

# **Town of Halcott**

## **Comprehensive Plan**



**Adopted by the Town Board,  
December 10, 2003**

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# Introduction

To the people who live and visit here, the Town of Halcott, Greene County, is a very special place. Halcott is a small community of 193 people. The town is 22.68 square miles and is accessed primarily by one main road, 5.3 miles long, which runs like the trunk of a tree up the Vly Creek stream valley. Open pastures and hay lands are common along Halcott's roads, while steep hills and ridges rise up from that on both sides.



Side roads extending off the main road, eventually end at the foot of a bowl-shaped mountain range. This range includes some of the Catskills' highest peaks: Bearpen, Halcott and Vly Mountains. The Halcott Mountain Wild Forest is located along the eastern boundary of the town.

Like many surrounding Catskill towns, Halcott's history combines influences of agriculture and tourism. At the peak of the farming era, there were many dairy operations, as well as sheep, chickens, cauliflower and potato farms. Maple syrup production was also an important part of the farmers' livelihood. Summer hotels and boarding houses gained

popularity during the golden age of railroad travel, which provided a colorful seasonal tourist trade for natives and visitors.

Today Halcott offers one of the purest experiences of natural beauty in the region. This natural beauty, highly valued by Halcott's residents and landowners, includes mountain and meadow views, clean water and air, an undisturbed night sky, natural habitats and abundant wildlife. People value the area's peace and tranquility. These qualities draw and keep people here.

One famous traveler, R. Lionel DeLisser, who wrote a series of pictorial guides to counties in the Catskills during the 1890s, stopped in Halcott and is often quoted for this famous comment about our town, "Like matrimony, wealth, heaven and other desirable things and places, Halcott is very nice when you get there."

## Town History

Halcott has a long history dating back to its first settlement in 1813. By 1824, many families had come "over the Vly." The first store was built in 1824. Early industries included a potash factory, a gunsmith, and carpentry and a shoemaking shop. In 1847, a Baptist Church was built. Schools were built in the eastern part of town during the 1830's.

George W. Halcott helped organize the town. In 1851 the Board of Supervisors was petitioned to create the Town, and the State Legislature passed the petition in 1852. As the town became more settled, there were numerous commercial enterprises including boarding houses that catered to vacationers, two creameries (the first in 1888, and the second in 1910 which is currently the Grange Hall), several sawmills, a country store, and a post office. Dairy farming dominated life in the valley. Census figures in 1875 show 78 dwellings, 7,667 acres of improved land, 146 horses, and 1,465 head of cattle. In 1860, Halcott's population peaked at 504 people. In 1948, there were 35 operating farms in Halcott.

The Halcott Methodist Church was organized in 1820 and was served by circuit riders for 20 years. During this time, people met in homes, barns, and schoolhouses. The church building was dedicated in 1849. The

church continues the active service that has characterized it since its organization. The Greene Valley Grange No. 881 was another vital activity of Halcott. Organized in 1899, the Grange sponsored local activities, and offered college scholarships. In 1914, the Grange bought the Halcott Creamery and a Juvenile Grange was organized the same year. Later the Grange remodeled Grange Hall, and contributed significantly to the State Camp Site Lean-to in Turk Hollow, the cemetery vault and a library containing several hundred books. The Grange still exists.

Some early dates mentioned in Town Clerk Donald Bouton's minutes include:

- 1862 – First record of plank for bridge
- 1868 – Town invested in Railroad Bonds
- 1877 – First mention of dog money collected
- 1889 – First Board of Health organized
- 1908 – Purchased a road machine
- 1914 – Voted to remove snow from highway by labor system
- 1919 – Stone crusher purchased
- 1924 – Steam roller purchased

In 1972, the Greene County Planning Department prepared a historic inventory of Halcott. Twenty-one different historic sites were identified. Some historical buildings include:

The Banker Log Cabin, Johnson Hollow, Townersbear Path. Built prior to 1835 out of square hand-hewn logs in a Russian stockade construction.

The William Earl House, wagon house/barn near north end of Johnson Hollow. Built in 1816.

The Johnson Home – Johnson Hollow. This house was built around 1835 by Sylvester Johnson.

Several old school houses, built in the mid-1800's.

The Elder David Earl House. The earliest known owner was Hezekiah Van Valkenburgh, in 1830.

The Methodist Church, Bouton Road, built in 1849.

The first store was on the corner of Main Road and Turk Hollow, just south of the Methodist Church.

The Buel Maben House and Tavern, on County Route 3, built in early 1800's.

The Stone Arch Bridge.

The former Post Office and "center of town," a dwelling constructed prior to 1856.

Several farmhouses and the Old School Baptist Church (now a garage).



## Comprehensive Planning in Halcott

### What is a Comprehensive Plan?

This comprehensive plan is a written document that identifies the goals, objectives, principles, guidelines, policies, standards, and strategies for the growth and development in the Town of Halcott. Comprehensive Plans attempt to answer four basic questions for a community:

- 1) Where are we now?
- 2) Where are we going?
- 3) Where do we want to be?
- 4) How can we get there?

The first section of this plan includes background information that describes the current status, conditions and trends in Halcott and answers the questions “where are we now?” and “where are we going?” The vision statement sets the tone and overall direction the Town should take in the future and together with the goals, answers the “where do we want to be” question. The vision depicts in words and images what Halcott is striving to become. The goals included in this plan are broad statements that reflect “ideal” future conditions desired by the residents of Halcott. Finally, the recommended strategies are a series of actions that the Town can take to accomplish each goal. The strategies address the “how can we get there” question.

The Town is authorized to develop and adopt a comprehensive plan by New York State Town Law Section 272-a. Since decisions and actions affecting the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development are made by local governments, New York State considers adoption of a comprehensive plan to be a critical means to promote the health, safety and general welfare of the people of the town and to give consideration to the needs of the people. It is the policy foundation upon which communities are built.

Once a comprehensive plan is adopted, there are several important implications. First, any government agency planning a capital project in Halcott in the future must consider this plan before acting. That means the Town now has a much greater role in what other governmental agencies may do when proposing a project in town. Second, development of the community inventory, shared vision, goals, and strategies builds consensus and support. Third, programs and regulations may be adopted to implement this plan to protect the town’s resources and encourage desired development and growth. Comprehensive plans can be effective in securing grant monies. Finally, all land use regulations must be in accordance with this plan. Thus, it is the plan that provides the basis for regulatory programs. Although it is not a law in itself, all land use laws should be reviewed, and updated where necessary to be in accordance with this plan.

### How Was the Plan Developed?

The Town Board assigned the task of developing this plan to the Town Comprehensive Planning Committee. The Committee met monthly and was assisted by the Greene County Planning Department and a planning consultant. The planning process included several major steps. The first included developing and implementing a resident survey; preparing background studies, holding a planning/visioning workshop and additional public meetings, and preparing a series of maps illustrating the physical conditions of Halcott. The second step included outlining issues to be addressed by the plan and defining goals and recommendations based on identified problems, opportunities and public comment. The issues, goals and recommended strategies detailed in this plan are based upon studies of information and data gathered about the Halcott as well as from input of many Town residents.

## Acknowledgements

### Comprehensive Plan Committee Members

Pete Ballard (Chairman)  
Nancy Reynolds (Secretary)  
Judy DiBenedetto  
Michael DiBenedetto  
Innes Kasanof  
Karen Rauter  
Adele Siegel  
Jennifer Bouton (alternate)  
Chris DiBenedetto (alternate)  
Tim Johnson (alternate)  
Patrick Pagnano (alternate)  
Ted Randazzo (alternate)

### Planning Assistance

Greene County Planning Department  
Ed Diamante

### Planning Consultant

Community Planning & Environmental Associates, Berne, NY  
Nan Stolzenburg, AICP  
Don Meltz  
Michael Buser, AICP  
Veronica Weigand

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*A NOTE ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE MAPS: THE FULL SET OF RESOURCE MAPS CREATED AS PART OF THIS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE TOWN INCLUDE A BASE MAP, SLOPE, SURFICIAL GEOLOGY, HYDROLOGY, ELEVATION, VIEWSHED, SOIL TYPES, LAND USE-PROPERTY CLASS, AND DISTRICT CONCEPT MAPS. THESE ARE AVAILABLE FOR VIEWING AT THE TOWN GRANGE HALL.*

# Demographic Profile of Halcott

## Population and Age Structure

According to the US Census, the Town of Halcott had a total 2000 population of 193 persons. The town's population dropped quite dramatically from 1850 until 1980. Since then, it has increased about 29% overall. Between 1990 and 2000, population increased about 2.1%. This compares to about a 7.7% increase countywide.

Compared to Greene County as a whole, Halcott has fewer young people and more elderly people. The number of people aged 45-54 has increased as well as those aged 65 and older. Chart 1 shows that the younger age groups have decreased in Halcott's population while the elderly has increased. The large "bubble" of people currently between 45 and 64 will form an even larger increase in senior citizens in the next decade or two. Twenty-one percent of the Town's population is over 65 years. Thirty-one percent is over 55 years. The table below shows Halcott as an area with a growing middle-aged and elderly population and a shrinking youth population. The 2000 median age in Halcott was 44.6, up from 37.5 in 1980.

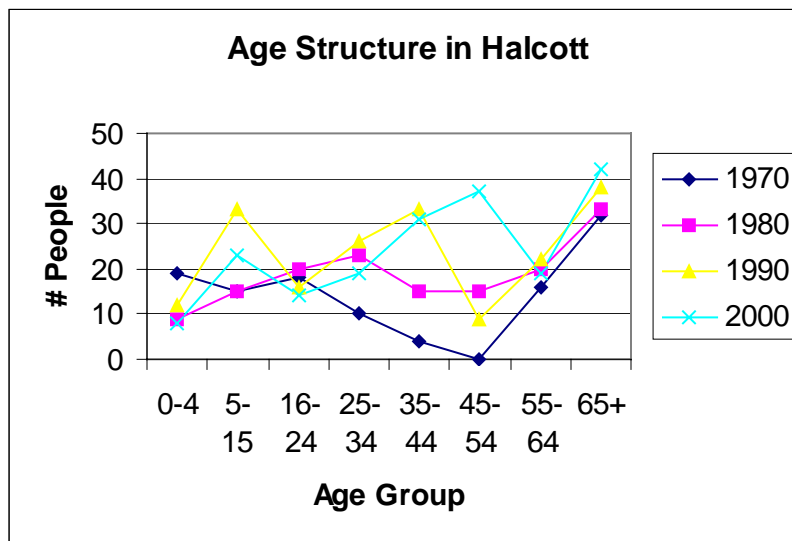


Chart 1: Age Group Comparison, 1970 to 2000



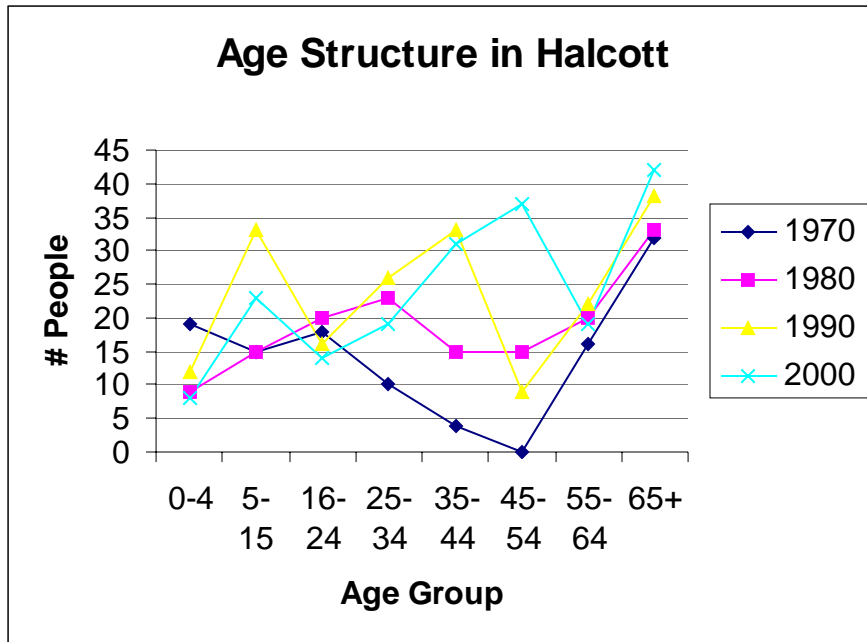


Chart 2: Comparison of Age Groups: Greene County and Halcott

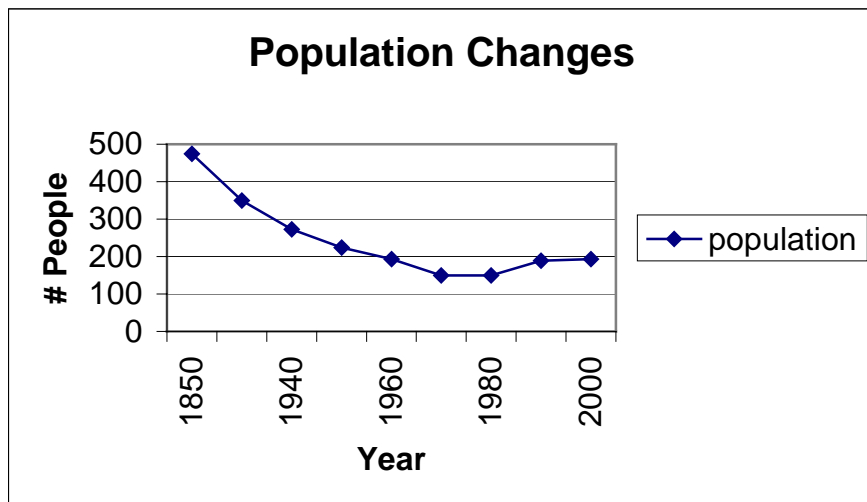


Chart 3: Population Changes in Halcott



**Table 1: Age and percent of population**

Age Group	1970 Census			1980 Census			1990 Census			2000 Census		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
<b>0-4</b>	0	19	19	5	4	9	7	5	12	3	5	8
<b>5-15</b>	8	7	15	7	8	15	13	20	33	10	13	23
<b>16-24</b>	5	13	18	6	14	20	4	12	16	6	8	14
<b>25-34</b>	6	4	10	16	7	23	11	15	26	10	9	19
<b>35-44</b>	4	0	4	7	8	15	22	11	33	16	15	31
<b>45-54</b>	0	0	0	9	6	15	3	6	9	21	16	37
<b>55-64</b>	5	11	16	9	11	20	12	10	22	9	10	19
<b>65+</b>	21	11	32	13	20	33	13	25	38	20	22	42
<b>Total</b>	49	65	114	72	78	150	85	104	189	95	98	193

**Table 2: Comparison of Population Changes of Greene County Municipalities**

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>1850</u>	<u>1900</u>	<u>1940</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>1990-2000</u>
<b>Ashland</b>	1,290	692	566	542	548	630	744	803	752	-6.4%
<b>Athens</b>	2,986	2,891	2,375	2,372	2,894	2,991	3,462	3,561	3,991	12.1%
<b>Cairo</b>	2,831	2,176	1,905	1,944	2,825	3,546	4,729	5,418	6,355	17.3%
<b>Catskill</b>	5,710	8,566	8,630	8,575	9,906	10,432	11,453	11,965	11,849	-1.0%
<b>Coxsackie</b>	3,741	4,102	4,146	4,703	4,794	4,812	6,018	7,633	8,884	16.4%
<b>Durham</b>	2,600	1,636	1,223	1,233	1,313	1,650	2,283	2,324	2,592	11.5%
<b>Greenville</b>	2,642	1,651	1,477	1,613	1,879	2,279	2,849	3,135	3,316	5.8%
<b>Halcott</b>	474	350	273	224	193	150	150	189	193	2.1%
<b>Hunter</b>	1,849	2,788	2,166	2,028	1,799	1,742	2,252	2,116	2,721	28.6%
<b>Jewett</b>	1,452	593	732	692	562	600	723	933	970	4.0%
<b>Lexington</b>	1,595	1,153	827	833	698	666	819	835	830	-0.6%
<b>New Baltimore</b>	2,381	2,283	1,489	1,781	1,972	2,068	3,050	3,371	3,417	1.4%
<b>Prattsville</b>	1,989	1,588	848	825	790	721	666	774	665	-14.1%
<b>Windham</b>	2,048	1,387	1,269	1,360	1,289	1,190	1,663	1,682	1,660	-1.3%
<b><u>Villages</u></b>										
<b>Athens</b>	-	2,171	1,655	1,545	1,754	1,718	1,738	1,708	1,695	-0.8%
<b>Catskill</b>	5,454	5,484	5,429	5,392	5,825	5,317	4,718	4,690	4,392	-6.4%
<b>Coxsackie</b>	2,741	2,735	2,352	2,722	2,849	2,399	2,786	2,789	2,895	3.8%
<b>Hunter</b>	-	-	626	526	457	238	511	429	490	14.2%
<b>Tannersville</b>	-	593	640	639	580	650	685	465	448	-3.7%
<b>Total For County</b>	<b>31,088</b>	<b>31,478</b>	<b>27,926</b>	<b>28,725</b>	<b>31,462</b>	<b>33,526</b>	<b>40,861</b>	<b>44,739</b>	<b>48,195</b>	<b>7.7%</b>

## Households

The number of households in Halcott has increased by 9% since 1990 (7 households). Households are defined as unrelated people living together. Families are groups of related people living together. Between 1990 and 2000, the number of families increased by 3.3%. The number of married couple families fell slightly from 48 in 1990 to 44 in 2000. The average household size in Halcott was 2.3 persons per household. This figure is slightly smaller than the average household size for Greene County as a whole (2.39 in 2000). The number of housing units increased at about the same rate as the number of households and there were 288 units in 2000.

While the population level has remained quite steady since 1970, the number of housing units has increased 70%. This indicates that the number of residences in Halcott outpaces the actual population and probably reflects a large number of seasonal homes built in the past few decades. Most of the housing units are owner-occupied. About 18% of occupied units are rental and this has remained steady since 1970. The number of seasonal units has increased greatly.

**Table 3: Selected Demographic Characteristics (1970 – 2000)**

Subject	1970	1980	1990	2000	Percent Change 1990-2000
<b>Population and Age</b>					
Total Population	193	150	189	193	2.10%
Median Age	NA	40.3	NA	45.3	12% (1980 – 2000)
<b>Households and Families</b>					
Number of Households	NA	NA	77	84	9.1%
Number of Families	NA	59	60	62	3.3%
Married Couple Families	NA	39	48	44	-8.3%
Female householder, no male	NA	NA	6	6	0%
Average Household size	NA	NA	NA	2.30	NA
<b>Housing Characteristics</b>					
Number Housing Units	169	201	263	288	9.5%
Occupied Housing	NA	59	78	84	7.7%
Owner-occupied	NA	47	63	69	9.5%
Renter-occupied	NA	12	15	15	0%
Vacant Housing	NA	142	191	204	6.8%
Seasonal Vacant	NA	128	182	192	5.5%

Source: United States Census Bureau, Census from 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000

**Table 4: Selected Demographic Characteristics (1980-2000)**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>Percent Change 1990-2000</b>
Lived in same house past 5 years	NA	93	157	68.8%
Lived in different house, same county	NA	5	14	180.0%
Lived in different house, out of county, same state	NA	62	37	-40.3%
< 9 <sup>th</sup> grade	NA	11	4	-200%
Attended 9-12 grade	NA	17	19	11.8%
Some college	NA	23	20	-13%
Graduate or higher degree	NA	8	16	100%
In labor force	NA	68	97	42.6%
Not in labor force	NA	66	79	19.7%
Unemployed	NA	11	2	-81.8%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and mining	16	6	12	100%
Construction	7	10	18	80%
Manufacturing	4	14	7	-50%
Transportation	NA	10	2	-80%
Communications	NA	0	4	400%
Wholesale Trade	11	2	0	-100%
Retail Trade	NA	4	14	-250%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	NA	0	2	200%
Business and Repair Svc and personal services	2	0	2	200%
Entertainment/Recreation	5	0	5	500%
Health and Educational Services	NA	14	13	-7%
Professional services	6	0	2	200%
Other Services	NA	4	14	250%
Public Administration	5	4	2	-50%
Median Household Income	\$10,250	\$19,519	\$31,094	59.3%
# With Farm self-employment income	NA	4	NA	NA
# With Social Security Income	NA	34	29	-14.7%
# With Public Assistance Income	NA	7	5	-28.6%
# With Retirement Income	NA	21	25	19%
Median Family Income	\$11,375	\$26,000	\$40,000	54%
Per Capita Income	\$5,089	\$10,957	\$21,627	97.4%
People with Income below poverty level	33	13	44	238%
Single Family Units	65	196	234	19.4%

Subject	1980	1990	2000	Percent Change 1990-2000
2 or more units in structure	3	9	4	-55.6%
Mobile Home or Trailer	5	66	43	-34.8%
Median Gross Rent	\$120	\$283	\$581	105.3%
Median Value of owner-occupied housing unit	\$32,500	\$67,500	\$82,500	22.2%

Source: United States Census Bureau, Census from 1980, 1990, and 2000

*Note:* The Federal Government sets the poverty thresholds each year. In 2000, they were \$8,959 for an individual under 65 years of age and \$8,259 for an individual over 65 years of age. In 1990, they were \$6,800 for an individual under 65 years of age and \$6,268 for an individual over 65 years of age. In 1980, they were \$4,290 for an individual under 65 years of age and \$3,949 for an individual over 65 years of age. Note that the poverty thresholds also change by the number of people in a household.

For comparison, specific demographic characteristics of the Town of Halcott were compared with other similar towns such as Bovina (Delaware County), Jewett, Harpersfield (Delaware County) and Greene County as a whole (Table 5, below). Halcott had the lowest population increase, but one of the highest increases in housing units. The percent of Halcott's population that is over 65 years is about the same as other communities but higher than Greene County. It has a much higher percent of vacant housing than all the other communities and most of this is made up of seasonal homes. Household incomes are lower and percent of people living below the poverty line is higher in comparison. Halcott's gross monthly rent is one of the highest, and the median value of a home is about average.

### Housing Affordability

There are several ways to determine if housing is generally affordable in a community. One method is to determine the "rental index". This index shows the maximum gross rent a given household can afford. Affordable rental housing is generally considered to be no more than 30% of a household's monthly income. The average monthly rental rate in Halcott is \$581.00. The median household income is \$31,094. This is about \$2591 of income per month. Thirty percent of this is \$777, which means that the average household could afford \$777 per month in rent. This figure is higher than the average monthly rent. Thus, rentals are affordable in Halcott.

Another method to determine affordability is to look at the ratio between the median value of a single-family house and median household income. Nationally, a ratio of 2 or less is considered to be affordable. The affordability ratio for Halcott is \$82,050 (median value of homes) divided by \$31,094 (median household income), or 2.6. This figure is above the desired ratio of two and indicates that some families would spend more than twice their annual income on a home.

Finally, the purchase price multiplier also gives an indication of affordability. This looks at the maximum mortgage approval amount likely to be given to potential homebuyers. This is usually about 2.25 times annual income. The figure below shows this multiplier plus a 10% down payment. This is the amount of money that would be able to be afforded for a mortgage by the median household.

$$2.25 \times \$31,094 = \$69,961.50$$

$$\$69,961.50 \times 10\% \text{ down} = \$76,957.65$$

Thus, median household would be able to afford a \$76,957.65 house. However, the median value of a house in the area is \$82,050. This would indicate that many households would have difficulty affording the average house.

There are 50 households (about 57% of all households ) in Halcott that earn less than \$35,000. Of these 26, or 30% earn less than \$15,000. These households would have the most difficulty purchasing or affording a home in Halcott. 23, or 26% of households earn between \$35,000 and \$75,000 and there are 14 that earn over \$75,000. These figures illustrate housing affordability trends and types of households most likely to afford purchasing homes in Town. Further, the trends have shown that addition of seasonal homes in Halcott have increased housing values making it increasingly difficult for new or lower income families to afford houses in Town.

**Table 5: Demographic Comparison**

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Halcott</b>	<b>Bovina (Delaware Co.)</b>	<b>Jewett</b>	<b>Harpersfield (Delaware Co.)</b>	<b>Greene County</b>
<b>Percent Population Increase</b>	2.1	NA	4.0	11.3	7.7
<b>Percent Population aged over 65 years</b>	21.8	21.9	17.7	25	15.7
<b>Percent Increase in Housing Units</b>	9.5	NA	7	4.3	6
<b>Percent Increase in # Households</b>	9.1	NA	9	13.4	10
<b>Percent of housing stock vacant</b>	71	46.8	60.5	35.3	31.2
<b>Percent of housing stock seasonal</b>	67	39.7	52.5	27.1	22.4
<b>Median Household Income</b>	\$31,094	\$43,359	\$41,172	\$33,333	\$36,493
<b>Percent of population below poverty line</b>	20.8	5.7	12	18.3	12.2
<b>Median gross rent (monthly)</b>	\$581	\$425	\$582	\$515	\$508
<b>Median value of home</b>	\$82,500	\$92,900	\$120,300	\$77,800	\$92,400
<b>Percent of housing stock in single-family units</b>	82.1	85.0	89.8	70.8	71.5
<b>Percent of housing stock in 2+ units</b>	1.4	3.5	3.2	11.5	17.2
<b>Percent of housing stock in mobile homes</b>	15.1	10.7	6.8	17.2	11.1

# Employment and Business

Since 1990, the Town of Halcott's labor force has grown by over 42.6 percent, from 68 to 97 persons. The number of people not in the labor force has increased since 1990. This would correspond to increasing numbers of retirees in Town. The unemployment rate has dropped dramatically (about 81%) over the past decade.

A comparison of the type of employment of residents over the past one or two decades shows that the number of people involved with retail trade, construction, and other service professions has increased. Conversely, the number of people employed in manufacturing, transportation, and wholesale trade has decreased. This is a change common in the northeastern United States. Some professions such as those involved with finance, insurance, real estate, repair services, and other personal services saw no real changes. Numbers of people involved with agriculture, forestry, fishing, and mining decreased from 1980 and has increased (doubled) between 1990 and 2000.

Some figures are also available for occupations in 1980. However, it is important to note that the classification system for occupations is significantly different in the 1990 and 2000 censuses. Direct comparisons should either be avoided or made with caution.

Local businesses in Halcott are all home-based and include at least one each of the following:

Water bottling plant

Trophy making

Photography

Alternator repair

Communications Consultant

Construction Contracting

In addition to these, there are two active commercial farms in Halcott. One of these farms also produces maple syrup. The New York City Watershed has funded projects at these farms to assist them be more environmentally sustainable and economically profitable. Four small farms raising horses and heifers are also operating in Town. Some people telecommute between Halcott and New York City and have home-based offices in Town.



## Recreation

There are no town-owned parks or recreational facilities in Halcott, other than the Grange Hall. Snowmobiling, hunting and fishing, cross-country skiing, and four-wheeling are recreational opportunities that people participate in on both state-owned and private lands within the Town. The Belleayre Ski Center is in nearby Highmount. Windham and Hunter Mountain are other ski areas located within one hour of Halcott. The Village of Fleischmanns has a library, a public park with a pool, tennis and outdoor baseball and basketball facilities. There is a seasonally operated movie theater in the Village. Other recreational facilities are located at Margaretville Central School in the Village of Margaretville. The school opens its facilities to a variety of both school-sponsored and other public programs.

## Transportation and Highway



The road system in Halcott is relatively small and not very complex. Due to the topography of the area, roads generally follow creeks or valley areas. There are 16.13 miles of secondary town-owned roads that intersect with County Routes 1 and 3. Most do not interconnect, instead terminating as dead ends. County Route 3, Silas Lake Road and Kaftas Road lead out of town towards Fleischmanns. This road network, along with the ridge systems in Halcott tends to isolate the Town. Local residents, however, highly value the fact that Halcott is “a destination” rather than a place you pass through to get somewhere else.

The main road into Halcott follows the Vly Creek. This road, County Route 3, is a two-lane road. There are no state highways in Town and two county roads, County Route 3 and Route 1. See roads on Land Use – Property Tax Map.

The Town plows County Route 3 using county-owned truck, salt and sand, and is reimbursed for this work. The County maintains Route 3 until the fork at Johnson Hollow. Beyond that point, it is a dirt road, and not well maintained by the County. The Lexington side is better maintained. There have been past efforts to have the County improve these portions of Route 3 to provide another access from Halcott to the rest of Greene County. However, this has not occurred and there has been no commitment yet from the County to do so.

# Public Services and Government

(Buildings, utilities, police, code enforcement, emergency services, and schools)

## Local Government

The local government includes the Town Board, the Planning Board, the Code Enforcement Officer, Highway Superintendent, Town Clerk, Tax Collector, Town Justice, Assessor, Bookkeeper, and the Dog Control Officer. The local laws on file with the New York State Secretary of State are:

- Opting out of enforcement of the State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code (1984)
- NYS Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code (create position of code enforcement officer) (1987)
- Dumping (prohibit operation of dumps for disposal of garbage and rubbish) (1988)
- NYS Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code (creates code enforcement officer to administer and enforce the NYS Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code) (1988)
- Prohibiting War Games (1989)
- Providing for the temporary closing of Town Highways to certain vehicles (with weight > 7 tons) (1989)
- Establishing Site Plan Review Law (1990)
- Flood Damage Prevention (1993)
- Amending the Subdivision Regulations (1993)
- Governing Travel Trailers (1993)
- Regulating, controlling, and licensing activities known as auto graveyards, salvage yards, junkyards and secondhand stores (1993)
- Amending the Site Plan Review Law (This has been done several times: The latest to establish standards and procedures for site plan review of Telecommunication Towers) (1995, and 2000)
- Abolish office of Town Tax Collector and combining it with Office of Town Clerk (1999)
- Separate the office of Town Clerk from Town Tax Collector and re-establish the office of Town Tax Collector (2003)
- Dog Control Law (2003)

In 2002, 32% of the municipal budget went to general funds, while 64% went to highway, and about 5% went to fire. Of the total budget, 39% was estimated to be revenues from non-tax sources, and 38%, or about \$114,000 was to be raised from taxes. Up until 2002 however, that portion of the total budget to be raised from taxes ranged from 50 to 70% of the total. The chart below illustrates some trends related to the Town budget. Between 1998 and 2002, the total town budget increased 62%. However, the largest increase was between 2001 and 2002, when the budget went from \$189,469 to \$306,401. Most of that increase was in the Highway Department budget (an 82% increase), due to grants received to pay for extraordinary road repairs.. The General fund increased 40% in that same time frame, also due to grants received to renovate the Grange Hall.

Trends in municipal expenditures are important to examine because there is a direct, but usually negative correlation between new residential development and municipal budgets. This is known as cost of community services. Studies from around New York State and the nation generally have shown that it costs a municipality more to service residential properties than agricultural, open land and commercial uses. According to the American Farmland Trust, for every dollar received from taxes on agricultural or open lands, the municipality spends less than one dollar providing services for those uses. However, most communities spend \$1.25 or more for each dollar received from residential taxes. This is because it costs more to build and maintain roads, and provide other municipal services. Residential development that brings new school-aged children to an area also adds significantly to the tax burden.

**Table 6. Budget Trends, 1998 - 2001**

<b>Year and Total Budget</b>	<b>Account</b>	<b>Percent of Total Budget</b>	<b>Percent Increase In Total Budget</b>
1998 \$171,254	General Fund	35%	
	Highway Fund	50%	
	Fire	6.9%	
1999 \$129,488	General Fund	50%	-24% (from 1998)
	Highway Fund	41%	
	Fire	9.5%	
2000 \$137,837	General Fund	48%	6.5% (from 1999)
	Highway Fund	43%	
	Fire	9.5%	
2001 \$189,469	General Fund	37%	37.5% (from 2000)
	Highway Fund	57%	
	Fire	6.9%	
2002 \$306,401	General Fund	32%	62% (from 2001)
	Highway Fund	64%	
	Fire	4.6%	



# New York City Watershed

The entire Town of Halcott is within the New York City Watershed. The Watershed is designated and regulated through a watershed agreement. The Watershed Agreement is a legally binding document that outlines the obligations on the part of both New York City and the watershed towns relating to the protection of water resources in the region. This agreement includes components for land acquisition, watershed rules and regulations, and watershed protection and partnership programs.

Except for the land already owned by New York State, the City classifies the entire town of Halcott as being a Priority 4 for land acquisition. Priority 4 areas are sub-basins in non-terminal reservoir basins. In 1997, the Town Board passed a resolution designating hamlet boundaries for purposes of the New York City Watershed Regulations. The hamlet includes 70.31 acres on 29 different parcels of land. (See hamlet delineation on the District Concept Map) In the resolution, the Town determined not to exercise its option to exclude these lands from acquisition by the City of New York. That means that the City could purchase any property having a willing seller.

Watershed rules and regulations went into effect in May 1997 and are designed to control sources of pollution including wastewater treatment plants, sewer systems, septic systems and stormwater pollution. The regulations include restrictions that reduce contaminants and prevent degradation of water supplies. Certain activities in designated areas are exempted. These exemptions are designed to promote responsible growth in existing areas while protecting water quality through increased regulation of activities within these areas. However, there are no areas in the Town of Halcott that are currently exempted. Some of the key elements of the watershed regulations that pertain to Halcott include:

- All septic systems installed, repaired or replaced in the Watershed require prior approval by the City. Existing systems that operate according to federal, state and local approvals are allowed to continue. However, if they need replacement, the repair must be made to the new standards. Routine repairs and maintenance are not affected by the regulations. The City will monitor, and approve design, treatment methods, construction, maintenance and operation of all new septic systems. In addition, no septic systems are allowed within 100 feet of a watercourse or wetland. (These are also statewide standards.)
- No impervious surfaces (paved or built areas) are allowed within 100 feet of a watercourse or wetland. There are some exemptions for villages, hamlets, and single-family home construction.
- No construction of roads is allowed within 50 feet of intermittent streams or wetlands, or within 100 feet of perennial streams.
- Location of new petroleum storage tanks are restricted.
- No new registered hazardous substance storage tanks are permitted within 100 feet of a watercourse.
- Some new commercial and industrial projects in the Watershed require the preparation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan.

The Watershed Protection and Partnership Programs and the Catskill Watershed Corporation includes funds for water pollution infrastructure, and education and economic development programs designed to protect water quality and improve the quality of life in the Watershed. Some examples of activities for which

funding is available in this program include sand/salt storage facilities, stream corridor protection, alternatively designed septic systems, public education, a forestry management program, and economic development studies. Some private enterprises in town have received funds for sustainable business growth, and the Town has received funding for improving stormwater runoff.

# Natural Resources

## Soils

Soils in Halcott have been identified and rated for their suitability for development purposes by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (formerly known as the Soil Conservation Service). Limitations reflect the difficulty and the costliness of altering the design of a new structure to compensate for the particular soil limitation. Limitations should not be considered judgments that soils cannot or should not be developed.

In Halcott, about 95% of the land base is considered to have very severe or severe limitations to development based on soils. Two locations are rated as severe to moderate. The area near the hamlet of Halcott Center is categorized as slight to moderate.

The very severe category contains the soils that are least suitable for development. The specific limitations here include steep slope, excessive rockiness, and shallow depth to bedrock. These characteristics would make excavation difficult. Large-scale disturbances to the surface can result in erosion, loss of soils, and water pollution. In Halcott, most of the land categorized as very severe is located at elevations above 2200' and is not adjacent to any existing road.

The severe category is generally comprised of deep soils with a hardpan developed in glacial till. The limitations of these soils include excessive runoff and difficulty in installing septic systems due to the soil characteristics. Individual septic systems would be possible on adequately sized lots however. The severe category includes all of the land below 2200' except for the alluvial plain formed by Vly Creek and its tributaries.

The moderate to severe category contains soils located in the alluvial plain formed by Vly Creek, Elk Creek, and Turk Hollow Creek. Adjacent to the creeks is land that has been subject to flooding, and is unsuitable for residential development because of this. Immediately adjacent to the floodplain are other alluvial deposits that are more easily adapted for development purposes.

The slight to moderate category consists of those areas where soils are deep and few development problems would be expected. These soils are found only in the hamlet of Halcott Center.

## Slope

Slopes are a physical characteristic that directly affects the ability of the land to sustain development. Steep slopes contribute greatly to the visual character of the area and dominate Halcott. In Halcott, the steep terrain also defines important wildlife habitats. Development of steep slopes increases cost for road construction, can contribute to erosion and sedimentation of the area's creeks, and can negatively impact the character of the area. The steepest areas can be found on the mountaintops as well as along the banks of the creeks. The flattest areas can be found along the alluvial plain formed by Vly Creek, north of Halcott Center and at the junction of Vly Creek and Turk Hollow Creek. Located near the creeks, these lands may not be buildable because of the danger of flooding.

Lands between 5 and 10 to 15% slope are usually the least constrained for development. In Halcott, all the land in this category is located at elevations below 2000' and is served by the existing road system.



Development of land with more than 15% slope presents serious problems due to excessive runoff, and difficulties in siting septic systems. Some of the lower slopes from 15% to 35% may have “pockets” of land appropriate for individual houses, if they are properly sited. This includes the areas served by existing roads such as on Elk Creek Road and Turk Hollow Road. Lands with slope in excess of 35% are largely unsuitable for development. In Halcott, these areas are in the upper elevations of Halcott, Vly and Bearpen Mountains. Development should be discouraged where steep slope areas exist. Excessively sloped areas are best

used as forests, open space, some forms of agriculture, and other low intensity uses.

### **Flood Plains**

The Flood Insurance Rate Map for the Town of Halcott became effective in 1983. Two different types of flood zones were identified and mapped: Zone A and Zone C. Zone A area in the 100-year flood plain. Zone C are areas outside of the 500-year flood. Zone A is designated along most of the streams in town and Zone C is every place else. People desiring to build in a floodplain must obtain a flood permit and ensure that the site is flood-proofed.

### **Streams and Wetlands**

Vly Creek and its tributaries, Turk Hollow Creek, Elk Creek, and West Settlement Creek are the major streams in the Town. These streams are primarily classified by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation as either B (t) or B (ts). A few sections of the upper reaches of Elk Creek are classified as “A” streams. This classification system is established under NYCRR Title 6, Chapter X, Parts 700-705. NYS DEC has determined that the best usages of Class B waters are recreation (swimming, boating and fishing.) These waters shall be maintained and suitable for fish propagation and survival. Designation of a stream as (t) or (ts) indicates it shall be suitable for trout survival or trout propagation. The best usages of Class A waters are as a source of water supply for drinking, culinary or food processing purposes, recreation, and fishing. These waters shall also be suitable for fish propagation and survival.

Wetlands in the Town have been designated as either a NYS DEC regulated Wetland (those 12.4 acres or larger and governed by the New York State Freshwater Wetlands Act), or classified as a wetland by the United States Army Corps of Engineers through the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) (See Hydrology Map). All wetlands are regulated through the Federal Clean Water Act, although NYS DEC and the Army Corps of Engineers have joint review for wetlands over 12.4 acres. All development affecting wetlands is thus regulated either by the State or the Federal government although some activities may be exempted or included in a nationwide permit.

In Halcott, the vast majority of wetlands are located along one of the streams. One DEC regulated wetland is found in the town along the Vly Creek where Turk Hollow Creek joins it. Approximately 30 smaller NWI wetlands are found along other streams and tributaries.

One aquifer has been identified in Halcott. This is located along the Vly Creek from the southern boundary of the town and extending north along the creek to the intersection of Turk Hollow Road and Johnson Hollow Road near the cemetery.



## **Surficial Geology**

The geological features of the town influence drainage patterns, topography, groundwater availability, and soil types. An evaluation of the geology of the area can help direct the location of new projects to suitable areas and gain a better understanding of the town's environmental resources and development constraints.

An analysis of the town's surficial geology can help identify several issues related to topography, land development, and land use. Surficial deposits are largely influenced by long-ago glacial activity. As glaciers in the area retreated, the melting created tremendous amounts of sediment-laden water in rivers and lakes. However, tongues or flows of ice tended to remain in the larger valleys long after the uplands were relatively ice-free. Eventually, these valley ice masses stopped flowing and melted away, creating landforms and deposits that are distinctly different from those in the uplands. Large amounts of melt water flowed along the sides and beneath these stagnant valley ice masses, washing through the rocky and muddy debris. This tended to separate and sort finer silt and clay from sand and gravel. In locations where washed and sorted debris was deposited a gravelly surficial deposit called kame occurs, giving this part of the landscape a hummocky appearance. In Halcott, Kame occurs mostly along the Vly Creek. Kame deposits have a small percentage of finer grain materials. Consequently, kame deposits are generally more permeable than till.

Where relatively fast-flowing tributary streams enter major valleys, they quickly lose velocity as they flow across the flatter river floodplain. This abrupt slowing causes streams to drop their load of sand and gravel on the floodplains as subtle fan or delta-shaped alluvial fan deposits. Because these deposits are fairly level and well drained they make good farmland and building sites. The hamlet of Halcott Center is located in an alluvial deposit.

A large portion of the Town except for ridge areas is made up of till surficial deposits, an unsorted mix of clay, silt, sand, gravel and boulders deposited above the bedrock. Because of its clay and silt content and its high degree of compaction, till is found throughout the Town outside of the ridge areas.

Bedrock is the common surficial feature throughout the higher elevations in Halcott. A thin layer of soil may be present on bedrock areas and can support forest growth. Some areas of exposed bedrock also exist on the steepest sites.

# Land Use

There are 475 total parcels in Halcott. Two parcels are taxed as a special district, and 4 parcels are wholly exempt. The total tax received from all parcels is \$283,805.89 (2001).

The largest amount of land is forested. The majority of forested land is in private ownership and includes both mature forest and brush land.

The State of New York owns a total of 1,985 acres in the Town. Some of those lands are within the Catskill Forest Preserve. NYS owns 691 acres of Forest Preserve land. Outside of the Park, the State owns 1,294 acres, of which 451 acres are classified as Forest Preserve Land and 843 acres are state reforestation areas. Forest Preserve lands are restricted by the “Forever Wild” clause of the New York State Constitution, which prohibits the sale of the land, or any forest products derived from the land. These lands are limited to non-intensive activities such as hiking.

There is still much open land in Halcott although not all is in active agriculture. While the land along Vly Creek appears to remain viable as farmland, open lands elsewhere, especially in the higher elevations are at risk for conversion to residential use. Some are being used as small, hobby farms. There are no cellular towers or other tall structures in Halcott.

Relatively little land in Halcott is devoted to intensive use. Outside of the Hamlet area, there are no non-farm commercial properties. The nearest commercial area is located in the Village of Fleishmanns. Most of the Town would be considered to have low-density residential use. The Land Use-Property Tax Map and Table 7, below, show that residential parcels make up about 42% of the land base in Halcott. Forestlands follow closely with 39.7% of the land area. Vacant lands comprise about 14.6 percent of the town with agriculture using less than 4% of the land. A large number of parcels are privately owned forestlands or state owned lands. In comparison to the residential parcels, vacant properties are generally smaller in acreage.

**Table 7: Land Use Parcels and Acres**

<b>Land Classification*</b>	<b>Number of Parcels</b>	<b>Number of Acres</b>	<b>Percent of Total Land Base</b>
Agriculture (property class 100)	6	509	3.56
Residential (year-round) (property class 200)	266	6,018	42.11
Vacant Land (property class 300)	146	2,084	14.58
Highway Garage, Grange, Religious Uses and Cemeteries (property class 600)	5	5.6	.04
Forest, Conservation and Park Lands (property class 900)	42	5,673	39.70

\* Four parcels have an unknown property class (about 227.4 acres)

## Agriculture and Agriculture Districts



According to the Greene County Department of Real Property, there are six parcels taxed as agricultural land. The largest parcels are located along Johnson Hollow Road north of Turk Hollow (See Land Use Property Class Map). There are approximately 509 acres of land coded and taxed as agriculture in Halcott. However, there are more open lands used for small farms found in other locations. (See aerial photograph below.) There is no New York State certified agricultural district in Halcott. There are no prime agricultural soils in town. There are two remaining commercial dairy farms in Town, and other small farm

operations including horse and other livestock.

## Building Permits and Subdivision Approvals

Since 1995, Halcott has issued approximately 18 building permits for new homes. This represents about 18% of all building permits issued. Most permits were issued for additions, renovations, decks, and garages. The most active years for new permits was 1997 and 2001 with 6 permits issued for new homes during each of those years. The years 2000 and 2001 saw an increase in overall permit activity. The records do not show whether they were for year-round or seasonal homes.

Since 1987, there have been 17 minor subdivisions and 4 major subdivisions approved by the Planning Board. Some of these were not completed however, due to discontinuation of the project by the landowner or developer. 2000 and 2001 had a higher level of subdivision activity than in the years since 1996.

**Table 8: Building Permits  
Issued in Halcott**

Year	New Homes	Total Permits
1995	1	12
1996	1	8
1997	6	18
1998	1	12
1999	1	9
2000	2	19
2001	6	20
Totals	18	98

\*This table was constructed by tabulating building permits issued from 1993 to 2001, eliminating replacement homes and those that are not close to completion.

**Table 9: Subdivision Approvals**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Subdivision</b>	<b>Total Planning Board Actions</b>
1987	4 major 6 minor	10*
1989		15**
1992	3 minor	19
1996	1 minor	4
1997	1 minor	6
1998	1 minor	10
1999	NA	NA
2000	3 minor	12
2001	4 minor	16
Totals	21	92

\* Applicant discontinued some of these actions

\*\*Planning Board Report listed only site plan review applications.



**Photograph 1: Aerial Photograph (1998) of Town of Halcott. This aerial photograph clearly shows the extent of open land in relation to forestlands.**

# Visual Resources

## Inventory of visual resources

Given the vital importance of the town's visual resources to residents, an inventory of visual resources was done. This inventory was consistent with NYS DEC guidelines (Policy DEP-00-2). This information can be used in the future to assess impacts to visual resources and to minimize negative impacts. The inventory included identifying and mapping specific categories considered by the State to have statewide aesthetic significance. In Halcott, areas of statewide aesthetic significance would include properties on or eligible for inclusion in the National or State Register of Historic Places; and lands included in the State Forest Preserve. The Comprehensive Planning Committee also inventoried locally important locations and resources. The Viewshed map shows those locations determined to have aesthetic value. The general public was invited to a workshop to identify and rank local visual resources. At the workshop, 32 photographs were shown. Participants ranked them according to how well they liked the scene. They also categorized each photograph as to whether it depicted an open view, mixed view, or enclosed view. Specific locations considered to be important views were identified on maps.

Using the computer mapping software (GIS), a viewshed of the entire town was created that includes each of the locations included in the inventory of visual resources.

## Town of Halcott Visual Inventory Results

1. Except for a few, most slides included in the survey were rated quite high. There were some differences however.
2. The highest rated views were open and expansive views. Mixed views, showing an area that has medium length views that are broken up by topography or with a mixture of vegetation and open gaps were not as highly rated.
3. The roads in town with highly enclosed wooded canopies were also rated high, but not as high as the open, expansive views.
4. The entrance signs on County Route 3, and the Highway Department Building received the lowest scores of all slides.
5. Slides with no view of any hill, or just a very small hill received lower ratings..
6. Small hills were not as well liked as the mountainous scenes.
7. Pictures with buildings, fences, barns, houses, etc. were not rated as highly as those "natural" ones.
8. The Church was rated higher than the Grange.
9. For the top 12 slides, there was no difference between how full time residents and seasonal or weekend residents rated the slides.
10. When there were differences, the full time and seasonal residents answered similarly and weekend residents had a different impression. Further, full time residents always ranked the slide higher than did the weekend or seasonal residents.
11. Isolated fields with no view of anything beyond the field were not ranked as high.

## Top Ranked Views in Halcott





## Views Not Ranked As High in Halcott





# State Lands and Wildlife

**Halcott Mountain Wild Forest:** Halcott Mountain Wild Forest is a state-owned forest preserve in the Catskill Park and encompasses a total of 4760 acres of land in the Towns of Halcott and Lexington. There are about 531 acres in Halcott. The State pays full property taxes based on land value. The area currently has one lean-to and four parking areas, but no marked trails or roads. Management of this state forest is governed by Article XIV of the New York State Constitution (also called the “forever wild clause”.) The Catskill Park State Land Master Plan classifies this area as “wild forest”. All wild forestlands above 2700’ in elevation are to be managed as wilderness. About half of the acreage in this wild forest is above this elevation. The highest peak is Halcott Mountain (3541’ above sea level). Vly, Bearpen and Roundtop mountains, located to the north and west of this forest preserve are part of the same mountain range. Vly and Bearpen mountains are also included as state forest preserve lands. The Halcott Mountain Wild Forest Unit Management Plan describes the wild forest area as follows: “This unit is very steep and rocky. The majority of it is mountaintop with various draws and streams. Views from the ridges are beautiful. On a clear day, one can see down to Belleayre Mountain to the south and to Hunter Mountain to the northeast. There are no maintained scenic vistas here, and views are generally screened by trees except during winter. Game and non-game species of mammals, birds, wildflowers, and many other types of flora and fauna are easily found in this unit.” Tasks included in the plan are marking a trail along the old roadbed to the Turk Hollow lean-to, constructing a 4-car parking lot on Forest Preserve lands past the town-maintained portion of Turk Hollow Road for foot access to the lean-to, upgrading Turk Hollow Road from the end of the town maintained portion to the new parking lot, extending the Devil’s Path to connect the Westkill Wilderness through Halcott Mountain and to Vly and Bearpen Mountains, and installing signage on Turk Hollow Road.

The habitat is predominantly mature northern hardwood forest with some pine plantations interspersed. There has not been a formal inventory of the animal species in the area. However, this area, as well as the remainder of town, is part of the Catskill Peaks ecozone. An extensive list of wildlife presumed to live in this ecozone was developed in 1983 and estimates that there are 49 species of mammals, 13 species of reptiles and 20 species of amphibians located in the Halcott Mountain Wild Forest. A list of 71 bird species are known to exist in the area, as determined by the 1988 New York Atlas of Breeding Birds. White-tailed deer are an important part of the area’s wildlife, especially at lower elevations where there is a mix of open and forested lands. Bears are common and the State considers lands such as the Wild Forest to be critical for their survival as more lands are becoming developed. Streams in the Wild Forest and beyond provide spawning and nursery habitat for trout, and may be inhabited by brown, brook or rainbow trout, cutlips minnow, common shiner, blacknose dace, longnose dace, creek chub, white sucker, tessellated darter and slimy sculpin. The bald eagle and red-shouldered hawk are birds listed by the State as threatened or endangered and are known to frequent the area.

# Public Participation In the Comprehensive Planning Process

A considerable effort was made to involve residents and landowners in the development of this plan. In addition to input from the public who attended regular monthly meetings of the Comprehensive Planning Committee, the following activities took place:

- 3Community Survey (174 surveys returned or a 46.5% return)
- 3Planning and Visioning Workshop (100 people participated)
- 3Community Image Survey and Visual Inventory (37 people participated)
- 3Goals and Issue Survey (88 surveys returned or a 23% return)
- 3Public Presentation of Survey and Data Collection Results
- 3Public Presentation of Plan and Public Hearing (Sponsored by Comprehensive Plan Committee)
- 3Public Hearing (Sponsored by the Town Board)



## Summary of Survey Results

During the spring/summer of 2002 the Town of Halcott Comprehensive Plan Committee surveyed its residents by mail for the purposes of receiving input on local issues, concerns, strengths and weaknesses. The survey was mailed to 375 and the response rate was 46.5% (One hundred and seventy-four surveys were returned and tabulated).

## Demographic Snapshot of Those Surveyed

Of those who described their status, the survey respondents were almost half (48%) seasonal, and one-quarter (28%) year-round residents, and one-quarter (25%) landowners but not residents. Sixty-four percent (64%) of those surveyed either plan to or already have retired in Halcott, while the vast majority were homeowners (88%), not renters (only 12%). For those who owned land, the average acreage was 37 acres. Only 17 respondents have home-based businesses (including those who live part of the year outside of Halcott). The average commute to work was 18.5 miles.

The survey asked how long the respondents had lived, or in the case of second homeowners, owned land in Halcott. Of those who answered the question, the majority (101 or 66%) characterized themselves as second homeowners with land in Halcott for an average period of eighteen years. Of the year-round residents, 20 or 13% of all surveyed, have lived in Halcott for 25 years or more, while the remaining respondents were evenly dispersed among the remaining categories.

Tabulation of “how many years have you lived in Halcott?”

Less than 5 years	6
5 to 9 years	6
10 to 14 years	9
15 to 19 years	4
20 to 24 years	8
More than 25 years	20
I am a second home owner*	101

\*Average number of years: 18

**Question 1: What in Halcott is important to you? Rank your top five choices, ranking most important as #1.**

Table one: ranking of important issues (question 1)		
Issue	Rank	Responses
Rural character	2.8	139
Quality of environment and clean water	2.9	138
Open space preservation	3	112
Low taxes	3.1	125
Road condition	3.6	100
Emergency services	3.6	71
Recreational opportunities	4	44
Waste transfer station	4.1	68
Quality of School System	4.2	30
Senior programs	4.4	24
Youth programs	4.9	10

The highest ranked/most important issue to Halcott landowners (among the listed choices) was *Rural Character*. From a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being the most important) Rural Character received an average ranking of 2.8. Respondents also gave Quality of Environment and Clean Water (2.9), Open Space Preservation (3.0), and Low Taxes (3.1) high rankings. Furthermore, Rural Character (139), Quality of the Environment (138), Low Taxes (125), Open Space Preservation (112), and Road Condition (100) were the only issues that received 100 or more individual rankings. According to those surveyed, these are the most important issues for the Town of Halcott (among the listed topics from question 1).

Youth Programs (4.9), Senior Programs (4.4), and Quality of the School System (4.2) received the lowest rankings. These issues also received the fewest individual number of rankings. Emergency Services, Recreational Opportunities, and Waste Transfer Station received a moderate number of responses and were ranked in the middle of the listed issues.

**Question 2. What types of recreational activities are you interested in pursuing in Halcott? Rank your top five choices, ranking most important as #1.**

Table 2: ranking of recreational activities (question 2)

	Rank	Responses	
Hiking/walking	2.3	118	There was less overall consensus on recreational activities than important issues. Survey respondents chose Hiking/Walking as the most important recreational activity available to them in Halcott. With 118 tallies, this activity was ranked more than any other and received the highest average ranking at 2.3. However, the remaining activities all received generally high rankings. Fishing (99), Swimming (84), Cross-Country Skiing (75), Horseback Riding (73), and Hunting (67), received over 65 tallies. Thirty-six respondents mentioned and described “Other” recreational activities that they pursue in Halcott. Some of the activities included Bike Riding, Downhill skiing, Gardening, Photography, and Tennis.
Hunting	2.7	67	
All-terrain vehicle use	2.9	56	
Swimming	3.1	84	
Fishing	3.2	99	
Cross-country skiing	3.5	75	
Horseback riding	3.6	73	
Other	3.6	36	
Snow-shoeing	3.7	49	
Snow-mobiling	3.8	27	

**Question 3. Please list the three things you like most about living in Halcott:**

Survey respondents were quite consistent in selecting the best aspects of life in Halcott. A majority favored Halcott’s “quiet, peacefulness, and privacy” (92) as its best asset. The town’s “beautiful environment” (61), “the nice people and community” (59) and the “rural and small town environment” were mentioned with significant frequency. For the most part, the best and most liked aspects of Halcott were its beautiful pristine environment and small town character.

**List the three worst things about living in Halcott:**

When asked to discuss the “worst things” about Halcott life, a wide variety of issues and concerns were presented and no real consensus was established. The “lack of a nearby transfer station” (30) “lack of shopping opportunities” (25) and “road maintenance issues” (20) were the only topics that were mentioned by at least twenty respondents. Other significant issues included “ATV and snowmobile noise and related concerns” (16), “limited recreation and/or entertainment opportunities” (12), “high taxes” (12), “speeding cars” (11), “Halcott’s isolation from the rest of Greene County” (11), and “roaming and barking dogs” (11). For those people who indicated that there was a lack of shopping opportunities, most also feel that the natural and rural environment of Halcott are the best features of theTown. Less than 17 of those that responded that they wanted more shopping were seasonal residents. Most comments about shopping were directed at the need for more small businesses and convenience retail. One person said that there was a need for more malls.

**Question 4. The minimum size for a residential building lot is 3 acres. Would you be in favor of increasing these minimums?**

Ninety-one respondents or almost 53% felt that the minimum lot size should be increased beyond three acres. A variety of options were presented as possible alternatives. However, the most common suggestions were approximately five acres (mentioned by 63 people) and ten acres (mentioned on 16 surveys).

**Question 5. Currently, the Town of Halcott is considered to be a “Rural Residential” area. How would you like to see the Town in the future? (check one)**

According to the survey, Halcott’s residents and landowners like the town the way it is. The vast majority does not desire significant change. Whether they have concerns about the impacts of new land development or increased regulations, the overriding sentiment is that Halcott, as it is today, is a great place to live. Almost seventy-one percent (71%) of those who responded to question five felt that Halcott should “remain the same.” Meanwhile, an almost even number felt the town should “become more rural (13%) and “have more business” (10%), while a few respondents “desired a more residential area” (6%).

**Question 6. Do you think that the Town should consider measures in any of the following areas? (check all that apply)**

While many of those surveyed were confused about whether the “measures” would be for or against a particular area or issue, there was some consensus reached on the relative importance of this list of topics. “Trash disposal” (selected on 96 surveys) and “historic preservation” (94) were by far the most often selected areas or topics that the respondents felt the town should consider “measures.” Other areas included “putting speed limits on roads” (78), “junk cars” (73), and “better protection of roads from heavy vehicles” (73).

**Question 7. What is the single most important thing you think could be done to improve our Town?**

There was very little consensus in response to this question among those surveyed. “Better roads and road maintenance,” and the “need for a transfer station and/or garbage pickup” were both mentioned thirteen (13) times in the survey. Many felt that the town should “preserve the overall environment, open space and rural character of Halcott” (9), while other respondents felt that the “trash and litter along roads and junk on properties should be cleaned up” (7). Others felt the most important step would be “better access to the rest of Greene County” (8), “more stringent regulations” (7), “more shopping” (5), and “more town activities” (5). Six (6) people felt that the town should “remain the way it is” without any changes whatsoever while others stressed “concern for the loss of individual property rights” and the need to ease existing restrictions while not creating any additional regulations.

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**Survey #2**

During the summer of 2002, the Comprehensive Plan Committee held a planning workshop to further investigate the issues and concerns of Halcott residents. During this gathering, a second survey was conducted to better understand some of the community’s desire for certain types of land uses and activities as well as the potential for government regulation. Forty-one (41) surveys were completed and tabulated.

**Question 1: “Do you think the Town of Halcott should encourage the following land use activities?” Participants could circle yes, no, maybe, or unsure.**

The workshop participants almost unanimously said they do not want Halcott to encourage any of the uses listed. There was a clear consensus that among the land uses provided in the question, only “Historic

Preservation” should be encouraged in Halcott.

Tabulation for question 1 – summary of answers (out of 41 possible responses)

	Yes	No	Unsure	Maybe
Commercial development	2	32	2	4
Industrial development	0	39	1	0
Multiple dwelling units (condominiums)	0	39	0	1
Billboards and signs	0	40	0	1
Unconventional Structures (i.e. windmills)	2	26	7	5
Casino Gambling	0	40	0	0
Airport(s)	1	35	1	3
Mobile Homes	3	30	2	6
Historic Preservation	36	2	1	1

**Question 2: “Do you think the Town of Halcott should control or regulate:” (a list of land uses and activities was provided). As in the previous question, participants could circle either yes, no, maybe or unsure.**

Again, there was a clear consensus among the workshop participants. In this case, they demonstrated their desire that the Town of Halcott should control or regulate almost all of the activities in the supplied list of land uses. There was some confusion regarding how the town could regulate or control “historic preservation.” Consequently, the total number of yes votes was slightly less for this activity.

Tabulation for question 2 – summary of answers (out of 41 possible responses)

	Yes	No	Unsure	Maybe
Commercial Development	38	0	2	0
Industrial development	38	0	2	0
Multiple dwelling units (condominiums)	38	0	1	0
Billboards and signs	38	0	1	1
Unconventional Structures (i.e. windmills)	33	1	3	2
Casino Gambling	39	0	1	0
Airport(s)	34	1	1	2
Mobile Homes	35	2	1	0
Historic Preservation	30	4	2	1
Junk Cars	36	0	2	1
Dogs	32	3	0	3

## Planning and Visioning Workshop

Forty-one residents attended the planning workshops during the summer of 2002. People worked in small groups to identify positive and negative features about the Town, and developed draft vision statements.



The following information details the positive features identified at these workshops.

### Identified Positive Features of Halcott

These features are categorized into topics. Participants were asked to identify the single most important positive feature. These comments are identified below as having received priority stickers. The “\*” indicates the number of people who identified that feature as positive.

<u>Positive Feature</u>	<u>Priority Status</u>	<u>#People Mentioned Feature</u>
<b>Beauty</b>		
Raw undeveloped beauty of landscape	9 priority stickers	*****
Rural, pastoral, natural beauty		
Unsurpassed beauty		
Beauty of the environment, rural character		
Picturesque, clean and well-kept		*
<b>Environment</b>		
Peaceful quiet surrounding	2	*****
Clean air	2	*****
Clean water		***
Clean environment		**
Dark, non-polluted night sky and mountains	1	*
The environment, ecosystem and wildlife		*
Lack of noise pollution	1	**
Wildlife	1	***
Views		*
<b>The People</b>		
The people form a cohesive active Community	4	*****
Community feeling and friendliness		
Respectful community		*
Good neighbors	1	*
Tolerance	1	*
Number of talented people in the town		*
<b>Residential, Agricultural and Open Character</b>		
Low density single family housing	1	**
Lack of people here		



Lack of industrial development	2	***
Small family farms	2	*****
Farming		
Working farms		
Cows		
Safety and security	1	**
Low density of residents	1	**
Open spaces	4	****
Town has no bars, and no gambling	1	*
Relative insulation from vicissitudes of region		*
No development		**
Small town feeling		*
No street lights		*
No center of town	1	*
Seclusion		*

### **Access and Lack-Of**

Town is a destination rather than a thoroughfare	6	*****
Dead-end valley		
Good access to cultural events		*
Skiing, sporting opportunities and resources		*

### **Other Positive Characteristics**

Rich history	1	*
Town activities, fair etc.		**
Church	1	*
The grange building and Community	1	**
Recycling center		**
Roads are in good shape, all year round	1	*
Times of Halcott		*
Aura of continuity..change has not affected yet		*
Four distinct seasons		*

At the workshop, participants worked to brainstorm methods to maintain these positive features. Many of these suggestions have been incorporated in the recommended strategies of this plan.

### **Solutions: Ideas to Maintain the Positive Features**

#### **Beauty**

Retain rural character, open fields and green space  
Change tax code to offer incentives to encourage retaining of larger tracts of land  
No wind farms  
Keep roads clean; people should police road in front of own property  
Maintain mountains as they are  
Make qualitative regulations that assure spirit of preserving natural beauty  
Maintain stonewalls

**Environment**

Zoning—regulate development of natural resources to protect viewscape  
Limit development  
Preserve clean water and air  
Enforce septic requirements  
Focus on natural resources and enviro-tourism and agri-tourism  
Encourage conservation easements  
Keep environmentally clean

**The People**

Improve communication  
Make public feel welcome – always invite  
Have regional drives that could use a Halcott chapter (blood drive, fire dept equipment fund raising, hospital fund raising, etc.)  
Pass planning laws that would favor sense of community (no condos or time shares)  
Encourage community participation  
Have church be part of Halcott Fair  
Offer meals on wheels to ill and shut-ins  
Inform community about activities and possibilities for participation  
Keep lines of communication very open via e-mail, bulletin board, weekend meetings,

**Residential, Agricultural, Open Character**

Keep farms farming  
Limit residential development through larger lot size  
Limit development  
Encourage cluster housing with major open land requirement (ex. 85% open land per lot)  
Use low-density land use  
Local laws to protect what the community views as important  
Subdivision regulations .. no multiple dwellings, apartment houses, town houses  
Control industrial development...keep a residential farming community  
No industry  
Have zoning regulations to limit development of industrial/commercial uses that would disrupt character.  
Limit quantity of development and kind of lighting allowed  
Zoning – control height of building  
Support farming and listen to problems of farmers  
Maintain existing roads

**Access and Lack-Of**

Keep road a dead-end (frequently mentioned)  
Maintain true seasonal status of our roads  
Keep road budget low

**Other**

Control cats and dogs  
Put in speed bumps  
Do as little as possible  
No new roads  
Place historic markers

Get state agencies, such as police and DEC to swap services – have coverage from Margaretville, Del. Co.  
 Have strict enforcement of land use regulations  
 Don't allow excessive ATV traffic, target practice, dog barking at night

## Identified Negative Features of Halcott

### Topic: Garbage/Trash

Can't use Middletown transfer station	3 priority stickers	*	
Lack of trash facilities	2	**	
Garbage dumping	1	**	
Unkempt yards	1		*
Disappearance of agriculture	1	*	
Misuse of recycling center		*	
Junk cars		**	
Burning garbage		*	
Distance from refuse transfer station		*	

### Roads and Conditions of Roads

Lack of speed limits on county roads	3	*****	
Elk Creek Road and Halcott Road hazardous	2	*	
Planned development of roads to other parts of Greene County	1	*	
No road over the mountain	1	**	
Double parking on town roads		**	
Unregulated and arbitrary widening of roads and cutting of trees		**	
Lack of median markers on county roads		**	
West Settlement stop sign often not observed		*	
Condition of roads		*	
Poor road intersections		*	
Brush along the road removed by Greene County		*	
Greene County road crews destroy slopes and walls		*	
There is need to have better bridge crossing maintenance, aesthetics and stone walls		*	
Excessive snow plowing		*	
Paving too many roads		*	

### Public Services, Taxes, and Government

Become part of Delaware Co. due to lack of services	6	**	
School taxes high	2	***	
High taxes	2	*	
No existing zoning	1	*	
Lack of senior citizen tax break on properties	1	*	
Lack of police presence		**	
Lack of information to non-full timers about what's going on		*	
Too small minimum lot sizes		*	
Delays in receiving ambulance service			*

Distance for emergency services (fire, police, ambulance)		*
Lack of TV cable		*
Taxes to Greene County without adequate services		*
Aloofness of County government		*
Poor cell phone reception		*
DEP meddling and rules		*

## **Recreation**

No public swimming		*
Lack of community activities		*
Lack of available information concerning access to public land, trails, fishing		*

## **Commercial Development**

Lack of general store		**
No employment opportunities		*
Area is economically distressed		*
Distance from stores		*

## **Nuisances**

Snowmobiles trespassing	2	**
Trespassing	1	***
ATV's on roads		*****
Unsupervised dogs	1	*****
Gunshots at inappropriate hours		*
Poaching		*
Wood theft		*
Gun club is noisy		*
Abandoned pet animals		*
Noise pollution		*
Conflict between people and wildlife		*
Light pollution		*

## **Other Characteristics**

Wind mills, and fact that town is considering them	3	**
Community centers (church, grange) are unappreciated, under-utilized	1	*
Lack of focal point and center of town	1	**
No central organ of communication		*
No affordable housing for first time homebuyers		*
Lack of preservation of rich history of area, ex. Unmarked gravesites		*

## **Community Spirit**

Disconnect between seasonal and fulltime homeowners	3	**
Separation of people – not working together	1	*
Only recently has there been any community building		*

Divisiveness	*
Too small, hard to find volunteers	*

During the workshop, participants worked together to identify strategies that can improve or mitigate these perceived negative features as follows:

## **Solutions: Ideas to Improve or Mitigate the Negative Features**

### **Garbage/Trash**

- Site a small transfer station with set hours in town
- Contract with Margaretville for use of transfer station
- Have a semi-annual pickup of non-recyclables, large garbage items
- Investigate why we cannot use transfer station facility and develop possible solutions
- Pass specific codes for yard maintenance and to prevent junk cars

### **Roads and Conditions of Roads**

- Impose speed limits
- Set a speed limit monitor
- Paint lines on roadsides and centerline
- Use creative speed limit sign to slow people down
- Place special signs at dangerous places (cow crossing)
- Use more signage
- Acquire land to provide another exit from Elk Creek Road
- Have sign at edge of public land coming from Prattsville
- Develop a small access road extended from county Rt. 3

### **Public Services, Taxes, and Government**

- To limit taxes, pave and maintain only the roads people want and need
- Provide public information about the tax process and why
- Earmark increases with a vote
- Institute a neighborhood watch
- Have a local person as a police deputy
- Petition Greene and Delaware Counties to make change 1) local vote for a change, and 2) contact Delaware County for help

### **Commercial Development**

- Stimulate agricultural (small and organic) development that is self-sustaining

### **Nuisances**

- Have a new local ordinance to keep dogs from running loose and enforce the law
- Show limit of state line, perhaps with a map
- Mark trails
- Petition state for signs delineating end of state land
- There needs to be someone to regulate use of motor vehicles on state and private land
- Call DEC forest ranger: ATV's cannot be on town roads without licenses and inspection

## **Other Characteristics**

Regarding cell towers and wind mills, inform people of negative aspects (no benefit to the Town, reduction in land values), have real caution in proceeding.

## **Community Spirit**

Put up a bulletin board to create a place for information exchange

Use a cybertown, and town website publicity

Revitalize the grange organization, and the building (use worker bees)

Encourage our neighbors

Develop a communication facility

Put a sign at the county line

Keep reminding about Halcott website

Have more grass roots involvement

More tolerance towards different points of view – all ideas are valid

# Development of A Vision

The following statements were developed by eight different working groups of participants during the planning workshops.

1. “Rural and agricultural character are maintained and protected. No through roads into Greene County from Halcott. Sustain current environment. Maintain good government.”
2. “Halcott has maintained its rural character. There is no through traffic and people drive with respect. Halcott is a clean place for people and animals. Development has been limited. There are wholesome and safe outlets for family and neighborly entertainment. Halcott people agree to create and maintain a small town vision.”
3. “Maintain community involvement in town affairs. Utilize current and future assets. Maintain open space and rural character. Regulate to maintain quality of life.”
4. “Land management and architectural awareness fosters the growth of varied, low impact, rural, traditional businesses to build a community that attracts a dynamic mix of talents and skills. We offer recreational activities for visitors as well as knit residents together along traditional rural lines which feature wholesome gatherings while maintaining good roads.”
5. “Halcott is a small responsive community responding to the needs of all tax-paying members. Agriculture is stimulated and sustained in a non-polluting manner. We have maintained and preserved low traffic along non-thoroughfare roadways. We have established a school system and tax in a more equitable way. We have retained the undeveloped environment that preserves the natural beauty of the area.”
6. “We think it is very important to maintain a quality of single family residences to keep a sense of limited population density. The Town should address how our roads are used and regulated. The Town Hall and Grange is the gathering place of the community and is enhanced by the “Times of Halcott”. Our rural farming appearance and community is maintained. The church is an important gathering place of the community. Neighbors work together and respect each other. The Town government listens to all. We have a Town post office. We are interested in small development such as a small grocery store, and we have trash pick-up.”
7. “We maintain low population density via proper zoning, have clean air and low noise pollution, keep visual pollution to a minimum, lack through-traffic keeping the town secluded. We have an unspoiled landscape with homes and farms blending into valleys, flats, and mountains.”
8. “We have exciting weather patterns. We have maintained our rural character. Our school is improved with surrounding counties to provide for our needs. We maintain a caring community atmosphere at gatherings. We keep the farms and open spaces with no development. We have retained the historical character of the area.”

## **Common Vision Elements Identified**

The list below includes elements, characteristics and descriptions of what many people desire for the future of Halcott. These sentiments were commonly identified (not listed in priority order):

- FNo industry
- FOne road
- FNo wind turbines or cell towers on ridges
- FSchools and services are improved, close to town, small, state of the art. Education has a priority in our budget, equitable taxing
- FMaintain beauty and rural character of area: Lots of open space, a blend of forest and pasture land, undeveloped land, nature, is the most conspicuous aspect of town, rural character, established wildlife preserve and forever wild areas, large, open fields, zoning regulations are restrictive to development that is unsympathetic to the rural character of the town.
- FClean air and water, wildlife
- F Strong sense of community: have an active church that is welcoming and serves the community, friendly people, people remain considerate of one another, community togetherness, lots of cooperation, minimal political conflicts, Town government that listens to all people, cooperation between people and government, communicate well, good neighbors that know each other
- FTranquility
- FLow population density, no multi-family housing, and conventional subdivisions, new construction of homes built in traditional architectural vernacular, City has purchased much of the property but allows recreation and farm use, no fast food outlets,
- FFarms are thriving: Farms, small organic farms, a center for sustainable agriculture, continued balance of agricultural and residential development, direct sales of ag products to community
- FCommunity Services: Garbage services, community center with swimming pool and activities for children, has maintained community activities and functions such as the Halcott Fair, social activities, Times of Halcott, continued good maintenance of town roads, a functioning town hall, Grange is complete and a working and thriving organization, variety of small resources, b/b's etc., Grange is painted, welcome wagon packets for new residents, traffic is reduced, less traffic speeding

### **Less Common Vision Elements Identified**

- FLimited recreation from outside sources
- FTown should maintain state lean-to.
- FBuried utilities
- FRelative freedom
- FNot gentrified
- FHas small town economic development such as small grocery, an active town center
- FA post office
- FRoad maintenance without destructive road development
- FHiking trails on state park land
- FDiverse town of all ages
- FNoted for 4 season outdoor sports
- FMany once part time residents have retired here and live full time
- FNo poverty
- FPeople can telecommute and work from their homes
- FZoning laws established
- FLeash laws established
- FAffordable taxes
- FCultural tradition to pass to the next generation



# Goals and Issues Survey

The Comprehensive Plan Committee presented the vision statement and draft goals to the public for comment. Before recommended strategies were developed, the Committee felt it was important to obtain feedback from the community on the direction the vision and goals establish for Halcott. These statements were presented at a public meeting and a survey was mailed to all residents and landowners asking for comments. The full results can be found in Appendix 5. Overall, there was a very high degree of agreement with the goals and vision statement. Eighty-two or 98% percent of the participants agreed with the goal statements. Many goals had 90% or more of all participants indicating they agreed with the goals. Only one goal received a lower percentage (76% of participants agreed with the statement “Forestry and woodland operations are encouraged”.) About 95% of participants agreed with the vision statement. Overall, this survey showed that there is a high degree of agreement with the direction established for Halcott by the vision and goals.

# Critical Issues Facing the Town

**Issue 1: Environmental Limitations.** The mountainous terrain found in Halcott poses many severe limitations to development and building in a large portion of Town. Soils are very poor in most locations and have characteristics that result in severe limitations for placement of septic systems. Many locations have exposed bedrock, and steep slopes. Environmental conditions are such that inappropriate or poorly sited development has the potential to result in erosion and sedimentation of Halcott's streams, as well as impact the town's rural character and natural beauty. Streams currently have high water quality and as development increases, there is the potential for impairing stream water quality. Residents have identified a clean environment, non-polluted skies, a quiet setting, the area's natural beauty and abundant wildlife as important characteristics that should be preserved. All of these characteristics are intricately tied to the physical environment of Halcott.

**Issue 2: Land Use.** Even with the many limitations imposed by the physical conditions of Halcott, there is still an abundance of developable land that exists. Site Plan Review and Subdivision laws may not meet the goals established by this plan. There is a fear among residents that future residential development could change the character and environment of Halcott.

People in general like the absence of commercial and industrial development; however, there are those that do feel there is need for additional local shopping opportunities. There was universal support among those who participated in the planning workshops for developing control mechanisms to regulate undesired or inappropriate activities. The Town of Halcott has been identified as a possible location for placement of wind towers for electricity generation.

**Issue 3: Visual Resources.** Overwhelmingly, most people don't want to see the town change substantially from what it is now. Many locations in Halcott have been identified as having significant aesthetic resources. Both statewide and local visual resources exist in Halcott. The rural character and natural beauty of the town was the most positive aspect identified by residents and residents are fearful that these resources will be negatively impacted by inappropriate or poorly sited development. Some residents feel there are too many unkempt yards, junk cars, and garbage dumping in town.

**Issue 4: Agriculture & Forestry.** People highly value the small family farms and working landscapes remaining in Halcott. Physical conditions and soil characteristics limit areas that are suitable for crops or more intensive agriculture. Only a few commercial dairy farms remain in operation. Open lands are an important part of the landscape not only because of agriculture, but because they contribute to the towns rural character and break up an environment dominated by woodlands. There is a desire among residents to encourage small, sustainable agricultural operations.

**Issue 5: Community character.** People highly value Halcott's small town feeling. There needs to be greater appreciation of the existing community centers in town (the Church and Grange Hall). There is a need and desire to enhance preservation of the town's rich history.

**Issue 6: Housing Growth.** Although the population level has increased at only a moderate rate, the number of households in Halcott grew at a much higher rate, outpacing the population increase. There has been a 9.5% increase in the number of houses. This means that there are more households and houses for about the same number of people. It is likely that this trend is highly influenced by seasonal home building (see also Issue 3). Communities that have low or slow population growth at the same time as higher rates of

housing growth can indicate an occurrence of rural sprawl. Further, as housing continues to be built, there is the potential for impacts to the many characteristics valued by residents: Halcott's rural and small town character and natural beauty.

**Issue 7: Transportation.** A majority of residents like the current rural road system and limited access to the town that makes Halcott a destination town rather than a pass-through. There is concern that new or improved roads will be out of context for our rural area. Several issues related to roads have been identified including a) lack of maintenance along Route 3 to Lexington, eliminating that route as an access between Halcott and the rest of Greene County; b) speeding; c) lack of road markings and signage; d) inappropriate roadside maintenance of trees and banks along County Route 3; e) identification of hazardous intersections of Elk Creek and Halcott roads; and f) the very large portion of the total Town budget for highway work.

**Issue 8: Public Services.** There is poor access to garbage and trash facilities in Halcott, as well as a lack of services from, and a feeling of connection to, the rest of Greene County. Some feel that there is also a lack of police presence, and that distances are too far for efficient emergency crews' access.

**Issue 9: Low income levels and job opportunities.** The number of people on public assistance decreased almost 30% over the past decade, but at the same time, the number of people living below the poverty level increased to 44 people (a 238% increase between 1990 and 2000, and 23% of entire population in 2000). The area is economically depressed and there are few employment opportunities nearby. Although there are limited job opportunities and low-income levels among some residents, many do not wish to see commercial development take place in Halcott. There is a desire among many residents to encourage home-based and sustainable businesses, and other enterprises that are consistent with the rural and undeveloped nature of Halcott.

**Issue 10: Nuisances.** One of the most common identified nuisance problems was with unsupervised dogs. Some also feel that trespassing of snowmobiles and ATV's are a problem. Use of ATV's on roads is perceived as both a nuisance and a safety issue.

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## Vision Statement for Halcott

“In the future, our natural beauty and secluded, rural character remain the most prominent features of Halcott. The landscape is a mix of undeveloped open and forested land, thriving farms, and low-density rural residences that are consistent with Halcott’s traditional character. Clean air and water, unobstructed views of the mountains, and an abundant wildlife community exist throughout the town. Agriculture is actively encouraged and sustained locally in a non-polluting manner. Sensible land use regulations control new uses and encourage low impact development that meet the needs of the community, enhances quality of life, and preserves the character and environment of our town. Halcott has a strong sense of community where people are friendly, tolerant, considerate, and welcoming, and where there is a high degree of cooperation and communication between citizens and the local government. Quality public services will include road maintenance, emergency services, recreational and cultural activities, solid waste management, and schools. The Grange Hall remains the central focus for activities in town.”

# Recommendations and Goals

## Guiding Principle:

**The Town will be guided in its policies by an effort to protect Halcott's quality environment and natural resources and minimize negative impacts on them. The Town will institute practices that are reasonable, not over-bearing, and that fairly balance public and private needs.**



## 1. Land Use

Halcott will utilize land use laws appropriate to a small town to maintain its rural character. The Town will continue to operate with an understanding of the New York City watershed regulations and will consider the impact of Town policy on state-owned lands and Catskill Forest Preserve lands located within Town boundaries.

**STRATEGIES:** In order to accomplish Halcott's land use goal, the town should undertake the following strategies:

- 1) Amend the existing town Subdivision Law so that:
  - a) Local regulations are consistent with current New York State law (NYS Town Law Section 279). This change will clarify the project review process and help expedite applications.
  - b) The definitions are updated and comprehensive. (For example, the current definition for "comprehensive plan" is inaccurate).
  - c) The policy section is expanded to include the stated purposes of protecting open spaces, rural character and farmlands. It should also establish as town policy the need to meet the goals of this comprehensive plan. The prime goals of the plan, to protect open space, rural character and

farmlands, are not currently recognized as important policies in the subdivision law.

- d) Time frames are increased from 45 days to 62 days, to be consistent with New York State Town Law Section 276.
  - e) Language is added that discusses procedures when an environmental impact statement is required. Procedures should be included in case the Planning Board requires an environmental impact statement on a subdivision proposal, making the subdivision law consistent with New York State Town Law Section 276.
  - f) Thorough environmental reviews as per SEQRA are conducted to ensure that negative impacts to the environment are mitigated or prevented during project review. The Full Environmental Assessment form should be used to examine potential environmental topics for all Type I actions. Consider establishing a local Type I list. This would allow the Town to conduct more thorough environmental reviews for certain projects it deems to be more impacting. The Planning Board should also request applicants to fill out the Visual EAF Addendum so that impacts to viewsheds and scenic locations can be properly evaluated. The environmental review process should take into consideration the vision and goals established in this plan.
- 2) Adopt a housing density measurement instead of establishing minimum acreage requirements. (This concept is explained and illustrated in Appendix 1.)
  - 3) Define different districts in Halcott to set development density and lot layout standards. Each could be established with different housing density to help the town attain its land use goals. Here are some options:
    - a) Agricultural district with development standards for density and lot layout set with the goal of maintaining as much land open and in farming as possible. This district would include lands that are currently actively farmed. Some of the standards that could be incorporated into this district include:
      - i) Lower the density of new homes in this district. Halcott's non-forested lands are desirable places for home building as well as important areas for agriculture. Setting a lower density than currently exists for new development would allow landowners to sell their land profitably, but would limit the total number of homes in these areas;
      - ii) Set siting standards so that new homes or structures are not placed in former farm fields in a manner that detracts from the aesthetic character of the landscape;

- iii) Explore the use of flexible subdivision techniques such as clustering or conservation subdivisions (explained more fully in Appendix 2) to protect active farmlands. Implementation of these techniques would be useful to help meet this goal whether an agricultural district was established or not. There are a variety of ways that these techniques could be implemented in Halcott. For example, use of conservation subdivisions could be voluntary everywhere, mandatory for major subdivisions, mandatory in certain districts or locations, or a combination of all these. These types of subdivisions allow creative development that fits the landscape; give landowners a high degree of flexibility and creativity; are easy to apply; are effective techniques to protect specific features present on a site; allow site by site development rather than spreading rigid standards throughout the town; and have been shown to be desirable and to enhance value of properties. Because houses and farms do not often mix well, neither clustering nor conservation subdivision may adequately protect active farmlands. They can be effective techniques for protecting open spaces and enterprises such as horse boarding, small livestock and organic farms. NYS Town Law Section 278 governs use of clustered subdivisions.
- b) Hamlet district. This district is recommended to have a housing density of 1 unit per two to three acres. The Town might use the boundaries for the hamlet as established with the NYC watershed but expand it for future growth. All types of residential and commercial development should be allowed. The advantages of having a hamlet district include:
  - i) Development of smaller lot sizes as soils permit. This would result in more opportunities for affordable housing lots. Lower lot size in this district might be the minimum required for placement of a septic system.
  - ii) Establishment of higher density than elsewhere in town which would result in new development more consistent with traditional hamlet style development. (Higher density would also make housing more reasonable for lower income families.)
  - iii) Use of either required or voluntary design standards or guidelines for commercial businesses in this district would ensure that new development is consistent with the rural and hamlet character and quality of the environment. Voluntary or mandatory hamlet design and siting standards might be adopted.
  - iv) Development of a hamlet area could promote community spirit and formation of cohesive neighborhoods.

- c) Rural district. This district is recommended as having a housing density of 1 unit per 5 acres. Commercial agricultural operations and small farms should be encouraged to continue as a major land use in this district. This district would include most of the land currently served by county and town roads.



The goal for this district made up of farms, residences, and undeveloped lands would assure that the rural character continues and intense development is avoided. This proposed rural district would strengthen both the community center/ hamlet concept and the remaining rural areas of Town. Several tools might be incorporated into this district such as use of rural design standards, establishment of a moderate density of development, and use of clustering or conservation subdivisions for subdivision layout. Like the hamlet district, it is not recommended that any restrictions be placed on the specific use or type of development (whether it be farm, residential, or commercial). Landowners would have the flexibility and freedom to decide what type of use they want, but would need to meet certain requirements in order to have a use approved. Some of the ideas that could be incorporated into this district include:

- i) The Town should set a density that can be supported by the environment of this district, and ensure a layout that promotes open space and farmland.
- ii) The Town may want to consider placing size limits on commercial buildings to prevent very large commercial and non-farm buildings (casinos, resorts, etc.). Home occupations should be allowed throughout the town and this district. Access to lots should be done in a manner that is consistent with rural road standards and so that there is a minimum of new road-building.
- iii) Since this district would encompass active farmland, the Town could apply specific farmland protection techniques (see Box 1). As an alternative approach the active farmlands could be separated from this rural district to create another district called agriculture (see option above).
- iv) Use incentives to encourage meeting the town's goals. One beneficial incentive would be to offer a density "bonus" (See Box 1), which is authorized under New York State law. Essentially a density bonus is an agreement to give a landowner MORE density (more houses) in return for protection of a ridge or steep slope, placing a



- conservation easement to protect open space, providing affordable lots or houses, building a hiking, horse, or ATV trail through the property, etc. Coupling the density requirements set for the district with the offering of density bonuses is an amicable compromise between town goals and individual needs.
- d) Steep slope district. This district could have a housing density of 1 unit per 20 acres. Building on steep slopes is difficult, can cause erosion and sedimentation, degradation of water quality, loss of character and disruption of wildlife travel corridors (along ridgelines). Establishment of a very low density will serve to protect this critical resource in Halcott. In addition to setting a density, 1 unit per 20 acres, for example, will protect this critical resource.
  - e) The town could also designate ridgelines and steep slopes as a critical environmental area, under SEQRA.
- 4) If Halcott ultimately chooses not to establish these suggested land use districts, then the town should continue to consider using one or more of the other techniques including conservation subdivisions, clustering, density requirements instead of minimum lot sizes, density bonus incentives, and using an environmental formula to take into consideration site by site characteristics and limitations (See Appendix 3). There are many ways to mix and match these techniques to be effective.

#### Box 1 Density Bonuses

Using incentives such as density bonuses: Density bonuses are incentives authorized under New York State law. “Essentially it is when you give a landowner MORE density (more houses) in return for something desired by the town such as protection of a ridge or steep slope, placement of a conservation easement to protect open space, providing affordable lots or houses, building a hiking, horse, or ATV trail through the property, etc. One very positive aspect of density bonuses is that it is always better to offer an incentive. They are win-win situations for the town and the landowner. On the negative side, implementing a density bonus will require an extra step as New York State law requires the town to hold a public hearing and do SEQR when you offer a density bonus.

## 2. Visual Resources

Policies will guide site development to conserve the rural views valued by the community.

**STRATEGIES:** In order to accomplish Halcott's visual resources goal, the town should undertake the following strategies:

- 1) Amend Site Plan Review Law so that:
  - a) Local regulations are consistent with NYS law (NYS Town Law Section 274-a). In addition to making local law consistent with legal requirements established by state law, this will help make the review process clear and should help in expediting an application.
  - b) Change the 45-day periods to 62 days, as required by the NY State law.
  - c) Give authority to the Planning Board to attach conditions to the approval of site plans. This authority is currently implied but not specifically stated in the local law. It is much safer to have a statement authorizing the Planning Board to attach conditions.
  - d) Give authority to the Planning Board to waive requirements on a case-by-case basis, for flexibility to plan and make decisions as they see fit. All waivers should be in writing. Without specific authority to waive requirements, the Planning Board does not have the ability to do so. This provision is in the local subdivision law but not in site plan review.
  - e) Give authority to the Planning Board to require a performance bond or other security, as they see fit. There may be a case (when a very large proposal comes in, for example) when a performance bond is critical to assuring that there is compliance with the Planning Board conditions.
  - f) Add more detail for required timeframe in the event that a public hearing is held as opposed to when one is not held. This language should follow and be consistent with NYS law.
  - g) Add a provision for court review to ensure that local regulations are consistent with NYS law.
  - h) Add a reference to this Comprehensive Plan and its stated goals (Article 1, Section C). The Comprehensive Plan is the basis for land use regulations. It outlines the specific goals the town is seeking to meet, and should be referenced as additional purpose statements. This will help tie the two documents together as needed.
  - i) Add a definition section to clarify terms.
- 2) Amend the local Site Plan Review Law to provide additional standards to meet the established goals of the plan. Use pictures and illustrations to clarify

requirements and expectations. Additional language and illustrations will help, for example, administer Article IV of the Site Plan Review law. It asks the Planning Board to consider the “adequacy” of a variety of site features. However, “adequate” is not defined. How will the Planning Board understand this term? What options are available to make something adequate? Pictures will help define the parameters of “adequate”. Several options can be used to incorporate new illustrations.

- i) They could be included as required standards in the site plan law (with option for waiving certain requirements), or
  - ii) Halcott can specifically state that the illustrations are to guide the planning board and applicant, or
  - iii) The town could develop a separate document that is a design guideline/manual. A nicely illustrated document could provide design criteria and development approaches. Such a manual could be used for site plan, as well as for subdivision. However, voluntary guideline/manuals traditionally have a very poor track record of actually being used unless the Planning Board really pushes it. Therefore, many communities have incorporated the design as required standards into site plan and subdivision.
- b) Include additional considerations and/or standards that are not currently incorporated in site plan review. Specifically, the site plan law should allow review of traffic flow patterns, layout and design, protection of streams, and reduction of erosion and sedimentation. These are areas where new development could negatively impact the environment and existing character but are not currently detailed in the review process.
- 3) Town Board should review the local Junk, Junk Car and Garbage Dumping Ordinances to ensure that they are updated and consistent with goals. After this review the Town Board must agree that these laws will be enforced.
  - 4) Have a yearly “clean up our property week” and provide a dumpster for refuse. Through town publicity efforts, encourage residents and visitors not to litter.
  - 5) Protect Steep Slopes and Ridgelines and their visual resources by designating these areas as “Critical Environmental Areas”. A Critical Environmental Area (CEA), authorized under New York State Environmental Conservation Law, establishes a designation that requires any development within this area to be considered a Type I action under SEQRA. As such, the planning board must take a harder look at the environmental impact of the proposal before making a decision. As a Type I action, any proposal in a CEA would require use of the Full Environmental Assessment Form, rather than the shorter Environmental Assessment Form to be filled out and evaluated. There are no other regulations attached. CEA’s are also useful to educate people about the

critical nature of these areas and serve as another avenue to involve people in the planning and review process. Other government agencies also need to take into consideration the existence of a CEA during their project development.

- 6) Amend the local Site Plan Review Law to reflect the need to conserve scenic views using the scenic inventory and viewshed maps from this plan in the review process. This will help determine if any visual impacts might occur as a result of new development.
- 7) Explore the implementation of a regulation on tall structures, which is consistent with the goals of this plan.

### 3. Community Character

The continuation of Halcott's rural atmosphere will be maintained by preserving open space, establishing the Town's center, and promoting the Town's historical resources.

**STRATEGIES:** In addition to the strategies outlined in Goals 1 and 2, above, the town should undertake the following strategies in order to accomplish Halcott's community character goal:

- 1) Inform and encourage landowners to manage their farm and forestland with voluntary use of best management practices. This can be accomplished through lectures on land management sponsored by the town, presentations on free forest management plans, and other educational opportunities.
- 2) Foster support of the town's efforts to renovate and maintain the Grange Hall as a community center.
- 3) Provide information about the potential for landowners interested in conservation easements to sell their development rights.
- 4) Publicize locally produced farm products to weekend and full-time homeowners. Promote cooperative projects (i.e., community supported agriculture; growers groups).
- 5) Continue to support **The Times of Halcott** as a vehicle to promote information about Halcott history.
- 6) Furnish a history room in the Town Grange Hall.
- 7) Explore the transfer of the Town's traditions from the older to the younger generation. (For example, have a maple sugar day so that children can participate in the local experience and connect with the agriculture history of the Town. Promote the traditional Catskill music to the next generation through cultural exchange, lessons, etc.)

### 4. Transportation

Existing roads will be maintained in a safe and cost-effective manner. New development will not create negative impacts on the rural quality of existing roads.

**STRATEGIES:** In order to accomplish Halcott's transportation goal, the town should undertake the following strategies:

- 1) Update the local Subdivision Law to institute rural road standards for new roads.

- 2) Update the local Subdivision Law to allow review and consider traffic impacts of a proposed subdivision. A large development could cause changes to either the character of the town's rural roads or to traffic levels, or to both. Traffic impact should be reviewed, and standards offered to protect the rural roads, if relevant to that proposal. The Town's subdivision regulations should offer methods to control future traffic congestion by reducing the number of driveways from a subdivision to the existing public road, by use of shared driveways and/or access roads to the public roadway, and by setting minimum separation requirements for driveways.

- 3) Adopt Cornell's Guidelines for Rural Town and County Roads, as well as



standards for when the town could take over roads. These provide standards for road maintenance based on the volume of the road, with some low volume roads classified as minimum maintenance roads. The Town would be responsible for classifying roads and

developing maintenance plans for them.

- 4) Abandon roads no longer used that might lead to possible future burdens on the Town.

## 5. Community Services and Community Building

Communication will be encouraged among all residents. The Town will seek solutions for providing adequate garbage removal and emergency services through Greene County or through reciprocal arrangements with adjacent counties. Townspeople will be educated about existing community resources. The Town will improve recreational opportunities for our residents.

**STRATEGIES:** In order to accomplish Halcott's community services and community building goal, the town should undertake the following strategies:

- 1) Establish a town ATV/Snow Mobile Club, whose members would work with the town to identify, maintain and police town trails.
- 2) Join Delaware County's Clean Sweep program.
- 3) Inform residents about Catskill Watershed Corporation septic replacement program and alternate septic replacement program.

- 4) Provide information to residents about the effects of contaminants (i.e., cleaning solvents, pesticides) when they leach into groundwater or surface water and encourage the use of environmentally friendly alternatives.
- 5) Establish a committee to explore recreational needs in the community.
- 6) Local and state laws currently exist to address the nuisances identified in the Comprehensive Plan survey (dogs, ATVs, speeding cars, etc.). The Town Board will work with citizens and enforcement officials to alleviate the problems.
- 7) Continue to encourage participation in the Halcott Fair and other local events.
- 8) Establish a committee to investigate how to take advantage of Green County services such as Meals on Wheels, HeadStart, nursing services, etc.

## 6. Job Opportunities

Home-based and small businesses that are consistent with the rural character and quality environment of the Town will be encouraged.

**STRATEGIES: In order to accomplish Halcott's job opportunities goal, the town should undertake the following strategies:**

- 1) Create workshop(s) on small business topics to be held in the Grange Hall.
- 2) Use **The Times of Halcott (TTOH)** for articles highlighting area small business owners and information about upcoming workshops and events. Existing small businesses or hobby ventures such as cake decorating, hair cutting, artwork, or construction, could be informally advertised in **TTOH**.
- 3) Construct a community bulletin board at the Grange Hall.
- 4) Work towards future development of a directory, map or some other "advertisement" for local businesses (on the website, local paper, etc.).

# Action Plan

The following table summarizes all the recommendations and potential strategies that Halcott could implement to meet the vision and goals detailed in this plan. Each action is also identified by priority and group or organization that could undertake implementation of the task. The time frames are organized as follows:

- uHigh Priority (Consider implementation in the first two years after adoption of the plan)
- uIntermediate Priority (Consider implementation in years three to five after adoption)
- uLong-term Priority (Consider implementation in years six through ten after adoption)
- uOngoing (task can be implemented on an ongoing basis)

Ultimately, the Town Board has the primary responsibility to implement this plan. They can however, assign specific duties and tasks to various groups including the planning board, or they can appoint ad-hoc committees to help them. Groups recommended to be involved in implementing these tasks include:

- uTown Board Members (TB)
- uPlanning Board (PB)
- uGreene County Planning Department (GC)
- uLocal organizations or groups (LO)
- uBuilding Inspector (BI)
- uAd-Hoc Committee (AC)
- uTown Assessor (TA)

Summary of Recommended Strategy	Time Frame	Town Board to Receive Assistance From:	Plan Page Reference
<b>Land Use*</b>			
Amend the existing town subdivision law for clarification, consistency with state requirements, and consistency with this plan	H	TB, PB, AC	47
Adopt housing density measurements instead of minimum lot sizes	H	TB, PB, AC	48
Explore establishing districts with density and lot layout standards	H	TB, PB, AC	48
Update existing subdivision law to allow for use of clustering, conservation easements and other flexible subdivision techniques	H	TB, PB, AC	51
If density is established, set up mechanisms to offer density bonuses and consider using an environmental control formula to fine-tune allowable density on a parcel by parcel basis	I	TB, PB, AC	51
Explore a transfer of development rights program	I	TB, PB, AC	51



Summary of Recommended Strategy	Time Frame	Town Board to Receive Assistance From:	Plan Page Reference
<b>Visual Resources</b>			
Amend existing site plan law to be consistent with NYS Law, for clarity, and to provide additional standards to meet the goals of this plan (protection of identified scenic locations, review of traffic impacts, layout and design, stream protection, erosion and sediment control)	H	TB, PB, AC	51
Establish a community “clean-up” program	I	TB, GC, LO, AC	53
Protect steep slopes and ridgelines by designating these areas as critical environmental areas under SEQRA	I	TB, PB	53
Implement regulations of tall structures that are consistent with this plan	H	TB, GC	53
<b>Community Character</b>			
Inform and encourage landowners about best management practices for farms and woodlands	O	TB, PB, LO	54
Continue to foster support for the Grange Hall as a community center	O	TB	54
Provide information on conservation easement programs to interested landowners	O	TB, PB, BI, TA	54
Work to enhance marketing of locally produced farm products	O	TB, LO	54
Continue Times of Halcott	O	TB	54
Furnish a history room in the Grange Hall	L	TB, LO, AC	54
Explore a generational transfer program for traditions and town history	L	LO, AC	54
<b>Transportation</b>			
Institute rural road standards	I	TB	54
Update Subdivision to consider and review traffic impacts of new development	H	TB, PB	55
Abandon roads no longer used	I	TB	55
<b>Community Services and Community Building</b>			
Establish town ATV/snowmobile club to identify, maintain and police town trails	I	TB, LO	55
Join Delaware County Clean Sweep program	O	TB	55
Educate residents about the CWC septic replacement program and alternate septic program	O	TB, LO	56
Educate residents about effects of contaminants	O	TB	56
Establish and support a committee to explore recreational needs	I	TB, AC	56
Update where needed, and enforce local and state laws to address identified nuisances	O	TB, BI	56

Summary of Recommended Strategy	Time Frame	Town Board to Receive Assistance From:	Plan Page Reference
<b>Job Opportunities</b>			
Create workshops for local residents on small business topics to foster entrepreneurship	O	TB, DC	56
Construct a community bulletin board	H	TB with input from PB, DC, and perhaps AC	56
Continue Halcott Fair and other local events	O	TB	56
Develop map or directory of local businesses	L	TB	56

\* It may be useful to initiate an Ad-Hoc committee to assist the Planning Board and Town Board in developing these ideas further.

# Appendix 1

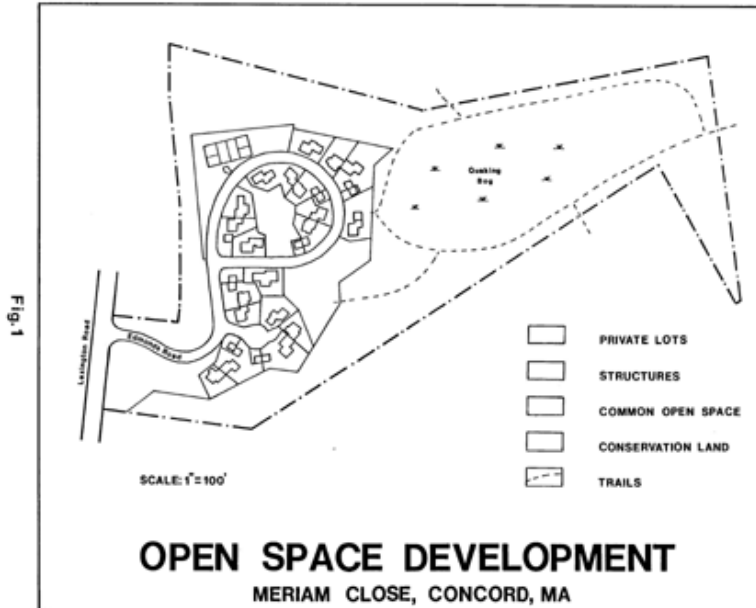
## Minimum Lot Size vs. Density Measurements

Many communities control growth by establishing a minimum lot size. Minimum lot sizes are thought to be important for spreading housing density out and for providing room for placement of septic systems. However, many communities have set minimum lot sizes to be much larger than needed for septic systems. So called large lot sizes (ranging from 3 to more acres) have proven to eat up the land, result in “cookie cutter” growth patterns, and force people to buy more acreage than they may want or can afford. A more preferable method to control density is to put less emphasis on minimum lot size, and instead, use a true density measurement by establishing the number of dwellings per acre. Lot sizes should be flexible, and must still be large enough to house a septic leach field. However, when lot size is separated from density, the landowner gains the ability to be flexible and creative in the development of the parcel. Cluster developments and conservation subdivisions become possible. It also allows better use of incentives such as density bonuses and methods such as transfer of development rights.

The example below illustrates this point. For example, a 90-acre parcel is slated for subdivision. Under current town regulations using a three-acre minimum lot size, 30 home sites could be created and each would have to be at least 3 acres in size. A conventional subdivision typically would look like the picture below. Except for one wetland in the middle, every piece of this parcel is included in a house lot. The development seeks to place as many 3-acre parcels as possible and little regard is usually shown for the terrain and environment on the site.



However, if a density was set to be 1 dwelling per 3 acres with a minimum lot size large enough for a septic system, a much different layout of those same 30 homes could occur. The parcel would still be eligible for the same 30 houses. The critical issue is the un-coupling of lot size from density. Now clustering, conservation subdivisions, and other creative layouts are possible.



# Appendix 2

## Explanation of Environmental Control Formulas

Environmental performance is a concept that could work well in Halcott. This is when land use regulations are based on how an activity will “perform”, i.e. impact the environment. It pays more attention to effects of development rather than to what type of use it is. Under this type of land use law, districts are set to match environmental limitations. Densities are set for that particular district, but can be modified on a parcel-by-parcel basis to take into consideration site-specific conditions. Density is ultimately set based on the specific environmental conditions and limitations found on the proposed site.

A baseline development intensity such as recommended in this plan is usually set by the community and this figure is then modified to reflect environmental constraints on the property.

There are two ways that environmental performance standards could be used:

1) The first method sets density for areas designated as having extremely severe, severe, and moderate limitations for development. These areas would be identified on a map.

**The following is an example of this:** Recommended densities for those areas having “extremely severe limitations” would be 0 to .1 dwelling units per acre to be transferred to the developable portion of the site, or off-site to another parcel if there are no buildable spots. Those areas with “severe limitations” could have a .1 to .2 dwelling unit density per acre, “moderate limitations” a density of .2 to .4 dwelling units per acre, and unconstrained lands a density greater than 2 dwelling units per acre. All development is transferred to the most developable portions of the site.

2) The second method to set density based on environmental limitations is to use a multiplication factor. Here, the density that has been set for the entire district is reduced, based on specific environmental features present at the site. The multiplication factor reduces the number of units allowed if that feature is present. **An example** of how a multiplication factor could be used is as follows:

Environmental Feature	Multiplication Factor
Open Water on Site	0.0 units
Wetlands	0.05 units
Flood Plain	0.2 units
Slopes over 10%	0.2 units
Preserved Historic or Archaeological Site	2.0 units
Aquifer Recharge	0.2 units
Non-constrained Land	1.0 units

The following example shows how this system could work:

Site Area is 97 acres and is in a district that has a base density of 3 dwelling units per acre

Site	Acreage Of Resource On Parcel	Base Density	Multiplication Factor	Maximum # Units
Open Water	3	3	.0	0
Wetlands	10	3	.05	1.5
Floodplain	5	3	.2	3
Slopes >10%	10	3	.2	6
Aquifer	1	3	.2	.6
Historic	1	3	2	6
Non-constrained	67	3	1	201

TOTAL SITE CAPACITY THAT TAKES INTO CONSIDERATION THE ENVIRONMENTAL LIMITATIONS PRESENT WOULD BE 216 units.

This compares to a conventional system that would yield 291 units at the base density of 3 dwellings per acre. This parcel would be allowed to have 216 units with all units transferred to the non-constrained portion of the site.

## Appendix 3

### Definitions

**Best Management Practices:** State of the art technology as applied to a specific problem or topic. Best Management Practices presents physical or strategic approaches to environmental problems, particularly with respect to nonpoint source pollution control.

**Critical Environmental Areas:** CEA's are specific geographic areas that have exceptional or unique environmental characteristics. Delineation of CEA's is authorized under New York State Environmental Conservation Law.

**Comprehensive Plan:** A comprehensive, long-range plan intended to guide the growth and development of a community that typically includes inventory and analytic sections leading to recommendations for the community's future economic development, housing, recreation and open space, transportation, community facilities, and land use, all related to the community's goals and objectives for these elements.

**Conservation Easement:** The grant of a property right stipulating that the described land will remain in its natural state or current agricultural land use and precluding future or additional development. Conservation easements can be perpetual or term (limited time duration, usually 25 years.)

**Conservation subdivision:** A form of subdivision where house sites are located specifically to protect open space, environmentally sensitive areas, or agriculture. Conservation subdivisions may result in houses being clustered, but not necessarily so. The number of house lots eligible to be built is determined from the established base density.

**Clustering:** A form of subdivision that permits reduction in lot area and bulk requirements, provided there is no increase in the number of lots permitted under a conventional subdivision or increase in the overall density of development, and the remaining land area is devoted to open space, active recreation, preservation of environmentally sensitive areas, or agriculture. Clustering results in houses being placed in closer proximity to each other on one portion of a parcel.

**Density:** The number of dwelling units or individual residences per acre

**Density bonus:** As authorized under New York State Town Law, density bonuses are incentives that may be offered to developers in exchange for the developer providing one or more community benefits including open space or parks, affordable housing, day or elder care, or other specific physical, social, or cultural amenities that benefit the residents of the community. A density bonus allows more residential units than is otherwise permitted under local laws.

**Design Standards:** A set of guidelines defining parameters to be followed in site and/or building design and development.

**Environmental Control Formula:** A formula that can be used to modify the allowable density on a property to take into consideration specific environmental features on a site that may limit development capability.

**Environmental Impact Statement:** A statement of the effect of proposed development, and other major private or governmental actions, on the environment. In New York, the State Environmental Quality Review Act governs preparation and review of an environmental impact statement.

**Environmental Assessment Form:** A form prescribed under SEQRA to evaluate and review potential negative environmental impacts that may result from some action being taken by a local municipality.

**Site Plan Review:** The process whereby the Planning Board reviews a development plan for one or more lots on which is shown the existing and proposed conditions of the lot.

**Subdivision:** The division of a lot, tract, or parcel of land into two or more lots, tracts, parcels, or other divisions of land for sale, development, or lease.



# Appendix 4

## Results of the Goals and Issues Survey

### Topic: Halcott's Environment

- ♦Goal 1a: New programs, policies, and/or local laws will protect sensitive environmental locations.

**Yes 83 (95.4%)      No 2 (2.3%)      I'm Not Sure 2 (2.3%)**

- ♦Goal 1b: Nonpoint source pollution of streams, wetlands, and other water resources will be minimized.

**Yes 80 (93%)      No 1 (1.2%)      I'm Not Sure 5 (6%)      1 Blank**

**Comments Received:** I do not believe we should allow any pollution

What does non-point mean

- ♦Goal 1c: Land use activities will protect the dark sky area, and the quiet countryside.

**Yes 78 (90%)      No 2 (2.3%)      I'm Not Sure 7 (8%)**

**Comments Received:** do not need

- ♦Goal 1d: Development and land use activities will not negatively impact Halcott's mountainous environment.

**Yes 80 (92%)      No 4 (4.6%)      I'm Not Sure 3 (3.5%)**

### Topic 2: Land Use

- ♦Goal 2a: Land use activities will be controlled to protect the important identified characteristics and environment of Halcott.

**Yes 78 (90%)      No 5 (5.6%)      I'm Not Sure 4(4.6%)**

**Comments Received:** controlled?  
do not need

- ♦Goal 2b: Local laws and regulations will be appropriate to a small town and do not impose unnecessary rules.

**Yes 76 (89.4%)      No 3 (3.5%)      I=m Not Sure 6 (7%)      2 Blank**

- ♦Goal 2c: Local land use planning and project review processes will recognize applicable NYC watershed requirements.

**Yes 74 (86%)      No 6 (7%)      I=m Not Sure 6 (7%)      1 Blank**

**Comments Received:** 2c do not know enough about

- ♦Goal 2d: Future land use laws, policies, and programs will take into consideration potential impacts on adjacent state land resources.

**Yes 76 (87%)      No 3 (3.5%)      I=m Not Sure 7 (8%)**

**Comments Received:** do not need

### Topic 3: Visual Resources

- ♦Goal 3a: Visual resources will be protected from inappropriate or poorly sited development.

**Yes 79 (90%)      No 2 (3.5%)      I=m Not Sure 4 (4.6%)**

**Comments Received:** we have more than we need

- ♦Goal 3b: Junk cars and trash will be controlled.

**Yes 80 (93%)      No 1(1.1%)      I=m Not Sure 4 (4.7%)      1 Blank**

**Comments Received:** I've noticed trash and litter in the course of my walks along Turk Hollow Road, Halcott Road, etc. who is doing this? Can it be controlled?

### Topic 4: Agriculture & Forestry

- ♦Goal 4a: Agricultural operations and smaller hobby farms are encouraged in Halcott.

**Yes 82 (94%)      No 0      I=m Not Sure 5 (5.8%)**

**Comments Received:** small gardens are OK, but what are agricultural operations and how will they have visual impact (a business look?) need specifics

♦Goal 4b: Forestry and woodland operations are encouraged.

**Yes 66 (76%)      No 7 (8%)      I=m Not Sure 14 (16%)**

**Comments Received:** Disagree if you are referring to timber harvesting

♦Goal 4c: Current open lands and agricultural fields are maintained.

**Yes 74 (85%)      No 2 (2.3%)      I=m Not Sure 11 (12.6%)**

♦Goal 4d: Agriculture and forestry operations do not negatively impact the environment.

**Yes**

**74 (85%)      No 6 (6.9%)      I=m Not Sure 7 (8%)**

**Comments Received:** they can – we should not let them

it depends on what the operation is and how it is handled.

♦Goal 4e: Best management practices are encouraged.

**Yes 82 (94.3%)      No 1 (1.5%)      I=m Not Sure 4 (4.6%)**

**Comments Received:** need more information

### **Topic 5: Community Character**

♦Goal 5a: The Town of Halcott will maintain its rural atmosphere of woodlands, farms, fields, and residential areas. Active agricultural lands, woodlands, and other open spaces will remain important land uses in the Town.

**Yes 83 (95.4%)      No 2 (2.3%)      I=m Not Sure 2 (2.3%)**

**Comments Received:** It is important to recognize that the character of any community changes with time. To guide this change with reasonable regulation is OK. To try to preserve or freeze the existing character of a community at any particular moment in time is unrealistic and overly restrictive.

What do you mean by land use – just leave them open.

♦Goal 5b: The Town has a recognizable focal point and center.

**Yes 71 (82.6%)      No 5 (5.8%)      I=m Not Sure 10 (11.6%)      1 Blank**

**Comments Received:** Grange Hall?

Only partially

The Grange? Used to be the post office.

♦Goal 5c: Town resources are appreciated and promoted within the community.

**Yes 76 (89.1%)      No 2 (2.3%)      I=m Not Sure 7 (8.2%)      2 Blank**

**Comments Received:** Community activities? Visits? Publicity?

I do not think they are currently being appreciated fully

♦Goal 5d: Community spirit will be enhanced and there will be excellent communication among all residents.

**Yes 77 (89.5%)      No 1 (1.6%)      I=m Not Sure 8 (9.3%)      1 Blank**

**Comments Received:** Great objective

Including seasonal residents

How do you accomplish this

♦Goal 5e: The historical resources of Halcott will be preserved and appreciation of them promoted.

**Yes 86 (98.9%)      No 1 (1.1%)      I=m Not Sure**

### **Topic 6: Housing Growth**

♦Goal 6a: The density of houses in Halcott will match both the ability of the land to support them and the community's desire to preserve their rural and small town character. Houses will be carefully sited to maintain rural character.

**Yes 79 (92.9%)      No 3 (3.5%)      I'm Not Sure 3 (3.5%)      2 Blank**

**Comments Received:** Can't build where you want on your property?

♦Goal 6b: The environment will be protected. Residential and commercial growth will be compatible with the environment. Negative impacts of new development on existing residences, scenic areas, streams, farmland, and other important natural features of the environment are eliminated or mitigated.

**Yes 74 (89%)      No 3 (3.6%)      I'm Not Sure 6 (7.2%)      4 Blank**

♦Goal 6c: Residential growth will sustain the hamlet area and other traditional development patterns.

**Yes 72 (87.8%)      No 3 (3.7%)      I'm Not Sure 7 (8.6%)      5 Blank**

### **Topic 7: Transportation**

♦Goal 7a: All roads will be maintained in a cost-effective manner and consistent with the rural character of Halcott.

**Yes 83 (97.7%)      No 2 (2.3%)      I'm Not Sure      2 Blank**

**Comments Received:** but all roads need to be safe and plowed in winter

♦Goal 7b: All roads will be safe for vehicles and pedestrians (hikers, bikers).

**Yes 82 (97.6%)      No 0      I'm Not Sure 2 (2.4%)      3 Blank**

♦Goal 7c: New development should not negatively impact the rural quality of existing roads.

**Yes 82 (95.4%)      No 2 (2.3%)      I'm Not Sure 2 (2.3%)      1 Blank**

### **Topic 8: Public Services**

♦Goal 8a: Adequate access to garbage and trash facilities will be available to Halcott residents.

**Yes 82 (96.5%)      No 0      I'm Not Sure 3 (3.5%)      2 Blank**

**Comments Received:** We need to be careful that we don't encourage too big a government in our town since the taxpayer will bear the brunt of the costs for services.

♦Goal 8b: More services will be received from Greene County or reciprocal arrangements made with Delaware County.

**Yes 78 (91%)      No 0      I'm Not Sure 8 (9.3%)      1 Blank**

♦Goal 8c: Adequate police service will be provided.

**Yes 69 (83.1%)      No 4 (4.8%)      I'm Not Sure 10 (12.1%)      4 Blank**

**Comments Received:** Should increase in the summer months with increased part time residents to protect community  
This is a dream

### **Topic 9: Low income levels and job opportunities**

♦Goal 9a: Home-based, sustainable, and other small businesses that are consistent with the rural character and quality environment of Halcott will be encouraged.

**Yes 74 (87%)      No 2 (2.4%)      I'm Not Sure 9 (10.6%)      2 Blank**

**Comments Received:** but zoning laws needed: business should be such that signs are not prominent or visible and garbage and junk is controlled and not visible and excess traffic doesn't exist. Employees not allowed or kept to a minimum.

### **Topic 10: Nuisances**

♦Goal 10a: In keeping with the rural character of Halcott, nuisance dogs will be controlled.

**Yes 77 (90.6%)      No 0      I'm Not Sure 8 (9.4%)      2 Blank**

♦Goal 10b: People using snowmobiles and ATV's will be encouraged to respect private property boundaries and remain on any trails the Town may designate in the future.

**Yes 77 (92%)      No 2 (2.4%)      I'm Not Sure 5 (6%)      3 Blank**  
**Comments Received:** no town trails  
 Enforcement of state and town regulations as well as respect for landowners wishes

**Do You Agree With the Draft Vision Statement?**

**Yes 80 (95.2%)      No 2 (2.4%)      I'm Not Sure 2 (2.4%) 3 Blank**

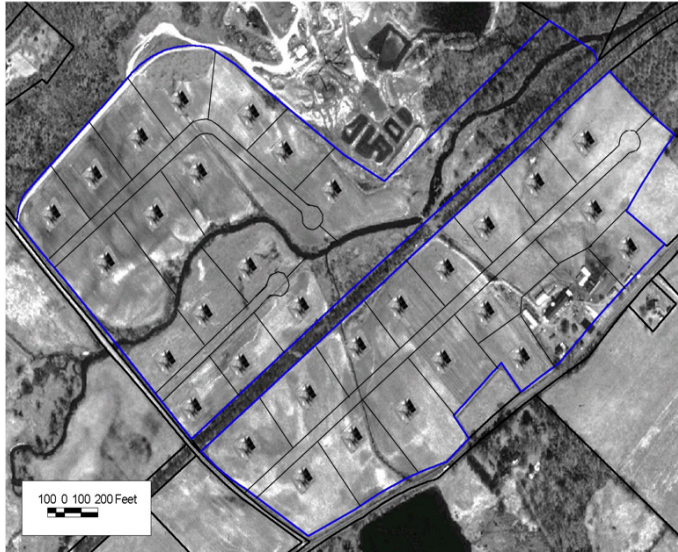
**Comments Received:**

1. Not sure how we can have emergency services and schools?
2. Re: friendly, tolerant, etc...a great objective, not sure it exists today.
3. I would like to ask the committee to consider completing the proposed road connecting us to Greene Co.
4. Reasonable protection of environmental factors with an absolute minimum infringement of personal and property rights.
5. A perfect expression of what we want and need
6. If the grange hall is the hall I think it is, it needs some sprucing up.
7. Can we do something about keeping the valley a cul de sac, that is, not extending the road over the mountain?
8. Communication is easier said than done, especially at election time.
9. These are very ambitious and noble development goals, however; will you be able to implement any of these plans without a great amount of funds that will require a substantial increase in our property taxes?
10. Dogs should be controlled not to be loose, people like to walk.
11. Will older trailers be replaced with newer trailers?
12. More rules = less friends
13. I have inherited this property and have not yet visited it. Your draft vision statement sounds fine to me.

# Appendix 5

## Illustrations of Clustering and Conservation Subdivisions

### Clustering

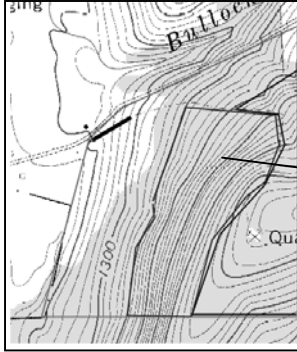


This photo shows an aerial view of a conventional subdivision of a parcel of land. This photo-simulation illustrates how use of a minimum lot size (in this case 4 acres) creates a development where every square foot of the parcel is included in a building lot. This subdivision results in no open space, loss of all potentially farmable lands, and a uniform look. This would also require a large amount of new road building to service these homes. Most subdivision laws result in this kind of subdivision.

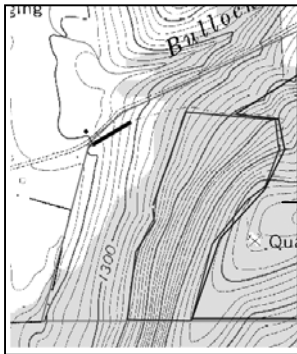


This photo-simulation shows a clustered subdivision. Here, the majority of the land remains undeveloped and there has been full protection of the stream corridor. Houses are clustered around the original farmstead. This clustered subdivision also results in fewer new roads, and smaller lots where either individual septic systems or a community waste system could be used. The undeveloped portion of the parcel is permanently protected and not subject to further subdividing.

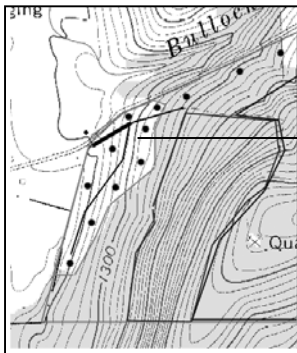
## Conservation Subdivision



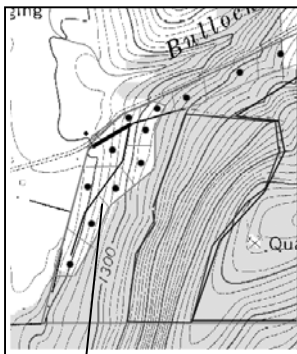
Step 1: Identify important environmental features on the parcel that should be preserved. In this case the primary conservation area is the steep slopes.



Step 2: Identify other environmental features or resources that should be preserved. In this case, the secondary conservation area is the top of the hill where a quarry exists along with the slopes immediately below it. The primary and secondary conservation areas are permanently protected with either deed restrictions or an easement.

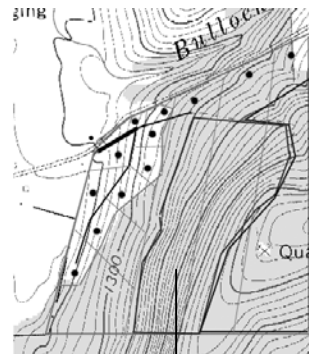


Step 3: Locate buildable areas and house sites. Houses are sited in a way to reduce the amount of new roads needed, and so that each home has either a view of or is adjacent to the preserved open space. In this example, 12 houses are sited.



Uniform  
lots  
created

Step 4. Draw in roads and finally, property lines. In this technique, property lines and sizes are the least important feature of designing the subdivision. There could be many alternate ways to draw the lot lines (see alternate example to the right). Preserved land can be owned by the original landowner or by a homeowners association (left) or be included in one or more lots (right).



Several very large lots  
created.