

## INTRODUCTION

Holland's natural beauty, small town atmosphere, and rural character are often cited by residents as the qualities they value most in their town. Residents and visitors alike often define the town by its unique natural resources, such as Hamilton Reservoir and the large tracts of native forestland that dominate its landscape. Hamilton Reservoir, a popular destination for water-based recreation, draws visitors from throughout the region. The popularity of the reservoir and other recreational areas within the town transforms Holland every summer. Each summer Holland's population more than doubles as visitors and seasonal residents arrive to enjoy the many recreational activities the town offers. The citizens of Holland are understandably proud to live in a community that provides residents and visitors a wealth of opportunities to enjoy the town's natural beauty.

The citizens of Holland have become increasingly aware of the need to plan for their community's future. The current boom in the housing and real estate markets has led to a rise in development pressure on the town. Having seen the negative effects of unplanned development in neighboring towns, residents want to ensure that their community establishes a plan for protecting its many desirable qualities for current and future generations. Residents understand the realities created by a growing population and therefore acknowledge that increasing residential and commercial development will occur within the town as its population continues to grow. Balancing this future development with the need to protect the town's most desirable qualities is Holland's most important planning goal. Residents of Holland understand that preserving the town's natural beauty and rural character requires a comprehensive planning approach that balances future development with the protection of its unique natural resources.

Preserving the qualities that make Holland such a desirable community in which to live will require addressing a number of planning issues. In addition to planning carefully for future development, the town will need to address issues created by previous residential development. In particular, the negative impacts of the dense residential development adjacent to Hamilton Reservoir will need to be addressed. Protecting water quality in Hamilton Reservoir is a major priority since the reservoir plays such a central role in the economic well-being of the town and its residents. Although the town faces a number of planning challenges, Holland possesses several major advantages in terms of community development planning. Most importantly, large expanses of undeveloped land still exist throughout the town. Due to this low level of development, the town still has an opportunity to make informed planning decisions that will guide the future use of these lands. The town also possesses a core of dedicated residents who recognize the need for protecting valuable natural resources and who are committed to preserving Holland's unique rural identity and small town atmosphere.

The Holland Community Development Plan is based on planning principles established by Executive Order 418, the State's community development planning initiative. The guiding principle of Executive Order 418 is that a comprehensive approach to community development planning is more effective than planning in isolation. Planning needs to occur within a framework that acknowledges the direct relationships between housing, open space preservation, economic development and transportation needs. The community development goals established

by this plan are based on priorities expressed by the citizens of Holland at a public forum held on November 19, 2003. Through comprehensive planning, the Town of Holland can ensure the protection of its valuable natural resources while accommodating the increasing residential, commercial, and infrastructure development required to serve its growing population.