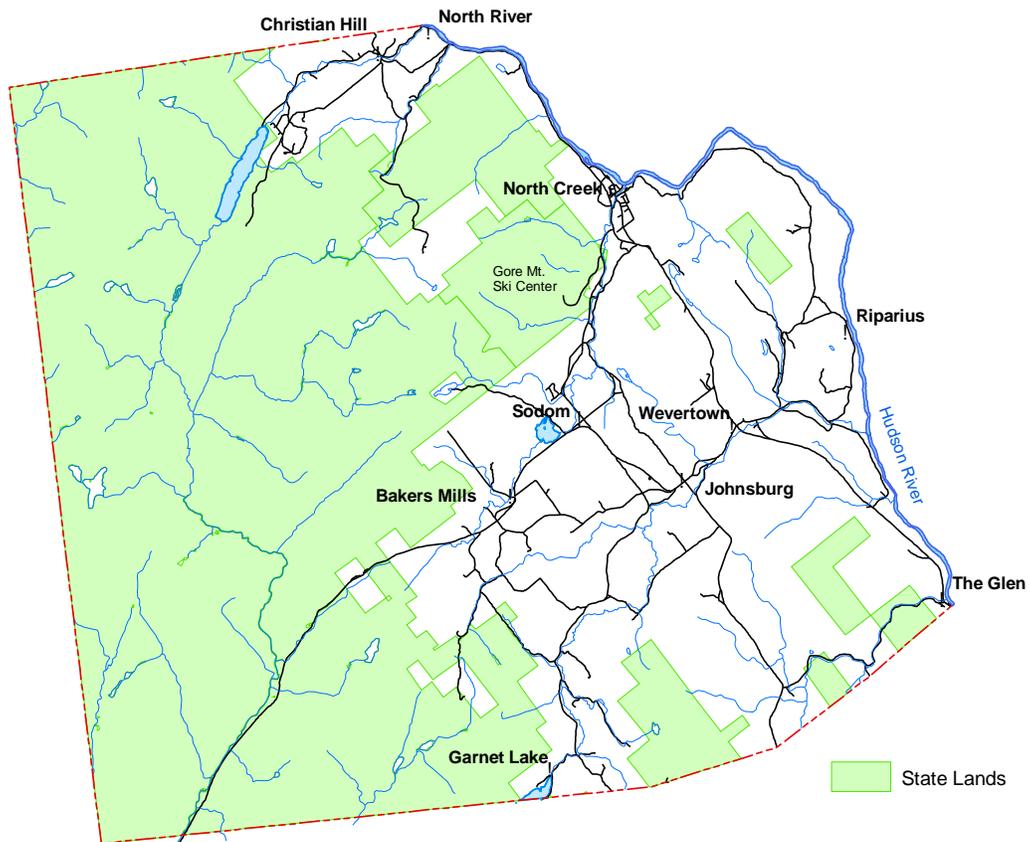


# TOWN OF JOHNSBURG COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Prepared by:  
Richard Lamb, Professor  
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For and with: The Town of Johnsburg Comprehensive Plan Committee

Prepared July 2005

## Contents

Part 1: Inventory and Analysis

Part 2: Analysis of Adirondack Park Agency Private Land Classifications

Part 3: Plan for the Future

## Acknowledgements

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Aaron Falzarano  
Candace Gates  
Dominick Piaquadio  
Brian Jones

## **INTRODUCTION**

The comprehensive plan is intended to serve as a guide for future growth, development, and preservation in the Town of Johnsburg. It describes the town's environmental resources and community infrastructure, examines current land use patterns, analyses growth trends, discusses future needs, establishes goals, and sets forth policies and a plan to achieve the goals.

The plan focuses upon land use issues, but takes into account economic and community development concerns. It establishes specific goals and policies with regard to land use, and general goals and policies in regard to economic and community development. It is intended that specific plans for economic and community development be prepared as a follow-up, or corollary, to this comprehensive plan.

New York State zoning statutes require that a zoning ordinance or law be based upon a comprehensive plan. Accordingly, this plan establishes the rationale for proposed changes in the town's zoning and land subdivision regulations.

This plan is also intended to serve as the basis for requests for any requests to amend the Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan Map pursuant to Section 805, part 2, c, (3) of the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) Act. Specifically, it is meant to serve as the "comprehensive inventory and analysis of the natural resource, public, economic and other land use factors as may reflect the relative development amenability and limitations of the lands within the entire jurisdiction," as well as the formally adopted comprehensive master plan cited in the aforementioned section and part of the APA Act.

In addition, should the Town of Johnsburg choose to make application to the Adirondack Park Agency for an Approved Local Land Use Program pursuant to Section 807, part 2 of the APA Act, this plan is intended to support such application.

Preparation of the plan has been a joint responsibility of the Town of Johnsburg Comprehensive Plan Committee, composed of Town residents, and Dr. Richard Lamb of the State University of New York at Plattsburgh, a planning consultant retained by the town to assist the Committee in their task. The consultant wrote the documents, prepared all maps, and served as an advisor and facilitator in the committee's deliberations. The committee met over the course of several months to review relevant information, determine goals and objectives, and establish the plans and regulatory changes proposed in Part 3 of the plan.

## **PLANNING HISTORY IN JOHNSBURG**

The town's existing zoning ordinance was adopted prior to 1971. It was not based upon a comprehensive town plan. Some amendments have since been enacted, but a total review and revision has not occurred.

In 1973 state regulations governing private land uses in the Adirondack Park came into effect with the creation of the Adirondack Park Agency and adoption of the Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan.

During the late 1980's the Town of Johnsbury appointed a local Planning Commission that prepared a comprehensive plan document with the assistance of the Warren County Office of Planning and Community Development. This effort included public workshops to solicit resident's opinions. The plan was submitted to the town board in 1989, but was not adopted.

In 1990 the town appointed a Master Plan Committee that prepared a comprehensive plan that built upon the earlier recommendations. This 9 page plan document was adopted by the Town Board in 1993. It discussed land use issues, established goals and objectives, and described recommended land use districts.

The "North Creek Action Plan" was prepared in 1993. This plan focused upon the North Creek hamlet area and dealt with economic development, hamlet revitalization, increasing tourism potential, and main street revitalization. It was prepared by the Saratoga Associates in conjunction with the North Creek Hamlet Action Committee, the Warren County Department of Planning and Community Development, the Johnsbury Town Board, and the Gore Mountain Region Chamber of Commerce. It contained a number of specific recommendations, many of which have been subsequently been undertaken. The plan was formally adopted by the Town Board in 1993.

Two plans were subsequently prepared by The Saratoga Associates as follow up to the North Creek Action Plan. The first was a parking and recreation study for North Creek hamlet prepared in 1997. The second was the "Ski Bowl Park Enhancement Plan" that provided details and cost estimates for needed facilities at the town owned and operated Ski Bowl Park.

In 1997 the town had a new "Zoning and Site Plan Review Ordinance" prepared using the Town of Newcomb ordinance as a model. The Newcomb ordinance had formerly been approved by the Adirondack Park Agency as part of an approved "Local Land Use Program" that enables communities to assume responsibility for review and approval of "Class B" projects (usually commercial development). The proposed Johnsbury ordinance was submitted to the APA for review for compliance with approved Local Land Use Program guidelines, and was returned to the town with numerous comments. No further action was taken by the town.

In 1999, an draft report titled "The Town of Johnsbury's Inventory and Analysis, Highlighting Johnsbury's Assets, 1999" was prepared with the assistance of the Wildlife Conservation Society's Adirondack Communities & Conservation Program at Paul Smiths. This report contained a description of some of the environmental resources and community infrastructure in the Town of Johnsbury, but did not include detailed maps. This draft report was reviewed and critiqued by the Warren County Planning Office in January 2000, but was not finalized.

The "Mill Creek Recreation Area Management Plan" was prepared by "The Dunklee Falls/Black Hole Task Force" in the year 2000. This document contained a plan for the use of the Mill Creek Recreation area, a natural area located south of Riparius near Fire Station and Harrington Roads, in cooperation with the Open Space Institute.

In 2001 "The "First Wilderness Heritage Corridor Plan" for the rail corridor between Saratoga and North Creek was prepared. This plan established North Creek, Riparius, and The Glen as

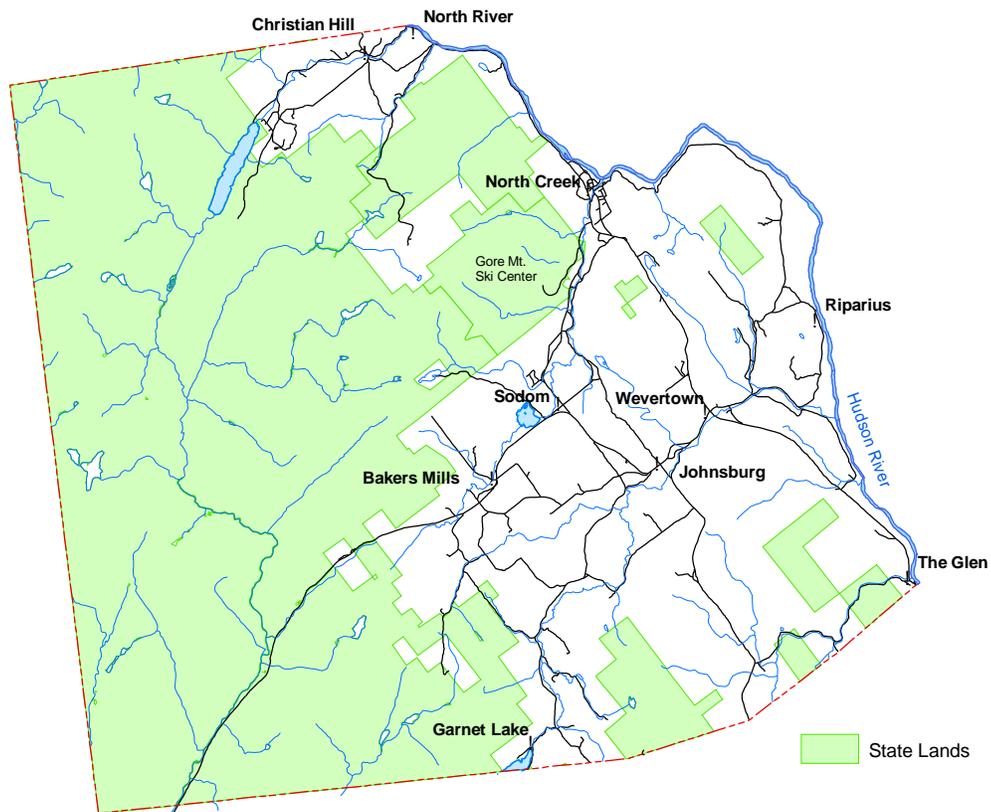
stops along the tourist railroad that began operation in 1999. Facilities to be constructed at each stop included parking, interpretative signs and small parks. Many of these facilities have since been completed.

The Unit Management Plan prepared for the Gore Mountain Ski Center for the Years 2002 to 2007 contains proposals that effect the North Creek hamlet area. New ski lifts will connect the state ski facility at Gore with the town owned Ski Bowl Park, thereby bringing more ski traffic closer to the hamlet area.

In 2003 the Town of Johnsbury appointed a Comprehensive Plan Committee and retained a consultant from the State University of New York at Plattsburgh to assist them in preparing a town comprehensive land use plan and revised land use regulations.

# TOWN OF JOHNSBURG COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

## PART 1: INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS



Prepared by:  
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Prepared July 2005

Contents

Regional Location And General Setting..... 1  
Settlement History.....2  
Topography And Slope .....5  
Soils.....5  
Geology.....8  
Water Features.....9  
Wetlands.....10  
Flood Hazard Areas.....11  
Groundwater.....12  
Significant Habitats .....13  
Natural Features .....13  
Visual Resources .....14  
Historic Resources.....15  
Population Characteristics .....18  
Social Characteristics .....22  
Housing Characteristics.....23  
Population Trends .....24  
Housing Growth Trends .....26  
Population And Housing Projections .....29  
Economic Characteristics .....33  
Tax Base.....33  
State Lands .....36  
Trails .....37  
Parks And Recreation.....38  
Public Facilities And Utilities .....40  
Highway System .....44  
Residential Land Use.....45  
Commercial Land Use.....47  
Industrial And Mining Uses .....51  
Empire Zone Properties.....53  
The Hamlets .....53  
Adirondack Park Agency Regulations .....58  
Town of Johnsburg Land Use Regulations.....59  
Community Interviews.....62  
Community Organizations.....66  
Appendix A: Summary of Community Development Plans Prepared in the Past

Maps

follows page

Town of Johnsburg.....

Regional Location ..... 1

Topography ..... 5

Percent Slope..... 5

Soil Limitations for Septic Systems ..... 6

Soil Limitations for Dwellings without Basements..... 7

Soil Limitations for Development ..... 7

Surficial Geology ..... 8

Water Features ..... 9

Wetlands and Flood Hazard Areas ..... 11

Aquifers and Aquifer Recharge Areas..... 12

Significant Habitats and Natural Features ..... 13

Visual Resources ..... 14

Historic Structures..... 16

20 Year Growth Trend ..... 28

State Lands, Trails..... 36

Mill Creek Recreation Area ..... 39

3 Phase Power Lines ..... 40

North Creek Water System..... 41

Fire Company Service Areas..... 42

Highway System ..... 43

Suitability of Highways for Development..... 44

Residential Land Use ..... 45

Housing Value, 2002..... 45

Residential Land Use, North Creek Hamlet ..... 45

Housing Value, North Creek Hamlet ..... 45

Commercial and Industrial Land Use..... 47

Commercial and Industrial Land Use, North Creek Hamlet..... 47

Industrial Location Factors..... 52

Empire Zone Properties..... 53

Existing Land Use and Physical Features

    North Creek Hamlet ..... 53

    North Creek Hamlet Core Area..... 53

    Bakers Mills ..... 54

    Johnsburg Hamlet..... 55

    Riparius ..... 56

    Wevertown ..... 56

    North River..... 56

    Sodom ..... 57

Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan Land Use Districts..... 57

Town of Johnsburg Zoning Districts ..... 59

Town of Johnsburg Zoning Districts, North Creek Hamlet Area..... 59



## **REGIONAL LOCATION AND GENERAL SETTING**

The Town of Johnsbury is located in the northwest corner of Warren County along the entryway to the Adirondack region from points south. The Hudson River forms its eastern boundary. It is bordered to the south by the Town of Thurman, to the west by the Towns of Wells and Indian Lake, to the north by the Town of Indian Lake, and to the east by the Town of Chester.

The largest hamlet and primary service center is North Creek. Other hamlets are Wevertown, Johnsbury, North River, Riparius, and Sodom. Smaller settlements include Christian Hill, Garnet Lake and The Glen.

The nearest urban center is Glens Falls, approximately 30 miles southeast of North Creek. For traffic headed south, the Adirondack Northway (I-87) is less than 10 miles distant from the town's southern border along State Route 28. Route 28 is the major travel corridor through town, is a gateway into the central Adirondack region, and provides scenic views of the Hudson River north of North Creek, at Riparius and at The Glen. For traffic headed north from the Town of Johnsbury, I-87 is less than 10 miles distant from the town's eastern border and is accessible by State Route 8.

A large portion of the town's land, about 58 percent, is owned by the State of New York and is part of "Forest Preserve" which is protected from development or removal of forests by the "forever wild" clause of the New York State constitution. In addition, there are significant areas of open space committed to forestry.

The Gore Mountain State ski center, a major recreation attraction, is located close to North Creek. The Town of Johnsbury is known for its wide variety of recreational opportunities, including downhill and cross-country skiing, white water rafting on the Hudson, hiking trails, swimming, fishing and hunting. It is a tourist destination four seasons of the year.

Regionally, it is situated in an area that can be expected to experience continued growth pressures in the future. Areas north of Saratoga have generally shown rapid growth in the past decade, including the Glens Falls urban area. Being a gateway into the central Adirondacks, and endowed with scenic beauty and natural and recreational resources, the Town of Johnsbury is an attractive residential setting.

The Town of Johnsbury appears to serve two primary roles within the region: (a) as a rural residential location, and (b) as a tourism/recreation destination.

It is a bit too far removed from the nearest urban area for its primary role to be a residential suburb for a commuting population. However, it is an attractive location for persons not dependent upon urban employment, including retirees and those that may be able to find employment locally, as well as for second home owners. Most of the town's recent growth has been in the form of residential development (as is documented later in this plan). Maintenance of a quality residential environment, while allowing for traditional uses of rural

property and affordable housing, therefore deserves to be a primary goal of the comprehensive planning effort.

With its year round recreational attractions, location astride a major travel corridor into the central Adirondacks, and its scenic beauty, the town is heavily reliant upon tourism and recreation to support the local economy. Enhancing tourism and recreation while maintaining the town's visual quality is therefore also a primary consideration.

## **SETTLEMENT HISTORY<sup>1</sup>**

The Town of Johnsbury was founded in 1805 when it was split from the Town of Thurman to the south. Its name derives from the original land patentee, John Thurman.

The early economy of the town depended upon its natural resources: forests, tillable land, and minerals. Small general farms were common despite the relatively harsh climate. Crops included beans, corn, potatoes, squash, hay, oats and buckwheat. Cows, pigs, chickens and horses were kept. Some early farmers supplemented their income by logging and peeling hemlock bark for use in tanneries.

Logging has long been a mainstay of the local economy, and provided most of the work and income for people in the area during the 1800s and early 1900s. In its heyday logs were floated down the Hudson River to points south. In addition, there were local sawmills and wood product manufacturing businesses. For instance, construction of the railroad along the Hudson River facilitated the establishment of a "huge sawmill and woodworking plant in North Creek in the mid 1870s." (p. 115) Tanneries were an important industry during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the 1870s there were 4 tanneries within the Town of Johnsbury. The Tannery at North Creek "turned out 30,000" hides per year." (p.99)

Mining was a third source of livelihood. Garnet was found in 1878, and George Barton began a mining operation that has been a significant employer through the years. A garnet mine survives to this day, although at a location different from the earlier large mine near Gore Mountain that was closed in 1984.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century tourism, recreation, and second home development became important segments of the economy. Commercial skiing began during the 1930's when the "first commercial ski area on the east coast" was established, bolstered by the "ski train" that transported passengers from points south to the railroad depot at North Creek. Hotels, rooming houses and other facilities sprang up in the hamlet to accommodate the ski trade. Today "the recreation industry has become a primary generator of economic activity in North Creek and the Town of Johnsbury, with winter snow sports, fall and spring whitewater rafting, summer hiking, canoeing, fishing, hunting, and biking." (p. 128)

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<sup>1</sup> Source of much of the information this section is "River, Rails and Ski Trails, The History of the Town of Johnsbury, and Adirondack Town Founded in 1805," Town of Johnsbury Historical Society, 1994. Quotations are from this source.

The town's hamlets historically served as small service and community centers, and contained some small industries. Typical community facilities found in the hamlets included a church (the most common facility), blacksmith, general store, school, and post office. Sawmills and gristmills were also relatively common. Hotels and taverns were found at railroad stops and in other locations. Tanneries were important for a period of time in Wevertown and North Creek. Paint was manufactured in the hamlet of Johnsburg for a few years.

Beyond the hamlets, population tended to be spread across the land in small farms on the better soils and in the valleys. As can be surmised from the scattered building pattern characteristic of farming areas shown on the 1876 Beer Atlas maps (see maps on following page), agriculture seemed to most common in the southern and eastern sections of town.

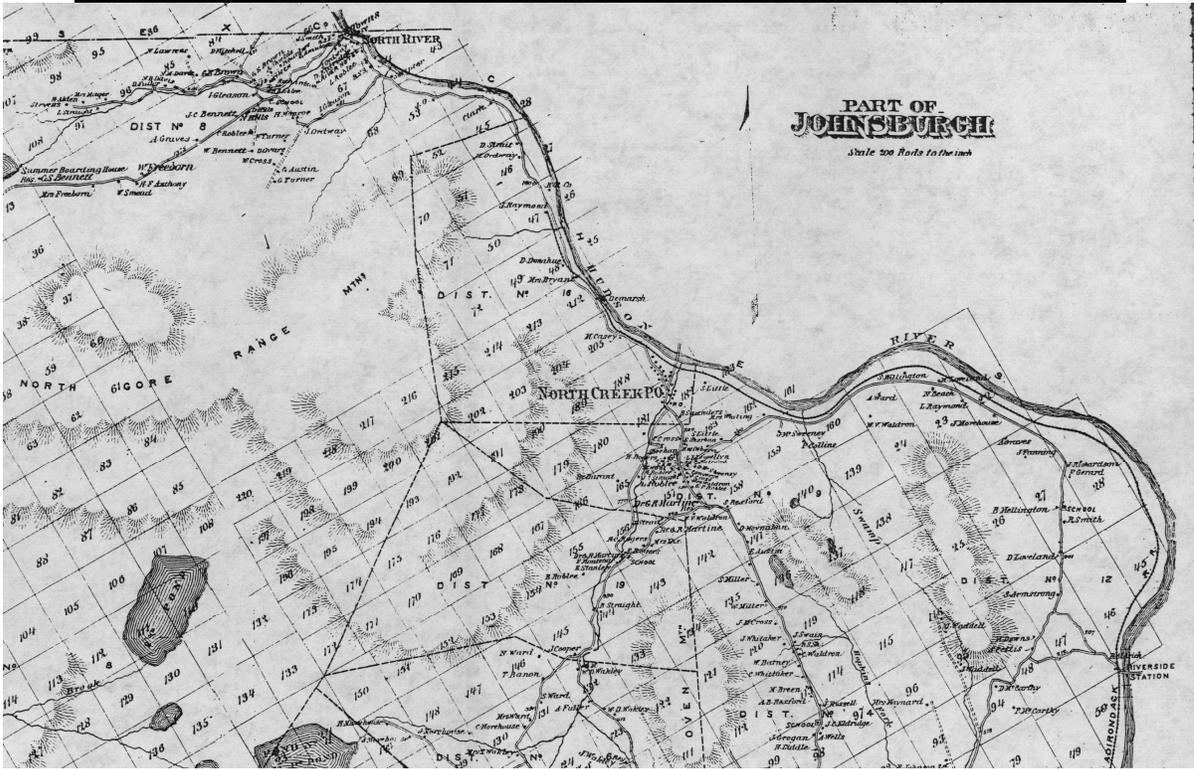
The character of the town's landscape has changed considerably from the early years. The most dramatic change has undoubtedly been the transition from cleared land to forest. Throughout the book "River, Roads and Ski Trails" that chronicles the town's history there are numerous references to the farms, cleared land, and views that were once prevalent.<sup>2</sup> The numerous small general farms of the horse power age have now all disappeared, and former fields have long since regenerated into forest. Where once there were scenic vistas and views along roadways, they are now tree lined corridors.

A second major change from the early years is in the character and function of the hamlets. Hamlets were once the focus of rural life when transportation was by means of horse or walking. People in the surrounding area needed basic services close by, and small hamlets contained the essentials. Today, however, small hamlets have been eclipsed by larger service centers that contain the much wider range of goods and services needed by modern society. Most of the small hamlets in rural America, as in the Town of Johnsburg, are now primarily residential neighborhoods, containing churches and perhaps a convenience store to serve local needs. They generally no longer serve as commercial centers, but for many people can be a desirable residential alternative to large lot rural development. Clusters of historic homes are found in most hamlets, providing an added attraction.

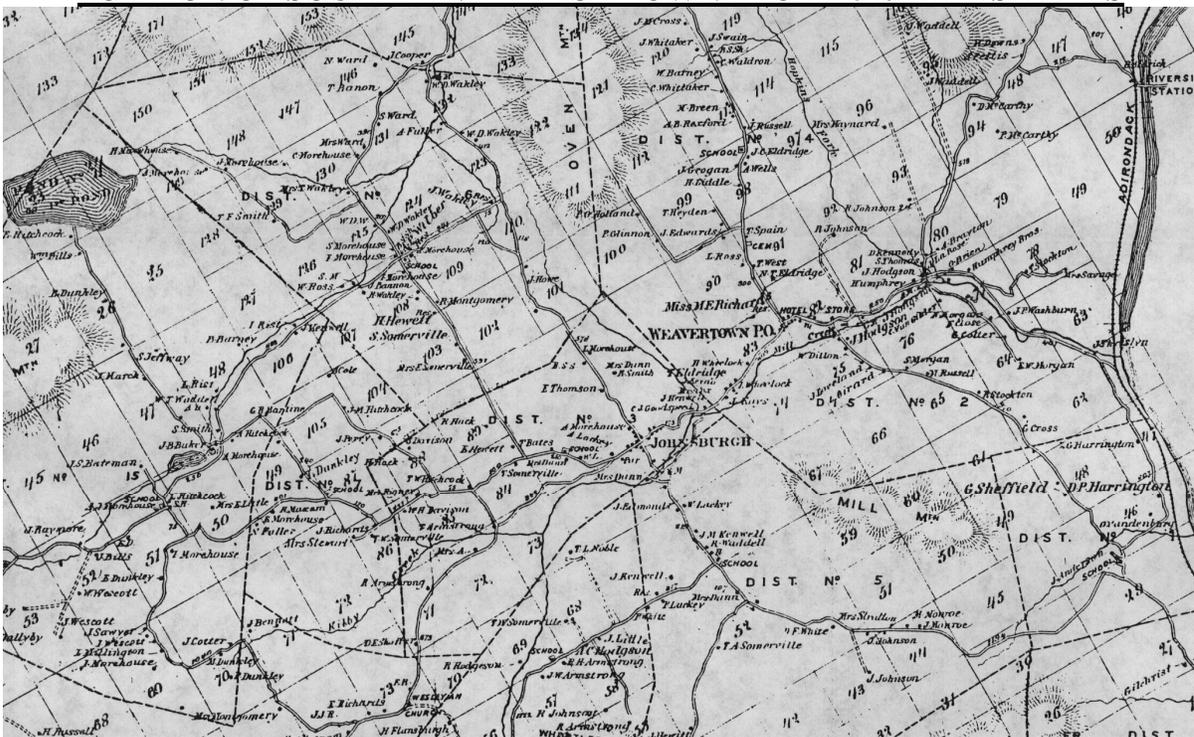
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<sup>2</sup> The town's current zoning law still contains zoning districts named "rural agricultural."

**PORTION OF NORTHERN PART OF TOWN FROM 1876 BEERS ATLAS**



**PORTION OF SOUTHERN PART OF TOWN FROM 1876 BEERS ATLAS**



### TOPOGRAPHY AND SLOPE<sup>3</sup>

Typical of Adirondack communities, the Town of Johnsburg is characterized by predominantly rugged terrain with patches of more level land in the valleys. (See “Topography” map.) Most of the higher elevations lie on state lands. Relief ranges from a high of 3583 feet above sea level at Gore Mountain to a low of less than 800 feet along the Hudson River. The more rugged terrain lies west of a line connecting Crane Mountain to Bakers Mills, then to North Creek. The area to the east of this line exhibits less relief and consequently contains most of the developed area.

Some of the higher elevations in the town are:

|                         | <u>Elevation (ft. above sea level)</u> |
|-------------------------|--|
| Gore Mountain           | 3583                                   |
| Puffer Mountain         | 3412                                   |
| Bullhead Mountain       | 3343                                   |
| Crane Mountain          | 3300+                                  |
| Eleventh Mountain       | 3249                                   |
| Pete Gay Mountain       | 3130                                   |
| Height of Land Mountain | 3021                                   |

Steeper slopes pose limitations for development. Slopes of 15 percent or greater are generally considered poor for development because of erosion problems, cost of construction, inability of septic systems to function properly, and if roads are involved, traffic safety and cost of road maintenance. Flat land may also pose problems due to poor drainage. The ideal slope for development is considered to be 3 to 8 percent in order to provide good drainage while minimizing erosion and runoff problems. As shown on the “Percent Slope” map<sup>4</sup>, favorable slopes are found in the hamlet of North Creek as well as in many other areas of town. A significant portion of the privately owned land within the town is characterized by slopes equal to or exceeding 25 percent, thereby limiting the area suitable for new development.

### SOILS

Soil information is based upon Order 2 soils mapping, and was obtained from the Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District.<sup>5</sup>

Order 2 soil mapping is done on a detailed level and is quite accurate. In the detailed mapping a soil sample is taken about every four acres, on the average. Even so, there is some variability within the soil areas shown on the soils maps, so that for example, where the

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<sup>3</sup> Some of the information in this section is derived from text prepared at an earlier date by the Warren County Office of Planning and Community Development.

<sup>4</sup> Slope data is derived from Order 2 soil mapping data supplied by the Warren Co. Soil and Water Conservation District.

<sup>5</sup> Paper copies of the soils maps were digitized by students at SUNY Plattsburgh in order to produce the maps shown in this document

map may indicate that soils are poor for septic leach fields, it may be possible to find spots within the mapped area that are in fact satisfactory for a leach field. Order 2 mapping therefore is good information for community planning purposes, but should be supplemented by on site testing for any particular parcel of land.

### **Soils and Septic Systems**

Many of the soils in the Town of Johnsburg are rated as having severe limitations for septic effluent fields (leach fields), as shown on the "Soil Limitations for Septic Systems" map. These ratings are those supplied by the Soil Conservation Service and are based upon such factors as the soil percolation rate, slope, depth to seasonal high water table, and depth to bedrock. However, a severe rating does not preclude the use of individual on-lot septic systems on such soils. Rather, it means that care must be taken to insure that systems are carefully sited and adequately designed for the soil conditions and/or that alternatives to conventional leach fields should be used. In many cases a larger and more costly leach field may be required (more footage of pipes). On soils where more restrictive characteristics prevail, an alternative system may be used. Alternatives include fill or mound systems, and evaporation-absorption (also named "leach bed") systems.

The N.Y.S. Department of Health (DOH) recommends a lot size of at least 20,000 square feet for conventional leach field systems in areas underlain by good soils. This space is necessary in order to provide enough room on the lot to place an adequately designed system and meet minimum distance requirements from wells, the house, and property lines.

On poor soils, a lot larger than 20,000 square feet is needed for conventional systems for several reasons. First, the average duration for a septic leach field is about 15 to 20 years, at which time it reaches capacity and requires replacement. Fill systems are especially prone to reaching a saturation point after which they will not function properly. When a system fails, either a new location on the property must be found to install a new one, or the old leach field and the earth surrounding it must be removed in order to provide adequate space. The latter alternative is very costly. Therefore, a 20,000 square feet lot may not be sufficient in the long run considering that there may be a need for more than one space for a leach field on a property. Second, many failing septic systems are never replaced. Thus, in areas of severe limitations larger lots are necessary to provide property owners with some protection from septic system failure on neighboring properties. Third, the minimum 20,000 square feet lot recommended by DOH assumes that there are no limiting factors due to terrain or shape of the parcel. On oddly shaped lots, and where limiting factors such as wetlands, streams, rock outcrops and other such natural features exist, the minimum lot size should be larger. Finally, the minimum 20,000 square feet lot assumes that the entire site plan for the buildings, driveways, water supply and sewerage system have all been carefully planned in advance of dividing a property into building lots in order to insure that the required setbacks for leach fields can be met. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. In summary, an adequate septic disposal system may be placed upon a 20,000 square feet lot, but only if it is properly planned, including the use of alternative systems, and is situated on a well shaped parcel of land free from environmental restrictions, is properly maintained, and is replaced when needed.

In the Town of Johnsburg it is recommended that a minimum lot size for new development larger than 20,000 square feet be established in the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) designated hamlets (North Creek, Wevertown, Johnsburg, Bakers Mills, Riparius) in order to provide for proper disposal of septic wastes. Outside of APA designated hamlets disposal systems should be designed with the less than favorable soils in mind, either by creating larger lots or by otherwise providing for proper sewerage treatment.

### **Soil Suitability for Buildings without Basements**

The map showing “Soil Limitations for Dwellings without Basements” is based upon data supplied by the Soil Conservation Service, and utilizes somewhat different criteria than that used for septic systems. Soils shown as having moderate or severe limitations on the map may be characterized by one or more limiting conditions, including steep slope, flood hazard, wetness, or bedrock close to the surface. There are fewer areas of severe restrictions on this map than on the septic limitations map because soil permeability (the rate at which water can percolate downward through the soil layer) is not taken into account as a building limitation, but is taken into account as a significant limitation for septic leach fields.

Severe limitations on the map do not necessarily preclude development. A severe limitation rating is intended to indicate that there are problems with development, some of which may be overcome with added cost, such as earth grading or drainage improvements. Also, smaller areas for good building sites may be found within the broader areas portrayed on the map as severe. However, areas of severe limitations are generally not good for intensive development.

Some of the best soils for buildings are found in and around the hamlets of North Creek and Sodom, in the Peaceful Valley area, south of the hamlet of Johnsburg, along portions of the South Johnsburg Road, near the Hudson River in the vicinity of The Glen and North River, and north of Route 8 east of Wevertown.

### **Soil Suitability For Development**

An overall soil suitability for development rating taking into account limitations for both buildings and septic systems, as well as other factors, is shown on the “Soil Suitability for Development” map. The criteria for preparing the map are shown in the following table.

Some of the best soils for development are found in the vicinity of Holcombville, Sodom, the hamlet of Johnsburg, South Johnsburg Road, portions of State Route 28, and portions of River Road. Least suitable soils, where development should be avoided, are found primarily in the more rugged mountainous terrain, often in inaccessible locations.

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Most Suitable Soils     | Slight or moderate limitations for both septic effluent fields and for dwellings without basements. These soils pose few restrictions for development, and are suitable for high or moderate density housing on smaller lots.   |
| Suitable Soils          | Slight or moderate limitations for dwelling without basements, but severe limitations for septic effluent fields. These soils are suitable for development provided that septic systems are designed to function properly.  |
| Somewhat Suitable Soils | Severe limitations for both septic effluent fields and for dwellings without basements. These soils are suitable for low density development on large lots if buildings and septic systems are properly sited and designed for the soil conditions.   |
| Least Suitable Sols     | Soils characterized by one or more of the following conditions: frequent or occasional flooding, slopes 25% or greater, wetness (depth to seasonal high ground water table less than 1 foot, or depth to seasonal low ground water table less than 2 feet). These soils are generally unsuitable for development. |

## **GEOLOGY**

### **Bedrock**

Bedrock in Johnsbury includes several types of metamorphic (or changed) rock, created by heat and pressure acting on igneous or sedimentary rocks base over the eons. Rocks in the Adirondacks are among the oldest in the United States. Metamorphic bedrock is not a good source of groundwater supply, and generally does not contain aquifers of sufficient pumping capacity to support the withdrawal of large volumes of water needed for a public water system.

### **Surficial Geology**

Surficial geology refers to the geologic material lying close to the surface of the earth. (See “Surficial Geology map.) It is composed of unconsolidated deposits of various types and depths, including those laid down during the last glaciation. In some places bedrock is close to the surface.

The last glacial age occurred approximately 10,000 years ago, and left in its wake many of the geologic features observable today. For instance, a glacial lake apparently existed for a time in the Town of Johnsbury and is thought to be responsible for the sand deposits near the former town dump in North Creek. It is believed that the “Black Hole,” a geologic feature found in the Glen Creek, was created when the lake drained.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> “Rivers, Rails, and Ski Trails,” p. 7-8.

The glaciers left behind a large plume of kame deposits (See Surficial Geology map) that extends from North Creek southward through the hamlet of Johnsbury area reaching the southern town boundary. Kame deposits typically consist of a deep layer of sand or gravel. They were often formed from beaches of glacial lakes, or otherwise deposited by glacial waters. Kame deposits are often a prime source of sand and gravel, and in many communities are used for commercial mining, including the Town of Johnsbury. Because of their porosity, they are also a good source of groundwater supply and frequently contain aquifers capable of supplying large quantities of water. (Porosity refers to the rate at which water percolates downward through the soil.) In the Town of Johnsbury, the Peaceful Valley aquifer runs through kame deposits.

Lacustrine sand is another material characterized by high porosity. Lacustrine deposits were also formed by glacial lakes. A sizeable area of lacustrine deposition is found along Garnet Lake Road in the southern section of town.

Most of the town is underlain by glacial till, which was deposited in a sheet as the glacier retreated. Till is generally a relatively thin layer of material of clay or clay-loam consistency, and is not very porous. However, there may be substantial variation in the thickness of the layer and its porosity from place to place. Till is not a good source of groundwater supply, but is generally sufficient for individual residences provided that the housing density is relatively low, such as in rural areas. It is not a source of sand or gravel.

Bedrock is at the surface at the higher elevations on the more rugged terrain.

## **WATER FEATURES**

### **Drainage Basins**

All surface waters in the Town of Johnsbury ultimately drain into the Hudson River. A major drainage divide occurs just west of Bakers Mills where water flows southwesterly into the Sacandaga River, thence eventually into the Hudson. (See Water Features map.) Waters in the eastern section of town flow directly into the Hudson.

### **Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers**

The Hudson and East Branch Sacandaga Rivers are included in the N.Y.S. Wild, Scenic and Recreational River System due to their exceptional natural characteristics. Areas within ¼ mile of these water courses are subject to special Adirondack Park Agency regulations designed to protect their natural character. The Hudson is classified as Recreational, as is that portion of East Branch Sacandaga that flows close to State Route 8. That portion of East Branch Sacandaga lying in the interior is classified as a Wild River.

### **Streams**

In addition to the rivers, the Town of Johnsbury contains a number of streams that are trout habitat. (See "Water Features" map.) The larger of these are North Creek, Mill Creek, and

Glen Creek. Water courses designated with a T on the Water Features map are considered to be trout spawning waters.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation classifies water bodies as AA, A, B, or C for the purposes of establishing standards for water quality and stream management. Class AA and A waters are regulated to standards suitable for water supply, swimming and fishing.. Class B waters are regulated to standards suitable for swimming and fishing. Class C waters, including most of the small streams in Johnsbury, are regulated to standards suitable for fishing.

The water quality and aquatic habitat value of streams can be adversely impacted by development on or near the shoreline that can increase surface runoff, decrease shade, and remove the vegetation that stabilizes shorelines. Surface runoff creates erosion and contains soil particles that increase turbidity and lower water quality. It can have an especially adverse impact when heavy rainfall occurs on barren ground during the construction phase of land development projects. Excessive turbidity in streams can destroy trout spawning beds and reduce the supply of aquatic insects, a major food source for trout. Removing trees that line a stream create higher water temperatures due to the sun, thus raising water temperature and decreasing oxygen supply required by cold water species such as trout. Removing trees and other plants that stabilize soils on the banks of streams can result in bank erosion, and add to turbidity. For these reasons it is desirable to establish stream buffers where building and vegetation removal are limited. Adirondack Park Agency regulations protect lakes, ponds, rivers and streams that are navigable by canoe by requiring minimum building setbacks from shorelines and restricting the removal of vegetation. These provisions, however, do not protect the smaller mountain streams where the water system begins.

### **Ponds and Lakes**

The largest lake in the town is Thirteenth Lake. It is undeveloped and lies almost entirely within state lands, as does its watershed, and is classified as A(t). Lying within state lands will to protect this water body from the possible adverse impacts of development.

A portion of Garnet Lake lies within the Town of Johnsbury. Much of the Lake is in the Town of Thurman, and is intensively developed. It is classified as an A body of water by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. Other water bodies not surrounded by state land include Austin Pond, Antler Lake, Windover Lake, and Chatiemac Lake.

State-owned ponds include Crane Mountain Pond, Fish Ponds, Cod Pond, Kibby Pond, Second Pond, Botheration Pond and The Vly, Siamese Ponds, Twin Ponds, Puffer Pond, Hour Pond, Peaked Mountain Pond, and John Pond.

### **WETLANDS**

The Adirondack Park Agency (APA) regulates wetlands in the Town of Johnsbury. A permit from the APA is required for any activity that includes the draining, filling, dredging, the placing of structures, or the subdivision of land on any regulated wetland. All wetlands of

one acre or more in size are regulated, as well as smaller wetlands which are adjacent to a body of water.

The Town of Johnsbury contains numerous wetlands, although they occupy a small percentage of the total town area. (See Wetlands and Flood Hazard Area map.) Many are located within stream corridors. Smaller wetlands are found scattered locations throughout the town.

Wetlands serve several beneficial functions in the natural ecosystem. First, they are important in flood control because they act as storm water retention basins, holding water and releasing it slowly downstream. Eliminating wetlands raises peak flood levels downstream during periods of heavy rain. Second, wetlands recharge groundwater by allowing surface water to slowly settle into the ground. Wetlands are often a significant source of water for aquifers. Third, water leaving a wetland may be considerably more pure than the water entering it. Silt, sediments, nutrients and sewerage, when entering a wetland through a feeder stream, become assimilated into the wetland. Silt and sediments settle out, and nutrients are used by plant life. Fourth, wetlands are rich habitat for numerous wildlife species, including waterfowl and fur bearing animals such as muskrats, beaver and others. Wetlands adjoining open surface water are especially important habitat. Finally, wetlands have aesthetic value by providing visual open space.

Wetlands are fragile environments that can be destroyed by direct dredging and filling, as well as by soil erosion in the surrounding area that can create silt that can fill the wetland over a period of time. Wetlands are unsuitable for development because a seasonal high water table causes wet basements and non-functioning septic systems. Also, wetland soils have a low bearing strength due to their high organic content, and are thereby unsuited for supporting heavy structures.

## **FLOOD HAZARD AREAS**

Lands along portions of the Hudson River and other watercourses in the Town of Johnsbury are classified as a flood hazard areas pursuant to the National Flood Insurance program.. (See Wetlands and Flood Hazard map.) The map shows areas where it is estimated that there is a least a 1 percent chance of flooding in any one year, otherwise known as the 100 year flood level. In addition to lands adjoining the Hudson River, flood hazard areas exist along portions of Mill Creek, North Creek, Thirteenth Brook and Johnson Brook. It should be noted that the official flood hazard maps are frequently not accurate in their detail, and that field investigation is necessary to determine actual flood hazard elevations.<sup>7</sup>

A permit is needed to build in designated flood hazard areas. Most of the land within such zones is classified as flood hazard “fringe,” as opposed to a “floodway.” Development is permitted in fringe areas, but must be “flood proofed” by constructing the main floor of dwellings above the flood level, as well as insuring that septic leach fields are also above the flood level.

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<sup>7</sup> Conversation with NYS DEC staff.

## **GROUNDWATER**

### **Aquifers**

Aquifers are sources of groundwater found in bedrock or in surficial geologic material such as sand or gravel, that are capable of yielding sufficient quantities of water for public water supply. The general areas where aquifers are suspected to be located in the Town of Johnsborg are shown on the Aquifers and Aquifer Recharge Areas map. The source of this map is a highly generalized statewide map available from the NYS Department of Health. Aquifer locations on the map are estimated based upon underlying geologic structure and other available data rather than upon detailed mapping based upon groundwater yield data. Accordingly, the aquifer map is neither accurate in detail nor is it necessarily complete. However, it suggests that large quantities of groundwater might be found in some locations in the town.

The largest aquifer, at least in terms of area, is found in Peaceful Valley and extends from just north of Sodom northward along State Route 29 to North Creek hamlet. The North Creek public water supply system taps the Peaceful Valley Aquifer through wells located near the hamlet. Other aquifers may exist in the vicinity of Johnsborg hamlet in the more sandy surficial deposits.

There is sufficient groundwater yield in most areas of New York State to support individual wells for household water supply at rural development densities, although water quality may vary. It may be assumed, lacking evidence to the contrary, that the same is true in the Town of Johnsborg. Areas not shown on the map as being underlain by aquifers, therefore, are likely to contain sufficient groundwater to support rural development. Where building densities are high, such as in villages or suburbanizing towns near cities, public water systems are needed if groundwater supplies are insufficient and/or if water quality is poor.

### **Aquifer Recharge Areas**

Aquifer recharge areas are the surface lands where water percolates into the ground and recharges the groundwater supply. A recharge area may be directly above an aquifer, or it may be a considerable distance from it. Groundwater flows slowly, and water percolating into the ground in one area will flow into another. The best recharge areas tend to be flat lands underlain by a thick layer of porous soils such as sand or gravel. Wetlands are also important aquifer recharge areas, particularly if located above porous substrata such as sand or gravel. Areas with these characteristics in the Town of Johnsborg are shown on the map as probable aquifer recharge areas.

Any pollutants entering the ground over aquifer recharge areas will enter the groundwater and could pollute water supply wells depending upon the direction of groundwater flow and the degree to which the pollutant is diluted before it reaches the well. It is therefore recommended that land uses that may pose a potential pollution hazard *not* be located over aquifer recharge areas, particularly if water supply wells are located nearby. Such land uses

include any business or industry involving petroleum products or heavy duty cleansers where accidental spills or illicit dumping may occur.

## **SIGNIFICANT HABITATS<sup>8</sup>**

Significant habitats are shown on the Significant Habitats and Natural Features map.

### **Deer Wintering Areas**

Deer wintering areas are locations with a distinctive combination of vegetation, topography and hydrology that are critical for the survival of deer during the deep snows of winter. Deep snow greatly hampers their ability to move and to find food. Deer wintering areas provide cover from deep snow, sometimes in the form of large evergreens, as well as having a source of browse nearby. Deer return to these areas during severe winter conditions for survival. Because such areas are limited, their degradation would lead to a decline of the deer population.

Deer wintering areas in the Adirondacks have been identified by New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC) personnel as a result of long term observation over a period of several years. There are several such areas throughout the town, as shown on the map. Because habitat conditions may change, for example as agricultural land is abandoned, the location of deer wintering areas may change somewhat over time.

### **Other Important Habitats**

Key plant communities have been identified by NYS DEC. They contain vegetative cover that either directly supports some form of wildlife, or that provides a stabilizing influence on the local environment. There are three such areas in Johnsbury: south of Oven Mountain Pond, along Thirteenth Brook, and in the southeast corner of town near Crystal Brook.

There is one area near Crane Mountain that has been identified as rare or endangered habitat by the NYS DEC. The specific species involved has not been identified.

Deer wintering areas and other habitats are important open spaces to protect in the Town of Johnsbury.

## **NATURAL FEATURES**

A most distinctive geologic feature found in the Town of Johnsbury is the “Black Hole” and nearby Dunkley Falls located on Mill Creek not far from its confluence with the Hudson River. The Black Hole was believed to have been created by plunging waters when the glacial lake that covered portions of the town during the last ice age drained. It is a deep hole

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<sup>8</sup> Habitats shown on the Significant Habitats and Geologic Features map were derived from a map prepared by the Warren County Department of Planning and Community Development in conjunction with an earlier planning effort.

in bedrock at the base of a falls that has attracted visitors for decades. It has traditionally been used as a swimming hole as well as spot to enjoy the beauty of nature. This property is now protected open space, the Open Space Institute having secured title in 1999. Volunteers in the Town of Johnsborg prepared a management plan for the property in the year 2000.

## **VISUAL RESOURCES**

Visual quality is a major factor in an area's desirability as a permanent or seasonal residence. It is also of obvious importance for tourism and tourism related business that is the foundation of the local economy in the Town of Johnsborg. Being a town whose major roles within the region are that of a rural residential area, for both year round and seasonal residents and as a tourist/recreation destination, maintenance of visual quality is especially important in Johnsborg.

### **Scenic Vistas and Viewsheds**

Due to the extensive forest cover, there are a limited number of good, long distance, panoramic views of the mountains and valleys along roadways in Johnsborg. Some of the best views are shown on the Visual Resources map. The map also includes scenic views of the Hudson River north of North Creek, at Riparius, and at The Glen.

Scenic "vistas" can be defined as points along a public roadway where long distance views of distinctive features such as mountains, lakes, or river valleys can be seen. The origin of the arrows on the map represent locations of vistas. The term "Viewshed" refers to the area that can be seen from a vista. Viewsheds exist in the direction to which the arrows are pointing.

Because scenic vistas are in limited supply, new land uses should be carefully planned so as to preserve views to the extent practicable. Preservation of vistas as open land would be most desirable from the standpoint of preserving views. If this is not possible, development should be carefully designed along major travel corridors where scenic vistas are located.

Many of the scenic views that were available across farm fields during the 19<sup>th</sup> century have long since been obscured by forest growth after agriculture was abandoned.<sup>9</sup> Clearing of land for new development may therefore actually enhance views, if done in a manner that is sensitive to visual quality. In the absence of farms, large lot residential development with extensive front yards or cleared areas coupled with occasional trees may be a good solution to restoring views of the mountains along country roads. Other uses that would enhance views include golf courses, commercial stables or dude ranches, and the keeping of horses or other animals for personal use.

### **Scenic Routes**

State Route 28 through the Town of Johnsborg has been designated as a "Scenic By-way" by the N.Y.S. Department of Transportation. Scenic By-ways are transportation corridors of particular statewide interest that are "representative of a region's scenic, recreational,

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<sup>9</sup> This has been documented in "River, Rails and Ski Trails."

cultural, natural, historical or archeological significance.” Route 28 is part of the “Central Adirondack Trail” that begins in Glens Falls, proceeds to Blue Mountain Lake, thence to Rome along State Route 28. It is noted for its Adirondack beauty and for following historic waterways. Because it is heavily traveled by tourists, maintenance of visual quality along State Route 28 is of special importance.

The section of State Route 8 beginning just south west of Sodom, thence southwesterly through Bakers Mills and state lands to the town line, is a locally significant scenic roadway containing many nice views along a route with large sections of open space. It is characteristic of the Adirondack landscape.

Another route with exceptional visual quality is the southerly portion of Garnet Lake Road where a large wetland provides open views of the Crane Mountain area to the east.

Exceptional views of the undeveloped Hudson River corridor are obtained by riding the tourist railroad from The Glen through North Creek.

### **Policies to Preserve Visual Quality**

Any development within visually sensitive areas should be carefully planned in order to preserve aesthetics. The Planning Board can use the power of site plan review to insure that new structures or uses of land are compatible with the scenic rural environment. Among the site plan considerations important for preserving aesthetics are:

- (a) Avoiding placing structures in the middle of scenic vistas.
- (b) Requiring additional setbacks from highways, and siting buildings so as to be less visible from roadways.
- (c) Using vegetation to screen or partially screen the view of buildings without blocking scenic views.
- (d) Using solid fencing or other means to screen from view objectionable elements of commercial operations, such as storage areas for automobiles awaiting repair.
- (e) Limiting building height to one story.
- (f) Using visually compatible color schemes and building materials.
- (g) Controlling signage.
- (h) Controlling night-time lighting.

It is also important to control eyesores, including junk automobiles and household junk, especially along scenic travel corridors.

### **HISTORIC RESOURCES**

The Town of Johnsburg has a rich historical heritage that gives it a unique identity and “sense of place.” Much of town’s history is still visible in the form of early structures which were part of everyday life in earlier times. Buildings such as churches, early homesteads, or the block of 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings that line Main Street in the hamlet of North

Creek provide a record of its history as a rural Adirondack town, and provide a tangible link to the past.

The town has not undertaken a comprehensive historic inventory that identifies all the locally significant buildings and sites, but is clear that many such sites exist. It is possible to determine the date when structures were built from the real property data base (a computerized data base prepared for property tax assessment purposes). One of the items in the data base is “year structure built.” The Historic Structures map shows the results of mapping this information. A total of 357 structures were recorded as having been constructed prior to 1850. It can be seen from the map that most of these existed within the hamlets, but there are also significant numbers in scattered rural locations probably representing early homesteads and family farms. An additional 140 structures were constructed between 1850 and 1899.

Not all of these structures would be considered as historically significant. Many have undoubtedly been changed or expanded so as to render their original architecture indistinguishable. The more important historical structures are those which: (a) were the home of a prominent local citizen, (b) were the site of an important event, (c) are representative of early architecture their exterior having been altered little over the years, and/or (d) those which comprise part of a cluster of historical structures.

Main street in North Creek has been identified as a district of historical significance in the book “River, Rails and Ski Trials.” Its architecture is described as follows.

“Special in Johnsbury is the American Vernacular, defined as the freestanding narrow and deep retail store ... Typically the structure is one or two stories, clapboard sheathed, and porch fronted. Nine of them are standing on Main Street in North Creek being put to good use. Fortunately, may have escaped remodeling!...Throughout architectural histories these buildings have been variously referred to as: Double-Tiered Porches, Old West Main Street Commercial, Two-Storyed Porticos, Two-Part Commercial, and Two-Tiered Veranda.” ...”Prevalent from the 1850s to the 1950ss, the two-part commercial block emerged as a distinct type during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.” (pp.145-146)

Cemeteries are another historical resource. Thirty cemeteries, ranging from larger municipal or church cemeteries, to small family plots, have been identified in the Town of Johnsbury.<sup>10</sup>

### **Alternatives for Preserving Historic Resources**

The historic flavor of its early buildings and rural hamlets, together with its setting in a scenic rural Adirondack location are among the amenities that make the Town of Johnsbury a desirable place to live and operate a business. (It offers an alternative to homogenized urban and suburban environments with no sense of place.) It follows that preservation of historic

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<sup>10</sup> “River, Rails, and Ski Trails,” p. xi.

resources is an essential ingredient in retaining the existing character of the town as it undergoes future development. There are several alternatives that could be pursued.

### Local Historic Inventory

A first step in preservation would be to undertake an inventory of significant historical structures and sites. This could be accomplished by volunteers with knowledge of historic architectural as well as the town's history, or by professionals. Universities with GIS mapping programs could assist by preparing maps of the historic resources. Unfortunately, grant money that had been available in past years to perform such inventories is not available at the time of this writing.

### Placement on the National or State Registers of Historic Places

If sites are identified of state or national significance they may qualify for inclusion on the National or New York State Register of Historic Places. Sites can be individual properties or be part of an historic "district." To be eligible for such inclusion sites or buildings must be of national or statewide significance, not merely of local importance. Historic sites should be connected with some significant event or person, and/or be representative of some special architectural style. Buildings should retain their original architectural integrity and their exterior should not be modified.

Listing on the national register, however, is essentially a recognition program, and does not protect properties so listed from being demolished or modified in such manner that diminishes their historical and architectural value. Neither does such listing, in itself, protect historical properties from adverse impacts of neighboring development.

### Local Historic Preservation Law

It is possible for municipalities to adopt an historic preservation law that would prevent the demolition of historic properties, and would control prevent any change in the exterior appearance of such buildings not in keeping with their historic character. Before enacting such a law, an historic district must be delineated on a map. The law would only apply within the district. An "architectural review board" would be appointed that would be given the responsibility of approving any external changes to structures, or demolitions, within the district.

The main street block in North Creek might qualify for such designation. However, it may not be desired by local merchants because it imposes a high degree of control on private property. Also, architectural expertise is required for membership on the review board – a qualification that is lacking in most rural communities.

### Local Historic Notification and Recognition Program

In such a program each owner of an identified property is made aware of the significance their site and why it deserves recognition and protection as part of the Town historic

preservation effort. Owners may be willing to take extra steps to preserve their properties once they learn of their significance. Along with this it is possible to develop a map and brochure listing local historical sites, and to provide some sort of small local historical markers that landowners can place on their properties.

It is recommended that the town pursue such a program through volunteer efforts in order to encourage owners of historic properties to preserve them.

### Local Site Plan Review and Zoning

First, it is suggested that within the hamlets the size of new buildings be limited in keeping with the size and scale of existing structures. Large modernistic buildings and large parking lots are incompatible with existing smaller historic buildings and shops.

Second, developers and property owners should be encouraged to design new buildings, and additions, that are compatible with existing architecture. The North Creek Action Plan contains a set of “Development Guidelines and Standards” that could be recommended to developers in North Creek hamlet.

Third, provisions to minimize adverse impacts of new development on historical buildings and sites should be incorporated into land use regulations. This should include Planning Board site plan review of new development to promote compatibility with adjacent historic sites by taking into account signage, color schemes, and building materials, as well as by requiring landscaping, vegetative screening or green space buffers as needed. A list and map of historic properties worthy of such consideration would support such an effort.

## **POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS**

Examination of the age structure of the Town of Johnsburg population reveals that it has a demographic profile characteristic of slowly growing rural towns and retirement areas, with out-migration of younger persons and young families, and in-migration of older persons and retirees. (See Table 1 and Figure 1.)

There is a somewhat lower percentage of younger persons, aged 0 to 19 years, than in Warren County and the state. This pattern is typical of areas where younger families with school aged children migrate out of an area in search of employment or affordable housing. The extent of in-migration and out-migration by age cohort can be gleaned from Table 2. During the 1990s this table suggests that about 74 young persons aged 15 to 24 years of age left the town to reside elsewhere. Approximately 42 persons also left town aged 25 to 34 years.

**TABLE 1  
POPULATION DATA FROM THE YEAR 2000 CENSUS**

|                           | Town of<br>Johnsburg | Comparison with Warren County and<br>New York State |                  |             |
|---------------------------|----------------------|---|------------------|-------------|
|                           |                      | Johnsburg   | Warren<br>County | NY<br>State |
| <b>TOTAL POPULATION</b>   | 2,450                |   |                  |             |
| Male                      | 1,176                | 48.0 %  | 48.5 %           | 48.2 %      |
| Female                    | 1,274                | 52.0 %  | 51.5 %           | 51.8 %      |
| <b>AGE</b>                |                      |   |                  |             |
| Under 5 years             | 113                  | 4.6 %   | 5.4 %            | 6.5 %       |
| 5 to 9 years              | 159                  | 6.5 %   | 6.9 %            | 7.1 %       |
| 10 to 14 years            | 165                  | 6.7 %   | 7.4 %            | 7.0 %       |
| 15 to 19 years            | 138                  | 5.6 %   | 6.9 %            | 6.8 %       |
| 20 to 24 years            | 122                  | 5.0 %   | 4.9 %            | 6.6 %       |
| 25 to 34 years            | 274                  | 11.2 %  | 12.0 %           | 14.5 %      |
| 35 to 44 years            | 383                  | 15.6 %  | 16.3 %           | 16.2 %      |
| 45 to 54 years            | 356                  | 14.5 %  | 14.8 %           | 13.5 %      |
| 55 to 59 years            | 147                  | 6.0 %   | 5.8 %            | 4.9 %       |
| 60 to 64 years            | 132                  | 5.4 %   | 4.4 %            | 4.0 %       |
| 65 to 74 years            | 234                  | 9.6 %   | 8.1 %            | 6.7 %       |
| 75 to 84 years            | 142                  | 5.8 %   | 5.2 %            | 4.5 %       |
| 85 years and over         | 85                   | 3.5 %   | 1.9 %            | 1.6 %       |
| Percent 65 years and over |                      | 18.8 %  | 15.2 %           | 12.9        |
| Median age (years)        |                      | 41.4  | 39.0             | 35.9        |

**TABLE 2  
POPULATION CHANGE BY AGE GROUP  
1990 TO 2000**

| <u>Age in 2000</u> | Number of persons |             | Change 1990 to 2000 |                | Change in the                           |
|--------------------|-------------------|-------------|---------------------|----------------|---|
|                    | <u>2000</u>       | <u>1990</u> | <u>Number</u>       | <u>Percent</u> | <u>1990 Cohort (a)</u><br><u>Number</u> |
| 5 to 14 years      | 324               | 334         | -10                 | -3%            |   |
| 15 to 24 years     | 260               | 316         | -56                 | -18%           | -74                                     |
| 25 to 34 years     | 274               | 364         | -90                 | -25%           | -42                                     |
| 35 to 44 years     | 383               | 335         | 48                  | 14%            | 19                                      |
| 45 to 54 years     | 356               | 225         | 131                 | 58%            | 21                                      |
| 55 to 64 years     | 279               | 223         | 56                  | 25%            | 54                                      |
| 65 to 74 years     | 234               | 208         | 26                  | 13%            | 11                                      |
| 75 to 84 years     | 142               | 136         | 6                   | 4%             | -66                                     |
| 85 years and over  | 85                | 59          | 26                  | 44%            | -110                                    |

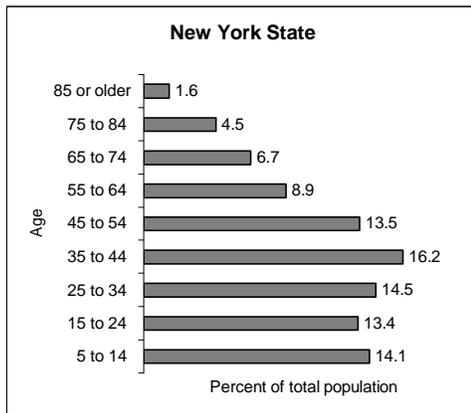
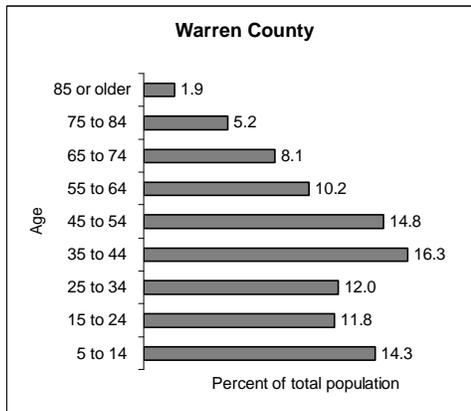
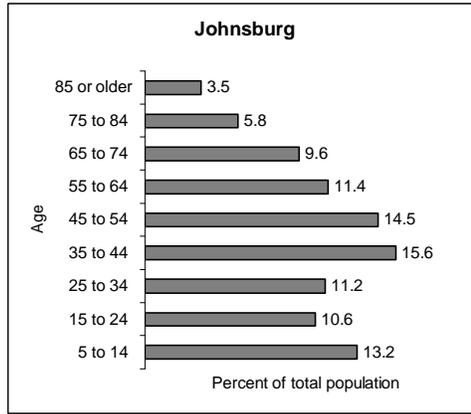
(a) For example, in 2000 there were 260 persons aged 15 to 24 years of age. This same group of persons numbered 316 in 1990 when they were aged 5 to 14. There was therefore a decline of 74 persons in this cohort during the decade.

The most notable difference between Johnsborg and both Warren County and New York State as a whole is the high proportion of older persons in the town. About 19% of Johnsborg's population in the year 2000 was aged over 65 years, compared to about 15% in Warren County and 13% in State. This suggests that there has been an in-migration of older individuals retirees into the town seeking its environmental amenities. This is borne out by Table 2 where the largest increase during the 1990s occurred in the 55 to 64 year age bracket. As the population ages the death rate increases, accounting for the declines in the cohorts aged 75 plus years. Accounting for deaths, it is likely that the in-migration of persons aged 65 to 74 years (age in 1990) was considerably higher than the +11 change in numbers of persons shown in the table.

One of the statewide demographic trends that will impact the Town of Johnsborg in the future is a large increase in the number of senior citizens. There is a "bulge" in the town's population age graph currently centered on persons aged in their mid-40's. This group will be in their mid-60's by the year 2020, and will constitute a rather sizeable increase in the proportion of older persons in the Town. As this cohort ages beyond working years, the income of many will significantly decline thereby creating an increasing need for affordable housing.

It is therefore suggested that the Town of Johnsborg address the need for affordable senior citizen housing and other needs of the older population in its comprehensive plan policies and land use regulations. This includes providing for assisted living facilities and nursing homes as well as for housing in the form of apartments and senior citizen units.

**FIGURE 1  
POPULATION AGE STRUCTURE COMPARISONS**



## SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Table 3 shows some of the social characteristic data available from the year 2000 census of population.

**TABLE 3  
SOCIAL DATA FROM THE YEAR 2000 CENSUS**

|  | Town of<br>Johnsburg | Comparison with Warren County and<br>New York State |                  |             |
|--|----------------------|---|------------------|-------------|
|  |                      | Johnsburg   | Warren<br>County | NY<br>State |
| <b>SCHOOL ENROLLMENT</b>                       |                      |   |                  |             |
| Population 3 years and over enrolled in school | 487                  |   |                  |             |
| Nursery school, preschool                      | 10                   | 2.1 %   | 6.5 %            | 6.4 %       |
| Kindergarten                                   | 31                   | 6.4 %   | 5.1 %            | 5.2 %       |
| Elementary school (grades 1-8)                 | 262                  | 53.8 %  | 47.7 %           | 42.3 %      |
| High school (grades 9-12)                      | 105                  | 21.6 %  | 22.1 %           | 21.1 %      |
| College or graduate school                     | 79                   | 16.2 %  | 18.5 %           | 24.9 %      |
| <b>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</b>                  |                      |   |                  |             |
| Less than 9th grade                            | 165                  | 9.4 %   | 3.7 %            | 8 %         |
| 9th to 12th grade, no diploma                  | 273                  | 15.6 %  | 11.7 %           | 12.9 %      |
| High school graduate (includes equivalency)    | 687                  | 39.2 %  | 33.6 %           | 27.8 %      |
| Some college, no degree                        | 226                  | 12.9 %  | 18.4 %           | 16.8 %      |
| Associate degree                               | 119                  | 6.8 %   | 9.4 %            | 7.2 %       |
| Bachelor's degree                              | 154                  | 8.8 %   | 13.5 %           | 15.6 %      |
| Graduate or professional degree                | 127                  | 7.3 %   | 9.8 %            | 11.8 %      |
| TOTAL  | 1,751                |   |                  |             |
| Percent high school graduate or higher         |                      | 75.0 %  | 84.6 %           | 79.1 %      |
| Percent bachelor's degree or higher            |                      | 16.0 %  | 23.2 %           | 27.4 %      |
| <b>ANCESTRY (single or multiple)</b>           |                      |   |                  |             |
| Irish  | 482                  | 19.6 %  | 21.0 %           | 12.9 %      |
| English  | 392                  | 16.0 %  | 15.6 %           | 6.0 %       |
| German   | 303                  | 12.3 %  | 13.2 %           | 11.2 %      |
| United States or American                      | 287                  | 11.7 %  | 7.1 %            | 3.8 %       |
| French   | 237                  | 9.6 %   | 13.1 %           | 2.5 %       |
| Italian  | 100                  | 4.1 %   | 11.1 %           | 14.4 %      |
| Dutch  | 71                   | 2.9 %   | 3.1 %            | 1.4 %       |
| Scotch-Irish                                   | 48                   | 2.0 %   | 1.9 %            | 0.7 %       |
| Scottish                                       | 47                   | 1.9 %   | 2.8 %            | 1.1 %       |
| Polish   | 45                   | 1.8 %   | 3.7 %            | 5.2 %       |
| Other  | 445                  | 18.1 %  | 7.4 %            | 47.9 %      |

The proportion of young persons enrolled in school is very similar to that of Warren County as a whole, with the exception of pre-school. Educational attainment of the town's population also mirrors Essex County, with a significant percentage of persons having attended college and received degrees. Ancestry is dominantly northern European with Irish, English and German being the most numerous, reflecting the town's early settlement history.

## HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

The year 2000 Census of Housing (see Table 4) reveals some significant differences between the Town of Johnsburg compared to both Warren County and the State of New York.

**TABLE 4  
HOUSING DATA FROM THE YEAR 2000 CENSUS**

|   | Comparison with Warren County and<br>New York State |           |                  |             |
|---|---|-----------|------------------|-------------|
|   | Town of<br>Johnsburg                                | Johnsburg | Warren<br>County | NY<br>State |
| <b>TOTAL HOUSING UNITS</b>                  | 1,714   |           |                  |             |
| Owner-occupied                              | 766   | 44.7 %    | 42.7 %           | 48.7 %      |
| Renter-occupied                             | 233   | 13.6 %    | 18.5 %           | 43.2 %      |
| Seasonal or recreational use                | 604   | 35.2 %    | 17.2 %           | 5.0 %       |
| Vacant                                      | 111   | 6.5 %     | 21.7 %           | 3.1 %       |
| <b>UNITS IN STRUCTURE</b>                   |   |           |                  |             |
| 1 unit                                      | 1,364   | 80.0 %    | 73.8 %           | 46.6 %      |
| 2 units                                     | 59  | 3.4 %     | 7.2 %            | 10.9 %      |
| 3 or more units                             | 51  | 2.9 %     | 11.9 %           | 39.8 %      |
| Mobile home                                 | 236   | 13.8 %    | 6.9 %            | 2.7 %       |
| Boat, RV, van, etc.                         | 4   | 0.2 %     | 0.1 %            | 0.1 %       |
| <b>YEAR STRUCTURE BUILT</b>                 |   |           |                  |             |
| 1999 to March 2000                          | 17  | 1.0 %     | 1.4 %            | 0.9 %       |
| 1995 to 1998                                | 72  | 4.2 %     | 5.0 %            | 2.6 %       |
| 1990 to 1994                                | 133   | 7.8 %     | 7.7 %            | 3.4 %       |
| 1980 to 1989                                | 298   | 17.4 %    | 15.4 %           | 7.7 %       |
| 1970 to 1979                                | 276   | 16.1 %    | 16.4 %           | 11.3 %      |
| 1960 to 1969                                | 234   | 13.7 %    | 11.0 %           | 14.6 %      |
| 1940 to 1959                                | 195   | 11.4 %    | 18.6 %           | 28.3 %      |
| 1939 or earlier                             | 489   | 28.5 %    | 24.5 %           | 31.2 %      |
| <b>HOUSEHOLD SIZE</b>                       |   |           |                  |             |
| Average household size                      |   | 2.36      | 2.41             | 2.6         |
| <b>VALUE, RENT</b>                          |   |           |                  |             |
| Median value, owner occupied<br>units       |   | \$84,500  | \$97,500         | \$148,700   |
| Median gross rent, renter occupied<br>units |   | \$456     | \$557            | \$672       |

First, the percentage of seasonal housing units accounted for about 35% of the total housing units in the town, compared to 17% and 5% in the Warren County and the state, respectively.

Second, the percentage of mobile homes is much higher in the Town of Johnsburg than in Warren County or in the state. While about 14% of the housing units in the town were in the form of mobile homes, they represented only about 7% and 3% in the county and in the state.

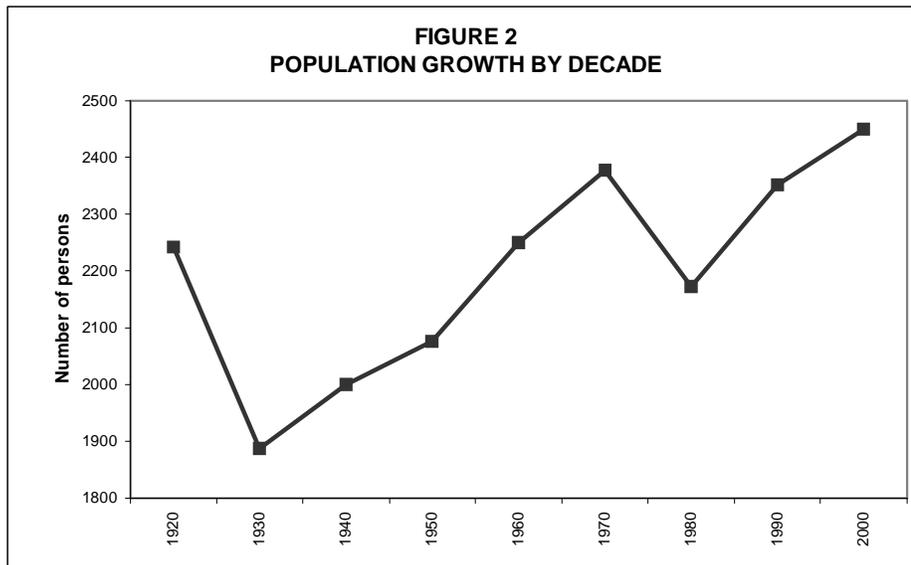
These figures suggest that there is a significant demand for affordable housing units in the town.

Third, the percentage of rental units in the Town of Johnsburg is lower than in either the county or the state, with only about 14 % of the units in Johnsburg being rentals, compared with 19% and 43%, respectively. This statistic supports the conclusion that more affordable housing units are needed in the town.

The mix of building ages in Johnsburg is similar to both Warren County and the state, with the exception of there being a smaller percentage of structures built between the years of 1940 to 1959 in Johnsburg.

### POPULATION TRENDS

As suggested by Figure 2, the Town of Johnsburg’s population reached a low in the year 1920. This decline can undoubtedly be attributed to fewer jobs in the forestry industry and the decline of family farms. After World War II the town’s population began a steady increase until the year 1970, then experienced a decline. During the 1980s development boom that affected many parts of the state, the town’s population grew rapidly, and continued to grow but at a slower growth rate during the 1990s.



**TABLE 5  
POPULATION CHANGE BY YEAR**

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Total Population</u> | <u>Change from previous decade</u> |                |
|-------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------|
|             |                         | <u>Number</u>                      | <u>Percent</u> |
| 1920        | 2242                    |                                    |                |
| 1930        | 1887                    | -355                               | -15.8%         |
| 1940        | 2000                    | 113                                | 6.0%           |
| 1950        | 2076                    | 76                                 | 3.8%           |
| 1960        | 2250                    | 174                                | 8.4%           |
| 1970        | 2377                    | 127                                | 5.6%           |
| 1980        | 2173                    | -204                               | -8.6%          |
| 1990        | 2352                    | 179                                | 8.2%           |
| 2000        | 2450                    | 98                                 | 4.2%           |

During the 1990's the Town of Johnsburg grew slowly compared to other Warren County towns. (Table 6) The largest increases in population were centered around Glens Falls, where the Town of Queensbury increased by 2811 persons. Johnsburg's location in the corner of the county and further removed from employment opportunities accounts for its relatively low growth rate. However, as growth expands outward from the Glens Falls urban area, Johnsburg's relative growth rate may be expected to increase somewhat.

**TABLE 6  
POPULATION CHANGE IN WARREN  
COUNTY TOWNS  
1990 to 2000  
Ranked by Percent Change**

| <u>Town</u>             | <u>Number</u> | <u>Percent</u> |
|-------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Hague                   | 155           | 22.2%          |
| Horicon                 | 210           | 16.5%          |
| Thurman                 | 154           | 14.7%          |
| Lake Luzerne            | 403           | 14.3%          |
| Bolton                  | 262           | 14.1%          |
| Queensbury              | 2811          | 12.4%          |
| Lake George             | 367           | 11.4%          |
| Stony Creek             | 73            | 10.9%          |
| <b>Warren Co. towns</b> | <b>4773</b>   | <b>10.3%</b>   |
| Chester                 | 149           | 4.3%           |
| <b>Johnsburg</b>        | <b>98</b>     | <b>4.2%</b>    |
| Warrensburg             | 81            | 1.9%           |

It should be noted that population trends are not the same as housing growth trends. During the early part of the last century family sizes were much larger than they are today, and historically there has been a steady decline in the number of persons per household. As a consequence many towns that had experienced slight population loss during the past decade or two had nonetheless grew in terms of numbers of housing units. In terms of land use planning, it is the increase in housing units, rather than population, that has the most visible impact.

In addition, seasonal population is not counted in the U.S. Census, and in many Adirondack towns population swells during times when seasonal homes and tourist accommodations are occupied. Thus, population change numbers are not necessarily representative of the real growth that is occurring in terms of numbers of structures being built and their impact upon communities. In the Town of Johnsburg there were 604 seasonal housing units counted in the year 2000 census. Multiplying this by an average of 2.43 persons per household (the town's average) provides an estimate of 1468 seasonal residents that are not counted in the population figures reported above. The number of seasonal residents is undoubtedly even higher when counting those living in hotels, motels and other seasonal accommodations.

## HOUSING GROWTH TRENDS

There are several sources of housing data available, and together they indicate that the Town of Johnsbury has experienced significant housing growth during the past two decades, peaking with the building boom in the mid-1980, and continuing at a modest rate thereafter.

### Year 2000 Census Data

The year 2000 census enumerated 1714 total housing units in the Town of Johnsbury, including 999 year round occupied units, and 715 seasonal or vacant units. (Table 7). Seasonal housing units accounted for about 35% of the total housing stock.

According to the census tabulation, the number of year round housing units (“occupied” units in the table) increased by 139 during the 1990’s, representing a rate of increase of about 16%, while the number of seasonal and vacant units declined by 24, or a 3% decrease.

The number of mobile homes enumerated in the census increased from 212 to 236 during the decade, an increase of only 24 units. However, it is likely that this figure underestimates the number of mobile homes actually moved into the town during the decade because some existing mobile homes may have been converted into structures more closely resembling conventional housing by virtue of building additions, and thus may have been enumerated as conventional 1 family dwellings.

**TABLE 7  
HOUSING CHANGE, 1990 TO 2000**

|   | <u>2000</u> | <u>1990</u> | <u>Change 1990 to 2000</u> |                |
|---|-------------|-------------|----------------------------|----------------|
|   |             |             | <u>Number</u>              | <u>Percent</u> |
| <b>NUMBER OF UNITS BY STATUS</b>            |             |             |                            |                |
| TOTAL units                                 | 1714        | 1599        | 115                        | 7.2%           |
| Owner-occupied                              | 766         | 661         | 105                        | 15.9%          |
| Renter-occupied                             | 233         | 199         | 34                         | 17.1%          |
| TOTAL occupied                              | 999         | 860         | 139                        | 16.2%          |
| Seasonal or recreational use                | 604         | 552         | 52                         | 9.4%           |
| Vacant                                      | 111         | 187         | -76                        | -40.6%         |
| TOTAL vacant                                | 715         | 739         | -24                        | -3.2%          |
| <b>NUMBER OF UNITS BY TYPE OF STRUCTURE</b> |             |             |                            |                |
| 1 unit                                      | 1364        | 1174        | 190                        | 16.2%          |
| 2 units                                     | 59          | 55          | 4                          | 7.3%           |
| 3 or more units                             | 51          | 119         | -68                        | -57.1%         |
| Mobile home                                 | 236         | 212         | 24                         | 11.3%          |
| Boat, RV, van, etc.                         | 4           | 39          | -35                        | -89.7%         |

Source: US Census of Population and Housing

**Building Permit Data**

A recently published study, "Growth Trends in the Adirondack Park: Analysis of Rates and Patterns of Development," collected building permit data from all municipalities within the Adirondack Park for a 10 year period 1990 to 1999 in order to study growth trends.<sup>11</sup> Data from this study is shown on Tables 8 and 9.

According to the building permit data, 146 new structures were built in the Town of Johnsburg from 1990 to 1999, an average of nearly 15 per year. This represents a rate of change somewhat lower than for Warren County as a whole (Table 9).

Of the 657 total building permits issued in the Town of Johnsburg during this period, 99 required a permit from the Adirondack Park Agency, and only 4 were for a commercial use.

**TABLE 8  
BUILDING PERMIT DATA, TOWN OF JOHNSBURG, 1990 TO 1999**

| <u>Year</u>  | <u>Building Permits Issued</u> | <u>Building Permits for New Structures</u> | <u>APA Permits Issued</u> | <u>APA Permits for Commercial Uses</u> |
|--------------|--------------------------------|--|---------------------------|--|
| 1990         | 67                             | 23   | 12                        | 1                                      |
| 1991         | 64                             | 17   | 14                        | 1                                      |
| 1992         | 71                             | 14   | 17                        | 0                                      |
| 1993         | 77                             | 10   | 10                        | 0                                      |
| 1994         | 63                             | 11   | 6                         | 0                                      |
| 1995         | 58                             | 19   | 7                         | 0                                      |
| 1996         | 73                             | 13   | 11                        | 2                                      |
| 1997         | 59                             | 12   | 11                        | 1                                      |
| 1998         | 57                             | 10   | 7                         | 0                                      |
| 1999         | 68                             | 17   | 4                         | 0                                      |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>657</b>                     | <b>146</b>                                 | <b>99</b>                 | <b>4</b>                               |

Source: "Growth in the Adirondack Park: Analysis of Rates and Patterns of Development," The Residents Committee to Protect the Adirondacks, 2001.

<sup>11</sup> "Growth Trends in the Adirondack Park: Analysis of Rates and Patterns of Development," Residents Committee to Proect the Adirondacks, 2001.

**TABLE 9**  
**BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED FOR NEW STRUCTURES**  
**WARREN COUNTY TOWNS**  
**1990 through 1999, Ranked by Percent Change**

| <b>Town</b>               | <b>Number</b> | <b>As Percent of<br/>Total Residential<br/>Parcels, 1999</b> |
|---------------------------|---------------|--|
| Thurman                   | 110           | 19.7   |
| Lake George Town          | 257           | 18.6   |
| Warrensburg               | 243           | 15.8   |
| Lake Luzerne              | 220           | 15.4   |
| Horicon                   | 188           | 12.6   |
| <b>Average, all towns</b> | <b>163</b>    | <b>12.3</b>  |
| Stony Creek               | 57            | 12.2   |
| Bolton                    | 207           | 10.7   |
| Hague                     | 95            | 10.7   |
| <b>Johnsburg</b>          | <b>146</b>    | <b>9.8</b>   |
| Chester                   | 179           | 8.5  |
| Queensbury                | 89            | 7.1  |

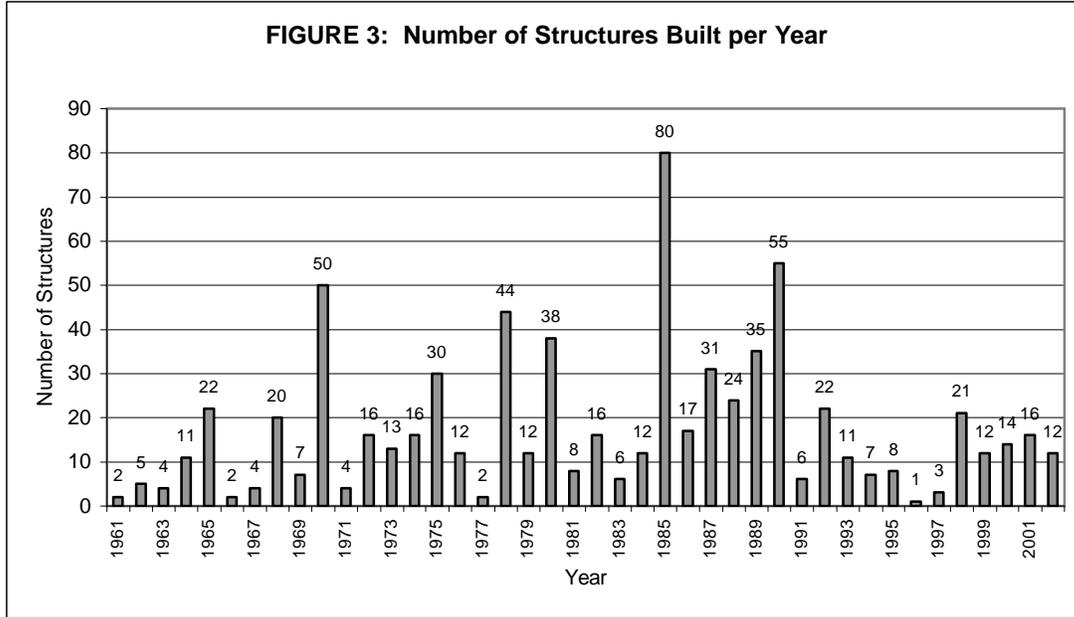
### Real Property Service Data Base

The real property service data base contains information pertaining to each parcel of land in the Town of Johnsbury. This computerized data base is recorded by local property assessors and is maintained for the basic purpose of levying property taxes, but also contains much information useful for land use planning. Among the items recorded is “year structure built.” If known to the assessor, the date of construction is listed for buildings on the property. It should be cautioned that this information is not complete and is not necessarily a totally accurate reflection of growth rates in town. First, the year of construction is sometimes blank in the data base where such date is unknown. Second, it does not include mobile homes because they are constructed elsewhere. This data is therefore helpful, but incomplete.

Figure 3 and Table 10 show the real property information. According to these records, the number of structures built in town has varied a great deal from year to year. There are large spikes in the data for some years, and almost no development in other years. However, when averaged over 10 year periods, it shows that the rate of development during the 1970s increased from previous levels, peaked during the 1980s, then retreated to a modest rate during the 1990s.

The location of new buildings constructed during the most recent 20 year period is portrayed on the “20 Year Growth Trend Map.” As can be seen from the map, growth has been generally scattered throughout the town, with the exception of subdivision and townhouse type developments, such as the Thirteenth Lake subdivision. Growth was *not* concentrated in the smaller APA designated hamlets of Wevertown, Johnsbury, Bakers Mills and Riparius. The hamlet of North Creek, however, did attract a townhouse style development as well as some single family homes. A considerable amount of rural growth occurred in the triangle bounded generally by Johnsbury hamlet, Bakers Mills and Garnet Lake. The vast majority of

new development occurred in the form of year round housing, which accounted for 356 of the total 393 units constructed during this 20 year period. There were 27 seasonal housing units built during the same time.



**TABLE 10  
NUMBER OF STRUCTURES  
BUILT PER YEAR**

| <u>Decade</u> | <u>Number<br/>per Year</u> |
|---------------|----------------------------|
| 1991 to 2000  | 10.5                       |
| 1981 to 1990  | 28.4                       |
| 1971 to 1980  | 18.7                       |
| 1961 to 1970  | 12.7                       |

## POPULATION AND HOUSING PROJECTIONS

### Regional Planning Board Projections

In 1997 the Lake Champlain – Lake George Regional Planning Board prepared population projections for municipalities within its service area, including Warren County and the Town of Johnsbury (see Table 11). These projections somewhat underestimated the 2000 population in both the county and the Town of Johnsbury. The town’s actual year 2000 population as recorded in the U.S. Census was 2450 persons, higher than the projected 2420 persons. Similarly, the county’s actual population in the year 2000 was somewhat larger than that which had been projected. It may therefore be concluded that the Regional Planning Board population projections for future years is also too low.

**TABLE 11  
POPULATION PROJECTIONS PREPARED BY  
THE REGIONAL PLANNING BOARD IN 1997**

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Actual or Projected<br/>Population</u> | <u>Number of Persons</u> |                      |
|-------------|---|--------------------------|----------------------|
|             |   | <u>Johnsburg</u>         | <u>Warren County</u> |
| 1960        | Actual                                    | 2250                     | 44,002               |
| 1970        | Actual                                    | 2377                     | 49,404               |
| 1980        | Actual                                    | 2173                     | 54,854               |
| 1990        | Actual                                    | 2352                     | 59,209               |
| 2000        | Projected                                 | 2420                     | 62,095               |
| 2010        | Projected                                 | 2424                     | 63,128               |
| 2020        | Projected                                 | 2427                     | 63,976               |
| 2030        | Projected                                 | 2430                     | 64,694               |
| (2000)      | (Actual)                                  | (2450)                   | (63,303)             |

Source of projections: Lake Champlain - Lake George  
Regional Planning Board, October 1997

### **Consultant’s Population and Housing Projections**

Population and housing projections are merely projections of past trends that may or may not hold true in the future. They are not predictions, but estimates based upon certain assumptions. The assumptions used to derive the projections for this plan are based upon the generally steady slow to moderate growth rate that has been characteristic of the Town of Johnsburg during past years. Three estimates for both population and occupied housing units are shown: a high, mid, and low projection. (See Table 12 and Figures 4 and 5.)

High Estimate. The high estimate assumes that both population and year round housing units will increase at a somewhat higher rate than had occurred during the 1990s. Specifically, it assumes that the 1990 to 2000 numerical increase in population and housing units will increase by 10% from 2000 to 2010 and from 2010 to 2020, and thereafter level off at a constant numerical increase per decade. This scenario assumes that the Town of Johnsburg will grow somewhat more rapidly until 2020 due to the expansion of the Glens Falls urban region northward in future years, and that the town will attract increasing numbers of migrants due to its amenities and recreational opportunities. Thereafter, it assumes that the growth rate will slow somewhat as it typically does in rural towns that undergo suburbanization. Growth eventually slows caused in part by a limited number of available building lots and increase in land values.

Mid-Estimate. The mid-estimate assumes that the 1990 to 2000 numerical increase will remain the same until the year 2020, and thereafter will slow by 20% per decade.

Low Estimate. This estimate assumes that numerical increase will decline by 20 percent per decade until 2040. Even these estimates are substantially *higher* than those published by the Lake Champlain – Lake George Regional Planning Board in 1997.

**TABLE 12  
POPULATION AND OCCUPIED HOUSING PROJECTIONS**

|                                  | Actual:     | Projected:  |             |             |             |             |
|----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|                                  | <u>1990</u> | <u>2000</u> | <u>2010</u> | <u>2020</u> | <u>2030</u> | <u>2040</u> |
| Population                       |             |             |             |             |             |             |
| High Estimate                    | 2352        | 2450        | 2558        | 2676        | 2795        | 2914        |
| Mid Estimate                     | 2352        | 2450        | 2548        | 2646        | 2724        | 2787        |
| Low Estimate                     | 2352        | 2450        | 2528        | 2591        | 2641        | 2681        |
| Change per decade, high estimate |             | 98          | 108         | 119         | 119         | 119         |
| Change per decade, mid estimate  |             | 98          | 98          | 98          | 78          | 63          |
| Change per decade, low estimate  |             | 98          | 78          | 63          | 50          | 40          |
| Occupied housing units           |             |             |             |             |             |             |
| High Estimate                    | 860         | 999         | 1152        | 1320        | 1488        | 1656        |
| Mid Estimate                     | 860         | 999         | 1138        | 1277        | 1388        | 1477        |
| Low Estimate                     | 860         | 999         | 1110        | 1199        | 1270        | 1327        |
| Change per decade, high estimate |             | 139         | 153         | 168         | 168         | 168         |
| Change per decade, mid estimate  |             | 139         | 139         | 139         | 111         | 89          |
| Change per decade, low estimate  |             | 139         | 111         | 89          | 71          | 57          |

Assumptions:

High estimate: The 1990 to 2000 numerical change in both population and housing will increase by 10% per decade until 2020, and thereafter the numerical increase will remain the same.

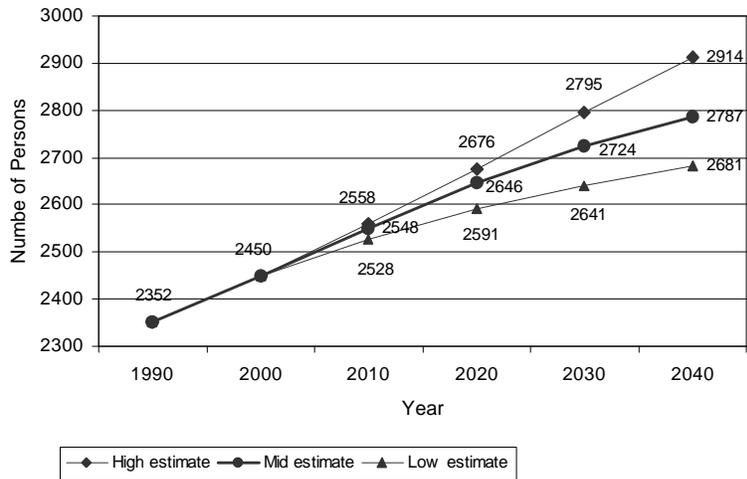
Mid estimate: : The 1990 to 2000 numerical change in both population and housing will remain the same until 2020, and thereafter the numerical increase will slow by 20% per decade.

Low estimate: The 1990 to 2000 numerical change in both population and housing will slow by 20% per decade.

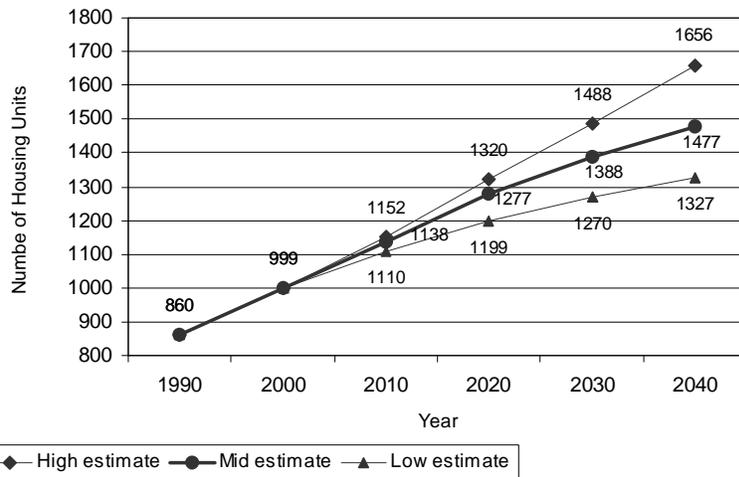
Should the mid-estimates be accurate, the town's population would experience low to moderate growth from 2450 persons in the year 2000, to 2646 persons in 2020 and 2787 persons in the year 2040. Year round housing units would increase from 999 units, to 1277 units and 1477 units respectively.

Should the high estimates be accurate, the number of housing units and corresponding impact upon the landscape would increase significantly. The town's 999 year round dwelling units in the year 2000 could increase by 321 units by the year 2020, and by 657 units by the year 2040.

**FIGURE 4  
POPULATION PROJECTIONS**



**FIGURE 5  
YEAR ROUND HOUSING PROJECTIONS**



## **ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS**

Some of the key characteristics of the town's economy are shown on Table 13.

Historically, the primary industries of agriculture, forestry and mining were the mainstay of the town's economy. Today less than 4% of the workforce is employed in these business sectors. Most persons commute to job destinations outside the town to find employment, as reflected in the high percentage of the population who drive to work and the average travel time to work of about 27 minutes.. Local employment opportunities are primarily in service businesses that provide goods and services to year round residents, seasonal residents, or tourists, as reflected in the comparatively high percentage of persons employed in retail trade for a town without a major commercial center. Another local employer is the public service sector, which includes schools.

Income levels are significantly lower than in both Warren County and New York State. Median family income in the year 2000 was only \$37,540 compared to \$39,198 and \$43,393 in the county and the state, respectively. Also, the percent of both families and individuals below the poverty level is considerably higher than that for both Warren County and the state. The 17.7% of families below the poverty level in the year 2000 compares with 9.7% in the county and 11.6% in the state.

The income statistics reinforce the need to address economic development and affordable housing in the town comprehensive plan.

## **TAX BASE**

The total assessed value of properties in the Town of Johnsbury in the year 2003 was about 258 million dollars. (See Figure 6 and Table 14.) The largest category was single family residential properties that accounted for about 36% of the total tax base. Adding the other residential sub-categories, the total value of residential properties in the Town of Johnsbury accounted for 43 of the total tax base. The average value per parcel of residential properties was \$82,454 for year round single family dwellings, but much less for seasonal homes (\$44,242) and for mobile homes (\$35,871).

State lands accounted for about 21 percent of the total tax base, with an additional 3.6% contributed by payments from the New York State listed as "Other State Land Assessments." Commercial and industrial uses accounted for an additional 9% of the total tax base. (The 9% figure includes seasonal lodging, but excludes lands that may be used for logging or forestry.)

This data reflects the characterization of the Town of Johnsbury as being primarily a residential area, both year round and seasonal, that depends upon forest products and seasonal tourism/recreation businesses for its economic livelihood.

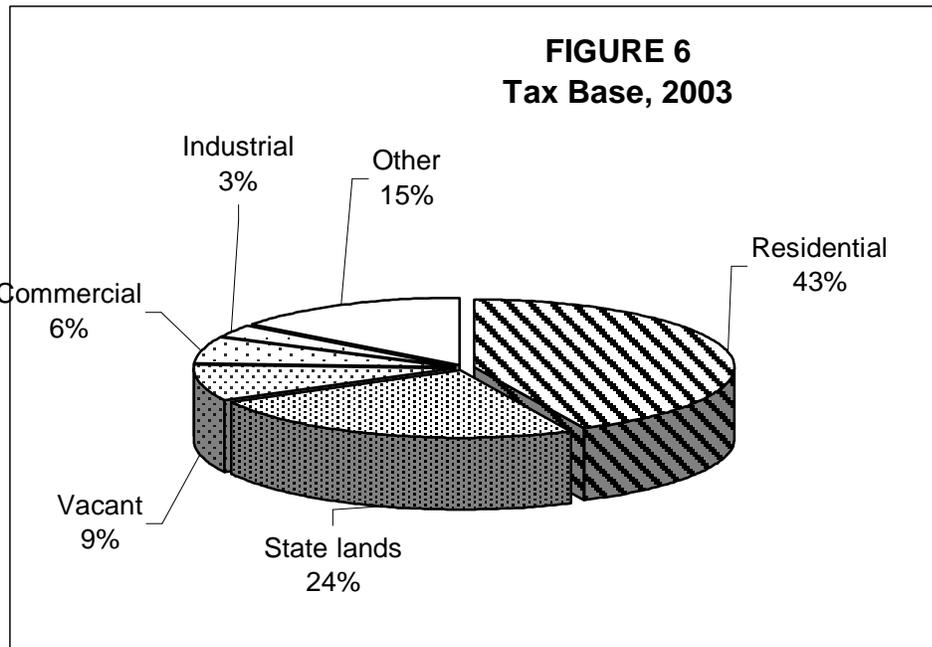
**TABLE 13  
ECONOMIC DATA FROM THE YEAR 2000 CENSUS**

|   | Town of<br>Johnsburg | Comparison with Warren County and<br>New York State |                  |             |
|---|----------------------|---|------------------|-------------|
|   |                      | Johnsburg   | Warren<br>County | NY<br>State |
| <b>COMMUTING TO WORK</b>  |                      |   |                  |             |
| Car, truck, or van -- drove alone   | 753                  | 73.2 %  | 80.8 %           | 56.3 %      |
| Car, truck, or van -- carpooled   | 152                  | 14.8 %  | 10.7 %           | 9.2 %       |
| Public transportation (including taxicab)   | 3                    | 0.3 %   | 1.1 %            | 24.4 %      |
| Walked  | 72                   | 7.0 %   | 3.4 %            | 6.2 %       |
| Other means   | 12                   | 1.2 %   | 0.8 %            | 0.8 %       |
| Worked at home  | 37                   | 3.6 %   | 3.1 %            | 3 %         |
| TOTAL   | 1,029                |   |                  |             |
| Mean travel time to work (minutes)  |                      | 27.4  | 21.4             | 31.7        |
| <b>INDUSTRY</b>   |                      |   |                  |             |
| Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting,<br>and mining                                 | 35                   | 3.4 %   | 1.1 %            | 0.6 %       |
| Construction  | 126                  | 12.2 %  | 7.0 %            | 5.2 %       |
| Manufacturing   | 107                  | 10.3 %  | 11.9 %           | 10 %        |
| Wholesale trade   | 26                   | 2.5 %   | 2.5 %            | 3.4 %       |
| Retail trade  | 143                  | 13.8 %  | 13.3 %           | 10.5 %      |
| Transportation and warehousing, and<br>utilities  | 18                   | 1.7 %   | 3.9 %            | 5.5 %       |
| Information   | 5                    | 0.5 %   | 2.9 %            | 4.1 %       |
| Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental<br>and leasing                                | 84                   | 8.1 %   | 6.1 %            | 8.8 %       |
| Professional, scientific, management,<br>administrative, and waste management<br>services | 32                   | 3.1 %   | 6.4 %            | 10.1 %      |
| Educational, health and social services   | 231                  | 22.3 %  | 23.0 %           | 24.3 %      |
| Arts, entertainment, recreation,<br>accommodation and food services                       | 152                  | 14.7 %  | 11.8 %           | 7.3 %       |
| Other services (except public<br>administration)  | 26                   | 2.5 %   | 4.2 %            | 5.1 %       |
| Public administration   | 49                   | 4.7 %   | 6.0 %            | 5.2 %       |
| <b>INCOME</b>   |                      |   |                  |             |
| Median household income (dollars)   |                      | \$30,559  | \$39,198         | \$43,393    |
| Median family income (dollars)  |                      | \$37,540  | \$46,793         | \$51,691    |
| Per capita income (dollars)   |                      | \$16,740  | \$20,727         | \$23,389    |
| Percent below poverty level, families   |                      | 13.7  | 7.2              | 7.8         |
| Percent below poverty level, individuals  |                      | 17.7  | 9.7              | 11.6        |

**TABLE 14  
ASSESSED VALUE OF PROPERTIES, 2003 (a)**

| <b>Land Use</b>              | <b>Total Assessed Value</b> | <b>Percent of Town Total</b> | <b>Number of Parcels</b> | <b>Average per Parcel</b> |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Single family residential    | \$92,101,636                | 35.6%                        | 1,117                    | \$82,454                  |
| Forest Land, State           | \$53,136,174                | 20.6%                        | 411                      | \$129,285                 |
| Community Services           | \$19,921,900                | 7.7%                         | 62                       | \$321,321                 |
| Vacant land                  | \$19,028,892                | 7.4%                         | 1,079                    | \$17,636                  |
| Utilities                    | \$17,647,309                | 6.8%                         | 71                       | \$248,554                 |
| Seasonal homes               | \$11,104,617                | 4.3%                         | 251                      | \$44,242                  |
| Commercial                   | \$9,492,427                 | 3.7%                         | 76                       | \$124,900                 |
| Other state land assessments | \$9,316,095                 | 3.6%                         | 9                        | \$1,035,122               |
| Industrial, mining           | \$7,810,026                 | 3.0%                         | 6                        | \$1,301,671               |
| Seasonal lodging             | \$6,720,317                 | 2.6%                         | 12                       | \$560,026                 |
| Mobile homes                 | \$5,093,668                 | 2.0%                         | 142                      | \$35,871                  |
| Forest Land, Private         | \$3,627,704                 | 1.4%                         | 74                       | \$49,023                  |
| Two family residential       | \$1,641,161                 | 0.6%                         | 21                       | \$78,151                  |
| Apartments                   | \$944,591                   | 0.4%                         | 8                        | \$118,074                 |
| Recreation, entertainment    | \$781,003                   | 0.3%                         | 10                       | \$78,100                  |
| Mobile home park             | \$137,203                   | 0.1%                         | 1                        | \$137,203                 |
| <b>TOWN TOTAL =</b>          | <b>\$258,367,520</b>        | <b>100%</b>                  | <b>3,349</b>             | <b>\$77,148</b>           |

(a) Dollar amounts in the table represent the assessed value after applying the equalization rate of 3.79%.



## **STATE LANDS**

About 58% of the town's land area is state owned land, and is protected from development or removal of forests by the "forever wild" clause of the New York State constitution, excepting ski facilities at the Gore Mountain Ski Center. Use of state lands within the Adirondack Park is governed by both the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).<sup>12</sup> The Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan categorizes state property into seven types of regulatory categories, three of which are found in the Town of Johnsburg: wilderness, wild forest, and intensive use. In addition, state lands have been divided into a series of individual geographic areas, or unit management areas. The DEC, in consultation with the APA, is charged with preparing and periodically reviewing and revising a "unit management plan" that regulates recreational usage for each of these areas. Three unit management areas exist in the Town of Johnsburg: the Siamese Ponds Wilderness Area, the Wilcox Lake Wild Forest, and the Gore Mountain State Ski Center. (See State Lands, Trails map.)

### **Wilderness Areas**

A wilderness area is defined as one "having primeval character, without significant improvement or permanent habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve, enhance and restore where necessary, its natural conditions..." In wilderness areas only scattered lean-tos and tent sites are permitted in generally non-visible areas. Motorized vehicles such as ATVs and snowmobiles are prohibited. Tent platforms, clusters of lean-tos, electric or telephone wires, roads, and buildings are prohibited.

The Siamese Pond Wilderness area, about half of which lies within the Town of Johnsburg, is described as follows. "The Topography consists of relatively low rolling hills with a few mountain summits like Bullhead, Eleventh, Puffer and South Pond Mountains above the 3,000 foot level. In addition the area contains a large number of beaver meadows and swamps..." "Most of the areas was heavily logged over half century ago..." "This large block of land is unbroken by public roads and haws been protected from wheeled motor vehicle use by administrative policies and the Sacandaga River, swamps and other natural barriers. However, the old woods roads that penetrated the areas from a number of locations during the logging days are rather easy avenues for motor vehicles, particularly snowmobiles. It may be anticipated that, because of this, motor vehicle trespass could be more troublesome than in some of the other areas."

"Thirteenth Lake has a small sand beach at the northern end that makes a very desirable spot for picnics, bathing and camping. There are also other desirable camping spots on this lake."

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<sup>12</sup> Reference for this section is the "State of New York Adirondack Park Master Plan," NYS APA and NYS DEC, updated in 2001. Quotations are from the master plan.

## **Wild Forest**

A portion of the Wilcox Lake Wild Forest area lies in the southern part of Johnsbury. A wild forest area is defined as “an area where the resources permit a somewhat higher degree of human use than in wilderness, primitive or canoe areas, while retaining an essentially wild character.” A wild forest frequently lacks a sense of remoteness, and permits a wide variety of outdoor recreation. Groupings of tent sites, picnic tables, lean-tos, trailheads are permitted in wild forest areas. Motorized vehicles are permitted on designated roads and trails.

The unit management plan describes the Wilcox Lake management unit as follows: “This area is capable of withstanding considerably more use without destruction of the physical resource or the wild forest atmosphere.” It contains a number of snowmobile trails, as well as some hiking and cross-country ski trails. The opportunity exists for creating a more extensive trail system within this unit.

## **Gore Mountain State Ski Center**

The Gore Mountain State Ski Center is a state owned, year-round, recreational day use area administered by the Olympic Regional Development Authority (ORDA) under agreement with NYS DEC. It opened in 1964 with strong support of the community, that continues to this day. It is classified as an “Intensive Use Area” in the State Land Master Plan. Its primary use is for downhill and cross-country skiing. It contains 25.1 miles of downhill trails, 14.6 miles of nordic ski trails, a gondola from the base to the summit of Bear Mountain, eight other lifts, two lodges, and five parking lots occupying about 12 acres.

The Gore Mountain Unit Management Plan has been updated for the years 2002-2207. The new plan calls for a number of improvements such as new trails, lifts, lodges, parking and other facilities. Of particular significance to the Town of Johnsbury is a plan to develop new trails and lifts to create a connection with the town owned Ski Bowl Park. It is hoped that this connection will help bring more business to the Main Street commercial district by bringing skiers closer to downtown.

## **TRAILS<sup>13</sup>**

There are several marked trails running through state owned land. (See State Land, Trails map.) The principal marked trail through the Siamese Ponds Wilderness Area follows an old road connecting the Garnet Hill area in North River with NYS Route 8 on the shoulder of Eleventh Mountain. The northern trailhead parking area is at the end of Old Farm Road, and the southern is about a mile west of the 1908-foot elevation height of land on Route 8 west of Bakers Mills. Side trails off this main trail go to Elizabeth Point on Thirteenth Lake, to Hour Pond and past Twin Ponds to Puffer Pond on the way to a trailhead at King’s Flow in Indian

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<sup>13</sup> Much of the information in this section is summarized from a draft report titled “The Town of Johnsbury’s Inventory and Analysis, Highlighting Johnsbury’s Assets, 1999,” prepared by the Wildlife Conservation Society’s Adirondack Communities & Conservation Program at Paul Smiths. Mapped information is from NYS DEC data files.

Lake, and to the Siamese Ponds in the middle of the wilderness. Marked trails now also lead from Thirteenth Lake at the end of Beach Road to Peaked Mountain Pond and Peaked Mountain, and from near the end of Chatiemac Road to Second Pond. West of the Eleventh Mountain trailhead on Route 8 is a short trail leading east to Kibby Pond, and trails mostly for snowmobile use lead east to Cod Pond and south into the Wilcox Lake Wild Forest area. A trail leading south past the Fish Ponds from the end of Bartman Road also provides access to this area. Trails to Crane Mountain and Crane Mountain Pond, by far the most heavily used in Johnsbury, are served from a trailhead at the end of Ski-Hi Road in Thurman, but can also be reached from the end of Crane Mountain Road. Finally, trails up Gore Mountain and Pete Gay Ridge ("Little" or "Old" Gore) begin from the North Creek Ski Bowl trailhead.

There are also many unmarked trails in Johnsbury, created by use of hunters or fishermen who were regular users of a particular area.

Snowmobile trails funded or proposed for funding by the State of New York are also shown on the map.

## **PARKS AND RECREATION<sup>14</sup>**

### **Ski Bowl Park**

Beginning in the 1930's, the North Creek Ski Bowl was the original focus for winter recreation on Gore and Pete Gay Mountains. In 1941, the Ski Hut was constructed as a WPA project to serve as the base for winter sports and to provide space for community and local government meetings and events. In the 15 years following World War II the Ski Bowl functioned as an excellent if small downhill ski center. With the growth of the ski industry through those years, it became obvious that the upper slopes of Gore needed to be included to maintain a competitive facility, and the creation of the DEC operated Gore Ski Center was welcomed as a way to provide the extension. Unfortunately, no provision was made to connect the original ski area with the new one on the upper slopes of Gore, and business waned at the smaller ski bowl leading to its closure in 1977. The town persisted in its efforts to provide a connection between the facilities, with substantial encouragement and cooperation from the Gore Ski Center (now managed by the Olympic Regional Development Authority), with the result that the latest unit management plan for the Gore Ski Center (Year 2002-2007 Unit Management Plan, Gore Ski Center) calls for the establishment of trails and lifts linking the two ski areas.

The original ski hut, a fine example of "government rustic style"<sup>15</sup> of the era, was erected in 1941 as a WPA project. However, it was destroyed by fire in 1999. The town is now seeking funding to reconstruct the building.

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<sup>14</sup> Much of the information in this section is summarized from a draft report titled "The Town of Johnsbury's Inventory and Analysis, Highlighting Johnsbury's Assets, 1999," prepared by the Wildlife Conservation Society's Adirondack Communities & Conservation Program at Paul Smiths.

<sup>15</sup> Rivers, Rails and Ski Trails, p. 147

Other facilities at Ski Bowl Park include:

- a covered pavilion that is flooded for ice skating in winter
- an adjacent heated recreation building
- three tennis courts and an outdoor basketball court
- Little League field
- an open hockey rink
- a tot lot
- a dam and swimming area
- a softball field
- a trailhead for a variety of marked hiking trails leading up through the old ski terrain to the summit of Gore Mountain.

There remains significant recreational potential to be developed in this largely under-utilized park. In 2001 the town commissioned The Saratoga Associates to preparation of a Ski Bowl Park Enhancement Plan that proposed the following improvements.

- Reconstruction of the original ski hut building.
- Rebuilding and expanding the existing pavilion.
- Expanding parking and improving traffic flow.
- Developing new recreational sports areas for snowboarding, dirt bikes, skateboards.
- Providing a new ski slope for toboggaining, sledding and skiing near the new the pavilion.
- Construction of a covered ice hockey rink.
- Constructing basketball and tennis courts.

In addition, the park enhancement plan calls for the creation of trails and lifts connecting the Gore Ski Center and Ski Bowl Park (as does the Gore Ski Center Unit Management Plan). It proposes a shuttle van system to connect ski bowl park with Main Street in North Creek: “This flexible system will provide skier access from the Train Station to both Ski Bowl Park and the housing condominium destinations in the hamlet.”<sup>16</sup> It is hoped and anticipated that this connection will enhance businesses in the North Creek Main Street Business District, as well as tourist accommodations in the hamlet.

### **Mill Creek Recreation Area**

The Beaverkill Conservancy, Inc., the land acquisition affiliate of the Open Space Institute, owns a 224 acre parcel located south of Riparius known as the Mill Creek Recreation Area, or Dunkley Falls, that is dedicated to open space recreation use. (See Mill Creek Recreation Area map.) It contains the “black hole,” a unique geologic feature, as well as falls on Mill Creek. It has been traditionally been used by the general public as a swimming hole, as a scenic spot to enjoy nature, and for camping. The land was acquired as permanent open space at the instigation of citizens of Johnsbury. The town, under agreement with the Open Space Institute, is responsible for managing the area. A management plan was prepared in the year 2000 designed to provide for continued public access, non-intensive recreation use and

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<sup>16</sup> “Ski Bowl Park Enhancement Plan,” p. 2.

preservation of its natural and biological features. The plan includes a picnic grounds and foot paths, as well as parking.

### **Community Recreation and Cultural Centers**

Community recreation centers include the Wevertown Community Center and Scout Hall in Sodom. The Tannery Pond Community Center provides a venue for cultural activities and events. Facilities are available for use by town residents and organizations on a first come, first serve basis.

### **Garnet Hill Ski and Mountain Bike Touring Center**

This private facility is located at the end of 13<sup>th</sup> Lake Road in the northern part of town. The Center includes several miles of miles of bike trails, groomed ski trails, and wilderness and back-country ski trails.

### **River Sports**

Hudson River White Water Derby. The Derby was organized in 1958 by the Johnsbury Fish & Game Club. It is now run independently under its own organization. The Derby includes novice and giant slalom kayak and canoe races, and a 7 ½ mile down-river race for amateurs.

Rafting. The Hudson River is the destination of numerous rafting enthusiasts, and Johnsbury is home to a number of rafting businesses that bring income into the community.

## **PUBLIC FACILITIES AND UTILITIES<sup>17</sup>**

### **Electrical Power**

The area is served by the Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation that maintains four electrical sub-stations within the town. Existing power capacities are considered sufficient to meet any potential residential, commercial or industrial growth in the community. In 1990 the 3 KV line from Warrensburg was replaced with a 13 KV line to the hamlet of North Creek.

Three-phase power is generally needed for industry and larger commercial facilities. The location of existing three-phase power lines is shown on the following map. Three-phase power serves the major hamlets, as well as extending along much of State Route 28, and portions of State Route 8 and County Route 29 (Peaceful Valley Road).

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<sup>17</sup> Much of the information in this section is summarized from a draft report titled “The Town of Johnsbury’s Inventory and Analysis, Highlighting Johnsbury’s Asssets, 1999,” prepared by the Wildlife Conservation Society’s Adirondack Communities & Conservation Program at Paul Smiths.

## **Sewer Systems**

There are no public sewer collection and treatment systems in the Town of Johnsburg at present. Due to low population densities and high costs of such systems the establishment of public sewer systems in the hamlet areas remains impractical.

It is recommended that minimum lot sizes for new development, in hamlets and elsewhere, be kept at a size large enough to insure that individual on-lot systems will function properly so that public sewer systems will not be needed in the future.

## **Water System**

The North Creek Water District is the only public water system in the Town of Johnsburg. At present, the district actually serves only a portion of the properties within its boundaries. In 1990 there were over 100 residences located too far from a water main to feasibly tap into the system. The water district has experienced a variety of operating problems over the years. Typical of many small communities, it lacks capital reserve funding and a preventative maintenance program. Numerous ad hoc extensions had been made to the original system during the past six decades that were poorly documented and below technical standards. The community received HUD grant funds to upgrade the system in 1999. The present system has four wells (one of which failed in 1999) with a combined yield of about 130,000 gallons per day, close to the average daily use. The district regularly services about 350 residential and business customers with un-metered water, making it impossible to assess and control consumption. During the winter especially, the district functions at near capacity and a failure anywhere in the system could exhaust the marginal reserve capacity available. The district also needs to construct lines that could circulate the water throughout the system to replace the many dead ends that are now typical.

## **Telephone Service**

The Town of Johnsburg is serviced solely by Citizens Communications Company of New York. Approximately 2230 residential and 574 business lines are serviced by the Company. Service adequately covers present needs. However, due to rising costs many town residents would like to see more competition in telephone company choice.

## **Internet Access**

The Town of Johnsburg has local dial-up access to at least seven Internet Service Providers (ISPs), however, Netheaven is the only 251 number. The Town Library and Johnsburg Central School provide public access to the internet.

## **Garbage Disposal/Recycling**

The Town of Johnsburg landfill was closed in 1991. A transfer station has been operated since then on the edge of the former landfill site, adjacent to the North Creek Ski Bowl. Trash is compacted in a 3.5 cubic yard compactor and is disposed of through Warren County

contracts at the incinerator in Hudson Falls. Hauling is also done through County contracts. In addition, recyclable materials, including newspaper, magazines, corrugated cardboard, clear glass, mixed glass, steel cans, aluminum, and selected plastics are hauled by the contractor. Mixed scrap metal is accumulated and sold. The Town provides curbside pickup of trash (by private contractor) and recyclables (by Town employees) one day a week along all of the Town's major highways, but residences on many side roads must bring their materials for pickup out to the main routes.

### **Fire Protection**

There are seven fire companies in the Town of Johnsburg: Bakers Mills/Sodom, Johnsburg, Garnet Lake, Weavertown, Riparius, North River, and North Creek. (See map.) The first six are in the Johnsburg Fire Protection District, the last is in the North Creek Fire District. The Johnsburg Fire District is governed by the Johnsburg Town Board, which funds the six volunteer departments through a contract agreement. The North Creek district is an independent taxing district. There is a strict policy of mutual aid among the fire companies.

### **Police Protection**

The Town of Johnsburg is served by the County Sheriff Department based in Warrensburg and Brant Lake and the New York State Police based in Chester and Bolton Landing. They are charged with upholding any enforceable local, county and state ordinance or law.

### **Town Offices**

The Johnsburg Town Hall, located in the hamlet of North Creek, provides office space for the Town Supervisor, Assessors, Town Clerk, and Tax Collectors, and a storage room for town records.

### **Tannery Pond Community Center**

The recently constructed Tannery Pond Community Center serves as a venue for a variety of local and regional functions, including cultural events as well as town business. It is also the home of the Gore Mountain Chamber of Commerce.

### **Highway Department**

The Town Highway Department garage is located at the north end of the North Creek Ski Bowl. The Highway Garage is a metal building with over 13,000 square feet of garage and storage space. The department maintains 94 miles of town roads, only a quarter of which have paved surfaces. There are a substantial number of short, dead-end roads which were included as part of the system in the early 1960's, when department equipment was generally smaller and maintenance requirements were less demanding. With the trend toward ever-larger highway machinery, maintenance and especially plowing of these roads has become increasingly difficult and impractical.

## **Johnsburg Central School**

In 1896, a school was built on the site where the current Johnsburg Central School (JCS) now sits. The school peaked in population in the 1970's with annual enrollment around 700. With the closing of National Lead, the numbers dropped dramatically and have stabilized in the 1990's around 400.

## **Health Care**

The Hudson Headwaters Health Care Network, a regional organization, maintains a health care center in North Creek, and also in Chestertown, Warrensburg, Indian Lake, Bolton Landing, Schroon Lake and Ticonderoga. The Network provides comprehensive primary care services, including treatment of chronic, acute and emergency illness in the office, nursing home, and hospital.

The Adirondack Tri-County Health Care Center, located on State Route 28 in North Creek, services the Town of Johnsburg as well as a wider region that includes portions of northern and central Warren County, southern Hamilton County, and south-western Essex County. It provides care for aged, disabled, and the chronically impaired.

## **Ambulance and Emergency Squad**

The Town of Johnsburg has two full-time ambulances and one on a back-up basis, both staffed by volunteers. They respond to about 350 calls per year, with the busiest period being during the ski season. Many volunteers are trained as Emergency Medical Technician's and a few in Advanced Life Support (ALS). They are funded through the town and annual fundraising. The building is located at the end of Peaceful Valley Road in Sodom.

The town is also serviced by Empire, a private ambulance company that covers all of Warren County.

Lower Adirondack Search and Rescue, Inc. (LASAR), founded in 1990 in Warrensburg, assists the NYS DEC Forest Rangers and law enforcement agencies in searches for missing persons and in rescue missions.

## **Town of Johnsburg Library**

The library is a free, public library, chartered to provide services to the people of the Township of Johnsburg. It is housed at the rear of the town hall building on Main Street in North Creek. It opened in one room in 1996. A tremendous increase in the number of users and the collection it prompted a building expansion in 1998-99. The missions of the Town of Johnsburg Library are to: (1) promote reading and literacy in our service area, (2) collect, preserve and distribute printed and other materials to help meet the needs of the people of Johnsburg; and (3) serve as the cultural center of the township.

## **HIGHWAY SYSTEM**

The Town of Johnsbury is served by a network of State, County and Town highways as shown on the Highway System map. State Routes 28 and 8 are the major travel corridors through town, serving both long distance and local traffic. These roads are arterial highways designed to serve heavier traffic volumes than county or town roads, and are suitable for truck traffic. Site distance is good along most segments of the state routes, with the exception of Route 8 between Riparius and Johnsbury that is winding and hilly. State Route 28 is a main entryway into the central Adirondacks from points south.

County highways generally serve as “collector” roads, with traffic volumes intermediate between arterials and local roads. Peaceful Valley Road (County Route 29) between North Creek and Sodom provides a connection between the Gore Mountain Ski Center with points to the south and west. County highways appear to be of adequate design to carry moderate traffic volumes. Site distance is good along most segments, with the exception of County Route 78 in the North River area.

The Town of Johnsbury maintains about 94 miles of roads, the majority of which are unpaved. Many are short dead-ends that serve only a few residences. Town roadways can be classified as “local highways,” whose primary function is to provide access to the highway system, i.e. to serve as residential roads. They need not be designed to high speed design standards. Adequate width is necessary for safety and plowing reasons, but asphalt paving is not essential. In fact, many persons prefer a gravel surface in order to retain the open space forested character, and to lower vehicular speeds.

### **Suitability Of Roads To Support Development**

In order to better assess the ability of public highways to support development, all state, county and local roads were given a rating by the consultant, shown on the “Suitability of Roads to Support Development” map.

Most Suitable highways are roadways constructed with base materials that can withstand heavy vehicle weights and larger traffic volumes, and are sufficiently wide with adequate shoulders. They are characterized by adequate site distance for their design speed. State Routes 28 and 8 fall into this category, as well as Main Street in North Creek.

These highways are suitable for land uses that generate truck traffic or larger volumes of automobile traffic, such as retail businesses or larger residential developments.

Suitable highways are those adequate for some truck traffic and moderate rural traffic volumes. They include roads surfaced with plant mix with at least 20 feet of driving pavement. Some of these roads may lack shoulders, or may not be constructed with adequate base materials to withstand heavier vehicle weights and/or higher traffic volumes, or to withstand annual freeze and thaw cycles and maintain a smooth driving surface. All of the County routes meet these criteria, as well as some town maintained roads.

These routes are suitable for residential subdivisions of small to moderate size, and for businesses that generate smaller amounts of automobile traffic and truck traffic.

Somewhat Suitable roadways are those that do not meet the criteria for being classified as “most suitable” or “suitable,” nor can they be classed as “least suitable.” They are generally highways that may have between 18 and 20 feet of driving pavement, and/or a stone and oil pavement (road mix) surface, and/or a winding or hilly alignment. These routes are not suitable for anything but occasional truck traffic and relatively low automobile traffic volumes due to safety considerations.

Least Suitable roadways are either those with a gravel or dirt surface, and/or with pavement width less than 18 feet. Many of these roads are dead ends leading to a few residences.

Recommended future land use along these roadways is low density residential, or seasonal use for residential or recreation.

Walking or bicycling along country roads is becoming an increasingly popular leisure pastime. Biking, especially, is hazardous on narrow, winding roads without shoulders. For this reason as well as automobile safety, traffic generating businesses should be discouraged from locating along roadways classified as less than “suitable.” This is particularly true for trucking businesses. The most compatible development along such routes is low density residential.

## **RESIDENTIAL LAND USE**

### **Existing Pattern**

Residential land use patterns are shown on the Residential Land Use maps and the Housing Value maps.

Higher value conventional housing consisting of more recently constructed homes tends to be clustered in newer developments such as the Thirteenth Lake subdivision, the townhouse units near North Creek, and developments near Sodom and Antler Lake. Newer, higher value homes have also been constructed in various locations scattered throughout the town. Older, higher value housing can be found in North Creek, and to some extent in the other hamlets, as well as sprinkled throughout the town.

Affordable housing on individual lots, represented by the lower housing values and/or mobile homes on the maps, can be found in all sections of town, but tends to be most prevalent in the south-central section: the Bakers Mills, Johnsborg hamlet, Garnet Lake Road, and South Johnsborg Road area.

Seasonal homes represent an especially high proportion of the homes in the North River – Thirteenth Lake area, and are also numerous in the south near Garnet Lake and to some degree near South Johnsborg Road. Some seasonal homes, though, are found throughout the town with the general exception of the hamlets, oftentimes on the more isolated rural roads.

Mid-value (the middle 50%) conventional year round dwellings, that represent the bulk of the housing stock in town, tend to be the predominate type of housing in and around the hamlets as well as in most rural areas, with the exception of the newer rural subdivision developments that are characterized by higher housing values.

## **Analysis**

From the data presented, including the Growth Trends map (discussed previously), it is possible to identify five general types of existing and future residential areas in the Town of Johnsburg.

North Creek hamlet: Older, middle value homes predominate in the inner hamlet area, with higher value homes located on the fringes. There are relatively few mobile homes. There are some opportunities for in-fill housing, either in the form of multi-family units or townhouse units, or as single family dwellings. The North Creek Action plan envisioned redevelopment in the form of clustered housing near the riverfront and in other locations within the hamlet. North Creek hamlet would be the best location in the town for affordable housing in the form of apartments due to proximity to services. Another planning consideration in this area is the preservation of existing residential neighborhoods.

Rural hamlets: Older, middle value homes predominate, mixed with occasional individually sited mobile homes. Little residential growth has occurred in these hamlets during the past two decades, and based upon past trends not much change can be anticipated occur in the future with the possible exception of conversion of some of the older, larger homes into two-family units and an occasional new home. Preservation of the rural, small town, and historic flavor of the hamlets is a planning concern in these areas.

Mixed Use, Affordable Housing, Rural Areas: Most of the town could be classified in this category that is characterized by mixed residential use, including year round housing, seasonal homes, and affordable housing (mobile homes) on individual lots. The south-central section that includes rural areas in the general vicinity and south of the hamlets of Johnsburg, Sodom and Bakers Mills has developed in this manner, as has the section of town east of State Route 28. Mixed residential growth is anticipated to continue into the future. Preserving the quality of the residential environment while providing affordable rural lots and allowing for traditional uses of rural property are planning considerations for the future.

Higher Value, Rural Second Home areas: These areas are characterized by higher property values, newer development, and/or second home growth drawn to the scenic rural environment. Portions of town with these characteristics are the North River/Thirteenth Lake area, the Route 28 corridor north of North Creek, and the Garnet Lake area including southern portions of Garnet Lake Road. Preservation of scenic and environmental quality is the key to sustaining the character of these areas.

## Winter Sports Related Second Homes

Areas near the Gore Mountain State Ski Center possess the most potential for development of clustered type seasonal residential housing units in the form of townhouses, condominiums, or other forms of housing or lodging sought as seasonal accommodations by winter sports enthusiasts. The North Creek Action Plan envisioned this sort of development within the hamlet of North Creek complementing the increased viability of the downtown area generated by improved connections with the state ski center. The potential for this type of residential growth also exists on lands near North Creek Hamlet, and along the major approaches to Gore from the south, including State Route 28 and Peaceful Valley Road to Sodom. A planning concern in these areas is to insure good site design for new development so that it does not detract from the rural, open space, scenic character of the area.

### **Future Potential**

The primary demand for housing in the Town of Johnsburg will be for conventional year round dwellings for a variety of income levels, ranging from high value homes to more affordable units such as manufactured housing. Past growth trends indicate that this type of mixed value development will be spread throughout rural areas of the town along existing public highways. Some higher value rural subdivisions, with their own internal roads, are also anticipated.

Based upon past trends, it is reasonable to conclude that there will be also be continued growth in second homes and seasonal housing units. Three forms may be anticipated: (1) development along existing highways one lot at a time, (2) rural land subdivisions on larger lots, and (3) clustered development near the Gore Ski Center and North Creek.

Based upon past trends little change is foreseen within rural hamlets. Some in-fill may occur, and some older homes could be converted to two-family or multi-family residences if allowed by local zoning.

## **COMMERCIAL LAND USE**

### **Existing Pattern**

Commercial land uses are shown on the Commercial and Industrial Land Use maps.

Commercial uses are concentrated in the North Creek hamlet. Main street contains a number of retail stores and restaurants, as well as a bank, hotel, and small shopping center anchored by a supermarket. The business district along State Route 28 in the southern part of the hamlet contains automobile traffic dependent businesses, including a restaurant, two mini-marts with gas pumps, an automotive repair shop and others.

The rural hamlets contain relatively few commercial uses. There is a small cluster in North River, including a rafting operation and retail store. Johnsbury contains a convenient mart. Bakers Mills has a small convenience store, a tavern/restaurant and a junk yard. Wevertown has a lawn equipment sales establishment and a lumber yard. Riparius is home to a gift shop and fuel distribution business. A motel is located near Sodom.

Some other commercial uses are found at individual locations along highways. The Route 28 corridor contains rafting businesses, a bed and breakfast establishment, a tavern/restaurant, a motel, a tavern, and a funeral home. There is vehicle repair shop along State Route 8. Other businesses located in rural areas include kennels, construction, logging, and snowmobile sales.

Commercial accommodations oriented to the forest and/or water resources include the Garnet Hill Lodge, the Garnet Lake Lodge, and the Chatiemac Lake Club.

### **Analysis and Future Potential**

#### North Creek Hamlet

The North Creek Action plan concluded that “The existing retail activity in downtown North Creek is modest, at best.” It goes on to suggest that the hamlet might capture a higher proportion of potential retail sales within the North Creek trade area (an area that was estimated to include the northern portion of the Town of Johnsbury and northwestern Chester) by undertaking a series of actions. Among the suggestions were to attract a greater mix of retail establishments, concentrate recreation businesses and attractions on the waterfront with links to Main Street, undertake physical improvements including beautification and parking, create an improved entrance to downtown, improve advertising and marketing, encourage residential development within the hamlet, and use architectural design guidelines to encourage new development that is in keeping with its existing character of the historic buildings.

Compared to many other main streets in hamlets and villages in upstate New York, North Creek is in reasonably viable condition being characterized by relatively few empty storefronts as well as by some new commercial development. Among the reasons for this probably are: (1) the general lack of competing strip commercial development in the area outside the hamlet (with the exception of the business district along Route 28 to the south of the hamlet), (2) the tourist/ recreation/second home market that supports recreational, restaurant, gift shop, and lodging businesses, (3) the ambience of the main street business district created by the block of historic structures with distinctive architectural styling, and (4) implementation of parts of the North Creek Action Plan.

After the North Creek Action Plan was written a number of developments have occurred that will affect the main street commercial district, including the First Heritage Corridor project and revived railroad depot. The Gore Mountain Unit Management Plan calls for additional measures that should serve to strengthen the main street area by bringing the ski crowd closer

to downtown.. In light of the changes that have taken place, as well as subsequent studies that have been done, it is recommended that the town update the North Creek Action Plan.

It is also suggested that commercial development continue to be limited along most sections of State Route 28 within the Town of Johnsbury outside the hamlet in order to help maintain the viability of the North Creek Main Street business district. The current zoning permits only tourism/recreation type uses such as restaurants, motels and other tourist accommodations within the Major Travel Corridor zoning district that extends along Route 28. General retailing is confined to the hamlet area.

### Rural Hamlets

Rural hamlets include Wevertown, Johnsbury, Bakers Mills, Riparius, North River, and Sodom. Most hamlets of this size ceased to be centers of retail activity decades ago as a result of the automobile, and the same is true in the Town of Johnsbury. Convenience stores and occasional small businesses such as auto repair, antique shops, and restaurants or taverns and the like are generally the only viable businesses, although larger establishments such as the lumber yard in Wevertown also exist.

Given the limited potential for new commercial development in the hamlets and their existing mixed use character, it is suggested that rural hamlets continue to be zoned to allow for a variety of smaller businesses that would be viable in a hamlet location and which would be compatible with neighboring residential uses.

### Highway Oriented Commercial

Commercial establishments that depend upon through traffic are best located along heavily traveled major highways. (Most commercial shopping strips surrounding smaller cities and larger villages are located along the route with the highest traffic volume.) Typical highway dependent uses are convenient marts, gas stations, motels, fast foods, restaurants, and motels. Many of these traffic dependent uses could not be viably located within existing hamlets due to lack of space for parking and buildings. This is especially true of large space users such as automobile sales lots.

Due to the high traffic volume generated along State Route 28 in the Town of Johnsbury, a significant portion of which is tourism/recreation related, this highway is the prime location for many commercial uses from a purely land economics perspective. However, because the route is also a scenic gateway into the central Adirondacks, aesthetic considerations must be taken into account, and therefore some form of limitation and control on commercial development is appropriate. Among the options for allowing commercial development along the Route 28 corridor, yet controlling its possible adverse impacts, include the following.

- (1) Limiting the type of uses permitted.
- (2) Limiting commercial districts to portions of the corridor.
- (3) Requiring site design measures and landscaping to insure compatibility with the rural scenic environment.

(4) Some combination of the above.

State Route 8 is the other major traffic artery through town, although with less commercial potential than Route 28 due to lower traffic volume. Much of the section of Route 8 between Riparius and Wevertown is winding and hilly with poor sight distance, and is therefore not well suited for commercial use due to traffic safety considerations. The portion of Route 8 between Wevertown and Bakers Mills, however, does have potential for some commercial development.

Among the other highways in town, Peaceful Valley Road between North Creek and Sodom appears to possess the most potential for commercial growth due to its proximity to the Gore Mountain Ski Center, and because it serves as a principal route to North Creek from the south-central portion of town.

### Rural Commercial Uses

There are many commercial uses that are not particularly dependent upon a high traffic volume location, although visibility from such a highway may be a benefit for some. Such uses have the potential of locating almost anywhere with suitable highway access in a rural area. They include auto body shops, vehicle repair shops, snowmobile sales and service, hair dressers, junk yards, kennels, antique sales, and home based businesses involving equipment including independent contractors, truckers, well drillers and excavators, among others.

A second category of rural businesses are recreation/tourism and seasonal type uses. These include dude ranches, resorts, golf courses, and outdoor recreation of various types.

A number of rural type businesses already exist in the Town of Johnsbury, and more can be anticipated in the future as the area develops. Good site design of such uses is necessary to insure compatibility with neighboring properties. Some rural commercial uses such as junkyards or kennels can be detrimental to nearby residential properties, and the town may choose to limit them in some way, either by designating certain zones where they are permitted and/or by establishing special use regulations for them such as a minimum lot size and screening requirements.

### Summary

There is moderate potential for commercial development in the Town of Johnsbury. The best opportunities exist in and around the hamlet of North Creek because it contains the largest existing cluster of existing commercial uses, contains the largest population of any of the hamlets, and is near the Gore Ski Center. State Route 28 through the town also has moderate potential due to its high traffic volume, but aesthetic considerations limit its desirability for commercial use. The remainder of town has less potential for commercial growth, but some scattered development can be anticipated.

## **INDUSTRIAL AND MINING USES**

### **Existing Uses**

Three wood products manufacturing businesses exist in the town: one in Wevertown (Design Kit Homes), one in Riparius (Riverside Truss), and one in North Creek (North Creek Wood Working Mill.) There are also sawmills in these communities.

Barton Mines operates a garnet mine in the North River area north of County Route 78. The former garnet mine at the end of Garnet Mines Road in the vicinity of Gore Mountain is closed.

There are a number of sand pits, including operations near Johnsbury hamlet and along Garnet Lake Road.

### **Existing Industrial Zoning**

Industrial uses are considered compatible uses in most APA land use districts (except Resource Management) provided they meet environmental and other criteria established in the APA Act, and provided that they successfully complete the APA review and permitting process. There are two Industrial zones in town specifically designated for industrial use by the APA, both of which are Bartons Mines properties.

The town's existing local zoning ordinance allows industrial uses only in the North Creek hamlet business district, with the exception that in all zones outside hamlets "planned industrial use" is a permitted use, the latter presumably referring to a planned unit development such as an industrial park that contains sites for a group of businesses.

### **Analysis and Future Potential**

The North Creek Action plan analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of the town for attracting future economic development. It concluded that its strengths are the labor force, described as "small but educated and available," and its attractive residential environment. There are several weaknesses: lack of quality sites; lack of industrial structures; lack of high quality infrastructure including sewer, natural gas and roads; high shipping costs due its location; and the fact that there is only one local bank. It concluded that "Many of these weaknesses are inherent to North Creek and cannot be overcome. The weaknesses that can be overcome are the problems of in-hamlet sites for development and attracting additional financial institutions. The strengths, particularly related to the setting and lifestyle, can be fine tuned through community involvement." (p. 5-5)

The plan implies that the town generally is not favorably situated for industrial development, but goes on to identify some specific types of industries that could be most feasibly attracted to such a location:

1. Value added wood products, such as the existing log home and wood roof truss producers.
2. Craft wood products, including furniture and home based manufacturing items.
3. Non-wood crafts taking advantage of mining products, for example stone work, mineral products or jewelry.
4. Small scale technology-based and assembly industries, such as computer software or component assembly of various items.

The plan included a number of recommendations to help attract industry, the first of which was to provide suitable industrial sites:

1. Develop land and buildings in properly zoned areas.
2. Provide infrastructure
3. Create a marketing program.
4. Encourage entrepreneurs to live here.
5. Form a local organization to support entrepreneurs.
6. Improve the quality of life, and beautify the hamlet area.
7. Identify funding mechanisms.

#### APA Act Section 807-4

An additional industrial location consideration, not identified in the North Creek Action Plan, is the permitting process that must be completed before locating a new industry. Outside of APA designated hamlets a permit is required from the APA for Industrial Development proposals, which can be a lengthy procedure. This process could be streamlined by qualifying for Section 807-4 of the Adirondack Park Agency Act that allows municipalities to establish industrial zones that are pre-approved by the APA. The local community then assumes the permitting authority for subsequent development within the zones. A municipality may apply for two such sites with a combined total land area of 100 acres or less.

#### Potential Industrial Sites

Good industrial sites generally possess the following characteristics.

- Location along a heavy duty highway suitable for truck traffic (designated as “most suitable” highways on the map), or if not possible location along a highway wide enough for truck traffic but not necessary heavy duty (designated “suitable” on the map).
- Proximity to 3-phase power. Extension of 3-phase power lines, however, is not a prohibitive expense.
- Land that is reasonably level and well drained. (The map shows areas of suitable soils and less than 8 percent slope.)
- Access to a public water system. (The only such system is in North Creek.)
- Available land and/or buildings. (Shown by vacant 10+ acre parcels on the map.)

An additional factor is access to a public sewer system, but there is none in the town.

The Industrial Location Factors map shows that there are few large empty parcels in the town well suited for industrial development. Also, no area on map stands out as being a potential industrial use zone for such designation in the town's zoning ordinance. There does not appear to be any single prime area for future industrial development large enough to constitute an industrial zoning district. Rather, suitable industrial sites tend to consist of individual parcels dispersed along some of the major highways. For this reason, it is suggested that the town consider establishing a "floating zone" for industrial use in its zoning law or ordinance. Such a floating zone enables the town to amend its zoning district map at such time an industrial development is proposed anywhere in town, provided of course that approval criteria are met.

### Summary

There is some potential for industrial development in the Town of Johnsburg, but it is very limited. A major obstacle is the lack of suitable sites.

### **EMPIRE ZONE PROPERTIES**

There are currently 12 properties included or proposed to be included in the Warren County Empire Development Zone. (See map.) Properties within the zone qualify for a variety of business incentives available under the New York State Empire Zones Program such as tax credits and abatements. Both commercial and industrial uses can qualify.

The Town may propose to add more parcels to the Empire Zone, but in the future such parcels must either be contiguous to the existing zone or create at least 300 jobs.

### **THE HAMLETS**

(See "Physical Features and Land Use" hamlet maps.)

#### **North Creek**

North Creek is the largest hamlet in the Town of Johnsburg. Historically it evolved from an early logging camp, then became the site of a tannery, and with the railroad in the 1870s became a center for shipping lumber and wood products and garnet from the mines. In the modern era its economic base is tied to its function as a retailing and service center for the surrounding area, much of the trade being generated by the tourism/recreation and second home industry, particularly by the Gore Mountain State Ski Center.

Its current development form derived from the early highway and road pattern. The Main Street business district formed along the major highway of the time (now Main Street) in close proximity to the railroad terminal, at the focal point of transportation during the latter 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. With the State Route 28 by-pass of the early hamlet center, the Main Street business district was no longer visible to through traffic, a fact that undoubtedly contributed to a loss of its vitality as a retailing district. The Main Street business district is not directly visible from State Route 28 today. On the positive side, removal of a large volume of through traffic from the downtown area, together with its block of architecturally

distinctive storefronts, creates the opportunity for a more pleasurable pedestrian environment and the potential for development of a retailing district possessing the amenities attractive to the tourist/recreation clientele, as an alternative to generic suburban shopping districts. The North Creek Action Plan (discussed previously) presented several ideas for improving the vitality of the Main Street commercial district, several of which have since been pursued. .

As is common in larger hamlets and in villages throughout the country, an outlying business district has emerged along the major travel route just outside the settled area containing convenience marts and other uses.. This business district is located along State Route 28 just inside the APA designated hamlet boundary.. There is some room for in-fill commercial development in this district, but such space is limited.

A large area of the hamlet astride State Route 28 is devoted to public or semi-public uses. Ski Bowl Park occupies a large land area. The town highway garage, the medical center, and senior citizen housing are also located here.

Most of the housing stock in the hamlet is of older vintage, but some newer homes in the form of single family dwellings has been constructed toward the fringes of the developed area. The most significant newer housing developments have been the townhouse, or “cluster” style, housing units constructed near the Gore Mountain Ski Center off State Route 28. The North Creek Action plan envisioned the future possibility of additional cluster style housing being attracted to locations nearer the Main Street business district as in-fill, thus creating a more compact housing pattern within the hamlet area and helping to support local businesses.

Another trend is the creation of affordable housing units in the hamlet of North Creek. The Senior Citizen housing complex off State Route 28 provides for the town’s seniors, and new subsidized housing units will be constructed in the near future.

There are relatively large areas of open land within the currently defined APA hamlet that are physically suited for development, provided that adequate septic systems are installed for the soil conditions. Soils and slopes are rated as “suitable” for development throughout much of the hamlet, but steep slopes severely limit the development potential of the southeastern portion of the APA designated hamlet area. (See the soils and slopes section of this plan.) There are significant opportunities for in-fill housing along existing streets and roads. However, much of the physically suitable land within the hamlet is not readily accessible, nor is it necessarily available for development.

It may be concluded that there is potential for some continued residential growth within the North Creek hamlet area in the form of: (a) conventional single family homes as in-fill along existing streets or along new streets, and (b) cluster style development either as in-fill or on the edges of the hamlet.

## **Bakers Mills**

Bakers Mills is a small rural hamlet along State Route 8 that began a community center during the logging era. The hamlet once housed a sawmill, gristmill and hotel, as well as a store and a church. Today the hamlet contains a few residential structures, a fire station, church, tavern, junk yard, and a small store.

With the exception of a sizeable wetland to the north of State Route 8, the land is physically well suited for development, provided that adequate septic systems are installed for the soil conditions. There is some vacant land within the APA hamlet area. Due to its relatively isolated location, little commercial growth is anticipated.

## **Johnsburg Hamlet**

Johnsburg hamlet, located along Route 8, developed as a cross-roads service center near a site for waterpower on Mill Creek. A grist-mill and sawmill close to the falls on Mill Creek where it crosses South Johnsburg Road was an early business enterprise in the settlement.<sup>18</sup> During the course of its history Johnsburg was home to a distillery, paint factory and hotel. It was an early community center, housing a general store, a school, and church.

Today Johnsburg is a small residential hamlet containing a church, post office, and fire station. Commercial uses include a convenience store, an auto repair business, a sport and flower shop and two vacant commercial structures. .

Land in the hamlet is physically well suited for development provided that adequate septic systems are installed for the soil conditions. However, there is little vacant space available for either commercial or residential development within the APA designated hamlet area. The establishment of new commercial uses within existing buildings is a possibility, particularly as population grows in the surrounding area. Additional commercial opportunities exist beyond the designated hamlet limits along State Route 8.

## **Riparius**

The hamlet of Riparius on State Route 8 is divided by the Hudson River, with part in the Town Johnsburg and part in the Town of Chester. The APA designated hamlet area within the Town of Johnsburg includes only a narrow strip of land south of the Route 28 bridge lying between Riverside Station Road and the Hudson River. Most of the buildings that generally would be considered as part of the “hamlet” lie just outside the APA hamlet boundaries on the west side of Riverside Station Road.

Riparius began as a river crossing location, first as a ford on the Hudson, and later as the site of a toll bridge. In the railroad era, the depot at Riparius became a shipping point and transportation node. A hotel emerged to house railroad and overland travelers. It was once home to a Sacony Oil Company Plant, a bottling works, and a creamery.<sup>19</sup> Today, a

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<sup>18</sup> “River, Rails and Ski Trails,” p. 41.

<sup>19</sup> “Rivers, Rails and Ski Trails,” pp. 85-88.

sawmill/lumber yard, a wood products manufacturing firm (roof trusses), a propane distributor, and a retail store are located in Riparius. It also has a fire station. There is little residential use in the hamlet area.

The most significant new development is the renovation of the railroad depot, a new visitor orientation kiosk and other improvements in conjunction with the First Wilderness Corridor Project and scenic train tour to North Creek. Some new commercial use in the form of small gift shops or other tourist/recreation related retail business is envisioned in the First Wilderness Corridor plan as a possibility for the future.

There is little available land for future expansion in Riparius. Steep slopes to the west of Riverside Station Road limit building in that direction. There is some vacant commercial property that might be available for future use or redevelopment.

### **Wevertown**

Wevertown began as a crossroads settlement at the junction of present day State Routes 28 and 8 near Mill Creek where a tannery was located. A sawmill was established in 1888 which grew to be the T. C. Murphy Lumber Company.<sup>20</sup> It was once home to a hotel and boarding house, as well as a school, churches and stores. The sawmill and lumber yard remain as major businesses in the area. Two small stores, a real estate office, “message spa,” and a lawn equipment sales establishment are located in the hamlet. A fire station, post office, and community center building that also houses the Johnsburg Historical Society are located there.

With the exception of wetland areas, land north of Mill Creek in Wevertown hamlet is physically well suited for development provided that adequate septic systems are installed for the soil conditions. South of Mill Creek steep slopes pose a development limitation. There is little developable land remaining within the APA hamlet boundaries.

The most favorable areas for expansion lie along State Route 28 north of its intersection with State Route 8, and along the north side of Route 8 just east of the APA designated hamlet.

### **North River – Christian Hill**

The North River – Christian Hill area contains the two smaller settlements of the same name, neither of which, however, were designated as a “hamlet” by the APA for purposes of their regulations. Nonetheless, in a general sense both places may be considered hamlets.

North River is not a compact hamlet area. Rather, its form is a strip of land along the west side of State Route 28 extending from approximately Bartons Mine Road northward to the town line. North River began as a stagecoach stop on the route from the railroad depot at North Creek to the Blue Mountain Lake area.<sup>21</sup> Its location along a transportation route made it a favorable site for an early hotel and store. Also, the road to the Bartons garnet mine,

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<sup>20</sup> “River, Rails and Ski Trails,” p. 94.

<sup>21</sup> “River, Roads and Ski Trails,” p. 66.

opened in 1878, met the Hudson River corridor in this location creating additional opportunity for commerce. In the modern era whitewater rafting is a major tourism and recreation attraction of North River. The hamlet currently contains three retail stores, two whitewater rafting businesses, a funeral home, bed and breakfast establishments, and a post office.

There is room for in-fill development along the west side of Route 28 in North River. Soils and slopes are suitable for development provided that septic systems adequate for the soil conditions are installed. Because it is a scenic recreation corridor with views and access to the Hudson River, it is especially important that new development be designed to be sensitive to aesthetics and maintenance of scenic beauty.

Christian Hill, located on County Route 78, grew as a small settlement and was known for its early churches. No commercial uses remain today. The area fire department is located in Christian Hill, as is a church. Little commercial growth is anticipated due to its location off a major highway. Some vacant land exists within the hamlet area on soils suitable for development.

### **Sodom**

Sodom is a small settlement located at the junction of State Route 28 and County Route 29 (Peaceful Valley Road). It is not an APA designated hamlet. It grew as a small service center at a crossroads with water power available from the nearby stream. At various stages of its history it contained a grist mill, cheese factory, blacksmith shop, garage, and school.<sup>22</sup> Today it is home to a church, the Sodom Community Hall with its ball field, an Emergency Squad, and a motel.

Land in an around Sodom is among the best for development in the Town of Johnsburg, wetlands excluded. It is gently sloped with favorable soil characteristics. There is vacant land both in and around the current hamlet. There is potential for commercial development due to its accessible location at the crossroads of the intersection of two moderately well traveled routes.

### **Garnet Lake**

The area around Garnet Lake in the south of town at one time contained a school, church, small store, and post office<sup>23</sup> and could appropriately be termed a hamlet. Today, however, the settled area consists entirely of year round and seasonal homes plus the Garnet Lake Lodge. A volunteer fire department is located north of the lake on Garnet Lake Road. It no longer functions as a community center, i.e. a hamlet, but as a residential and seasonal use area around a lake.

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<sup>22</sup> "River, Roads and Ski Trails," pp. 89-92.

<sup>23</sup> "River, Rails and Ski Trails," p. 33-37.

## ADIRONDACK PARK AGENCY REGULATIONS

New development and/or land uses within the Town of Johnsbury must comply with Adirondack Park Agency regulations. The town is divided into a number of regulatory districts for privately owned lands as shown on the following table. About 41% of all land in the town is privately owned, the remainder being state property. (See map titled “Private Land Classification, Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan.”)

**TABLE 15  
APA PRIVATE LAND CLASSIFICATION**

| Area                       | Acres<br>(approx.) | Percent of total<br>private land | Overall Intensity<br>Guidelines |                             |
|----------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
|                            |                    |                                  | Buildings per<br>square mile    | Average lot<br>size (acres) |
| Hamlet                     | 1900               | 3.5%                             | no limit                        | none                        |
| Moderate Intensity Use     | 644                | 1.2%                             | 500                             | 1.3                         |
| Low Intensity Use          | 8659               | 16.0%                            | 200                             | 3.2                         |
| Rural Use                  | 36,168             | 67.0%                            | 75                              | 8.5                         |
| Resource Management        | 5685               | 10.5%                            | 15                              | 42.7                        |
| Industrial                 | 951                | 1.8%                             | no limit                        | none                        |
| <b>TOTAL PRIVATE LANDS</b> | <b>54,007</b>      | <b>100.0%</b>                    |                                 |                             |

For privately owned lands a maximum density of development, or average lot size, is established for each use district except hamlets and industrial use areas. Hamlets occupy only about 3.5 percent of the private land area. Moderate intensity use areas, for which the average lot size requirement is 1.3 acres per principal structure, are also very limited, accounting for a scant 1.2 percent of total private lands. A somewhat higher proportion of land, 16.0%, is classified as low intensity use at 3.2 acres per principal structure. Rural use districts cover the bulk of the town, accounting for a full 67% of the total private land acreage. Average lot size in these districts is 8.5 acres per principal structure. The Resource Management category, intended to preserve open space resources and consequently requiring the largest average lot size, occupies a relatively small 10.5% of the land area and is found primarily in more remote locations.

In addition to regulating density of development, state regulations require that certain developments, including commercial uses and larger land subdivisions, be reviewed and approved on a case by case basis by the Adirondack Park Agency. APA regulations, however, do not establish lot dimension and building setback requirements for single family dwellings, the type of development expected to comprise the bulk of future growth within the Town of Johnsbury.

The APA also regulates shoreline development and wetlands. Minimum setbacks for buildings and septic systems, as well as vegetative cutting restrictions, are established for shorelines. Shoreline regulations apply to all lakes and ponds, and all rivers and streams navigable by canoe.

## **TOWN OF JOHNSBURG LAND USE REGULATIONS**

### **Zoning Ordinance**

The existing Town of Johnsburg Zoning Ordinance was adopted in 1971 (before the APA established its Land Use and Development Plan) and has been amended a number of times in subsequent years. It is an earlier vintage ordinance, and needs updating in several areas including definitions, special permit requirements, requirements for particular uses, and use regulations. It should be redrafted to improve organization, internal consistency, and clarity. Its provisions should dovetail with the APA regulations for ease of administration (use of common definitions, etc.). Moreover, its provisions should be consistent with this comprehensive plan. A total revision and update is recommended.

The town is undecided at the time of this writing as to whether it will seek status as an APA “approved local land use program,” an action that would require revising local zoning regulations to comply with the criteria for such approval. The town considers it advantageous to take responsibility for review of “class B” projects as provided for in an APA approved local planning program, but may decide against fulfilling all the requirements for such status.

In areas outside of APA designated hamlets, the town’s zoning districts are intended to coincide with APA land use districts. (See “Town of Johnsburg Zoning Districts” map.) The exception is a 200 feet wide corridor along both sides of State Route 28 throughout its entire length outside of hamlets that has been designated as Major Travel Corridor. The hamlets of Bakers Mills, Johnsburg, Riparius and Wevertown, and much of North Creek hamlet have been designated RA 1.0 requiring a 1 acre minimum lot size. North Creek hamlet is divided into additional districts: (1) two business districts, one along Main Street in the core of the hamlet and the other along State Route 28 in the southern part of the hamlet, (2) a residential district that incorporates most of the residential neighborhoods of the hamlet, and (3) a public and semi-public service area along Route 28 including Ski Bowl Park, the medical center and other lands.

Uses permitted in each current zoning district are shown in the following chart. Of note is the fact that commercial uses are generally restricted to the North Creek business district with the exceptions of tourism / recreation related businesses (such as “transient commercial” or tourist accommodations), gas stations, lumber yards, sawmills, mining, and industrial parks.

### **Subdivision Regulations**

The town adopted its “Subdivision Regulations and Design and Construction Standards” in 1989. It applies to “major subdivisions,” i.e. subdivisions of 5 or more lots, or subdivisions requiring the construction of an access road. The subdivision regulations should be reviewed for consistency with the recommendations of this comprehensive plan and for consistency with the revised zoning law or ordinance as such is developed.

**USES PERMITTED BY EXISTING ZONING LAW**

x = Permitted use  
 S = Special use (Special use approval required.)  
 blank = not permitted

|  | <b>RA<br/>Zones</b> | <b>RA-C<br/>Zone</b> | <u>North Creek Hamlet Zones</u> |          |            |
|--|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|----------|------------|
|  |                     |                      | <b>R</b>                        | <b>B</b> | <b>PSP</b> |
| <b>Residential Uses</b>                          |                     |                      |                                 |          |            |
| Single-family residence (includes modular homes) | x                   | x                    | x                               |          |            |
| Two-family dwelling, attached or semi-attached   | x                   | x                    | x                               |          |            |
| Mobile home not in mobile home park              | S                   | S                    | S                               |          |            |
| Residential designed manufactured home           | x                   | x                    |                                 |          |            |
| Mobile home park                                 | S                   |                      | S                               |          |            |
| Seasonal residence                               | x                   | x                    |                                 |          |            |
| Cellar used as residence                         | S                   |                      |                                 |          |            |
| Multiple-family residences                       |                     |                      | S                               |          |            |
| Garden apartments                                |                     |                      | S                               |          |            |
| Row houses                                       |                     |                      | S                               |          |            |
| Trailers and trailer courts                      | S                   |                      | S                               |          |            |
| Senior citizen housing development               |                     |                      |                                 |          | S          |
| Rooming and boarding houses                      | S                   | S                    | S                               |          |            |
| Conversion of dwelling for dormitory use         |                     |                      | S                               |          |            |
| "Planned Residential"                            | S                   |                      |                                 |          |            |
| Residential accessory structures                 | x                   | x                    | x                               |          |            |

**General Uses**

|  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| Religious buildings, facilities                                | x | x | x | x | x |
| Government buildings   |   |   |   |   | x |
| Nursing homes  |   |   |   |   | x |
| Assisted living facility for seniors                           |   |   |   |   | x |
| Town owned recreation area                                     |   |   | x |   | x |
| Buildings and places of public assembly, theatres, band shells |   |   |   |   | S |
| Senior citizen meal sites                                      |   |   |   |   | S |
| Museums  |   |   |   |   | S |
| Memorials, monuments   |   |   |   |   | S |
| Schools  |   |   | x |   |   |
| Cultural facilities  |   |   | x |   |   |
| Cemeteries   |   |   | x |   |   |
| Veteran and fraternal organizations                            |   |   | S |   |   |
| Airstrips, heliports   | S |   |   |   |   |
| Farms  | x |   |   |   |   |

|  | RA    | RA-C | North Creek Hamlet Zones |   |     |
|--|-------|------|--------------------------|---|-----|
|  | Zones | Zone | R                        | B | PSP |
| <b>Commercial and Industrial Uses</b>                      |       |      |                          |   |     |
| Home occupations   | x     | x    | S                        |   |     |
| Transient commercial                                       | S     |      |                          |   |     |
| Commercial ski lodges                                      | S     | S    |                          |   |     |
| Hotels, motels   | S     | S    |                          | x |     |
| Gas stations   | S     |      |                          |   |     |
| "Planned Commercial"                                       | S     |      |                          |   |     |
| Commercial recreation, riding stables, dude ranches        | S     |      |                          |   |     |
| Studios  |       | S    |                          | x |     |
| Fully enclosed eating and drinking places                  |       | S    |                          | x |     |
| Tourist homes  |       | S    |                          | x |     |
| Professional office in private residence                   |       |      | S                        |   |     |
| Professional, business office                              |       |      |                          | x |     |
| Commercial gardens and nurseries                           |       |      | S                        |   |     |
| Conversion of first floor of home to store use             |       |      | S                        |   |     |
| Stores, shops, banks                                       |       |      |                          | x |     |
| Public transportation terminals                            |       |      |                          | x |     |
| Wholesale and personal service establishments ?            |       |      |                          | x |     |
| Places of assembly   |       |      |                          | x |     |
| Commercial amusements                                      |       |      |                          | x |     |
| Auto sales and service facilities                          |       |      |                          | x |     |
| Parking lots and garages                                   |       |      |                          | x |     |
| Newspaper and printing establishments                      |       |      |                          |   |     |
| Public utility buildings                                   |       |      |                          |   |     |
| Storage of customary merchandise in enclosed building      |       |      |                          | x |     |
| Open storage of customary vehicles                         |       |      |                          | x |     |
| Garages and storage sheds                                  |       |      |                          | x |     |
| <b>"Planned Industrial"</b>                                | S     |      |                          |   |     |
| Light industrial (not noxious, noisy, or smoke generating) |       |      |                          | S |     |
| Research facilities  |       |      |                          | S |     |
| Warehousing and outside storage                            |       |      |                          | S |     |
| Light assembly and fabrication                             |       |      |                          | S |     |
| Transportation garages                                     |       |      |                          | S |     |
| Lumber yard  | S     |      |                          |   |     |
| Sawmill  | S     |      |                          |   |     |
| Extractive operations                                      | S     |      |                          |   |     |

## **Sanitary Code**

On-site wastewater treatment systems are currently required to comply with NYS Department of Health (DOH) design standards. Were the Town of Johnsborg to seek status as an “approved local land use program,” it would need to adopt a sanitary code with more rigorous requirements for individual on-lot septic systems than are currently in force. There are two major differences:

- (1) APA approvable programs require at least 4 feet of soil to bedrock, whereas DOH requirements specify a minimum of 2 feet.
- (2) In soils characterized by rapid percolation rates between 1 and 3 minutes per inch (generally sand or gravel soils), APA approvable programs require a 200 foot minimum septic system setback from all streams, rivers, ponds and lakes (including non-navigable streams), whereas the DOH requirement is 100 feet. Percolation rates from 0 to 1 minute per inch are unacceptable under either APA or DOH requirements.

A minimum distance of 2 feet to the seasonal high groundwater table is required by both agencies.

## **COMMUNITY INTERVIEWS**

Insight into some of the planning issues that face the Town of Johnsborg can be gained from a series of interviews conducted with town residents during the late 1990’s. The following section is taken directly from a draft report prepared in 1999 by the Wildlife Conservation Society’s Adirondack Communities & Conservation Program at Paul Smiths, as edited by the Warren County Department of Planning and Community Development, that summarized the results of interviews with 40 Town of Johnsborg residents regarding community planning concerns. Persons interviewed included a wide spectrum of citizens: “year round and seasonal, native-born and transplanted, employed and unemployed, hunters, guides, environmentalists, business owners, and local government officials.”

“There is no single social reality in the Town of Johnsborg, but interviews identified some shared values and principles that draw together Johnsborg’s diverse people and create a sense of connectedness. There is love for the community that transcends ideology and class, and a rich legacy of stewardship of Johnsborg’s forests, wetlands, rivers, lakes, school, library, families, communities, and wildlife. These values spring partly from the nature of small town life. People know each other well. Extended families connect generation and a network of relationships sustains neighbors and hamlets. Conflicts and controversies exist, but usually involve only a few players; the majority of residents resist the impulse to “take sides.””

### Sense of Community

“One of the first questions residents were asked was how they would describe the sense of community within the Town of Johnsborg. Most responded positively, with terms like warm, friendly, and family-centered. Many events bring the people of Johnsborg together to enforce this strong sense of community. The school was the most often cited community unifying

institution. Others included library events, church, theater, 4th of July and Memorial Day celebrations, concerts, skiing, White Water Derby, and Teddy Roosevelt Day. Residents have a deep feeling for their own hamlets, but often mentioned the entire Town of Johnsburg as a source of pride.”

“However, almost every resident mentioned the ‘difference’ or ‘division’ between recently retired residents and the longer-term or working residents. Many residents noted that this social division has the potential to cause serious problems for community development. As the community has experienced dramatic change over the past 5-10 years, much of this change has been ushered in by newer, retired residents. The lack of involvement by long-term working residents has led to some feelings of resentment of the pace at which their community is changing. If this is not addressed it will increase the level of “us and them” sentiment. The opportunity to include socially, generationally and economically diverse groups should be a priority goal. Most importantly, any future work in the community will be enhanced by the positive sense of community. It will provide a strong foundation for any community based change.”

### Rate of Change

“The Town of Johnsburg is changing. Many people feel disconnected from the change and this has led to the fear that change will diminish the community sense of character, familiarity and natural beauty. Most residents pointed to examples of change: relocation of Barton Mines, closing of National Lead, the 13<sup>th</sup> Lake Development, growth at Gore Mountain, the new Copperfield Inn, establishment of a large river rafting sector, investment in the Main Street of North Creek, a new library, revitalization of the Railroad, and an emergence of many new cultural institutions. Change is inevitable, but a community can have planned change or unplanned change. Keeping the small town atmosphere was key to most people in Johnsburg.”

“For many residents interviewed, the changes often seemed disconnected from their lives. Some felt the change was positive, others negative and even a few neutral. Many residents felt that the Town suffered from a lack of planning, but felt that planning was extremely important. They felt that the change taking place was piecemeal: particularly expansion at Gore and more restaurants without consideration for parking, and building new homes and condominiums without consideration for fire protection. As one resident put it: ‘it is critical for the Town of Johnsburg to establish long-term character. With character based on Johnsburg’s history, future change will be more welcome.’ One new institution has connected to most of the Johnsburg population: the Johnsburg Library. Everyone agrees that the library was needed and is used by almost every family in the community. It is an institution that seems to transcend all differences in population.”

“There was much discussion regarding the disproportionate amount of change in North Creek as opposed to the other hamlets. Most respondents saw the town of Johnsburg as one town with seven hamlets, with North Creek as the hub. There was considerable disagreement regarding location of future development. Many felt development should be concentrated in North Creek, while others felt strongly that the remaining hamlets should be able to develop

as they saw appropriate. One resident may have put it best, 'I think it is logical for most businesses that offer services to concentrate in North Creek, everyone comes there for groceries, the bank, health care, etc. Small manufacturing concerns could be in other hamlets if appropriate and desired by the residents of that hamlet.' Many residents went a step further with this question and spoke about the relationship between Johnsbury and its neighboring communities, Chestertown, Warrensburg, and to a lesser extent Indian Lake. Many residents mentioned joint business attraction, combined advertising, joint planning, and even sharing resources such as highway, fire and other community infrastructure needs."

### Support for local institutions and businesses

"A strong community can be measured by the amount of local support or dollars spent in local stores or donated to local institutions. Residents of the Town of Johnsbury have deep pride in their strong local institutions and businesses. Interviewees mentioned the following as important to their lives: Johnsbury Central School, Johnsbury Library, the Hudson River, Volunteer Fire departments, Hudson Headwaters Health Network, the churches, Adirondack Ensemble, Our Town Theater Group, Gore Mountain, Garnet Hill, The Copperfield Inn, Grand Union, drug store, White Water Derby, small businesses, local hardware store, bank, Stewart's, the deli, North Creek New Enterprise, North Country Public Radio, Residents' Committee to Protect the Adirondacks, Tri-County Nursing Home, Barton Mines, and the Railroad. When asked what residents wished were located in the town that is currently not here, the list included: continuing educational opportunities, a car wash, value-added business producing finished wood products, a more local bank, a swimming pool, an eye specialist, access to natural/organic foods and fresh fish, a movie theater, more access to car repairs and a dealership, more medium priced homes, a golf course, clothing store, and more recreational activities, especially activities for the town's youth."

"When asked what percentage of the monthly budget residents spent outside of the Town of Johnsbury, the answer varied greatly. Putting telephone, power, and cable aside, some residents felt that the Town provided almost everything they needed with the exception of big ticket items such as large household appliances, computers, cars, and furniture. Other residents made weekly shopping trips to Glens Falls for clothes, groceries, office supplies and even gas. For some, a trip to Glens Falls is no big deal, many even commute for work, but others felt it was too far."

### The Economy

"When asked what kind of economic development residents would like to see in Johnsbury -- what kind of economic development will provide long-term benefits for the town and the town's youth? -- answers were often the same. Many pointed to telecommunications, greater investment in value-added wood products and other soft industries, including more businesses similar to Creative Stage Lighting. However, others talked at great length about making Johnsbury/North Creek a destination community similar to Lake Placid. They wanted to see greater investment in high-quality tourism opportunities by strengthening existing accommodations and advertising. These people felt that if the community was more of a destination, it would address seasonal unemployment, by establishing more steady use. Some

residents noted the severe decline in the number of jobs relating to natural resources. National Lead closing, and the diminishing numbers of jobs at Barton Mines and in the timber/lumber industry raised concern about availability of jobs not requiring advanced education.”

“Other strategies identified for enhancing the economy of the Town revolved around the linkage of environmental and community preservation. One resident said, ‘It is an opportune moment to integrate the two concerns since the resource-based economic vitality of the Park is inextricably bound up with its environmental health. Examples include revitalization of the Upper Hudson Scenic Railroad, providing a connection between Gore and Little Gore, the expanding rafting community, and efforts to incorporate the Siamese Ponds Wilderness. Approaches that combine economic planning with environmental preservation will be most successful.’”

### The Environment

“For many residents of the Town, the quality of the environment is a deep source of pride. Families that have lived here for generations tend to be most familiar with the land, while the newer arrivals seem to utilize it more frequently. Environmental issues that matter to Johnsbury residents are stopping acid rain, promoting the health of the Hudson River, and the recent return of Moose back into the Adirondack Park. There was disagreement on issues such as jet ski and snowmobile use, black fly control, disabled access and state land acquisition.”

“When residents were shown a map of the Town of Johnsbury, they saw that more than one-third or 100 square miles of the western half of the Town of Johnsbury, is state-owned forest preserve. They were asked to consider whether the forest was an asset to the town, to local businesses, tourism or themselves. The response was overwhelmingly that the forest was an under-utilized resource. Many mentioned limited access to trail heads and the distance between the forest preserve and Johnsbury’s hamlets. Many wished there could be direct trails connecting the hamlets to the forest preserve (similar to the trail from North Creek up Gore Mountain) and more businesses using the forest as a resource as does the Garnet Hill Lodge. A few residents wanted the community to promote protection of natural resources in their advertising, believing it to be a strong community economic benefit.”

### Improving Quality of Life

“When asked for specific changes that would make the town of Johnsbury more livable, the answers were extremely different. A strong, friendly Chamber of Commerce, careful long-term town planning, maintaining the philosophy of thinking regionally but acting locally, doing something about black flies, improving access to infrastructure such as better telephone, roads, water system, telecommunications and public transportation, connecting Gore Mountain with Little Gore, and retaining or attracting more post-college young people and the jobs to support them.”

## **COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS**

The following groups have been actively involved in community planning efforts.

**Johnsburg PRIDE:** The name, the goals and logo originated in June 1993. It was spearheaded by the Downtown Reorganization Committee which in turn was formulated as a result of recommendations of the North Creek Action Plan. The purpose and goals at that time were: (1) to encourage spring planting of flowers to beautify our hamlets, (2) to establish and carryout a “clean-up” day, weekend or week, (3) to begin a series of “adopt a...” programs for highways, streets, roads and vacant lots, (4) to encourage each hamlet to create special beautification projects, (5) to coordinate and disseminate information of all projects to all hamlets, and (6) to work with all pertinent organizations in the Town of Johnsburg.

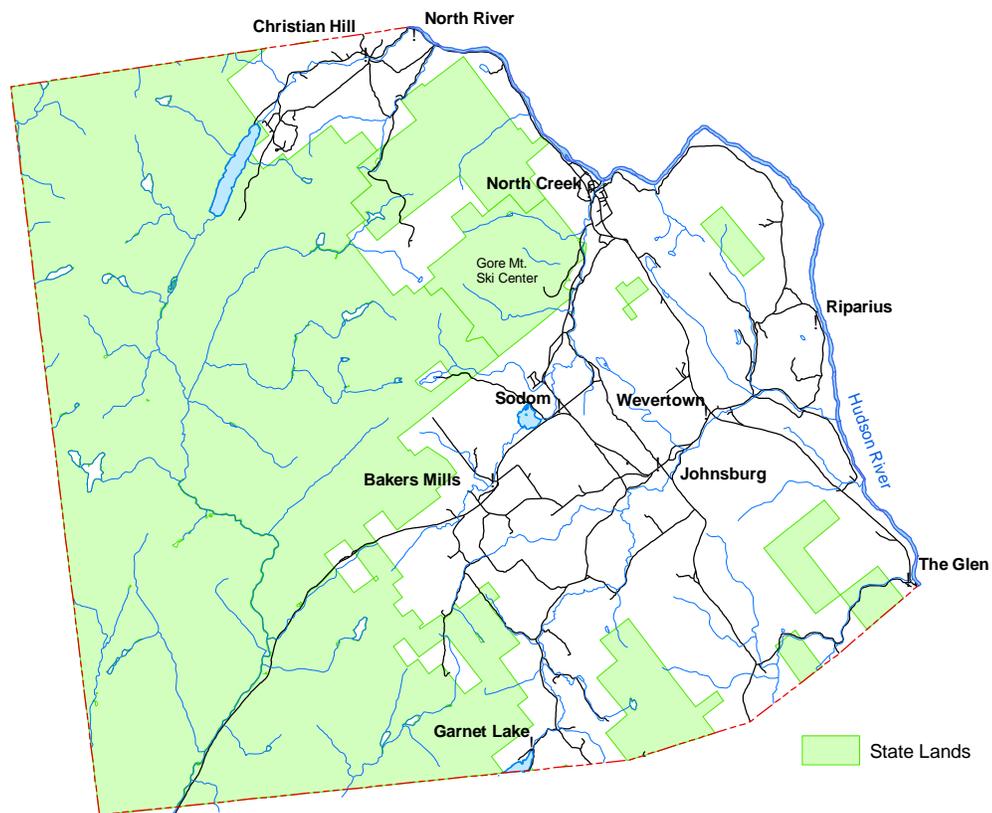
**CORE Committee:** The CORE committee is a group of residents that come together for a meeting twice per month to help implement the Town of Johnsburg vision statement: “The community vision of the Town of Johnsburg is to become the Adirondack’s most improved community in which to live and work. Achieving the vision will require an inspired plan, dedicated support from residents and businesses, and strong support from Town, County, and State governments. While doing this, it is also imperative to preserve the essential character of the community.”

**Main Street Merchant’s Association:** Formed in the spring of 1999, it was comprised of roughly 15 businesses based in North Creek. The goal was to work cooperatively toward unified advertising, promotion and special events. The group felt there was a need and opportunity to improve the economics of Main Street by working together. The first projects they tackled included supporting alternate parking on the streets from November to April for emergency snow removal, moving the information booth from the town park to the train depot as a community information kiosk, and helping to spearhead the Pole, Peddle and Paddle Marathon. The group also worked on Community Lights, a week long street celebration in preparation for the holidays.

**Johnsburg Historical Society:** The Society has been an active part of the community for many years. The purpose of the society is to acquire, preserve, display, interpret, develop, and make available a collection of artifacts and information that relate to the history of the town of Johnsburg and to its major industries: railroad, garnet mining, lumber and recreation (especially skiing). To accomplish this mission, the members are guided by four primary objectives: (1) to acquire and preserve artifacts and records, (2) to catalog collections, (3) to provide for the public and program planning, and (4) to conduct youth programs that enrich the state’s curriculum and administer these programs at the Johnsburg Historical Society’s headquarters at the Wevertown.

# TOWN OF JOHNSBURG COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

## PART 2: ANALYSIS OF APA LAND USE AREA CLASSIFICATIONS



Prepared by:  
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For and with: The Town of Johnsburg Comprehensive Plan Committee

Prepared July 2005

## PURPOSE

This section evaluates the appropriateness of the current land use area classifications as shown on current Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan map for the Town of Johnsburg. There are a number of reasons for this analysis.

First, the town intends to amend the Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan Map pursuant to Section 805, part 2, c, (3) of the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) Act which requires that amendments be based upon a “comprehensive inventory and analysis of the natural resource, public, economic and other land use factors as may reflect the relative development amenability and limitations of the lands within the entire jurisdiction.” Part 1 of this plan presents the inventory information. This part provides the analysis that synthesizes the relevant environmental and developmental factors.

Second, the current APA land use classifications were prepared just prior to 1973 when the Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan was adopted, and require updating based upon new and more detailed information as well as new development infrastructure. New and updated information includes, but is not limited to, the following.

- Order 2 soils mapping is now available, which is much more detailed than the meso-intensity mapping used for the original classifications. Also, there are revised soil interpretations for septic systems and for home sites. Soil information is a significant factor in the land use area classifications.
- Detailed wetlands maps are now available.
- Flood hazard maps are now available.
- Information regarding the suitability of roads to support development has been taken into account in this analysis.
- Current land use information is available.

Third, the original Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan map was prepared at a much smaller scale than is used in this analysis. The original plan was prepared using maps of scale 1:62:500 and employed a methodology whereby overlays that were hand drawn on transparent paper.<sup>1</sup> The minimum size area depicted in the overlays “was approximately 300 acres.”<sup>2</sup> Most of the information used in the present analysis was originally prepared at a scale of 1:24,000 or larger, and thus is more detailed than the original data upon which the current classifications are based.

Fourth, one of the goals of this plan is to increase the supply of affordable building lots in appropriate locations, i.e. on physically suitable land in accessible locations. Like other Adirondack communities in the general region, local people find that the cost of building lots

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<sup>1</sup> “Private Land Resource Capability, Inventory Report 1,” report prepared by the Adirondack Park Agency, August 1972, 16 plus pages, and “A Planning Methods and Results Overview of the Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan,” report prepared by Roger Wells, August 1977, 13 plus pages.

<sup>2</sup> “Private Land Resource Capability Inventory Report 1,” p. 4.

is increasing as demand for seasonal and year round housing properties rises. The scarcity of affordable lots could be alleviated to some extent by reclassifying physically suitable lands into categories that permit smaller average lot sizes, while at the same time reclassifying other lands that are less suitable for development into categories requiring larger average lot sizes.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The methodology employed in this analysis is very similar to that used in the original planning process by the APA which resulted in the current land use classifications<sup>3</sup>, except that it was performed using Geographical Information System (GIS) software rather than hand drawn maps.<sup>4</sup> It uses a similar set of environmental inventory information (albeit more detailed and up to date), and employs a map overlay process to create a similar environmental limitations composite map. It takes into account traditional factors affecting development by creating a composite “development opportunities map” based upon such criteria as distance to hamlets, proximity to highways, and the presence or absence of water or sewer infrastructure.<sup>5</sup> The two composites are then combined into a single map that shows the intensity of development that each area of town could appropriately support based upon a synthesis all the relevant factors.

### **Environmental limitations composite**

The “Composite Environmental Limitations for Development” map was derived using the criteria shown on the “Environmental Limitations Chart.” A “most limiting factor” assumption was used in the analysis, i.e. the suitability for development of any given area of land is determined by the most limiting environmental factor.

Areas in the “least suitable” category include wetlands; wetland and muck soils; slopes exceeding 35 percent; frequently, commonly or occasionally flooded lands (from soils data); critical wildlife habitats; elevations above 2500 feet; and open space preserved through conservation easements.

Areas in the “most suitable” and “suitable” categories are generally characterized by soils and slopes that are suitable for residential development provided that adequate septic systems are installed.

Areas in the “somewhat suitable” category include lands with some soil or slope restrictions, visually sensitive areas, lands near designated wild and scenic rivers, and forestry resources.

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<sup>3</sup> “Private Land Resource Capability Inventory Report 1,” and “A Planning Methods and Results Overview of the Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan,” report prepared by Roger Wells, August 1977, 13 plus pages.

<sup>4</sup> The original plan was prepared by hand using visual overlay maps on transparent media. The current analysis was prepared using Arcview 8.x software and computerized data files.

<sup>5</sup> The work plan for consultants, formerly distributed by the APA to consultants using state funds to prepare local plans within the Adirondack Park, required the completion of both an environmental limitations composite map and a development opportunities map, the same methodology used in the present analysis.

### ENVIRONMENTAL LIMITATIONS CHART

|   | Most Suitable | Suitable | Somewhat Suitable | Least Suitable |
|---|---------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|
| Soils (a)   |               |          |                   |                |
| Most suitable   | x             |          |                   |                |
| Suitable  |               | x        |                   |                |
| Somewhat suitable   |               |          | x                 |                |
| Least suitable  |               |          |                   | x              |
| Slope   |               |          |                   |                |
| 0 to 8%   | x             |          |                   |                |
| 8 to 15%  |               | x        |                   |                |
| 15 to 25%   |               |          | x                 |                |
| 25% or greater  |               |          |                   | x              |
| Flooding  |               |          |                   |                |
| Frequent, common, or occasional flooded soils                                   |               |          |                   | x              |
| Regulated flood hazard area   |               |          | x                 |                |
| Wetlands  |               |          |                   |                |
| Regulated wetlands  |               |          |                   | x              |
| Habitats  |               |          |                   |                |
| Deer wintering areas  |               |          |                   | x              |
| Rare or endangered species habitat  |               |          |                   | x              |
| Aquifer recharge areas  |               | x        |                   |                |
| High elevations   |               |          |                   |                |
| 2500 feet or more   |               |          |                   | x              |
| Visually sensitive areas  |               |          |                   |                |
| Areas within ¼ mile of scenic routes outside of hamlets and developed areas (b) |               |          | x                 |                |
| Areas within ¼ of state highways outside of hamlets                             |               | x        |                   |                |
| Wild and Scenic Rivers  |               |          |                   |                |
| Within ¼ mile of designated rivers outside of hamlets and developed areas       |               |          | x                 |                |
| Preserved Open Space (land conservancy)   |               |          |                   | x              |
| Forestry Resources, Section 480 or 480-a (c)                                    |               |          | x                 |                |

- (a) See Part 1 of the Comprehensive Plan for discussion of the soils ratings.
- (b) See scenic routes on Visual Resources map.
- (c) Forested lands under Section 480 or Section 480-a of the Real Property Tax Law.

## Development Opportunities Map

The “Development Opportunities” map is based upon traditional development considerations. Areas with the better opportunities are served by the town water system, are in or near hamlets, and are accessible by highways suitable to support development. Areas with least opportunities are remote from existing population centers and/or are not accessible by roads suitable to support development.

### DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES CHART

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| <b>Best</b> | Areas within ½ mile of boundaries of APA designated hamlet of North Creek; areas within ¼ mile of APA designated hamlets of Wevertown, Johnsburg, Bakers Mills, and Riparius; areas within ¼ mile of North River, Christian Hill, and Sodom hamlet areas; excluding lands further than ½ mile from any public highway not suitable for development (pavement width less than 14 feet). |
| <b>Good</b> | Areas within 1/4 mile from any public highway suitable for development (at least 14 feet pavement width) that are not classified as Best.  |
| <b>Fair</b> | Areas between ¼ mile and ½ mile from any public highway suitable for development, that are not classified as Best.   |
| <b>Poor</b> | Areas further than ½ mile from any public highway suitable for development.  |

## Density Analysis Map

The “Density Analysis” map was prepared by combining the two aforementioned maps by use of a matrix, resulting in the categories of densities shown on the chart below. Areas that could appropriately support the highest intensity of development score a 7, and areas that could support the least development score a 1 on this rating system.

### LAND USE DENSITY CLASSIFICATION CHART

| Development Opportunities | Development Suitability |          |                   |                |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|
|                           | Most suitable           | Suitable | Somewhat Suitable | Least Suitable |
| Best                      | 7                       | 6        | 5                 | 1              |
| Good                      | 6                       | 5        | 4                 | 1              |
| Fair                      | 5                       | 4        | 3                 | 1              |
| Poor                      | 4                       | 3        | 2                 | 1              |

Recommended maximum density of development permitted by regulation:

7 = highest density

1 = lowest density (open space)

Areas scoring the lowest on the chart (value of 1) are unsuitable for development regardless of other factors. These include wetlands; muck soils; slopes exceeding 35 percent; flooded soil areas, critical wildlife habitats; elevations above 2500 feet; and open space preserved through conservation easements.

Areas scoring high are generally within or near hamlets, near roads suitable for development, and characterized by favorable soil and slope conditions.

Areas scoring in intermediate categories tend to be those that are not ideally suited for development due to somewhat unfavorable soil and slope conditions and/or somewhat unfavorable development opportunities.

## **PROPOSED APA MAP AMENDMENTS**

In order to evaluate the appropriateness of the current land classifications the “Density Analysis” was compared to the existing APA land use designations. When this was done, a number of areas were identified where the current classification is not consistent with the environmental characteristics and development opportunity factors taken into account in this analysis. These initial areas were discussed by the Town of Johnsbury Comprehensive Plan Committee for further refinement, resulting in the following list and map of proposed amendments to the Adirondack Land Use and Development Plan Map. These proposed amendments are preliminary, and may be modified as a result of further discussion and public input prior to the submittal of formal map amendment applications to the Adirondack Park Agency.

The number of acres in each proposed amendment area as shown in the chart was estimated by use of a geographical information system. The maximum number of principal structures permitted in each area, before and after the amendments, was also calculated and is shown in the change column. Because there are no APA density limitations within designated hamlets, an assumed density of 2 principal structures per acre is used in the table for comparison purposes. (The proposed minimum lot size for single family dwellings within hamlets is approximately 1/2 acre.) Using these assumptions, the total increases and decreases in densities are almost evenly balanced.

## **Conclusions**

It is concluded that the map amendments identified in this analysis would be justified using the criteria established by the Adirondack Park Agency, and are in keeping with the spirit and intent of the Adirondack Park Agency Act and the Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan. Were these amendments to be adopted, the net number of new principal structures allowable within the town would remain generally the same. However, more new development would be permitted in logical growth areas characterized by suitable soil and slope conditions, and less would be permitted in areas with environmental or access restraints.

## PROPOSED APA MAP AMENDMENTS

| Map ID | Location   | Area Sq. miles | Area Acres | APA Land Classification |          | Number of Permitted Principal Structures |          |        |
|--------|--|----------------|------------|-------------------------|----------|--|----------|--------|
|        |  |                |            | Current                 | Proposed | Current                                  | Proposed | Change |
| A      | Extension of North Creek hamlet to the north   | 0.113          | 72.6       | LI                      | H        | 23                                       | 145      | 122    |
| B      | Extension of North Creek hamlet to the west, mostly town owned land                                    | 0.031          | 19.9       | LI                      | H        | 6  | 40       | 34     |
| C      | Eastern part of North Creek Hamlet   | 0.570          | 365.0      | H                       | RU       | 730                                      | 43       | -687   |
| D      | Southern portion of Peaceful Valley Road   | 0.458          | 292.9      | LI                      | MI       | 92                                       | 229      | 137    |
| E      | Sodom hamlet area  | 0.439          | 280.6      | LI                      | MI       | 88                                       | 219      | 132    |
| F      | Wetlands along Peaceful Valley Road  | 0.192          | 123.2      | LI                      | RU       | 38                                       | 14       | -24    |
| G      | Between Sodom and Johnsbury hamlet along State Route 8 and Park Road                                   | 0.938          | 600.4      | RU                      | LI       | 70                                       | 188      | 117    |
| H      | Between Bakers Mills and Johnsbury hamlet along Goodman Road, also along a portion of Garnet Lake Road | 1.324          | 847.4      | RU                      | LI       | 99                                       | 265      | 166    |
| I      | South of Johnsbury hamlet along South Johnsbury Road and Hudson Street                                 | 0.634          | 405.5      | RU                      | LI       | 48                                       | 127      | 79     |
| J      | Edward Hill  | 0.537          | 343.5      | RU                      | LI       | 40                                       | 107      | 67     |
| K      | Along southern portion of River Road   | 1.148          | 734.9      | RU                      | LI       | 86                                       | 230      | 144    |
| L      | North side of State Route 8 near Riparius  | 0.339          | 217.1      | RU                      | LI       | 25                                       | 68       | 42     |
| M      | Mill Creek Recreation Area   | 0.356          | 227.6      | RU                      | RM       | 27                                       | 5        | -21    |
| N      | North of State Route 28 south of Wevertown   | 1.428          | 913.9      | LI                      | RU       | 286                                      | 107      | -179   |
| O      | Forested land between State Route 28 and South Johnsbury Road  | 2.720          | 1740.7     | RU                      | RM       | 204                                      | 41       | -163   |
| P      | Immediately south of Wevertown along State Route 28  | 0.054          | 34.4       | H                       | RU       | 34                                       | 4        | -30    |
| Q      | Wevertown, west side of Route 28, north of intersection  | 0.029          | 18.3       | MI                      | H        | 14                                       | 37       | 22     |
| S      | Near Christian Hill  | 0.137          | 87.9       | RU                      | LI       | 14                                       | 38       | 24     |
|        |  |                |            |                         | TOTAL =  | 1925                                     | 1906     | -19    |

\* There is no APA density limitation within APA designated hamlets. For purposes of this table the assumed density is 2 principal structures per acre.

- H = Hamlet (assumed maximum density = 1 principal structure per acre)
- MI = Moderate Intensity Use (500 principal structures per square mile)
- LI = Low Intensity Use (200 principal structures per square mile)
- RU = Rural Use (75 principal structures per square mile)
- RM = Resource Management (15 principal structures per square mile)

Adopting these amendments would help achieve the goal of providing more affordable rural housing lots for local residents. Many such lots would become available in the central area of town in the vicinity of the hamlets of Johnsbury, Sodom and Bakers Mills, a section once composed of farmland on better soils, and now representing one of the most favorable areas in town for year round, single-family housing development. Substantial acreage is proposed to be changed from the Rural Use category to Low Intensity Use, a change from an average density of 8.5 to 3.2 principal structures per acre.

Also, there are currently many areas in the town where a highway is a land use area boundary, resulting in a situation where one side of the road is classified differently than the other side despite the fact that environmental and developmental considerations are similar. This is contrary to common zoning practice whereby both sides of a highway are designated in the same zoning district. The proposed amendments would rectify this situation in many locations, with the result being more equitable for property owners on each side of the road.

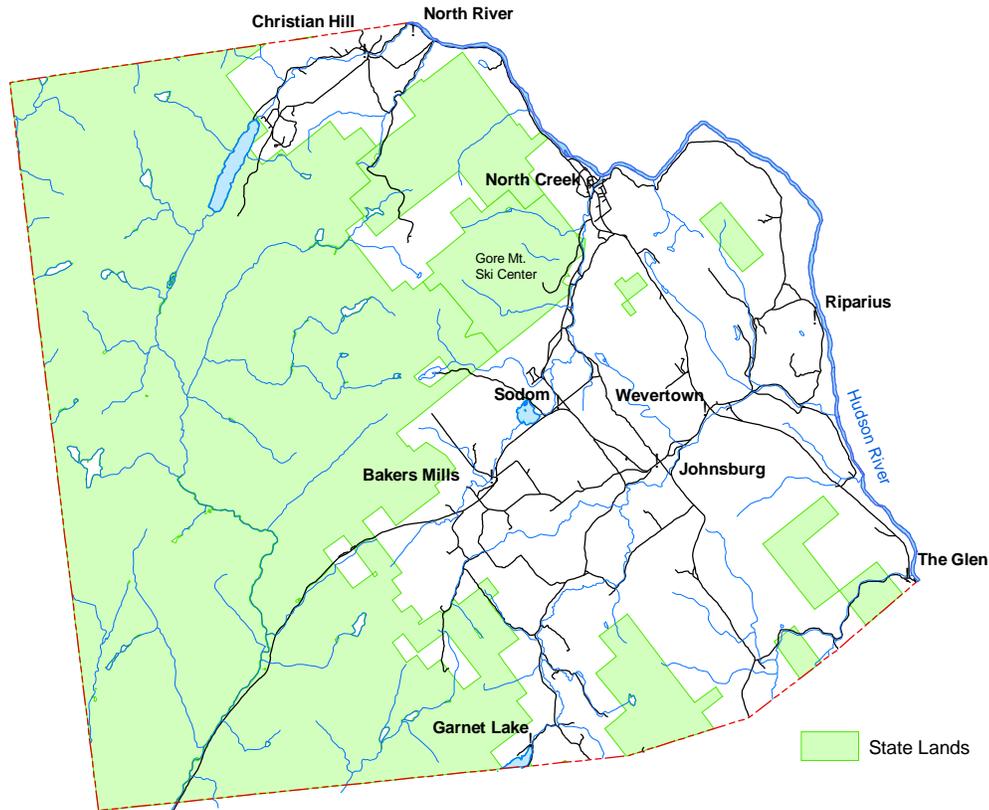
The acreage of Moderate Intensity Use area is currently very small in the Town of Johnsbury. The proposed amendments would expand the Moderate Intensity Use area along Peaceful Valley Road to, and including, the hamlet of Sodom (not an APA designated hamlet).

Conversely, permitted development densities would be reduced along the forested scenic Route 28 travel corridor south of Wevertown, and on forestry resource lands near the corridor, thereby helping to preserve the open space character of this entryway into the central Adirondacks.

The APA designated hamlet of North Creek would be reshaped by subtracting rugged land only accessible by an unimproved seasonal town highway, and by adding land area north of the current hamlet (area A) and a small area along Peaceful Valley Road across from the current hamlet (area B).

# TOWN OF JOHNSBURG COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

## PART 3: THE PLAN



Prepared by:  
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For and with: The Town of Johnsburg Comprehensive Plan Committee

Prepared July 2005

Contents

VISION STATEMENT .....1  
ISSUES .....1  
PLAN GOALS .....2  
PLANNING POLICIES .....3  
    Natural Resources and Scenic Rural Character .....3  
    Historic Recognition and Preservation .....3  
    Tourism and Outdoor Recreation .....4  
    Industrial Development .....4  
    Commercial Development .....5  
    Revitalization of North Creek Hamlet .....6  
    Rural Hamlets .....6  
    Affordable Housing .....7  
    Rural Residential Environments .....7  
    Revision of Land Use Regulations .....8  
LAND USE PLAN .....8  
    Hamlet Residential Districts (HR) .....9  
    Hamlet Business District 1 (HB1) .....10  
    Hamlet Business District 2 (HB2) .....10  
    Hamlet Public and Semi-Public District (HP) .....11  
    Hamlet Mixed Use Districts (HX) .....11  
    Rural Mixed Use 1.3 Districts (MX 1.3) .....12  
    Rural Mixed Use 3.2 Districts (MX 3.2) .....12  
    Rural Mixed Use 8.5 Districts (MX 8.5) .....13  
    Rural Mixed Use 42.7 Districts (MX 42.7) .....13  
    Commercial - Industrial Districts (CI) .....14  
    Main Street Overlay District (MSO) .....14  
    Scenic Corridor Overlay District (SCO) .....15  
    Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers Overlay district (WSR) .....16  
ACTION PLAN .....16

## **VISION STATEMENT**

The Town of Johnsborg Comprehensive Plan Committee has adopted the following vision statement as a general guide to the town's future.

The Town of Johnsborg should remain as a scenic, rural, residential community for both year round and seasonal residents with services provided primarily in the hamlet areas. North Creek hamlet should be revitalized as a tourist destination and service center with closer linkage to the Gore Mountain Ski Center. The local economy should be supported by enhanced tourism/recreation trade as well as by business and industry compatible with the town's rural and scenic character.

## **ISSUES**

### Scenic Rural Environment

The principal resource of the town is its scenic, rural, open space character, with its mountains, rivers, and forests providing an outstanding setting for residents and visitors alike. This natural resource should support both tourism, particularly related to outdoor recreational opportunities, and established local industries, and it should be protected from uses and land use practices that would tend to diminish or destroy it.

### Economy

There are insufficient employment opportunities. The town should seek to enhance tourism related businesses, as well as to provide for commercial and industrial type uses in appropriate locations.

### Hamlet Revitalization

North Creek hamlet should continue to be revitalized building upon the "North Creek Action Plan," the "First Wilderness Corridor" project, Ski-Bowl Park enhancements, and other initiatives or plans that have or will affect the hamlet area and/or the Main Street business district. (See Part 1, Appendix A for summaries of these plans.)

### Affordable Housing

Affordable housing for long term residents is in short supply or of poor quality. Alternatives should be sought to augment the supply of affordable housing and affordable building lots.

### Location Of Commercial And Industrial Development

Suitable locations for different types of commercial development and for industrial uses should be identified, and the town's zoning ordinance should be modified accordingly. It is believed that town's existing land use regulations do not provide sufficient opportunity for commercial and industrial development. However, the need for economic growth should be

balanced with the goals of preserving the scenic environment and the character of rural residential neighborhoods.

### Protection of Residential Neighborhoods

Residential growth is the predominant form of development the town can expect in the future. Residential properties, whether rural or in hamlets, should be protected from adverse impacts of disruptive land uses, while at the same time providing for traditional uses of rural land such as forestry, agriculture, recreation, and the establishment of home based businesses.

### Revision of Existing Land Use Regulations

The town's existing zoning ordinance is of 1960s vintage, and requires updating and revision based upon the recommendations of this comprehensive plan.

## **PLAN GOALS**

The foundation of a comprehensive plan are its vision statement and its goals. The specific recommendations and proposals contained in this plan are intended to further the following goals.

- Goal 1: Preserve and enhance the scenic rural character and cultural attractions that are the town's principal resources.
- Goal 2: Promote tourism and outdoor recreation for all seasons.
- Goal 3: Encourage industrial development, including wood products and light industry, in appropriate locations.
- Goal 4: Designate additional areas where commercial uses would be permitted by the town zoning ordinance.
- Goal 5: Revitalize North Creek hamlet.
- Goal 6: Maintain rural hamlets (defined as hamlets other than North Creek) as desirable residential areas and as rural service centers accommodating a mix of land uses.
- Goal 7: Provide affordable housing choices for middle income and low income families.
- Goal 8: Protect the character of rural residential areas while providing for traditional uses of rural property such as forestry, agriculture, recreation and the establishment of home based businesses.
- Goal 9: Review and update land use regulations that affect the town.

## **PLANNING POLICIES**

The policies stated below are intended to implement the plan goals.

### **Natural Resources and Scenic Rural Character**

A goal of this plan is to preserve and enhance the scenic rural character and cultural attractions that are the town's principal resources

#### Policies:

1. Establish State Route 28 as a scenic corridor through the town as a gateway into the central Adirondacks. The corridor should extend the full length of State Route 28 excluding the hamlets of North River, North Creek and Wevertown, and should be 500 feet wide measured from each side of the highway right-of-way. Also designate the northern section of Peaceful Valley Road near the Gore Mountain State Ski Center as a scenic corridor. A 100 foot building setback requirement should apply within the corridor, and landscaping and building design guidelines should be established for new non-residential uses.
2. Use special use approval, site plan approval, and land subdivision review pursuant to town land use regulations to insure that new development is in keeping with the scenic rural character of the area and does not have an adverse impact upon the natural environment, especially in major travel corridors and in sensitive environmental areas. Revise review criteria in the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations accordingly.
3. Establish regulations requiring that junk be kept out of sight.
4. Establish a program to assist land owners in removal of junk vehicles.
5. Implement the recommendations of the Mill Creek Recreation Area Management Plan. (See Part 1, page 39.)
6. Support the beautification and clean-up programs, and other work of the Johnsbury PRIDE organization.

### **Historic Recognition and Preservation**

A goal of this plan is to preserve and enhance cultural attractions of the town, such as historic buildings and sites.

#### Policies:

1. Encourage the private preservation of historic properties by undertaking a town-wide notification and recognition program for locally significant historic sites and structures.

2. Establish an overlay zoning district along Main Street in North Creek where new structures or changes in existing structures are subject to architectural design guidelines in order to insure compatibility with the historic character of district.
3. Use special use approval and site plan review to insure that new development is compatible with neighboring historic properties and cultural or tourist attractions.
4. Support the work and programs of the Johnsbury Historical Society.

### **Tourism and Outdoor Recreation**

A goal of the plan is to promote tourism and recreation for all seasons in order to provide local employment opportunities.

#### Policies:

1. Support the Gore Mountain Unit Management plan that proposes to link the Gore Mountain Ski Area with the hamlet of North Creek. (See Part 1, page 37.)
2. Pursue other enhancements for the North Creek hamlet area and Ski-Bowl park as may be part of on-going implementation of the various plans prepared in the past.
3. Continue to work with the Gore Mountain Region Chamber of Commerce, ORDA, and other interested groups to identify infrastructure improvements likely to be attractive to tourists.
4. Identify appropriate locations for tourist and recreation businesses, and revise local zoning accordingly.

### **Industrial Development**

A goal of this plan is to encourage industrial development, including wood products and light industry. At this time the town is not considering the purchase of property in order to establish an industrial park. Rather, it intends to facilitate industrial development on privately owned land.

#### Policies:

1. Seek to find a site or sites on privately owned land suitable for designation as an industrial use zone pursuant to Section 807-4 of the Adirondack Park Agency Act, thus enabling the town to assume review authority for some industrial projects that otherwise would be reviewed by the Adirondack Park Agency. Establish an industrial “floating zone” in the town zoning ordinance that would enable the town to amend its zoning map in an expeditious manner to accommodate the creation of such industrial zone or zones.

2. In the zoning ordinance, provide for Planned Industrial Districts to be created after review and approval by the Town Board.
3. Allow sawmills, lumber yards and wood products industries in rural zones after special use approval by the town planning board.
4. Allow mining in rural zones after special use approval by the town planning board.
5. Allow “home based manufacturing” in rural zoning districts after special use approval by the Planning Board. Such businesses might include small scale manufacture or assembly or wood products, canoes, ceramics, crafts, electronic or computer equipment, and similar products conducted on a property where the owner resides.

### **Commercial Development**

A goal of this plan is to revise the existing zoning ordinance to provide additional areas for commercial development in appropriate locations, both to provide local employment opportunities and to provide needed goods and services.

#### Policies:

1. *Rural hamlets.* Permit a variety of commercial uses consistent with the concept of a mixed use hamlet. Require special use approval and site plan approval to insure compatibility with neighboring residential uses.
2. *Rural zones.* Permit home based businesses, tourist and recreation oriented businesses, and other businesses appropriate for mixed use rural areas. Require special use approval and site plan review to insure compatibility with neighboring residential uses. Require a 30 feet green space buffer from surrounding properties.
3. *Scenic corridor.* Permit tourism oriented businesses such as restaurants and tourist accommodations, but not general commercial development. Require special use approval and site plan review to insure that new development does not detract from the scenic rural character of the town. Require landscaping and building design be consistent with “Adirondack character.”
4. *North Creek business zones.* Revise list of uses permitted within each zone. In the Main Street business district use site plan review in conjunction with architectural design guidelines to insure that new buildings will be in keeping with the historic character of the district.
5. *Problem uses.* Limit the areas where uses incompatible with residential neighborhoods or the scenic environment may be located. Establish special use standards for such uses, and require site plan review by the Planning Board.

## **Revitalization of North Creek Hamlet**

A goal of this plan is to revitalize North Creek hamlet building upon the “North Creek Action Plan,” the “First Wilderness Corridor” project, Ski-Bowl Park enhancements, and other initiatives and plans that have or will affect the hamlet area.

### Policies:

1. Seek to update the North Creek Action plan taking into account the various initiatives, projects and studies that have been undertaken subsequent to its adoption in 1993.
2. Encourage retail development by pursuing measures to enhance tourism and recreation, and to link Main Street to the Gore Mountain Ski Center, Ski-Bowl Park, and the riverfront.
3. Seek to acquire funds for under-grounding utility cables within the hamlet of North Creek.
4. Continue to coordinate with the Warren County Department of Planning and Community Development in acquiring grant funds for improvements in infrastructure, housing, and tourism and recreation attractions, and to support other initiatives that would benefit the Main Street business district and/or the hamlet area.
5. Support the continuation and work of the Town of Johnsbury CORE Committee and the Main Street Merchant’s Association in their efforts to revitalize North Creek Hamlet.
6. Revise zoning to permit residential units on the second or third story of buildings.

## **Rural Hamlets**

A goal of this plan is to maintain rural hamlets (defined as hamlets other than North Creek) as desirable residential areas and as rural service centers accommodating a mix of land uses.

### Policies:

1. Revise zoning to permit a variety of residential, commercial, public and semi-public uses in rural hamlets.
2. Support the Town of Johnsbury PRIDE organization and its efforts to beautify hamlets.
3. Continue to coordinate with the Warren County Department of Planning and Community Development in acquiring grant funds for housing rehabilitation and other projects that would benefit rural hamlets.
4. Require new mobile homes to meet design standards in order to increase compatibility with conventionally constructed housing.

## **Affordable Housing**

A goal of this plan is to provide affordable housing choices for town residents.

### Policies:

1. Allow mobile homes as a housing choice in all zones where conventionally constructed single family homes are permitted.
2. Allow mobile home parks in all zones outside of North Creek hamlet, subject to mobile home park design requirements.
3. Allow two family dwellings in all zones where single family dwellings are permitted.
4. Allow multi-family dwellings in all hamlets, subject to special use requirements.
5. Allow cluster development of all types (townhouse units, single family housing on small lots, and other forms) in all zones, subject to special use requirements.
6. Increase the supply of moderate income housing lots by seeking amendments to the Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan map, in appropriate areas, that would allow higher densities of development than are currently permitted.
7. As need and demand indicates, seek grant funding for subsidized housing units in coordination with the Warren County Department of Planning and Community Development.

## **Rural Residential Environments**

A goal of this plan is to protect the character of rural residential areas while providing for traditional uses of rural property such as forestry, agriculture, recreation and the establishment of home based businesses.

### Policies:

1. Permit a variety of commercial uses in rural areas, especially home based businesses and recreation and tourist related enterprises. Require special use approval and site plan review to insure compatibility with neighboring residential uses.
2. Require a 30 foot green space buffer between commercial developments and neighboring residential uses.
3. Permit agriculture, forestry and recreation uses in all rural areas.

4. Within proposed Rural Mixed Use 1.3 land use districts, and within the Scenic Corridor overlay zone, require new mobile homes to comply with design standards in order to improve compatibility with conventionally constructed housing.

### **Revision of Land Use Regulations**

It is a goal of this plan to review and update existing land use regulations that affect the town.

#### Policies:

1. Seek amendments to the Adirondack Park Agency Land Use and Development Plan Map in accordance with the recommendations of Part 2 of this plan, as may be modified as a result of public input and further discussion.
2. Revise local zoning with respect to several issues, including but not limited to:
  - . Special use and site plan review standards.
  - . Home occupations.
  - . Home based businesses.
  - . Mobile home regulations.
  - . Mobile home park regulations.
  - . Travel trailer regulations.
  - . Campground and recreational vehicle park regulations.
  - . Adult entertainment.
  - . Junk and junkyard regulations.
  - . Lot size and building setback requirements.
  - . Commercial uses permitted within each zoning district.
  - . Residential uses permitted within each zoning district.
  - . Creation of a Main Street overlay zone.
  - . Standards for this issuance of variances.
  - . Procedures for special use approval, site plan approval, and variances.
3. Adopt a town Junk Storage law that requires junk be kept out of sight.
4. Amend the town Subdivision Regulations and adopt an On-site Wastewater Treatment Law that meet the requirements for an Adirondack Park Agency approved local planning program.
5. Seek approved local planning program status from the Adirondack Park Agency, and assume review authority for “class B” regional projects pursuant to the Adirondack Park Agency Act.

### **LAND USE PLAN**

The land use plan consists of the districts illustrated on the “Land Use Plan” map. Proposed land use districts are intended to coincide with the land use areas of the Adirondack Park

Land Use and Development Plan map, incorporating the proposed amendments as described in Part 2 of this comprehensive plan. Within the APA designated hamlet of North Creek, the town land use plan establishes four types of districts: Hamlet Residential (HR), Hamlet Business 1 (HB1), Hamlet Business 2 (HB2), and Hamlet Public and Semi-public (HP). Otherwise, the town land use districts are intended to be identical with APA land use areas.

In addition, two overlay zones are established:

- (1) A Scenic Corridor overlay zone (SCO) that extends the entire length of State Route 28, excluding North River, North Creek and Wevertown hamlets. This zone encompasses lands within 500 feet of the highway right-of-way.
- (2) A “Main Street” (MSO) overlay zone located in the Main Street business area of North Creek.

### **Hamlet Residential Districts (HR)**

Location: Portions of North Creek hamlet.

Character Description: Hamlet residential districts include existing residential neighborhoods within North Creek hamlet, and vacant land suitable for hamlet density development. Older residential neighborhoods consist of relatively closely spaced housing that is primarily single family homes, and with some public and semi-public uses interspersed. Most are serviced by public water. Newer development in the form of cluster style housing is located in the proximity to the approach to the Gore Mountain State Ski Center along State Route 28.

Vision:

*Older neighborhoods:* Much the same as at present, with some residential in-fill possible.

*Undeveloped land:* Mixed forms of residential development, including additional cluster style development to accommodate housing demand associated with the Gore Mountain Ski Center and other recreational/tourism attractions.

Allowable Uses: All forms of residential development except mobile home parks. Individual mobile homes provided that they comply with design standards. Public and semi-public uses.

Minimum lot size for new development:

Single family dwellings and mobile homes: 22,500 square feet.  
Larger for other uses.

Maximum Average Density (acres per principal building): none

## **Hamlet Business District 1 (HB1)**

Location: Main Street, North Creek

Character Description: A retail and service center characterized by a mix of retail and service businesses housed in closely spaced buildings on small lots typical of village downtown areas in rural New York State, and serving the year round population, seasonal residents, and tourists. Several of the structures are representative of historical architectural styles.

Vision: Enhanced business potential due to closer linkage with the Gore Mountain State Ski Center, growth of nearby residential areas and seasonal accommodations, and other initiatives envisioned by the North Creek Action Plan and subsequent planning efforts, while preserving the historic character and Adirondack flavor of the district.

Allowable Uses: Retail, service and other businesses suitable for location in a village downtown area or on its fringes. Residential use on second or third story of commercial structures.

Minimum lot size for new development: None.

Maximum Average Density (acres per principal building): none

## **Hamlet Business District 2 (HB2)**

Location: State Route 28, southern portion of North Creek hamlet

Character Description: A retail and service district characterized by businesses that thrive in higher traffic volume locations and/or require more space than available in the Main Street business district.

Vision: Continuation as a retail and service district for uses that are incompatible with a location in the Main Street business district and/or that require siting in a higher traffic volume location.

Allowable Uses: Most commercial uses.

Minimum lot size for new development: 30,000 square feet.

Maximum Average Density (acres per principal building): none

### **Hamlet Public and Semi-Public District (HP)**

Location: West of State Route 28 within the APA designated North Creek hamlet, including portions of Ski-bowl Park.

Character Description: Community service area containing recreational, health care, and highway garage facilities.

Vision: Continued use as a community service area.

Allowable Uses: Public and semi-public buildings and grounds. Senior citizen housing and assisted living facilities.

Minimum lot size for new development: 40,000 square feet.

Maximum Average Density (acres per principal building): none

### **Hamlet Mixed Use Districts (HX)**

Locations: Adirondack Park Agency designated hamlets of Bakers Mills, Johnsbury, Riparius and Wevertown. Also portions of North Creek hamlet intended as mixed use districts.

Character Description: Rural hamlets consisting primarily of residential structures on relatively small lots, but interspersed with commercial, industrial, public, and semi-public uses, including vacant land for expansion. Also, portions of North Creek hamlet that contain large amounts of undeveloped land.

Vision: Mixed use hamlets that serve as focal points and growth centers for rural neighborhoods, containing both older and newer residential structures as well as businesses, religious institutions, and community services. Also portions of North Creek hamlet intended as mixed land use areas.

Allowable Uses: All forms of residential use. Commercial, public, semi-public, and industrial uses that are compatible with the existing character of rural hamlets.

Minimum lot size for new development:

Single family dwellings and mobile homes: 30,000 square feet.

Other uses: 40,000 square feet.

Maximum Average Density (acres per principal building): none

### **Rural Mixed Use 1.3 Districts (MX 1.3)**

Locations: Areas classified as Moderately Intensity Use on the Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan map.

Character Description: Existing areas of relatively intense development, primarily residential in character. Also, areas where the capability of the natural resources and the anticipated need for development indicate that relatively intense development, primarily residential in character, is possible, desirable and suitable for the future. Such areas are generally near hamlets and/or highway corridors, and are characterized by good soils, slopes, and other environmental conditions favorable for development.

Vision: Rural residential neighborhoods primarily consisting of single family dwellings on 1.3 acre or smaller lots where land owners can utilize their property for traditional rural uses of land such as agriculture, forestry or recreation, as well as for the establishment of small businesses, home based businesses, and tourism/recreation related businesses that are compatible with the residential character of the area. These areas are intended to provide affordable rural building lots for local residents.

Allowable Uses: All forms of residential development except multiple family dwellings. Agriculture, forestry and open space uses. Public and semi-public uses. Business uses that are compatible with the character of the area..

Minimum lot size for new development: 1 acre

Maximum Average Density: 1.3 acres per principal building

### **Rural Mixed Use 3.2 Districts (MX 3.2)**

Locations: Areas classified as Low Intensity Use on the Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan map.

Character Description: Existing areas where the intensity of development is somewhat less than in hamlets and in Mixed Use 1.3 districts. Also, readily accessible areas in reasonable proximity to hamlets where physical and biological resources are fairly tolerant and can withstand development at a density somewhat lower than found in hamlet and Mixed Use 1.3 districts. Such areas are generally characterized by fair to good soils and slopes, and do not contain large acreage of sensitive environmental lands.

Vision: Rural residential neighborhoods, for both year round and seasonal residents, primarily consisting of single family dwellings on 3.2 acre or smaller lots where land owners can utilize their property for traditional rural uses of land such as agriculture, forestry or recreation, as well as for the establishment of small businesses, home based businesses, and tourism/recreation related businesses that are compatible with the residential character of the area. These areas are intended to provide affordable rural building lots for residents.

Allowable Uses: All forms of residential development except multiple family dwellings. Agriculture, forestry and open space uses. Public and semi-public uses. Business uses that are compatible with the character of the area..

Minimum lot size for new development: 1 acre

Maximum Average Density: 3.2 acres per principal building

### **Rural Mixed Use 8.5 Districts (MX 8.5)**

Locations: Areas classified as Rural Use on the Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan map.

Character Description: Rural areas where environmental limitations and/or access constraints limit the desirability of relative intense development. These areas may be characterized by relatively poor soils and/or slopes for development, and/or by restraints posed by wetlands, valuable natural habitats, scenic vistas, or proximity to key public lands.

Vision: Rural residential neighborhoods, for both year round and seasonal residents, primarily consisting of single family dwellings on 8.5 acre or smaller lots where land owners can utilize their property for traditional rural uses of land such as agriculture, forestry or recreation, as well as for the establishment of small businesses, home based businesses, and tourism/recreation related businesses that are compatible with the residential character of the area. These areas are intended to allow development that is in keeping with the open space character of the Adirondack Park.

Allowable Uses: All forms of residential development except multiple family dwellings. Agriculture, forestry and open space uses. Public and semi-public uses. Business uses that are compatible with the character of the area..

Minimum lot size for new development: 1 acre

Maximum Average Density: 8.5 acres per principal building

### **Rural Mixed Use 42.7 Districts (MX 42.7)**

Locations: Areas classified as Resource Management on the Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan map.

Character Description: Lands where the need to protect, manage and enhance forest, recreational, and open space resources is of paramount importance because of overriding natural resource and considerations. These lands are generally characterized by significant environmental limitations such as very steep slopes, very poor soils for development,

wetlands, flood hazard, valuable natural habitats, scenic vistas or areas, and/or proximity to key public lands. Managed forests as well as remote and inaccessible lands are also included within these districts.

Vision: Dominantly open space. Other uses that are consistent with open space character.

Allowable Uses: Forestry, open space recreation, and other open space uses. Year round and seasonal dwellings and hunting and fishing camps with large acreage set aside as open space. Commercial uses that in keeping with the intended open space character of the district.

Minimum lot size for new development: 1 acre

Maximum Average Density: 42.7 acres per principal building

### **Commercial – Industrial District (CI)**

Locations: None proposed at present. The Commercial – Industrial District is intended to be a “floating zone,” whereby such zone or zones may be created by the Town Board upon following procedures for adopting zoning map amendments.

Character Description: Vacant land, with or without existing buildings, suitable for commercial and industrial development by virtue of its physical characteristics, access considerations, surrounding land uses, and other commercial and industrial location factors.

Vision: Commercial and/or industrial use areas.

Allowable Uses: Industrial, wholesaling, trucking, mining, and commercial uses, provided they pose no significant adverse impacts upon the environment.

Minimum lot size for new development: none

Maximum Average Density: none

Minimum Size for Creation of New CI Districts:

If created within a pre-existing Hamlet or MX 1.3 District: 2 acres

If created within other pre-existing districts: 10 acres

### **Main Street Overlay District (MSO)**

Location: Main street area of North Creek.

Character Description: Retail and service center streetscape characterized by a core of structures reminiscent of early 20<sup>th</sup> century architecture. Also includes vacant lots, the historic railroad depot and museum, as well as residential structures and newer commercial structures.

Vision: Revitalized business district and service center capitalizing upon its historic character and Adirondack heritage. The purpose of this district is to promote architectural compatibility with historic and Adirondack building styles.

Allowable Uses, Minimum Lot Size for New Development, and Maximum Average Density: Same as in underlying HB1 district.

Special Regulations: New structures and changes to the exterior of existing commercial structures to be subject to review and approval by the town Planning Board in order to insure compliance with design standards set forth in the “North Creek Action Plan” of 1993.

### **Scenic Corridor Overlay District (SCO)**

Location: A corridor encompassing lands within 500 feet of each side of State Route 28, and extending through the entire length of the Town of Johnsbury excepting the hamlets of North River, North Creek and Wevertown. Also included is the northern portion of Peaceful Valley Road near the approach to Gore Mountain Ski Center.

Character Description: Major travel corridor leading into the central Adirondack region. The southern portion of the Route 28 corridor (south of North Creek) is characterized by stretches of forested open space interspersed with occasional development. The northern portion of the Route 28 corridor provides scenic views of the Hudson River to the east. The Peaceful Valley road section provides views of Gore Mountain and is bounded on the south by state land.

Vision: Preservation of Route 28 as a scenic forested corridor in the south, and as a scenic river corridor in the north. The purpose of the Route 28 district is to insure that new development is consistent with the forested, open space character of the southern section, and consistent with the scenic river view and open space character of the northern section. The Peaceful Valley Road section is intended to preserve scenic qualities near the entrance to the Gore Mountain Ski Center.

Allowable Uses: Most residential uses. Open space and recreation uses. Tourism related accommodations and businesses.

Minimum Lot Size for New Development, and Maximum Average Density: Same as in underlying land use districts.

Special Regulations: (a) Minimum building setback from highway right-of way of 100 feet. (b) Site plan review of new land uses by the Planning Board in order to insure compatibility with “Adirondack” building styles, the retention of the forested character of Route 28 south, and appropriate landscaping and signage.

## **Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers Overlay district (WSR)**

### Locations:

- (a) Recreational rivers: Lands within one-quarter mile of the Hudson River, excluding APA designated hamlet and moderate intensity use areas. Lands within one-quarter mile of the Sacandaga River along State Route 8.
- (b) Wild River: Lands within one-quarter mile of the remaining portion of Sacandaga River.

Special Regulations: Areas within these districts are subject to the Adirondack Park Agency Rules and Regulations governing to Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers. Such regulations are to be administered by the APA, not the Town of Johnsburg.

## **ACTION PLAN**

### **Land Use Regulations**

- a. Adopt a new town zoning law that: (a) incorporates the recommendations of this comprehensive plan, and (b) fulfills the requirements of an APA approved local planning program.
- b. Adopt revisions to the town's subdivision regulations that: (a) incorporate the recommendations of this comprehensive plan, and (b) fulfill the requirements of an APA approved local planning program.
- c. Adopt a town on-site wastewater treatment law that fulfills the requirements of an APA approved local planning program.
- d. Seek APA approval of the town's local land use program in order to assume review and approval authority over class B projects pursuant to the Adirondack Park Agency Act.
- e. Adopt a town junk storage law.
- f. Make application to the APA to amend the Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan map according to the recommendations of this plan, as may be revised after public input and further review.

### **Hamlet Revitalization and Community Development**

- a. Seek means to update the "North Creek Action Plan" with specific recommendations for hamlet revitalization and community development.
- b. Continue to coordinate with the Warren County Department of Planning and Community Development in acquiring grant funds for improvements in infrastructure, housing, and

tourism and recreation attractions, and to support other initiatives that would benefit the hamlets or the town as a whole.

- c. Continue the work of the CORE committee, and Johnsborg PRIDE organization.

### **Industrial Development**

Continue to seek a site that would qualify for designation as an industrial use zone pursuant to Section 807-4 of the Adirondack Park Agency Act.

### **Historic Preservation**

- a. Undertake a town-wide inventory of locally important historic structures and sites. The Johnsborg Historical Society should take the lead role in this effort, seeking funding and technical assistance if available, but otherwise accomplishing it through volunteer efforts.
- b. On the basis of the historic inventory, establish a local historic notification and recognition program. . The Johnsborg Historical Society should take the lead role in this effort, supported by the Town Board.

### **Natural Resources**

Implement the recommendations of the Mill Creek Recreation Area Management Plan.

**APPENDIX A**

**SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
PLANS PREPARED IN THE PAST**

## NORTH CREEK ACTION PLAN, 1993

In 1993 a plan was prepared for the North Creek hamlet area that focused on economic development, hamlet revitalization, increasing tourism potential, and main street revitalization. The “North Creek Action Plan” was prepared by the Saratoga Associates in conjunction with the North Creek Hamlet Action Committee, the Warren County Department of Planning and Community Development, the Johnsburg Town Board and the Gore Mountain Region Chamber of Commerce. The plan was formally adopted by the Town Board in 1993.

The stated vision of the plan was for the Town of Johnsburg to become “The Adirondack’s most improved community in which to live and work,” with the realization that “it is also imperative to preserve the essential character of the community.” (North Creek Action Plan, p. 2-1) The plan envisioned a busy Main Street business district made possible by a number of improvements designed to increase tourism and recreation, and to connect Main Street with the Gore Mountain ski center and to the other attractions. The fundamental concept was to revive the Hamlet of North Creek as a four-season tourist hub in the southeastern Adirondacks by drawing additional visitors to the region, and to revitalize the Main Street business district by providing better linkages to recreational and tourism attractions and by developing housing in the hamlet area. Among the proposals were the following:

- Street beautification along Main Street: to include street trees, attractive lighting, sitting area, building façade improvements, and maintaining appropriate architectural styles in all new and remodeled structures.
- Improvements to Ski-Bowl Park: expansion of recreational facilities, provision of new planted entrances, renovation of the existing ski lift for limited use, creation of a ski museum, provision of walking paths to the village, and construction a golf course and driving range.
- A “Hudson River Park,” to include historic train structures, the rail station to become a museum, and a riverside picnic area
- Walking paths to connect the Main Street business district with the Hudson River Park, Ski Bowl Park and Gore Mountain.
- The attraction of additional retail businesses to the Main Street via a vigorous marketing campaign.
- New in-fill housing developments in the hamlet area consisting of second homes and vacation homes.
- A business park in the northern portion of the hamlet area.
- Some expansion of senior citizen housing in the Route 28 area.

A primary goal of the plan was to enhance and broaden the Town’s economic base and provide additional employment opportunities. Revitalization of Main Street by capitalizing on tourism potential was one key to achieving this goal. The attraction of other types of industries and businesses was a second objective. The plan evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of North Creek as a industrial and business location. It concluded that the best possibilities for attracting new business were the following: wood products industries (including wood crafts), mining, and light industries and services such as computer software, insurance, consultants, and retail mail order that are not reliant upon proximity to markets and the highway transportation network.

The plan also investigated housing needs, concluding that many local residents are priced out of the housing market due to escalating real estate values, and that physically substandard housing is found throughout the town. Particular problems were noted for younger families seeking “starter homes,” and for senior citizens.

The following specific recommendations were made.

- *Waddel/Kellog buildings* (located between the railroad line and the Hudson River). Use as a retail center featuring Adirondack products, and for events accentuating Adirondack culture and products.
- *Train station*. Restore a a museum.
- *Former titanium transfer site*. Market for commercial re-use. Use shoreline portion for walking trail.
- *North Creek business park*. Create a business park to house small business in an office park setting on north end of the hamlet along Route 28.
- *Senior support center*. An existing facility. Provide pedestrian links to Main Street and the waterfront. Consider expanding the housing component and augmenting support facilities for the elderly.
- *Hudson Riverfront Park*. Create a riverfront park to include a river/creek trail system, picnic area, canoe launch, platform theatre, fishing access, sitting areas, open lawn and swimming.
- *Circle Avenue residential neighborhood*. Transition from residential to Bed and Breakfast mixed with residential . Provide links to trail system.
- *Bridge Street second homes*. Create second home development. (Site is near public walkway along North Creek.)
- *Hudson River townhouses*. Create townhouse development, perhaps a mix of vacation homes and affordable housing, in vicinity of unused titanium transfer rail sidings.
- *Mixed use entry corridor*. Provide for mixed use and create new in-fill housing in the entry corridor along Route 9N between Route 28 and the intersection with Main Street.
- *Municipal parking*. Provide six new parking lots in various locations.
- *Improve primary entrance to the hamlet, Welcome Center*. Use existing log cabin as welcome center. Provide new welcome sign, community bulletin board, enhanced plantings, and parking area.
- *Housing action initiatives*. Take steps to provide affordable housing, including promoting small scale multi-family structures, pursuing the construction of a group home facility, providing housing assistance through the formation of a local not-for-profit organization, and allowing mobile homes in appropriate zones provided that they comply with site design standards.
- *Adopt Design Guidelines and Standards*. The action plan includes a recommended set of design standards for new development or redevelopment that are intended to supplement the Zoning Ordinance.
- *Maintain wooded roadside edges*. Maintain the forested area along Route 28 that extends from the proposed business park southward to the intersection with Main Street near the south end of the hamlet. Plant indigenous species along he edge of the Town sand borrow pit in order to provide a vegetative buffer from Route 28.
- *Ski Bowl Park improvements*. Expand park area toward Route 28N. Re-grade and re-seed Town DPW sand borrow area. Expand recreational opportunities and facilities. Possibilities

include: constructing a golf course, band shell and playground; providing links to Gore Mountain through trails, shuttle bus, and/or a lift; develop small ski museum and renovate existing lift for limited use; hold special events and promotions relating to skiing.

- *Bike/hike trail system.* Create a trail system that links together the Main Street Business District, the Hudson River waterfront trail and park, North Creek trail, Ski Bowl Park, and Gore Mountain.
- *Walking tour program.* Provide cultural and historical interpretative signs, and prepare a walking tour brochure.

Implementation of the plan was to be accomplished by various local committees, with the assistance of the Warren County Department of Planning and Community Development and consultants. The core committee was the “Action Plan Advisory Committee.” This was to be supplemented by six subcommittees:

- Beautification
- Business and Employment
- Housing
- Railroad Museum
- Retail
- Tourism, Marketing and Recreation

Funding for the initiatives was to be provided through a combination of grants and local resources, with assistance provided by the Warren County Department of Planning and Community Development.

## **HAMLET OF NORTH CREEK PARKING AND RECREATION STUDY, 1997**

A parking and recreation study was prepared by The Saratoga Associates in 1997 as a follow up to the “North Creek Action Plan.” The objectives of the study were three-fold:

1. To develop a parking plan for the Main Street and riverfront park area sufficient to accommodate the influx of visitors from the operation of the then proposed scenic railroad and associated train projects.
2. To design a pedestrian connection between the Ski Bowl Recreational Area and the Hamlet’s center.
3. To develop an enhancement plan for the Ski Bowl Recreation Area that expands upon existing amenities.

### Parking

A detailed survey was conducted to determine the need and possible location for future parking areas. It was concluded that 170 additional parking spaces would be required to meet the demand, in part generated by the scenic railway. A number of alternative locations were evaluated, and it was recommended that three new municipal lots be created near the downtown core area.

### Recreational Trail

As recommended in the North Creek Action Plan, a mile-long pedestrian trail is proposed to extend along the Hudson River and North Creek, and will highlight cultural, historic, and natural resources along its length. A route for this trail, as well as connections to it, are detailed in the study. In the railroad track area a physical barrier between the tracks and the trail is needed for safety reasons, and a designated pedestrian track crossing is also necessary.

### Ski Bowl Park

The Town owned and operated Ski Bowl Park provides a variety of recreational facilities, including sports fields, tennis courts, an outdoor ice rink, a beginner ski slope with tow rope, playground equipment, beach, and swimming area. A number of improvements are recommended to enhance the park, and to otherwise further the objectives of the earlier “North Creek Action Plan:”

- A connecting trail to the Gore Mountain ski area
- An additional soccer field
- A new NCAA sized baseball field
- Improved parking and vehicular circulation
- Pedestrian paths and connection to the recreational trail system
- Enhanced park entrance, signage, and landscaping
- Enhanced children’s playground
- A tent and RV camping area

### **SCENIC RAILROAD AND RENOVATED DEPOT, 1999**

In 1999 a new tourism rail line called the “Upper Hudson River Railroad” began running a scenic trip between North Creek and Riparius. The trip originates at the historic North Creek railroad depot, which had been renovated and includes a railroad museum, gift shops, refreshment stand and rest rooms. The train departs from the North Creek Station twice daily, and stops for a 20 minute layover at the renovated Riverside Rail Station in Riparius which contains a museum room and gift shop.

In 1995 Warren County had purchased the forty mile right-of-way of the former Adirondack Branch of the Delaware and Hudson Railroad, extending from Corinth in Saratoga County to North Creek in the Town of Johnsburg. Warren County now leases a portion of it to the Upper Hudson River Railroad Company for use as the scenic railway.

## **SKI BOWL PARK ENHANCEMENT PLAN, 2001**

The “Ski Bowl Park Enhancement Plan,” completed in 2001 by Saratoga Associates, follows up on recommendations made in the earlier “North Creek Action Plan” and the “Hamlet of North Creek Parking and Recreation Study.” It details needed facilities, and provides cost estimates.

Principal features of the plan are:

- *Replace the Ski Hut building.* Relocate the replacement building to be more visible from Route 28. Provide ticketing, rest room, rental equipment, concessions, and warming facilities to support winter activities at the park. Expand the existing pavilion building.
- *Expand parking and modify traffic flow.*
- *Develop recreational sports areas:* new ski slope near pavilion, tobogganing and sledding area, snowboarding, dirt bike course, skateboard park, and a covered ice skating and hockey rink.
- *Develop new tennis and basketball courts.*
- *Connect Big Gore to Ski Bowl Park and the hamlet.* Construct a ski lift between Big Gore and Ski Bowl Park (Little Gore) that facilitates a pod of skiing in the Ski Bowl Park and Burnt Ridge area. Connect Ski Bowl Park to Main Street via a shuttle van system.

## **FIRST WILDERNESS HERITAGE CORRIDOR PLAN, 2001**

The First Wilderness Heritage Corridor plan proposed to develop the entire rail corridor from Corinth to North Creek as an integrated recreational and tourism attraction focusing upon the tourist railroad. The term “first wilderness” refers to the Adirondack region which was arguably the first wilderness that Americans considered to be a distinguishing and permanent part of the landscape. An early entryway into this wilderness was by way of the Hudson River and the rail line to North Creek, a transportation corridor that was instrumental in the economy and settlement history of the region. A plan document titled “Rediscovering the First Wilderness, Inter-Municipal Development Strategy for the Northern Hudson River” was prepared by The Saratoga Associates in conjunction with the Warren County Planning Department. The plan was to be implemented via an inter-municipal agreement among the affected towns, including the Town of Johnsbury.

The First Wilderness Heritage Corridor is a “Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan” (LWRP) prepared in accordance with the New York State Department of State’s Local Waterfront Revitalization Program. As such, once completed and approved by the New York State Secretary of State, all actions taken by state and local governments are subject to the “consistency” provision of the program, i.e. actions are required by law to be consistent with the plan. LWRP funds also become available for implementation.

The First Wilderness Heritage Corridor plan thus provided an opportunity for the Town of Johnsbury to: (a) significantly boost tourism via North Creek’s key terminal position on the tourism railroad, and (b) fund projects identified in earlier plans for North Creek that involve the railroad and the Hudson River riverfront which are also included in the corridor plan.

The plan called for the establishment of a tourism railroad from Corinth to North Creek, and the development of a series of “nodes,” or stopping points along the line where tourists can disembark and partake in a variety of activities related to appreciation of the natural environment and history of the region, as well as patronize commercial establishments. There are three types of nodes (as defined on p. IV-7 of the plan document):

- *Destination Stop.* A dense cluster of activities for people to explore for two to four hours.
- *Attraction Stop.* Provides access to an already well-developed tourist destination that can provide a 1 to 4 hour experience.
- *Whistle Stop.* A low density stop with a single feature for tourists to explore for 1 hour.

There are seven nodes within the entire corridor, three of them located within the Town of Johnsbury:

- North Creek -- Destination Stop
- Riparius – Whistle Stop
- The Glen – Whistle Stop

#### North Creek Destination Stop Plan

(reference pages IV-8 to IV-13, “Rediscovering the First Wilderness”)

The intent of the plan was to build upon recommendations of the “North Creek Action Plan,” and “to provide the next level of services, attractions and historic interpretive program.”

The purposes of the plan were:

- To provide a visual and physical linkage for pedestrians from Main Street to the train station, and visa-versa.
- To connect the Hudson River waterfront and he proposed riverfront trail that will provide a linkage south to the trail along North Creek and eventually the town park.
- To provide a small “village green” along Main Street to offer a space for visitors to relax while in the hamlet of North Creek.

Specific recommendations include:

- Acquire the Mundy Property
- Demolish buildings and grade site
- Create a “village green.”
- Create a paved walkway from Main Street to the train Station.
- Create historic interpretative program, e.g. signage.
- Attract in-fill retail.
- Provide parking between the railroad tracks and the rear of properties along Main Street.
- Provide a walkway through the Mundy property, across the railroad tracks, and connect to the Hudson River waterfront.

### Riparius Whistle Stop plan

(reference pages IV-13 to IV-118, “Rediscovering the First Wilderness”)

The stated intent of this plan is “to build upon the existing features and in-fill with retail activities and enhanced pedestrian amenity.” A train station currently exists on the site; however, there is no in-fill commercial other than a nearby antique shop.

The purposes of the plan were:

- To develop parking so that incoming passengers can board the train in Riparius.
- To enhance pedestrian safety by completing a circulation system.
- To promote appropriate retail and tourism services in-fill.

Specific recommendations include:

- Work with businesses to develop parking.
- Do streetscape improvement in the area of the station, i.e. sidewalks, street trees, benches, historic design street lighting, etc.
- Create small passive park along Hudson River.
- Construct a visitor kiosk.
- Create an historic interpretive program (signage).
- Attract in-fill retail.

### The Glen Whistle Stop Plan

The purposes of this plan are to provide a “whistle stop” to view rare ecological habitat from a viewing platform, and to provide a rail access for whitewater rafters. There is an existing whitewater business on the site. A rare plant community, the Ice Meadows, is visible from along the shore from the Glen site.

Specific recommendations include:

- Work with Warren Co. to establish a station platform.
- Work with existing business to provide parking.
- Enhance pedestrian safety and provide amenity.
- Construct “Ice Meadows” viewing platform.
- Coordinate with the Nature Conservancy to protect and promote the “Ice Meadows,” a sensitive ecological community.