

TOWN OF WEBB COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

June 2002

1. INTRODUCTION

This Town Comprehensive Plan seeks to provide a community vision and recommended Town actions for the near future. It is important to emphasize that this Plan was not developed out of a sense of urgency to address crises. While many plans are drafted for that very purpose, the Town of Webb is in the enviable position of not having a crisis demanding response. The purpose of this Plan is to look at current and past experiences and consider if changes should be made, so as to prevent problems in the foreseeable future. Further, this Plan and its recommendations will serve government and citizens of the Town of Webb in seizing opportunities for preserving and protecting our natural resources while protecting and enhancing our tax base, always improving our quality of life.

The Recommendations in this Plan are comprehensive and complex, and are made with the understanding that the Town of Webb is committed to long term planning. The “Town of Webb” refers both to the public and private sectors, not just to the elected officials. While Plan initiation and adoption is the prerogative of the Town Board, the recommendations are explicit that **the Board is not expected to “make it happen” based upon its own efforts.** There are Plan Recommendations that are so complex that they call for “master plans” of their own. Some of the Recommendations could be initiated quickly, with early results.

The Plan must be considered dynamic with the need **to set priorities, commit requisite resources,** and to **be responsive to change.**

1.1 The Importance of a Plan

Why do a plan? All Towns in New York State are obliged to have an up-to-date plan as the legal foundation for any zoning and land use regulations. A thoughtful plan, based on public input and a positive perspective for the future, can help set the priorities for coordinated action by Town officials, staff and volunteers. This Plan also offers guidance to

anyone interested in Webb --- including Town residents, property owners, businesses, organizations, and prospective businesses or investors --- about our history, our current conditions, and about what we prefer as a future. Much as a “business plan” provides any effective business with the vision and priorities for how to sustain and prosper, this Plan presents the background research and defines the vision and priority actions for the Town of Webb.

Leading reasons to create Webb’s Comprehensive Plan are to:

- Define preferred future actions.
- Establish a contemporary, positive community vision.
- Identify actions to ensure economic stability and protect valuable natural, cultural, and historic resources.
- Protect and enhance the tax base.
- Provide guidance and direction to all governmental and non-governmental interests active in the Town of Webb.
- Identify the Town’s assets and liabilities.
- Provide a legal and technical foundation for land use policies and tools.

1.2 The Planning Process

Consistent with New York State Statutes guiding town comprehensive planning, the Town of Webb Town Board recognized the need for thorough involvement of the Town officials, citizens, civic leaders, and professional advisors in preparing this Plan. In March 2000, a citizen-based Master Plan Advisory Committee (MPAC) was appointed by the Town Board with an overall goal to provide recommendations for a new Town Plan. MPAC included representatives from the Town Board and Planning Board to help insure the acceptance of this Plan to key municipal officials for implementation. Yet the majority of MPAC were citizens who brought the diversity of opinion and expertise reflected in this Plan.

Recognizing the value of professional assistance complementing the work of Town officials and MPAC volunteers, the Town Board and MPAC also agreed early in 2001 to gain contract assistance from the New York Planning Federation. The Federation provided overall technical guidance, research, and project coordination. Additionally, Communities 2000, now known as the Central Adirondack Partnership for the 21st Century (CAP-21), provided important project, logistic and research support, and helped to facilitate a series of work sessions with outside experts.

In April of 2002, after twenty-four (24) months of work, including at least one meeting per month, plus active public outreach as noted below, MPAC referred a draft plan to the Town Board for review. That draft was also made available

to the public in paper copy and on-line.¹ Public comments were elicited in written form and in two (2) public information sessions, after which this final document was prepared for delivery to the Town Board. Therefore, this Plan reflects the substantial contribution of hundreds of individuals and many local organizations and municipal boards.

The membership of the Master Plan Advisory Committee (MPAC) consists of individuals representing a range of interests, including municipal officials, community activists, civic group leaders, business owners and managers, and other interests. MPAC began with members sharing opinions from their personal and professional experiences. MPAC work was then organized around work group assignments. These work groups focused on the following topics:

- Economic Development
- Emergency Services
- Recreation/Forest Management
- Tourism
- Affordable Housing
- Infrastructure
- Architecture/Beautification/Signage
- Historic Preservation
- Senior and Youth Issues
- Education
- Town Government

Successful completion and implementation of any Town Comprehensive Plan requires meaningful public outreach and participation in defining a positive consensus for Town priorities. Using a variety of complementary techniques, public opinion and input was gained in the following ways:

MPAC developed a list of organizations and individuals to contact directly. Through a shared effort, MPAC members interviewed these individuals or made presentations to organization meetings, all intended to gain feedback and ideas from many perspectives. Work sessions or interviews were also held with the Town Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals, Town department heads, various lake associations, and other organizations such as the Central Adirondack Association. Draft versions of the plan were also available for public review and were subject to public hearings held first by MPAC and later by the Webb Town Board.

The Town of Webb also gained the advice of many outside professionals. First, Ed McMahon, Vice President of The Conservation Fund, facilitated a weekend workshop to help explore shared issues among the towns of Webb, Forestport

¹ One hundred twenty-five (125) hard copy documents were distributed. There have been over 200 “visits” to the Web site. Forty (40) people attended the public information sessions. There were seven (7) written comments.

and Inlet. Professors Robin Hoffmann and Jim Palmer from the landscape architecture faculty of the State University of New York School of Environmental Science and Forestry organized and held a series of workshops in late July and early August of 2001. They helped to focus attention and consensus on visual and design issues affecting the Town. Tania Werbizky, Field Services Director of the Preservation League of New York State helped consider historic preservation issues. James Hotaling, Chief of Local Government Services, John Banta, Counsel and Stephen Erman, Special Assistant for Economic Affairs at the Adirondack Park Agency all provided a regional perspective and advice.

Representatives from Webb participated in special training sessions with representatives from Forestport and Inlet. In 2001, David Church of the New York Planning Federation held two evening sessions with members of the Planning and Zoning boards to update them on contemporary practices and to gain insight into needed code and local law changes. In January 2002, Blair Sebastian and Hannah Blake of the New York State Rural Housing Coalition facilitated a daylong workshop on housing issues. In early February, Jeff Olsen RA, formerly with NYS Department of Transportation and the United States Millennium Program, and now a private consultant from Saratoga Springs, New York, facilitated a 1 1/2 day session on trails and transportation issues with an emphasis on the Route 28 corridor.

Numerous local professionals and knowledgeable persons were also interviewed by members of the MPAC committee including: Town department heads, Town planning and zoning officials, fire, emergency, and health services staffs and volunteers business owners, real estate professionals and civic group leaders. Nearly 40 individuals were interviewed, many representing some 20 organizations or government departments. These interviews are a primary resource supporting the recommendations of this Plan. Outreach was also built on two additional community-wide efforts. These are described and summarized in Chapter 5.