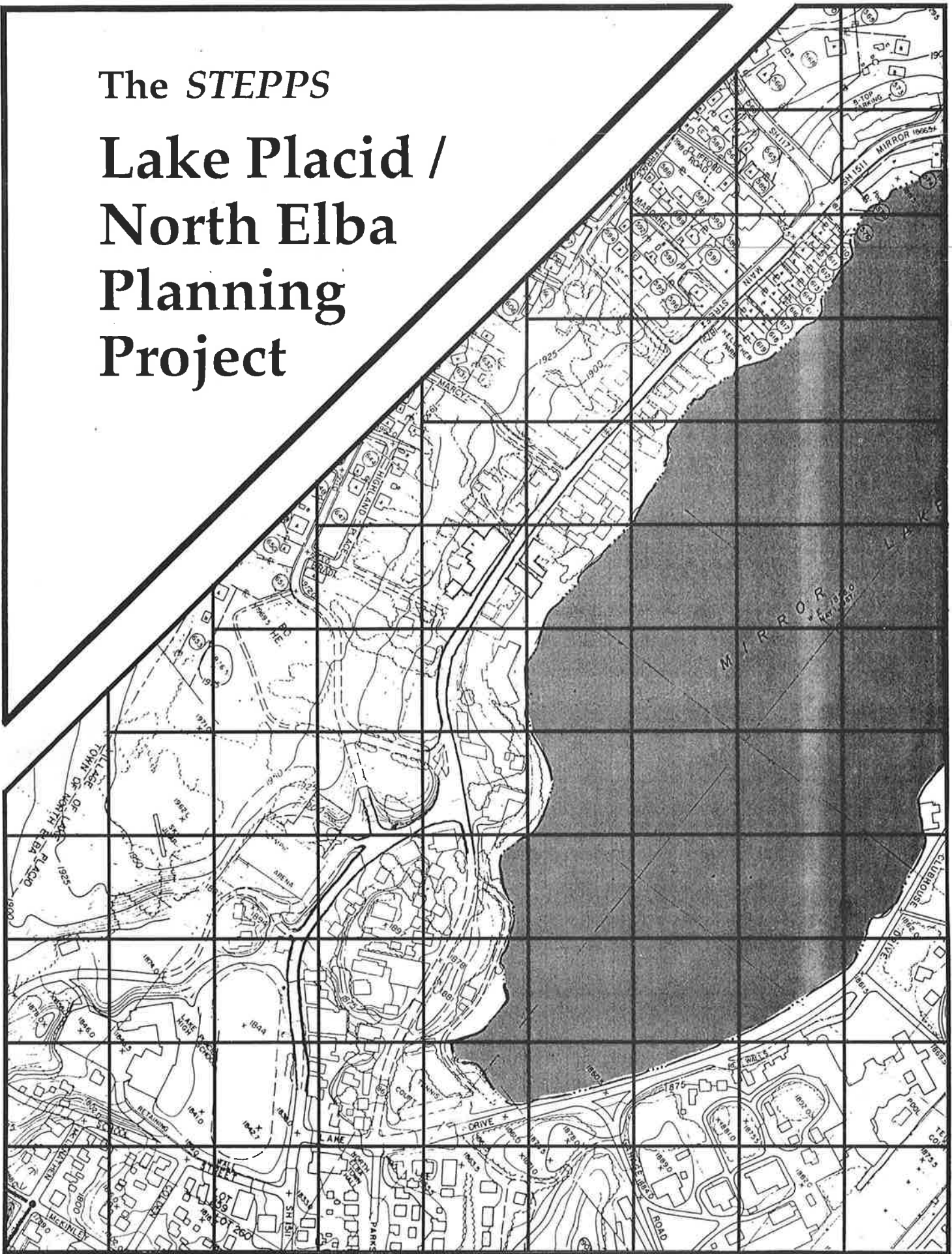


# The *STEPPS* Lake Placid / North Elba Planning Project

A detailed topographic map of the Lake Placid and Mirror Lake area. The map features a grid overlay and various geographical features including roads, trails, and buildings. Key locations labeled include 'VILLAGE OF NORTH ELBA', 'LAKE PLACID', 'MIRROR LAKE', and 'CLUBHOUSE'. The map also shows contour lines and elevation markers. A large, dark, irregular shape is overlaid on the map, possibly representing a specific area of interest or a project boundary.



# **STEPPS:** Lake Placid / North Elba Planning Project



Aerial View of Downtown Lake Placid / Mirror Lake

January 1989

# LAKE PLACID/NORTH ELBA PLANNING PROJECT

**This publication was designed and prepared for  
the STEPPS Committee by:**

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**This committee would like to acknowledge the contributions and support from  
the following individuals and groups:**

**The New York State Council on the Arts, whose generous support made this project possible.**

**The Town of North Elba under the leadership of its Supervisor Matt Clark and the Town Board:  
Richard Hunkins, Luke Perkins, Jay Rand and Jerry Stack;**

**The Village of Lake Placid under the leadership of Mayor Robert Peacock and its Board,  
including Jack Berry, Gerald Cassidy, Shirley Seney, and James Strack; are to be commended for  
their support of the STEPPS work.**

**Local, county and state agencies including: the Town and Village Planning and ZBA boards,  
the LP Convention and Development Bureau, the LP Central School District, the LP Chamber of  
Commerce, ORDA, the APA, Essex County Planning offices, have provided valuable support.**

**Larry Barry of Barry & Wilson and Adele Raymaley of Advertisers Workshop, have provided  
generous technical assistance in the printing of this publication.**

**And a special thanks to the following individuals:**

**Mary MacKenzie who has provided us with a wealth of historic images**

**Art Thompson for his role as taskmaster**

**Patricia Clark for her coordination efforts**

**Bill Johnston for his professional guidance**

**Kirstin Siebert for her valuable organizational efforts**

**David Dachs for his technical assistance**

**Mike McGlynn, Jim McKenna and Jim Edgcomb for their continuing support  
and efforts towards the formulation of STEPPS process.**

**Acknowledgements**

# STEPPS: Lake Placid/North Elba Planning Project



Avalanche Lake, 1888 (Seneca Ray Stoddard, Adirondack Illustrator)



# STEPPS: Lake Placid/North Elba Planning Project

**Lastly and most importantly we wish to express our deep gratitude and appreciation to the following participants in the STEPPS project:**

## Core Committee

Jim McKenna, Mike McGlynn, Mike McGaughey, Jim Morganson, Art Thompson, Gerry Blair, Jim Edgcomb, Jeff Squires

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### **Chairman Gerald Blair**

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Allan Hipps- Housing Assistance ofc.  
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Jerry Blair- Suprintendnt. LP School  
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Tom Tobin- A.N.C.A.  
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Carol Hoffman- Ski Club  
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Linda Friedlander- Garden Club

Kady Kinsella- Chmbr of Commerce  
Del Warner- Kiwanis  
Gloria Chadwick- U.S. Olympic Tr. Ctr.  
Craig Randall- Bank of Lake Placid  
Tom Heinrich- Tech Office Products  
Martha Cogan- Town Board of Appeals  
Jim Morganson- Building Code Officer  
Michael McGaughey- Studio  
Mike McGlynn- Sun Dog  
Jim McKenna- Convention Bureau  
Betsy Boyd- N.Y.S. Tourism Bureau  
Ron Landfrie d- Lake Placid News  
Ron Edgley-Potato Farm  
Dave Evans- Swiss Acres Motel

**and the work group committees:**

## Public / Open Spaces

**Chairman Dean Dietrich**, William Billerman, Bob Birk, Mike D'Angelo, Ronald Edgley, Heidi Holdevied/ Madden, Eugene Martin, Mike McGaughey, Gail Meyer, Jim Morganson, Noni Perry, Jay Rand, Tom Smith, Peter Wilson

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**Chairman William LaHart**, Bernie Adler, Greg Denin, Howard Fish, Sig Giambruno, Richard Kaltenback, Joe Lamb, Susan Lavin, Jim McKenna, Norm Martin, Ingrid Ovmsby, Greg Peacock

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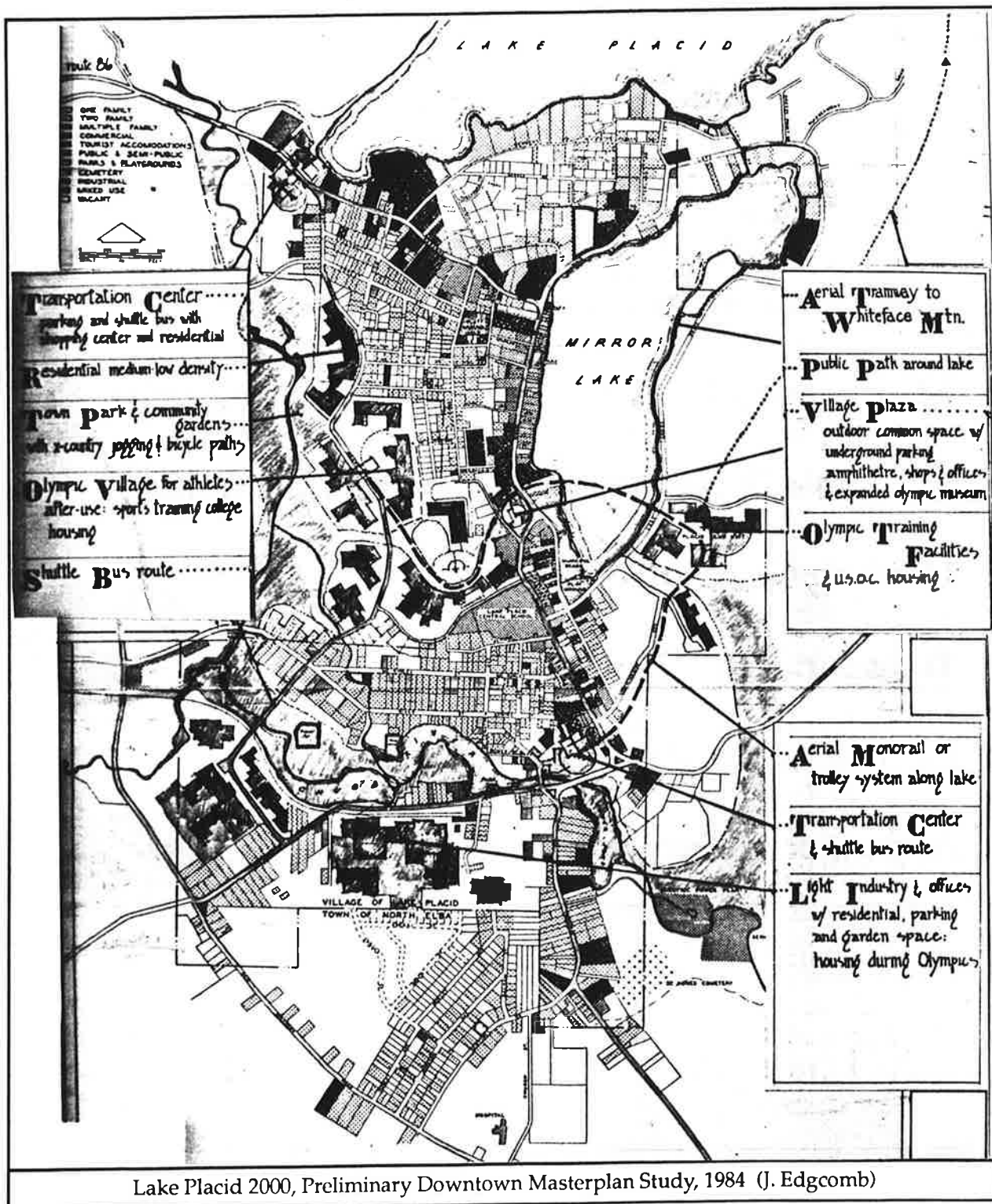
## Facilities & Capitol Planning

**Chairman Janet Bliss**, Jack Barry, Steve Detwiler, Paul Gutmann, Leo Jentran, Jim Morganson, Phil Perry, Kent Pratt, Mike Saulpaugh, Charles White, Ray Wilson

**Taskmaster / Coordinator Arthur Thompson**

# Acknowledgements

# STEPPS: Lake Placid/North Elba Planning Project



Lake Placid 2000, Preliminary Downtown Masterplan Study, 1984 (J. Edgcomb)

## **Table of Contents**

1	Introduction
6	Public / Open Spaces Committee
14	Main Street / Downtown Development Committee
24	Economic Development / Marketing Committee
36	Housing Committee
42	Transportation Committee
48	Facilities & Capital Planning Committee
52	Appendix A : Support Material for Committees
	Appendix B : Community Survey
	Appendix C : About STEPPS



## **INTRODUCTION**

### **The STEPPS: LAKE PLACID/NORTH ELBA PLANNING PROJECT**

The STEPPS (Solutions Through Elba/Placid Planning Studies) process is a citizen based effort to plan for the future of the Lake Placid / North Elba community (See Appendix). Recognizing that the community has experienced unprecedented growth over the past decade, this project was initiated to help Lake Placid/North Elba understand the problems the community faces, and establish goals, objectives and strategies which will guide growth in the future. This project was also designed to stimulate citizen participation in the development of solutions. STEPPS helped to get the project started by securing a grant from the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA). The process described here is Phase One of a two part planning program. Phase Two will involve technical experts in defining a course of action (an implementation plan) to help Lake Placid/North Elba meet their goals and objectives. Phase One should provide the agenda for Phase Two.

The NYSCA-funded effort was preceded by a detailed attitude survey of the community, conducted by STEPPS, to identify concerns and preferences for the area's future (see Appendix), and by a series of concept/design projects carried out by STEPPS consultants, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Columbia University and the State University of New York. The results of these projects were drawn upon in the course of the planning process.

The Planning Process has included the following elements:

- formulation of the planning program
- collection and evaluation of background data
- setting goals and objectives
- recommendation of strategies for action
- reporting of results

#### **• FORMULATION OF THE PLANNING PROGRAM**

The planning program was designed by the consultants to STEPPS, based upon the objectives of the NYSCA grant and the availability of resources. The most fundamental characteristic of the program is its reliance on citizen work-groups to investigate the issues and recommend strategies. Regular guidance was provided by the project

# STEPPS: Lake Placid/North Elba Planning Project

consultants, and on-going support was available from the project coordinator.

The planning program provided the structure of the process: What issues will be looked at? Who will be involved? When will the work be completed?

## ISSUES:

Through group discussions and a community wide survey STEPPS has identified six issue areas which are of concern to the community and need to be addressed.

They are:

- parks/open space/pathways/public space
- Main Street/downtown commercial development
- economic development/marketing
- housing
- transportation/traffic/parking
- facilities and capital planning

These issues served as the focus for the planning program.

## PARTICIPANTS:

An effort was made by STEPPS to involve a broad cross-section of people and interests; residents, local officials, citizen's groups, business people, special interest groups and others.

- Six work-groups were formed, consisting of over 65 participants, and each group was given the responsibility of addressing one of the above issues.
- Planning consultants assisted with project design, organization and coordination with NYSCA.
- A project coordinator was hired to oversee work group schedules, and coordinate public meetings. The coordinator also served as a liaison between the work-groups, the consultants and local officials.

## TIME FRAME:

The work-group process began in May 1988 with an introductory meeting for all participants. It was proposed that work-groups meet once every three weeks, at a minimum, however each work-group was asked to develop their own schedule, with the help of the coordinator. Final reports were completed by the beginning of September. A public meeting was held on September 26, 1988, at which each work-group gave a 20 minute presentation of their work. The meeting was attended by roughly 75 citizens, including most of the Town and Village elected officials.

# STEPPS: Lake Placid/North Elba Planning Project



STEPPS/MIT Presentation Meetings with Community Members, Spring 1986

## Introduction

## • **COLLECTION AND EVALUATION OF BACKGROUND DATA**

Information has been developed over the years through various planning efforts. This material was assembled and catalogued according to the six topic areas. A directory of the information was provided to each participant, and resource materials were placed in a central location for the use of the work-groups. However, some updating and infilling was required. Resource lists of documents, people and organizations were also provided.

## • **ESTABLISHING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

In a broad sense, goals are statements of the self-image of the community. A goal is a "result" toward which an effort is directed; goals are usually expressed in terms of one or more objectives. Objectives are specific, measurable targets for accomplishment of goals. Each work-group was asked to formulate goals and objectives for their particular issue.

## • **RECOMMENDATION OF STRATEGIES**

It was important for each work-group to consider actions or strategies for achieving the goals that they set. These may come from the experiences in other towns, from examples set by private businesses, or from ideas generated by the work-group itself.

## • **REPORTING OF RESULTS**

All work-groups were requested to present the results of their work according to a common reporting form. The form was as follows:

1. Work-group Statement of Purpose
2. Work-group Background / Findings according to task  
(maps, supporting statistics and other information to be attached to report)
3. Work-group Recommendations for Goals and Objectives / Alternative Strategies
4. Unanswered issues and questions beyond the scope of the group work.

Over the short term, the process is considered to have succeeded on a number of levels. STEPPS has significantly expanded the number of Town and Village residents actively involved in the planning for their community. The work-groups did amass an impressive body of information on the issues, and did develop a clear agenda for continued planning and implementation efforts. Finally, local officials have expressed appreciation for the time and effort invested by the work-group members, support for



## STEPPS: Lake Placid/North Elba Planning Project

the general thrust of the recommendations, and commitment to the furtherance of the planning process in Lake Placid and North Elba. The Town and Village have both voted in resolutions which will be the basis for continuing support of the STEPPS process.

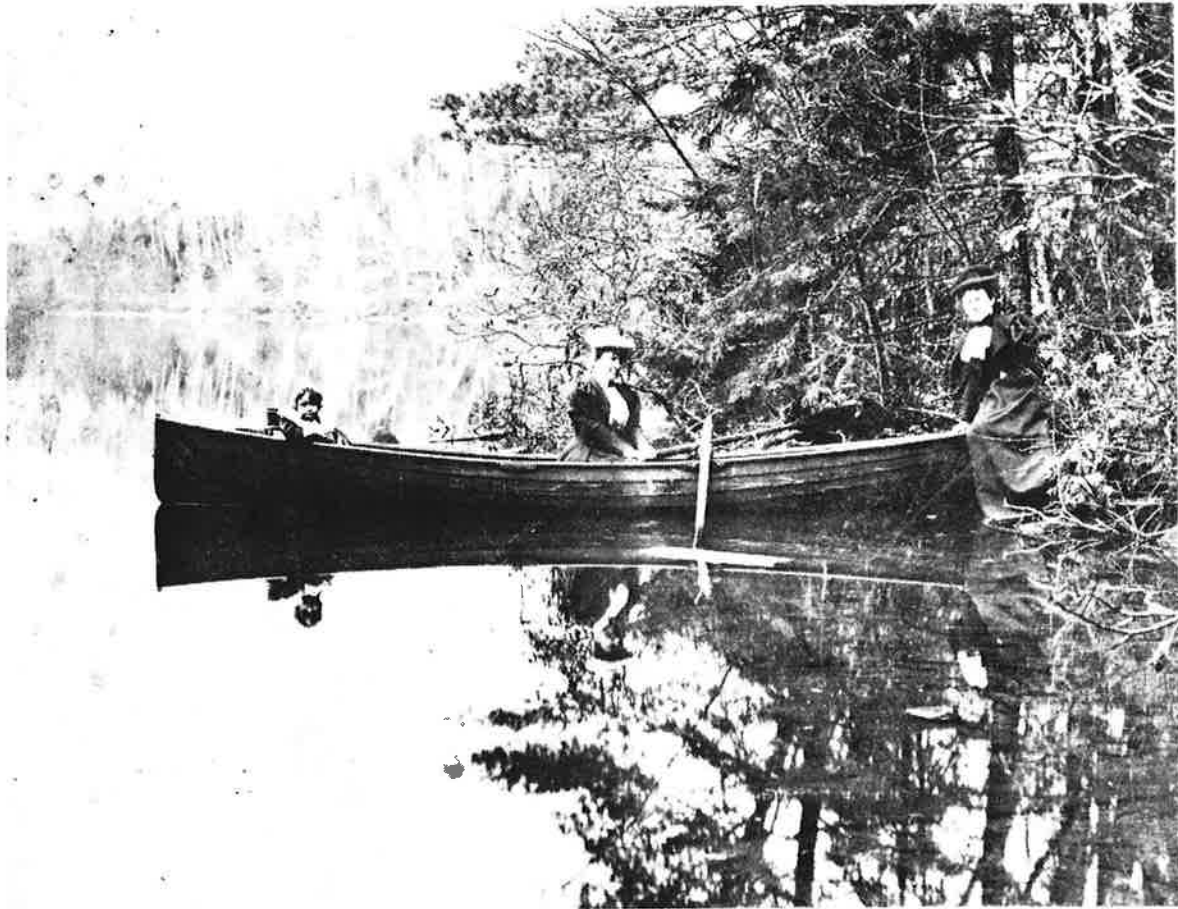
What follows are the reports of the work-groups. Each report is preceeded by the specific charge given to that group at the outset of the planning process. In addition to this report, STEPPS is preparing a more graphic presentation of the Phase One work in a poster format in hopes of reaching a wider audience with a more accessible message.



Upper Ausable Lake From Boreas Bay 1887 (S.R. Stoddard, Adirondack Illustrator)



# **STEPPS:** Lake Placid/North Elba Planning Project



Mirror Lake, circa 1900 (Mary MacKenzie)

## **PUBLIC / OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE**

### **• INTRODUCTION**

Results from the 1987 STEPPS survey show that 90% of those polled support improvements to Village and Town parks, common areas and playgrounds. Previous planning studies have also noted the need for a public park/village center in Lake Placid. Over 70% were in favor of expanding public access and views to Mirror Lake and Lake Placid, as well as developing a recreational/pedestrian path around Mirror Lake. Unique public facilities and opportunities exist in the community i.e.: the Olympic recreational facilities, the lakes, and the mountains. Stronger links between these resources and the commercial center could provide new economic development opportunities. A majority of the land in the Town of North Elba is designated conservation land by the Adirondack Park Agency.

The purpose of this work-group is to:

1. Collect and Evaluate Background Data:
  - a. Inventory existing public space/open space conditions and demands as to access, condition, opportunities/availability, demand/need, capacity, type and location.
  - b. Review existing information
  - c. Identify and collect information which is needed.
  - d. Identify public space/open space problems, their nature, extent and implications. Issues to consider include those listed above.
2. Establish Goals and Objectives
3. Recommend Strategies

### **FINAL REPORT:**

## **PUBLIC / OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE**

### **• STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The Public / Open Spaces Committee was created as part of the Lake Placid/North Elba Planning Project. The committee met ten times over a three month period to establish community goals concerning public space/open space and to develop strategies which would help to translate these specific, measurable goals into policies and actions. The overall objective of the Public / Open Spaces Committee is to enhance the opportunities for access to a range of public outdoor spaces in the area, while at the same time protecting those existing areas and assets.

# **STEPPS:** Lake Placid/North Elba Planning Project

The STEPPS survey of the community and our committee's research established the following priorities to accomplish our objectives:

- Preserve scenic view of the area.
- Enhance recreational opportunities.
- Improve existing public spaces.

## **• BACKGROUND / FINDINGS**

### **ACCESS TO LAKES:**

The STEPPS survey of the community which was conducted in the spring of 1987, indicated the 72.7% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the goal that public access and views to Mirror Lake should be expanded.

### **PLAYGROUNDS:**

The STEPPS community survey indicated that 77.6% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that North Elba and Lake Placid should encourage the provision of numerous playground and youth facilities. The Public / Open Spaces survey of families with school aged children indicated that 65.8% of those families felt that the existing playground equipment should be improved.

### **BEACH:**

The Public / Open Spaces Committee conducted a community survey of school children regarding attitudes concerning the public beach. This survey indicated that 73% of the respondents felt that picnic facilities should be improved at the beach, while 61.8% felt that changing facilities should be improved.

### **VIEWS:**

The STEPPS community survey indicated that 86.7% of the respondents felt that the natural beauty and scenery of the area make Lake Placid a good place to live.

### **NEW FACILITIES:**

The STEPPS community survey indicated that 77.6% of the respondents felt that year round recreational facilities should be developed for public use.

### **TRAILS:**

The STEPPS community survey indicated that 88.8% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that the construction of walkways and bikeways should be encouraged.

# STEPPS: Lake Placid/North Elba Planning Project

## • RECOMMENDATIONS

### ACCESS TO LAKES:

The Public / Open Spaces Committee recommends that:

- Public access to Mirror Lake and Lake Placid should be increased. Since most of the land surrounding these lakes is privately owned, a strategy of negotiating public easements in exchange for tax concessions might be the best approach.
- The existing boat access by the tennis courts should be marked with a sign. This sign should also indicate the fact that motorized boats are not allowed on Mirror Lake.



Toboggan Slide Near Mirror Lake Inn, circa 1900 (Mary MacKenzie)

### PLAYGROUNDS:

The Public / Open Spaces Committee recommends that:

- A long range plan to improve and enhance the existing playground equipment should be implemented.
- Some new equipment could be built using labor from the prison or community volunteers. Any new construction should follow the Federal Guidelines for Playground Equipment and Surfaces. It should also be taken into account the fact that the recreational areas should be wheelchair and stroller accessible.
- Toddler equipment should be included in the facilities at each park.
- Immediate action should be taken to improve the safety of some existing areas.

## STEPPS: Lake Placid/North Elba Planning Project

- Further investigation should continue into how the Planning Board can insure the building and maintenance of new playground facilities in planned developments.
- Basketball courts, which during the winter could be used as hockey boxes, could be constructed in the McKinley Playground and along the tennis courts.
- The tennis courts should be resurfaced.



A Band Concert, Over-Looking Mirror Lake 1984

### BEACH:

The Public / Open Spaces Committee recommends that:

- A picnic area should be added to the beach facility. This area could be placed on the north side of the toboggan run. The area could be lit and contain picnic tables, grills, and trash containers.
- The existing changing facility should be renovated. Rental lockers could be installed which would help defray the cost of maintenance.
- The sand quality can be improved by adding new sand and enforcing the dog ordinance in the area.



**VIEWS:**

The Public / Open Spaces Committee recommends that:

- The Village and Town should continue the stringent enforcement of existing Scenic Preservation Zoning Districts.
- Expand the number of "SP Districts" to protect views other than those at the gateway to the village.
- Develop a long range plan for the burial of existing utility lines and insure that new lines are buried.

**NEW FACILITIES:**

The Public / Open Spaces Committee recommends that:

**CRAIG WOOD:**

- Be expanded to year-round use. Cross country ski trails (with a beginner loop), a skating pond, and a sledding area could be placed on the facility.
- Part of the existing building could be heated for use as a warming hut.
- Lights could be added for night use.
- It might be feasible for a concession to operate the facility 3 to 4 days a week.
- Links with the existing Jackrabbit Trail could be improved. This would allow the facility to be promoted as a destination. Shuttle transportation could be provided back into the Village.

**CHUBB RIVER:**

- Access for fishermen to the river could be improved by clearing the area along the river south of the Agape Church to Bickford's. This would also improve the view.

**TRAILS:**

The Public / Open Spaces Committee makes these recommendations:

**HANDICAP ACCESS NATURE TRAIL:**

- While recognizing the recent improvements to the Peninsula trail by the D.E.C. we feel that the trail can be made more accessible by wheelchair and stroller with few modifications.
- The trail should be marked, advertised, and maintained as wheelchair/stroller accessible.

# **STEPPS:** Lake Placid/North Elba Planning Project

## **BIKE TRAIL:**

- Three bike loops could be developed. Each would start at the traffic light by the Robo Station. (see map)
- Bike lanes with markings would add to the safety of riders.
- Investigation into the possible use of the railroad track to Saranac Lake as an additional trail should continue.
- Contact should be established with the Highway Corridor Group (this group consists of members of the D.O.T., D.E.C., A.N.C.A., and A.P.A.) to help facilitate the development of the proposed bike trail. This group should also be made aware of our community's interest in developing a trail along the railroad tracks.

## **MIRROR LAKE WALKWAY:**

- The efforts of the existing committee to provide a walkway around Mirror Lake (especially the waterfront area along Main street) should be supported by future STEPPS work.

## **POTENTIAL PROBLEMS AND SUGGESTED STRATEGIES CONCERNING IMPLEMENTATION:**

In its discussions the Public / Open Spaces Committee became acutely aware of some problems that will arise concerning the implementation of their recommendations. These roadblocks include:

- Financial constraints.
- Need for cooperation from the private sector.
- Unknown plans of Gleneagle Corp.
- Need for the cooperation of various government agencies.

Some possible suggestions for overcoming these obstacles would include:

- Immediately developing a continuing financial program for improving existing facilities and creating new ones.
- Exploring the possibility of including Village Parks in the North Elba Park District.
- The Village and Town immediately contacting and working with the Highway Corridor Group.
- Formation of a community committee to discuss developmental plans with the private sector, including the Gleneagle Corp.
- Insuring that money budgeted for improvements on playgrounds be spent on those items.

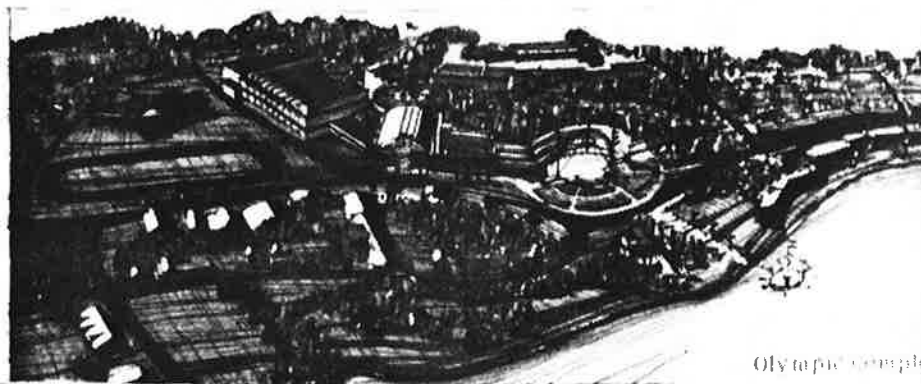
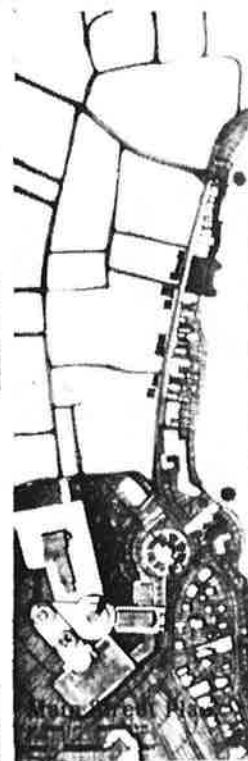
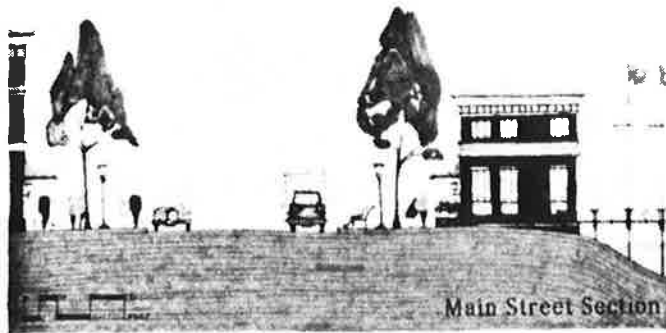
**STEPPS:** Lake Placid/North Elba  
Planning Project



Raquette River at Sweeney Carry, 1888 (S.R. Stoddard)

# STEPPS: Lake Placid/North Elba Planning Project

## DOWNTOWN



M.I.T. LAKE PLACID URBAN DESIGN STUDIO

MIT/STEPPS: Urban Design Studio, Spring 1986

Main Street / Downtown Development Committee

Page 14

## **MAIN STREET / DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

### **• INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this work-group is to establish specific goals and objectives for downtown Lake Placid and for the commercial development of the Town and Village in general. And to make recommendations for planning actions regarding these issues.

Between 1974 and 1986, sixty-eight new retail locations opened in the Lake Placid Business District. From 1984 to 1986, two hundred new hotel units were built. The proposed additions and changes to the Lake Placid Club will undoubtedly have a significant impact on the business community. Previous planning studies have sighted design, parking, delivery and circulation problems in the central business district. Location and design of commercial development along major traffic corridors (south on Main Street, north on Saranac Ave. and on Route 73) is also a concern. The community's orientation toward tourism and recreation pose unique challenges to the business community.

Results from the 1987 STEPPS survey show that 70% of those polled thought that the tourist industry should be strengthened, and 80% felt that non-tourist, year-round business and job opportunities should be encouraged. Development of downtown parks and sitting areas and additional parking facilities was supported by more than 80% of the respondents. 80% also favored establishing an architectural review board to review all development.

The purpose of this work-group is to:

1. Collect and Evaluate Background Data
  - a. Inventory existing conditions and demands of the central business district and other commercial areas as to availability/opportunities, needs of residents & tourists, condition, related services (roads, sewer, water, sidewalks, parks, delivery areas), type, location and fiscal & employment benefits.
  - b. Review existing information
  - c. Identify and collect information which is needed.
  - d. Identify Main Street/commercial problems, their nature, extent and implications. Issues to consider include those listed above. Cooperation with the transportation/traffic/parking work-group would be useful.
2. Establish Goals and Objectives
3. Recommend Strategies



**FINAL REPORT:**

**MAIN STREET / DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT**

**SHORT RANGE SUBCOMMITTEE**

• **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

Our goal was to look at the Main Street Commercial District and to explore short term ways to improve this area. At our first meeting on June 23rd, we organized our committee and William LaHart was selected as Chairman and Secretary. At our next meeting we all spread out and took a look at what the Main Street corridor really looks like. Photographs and slides were taken for use in the final presentation. In addition a property-business survey was taken. (see appendix)

• **BACKGROUND /RECOMMENDATIONS**

The short range subcommittee of the Main Street/Downtown Development Committee has come up with the following recommendations:

**AESTHETIC IMPROVEMENTS FOR MAIN STREET /COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT:**

- Flower and flag holders be reinstalled on parking meters where they are missing now.
- Light poles and other public property looked at and evaluated for repair and painting on yearly basis.
- Come up with a way to clean sidewalks, as not all store owners clean them.
- More attention to litter on Main Street
- More signs for local attractions.
- Alternate flags on Main Street with international flags (as in front field of High School) to give an international flavor.
- Can the Garden Club expand their flower treatment to other parks. Maybe the Village could buy the flowers.
- Cover alleyways with appropriate gate or door. Maybe a place for garbage cans.

**PUBLIC SERVICES:**

- The first major concern is the lack of adequate rest rooms in the Main Street Corridor (area between the Horse Show grounds to the Ponderosa restaurant). The present rest rooms in the main parking lot need a complete overhaul with aesthetic considerations. A second public restroom is needed in the Band Shell park to service the north end of Main Street. We recommend a deck adjacent to the present one in the park. A possible third location, with the cooperation of ORDA, could be the Speed Skating building which has outside access for

## STEPPS: Lake Placid/North Elba Planning Project

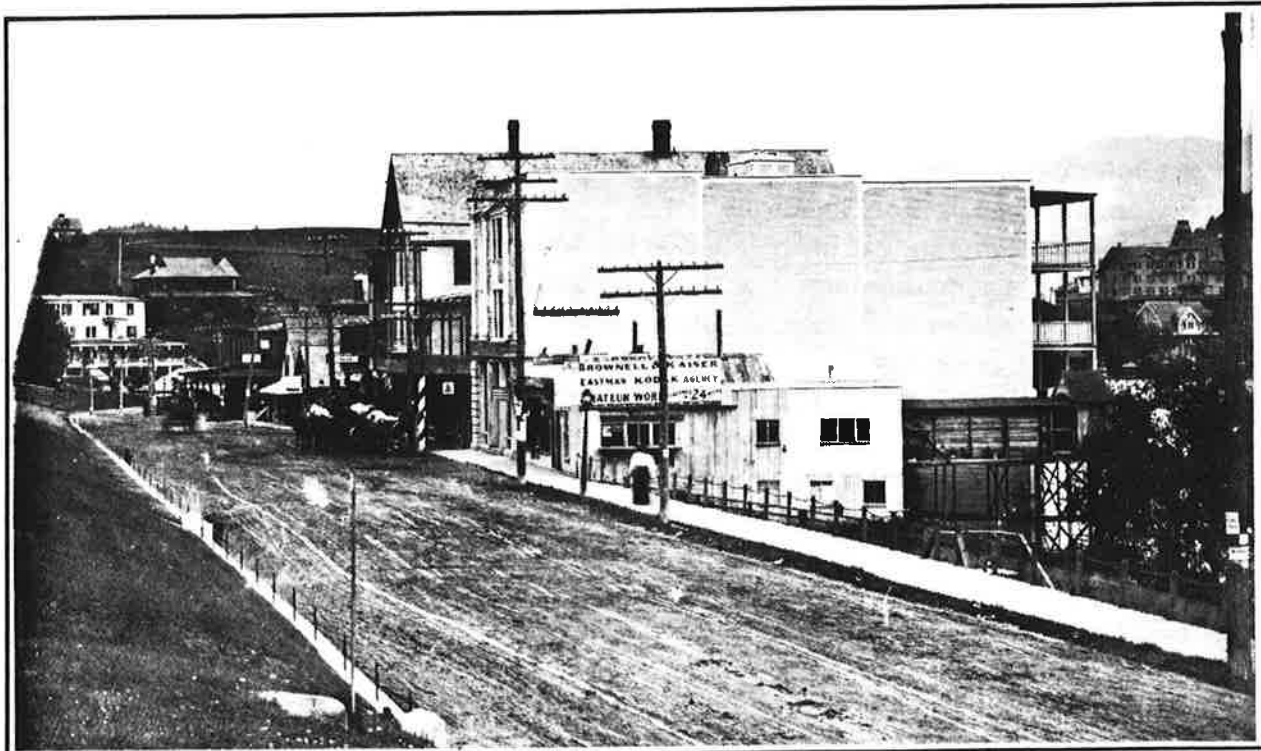
restrooms. We also believe that, if needed, additional restrooms could be installed in the parking lot across from the Bank of Lake Placid (corners of lot not parked in now).

- Cross walk plan, better identified by paint and signs. Future plans for cross walk lights.
- More benches in more locations.
- Water fountains should be installed at the Main Street parking lot (there is a pipe there now), at the Band Shell park, and at #1 Main Street park.
- Sidewalk ordinance should be enforced without complaints or rewrite ordinances if necessary to include all areas and private property.
- An aesthetic ordinance, no outside displays, should be written.
- Red brick sidewalks: spread it over a number of years or Village pay for it and do it. Aesthetics can not wait and the sidewalks are getting worse.
- Better street painting-traffic lanes, i.e. Post Office area and Hilton-Mirror Lake, crosswalks and around town.
- Better signage crossing into Lake Placid, how to get to Main Street, beaches, etc. Legend of Main Street, like in Malls. Outside Village with poster and kiosks (by Green Thumb).



4th of July Parade, Main Street, Lake Placid 1980's (M. McGlynn)

## STEPPS: Lake Placid/North Elba Planning Project



Old Photo of Main Street circa 1901 (Mary MacKenzie)

- Do traffic study of Main Street/ commercial and concentrate on problem areas:
  - Cold Brook Plaza and Saranac Avenue.
  - West Valley Road and Saranac Avenue.
  - Mirror Lake Drive, Saranac Avenue and Main Street (Hilton Area).
  - Post Office and Parkside Drive.
  - Mirror Lake Drive and Main Street.

We need solutions to these problems to keep traffic moving, tourists "happy."

- Long term plan to change Main Street lights to be more in keeping with the "quaint" nature of Main Street.
- Winter time considerations:
  - Keep a few garbage cans out in winter, covered.
  - Identify cross walks with signs for winter use.
  - Keep rest rooms open year round.
  - Can benches be left out on Main Street and the snow cleared off Band Shell deck on a routine schedule?

# **STEPS:** Lake Placid/North Elba Planning Project

-Long term plan to replace parking meters so they can be used for more than one hour. This is not enough time to go length of Main Street, also added revenue.

## **PUBLIC ACCESS TO MIRROR LAKE AND MAIN STREET AREA:**

Last views of Mirror Lake and ways to improve:

- Post Office, Beach, Methodist Church: limited cutting of trees to expose views of the lake around Church and toboggan chute. Redo toboggan chute so it looks better. More walkways down and around the Church. Work with Church if they indeed want to pursue.
- Bank of Lake Placid should look into the building of a small deck to maintain the view of Mirror Lake. We believe the Bank Board is interested in this idea. Again, a place for trash cans and benches (on sides) off of the sidewalk.
- Library back lawn and walkway garden: explore ways to encourage more public use of this beautiful area.
- Band Shell Park: other committees addressing the problems of this park.
- Ruthie's Run-Vacant lot: can the Village purchase it?
- #1 Main Street: more garbage cans, signs to explain what lake and what other shores. Village Center map, like in malls. i.e., "You are here", etc.

## **OUTER CORRIDOR CONSIDERATIONS:**

(Hilton to Ponderosa, traffic light to Horse Show Grounds)

- Encourage business development in these areas to take pressure off Main Street area.
- With the shuttle in operation, encourage no parking in these areas, i.e. not near Stewarts.

## **OVERVIEW:**

- A Main Street Corridor Committee should be set up with volunteers from the community to aid in ongoing efforts mentioned above.
- Long term plans should be developed and looked at when reconstructing and building in these areas, i.e. parking plans, side walks, zoning.

**FINAL REPORT:**

**MAIN STREET / DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT**  
**LONG RANGE SUBCOMMITTEE**

• **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

This subcommittee identified the need to address three specific areas for the continuing success and charm of our Main Street business district. The committee recognized that Main Street serves both as a necessity for residents and an attraction for visitors. The committee also recognizes that the vehicle and pedestrian traffic congestion is a major concern. It has also been noted that the community must continue to grow and as it does, our Main Street congestion will be multiplied.

The three areas this subcommittee feel are the most important to start addressing are:

- Creation of a Village Center.
- West side of Main Street development.
- Main Street Lake Access.

**CREATION OF A VILLAGE CENTER**

• **BACKGROUND / FINDINGS:**

We feel that currently our Main Street district lacks a central Village Center area. We feel that the visual impression of the current municipal lot is not impressive to our visitors. We also feel that there is a lack of green space in the Main Street area, and that there is inadequate utilization of existing space in the current municipal lot area. We feel that there is a need to better link the two commercial areas of Main Street. Also, that there is a need to develop a better link to the Olympic Center Complex. Finally, we need to address both pedestrian and traffic flow in the vicinity of the Post Office area.

• **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

With the above in mind, along with the continually increasing traffic, both automobile and pedestrian, we make the following recommendation: to do an extensive study of the current municipal lot and Olympic Drive area with the creation of a Village Center in mind that would maximize land use. The creation of a Village Center/green space would satisfy the following goals:

- provide a central focal point and collective space for the downtown
- the creation of additional parking.
- the addition of new commercial use.



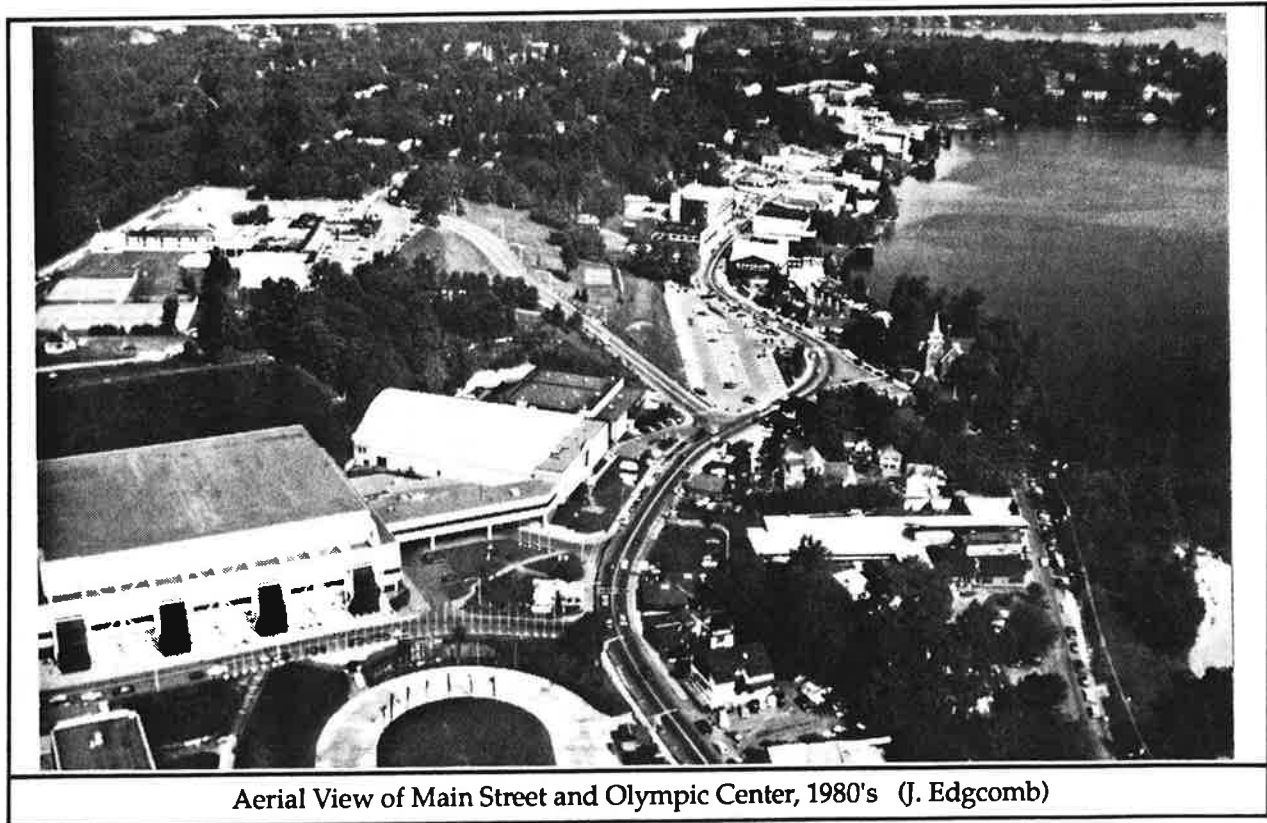
## STEPPS: Lake Placid/North Elba Planning Project

- the improvement of the connection to the Olympic Center Complex and lower Main Street.
- the improvement of the overall aesthetics.
- the enhancement of lake access and scenery.
- the creation of an International or Olympic theme.

To accomplish this a public/private partnership must be created. The initial step would be to develop a design concept followed by a financial feasibility study. Grants for a project like this are available at both the State and Federal level. We suggest the participation of the following groups to proceed with this recommendation:

- Village of Lake Placid.
- Town of North Elba.
- Village Planning Board.
- Property owners.
- O.R.D.A.
- STEPPS

In addition we feel that a public/private initiative could be a benefit to all.



Aerial View of Main Street and Olympic Center, 1980's (J. Edgcomb)

## STEPPS: Lake Placid/North Elba Planning Project



Lake Placid Guides, late 1800's (Mary MacKenzie)

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT / MARKETING COMMITTEE**

### **• INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this work-group is to establish goals and objectives and to make recommendations for planning actions with regard to the economic development of the community.

Results from the May 1987 STEPPS survey show that over 80% of those polled felt that wages in the community were too low, and 80% favored development of additional non-tourist, year-round business opportunities.

The question of whether or not clean industry should be developed remains unanswered. Previous planning studies have noted that the seasonality of the tourist based economy creates high unemployment during the spring and fall, though this may be changing. The Lake Placid Club is expected to create hundreds of new job opportunities, but most of them service-related. Unique economic opportunities related to the vast sport facilities, the Lakes and the Adirondacks is another factor to consider.

The purpose of this work-group is to:

1. Collect and Evaluate Background Data:
  - a. Inventory existing economic conditions and demands such as jobs, products created, income, resources, activities in the community and region, tax contributed, services and products used, natural resource production, commerce & industry, number, type and location of businesses and number of persons employed & location of residence.
  - b. Review existing information
  - c. Identify and collect information which is needed.
  - d. Identify economic development/marketing problems, their nature, extent and implications. Issues to consider, in addition to those listed above are population trends, labor force characteristics, regional economic conditions, public services, utilities, transportation and land availability.
2. Establish Goals and Objectives
3. Recommend Strategies

**FINAL REPORT :**  
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT / MARKETING COMMITTEE**

• **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The goal of this committee is to consider ways to enhance existing economic opportunities and diversify the area's economic base in a manner which will promote economic stability while preserving the unique physical environment and quality of life.

• **BACKGROUND**

Citizen survey results indicate a local awareness of a need to expand quality year round employment opportunities in both tourist and non-tourist related industries in our community.

- See 1987 STEPSS survey results: 80% favored development of additional non-tourist business opportunities. Citizen survey results also indicate an awareness of the need to preserve the quality of life and quality of the environment.

Services, agencies and assistance programs are available to aid existing businesses, as well as to aid potential new businesses in our community. These agencies are not properly coordinated or are not well enough known for those businesses to take advantage of their help. The following agencies currently provide the community with various services:

- ORDA, Chamber of Commerce, Convention Bureau, ANCA, Economic Development Corporation, APA, I Love NY office, Essex County Tourism Office, Adirondack Destinations, Adirondack Tourism Council, Merchant's Association, 2000 Club, Sports Council and others.

However, the focus of each agency is based on their own individual goals and on their client needs. These agencies lack the necessary coordination among one another to properly benefit the community, and it seems that these agencies also lack a distinct marketing position for the community.

An evaluation of the community's infrastructure in relation to the undeveloped and underdeveloped land in our area indicates that growth is still possible. See other committee findings, especially the physical plant committee to support the basis that our community's infrastructure can in fact handle a good deal of growth.

# **STEPPS:** Lake Placid/North Elba Planning Project

## • **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **GOALS:**

- Develop a coordinated effort and plan to promote North Elba/Lake Placid as a unified and strong economically developed region.
- Enhance existing tourism and promote additional tourism and tourist related employment opportunities.
- Enhance existing and promote additional year-round non-tourist (clean industry) employment opportunities.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- Devise a means to minimize overlapping agency responsibilities.
- Explore possibilities of using existing structure/organization as a "coordination headquarters".
- Alternatively, consider establishing a North Elba/Lake Placid Development Authority.
- These headquarters would provide the needed direction to maximize efforts for the benefit of the community.
- Pool resources for all tourism related organizations to maximize current efforts, monies and time.
- Establish a task force composed of existing organizations and businesses to develop an overall marketing strategy.
- Market events and attractions so visitors and potential visitors are more attracted to the area and are satisfied with their experiences in the area.
- Continue to explore the creation of new events to attract additional tourist subpopulations.
- Develop a coordinated marketing effort and develop strategies for a strong economically unified region.
  - Prepare a "finder directory" to include all information on services and resources available to assist existing businesses and attract new businesses.
  - Prepare other marketing materials promoting the area as a unified region for its potential as both a tourism and non-tourism related business site.
  - Identify and target specific tourism and non-tourism related industries, with the initial emphasis on building upon the following existing businesses: biotechnology, sports training/sports medicine related industries.
  - Promote the unified region through advertisements and articles in targeted industry trade journals, papers, magazines, etc.



## STEPPS: Lake Placid / North Elba Planning Project

Existing enterprises in the area, if properly promoted, could serve as a foundation for an expanded and diversified local economy from "clean industry".

- The following companies form a nucleus for the rapidly growing biotechnology field: The W. Alton Jones Cell Science Center, Inc., Bionique Laboratories, Inc., Upstate Biotechnology Inc., and the Trudeau Institute. According to the US Congress Office of Technology Assessment, biotechnology ranks as one of the three most important "high-tech" growth industries of the future, (technology and advanced materials are the other two).



## STEPs: Lake Placid/North Elba Planning Project

- Establish a clearly defined system to provide useful information about the area to businesses. This information would explain specific services, regulations, financial assistance, etc. to aid a business in our area.
  - Implement and promote an expanded business assistance program through an already existing organization to provide assistance with permits, compliance with regulations, etc.
  - Develop an improved and cooperative business support system which would offer aid in employee recruitment, training and retention. Other services such as housing information and assistance, education and training programs, and benefit packages which include daycare facilities would be made available to the prospective "new comer" to the area.



Playing Cards on the Ice, early 1900's (Mary MacKenzie)

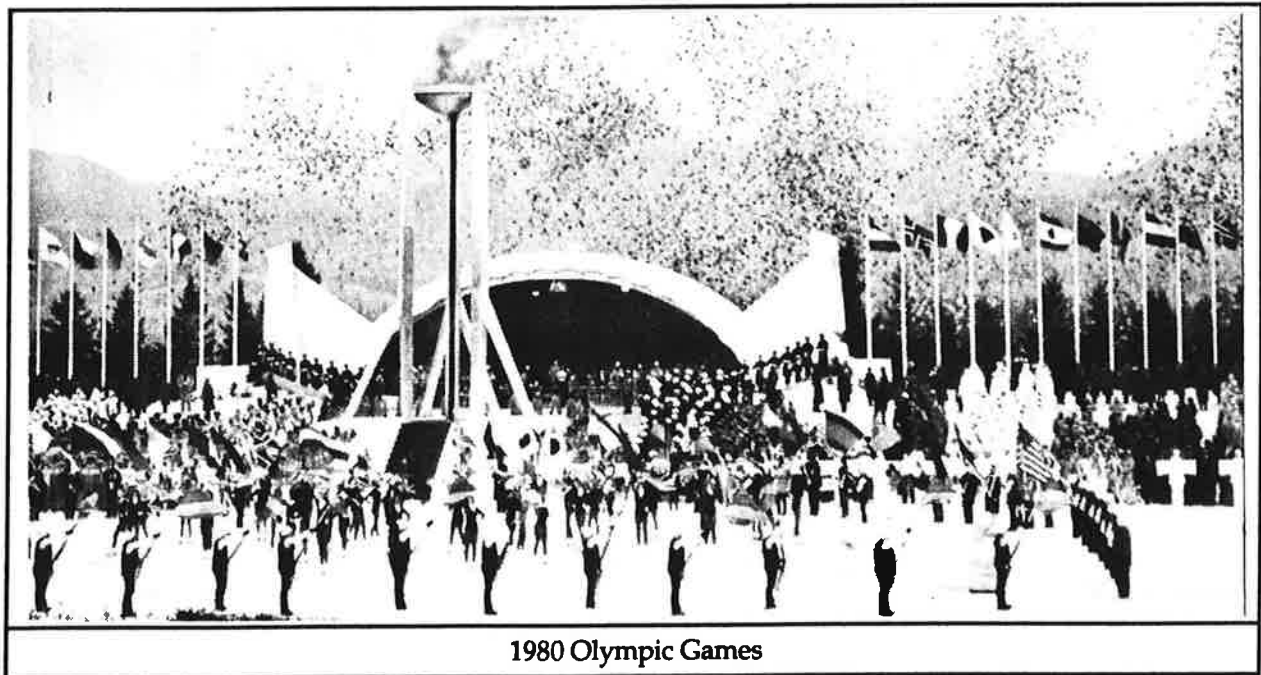
- Explore a means to improve visitor satisfaction with the area.
  - Examine the feasibility of a Central Reservations System and Visitors' Center to maximize visitor convenience and satisfaction with their experience in the area.
  - Implement a community education program to develop an awareness of the importance of tourism to the economic base of the area, and to improve and maintain a positive relationship between residents, tourist industry employers and employees, and the visiting public.

## **STEPPS:** Lake Placid/North Elba Planning Project

- Establish economic incentives to encourage new businesses and to encourage the expansion of existing businesses.
  - Explore the feasibility of the development of commercial property through public assistance. For example: the future conversion of the landfill site into an industrial park; property tax incentives; revolving loan fund; etc.
  - Establish a financial assistance program to provide existing businesses with the proper support for expansion to encourage the business' to have a long range commitment to the area. For example, at this moment, other surrounding communities are soliciting existing biotechnology firms from our community to relocate.

### **UNANSWERED QUESTIONS:**

- How will national and state level economic fluctuations affect local tourist and non-tourist related businesses?
- Will visitor growth rate continue to increase sufficiently to support the expansion of existing services and support the establishment of new tourist businesses?
- How might the expected increase in energy costs affect the community's economy, and what steps can be taken to reduce its impact?
- How will the community control and structure development to maintain the quality of life and the quality of the environment in our area?



1980 Olympic Games

**FINAL REPORT:**  
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT / MARKETING**  
**SUBCOMMITTEE ON TOURISM**

• **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

It is the purpose of the Subcommittee on Tourism to develop ways to increase overnight visitor demand by attracting convention holding organizations and leisure time travelers to the community and to properly maintain an attractive and favorable visitor climate.

• **BACKGROUND / FINDINGS**

- Identified various organizations which aid tourism and discuss their functions and purpose.
- Pinpointed community awareness/unawareness regarding the "service industry".
- Identified tourist awareness/unawareness of what is available in our area.
- Discussed the need for a Central Reservations System or a new innovative system which will work for our unique area.
- Evaluated the need for a more coordinated effort to target the following four major areas:
  - Convention/Meeting Sales and Marketing Services.
  - Tourism Sales.
  - Tourism Development.
  - Visitor Services.

• **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Subcommittee on Tourism makes the following recommendations:

- Pool resources for all tourism related organizations in order to avoid duplication and replication of efforts, monies, and time. A task force of the existing members of each organization would be required to start compiling all pertinent information and making the organizations run more efficiently and smoothly.
- Implement a lifelong and ongoing education program on the importance of a "Service Industry" for our community. At a basic level, no direct cost is involved if an education program is installed in the schools and businesses. Enthusiasm

## **STEPPS:** Lake Placid/North Elba Planning Project

can be generated by offering various incentive for the community to follow sound service practices.

- Market events and attractions so the visitor and the potential visitor are knowledgeable and excited about our area even before he gets to our area. Possibly a task force to study the various publications and distributions and the effectiveness of these publications would be beneficial to aid and make the visitor more knowledgeable and more enthusiastic about our area.

- Reduce the visitor's frustration with our area by opening a clearly visible visitor's center to aid and inform the visitor of his options. Monies may be necessary to study the feasibility of such a CRS and to decide if a CRS is in fact what is needed or if another system may remedy the problem.

- Discuss the possibility for opening a new office or creating a new position for a person or an organization to promote our area by offering services to the community as well as to the visitor. This concept can be thought of as a public or a private endeavor. A study must be undertaken to determine if such an office is really necessary or is in fact feasible.

### **UNANSWERED ISSUES AND QUESTIONS:**

Questions that arise are as follows:

- Will we be able to maintain the visitor growth that we have experienced recently?
- Will our peak season continue to supply enough visitors to continue to expand our services?
- Will our shoulder seasons be strong enough to make new businesses profitable?
- Will the competition for visitor dollars continue to increase?
- Are we soliciting all of the markets available to us properly?
- Do we have a coordinated sales effort for visitors, tours, and meeting groups?
- Do we have an office totally responsible for only the solicitation and servicing of visitors?

### **FINAL NOTE:**

It will be imperative to start a move to study the effects of tourism on our community because we may soon be overloaded with incoming visitors; we must establish ways of properly handling their needs and demands.



# **STEPPS:** Lake Placid/North Elba Planning Project



Lake Placid Club Resort, 1970's

## **FINAL REPORT:** **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT / MARKETING** **SUBCOMMITTEE ON CLEAN INDUSTRY**

### **• INTRODUCTION**

Results from the May 1987 STEPPS survey indicate that over 80% of those polled favor development of additional non-tourist based, year round business opportunities. As part of a strategy for strengthening the economic base of North Elba/Lake Placid, we recommend that the community exert a major commitment to the promotion of high technology business opportunities. We specifically recommend that biotechnology be defined as a desirable clean growth industry in our community and that we build upon the nucleus of biotechnology enterprises already present in our region (e.g. Trudeau Institute, W. Alton Jones Cell Science Center, Inc., Bionique Laboratories, Inc., and Upstate Biotechnology, Inc.).

Biotechnology has exploded in the United States over the last few years. A 1986 report by the U.S. Congress Office of Technology Assessment states that biotechnology ranks as one of the three most important high-tech industries of the future – along with information technology and advanced materials. According to a U.S. Government study in 1985, by the year 2000 the potential annual worldwide market for biologically-derived products will range from \$40 billion to \$100 billion. The "DNA Valleys" of the

future may approach the value and importance of the "Silicon Valleys" of today. The most successful biotechnology corporations (such as Genentech and Cetus) have been located in close proximity to basic research institutions. Notably, we have a similar situation in Lake Placid, the W. Alton Jones Cell Science Center conducts basic research that has great potential in the commercial marketplace. Given an active commercial biotechnology focus, other high technology clean industries will be attracted to our area such as computer software development, scientific supply houses, and scientific instrument/equipment maintenance and repair services. Biotechnology enterprises could also be encouraged to establish east coast customer/employee training centers where, for example, customers could be taught how to use new sophisticated and expensive instrumentation. Clearly middle and upper management training could also be performed in our attractive community on a permanent, routine basis.

## **• BACKGROUND / FINDINGS**

The strengths our community have to offer regarding biotechnology business opportunities include:

- A recognized first class basic biotechnology research institute (WAJCSC) which can serve as a central resource for expertise, library services, and expensive biotechnical procedures (e.g. protein sequencing, DNA and peptide synthesis, amino acid analysis).
- Evidence that commercial biotechnology can be successfully performed here (e.g. Bionique and Upstate Biotechnology).
- New York State Grant programs that emphasize both industrial biotechnology and economic development in the North Country.
- An attractive geographical setting with a high standard of living. It should also be noted that the U.S. government also actively supports a grant program targeted upon commercial biotechnology.

The major weaknesses that must be addresses in developing a commercial biotechnology recruitment program include.

- Inconvenient and expensive transportation into and out of our area.
- Harsh winter weather conditions.

Appropriate attention must also be given to potentially inhibiting regulations from government agencies concerned with approving Adirondack businesses and buildings. Several indices are regularly published which:

- List biotechnology companies in the U.S. and abroad.
- Often identify associations with larger companies and venture capital groups.

# STEPPS: Lake Placid/North Elba Planning Project

## • RECOMMENDATIONS

Our community should institute a concerted recruitment program with mailings and follow through phone calls and visits to such businesses, making the biotechnology community at large aware of the opportunities available in Lake Placid.

We further recommend that the community very soon give serious consideration to a location for developing an Industrial Biotechnology Park that eventually could contain several biotechnology companies and associated supply and service organizations. This is a particularly timely issue since both Bionique and Upstate Biotechnology are expanding, looking for alternate locations and anticipating a move in the near future. Our STEPPS research indicates that these two companies prefer to remain in our community. However, economic considerations could result in a move outside the region.



Skiing - Lake Placid Club 1920's (Mary MacKenzie)

## STEPPS: Lake Placid/North Elba Planning Project



Unknown Camp on Lake Placid, early 1900's (Mary MacKenzie)

### Housing Committee

Page 36

## **HOUSING COMMITTEE**

### **• INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this committee is to establish goals and objectives for housing, identify existing and future housing needs, and recommend ways to meet those needs.

Housing is a critical community development issue, affecting who lives and works in the community. The appearance of the town is also affected by the design and location of housing. 80% of the STEPPS survey respondents supported architectural design review of all development. The impact on housing as a result of the Lake Placid Club renovations is also a concern. Survey results show that 75% of those polled support additional and subsidized low-cost housing for residents. The impact of seasonal housing on the community is another important factor to consider.

The purpose of this work-group is to:

1. Collect and Evaluate Background Data :
  - a. Inventory existing housing conditions and demands: available housing units, type of housing (affordable, elderly, seasonal, single family, multiple, condominium, mixed use), condition of housing, demand for housing.
  - b. Review existing information
  - c. Identify and collect information which is needed and missing.
  - d. Identify housing problems, their nature, extent and implications.  
Issues to consider are; affordable housing, housing needs, housing costs, special housing needs (elderly, handicapped), housing conditions, housing design.
2. Establish Goals and Objectives
3. Recommend Strategies

## **FINAL REPORT:** **HOUSING COMMITTEE**

### **• STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

Housing is a part of the economic equation which makes us competitive with other resort areas for employees and tourists, or not. Primarily residences are spilling into the second home market and for the most part new construction is for the second or retirement home market with little economic incentive for builders in the affordable markets.



## **STEPPS:** Lake Placid/North Elba Planning Project

The goal of the Housing Committee is to provide for the housing needs of service employees by intervention in the market. In a service economy, as the economy expands the need for service employment and housing expands. To insure that planned expansion of the economic base result in a higher quality of life for residents and guests. To match affordable housing demand at various income levels with affordable supply. If the economy is strong there is more potential for upward mobility in jobs and housing. Additional goals of this committee have been to inventory existing land use patterns, document price levels and identify supply and demand. (see appendix)

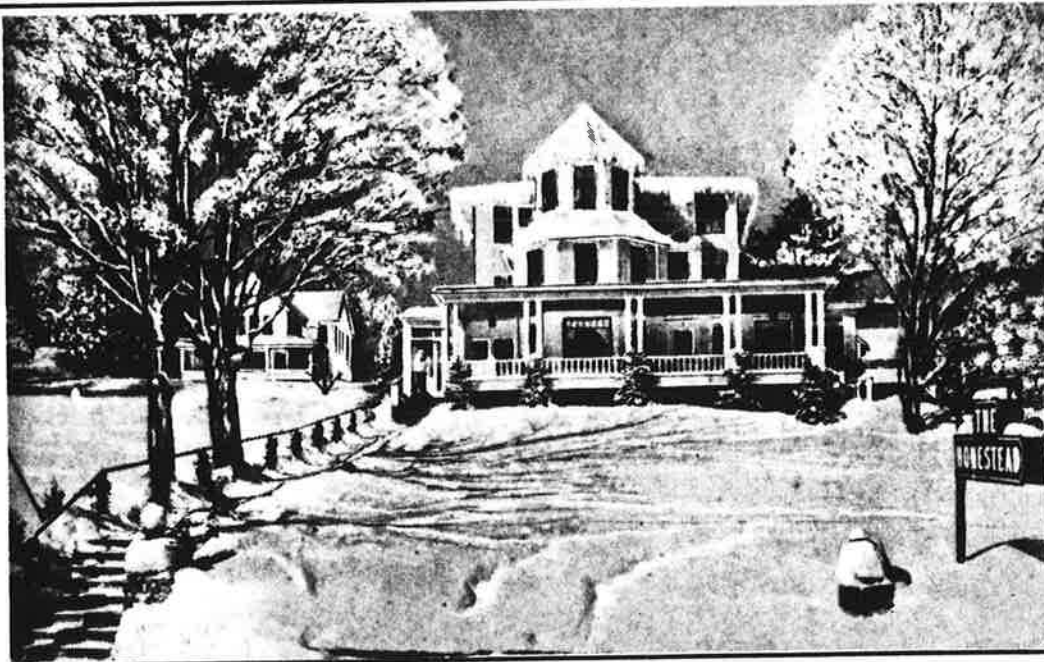
### • **BACKGROUND / FINDINGS**

- Approximately 74% of land in the town of North Elba is owned by New York State.
- Average single family primary residence in North Elba in 1986 was \$64,5000.00 in 1987 was \$94,6000.00.
- Home affordability: For the \$94,6000.00 above, Assume 10% down payment (\$9460.00 cash), Loan Amount \$85,000.00 minimum required income to qualify (10%) = \$38,400.00.
- The 1986 average income for industries present in North Elba is estimated to be \$12,000.00 per employee. Adjusted to 1988 is \$13,230.00 (5% + 5%) with 2 wage earners totaling \$26,460.00.
- Based on Typical Rents: \$400.00/month represents 36% of average income when it should be no more than 25%.
- Per capita Real Dollar Income in Essex County has increased only 8.3% from 1979; and Essex County Per Capita Income in 1986 was only 67% of the overall state figure.
- Land cost plus construction cost would no longer be affordable @ :

\$32,000.00	For Land
66,000.00	Home (1200 sq ft x 55.00/sq ft)
\$98,000.00	Total for a modest home.

## STEPPS: Lake Placid/North Elba Planning Project

- Our economy is a service based labor intensive seasonal economy, with the majority of jobs in service and retail trades. Average wages are on the low end of the spectrum. If quality of service diminishes, repeat business and positive word of mouth advertising diminish at community expense.
- The average age in Essex County by the year 2,010 will be 45 years as opposed to 35 - 37 in neighboring counties (by NYS projections).
- Housing is a part of the economic equation which makes us competitive for employees and tourists with other resort areas, or not.
- Primarily residences are spilling into the second home market and that for the most part new construction is for second or retirement homes market with little economic incentive for builders in the affordable markets.

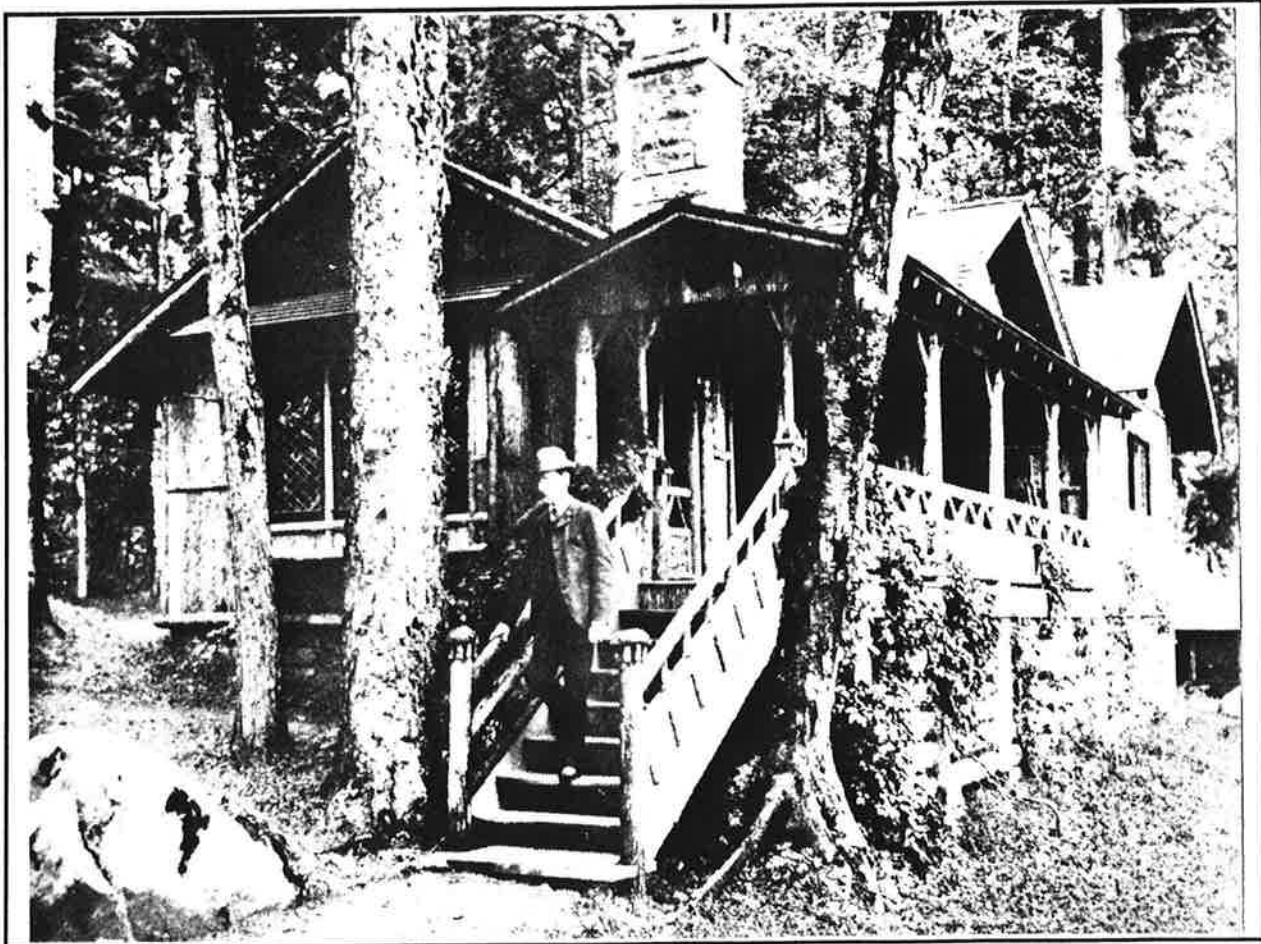


The Homestead, 1944 (Mary MacKenzie)

## • **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Request Essex County Planning and local and state economic development personnel to spend more quality time in North Elba for North Elba.
- Look at funding a position in town and village government to do planning, grant writing etc. on an ongoing full-time basis. To help find economic incentive for affordable conversions or new construction.
- Look into Public Benefit Land Trust and donations from large private land holders, the state, and employers. The possibility of a Planning Officer to administer the above. Again, to find economic incentives.
- Look at converting existing inventory of housing to match lower skilled transient labor housing needs, with more emphasis on employer responsibility.
- Study other resort areas we know have had similar problems, both to see how they solve the problems and realizing that they are sometimes competitors for tourists and employees.
- Look at more involvement with surrounding communities - insuring that other communities are attractive alternatives to Lake Placid.
- Plan now for Senior Citizen Housing, considering intermediate care and needs of projected older population.
- Involve community college in housing systems. Summer use of school season housing and student employees.
- Look at impact of reassessment in North Elba before we have to react, if we have to react.
- Look at impact of Lake Placid Club on employment, wages, housing and taxes. Discourage importing of foreign labor.
- Learn more about the perception of the housing problem. Is it economic, and an expression of employers need for employees; or is it a desire for upward mobility - or both. How important is it for to employers to help provide housing.
- Weigh benefits of more development and the resulting needs for additional parks and open space.
- Look at effects of transportation improvements and day-care on the available work force.

# **STEPPS:** Lake Placid/North Elba Planning Project



William West Durant, Camp Pine Knot, early 1900's (S.R. Stoddard)

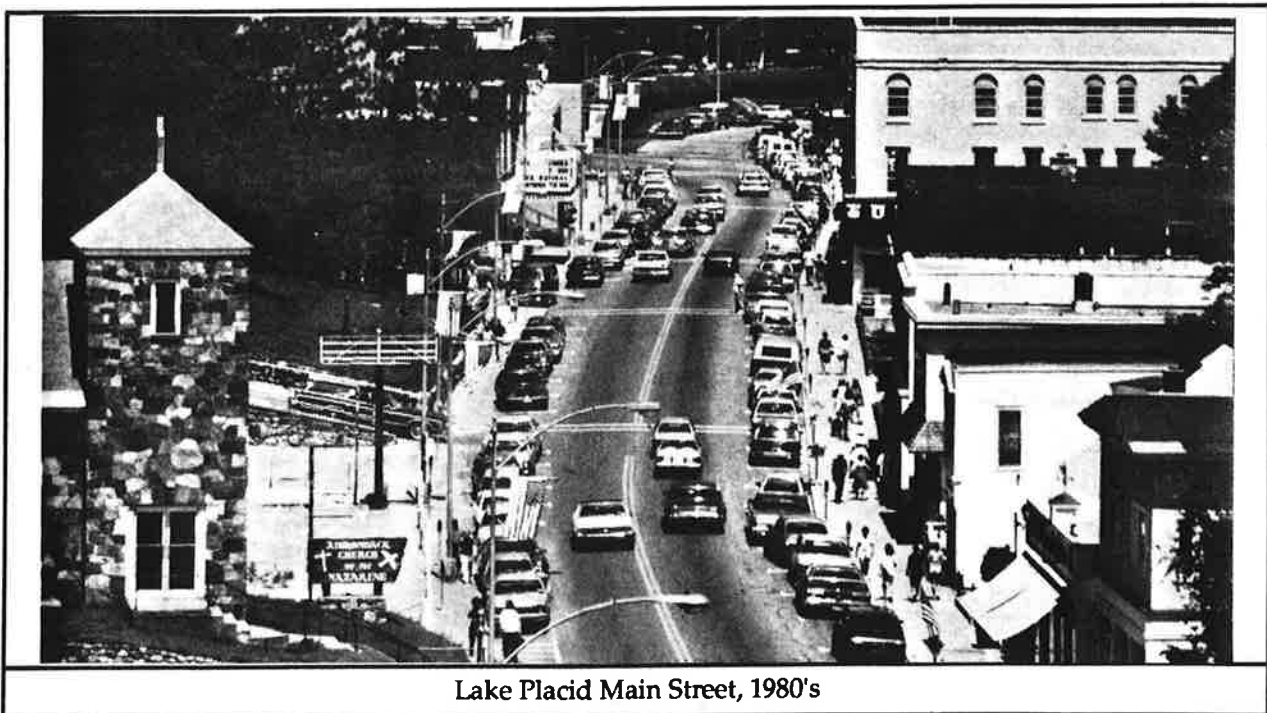
## **FINAL REPORT :** **TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

### **• STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

It is the goal of the Transportation Committee to provide for continuing growth of opportunity in Lake Placid/North Elba while maintaining or enhancing the quality of life.

### **SPECIFIC GOALS:**

- Provide a high degree of access and mobility into and around town.
  - Enhance the safety of the transportation network.
  - Minimize the negative environmental impact of such mobility.
  - Balance the above with the town/village's ability to pay. (or availability of grant money)
  - Ensure that the community understands and supports the goals.
- ### **• BACKGROUND / FINDINGS**



Lake Placid Main Street, 1980's



## • RECOMMENDATIONS

Enlist community involvement and support by:

- Maximizing citizen involvement in all studies and plans.
- Effectively communicating findings and plans to community.

Implement a primary roads plan:

- Designate commercial and through-traffic corridors.
- Identify generators of traffic and the hot spots (both vehicular and pedestrian/bicyclist).
- Study ways to manage impact of generators and improve safety and performance at hot spots. Management might include: signage, left turn lanes, signal lights, road engineering, enforcement, cross walks, etc.
- Study road engineering...including: alignment, lines of sight, surface conditions, shoulders, drainage, line painting etc.
- Study pedestrian/bikeway requirements for access to same vehicular corridors.
- Study land and use/zoning as it relates to future development and creation of new generators and hot spots.

Implement a public transportation plan:

- Do a commercial corridor shuttle study. Resources include Rudi Scheller, Convention Bureau. Issues include how to pay for it, and what secondary roads will also be used.
- Do an Olympic Avenue study (also include Olympic Training Facility and perhaps Hospital/Uihlein). Resources include ORDA and R. Scheller.
- Study the existing roles of taxis and common carrier bus.
- Study links with Lake Clear airport and local airport.
- Study inter-city links with the likes of Saranac Lake and Wilmington.

Implement a parking plan:

- Inventory existing parking resources, both public and private.
- Study existing public parking areas for ways to enhance management and/or physical condition.

## **STEPPS:** Lake Placid/North Elba Planning Project

- Identify and study potential new parking areas.
- Forecast parking requirements into future.
- Study existing variance fee structure; other approaches toward funding public parking improvements?

Implement a secondary roads plan:

- Identify secondary roads used by vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists:

- Mirror Lake Drive
- Hillcrest Avenue
- West Valley Road
- River Street
- Northwood Road
- Whiteface Inn Road
- Riverside Drive
- Averyville Road: Sentinel Rd to some point west of Old Military
- Sentinel Road: from Cascade Rd to Old Military
- Possibly some Ray Brook or Saranac Lake routes.

- Identify generators and hot spots along these major feeder roads.

Coordinate with primary roads subcommittees.

Feeder Road: Hillcrest Avenue.

Generators: Main Street bypass traffic, Holiday Inn, St. Agnes Church, Hillcrest Park, Main Street to/from West Valley Road traffic, local resident circulation, ORDA events/ concerts.

Hot Spots:

- Intersection with Saranac Ave (primary road subcommittee)
- Intersection with Main Street (primary road subcommittee)
- Bend in road at entrance to Holiday Inn parking lot
- Intersection of Oneida and Hillcrest
- No separation of vehicular traffic from pedestrian and bicyclist traffic along most of route, and very little shoulder.

- Study ways to manage impact of generators and improve safety and performance at hot spots.

Hillcrest Avenue ideas:

- Sidewalks/road shoulder, designated pedestrian and bicyclist lanes
- Enforce speed limits

## STEPPS: Lake Placid/North Elba Planning Project

- Use of crosswalks
- Better signage, including the addition of stop signs
- Line of sight improvements, e.g.. Oneida and Hillcrest and the bend at the Holiday Inn parking lot.
- Identify hot spots on any other roads and study ways to improve same.



A Main Street Taxi, 1907 (Mary MacKenzie)