

Town of Berlin

FINAL DRAFT

Comprehensive Plan

July 2011

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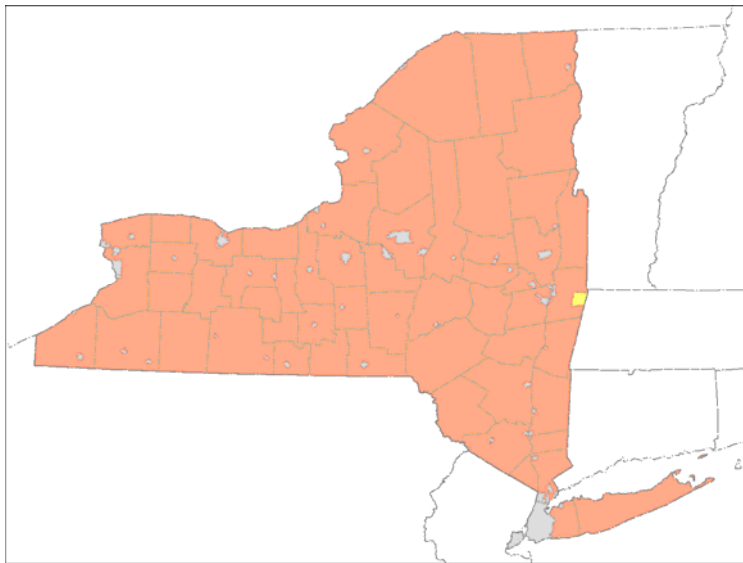
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Vision: *Berlin will maintain its rural character and natural and historic resources while including diversified housing, local employment opportunities as well as health, technology and business services.*

The Town of Berlin, located in the eastern most portion of Rensselaer County, at the border with Massachusetts, is a community rich in natural resources, history and traditions. First settled in 1765, the valley running through Berlin was long used by native Americans as a north-south trade route due to its easy traverse. Traveling east or west from Berlin was much more difficult due to the Rensselaer Plateau to the west or Taconic Mountains to the east. Early settlers took a week on horseback to reach the settled areas of Albany and Rensselaer due to the terrain, forests and lack of roads. This trip can now be done in under an hour.



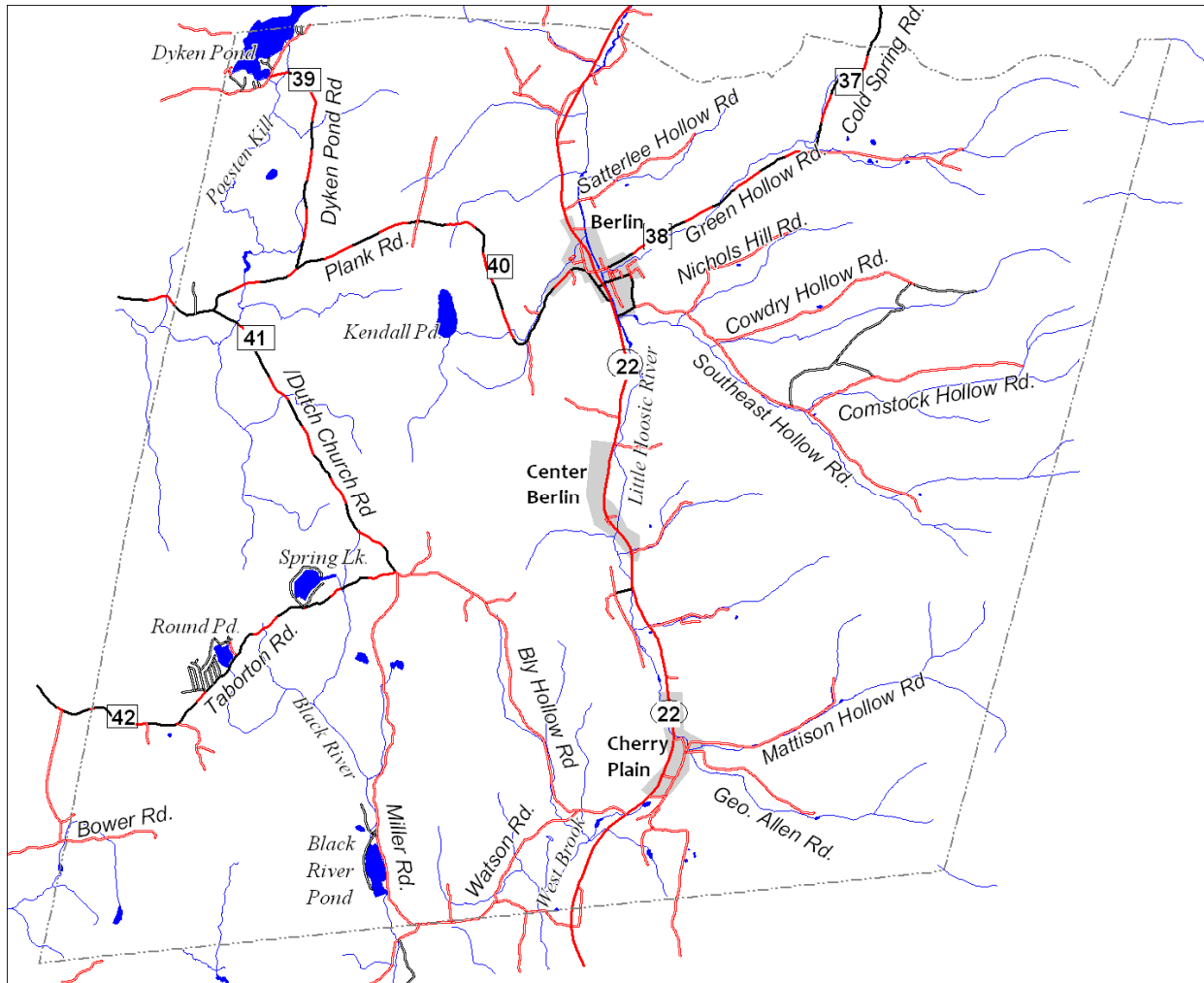
Map 1 *The Town of Berlin is located on the eastern border of New York State.*

Due to its fertile soils in the Little Hoosick River valley and Berlin's several "hollows," ample forests and water, Berlin quickly developed settlements and industries. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the town had three village areas, the largest by far, the hamlet of Berlin. These hamlets had many stores and small factories to supply the residents as well as other areas in Rensselaer County. Daily coach service to and from Troy and Williamstown provided an early transportation link to the cities and factories along the Hudson River. The Rutland Railroad line allowed more products to come into and be sent out of the town. The fertile fields provided produce and milk sold to the growing factory cities as well as for Berlin itself. Later, these fertile fields produced many gladioli for sale throughout the country, providing additional business of floral picks and stakes and other wood turning products.

Throughout the last half of the twentieth century, changes such as the loss of the railroad, and slow decline of businesses has left Berlin pondering its future. It has been reinvented several times; from agrarian to industrial to floral capital. It has survived explosions, floods, and other natural disasters. The moving of NY Route 22 in the hamlets also affected the town. At this time, the town is in flux. Its location not on a major interstate highway or near a major city makes it difficult to attract industry. Stagnant population threatens major population loss.

The Comprehensive Plan of the Town of Berlin, New York will attempt to address these issues, creating a map for the path forward. The Comprehensive Plan will look at issues that are pertinent now, in the early twenty-first century, while trying to also address possible future issues. Not all the ideas listed in this document will be followed; some will be further explored and it will be found that

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Map 2 Roads, waters and communities of the town of Berlin.

down 28 from 1990's Census. The population of the town had previously dropped between 1950 and 1960, probably as jobs became scarce in the area. In several ways, the town's population reflects the county's population, except that the county's population has remained around the same level since 1970. This too reflects the job situation in the Capital District Region.

they won't work and changes may make others moot. This document should provide guidance for the Town, its residents and businesses.

The Town first started working on its Comprehensive Plan in 2006. Public outreach to gain insight into the community's thoughts included a survey of the landowners in 2008, and public workshops in Winter 2008, January and June 2010, and a Public Hearing in 2011. In the autumn of 2009, a public meeting showing the past of the Town was held which showed Berlin's past through historic photographs. A synopsis of the survey and public workshops can be found in the Appendix of this document.

The town of Berlin is approximately 60 square miles. A majority of its population can be found in the hamlets of Berlin and Cherry Plain located in the Little Hoosick River valley. In 2000, the population of the town was 1901,

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Year	Population	Ten Year Change	Percent Change	County Population	County Change
1940	1,402	--	--	121,834	--
1950	1,409	7	0.5%	132,607	8.8%
1960	1,329	-80	-5.7%	142,585	7.5%
1970	1,562	233	17.5%	152,510	7.0%
1980	1,696	34	8.6%	151,966	-0.4%
1990	1,929	233	13.7.0%	154,429	1.6%
2000	1,901	-28	-1.5%	152,538	-1.2%
2010	1,880	-21	-1.1%	156,602	2.7%
2020*	1,980	37	1.9%	158,579	1.3%
2030*	2,013	33	1.7%	159,995	0.9%
2040*	2,052	39	1.9%	161,379	0.9%

When compared to bordering towns, Berlin’s population has risen the slowest, although similar to Petersburg. These two towns are the most isolated from the population centers of Albany, Bennington, Pittsfield or Troy.

Table 1 Source: Bureau of the Census, except (*), population projections from the Capital District Regional Planning Commission.

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Town of Berlin	1,329	1,562	1,696	1,929	1,901	1,880
Town of Grafton	1,009	1,307	1,665	1,917	1,987	2,130
Town of Nassau	3,721	4,043	4,479	4,989	4,818	4,789
Town of Petersburg	989	1,187	1,369	1,461	1,563	1,525
Town of Poestenkill	2,493	3,426	3,664	3,809	4,054	4,530
Town of Sand Lake	4,629	5,843	7,022	7,642	7,987	8,530
Town of Stephentown	1,361	1,731	2,031	2,521	2,873	2,903

Table 2 Source: Bureau of the Census

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	1980	1990	2000	2010
White	1,686	1,923	1,871	1,829
Black	2	2	0	2
American Indian, Eskimo or Aleutian	4	0	1	3
Asian or Pacific Islander	1	4	2	3
Other	3	0	27	8
Hispanic	8	4	19	19

Table 3 Source: Bureau of the Census.

The age of residents in Berlin is rapidly becoming older. In 1980, 34% of the population was under 20 years of age. By 2010, only 24% of the population was under 20. This is also reflected in the median age which rose from 30.8 to 37.5. The population 65 years of age and older rose from 12% in 1980 to 18% in 2010.

In the past few decades, the population has become slightly more racially mixed. It is still primarily (97.3%) white.

	1980	1990	2000	2010
Under 5 years	141	169	119	99
5 to 9 years	156	161	147	111
10 to 14 years	156	158	180	126
15 to 19 years	128	150	139	121
20 to 24 years	120	99	68	95
25 to 34 years	258	305	211	162
35 to 44 years	187	274	339	239
45 to 54 years	176	196	270	319
55 to 59 years	83	91	94	151
60 to 64 years	80	86	76	119
65 to 74 years	137	129	146	156
75 to 84 years	63	95	84	124
85 years and over	11	16	28	58
Median Age	30.8	31.4	37.5	44.6

Table 4 Source: Bureau of the Census.

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Year	Number of Households	Ten-Year Change	Persons Per Household
1980	595		2.84
1990	664	69 (11.6%)	2.91
2000	729	65 (9.8%)	2.61
2010	789	60 (8.2%)	2.38
2020*	795	30 (3.9%)	2.49
2030*	825	30 (3.8%)	2.44
2040*	855	30 (3.6%)	2.40

Although the population did not rise significantly, the number of households did between 1980 and 1990. The number of persons per household therefore dropped. This reflects a national trend of smaller families and more households without children.

Table 5 Source: Bureau of the Census, except (*) projections from the Capital District Regional Planning Commission.

The number of married couple families dropped significantly between 1990 and 2000. Male headed households and non-family households increased in this same period.

Type	1980	1990	2000	2010
Married couple families	396	436	337	416
Male headed household, no wife	72	102	124	38
Female headed household, no husband	107	126	120	50
Non-family households	171	140	165	285

Table 6 Source: Bureau of the Census.

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Attainment Level	1990 (Town)	2000 (Town)	1990 (County)	2000 (County)
Less than high school diploma	25.10%	22.10%	22.30%	15.10%
High school diploma or higher	74.90%	77.90%	77.90%	84.90%
Bachelor degree or higher	13.40%	15.50%	19.60%	23.70%

Although still lagging behind the county, Berlin’s population is increasing its educational attainment with greater numbers receiving high school diplomas and bachelors degrees.

Table 7 Source: Bureau of the Census.

Income levels increased strongly between 1980 and 1990, but only grew anemically between 1990 and 2000. In 2000, the median income for households and families as well as per capita income was lower in the town of Berlin than in Rensselaer County as a whole. The percent poverty status for individuals was lower in Berlin than the county as a whole, but the percentage of families below poverty was higher by almost one third. Of the 22 municipal subdivisions in

	1980	1990	2000
Median household income	\$14,495	\$30,270	\$38,875
Median family income	\$17,195	\$32,875	\$44,464
Per capita income	\$6,604	\$12,907	\$18,117
Individuals below poverty level (%)	15.6%	9.8%	12.0%
Families below poverty level (%)	11.7%	17.1%	9.7%

Table 8 Source: Bureau of the Census.

	Berlin	Rensselaer City	Troy	Rensselaer County
Median household income	\$38,875	\$34,730	\$29,844	\$42,905
Median family income	\$44,464	\$40,688	\$38,631	\$52,864
Per capita income	\$18,117	\$19,674	\$16,796	\$21,095
Individuals below poverty level (%)	12.0%	12.8%	19.1%	9.5%
Families below poverty level (%)	9.7%	9.8%	14.3%	6.7%

Table 9 Source: Bureau of the Census.

Rensselaer County, the Town of Berlin ranked 19th, above both cities of Rensselaer and Troy. As in the cities, Berlin’s housing costs are lower, which may make it attractive to lower income individuals and families who cannot afford housing in most other towns in the county. Although the percent of individuals and families below the poverty line is higher than other towns, it is relatively low compared to 1980.

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Table 10: Residence in 1995 for the Population 5 years and over – 2000 Census		
	Berlin town	Rensselaer County
Total	1,779 (100%)	143,234 (100%)
Same house in 1995	1,206 (67.8%)	89,953 (62.8%)
Different house in 1995	573 (32.2%)	53,281 (37.2%)
In United States in 1995	568 (31.9%)	51,361 (35.9%)
Same city or town	0 (0.0%)	11,899 (8.3%)
Not same city or town	568 (31.9%)	39,462 (27.6%)
Same county	404 (22.7%)	17,125 (12.0%)
Different county	164 (9.2%)	22,337 (15.6%)
Same state	106 (6.0%)	15,944 (11.1%)
Different state	58 (3.3%)	6,393 (4.5%)
Northeast	40 (2.2%)	3,507 (2.4%)
Midwest	2 (0.1%)	572 (0.4%)
South	2 (0.1%)	1,586 (1.1%)
West	14 (0.8%)	728 (0.5%)
Elsewhere in 1995	5 (0.3%)	1,920 (1.3%)
U.S. Island Areas	0 (0.0%)	126 (>0.1%)
Foreign country or at sea	5 (0.3%)	1,794 (1.3%)

Table 10 Source: Bureau of the Census.

Berlin's residents have been on the move. Only two thirds of residents lived in the same house in 2000 than five years previously. Of the one third that had moved, none came from Berlin previously, 70% came from other parts of Rensselaer County. Of the other 30%, approximately two thirds came from other counties in New York State, with the rest primarily coming from other parts of the northeast. Only a few (5) came from overseas or were at sea. Very few came from the southern or mid-west portions of the United States (2 each).

In comparison with New York State and the nation as a whole, the population of the town of Berlin is whiter, older, with an average household size, less educated, more likely to be unemployed, less well paid, but more likely to own their own, single-family home, which has lower value, or pay less in rent. The poverty rate is lower in Berlin than in the state or the county. There is also a much larger number of vacant housing, part of which can be accounted by the high number of seasonal homes. Although many have tried to put numbers on it, the actual quality of life cannot be measured by census numbers. The fact that one third of the population has moved into the town recently shows that there is a quality to the town which makes it attractive to people.

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Table 11: Comparative Data, Town, County, State and Nation				
	Town of Berlin	Rensselaer County	New York State	United States
Population Change, 2000-2010	-1.1%	4.5%	2.1%	9.7%
Households Change, 2000-2010	6.4%	8.1%	3.7%	10.7%
% Minorities, 2010	1.9%	14.3%	41.7%	36.3%
Median Age, 2010	44.6	39.2	38.0	37.2
Average Household Size, 2010	2.38	2.38	2.57	2.58
Average Family Size, 2010	2.97	2.94	3.20	3.14
% with High School Diploma, 2005-2009	83.9%	88.6%	84.2%	84.6%
% with Bachelors Degree or higher, 2005-2009	22.0%	26.4%	31.8%	27.5%
Labor Force Participation Rate, 2005-2009	67.0%	68.0%	63.5%	65.0%
Unemployment Rate, 2005-2009	4.4%	6.5%	7.0%	7.3%
Median Household Income, 2009	\$50,365	\$54,262	\$55,233	\$51,425
Median Family Income, 2005-2009	\$51,696	\$68,516	\$67,040	\$62,363
Per Capita Income, 2005-2009	\$25,055	\$27,289	\$30,634	\$27,041
% Individuals Below Poverty Level, 2005-2009	6.7%	11.1%	13.8%	13.5%
% 1-Unit Housing, 2005-2009	72.8%	59.6%	47.0%	67.3%
% Owner-Occupied Housing, 2005-2009	83.8%	66.5%	55.7%	66.9%
% Vacant Housing*, 2010	28.3%	9.5%	9.7%	11.4%
Median Housing Value, 2005-2009	\$144,400	\$162,700	\$300,600	\$185,400
Median Gross Rent, 2005-2009	\$668	\$756	\$945	\$817

Table 11 Source: Bureau of the Census. *includes second homes not in use during census. Data from 2005-2009 may contain very large (upwards of 300%) margins of error for the Town of Berlin and should be used more as a reference number.

Natural Resources

Goal: *Inventory and conserve the natural resources of Berlin for community use and tourism*

The Town of Berlin has many high quality natural resources. Clean air and water, large stands of forest, varied and abundant wildlife and a rugged topography which provides some of Rensselaer County’s best scenery. This chapter will examine the natural resources of the Town of Berlin, the assets as well as the issues that threaten them.

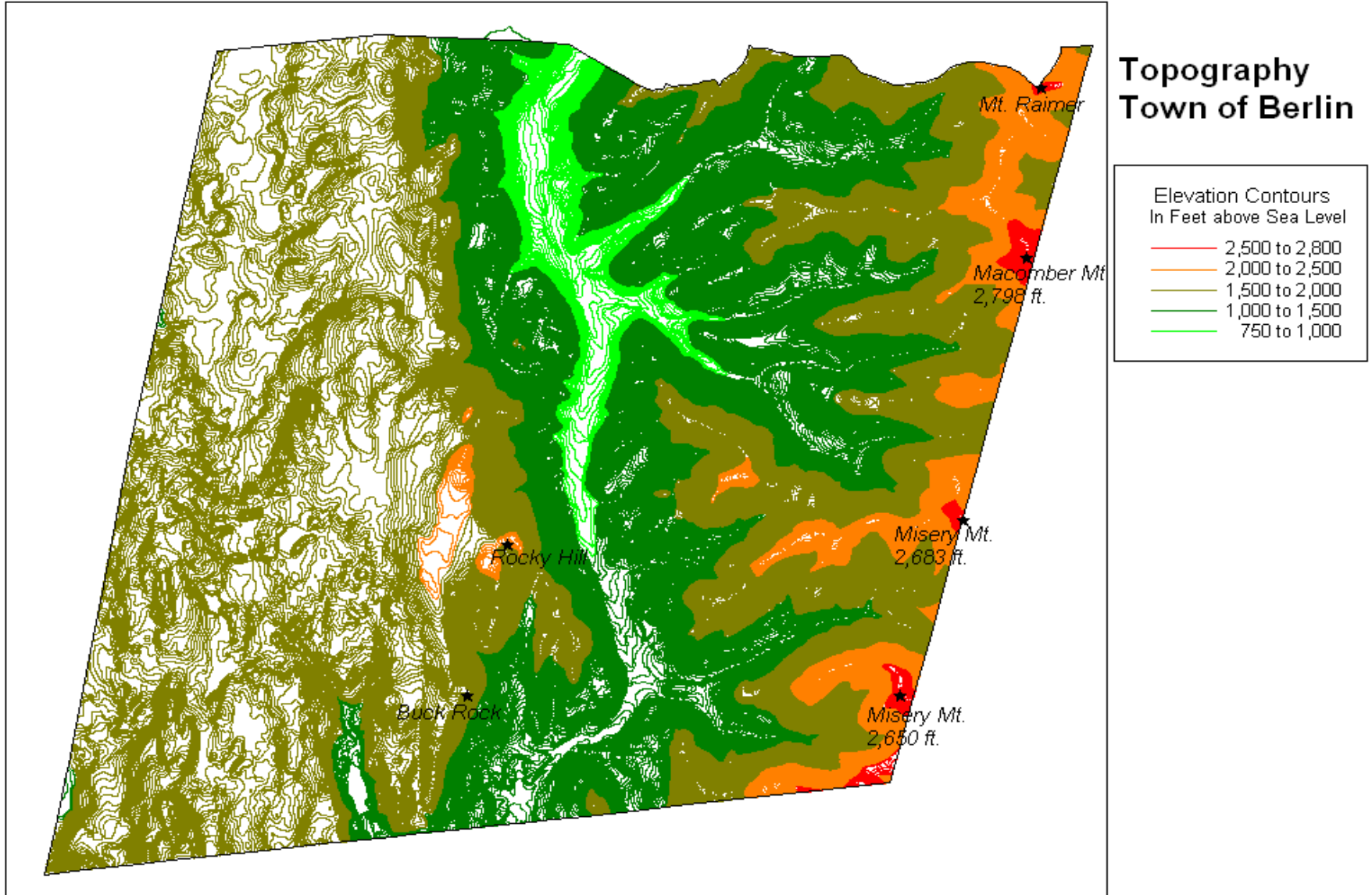
Topography

One of the assets of the Town of Berlin is its views, created by its topography and underlying geology. With the Taconic Mountain Range, part of the New England Upland, on the eastern half of the town and the Rensselaer Plateau on the western part, the town is bisected by the Little Hoosick river valley and underlying fault. Berlin contains the tallest mountain in Rensselaer County, Macomber Mountain, at 2,798 feet above sea level. The lowest elevation in Berlin is 750 feet above sea level where the Little Hoosick flows from Berlin into the town of Petersburg.

The Taconic Mountain Range consists of several interconnected mountains. At the northern-most part of the town, Mount Raimier is part of the ridge which the boundary between Berlin and Petersburg to the north follows. Macomber Mountain, listed as Berlin Mountain on some maps, peaks just west of the border between New York and Massachusetts. Misery Mountain has three peaks, two of which are located in Berlin. Some lower hills separate several of the “hollows” from the Little Hoosick valley. The hollows are stream valleys which flow into the Little Hoosick River, which bisects the town.

On the western side of the town, the Rensselaer Plateau, known to locals as Berlin Mountain, has several high areas overlooking Center Berlin and Cherry Plain. One high area is named Rocky Hill on maps. The Rensselaer Plateau at its top is comparatively flat with steep sides. Very few ravines carry streams down off the Plateau. Several lakes and ponds are located on the Plateau along with wetlands. The height of the plateau and Taconic Mountains to the east has created a weather anomaly where snow falls thickest in the county in southern Berlin, likely due to the height of the mountains squeezing moisture from the atmosphere.

The valley which bisects Berlin, sometimes called the Taconic Valley, carries the Little Hoosick River north from its headwaters in Cherry Plain. South of Cherry Plain are the headwaters of the Kinderhook Creek which flows south along the Taconic Valley toward Columbia County. The valley is widest and flattest to the north and narrowest around Cherry Plain to the south.



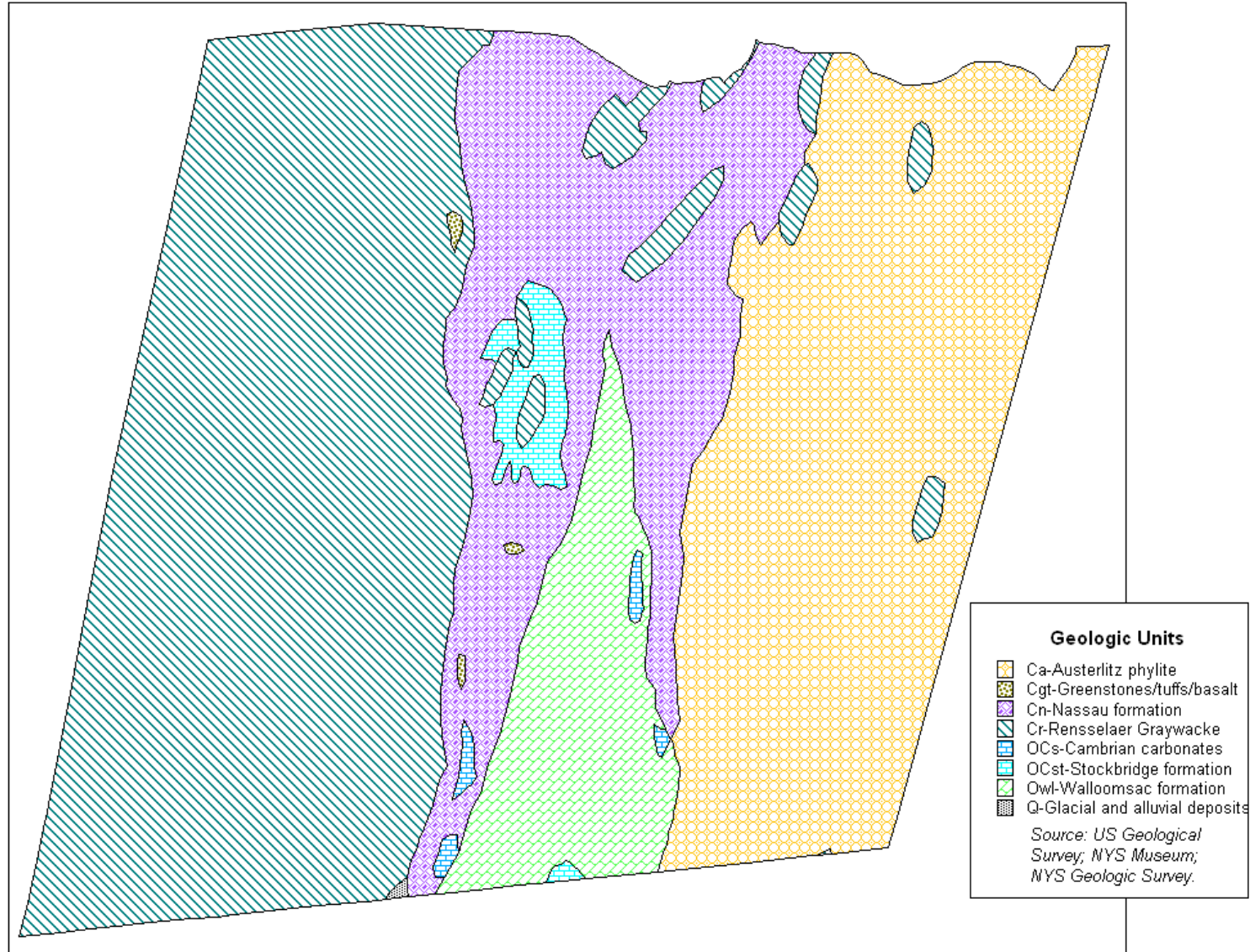
Map 3 *Topography of the Town of Berlin*

Geology

Much of the Taconic Mountain Range is steeply sloped hillside with some areas of less-steep side slope where glaciers and subsequent streams have created valleys that have allowed agriculture and development. The crest of the mountains are somewhat connected with a less steep ridge on which is perched the Taconic Crest Trail. The Taconic Mountains created an eastern wall to Berlin, separating it from Massachusetts and the communities on the other side. The Taconic Mountain Range has differing bedrock than that found on the Rensselaer Plateau. Probably dating to the Lower Cambrian era, the bedrock is part of the “Berkshire Formation” of Austerlitz phyllite. Slates, limestone and schists can be found in the Taconic Range.

The Rensselaer Plateau is gently rolling at its top with a steep escarpment into the valley of the Little Hoosick River. In a few places, streams have cut ravines into the hard rock of the steep walls. The Plateau also creates a western wall to Berlin. The primary stone found on the Rensselaer Plateau is greywacke grit - a hard sandstone. The hardness of the rock limited the creation of soil from rotting bedrock, leaving mainly shallow soils littered with rocks and boulders. Peat bogs and marshes can be found in areas of poor drainage. The Rensselaer Plateau drains slightly south in Berlin into the Black River.

The Little Hoosick valley, where the two geologic units meet, follows a fault line caused by the meeting of the two units. The valley is fairly wide in the town of Berlin, as compared to Petersburg, where the valley becomes pinched before entering into the Hoosic River valley. The narrowest part of the valley can be found on the southern end of Berlin from where springs the headwaters of the Kinderhook Creek. The Little Hoosick Valley has flat, fertile, deep gravelly soils which have supported the development of the town. The fault valley runs north and south beyond Rensselaer County’s borders and beyond the Hoosic and Kinderhook watersheds. Bedrock in the valley partly dates back to the Lower Cambrian era, with Wallomsac slate and limestone found along the valley floor. Marble and carbonates can be found in some hilly areas of the valley, where two caves exist. The larger cave is located south of the hamlet of Berlin and is a complex with several rooms and water features. This cave has had some collapse after blasting for the widening of Route 22. The second is located near Center Berlin and is much smaller. The larger cave has recently been given to the Northern Cave Conservancy. A parking area for spelunkers has been provided off Route 22 and rules for caving are posted at the entrance of the cave.



Map 4 *Geology of the Town of Berlin*

Soils

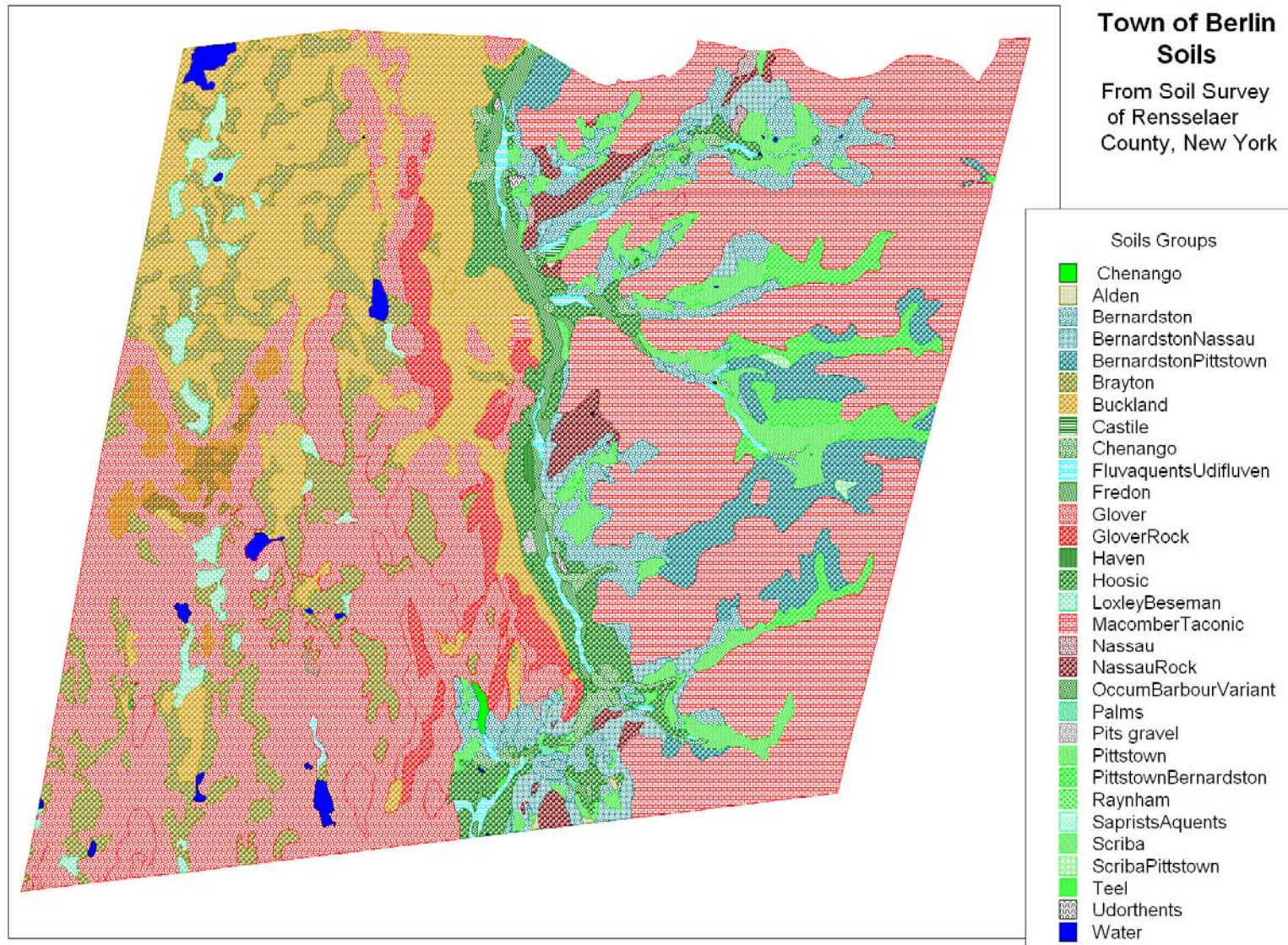
During the past ice age, all soils were removed by the ice sheet that covered the entire region. On the higher elevations such as the Rensselaer Plateau and on the Taconic Mountains, soils are thin, and in the case of the Rensselaer Plateau, with till mixed with boulders and moraines and small hills of soils left by the retreating glaciers. The Little Hoosick valley at one time held a larger river which left behind sandy and gravelly shores.

The Buckland-Glover soils predominate in the Rensselaer Plateau. Primarily gently sloping, but can be steep along the escarpment, these soils were formed in glacial till primarily formed from sandstone. They are well drained to excessively drained, with boulders and surface stones found throughout. Due to changes in depth of the soils, some areas are very deep with a dense fragipan and other places may have bedrock outcroppings with shallow soils. Along waterways, Brayton soils can be found, with Loxley and Beseman soils in depressions which have bogs and swamps. Due to the short growing season and stones and boulders, farming is difficult as the stones interfere with equipment. Soils are relatively acidic.

Hoosic-Chenango soils are predominantly found in the bottom of the Hoosic River valley. These primarily flat soils were formed by glacial outwash and have high sand and gravel content. These soils are deep, and depending on whether they are gravelly (Hoosic) or sandy (Chenango), they can be fast draining or moderately draining. These soils are easily tilled and are planted with corn and other crops in various places in the valley. The soils are easily developed for houses or commercial uses, but pollution of ground water is a possibility due to the rapid drainage of wastewater from septic leach fields.

East of the Little Hoosick River valley, on the lower portions of the mountains and in the valleys that climb into the Taconic Mountains, Bernardston-Pittstown-Nassau soils predominate. Formed from shaly glacial till, these soils are medium to excessively drained with varying depths to bedrock. Slopes vary greatly. A dense layer of soil is often found between 15 to 30 inches, creating a seasonal water table in winter and spring. The soils are arable where the slopes allow, although rock outcroppings may limit crop production. The seasonal wetness in the soils can limit development for houses and commercial uses.

On the steep mountain sides of the Taconics, Macomber-Taconic soils are only found in the far eastern portion of Rensselaer County. These soils are created from glacial till derived primarily from slate, phyllite and shale. These soils can be steep and very shallow, with bedrock exposed in many places. The soils are excessively to well-drained. A short growing season, shallow soils and steep slopes limit agriculture in these places. Steep slopes and shallow soils also limit the development of houses and commercial uses.



Map 5 *Soils of the Town of Berlin*

Water

Water is relatively abundant in Berlin, although drilled wells that provide sufficient water yields are not found throughout the town. Due to the height of the Taconic Mountains, higher rain and snow yields are found in Berlin, with the greatest snow amounts seen west of Misery Mountain, in the southern part of the town. With ample rainfall and snowmelt, many streams feed the Little Hoosick River. Swamps can be found in the uplands, often on highest ground. Swamps and stormwater provide for down slope groundwater and the aquifer which can be found in the Little Hoosick River valley.

Groundwater & Aquifers

The Town of Berlin relies on groundwater for its drinking water for its Water Districts as well as for most residences and businesses with private water sources. In the highland areas, groundwater is not as abundant as in the Little Hoosick River valley, where deeper, gravelly and sandy soils which are more conducive for aquifers are found. In fact, an aquifer is known to exist from Center Berlin north to Petersburg, with the possibility of this aquifer originating further south toward Cherry Plain.

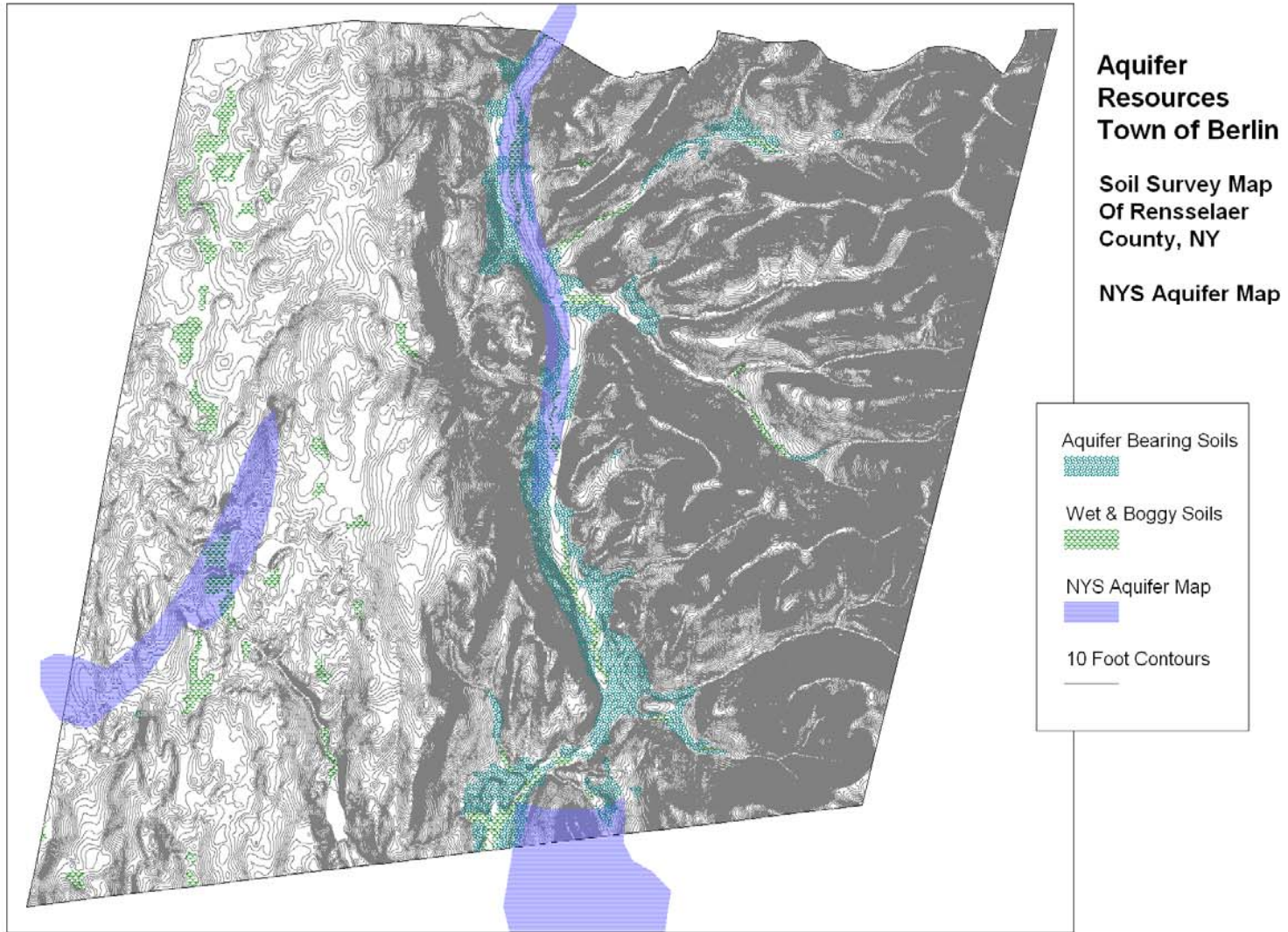
The state aquifer map also shows an aquifer in the Rensselaer Plateau. The location of this aquifer may be approximate. A series of wet and boggy soils runs south of Dyken Pond to the headwaters of the Black River, providing a water source for a possible aquifer fed through these marshy areas. The state aquifer map also shows another aquifer starting on Butternut Hill and running south into Stephentown. This aquifer probably starts south of Butternut Hill in Stephentown, and follows the West Brook and East Brook south to the Kinderhook Creek.

Groundwater quality is hard, with high levels of iron and manganese. No areas of low groundwater quantity are found, although issues with depth to groundwater exist in areas on the slopes of the Taconic Range and Rensselaer Plateau, where well depths are over 500 feet. Due to shallow soils, bedrock at or near the surface and steep slopes, these areas can have areas that require deep wells for sufficient yield with small areas that produce artesian wells.

Lakes, Rivers, Streams & Marshes

Along with plenteous groundwater, Berlin has much surface water. There are five large ponds or lakes: Dyken Pond, Kendall Pond, Black River Pond, Spring Lake and Round Pond. Several of these are created by dams. There are numerous smaller ponds dotting the countryside, as well as beaver dam ponds and marshes.

The primary river in Berlin is the Little Hoosick River which originates on Misery Mountain in the southern part of the town. Many smaller brooks and streams flow primarily west (some east) into the Little Hoosick. On the Rensselaer Plateau, the headwaters of the Poesten Kill are found along the western part of the town. Dyken Pond is one of the sources of the Poesten Kill. Rocky Brook, West Brook and Black River flow in a southern direction and are tributaries of the Kinderhook Creek. All surface waters in Berlin ultimately flow into the Hudson River, through the Hoosic River, Poesten Kill or Kinderhook Creek.



Map 6 *Aquifer Resources in the Town of Berlin*

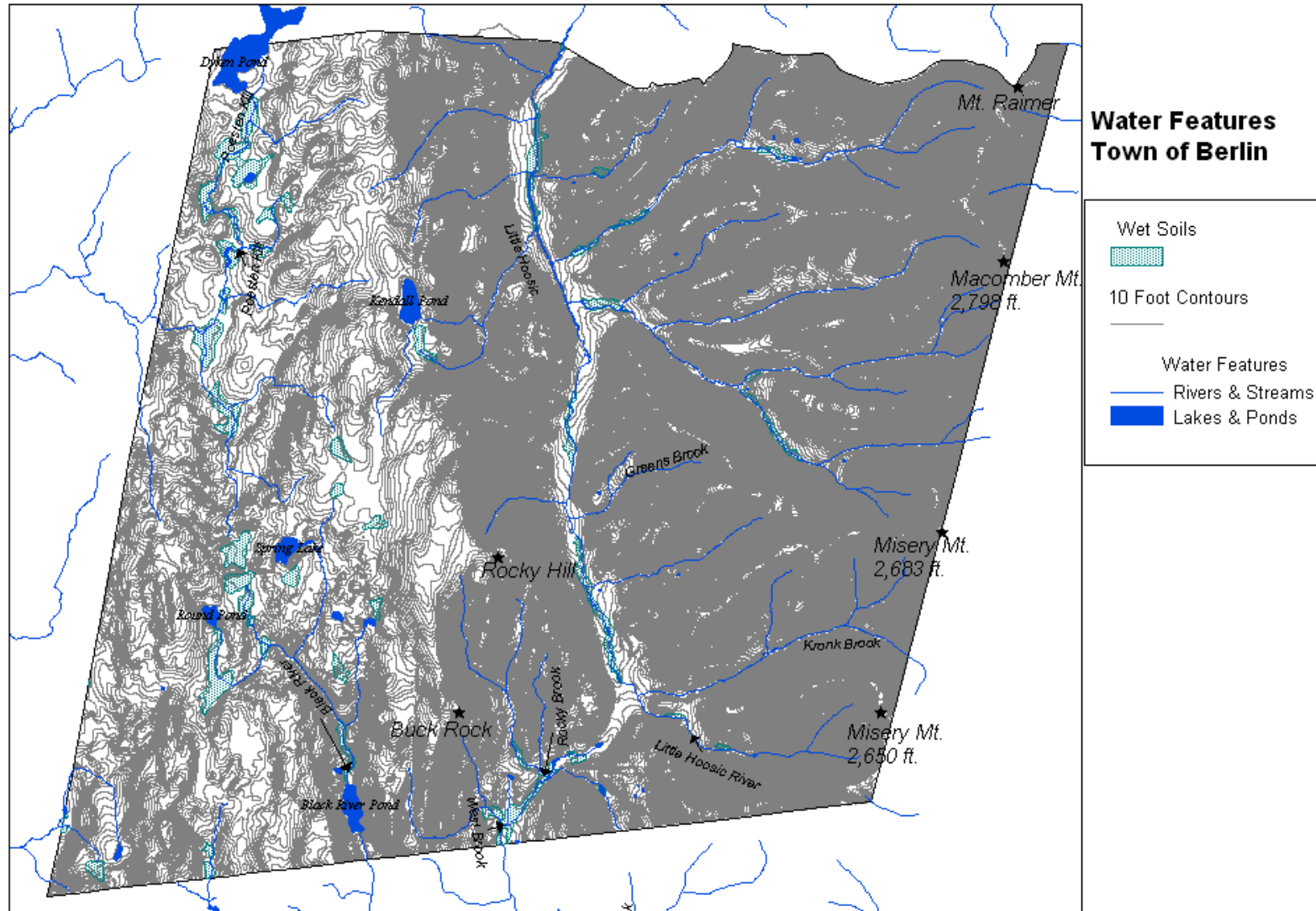


Photo 1 *Dyken Pond from the dam.*

railroad service and severely damaged homes and farms in the flood plain. A hurricane in September 1938 knocked out the railroad and three county bridges as well as many roadways. A six inch cloudburst in July 1945 around Henrotin Hollow caused the flooding of bottomland from Cherry Plain to North Petersburg. New Year's Eve to New Years Day, 1948/1949 had nine inches of rain on top of ten inches of snow, which washed out 15 bridges, roadways, the railroad and power and phone service. A flash flood on June 30, 1973 took out the bridge at Brimmer Junction road as well as damaged town roads and culverts.

A stream gauge was placed on the Little Hoosick by the Army Corps of Engineers to measure water flow and help predict floods downstream in the Hoosic River. The Little Hoosick Watershed was formed in 1953 to solve the flooding problems, A series of flood control works were performed by the Little Hoosick Watershed which have greatly reduced the flooding since. The removal of strategic sand bars and snags has helped reduce flooding in the past few decades. Maintenance of the flood channel is required to maintain the low amount of damage caused by flooding in the past decades. The Little Hoosick Watershed was reinstated in 2008.

There is a history of flooding in the town of Berlin. Due to the shallow soils of the hillsides in Berlin and being the site of the headwaters of several major creeks, heavy rains and fast snow melts have created flooding issues in the town. Exacerbating the issue is the fact that the Taconic Mountains, being the tallest barrier for a distance from the west, wring rain and snow from the atmosphere, creating heavier rains and snows in certain locations – the same locations from which the headwaters spring. Heavy flooding has occurred in the town in August 1891 due to a cloud burst. Lives were lost, the railroad was inoperable for weeks, bridges were washed out, fields, homes and businesses were damaged or destroyed and a small stream changed course. In November 1927, floods disrupted



Map 7 Water Features

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There are several types of wetlands in Berlin. Stream-side marshes, forest swamps, beaver dam swamps and bogs can be found in varying areas. These wet areas provide wildlife habitat as well as groundwater recharge areas. They also provide water storage to reduce flooding.

The largest wetlands are a series of swamps that run from Dyken Pond south into Stephentown, running parallel to the western Berlin border. Another large wetland is found immediately south of Cherry Plain on the west side of Route 22. No large wetlands are found in the Taconic Mountains, probably due to the steep topography and soils and underlying rock variety.

Land Cover

Much of the town of Berlin is forested, with some agricultural fields found in the Little Hoosick valley and valleys of its tributaries to the east. Urbanized areas are found in the Berlin hamlet area and in the Cherry Plain hamlet. Smaller, forest urbanized areas, where denser housing exists under trees are found in the camp settlements at Spring Lake, Round Pond and Dyken Pond. Larger commercial and community uses, such as the old Berlin Lumber and Berlin Middle/High School complex, can be found away from the more urbanized settings of the hamlets.

Air

Berlin has clear air much of the time, although it is located in Rensselaer County, which is considered a non-attainment area for 8-hour Ozone. Ozone is created when sunlight creates a reaction with hydrocarbons, often sourced from gas vapors, and nitrogen dioxide, from tailpipes and smokestacks. Ozone can travel for many miles, as is seen on Whiteface Mountain, which is also a non-attainment area for ozone. Ozone can trigger asthma, destroy materials such as rubber and fabrics, and will damage or destroy crops if the concentration is high enough.

As there is little industry presently (2010) in the town of Berlin with very little traffic congestion, local air quality is usually very good. On days of atmospheric inversion, some areas that have a greater density of wood burning apparatus may have air quality issues due to the inversion, the dryness and quality of wood and the number of wood stoves and fireplaces. Residents should be encouraged to only burn dry, clean wood and wood pellets in fireplaces, woodstoves or wood furnaces.

Radon may be an issue in some homes where basements and cellars are built into bedrock. Radon is a naturally occurring product which can be emitted from many varieties of bedrock. Cellars and basements that are air tight can trap this radioactive gas which is a cause of lung cancers. Testing kits can be purchased to test for the gas. Venting of the cellar or basement will allow the gas to escape into the atmosphere and reduce concentrations in living areas to safe levels.

Because of its topography, Berlin has garnered interest in wind energy. The Planning Board is presently examining wind power issues.

Wildlife

The town of Berlin has a rich variety of wildlife due to its rural nature and vast quantities of quality habitats. Being located next to Massachusetts' Berkshire Mountains, Berlin was one of the first towns in Rensselaer County to have larger wildlife such as black bear and moose set up residence in their borders. Berlin has always had smaller fauna such as white tailed deer and lynx.

The Capital District Wildlife Management Area is located in the southwestern portion of the town, with a portion in the town of Stephentown. The Wildlife Management Area has wintering areas for several species including moose and bald eagles.

Due to the fact that houses have been built in the forestland, some contact between humans and wildlife is expected. Contact with large animals probably is occurring more frequently as the animal population grows and expands to more territory. Precautions should be taken such as covering trash cans or leaving them indoors, taking bird feeders in at night and not tying small animals out without human supervision. Most wild animals will avoid human contact if possible, so care should be taken not to impede an animal's escape route.

A larger portion of the private forests have been recently logged, providing excellent habitat for deer. As the new growth of trees grows larger, food sources will decrease due to shading by the trees and live branches being too high to browse upon. At that point, more deer will be entering in yards, farm fields and other similar places to find food, especially in the winter. Some forest thinning will be needed in staggered timing to allow for improved habitat and reduce deer starvation.

Action Items:

1. Create an inventory of the natural resources of Berlin.

Berlin contains many natural resources throughout the community. An inventory with map of the locations can assist the Town Board, Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals with making land use decisions that may affect these resources. Information with the inventory detailing the quality of the resource, any known threats, resource needs and other information can help the Town if the Town should pursue funding to preserve, conserve or improve the resources.

2. Identify lands with significant ecological qualities or quality farmland to be preserved with conservation easements.

Using the above inventory of natural resources, certain areas and lands will be shown to have significant ecological qualities, multiple ecological qualities or be high quality farmland that should be preserved as such. State and federal programs funding resource preservation and private funds are available for farmland, wetland and other resource preservation. The identification of these lands will assist the Town and its residents and landowners to receive funding to purchase easements limiting development to these lands.

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3. Properly maintain and advertise preserved and state lands with their passive and low-impact recreation areas.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) both own lands within the Town of Berlin. The DEC also controls easements on numerous acres along the Taconic Crest as well as fishing rights along the Little Hoosick River. Much of the land is forest land which requires little maintenance, but a number of trails, including the Taconic Crest Trail and its feeder trails are located on these lands. Parking areas near trail heads have become overgrown or washed out. There is no signage for trail heads, which leads to under use of these trails. Fishing area parking areas and signage is also becoming deteriorated. To encourage usage and also support of these resources, improved signage leading potential users to trail heads and parking areas is needed.

4. Insist on a seat at the table when NYS Department of Environmental Conservation creates the Unit Management Plan and Recreation Management Plan for DEC controlled lands for the Taconic Crest, Berlin State Forest and Capital District Wildlife Management Preserve.

According to DEC’s website, Unit Management Plans (UMPs) assess the natural and physical resources present within a land unit. They also identify opportunities for recreational use and consider the ability of the resources and ecosystems to accommodate public use. Furthermore, these plans identify management objectives for public use which are consistent with the [land classification](#) guidelines and the wild character of these lands. UMPs control which users and user groups can use public lands and how. Since these lands are a significant portion of the town of Berlin, the Town should be actively involved in the creation of the plan. Since UMP can block access to certain users, the Town should make sure that the UMP for the DEC controlled lands does not run counter to the Town’s goals.

According to DEC’s website, Recreation Management Plans (RMPs) are plans intended to assess the recreational resources present within a Conservation Easement, identify opportunities for recreational use and consider the ability of the resources and ecosystems to accommodate public use. These plans are written by DEC planners for Conservation Easement Lands. Since many of the Taconic Crest lands are controlled by DEC easement, it is expected that an RMP may be prepared for these lands at the same time as the UMP for DEC state-owned lands. The RMP for these lands may help address item 2 above.



Photo 2 Entrance sign to the Capital District Wildlife Management Area,

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5. Encourage the use of best management practices in agriculture to minimize soil erosion, preserve and increase soil fertility, maintain water and air quality and provide a healthy living environment for livestock.

Although there presently is a limited amount of agriculture being practiced in Berlin, the high quality bottom lands along the Little Hoosick River, as well as high quality grazing lands on the western slopes of the Taconic Range should ensure that agriculture in some form or the other will be practiced in the town. Best management practices (BMPs) for agriculture are those that best preserve soil, water and air resources while also being cost efficient. Contour plowing, strip cropping and no-till planting are some of the best management practices used for crops. Rotational grazing is one practiced for large livestock operations. At present, the farms operating in the town practice these BMPs. New farm operations should contact the Rensselaer County Soil and Water Conservation District/NRCS to receive information on BMPs that would best suit their operations.

6. Discourage ridgeline development to preserve views.

Although the Taconic Crest is primarily preserved through DEC purchase of land or easements, several significant ridgelines exist on the west side of the Little Hoosick River valley. These properties can become choice building sites due to the views along the valley. The placement of houses away from the edge of the ridge can soften the visual impact the development of the houses can have. Placing the houses back from the ridgeline one or two times the height of the building will still preserve the view from the house, but will keep the structures from overshadowing the valley views. Retaining some of the trees between the house site and ridge will also soften the building(s) from valley views.

7. Maintain flood infrastructure and the Little Hoosick River riverbed to reduce the effects of flooding.

The town of Berlin has had some significant flooding in its history. In the 1950s several works were performed by the Little Hoosick Watershed to reduce the number of significant floods and impact of flooding. These works seem to perform as proposed since there have been very few flooding incidents since they were enacted. Through time, some gravel bars and snags will recur, and will need to be maintained so that the damages from flooding and scouring do not become more regular.



Photo 3 *The Little Hoosick running through the hamlet of Berlin.*

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8. Work with NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to maintain and improve Cherry Plain State Park.

OPRHP has recently spent much money upgrading the facilities including a new bathhouse, camping areas and beach renovations. Closing this facility would probably lead to illegal use of the facilities and vandalism. The Town encourages OPRHP to keep this facility open as it provides a secondary facility for Grafton Lakes State Park when it is at capacity. The Town encourages that OPRHP work together with the newly formed Friends of Cherry Plain State Park to assist with trails maintenance, fund raising and other duties which could assist to keep the park open.

9. Create vistas on Taconic Crest trails and Plank Road.

The Taconic Crest Trail and Plank Road were known places that were used by residents and visitors alike to appreciate the views from the significant heights. Over time, these views have become overgrown with trees. Working with the landowner for private land and the state forester for state lands, vistas should be opened in appropriate places so that the panoramas can be seen which were previously appreciated. These vistas would require regular maintenance so that they would not be overgrown again. Other areas may also be suitable for the creation of vistas for hikers and drivers.



Photo 4 *The beach, bath houses and pavilion at the Cherry Plain State Park.*

10. Work with bordering towns and beyond to create Route 22 as a Scenic Byway.

New York State Route 22 runs from New York City to Canada, following the valley system that the Little Hoosick River valley is a part of. It is shown on Rand McNally maps as a scenic route. The National Scenic Byway Program was laid out in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991. Scenic Byways are alternative travel routes to major highways and daily travel patterns with scenic, historic, recreational, cultural, archaeological and/or natural intrinsic qualities. To receive federal

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designation, a Scenic Byway must first be approved as a State Byway. New York State has created its own Scenic Byway program, based primarily on the federal program. New York Scenic Byways must have at least one theme defined by the significant intrinsic quality and have a Corridor Management Plan. Benefits of Scenic Byway designation include economic development through increased tourism and customer base; resource management; community services for the community and traveler; visitor management; and roadway management.

Corridor Management Plans must contain 1) Vision and Goals Statement; 2) Public Participation Plan; 3) Resource Inventory; 4) Stewardship Plan; 5) Tourism Development Plan; 6) Marketing and Promotion Plan; 7) Resource Interpretation Plan; 8) Financial Resources Plan; 9) Support and Implementation Plan; and 10) Transportation Safety Plan. To create a Corridor Management Plan, a Local Byway Advisory Committee is required. The Committee should be created of government, business, resource representatives (historians, Park Managers), residents and others that will be affected by the Byway. The Local Byway Advisory Committee will sponsor the Byway, build public support, create the plan and formally nominate the byway.

NY Route 22 has been proposed as a Scenic Byway in Dutchess County. Berlin, working together with the other three towns and one village (Hoosick, Petersburg, Stephentown and Hoosick Falls), can start the basis of a plan, but should reach out to the communities to the north and south along the roadway. Keeping the Corridor Management Plan simple will help gain acceptance by communities. The Capital District Transportation Committee's Linkage Program has helped fund Corridor Management Plans for other scenic byways in the Capital District.

Infrastructure

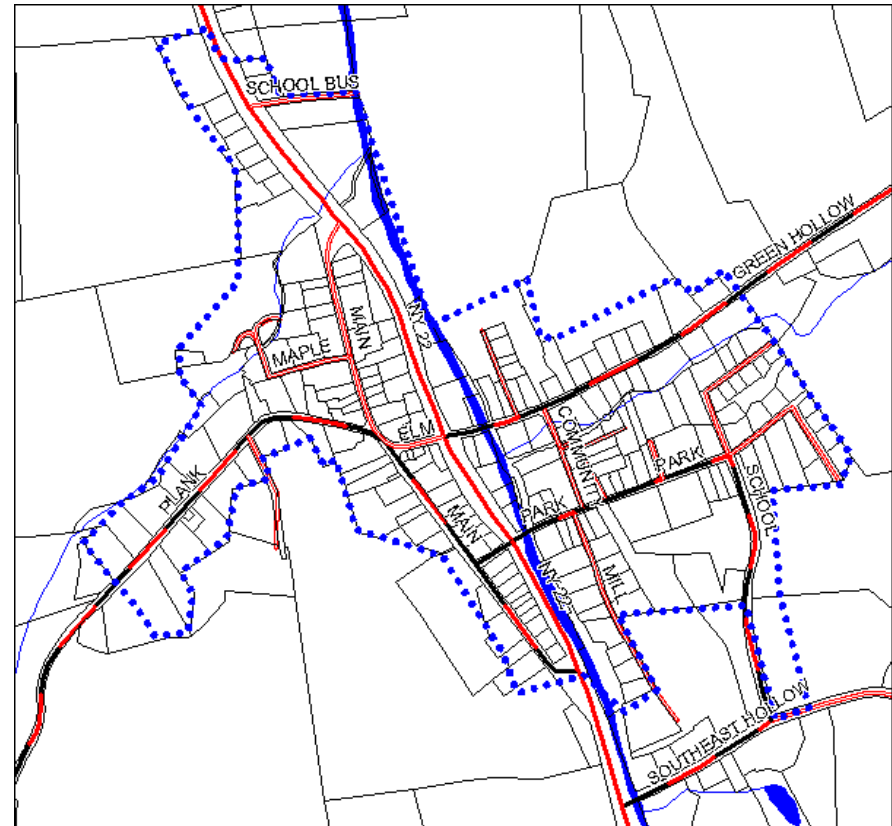
Goal: Maintain the infrastructure in the community to support business growth and a healthy community.

Due to its rural nature, the Town of Berlin has some basic infrastructure, with some infrastructure limited to the hamlet of Berlin and the Route 22 corridor. Issues exist in areas where there is a lack of infrastructure, and with quality, maintenance and cost of expansion of services.

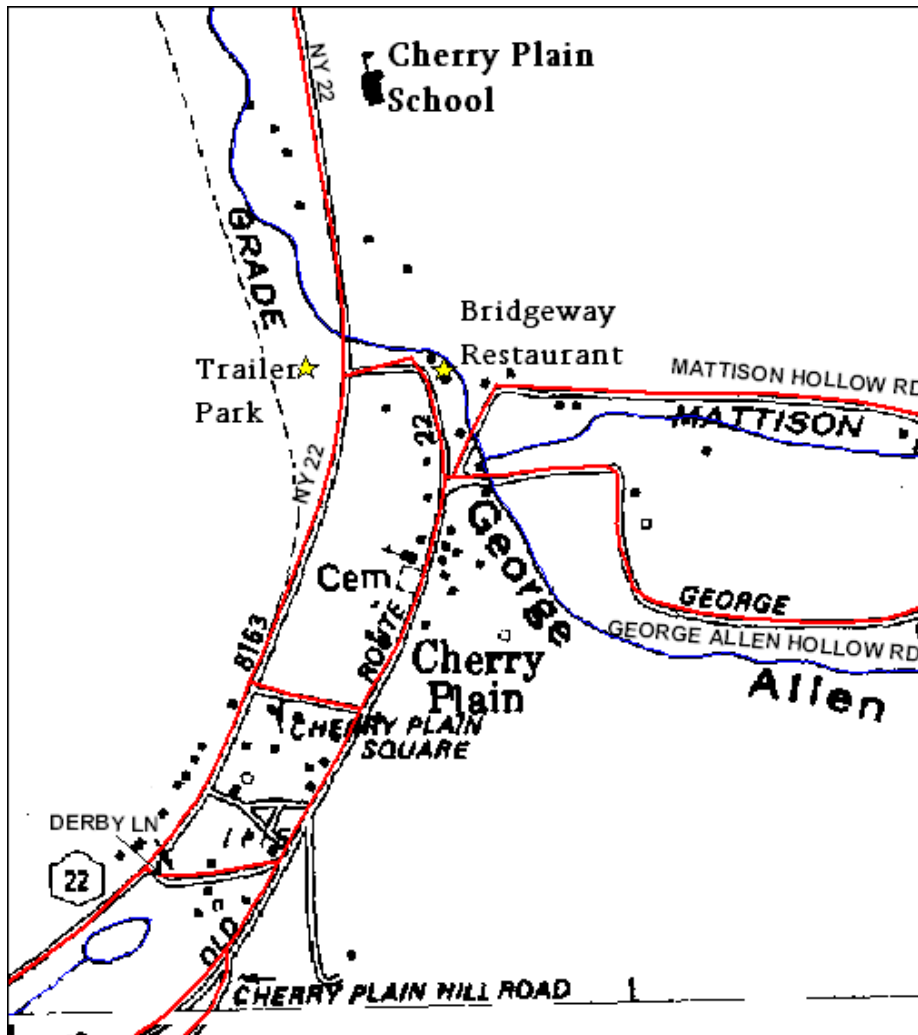
Water

Presently, there are two water districts in the town. Water District #1 serves the Berlin Mountain Fish and Game Club, a primarily seasonal residential area. The water system was created by the Fish and Game Club to supply water to the camps and cabins along Round Pond. The water supply for this district is a well off Long View Trail. Recent significant upgrades to this district include a new reservoir.

Water District #2 serves the hamlet of Berlin and provides water to approximately 20% of the population of the town. The water system was created by W.J. Cowee to provide water supply to the factory, for fire fighting purposes, and to its workers. The water supply for this district is a well field off NY Route 22. The system is unmetered. Billing is according to the number of water fixtures in a house. The system is primarily 100 years old and is expected to need significant repairs soon. The last upgrade to the district was the replacement of a water main. To qualify for state revolving loan fund monies to upgrade the system, water rates must be raised significantly. Metering would fairly place the majority of water district costs on the heavier district users. A funding mix of per unit charges for maintenance costs and meter charges for operation and water costs may be the most equitable method of charging costs. A capital plan for the water system may help the district plan for the upgrading of the system, and create realistic rates.



Map 8 Approximate boundaries of Water District #2 Service Area.



Map 9 *Cherry Plain Neighborhood*

Most areas in the town of Berlin rely on groundwater for their water supply. In some areas in the Rensselaer Plateau or on high ground in the Taconic range, well depths are beyond 600 feet.

Public or community water systems are usually unaffordable unless the density is one house per quarter to half acre, or there is a large user which can help defray costs. The hamlet of Cherry Plain, due to the numerous residences and the presence of the Cherry Plain Middle/High School and trailer park - both community or transient community water supplies, may have sufficient density for a community water system. Community water supplies are those who provide water to 5 service connections or 25 people year round. Transient community water supplies serve at least 25 of the same people 4 days a week for at least 4 hours a day for at least 26 weeks a year. Restaurants require regular water testing as part of its restaurant health permit.

Sewer

At present, there are no public or community sewer systems in the town of Berlin. All wastewater treatment requirements are dealt with on-site with septic systems, pump-out tanks or the occasional sand filter systems.

As with water systems, sewer systems require density or large users to be affordable. The water district areas and Cherry Plain hamlet are the only areas that may allow affordable sewer systems. A public sewer system would allow for greater density, and would allow businesses that require sewerage to be able to settle in the Town.

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On-site septic systems require regular maintenance to keep the system operational and reduce the chance that bacteria or pollutants escape into the groundwater or surface waters. Septic tanks require regular pump-outs from yearly to every three years, depending on the size of the tank and usage. Surface discharges, often seen as oily, multicolored and/or odiferous water around the tank or on the leach field, require the replacement of the leach field or cleaning of the tank.

Telephone

The land-line telephone system in the town of Berlin is provided by Fairpoint Communications, which purchased the Taconic Telephone system. T-1 service is provided throughout the community with fiberoptic service available along small areas of Route 22.

Cellular Telephone

Cellular telephone reception is increasing in the town of Berlin. A new transmission tower was erected by Verizon Wireless/Cellco in Petersburg, which has created some coverage along Route 22 north of the hamlet of Berlin. Another new cell tower has been erected just north of the hamlet of Berlin which should improve cell coverage to the hamlet and south into Center Berlin. A third cell tower had been erected in Cherry Plain and should provide coverage along the entire Route 22 corridor through the town of Berlin. In the hollows and valleys, coverage will still be sporadic due to topography.

Electric

The electrical system in Berlin was first started by W.J. Cowee. The electrical service franchise in Berlin is now owned by New York State Electric and Gas (NYSEG). NYSEG's reliability ratings in 2009 are Frequency (SAIFI) of 1.08 and Duration (CAIDI) of 2.00. A supply transmission line to the hamlet of Berlin has unused capacity due to the closure of Seagroatts and Berlin Lumber and reduced activity at Hoosick River Hardwoods.

Gas

No natural gas service is provided in Berlin. Propane gas heats approximately one tenth of the homes in the town. The closest natural gas pipeline is located in Columbia County where two major natural gas transmission lines cross into Massachusetts. No gas service is expected in the near or medium term future.

Television/Cable

The cable service franchise in the town of Berlin is owned by Charter Communications. Cable service is provided along the Route 22 corridor and in the hamlets of Berlin, Center Berlin and Cherry Plain, as well as Plank Road and Green Hollow Road. The outlying areas of Berlin use dish services for television reception. Regular television reception through antenna is sketchy due to topography. New television services using computer and cellular services are becoming available.

Internet

Internet service is provided through Fairpoint Communications and by dish services. Standard speed for Fairpoint customers starts at 256 kB down, with speeds available up to 5 mGB down along the Route 22 corridor. Speeds up to 3 mGB down are available throughout the community.

Action Items:

1. **Ensure that sufficient infrastructure exists in areas proposed for commercial and industrial use to support business growth.**

Businesses, especially industry, often require some variety of infrastructure, whether it is a plentiful water supply, reliably fast internet access or reliable electricity. Although Berlin is not next to an interstate highway, some businesses will be attracted to Berlin due to its mechanically inclined labor force, recreational and outdoor qualities and reliable services. Computer programming companies, back offices and artisanal workshops often do not require sewers, but will need fire suppression water supply for insurance needs. They also need reliable electric service and high speed internet services for communication with customers, other offices and marketing. To attract businesses, Berlin should work with providers to make sure that sufficient capacity exists and that the reliability is high enough to attract new businesses.



Photo 5 *The 15 kV feeder line to the hamlet of Berlin running along the old rail bed.*

2. **Work with technological infrastructure providers to find suitable locations for cell towers and with other needs providers may have.**

Cell phone service was identified in the 2008 survey to be one of the most needed services. Due to the topography of the town, multiple towers may be needed to provide service for most residents. Due to the scenic nature of Berlin, the location of cell towers can

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be highly disturbing. Careful siting of cell towers can reduce the visual impact of the towers while providing needed services. As the Town Board and Planning Board have more knowledge of the town than the tower siting companies, these Boards can help steer these companies into sites that are less obtrusive.

3. Examine the use of new technologies for infrastructure upgrades, including green technologies.

The use of wireless internet and other high speed transmissions can help power companies and other infrastructure owners identify malfunctioning infrastructure. Up until recently, if part of the electrical power, telephone or cable grid malfunctioned or was damaged, crews would be required to drive around to find where the problem was. Now, the use of computer technology and wireless communication can help pinpoint problem areas on an electronic map in the office if the proper new technology is installed with upgrades to the wires, their capacitors and other components. This reduces time when the service is down. The technology can also warn if issues appear to be forming on the grid. Utility companies are encouraged to upgrade their services during routine maintenance.

4. Encourage development in areas of existing public water infrastructure where smaller lot sizes can be used.

New housing lots with on-site water and sewer systems in Rensselaer County usually require an acre and a half to two acre lots to allow required separation distances for well and septic systems. In the areas with public water infrastructure, lot sizes will still need to be able to accommodate septic systems, but do not have to factor in separation distances from wells. This allows a more dense development which allows for growth but does not eat up as much raw land. Smaller lots are usually less expensive, providing a more affordable housing option.

5. Maintain water and other infrastructure to support the Berlin hamlet area.

One consistent theme from attendees to the January 27, 2010 Public Workshop was that the hamlet areas need to be supported to maintain the village-like atmosphere. This village-like atmosphere is due to the significant number of small housing lots, commercial properties and industrial properties which safely exist in the density due to the provision of public water for drinking and fire suppression. The density also has allowed the provision of cable television and T-1 phone lines and would be the most likely area for other hard-wired infrastructure such as fiber optic. Provision of these services will also help attract new businesses into the Berlin hamlet area.

6. Look into the development of water infrastructure in Cherry Plain and the development of sewer infrastructure in both Berlin and Cherry Plain to encourage the development in these areas.

Although Cherry Plain has fewer residences than the Berlin hamlet area, the Middle/ High School is a large user of water which requires water testing as it is considered a transient water supply. Across from the Middle/High School is a small trailer park which is considered a community water supply. The creation of a water district that includes the school would allow more businesses in Cherry Plain, as well as additional housing.

Sewer systems could be justified in the two major hamlets by the density of the housing in Berlin and the location of a restaurant, trailer park and larger school in Cherry Plain. Restaurants, hotels, schools and several varieties of industries are easier to locate and serve where public or community sewers exist. Large septic systems require large amounts of land. If sufficient area isn't available, expensive sand filters or holding tanks which need to be pumped regularly are required. This can be limiting for the reuse of some of the historic properties in Berlin and Cherry Plain. Businesses that could take advantage of the plentiful water in the town would also need to process any waste water. Any sewer system should be carefully planned for size to allow growth and expansion, while not over-sizing the treatment facility.

7. Create a multi-use trail along the railroad bed of the old Rutland Railroad bed running parallel to Route 22 and the Little Hoosick River.

The old Rutland Railroad connected the valley settlements in Berlin, allowing easy travel between communities. The railroad bed is being converted to rail trails in Vermont and Columbia County, providing a recreation facility, non-motorized roadway which has become a draw with tourists and residents alike. This trail could also provide a location for buried infrastructure such as water, sewer or telephone/fiber lines.

Transportation

Goal: Facilitate access to commerce, services, employment and communities.

Transportation is essential to all societies. The need to move people and goods is a basic part of the economy. Since Berlin is located away from major population centers, it is more essential to be able for residents to travel to jobs, markets and services, as well as allow the influx of goods and services to homes and businesses in the town.

Roadways

Roadways are the most essential travel ways in Berlin. The Little Hoosick River valley was part of a pre-European travel system which is now followed by Route 22. County Route 40 was a stage coach route which probably followed a much older pathway across the Plateau. Throughout the years, many miles of roadways have been abandoned in the town as populations moved away from the Rensselaer Plateau and newer routes were carved over the Taconic Mountains, making the old routes passé.

State Highways

There is only one state highway in the town of Berlin – Route 22. Route 22 runs north/south for 8.3 miles through the center of the town of Berlin. This very important roadway carries the majority of traffic through the town. Route 22 was widened in the 1950s and is now a wide roadway with 12 foot lanes in each direction and shoulders of 6 to 8 feet throughout most of the town. With the exception of the area of the Berlin Hamlet, the posted speed limit is 55 mph. In the Berlin hamlet area, the speed limit is 45 mph. Most traffic travels above the posted speed limit, due to the feel that the flat and wide highway seems like an interstate. Much of the traffic is thru-traffic avoiding the interstate. Congestion is rare and usually due to an event such as a major accident. There is sufficient highway capacity on Route 22 to allow a doubling of traffic through the town of Berlin.

NY Route 22 Traffic Count			
Estimated Annual Average Daily Traffic			
Location	Latest Traffic Count	Previous Traffic Count	Earlier Traffic Count
Between Route 43 & North Main Street	2,510 (2007)	2,830 (2004)	2,850 (2001)
Between North Main Street & Route 2	3,110 (2007)	3,400 (2003)	3,290 (2000)

Table 12. *Source: NYS DOT 2008 Traffic Data Report*

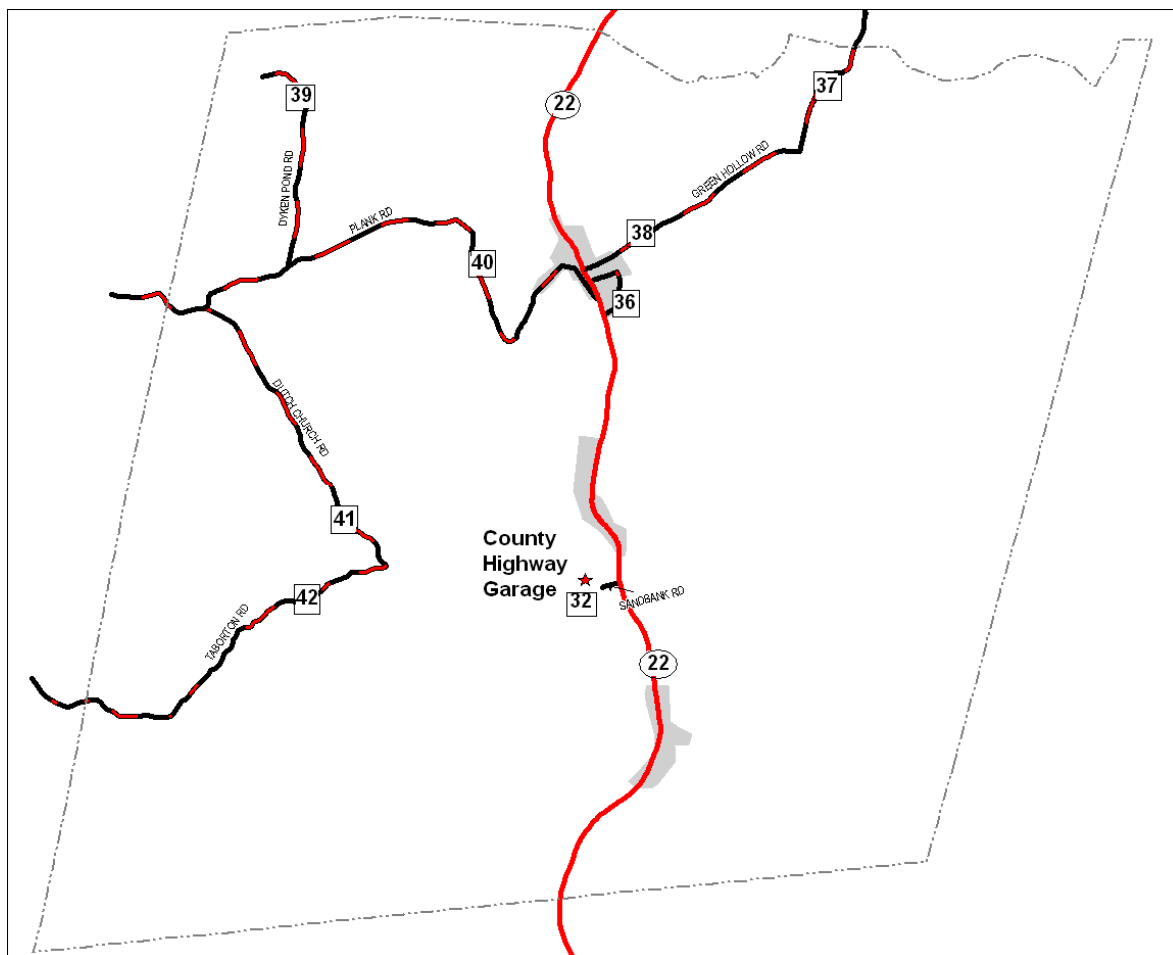
Route 22 is maintained by state highway crews operating out of the Petersburg state highway maintenance facility on Route 22 in Petersburg.

During the Memorial Day and Independence Day parades, Route 22 is shut down to traffic, causing some back-up, delays and complaints

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County Highways

Many of the old stage coach routes and turnpikes are now county highways. The main county highway in Berlin is Plank Road/County Route 40. This old turnpike and stage route now runs from downtown Poestenkill to downtown Berlin. Plank Road is also on the Federal Highway system, part of the escape route from Troy from the Cold War era. The turnpike used to cross the Taconic Mountains over the Berlin Pass. Part of the route east of Route 22 is Green Hollow Road/County Route 38. The county route part ends at Cold Spring Road/County Route 37, which leads over a pass to the town of Petersburg. The old stage coach turnpike continues east as a town road and then an access trail to the Taconic Crest Trail.



Other county roads include Taborton Road/County Route 42 and County Route 36 which includes South Main Street, Park Street and portions of Bank Road/County Route 32, Southeast Hollow Road and School Street, Dyken Pond Road/County Route 39, Dutch Church Road/County Route 41 and. These 7.6 miles of roadways provide the backbone to accessing the outer areas of the town of Berlin.

The Rensselaer County Highway Department maintains a garage on Sand Bank Road, with salt storage and truck maintenance facilities. This facility maintains the county highways in Berlin, Stephentown and parts of Poestenkill, Sand Lake and Nassau. The salt storage facility is also used by intermunicipal agreement with the Town of Berlin and Stephentown as well as the Berlin Central School District and New York State Department of Transportation.

County highways in Berlin are mainly

Map 10 State and County Highways

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posted at a speed of 45 MPH, with certain areas posted for lower speeds due to highway alignment. Roadway conditions are usually not conducive to higher speed driving, as most county highways in Berlin are curvy and do not keep their pavement surfaces long. Proposed road and bridge work on county highways includes the replacement of the bridges over the Little Hoosick on Sand Bank Road and Elm Street.

Town Roads

There are 48 miles of town roadways. Many of the town roads are dead-ended, often part of abandoned old roadways. Berlin town roads are a mix of paved and dirt roads. Paved road widths are usually between 16 and 18 feet, with some unpaved roads narrower. As like county highways, pavement often heaves or breaks up in winter due to underlying soils.

Town roadways include Brimmer Junction Road, Brimmer Farm Road, lower Goodell Road, Graney Road, Hilltop Road, Old Route 22, Dale Road, Satterlee Hollow Road, Raymer Lane, School Bus Lane, Taylor Avenue, North Main Street, Walnut Lane, Elm Street, Maple Avenue, Reservoir Road, Fog Lane, Community Avenue, Railroad Avenue, Roosevelt Avenue, Mill Street, Johnson Lane, Brookside Park Road, Echo Park, Southeast Hollow Road, Nichols Hill Road, Cowdry Hollow Road, Legion Road, Cowee Road, Fifty-Six Road, Sicko Road, Lower Bower Road, Dingman Road, Wood Road, Bower (Bauer) Road, Miller Road, Upper Stage Coach Road, Bly Hollow Road, Schaeffer Road, Goodermote Road, Watson Road, Black River Road, Adams Road, CCC Dam Road, Cherry Plain Hill Road, Rastus Lane, Cherry Plain Square, Derby Lane, Fuller Lane, George Allen Hollow Road, Mattison Hollow Road, Gilcher Lane, Miles Mountain Road, Browns Hollow Road, Airport Road, Greenes Brook Road, Lower Stage Coach Road, Browns Lane, Lanphier Lane, and Canfield Road.

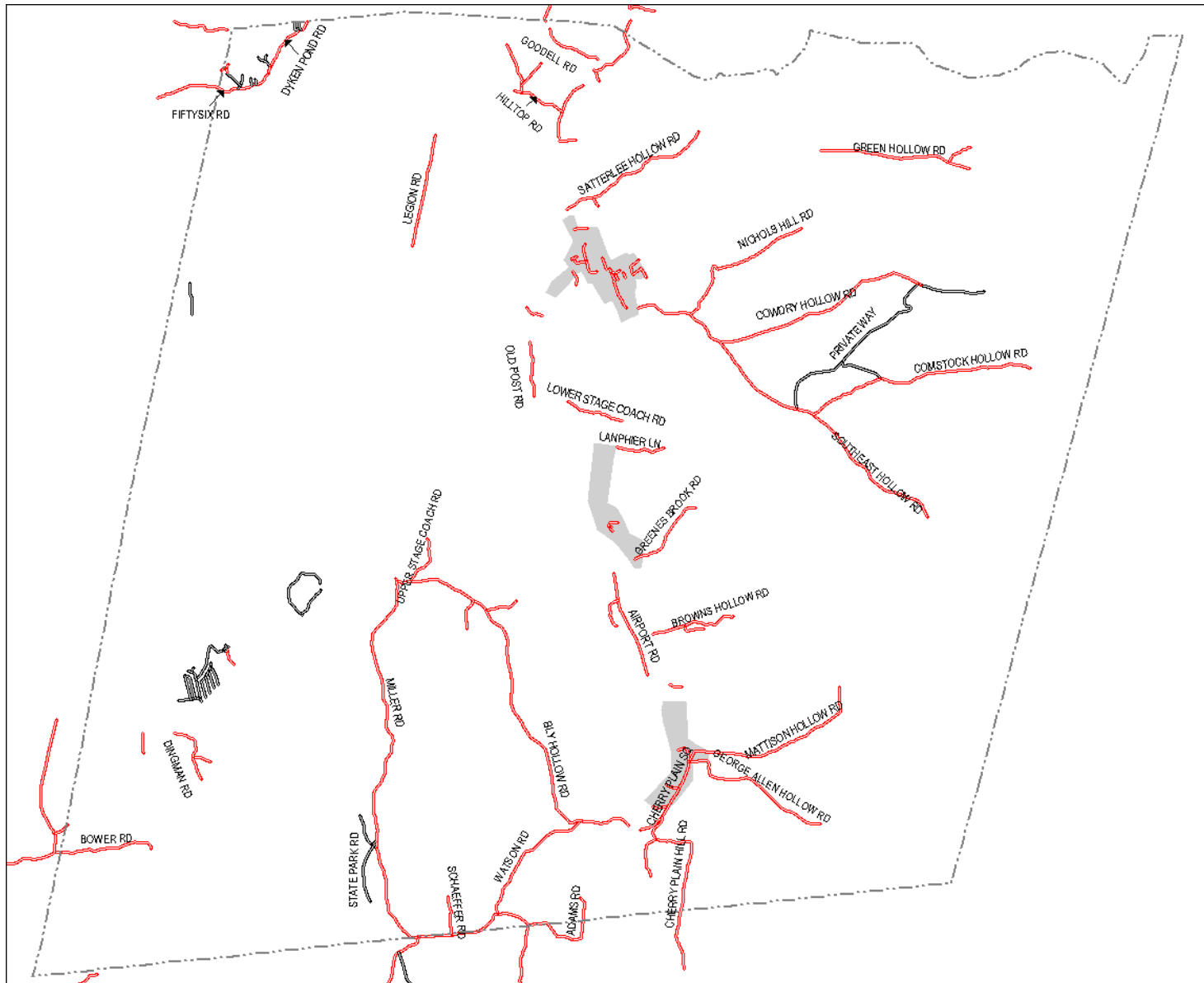
The Town Highway Garage is located off Route 22 in hamlet of Berlin and has truck maintenance.

Private Roads

Along with the state, county and town-owned roadways, there are a number of private roadways, primarily in lake-front developments, but also in Cherry Plain State Park and Berlin State Forest. The private roads are often narrower than local roads, with most being 12 to 14 feet wide. These roads are maintained by the lake association or state agency in charge of the underlying lands.

Private roadways include the eastern-most portion of Cowdry Hollow Road, Private Way, Admant Drive, Pine Avenue, East Road, East Shore Drive, Wager Road, Wachter Road, Ruff Road, Sicko Road, Spring Lake Road, Hill Road, Long View, Mountain View, Forest Trail, Maple Trail, Pine Trail, Spruce Trail, Lake Trail, Birch Trail, State Camp Road and Cowee Way.

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Map 11 Town and Private Roadways

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Highway Safety

Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) staff reviewed automobile crash data for the entire town of Berlin for the period of 1/1/2005 to 12/31/2009 using information pulled from the NYS Accident Location Information System (ALIS). In the five year span, 120 crashes were reported, including both reportable and non-reportable type crashes. Of those, 89 (74%) were located on NY Route 22 – not surprising since the highway has the greatest traffic volume of all roads in the town. Of the 120 crashes, 44 were between two motor vehicles, 25 between motor vehicles and deer, and 37 between motor vehicles and fixed items such as guardrail, trees, earthen embankments or ditches. In severity, only 20 included property damage and injury, 52 only had property damage, 11 injury with no property damage, 1 fatality and 32 non-reportable. The most common apparent crash factors, if known, were animal’s action (28 crashes), slippery pavement (15 crashes), driver inattention (14 crashes), unsafe speed (14 crashes), failure to yield right of way (13 crashes), passing or improper lane usage (11 crashes), following too closely (8 crashes) and finally alcohol (5 crashes). CDTC’s complete crash data summary can be found in the Appendix.

A cluster of crashes were located in the hamlet of Berlin on Route 22 between the intersections with North Main Street and South Main Street. In the period reviewed, 25 crashes occurred on NY Route 22 in the Berlin hamlet, of which 22 were between two motor vehicles. The majority of the two motor vehicle crashes were right angle crashes, seen typically with a turning vehicle. A safety assessment would review data in greater detail to further identify safety issues along this section of highway.

Sidewalks/Paths/Trails

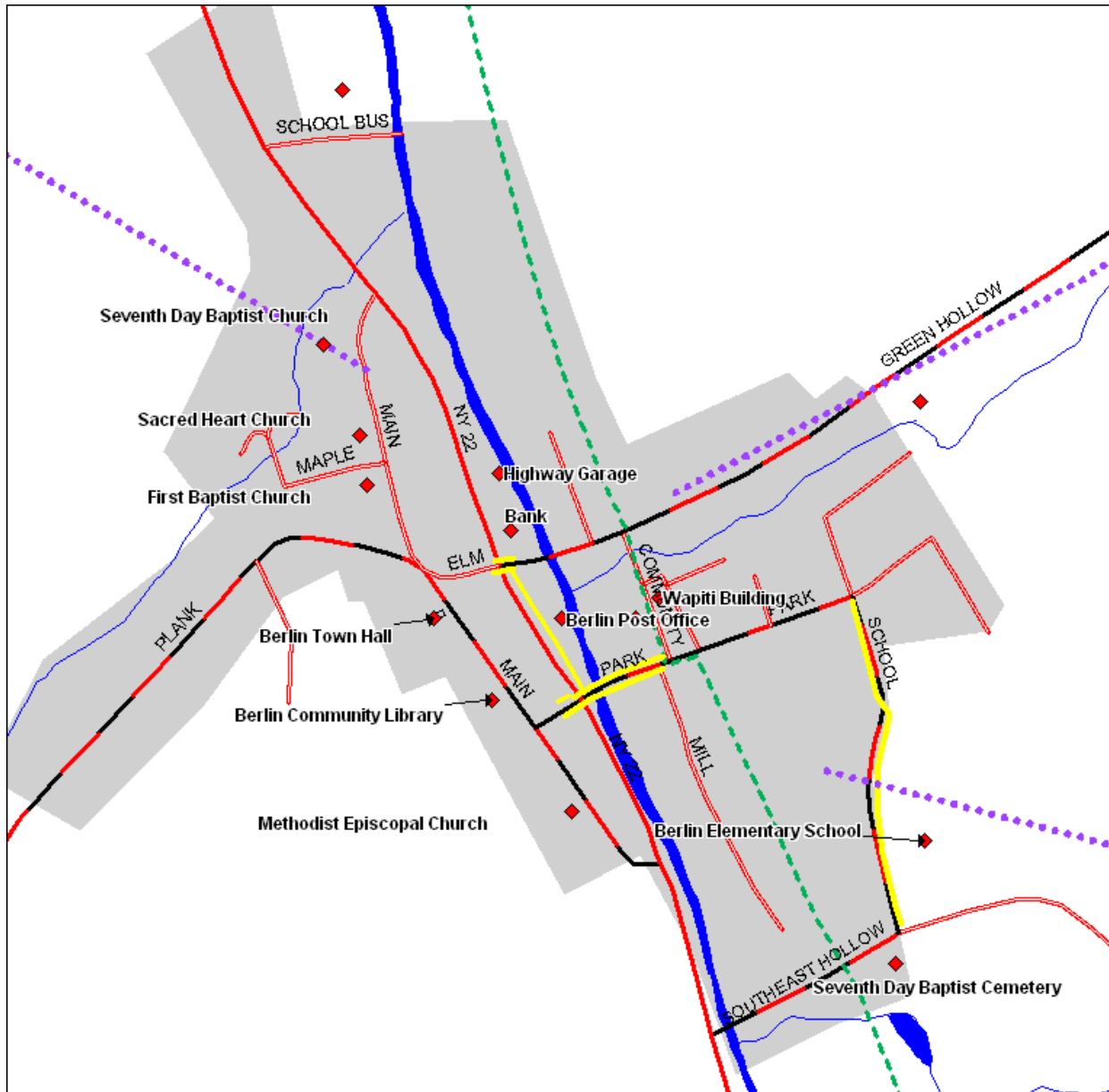
There are sidewalks in the hamlet of Berlin along North and South Main Street, most of Elm Street and parts of Park Street and Community Avenue. Some sidewalks have been removed along School Street recently. When Rensselaer County rehabbed the Park Avenue Bridge, walkways and sidewalks were also removed from this section of roadway. Likewise, when work was done on Route 22, sidewalks were covered or cut.

There are no sidewalks along Route 22 or outside of the hamlet of Berlin. There is a need for sidewalks to be reinstated or installed in parts of the hamlet of Berlin, which has many community facilities and is a highly walkable. Crosswalks and intersection improvements at the intersections of Elm Street and Route 22 and Park Avenue and Route 22 would help slow traffic down on Route 22, make turning out of and into the side streets less confusing, and give drivers an alert that pedestrians may be found in these areas.



Photo 6 *A portion of the sidewalk along Park Avenue that has been partially covered by asphalt and gravel.*

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Map 12 *The Hamlet of Berlin.* The yellow lines denote areas where sidewalks should be installed. The green dotted line shows the old Rutland Railroad rail bed. The purple dotted lines show areas where connections are needed to resources such as hiking trails and other recreation facilities.

The intersections of Elm Street and Park Avenue with Route 22 have widened over the years, with the side streets becoming wide enough to accommodate two vehicles pulling out side by side. The widening has taken away the sidewalks, as see in the photo on the previous page. Additionally, Route 22 appears wide in this area due to wide shoulders and a large clear zone, creating difficulties to determine speeds of vehicles. Planting trees along the route could help establish speeds as well as create a feeling of entering into a community. The Appendix has a more in-depth write up on these issues and possible solutions.

The Berlin Post Office is located on Route 22, but does not have a sidewalk running to it. There is sufficient area in the road right-of-

way outside of the drainage ditch to provide a sidewalk between Elm Street and Park Avenue.

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The Elm Street Bridge is listed on the regional Transportation Improvement Plan for replacement. Sidewalks should be retained in the design and extended to Route 22. Although the Park Avenue Bridge was recently replaced, when the bridge is to be replaced again, sidewalks should be reestablished on this bridge also. Sidewalks should also connect the Berlin Elementary School to Park Avenue.

The Taconic Crest Trail runs along the top of the Taconic Mountain range, with feeder trails that can be accessed in several locations, including Green Hollow, Cowdry Hollow, Comstock Hollow, Southeast Hollow and Mattison Hollow Roads. Some of the feeder trails have parking areas, although most parking requires improvement. Signage to the trails is almost non-existent.

Some of the abandoned roadways have been used informally by hikers. Most of these roads have reverted ownership back to the underlying property owners. Permission from property owners should be sought before hiking on these roadways or if the community wanted to create more permanent trails on them.

In a Trails Planning Study performed by the Rensselaer Land Trust funded by the Hudson River Greenway Conservancy, several trails were proposed for the Berlin area. One is being more actively pursued, the creation of a rail trail on the old Rutland Railroad bed. This trail would connect ultimately between Bennington VT, and Chatham in Columbia County. The trail would provide a connection between the three valley hamlets of Berlin, Center Berlin and Cherry Plain, as well as connect both Berlin Elementary School and Berlin Middle/High School with the hamlets. The rail bed has been reclaimed for agricultural uses in places and is part of the roadway system in the hamlets of Berlin (Railroad Avenue) and Center Berlin (Airport Road). In some areas, the trail would need to follow Route 22 to reduce impacts on houses that may have been built on or next to the old railroad bed.

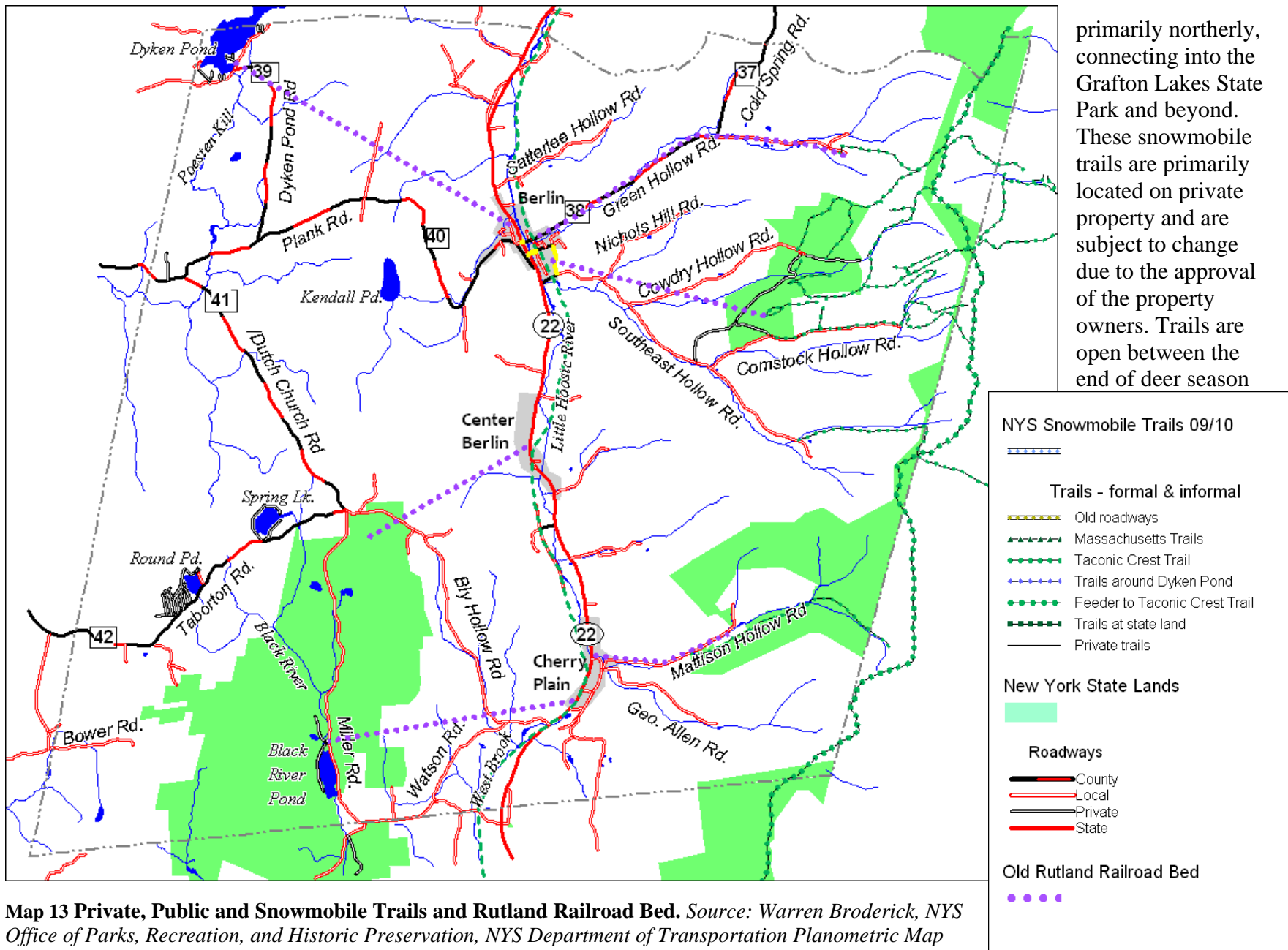
Other trails include creating a bicycle trail as an integral part of Route 22 and creating a trail that would connect the different state parks. The Route 22 bicycle trail would be easy to do the next time DOT repaves the roadway, as the road is wide enough for a striped bicycle lane. It may also help narrow the lanes to slow traffic down a little.

There are two snowmobile trail clubs that have trails within the town of Berlin: the Grafton Trail Blazers and Black River Raiders. The Black River Raiders trails run primarily westerly from the park to the hamlet of Sand Lake. The Grafton Trail Blazers trails run



Photo 7 *A foot trail in Cherry Plain State Park.*

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Map 13 Private, Public and Snowmobile Trails and Rutland Railroad Bed. Source: Warren Broderick, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, NYS Department of Transportation Planometric Map

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and April 1st when sufficient snow is on the ground to snowmobiles registered in the State of New York.

There have been trails in the Capital District Wildlife Management Area, many of which have grown over in the years. These trails have been open to snowshoers, cross country skiers and hikers

Public Transit/Alternative Transportation

At present, there is no public transportation in Berlin. Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) at one time ran buses to Troy over Plank Road two runs a day on a twice weekly basis and morning and evening runs on Route 22 north to Route 2 on a daily basis. These runs were dropped due to lack of ridership. Most Berlin residents work at differing hours in multiple locations, which makes it difficult to provide bus service.

Car pools and van pools can provide a simple alternative to public transit. The Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) has a web site for car pools – www.iPool2.org – which can help commuters link together to share driving. If a large enough number of workers from Berlin travel at the same time to the same location, a van pool can be examined. The van pool would either reimburse the driver for costs and time or could be paid by an employer if all the riders work for one employer.

Other Issues

Route 22 Through Berlin Hamlet

Due to the fact that the hamlet of Berlin spreads across the entire valley, the hamlet was bisected when Route 22 was widened and improved in the 1950s. The width of the roadway and speed of the traffic make the crossing of Route 22 unappealing to pedestrians and bicyclists. Although the speed limit in the hamlet is posted at 45 MPH, many drivers speed through the hamlet since the roadway is straight and broad, giving it a super-highway feel.

A narrowing of the roadway by moving the fog line in one foot, along with tree planting and cross walks at Elm Street and Park Avenue could help provide drivers visual clues that they are in a built-up area and to reduce speed. The narrowing effect of the roadway should occur between Satterlee Hollow Road and Southeast Hollow Road to reduce drivers' speeds before getting into the heart of the hamlet. A more detailed write up with photos can be found in the Appendix. The Capital District Transportation Committee has matching funding available for corridor studies that would look in more depth at issues such as Route 22 through the hamlet(s), as well as other transportation related studies such as scenic byway plans and trail studies.

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Route 22 at Berlin Jr./Sr. High School

Route 22 in front of the Berlin Jr./Sr. High School is posted at 55 MPH. At present, the speeds exceed this regularly. Although only one accident was listed during the period of 1/1/2005 to 12/31/2009, the opportunity for accidents is pretty high. The school is a smoke free zone, with students and teachers crossing Route 22 to smoke on the shoulder of the road. With the smokers, number of new teen drivers and slower moving school buses, 55 MPH should be the maximum speed driven past the school. A school zone speed limit or warning could be placed around the school to encourage drivers to drive more slowly in this location, as well as greater enforcement of the speed limits.

Action Items

1. Create a multiple-use trail on the old Rutland Railroad rail bed

Although parts of the old Rutland Railroad rail bed are now in use for agriculture or housing lots, much of the Rutland Railroad rail bed is still much like it was when the trains stopped in the late 1950s. This rail bed connects the three hamlets of Berlin, and also leads north beyond the hamlet of Petersburgh and south beyond Stephentown. The rail bed also passes by the Berlin Elementary School and near the Berlin Middle/High School, connecting these important community assets to the hamlets.

Some portions of the rail bed are in use south of Berlin as part of the snowmobile trail system. In areas where the bed is in other use, the trail would be shunted to Route 22 on the shoulder and back to the rail bed where feasible. For areas where farm fields have claimed the rail bed, the trail could run alongside the Little HoosicK, providing fishing access as well as a trail. Fishing access rights have been purchased by DEC on a few parcels in the town.

2. Encourage the funding for New York State Department of Transportation to maintain Route 22.

Route 22 is highly important to the Town of Berlin as it is the main route from the town to the north and south. It provides the backbone of the entire roadway system as well as providing a back door to Vermont from the downstate area. Route 22 provides a truck route from the Mass Turnpike/I-90 to businesses and industries along the road. As Berlin is trying to re-establish businesses in its borders, a good major transportation route is needed to provide the needed jobs within town borders. Of recent years, the funding the New York State Department of Transportation has received is not sufficient to fulfill its maintenance needs for all the highways under its jurisdiction. The New York State Legislature should recognize that safe highway access is required for the



Photo 8 A sign similar to this one on NY Route 22 in the town of Hoosick could be posted near the Cherry Plain school property.

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State's, as well as the Town of Berlin's, future economic development and general health. For this purpose, funding should be provided for the general and basic upkeep and maintenance of the State's highway system.

3. Create alternative transportation modes such as public transportation, car pool, ride sharing and van pools for trips to work, appointments and services.

Those living in Berlin are highly dependent on their automobiles. When automobiles break down, gas prices rise significantly or other things happen which leave people bereft of their cars, transportation alternatives are needed to get people to work, the market and doctor's appointments. Until 2008, the Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) ran a bus service into Berlin hamlet on a daily basis. This service was dropped due to lack of ridership. Alternatives can include car pooling and ride sharing. Van pools can provide a larger number of people to a business or business area. Often van pools are provided by employers, but can be funded through other sources. A website – www.Iride2.org – can help connect Berlin riders together for car pooling purposes.

4. Create a senior transportation mode such as vans or volunteer drivers to assist seniors in getting places.

Senior citizens often reach an age where they do not want to drive or shouldn't drive due to poor eyesight and reaction time or other health reasons. Sometimes they are not able to afford the cost of maintaining an automobile. This leaves them stranded, relying on neighbors and family to take them to doctor's appointments and grocery shopping and they often become housebound by lack of transport. Volunteer drivers and/or a senior van service which can take seniors to their destinations can provide a vital link to the outside world for this fragile population.

5. Support or create an Adopt-a-Highway program for roadways.

New York State DOT and Rensselaer County both have Adopt-a-Highway programs that allow community groups and individuals to take responsibility for clean-up and beautification of specific sections of state and county roadways. The programs assist the groups and individuals by providing safety vests and picking up the bagged collected trash. The Town of Berlin could also create a program similar to the state and county programs if they so chose. Presently, there is no section of highway, state, county or local, that has been adopted within the town of Berlin.

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Housing

Goal: A balance between restoration of historic buildings and new housing opportunities to provide housing for all ages and incomes.

Housing in the town of Berlin takes many forms. Log cabins in the woods, colonial farmhouses, bungalows, row houses and modern subdivision-style houses can be found in Berlin. This chapter looks at the housing within the town, as well as housing needs in Berlin.

Housing Stock

The number of housing units has steadily grown since 1980. In fact, the number of housing units has grown faster than the amount of household, creating a growing number of vacant units. For most communities, this would be devastating, but for Berlin which has been a vacation destination for decades, this shows the significance of the second house population in the town. In the 1980 census, 37 units were considered seasonal residences. This increased to 231 in 2000.

Although a significant number of housing units are seasonal in Berlin, there is still a significant number of vacant housing units (74) that were vacant but not seasonal.

A majority of the housing is single family housing, although the number of multi-family, which includes two-family, is increasing. Mobile homes have also increased through the

Table 13: Housing Data, Town of Berlin			
	1980	1990	2000
Number of housing units	696	910	1,034
Number of occupied housing units	597 (85.8%)	664 (73.0%)	729 (70.5%)
Owner occupied housing units	465 (77.9%)	547 (82.4%)	581 (79.7%)
Renter occupied housing units	132 (22.1%)	117 (17.6%)	148 (20.3%)
Vacant units	99 (14.2%)	246 (27.0%)	305 (29.5%)
<u>Number and type of unit:</u>			
Single family	499 (71.7%)	665 (73.1%)	796 (77.0%)
Multi-family	91 (13.1%)	68 (7.5%)	109 (10.5%)
Mobile homes/trailers	69 (9.9%)	120 (13.2%)	129 (12.5%)
Other	37 (5.3%)	57 (6.3%)	0 (0%)
Median housing value	\$28,700	\$73,800	\$79,000
Median gross rent	\$125	\$264	\$412

Table 13 Source: Bureau of the Census.

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years. The lack of anything in the “Other” range for 2000 most likely is a result of these housing units not being recognized. “Other” has previously meant unfinished construction, such as a basement without overlying house, recreational vehicles and similar places where people may live.

The number of owner occupied units has steadily increased whereas the rental occupied units has wavered. This is possibly due to the drop in multi-family housing at the same time as the drop in rental housing. A lack of housing available as rental units will reduce the number of rented housing.

Housing value and gross rent have increased, but are still lower than the county state and national median values. Median housing value is self-reported and may reflect residents’ lack of knowledge as to their housing values. This may also be true with gross rent, although rent, being more attune with market forces, may show the lack of tenants with the means to afford higher rents or the quality of the rental units.

A significant enough number of houses have been built in the past few years to increase the median year built to 1957. The age of housing is provided by the owner or tenant who may not know the actual age of the house. The number of houses built in the 1960s grew significantly between 1990 and 2000. This is also true of other year groupings. In Table 13 above, it is shown that the number of housing units increased by 48% between 1980 and 2000.

Housing Needs

One of the requirements that Comprehensive Plans should look at is whether a community can meet its housing needs and that of its area. As Berlin is relatively isolated from urban areas, this will examine the needs of the population of Berlin.

Table 14: Age of Housing, 1990-2000, Town of Berlin			
Year Built	1980	1990	2000
1995 – 2000 (March)			43
1990 - 1994		10*	57
1980 - 1989	4*	111	86
1970 - 1979	85	182	134
1960 - 1969	105	103	144
1940 - 1959	74	114	218
1939 or earlier	392	390	43
Median year built	Pre 1939	1953	1957

Table 14 Source: Bureau of the Census. *Since that decade was just beginning, this number includes the year previous (1979, 1989) into March of the next year.

Status of Housing Units - 2000	
Total Vacant Units	305
For rent	16
For sale only	18
Rented or sold, not occupied	6
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	240
For migrant workers	0
Other vacant	25

Table 15 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census

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Houses Listed for Sale in February or March				
Year	Number	Range	Median Price	Average Price
2003	7	\$50,000 - \$119,900	\$78,000	\$78,529
2004	5	\$99,900 - \$499,000	\$298,000	\$276,560
2005	6	\$131,900 - \$279,000	\$209,450	\$205,783
2006	10	\$56,265 - \$479,000	\$132,900	\$191,947
2007	13	\$38,500 - \$1,400,000	\$119,000	\$253,469
2008	12	\$65,000 - \$269,900	\$179,949	\$177,883
2009	14	\$59,900 - \$650,000	\$147,450	\$203,836
2010	20	\$59,000 - \$895,000	\$138,750	\$211,485

Table 16 *Source: Multiple Listing Source*

houses for sale during February or March from 2003 to the present. A chart of the houses listed in the Multiple Listing Service for these years is found below. From 2003 to 2005, very few houses were listed. During those years, the price of houses skyrocketed, reflecting the boom in the housing market. Unlike the national housing market, the prices normalized by mid-decade. It should be noted that the listing includes summer camps as well as year-round houses, which may explain some of the very low house prices. The highest price house in 2007 included vast acreage.

A general rule of thumb is that a house three times the household income is considered affordable. The table to the left shows the income needed for the median price. For most years except 2004, 2005 and 2008, the median priced house was affordable to Berlin’s general population, although the Albany-Schenectady-Troy MSA’s population could afford 2008 housing prices. The median income of the population of Berlin is approximately 90% that of the regional median.

During the 2000 Census, there were 305 vacant units of which the majority of units were for seasonal, recreational or occasional use. Only 16 units were for rent and 18 were for sale. There were 25 “other” vacant units, presumably abandoned or otherwise vacant.

Affordability issues can keep residents from being able to purchase their own home, or may keep children from being able to settle where they grew up. The Rensselaer County Economic Development and Planning Office has kept track of

Affordability of Houses			
Year	Median Price	Income Needed	Regional Median Income
2003	\$78,000	\$26,000	\$53,800
2004	\$298,000	\$99,333	\$56,300
2005	\$209,450	\$69,817	\$57,100
2006	\$132,900	\$44,300	\$59,600
2007	\$119,000	\$39,667	\$59,700
2008	\$179,949	\$59,983	\$63,500
2009	\$147,450	\$49,150	\$66,700
2010	\$138,750	\$46,250	

Table 17 *Source: Multiple Listing Source; U. S Census Bureau.*

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The increasing number of houses for sale shows that there is a sufficient market of houses. The number of rental units available is not known since most apartments are not listed for rent. There may be a need for quality apartments, especially for senior and handicapped individuals who have special housing needs.

Senior Housing

In 2000, over 25% of owner-occupied and almost 17% of renter-occupied units were occupied by households with householders 65 years of age and older. As this important population ages, their housing needs will also change. Many of the houses in Berlin are multi-story, requiring the use of stairs to reach bedrooms and bathrooms. Other houses require large amount of upkeep or maintenance, which may be difficult for older persons to keep up with. Other houses may be isolated, leaving householder alone and a distance from neighbors.

Several things can be done in the community to help keep seniors in Berlin. In Schenectady County, a not-for-profit was established to help seniors with simple maintenance projects, charging a small fee or no fee, depending on means. Establishing a phone system between volunteers or other seniors to make daily calls to check on residents can help ease. Single story senior apartments for those who need single story housing or find homeownership too burdensome could be established in Berlin hamlet where some businesses are within walking distance.

Action Items

1. Encourage the restoration of historic buildings.

Berlin has many historic and architecturally pleasing buildings within the hamlets and in the rural areas. Although some of these buildings have been maintained through the years, many have become dilapidated or worn with time and use. Presently there are no tax credits available through the state or federal government for rehabilitation of historic residential properties, which would assist homeowners with the increasing cost of restoring these properties. Federal tax credits are available for commercially used properties on the National Historic Register.

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In 1988, the Town of Berlin received U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Small Cities Community Development Block Grant funding for a housing rehabilitation program for the Berlin hamlet area. Similar funding through the New York State Office of Community Development can be applied for to assist low and moderate income households perform necessary repairs to their housing.

2. Create a Hometown Maintenance Committee to assist homeowners with house and yard maintenance.

House and yard maintenance can become overwhelming to senior citizens and handicapped individuals as well as first-time homeowners who may not have had experience in doing such work. A Hometown Maintenance Committee could be set up to assist with yard and brush clean-up, as well as house painting and simple repairs. The Hometown Maintenance Committee could also create an annual competition for best residential and commercial properties as well as greatest improvement. The Committee could provide funding through house and garden tours, garden and maintenance classes, as well as plant sales, which would also encourage house and yard maintenance.



Photo 9 *House and former shirt factory on Main Street, Berlin.*

3. Provide opportunities for a secure environment for senior citizens.

Senior citizens are one of the most vulnerable populations in Berlin due to the isolation of the community to services as well as the isolation of many house sites. Security is important to seniors, who often feel vulnerable. Seniors may have hardships with their houses due to lack of income to pay for increasing taxes, heat and utility costs, home maintenance, and lack of mobility, especially if a

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house has two or more stories. Safety issues in homes include loose floor coverings, steps and rails, and bathroom fixtures. For seniors living alone, dangers are amplified since there is no help around if something happens to the senior.

Many seniors want to stay in their own homes. Their memories are there and the house may have been passed through generations. There are a few organizations which can help seniors with their housing needs. Weatherization assistance is funded through the federal government and is provided in Rensselaer County through the Commission on Economic Opportunity (CEO). CEO will inspect an applicant's house for weatherization and other needs and will add weather stripping and caulking; clean, test, repair or replace heating systems; replace or repair storm windows; replace or repair broken windows and/or doors; the addition of insulation to walls and ceilings; and minor repairs, as needed, to ensure maximum energy efficiency from the Weatherization services performed. This program is available to all residents who fulfill the income limits, including renters.

HEAP is a program which provides assistance for heating costs for senior citizens and other low-income individuals. HEAP directly pays oil and gas providers for delivery of heating fuel to qualified households.

To help seniors living alone maintain a sense of safety, a phone system can be created using volunteers, including seniors who would call on a daily basis to make sure that the senior is okay.

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Business/Economy

Goal: Provide a receptive environment for new and existing businesses

The town of Berlin has lost much of its industry in the past few years due to international competition. This loss has spiraled and created a loss in business service providers and retail. In the next few years, the community will need to rely on its resourcefulness and ingenuity to bring it back to a thriving community, with jobs, businesses and stores. This is not the first time that Berlin has had to adjust; at the previous change in centuries, a similar transition occurred, where the industries that previously fed the industries in Troy, pulled out or closed. This led to Berlin becoming the gladiola and rose capital, with its secondary industry making stakes for the gladiolas and floral spikes for the roses.



Photo 10 *Seagroatt's greenhouses now for sale.*

Flexibility and forward thinking can lead Berlin to being the next leader in a field yet to come.

Existing Businesses

Although the larger industries such as Seagroatts and Berlin Lumber have recently closed, there are still many small businesses in Berlin. Most of these are micro-businesses - businesses that have one or two employees, and provide services in Berlin and Rensselaer County. As large corporations flee New York State and the United States, a majority of businesses in the country, state, county and town are micro-businesses. In 2007, over half of the establishments in Rensselaer County have between one and four employees. Small businesses provide a large portion of employment in the United States. Many successful large companies have started in the garage and basement of a residence and have become major employers.

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Employer	# of Employees	Field
Berlin Central School District	212	Public Education
Mapledale Farm	19	Agriculture
Hoosick River Hardwoods LLC	18	Manufacturing
W.J. Cowee LLC	18	Manufacturing
Stewarts – Dake Bros.	8	Retail
Hewitt’s Market	5	Retail
Morse Heating	5	Retail
Bridgeway	4	Restaurant
Eagle Energy	4	Retail
Town of Berlin	4	Government

The 2007 ZIP Code Business Patterns created by the Census Bureau using IRS information shows that there were 20 establishments in the 12022 Berlin postal code and 19 in the 12138 Petersburg postal code that covers much of the rural areas of Berlin.

Industry	12022 Berlin	12138 Petersburg
Construction	5	8
Manufacturing	3	2
Wholesale Trade	0	1
Retail Trade	2	2
Transportation and Warehousing	0	1
Information	1	1
Finance and Insurance	1	0
Professional, Scientific & Technical Service	2	3
Administrative, Support, Waste Mgt., Remediation Ser.	2	0
Accommodation & Food Service	2	1
Other Services (except public administration)	2	0
Total	20	19

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Retail

There are a small number of retail establishments and restaurant/bars in Berlin. Most of these are located in the hamlet of Berlin, with a few in Cherry Plain or Center Berlin. The retail establishments provide basic goods to the residents. Retail establishments in the hamlet of Berlin include Hewitt's Market, Stewart's, Corner Creations, Voneadeau Wines & Spirits, Valley Tavern and Bank of America. Establishments in Center Berlin include the Sedgewick Inn and in Cherry Plain include the Cherry Plain Pantry and the Bridgeway restaurant.

Dining establishments are few. The Bridgeway and Valley Tavern are the only food and drink establishments in the town. There is a need for additional establishments including a pizzeria in Berlin hamlet and a diner, and Chinese or other take-out/dine-in style food.



Photo 11 *Hewitt's Market*

In the Comprehensive Plan Committee's 2007 Survey, property owners and residents were asked what businesses/services they would like to see (more of)? The top business was restaurant (51%) followed by a tie for grocery and hardware (39%), health care (37%) and pharmacy (33%). Other retail that would be useful in the town include a feed store and bakery. Retail services that may do well in Berlin include a small gym, copying/printing/business services, self storage units, UPS/FedEx Drop and business courier service as well as an additional gas station. Additional types of stores may be needed for tourism or if particular industries take hold in town. Unless retail stores have customers, are such a specialty that they are a draw, or have another outlet such as the internet, they can not survive in a small town such as Berlin.

Berlin will probably have to grow its own retail establishments. Big box outlets require large population bases before they locate somewhere. Unless a local franchise owner decides to place a shop in Berlin, most of the businesses will be Berlin only businesses. This is not a bad thing, as profits will remain local, too.

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Agriculture

The prime and state-wide significant soils in Berlin have maintained agriculture in the town. One large dairy, a smaller dairy, several beef growers, an apiary, maple shack, small vegetable and flower growers and a few private horse farms presently exist in Berlin. Some previously vacant farmlands have recently been put back into production for winter cattle feed. Additional vacant lands in the hollows can easily be put back into production.

The gentle slopes on the lower parts of the Taconic Mountains provide good grazing for beef, goats and sheep. Although the Rensselaer Plateau is not very productive with standard crops, highbush blueberries thrive in the highland areas, as should cranberries. Other berries should also thrive throughout the town. Apple and other tree orchards should thrive on the soils of the Taconic slopes, although varieties that can survive down to Zone 4 would probably be needed. Christmas trees are also becoming a major agricultural use, with one tree farm presently selling trees and two additional farms soon able to harvest trees commercially.

Although the greenhouses where Seagroatts used to raise flowers are for sale, a business of growing tomatoes has started in the lower houses. The upper greenhouses could be put in production for salad greens, peas and other vegetables that do not require a lot of warmth or sunlight in the winter. These vegetables could then be marketed to New York City, Boston and Montreal.

Due to its relatively close proximity to the Boston and New York City markets, Berlin can provide produce and meat products to these major urban centers, as well as the smaller markets of Pittsfield, Albany and Troy. Local entrepreneurs could also use Berlin-grown produce for prepared food products, if there was a communal commercial kitchen that could be shared by multiple users creating jams, jellies, relishes and other such goodies. A shortage of producers for farmers markets in the area shows the need for truck farmers who are willing to direct market to local customers.

In 1990, the Town of Berlin enacted a Right to Farm law, which ensures that farm practices and the farming way of life be protected from nuisance laws and lawsuits. This law should be used to ensure that farmers can continue in their way of life and business.



Photo 12 *Corn growing on the prime ag soils of the Little Hoosic valley.*

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Forestry/Wood Products

Much of the Cowee forest has been logged as part of its sustainable management plan in recent years. These private forests will take a few years before more tree harvesting can take place. Much more forest lands including state lands and private properties have mature or maturing forests. Harvesting should follow New York Forestry Best Management Practices.

Berlin has always had a strong saw and lumber presence. W. J. Cowee LLC still makes wood picks and plant stakes for the floral industry and Hoosick River Hardwoods LLC manufactures kiln-dried packaged fire wood. Other lumber mills produced raw materials that were shipped for further processing, such as Berlin Lumber, which is now closed. Since there are many high-quality furniture grade hardwood trees harvested in Rensselaer County, branching out into a new direction, such as furniture, carvings or similar artisanal shops may create jobs that feed high-end markets in New York or Boston, while maintaining small greenhouse gas footprints. As Berlin presently has trained operators of machinery needed for such enterprises, any start-ups would have reduced job training needed.

Tourism

Thousands of tourists drive into Berlin every year. Unfortunately, most of them speed out without stopping at roadside stands, stores or restaurants, leaving nothing behind except their automobile exhaust.

With its beautiful scenery and many outdoor activities, Berlin can take advantage of the many tourists traveling to Vermont or the

Adirondacks using Route 22. Tourists need information on what is available – food, lodging, activities and events. Information on what’s available needs to be collected and shared and is now partially available on the Town’s website – www.berlin-ny.us.



Photo 13 *The Bridgeway Restaurant*

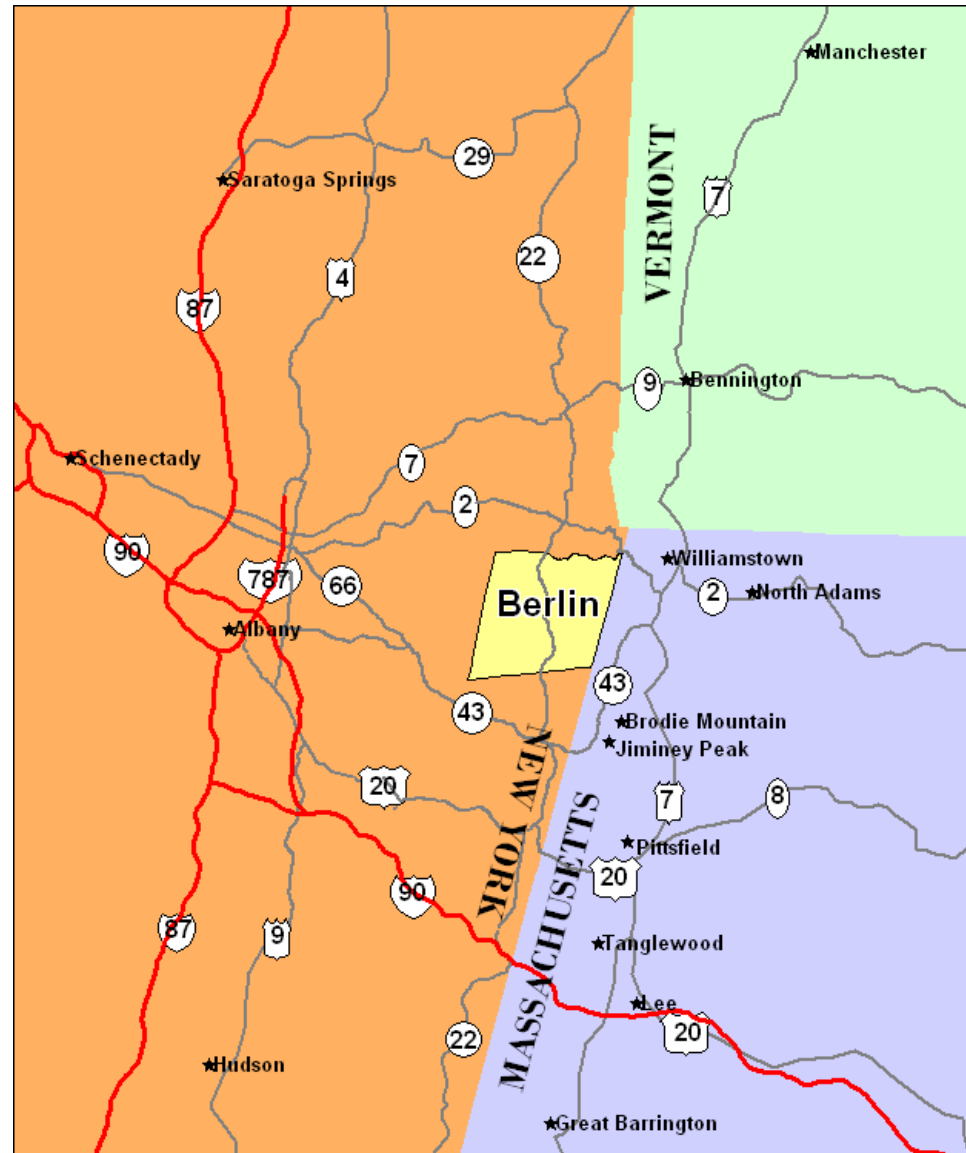
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Additional methods to share information include brochures, newspaper/magazine ads and other methods. The businesses and venues need to be prepared for visitors. Venues should be found with ease, with parking areas for trail heads (see Natural Resources Action Item 2) in good condition, restaurants and stores open regular hours, and the community prepared for visitors.

Berlin's central location between Saratoga, Albany, Bennington, Williamstown and Lenox make it a good location for vacationers wanting to sample these venues. Vacation apartments, popular with European vacationers, can be rented by the week, similar to lake camps. Route 22 as a Scenic Byway would help by assisting Berlin and its neighbors with preparing for visitors, creating enough venues and services in and around Berlin to be able to service tourists with a first-rate visit.

Tourism adds business potential. Additional bed-and-breakfasts can be supported by tourism and also by the close location of Jiminy Peak and Williams College. Smaller stores selling general merchandise, books (new and used), crafts and other such items are difficult to support with just the population in the town. Tourists can provide the additional customer base to make these businesses sustainable.

Tourism will not provide a large amount of well-paying jobs by itself. It may, though, help businesspeople looking for a location decide they like Berlin. Berlin's fresh air, outdoor recreation facilities and scenic qualities, as well as close proximity to New York City, Boston and



Map 14 Berlin is centrally located between many tourist locations and venues.

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Montreal, can attract young entrepreneurs looking for a location for a back-office or technology business that does not require interstate access or large amounts of water and sewer.

Business Needs

Industry had its heyday in Berlin when good transportation to markets was had with the railroad. Now, as then, goods still need to be able to go out of or into the town. The major roads connecting Berlin to the interstate system and Albany and Troy, including Route 22, Route 2, and Route 43, need to be maintained and kept up to allow trucks, delivery vans and cars to safely deliver goods and services to Berlin. The two major private delivery companies, UPS and FedEx, do not guarantee next day or second day delivery to or from Berlin. This reduces competitiveness with other companies which can use these companies with more timely results.

Affordable health insurance is a more equalized need. The costs of health insurance for the small businesses that are in Berlin have been increasing greatly, as is found across the state and country. Using the Rensselaer County Regional Chamber of Commerce or other insurance-providing group, or creating a chamber of commerce or business group to help group-buy health insurance can reduce the costs by creating a larger pool of workers that would reduce costs.

Reliable electrical service is necessary, especially if trying to attract computer-based companies. Electrical reliability often comes from the power companies' regularly trimming trees and vegetation, and maintaining substations and other equipment.

Phone competition, in land lines and cellular service, allows businesses to keep phone



Photo 14 *The 15 kV power line feeding the businesses of Berlin*

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prices down. The location of additional cellular transmission towers is needed to provide cell phone service throughout a larger portion of town. Most technology companies will want to locate where cell phone service exists.

High-speed internet service is crucial for businesses such as back office and call centers, as well as technology-based companies. Fiber optic or T-1 lines provide the high speed links to the internet, usually by the phone company. Fairpoint Communications provides T-1 service throughout the town and has a fiber line to Berlin hamlet. Wireless internet service would also prove useful for encouraging youthful start-up companies to locate in Berlin. At present, there is a push for wireless service to come south from the northern parts of the County, using cellular towers as broadcasting points.

Other business services such as a copy center, accounting and legal advice would make permanent offices in town as an increase of customers using their services would make it profitable to do so. More customers may also make better Fed-Ex and UPS service in the town, an issue that plagues existing businesses.

New Businesses & Growing Old Ones

Berlin can increase the employment in its borders by attracting new businesses and growing its existing ones. Most importantly, the critical mass for retaining or attracting services and workers must be maintained or attained to keep Berlin a viable community. Without industry, businesses and jobs, taxes will increase at a greater rate and amenities that residents enjoy will be lost.

Some of the greatest businesses started in recessions. Entrepreneurs with great ideas have used these hard times to create businesses that have survived beyond the hard times. Berlin has more than its fair share of entrepreneurs. With persistence and occasional assistance, some of these small businesses may grow to be major businesses in

Berlin. Training for small businesses can be had at the “Smart Up” training provided jointly by the



Photo 15 *W.J. Cowee Inc. LLC at the Hoosick River Hardwoods property*

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Photo 16 *The Berlin Inn is presently vacant and provides a clear opportunity for future businesses, either as an inn or B &B or as use for office space.*

Rensselaer County Regional Chamber of Commerce and Rensselaer County Economic Development and Planning, the New York State Small Business Development Center (SBDC), the Capital District Community Loan Fund (CDCLF), and at Hudson Valley Community College (HVCC).

Loan funding assistance may be received from the Capital District Community Loan Fund for low-income, women and minority businesses up to \$10,000 for start-up businesses and \$35,000 for expanding businesses, from the Jobs Development Program for companies creating jobs and needing between \$25,000 and \$200,000, and from the New York Business Development Corporation (NYBDC).

The Town may want to work with its local businesses to create a local business group, which would provide support for its members, as well as assist in gaining more businesses into town. The local business group would become the welcoming committee for interested businesses looking at setting roots in Berlin. They could also maintain a list of available properties for use by businesses looking for a new home. This group would also advise the Town Board about business issues in the town.

For new businesses and expansions, sufficient locations, including existing buildings and vacant lots, will be needed. These locations could include 500 to 1,000 square feet of space for a small office or workshop, to 5 to 10 acres for a 15,000 square foot office building, warehouse or factory. An existing list of appropriately-zone locations would make it easier to fill spaces and grow businesses. One positive of Berlin is that space costs are much lower than in the areas around the cities. If sites are appropriate for business, but are not appropriately zoned, they should be examined for rezoning, or changing zoning classifications to allow certain uses with special permit if the use matches the location.

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There was a higher unemployment in Berlin in 2000, which has increased in the past decade. HVCC has the Workforce Development Institute which provides training in multiple careers including medical transcription, photovoltaics, computer software certificates, pharmacy technician, security guard, plumbing and water treatment plant operators. Additionally, the Workforce Development Institute will work with employers to create training programs for new and existing workers. The Capital District Educational Opportunity Center operated by HVCC provides training including business preparation, processing, internet and computer skills and proficiency, health information, work and job readiness, cosmetology, nursing assistant, culinary arts and food safety, building trades and welding. The Rensselaer County One-Stop Center in Troy also assists workers with getting jobs, assists employers finding qualified employees including screening of candidates, employee training and retraining, e-Learning classes, job search assistance, resume and interview assistance and programs for youth and veterans. In addition, there are many small colleges and institutes in the Capital District that provide education for Associates Degrees, Baccalaureate Degrees and Graduate Degrees. In addition, educational opportunities can also be had across the border in Massachusetts. The Berkshire County Community College in Pittsfield provides many similar fields as HVCC, as well as hospitality. Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts in North Adams and Williams College in Williamstown also have Baccalaureate Degree and higher programs.

The town of Berlin is well placed to get small, young software or similar companies whose young entrepreneurs would like the outdoor environment of the town, including the closeness to snowboarding/skiing, spelunking, trails for hiking and biking and affordability of housing and commercial space. Good internet access is available along Route 22 north to the hamlet of Berlin to service such companies. Along with identifying properties in the town which would make good homes for these companies, the Town should do outreach with Rensselaer County to RPI, SUNY Albany and Williams College student start-up businesses who may be interested in locating in Berlin.

Action Items

1. Create a business leaders group.

To encourage the growth of existing businesses and influx of new businesses, a business leaders group should be formed to examine the economy of Berlin and its business needs. The business leaders group could also meet with businesses looking at possibly moving to Berlin, as well as be a business liaison to the Town and County governments and the Rensselaer County Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Since the Town of Berlin has a long history of strong business/community relations, the business leaders group can follow in the footsteps of community forefathers who helped establish and build the town by helping steer the community toward its future.

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2. Promote the business directory on the Town’s website with links.

The Town of Berlin has recently created a website which lists local governmental information as well as elected representatives and links to the Berlin Central School District, Berlin Library and Eastwick Press websites. When googled, very few hits occur for Berlin, NY. Enhancing the Town’s website to include a list of businesses and not-for-profits has allowed residents, visitors and prospective residents/businesses see what services can be gotten in the town. It has also provided additional customers to local businesses. Businesses that are not presently listed on the Town’s website are encouraged to do so. One of the challenges that may occur is that the website needs to be kept recent. Businesses which go out of business or change web addresses should be removed or changed as soon as possible.

3. Improve tourism.

Berlin has great scenery, recreational opportunities and centralized location to be a strong tourist destination for those looking for a nearby getaway. Located between Tanglewood, SPAC, Bennington/Manchester and Albany, with nearby Pittsfield and Williamstown, Berlin is a centralized location for people who want to sample surrounding venues. With the Cherry Plain State Park, Taconic Crest Trail and Jiminy Peak/Brodie Mountain, Berlin provides outdoors enthusiasts many opportunities to enjoy themselves.

Several things are lacking to create the tourist trade, and these are lacking in Rensselaer County as well as Berlin. Berlin has limited food and lodging establishments. Working with surrounding towns, a brochure or listing of available food, lodging, entertainment and other venues can provide sufficient tourism infrastructure to support an increase in tourism. This would also help strengthen the existing businesses

4. Check land use regulations to see if sufficient area for business and industry.

Businesses prefer to locate where they don’t require a zoning change. All of the industrially-zoned property is on the Hudson River Hardwoods lot. Some of the Hudson River Hardwoods property is hillside and not conducive to building. Other parts have existing buildings that may not fit the needs of businesses requiring industrial zoning proposing to locate in town. Likewise, if a commercial use wants to locate in town, is there sufficient vacant property if a new building is needed? The land use regulations may also need additional uses added which were not in existence when the land use regulations were adopted. Specific mention of an industry that the Town wants to attract will make it clear that there are locations for that industry.

5. Work to get needed services in the community.

There are many varieties of services that are needed in the town of Berlin. Health care and many business support services are needed for use by the community as a whole and to make Berlin more appealing to those who may want to locate there. Some services require

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sufficient customers to make a permanent presence, although satellite offices with limited hours can be a possibility. Some health care services can be requested from Visiting Nurses or other community not-for-profit providers, if a site is provided that meets the needs of the health care service provider. Limited services such as blood testing for seniors, diabetics or heart patients can expand when a need is proven. Berlin is in a good location to serve the Taconic Valley communities, including Petersburgh and Stephentown and parts of Sand Lake and Poestenkill. A health needs survey of the town's residents can show what health care services are needed and could be supported in the town. The survey could be expanded to surrounding communities.

Some businesses in Berlin have their own internal business support services such as copying and printing. If their support system has the capacity to be used by other small businesses, they can start a small side line of providing secondary business services. Additionally, some businesses may want to include a business service as a side line to broaden their product line. Some services may already be provided in town by a small business that has not advertised sufficiently. The business directory above may assist in this respect.

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Community Services

Goal: Enhancing community services to improve the quality of life

A community can be small in population but great in community spirit. Berlin is one such community. Volunteers run much of the services found in town, which keeps local taxes down. One drawback is that the same pool of volunteers is called upon repeatedly, creating burn out among this important group of people.

Town Government

The Town of Berlin is comprised of a Town Board which meets the second and fourth Thursday of every month, with the Town Supervisor as Chief Elected Official. The Town Clerk provides permits and licenses for residents and has hours from 6 to 8 PM on Mondays and Wednesdays and on Saturdays from 9:30 AM to noon except for the first Saturday of the month.

The Town Court meets at 7 PM on the first, second and third Wednesday of the month. The Assessor's office is open to the public at 7 PM on the first, second and fourth Monday of the month. The Planning Board meets the fourth Thursday of the month at 6 PM and the Zoning Board of Appeals meets at 7:30 PM on the third Thursday of the month.

The town operates a garbage and recyclables transfer station off Route 22 north of the hamlet of Berlin. The Highway Garage is located off Route 22 in the hamlet of Berlin. The Town shares services with Rensselaer County and uses the County's Salt Storage Shed at the County's Facility on Sand Bank Road for their road salting needs.

The Town's Youth Commission operates a summer youth camp and is examining combining with Petersburg. To continue receiving funding for its summer day camp youth program, the educational content requires an upgrade. The Town presently uses the 7th Day Baptist Church's facility for their youth programs.



Photo 17 *The old Cherry Plain Polling Place.*

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Photo 18 *The Watipi Building.*

The Town owns the Watipi Building which had been used by the Rensselaer County Department for the Aging for a Senior Center. The building is used by the Town Board for their workshop meetings, Berlin Seniors group, Rod & Reel club and American Legion. The Watipi Building was originally the railroad station and requires some work to make the building more habitable. Issues of mold exist in the building, as well as a need for insulation and handicapped accessibility. Little parking exists around the building.

The Watipi Building is available for use by community groups providing liability insurance coverage to the Town.

The Town of Berlin presently is looking for space for a Town facilities center. Two referendums have been held on the Town's purchasing the Berlin Lumber property to located the Town Garage and Town Offices in as well as provide some recreation area. Options for additional space include repurposing an existing building for space or building new. A



Photo 19 *The Town of Berlin Highway Garage.*

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complex for all uses to be located on one site is not necessary. Any repurposed building will need to be brought up to code. Sites for the town offices and court should be located in or near one of the hamlets for better accessibility to residents.

Along with the Berlin Lumber site, a proposal of repurposing the highway garage into town offices has been made. Additional sites have also been investigated by the Town’s Space Committee. Although the Town has approximately \$500,000 saved up for new facilities, the cost of new offices has been proposed at significantly higher amount.

Other Governments

To maintain lower property taxes and provide sufficient services, communities need to work together more than ever. Shared services are not a new phenomenon in eastern Rensselaer County, where the rural way of “neighbor helping neighbor” has long been the way of life. Not only do neighboring local governments help each other, Rensselaer County assists with salt, training and equipment. Most of this sharing and cooperation has existed long before written agreements between communities and before New York State started encouraging communities to do so.

Neighboring Towns

In previous years, the Town of Berlin shared the Town of Stephentown’s Building Inspector. Presently, the Town shares the transfer station with the Town of Petersburgh. The Town has also been examining joint youth services with the Town of Petersburgh. The towns also share some storage space.

Rensselaer County

The Rensselaer County Highway Department has a substation in Berlin on Sandbank Road. The substation has a garage and salt storage shed as well as storage for equipment and materials. The salt storage shed is used by Rensselaer County, the Town of Berlin Highway Department, the Town of Stephentown Highway Department, the Berlin Central School District and NYS DOT. The County also uses some Town lands near their substation for storage of road materials



Photo 20 *The Rensselaer County Highway Substation on Sand Bank Road*

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The Rensselaer County Department of the Aging previously used the Watipi Building as the Eastern Area Senior Center. Since the construction of a new facility in Grafton, the Senior Center has been moved out to Grafton. Van pools pick up elderly in the town to take them to the new Senior Center in Grafton. The Grafton center sends personnel to the Berlin Seniors weekly for education and other programming.

Sheriff Deputies serve the town of Berlin from their substation in the Petersburg Town Hall.

New York State

New York State owns considerable property in the town of Berlin and also owns easements on other considerable properties. The Berlin State Forest, Capital District Wildlife Management Area and Taconic Crest properties are owned by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). The Taconic Crest Trail is on lands of DEC and operated by a non-profit organization, the Taconic Hiking Club, which maintains the trails and puts out literature on the trail. The Taconic Crest Trail runs for 35 miles skirting the New York-Vermont-Massachusetts line. There are also trails in the Capital District Wildlife Management Area, many of which have not been maintained in some time.



Photo 21 *Cherry Plain State Park Main Entrance.*

The Cherry Plain State Park is owned by DEC but operated by the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. Significant renovations were performed in 2009, including new bathroom areas, upgrade of the pavilions and installation of camping areas. The Cherry Plain State Park was on the chopping block during SFY 2010-2011 budget discussions, but received a reprieve. The Cherry Plain State Park is closed during the winter.

The New York State Troopers cover the town of Berlin from Troop G barracks in Brunswick on NY Route 278.

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Schools

The town of Berlin is served by two school districts, the Berlin Central School District and the Averill Park Central School District. The Berlin Central School District serves the majority of the town and the Averill Park Central School District serves a small area adjacent to the town of Sand Lake west of the Capital District Wildlife Management Area.

The Berlin Central School District’s remaining schools are located in the town of Berlin.

The Berlin Elementary School was originally built as the Berlin High School in 1936. Its use was changed to an elementary school in 1989 when the Cherry Plain Elementary was expanded into a Middle/High School. Two other elementary schools, Stephentown Elementary and Grafton Elementary, were recently combined into the Berlin Elementary School. The Berlin Elementary School houses classes pre-Kindergarten to grade 5. Its 45,200 square feet house 13 classrooms as well as a gymnasium, cafeteria, library, computer room, art room, resource rooms, administrative space, health suite and other education space.

The Cherry Plain Middle/High School was built in 1960 as the Cherry Plain Elementary School and was expanded several times before it was changed into the Middle/High School in 1989. The school complex contains grades 6 through 12. Its 92, 500 square feet house 23 classrooms along with an auditorium, gymnasium, cafeteria, library, computer room, art room, resource rooms, administrative space, health suite and other education space as well as the District Administrative Offices.

The Berlin Central School District provides its own transportation and has a bus maintenance garage on School Bus Lane. The school district shares use of the County’s salt storage shed for its de-icing needs.



Photo 22 *Berlin Elementary School*

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Grade	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Class Size	70	52	69	73	68	68	90	55	68	107	71	57	51

The school district runs two summer day programs for children and youth. The children’s program is based on arts and crafts and the youth program is educationally based.

One issue that has caused two of the elementary schools to close is the declining student population. In the 2008-2009 school year, the total class size for elementary grades tended to be around 70 students, with the first grade class at only 52 students. The sixth grade class was 90 students while the ninth grade class was 107 students. The eleventh and twelfth grades had a drop off of class size. This could be due to students dropping out.

Due to small class sizes, the district could market itself as providing a good teacher-student ratio, as well as ample opportunities for students to participate on the field in interscholastic sports. School districts can provide a draw for new families if those families feel that they will be receiving a quality education, as well as some other perceived good such as a guaranteed berth on the basketball team. Extracurricular activities such as an outdoor program, computers or another niche can also help attract families into the town as well as providing something of interest to the youth.

Fire District

The town of Berlin is served by the Berlin Fire District and Berlin Volunteer Fire Department and Berlin Firemans Emergency Rescue Squad. The Berlin Fire House is located at 11 Community Avenue across from the Wapiti Building and contains both fire and rescue squad equipment.



Photo 23 *The Berlin Volunteer Fire District Firehouse.*

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The Fire Department is run by 28 volunteer firefighters and 15 non-fire fighting volunteers. The Fire Department responded to 69 calls in 2010, 62 calls in 2009, 67 in 2008 and 68 in 2007.

The Rescue Squad is trained at basic life support. The rescue squad responded to 181 ambulance calls in 2010, 203 in 2009, 207 in 2008 and 223 in 2007.

The Berlin Fire Department has been around for over 100 years. The Fire Department holds Sunday Morning Breakfasts throughout the winter as a fundraising campaign as well as for community interaction. The Fire Department also supports a yearly visit from a circus which stays in Firemen’s Field. They also have an annual lobster bake and clam steam.

Health Services

Other than the rescue squad, there are no health services in the town of Berlin. The closest doctor’s offices are in Sand Lake, Hoosick or Pittsfield. Most residents use Bennington’s Southwestern Vermont Medical Center or hospitals in Troy or Pittsfield. The nearest dentists are in Brunswick, Sand Lake, Hoosick Falls or Pittsfield.

There is a need for some health services that may be able to be provided by a once a week clinic. This clinic would easily serve not only Berlin, but also Petersburg, Stephentown, Poestenkill and Nassau, which also lack medical services. The clinic could be staffed by physician assistants and nurses from the Visiting Nurses or another medical non-profit that serves underserved areas.

Cultural Resources

The town of Berlin is rich in cultural resources, many which go unnoticed by residents and passers-by. Berlin’s long history and community-minded population created a community rich with sites of events and places that are cherished by the community.



Photo 24 *Old Baptist Cemetery in Center Berlin.*

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Photo 25 *The Cherry Plain Post Office, originally a store.*

The two caves located in town could have easily been a way-stop for the indigenous populations traveling through the Taconic Valley. The caves were also explored by many more recently, who could have left or lost items in their explorations. The great propane fire of 1962 burned a large portion of the western part of the hamlet of Berlin. Eight houses were destroyed, three damaged along with the loss of the First Baptist Church. Ten lives were lost as a result of the fire. Many of the lots were rebuilt after the ashes were cleared. Several mills were in existence in the hamlet, but many of these buildings are gone due to fire or flood

Historical

Although there are presently no buildings or sites on the New York State Historic Register or National Historic Register, there are many buildings and sites that are eligible, including areas in both the hamlet of Berlin and Cherry Plain that could be Historic Districts. The Town of Berlin requires space to display artifacts which have been collected over the years.

Archaeological

The Taconic Valley was used as a transportation route by the native Americans long before there was a Town of Berlin. Camping sites for travelers on this old highway are to be expected. The local tribe, the Munsee-Stockbridge Mohicans would more likely have had individual family sites in Berlin rather than villages or castles which were found in the western part of the county.

European settlers came into Berlin in the late 1600s. A raid on the Brimmer farmstead just north of the town would have kept settlers in close proximity, especially as the trip to the settled western part of the county took up to a week due to a lack of roads. After the French and Indian War, farmsteads could be found everywhere. Foundations of abandoned farmsteads can be seen throughout in the forests of the town.

Several areas may be rich in archaeological finds due to events or the layout of the site.

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Religious Institutions

The population of Berlin has had strong religious roots. The first church, the Seventh Day Baptist Church, was established in 1780.

For a population with less than 2,000, the town of Berlin has strong religious ties. At present, six churches are present in the town. One old church, the Old Dutch Church on the Rensselaer Plateau was burned twice in the 1970s. The remaining churches are:

- Cherry Plain Community Christian Church
- First Baptist Church
- Rensselaer County Landmark Baptist Church
- Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church
- Seventh Day Baptist Church of Berlin
- United Methodist Church

Meeting areas of other faiths are represented in either neighboring communities, or in the larger cities, such as Pittsfield, Troy and Albany.

Activities & Community Groups

The Town of Berlin has a number of active interest groups as well as a few annual civic parades.

On Memorial Day and Independence Day, the Town has a parade which marches through the hamlet of Berlin. The parades are organized by all-volunteer parade committees which seek donations for funding. A volunteer committee also put on the Town's Bicentennial Celebration in 2006, which ran for six days straight, had large crowds in attendance and was considered a great success. The Bicentennial Celebration started with an opening dinner in March 2006. In July, there were six packed days of celebration including a car show, patriotic evening, harp concert, town



Photo 26 *Cherry Plain Community Christian Church.*

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tours with a trolley and duck vehicle, exhibits, parade, dance, barbecue, and auction. Ideas for future activities are a weekly summer band performances such as once performed on Tuesday nights, and regular, town parties such as the Bicentennial Celebration.

The town also has several community groups which meet regularly. Meeting monthly are the American Legion & Auxiliary Post, Berlin Senior Club, Knitting Club, Book Club, Taconic Valley Historical Society, Rod and Reel Club and Rod and Gun Club. A fledgling Friends of Cherry Plain State Park was created in 2009 in efforts to help maintain the facilities. There is a local Boy Scout Troop and a Girl Scout Troop as well as a Soccer League that practices and plays at the Berlin Elementary School fields. These regional youth groups are as well open to youth in Petersburg or along the Taconic Valley

Although the Watipi Building houses some of the meetings, there is a need for space for such things as aerobics and martial arts classes. Since the town is isolated in the winter, civic groups can provide an outlet for residents to ward off cabin fever, as well as improve the well being of the residents and community.

Action Items

1. Improve health services

Due to the isolated nature of the Taconic Valley in which Berlin is located, access to health services requires driving half an hour for simple doctor or dentist visits. The elderly and poor may have difficulties reaching these services due to the transportation factor and distance.

Berlin is not unique in its lack of health services. The surrounding towns of Petersburg, Grafton, Poestenkill, Nassau and Stephentown do not have health services either. In combining forces, the towns together would have more chance of gaining the needed services within the region. There are several non-profit health care agencies that serve underserved and lower income areas in the Capital District Region which may assist in the provision of medical and/or dental services to the residents.

The Town should contact the other surrounding towns to see if they would be interested in working together. A survey of resident's medical needs and preferences would help gauge whether there would be enough interest to merit further action. Finding the proper fit with a non-profit medical agency is necessary as some agencies have focuses that may be a better fit for Berlin and its rural neighbors. Finding a site for proposed services would be necessary. Depending on service, the site could be several rooms to an entire building. Using an existing building would be preferable as fit up could be faster than building new space.

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2. Improve senior services

Since the removal of the Rensselaer County Eastern Service Center to Grafton, there has been a drop in the services available to the elderly in the town. The Rensselaer County Department of Aging does send workers to the monthly Senior Club meetings and a van will pick up residents and take them to the Senior Center in Grafton for meals and other services, but other services are still lacking for the senior population.

Senior citizens are one of the greatest users of health care services. The lack of services and a plan to attract such services is mentioned above. Even with services located in one of the hamlets, senior residents living farther away from the service would require transportation to the doctor's office or dentist. This lack of transportation also creates difficulty for going grocery shopping or to other appointments. Presently, seniors must either drive themselves or rely on the kindness of neighbors or family. A volunteer senior transport group could help ferry Berlin's seniors to necessary appointments and grocery shopping. The Town could provide a senior van for group trips, such as the Town of Sand Lake, or volunteers could use their personal automobiles.

There are many seniors living alone in the town, often in isolated areas. If a medical emergency arises, there is no one to know whether these seniors need assistance. A phone chain or buddy system can be set up where someone phones the senior on a daily basis to make sure that they are not in need. The phone buddy would need to have a contact to call if a phone call went unanswered, whether it be a family member, close neighbor or the police.

Basic house and yard work can be difficult for some seniors. Getting volunteers, including students required to perform volunteer duty for school, to help with basic things such as yard clean-up, house cleaning or shoveling can help seniors enormously. Rensselaer County Housing Resources provides two programs to provide needed repairs or alterations to senior housing. The Restore program provides repairs to homes for emergency, health or safety issues. The Access to Home Program removes physical barriers for those in wheelchairs by building ramps, widening doorways and the like.

3. Improve youth services

Presently, there are several youth programs provided by the Town and the Berlin Central School District. The Town of Berlin has a summer youth camp and summer swimming program that is open to all children and youth of the town. The Berlin Central School District also has an educational program in the summer for children in the district. There is a soccer league in the town and a baseball league that covers the Taconic Valley into New Lebanon that is not located in the town. There also is a Boy Scout Troop and Girl Scout Troop. Some adult groups have junior member programs such as the Rod and Gun Club and Fire Department. Several churches have youth groups and provide activities for Berlin's younger citizens.

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Although there are some activities in town for youth, they are still limited. Some of the adult groups such as the Knitting Club and Rod and Reel Club may want to reach out to get young members. Along with teaching the youth new skills or hobbies, infusion of young blood may also give these groups longevity. The youth may also be a good volunteer force for Town Clean Up Days and the like.

No playground other than the ones at the schools exists in the town. The Town of Berlin should investigate creating a small park in one of the hamlets that would have some playground equipment. This would provide a place for the younger children to go and recreate.

4. Improve entertainment and recreation

Along with a lack of things for the youth to do, there are limited things for adults to do too. Several clubs meet monthly, including the Knitting Club, Rod and Reel Club, Book Club and Historical Society. Additional activities could help attract new residents as well as provide entertainment to existing ones. Some activities work as fund raisers, such as the Fire Department's Lobster Bake, Clam Steam and Breakfasts.

The Town or a committee of residents could investigate such things as summer concerts, old movie nights, talent contests, dances for adults (youths allowed), exercise groups and classes for adults such as painting. Some of these may be able to be used as fund raisers for larger events, such as the Bicentennial Celebration. Regular events would draw not only Berlin's citizens, but also those from neighboring communities. Having activities or events which regularly bring people to an area of town would encourage businesses such as a restaurant or pizzeria to locate nearby and provide additional things to do.

One issue is that there are limited areas presently for club meetings, etc. A survey of community resources, including church halls, should be made to see available sites and their requirements. A building may be needed to adequately provide room for events, as well as be rented for private events such as showers and birthday parties. An area with a bandstand, such as a park, would also be needed for outdoor summer concerts. This could be combined with a small play area for children.

5. Create a rail trail on the old Rutland Railroad rail bed where feasible

As discussed in the Natural Resources chapter, use the old Rutland Railroad rail bed to provide a multi-use trail that would connect all the hamlets in the town of Berlin, as well as connect into Petersburgh and Stephentown. This would provide recreation opportunities for all since the rail bed is relatively flat. Connections to the Taconic Crest Trail and Cherry Plain State Park using local roads would create long and short loops for hikers and mountain bikers.

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6. Improve signage to Taconic Trail trailheads, improve parking at trailheads where needed

As discussed in the Natural Resources chapter, finding the Taconic Trail through its trailheads in Berlin is very difficult. Trailheads are not signed, nor is parking designated. Trailheads, in some places, look like private trails through private property even though they are part of the Taconic Crest Trail system. Improved signage would increase the usage of the trails by residents who don't know they exist and by visitors. Improved parking would reduce friction between property owners and trail users.

7. Create list of historic buildings and historically relevant places

There are no properties or sites in Berlin that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. This is not because that there are no properties which are eligible, but that eligible properties have not been recognized. Historic properties which are not recognized as historic by their local communities are in more danger of being lost and destroyed.

The Town of Berlin should work with the Town Historian and Taconic Valley Historical Society to create a list of buildings, properties and sites which have local and regional significance

historically. This list can then be referenced by the Planning Board when reviewing subdivisions and site plan reviews. Additionally, property owners who know their property has historic significance often will take additional pride in their property and are more likely to maintain the historic character of their houses. Property owners may also want to take advantage of federal tax credits for restoring historic buildings listed on the National Register used for commercial uses.

Preservation of the hamlet of Berlin's Main Street could add to its value for use as a movie set in historic films, as well as possible "History Days" celebrations.



Photo 27 Several of the historic downtown buildings on Main Street in the hamlet of Berlin.

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8. Hold Community Clean Up Days

Time, grime and plant growth can quickly make houses and yards appear abandoned or extremely messy. Fugitive trash, litter and leaves can make streets look mean. Annual or semi-annual Clean-Up Days, perhaps linked with Earth Day and an Autumn festival, could get the community out together, making the town look neater and cleaner. Elderly people and first time homeowners can be provided with assistance with clean up and minor yard repairs or education on use of tools, pruning and planting. Civic buildings such as the Town Hall, Watipi Building, Fire House, Polling Place, churches and the like can be cleaned up exteriorly with volunteers.

Along with the Clean Up Day, the Town could create a beautification contest on the best yard, greatest improvement and best flower boxes along with other awards that the Town may choose.

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Planning & Zoning

Goal: Provide guidance for planning and land use regulations of the Town

Although the Town of Berlin’s Town Board charged the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals with review for update of the zoning regulations, several zoning and planning matters arose when the Comprehensive Plan Committee looked at issues dealing with other parts of the community. Since zoning deals with land use, and land use covers the entire town, it is not surprising that several recommendations arose from the Comprehensive Plan Committee.

It is hoped that the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals will consider this chapter when reviewing the Zoning regulations.

Land Use

There are certain land uses that every community wants to attract. There are other land uses that every community in New York State must provide for due to decisions from State and Federal courts. Clean industrial and commercial uses fall in the first category; adult uses fall in the latter. Sufficient room must be provided to each of the land uses that the Town wants to encourage as well as for adult uses.

The town of Berlin, at present, is lacking employment for a large portion of its population. The Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals should review areas that are zone appropriate for clean industrial and commercial use. Along with existing buildings, there should be some area for new development near the hamlets. The Planning



Photo 28 *The Berlin Hotel which is presently vacant.*

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Board and Zoning Board of Appeals should also examine whether any new uses should be listed in the Schedule of Uses, to clearly encourage these uses in Berlin.

Presently, the only area zoned for Adult uses is the Hoosick River Hardwoods property. The Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals should examine whether there is room in the property to allow such a use and whether that would be the most appropriate location in town should one locate there. If the site is not the most appropriate, the Adult Use law should be amended to provide for the best location for such uses.

Historic Preservation

Although there are no properties listed on the National Register for Historic Places in the town of Berlin, there are many properties that are eligible for such listing. In the Community Services page, a local list of historic properties is touted. These properties should be recognized by the Planning Board in their review of site plans and subdivisions, to help preserve the historical qualities of the properties. Concrete clapboard should be encouraged instead of vinyl siding when exterior finishes are being examined as well as brick facing of concrete for foundations. Layouts of a subdivision including a historic house could include houses set forward similarly to the existing historic house. Stone or split rail fencing could decorate yards or split property lines. Preservation of historic buildings should be encouraged when property reuse is examined. In areas of dense historic properties, such as Main Street in the hamlet of Berlin, hanging signs with external lighting and maintaining large windows in store fronts help maintain the historic feeling of the street.



Photo 29 *The old downtown of the Hamlet of Berlin with several stores.*

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Guidelines can be made for the reuse of properties on Main Street and Cherry Plain Square that encourage the preservation of the historic fabrics of the two hamlets. The guidelines would give pictorial suggestions of what is preferred to what would be unfavorable.

Green Development/Low Impact Development

Due to its low growth in the past 40 years, the town of Berlin is ahead when it comes to green development. Much of the population lives within the three hamlets, two of which are very walkable. Large portions of the town have been preserved by purchase of easement or land by New York State.

Twenty years ago, land preservation was considered by creating large minimum lot sizes. This is now considered to eat up land – not preserving it. Use of conservation or density development subdivisions is now considered on the forefront of land preservation. Conservation development uses the density of the minimum large lot subdivisions, but has smaller lots, with the surplus land being

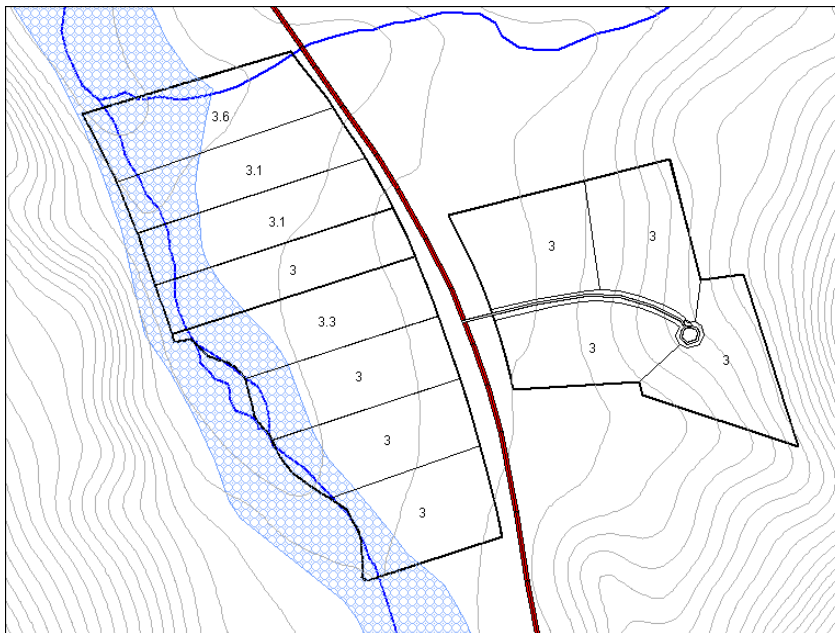


Figure 1 Standard Subdivision of 3 acre lots of a parcel split by a roadway. The land on the right rises up a hillside and on the left are agricultural fields with a stream and floodplain to the rear.

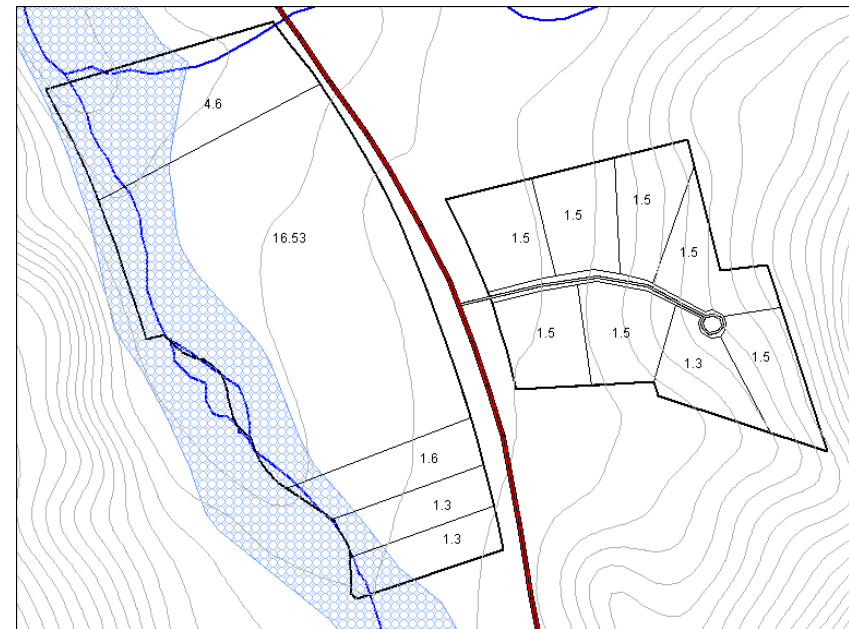


Figure 2 Conservation Subdivision creating the same number of lots, but using the acreage needed for on-site septic only. The houses are located, for the most part, on the hillside, preserving most of the agricultural fields.

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owned by a homeowners association or land trust, or given outright to the community as green space park land. The surplus land may have trails and/or other recreational amenities as well as wetlands, steep slopes or other developmental problems. In the case of Berlin's zoning, a 30-acre parcel in the Rural Use zone could provide 10 lots. Under a conservation development subdivision, there would still be 10 lots of two acres for development, but there would be another lot of 10 acres that would be preserved and not be developed. To be able to use this method of land preservation, the Town would need to adopt a conservation subdivision local law that either allows or promotes the use of conservation subdivisions. Use of the conservation subdivision on properties that may have some special properties, such as important habitat, wetlands, cliffs, etc., can allow the subdivision of part of the property which is not sensitive while preserving that part that is.

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Stormwater State Permit for the Elimination of Pollutants System (SPDES) was expanded in 2003 to include the disturbance of 1 acre or more of land. The requirements of the Stormwater SPDES permit necessitate developers, contractors and homeowners to follow the New York State Stormwater Management Design Manual and New York State Standards and Specifications for Erosion and Sediment Control in the preparation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). Changes to the New York State Stormwater Management Design Manual now require developers to look at low impact development as it applies to stormwater. Reduction of impermeable surfaces by the narrowing of roadways, use of permeable asphalt, use of pavers instead of concrete slabs for walkways, green roofs, use of cisterns and rain barrels, rain gardens and smaller building footprints are now being impressed on developers.



Photo 30 *The Little Hoosick in the hamlet of Berlin. The crib walls were built after massive flooding in the 1950s.*

“Why should the reduction of permeable surface would be important in development in Berlin?” many would ask. Although Berlin is a highly rural town, the shallow soils and steep topography of much of the town along with the usual clearing of many mature trees

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and brush that occurs development along with the high rain and snowfall that can be found in parts of town can create a greater instance for flooding with very little development. The increase of stormwater from the clearing and development of a standard five lot development from a one-inch rainfall totals approximately 5,300 gallons of water. Depending on the speed of the rainfall, this additional water could wash out ditches and culverts and create localized flooding. If a larger deluge such as occurred in Stephentown in 2009 (10 inches in 24 hours) or East Greenbush in 2008 (4 inches in 1 hour), the increased flooding potential from even a small development could create problems for bridges and culverts that are sized with little additional capacity. Reducing the effects of



Photo 31 *The Berlin Free Town Library is an example of a residence that has been repurposed as a public building.*

development by reducing the permeable footprint and retaining water on site could save property damage downstream.

Reuse of existing buildings by rehabilitation or repurposing saves community character as well as materials and greenhouse gases. Use of locally milled wood in construction also saves greenhouse gases, but also local jobs and will probably be of a higher quality and cheaper. Due to the large amount of natural resources in the region around the town of Berlin, many building materials can be sourced close by, promoting local economies and saving on transportation.

Action Items

1. Ensure resident input into the Land Use Regulations as per the Town’s 2007 survey

Amendments to the Town’s Land Use Regulations were proposed in 2005. Unfortunately, the amendments were not created with sufficient resident input – public workshops and forums – to gain the public’s trust or reflect the community’s sentiments. Since

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the Town of Berlin is a republic form of government with elected representatives of the people, Town Board members will usually vote on the general sentiments of their constituents. Any amendment to the Town’s Land Use Regulation should allow public input and comment prior to a final draft version. Public input is often valuable as residents are often the local “experts” on their immediate area. The public can provide viewpoints that provide clarity on local topics as well as unique solutions. Although people usually try to protect their own interests, most are fair when looking at the greater picture, especially in public situations. Since this Comprehensive Plan did not take a hard look at land use and zoning, any major changes to the zoning map should be done with a public workshop that allows residents to help the Planning Board with identifying where the zoning changes should occur and what changes should be made.

2. **Ensure sufficient area of zoned property for uses such as commercial, industrial, adult uses, etc.**

Federal and state court decisions have made requirements for uses such as adult uses and affordable housing. Other uses such as commercial and light industrial are favored for providing spaces for jobs and lowering property taxes. Sufficient areas must be provided for the following uses:

- Adult Uses
- Affordable housing (can be trailers, apartments)
- Group homes and shelters
- Religious institutions

The Comprehensive Plan Committee has also discussed that sufficient area must be provided for commercial and light industrial uses, such as office buildings and space. This was reviewed in the Business/Economy Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Planning Board should review the Land Use Regulations to see if required land uses are listed within the use categories as well as preferred land uses. If such uses are not listed, they should be added into the land use chart along with which zoning classification they should belong to. Additional requirements under Special Permit can be added to protect residents and others, such as distances from churches, schools and playgrounds for Adult Uses. These additional requirements cannot have the effect of not allowing the use in the community, and should be based on logical protections for the community.

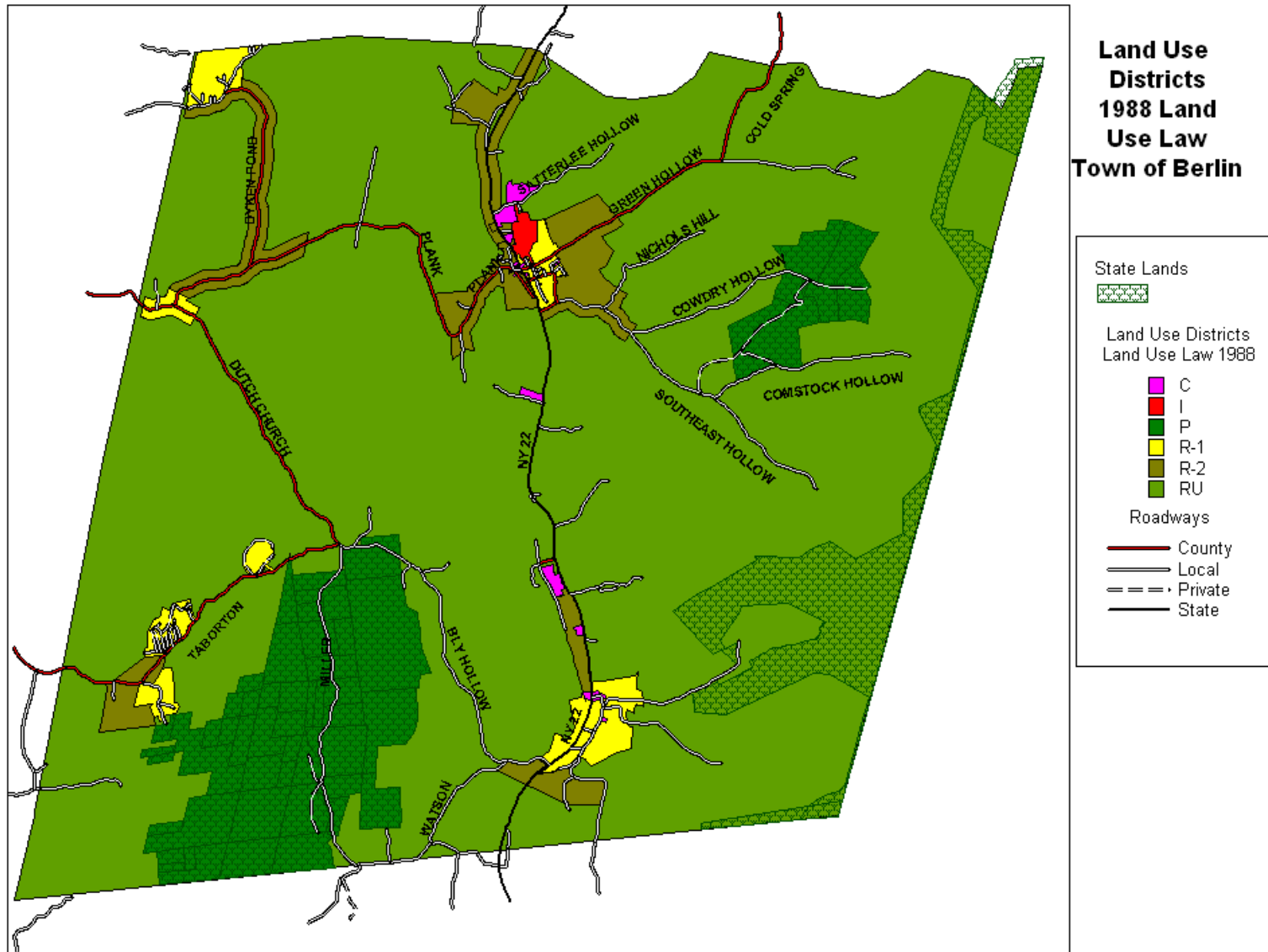
3. **Ensure regular review of the Land Use Regulations and Comprehensive Plan**

Although the town of Berlin has not seen much growth since the Land Use Regulations were adopted in 1989, changes have occurred which require the reexamination of the law. Both the Land Use Regulations and this Comprehensive Plan show a snap shot in time and do not reflect the fluid nature of land use over time. Also, no land use regulations or comprehensive plan is perfect, so therefore “tweaks” and major changes may be needed to correct errors or changes in thinking or goals. Although actual

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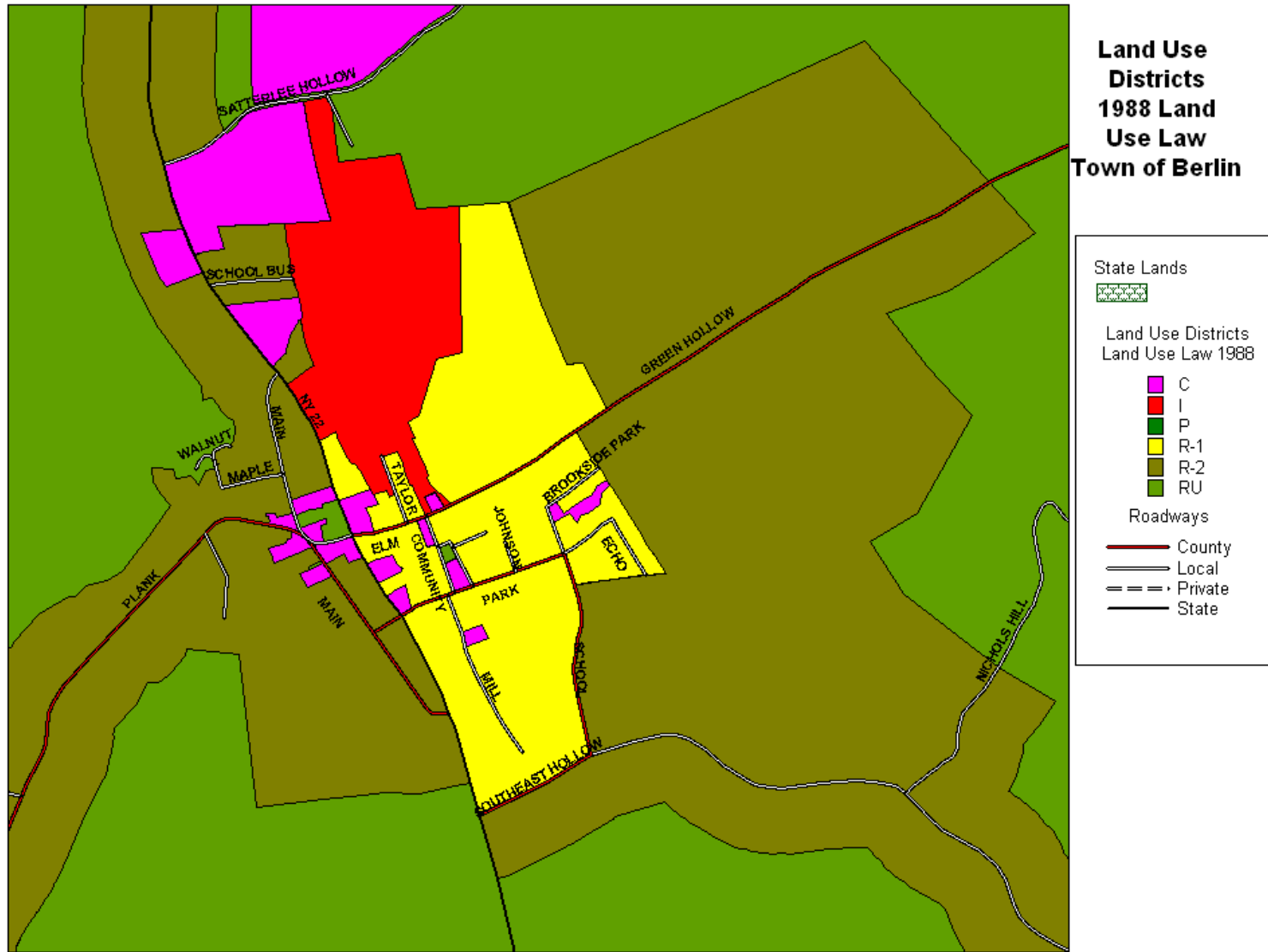
changes may not be needed, a regular review of the Land Use Regulations and Comprehensive Plan should be performed at least every 5 years. The review can be performed by the Planning Board, the Town Board or a special review committee created by the

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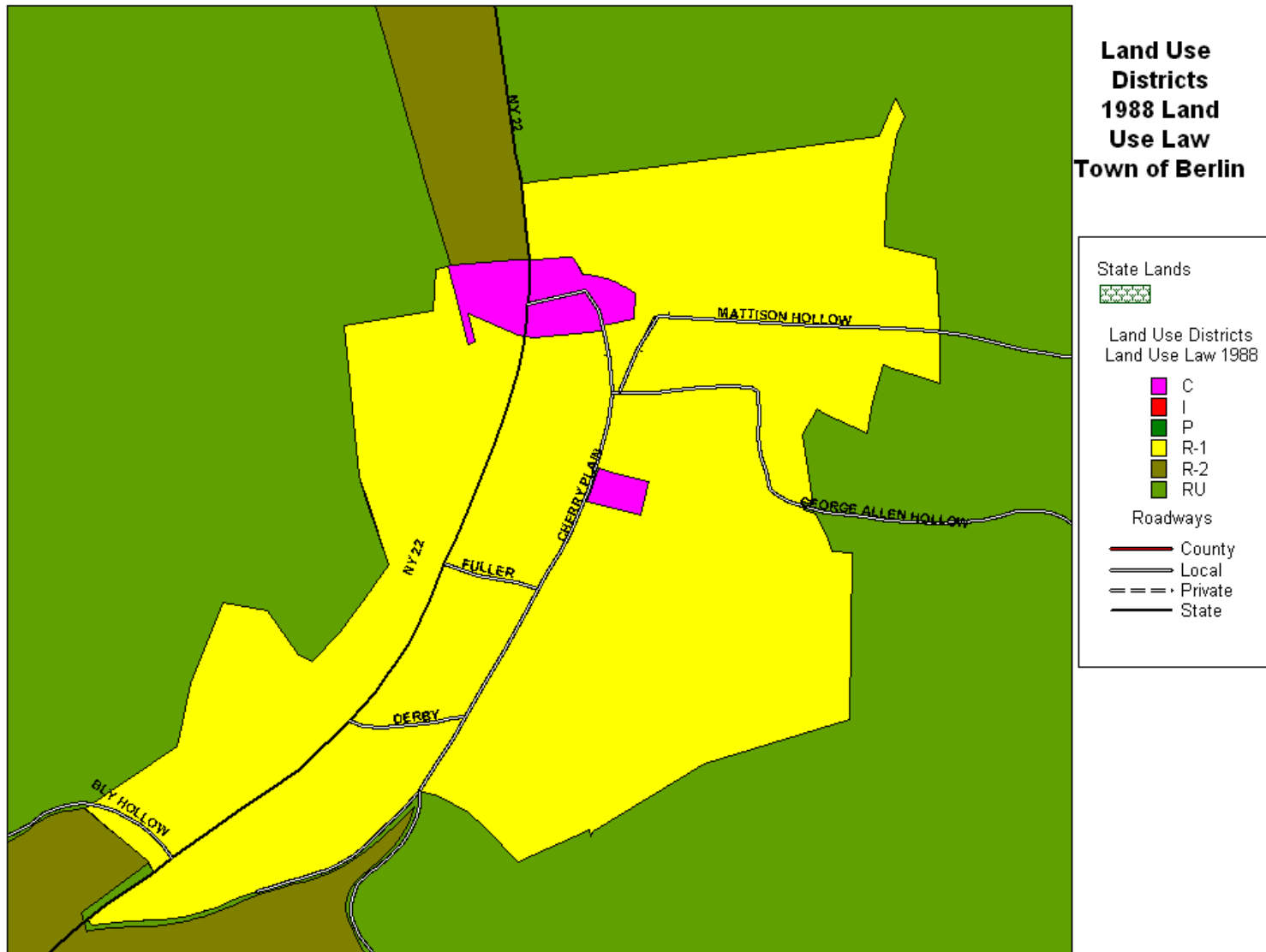
Map 16 1988 Land Use District Map

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Map 17 1988 Land Use District Map, Berlin Hamlet inset

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Map 18 1988 Land Use District Map, Cherry Plain inset

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Town Board. New issues, problems and improved processes can be addressed in revisions to the Land Use Regulations and Comprehensive Plan. Every once in a while, it may be necessary to perform major overhauls to both Land Use Regulations and Comprehensive Plan.

4. Determine areas for conservation of open space and agriculture including the Rensselaer Plateau and the Taconic Crest

Although much of the Taconic Crest is preserved through easements or outright purchase by New York State, there may be other areas that may be considered important ecologically or due to the quality of soils, etc. Some funding streams exist to help purchase easements on important lands that are considered important. New York State Department of Ag & Markets provides funding to towns for the creation of an Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan that helps towns identify ways to assist their farmers and help protect their farmland.



Photo 32 This picture shows two important resources of the town of Berlin, prime agricultural soils in the Little Hoosic valley and the Rensselaer Plateau.

Open space plans can also be created to identify lands already protected and those that still need protection. New York State’s Open Space Plan has identified both the Taconic Crest and Rensselaer Plateau for protection. This has allowed the State access to funds that have allowed the purchase of the easements along the Taconic Crest. Lands that the Town feel are important to be saved should be identified in a document such as an Open Space Plan or Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan which then can be used by the Town, Rensselaer County and New York State in identifying top priority properties in Berlin.

The Town’s Right to Farm law should also be used to ensure that farmers can practice their business, preserving farms by preserving farmers.

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Goals and Action Item Matrix

The purpose of this section is to provide a handy outline of the Comprehensive Plan’s proposals, as well as possible time frames, involved groups and funding sources that may help complete the ideas put forth in this plan. The item numbers do not represent the priority of the action item but are used for reference purposes only. The time frames are intended to be approximate and do not set a mandate that the Town or other agency be required to complete in any proposed time period. In fact, some action items may be considered not to be a part of the Town’s goals at a later date. Involved groups and funding sources are not considered an end-all list. A list of the acronyms is listed at the end.

Vision: *Berlin will maintain its rural character and natural and historic resources while including diversified housing, local employment opportunities as well as health, technology and business services.*

Item #	Action Item	Time Frame	Involved Groups	Funding Sources
Natural Resources Goal:		<i>Inventory and conserve the natural resources of Berlin for community use and tourism</i>		
NR1	Create an inventory of the natural resources of Berlin.	Short	Planning Board, Historian, NRCS, RCSWCD, RC Planning,	
NR2	Identify lands with significant ecological qualities or quality farmland to be preserved with conservation easements.	Medium	Planning Board, ZBA, NRCS, RCSWCD,	A&M
NR3	Properly maintain and advertise preserved and state lands with their passive and low-impact recreation areas.	Medium/ Ongoing	DEC, OPRHP, FCPSP, STC	DEC, OPRHP, USNP,
NR4	Insist on a seat at the table when NYS Department of Environmental Conservation creates the Unit Management Plan and Recreation Management Plan for DEC controlled lands for the Taconic Crest, Berlin State Forest and Capital District Wildlife Management Preserve.	Short/ Medium	Town Board, DEC, FCPSP, STC	

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Item #	Action Item	Time Frame	Involved Groups	Funding Sources
NR5	Encourage the use of best management practices in agriculture to minimize soil erosion, preserve and increase soil fertility, maintain water and air quality and provide a healthy living environment for livestock.	Ongoing	NRCS, RCSWCD, RC Planning	NRCS, A&M, DEC
NR6	Discourage ridgeline development to preserve views.	Ongoing	Planning Board, ZBA	
NR7	Maintain flood infrastructure and the Little Hoosick River riverbed to reduce the effects of flooding.	Ongoing	Town Board, Town Highway, NRCS, RCSWCD, RC Highway	SEMO, FEMA, Town, County
NR8	Work with NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to maintain and improve Cherry Plain State Park.	Ongoing	Town Board, OPRHP, DEC, FCPSP, STC	OPRHP, USNP, private
NR9	Create vistas on Taconic Crest trails and Plank Road.	Medium/Long	DEC, Private Landowners	DEC, private
NR10	Work with bordering towns and beyond to create Route 22 as a Scenic Byway.	Medium/Long	Town Board, Planning Board, ZBA, CDTC, RC Planning, neighboring communities, Historians, private groups	CDTC, RC Planning
Infrastructure Goal:		<i>Maintain the infrastructure in the community to support business growth and a healthy community.</i>		
I1	Ensure that sufficient infrastructure exists in areas proposed for commercial and industrial use to support business growth.	Medium/Ongoing	Town Board, Business Group, Planning Board, ZBA, Service Providers	Service Providers, NYSERDA, NYDOH, DEC, EFC
I2	Work with technological infrastructure providers to find suitable locations for cell towers and with other needs providers may have.	Ongoing	Planning Board, ZBA, Town Board, Service Providers	
I3	Examine the use of new technologies for infrastructure upgrades, including green technologies.	Ongoing	Planning Board, ZBA, Town Board, Service Providers	Service Providers, NYSERDA

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Item #	Action Item	Time Frame	Involved Groups	Funding Sources
I4	Encourage development in areas of existing public water infrastructure where smaller lot sizes can be used.	Ongoing	Planning Board, ZBA, Town Board	
I5	Maintain water and other infrastructure to support the Berlin hamlet area.	Ongoing	Town Board, NYDOH, DEC, ESFC, RCWSA	Water District, NYDOH, DEC, EFC, RCWSA
I6	Look into the development of water infrastructure in Cherry Plain and the development of sewer infrastructure in both Berlin and Cherry Plain to encourage the development in these areas.	Long	Town Board, NYDOH, DEC, EFC, RCWSA	Town Board, NYDOH, DEC, EFC, RCWSA
I7, T1, CS5	Create a multi-use trail along the railroad bed of the old Rutland Railroad bed running parallel to Route 22 and the Hoosic River.	Medium/ Long	Private groups, STC, Town Board, Highway, Landowners	Private, OPRHP, USNP,
Transportation Goal:		<i>Facilitate access to commerce, services, employment and communities.</i>		
T2	Encourage the funding for New York State Department of Transportation to maintain Route 22.	Ongoing	Town Board, DOT	DOT, FHWA
T3	Create alternative transportation modes such as public transportation, car pool, ride sharing and van pools for trips to work, appointments and services.	Medium	Town Board, CDTC, RC Planning, Private	DOT, FTA (JARC), CDTA
T4	Create a senior transportation mode such as vans or volunteer drivers to assist seniors in getting places.	Medium	Town Board, ROUSE, Private, RCDA	ROUSE, FTA
T5	Support or create an Adopt-a-Highway program for roadways.	Medium	Town Board, Highway, Private groups	Town, Private groups
Housing Goal:		<i>A balance between restoration of historic buildings and new housing opportunities to provide housing for all ages and incomes.</i>		
H1	Encourage the restoration of historic buildings.	Ongoing	Town Board, Planning Board, ZBA, RCHR, CEO	OCR, OPRHP,

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Item #	Action Item	Time Frame	Involved Groups	Funding Sources
H2	Create a Hometown Maintenance Committee to assist homeowners with house and yard maintenance.	Medium	Town Board, Private groups	Town, Private
H3	Provide opportunities for a secure environment for senior citizens.	Ongoing	Town Board, RCDA, ROUSE, RCHR, CEO, Private	RCDA, ROUSE, DHCR,
Business/Economy Goal:		<i>Provide a receptive environment for new and existing businesses</i>		
BE1	Create a business leaders group.	Short	Town Board, Local Business & Groups	
BE2	Promote the business directory on the Town's website with links.	Ongoing	Town, Private	
BE3	Improve tourism.	Medium/ Long	Town Board, Business Group, RC Tourism, Private, Neighbors,	RC Tourism, RCIDA, Private, I♥NY
BE4	Check land use regulations to see if sufficient area for business and industry.	Short/ Medium	Planning Board, ZBA	
BE5	Work to get needed services in the community.	Medium/ Long	Town Board, RC Planning, Neighbors, RCDOH	NYDOH, HHS, private, OCR
Community Services Goal:		<i>Enhancing community services to improve the quality of life</i>		
CS1	Improve health services	Medium/ Long	Town Board, Neighbors, RCDOH	NYDOH, USHHS, private, OCR,
CS2	Improve senior services	Medium/ Long	Town Board, RCDA, ROUSE	RCDA, ROUSE, DHCR, Private
CS3	Improve youth services	Medium/ Long	Town Board, RCDY	RCDY, Private
CS4	Improve entertainment and recreation	Medium/ Long	Town Board, Private groups,	Town, Private, USNP, OPRHP
CS6	Improve signage to Taconic Trail trailheads, improve parking at trailheads where needed	Medium/ Long	Town, THC	DEC, USNP
CS7	Create list of historic buildings and historically	Short	Historian, Historic Society	

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Item #	Action Item	Time Frame	Involved Groups	Funding Sources
	relevant places			
CS8	Hold Community Clean Up Day	Medium/ Ongoing	Town Board, Private groups	Town, private
Planning & Zoning Goal:		<i>Provide guidance for planning and land use regulations of the Town</i>		
PZ1	Ensure resident input into the zoning regulations as per the Town’s 2008 survey	Short/ Ongoing	Planning Board, ZBA, Town Board	
PZ2	Ensure sufficient area of zoned property for uses such as commercial, industrial, adult uses, etc.	Short	Planning Board, ZBA, Town Board	
PZ3	Ensure regular review of the Land Use Regulations and Comprehensive Plan	Ongoing	Town Board, ZBA, Planning Board	
PZ4	Determine areas for conservation of open space and agriculture including the Rensselaer Plateau and the Taconic Crest	Short	Planning Board, ZBA	
Hazard Mitigation Plan Goals:		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Promote disaster-resistant development.</i> <i>2. Build and support local capacity to enable the public to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters.</i> <i>3. Reduce the possibility of damage and losses due to drought.</i> <i>4. Reduce the possibility of damage and losses due to flooding caused by floods, hurricanes and nor’easters.</i> <i>5. Reduce the possibility of damage and losses due to earthquakes.</i> <i>6. Reduce the possibility of damage and losses due to landslides.</i> <i>7. Reduce the possibility of damage and losses due to lightning.</i> <i>8. Reduce the possibility of damage and losses due to ice jams.</i> <i>9. Reduce the possibility of damage and losses due to dam failures.</i> <i>10. Reduce the possibility of damage and losses due to wildfires.</i> <i>11. Reduce the possibility of damage and losses due to winter storms.</i> <i>12. Reduce the possibility of damage and losses due to extreme temperatures.</i> <i>13. Reduce the possibility of damage and losses due to tornadoes and</i> 		

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Item #	Action Item	Time Frame	Involved Groups	Funding Sources
	<i>high winds caused by windstorms, hurricanes and nor'easters. 14. Reduce the possibility of damage to emergency and critical facilities from damage due to flooding, wildfires and extreme winds.</i>			
	Prevent flooding in the valley by working with the Little Hoosick Watershed Association to ensure that debris jams in the channel are removed on an ongoing basis.	Medium/Ongoing	Little Hoosick Watershed Association, Town Highway, County,	SEMO, FEMA, Local, Count
	Public awareness program on hazard mitigation and mitigation planning web presence (Town website to link to this site); Town to support preparation of a joint annual hazard mitigation and mitigation planning fact sheet and its distribution; periodic discussions of hazard mitigation and the mitigation plan at other regular local meetings; used of annual flyers, newsletters, advertisements, or radio/TV announcements, etc. at the discretion of the Town (incorporating as much free information as possible from the FEMA Publications Warehouse and other appropriate sources).	High	Town, other county municipalities, County, fire department	County, Town, FEMA
	Code Update: Review existing local codes and ordinances against the identified hazards to determine whether there needs to be any amendments to address identified hazards, and, where a need is identified, modify/amend the codes/ordinances as applicable.	Medium	Town Board, Planning Board, ZBA, Building Inspector	
	Code Enforcement: Enforcement of NYS and Local building codes with continual CEO training.	Medium/Ongoing	Building Inspector	Town, permit holders
	Ensure that the Comprehensive Plan incorporate natural disaster mitigation techniques through a courtesy review of draft plans by the County	High	Town Board, RC Planning	

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Item #	Action Item	Time Frame	Involved Groups	Funding Sources
	Planning Department.			
	Rensselaer County to hold workshops for municipalities regarding zoning and planning issues that arise regarding natural hazards and hazard mitigation.	Low	RC Planning, Planning Board, ZBA, Town Board	

Short Term – Immediate – 9 months after the adoption of the Plan

Medium Term – 6 months to 2 years after the adoption of the Plan

Long Term – 18 months to 4 years after the adoption of the plan

Ongoing – After the adoption of the action item, until the Town decides it no longer is part of the goal of the community.

Definitions/Acronyms

A&M – New York State Department of Ag & Markets

CDTA – Capital District Transportation Authority

CDTC – Capital District Transportation Committee

CEO – Commission on Economic Opportunity of the Capital District

DEC – New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

DHCR – New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal

DOT – New York State Department of Transportation

EFC – New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation

FCPSP – Friends of Cherry Plain State Park

FHWA – Federal Highway Administration of the United State Department of Transportation

FTA – Federal Transit Administration of the United States Department of Transportation

HHS – United States Department of Health and Human Services

Highway – Berlin Town Highway Department

Historian – the Berlin Town Historian

I♥NY – I Love New York Tourism Office of Empire State Development

JARC – Jobs Access Reverse Commute

NRCS – United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service

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NYDOH – New York State Department of Health
NYSERDA – New York State Energy Resource Development Authority
OCR – New York State Office of Community Renewal
OPRHP – New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Planning Board – the Planning Board of the Town of Berlin
Private – Private individuals, groups and not-for-profits
RCDA – Rensselaer County Department for the Aging
RCDY – Rensselaer County Department for Youth
RC Highway - Rensselaer County Highway Department
RCHR – Rensselaer County Housing Resources
RC Planning – Rensselaer County Planning
RCSWCD - Rensselaer County Soil and Water Conservation District
RCWSA - Rensselaer County Water & Sewer Authority
ROUSE – Rensselaer Organization United for Senior Endeavors
STC – Snowmobile Trail Clubs
THC – Taconic Hiking Club
Town Board – Town Board/Council of the Town of Berlin
USNP – United States National Park Service
ZBA – Town of Berlin Zoning Board of Appeals