

# Land Use and Design

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## Background

There are very few communities that are as closely tied to their surroundings as Lake Placid / North Elba. The natural beauty of the environment and the recreational opportunities that exist bring visitors that drive the tourist economy, draws retirees to settle here, and gives residents



the economic base needed to survive.

As a result, Lake Placid and North Elba are continually challenged to find a path of development that allows for economic growth while at the same time protecting the environment and the region's rich legacy.

Development guidelines have been instituted into several Land Use Codes updates. In 1996, the Land Use Code established storm water management regulations to protect the lakes, rivers and streams. The 1996 Code also established the first scenic overlay districts and architectural review corridors. The 2011 Code expanded the Shoreland Overlay and created new viewsheds that assured quality upland development. It also expanded the number of visual corridors, especially in the gateways, encouraged clustering and conservation subdivision planning, and revamped the signage regulations in an effort to keep a consistent visual integrity. The 2011 Code also established an historic district along Main Street to preserve the corridors historic character.

The 1997 Comprehensive Plan outlined some initiatives that promote aesthetics existing outside the Code. A Beautification Committee, for instance, acts as a community gardener and maintains flowers and landscaping. A Tree Board works to promote shade tree corridors, protect "heritage trees" and fight off invasive species. The Historic Society promotes architectural preservation while the Lake Placid Institute and the North Elba Conservancy create conservation easements in environmentally sensitive locations.

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## Vision for Land Use & Design

The vision for the Village of Lake Placid's land use and design patterns is to maintain a balance of land use and development that enhances and protects the character of the greater Lake Placid / North Elba community. To accomplish this, the Village of Lake Placid will:

- Manage the impact on infrastructure,
- Enhance "the look" of downtown Lake Placid,
- Promote historic preservation,
- Regulate activities and development on the shorefront,
- Coordinate similar development goals with bordering areas and neighboring communities, and
- Educate and encourage sustainable and low impact development.



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## Goals, Objectives and Implementation Measures

***Goal #1: To promote an architectural style for commerce and municipal uses that complements the natural and manmade environments.***

**Objective 1: Encourage the Town and Village to work together to create a uniform Community Design Guidelines.**

Implementation Measures

- Establish a *Design Policies Committee* to develop design standards for the purchase of streetscape elements (streetlights, lampposts, trash and recycling receptacles, bikes racks, benches and fences) and promote their adoption by the municipalities.

**Objective 2: Monitor signage guidelines to ensure compliance with existing regulations regarding size, color, duration of temporary signage, prior approval and consolidation where appropriate.**

Implementation Measures

- Establish a Signage Design Review Committee to evaluate proposed projects and to monitor existing regulations.
- Develop and distribute pamphlet and online materials that demonstrates appropriate guidelines.
- Review and enforce regulations for residential signage (i.e. vacation rental, political signs, etc). Regulations should include criteria for placement, size and duration of posting any signs on residential property. Some types of signs may be prohibited such as items for sale.
- Work with the public sector to eliminate confusing clusters of signs and unnecessary signs; and to site, design, and landscape public sector signage.
- Review the regulations for the location, size, and duration for Sandwich boards and free-standing sidewalk signs, merchandise and/or advertising displays etc.

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**Objective 3: Monitor the Land Use Code to encourage architectural diversity and multi-purpose buildings while still maintaining the character of the area.**

Implementation Measures

- Monitor the effects of the new land use code.

*Goal #2: To preserve and enhance the vitality and attractiveness of the business district.*

**Objective 1: To enhance and further develop an aesthetically pleasing, user-friendly business district.**

Implementation Measures

- Develop a Streetscape Enhancement Plan for Main Street.
- Formalize the Beautification Committee and allocate more funds to ensure the implementation of recommendations of the streetscape enhancement plan within the business district.
- Work with the downtown businesses to explore the feasibility of creating a Business Improvement District (BID) and include beautification methods in the BID Plan (see Appendix 1).

**Objective 2: Increase customer access to the business district.**

Implementation Measures

- Evaluate the creation of a Parking District to comprehensively address parking solutions and examine times of commercial deliveries on Main Street.

**Objective 3: To facilitate a secondary use for vacant buildings.**

Implementation Measures

- Create a program that works with owners of vacant buildings to encourage use of window displays for beautification, to provide area information to residents and visitors, or non-profit use.

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*Goal #3: Establish uniform Gateway Designs to integrate with neighboring towns.*

**Objective 1: Work with neighboring communities to enhance appearance of corridors and gateways into Town.**

Implementation Measures

- Establish an inter-municipal committee to create a Master Plan for gateways and connections to neighboring communities. Consider:
  - Signage marking entrance/exit of town/village - Welcome/Thank you for visiting.
  - Introduce welcome kiosks / visitor information stands / booths.
  - Create pull-off areas and parking. Visitors stopping to take photos are creating safety issues.
  - Consider screening or reduction of construction debris pile at transfer station

**Objective 2: Work with neighboring communities to coordinate similar development and design goals.**

Implementation Measures

- Use best management practices when developing near shore front property such as the joint use of Lake Placid with St. Armand and North Elba.

*Goal #4: To preserve and enhance the natural beauty of viewsheds and open spaces.*

**Objective 1: Maintain and enhance the use of public open spaces.**

Implementation Measures

- Develop an inventory of existing open spaces and target where they should be expanded.
- Develop scenic easements along unprotected areas to maintain the rural character of those areas.

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## **Objective 2: Preserve vistas and open spaces.**

### Implementation Measures

- Utilize the Conservation Advisory Council (See Environment section) to coordinate with the North Elba Land Conservancy to preserve vistas and open spaces by creating an Open Space Plan.
- Identify various protection measures such as volunteer conservation easements and land use regulations.

## **Objective 3: Encourage cluster subdivisions or planned unit developments in areas to protect existing open space, viewsheds and natural land forms.**

### Implementation Measures

- Monitor the changes that were part of the Land Use Code.

*Goal #5: To promote the maintenance, beautification and upkeep of residential and commercial properties.*

## **Objective 1: Encourage regular upkeep of all properties.**

### Implementation Measures

- Create a Property Maintenance Code that requires the repair of deteriorating structures: broken windows, rotting boards, sagging porches, falling stucco, etc.
- Create Town/Village laws requiring snow shoveling, lawn mowing, and debris removal.
- Enforce laws which forbid “junk” (unlicensed vehicles, boats, RV's, and snowmobiles) from being visible from the street side of the property.
- Research funding opportunities for rehabilitation and renovations.
- Create pamphlets and provide online resources of grant monies available to the public.

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- Consider expansion of hazardous waste days to include appliances

*Goal #6: Promote public appreciation of the Town and Village heritage and encourage the preservation and revitalization of historic resources for the educational, cultural and economic benefit of all residents of the community.*

## **Objective 1: Recognize the inherent value of historic preservation at all levels of Town and Village government and functions.**

### Implementation Measures

- Invite preservation experts such as AARCH (Adirondack Architectural Heritage) to speak to Town and Village officials or appropriate committees about the value and importance of architectural heritage and resources available.
- Work with New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (NYS OPRHP) to develop a Heritage Preservation Plan.
- Apply to NYS OPRHP to become a Certified Local Government (CLG).
- Use the historical society as a resource to educate owners about their district.
- Develop and distribute informational flyers to home/business owners in historic districts that will make them aware of the importance of their property.



## **Objective 2: Encourage voluntary actions by private property owners that will help accomplish historic resource management goal.**

### Implementation Measures

- Create ways in which private property owners are recognized publicly for their historic resource management efforts including inviting homeowners to speak to other groups of interested community members.

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**Objective 3: Promote public awareness and understanding of the cultural history and importance of preserving heritage to the social and economic well-being of the community.**

Implementation Measures

- Encourage collaborations between local historical societies to create a shared conversation about historical preservation in the region.
- Develop heritage walkways and bikeways.

**Objective 4: Increase the attractiveness of historic neighborhoods.**

Implementation Measures

- Add signage signifying the entry into a historic neighborhood.
- Provide resources to home and business owners who are interested in maintaining the historic flavor of their property.
- Bring public light to those home and business owners who are following historic preservation guidelines and best practices.



**Objective 5: To encourage the appropriate rehabilitation, preservation and renovation of existing properties within the business district.**

Implementation Measures

- Examine legislation regarding condemnation and demolition of buildings.
- Establish a *Heritage Committee* to work with preservation partners, identify funding opportunities, and develop and distribute an informational brochure regarding renovation and preservation techniques.



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*Goal #7: To promote and encourage sustainable and low impact development.*

**Objective 1: Cultivate opportunities to enhance and develop the use of green and eco-friendly practices.**

Implementation Measures

- Identify and assess potential costs/benefit of implementing eco-friendly practices including town recycling, green roofs, wind farms, biomass plant, LED street lighting and geothermal sidewalks.
- Promote innovative stormwater management practices such as rain gardens, planters, permeable pavers and other new technologies.

**Objective 2: Educate and promote public awareness on the benefits of sustainable low impact development and practices.**

Implementation Measures

- Secure grant funding and create committee to develop and distribute brochures and online resources designed to increase public awareness of the benefits of these practices, including any grant money or money saving opportunities.
- Coordinate public seminars.