve aesthetics and calm traffic as it approaches the commercial areas along Route 9, Route 236 and Guideboard Road.

- ▶ The Crescent-Church Hill Road Historic District should continue to be protected, preserved expanded if adjacent areas are deemed connected to the historical significance of the Area. This may be accomplished through a redefined historic overlay zone including a review of the existing boundaries. The overlay district should include incentives for owners to protect historically significant structures. The celebration of this historic area could be accomplished through the use of historic walks and tours and community recognition of restoration efforts.
- ▶ Review the area identified as Professional Office/residential corridor on Vischer Ferry Road to determine the necessary adjustments to this zone. This area is intended to provide a transition between the business development uses at Exit 8 and the less developed portions of this neighborhood. Although this neighborhood is not heavily developed, Vischer Ferry Road includes residences, residence converted for businesses and newer structures intended solely for business uses. As a result traffic has increased on this roadway. In order to protect the remaining residences and the integrity of the roadway, non-residential uses should be limited to low intensity service oriented businesses. Structures should retain the scale and style of a residential unit. New structures shall also reflect the scale and style of a residence.
- ▶ Conduct a corridor study for Vischer Ferry Road to address land use, access management, traffic flow, pedestrian access and streetscaping.
- ▶ Development and redevelopment throughout the planning area should remain low to medium density in keeping with existing development, cognizant of existing constraints (e.g. the road system and sewer infrastructure) and to protect the character of existing development. The recommended density for this area is one residential unit per buildable acre<sup>1</sup> if sewer is available. If sewer is not available, density

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<sup>1</sup> The term “buildable acre” refers to land identified by the Town and applicant through the conservation subdivision process as suitable for development. Typically, wetlands,

should be based on a minimum 2-acre lot size (zoning currently allows 30,000-40,000 square foot lots depending on the availability of public water). The area should not be a candidate for sewer as a means to increase development density but will be utilized as appropriate to correct deficiencies. The reinvestment and redevelopment of vacant/underutilized buildings should be encouraged. As part of this plan, the Town should repair and upgrade existing infrastructure as necessary. Residential areas should be buffered from businesses and commercial uses, particularly those that rely on vehicular transportation.

- ▶ The integrity of the existing roadways should be protected by limiting curb cuts, and carefully reviewing traffic impacts of potential projects and maintaining existing vegetation and topography to the maximum extent possible. The existing road system is a limiting factor to development in this neighborhood. It is also an integral part of the character of the neighborhood. Attempts to widen and/or straighten the roadway would significantly alter the appearance of the area.

### ***Potential Adverse & Beneficial Impacts of Recommendations***

Recommendations to develop a canal/riverfront trail and provide Mohawk River access will benefit the planning area and the community at large. The trail will also have regional implications through connection with the Clifton Park trail system. Trails increase recreational opportunities, promote a healthy lifestyle, and can result in reduced traffic when linked to population centers and desirable destinations. Future development of the trail must address property ownership, potential impacts to environmental resources such as wetlands and streams, and the historic character of the towpath and canal.

The provision of an overlay district within the Crescent-Church Hill Road Historic District is primarily intended to provide incentives to landowners to maintain their historic structures. It is also intended that the overlay would address improvements, new development and adjacent uses that might detract from the historic character of the area. Most of this area is built out. Therefore, it is not anticipated that the overlay district would impose any significant burden on new development within or adjacent to the historic area. However, care should be taken to preserve the character of the areas when buildings in or adjacent to the district make improvements or replacements.

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water courses, and steep slopes are not considered buildable. Other features may also warrant protection.

Corridor study and improvement recommendations for Route 9 and Vischer Ferry Road will have a beneficial impact on traffic, land use, and community character.

Density recommendations for this planning area reflect poor soil conditions and associated septic system failures and limitations of the existing road network. Currently, this area provides a variety of lot sizes that is unique to the Town's general pattern of residential development and should be preserved. A large, half-acre lot subdivision would be out of character in this area. In addition, overall density of the Town would increase, which will have impacts on the tax base, traffic, and the environment.

Plan recommendations are intended to mitigate impacts to the environment and community character resulting from current land use policy and regulations. The proposed changes in density may have an adverse impact on some landowners of large parcels by decreasing their development potential. Development potential in this planning area is currently limited by environmental constraints and the lack of utilities making the area less marketable than areas with utilities. Therefore, it is not expected that changing the minimum lot size will have a significant adverse impact on development potential (marketability) under current conditions (no utilities).

There is a greater potential for impact if water and sewer are provided to this planning area. Marketability of a given parcel would be expected to increase. The return on the land (number of lots translated into dollars) would be less under the recommended density. The speculative nature of the utility scenario makes it difficult to reasonably determine the significance of the impact. It is therefore necessary to rely on the probable decisions for utility extensions over the next 10 years. To date there are no plans for any large-scale sewer project(s) in this area. Funding may be sought to deal with problem areas, but funding is limited. Even at a lower density, provision of utilities would increase marketability and, in some cases, would address environmental constraints of septic systems by increasing design flexibility.

### **Halfmoon Center**

This area of Halfmoon is the most highly developed area in the Town and is characterized by a development pattern that includes a variety of residential and commercial uses (Figure III-1). Although there are undeveloped parcels scattered throughout this planning area, this area does not contain the large undeveloped contiguous lands found in other parts of the Town.

A variety of retail ventures, restaurants and other businesses are located along the heavily traveled corridors of Route 9, Route 236, and Guideboard Road. Commercial development ranges from the Big Box style of “The Crossings” and Walmart, to strip style plazas and small individual businesses. Route 9 is also interspersed with apartments and a number of older residential structures. While many of these structures have been converted to businesses, a number of them are still in residential use. Commercial development along Routes 236 and Guideboard Road consists mainly of strip style development and individual buildings. The residences which use these roadways for primary access and the numerous residential uses in close proximity to this area, at times result in land use and traffic conflicts.

Numerous residential subdivisions including Deer Run Hollow, Timberwick, Woodin Oaks, and Mapleridge are all located in this area. There are also several large apartment complexes including Twin Lakes, Halfmoon Landings, Park 200 and Squire Park Apartments. South of Wooden Road and continuing south to the Mohawk River the development pattern is less dense consisting generally of single lots along the existing roadway system.

Public sewer and water is available to large segments of this Planning Area. NYSDEC regulated wetlands are limited and there are no 100-year floodplains regulated by FEMA in this planning area.

### ***Plan Recommendations***

This is the heart of the community both in terms of existing development and potential future development. Existing development patterns have led to a vehicle-oriented environment, resulting in impacts to residential areas. Residents have expressed these impacts. From a planning perspective, the area has significant potential for development and redevelopment such that density would increase. This would benefit the community by concentrating development in a core area of Town where goods, services, and transportation are readily available.

Prior to undertaking or allowing further significant development in this planning area, the Town should focus on efforts to reduce current impacts on the residential community by decreasing traffic congestion and increasing pedestrian facilities. Reinvestment in this area is key to success and future support for new development. Additionally, guidelines should be in place for new development to incorporate amenities and balance the vehicle-pedestrian environment.

The central core of this area (inside the blue ring) identified in Figure III-3 should continue to develop with a mix of residential, business and municipal uses. The theme for development and redevelopment in this area should be as a hamlet to include commercial/service/residential/municipal facilities, community gathering areas and an improved pedestrian environment. This area should include housing to serve the needs of individuals that may not have access to private vehicles.

Residential areas outside the blue ring will continue to develop as medium density residential subdivisions. Due to the environmental constraints in many locations, subdivision design should reflect resource protection and the provision of open space. Opportunities to cluster or otherwise concentrate development to conserve open space should be a goal. The provision of trails, sidewalks and other residential amenities that will help to create high quality, sustainable neighborhoods should be emphasized.

Areas along Route 9 will include a mix of commercial, retail and business uses. Route 9 is part of the Highway Planning Corridor area previously recommended. At Exit 8 business park uses are recommended cognizant of the surrounding residential area.

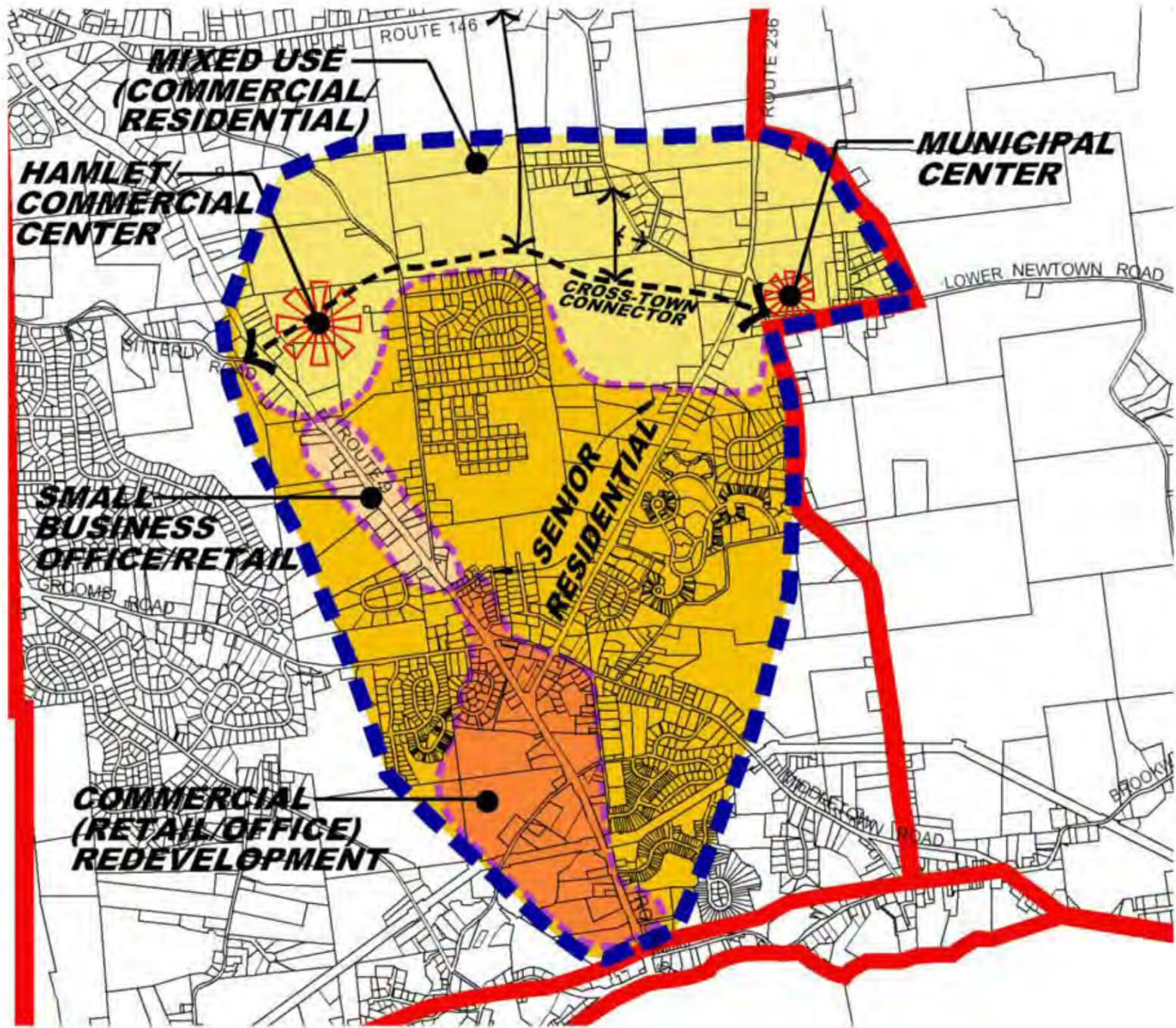
### ***Recommendations***

#### ***Core Area***

- ▶ Redevelopment and infill development should be the theme in the area of Route 9, Route 236, and Guideboard Road (Figure III-3). Appearance, building layout, parking, and pedestrian access should be addressed. Maximum density should be based on the carrying capacity of the area and the goals for a pedestrian-friendly environment. To identify buildout of the area under the current vision and goals will require further study through the Route 9 Corridor Study and master plans for redevelopment and new development.
- ▶ Address traffic issues in the above referenced area. Again, this is discussed later in this section. Access management is a key component of this area. Vehicles and pedestrians must be accommodated.
- ▶ Prepare a master plan for the areas identified as hamlet/commercial center (between Route 9 and Plant Road) and mixed use, as shown on Figure III-3. This area would provide the opportunity to create truly mixed development in a location that is largely undeveloped but part of the core of the Town. The master plan should address appropriate land use, possibly with a new urbanism theme that would create a commercial center along Route 9, linked to the municipal center via a main street corridor.



# TOWN OF HALFMOON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CORE AREA PLAN



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FIGURE III-3  
TOWN OF HALFMOON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
CORE AREA PLAN



- ▶ The hamlet/commercial center and the redeveloped area at Route 9, Guideboard Road and Route 236 would be linked by infill office retail development along Route 9. Special attention would be given to aesthetics, site layout, building setbacks, landscaping and green areas, and internal road linkages and shared parking.
- ▶ Prepare a master plan for a Municipal Center. The Municipal Center would be the location of the existing Town Hall, Senior Citizen's Center and Town recreational facilities. This area should continue to function as such and be expanded as a municipal, community based area to include government and community based facilities and both outdoor and indoor recreational facilities. Streetscape connections between the municipal center, commercial center and the hamlet commercial center should be developed to provide a physical as well as a psychological link and to encourage non-motorized transportation.
- ▶ Encourage senior housing and housing for people who may not have access to private vehicle transportation within the core area. This type of housing should include sidewalks and pathways to allow people to gain access to the goods and services available in Halfmoon Center.
- ▶ Development should be contingent on the availability of the appropriate services (utilities, roadway capacity and other amenities).
- ▶ Prepare a transportation plan for the Core Area. The area must encourage and allow the movement of people on foot and by vehicle. Several potential connector roads have been identified on the transportation plan linking the various areas within the planning area. A feasibility study should be conducted to determine the cost and location of these potential roadways. The connector proposed to link Lower Newton Road to Route 9 should include sidewalks, on street parking, landscaped medians and other amenities. Curb cuts should be limited and shared driveways access required. Speed limits should be no greater than 30 mph.
- ▶ The Route 9, 236 and Guideboard Road area should be addressed for redevelopment. A plan for traffic and pedestrian movement, site layout, utilities and aesthetics for this area should be included in the transportation and mobility improvements plan discussed above. Development and redevelopment in this area should include housing to serve the needs of individuals that may not have access to private vehicles, as well as a variety of service and retail ventures. Curb cuts should be limited and shared driveways and connector roads should be

required as practicable. The success of this plan is heavily dependent on traffic management and movement.

- ▶ Architectural standards for commercial development should be established for the core area. Appearance, scale, layout and building style should all be addressed. These standards should apply to new and renovated structures.
- ▶ The Town should seek public/private partnerships to encourage the development and redevelopment of the core area as envisioned. Public involvement could include efforts to achieve shovel ready status for a given project area and development incentives (through incentive zoning). In return, private investment might include creation of a master plan, provision of public amenities, and site development.

### **Transition Area**

- ▶ Residential land uses, similar in scale, character and density should continue in the areas east and west of the Core area. Development adjacent to the surrounding planning districts should be of a density similar to these surrounding districts in order to limit land use conflicts. In this area, as in the core of Halfmoon Center, development should not occur until the appropriate level of services are available (roadway capacity, utilities, and other amenities). Additionally, all new development should undergo the conservation subdivision process to identify and conserve important natural and cultural resources. Developments should also provide the amenities, such as sidewalks, street lighting, and linkages to create viable, sustainable neighborhoods. The recommended density for this area is 2 units per buildable acre.<sup>2</sup>
- ▶ Reinvest in older neighborhoods to help maintain pride, appearance and the functionality of these neighborhoods.
- ▶ Provide linkages between existing and new neighborhoods as well as to business through the use of pathways and sidewalks.
- ▶ Prepare and implement a corridor study of Routes 9 & 146 to address current and future traffic loads, access management, aesthetics, streetscape and the pedestrian environment.
- Encourage business development/business park uses on Route 146 east of the Exit 9 commercial area to the Hudson River Corridor. Access to Route 146 from adjacent lands should be limited to reduce future

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

traffic congestion. An access management plan should be developed as part of the Route 146 Corridor Study (see also Northern Halfmoon recommendations and Figure III-2).

- ▶ Encourage business development at Exit 8. Further east, Crescent Road will continue to be identified for professional office/residential uses, in keeping with the existing Comprehensive Plan and Local Laws Related to Zoning. This classification allows both residential uses and the conversion of homes for business uses. The intent of this classification is twofold: to provide protection to existing homeowners and the residential character of the area and also to recognize that changing traffic and development patterns may make Crescent Road undesirable for residential uses for some people. Thus existing residential structures could be difficult to sell for residential uses. Existing homes or new structures built for professional office uses must blend in scale and appearance with the existing residential neighborhood.
- ▶ Continue Commercial uses in the Exit 9 Commercial Area. This area is appropriate for destination oriented retail/commercial development due to its location at the I-87 interchange and existing development patterns. Development will consist of both infill and redevelopment. Traffic and mobility issues will be an important component of any development that occurs in this area.
- ▶ Commit to the recommendations above through the identification of funding source and the commitment of town dollars to ensure the success of this plan.

### ***Potential Adverse & Beneficial Impacts of Recommendations (Core Area)***

The plan recommendations place considerable emphasis on development and redevelopment within the Core Area. Redevelopment and reinvestment are believed to be key foundation-builders for achieving the vision of a lifelong community. The recommendations for the Core Area will mitigate current impacts by addressing traffic concerns and providing for pedestrian facilities, providing amenities that will strengthen neighborhood character and values, and establishing sustainable commercial development. Potential impacts may arise if elements of the process are addressed out of sequence. Development and infill within the Core Area that occurs before current problems are addressed will exacerbate existing problems and further contribute to a decline in neighborhood character and quality.

The Core Area is a logical location in the Town to promote development in exchange for the conservation of land in rural areas. This is a “smart growth” tool that is good for the environment.

Development of a hamlet/commercial center can also serve to establish high quality, high value mixed development in a compact area, conserving land and energy resources. There may be impacts associated with such a development that cannot be addressed in this GEIS. It is intended that a master plan be developed for a hamlet/commercial center (hamlet commercial, mixed use, and municipal) that would include proposed zoning and impact thresholds for future development.

***Potential Adverse & Beneficial Impacts of Recommendations (Transition Area)***

The emphasis of the recommendations for this area is also reinvestment and enhancement of existing neighborhoods. The Transition Area provides opportunities for further residential and commercial development. This should occur after necessary infrastructure improvements and amenities, necessary to accommodate new development, are available.

With an emphasis in development and redevelopment within the Halfmoon Center planning area, there is an increased potential for impacts to natural resources including wetlands, streams, forest and other habitats. This GEIS does not attempt to address the potential cumulative impacts of future development within this or any other planning area;<sup>3</sup> however, recommendations are made to mitigate the potential impact of development through planning and coordination with regulatory agencies. The recommendations call for a conservation subdivision review process to address the protection of important community resources. Ideally, this process will identify and protect, to the greatest extent practicable, important natural resources. Since it is a proactive process, the hope is that upfront identification of natural and cultural constraints will limit impact by designing with these elements in mind.

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<sup>3</sup> Note: A GEIS for most of the Northern Halfmoon Planning Area was previously prepared to address the cumulative impacts of development in that area. Please refer to the Northern Halfmoon Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (February 2001), Final GEIS (July 2001), and Statement of Findings (March 2002). All documents are available for review in the Town Clerk’s office, Halfmoon Town Hall.

## **Newtown**

This area of Halfmoon bounded generally by Northern Halfmoon to the north and Harris Road and Route 236 to the west is characterized by undeveloped lands; either vacant or in agricultural use (Figure III-1). Several mining operations are located between Lower Newtown and Brookwood Road. Residential units are generally scattered along the existing roadway network. There is no sewer service in this planning area. Municipal water service is available to a small area along Brookwood and Middletown Roads.

Although there are very few constraints related to wetlands or floodplains, the majority of soils in this area have limitations related to the operation of standard septic systems. Soils generally exhibit poor filtering capabilities or wetness. Soil characteristics, steep ravines, and the lack of municipal services as well as less convenient access to I-87 and Route 9 have combined to be the major limiting factors to development in this area of Halfmoon.

### ***Plan Recommendations***

The Newtown Planning Area consists of two main components. The area south of Upper Newtown Road is primarily recommended for low density and conservation residential subdivisions. The recommendation for low density is one unit per buildable acre,<sup>4</sup> assuming sewer is available. If sewer is not available, then density should be based on a 5-acre minimum lot size. The subdivision should provide a minimum of 50% quality open space.

The anticipated construction of a sewer main along Route 146 and Route 236 will open up development along Harris Road. Some parcels in this area have strong development potential resulting in pressure from some landowners and developers to develop the land with medium density residential subdivisions. In general, it is recommended that the lands designated as low density residential remain as such due to the potential to overdevelop the Town and the impacts this can have on community resources (land, natural environment, character, services, and taxes).

Should the Town determine that development of one or more of the Harris Road parcels is appropriate, developers should be required to achieve 50 percent quality open space. Alternatively, the developer could provide a minimum of 20 percent quality open space and the provision of other open space preservation amenities such as the purchase and dedication of community-identified important open space or agricultural parcels. The

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

primary incentive should be the provision of open space to compensate for the discrepancy between the project goals and the comprehensive plan goals to limit development within this planning area.

All land located north of Upper Newtown Road and some lands south of Upper Newtown Road (Figure III-1) will transition to medium density residential uses. These lands are adjacent to the Business Park designation in the Northern Halfmoon Planning Area. Maximum density should not exceed 2 units per buildable acre if sewer is available. The subdivision should also provide 20 percent quality open space. If no sewer is available, density should be based on a 2-acre minimum lot size.

### ***Recommendations***

- ▶ The focus of the area south of Upper Newtown Road should be land conservation. There are numerous stream corridors and ravines in this area that should be protected. The use of buffers to protect stream corridors and associated wetlands will compliment any programs initiated to protect agricultural lands and/or open space. The extension of utilities, for the purpose of increasing density, is not appropriate for this planning district. The exception would be to accommodate hamlet style/conservation subdivisions that include smaller lot sizes and are designed to maintain the rural feel of the existing roadway corridors and to maintain open space. Hamlet style development would not result in an increase in overall density of a site but would protect larger amounts of open space. A possible exception is as noted above for the Harris Road area.
- ▶ The road system in this area is limited, consisting primarily of collector roads with scattered residential structures. Narrow roadways and limited site distances require careful consideration of development that occurs along the various roadways. No frontage lots on these roads should be allowed for major subdivisions. Minor subdivisions should be required to develop as flag lots with a common access drive.
- ▶ Views to and from the river should be considered when reviewing projects in this district. Views of the Hudson River are an important part of this district. The Champlain Canal forms the eastern boundary of this district. The Canal should be buffered from development and adjacent development should be required to provide access to the Canal lands. The Town should continue to take steps to improve access to the Canal and to improve the Canal itself.
- ▶ The area north of Upper Newtown Road, including several parcels south of Upper Newtown Road is a candidate for medium density

development although conservation style development is still encouraged. This area will provide a transition between low-density residential development and the business development proposed along Route 146. The extension of utilities into this area would be appropriate.

### ***Potential Adverse & Beneficial Impacts of Recommendations***

The development potential/marketability of this area has been low due to physical/environmental constraints and the lack of water and sewer. The design and eventual installation of the Route 146/236 sewer will increase the development potential for the northern and western portions of the planning area. Loss of this area to over-development can have significant impacts on community character and the environment. The plan recommendations provide land use policy necessary to preserve the integrity of this area. It will be important for the Town to implement these policies wherever land conservation is desired but threatened by utility extensions.

Provisions for land conservation will benefit water quality, air quality, habitat, viewsheds, and community character.

The plan recommendations for this area will benefit the community as a whole by preserving the rural character of at least one area of the Town. Given development potential elsewhere in the Town, Newtown should remain low density. Landowners should be afforded the opportunity to develop their land, especially if utilities are in reasonable proximity. However, density and open space requirements should be enforced. The key to this plan is the provision of opportunities to develop in appropriate areas and strong implementation of open space policy in areas designated for land conservation.

### **Hudson River Corridor**

The Hudson River Corridor or Riverfront Planning District is a long, narrow strip bounded by the River and the Old Champlain Canal. This planning area (Figure III-1) provides the Town with a unique opportunity to take advantage of the special character of this area and its waterfront location along the Hudson River.

Route 4 & 32 is a minor arterial and is virtually the only roadway in the district. Land use in this planning area consists of scattered residential units on individual lots, vacant lands and several small commercial uses in the southern portion of the planning area. There are no industrial uses in

this neighborhood, although zoning allows these uses. The General Electric Silicones facility is located immediately south of Halfmoon in the Town of Waterford. Zoning is R-1 Residential, A-R Residential and M-1 Industrial.

***Plan Recommendations***

This area provides a number of opportunities due to its water orientation and the location of the Old Champlain Canal. A mixed-use waterfront-oriented community is envisioned in the area north of Upper Newtown Road. This area includes large parcels of vacant land and provides the potential to develop a multi-use community that would include multi-family residential units (condominiums, townhouses), waterfront oriented businesses, a public gathering area, and public river access including boat launching facilities and marina. In order to accomplish this, an inventory to identify candidate parcels should be conducted followed by a site master plan or GEIS to address such issues as traffic, sewer and water and visual impacts. Site Development guidelines should be used in the residential component of the project. Incentive zoning would be very effective in the development of the public amenities (marina, launching facilities, and gathering areas).

A maximum density for development of this planning area based on the vision above cannot be determined without additional information on the carrying capacity of the area and the ability to provide amenities. In its current state (no sewer and existing traffic issues), additional development in this area should be limited to minimum 2-acre lots.

Other recommendations include:

- The potential for a sewer force main along routes 4 & 32 will enhance the opportunity to develop the water-oriented uses described above. The Town should adopt policies to coordinate land use policy with the potential sewer system expansion to ensure that the various land use goals in this neighborhood are met.
- Rezone the appropriate areas to support the type of land use identified above. Currently the area north of Upper Newtown Road is zoned for both industrial and light industrial uses. The areas currently zoned for M-1 industrial should be reconsidered for residential and community/waterfront oriented businesses. With the development trends indicating interest in the development of light industrial properties along the Route 9/Ushers corridor the zoning for M-1 along the Route 4 & 32 corridor may be unnecessary.

- Land uses to the south of Brookwood Road on Routes 4 & 32 should continue to be zoned M-1.
- River access at a scale in keeping with the neighborhood should be developed including links between the River and the Old Champlain Canal along the entire Canal/River corridor (Figure III-2). These links should be included as part of a trails master plan.
- Lands use between Upper Newtown Road and Button Road should continue to develop as medium density water oriented residential.
- Development within this entire corridor should protect and enhance both the Hudson River and the Old Champlain Canal (Figure III-2). Projects should be required to provide access to the River or the Canal (depending on their location). Projects should also provide buffers to protect the canal and participate in improvements to the pathway or the Canal itself. Projects adjacent to the River should provide access and appropriate landscaped buffers. Projects near the river should also be reviewed for any potential visual impacts.
- Site access and traffic management on Routes 4 & 32 as they relate to the entire neighborhood are critical to the success of the vision for this area. Any traffic that occurs as a result of development in this neighborhood must utilize some portion of this roadway.

### ***Potential Adverse & Beneficial Impacts of Recommendations***

A definitive land use plan for this area cannot be developed without additional detail on existing environmental conditions and development potential. It is anticipated that a master plan or GEIS will be undertaken for the area to identify appropriate uses and address potential environmental impacts.

The plan recommendations as they currently stand lean toward an increase in development along the corridor with an emphasis on water dependent uses and amenities. Like Halfmoon Center, this area could be designated for development, redevelopment and infill. Using incentive zoning, there may be opportunities to preserve open space in Newtown and/or Northern Halfmoon, while providing incentives for development along the Hudson.

The area north of Upper Newtown Road presents opportunities for waterfront uses and development. This may be limited by environmental constraints, particularly wetlands. Any potential future development in

this corridor should respect the environment, consistent with the Town-wide recommendations to conserve natural resources.

### **Northern Halfmoon**

This planning area is comprised of approximately 8000 acres of land in the northern third of the Town of Halfmoon and generally coincides with the study area utilized to complete the Northern Halfmoon Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS). The boundaries of this area include the municipal boundary with Clifton Park to the west, Malta and Stillwater to the north, and the City of Mechanicville to the east. The southern boundary generally follows the parcels along the south side of Farm-to-Market Road, Vosburg Road and Route 146 (Figure III-1).

Land use in this area consists of a variety of residential uses and open fields, many of which are cut for hay. Dater Farms is the largest subdivision consisting of over 200 housing units. There are several other small subdivisions in the area with the remaining residential units on single lots of varying size. Large, undeveloped areas consist of old fields or remain in agricultural uses. There are a limited number of non-residential developments along Route 9 and Ushers Road, the largest of which is SYSCO located on Route 9. Existing zones in this planning area consists of A-R Residential, LI-C Light industrial/Commercial and M-1 Industrial. There are also small areas of C-1 Commercial and R-3 Mobile Home Park zoning.

Water and sewer service is currently limited in this neighborhood. Municipal water is available in a larger area of the southwest portion of this neighborhood (Figure A-7). Sewer is available at the Mechanicville School Complex on Pruyn Hill Road and in several locations in the southwest portion of Northern Halfmoon (Figure A-8). A transmission line connects this portion of Northern Halfmoon to the Mechanicville school site and although there are limited connections along this route there is the potential for connections. There is a large NYSDEC wetland system associated with the Anthony Kill and Round Lake in the northern most portion of this planning area. Additionally there are a number of small wetland systems scattered throughout this area.

### ***Plan Recommendations***

The Northern Halfmoon Planning Area can generally be divided into three land use categories. The majority of the land area is currently and will continue to be developed for residential uses. Areas along Route 9 are recommended for commercial, office and light commercial uses. Route

146 has been identified for business park and mixed commercial/office uses. Land use recommendations are as follows for this area:

- To protect and enhance agricultural and open space lands, conservation subdivisions should be required as recommended in the Northern Halfmoon GEIS. The GEIS recommends a minimum 20% quality open space and the provision of incentives to encourage additional open space.
- Maximum density should not exceed 2 units per buildable acre, if sewer is available. The Northern Halfmoon GEIS provides guidelines for a density bonus if additional quality open space (must come out of buildable land, not constrained lands) is provided. The maximum density is then relaxed to allow 2 units per gross acre.<sup>5</sup> Although this may be sufficient for the interim, incentives should be defined in greater detail and with public involvement through the establishment of incentive zoning.
- Conservation subdivisions should be designed not only to protect open space but should also target important resources as identified in the Inventory and Analysis (wetlands, stream corridors, agriculture and important views). By allowing greater flexibility in site layout the Town and developer should be able to reasonably balance the need for housing and the need to protect open space.
- A network of trails and parks as identified on the Transportation Concepts Plan (Figure III-2) should be developed in order to serve the growing residential population both in this area and the entire Town. The creation of a Recreation/Trails Master Plan will assist the Town in determining more specifically the location, design and cost associated with these types of facilities. The Town can use this information to plan short and long term projects and to identify funding.
- Business Park and commercial office uses are appropriate along Route 146. Access to Route 146 from adjacent lands should be limited to reduce future traffic congestion. An access management plan should be developed as part of the Route 146 Corridor Study
- The Route 9 corridor including Ushers Road has been identified as an appropriate location for the development of both mixed commercial and office uses as well as light industrial uses. The proximity of I-87, with its connection to Route 9 via Ushers Road, and the railroad provides excellent transportation options.

<sup>5</sup> The term “gross acre” refers to both constrained and unconstrained lands.

- The exception to the Route 9 Corridor/Ushers Road commercial and industrial corridor is the Tabor Road area. Although a portion of this road is currently zoned as light industrial, the land along it has developed as a residential neighborhood. Therefore, it is recommended that the land be considered for rezoning to residential, consistent with the conservation residential uses proposed for the Northern Halfmoon Planning Area. It is recognized that the railroad adjacent to this area may present land use conflicts. The area should be evaluated further during the rezoning process to determine the proper controls and the extent of rezoning in order to protect the health, safety and welfare of the current and future residents of Tabor Road.
- Develop a Highway Corridor Plan for the Route 9 and 146 corridors (Figure III-2) to address traffic and land use issues in this corridor. For the proposed land uses of business commercial, office and light industrial to function effectively and not impact surrounding residential land uses or other resources, a number of issues will need to be addressed in the Plan. A Highway Corridor Plan should address the following among others:
  - ❖ Access management- Development on both Routes 9 and 146 should include attractive shared entrances, thus limiting curb cuts. Service roads and shared parking will be an important part of the development plan for this area.
  - ❖ Protection of highway function- The development of these roadways for non-residential uses should be such that it does not interfere with the roadways' role as minor arterials.
  - ❖ Protection of adjacent neighborhoods- Access to and from parcels in this corridor should send traffic to Routes 9 or 146 rather than through residential neighborhoods or Town Roads that are not designed for this level or type of traffic.
  - ❖ Working partnerships with outside agencies- Work with the NYSDOT and the CDTC to achieve coordinated signalization along Route 9 and Route 146. A coordinated signal system modifies signal timing in response to traffic volume to keep traffic moving smoothly.
  - ❖ Pedestrian environment- Improve the safety of the pedestrian environment including providing a means of safely crossing Route 9 and Route 146. Crosswalks with pedestrian signals, medians used for pedestrian havens to shorten the length of crossing, or even the use of a pedestrian bridge are all methods to allow safe pedestrian crossings. Identify appropriate locations for sidewalks or other linkages.

- ❖ Aesthetics- the visual appearance of the corridor should be addressed through the use of site design, landscaping and building appearance. Streetscape, medians and other traffic calming methods will also improve the appearance of the corridor.
- Site plans for business uses should include appropriate set backs and buffers to protect adjacent residential uses. Issues such as noise, lighting and visual impacts will be addressed during site design of projects. Activities which generate noise or light pollution will be located so as to minimize impacts to adjacent residences. Existing topography should be maintained as practicable. This will be supplemented with grading and plantings to create effective visual screens and/or noise barriers.

### ***Potential Adverse & Beneficial Impacts of Recommendations***

Future development in this area of Town will reduce if not eliminate its rural character. It will also consume land and other natural resources and produce noise, air, and water pollution. Current zoning and land use policy can not prevent the scale and impact of development. The recommendations of this plan will provide opportunities to reduce density and conserve natural resources by implementing the conservation subdivision review process and requiring 20 percent quality open space.

The choice of Newtown over Northern Halfmoon for higher open space conservation standards was based on present development pressure and projects and the proximity of utilities. With a sewer trunk line skirting the northern boundary of the Town, sewer service along the western boundary, and water service covering a third of the area, the pressure for development in Northern Halfmoon is high.

Recognizing this potential, the Town prepared a generic environmental impact statement (GEIS) to address the cumulative impacts of growth and establish mitigation measures in an attempt to balance growth with land conservation and maintaining community character. Many of the mitigation measures were recommendations for consideration in the comprehensive plan and are now part of the plan recommendations.

The success of land conservation goals and the benefits this imparts to the community is dependent upon the provision of the proper growth management tools. Zoning code and subdivision amendments that provide for the conservation subdivision process, incentive zoning, and

development guidelines will facilitate the review process by providing back-up for Planning Board and Town Board decisions on project layout and density.

### **Unavoidable Adverse Impacts**

The plan recommendations generally provide for beneficial impacts and mitigation for existing problems. The Town has developed a vision for the future and has expressed its concerns over the current pattern of development and its impacts. The plan recommendations attempt to provide solutions to the problems/impacts.

Although typically not a SEQR issue, land value and development potential become issues anytime land use is modified to decrease density. Many of the land conservation recommendations are incentive based (incentive zoning, purchase of development rights, term easements) and must involve willing parties. Zoning and subdivision amendments are regulations and apply to all. Land owners in areas where development is discouraged by reducing maximum density and applying open space requirements may feel adversely impacted by the recommendations. In many cases, however, the assumption is that utilities are available and they will obtain the highest value based on the highest and best use of the land. Current zoning creates a false sense of development potential by allowing 20,000 square foot lots in rural areas if sewer and water can be provided. Interestingly, it was logical for the Town to zone in this manner due to the fact that the entire Town is within the Saratoga County Sewer District.

The provision of utilities is very expensive. It is not a policy of the Town to supply utilities to all residents. It's simply not feasible. However, even with the density recommendations in place, it is anticipated that many landowners would realize more development on their land if sewer became available than possible without sewer under current zoning. The reason for this is that most developers will seek land with utilities for their projects. Homes with municipal services are generally more desirable and will therefore sell quicker. Although it is quite possible that a landowner could subdivide a 100-acre parcel into 80 one-acre lots on septic and wells (assuming no constraints), it is unlikely that such a development would be marketable when new homes with municipal services are readily available.

Increased development in Halfmoon Center will be a significant adverse impact if recommendations to improve infrastructure and the pedestrian environment are not undertaken first. Residents of this area currently experience traffic, noise, odor, air quality, and safety impacts due to

surrounding development. The recommendations provide solutions to address both existing and potential future impact from development.

The Northern Halfmoon Planning Area will lose its rural character, replaced by suburban to semi-rural residential. The magnitude of this impact will depend on plan and GEIS recommendations that encourage land conservation, particularly opportunities for the purchase of development rights and term easements. An open space plan would benefit the land conservation effort by identifying and linking parcels that are important to the community.



# Chapter IV: Alternatives

The development of a comprehensive plan involves a process of evaluating alternatives. A plan begins with community discussions and an inventory and analysis. It is given focus with a vision and supporting goals and objectives, and refined through the evaluation of alternative land uses and development scenarios.

A number of alternative growth and land use scenarios were explored during the creation of plan concepts. The first growth alternative typically considered during the planning process is the “no-action” alternative. The “no-action” alternative represents the impact (beneficial and adverse) of allowing development to continue under current land use and zoning regulations. Alternative land uses that were explored during the development of plan concepts included the location and density of residential and non-residential development. Other alternatives addressed infrastructure, natural resources, and social/cultural resources. The following provides a summary of some of the more significant considerations made during the planning process.

## **A. No-Action Alternative**

The “no-action” alternative represents the growth potential of the Town of Halfmoon under existing zoning and land use regulations. Residents of the town have determined that this scenario is unacceptable because it would lead to a continuation of current growth patterns and trends that have already resulted in impacts to the community. Town officials are equally concerned about the current rate of growth and the town’s ability to keep pace with adequate levels of municipal service. With regard to land use, the town is in a reactionary mode and desires to become more proactive in its review and approval process.

Major concerns in the town include traffic along major roadways, lack of pedestrian facilities, strip and “big box” commercial development along Route 9, loss of open space and rural character, air quality, water quality, and natural resource impacts. Under the no-action alternative, only the current planning tools would be available to address these issues.

## **B. Growth Alternatives**

The following alternatives address potential growth scenarios the town could adopt as policy. There are both beneficial and adverse impacts associated with each. For the purposes of comparison, the plan recommendations (Chapter III) represent a “managed growth” alternative, which accepts future growth but both encourages and places limitations on where and how much growth occurs and addresses appropriate land use in concert with guiding principals derived from the vision statement and the goals and objectives.

### **No Growth Alternative**

This scenario would require the adoption of a no growth policy in the town, which would essentially close the door to any future new development. On the surface, this policy appears extreme and unrealistic for a community in the heart of a high growth region. However, it might also be considered as a temporary solution to current issues of rapid growth and difficulties keeping pace with utilities and services. This is discussed as a separate alternative.

Assuming this would be a permanent policy on growth, the town would designate itself as built-out. This may have some significant repercussions from landowners that are anticipating future development. It may prevent the town from developing amenities such as recreational facilities and other important community facilities. It may prevent the provision of various types of housing necessary to achieve the vision of a “Lifelong Community.” It would also limit the town’s ability to attract both local businesses and responsible corporations (sustainable businesses).

No further growth might have a beneficial impact on the natural environment by preventing further loss of habitat. This would depend on how large landowners utilized their property. It would probably be necessary for them to reconsider farming or to at least cut their land for hay. This scenario does not preclude redevelopment and reinvestment in older areas, which could have beneficial impacts on property value and community character.

### **Level of Service Alternative**

The basis of this alternative is to allow growth in a prescribed manner only when sufficient infrastructure and services are in place. Most developed and developing communities have the basic services to protect the health, safety and welfare of its residents. The issue with growth becomes the

ability to provide adequate levels of services. Most communities have limited services and limited budgets. During periods of high growth, the limits are easily exceeded, many times with little warning. This is primarily due to a lack of coordinated review of an entire area or a series of projects to identify cumulative impacts. The impacts to a community that exceeds its capacity can be significant. There can be major, unexpected infrastructure improvements that may affect budgets and taxes. System failures can result in impacts to the natural environment. Lack of coordination with school districts can lead to overcrowding and limited resources.

As the primary policy in the town, this alternative would require the use of moratoriums on development and a more equitable means of distributing the costs of development. State legislation presents limitations on what tools communities can use to address equitable cost distribution. Some communities have utilized the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) process to address potential cumulative impacts over a given time period and identify the costs of mitigation, which are then distributed to all who develop within the study area. However, there are limitations on the types of impacts that can be quantified. As a result, many services are not addressed such as recreational needs, open space, social services, and education.

The managed growth alternative (plan recommendations) provides opportunities to address level of service issues through proactive planning and the use of SEQR. It does not provide a program and criteria for the use of moratoriums as a tool for growth management nor does it specifically recommend that growth be based on level of service. Such policy might be considered in the future as the town conducts further study of its resources and services and establishes greater coordination with other service suppliers, such as the school districts and the county.

## **C. Land Use Alternatives**

The following alternatives address various land use scenarios that have been considered during the development of the plan recommendations.

### **Hamlet/Commercial Center**

The types of land use that should be incorporated into a hamlet/commercial center have not been defined by the community at this time. However, there were discussions within the Comprehensive Plan Committee and within the community on what might be included. Consideration was given to the inclusion of a new town hall. The land use

plan suggests that the town hall would be built on lands adjacent to the existing town hall. Other ideas included the adoption of a new urbanism theme that would intensify development within the hamlet/commercial center and offer some housing alternatives such as apartments above storefronts.

The location for the hamlet/commercial center was discussed. Consideration was given to locating this center at the Route 9/Route 236/Guideboard Road intersections. This would involve redevelopment of this area. Although not totally rejected, it was determined the area at Route 9 near Sitterly Road provided greater opportunity and flexibility for development and might also address the need for a cross-town connector that has been discussed in the past.

### **Residential Development**

Several residential development scenarios were discussed. Some committee members initially rejected the idea of concentrating multi-family development within the Halfmoon Center planning area and particularly within the Core Area of that planning area. This led to recommendations that existing major issues, such as traffic congestion and pedestrian access, be resolved prior to allowing further development. However, it was agreed that under the right circumstances, the area is suitable for multi-family development, particularly in conjunction with the hamlet/commercial center concept and when considering senior housing.

The potential increase of density and associated impacts as a result of extending sewer service was also discussed. Originally, the entire Newtown planning area was considered for low-density development. However, with the potential for sewer service along Route 146 and the potential for mixed waterfront development in the northern portion of the Hudson River Corridor planning area that may also include sewer service, it was decided that the land north of Upper Newtown Road could support a slightly higher density, similar to that suggested for the Northern Halfmoon planning area.

The plan recommendations treat the Crescent planning area as built out despite the presence of numerous larger lots (5+ acres). There is potential to provide sewer service to this area. If so, the density of development could increase significantly. The Comprehensive Plan committee generally rejected this scenario since the area provides different housing opportunities than other areas of town and has some unique characteristics that could be impacted by increased density.

## **Commercial and Industrial Development**

There are many alternatives for commercial and industrial development in the town. The plan recommendations attempt to organize commercial development based on size and potential impact to the community. This resulted in the limitation of “big box” commercial to areas of greater accessibility and lesser impact on the community. The obvious locations were in the vicinity of the I-87 exits.

Industrial development was initially limited to the areas of current zoning. However, further review resulted in limiting the extent of industrial along Route 4 & 32 in favor of waterfront residential and waterfront park. Light industrial was expanded in the Northern Halfmoon planning area to incorporate land to the west of Route 9 and south of Tabor Road which appears to be viable for light industrial and business park uses.



# Chapter V: Action Plan

Perhaps the most important component of any comprehensive plan is the identification and prioritization of plan recommendations that should be carried out over a given time period to achieve the goals and objectives of the plan. This is typically referred to as an action plan.

This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan identifies those tasks that might reasonably be accomplished over the next 20 years and attempts to provide a logical order and schedule. An action plan is meant to provide focus and organization but should not be so rigid as to miss opportunities or fail to adjust to the dynamics of the community. Some tasks will logically come before others, especially when the initiation of one task is dependent upon the outcome of another. However, in many instances, community interest, budget, and outside or regional influences may elevate one task over another.

The purpose of this Action Plan is to provide the community with direction; a path towards achieving the vision of a “Lifelong Community.” Prioritization is based primarily on community interests and needs. Public consensus on the order and timing of these tasks is critical to achieving the support and leadership of the elected officials.

Tasks are prioritized based on the urgency and significance of the issue. Typically, tasks are grouped into short, medium, and long-term time frames. However, development pressure has created the need to begin some tasks immediately. Short-term tasks should be completed within the next 1-2 years. Medium term tasks should be completed in the next 2-4 years. Long term tasks are those that are expected to occur in excess of 5 years out and are typically dependent on the outcome of short and medium term tasks, or are simply not of high priority at this time.

## A. Implementation Priorities

The implementation table to follow prioritizes and summarizes the action plan tasks. Also included is a description of the interrelationships between tasks and the necessary legislation/approvals to carry out these tasks. Full descriptions of the Action Plan tasks are provided following this section.

**Implementation Priority Table**

<b>Immediate Actions</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Linkages/ Dependencies</b>	<b>Legislative Agenda</b>
Zoning Code Revisions - Rezoning - Site Plan Review - Historic District Overlay - Stream Corridor Overlay - Collector Road Overlay	Plan Adoption by Town Board	Town Board directs Town Planner and Town Attorney to prepare draft zoning or retains planning consultant. Town Board holds public hearing and adopts code amendments.
Subdivision Amendments (conservation subdivision process)	Partially dependent on Residential & Commercial Develop. Guidelines	Same as above.
Residential & Commercial Development Guidelines	Linked to conservation subdivision and site plan review amendments.	Town Board authorizes professional services; holds public hearing and adopts code amendments.
Incentive Zoning Legislation	Linked to Farmland & Open Space Conservation Plan and economic development initiatives.	Engage community to identify incentives and benefits. Town Board directs Town Planner and Town Attorney to prepare draft zoning or retains planning consultant. Town Board holds public hearing and adopts code amendments.
Historic & Architectural Review Guidelines and establishment of an Advisory Commission	Linked to hamlet/commercial center concept, redevelopment and economic development initiatives, and development guidelines.	Town Board authorizes professional services; establishes Historic & Architectural Review Advisory Commission and appoints members.
Farmland & Open Space Conservation Plan	Partially linked to code revisions, especially incentive zoning.	Town Board authorizes professional services, establishes committee, reviews and adopts strategy, implements recommendations via local laws, develops funding initiatives, etc.

<b>Short Term Actions (1-2 years)</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Linkages/ Dependencies</b>	<b>Legislative Agenda</b>
Route 9 Corridor Study	Independent but linked to hamlet/commercial center planning and Halfmoon Center Core Area neighborhood revitalization	Town Board authorizes professional services, establishes a committee, reviews and adopts action plan, implements via local laws, and seeks funding.
Hamlet Center Design Charrette & Master Plan	Independent but linked to Route 9 corridor study and pedestrian linkage plan, incentive zoning, design guidelines, architectural standards.	Town Board authorizes professional services, establishes a committee, review and adopt action plan, implements via local laws, and seeks funding.
<b>On-Going Actions</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Linkages/ Dependencies</b>	<b>Legislative Agenda</b>
Obtain Riverfront Access	Independent but linked to Erie Canal and Old Champlain Canal trail corridor planning.	Town Board identifies parcels for potential acquisition and appropriates/seek funding.
Establish Town Beautification Committee	Linked to development and architectural guidelines, corridor studies, and Halfmoon Center neighborhood and commercial development and redevelopment initiatives.	Town Board appoints a committee.
Community Facilities Planning	Linked to hamlet/commercial center, future growth, and recreation master plan	Town Board appoints a Community Facilities Committee
Planning Education	Linked to many planning and zoning actions that result in changes to current project review procedures.	Planning Board and ZBA develop schedule for training board members. Town Board appropriates funds as necessary.

<b>Medium Term Actions (2-4 years)</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Linkages/ Dependencies</b>	<b>Legislative Agenda</b>
Fiscal Impact Model	Independent but linked to many land use and planning decisions.	Town Board authorizes professional services, identifies and trains Town official to be responsible for the use and understanding of the model.
Neighborhood Revitalization Planning – Halfmoon Center Core Area & Transition Area	Independent action but impacted by other initiatives for commercial revitalization, hamlet/commercial center, recreation and trail planning, and corridor planning.	Town Board authorizes professional services, establishes a committee, review and adopt action plan, implements via local laws, and seeks funding.
Housing Stock Inventory	Independent but linked to Halfmoon Center Core Area planning.	Town Board directs Town Assessor & Building Department to compile data.
Mobility Plan for Core Area	Partially dependent upon and linked to other tasks within Halfmoon Center.	Town Board authorizes professional services, establishes a committee, reviews and adopts action plan, implements via local laws, and seeks funding.
Halfmoon Gateway Design Competition	Linked to Route 9 corridor study.	Town Board initiates competition
Economic Development Initiative	Partially dependent upon code revisions, design guidelines and other short term planning tasks that involve incentives, partnerships, and constraints.	Town Board authorizes professional services, establishes a committee, review and adopt action plan, implements via local laws, and seeks funding.
Pathways Master Plan	Independent but linked to future land use policy that will guide the location of important destinations.	Town Board authorizes professional services, establishes a committee, reviews and adopts action plan, implements via local laws, and seeks funding.

<b>Long Term Actions (5+ years)</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Linkages/ Dependencies</b>	<b>Legislative Agenda</b>
Comprehensive Plan Review & Update	Successes and failures of Action Plan tasks.	Town Board appoints a committee to review plan.
Recreation Master Plan	Independent but linked to future land use policy that may impact population projections. Also linked to facilities planning.	Town Board authorizes professional services, establishes a committee, review and adopt action plan, implements via local laws, and seeks funding.
Route 9/Route 236/ Guideboard Road Redevelopment Master Plan	Possibly a component of the Route 9 corridor study. Also linked to economic development initiative, incentive zoning, and Core Area mobility plan.	Town Board authorizes professional services and/or establishes a public/private partnership agreement with a developer, establishes a committee, reviews and adopts action plan, implements via local laws, and seeks funding.
Target Areas for Commercial/Industrial Economic Development – Shovel Ready	Independent but linked to incentive zoning and design guidelines.	Town Board authorizes professional services to prepare a GEIS for selected sites, adopts SEQR findings, and markets areas with assistance from SEDC.
Exit 8 Business Development Plan/GEIS	Independent but linked to incentive zoning, Vischer Ferry Road corridor study, and design guidelines.	Town Board authorizes professional services, adopts SEQR findings.
Exit 9 Business Development Plan/GEIS	Same	Same
Corridor Studies for Route 146, Route 236, Vischer Ferry Road, Grooms Road, and Sitterly Road.	Independent	Town Board authorizes professional services, establishes a committee, reviews and adopts action plan, implements via local laws, and seeks funding.
Viewshed Inventory & Preservation Plan	Independent but useful for the Conservation Subdivision process	Town Board appoints a committee of volunteers to inventory viewsheds.
Hudson Riverfront Park Feasibility Study & Design Charrette	Independent but also an important component of the Hudson River Corridor GEIS	Town Board authorizes professional services, establishes a committee, establishes public/private partnership to implement.
Hudson River Corridor GEIS	Dependent upon outcome of Riverfront study. Implementation linked to incentive zoning and economic development initiatives.	Town Board authorizes professional services, adopts SEQR findings, implements through local laws.

## **B. Action Plan Discussion**

Most of the action plan tasks identified in the preceding tables are important to the community. Prioritization is often a very personal decision based on an individual's concerns and interests in the community. Therefore, it is important to understand the theory behind the decisions reflected in the tables. It is also important to note that priorities change for any number of reasons and the Action Plan is meant to be flexible. The discussion of linkages can be useful in determining whether a task can be brought forward or pushed back based on its relationship to other projects.

The following discussion of each task provides the reasoning for its priority designation. However, the general theme for prioritization is to establish the regulatory framework that will support future planning efforts.

Although desirable, it may be difficult for the Town to accomplish all the tasks in the immediate and short-term lists. It is reasonable to assume that the first year of implementation will be devoted to code revisions, incentive zoning, and development and architectural guidelines. It is quite possible, assuming adequate funding is available, that other short-term items can be completed or at least begun.

### **Immediate Actions**

#### ***Zoning Code Amendments***

The Comprehensive Plan provides the Town with a parcel-based future land use map. This is intended to be used as the base map for rezoning portions of the Town. Since Town Law requires that a community's zoning ordinance be consistent with its land use plan, this task should be one of the first items addressed.

In order to proceed, the Town should either direct the Town Attorney and Town Planner (perhaps with a committee) to draft the zoning revisions. Alternatively, the Town may wish to retain professional services to perform the task, typically in concert with the Town Attorney and Town Planner. Once the draft zoning is available for public review, the Town Board would hold a public hearing. After sufficient opportunity for public input has been provided and any necessary revisions incorporated, the Town Board would adopt the zoning amendments. Adoption of the zoning amendments is a Type 1 action under the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) regulations (6 NYCRR 617). However, rezoning

and other major code amendments are addressed in the SEQR documentation for the Comprehensive Plan. Therefore, no further SEQR action should be required unless the proposed zoning amendments are significantly different than envisioned in the Comprehensive Plan.

The components of this task include the preparation of a zoning map (draft and final) and the necessary written amendments. The extent of the amendments will depend on other code revisions that might be wrapped into this task (discussed separately). In general, the amendments would include new and revised zoning designations and uses, revised site plan review procedures (consistent with the conservation subdivision process), revised special uses, and revised definitions. Other portions of the zoning code would require review and possible amendment to be consistent with the major changes.

Although discussed as a separate task, the creation of design guidelines for commercial and residential development will be an important component of the revised site plan review process. As envisioned, the bulk regulations currently used to define project layout would be eliminated in favor of the more flexible design guidelines.

Other special zoning designations included in this task are described as follows:

### **Historic District Overlay**

Overlay districts are zoning districts that provide an additional level of regulation and/or incentive program to address the specific concerns of a given area. The Crescent-Church Hill Road Historic District would benefit from an overlay zone that would provide additional protection of the area and incentives for owners to maintain their structure and properties in their historic context.

The overlay zoning regulations would provide protection from incompatible land uses and other modifications that might jeopardize the character of the area or a given structure or site. It is also possible to provide incentives to property owners, such as a tax abatement, that would help them maintain their properties.

### **Stream Corridor Overlay**

This overlay zone will be designated by the setback required for all mapped streams, as illustrated in the Comprehensive Plan. This overlay will require that all projects provide, at a minimum, the designated setback to preserve this resource. The regulation must

define the character of the setback and any allowed uses. The means of measuring the setback must also be identified.

### **Collector Road Overlay**

The purpose of this overlay district will be to limit the number of access points along collector roads in order to preserve road function. It is also the purpose of the overlay to limit the number of homes fronting on collector roads to avoid future impacts to residences as a result of increased traffic and other associated impacts.

Components of the overlay district will include development guidelines for both major and minor subdivisions, including setbacks and common access drives.

### ***Subdivision Amendments***

The primary objective will be to incorporate the conservation subdivision process into the Town's subdivision regulations. This task is dependent upon the preparation and adoption of residential and commercial development guidelines and therefore should be undertaken during or shortly after the zoning code revisions.

In order to proceed, the Town should either direct the Town Attorney or Town Planner (perhaps with a committee) to draft the subdivision revisions. Alternatively, the Town may wish to retain professional services to perform the task, typically in concert with the Town Attorney and Town Planner. Once the draft zoning is available for public review, the Town Board would hold a public hearing. After sufficient opportunity for public input has been provided and any necessary revisions incorporated, the Town Board would adopt the subdivision amendments. Adoption of the subdivision amendments is subject to the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) regulations (6 NYCRR 617). However, the environmental impact of the subdivision amendments are addressed in SEQR documentation for the Comprehensive Plan. Therefore, no further SEQR action should be required unless the proposed amendments are significantly different than envisioned in the Comprehensive Plan.

### ***Residential and Commercial Development Guidelines***

This task will involve the creation of guidelines for development of both residential subdivisions and commercial projects. The guidelines are intended to replace current bulk regulations that specify rigid setbacks and

lot dimensions and will provide much the same guidance but in a more flexible manner that can address the unique characteristics of each project. Illustrations should be incorporated into the guidelines to visually express the Town's intent.

This task is an essential element of the revised site plan review and conservation subdivision processes and therefore should be undertaken in the short term.

Plan recommendations that address the conservation of environmental and community resources should also be incorporated into the guidelines as policy statements and required procedures. An example of this is the coordination process with federal and state agencies for the delineation and confirmation of wetland boundaries. Although flexibility is important, the Town can incorporate any portion of the guidelines as requirements to reduce uncertainties, as necessary.

The guidelines should also include guidance on landscaping and the preservation of existing trees and other important vegetation. A tree survey should also be required for all projects and available for review during the initial stages of the conservation subdivision process. A maintenance plan is need to ensure that landscaping and other elements designed for aesthetic improvement and public benefit are kept in good condition and replaced as necessary throughout the life of the project.

The Town Board should authorize professional services to assist the Town in preparing the illustrated guidelines. Once completed, the guidelines should be adopted as part of the zoning code.

### ***Incentive Zoning***

Incentive zoning is permitted under Town Law § 261-b. This is the last important component of the legislative (regulatory) group of growth management tools recommended for controlling future development and has therefore been designated a short term action. As envisioned, the Town will adopt zoning in accordance with the land use plan. The zoning will specify permitted uses and densities. The development process will be dictated by the conservation subdivision process, which provides much more flexibility in design. Site layout will be guided by illustrated residential and commercial design guidelines. Incentive zoning provides the opportunity for the provision of additional public benefit and amenities in exchange for bonuses that benefit the developer.

The latter component, incentive zoning, is important to the process because of the increased flexibility. If the Planning Board's hands are no

longer tied on issues such as minimum lot size and road design standards, they can work with a developer to protect/enhance the unique characteristics of the particular project. Incentive zoning allows the Planning Board to offer a developer a bonus in exchange for some desirable community benefit. An example might be that the Town agrees to allow the developer to increase the number of units (increase density) if he/she is willing to purchase (from a willing landowner) the development rights of a parcel of land that has been identified by the community as important farmland or open space. The incentive based approach to achieving community goals compliments what will become a very interactive and open process for future development projects.

Incentive zoning is not intended as an avenue for increased density with marginal benefits. It will be critical for the Town to identify what incentives will be offered and what is expected as a corresponding community benefit. The Town must identify a maximum density for any given area so as not to jeopardize the vision and goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

It is expected that incentive zoning will be broadly used for residential development in both the Northern Halfmoon and Newtown planning areas. It will be necessary for the Town to designate which zoning districts or overlay zones will carry the incentive zoning provisions.

The following procedures are recommended to establish the incentive zoning legislation.

- Based on information collected for the Comprehensive Plan, the Town should derive a draft list of incentives and community benefits. The list should be made available for public review and opportunity provided for public input.
- While conducting community outreach for the above, the Town should prepare the draft zoning.
- Depending on the extent of benefits and incentives, it may be necessary to engage the SEQR process.
- A public hearing would be required and the process for adoption would follow the same procedures as any zoning amendment.

This task could be combined with the other code amendments.

### ***Historic & Architectural Review Guidelines***

The purposes of the historic and architectural review guidelines are to create standards for quality and uniformity of commercial/office/industrial

design in conjunction with the community's concept or vision for a given area and to provide protection for historic structures throughout the Town.

The Town Board should establish a commission charged with reviewing projects referred to them by the Town Board or Planning Board. Their first task would be to serve as a committee for the development of the guidelines. This task is partially dependent upon the establishment of plans for the hamlet/commercial center, commercial road corridors, and redevelopment areas.

Architectural review guidelines would address the visual aspects of the structure as it relates to the surroundings and the vision for the area. Historic review guidelines would address the potential impact of a project on the historic character of a structure. They would also provide guidelines for the maintenance of the structure itself, usually in conjunction with owner incentives (tax abatement program).

### ***Farmland & Open Space Conservation Plan***

The Farmland & Open Space Conservation Plan would identify appropriate, long-term land protection strategies that manage future growth in rural areas of the Town. The types of tools and techniques that might be considered are described in some detail under the *Growth Management* section of this comprehensive plan. The plan should be developed with active participation from farmers, other landowners, and interested Town residents.

The plan should establish a goal for open space protection in terms of both acres of protected land and the types of open space resources that the Town seeks to protect. The plan should also establish the principles and techniques for how these lands should be protected (for example: incentive based techniques such as acquisition or Purchase of Development Rights). A fiscal model could be developed to explore land use scenarios that included an open space protection program. The fiscal model would project the potential fiscal implications (i.e. impact on taxes) of this program once the Town's protection goals and techniques are refined.

A primary focus of this work should be the identification and preservation of appropriate parcels in the Town for open space or agricultural use. The plan would establish a completely voluntary program for land conservation. The most successful approaches to land conservation are incentive based, whereby the landowner is compensated for the lost development potential of the property while retaining the right to own and work the land. Farmers and other large landowners would have the opportunity to apply for these incentives.

The process for developing this plan involves discussions with individual land owners and community input to identify goals and appropriate implementation tools. In order to proceed, the Town Board should authorize professional services to develop the plan and conduct community outreach. Once complete, the Town should adopt the plan and establish funding mechanisms. Grants may also be available and should be investigated.

Whether or not this task is undertaken in the short, medium or long term will be dependent upon the perceived need to address open space. It is clearly an important issue that the public has identified through the community survey and other public outreach. Large development projects continue to come before the Town Board and Planning Board that may involve important open space parcels. If development pressure continues, the need to identify open space goals and establish a plan may become more urgent.

### **Short Term Actions**

#### ***Route 9 Corridor Study & Action Plan***

The need to address development and mobility along Route 9 is important and is a candidate for a short term action. The decision to include this task in the medium term was primarily based on the secondary beneficial impacts to Route 9 as a result of several of the short term tasks (hamlet/commercial center plan, neighborhood revitalization, and code revisions).

The corridor study should address access management, streetscape improvements, and pedestrian linkages. Corridor studies are as much land use studies as they are traffic studies. Land use is critical to the flow of traffic. Multiple access points along a highway create multiple points of congestion. The corridor study should evaluate the potential to combine driveways and possibly construct service roads.

Also from a land use perspective, the study should include design standards that halt strip development. Where appropriate, careful attention should be paid to the pedestrian environment, providing sidewalks and streetscape amenities that will encourage people to walk rather than drive from point to point. Opportunities to link near-by residential neighborhoods to various destinations along the corridor may also reduce the number of vehicle trips.

Like most of the planning tasks, the corridor study should begin with an inventory of resources and the development of a base map to address access issues. Prior to developing recommendations, it would be useful to conduct a design charrette to address visual character, commercial architectural design standards, and pedestrian linkage opportunities.

The final product should be an action plan that includes alternatives for access management, pedestrian access, draft design/architectural standards, a vision for the streetscape, and a plan and schedule for financing the projects.

### ***Hamlet/commercial Center Design Charrette & Master Plan***

Ideas for a hamlet/commercial center that include potential uses and location have been discussed in the Comprehensive Plan, but have not developed into a concept plan. Due to the number of issues and components of a hamlet/commercial center, it is recommended that the Town develop a master plan that addresses location, land use, road system, character, scale, and design. It is anticipated that the Master Plan would culminate in a concept plan providing potential uses, layout and architectural renderings.

This task is recommended in the short term to keep pace with the current momentum for this project.

The plan should address issues such as mobility, streetscape, pedestrian environment, linkages to neighborhoods and other destinations in the Town, feasibility, and environmental impact. A major component of the plan should be the cross-town connector that would link Route 236 and Harris Road with Route 9.

The first part of the planning process should involve the public in a design charrette. The purpose of the charrette would be to engage the public in a hands-on process of identifying what a hamlet/commercial center should include and how it should look.

The first step in the design charrette should be an evaluation of peoples' preferences through a visual presentation of hamlet/commercial centers in other communities. Next, with the aid of designers and facilitators, design alternatives can be developed. These alternatives, perhaps with the preliminary designation of a preferred alternative, can be circulated to the public for review and refinement.

## **On-Going Actions**

### ***Riverfront Access***

This task will likely be on-going but should begin as soon as possible to identify and act on riverfront parcels as they become available. Recommendations from both the Erie Canal and Old Champlain Canal trail corridor planning projects will assist in identify appropriate areas for acquisition.

### ***Town Beautification Committee***

A committee should be established to help provide guidance with the development of corridor plans, public spaces, neighborhood revitalization and numerous other tasks that involve improving the aesthetics of the community.

### ***Community Facilities Planning***

Facilities planning has begun with a committee investigating the future location for Town Hall. Such planning should be broadened in scope to include all community facilities and services. A committee should be established to address such issues as the number and location of future schools, the location of a future library, the future of volunteer fire and emergency services, the potential need for a Town police force, and recreational need. It may also be prudent to review and perhaps redevelop emergency preparedness plans in conjunction with county, State and federal initiatives for homeland security.

### ***Planning Education***

The purpose of this task is to train the planning and zoning board members on the new procedures for site plan and subdivision review. If implemented, several new procedures and tools will be available to the boards. Members should be knowledgeable of these tools in order to be effective and efficient with the process.

The Town should also consider budgeting for conferences and planning schools to keep board members and staff current on planning tools, decisions, and court cases.

## **Medium Term Actions – 2-4 Years**

### ***Fiscal Impact Model***

This very useful tool for projecting the future impact of various land use decisions is often linked to open space plans. Decisions to purchase development rights or remove parcels from the tax rolls may have fiscal impacts. The fiscal model can be used to predict what the impact might be relative to other land use scenarios.

But this is only one use of the model. It might be important for the Town to know how much commercial and industrial development is necessary to balance the tax base. The model can incorporate spending for amenities other than open space (trails, recreational facilities, redevelopment and revitalization, cultural activities, etc.) to identify a reasonable spending program.

Since the model is a planning tool, it typically does not require community input or other actions by the Town. However, there are a number of data inputs to develop a baseline condition that should involve consensus on the part of a committee. Development of the model typically includes an evaluation of a few land use scenarios. These can be developed to address a given task underway. If linked to the open space plan, the model might be used to compare development and land preservation.

Once completed, the model can be used to address a number of land use decisions. To provide the most flexibility, selected town officials/staff should be trained in the use of the model. Currently, this model would apply to the school tax and special district taxes. The Town does not have a general tax and receives most of its income from sales tax.

### ***Neighborhood Revitalization Planning - Halfmoon Center***

This task will be a key element in the goal of achieving a Lifelong Community. Many older developments in suburban areas were constructed in like manner to today's subdivisions. That is, they were once situated in rural areas and little attention was paid to amenities that are typically found in urban areas. The primary amenity that people sought was rural character and open space. However, development has surrounded and extended beyond the older subdivisions, as it spreads outward. The older subdivisions have become interior residential neighborhoods, much like those of a city, but without the amenities. This has resulted in traffic, noise, air, water (stormwater and water quality), aesthetic, recreation, and general safety impacts.

The purpose of this task is to identify the issues facing older neighborhoods of the community and to provide an action plan to reduce impacts. Based on what is currently known about these areas and the response from residents, it appears appropriate to begin with the Halfmoon Center planning area. Compared to other areas of the Town, this area is highly developed and significantly impacted by traffic along Route 9, Route 236, and Route 146.

This task should begin with a series of neighborhood meetings aimed at identifying issues specific to the area and gaining consensus on the appropriate solutions. An action plan should be developed to prioritize mitigation. The action plan should include opportunity for neighborhood input/involvement with other redevelopment and improvement projects such as commercial revitalization, pedestrian linkages, and Route 9 and Route 236 corridor studies.

An effective tool for beginning neighborhood discussions is Study Circles. This program teaches neighborhood volunteers to be facilitators for small group sessions designed to discuss specific issues in a non-threatening environment.

### ***Housing Stock Inventory***

An important step towards achieving a Lifelong Community is to provide enough housing for all sectors of the community. The first step is to inventory existing housing stock. With this information, the Town can begin to categorize housing by type and cost. Using demographic data, the Town can then identify existing and future needs.

The inventory task is an important short term task since it may help to identify a major shortfall in one type of housing that could be incorporated into future development plans. It is anticipated that this task could be conducted very efficiently by the Town Assessor.

### ***Mobility Plan for Core Area***

A plan for the circulation of vehicles and pedestrians should be developed for the Core Area of Halfmoon Center. This could be incorporated into the hamlet/commercial center Master Plan. With the potential to develop a cross-town connector in the northern portion of the Core Area, traffic patterns and volumes may change. This connector may serve as a main street in the Town and therefore should be developed to a different standard than a typical collector road. The purpose of the mobility plan is to provide greater balance between the vehicular and pedestrian

environment. The potential creation of a hamlet/commercial center would create a new destination point that should be made easily accessible to pedestrians. Pedestrian linkages between neighborhoods and the various destinations (present and future) should be laid out. This task is an important component of neighborhood revitalization and should therefore become a short term action.

### ***Halfmoon Gateway Design Competition***

This task could be conducted separately or easily combined with the Route 9 Corridor Study. The community should have the opportunity to provide input on the gateway. A gateway provides the community's first impression, which is particularly important to newcomers. Since there are so many different ways to address a gateway, it might be fun for the community to conduct a design contest. The contest could be open to all residents and business owners in the Town. Participants would be asked to express their ideas graphically, with a written description. The selection of winners (more than one option is desirable) should be based on the concepts and not necessarily the graphic quality, thereby opening the contest to young and old, regardless of graphic ability.

Once the options are selected, the Town should engage a professional designer to render the alternatives and present them in a public forum.

### ***Economic Development Initiative***

The purpose of the economic development initiative is to promote well-planned, well-located commercial, office, and industrial development by establishing the framework for future specific tasks. Components of this task include the following:

- An inventory of existing commercial and industrial areas of the Town to identify issues to be addressed in future action plans.
- A strategy for the establishment and appropriate use of public-private partnerships for economic development.
- A strategy for funding redevelopment/revitalization projects (budgeting and grants).
- Establishment of incentives to attract and retain locally owned businesses.
- Establishment of an Economic Development Committee to oversee the initiative and to develop relationships with the SEDC and related organizations.

### ***Pathways Master Plan***

The Town should establish a Pathways Committee to begin to formulate a strategy for the development of a comprehensive pathways plan. Initial work by this committee should be to identify sources of funding and technical assistance for the development of this plan. The committee could also begin to refine the pathways concept as presented in this plan and begin to investigate potential projects.

### **Long Term Actions - (5+ Years)**

#### ***Comprehensive Plan Update***

Although a comprehensive plan typically adopts a 20-year planning period, communities that are undergoing development pressure cannot afford to wait that long to revisit the plan recommendations. The Town of Halfmoon should continue to monitor the changes in the community. Even if all is “going according to plan,” the character and composition of the community may shift significantly such that visions and goals change. Due to the current fast pace of development in Halfmoon and surrounding communities, the Town should conduct a review of the plan recommendations in 5-year intervals to determine if a comprehensive plan update is warranted.

#### ***Recreation Master Plan***

A detailed assessment of recreational needs and opportunities should be developed. Active and passive recreational opportunities, programs, and recommendations should be identified along with funding sources. In addition to larger centralized facilities, the plan should include neighborhood parks as identified through the neighborhood revitalization tasks. Standards for the incorporation of recreational facilities into new development projects should also be provided.

#### ***Route 9/Route 236/Guideboard Road Redevelopment Master Plan***

This area is an important older commercial area of the Town, well situated at a crossroads and surrounded by residential development. It is a hub along the Route 9 corridor and could serve as an area for the intensification of pedestrian-oriented commercial development. Like the adjacent residential neighborhoods, reinvestment and revitalization is necessary in order for the area to remain viable. This plan should incorporate the recommendations of the neighborhood revitalization plan, which is likely to include options for pedestrian linkages and suggestions for neighborhood commercial development.

An inventory of issues and concerns for the area should be completed as part of the economic development initiative. Using this information and input from the neighborhood revitalization plan, a design charrette should be conducted to investigate design alternatives and a vision or theme.

An action plan should then be developed to identify a preferred alternative along with design and architectural guidelines.

### ***Target Areas for Commercial/Industrial Economic Development***

The purpose of this task is to identify sites suitable for commercial and industrial development and pre-approve these sites to encourage new economic development. The primary component of this task is the identification of areas in the Town where future economic development will not significantly impact residential areas or community character. Specific environmental review and permitting would follow.

The Town Board should charge the Economic Development Committee with the task of identifying target areas and target businesses and marketing these areas with the assistance of the SEDC. Professional services should be retained to conduct the environmental investigations.

### ***Exit 8 and Exit 9 Business Development Plans/GEIS***

The areas surrounding exits 8 and 9 of the Northway (I-87) offer continued commercial and office development opportunity. The areas are distinctly different and should be approached separately. This task should involve the development of a land use plan and Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) for each area. The GEIS will allow the implementation of the land use plan, which may include design and architectural standards, and will identify the cumulative impacts of the projects and the appropriate mitigation.

The Economic Development Committee should take responsibility for this task with assistance from a planning consultant.

### ***Corridor Studies (Route 146, Route 236, Vischer Ferry Road, Grooms Road, & Sitterly Road)***

As the need arises, each of these corridors should be evaluated to improve traffic flow, address access management, curb strip development, protect residential neighborhoods, provide pedestrian facilities, and improve the visual character of the streetscape.

The process for conducting the studies is outlined under the Route 9 Corridor Study.

### ***Viewshed Inventory & Preservation Plan***

Viewsheds are community-wide resources that can be enjoyed by all who travel the public roads. Halfmoon has several areas with exceptional views. The conservation subdivision process provides an opportunity to consider and preserve these views. It would be much more effective for the community to identify and map these views. Community based support for the viewsheds would offer the Planning Board guidance and justification for the preservation of important views. Furthermore, viewsheds could become one of the criteria for identifying lands for open space conservation through incentive zoning, term easements, or the purchase of development rights.

The Town Board should appoint a committee responsible for an inventory of viewsheds. This should include a photographic as well as map inventory that can be presented to the public to develop consensus.

### ***Hudson Riverfront Park Feasibility Study & Design Charrette***

The Plan Recommendations for the Hudson River Corridor Planning Area call for the development of a riverfront park in the northern portion of the corridor, associated with the old hydro generating facility. As envisioned in the Plan, the park would provide riverfront recreation that might include a marina, restaurants and related commercial establishments. Opportunities for passive recreation such as open space and trail linkages are also suggested.

The first step in developing a plan for this area should involve a feasibility study to identify development opportunities and constraints. This could then be used as a tool to market the area and perhaps create a public-private partnership. The next step would be to identify the appropriate uses for the area and design concepts. This could occur through a design charrette. The Town could then develop an action plan for site development or incorporate the design alternatives into a GEIS for the Hudson River Corridor.

### ***Hudson River Corridor GEIS***

Depending on the outcome of the Hudson Riverfront Park study, the Town should consider the preparation of a GEIS for the future development of this corridor. The Riverfront Park would become an anchor for the corridor that, if successful, could induce further residential growth. With

the proper mix of commercial and recreational development coupled with good vehicular and pedestrian access, there may be opportunity and desire for riverfront oriented residential development, including apartments, townhouses, and small lot single family homes. The opportunity to intensify development within the corridor could be linked to land preservation within the Newtown Planning Area.

The GEIS will help to identify carrying capacity (development potential) within the corridor and mitigation measures to address utilities, land use conflicts, traffic, and environmental impact. With an understanding of the cumulative impacts of development, the Town can develop a capital improvements program and equitably distribute the costs of development. This would be similar in scope to that of the Northern Halfmoon GEIS only smaller in area.



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# **APPENDIX A**

## **INVENTORY & ANALYSIS**

Within its borders, the Town of Halfmoon contains many natural, cultural and socioeconomic resources that combine to make the area a desirable place to live, work, and play. Those resources for which information is readily available are identified and discussed in the sections that follow. The purpose of collecting information on community resources is to begin to identify those elements of the natural and built environment that are enjoyed and should be conserved for the future, as well as those elements that are causes for concern. This information is invaluable to the process of identifying community needs and goals for the future. This process of data collection may also reveal important issues and resources that deserve more in-depth analysis. It is not the purpose of a comprehensive plan to solve all of the community's problems or enhance valuable resources. Rather, the plan will provide a comprehensive and logical plan of action to address these important issues. The process not only allows the community to identify important issues; it also provides the forum for prioritizing future actions.

This section of the Plan serves as the Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) discussion of the environmental setting in accordance with SEQR regulations (6 NYCRR 617.9 (b)(5)(ii)).

## **A. Physiology & Topography**

### **Inventory**

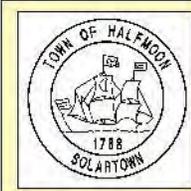
The Town of Halfmoon is located in south central Saratoga County (Figure A-1). It is bounded to the south by the Mohawk River, to the west by the Town of Clifton Park, to the north by the City of Mechanicville and Town of Malta and to the east by the Hudson River. Saratoga County is situated within the northern extent of the Hudson-Mohawk Lowlands physiographic region and the southern extent of the Adirondack Mountains. The Town of Halfmoon lies entirely within the Hudson-Mohawk Lowlands.

The topography of the Town is the result of glacial events, the most recent occurring during the Wisconsin Glaciation which covered the area from 70,000 to 16,000 years ago (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service (SCS), 1992). Subsequent to these events, surface drainage has incised several areas creating steep slopes and ravines. These “steep slopes” are limited primarily to areas adjacent to the Champlain Canal, and some areas adjacent to the Mohawk River, Anthony Kill, and the Dwass Kill. Ravine areas are also associated with the numerous tributaries feeding the Hudson River including McDonald Creek.

The remaining areas of the Town consist of rolling to flat topography. A review of soil types and topographic mapping indicates that areas with slopes of 0-3% (very little topographic relief) include the plateau between the Champlain Canal and Routes 4 and 32, as well several plateaus primarily located between tributaries to the Hudson River. Rolling topography dominates the remaining portions of the Town.

### **Opportunities and Constraints**

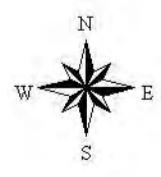
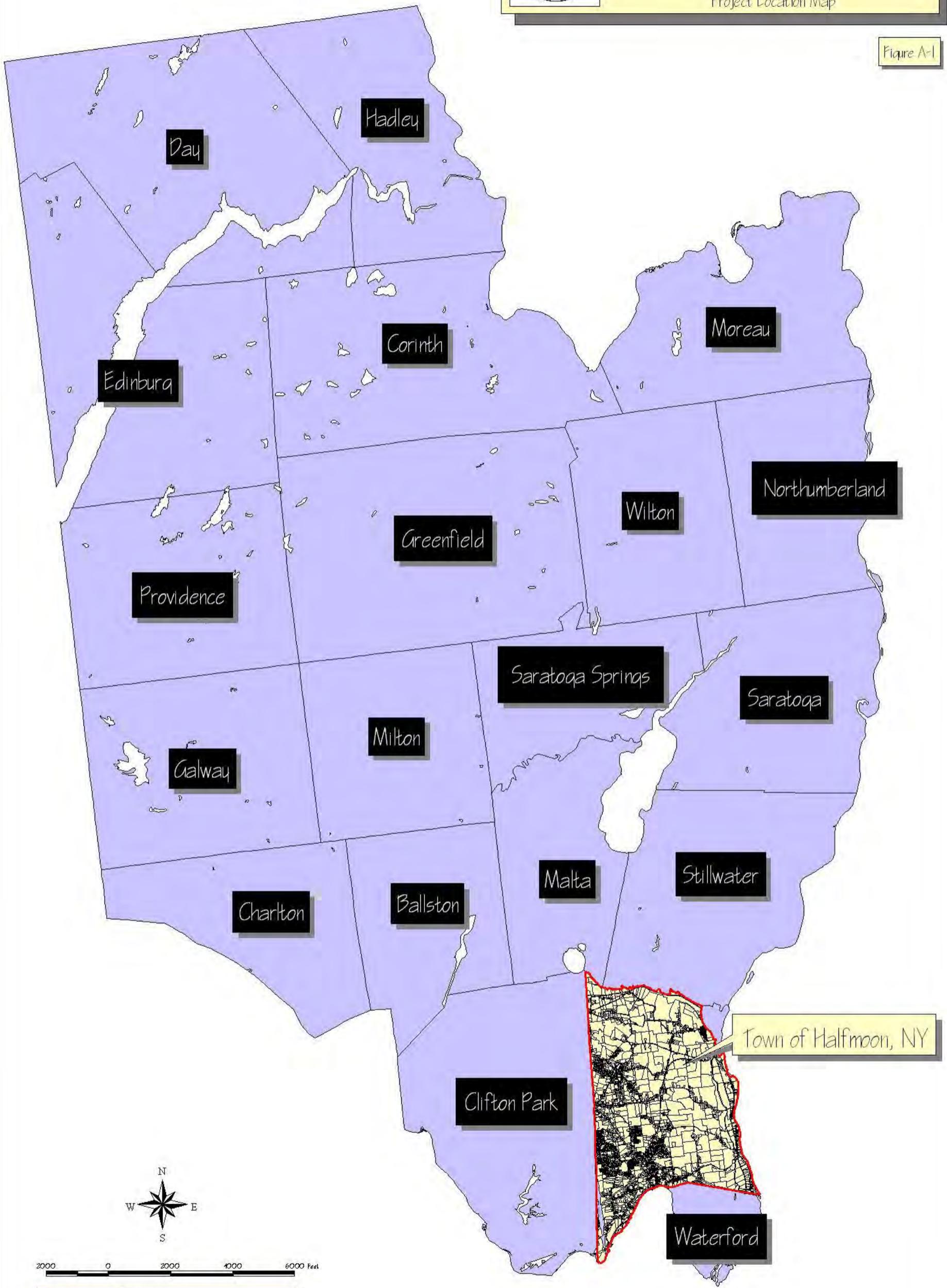
The rolling topography of Halfmoon provides an aesthetically pleasing environment. Development projects designed in harmony with the topography (limited grading) will limit impacts to the aesthetic quality of the Town, preserve important views, and limit the potential for soil erosion and sedimentation.



# Town of Halfmoon

Comprehensive Plan  
Project Location Map

Figure A-1



2000 0 2000 4000 6000 Feet

Map Created August 2001 by:  
**CHA** CLOUGH, HARBOUR & ASSOCIATES LLP  
ENGINEERS, SURVEYORS, PLANNERS & LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS  
Map Last Revised August 2001  
Data Source: Town of Halfmoon Planning Department, County of Saratoga and NYS GIS Clearinghouse.  
Additional Data Source: Clough, Harbour & Associates LLP Mapping



Areas of steep slopes should be developed with caution. The potential for water quality impacts as a result of erosion and release of pollutants from paved surfaces is much higher in these areas as a result of development since most steep slopes in the Town are associated with water features, primarily streams.

## **B. Geology & Soils**

### **Inventory**

Based on a review of the “Geologic Map of New York-Hudson-Mohawk Sheet” (New York Education Department 1980), the Town of Halfmoon is underlain almost entirely by Canajoharie Shale with a large wedge of Austin Glen formation (greywacke and shale) located in the south central area of the Town. Lying over these formations are large deposits of lacustrine sand and clay, and lacustrine sand with smaller areas of dunes, till and kame deposits. The lacustrine sand and clay is located primarily adjacent to the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers. The lacustrine sand deposits are generally located adjacent to the clay and sand deposits. The small area of dunes are located in the area of Routes 9, 146 and 236 (“Surficial Geologic Map of New York- Hudson-Mohawk Sheet” New York State Education Department).

Subsurface resources primarily include gravel deposits. Figure A-2 illustrates locations of potential gravel deposits identified as kame deposits on the “Surficial Geologic Map” and locations of operating gravel mines as identified by a local supplier of gravel. Kames are glacial landforms that typically occur as mounds and generally contain concentrations of gravel. Gravel is an important resource for the construction industry. Local supplies are important due to the high cost of transporting the material.

Weathering of the surface of glacial deposits result in the development of soil layers referred to as a soil pedon. Soils information has been mapped by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NCRS) and is available from the Saratoga Cooperative Extension. Soils within the Town of Halfmoon consist primarily of silt loam and loamy sand. Drainage capabilities vary within the Town. There are some locations in the Town with well-drained soils that can support a standard septic system. However, as was indicated in the 1992 Master Plan, there are large





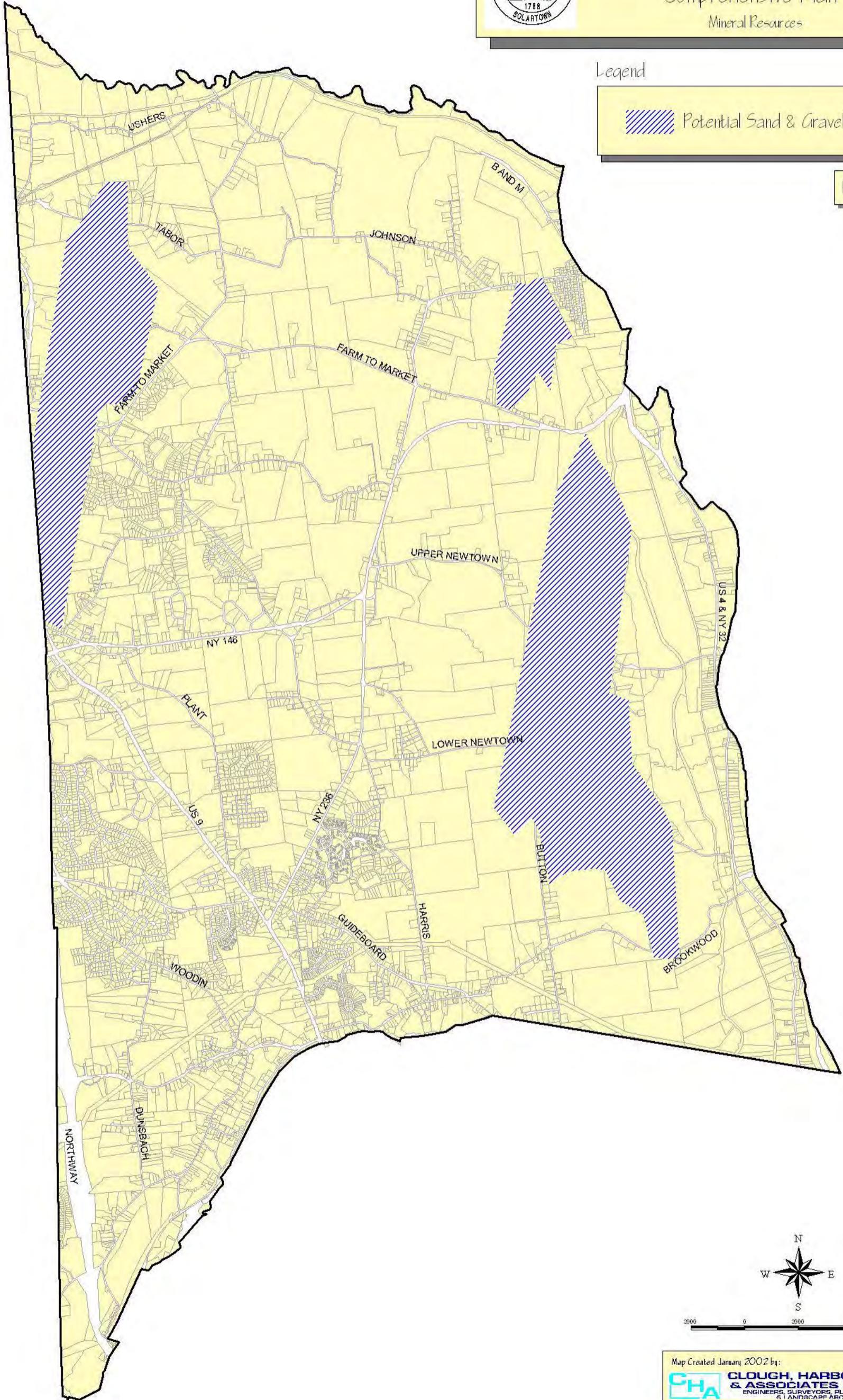
# Town of Halfmoon Comprehensive Plan

Mineral Resources

Legend

 Potential Sand & Gravel Deposits

Figure A-2



0 2000 4000 6000 Feet

Map Created January 2002 by:  
**CHA** CLOUGH, HARBOUR & ASSOCIATES LLP  
ENGINEERS, SURVEYORS, PLANNERS & LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS  
Map Last Revised March 2002  
Data Source: Town of Halfmoon Planning Department, County of Saratoga and NYS GIS Clearinghouse.  
Additional Data Source: Town of Halfmoon Comprehensive Plan Committee



areas in the Town that are poorly or excessively drained and would require specialized septic system designs to effectively treat residential sanitary wastes. Depth to the water table varies across the Town and depth to bedrock is greater than 60” in most areas.

Development is often influenced by soil type. Poorly drained soils with seasonal high water tables (hydric), wetlands and steep slopes are normally less desirable areas for development due to the specialized construction techniques necessary and added construction costs. The properties of each soil type may warrant investigation for site specific developments in order to identify constraints and the required engineering practices to mitigate these constraints.

Hydric soils as defined by the National Technical Committee for Hydric Soils (NTCHS) are defined as a “soil that is saturated, flooded, or ponded long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions in the upper part” (Soil Conservation Service 1989). Anaerobic conditions result in changes in soil color that can be evaluated in the field. Hydric soils are an essential component of wetlands. A list of hydric soils has been prepared for Saratoga County by the NRCS and a number of these soils occur within the Town.

Another soil characteristic to be considered is agricultural productivity. The NRCS in cooperation with the Cornell University Agricultural Experiment Station has developed a list of soils that comprise “prime farmland” and soils of “statewide importance”. Based on mapping included in the Agricultural & Farmland Protection Plan for Saratoga County, 1997, large areas in the Town of Halfmoon contain soils that are considered productive agricultural soils. Both prime and Statewide important soils were mapped for the northern third of the Town as part of the North Halfmoon Generic Environmental Impact Statement (Clough, Harbour & Associates LLP 2001).

The Town of Halfmoon has no land in designated Agricultural Districts, however the Agricultural & Farmland Protection Plan for Saratoga County (1997) identified approximately 16 farming operations scattered throughout the Town. 1997 Real Property Data for Halfmoon includes 5,178 acres of land in some type of agricultural production.

## **Opportunities and Constraints**

Geology and soils are very important resources for any community. Local supply of sand and gravel support the local development community, which offers various housing opportunities and economic development. Soils play the critical role in agricultural production. As large areas of land continue to be consumed by non-agricultural uses across the country, the availability of fresh, locally produced vegetables, meats and dairy products will diminish.

The physical characteristics of soil and subsurface material is an important consideration for new development. Foundations must rest on stable material to provide the necessary support for structures. Soil wetness has implications to structural stability, flooding, and wastewater disposal. The presence of hydric soils generally requires suitable fill material to construct upon. This may result in permitting issues due to the relationship between hydric soil and wetlands.

## **C. Water Resources**

### **Inventory**

#### ***Surface Water***

The Town of Halfmoon is abundant with a variety of surface and groundwater resources. Surface water features include most notably the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers as well as numerous stream systems such as the Dwass Kill, McDonald Creek, the Anthony Kill and small tributaries that flow into the Hudson River. The Old Champlain Canal located adjacent to the Hudson River is an historic water feature in the Town.

Surface water features in New York are designated with a water quality classification for the purposes of regulating discharges into these water bodies in accordance with the State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES). These classifications refer to the suitability of a given water feature (lake, pond, river, stream) for human use. The higher the classification (A) the better the water quality and the more suitable for human use. For example, Class A water is suitable for “primary contact” (swimming) and for a water supply.

Classifications include water supply designations (AA-S, A-S, AA) and normal designations ranging from A (suitable for most uses) to D (unsuitable for primary contact). Each water quality classification carries with it a set of discharge limitations designed to protect or improve the water quality. A "T" modifier is used for those streams that have a breeding trout population. Effluent limitations on the demand for oxygen are more stringent, since high oxygen content is essential for trout survival. In addition, the ecology and geomorphology of streams with a classification of C(T) or higher are protected/regulated pursuant to Article 15 of the NYS Environmental Conservation Law and its implementing regulations (6 NYCRR 608).

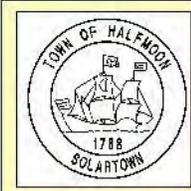
Within the Town of Halfmoon the Anthony Kill, McDonald, Creek Dwass Kill, Mohawk River and various tributaries to these streams are designated Class C(T) or higher and as such are regulated by the State (Figure A-3).

Work occurring within the bed and banks of these streams would require a permit from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC). In addition to State regulations, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) regulates all waters of the U.S. Therefore, almost any water body (streams, ponds, and lakes) falls under federal jurisdiction. The extent of regulatory involvement depends on many factors. In general, Section 404 of the Clean Water Act regulates the discharge of dredged or fill materials into all waters of the U.S. Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (federal program granted to the State) regulates the quality of the discharge regulated under Section 404. Section 10 of the 1899 Rivers and Harbors Act regulates most activities in navigable waterways (Hudson River and Mohawk River) and historically navigable waterways (Old Erie Canal, Old Champlain Canal).

### ***Groundwater***

Groundwater is generally adequate in most areas of the Town, providing drinking water for residents through individual wells or centralized municipal or private systems. The western portion of the Town is part of the Clifton Park- Halfmoon Aquifer which is a highly productive aquifer. The Town maintains two well fields to serve a portion of its municipal system: the Hoffman well field and the Twin Lakes well field. These well fields are protected through a wellhead protection overlay zone delineated on the Town's Zoning Map. Uses that could potentially impact water quality within the wellhead protection area are restricted.





# Town of Halfmoon

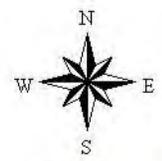
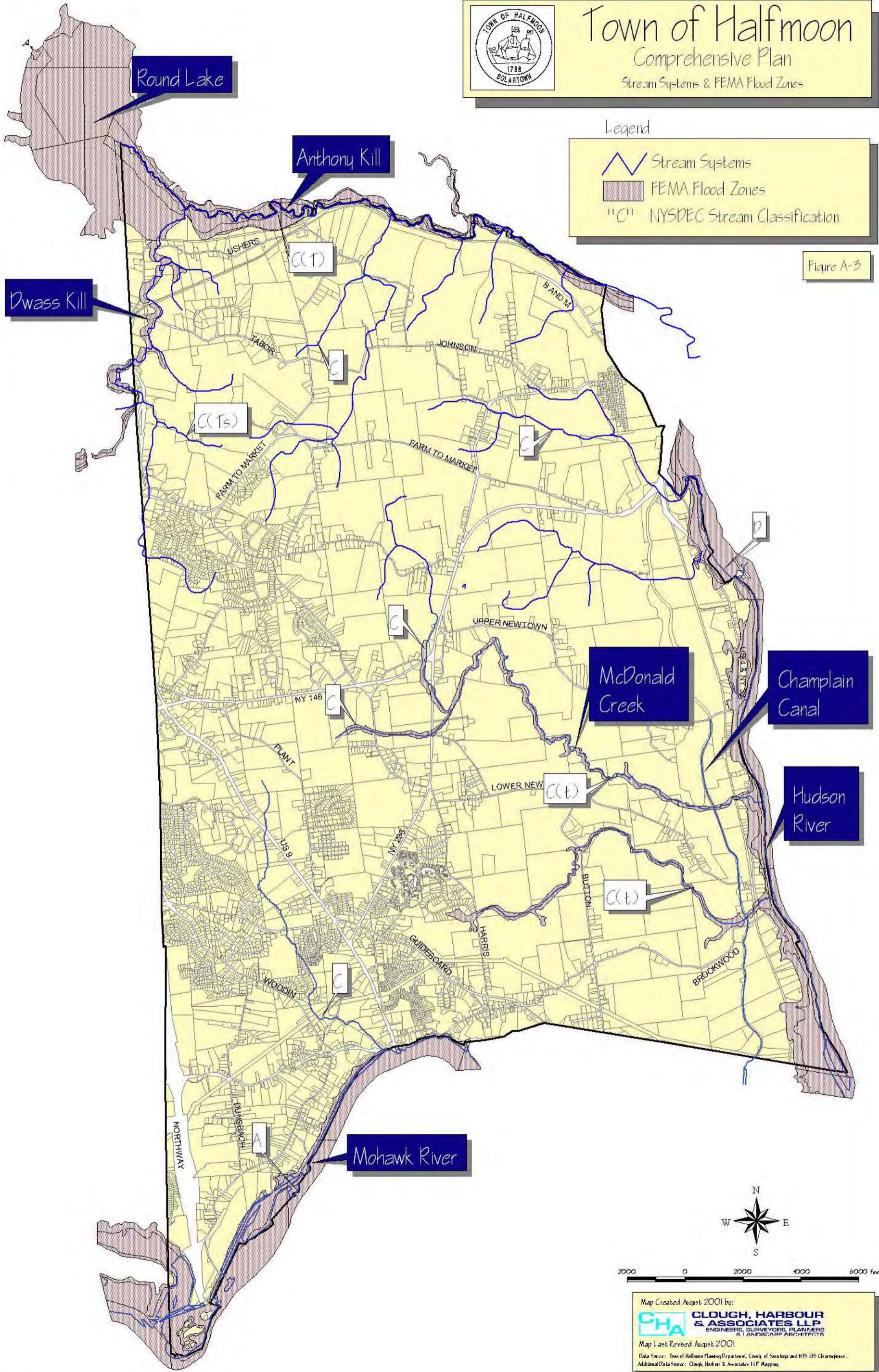
## Comprehensive Plan

Stream Systems & FEMA Flood Zones

### Legend

- Stream Systems
- FEMA Flood Zones
- "C" NYSDEC Stream Classification

Figure A-3



2000 0 2000 4000 6000 Feet

Map Created August 2001 by:  
**CHA** CLOUGH, HARBOUR & ASSOCIATES LLP  
 ENGINEERS, SURVEYORS, PLANNERS & LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS  
 Map Last Revised August 2001  
 Data Source: Town of Halfmoon Planning Department, County of Saratoga and NYS GIS Clearinghouse.  
 Additional Data Source: Clough, Harbour & Associates LLP Mapping



Areas near the Hudson River and along Route 9 are located in unconfined aquifers that may produce more than 100 gallons per minute. These areas generally consist of sand and gravel deposits. Unconfined aquifers that can produce 10 to 100 gallons per minute are located in large areas of the central portion of Town. These aquifers also generally consist of sand and gravel.

### **Opportunities and Constraints**

Water is a vital resource for any community. In the Town of Halfmoon, surface water (Hudson River) is a critical resource for the expansion of municipal water. At present the Town utilizes groundwater resources and purchases water from adjacent municipalities. Planned development of a water intake in the Hudson River and a water treatment plant would eliminate the need to purchase water from surrounding municipalities. In the interim, the abundance of groundwater in the Town will continue to provide much of the potable water supply.

Surface water resources provide excellent opportunities for recreation or open space and wildlife habitat. Streams provide wildlife corridors that allow movement from habitat to habitat while avoiding conflict with humans or the built environment.

The protection and regulation of surface and groundwater resources can result in development constraints and at times a long permit process.

## **D. Floodplains & Drainage**

### **Inventory**

The Town of Halfmoon is generally divided into two major drainage basins. The majority of the Town drains to the east and southeast into the Hudson River. A small section of the Town west of Route 9 drains in a southerly direction towards the Mohawk River.

The flooding potential in the Town is generally limited, mainly due to the rapid rise in topographic elevation from the major water bodies (Hudson River, Mohawk River, Anthony Kill, and Dwaas Kill). Areas of serious flooding potential are

generally located within floodplains. Floodplains are the lands adjacent to water bodies (typically streams and rivers but also includes lakes and other water bodies) that are flat and frequently flooded during storm events and spring runoff. The frequency of flooding depends on topographic conditions as well as the hydrologic characteristics of the water body. The 100-year floodplain is defined as an area of land that can be expected to flood at least once every 100 years. It may also be said that the 100-year floodplain has a 1 out a 100 chance of flooding each year. In many cases the floodplain is a gradation of flood potential. Areas closest to the water body may flood during each storm event. Depending on topography, it may be possible to define other zones of flooding frequency (10-year, 20-year, etc.). The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) maps 100-year floodplains for communities. Floodplains within the Town of Halfmoon are identified on Figure A-3, taken from the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) which are the provided to communities that participate in the National Flood Insurance Program.

Critical to floodplain management is the identification and protection of the floodway, the portion of the floodplain that is regularly flooded during most storm events. Encroachment into the floodway, as well as the floodplain, reduces the flood storage area and increases the potential for higher flood elevations upstream.

To protect upstream uses, FEMA requires that local governments participating in the Flood Insurance program develop regulations to prevent impact to the floodway. Additionally, the regulations must include provisions that ensure development outside the floodway but within the floodplain is located above the 100-year flood elevation. Typically, this applies to the elevation at which electrical and mechanical equipment can be housed. The Town of Halfmoon is a participant and has developed such regulations.

Localized flooding along tributaries of larger streams and rivers occurs in several areas of the Town and is generally the result of increased development coupled with inadequately sized culverts at road crossings. This was a discussion issue during preparation of the North Halfmoon GEIS and became a component of the capital improvement program.

The Town of Halfmoon currently has the following stormwater management requirements for all proposed development activities within the Town subject to Subdivision Review:

- All storm drainage facilities shall be designed based on a twenty-five (25) year storm frequency.
- Peak runoff rates from the project site after development shall not exceed pre-development peak runoff rates of a ten (10) year storm frequency by more than (10) percent or one (1) cfs, whichever is less.
- Adequate storage facilities shall be provided for the site to store the additional runoff volume due to development of the project site for a twenty-five (25) year storm frequency.
- Provisions, such as overflow studies, shall be made for protection against property damage and loss of life for more severe storms (100-year storm frequency).
- Provisions shall be made for the conveyance of off-site drainage from upland watershed areas.
- All storm drainage systems shall be designed to allow for positive drainage from the project site to existing drainage courses or storm sewer systems. The adequacy of the existing systems to convey this runoff should be evaluated.
- Surface flow on streets shall be limited to a maximum of three hundred fifty (350) feet.

The North Halfmoon GEIS identified potential significant impacts to drainage and flood potential as a result of future development under current stormwater management requirements. To mitigate this impact the DGEIS recommends the following:

- The stormwater management plan shall comply with the NYSDEC SPDES permit guidelines. Specifically, post developed peak discharge rates shall not exceed pre-developed peak discharge rates for the 2-year, 10-year and 100-year storm events.
- Additionally, post developed peak discharge rates shall not exceed pre-developed peak discharge rates for the 25-year storm event.

The more stringent stormwater management practices will help to decrease the localized flooding potential.

### **Opportunities and Constraints**

Land development impacts natural drainage by changing topography and increasing impervious surfaces. Drainage problems, ponding or localized flooding can occur on the sites that are developed as well as at points downstream or adjacent to a developed site. This potential impact, although heightened in areas of poor drainage, can occur even in well-drained areas if appropriate stormwater management techniques are not utilized.

In order to protect its soil and water resources from the impacts of poor drainage the Town should continue to require stormwater management plans as part of site plan review procedures and might consider adopting the recommendations of the North Halfmoon GEIS. In addition stormwater management and erosion control regulations should be periodically reviewed to ensure that they are providing the maximum protection to soil and water resources.

Development within the 100-year floodplain or floodway as defined by FEMA is regulated by the Town in accordance with the National Flood Insurance Program. Lands within the 100-year floodplain are relatively small and, therefore, should be considered resources worthy of protection. The floodway is contained within the banks of most stream systems in the Town of Halfmoon and will result in few physical restrictions to development overall.

## **E. Ecology**

### **Inventory**

The ecology of the Town of Halfmoon is diverse and complex. It is also changing as a result of the abandonment of farming practices and new development. The Town is at a critical juncture in the future of its ecological systems and the health of the natural environment. Planned correctly, development can move forward in a way that preserves corridors and provides linkages between large undeveloped or protected areas. Otherwise, development generally progresses without such issues in mind, resulting in fragmented and dwindling habitat.

The inventory and analysis of ecological systems can be very time consuming and costly. It is not the intent of this Comprehensive Plan to provide an in-depth analysis of the Town's ecology. Through existing information, it is possible to identify the habitat of threatened and endangered species and other important ecological areas, and well as provide an overview of the general vegetative cover types and the wildlife typically found in these systems. Some of this information has been extracted from the North Halfmoon GEIS as well as from digital orthophotographs and existing wetland mapping.

### ***Vegetation & Wildlife***

The Town of Halfmoon was once prized hunting grounds for Native Americans both before and after European contact and settlement. The early conifer forests that dominated the land immediately following glacial retreat provided habitat for many large mammal species including caribou, giant beaver, and the mastodon. As meteorological conditions warmed, the mixed conifer forest became a spruce climax forest that was less valuable as wildlife habitat. Further warming caused the development of a northern hardwood forest that once again provided habitat for many species and was heavily utilized by Mohawk and Algonquin tribes. Increased contact with the Europeans resulted in heavy hunting that decimated New York's beaver population.

The Town remained forested throughout the pre- and post Revolutionary War periods when decades of warfare turned the Town into a warpath, preventing settlement of the area. Eventually, the Town was settled and logging began, soon followed by farming. Most of the land that was once forested is now cleared and has remained in this condition for two centuries. Today, forested lands are relegated to steep slopes, wetlands and stream corridors.

The dominant vegetative cover types within the Town include deciduous forest, mixed forest, and open field/abandoned farmland. As previously mentioned, much of the forested land occurs within ravines and wetlands. Open fields and abandoned farmland probably comprise the majority of land that is unutilized and available for habitat. This land is undergoing secondary succession whereby the cover type will eventually convert to a deciduous forest. The following describes some of the vegetative and wildlife species found in each of these ecological communities:

#### ***Deciduous Forest***

There are a wide variety of trees that can be found in the deciduous forested upland areas, but the most common include red oak (*Quercus rubra*), white oak (*Quercus alba*), quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*), eastern white pine (*Pinus strobus*), red maple (*Acer rubrum*), sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*), American elm (*Ulmus americana*), black cherry (*Prunus serotina*), eastern hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*), and gray birch (*Betula populifolia*).

There are a variety of species that could possibly utilize this habitat. Reptiles and amphibians (herpetofauna) that could occur in this habitat include eastern American toad (*Bufo a. americanus*), wood frog (*Rana*

*sylvatica*), northern redback salamander (*Plethodon cinereus*), eastern garter snake (*Thamnophis s. sirtalis*), and northern brown snake (*Storeria d. dekayi*). Bird species that could utilize this habitat include hairy woodpecker (*Picoides villosus*), downy woodpecker (*Picoides pubescens*), pileated woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*), northern flicker (*Colaptes auratus*), great crested flycatcher (*Myiarchus crinitus*), red-eyed vireo (*Vireo olivaceus*), wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*), red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), black-capped chickadee (*Poecile atricapillus*), and white-breasted nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis*). Species of mammals that could occur in this habitat include white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), raccoon (*Procyon lotor*), red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), eastern gray squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*), Virginia opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*), and white-footed mouse (*Peromyscus leucopus*).

Wetland within this cover type is typically comprised of red maple, green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*), and American elm.

Species of herpetofauna living in deciduous forest wetlands include northern redback salamander, eastern American toad, northern spring peeper (*Pseudacris c. crucifer*), gray treefrog (*Hyla versicolor*), and common garter snake. Bird species commonly found in deciduous forested wetland areas include black-capped chickadee, white-breasted nuthatch, hairy woodpecker, and blue jay. Common mammal species include gray squirrel, white-tailed deer, raccoon, and opossum.

### ***Mixed Forest***

The tree layer in the mixed forest upland community generally consists of a variety of plants including white pine, quaking aspen, American elm, red oak, white oak, sugar maple, and red maple.

Herpetofauna that could utilize this habitat include eastern garter snake, eastern American toad, northern redback salamander, and northern brown snake. Bird species that could utilize this habitat include red-breasted nuthatch (*Sitta canadensis*), white-breasted nuthatch, black-capped chickadee, blue jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*), and sharp-shinned hawk. Mammals that could be found in this habitat include gray squirrel, white-footed mouse, raccoon, short-tailed shrew (*Blarina brevicauda*), Virginia opossum, and red fox.

### ***Open Field/Abandoned Farm Field***

Vegetation found in the open field/abandoned farmland areas typically includes wild carrot (*Daucus carota*), orchard grass (*Dactylis glomerata*), Canada goldenrod, burdock (*Arcticum minus*), narrow-leaf plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), timothy (*Phleum pratense*), broome sedge (*Andropogon virginicus*), redtop

(*Agrostis gigantea*), red fescue (*Festuca rubra*), and mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*).

Herpetofauna that utilize open fields include eastern milk snake (*Lampropeltis triangulum*), eastern garter snake, and northern brown snake. Birds that can be found in this habitat include northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*), red-tailed hawk, American crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*), eastern meadowlark (*Sturnella magna*), bobolink (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*), American goldfinch (*Carduelis tristis*), red-winged blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*), and Savannah sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*). Mammals typically found in open field areas include white-tailed deer, woodchuck (*Marmota monax*), eastern cottontail (*Sylvilagus floridanus*), meadow jumping mouse (*Zapus hudsonius*), and coyote (*Canis latrans*).

Wetland within the open field cover type is characterized as wet meadow. Vegetation found in wet meadows can be very diverse, depending on the extent of invasion by non-native species. Vegetation identified in North Halfmoon during field investigations include reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), common reed (*Phragmites australis*), common cattail (*Typha latifolia*), narrow-leaf goldenrod (*Euthamia graminifolia*), vervain (*Verbena hastata*), New England aster (*Aster novae-angliae*), and soft rush (*Juncus effusus*).

Herpetofauna typically found in wet meadow habitats include eastern ribbon snake (*Thamnophis s. sauritus*), northern leopard frog (*Rana pipiens*), eastern garter snake and eastern milk snake. Bird species typically found in wet meadow habitats include yellow warbler (*Dendroica petechia*), red-tailed hawk, red-winged blackbird, willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii*), swamp sparrow (*Melospiza georgiana*), American goldfinch, northern harrier, and song sparrow. Mammals often found in wet meadow habitats include white-tailed deer, striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*), eastern mole (*Scalopus aquaticus*), and white-footed mouse.

### **Wetlands**

The Town consists of silts, clays, and pockets of sands, the remnants of glacial Lake Albany. The silts and clays are typically somewhat poorly drained to poorly drained, which means that where topography is flat or where depressions occur, water sits. This topography creates ideal conditions for the development of hydric soils, one of the three parameters that define federal wetlands. National Wetland Inventory Maps (NWI) prepared by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are useful tools in identifying potential wetland areas. However, the Corps of Engineers does not recognize the NWI maps as any type of official mapping.

### Federal Wetlands

By virtue of their administrative role in implementing and enforcing Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Section 10 of the 1899 Rivers and Harbors Act, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) has jurisdiction over all waters of the United States, including wetlands. Section 10 waters are defined as navigable or historically navigable. Within the Town, the old Erie Canal and Champlain Canal are designated historically navigable and, therefore, subject to Section 10 regulations. Truly navigable waters include the Hudson River and the Mohawk River. Wetlands that are adjacent to these Section 10 waters may also be subject to Section 10 regulations. Other wetlands within the Town are subject to Section 404 regulations that are limited to the discharge of dredged or fill materials into federal wetlands and other waters of the U.S. Federally regulated wetlands are defined by ACOE as:

*Those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas (33CFR 328.3).*

The actual identification of federal wetlands and their boundaries requires a wetland delineation, usually conducted on a case by case basis due to the cost and time limitations placed on jurisdictional determinations.

### State Wetlands

New York State regulates all wetlands that are 12.4 acres (5 hectare) or greater in size pursuant to the Freshwater Wetlands Act (Article 24 of the Environmental Conservation Law (ECL) of 1975). These wetlands are mapped and classified by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC). State classifications are based on variations in cover type, ecological associations, special features (critical or fragile resources), hydrological and pollution control features, and distribution and location that affect wetland benefits (6 NYCRR 664.5). The highest classification is I and is afforded the greatest amount of protection; the lowest is IV.

A 100-foot buffer zone is extended from the wetland boundary to protect the wetland from encroaching development and other impacts. Any work to occur

within the buffer zone or wetland would require a permit from NYSDEC. Figure A-4 identifies the mapped State wetlands within the Town.

#### National Wetland Inventory

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service uses aerial photography to identify potential wetland areas through a process referred to as photo-interpretation. Figure A-4 identifies numerous potential wetland areas based on the National Wetland Inventory Mapping (NWI).

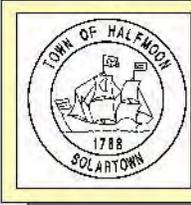
The NWI wetlands are classified in accordance with the *Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the United States* (Cowardin et al. 1979). Five major categories are used: marine, estuarine, riverine, lacustrine, and palustrine. Of these, most wetlands within the Town are identified as palustrine. A palustrine wetland is defined as “[a]ll nontidal wetlands dominated by trees, shrubs, persistent emergents, emergent mosses or lichens...” There are numerous subcategories of palustrine wetlands within the Town related to the vegetative cover; the most common of which are forested (PFO), scrub-shrub (PSS), emergent (PEM), and open water (POW).

Ecological information is very important when identifying the significance of wetland impact. In the absence of any formalized wetland evaluation method acceptable to ACOE, forested wetlands are afforded the greatest value due to the length of time necessary to establish these wetland systems. For more information on the other modifiers used in the Cowardin/NWI classification system please refer directly to the NWI map legends provided on the Mechanicville and Round Lake NWI quadrangles. Copies can be viewed at the Saratoga County Planning offices or obtained by contacting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

#### ***Threatened & Endangered Species and Other Important Habitat***

Contact with the NYSDEC Natural Heritage Program revealed “no records of known occurrences of rare or state-listed animals or plants, significant natural communities, or other significant habitats, on or in the immediate vicinity” of the Town. However, previous contact with this agency in conjunction with preparation of the North Halfmoon GEIS revealed two State-listed endangered species, one State-listed threatened species, and two rare but unprotected species. The endangered species include the Karner blue butterfly (*Lycaeides melissa samuelis*) and swamp smartweed (*Polygonum setaceum var interjectum*), a vascular plant.





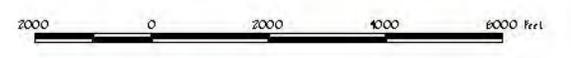
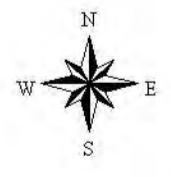
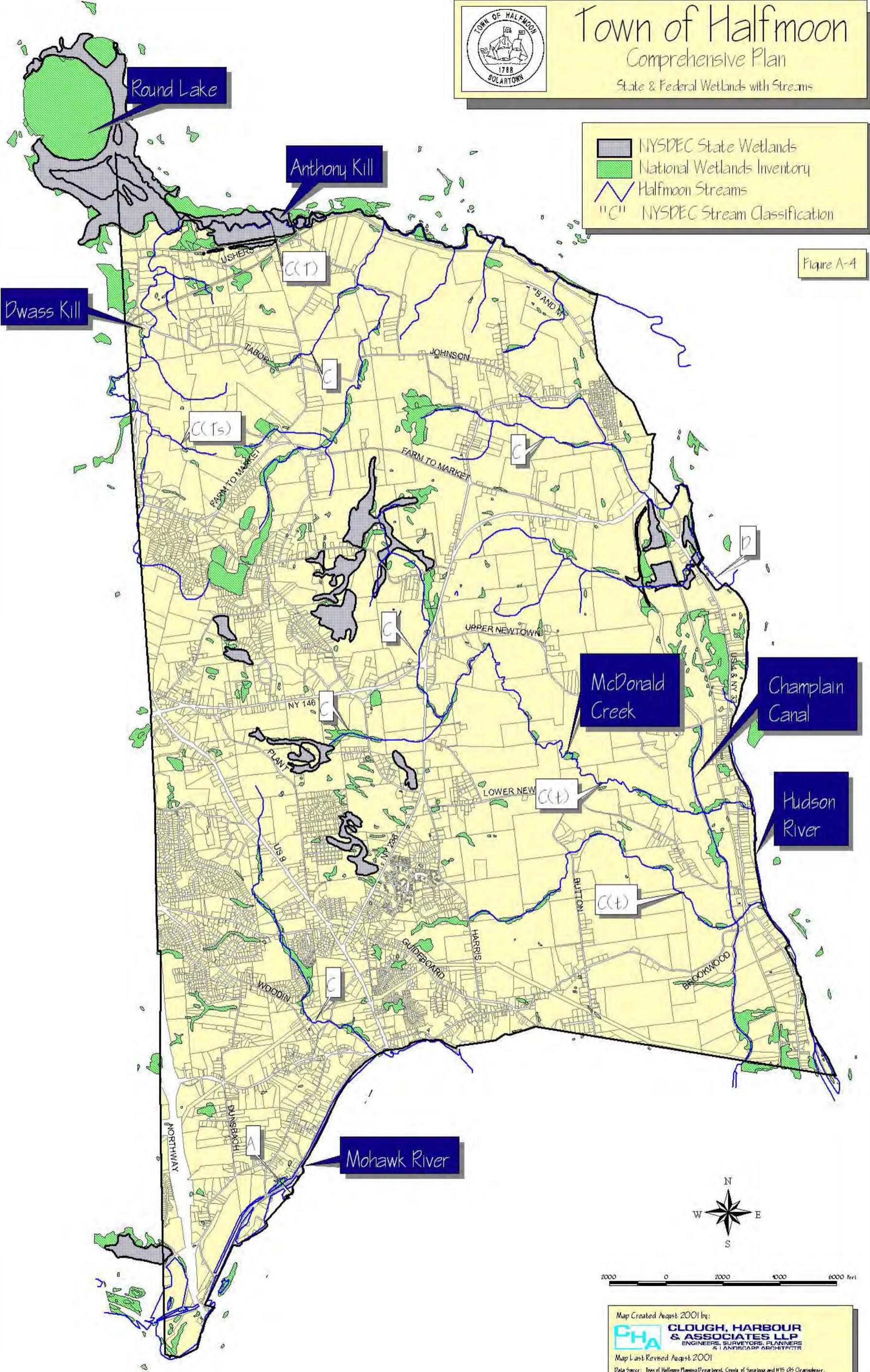
# Town of Halfmoon

## Comprehensive Plan

State & Federal Wetlands with Streams

-  NYSDEC State Wetlands
-  National Wetlands Inventory
-  Halfmoon Streams
-  "C" NYSDEC Stream Classification

Figure A-4



Map Created August 2001 by:

**CHA** CLOUGH, HARBOUR & ASSOCIATES LLP  
ENGINEERS, SURVEYORS, PLANNERS & LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

Map Last Revised August 2001

Data Source: Town of Halfmoon Planning Department, County of Saratoga and NYS GIS Clearinghouse.  
Additional Data Source: Clough, Harbour & Associates LLP Mapping



The Karner blue butterfly is both a federally listed and State-listed endangered species. This species requires the blue or wild lupine plant for caterpillars to survive. It is the caterpillars' lone food source. Eggs are laid at the base of the plant beneath the leaf litter. When the young hatch, they eat the lupine.

Based on the descriptions provided by NYSDEC, the general locations of Karner blue butterfly habitat are found in the far northern portions of the Town. Due to the sensitivity of the species, NYSDEC has requested that exact locations not be provided. Therefore, no mapping is provided. Other butterflies associated with the Karner blue butterfly habitat include the State-threatened frosted elfin (*Callophrys irus*) and the unprotected (rare) dusted skipper (*Atrytonopsis hianna*).

The two species of plants identified in the NYSDEC correspondence have not been reported within the Town. The hoary puccoon (*Lithospermum canescens*) is a rare plant last seen in the Jonesville area. Swamp smartweed has been identified on the shore of Round Lake. This species is State-listed endangered. Due to the proximity of the known occurrence to Town boundaries, it is possible this species could occur within portions of the wetland that dominates the northwestern corner of the Town.

The State identified Meyers Brook as a cold water fish spawning area but is not identified as a protected habitat. The Town's 1992 Master Plan also identified Meyers Brook as an important habitat along with a deer wintering area located along the Hudson River bluffs, between Upper and Lower Newton Road.

### **Opportunities and Constraints**

The ecology of the Town provides numerous opportunities for recreation and the preservation of visual quality and rural character. Forested areas and wetlands provide opportunities for trail development and nature facilities. Ecological communities provide many functions that protect other resources. For example, trees and other vegetation filter the air and provide noise abatement and visual buffers. Diverse wildlife reduces populations of nuisance animals, such as rats and mice, and minimizes the occurrence of disease. Many species of birds, bats, amphibians and insects keep harmful insects in check. Wetland communities filter pollutants from water and provide habitat, among many other functions and values.

The presence of wetlands and other important habitat on a given piece of property can conflict with development plans. Sometimes the extent of important habitat is so great as to preclude development on a given parcel. However, many times these resources can be preserved and protected through innovative site design. The concept of designing with nature is widely accepted practice and very desirable to potential homeowners. Currently, the NYSDEC and the Corps regulate wetlands.

## F. Land Use & Zoning

### Inventory

Land Uses in the Town of Halfmoon encompass rural, agricultural, undeveloped, suburban, commercial, industrial, and institutional. Existing land use (Figure A-5) was derived from the Saratoga County Real Property Office Tax Maps and associated land use codes that were updated by the Town of Halfmoon Assessor through October 2000. This map was also updated based on a windshield survey of current field conditions in the spring of 2001. Table A-1 identifies the total acreage of each land use type.

**Table A-1**  
**Existing Land Use**

Land Use	Acres	% of Total
Residential (total)	<b>6246</b>	<b>30</b>
• Single Family	3603	17
• Multi-Family	361	2
• Rural Residential	2282	11
Commercial	<b>1617</b>	<b>7</b>
Industrial	<b>840</b>	<b>4</b>
Public Services	<b>253</b>	<b>1</b>
Community Services	<b>379</b>	<b>2</b>
Agriculture	<b>5947</b>	<b>28</b>
Rec. & Entertainment	<b>333</b>	<b>1</b>
Vacant	<b>5838</b>	<b>27</b>
Wild & Forested Land	<b>57</b>	<b>0.3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,510</b>	<b>100.3*</b>

*\*Does not equal 100% due to rounding*

A review of the existing land use map identifies several development patterns and trends in the Town of Halfmoon. The most intensive levels of development are generally located south of Route 146 and west of Route 236 and Harris Road. This encompasses lands adjacent to Northway exits 8, 8A, and 9. Development continues to move northward from the Exit 9/Route 9/Route 146 area, utilizing Cemetery Road, Werner Road, Anthony Road and Farm to Market Road as collectors.

Development patterns in the Town are typical of suburban development in many communities in Saratoga County and in communities across the country. It is referred to suburbanization or urban sprawl. Saratoga County communities along the Northway are classic examples. Prior to the extensive road systems that now cross the Saratoga Region and the North Country, development was concentrated into small communities that took advantage of older means of transportation, primarily the canal system. So sprang up communities like Waterford, Mechanicville, and Stillwater. Smaller hamlets grew around river crossings, where ferries were the primary means of crossing.

Perhaps the single most important influence on development in Saratoga County was the construction of the Northway. With fast, efficient access to Albany and I-90/I-87, Clifton Park and Halfmoon quickly became desirable places to live. Much of the residential development was focused around Northway exits 8 and 9, mostly within Clifton Park. As these population centers grew, commercial development sprang up, primarily at the exits. New commercial development was not like the small stores prevalent in villages and cities. Rather, these new projects took advantage of cheaper land, building much larger stores and focusing on a regional market. These developments catered to motor vehicles and essentially assumed that all travel to the stores would be by car. Pedestrian environments were no longer an integral component of site planning. They were relegated to walks along storefronts of strip developments or enclosed within a mall.

Support business and industry have also followed the population outward from the city center. This has created new business centers, the effect of which has been further outward migration of residential development.

Suburbanization/sprawl has become a problem, but was not always viewed this way. It epitomizes the “American dream” and continues to be a very popular way of life. Problems arise from the inefficiencies and expense of suburban living.

Although you may get more land for your money, you likely pay more for utilities, fuel for cars, and equipment and products for grounds maintenance. Much more time is spent commuting; time which is becoming more valuable given all the opportunities and duties of modern life. As surrounding lands become developed, suburban communities are no longer quiet. Vehicle noise and emissions contribute to the impact on the quality of life. How suburbia is developed has changed over the years and concerted efforts have been made to link developments, provide recreational opportunity, and bolster the pedestrian environment. Unfortunately, many of the older developments do not have these amenities and it becomes difficult to retrofit new traffic patterns and trails.

Two recent initiatives have begun a process of education and change on a national and statewide basis. The first to begin meetings and conferences was Smart Growth. Smart Growth is not an organization but rather a term to define the realization that growth will continue but it can be done in a manner that recognizes and celebrates the environment. Smart Growth is about curbing the massive consumption of land for development and placing emphasis on redevelopment and reinvestment in the urban centers. It is also about the identification and implementation of measures that allow for growth in a more efficient and desirable manner. Smart Growth Conferences have been held over the past couple of years, organized by the Audubon Society and sponsored by planning organizations, the development community (NYS Builders Association), government agencies, land preservation groups, environmental groups, and historic preservation groups. The striking aspect of this conference and the Smart Growth initiative is that it is a partnership between what are typically two opposing forces: the development community and the conservation/preservation community (growth vs. anti-growth). It is a compromise and perhaps recognition on both sides that growth will continue, but it can not continue in its current form/pattern.

The second initiative began in January 2000 with Governor Pataki's establishment of the Quality Communities Task Force. The purpose of the task force was to reach out to the many communities within the State and collect broad public input and to establish the means for communities to create and implement visions to improve or enhance the quality of life. This is a smart growth principal; strengthen the existing communities across the State. The task force also focused on agriculture and farmland protection, open space conservation, transportation, and sustainable economic development (Quality Communities Interagency Task Force, 2001).

The task force identified 41 recommendations under the topics of *State Leadership, Interagency Collaboration and Assistance to Local Governments; Using Technology to Distribute Information, Create Development Tools and Eliminate Barriers to Quality Development; Revitalizing Our Downtowns; Maintaining New York's Leadership in Open Space Conservation; The Renewal of New York Agriculture; Transportation Infrastructure: The Search for Quality in the Built Environment; Quality for All: Strengthening the Place We Call Home; Economic Growth: Sustaining a Community*. These recommendations provide a springboard for future funding and the recognition on a State level that change is necessary and that there are planning/growth management tools available for municipalities.

Considerable discussion of sprawl development and growth management is contained within the Plan Recommendations of this Comprehensive Plan. It is important to understand the history and characteristics of this pattern of development to understand the importance of growth management and the many opportunities to create new development patterns that strive for a healthier lifestyle. Unlike some communities, the Town of Halfmoon is highly undeveloped. This provides the opportunity to take advantage of the new body of information available to planners and communities to design and build in a better way.

The following provides a synopsis of the various land uses within the Town, including areas/issues of concern and successes.

### ***Residential***

Halfmoon is a very desirable place to live. Much of the initial development along the Northway was focused in Clifton Park. The oldest neighborhood in Halfmoon (1920's or 30's) is located directly adjacent to Mechanicville on Pruyn Hill. Northway influenced Suburban development was most active during the 1960's and 1970's with the development of Northwood at what is now Exit 8A and Colonial Green, north side of 8A. Still, most of the development activity continued in Clifton Park. Current development trends have focused on the northern portion of the Town. Here there are numerous large parcels that are no longer being farmed and have been sold for development. The attraction to this area is not only its rural character and fine views but also the availability of sewer capacity not available in other parts of the Town. Utilities are by no means readily available but are in close enough proximity for developers to feasibly extend. Based on information collected for the North Halfmoon GEIS, almost 800 units of housing

have been informally presented to the Town. At present, two residential development projects are before the Planning and Town boards for review totaling 174 units. It is evident that the heaviest development activity in the Town is looming.

The mix of residential development is discussed in detail in Section L. Socioeconomic Resources. Based on 2000 Census data and data obtained from the Assessor's Office, single family homes dominate the existing housing stock. Apartments are second at about half the total number of single family homes. Mobil homes are third followed by condominiums and senior housing.

Residential zoning in the Town includes the following:

*A-R Agriculture-Residence District* – Permitted use include farms and farm related uses as well as one and two-family dwellings. Lot sizes for single family homes are a minimum of 20,000 feet with public water and sewer and 40,000 feet without public water and sewer. Farm operations must be a minimum of 80,000 square feet.

*R-1 Residence District* – Permitted uses are the same as the A-R district. Lot size requirements are the same as the A-R district.

*R-2 Residence District* – All uses allowed in the R-1 district. Mobile Home Parks may be approved by special permit.

*R-3 Residence District* – This district allows three and four-family dwellings as well as any uses allowed in the R-1 district. Lot size requirements for single and two-family homes are the same as in the A-R district. Three and four-family lot size requirements range from 30,000 square feet to 60,000 square feet depending on the type of structure (3- or 4-family) and the availability of public sewer and water.

### ***Commercial***

The majority of non-residential uses occur along Route 9, with some located along Route 146 and Routes 4 & 32. Commercial uses vary from small-scale retail and business to larger shopping plazas such as Raymour and Flanigan to large discount retailers such as Wal-Mart. Smaller shops and services are spread out in the developed portions of the Town, providing necessities to population concentrations.

Commercial uses in the Town follow a typical pattern of strip development. The major corridors include Route 9 and the crossroads that provide direct access to the Northway exits (Vischer Ferry Road and Grooms Road). Sitterly Road is also a commercial and office corridor within the Town, primarily due to its connection to development in the Exit 9 area of Clifton Park.

Many commercial parcels are quite large, as noted on Figure A-5. Some are low intensity uses such as nurseries and excavation operations.

There were several commercial projects under consideration by the Planning Board as of October 19, 2001. These projects included an 8,000 square foot office building in the Halfmoon Executive Park and a 16,000 square foot equipment rental facility on Vischer Ferry Road. There is also an eighteen-unit apartment proposed on Cemetery Road.

Commercial zoning in the Town includes the following:

PO-R Professional Office/Residence District – The intent of this district is to provide a transition area between commercial and residential uses along roadways that have been impacted by traffic increases and non-residential development pressure. The goal of these districts is to maintain the residential character of these areas as much as possible while allowing non-residential land uses which do not generate large amounts of traffic. Allowable uses for example, include all R-1 uses, professional offices such insurance of real estate offices and home occupations. Minimum lot sizes range from 25,000 square feet with public sewer and water to 45,000 square feet with no utilities.

C-1 Commercial District - Allowable uses in commercial districts include a wide variety of uses ranging from all types of retail uses to offices, motels, gasoline stations to car sales. Residential uses are also allowed in this district. Lot sizes also range from 25,000 square feet to 45,000 square feet.

NB-1 neighborhood Business District – The purpose of this district is to provide convenient basic services to residents in less developed areas of the Town while maintaining residential character of an area. These uses may include a hairdresser, photography studio or medical offices. Minimum lot size is 20,000 square feet.



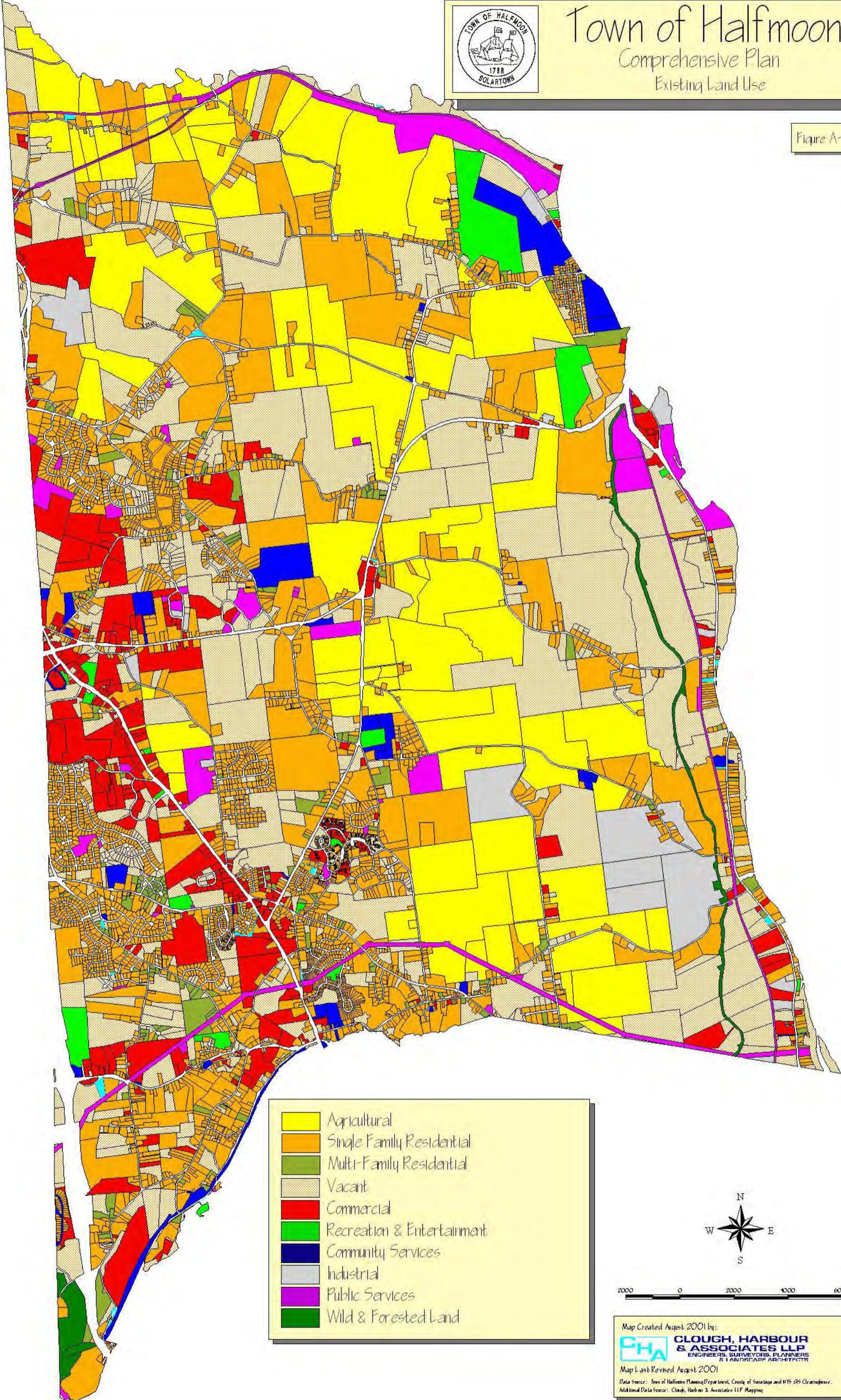


# Town of Halfmoon

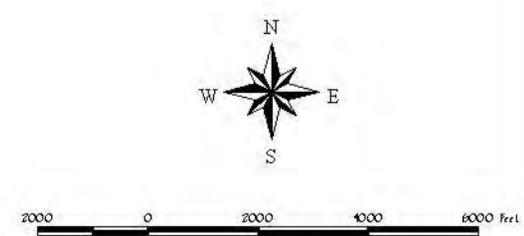
## Comprehensive Plan

### Existing Land Use

Figure A-5



-  Agricultural
-  Single Family Residential
-  Multi-Family Residential
-  Vacant
-  Commercial
-  Recreation & Entertainment
-  Community Services
-  Industrial
-  Public Services
-  Wild & Forested Land



Map Created August 2001 by:  
**PHA CLOUGH, HARBOUR & ASSOCIATES LLP**  
ENGINEERS, SURVEYORS, PLANNERS  
& LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

Map Last Revised August 2001

Data Source: Town of Halfmoon Planning Department, County of Saratoga and NYS GIS Clearinghouse.  
Additional Data Source: Clough, Harbour & Associates LLP Mapping



***Industrial***

Industrial and light industrial uses in the Town are limited. Some of the land zoned for industrial uses is being mined. Industrial zoned lands are primarily located along Routes 4 & 32 however nearly all of this land is undeveloped. The recently developed SYSCO warehouse distribution facility is located on Route 9 near Ushers Road. Several Light Industrial Planned Unit Developments are located on Route 146 including the NYSEG and Halfmoon Business Park. The Werner Road Industrial Park is located immediately north of the NYSEG Business Park. Industrial development provides the Town with significant tax revenues and employment opportunities. There are no heavy manufacturing facilities in the Town. Manufacturing is permitted in the Industrial zoning district but precludes such uses that would produce excessive noise, odor, pollution, or other hazards to the community.

Considerable undeveloped land area has been zoned for manufacturing and light industrial uses. Most of the land available for this use (future development) is located in the northwestern portion of the Town. The North Halfmoon GEIS identifies a potential for 9,450,000 square feet of light industrial uses and another 3,240,000 square feet of manufacturing uses. As stated above, lands along Route 4 & 32 from Upper New Town Road north to Route 146 are also generally undeveloped and available for industrial uses. The lack of water and sewer along this corridor is a critical factor in the lack of development.

Industrial zoning in the Town includes the following:

**LI-C Light Industrial-Commercial District** - The purpose of the LI-C district is to permit light industrial and commercial uses in areas with good transportation access. This district is intended to encourage the use of common utilities and access and to discourage the strip-mall style of development. Many allowable uses are similar to those allowed in the C-1 district. Uses particular to the LI-C district include assembly, automotive repair, and warehouses. The LI-C district also includes performance standards that must be met for projects that require a special permit. Uses included in the M-1 district discussed below are strictly prohibited. Lot sizes range from 40,000 to 60,000 square feet depending on the availability of utilities.

**M-1 Industrial** – The M-1 district allows industrial and manufacturing uses and those commercial uses that will provide support to the companies or employees

within the district. Allowable uses vary and include manufacturing, fabricating of assembly of previously prepared materials as well as warehouses newspaper and printing and self-storage facilities. Minimum lot sizes range from 40 to 60 thousand square feet.

### ***Public Services***

Public services generally include the major utilities (electric, telephone, gas) and many other services such as television, radio, communication facilities, water and sewer services, railroads, bridges, and the like. In Halfmoon, public services include utility right of ways (ROWs), utility substations, the County's wastewater treatment plant, the closed landfill, and the railroad yard near Mechanicville.

There is no zoning district in the Town designated specifically for public services. It is generally recognized that at least some of these uses are necessities and are therefore permitted in most districts. Some intensive uses such as landfills, railroad yards, and wastewater treatment plants require more thorough siting, generally away from residential areas. The Town's proposed water treatment plant is an example of an appropriately sited public service. It will be located within Industrial zoned land along Route 4 & 32, south of Brookwood Road.

Wireless communication facilities have posed land use concerns in many communities, including Halfmoon. Some communities have adopted "tower ordinances" to enact some control over the siting of these facilities. Halfmoon does not have such an ordinance at this time. As a public service, a community must allow the carrier to provide service. Thus often times the carriers can easily show need for a given tower based on "holes" in the coverage or service. However, the carrier is a private corporation and must receive local approvals. It must also address federal and State environmental regulations. Therefore, Halfmoon has the opportunity to protect the quality of life in the Town and appropriately locate what is becoming an essential service.

### ***Community Services***

Community services include those public facilities and services generally provided by the community but may also include county and state level services, as well as special districts such as fire and emergency services and schools. Community services located in the Town of Halfmoon include Town Hall and the Senior Center, Mechanicville High School, West Crescent Fire Department, Halfmoon-Waterford Fire Department, and Hillcrest Fire Department. The Clifton Park

Halfmoon Emergency Corps and the Clifton Park/Halfmoon Fire Department both located in Clifton Park also provide service to Halfmoon residents and businesses. These facilities and districts are discussed further in Section I. and mapped on Figure A-6.

### ***Agriculture***

The Town of Halfmoon was once an agricultural community. In 1950, the Town had 146 active farms totaling 15,640 acres. Today, there are 18 active farms totaling 5,178 acres (Agricultural & Farmland Protection Plan for Saratoga County, December 1997). Information collected from local officials and residents for the North Halfmoon GEIS revealed that out of the 5,294 acres in north Halfmoon with a tax map land use classification of Agriculture, only 1,047 acres are known to be currently productive. A hand-full of farms remain.

The areas north of Route 146 (North Halfmoon) and east of Harris Road generally include rural residential land uses. These uses generally consist of a single family home on a medium to large size parcel of land. Although the land may be put to some form of agricultural use, it typically remains fallow.

Agriculture Residence District (A-R) is the primary zoning within rural areas. This use provides for farming but also allows residential uses on minimum 40,000 square foot lots and 20,000 square foot lots if water and sewer are available.

### ***Recreation & Entertainment***

Approximately 449 acres of passive and active recreational resources are scattered throughout the Town. Of this total, approximately 304 acres is in public ownership. This includes land that is undeveloped but earmarked for recreational use, such as the future Town Park slated for Route 236. Active and passive open space identified through the Town Assessor's office is shown on Table A-2 in Section G. Recreational Resources.

### ***Vacant Land***

Vacant land primarily consists of fallow farm fields, wetlands, ravines, forests, and other constrained lands. It is undeveloped or abandoned and typically represents land that is available for some future use. Vacant land can exist within any of the zoning districts.

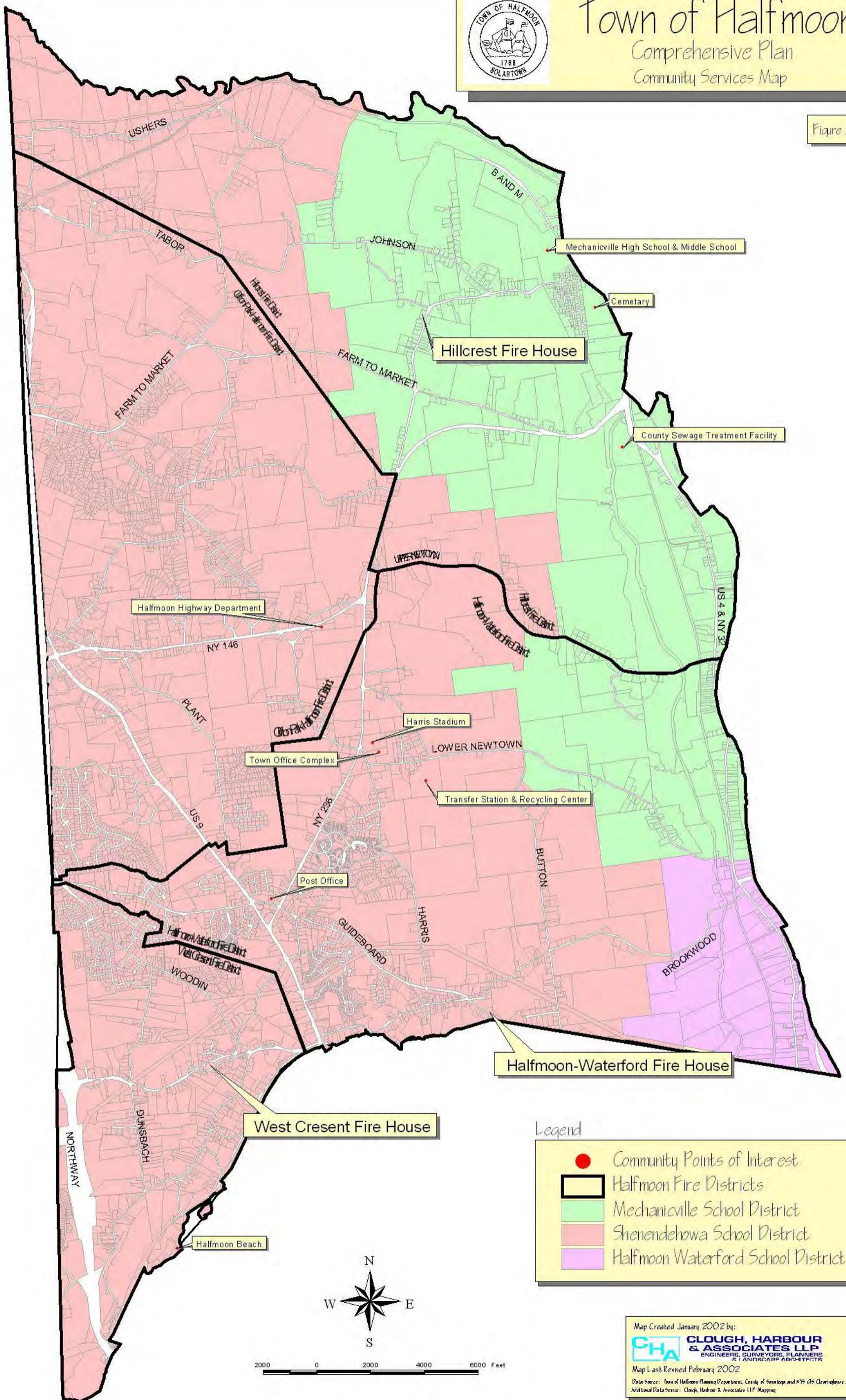




# Town of Halfmoon

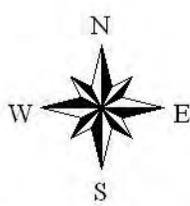
Comprehensive Plan  
Community Services Map

Figure A-6



**Legend**

- Community Points of Interest
- Halfmoon Fire Districts
- Mechanicville School District
- Shenendehowa School District
- Halfmoon Waterford School District



2000 0 2000 4000 6000 Feet

Map Created January 2002 by:  
**CLOUGH, HARBOUR & ASSOCIATES LLP**  
 ENGINEERS, SURVEYORS, PLANNERS & LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS  
 Map Last Revised February 2002  
 Data Source: Town of Halfmoon Planning Department, County of Saratoga and NYS GIS Clearinghouse.  
 Additional Data Source: Clough, Harbour & Associates LLP Mapping



### ***Special Zoning Districts***

Overlay zoning districts are used to provide additional regulations in order to address a special or unique issue or resource. The underlying zoning provides the basic permitted land uses and the overlay district provides additional requirements and considerations for the particular use. They may also preclude specific uses due to the potential for impact to the resource.

The following is a description of the various overlay-zoning districts within the Town:

**WP-1 Wellhead Protection Overlay District** – This district was created to protect the Town of Halfmoon’s public water supply and ensure both the quality and quantity of water for residents and businesses. This district includes Performance Standards to further protect the water supply.

**CC-1 Champlain Canal Overlay District** – Mapped along the location of the original Champlain Canal, the purpose of this district is to protect and enhance the Champlain Canal. The requirements of this district are in addition to the underlying zoning district.

**CH-1 Church Hill Road Historic Overlay District** – The purpose of this overlay zone is to protect and enhance the historic residential neighborhood of Crescent, an old Erie Canal era hamlet. The criteria listed in this zone are in addition to the requirement of the underlying zoning.

**FC-1 Flood Conservation Districts – Flood Prone and Mudslide Prone Areas** – These areas are based on FEMA maps produced for the National Flood Insurance Program.

### **Opportunities and Constraints**

The population of Halfmoon has grown at a rate of 33% over the last decade. Areas along Route 9, Route 146 and Route 236 have seen considerable growth. Residential development in and around these roadways has also grown significantly since 1990. With this in mind, there are still large areas of undeveloped lands in the Town particularly to the north and east. Halfmoon is in a strong position to encourage a new pattern of growth in the Town that rejects the standard subdivision in favor of projects that protect important resources, provide

an enhanced pedestrian environment, and create a variety of housing opportunities. The availability of municipal water and sewer service provides the greatest opportunity and incentive for development since it opens up a variety of development options and higher density. Policy relating to the availability of utilities is strong tool to control growth. Topography, soils, wetlands, and other regulatory issues will limit development opportunities in some areas of Town.

A number of large- scale non-residential developments have occurred since 1990. Some of these projects include Home Depot, Wal-Mart, SYSCO, and Eckards. Previously established Business Parks have continued to build out including NYSEG, Halfmoon Executive Park and the Capital Region Business Park. These projects are generally, but not always located on major roadways in commercially zoned areas. Development which occurs at the “edge” of one zoning district (i.e. a large scale commercial project adjacent to a residential neighborhood) or as the result of PDD’s by their very location have increased potential for land use conflicts. Projects reviewed in these situations should be carefully considered in regards to layout, screening, the proposed use and its intensity as well as potential impacts to surrounding land uses.

The Town has many options with respect to expanding its park and trail system. The County continues to expand the Zim Smith bike trail that links the Village of Ballston Spa with Malta, the Village of Round Lake and Halfmoon. In Halfmoon this trail connects Coons Crossing to the Village of Round Lake. The Town’s unique location along the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers and associated canals provides ample opportunity for both passive and active recreation, as well as the opportunity to enhance and protect these important natural and cultural resources. Potential recreation/trail opportunities are discussed in the Section addressing recreation and open space.

Zoning by design is a constraint on development, which attempts to avoid land use conflicts and arrange development in an efficient and beneficial way. Zoning may conflict with the goals and objectives of some individual landowners by precluding certain types of uses. However, regulatory growth management tools provide the essential foundation upon which incentive-based land use programs can be built.

## **G. Agricultural Resources**

### **Inventory**

Lands in agricultural production have decreased significantly in the Town of Halfmoon and throughout all of Saratoga County since the turn of the century. At that time nearly 75% of the total land area of Saratoga County was actively farmed. The construction of the Northway in the 1950's increased the rate of farmland conversion for communities such as Halfmoon located directly adjacent to the interstate. In 1950 there were 146 active farms totaling 15,640 acres as compared to the 18 active farms totaling 5,178 acres in 1997 (Agricultural & Farmland Protection Plan for Saratoga County, December 1997). Based on updated information from the Cornell cooperative Extension there are currently 17 active farms totaling 2,686 acres. State tax codes suggest that 8,514 acres are in agricultural use. Clearly, most of this land is vacant or not in active production.

Although farming is no longer a major land use in the Town, it still has an important role in the community both as an economic resource and open space resource. Farm operations in Halfmoon include apples, beef, dairy, field crops, horses, horticulture, livestock, small fruit, and vegetable operations. Information from the North Halfmoon GEIS indicates that the majority of agricultural land is dedicated to field crops and hay. As previously identified, there are significant amounts of Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance located within the Town of Halfmoon.

There are no Agricultural Districts located in the Town. Agricultural districts in Saratoga County are formed by landowners that voluntarily agree to keep their land in a district for eight-year, renewable time periods. In exchange, agriculture is designated as the primary activity in the district and landowners receive tax incentives to encourage them to continue farming. Districted land in Saratoga County now totals 110,800 acres. Of this about 32,750 acres is productive cropland.

### **Opportunities and Constraints**

Farming in the Town of Halfmoon has declined steadily over the last several decades. The 2,686 acres of land identified as remaining in active agricultural

production represents a small but significant land use. Some prime and statewide important soils were mapped in the northern portion of the Town. The availability of some of these soils in an undeveloped state presents the opportunity to regain some of the lost agricultural production within the Town. Promoting farms and agriculture is an important part of the overall appeal of tourism in Saratoga County (i.e. pick your own operations, farm stands, harness track, thoroughbred track). The Town has the opportunity to protect remaining farm operations by participating in programs that provide assistance to farm operations including Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) and Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) programs, tax abatement (such as the formation of an agricultural district) and conservation programs.

To provide additional protection and support farmers, the Town has included a Right to Farm Law provision in the Local Laws Related to Zoning. Traditionally this law recognizes “farming practices” and the farmers’ right to conduct such activities as part of normal farming operations. Right to Farm regulations raise community awareness regarding farming practices and protects farmers from nuisance lawsuits.

There are numerous constraints on farming operations. Many of these constraints are directly related to the economics of farming for a living. Farming practices have changed over the years. Small to medium size farms that prosper have converted to specialized operations and products. Farming is also impacted by suburban expansion that drives up land values and increases taxes. The fact that good farmland soils often have few limitations for residential development further complicates this issue. Often new homeowners are unfamiliar with farming practices and find them to be unpleasant.

Agricultural activity is generally incompatible with suburban residential development. With proper design, the two may coexist but this requires a certain level of understanding on the part of the resident who may be impacted by dust, noise and odors, all common residuals of farming.

## H. Recreational Resources

### Inventory

Information regarding the Town’s recreational resources was obtained from the Town assessor’s office and from the cultural and recreational resources subcommittee. Recreation is typically divided into two categories: active and passive. Active recreation includes organized play areas such as ball fields, playgrounds, and indoor facilities. Passive recreation includes all those activities that do not require organized grounds or facilities. Examples of passive recreation include hiking, biking, fishing, bird watching, and picnics.

Table A-2 identifies recreation and open space in the Town that totals approximately 449 acres. Of this total, approximately 304 acres constitute the Town’s public open space.

**Table A-2**  
**Public Open Space**

<b>Location</b>	<b># Acres</b>
Town Hall	
• Pond parcel	7.35
• Ball fields	12.00
• Woods & playground	3.92
• Gazebo	6.11
Future Town Park on Rt. 236	73.83
Woods Road ball fields	10.84
Town Landfill (Closed)	32.08
Open space in Aspen Ridge Subdivision	3.66
Mohawk Road Park	41.92
State lands in northwest section of Town	16.40
The sports fields of Mechanicville School.	93.68
Little League field the north of the School	2.36 approx.
Fairways of Halfmoon Golf Course (Private)	144.62

As an interim measure to address opportunities for future recreation and trail development, the North Halfmoon GEIS identifies a future passive park and an active park to serve the Town. These parks would be linked by a trail system that would, ideally, link two major regional trails: Zim Smith with Champlain Canal.

A 1.4 mile section of the 8.8 mile Zim Smith Trail connecting Coons Crossing to the Village of Ballston Spa is located within the Town. Additionally, undeveloped sections of the Champlain Canal Scenic Byway and the Mohawk Towpath Scenic Byway are located within the Town.

The Town operates recreational programs for residents that include a summer recreation program for children aged 5 to 15. This program runs for six weeks in the summer and is based out of the facilities adjacent to the Town Hall. The recreation program also sponsors special events during the remainder of the year and sponsors a “learn to ski” program during the winter. The fields located adjacent to the Town Hall are used by a number of leagues and groups. Scheduling for these facilities is accomplished through the Town’s Recreation Director.

### **Opportunities and Constraints**

The Town has numerous opportunities to increase recreational opportunities for its residents and provide protection to its many open space and cultural resources. Its unique location at the confluence of both the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers puts the Town in an enviable position to promote both water based recreational and cultural/historical opportunities.

The Town owns the portion of the Erie Canal within its borders; a part of the Mohawk Scenic Byway linking waterfronts between Waterford and Schenectady. The trails committee of both Halfmoon and Clifton Park conducted a field meeting in May 2001 to assess the potential of developing and linking the sections of the Mohawk Towpath at the Town boundary just west of the Thaddeus Kosciuszko bridge (I-87) over the Mohawk River. Additionally a 60-acre state owned parcel adjacent to the Towpath and located in the Town of Halfmoon could be developed to provide public access.

The portion of the Champlain Canal which runs from Whitehall to Waterford, located within Halfmoon is generally in private ownership and as such the Town has included it in an overlay district to provide protection to the canal as parcels

that include or have access to the canal are developed. The Town is currently pursuing funding to prepare a Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan that would include the Mohawk River Towpath and the Old Champlain Canal.

The Town has recently purchased a parcel to be developed as a recreation/park facilities on a parcel located on Route 236 near the transfer station and adjacent to a parcel which has recently been developed with multi-purpose fields.

In addition to park facilities and the canal trail systems, there is an opportunity to develop links between neighborhoods and community centers or facilities, especially in developing areas. These links which would encourage/allow non-motorized travel to various destinations in and around the Town would provide recreational opportunities as well as opportunities for community interaction.

A major consideration (constraint) in the provision of recreational resources and services is the cost of developing and maintaining new facilities. As the Town population grows and land values continue to rise the acquisition of lands for open space and recreation may become more difficult/expensive. Identification of appropriate parcels for future public use in coordination with a future land use plan is prudent.

## **I. Municipal/Community Services**

### **Inventory**

Municipal Services are an important part of daily community life. A variety of services are provided to residents in the Town including local government, police protection, emergency medical services, fire protection, and education. The following provides details on each of these services.

**Police Protection** – The Town of Halfmoon does not have a municipal police department. Police protection is provided to Town by the Saratoga County Sheriff's department and the New York State Police Department. Routine patrols are conducted within the Town to insure protection of both public and private properties. The closest State Police installation is the Clifton Park Satellite office, which is located in the Public Safety Building 5, Municipal Plaza in Clifton Park.

This satellite office presently has two (2) Sergeants and twelve (12) Troopers assigned. Also, one (1) Senior Investigator, who supervises four (4) Investigators, work out of the satellite office. Currently there are no plans for a new station for the State Police (See Correspondence dated December 7, 2000 in Appendix B.)

The Saratoga County Sheriff's Department also patrols the County roadways in the Halfmoon. The closest station is located on Harris Road. There are also substations at the Town Hall and one at Malta Commons. The County Sheriff reports that there are no existing deficiencies in staffing or equipment. There are no plans for a new station or location (See correspondence dated December 15, 2000 and June 12, 2001 in Appendix B).

**Fire Protection**- There are four fire departments that provide service to the Town. The departments include the Hillcrest Volunteer Fire Department, located on Pruy Hill Road, the Clifton Park/Halfmoon Fire District located on Firehouse Road, near the intersection of Routes 9 and 146 in Clifton Park, the Halfmoon/Waterford District with facilities located on Middletown Road and the West Crescent Fire District located on Crescent Road (Figure A-6). These districts support one another with a mutual aid system from 6am to 6pm. If required, all four fire districts could respond at the same time to a fire emergency during the day. Each district was consulted to ascertain current readiness and future capabilities as growth occurs in the Town (See correspondence in Appendix B).

1. The Chief of the Hillcrest Volunteer Fire Department sited the lack of municipal water as the main problem in providing fire control services. He states that currently, the majority of his district is without municipal water, and there are problems with existing hydrants. There have been some preliminary discussion concerning possible expansion of his existing facility and also consideration for a future substation. He makes no mention of existing problems in staffing or equipment. (See correspondence dated January 3, 2001 in Appendix B.)
2. The West Crescent Fire District indicated that generally there is a shortage of volunteers and that more and more agencies are considering paid staff to ensure adequate coverage particularly during daytime hours. In regards to fire flow the District cautions against allowing inadequate diameter meter on the main water supply entering properties because the reduced flow at the hydrant hampers the ability to control a fire.

Development patterns and its impact on traffic as it relates to the ability of volunteers and equipment to respond to an emergency was mentioned. Increased development and the corresponding increase in emergency calls was also identified as a concern.

3. Contact with the Waterford-Halfmoon Fire District indicates that staffing and equipment are adequate for the current demand. There are no known hydrant/fire flow problems however there are areas within the district where there are no hydrants.
4. Correspondence from the Clifton Park Halfmoon Fire District indicated that equipment is sufficient at this time. Staffing is currently sufficient but staffing is an important issue facing the department. There are no hydrants in some areas of the district. In regards to fire flow inadequate diameter meters on the main water supply entering a property can result in reduced flows at the hydrant and hamper the ability to control a fire.

**Emergency Medical Services**- Clifton Park/Halfmoon Emergency Corps, located at 15 Crossings Boulevard in Clifton Park, provides emergency medical services (EMS) to the Town. A letter dated June 5, 2001 was sent to the Emergency Corps to obtain information about emergency services. The private/not for profit agency offering ambulance service only is staffed with a combination of paid staff and volunteers. Presently there are 29 paid paramedics and other EMS staff, and 50 active riding volunteers.

The agency has been in business for the last fifty years, and they have been at their present location for the past two years. There are no existing deficiencies in staffing or equipment. There are no plans for a new station. However as the population continues to grow the need to hire more personnel, purchase more equipment and replace equipment more frequently will also grow. Certain types of development result in higher numbers of calls. Young families generally do not make as many calls to the Emergency Corps as Senior Housing (See conversation log Appendix B).

**Education**- There are three public school districts that provide education to the students who reside within the Town: the Shenendehowa Central School District, Mechanicville Public School District and the Waterford-Halfmoon School District. The district boundaries do not coincide with municipal boundaries (Figure A-6).

The Mechanicville Public School District services the northeast corner of the Town. The Mechanicville schools serving Town residents include: the Mechanicville Elementary School in the City of Mechanicville, and the Mechanicville Middle school and High school located on a single campus on Pruyn Hill in the Town of Halfmoon. Currently the elementary school building is at its full capacity. The middle school and high school are near their full capacity.

The school district is in the process of siting a new elementary school that would be adjacent to the existing middle school/high school campus. The existing elementary school will be closed upon completion of the new elementary school.

The facilities for the Waterford-Halfmoon School District are located on Middletown road in the Town of Waterford. This small district houses students in grades K-12 at this one location. The Waterford-Halfmoon School District has recently allowed students within the Shenendehowa Central School District to attend Waterford-Halfmoon schools tuition-free. The goal of this program is to stabilize the student population in this small school district.

The Shenendehowa Central School District includes the majority of the Town and its residents. School facilities include the Arongen Elementary School on Clifton Park Center Road between Moe Road and the Northway, Chango Elementary School located in the Town of Malta off of Round Lake Road and the schools on the main Shenendehowa campus at Route 146 in Clifton Park. On the main campus there are three Middle Schools, a High School and four elementary schools. The three elementary schools on the campus that are most likely to serve the Town of Halfmoon are Karigon, Skano and Tesago Elementary Schools. Children are assigned to these schools based on geographic districts.

The district is currently transitioning the high school population into two buildings to relieve over crowding. Once the transition is complete grade 9 will be housed in one building and grades 10-12 will be housed in another building. The District is

in the process of constructing additional classrooms and other facilities as part of this transition.

**Waste Disposal-** Waste disposal is provided by private haulers that are contracted by homeowners and businesses. Wastes are transported to licensed landfills and other facilities. Locally the Colonie landfill is active and accepts wastes from private haulers. The Washington County burn plant also accepts wastes from private companies. The first phase of the Saratoga County landfill is completed but is currently not accepting waste. Homeowners who desire may pay a small fee to dispose of household garbage and recyclables at the transfer station located on Route 146.

Saratoga County sets recycling policies and residents are expected to participate in the program. The private waste haulers pick up recyclable items as part of their normal service. The level of recycling varies depending on the changing market for various recyclable items. The County operates five recycling centers, which accepts a variety of items including white goods, which are too large to be included in regular pick-up by waste haulers.

### **Opportunities and Constraints**

Community services in the Town of Halfmoon are generally sufficient to meet the existing needs of the town and its residents. The anticipated increases in development and population will likely have the greatest impact on volunteer organizations such as fire companies. Recent demographic trends indicate that the demands of work and family tend to leave little extra time for people to devote to these types of community service pursuits.

Although the State Police and Sheriff's office have indicated that they have sufficient staffing to service this area, unchecked development in the Town could impact the delivery of these critical services. The Town should monitor service demands and periodically evaluate the effectiveness of these services for both law enforcement and emergency services. The Town should continue to support these community service groups that are critical to the quality of life in the Town of Halfmoon.

The reputation of a school district is often one of the critical forces driving residential development. This combined with Halfmoon's convenient location has

resulted in large-scale residential development over the past decade. The corresponding increase in students has put a strain on the resources of the districts serving the Town. There is an opportunity through the comprehensive planning process initiate dialogue with the school districts to address growth issues. Based on school and town population projections, potential facility expansions and corresponding property needs could be identified.

Waste disposal will continue to be a concern to many communities in Saratoga County as well as the Capital District. Solid waste generated in Saratoga County continues to be disposed of in permitted sites located outside of the County.

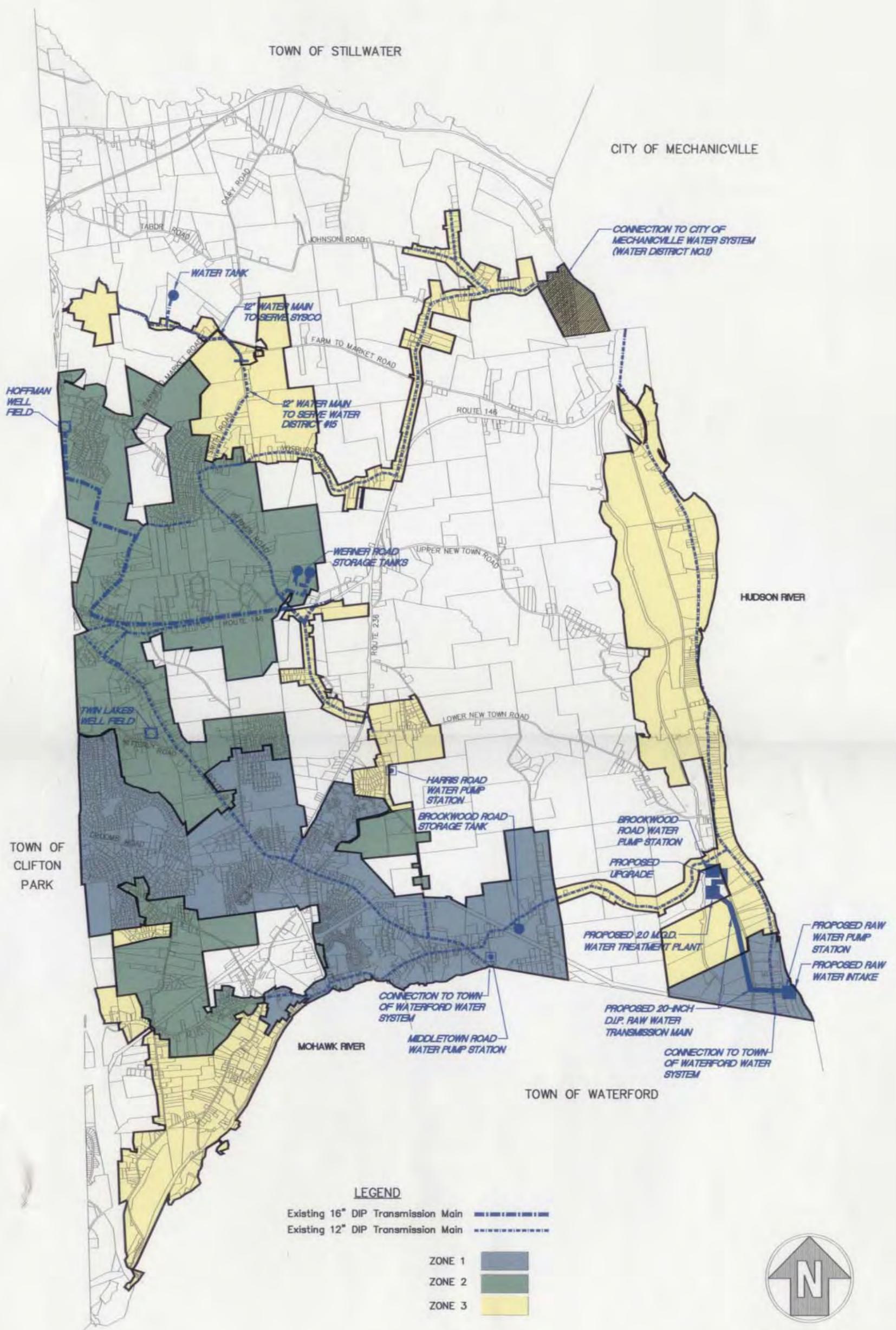
## **J. Utilities**

### **Inventory**

#### ***Water***

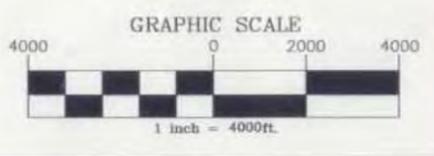
The Town operates a municipal system that provides water to many areas of the Town. Water lines and water districts are located primarily west of Routes 236 and Harris Road and south of Werner Road (Figure A-7). Water districts also serve the Route 4 & 32 area south of Farm to Market Road, Brookwood Road, Pruyn Hill and several areas north and west of Farm to Market and Cary Roads. The Town of Halfmoon web site (visited 8/7/01) indicates over 3,500 properties are currently served by municipal water. Lands between Guideboard and Routes 4 & 32 are generally not serviced by the municipal system and therefore rely on private wells. Areas east of Routes 236 and 146 also rely on private wells.

**Supply** - The Town's water supply is from groundwater sources and interconnections with the municipal systems of the Village of Waterford and the City of Mechanicville. The two well fields are the Hoffman well field located on US Route 9 adjacent to Oakbrook commons and the Twin Lakes well field located on Sitterly Road adjacent to the Twin Lake Apartments. Presently the yields of the well fields are less than the yields established when the wells were installed. The *Water System Capital Improvement Plan for the Town of Halfmoon* dated January 1998 indicates that this is probably due to a reduction in the yield of the underlying aquifer rather than operational or mechanical problems with the wells. This was further supported by the *Final Water Source Study* dated November 2000. As a



**LEGEND**

- Existing 16" DIP Transmission Main
- Existing 12" DIP Transmission Main
- ZONE 1
- ZONE 2
- ZONE 3



m: 9911 \ ACAD \ WATER

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CHA # 9911      DATE: 9-20-01

FIGURE No. A-7  
**TOWN OF HALFMOON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**  
**WATER INFRASTRUCTURE MAP**



result of these studies the Town recognized that the well fields couldn't adequately support the expansion of the water system or new development.

**Treatment** - Water supplies from all sources are free of contamination and in compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act Standards. Water supplied by the Town wells is chlorinated and treated for corrosion control at the well fields. Water from the Town of Waterford is taken directly from the interconnect and has been sufficiently treated in Waterford.

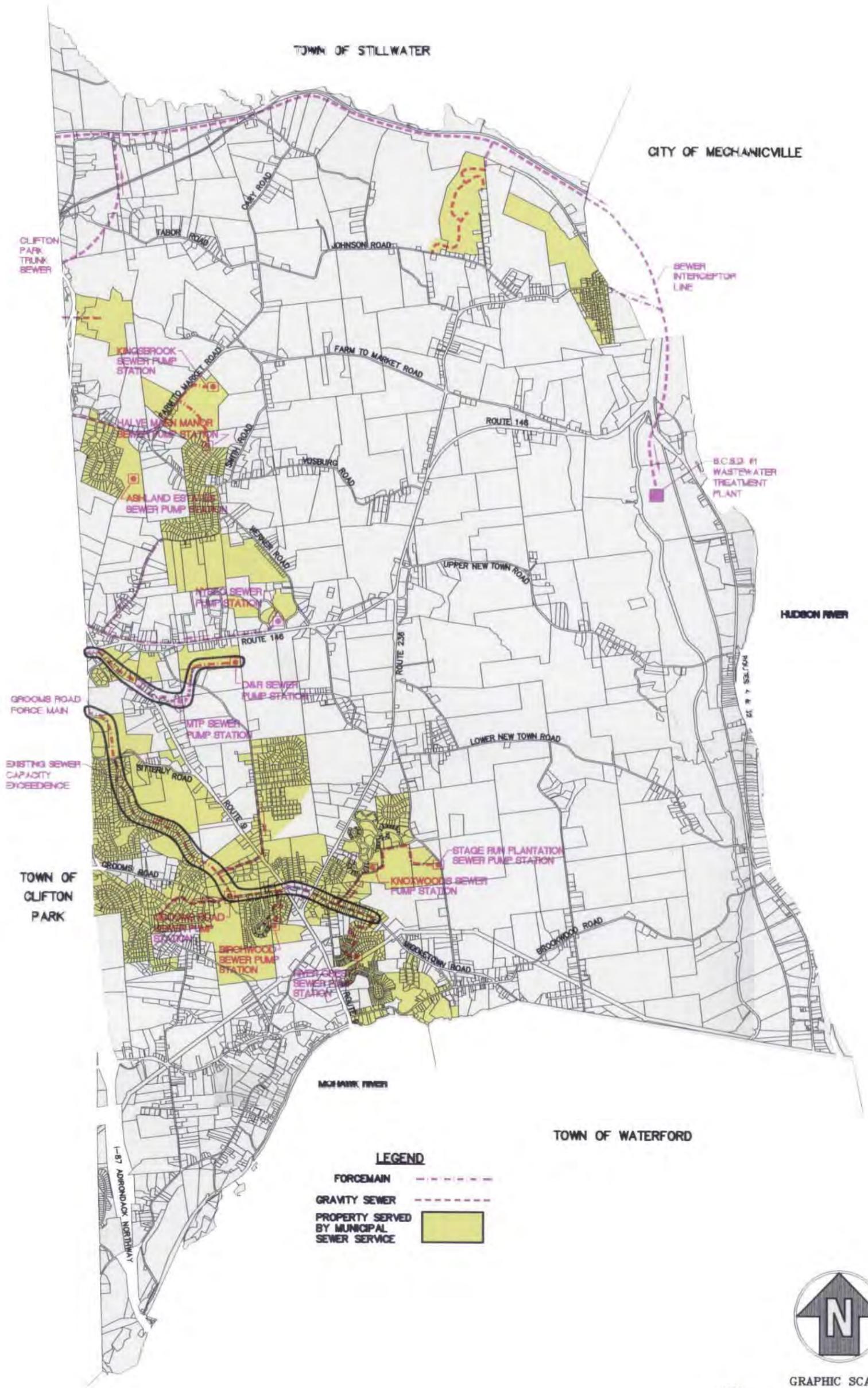
**Distribution** – Areas of the Town with municipal water service are shown on Figure A-7. The Average Daily Water Demand for 1999 as reported in the *Final Water Source Study* was 1.34 mgd. Twenty-year projections also prepared for the Final Study indicate that the Average Daily Demand in the year 2018 will be 3.05 mgd with a Maximum Day demand of 6.10 mgd. The existing water source production capacity of the Town system is 1.368 mgd. The Town contracts with the Village of Waterford and the City of Mechanicville for a total of 1.15 mgd annually. The study indicated that beginning in 1999 and every year there after the Town would face a shortfall and be forced to purchase water from the City of Troy. In order to address this shortfall and to continue to expand its service area the Town has developed plans for a new water supply treatment plant along the Hudson River near the intersection of US Route 4 and Brookwood Road. The Town anticipates increasing its available water supply to 6.30 mgd by the year 2015, which would provide adequate water supply to the Town through the year 2018. Purchase of water from Mechanicville and Troy and the use of the two well fields will be phased out as the phased expansion of the proposed water treatment is completed. This project will allow the Town to eliminate its reliance on neighboring communities for its water supply and provide service to more areas of the Town.

### ***Sewer Service***

The entire Town of Halfmoon lies within the Saratoga County Sewer District #1 (SCSD). Sewer service in the Town is generally limited to areas west of Route 236 and Guideboard Road and south of Route 146. Several developments located along Cemetery Road and Farm to Market Road are also served by the SCSD. Parcels currently served by sanitary sewer are shown on Figure A-8.

The County completed a major upgrade to its wastewater treatment plant and is reported to have sufficient capacity for anticipated future growth of Saratoga





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FIGURE No. A-8

**TOWN OF HALFMOON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**  
**SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE MAP**



County. However there are numerous problems with the collection and conveyance system that must be addressed for the system to operate at its full capacity and efficiency. Numerous trunk lines are at or close to capacity, and pump stations and other facilities are overextended or aging.

A study entitled *Trunk Sewer System Capacity Evaluation* prepared for SCSD by Malcolm Pirnie (November 2000) predicted trunk sewer capacity exceedances and other potential problems regarding the sewer district throughout the County. Based on that document a subcommittee of the Commissioners of SCSD prepared a report entitled *Sewer System Capital Project Recommendations* dated March 21, 2001.

The above report identified and prioritized nineteen Capital Improvement Projects necessary to the continuing function of the overall sewer system. Four priority classes were utilized:

- **A** Observed overflowing conditions observed surcharging, or concerns for reliability of existing facilities.
- **B1** Less severe reliability concerns, moratorium on new connections in effect, evaluation study indicates current or pending over-capacity, significant economic growth potential has been identified or other projects are dependent upon completion of a project in this category.
- **B2** Evaluation study indicates current or pending over-capacity, possibility exists for a moratorium, or economic growth potential is identified.
- **C** Projects, which are already under construction, have design and funding packages in-place, or where no action is recommended. The no action may be a result of having another project relief that is needed.

The subcommittee recommended immediate action to complete engineering studies and design work necessary to complete all class A and B1 projects. Issues impacting development in Halfmoon include the Clifton Park/Halfmoon trunk sewer. The force main from the Grooms Road Pump Station to the Crossings is over capacity. This pump station accepts flow from the Northwood Trunk Sewer, the Colonial Trunk sewer, Plant Road Trunk Sewer and the Grooms Road/Guideboard Road trunk sewer. The result of this situation is a moratorium on unapproved connections. This has impacted commercial growth potential at Exit 8 and on Route 9.

The Grooms Road/Guideboard Road Trunk Sewer is over-capacity during peak flow periods. Currently there is a moratorium on all unapproved construction in the area served by this trunk sewer.

Halfmoon Pump Stations 1 and 2 and the lines leading to the Clifton Park Hamlet trunk sewer are over capacity during peak flow periods. Wet weather appears to be a significant factor in this condition.

### **Opportunities and Constraints**

Existing water sources are inadequate to support existing or predicted Town demand over the next 20 years. Large-scale groundwater resources are limited and the Town wishes to minimize its reliance on the water systems of adjoining municipalities. The development of a surface water source from the Hudson River will address quantity issues related to existing and future water demand. As stated above the Town wishes to systematically provide water to all parts of the Town. This however will increase development pressure in some areas for the Town that are zoned for rural uses or that the Town wishes to maintain as low density or public/private open space. The Town should develop a policy to address the issue of water service and development pressure.

Although the SCSD has more than adequate treatment capability, the system has numerous problems related to the collection and conveyance system. As a result the County is denying new connections to its system in these problem area until these issues are resolved. This moratorium of sorts has slowed development in some areas of the Town of Halfmoon and other areas in the County. The *Sewer System Capital Project Recommendations* dated March 21, 2002 prioritizes the necessary steps to address these issues on a District wide basis. Recent improvements made to the treatment plant has resulted in adequate treatment capacity for the foreseeable future (20 years±). Therefore, once improvements are made to the collection and conveyance system, a critical limiting factor for development will be removed. The availability of sewer in an area may result in development pressure.

## **K. Transportation System**

### **Inventory**

The primary means of transportation in the Town of Halfmoon is the automobile. There are three park and ride lots serving both Halfmoon and the adjacent Town of Clifton Park. The lots located west of Exit 8 and at the Crossings east of Exit 9 provide parking for car pools and bus service. Additionally there is a park and ride lot located near Exit 9 on Fire Road, which is designated as a carpool lot only. Generally these facilities are not utilized to capacity. This may be related in part to limited schedules and routes available to commuters. Additionally, many people complete personnel obligations during their morning or evening commute, which limits their ability to utilize public transportation or even car-pooling arrangements. Realistically, bus service in the suburbs will probably not become a major component of the transportation network unless traffic conditions on I-87 deteriorated significantly. However, the Town should continue to be aware of and open to the potential for mass transportation programs. A successful program in this regard would most likely be implemented on a regional level. For the purposes of this Comprehensive Plan, this section will focus on the existing roadway network, traffic patterns and transportation needs within the Town.

The Town of Halfmoon is comprised of network of roadways that include an interstate and U.S. highway, and state highways, county routes and town roads. The Northway (I-87) is a major interstate highway that is the primary artery between Albany and the North Country. More importantly, it is the primary artery serving the large residential communities in Southern Saratoga County. A portion of the Northway traverses the Town's western boundary near Exit 8. Although located in the Town of Clifton Park, Exit 8A through Exit 10 provide convenient access to Halfmoon.

U.S. routes include Route 4 and Route 9. State roads include Route 32, Route 146, and Route 236. County Roads include Guideboard Road (County Route 94), Grooms Road (County Route 91), Crescent Road (County Route 92), Harris Road (County Route 95), Upper Newtown Road (County Route 85) and farm to Market road (County Route 109). The remaining roadways consist of Town roads and a limited number of private roads.

The Town maintains approximately 82 miles of paved roadway. As part of its ongoing maintenance program the Town utilizes a 10-year re-paving cycle. In addition to roadway reconstruction, which includes improvements to roadway profiles, construction or improvement of drainage systems occurs on as needed basis. There are still a small number of dirt roads in the Town, several of which are on steep grades. These roadways often wash out during heavy rains or during the spring thaw, thus resulting in ongoing maintenance problems.

Improvements to Interstate and State roads are normally accomplished by the NYSDOT with both Federal and State aid. There are several projects on the NYSDOT Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) list approved on May 17, 2001 that are located in Halfmoon. The TIP list, which is updated annually, includes project listings covering the entire State for the next 5-years. Identified projects within the Town include improvements at the intersection of Route 9 with Crescent Road and Church Hill Road, the reconstruction of the Route 4 bridge over the D&H railroad and reconstruction of CR 109 from Route 9 to Route 146. The construction of bike paths within the shoulders on Woodin and Sitterly Roads and the replacement of buses for the Upstate Transit Northway Service are also on the recently approved TIP list.

Traffic flows vary throughout the Town. The Average Annual Daily Traffic Volumes (AADT) represents the average 24-hour traffic flow during the year. Of the Interstate and State Roads, I-87 carries the highest volume of traffic on a daily basis. Of the remaining roadways, State Route 146 and U.S. Route 9 carry the largest number of vehicles daily as shown in Table A-3 below and on Figure A-9. This information was obtained from the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) 1999 Traffic Volume Report and NYSDOT 2000 Highway sufficiency Rating Manuel.



# Town of Halfmoon Comprehensive Plan

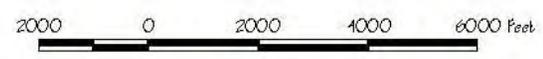
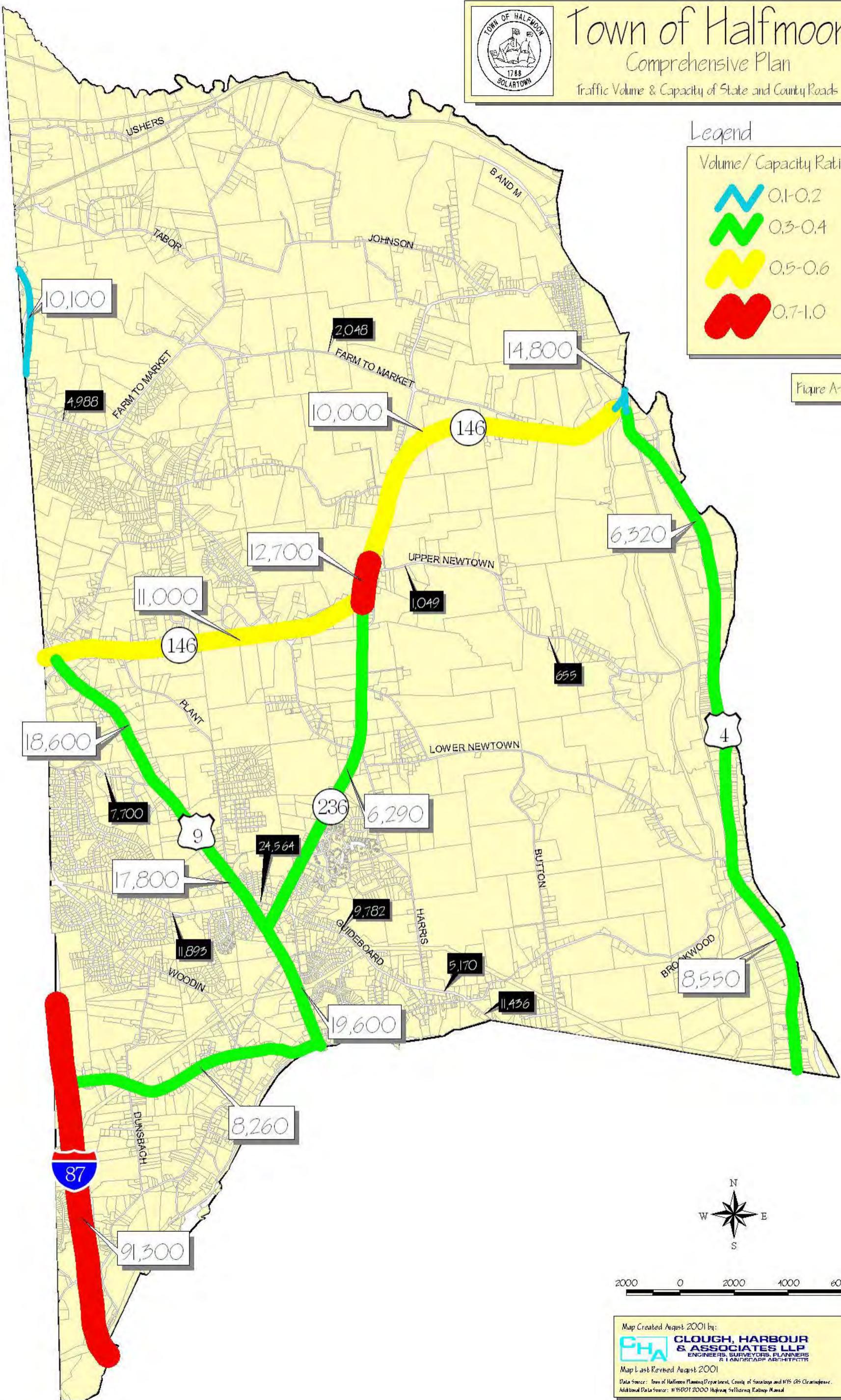
Traffic Volume & Capacity of State and County Roads

## Legend

Volume/ Capacity Ratio



Figure A-9



Map Created August 2001 by:  
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 Map Last Revised August 2001  
 Data Source: Town of Halfmoon Planning Department, County of Saratoga and NYS GIS Clearinghouse.  
 Additional Data Source: NYS DOT 2000 Highway Sufficiency Rating Manual



**Table A-3**  
**Comparison of Average Daily Traffic for Interstate and State Roads**  
**Town of Halfmoon**

Interstate & State Routes	AADT 1999	AADT 2000
<b>I - 87</b>		
Town line to Exit 8	86,200	91,300
Exit 8 to NYS Rt. 146	85,100	86,200
<b>NYS Route 9</b>		
Town line to Grooms Road	19,600	19,600
CR 91 to Sitterly Road	17,800	17,800
Sitterly Rd. to NYS Rt. 146	18,600	18,600
<b>NYS Route 146</b>		
Rt. 9 to Rt. 236	11,000	11,000
Rt. 146 to CR 86	12,600	12,700
CR 86 to Rt. 4 and 32	10,000	10,400
<b>NYS Route 4 &amp; 32</b>		
Town Line to Brookwood Road	8,550	8,200
Brookwood Road to Rt. 146	6,350	6,800
Rt. 146 to town line (Mechanicville)	14,900	12,800
<b>NYS Route 911p (Vischer Ferry)</b>		
Exit 8 to Rt. 9	8,250	8,260
<b>NYS Route 236</b>		
Route 9 to Rt. 146	6,300	6,290

Source: NYSDOT 1999 Traffic Volume Report and NYSDOT 2000 Highway Sufficiency Rating Manual

Average Daily Traffic for County roads (2000) are also shown on Figure A-9. This information was obtained from the from the Saratoga County Department of Public Works. As can be seen in TableA-4 and on Figure A-9 the most heavily traveled County Routes in Halfmoon are County Route 94 (Guideboard Road) and County

Route 91 (Grooms Road). The general trend indicates considerable increases in traffic volumes on these roadways since 1988.

**Table A-4  
Comparison of Average Daily Traffic for County Roads  
Town of Halfmoon**

<b>County Routes (CR)</b>	<b>1988</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>County Route 86 (Upper Newtown Rd)</b>			
• East of Route 146	1,214	1,688	1,049
• West of US Route 4	466	595	655
<b>County Route 91 (Grooms Road)</b>			
• West of Route 9	7,317	11,578	11,893
<b>County Route 94 (Guideboard Road)</b>			
• East of CR 95	3,492	3,815	5,170
• Northwest of Halfmoon Village & CR 96	8,491	383	11,436
<b>County Route 95 (Harris Road)</b>			
• North of CR 96	954	1,606	1,167
• East of Route 236	1,874	3,166	2,817
<b>County Route 96</b>			
• By-pass east of CR 95	10,271	11,369	11,941
<b>County Route 99 (Church Hill Road)</b>			
• East of Route 9	4,226	4,061	3,600
• West of CR 94	3,144	5,927	3,758
<b>County Route 109 (Farm to Market Road)</b>			
• East of Route 9	2,701	4,027	4,998

*Source: Saratoga County Department of Public Works*

Volume to capacity ratios for state roadways are also shown on Figure A-9. The volume to capacity ratio represents a comparison of the design capacity of a roadway to the volume of traffic utilizing the roadway. A roadway with a volume to capacity ratio at or near 1.0 is approaching its maximum capacity. Two segments of the Northway between Exit 8 and Exit 8A have volume to capacity ratios of 0.9, which indicates that these segments are approaching their maximum capacity. The volume to capacity ratio for State Route 146 between the intersection of Route 236

and Route 86 is 0.8. All other state roadways within the Town currently have volume to capacity ratios of 0.6 or lower.

Sidewalks and pedestrian pathways are somewhat limited in the Town. A portion of the Zim Smith Trail traverses the Town near Coons Crossing. Sidewalks have been included in a small number of residential and non-residential developments, but generally do not provide a link to adjacent neighborhoods or facilities.

### **Opportunities and Constraints**

Direct access to the Northway and Route 9 provide numerous opportunities for future development. This access is also a major incentive to live in Halfmoon. The Town has an opportunity to preserve the function of its road network as future development occurs.

The existing transportation system generally operates adequately although there are several locations where traffic problems do exist. As noted on Figure—the segments of I-87 between the Thaddeus Kosciuszko Bridge and Exit 8A are nearly at full capacity. Although Route 9 appears to be functioning adequately, at various times of the day there are delays at a number of intersecting roads.

The Town may wish to identify corridors that would be the subject of corridor studies. High traffic roadways such as Route 9, Route 236, and Guideboard Road for example would benefit from such a study. A corridor study evaluates both traffic and land use issues associated with a given roadway to provide solutions to improve traffic flow and the pedestrian environment.

The Town also has the opportunity to develop a sidewalk/pedestrian pathway plan. Sidewalks would be particularly useful in the more populated areas of Town that are located near a variety of services and retail establishments. Woodin Road, Grooms Road, Sitterly Road and Route 9 for example, would all benefit from the addition of sidewalks or other pathways that would allow safe pedestrian movement. The construction of sidewalks has been included in NYSDOT's most recent TIP list. There are other neighborhoods and facilities in the Town that would benefit from the link provided by sidewalks or trails. This would not only reduce traffic congestion in some areas but also foster the opportunity for interaction between residents thus fostering a sense of community.

## L. Socioeconomic Resources

### Inventory

#### *Population*

The Town of Halfmoon is growing rapidly. The 2000 Census population is 18,474, an increase of 4,595 people since the 1990 Census, representing a 33% increase for the decade. The Town of Halfmoon had the greatest net increase in population of any municipality in the Capital district (Saratoga, Schenectady, Albany and Rensselaer Counties). This increase is attributable to several factors. Completion of the Northway in the 1960's has resulted in steady population increases since that time. During the 1990's the perceived overcrowding and higher land costs in neighboring Clifton Park has resulted in significantly more development in Halfmoon. Population trends from 1950 through 2000 are shown on Table A-6 below.

**Table A-6**  
**Population Trends**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Halfmoon</b>	<b>Saratoga County</b>	<b>Capital District</b>
<b>1950</b>	<b>2,836</b>	<b>74,689</b>	<b>589,359</b>
<b>1960</b>	<b>4,120</b>	<b>89,096</b>	<b>657,503</b>
<b>1970</b>	<b>9,287</b>	<b>121,679</b>	<b>721,910</b>
<b>1980</b>	<b>11,860</b>	<b>153,759</b>	<b>741,580</b>
<b>1990</b>	<b>13,879</b>	<b>181,276</b>	<b>777,783</b>
<b>2000</b>	<b>18,474</b>	<b>200,635</b>	

*Source: 2000 Census*

The Town population represents a near balance between males and females. As of the 2000 census there were 8,985 males and 9,489 females residing in Halfmoon. The population between the ages of 18 and 64 was 12,149 or 66% of the total population. This significant working age population makes the availability of good paying jobs within a reasonable commuting distance an important consideration for the Town and its residents.

Demographics in the Town are slowly shifting to include a more diverse population mix. Data from the 1990 Census indicated “white” made up nearly 98% of the total population. The 2000 census figures indicate that approximately 95% of the population are white. Minorities include Black, Asian, Hispanic, native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander and American Indian and Alaska Native.

### ***Housing***

Housing pressure is directly related to the population growth. Existing housing stock within the Town consists of single family homes, duplexes, town homes, apartments and mobile homes. Year 2000 Census data indicates that there were 8,172 housing units in the Town at the time of the Census. June 2001 data from the town assessor indicates the number of housing has increased to 8,375 units. The majority of homes within the Town however are single family accounting for approximately 3,618 units (1990 Census data and building permit data from 1990 through 2000). Based on data provided by the Town of Halfmoon Assessor’s office the housing breakdown as of June 2001 is as follows: single family, two-family and three-family units 4,416, condominiums 248, Mobile homes 1,258, senior units 50, apartments 2,403. Census data indicates that 95% of existing housing units are occupied. Of the occupied housing units over 63% are owner occupied while nearly 37 percent are renter occupied.

From 1990 to 2000 the Town of Halfmoon issued building permits for 1,126 single family and 1,224 multi-family units. This equates to approximately 235 permits annually and correlates closely with the town’s significant population increase during the decade. Housing types consist of single family, duplexes, triplexes, town homes, condominiums, and mobile homes. Apartments buildings (4 or more units) are considered a commercial use.

### ***Economics***

Residents are generally financially secure. Based on the 1990 Census the median household income was \$36,185 as compared to \$33,358 for Albany County and \$32,965 for New York State. Of all households in the Town of Halfmoon, 63% have an income between \$25,000 and \$74,999, as compared to 52% for Albany County and 48% for New York State. A breakdown of 1990 income levels is provided in Table A-7.

**Table A-7  
Household Income Levels**

<b>Income Levels</b>	<b>Town of Halfmoon</b>	<b>Percent of total</b>	<b>Saratoga County</b>	<b>Percent of total</b>	<b>NY State</b>	<b>Percent of total</b>
\$0-14,999	727	12.68%	10,498	15.79%	1,526,285	23.01%
15,000-24,999	909	15.86%	10,109	15.20%	999,183	15.06%
25,000-34,999	1,101	19.21%	10,768	16.20%	950,695	14.33%
35,000-49,000	1,309	22.84%	14,302	21.51%	1,145,247	17.26%
50,000-74,999	1,227	21.41%	13,564	20.40%	1,108,921	16.71%
75,000-99,999	297	5.18%	4,545	6.84%	454,648	6.85%
100,000-149,000	126	2.20%	2,008	3.02%	285,138	4.30%
150,000+	34	0.59%	691	1.04%	164,317	2.48%
No of households	5,730	100%	66,485	100%	6,634,434	100.00%

*Source: 1990 Income & Poverty Status Tables, US Census*

Unemployment rates in the Capital District and specifically the Albany-Schenectady-Troy MSA (which includes Saratoga County) are generally low. A comparison state wide of unemployment rates at various years since 1994 indicate that the Albany-Schenectady-Troy MSA is generally at or near the top of the list for employment rates in the State. In April 2001 the unemployment rate for the Albany-Schenectady-Troy MSA was 2.7%.

An analysis of employment and industry show that the majority of the Town's residents work in other communities. This conclusion is reached by comparing statistics about the Town's industries with statistics about the town's workers.

First, a review of labor force statistics show that the Town's labor force works in a wide range of industries. As of September 25, 2001, labor force status and employment characteristics were not available from the 2000 Census and figures from the 1990 were used. The current labor force in the Town would be much larger than reported below since the Town has grown by almost 5,000 people in the last decade. However, the statistics presented below will give a general picture of the labor force characteristics. Of the 7,872 persons employed, 1,650 or 21% are government workers, 332 persons or 4% are self-employed, while 1,431 or 18% work in retail trade.

**Table A-8**  
**Industries for Employed Persons 16 Years and Older**

Agriculture, Forestry, & Fisheries	66
Mining	0
Construction	511
Manufacturing, non durable goods	361
Manufacturing, durable goods	605
Transportation	282
Communications & Public Utilities	178
Wholesale Trade	432
Retail Trade	1,431
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	666
Business & Repair Service	424
Personal Services	189
Entertainment & Recreation Services	60
Health Services	703
Educational Services	602
Other professional & Related Services	528
Public Administration	834
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,872</b>

*Source: 1990 Census, Table DP-3 "Labor Force Status and Employment Characteristics"*

These figures can then be compared to the figures below obtained from the 1997 Economic Census to find out how many of these workers are employed within the Town of Halfmoon. Table A-9 "Economic Sector Statistics" represents businesses that are physically located within the Town of Halfmoon. These represent the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) industries as defined by the Census bureau as the taxable portion of the services sectors, the wholesale sector and other sectors in the Economic Census. It excludes data for auxiliaries. The 1997 Economic Census uses the NAICS as a more flexible system for classifying individual business locations, replacing the Standard Industrial Classification System that began 60 years ago.

**Table A-9**  
**Economic Sector Statistics**  
**Town of Halfmoon, 1997**

NAICS Industry Code	Industry Description	Number of Establishments	Number of Employees	Annual Payroll (\$1,000)	Shipments/Sales/Receipts (\$1,000)
42	Wholesale trade	14	88	3,397	66,858
44-45	Retail trade	9	50	545	9,426
53	Real estate & rental & leasing	7	22	470	2,991
54	Professional, scientific, & technical services	3	6	202	461
56	Administrative & support & waste management & remediation	6	24	480	848
61	Educational services	2	0 - 19	D	D
62	Health care & social assistance	7	25	322	899
71	Arts, entertainment, & recreation	2	0 - 19	D	D
72	Accommodation & foodservices	14	276	2,300	7,534
81	Other services (except public administration)	9	43	858	3,120
	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>572</b>	<b>\$7,574</b>	<b>\$91,137</b>

*Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1997 Economic Census*

*D: Withheld to avoid disclosing data of individual companies; data are included in higher level totals*

The 1997 Economic Census shows that there are a relatively small number of people employed in industries in the Town of Halfmoon. For instance, the table shows a total of 50 employees in nine retail businesses in the Town, yet the 1990 Census shows a total of 1,431 persons employed in retail trade. It can be inferred that the majority of persons employed in the retail trade commute out of the Town. The 1990 Census shows that the average commute for residents in the Town of Halfmoon is 24-25 minutes. This would be the case for the other industries as well, with the possible exception of farming and forestry, where the activity would more likely be local. The above analysis does not take into account recent development such as Walmart and Sysco which were recently built, and were not counted in the 1997 Economic Census.

Building permit data is another economic indicator. Since 1990 the Town of Halfmoon has issued building permits for nearly 1,000,000 square feet of commercial space. Building permits issued for industrial use during this same time period were for approximately 470,000 square feet of space.

### **Opportunities and Constraints**

The Town of Halfmoon has experience rapid population growth during the last decade. Growth is predicted to slow somewhat but will still continue at a steady rate. Population growth and housing are linked. The availability of undeveloped lands in northern and eastern Halfmoon presents the opportunity for continued residential development.

Constraints to the development of housing are primarily related to physical features and the lack of utilities. As the Town identifies expansion areas for its water system it needs to consider these sensitive lands by limiting the availability of utilities in critical areas or placing restrictions which allows some development and protects these critical resources.

Although the Town cannot control housing prices it should be aware of rising prices and the possibility that this may drive new home owners or retirees out of the housing market in Halfmoon. As projects are proposed, the Town should review them to determine if there is potential for reasonably priced homes.

There are numerous businesses both commercial and industrial located in the Town of Halfmoon. Over the last decade there has been steady growth in the non-residential component of the Town's economy. The availability of undeveloped lands zoned for business and industrial uses in Halfmoon presents an opportunity for future economic development.

### **M. Cultural Resources**

Due to its location at the confluence of two rivers, Halfmoon has an abundance of historic and cultural resources. The following history of the Halfmoon was prepared by past Town historian Norma Harris and updated and revised by the current Town Historian Ellen Kennedy. Lucy Healey assisted by typing the text for inclusion in this plan. Many of the locally significant historic structures and sites are identified on Figure A-10 and Table A-10 located at the end of this section.

In the early 1600's the site of a cluster of islands located where the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers meet along with the surrounding area became known as Half-Moon Point. Initial settlement of Half-Moon Point centered in present day Waterford where Dutch traders, trappers and homesteaders who had traveled up the river from Albany made their homes. The area had been an Indian trading site for some years controlled by the Mahicans who bartered among themselves and with other tribes. Passage across the river at Half-Moon was facilitated by the low waters, which ran from the Point to Haver (Peebles) island.

As settlement in Waterford took hold, pioneering Albany Dutch went north from Waterford and entered the wilderness that is now part of the Town of Halfmoon. The majority of lands comprising Halfmoon were once a part of the VanSchaick Patent of 1674. Records show that land in Halfmoon was purchased and developed in 1667. The pattern of Albany Dutch settlement extended up the Hudson River as more families came to the area. A group of Schenectady Dutch, mostly farmers, settled in Canastigione (Clifton Park) then later spread to the Town of Halfmoon.

The early settlers of Half-Moon were under the jurisdiction of Albany County from 1683 until 1791 when Saratoga County was made a separate governing body. Half-Moon at that time also extended across the Mohawk River to include part of the Boght and Niskayuna ending at the north boundary of the Manor of Rensselaerwyck. One of the four "mother towns" of newly created Saratoga County, Halfmoon included the present area of Waterford until 1816 and Clifton Park until 1828. When its boundaries were finally fixed, the Town of Halfmoon emerged somewhat irregularly shaped and without a central focus of settlement.

For a short time, from 1816 to 1820 Halfmoon was known as Orange. Few people were comfortable with the name change and the original name of Halfmoon was restored.

Along the Hudson River Road, a farm operated from 1737 until 1747 when a raiding party of French Canadians and Indians massacred the family and burned the house. A year later Colonel Ten Broeck purchased the land and built his home this site became property of the Leland family in later years.

John Flynn settled along the Hudson River in the 1750's and opened a tavern that he kept until Revolutionary War activities forced his temporary move to Albany. Among other pre-war settlers of note were Benjamin Rosekrans from Dutchess

County who held various offices; and George Ellsworth, a Revolutionary War soldier whose great grandson was Colonel Elmer E. Ellsworth from Mechanicville, a distinguished Civil War soldier. The Thomas Peebles family settled north of Waterford in the 1760's and built their home, Brookwood, in 1766. Brookwood was well-patronized tavern where such notables as George Washington, New York Governor DeWitt Clinton and Alexander Hamilton stopped in 1783.

In 1718 an early settler and ferry owner, Cornelius Claes Vandenburg, built a landmark stone house on the Mohawk west of Crescent. Cornelius Claes Ferry was later called Dunsbach Ferry.

By 1762, the existence of the Scouten saw mill near Crescent and a gristmill on the Dwaas Kill suggested some degree of stable settlement. It was not until the cessation of revolutionary hostilities, however, that Halfmoon experienced rapid growth. The proximity of water power and transportation sources provided by the two rivers, plus an abundance of gently rolling farmland were the town's prime assets. The late 1700's were characterized by the appearance of several saw and gristmills on the rivers and streams of Halfmoon. The Dwass Kill and Anthony Kill were the most important streams in the northern part of town. There were also several taverns in operation at this time underscoring Halfmoon's significance as an early trading area.

Industry in Halfmoon was slow to develop until the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825. At this point, many new mills appeared and new industries were founded. The hamlet of Crescent became the focus of economic development in the 1840's and 1850's, for it was here that the Erie Canal was carried over the Mohawk River via the Crescent Aqueduct. Supply stores serving canal operations were commonplace. W. K. Mansfield, an early settler in Crescent, owned and operated a brickyard, using the canal to ship bricks to New York City. In fact, there were three other brickyards in Crescent during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Larger barges passed by Crescent when the canal was moved to the river in 1913 and became the New York State Barge Canal.

Crescent also produced ice and shipped molding sand into the early 1900's. The diversity of economic pursuits, spurred on by the construction of the canal, afforded Crescent a good deal of prominence and prosperity in the middle 1800's. Although other hamlets within the Town of Halfmoon developed their own economic bases at this time, none were as successful as Crescent. Clifton Park, while still a part of

Halfmoon, developed a wagon and carriage industry and was the location of many machine shops.

In the northern part of town, in an area apart from any established community, Halfmoon resident Joshua Anthony developed his famous spice factory. He began his operations in 1869 with the manufacture of baking powder and cream of tartar. He then added spice grinding and the production of fluid extracts for flavoring in 1892. The success of his business prompted Anthony to approach the Delaware and Hudson Railroad in the hope that a station of the Schenectady branch be located in Ushers. This he secured in 1882. The following year, Anthony contributed substantially to the development of a post office at Ushers. He established a private telegraph line between Ushers, Clifton Park, Round Lake and his factory. Anthony's contributions to the community were improvements that benefited many. The spice factory ceased operation in 1920. The two story factory buildings and farmhouse remain in Halfmoon, outwardly unchanged to the enjoyment and interest of passersby.

As in all early American settlements, religious societies were an intrinsic part of Halfmoon's past. Typically, many of the church groups in Halfmoon were organized prior to actual church construction and incorporation. The earliest known religious society was a Friends group, organized before the Revolution and held meetings until 1850.

The First Baptist Church was initially established in the hamlet of Newtown where a church was built in 1790, then moving and re-establishing in Middletown in 1835. The Second Baptist Church of Halfmoon was founded in 1841 at Clifton Park hamlet only to dissolve in later years as membership declined.

About 1800, a Methodist Episcopal Society was organized. Other Methodist societies were established at Coons Crossing, Smithtown, Crescent and West Crescent in the early 1800's. Both Crescent congregations later joined the Shenendehowa United Methodists.

St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church was established at Crescent about 1863 on the site of the present-day church. St. George's Episcopal Church was organized in 1870 near Clifton Park village. The 1925 original church was taken over by the Church of Christ.

In the same way that many religious societies met at private homes in their incipience, so were school-age children educated at home by their parents or tutors. The onset of public education in Halfmoon came with the allotment of \$1200 from the Saratoga County Board of Supervisors in 1792 pursuant to their Act for the Encouragement of Schools passed the same year. When the New York State Legislature established a common school system in 1812, 11 districts were created in Halfmoon. Private schools as well appear in Halfmoon's history, the most notable being the Halfmoon Academy in Middletown.

This school was organized and constructed in the 1820's and was operated successfully until 1880. In 1863, the Clifton Park Female Seminary was founded also as a private institute. Because public school education stopped at the eighth grade for most of the 19th century, private schools were the only vehicle for continuing education. When public high schools were created, students in Halfmoon attended high school outside the town. The formation of the Shenendehowa Central School District in 1950 ended the era of one-room schools in Halfmoon.

Primarily an agricultural community, the early development of the town of Halfmoon reached a peak during the canal era when the town was marked by a lively and varied economy.

With the widening of Route 9, the construction of the new Crescent Bridge in 1959 and the completion of the Northway, Halfmoon was within easy access to employment in the large cities of the Capital District. At this point, farmland began to be sold and housing developments established. This activity continues today. Commercial and industrial growth is now increasing as our population grows. Halfmoon today is a busy suburban community enjoying the same opportunities as larger surrounding communities.

Less obvious than historic structures but equally as important as part of the Town's cultural resources is the potential for archeological material that may exist within the Town. Long before European settlement, the area was well traveled by Indians, who used both rivers for travel and as a food source. Many areas along the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers have been identified as historically or archeologically sensitive on the NYS Historic sensitivity maps which are compiled from the NYS Museum Archeological site files and the NYS Historic Preservation Office Archeological Site Files. Projects located within these sensitive areas should be investigated during the project review stage and if necessary a plan implemented to preserve, protect and/or



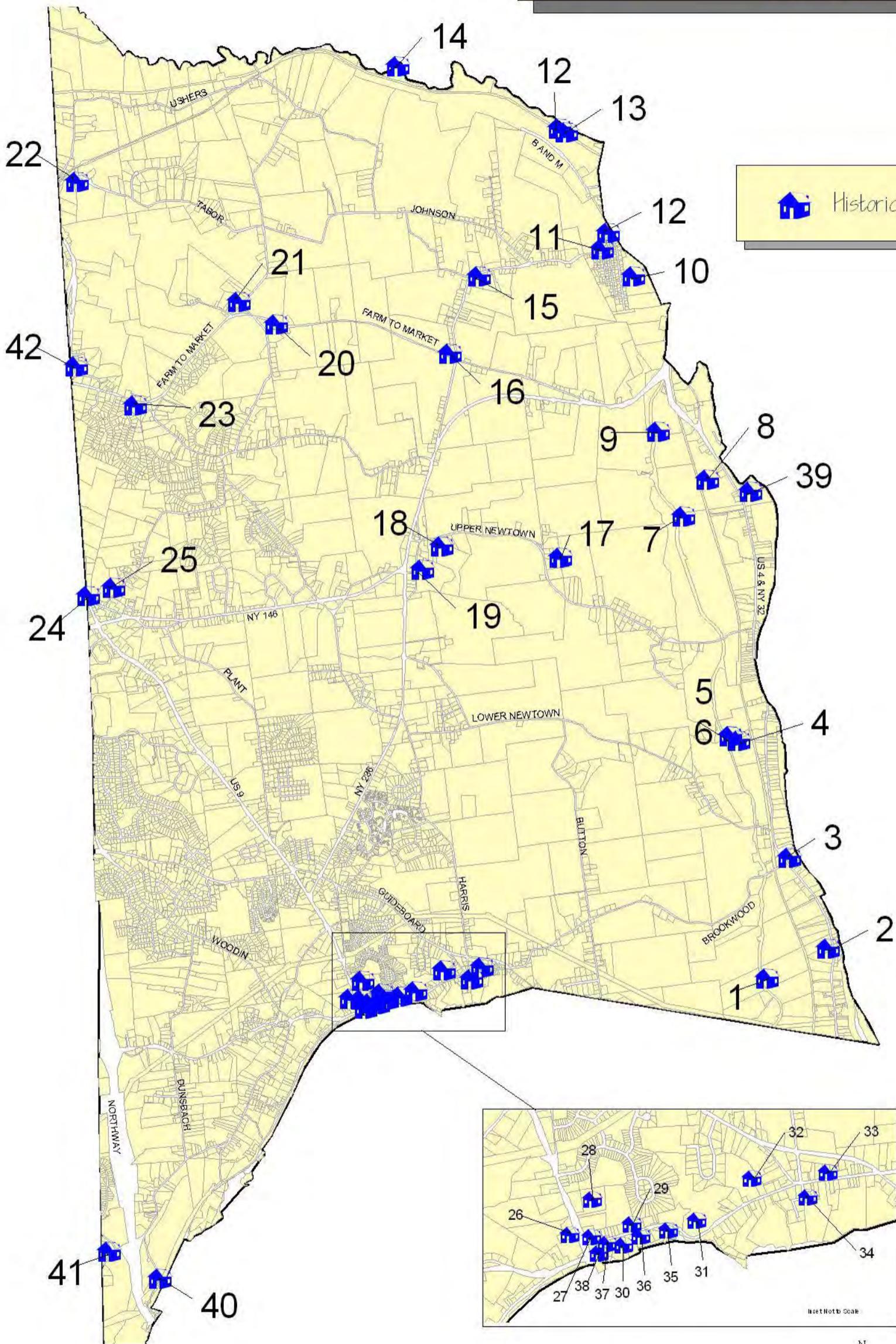


# Town of Halfmoon

## Comprehensive Plan

Historical Resources

Figure A-?



 Historic Site



2000 0 2000 4000 6000 Feet

Map Created August 2001 by:  
**PHA** CLOUGH, HARBOUR & ASSOCIATES LLP  
ENGINEERS, SURVEYORS, PLANNERS & LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS  
Map Last Revised August 2001  
Data Source: Town of Halfmoon Planning Department, County of Saratoga and NYS GIS Clearinghouse.  
Additional Data Source: Clough, Harbour & Associates LLP Mapping



enhance these resources should be approved by the Town prior to construction activities.

**Table A-10**  
**HISTORIC SITES KEY (as of 10/15/01)**

1. ♦ Abandoned Champlain Canal 1823.
2. Red White and Blue Farm, c.1840, one time hotel of J. Pratt.
3. Thomas Peebles home, Brookwood Farm and family cemetery, c. 1766, early tavern which hosted George Washington and other notables.
4. Aqueduct over McDonald Creek.
5. Former locktender's house on 1823 Champlain Canal. No longer standing.
- 6.\* Lock #7 of old Champlain Canal (Flynn's Lock).
- 7.\* Lock #8 of old Champlain Canal.
8. Site of Leland Farm 1737; area of Indian and French Canadian massacre in 1748 in which house burned and family killed. Col. Ten Broeck built his home on same site in 1749.
9. Former site of Jonathan Gates Tavern, c.1773, early inn and meeting place.
10. ♦ Grave of Colonel Elmer Ellsworth, first Union officer killed in the Civil War (1837-1860). Monument erected in 1873.
11. Pruyn home, after 1866, legendary station of Underground Railroad.
12. Site of Barnes and LaDow Sash and Blind Factory 1867. Originally on Anthony Kill; moved into town 1885 when first building razed by fire.
13. Former site of Rogers Brothers Sash and Blind Factory 1859 (no longer exists).
14. Anthony Kill. Called Tenandeho by Indians, site of first industries in Halfmoon and Mcchanicville.
15. Tyler home, c.1760 (located at 134 Pruyn Hill Rd.).
16. Site of First Baptist Church and cemetery 1790.
17. Smith home, c.1839, family cemetery in vicinity (located at 179 Upper Newtown Rd.).
18. Brick schoolhouse prior to 1866 (Newtown/Smithtown hamlets).
19. Smithtown/Newtown Methodist Church. 1870.
20. Peters home, c.1820 (located at 48 Smith Rd.).
21. Carey home, c.1780, early area doctor. Quaker cemetery nearby. Careys were pioneer Quakers.
22. Double arch stone bridge over Dwaas Kill near historic hamlet of Ushers.

23. Anthony's Baking Powder and Spice Factory, c.1866. Joshua Anthony homestead, c.1850, large and notable industry. Family related to suffragette Susan B. Anthony.
24. Clifton Park Hotel 1790, straddles Halfmoon and Clifton Park town boundary.
25. Second Baptist Church 1842, later used as a school and then became the first Shenendehowa Free Library.
26. DeVoe/Peter Woodin house, c.1850.
27. ♦ Hamlet of Crescent, 19<sup>th</sup> century settlement 1840-1850. Contained grain shipping and mercantile establishments largely through the efforts of Alfred Noxon who developed industry between 1840-1844.
28. Union Cemetery 1866. Contains graves of two Revolutionary War soldiers.
29. Methodist Church of Crescent 1852, organized in 1833.
- 30.\* Duncan McMartin home, c.1840. Became home of Truman Younglove, New York State politician and host to U.S. Grant and other American presidents. (Located at 78 Church Hill Rd.)
31. Taylor home, c.1810, family operated lumber mill (57 Church Hill Road).
32. Halfmoon Academy 1821. Private school operated until 1880.
33. Site of early grist mill. There was more mill activity in surrounding area before the Mohawk River was dammed for the present day Erie Barge Canal and lands became submerged.
34. Halfmoon hamlet cemetery formerly of Dutch Reformed Church.
35. C. L. VanSlacke octagon house, c.1820, with later alterations in Victorian style (located at 66 Church Hill Rd.).
36. Alfred Noxon home, c.1840. Mr. Noxon was a prominent business person in Crescent. He established a bank (#38), paint works, block of stores, hotel and Crescent Iron Foundry, which produced stoves and iron railings (88 Church Hill Road).
37. Site of Erie Canal and Crescent Aqueduct, c.1850. Aqueduct carried canal over the Mohawk River from what was formerly called Watervliet, today Town of Colonie.
38. Farmer's Bank of Saratoga County, c.1840, built by Alfred Noxon.
39. Oldest hydro power plant in the United States, c.1895.
40. Ferry site of Cornelius Claes Vandenburg, later called Dunsbach.
41. Vandenburg farmhouse, c.1834. Privately owned residence (32 Riverview Rd.).
42. Old Dater Tavern former home of Scouten Family, c.1800. (Located at N.E. corner of Farm to Market Rd. and State Route 9)
43. Lamb residence, c.1836. Privately owned two story brick building presently undergoing restoration (89 Tabor Road).

44. Two story, wooden framed canal era dwelling, c.1830. Privately owned residence (Terminal Road).
  45. Canal era residence, c.1840. Private residence featuring interior design of the period and tie up ring for canal boats. (11 Canal Road)
  46. Two story brick home, formerly owned by the Baker Family early 1800's. Thought to have been used as offices for canal builders and local brickyard company in mid to late nineteenth century. Privately owned (69 Canal Road).
- ◆ State Marker Site
  - \* National Register Site

### **Opportunities and Constraints**

The Town of Halfmoon has a rich and varied history and still contains some excellent examples of structures built during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Some areas of significance include the locations of the Church Hill Road (Hamlet of Crescent) and the Champlain Canal Historic Overlay Districts. Other significant historical features include remnants of the Old Erie Canal and Towpath. The Champlain Canal and the Erie Canal represent significant opportunities to develop and highlight the historical significance of these features *and* expand recreational opportunities within the Town.

Halfmoon contains many structures and areas worthy of protection and enhancement. These areas should be protected and enhanced whenever possible. This may at times constrain development of a particular site, however in most cases good site design should make it possible to develop a site and protect and enhance historic resources. In this situation a PDD *may* be an appropriate vehicle to develop a site. Development could occur at higher densities than normally allowed elsewhere on the site, while the historic resource is preserved. If properly planned, both the new use and existing resource can be enhanced by this approach.



***APPENDIX B  
TOWN-WIDE  
SURVEY RESULTS***

Town of Halfmoon  
Comprehensive Plan Update

Community Survey

FOR EACH OF THE QUESTIONS IN THIS SURVEY COMPLETELY FILL IN THE APPROPRIATE CIRCLE ON THE LINE THAT CORRESPONDS WITH YOUR REPLY. YOU MAY USE PENCIL, BLUE OR BLACK INK. IF YOU DO NOT WANT TO ANSWER A QUESTION, LEAVE IT BLANK AND CONTINUE. PLEASE DO NOT STAPLE THESE PAGES.

1. How important to you is each of the following reasons for living in the Town of Halfmoon?

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
a. Rural lifestyle	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Life-long resident	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Near family or friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Near job/job opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Setting, landscape of area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Schools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Affordable housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Property taxes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Library	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. Other: _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. Over the next ten years, would you like to see the Town of Halfmoon: (Choose all that apply)

- a.  Develop a Town Center
- b.  Encourage residential development
- c.  Encourage commercial development along Routes 9 & 146 west to Route 236
- d.  Encourage industrial development along the Hudson River and on Ushers Road
- e.  Develop public access to the Hudson and/or Mohawk River
- f.  Discourage mixed residential and commercial development
- g.  Not encourage business or industry
- h.  Not encourage residential growth
- i.  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

3. In the next ten years, would you like to see the population of Halfmoon:

- a.  Stay the same
- b.  Grow moderately
- c.  Grow rapidly

4. How would you rate residential development that has occurred in the Town of Halfmoon over the last 10 years?

- a.  Excessive
- b.  About Right
- c.  Too Limited

5. As growth occurs, which of the following types of housing would you prefer to see in the Town of Halfmoon?

	Yes	No	Don't Know
a. Single family housing (single lots)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Single family developments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Senior citizen housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Village/hamlet style neighborhoods	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Condos/townhouses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Apartments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Affordable Housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. How would you rate commercial development that has occurred in the Town of Halfmoon over the last 10 years?

- a.  Excessive
- b.  About Right
- c.  Too Limited

7. What pattern of commercial development would you prefer to see in the Town of Halfmoon?

- a.  Scattered throughout town
- b.  Distinct centers in commercially zoned areas
- c.  Mixed use with residential development
- d.  Development along all major commercial routes
- e.  No further commercial development
- f.  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Which of the following types of non-residential development would you prefer to see in the Town of Halfmoon?

	Yes	No	Don't Know
a. Passive recreation facilities (trails, picnic areas)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Active recreation areas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Business/professional offices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Convenience stores/small retailer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Fast food restaurants	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Light industrial/warehouse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Large retailer or discount store	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Corporate offices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Town library	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. Educational Facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k. Hi-tech or R&D Parks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
l. Other: _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. Rank in order of importance the following 14 issues facing the Town of Halfmoon during the next five years with 1 being the most important and 14 being the least important

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
a. Adequate drinking water and extension of water lines	<input type="radio"/>													
b. Roads and traffic	<input type="radio"/>													
c. Sewer and waste treatment and extension of sewer lines	<input type="radio"/>													
d. Residential growth	<input type="radio"/>													
e. Economic development and job opportunities	<input type="radio"/>													
f. Commercial & industrial development	<input type="radio"/>													
g. Recreational facilities	<input type="radio"/>													
h. Protection of open space	<input type="radio"/>													
i. Protection of agricultural land uses/resources	<input type="radio"/>													
j. Growth Management	<input type="radio"/>													
k. Affordable Housing/Senior citizen housing	<input type="radio"/>													
l. Property taxes	<input type="radio"/>													
m. Schools	<input type="radio"/>													
n. Other: _____	<input type="radio"/>													

10. Would you... (check those that apply)

- a.  encourage growth if it reduced taxes
- b.  not encourage growth even though it resulted in the same or higher taxes
- c.  reduce the current level of services to reduce taxes

11. How would you rate the following services in the Town of Halfmoon?

	Excellent	Adequate	Poor	Don't Know
a. Water service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Sewer service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Ambulance service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Fire protection services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Streets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Building code enforcement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Snow removal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Recreational opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Senior services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. Other: _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. Below is a list of services that generally require taxes for maintenance and construction. Would you be willing to pay more taxes if you knew the money would be spent in the Town of Halfmoon for that particular purpose?

	Yes	No	Don't Know
a. Improve fire protection	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Improve ambulance service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Improve water service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Improve sewer service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Improve street lighting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Build new roads	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Repair existing roads	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Develop sidewalks and/or trail systems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Recreational opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. Code enforcement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k. Landscaping/Streetscaping	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
l. Municipal garbage collection	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
m. Preservation of open space	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
n. Other: _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13. How many years have you lived in the Town of Halfmoon?  
 0 - 5 years     6 - 10 years     11 - 15 years     Over 15 years

14. Do you expect to be living in the Town of Halfmoon five years from now?  
 Yes     No     Don't know

15. Overall, how would you rate the Town of Halfmoon as a place to live?  
 Very good     Good     Fair     Poor     Very poor

16. Which category best represents the age of the head of your household?  
 18 - 29     30 - 39     40 - 49     50 - 64     65 or older

17. Which of the following categories best describes your total family income (from all sources including children) during the last year?  
 Less than \$10,000  
 \$10,000 - \$24,999  
 \$25,000 - \$49,999  
 \$50,000 - \$74,999  
 \$75,000 - \$99,999  
 \$100,000 and over

18. What was the last year or grade in school you completed?  
 Grade school  
 Some high school  
 High school graduate  
 Some college/vocational  
 Vocational graduate  
 College graduate  
 Some graduate school  
 Graduate degree

19. If you have additional comments about the Town of Halfmoon please add them here:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

20. If you are interested in serving on a subcommittee for the Halfmoon Comprehensive Plan Update please include your name and phone number here:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Town of Halfmoon  
Comprehensive Plan Update**

**Community Survey**

DRAFT

**FOR EACH OF THE QUESTIONS IN THIS SURVEY PLACE A CHECK MARK ON THE LINE THAT CORRESPONDS WITH YOUR REPLY. IF YOU DO NOT WANT TO ANSWER A QUESTION, LEAVE IT BLANK AND CONTINUE.**

**1. How important to you is each of the following reasons for living in the Town of Halfmoon?**

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
a. Rural lifestyle .....	<u>64</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>7</u>
b. Life-long resident .....	<u>30</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>42</u>
c. Near family or friends .....	<u>45</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>19</u>
d. Near job/job opportunities .....	<u>42</u>	<u>39</u>	<u>19</u>
e. Setting, landscape of area .....	<u>67</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>5</u>
f. Schools .....	<u>51</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>23</u>
g. Affordable housing .....	<u>56</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>12</u>
h. Property taxes .....	<u>70</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>6</u>
i. Library .....	<u>26</u>	<u>48</u>	<u>26</u>
j. Other .....	<u>85</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>9</u>

**2. Over the next ten years, would you like to see the Town of Halfmoon: (check all that apply)**

- a. 43 Develop a Town Center
- b. 29 Encourage residential development
- c. 34 Encourage commercial development along Routes 9 & 146 west to Route 236
- d. 26 Encourage industrial development along the Hudson River and on Ushers Road.
- e. 56 Develop public access to the Hudson and/or Mohawk River
- f. 56 Discourage mixed residential and commercial development
- g. 35 Not encourage business or industry
- h. 36 Not encourage residential growth
- i. 14 other: \_\_\_\_\_

**3. In the next ten years, would you like to see the population of the Town of Halfmoon:**

- a. 42 Stay the same    b. 57 Grow moderately    c. 2 Grow rapidly

**4. How would you rate residential development that has occurred in the Town of Halfmoon over the last 10 years?**

- a. 45 Excessive    b. 52 About Right    c. 2 Too Limited

**5. As growth occurs, which of the following types of housing would you prefer to see in the Town of Halfmoon?**

	Yes	No	Don't know
a. Single family housing (single lots).....	<u>88</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>
b. Single family developments .....	<u>64</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>9</u>
c. Senior citizen housing .....	<u>68</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>16</u>
d. Village/hamlet style neighborhoods ...	<u>52</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>18</u>
e. Condos/townhouses .....	<u>26</u>	<u>65</u>	<u>9</u>
f. Apartments .....	<u>14</u>	<u>77</u>	<u>8</u>
g. Affordable housing .....	<u>51</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>12</u>

DRAFT

6. How would you rate commercial development that has occurred in the town of Halfmoon over the last 10 years?

- a. 34 Excessive b. 55 About Right c. 10 Too Limited

7. What pattern of commercial development would you prefer to see in the Town of Halfmoon?

- a. 7 Scattered throughout town
b. 50 Distinct centers in commercially zoned areas
c. 4 Mixed use with residential development
d. 26 Development along all major commercial routes
e. 22 No further commercial development
f. 2 Other:

8. Which of the following types of non-residential development would you prefer to see in the Town of Halfmoon?

Table with 4 columns: Item, Yes, No, Don't know. Rows include Passive recreation facilities, Active recreation facilities, Business/professional offices, etc.

9. Rank in order of importance the following issues facing the Town of Halfmoon during the next five years with 1 being the most important and 14 the least important

Table with 2 columns: Most important, least important. Rows include Adequate drinking water, Roads and traffic, Sewer and waste treatment, etc.

10. Would you .... (check those that apply)

- a. 48 encourage growth if it reduced taxes
b. 40 not encourage growth even though it resulted in the same or higher taxes
c. 11 reduce the current level of services to reduce taxes

11. How would you rate the following services in the Town of Halfmoon?

Table with 4 columns: Item, Excellent, Adequate, Poor. Rows include Water service, Sewer service, Ambulance service, etc.

f. Building code enforcement ...	<u>17</u>	<u>66</u>	<u>17</u>
g. Snow removal .....	<u>51</u>	<u>46</u>	<u>3</u>
h. Recreational opportunities .....	<u>9</u>	<u>55</u>	<u>35</u>
i. Senior services .....	<u>19</u>	<u>69</u>	<u>12</u>
j. Other .....	<u>23</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>72</u>

**12. Below is a list of services that generally require taxes for maintenance and construction. Would you be willing to pay more taxes if you knew the money would be spent in Halfmoon for that particular purpose?**

	Yes	No	Don't Know
a. Improve fire protection .....	<u>53</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>17</u>
b. Improve ambulance service .....	<u>52</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>19</u>
c. Improve water service .....	<u>61</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>11</u>
d. Improve sewer service .....	<u>51</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>13</u>
e. Improve street lighting .....	<u>27</u>	<u>62</u>	<u>11</u>
f. Build new roads .....	<u>24</u>	<u>62</u>	<u>13</u>
g. Repair existing roads .....	<u>69</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>9</u>
h. Build sidewalks .....	<u>57</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>8</u>
i. Recreational opportunities .....	<u>50</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>13</u>
j. Code enforcement .....	<u>28</u>	<u>48</u>	<u>24</u>
k. Landscaping/Streetscaping .....	<u>32</u>	<u>53</u>	<u>15</u>
l. Municipal garbage collection .....	<u>40</u>	<u>46</u>	<u>14</u>
m. Preservation of open space .....	<u>62</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>14</u>
o. Other .....	<u>39</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>30</u>

**13. How many years have you lived in the Town of Halfmoon?**

<u>27</u> 1 to 5 years	<u>15</u> 11 to 15 years
<u>18</u> 6 to 10 years	<u>39</u> Over 15 years

**14. Do you expect to be living in the Town of Halfmoon five years from now?**

<u>81</u> Yes	<u>4</u> No	<u>15</u> Don't know
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**15. Overall, how would you rate the Town of Halfmoon as a place to live?**

<u>43</u> Very good	<u>47</u> Good	<u>9</u> Fair	<u>&lt;1</u> Poor	<u>&lt;1</u> Very poor
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**16. Which category best represents the age of the head of your household?**

<u>4</u> 18 - 29	<u>30</u> 50 - 64
<u>23</u> 30 - 39	<u>15</u> 65 or older
<u>27</u> 40 - 49	

**17. Which of the following categories best describes your total family income (from all sources including children) during the last year?**

<u>      </u> Less than \$10,000	<u>      </u> \$50,000 - \$74,999
<u>      </u> \$10,000 - \$24,999	<u>      </u> \$75,000 - \$99,999
<u>      </u> \$25,000 - \$49,999	<u>      </u> \$100,000 and over

**18. What was the last year or grade in school you completed?**

<u>1</u> Grade school	<u>3</u> Vocational graduate
<u>3</u> Some high school	<u>33</u> College graduate
<u>16</u> High school graduate	<u>6</u> Some graduate school
<u>17</u> Some college/vocational	<u>20</u> Graduate degree

**19. If you have additional comments about the Town of Halfmoon please add them here**

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**20. If you are interested in serving on a subcommittee for the Halfmon Comprehensive Plan  
Update please include your name and phone number here**

**DRAFT**

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*Thank you for completing this survey*

# TOWN OF HALFMOON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

## OVERVIEW OF SURVEY RESULTS

### 1. General

A total of 1449 surveys were returned out of 7500 sent. Five surveys were returned from individuals outside Town boundaries and seven were returned blank. The response rate was nearly 20%, which is excellent for a written survey. Survey results were compiled using a piece of equipment called a Scantron, which automatically tallies the responses and compiles the raw data on a spreadsheet. Surveys that would not register with the Scantron were tallied by hand. All written comments were categorized and listed on a separate sheet. The responses were then converted into percentages based on the number of people answering a specific question. Not all questions were compared to the number of valid surveys (1432) because many individuals did not answer all the questions. They were instead compared to the number of people who responded to the specific question under scrutiny. This allowed all responses to be tallied even if an individual did not answer every question on the survey.

As a general rule, the results should be used as a barometer to affirm what has already been identified as an important issue or to identify “new” (previously unidentified) issues or to indicate a trend different from expectations. The importance of issues however should not be determined solely by percentages (comparing 25% to 26% for example). The percentages (high or low) should be used to identify issues that should be studied or clarified to determine their potential place in the plan.

Some questions resulted in data that may be hard to interpret. Question 9 for example, asked people to prioritize from 1-14, 14 different issues. This question was rather complicated. Many people skipped it or only responded to the issues that were most important to them or ranked items more simply (1 for important, 7 for somewhat important and 14 for not important). As a result the responses to these questions should be used for the general information it provides (i.e. property taxes are an important issue for many people). For each of the 14 issues the percentage of respondents identifying the issue as most important and least important were calculated.

### 2. Trends

- a. **Rural lifestyle and open space** appear to be important. Sixty-four percent (64%) of respondents indicated that the rural lifestyle was an important reason for living in Halfmoon. Related to the issue of rural lifestyle and open space, the development of passive and active recreational areas was also deemed very important (91% and 72% respectively). In question 9 respondents were asked to rank issues in order of importance; protection of open space, protection of agricultural land uses/resources and growth management were all rated as important issues with only drinking water and property taxes ranked higher

overall. Question 12 addresses the willingness to pay higher taxes for added/improved services and respondents indicated the following: 62% would pay higher taxes to preserve open space, 57% would pay higher taxes for sidewalks and trail systems and 50% would pay higher taxes for increased recreational opportunities.

- b. **Taxes** are important! This was also indicated on many of the written comments included on the last page of the survey. Seventy (70%) of the respondents indicated that property taxes were a very important reason for their living in Halfmoon. Forty-one percent (41%) of the respondents rated it as the most pressing issue facing the Town in question 9 (the “ranking” question). There was however a strong indication that people would be willing to pay more taxes for services they value (See question 12).

The issue of taxes is an area the Town may wish to pursue some “education” of residents. It appears that many people think that the Town has absolute control of school taxes. The Town can impact the tax rate in several ways including the increase in residential units, property assessments and the balance of development that occurs within Town/school district boundaries. The Town can set policy that may impact taxes such as the rate and type of development approved. The Comprehensive Plan is an appropriate vehicle to consider and outline such policy. The type of programs and facilities provided by the various school districts within the Town is an issue that involves State mandates, the specific school board and residents of those districts.

- c. **Services** were generally rated as adequate or excellent. However over 20% rated water and sewer services as poor. Recreational opportunities were also rated as poor by 35% of respondents. Respondents generally indicated a willingness to pay higher taxes to improve water and sewer services. Municipal garbage appeared somewhat important although a large group indicated no interest in this service. Although not generally ranked as poor, people indicated willingness to pay higher taxes to improve fire protection, ambulance service and repair existing roads.
- d. **Single family housing** on single lots was the overwhelming housing choice (88%) of respondents. All housing types with the exception of apartments and condos/townhouse appeared to be acceptable to residents. Very few people were undecided on this issue. Responses to housing types were generally yes or no (Question 5). Responses to “not encourage residential development” and “encourage residential development “as a focus of the Town over the next 10 years were very close (question 2). Forty-five percent (45%) of respondents felt that residential development over the last 10 years was excessive while 52% felt it was about right.

**e. Non-residential Development (questions 2, 7, 8)**

- Commercial – The responses to this varied depending on the type of non-residential facility. Most residents did not identify fast food restaurants as desirable. Many other commercial uses had a large number of respondents indicating “no” as well (big box, warehouse, convenience/small retailer), but a smaller but still significant number indicating yes. The results were more favorable for some uses (corporate office, business and professional offices). There seems to be strong support for educational facilities and a Town library. Many people believe that the Town and School District(s) are linked administratively.
- Recreational - There appears to be widespread support for the development of both active and passive recreational facilities (72% and 91% respectively). This is supported in the response to two questions: by the willingness of people to pay additional taxes *if* these services were improved and by the percentage of people who identified open space as an important issue facing the Town. In a related issue over half the respondents indicated interest in the development of public access to the Hudson and/or Mohawk Rivers.
- General- People dislike the idea of mixed residential and commercial development. A fairly large group does not wish to encourage business or industry but similar numbers would like to see commercial development along Routes 9 & 146 east to Route 236. Half of the respondents reacted favorably to the idea of distinct commercial centers in commercially zoned areas rather than scattered development throughout Town. Over half of the responses indicated that the pace of non-residential development was “about right” however over 1/3 of the respondents felt that development has been excessive”.

**f. Demography (questions 13-18)**

- There are large numbers of both long time (39%) and new residents (27%). It is important to note that over half of the respondents have lived in the Town more than 11 years. A resounding 81% plan to still live in Halfmoon 5 years from now!
- Ninety percent (90%) of the respondents indicated that the Town is a good or very good place to live
- Eighty percent (80%) of the population responding to this survey falls between 30-64 years, the years when many people are buying homes, raising families, pursuing careers. Only 4% of the population is between 20-29 and 15% 65 or older.
- The population is fairly well educated. Ninety-five percent (95%) of respondents indicated an education level of high school or higher. Nearly 80% have completed education beyond high school.

### 3. Observations

- a. **People appear to be committed to the Town.** This is excellent! They do have a variety of concerns regarding development. Overall it appears residents don't want to stop development completely but would like to see more control over the type and location of development.
- b. **People are concerned about open space, agricultural lands, and recreational facilities.** Many indicated that they would be willing to pay higher taxes for this type of protection. Many people are also concerned about tax rates and their ability to pay increased taxes. The key here is to balance the protection of open space with cost. The Comprehensive Plan process will begin to identify important resources and programs to protect these resources. Over the long term the cost and effectiveness of these programs will need to be determined and priorities identified in terms of protection.
- c. **People are concerned with the pace of growth.** Overall they would prefer more controlled growth.
- d. **Many services received high ratings.** The Town needs to address issues regarding water service. The Comprehensive Plan will identify policy regarding the expansion of municipal water service. Emergency services received high ratings however people are concerned with the continuation of these services. Many people feel that recreational services should be improved.

# *Appendix C*

## *Response to Public Comment*

# 1. PUBLIC HEARING

The planning process for this Comprehensive Plan was established with the primary intent of directly involving the public throughout the process. The community outreach program involved neighborhood meetings, a Town-wide survey, public workshops, and a public hearing. The entire process was guided by a planning committee consisting of subcommittees charged with specific topics. Chairpersons of each subcommittee formed the main committee, ultimately responsible for the plan recommendations leading up to the preparation of a draft plan.

Upon presentation of the draft plan to the Town Board, the plan adoption process began. In accordance with Town Law (§272-a), adoption of the Town of Halfmoon Comprehensive Plan by the Town Board is subject to the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR). Town Law also requires that the adopting board conduct a public hearing. Although not required, a SEQR public hearing is also recommended and may occur concurrently with Town Law requirements. Therefore, a public hearing was held by the Town Board on April 29, 2003 at the Town of Halfmoon Senior Center. A stenographer was present to record all comments. A copy of the public hearing transcript is available for public review in the Town Clerk's office in Town Hall, 111 Route 236, Halfmoon, New York 12065.

## **2. WRITTEN COMMENTS**

Copies of all written comments received during the comment period are provided following this page. A summary of the comments and associated responses are provided in section 3.

### 3. COMMENT AND RESPONSE

The following provides a summary of comments received during the public hearing and in writing and responses. Any changes to the plan as a result of the comments are noted in the responses.

**Comment:** Supportive comments were made for the plan recommendations, particularly in support of historic resources and recreational needs.

**Response:** Comments noted and appreciated.

**Comment:** Many individuals expressed their concern that the pace of development is consuming important land resources and many of the resources that the Town is trying to protect through the comprehensive plan and subsequent action plan tasks will be lost if the plan is not adopted soon and immediately implemented. Some individuals called for a moratorium and others suggested that implementation begin prior to adoption. The suggestion was made that the Town could set tasks in motion by setting up committees, appropriating funds, etc, while finalizing the plan.

**Response:** The Town Board recognizes the need to proceed quickly to address the pace and appropriateness of development throughout the Town. Efforts are underway to establish a committee and set aside funds to address rezoning. A trails committee has been working on establishing a trail network for the Town. The Facilities Committee is also developing a recreation master plan. Implementation is essentially underway. Once adopted, the Comprehensive Plan provides significant guidance with respect to where and how development should occur. Projects that are not in compliance with the Comprehensive Plan must justify the discrepancies appropriately or the Town can conclude that the project is not in accordance with officially adopted land use plans and may therefore have an impact on the community. This is certainly justification for denial of planned developments that require a zoning amendment. New zoning and development guidelines prepared in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan will provide greater authority and land use control.

**Comment:** The plan recommendations do not provide enough breakdown of commercial uses necessary to avoid the placement of large commercial uses in

inappropriate locations. Future zoning should address this issue.

**Response:** As noted, the plan recommendations chapter does not identify specific zones. It does recommend various commercial and office land uses within specific areas of the Town to begin to address inappropriate or conflicting uses. In particular, the Town's major corridors, such as Route 9 and Route 146 are addressed in terms of the need for corridor studies to better define land use and to establish plans for controlling access and improving the function and aesthetics of the corridors. Specific commercial and other business land uses include the Exit 9 Commercial Area; Mixed Business, Commercial and Office Park; Professional Office Corridor; commercial waterfront development; Hamlet Commercial Center; and potential uses for the Route 9 corridor within the Halfmoon Center Core Area. These recommendations are intended to become the basis for more detailed evaluation during the rezoning process. The concerns regarding conflicting commercial uses are recognized by the Town Board and are intended to be addressed during rezoning and subsequent corridor work.

**Comment:** The plan does not address the need for a hospital in the Town. Hospitals in the region are a considerable distance from the Town. At a minimum there should be an emergency room facility. Urgent care facilities do not serve this purpose.

**Response:** Although the plan recommendations do not specifically address the need for a hospital, the broader issue of the availability and quality/level of service of community services is noted as an issue that should be monitored. Firefighting, emergency services, and police service are all considered critical elements to preserving the health, safety and welfare of Town residents. The need for a hospital might be added to this list but should probably be considered from a regional perspective.

**Comment:** Numerous people identified a concern over land use along Tabor Road during the public hearing. They feel that the industrial zoning for this area is inappropriate based on the current residential character of the area. They would like the plan to change the land use of this area to residential. In addition to land use, others cited environmental constraints, such as stream corridors and wetlands, and road capacity and structure as sufficient reason to preclude industrial development.

**Response:** The land use designation for the area along Tabor Road essentially reflects current zoning. The exception is land located south of Tabor Road and without frontage on Tabor Road. The intent would be for this land to access Route 9. Considerable consideration was given to this area when it was initially rezoned for industrial uses several years ago. Some of these considerations include access to Route 9 and I-87 Exit 10, as well as the proximity of the land to an active railroad. However, this area has not developed as anticipated and without public utilities will probably not be developed.

Residential development has occurred along Tabor Road and now abuts the industrially zoned land. The area has become a residential neighborhood. For these reasons and in response to the comments and support of the residents of Tabor Road, the Comprehensive Plan has been revised to support residential uses for those parcels fronting on Tabor Road, extending from the Northern Sites development west to the intersection with the railroad (Figure C-1). This land use would be an extension of the Medium-Low Density Conservation Residential use proposed for much of the Northern Halfmoon Planning Area.

It is still recognized that the proximity of the railroad presents compatibility issues with residential uses. Further study will be necessary during the rezoning process to determine if all of the land identified as residential use should be zoned in this manner. This would be of particular concern for those smaller parcels located adjacent to the railroad and for potential new development on larger parcels.

**Comment:** What makes the Town attractive is its rural character. All of Area 3 (Newtown) should be considered for low density development. Natural constraints render this area inappropriate for development.

**Response:** The areas within Newtown identified as medium-low density conservation residential reflect the anticipated extension of sewer along Route 146 and Route 236 and the likelihood that these areas could be served by sewer. The character of the area would undoubtedly change if utilities are made available. How this area is developed will depend on efforts to encourage clustering, and opportunities to incorporate open space in site design. The establishment of incentive zoning would provide a means of pursuing the preservation of important pieces of open space through the development process. The plan recommendations recognize the open, rural qualities of both the Newtown and Northern Halfmoon

# TOWN OF HALFMOON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN LAND USE PLAN

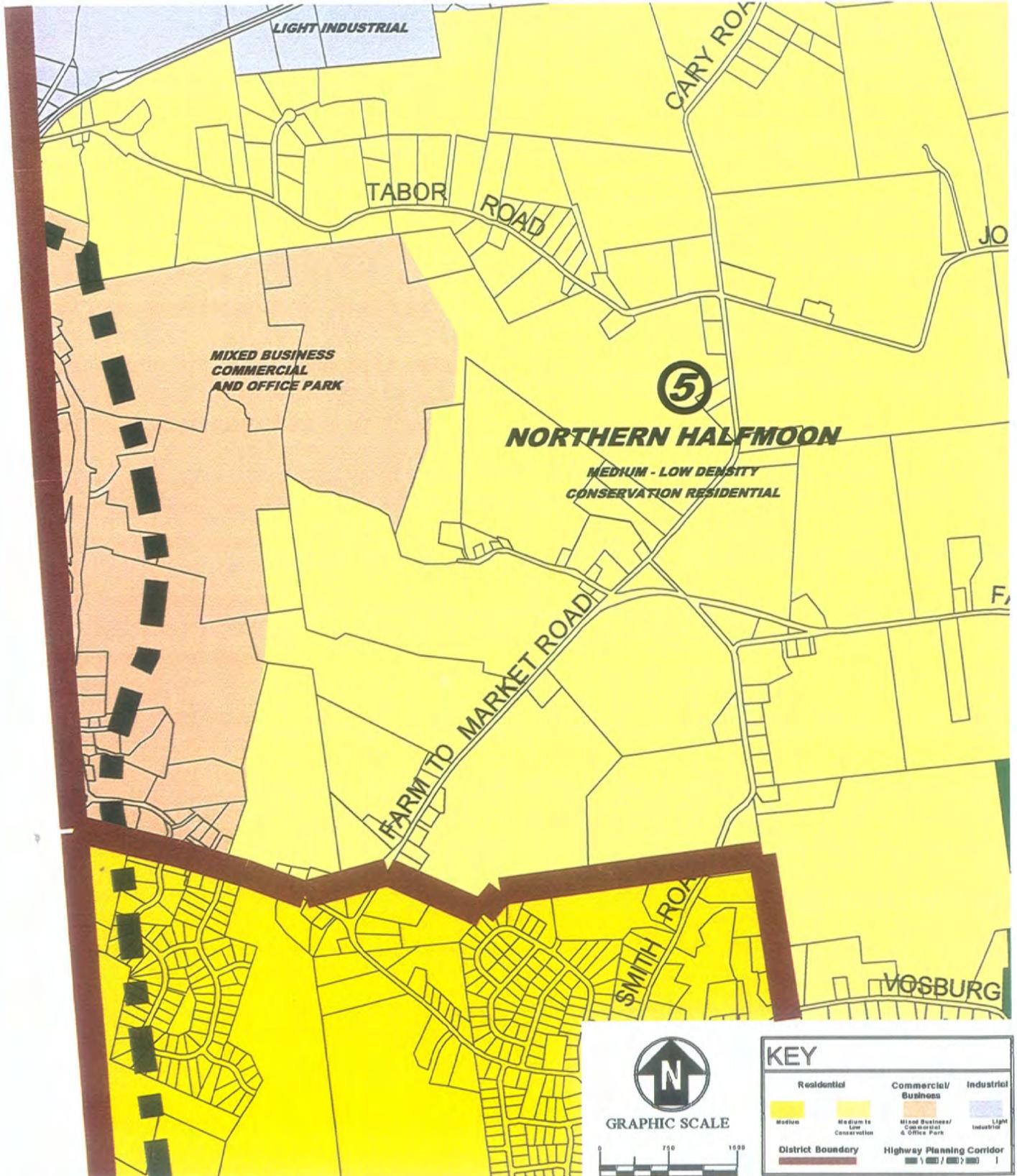


FIGURE No. C-1

## TOWN OF HALFMOON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

TABOR ROAD RESIDENTIAL AREA



**CLOUGH, HARBOUR & ASSOCIATES LLP**  
ENGINEERS, SURVEYORS, PLANNERS & LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS  
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12205  
518-483-4800

CHA # 9911

DATE: 8/26/03

planning areas and recommend that the Town aggressively seek opportunities to preserve open space in these areas.

**Comment:** The reduction in development density in Newtown is unfair to land owners. If the intent is to maintain the rural atmosphere as might be viewed by adjacent roadways, then the better approach is to cluster and limit road frontage. If the Town wants to preserve the land then the Town should compensate the land owners accordingly. Housing needs to remain affordable in the Town and cannot be achieved with too many restrictions.

**Response:** The reduction of density in Newtown should have little impact on the development potential of the land. The assumption made in the comment is that all land in the Town will be served by utilities. This is not a reasonable assumption since the cost of providing water and sewer dictates, for the most part, significant development to make the services affordable to the district ratepayers. Steep slopes and other environmental constraints already present significant limitations to development. Provision of sewer service to the low density portion of Newtown is not anticipated within the 20-year planning period used to develop the plan recommendations. The plan notes, however, that should sewer become a reality within the Hudson River Corridor, there may be opportunities to serve some parcels within Newtown. Such development would need to employ clustering and maintain overall density requirements.

The Town should seek opportunities to preserve open space through incentive zoning, purchase of development rights, and other means. Typically, this involves the purchase of the development rights of the land in exchange for a permanent conservation easement on the land. In effect, the land owner is compensated for the lost development rights and still retains the land which can be sold for the newly specified use (eg., open space, agriculture, large single family parcel).

**Comment:** Traffic is a major concern. Can elements of the plan be implemented now?

**Response:** Traffic has been recognized as a major issue of concern to Town residents. The plan provides numerous recommendations to address the issues that primarily relate to the Town's major corridors (Route 9, Route 236 and Route 146). Corridor studies are recommended to not only address traffic flow but to also

account for land use and land use potential, the pedestrian environment, and aesthetics. Other recommendations call for a mobility plan to address the Town's entire transportation, bicycle, and pedestrian/trail network and controls on frontage development along collector roads.

At this point, the Town has achieved consensus on the plan recommendations and future actions. Adoption of the plan provides the Town with guidance that must be considered by all future development projects. The implementation of transportation studies will depend on funding and other priorities. For example, it is anticipated that the first action after (or even prior to) adoption of the Comprehensive Plan will be zoning. Whether or not the resources and opportunities (such as grants) will be available to the Town to progress with other actions concurrently is unknown at this time.

**Comment:** People should be able to do whatever they want with their land.

**Response:** This is a basic land rights comment that reflects a general appreciation for the freedoms of America. For many in truly rural areas, the right to use the land as the individual sees fit is seldom an issue. The use is almost always rural in nature and the rural character in and of itself mitigates any unintended impacts of such use. However, Halfmoon is no longer a rural community. The vision for the Town recognizes the importance of open space but foresees a growing, working, recreating, interconnected community. As such, there must be regulations, guidelines and incentives to control land use so as not to result in land use conflicts and associated impacts on neighbors and the community.

**Comment:** Agriculture should be protected.

**Response:** There are few active farms in the community but those that are left should be protected to the greatest extent practicable. This not only relates to the use of the agricultural land itself but the types of uses that surround it. At present there are no programs or incentives in the Town that could be used to help preserve agricultural land and other open space. The plan recommendations provide many suggestions to compensate farmers in order to allow them to keep farming (compensation for development rights – several methods, and/or tax incentives through term easements). The Action Plan calls for the preparation of an open space plan. This effort has been made a priority by the Town and should be addressed in

the short term.

**Comment:** All stream corridors should be named so they have identity, thus better able to be protected.

**Response:** The inventory (Appendix A) identifies those streams that appears on USGS quadrangle mapping for the Town. Some of these streams are named on the mapping and others are not. The Town could consider a more thorough mapping effort to identify all streams and provide names to the unnamed. The current mapping is intended to be used as the official map to identify streams within project sites that must be protected by setbacks (buffers). Through implementation of development guidelines, greater detail and perhaps more stringent requirements could be employed to protect specific resources.

**Comment:** Infrastructure should be addressed, particularly in developed areas, to insure good levels of service. This includes water, sewer, roads, sidewalks, trails, gas, electric, and communications.

**Response:** This is an important issue identified in the plan recommendations. Certain areas of the Town could benefit from additional development and redevelopment to complement existing development and increase land value. However, these areas are currently experiencing impacts from traffic, noise, pollution, and aging infrastructure that should be addressed first to provide adequate capacity for future development. These areas would particularly benefit from improvements to traffic circulation and the pedestrian environment.

