



CAROGA LAKE

NEW HAMLET CENTER

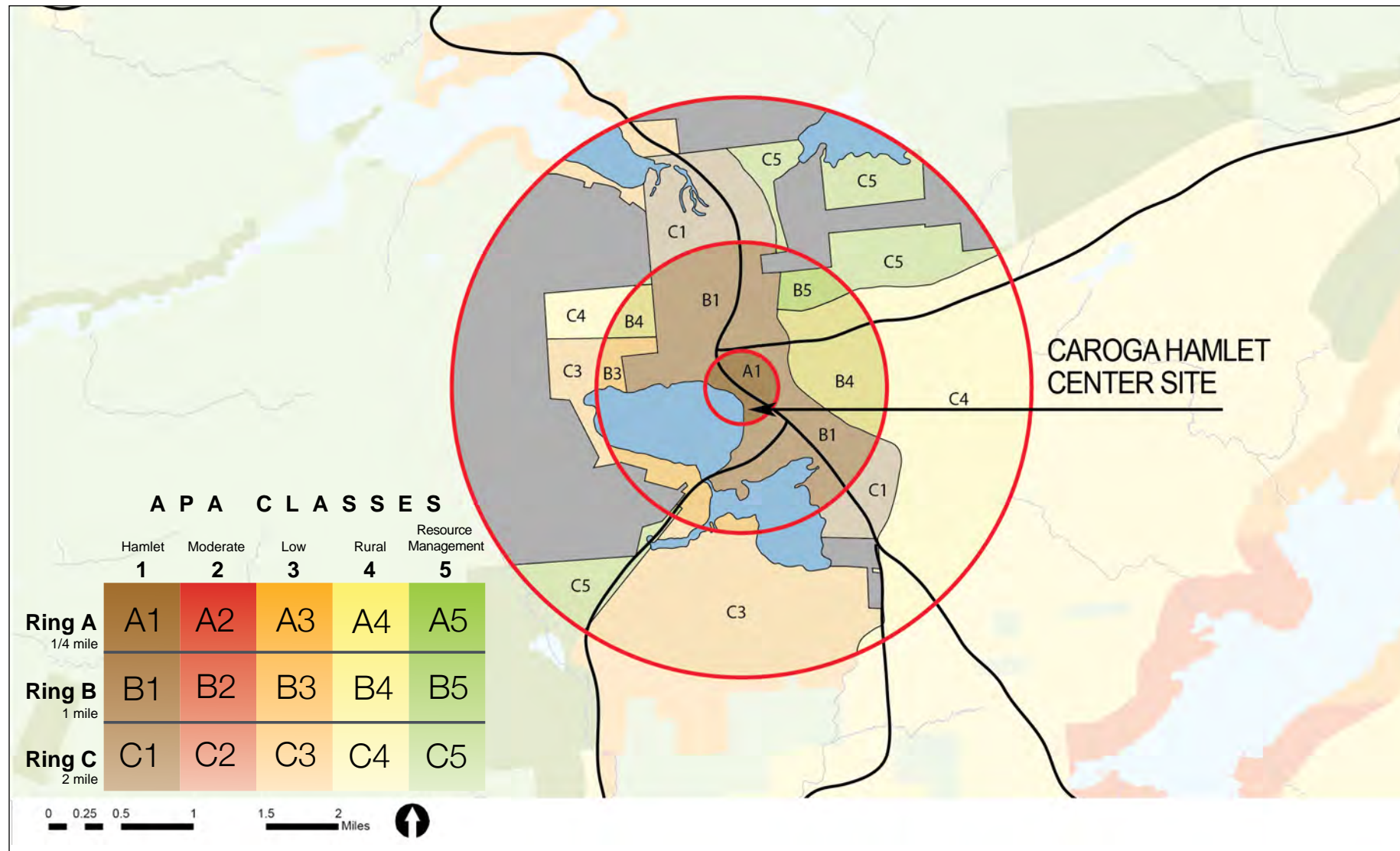
CAROGA LAKE NEW HAMLET CENTER SITE

In 2011, Caroga Lake's Planning Board completed an update of its Comprehensive Plan. In introducing the Vision Statement for the plan, the Planning Board writes that through, "...the closing of Sherman's Amusement Park...the Town has lost its Town Center, a place that served as the magnet to both people and business." The Vision Statement goes on to outline a diverse new revitalized town center where residents and visitors will be able to gather, eat, shop and enjoy both the "streetscapes and landscapes."

The H3P2 public training meeting held at the Caroga Lake Town Hall in April 2013 affirmed the issues and opportunities contained in the Town Center portion of the Comprehensive Plan. With the former Sherman Amusement Park parcel serving as ground-zero for the new town center, the site is anchored by the historic carousel and dance hall presenting interesting historic reuse opportunities.



GROWTH RING ANALYSIS



The Hamlets 3 expansion model is organized around three concentric rings centered around the core of the hamlet. These rings represent approximate travel time to the hamlet center and when overlayed with the APA Land Use and Development Map, outline potential areas of prioritized smart growth development (40). Caroga's site falls under **A1 Suitability: greatest inward potential for mixed-use development, reuse of vacant buildings and land and infrastructure improvements.**

HISTORY

Caroga Lake has a rich history of change and resilience. Although previously settled in 1783, Caroga Lake was created in 1842 from surrounding towns with an economy centered around tanning and timber. In the 1920s the area around the tannery became a golf course and Sherman's Amusement Park was built on the shore of West Caroga Lake. A popular destination with its rides, beaches and grand dances, the park served as the town center for residents and visitors alike until its closure in the late 1970s.



Built in the early 1920's, Sherman's Amusement Park was a popular destination until its final closure in the late 1970s.



Postcard depicting the Caroga Lake beach at the height of its popularity.

HAMLETS3: PHASE2



The new hamlet center site from the east. On the right is the new proposed beach area.

PRESENT CONDITION

The Town of Caroga Lake is a small rural town located at the Foothills of the Adirondack Mountains in the northern section of Fulton County and serves as a gateway to the southern Adirondacks. Like other hamlets in the Adirondack park, Caroga Lake has a small year-round population (~1200) which triples with seasonal residents in the summer.



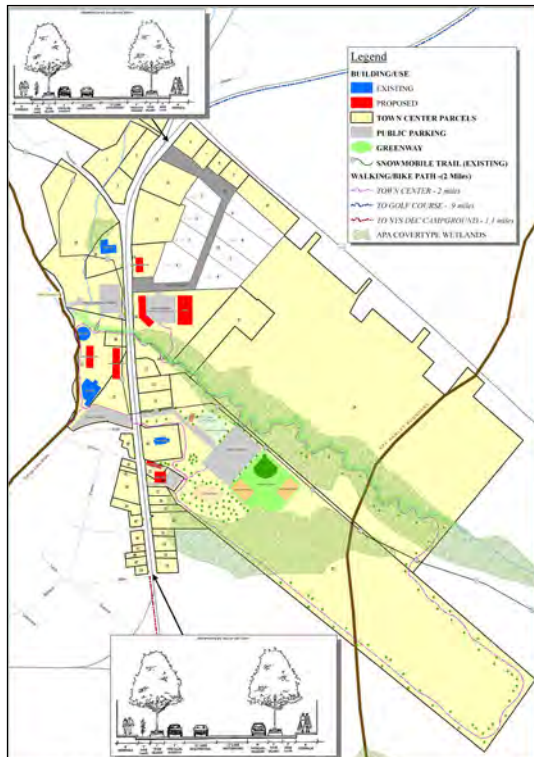
The large dance hall structure; it could potentially support multiple commercial, municipal and retail uses.



The carousel structure is in good condition with new stained glass windows.

LOOKING FORWARD: CAROGA 2025 Caroga Lake Vision Statement Summary

- Maintain small, close rural town community with rich history and heritage
- Attractive vibrant multi-use town center with diverse restaurants, retail / commercial anchoring a strong tourism-based economy and stable tax base
- Year-round outdoor recreational opportunities and hotel accommodations
- A great place to live and raise a family with a variety of housing types
- Recognized natural beauty with excellent water quality



Part of the Caroga 2025 vision includes repurposing the Sherman's Park site into a new town center.
Courtesy of Fulton County

VISION FOR HAMLET CENTER

From the Caroga Comprehensive Plan:

This commercial center will be known as Town Center. Town Center will be located near and around the former Sherman's Amusement Park. Town Center will be a walkable, integrated open-air, multi-use development where residents and visitors will be able to gather, socialize, eat, live, drink, recreate, shop, visit, exercise and enjoy its attractive street scape and landscaping. It will be anchored by retail, dining, and leisure uses, as well as by recreational and residential uses and be the most diverse area of the Town. It should include the following amenities:

- Town Hall including a Visitor Info Center and Public Restrooms.
- Public Park/Multi-Purpose Rec. Center.
- A 2.0+/-mile Foot/Bike Path
- Convenience store/gas station.
- Retail stores.
- Restaurants.
- Hotel/Motel/Bed and Breakfast.
- Housing: Single-family and apartments.
- Public boat launch on West Caroga Lake.
- Public Parking.
- A link to the C-8 Corridor Snowmobile Trail maintained by the Nick Stoner Trail Club.
- Kayaking/Canoeing/Paddle Boating on Mead Creek.
- Primary Care Clinic.
- Public Sewer System

PRECEDENT: TOWN OF SCHROON

With similar lake-front access, mix of programming and ties to the hamlet core, the Town of Schroon can serve as a conceptual precedent for Caroga Lake.



This structure is a focal point for the west side of the park.



Schroon lake's small but very functional beach area.



The lake front area is adapted for multiple functions and uses.

DESIGN PROCESS AND INSPIRATION

A series of four yellow-trace sketches were made for the Caroga Lake center site at the outset. The sketches suggested ideas about defining urban and lakefront edges, possible site uses and points of vehicular access. This first sketch made a pass at building shapes that might be appropriate and configuration of a new 'central park' on the site. The second sketch refined these ideas and how best to accommodate parking; the third sketch introduced a flood control pond as a major water feature in the park. The fourth sketch explored a more 'urban expression' to the central space. Each sketch shows a different combination of saving or removing the Carousel and Dance Hall. The three plan options, A, B and C, are based off these four sketches. Descriptions accompany each plan.



Draft sketches of the site depicting the first evolution of the various alternatives.

HAMLETS3: PHASE2



Old postcard depicting the Sherman's Park site. Notice the curve of the promenade at the water's edge as seen in sketch 1.



Old postcard depicting the former beach site. This area would likely serve as a new public beach for the town center as noted in sketch 2.



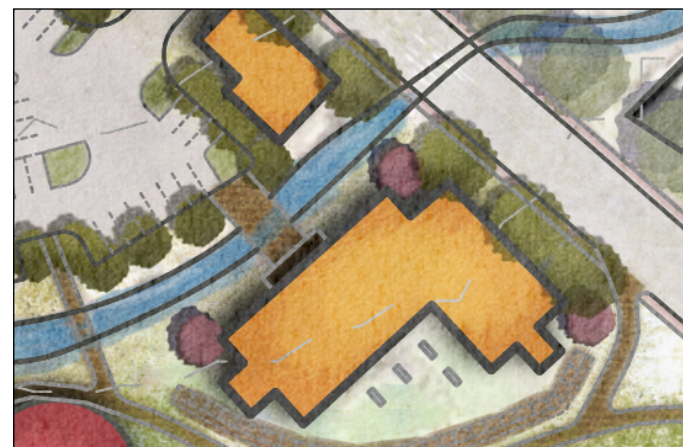
Photo of the Sherman's Park site in use. Notice the pedestrian activity is pushed to the edge by center area parking as shown in sketch 4.



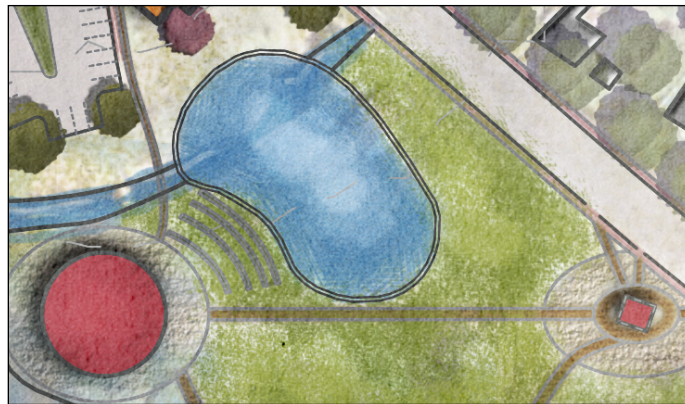
'Central Park' and lakefront promenade with repurposed Carousel and Dance Hall.

PLAN A

Plan A keeps both the Carousel and Dance Hall for adaptive reuse and centers on a large green park bordered by a new hotel and parking. Retail is sited across Route 10.



Hotel/motel on Mead Creek with convenience retail and gas station on Route 10.



Retention pond with diagonal walkway between info kiosk and Carousel.

PLAN B

Plan B also retains the Carousel but replaces the Dance Hall with a hotel and restaurant complex and introduces a flood control pond that serves as a strong visual element in the park. Infill housing is added on both sides of the site.



Hotel, restaurant, lakefront apartments replace Dance Hall.



LEGEND

1. Carousel Adaptive Reuse
2. Dance Hall Reuse
3. Lakefront Shops
4. Hotel and Retail
5. Residential Infill
6. Parking/Pedestrian Plaza
7. Promenade

West Caroga Lake



Urban oval with planted island, lakefront shops and central parking.

PLAN C

Plan C keeps both Carousel and Dance Hall for reuse but develops a more urban approach to design of the Central Park with an oval-shape space for cars and formal landscape. Retail is added to the center and hotel located across the canal.



Hotel/motel across Mead Creek with mixed-use retail and residential on Route 10.



View of central green space towards historic carousel, lakefront and reused dance hall (left). Proposed hotel is right of the carousel.

SMART GROWTH APPLICATION

The Caroga Lake site plans aim at integrating inward urban expansion into the fabric of the existing hamlet (8). The alternative plans suggest well-defined urban and lakefront edges discouraging sprawl and protecting natural resources of the area (10). In the three proposals, walkable public spaces promote social interaction at a human scale, energizing hamlet center activities (10).

Reminder: the numbers refer to pages in the H3 guidebook.

A strong hamlet center in Caroga Lake will support density and provide a compact mix of uses including hotel, retail, residential, and municipal office space (12). The plans make better use of Caroga Lake's waterfront and canal properties (15). By holding a defined street wall along Route 10 and infilling blocks at Bath Road (53), lost spaces in the hamlet center can be reclaimed (55).



Maintaining a defined street wall along Route 10 frames the outdoor space.

Public waterfront amenities are suggested along with ways of conserving—reusing

the historic Sherman Amusement Park Carousel and Dance Hall buildings (54). A 'Central Park' re-establishes the community core in each scheme welcoming people to the new Caroga Lake waterfront (57). A similar Adirondack example can be seen at Point Park in Old Forge where an historic "music park" is being converted into a modern civic-cultural space in the hamlet center (32). In Schroon Lake the waterfront Park is integrated with the hamlet and contains similar characteristics to that of Caroga Lake.



Schroon Lake's waterfront park is well-integrated into the hamlet and shares many characteristics with Caroga.

The three alternatives proposed for a new hamlet center in Caroga Lake differ in their arrangements of streets, open spaces and buildings. All three schemes reinterpret historic site elements and uses that existed in the days of Sherman Amusement Park, but puts them into a modern hamlet center context.

The Caroga Lake redevelopment infrastructure will have to be phased incrementally and was taken into consideration in selecting the preferred alternative in the workshop process (64).

POTENTIAL BUILDING USES

Carousel

Running Carousel
Public Pavilion
Museum / Art Gallery
Restaurant
Theatre
Farmers / Small Vendor Market
Retail / Shops

Dance Hall

As multiple and mixed uses (retail/office space)
Town Hall
Casino
Public Market
Community Center
Artist Space / Gallery
Library
Restaurant
Health Clinic
Wellness / Spa / Fitness Center



With ample room, the carousel building has been used for banquets and could sustain diverse re-uses.

FEATURED SMART GROWTH PRINCIPLES

Boundaries: Well-defined boundaries prevent hamlet sprawl and protect natural resources (10). The Caroga Lake Hamlet Center designs utilize West Caroga Lake as a strong natural boundary and focal point for concentrating uses.



Contrasted boundaries of Rivello, Italy

Walkability and Human Scale: Walkable public spaces promote social interaction at a human scale, energizing hamlet activities (10-11). By promoting a mix and intensity of uses with integrated public space, the Caroga Lake Hamlet Center forms a true municipal, social and economic center for residents and visitors in appropriate physical proportion.



Human scale of Old Forge, New York

Compact Mix of Uses: Strong hamlet centers support density and provide a compact mix of uses (12). By making functional reuse of the carousel and dance hall buildings, as well as concentrating new growth into the Sherman's Amusement Park site, the new Hamlet Center builds more solvent and sustainable economic and social mass.

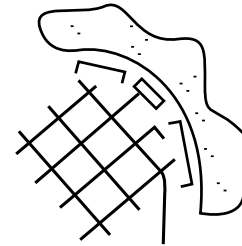


High visual quality in Essex, New York

Visual Quality: High visual quality attracts investment and reflects a hamlet's history (15).

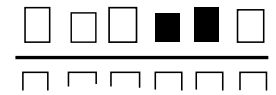
Utilizing the attractive historic buildings, as well as ensuring new development reinforcing place-conscious design, will preserve local history while presenting an attractive focal point for investment.

DESIGN TOOLS IMPLEMENTED (54)



Hold/Wrap Edge: Defined edges prevent scatter development.

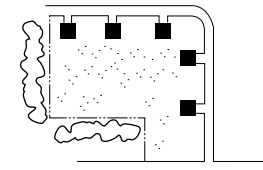
The designs use the waterfront as a strong edge to focus development as well as forming strong growth edges with new proposed development.



Hold Street Wall: Consistent setbacks enclose the street, creating outdoor rooms.

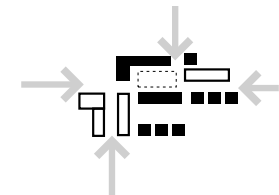
The designs propose a consistent framing of buildings on the main street.

Conserve and Reuse: Adapted buildings retain a hamlet's sense of place. All designs reuse some original structures and each attempts to infuse the hamlet's history into the form.



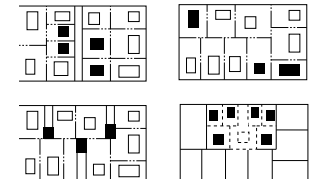
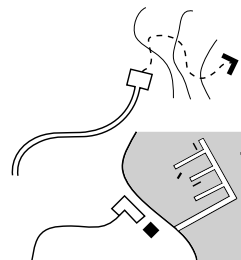
Off the Field: Smart outward development tucks buildings along natural edges.

New proposed buildings are formed around natural and existing boundaries and edges.



Push Spaces Together: Compact development uses hamlet land more effectively. By concentrating town center development, the hamlets land and resources are efficiently deployed.

Front Amenities: Waterfronts and trailheads create growth opportunities. The new hamlet center capitalizes on the Caroga waterfront and Mead creek form.



Fill Block: Reconfigured lots and infill make the case for improving infrastructure.

When considering new sewer infrastructure, infill development optimizes use and builds efficient capacity.

WORKSHOP REVIEW

The on site workshop for Caroga Lake took place on September 26th in the Caroga Lake Town Hall with 15 people attending including town citizens, representatives, leaders and the H3P2 team.

After introducing Hamlets 3 phase one and background information on hamlet planning in the Adirondacks, the H3P2 team presented conceptual site designs for smart growth projects in the hamlet to facilitate open discussion among workshop participants. Individual feedback was collected via worksheets evaluating various elements of the proposed designs.

This feedback, along with notes from the H3P2 team, have been collected and summarized in the following section. While this does not represent an exhaustive collection of the discussion, it is an effort to highlight general themes, concerns and ideas formed during the workshop.



Roger Trancik explaining the Hamlets 3 design process



MEDIA ATTENTION

OFFICIALS EYE SMART GROWTH FOR CAROGA LAKE

October 1, 2013

By ARTHUR CLEVELAND The Leader-Herald , The Leader Herald

CAROGA - Caroga Lake could look a bit different in the future if local officials follow one of three proposed plans for its development.

Caroga Lake was one of five Adirondack Park communities, and the only one in the local area, chosen to directly work with the Hamlets 3 initiative, said Roger Trancik, architect with Urban Design Consultants

Hamlets 3 "presents a planning and design model for smart growth of hamlets in the Adirondack Park," according to the website for the initiative - www.adkhamlets.org.

The principles of smart growth can be used to help local communities plan sustainable development, the website said.

According to the guidebook for Hamlets 3, smart growth - which balances economic development and preservation of the environment - has two important benefits

1.) Communities can integrate "land suitable for development into the fabric of the existing hamlet," thus concentrating resources.

2.) The idea complements the protection of forests, farmlands, and other open spaces by

avoiding visually unappealing and resource inefficient sprawl and strip development.

Three development plans utilizing smart growth were shown to members of the town Planning Board and Supervisor Ralph Ottuso on Thursday.

Trancik, who directed the work on Hamlets 3, said all the plans would help to centralize Caroga Lake and work in new establishments, while avoiding the sprawl that has accompanied economic development in many areas.

All three of the plans also would maintain a rural look with a multi-use town center and year-round recreational options, he said.

The plans are:
Trancik said none of the plans or anything suggested at the meeting are final.

Trancik would not provide a copy of the plans to The Leader-Herald.

Ottuso said the ideas in Hamlets 3 are great, but officials and businesses in Caroga Lake would need to actually bring them to life.

"I think that is the biggest hurdle you are going to obtain in bringing the Hamlet 3 project to life," Ottuso said. "...There is a long road to get to that point."

Following the presentation of the plans, officials exchanged ideas regarding the suggestions made.

One topic that came up was a possible need for

low-income housing.

However, Sean Geraghty, Fulton County senior planner, did not consider it an issue.

"Off the lakes, I don't think affordability is an issue," Geraghty said.

Ottuso also mentioned the idea of revitalizing Sherman's Park. Ottuso said during a special event there one weekend, more than 1,000 people came to ride the Ferris wheel.

Trancik said there would be a symposium meeting in the future to review the suggestions. The date has not been set.

The state Department of Environmental Conservation's Adirondack Park Community Smart Growth Grant Program provided the funding for Hamlets 3.

According to the guidebook, Hamlets 3 is the third installment of a series that builds on two prior studies from the 1980s. Hamlets 1 educated people and agencies - especially those outside the Adirondack park - about the hamlets. Hamlets 2 provided officials and local groups with ideas about revitalizing the hamlets in the park.

Arthur Cleveland can be reached at acleveland@leaderherald.com

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Posted directly from <http://www.leaderherald.com/page/content.detail/id/559079/Officials-eye-smart-growth-for-Caroga-Lake.html>

WORKSHOP WORKSHEET

HAMLETS 3, PHASE 2 WORKSHOP: NEW HAMLET CENTER, CAROGA

Our sincere thanks for your attendance today. Your feedback is essential to the design of this project and we welcome open and honest comments. Please answer the following questions and turn this paper in after the meeting.

	Definitely Reuse	Probably Reuse	Probably Demo.	Definitely Demo.	Comments:
Do you support reusing or demolishing the dance hall building?					
Do you support a variety of new housing options around the site?	Definitely Yes	Depends on Type	Unsure	Definitely No	
Do you support additional measures for water quality and de-siltification?	Definitely Yes	Depends on Type	Unsure	Definitely No	
Would you prefer open park space or more commercial uses (shopping, hotel, offices) on the Sherman Park site?	Open Space	Some Shops	Hotel & Shops	All Uses	
Should the new town hall be located on the Sherman's Park site?	In Dance Hall Build.	Separate Building	Unsure	Outside Site	
How do you think the carousel should best be used? Please mark which ideas you like best.	Public Pavilion Museum / Art Gallery Restaurant Theatre Farmers / small vendor market Shops Other:				
How do you think the dance hall should best be used? Please mark which ideas you like best.	Town Hall Casino Public Market Community Center Artist Space / Gallery Library Restaurant Health Clinic Wellness / Fitness Center None / Demolish Other:				
Which of the three plans do you prefer (circle one)? Please comment on why you favor your selection and provide any suggestions to your selected plan. Please use back of paper as needed for comments.					

PLAN A



PLAN B



PLAN C



COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

83% (5) of respondents **supported reusing the dance hall building** with 16% (1) probably desiring to demolish it. A majority suggesting its use as a restaurant and artist space or gallery. Other uses suggested include a public market, community center, multiplex movie house, wellness / fitness center, hotel and mixed use.

“Why not bring back the old park; there are still kids around and there’s nothing like it around here.”

66% (4) of those responding **strongly supported restoring and restarting the carousel**. This opinion was solidified during the general discussion. Additional uses include a public pavilion (50% [3]), museum or art gallery (16% [1]), and a theatre (16% [1]).

66% (4) **supported a variety of new housing on the site** with 16% (1) supporting depending on the type and 16% (1) unsure.

50% (3) **supported additional water quality or de-siltification measures** with the other 50% (3) marking that it depended on the type.

Opinions on intensity of use were fairly split with 40% (2) desiring some shops, and 20% (1) wanting more open space, more hotel and shops, and all site uses.

“[I] don’t favor developing more launch sites on West Caroga for large boats.”

There was **little support for the town hall being located on the site**: 60% (3) want it outside the site, 20% (1) wanted it in a separate building on site and 20% (1) unsure.

That park is what made this town famous.

The respondents didn’t directly engage with the proposed designs: each design received one vote.



Participants studying the proposed plans

In response to the proposed question of what the draw to the site would be, there was significant discussion surrounding the issue of reusing the carousel. Several of the attendees were adamant that the carousel be restarted with others wanting the entire site restored to an amusement park. The town has made some progress towards this goal, having successfully used the carousel during a Memorial Day town event. While any of the designs could be altered to accommodate restoration of the amusement park, the focus on general site use detracted from specific plan engagement.

“[The] link to travel routes of 10 and 29A need to be used better for shops and art.”

A lack of temporary lodging was seen as a significant problem. Current seasonal housing could, with affordable housing incentives, be potentially insulated for year-round living. Focusing on moving forward, it was suggested that the town pursue listing the carousel on the National Register of Historic Places for recognition and funding opportunities. In addition to securing the proper zoning for the site, it was recommended that the town document their natural resources (including hiking trails) and events, then develop and pursue a ‘Discover Caroga’ marketing plan.



H3P2 Team preparing before the workshop



Posters outlining the Hamlets 3 process and designs

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NEW HAMLET CENTER

