

**Town of Horicon, New York  
Comprehensive Master Plan Focus Group Discussions**

**Part One**

**Summary of Research**

**March 2007**

## **Executive Summary: Themes of Focus Group Discussions**

Residents surveyed in the focus groups generally enjoyed living in the Town of Horicon as a result of the small town feeling and the community of people residing in the town. Although there was variability among groups, a few pressing issues were evident across all of the groups. First, many participants recognized a lack of available affordable housing within the town. Many of the residents were quick to point out, however, that they did not desire affordable housing in the form of trailer parks or mobile homes. Instead, they preferred the idea of nice, small, single family homes away from the lake. Second, residents surveyed in the focus groups were also concerned with the lack of services and jobs in the area. Residents suggested the encouragement of “reasonable growth” or “controlled growth” in the Town of Horicon, hoping that the town could develop in a manner which maintains the town’s character. It was apparent that residents missed having a general store in the town’s center and would both welcome and appreciate the development of some small commercial establishments in the Town of Horicon: shops and stores hold value for the local economy and also for community development. Tourism was often mentioned as an industry that would both provide jobs and maintain the character of the town. Third, many group participants mentioned that zoning regulations need to be addressed to foster development in the town. Many participants in the focus groups expressed the sentiment that regulation of development in outlying areas of the town was too strict while regulation of development surrounding Brant and Schroon Lakes was too lenient. Residents were generally frustrated with the “hoops” and “red tape” associated with the present zoning regulations, even outside of the realm of economic development and affordable housing.

Fourth, each of the groups identified the Mill Pond as being the center of the Town of Horicon, yet many residents noted that the area still needs to be improved. These residents felt that beautification through the addition of trees, a sidewalk, or improved sidewalks would improve the town’s aesthetics as well as its developmental capacity. Many groups were concerned with both the level of safety and the current location of the town beach on Mill Pond. Fifth, the desire to actively pursue the location for a public beach on Brant Lake was nearly unanimous across the focus groups. Sixth, the general consensus among groups in which the environment was discussed was that invasive species were a problem in the town and that the town should hire a seasonal employee at the boat launch to power wash boats as they enter the lake. Seventh, the groups that discussed recreation hoped for more and improved town-sponsored activities, both for the young populations and the elderly. A number of groups mentioned that handicap access to the trail system should be addressed. Finally, ATV and snowmobile use proved to be a contentious and much debated issue among participants in all of the groups.

Respectively submitted,  
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## **I. Background on Focus Group Discussions**

Focus group discussions of Brant Lake residents were conducted by the Upstate Institute of Colgate University at the request of the Planning Board of the Town of Horicon, New York during January 2007. The purpose of the focus groups was to understand sentiments of town residents regarding the future development in the Town of Horicon, and ultimately to aid the revision of the Comprehensive Master Plan for the Town. In August 2007 Ellen Kraly, Director of the Upstate Institute met with member of the Town Planning Board to discuss the plan for research; over the course of the fall, members developed the list of themes to be addressed in the focus group discussions.

The following four Colgate students were selected as Fellows of the Upstate Institute to participate in the research project: Donald Boyajian, Erika Colaiacomo, Jane Phelan, and Meg Reed. During the fall semester at Colgate, these students participated in a series of training session in qualitative research and focus group facilitation. Upon arrival in Brant Lake in January 2007, the Upstate Institute students were briefed by members of the Board of the Town of Horicon regarding current and emergent social, economic, municipal and environmental issues in the town and region. The Town Board requested that while each focus group should consider a series of general questions, the groups should also be divided into two topical areas: (i) environment and housing, and (ii) recreation and economic development. Based on these discussions as well as the prior planning, the students developed the question line for each set of focus group discussions. The research protocol for the focus group interviews was approved by the Institutional Review Board of Colgate University.

Fourteen focus groups were held in the multi-purpose room of the Town of Horicon Town Hall during January 2007. Participants were recruited and selected by members of the Town Board and Town Planning Board. Most of the groups consisted of a mixture of 6-10 full-time and part-time residents. Each session was 90 minutes in length. Sessions were held during a variety of time periods during the day in order to attract a diverse group of residents. Refreshments were available for all group participants. The groups were facilitated by the four Upstate Institute Fellows. Two students served in facilitation roles in each group, one being the primary facilitator and another being the co-facilitator. The remaining two students served as observers and note-takers. The four students served in each of these roles on a rotating basis.

Each of the focus groups was audio-recorded with the permission of the group participants. Two of the groups did not obtain audio recordings due to technical difficulties; therefore, summary of the discussion for each of these groups (groups C and J) are developed through notes taken by the student observers; transcriptions for these two groups do not appear in the Appendix to this report. The groups that were successfully recorded were immediately transcribed into text format by the Upstate Institute students.

Upon returning to Colgate University, the transcripts were prepared for analysis, and all identifying information (name, distinct place of residence, etc.) was removed from

the transcripts in order to ensure group participants' confidentiality and privacy. In the typed transcripts, individuals who were followed throughout the entire recorded discussion are identified with a changed name; individual comments that could not be identified throughout the recorded discussion are shown with dashes (-). Finally, the order of the focus groups was scrambled in order to further protect the identity of the focus group participants.

This first report, a thematic summary of the results of the focus groups, was prepared through the analysis of transcripts and observation notes. Meg Reed and Jane Phelan independently identified thematic summaries of each group, and subsequently merged the results into a single analysis. Although the general statements offered above do provide an overview of the opinions of the residents of the Town of Horicon who participated in focus group interviews in January 2007, more systematic analysis must be completed in order to catalog the entire dataset.

Part Two of the report, a more detailed analysis of the qualitative data, will provide a comprehensive account of the content and emergent themes of the focus group transcriptions. Further analysis will lead to a closer reading of the opinions that were so thoughtfully expressed by each of the group members, and thus will also highlight opinions that are obscured by this general summary of results. Prior to the preparation of the final detailed analysis of transcriptions, members of the Planning Board are encouraged to read the summary for each of the individual focus group discussions. In reading the group summaries, members will more fully appreciate the innovative and conscientious views of town residents that can be used to guide planning and policy in their beautiful Town of Horicon.

## **II. Summary of Focus Group Discussions**

### ***Focus Group A***

This group considered general issues concerning the Town of Horicon and focused specifically on topics involving economic development and recreation. The group felt that the people in the Town of Horicon are what give the town its character. The group expressed concern with the lack of business and services in the town. Individual business suggestions included a shipping store, basic supply store, tourist related industry, home businesses, garden center, small arts center and “Adirondack” specialty stores. The group proposed that if the town were to use grant money in fostering development, the entirety of the town should benefit. The group also felt that there was a lack of publicity for the town and that the town should take steps to increase the level of exposure and publicity.

The group identified the Mill Pond area as the center of the town but noted that it does have drawbacks. Individuals in the group felt that the old town hall is “a waste” and that Mill Pond needs to be transformed into a more attractive destination. The group also mentioned that the area is very dangerous, especially for children. Sidewalks were discussed as a possible solution to this problem.

The group discussed a number of opportunities which could be pursued in the realm of recreation. The group suggested a bike path on Rt. 8 and a cultural or community center as recreational options, and also felt that the town should pursue the installation of a public beach on Brant Lake.

The group also discussed issues of taxation relating to affordability for year-round residents. Some members of the group suggested that taxation levels should be addressed to improve affordability for year round residents. It was suggested that some form of double assessment might be a viable alternative. The group also expressed a level of dissatisfaction with the present state of zoning and planning regulations, stating that the current makeup of the planning board has a less than desirable reputation in the town.

### ***Focus Group B***

This group considered general issues concerning the Town of Horicon, but focused specifically on topics that involved housing and the environment. The group expressed appreciation of the small town feeling and access to recreation provided in the Town of Horicon. Many individuals in the group, however, also voiced frustration with the lack of services and jobs in the area as well as the great distance to services and jobs outside of the Town of Horicon. Another major issue discussed was the lack of a public beach on Brant Lake, and the desire for the town to consider obtaining land for public beach access.

The group expressed unanimous frustration with the affordability of both land and housing in the town, as well as the increasing number of seasonal homes and residents. The group made it clear that it was difficult for locals to afford to purchase land in the town. The group was weary of further housing development in the immediate vicinity of Brant Lake, and identified outlying areas for the development of affordable housing. The group also expressed general frustration with zoning and regulations in the Town of Horicon, making statements such as, “too much red tape,” and “too many hoops to jump through” to express this frustration. The group felt that having seasonal residents on the town boards was hindering the decision making process in the town. Another problem identified by the group was that members serving on the town boards were not well informed on the regulations in place. The group agreed that the Town of Horicon needs to update zoning definitions and lot size.

The group did not express a great need for further wildlife protection, and believed that there is already sufficient land for wildlife in the Town of Horicon. The group also felt that there was no need to develop a municipal water and sewer system in the town. The group did express a need for protection of natural waterways from runoff, fertilizers, septic leakage and invasive species. The group agreed that erosion may be difficult to control, yet could be prevented through reforestation and implementation of fencing. Although not prompted on the issue, the group expressed concern on the use of outdoor wood burners in the Town of Horicon. No means for addressing the issue were mentioned.

The group articulated many qualms about recreational opportunities in the Town of Horicon. The group agreed that the Town of Horicon needs to look into activities for the young people, handicap access at the Pharaoh Lake Wilderness Area, and public access to Brant Lake through provision of a public beach. The group believed that the existing green space in the town is poorly managed, and that this green space should be utilized through improved access to a trail system or other means.

### *Focus Group C*

This group considered general issues concerning the Town of Horicon, but focused specifically on topics that involved housing and the environment. The group appreciated the community atmosphere and social cohesion provided by the Town of Horicon. The group agreed that some economic development, such as a grocery store or gas station, should be encouraged and that the town does need to promote some level of commerce within. The group expressed hope that the demographic would transition to a year-round resident base, and agreed that the Mill Pond area is in need of improvement through installation of sidewalks, trees, and some businesses. The group expressed unanimous agreement in the need for the Town of Horicon to purchase lakefront property on Brant Lake for public beach access.

The group agreed that development of affordable housing must occur in the Town of Horicon, but did not want to compromise the town's own natural beauty in the process of doing so. The group felt that new housing should not come in the form of the condos located in Adirondack or a trailer park. Some members of the group believed that affordable housing should be located within walking distance of the Mill Pond area. The group believed that in order to develop affordable housing in the Town of Horicon, the town's zoning regulations and designations need to be addressed or improved. The group expressed a general sense of frustration with the town's planning and the zoning boards, and believed that the zoning laws were too strict in some regards, but too lenient in others, especially in the environmental realm. The group believed that instead of halting housing developments in the peripheral areas of the town, zoning restrictions should address the increasing housing development around the lake to maintain the Town of Horicon's charm.

The group did not express great environmental concern beyond the need for zoning restrictions in the immediate Brant Lake area and stronger enforcement of existing regulations. Strong desire was voiced for further development of ATV and snowmobile trails, and for a community activity center, senior center or meeting place such as the one in North Creek, NY.

Although not prompted to do so, the group addressed many issues in the realm of economic development. The group believed a primary goal of the town planning and zoning boards should be to bring the youth back into the community in order to foster economic growth. In this regard, the group suggested provision of incentives for development. The group suggested affordable housing as a hindrance to growth, and believed that the provision of affordable housing would lead to future development, therefore relating issues of housing to issues of economic development. The group believed that the Town of Horicon already has a resource in recreation, and that this resource should be capitalized upon for economic growth.

### *Focus Group D*

This group considered general issues concerning the Town of Horicon, but focused specifically on topics that involved housing and the environment. The group felt expressed that the Town of Horicon is a wonderful small community in a beautiful location. The group expressed disappointment, however, in that rules within the town were not enforced evenly and that the planning board was too lenient in some regards, and too strict in others. There was a feeling within in the group that there has been a gradual degradation of the Town of Horicon. It appeared to be very important to the group that the town maintain its rural character, while at the same time it was apparent that the group wanted certain things to change. The Mill Pond was identified as the town center, but the group was adamant that the Hamlet of Adirondack should not be ignored and is also an important part of the town.

The group believed that housing within the town was not affordable and that affordable housing should be built for younger, productive, community members. A few members of the group were expressed that they did not want people from outside the community benefiting from any affordable housing that might be built. It was suggested that controlling taxes might be a possible solution to this possible problem. The group believed that future housing development should occur away from the lake and should come in the form of single family homes, not sub-divisions. There was also a desire to update zoning so as to better control the growth that is taking place in the town and make sure that it does not get out of hand. The group believed that updating and enforcing regulations would help to solve many of the problems that the Town of Horicon is experiencing. A group member cited Saratoga as an example of town that was planned well.

The group expressed mixed feelings about the condition of the roads within the Town of Horicon. Some members were content with the plowing in the winter time, but were dissatisfied with the quality of the roads overall. It was clear that the group wanted the town to establish a better method of determining what road maintenance projects are completed. The group believed that invasive species were a major problem within the town and that the town should invest in a seasonal employee to clean the boats before they enter the lake to help stop the spread of milfoil. The group also felt that traffic on the lake needs to be regulated and that this could be accomplished by simply enforcing parking rules at the boat launch. Erosion was also identified as an issue within the town and the group felt that the solution to this problem was again, good and enforced zoning regulations.

The group briefly touched on recreation and economic issues. There was a desire for more stores in the town, not a Wal-Mart, but a grocery store, coffee shop or craft store. The possibility of an exercise center was discussed, as well as a continuing education program in the high school.

### *Focus Group E*

This group considered general issues concerning the Town of Horicon, but focused specifically on topics that involved recreation and economic development. The group expressed a general appreciation for the sense of community and small-town character of the Town of Horicon, but also expressed frustration in the division between seasonal and full-time residents, the lack of services and the lack of economic opportunity. The group expressed further dissatisfaction with the “red tape” and “hoops that must be jumped through” in dealing with the APA and the town zoning board. The group also articulated a level of frustration with developing housing in the town. To this end, the group expressed hope that the zoning and planning boards would work with the people in the Town of Horicon to achieve a common goal rather than work against the people to terminate development projects. The group almost unanimously agreed that the public offices need to be renewed or replaced, making statements such as, “the zoning and planning boards dispense justice without experiencing the brunt of the effects,” to voice this sentiment. The group unanimously agreed that development of the Mill Pond area is necessary and also expressed interest in bringing the communities of Brant Lake and Adirondack closer together.

The group believed that the need for the development of affordable housing in Town of Horicon needs to be filled before any economic development will occur. The group believed that affordable housing will allow the younger citizens of the town to remain in Horicon as well as foster economic development. The group stated that the current zoning bylaws do not allow for the development of affordable housing and that this factor inhibits economic growth. The group believed that the largest barrier to development in the Town of Horicon is the label, “conditional use,” which is often interpreted as “anti-development.” The group agreed that the town needed a character for businesses to “buy into,” such as a strong sense of community, and brought up the possibility of an economic development committee to address these issues. Individuals suggested Adirondack furniture or a quaint conference center as possible businesses, and agreed that businesses should utilize the internet infrastructure which is already installed in the town.

In terms of recreation, the group agreed that the town needs to develop more activities for both the youth and adult populations. The group spoke of the “days gone by” in recreational availability and suggested a return to the active recreational schedule of the past. The group believed that the recreational needs of the senior citizen population of the town should be addressed through development of a senior center or transportation systems for the senior population. Some members of the group expressed a firm belief that there is no place for the use of ATV’s in the Town of Horicon.

### *Focus Group F*

This group addressed issues of general concern in the Town of Horicon as well as housing and environmental issues. The group expressed a great amount of consensus due to the makeup of the group of entirely full-time residents and retirees. The group expressed appreciation for the social cohesion of the Town of Horicon and the small, tranquil nature of the town. The group agreed that the town needs some development, but that this development should be controlled through “core planning” and an understanding of the maximum amount of growth that will be allowed and encouraged in the town.

The group did not believe that housing construction should be encouraged in the Town of Horicon, and did not wish to discuss the types of homes that should be pursued because of its belief that homes should not be built at all. The group did not believe that the town should allow for subdivision development or decreasing lot size requirements in the spirit of controlled growth. The group also did not support subsidized housing, but agreed that affordable housing should be zoned in the town’s overall master plan.

The group believed that green space belongs to the private citizen, not the town. Thus, the group expressed the belief that the private citizen should be able to control the use of privately owned green space.

### *Focus Group G*

This group considered general issues concerning the Town of Horicon, but focused specifically on topics involving economic development and recreation. The group felt that although Town of Horicon possesses great natural beauty, the town is, “in a slump” and there are few economic opportunities within the town. The group agreed that Mill Pond was the focal part of the town but that beautification projects should be pursued to improve the area. Many identified the waterfalls and the fountain as positive aspects of the Mill Pond area, and suggested that adding trees and a footpath would make it considerably more pleasant. The group also believed that the current beach on Mill Pond is not safe and that the town should pursue the possibility of acquiring land for a beach on Brant Lake.

The group felt that the younger generation in the town does not have access to viable employment opportunities. In this light, the group believed that the only current viable industry in the town is the second home market. Many individuals in the group expressed the desire for the town to develop economically, but in a controlled manner, maintaining the small town feeling. The group suggested that town events, such as a marathon or other family gathering, to attract possible business people. The group believed that the town was lacking in activities on the whole, and that the promotion of these types of activities would also benefit the entire community. The group felt, however, that the town should not allot an excessive amount of funding to attracting businesses, as the town is not “in the business of being in business”. Allotment of area for businesses to develop in, as well as a professional building and easement of zoning regulations were suggested as non-expensive methods to bring in business to the town.

The group generally believed that the town board does not greatly consider the people of the town in making zoning and planning decisions. Many individuals expressed concern that the zoning board is discouraging development, stating that realtors are now advising clients not to do business in the town at all. The group felt that the infrastructure in the town was very good. However, the group came to a consensus on the opinion that laws are not being sufficiently enforced in the town, especially when it comes to speed limits the lake and on the roads. The group did not focus heavily on recreational issues, yet discussed the desire for the implementation of fitness facilities.

### *Focus Group H*

This group considered general issues concerning the Town of Horicon, but focused specifically on topics that involved recreation and economic development. The group expressed appreciation for the Adirondack beauty and the rural qualities of the Town of Horicon. There was unanimous agreement expressed in the need for the beautification of the Mill pond area through implementation of a walkway, a shoulder on the roadway, or general store. The group also discussed the need for improvement of the dam on Mill Pond, specifically the possibility of losing the town through failure of the dam.

The group expressed the need for controlled growth within the Town of Horicon, believing that some growth is needed within the town, but that the growth should not be excessive. Tourism, an incubator center, the use of trails, the natural environment, recreational opportunities, green space, gift shops and bakeries were all suggested as viable businesses for the Town of Horicon. The group felt there was no need for an industrial zoned area as it was not successful in Warrensburg, and would therefore not be successful in Horicon. The group believed that these businesses could potentially be supported through tax breaks or incentives, and also believed that the town zoning is presently restricting economic development. The group accented the contention that the town zoning and planning boards are in constant contact with the APA when the town's plan was implemented to prevent this contact. The group felt that there is a lack of communication regarding events and planning in the town and that simply placing a bulletin board in the town hall would assist in solving this problem.

The group expressed a sense of passion while discussing recreational issues. The group believed that the boat launch in the town should be transferred into town control. The group also believed that the town should hire a seasonal employee to power wash the boats to help with the milfoil problem. The group expressed the need for the development of the Town of Horicon's own recreational facilities and activities, such as basketball, sports, soccer, a recreational hall, a winter carnival, community development and community events. The group suggested that the town look into ecologically sound activities in this regard. The group believed that the town's development of recreational opportunities would encourage the type of controlled growth that had been previously discussed.

### *Focus Group I*

This group addressed issues of general concern in the Town of Horicon as well as issues of housing and the environment. The group agreed that there are no businesses or opportunities for economic advancement within the Town of Horicon, and that the younger generations will be therefore forced to leave the town to seek employment opportunity elsewhere. The group agreed that there is currently a lack of education on the town planning boards regarding zoning and planning issues, and that the boards should be filled by year-round residents who are knowledgeable and educated in issues of zoning and town planning. In this regard, the group expressed a degree of concern with the town board's constant contact with the APA. When prompted on the Mill Pond's prevalence and the possibility of improvements in the Mill Pond vicinity, the group stated that Mill Pond is the center of town, but that the area could be made more attractive and could serve as a hub for town events and activities.

The group expressed concern with the availability and affordability of housing in the Town of Horicon, as the lack of affordable housing is driving the local people out of the town. The group expressed a desire for the development of affordable housing that is aesthetically pleasing, and is of relatively high quality while still being affordable. The group believed that an individual who desires to complete development of affordable housing in the town should be both encouraged and assisted in doing so. In this regard, the group suggested that the town board, "help out the people," "help the people along," and foster, "a little improvement." The possibility of the designation of an empire zone was also discussed.

The group was not extremely concerned with issues related to the environment. When prompted on the concern of Eurasian Milfoil, the group suggested the possibility of hiring a town employee at the boat launch to clean boat hulls in the summer months. When prompted with other questions related to environmental issues, the group reverted to discussion of concerns involving personal issues with the makeup of the town zoning and planning boards and the lack of recreational opportunities within the Town of Horicon.

### *Focus Group J*

The audio file for this focus group was lost. Therefore the data extrapolated from this group is limited. This group considered general issues concerning the Town of Horicon, but focused specifically on topics involving economic development and recreation. The group believed that both the positive and negative aspects of the town are a result of the Northway. According to the group, the town is desperately in need of a new general store and a town bulletin board to improve the town's communication and foster community involvement. The group believed that the Mill Pond was undoubtedly the focal point of Brant Lake.

The group believed that housing is not affordable in the Town of Horicon, and that the real issue is available housing. The group felt that this lack of affordable housing is due to the stringent zoning restrictions in the Town of Horicon. The group believed that a municipal sewer system might help with water quality in the town. The group emphasized that "things need to be changed" within the town without taking away from the town's overall character.

### *Focus Group K*

This group addressed issues of general concern in the Town of Horicon as well as issues of economic development and recreation. The group expressed frustration with the lack of development and excitement in the town, yet was also concerned with the high level of housing development related to retirement and subsequent increasing property and real estate prices. The group agreed that the area is becoming unaffordable, and that the local and younger generations are experiencing difficulty remaining in the area. The group expressed interest in attracting businesses to the town, yet believed that the present state of the zoning and planning bylaws was permitting business development. The group believed that the Mill Pond area should be improved through beautification (sidewalks, lampposts, trees, or a boardwalk) and through business development.

The group was extremely interested in discussing matters of business and economic development. Without prompting, the group suggested a number of possibilities for business development: Nanotechnology, avionics, small businesses surrounding the Mill Pond, a distribution center, restaurants, and an outdoor store. Although the group did express interest in business development, the subsequent effects were also discussed, and the group agreed that the maintenance of the “small town feel” of the area must be paramount in promotion of businesses.

The group expressed some discontent with the current recreational opportunities in the Town of Horicon, and was not content with the amount of public access to Brant Lake. Although the possibility of a new public beach on Brant Lake was discussed, the group did view this as feasible due to the high cost of beachfront property. In this regard, the possibility of selling the town beach on Schroon Lake was discussed so as to financially facilitate the purchase of a beach on Brant Lake. The group discussed many potential recreational activities which could be installed in the town, such as basketball tournaments, local interest groups, a town position for a recreation director (possibly partnered with Chestertown), a visitor center, a boat race, senior activities and improved access to town trails and lakes. The group expressed discontent with the limited access to state land with ATV's and snowmobiles. The group was satisfied with the current amount of land that was open to the public.

Although not prompted for discussion of the topics, the group also discussed issues of zoning and planning and environmental concerns. The group expressed a level of discontent with the present state of the zoning and planning bylaws, believing that laws are too lax when applied to development in the immediate area of the lakes and too strict when applied to development in outer areas. The group suggested improved communication between the town board and the population of the town, but also agreed that much of this communication is at the responsibility of the town's population. The problem of invasive Eurasian Milfoil was also discussed, and the group suggested implementing the cleaning of boats before they enter the town's lakes as a preventative measure.

### *Focus Group L*

This group addressed issues of general concern in the Town of Horicon as well as issues of housing and the environment. The group expressed satisfaction with the small-town nature of the Town of Horicon, but then quickly expressed concern with the low levels of economic opportunity and services in the town and with the high levels of development on the lakefront. The group agreed that some level of affordability must be reached in order for local people to stay within the town and within the Adirondack Park, and that recreational opportunity and community activities should also be improved. The group mentioned that the Mill Pond area is a focal point of the Town of Horicon, but that commerce should be developed around the area as well. The group mentioned that zoning and planning regulations need to be revisited and revised to encourage commercial development.

The group agreed that some attention must be paid to affordable housing in the Town of Horicon, and suggested clustered development of small homes in a specified area as a way to meet the needs of affordable housing. Further suggestions identified the use of an abandoned hotel for rent controlled affordable housing and the collaboration between younger families and senior citizens in an affordable housing community. When prompted on housing in general, the group suggested halting development of larger second homes around the lake and concentrating on affordable housing. The group expressed great concern with the level of regulation related to zoning and planning in the Town of Horicon, and believed that the zoning and planning should be revisited as the current zoning is allowing over-development on the lakefront and stifling development of more affordable housing in the surrounding areas. The group also stressed that although affordable housing should be developed and some smaller lot sizes allowed in the process, lot sizes should not drop below a certain level.

When prompted for opinions regarding green spaces, the group suggested a number of recreational possibilities for green spaces in future developments, such as sporting fields, trails, and tennis courts. The group agreed that the town must purchase a space on Brant Lake for the installation of a public beach, and that in the meantime, improvements such as a safety wall should be implemented on the present beach. When prompted about access to public lands, the group brought discussion toward recreation, snowmobile and ATV use. The group agreed that the impact of snowmobiles is low and that the current snowmobile club fills the need for snowmobile access. The group also agreed that although ATV's may not be desirable, they must be addressed in order to prevent environmental degradation. Many members of the group also believed that handicap access to the Pharaoh Lake Wilderness should be allowed, not only for handicap individuals but the large population of senior citizens in the Town of Horicon. A unique contention which arose in the group was the issue of light pollution and the desire for tranquility in the Adirondacks.

### *Focus Group M*

This group addressed issues of general concern in the Town of Horicon as well as issues of economic development and recreation. The group appreciated the small town feel that Horicon possesses, but was concerned with the lack of opportunities and increasing cost of living. It was evident that the group did desire some form of economic development, however, the members of the group were not interested in the promotion big businesses in the Town of Horicon. The group did feel that light industry such as a sawmill, would be an acceptable type of business to be pursued in the future. The Mill Pond was identified as the focal part of the Town of Horicon and a number of changes were suggested including improvement of the beach area and creating more parking. The group felt that the town had lost its downtown area, and this has been hindering economic growth and the formation of a town identity.

The group also expressed interest in the town pursuing the implementation of a public beach on Brant Lake. The group also expressed interest in the development of a fitness center, bike path system, and youth recreation center. The group did not consider the issue of snowmobiles and ATV's as something the town should consider. The group expressed interest in pursuing more town activities in the future and cited as an example the Fourth of July fireworks celebration that the town used to put on.

The group felt that the Town of Horicon needed to protect the lake at all costs. Many members of the group believed that milfoil was being brought into the lake by non-residents and that it would be appropriate for the town to pay an attendant to monitor and wash the boats entering the lake. The group also expressed concern that there are too many boats on the lake and suggested limiting docks as a possible solution to this problem. The group also felt that the boat launch was often overcrowded and there was a lack of available parking for individuals who do launch boats. Some group members felt that it would be appropriate to charge non-residents for the use of the boat launch and also felt that the town needed to improve enforcing of parking regulations around the boat launch. The group also believed that the town needed to improve the maintenance of its roads.

### *Focus Group N*

This group addressed issues of general concern as well as issues of recreation and economic development. The group expressed high levels of appreciation for the close knit community, yet was not content with the lack of affordable housing, lack of community identity or gathering places and high level of growth that has occurred in the area. The group believed that the Mill Pond area is the focal point of the Town of Horicon, but also expressed the need for further beautification and development of commercial enterprises in the Mill Pond vicinity. This group was the most contentious of all the focus groups.

The discussion of recreation centered on the town beach. The possibilities for improvement of the current beach and the possibility of obtaining land for improved town access to the lake were discussed. The group was concerned with the amount of parking for the current beach and the safety of the placement of the beach on Rt. 8, a road characterized by high levels of traffic. The group was extremely practical in discussing issues of access to public lands, expressing that ATV's do cause great damage to trails, and that APA regulations override town regulations. The group also discussed the prospects for a fitness center, a playground, a youth summer recreation program and improved bike paths in the Town of Horicon.

The group believed that the prospects for economic development in the Town of Horicon were grim, and was concerned with the excessive loss of business that has ensued over the past decade. The group also expressed concern with the lack of employment in the area that has occurred as a result. The majority of the group believed that the town needs "an anchor" or a "gathering place," and suggested the development of small businesses, even possibly town-run business, such as small stores, restaurants, antique shops, book stores, coffee shops, or general stores to draw in both local residents and visitors.

In addition to concerns of development and recreation, the group expressed high levels of concern with regard to regulations of zoning and planning in the town. The group believed that regulation of building and development around the lake was presently too lax, and that the lake should be protected "at all costs." In the same regard, a level of discontent was expressed with regulation in the outlying areas. In regard to the future, the group believed that development to the south will affect the Town of Horicon, and that the town should be prepared for the influx of visitors from Canada and from the southern regions.