

# TOWN OF HAMILTON

## Comprehensive Plan Part I

2017



Adopted February 9, 2017 by the Town Council.

Town of Hamilton  
Madison County  
New York State

# Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan January 2017

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## Acknowledgements

### **Town Council**

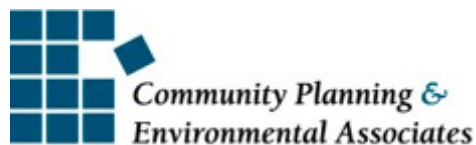
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# Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan January 2017

## Executive Summary

In 2013, the Town Board initiated a process to update the Town's Comprehensive Plan. This effort, which included formation of a Comprehensive Plan Committee, data collection, and significant public input from workshops, a town-wide survey, public meetings and focus groups, is summarized below.

### Our Vision

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The 2016 Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan establishes a series of goals, strategies, and actions designed to help the Town meet the community's needs and desires over the next 10 to 15 years. Ultimately, the Plan is a roadmap to realizing Hamilton's future community vision:

*The Town of Hamilton is known for its friendly, safe, small-town character. Its citizens value the many social, cultural and recreational activities that contribute to the well-being of our community. We are excellent stewards, protecting the environment while using our natural, economic, and community resources wisely and responsibly. We actively support agriculture as a key part of our economy, heritage, and rural character. The Town welcomes new and innovative businesses that promote economic opportunity and provide for the needs of our residents. The Town government fosters a spirit of collaboration among our residents and among other local governments, organizations, and institutions in our community.*

### Planning Process

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Development of this plan was coordinated by a Town Board-appointed Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC). This group, made up of citizens and elected officials representing the diversity of Hamilton's community, coordinated the two-plus year planning effort that included collection of data about Hamilton and its resources, creation of a detailed set of maps to understand the Town's environment and land use patterns, and attained public input through workshops, focus groups, and a town-wide survey. The public input received is the key foundation and strength of this plan. That input, together with data and maps, was used to identify Hamilton's strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities the Town can take advantage of, and threats facing the Town. The recommendations made in this Plan can be directly tied to those strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

The Planning process helped the Comprehensive Plan Committee answer three primary questions that are the focus of this Plan:

- What are the **current conditions** in the Town of Hamilton? The Plan is built upon the Town's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to the quality of life desired by Hamilton residents.
- What is the **future direction of the Town** desired by the community? The Plan accomplishes this by establishing a community vision and a set of long-range goals.
- What **actions** can the community take to attain its vision? The Plan offers a comprehensive set of recommended actions that address the issues of concern in Hamilton. These recommendations can be implemented through policy changes, new program creation or



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expansion, organizational changes, grant acquisition, regulatory updates, and other alternatives and actions that will guide the Town toward a successful future.

The following Key Findings, Focus Areas, Strategies, and Action Plan are derived from the Planning process and community input.

## Key Findings

Hamilton has many positive characteristics that make it a quality place to live and work. These positive attributes should be maintained in the future. Some of these key strengths include:

- Agriculture.
- Colgate University – cultural, economic, recreational and other benefits.
- Roads, water, sewer and gas infrastructure.
- Environment and natural resources.
- Rural character and scenic beauty.
- Sense of community, community organizations.
- Cultural and recreational resources.

At the same time, several negative issues and concerns were identified. Some of these include:

- Lack of high speed Internet in rural areas limits economic development.
- Too much dependence on Colgate as an economic driver for the community.
- Student housing and other town/gown issues.
- Town/Village issues.
- Lack of public transportation and lack of transportation for elderly residents.
- Hamilton has been described as not always welcoming to newcomers.
- Lack of local shopping opportunities, and a need for more jobs and economic growth.
- Route 12B intersection 5-way intersection in the Village of Hamilton.
- Lack of volunteers for EMS, SOMAC financial issues, challenges to Community Memorial Hospital.
- Lack of affordable housing opportunities.
- Loss of farms and farmland.

Many opportunities have been identified in this Plan that Hamilton could take advantage of to maintain community strengths and improve weaknesses. Some highlights include:

- Expanded agricultural opportunities such as promoting buy-local and working with Colgate on farm incubator and food to institution programs.
- Appoint an agricultural advisory committee for the Town.
- Expand broadband and internet services.
- Promote energy conservation and promotion of more green initiatives.
- Build on tourism and recreational opportunities.
- Develop new paths and trails.
- Update zoning – to promote development that is consistent with Hamilton’s environment and rural character, and that is more business and ag-friendly.

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- Update the zoning and subdivision laws to promote protection of the environment and positive features of the community.

Threats are external factors that could prevent the Town from reaching its community goals. Several threats face Hamilton including the volatility of the agricultural economy, concerns that Colgate's goals may not always be aligned with the Village's or Town's goals, changing demographics that result in different public needs and services, and industrial scale wind, solar, and gas development in the Town.

## Focus Areas

The Plan focuses on the following key areas, in order of importance based on public input:

- **Community** – To create an open, welcoming, and safe community that fosters civic participation and promotes collaboration among all residents and local institutions.
- **Economic Prosperity** – To nurture entrepreneurship, a wide variety of businesses, and a vibrant economic base that places a high value on Hamilton's rural small-town character and promotes environmentally friendly business practices.
- **Environment** – To protect our wealth of natural resources and beauty and promote a clean environment and local wildlife.
- **Agriculture** – To promote diverse and thriving farming so that it remains an essential part of the local economy, heritage, and lifestyle in Hamilton.
- **Housing** – To ensure the availability of quality, affordable housing for all residents.
- **Recreation** – To promote cultural activities and recreational opportunities that enhance the health and quality of life for all citizens.
- **Governance** – To promote a local government that is open and responsive, and that provides high-quality public services in a fiscally responsible and transparent manner.

## Highlights of Key Strategies

### Community Character

- Use conservation principles in zoning and subdivision to improve design of new development.
- Use design standards, especially on Route 12 and the route 12B business district to ensure development is consistent with community character.
- Remove current exemptions from the subdivision laws
- Expand the Town's role with Partnership for Community Development (PCD) and others, including collaboration with Colgate.

### Economic Prosperity

- Increase broadband and Internet services.
- Update zoning to be more ag-business friendly and allow more ag-related businesses.
- Update land use regulations so they promote opportunities for new businesses that are economically and environmentally friendly and in appropriate locations.

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## Environment

- Update zoning to further protect important environmental areas such as steep slopes, floodplains, and stream banks, and reduce impacts from stormwater runoff.
- Increase energy conservation and use of green energy initiatives. Update zoning to allow use of solar in a manner that does not cause nuisances to neighbors or impacts to community.
- Update zoning to ensure proper siting of any industrial use, develop standards through special use and site plan review approvals for site access, screening, signs, landscaping, noise, lighting, impacts on adjacent uses, and ensure adequate review of all such proposals.
- Regulate compressor stations and gathering pipelines by zoning that specifies the conditions and requirements for building and inspecting these facilities.
- Consider identifying critical environmental areas for enhanced environmental review under the State Environmental Quality Review Act. Use resources from the Southern Madison Heritage Trust Strategy as an aid in this future planning.

## Agriculture

- Adopt a right to farm law.
- Appoint a Town of Hamilton Agricultural Advisory Committee to help identify alternatives, ideas, and programs, and work to implement the agricultural recommendations in this plan. Use NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets as a resource.
- Support efforts to link consumers and producers. Ensure Town zoning allows for u-pick, CSA, farm stand, farm retail, breweries, distilleries, food hubs, and other direct sales opportunities.
- Minimize adverse impacts on farms when new development occurs. Update the Zoning and Subdivision laws to improve evaluation of impacts on agriculture during zoning review.
- Work with farmland owners to promote inclusion of land in the New York State Agricultural Districts program.
- Balance growth with preservation of farmlands through adjusting density of development. Consider changing the current one-acre minimum lot size to a new density appropriate to meet the goals of the Town. Allow for averaging of acres or setting a sliding scale for density to give landowners more flexibility (See Support Information for Part I in Appendix for more details on sliding scale density).
- Remove the zoning requirement that a farm needs to have five acres of land in the Ag Residential District.

## Housing

- Update Town zoning to allow alternative housing types including shared housing, Elder Cottage Housing Opportunity (ECHO housing), and granny flats. Consider zoning that would encourage major subdivision developments or multi-family developments to provide for a certain percentage of dedicated affordable units for low to moderate incomes (as defined by Federal law).
- Work with PCD to seek grants to promote affordable housing for low and moderate income families in both villages and rural areas.
- Reduce the chance of sprawl outside the villages. For example, consider offering a density bonus to developers who agree to locate higher density developments in priority growth areas.
- Update the subdivision law to include a set of rural development guidelines that result in new housing that is sited in a manner that is protective of the environment and consistent with community character.
- Work with the PCD and the County to identify grants to maintain historic housing stock and preserve community character.

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## Recreation

- Appoint a Recreation Committee to aid in recreation planning for the town, including drafting plans for multi-use trails.
- Work with PCD to find grants to support arts, cultural, and historical activities in the town and its villages.
- Raise awareness of historical assets through walking tours and trails.
- Work with Madison County Tourism, Inc. to develop, support and promote cultural activities.
- Work with the Route 20 Association of New York State (Official Stewards of the NYS Route 20 Scenic Byway) as a resource for promotion.

## Governance

- Enhance collaboration and coordination of programs, services and policies with adjacent municipalities to promote efficiency and sharing.
- Assess public transportation needs. Increase public transportation opportunities to enhance access to economic, service, retail, recreational, and cultural resources in the villages.
- Provide public services in a transparent and fiscally responsible manner. Update the Town Zoning law to require a public hearing before the Planning Board for all projects that require site plan review approval.
- Develop a Capital Improvement Plan for construction of new facilities, replacement, upgrade, and maintenance of facilities and large equipment and their associated costs.
- Increase public participation in Town governance.
- Increase outreach to the community by advertising existing monthly meetings. Continue press releases about town council activities.
- Enhance use of the Town website in innovative ways to inform the community apprised of town business and activities.
- After adoption of this plan, the Town Board should identify its implementation priorities and then assign certain projects to work on. The Town Board should review this plan at their annual reorganization meeting, identify goals for the year and work on those actions, enlisting community help as needed.
- Review and/or Update this Plan every five years through a comprehensive plan update process that involves community members.

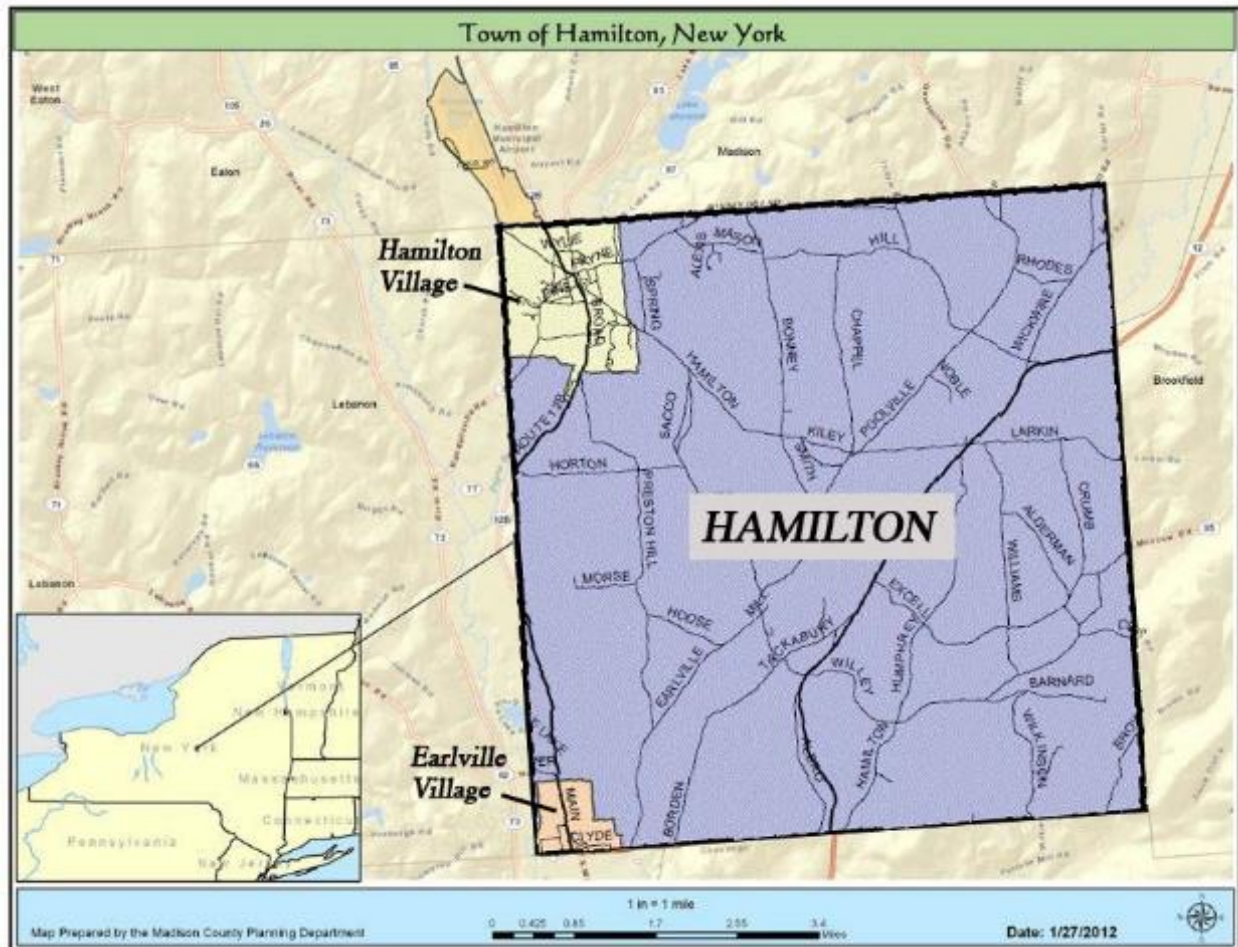
## Hamilton's Action Plan

The Comprehensive Plan details many strategies that the Town hopes to implement over the next 10 to 15 years. Some of these are easier to implement than others. Some can be accomplished in a short amount of time, while others will need long-term or sustained implementation. To help the Town Council focus on implementation activities, the Plan recommends formation of a comprehensive plan implementation advisory committee. The Plan currently identifies actions that are considered to be priority or foundational strategies to be implemented over 1-3 years, others over 3-5 years, and those currently in action and that should be continued after adoption of the plan. The Town Council should review the Comprehensive Plan and the Action Plan at a dedicated yearly meeting with the

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comprehensive plan implementation advisory committee to determine which actions have been accomplished and identify which actions from the plan should be added to the implementation list.

## Introduction



This Comprehensive Plan is designed to play a pivotal role in shaping the Town of Hamilton for the next 10 to 15 years. By design and definition, this Comprehensive Plan provides an overall framework for future public and private decision-making in Hamilton and should be considered a “road map” for future financial, civic, and land use activities. This Plan articulates the vision for the Town, its long-term goals, and how Hamilton can achieve them.

The Town Council initiated this planning process to document and evaluate changes that are or have been taking place within the Town since the original Plan was adopted in 1999. The Town Council determined that having an updated comprehensive plan would be an important tool to help the Town move forward.

New York State law (Town Law 272-a) grants municipalities the authority to prepare and adopt comprehensive plans. A comprehensive plan is a document that identifies goals, objectives, principles,

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and policies for the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth, and development of a community. It provides guidance to municipal leaders, government agencies, community organizations, local businesses, and residents, and helps to ensure that the community's needs are met, both now and in the future. New York's laws also require that land use regulations that are adopted shall be in accordance with a comprehensive plan.

This Plan should be reviewed and updated every five years to gauge progress on implementation and perform needed updating to ensure that the Plan remains relevant to Hamilton. Revisions should update existing conditions (see Appendix A), verify community vision and goals, and summarize completed action items and the addition of other steps based on the changing needs of Hamilton. The Plan should be a vital document that remains a centerpiece for discussion and decision-making at the Town Council and Planning Department level. To ensure this, the Plan includes an action plan designed to help the Town Council implement the recommended actions over time.

Once a comprehensive plan is adopted, there are several other important implications. First, all government agencies involved in planning capital projects in Hamilton must first consider this plan. That means the Town now has a much larger stake in what other governmental agencies want to do when they are proposing a capital project in Hamilton. Second, it is the policy of New York State to encourage comprehensive planning for the sake of protecting the health, welfare and safety of its citizens. Therefore, most State agencies recognize, if not require, a comprehensive plan as a condition for grants and other funding assistance. This assures that public funds are spent in pursuit of a well-defined public goal.

Other implications of having a Comprehensive Plan include:

- Programs and regulations may be adopted to implement the Plan to protect the Town's resources and encourage desired development and growth.
- Community consensus and support can be built on the shared vision, goals, and strategies presented in the Plan.
- Comprehensive plans also help the Town be successful in obtaining grant monies to implement items contained in the Plan.

## **This Plan is Not a Law**

In addition to providing the basis for future decision-making, the comprehensive plan provides a framework for local land use laws such as subdivision and site plan review. As such, the Plan includes recommendations related to improving Hamilton's existing local land use-related laws. It is important to note however, that the plan is not a regulatory document; any change to or development of new land use laws would need to be adopted according to NYS Town Law procedures through a separate process. This process would include public hearing(s), an environmental review, and County Planning Board review.

This Plan is not a local law. The recommendations made in this Comprehensive Plan will not take effect until the Town Council decides to act on them. This Comprehensive Plan will be implemented through new or updated local laws and other programs initiated by the Town Council over time.



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## Organization of this Plan

Part I: Introduces the planning process used to update the Comprehensive Plan and outlines the community strengths and weaknesses. It establishes the vision and goals for the Town and then offers a series of recommended actions that the Town can take in the future to accomplish those goals. Part I also helps the Town Council implement the Plan by offering action priorities, time frames, and identifying assistance that might be needed. This part answers the “where do we want to be in 10 to 15 years” and “how do we get there” questions.

The Appendix is developed to detail the profile and inventory of Town resources and to document the public input upon which this Plan is based. This information answers the “where are we now?” questions. The Appendix describes current conditions, demographics, physical and cultural features, and information from the residents. Other information is presented in the Appendix to help provide other background information needed.

**As per NYS Town Law 272-a, this Plan should be reviewed and updated by the Town every five years to ensure that it remains up-to-date and useful to address current conditions and needs.**



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## Planning Process Overview

The Comprehensive Plan is based on community input and an analysis of resources, programs, and other data. A variety of tools were used to gather public opinion throughout the planning process. The Plan incorporates the knowledge and skills of the Comprehensive Plan Committee, elected officials, the general public, farmers, and business owners.

The process focused on answering three primary questions:

1. What are the current conditions in the Town of Hamilton? The Plan is built upon the Town's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to the quality of life desired by Hamilton residents.
2. What is the future direction of the Town desired by the community? The Plan accomplishes this by establishing a community vision and a set of long-range goals.
3. What can the community do to attain its vision? The Plan offers a comprehensive set of recommended actions that address the issues of concern in Hamilton. These recommendations can be implemented through policy changes, new program creation or expansion, organizational changes, grant acquisition, regulatory updates, and other alternatives and actions that will guide the Town toward a successful future.

## Planning Events and Milestones

The planning process was initiated in April 2013. This project was coordinated by an advisory Comprehensive Plan Committee appointed by the Town Council. This Committee was established to include farmers, residents, and representatives of the Town Council. The Town hired a planning consultant to assist in all phases of the Plan's development.

The following activities took place:

1. Formation of the Comprehensive Plan Committee by the Town Council.
2. Monthly Comprehensive Plan Committee Meetings.
3. Town-wide community survey (July 2013).
4. Public visioning and planning workshop (November 2013).
5. Focus Group Meetings: Economic Development, Energy, Recreation, Housing, Agriculture (March 2014).
6. Development of town-wide inventory and profile of resources and characteristics.



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7. Update of all resource maps via a computerized Geographic Information System and analysis of these maps.
8. Evaluation of public input and all data to determine the “Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats” (SWOT Analysis).
9. Development of vision and goal statements.
10. Development of recommended policies and recommended actions, including an action plan for implementation.
11. Development of full draft of plan, presented to the community at three informational meetings, and for comment at a public hearing (September 2015).
12. Submittal of Draft Plan to Town Board (February 11, 2016).
13. Town Board review and public hearing (September 2016).
14. Draft plan sent to Madison County Planning Department for required 239-m review (November 2016).
15. Environmental review as per NYS State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) (December 2016).
16. Adoption of Plan by Town Board via a resolution (Adopted on February 9, 2017).

## **Town Input and Data Collection**

The issues, goals and recommended strategies detailed in this comprehensive plan are also based on new information gathered about the Town of Hamilton, new public input, and relevant information from the old plan. Specific sources of information used to prepare this plan included:

- Background studies of land use patterns in Hamilton.
- Population and demographic information.
- Housing (number of units, type of units, etc.).
- Community facilities and services.
- Transportation resources.
- Recreation and educational resources.
- Public safety programs.
- Environmental conditions of the Town.
- Analysis of the regional growth patterns and trends that have affected, and will continue to affect the area’s growth.
- 1999 Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan.
- Southern Madison Heritage Trust - Strategic Land Protection Plan, 2005.
- HVHF (Gas Drilling) Build-out Analysis.
- Wind Power Analysis.

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- Review and Analysis of Town Zoning and Subdivision Regulations.

Maps developed for this plan include:

- Aerial Photographs
- Roads and Property Boundaries
- Property Classes (Land Uses)
- Topography
- Steep Slopes
- Watersheds
- Bedrock and Surficial Geology
- Farmland Soils
- Agricultural Properties
- Agricultural Districts
- State Lands, Trails and Protected Lands
- Current Zoning Districts
- Wetlands and Flood Hazards
- Principal Aquifers
- Recreation Centers and Populated Areas
- Scenic Viewsheds (from Southern Madison Heritage Trust)
- Existing Gas Leases
- Archaeologically Sensitive Locations
- Rare Plants and Animal Habitats and Significant Natural Communities
- (Combined) Sensitive Environmental Areas
- Potential Commercial Expansion Locations
- Gas and Wind Build-out Maps



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## Public Input Summary

### Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

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**SWOT – This SWOT was created with input from our community. In this way, the Town has identified a variety of projects and actions that over time, can build on the strengths, take advantage of the opportunities, address weaknesses, and work to prevent the threats. Strengths are internal resources and capabilities that affect the Town. Weaknesses are internal deficiencies in resources or capabilities that negatively impact Hamilton. Opportunities are potential projects or programs that could be taken advantage of to improve the quality of life in the Town and threats are external influences coming from outside the Town.**

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#### Strengths – Features to be maintained:

##### Agriculture and Farmland

- Open-space
- Fresh food/ Farmers market
- Lifestyle
- Rural character
- Heritage
- Landscape
- Reduces Carbon footprint
- New businesses focusing on locally grown or created items (CSA's, Micro-brewery)
- Employment
- Highly productive farms



##### Community Tone and Character

- Beauty of the area
- Rural and small town character
- Safe and secure area to live
- Strong sense of community
- Family friendly community
- Historic area
- Historic homes and barns
- Diverse community
- Culture - music/art diversity
- Outdoor recreational opportunities
- Creative town, vitality that fosters creative spark
- High village taxes, but high services in return
- Churches are active with outreach in community

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Senior services - housing  
Food Cupboard  
Public Libraries  
Volunteers

## **Colgate University**

Employment  
Diversity  
Facilities – sports, films, pool, classes  
Boost to downtown/ local business  
Stable presence  
Helps Hamilton Central School  
Town/gown relationship has improved  
Educational offerings for undergraduate students  
and adults  
Supports arts  
Lends student help for community projects and  
research (COVE/Upstate Institute)  
Assists with grants for non-profits



## **Economic Conditions**

Electric, water, sewer and gas utility benefits  
Some small stores, restaurants available  
Small businesses are high quality

## **Environment/natural resources**

Wind, water, forest, minerals  
Wildlife  
Recreation  
Viewscapes and scenic beauty  
Seasonal changes

## **Health Services**

Community Memorial Hospital  
Southern Madison County Volunteer Ambulance Corps (SOMAC)  
Variety of medical services from general practitioners to specialists

## **Schools**

Hamilton Central School  
Sherburne Earlville Central School  
Chenango Nursery School (CNS) and 2 by 2 Nursery School  
Education Unlimited  
Lifelong Learning  
New Life Christian School  
Morrisville State College

## **Town Services**

Good roads that are well maintained by the Highway department

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Partnerships between the Town, villages and Colgate  
Efficient and accessible local government

## **Weaknesses - Features to be improved:**

### **Community Tone and Character**

Village/Town outside split – divisions between town and villages  
Social divisions  
Some apathy and lack of public involvement  
Negative attitudes  
Loss of community character  
Community cliques not welcoming to newcomers  
Poverty level  
Lack of obvious public transport  
Lack of trails and safe places for recreation

### **Colgate University**

Dependence on as economic driver  
Concerns about Colgate acquiring and taking property off tax rolls  
Perceived town/gown split  
Students living in residential areas

### **Economic Conditions**

Not much local shopping  
Limited business development opportunities  
Not all businesses welcome – high village taxes  
Lack of jobs for 2 wage earner families  
Need for more local economic growth  
Lack of parking in Hamilton village  
Rte. 12B and intersection in Hamilton Village  
Loss of farms and farmland  
High cost of living here

### **Health Services**

SOMAC financial problems  
EMS volunteers in short supply  
Transportation for elderly residents  
Economic health of Community Memorial Hospital

### **Housing**

Disrepair of houses  
High cost of housing  
Vacant houses  
Impact of large-scale agriculture on homeowners in areas outside villages  
Hard for 1 wage earner families to afford property  
Lack of housing for elderly  
Lack of a diversity of desirable housing (example: easy to maintain, walkable to services, affordable)  
Absentee landlords

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## **Town Services**

- Earlville split between counties and towns
- Poor office and storage space for town office
- Lack of high-speed internet/cell service in parts of town
- Zoning needs to be reviewed and updated

## **Opportunities - Features or activities that can be taken advantage of:**

### **Agriculture and Agricultural Economic Development**

- Take better advantage of institutional use of local agricultural products
- Update zoning to improve ag-business opportunities
- Pass Right to Farm Law to protect farmers
- Identify businesses that are needed and provide incentives for them

### **Economic Development**

- Promote value added forestry products
- Promote value added agricultural products
- Promote agri-tourism and heritage tourism

### **Energy**

- Start Green energy initiatives (conservation, energy efficiency, non-industrial wind, micro-hydro, community biodigester, solar, geothermal)
- Manage industrial energy development (gas/wind/solar) to maximize benefits and minimize negative impacts
- Consider social and community impacts of energy development
- Regulate energy infrastructure to minimize negative impacts
- Work with Colgate to help offset their carbon footprint
- Have a gas utility
- Have an electric utility or purchasing cooperative

### **Housing**

- Promote affordable housing opportunities
- Promote use of conservation cluster development when subdivisions take place
- Re-use empty houses in communities outside of the villages
- Promote housing and services for elderly (which attract retirees)
- Allow for more diversity of housing types that do not impact neighborhoods such as granny flats and ECHO housing options

### **Town Services**

- Shared services between town and villages, and town to town
- Promote public transportation
- Develop more trails and bike paths
- Expand recycling and composting programs

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## Threats – Features that could prevent Hamilton from reaching its goals:

### Loss of Agriculture

- Fragility of farming
- Deer population explosion – damage crops, property and forests, spread Lyme disease
- Impacts of other invasive species - Emerald Ash Borer, Canada Geese

### Changes to Community Tone and Character

- Changing demographics - aging population, fewer families
- Split community on divisive issues

### Colgate University

- Perception that Colgate “owns” village, taking property off tax rolls, creating shrinking tax base, Colgate’s goals may not be aligned with village’s and/or town’s goals

### Energy Development

- Industrial scale wind and gas

### Loss of Town services

- Adverse/extreme weather and effects on infrastructure

*The following ‘wordle’ is an illustration of the words used by Town of Hamilton survey participants to describe community character. The larger the word, the more times that same word was used to define community character by participants.*



# Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan January 2017

## Vision Statement

The Town of Hamilton is known for its friendly, safe, small-town character. Its citizens value the many social, cultural and recreational activities that contribute to the well-being of our community. We are excellent stewards, protecting the environment while using our natural, economic, and community resources wisely and responsibly. We actively support agriculture as a key part of our economy, heritage, and rural character. The Town welcomes new and innovative businesses that promote economic opportunity and provide for the needs of our residents. The Town government fosters a spirit of collaboration among our residents and among other local governments, organizations, and institutions in our community.





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## Summary of Goals

To help the Town attain its vision, this Comprehensive Plan establishes several goals. These goals are long-term and express the desired changes Hamilton would like to make. They reflect community attitudes about certain topics, and establish general direction and expected results. In developing this set of goals, the Town of Hamilton evaluated its strengths (features to preserve), its weaknesses (features to avoid or eliminate), its opportunities (features to achieve), and its threats (features to avoid) (SWOT). These goals and the actions suggested to achieve them are explored in detail starting on page 22.

The results of this SWOT analysis helped formulate the following goals for the Town:

### **Community Vision (Page 22)**

- Goal 1. Maintain the small town and rural nature of Hamilton as a core attribute of the Town.
- Goal 2. Maintain a mutually beneficial relationship with Colgate University.
- Goal 3. Ensure that Town residents have access to vital services.

### **Economic Prosperity (Page 26)**

- Goal 1. Increase broadband and cellular services to support emergency, business, farm and educational activities.
- Goal 2. Expand small business opportunities in appropriate locations (identified in survey or zoned for) and in ways that maintain the character of Hamilton so that new services, retail opportunities, and jobs are available.
- Goal 3. Promote opportunities for new businesses that are economically viable and environmentally friendly and meet the needs of both residents and visitors.

### **Environment (Page 28)**

- Goal 1. Protect water, air, open spaces, wildlife and other natural and historic resources.
- Goal 2. Increase energy conservation and use of green energy initiatives to decrease energy use and enhance the long-term environmental health of the community.
- Goal 3. Decrease negative impacts of new development on our residents and the environment.
- Goal 4. Strengthen local regulations that address large scale and industrial development to minimize risks and maximize local benefits.

### **Agriculture (Page 33)**

- Goal 1. Maintain land that is currently in active farm use so that agriculture remains a primary land use in Hamilton, while supporting a farmer's ability to conduct business.
- Goal 2. Increase availability and accessibility of local agricultural products so that institutions, businesses, and residents can benefit from local food and farmers can be profitable.

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Goal 3. Increase awareness in the community about the role local farms of all sizes play in Hamilton to promote farming and reduce conflicts.

Goal 4. Support farm-related land uses and businesses.

## **Housing (Page 39)**

Goal 1. Increase the diversity of housing available in the Town to meet the needs of all, especially young families and senior citizens.

Goal 2. Increase housing affordability.

Goal 3. Reduce the incentives for sprawl outside the villages.

Goal 4. Preserve Hamilton's community character and environment through housing initiatives and policies.

## **Recreation (Page 42)**

Goal 1. Increase opportunities for safe biking, hiking, and other outdoor recreational opportunities.

Goal 2. Identify and promote year-round cultural opportunities throughout the Town.

## **Governance (Page 44)**

Goal 1. Enhance collaboration and coordination of programs, services and policies with adjacent municipalities to promote efficiency.

Goal 2. Increase public transportation opportunities to enhance access to economic, service, retail, recreational, and cultural resources in the villages.

Goal 3. Provide public services in a transparent and fiscally responsible manner.

Goal 4. Increase public participation in Town governance.



# Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan January 2017

## Recommended Actions, Policies and Programs

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### Community Vision

**The Town of Hamilton is an open, welcoming, and safe community that fosters civic participation and promotes collaboration among all residents and local institutions. Our community embraces its diversity, and is enriched by its cultural and educational assets, as well as its rural character.**

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#### **Goal 1. Maintain the small town and rural nature of Hamilton as a core attribute of the Town.**

- A. Use the conservation subdivision design method in zoning and subdivision laws to allow for larger residential development that is sensitive to environmental and community character needs. (See Supporting Information for Part I in Appendix, and Agriculture, Goal 1 (E) for more detail).

This is a 'density neutral' layout technique – with the landowner still eligible for all the lots allowed under the zoning. Any update that includes conservation subdivisions should also include a definition of open space, methods for identifying, preserving and maintaining open space, lot layout and other performance criteria, and procedures for the Planning Board to review and approve a conservation subdivision.

Provision for allowing the conservation subdivision method should be included in both the Zoning and Subdivision laws. In so doing, it is recommended that the preserved open space requirement be set at 50%.

The conservation subdivision method could be applied with voluntary use by any subdivision applicant and with density bonuses to incentivize its use.

- B. Update the Route 12 and 12B Business Districts as recommended above to prevent strip-style development. Explore ways to offer incentives for enhanced conservation design. Re-examine strict parking lot requirements in zoning, and allow for shared parking lots.
- C. Use the data, analysis and planning outlined in the Southern Madison Heritage Trust Strategic Land Protection Plan (SMHT) to assist in meeting the goals of Hamilton. In particular, the following sections of the SMHT plan offer options that should be considered by the Town (see Appendix for more information about this plan):
1. The scenic and cultural inventory and analysis could be used to help create a scenic view special district to support landowners wishing to participate in State or Federal voluntary PDR programs to protect critical locations. See Supporting Information for Part I in the Appendix for more information on special overlay districts.

# Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan January 2017

2. Growth Areas. Consider the identified potential growth areas around the villages of Hamilton and Earlville as locations for higher density in the Town. The SMHT Y-Growth Plan (See full plan at Town Clerk's office) identifies growth areas and greenbelt areas. It recommends transferring development density from areas that should be preserved as open space to areas more suitable for growth, such as around population areas or away from environmentally sensitive areas. The recommendations from the SMHT plan can be implemented via Town zoning changes that decreases or transfers density from greenbelt areas to growth areas.
3. Natural Resource Corridor. The SMHT plan recommends a Natural Resources Corridor that creates links between major waterways and ecologically significant wetlands, lakes, forests, farmland, and other areas with wildlife species richness.

## D. Update the Use Schedule in the Zoning Law.

Currently, most business uses are allowed with a special permit in all locations of Town, with a wide range of business permitted along with residential, agricultural and other uses. While business promotion is consistent with economic development goals of the Town, allowing business development in all locations may not be consistent with the desire to protect community character and the environment. Consider changing the use schedule to ensure that new business uses in the Agricultural Residential District (ARD) do not negatively impact farming or residential uses.



- E. Use other techniques to ensure consistency such as commercial design standards, use of a building footprint limitation for commercial uses in certain areas, or by creating new business districts or floating business districts. Creation of these districts would be subject to a public meeting and community input.
- F. Create an inventory of resources to support preservation of historic features.
- G. Update the sign section in the zoning so the size of signs is reduced. Also address the new LED lighted signs that are favored by many commercial uses. Consider adding a sign size bonus as an incentive for signs that are designed in a specific, desired way (such as only using externally lighted signs).
- H. Update the Town's subdivision regulations to bring them up to par with newer NYS requirements and help streamline the review process, reduce redundancy, and clarify the process for both Planning Board and applicants.

# Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan January 2017

This would include updating review and project timelines, adding in the requirement that subdivisions be referred to Madison County Planning Department, and remove the outdated environmental assessment forms from the law.

- I. Update the Town's subdivision regulations to ensure that agriculture, rural character, and other values as expressed in this Plan are reflected in the purpose statements.
- J. Currently, the Town's subdivision regulations do not have any procedures to help landowners or the Planning Board easily address lot line boundary adjustments. Consider adding a section to cover procedures for a boundary adjustment. A boundary adjustment should not be considered the same as a minor subdivision since no new lots are created.
- K. Consider removing the dollar amount for fees in both the zoning law and subdivision law and instead use language related to fees "as established by the Town Board."

In this way, the Town can set fees for various permits and review or change them whenever they feel it necessary without changing the local law. Fees can be established through resolution. It is recommended that at its annual reorganization meeting, the Town Board review its fee schedule and make adjustments if necessary.

- L. Update the Subdivision Law to remove the two-lot subdivision exemption (See Supporting Information for Part I in Appendix).

## **Goal 2. Maintain a mutually beneficial relationship with Colgate University.**

- A. Promote Town communication and collaboration with Colgate.
- B. Expand the Town's role with the Partnership for Community Development (PCD).
- C. Request that Colgate's property be open to hunting to offset deer damage in Town.
- D. Explore shared services opportunities such as local transportation (Colgate Cruiser).
- E. Work with Colgate to encourage additional educational and recreational opportunities for Town residents.
- F. Work with Colgate to ensure that residents are informed about events (Colgate website, link on Town website, advertise on Mid York Nextdoor Hamilton, etc.)



# Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan January 2017

- G. Work with Colgate University to keep as many properties on tax rolls as legally possible.

## **Goal 3. Ensure that Town residents have access to vital services**

- A. Continue to support the Southern Madison County Volunteer Ambulance Service (SOMAC).
  - 1. Encourage an increase in the number of emergency service volunteers that serve our community.
  - 2. Provide monetary support and oversight as needed.
- B. Support Community Memorial Hospital and local medical services.
- C. Work with the local fire departments, the County, Colgate, and the villages to coordinate and provide emergency disaster services. Make sure that disaster relief for agriculture is given a high priority.





# Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan January 2017

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## Economic Prosperity

**Vision** - The Town of Hamilton nurtures entrepreneurship and welcomes a wide variety of businesses. A vibrant economic base provides local jobs and services that fit the needs of residents, students and visitors. Valuing its rural small-town character, the Town encourages environmentally friendly business practices.

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**Goal 1. Increase broadband and cellular services to support home, emergency, business, farm and educational activities and residential usage.**

- A. The Town should actively engage with the County and other regional efforts to expand broadband and cell service to all areas in the Town.
- B. Create a feasibility study for the Town using the NYS Broadband Map to identify holes in where broadband and cell services are absent or weak in town and target work to those areas. Use this data, along with information from the Broadband Strategy (see B1.c, below) to work with cellular and broadband providers to show the need for improving coverage. Work with PCD to accomplish this.
- C. Develop a strategy and a series of locally supported initiatives designed to improve the level of service. Research available incentive programs, grants, and opportunities to create public-private partnerships to expand services. See the New York State Broadband Toolkit to aid in this effort: [http://www.nysbroadband.ny.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ToolkitFINAL\\_6-4-14.pdf](http://www.nysbroadband.ny.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ToolkitFINAL_6-4-14.pdf).
- D. Consider setting basic standards regarding minimum levels of service for any residential planned communities, multi-family or commercial buildings in the future. New construction could be required to include structured wiring that allows fiber to be run easily to each room.
- E. When the cable franchise agreement is up for renewal at the Town, negotiate with the carrier for extended coverage.
- F. Work with Colgate to expand broadband services and accessibility that would mutually benefit the university and community.

**Goal 2. Expand small business opportunities in appropriate locations (identified in survey or zoned for) and in ways that maintain the character of Hamilton so that new services, retail opportunities, and jobs are available.**

- A. Ensure that economic development programs outside the village emphasize ag-related businesses, outdoor recreation, and tourism. As such, the Town should have a marketing plan for the town to promote the college, agri-tourism, recreation, antiques, and the arts.

# Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan January 2017

- B. Intensify work with the PCD, Hamilton Business Alliance (HBA), and the Hamilton Initiative to advocate for other business development opportunities in the Town, making available a comprehensive list of existing state and federal business incentives. These efforts could be improved with additional funding for PCD and greater parity with Town/Village/Colgate funding so local municipalities are equal stakeholders with Colgate in these efforts.
- C. Hold regular meetings with surrounding municipalities and towns to discuss economic development opportunities and to ensure that there is collaboration and coordination of efforts. Expand on the current meetings of the Southern Madison County supervisors so economic and other regional issues are discussed and mutually beneficial solutions formulated.
- D. Work with Colgate Alumni network to create and locate new businesses in the town

## **Goal 3. Promote opportunities for new businesses that are economically viable and environmentally friendly and meet the needs of both residents and visitors.**

- A. Ensure that zoning allows for, and the economic development programs promote the following businesses:
  - 1. Value added forestry products
  - 2. Agri-tourism
  - 3. Niche and value added agriculture
  - 4. Food hub and small scale food processing development
  - 5. Local food to local institutions and restaurants – distribution model
  - 6. Ag related businesses – meat processing, slaughterhouses, wineries, distilleries, breweries, cheese and yogurt making, etc.
  - 7. Health tourism
- B. Encourage the PCD to conduct a market analysis to identify businesses that are missing from the Town which would provide local economic opportunities. Work to provide incentives and market to those businesses.
- C. Work with PCD, HBA, the Hamilton Initiative, and Madison County to better advertise outdoor recreational opportunities. Actively promote small businesses that cater to those activities, such as hiking, canoeing, kayaking, running, snowmobiling, and horseback riding. Create a more comprehensive marketing plan to advertise the recreational resources that exist or that could exist.
- D. Work with the County in a regional branding and promotional effort for local products (e.g. Kriemhild butter, Good Nature Brewing beer).



## Environmental

**Vision - The Town of Hamilton has a wealth of natural resources that its citizens value. We take pride in the natural beauty of our town, clean environment and local wildlife.**

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### **Goal 1. Protect water, air, open spaces, wildlife and other natural resources.**

- A. Develop design guidelines that encourage the use of cool (heat reflective) and/or permeable paving materials in large commercial parking lots. This could be part of the design guidelines for commercial development recommended above.
- B. Reduce parking lot space requirements for commercial uses so they are more flexible and prevent creation of overbuilt parking lots. This will reduce stormwater runoff.
- C. Create a Green Development guidance document that the Planning Board & builders could use to inform new development. Encourage use of green building materials and use existing guidelines from the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and organizations such as the U.S. Green Building Council and the LEED rating system.  
<http://www.dec.ny.gov/energy/57119.html#Green>
- D. Strengthen Zoning Law Section 5.6 to incorporate new methodologies related to stormwater runoff, including requiring use of low impact designs (LID). These are advocated by DEC and are now considered best management practices for stormwater.
- E. Zoning Law section 5.8 details the requirement for a special use permit to develop on slopes >15%. Given there are many negative impacts associated with hillside development such as erosion, changes in runoff, removal of microhabitats, and changes in the character of the area, consider controlling development on excessive slopes greater than 25% or 30% to protect these sensitive areas.
- F. Obtain the DEC model floodplain law to update Article 7 of the zoning so that it is consistent with FEMA/DEC standards.
- G. Consider using the SMHT plan suggestion for creation of a natural resource special overlay district to protect critical environmental resources. As per the SMHT plan, consider linking the Sangerfield River, Nine Mile Swamp, Chenango River and state lands.

# Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan January 2017

1. The Town can use buffers around significant environmental features, use transfer of development rights from one location to another (TDR) or use of conservation subdivision designs that carefully place new lots in a way that also preserves open space. See Supporting Information for Part I in Appendix for more details on transfer of development rights.



2. The recommendations from the SMHT plan can be implemented via Town zoning changes that decrease density or transfer density from greenbelt areas to growth areas.

## **Goal 2. Increase energy conservation and use of green energy initiatives to decrease energy use and enhance the long-term environmental health of the community.**

- A. Promote energy conservation as the first method in energy policy.
  1. Make all town-owned buildings energy efficient as funds permit.
  2. Educate the community on energy efficiency programs.
- B. Work with livestock farmers to evaluate, support and implement use of anaerobic digester systems. Use and implement EPA's AgStar to promote recovery of methane from livestock waste.
- C. Continue work on climate planning and together with the Villages of Hamilton and Earlville, and Colgate University, join the NYS DEC Climate Smart Community:
  1. Develop a local climate action plan based on the greenhouse gas inventory already completed. (<http://www.dec.ny.gov/energy/67101.html>).
  2. Establish an energy or climate task force as a continuation of the village/town/community green community work to assess local resources and issues, galvanize community support and develop an energy or climate plan. Through this process, identify sources of greenhouse gases in the community and set goals for emission reduction.
  3. Work with Colgate to help it offset its carbon footprint locally.
  4. Consider Morrisville College as a resource for this work.

# Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan January 2017

- D. Promote and allow green energy initiatives in the zoning (conservation, non-industrial wind, micro-hydro, community biodigester, residential solar, geothermal). Review existing zoning for green energy building projects to ensure they are subject to adequate review process.
- E. Work with landowners to promote biomass (willow, switch grass, etc.) growing as energy source. Support partnerships between Colgate University and/or Morrisville College and local farmers to grow biomass.
- F. Explore feasibility of forming a purchasing cooperative for energy or energy efficiency items like insulation.
- G. Work with Madison County, the villages and neighboring towns to promote recycling and composting.

## **Goal 3. Decrease negative impacts of new development on our residents and the environment.**

- A. Implement policies that are consistent with New York's Smart Growth policies (See Supporting Information for Part I in the Appendix for more details on the New York State Smart Growth Policies and Conservation Subdivision recommendations in Community Goal 1(A).)
- B. Use the NYS DOT Green LITES (See Appendix) program to inform new road building in Town and assist the Town Highway Superintendent in use of environmentally friendly road specifications.

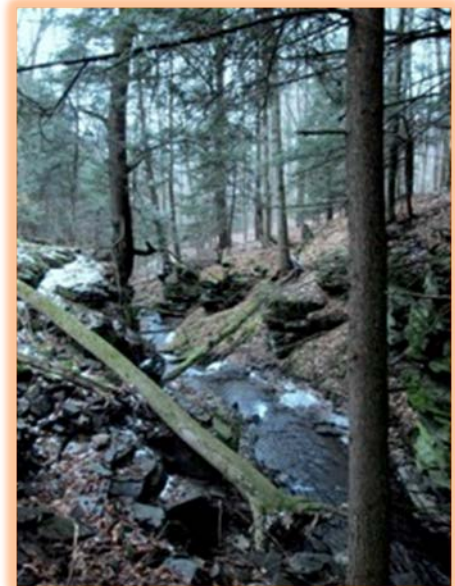
This could also be used as a green rating system for infrastructure improvement projects. The State program is a rating system that helps to ensure infrastructure investments minimize greenhouse gas emissions.
- C. Research development standards for large scale solar facilities and update the Town Zoning Law to provide for use of solar in a manner that does not cause nuisances to neighbors. The Town should evaluate use of setbacks to ensure access to solar potential, where possible.
  - 1. Define utility scale solar as a facility that produces energy for the electoral grid only, as opposed to residential solar which would generate electricity primarily for residential or farm use with overages going into the grid.
  - 2. Utility scale solar facilities should be permitted through the Special Use approval process, oriented so that the project is consistent with agricultural land uses, environmental resources, community character, and other values of the Town of Hamilton as expressed in this plan.
- D. Consider establishing a setback from streams to protect water quality and to move development out of areas that are subject to flooding.

This area, known as a vegetated riparian zone could be defined as a special zoning district located along DEC regulated streams (Class Ct and higher) or other locally designated streams. Riparian zones are often determined to be 100' on either side of a stream, but this dimension may be influenced by the topography adjacent to the stream.

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## **Goal 4. Strengthen local regulations that address large scale and industrial development to minimize risks and maximize local benefits.**

- A. Ensure that Town Government has adequate time to consider potential effects, community concerns, and possible actions for projects that may cause significant environmental and community impacts to the Town.
- B. Ensure the Town is an advocate for this Comprehensive Plan and the vision, goals, and long-term direction established in the Plan regarding any future industrial or industrial energy development - industrial wind, utility scale solar, gas drilling or natural gas infrastructure - that may be considered in the Town of Hamilton. (see Appendix for more information on high volume hydrofracking)
- C. Update the Zoning Law to accomplish this goal:
  1. Review and identify locations of existing residential, agricultural, and natural resources that could be negatively impacted by potential new industrial uses. To assist this, consider conducting a ground water study to determine critical ground water and water recharge areas that may need protecting in the Town.
  2. Amend zoning regulations by adding necessary definitions for light industry and heavy industry and include gas drilling, industrial wind farms, and industrial solar farms activities as a heavy industrial use.
  3. Specify where in Hamilton industrial uses would be allowed or prohibited.
  4. Require site plan approval and special use permits for industrial uses.
  5. Consider adding language to the Zoning Law for the following:
    - floodplain and stream buffer protection
    - protections for unique natural areas, such as conservation zones
    - protections against fragmenting agricultural lands and intact forests
    - list prohibited land uses, including those prohibited in all districts
    - establish buffers between industrial land uses and other uses.
- D. To address the potential ancillary impacts of industry, including gas drilling, industrial wind and industrial solar, the zoning law should be amended to include review of site access, screening, signs, landscaping, location and dimensions of buildings, lighting, noise, and impacts on adjacent land uses.



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- E. The Public Service Commission and other state agencies does not regulate gathering lines for natural gas except where they go through environmentally sensitive areas. The Town should consider regulating gathering lines by adopting a local law or including a section in zoning that specifies the conditions and requirements for building and inspecting these gathering lines. The Town should also require that all gathering lines be mapped, with the map filed with the Town of Hamilton, and enrolled in the Dig Safely NY program.
- F. Update the zoning so that the broader social and community impacts of energy development, not just technical and economic, are examined for consistency with this Comprehensive Plan.
- G. Update zoning to address gas compressor stations and require site plan and special use permits where these uses are allowed. The Town should regulate noise, emissions, safety, and siting of these facilities to minimize adverse impacts.
- H. Designate certain areas in Hamilton as critical environmental areas under SEQRA to provide added environmental review at the State and local level. Critical Environmental Areas provide for a higher scrutiny for environmental impacts. Use information provided in this Comprehensive Plan to identify potential critical environmental areas.
- I. Determine if there are any mapped aquifer locations in the Town of Hamilton and consider adopting regulations to protect those resources from pollution.
- J. Consider prohibiting most development in the mapped floodplain.
- K. For all development, consider adopting stormwater regulations to review stormwater pollution prevention plans for land disturbances in coordination with NYS DEC requirements.
- L. Because the Town relies solely on well water for residences and farm uses, Hamilton should ensure that zoning regulations address water use and safety. This could include well-head protection rules, watershed protections, and use of setbacks from private wells as methods to ensure protection of these resources.
- M. Create a Local Type 1 list – identify land uses that are potentially significant to Hamilton. Proposed development would trigger SEQRA, and thus provide Town with more information on potential impacts from development.

Some examples of land uses that the Town is concerned about include gravel pits, large mines, gas development and its infrastructure, other heavy industries, large-scale wind development, large scale retail (big box retail), etc.

- N. Use SMHT scenic resource analysis and the wind overlay map as a tool to ensure that current zoning is consistent with goals of this plan, and modify zoning if needed. (See appendix for information on SMHT scenic resource analysis)

## Agriculture

**Vision-** Farming in the Town of Hamilton is a diverse, thriving, and an essential part of the local economy, heritage, and lifestyle. It enriches our quality of life by providing local fresh foods, maintaining land for agricultural use, and continuing the town's historic rural character.

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**Goal 1. Maintain land that is currently in active farm use so that agriculture remains a primary land use in Hamilton, while supporting a farmer's ability to conduct business.**

- A. Minimize, to the maximum extent feasible, adverse impacts on farms when new development occurs. Update the Zoning and Subdivision laws to help accomplish this:
1. Update zoning sections 8.2 and 9.3-3 so that site plan and special use applications contain adequate information about agricultural resources. In subdivision, update Sections 410, 510, and 520 to require this information.
  2. To ensure evaluation of impacts on active farms especially when located in the NYS Agricultural District, update zoning sections 9.3-5 so that agricultural protection or minimization of impacts on agriculture are part of the criteria for special use and site plan reviews. In the subdivision law, update to enhance how agriculture is included in the evaluation in sections 610 and 330.2.
  3. Include protection of agricultural land uses in the purpose statements of the subdivision law (Article 1).





# Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan January 2017

4. Update the Subdivision standards (610 and 645) to include development guidelines that when implemented, minimize impacts on agriculture when a subdivision is planned.
  5. Add in language to the Subdivision law, similar to what already exists in the zoning law, to require agricultural disclosure notices and use of agricultural data statements. Further, update the public notice requirements so that landowners identified in the agricultural data statement are notified of a subdivision public hearing.
  6. Remove the waiver for agricultural subdivisions (Section 3.40). Instead, make this a minor subdivision process.
  7. Require use of buffers between new residential uses and farmlands. The buffer is to be provided by the non-farm land use and should not be a burden to the farmer to create.
  8. Provide for Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) training about agriculture and agricultural practices so that they are well-informed about agricultural needs and activities in Hamilton.
  9. See Supporting Information for Part I in appendix for questions the Planning Board can ask to analyze impacts of new development on agriculture.
- B. Work with local land trusts to initiate or expand programs that keep property available to local farmers such as use of permanent conservation easements, lease of development rights, farmer to farmland link and match programs, and others.
- C. Work with landowners to increase enrollment in the NYS certified agricultural district. A large amount of farmland within the Town is not included in this district.
- D. Currently, zoning allows for one dwelling for every one acre of land. This level of development is not likely to be compatible with farming, or other open space, environmental and rural community character goals in the long-term. Consider the following methods to enhance planning to balance growth and preservation:
1. Involve the farming community to identify critical farmlands desired to be maintained for farm activities and consider establishing, in zoning, a special farmland overlay zoning district to include these critical farmland areas and set development standards so that new residential development would be compatible with farm operations. See also conservation subdivision recommendations in Community goal.
- More about Using Special Overlay Districts to Promote Agriculture

Parcels in special zoning districts may be permitted additional ag-related or compatible rural business uses, or be subject to additional development guidelines that conserve key agricultural resources and limit the impacts of new development on nearby agricultural uses.

Special overlay zoning districts are often applied to parcels that meet all or some of the following criteria: minimum parcel size

  - High quality agricultural soils
  - Capacity for continued agricultural use
  - Located in a NYS certified agricultural district

# Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan January 2017

2. Use density instead of a minimum lot size to control the amount of housing development that takes place in Hamilton. A minimum lot size requires all new lots to be a specific acreage whereas density establishes the number of houses per acre that would be allowed. In rural areas, use of a density measurement (dwellings per acre) offers more flexibility to landowners and results in a better configuration of lots than a minimum lot size. Note that the Madison County Health Department does require a minimum lot size to place septic systems and it is based on soil percolation rates.

3. Consider a new density (5 acres suggested) appropriate to meet the goals of the Town.

Consider lower density of development outside the Village, the hamlet, and at least in some parts of town. Currently the one-acre minimum lot size covers the majority of the town outside the village. However, not all parts of the town could accommodate that level of development and other areas may have characteristics that make it incompatible with other goals.

4. Consider use of sliding scale density. (See Support Information for Part I in Appendix for more details on sliding scale density.) The Town Council should research the effects of using sliding scale density on our large landowners before implementing this strategy.
5. Use density averaging in a new subdivision to allow more flexibility in creation of lots. Coupled with density (recommended above), averaging allows a landowner to create a variety of lot sizes as long as the average meets the overall density allowable.

Here are some examples to illustrate this:

A 100-acre lot with a 5-acre density would be allowed to be subdivided to create 20 new lots. There could be three 10-acre lots, four 5-acre lots and thirteen 3.8 acre lots created. When the density is averaged together, it equals 20 lots with an average density of 5 acres. Or, it could create one 80-acre lot preserved for farming and nineteen 1 acre lots (approximately) which still equals 20 lots with an average density of 5 acres. In comparison, the same 100-acre lot with a 5-acre minimum lot size would create 20 lots, each of 5 acres each with no land available for farming, open space or environmental protection.

6. Consider initiating a voluntary transfer of development rights program (TDR) (See Supporting Information for Part I in Appendix for more information on TDR.



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## **Goal 2. Support established farmers and nurture new farmers.**

- A. Appoint a Town of Hamilton agricultural advisory committee composed of local farmers and members of the agricultural business community. This committee should be a sounding board for the Town Council and the forum to brainstorm alternatives, ideas, and programs and work to implement the recommendations in this plan and increase awareness about farming in the community. This advisory committee could also coordinate with similar committees in other



towns and the County to encourage and promote agricultural-based economic opportunities, and to preserve, revitalize, and sustain the Town's agricultural businesses and land.

1. This group could be responsible for:
  - a. Serving as the information clearinghouse and forum for farm-town relations
  - b. Facilitating the technical, educational, business and regulatory assistance needed to farm and to live near farms
  - c. Fostering a working relationship among farmers, residents and institutions
  - d. Assisting the Town in advocating for agriculture, farmland protection, and agricultural economic development at county, state and federal levels
  - e. Supporting the town and county in marketing, promoting (such as a town-wide farm tour), and initiating community agricultural events and awareness programs
  - f. Assisting the Town Board in identifying grants that are helpful to local farmers
  - g. Advising on existing programs that match farmers with available land
  - h. Helping to promote sustainable farming to landowners and farmers
  - i. Assisting the Town in using existing resources (such as the Agricultural Marketing Resource Center and the Small Scale Food Entrepreneurship program) to promote value-added farming, CSAs, niche farming and agri-tourism opportunities

## **Goal 3. Increase availability and accessibility of local agricultural products so that institutions, businesses, and residents can benefit from local food and farmers can be profitable.**

- A. Support efforts to link consumers and producers. Provide leadership to bring schools and other institutions together with area farmers. Work with Cornell Cooperative Extension and the Madison County Agricultural Economic Development agency to expand farm opportunities for Town of Hamilton farmers.
- B. Work with Madison County officials including those from Madison County Agricultural Economic Development to implement and expand the Madison Buy Local program in Hamilton.

# Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan January 2017

- C. Add a link or information on the Town website that identifies farms in Town and what products they offer.
- D. Facilitate local direct sales of agricultural products by ensuring Town zoning allows for u-pick, CSA, farm stand, farm retail, breweries, distilleries, food hubs, and other direct sales opportunities.
- E. Work with Colgate University to establish a farm incubator program for new farmers. Using college-owned farmlands as farm incubators could offer low rent and long-term leases for beginning farmers. This initiative could be part of a larger program with Colgate, SUNY Morrisville and Cornell Cooperative Extension to address topics such as enhancing access to local foods, use of carbon credits, and enhancing local economic development.

## **Goal 4. Increase awareness in the community about the role local farms of all sizes play in Hamilton to promote farming and reduce conflicts.**

- A. Support Future Farmers of America (FFA), 4-H, and other agricultural programs for youth.
- B. Develop a brochure (or use one such as that developed for Farm Bureau, see Appendix) that can be given to new residents to help them understand about life in a rural farming area. This brochure should also go on the website.

## **Goal 5. Support farm-related land uses and businesses.**

- A. Adopt a Right to Farm Law and include a Right to Farm statement in zoning. The Town should also post road signs to publicize the right to farm status.
- B. Include a section in zoning that reflects State rules that small wind facilities and solar panels on farms located in New York State Certified Agricultural districts are to be considered on-farm equipment and should be allowed as a permitted use or perhaps with a modified site plan review as per NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets guidance. See Support Information for Part I in Appendix for more details on farm structures and other NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets guidance.
- C. Zoning should allow multiple farm uses in the New York State certified agricultural district - including uses such as growing, processing and selling their product.



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Some of these farm uses, such as retail or processing facilities that take in produce from beyond the farm may require a special use permit and/or site plan review. However, the Town should be aware of New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets guidelines for review of certain agricultural operations so as not to over-regulate farm operations.

- D. Remove the zoning requirement that a farm needs to have five acres of land in the Agricultural Residential District. This is an unreasonable restriction and could prevent new and small niche farms from starting in Hamilton. A five-acre rule is not consistent with NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets which does not have any acreage associated with the definition of a farm.
- E. Local regulations for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO) cannot exceed State regulations. Review Hamilton's zoning to make sure that the local definition of CAFO matches the State definition. Update the CAFO section of the zoning so it is consistent with new State CAFO rules.

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## Housing

**Vision - The Town of Hamilton supports actions that ensure the availability of quality affordable housing for all residents.**

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**Goal 1. Increase the diversity of housing available in the Town to meet the needs of all, especially for young families and senior citizens.**

- A. Update Town zoning to allow other alternative housing types including shared housing (Home Sharing – see Supporting Information for Part I in Appendix for details), Elder Cottage Housing Opportunity (ECHO housing), and granny flats, subject to compliance with county health regulations. Work with the Village of Hamilton and the Village of Earlville to coordinate these rules and efforts to expand services and housing options.



A granny flat is an accessory apartment either in a principal residence or in an accessory structure such as a renovated garage. ECHO housing is a small, temporary housing unit that can be installed in a backyard—most commonly used to accommodate older adults.

- B. Allow a mix of single family and multi-family dwellings to be built when a conservation subdivision is designed (See recommendation Goal 1 A for further explanation).

**Goal 2. Increase housing affordability.**

- A. Create an option in zoning that offers a density bonus to applicants for a subdivision or other zoning permit. The bonus allows higher density in certain areas when the developer agrees to dedicate a certain percentage of the housing units as affordable units.
- B. Consider adopting a new section in zoning that would encourage or require major subdivision developments or multi-family developments to provide for a certain percentage of dedicated affordable units for low to moderate incomes (as defined by Federal law). (See appendix for model.) Provide incentives to promote this by offering a density bonus for large developments in exchange for dedicated affordable units.

# Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan January 2017

- C. Consider changing the dimension table in zoning for multi-family houses.

Currently the density is the same as for single-family housing, requiring 1 acre for each dwelling unit, and making it very difficult to get a multi-family development because of land needs and subsequent costs.

- D. Work with the PCD to seek grants to promote affordable housing for low and moderate-income families, including first time home-buyers.

## **Goal 3. Reduce the chance of sprawl outside the villages and hamlet.**

- A. The Town should identify growth and greenbelt areas. The SMHT plan could be used as a guide for Town level zoning changes. For example, the Town could establish other overlay districts or base zoning districts with different density or other development standards.

- 1. Offer a density bonus to developers who agree to locate higher density developments in priority growth areas identified in the SMHT plan.

- B. Establish new design standards in zoning for commercial development in business districts that minimize strip mall style development. These should be oriented to guide the building form, mass of structures, scale, and the relationship between streets and buildings. These should also address sidewalk, parking, trees, signage, landscaping, and general architectural features that can help ensure consistency of new structures with the character of Hamilton.

## **Goal 4. Preserve Hamilton's community character and environment through housing initiatives and policies.**

- A. Update the subdivision law to include a set of rural development guidelines that result in new housing that is sited in a manner that is protective of the environment. See Supporting Information for Part I in Appendix for more information about design standards.

- 1. Minimize clearing of vegetation such as along streams or in areas where trees and other vegetation could serve as a visual buffer.

- 2. Place buildings and access roads in treelines, on mildly sloping ground or along the edges of fields.

- 3. Locate structures more than 100 feet from streams.

- 4. Include rural road standards in a highway law or subdivision that allows for a hierarchy of road types that are built to rural road standards. Low volume residential roads could be rural lanes or rural roads with smaller paved widths, shoulders and right of ways.

- B. Allow site-sensitive utilities such as a community water and septic system that allow smaller average lot sizes, shared septic systems, or small package plants.

- C. Consider a noise ordinance for commercial activity throughout the Town.

# Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan January 2017

- D. Add multi-family development design standards to the zoning law to ensure that such development is consistent with the environment and character in Hamilton.
- E. Update the zoning and subdivision purpose statements to include protection of community character as a critical goal of land use regulations. To assist in this, use a definition of community character derived from the public survey for this plan.
- F. Encourage the preservation and re-use of existing and historic structures as a viable alternative to new construction that maintains community character.

Work with PCD, County, and State to secure HUD grants and identify other funding to maintain these structures. Help owners of income-producing real property find out about possible income tax credits for renovating historic properties as well as obtaining listing on the State or National Register of Historic Places.



# Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan January 2017

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## Recreation

**Vision – The Town of Hamilton promotes a multitude of cultural activities and recreational resources that enhance the health and quality of life for all citizens.**

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**Goal 1. Increase opportunities for safe biking, hiking, and other outdoor recreational opportunities for all.**

- A. Appoint a Recreation Committee to develop a comprehensive recreation plan for the Town. This group can draft plans for multi-use trails (bikes, walking, horses, snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles), develop more opportunities to promote recreational opportunities, and address safety issues identified in this plan. Include Colgate, Village reps, summer recreation program, Colgate Cycling Club, snowmobiling clubs, etc. on committee. Roles for this committee also include seeking funding to get a trail planner to design trails and maps and design parking, access, and signage. The Southern Madison Heritage Trust (SMHT) Plan can be used to aid in the recreation corridor planning. This Committee should work with Madison County Planning Department as well as NY Parks and Trails.

1. Trails that should be considered include:

- a. Extend canal & railroad trails south to Earlville
- b. Consider trails connecting with Leland Reserve and along 12B to Earlville.
- c. A walking trail around loop of Mason-Bonney – Bonney Hill Roads
- d. Payne – Spring – Hamilton Street loop.
- e. Connect Colgate land from campus with Beattie Reserve.
- f. Create a better running route to Lake Moraine.
- g. Hamilton St. – Gorton Road – Poolville/Earlville Road to Earlville and back
- h. Madison Street – Spillway Drive – East Lake Road
- i. Use the rail trail along RR bed through town.



2. Other actions recommended for this Committee include:

- a. Create a map and an interactive online app showing trails, tourist routes etc. for biking.
- b. Provide parking at specific locations to help promote recreational use and integration with tourism efforts.



# Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan January 2017

- c. Provide landowners with educational materials explaining state policies related to liability of landowners.
  - d. Work with the Department of Transportation (DOT), the Town, Village, and the County to look at shared road opportunities to minimize conflicts with cars, cyclists, and walkers. Expand road shoulders where possible to improve safety for bikers and runners.
  - e. Explore opportunities for new horse trails.
- B. Update the subdivision law to include trails and trail links as part of a major subdivision approval or large scale commercial uses. Amend land use regulations so that new, major subdivisions or commercial developments incorporate trails, and links to existing trails. Use the existing subdivision process to encourage the creation of new open spaces and parkland when major subdivisions or commercial development takes place.

## **Goal 2. Identify and promote year-round cultural opportunities throughout the Town. –**

- A. Work with PCD to find grants to support arts and historical activities in the town and its villages. Use the ENGAGE CNY plan as part of this work ([cnyarts.org/programs/engagecny/](http://cnyarts.org/programs/engagecny/))
- B. Through the Hamilton Business Alliance (HBA), work with Village galleries, local artists, cultural entities, merchants and Colgate University to create “First Friday” type events.
- C. Support cultural, educational, and recreational activities that involve diverse participants as community-building opportunities. Work with Earlville Opera House, Arts at the Palace, local libraries and schools.
- D. Raise awareness of historical buildings, landmarks, and vistas through walking tours and trails.
- E. Support lifelong learning initiatives in the Town.
- F. Work with Madison County Tourism, Inc., to develop, support and promote cultural activities.
- G. Work with the Route 20 Association of New York State—official Stewards of the NYS Route 20 Scenic Byway and part of the NYS DOT—as resource for promotion.



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## Governance

**Vision** - Hamilton Town government is open and responsive to its citizens, providing them with high-quality public services in a fiscally responsible and transparent manner.

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**Goal 1. Enhance collaboration and coordination of programs, services and policies with adjacent municipalities to promote efficiency and sharing.**

- A. Do a shared service study to identify areas where government services can be shared or consolidated to make for efficiencies.

**Goal 2. Increase public transportation opportunities to enhance access to economic, service, retail, recreational, and cultural resources in the villages.**

- A. Expand the role of the Colgate Cruiser in the community to provide free public transport. Market the cruiser to towns' people so they know the Cruiser is available for their use.
- B. Facilitate volunteer community based volunteer transportation for the elderly or infirm.

**Goal 3. Provide public services in a transparent and fiscally responsible manner.**

- A. Update the Town Zoning law to require a public hearing for all projects before the Planning Board that require site plan review approval.

Currently, the public hearing is at the discretion of the Planning Board. For more transparency and community involvement, the public hearing should be mandatory.

- B. Develop a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) as a multi-year schedule that lays out a series of Town projects including plans for construction of new facilities, replacement, upgrade, and maintenance of facilities and large equipment and their associated costs. See Supporting Information for Part I in Appendix for more information on a Capital Improvement Plan.

Over the five-year period considered by the CIP, the plan shows how the Town will maintain, expand or renovate facilities and services as needed to meet the demands of existing or new population.

**Goal 4. Increase public participation in Town governance.**

- A. After adoption of this plan, the Town Board should identify its implementation priorities and then assign certain projects to work on. The Town Board should review this plan at their annual reorganization meeting, identify goals for the year and work on those actions, enlisting

# Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan January 2017

community help as needed. Review and/or update this Plan every five years through a comprehensive plan update process that involves community members.

- B. Increase outreach to the community to advertise existing monthly meetings & issues.
  - 1. Enhance use of the Town website in innovative ways to keep the community apprised of town business and activities.
  - 2. Continue press releases about town council activities
- C. Consider establishing a Conservation Advisory Council, as authorized (but not mandated) as per General Municipal Law. This is a voluntary group of citizens interested in the environment that can be available to do educational programs, natural resource inventory work, or advising the Planning Board, ZBA and Town Board on environmental matters. Use existing resources such as this Plan and the SMHT strategy to assist with this effort.

# Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan January 2017

## Implementation and Action Plan

Implementing the Comprehensive Plan will require a series of Town Board policy decisions, program initiatives, and coordination with local, county, regional and state organizations and agencies. Some actions recommended in the Plan will also require funding.

This Plan details different types of actions including capital improvements, administrative actions, and establishment of programs and policies. Successful implementation of these actions over the next ten to fifteen years will be based on effectively setting priorities and allocating limited resources – people and funding – to the most important projects.

### **Critical Implementation Steps for the Town Board**

#### **A. Coordinate Implementation**

The Town Board will oversee all aspects of implementation of the Plan and will direct work to be done in the future. However, other groups and agencies should be called upon to assist the Board when needed including the Planning Board, Town Highway Department, Madison County, local organizations, professional advisors, new committees as called for in this Plan, and village officials (Hamilton and Earlville).

#### **B. Inform the Public**

The Town Board should ensure that copies of this plan are available at Town and village offices, in local libraries, and on the website. All Plan materials should be available including Part I and Part II and all the maps. The Town should also ensure that a full set of large scale maps are provided for use by the Planning Board, ZBA, and other committees. The mapped data could also be made available on a Town computer for use by the Planning Board, ZBA, and others during meetings.

#### **C. Establish an Implementation Committee**

The Town Council should create and then appoint members to a Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee to move the priority actions recommended in this Plan forward. The committee should be composed of a diverse group of representatives of elected and appointed officials, citizens, and landowners to help guide implementation of the plan. The Town Council should clarify its expectations, and time frames, along with any funding or other assistance it may choose to make available for the committees' implementation efforts.

#### **D. Keep the Comprehensive Plan Current**

The Town Council should update this plan every five years. The Town Board should review this list on an annual basis to determine the status of efforts as well as to identify other actions that should be implemented next.

#### **E. Work on Priority Actions**

# Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan January 2017

The Town Council could use the following chart below to help guide its implementation efforts. The following actions are identified as priorities for the Town Board to begin work on soon after adoption. The Town Council should make sure that a yearly review of the plan and the action matrix is made part of the annual re-organization process for the Town Council. A standard date for work session soon after the yearly Town Council's January re-organization meeting should be established. This work session would be devoted to reviewing the action plan, identifying goals reached, retiring completed ones from the action list, and adding new actions in to be implemented.

## **Implementation Matrix**

The following table provides a summary of the next steps the Town should take to implement this plan. These actions should be completed in 1 to 3 or 3- 5 years after adoption of the plan. Some of the actions are already under way, and should be continued as ongoing actions. There are many other recommendations included in this plan that are mid to long term projects.

# Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan January 2017

The following matrix identifies the priority actions to be non-regulatory implemented by the Town 1 to 5 years after plan adoption:

Time Frame	Topic Area	Strategy to implement	Goal/Strategy Reference	Suggested Action Steps	Implementation Partners	Action Type
1-3 Years	Agriculture	1. Assist landowners who wish to be enrolled in the NYS Certified Agricultural District.	1 (C)	Work with landowners of active farmland Identify those farms that are not in the Ag District program. Facilitate their communication with County Planning to enroll.	Farm Community, Ag Advisory Committee	Program and Policy Development
1-3 Years	Agriculture	2. Adopt a right to farm law.	5 (A)	Research model Right to Farm laws. Draft document. Submit for consideration to Town Board. Adopt as local law.	Ag Advisory Committee, Attorney, Planner	Adopt Local Law
1-3 Years	Agriculture	3. Appoint an agricultural advisory committee.	2 (A)	Identify and appoint farmers and interested citizens. Draft role of committee, communication and funding (if any), and assign tasks.	Town Board	Committee Appointment
1-3 Years	Economic Prosperity	4. Intensify work with PCD, HBA, and Hamilton Initiative to advocate for new business development opportunities in Town.	2 (B)	Ensure that these groups are familiar with and understand this plan. Establish methods for communication to accomplish this strategy.	PCD, HBA, Hamilton Initiative, Village officials	Program and Policy Development

## Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan January 2017

Time Frame	Topic Area	Strategy to implement	Goal/Strategy	Suggested Action Steps	Implementation	Action Type
1-3 Years	Recreation	5. Work with PCD to find grants to support arts and historical activities in the town and villages. Involve Madison County Tourism, Inc. to develop, support and promote cultural activities.	2 (A,D)	Research state and federal grants. Discuss needs with Preservation League of NY and State Historic Preservation Office. Ensure that County Tourism supports this plan	PCD, grant writer, NYS SHPO, NYS OPRHP, County Tourism Department	Program and Policy Development
1-3 Years	Governance	6. Develop a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) as a multi-year schedule that lays out a series of Town projects.	3 (B)	Seek funding for this planning or include in budget. Coordinate with Highway Department.	Highway Department, professional assistance	Program and Policy Development
1-3 Years	Governance and Community	7. Do a study to identify where government services can be shared or consolidated to increase Update efficiencies.	Governance 1 (A) and Community 2 (D)	Reach out to neighboring municipalities. Create a shared service committee to research programmatic and funding opportunities.	Neighboring municipalities, professional assistance, NYS, Villages, Colgate, Madison County	Program and Policy Development
3-5 Years	Agriculture	8. Work with local land trusts to preserve farmland.	1 (B)	Initiate or expand programs that use conservation easements, lease of development rights, farmer/farmland link programs and other programs	Southern Madison Heritage Trust, other land trusts	Program and Policy Development



## Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan January 2017

Time Frame	Topic Area	Strategy to implement	Goal/Strategy	Suggested Action Steps	Implementation	Action Type
3-5 Years	Agriculture	9. Develop a brochure for new residents to help them understand about life in a rural farming area.	4 (B)	Research model brochures from elsewhere. Draft text. Design and print brochure for distribution and placement online.	Ag Advisory Committee	Program and Policy Development
3-5 Years	Environment	10. Provide for added environmental review at the State and local level for town-wide development.	4 (H, M)	Designate certain areas in Town as a Critical Environmental Area under NYS SEQRA	CAC, DEC, Planning Board, Planner, Attorney	Develop Policy, Adopt Local Law for Designation
3-5 Years	Environment	11. Explore feasibility of formation of a local utility or purchasing cooperative to reduce energy costs and promote energy conservation.	2 (F)	Recruit volunteers to serve on a committee to research this. Set time frame for reporting back to Town Board.	CAC, Energy Committee	Feasibility Study

# Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan January 2017

The following matrix identifies the priority regulatory actions to be implemented by the Town 1 to 5 years after plan adoption. To accomplish these strategies, it is recommended that the Town appoint an ad hoc committee for zoning and subdivision updates. In addition, use a planner or attorney to assist in the drafting of language. All updates must be adopted as per local law adoption procedures, which include public hearing and environmental review. The CAC, Planning Board, Attorney, Planner and other committees such as the Energy Committee should all be partners in developing and reviewing updates with this Ad Hoc Committee.

Time Frame	Topic Area	Strategy to implement	Goal/Strategy Reference	Action Type
1-3 Years	Environment	1. Promote energy conservation and allow green energy initiatives in the Town.	2 (B,C,D,E,G)	Program and Policy Development and Regulatory
1-3 Years	Governance	2. Update the Town Zoning law to require a public hearing before the Planning Board for all projects that require site plan review approval.	3 (A)	Zoning Update
1-3 Years	Community	3. Update town subdivision procedures to correspond to New York State Town Law.	1 (H)	Subdivision Update
1-3 Years	Community	4. Remove references to dollar amounts in required zoning fees, and instead set a fee schedule annually.	1 (K)	Update Subdivision regulations & zoning law
1-3 Years	Community	5. Remove the two-lot subdivision exemption	1 (L)	Subdivision regulations & zoning law
1-3 Years	Agriculture	6. Remove the waiver for agricultural subdivisions and make them part of the minor subdivision process.	1 (A, #6)	Update Subdivision regulations
1-3 Years	Agriculture	8. Consider establishing a new density of development appropriate to maintain farming.	3 (A) Environment	Update Zoning law
1-3 Years	Agriculture	9. Remove the five-acre zoning requirement for farms in the Agricultural Rural district.	4 (D)	Update Zoning law

## Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan January 2017

Time Frame	Topic Area	Strategy to implement	Goal/Strategy Reference	Action Type
1-3 Years	Housing and Community	10. Update the zoning and subdivision purpose statements to include protection of community character & agriculture as critical goals of land use regulations.	Housing 4 (F) and Community 1 (I)	Update Zoning law
1-3 Years	Community and Environment	7. Allow conservation subdivisions in the zoning law. Incorporate procedures and standards for conservation subdivision.	1 (A) Community	Update Zoning Law
3-5 Years	Housing	11. Consider adopting the SMHT Y-Growth Plan identifying growth & greenbelt areas. Or, establish overlay districts with different density or other development standards.	3 (A)	Zoning Update
3-5 Years	Housing	23. Update Town zoning to allow alternative housing types including shared housing (Home Sharing), ECHO housing, and granny flats.	1 (A)	Update Zoning Law
3-5 Years	Housing	24. Create an option in zoning that offers a density bonus to applicants for a subdivision or other zoning permit as an incentive to providing desired amenities for the community.	2 (A)	Update Zoning Law
3-5 Years	Community	12. Update purpose statements to ensure agriculture, rural character, and other values expressed in this plan form a foundation for regulations.	1 (I)	Update Subdivision regulations
3-5 Years	Community	13. Include provisions to more easily accommodate boundary line adjustments.	1 (J)	Update Subdivision regulations
3-5 Years	Community	14. Amend standards for the Route 12B Business District to limit strip style development.	1 (B)	Update Zoning Law
3-5 Years	Economic	15. Ensure that value-added forestry, agritourism, niche agriculture, local food institutions and ag related businesses are allowed.	3 (A)	Update Zoning Law
3-5 Years	Environment	16. Incorporate new methods to reduce stormwater runoff when development occurs.	1 (D)	Update Zoning Law

## Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan January 2017

Time Frame	Topic Area	Strategy to implement	Goal/Strategy Reference	Action Type
3-5 Years	Environment	17. Control development on lands having excessive slopes > 25% or 30% to protect these sensitive areas.	1 (E)	Update Zoning Law
3-5 Years	Environment	18. Update zoning to include development standards for large-scale solar facilities.	3 (C)	Update Zoning Law
3-5 Years	Agriculture	19. Ensure zoning allows u-pick, CSA, farm stands, farm retail, breweries, distilleries, food hubs and other direct sales of agricultural products.	1 (D)	Update Zoning Law
3-5 Years	Agriculture	20. Small wind and solar facilities used on farms located in a NYS Certified Agricultural District should be considered a farm structure allowed as a permitted use or requiring only a modified site plan review.	5 (B)	Update Zoning Law
3-5 Years	Agriculture	21. Update zoning to allow multiple farm business uses on a farmed parcel, such as growing, processing and selling farm produce.	5 (C)	Update Zoning Law
3-5 Years	Agriculture	22. Review zoning to ensure that local definition and regulations for Concentrated Animal Feed Operations (CAFO) are consistent, with new NYS CAFO rules.	5 (E)	Update Zoning Law
3-5 Years	Governance	23. Complete the 5-year review of the Comprehensive Plan	4 (A)	Plan Update

# Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan January 2017

The following matrix identifies the priority regulatory actions to be implemented on an ongoing basis by the Town:

Ongoing Work	Topic Area	Strategy to implement	Goal/Strategy Reference	Suggested Action Steps	Implementation Partners	Action Type
Ongoing Work	Community	1. Continue communication and collaboration with Colgate and expand the Town's role with the Partnership for Community Development.	2 (A through C)	Continue to liaison with Colgate. Continue to liaison with PCD. Outline expectations for reporting back and communication.	Colgate, PCD, Other groups and organizations	Program and Policy Development
Ongoing Work	Community	2. Continue support for SOMAC (ambulance service).	3 (A)	Continue financial support Support volunteer programs	SOMAC volunteers	Program and Policy Development
Ongoing Work	Community	3. Work with local fire departments, the County, Colgate, and villages to coordinate emergency disaster services, especially those related to agriculture.	3 (C)	Identify what emergency disaster plans exist. Review for completeness. Identify any gaps. Coordinate any necessary training. Set up communication system so all parties are coordinated.	Fire Departments, Madison County, Village officials, County Emergency Management Office	Program and Policy Development
Ongoing Work	Economic Prosperity	4. Explore broadband expansion. NY State is currently examining this issue.	1 (B)	Identify locations where broadband and cell service is weak or absent - target work to provide services in those areas. Research NYS efforts to extend broadband in rural areas.	Engineer and other professional	Feasibility Study
Ongoing Work	Environment	5. Ensure that the Town advocates for the vision, goals & long-term direction of this Plan for industrial/industrial energy development.	4 (B)	Keep the plan an active part of Town government process and reference with yearly review	Town Board	Program and Policy Development
1-3 Years	Environment	6. Update the local floodplain law so it is consistent with FEMA and DEC standards.	1 (F)	Contact NYS DEC to get updated model floodplain law for Hamilton. Adopt as	DEC, Attorney	Regulatory Update

## Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan January 2017

Ongoing Work	Topic Area	Strategy to implement	Goal/Strategy Reference	Suggested Action Steps	Implementation Partners	Action Type
				per local law procedures.		
Ongoing Work	Environment	7. Ensure that the Town has adequate time to consider effects, hear community concerns, & take actions on projects that may cause significant environmental and community impacts.	4 (A)	Use tools such as moratoria to gain time for additional review, educational efforts, and for community dialogue	Town Board	Program and Policy Development
Ongoing Work	Environment	8. Promote energy conservation.	2 (A 2)	Educate the community on energy efficiency & energy conservation programs. Work with Madison County.	CAC, Madison County, Colgate, Energy Committee	Program and Policy Development
Ongoing Work	Environment	9. Make all town-owned buildings energy efficient as funds permit.	2 (A 1)	Work with NYSEDA to complete an energy audit on town buildings. Complete a budget for necessary improvements. Include these in capital improvement planning.	Town Board, Highway Department, CAC, Energy Committee	Capital Improvement
Ongoing Work	Housing	10. Work with PCD to seek grants to promote affordable housing for low and moderate income families.	2 (D)	Work with NYS Housing & County agencies to understand existing programs. Identify needs and gaps. Develop program ideas and seek grant writer to assist with funding.	PCD, grant writer	Program and Policy Development

## Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan January 2017

Ongoing Work	Topic Area	Strategy to implement	Goal/Strategy Reference	Suggested Action Steps	Implementation Partners	Action Type
Ongoing Work	Recreation	11. Appoint a Recreation Committee to develop a comprehensive recreation plan for the Town.	1 (A)	PCD currently undertaking this work. Or, appoint volunteers to serve on this committee. Seek funding for this planning effort.	PCD, or Ad Hoc Recreation Committee, Planning Professional	Program and Policy Development
Ongoing Work	Governance	12. Enhance use of the Town website in innovative ways to keep the community apprised of town business and activities.	4 (B1)	Link and coordinate business and community groups' information to maximize effectiveness of website. Work with web master to accomplish these improvements.	Web Master, business and community groups	Program and Policy Development
Ongoing Work	Governance	13. On a yearly basis, identify implementation priorities and assign certain projects to work on from this plan. Review and or update this Plan every five years.	4 (A)	Review this plan at the Town Board annual reorganization meeting, identify goals for the year and work on those actions, enlisting community help as needed.	This is a Town Board action	Program and Policy Development



# Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan January 2017

## Maps

The following maps are included:












- Aerial Photographs
- Roads and Property Boundaries
- Property Classes (Land Uses)
- Topography
- Steep Slopes
- Watersheds
- Bedrock and Surficial Geology
- Farmland Soils
- Agricultural Properties
- Agricultural Districts
- State Lands, Trails and Protected Lands
- Current Zoning Districts
- Wetlands and Flood Hazards
- Principal Aquifers
- Recreation Centers and Populated Areas
- Scenic Viewsheds (from Southern Madison Heritage Trust)
- Existing Gas Leases
- Archaeologically Sensitive Locations
- Rare Plants and Animal Habitats and Significant Natural Communities
- (Combined) Sensitive Environmental Areas
- Potential Commercial Expansion Locations



# Town of Hamilton

## Madison County, NY

### Roads and Property Boundaries

-  Town Boundary
-  Surrounding Town Boundaries
-  Village Boundaries
-  Property Boundaries
- Roads**
-  State Route
-  County Road
-  Town Road, City/Village Street
-  Private Road
-  Railroad
-  Water
-  Streams

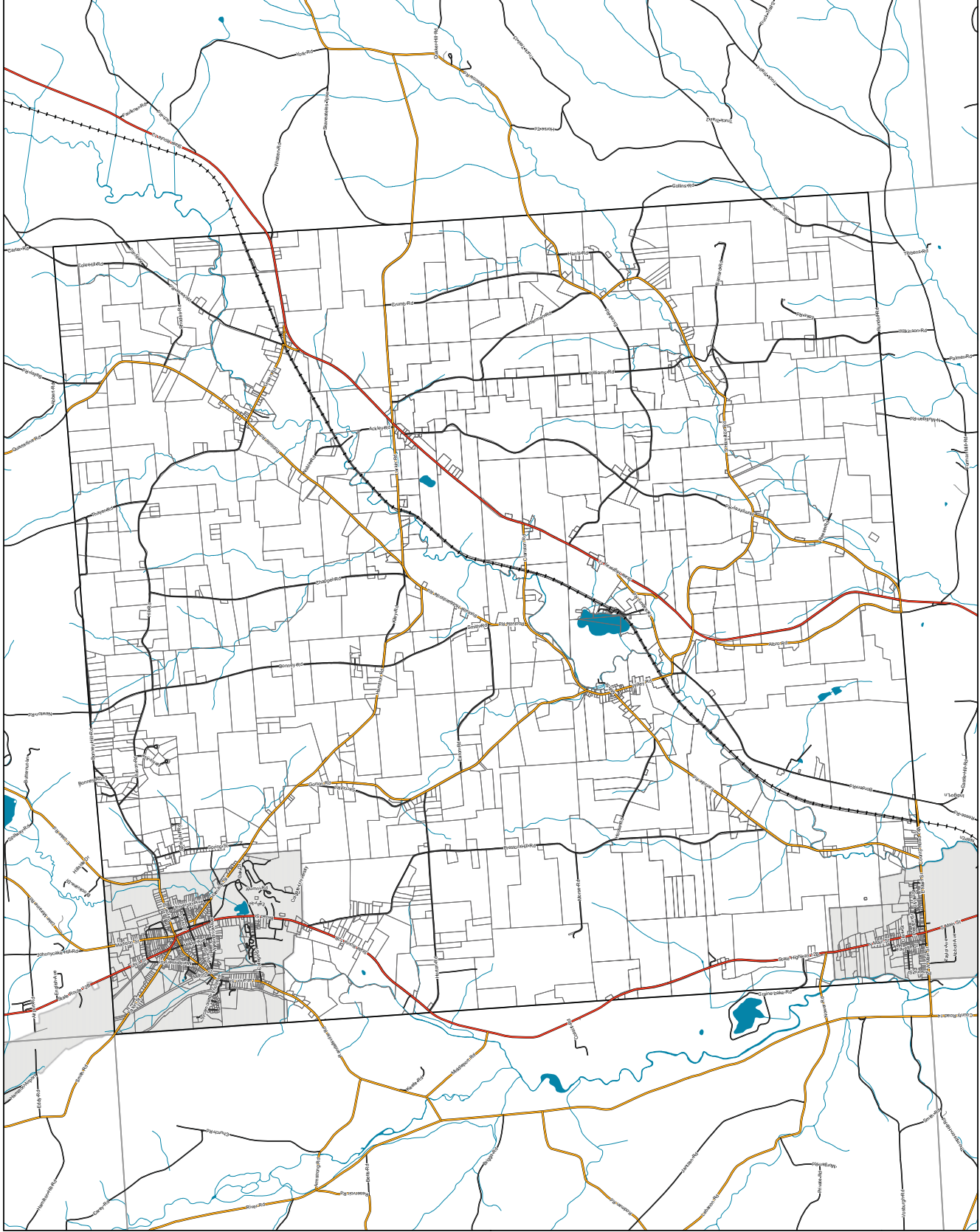


Map Date:  
10-17-2013



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# Town of Hamilton

## Madison County, NY

### Topography

-  Town Boundary
-  Surrounding Town Boundaries
-  Village Boundaries
-  Property Boundaries

### Roads

-  State Route
-  County Road
-  Town Road, City/Village Street
-  Private Road
-  Railroad

-  Water
-  Streams

Elevation  
 - High : 1,933'  
 - Low : 1,020'

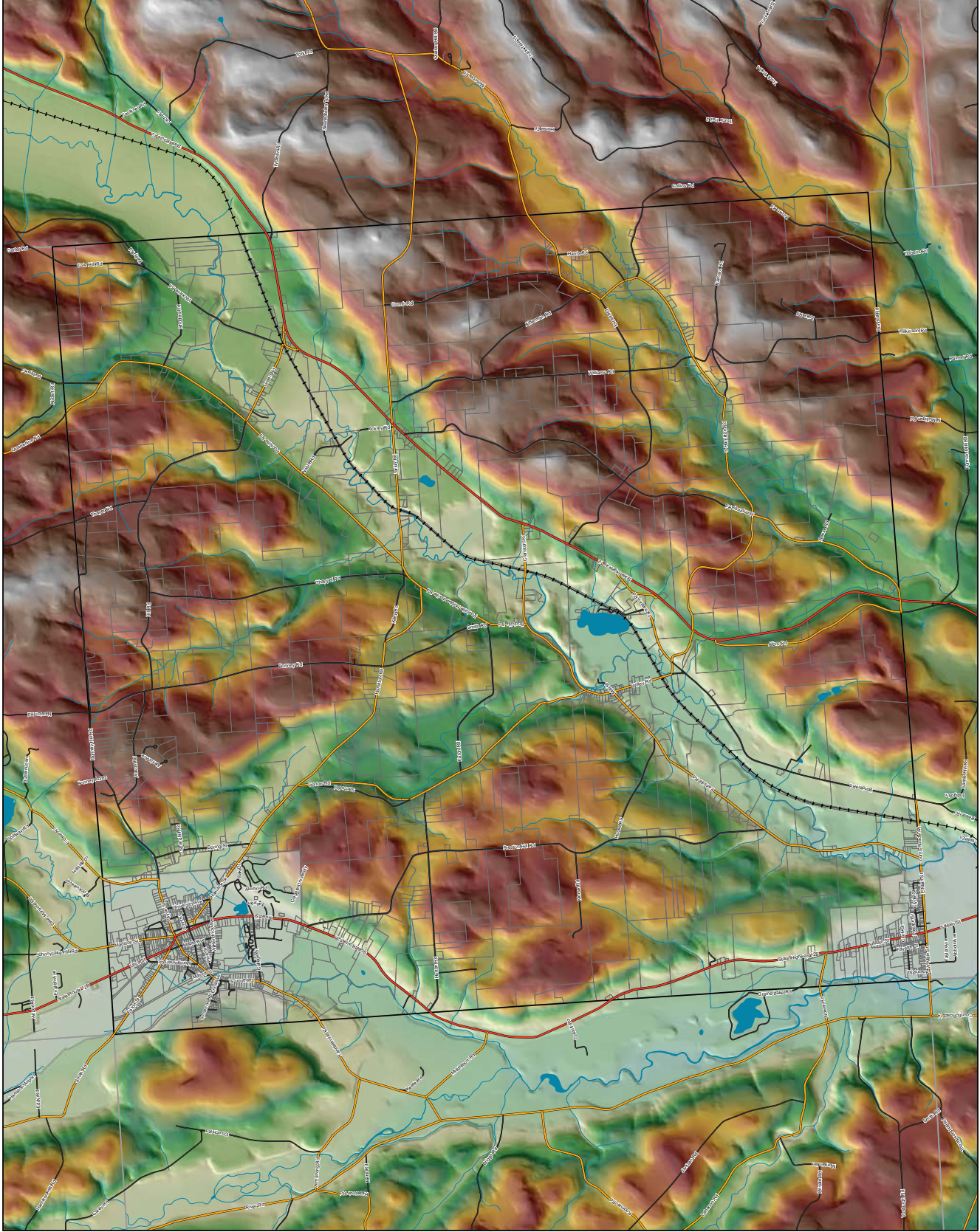


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# Town of Hamilton

## Madison County, NY

### Steep Slopes

- Town Boundary
- Surrounding Town Boundaries
- Village Boundaries
- Property Boundaries

### Roads

- State Route
- County Road
- Town Road, City/Village Street
- Private Road
- Railroad

- Water
- Streams

### Slope

- 15 - 25%
- 25 - 45%
- 45% or steeper

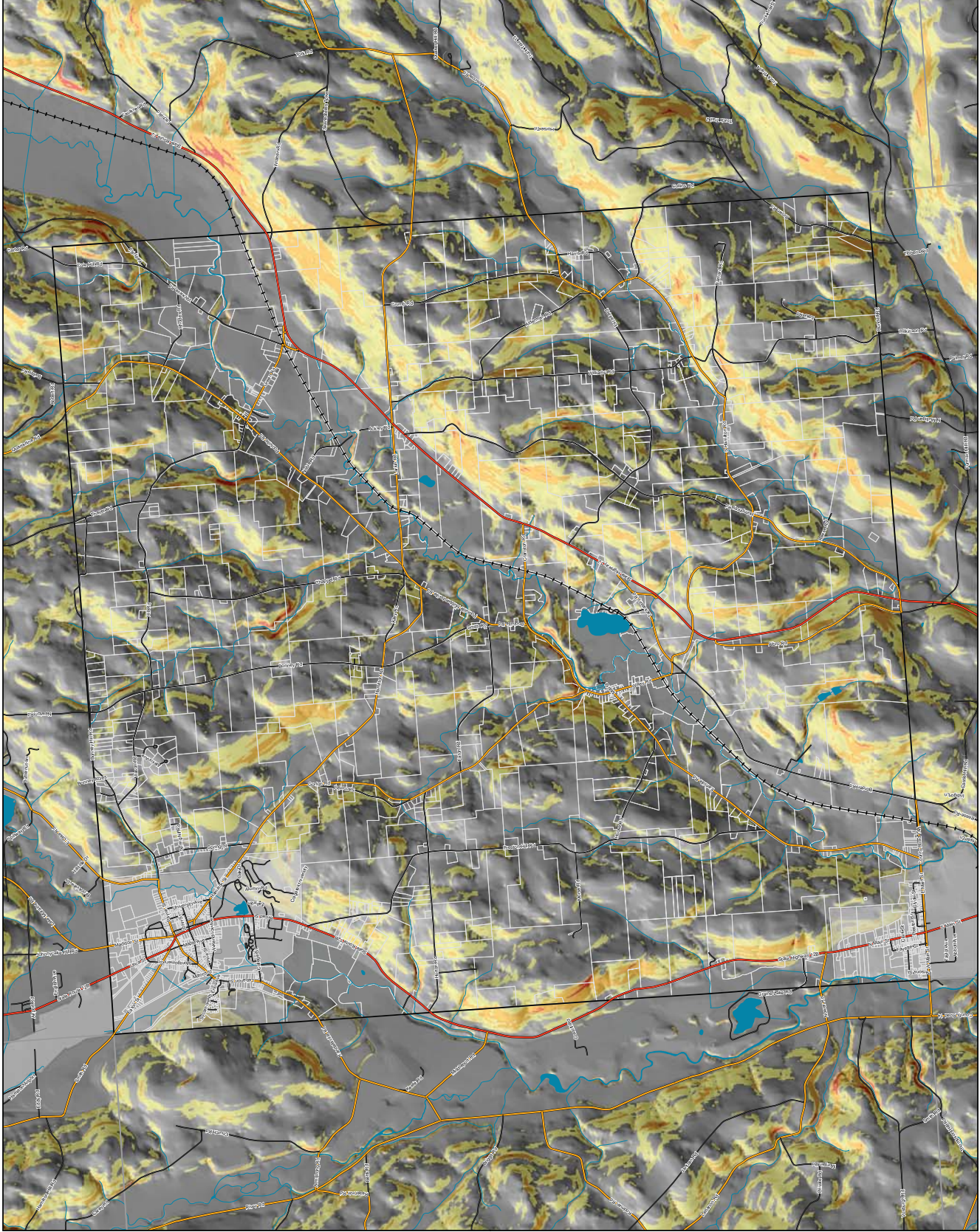


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# Town of Hamilton

## Madison County, NY

### Watersheds

- Town Boundary
- Surrounding Town Boundaries
- Village Boundaries
- Property Boundaries

### Roads

- State Route
- County Road
- Town Road, City/Village Street
- Private Road
- Railroad

### Water

- Water
- Streams

### Watersheds

- Eaton Brook-Chenango River
- Handsome Brook
- Lower Sangerfield River
- Middle Sangerfield River
- Payne Brook
- Pleasant Brook
- South Lebanon Brook-Cold Spring Brook
- Stone Mill Brook-Chenango River
- Upper Sangerfield River

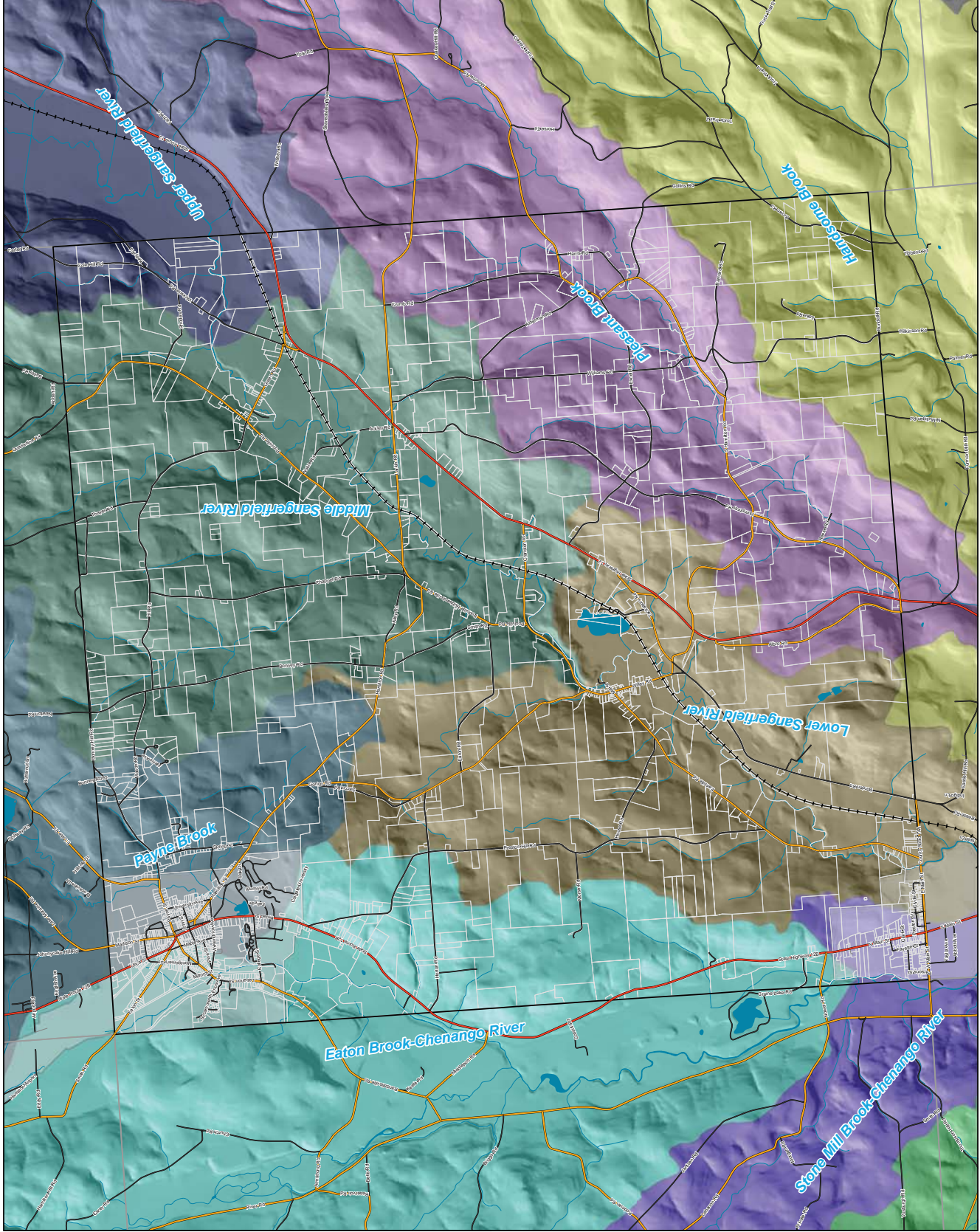


Map Date:  
10-17-2013



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# Town of Hamilton Madison County, NY

## Bedrock Geology

- Town Boundary
- Surrounding Town Boundaries
- Village Boundaries
- Property Boundaries

### Roads

- State Route
- County Road
- Town Road, City/Village Street
- Private Road
- Railroad

### Water

- Water
- Streams

## Bedrock Geology

- Shale and Limestone
- Dhld - Ludlowville Formation
- Dhsk - Skaneateles Formation
- Black Shale and Limestone
- Dhmr - Marcellus Formation
- Shale and Sandstone
- Dhmo - Moscow Formation
- Sandstone and Limestone
- Do - Oriskany Sandstone

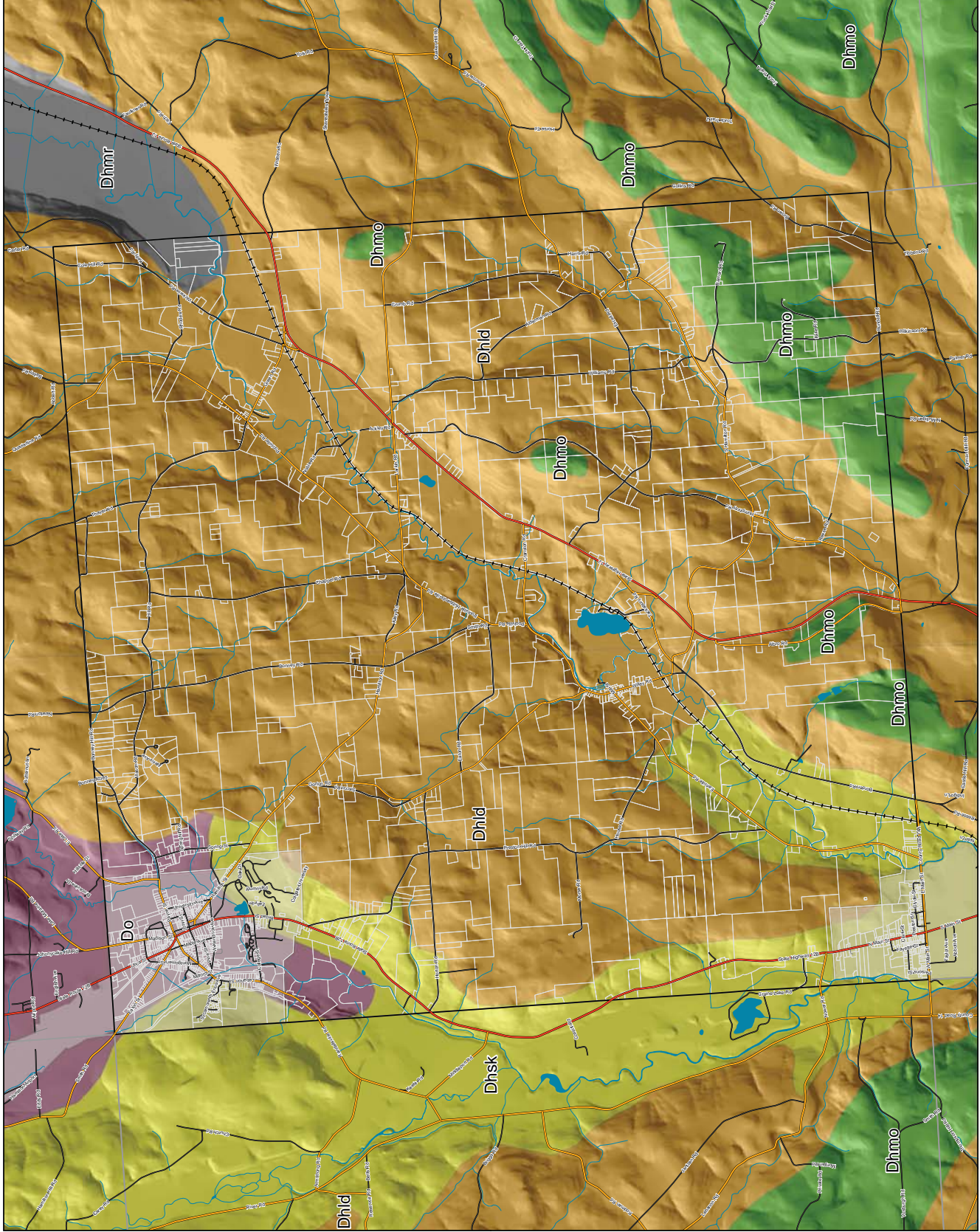


Map Date:  
10-17-2013



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# Town of Hamilton Madison County, NY

## Surficial Geology

- Town Boundary
- Surrounding Town Boundaries
- Village Boundaries
- Property Boundaries

### Roads

- State Route
- County Road
- Town Road, City/Village Street
- Private Road
- Railroad

### Water

- Water
- Streams

### Surficial Geology

- Till: Deposition beneath the ice
- t - Till Variable texture (boulders to silt)
- Glacioluvial: Stream Deposition near ice
- k - Kame deposits
- og - Outwash sand and gravel
- Moraine: Sedimentation at Ice Margin
- km - Kame moraine
- Fluvial: Stream Deposition
- al - Recent alluvium
- Bedrock
- r - Bedrock
- Miscellaneous
- pm - Swamp deposits

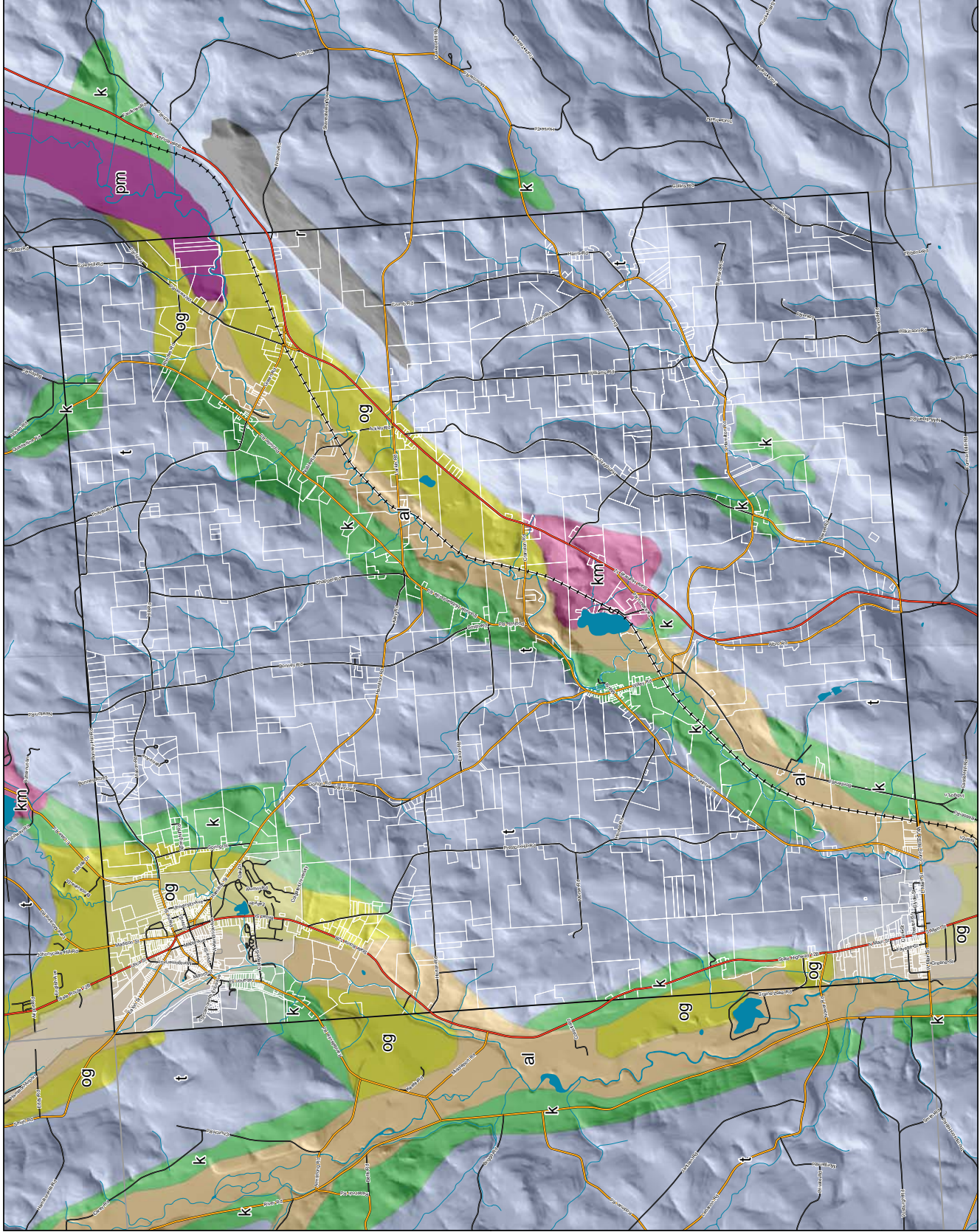


Map Date:  
10-17-2013



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# Town of Hamilton

## Madison County, NY

### Farmland Soils

- Town Boundary
- Surrounding Town Boundaries
- Village Boundaries
- Property Boundaries
- Roads**
  - State Route
  - County Road
  - Town Road, City/Village Street
  - Private Road
  - Railroad
- Water
- Streams
- Farmland Soils**
  - Prime Farmland
  - Prime Farmland if drained
  - Farmland of Statewide Importance

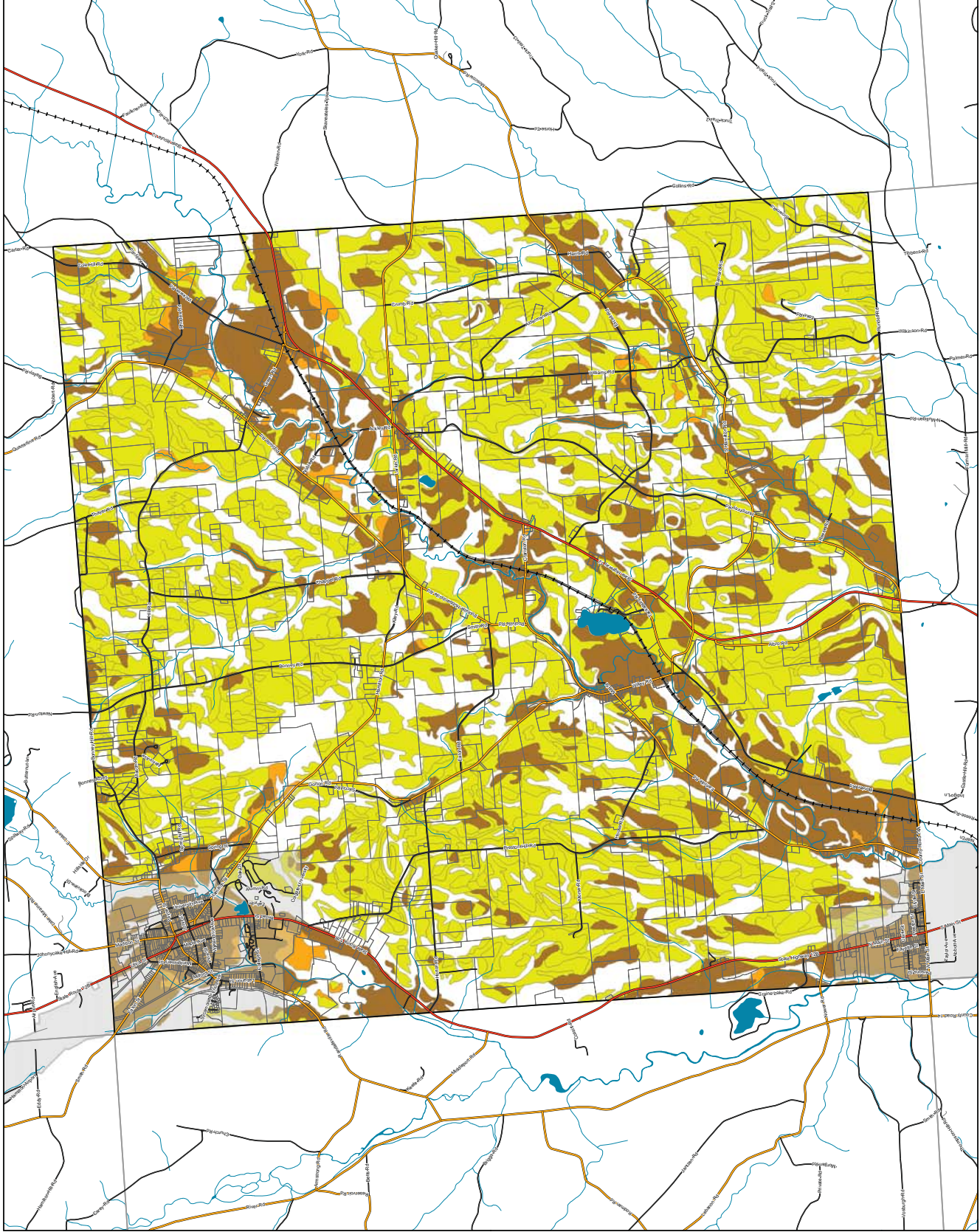


Map Date:  
10-17-2013



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# Town of Hamilton

## Madison County, NY

### Wetlands and Flood Hazards

- Town Boundary
- Surrounding Town Boundaries
- Village Boundaries
- Property Boundaries
- Roads**
  - State Route
  - County Road
  - Town Road, City/Village Street
  - Private Road
  - Railroad
- Water
- Streams
- DEC Regulated Wetlands
- NWI Identified Wetlands
- 100 Year Flood Hazard

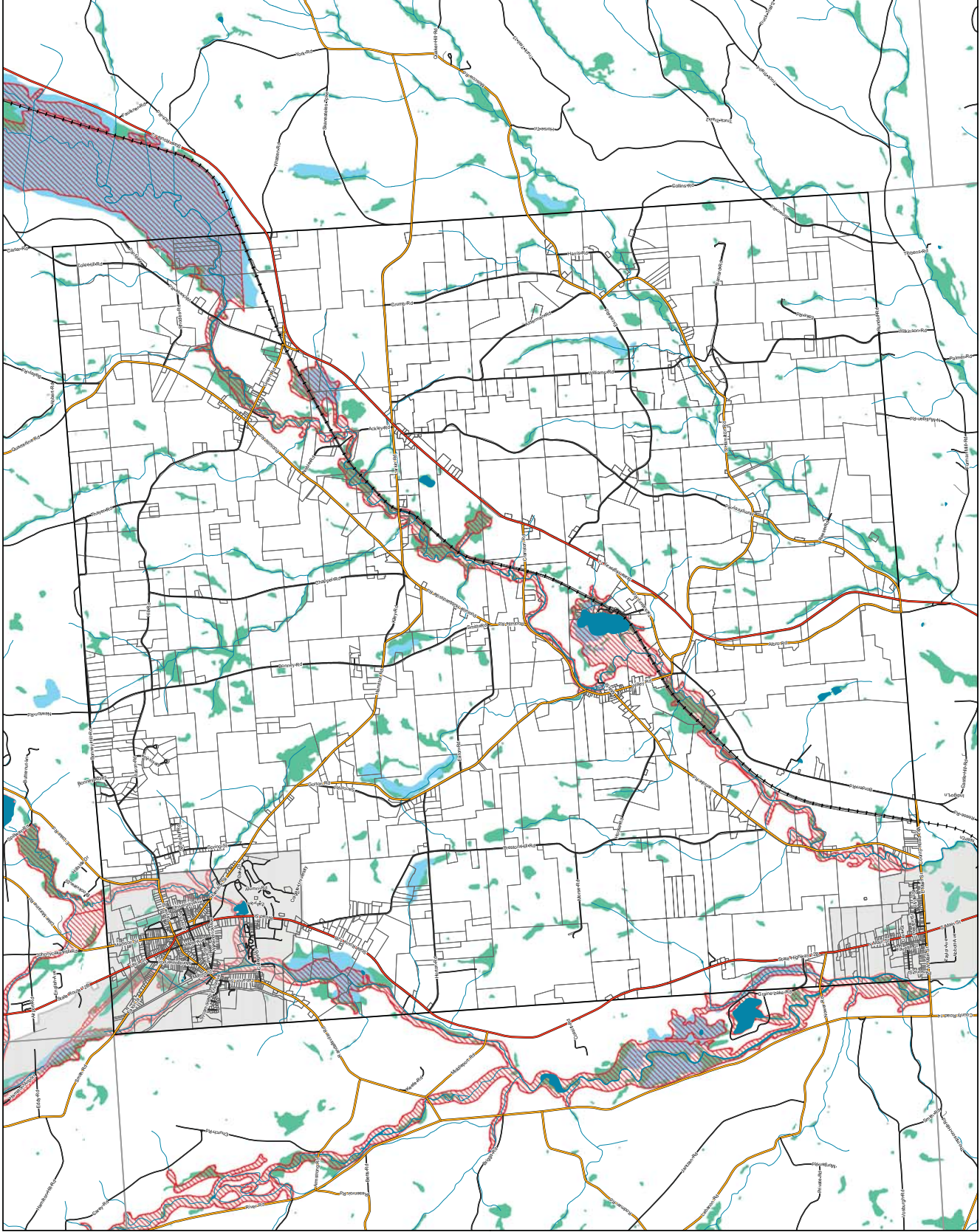


Map Date:  
10-17-2013



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


















# Town of Hamilton

## Madison County, NY

### Property Class

-  Town Boundary
-  Surrounding Town Boundaries
-  Village Boundaries
- Roads**
-  State Route
-  County Road
-  Town Road, City/Village Street
-  Private Road
-  Railroad
-  Water
-  Streams
- Property Class**
-  Agricultural
-  Residential
-  Commercial
-  Industrial
-  Community Services
-  Public Services
-  Recreation and Entertainment
-  Wild, Forested, Conservation Lands and Public Parks
-  Vacant Land

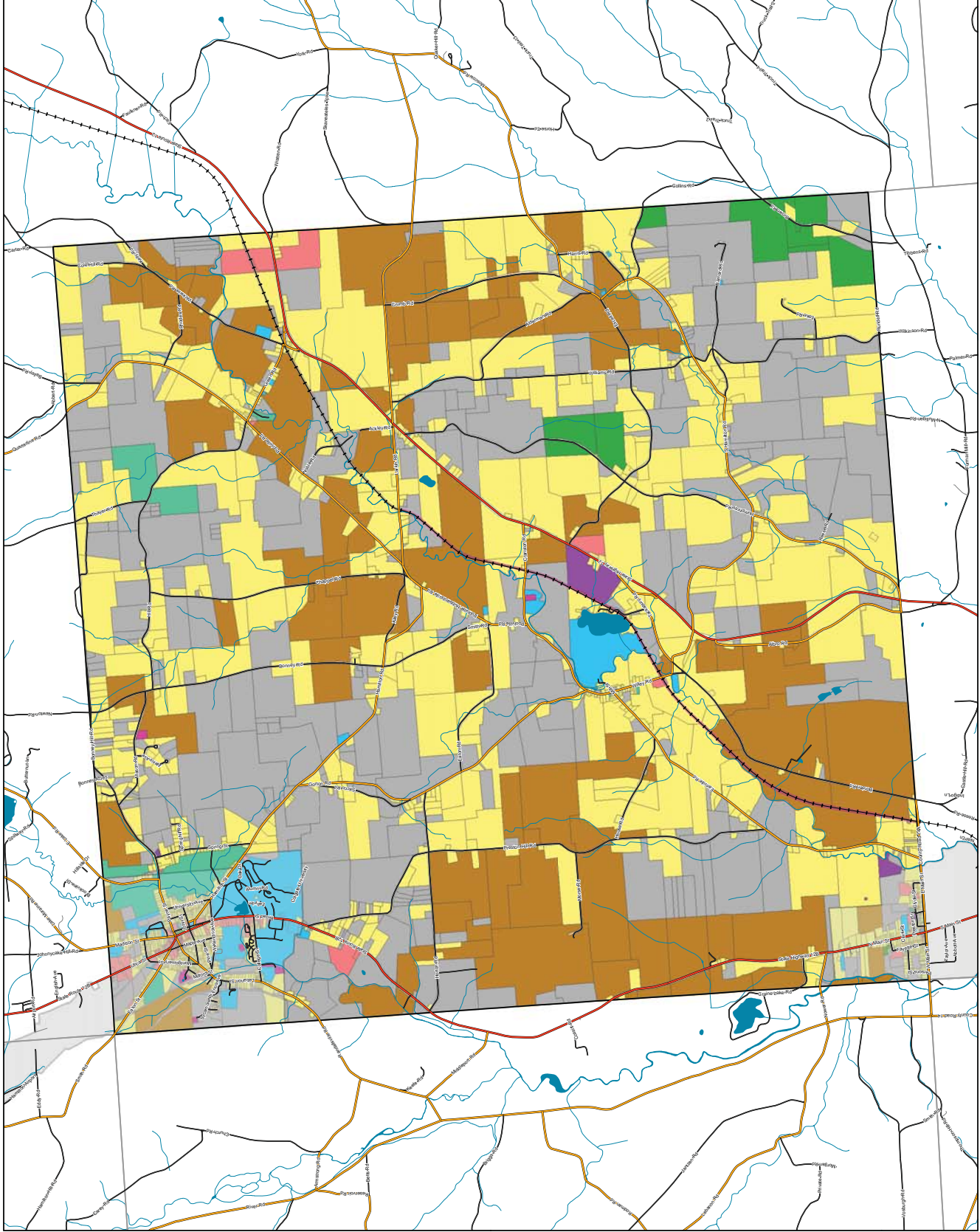


Map Date:  
10-17-2013



**Community Planning &  
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







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# Town of Hamilton

## Madison County, NY

### Property Class

-  Town Boundary
-  Surrounding Town Boundaries
-  Village Boundaries
- Roads**
  -  State Route
  -  County Road
  -  Town Road, City/Village Street
  -  Private Road
- Property Boundaries**
  -  Property Boundaries
  -  Railroad
  -  Water
  -  Streams
- Agricultural Parcels**
  -  Agricultural Property Class
  -  Residential with Ag Use
  -  Vacant Land (ID'd via Aerial Photo)
  -  Wild, Forested, Conservation, or Public Parks (ID'd via Aerial Photo)
  -  (ID'd via Aerial Photo)

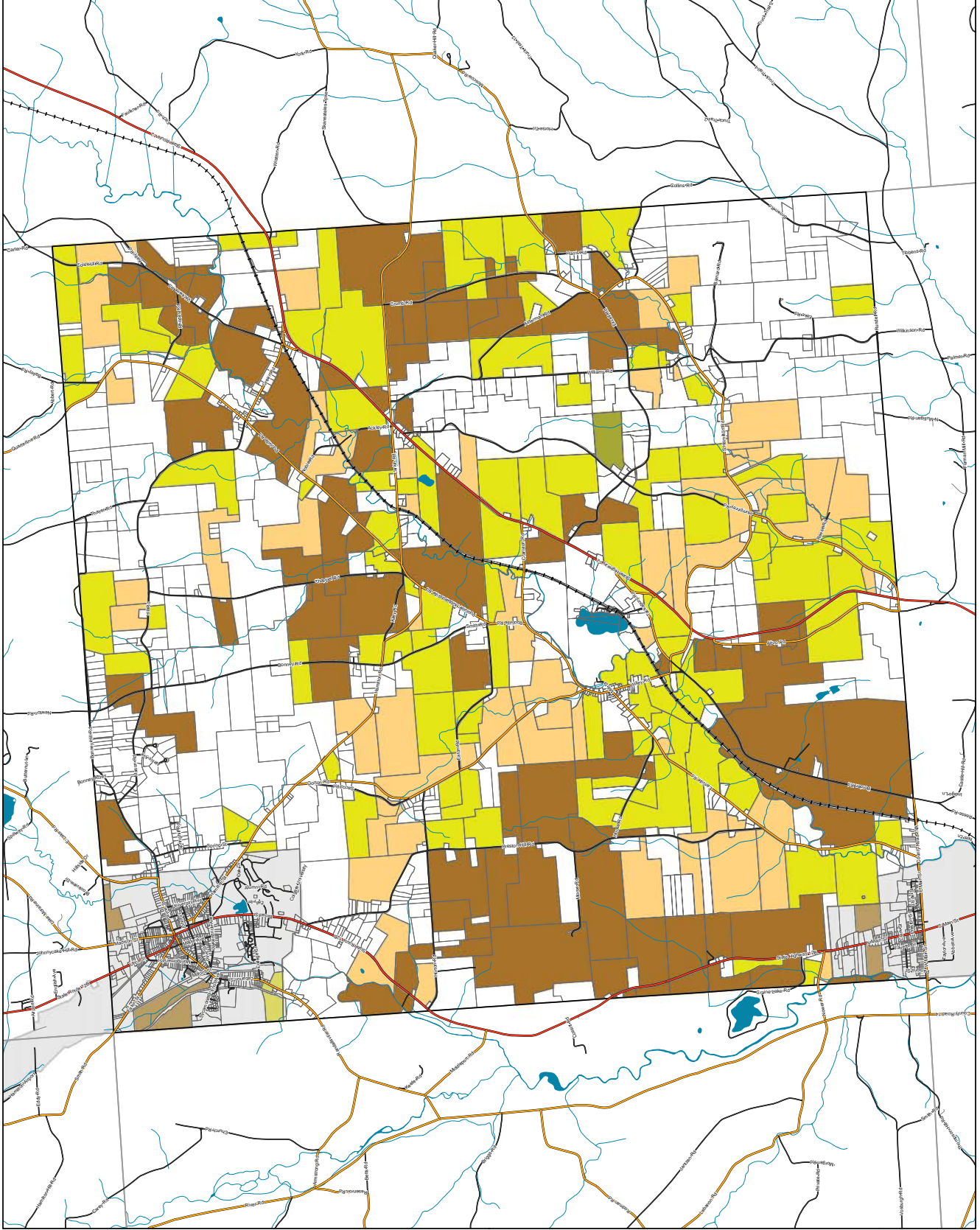


Map Date:  
10-17-2013



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# Town of Hamilton

## Madison County, NY

### Agricultural Districts

- Town Boundary
- Surrounding Town Boundaries
- Village Boundaries
- Roads**
  - State Route
  - County Road
  - Town Road, City/Village Street
  - Private Road
- Property Boundaries**
  - Property Boundaries
  - Railroad
- Water
- Streams
- Agricultural Parcels**
  - Agricultural Class
  - Non Ag-Class
  - Agricultural Districts

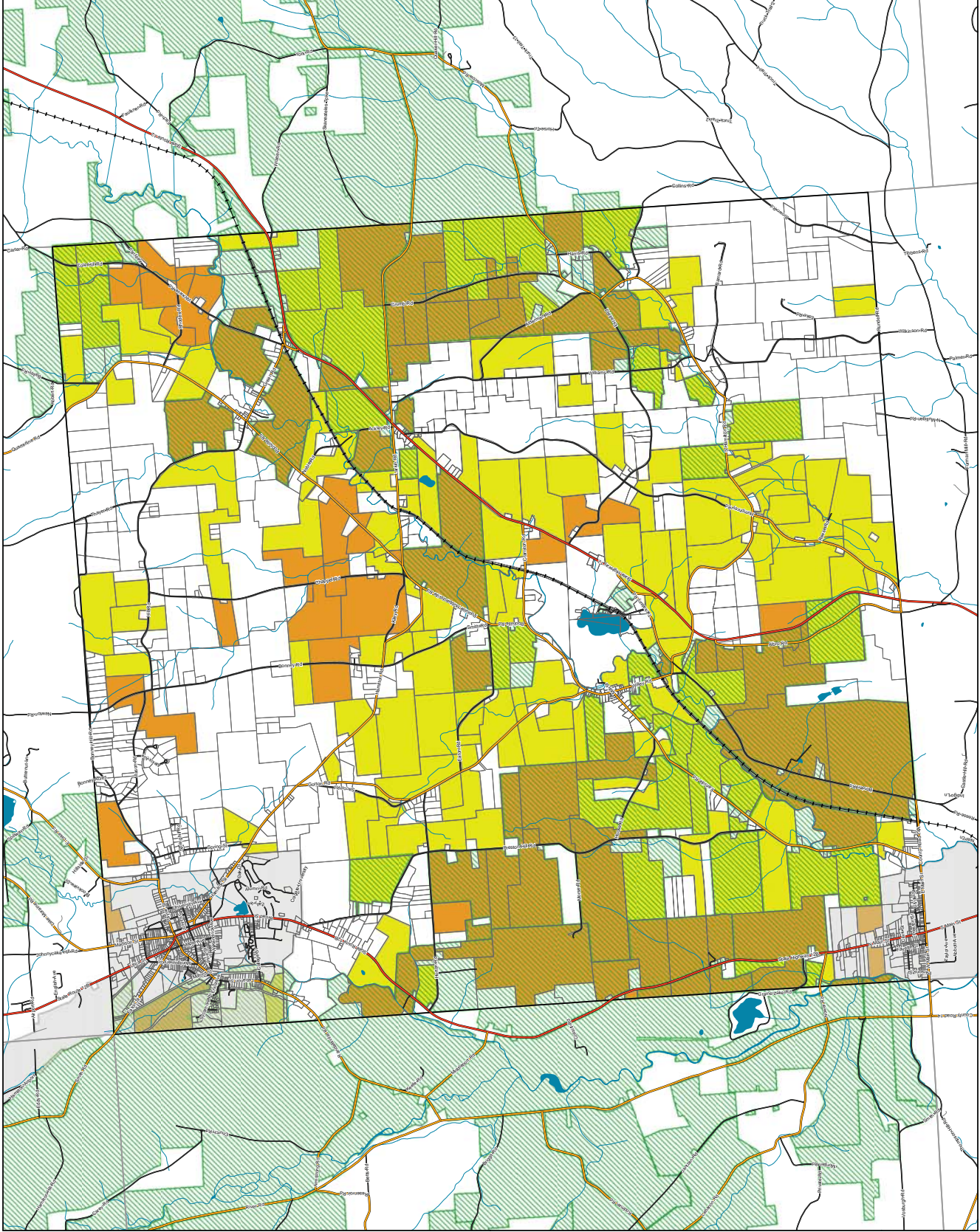


Map Date:  
10-17-2013



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# Town of Hamilton

## Madison County, NY

State Land, Historic Resources,  
Conservation Easement,  
and Snowmobile Trails

- Town Boundary
- Surrounding Town Boundaries
- Property Boundaries
- Roads
  - State Route
  - County Road
  - Town Road, City/Village Street
  - Private Road
  - Railroad
- Water
  - Streams
- DEC State Forest Lands
- National Register of Historic Places
- Conservation Easement
- Snowmobile Trails

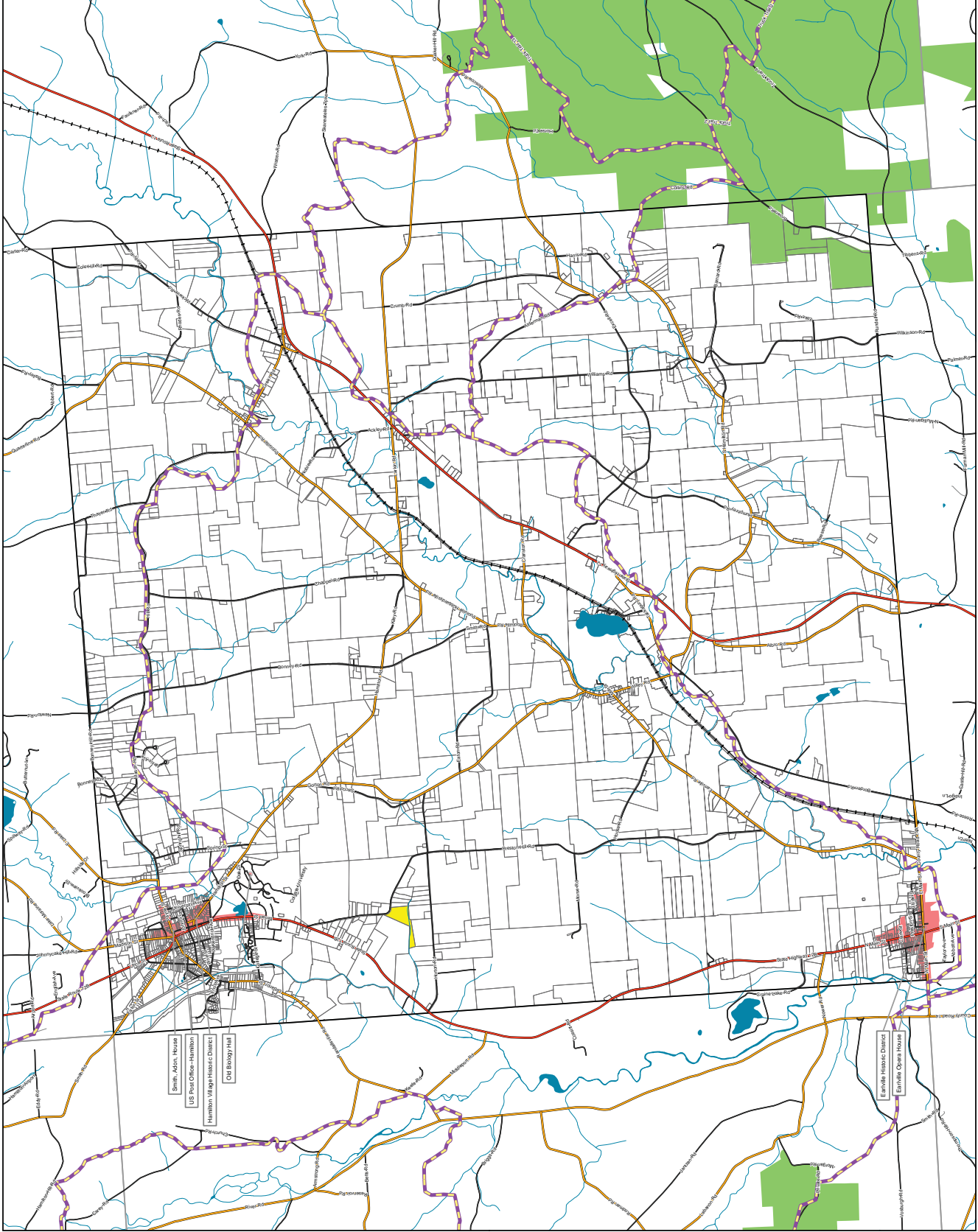


Map Date:  
1-26-2016



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# Town of Hamilton

## Madison County, NY

### Zoning Districts

- Town Boundary
- Surrounding Town Boundaries
- Village Boundaries
- Property Boundaries

### Roads

- State Route
- County Road
- Town Road, City/Village Street
- Private Road
- Railroad
- Water
- Streams

### Zoning Districts

- HD - Hamlet District
- RD - Residential District
- ARD - Agricultural-Residential District
- C - Commercial District

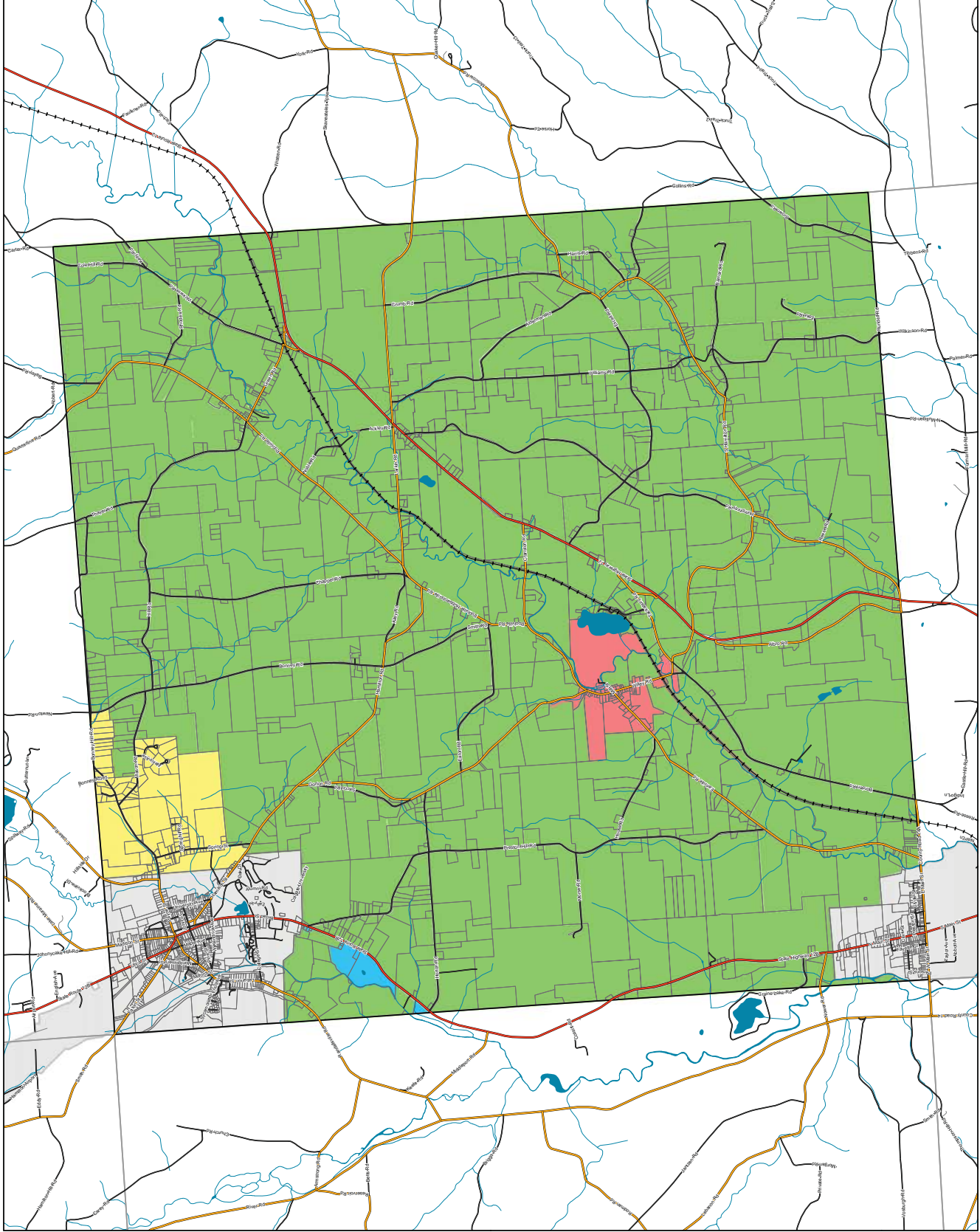


Map Date:  
10-17-2013



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















# Town of Hamilton

## Madison County, NY

### Archeological Sensitive Areas

-  Town Boundary
-  Surrounding Town Boundaries
-  Village Boundaries
-  Property Boundaries
- Roads**
  -  State Route
  -  County Road
  -  Town Road, City/Village Street
  -  Private Road
  -  Railroad
  -  Water
  -  Streams
-  Archeological Sensitive Areas

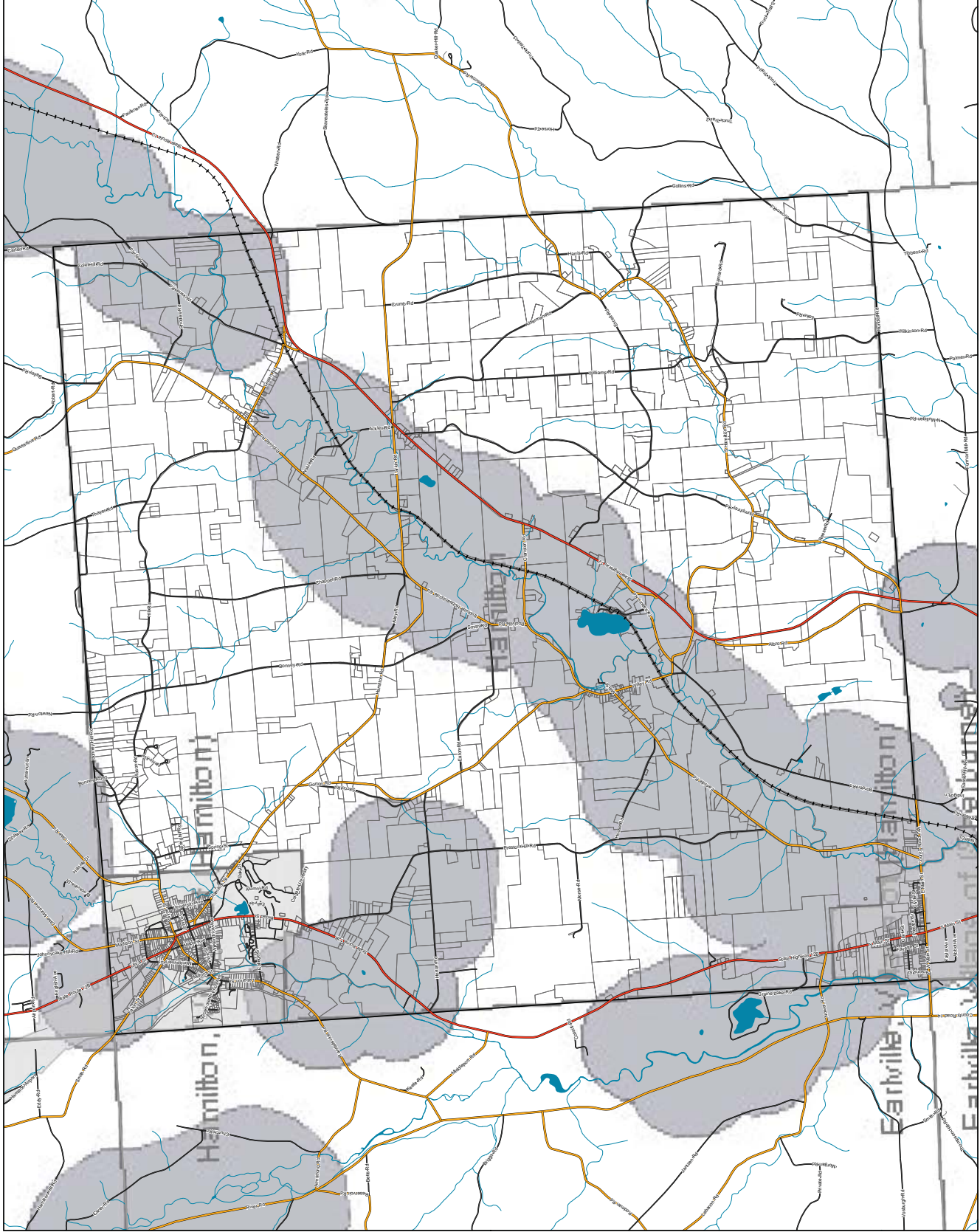


Map Date:  
10-17-2013
















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# Town of Hamilton Madison County, NY

## Rare Plants and Animals, and Significant Natural Communities

-  Town Boundary
-  Surrounding Town Boundaries
-  Village Boundaries
-  Property Boundaries
- Roads**
  -  State Route
  -  County Road
  -  Town Road, City/Village Street
  -  Private Road
  -  Railroad
  -  Water
  -  Streams
  -  Rare Plants and Animals
  -  Significant Natural Communities

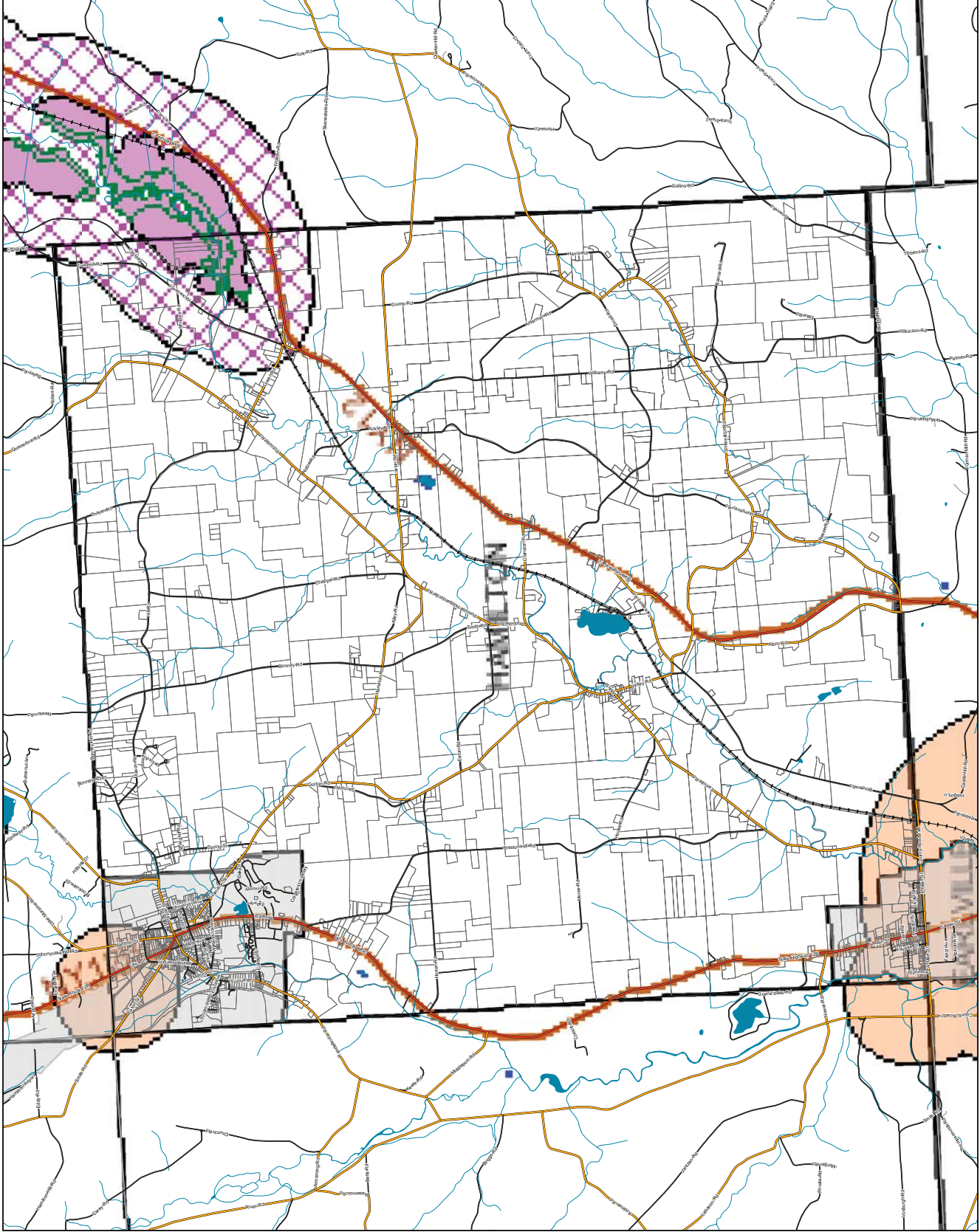


Map Date:  
10-17-2013



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





# Town of Hamilton

## Madison County, NY

### Possible Commercial Expansion

-  Town Boundary
-  Surrounding Town Boundaries
-  Village Boundaries
- Roads**
-  State Route
-  County Road
-  Town Road, City/Village Street
-  Private Road
-  Railroad
-  Water
-  Streams
- Potential Commercial Expansion**
-  (Main Roads Option)
-  Potential Commercial Expansion (Main Roads Option)

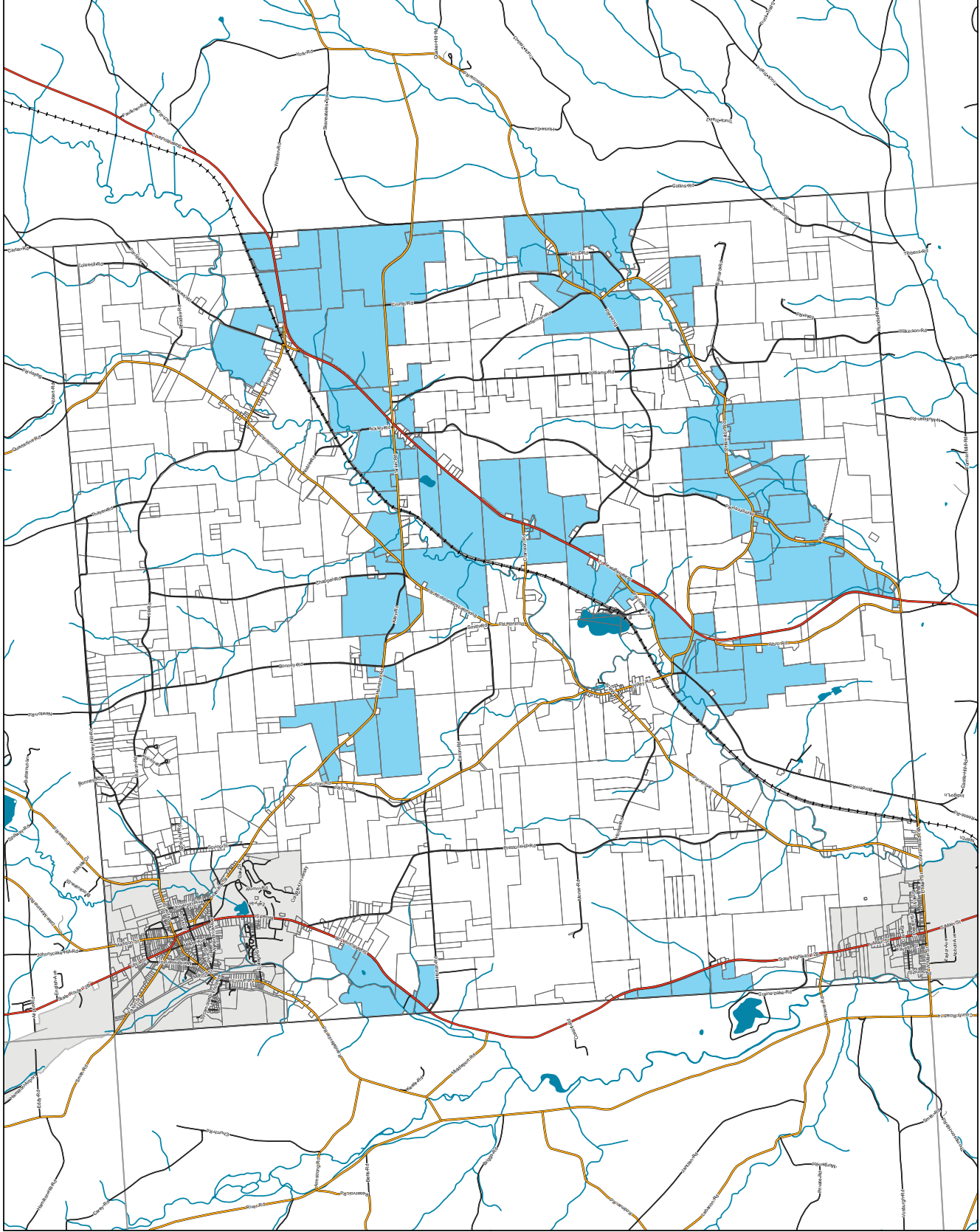


Map Date:  
8-8-2014



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# Town of Hamilton

## Madison County, NY

### Combined Environmental Sensitivities

-  Town Boundary
-  Surrounding Town Boundaries
-  Village Boundaries
- Roads**
  -  State Route
  -  County Road
  -  Town Road, City/Village Street
  -  Private Road
  -  Railroad
-  Water
-  All Environmental Constraints  
(slope over 15%, wetlands,  
100 year flood hazard,  
water and streams)

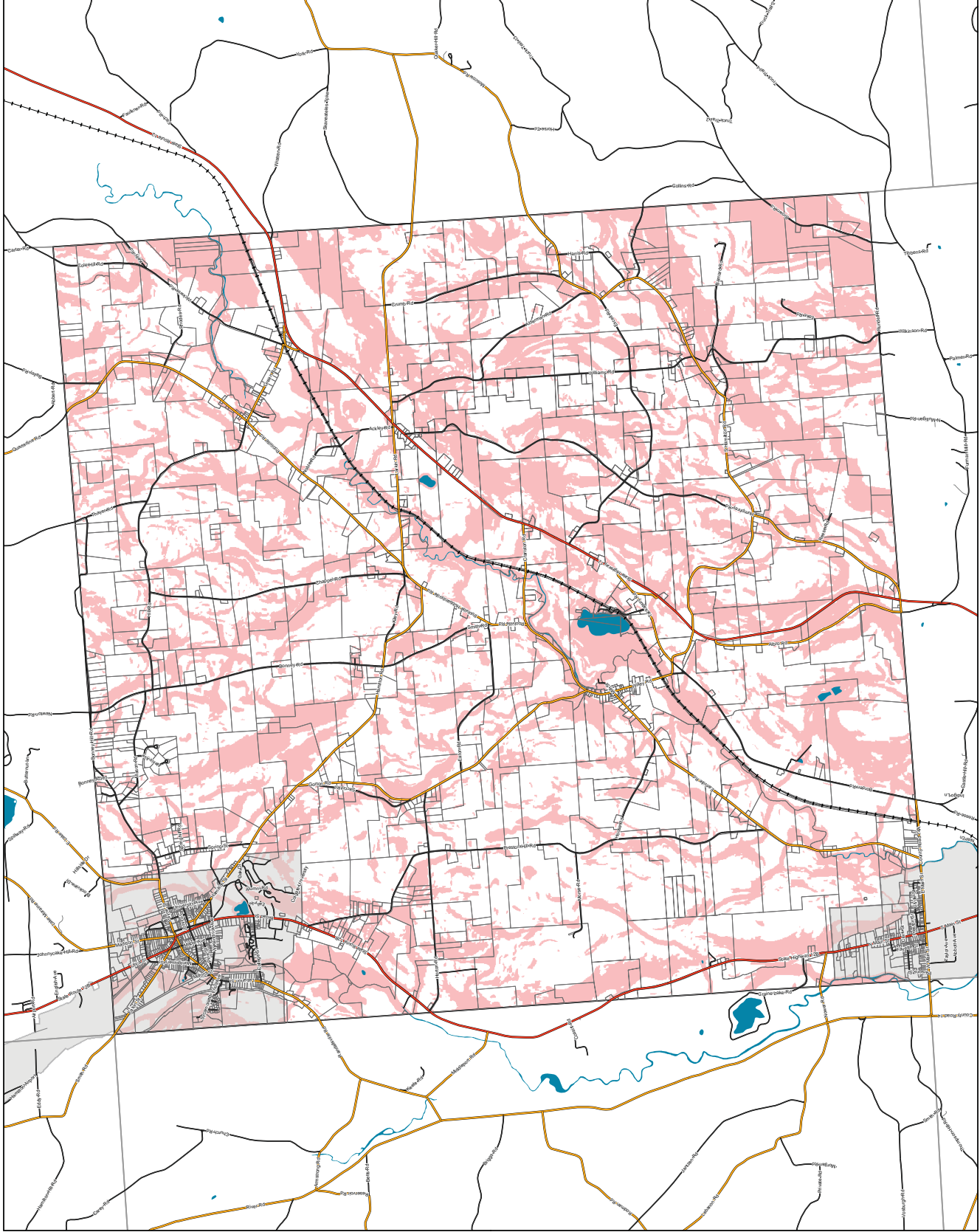


Map Date:  
8-8-2014



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














# Town of Hamilton

## Madison County, NY

### Aerial Photos

-  Town Boundary
  -  Surrounding Town Boundaries
  -  Village Boundaries
  -  Property Boundaries
- Roads**
-  State Route
  -  County Road
  -  Town Road, City/Village Street
  -  Private Road
  -  Railroad
  -  Water
  -  Streams



Map Date:  
10-17-2013



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# Town of Hamilton

## Madison County, NY

### High Volume Hydro Fracturing Analysis

### Potential Well Sites and Principal Aquifers (Analysis performed for the Utica Formation only)

- Town Boundary
- Surrounding Town Boundaries
- Village Boundaries

- #### Roads
- State Route
  - County Road
  - Town Road, City/Village Street
  - Private Road

- Railroad
- Water
- Streams

Possible Well Site - based on 640 acre units  
(There are 33 possible locations shown on this map)

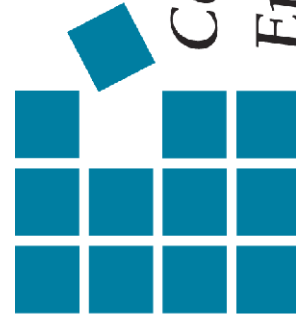
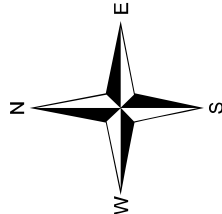
Possible Well Pad  
(Shown approx. 3 acres in size, does not have to be in the center of the 640 acre well site)

#### Principal Aquifers

- Unconfined, High Yield
- Unconfined, Mid Yield
- Kame, Kame Terrace, Kame Moraine, Outwash or Alluvium

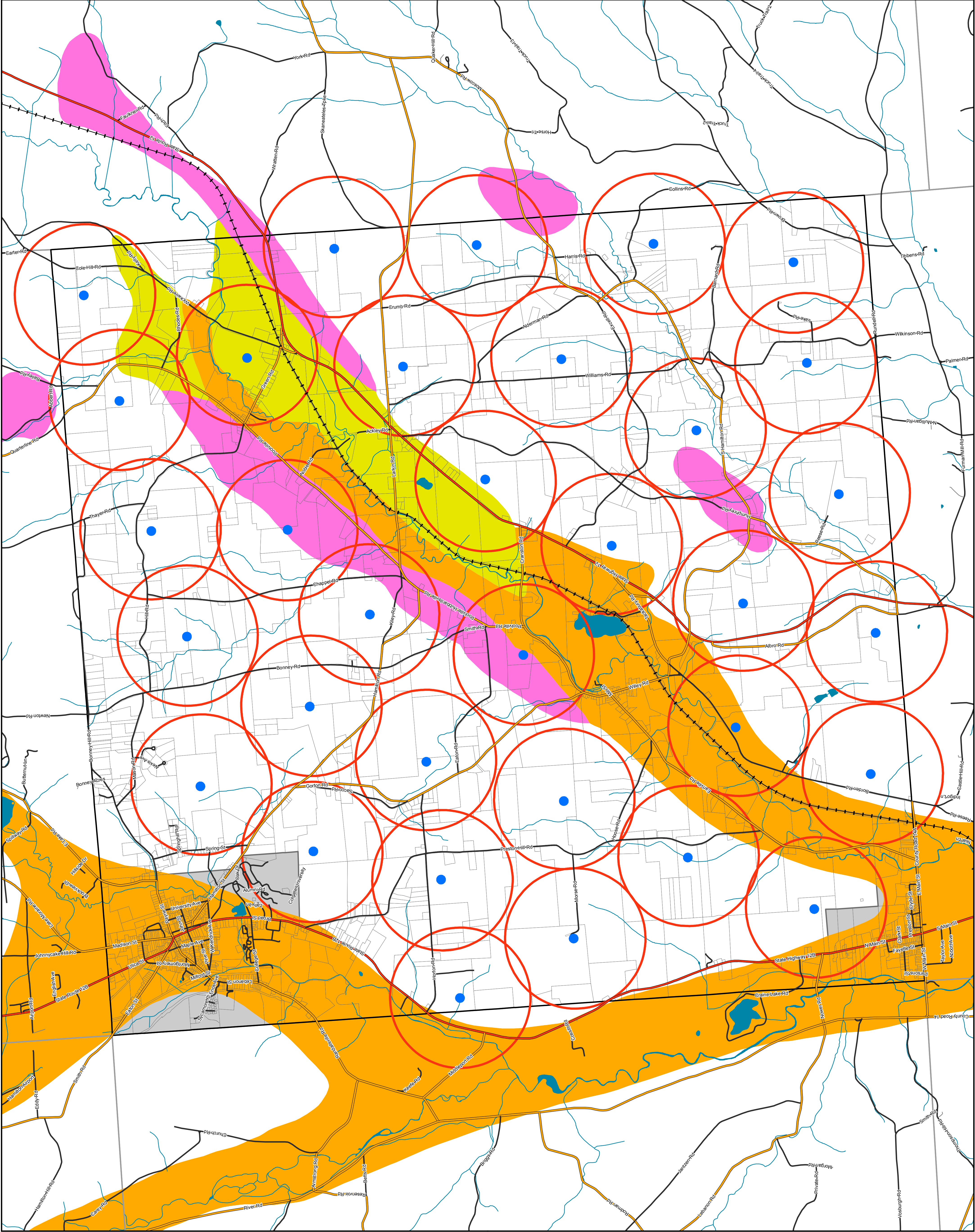
Principal Aquifers are aquifers known to be highly productive or whose geology suggests abundant potential water supply, but which are not intensively used as sources of water supply by major municipal systems at the present time.  
This data was developed at a scale of 1:250,000, and is based on the statewide surficial geology data. Our view is, the data shows areas of "potential" groundwater aquifers that have not been verified through analysis of existing groundwater wells.

Map Date:  
11-17-2014



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# Town of Hamilton

## Madison County, NY

### High Volume Hydro Fracturing Analysis

### Potential Well Sites, Recreation Centers, and Populated Areas (Analysis performed for the Utica Formation only)

- Town Boundary
- Surrounding Town Boundaries
- Village Boundaries

#### Roads

- State Route
- County Road
- Town Road, City/Village Street
- Private Road
- Railroad

#### Water

- Streams

Possible Well Site - based on 640 acre units  
(There are 33 possible locations  
shown on this map)

#### Possible Well Pad

(Shown approx. 3 acres in size,  
does not have to be in the center  
of the 640 acre well site)

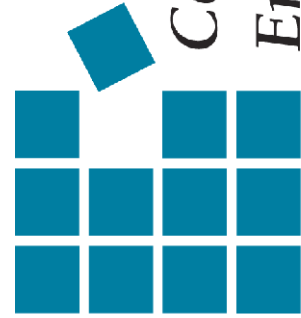
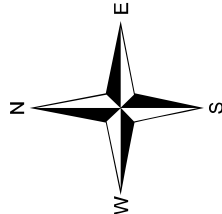
#### Populated Areas

(Approximate locations of  
private groundwater wells,  
agricultural water supplies,  
and public assembly areas)

#### Recreation Centers

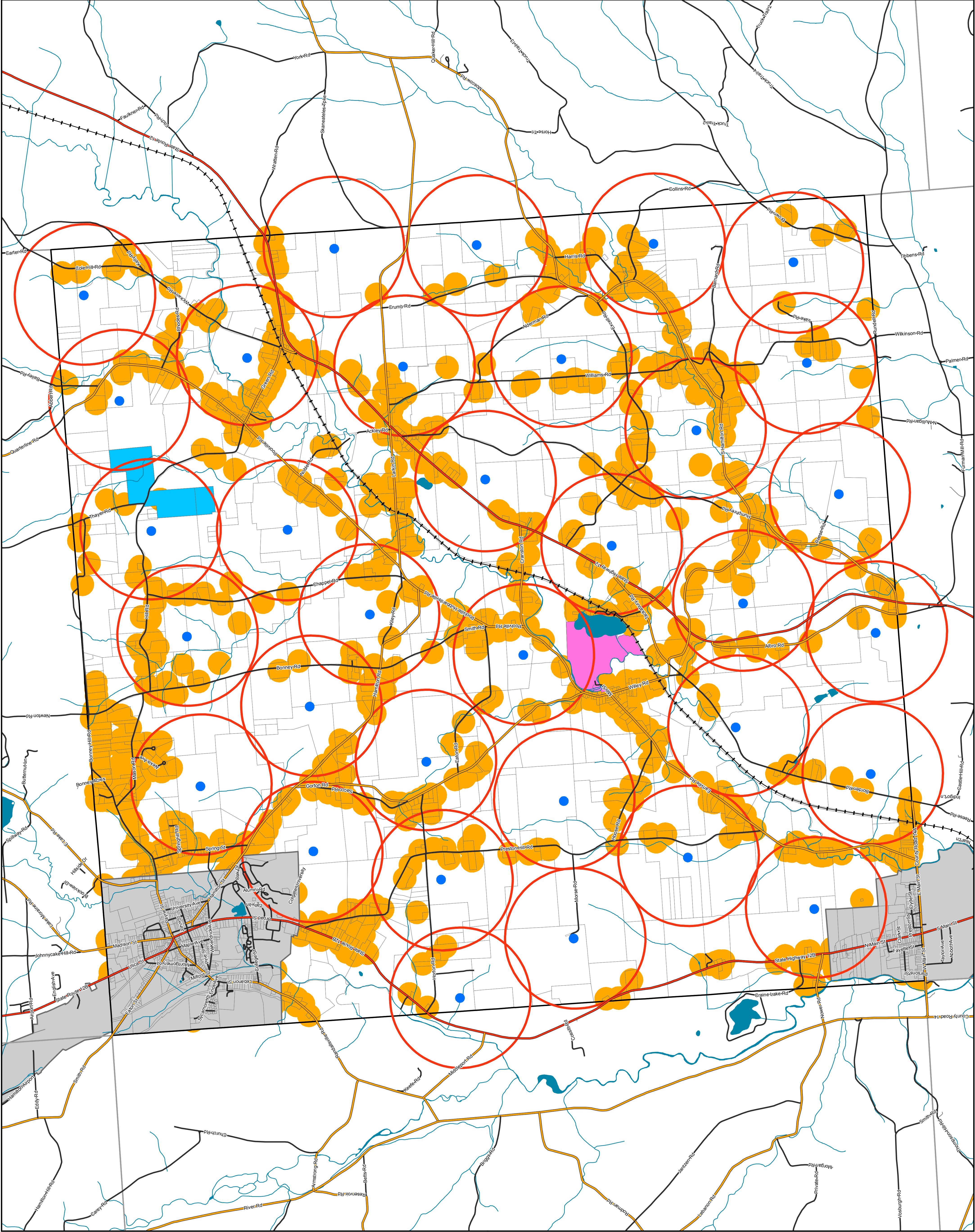
- Camp Hunt
- Fiver Children's Foundation

Map Date:  
11-17-2014



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# Town of Hamilton

## Madison County, NY

### High Volume Hydro Fracturing Analysis

### Potential Well Sites and Scenic Views Identified in the Southern Madison Heritage Trust Strategic Land Protection Plan

(Analysis performed for the Utica Formation only)

- Town Boundary
- Surrounding Town Boundaries
- Village Boundaries

#### Roads

- State Route
- County Road
- Town Road, City/Village Street
- Private Road
- Railroad
- Water
- Streams

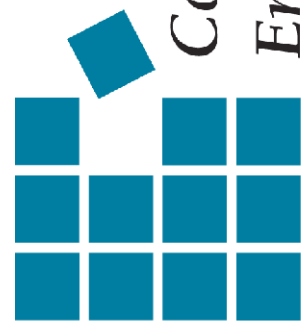
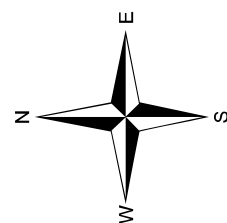
Possible Well Site - based on 640 acre units  
(There are 33 possible locations shown on this map)

Possible Well Pad  
(Shown approx. 3 acres in size, does not have to be in the center of the 640 acre well site)

#### Cornell Viewshed Analysis - Priorities

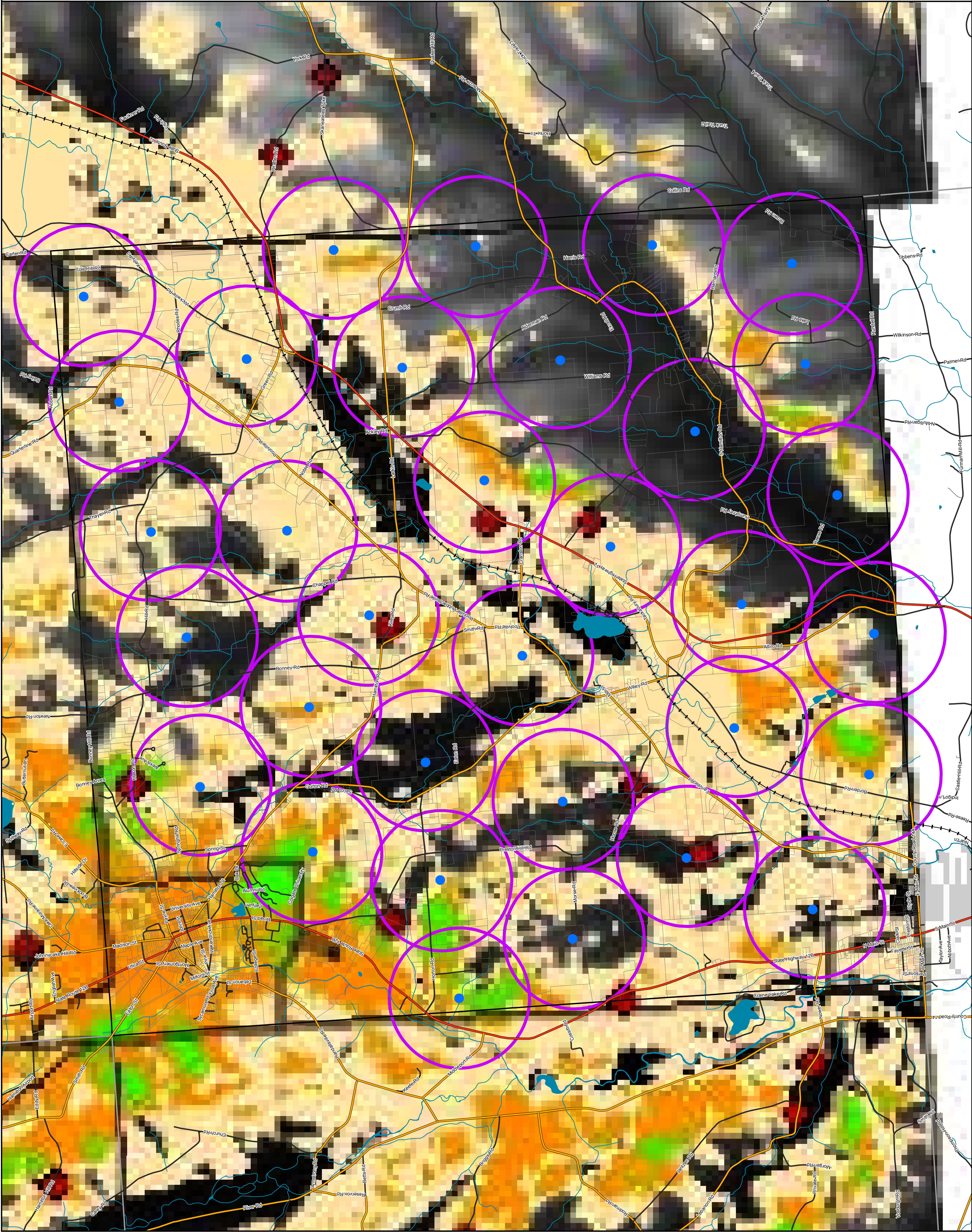
- 1-3 Priority
- 4-6 High Priority
- 7-16 Critical
- (Red Dots are identified Scenic View Points)

Map Date:  
11-17-2014



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# Town of Hamilton

## Madison County, NY

### High Volume Hydro Fracturing Analysis

### Potential Well Sites and Existing Gas or Oil Leases as of Sept. 2010

### (Analysis performed for the Utica Formation only)

- Surrounding Town Boundaries
- Village Boundaries

- #### Roads
- State Route
  - County Road
  - Town Road, City/Village Street
  - Private Road
  - Railroad

- Water
- Streams

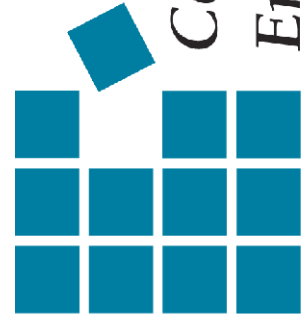
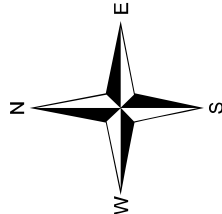
Possible Well Site - based on 640 acre units  
(There are 33 possible locations shown on this map)

Possible Well Pad  
(Shown approx. 3 acres in size, does not have to be in the center of the 640 acre well site)

Existing Gas Leases

Information on gas and oil leases supplied by Madison County Planning Department. Parcels shown were leased between 1995 and September 2010. The term of the lease may or may not still be in effect. The continuity of the lease term is not known.

Map Date:  
11-17-2014



Community Planning &  
Environmental Associates

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