

# VISION, GOALS, OPPORTUNITIES AND ACTIONS 11.22.22-DRAFT #1

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## **2022 COMMUNITY VISION: *Dream Big, Start Small and Go Deep***

*The following 2022 community vision statement reflects the spirit of the 2010 vision but is updated to reflect current conditions.*

The Town of Lake Luzerne is a charming rural community located in the foothills of the Adirondack Mountains where the Sacandaga River converges with the Hudson River. Since the Town was founded in 1792, the growth and prosperity of the community has been tied to the natural resources associated with the water and forests. These resources fueled the industries of logging, mills, and tanneries. As these industries declined, the foundation of the new economy shifted to tourism. This change led to the introduction of a wide variety of motels, cabin colonies, camping facilities, and dude ranches, and led to a greatly expanded market for second home buyers.

Today, Lake Luzerne can be described as a community that has achieved economic success through a stable year-round and seasonal residential base and the support of recreational tourism. The charming hamlet that represents the downtown continues to be the heart of the community by providing essential services and gathering places in a safe walkable setting along the Hudson River. The Town's assets provide an outstanding collection of recreational opportunities that are unique to Lake Luzerne and the immediate region. Visitors are drawn to the guarantee of a low-key, quiet vacation in a beautiful natural setting with the opportunity to enjoy recreation, music, crafts, and culture. Luzerne's proximity to Lake George, Saratoga Springs, and the greater Adirondacks provide an even wider opportunity for these seeking more crowded venues.

The community's vision for the future is to protect and enhance the Town's unique character and assets in the face of demographic shifts and changes in the American culture. The Town will be responsive to regional development changes, the conversion of seasonal homes, the proliferation of short-term rentals, and the continuing decline of the year-round population. In

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the midst of these challenges, the best defense is to be proactive by building a sustainable year-round economy through Luzerne's small-town atmosphere, high quality of life, and strong sense of community.

The vision calls for the development of a unique brand and sustainable marketing approach for the Town of Lake Luzerne. The plan would weave the community's assets into a consistent and compatible strategy that supports a year-round recreation and heritage tourism destination that supports and builds on the successful businesses and facilities that are traditional or newly introduced to Lake Luzerne. It includes stories of the Adirondack Folk School, Luzerne Music Center, Nettle Meadow Farm and Artisanal Cheese, Huttopia, Adirondack Stampede Rodeo, and the many tubing/whitewater companies. The vision should also extend to other nearby businesses that have a direct influence on Lake Luzerne such as the Saratoga Corinth & Hudson Railway and the Revolution Railbike Company both of which have brought new attention to the historic railway along the Hudson River, potentially adding a new visitor base into the Luzerne area.

The success of this marketing approach depends on the Town being able to attract a destination business venue on Main Street that is consistent and compatible with visitor interests. The loss of the Adirondack Mountain Club's Store at Exit 21 could yield an opportunity for a business for outdoor supplies, books and maps, and a café/deli. The potential for cross-marketing with other successful businesses such as the Adirondack Folk Center will ensure the success of a new business downtown that reutilize the several dilapidated buildings along Main Street. A craft beer pub would round out downtown with a new destination for visitors.

The 2022 vision seeks to focus on moving forward with some meaningful incremental changes and one or two big ideas.

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## HAMLET BUSINESS DISTRICT

**Goal:** Repurpose the vacant and underutilized properties by developing an action plan that bundles these lots and markets it as a new destination for the public that includes a store that sells Adirondack goods, supports a local craft brewery and year-round restaurant.

### Opportunities and Recommended Actions

1. Enhance gateways into the historic hamlet area through the thoughtful use of signage, landscaping, and pedestrian amenities.
2. Address infrastructure issues that may be limiting revitalization and infill development.
3. Increase accessibility and walkability by making it more pedestrian-friendly during all the seasons. Add low-style pedestrian lighting, upgrade sidewalks, and provide benches, bike racks, and trash receptacles.
4. Create a set of design guidelines to ensure that new buildings, as well as improvements to older structures, fit in with the overall historic character of the hamlet.

## ROUTE 9N CORRIDOR

**Goal:** Improve the overall appearance of this corridor and provide an improved interface with the downtown area.

### Opportunities and Recommended Actions

1. Develop a corridor study for the Lake Luzerne hamlet portion of Route 9N that addresses improvements for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists.
2. Establish signage and design guidelines that will identify and create a distinct identity for the smaller hamlets of Fourth Lake, Lake Vanare, and Hudson Grove.

## JOBS, TOURISM, AND LOCAL ECONOMY

**Goal:** Focus on attracting travelers that are interested in outdoor recreation, sightseeing and relaxation as an economic development strategy. The five principles identified by the National Trust for Historic Preservation provide a relevant framework for implementing an expanded tourism economy without detracting from the high quality of life of local residents:

- *Focus on authenticity and quality of experience:* Build on the unique qualities of Lake Luzerne and preserve the special character of the historic hamlet.
- *Preserve and protect resources:* Protect water bodies and other natural resources to sustain an economic future.
- *Make sites come alive:* A site that is actually used by a community is a much more compelling experience for the visitor.

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- *Find the fit between a community and tourism:* Tourism succeeds when the resources communicate what is special about the place, its environment, and its way of life.
- *Collaborate:* A successful resource-based economic development experience comes from the creation of consistent messages and well-coordinated series of experiences for each visitor.

### Opportunities and Recommended Actions

1. Prepare a detailed Hamlet Revitalization Plan that identifies alternative actions to meet the goal for the “downtown”. Identify the “right” mix of businesses needed to enhance Lake Luzerne as a unique destination for visitors. Look at potential for cross-marketing with other successful businesses and an outdoor theme. Market the local museums and historic sites as a comprehensive unit that tells a unique story of Lake Luzerne.
2. Hire a local event coordinator. Focus on fewer local special events that are well organized and have a high impact to local economics. Expand activities such as art and craft fairs, farmers markets, festivals, and other historical and cultural celebrations that build off of the existing institutions will breathe new life into the community. Coordinate with adjacent communities on craft fairs so they are regional or coordinated events. Establish joint advertising ventures with Hadley to create joint promotional campaigns that would bring additional tourist dollars into both communities. Utilize the park pavilion for extended/expanded events and bring in food trucks for events on Tuesdays.
3. Work with regional partners Warren County Tourism and I Love NY to brand Lake Luzerne as a year-round recreation and heritage tourism destination. Coordinate with Warren County’s year-round marketing program cultivating the Lake George Area’s brand as “The Original Vacation” (<https://www.visitlakegeorge.com/>).
4. Advance the marketing concepts of the First Wilderness Heritage Corridor including the companion project known as the First Wilderness Trail, a regional revitalization initiative for nine communities along the Upper Hudson River. FWT seeks to develop a 99.3-mile-long recreational trail from the Village of Corinth to the hamlet of Tahawus in the Town of Newcomb.
5. Explore an opportunity to draw visitors from the Saratoga Corinth & Hudson Railway and the Revolution Railbike Company both of which have brought new attention to the historic railway along the Hudson River, potentially adding a new visitor base into the Luzerne area.
6. Meet with the administration of the Adirondack Folk School to see how the town can support the planned expansion.

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## LAND USE AND ZONING REGULATIONS

**Goal:** Update the Lake Luzerne Zoning Ordinance, Zoning Map, and Subdivision Regulations as recommended by the Zoning Code Officer, Planning Board, and Zoning Board.

### Opportunities and Recommended Actions

1. Apply for a grant to fund the update the zoning documents through the NYSDOS Smart Growth Program during the CFA 2022 funding round. Awards are due mid-December 2022.
2. Remove unnecessary obstacles in the zoning code to encourage the redevelopment of dilapidated and vacant properties and the development of restaurants.
3. Develop a set of regulations for the management of short-term rentals.
4. Put forth a formal request to the APA to change zoning from Moderate Use (1.3 acres) and Rural Use (8.5 acres) to the Town's Zoning District of Residential Resort (1.3 acres for single family home).
5. Designate Main Street as a Heritage District.
6. Address the management of RVs and campers on residential properties.
7. Develop supplemental regulations for steep slopes, stormwater management and erosion control. Revise shoreline requirements so that they are consistent with local zoning districts and the Adirondack Park Agency.

## HOUSING AND POPULATION GROWTH

**Goal:** Protect the existing housing stock for residential growth to the greatest extent possible and address housing needs in the community.

### Opportunities and Recommended Actions

1. Conduct a Community Housing Needs Assessment. Apply for funding as needed and as identified in resources outlined below.
2. Identify opportunities for the development of additional residential and mixed-use rental units.
3. Conduct a feasibility study to explore the construction of a senior housing project on the rear property of the Town Hall Municipal Center. Connect housing into the existing Senior Center with walking paths and a sidewalk that will tie into the existing sidewalk network on Route 9N.

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4. Seek funding (such as DRI or NYMS) to encourage owners to develop commercial and residential units and incentivize affordable housing development with a PILOT program.
5. Apply for a housing rehabilitation grant to be funded through NYS Office of Community Renewal.
6. Apply for a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to establish a Housing Rehabilitation Program. CDBGs are awarded up to \$500,000 to assist low-to-moderate income families living in substandard housing or needing assistance with home repairs. Pair with the county weatherization program, first time home-buyers program, or regional housing programs (such as those run by Rebuilding Together Saratoga County) to increase the potential investment in a home. The program can also be paired with Affordable Housing Corporation or HOME funds, but these programs have less admin and program delivery allowances, which would require municipal investment in program operation.

### **COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND PUBLIC FACILITIES**

**Goal:** Continue to improve community facilities and expand facilities and services as needed.

#### **Opportunities and Recommended Actions**

1. Assess, price, and develop financing alternatives for a new ambulance.
2. Assess, price, and develop financing alternatives for upgrades to existing firehouse.
3. Review the need for a secondary firehouse.
4. Review the feasibility of restoring the Hadley-Luzerne Joint Youth Commission.

### **ARTS, HISTORY AND ENTERTAINMENT**

**Goal:** Expand/enhance the interpretive story of Lake Luzerne. Tie all museums and landmarks together into a cohesive, distinctive interpretive story.

#### **Opportunities and Recommended Actions**

1. Consist with #1 recommendation under *Jobs, Tourism, and the Local Economy*, develop a branding for the community “Where Friends and Rivers Meet”, a community interpretive brand developed through the First Wilderness Heritage Corridor Planning Initiative. This brand identity can be developed to connect Lake Luzerne’s historical and cultural attractions both past and present. Follow through on the following actions:
  - Create a gateway sign at both ends of the Town welcoming visitors and displaying the brand.
  - Place branded signage that is easily visible in high traffic areas telling commuters at a glance where to go and generally what they can find there. Ex: Museums and Attractions, Business District, Restaurants.
  - Incorporate branding into all cultural attractions with signage that clearly denotes what each is, what it houses (if applicable), its significance, and how it relates to the Town and its identity.

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### 2. Develop a Hamlet Cultural Heritage Trail

Most of the museums and cultural attractions in the Town of Lake Luzerne are centrally located along the northern section of Mill Street in the Hamlet area. While each of these attractions may not be a destination unto themselves, the combination of museums, cultural attractions, and recreational opportunities in close proximity makes it worth a visitor traveling some distance to spend the day; a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.

Some specific actions that can be taken to support this recommendation include:

- Enhance pedestrian access along the “loop” including the “trail” linking the Kinnear Museum to the Pulp Mill Museum and along Mill St.
- Improve physical visibility and identification of attractions, including uniform design standards and signage.
- Create a wayfinding and orientation map identifying the loop and its attractions.
- Establish site specific interpretation to enhance accessibility to information about historic resources.
- Define an intended use and clean up the Smokestack area.
- Generate a driving tour with the Hamlet as the “hub” directing visitors to destinations in the Town.
- Identify linkages with hiking, biking, and horseback riding trail system connecting Hamlet with various areas with educational or experiential activities along the way.
- Coordinate with local creators and artisans to create low budget events and festivals that utilize the ample outdoor spaces.
- Identify a location for additional visitor parking.

### 3. Redevelop the “Dude Ranch Trail”

The Dude Ranch Trail is a New York State scenic byway that was established through an act of legislation. The Scenic Byway program has not been consistently funded in more than 10 years, so a practical approach may be to focus on what it means to create a “Dude Ranch Trail” visitor experience.

Some specific actions that can be taken to support this recommendation include:

- Enhance wayfinding signage beyond the existing roadside markers to create a branded trail.
- Develop a hub-and-spoke approach to create a visitor experience that includes learning about Dude Ranch heritage at a local museum with the ability to visit a ranch for an authentic Adirondack Dude Ranch vacation.
- Reconstruct and enhance the roadside visitor’s information stand near Painted Pony Ranch as a secondary visitor hub that includes information about Dude Ranch heritage in the Adirondacks.
- Develop multimedia collateral materials promoting the trail and the visitor experience.

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- Prepare a one-day or multi-day travel package or itineraries that can be distributed by local, regional, state, and federal tourism partners.
4. Develop the “Timber and Tanning Trail” that interprets the logging history of the area.

Some specific actions that can be taken to support this recommendation include:

- Wayfinding and exhibits telling the story of logging camps that occupied the dude ranch locations before they were abandoned and turned into dude ranches.
  - Signage and/or video installation relating to the log drives.
  - Outdoor exhibits about the importance of Ebenezer and Edward Jessup to Lake Luzerne’s logging history.
  - Identify a location for the interpretation of a logging settlement or homestead.
  - Interpret the importance of Wells Creek to the Pulp Mill and Garner Leatherworks.
  - Develop tannery inner workings display at the Tannery site.
  - Develop bookbinding story at Tannery location.
  - Partner with the Adirondack Folk School (or use Kinnear Museum or Visitor’s Center) for bookbinding lessons and tanning demonstrations.
5. Develop greater advertising of Lake Luzerne as part of the First Wilderness Corridor. While the First Wilderness Heritage Corridor may not be an approved state heritage area, there is still an active social media presence and other marketing that promotes the region as an a cultural/heritage and outdoor recreation destination. Cooperating and cobranding with FWHC will enhance opportunities to create linkages with nearby communities with similar stories.

### INFRASTRUCTURE: WATER, WASTEWATER, ROADS, INTERNET, AND CELL SERVICE

**Goal:** Continue to modernize and make infrastructure improvements that support the needs of local businesses and residents.

#### **Opportunities and Recommended Actions**

1. Continue to seek funding sources to complete needed improvements to the municipal water system:
  - NYS EFC WIIA Grant with SRF Loan
  - United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development
  - NYS Office of Community Renewal Community Development Block Grant
2. Develop a feasibility study on a mandatory septic inspection program for waterfront properties and other potentially sensitive lots. Continue to follow the progress of Warren County’s draft law that may provide an acceptable regulatory framework.
3. Identify grants to fund several new electric charge stations at the Town Community Center and downtown.



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4. Investigate the potential of investing in a municipal sewer system for the hamlet area as a tool to expand existing businesses and bring in new businesses.
5. Address needed stormwater improvements:
  - Reduce most stormwater runoff at the Wayside beach site by utilizing green space on the side of the access road and installing a slotted trench drain to capture all the runoff draining off the top of the access road, down to about the midpoint of the road. The water could then be conveyed through a biofiltration system and through the outlet to the lake. This system can be installed at the bottom of the grassy area above the beach and could be open channel, closed or a combination.
  - Improve the stormwater at Pierpont Beach by modifying the paving to allow for better capture at the drywall. It may be possible to alter this to a permeable type of system that allows for shallow infiltration or capture it in a catch basin, then send it to an infiltration system under the road. Stormwater runoff also concentrates on the outside of the road/parking area, along the stone wall. This water goes to a drop inlet in the parking lot, which is then culverted under the access road to the sluiceway down to the lake. The same type of application as discussed in (4) may be applicable for this site as well.
  - Improve stormwater management at Sylvan Road by installing several drop inlets to capture runoff and allow for some sediment settling and convey the water to a raised bed/timber bio filtration system. The drop inlet structures would move the water with no erosion and would provide some pretreatment. The filtered water could then be sent to the lake through a small rock lined ditch.
  - Work with NYSDOT to address identified areas of stormwater management concerns on Route 9N. These will be expensive projects but getting them in front of the NYSDOT is critical as they can be evaluated and potentially added into a capital project for the future.
6. Identify funding sources to replace the Town's Water Tank at an estimated cost of \$100,000.
7. Assess the gaps in cell phone service in the town and develop a plan for 100% coverage.

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## NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

**Goal:** Protect and improve the condition of all lakes, streams, rivers, and forests throughout the town.

### Opportunities and Recommended Actions

1. In partnership with the Lake Luzerne Association, the Town should erect strong signage about the Clean Drain Dry program at the launch and encourage self-inspections of all small boats entering Lake Luzerne.
2. Develop a shoreowners' guide to provide education on what can be done at a home to reduce excess water runoff from an individual property and reduce water quality impacts.
3. Investigate the Climate Smart Grant program to fund special projects that experience flooding issues.
4. The Lake Luzerne Association should continue as members of the New York State Federation of Lake Associations (NYSFOLA) and enroll in the Citizen's Statewide Lake Assessment Program (CSLAP), a water quality testing program conducted by volunteers.
5. Conduct a study of the Lake Luzerne sub-watershed (above the Second Lake outlet) to determine the potential source of potential pollutants. Request Warren County Soil & Water Conservation District to outline and conduct this study.
6. Continue the diver and suction harvesting program for the next two years. Continuing with the two-phase approach. This has proven to be effective and will allow us the contractor to remove regrowth at the end of the season. Maintain what was done in the past and move into different problem areas in the lake until the point is reached where the entire lake is in a maintenance situation. Once that happens then the level of effort needed, and the budget required will level off and become more manageable.
7. Town should investigate the feasibility of using the new herbicide known as ProcellaCor® to treat aquatic invasive species in the south bay in future years. Following an evaluation of Lake Luzerne following the 2023 season, consider next steps required in submitting an application to apply the herbicide ProcellaCor in Lake Luzerne from the Adirondack Park Agency and DEC.
8. Lake Vanare residents should form a lake association to better organize and communicate ongoing issues regarding the lake. The Town should support and provide training one or more volunteers conducting water quality testing at the beginning and middle of the

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season to begin building a baseline set of data on Lake Vanare. Investigate utilizing a hydro rake for removing the islands of lilies that are encroaching lake use.

### PUBLIC SPACES AND RECREATION

**Goal:** Meet the changing and expanding recreational needs of residents and visitors.

#### Opportunities and Recommended Actions

1. Explore funding sources to install a new playground in Bicentennial Park that will accommodate a range of age groups and attract young families and visitors.
2. Extend the pathway of the Riverside Trail south to meet the picnic area in the park and the parking lot at the Adirondack Folk School. Explore the feasibility of extending Riverside Trail to the Hadley Bridge.
3. Explore the feasibility of developing a pocket park s an overlook platform on town-owned land on the northeast side of the bridge.
4. Develop a formal footpath between the Town Hall and the Hadley-Luzerne Junior/Senior High School.
5. Develop a trails master plan that will provide residents and visitors information about all the trails in Lake Luzerne.
  - Utilize the Warren County Recreation Mapper: [Warren County New York Recreation Mapper \(arcgis.com\)](https://arcgis.com) to illustrate connections to neighboring communities and regional trail systems.
  - Develop a trail challenge program for Lake Luzerne and tie into regional fire tower and other trail challenge programs.
  - Participate in the First Wilderness Letterboxing Trail program, an interactive treasure hunt activity that engages young people in hiking: [First Wilderness Heritage Corridor Letterboxing Trail - Visit Lake George](#).
  - Provide coordinated interpretive signage with consistent messaging on all trails.
  - Develop new and improve existing trail systems for different user groups.
  - Explore the feasibility of expanding public trails in underutilized areas such as Bucktail Mountain.
6. Encourage the Town of Hadley to participate in a trail initiative that links Lake Luzerne to the Bow Bridge, Dean Mountain Whitewater Park, and Sam Smead Memorial Park.

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7. Utilize the *First Wilderness Heritage Trail Plan* as a marketing tool for recreational tourism. To support the plan, add bicycle and pedestrian friendly amenities to the public landscape.
8. Explore the need and feasibility of transferring 9 acres from the Open Space Institute to the Town for a small park and kayak take out site.
9. Provide improved access to and from the kayak takeout off the Riverside Trail and add appropriate signage about the location and river safety. Investigate the potential for a new kayak access point onto the Hudson River in the lower hamlet area just below the convergence of the Hudson and Sacandaga rivers.
10. Consider the feasibility of bringing back a paid youth director to organize after school and summer youth programs.