

# Hamlets of the Adirondacks

## Development Strategies

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# Hamlets of the Adirondacks

## A Manual of Development Strategies

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## Credits

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Roger Trancik was principal-in-charge; Dan Krall and Paula Horrigan project planners; Julie Campoli, Allison Platt, Rick Manning and Barbara Pulleyblank project assistants. The work was performed for and with the continued involvement of the four participating county directors: Fred Aufschläger, AICP, Clinton County; William Johnston, AICP, Essex County; Ernest Lorenzen, Hamilton County; and Mary Burns Verlaque, St. Lawrence County. Staff members of each county planning office also made significant contributions. James Hotaling, Chief of Local Government Services of the Adirondack Park Agency, provided valuable and ongoing input.

We are also most grateful to the workshop participants in the twelve sample communities who hosted the project team's site visits and provided helpful insights and information. Many other individuals and groups provided encouragement and assistance throughout the development of both phases of the work and are credited in the Phase I publication. The preparation of this manual was financially aided through public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts and the Adirondack North Country Association. The Housing Assistance Program of Essex County provided administrative assistance. The contents reflect the views of many individuals and institutions yet do not represent the official position of any sponsoring agency.

August, 1985

*Cover image:*

*"Old Adirondack" today - historic home of the McIntyre Iron Works, one of the earliest Adirondack developments.*

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# Part One

## Introduction

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*The issue of the Adirondacks: How will the hamlets survive?*

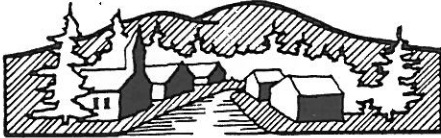
### About this Manual

This document, *Hamlets of the Adirondacks: Development Strategies*, is a combined catalog and workbook—a “how-to” manual of physical planning and economic development approaches for Adirondack hamlets. Its intended audience is the villages and hamlets of the Adirondack Park. Its purpose is to present concepts, ideas, problems and success stories of hamlet redevelopment.

Each village and hamlet in the Park is unique physically and culturally, but common problems, opportunities and experiences exist which should be shared. This manual examines these common areas of concern and illustrates specific, feasible hamlet restoration projects which can be achieved at the local level as a means of creating economic development opportunities. As a reference, the manual

attempts to cover the broadest spectrum of redevelopment topics applicable to Adirondack hamlets.

The visible deterioration of the hamlets within the Adirondack Park Region has been the result of a number of factors including a lack of capital, technical assistance and human resources. Stimulated by these common concerns, four Adirondack county planning directors from Clinton, Essex, Hamilton and St. Lawrence Counties participated in a research and planning effort with support from the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) Local Planning Assistance Program (Phase I) and the New York State Council on the Arts (Phase II). Working with this group, Roger Trancik, urban design consultant, explored creative and realistic ways to effect problem solving in the hamlets at the regional and local level.



## Introduction

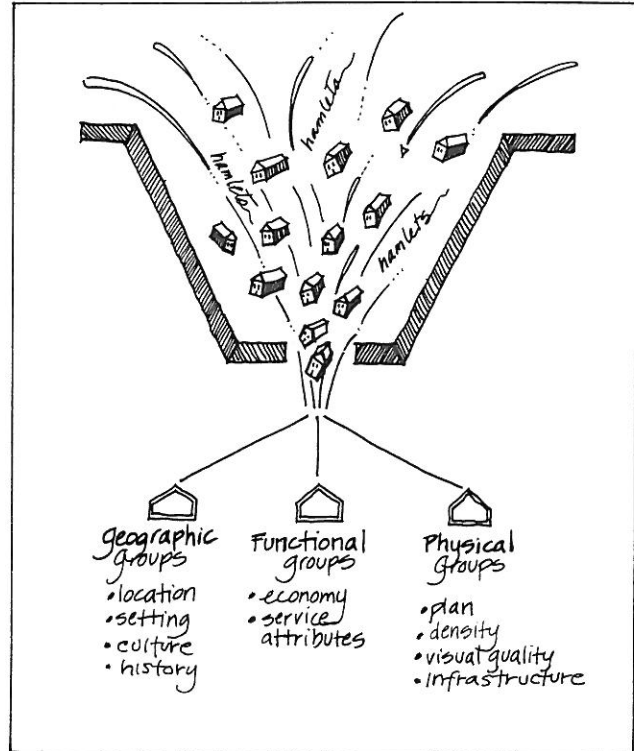
*"Phase I looked at the settlement areas in the Park and determined how and why they came into existence."*

The study, begun in January 1983, had two major goals—Phase I: to conduct a descriptive survey and analysis of all hamlets within the Adirondack Park Region and, Phase II: to develop specific planning, marketing and investment guidelines for the hamlets. The results of Phase I formed the basis for the publication *Hamlets of the Adirondacks: History, Preservation and Investment*. This document represents the work of Phase II.

## Phase I Summarized

As a descriptive survey and analysis, Phase I introduced 135 Adirondack hamlets to people inside and outside of the region. The distinct qualities of the Adirondack hamlets were described, including their location and setting, historic characteristics, economic base, regional or local service attributes, and physical structure including the visual quality (landscape) and infrastructure. This analysis resulted in three major hamlet groupings which brought together similar attributes, potentials and problems. The three categories were Geographic Groupings, Functional Groupings, and Physical Types and are summarized in Chapter Four of *Hamlets of the Adirondacks: History, Preservation and Investment*.

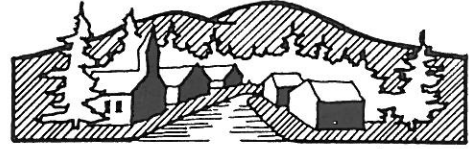
The outcome of Phase I discussed the relationship between economic development (primarily recreation and industry) and improvements in the physical environment. Of great concern was the appearance and maintenance of public landscape and communal areas. Together these considerations suggested a marketing approach for the hamlets; recognizing that the often undeveloped and unmarketed potential of the hamlets—including landscape setting, history, people, spaces, buildings and districts—need identification and revitalization. Even more important is the mobilization of people, agencies and institutions which is the crux of any attempt at problem-solving in the region.



*The hamlets were sorted into three major groups: geographic, functional, and physical.*

## Phase I Groupings

Phase I concluded by laying the groundwork for developing a series of actions in Phase II. Twelve sample communities were selected from among the 135 Adirondack hamlets to participate in Phase II (see page 54 *Hamlets of the Adirondacks: History, Preservation and Investment*). The twelve communities were selected as a result of criteria based on population, location, geographic group and functional and physical characteristics. Together they represent a cross-section of the hamlets in the Park, exhibiting opportunities and problems shared by most Adirondack communities. As a part of the Phase II study, sample communities provided the arena in which actions for development and revitalization were prescribed.



This manual represents the culmination of Phase II, providing citizens and local governments with information and options for revitalizing both the physical and economic fabric of their communities. This Phase focuses on the local level where problem-solving is most likely to occur and be effective. It is intended that the concepts outlined on the following pages will initiate not only interest but tangible accomplishments to reverse the trend of economic and physical deterioration of hamlets evident throughout the entire Adirondack Park Region.

## Goals

Four major goals guided the Phase II process:

- **DEVELOP SPECIFIC STRATEGIES AND ACHIEVABLE PROJECTS**—aimed toward problem-solving with useful tools for making improvements and stimulating economic development.
- **ENCOURAGE INVESTMENT**—demonstrate how public investment in redevelopment programs in a hamlet (physical, financial and human) can attract private dollars.
- **ILLUSTRATE DESIGN GUIDELINES**—outline specific ways to improve the physical attractiveness of the hamlet and the public spaces in its central area in order to increase community pride and interest.
- **IDENTIFY WAYS TO BEGIN...A PLACE TO START**—provide guidance, information and suggestions on how communities can get going on the process of community revitalization.

## Phase II Approach

With these goals in mind, the project team established a four-step process to achieve the following objectives:

**Step One:** Identification of Redevelopment Issues.

**Step Two:** Conducting Workshops in Sample Communities.

**Step Three:** Developing Tools to be Applied to Hamlets.

**Step Four:** Developing a Manual/Workbook for use by hamlets in the Adirondack Park Region.

This four-step process served to organize the project and establish the scope of what was to be undertaken by the consulting team. Following is a brief description of each of the four steps.



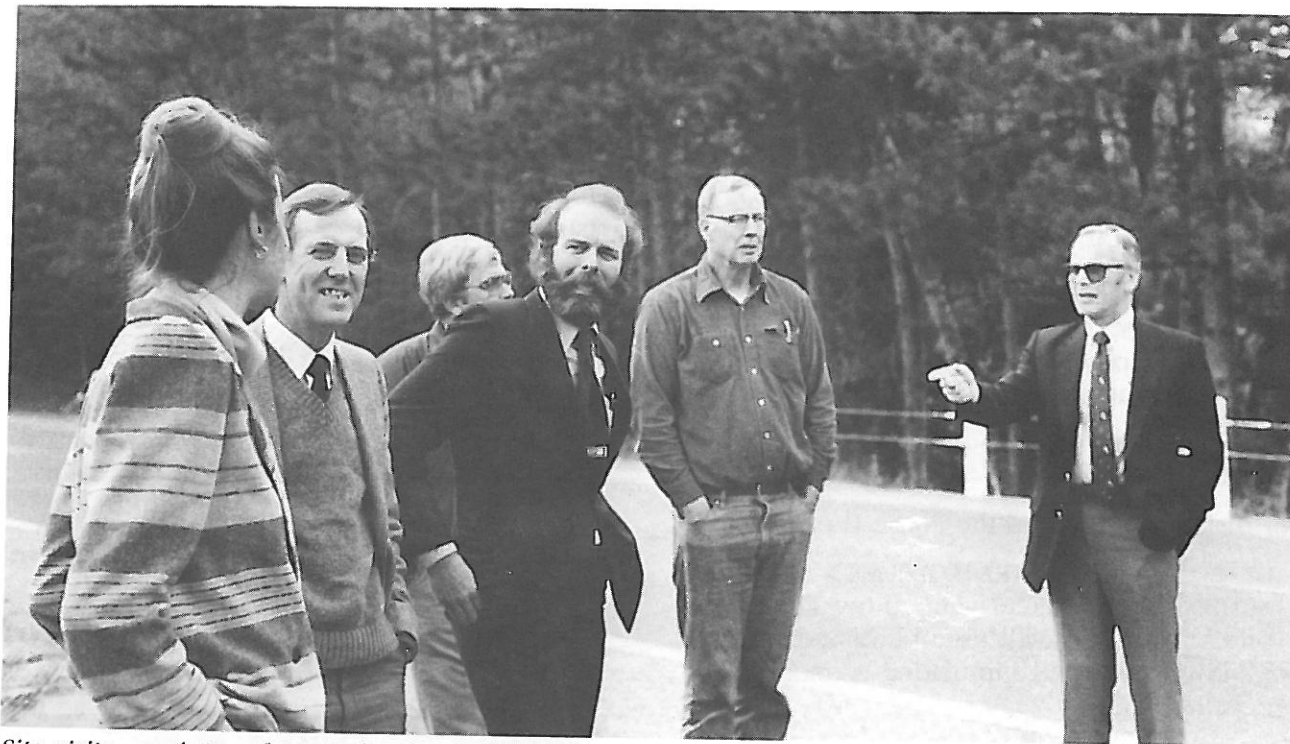
*Local residents, county planners, and the consultant discuss the issues.*





## Introduction

*"Issues fell into eight key redevelopment strategies."*



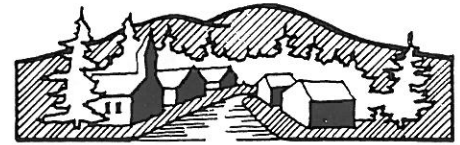
*Site visits - an integral part of each workshop.*

### Step One: Identifying Redevelopment Issues

The project team reviewed the results of Phase I and identified the leading issues and problems which most of the hamlets of the Adirondacks face to a greater or lesser degree. The issues resulted in eight key redevelopment strategies needed in order to solve problems at the local level:

1. **How to Revitalize Waterfronts**—and other important relationships to natural landscape features.
2. **How to emphasize recreation and tourism**—seasonal programs; parkwide subregional and local.
3. **How to attract industry**—resource-based, non-recreational, manufacturing.
4. **How to preserve and reuse important historic resources**—both buildings and sites.
5. **How to redevelop important sites within hamlets**—promoting infill and cluster development (see page 81), innovations in public/private ownership, temporary improvements, maintenance.
6. **How to improve the quality of public places**—views from the road, entry points into a hamlet, pedestrian areas and facilities, important neighborhoods.
7. **How to improve water and sewer systems**—small-scale, site-specific approaches that are environmentally sound and affordable.
8. **How to develop coordinated information programs and community interest**—through local histories, place names, tourist and marketing information, identifying the "movers and shakers," special interest groups meetings, workshops, planning community events and activities, promoting local pride.

*"The Phase II Hamlet Study was developed as a 'trouble-shooting' document."*



## Introduction

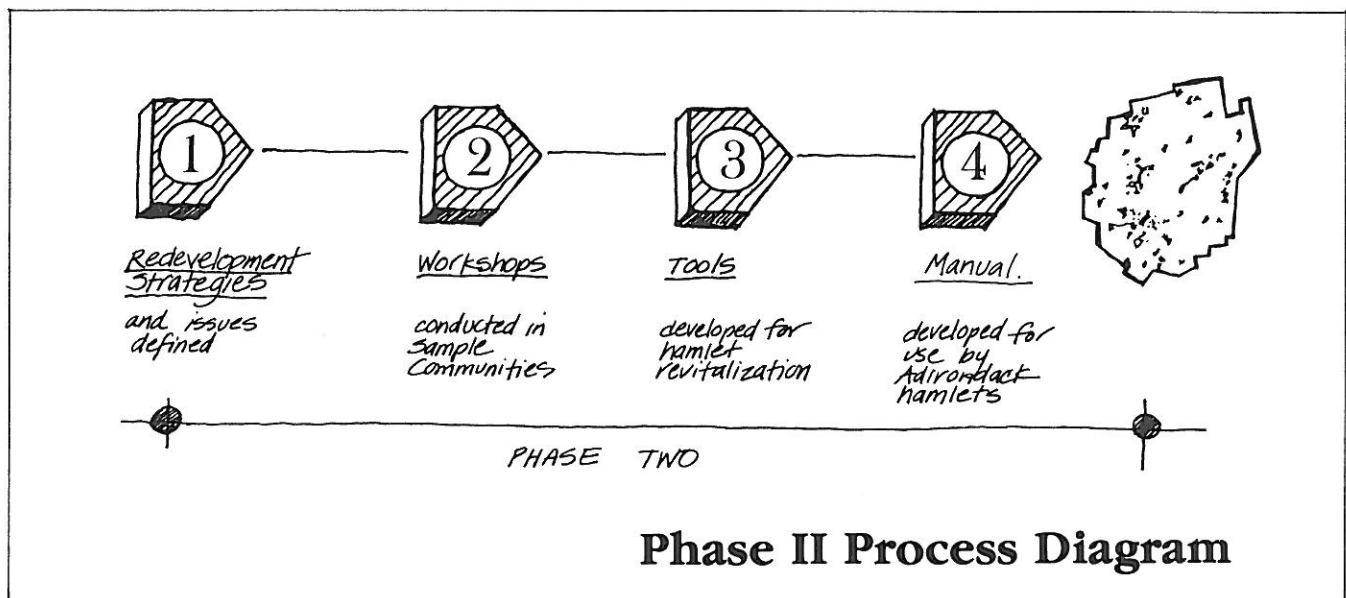
### Step Two: Workshops in Sample Communities

The eight redevelopment issues outlined above were used as a checklist for workshops held in each of the 12 sample communities. Letters were sent to local residents in each of the hamlets asking them to think about the leading issues and problems which they perceived in their communities. A copy of the Phase I report accompanied this request. Following this initial contact, a workshop was scheduled in each hamlet.

The four participating county planners and the consultant team attended a workshop in each of the sample communities meeting with citizens, town supervisors and mayors. The hamlet's problems and opportunities were discussed at length and a tour of the settlement area took place. This enabled the group to discuss and observe key sites and attributes of the hamlet. The results of each of these workshop sessions is presented in Part Two of this manual, entitled "Sample Communities Introduced."

### Step Three: Tools and Applications

After the workshops were held in the sample communities, the consultant team conducted follow-up site visits for individual hamlets, groups of hamlets and settlement in the Park as a whole. Sketch plans and proposals were developed as illustrative tools which contain suggestions concerning, for example: how to enhance a public green, park, waterfront or main intersection in a hamlet center; or plans for reorganizing pedestrian and traffic circulation and parking areas to accommodate commercial and recreational needs; or how to make sites more attractive to potential developers and investors. These illustrations are featured on pages 98-111 in the section entitled "Public Spaces." Examples of subregional approaches are illustrated in the "Recreation and Tourism" section found on pages 55-59; and parkwide strategies are contained in several sections throughout the report. Generally speaking, the sketch plans in Part Three focus on a combination of physical





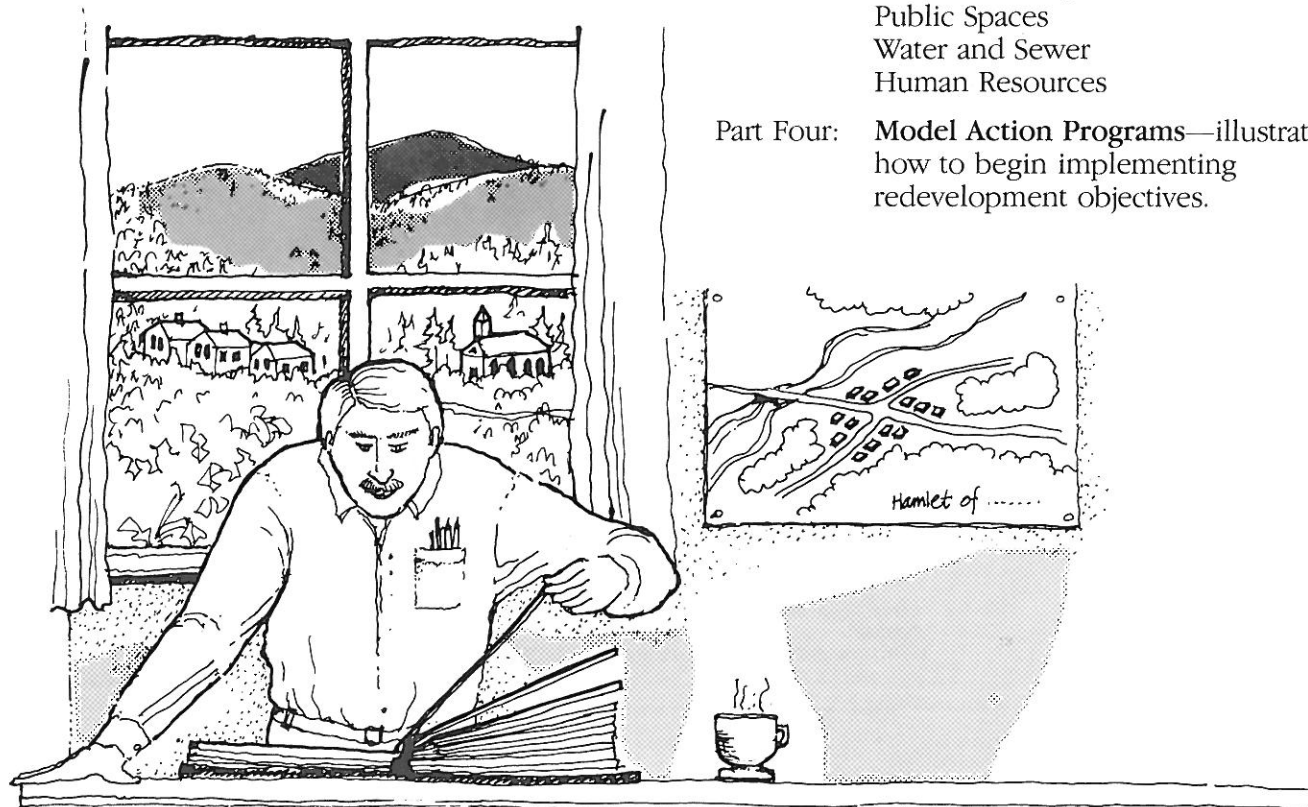
## Introduction

design improvements, marketing and investment concepts and community image-building. There are also technical “how to’s” in Part Three. For instance, the section on Water and Sewer Systems explains why many Adirondack hamlets encounter what seem to be unresolvable issues and financial woes when they attempt to solve sewer and water problems. This often happens because small communities are unaware of the alternatives available to them for overcoming these obstacles and engineering consultants may not design solutions responsive to the scale of the community and its needs. State and federal agencies similarly may not be sensitive to the need to match problem and response. Part Four goes through a step-by-step process of defining what needs to be done, where to begin, and where ultimately is the appropriate place to seek advice and assistance.

## Step Four: Manual Preparation

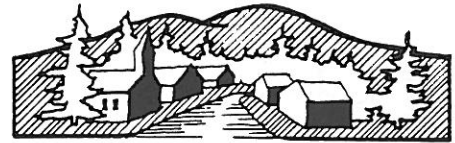
The Phase II publication is organized as a trouble-shooting document. It is intended to be used as a workbook by any hamlet in the Adirondack Region. In summary, the manual is divided into four parts which include:

- Part One: **Introduction**—describes the purpose and value of the manual, and how to use it.
- Part Two: **The 12 Communities Introduced**—reviews the workshops and outcome.
- Part Three: **Redevelopment Strategies**—
  - Waterfront Revitalization
  - Recreation and Tourism
  - Industrial Development
  - Reuse of Historic Resources
  - Infill Redevelopment
  - Public Spaces
  - Water and Sewer
  - Human Resources
- Part Four: **Model Action Programs**—illustrates how to begin implementing redevelopment objectives.



*A concerned citizen, business person, local government official or an investor are among those who may want to use the manual.*

*"It is not necessary to read the manual from beginning to end to get information from it."*



## Introduction

### Use of the Manual

Adirondack residents, no matter how involved in local government, have a vested interest in their communities. No one likes to see decisions made which disagree with, or which do not represent the interests and concerns of the community. Often citizens give up their power to influence change and delegate decision-making to a handful of people. A pattern of bitterness and resentment creeps in and any idea, good or bad, is met with a negative response. By generating new interest in community improvement and by offering realistic and affordable alternatives, this manual intends to address such situations.

In the hamlets of the Adirondacks, the old adage, "you've got to accomplish more with less" couldn't be truer—there is less money, fewer people, less access to channels of influence and power. However, even more of these things would not guarantee progress. The solutions for hamlet redevelopment have to begin in the region itself—in every hamlet—and have to fit the size, the scale and the context of the Adirondacks.

Who might find the information contained in this manual helpful? A concerned citizen, a business person, a local government official, a county planner, an investor, a cooperative extension agent, members of a community group or organization—any of these people might want to use this manual. It is from such diverse backgrounds that change in hamlets is most likely to be ignited.

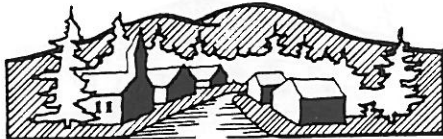
For example, an issue might arise in a community because a supermarket plans to move into the hamlet. A group of citizens might join together because the developer plans to construct the building on the edge of the business district and remove two historic structures in the process. While it may not seem that issues like this would assume crisis proportions in a small hamlet, that is, in fact, what happens. In a situation such as this, the community group could contact its county

planning office to get advice on where to start. This manual can help put the issue into a community perspective by identifying possible public concerns. Sections in this manual about Infill Redevelopment, Historic Resources and Public Spaces would be useful to consult. The manual can aid the group in understanding what possibilities exist to ensure that the facility will be located in a place with adequate business traffic and circulation, where it will have the least impact on the physical and historic fabric of the hamlet core and improve the appearance of the hamlet. The manual would also be helpful in developing guidelines for the building's size, height, materials and the landscaping features which accompany it.

Regardless of who uses this manual, there are several key facts that should be kept in mind. First, the actions suggested do not discourage change and development in a hamlet—they merely ensure that development occurs in a manner which will, in the long term, be the most beneficial to the interests of the community *and* the developer.

Secondly, remember that you can pick and choose useful information from the manual; you don't have to read the whole thing. It is organized so that you can leaf through it and look for what you want. For example, if a community has a lakeside waterfront area that needs landscaping, public access and reconnection to the hamlet core, look under the Waterfront Revitalization section of Part Three. This section includes illustrations of the different types of waterfronts and waterfront problems that are encountered by hamlets throughout the Park. The section also contains sketch plans and descriptions of "success stories." A success story is an example of a hamlet that has identified its problems and opportunities and taken the initiative to change and revitalize its waterfront, business district or economic base.

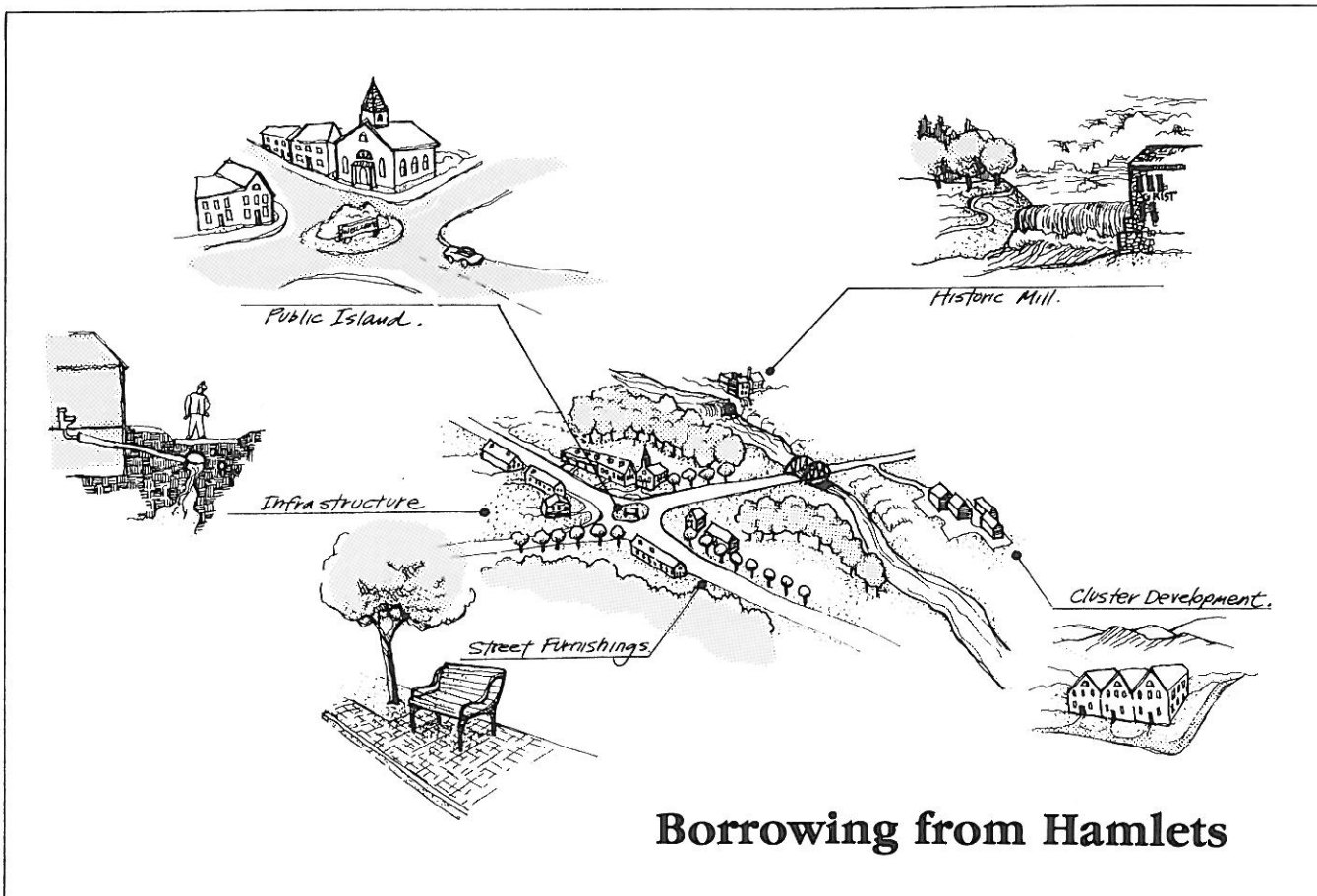




## Introduction

*"Common opportunities exist among many hamlets which should be shared."*

*The manual enables communities to share development ideas among themselves.*



## Borrowing from Hamlets

A final point to remember is that the manual is based on the idea that a community can learn from the mistakes and successes of other hamlets. This manual may inspire a community group, an individual or a local government to get in touch with another hamlet in the Adirondacks. Exchanging ideas and creating dialogue begins to overcome the fear of isolation and inability to get things done. This manual is a resource for communities which want to increase the level of communication between hamlets and individuals. It can be added to or altered in order to reflect the needs of the user. It is intended to be used as a tool to stimulate ideas and plans for the future of a community.



*The village green at Crown Point—an attractive open space that other hamlets can refer to.*