

Hamlets



Hamlets

PLANNING FOR SMART GROWTH
AND EXPANSION OF HAMLETS
IN THE ADIRONDACK PARK

AN ILLUSTRATED GUIDE

ROGER TRANCIK, FASLA
URBAN DESIGN CONSULTANTS
ITHACA, NEW YORK

Hamlets 3 was written and produced by:

Roger Trancik, FASLA
Urban Design Consultants
Ithaca, New York

Roger Trancik, principal-in-charge, directed the work. The *Hamlets 3* team included: Zachary Boggs, Daniel Kelleher and Daniel Stevens on research, writing, and graphic production; Anna Reynolds on field analysis; sub-consultants Paul Saporito and Deni Ruggieri on concept development. Final copyediting was by Susan R. Dixon and printing by Arnold Printing Corporation of Ithaca. Bill Johnston, AICP was a key partner in making *Hamlets 3* a reality.

Funds for *Hamlets 3* were provided by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation through its Adirondack Park Community Smart Growth Grant Program, sponsored by the Adirondack Community Housing Trust in partnership with Essex County.

Special thanks to our fieldwork hosts in Elizabethtown: Town Supervisor Noel Merrihew, Elena Borstein and Meghan Murphy; Old Forge: Town Supervisor Robert Moore, Lani Ulrich and Deb Carhart; Star Lake: Town Supervisor Mark Hall, Elizabeth Cooper and Chris Westbrook. Supplemental funds for printing were provided by the towns of Elizabethtown and Fine, Adirondack Community Trust, the Housing Assistance Program of Essex County and the Adirondack Community Housing Trust.

We greatly appreciate support of the Adirondack Council, guidance from the *Hamlets 3* Advisory Committee, and participation of the Adirondack Park Agency, especially Curt Stiles, Chairman; Jim Connolly, Deputy Director of Planning; Brian Grisi, Local Planning Assistance Specialist; Matt Kendall, Senior Natural Resource Planner; and Robyn Burgess, Environmental Program Specialist. Thanks, also, to Victor Putman, Essex County Department of Community Development and Planning, and Alan Hipps and Emily Kilburn of Adirondack Community Housing Trust, for administrative support. Many thanks to the Department of City and Regional Planning, College of Architecture, Art and Planning, Cornell University for providing space and staff support during the production periods.

Hamlets 3 is a public document written for local communities and regional decision-makers to plan for the sustainable growth of hamlets in the Adirondack Park. You are encouraged to use the material for this purpose, giving full credit to the authors and sponsoring organizations of *Hamlets 3*. Copyright restrictions apply to reproduction and distribution in any form for commercial or other purposes; such use is prohibited without the written permission of *Urban Design Consultants* and the *Hamlets 3* sponsors.

This guidebook can be viewed online at the *Hamlets 3* website www.adkhamlets.org.

First edition of 1000 copies.

December 2010.

contents

5

1.0 ABOUT HAMLETS 3

9

2.0 SMART GROWTH PRINCIPLES

17

3.0 STUDY ELEMENTS

25

4.0 FIELD ANALYSIS

39

5.0 EXPANSION MODEL

59

6.0 ACHIEVING SUCCESS

Image Sources

The Hamlets 3 team produced all images except the following:

p. 13 Våxjö photographs, Våxjö Kommun, www.vaxjo.se; p. 15 train photograph, Upper Hudson River Railroad, www.uhrr.com; p. 17 hamlet lithograph, Stuart D. Ludlum, *Exploring the Adirondacks 100 Years Ago*, Brodock and Ludlum, 1972; p. 18, 22, 23, 26, 31, 32, 60 maps and orthoimagery, Adirondack Park Agency; p. 28 Court Street aerial photograph, Town of Elizabethtown; p. 32 Old Forge music park photograph, Town of Webb Historical Association; p. 33 McCauley Mountain Recreation Center proposal sketch, CAP-21, WARDA; p. 53 Boulder, Colorado photograph, Paul Saporito Architects; p. 60 Inlet map, *The Weekly Adirondack*, Old Forge; p. 61 Tahawus Lodge Center schematic drawing, Appleby Foundation, Inc.

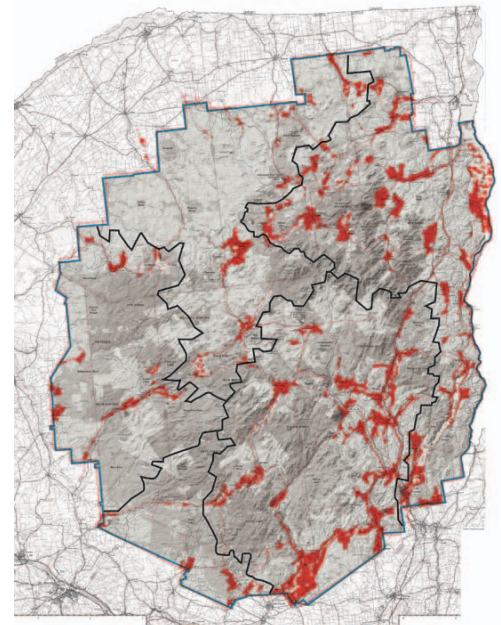
SMART GROWTH BALANCES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PRESERVATION.

About *Hamlets 3*

Many hamlets in the Adirondack Park have expressed a need for residential and commercial expansion. Using the principles of smart growth, *Hamlets 3* responds to this need by helping local communities and regional decision-makers plan for sustainable development. Smart growth, which balances economic development and preservation of the environment, has two important benefits:

1. it enables communities to integrate land suitable for development into the fabric of the existing hamlet, thus concentrating rather than dissipating resources, and
2. it complements the protection of forests, farmland and other forms of open space by avoiding visually unappealing, and resource-inefficient sprawl and strip development.

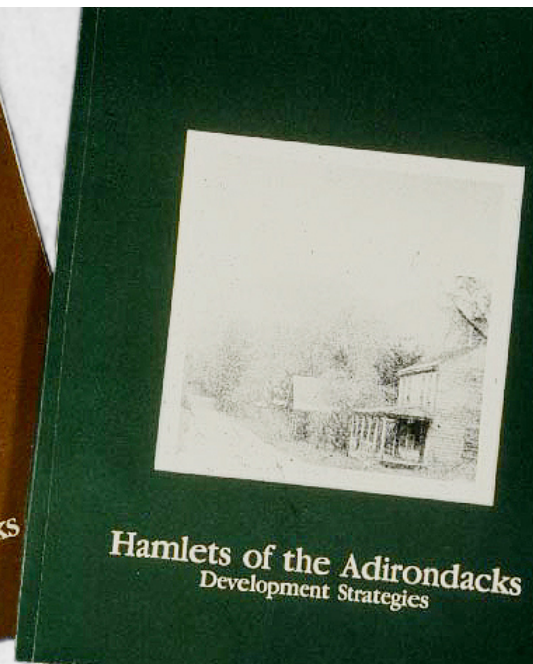
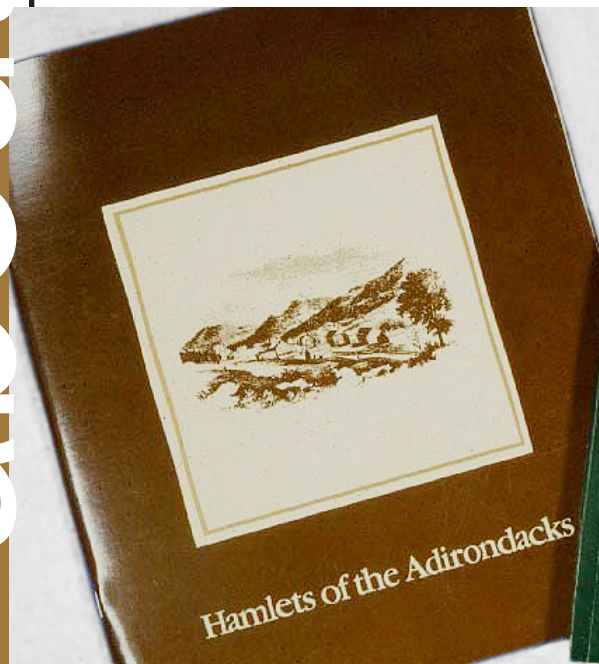
This guide develops a planning and design model for smart growth that builds on existing community centers and bridges state and local planning processes.



Hamlets 3 encompasses the entire 6-million acre park and over 130 hamlets and villages, mapped in red.

Hamlets 3 builds on Hamlets of the Adirondacks 1 & 2 from the 1980s.

HAMLETS 1 AND 2



Planning for **Smart Growth** and

EXPANSION: HAMLETS OF THE ADIRONDACKS 3

DEC SMART GROWTH CATEGORIES

- **LOCAL** - one municipality
- **REGIONAL** - two or more municipalities
- **PARKWIDE** - multiple municipalities

PROJECT GOAL:

TO DEVELOP A SMART GROWTH PLANNING
MODEL THAT WILL HELP ADIRONDACK
HAMLETS EXPAND INTO THE FUTURE

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

PROTECT NATURAL RESOURCES WITHIN &
NEAR HAMLETS BY PREVENTING SPRAWL

INTEGRATE EXPANSION PROJECTS INTO THE
FABRIC OF EXISTING HAMLETS

PROMOTE SMART, SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC
GROWTH OF THE HAMLETS

Hamlets 3 presentations in different areas of the park guided discussion on smart growth principles, precedents, and best practices.

SMART GROWTH IMPROVES QUALITY OF LIFE IN HAMLETS.

Hamlets 1 & 2 background

Hamlets 3 is the third installment of a series that builds on two previous studies from the 1980s: *Hamlets of the Adirondacks 1* and *2*. *Hamlets 1* educated persons and agencies (especially those outside of the park) about the existence of the hamlets, addressing any perception that the Adirondacks is entirely a wilderness, without any communities or resident population. It made the case that the hamlets had pressing needs for new investment and revitalization, and that appropriate policies and programs were required to meet the needs of hamlets. Problems identified in *Hamlets 1* included struggling local economies, workforce housing shortages, inadequate infrastructure, deteriorating public realms, and perceived administrative obstacles to development.

Hamlets 2 provided local governments, planning boards, community organizations, and concerned individuals with ideas and strategies on hamlet revitalization. *Hamlets 1* received a National Merit Award from the American Society of Landscape Architects, and *Hamlets 1 & 2* won the American Planning Association's National Best Planning Project Award in 1987. Roger Trancik, professor emeritus, Cornell University, was lead consultant in the development and production of *Hamlets 1 & 2*.

Hamlets 3 project

Hamlets 3 finds ways to create opportunities for sustainable smart expansion of Adirondack hamlets by improving their physical and economic environment. This can be achieved in part through affordable housing, jobs, open spaces, community facilities, and the expansion of infrastructure.

Hamlets 3 recognizes the uniqueness of the Adirondacks as a

significant nature preserve that also contains a diverse collection of hamlets – “a park of people and nature.” It recognizes the special problems of the Adirondack hamlet as small, isolated, and having a seasonally-fluctuating population and economy. It also recognizes the requirements of the regional environmental planning regulations administered by the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) and the need to provide local communities and their constituent agencies with tools, procedures, and guidelines to plan for appropriate kinds of development. *Hamlets 3* respects the positive attributes of the Adirondacks to improve quality of life in the hamlets.

Client groups and sponsors

Hamlets 3 is funded by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), in partnership with the APA and Department of State, under its current and ongoing Adirondack Park Community Smart Growth Grant Program. The overall purpose of this initiative is to link environmental protection, economic development and community livability within the special conditions of the Adirondack Park.

The firm of Roger Trancik, FASLA, *Urban Design Consultants*, Ithaca, New York is lead consultant for *Hamlets 3*. The Adirondack Community Housing Trust is principal client with Essex County, acting through its planning department, as the municipal sponsor. A broad-based Advisory Committee representing many different public, semi-public and private organizations and stakeholders throughout the park provided project direction and feedback during the development of *Hamlets 3*. For a complete listing of contributors see credits on Page 2.

Park-wide scope

The DEC's Adirondack Park Community Smart Growth Grant Program sponsors three types of projects:

- Local – those that involve one municipal government
- Regional – those that involve two or more municipalities in a similar geographic region of the park
- Park-wide – those that involve multiple municipalities and have a park-wide scope

Hamlets 3 addresses the park-wide category, encompassing the entire six-million acre park and over 130 hamlets and villages. It develops smart growth planning methods for the region as a whole that communities can apply locally.

The Adirondack Park as a park is unique in the United States. It consists of a mosaic of public and private holdings and a mix of seasonal and year-round residents. Its land area is about the same size as the State of Vermont, and larger than Yellowstone National Park. In fact, it is the largest publicly protected area in the contiguous United States.

While the park has been a recreational destination since the 19th century, its forestry and mining industries have an even longer history, giving birth to the Adirondack hamlet as a physical and social entity. But with the park's remoteness and changes in technology posing almost insurmountable barriers to economic growth, sustaining the Adirondack hamlet has been a major challenge.

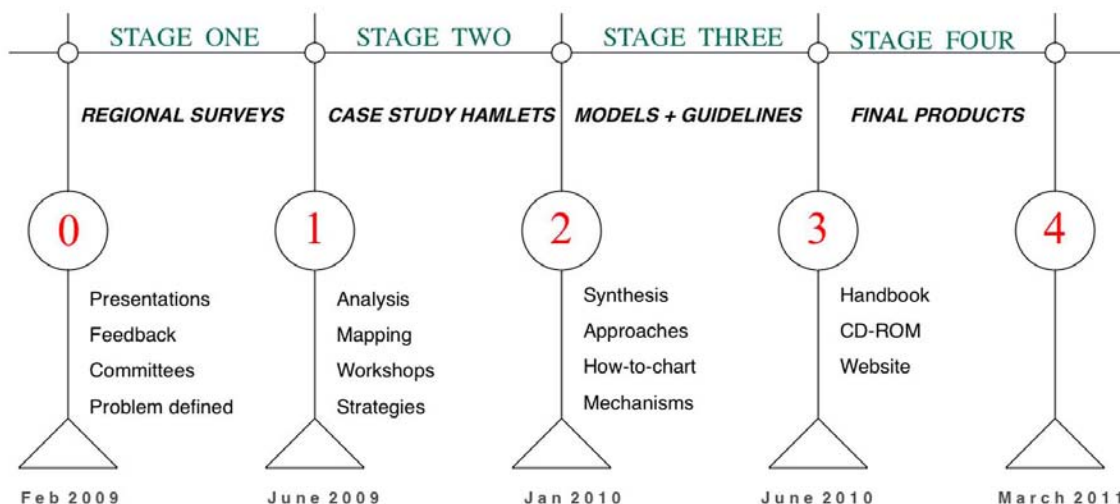
Yet, Adirondack Park communities continue to retain their heritage, sense of place, and powerful relationship with nature in the 21st century. Today these settlements, along with tourism, are the cornerstone of the Adirondack economy and are essential to the future of the park. The region's renewable resources have been largely preserved, enabling its supreme environmental quality to be leveraged to achieve development of hamlets compatible with this unique landscape. Through smart growth planning, communities can preserve hamlet culture and lifestyle and find the right balance between development and preservation.



Hamlets 3 worktable combines digital and hand-mapping techniques.

The workflow was organized in four stages over a two-year period.

WORKFLOW



Hamlets 3 objectives and workflow

Hamlets 3 has three objectives:

- to protect natural resources in and around hamlets by preventing sprawl
- to integrate expansion projects into the structure of existing hamlets
- to promote smart, sustainable physical and economic growth of hamlets

These objectives underpin the four stages of the project workflow.

In **Stage 1** visual presentations in different areas of the park showed principles, precedents, and best practices of smart growth. Regional surveys elicited feedback on the following questions: What types of hamlet expansion are needed? How much expansion is desirable? Can expansion be accommodated within existing settlement areas or is outward expansion required? What impact does location and geography have on expansion? What smart growth principles can be applied to sustainable hamlet expansion in the Adirondacks? These discussions led to the selection of case study communities addressed in the second stage.

In **Stage 2**, the team conducted fieldwork in three hamlet clusters – Elizabethtown, Old Forge, and Star Lake – to document, analyze, and evaluate hamlet expansion options. This included a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) of public space and its “walkability,” mapping of lost spaces including vacant sites and buildings, and documentation of natural conditions, roads, water, and sewer lines. They recorded demographics, existing zoning, land uses, and open space assets, documented historical and cultural heritage and photographed visual character to determine areas of high value. They distributed a user survey and held a series of workshops and ‘charrettes’ in the communities to assess expansion needs and to evolve ‘sketch plans’ and economic development proposals. These on-site studies and interactions led to the models and design strategies developed in the third stage.

In **Stage 3**, the team created a planning model with design tools for hamlet expansion that local communities could use. This included a step-by step guide of how to apply

Smart Growth Rings and hamlet expansion overlay zones for identifying the most suitable sites for smart growth in and around a hamlet. They developed design prototypes and guidelines for expansion and incremental growth. They formulated ways to achieve success, such as increasing density within APA regulations, finding new mechanisms for financing infrastructure and expansion projects, and developing effective modes of local participation and governance.

Production of this guidebook took place in **Stage 4** to communicate findings and illustrate the principles and processes of smart hamlet expansion in the Adirondack Park.

SMART GROWTH PRACTICES EMPOWER COMMUNITIES TO PLAN FOR FUTURE EXPANSION.