

## **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

### **Essex, New York**

The Town of Essex lies on the western shore of Lake Champlain at the Lake's narrow waist where it is deepest. The land, which has been cleared and worked for 250 years, rises gradually, broken by granite outcrops and forested ridges, into the foothills of the Adirondack Mountains, offering sweeping views of the High Peaks to the west. The Town is wholly within the Adirondack Park, forty miles from the Olympic Village of Lake Placid, and on the rail corridor between New York City and Montreal.

Before the coming of the railroad, Essex, one of the "lake towns," was a vigorous commercial center. It served as the transshipment point for the great stones of the Brooklyn Bridge; and the hamlet, home to two shipyards and a half-dozen inns and taverns, has been the New York terminus for the ferry service to Vermont since 1790. Even before the Civil War, however, Essex began a long decline in population from its peak of 2,351, as counted in 1850, to the fewer than 800 souls who live here today.

Farming, mostly dairy and some logging, provided a good living for many residents until very recently, and since the turn of the century the Town has been a beloved lakeside resort, cherished for its quiet, unspoiled character. The historic hamlet of Essex, its nineteenth century layout still intact, untouched by neon and graced by a remarkable collection of Federal, Greek Revival and Victorian buildings, is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, a particular source of pride.

And yet people continue to leave. The dairy farms are largely a memory. The seasonal lakeside enterprises, the marinas, the restaurants, the stores are doing only a modest business, and much of the village cries out for maintenance. There is constant pressure on the tax base. Many residents are concerned that the growing seasonal population, while welcome, does not have the same ability to sustain the life of the Town as the people who live here year-round. Tourism, while on the upswing, may be a mixed blessing. There is a fear that sudden, inappropriate development could alter Essex forever, destroying what it is we all love about the place.

We are faced with a dilemma. How can we preserve the quiet way of life we enjoy, which has been left to the Town by an accident of history, and at the same time foster the modest growth required to sustain it? How can we encourage like-minded people to join us? Can we attract others with the vision, skills and capital needed here without being swept away ourselves?

The comprehensive plan articulated here is our attempt to confront and master this dilemma by presenting a clear, detailed and authoritative analysis of the Town and our vision for its future. It serves as the basis for the Town of Essex Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations. It tries to make clear what we are, as various as we are, what we want and what we don't want, so that those who have plans and ideas for our Town will know what to expect and be encouraged and guided in their efforts.

*Local control puts the development agenda in local hands and creates a much stronger link between decisions and their consequences.*



BOQUET CHAPEL 1855



ROSS HOUSE 1822



WALKER FARM 1867

## Contents

---

Introduction to the Comprehensive Plan .....	3
Location, Landscape and Natural Environment .....	4

## Part I – Understanding Our Past

Early Days .....	6	Early Industries .....	7	Early Agriculture .....	8	Transportation in the 1800s .....	9
------------------	---	------------------------	---	-------------------------	---	-----------------------------------	---

## Part II – Present Day Essex

The Essex Hamlet.....	10	The Whallonsburg Hamlet .....	12	The Lake and the Shoreline .....	13	The Agricultural Landscape .....	15
-----------------------	----	-------------------------------	----	----------------------------------	----	----------------------------------	----

Population .....	17	Land Use .....	19
Housing .....	20	Economy .....	21
Transportation .....	22	Tourism .....	23
Government.....	25		Local

## Part III – Providing for the Future

Goal 1. Modest Growth for a vibrant community .....	30	Goal 2
Preservation of historic resources .....	34	Goal
3. Preservation of agriculture and open space .....	36	Goal 4.
Protection of natural resources .....	39	Goal 5.
Administration, implementation .....	43	Goal 6.
Efficient public services .....	43	
Public Input .....	45	The
Town and the APA .....	46	Town of
Essex Zoning and Land Use Map .....	47	
Appendices .....	48	
Resource Documents .....	50	

## Introduction

---

The Town of Essex, like most communities, is facing important decisions today that will affect its future for many years. The purpose of the Town's comprehensive planning process is to provide guidance for making the decisions that will shape the future of the community.

The Comprehensive Plan's creation is the result of over 20 years of work, culminating in an intensive, three year long process involving public meetings and discussions between residents and members of the Zoning and Shoreline Review Committee. The analysis and recommendations presented came from the people of Essex working together in small and large groups.

One of the underlying assumptions of the comprehensive planning process is that if the Town does not take decisions into its own hands, outside forces will most likely determine its future. Whether these forces are developers, state agencies, or the general economy, the Town runs the risk of losing its identity if it does not clearly identify its goals for the future. This Comprehensive Plan will form the basis for a complete update of the Town's Zoning Ordinance, which was created in 1974. Together, the Comprehensive Plan and revised Zoning Ordinance will give the residents of Essex the clearest and strongest possible voice in determining the future of the Town.

The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide a well-thought-out set of land use goals and policies as a framework for making development and zoning decisions, promoting orderly land use, and implementing public improvements. We know that technology, values, and lifestyles will continue to evolve whether we like it or not, and the resulting changes will impact our culture and our community. The Plan outlines a vision of where the residents of Essex want to be in the future, and outlines a strategy to achieve that vision. With this Plan, decision-makers will be able to make short-term decisions that promote orderly long-term development to benefit the citizens of the Town.

Although the total population of the Town has declined slightly in recent years, there are many new residents living and working in Essex. This influx of new faces provides both opportunity and conflict. The challenge of the planning process is to bring all segments of the community together in an atmosphere of mutual respect, building upon the institutions and traditions of the past, which have kept the Town a special place. This planning process is intended to build community cooperation in implementing shared goals for the future.

The members of the Zoning and Shoreline Review Committee:

Suzanne Perley, Committee Chairman, Member Essex Town Board  
Stephen Sayward, Essex Town Board  
Edward Cornell, Essex Planning Board  
Bradford Beers, Essex Planning Board  
Donald Hollingsworth, Essex Zoning Board of Appeals  
David Lansing, Zoning and Code Enforcement Officer

*Also, special thanks to George Lowe who served as the Town Board representative in 1998-1999, and remained active in the process through its completion.*

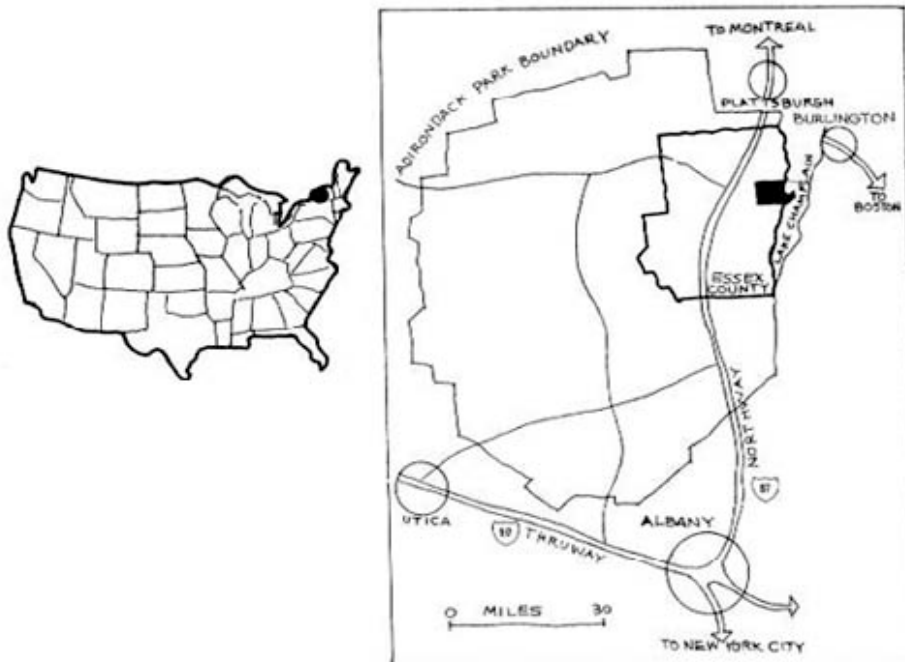
## Location, Landscape, and Natural Environment

The Town of Essex encompasses approximately 23,798 acres nestled in the foothills of the Adirondack Mountains along the western shore of Lake Champlain. It is almost a perfect rectangle in shape, 38 square miles in area. It is bounded on the north by the Town of Willsboro, on the west by the Town of Lewis, on the south by the Town of Westport and on the east by Lake Champlain. The western part of the Town is characterized by steep, wooded hills and rounded mountains often referred to as the foothills of the Adirondacks.

The Boquet River flows northward through the center of Town. In the southeastern corner of Essex, the Schroon Range, a sub-group of the Adirondack Mountain system, extends out into the Lake, forming Whallons Bay with its rugged promontory ending at Split Rock. In between these mountainous outcroppings, the Boquet River cuts a narrow valley through a high central plateau of open farmland with dramatic views westward towards the Adirondacks and eastward out over Lake Champlain.

Within its bounds is the historic Hamlet of Essex, founded in the 18th century, which to this date, represents one of the most unspoiled ensembles of Federal and Greek Revival architecture in rural America. In 1975, the Essex Hamlet was listed in its entirety on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Town of Essex has no shopping centers, fast food, franchise fast food or lodging. The quiet integrity of the Town, its sense of history, intact architecture, beautiful location on Lake Champlain, its fine craft, antique, and other shops and fine accommodations richly reward the visitor seeking an alternative to over-commercialized resort communities. With over sixty percent of the land in the Town classified as agricultural, a ride through the Essex countryside provides expansive views of working farms and open fields, the pastoral "middle landscape" celebrated by Thomas Jefferson as his cultural ideal.



## **The 1975 Trancik Study**

In the summer of 1975, Roger Trancik (at the time an Associate Professor in Landscape Architecture at Harvard University Graduate School of Design) along with a student intern compiled and analyzed extensive information on the natural systems which impact and are impacted by land use. Disseminated in *Essex - A Land Use Planning Process*, this work was “cutting-edge” in its day, and its findings and recommendations relating to the Town’s natural resource base remain valid for generalized, town-wide planning purposes today. The study provides a detailed analysis of existing man-made and natural systems including an analysis of:

- Formation of the Landscape-Geology
- Topographic Slope
- Soils and Soil Erosion/Sedimentation Vulnerability
- Hydrology
- Vegetation
- Key Wildlife Habitats
- Surface Water Quality Vulnerability
- Run-off and Ground Water Recharge Vulnerability
- Groundwater Quality Vulnerability
- Buildability

Much of Trancik’s work will be referenced throughout this publication.

### **• The Boquet River and Watershed**

New York State has designated the Boquet River as a “wild, scenic, and recreational river.” Its headwaters are high up in the Dix Mountain range. There are two major tributaries, The Branch, which begins near Giant Mountain east of Elizabethtown, and the North Branch that flows from the Black, Bald, Rocky, and Pocomoonshine peaks southeast into Willsboro. The main stem of the Boquet River is the steepest river in New York, plunging over 3,200 feet into Lake Champlain in just 48 miles. (With a 280 square mile watershed, the River is a major tributary to Lake Champlain.) Because of its steepness, the River has a “flashy discharge,” meaning the amount of water draining into the River channel fluctuates wildly with each rainstorm or melting of winter snow.

In 1984, the Boquet River Association (BRASS), a not-for-profit organization was formed. The mission of BRASS is to preserve and enhance the quality of water and life in the Boquet watershed. Its organizational by-laws and methods of operation rely upon cooperation and education, where physical improvement projects are accomplished through coordination strategies that combine the skills and services of volunteers, town governments, county, and state agencies.

BRASS staff was contacted to provide additional resource information to supplement the 1975 Trancik Study as it relates to the natural resource base of the Town today. Many of their recommendations are contained throughout this Plan.

# Part 1 - Understanding Our Past

## Early Days

In 1765, William Gilliland, an Irish soldier turned successful colonial merchant, moved his family up the Hudson River from New York City to the wilds of northern New York, where he purchased large tracts of land on the western shore of Lake Champlain between Split Rock and the Boquet River. Within a decade, his farming communities, which included present-day Essex, were well established.

In 1777 the American Revolution reached Essex. The young settlement lay directly in the path of British General John Burgoyne's march from Canada to Saratoga. Gilliland, who sympathized with the American cause, also became involved in the bickering between Ethan Allan and Benedict Arnold, thus earning Arnold's lifelong enmity.

By 1778 the settlements were in ashes. In the period of displacement following the war, Gilliland returned, now joined by a growing stream of young settlers and entrepreneurs eager to carve out new lives and fortunes on the northern frontier. Soon forest products, iron, leather, and textile manufacturing, stone quarrying, ship building, and lake commerce made the little harbor town of Essex prosperous – a principal port on Lake Champlain. By the early 1800s, two shipyards were flourishing near the South Bay. If the revolution had nearly finished off Gilliland's settlement, the War of 1812 contributed largely to its growth. At least 250 bateaux and two sloops – the Growler and the Eagle – were produced in Essex yards and used in Commodore Macdonough's American fleet.

Before 1790, a ferry service had been established between Essex and Vermont. First driven by sail, the boats later were powered by horses on a treadmill, still later by steam. The commercial center of Essex was a natural stopping place for travelers; the first tavern was built in 1786 and was quickly followed by at least a half dozen other inns and taverns, one of which still stands on the main street of Essex.

The opening of the Champlain Canal in 1823, connecting the northern producers to the urban markets of the south, tremendously stimulated economic growth in Essex. Shipyards hummed with activity; dozens of Essex-built canal boats joined the sloops, which whitened the Lake with their sails. Shipbuilding, lumbering, the mining and processing of iron, lake commerce, and agriculture provided prosperity for the population of 2,351 counted in the 1850 census.

However, Essex's maritime-dependent economy collapsed with the coming of the first railroads to the Champlain Valley in 1849. By 1860, the population had fallen to 1,633. It never regained its previous level and the year 2000 census showed only 713 people in the Town.

With the declining population, there was little demand for new housing. With the cessation of economic growth, no new buildings were needed or could be afforded. For the most part, what was standing in 1860 had to make do. Many buildings became derelict and abandoned; many continued to be inhabited and preserved. As a result, Essex today retains one of the most remarkably intact ensembles of pre-Civil War architecture in New York state.

th

The early 19 century middle-class merchants, shipwrights, hotelkeepers, lawyers, shoemakers and tailors of Essex were conservative, canny and fiercely individual. They tended to be conventional in their tastes, while at the same time knowledgeable and particular in the quality of their workmanship.

The town they built and the structures they left behind are tangible evidence of their concern for both their private and public lives.

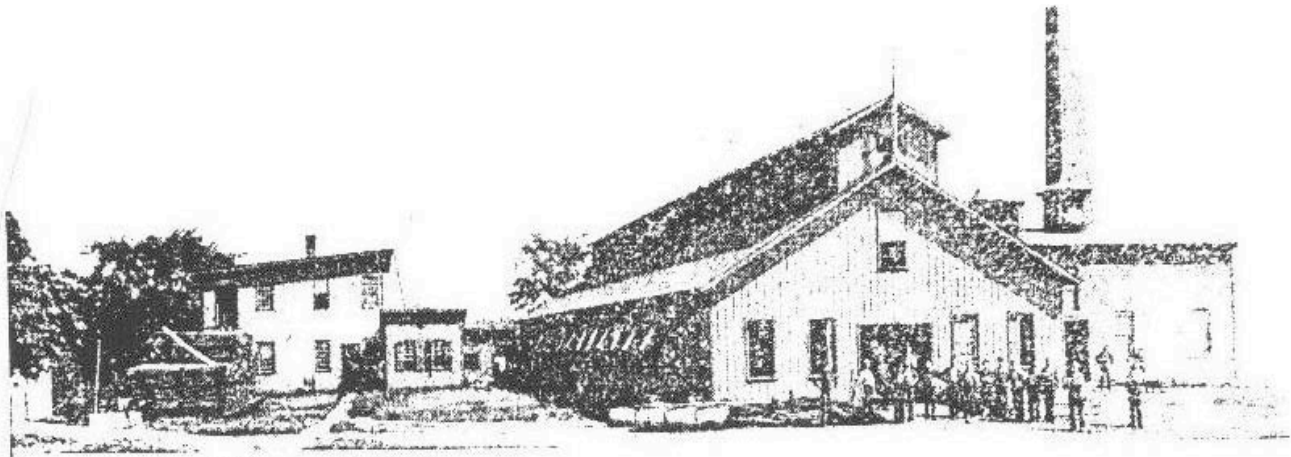
## Essex's Early Industries

The first known industry in the village of Essex was a tannery located behind the present site of the Belden Noble Library and owned and operated by Ransom Noble about 1800. He had interests in lumber, a sawmill, a gristmill, and a mercantile and boat shipping business. He also had an iron ore smelting and rolling mill on the shore of the Boquet River in Boquet.

Early in the 1800s there were two shipyards in Essex. One was located on what is today known as Begg's Point and operated by John Ross; the other on Gould or "South Bay", the present site of the Essex Marina and Essex Shipyard and operated by the Eggleston brothers. The Ross yard built sail and steamboats. The Eggleston Brothers built the Euretta, the first sloop to sail these northern waters, about 1800. A short time later, with war in view, eight or ten vessels of one-hundred and fifty tons were built as well as two hundred and fifty row galleys or bateaux for the American fleet on the Lake.

Around 1850, the village of Essex was the leading port on Lake Champlain, shipping locally produced lumber, iron, clothing, sash and doors, lime, brick, quarried stone, dairy products, etc. The Ross Shipyard became the Essex Manufacturing Company in 1879, builders of sashes and blinds. The Essex Horse and Nail Company subsequently occupied the same site, and employed sixty to seventy men and women until it burned in 1917.

Business at the Eggleston Brothers' shipyard declined but was later revived when it was purchased and operated by C.W. Mead as a boatyard. He built several sailboats and a 40-foot power yacht, the Emerald. In 1938 the Morse brothers, James, Alpheus, and Frank bought the yard and set about reestablishing the business. By 1955, this enterprise boasted of having the largest undercover storage and first complete marina on Lake Champlain. It expanded to include a garage, machine



Essex Horse Nail Factory, 1880-1918

The iron ore, tanning, potash, and other businesses were on a decline by the late 1800s, leaving the Town of Essex with agriculture and a few contracting and building concerns. John Bird Burnham and Leo W. Baker were the largest contractors in the area. Mr. Burnham specialized in building camps and was the founder of the Crater Club, while Mr. Baker had a woodworking shop, gristmill and ice storage shed located on the south side of Gould's Bay. These businesses ceased with the death of these two prominent men in the 1930s.



The first water company in Essex was formed in 1907 by Fred Sherman and Eldon Mason. Called the Essex Water Company, the company gradually extended its services until it furnished water to the majority of the residences and business places in the village. In 1904, the Boquet Electric Power Company was formed by John Bird Burnham, Eldon Mason, Seldon Mason, and Fenton Barber. The plant was built in 1905 on the west branch of the Boquet River three miles west of Willsboro and began operations in 1906 furnishing electricity to Willsboro, Essex, and Whallonsburg.

In the late 1920s, Howard Calkins operated a cabinet shop specializing in antique restorations and reproductions. W. G. Lyons operated a shirt factory in the Masonic Lodge building from 1890 to 1905. From 1925 to 1930, Rolland Mason operated a radio factory employing four men. A hat factory was in operation for a time in the present Library building. Many other industries were in operation which have not been documented due to a lack of sufficient data.

Boquet, a small hamlet situated about three miles west of the village of Essex on the shores of the Boquet River was also a thriving industrial community in the early 1800s. The first known business was a sawmill owned and operated by D. Ross about 1785. In 1810, W.D. Ross erected a gristmill just north of the present day bridge as well as an extensive rolling and slitting mill and a nail factory on the east shore of the river.

In 1947, Champlain Forestry Industries, Inc. started operating an accumulating, drying, and lumber finishing mill employing upwards of fifty men. In addition, the Dairyman's League Cooperative, a milk receiving and processing plant was also located in Boquet.

Whallonsburg was second in size in the Township of Essex about 1830 and the community was the scene of several thriving industries. Whallonsburg was an important whistle stop for peddlers and vendors. The Tyrell house welcomed weary travelers from the train and provided rooms and meals. Community businesses included a creamery, blacksmith shop, foundry and many other businesses. The first was a sawmill built by John Ferguson in the employ of Reuben Whallon on the banks of the Boquet River. This small community can also boast a once flourishing clothing manufacturing business near the site of the sash factory, located east of the present day Grange Hall. A gristmill was built by A. Hale on the hillside west of the River. Later, a plaster mill was established as well as a wool carding mill and several woodworking shops. In 1840, Whallon built an iron forge. Yet, with all this, the principal occupation remained lumbering and the fabrication of wood products. Many family farms operated within the fertile domains of Whallonsburg. Dairy farming was a dominant occupation until the 1960s when family farms began to unravel across the nation. Today, a few farms remain, and part time residents from outside the community have purchased significant tracts of farmland. Around town, a number of vacant buildings are a reminder of a more prosperous past.

## **Early Agriculture**

From the Town's early settlement to today, agriculture has been a significant part of the landscape, rural character, and economy of the Town of Essex. Winter wheat was the first major income-producing crop, averaging 25 bushels to the acre on newly cleared land. Rye was also planted on early farms; its produce was used mostly in distilleries.

In the 1800s, produce that was raised for market was mainly hay, grains, beans, apples, wool, and such products that would not easily spoil. The principal means of delivering product to market was by Lake Champlain in the summer and by ice in the winter. Butter was taken to Burlington and other New England points. Many boatloads of apples went to Canada and were made into cider. By the 1850s, better access to markets brought higher cash incomes for local farmers as well as access to more factory-produced goods. Farmers began to diversify their crops and were able to produce more for the needs of the market rather than personal subsistence. Local production shifted from large staple crops such as wheat to more specialized products in demand in urban markets. The last decades of the century were the peak of apple growing in Essex County. However, this crop also declined by the early 1900s due to increased competition from orchards in the Northwest.

For more than sixty years, between 1875 and 1935, both the number and the average size of farms in Essex remained the same. Since World War II, however, the number of farms has rapidly fallen. By 1955, the principal farm products were milk, birds-foot trefoil seed, hay, wheat, oats, and some maple syrup. Today, many farms are largely abandoned, with only the residence in regular and active use. Despite the decline in active farm operations over the years, the agricultural landscape has not been obliterated in the ongoing pursuit of “modernization” and the market.

## **Transportation in the 1800s**

In 1790, Platt Rogers established a ferry between Basin Harbor, Vermont and some spot near Split Rock. This ran for a few years and was replaced in 1807 by Charles E. Haskins who ran (from Essex Bay to Charlotte, VT) the first horse ferry to be set up in the area. Later, the vessel was operated by the Lake Champlain Company until 1838. In 1810 the first steamboat appeared on Lake Champlain. In 1838, the Lake Champlain Steamship Navigation Company took over the operation of the ferry. The Company transported timber and lumber to be sent to Europe for shipbuilding, bringing in needed supplies on the return trip. No decked vessels navigated Lake Champlain until the beginning of the century, the insignificant commerce being conducted in cutters, pirogues, and bateaux. Wharves were not built to any significant extent until still later, and immigrants with livestock to land ran their boats in as near as possible to the lakeshore, threw the animals overboard and swam them to shore. Previous to 1809, it took a local merchant one-month’s journey to obtain his goods.

The Essex Bay to Charlotte ferry route, though given up by the horse ferry company some 10 years later, was re-established by Powell and Sherman with a gas driven ferryboat. In 1826 the Lake Champlain Transportation Company was authorized and for fifty years it controlled a large proportion of the carrying business of the lake. Today, the Lake Champlain Transportation Company runs two diesel powered ferries across the three-miles of water to Charlotte, Vermont.

As early as 1860, a railroad was prospected from Saratoga northward. Due to the paralyzing effect of the Civil War, actual work was not begun until 1869 when earth was broken at Crown Point. The railroad of the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company, as it was then termed, was completed and trains began operating in the early winter of 1875. The station nearest Essex was a passenger car on what was known as the Boynton Farm, some distance from the road near Willsboro station.

## Part II - Present Day Essex

### The Essex Hamlet

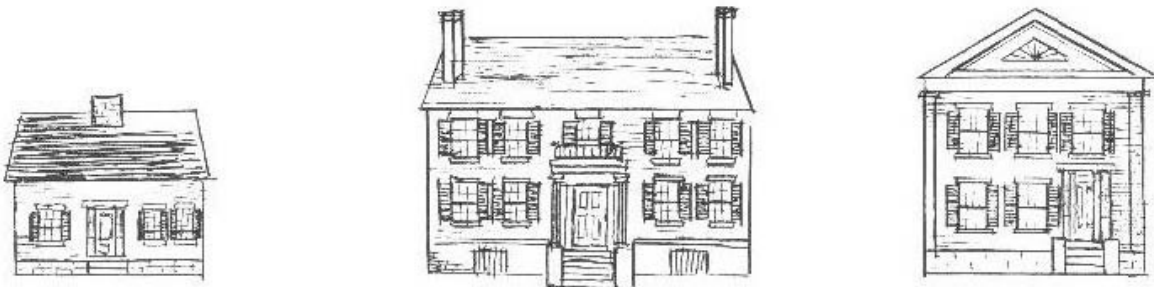
The identification and consideration of historic properties are important because of their ability to preserve a community's history. A critical element in maintaining the architectural fabric of Essex is the protection, rehabilitation, and restoration of its many historic structures.

Ironically, the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw Essex as a village preserved by its very loss of economic importance from the attrition which has befallen busier places. While its industry has vanished, its charm and the great beauty of the Champlain Valley have given it a vacation population upon which the economy of the area principally depends. In increasing numbers, its homes are being purchased and preserved or restored by young families as well as retired persons who know how to value and preserve its

quality. Visually, both in layout and architecture, Essex has retained the character of an early 19<sup>th</sup> century village, a character determined by its geographical and historical position.

In 1974, the Essex Community Heritage Organization, (ECHO), prepared the National Register nomination which led to the listing of the Essex Village Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places in 1975. The resulting historic district is approximately 1.5 miles long and .3 miles wide. From the intersection of Route 22 and Main Street it extends approximately .8 miles to the north, with the current Kellogg (Blockhouse Farm) property being the northern most property to be included. It extends approximately .6 miles to the south with the "Champ Watch" property being the most southerly. The shore of Lake Champlain is the eastern boundary and the western boundary is a line .3 miles from the intersection of Route 22 and Main and running parallel to Main Street.

The district contains approximately 150 structures which predate the 20th century. Of the structures in the district, there are only 15 that were constructed after 1900. Of these, only 3 were built after 1910. Four or five structures are of the 18th century; the rest are all 19th century. Of these, only 7 were constructed after 1860. The predominant building materials were clapboarded wood, frame, brick, and native stone. No structure exceeds 2 1/2 stories, thus taking the fullest advantage of the natural beauty of a location between wooded ridge and a rocky and irregular lakeshore.



*Line drawings by George McNulty*

Essex Village is nearly unique in that, established in the 1780s, it reached its maturity in less than 60 years, thus containing buildings of only three closely-related architectural periods: Federal, Greek Revival, and early Victorian. These styles are displayed, virtually unaltered, in their residential, commercial, and ecclesiastical forms. The Dower House on Lake Shore Road was built prior to 1793 by Daniel Ross, son-in-law of William Gilliland, and is the oldest documented structure in the area.

Probably the first clapboarded wooden framed structure (residence) to be erected in the hamlet, its gambrel roof and five-bay layout displays its 18th century character beneath later alterations.

Wright's Inn, constructed on Main Street by General Daniel Wright in 1796, was originally a five-bay center-hall clapboard structure, subsequently doubled in size by extending it to the north. While the interior has been extensively altered, the facade with its portico has been carefully restored to its appearance in the opening years of the 19th century. A classic example of the commercial inn of its period, the window division, roof pitch, cladding technique, and architectural style elements are the same used elsewhere in the Village in more modest structures and relate it harmoniously to them.

The stone building now known as the Belden Noble Library on Main Street was erected in 1818 by General Ransom Noble for use as a store and warehouse in conjunction with his tannery (the foundations of which may still be seen in the rear). Constructed of native limestone, its Federal proportions retain their elegance, although a later "Swiss chalet" balcony was added to the facade.

"Hickory Hill" on Elm Street, and "Rosslyn" on the Lake Shore Road represent the residences of the wealthy merchants and lawyers who dominated Essex in the early days of its prosperity. Two-and-a-half-story brick structures whose design combines Georgian and Federal elements, both "Hickory Hill" and "Rosslyn" were built before 1830. "Hickory Hill" (1822), built by Henry Howard Ross for his bride, was taken from a five-bay design in Salem, New York. It displays great grace and lightness in its Palladian window, Neo-classic portico, and elegant cornices. Its setting in its own spacious grounds on the ridge which overlooks the Village and the Lake adds much to its beauty. "Rosslyn," the William D. Ross house, originally constructed as a three-bay side hall dwelling, was expanded into five bays. Presently restored to its appearance in 1840, it commands a superb view of the Lake and the Green Mountains of Vermont.

The "Old Brick Schoolhouse" on Elm Street (1830) stands on the probable site of the first school in Essex, erected in 1787. Expanded to the north in 1837, this one-story building served as the Village schoolhouse until superceded by the large frame schoolhouse of 1867 (still surviving, and restored). Surmounted by a small belfry, the building has the simple dignity given it by good proportions and mellowed brick. It has been sensitively restored for use as a dwelling.

"Block House Farm" on the Lake Shore Road (1836) is a small clapboarded and Doric-porticoed Greek Revival dwelling in its purest form, with the exception of added dormers (for practicality) to the north and south. Its temple effect is accentuated by its site set high above the lake on its terraces, with fields and orchards about it, its portico and gable toward the road.

Another somewhat richer version of Greek Revival architecture may be seen in the Stafford-Spear house on Route 22. Built by Cyrus Stafford in 1847, its design was taken from the pattern books of the period: the front entrance, in particular, was copied directly from a plate entitled "Design for a Front Door" in Minard Lefever's *The Modern Builder's Guide*, published in 1833. The house, brick and two-and-a-half stories, has corner pilasters, full entablature and pediment, a raking cornice and a sunburst panel almost filling the tympanum. The great distinction of the structure is in the beautiful and harmoniously-realized detail of the entrance.

"Greystone" was built by Belden Noble in 1853. Of local limestone in two-and-a-half stories, it is a late Greek Revival mansion, characterized by superb stone work on the exterior and magnificent Federal plan and plasterwork in the interior. Set in broad, park-like acres, its condition today is as fine as the day it was built.

The unique quality of Essex Village lies in the fact that its structures - residential, commercial, and ecclesiastic - were almost entirely built before the Civil War, and have remained substantially unaltered, with the exception of an occasional Victorian porch or bay window. The stone fire house with its added Greek Revival colonnade (1840s) was previously (1830s) a law office. It has recently been sold and is being restored for a mixed commercial-residential use.

The stone Masonic Lodge, also on Main Street, was once a warehouse and factory loft (1858). It now boasts a modern addition in the form of a Palladian window and (modern) porch. Another significant building once housing the local liquor store (1836) on Main Street is a charming brick Greek Revival building with an early Victorian roof. The Community Church (formerly Presbyterian) on the corner of Route 22 was built of native limestone in 1853. Its interior represents a remarkable survival of the Federal style into later periods.

The Noble-Schreiber brick house (1835), located on the Lake Shore Road has on its grounds a small, octagonal, one-room schoolhouse built-in the 1850s for the use of the Noble children and their tutor. Of clapboard with a conical Gothic roof and slender pillars supporting the porch which entirely surrounds it, the schoolhouse is of a surprising elegance and very well preserved.

It should be added that it is the sense of Essex as an architectural whole, without intrusive modern elements, and with a wealth of imaginative taste in the use of detail, that is the village's finest heritage. From the viewpoint of either an architectural historian or a casual visitor, the village of Essex displays a unique opportunity to see and study a village that "went to sleep architecturally" for 100 years and, excepting a brief arousal at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, has not changed in any important aspects.

Life however, does go on for the many residents and businesses in the Essex Hamlet. A very lively and energetic business core heavily promotes the area during the summer season. The population of the Town swells and the many seasonal residents return to enjoy the Lake and the very special quality of life. On any given day, the hamlet is replete with tourists, enjoying the sights, patronizing shops, restaurants, and marinas.

## **The Whallonsburg Hamlet**

Whallonsburg is home to scenic mountain vistas, large open spaces, and an interesting mix of architectural styles. The Boquet River is a central natural feature of the community and is a challenging venue for anglers of varied interest. The community is comprised of a mix of new residents and many long time residents. Whallonsburg is a friendly community and its people are its most valued resource. Whallonsburg operates an independent all volunteer fire department, which has kept pace with the demands of firefighting. The Fire Department is also an important social institution in the community. The former Whallonsburg church is now the home of the Boquet River Children's Theatre. For over six years now, youth from Essex, Willsboro, Westport and Elizabethtown enjoy this extraordinary cultural opportunity. Over the past several years, this privately owned building has seen extensive renovations and is in demand for varied public uses.

Several buildings in town, the sites of former businesses, could be used again as shops, offices or other uses. The Walker property downtown and Whitcomb's Garage on Route 22 both boast significant floor space. Jim's Grocery now seasonally occupies the old Braisted store. The Flower Pot is another ongoing seasonal business. The Grange hall is a historically significant building that might be used in a variety of ways should the Grange decide to no longer use the building.

The Boquet River runs through the middle of this hamlet and could be used for a variety of water sports. One of the unique features of Whallonsburg is the old Iron Bridge. There have been indications that this historic bridge, the last of its type in the hamlet, is failing. It should be repaired and kept open and if replacement is necessary. The Whallonsburg Civic Association has suggested that the Town should consider replacing it with a covered bridge. This effort could help define the hamlet and be a boost to revitalization efforts.

## The Lake and the Shoreline

Lake Champlain is a constant presence in Essex. Essex's nine mile long shoreline on Lake Champlain is very beautiful – a source of pleasure to its residents, seasonal homeowners, and visitors – and a priceless asset to the Town. Village streets dead-end at the Lake and the Lake is seen from practically every residence and building. Essex offers visitors a way of experiencing Lake Champlain that is different from, but no less important, than parks, beaches, or boating.

*Some important notes of interest about Lake Champlain:*

- Lake length: 120 miles
- Greatest Lake depth: 400 feet
- Lake Area: 435 square miles
- Greatest Width: 12 miles
- Number of Islands in Lake: 70+
- Area of Wetlands in Basin: 300,000+ acres
- Average Lake Depth: 64 feet
- Record High Water Level: 101.89 feet (1993)
- Record Low Water Level: 92.4 feet (1908)
- Average Annual Water Level: 95.5 feet
- Average Annual Precipitation (Mountains): 50+ inches
- Average Annual Precipitation (Near Lake): 30 inches
- Growing Season (near Lake): 150 days
- Growing Season (higher terrain): 105 days
- Average Annual Air Temperature: 40-45 degrees F.
- Average Lake Freeze Date: February 12
- Drainage Direction of Lake: North

*Aerial photo courtesy of Barry Hamilton and Jill Schoenfeld*

*Whallons Bay looking North*



In Essex, visitors have an opportunity not only to enjoy the Lake as it is today, but to see it in its historic context, as a remarkably intact historic village. Essex is fortunate that its shoreline is largely unspoiled by development, thus contributing to the unique rural lakeside character of the Town.

Lake Champlain stretches south from the Canadian border for over 100 miles along almost one-third of New York State's eastern border and has 587 miles of shoreline. The Lake is unique, in part because of its narrow width, (measuring only twelve miles as its widest point), great depth (some parts are more than 400 feet deep) and the size of the land area, or watershed, through which 90% of the water delivered to the Lake flows.

The Town of Essex is located approximately halfway up the Lake. The bulk of access to the Essex Waterfront takes place in the Essex Hamlet with the Ferry, Beggs Park, and two marinas. There is no public access to the lake in the Town for purposes of launching watercraft and while the Town maintains a beach at Beggs Park and at Whallons Bay, neither site is open for public swimming. The Town maintains a dock at Beggs Park and allows access on a limited basis for boaters wishing to dock.

The Crater Club, a rustic camp retreat and summer resort colony is located two miles south of the Essex Hamlet on Lake Champlain. It was founded and built in the early 1900s by John Bird Burnham, and it is home today to approximately 40 seasonal property owners. John Burnham constructed telephone lines, four tennis courts, a fourteen-mile water system, docks, a central building with dining room, a library, recreational facilities, a big garden and a federal Post Office. Many of these facilities remain today. In the days of long vacations, the Crater Club resort's clients were persons of middle means, among them clergymen, educators, government officials, authors, and persons whose tastes were simple. During this time, Burnham built over 75 cottages, each with a lake or mountain vista. The members have continued to maintain the common buildings and facilities and have upgraded the dock area. Today, the residents of the Crater Club bring vitality and life during the summer months to an otherwise secluded and private part of our Town.

Adjacent to the Crater Club dock, the Split Rock Yacht Club, a small informal club, sponsors weekly sailing races during mid-summer. For the past 60 years, the Club has followed the course from the southern shore of Essex to a marker in Whallons Bay and back to a marker off Cannon Point and finally to the finish line in Cape Cod Knockabouts. In 1999 the Club had approximately 100 members.

Lake Champlain is a marvelous lake for sailors. Powerboats also enjoy it but often find the heavy weather unpredictable and difficult. Experiments with houseboats have not worked because an active lake pounds them too much. The two marinas in Essex are filled with large sail vessels as well as powerboats. It should be noted that the powerboats have muffled engines, and sailboats make little or no sound under sail. This quiet adds to the enjoyment of the lake as well as those who live on its shores.

With the exception of the Essex Hamlet area, development on the shoreline is typified by the rustic Adirondack camp in the woods. A significant part of the shoreline is characterized by narrow strips of rocky beach below steep banks. As stated previously, the offshore waters are not typically calm and recent unexplained weather patterns have meant that shoreline property owners are seeing the significant effects of erosion and dealing with the need for bank stabilization. What little is left of undeveloped shoreline can be considered unsuitable for future development.



## The Recent Agricultural Landscape

Farming is an integral part of life in Essex and has been for two hundred years. Agriculture comprises up to 60% of the land use in Essex and more than any other single factor creates the rural Essex landscape.



*Bob Perry, summer 2000 -Photo courtesy of Gary Randorf*

The soils in general are well-adapted for farming and grazing. Along the Lake, it is a claylike loam. Moving west into the mountains, it becomes a lighter sandy loam. The primary soil type, running in a north-south pattern, is the Vergennes-Kingsbury association described as deep, moderately well and somewhat poorly drained, fine textured soils. The underlying bedrock is limestone of the Glens Falls and Orwell formations of the Trenton and Black River groups, historically used both for construction and the manufacture of lime. The Essex County Soil and Conservation Service has recently completed an updated soils mapping of Essex County. See attached relevant data for Essex, Appendix A.

Current statistics on farming in **Essex County** are as follows:  
(source - Cornell Cooperative Extension, 1999)

- There are 25 dairies, 5 apple orchards, and 2 potato farms.
- Approximately 240 residents of Essex County complete the census forms for farmers. Of those, 74 produce over \$10,000 a year in agricultural income and can be considered full-time farmers.
- There are a total of 52,200 acres of land in agricultural production.
- There are a total of 24,300 acres in croplands.
- There are 3,000 milk cows averaging 15,400 pounds of milk per cow per year.
- Annual sales reach \$9.5 million annually, of which \$6 million is from the dairies.
- Hay, apple, and vegetable production make up most of the rest.

Of the 32 farms identified in the Town of Essex, the majority are in hay production. In addition, many other landowners have hay fields. Growing hay is well suited to Essex's soils and compatible with Essex's desire for well-groomed open land. There are no dairy farms active in Essex at this time.

In 1999, 262 parcels comprising approximately 12,645 acres or 54% of the land use in the Town participated in the Agricultural Districts. Under the State Agriculture and Markets Law (Article 25-AA as amended), agricultural districts are established by the county for a period of eight years following review of the proposal by state agencies and approval of the Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets. *Essex County Agricultural Districts 1, 4, and 5* contain land in the Town of Essex (1999).

# Parcels Owners Acres Assessed Value In Essex In Essex In Essex in Essex

---

1-Westport	41	24	1,856.54	\$ 2,250,100
4-Essex	188	129	9,823.13	\$15,155,005
5-Willsboro	33	20	965.81	\$ 1,610,550

---

Total	262	173	12,645.48	\$19,015,655
-------	-----	-----	-----------	--------------

The Agricultural Districts in the Town are intended for agricultural, forestry, rural housing, recreation, and resource protection purposes. The challenge of these districts is to allow all of these uses without compromising the resources of the district. Significant resources in the district are: prime agricultural soils and productive farmland; open space, scenic vistas and views; locally-significant wildlife habitat and natural areas; large parcels of good farmland; wetlands; productive woodlands; and the conservation and aesthetic value of roadside environments.

The Adirondack Park Agency designates agricultural land as "Resource Management" with an average lot size of 42.7 acres and an intensity of 15 principal buildings per square mile. However, farmlands are often subdivided over a long period of time, with small pieces taken out each time, without a real idea of how these small subdivisions hurt the overall unity or continued viability of the farm. It is common for landowners to subdivide in piecemeal fashion because often they cannot afford the expense of performing an overall master plan for their entire property.

Due to the changing nature of small farms in Essex, it is likely that a significant percentage of farmland is likely to change hands within the next ten years. This situation could result in abandoned farmland, subdivision and development of farmland, reduced family farming and erosion of the Town's rural character. Fragmentation of farmland reduces the potential for agricultural operations such as hay and crop production and dairying.

Residential development in farming areas increases the conflicts between residential property owners and farmers. Farms create dust and noise from machinery, may often apply pesticides and manure to the land which can create an unpleasant odor, and use roads for oversized, slow-moving equipment. Historically, these operations did not create problems; many residents grew up with these conditions and were used to them as a way of life. As the Town population has shifted and people have moved in from non-agricultural areas, conflicts have arisen.



Harold Savre Farm. 1978 – photo provided by Shirlev LaForest

The use of land for agriculture has given Essex much of its characteristic look and feel. However, local agriculture has come to reside in the hands of fewer and fewer farmers. Our agricultural landscape, characterized by meadows, pastures, and fields of hay and corn are now interspersed with stretches of abandoned fields reverting to grassland or woods.

## Population

The earliest population record of the Town of Essex is 1810, when there were 1,186 residents. By 1850 the population had grown to 2,351 and by 1950 the census showed a population of 1,012.

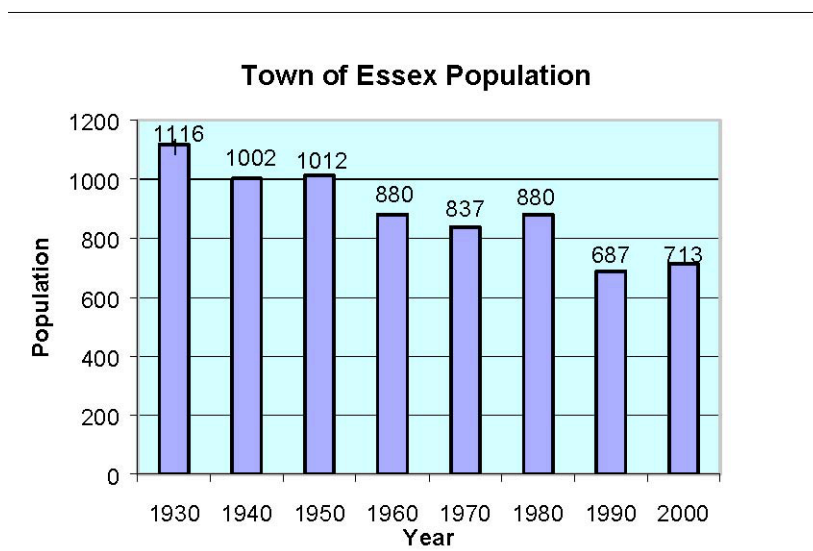
According to the 1990 census, the population of Essex was 687, a 21.9% decrease from 1980 figures of 880. The estimated population census at 7/1/96 showed an additional decrease to 663. A comparison with other surrounding towns shows the following:

Year	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Essex	1,116	1,002	1,012	880	837	880	687	713
Lewis							1,200	
Westport	1,534	1,657	1,597	1,565	1,453			
Willsboro	1,439	1,446	1,362					
	1,612	1,780	1,646	1,716	1,688			
	1,759	1,736	1,903					

The decline in population over the years represented a decline in industrial and commercial activity. When the forests were cut over, the sawmills dwindled. The growth of large industrial complexes for

the manufacture of iron and steel spelled the end to small mines, mills, and forges in the North Country. The changes meant a declining population, and with a declining population, there has been little demand for new housing. Ironically, the twentieth century saw Essex as a place of refuge, peaceful and remote from the very values upon which its prosperity once depended.

Essex's population today consists of both seasonal and year-round residents. According to 1990 census data, the town had approximately 170 seasonal residences with an average 3.5 people per housing unit. In addition, there are tourists who travel through the Town on a daily basis. Due to the limited number of overnight accommodations and tourist attractions in the Town, the number of transients who stay for more than an average of one to two nights is very low, except in the summer months. Therefore, the Town's year-round service population is comprised almost entirely of year-round and seasonal residents. There are 519 registered voters in the Town as of January 2001.



Age Data No. Percent 0-18 185 26% 19-44 216 31% 45-90 286 42% *Source: 1990 Census Data*

While no specific data is included in this Plan, it can be assumed that the major loss in population is in school aged and the 25-34 age categories. The Town has witnessed dramatic changes in the composition of its residents from the early settlers of the eighteenth century who were primarily farmers or people engaged in local Essex businesses and industry. Today, a significant majority of the Town's workforce commutes to jobs outside the Town.

Population trends serve as an important indicator of the potential pressures and demands a community must consider in planning for its future. Data on the size of and growth (or decline) in population assists in determining needs for facilities, services, housing, and indicates potential land use patterns. In spite of the changes in the size of the Town's population and the composition of its workforce, the continued presence of a farming population and the Town's low population density help explain why Essex's character remains rural. According to census data, per capita income in Essex in 1989 was \$10,625, a 19.3 percent increase over 1979 figures.

Income (Essex Resident)

Family Average \$23,221 Individual Average \$10,625

Housing Units – Total 486 Residential 276 57% Seasonal 170 35% Not occupied 29 6% Commercial \* 21 4% \* 11 Commercial and 10 commercial/residential.

## Land Use

The Town of Essex is situated in northeastern New York on Lake Champlain. The Town encompasses approximately 23,798 acres, of which approximately 16 percent is water. The Town is bounded to the north by Willsboro, to the east by Lake Champlain, to the west by Lewis, and to the south by Westport. This land is allocated to the following official Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan Map land use area classifications as of August, 2000:

	% Essex County	Essex of Essex County Total	Essex	% of Park Acres	Total
Hamlet	255.0	1.1	18,864	1.4	Moderate Intensity Use 222.1 1.0 20,291 1.1
Use	1,892.1	8.0	77,651	2.5	Rural Use 8,728.5 36.7 184,884 4.8
Resource Management	8,195.5	34.5	309,006	2.7	Industrial Use 0.0 0.0 6,470 0.0
Wilderness	0.0	0.0	21,327	0.0	Wild Forest 617.0 2.6 175,146 0.4
Intensive Use	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	Primitive 6,554 0.0
Historic	0.0	0.0	495	0.0	State Administrative 0.0 0.0 316 0.0
Pending Classification	0.0	0.0	182	0.0	Open Water 3,856.0 16.2 76,580 5.1
<hr/>					Total
	23,766.1	100.00	1,224,583	2.0	

The Boquet River, flowing in a northerly direction, divides the Town in two. The land to the east of the river is relatively flat at a mean elevation of 300 feet above sea level, and the highest point in the Town is Boquet Mountain at 1,200 feet.

The Town has two established hamlets, Essex and Whallonsburg. Several other concentrations of housing are recognized by local residents; Boquet, located about three miles west of the Essex hamlet on the shores of the Boquet River; Brookfield, located in a more remote area in the western part of the Town; and Whallons Bay, located in the southeast part of the Town embracing the bay which bears its name and Split Rock.

The cliffs of Split Rock Mountain rise 400 feet out of Lake Champlain between Westport and Essex, creating a dramatic bluff known as the Palisades. The state acquired the cliffs in 1980 and much of the rest of the Mountain in 1994 totaling 3,000 acres and 4.3 miles of shoreline, representing the largest stretch of undisturbed waterfront on the 120-mile long lake. In 1994, the state also bought the Webb-Royce Swamp across the road from Split Rock Mountain. The swamp is popular among birders for its great variety of species, including osprey, heron, various ducks, and great horned owls. Swamp white oak, a rarity in the Adirondacks, can be found there.

In the Town of Essex, the people of the State of New York own approximately 448 acres of forest preserve land and retain a conservation easement on 474 acres of private land. The forest preserve portion includes the north end of Split Rock Mountain and a substantial portion of Webb Royce swamp to the west. An additional 2,520 acres of state land adjoin in the Town of Westport. Collectively, these lands are known as the *Split Rock Mountain Tract* and are afforded “forever wild” protection under Article XIV of the New York State Constitution. The lands are classified by the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan as “Wild Forest” which permits a wide variety of outdoor recreation.

The Split Rock Tract, the largest block of undeveloped shoreline on the New York side of Lake Champlain is a picturesque land form that projects outwardly 150 feet. The adjoining steep, rugged terrain, dense forests, and notable wetland communities blend together to create a unique natural setting found nowhere else in the Champlain Valley. In addition to the forest preserve portion, the State of New York acquired a conservation easement (development rights) on Split Rock Farm in order to substantially protect the outstanding scenic and historical character and aesthetic beauty of this farm as well as adjoining state lands.

The State of New York pays approximately \$4,300 annually in taxes to support the local tax base (NYS Office of Real Property Tax Service, 1998) on the forest preserve portion. In addition, the state pays a percentage of the taxes on Split Rock Farm. In the latter, ownership is divided between the State and Gary Heurich, the farm’s fee title owner. Taxes are apportioned to the percentage of the property retained by each owner. Tax rates are determined by local assessors subject to review by the NYS Office of Real Public Services. Public recreation rights were not included in the easement.

## Housing

The type, location, and price of housing affects the social, economic, and physical character of any Town. Historically, housing in Essex has been concentrated in the two hamlet areas, clustered in the Crater Club area and along the shoreline, or located in a dispersed pattern on or near farms in the surrounding countryside.

Many factors play a role in the price of housing, including the desirability of the Town as a place to live. Many building sites have magnificent views of the countryside, the Adirondack Mountains and Green Mountains of Vermont, and Lake Champlain. Other factors include raw land prices and site development costs, which are somewhat interrelated. Limitations include the lack of municipal sewer and water systems. In addition, minimum lot sizes outside the hamlet areas are also a consideration for siting single-family homes. Overall, the Town has seen no pattern of new housing development in recent years.

The Crater Club, a private homeowners association, currently has forty homeowners. Of those forty, none are in residence on a year-round basis and make up a substantial part of the Town’s seasonal population. Several of the homes at the Crater Club have recently been renovated or winterized for year-round use. This housing pattern is prevalent along the entire shoreline south of the Essex hamlet.

As a result of these factors, there has been no recent move by developers to construct large housing developments as are seen across the Lake in Shelburne, Vermont. The resale value of existing homes is high due to the limited availability of new housing and the desirable quality of life and rural character in the Town and the region. The situation has contributed to a lack of affordable housing for low and middle-income families.

While the Town Board is pursuing the expansion of municipal water and sewer facilities in the Essex hamlet area, it is not anticipated that this will cause a “spurt” in growth due to the lack of developable property within the hamlet.

There is no organized senior housing in the Town. Approximately five miles to the north in Willsboro, a twelve unit elderly low-income rental apartment is owned and operated by the Willsboro Senior Housing Corp., a not-for-profit entity established for the sole purpose of providing affordable senior housing to residents of Willsboro and Essex. That facility is currently being expanded to twenty-two units. The apartment complex has been rented to capacity since it became operational in 1996. There is a current waiting list with over fifteen persons seeking to live at the facility. Residents of Essex have recently formed a committee to explore the options for bringing senior housing to our Town. This committee is working with the Housing Assistance Program of Essex County to explore funding opportunities.

## **Economy**

As a rural community, the Town of Essex has a local economy primarily based on agriculture, local services, small industries, home occupations, and water-related recreation and transportation. Home occupations include, but are not limited to, such businesses such as bed and breakfasts, antique dealers, offices, woodworking, crafts, art galleries, and repair shops. Home occupations are important to the local economy and provide employment in rural areas. This type of economic activity enables more flexibility for working parents, reduces travel and commute time, and can provide an incentive for residents to preserve historic buildings on their property if they can establish an income producing business in the space. In addition, people working locally in Essex are able to satisfy the need for fire and rescue volunteers during regular working hours. While the Zoning Ordinance does not restrict home occupations to dwelling units, and the use of accessory buildings are allowed for home occupations, it is not intended that home occupations detract from the rural residential character of the Town.

During the months of June through October, several shops and tourist services operate within the Essex hamlet. A business and services directory is produced annually by the Commerce Committee and is distributed locally and on the Essex-Charlotte Ferry. In addition, the shop owners collaborate on advertising, mostly in Vermont. These shop owners depend on the summer tourist infusion for the survival of their businesses.

## **Transportation**

The Town of Essex’s nineteenth century road network survives virtually intact save for a few unimproved secondary roads. The Town has ready access to major interstate roadways and rail. I87, also known as the Northway, is accessible both north and south of the Town.

The Essex Ferry is located adjacent to the Essex hamlet and connects Essex County to Charlotte, Vermont, just south of Burlington. During the summer months, two ferries run providing service every half hour. The ferry serves tourists as well as commuters and people on business. In addition, it is a major form of access to the Fletcher Allen Hospital in Burlington for residents of the area. It has historically operated from early spring until fall. An additional ferry slip and an upgraded parking facility were added to the Charlotte dock in 1998 which increased the ferry's parking capacity. The Lake Champlain Transportation Company currently has plans for a similar expansion at the Essex dock projected to begin in the year 2002. LCT has attempted to run ferry service year-round in recent years, and is only forced to stop when the ice on the Lake becomes impassable.

Both passenger and freight trains pass through the Town of Essex. Trains run from New York City to Montreal daily on this line with the closest station located ten miles to the south in Westport. There is no public bus transportation in the Town. Two airports service the area; the Plattsburgh airport, 30 miles to the north by car provides the nearest air passenger terminal; and the Burlington International airport.

*Ferry Arrival, an Essex event*



## Tourism

Tourism is one of the more controversial issues facing the Town today. The existence of the ferry dock provides a major access point to Essex County, Northern New York and the Adirondack Park. While no direct studies exist, it is a logical conclusion that upwards of 80% of peak season ferry traffic passes through Town without stopping. However, the historic and unspoiled nature of the Town itself is an attraction for tourists. Tourism is a major part of the economy of Essex County and is promoted heavily by surrounding towns and the Essex County Visitors Bureau. In addition, shop owners in the Essex hamlet rely entirely on tourism for the success of their seasonal businesses.

A March, 1997, study commissioned by the Village of Port Henry entitled: "*Essex and Clinton County Local Waterfront Revitalization Program*" states: "Today, tourism and recreation utilizing the incomparable natural and cultural resources of Lake Champlain are economic activities which no community can afford not to incorporate in any revitalization effort, but in doing so the communities need and wish to preserve the unique quality of life and the environment associated with it."

Lake Champlain Byways, a collaborative effort between three New York County Planning Offices (Clinton, Essex and Washington) and four Vermont Regional Planning Commissions (Northwest, Chittenden, Addison, and Rutland) developed a plan for a 250-mile bi-state route surrounding Lake Champlain and including the Town of Essex. The Corridor Management Plan is aimed at coordinating existing activities to establish a regional identity and unification of the Lake as a region. Strategies and partnerships identified in the plan are to promote, interpret and steward the region's resources in balance with economic development in the region.

The Byways plan has identified NYS Route 22 in Essex County as the designated byway, the "Champlain Trail." Lake Champlain Byways is more than a designated roadway. It reflects a "geographic sense of place" that is created by a concentration of byway resources that have a functional or physical relationship to Lake Champlain. The objective of regional unity is realized through the linkage of communities by a network of multi-modal routes with themed interpretation. The Byway corridor was defined by the extent historic, cultural, recreational and natural resources related to the Lake. By this definition, the Byway corridor extends from the center of the Lake to Elizabethtown, encompassing the entire town of Essex. The Byways Corridor Management Plan does not include land use policies or plans for implementation. Specific areas where there is interest to work together includes education, recreation, transportation, agriculture, tourism, environment, and historic/cultural resource management.

Significant funding is available on the national level for creation and expansion of cultural heritage tourism opportunities. The Essex Community Heritage Organization has recently received funding for the establishment of a heritage/tourism facility to be located in the hamlet of Essex. In 1996, the National Park Service funded the "Champlain Valley Heritage Corridor Project," a New York-Vermont effort to study how best to take advantage of the historic nature of the Champlain valley. In Essex County, the Champlain Valley Heritage Network supports recognition of the Champlain Valley Heritage Corridor providing that its implementation can be managed locally, and that its emphasis includes economic development as well as address industrial tourism, tourism history as well as military history of the area.

Within the corridor, the Champlain Trail is supplemented by a network of multi-modal transportation routes including:

- **Lake Champlain Bikeways** is a network of routes for bicyclists. The principle route, “Champlain Bikeway”, circles Lake Champlain. From this principle route, interpreted bicycle theme loops provide access for bicyclists to the smaller communities and roadways in the region.
- **Lake Champlain Walkways** is a network of trails and roadways that connect the region’s communities and are accessible by the pedestrian. Although this network is in a pilot-study stage, it is anticipated that these routes will have local interpretation developed for the user.
- **Lake Champlain Waterways** are routes for boaters that connect the lakeshore to the lake’s streams and rivers up to the first non-navigable point (dam or waterfall). The Waterways include the Lake Champlain Paddlers Trail, which connects sites along the lake that are accessible to the public. This network is also in a pilot-study stage, it is anticipated that these routes will have local interpretation developed for the user.

This network of multi-modal routes is developed to merge transportation and recreation for the visitor. The slower modes of travel, coupled with interpretation, allows the visitor to have a meaningful and authentic experience of the region. By having visitors utilize various modes of travel, the region can experience reduced congestion on major roadways, while increasing visitor access to the local businesses and services, and showcasing local culture and heritage.



*Aerial view of the Essex Hamlet, August 2000. Photo courtesy of Barry Hamilton and Jill Schoenfeld*

Within the Lake Champlain Byway Corridor, and connected by the various multi-modal routes, several communities will serve as **Lake Champlain Waypoint Communities**. Waypoint Communities provide access to cultural attractions, natural and historic features, recreation opportunities, as well as access to alternative modes of transportation. As a “hub” for surrounding towns, hamlets, and countryside, each Waypoint Community will provide:

- A physical or functional relationship to the Lake “experience” and resources
- Multi-modal access to outlying areas
- Accommodations, food, retail and local products
- Public restrooms
- Directional and interpretative information
- Equipment rentals for biking, hiking and boating
- Connecting hubs for public transportation such as buses, ferries, trains, airports

The hamlet of Essex has been formally designated as a Waypoint Community.

## **Local Government and Community Services**

The Town of Essex was formed from the Town of Willsboro on April 4, 1805. The first town meeting was held at Rogers Inn, which was located at what is also known as Rogers Corners, or the intersection of Middle and Station Roads. The early records of the Town are not in existence and the first officers of the Town are not known. The Town offices today are located in the historic Wright’s Inn building which has recently undergone a complete renovation of the first floor space.

Town Government today consists of an elected Town Supervisor and four Town Councilmen. The first supervisor of the Town of which there is any record was Reuben Whallon who served in 1818 and 1819. Other elected officials include the Highway Superintendent, Town Clerk, one Town Justice, and three Assessors. Volunteers make up the membership of the seven member Planning Board, the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Youth Commission, and Board of Assessment Review. The Town is also fortunate to have an active Town Historian.

### **• Municipal Services**

The Town of Essex Highway Department provides street maintenance throughout the Town. The Town has one Water District in the Essex Hamlet but no municipal sewer. The Town recently received funding for the expansion of the water district surrounding the hamlet of Essex. In addition, a grant was recently awarded to assist with preliminary engineering studies for a municipal sewer in the hamlet of Essex.

### **• Solid Waste**

Solid waste disposal is provided by the Town of Essex Transfer Station, which operates through an inter-municipal Agreement with the neighboring town of Willsboro. In 1998, the Town Board saw the need to restructure and formalize the agreement between the Town and the Town of Willsboro. In such, user fees cover the cost of operation of the Station and operational costs are not included in the Town’s operating budget and hence are not taxed to residents.

### **• Public Safety**

Public safety in the Town is provided by two volunteer fire departments, a rescue squad, and the New York State Police in Westport. The Town is fortunate to have dedicated, well-trained, and hardworking volunteers providing its fire and rescue services. Essex has two Fire Districts, each with its own five member Board of Fire Commissioners and operating budgets. In recent years the Whallonsburg Fire Department (Essex Fire District # 2) has made significant additions to its building and has kept pace with the demands of firefighting by keeping their equipment updated. In 1994, Essex Fire District # 1 voters approved a \$400,000 bond issue to finance the construction of a new firehouse. The new facility, completed in 1999 on Route 22, houses significant firefighting apparatus as well as provides ambulance service for the entire Town manned by volunteers from both Fire Districts.

The fire departments respond to fires, hazard conditions, mutual aid calls to neighboring towns and false alarms. In addition, the departments are responsible for training their members, maintaining the facilities and equipment, fire prevention, and participation in community events. The Town expects to continue to rely on the volunteer fire departments and rescue squad. However, there is concern that lack of younger volunteers and the fact that most working people who live in Essex are employed out of Town, may cause a situation where there may be too few people available to volunteer to respond to an emergency in adequate time during working hours. Additional employment opportunities should be encouraged to increase the number of Essex residents in the local workforce.

The New York State Police provides police services to the Town. They handle any complaint except dog complaints, which are handled by the Town's Animal Control Officer. Speeding vehicles on local roads is an important safety issue, and has been a recent focus of the Whallonsburg Civic Association.

- **Health Care**

The nearest hospitals are the Elizabethtown Community Hospital in Elizabethtown (approximately 17 miles south) and CVPH Medical Center in Plattsburgh (approximately 35 miles north). Additional health care services are available through the Fletcher Allen Health Care system across the Lake in Burlington, Vermont. The Town is also served by the Smith House Health Care Center, an outpatient facility, located five miles to the north in Willsboro. This facility is open five days a week and is staffed by a physician and physician assistants.

- **Schools**

Essex is divided into two school districts. The Willsboro Central School District includes the majority of the Town of Essex and provides educational facilities for students from kindergarten through high school. Voters of the Willsboro School District recently approved the construction of a new state of the art K-12 facility to be located on the Farrell Road in Willsboro. Currently, there are approximately 50 children from Essex enrolled in the Willsboro School District. In addition, approximately 25 school aged residents of Essex attend the Westport School. Additional educational opportunities are available through BOCES which offers special education classes for disabled students and occupational courses in a variety of subjects.

- **Library**

The Town is fortunate to have the historic Belden Noble Library as part of its community. It is run by a volunteer not-for-profit nine-member board, which maintains ownership and custody of the contents of the Library. The building is owned by the Town, which also provides a portion of the Library's yearly operating expenses. Additional operating support for the Library comes from the State of New York, the Clinton-Essex-Franklin Library system, fundraisers, and donations. In addition to traditional library services, the Belden Noble Library offers a range of community programs for residents and seasonal visitors.

## • Churches

There are four churches in the Town today. St. John's Episcopal Church was organized in 1853. From 1853 until 1877, services were held in a building erected by Henry H. Ross in about 1853, to serve as a schoolhouse on the lot where the church now stands. The present church was built in 1877. The bell in the belfry of the church proves of an unusual interest, since it was formerly the ship's bell on the steamer, the Champlain. The Essex Community Church represents a federation of the Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches and was established in 1922. A re-dedication for the present Community Church was held in 1949. In late 1999 it was rededicated as a Methodist Church. The clock in the tower was given in memory of Belden and Adeline M. Noble in 1911. The clock still functions today and is maintained by the Town. St. Joseph's Catholic Church was organized in 1872 and the current building constructed the same year. This same building has been in use ever since. The chapel in Boquet, built by the Episcopalians was subsequently purchased by the Baptists and Presbyterians who started services there in 1880. The building was purchased by the church of the Nazarene in the 1940's. All of the churches have active congregations today and serve the community in many ways by hosting many public and social events.

## • Senior Center

The Town currently operates a part-time senior center located in the basement of the Old Stone Church on Church Street which is owned by a local American Legion group. The Town has use of the facility on an ongoing basis with the proviso that it be used as a senior center. The Town pays to maintain the facility and pays no rent to the owners. Today, the senior center provides a hot lunch program to residents of Essex and Willsboro, staffed by Essex County Nutrition Service personnel.

## • Youth Commission

The Town includes a line item in its general operating budget to fund limited youth activities. The bulk of the funding allows up to 20 youth per year to participate in the Summer Youth Program organized by the Town of Willsboro. Since the inception of Noblewood Park, the Summer Youth Program activities are focused at that site and include swimming, nature walks, reading program, etc. In addition there is a very active volunteer Youth Commission which organizes events on a year round basis for the Essex youth population.

## • Parks and Recreation

Over 20 years ago, with broad local support and a Federal Land and Water Conservation grant, the Town of Essex acquired and developed a waterfront municipal park at Beggs Point. The park was developed on the site formerly occupied by the Essex Horse and Nail Company. The park is located on a man-made plateau rising about fifteen feet above the lake level of Lake Champlain. The plateau is contained on the east by 19<sup>th</sup> century stone retaining walls, which rise from Lake Champlain. The walls, and a wharf which is no longer present, were constructed by previous industrial users of the site including the horse nail factory works (c.1879), or earlier occupants which include the Lyon and Palmer sash company and the Hoskins and Ross shipyard.

The retaining wall is subject to very harsh treatment by the elements, including repeated freezing and thawing, wave action, and the effects of Lake ice. At present, it requires extensive repair. Such repairs are necessary to protect the integrity of both the historic walls and the park itself. In 1997, a grant was received from the Lake Champlain Basin Program to do an engineering study to provide the necessary guidance for the rehabilitation of Beggs Point wall. This study and engineers' recommendation for reconstruction of the wall was completed in December of 1999. Funding sources should be sought immediately by the Town Board to effect the necessary repair of the wall.

The park today includes a public dock, playground, and picnic tables and is a tremendous asset to the community. It is the only access most hamlet residents and visitors have to the Lake. The Town maintains a beach adjacent to the park; however, at the current time, public swimming is not allowed.

The Town also owns an access point to the Lake at Whallons Bay, which has been used in past years as a swimming area. However, recent problems with "swimmer's itch" closed this beach area to public swimming.

The only boat launch area available in Essex is at the Essex Shipyard Marina for which a fee is charged. Also, this is a very difficult launch due to the steepness of the entry and limited access for maneuvering vehicles. While the area at Whallons Bay has been suggested as a site for a public boat launch, its physical location close to Lake Shore Road makes this almost impossible. Public boat launch facilities are available in the towns of Westport and Willsboro.



*Essex Fourth of July Parade, 2000. Photo by Suzanne Perley*

## Part III – Providing for the Future

*The Town wishes to maintain its scenic, historic, agricultural, rural, and small town character.*

*At the same time the Town wishes to encourage high quality growth, which will increase the community's ability to finance basic services and public improvements. Maintaining high quality public services requires continued investment in these functions and the willingness of citizens to contribute their time and skills.*

*The Town recognizes that there are areas of the Town with unique characteristics and opportunities and that each area requires special provisions for guiding development. Land use regulations and programs should try to use common sense to balance the right to reasonable use of one's property, the right of adjacent property owners to co-exist without undue negative impacts, and the right of the Town to expect that new development will enhance the community and will not have hazardous environmental impacts.*

*The Town of Essex faces the challenge of integrating new residents, seasonal homeowners, and businesses into its social and economic fabric. Its future lies not in rebuilding a traditional industrial and manufacturing economy, but in accommodating a mix that incorporates the contributions of the new, while retaining the best of the past.*

*The challenge of planning is to try and bring together all segments of the community in an atmosphere of mutual respect to help Essex pro-actively plan for its future.*

# Goals for the Future of Essex

***Goal 1. Maintain and encourage a vibrant community life in the Town by providing for residential, commercial, agricultural, industrial, recreational, and public uses that meet the needs of existing and projected populations and promote the social and economic diversity of the Town.***

## **1.1 Economic Development**

There is little industry in the Town today due to its location away from the interstate highway system, regional facilities, and lack of municipal water and sewer service. People are commuting to their jobs at increasing distances. Residents travel to nearby communities for most of their convenience goods such as groceries, hardware, drug store purchases and gasoline, although there exists one small gas station in the Essex hamlet. Residents travel to regional shopping centers and department stores for apparel and home furnishing needs.

Trends in the local economy have raised the following issues that the Town must consider: how to increase employment opportunities in the Town, and how to guide commercial development to meet community needs, prevent burdens on public services, and be compatible with the rural and historic character of the community.

The Town wishes to encourage creative and low impact uses of all areas of the Town which will provide employment and tax revenue, while preserving open space and the rural environment. Projects will be sought and evaluated on a case-by-case basis according to the broad area criteria defined in the zoning ordinance. It is generally agreed that businesses that include small workforces, low water use and non-polluting industries would be most appropriate for the Town. The Town will assist and support suitable projects in their dealings with other permitting agencies, such as the APA.

### ***Recommendations:***

- Locations for light industrial and commercial development will be considered throughout the Town where feasible. Development that offers quality employment, is non-polluting, small in scale, and has low demands for water and sewer usage will be encouraged. Allowed uses in the agricultural districts will be reviewed to expand opportunities.
- Home occupations will be encouraged throughout the Town.
- Essential commercial services which meet the needs of Essex residents, such as a small grocery store, hardware store, pharmacy, and/or cafe/restaurant will be encouraged to locate within the hamlets. Commercial and light industrial uses will be small in scale and designed in a way that is compatible with existing Town historic and rural character.
- Agriculturally related businesses, including agri-tourism, will be encouraged in conjunction with active farms. The production, processing, and marketing of food and fiber and other natural resources and agricultural products will be promoted as important industries in the Town.
- The Town will pursue policies and partnerships which link the area's agricultural, historic, rural, and scenic qualities in order to provide more opportunities for jobs and new business.



- Town regulations will ensure quality in site planning and design of commercial and industrial facilities through expanded site plan review. All development will be required to meet local and State standards for water supply, sewage disposal, and drainage.
- Attempts will be made to bury power lines in all new construction when possible.
- The function of Route 22 as the main north-south corridor in the Town and as a regional arterial highway will be protected through the limitation of access points and the control of land use along the highway. The Route 22 corridor shall be protected as a scenic travel corridor.

## 1.2 Housing

In considering current and future housing opportunities, the Town will consider how to locate housing to protect the Town's high quality landscape, environment, and historic qualities, and to minimize conflicts with the agricultural community. In addition, it should work to meet the needs of affordable housing and the special housing needs of the elderly.

Where possible when multiple housing units are proposed, cluster development should be considered. Cluster housing allows reduced lot sizes and setbacks in exchange for permanently protected open spaces. It is designed to encourage site-sensitive road and building placement, promote efficient use of space and maintain an area's rural character. While cluster housing would not change the number of lots permitted on a tract, it would allow houses to be built closer together. Smaller, more closely configured lots require a smaller network of streets and utilities.

### ***Recommendations:***

- 1 Encourage a variety of high quality housing types to meet the needs of all residents, especially young families and senior citizens. Participation in first-time homebuyer programs should be promoted by the Town.
- 2 Encourage subdivisions which economize on roads, utilities, and services, and protect scenic beauty, agricultural lands, and natural resource areas.
- 3 Create positive incentives, such as density bonuses used in locations suitable for more dense development, which can help reduce the developer's cost (for road building, community septic systems, etc.), and thus make housing more affordable.
- 4 Make provisions in the zoning ordinance to allow for elderly housing in the Hamlet District and the R1-R2 districts, provided the units are affordable and the number of bedrooms per unit is supported by the septic capabilities of the parcel or a hamlet wastewater system.
- 5 Continue to apply for available state, Federal, or private funds to reduce housing costs. For example, the Federal Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant Program can rehabilitate sub-standard housing, facilitate home-ownership, or meet other housing needs.

## 1.3 Hamlet Development

The hamlets of Essex and Whallonsburg incorporate a compact mixed use, characteristic of small towns throughout the Adirondack Park. Uses include housing and home occupations, retail shops and restaurants, inns, bed and breakfasts, professional offices, public buildings and workshops for artists and artisans. Both hamlets have a theatre. The waterfront of the Essex hamlet includes two marinas and the cross-lake Ferry operated by Lake Champlain Transportation Company.

The Town recognizes the importance of the ferry to its local economy and the character of Essex. It is working with the Lake Champlain Transportation Company in upgrading its infrastructure within the Town boundaries to provide for safety and efficient traffic patterns in the Essex hamlet.

The particular needs of the Essex Hamlet as a historic district and waterfront are discussed in subsequent sections.

### ***Recommendations:***

- 1 Hamlet areas are where growth is to be encouraged so as to reinforce historic patterns of compact settlements surrounded by rural, open land.
- 2 The preservation and reuse of existing buildings will be preferred and new buildings should fit in with the character of the existing hamlets, including the scale and location of buildings.
- 3 The design of new commercial buildings shall be consistent with the shape, scale, siting, and design of buildings of the existing hamlet area within which they are to be located.
- 4 All land development, including the conversion of existing structures to multiple units, will be required to meet applicable local and state standards for water supply, sewage disposal, parking, access, and landscaping applicable to the new use.
- 5 The Town will establish flexible yet effective site plan review guidelines to protect the historic and rural character of these areas.

Two limiting factors for new commercial development are sewage disposal and the traffic and parking capacity of the existing roadways. Therefore, commercial development must not overburden either of these factors.

***Further Recommendations - parking:***

- 1 Increase the supply of parking spaces and improve the management of existing downtown parking without damaging the pedestrian fabric of the Essex Hamlet.
- 2 Provide more flexibility in the Zoning Ordinance's off-street parking requirements to encourage public parking while maintaining the design features that make Essex a walking village. Avoid the unnecessary paving over of green spaces to accommodate parking.
- 3 The Town should cooperatively work with ECHO to ensure that the proposed new parking area across from the Ferry Dock be constructed in such a manner as to optimize parking while preserving the visual qualities of the site while providing expanded parking opportunities for the Town.
- 4 Explore additional parking sources in the Essex Hamlet that will not have a detrimental effect on the visual qualities of the Historic District.

***Further Recommendations – sewage disposal:***

1. The Town will continue in it's efforts to establish a sewer district to service the Essex Hamlet, especially those properties located on the shore of Lake Champlain.

**1.4 Tourism**

Essex's increasing economic reliance on tourism and second-home owners has alarmed some residents who already see the character of their Town changed by the turnover in retail shopping from basic goods to specialty items. It must be recognized, however, that the additional tourism and seasonal home populations are essential to maintaining the economic base which provides some basic needs of the community, as well as those which cater only to the tourism market. While Essex should not lose its unique character, shops and facilities that draw tourists can add valuable economic activity.

***Recommendations:***

- Encourage low impact tourism that increases employment, keeps revenue in the hands of residents, targets interpretation of our history and natural resources, keeps the look and feel of our surroundings, and minimizes the potential for environmental degradation.
- Encourage non-motorized forms of tourism development.
- Incorporate bike lanes or wide shoulders in major improvements to highways in the Town. Improvements shall accommodate shoulders wide enough to accommodate bicycles wherever possible.
- Work to promote and maintain local ownership of businesses and encourage tourists passing through Town to extend their stay and patronize local businesses.
- Support the efforts of the Lake Champlain Byways Program of Essex County in their efforts to promote and interpret the region for the benefit of tourism, economic, and community development.

## **1.5 The Arts**

Essex is home to numerous professional artists and the Adirondack Art Association. There are also two theatre companies, several galleries, and numerous craft persons at work in the Town. If the Town can continue to attract and continue to provide a home for working artists, the quality of life in the Town will be improved and efforts to establish a marketable image for tourism and the marketing of agricultural products will be enhanced.

### ***Recommendations:***

- 1 Seek out suitable places for the future establishment of an art center.
- 2 Utilize space in the Town Hall to display professional quality paintings, drawings, and craft pieces.

The Town should continue to seek funding to complete the renovations to the Old Stone Church (American Legion Hall) on Church Street to make it accessible to the public for performances and other public, artistic, and performing events.

## ***Goal 2. Maintain and protect the historic heritage of the Town.***

## **2.1 Historic Preservation and Listed Properties**

The Essex Historic District, which was entered on the National Register of Historic Places on November on May 28, 1975, is highly regarded as an excellent example of American architectural styles of the past. Maintaining the Essex Hamlet Historic District as well as all of the historic resources of the Town is a major concern for residents. The Town currently has no mechanisms in place to protect properties within the established Historic District and properties outside the District currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places (see attached listing). The Town has been fortunate that there has been minimal turnover in these properties and that they have been resold to date to persons wishing to maintain the integrity of the buildings.

The Essex Community Heritage Organization (ECHO) currently maintains façade easements on over fifteen properties in the Town. These easements, while not only protecting the integrity of the buildings, are useful in acquiring outside funding sources for renovation purposes, as evidenced by the current porch renovation project at the Essex Inn (*Appendix B*).

The following Standards for Rehabilitation established by the United States Secretary of the Interior shall be considered by the Town in evaluating any commercial project involving a historic property in the Essex Hamlet Historic District as well as those properties outside of the District listed on the National Register of Historic Places (see Appendix C):

- 1 Every reasonable effort shall be made to provide a compatible use for a property which requires minimal alteration of the building, structure, or site, and its environment, or to use a property for its originally intended purpose.
- 2 The distinguishing original qualities or character of a building or structure, or site and its environment shall not be destroyed. The removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive architectural features should be avoided when possible.
- 3 All buildings, structures, and sites shall be recognized as products of their own time. Alterations that have no historical basis and which seek to create an earlier appearance shall be discouraged.
- 4 Changes which may have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history and development of a building, structure, or site and its environment. These changes may have acquired significance in their own right, and this significance shall be recognized and respected.
- 5 Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship which characterize a building, structure, or site shall be treated with sensitivity.
- 6 Deteriorated architectural features shall be repaired rather than replaced wherever possible. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should match the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture, and other visual qualities. Repair or replacement of missing architectural features should be based on accurate duplication of features, substantiated by historic, physical, or pictorial evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different elements from other buildings or structures.
- 7 The surface cleaning of a structure shall be undertaken with the gentlest means possible. Sandblasting and other cleaning methods that will damage the historic building materials shall not be undertaken.
- 8 Every reasonable effort shall be made to protect and preserve archeological resources affected by, or adjacent to, any project.
- 9 Contemporary design for alterations and additions to existing properties shall not be discouraged when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant historical, architectural, or cultural material, and such design is compatible with the size, scale, color, material, and character of the property, neighborhood or environment.
- 10 Wherever possible, new additions or alterations to structures shall be done in such a manner that if such additions or alterations were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the structure would be unimpaired.

***Recommendations:***

- The above Standards for Rehabilitation should be used as guidelines for any residential project involving such a historical property.
- There should be a visual continuity between old and new buildings. The size and scale of new buildings or renovated structures should be similar to or compatible with that of surrounding or similar buildings in the area.
- Demolition delay provisions should be considered in the year 2002 ordinance update for all properties within the Town listed on the National Register of Historic Places and any demolition of historic properties should require a special use permit.
  - i. Demolition is not appropriate if a building or major portion of a building contributes to the architectural or historical significance or character of the Historic District or the area of the Town in which it is located.
  - ii. Demolition is appropriate if a building or major portion of a building does not contribute to the architectural or historical character or significance of the area; or if a building or major portion of a building has irretrievably lost its physical integrity to the extent that it no longer contributes to the area's architectural or historical character or significance; or if the denial of the demolition will result in an economic hardship on the applicant as determined by the Planning Board in accordance with the Zoning Ordinance.

***Goal 3. Preserve land that is suitable for farming, provide for the protection of agriculture and open space and ensure that farming remains an important part of the local economy.***

**3.1 Agriculture and Open Space**

Long-term protection of open space (considered in its broadest sense and comprising both farm fields and woodlands) is essential if Essex's rural character is to be conserved for future generations.

Based on public input and community meetings, preservation of working farms and open land is a clear priority for Essex residents. Loss of farms and farmers will dramatically change the Town's character, which was established from the earliest period of settlement.

The Town therefore wishes to take an active role in the preservation and encouragement of agriculture, which has been so severely diminished over the last twenty years. While the reasons for this decline are not centered in the Town, it is our hope that by refocusing our energies and attention, we can locate resources, including government and corporate grants, and contrive plans and means for reinvigorating farming. The Town will work with farmers and farmland owners to encourage, among other things, cooperative projects including marketing and branding, continuous research and development of niches in a market which will continue to change, and means such as land registry to permit farmers who are no longer full-time to find uses for their land or land to use.

The Town, through its Agricultural Review Committee (Essex Farm Initiative) established in early 2000, is currently investigating resources available to not only protect the existing farming community, but to assist in planning for the future of farming and farmlands in Essex. Anything that can assist farmers in protecting their land for agricultural use will help ensure the existence of agricultural opportunities for the next generation.

Furthermore, provisions must be made for the long-term protection and management of the significant open space, farm, and natural resources in the rural areas when lands are being developed or subdivided. The site plan review process provides an opportunity to protect the Town's agricultural and open space resource base. Property owners and developers should be encouraged to plan the entire parcel of land on which land subdivision is proposed for the best management of natural resources. When development is proposed, consideration should be given to the significant farm and natural resources on the parcel and minimize the impact on these resources. On farm parcels or land contiguous to farm parcels, housing will have to meet standards that are designed to minimize the impact on farmland and on farming operations.

***Recommendations:***

1. The Town will encourage agriculture and the preservation of open space and avoid regulating agricultural uses in a manner that unreasonably restricts or regulates farm structures or farming practices. Long-term efforts to conserve and manage designated agricultural lands and open space will be undertaken. The Town will continue to promote participation in the Agricultural Districts.
2. Diverse agricultural enterprises, including dairying, hay production, livestock production, produce stands, and specialty farms such as wildflowers, nurseries, berries, orchards, and produce, will be encouraged.
3. The Zoning Ordinance will be amended to include farm related owner-operated businesses on farm property including but not limited to agri-tourism, direct-marketing, value added products such as cheese, farm equipment and supply operations, agricultural cooperatives, nurseries, sale of excavating equipment, with consideration of the scale of the operation and the impact on the community.
4. Priority will be given to identifying and conserving the Town's high potential agricultural soils for agricultural use. Medium and low potential agricultural soils where improvements have been made or which support existing agricultural operations will be protected where possible.
5. The community understands the importance of agriculture to the Town and also recognizes that agricultural practices may create conditions, including noise and odors that can impact their desired lifestyle. In general, neighbors should try to resolve any problems among themselves; however, it should be understood that reasonable agricultural practices, which are defined by State policy, are necessary for viable farming operations and contribute to a healthy ecosystem and community pride.
6. The local Extension Service and other similar bodies will be supported in their efforts to provide technical assistance to develop land use plans for farm properties. Efforts with other preservation organizations will be encouraged to negotiate private, voluntary agreements for the protection and management of designated agricultural and natural resource lands.
7. The size, shape and orientation of lots and siting of buildings should be designed to provide building sites logically related to vegetation, topography, solar orientation, natural features, streets, and adjacent land uses.
8. Lots and streets should be designed to maximize the preservation of natural features, trees, tree masses, watercourses, and sites which have historical significance, scenic views, and similar assets.
9. Conservation subdivisions should be considered in new development to provide a means for farmland owners to realize some profit from development and stay in farming. Conservation subdivisions are a form of clustering using the following approach:
  - a. Conservation areas are identified and include the physical environmental features of the land to be protected, as well as cultural, aesthetic, and historic concerns. Once an area is identified, it is set aside as permanently protected open space via an easement.



- b. The zoning code identifies the density allowed on the property. The allowed number of dwellings are placed on the remaining portion of the parcel so that each dwelling has the best view or access to the open space.
- c. Roads are designed in the most efficient manner and lot lines are established.

This technique allows for different lot sizes, some being more affordable than others. Some lots may have the preserved open space on them and be very large. Other situations allow the open space to be owned by a homeowners' association, or retained by the original landowner to continue farming. It is permissible to place a community septic system in the preserved open space which allows for even smaller lot sizes, if desired.

1. The Town should encourage and assist farmers or other large property owners in the preparation of master plans or land use plans, providing incentives for property owners to prepare thoughtful subdivision designs which protect the natural resources and other special features of the property and advance other Town goals.
2. The Town will support the Adirondack Land Trust and the Adirondack Nature Conservancy in their efforts to protect open and working landscapes such as farmlands and managed forests as well as other lands contributing to the quality of life of Adirondack residents and to make affordable farmland available to farmers. In particular, the Town encourages the Land Trust and Nature Conservancy to provide technical assistance to farmers and other large property owners to maximize the preservation of farmland, natural resources and rural character.

**Goal 4. To maintain and protect the natural resources of the Town by encouraging land uses that have few environmental impacts while discouraging those that put the area's environment at risk.**

## **4.1 Resource Protection**

Environmental resources contribute greatly to the quality of life in Essex. The Boquet River, as well as Lake Champlain, represent significant resources within our community. The Town also contains wild and scenic areas that have been designated "critical environmental areas" that the Town wishes to protect, while making them accessible to residents and tourists.

### **Recommendation:**

1. The Town should be encouraged to maintain an inventory of the Town's natural resources, help arrange donations of gifts of land to the Town or other appropriate not-for profit organizations for conservation purposes as well as assist the Planning Board on natural resource issues and development reviews.

## **4.2 The Boquet River**

"We all live downstream," meaning every land use or action that contributes pollutants to surface or ground water will affect someone else's health, environmental quality, and pocket book. According to Boquet River Association (BRASS) studies, the water quality of the Boquet River is generally good and meets State recreational river standards. However, during periods of hot dry weather, elevated bacteria counts are frequent in Whallonsburg and Boquet.

Following four years of studies on sediment embeddedness in the Boquet River, (all conducted with EPA-approved scientific protocols), BRASS concluded the amount of sand and fines packed into the Boquet River's substrate cobbles has reached a near-critical level of impact for stream life. Average embeddedness during the four years of BRASS study was 37%. At this level, the Boquet's aquatic stream life is threatened. This has obvious economic impact. There is also a problem with phosphorus binding to soils which, when eroded or allowed to run off the surface of the land, can impact stream water quality and contribute to Lake Champlain eutrophication.

The amount of sediment embeddedness may also indicate concern to those worried about flooding and flood damage. For, if the cross-sectional area of the river's channel lessens due to sediment build-up, flooding levels will increase with the concomitant potential for damages to life, property, and infrastructure.

State laws governing "wild, scenic and recreational rivers" and Adirondack Park Agency regulations prohibit indiscriminate cutting of vegetation along the river banks, and require setbacks for all new land use and development as well as septic systems. However many existing land uses prior to the law (particularly farming and homes in hamlet areas) translate into little or no vegetation bordering rivers and streams. These are the areas most vulnerable to sediment-contributing bank erosion.

Any new development that disturbs the surface of the land could contribute sediment to a water body during periods of run-off. A current NYSDEC law requires any new project disturbing 5 acres or more of land to file and put into place, a plan for erosion run-off controls. This law will soon be amended to 1 acre of land, in compliance with federal non-point-source-pollution regulations.

Although de-icing salts are often a common contaminant to surface water, this does not appear to be a problem of water quality in the Boquet River (from BRASS water quality studies) nor to Lake Champlain. De-icing salts will affect certain road-side vegetation and can contaminate nearby private well water. However, the primary non-point-source pollutant to the Boquet River is sediment, and the primary non-point-source pollutant to Lake Champlain is the phosphorus adhering to soil particles, which enter the lake through erosion and run-off.

The Town of Essex complied with the National Flood Insurance Act and delineated floodplain boundaries and adopted a local compliance law in 1987. It is important that the Town Zoning Ordinance adheres to this agreement, and that the town-designated Zoning Codes Officer be totally familiar with the administrative duties including compliance monitoring. Since sediment run-off into the Boquet River may reduce channel capacity and increase flooding boundaries, every effort should be made to control sediment inputs.

***Recommendations:***

- Promote land uses that are consistent with the capacity of the land and other resources.
- Use thorough site and environmental quality review (SEQRA) procedures for new development and mitigate any potential environment impacts to water, air, or visual resources.
- Identify and recognize significant wetlands and lands with permanent conservation restrictions and retain the current flood hazard area designations and the regulations to protect them.
- Work with the Boquet River Association on water quality issues affecting the town, such as control of run-off sediments into the Boquet River and Lake Champlain contributed by road construction and maintenance. Increase the overall understanding of the hydrological system in the Town and its relation to Lake Champlain.
- Road construction and maintenance contribute to run-off sediments. It is important to time cleaning of roadside ditches to accommodate immediate seeding. Catchment or settling basins are needed prior to discharge of ditch and/or piped stormwater into a water course. Properly sized “sumps” at the base of storm drain catchments are needed to hold sediment until periodic removal. Winter snow removal piles should not be located where winter sanding material can enter a water course.

### **4.3 The Lake and the Shoreline**

The Town wishes to maintain and enhance the scenic beauty and environmental quality of the shoreline as well as provide increased recreational opportunities and lake access. It is expected that some limited development will continue to occur along the shoreline and continued efforts will be needed near existing homes and new development to minimize future impacts.

The Town is currently developing a Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan and associated Water Surface Law in conjunction with the New York State Department of State Local Waterfront Revitalization Program.

#### ***Recommendations:***

1. The Town, through the enactment of a Water Surface Law, will monitor the use of the waters of Lake Champlain for boat docking and mooring facilities to minimize congestion and conflicts with commercial traffic, to protect scenic beauty and recreational enjoyment of these waters, and to provide for the needs of boaters and residential lakefront users. The Town may control docking and mooring facilities if determined necessary.
2. The Town, in conjunction with the revision of the Zoning Ordinance, will adopt a formal Shoreline Overlay District and accompanying Harbor Management Plan which will provide for oversight of:
  - a. The use, operation, speed, anchoring and mooring, and other uses of or activities associated with vessels;
  - b. The siting and construction of docks, piers, bulkheads, or other in-water structures;
  - c. Activities allowed or prohibited in areas such as swimming areas where public safety is of concern;
  - d. Dredging and dredged material disposal and the mining or excavating of subsurface materials;
  - e. Shoreline stabilization methods which can be vegetated and/or blended in with the natural surroundings in areas of highly erodent soils.
3. The direct discharge of materials and wastewater to the lake and its tributaries will not be allowed; indirect discharges will be minimized.
4. Expanded opportunities for public access to the shoreline and waters of Lake Champlain will be explored by the Town.

## 4.4 Parks and Recreation

The Town currently maintains a beach area at Beggs Park, although swimming is prohibited. The Town also owns a beach site at Whallons Bay; however, swimming is also prohibited at that site due to water quality issues. Facilities and activities, especially for youth aged 8 to 18 are lacking. The Town wishes to provide for more outdoor related year-round recreation that builds on the area's rich environment and scenic beauty.

### ***Recommendations:***

- 1 Provide for future recreational needs, especially activities for young people, and enhance existing town park and beach areas. Review possible uses for the Town owned land at Whallons Bay for recreational purposes.
- 2 Provide for enhanced access to Lake Champlain.
- 3 Provide for enhanced access to other natural areas via bike/hike trails.
- 4 Complete the renovations to the Old Stone Church property on Church Street for youth and community programming.
- 5 Pursue funding opportunities to effect the repair of the retaining wall at Beggs Park and general park improvements.

## 4.5 Lighting and “Dark Skies”

The residents of Essex value the Town's rural qualities, including the ability to view the stars against a dark sky. Inappropriate or poorly designed and installed outdoor lighting can cause unsafe and unpleasant conditions, limit the ability to enjoy the nighttime sky, and result in an unnecessary use of electric power. It is also recognized that some outdoor lighting is necessary and appropriate in areas such as the village centers.

### ***Recommendations:***

- Use energy efficient light resources that minimize glare and light trespass.
- Angle the light, where appropriate, so that the light beams face down.
- Whenever practicable, lighting installations shall include timers, dimmers, and/or sensors to reduce overall energy consumption and eliminate unneeded lighting.
- Expansions, additions, or replacements to outdoor lighting installations should be designed to avoid harsh contrasts in color and/or lighting levels.

***Goal 5. To improve the administration, implementation and enforcement of land use and planning regulations in order to encourage creative and compatible uses of the Town's resources.***

## **5.1 Land Use and Planning**

The Zoning Ordinance for the Town was developed and adopted in 1974. Over the years, several attempts have been made to re-write or update the document. Each of these efforts has been unsuccessful. The Town Board realizes that the current ordinance, which is not in conformity with New York State Zoning regulations needs to be updated. The Town has received grant funding and appointed a committee which is at work re-writing the zoning ordinance and creating a Shoreline Overlay District and Water Surface Law. These three documents together will provide clear and workable methods for implementing this Comprehensive Plan.

### ***Recommendations:***

- Complete and adopt an updated Zoning Ordinance, to be coordinated with a Shoreline Overlay District and associated Water Surface Law. These three documents will be supported by the recommendations and vision put forth in this Comprehensive Plan.
- The Town will work with the Planning Board to facilitate the land use permitting process and create user-friendly applications and procedures.
- The Town will continue to support the seven member all volunteer planning board by providing avenues for education and technical assistance in review of projects in the Town.
- This Comprehensive Plan, the Town Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations, and the Water Surface Law should be reviewed and amended, if necessary, every five years.

***Goal 6. Maintain and develop high quality public services, especially fire protection, emergency rescue, and public works.***

## **6.1 Town Government and Community Services**

The Town will maintain and develop the quality of public services, especially fire protection, emergency rescue, and public works, while keeping the costs of these services and the tax rate under control. Maintaining quality public services requires continued investment in these functions. A successful planning process should help stimulate high quality growth, which will increase the community's ability to finance basic services and public improvements.

### ***Recommendations:***

- 1 The Town will remain primarily as a volunteer form of government.
- 2 The Town will continue its efforts toward the formation of a sewer district in the Essex Hamlet.
- 3 The Town will explore creating a Public Works Department within the next three years in order to better coordinate the requirements of maintaining our town roads as well as the expanded water districts and future sewer district.
- 4 Private developments will be encouraged to establish adequate maintenance funds to ensure compliance with the Town road and driveway standards. The subdivision regulations will be amended to allow for the Town to ensure that private roads (as well as drainage structures, fire hydrants and fire ponds) are properly maintained. Where necessary, the Town will reserve the right to make improvements where needed and charge the development directly for the repairs.
- 5 The zoning and subdivision regulations will be amended to require that where the cost of developments necessitating capital improvements are not included in the Town budget, the developer shall contribute towards their improvement. Require that improvements to Town roads required by new development and not programmed by the Town will be the responsibility of developers and that any improvements must be to Town specifications.
- 6 The building of oversized roads will be avoided when they are not needed, since road size impacts both the visual character and safety of an area. Conversely, the Town should ensure that roads and/or new bridges are wide enough to accommodate large farm machinery and emergency vehicles.



## **Public Input**

Throughout the planning process, opinions of residents and organizations were solicited through personalized mailings, public meetings, and a mail-in survey which was the basis for gathering information on shoreline-related issues. The committee also solicited specific input from local organizations and special interest groups, much of which is contained in the previous narrative.

The Zoning and Shoreline Review Committee held two well attended public sessions in the summer of 1999, one on farming and one on the shoreline. In addition, all meetings of the committee were open to the public and have been well-attended. A public hearing was held in the summer of 2000 and a variety of comments were received and reviewed by the Committee, including a professional planning consultant's review of the plan provided by ECHO.

The community was encouraged to review the Draft Plan which was available at the Town offices or by mail, and a number of letters were received with comments and suggestions concerning the content of the Plan. Many of the suggestions received have been incorporated into the final Plan.

A second public hearing was held prior to adoption of this Plan.

Meetings continued on a regular basis through the completion of the Plan.

## The Town and the APA

The Adirondack Park Agency Act was adopted in 1973 and in its simplest terms, tries to channel much of the future growth in the Park around existing communities where there are already roads and utilities and where services and supplies are available. The centerpin of the APA Act is density control. In each land use area, a guideline is established for the approximate number of new principal buildings per square mile. In other words, new development is permitted according to the capacity of the land to withstand it from the point of view of natural resources, public facilities, and open space. Under the Act, all private lands in the Park are classified in the six following categories:

- Hamlet: These are the growth and service centers of the Park. Hamlet boundaries usually go well beyond established settlements to provide room for future expansion.
- Moderate Intensity: Most uses are permitted, but relatively concentrated residential development is most appropriate.
- Low Intensity: Most uses are permitted, but residential development at a lower intensity than above is appropriate.
- Rural Use: Most uses are permitted, but rural uses and lower intensity development is most suitable.
- Industrial Use: This is where existing industrial uses are located and where future development can be located.
- Resource Management: These areas include nearly two million acres (53% of private lands). Special care is taken to protect the natural open space character of these lands. The most suitable uses include agriculture, forestry and outdoor recreation pursuits.

The Town of Essex Zoning and Land Use Map adopted in 1974 contains the following land use classifications (see attached map):

- 1 ESSEX HAMLET (APA Hamlet) - The Essex Hamlet is presently defined by the existing Water District (comprised of two water systems) and represents a generally developed area with a mixture of residential, commercial and recreational uses. WHALLONSBURG HAMLET (APA Hamlet) -The Whallonsburg Hamlet area represents a collection of individually serviced residences and commercial establishments that play an important function in the community economy.
- 2 Residential 1: (APA Low Intensity) - Generally those areas of the community developed in areas or areas showing most reasonable opportunity and ability to sustain development.
- 3 Residential 2: (APA Moderate Intensity) - Generally those areas of the community adjacent to developed areas showing the most reasonable opportunity and ability to sustain added housing development.
- 4 Forest/Recreation: (APA Rural Use) - Generally those areas of the Town with forest cover and occasional pasture/garden openings. Protection of the open space character and of forest management practices is to be encouraged.
- 5 Agriculture: (APA Resource Management) - Generally those areas of the town devoted to commercial farm operations. There should be protection of these lands for agricultural purposes as long as commercial agricultural production continues.
- 6 Critical: Those areas with excessive slope, major rock outcropping, flood plain characteristics, erosion vulnerability, wet land characteristics or other ecologically critical determinants.

Because the APA land use classifications do not match the Town's land use classifications, the overlap of land use districts often causes confusion during the Town's permitting process. More often than not, applicants are required to secure permits from more than one permitting body.

## APPENDIX A

### SOILS

Soils are grouped according to the general geologic process which created them. These groups, or associations, have similar characteristics which can be interpreted for specific uses. The Soil Conservation Service has inventoried the soils of Essex and made available advanced soil maps. Aerial photo interpretation of the landforms and field investigation were combined to map soil characteristics.

#### I. Deep Glacial Till

These soils, the Amenia-Nellis and Leicester Associations, are found predominantly on the drumlins, in agricultural areas and along the shoreline of the lake from the north edge of the Town to Whallons Bay. These soils are approximately two feet of loam over firm gravelly fine sands, sandy loam or gravelly loam. Because of hilltop location and coarse texture, they are suitable for development.

#### II. Glacial Till With Fragipan

These soils are common in the Adirondacks and cover 30 percent of the land in Essex. An impervious layer known as fragipan exists anywhere from one foot to three feet below the surface, resulting in poor vertical movement of water. These Associations cover the western uplands and vary greatly in their depth due to the undulating bedrock which they cover. Occasionally rock outcrops are at the surface, but generally, the depth to bedrock is greater than four feet. Pockets of wetlands are common where these soils are in depressions or on flat slopes. The slow percolation rates caused by the fragipan layer constrain development opportunities,

#### III. Glacial Till Shallow Depth

The Canaan-Rock outcrop soils are very shallow sandy tills. The rock outcropping and rock controlled drainage make the characteristics of the underlying bedrock readily apparent. These soils are a thin veneer with less than two feet to bedrock, severely limiting development.

#### IV. Glacio-Lucustrine

The predominant soils of Essex are found in this group.

-Lake Champlain is the present day remnant of a larger lake created by glacial melt water. Suspended particles were washed into the lake and settled to the bottom. These heavy clay and sandy materials built up in layers in the eastern half of the Town. They are very poorly drained and exhibit seasonal high water tables between zero and three feet of the surface. Often there is a perched water table with the saturation layer much deeper. Septic leaching fields are not recommended in these soils because of the slow percolation rates and high water tables. Areas of sandy lake bottom, similar to glacial till without the fragipan layer, exist in this Association. The percolation rates are acceptable, and the water table is below four feet. The remaining soils in this group are glacial deposits known as outwash. Such deposits are very well drained and often described as "droughty." Percolation rates are commonly above six inches per hour creating the possibility of ground water contamination from unfiltered septic effluent.

#### V. Recent Alluvium

The flooding of the Bouquet River deposits a mixture of soil types—gravels through silt—along its channel. High water tables and continued flooding make them hazardous to build on.

#### VI. Organic Deposits

The Webb Royce Swamp is the only organic soil deposit in Essex with up to six feet of peat or muck. The high water table and compressibility of the soil makes it an unsuitable building site.

#### VII. Non Soil Areas

These areas are where greater than 50 percent of the association is rock outcrop and consequently unsuited for development.

## APPENDIX B

Façade Easements held by ECHO as of 2/15/00

Property Owner: .....	Property:
John Durant .....	Kidder Store Grace
MacLeod .....	Tatro House John T.
Walker .....	The Essex Inn Alan
Wardle .....	Beggs Cottage Robert
Hammerslag .....	Stafford Manor Farm Sylvia
Hobbs .....	Brick Schoolhouse James D.
Sorley .....	Donahue House Colin
Ducolon .....	McCamic House Larry Williams/Trillium
Partnership .....	Bluff Point Lots Russell B.
Shapiro .....	Hascall House Thomas E.
Carrick .....	Garvey House Ronnie
Hamel .....	Whitney/Flora House (Willsboro) Town of
Essex .....	Deli Lot Town of
Essex .....	Tart Lot Suzanne
Cochran .....	Noble Thorn House
F. Shrunk Brown, III .....	Wells House Robin
Belzile .....	Spierto House (Willsboro) David C.
Hislop .....	1867 Schoolhouse Wayne
Gryk .....	Wakefield House William
Lawrence .....	Dalton House

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Historic District and Listed Properties**

- 1 Essex Village Historic District, entered on the National Register of Historic Places on May 28, 1975.
- 2 Octagon Schoolhouse, Boquet, entered on the National Register of Historic Places on January 17, 1973.
- 3 The Church of the Nazarene, Boquet, was entered on the National Register of Historic Places on June 19, 1973.
- 4 The Essex County Home and Farm Complex, Whallonsburg, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on November 4, 1982.

## ***Sources and Resources***

- *Essex - A Land Use Planning Process*, by Roger Trancik, Richard Shaw and David Ford, 1975
- *Plan for the Future - Essex Hamlet*, by Roger Trancik, August 1989
- *A History Celebrating the 150th Anniversary of the Town of Essex*, by the Town of Essex Sesquicentennial Committee, 1955
- *Essex - The Architectural Heritage*, Copyright 1971, by George McNulty and Mrs. Joseph Scheinin
- *Hamlets of the Adirondacks, Development Strategies* by Roger Trancik, 1985
- *Hamlets of the Adirondacks, History, Preservation and Investment* by Roger Trancik, 1983
- Growth Impact Analysis of Essex Hamlet, The Saratoga Associates, December, 2000
- Lake Champlain Byways Corridor Management Plan, January 2000
- Lake Champlain Basin Program “Opportunities for Action”
- Adirondack Park Agency, Ray Brook, NY
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Office of Natural Resources, Region 5, Ray Brook, NY
- *Vision for the Future of Essex*, Essex Community Heritage Association, 2000
- Whallonsburg Civic Association, 2000
- *Lake Champlain Basin Program Atlas*, 1999 New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission
- *Economic & Demographic Characteristics of Essex County*, January, 1998 Technical Assistance Center, Plattsburgh State University
- *History, Essex Community United Methodist Church and Congregations, 1815-2000*, Essex Community Church, Essex New York 2000