

Community Development Plan

Town of Kirkland
Village of Clinton
Clinton Central School District
Hamilton College

Kirkland Ventures
January 28, 2009

Foreword

The Community Development Plan¹ (“the Plan) for the Kirkland community is the culmination of nearly two years of effort² by concerned citizens, elected officials and appointed leaders. Its foundation is the Kirkland community’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Strengths and opportunities include: the diversity and quality of life, a world-class liberal arts college, a unique and attractive village green, a school system with strong academic and extra curricular programs, beautiful landscapes and farmland, a variety of cultural and recreational venues, dedicated elected leadership, and virtually no municipal debt.

Weaknesses and threats include: slow growth, a primarily residential tax base, a high percentage of non-taxed properties, an ageing population, lack of communication among constituents, declining school enrollment, eroding state school aid, escalating school operating costs, and the lack of a long-range vision and development plan. These local deficiencies are further complicated by external issues beyond the community’s control, most notably state and national economic conditions.

Our Vision and Goals

Our vision is a community that balances an attractive and desirable place to live with a diversified, growing and sustainable tax base.

To realize this vision we have established three overarching goals:

- I. Provide a rich and varied quality of life, including convenient access to commercial, cultural and recreational activities.
- II. Assure access to excellent, affordable K – 12 schools.
- III. Create a vibrant and diversified local economy with commercial enterprises that provide every-day retail needs, high value employment opportunities and complementary tax revenues.

¹ In the context of the Plan, the “community” includes the Town of Kirkland, the Village of Clinton, the Clinton Central School District (CCS), Hamilton College, and the hamlets of Clark Mills, Franklin Springs and Kirkland.

² The Appendix contains a summary of the last two years of activity, led by the Kirkland Ventures organization.

Strategies

To achieve these goals we will use the following five strategies:

1. (People) Create a culture of continuous planning and implementation.
2. (Growth) Focus economic development activities in four priority areas (Clark Mills, Robinson Road, Route 5 and the Village Core)
3. (Assets) Strengthen cultural, educational and recreational resources.
4. (Unity) Foster active collaboration and communication among the Village, Town, CCS, Hamilton College and all other members of the community.
5. (Efficiency) Ensure the efficient operation of all public institutions (Town, Village, and CCS).

The Plan

To be vibrant and successful, any community must have a long-term plan, the strategies to support it and the will to make it happen. Kirkland Ventures has facilitated the creation of the Plan and its long-term vision and strategies for the community. Now, the entire community – government, citizens and institutions - must turn the Plan into reality. We must work together to sustain and build from our assets, take advantage of future opportunities, address our deficiencies and defend against external threats

First Initiatives

The following are the first initiatives to be accomplished. They are listed in descending priority order and include, in parentheses, the entity responsible.

- Economic Development Plan
Develop a multi-phased plan and budget to attract additional commercial entities to the community. (EDP Team)
- Communications
Improve communications through a community web site, regular town-hall forums, print and email newsletters, and surveys of the community.

- Collaboration
 - Collaborate with the College to explore “creative resource integration” and strengthen long-term cooperation.
 - Community Development Plan
 - Annually update the CDP. (Kirkland Ventures)
 - Resource Sharing
 - Analyze and recommend potential opportunities to improve efficiency through shared services and/or consolidation.
 - Regional Cooperation
 - Work with other municipalities to explore the development of the SOCCOG regional effort.
 - Hill Card
 - Expand the use of the “Hill Card” to local merchants. (Hamilton, Chamber of Commerce)
 - Boynton Pool
 - Develop a plan to address the short-term (1-3 year) operations of the pool and explore opportunities to fund major facility upgrades for the long-term. (Pool Team)
 - Sidewalk Expansion
 - Develop a plan to improve and expand sidewalks in the community to enhance access to resources. Develop a budget and identify sources of funding, including grants. (Sidewalks Team)
 - Oriskany Creek Park
 - Explore the feasibility of a plan for a multi-purpose ribbon park on Village property north of Norton Avenue.
 - Planning Board
 - Investigate combining the Village and Town planning boards into one entity serving both municipalities.
 - College-Village Transportation Link
 - Develop a system for providing convenient access for students between the Village and the College.
 - Village Core Preservation
 - Develop a plan and budget to restore/refurbish/protect structures and atmosphere in the Village Core. (Chamber of Commerce)
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- Arbor Program
Design and implement a program to preserve/protect/replant trees in the Village Green and other key locations in the community. (Chamber of Commerce)

Tools

We will utilize the following tools to support initiatives:

- a. Grant writing for funding;
- b. Data collection and analysis for decision-making;
- c. Citizen Action Teams (CATs) for tackling projects;
- d. Institutions for analytic support (e.g., Maxwell School, Hamilton College and others).